

Big Lives

Our Big Plan to support people to live their lives to the full.

Introduction from Kate, Chief Executive

A great life is full of the ordinary things that make us smile – a walk in the park, eating our favourite meal, catching up with a friend, watching the team we support play. But we all have bigger dreams too – we might want to buy a new home, get a new qualification, go on that once-in-a-lifetime holiday, get married or host our own podcast. People with learning disabilities and autistic people too often don't have equal access to these aspirations.

United Response exists because we want to change that for people we support and for all disabled people.

We support 2,300 people in over 360 places in England and Wales. We offer people the support they need to have good days, every day, and encouragement to imagine big lives. We're as passionate about supporting someone to take the bus to the shops or make their breakfast, as we are when they are interviewed for a job, record a new song, host their radio show, go on a second date with someone, or book their holiday to rave in Ibiza.

We're proud of our work but we have big ambitions for the future – we want to be a better, bigger and bolder organisation that supports more people throughout all stages of life.

Our new big plan describes these ambitions, giving us direction and clear priorities for the next four years. We all deserve to live a big life where every day joys are abundant, and aspirations and dreams are nurtured and within reach.

Foreword from Ted, Chair of our People's Forum

The People's forum has played an important role in shaping this Big Plan. We spoke to Kate Terroni and shared what matters most to us. After that, members of the People's Forum hosted roadshows across the country to find out what other people think too.

I want to say thank you to all the People's Forum members who hosted their roadshows. You worked hard to gather views from the people we support and their families, and that work will help shape our plans for the next four years and beyond. It is important that people have the opportunity to live the best lives possible, and to have their voices heard when decisions are being made.

I feel proud that the priorities we shared as the People's Forum have helped shape the ambitions in this Big Plan. Knowing that what we said will influence the future is really important.

These ambitions matter to me because I want to help as many people as possible. I believe it is important that people have a say in decisions that affect their lives. We want to have the best life possible, and we know what is best for us. When people receive great support, it helps them to live great lives.

Looking ahead, the People's Forum will continue to play an active role. One of the things we are working on right now is developing a new staff award. We are starting this this year as a way for people to say thank you and celebrate their amazing support workers. Watch this space.

Why we need a new big plan

We were founded to respond to a need. People with learning disabilities and autistic people were being forced into long-stay institutions and denied the right to build their own lives and homes, connected to friends, family and all that life has to offer. So we created places people could be supported to live the lives they wanted to, building networks of support within a community.

Over the last 50 years we've grown from these grassroots. We embraced a creative, flexible spirit that enabled us to develop innovative, diverse support for people from a working farm in Cornwall and a media hub in York, to supporting people to live in their homes, and more. But over time this has led to differences in the way we work and the quality we offer.

Our new Big Plan will change that. It targets our skills, energy and resources on our strengths.

We want to support more people, and our new Big Plan puts us on a path to grow our organisation and help more people live Big Lives!

What we are here to do

Our vision: We want a society where everyone has equal access to the same rights and opportunities.

Our mission: We are here to ensure that people can live their lives to the full.

Our values:

- Connected.
- Empowered.
- Driven.
- Bold.

How we developed our plan

We developed our plan by listening to people we support, their families and carers and our colleagues. We also thought about the world we live in today and considered how this might affect our mission in the coming years.

To understand what matters to people we held events, roadshows and meetings, gathered feedback from surveys and team conversations. We began this listening work by meeting with our People's Forum, a group of people we support who help shape our direction and give us feedback on how we are performing and what needs to improve.

They told us they want us to:

- Create more opportunities to do things they enjoy and have new experiences.
- Help them feel safe from hate crime and discrimination.
- Fight for all disabled people.

They told us what matters most are:

- Fund and meaningful activities from social events and hobbies to education and employment.
- Support workers who are kind and consistent.
- Great relationships with family, friends and romantic partners.
- A comfortable and safe home that reflects their personality.
- Being respected for their values and individuality.
- Feeling understood and included by everyone.
- More funding so that they can do more of the things that make their lives great.

A survey of families and loved ones told us they want:

- To feel confident their loved one is cared for with kindness and dignity.
- More creative, social and active opportunities for people we support.
- Consistent, well-trained and caring staff.

- Continuity of care in stable, safe, warm and welcoming homes and other environments people are being supported.
- For loved ones to be treated as individuals, with autonomy and choice.
- To be included in care planning.
- For us to get better at listening and acting on feedback.
- Better join up between housing providers and care providers.
- Better government funding and recognition of support workers.

Our colleagues told us they want to:

- Stay passionate about what we do and doing the best for people we support every day.
- Keep being creative and be encouraged to innovate in their roles.
- Collaborate with colleagues and people we support.
- Get involved in how we make big decisions and be able to influence the things that matter to them.
- Fix the things that make it harder to do their jobs.
- Invest in great learning and development so they can grow in their roles.
- Better government funding and recognition of support workers.

Everything we heard has shaped our Big Plan ambitions

Over the next four years we want to:

- Provide outstanding services to more people.
- Become the most coproduced charity in the UK.
- Make the lives of all disabled people and autistic people better.

Our six Big Plan goals

To achieve our ambitions we are working on the following goals:

- Safe, quality services.
- Highly skilled and engaged workforce.
- Effective systems and processes.
- Financial sustainability.
- Inclusive organisation.
- A powerful brand.

Safe, quality services

We want all the support, care, housing, education and training we provide to be outstanding.

Outcomes

- Outstanding quality across all the support, care, housing, education and training we offer.
- Support hundreds more people.

- An offer, shaped around individuals, for all stages of adult life, including the often-tricky transition from children's to adult services.
- Every assessment of quality includes the perspective of people we support.

