



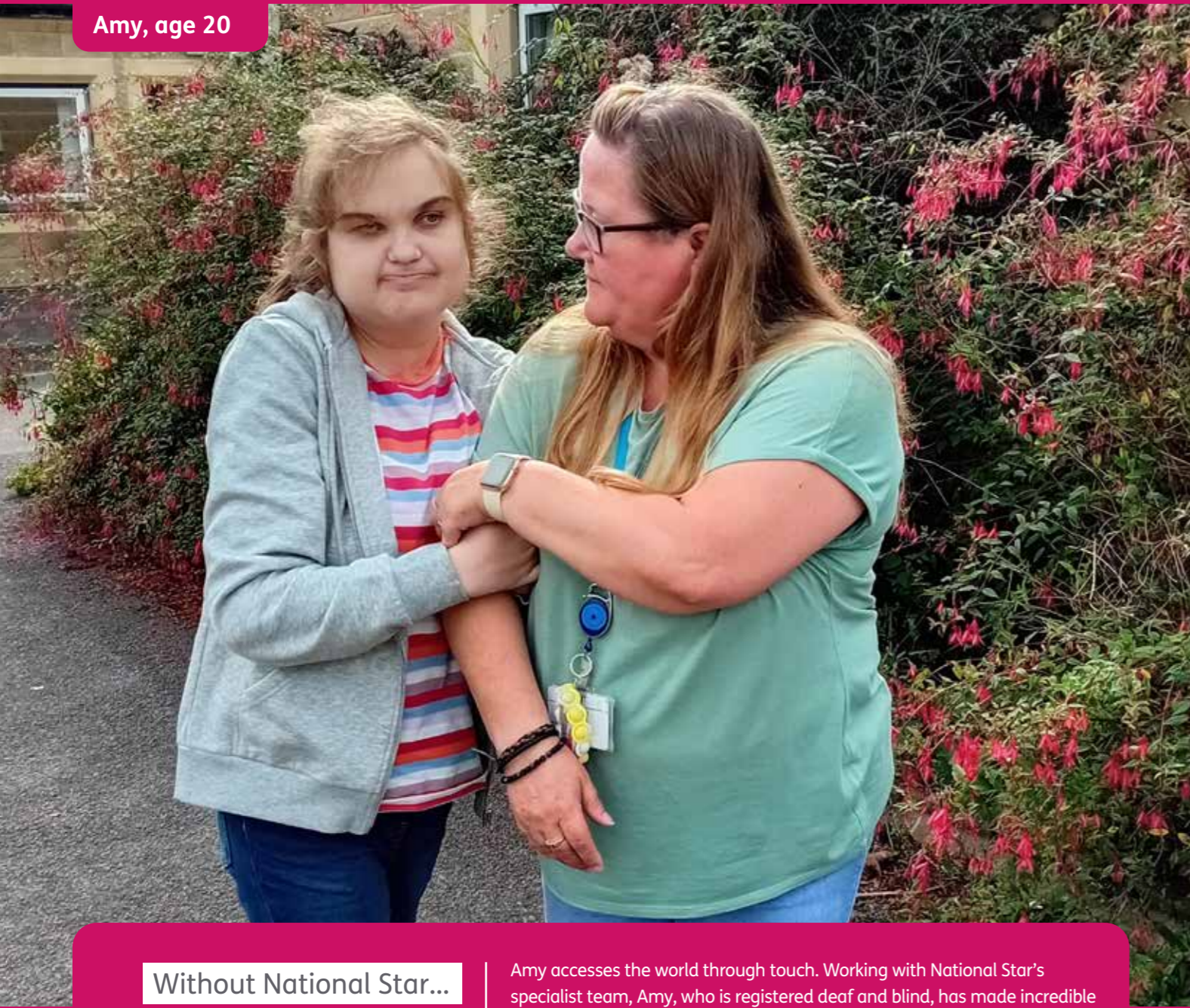
National Star

Realising the aspirations
of people with disabilities



Growth Strategy 2023 - 2028

National Star is a working name of National Star Foundation which is registered in England and Wales, company number 00522846, charity number 220239. Registered office Ullenwood Manor, Ullenwood, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL53 9QU



Without National Star...

