YOUNG LIVES vs CANCER

THE TIME IS NOW

OUR 2024/29 STRATEGY





THE NORTH STAR VISION

OUR ULTIMATE DESTINATION

In 2022, Young Lives vs Cancer, Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group, Ellen MacArthur Cancer Trust, and Teenage Cancer Trust came together to fully understand the experiences and needs of children and young people with cancer.

Supported by Dartington Service Design Lab, together we carried out an in-depth programme of qualitative and quantitative research. This research would be used to inform change, to be used as a tool to transform the system as we know it, to develop groundbreaking solutions and inform our decisions to build a better future of equitable support.

Two years on and the research is complete. And from it, we have created the North Star, a vision for a better future for children and young people with cancer.

The reality is that this isn't the case right now. But it needs to be.

AT A GLANCE

The North Star vision is a future where every child and young person facing cancer receives care that's tailored to them.

They feel informed and in control and, along with their families, they're able to make knowledgeable decisions about their care and their future.

They feel empowered every step of the way. There are no gaps in support and no barriers to access.

They have everything they need from the beginning of their cancer experience, for as long as they need it.

Children and young people with cancer deserve to have their unique needs understood and supported and they should feel empowered by the systems and organisations around them. Throughout every step of their journey, they, along with their families, deserve to feel like their wellbeing is recognised as a priority and that everyone around them is working hard to make sure it's the best it can be. Together, as a sector, as a system, as a society, we have the power to make the North Star happen.

A WHOLE-SYSTEM APPROACH

The North Star is more than a vision, it's a rallying cry. And it's not ours alone. It's been forged alongside young cancer patients, their families, and the organisations that surround them.

Along with our charity partners, we're a force to be reckoned with. But we still can't deliver systematic change by ourselves. We know that we're a part of a much wider system – one which is not yet good enough and continues to leave lasting damage on young lives. So, we need to move and adapt collectively, with all bodies who make up the system playing their part – from the NHS and governments to education authorities and local communities.

Together, we need to unlearn norms, transform cultures and embrace a future of doing things differently. Only then will we effect change that will resonate for years to come.

By working as one, we have the power to finally make sure children, young people and their families have the support they need and deserve. The time for change is now.

AT A GLANCE

The 'system' (for the purpose of Young Lives vs Cancer's work) refers to the people, communities, organisations and structures which have an impact on the psychosocial experiences of children, young people with cancer, and their families. It includes official organisations such as the NHS, governments, charities and the education authority. Local communities, private corporations and networks such as family and friends are a part of the system too. All of these system actors have relationships with each other and with us. We are also part of the system.

REACHING THE NORTH STAR

OUR STRATEGY

At Young Lives vs Cancer, we have our own unique role to play in reaching the North Star. We know our strengths and where we can have the most impact for children and young people with cancer.

Our 2024/29 strategy, this document, explains what we'll do and how we'll contribute to making the North Star a reality. Divided into four long-term ambitions, our strategy is bold and it's going to take every member of Young Lives vs Cancer to play their part.

Throughout it all – every milestone, meeting and decision made – we will stay true to who we are. Our culture and our people are what make us unique and it's up to each and every one of us to make the North Star happen. The time for change is now.

Here's what we will do to take us closer to the North Star vision.

FOUR LONG TERM AMBITIONS COMING TOGETHER TO DRIVE LONG-TERM CHANGE

1. CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR SERVICE PROVIDER
2. SHAPE THE SYSTEM
3. CREATE AND SHARE SYSTEM EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION
4. DEVELOP AND ENHANCE RESOURCES

LONG TERM AMBITION ONE

CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR SERVICE PROVIDER

We will be a major service provider of high-quality, impactful psychosocial support for children and young people with cancer.

Our integrated social work and accommodation service is unique, and we're proud to lead the way in delivering high-quality, vital psychosocial support throughout cancer treatment, end of life and bereavement. We'll always be dedicated to supporting the needs of children, young people and their families, and we'll continue to invest heavily within this area to ensure we can always provide the tailored support that they need.

We know our services are strong, and we'll consistently scrutinise them so that they remain relevant and an efficient use of resources. We'll be led by outcomes on children, young people and their families, using our research to track progress and understand impact.

We're ambitious and we will make innovative changes.

However, we know where to focus our time and investment and we know the areas where our charity partners are better placed to take the lead.

But we still have a role to play here, by influencing the provision of care in these spaces, and we'll raise the voices of children and young people with cancer. We'll share our research findings to highlight need and encourage change even when we're not making that change ourselves.

IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE WILL

- continue to deliver high-quality, trauma-informed integrated social work and accommodation services
- assess the best delivery method for our services to respond to changing needs of children and young people
- look for opportunities to collaborate and share knowledge for bigger and better impact.

LONG TERM AMBITION TWO
SHAPE THE SYSTEM

We will shape the system and strive for equity, working with others to become architects of change.

