



2024 - 2026 Strategy



INTRODUCTION

from our
Chief Executive

Welcome to the new Helm strategy for 2024 – 2026, in this document we set out our priorities and goals and explain how we will meet them over the next two years.

Before looking forward we must look back, to understand the context of where we find ourselves.

‘You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards.’ Steve Jobs

Staff and Trustees came together and wrote our last strategy in Oct 2020, when we had just experienced the first lockdown of the pandemic and were trying to predict what the future would hold. This was no easy task, but we put young people at the heart of what we did and resolved to be flexible to the changing needs moving forward.



Pre-pandemic young people's mental health and school attendance were both on the decline. We now know that the isolation, fear, and shaming of the pandemic have impacted their education and curbed the emotional and social development of those most affected.

The pandemic also changed how and where people work and created skill shortages across sectors. This is still impacting businesses across Tayside.

We must move on from the pandemic and now have other factors such as cost of living increases and reduction in government and grant funding to mitigate. However, we do not lose sight of the impact the last four years has had on young people and the employment landscape in Scotland, as this is the context in which we work.

As young people, staff and Trustees started to explore our new strategy we quickly came to the realisation that we find ourselves in another period of challenge and change.

Government funding and priorities are changing and the number of young people requiring support to move from school into employment is increasing. Our Trustees took the difficult decision to close the Hame housing project, in May of this year. Although a highly successful project, this is a sad reflection of where we find ourselves with funding becoming more difficult to secure and priorities within Helm having to be made.

With this changing landscape in mind, we have decided to focus our strategy on the next two years, ensuring we have capacity to be flexible in the face of political changes and reductions in funding, and then look further to the future with more dots connected behind us.

As always, young people are at the heart of our new strategy, ensuring that everything we do is through the lens of what is best for them. We will ensure that our support is inclusive and always meeting their developmental needs. We will review changes in the world of work and make sure that everything we deliver is preparing young people for work now and in the future, giving them the best opportunity to succeed.

We remain determined to give young people the best life chances, to support them to understand their abilities and passions, to take them positively into adulthood and provide a foundation for a bright future. As one of our young people said, while writing this strategy:



“Helm gives us young people an opportunity to brighten our future and make us see it better”.



Ally Calder
Chief Executive Officer



ACHIEVEMENTS in 2020 - 2024



Just as the last four years have brought challenges and changes for young people and the world of work, it has brought about significant change for Helm. At a time when young people were experiencing the impact of home schooling and some were failing to return to school, we lost the funding for our alternative education provision, which had supported hundreds of Dundee's most excluded young people to gain an education. Funding to support people into employability changed and reduced, leading to more uncertainty and adjustment for our team. Through all of this 'Team Helm' put young people at the centre of what we did and went from strength to strength:

- ★ When there were gaps in local government funding, our Trustees chose to use reserves to keep staff in jobs and services running for young people.
- ★ We brought in just under £2m of funding from grants and trusts, to add value to local authority commissioned services.
- ★ We successfully tendered to deliver employability support in Dundee, through the All in Dundee consortium, reflecting the great work the team have done in moving young people onto college and into work.
- ★ We introduced an Art Therapy Service, which has impacted the lives of hundreds of Dundee and Angus young people, who were struggling with their mental health.
- ★ We ran a pilot and secured funding for an employability service in North East Fife, in partnership with Families First and Friends of Craigtoun.
- ★ Young people were referred from Angus Council to use our learning centres and gain qualifications in trades, cosmetology and mechanics.
- ★ Perth and Kinross Council gave homes and support to asylum seeking young people through our Hame service.
- ★ We extended and rebranded our garage 'Helm Autocare' to include a MOT station to ensure more capacity and variety when training young people in mechanics.
- ★ We gave our salon 'Lavish Lounge' a makeover and brought in additional eyelash and eyebrow qualifications.
- ★ We brought in a new IT system that allows for the mobile use of devices, creating relaxed workspaces for young people and staff.
- ★ We reviewed our people policies and extended our sickness policy, benefits package and salary scales.

