



Strategy 2026–2029

Foreword

Together, we can make sure that learning remains a powerful force for hope, opportunity and lasting change.

This year marks 25 years of Shannon Trust's work transforming lives through peer mentor-led learning in prisons. Since 2001, we have grown from a small, visionary idea into a national organisation recognised for our deep expertise in working with people facing multiple, overlapping forms of disadvantage. Over that time, we have strengthened our phonics-based approach, expanded into numeracy, and begun to harness digital tools to widen access and support different learning needs.

Today, our reach is wider than ever: we have around 100 staff, nearly 150 volunteers, and over 2,000 active mentors working in prisons and communities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Together, they create daily opportunities for people to build confidence in reading and numeracy - skills that open doors to connection, dignity and opportunity.

We launch this strategy at a moment of significant reform. The Sentencing Act, introduced in January this year, is reshaping the criminal justice landscape, with implications for who enters custody, for how long, and under what conditions. Meanwhile, in education, the school reform White Paper Every Child Achieving and Thriving (2026), published in February, seeks to close the widening disadvantage gap. Data continues to underline the scale of the challenge. Roughly 15% of children do not reach the expected reading standard by the end of primary school. These inequalities follow young people into adulthood, where they become painfully visible across the prison estate.

Estimates suggest that around 66% of adults in custody have literacy levels below those expected of an 11 year old; far higher than in the general population. A significant proportion of people in prison face serious challenges with reading.

At the lowest end of the scale, a fifth of those in custody - almost 19,000 people in the UK last year - are operating at the most basic literacy level, meaning they struggle with everyday reading tasks. According to the National Literacy Trust, adults working at this level may find it difficult even to interpret simple written information, such as road signs.

The recent HM Inspectorate of Prisons thematic report, Reading for Rehabilitation (2026), reinforces what we have long understood: the ability to read has a profound impact on both the experience of prison life and people's prospects after release. Inspectors found that prisons with a strong reading culture, with active libraries, visible leadership commitment and targeted support, saw markedly better outcomes for people in their care. However, people in prison with low literacy levels struggled most both inside prison and on release, often becoming distressed or frustrated in ways that increase their vulnerability, heighten risk of conflict or lead to deeper isolation.

Our ambition is clear. Our core purpose is supporting people already in custody or under supervision, ensuring that every person, regardless of their starting point, has the opportunity to strengthen their skills, build confidence and change the direction of their life. At the same time, we know that real change also means prevention. We also want to reach people long before they encounter the justice system, offering learning pathways that reduce exclusion and marginalisation and help prevent the circumstances that lead so many into custody.

Delivering this work requires an organisation that is strong from the inside out. Over the last four years, embedding staff in prisons has transformed the experience of Shannon Trust learners, allowing us to provide more consistent, higher quality support.



Now, we must consolidate that progress: strengthening internal systems, modernising processes, and ensuring our structures are fit for purpose so that our people - staff, volunteers, and mentors - can do what they do best. Our mentors and volunteers remain at the heart of everything we achieve. Without their dedication, patience, and belief in others, none of this would be possible.

This strategy is a commitment to build on our success, expand our reach, and ensure that everyone who needs our support can access it easily, whether in prison, on probation, or in the community.

Thank you to all our supporters, partners, donors, staff, volunteers and mentors. Collaboration has always been at the heart of Shannon Trust's progress, and every step forward has been made possible because so many people choose to stand with us.

As we look ahead, we are committed to working even more closely together to ensure that everyone, wherever they are starting from, has the opportunity to learn, grow and build confidence in reading and numeracy. The impact of gaining these skills is profound: it lifts barriers, restores dignity, strengthens relationships, and changes the trajectory of lives. Together, we can make sure that learning remains a powerful force for hope, opportunity and lasting change.

Lucy de Groot CBE
Chair of the Shannon Trust Board of Trustees

Dr Jane Rigbye
Chief Executive of Shannon Trust

Vision

A future where confidence with words and numbers unlocks access to connection, dignity, and opportunity.



Connection

Connection is the foundation of our approach: mentors and learners building trusting relationships that make learning feel safe and achievable. Through meaningful human connection, people who may have felt isolated or excluded gain the encouragement, consistency and support they need to take their first steps into reading and numeracy.



