

Strategic Plan

2023 - 2026



Toynbee Hall

About us

Based in the East End of London since 1884, Toynbee Hall is a charity working alongside people facing poverty, injustice, and inequality to build a fairer East London.

We provide vital advice and support, working in partnership to tackle unfairness and ensure everyone has an equal chance to thrive.



“I find much to justify hope that if not in our time, in some time, the forces at work will make a happier and better East London.”

Samuel Barnett, Co-Founder of Toynbee Hall

1. Introduction

When Toynbee Hall first opened its doors in 1884, the need for help and support in the area outside those doors was greater than almost anywhere else in the UK. 140 years later, and the community in which we work remains one of the most unequal in the UK, with 51% of children in Tower Hamlets living in poverty¹. This is amidst increasing levels of destitution across the UK, with 3.8 million people experiencing destitution in 2022, including around one million children².

Facing these facts can generate a sense of despair and of outrage. But it can also galvanize action and commitment to make change happen. The Toynbee Hall story is one of pioneering new solutions to poverty and injustice, from developing adult education and free legal advice in the 1880s to innovating on debt advice and financial inclusion in the 1990s. Over our history, we have combined research with service development and with campaigning. We know that change is possible.

This strategy is an evolution of our work over the last few years and a recognition of the challenges we and other charities face. It draws from consultation and discussion, as well as the thinking of current and previous colleagues. It also involves the ideas of some of the people who use our services and our peer researchers.

This is the time for new solutions. However, the solutions we seek for today and tomorrow cannot be developed by Toynbee Hall alone. Instead, they must be built in collaboration with other organisations, and with those who have lived experience of the issues. They must also have a recognition of the disproportionate impact of poverty and injustice on minority communities, women, carers and people with disabilities.

1.1 Some key terms and definitions

We have tried to write this strategy in a way that is accessible. However, we realise some phrases might need to be explained.

- Lived Experience – knowledge or expertise about a particular subject through personal experiences rather than through formal education or professional training.
- Experts by Experience – people who have gained valuable insights and understanding through directly dealing with a specific condition, situation, or life circumstance.
- Peer Research – a research approach where individuals with lived experience related to the research subject matter takes on the role of researchers or research collaborators.
- Participatory Action Research (PAR) – a style of peer research that involves professional researchers and people with lived experience of an issue (peer researchers) working as equal partners. A core aspect is to ensure those with lived experience are able to shape research, to focus on what is important to them and those around them. Another aspect of PAR is to work with stakeholders to implement solutions.
- Co-production – draws from the belief that people who are affected by something have a right to have a meaningful say in it. Service providers work together as equal partners with service users and the broader community to design, deliver, and assess services, with the aim of making them more effective, efficient, and responsive to the needs of the community.

¹ Trust for London, London's Poverty Profile

² Destitution in the UK 2023 – Suzanne Fitzpatrick, Glen Bramley, Morag Treanor, Janice Blenkinsopp, Jill McIntyre, Sarah Johnsen, and Lynne McMordie. Published by JRF 2023

2. How we developed the strategic plan

The development of this strategic plan began with consultations with colleagues, the local community and peer researchers in 2021 and 2022. To check in with the findings from this work, we held an all-staff meeting involving over 50 colleagues and ran a workshop with peer researchers and community members.

From these discussions, the questions and comments that came up most often were:

- To what extent should our vision be measurable? How can we ensure it represents the world we want to see in the future i.e. what it would look like if our work was done?
- We should retain the sense we work in partnership with communities and use that learning for systemic change and ensuring that we are a place where people feel belonging / valued and ownership.
- Our current values don't reflect our organisation - they should be more person-centred, with connection to our vision and mission.
- Where does combatting 'poverty' fit into the strategy? Is the term deficit-based and paternalistic, or is it reflected in what we see around us, part of Toynbee Hall's history and ongoing work?
- We should be delivering more activities for the local community - colleagues wanted to see youth programmes, a response to homelessness and insecure housing, and access to good work e.g. through apprenticeships or placements.
- We should be influencing more - taking our findings from peer research and co-developed solutions further, to go from participant research to campaigning for social change.
- We need to communicate externally more about our work - not enough people know what we are doing.
- We need to work alongside others - including local organisations; amplifying their voices and collaborating more, rather than working in isolation.

