



HIGHER HEALTH



# UK STRATEGY: 2025 TO 2030

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# Our purpose and the journey ahead

Over the next five years Higher Health UK will take an important step forward in helping young people build the soft skills, confidence and positive wellbeing they need for adult life. This strategy sets out how that will be achieved. It explains why the moment is right for national action and how the Skills4Living programme can grow to reach citizens across the country.

The first Skills4Living pilot demonstrated strong early impact and clear appetite for essential life skills. Young people showed measurable gains in confidence, emotional regulation and stress management, with meaningful ripple effects created through early peer mentoring activity. This evidence provides a solid foundation for the next phases of development.

This strategy builds on that momentum. Its purpose is to set the direction for regional growth and national expansion through deeper partnerships and a long-term ambition for a UK-wide Skills4Living entitlement. It provides a five-year blueprint for how Higher Health UK will refine and scale a programme that responds to the pressures young people are facing today, from poor mental health and digital safety, to financial insecurity, challenging relationships and climate anxiety.

Our primary focus for the next five years is the 16 to 25 age group; however, we will also aim to work with younger learners below 16 and those over 25 where there is clear value and demand.

The strategy is written for funders, policymakers, system partners and organisations across education, health and employment who share the ambition to prepare young people for life. It sets out a shared framework for our decision-making, investment and collaboration as we work together to support a healthier and thriving generation.



## VISION

A new generation of healthy, confident and connected global citizens with the essential life skills to navigate adulthood and contribute to their communities. They can act with purpose in a fast-changing world and are ready to shape a fairer and more resilient society.

## MISSION

To deliver prevention-focused essential life skills education across the UK. Through digitally enabled learning and peer-to-peer support, we will help young people build wellbeing and everyday capabilities. Working with education providers, employers and civic partners, we aim to make essential life skills a standard and accessible part of education and work-based learning.

## VALUES

Our values guide how we work and how we grow:

### Breaking new ground

We take bold steps to put prevention at the centre of youth development and public health

### Based on data

We use evidence, insight and continuous learning to shape decisions and strengthen impact

### Built together

We co-create with young people, educators, employers and communities, ensuring the programme reflects real lives and real pressures

### Bridging the gap

We remove obstacles to learning by creating programmes that are accessible, inclusive and reachable in the spaces young people already use



# The context and why action is needed

Young people are navigating a complex mix of pressures that affect their health, confidence and futures. Rates of poor mental health, loneliness and financial strain are rising, while climate anxiety and online harms shape everyday life. These challenges often appear long before young people can access meaningful support.

There is also a clear gap in soft skills education across the board. Current provision is uneven and short term, leaving many without the tools needed to manage relationships, finances, digital environments, wellbeing and the transition into work. Employers continue to report shortages in communication, problem solving, resilience and confidence, reinforcing a growing skills mismatch.

National policy is increasingly focused on prevention, health literacy and workplace readiness, yet structured opportunities for young people to build these capabilities upstream remain limited. Evidence from the Skills4Living pilot shows that young people engage strongly and show clear improvements in self-assurance and positive behaviours when soft skills learning is accessible and grounded in lived experience.

This strategy responds to that need. It sets out how Higher Health UK will scale a coherent model that supports young people to navigate adult life with greater clarity and agency.

## Our direction aligns with leading national and international frameworks, including:

- WHO 2025 Strategy (health literacy and social determinants of health)
- NHS 10 Year Plan (prevention, digital access and community based support)
- Department for Education priorities (post 16 education, skills and economic growth)
- UK skills strategy and the wider industrial strategy
- Curriculum and Assessment Review
- National commitments to improve employment, productivity and social mobility, particular around those not in education, employment or training (NEET)



# The Higher Health model

The Higher Health model centres on Skills4Living, a structured programme that helps young people build essential life skills. These range from conflict resolution to empathy as well as resilience, problem-solving and stress management.



The curriculum is delivered through interconnected modules covering mental health, gender equality, digital safety, climate, disability inclusion, physical health, substance use, financial planning, rights, race and community. These themes reflect the pressures that young people face and offer practical tools for them to respond with clarity.

The programme combines interactive online learning with in-person peer discussions and peer mentoring. Digital modules provide flexibility, while the peer-led sessions create physical spaces for connection and critical reflection. A parallel national Speaker Series brings in diverse voices from public life, helping learners understand how these skills apply beyond the classroom and into work and civic life.

The model aligns with international standards, including UNESCO's focus on equality, active citizenship and global responsibility. Furthermore, Skills4Living is grounded in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

By integrating holistic health literacy, social awareness and employability skills, the programme brings together strengths that are often treated separately. Learners gain a clearer sense of purpose and agency. This supports healthier lives, stronger engagement in education and better preparation for work and adulthood.