Dignity

Dignity is central to how we work. We recognise the inherent worth of every person, and our programmes are designed to enable a sense of agency, respect and self-belief. By learning at their own pace with a peer mentor, individuals experience dignity through being seen, heard and supported in a way that honours their strengths rather than defining them by their circumstances.



Opportunity

Opportunity is the outcome we strive for: the chance for every learner to develop essential skills that open new pathways in education, employment and life. Whether in custody or the community, our strategy is about ensuring that people have real, tangible opportunities to progress, opportunities that can change futures for individuals, families and communities.

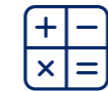
Mission

We build reading, numeracy and life skills through mentor-led learning to help people fully participate in society.



Reading

Reading is the gateway skill at the heart of our mission. For many of the people we support, unlocking the ability to read is the first step toward greater independence, confidence and connection with the world around them. Through accessible, supportive learning environments, we help individuals build the foundations they need to navigate information, communicate with others and take control of everyday tasks.



Numeracy

Numeracy is just as essential, shaping how people manage daily life, from understanding prices and bills, to making informed decisions. By strengthening core number skills, we equip learners with the practical tools that underpin stability, problem solving and confidence. Improving numeracy is about removing barriers that prevent people from moving forward.



Related Life Skills

Related life skills, such as understanding forms, managing money, or communicating effectively, help people apply reading and numeracy in meaningful, real world ways. These skills support wellbeing, resilience and independence, enabling learners to take steps toward their goals with greater clarity and confidence.



Mentor-led

Mentor-led learning is the thread that runs through all our work. Learning alongside someone who understands your challenges and believes in your potential creates trust, motivation and momentum. Mentors provide encouragement, role modelling and practical support, making learning feel accessible, personal and achievable.



Participation

Ultimately, our mission is about enabling people to take part fully in society; in their families, communities and workplaces. When individuals gain the confidence to read, work with numbers and manage everyday tasks, they can engage more fully with opportunities, better contribute to their communities and shape their futures with dignity and autonomy.

Reading and numeracy are gateway skills that build confidence, independence and the ability to navigate everyday life.

Through mentor-led learning and practical life skills, we support people to apply these foundations in real-world situations and participate more fully in society.

Our pillars

We have set out three strategic pillars and three enabling pillars that together will drive us closer to achieving our vision and mission. Each pillar is equally important, and all are connected by shared themes.

Every pillar is supported by a set of actions which, when delivered collectively, will help us realise our strategic ambitions.

STRATEGIC PILLARS



Reach and Impact

Expanding the breadth, depth and reach of our activities to maximise our impact.



Innovation in Learning and Delivery

Leading with innovative ideas to continuously test and improve our offer.



Evidence and Influence

Sharing our expertise, best practice and evidence to inform policy and practice.

ENABLING PILLARS



People and Culture

Enable everyone to contribute to a great culture, where people feel valued and empowered to make a difference in the uniquely challenging contexts in which they work.



Diverse and Sustainable Funding

Diversify our range of income streams, ensuring the budget is fully funded through multiple years, underpinned by sustainable and ethical fundraising models.



Operational Excellence

Enable the charity to succeed through professional and agile business support.

Reach and Impact

Our ambition: Expanding the breadth, depth and reach of our activities to maximise our impact.

Rationale

Low literacy and numeracy are risk factors for offending and major barriers to rehabilitation. Many people in custody or on probation lack access to learning that feels safe, relevant and achievable. By deepening and widening our reach, we ensure that those most excluded have pathways into learning that work for them.



What we are currently doing

- We deliver reading and numeracy programmes, *Turning Pages* and *Count Me In*, across prisons in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland through a mix of commissioned services and charitably funded provision.
- We provide *Write Now*, a writing, comprehension and literacy programme to help reinforce reading and writing skills learned through *Turning Pages*.
- We are piloting our programmes in probation services and in CFO (Creating Future Opportunities) hubs.
- We work in partnership with community-based organisations to deliver our programmes.
- We offer development opportunities to mentors, including AQA accreditation.
- We provide digital access to our programmes to support learning, both in custody and in the community.

