



## Ideas to help realise a strategy

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SJOG research series  
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## **1.0 Introduction**

SJOG's second conference brought together over 100 people from across the organisation. Aside, from providing an opportunity to network and discuss the activities of the charity, the main part of the day was spent on a facilitated workshop called the big idea.

The 'Big Idea' aimed to get our colleagues to generate ideas that help realise the new strategy that underpins SJOG and have some fun too. The theme of the day was Bigger, Bolder, Brighter – how can we think bigger, be bolder in our ambition and brighter and more innovative in our thinking.

The session was facilitated by Kate Ainscough from Freestyle Innovation who specialise in capturing the voice of experience when designing solutions to problems. By working with our Director of Opportunities, Dr Jamie Mackrill, a series of tasks were created to help generate meaningful ideas.

In this paper we explain the process we went through, the ideas that emerged from the session and what this means.

## **2.0 Workshop session methodology**

The 100 people who attended were split into 12 groups. Each group was tasked with exploring ways that SJOG could be of more use to more people by being cleverer about the way we currently deliver services, or through new bold initiatives. This was framed around our new strategy called 'here to help'.

The new strategy consists of four key themes;

- People
- Colleagues
- Growth
- Sustainability

Four questions were set framed around these themes (figure 1). Each question was given to one group meaning they were answered three times. Before arriving colleagues were asked to think about how they would answer the questions based on the work that they do at SJOG.

**Figure 1.** questions posed to initiate idea development



### 2.1 Part 1 – How might we...?

The first task ‘How might we...?’ was a discussion to encourage groups to explore what ideas to answer the question that was sent for the group. Posing the question ‘how might we’ prompts solution and possibility based thinking. For each idea a post it notes or bullet point was written.

### 2.2 Part 2 – Opportunities

After generating ideas each group created an ‘Opportunity area’. Each idea was grouped into themes and each member of the group voted for their favourite idea to take forward. Three questions were used to prompt thought and discussion if needed:

- What do you like?
- What is important?
- What do you need?

Groups were encouraged to be bold and ambitious in their choice.

### 2.3 Part 3 – Big Idea

Once chosen the next stage was to flesh out the Big Idea. Specifically, each group was asked to answer:

1. What is the idea?
2. Why did you choose the idea (how does it answer the ‘how might we...’ question?)
3. Why is it important?
4. How should we make it real?
5. Why is it bigger?
6. Why is it bolder?
7. Why is it brighter?

The aim was that each group would be able to detail the idea so that mechanisms for realising idea could be explored.

### 3.0 Results

The process of the workshop was to distil and refine ideas so that they can be articulated in a simple way. In order to report on the results easily, we present the idea mapped against each theme and sub theme of the strategy.

#### 3.1 How might we be of more benefit to more people?

Our strategy says that we will make people’s lives more worthwhile through relationships, purpose and being well. The ideas that emerged in this theme covered volunteering, creating outstanding services and broadening opportunities through access to the internet and accessible technologies. We describe how these link to our ambitions to support more people in table 1.

**Table 1.** Ideas for the theme of people mapped against SJOG strategy

Idea	Strategy theme: People		
	Hear people’s voices	Embracing lived experience	Gain control
<b>Grown volunteering</b>	Volunteers are able to build relationships that have reciprocal benefit for them and the people we support. Volunteering also gives purpose to the individual. By growing our volunteers we can support people in activities that enhance their physical and mental wellbeing, helping them gain control of their lives.		
<b>Being outstanding</b>	Outstanding services allow the people we support to achieve their potential. This includes developing and maintain relationships, having activities that give purpose aligned to their abilities, and achieving outcomes that promote physical and mental wellbeing. To do this we will hear their voices and to capture the lived experience and feed this into service development.		
<b>Use accessible technology</b>	Accessible technology can give independence and, with the right support, help people gain control of their lives. They can connect people to the outside world and prevent them feeling “cut off” (Mackrill et al., 2019). A challenge with technology is ensuring that it meets the need – need pull rather than technology push. We will ensure that accessible technology is used appropriately and made available. We will also ensure that the infrastructure to support this (e.g. internet connection) is provided.		

