Strategic Plan

2023-2027

People Know How
Unlocking Your Ideas

Welcome

We're delighted to present our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan this year, marking 10 years since our foundation in 2013. Over the last decade we have continually evolved to meet the needs of those we support, developing our services, growing our team and building partnerships across the country.
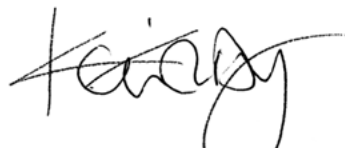
We published our last strategic plan as we emerged from the height of the pandemic, a time in which we had grown significantly to meet the needs of communities. In 2020, as a result of the pandemic, People Know How was able to transform almost overnight to continue supporting thousands of children, young people, adults and families. As such, the strategy focused on social innovation, the tool through which we develop and run our services which had allowed us to adapt so efficiently. We use the term social innovation to describe making best use of people's experiences, thinking, and ideas in testing out solutions to everyday issues that affect people and their communities.

In reviewing our strategy this year, our Board of Trustees and Leadership Team gathered to reflect on our growth, looking to pinpoint the essence of People Know How. This strategic plan is the result of these conversations, situating social innovation as an essential and unique tool in our work and ensuring we continue to place a key emphasis on the people, because we really do believe that people know how. That work, as all of our work, continues to engage with and listen to the voice of the people and communities we support, our stakeholders, partners and supporters.

With the cost-of-living crisis following a pandemic, the need for our services remains high. Through social innovation, we continually develop and deliver our services to address this need, supporting children, young people and families in the transition to secondary school, and adults and families to improve wellbeing by increasing digital and social inclusion. But we don't stop there. Through cross-sector collaboration, research and campaigning we aim to influence government policy and act as a catalyst for systems change and improved practice across Scotland.

Glenn Liddall
Chief Executive & Founder

Keith Dyer
Chair of the Board of Trustees

About

We run services and campaigns in Scotland that place people at the centre, making their voices heard to improve their wellbeing, overcome barriers and solve social issues. We do this through collaboration with charities, universities, businesses, government and various other bodies.

People Know How is a Scottish charity that aims to improve wellbeing across communities by supporting people to overcome barriers and thrive.

We deliver services locally in Edinburgh and the Lothians, and engage in research and campaigning to effect change on a national scale. We also provide a national digital support helpline.

Our work supports all parts of the community including children, young people, families and adults. Our services recognise the varied and intersectional experiences and needs of each individual. This is why we take a hybrid approach to our service delivery, combining a holistic model with tailor-made support while also making use of partnerships to signpost to other appropriate interventions in addition to our own service offerings.

These partnerships play a key role in placing the voices of those we support at the centre of our work to effect social change. By collaborating across the four sectors (third, public, business and academic) we are not only able to work together to deliver local support, but also engage in research, and campaign for policy change nationally.

In our ten years, we have formed a People Know How community made up of staff, trustees, volunteers, interns, placement students, the people we support and stakeholders across the sectors. We're committed to inclusion and value the diverse experiences of every member of this community.

Social innovation model

All of our work is formed and developed using our social innovation model. We ask, evidence, do, share, and repeat. We then use our learning to effect change on a national scale through research, campaigning and influencing.

Ask

We begin projects by asking people to share ideas, needs, strengths and assets. We believe people know how to identify their needs and the solutions to help them to fulfil their potential and solve social issues.

Evidence

We review literature and best practice, collaborate to inform people's ideas and ensure an evidence base before proceeding with a project. We never duplicate existing services and offer truly unique solutions.

Do

We run projects and deliver activities, putting ideas into practice, testing, and refining as we progress. A robust framework of monitoring and evaluation is built into our projects, constantly gathering data to assess our progress and performance.

Share

We share the approaches and impact of our work to recognise and celebrate the positive outcomes whilst identifying where improvements can be made. We then ask people for feedback on what we have shared, thus creating a cycle which drives continuous improvement.

Research

In collaboration with academic institutions, private enterprise, third and public sector partners and government, we initiate research to test innovative solutions to entrenched social problems. This ranges from multiyear longitudinal studies to nationwide mass participation, all the way to small locality-based surveys.

We are currently running two PhD research projects with the University of Edinburgh, one on positive school transitions and the other on digital inclusion.

