

The logo for nyas, featuring the word "nyas" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a graphic of seven white dots of varying sizes arranged in a semi-circular pattern, resembling a stylized sun or a cluster of stars.

nyas.

gwasanaeth eiriolaeth  
ieuenctid cenedlaethol

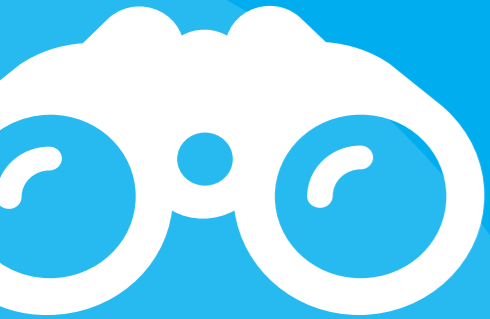
national youth  
advocacy service

A close-up photograph of three young people of diverse backgrounds smiling and looking towards the left. The person on the left is a young girl with curly hair wearing a pink shirt. The person in the middle is a young boy with curly hair wearing a striped sweater. The person on the right is a young man with dark hair wearing a grey shirt. The background is bright and out of focus.

**Strategic Plan**

**2021-24**

# What we stand for



## our vision

Every child and young person has the right to be **heard**.

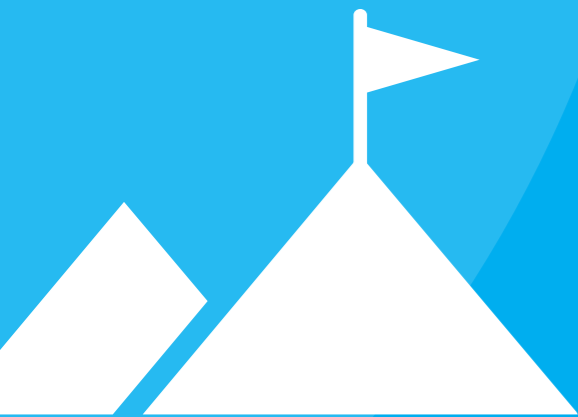
Every child has a right to feel **safe**.

Every child has the right to be involved in **decisions** made about **them**.

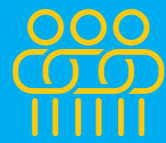
## our purpose

We will **listen** to what children and young people want, **care** about what they say and **empower** them to get their voice heard. We will ensure their wishes and feelings are expressed and acted upon to improve their situation and help them build a better future.

We will never stop in our efforts to influence, lobby and campaign to bring about positive changes and ensure children's and young people's rights are upheld.



## our values are important to us



### COLLABORATIVE

We work closely with colleagues and partners to deliver an outstanding service to the children and young people who need us.



### ACCOUNTABLE

We are open, transparent and accountable, taking responsibility for what we do.



### RESPECTFUL

We value and respect each other and the people we work with, embracing diversity and nurturing trust.



### EMPOWERING

We listen to children and young people when they feel they are not being heard, inform them of their rights, and empower them to change their lives for the better.

# Welcome

**As an established leading rights-based charity, NYAS is well positioned to ensure that children and young people across England and Wales are fully respected, represented and supported in expressing their views and having their rights upheld.**

All NYAS services are formulated around the child-centred principles set out in the Children Act 1989, the Social Services Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in particular Article 12, which sets out the rights of children to be fully informed, consulted and if necessary represented when far reaching decisions are being made about their lives and future welfare.

As we enter our fifth decade, the need for a child's voice to be heard and the positive impact that that can have on improving life chances and outcomes for them is increasingly being recognised. The work of NYAS has changed and developed in order to reflect the growing and diverse needs of the children and young people who come to us for help.

#### Yet more needs to be done.

We work in partnership with others in order to achieve our strategic aims and to inform and drive forward change, using what we have learned from children and young people to help shape legislation and the associated services on which they depend.

We are eternally grateful to colleagues, trustees, volunteers, funders, commissioners and everyone who has supported, endorsed and worked tenaciously to enable NYAS to translate the rights of a child into services for thousands of vulnerable children and young people.

We hope that we can continue to rely on your much-valued support, which will help us to deliver on our strategy, as we remain passionate about improving young lives.

#### Thank you

**Our 2021 to 2024 strategy** reflects updates to our infrastructure and service delivery models to make the most appropriate use of remote working, learning from experiences of the Coronavirus pandemic of 2020/21.

