



AUTISM
FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

Scottish Charity No. SC047640
www.autismfa.org.uk
www.team-united.org.uk

PEOPLE
COMMUNITIES
OPPORTUNITIES
ACROSS SCOTLAND

ANNUAL REPORT & IMPACT REVIEW 2025 – 2026

Using football to create
inclusive opportunities for
neurodivergent people
across Scotland.



PEOPLE
Building
confidence



OPPORTUNITIES
Creating
pathways



COMMUNITIES
Reducing
isolation



CHANGE
A fairer,
more inclusive
Scotland



**TEAM
UNITED**

The flagship programme
of Autism FA

CONNECT • DISCOVER • FLOURISH • SHINE

WELCOME

A message from the Chair

It is my privilege to present the Autism Football Association's Annual Report and Impact Review for 2025–2026. This year marks a defining period in our development - a year of growth, stability and renewed purpose following our transition to full independence.

As we approach our 10th anniversary year in 2027, we have much to celebrate. Autism FA has grown from a small initiative into a national organisation creating meaningful opportunities for neurodivergent people across Scotland. Our programmes, partnerships and reach continue to develop, while our focus remains firmly on belonging, confidence and participation.

A key achievement has been the development of transition pathways for young people aged 15+ moving towards our 16+ services. We are building opportunities for former players to stay connected, contribute through our Youth Panel, develop leadership skills and continue their personal development through football.



The final year of our Young Start programme supports this transition work and our ambition to provide pathways that extend beyond youth provision. Alongside this, the charity has strengthened its financial position, giving us a stronger base from which to develop projects, diversify funding and invest in safe, high-quality delivery.

Our vision

Every neurodiverse person in Scotland should have access to safe, inclusive and meaningful football opportunities where they can belong, grow and thrive.

Ann Brown
Chair of the Board

OUR CHARITY

Who we are

Autism Football Association (Autism FA) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), registered on 15 August 2017. Team United is our flagship youth programme, using football as a platform for inclusion, connection and personal development.



Our charitable purposes

- Provide sporting opportunities with targeted support to young people with disabilities.
- Promote social inclusion among disabled young people and their parents who may experience exclusion.
- Encourage and enable disabled people to participate more effectively within the wider community.
- Provide training and support.
- Increase or coordinate opportunities for people with disabilities to engage with service providers so services can better meet their needs.

Charity information

Registered name: Autism Football Association | Scottish Charity Number: SC047640

SCIO | Financial year: 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2026

Principal address: 14 Frankfield Crescent, Dalgety Bay, Dunfermline, Fife, KY11 9LW

www.autismfa.org.uk • www.team-united.org.uk

OUR REACH

2025–2026: Year in numbers



1,200+ participants engaged	28 community clubs	300+ weekly session places
650+ young people in youth programmes	300+ adults / 16+ pathways	350+ Scottish Cup players
85+ volunteers and coaches	4 national events	92% reported increased confidence
87% families reported reduced isolation	90% reported improved wellbeing	100% clubs reported improved neurodiversity understanding

Football is the vehicle.

Belonging, confidence and community are the impact.

Our impact

Autism FA continues to deliver meaningful impact for Neurodivergent children, young people, adults and families across Scotland. Our programmes are structured environments where people can develop socially, emotionally and physically - with football creating a shared focus and a sense of belonging.



What participants and families gain

- Increased confidence and communication
- Stronger peer relationships and friendships
- Reduced anxiety in group settings
- Improved physical health and coordination
- Greater independence and sustained engagement in community sport
- A clearer sense of identity and belonging within football

Impact in practice

The aim is not simply to create football sessions. It is to create environments in which Neurodivergent people feel understood, supported and able to participate on their own terms.

FLAGSHIP YOUTH PROGRAMME

Team United

Team United provides a structured pathway from age 10, combining weekly football with social opportunities, personal development and progression routes. Young people can take part competitively or non-competitively, with support tailored around the individual.



The youth pathway

COME & TRY	Accessible entry point for ages 10–16
WEEKLY TEAM TRAINING	Regular sessions with support for different abilities
CHOICE OF ROUTE	Competitive and non-competitive opportunities
SOCIAL CONNECTION	Events and activities that build friendships and reduce isolation
TRANSITION 15+	Gradual preparation for adulthood and 16+ provision
PROGRESSION	Supported opportunities into community / grassroots football

Growing with our players

During 2025–2026, Autism FA continued to strengthen the transition from youth provision into 16+ opportunities. The aim is to avoid a cliff edge at the end of youth football and instead create a gradual, supported pathway into adulthood.

- Transition support beginning from age 15+
- A developing 16+ section that keeps former players connected
- Opportunities to contribute through the Youth Panel
- Training, leadership and personal development opportunities
- Football-based social communication activity
- A longer-term adult recreational pathway



A lifelong pathway

Young people should not lose their football community simply because they reach a particular birthday. We want to build continuity, choice and belonging into adulthood.

