



# INSPIRE 31

Strategic Plan

2026-2031

# BY 2031, WE WANT TO ACHIEVE WELLBEING, ABILITY AND RECOVERY FOR ALL



# INTRODUCTION

**AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO 2031, INSPIRE STANDS AT A PIVOTAL MOMENT. THE WORLD AROUND US IS CHANGING RAPIDLY AND THE PRESSURES FACING INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES ACROSS THIS ISLAND ARE INTENSIFYING.**

Yet, within this challenge lies a profound opportunity to reimagine how we support wellbeing, strengthen ability and enable recovery for all.

This strategy sets out our direction for the next five years. It is shaped by the voices of more than 700 people: individuals who use our services, their families and carers, our colleagues, volunteers, partners and trustees. Their insight has grounded this plan in lived experience and ensured that it reflects the realities, hopes and expectations of the people we exist to serve. I am deeply grateful for their honesty and ambition.

Across both jurisdictions, health and social care systems are undergoing significant reform. Financial pressures, workforce shortages, rising complexity of need and widening inequalities are reshaping what communities require from organisations like Inspire. At the same time, digital transformation, environmental responsibility and a renewed focus on rights-based, inclusive practice are redefining what high-quality support must look like. We are ready to meet this moment.

A central part of that readiness is Lena by Inspire, our social enterprise. Lena enables us to extend our impact far beyond traditional service boundaries, delivering counselling,



therapeutic support, training, digital wellbeing and specialist programmes that help workplaces, students and communities to thrive. Crucially, Lena also strengthens our long-term sustainability by generating significant reinvestment back into Inspire. In a funding environment marked by volatility and rising demand, Lena is not simply an asset. It is a strategic engine of innovation, resilience and social value. It will be fundamental to how we deliver on our mission in the years ahead.

This strategy focuses on three interconnected aims that will guide our work to 2031:

- **Wellbeing** – creating environments where people feel safe, supported and connected
- **Ability** – recognising and nurturing the strengths and potential in every person
- **Recovery** – supporting personal, societal and organisational journeys of healing, growth and reclaiming control

# INTRODUCTION

These aims reflect what people told us matters most to them. They also reflect what the future demands: earlier intervention, stronger community connection, digital confidence, sustainable practice and a deeper commitment to equality, rights and inclusion. Our alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reinforces our responsibility to contribute to a healthier, fairer and more compassionate island.

I want to acknowledge the dedication of Inspire's staff, whose professionalism, compassion and resilience underpin everything we do. You create connection where there is isolation, dignity where there is stigma and possibility where there was once uncertainty. This strategy builds on your expertise and your belief in the potential of every person.

To the people who use our services, thank you for your trust and for the courage with which you share your experiences. You guide our direction and remind us that wellbeing is something we build together.

And to our boards, Inspire and Lena by Inspire thank you for your leadership, stewardship and unwavering commitment to our mission. Your guidance ensures that we remain bold, ethical and future-focused.

This strategy is a commitment to act. It is a promise that Inspire will continue to stand with people, challenge inequality and create the conditions in which everyone can thrive. With the collective strength of our staff, service users, volunteers, partners and supporters, I am confident that we will shape a future where wellbeing, ability and recovery truly are for all.

*Keray Ashney*



# WHO WE ARE

**Inspire is an all-island charity and social enterprise and our aim is wellbeing for all.**

We work alongside people living with mental ill health, intellectual disability, autism and addictions. We ensure that they live with dignity and realise their full potential.

Inspire campaigns to create a society free from stigma and discrimination, one steeped in a culture of compassion that focuses on people and their abilities.

## **Our Vision**

Wellbeing for all

## **Our Values**

We are Inclusive

We are Passionate

We are Determined

We are Kind

We are Honest

We are Innovative



# OUR SERVICES

## **Mental health and Addiction Care and Support Services**

Our mental health and addiction services focus on inclusion by providing recovery-based support in communities.

Services include: day support, supported housing, floating support and advocacy, counselling, social support and training.

## **Intellectual Disability and Autism Care and Support services**

Our intellectual disability and autism services are built around the people we support. They empower people to live independently in their communities.

