

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Scottish
Attachment
In Action

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Thank you

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



Scottish Attachment in Action (SAIA) has been through a period of enormous change in the last year. Thanks to successfully being awarded funding from the PROMISE we now have a larger staff team which includes our Director Wendy, our Communications & Engagement Lead Pauline, and our Attachment Practice Leads, Claire and Laura.

With the staff team now established in post we have been working through an adjustment period where staff are taking on the majority of the involvement work, and the trustees are now spending time on governance related work for the charity.

The last few months have been busy, and the staff team has been focussed on a range of areas including developing our IT systems, developing policies, and ensuring we have the right systems and structures in place to effectively deliver a range of programmes.

We are delighted to be able to say that our Education Project which we have called the “Wee BREATHERS” is now being delivered within schools, our Why Attachment Matters to Black and Minority Ethnic Communities is now into year two with great plans ahead and fantastic partnership working, and we have supported two interns to increase our understanding of attachment and poverty. Alongside the Why Not? Trust and Early Years Scotland we continue to support the Village, an online community for care experienced parents (and parents to be) by providing training and resources as needed.

We have also recently received funding from The Promise Partnership, Corra Foundation on behalf of Scottish Government to support a change in the post-adoption support experience within education in Scotland, focussed on deepening professionals understanding of the experiences of adopted children, addressing the need for relational approaches and trauma responsiveness.

We have continued to deliver PACE training across Scotland and have recently been contributing to national steering groups and networks to highlight the importance of attachment.

Our Trustees and former development manager have done a wonderful job to get us to where we are, and we are in a strong position with our staff team to see SAIA flourish. There is still work to be done but I know we are all very positive and excited for the future of SAIA.

Alison MacDonald

CHAIR, SAIA

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I am proud that in this first annual report as Director we have managed, as a team and supported by our fantastic trustees to build on the excellent work that SAIA has achieved over the years.

I'm particularly pleased at how our work in schools is seeking to build an evidence base to show the value of attachment relationships, and advance that must needed shift from only seeing behaviour, to building understanding through attachment relationships.

We have confidence that between our work in schools, our training, and our policy influencing work that we are further embedding the awareness of attachment relationships into policy, practice and research.

We also aim, over the coming year, to push for change across the lifespan so we can spread the message that we can all benefit and thrive from attachment based relationships to support our sense of safety, connection and trust. I'm excited about what we will achieve in the near future at SAIA, supported by the tremendous dedication of our trustees, staff, patrons, members and colleagues.



Wendy McAuslan

DIRECTOR, SAIA



STRENGTHENING OUR FOUNDATIONS

Development Day - SAIA held a successful development day which enabled us to think broadly about what we need to focus on to ensure we can become a stronger and more effective organisation looking at attachment across the lifespan.

This included focussing on some of the fundamentals all charities need to operate as well as our training, funding model and most importantly our values.



Policies should reflect Values

Structure around Passion

We also had a good think about how we best involve, include and are accountable to our members, to ensure as a charity that we are developing what our members feel is valuable. We have carried out a survey to understand what our members would like us to achieve and offer, and held a focus group to see how we can engage effectively with our members. In response to this we will be initiating our members programme early 2024, where we will hold quarterly catch ups with our members to open up opportunities to take part in interesting discussions, hear from inspiring speakers and participate in activities.

Development Plan - we now have an up-to-date Development Plan which we are implementing to provide strategic action and to further develop our approach across the lifespan.

Given the fact that the world of the charity sector is forever changing we will be looking to ensure we have a continuous process of feedback and review to ensure that strategic as well as financial plans are moving in the right direction, this should help to ensure we build our infrastructure and continue to flourish.

RAISING AWARENESS, IMPROVING SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE OF ATTACHMENT

Training Delivery - Scottish Attachment in Action is certificated and supported by the Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy Institute to offer DDPI PACE training. PACE (Playful, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy) is the core therapeutic, relational attitude of DDP (Dyadic Developmental Practice) developed by Dan Hughes.