Finally, we asked our Trustees what they wanted to take with us into the future and what they thought we should leave behind.

Taking with us	Leaving behind
Purpose	Lack of a single vision that ties the organisation together
Governance	Strategic decisions taking a long time and then not being implemented
Our people	Working in silos
Our partnerships and relationships	Being reactive in our relationships and funding
Our history, while acknowledging that this is a very different time	Lack of focus on impact
The opportunities we have embraced in the use of technology and hybrid working	Not setting out a clear agenda and communicating it
	A sense of fatigue from challenges faced due to external/internal factors.

3. Vision, Mission and Values

Based on discussions across the organisation, we have decided to update our Vision and Values and clearly set out our Mission.

Our vision is of a fairer future with an end to poverty, injustice and inequality.

Our Mission - We work towards our vision by:

- Addressing poverty and injustice through advice and support and influencing systemic change.
- Shifting power to people and communities affected by injustice and inequality.
- Collaborating to end poverty and build fairer systems and institutions.
- What we want to see in the world starts with our community and our organisation.

This means:

- Working together to build a thriving local community where people have the resources they need, feel their voices are heard and are optimistic about the future.
- Being a good employer, where people are treated fairly, feel engaged and empowered, and work together to achieve our shared vision.
- Acknowledging the role Toynbee Hall has played in civic society while recognising that our role now is to shift power, to be an effective partner, and to amplify voices that are less likely to be heard.

Our values are to be:



Inclusive

Open-minded, transparent, convening and collaborative;
seeking fresh and alternate perspectives



Courageous

principled, ambitious and acting with integrity.



Empowering

shifting power, sharing our knowledge, enabling
people to take action for themselves.

4. Our strategic ambitions

Between now and the end of 2026 our ambitions are to:

1. Improve economic security for those affected by poverty, debt, low pay, insecure employment and housing. We will do this through direct support and through work to bring about system change.



2. Help our local community thrive – increasing emotional wellbeing, optimism, economic security in key groups. We will also focus on how we come together despite differences and celebrating the strengths and history of the community.



3. Collaborate to drive social change in a way that gives a platform to the ideas and solutions of people with lived experience.



4. Ensure that addressing systemic inequality and racial discrimination is a priority across our work and our organisation.

The way we deliver these ambitions will reflect our mission and values.

5. Our programmes and approach

We seek to address poverty, injustice and inequality in a way that is collaborative, shifts power and co-produces solutions with those who have lived experience of the issues.

5.1 Our current programmes

Advice

- Our advice offer includes direct delivery based at our Toynbee Hall Advice Hub in Tower Hamlets where we offer free, impartial debt advice (as part of Debt Free Advice), advice and support on completing applications for Personal Independence Payments, Attendance Allowance and Disability Living Allowance for people living in Tower Hamlets, advice to those who live, study and work in the City of London on issues such as debt, housing, welfare benefits, employment, consumer rights, family issues.
- We also deliver debt advice as part of Debt Free Advice (DFA) at sites in Barking and Greenwich.
- Our free legal advice clinic (FLAC) has been running for 125 years. Currently we provide free legal advice on housing, employment and consumer rights issues from the Toynbee Hall Advice Hub – many of those who use the service are from Tower Hamlets, but we also support people across London.
- We provide free welfare benefits advice to people who have a diagnosis of cancer living in Tower Hamlets, City, Hackney or Newham.
- Debt Free Advice (DFA) operates across London and Toynbee Hall leads the coalition of 15 organisations to deliver the Money and Pensions Service funded programme.