Services include: residential services, day support services and supported living.

## **Lena by Inspire**

Lena by Inspire is our social enterprise, through which we provide a range of wellbeing support services. These help organisations, employees and students to thrive.

Interventions include counselling, trauma-informed therapeutic support, training, information and digital wellbeing services, specialist-support projects, coaching and mentoring.

## **Insight, Engagement and Innovation**

Our Insight, Engagement and Innovation team engages with Inspire's service users, their families and their carers, aiming to amplify those crucial voices of lived experience. It informs and shapes wider society via campaigning, research and the development of new programmes.

The Insight, Engagement and Innovation team also oversees volunteering, fundraising, prevention and self-help services, community development and communications.

# SHAPING OUR STRATEGY: PROCESS

As we looked ahead to the next five years for Inspire, we wanted our strategy and the way we created it to embody the transformation we aim to deliver – unified, transparent, relevant and grounded in the experience of the people we serve and the communities in which we live and work. This strategy does more than describe change; it demonstrates it, through a process designed to be inclusive, driven by evidence and genuinely collaborative.

People and data sat firmly at the centre of our planning. A cross-departmental steering group, including representation from our Service User Reference Forum, guided the process to ensure that it reflected a diverse range of voices and perspectives.

## Discovery Phase

Our discovery phase focused on extensive data collection and engagement. More than 700 people contributed, including individuals who use our services, colleagues across all levels of the organisation and our trustees. Every idea, insight and priority was recorded with equal weight, building a rich and balanced evidence base.

We also examined external trends, policies and sector intelligence to understand the shifting expectations of our partners, funders and wider stakeholders. This external lens ensured that the strategy is not only rooted in the lived experience of our Inspire community but also aligned with the evolving environment in which we operate.



# SHAPING OUR STRATEGY: PROCESS

## Design Phase

During the design phase, we translated this diverse data into clear aims, goals and indicators of success, shaped around the needs and expectations of the three groups of people Inspire exists to serve:

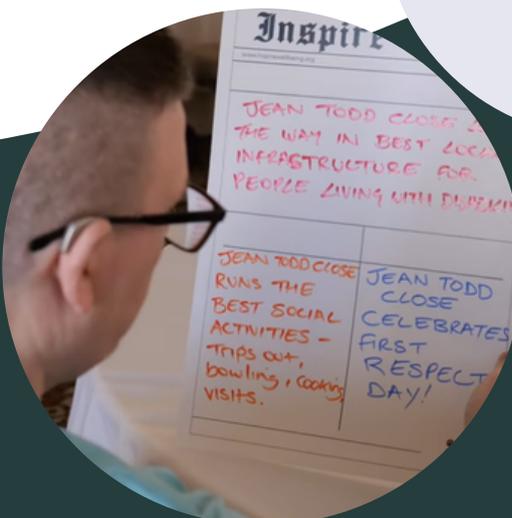
- The people who use our services
- Members of the wider community who benefit from our work
- Our organisation and its people.

As part of our strategic thinking, we also recognised that Inspire does not operate in isolation. The global issues shaping people's lives – including rising health inequalities, the pressures facing communities, social injustice and the growing environmental challenges affecting wellbeing – also shape the context in which we work. We believe that social and environmental justice go hand in hand and that meaningful change requires us to consider the conditions in which people live and the wider world that sustains us.

With this in mind, we mapped our future plans against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This framework helps us understand where Inspire can make a positive contribution to global progress, while strengthening our ability to meet local needs. Aligning our strategy with the SDGs reinforces our commitment to responsible leadership, long-term sustainability and making a positive, interconnected impact on our communities and our environment.

The result is an inclusive, evidence-based strategy, deeply connected to the voices and perspectives that matter most.

