

FURTHER, FASTER, FOR ALL.

STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
2021-2026

ROYAL FREE
CHARITY

Foreword from our chief executive

In 2005, I was invited by the American Cancer Society to join a huge cancer patient lobbying event in front of the Capitol Building in Washington DC. Before visiting their representatives and senators, the crowd of thousands of cancer patients and their loved ones were addressed by the relatively unknown junior US Senator for Illinois, Barack Obama. He spoke eloquently about the power of individuals to create positive change. In 2008, as he accepted the Democratic nomination for president, he returned to this theme with a quote which I've remembered ever since:

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change we seek."

Change provokes strong emotional reactions. It can be exhilarating and inspiring. It can be frightening and disempowering. It can bring a team or a community together or it can pull them apart. It can make you feel hope and optimism, or it can make you feel like something dear to you is slipping away.

In 2021, we are all living through seismic changes affecting every area of our lives. We know it can be comforting to cling to certainties and old habits. But the people and organisations who will thrive in the years ahead are those who see change as an opportunity not a threat, who can respond to change positively and proactively and who are willing, themselves, to change.

The Royal Free Charity is an incredible organisation which changes lives every day. But we can and must do more. This strategy describes the changes we have been through, the changing environment around us and how we want to change in future so that we can help everyone served by the Royal Free London to have access to the best healthcare in the world. We are the ones our patients, our researchers and our NHS colleagues are waiting for. We are the change they seek.

- Jon Spiers, May 2021

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Our vision and mission

Vision

Our vision is for everyone served by the Royal Free London to have access to world-leading healthcare, delivered by a thriving workforce and driven by medical research that has a global impact.

Mission statement

The Royal Free Charity supports our hospitals, our NHS colleagues, our patients and our researchers.

From small acts of kindness to huge investments in discovery and innovation, everything we do changes lives for the better.

Our extraordinary volunteers enrich the experience of patients and the support they provide to NHS staff is transformational.

We're there when patients need us, thanks to the services we provide. And the grants that we make help our hospitals to accelerate vital medical research and invest in innovations to help patients and staff.

All this is made possible by the generosity of our supporters who help our hospitals go further and faster than the NHS could do alone.

Introduction: our past, our present and our future

In 1828 a young surgeon, William Marsden, found a girl dying on the steps of a church and couldn't find a hospital which would admit her. Shocked, he gathered a group of philanthropists and founded what became the Royal Free Hospital, now one of three hospitals comprising the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust.

Now, as then, charitable donations and legacies are a linchpin of support for the hospitals and the Royal Free Charity contributes to all areas of the Royal Free London's work. The value of philanthropy and of broad civic engagement with healthcare was brought into sharper-than-ever focus with the NHS during the most challenging time in its history, navigating through the COVID-19 crisis and beyond, with resources stretched and a workforce strained.

As the Royal Free London approaches its 200th anniversary, we're committed to harnessing the extraordinary generosity of our supporters in order to make an impactful and meaningful contribution to the work of the trust. The trust provides local clinical excellence, is home to multiple national specialisms and fosters medical research with the potential for global impact. The Royal Free Charity and our supporters are passionate about all three.

The charity is more than just a support service for the Royal Free London, our NHS colleagues, our patients, our researchers and our communities. Together, we can do things the NHS can't do alone; this has inspired our new strapline, 'Further, Faster, For All'. As an independent organisation, but with deep and strong ties to a powerhouse NHS trust, we're in a unique position to accelerate improvements in patient care, staff experience and medical research locally, nationally and globally.

Five years of progress

We have come a long way, and helped a lot of people, since our last strategy document in 2016. Here is a snapshot of progress made against our 2016-2021 objectives:

- Awarded an £8m grant for a new electronic records management system.
- Made a £2m investment in the out-patient department at the Royal Free Hospital.
- Set up the Royal Free PhD scheme and invested over £10m in medical research.
- Established a support hub to help vulnerable patients stay out of hospital.
- Funded new text message appointment reminders to ensure treatment is not delayed.
- Invested in nurses' accommodation at Graseby House near Barnet Hospital.
- Provided a patient car park and patient accommodation within the Pears Building to allow individuals easier access to the Royal Free site and a better quality of non-clinical overnight stay.
- Created the new home for the Institute of Immunity and Transplantation in the Pears Building and the Charles Wolfson Centre for Reconstructive Surgery.
- Provided free wifi to patients and visitors
- Curated more than 1,000 works of art in our hospitals to improve the patient and staff experience.
- Established a stronger volunteer presence with volunteers doubling to 900 (pre-COVID) and becoming a welcoming presence in the hospitals through our meet-and-greet volunteers, ready to direct and help navigate to appointments and clinics.
- Developed a hugely popular wider service offer with the merging of the complementary therapy team with the charity, delivery of music on the wards and in public spaces and the establishment of art and pet therapy for patients and staff.
- Provided support for patients being discharged from hospital via a piloted, trusted-assessor programme with care homes, supply clothing, food and other items for people to leave hospital with dignity.
- Created a new best-practice recruitment process and trained managers to recruit staff in a cost-effective, fair, transparent way, ensuring a positive experience for candidates.

