



Groundswell strategy 2020 – 2023

Vision

Our vision is of an equal and inclusive society, where the solutions to homelessness come from the people with experience of homelessness.

Mission

Groundswell exists to enable people who have experience of homelessness to create solutions and move themselves out of homelessness – to benefit of our whole society.

Core Beliefs

- The whole community benefits when we effectively tackle homelessness and social exclusion.
- We believe in people. People are society's most valuable resource, and everyone has the capacity to make a contribution.
- There is no "them" and "us" – only us. Groundswell brings everyone together to create genuine solutions to homelessness.
- Participation works. Supporting people to participate creates more effective services and policy – and crucially enables people to move out of homelessness.

Background

Developments since our last strategy

Briefly reflecting on the goals of the last strategy, the strategy survey indicated that staff and volunteers, broadly speaking, feel that from 2017 to early 2020:

- Progress on growing Homeless Health Peer Advocacy in London has been impressive
- The work to develop nationally is moving but could have been quicker
- We need to invest more in our progression team to ensure peers get the support they need
- The growth in our Insight & Action work is impressive, though the impact of the work needs to be more clearly communicated
- We are well on track to be a healthier and more robust organisation
- Our profile and reputation has grown over this period.

Hopefully, these sentiments are reflected in our future plans.



Covid-19

At the time lockdown began in mid-March, much of the work on this strategy had been done and we were planning an away day with staff and volunteers to launch it and begin more detailed work planning. Instead we have finalised this document remotely and plan to keep working on what we believe will be the most impactful way forward for Groundswell.

Financially, we are in a good position to move ahead. There is a clear financial plan which can be adapted as needed and our funders have been very supportive, adapting with us as the pandemic unfolds. Operationally, the whole team has worked hard to continue delivering our usual work whilst responding to the ever-changing environment. All the information on our response to Covid-19 is on our website.

As the world continues to change around us, we will continue to be adaptable and responsive, meeting need where we can and staying true to our core beliefs. Groundswell is an organisation that is about people who have experienced homelessness creating positive change for people who are homeless, and we will stay that way through the pandemic. **There is no “them” and “us”.**

The thinking behind the new strategy

Striking the right balance between producing this strategy together and taking up too much of people’s time is tricky. What is written is a culmination of conversations that include amongst other things:

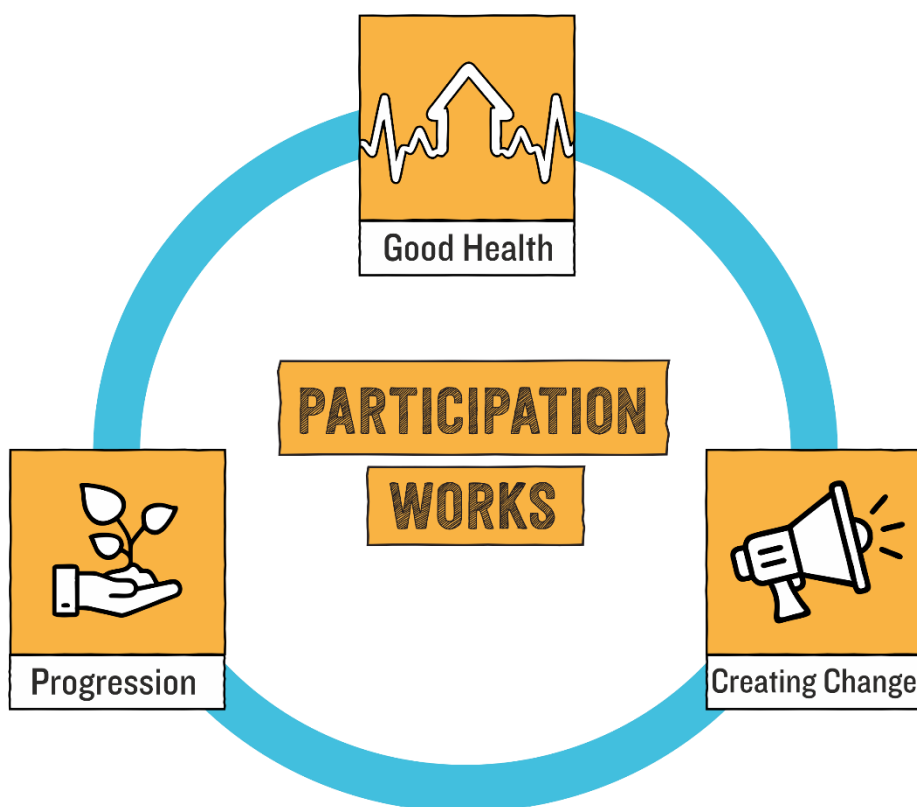
- The May 2019 away day which focused on participation
- Workshops on developing the national #HealthNow strategy
- Discussions with peers on what they want from the Progression Programme
- Insight & Action business planning and substantial peer researcher feedback

The Strategy survey at the end of 2019 was completed by over two-thirds of the staff team, five trustees and six volunteers. The responses to the survey are heavily used in this document. In some instances, the goals here also borrow wording from existing programmes of work, for example #HealthNow and the development of the Progression Programme.

This will always be a working document which will evolve with the external environment. Progress in all three areas will be a regular focus of discussion at every level of the organisation, with partners and people experiencing homelessness. Together, we can consider what we know, what we need to find out, and what we are learning, and apply that learning to achieve more.

Our three-year strategy: 'Participation Works'

This three-year strategy has three connected strands. They are shown in the diagram and explained in more detail in the text that follows. In all areas we are strongly committed to partnership working wherever this more effectively provides impact.



Progression



This strand represents all our work on developing and supporting a workforce with experience of homelessness to participate in designing and delivering solutions to homelessness whilst progressing in their own lives, which after the pandemic will be increasingly digital and online.

Peer engagement

Develop a national network of volunteers with experience of homelessness to support delivery of all three strands of this strategy.

Employment

Create opportunities for Groundswell staff and volunteers to progress into fulfilling careers.

Participatory practice

Have the right participatory structures across the organisation to guide good governance and our learning as an organisation.

Good Health



We believe health is the foundation to move out of homelessness. This strand represents all our people focused health work; innovative services that enable people to access the health care they need and the work we do to promote a healthy and sustainable working environment both within Groundswell and as tools to share with others.

Homeless health services

Support people experiencing homelessness to access the health care they need through personalised Homeless Health Peer Advocacy (HHPA) services across the UK.

Health promotion

Give people experiencing homelessness the tools to understand and take control of their situation; recognising how to make safer informed choices about their own lives.

Healthy Groundswell

Ensure that Groundswell is a leader in the Health and Social Care sector with regards to providing a healthy and satisfying place to work and volunteer.

Creating Change

“It is crucial that people experiencing homelessness have their views heard and taken into account and that this is used to inform how services are designed and delivered at a local level and to use this to challenge national policy.” – Staff comment in the strategy survey



This strand of the strategy represents all the work we will be doing to challenge and change policy and practice. This cuts across the whole organisation, e.g. the #HealthNow goals of reducing health inequalities, sharing knowledge through Insight & Action research and demonstrating the effectiveness of our support model to make participation and progression of people with experience of homelessness the norm.

Challenging policy

Use the views and experiences of the people we work with to create action locally and nationally that challenges policy and breaks down barriers to good support and healthcare.

Changes in practice

Use our knowledge base to provide the tools to change systems and improve services at a local and national level.

Increasing awareness

Keep the issue of homelessness in the forefront of people's minds by communicating the experiences of people who are homeless. Raise awareness and understanding of barriers to accessing health and other homelessness services.