



Our Strategy 2025



Where children and families thrive



About Unlocking Potential



Ten years ago, Unlocking Potential was created out of a simple but urgent truth: too many children were struggling with their emotions and mental health, and too many families felt powerless to help them. Schools were doing all they could, but the gaps were clear — and the cost of leaving children unsupported was too great.

Since then, we've supported tens of thousands of children and families across London, offering space to talk, to play, to express themselves, and to feel safe. Our work is all about helping others to experience the difference: when a child discovers they can regulate their emotions, when a teacher feels more equipped to support their students, when a parent realises they're not alone and that they can make decisions to support themselves and their children in new ways.

This work is never been just about therapy sessions. It's about prioritising connection, relationship and reflection, to unlock confidence, resilience and possibility - the building blocks of a thriving childhood.

Our impact is tangible and we are proud of what we have achieved to date – for schools, for children and families who would otherwise not have received the support they so urgently need.

We are extremely grateful for the commitment and encouragement of our Trustees and team and to our funders and supporters, all of whom have enabled us to achieve all that we have.

But today the challenges for families and across childhoods are even greater. Existing systems are under extreme pressure, and the gap between need and support continues to widen – felt keenly in school settings and in areas of deprivation – where timely, effective help can radically change life trajectories. We know the scale of the challenge, and we know we cannot solve it alone, so we will reach out to share our thinking and experience and work with others who share our vision in order that we can make change together. With the right therapeutically-minded relationships, delivered at the right time, lives can change. And when lives change, whole communities are strengthened.

Over the next decade, our ambition is simple: to reach more children and families who need us, to stand alongside schools as valued partners, and to build a movement of support that gives every child the chance to thrive.

We hope you'll join us on this journey.

Cassie Oakeshott
CEO

Our Impact

In the past year...

We partnered with

26

Schools to provide tailored programmes of support for children, staff and parents and carers.

We supported

771

children in 1:1 interventions at the times when they most needed our help.

We provided

4,910

one-to-one Psychotherapy sessions to support individual children with their thoughts, emotions and behaviours.

We held

7,855

check-ins and Speak UP sessions which give children in our schools the opportunities to self refer and tell us what is on their mind.

We delivered

759

'Six x TalkTime' sessions, which provided short term targeted interventions on specific issues.

We provided

1122

Occupational Therapy (OT) sessions to support children through play, enable regulation and self-care and develop life skills.

We delivered

788

Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) sessions to support children with speech, voice, language, social and other communication skills.

Our Impact

We can demonstrate the tangible impact of what we do for the children we support

95%

of children achieved progress on the goals that mattered most to them - a clear indicator of improved mental health and wellbeing.

96%

of children who set a goal around managing their emotions reported improvement - showing our work helps children regulate feelings and cope more effectively.

100%

of children whose parents identified communication as a goal made progress, giving them greater confidence and the ability to express themselves more effectively.

Introducing Our Strategy

Our strategy sets the direction of travel for Unlocking Potential, the charity that provides flexible programmes of in-depth, over time, multi-disciplinary therapeutic support in schools for children, along with the support their families need, to enable everyone to be the best version of themselves.



Our mission is to provide tailored therapeutic support to more children, while training the practitioners of the future to build holistic, resilient social systems that equip children and their families with the confidence, tools, and skills to thrive at school and within their communities.

This strategy is about growth – our ambition is to reach more children and families and extend the reach of our Schools Programme to more of the schools who can support and enable them to thrive.

Our long-term ambition for the future is a transformed landscape of multi-disciplinary therapeutic support in schools, with UP acknowledged and recognised as a thought-leader, innovator, preferred collaborator and convener.

We know we won't achieve this all at once and are committed to working towards this goal over the coming years by planning and implementing an evolving offer of multi-disciplinary therapeutic support in schools, innovative thought-leadership, collaboration and working with others to make tangible change for more children and families.