##### 3.1.1 What other ideas were there?

Additional ideas that were explored initially during the session but not taken forward were:

- New services to build new links, friends and interactions both online and in the real world.

- SJOG meeting point – a space for people to meet and interact with activities from across our services
- Use of immersion sensory therapy technologies

### 3.2. How might we better support our colleagues?

Our strategy focuses on supporting SJOG colleagues and volunteers in their physical and mental wellbeing and also their financial wellbeing. We have a focus on living our values every day (LOVED). We are also working towards supporting the financial wellbeing of our colleagues through becoming a living wage employer. We also know that many of us will work longer. Our focus is being an attractive employer, particularly those over the age of 50.

The ideas that emerged around the theme of colleagues focused on infrastructure, flexibility and opportunity, and individual contribution. Table 2 details these further.

**Table 2.** Ideas for the theme of colleagues mapped against SJOG strategy

Idea	Strategy theme: Colleagues		
	LOVED	Living wage employer	Attractive employer
<b>Improve our infrastructure</b>	The organisations infrastructure supports colleagues across SJOG. Our new Access software system will facilitate colleagues to do their job more easily. Training will be provided to make sure that every person can use these systems to make them more efficient in their job.		
<b>Provide flexibility and opportunity</b>	Flexibility and opportunity focuses on offering a range of shift patterns so that colleagues have opportunity to pick up additional work. The idea suggests that this would allow us to be a more attractive employer. The idea also posed the idea of offering SJOG colleagues to other providers should individuals require more work that is not available in our services.		
<b>Promote skills share</b>	All our colleagues have individual skills. By promoting skills share we would recognise that each has more to give than just the role they do. For example, if someone has a gift in playing music, provide music lessons for the people we support and colleagues. The ideas suggest that the approach would improve colleague wellbeing, motivate the people we support through inclusive group activity, and acts free resources to broaden activities. We can also map activities into individual care plans.		

#### 3.2.1 What other ideas were there?

Other ideas that the groups explored were:

- Support with childcare – pop up nursery.
- Service exchange for learning and development
- IT skills academy
- Benefits schemes for a colleague’s wider family.

### 3.3. How might we grow as a charity?

We work in 35 communities. If we grow as a charity, we can be of more benefit to more people. To do this, we need to have the ideas and evidence to deliver new services or replicate our successes, and for that we need to increase our income. This is wrapped in the understanding that we can't do all of this on our own. Partnerships with purpose mean we can contribute what we are good at, and meet the needs of diverse and changing communities. The group ideas touch on these three areas directly and indirectly (see table 3).

**Table 3.** Ideas for the theme of growth mapped against SJOG strategy

Idea	Strategy theme: Growth		
	Replicate service model	Increase earned income	Partnerships with purpose
<b>Reducing agency use</b>	Using agency in the delivery of our services is sometimes necessary but we want to grow our SJOG colleagues. By growing our colleagues across SJOG we are able to meet the needs of more people and grow. To do this, the idea focused on partnerships with colleges, schools and universities to allow us to attract new colleagues and using social media will facilitate this too.		
<b>Building our profile</b>	Social media is a platform for us to talk (shout!) about what we do at SJOG. This idea focused on using this so the people we support can have a voice and create content, for example through case studies and discussion. Doing this will allow the profile of SJOG grow, help us build partnerships and indirectly attract income through donations.		
<b>Replicating our safe houses</b>	We already provide support for people who experience homelessness or are victims of modern day slavery. Through evidencing positive outcomes and appraising the models and pathways we provide we can replicate services. We have opportunity to replicate these service models so that we meet the needs of these people and those who experience disadvantage such as substance misuse and abuse. We might not be the right people to provide for a specific group who experience abuse (such as domestic abuse) but through partnerships we can.		