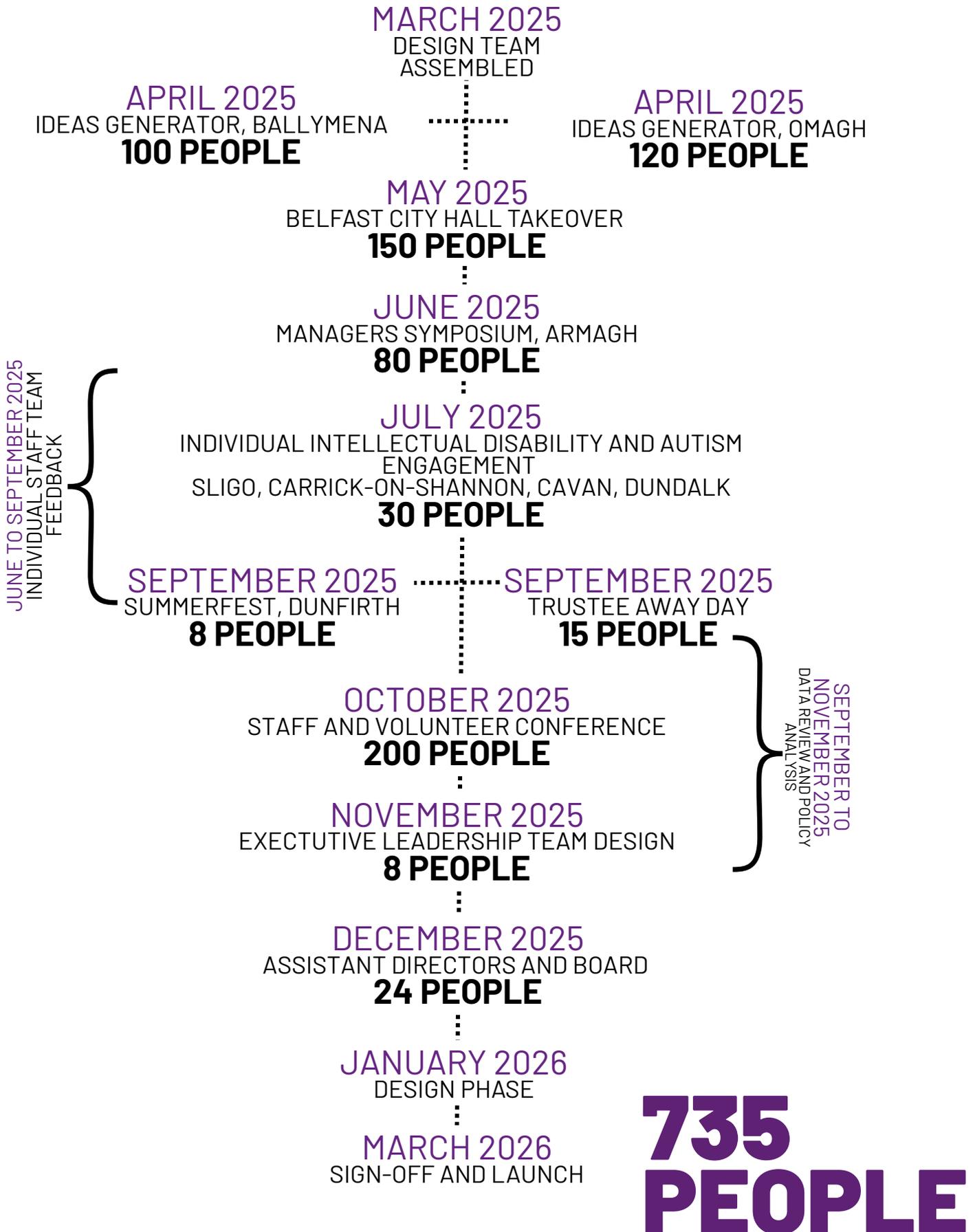
You can watch the Shaping Our Strategy Video by scanning the QR Code below:



What do you enjoy about your inspire service?



# CONSULTATION PROCESS TIMELINE



# SHAPING OUR STRATEGY: OUTCOMES

Across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, health and social care systems are experiencing intense and accelerating change. Severe financial pressures, workforce shortages, inequality and rising levels of complex need are intersecting with a shift toward prevention, integration and community-based support.

For Inspire, this landscape presents challenges and opportunities. We are an organisation rooted in compassion, community connection, and evidence-driven impact. These are exactly the strengths the system needs at this moment of reform.