“ Amy would not have made such remarkable progress. ”

Amy's mum Jane

Amy accesses the world through touch. Working with National Star's specialist team, Amy, who is registered deaf and blind, has made incredible progress in her first year at National Star.

Charge Syndrome has impacted all of Amy's senses, including her hearing, sight, taste, and smell. She has multiple medical needs and uses a wheelchair to move about safely.

Not only has Amy quickly settled into college life, but she is beginning to show awareness of her peers, communicating more and walking around campus with support.

A team of multi-sensory impairment specialists, including the college's specialist tutor in vision impairments, advises the multi-disciplinary teams on how to make Amy's world accessible to her. This involves textures to feel, contrasting colours, and spotlighting which enables her to understand her environment.

Amy hears by vibrations through her skull. By using a speaker held close to her head or a resonance board, Amy can feel and distinguish sounds and is included in activities. Music plays a central role in all her college sessions.

'Her progress has been remarkable and there has been a huge difference in her movement and communication,' says her mum Jane. 'All of a sudden she has grown up and her confidence has grown.'

Welcome

I am delighted to share with you National Star's growth strategy through to 2028. Planning ahead starts by recognising that the charity is in a position of strength, both in terms of the quality of its services and its financial stability.

However, the external political and economic environment is more uncertain. National Star has proven its resilience to change and uncertainty. Through planning and clear focus, we have not only weathered the pandemic and the challenging economy, but we have also thrived and grown.

There is much more to be done. The need for our services continues to grow. National Star is passionate that young people with disabilities have a right to high-quality provision. That quality of service must underpin all our ambitions.

To achieve this, we must continue to invest in employees, our greatest asset. It is imperative that National Star is seen as the employer of choice so that we can attract and retain the most talented and motivated workforce. We will do that by continuing to offer career development and ongoing training. Those highly skilled colleagues need high quality facilities and resources to enable them to deliver the best care and support. It is vital that we also carry on investing in our facilities and resources.

Technology is critical for any organisation and National Star is no exception. We will further develop our technology to make the charity efficient and to maximise the impact of technology on the lives of people with disabilities. Building expertise, improving systems and processes, and investing in additional non-statutory

income streams such as National Star's charity shops will also support our capacity for growth.

We believe that people with disabilities have a right to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives and that they have an important contribution to make to our society. That belief is what drives us to be a leader in the sector and to ensure the voices of students, residents and families are heard. No one organisation can achieve change. It must be collaborative. We are committed to work in partnership with other further education and care providers.

Together we can raise the quality of specialist provision and increase the opportunities for young people to access and receive high quality specialist education and care. We will achieve this through collaborating, training and developing colleagues across the sectors.

We know our plans are ambitious and recognise there will be challenges ahead. National Star will be celebrating its 61st anniversary in 2028, when this strategy is complete. Our history is a testament to the charity's willingness to change, adapt and evolve. Throughout those decades we have never lost sight of what is important – the people who use our services.

We are confident, thanks to incredible partnerships and the support we have, that we can make this strategy happen.

Lynette Barrett
Chief Executive



“ Our history is a testament to the charity's willingness to change, adapt and evolve. ”

Who we are

National Star is a charitable provider of exceptional education, personal development, accommodation, care and support services for young people and adults with complex needs, disabilities and learning difficulties. Every year, we work with hundreds of young people and adults from across the UK.

The charity started in 1967 with just 10 learners at its base in Ullenwood, Cheltenham. Since then, we have grown with a campus at Ullenwood that provides day and residential education and additional day education provision in Wales, Worcester and Hereford. We have long-term accommodation in Cheltenham, Gloucester, Malvern and Hereford. We now support and care for young people with more complex medical needs than we have done in the past. We also provide a range of work-based learning programmes.

The constant thread is National Star's belief in realising the aspirations of people with disabilities.

Our values

As we work, we are led by our values:



Ambition (Having goals)

We support students, colleagues and residents to be the best they can be. We aim for excellence in everything we do. We look for ways to improve society so people with disabilities can live full and active lives.



Collaboration (Working together)

We work with others to achieve more for people. We develop strong partnerships to grow and be sustainable. We encourage everyone to be passionate and enthusiastic, sharing what they know to improve their own life and that of others.