What we plan to do next

- **Enhance the mentor and learner experience**, focusing on retention, progress, and meaningful recognition of achievements.
- **Introduce new co-produced content** that builds essential life skills, such as CV writing and managing bills, while continuing to grow confidence with words and numbers.
- **Extend our reach beyond custody**, delivering targeted programmes in non-custodial settings with clear eligibility criteria and simple referral routes.
- **Strengthen our storytelling**, promoting our offer inside and outside prison and engaging professionals, families and friends with compelling, accessible communications.
- **Embed a results-driven approach**, using robust performance monitoring and quality assurance to ensure every learner receives the highest quality support.



What difference you will notice in three years

- **We will be seen as the experts:** Shannon Trust will have a recognisable, trusted national identity as experts in phonics, numeracy and mentor-led learning, particularly in the context of criminal justice.
- **We will be easy to access and engage with:** Clear, simple routes into our programmes for learners, mentors, families, and professionals.
- **We will deliver flexible, high quality and effective programmes:** Every programme will be delivered consistently and to a high standard, using strong quality assurance and data driven monitoring to continually improve the support every learner receives.
- **We will collaborate and work in partnership to maximise our reach:** A strong network of strategic partnerships, increasing access and widening our impact.
- **We will engage and retain our learners and mentors:** More learners progressing into life skills development, employability and accredited opportunities.
- **We will work across all four nations of the UK:** We will have increased participation in our programmes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and will have begun to deliver programmes in Scotland.

Innovation in Learning and Delivery

Our ambition: Leading with innovative ideas to continuously test and improve our offer.

Rationale

Learners' needs are always changing, whether that's the rising demand for neurodiversity support, to learners speaking English as a second or other language (ESOL), or the digital transformation in prisons. To remain relevant, we must embrace innovation that is co-produced with our learners and mentors, grounded in evidence, and responsive to emerging challenges.

What we are currently doing

- We are innovating to better meet mentors' needs by testing and scaling a mentor accreditation scheme, building a relationship with the AQA awarding body, and providing Level 1 Accreditation to all mentors.
- We continue to invest in the development of *Turning Pages Digital* and *Count Me In Digital*, including piloting their use in probation settings and launching *Turning Pages Digital* through in-cell devices at HMP Ashfield.
- We partner with Read Easy to test ways of continuing to support mentors and learners after they are released from prison, and create better post-release pathways.
- We encourage innovation and collaboration amongst our volunteers, hosting a resource forum to share and explore over 70 volunteer-created resources, informing improvements in accessibility, good practice and learning materials.

What we plan to do next

- **Create practical spaces for idea development**, establishing regular forums and channels where staff, volunteers, mentors and learners can share challenges and shape early-stage solutions.
- **Improve internal processes to support innovation**, streamlining administrative tasks for frontline staff, strengthening quality review systems, and using structured pilot cycles to test, refine or stop new ideas.
- **Build our co-production capacity**, nominating co-production champions and developing learning materials that strengthen co-design skills across the organisation.
- **Advance our digital learning offer**, investing in the skills and tools needed to produce high quality digital content and developing digital versions of all core programme resources, including *Write Now*.
- **Pilot digital engagement projects in custody and the community**, working with the Ministry of Justice and prisons to align with existing infrastructure, while testing new approaches in probation and community settings.
- **Develop new programme content through targeted projects**, including ESOL and life skills resources rooted in everyday experiences.



What difference you will notice in three years

- **We will create and sustain an environment that fosters innovation:** Staff, volunteers, mentors and learners will feel confident bringing forward new ideas, supported by clear processes that make it easy to test, refine and implement improvements.
- **We will empower mentors and learners through co-production:** This will be a normal part of how we design and shape our programmes, with mentors and learners actively involved in developing materials, identifying challenges and influencing decisions.
- **We will recognise iteration and improvement as innovation:** Small, continuous improvements will be visible across our programmes and resources, creating a more agile organisation that learns, adapts and strengthens its offer over time.
- **We will innovate to meet emerging needs:** Our programmes will be more responsive to the changing needs of learners, such as ESOL, neurodiversity, digital literacy and life skills, ensuring we remain a leading provider of effective, relevant learning.
- **We will recognise opportunities for digital – but provide access where digital is a barrier:** Digital tools will be used where they genuinely enhance learning and access, while high quality non-digital options remain available, so no learner is excluded.
- **We will be disciplined in innovation:** New ideas will be tested through structured pilots with clear criteria, ensuring we only scale activity that delivers real impact and aligns with our mission, making innovation purposeful and sustainable.