Community

- The Community Centre has a full schedule of free and inclusive social, physical and learning based activities as well as regular celebrations and events.
- Our centre is one of five 'hubs' across Tower Hamlets working with older people to improve their wellbeing and increase their social networks and tackle isolation through the Linkage Plus programme. We are also the lead partner and support the delivery of the programme.
- The play programme provides opportunities for children to play outdoors. We make connections to nature for children living in a highly urban environment, supporting their development. The programme works alongside local schools.
- In partnership with Tower Hamlets Council, and other local art and culture partners we are offering a programme of community-led cultural activities and events to celebrate the People's History of Petticoat Lane.



Research, social change and involvement

- Emotional Support for Young People is a peer action research project funded by the Health Foundation investigating the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on young people, their family relationships and emotional support needs.
- Knowledge Exchange Circle, a project we ran during 2023 and hope to continue, brings policy makers, people with lived experience, charities and other organisations together to share experiences with the aim of building understanding and connections to help inform solutions to systemic problems.
- We want to help people have more control of the situations they are in. Our money coaching programme supports people to understand and take control of their finances and our legal advice packs help people know their rights.

The diagram shows how our current programme contributes to the delivery of our mission.

Addressing poverty and injustice			
Debt Free Advice hubs, Legal advice, general and welfare rights advice	Community services – work with older people and Play programme	Peer research	Shaping policy and systems (Knowledge Exchange Circle)

Shifting power to people and communities affected by injustice and inequality			
Experts by Experience shaping policy and systems (Knowledge Exchange Circle)	Legal advice packs	Money Coaches	Peer researchers carrying out inquiries into issues they are affected by (Emotional Wellbeing for Young People research)

Collaborating to end poverty and build fairer systems and institutions		
Debt Free Advice Partnership	Peer researchers carrying out inquiries into issues they are affected by (Emotional Support for Young People research)	Participatory action research / Experts by experience shaping policy and systems (Knowledge Exchange Circle)

Collaborating to build a thriving local community			
Community services – work with older people and Play	Heritage Action Zone project to promote the People’s History of Petticoat Lane	Participatory action research / (Emotional Support for Young People research)	Commitment to local suppliers in our events business

We lead coalitions of charities to deliver services – ensuring that a wide range of organisations can be part of delivering commissioned services for local authorities or public bodies.

Our community services are planned and delivered with those who use them. In our commissioned services, we work with peer advocates and evaluators so we can gain input to improve and plan future delivery.

We seek to support the local economy through our venue hire business, with, for example, 80% of our catering expenditure going to local businesses, and through seeking to employ people who live in the local area.; as of 01/04/2023, a quarter of our staff lived in Tower Hamlets.

Our research is developed by people with lived experience of the issues. We then bring together decision makers and those with lived experience to develop solutions collaboratively. It is these ideas and recommendations we then share to influence change.

We believe our approach leads to fairer systems and policy, and more engaged people who are confident their voices will be heard. More engaged people help shape thriving communities.

5.2 Developing our programmes

We know that our programmes will change and develop over the life of the strategic plan.

We are particularly interested in exploring how we can develop programmes with young people using the findings of our peer action research project looking at the emotional support for young people. The research is due to be disseminated in early 2024 and the process of developing recommendations based on the findings will be led by our PAR researchers and will be collaborative. We are mapping other local provisions as part of this research to enable us to identify opportunities to collaborate and partner as well as to explore programmes Toynee Hall could lead.

We want to further develop our free legal advice service and recognize that across all our advice services there are opportunities to innovate and develop different ways of working to ensure that we reach those needing free, impartial advice.

Our community centre and its programme are another area that we want to develop further – working in partnership with other organisations or enabling them to operate from our space when that is more appropriate. We think there is a need to look at access to play provision across our local area, and work alongside families to raise the importance of play to child development.

