

THE TURN AROUND PROJECT

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023



Helping people serving sentences to turn around their futures.

INTRODUCTION

Much has been done to reform and improve the justice system in Northern Ireland in recent years.

Yet, too many people who receive criminal justice sentences end up re-offending and serving more time in custody or under supervision in the community. In simple terms, the system that is supposed to reduce re-offending consistently records a re-offending rate of around 60%¹. There has to be a better way.

In our view, this better way will not be found by the criminal justice system alone. That's because many of the issues that lead people into the justice system, and hinder them from getting out of it, are social issues.

Some of those require change in other public services; others require different parts of the system to work better together, particularly as people transition out of the justice system.

But others require a different approach within society as a whole.

The Turnaround Project believes that too often, society turns its face away from the justice system, 'outsourcing' the issues around offending to justice agencies and assuming that the passing of a sentence is the end of the story. But the story continues, and the passing of a sentence often deepens the rupture between the person who has been sentenced and society; and the deeper that rupture, the harder it becomes for that person to turn around their future.

So, the way we work to help people turn around their futures is by also turning around the wider community, encouraging people to turn their faces *towards*, rather

than *away from*, the justice system and the people sentenced to serve time within it.

We are working to find new ways of enabling and supporting people to make the transition out of the system; new ways of encouraging the wider community to see the links between criminal justice issues and social justice issues; and new ways of working together as people who have, and haven't served sentences, to find new solutions to old challenges.

Registered as a charity in 2017, we are still a young organisation. But over the last few years we have laid a foundation upon which our Board, staff and volunteers will work in pursuit of our vision of an inclusive community where everyone has hope and opportunity.

This Strategic Plan sets out the Outcomes and Objectives we will work to achieve. But while we are clear about where we are going, we will be flexible about how we get there. We are open to exploring new ideas and approaches, and in particular to

"our vision is an inclusive community where everyone has hope and opportunity."

learning from people with lived experience of spending time in, and transitioning out of, the justice system.

Indeed, the Turnaround Project is in the business of 'movement-building'. Reflecting our values of *creating opportunity, respecting each other and committing to inclusion*, our strategy must create space for the Turnaround Project to grow in ways that are shaped by the experiences, ideas and inputs of people who join us as we go along.

¹ Figures released by the Department of Justice in 2017 showed that of adults released from prison in 2014/15, 61.2% had committed previous offences, and 37.4% went on to commit a further offence within 12 months of release.

We want Turnaround to be an organisation that works *with* people rather than *for* them. Rather than delivering pre-prepared solutions to people, we want to involve them in the creation and development of new solutions.

So, while this strategy document sets out the broad framework within which we plan to work over the next three years, it is also an invitation...

An invitation to the broad range of stakeholders listed on the following pages - as individuals and organisations - to work with us to redefine the boundaries between the justice system and the wider community.

You may be someone who has been through the justice system and wants to develop a plan for your own future, or someone who has been there and now wants to help shape someone else's journey. You might be a property owner who would consider engaging our grounds maintenance enterprise, providing you with 'social value for money' as well as 'financial value for money'.

You may be an employer who is willing to engage in a conversation about offering someone hope and opportunity. Or a member of the community with skills or

experiences to share with others, and a desire to learn about other people's journeys.

We will need business people with skills to help develop our enterprises; communicators to help tell the stories that will inspire others to become involved; and volunteers and staff to help run a high-achieving organisation.

Whatever you think you might be able to bring to the Turnaround Project - your ideas, experience, skills or enthusiasm - we invite you to join us as we work together to help turn futures around.

We believe that together, we can find a better way. A way that heals - rather than deepens - the ruptures that are caused when people offend, and when they receive criminal justice sentences. A way that helps people to use their strengths to take control of their lives and turn around their futures. A way that also encourages people to help others to turn around their futures. And a way that brings them and the wider community together to learn about their different stories, share experiences and ideas, and support each other on their journeys.

That is what we mean when we talk about opportunity, hope, respect and inclusion.



OUR VISION

An inclusive community where everyone has hope and opportunity.

OUR GOALS

All of our work is aimed at achieving two goals:

- **To help people serving sentences to turn around their futures**
- **To engage the wider community in supporting them on that journey**

OUR VALUES

The values that all of us as trustees, staff and volunteers commit to demonstrating in our engagement with the Turnaround Project:

1. **We create opportunity**

Each of us has opportunities to learn, grow and play a part in our community. We work to enable, encourage and support each other by creating opportunities to build new futures.

2. **We nurture hope**

Each of us is more than our pasts. We use our past experiences to guide us and strengthen us, but we don't allow them to define us or limit our futures.

3. **We respect each other**

Each of us should be treated with respect and dignity. Whatever our backgrounds, we value each other, respect differences, and work together to achieve our goals.

4. **We are committed to inclusion**

Each of us has strengths and has a positive contribution to make within our community. We all learn from each other and use our experiences to improve our own and other people's futures.

OUR GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The principles that our trustees and management team are committed to:

- Ensuring that we fulfil all our legal, social and environmental responsibilities in line with principles of **good governance**.
- Building social enterprises and community initiatives that are financially and organisationally **sustainable**.
- Basing our decisions, actions and strategic development on **evidence-based research and lived experiences** of the justice system.
- Fostering **courage, creativity and resilience** in our learning and growth.