#### 3.3.1 What other ideas were there?

These were the ideas that the three groups took forward. The groups explored were:

- Knowledge transfer - partnerships with local charities to share good practice
- Becoming community hubs for each local community we work in so that we can be more integrated.
- Create ambassadors from people internal and external to SJOG.
- Life skills pathways. Providing support across the transitions from education to employment and employment to retirement.

### 3.4. How might we become more sustainable as a charity?

Our strategy recognises that we need to be sustainable in our approach. We need to be financially sustainable so we are here in the long term, but we have an impact on the world around us; people and planet. We have adopted the UN's sustainable development goals so that we achieve our purpose while keeping in mind people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership. Table 4 presents our initial ideas that map across our sustainability theme.

**Table 4.** Ideas for the theme of sustainability mapped against SJOG strategy

Idea	Strategy theme: Sustainability		
	Surplus	Fair price	UN Goals
<b>Toy bank</b>	This idea focused on reusing, repairing and recycling new and used toys for people in need. Run as a community group, it would provide opportunities for families to socialise through running exchange events. This prevents land fill waste and also help people save money through using different toys rather than having to buy new ones.		
<b>Promoting our LOVED</b>	Promoting our values in the support we provide but broadening to families and communities we work in was a further idea. Although the exact mechanism to do this outside of SJOG would need to be developed, we will continue to promote our LOVED programme in everything we do and link this to the UN sustainable development goal of peace.		
<b>A pathway home</b>	We already provide support for people who experience homelessness. We recognise that young people also experience this. We can work in partnership to give a safe environment, employment, and education opportunities to these people. By creating a pathway home consisting of education and employment and housing we can help lift individuals out of poverty and lead a more prosperous life.		

#### 3.4.1 What other ideas were there?

Other ideas in the sustainability theme were:

- Recycling in services in partnership with local authorities
- Best before food schemes (projects) to stop food waste
- Sustainable travel and renewable energy usage including solar panels on building
- Grow and bake our own food for our supply chain
- Video conferencing
- Environmental education projects
- Repurposing old clothes and items through a remakery

## **4.0 Discussion**

This presents the ideas that came those at the conference and an activity that lasted just 2.5 hours. Concepts that have been developed here are mapped against the different themes and sub themes of our strategy 'Here to Help'. They provide the bones of the idea. The mechanisms with which to develop and see these ideas through to implementation is required. Indeed, although some of these ideas sound small (e.g. a pathway home), they require work to build partnerships, secure funding and develop an operational model.

### **4.1 Intertwined**

Through exploring these ideas, there is overlap in the themes they relate to. For example, moving to being outstanding in our care offer requires us to hear people's voices and experience but also support colleagues across the organisation. Similarly, developing a toy bank service will help us meet our sustainability theme, yet at the same time reach more people who may experience poverty. As these ideas and others develop, we will be careful to map these our strategy so we are here to help in the fullest sense.

### **4.2 What next?**

Some of the ideas expressed here are already being worked on. Others are new. Piloting some smaller initiatives, such as the toy bank, offer the means to refine the idea further and ensure feasibility. Within the ideas that were mentioned some were not explored in full. Of the ideas that were not explored in detail the following offer exciting opportunities:

- Use of immersion sensory therapy technologies
- Service exchange
- SJOG meeting point online and in the real world
- Life skills pathways
- Grow, bake, and make for our own supply chains

We will look to develop the thinking behind these so that we can test the viability.

### **4.3 An approach to harness ideas**

The workshop has itself developed a new process that we can take forward. The methodology described here acts as a toolkit for colleagues across SJOG to capture their ideas and work up the thinking behind them. Harnessing the genius and knowledge of the people we support and our colleagues facilitated through these tools will allow us to be 'Here to help' more people. We will be setting up a working group specifically to embed this approach and thinking in the organisation.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank colleagues across SJOG who worked to develop the ideas presented here at our conference. We would like to thank Kate Ainscough, Director of Freestyle Innovation (you can find out more [here](#))

## **References**

Mackrill, J., Beard, S., Frew, E. (2019). Understanding community need at Woodhall community centre. *SJOG research series*. url. <https://sjog.uk/publications-research.php>