

Strategic Plan

2022 - 2025



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Foreword from our Chair

The last two years have seen situations like no other nor anything any of us could ever have foreseen. The impact of the pandemic will stay with us for quite some time and has led to an unprecedented demand for mental health services. Northern Ireland already has significant mental ill health issues linked to social and economic inequalities, the trauma of the Troubles and high rates of childhood adversities including those suffered by victims of institutional abuse.

Northern Ireland's first Mental Health Champion, Professor Siobhan O'Neill is calling on all political parties to commit to the additional 34% increase in funding needed to fully implement the Mental Health Strategy. This call is supported by Lighthouse as we have seen directly how mental health has deteriorated because of the pandemic, and an increase in the levels of people reporting suicidal thoughts.

Mental illness is a preventable and treatable cause of death and suffering and Lighthouse will continue to work in partnership with families, the local community, statutory agencies and interested parties to do all we can to provide the services and support necessary to assist anyone who requires it.

In order to properly direct this support where it is needed, the Board and Team at Lighthouse, in consultation with the local community and partners have developed this Strategy which demonstrates our vision and ambitions to provide dedicated and professional support services. As always, we will endeavour to be that "Beacon of Hope."



Anne Dorbie
Chair, Lighthouse

Introduction from our Executive Director

I came into post in early 2021 and it has certainly been an interesting and rewarding journey over the subsequent months. Right away I was able to see the ambition of our staff and Board – so much so that I was keen to ensure our strategic plan would be steered by ambitions rather than objectives.

Developing this strategic plan has been an important act of self-determination for Lighthouse. It started off with a staff survey, an opportunity for our key resource to get involved from inception and they have most certainly played a pivotal role in getting us to this point. Our Board have also been closely involved through engagement at workshops and provision of feedback.

We feel that we have developed a plan for the future that is reflective of the needs of our service users and the purpose of Lighthouse. It reaffirms our mission and vision, prioritises our ambitions and reconfirms the values to maintain while working towards achieving our vision.

This strategic plan will act as a road map to identify the route to take to get us to where Lighthouse wants to go – our vision for the future. It is designed to help coordinate our work and make our efforts more effective. It will also help us to be more accountable and transparent. It was felt that the strategy should be developed for a three-year period.

I want to thank our staff for the openness and honesty in expressing their views, hopes and ambitions for Lighthouse. I would like to thank the service users who have helped us develop our priorities and advance our services and I would also like to thank our Board for their support and encouragement throughout the process. I would also like to thank Sharon O'Connor for her work in helping us navigate the journey to develop this plan.

Finally, this plan needs to remain in the minds (and hearts) of our stakeholders – staff, Board, volunteers, funders, clients and our communities alike. Having key strategic ambitions for our work brings clarity and focus to our team's efforts and allows us to begin the process of making our strategy actionable and more importantly achievable on a day-to-day basis.



Paul Finnegan
Executive Director, Lighthouse

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is a strategic plan?

A strategic plan is like a road map. It identifies the place we are trying to get to – Lighthouse’s shared vision for a better future. It also guides the work of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the staff team and our Board by giving them direction on how to get to the destination.

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Why is a strategic plan important?

It is a plan for the future that reflects the needs of our community/communities and the vision of what Lighthouse can be. A strategic plan helps to remind us of what we want to achieve. It helps us to coordinate the work of many different people and make our efforts more effective. It reminds us that as we work, we need to stay true to our values. Additionally it helps us to be more accountable and transparent to the community/communities that we serve.

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How was the strategic plan developed?

The strategic mission, vision, values and ambitions were developed through thorough consultation with the staff, board and other stakeholders of the organisation. Two surveys and a workshop were held with staff and then two workshops were held with the Board. Staff continued to be represented at these workshops by members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The work was supported by a consultant Sharon O'Connor. Sharon took account of existing analysis and facilitated further inputs from the Board and staff helping to produce a new vision, mission and values for Lighthouse. The consensus from Sharon's work confirmed a clear appetite for change with staff feedback balancing our ambition with the need to develop and sustain key services. Both the Board and staff were concerned to have clarity on the future mission for Lighthouse and endorsed the need for growth and focus.