**“ It helped me see life beyond qualifications, and that success means more than just academic achievements.**

**Dhruwi, Skills4Living participant ”**



# Strategic goals for 2025 to 2030

Higher Health's overall objective is to advance health and wellbeing for the public benefit (particularly among young people) by promoting physical, mental, emotional, social and environmental wellbeing through structured education and training programmes.

These programmes develop the essential skills that underpin good health, including emotional resilience, critical thinking, interpersonal communication, financial awareness and informed decision making. By strengthening these foundational capabilities, the programmes enable individuals to make healthier choices, reduce preventable harm and improve long term health and wellbeing outcomes.

Over the next five years Higher Health UK will pursue two interconnected sets of goals to achieve this objective:

- **System impact goals** that shape outcomes for young people, communities and national policy
- **Organisational capability goals** that ensure we can deliver this impact consistently and at scale

## A. SYSTEM IMPACT GOALS

### 1. Build a national essential life skills entitlement for all 16- to 25-year-olds

Create a coherent offer that can be adopted across education, training and community settings so every young person can access structured soft skills learning

### 2. Strengthen prevention in line with NHS and public health priorities

Embed Skills4Living as a practical contribution to improving mental health, reducing harm, increasing health literacy and supporting healthier everyday behaviours

### 3. Strengthen community cohesion through shared learning and civic engagement

Use Skills4Living to help young people build relationships across backgrounds, counter division, and take part in activities that strengthen respect and collective wellbeing

## B. ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY GOALS

### 1. Develop a national Peer Champion workforce

Train and support young leaders who can strengthen inclusion and create ripple effects to build the confidence and belonging that young people value most

### 2. Embed partnerships with employers

Align Skills4Living with the capabilities young people need for work by collaborating closely with employers to strengthen readiness and job success

### 3. Expand delivery across regions and sectors

Grow provision across further education, higher education, apprenticeships, employers and community settings to reach diverse groups of learners nationally

### 4. Secure long-term funding and formal accreditation

Create financial stability, develop qualification routes and embed Skills4Living within recognised education and workforce frameworks

### 5. Build a robust evidence base through research partnerships

Strengthen evaluation by working with researchers to track long term outcomes in health, education and employment



# Delivery pillars

Our strategy is organised around five delivery pillars that set out how Higher Health UK will maintain quality, grow sustainably and deliver impact at scale.

## 1 Programme quality and curriculum development

- Continuously strengthen the curriculum to reflect the pressures young people face today
- Establish clear progression routes, formal accreditation and consistent assessment
- Uphold high levels of safeguarding, accessibility and inclusion across all delivery settings

## 2 Digital learning and the learner experience

- Enhance the digital platforms to support personalised learning and reflection tools
- Improve onboarding and create clearer learner pathways from first login to completion
- Use data insight to improve accessibility and increase participation over time

## 3 Partnerships and system leadership

- Anchor Skills4Living with FE, HE, apprenticeship providers and community organisations
- Strengthen collaboration with the NHS and local health systems to align with prevention priorities
- Work with employers and civil society to extend reach and strengthen routes into work

## 4 Workforce and Peer Champion development

- Train a national Peer Champion network to lead in-person discussions & create ripple effects
- Create leadership pathways for Peer Champions as part of a wider youth development offer
- Equip staff in partner institutions with the tools needed to deliver Skills4Living effectively

## 5 Evidence, impact and continuous improvement

- Build an evaluation framework with researchers using behavioural insight and long-term tracking
- Share evidence with educators, funders and policymakers to support learning and accountability
- Use real time insight to refine delivery, influence policy and strengthen national conversations

# Five-year roadmap

This roadmap sets out the milestones that will guide the growth and long-term sustainability of Skills4Living. Each year builds on the foundations of the pilot and moves Higher Health UK towards a national offer for all young people.

## 2025

### LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

- Strengthen delivery readiness across all partner sites
- Launch the first Peer Champion pilot and refine the support model
- Consolidate delivery in Greater Manchester

## 2026

### EVIDENCE, ACCREDITATION AND REGIONAL EXPANSION

- Scale the Peer Champion model to support consistent in person discussion
- Build stronger partnerships with employers & health systems
- Secure formal curriculum accreditation routes to strengthen progression
- Enhance digital tools, onboarding processes and evaluation systems

## 2027

### NATIONAL GROWTH PHASE

- Expand delivery across additional regions and provider types
- Publish impact research with academic partners
- Strengthen data insight to inform programme and policy engagement

“ **Health is created in the settings of everyday life – where people learn, work, play and love.**

World Health Organisation, The Ottawa Charter, 1986



## 2028

### EMBEDDING WITHIN SYSTEMS AND PATHWAYS

- Integrate Skills4Living within university, FE and apprenticeship structures
- Align delivery with Integrated Care Systems to support prevention priorities
- Expand employer pathways linking soft skills with workplace readiness
- Secure long term funding partnerships to support sustained delivery

## 2029 TO 2030

### TOWARDS NATIONAL ADOPTION

- Position Skills4Living as a core part of national education & training systems
- Deepen regional and international collaboration to strengthen impact
- Move towards a UK wide entitlement so all young people can access essential life skills learning that strengthens health, confidence and future success



# Measuring impact

Our approach to impact will be guided by the Skills4Living curriculum and the Higher Health UK theory of change. They provide a clear structure for understanding how young people build their capabilities and how these shifts contribute to wider social and economic outcomes.