Evidence and Influence

Our ambition: Sharing our expertise, best practice and evidence to inform policy and practice.

Rationale

Our work generates insights that can shape the wider criminal justice and education systems. Strong evidence helps us improve our programmes, influence policy, and give decision-makers the confidence to adopt learning models that work.

What we are currently doing

- We deliver evidence-based programmes that are grounded in evaluation findings and impact data.
- We collect and analyse progress measures across our programmes, and we test this data against the literacy levels used by the Ministry of Justice to strengthen consistency and insight.
- We engage with academic networks and researchers in prison education, contributing to sector knowledge and staying connected to emerging evidence and best practice.
- We listen closely to learners and mentors, regularly capturing their feedback through multiple channels and using what we learn to improve the learning experience.
- We share data with partners, helping build a clearer understanding of the impact of literacy and numeracy support within the criminal justice system.

What we plan to do next

- **Develop a robust data reporting framework** that standardises how we collect, analyse and present monitoring and evaluation data, enabling clearer insight into progress and improved decision making across all programmes.
- **Create and embed Theories of Change** for each of our core programmes, setting out the assumptions behind our approach, clarifying the pathways to impact, and enabling us to test rigorously whether and why our interventions work.
- **Implement proportionate evaluation for every programme**, designing evaluation plans that match the scale, purpose and learning goals of each intervention, and ensuring we gather meaningful evidence without placing unnecessary burden on staff or volunteers.
- **Align our data systems with the Ministry of Justice and His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service frameworks**, ensuring our measures, definitions and reporting structures are compatible with those used across the criminal justice system, and strengthening the relevance and comparability of our evidence.
- **Develop a structured public affairs programme**, identifying key policy priorities, audiences and opportunities for influence across criminal justice and education.
- **Strengthen academic and sector partnerships**, developing collaborative research projects, supporting external evaluations, and increasing our engagement with prison education networks to expand the evidence base and shape best practice.

What difference you will notice in three years

- **We will influence policy:** Shannon Trust will be recognised as a credible voice in national discussions on literacy, numeracy and rehabilitation, contributing evidence that shapes policy and practice.
- **The data we collect will feel thoughtful and intentional to all stakeholders:** Our data reporting will feel streamlined and useful, with clear systems that make collection and analysis straightforward for staff and volunteers, and generate insights that actively support decision making and strengthen our work.
- **Every programme will have proportionate evaluations in place:** This will help us understand what works, refine our approach and strengthen outcomes for learners and mentors.
- **We will have a stronger evidence base:** We will be informed by ongoing research, robust methodologies and deeper engagement with academic and sector partners.
- **Our insights will be easier to access and use:** This will be implemented through a well maintained evidence bank and regular dissemination of findings to stakeholders, partners and funders.
- **We will focus on internal knowledge translation:** Learning from data, research and evaluation will be routinely shared across teams, strengthening practice, building confidence and improving decision making throughout the organisation.



People and Culture

Our ambition: Enable everyone to benefit from a great culture, where people feel valued and empowered to make a difference in the uniquely challenging contexts in which they work.

Rationale

Shannon Trust's people are central to our mission, but we know we still have work to do to ensure everyone feels supported, connected and set up to succeed. As we have grown rapidly, our systems, structures and ways of working have not always kept pace. Staff, volunteers, and mentors have told us they need clearer roles, better communication, more consistent support, and a stronger sense of belonging. This pillar is about building those foundations: creating clarity, strengthening confidence and ensuring our culture evolves as we do.



What we are currently doing

- We continually refine our processes, support staff effectively, and ensure our services remain person-centred, consistent and high quality.
- We are deepening our understanding of staff and leadership development needs, and our learning and development offer now provides enhanced, role-specific training alongside compliance requirements.
- Staff wellbeing remains central to our work, with our fully embedded Care Team offering listening support, mental health first aid and resilience guidance, particularly for prison facilitators.
- We are reviewing and improving recruitment processes to remove barriers, increase accessibility and ensure fairness, while our Ban the Box commitment continues to provide equitable opportunities for candidates with lived experience of the criminal justice system.