Priorities

- Embed a new, person-centred quality framework across all our services.
- Expand our Quality Checker programme so that more people with lived experience of being supported help us find out how our support is performing.
- Work with colleagues to use our care management tool Nourish well, so that it helps us deliver great, consistent person-centred support.
- Manage risk well, using our new assurance framework.
- Evolve our support offer, including a new coproduced service to support young people to move smoothly into adult life by building the skills, independence and nurturing aspirations for a great, full life.
- Develop strategic partnerships where they align with our mission and can enhance our offer to people we support.

Financial sustainability

We want to be financially sustainable so that we can pursue our big ambitions for the future.

Outcomes

- All our colleagues understand where we get our money, how we spend it and the part we all play in using our resources wisely.
- Our income grows year on year, through sustainable growth and wise, ethical investment.
- We have healthy reserves and can withstand economic uncertainty.

Priorities

- Increase the financial literacy of all colleagues.
- Deliver financial sustainability.
- Develop a clear and sustainable pipeline for services we will continue to invest in and where we want to grow.
- Build our reserves.
- Introduce a new financial system.

Highly skilled and engaged workforce

We attract, recruit and retain brilliant colleagues who do their best for people we support every day.

Outcomes

- Our colleagues have the skills and resources they need to do their jobs well.
- Our leaders inspire, enable and coach our teams to achieve outcomes that matter for people we support.
- We attract talented, passionate people who are committed to our mission.

Priorities

- Redesign our learning and development offer.
- Invest in our leadership team, developing their capability and collective leadership.
- Revamp our induction so that people are supported to make an impact in their roles faster.
- Strengthen our internal engagement to create more opportunities for colleagues to get involved in our work and in conversations that matter to them.

Inclusive organisation

We want to create a culture where every person feels valued, heard, and empowered to contribute.

Outcomes

- People we support co-produce our services and strategic direction.
- Organisations come to us to learn about our co-production approach.
- Colleagues tell us we are a great, inclusive place to work.
- Colleagues know what is going on in our organisation and have had the opportunity to influence what we do and how we do it.
- Our communications are accessible to all.

Priorities

- Deliver inclusive leadership and co-production development so we build strong skills and genuinely co-produce everything we do.
- Co-produce our recruitment approach so that people with lived experience of our services help decide who works for us.
- Develop great tools and guidance to support a practice and culture of inclusion.
- Target recruitment so our colleagues reflect the diversity of the populations we work with.
- Partner with our staff forum United Voice to ensure colleagues are involved, consulted and informed about how we work and strengthen our inclusive recruitment practice so our colleagues reflect the diversity of the communities we work in.
- Improve the accessibility of our content and channels.

Effective systems and processes

We have great systems, processes and effective ways of working that enable us to deliver our ambitions.

Outcomes

- It is easier for colleagues to do their jobs.
- We have timely, accurate data that captures what matters to people we support and how we are supporting them.
- We have great quality management information to support our decision making and we can rapidly identify and manage risks and issues.

- We have clear and consistent processes, effective governance, and shared priorities for action.
- We demonstrate our impact for people we support and for all disabled people.
- Our information and data is secure.

Priorities

- Make our digital systems work together well.
- Embed our care planning system Nourish.
- Upgrade our rostering system, supported by a programme of change communication, so that we have the right colleagues in place at the right time for the people we support.
- Strengthen our internal ways of working.
- Develop an impact framework to measure the difference we make for the people we support, the communities we work in and wider society.
- Use our data better to help us reach our goals.

A powerful brand

Our brand reflects our mission, values and the aspirations of people we support.

Outcomes

- A brand that is trusted, recognised and influential.
- We have improved lives through our campaigning.
- We are provider of choice for commissioners.

Priorities

- Develop a new brand identity, shaped by insight from people we support, our colleagues and our ambitions for the future.
- Deliver high-impact campaigns that fight for the rights of disabled people and autistic people.
- Deliver internal campaigns that promote the culture of our organisation.

Making things happen

Our Big Plan is an ambitious programme of work that involves every colleague. We have established a Delivery Board to oversee this work, make sure we are on track and stay focused on the ambitions of the Big Plan and whether what we are doing is working. We want to do the right thing and the things that will achieve our goals, so we will adapt our plan and be responsive to feedback.

Year 1: Putting the right foundations in place: Improving our quality, improving our finances, systems and processes.

Year 2: Embedding co-production in everything we do, relaunching our brand, innovating our offer, sustainable, evidence-led growth, employer of choice.

Year 3: Increased revenue, healthy reserves, increased brand recognition.

Year 4: Provider of choice for people looking for support, influential campaigner, strategic partnerships with our funders to deliver a full-service offer.

Measuring our performance

We will measure how we are doing by looking at our performance through four different perspectives. We will ask ourselves:

1. Are people we support genuinely shaping their lives, their support and the organisation?
2. Do colleagues feel valued, capable and equipped to deliver the Big Plan?
3. Are we financially secure and able to invest in our ambitions?
4. Is the support we provide consistently safe, high quality and trusted?

We will track and report on our progress, identifying where we need to learn, improve or make changes to meet our goals. We will also benchmark ourselves against other organisations who deliver similar support for people. We will report to our Board of Trustees and our People's Forum so they can challenge us and offer strategic direction. This will help us to act where we need to do things differently as well as celebrate and share our successes.

Our impact

Many sources of information will help us understand our performance against our Big Plan, from financial reports and our colleague surveys, to the ratings regulators award us and local authority contracts we win.

But our most important measure of success will be people we support telling us they can live the life they want to and feel supported to achieve their goals – big and small – every day.

So we will develop a new Impact Framework to help us understand the difference we are making for people we support and our wider societal impact in improving the lives of all disabled people.