The mission, vision, values and ambitions of the strategic plan were developed and approved by the organisation. They are intended to be the road map for the next three years. This makes the strategic plan durable and focusses on achieving a shared vision of our future.

Strategic Planning Process

This strategic plan represents a three-year planning cycle for Lighthouse. The key elements of the strategic planning process are outlined in Figure 1 below.

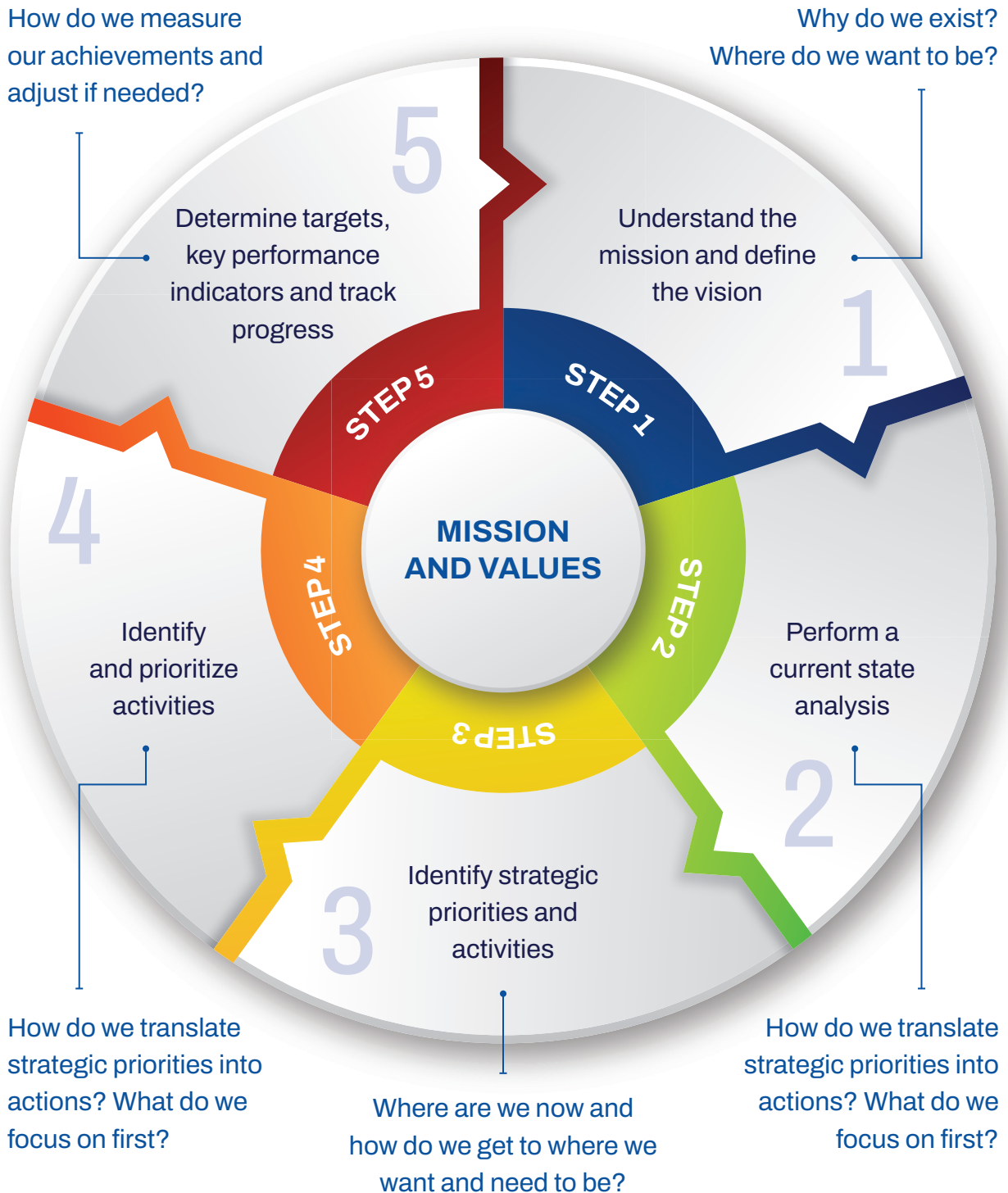


Figure 1 Strategic Planning Process

Vision, Mission and Values

The strategic planning process reaffirms the mission and vision of Lighthouse, the strategic ambitions to accomplish the vision, and reconfirms values to maintain as Lighthouse works towards realising the ambitions.

The following vision, mission, and values came about through in-depth consultation with staff and Board.

Vision

This is Lighthouse's ideal state, where it wants to be in the future.

To be recognised as a beacon of hope, saving lives and creating a brighter future.



Mission

This sets out why Lighthouse exists, its purpose and who it supports.



Lighthouse works in communities to promote positive mental health and prevent suicide.

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Values

Our values are our source of guidance and what the organisation stands for.

Community

Empathy

Excellence

Accessible To All

Client-Centred

Develop Our People

Collaborative

Think Big

Current State Analysis

A current state analysis or environmental scan was carried out. This was a review of everything that impacts Lighthouse – either positively or negatively. It was an exercise to consider all assets and opportunities for Lighthouse. It also identified gaps or vulnerabilities that could impede our success. An environmental scan is always limited – we can never know everything or predict the future.

However, it is also a useful tool to consider the operating environment that can affect the success of our efforts. We carried out this scan using a strategic analysis process (see Figure 2) involving both the staff and Board.