A Scotland where all young people have a brighter future



Vision

Our long-term vision is a Scotland where all young people have a brighter future through access to sustainable, meaningful employment.

Mission

Our more immediate mission is to inspire and support young people to create a brighter future, by gaining qualifications, skills and employment.

Values

‘What’ we do is only part of how we will achieve our mission. ‘How’ we work, as individuals and as an organisation, will shape everything that we do and ensure that we all work together with a joint understanding.

The values of the organisation will be the lens through which everything is viewed and scrutinised. In all our activities we will ask ourselves, are we...



Caring

in all that we do as an organisation, with young people, each other, the community and the environment



Respectful

of others, valuing differences and allowing others to express themselves without judgement



Collaborating

with young people, each other, and partners, understanding the power of reciprocity within relationships

Our strategy for achieving these focuses on three key aims, which we believe, will make education, training and employment accessible and achievable for all.

Our focus for 2024 - 2026 is to:



Overcoming Barriers

Accessing and maintaining mainstream education and training is made more difficult for young people by a multitude of individual and societal barriers, such as previous experiences of learning, trauma, family relationships, education system, poverty and housing. To support young people to overcome these barriers we will deliver appropriate services, work in partnership and influence others to increase young people's engagement in education, training and employment.

We will work with partners across Tayside, and beyond, to listen to the experiences of excluded young people to adapt and develop services that remove barriers and enable access to learning and employment.

Develop and Sustain Services

Young people across Scotland should have access to education, training and employment services that meet their needs and supports them to learn and prepare for the world of work.

We deliver services that understand the internal challenges and societal pressures that young people experience in formal learning. We recognise the impact of poverty and exclusion on young people's self-worth and choices. Cultural norms and expectations that cause bias will be challenged. An understanding of child development and the impact of adolescence on young people is central to all we deliver. Young people's mental health will be supported to improve their ability to engage with learning. We will take a trauma informed approach and recognise behaviours that are a result of trauma. We understand the impact of disabilities on young people. All our services will be designed to be inclusive of the needs of all young people and support young people to overcome barriers to learning.

We will work with employers and a wider understanding of the local labour market to develop pathways into sustainable employment for young people.



Young People's Voice

Young people who have experienced barriers to learning and employment know and understand what we are trying to achieve. They know what needs to happen to change learning for future generations. We value the experiences that young people have had and listen to their thoughts and feelings. Young people engage in their own training plans, the services which support them, how the organisation is run and what the future of Helm looks like.

We support and train young people to enable them to articulate their experiences and transform services for Helm and nationally, for all young people.

Our approach to a brighter future for young people



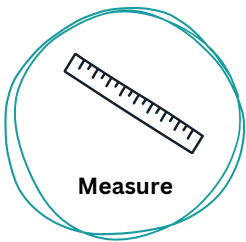
People

Our people are our biggest asset. We cannot do any of our work without them. We want to attract, develop and keep our people. Our Quality Group will continue to work with Investors in People to ensure we are implementing best practice. We will make sure that our colleagues are supported in their work, provided with opportunities to learn and recognised for their successes.



Innovation

We use our and young people's experience, alongside evidence available to us, to develop new and innovative services and models of working. We will find the most effective services for young people, by further developing young people's voices and using research from around the world.



Measure

All of our work must provide a positive impact on the lives of young people. We will improve how we evidence our outcomes.



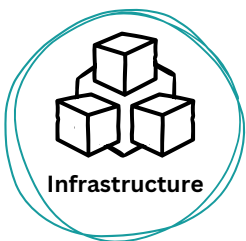
Influence

We have a responsibility to shape policies, systems, practice and culture to improve the lives of young people. We will raise awareness and improve understanding in order to gain support from the decision makers, funders and the wider public.



Income

We will increase our income to enable us to deliver our services. We aim to sustain and complement our services in Dundee, Angus and North East Fife.



Infrastructure

A strong infrastructure will give our organisation the stability to deliver high quality services and ensure we move with the times and prepare young people for the future world of work. We will become more digitally focused. We will extend our green commitment to ensure we are creating a brighter future for all young people, their communities, and the planet.