Campaign & influence

We design and run nationwide campaigns that aim to influence government policy, enhancing community development and acting as a catalyst for systems change across Scotland. We are currently campaigning to end data poverty through Connectivity Now.

Mission, vision, values

Our mission is to support people to overcome barriers so that their wellbeing can be improved, effecting positive change at its root.

Our vision is for those who need support to be heard by decision makers and placed at the centre of solving social issues.

We aim to achieve our mission and vision through social innovation, a tool we use to identify barriers and develop solutions towards systems change. Our social innovation model shows how our services and campaigns keep the voices of those we support at the centre, from community-level consultation, research and delivery to campaigning and influencing to create change across Scotland.

Our values as an organisation are to be:

People-centred & people-led

We place people at the centre of our work. The people and communities we support, our volunteers, interns, placement students (VIPs), staff and trustees all inform and shape our services and campaigns to solve social issues.

Collaborative

We recognise the power of collaboration in achieving our aims, collaborating across the third, public, academic and business sectors. Through our events, we bring these sectors together to identify solutions to social issues.

Inclusive

We support and embrace everyone who provides and receives our support, cultivating an inclusive, diverse and welcoming culture for all. We equip our team with the knowledge and tools to support all parts of the community, recognising the intersectionality of identities and experiences of those who use our services.

Innovative

Our services and campaigns are continually reviewed through our cyclical social innovation model, ensuring they match the current needs of communities and creating space for innovation at all stages of our work.

Action-orientated

We get things done. Building on a foundation of listening and research, we create services, conduct research and influence policies that directly address the needs of those we support.

Strategic aims

To provide spaces for people to gather, collaborate, exchange ideas and improve wellbeing, both in person and remotely.

Where we are

By placing people at the centre of our work we aim to create spaces where their voices can be heard. These can be physical or virtual spaces in the form of online events, networks, our helpline, newsletters or resource hubs.

All Aboard

We have managed a variety of physical spaces, cultivating creative, innovative communities. We own the All Aboard canal boat with Polwarth Church. It is open to the community and is a safe space to explore the canal, find new experiences and socialise while surrounded by nature. The boat is run by volunteers and hosts trips for groups, organisations and those we support through our core services.

Service delivery

We also create safe spaces through our core services. Our Positive Transitions team works in schools, supporting children and young people in the transition to secondary school through one-to-one and group support including youth work, family support through social work, arts therapies and befriending.

Similarly, our Reconnect team delivers digital groups across communities. Our partners provide spaces in the community for us to create an environment in which to increase social and digital inclusion.

Also part of Reconnect, our national Connecting Scotland Digital Support Helpline is a virtual space that people all over Scotland can call to receive digital and social inclusion support.

Social innovation in action: events

People Know How hosts events on a range of themes, bringing together key voices from across the four sectors to share learning and collaborate towards social innovation. Whether in person or online, these spaces provide opportunities to exchange ideas. We believe collaborating across the four sectors (third, public, business, academic) can inform systems change by facilitating communication among groups that may not usually interact – this is social innovation in action.

Where we want to get to

Spaces have always played a part in our work and this new strategic aim recognises their importance. Moving forward we will:

- Continue to offer trips on All Aboard, cultivating collaboration with organisations from across sectors

- Create spaces in existing and new schools and clusters across Edinburgh and the Lothians, as we expand into Midlothian and beyond

- Create new digital groups in more communities across Edinburgh and the Lothians

- Expand our helpline to reach more areas in Scotland through partnership with community-based and UK-wide digital organisations

- Deliver a programme of events that brings together the four sectors, tying together our local and national work and cultivating our networks

To improve digital inclusion in Scotland by providing support and campaigning for everyone to have access to digital skills, affordable data and devices, to safely communicate, connect and engage with opportunities.

Where we are

Digital inclusion has been embedded in our work since 2016 when our Reconnect service was founded on the principle that social and digital inclusion are intrinsically linked. Since then, the service has grown, particularly through the pandemic, as digital exclusion has gained increased recognition as a key obstacle to combatting poverty and improving wellbeing.

Service delivery

Reconnect offers support to adults and families in Edinburgh and the Lothians to help them improve wellbeing by increasing digital and social inclusion.

We do this through the delivery of digital groups with partner organisations across Edinburgh and the Lothians, providing opportunities to learn about technology, feel supported, meet up with others, and feel more included in the community. As well as this we operate Connecting Scotland's national helpline, providing over the phone support to use digital devices and decrease social isolation.