We measure progress across short-, medium- and long-term indicators:

**Short term** measures focus on confidence, communication, emotional regulation and the ability to manage everyday challenges

**Medium term** outcomes include improved wellbeing, employability, peer support, civic engagement and a stronger sense of belonging

**Long term** outcomes include healthier behaviours, stronger progression in education or work, greater community cohesion and reduced pressure on public services

Evaluation will be delivered through partnerships with independent researchers, education providers and public bodies. This approach will help us understand both individual change and collective impact.

## Resourcing and sustainability

Delivering and scaling Skills4Living over the next five years will require a sustainable model that supports quality and long-term stability. This must include a mixed funding approach combining multiyear grants, partnerships with public bodies and employers, service contracts with education providers and philanthropic investment for innovation and evaluation.

Higher Health's workforce model will entail a focused local core team and a growing Peer Champion network, supported by digital platforms that enables consistent delivery and personalised learning. Core back-office functions can be delivered through Higher Health South Africa, providing significant economic efficiencies and enabling UK teams to focus on partnerships and impact.



# Key strategic risks and mitigations

Risk	Description	Mitigation
Digital exclusion	Some learners may not be able to access online content	Blended delivery, offline alternatives, partnerships that widen device and Wi Fi access
Provider capacity and readiness	Partner organisations may lack the time, staff or structure to deliver	Clear delivery frameworks, onboarding packages, training and simplified implementation models
Engagement drop off over time	Participation may fall, especially in digital only phases	Stronger peer support, regular prompts, in person discussions and clear guidance for partners
Equity and uneven reach	Certain groups may benefit less due to setting or disadvantage	Targeted support, data monitoring, adaptive content and partnerships with community providers
Funding volatility	Short term or unstable funding could disrupt delivery or scale	Mixed income model, multiyear agreements, diversified partnerships and clear value demonstration
Workforce capacity, incl. Peer Champions	Recruitment or retention challenges may limit scale	Structured training, recognition pathways, leadership development and local support systems
Data quality and safeguarding	Risks linked to inconsistent reporting, privacy or safeguarding gaps	Strong data governance, secure digital systems and clear safeguarding protocols across all providers

# Governance & accountability

Our structure brings together Board leadership, youth participation and local advisory input to create a transparent and coherent approach.

## Board oversight

The Higher Health UK Board provides strategic direction, monitors performance and risk, and reviews progress against this five-year strategy. Regular reporting cycles support timely decisions and long-term stability.



## Executive leadership

The executive team oversees programme delivery, partnership development, financial management and quality assurance, with structured reporting to the Board to ensure clarity and accountability.

## Youth voice and co-creation

The Youth Advisory Council helps shape content, guide learner experience & influence programme development. This keeps Skills4Living grounded in lived experiences & relevant to the realities young people face.

## Regional Advisory Group

The Greater Manchester Advisory Group brings together educators, health partners, community organisations and system leaders to offer local insight and challenge. Their guidance strengthens alignment with regional priorities and will directly into broader governance structures as the programme grows.

## Stakeholder accountability

Education providers, employers and funders receive regular updates through dashboards, evaluation summaries and partnership reviews. This supports transparency, builds trust and creates shared responsibility for outcomes.

## Safeguarding and ethics

Clear safeguarding protocols, strong data governance and staff training underpin all delivery. Young people learn in safe, respectful and well supported environments.

## Continuous quality improvement

Evidence from evaluation, learner feedback & partner insight drives ongoing refinement of the programme. This ensures high standards are maintained & strengthened as Skills4Living scales nationally.

# Looking ahead: invitation to partners and supporters



By 2030 we want every young person in the UK to have access to the life skills, confidence and support they need to navigate adulthood with clarity, wellbeing and purpose.

We are now entering the next phase of growth. To realise this ambition, we will need to work with partners across education, health, employment and civil society who share a commitment to improving life chances and supporting a healthier future generation. Long term investment and collaboration will be essential to scale delivery and reach young people in every region.

**This strategy invites funders, policymakers and system leaders to join us in shaping a national approach that improves health, strengthens productivity and supports community cohesion. Collaboration will help us all create the conditions for young people to thrive and contribute to a future that benefits all.**

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**“ Now I can look at myself and say: there’s actually so much more to me than I once thought and I can be proud of that.  
Chris, Skills4Living participant ”**

## **GET IN TOUCH:**

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