## **System Reform and Financial Pressure on Health & Social Care**

Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are facing major health and social care reforms, driven by:

- Major budget gaps in statutory provision including NI's £600m gap and HSC efficiency plans
- Workforce shortages and retention challenges
- Planned shift to community-based, preventative and neighbourhood-focused models
- Strong emphasis on integration across mental, physical and social care

For us, this means operating in a system that is both under pressure and undergoing transformation. We are required to play to our strengths of agility,

partnership working and tracking evidence of impact. The people who use our services expressed deep concern about service continuity and future security:

**"WE WOULD BE LOST WITHOUT INSPIRE."**

**"I REALLY HOPE IT CAN KEEP GOING WITH ALL THESE CUTBACKS."**

## **Move Toward Community-Based, Early-Intervention and Preventative Models**

Across mental health, learning disability, autism, addiction, justice and housing, the same shift is emphasised:

- Away from institutional and acute settings
- Towards early intervention, crisis prevention and community-based support
- With co-production and lived experience embedded in design and delivery

Service users repeatedly described Inspire's community services as life changing and life saving, demonstrating that voluntary and community organisations are not supplementary to statutory care, but central system partners.

This means that we could see rising demand for our community-based service model, alongside exciting new expectations of partnership, accessibility, responsiveness and lived-experience involvement.

# SHAPING OUR STRATEGY: OUTCOMES

**“INSPIRE HAS TURNED MY LIFE AROUND.”**

## **Workforce Shortages and the Need for Skills, Training and Capacity Building**

Both jurisdictions in which we operate highlight:

- Recruitment and retention challenges
- Need for better pay, conditions, leadership and professional development
- Digital skills gaps
- Pressure on social care workforce planning (2025–2035 strategies)

Staff capacity is the critical enabler of person-centred care. Without sufficient staffing, services cannot provide the one-to-one time, consistency and responsiveness that allow people to feel safe and understood. Transformational, long-term funding – alongside investment in pay, retention and development – is, therefore, not optional; it is the foundation of sustainable quality and safety and should be reflected in the delivery of services.

For us, this means that workforce sustainability, in all senses of the word, becomes a strategic priority. We want to focus on meeting the financial, professional, physical and psychological needs of our existing workforce, as well as ensuring that we can attract new talent.

**“NOT ENOUGH STAFF, NOT ENOUGH HELP.”**

## **Rising Complexity of Need (Dual Diagnosis, Trauma, Neurodiversity)**

The policy frameworks in which we operate, and the lived experience of the people we support, point to a growing demand for services tailored to individuals with increasingly complex needs. This means exploring services that are:

- Trauma-informed
- Meet the needs of people with dual or multiple diagnoses
- Focus on the increased demand and backlogs in autism and learning disability services
- Truly person centred with integrated care pathways

**“SEE US NOT JUST OUR ILLNESS.”**

## **Housing Shortage, De-institutionalisation and Independent Living Pressures**

We are committed to the principle of person-centred support for those living in the communities of their choice. Yet, housing insecurity remains a major barrier to wellbeing and resettlement. In this area we can see:

- Growing demand for supported and specialist housing
- Misalignment between housing supply and support services
- A growing cohort of carers becoming older and a lack of future planning.

**“NO MORE SHARED HOUSES.”**

# SHAPING OUR STRATEGY: OUTCOMES

This means that new strategic partnerships and innovation will be essential to ensuring that the people we support now, and over the next five years, have access to appropriate housing.

## **Justice System Demand and the Push for Diversion and Alternatives to Custody**

In Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, we are seeing changes in how people living with mental ill health, addictions and intellectual disabilities interact with the justice system:

- Disproportionately high levels of mental illness and substance misuse
- Policy movement towards diversion, rehabilitation and integrated care pathways
- Emphasis on youth diversion and trauma-informed justice

This offers opportunities to expand community-based interventions, along with health- and justice-focused partnerships.

