

YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE CENTRE



Unitas Youth Zone
2023-2026 Strategy

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“I feel happy and excited when I attend Unitas. I can express myself more freely since coming and I always have someone looking out for me”

Maliq

Age 19

Foreword from Chief Executive



When I joined Unitas as Chief Executive in the summer of 2021, the organisation, and all of our lives, were still in the shadow of the pandemic. We then spent 2022 rebuilding our youth work offer, encouraging our members to return to our open-access provision and re-establishing our relationships with donors, many of whom had not been to visit Unitas in two years or more.

Thankfully, both the pandemic and the important work of getting ourselves back on our feet are now in the rear view mirror. It is therefore the opportune moment to look ahead and plan for the future. That is what this strategy is all about. It's our roadmap for the next three year, moving Unitas from "back to normal" to "performing exceptionally".

We have called this strategy "Young People at the Centre". It is of course literally the case that we want to bring as many young people to our youth centre as possible. But more importantly, we want Unitas to be their space. It isn't my building that I kindly open to young people. It is theirs that I am privileged to humbly serve. Our Trustees, staff and volunteers are all here for young people, and it is young people that give us and our work meaning and purpose. I hope this strategy honours and elevates our young people even further.

Robin Moss
Chief Executive

The Big Picture

Vision

Every young person is supported and empowered to reach their potential

Mission

To provide a safe, fun, inclusive and nurturing space for young people to grow in confidence, develop skills and build resilience

Values

Our three values guide the work that we do at Unitas

RESPECT

We listen and always act as role models

TEAMWORK

We communicate to connect and connect to communicate

INTEGRITY

We are honest and hold each other to account

Our Ambition

In Barnet alone, there are approximately 100,000 residents aged 0-18, meaning that in Unitas' age range (8-19 and up to 25 for young people with additional needs), there are tens of thousands of potential members (and even more when we consider surrounding boroughs).

We are ambitious for our young people and this strategy is ambitious for Unitas.

As a charity, our ambitions are three-fold:

To serve all young people who would benefit from being members of Unitas

To be the best universal access youth provision in North London

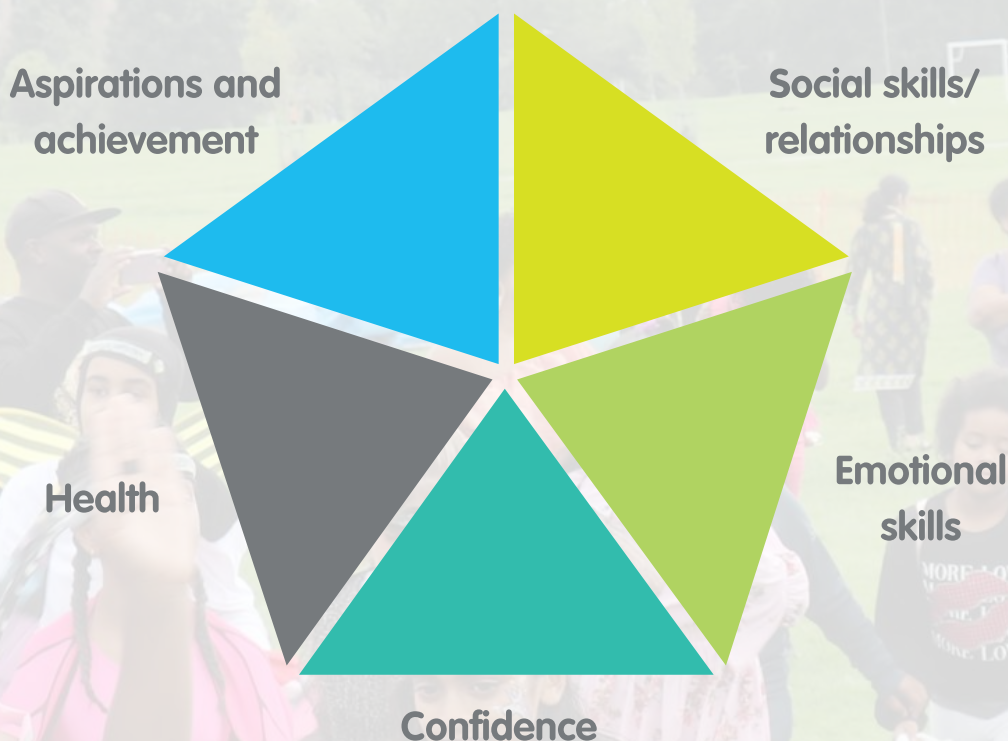
To be an outstanding organisation to work for or volunteer with

Our long-term aspiration is to supplement our base in Burnt Oak with extensive work beyond our walls – outreach, detached and satellite. In addition, our work within our building could be dramatically expanded in scope and depth, introducing not only exciting new activities but also more specialised support services such as professional counselling, one-to-one support work, a youth employment hub and the development of a social enterprise that could train and employ our young people

Focus on Impact

As a vision-led charity, we are in the business of changing young people's lives. We think it's important to focus on how much change we make in young people's lives

The outcomes that our universal impact assessment tool measures are grouped into five categories:



