



**FOUNDATION
OF LIGHT**

THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET

Our Hat-trick of Strategic Aims 2021–2025







With the Beacon of Light strangely quiet during periods of lockdown, we have adapted our services to ensure that we have continued to support those in our communities that need us most.

From 'garden gate' visits and food parcels for the over 55's to delivering a virtual youth service, we've reached out far and wide.

Lessons learned from 2020, along with the views from our stakeholders, has shaped our strategy for the future.

As we all know, the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to have an impact on our lives and our communities long after the vaccination has been distributed. COVID has touched everyone – but it has had a far greater impact on those who already live with inequality and deprivation.

Those members of our community who have less access to education or training, are further away from employment or experience poorer mental or physical health, are facing a greater struggle to get back on track. So, we are re-doubling our efforts in the years to come to help them.

We will continue to provide support across our four core outcome areas, but will increase our focus on improving mental wellbeing across a broad spectrum of ages over the next five years. The NHS will be a primary partner as we develop and lead projects that take on depression and loneliness, and help prevent suicide.

We will also be focussing on tackling youth issues, helping to reduce inequalities and championing digital innovation.

“ It will come as no surprise when I say that the times we are living are shaping us.”

Sir Bob Murray, CBE

Foundation of Light is the official charity of Sunderland AFC. Using the power of football we aim to improve the lives of our communities, by tackling some of the North East's biggest challenges.



Situated in the North East of England, we are based at the Beacon of Light and have outreach centres across Sunderland, South Tyneside and County Durham.

We are financially independent from Sunderland AFC, raising over £4million each year through donations, grants, contracts, and trading activities.

We collaborate with partners such as: local authorities, higher education and housing associations, taking a lead role in delivering projects to benefit our communities and tackle some of society's biggest challenges.

Last year for every £1 spent with us we saved £29 in public spending.

We use our position as an unparalleled route into traditionally 'hard to reach' communities – involving, educating and inspiring.

Working across four industries – education, the world of work, sport and play, and health and wellbeing, we use the power of football to engage individuals and communities, increasing life opportunities and supporting thousands to live happier and healthier lives.

Our history, tradition and culture provides an important platform for our future development.





Why we are here

The areas we serve experience high levels of poverty and deprivation, high levels of economic inactivity, poor physical and mental health and dramatically lower levels of life expectancy. We are here to help tackle these inequalities.



Our Vision

Better opportunities.
Better lives.



Our Purpose

To involve, educate and inspire our communities using the power of football and the SAFC brand.



Our Assets

- Brand
- History, culture and track record
- Bespoke customer service
- Our people - staff, ambassadors and networks
- Innovative and responsive solutions to community problems
- Our collaborations - partnerships and relationships
- Beacon of Light and outreach hubs

Our Mission

Using our high performance and innovative culture, we work across communities in Sunderland, South Tyneside and County Durham, with all ages and abilities, to:

**Raise educational attainment;
inspiring a love and commitment
to lifelong learning.**

Raise attainment in English, Maths and I.T. for all young people whilst closing the gap between those from disadvantaged backgrounds and others. Raise aspirations and support learners to be more confident and motivated. Inspire a love of learning and commitment to lifelong education. Encourage and celebrate success.

**Increase skills and access
to employment opportunities,
connecting people to the world of work.**

Support people to gain good quality vocational and technical qualifications. Provide opportunities for the development of personal social skills. Work with local businesses to provide high quality and relevant learning and training opportunities and help people into work.

**Enable individuals and families
to develop healthier and happier
lives supporting the development
of vibrant and respectful communities.**

Improve health and wellbeing by supporting individuals and families to make safe and healthy lifestyle choices. Strengthen families and community resilience and cohesion. Encourage self-confidence, self-esteem and positive attitude to others and reduce inequalities.

**Provide more opportunities for
inclusive sport and play, inspiring
participation and achievement.**

Provide high quality opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to take part in sport. Encourage a lifelong commitment to sport by working with others to offer clear routes for progression. Raise standards of coaching and teaching.