## **Digital Transformation Expectations and Risk of Widening Inequalities**

Digital capability (internal and external) has become a core strategic enabler, not an optional box-ticking exercise. Governments are investing heavily in digital innovation, AI, automation and data-driven services. As an organisation, we have a desire to develop a digitally confident workforce

that can harness the opportunities presented by emerging technologies. In doing so, we must also be aware of:

- The resource requirements of building digital skills for staff and the people we support
- Digital exclusion for vulnerable groups
- Limited investment in the digital capacity of the VCSE sector
- Balancing our ethical, environmental and wellbeing responsibilities with the enabling potential of new technologies

**“WHERE WILL I GET THE TIME TO UPDATE THE SYSTEM OR BE PROPERLY TRAINED?”**

## **Social Value as a Contractual Requirement**

Our work is inherently social in nature and demonstrating measurable social value has become essential for funding and commissioning success. Our new approach to social value requires measurable contributions to inclusion, climate action, skills and wellbeing, especially in Northern Ireland, where social value is mandatory in government procurement. In Ireland, social enterprise policy emphasises the need to focus on impact measurement, green transition and social innovation.

# SHAPING OUR STRATEGY: OUTCOMES

## **Equality, Rights-Based Approaches, and Inclusion**

Across disability, mental health, housing, justice and employment, all services must be framed by rights-based, inclusive and equality-driven approaches, including:

- Strong focus on human rights
- Inclusive design
- Accessibility and agency
- Tackling stigma and discrimination

For Inspire staff and the people they support, a holistic, rights-based model ensures that services focus not on compatibility or risk reduction but on dignity, autonomy, belonging and wellbeing. Embedding lived experience and human rights across policy, commissioning and delivery aligns services with what people themselves define as high-quality support.

**“FOR THE FIRST TIME, I FEEL UNDERSTOOD.”**

## **Growing Focus on Outcomes, Data, Monitoring and Accountability**

Across every domain in which Inspire operates, evidence, data and impact reporting are increasingly required. National strategies have detailed action plans and annual reporting frameworks. VCSE organisations are expected to

**“STREAMLINING DATA: WHERE IS IT? WHO USES IT?”**

contribute to system-level data. To meet this growing challenge, data capability and impact measurement must be strengthened and embedded across Inspire.

## **Economic Inclusion, Employment Gaps and Skills Development**

In all parts of the island, the economic inclusion of people with disabilities – including individuals living with mental ill health – continues to present a significant challenge. We can see this in:

- Low disability employment rates (particularly acute in NI)
- The need for supported employment pathways, transitions from education and employer engagement
- Government focus on labour market inclusion

As we move into our new strategy, we want to consider how financial wellbeing, economic justice and employment-related support can become a central part of holistic wellbeing.

**“ENGAGE IN PROGRAMS THAT GIVE PEOPLE A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND WORK TOWARDS THEIR EDUCATION.”**

## **Sustainability, Climate Action and Alignment with SDGs**

Environmental sustainability has become an explicit organisational responsibility.

# SHAPING OUR STRATEGY: OUTCOMES

In our procurement, social value and national SDG commitments, we want to play our part in the integration of climate and sustainability duties. We will focus on sustainability via greener operations, ethical procurement and fit-for-purpose community-focused services and programmes.

## **Social Justice, Community Division and the Responsibility to Speak Out**

People across the island of Ireland are experiencing widening divisions. From poverty, identity and inequality to racism, sectarian tensions and social exclusion, these fissures directly impact on the mental health, sense of belonging and safety of individuals, families and communities.

As an organisation rooted in compassion, Inspire recognises that social justice is inseparable from wellbeing. We know that division and discrimination

profoundly affect mental health. We have the opportunity and the responsibility to serve as a clear, consistent voice for:

- Equality and human rights
- Anti-racism and anti-discrimination
- Respect, dignity and safety for all
- Cross-community understanding and cohesion
- Challenging stigma and harmful narratives wherever they arise

Our advocacy, partnerships and public positioning must reflect our commitment to fairness, dignity and inclusion across all identities and communities.

