

The background features a stylized portrait of a woman with curly hair, wearing a blue lanyard with the Nacro logo. The image is composed of geometric shapes: a large teal arrow pointing right in the top left, a yellow triangle with a blue dot pattern in the top right, and a dark blue triangle with a white dot pattern in the bottom right. The text is overlaid on the dark blue triangle.

Nacro>

We won't walk by

Strategy 2025–2028



**We see your future,
whatever the past**

We won't walk by

At Nacro, we believe passionately in people.

We believe that we all make mistakes, we all face challenges, we all take a wrong turn or don't listen to good advice. We know from almost 60 years of experience that a supportive family, a good teacher, a stable upbringing, a decent home, meaningful work, or a supported pathway out of prison can be the things that can put us back on track and help us from making more mistakes.

We also know there are millions of people in this country who come from generations of disadvantage and unemployment, from families struggling to make ends meet, stuck in temporary, poor quality housing or in schools and colleges that don't have the time to support them or see their potential. And that's when things can go from bad to worse. Exclusion from schools can lead to exploitation or gangs, prison or homelessness and poverty.

We know it doesn't have to be this way. We know this because every day we don't accept what we see, we won't walk by. In our classrooms, in our homes and in our support groups we see the potential. We see the desire to take a different path and we support thousands of people to get back on their feet, believe in themselves, stay out of trouble, get a job, get a home, start a family, be the person they want to be.

It's not easy though. It is hard. It takes time, it takes good people, and it takes resilience and courage to turn your life around. It can be hard to move off benefits and find a job, almost impossible to find a decent affordable home, it can be a long wait to get some support for your addiction or your mental health.

And it is a challenging time to help people. The prolonged lack of investment in our public services, a dysfunctional care system, overcrowded prisons and overwhelmed probation services, a complex welfare and benefits system that doesn't always incentivise finding work, a lack of empathy in some of the political and public discourse for those with the least, the instability of our climate and our global politics makes it as hard as it has ever been for Nacro to do what it does best. To support those with the least. Many charities are facing huge pressures on their services and their finances. This presents us all with difficult choices.





At Nacro, we are making a choice to step up to the challenge. We won't walk by and accept what is happening.

That's why in our strategy we will aim to make the biggest impact we can for the most people we can by improving and expanding our campaigns and investing in our services. And therefore we need to continue to make Nacro a strong organisation by focusing on our people, embedding learning and improvement and becoming more sustainable. We are going to fight for everyone to have a chance. We know that what makes Nacro great is our people; they work for Nacro precisely because, not in spite of the fact that, the work we do can be challenging.

We are going to invest in them — their pay, their training, their health and wellbeing, and safety. We are going to make sure they have what they need to do the best job they can. We are going to give even more to make sure the voices of our tenants, our students and those we support are heard in the places where decisions are made — in town halls, in Whitehall and in the media. We are going to make sure more of the people who work for us have lived experience of the issues many of our service users face.

We are going to work hard to keep the excellent services we have but also develop new ones and grow our education provision because we know that it makes a very real difference to support people as early as possible in life. We are going to work with partners to try and build regional networks of support and help for the most vulnerable so that there are fewer gaps for people to fall through.

We know this a challenge. That's what we are good at. And we will do it our way, with our values front and centre, with diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do, alongside partners and staff, and service users. For almost 60 years, we have been working with some of the most challenged and excluded people, including people who have been involved in the criminal justice system as well as many people who haven't. We know we can make a difference and we know how to make a difference.

In this strategy, we will step up to the challenge and we will help more people, and make real change. We will not walk by.

Building on success

The period of our last strategy has been one of significant turmoil and change, with the aftermath of the Covid lockdowns and a cost of living crisis. Throughout this, Nacro has remained focused on three key things.

- Firstly, we needed to build a sustainable robust organisation that could weather the many storms we face. We have invested in new systems and buildings, a new website and brand, and grown our income and our reserves, and we continue to build an equal, diverse and inclusive organisation.
- Secondly, we wanted to improve and grow the services we deliver. We did this by retaining all of our major contracts and winning new ones. We strived to invest in our staff through pay and development. We focused our structures and people on the advice and support that the people we support needed.
- Finally, we campaigned for change — and won. Ending Friday releases for those leaving prison and investing and amplifying our service users' voices in everything, we challenged and changed the systems and rules that make life difficult for those we work with.



