

## Centre for ADHD and Autism Strategy: 2022 – 2025

### **Introduction from the Chief Executive**

I was delighted to join the Centre for ADHD and Autism Support (CAAS) in September 2022, following an extremely successful previous strategy period, which saw CAAS continue to grow and thrive despite the enormous pressures of the pandemic.

The most significant internal change during that 2018-2021 period was the development of our Adult Autism Services, initially with funding just in Harrow, but which has now seen us grow to support the whole of North West London. Over the same time period, we also saw real embedding and development of our Youth Services, which had been established in 2016, and which now offer teen specific parenting courses and more social and therapeutic groups, and of course the continuous improvement and growth in our original, core Family Service. We are proud that in 21-22 we were able to offer over 50 different services across our work, and facilitated more than 5,000 attendances across the year.

We can only deliver great services to neurodiverse individuals and their families in North West London by properly understanding and listening to their needs, so everything we do is grounded in a culture of genuine involvement working with our service users. We also need to maintain our funding base, to enable us to keep providing services, so retaining great relationships with our funders is vital. This means that ensuring a culture of collaboration and openness with those stakeholders is key, as is maintaining continuous focus on how we measure, improve and report on the impact we are able to achieve.

2022 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the charity, which gives us an opportunity to celebrate all the work that has been achieved by the charity since it was founded – and to really consider what we want to do next and how we want to build on that success into the future. We set out these ambitions across our four key strategic areas below.

We can only deliver this strategy with the support and help of our incredible staff, funders, fundraisers and trustees, so I wish to extend my heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to CAAS success so far – and to all who will do so in the future.

### **Our Vision, Mission and Values**

Founded in 1996, CAAS has over 25 years of experience and has an excellent reputation locally for the provision of high-quality services. With qualified staff with personal experience, and through talking and listening to ADHD/autistic people, we have an in-depth understanding of the support needs of our clients. 50% of our Trustee Board have personal experience of ADHD/autism as do 2/3 of our Senior Leadership Team and 70% of our staff team. This lived experience means we can relate to and empathise with those who access our services, and it

complements our academic research and our involvement work with our service users to ensure a fully rounded, effective and evidence-based programme of support.

### **Our vision:**

We put neurodivergent voices first. By increasing awareness, understanding and access to support services for ADHD and Autism across NW London we aim to drive lasting, positive change for neurodivergent individuals.

### **Our mission:**

To support, educate and empower individuals diagnosed with ADHD or who are autistic, their families and the community. Through raising awareness, we change perceptions and break down barriers.

### **Our values:**

**Integrity:** CAAS is committed to the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to our mission.

**Valuing Difference:** what is normal? CAAS recognise and value that differences can be valuable assets in the workplace, and in our communities.

**Passion:** we are committed to the work of CAAS in continuously improving outcomes for ADHD/autistic people and to creating inclusive communities where ADHD/autistic people can thrive.

**Collaboration:** we work with ADHD/autistic people to amplify their voices. We never aim to speak for them. We work with each other, with our funders and with our community, as more than the sum of our parts, to best support the delivery of our mission.

**Trust and Respect:** CAAS staff are privileged to be trusted to amplify the voice of ADHD/autistic people, and will always treat beneficiaries, and each other, with the utmost respect.

### **Our Aims:**

**Support:** CAAS aims to provide support and understanding in a safe and non-judgemental environment. As well as having relevant qualifications, the personal experience of staff along with empathy and understanding allows those who use our services to feel a sense of belonging when they access the centre. We provide a comprehensive service that acknowledges that people need support pre and post-diagnosis.

**Educate:** Understanding and increased awareness come through education. CAAS offers training using skilled support workers, specialist courses, specialised workshops, conferences and a comprehensive lending library.

**Empower:** Feeling empowered can break down barriers and encourage positivity about the future. Through support and education, we empower those who use our services to be more confident and independent, enabling them to reach their full potential.