Central to our strategy is 'The UP Way', our methodology, which sets out our distinctive approach and is the foundation and reference point for our thinking and the services we offer.

Introducing Our Strategy

In order to meet the changing needs of our partners, we will review the scope of our services in order that we can provide a more flexible and innovative range of options to allow more schools to take up our offer and more families to benefit from our support.

Our commitment to innovation is evident in our new Family Support Programme which has been launched and will be piloted from September 2025 to provide practical support and enable more families to thrive.

In addition to schools, children and families, we are also committed to supporting the practitioners of the future and to support students and trainee therapists in their professional development – they will be needed to meet the growing need for mental and emotional health support.

Importantly, we do not expect to achieve our ambitious objectives on our own, our strategy requires us to focus outwards, to identify others who share our goals and to work collaboratively both to develop and implement our plans.

Our strategy requires us to change as an organisation if we are to deliver our ambitions and we will need to equip our people to embrace and enjoy change, to be nimble and receptive to new ideas, adopt a creative mindset and share the vision in their day-to-day work.



Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values

Our Purpose

Unlocking Potential is the charity that seeks to address the unmet need for social and emotional mental health support by providing flexible programmes of in-depth, over time, multi-disciplinary therapeutic support in schools for children, along with the support their families need, to enable every child to be the best version of themselves.

Our Vision

Everyone feels supported, equipped and able to achieve their potential.

Our Mission

Our mission is to provide tailored therapeutic support to more children, while training the practitioners of the future to build holistic, resilient social systems that equip children and their families with the confidence, tools, and skills to thrive at school and within their communities.





Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values

Our Values

Individual

Everything we do is about the individual and what is right for them – no two children or families are the same.

Innovative

We look for new solutions and continuously evolve our thinking and approach.

Collaborative

We choose to work with others to find the best solutions – we are stronger together.



Our Services



For Children

Schools Programme – Tailored multidisciplinary therapeutic support in schools.

Creative Arts and Play Therapies, Communication (SaLT), Skills and Environment (OT).

For Schools

Wrap around therapeutic support and expert advice across the school community.

Universal, targeted and specialist whole-school approach.

For Families

Family Support Programmes – Enabling understanding and skills so that families can help their children thrive.

Tailored groups and therapeutically-informed 1:1 support in the home and beyond.

For Students

Supportive training and placements for the leading practitioners of the future.

In-house clinical supervision and training in safeguarding, outcomes measures and the UP Way.

Our Partners



Schools

We work with schools to deliver our services to the children and families who need them most.

Charity Partners

We work closely with partners and others who share our ambitions to drive change.

Supporters

We are supported by individuals and organisations who share these ambitions and value our work.

Students

We partner with leading universities and training providers to enable students to succeed.

UP – In Their Own Words



A Parent

"Since she started with UP, I can see real change in my child – she is more confident, settled and making friends.

I appreciate the support I get too – it's helped me to support her – in fact we are all doing better as a family"

UP – In Their Own Words



A Teacher

"We can really see the difference that UP makes to our children – both in individual sessions and in groups – as well as the support they give us as teachers and the whole school – they have become a key part of our team"

UP – In Their Own Words

A Partner

"Our partnership with UP has been a great success - the professional skills and expertise their staff have creates synergy and enhances our work - it's a relationship that benefits everyone."



UP – In Their Own Words



A Therapist

"Working with the children in the way we do is so satisfying – we really get to know the children and can tailor our support to be what's best for them - whether that is talking therapy or speech and language, skills based or play. We form trusted relationships with the children, their families and their school – it really is a team effort."

UP – In Their Own Words



A Student

“They have given me opportunities to learn the UP Way and consider the needs of children through a multi-disciplinary lens. The supervision and in-house trainings have really expanded my practice – it has been both a supportive and stretching experience – I look forward to extending my placement.”

