

Our updated strategic framework

Having completed our three-year plan for 2016-2019, we have now established a new strategic framework. Built upon the foundations of our work over the past three years, and developed through our learning and increased understanding of our network, the sector and the current socio-political landscape, we believe that this framework will bring about real change.

40,000 children and young people will enter the UK care system this year. Many will have suffered neglect or abuse; all will experience the trauma of loss and separation. Fostering services need to recruit at least 8,100 new carers this year to ensure that every child has the right home in the right place at the right time, where their needs can be met and they are enabled to thrive.

Some children will go on to be placed for adoption, and according to the most recent figures, there are more than 3,000 children waiting for an adoptive family. 39% of these children have already been waiting for more than 18 months, and many will have additional or complex needs.

It is now estimated that 50% of the prison population are care experienced, and at least 25% of the homeless population. Nearly 40% of care leavers aged 19-21 are not in education, employment or training, compared to just 12% across the rest of the population, and in some areas, up to 70% of sex workers are young women who have left care. **This is a big problem.**

Which is why our vision is also big: **a home for EVERY child who needs one.** And not just any home – a great one.

And we believe the Church in the UK is well placed to ensure this happens. Yes, the problem is big, but we know the Church is bigger. Not only this, we believe God calls His Church to care for vulnerable. This isn't just a nice idea, it's our responsibility, and **Home for Good exists to make this vision a reality.**

We believe there are two equally important parts to finding a GREAT home for every child who needs one: **finding homes and supporting families.** We recognise the importance of both these elements to ensure that children experience the continued nurture and stability they need to thrive. The three steps of our new strategic framework each work towards the ultimate goal of these two outcomes.

When our vision is realised, we believe the lives of children, the Church, and society will be transformed.

Our strategic framework outlines the three steps that will lead us to achieve our vision and bring about this change.

Step 1: We **INSPIRE** people to make a difference to the lives of vulnerable children

We do this through **spiritual pacesetting** as we put vulnerable children, fostering and adoption on the agenda of the Church in the UK in three ways:

1) We provide **THOUGHT LEADERSHIP** to the UK Church, ensuring it has a better theology of God's heart for vulnerable children and our mandate to respond.

2) We **ENGAGE INFLUENCERS** (e.g. denomination and network leaders, festivals and conferences, Christian media) to enable them to recognise the importance of caring for vulnerable children.

3) Through our 'on the ground' activities (including champions, local movements and city-wide campaigns) we **INSPIRE AND EQUIP** churches to play their part in caring for vulnerable children.

Step 2: We EQUIP people to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children

We do this through **pre-placement support** as we journey with people stepping up to provide a home for vulnerable children from inspiration to placement:

- 1) We **EQUIP** churches to support people exploring fostering and adoption and navigating the assessment process.
- 2) We **HELP** people exploring fostering and adoption and navigating the assessment process.
- 3) We **CONNECT** people with faith-friendly local authorities, agencies and Trusts so that they can become foster carers or adoptive parents.

We also provide **post-placement support** as we ensure adoptive parents and foster or kinships carers are well supported as they care for children:

- 1) We **EQUIP** churches to support looked after and adoptive children and the families who care for them.
- 2) We **CONNECT** parents and carers to one another for appropriate peer support as they seek it.
- 3) We **HELP** parents and carers to better understand what support is available to them and how to access it.

Step 3: As a result we have the credibility to influence even greater CHANGE.

We do this through **systemic change** as we bring about change to attitudes, policy and practices that impact looked after and adopted children and the families who care for them:

- 1) We rigorously **UNDERSTAND** the issues and identify solutions through research, ensuring the voice of the child is central.
- 2) We seek to change hearts and mind through our **CREDIBLE VOICE** in all forms of media.
- 3) We work to catalyse innovative **POLICY AND PRACTICE CHANGE** through political advocacy.

We believe that our three step framework will become a virtuous cycle, which enables us to increasingly gather momentum and bring about more impact.

As we implement our new strategic framework, we have developed objectives for 2019-2020 in each area. The following is a flavour of what we're planning over the coming year.

Spiritual Pacesetting: We put vulnerable children, fostering and adoption on the agenda of the Church in the UK

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Many of our opportunities to raise awareness and shape understanding come through Krish's speaking engagements and publications. This year he will give a keynote lecture at the Global Leadership Summit (estimated reach of 300,000 people) and publish a new book, *The Greatest Secret*, which explains how an understanding of adoption enriches our understanding and experience of the Christian faith.

ENGAGE INFLUENCERS

We have relationships with a wide range of influencers and plan to develop an approach to better serve them as we enable them to bring about culture change. This will include enabling our staff to build and strengthen relationships, making the most of geographical and personal connections, so that we can both increase the number of individuals we are journeying with and enrich the depth of those relationships.

