



Creating brighter futures throughout Norfolk...

Organisational Strategy

2020-24 – ‘A Brighter Future’

Welcome

Future Projects has a proud history of working with people in extremely challenging and complex situations. Our services have literally saved lives and provided a safety net for families and individuals throughout Norfolk that would otherwise have been cut adrift and further excluded from society.

The last few years have perhaps been the most important in the charity's recent history as the unprecedented scale of the challenges facing our society have become clear. For many of the people we support the future is uncertain and frightening as poverty and deprivation continue to worsen, resulting in severe hardship. We are committed addressing these issues as we look forward to the next stage in the charity's journey through this new four-year strategy.

Who we are

Future Projects is a registered charity which was founded in 2000 by two volunteers who had become increasingly frustrated at the social exclusion, poverty, and lack of support available in their local community.

At the heart of this work was a desire to build on the strengths and assets which already exist in communities so that people could live independently without the ongoing need for support. Our founders focused their efforts specifically on people and communities most in need; those experiencing poverty, deprivation, isolation, and marginalisation. They developed services and support programmes to address these issues in creative and community-based ways.

Vision

Our vision is of vibrant and strong communities where everybody can live independent, safe and happy lives.

Mission

Our Mission is to unlock the potential of communities experiencing hardship and deprivation by delivering high quality services and support which enable lasting change

Values

Organisational Values are the defining culture or guiding beliefs of an organisation – how we go about our mission. It is important that we practice what we preach, so you can expect to see these values demonstrated in everything we do:

- **Responsible:** We act responsibly and hold ourselves to the highest standards in everything we do
- **Dedicated:** We are relentlessly dedicated to our mission, care deeply for our work and our beneficiaries, and do not give up
- **Ambitious:** We are demanding of ourselves and others; we set ambitious goals which push us and our beneficiaries to achieve more
- **Listening:** We build meaningful relationships with the communities we serve and others by listening, understanding, and working together
- **Empowering:** We are committed to empowering people to make sustainable change happen
- **Creative:** We are open to new ideas, embrace change, take considered risks, and seek creative ways of finding solutions to society's problems

What we do

Our work spans several themes, bringing personalised support in areas such as:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Housing and homelessness
- Welfare Rights and Benefits
- Debt and Money Advice
- Criminal Justice & Offender Support
- Family Support
- Therapeutic Education
- Volunteering
- Employment Support
- Training & Skills
- Tackling Loneliness and Social Isolation
- Community Development

These are broadly brought together under three strands:



1. **Future Education:** A specialist independent school which engages children with complex needs in learning, inspiring them to achieve and nurturing them to become successful adults.
2. **Future Radio:** A radio station which engages the community, builds skills and provides opportunities through great music, conversation and people.
3. **Future Support:** A collection of specialist support services which help those most in need through hands-on support, advice and advocacy.

How we operate

We are acutely aware of our responsibilities and aim to communicate clearly what our stakeholders can expect from us.

Service users can expect:

- to be valued and treated with dignity and care at all times by impartial, professional and welcoming staff
- to receive high quality, flexible help which exceeds expectations and achieves the best possible outcomes for them
- help that is delivered where and when it is needed, and in a way that is most appropriate to each individual
- to be gently challenged to take ownership of their issues and to develop the skills, knowledge and capacity to live independent of long-term support
- to have their voice heard and acted upon, and to be active partners in moving forward in their lives

Partner organisations, funders and commissioners can expect:

- a creative, flexible and unique approach to delivering services which provides real change for those in need
- strong governance and management arrangements which ensure good performance and value for money
- a secure and sustainable charity which manages risk and operates safely
- a forward-looking charity which has a clear and ambitious vision for the future
- a transparent partner which is keen to work with others to add value to our work
- a champion of the voluntary and community sector and a vocal advocate for the people and communities we serve

Looking back

It is important that we look back at our progress and achievements in recent years and use this to inform our plans for the future.

In recent years Future Projects has grown to deliver projects and services in more locations to more people in need. We now work with thousands of people each year in Norwich, Great Yarmouth, North Norfolk, and South Norfolk and on an outreach basis across the county.

We have developed new work in areas such as homelessness, social prescribing, social isolation, employment support and inclusive growth. We have significantly grown our work in community support and education having focused our efforts on services which provide maximum benefit to those most in need but also contribute clearly to the health of the charity.