Our Values

Innovative

- Leading
- Creative
- Curious
- Bold



Passionate

- Inspiring
- Committed
- Driven
- Industrious



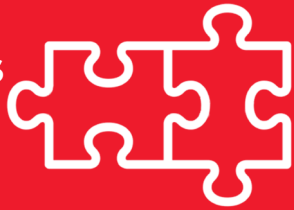
Excellence

- Professional
- Transparent
- High performing
- Accountable



Collaborative

- Diverse
- Relationships
- Teamwork
- Community



Integrity

- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Honest
- Caring



Agile

- Flexible
- Responsive
- Dynamic
- Resilient



Every contact will count with three million hours of meaningful engagement

We will make a positive difference to the lives of thousands over the next five years, through meaningful contact hours.

Making a difference is what meaningful engagement is all about. The engagement itself isn't our goal – we're focused on the outcome, not the output.

We've always worked with those with the greatest needs. COVID-19 has meant that we are needed more now than ever before.

Our work over the next five years will be focused on key areas including:

- Young people
- Inequality including social mobility, gender and race
- Mental and physical health including obesity, suicide prevention, depression and loneliness

We will inspire others by telling more of our life changing stories aiming to create:



Better life chances

- More people into work
- Increased ambition and aspirations
- More people with qualifications and skills



Better lifestyle choices

- Improved physical health
- Improved mental health



Better balance

- Reduced divisions in society
- Improved social mobility
- Stronger communities



Continue to create a vibrant and sustainable Beacon of Light

Prior to lockdown, the Beacon of Light was a real community anchor – with more than 7,000 visitors a week. Parents brought their children to football only to find themselves attending a maths class. It's the kind of place where there is something for everyone to enjoy and benefit from.

Yet too many people don't understand that the Beacon is a place for them.

It is a community hub and event space where we bring the Foundation's programmes to life.

It's the Foundation's engine – bringing in much needed income for the charity to plough straight back into the meaningful engagement that improves the lives of many across the North East.

We aim to exceed pre-lockdown levels of participation – driving vibrancy, driving income and driving the Foundation further. We are determined to grow our unrestricted income, giving the Foundation the freedom to deliver more meaningful engagement for our communities.

As part of this, we are focused on

Better investment

- Unrestricted revenue growth
- Reduced overheads to delivery costs
- Growing environmental sustainability

Better access for all

- Data informed decisions
- Improved user experience



Be the best in our field

If we deliver three million meaningful contact hours, exceed pre-lockdown levels of engagement, improve the user experience and continue to deliver great quality work, we'll be well on our way to accomplishing our aim of being amongst the best football foundations in the world.

But we also need to ensure we continue with good governance, deliver high levels of employee and customer satisfaction and keep raising funds so that our destiny remains in our own hands.

Help us get there, over the next five years, to deliver the:

Best standards and governance

- Be financially robust
- Meet industry standards
- Invest in our workforce

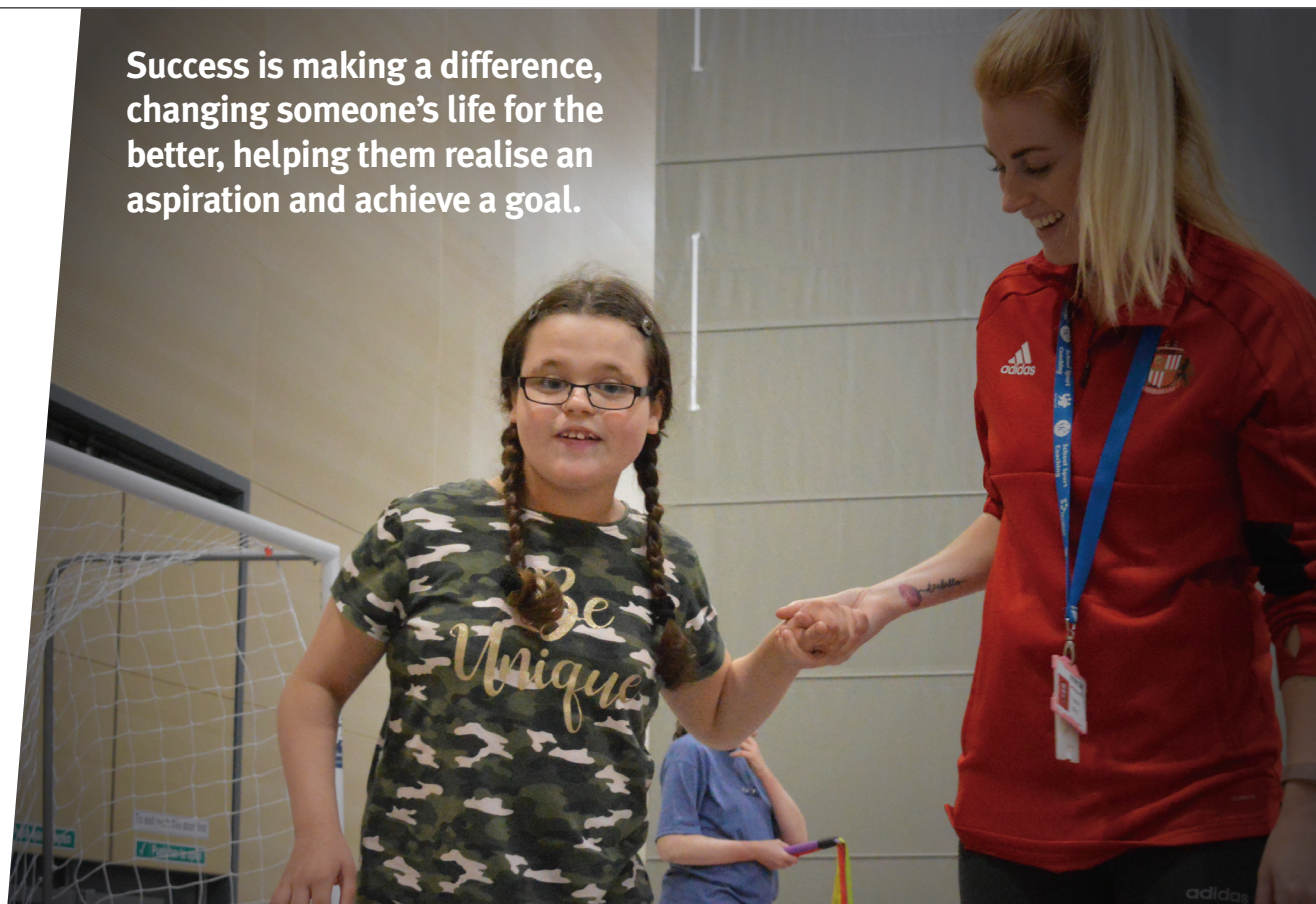
Best level of impact

- Ensure people are at the heart of our decisions
- Maintain robust and consistent monitoring and evaluation

Best innovation and learning

- Growth in ICT and digital innovation
- Continue to build strong collaborations and partnerships

Success is making a difference, changing someone's life for the better, helping them realise an aspiration and achieve a goal.



It is important that we demonstrate the impact of the work that we do. It is important for our communities, partners, our funders and that we are seen to be making a tangible difference, evaluating and collecting the right data at the heart of every project.

We are currently reviewing how we evaluate our performance and how football is changing society. With support from researchers at Northumbria University, we've been examining what works and why. The team is conducting a review on a selection of programmes looking at better demonstrating our impact – so we can better understand community provision, provide partners with more robust evidence and give us better evidence to underpin our story regionally, nationally and globally.

We have collaborated with market research company MMC who will support us with telling our story and engaging our communities over the next three years. This comes in the form of yearly perception and market research, which will help us determine what matters most to our communities but also provide us with a benchmark on which to track our success.

Our annual implementation plan will indicate how we will deliver this strategy and measure its performance.



Foundation of Light
Beacon of Light
Stadium Park
Sunderland
SR5 1SN

T: +44 (0)191563 4777

E: info@foundationoflight.co.uk

www.foundationoflight.co.uk

Registered Charity No. 1089333



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