



# Life Opportunities

'Embracing  
Disability,  
Empowering  
Lives'



## STRATEGY FOR 2015-2020

In simple terms, a strategy is a plan for the future – a roadmap for the next journey, showing a clear vision for where we want to be by 2020 (and beyond) and what steps we are going to need to take to get there.

Before we begin this journey, let's set out our purpose:

***Within SoLO we see our members with a learning disability spending time in an environment that is comfortable, safe and secure enabling them to be stretched, challenged and take risks. We are happy with what we see, but we want more. In the future, we want to ensure that our members are not excluded from society in institutional settings, but are provided an environment that equips them for the future. We want to give them the skills and experience they need to become free-thinking people able to make choices and take control of their lives. We want to see the lives of our children with a learning disability enhanced as they become adults, not shrink with less opportunity and less freedom. We want to provide for our adults with a learning disability the chance to experience all that life has to offer, have fun and be happy.***

Journeys are always better when the group of travellers all have a shared understanding of where they are going and it helps if they all want to go!

Within SoLO, our travellers are:

- Our members with a learning disability
- Our parents and carers
- Our people – both paid and voluntary
- Our stakeholders – the people who fund us, support us and believe in us

We have involved them in a range of information gathering sessions through:

- ✚ Group Focus
- ✚ Surveys
- ✚ Individual conversations

The following document captures the outcomes of those various conversations and gives SoLO our map for the future.

## OUR VISION... in a nutshell



**High Quality Services that are fit for purpose, delivered by a well supported, confident and skilled staff team (both paid and voluntary) that enable our members to reach their full potential**

## OUR VALUES... spelt out

Vision requires Values – they go hand in hand. Our research has established buy in across the organisation to the following set of values that will underpin all we do:

**F**un loving.... This is the essence of what SoLO is about. We will use enjoyable social and leisure experiences as the tool to unlock our members' potential, enable them to build skills, make new friends and have their place in society. We will be flexible and ready to take on innovation and accept challenge.

**I**ntegrity.... In our relationships with our members, colleagues, parents/carers and supporters, we will act with honesty and respect. We will listen, reflect and act appropriately in all our interactions.

**T**raining.... We will be a learning organisation, providing for our members, voluntary and paid staff the opportunities to grow and develop. Through training, development and support, we will ensure that we are able to deliver excellent services with outstanding outcomes for all involved.

SoLO will be **FIT** for purpose.

## OUR JOURNEY... where we started



For 15 years, SoLO has been on a journey, from the nebulous of an idea in 2000 with £500 in the bank and an energetic volunteer trustee board to a vibrant organisation in 2015 turning over just under £1,000,000, serving over 1000 members with a learning disability and involving over 400 people (both paid and voluntary) in its delivery.

Through that time, the organisation has changed with the environment, re-branded and developed new services to meet the opportunities presented by personalisation.

Whilst still delivering our core services with Solihull, it is starting to expand into other areas, as the need grows.

We work with all ages, our youngest member joining us at the age of 4 and our current oldest member over 60.

This next part of the journey offers us the opportunity to reflect and review.



## OUR JOURNEY... review

We will take three months to review various areas of our working, to test out:

- ✚ Our people
- ✚ Our services
- ✚ Our communication
- ✚ Our competitors/partners
- ✚ Our finances

## OUR JOURNEY ... reflect

We will use the outcomes of this review to shape the organisation to deliver on the key themes that have been identified through the strategy discussions

## OUR JOURNEY... action

We have identified the following themes that will be the focus on our three year strategy:



### 1. Effective use of Assets

We have developed two purpose built bases which provide opportunities for both children and adults with a learning disability to meet their friends, socialise, learn new skills and access the local community. They were purchased to enable us to expand and have enabled us to do this. We now need to ensure they are used fully in the future.

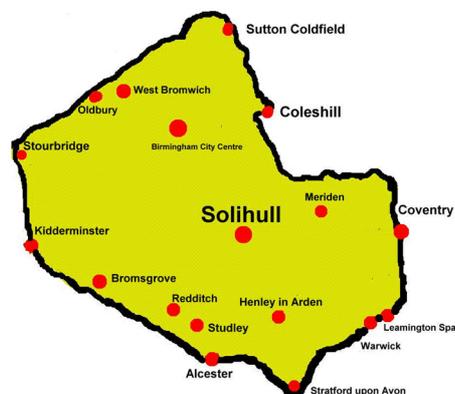
We will seek to fund and build a larger facilities room at Walnut Close to enable those with more challenging behaviour to be accommodated – thus increasing the

reach of this facility to enable us to incorporate, in particular, our specialist holiday schemes for children with more complex needs.

By 2020 we will have grown Daylight<sup>i</sup> towards a 14 day service across both sites, with the development of an integrated 'Cameo'<sup>ii</sup>

## 2. Geography

For the past 15 years we have worked predominantly within Solihull with 95% of our work focused on this area. We are aware, from parental feedback at out of borough events that there is a lack of organisations offering bespoke, person centred services and we are well placed to fill this gap. We have already achieved the status of being on the framework for shortbreaks within Warwickshire and we will begin to market our services in this area with the aim to pilot within the first year some PA placements. By 2020, we will be working within Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire, whilst still keeping our current level of activity within Solihull. To support this we will develop a coherent message regarding the charges for such services.