The training is designed to offer both an understanding of the impact of relational trauma on all aspects of children and young people's development and to offer practical strategies that will support positive emotional, social, educational, and behavioural change. DDPI PACE training is suitable for a range of practitioners working in education, social work, and health settings as well as for adoptive parents, foster and kinship carers.

This year we have delivered DDPI PACE training across Scotland in a range of settings covering Aberlour Fostering services, Angus Council Children, Families & Justice Services, South Ayrshire Education as well as open online sessions supporting adoptive parents and kinship carers. We are also excited to be piloting a new twilight delivery model for DDPI PACE training. This innovative approach allows DDPI PACE training to be delivered in five two and a half hour (5 x 2.5 hrs) evening sessions in an online format, increasing accessibility for those unable to attend full day courses. In order to gain the DDPI certificate delegates must undertake all five sessions, however it can be attended independently for those who wish to understand particular elements of PACE.

SAIA has also delivered training across both mainstream education and specialist provisions to increase staff's awareness of the importance of attachment relationships and the impact of developmental trauma.



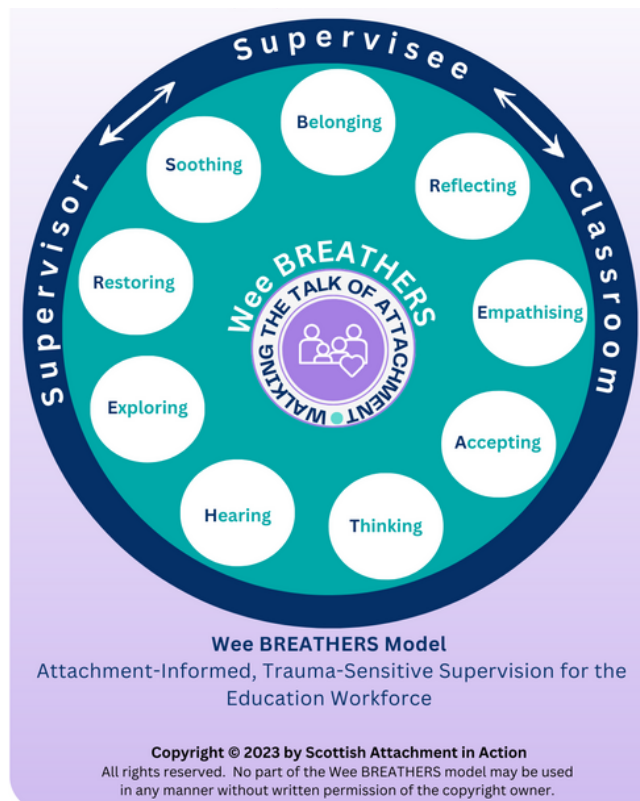
CREATING PRACTICE AND CULTURAL CHANGE

Wee BREATHERS - SAIA are delighted to be funded by The Promise Partnership, Corra Foundation on behalf of Scottish Government to test our Wee BREATHERS model for change, Wee BREATHERS are attachment-informed, trauma sensitive supervision sessions that offer education colleagues protected time to connect, reflect and learn within a safe and confidential space. Wee BREATHERS are led by trained supervisors with knowledge and experience of applying attachment-informed, trauma sensitive approaches within education.



The Wee BREATHERS project aims to better understand how developing an increased knowledge about the impact of disrupted attachment and trauma as part of reflective supervision can impact on teacher wellbeing through supporting staff to better understand and respond to distressed behaviour and pupil needs, encouraging positive and supportive adult-pupil relationships.

We have recruited and trained our team of nine Wee BREATHERS supervisors, and sessions have begun in schools within four local authorities. At this stage of the project, we are exploring what models work best for education staff, looking at online/in person, group/individual sessions and using the feedback from the first tranche of schools who participate to help us refine our approach to ensure we have the greatest impact.



CREATING PRACTICE AND CULTURAL CHANGE

We are delighted to be partnered in this project by Barnardo's, who are, like us, excited by this innovative approach which recognises the need to reduce the emotional load of education staff. We hope it provides the chance to further develop open, honest and supportive relationships between staff and pupils, particularly care experienced pupils.