OUR WORK

Since 2016 we have been researching, planning and implementing an approach that we believe can help us achieve our vision and goals. Our approach to designing that model – our research, engagement and co-design activities, and the academic and social theories that underpin it – is set out later in this document.

The product of all of that research and co-design is a model that comprises three elements:

1. A strengths-based model of support

Respecting their self-determination, and in order to strengthen their sense of personal ‘agency’ we support people to develop their own ‘Turnaround Plan’ – a roadmap of where they want to go beyond the justice system, and how they plan to get there. Each plan is personal, structured around the social and economic factors that have been identified as important on people’s journeys away from the justice system. Turnaround commits to supporting people in achieving them through individual coaching. And we ask each person to use their own learning to support others on the same journey.

2. Transitional training and employment

At the centre of our model is ‘transitional employment’, using enterprise to give people the opportunity to experience and demonstrate competency in real jobs, in real businesses, before and after they complete their sentences.

We currently run two enterprises. [Big Loop Bikes](#) is our social enterprise that uses staff and community volunteers to teach students skills in bike repair and management. [Outwork](#) is our grounds maintenance service.

Within Outwork, people who are allowed to work in the community on day release while still in prison generally work for a period as trainees (rewarded by 50% of minimum wage rates being paid into a grant that they can access at the end of their sentence to help them move on) then become ‘transitional’ employees post-release. Others on ‘working out’ programmes or serving community sentences join as transitional employees.

Transitional employment environments differ from conventional environments in the way they offer a more supportive, flexible ethos that is designed to take account of the complex issues people face at that stage of their journeys.

3. Shared, supportive communities

Desistance is not only about changes in individual behaviour and identity, but also relies on people’s access to positive networks and developing a sense of belonging. So, Turnaround’s approach is also designed to develop community capital, engaging people who have served sentences and others who have not in a shared, supportive community that engages in supporting its own members and others in wider society. Engaging in volunteering and social activities, chosen by the members of our community, helps to build everyone’s sense of agency, to shape how they are perceived by themselves and by others, and to strengthen their sense that they have something to offer.

With this in mind, and tying in our approach to transitional employment, we are developing the concept of a ‘New Futures Centre’. While we are developing that concept through co-



design, the emerging picture is of a place where social and private enterprises employ people before and after they leave the justice system; where we work in partnership with the private sector to ensure people are ready to enter the job market; provide incubation space and advice for people wanting to start their own enterprises; and support people to manage the opportunities and challenges of the gig-economy.

Alongside these employment activities, the centre could provide continuing support to address other factors that hinder people's journey away from offending: health and wellbeing, housing and restorative justice. And fundamental to its success, the centre would provide space where people who have been through the justice system, and people from the wider community who have not, could share their experiences and skills to strengthen social and community capital.

Our view is that under-used prison and community assets could be re-purposed within a community enterprise asset strategy that engages the wider community in supporting people to turn around their futures and creates opportunities to redefine traditional boundaries between the justice system and the society it serves.

OUR STRATEGY - AN OVERVIEW

In pursuit of our vision and our goals, we have developed a strategy for 2020-23 based around four themes:

1. **Providing transitional training and employment**
2. **Developing agency through strengths-based support**
3. **Building shared, supportive communities**
4. **Growing as a sustainable, high-achieving organisation**

THEME 1: PROVIDING TRANSITIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

The outcomes that we will work to achieve under this theme:

- People have access to paid meaningful work as they transition out of the justice system
- People increase their employability through formal and informal training activities
- People are supported into conventional employment

In pursuit of those outcomes we will:

- Provide 24 individuals with a transitional employment placement (including at least 10 females)
- Provide 24 individuals with accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities (including at least 10 females)
- Support 12 individuals into conventional employment (including at least 5 females)

THEME 2: DEVELOPING AGENCY THROUGH STRENGTHS-BASED SUPPORT

The outcomes that we will work to achieve under this theme:

- People can demonstrate that they have built upon their own strengths and experiences through working with Turnaround.
- People with lived experience of the justice system can demonstrate how they have used their own experience to support others on that journey.

In pursuit of those outcomes we will:

- Develop individual plans and records of achievement
- Develop coaching programme
- Develop peer support framework

THEME 3: BUILDING SHARED, SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

The outcomes that we will work to achieve under this theme:

- The wider community is more willing to accept and re-integrate people who have served sentences.
- People who have served sentences have strengthened social networks.
- An integrated community of people is involved in developing the Turnaround Project and supporting each other on their journeys.

In pursuit of those outcomes we will:

- Inspire people in the community to engage with Turnaround as volunteers, supporters and advocates
- Create spaces for 'Turnaround Community' activities and initiatives
- Involve people with lived experience of the justice system in Turnaround Project decision-making

THEME 4: GROWING AS A SUSTAINABLE, HIGH-ACHIEVING ORGANISATION

The outcomes that we will work to achieve under this theme:

- Turnaround is a financially resilient and thriving organisation.
- Turnaround is an accountable organisation that meets its legal, social and environmental responsibilities.
- Turnaround is a collaborative, networked organisation committed to best practice.
- Turnaround's work is leading to system change within the statutory and non-statutory justice sectors.

In pursuit of those outcomes we will:

- Increase income from a diverse base of donors and contracts
- Recruit, retain and nurture talented staff, volunteers and trustees
- Establish network of expert pro-bono support for organisational development
- Conform to best practice standards of governance
- Develop culture and practice of learning, knowledge-sharing and exploring new ideas and approaches