**“MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE WANT TO EMPOWER OUR COMMUNITY TO FEEL THAT THEIR VOICE MATTERS – THAT THEY CAN SPEAK UP, GET INVOLVED AND HELP SHAPE THE DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEIR ENVIRONMENT.”**



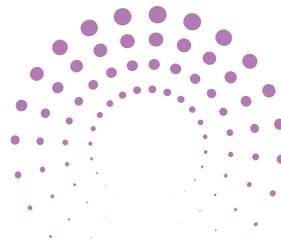
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BY 2031 WE WANT TO ACHIEVE WELLBEING, ABILITY AND RECOVERY FOR ALL



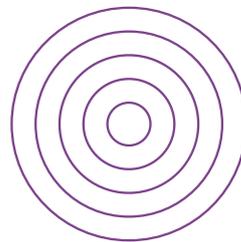
## WELLBEING

We will create an environment where people feel safe, supported and connected.



## ABILITY

We will recognise and nurture the strengths and potential in every person.



## RECOVERY

We will support personal, societal and organisational journeys of healing, growth and reclaiming control.

# AIM: WELLBEING



Wellbeing is the foundation for healthier individuals, stronger communities, and more effective organisations

## GOAL:

Create an environment where people feel safe, supported and connected

### SUCCESS FOR COMMUNITIES WILL MEAN:

- Increased access to inclusive, preventative and recovery-oriented services
- Reduced stigma and health inequalities

### SUCCESS FOR THE PEOPLE WHO USE OUR SERVICES WILL MEAN:

- Enhanced emotional, physical and social health for the people we support

### SUCCESS FOR OUR ORGANISATION WILL MEAN:

- A valued, connected and healthy collective workforce, empowered through expert learning and development.

### UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# AIM: ABILITY

Investing in ability unlocks opportunity, inclusion, and innovation

## GOAL:

Recognise and nurture the strengths and potential in every person

### SUCCESS FOR COMMUNITIES WILL MEAN:

- Society upholds the rights and dignity of individuals with mental ill health, addiction, intellectual disabilities and autism

### SUCCESS FOR THE PEOPLE WHO USE OUR SERVICES WILL MEAN:

- Service users can identify and apply their strengths through personalised support

### SUCCESS FOR OUR ORGANISATION WILL MEAN:

- A digitally confident collective workforce, supported by data, systems and processes that empower the delivery of impactful services

### UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# AIM: RECOVERY



Enabling recovery builds resilience in individuals and trust in systems

## GOAL:

Support personal, societal and organisational healing, growth and reclaiming of control

### SUCCESS FOR COMMUNITIES WILL MEAN:

- Increased public understanding and support for recovery

### SUCCESS FOR THE PEOPLE WHO USE OUR SERVICES WILL MEAN:

- Access to personalised, recovery-oriented support

### SUCCESS FOR OUR ORGANISATION WILL MEAN:

- A resilient organisation ready to navigate challenges and embrace innovation

### UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



# SUPPORT OUR WORK

## WORK WITH US

Careers with Inspire will challenge you and develop your skills. You will have a first-hand view of the difference that you are making in people's lives. For all our current opportunities, visit: [inspirewellbeing.org/join-team-inspire](https://inspirewellbeing.org/join-team-inspire)

## VOLUNTEER WITH US

Our volunteers bring diverse skills, lived experience and deep commitment to our mission, helping us to stay connected to their communities. They are grounded, responsive and people-centred. If you are interested in volunteering with Inspire, visit: [inspirewellbeing.org/get-involved](https://inspirewellbeing.org/get-involved)

## FUNDRAISE FOR US

There are many ways to support Inspire through fundraising. Whether you join our flagship Inspire Colour Run or take on a challenge like abseiling from one of Northern Ireland's tallest buildings, every effort helps us make a lasting difference to the people who rely on our services across Ireland.

## CONSIDER US AS A PARTNER

We are delighted to work alongside organisations through collaborative campaigns, shared initiatives and co-designed programmes. We can create a partnership that not only raises vital funds but also demonstrates a clear commitment to social responsibility, building a positive, lasting legacy for people and communities.

Find out more about how we can partner with your organisation by emailing: [fundraising@inspirewellbeing.org](mailto:fundraising@inspirewellbeing.org)





**For more information about Inspire, contact:  
[hello@inspirewellbeing.org](mailto:hello@inspirewellbeing.org)**

**#TeamInspire**

**For more information about our services, visit:  
[www.inspirewellbeing.org](http://www.inspirewellbeing.org)**

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