The future of the Royal Free Charity

What this strategy framework sets out to achieve:

- A major fundraising player within the NHS charity sector and beyond
- A known and loved local brand
- Large, diverse supporter base
- Solution provider, spanning grants, services and partnerships
- Recognised externally as the key strategic delivery partner of the trust
- Initiator of sector-leading partnerships
- Strategic funder targeting the highest impact areas for investment.
- Working with other trusts and their charities across North Central London
- Co-designing solutions with beneficiaries
- Employer of choice, attracting top talent and investing in our people

How we change lives

The charity focuses its support on three core groups:



Patients and their families, whether those who live locally to the hospitals or those who come from further away to use the trust's specialist services. We enhance the experience of patients throughout their hospital journey, through the services we provide directly and the programmes and equipment we fund on the wards.



The staff of the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, so they can deliver the best possible healthcare.



The researchers working in our hospitals and partner institutes, enabling the Royal Free London to have both a local impact and the potential of national and global reach.

We're an agile and adaptable organisation that acts as a solution provider. We're flexible in how we support the projects and services that deliver the greatest impact in support of our vision and mission:

- Some things we will do ourselves through our services.
- Some things we will support others to do through our grant giving.
- Some things we will work in partnership to deliver or commission others to deliver.

Changing how we're seen by NHS colleagues

We're determined to deepen our engagement at every level of the Royal Free London to ensure that the charity is valued and respected as an independent, yet co-dependent, strategic partner.

The broad principles we apply when communicating with trust colleagues are:

Tell as we spend: We favour a style of communication that talks directly to our NHS colleagues as close as possible in time to the roll-out of projects funded and/or delivered by us. This helps NHS staff understand the impact we're having.

Remember the donors: None of the projects we deliver and/or fund could happen without our donors and fundraisers. It's them – not us – who made it possible. We're proud to talk about the generosity and commitment of our supporter base so that – whether it's the everyday work we do in the hospitals or the major projects we fund – our work is always associated with our ability to attract financial support from our community.

Changing how we're seen by patients, families and friends

The RFL sees 1.6 million patients a year and we want to reach as many of them as possible. Communications should be two-way wherever possible and our own output should be engaging, natural and responsive to need.

Our new brand will be crucial in helping us to build a lasting kind of influence, building a relationship with our audience based on empathy and shared values. To do that we need to know who we're talking to, so we'll take care to segment our communications to ensure they're equally relevant to a wide range of people and to respond to their questions, needs and concerns.

Changing how we see ourselves

Achieving our mission relies on our most important asset: our people. With a high performing, innovative, well-supported, resilient and highly skilled team, we can successfully move from good to great across all our corporate functions:

Fundraising: Major income growth through a diverse portfolio with best-in-class donor stewardship.

Comms and engagement: Deep and broad community support underpinned by a compelling brand, engaging, inspiring storytelling and the ability to gather insights and ideas from all our beneficiaries.

Grants: Sector-leading grant making for maximum impact, bolstered by co-production expertise and thematic grant calls in priority areas.

Services: High-impact, holistic service delivery model with the ability to flex to new demands.

People, finance and operations: Highly collaborative support functions with a strong customer service ethos and commitment to continuous Improvement.

A new set of organisational values, being developed by our staff across the first year of our strategy, will be embedded across the organisation to strengthen employee engagement, job satisfaction and work morale. We're committed to creating an inclusive and collaborative workplace culture built on principles that all our employees believe in and which will lead to fulfilment in their work while achieving the charity's aim of becoming an employer of choice. Our new values will also help us to provide the trust, our donors and supporters with great customer service.

As well as fostering a fantastic work culture, we want all our staff to feel connected to the vital work of the charity.

We'll build on the initiatives introduced by the new engagement and communications department – telling the stories of the difference we make and connecting every member of staff, no matter their seniority nor the department in which they work, to the vital work we're funding in the hospitals.

We want our staff to feel not only fully informed but also able to influence decisions and field new ideas. We'll create the forums for this, and we'll always report back to our staff on how we're doing across our key objectives.