Looking ahead, we know that collaboration and using the insights gained from our direct service delivery will be important to our approach to research, policy and social change. Our staff team, community members, and peer researchers all told us they want to see us taking our research findings into social change.

5.3 Geography

Our starting point is that we are a place-based organisation. Our ‘place’ is the East End of London, by which we mean Tower Hamlets and in particular the area around Commercial Street and Aldgate and areas in the City of London such as Portsoken ward.

Our ambitions are that the community around us can thrive and is more economically secure. If we are delivering services, planning research, or working towards social change, we always need to

to come back to the question: what will this help to change or make better in the place where we are based?

We are also committed to ongoing support to locally based businesses through our expenditure and continuing our focus on employing people who live in Tower Hamlets.

This does not prevent us from delivering services that have a wider remit or operate across London. We will continue to have hubs in other parts of London and /or have a London-wide or national impact from our research and policy. Those initiatives should also be delivered from and relevant to our place.

This also doesn't necessarily preclude us from delivering services outside London if we either also deliver those services for the local area or can clearly show how doing so helps or is relevant to our place.

Our commitment to the local area should be evident not only in what we deliver ourselves, but in how we engage with other organisations, support their campaigns and activities, and add value to the local community and economy.



6. Our operating context

The external context is highly challenging – the cost-of-living crisis has increased the numbers of people in desperate financial situations, with increasing debts, insufficient income to meet their living costs and facing choices between food, heating, and housing. It has amplified existing inequalities, having greatest impact on black and minority ethnic communities, people with disabilities, low paid workers, and women.

“The people approaching the Debt Free Advice coalition for help managing debts are now managing at least three different types of debt or creditors, more than double the pre-pandemic average. The average debt over £11,000. Almost half (43%) have rent arrears, and we are also seeing high levels of clients with utility bill debts; 4% have water bill arrears, 26% have electricity bill arrears and 17% gas bill arrears.”

This is against a backdrop of reduced public services, high thresholds to be accepted for social care and other support, delays in processing asylum claims, and refugees and migrants struggling to navigate complex and hostile systems. In Tower Hamlets, income inequality is a significant issue despite the borough being a base for many large national and international companies.

Our advice services are busy, and we are increasingly working with people who have nowhere else to turn, or who still will not have money to live on even after we have helped them to address debts or to claim benefits they are entitled to. This can put great pressure on our staff, and their well-being remains an area of focus if we want them to do the best job possible for those who come to us for advice and support.

Our community centre and activities are open to local people, and we have funding to deliver activities for older people and a play programme for children. However, our youth services were affected by a lack of funding and had to stop running. Other services in the area are also having to reduce activity due to changes in funding. This contributes to demand in services that remain and can mean we are working with people with a higher level of vulnerability due to a combination of needs.

The pandemic and remote working, followed by changes in leadership, have meant that we have lost local contacts and relationships. We are not communicating clearly about what we do and are not always reaching either individuals or organisations who we could collaborate with to amplify impact. There are also many grassroots, small organisations who are struggling for resources and voice, and we can do more to share our platform and amplify their voices. Reductions in funding have left us with limited roles to carry out outreach, and we do not currently build a collaboration mindset into roles across the organisation. However, recent delivery of heritage action zone activity in partnership with the local community has taught us a lot, and in our peer research there are countless recommendations about areas we could focus on alongside others to build a community where everyone thrives.

Our approach to people management was reviewed by an external consultant in early 2023. Their report identified a need to have a clear People Strategy that is aligned to our overall strategic plan, as well as reviewing our approach to remuneration and benefits, to well-being, and to training and development. These points are reinforced by feedback from staff about how we can ensure Toynbee Hall is a fair and inclusive place to work.

Like many charities, the organisation is under financial pressure. There is a need to develop a financial plan that enables us to deliver our overall strategy in a way that is more financially resilient and enables us to move to a position where we are replenishing reserves from a small surplus.