INSPIRE AND EQUIP

As part of changes to the team structure of Home for Good, we will establish more consistency to our church engagement across the UK. Staff working in regions or nations will intentionally journey with specific churches and will also prioritise strengthening relationships with champions and delivering more speaking engagements. Centrally, we will continue to produce resources for churches for Adoption Sunday, Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Pre-placement support: We journey with people stepping up to provide a home for vulnerable children from inspiration to placement.

EQUIP

To equip churches to journey better with those exploring fostering and adoption we will provide them with content and support in running 'first steps' events such as Home for Good meals, information events or drop-ins. We are developing a further marketing strategy for our Foundations course to enable a wider reach, and will then be working to evaluate the pilot stage and release a fully revised version of the course.

HELP

Our enquiry line is a primary objective for development this year, to enable us to resource many more individuals who contact us as they are exploring fostering or adoption. We will be increasing the size of the enquiry team and developing the training they undergo, alongside enhancing internal systems and processes to ensure we can offer a bespoke, quality response as standard to everyone who contacts us.

CONNECT

We will be developing our Pathway to Adoption in England by moving from relationships with individual partners to an England-wide collaboration model, which will increase the impact across the country. Alongside this we will be creating and testing a new approach to partnering with fostering providers, aiming to have 'proof of product' by the start of 2020. We continue to deliver faith literacy training, evaluated through participant surveys, and aim to conduct academic research in connection to this.

Post-placement support: We ensure adoptive parents and foster or kinships carers are well supported as they care for children.

EQUIP

Our children's and youth leader training plays a key role in equipping churches to understand and support children and families. We will be revising the programme to incorporate the latest research, new training films that feature specialists in trauma and attachment, and a more varied approach to include a breadth of learning styles. We are also developing a 'taster session' version that is ideal for delivering in seminars at conferences.

CONNECT

We will continue to facilitate peer-to-peer support groups and are redirecting some staff time so that we are able to intentionally journey with group leaders through resources and encouragement. We are exploring ways of maximising the impact of online support groups facilitated by Home for Good. In Autumn 2019 we will be hosting an England Summit and the first Home for Good conference in Scotland.

HELP

As well as better equipping our enquiry team through further training and increased knowledge, we will be continually updating and adding to our website to ensure it is an invaluable resource for parents and carers. We will establish how best to signpost families to more formal support, particularly post-adoption support services where appropriate, and ensure this information is easily accessible for those who need it.

Systemic Change: We bring about change to attitudes, policies and practices that impact looked after and adopted children and those who care for them.

UNDERSTAND

In the coming year we will embed research across our advocacy work by engaging with current literature, conducting survey and focus group based research, and enabling ways of listening to the voice of the child. We intend to ascertain gaps in sector knowledge and identify academic institutions working in this area, with a view to embarking on further academic research on the topic of faith in fostering/adoption in the future.

CREDIBLE VOICE

To date, much of our media engagement has been with faith press, and we will continue to build these relationships and use the faith press to raise the profile of our church and government facing campaigns. Alongside this we will seek to grow our secular press engagement and maximise increasing media opportunities presented to our Founding Director, Krish Kandiah, seeking secular press coverage for our advocacy work in particular.

POLICY AND PRACTICE CHANGE

Through providing the co-secretariat for the APPGAP, we will equip Parliamentarians to hold the government to account on issues affecting adoptive and special guardianship families, and establish credibility as a thought-leader in the sector by co-authoring reports with policy and practice recommendations. In addition, we will coordinate government facing campaigns that seek to influence policy and practice, maximising ad-hoc opportunities.

Northern Ireland

- > Continue to develop relationships with key denominational leaders and networks.
- > Develop a speaker team to enable an increase in number of speaking engagements.
- > Establish two working models of working with Trusts or IFAs to find foster carers.
- > Ensure we have peer-to-peer support activities in each Trust area.
- > Continue to build relationships with other organisations in the sector in order to best establish our advocacy priorities in Northern Ireland.
- > Develop a voice within both the Christian and mainstream media in Northern Ireland.

Scotland

- > Increase the number of speaking engagements, including a 'Hope and Hospitality' tour throughout Scotland.
- > Continue working with our VAA partners and run a series of information events.
- > Establish foundations for an approach to partnering with fostering providers.
- > Hold the first Home for Good Scotland Conference, develop peer support groups in Stirling and Glasgow, and host a second retreat for foster and adoptive mums.
- > Continue to build relationships and increase our knowledge base so we are able to be in a position of influence when the Care Review is published.