What we plan to do next

- **Review our organisational structure with care and transparency**, ensuring roles are clear, workloads are manageable, and everyone feels supported and enabled to do their best work.
- **Strengthen our culture** by improving internal communication, increasing transparency and connection, and building a stronger sense of shared purpose across teams and locations.
- **Embed a performance development and competency framework** that links directly to our organisational objectives, helping staff understand expectations and access meaningful, personalised professional development.
- **Invest in high quality training and development**, including context-specific learning that builds confidence and expertise in working within the criminal justice system.
- **Refresh our reward and recognition package**, offering fair, thoughtful benefits, including opportunities such as volunteering days, that help colleagues feel valued and supported.



- **Ensure a fair and inclusive environment** by reviewing all policies through an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging lens and making sure they reflect the diverse needs and lived realities of our staff and volunteers.
- **Continue creating opportunities for people with lived experience**, including those who have faced low literacy and numeracy challenges, or have experience of the criminal justice system, ensuring our organisation reflects and learns from the communities we serve.

What difference you will notice in three years

- **We will feel like one team, irrespective of location or role:** People across the organisation will feel more connected, with stronger relationships between staff, volunteers and mentors, and clearer communication that helps everyone pull in the same direction.
- **Staff, volunteers and mentors will have clearer pathways for learning and development**, with better access to training, coaching and opportunities to build skills.
- **People at all levels will have more meaningful ways to contribute** ideas, give feedback and shape decisions, creating a culture where everyone feels heard and involved.
- **Our policies, practices and culture will work consistently for everyone**, with greater confidence that diversity, equity and inclusion are embedded and lived across the organisation.
- **Recognition will be more consistent and meaningful**, and wellbeing will be better supported, helping people feel valued, motivated and able to thrive.
- **Roles and responsibilities will be clearer**, systems will be easier to navigate, and people will have the tools, guidance and support they need to perform confidently and effectively.

Diverse and Sustainable Funding

Our ambition: Diversify our range of income streams, ensuring the budget is fully funded through multiple years, underpinned by sustainable and ethical fundraising models.

Rationale

To deliver long-term impact, we need stable, diverse income streams that align with our values. A balanced portfolio allows us to take a long-term view, protect programme quality, and invest in growth.

What we are currently doing

- We are building strong, strategic relationships with trusts and foundations that align with our mission and delivery strengths.
- We continue to grow individual giving and legacy fundraising, developing meaningful supporter journeys and broadening our base of long-term donors.
- We are working to secure appropriately costed contracts, ensuring they are financially sustainable.
- We are committed to ethical fundraising. We ensure all income generating activity aligns with our mission and values, is transparent and respectful, and maintains the trust of our learners, supporters and partners.

What we plan to do next

- **Maintain a balanced, resilient income mix** by focusing on the income streams that fit who we are, setting clear expectations for their contribution, and ensuring our fundraising strengthens our mission.
- **Strengthen trusts and foundation fundraising** through building long-term partnerships with funders who share our commitment to improving lives through literacy, numeracy and mentoring.
- **Grow individual giving by deepening supporter journeys**, strengthening digital engagement and developing a thoughtful, sustainable legacy offer that helps people stay connected to our work.
- **Secure fully costed contracts** by engaging early with commissioners, being clear about our expertise, and only taking on work that enables us to deliver high-quality support to learners and mentors.
- **Develop purposeful corporate and community fundraising** by focusing on opportunities that reflect our values, can grow sustainably and help us reach more people who need our support.
- **Embed income innovation** by testing new mission-supporting income ideas through focused, time-limited pilots, and integrating income generation data into our planning and budgeting, so we grow only what works and resource our future responsibly.



What difference you will notice in three years

- **We will have a balanced and diverse income mix:** You will see a more stable organisation with income coming from a broad range of well-managed sources, reducing financial risk and increasing long-term resilience.
- **Our trust and foundation partnerships will be stronger and more strategic:** We will have multi-year funding secured for programmes that clearly align with our mission.
- **We will invest in effective stewardship of our individual giving donor base:** Donors will feel more connected and valued, with thoughtful stewardship and clearer supporter journeys that grow individual giving into a reliable income stream.
- **We will have secure, sustainable contract and commissioned income:** We will hold well costed, mission aligned contracts that contribute positively to our financial health and reflect our recognised expertise.
- **Corporate and community partnerships** will be more focused, values-led and high impact, contributing meaningfully to our overall funding mix.
- **We will have strong fundraising foundations.** Our systems and processes will provide clearer guidance and more reliable information, enabling confident, responsible fundraising decisions that support long-term sustainability.



