



Science in the Service of Autism

Autistica appoints Christine Swabey as new Chief Executive

Autistica, the UK's largest autism medical research charity, is delighted to announce the appointment of Christine Swabey as its new Chief Executive with effect from October 1st 2010. Christine will succeed Hilary Gilfoy, who has held the post for five years, and is reducing her workload for health reasons.

Christine Swabey has enjoyed a highly successful career in both the private and public sectors. After leaving university she held director-level roles in the financial sector before taking on a portfolio of non-executive posts in the public sector. She is particularly well-qualified to take Autistica forward, having had previous experience as a trustee of TreeHouse, the national charity for autism education, as well as having had extensive experience of the healthcare sector, including eight years as Chair of Kingston Hospital NHS Trust.

Having successfully built the charity from a standing start in 2005 to its present position as the leading UK charity funder of autism research, Hilary Gilfoy will continue to support Autistica over the nine months from October 1st 2010 as a part-time consultant, completing several major projects with which she has been closely involved.

Autistica Chair of Trustees Winston Fletcher CBE says: "We have been doubly fortunate in finding Christine Swabey to take over from Hilary Gilfoy. Hilary has given the charity a marvellous start, and Christine will build upon these strong foundations at an exciting and hugely important time in the history of autism science – a time when research is within sight of bringing real benefits to those with autism and their families."

Christine Swabey says: "I am delighted to be joining Autistica at such an important time in the development of the charity and the evolution of the science of autism. Understanding the true nature of autism is vital to developing more effective intervention and improving the services available to support the individuals and families affected by this range of disorders. I am looking forward to working with others in the autism community and with our supporters to ensure that we continue to fund ground breaking research which will lead to tangible benefits for people with autism."

Hilary Gilfoy says: "We have come a long way in our first five years and are thrilled to see that results from the research we have funded are already adding greatly to our knowledge of autism. The task now is to move more quickly to convert this knowledge into real benefits for those with autism and their families. I am delighted to be handing on the baton to Christine, who has exactly the right skills and experience to do this. I am also pleased that I am able to continue to use the knowledge I have built up over the years to support the charity's activities in the immediate future."