Integrity (Open and honest)

We are open, honest, accountable, and transparent. What we do is central to our belief that people with disabilities should be in control of their own lives.



Respect (Listening and understanding each other)

We recognise and are grateful for everyone's contribution. We are compassionate and promote a community where everyone can feel welcome, and success is celebrated.



Sustainability (Caring for the environment and National Star's long-term future)

We aim to reduce our environmental footprint. We will follow a strategy of growth to secure the future of the charity and our work with people with disabilities.



Our clear aim

Everything National Star achieves is through collaboration. Our multi-disciplinary teams work with students, residents and their families to empower young people to achieve their goals. Education and therapy teams work with their care and nursing colleagues to find innovative approaches that suit the individual. After all, no two people are alike.

National Star's leadership team, governors and trustees bring their individual expertise, experience and energy.

We work with people with disabilities and their supporters to challenge stereotypes, raise aspirations and change attitudes.

The charity is passionate about sharing best practice. We collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders from local authorities, influencers and key opinion leaders, regulatory organisations, such as Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission, and national bodies.

We're a diverse group brought together with a common belief and vision.



Our aim

Our aim as a leadership team is to realise the vision and mission set out in this strategy.

Our vision

A world in which people with disabilities are able to realise their potential as equal and active citizens in control of their lives.

Our mission

To realise the aspirations of people with disabilities through personalised learning, transition, support and care and accommodation services.

Education and therapy

Our aim

To deliver and grow our education and therapy services to enable more young people with disabilities and medical needs to access the most appropriate support in the right place, at the right time.

Why?

Young people with disabilities and medical needs are integral to our society. They require access to high quality education and therapeutic services to enable them to become equal and engaged citizens as adults. There is an increasing need for specialist education providers such as National Star and we are committed to finding ways to enable more young people to access high quality specialist support.

What will we do?

National Star will further develop a sustainable funding model and curriculum structure. This will raise the quality and access of educational and therapeutic services offered to National Star students across England and Wales. To meet the evolving needs of young people we will create more specialist environments to meet the needs of current and future learners. We will continue to forge strong partnerships to enable us to expand the reach and impact of our specialist education and therapy programmes.

How will we do this?

1. We will further develop and evolve how we deliver education and therapy programmes to ensure that current and future learners achieve their outcomes to fulfil their aspirations for adult life.
2. We will introduce a simpler funding model for our services which reflects the flexibility of National Star's multi-disciplinary approach and the high quality of our curriculum.
3. The 'Building a Brighter Future' capital development programme will expand the building and specialist environment capacity in Hereford to meet the increased demand and we will begin the next phase of creating further specialist environments at Ullenwood.
4. We will develop further partnerships with further education colleges to create a wider reach.



“ National Star has made Lucy. She has realised that she can be independent and is doing so much more for herself. We are incredibly proud of her and what she has achieved at National Star.

”

Lucy's parents

01 Education and therapy

Care services

Our aim

To grow our long-term accommodation and care services.

Why?

There is an incredible need for person-centred long-term accommodation. The number of residential and nursing care beds in England has continuously fallen since 2012 and that decline is expected to continue. This reduction has been made worse due to shortages of staff and increasing funding challenges. This is against increased demand as people live longer and with more complex needs.

National Star opened its first long-term accommodation a decade ago in response to former National Star learners struggling to find suitable homes. Young people with disabilities want to live with their peers and have a right to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives.

What will we do?

National Star will empower people with disabilities to thrive by expanding our range of innovative, person-centred, long-term accommodation and care services across key identified locations in England and Wales.

How will we do this?

1. Expand residential care provision at National Star's long-term accommodation in Malvern.
2. Maximise capacity for respite and develop day services in Gloucestershire.
3. Deliver long-term accommodation and/or respite in Wales.
4. We will aim to work with other providers to help ensure a wider range of transitional options are available.



“ I am overwhelmed by the level of care that Mike has been shown. Nothing is too much trouble and Mike's wellbeing is central to all that the National Star team do. They not only support Mike, but me as well.