We believe that digital inclusion and social inclusion are linked and together contribute to enhanced wellbeing. By providing a supportive environment to reduce social isolation, those we support can build digital skills, maintain connections, improve financial health, increase employability, access resources and more.

Reconnect also supports adults recovering from addiction to become digitally included. Scotland has the highest drug-death rate in Europe. Increasing digital inclusion creates opportunities including finding recovery groups, discovering useful tools and apps, tracking housing applications, applying for Universal Credit, keeping in touch with family or rediscovering hobbies online.

We are a UK Network Ambassador with Good Things Foundation, delivering training across the UK.

Campaigning

By analysing our learnings from delivering Reconnect in local communities and exchanging knowledge with organisations across Scotland, we identified connectivity as the biggest obstacle to digital inclusion. To combat this we established Connectivity Now, a campaign to end data poverty and achieve accessible and affordable connectivity across Scotland.

The campaign has led to the cultivation of a network of digital-focused organisations across the UK. We have spoken, presented, and sat on panels in numerous events and conferences, sharing our campaign manifesto and key findings. We also frequently engage in research with our partners and sit on the UK's Data Poverty All Party Parliamentary Group.

Research

We have partnered with the University of Edinburgh on a multi-disciplinary participatory research project on digital inclusion. Using our learning from Reconnect, the project will evaluate and reflect on steps that can be taken to combat digital exclusion, with the aim of influencing and improving digital inclusion across Scotland, exploring intersecting issues such as class, ethnicity, gender, culture and disability, and informing our campaigning work and government policy.

Where we want to get to

Reconnect has made significant strides in the last few years, particularly due to our key partnerships. Moving forward we will:

- Grow our digital partnerships network, cultivating a community of key voices and organisations in combatting digital exclusion and data poverty both locally and nationally

- Create new partnerships with community-based organisations to provide digital groups in more communities across Edinburgh and the Lothians

- Continue to deliver training to organisations across Scotland and the UK

- Relaunch the Digital Support Helpline to support even more communities across Scotland through collaboration with the Scottish Government, SCVO and Good Things Foundation's National Digital Inclusion Network

- Progress our action-research project with the University of Edinburgh

- Engage in further research around digital inclusion to inform our work

- Take the next steps in our Connectivity Now campaign to end data poverty

- Engage with local government towards embedding digital inclusion in strategies and policies

To improve school transitions for all children and young people across Scotland by providing support and campaigning for children, young people and families to have access to the support they need in the transition from primary to secondary school.

Where we are

Service delivery

Positive Transitions supports children, young people and their families in the transition from primary and secondary school across Edinburgh and the Lothians. The service is designed to support them to feel valued and understood, improve their self-esteem and peer relationships, and enable them to fulfil their potential.

The service spans across a wide range of interventions that offer support both on a one-to-one basis and through group projects. We provide holistic support and youth and family work that aims to support not just children and young people, but also their parents, carers and families. We do this by working directly with schools, teachers, families and other agencies to identify and offer the most suitable and appropriate support, as well as collaborating with social work and arts therapies programmes in universities across Scotland.

Working in over 50 schools in Edinburgh and the Lothians, the service continues to grow year on year in response to demand. Since 2015, we've supported over 3,000 young people, evidencing that the need for a positive transition remains highly important.

Research

We have partnered with the University of Edinburgh on a multi-disciplinary participatory research project on positive school transitions. Using our learning from delivering Positive Transitions, the project will evaluate and reflect on what makes a positive transition, with the aim of creating a model of practice that can influence and improve pupil transitions into secondary school across the country. Findings will also enhance theories on school transition and explore intersecting issues such as class, ethnicity, gender, culture and disability, to ensure any practice model meets the needs of all children and their families.

Where we want to get to

Positive Transitions continues to provide a unique service in Scotland by placing a focus on school transitions. Moving forward we will:

- Grow our partnerships network around transitions work, cultivating a community of key voices and organisations in improving school transitions both locally and nationally

- Progress our research project with the University of Edinburgh

- Continue and expand on our transitions advisory group bringing together external professionals and school staff

- Engage in further research around school transitions to inform our work

- Continue to cultivate our relationships with schools, facilitating communication between families, children and the school itself

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