Advocates for Adoptive Rights in Schools - SAIA has recently been awarded a further £67,500 funding from The Promise Partnership, Corra Foundation on behalf of Scottish Government over the next 18 months to enable trauma skilled specialist advocates to bridge the gap between adoptive families and schools, with an aim to ensure the ongoing needs of adoptive children are fully recognised and met.

In our work with adopters, we repeatedly hear 'We have had little support and only because we fought really hard for every little thing.' We aim to help adoptive children and their families to address this challenge, bringing their specific needs to the forefront. Our advocates, using a relational approach, will mediate across home and school to support the child effectively and provide consistency.

This approach aims to enable children and young people from adoptive families to have full access to educational opportunities, overcome barriers to learning, support education practitioners to develop knowledge around adoption rights, signpost, and to co-design new services where gaps exist. We are committed to ensuring that this project will influence how schools recognise and work with adoptive families and anticipate that access to ongoing, consistent support would reduce stress, secondary trauma, and adoption disruption, in addition to ensuring that adopted children's right to education are upheld.



**the
promise**

DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

The Village – care experienced parents (and parents to be) – The Village was created in 2022 to serve as a digital community of support for new parents and parents to be with care experience. Now sitting under The Why Not? Trust, and alongside Early Years Scotland this community gives care experienced parents access to information, resources, and a place to reach out to others.



The Village understands that parents with experience of care often feel stigma and judgement when reaching out, so at the heart of the community is the creation of an environment which is safe and supportive. Scottish Attachment in Actions (SAIA) role within the Village is to bring expertise in delivering inclusive learning opportunities supporting the understanding and development of positive attachments.



Adoptive Families Forum - SAIA provides a regular free online forum where adoptive families can come together and discuss issues that matter to them. The sessions are facilitated by adoptive parents to support a safe, trusting, and confidential space.

There are opportunities to create change, share your experiences, co-design and most importantly connect with others who understand. There will also be opportunities for those who attend the conversation to get more involved in our Advocates for Adoptive Rights in Schools work.

Why Attachment Matters to Black and Minority Ethnic Communities - The SAIA project Why Attachment Matters to Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, funded by the Robertson Trust until June 2025, is now in its second year.

The two themes for the project are 'Power and Inequality' and 'Attachment Theory into Practice'. Co-creation with organisations and individuals focused on these themes has been and will continue to be at the centre of planning and delivery. The overall aim of the project post the grant funding is for the work to be self-sustaining.



DEVELOPING AND SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES

In the first year of funding the groundwork of connecting with individuals and organisations progressed to inviting representatives to attend development workshops bringing people together to advise us on how the overall themes of social power and inequality, and attachment could be delivered. Also, in the first year in-person and on-line six-session workshops have been successfully delivered. Participants have really appreciated the safe spaces created for both learning about attachment and for the sharing and reflection of their own attachment stories and how these are influenced by power and inequality that they all face on a daily basis.



Entering the second year of the project SAIA have developed partnership working with several organisations including The Daisy Project and Amma. As well as continuing to offer in person and online workshops SAIA will be training and supporting people to deliver their own workshops. SAIA continues to connect with everyone they have worked with to date offering ‘connect and chat’ safe spaces throughout the year.

SAIA in Castlemilk - In promoting the importance of attachment across the lifespan, SAIA has continued to develop work in Castlemilk. Following a series of Why Attachment Matters (WAM) events we ran for staff and parents via Miller Primary School in Castlemilk in 2020, we linked with Fiona McGovern, Ardenglen Housing Association’s Community Investment Manager, to discuss ways to continue our connection in the community and have since then, in partnership with Ardenglen Housing Association, worked with the local Women’s Group.

The content of our monthly sessions is decided by the group and our current themes are ‘Knowing yourself’ and ‘Assertiveness’. Sometimes we invite guest speakers to share their experience. The group members are really supportive of each other and active in making a positive difference in their community. In the midst of this cost of living crisis, they also have their own struggles and they value the additional opportunity our sessions provide for them to be together, to have a space to talk openly, to be heard, to laugh and sometimes cry, to get and give support. That’s what attachment is all about.