”

Mike's mother

02 Care services

People

“ National Star is an organisation I am proud to work for. Staff are enthusiastic and dedicated in supporting students to achieve their full potential. The wellbeing of staff is considered just as much as that of the students.

”

Senior Physiotherapist



03 People

Our aim

To sustain and grow a highly skilled workforce and to share specialist expertise.

Why?

National Star's employees are the charity's most valuable asset and the reason why the charity is able to provide high-quality services. Recruiting and retaining highly skilled, talented and committed employees is critical to the survival and growth of the charity.

What will we do?

National Star will sustain, attract, and further develop a highly skilled, motivated specialist workforce. We will share specialist expertise across the charity and the wider sector to drive high quality, exceptional education, care and therapeutic services for people with disabilities.

How will we do this?

1. Continuous improvement of a People strategy that attracts, retains and motivates the right talent.
2. Further development of sector leading training and development programmes.
3. Expand National Star's external training and consultancy offer.

Fundraising

Our aim

To grow and strengthen our fundraising to enhance the resources and experiences for those who depend on our services.

Why?

While most of National Star's charity services are largely funded through statutory sources, we are dependent on our fundraising activities to help fund our specialist facilities.

What will we do?

National Star will strengthen and diversify fundraising activity and generate additional revenue by expanding the number of charity shops. This retail expansion will also elevate the charity's public profile, raising awareness of our vital work and forging stronger connections with the communities we serve.

How will we do this?

1. Expand the network of charity shops and their net income contribution.
2. Grow the National Star fundraising community and donor base.
3. Strengthen the levels of legacy and regular giving fundraising activity.
4. Maintain high levels of donor stewardship and individual donor support.
5. Develop the Capital Fundraising programme to contribute to the Building a Brighter Future development phases.



“ National Star is magical. It transforms. It changes lives. National Star is a place that hinges on freedom and these new buildings are a prime example of that creed. They are using technology to further release the individual brilliance of these students and residents. ”

Supporter Jack Thorne on the opening of the new specialist residence in Ullenwood.
October 2023

04 Fundraising

Technology

Our aim

To optimise the use of technology for students, residents and employees.

Why?

Technology transforms the lives of people with disabilities. It enables them to do tasks for themselves and not be so dependent on others. Technology is critical for National Star as it enables us to be as efficient as possible so that we can focus our time, resources and energy on those people who count on our services. We deal with sensitive personal data, and we must ensure that we protect that data.

What will we do?

National Star will optimise the use of technology to its greatest potential for students, residents and employees. This will include creating streamlined, integrated systems with efficient processes and quality information reporting to enable business improvement. We will maintain our commitment to a high level of information security. We will strive to be leaders in using technological innovation to improve learning and living experiences for our service users.

How will we do this?

1. Add modern service integrations to ensure single source of information and data management.
2. Further develop robust data classification and retention.
3. Develop management information via dashboards and automated reporting across the organisation.
4. Expand centralised Key Performance Indicators (KPI) management.
5. Review, and improve, students' and residents' use of technology to facilitate learning and independence.



“ Technology is power. My eyes, thanks to the technology, have superpowers. I can move independently driving my chair, control my music, the lighting in my room, the curtains and my computer. Thanks to technology, I can speak to you, so that you don't think I am just another disabled person, who may, or may not, have anything to say.

”

Student Jasper

05 Technology

Francis, age 21

Without National Star...

“ I would not have developed my independence skills and confidence.

”

Francis

Before starting at National Star in Hereford, a trip to the local shops was a huge challenge for Francis. His autism meant that he struggled with busy areas and unknown situations.

Two years on and Francis shops and cooks independently and manages his own medical needs. He has become a confident young adult who now feels more in control of his anxiety.

‘The most important skill I have learned at college is independence as it proves, not just to me but to other people such as friends and family, that having special needs doesn’t mean I can’t look out for myself,’ says Francis.

One of Francis’ biggest achievements was travelling to London - for the first time - and making a speech at a House of Commons event on behalf of National Star.

His ambition is to go on to mainstream further education to develop skills in retail and catering to get paid work. He hopes to move out of his family home into supported living.

‘National Star is a place where I feel I am understood. The wellbeing support has helped me build up my confidence, become more independent, have more faith and trust in others and to control and explain my emotions.’



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