

# REACHING HIGHER

CHALLENGING YOUNG PEOPLE TO  
BE LEADERS OF THEIR OWN LIVES



## STRATEGY TENDER


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Reaching Higher is in search for a consultant to support the development of a three-to-five-year strategy for the organisation.

This document outlines the context for a tender to assist us a strategic review, our thinking and expectations, and the process we anticipate will lead us to establish a relationship with the successful consultant.

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## ABOUT REACHING HIGHER

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Reaching Higher is a youth charity with a Christian ethos, focused on serving young people and challenging them to be leaders of their own lives. For well over a decade, RH has cultivated an organisation that is built by and for young people and young leaders – we are **value-driven**. We work with over 2000 young people aged 9-18 each year, partnering with ten schools and a range of community groups and statutory services.

Our work has illuminated the gaps which we recognise as the root causes of the challenges faced by young people and their families in Croydon, and informed the development of our current approach encompassing schools, community and home engagement. We call this **'360 Pastoral Care'**. Our work includes formal mentoring, sports programmes, transferable skills development, employability support, drop-in youth hubs, a youth-led café and school holiday provision.

Reaching Higher has successfully recruited former service users as volunteers, employees, sessional workers and trustees, all of whom play a crucial role in the development of the charity. This model has allowed us to learn and evolve in a unique way, generating strong trust and rapport with the young people we engage.

# WHY WE NEED A NEW STRATEGY

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The organisation has grown considerably over the past five years following its previous strategic review. We now have a much larger team (from 5 FTE in 2019 to 20 FTE in 2024) and our work has expanded significantly (from a turnover of £304k in 2019 to over £1million in 2024). Concurrently, Reaching Higher has observed a sharp decrease in positive opportunities available for young people in Croydon and a corresponding increase in the number and scope of referrals we receive. Rates of violence and exploitation affecting young people in the borough are an increasing cause for concern.

Having recently joined the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation Strategic Investment Fund**, following a reflective internal process, we believe that the organisation needs a clearer strategy that will help us appropriately evolve, grow our impact and make the best decisions along the way.

We have a clear sense of direction but have recognised the need to consolidate and simplify what it is we do and how we do it. We recognise that we have achieved great success in key areas whilst also acknowledging areas of improvement. This next step for us is an intentional one, whereby we aim to align our entire team, community and stakeholders on our journey.

The organisation has undergone much change over the last five years, and we now believe we are at a place whereby we can more effectively streamline our strategic focus. We are committed to taking our whole team on this journey and wish to involve all staff in the development of a new three-to-five-year strategy. We expect this piece of work to incur further changes and intend for the process of creating this strategy to help mitigate any risks and maximise the opportunities that this transition will present.

We want to ensure that this process accurately reflects our organisational values and principles to promote further alignment towards our shared goal and commitment to the journey.

## THE PROCESS AS WE SEE IT NOW

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We have carried out a considerable amount of work internally to align ourselves and lead from a place that is value-driven and young people centric. We want to build on all of our hard work and preserve the core of who we are and what we do. We expect that the process in developing a new strategy will challenge us in a healthy way and empower us to evolve in a way that enhance the impact we make.

*We anticipate three core phases to undergo:*

- 1. Phase 1 14th April 2025 – 31st July 2025:** Focussing on higher level development and strategic priorities
- 2. Phase 2 1st August 2025 – 31st October 2025:** Focussing on an operational plan for implementation of priorities over a window of time
- 3. Phase 3 1st November 2025 – 30th April 2026:** Evaluation or progress check on implementing the strategy

This is some of things we will expect as an organisation.

## WE EXPECT THE PROCESS WOULD INVOLVE SOME OF THE FOLLOWING:

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1. Review of our current strategic plan, vision, mission, values, target audience and wider contextual considerations.
2. Review of our comms strategy and management infrastructure.
3. Review our existing theory of change.
4. Consideration of our resourcing needs for the short to medium term.
5. Consideration of the governance structures, processes and culture that help guide and protect the organisation.
6. A whole team approach that clearly includes all key stakeholders.

# ENGAGEMENT

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It is essential that the successful consultant is able to demonstrate an ability to meaningfully engage and work effectively with all stakeholder groups, as outlined under 'considerations' below, and to bring challenge to our assumptions in equal measure.

Being youth-led is one of our core values and will represent a fundamental process throughout this journey. We want young people to play a central role in helping shape our strategy in the most suitable way. Our most important stakeholders must be empowered to support the development of a new strategy.

Trustee and executive engagement remain paramount in shaping a new strategy. We want every member of our team to feel valued and empowered throughout this process. Our hope is that this process will provide excellent opportunities for staff development where appropriate.

We would like some stakeholders to be involved within this process as appropriate, such as parents, schools, businesses, local authority and funders.



## OUTPUTS

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- The content for a well-articulated strategy document suitable for external use. We will address the design and production of a finished document outside this project's scope.
- Consistency in language across our vision, mission, values, including a clear articulation of Reaching Higher's essential role in improving society.
- Revised theory of change.
- Deep-dive and review into our monitoring and evaluation methods so the strategy is kept alive and different stakeholders remain appropriately engaged.
- Recommendations for board development in the context of providing good strategic oversight.
- An analysis of resources and other requirements for the delivery of the strategy, with pragmatic and achievable first steps to help us start the journey of delivering our strategy.
- To support a realistic and achievable strategy, clarity on what Reaching Higher does not, or will not, do.

## CONSIDERATIONS

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- We think it may be useful to establish a steering group representing a range of key stakeholders.
- Reaching Higher has a proactive Youth Board. Their engagement throughout the process is an important design consideration.
- To efficiently and meaningfully engage the board of trustees, we anticipate a small group of board members will be involved throughout and that they will ensure the wider board is involved when appropriate. Certainly, we anticipate the board will be fully involved in key workshops.
- We need to ensure all staff and young people work according to our operational and safeguarding policies when contributing to strategy.
- We are keen for the process to be efficient and to continue at pace but also recognise a need to ensure decision-making is inclusive, considered, and transparent.

# THE STRATEGY

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*Key questions we think will arise during the process may include:*

- How do we balance growth in the size of the organisation with growth in impact?
- How do we embed practices to ensure Reaching Higher remains youth-led?
- How do we preserve the development of young leaders through the organisation whilst experiencing organisational growth?
- How we work towards establishing our youth engagement model as a credible and replicable model via the use of high-quality research and studies?
- How do we balance our local impact and our national visibility?
- How do we diversify our income and reduce reliance on grant-giving bodies?
- How can our strategy be a tool for sharing the Reaching Higher model with other youth charities when adapted to the needs of their beneficiaries?

*Budget range: 8k - 10k*





## NEXT STEPS

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We would welcome submissions from consultants interested in supporting our strategy development by January 20th, 2025. Interview will take place throughout the month of February, confirming a successful candidate by March 1st, 2025. The month of March will be dedicated for orientation and date setting before launching the full project in April 2025.

If you are interested, please send us a document addressing the following:

- Evidence in support of your suitability for the role.
- The process you anticipate taking us through, with your best estimate of likely timescales for each phase of the project.
- Your assessment of risks and opportunities as you see them at this stage.
- Proposed outputs and deliverables.
- Cost, including an explanation of how you have priced this.

### **Our process for selection**

- After considering written submissions, we will invite a maximum of three consultants to a meeting for further discussion.
- We will then make our selection and invite the successful consultant to meet and agree on the contract. Once agreed, this will be followed by a kick-off meeting.

## Reaching Higher Youth Charity

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