We have funded this growth by securing larger, longer term contracts, and have all-but phased out the reliance on grant funds. In recent years, we have almost tripled our annual turnover to c£2m and stabilised the charity's financial model, returning to sustainability and providing opportunity to reinvest in premises, equipment and staff.

This meant increasing our staff team from 35 to over 60 employees, adding greater skills and expertise to the organisation, as well as opening new high-profile venues directly in the communities we serve which provide better access to help and support.

We have also improved the quality of our work by investing in specialist therapeutic and educational skills across our team, by developing our management systems, and by making better use of data and monitoring to improve our practice and impact. Our services have fully embraced emergent practices such as Trauma informed Care, Psychologically Informed Environments, MEAM and the Secure Base model, and in doing so we have developed strong partnerships with like-minded organisations and have grown our reputation for quality and impact.

How we developed this strategy

We listened to many voices when preparing this strategy. We heard directly from the people using our services; we asked them what they valued about our work, how and why we are different to others and what they would like to see us focus on in the future. We worked closely with colleagues from other organisations – charities, social enterprises, local authorities, commissioners, and so on. We discussed how, together, we could make a bigger difference for people experiencing hardship and deprivation. We consulted with our staff and volunteers to find out how they felt we were doing and what we could do to make Future Projects better for them. We undertook assessments of our own impact and performance using planning tools such as the dual bottom line analysis and Ansoff matrix and we reviewed our own performance in the context of both our client needs and situations, and the wider environment locally, regionally, and nationally. We considered the socio-political climate, the commissioning and funding and organisational strategies of key agencies, impact reports, research documents, need analyses, and more.

We brought together all of this information and knowledge to identify the best approach to achieving our vision and strategic intent over the next four years through this strategy.

How it all works

This strategy is focused on how we as an organisation can continue to develop and improve for the benefit of our service users. We have a very clear process for breaking down our long term aims into manageable actions, so we can track our progress and stay on course. Our every activity can therefore be traced back to our over-arching vision.



Our Strategic Intent

By 2024 we want to be well known as a leading charity in Norfolk which delivers first class services which are resilient, effective, sustainable and deliver the best possible outcomes for people in need.

Strategic Priorities & Goals

To achieve our strategic intent over the period we have identified four key priorities, and for each of these a series of achievable goals.

Strategic Priority 1:

Consolidate recent growth and ensure the charity operates sustainably

- **Goal 1:** Sustain or grow current levels of service delivery across Norfolk
- **Goal 2:** implement consistent project management and reporting systems, making use of data and metrics to monitor performance and evidence impact
- **Goal 3:** Invest in equipment and facilities to improve efficiency and to anchor our work within communities
- **Goal 4:** Strengthen HR and internal staff management systems in order to retain key staff and maintain consistency across services
- **Goal 5:** Strengthen the charity's governance and management arrangements to improve accountability and drive up standards

Strategic Priority 2:

Improve the quality, effectiveness and impact of services

- **Goal 1:** reinvest in workforce development at all levels to better meet the needs of the charity and its beneficiaries
- **Goal 2:** Continue to work closely with stakeholders to design, deliver and evaluate our services
- **Goal 3:** Meet external quality assurance standards and achieve quality mark recognition
- **Goal 4:** Adopt innovative, evidence based practice throughout our work
- **Goal 5:** Empower well trained, well managed volunteers to support our work

Strategic Priority 3:

Improve financial strength and resilience

- **Goal 1:** Maintain current levels of income, carefully manage expenditure, and ensure that services have adequate financial resources to operate sustainably
- **Goal 2:** Achieve Free Cash Reserve Targets to mitigate risks to the charity and provide opportunity for reinvestment
- **Goal 3:** Strengthen financial management and reporting systems, making better use of up to date financial information to plan ahead
- **Goal 4:** Continue to spread financial risk by diversifying income streams and focusing on longer term, higher value funds/contracts
- **Goal 5:** Invest in strategically important services which provide long term viability

Strategic Priority 4:

Develop the charity's profile and role as a leader within the sector

- **Goal 1:** Invest in marketing and communications functions, and develop a strategy to promote the charity to stakeholders
- **Goal 2:** Redefine and re-establish the charity's identity and purpose amongst influencers and decision makers
- **Goal 3:** Develop strategic roles within VCSE consortia, partnerships, boards, committees and leadership groups
- **Goal 4:** Continue to build strong partnerships across Norfolk and adopt leading roles in strategically important projects or services as they arise
- **Goal 5:** Consistently measure our impact to understand how and why we make a difference, and sharing our success widely