By showing measurable and robust improvements in these outcomes measures, we can both prove the incredible effect that Unitas has on our members' lives but also use the data to further improve our offer. This strategy therefore requires us to further strengthen the quantity, frequency and reach of our data-gathering and analysis. A focus on impact will ensure that Unitas remains relevant, vibrant and most of all vision-led

Our Flywheel

“ Our Flywheel is a simple representation of our strategy. With our vision, mission and values at the centre, it shows the six key areas that will focus on. Each one builds on the others and in turn adds power to them all. Our Flywheel drives our success ”

UNITAS YOUTH ZONE FLYWHEEL



Strategic aspirations and aims

1) Diverse, creative and inclusive youth work is offered in a safe, high-quality facility

The activities that we run and the youth work conversations that surround them are the core of both why young people come to Unitas and the impact that we have on our members' lives. Our building is much more than just a space for activities. It sets the tone and atmosphere and should be an expression of our values.

Strategic aspiration: Unitas should be the best youth provision and youth facility in Barnet

Our aims are:

1. To be open for young people throughout the week, every week
2. To offer both tried-and-tested and innovative, cutting-edge activities and initiatives in every space of the Youth Zone
3. To increase the prominence of and quality of support within the Limitless Club
4. To dramatically increase retention between Juniors and Seniors
5. To ensure attendees on all Clubs are gender-balanced
6. To have robust contextual safeguarding at all times
7. To maintain the building to a high standard at all times
8. To use the building to showcase young people's talents much more
9. To work outside the confines of our building in other spaces in the Borough

Strategic aspirations and aims

2) Clear, vibrant brand and strong local reputation

“Unitas cannot be an island without any links to our local community. Our public persona, social media presence and relationship with local stakeholders (residents, businesses and other agencies) are all important aspects of the organisation that need active cultivation to maintain and strengthen.”

Strategic aspiration: Unitas should be the most-recognised and admired charity in Barnet

Our aims are:

1. To have clear, regularly-updated online information about Unitas
2. To use our social media to speak to our two key audiences: young people and families; and the local community and current and potential donors
3. To raise our profile within Barnet
4. To be good neighbours to local residents in Colindale and Burnt Oak
5. To have a strong partnership with Barnet Council, local schools, the police and other statutory agencies

Strategic aspirations and aims

3) Increased and diversified fundraising

Everything we do depends on money. Without it, our services have to be cut and our impact lessens. Growing our campaign over the next few years is the only way for the rest of the strategy to be delivered.

Strategic aspiration: Unitas should sustainably have an income of £2m (non-capital) a year

Our aims are:

1. To broaden our base of major donors and ensure that no one donor is too large a proportion of our campaign
2. To be seen as a “charity of choice” locally for the community of philanthropists and corporates
3. To gain statutory revenue funding
4. To have many more donors giving at every level of the campaign

Strategic aspirations and aims

4) Recruitment, retention and upskilling of passionate staff and volunteers

“Our people are our greatest asset. Bringing the right people in, offering them the best training and support and retaining them for a good length of time provides both organisational stability and the maximal chance to focus on the young people.”

Strategic aspiration: Unitas should be an exceptional place to work and volunteer

Our aims are:

1. To reduce our turnover rate of paid staff
2. To be a happy, healthy workplace
3. To increase our number of volunteers
4. To have a programme of training opportunities that add value to both staff themselves and the work they do for the organisation
5. To embed Unitas' values into our day-to-day culture

Strategic aspirations and aims

5) Cohesive and dynamic teams with effective leadership

“ Our people are our greatest asset. Bringing the right people in, offering them the best training and support and retaining them for a good length of time provides both organisational stability and the maximal chance to focus on the young people. ”

Strategic aspiration: Unitas staff should be in high-performing teams with supportive leadership

With Trustees, our aims are:

1. To ensure at all times that the Board of Trustees are diverse on skills, experience and background
2. To have effective succession-planning, especially for the Chair
3. To build the Board as a collective

With the Salaried Staff, our aims are:

1. To standardise and strengthen line management
2. To create a healthy culture of feedback, support and unity
3. To strengthen departmental identities
4. To ensure leadership is sustainable, standards-driven and supportive

With the Delivery Staff, our aims are:

1. To invest in the Club Leads as leaders of each session's team
2. To improve punctuality, reliability and other professional practices
3. To take a zero-tolerance approach to bullying in the workplace
4. To improve performance management of sessional staff

Strategic aspirations and aims

6) Continual focus on young people's needs, voice and potential



Young people are at the centre of what we do (and why we do it). In order to remain relevant and impactful, we must always be listening to and responding to our young people.



Strategic aspiration: Unitas' young people should be at the heart of every decision we make

Our aims are:

1. To increase our membership and attendance whilst retaining the ability to truly work with each young person as an individual
2. To be even more knowledgeable about the diversity of young people locally and what that means for our provision
3. To place wellbeing at the centre of Unitas' offer to young people
4. To strengthen the profile and impact of youth voice within Unitas
5. To use the successes of our young people as a way to inspire others to be the best versions of themselves
6. To provide pathways for interested young people to transition into youth work