To reach the North Star, we need to work with others to shape the systems around children and young people with cancer. We'll align forces with the public sector, while nurturing relationships within the charity and private sectors too. From education authorities, NHS and governments to businesses and corporates, we'll pull communities and organisations together to collectively transform the future of cancer care.

Technology is constantly changing and influencing the health and social-care landscape. It's our duty to move with these changes, to embrace them and harness new opportunities which will lead to better psychosocial support for young cancer patients. We'll work with partners and build innovative relationships so that we can craft pioneering and creative solutions together to reduce or eliminate the gaps in the system.

IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE WILL

- continue to keep the needs of young cancer patients and their families on the agenda of the new UK government and raise their voices on these topics across the UK
- seek to improve post-treatment wellbeing outcomes, working in collaboration with our partners to truly understand what drives and what hinders wellbeing after treatment
- lead and inspire conversation around the new technology transforming the health and social-care landscape, working with innovators and entrepreneurs to create new solutions together
- build an outcomes framework for the North Star, so we can consistently learn, improve and make strategic, informed decisions about where to invest time and resources.

LONG TERM AMBITION THREE

CREATE AND SHARE SYSTEM EVIDENCE AND INFORMATION

We will create and share evidence and information about the experiences of children and young people with cancer, and their families, and use it to steer change.

There is still work to do to turn the data we've collected so far into evidence, and to share it so it can make a real impact. We have made a start with the publication of the State of the System report, but it doesn't stop there. Continuing the interrogation and sharing of data will be a major priority for us.

There is more research with children, young people and families to be done. We'll create new opportunities for young people and families to take part in psychosocial research and share them widely, whether the research is being led by us or by others.

We will use data to transform services and policies, improve funding access, build relationships, strive for equity and hold those with power to account. From hospital corridors to the offices of Parliament, we'll be there and we'll be informed, backed by solid evidence and information. Disrupting, challenging, innovating.

IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE WILL

- use our data on the experiences of children and young people with cancer and their families to conduct further research that identifies how we can improve the system
- share our research findings through a new Centre for Insight – a collaborative initiative which allows people across the sector to learn more about the psychosocial experiences of children and young people with cancer, and their families
- find new partners to work with who can help us expand our evidence base further
- develop our technology systems and processes so that we can be confident our data is always of the highest quality, and we can use it in an accessible way.

LONG TERM AMBITION FOUR

DEVELOP AND ENHANCE RESOURCES

We will work to make sure more money and time is invested in supporting children and young people with cancer, and their families, across the system.

The North Star can only be reached if more resources are allocated to support the needs of children and young people with cancer. Only when more money, time and capacity is dedicated across the entire system will children and young people with cancer get the equitable support they deserve. We won't stop until this happens.

When it comes to funding, we need to grow our own income so that we can increase our impact on the lives of children, young people and their families. So, we'll focus on coming up with innovative ways of increasing it. We'll not just meet, but exceed the fundraising income targets we set for ourselves.

IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS WE WILL

- set out and deliver a strategy for income generation focused on ensuring more individuals, communities and organisations engage with us and become long-term supporters
- build relationships with funders and identify opportunities to support new innovations and cross-sector collaborations
- experiment with models of funding and seek new forms of commercial income with partners.

BEING TEAM YOUNG LIVES

Our organisational culture fuels our passion, it gives us the energy we need to be dynamic and focused in the pursuit of a better future for children and young people with cancer.

We know that we can't get anywhere without a good culture and clear values which we can all align to. Refining and interrogating who we are as an organisation and workforce will be an important part of the foundation laying phase of our strategy.

Getting this work right and fully understanding and embracing our culture is the key not only to achieving our strategy, but also to leading the way towards the North Star vision. Our passion, bravery and ambition are contagious and by embracing our culture and the roles we have to play in making change happen, we will inspire our contacts, motivate our colleagues and lead the entire system towards groundbreaking transformation.

Children and young people with cancer shouldn't have to wait any longer. **The time for change is now.**

TO LAY THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR STRATEGY, WE ARE GOING TO

- update and amplify our values to reflect the kind of organisation we know we need to be
- invest in our workforce and in our infrastructure – the tools people need to walk the walk – and we will do it together, enabling Team Young Lives to connect and collaborate
- describe the 'Young Lives Way' – giving the workforce a way to reflect and shape the Team Young Lives of the future
- continue in our pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive future through our commitment to advancing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging – for children and young people, for our workforce and for the system we shape.



YOUNG LIVES vs CANCER

Young Lives vs Cancer is an operating name of CLIC Sargent Cancer Care for Children. A registered charity in England and Wales (1107328) and in Scotland (SC039857).

Also operating in Northern Ireland. Registered office: 4th Floor, Whitefriars, Lewins Mead, Bristol, BS1 2NT.

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