We have experienced increased costs across the contracts we enter into to deliver goods and services, as well as the need to make sure we are able to pay colleagues salaries they can live on. However, this comes without the opportunity to increase our prices regularly, though we are negotiating with funders when we can.

We have a good track-record in generating unrestricted income from commercial activity, but this and our fundraising are not keeping pace with our costs. We are not alone in experiencing a competitive fundraising environment, but we have not prioritised diversifying our sources of fundraising income. Restricted funding from Trusts and Foundations often has a focus on new work and one-off projects; this leaves us (and organisations like us) facing challenges in funding core activity like the community centre or our free legal advice centre.

Our largest contracts are due to be re-tendered over the next few years and we would benefit from clear parameters / bidding guidelines and a resource to support us in responding to these (and other) tender opportunities. This is to ensure that we are meeting our strategic priorities in bidding as well as ensuring the financial arrangements do not contribute to further challenges.

We also need to look at how we fund our policy and research activity. There is currently project funding for our research activity – with each project covering some of the team’s time. This approach has enabled us to maintain a research function, develop relationships with funders, and deliver participant research involving high numbers of peer researchers. However, seeking funding in this way has meant we have struggled to prioritise, and we are often unable to support the policy and influencing activity that we would want to go alongside the research. Finally, the limited communications resource we have available has limited the reach of some of our work.

Our activities require a certain level of overhead to manage buildings and finances, properly report to our funders, and support our staff. Reducing overheads is not conducive to innovation, supporting staff well-being, or communicating our impact – although we recognise that an organisation with reduced income due to changes in activities would need to look at the right overhead provision for what it’s purpose and priorities are.



7. Priorities to deliver the strategic plan

We have identified key organisational priorities which will enable us to implement our strategy and milestones and measures to accompany them. These are underpinning elements of our work that need attention over the next three years.

1. Communicate a shared vision and set of values for Toynbee Hall so that everyone knows how their role helps us achieve our vision and we join up our activities and areas of focus.

2. Set out our priorities for influencing social change and build on our participant research approach to influence change in structures, systems, and policies.

3. Grow our engagement with the community around us so that there is greater involvement in Toynbee Hall in a way that promotes inclusion and shifts power.

4. Set out our approach to collaboration, partnership, and learning, so that we can work collaboratively to build a thriving community, understand Toynbee Hall's contribution to that goal, and recognise and respect the strengths and expertise of others.

5. Develop a financial strategy to cover overheads and generate small annual surplus sufficient to replenish our free reserves, without leaving us unable to deliver to charitable purpose.

6. Embed our approach to diversity, inclusion, equity; commit to becoming an anti-racist organisation and ensure we are addressing systemic racism and discrimination across our work and our organisation.

The outline of how we will deliver these priorities is set out as an action plan which is further developed in our annual operational plan and in the objectives set for teams and colleagues each year.

8. Our enablers

These are areas that enable us to deliver our strategy. Across these areas we have key actions to be delivered over the course of the strategic plan.

8.1 Finances

The aim of our financial strategy is that by the end of this strategy we will be able to cover overheads and generate small annual surplus sufficient to replenish our free reserves, without leaving us unable to deliver to our charitable purpose. Ideally, we would be able to fund some of our ongoing charitable operations from unrestricted income, whilst also having efficient but appropriate overheads.

In order to achieve this, there are some short and medium actions needed, alongside work to determine a longer-term position.

We will develop an income strategy which sets out key principles and assumptions:

- Our operating expenses do not exceed our operating income on an ongoing basis;
- We have clear rules on the level of core cost recovery;
- We agree our staffing establishment based on resources required, and any changes to establishment go through a robust approval process;
- We have a target for the level of income to be generated from commercial activity and from other sources;
- We should invest to save, if we are able to identify opportunities where we can utilise reserves to generate a surplus in the medium term.