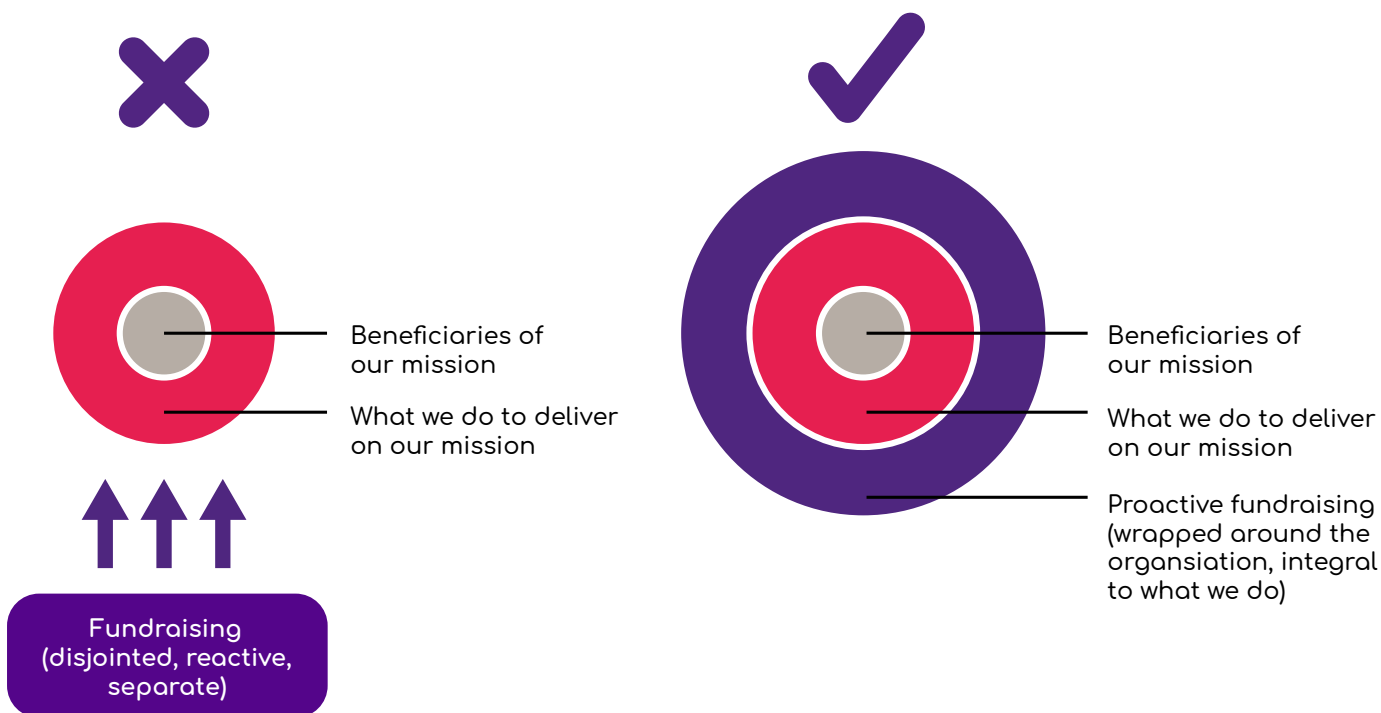
Volunteers

Many of our volunteers have a deep loyalty and passion for volunteering in the hospitals. This is borne out of a desire to give something back or perhaps to say thank you for the care they or a loved one has received. From our recent success at achieving Investing in Volunteering status, we have had external validation that volunteers feel truly valued and supported as part of the charity structure, but we can always do more, and we always strive to involve and bring our volunteers with us as the charity develops and achieves new milestones. We want them to know they have a voice and can actively help to steer our decision making. Like our staff, we want them to feel proud of the organisation they volunteer with and to act confidently as an advocate of our work.



Above
Royal Free Volunteer at
Hampstead Gown Factory

Changing to become proudly fundraising focused



The diagram above sets out two distinct ways of thinking about fundraising and explains why we choose the 'wraparound' model on the right.

We're a supporter-centric organisation, and we want our supporter base to be broad, as well as deep.

Building a wide base of supporters at all income levels creates a community of people who are personally invested in our cause and can become our ambassadors of tomorrow. They represent us locally, efficiently increasing our reach, by introducing their own networks to the work of the charity.

We want to be a highly visible local charity in all the parts of north London served by the Royal Free London. We also want to reach out to the wider patient community services who receive care at the hospitals because of the Royal Free London's national, and often international, specialist status for certain areas of healthcare.

We know we must be embedded in the communities we serve, in particular:

- the general public of patients and their families, past, present and future
- the 10,000 strong workforce of the Royal Free London
- the staff and volunteers of our own organisation, the Royal Free Charity, and our subsidiaries

The strategic value of our service provision to our wider mission

The services we provide to patients help us achieve our charitable mission while providing core strategic benefits to the charity.