NYAS does not exist to make vast amounts of money or for the benefit of our colleagues, supporters, service providers or volunteers; we exist to ensure children and young people have their rights respected and their voices heard.

We know that:

- We are agile and resilient
- We can adapt to new ways of thinking and flexible working
- We are excited by doing things differently
- We act in line with our values



**Sir Mark Hedley**  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees



**Rita Waters**  
NYAS Group Chief Executive (England and Wales)

# Our Journey

**NYAS exists as a strong independent voice, speaking up for and with, vulnerable children and young people – we listen to what they want, care about what they say and enable them to express their wishes and feelings in order to improve their situation and help them build a better future.**

This plan represents the route map by which we intend to navigate this important journey across England and Wales.

Over the coming pages you will read about how NYAS aims to develop and enhance its service provision in response to the many challenges facing care experienced young people today.

The plan will also highlight why we need your help to continue to provide this support and we will introduce you to some of our dedicated colleagues and the young people we support.

At NYAS we often meet young people at a time in their lives when they are most vulnerable, when no one is listening to their views, wishes and feelings and their voice is simply not being heard.

We have therefore identified four key areas that we believe will deliver real, measurable progress.

## We will...



Our three-year plan has been developed by our Senior Management Team and various working groups across NYAS and has been approved by the Board of Trustees. It provides clarity but is flexible enough to cope with changing circumstances. The purpose is to provide a direction of travel for all supporters who have an interest in seeing NYAS succeed.

# Our Challenge



**NYAS works with some of the most vulnerable children, young people and adults who are often reliant on the statutory services suffering the negative impact of the cuts in public expenditure. Our combination of social care and legal services places us in a unique position to ensure that they receive the services they need and that their voices are heard.**

**Demand for children's services has risen dramatically...**

There are more than

**85,000**

**children in care in England and Wales.**

One in five adults are estimated to have experienced at least one form of child abuse before their 16th birthday. Abuse and neglect are the most common reasons for children entering the care system.

**...and funding has been cut**

**In 2018/19, councils across England were forced to spend £770 million more on children's social care than they had budgeted for.**

An average of

**94**

**children are now coming into care every day.**

Society remains ambivalent about the empowerment of children and young people. Perceptions of young people, particularly those in or having had experience of the care system, continue to remain polarised in society. This can be a source of concern and frustration for many young people themselves.

NYAS will continue to champion the rights of all children and young people and to identify vulnerable individuals or groups, such as children looked after by local authorities, children and young people with challenging physical or mental health conditions, trafficked and unaccompanied asylum seeking children and children and young people suffering the negative effects of family breakdown. NYAS will endeavour to support all these groups in having their voices heard and in having an input into decisions made about their lives.

NYAS will be advancing our work to include family and parental support with the aim of keeping families together with their children whenever safe and possible to do so. In Wales, NYAS Cymru will be providing advocacy through our parent advocacy programme for those subject to care and support plans to ensure parent/s voices are heard in decision making processes. We will be providing peer support; parents helping parents and offering training to promote the power of parent advocacy.

# Champion rights



## What we want to do and why

Children and young people have a right to have their views and feelings heard and to be involved in decisions made about their lives. When this happens, and happens well, it improves their experience in care, which in turn promotes positive outcomes for them in the future.

The children and young people we work tell us they often feel powerless because they are not able to influence what happens in their lives.

We will always listen to and speak up for young people, empowering them to ensure their rights, views, wishes and feelings are represented, heard and supported.

## How we will do it

We will recognise and value the voices of children and young people in all areas of our work, listening to them and responding to what they tell us. Listening is vitally important to the way we work with children and young people. It is only through understanding what matters most to them that we can help them change things for the better.

We are passionate about children and young people's rights. This is reflected not only in the way we work with them but in all aspects of our service delivery. We work independently and confidentially and will always be on the side of the child.

We will ensure that we take all measures to keep young people safeguarded and maintain their well-being.

We will ensure that care experienced young people are fully informed of their rights and entitlements and know where they can find the help they need. We will ensure they are motivated to take action through providing a variety of independent advocacy services and legal representation.

We will provide accessible platforms and projects to form positive relationships and support young people to improve outcomes.

# Influence change



## What we want to do and why

We will inspire care experienced young people to work with us and campaign to bring about positive changes to shape the laws and services on which they depend.