Our aim is to align our commercial income streams with our charitable objectives where possible, but that does not preclude us from taking on commercial opportunities if the income can contribute to our ability to deliver our charitable objectives.

Our short-term goals involve a review of income sources to ensure we are maximising the opportunities available to us – for example developing a new fundraising strategy that aims to diversify our fundraising income and utilises our connections in the local area to generate partnerships.

We are reviewing systems and processes and seeking efficiencies in how we operate to reduce operating costs without compromising on key areas such as asset value, compliance, and health and safety.

There is also a need to agree clear criteria for future funding opportunities, both from contracts and income from Trusts, so that we can explain our overhead costs and make decisions about funding opportunities based on strategic fit and costs versus sum available. We need to set parameters and identify what resource is required to support the bidding process.

Within the life of this strategic plan, we will develop a medium-term financial strategy which considers the role of our assets and commercial income in securing a more resilient financial position for the organisation.

8.1 People

It is a priority that we develop a People strategy that sets out the strengths of our current culture, what we need to do to improve / develop it, and how we will deliver this. The People strategy should reflect our approach to fairness and equity and contribute to our efforts to move out of silos and collaborate.

It should also show how we plan to enable and support staff through training, development opportunities, and good internal communications.

Key areas of focus will be:

- Staff wellbeing
- Our approach to remuneration and benefits
- Training, development, and progression to enable our people to achieve impact in a way that is aligned to our values and which includes a focus on how we work as well as on technical competence.
- Ensuring colleagues know how they can have their say and how they can feedback or raise concerns, and that colleagues are kept informed about what is happening across the organisation and why.
- Ensuring our approach to People management is a core component of our Equity, diversity, and inclusion strategy, and the work we undertake to become an anti-racist organisation.

8.3 Showing impact, sharing insight and learning

Our peer-led research has been hugely impactful and there have been commitments to action following co-developed recommendations. We record data about our programmes to report to commissioners, and in our advice services we can report financial gains.

However, we are not able to share insight or learning from our programmes and we don't collect overall impact against a set of measures or priorities.

At the moment, we don't set out the change we want to see when we develop programmes in direct services, and in our research the research questions we are exploring are not linked back to an over-arching goal.

We often share the learning from individual pieces of work, but we aren't yet able to join the learning up, share it, and consider what it tells us about our communities. This also makes it difficult to inform service development, policy activity, and influencing.

There is a need for us to think about how we gain feedback from those who have used our services about their experience in a way that makes sense for the nature of the activity. We have developed mechanisms to do this in some areas of our work but believe we can collaborate internally to build more effective methods. This is important to our ability to ensure we are meeting required standards and to continuously learn and improve.

We also want to consider how we develop our approach to learning and insight to help us reach out to communities, to collaborate and explore partnerships.

8.4 Communications

Our approach to communications is under-resourced, and, without changing this, we will find it difficult to build improvements in culture, to reach participants, amplify voices, and make our work more visible with policy makers and potential funders.

As a minimum we need:

- A marketing /communications lead with press expertise so that we can share the findings of our research, advice, and community activities more widely and utilize the media in our influencing plans so that more people hear about our work.
- Improved internal communications to help embed the strategy and our values and by improving access to information supporting our approach to fairness, inclusion, and transparency.
- Greater understanding of our audiences to support proactive planning around the activities we deliver, and the communications needed to reach our audiences.
- Improved website and social media expertise to support our reach, help grow fundraising, and engage with people who are interested in our work in creative ways.
- Support to review our approach to marketing more broadly so that we are maximizing reach and recognition for our organisation across a range of elements, including supporting our income generation activities and reaching people who could use our services or participate in research or other activities.

8.5 Physical assets and infrastructure

As well as the main buildings of the Halls and 28 Commercial Street, we own one additional small flat which is occupied by a tenant. Part of our estate (including the theatre) is occupied by a tenant on a long lease.