INCREASING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF ATTACHMENT - RESEARCH

SAIA, through Glasgow Universities Internship Programme employed two interns, Fatima and Izzy over the summer where we supported research to broaden our understanding of attachment, with a focus on poverty.

Fatima Durrani's research focussed on the impact of multi-generational poverty on attachment dynamics within south Asian families residing in Scotland.

The research identified the influence of family and community connections on the wellbeing and adaptive capacities of individuals within these families, focusing on their ability to cope, survive, and potentially thrive in challenging circumstances. The research actively engaged with South Asian families and communities experiencing poverty and inequality through attachment-informed discussions.

“Through the lens of attachment theory, the study uncovers how poverty shapes familial relationships, emotional bonds, and cultural integration experiences.”

Izzy McTamney focussed her research on an investigation into the interplay between parental incarceration and attachment theory in families experiencing intergenerational poverty and inequality. Loss of income, the unwelcoming environment of the prison, stigma and a host of other factors impact negatively on the ability to develop healthy attachments.

Both pieces of research have helped develop our understanding of the socio-economic and cultural factors which must be focussed on for attachment to be able to thrive. We will continue to highlight these broader issues within policy settings and seek opportunities to develop models which address the inequalities which currently exist.

A huge thanks to both Fatima and Izzy, and to Paula Sheils, SAIA Trustee, in doing a fantastic job in supporting our interns.



STATEMENT OF BALANCES



Financial Review - Overview

The charity's total fund balance at the year-end on 31st March 2023 was £90,125. Of this £75,689 was held as Restricted Funds with the remaining £14,436 held as unrestricted funds.

	<i>Unrestricted Funds</i>	<i>Restricted Funds</i>	<i>Total Funds</i>	<i>Total fund 31st March 22</i>
<i>Opening Cash & Bank Balances</i>	£10,160	£34,270	£44,340	£15,080
<i>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</i>	£4,276	£41,419	£45,695	£29,350
<i>Closing Cash & Bank Balances</i>	£14,435	£75,689	£90,125	£44,430

Receipts and Fundraising - The majority of our receipts are now made up of grants, totalling £86,870 this year, and £57,600 last year. We continue to receive a significant portion from the provision of training £22,748 and from donations and membership subscriptions. We are grateful, once again, to those who took part in the Kiltwalk, and also who make purchases using Easy Fundraising.

Payments - Total payments for the year were £74,344 (2022: £59,111). The main source of the increase is to increased staffing and consultancy costs associated with the grant-funded activity and training provision. We have taken on our first employees including a full time Communications and Engagement Lead and two part-time Practice Attachment Leads. The funding we have received will now enable us to employ a part-time Director for the charity. This will enable us to deliver the programmes of work funded by the Corra foundation and Robertson Trust.

The balance of a large proportion of grants (£75,689) are carried forwards to 2024 which gives us a good foundation to start the new financial year.

Reserves Policy - The charity trustees reviewed their reserves policy in 2023 as a result of becoming an employer and the increased responsibilities to employed staff. The policy for holding reserves is based on holding a level of reserves between 3 and 12 months of unfunded employee costs. The level of reserves that this policy will require is around £9,000. At 31st March 2023 the level of reserves held by the charity was £14,436. We aim to build up to £24,000 in reserves, so we can cover the costs of 3 months of staff salaries, this will be dependant on a range of factors and financial opportunities.

THANK YOU

We would like to thank all of those who have supported our aims over the last year, including our members, trustees, patrons, funders, current staff and associates as well as our previous staff who have all helped us to be in the strong position we are in now.

We would also like to thank our funders, The Promise Partnership, Corra Foundation on behalf of Scottish Government to support a change in the post-adoption support and to support Education staff to have reflective space to look at attachment relationships.

Thank you to the Robertson Trust for supporting our BME work to empower communities.

A special thanks also goes to The Timpson Trust for providing support to our annual conference.



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