## **Our Strategic Objectives**

### **1. We will deliver quality services in a sustainable way for ADHD/autistic individuals and their families.**

Our ambition for the end of the strategy period is that all our services and core costs are fully funded, our services are high quality (as measured by user satisfaction surveys), are evenly balanced across the different service departments, and that our staff are well placed to deliver high quality provision (as measured by our staff survey)

We will deliver this by:

- Developing new governance processes for the **creation of new services** to ensure they meet emerging needs, are sustainable, risk-managed, cost effective, employ co-production principles and are of appropriate quality
- Developing and implementing new processes for **evaluating existing services** to ensure they remain sustainable, risk-managed, cost effective and of appropriate quality, and are updated with changing service needs through use of co-production principles.
- Developing and implementing new processes for **measuring and evaluating** our **outcomes** and the **impact** we deliver to better achieve funding application success and strive for improvements in our effectiveness.
- Evaluating and improving our processes and structures around **governance, risk and organisational strategy**, to ensure clear lines of accountability within the organisation, effective governance policies, ongoing best practice in back-office 'business as usual' and an appropriate level of risk management.
- Continuously improving our **fundraising** and bid writing capabilities, to diversify our funding risk and look for new areas of funding to ensure we remain sustainable
- Developing new commercial income streams where appropriate, such as providing **professional training** to businesses and statutory entities, to enable the funding of our core costs.
- Focussing on our **ADHD** Services where funding allows, to ensure parity within the service offer.
- Reviewing and improving our **staff management** policies and strategy, incorporating the introduction of a performance management cycle, staff surveys, salary benchmarking, staff structure review and updated policies and handbook, to ensure our staff are well supported and managed.

### **2. We will integrate equity, diversity and inclusion considerations into everyday practice.**

Our ambition for the end of the strategy period is that our services are more accessible to a wider range of users (as measured by our monitoring data), and that our staff are better supported themselves, and better able to recognise changes that can be made to develop and improve inclusivity within the organisation and the services we offer (as measured by our staff survey)

We will deliver this by:

- Improving the accessibility of our services by seeking funding for [translation](#) services and where possible implementing [multi-format](#) versions of our information.
- Ensuring our new service development framework incorporates EDI considerations, to facilitate support for more [marginalised groups](#) (eg dads, specific communities, ND parents)
- Reviewing how we can deliver our services to reach new diverse groups, such as in developing [community partnerships](#) with cultural or faith based organisations
- Embedding a [culture](#) of inclusivity, reviewing the [physical environment](#) for potential issues, offering reasonable adjustments where appropriate and ensuring staff have regular EDI [training](#)
- Ensuring our use of [social media](#) incorporates a wider range of diverse images, and inclusive text and content
- Improving our [recruitment and induction](#) processes to ensure equity principles are embedded within them

### **3. We will ensure that we use technology to deliver CAAS services effectively.**

Our ambition for the end of the strategy period is that our infrastructure is better developed to enable more efficient and accurate processing of data and more appropriate ways of working.

We will deliver this by:

- Implementing a new [finance system](#)
- Implementing a new [monitoring](#) and [reporting system](#)
- [Training](#) staff in using our new MS365 tools and providing 'ways of working' [manuals](#) to facilitate best practice sharing and efficiency improvements.
- Implementing a new [website provider](#) to provide a more stable and cost-effective content management system, and better user experience
- Developing our [website content](#) to provide information and support to more users in a more accessible way
- Reviewing our [service delivery methodologies](#) and ensuring best practice in the tools we use and the ways in which we ensure privacy, effectiveness and a good experience for our users.

### **4. We will ensure that CAAS services are appropriately recognised and promoted.**

Our ambition for the end of the strategy period is that our services are well known by all in the area who could benefit from them, and that the wider community has an increased awareness of ADHD and Autism, and how neurodiverse individuals can be better supported.

We will deliver this by:

- Expanding our use of [social media](#) to improve our visibility, recognition and reach to a wider audience, and updating our branding guidelines, to ensure appropriate and effective.
- Developing our [website content](#) to ensure users can easily see the most appropriate services for them, and how to join in
- Reviewing our [physical assets](#), such as posters and brochures, to ensure appropriate language and design is included, and branding is updated as per our brand guidelines.

- Continually developing our [community links](#), using physical assets to promote the service in community hubs, and utilising other organisation's distribution mechanisms where possible
- Reinforcing [professional links](#), to ensure we are advertising our services as widely as possible, and are able to share within partnership meetings and with referrers across the NW London area the effectiveness and appropriateness of our services, to support future funding opportunities.
- Take up opportunities to [pursue media coverage](#) or achieve relevant [awards](#)
- Taking up opportunities to [advocate](#) for autism and ADHD services at a [regional and national level](#), particularly in terms of campaigning for recognition of ADHD support needs on a statutory basis