National activity and competition

Autism FA's tiered competitive pathway provides meaningful opportunities for players who want competition while retaining non-competitive routes for those who prefer them. National events, including the Autism Scottish Cup, create moments of celebration, connection and recognition for players and families.

Governance & safeguarding

Safeguarding is embedded in Autism FA's delivery and governance. We recognise that autistic children, young people and adults may experience additional barriers to being heard or supported, so our approach aims to make reporting routes clear and participation safe, respectful and inclusive.

Our safeguarding framework

- Safety and wellbeing underpin all activity
- Safeguarding is a shared responsibility across trustees, staff, coaches, volunteers and partners
- Concerns are recorded, escalated and managed confidentially in line with relevant procedures
- Regulated roles require appropriate PVG membership
- Risk assessment, safe recruitment and induction support programme delivery
- Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated as required

Training and practice

The charity's safeguarding approach includes Scottish FA child wellbeing training, Autism FA safeguarding induction and specialist learning relevant to neurodivergent participants, including communication strategies and inclusive coaching methods.

Accountability

The Board provides strategic oversight and receives safeguarding information. Operationally, the Safeguarding Lead supports case management, policy development, training and audit activity alongside programme staff and volunteers.

Financial review

The draft receipts and payments accounts show a substantial increase in activity following the charity's transition to full independence. The figures below have been reconciled to the workbook supplied for the year ended 31 May 2026; they replace the provisional figures in the original narrative draft.

£192,459 total receipts	£121,978 total payments	£70,481 surplus for the year
£71,420 unrestricted receipts	£121,039 restricted receipts	£79,454 cash / bank balances at year end

Fund position

Fund	Receipts	Payments	Surplus
Unrestricted	£71,420	£46,836	£24,583
Restricted	£121,039	£75,142	£45,897
Total	£192,459	£121,978	£70,481

Compared with the prior period total receipts of £28,822, the draft accounts show receipts increased by approximately 6.7 times. Direct charitable activity accounted for the payments recorded in the main receipts and payments statement.

FUNDED PROGRAMMES

How restricted funding supported delivery

The draft accounts identify restricted grant income from a number of funders. These funds are held and used for the purposes for which they were awarded.

Restricted fund	Receipts	Payments	Year movement
Agnes Hunter	£7,500	£7,500	£0
Bank of Scotland Foundation	£10,500	£9,598	£902
East Lothian Council	£24,697	£7,009	£17,688
Scottish FA	£18,717	£18,428	£289
Young Start	£59,625	£32,606	£27,019

At the year end, the draft statement of balances shows £28,049 in unrestricted cash funds and £51,404 in restricted cash funds, giving total cash and bank balances of approximately £79,454.

Reserves policy - information to confirm

The Trustees' Annual Report should state the trustees' reserves policy: the level of reserves held, why they are held, and the amount/purpose of any designated funds. This information was not contained in the material supplied, so it has not been invented here.

Looking ahead

1 Expand regional hubs towards 16 locations	2 Launch and develop an adult recreational pathway	3 Develop national coach education around neurodiversity
4 Continue strengthening safeguarding infrastructure	5 Grow partnerships with community football clubs	6 Increase competitive opportunities across age groups
7 Enhance family support and wellbeing initiatives	8 Develop national guidance on autism-inclusive football	9 Diversify funding streams and strengthen long-term sustainability

Long-term ambition

To ensure every autistic person in Scotland has access to safe, inclusive and meaningful football opportunities - regardless of ability, background or location.

As we move towards our 10th anniversary in 2027, we will continue to build football environments where Neurodivergent people can belong, grow and thrive.

Trustees' Annual Report - governance information

Trustees

The Scottish Charity Register currently lists the following trustees: Gillian Pyper, Lorraine Mackenzie, Ann Brown and Timothy Davidson.

Governing document and structure

Autism Football Association is constituted as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Its constitution sets out the charity's purposes and governance arrangements. The Board of Trustees provides strategic oversight of the charity.

Trustee recruitment and appointment

Trustees are recruited and appointed in line with our constitution. New trustees are identified through open expressions of interest, recommendations from existing trustees, or targeted recruitment where specific skills are needed. All prospective trustees are invited to meet with the Chair and Safeguarding Lead to discuss the role, responsibilities and expectations. Appointments are formally approved by the Board in accordance with the constitution. No external organisation has the right to appoint trustees, and all appointments are made solely by the charity's Board.

Donated facilities and services

The charity did not receive any material donated facilities or donated services during the reporting period.



Belong • Grow • Thrive

Using football to create inclusive opportunities for neurodivergent people across Scotland.