Operational Excellence

Our ambition: Enable the charity to succeed through professional and agile business support.

Rationale

To deliver high-quality programmes at scale, our systems must be robust, efficient and future ready. Operational excellence enables staff and volunteers to focus on what matters most: supporting learners.

What we are currently doing

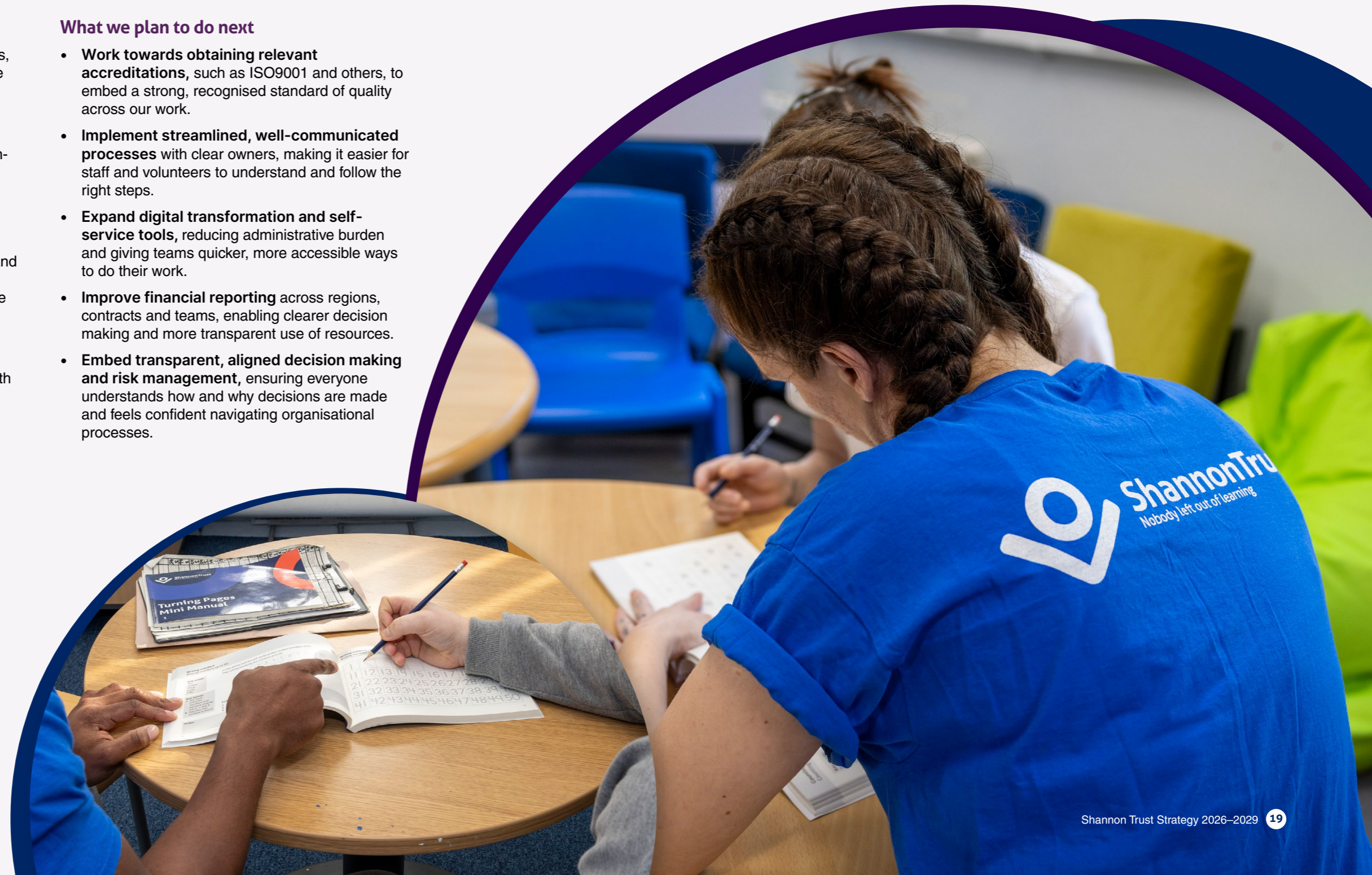
- We are reviewing and strengthening our policies, processes and governance structures to ensure they are clear, joined up and supportive of effective working.
- We are introducing quality management approaches that help us deliver consistent, high-quality services across the organisation.
- We are advancing our digital-first operations, improving tools and systems to make everyday tasks simpler and more efficient.
- We are strengthening financial understanding and controls, giving teams clearer insight into how resources are used and how they can contribute to cost effective delivery.
- We are improving risk management across the organisation so that potential issues are identified early, shared openly and managed with confidence.