Where do we want to get to?

We have worked with our staff, our trustees and the people we support to build together a vision of what we hope to achieve over the coming years. We will review this regularly and check our progress with those that helped to create it.

In three years, Nacro will be increasingly renowned for working alongside some of the most excluded groups in our communities, supporting them to transform their lives and campaigning for change to make this possible for everyone. We will be financially sustainable, a partner of choice with a highly skilled, connected and values-led workforce. We will have equality, diversity, and inclusion, and safeguarding at the core of everything we do and we will provide high-quality support services, housing and education across the country.

Much of this is building on the work we already do. In particular, we want to:

- improve the employee experience
- build up our evidence base
- further embed the voices and experiences of service users and students in our campaigning, decision making, and service design
- ensure that our workforce reflects the communities we serve and has higher levels of lived experience.

The challenges we face

We know there are serious challenges in delivering this strategy — that it is ever harder for organisations like ours to survive and thrive while providing the level and quality of services that we believe are core to bringing real sustained change to people's lives.

We believe it's important to have these challenges front and centre of our strategy so they inform our priorities and our decision-making.

The state of the public finances and the public sector mean there is less money for what we do while costs go up. There is ever increasing levels of exclusion and need from our service users and students but less support from other agencies and institutions that should be there for them. This puts a constant strain on our financial security and sustainability.

This makes it harder and harder to pay our staff the wages they deserve and need to do the challenging and difficult jobs we ask them to do. The need to re-model services, to cut costs and do more with less, makes jobs harder and more demanding and it can sometimes be a struggle to keep good people.

This constant pressure on our time and our money means that it is always difficult to find the time and resources to invest in the systems and processes that give us the evidence and information we need to get better at what we do, to learn from our mistakes and become more efficient and effective.



The opportunities we see

We will build on our successes.

We have been rated as Good by Ofsted. We have retained important contracts across the criminal justice, health and housing sectors, against strong competition. We have more reliable systems, better data and brilliant people.

We know there is a need for what we do. We have waiting lists in our education centres. We see the rise in homelessness, a high demand for accommodation for children in care, the need to reduce the prison population and the difficulty in getting high-quality places for pupils with SEND.

We believe that we have an offer for adults and young people, for commissioners and for Government which will allow us to deliver more and to reach more people, and we will work with stakeholders to make this happen.



Our priorities

So, how will we overcome these challenges and make this vision a reality?

By focusing on the key elements of what we do well; on being innovative and creative, ensuring our values drive our ways of working. Our five priorities for this strategy will be:

1. Valuing our people and distinctive culture
2. Campaigning for change for the people we support
3. Investing in the future of our services
4. Embedding learning and improvement
5. Building a sustainable organisation

At the core of these priorities are three themes:

- An investment in our staff and managers — we need good leadership, clear management, thriving and innovative staff who feel and embody our values
- Having the voice and interests of our service users at the heart of our decision-making
- Building a focused, evidence-led organisation that can sustain itself by using data and learning to deliver the very best services



PRIORITY 1

Valuing our people and distinctive culture

Building and sustaining an inspiring, courageous, compassionate, reliable, and inclusive staff team will be the most important way to achieve our strategic goals. That is why we have developed a people strategy which is at the heart of our approach over the next three years.

- We will invest in systems and technology that will ensure our staff can deliver the best outcomes for the people we support.
- We will create opportunities for staff and service users to join, progress and thrive at Nacro.
- We will update and invest in our pay framework to ensure we are rewarding our staff better for the work they do.
- We will continue to put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our organisation and deliver meaningful change at all levels of the organisation.

What success will look like

- More people will feel that the organisation cares about them and feel well supported.
- More people will join us and stay for longer and recommend Nacro as a good place to work.
- More of these people will come from the communities we work with and be representative of them.