UP – In Their Own Words



A Supporter

“There is no more important cause to support than the mental health and wellbeing of the next generation. UP provide exceptional support for children who really need additional attention, and I am proud to support their work”

The UP Way

We have defined our Method to clarify how our approach is different from others in order to focus our practice – it is a shared commitment to what we do and how we do it and why we are confident in the impact we have.



The UP Way

The UP Way is built out of our Strategy and driven by three principles:

Individual

We start with the needs of the individual and design our offer to meet them.

Tailored

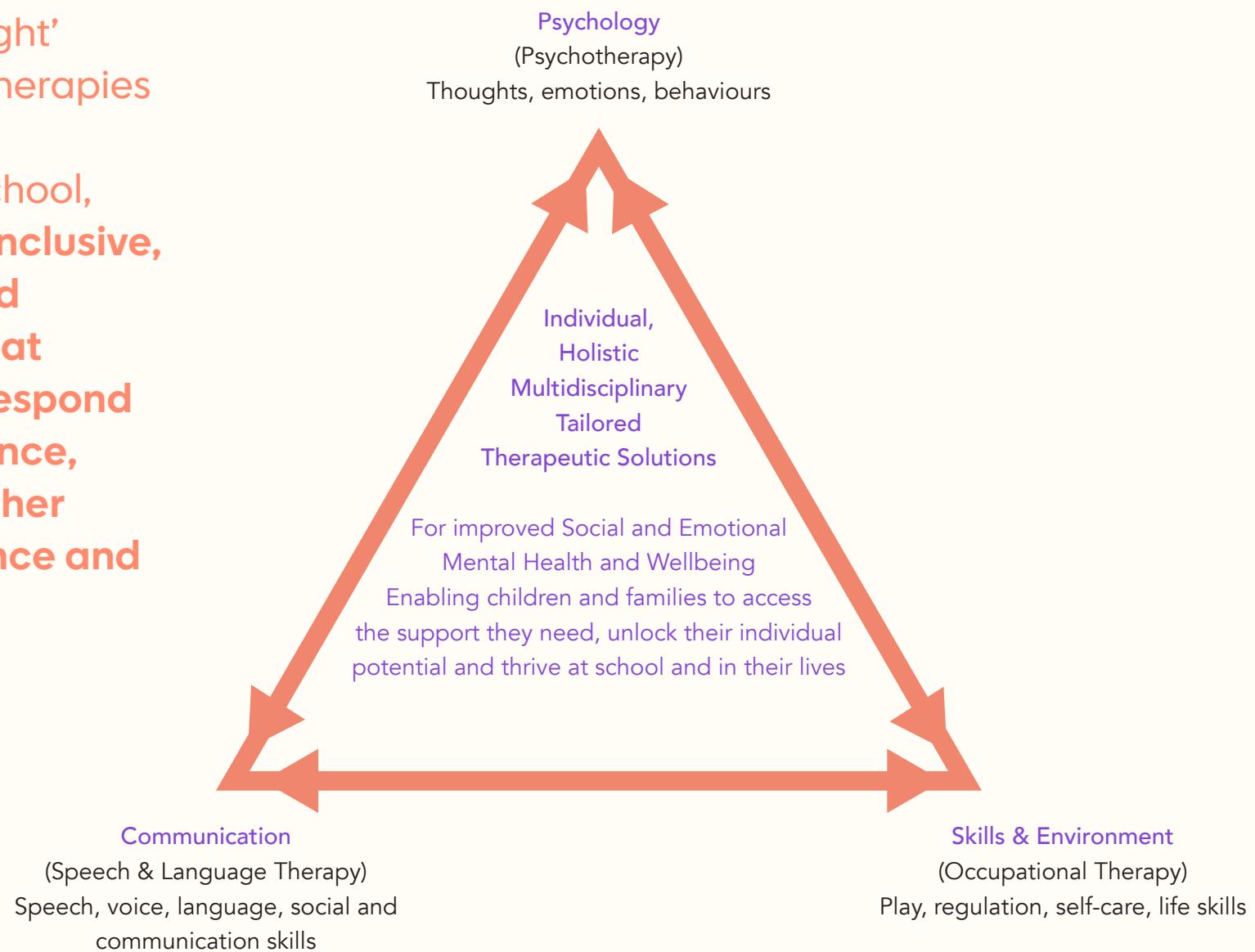
We provide the support that each child, family or school needs, not standard solutions or programmes.