## 3. Supporting those not in receipt of social care funding

There will be, increasingly, in the future a large number of adults who do not meet the criteria for social care funding, living semi-independently, who will require support to live healthy, meaningful lives.

We will develop creative ways of meeting the needs of these people through the continued provision of a range of social and leisure experiences that are cost effective but maintain the high level of support and care.

- ✚ We will increase the number of volunteer led groups, using the models that have already been developed.
- ✚ We will explore partnership working to aid the sustainability of these groups.
- ✚ We will increase our individual financial support, to subsidise these groups, where appropriate
- ✚ We will seek funding to expand the Volunteer Co-ordinator Role to enable us to meet demand for future expansion

By 2020, we will have maintained those subsidised services still fit for purpose and developed other sustainable models in Birmingham, Warwickshire and Coventry.

## 4. Supporting children with disabilities

We will continue to provide services for children who are in receipt of an Education, Health and Social Care Plan (EHC) and we will re-tender for our current work within Solihull. We will explore opportunities outside of Solihull to tender for similar work, building on the success we have already achieved within borough.

## **Growth of Personal Assistants Service<sup>iii</sup>**

There has been a significant growth in the Personal Assistants Service and we recognise that this is an area of increasing need. There is a lack, in the current market, of person centred services which match the worker to the individual and build up lasting relationships (as opposed to an agency model).



We will grow the current service within Solihull, using the financial modelling that has already been developed and will ensure that we have adequate support in place to ensure its success.

We will seek investors to support the marketing of this service outside of Solihull and develop new IT solutions to enable the upscaling of this model whilst still keeping the 'personal touch'.

By 2020, we will be delivering PA services within Solihull, Warwickshire, Birmingham and Coventry.

### **5. Development into new areas of work**

With the move from residential placements to supported living, there is an increased need for high quality providers to enable young people with a learning disability to live in their own home, successfully and with a good life.

We will, in the first year, pilot an approach for supported living within one or two homes in the local area, costing this model to ensure it is delivered on a full cost recovery basis generating a small surplus to set against any set up costs.



By 2020, we will be providing supported living across Solihull for those who wish to leave home and become independent.

### **6. Funding**

All of the above will have a significant impact on our organisation and how it will look in five years' time. We recognise that this strategy provides the opportunity to double our turnover. This will mean significant changes in:

- Staffing
- Accommodation
- Systems

We recognise that this will also require us to source additional investment and we will need to increase our fundraising streams to cope with the demand.

In our last strategy, we planned to move from reliance on one funding source to create a more sustainable model. We have achieved this, grown year on year and consistently delivered more services showing an average growth in service delivery

across the past three years of 15%. Our expenditure and income has not matched this growth – we have achieved ‘more for less’. This has been done through an innovative, ‘can do’ approach which sets us apart from other agencies, but we need to ensure that our growth does not impact on quality or effectiveness. To accommodate our growth plans we will need to continue to diversify our funding, build a culture of continuous improvement and keep our members, staff and volunteers central to any future planning.

To support this need, we will increase the paid support to support fundraising, incrementally, over the first year and build up our existing bid writing volunteer fundraising team. We will review the success of this support and react accordingly.

We will fundraise, specifically, to enable us to provide a robust platform for our Voice Representative Group to grow and have more influence across the organisation.

We will focus on longer term funding to support our strategy. We will not adjust our plans to fit funding, unless we deem it appropriate to do so.

By the end of 2015, we will have re-tendered for children’s services, adults carers breaks, supporting planning within Solihull.

By 2020, we will have increased our long term funding streams and will create year on year surpluses of £25,000 to bring our reserves to the required level.

## **7. Staff Structure, Training and Development**



We recognise that with a growing organisation, structures will need to change with the needs for a more streamline, efficient and effective team. Our review period will focus on ensuring that we have the correct structures in place to meet the demands of the future.

Our parents/carers stated that safety was the most important priority for them when considering any provider for their child/adult with a learning disability.

With the growth of the organisation, will come an increase in beneficiaries, staff and volunteers and we will need to ensure that we have a robust systems approach to support all of our people to be safe, happy and successful.

The Care Certificate gives us a solid framework to design our future training around and offers for our staff and volunteers the opportunity for an accredited programme. The framework will also provide our parents and carers with the assurance that their sons and daughters will be supported by trained and skilled staff and volunteers.

We will pilot the care certificate within the first 6 months, use the learning from this pilot and provide the opportunity for all our staff and volunteers to achieve this qualification.

We will refresh our Training and Development Plan to give other opportunities for staff to be developed and create, within the organisation, a clear succession plan for aspiring managers.

We will increase our apprenticeship offer to include health and social care to enable more young people to gain skills, and continue our apprenticeship programme within the office.

We will explore additional opportunities within the organisation to give our members an opportunity to have paid employment within SoLO.

By 2020 all of our staff and volunteers will have access to an accredited training opportunity.

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<sup>i</sup> Daylight is an alternative community based daytime provision for adults aged 18 with a learning disability in receipt of social care funding

<sup>ii</sup> Cameo is an alternative community based daytime provision for adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities

<sup>iii</sup> Personal Assistants Service is the provision of a skilled, experienced, paid support worker to enable a person in receipt of social care funding to purchase 1-1 care.