What we plan to do next

- **Work towards obtaining relevant accreditations**, such as ISO9001 and others, to embed a strong, recognised standard of quality across our work.
- **Implement streamlined, well-communicated processes** with clear owners, making it easier for staff and volunteers to understand and follow the right steps.
- **Expand digital transformation and self-service tools**, reducing administrative burden and giving teams quicker, more accessible ways to do their work.
- **Improve financial reporting** across regions, contracts and teams, enabling clearer decision making and more transparent use of resources.
- **Embed transparent, aligned decision making and risk management**, ensuring everyone understands how and why decisions are made and feels confident navigating organisational processes.

What difference you will notice in three years

- **We will have quality processes and systems:** You will experience clearer, more consistent processes that are easy to follow, with strong quality assurance and clear accountability helping you work efficiently and confidently.
- **We will be digital first:** You will have access to better digital tools that reduce administrative burden, make information easier to find, and help you provide faster, more effective support to learners and mentors.
- **We will have a shared financial understanding:** You will have clearer insight into how resources are used and access to straightforward financial information, helping you make informed, cost-effective decisions.
- **We will have robust governance and risk management:** You will see more transparent and aligned decision-making across teams, supported by a well-embedded risk framework that helps us anticipate challenges and opportunities, and act with greater confidence.



Values

Our values define the beliefs and principles that guide how we operate, make decisions, and work together. They articulate the standards we hold ourselves to, shaping our culture, influencing our choices, and grounding our strategy in a shared sense of purpose.



Respect

We treat everyone with fairness, kindness and understanding. We see people's potential, not just their circumstances.



Connection

Strong relationships make learning possible. We build trust, communicate openly, and work together with honesty and care.



Progress

We learn, adapt and improve; for the people we support, for ourselves, and for each other.



Belonging

Everyone has a place here. We include people, welcome difference, and remove barriers so everyone can contribute and succeed.

Moving towards our vision: From strategy to impact



Implementation Planning

A strategy is only meaningful when it is supported by a practical, well-understood plan for delivery. That's why this strategy has been designed as a three year rolling framework, reviewed and refreshed annually to stay responsive to changing needs and context. Turning the strategy into action will require ongoing, thoughtful implementation planning. Each year, alongside our Impact Report, we will publish an updated Strategy Implementation Plan for the year ahead that reflects the operational landscape and sets out our priorities. We will be explicit about our annual goals and the evidence behind them, ensuring our work is focused, achievable and aligned with the long-term direction of the organisation.



Reporting

Regular, transparent reporting will be central to how we track and demonstrate progress. We will report routinely to our Board and provide an annual update to stakeholders, being open about what is working well and where things are not going to plan. When challenges arise, we will examine the reasons, identify solutions and adjust our approach accordingly. We will continue to share the findings from research and evaluation to strengthen our collective understanding of what makes a difference.

Each year, we will publish an Impact Report outlining our achievements and the lessons learned, helping to drive better practice across all our work.



Governance

Strong governance will underpin the successful delivery of this strategy. Our Board will provide clear oversight, ensuring that decisions are aligned with our mission, informed by evidence, and grounded in the best interests of the people we support. We will maintain transparent decision making processes and ensure that roles, responsibilities and lines of accountability are well understood across the organisation. When risks or challenges emerge, we will address them openly, reviewing our approach and adapting where needed to stay on course.

Through consistent scrutiny, constructive challenge and informed stewardship, our governance structures will help safeguard our progress and support the organisation to deliver with confidence and integrity.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

At Shannon Trust, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. We demonstrate this through measurable actions, transparent reporting and continuous review of our practices. Our commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) is central to our mission of unlocking the power of learning for people in prison and the community.

We recognise that our learners come from diverse communities and lived experiences, often shaped by inequality, marginalisation, and trauma, including inequalities related to race, sexual orientation, gender identity, neurodiversity, disability, poverty, education access, geography and involvement with the criminal justice system.