## How we will do it

We will identify, research and campaign on relevant issues to bring about positive outcomes and systemic change for care-experienced children and young people and those who experience family breakdown.

We will build positive relationships with young people and explore new ways to involve them which will enable them to actively contribute and participate in shaping policy.

We will increase NYAS's reputation as a lead organisation by evidencing our expertise and evaluating our impact through powerful storytelling and informative research reports and recommendations.

We will partner with academic institutions for joint bids on research projects, connect NYAS with relevant parliamentary groups and work with student researchers to produce quality research on a range of topics.

We will gain national media coverage for NYAS' policy, research and campaigns programme and promote NYAS legal services with the judiciary. We will improve NYAS' visibility in Parliament and the Welsh Assembly by attending sessions, submitting evidence and hosting events.



**Thank you for all your support it really helped me at a very difficult time. I feel my advocate was a great listener to all my worries and concerns, she was not judgemental and was very understanding and made things happen.**

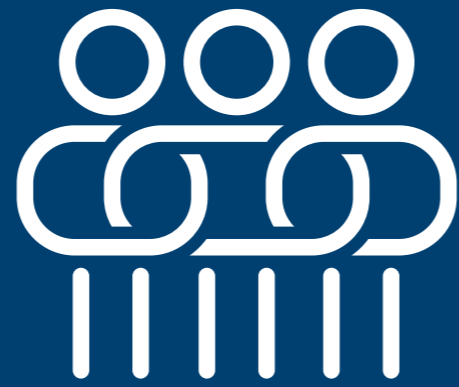
**Young Person**

**Thank you for all that you have done. For being a part of helping to bring the joy and happiness back to a child that was left completely destroyed and without hope or a future in the struggle to get the right placement. I hope today really shows you just what a difference you make to our children in giving them back a voice seeing them in the right placement and giving them back life and them blossoming means so much more than words.**

**Parent**



# Work Collaboratively



## What we want to do and why

We will cultivate a series of strong, collaborative and effective partnerships with commissioners, funders and other providers to broaden our reach and improve service delivery. We will empower our dedicated workforce to succeed together by realising their full potential.

## How we will do it

We will attract, recruit and retain a passionate and engaged workforce who are recognised as experts in their field. We will focus on getting the right people with the right skills in the right roles. We will ensure our people embrace the values of the organisation and have the skills and knowledge they need to excel in their job. We will have confident and competent leaders and we will grow internal talent to ensure that a high level of knowledge and expertise is maintained.

We will continue to expand the number of volunteers engaged in all areas of our work. In particular, we will seek to identify new opportunities for volunteers to ensure the experience is positive and mutually beneficial for both parties.

We will actively explore opportunities for partnership working which will recognise the unique contribution of each organisation towards achieving our shared goals.



**I have been an IV for many years and have honestly got as much from my four matches as I hope those lads have got from my time with them. They have all been very different, bringing some challenges, but also great joy and pleasure, and many, many joyful trips and adventures. I would recommend it to anyone who wants to think they can make a positive difference to a young person's life, and offer that priceless commodity, time!**

# Inspire Trust



## What we want to do and why

A strong foundation is crucial for NYAS to deliver a range of quality services and projects to support children and young people. This means ensuring quick and effective decision-making, high-performing systems and processes, and a culture of engagement and inclusiveness that puts young people at the centre of all we do and empowers all our people to be the best they can be.