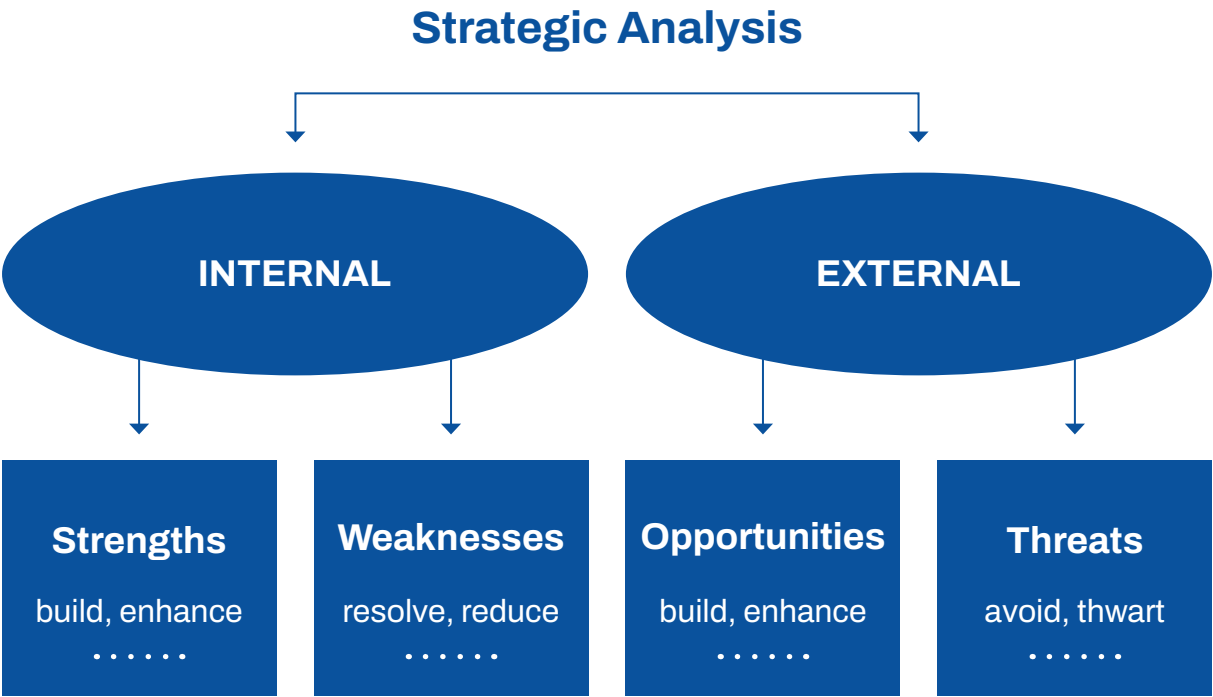


Figure 2 Strategic Analysis Process

What follows is a summary of our Strategic Analysis findings.

Strengths

The organisation is blessed with many strengths and natural endowments. The reputation of the organisation has been built carefully over the years since inception. It is important to recognise and acknowledge these gifts and celebrate the strength of the Lighthouse. The strengths included:

Track record	Expertise
Stable, committed and experienced Staff	Client centred
Open to all	Ever improving community recognition & pride
Reputation	Good facilities
Trustees	Healthy funding position

Weaknesses

The workshops also acknowledged where improvement is needed. Some items can be addressed by looking at communication channels or staffing but others require a more strategic approach. Weaknesses identified included:

Communication	Lack of strategic focus
Staff resource – not enough	Low profile
Reacting without a plan	Challenge of the work
Restricted to one Area	Not meeting need
Funding challenges – reliance on public funds	

Opportunities

At times, and perhaps more so with Covid-19 there are changes in the operating environment that can benefit Lighthouse. It is important to recognise these changes and take advantage of opportunities.

These included:

Huge need for the services of Lighthouse	Community support
The current climate offers opportunities for expansion and to support more people	The potential for partnerships and new beginnings and lots of room to improve
Stakeholder interest	Fundraising opportunities
Unique programmes of work	Potential corporate interest
The huge ambition of Board and Staff	The potential to expand and grow new services including digital

Threats

Threats are those things that Lighthouse has no or little control over. That does not mean that we are helpless. It means that we have to take purposeful steps to mitigate the negative impact of those threats. These included:

Increased competition for services and funding	
Continuing growth of need for our services	Short term funding
Limited reach outside of North Belfast	Lack of strategic focus
Continuation of Covid-19 Pandemic	

Strategic Ambitions