By embedding EDIB into every aspect of our work, from programme design to delivery, recruitment to partnerships, we aim to create an environment where every member of our community feels seen, respected, and supported.

Why EDIB matters to our learners:

- ★ **Equity** ensures that every learner receives tailored opportunities, resources, and support they need to succeed, taking into account their individual circumstances and starting points.
- ★ **Diversity** brings a richness of perspectives that helps us tailor learning approaches to meet varied needs and cultural contexts.
- ★ **Inclusion** fosters a safe and welcoming space where everyone feels valued and our learners feel empowered to participate, engage, and succeed.
- ★ **Belonging** supports the building of trust and connection, which are essential for motivation, resilience, and sustained learning.

By prioritising EDIB, we strengthen our ability to:

- ★ Reach and engage more learners, especially those who may have been excluded from education.
- ★ Build stronger peer-led learning communities that reflect and respect individual identities and ensure those communities are safe, included.
- ★ Improve learner outcomes by creating environments where people feel valued and capable.
- ★ Challenge stigma and promote dignity, both within prison settings and beyond.

We are committed to continuous learning and reflection, ensuring that our practices evolve in response to feedback, evidence, and the voices of those we serve.

Together, we can build a more inclusive and equitable future, where every learner has the chance to unlock their potential.

Theory of Change



This is the problem we want to solve:

Difficulties with reading and numeracy are linked to worse life outcomes, including offending, and they undermine rehabilitation by limiting access to the information, services and decisions that shape everyday life. Without support, systems remain hard to navigate, and opportunities remain out of reach.

To solve this, there are three priority needs:

Access: Simple, reliable routes into learning in custody and the community, with materials and support that fit real contexts and abilities.

Engagement and Progression: Motivating, mentor-led support that people trust; clear next steps (life skills, accreditation, employability) that build confidence, reduce frustration, and enable dignity.

Evidence and Alignment: Robust data, evaluation and learning partnerships that improve what we do, influence policy and practice, and ensure resources are used where they make the biggest difference.

We will address these needs through three strategic pillars:

Reach and Impact: Expanding the breadth, depth and reach of our activities to maximise our impact.

Innovation in Learning and Delivery: Leading with innovative ideas to continuously test and improve our offer.

Evidence and Influence: Sharing our expertise, best practice and evidence to inform policy and practice.



We will underpin this activity with three enabling pillars:

People and Culture: Enable everyone to contribute to a great culture, where people feel valued and empowered to make a difference in the uniquely challenging contexts in which they work.

Diverse and Sustainable Funding: Diversify our range of income streams, ensuring the budget is fully funded through multiple years, underpinned by sustainable and ethical fundraising models.

Operational Excellence: Enable the charity to succeed through professional and agile business support.



Which will mean we achieve our mission:

Building confidence with reading, numeracy and related life skills through mentor-led learning, we help pave the way for people to participate fully in society.

And longer term, this will lead to three strategic outcomes:

Confident Learners and Mentors: People build skills in reading, numeracy and related life tasks; mentors are recognised and equipped; progress is visible and celebrated.

Better Access and Continuity of Support: Clear, joined-up pathways before, during and after custody means people get support when they need it and can keep moving forward.

Systems that Recognise What Works: Commissioners, providers and policymakers use our evidence and lived experience to improve how learning is delivered across the justice system.



And ensure we fulfil our vision:

A future where confidence with words and numbers unlocks access to connection, dignity, and opportunity.

Thank you

Shannon Trust's work is only possible because of the people who stand alongside us.

To our donors, supporters, partners, volunteers, mentors and staff - thank you. Your belief in the power of learning, your commitment to people in some of the most challenging circumstances, and your support for our mission continue to drive real and lasting change.

As we embark on our next chapter, we do so with gratitude for everything you contribute and with optimism for what we can achieve together.



Every gift, every partnership, every hour volunteered, and every mentoring session shared helps ensure that more people have the chance to build confidence in reading, numeracy and the skills that shape opportunity.



Contact us

All contact details are available on our website, including staff emails.

If you aren't sure who to direct your enquiry or comments to, please email: info@shannontrust.org.uk

Call us on **020 3764 5250** or write to us at **Freepost SHANNON TRUST**



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Charity number 1117249