Multidisciplinary

We offer the 'right' combination of different therapeutic solutions for each situation.

The UP Way – Tailored Multidisciplinary Therapies

Our approach allows us to tailor the 'right' combination of therapies for the individual child, family or school, **advocating for inclusive, trauma-informed environments that recognise and respond to neurodivergence, adversity and other forms of difference and diversity.**



Our Method – The UP Way

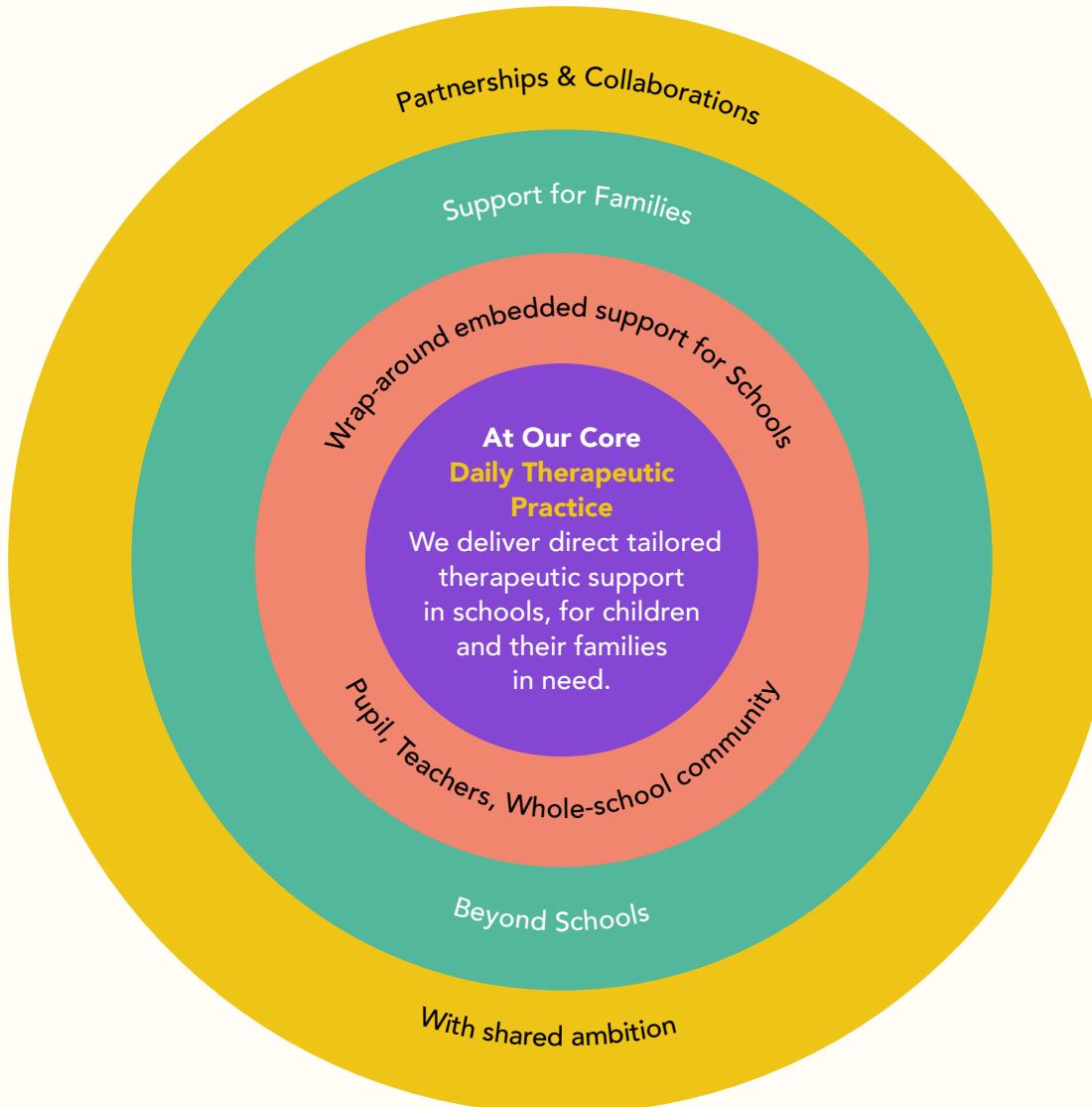
Our offer is focused on therapeutic practice in schools and with families, but extends far beyond this:

Collaboration

We believe in the power of collaboration and partnership and the potential to achieve systems change, and are committed to being part of the bigger changes that can be achieved when we work together with others.

People

We are a multidisciplinary team of skilled professional therapists with breadth and depth of experience. We live by our values. We are committed to supporting and training the practitioners of the future and pass on our values and approach.



Mindset

Our mindset is generous, curious and outward facing. We actively look for opportunities to share our knowledge, expertise and skills to achieve greatest impact and collectively bring about change.

Innovation

We embrace new ideas and ways of working to have greater impact and drive systems change, to enable us to reach more children and families. We are thought leaders, influencers and conveners.

Strategic Objectives

Our strategy will only be successful if we deliver against our goals. We will measure and report our progress towards our objectives, to ensure we achieve our Mission and Vision.

Objectives

1. To shape a forward-looking, flexible service offer that meets the evolving needs of children, families, schools, and future practitioners.



2. To secure a sustainable financial and operational model that underpins long-term impact and resilience.



3. To identify and invest in strategic opportunities for growth that strengthen our impact and reach.



Outcomes

1. A dynamic portfolio of services ensuring that every child and school can access the right support, at the right time, in the right way.

2. A balanced and sustainable organisation with the resources, systems, and financial foundations to continue transforming lives.

3. A consistent and sustainable growth trajectory aligned with our mission, values, and evidence of community need.

Strategic Objectives

Objectives

4. To foster a culture of collaboration and innovation that positions us as a forward-thinking leader in children's mental health and wellbeing.



5. To develop a high-performing organisation built on strong leadership, skilled people, positive culture, and a compelling brand.



Outcomes

4. A robust programme of innovative partnerships and co-designed projects that generate measurable impact and fresh insight.

5. An empowered workforce and well-resourced organisation ready to deliver excellence, adapt to change, and achieve strategic goals.



Enabling Our Strategy

Our strategy challenges us to put in place the enabling structures, systems and processes that will make it possible to achieve our ambitions.

Culture

We will create a shared positive culture for all:

- **Positive** – We believe in the potential to change life trajectories through the right therapeutic support.
- **Professional** – We are highly trained professionals and hold ourselves to the highest standards of practice.
- **Person-centred** – People are central to all that we do – children, families, schools & partners, as well as our team.
- **Generous** – We share learning and success with our people, our schools, partners, and those we work with.
- **Adaptable** – We anticipate and respond to changing needs and challenges.

Organisation

We will review our resources, structure and skills to ensure that we can implement our strategy:

- Continue to deliver our core programmes in schools to support children.
- Enable growth to engage with more schools and more children.
- Extend our reach to support families through our Family Support Work.
- Work with partners to access new opportunities.
- Innovate and continuously look for new ways to serve our target audiences.
- Raise our profile to influence others.
- Develop and deploy our data set to prove impact.