The staff and volunteers of our services team have been described frequently as the “heart and soul” of the charity in the hospitals. Across our large, best-in-class volunteer programme and our massage and support hub teams, we have fostered strong links with staff and patients of the Royal Free London. Our people see and hear the stories, the stresses, the upset and the joys of everyday life. This level of insight is a vital part of how we can help come up with solutions and it also establishes us within the community as a credible, visible force for good. As we grow our new engagement and communications function, we can tell stories about the lives we have changed through the services we provide directly and inspire donors and future volunteers to join our community of supporters.

We believe our volunteers are the ‘jewel in the crown’ of the charity. Their roles are designed around both improving patient experience and saving NHS staff time. With their recognisable branded clothing, they give the impression that help is ‘around every corner’; indeed, we have heard versions of that phrase told to us by trust staff again and again. Our volunteers support new mums struggling with breastfeeding. They bring joy and comfort by sharing their therapy dogs with staff and patients alike. They sit patiently holding the hand of elderly patients living in a world of dementia, providing them with a warm and comforting touch. What seem like small acts can leave a long-lasting impression on patients and their loved ones.



Above
We invest in the future of our local young people with our young volunteers programme

We were one of the first hospital volunteer programmes in England to lower the age limit of volunteers to 16 and have provided hundreds of volunteers from the local area the opportunity to participate in the running of the hospital. Volunteers have gained skills for employment or secured places in healthcare education, many becoming the doctors, nurses and healthcare assistants of tomorrow. These volunteers will always remember the Royal Free Charity, and many will become lifelong supporters.

Our team of clinically-approved massage therapists are deeply embedded on the wards, delivering more than 20,000 treatments a year. The therapists are fully integrated into the trust and can support patients across almost all clinical specialisms. The team have a successful fundraising track record and there is scope for growing this in the future.

The support hub was the first centre of its kind in the country – an example of how the charity can contribute to the trust's culture of 'firsts'. By empowering people with long-term conditions to manage their health and helping them to access financial and housing support, the hub not only benefits the trust by supporting vulnerable patients being discharged, reducing re-admissions and helping patients manage their conditions; it also positions the charity as an innovator and leader in bridging the gap and raising the bar for all.



Above
Our support hub

Strategic objectives 2021-22

- 1.** Support the Royal Free London through COVID recovery as a valued strategic partner.
- 2.** Lay the foundations for our longer-term growth aspirations, as we transform into a proudly fundraising-focused organisation.
- 3.** Focus on organisational resilience and adaptability, embracing new ways of working.

Strategic objectives beyond 2021-22

- 1.** Support major investment into our hospitals by significantly increasing our fundraising income across five years, aiming for a year-on-year increase of at least 15% in BAU income and laying the foundations for an additional £60m+ in capital appeals income.
- 2.** Systematically and continuously deepen and enrich our relationships with our beneficiaries and our communities, proactively communicating our purpose and impact, building long-term loyalty and increasing our brand reach and awareness
- 3.** Deliver best-in-class volunteering and services in our hospitals, ensuring that the additional benefits of our service offer are optimised to maximise the return for the charity and share best practice with our peers.
- 4.** Double our grants contribution over five years including R&D, equipment and service improvement but excluding capital appeals, fully completing our transition from a reactive grant funder to a proactive solution provider with an increased emphasis on co-production.
- 5.** Continue to improve our internal capabilities and capacity and invest more in our people, aiming to become an employer of choice in the sector by 2025.

Our prioritisation framework

As an agile and adaptable organisation, we're flexible in how we support the projects and services that deliver the greatest impact and achieve the best outcomes. To assess this, we'll use our strategic prioritisation framework. The framework will assess strategic proposals against three considerations:

STAGE 1: Does the project support our mission and beneficiaries?

It should either:

- support patients (either local to the trust or those from further away who use its specialist services)
- or
- support trust staff to enable them to deliver high quality care
- or
- support locally-delivered research

STAGE 2: What impact and improvement on outcomes does the project deliver?

1. Is there demand/need within the trust?
2. What is the impact on beneficiaries?
(High, medium, low impact AND many, some, few beneficiaries)
3. Is the proposal unique or are there other ways this need can be met?

STAGE 3: Is the proposal feasible/deliverable? And is it best for us to deliver it or for someone else to do so on our behalf?

Feasibility assessment:

1. Fundraising potential
2. Internal ability to deliver
3. Benefits of delivering internally
4. Ability to commission external body to deliver
5. Benefits of commissioning externally
6. Financial implications

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