Based upon our mission, vision, values, the current state analysis and discussions with staff, clients, Board, competitors and commissioners, we have determined six strategic ambitions that will assist us to get where we want and need to be. The following are our six ambitions and associated activities.

Ambition 1: We will have an open door to help anyone who needs us and demonstrate excellent support through high standard services

This is our primary ambition and so important as we must continue to be an 'open door' for those needing information, a listening ear or other support and for those in distress ensuring that we are available when needed. We will do this by examining our services and refining what we do. Additionally, we will strive to deliver exemplary services and double the numbers of people we support in the next three years.

To achieve this ambition, we must;

- a) Make our services more accessible and attractive to people who need us.
- b) Deliver high quality and effective services.
- c) Source and introduce an effective methodology to measure the impact of our services.
- d) Place a particular emphasis on supporting young women.

We will have an open door to help anyone who needs us...



Ambition 2: We will work in partnership to improve our impact

We will develop new collaborations with likeminded partners to expand the reach of our services, in the next three years developing at least five new local or regional collaborations.

To achieve this ambition, we must;

- a) Identify organisations not in the suicide awareness/prevention space who can help us reach more people in need of our services and engage in partnership or collaboration, joint projects or bespoke solutions.
- b) Develop partnerships with other organisations within the suicide awareness/prevention space putting beneficiaries at the heart of discussions, pooling budgets and focusing on outcomes.
- c) Share learning with organisations/programmes to improve our work and services, acknowledging each other's expertise and creating long term relationships.
- d) Coach and prepare the public with the knowledge and confidence to respond to friends and family when they need help and guide them to the right support services.