Collaboration

We will collaborate with a broad range of partners:

- Existing partners – other service providers and charities working in our space.
- Potential partners in our space and beyond – including service providers, charities and commercial organisations.
- Others working in the area of mental health support in schools, for children and families more broadly – to identify new opportunities.
- Beyond this, to be outward-facing and open to collaboration with others in support of our strategic aims.
- Importantly, we will be generous in our sharing of our thinking and expertise and encourage others to come with us on our journey.

Funding

We will review and reset our funding model to enable sustainable growth:

- Review current funding arrangements and reset agreements with current school partners.
- Establish new, more flexible options for service provision –with different levels of service according to financial constraints and realities.
- Seek out opportunities for statutory funding.
- Develop a dynamic approach to fundraising and charitable revenue generation.
- Ensure that the quality of the services we offer are not degraded by the funding review and reset.

Supporting Our Strategy

Our strategy requires us to ensure we address the essential aspects of our operation to ensure we can achieve our ambitions.

Digital and Data

Data will have an increasingly critical role to play in the delivery of the strategy.

The organisation will be digital and data enabled.

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) and Wellbeing

EDIB and wellbeing will be embedded in the culture of the organisation. to ensure Unlocking Potential is a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment and hold the wellbeing of all as a key priority.

Environmental Social and Governance/Sustainability

The organisation will embrace ESG principles – environmental, social and governance – and commit to a sustainable future. The organisation will be resilient and fit for the future – in organisational structure, operations, compliance, governance and financial security.

People

The organisation will adopt a strategic approach to ensure that we have the right people in place to deliver the strategy.



Our Plans

In developing our strategy we have been looking at the next 10 years and how we can move towards our Vision.

However, we have also been clear that this strategy is not just a means of setting our long-term vision for the coming years, but about identifying tangible outcomes for what we will do in practice to achieve our ambitions.

Our five strategic objectives will require us to take specific action, and these are our plans to enable them.

1. Flexible and evolving service offer:

- Review, develop and evolve a flexible service offer with clear referral processes and equity and inclusion at its core.
- Continue to extend our offer to reach to new groups in areas of greatest need.
- Develop clear and consistent messaging for our partners and services in order to ensure understanding and take up of our offer.
- Ensure continuous improvement by developing an effective evaluation framework and monitor progress to improve our approach.
- Ensure innovation and growth are prioritised in our culture and approach across all we do.

2. Sustainable financial model, operational efficiency and stability:

- Embed a culture of philanthropy and financial sustainability across the organisation.
- Develop an enhanced philanthropic programme and enabling resources.
- Scope, plan and develop our activities to access new income streams such as corporate partnerships and individual giving.
- Strengthen our Trusts & Foundations programme over time to ensure long term security.
- Develop and implement robust prospecting and pipeline management.
- Build our brand profile and reputation to support extended reach to access new funding opportunities.



Our Plans

3. Consistent growth trajectory:

- Identify growth targets and pipelines across our services and partners.
- Evolve organisational structure and resources to support growth ambitions.
- Ensure a fit-for-growth organisation in terms of structure, skills, resources, people, culture and brand.
- Develop and implement effective People and Culture strategies.
- Drive targeted expansion across England in high-need areas, forming strategic partnerships with new schools, MATs, training colleges and local authorities.
- Maintain quality and impact through feedback and quality assurance processes.

4. Collaborative partnerships and active innovation projects:

- Embed innovation and collaboration as core themes, by reviewing current pilots, partnerships and contacts to identify new opportunities.
- Identify specific targets, create pipeline, initiate contacts for discussion of potential opportunities to work with others who share our ambitions.
- Develop our approach and people resources in order to convert and progress the collaboration and innovation pipeline.
- Test, evaluate, share learning, refine and scale projects.

5. Required funding, resources and tools:

- Communicate and embed strategy and supporting plans with both internal and external audiences and gain support.
- Review systems, people and resource requirements to enable successful implementation.
- Future-proof through pro-active succession and professional development planning.
- Continue to evaluate and review progress and adjust as required.





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