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PRIORITY 2

Campaigning for change for the people we support

Every day we see the things that stop people from achieving their potential. We believe passionately in working alongside people to bring about real change to their lives, now and in the future.

- We will champion the issues and causes that the people we support believe stop them progressing.
- We will involve the people we support in the development and delivery of our policy and campaigns, and create opportunities for them to be heard by the people who make decisions.
- We will use our experience of service delivery to advocate for policies which overcome the barriers to young people's potential, and which improve justice services in the community.
- We will build our evidence base to showcase what works and put forward solutions to show what needs to change.
- We will look to ways we can effect change locally and regionally as well as nationally.

What success will look like

- We will have put the voices of our Justice ExChange further at the heart of the debate about the future of justice services.
- We will be campaigning to ensure that the young people who have faced the most barriers in their early lives get more help to reach their potential.
- We will be creating change at local and national levels.

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PRIORITY 3

Investing in the future of our services

We know there is significant unmet need and there is so much more we want to do. We want to further develop and invest in services which we know are in demand, including our education services, community rehabilitative services and supported accommodation.

There are too many young people out of education and training and in the wrong environment for them to learn and grow. There are too many people who are homeless or in insecure accommodation. There are too many people who are being set up to fail at the point of leaving prison. We know we can make a difference and we want to do more.

- We will invest in a classroom of the future to ensure that the most disadvantaged young people can have the best learning environment and are not digitally excluded.
- We will invest in providing the best possible support for our students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- We will focus on performance to ensure high-quality services with evidence and impactful outcomes.
- We will work with local authorities to retain, develop and launch new services in the areas which need them most.

What success will look like

- We will open more education centres.
- We will support more young people to get qualifications.
- We will increase the number of SEND students we support.
- We will strengthen our non-commissioned housing in strategically important geographies including where we have long-term commissioned services.
- We will be a provider of choice for commissioners of care leaver accommodation, Commissioned Rehabilitative Services, and ex-offender accommodation services.

PRIORITY 4

Embedding learning and improvement

We are a diverse organisation working and embedded in communities across England and Wales. We work in many different ways with some of the most disadvantaged communities, with multiple funders and an ever-changing regulatory environment. This makes what we do complicated, challenging and hard. So we need to do everything we can to listen, learn, change and innovate to ensure we can support our service users and students to achieve what they need.

- We will invest in new systems, and review and update our processes and ways of working.
- We will better utilise the data we collate to make informed and forward-thinking business decisions and to better shape and develop our services.
- We will create new approaches to listening and learning that provide real time support and advice to staff and managers to deal with new challenges.
- We will use the information we hold to help us to learn, to improve and to change our ways of working.

What success will look like

- We will proactively respond to incidents and complaints by identifying trends and embedding continuous improvement, and we will have more positive feedback from service users, students and commissioners.
- We will improve the way we measure impact across our services to ensure they are getting better over time as a result of feedback and learning.
- We will invest in our capacity to use information data and systems to improve our efficiency, and to deliver better services and to better understand the impact we have.

PRIORITY 5

Building a sustainable organisation

Nacro has been helping people for almost 60 years. We need to be ready to do it for another 60 more. To do this we have to ensure that we have a strong financial basis to continue to invest in our staff and our outcomes.

- We will diversify and strengthen our funding base.
- We will continue to invest and grow our approach to a greener organisation.
- We will invest in our capacity to capture and express our outcomes and social value.
- We will make the most of a more regionalised approach to commissioning.

What success will look like

- We will make a surplus over the course of the strategy, and we will use this to invest in the organisation's future.
- We will win new contracts and retain existing ones which support our sustainability.
- We will have a strong presence in two or three key regions where we will have the ability to make and shape new opportunities for our work.

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Our hope

Nacro is an organisation that is really a community: the sense of connection between our staff, their desire to help and support despite all the challenges, the way we talk honestly and openly to each other, the affirmation we get from the success of others, and the collective values we hold and cherish. That's what creates the very real and meaningful change for thousands of the most vulnerable and excluded people in our communities at a time of unprecedented change and challenge.

Our hope — that this strategy allows us to do more for more people.



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nacro.org.uk