Our plan for the estate re-development was to generate income through commercial office space leasing and the events business. While both these areas are performing well post-pandemic, the original intention was to generate a higher proportion of income from additional assets which the redevelopment was not able to be realised.

We recognise that there has been a downturn in the value of commercial lettings due to reduced demand as many organisations down-size to accommodate home-working. We have enquiries about the space due to the favourable location, but the loss of a tenant would affect our income even if we were able to re-let in good time.

The buildings that we own also need to be maintained, and this adds to our cost-base even as they generate income for us – our tenants contribute to the upkeep of 28 Commercial Street through service charges.

In terms of our systems and processes, there are efficiency improvements that we can make. There are complexities in our processes, and some of our systems are not set up as efficiently as they could be.

However, our approach to infrastructure over the course of this strategy is determined by other

decisions that we make. If, in looking at our long-term financial strategy, we make different decisions about our buildings, or the events business or our activities change substantially, then it would change our relationship to the infrastructure we need to deliver our operations.

There is a need for an overarching plan for our physical assets, including an investment strategy specifically related to our property. Over the next year, we will draw together potential options for our existing property, to allow trustees to consider options for a longer-term plan.

9. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

This is a key commitment and a priority for our organisation across the life of this strategic plan and beyond. In 2021, we published the first report into Our People. An updated version of this report is due to be published alongside this strategy.

Work undertaken in 2021 identified principles for Toynbee Hall to be an equitable and inclusive organisation, which include:

- Governance, systems, and structure which are transparent.
- A strategy that explicitly declares its commitment to equality and is supported by a plan to set out priorities and actions.
- A staff team who experiences the value the organisation places on equity and fairness in both what we do and how we do it, from recruitment through to leaving the organisation.
- Policies that reflect our values and that are clear, usable, and inclusive.
- External communications that are accessible and provide a platform for underrepresented voices.
- Internal communications that provide clarity, transparency, and safety to the whole staff team.
- Services and activity that are proactive in increasing equality and which are designed by / with those they are for.

Since over half of our colleagues have joined the organisation since this work was undertaken, this strategic plan starts with an opportunity to revisit these principles and to explore what the delivery of them looks like in our context.

Our intention is to establish an internal ED&I steering group to support the development of our policy and action plan including our anti-racism statement and action plan. This will also enable us to set out clear targets.

10. Priority setting, tracking and reporting progress

Our approach is to develop an annual operational plan to support this work. This involves identifying priorities and being clear about the capacity to deliver them. We will not be able to do everything in the first year of the strategic plan.

In setting out our priorities (see section 7), there are some areas of work that need to be in place at an early stage e.g. the development of a plan to support our approach to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

However, the word ‘collaboration’ has run through this strategy, and in being collaborative there is an opportunity to work differently to make progress on some of these objectives.

We want to join up the insights from our direct work with the initiatives we undertake in policy, research, and social change. We want to share information, contacts, and learning across teams to support the first of our priorities to ensure everyone knows how their role helps us achieve our vision and join up our activities and areas of focus.

There is not a specific model for developing collaboration – especially given the pressures of demand and funding. We are going to try things and see what works for us. We also need to think about how our policies and approaches support a collaborative ethos so it becomes key to our culture.

We have the following in place:

- Setting priorities – annual operational plan, departmental plans, and performance objectives through appraisals, all of which will be clearly linked to our mission and strategic objectives.
- Tracking progress – appraisals, colleague survey, external feedback, collecting data from activities to show impact.
- Reporting progress – Board updates, annual reports, communications to staff and community, sharing learning internally and externally.

Looking ahead as we develop new projects and initiatives, we will build in a clear approach to setting out the changes we are seeking to make and then being able to reflect on our progress towards these goals and share our learning. This is also a way to ensure that those objectives align with the mission and objectives of this strategic plan.





For a fairer future

Since 1884



Toynbee Hall

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