**We will work in partnership
to improve our impact.**

Ambition 3: We will sustain our organisation

This ambition is important because we must secure the funding to shape our destiny over the three years covered by our strategic plan. We will ensure our financial viability by establishing sustainable sources of revenue alongside cost effective services. We aim to increase our revenue by 25% over the three years covered by the strategic plan and grow existing and develop new services.

We will be bold. As we continue to expand our knowledge, we will advocate for cost effective supports and systems required to support recovery when suicidal distress arises – for example building our technical and digital capabilities to enable us to reach more people.

To achieve this ambition, we must;

- a) Establish an organisational structure that ensures effectiveness alongside sustainability.
- b) Develop a comprehensive, three-year fundraising strategy with ambitious but realistic targets to help our organisation become financially sustainable.
- c) Develop a central database of donors and potential supporters.
- d) Develop a volunteering strategy.
- e) Develop a learning centre within the organisation.
- f) Develop a digital resource including a youth portal.



A comprehensive, three-year fundraising strategy with ambitious but realistic targets... ”

Ambition 4: We will develop effective teams

This ambition must be realised as our staff are our key resource and their health and wellbeing are essential to our growth and prosperity. We will invest in and support our staff to excel in their work, enhancing their skills as individuals and collectively through appropriate training and support.

We will create an effective, supportive and accountable environment for our staff team by achieving an accreditation such as Investors in People.

To achieve this ambition, we must;

- a) Prioritise a team approach to our work.
- b) Be a great place to work so we have the right people working and volunteering for us, with the right skills and experience.
- c) Ensure a healthy work life balance exists for all staff.
- d) Guarantee staff engagement through regular supervision and team sessions.
- e) Develop and ratify a learning culture for staff and provide opportunities to develop and prosper.
- f) Develop a collective leadership philosophy throughout the organisation.
- g) Approve the use of and implement an accreditation, guaranteeing our commitment to support and empower our staff and help them excel in their roles.

We will create an effective, supportive and accountable environment for our staff team by achieving an accreditation such as Investors in People.



Ambition 5: We will be influential

Influence is so important as it helps enhance our reputation as a leading organisation in the field of suicide prevention. We will seek to influence government policy in support of those we serve, telling the story of those in distress and how they are best helped.

To achieve this ambition, we must;

- a) Build trust within the organisation and others within the suicide space.
- b) Cultivate our expertise and organisational intelligence.
- c) Create more visibility of the work that we do.
- d) Provide a voice for suicide prevention in Northern Ireland and beyond.
- e) Build formal links with educational institutions to produce academic research.
- f) Leverage influence and opportunities through a range of networks.

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**We will seek to influence
government policy in support
of those we serve...**

Ambition 6: We will be well governed and demonstrate our impact

Good governance is critical to our success. We will strive to follow good corporate governance practices to ensure that we balance stability and strong oversight, with dynamic decision-making processes that supports responsive ways of working.

We will develop tried and tested processes, policies and guidelines to address pertinent issues, such as rules and principles for day-to-day operations. These will help ensure compliance with laws and regulations, reflect the culture of our organisation and provide guidance for decision-making, risk analysis and streamline internal processes.

We will achieve accreditation to ensure our organisation offers an ethical and professional counselling or psychotherapy service for clients, staff, volunteers and stakeholders.



We will share our learning and insights with like-minded organisations, funders and our supporters, to help amplify our support regionally.

To achieve this ambition, we must;

- a) Achieve BACP Accreditation.
- b) Review existing and develop new policies for all elements of the organisation.
- c) Ensure our Board have the appropriate environment, diverse mix of skills, experience and independence, to ensure there is robust but effective challenge and stewardship of the organisation's purpose and strategy.
- d) Ensure Board members have access to adequate training and performance reviews.
- e) Ensure Board members can participate in sub-groups such as finance, clinical practice and fundraising.
- f) We will measure our success through techniques such as Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA).





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