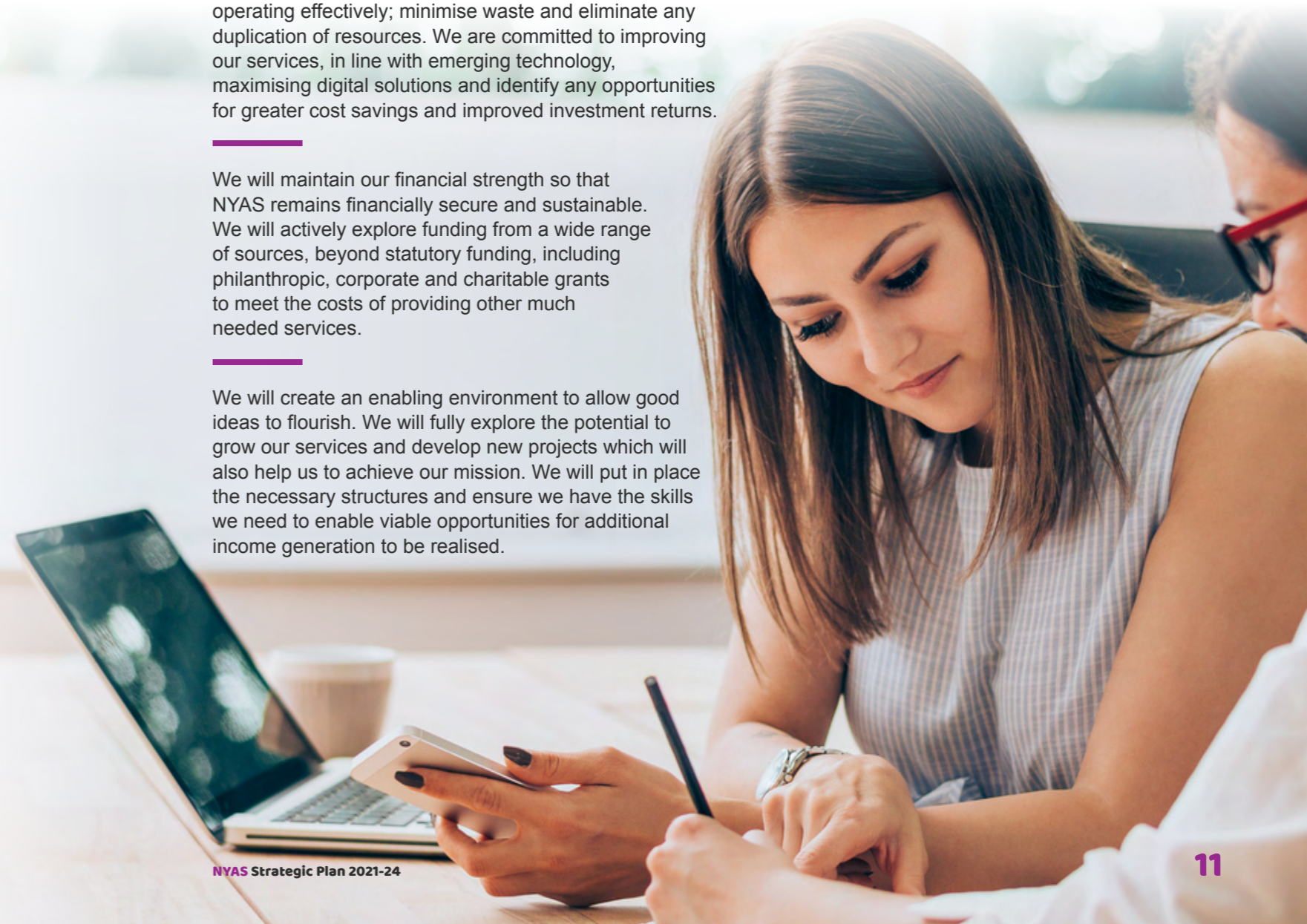
We will make best use of all our resources and strengthen our processes and services by investing in new technology, delivering efficiency and financial sustainability.

## How we will do it

We will ensure that we have in place robust systems to assure compliance and the quality of all our services. We will review our work processes to: ensure they are operating effectively; minimise waste and eliminate any duplication of resources. We are committed to improving our services, in line with emerging technology, maximising digital solutions and identify any opportunities for greater cost savings and improved investment returns.

We will maintain our financial strength so that NYAS remains financially secure and sustainable. We will actively explore funding from a wide range of sources, beyond statutory funding, including philanthropic, corporate and charitable grants to meet the costs of providing other much needed services.

We will create an enabling environment to allow good ideas to flourish. We will fully explore the potential to grow our services and develop new projects which will also help us to achieve our mission. We will put in place the necessary structures and ensure we have the skills we need to enable viable opportunities for additional income generation to be realised.

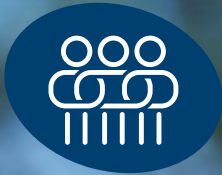




**Champion rights**



**Influence change**



**Work collaboratively**



**Inspire Trust**



gwasanaeth eiriolaeth  
ieuentid cenedlaethol  
national youth  
advocacy service

**Helpline 0808 808 1001**

**Email [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)**

**f NYAS.yv**

**@NYASServices**

**[www.nyas.net](http://www.nyas.net)**

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