



Strategic Plan

2017-2022

Everyone needs someone on their side

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Appendix 1 Income Generation strategy

Appendix 2 Volunteer Strategy (in development)

1. Introduction

Swan's previous strategic plan ended in March 2017. During the period of the plan 2014 – 2017 SWAN went through a period of considerable change including loss of Wiltshire contract, award of Somerset contract and recruitment of a new CEO. Throughout this period SWAN remained true to its vision of a society where everyone has the right to be heard, to have choice and control and to be safe from violence and aggression. It achieved this by continuing to provide statutory and community advocacy services that focussed on the promotion of self advocacy skills alongside providing specialist advocacy services for people fleeing domestic violence, veterans, people with dementia and people with learning disabilities.

During 2016 SWAN received funding from the Big Lottery (Reaching Communities Fund) to undertake a capability review. Staff, volunteers and Trustees worked with an external consultant to focus on strengthening particular aspects of capability (skills, knowledge, and confidence) that would improve the organisation's work and allow them to serve the people and communities they work with more effectively.

The findings showed SWAN as an organisation with formidable strengths. Internal and external stakeholders spoke to Swan's absolute commitment to quality, the organisation's ability to respond to change and be firmly rooted in the needs of clients and the community (e.g. the shift to remote working). Staff and volunteers reported strong shared aims, with those working at SWAN able to see the difference they make to the lives of clients and the community. 'Think Advocacy: Think SWAN' signals Swan's wider role in raising the profile of advocacy and establishing standards and practice followed by others across the advocacy sector.

Some of the recommendations in the review reflected Swan's growth strategy and the need for consolidation and consistency. It was highlighted in the review that growing by acquiring new contracts brought new staff, managers and norms. This resulted in the need for a fresh look at policies and processes (such as performance management, decision making and communications) to ensure common approaches and values.

Other recommendations reflected the need for SWAN to 'futureproof' its capabilities, and along with many other voluntary and community organisations, build capability in areas such as new ways of working (e.g. prevention, self-advocacy), new business models and the acquisition of new income streams, partnership working, greater service user involvement in shaping and evaluating services, and ever more sophisticated impact evaluation and reporting.

Following the capability review SWAN engaged the services of Caplor to work with staff, volunteers and trustees to address some of the findings from the strengths review and develop a new 5 year strategic plan.

The plan sets out the vision, mission and strategic priorities for the years ahead. We know that over the period of the plan we will face considerable challenges including:

- Further implications of austerity and public service cuts including loss of key services
- Changes in the law, and other considerations at a national level
- Pressures in providing 'more for less'
- Competition from competitors
- Retaining key staff
- Trends in changing population in the South West
- Rural population in the South West and the issues that are faced by communities, especially in hard to reach areas.

But we also expect to see many opportunities including:

- Building new relationships with MPs following recent elections
- Learning from tender applications and new ways of working
- Depicting accurately the outcomes and social value of Swan's work
- New trends in society providing the opportunity for new advocacy approaches and/or services
- Technology enabling identification of unmet need as well as greater self-advocacy opportunities

Our aim is to be flexible and responsive to a changing and challenging environment we will then be confident and able to overcome any challenges and take advantage of opportunities that support our vision.

Everyone to have access to high quality advocacy services.

2. History

SWAN is a well established organisation that has developed an excellent reputation for delivering independent, high quality, cost effective advocacy services across Wiltshire, Somerset, BaNES and more recently South Gloucestershire.

Over the period of this strategy we will continue to build on our strong foundations and the things that make SWAN unique including:

- We will only provide advocacy and stick to our strengths
- We will have well trained advocates who follow best practice
- We will identify gaps in services and remain flexible with allocated resources so that we can respond to emerging needs and opportunities quickly
- We will focus on securing unreserved income to provide advocacy support to people ineligible for statutory services.
- We will invest in volunteers
- We will continue to build self-advocacy as a thread throughout everything we do

3. The Future for SWAN

a. Building on our strengths

We considered the words of management guru and social philosopher, Charles Handy: *“do the best at what you are best at for the benefit of others”*, we focussed on what the organisation does well, so that we can build on these to ensure greater impact in the future.

Our strengths	
Diversity	Passion
Independence	Flexible
Resilience	Responsible
Caring	Friendly
Dynamic	Integrity
Team Spirit	

b. Why does SWAN Exist

In talking to staff, volunteers and trustees there was an overwhelming level of similarity between responses on the purpose of SWAN including:

Why we exist	
To provide free and independent advocacy for vulnerable people who need a voice	To be a quality provider of advocacy in the South West
To provide access to rights without prejudice	To ensure social justice and to protect rights
Because everyone needs someone on their side	To empower individuals to become more independent
To support communities and to make a difference	To help Local Authorities meet their statutory obligation
To hold organisations and service providers to account	

c. Where do we want to be in 2022

Additionally, there were many similar themes appearing in the discussions around what success would look like in 2022.

What we will we have achieved by 2022	
To have consolidated current services	To know our communities well and develop a sense of localism
To have increased awareness of advocacy	To have expanded range of advocacy services (eg domestic violence)
To have evidenced impact on value of advocacy services	To have a more diverse group of trustees
To have diversified funding sources and achieved sustainability	To have a strong sense of team with high retention of staff and attraction of volunteers
To have an effective, fit for purpose structure	To have strong internal and external communication strategies and channels
To have solid systems and processes that support and enable a quality standard	To be recognised as the advocacy service provider of the South West
To be a flexible and adaptable a client focused organisation	To have partners with other organisations (eg Macmillan)

4. Developing the new Strategic Plan

Between April and July 2017 staff, volunteers and trustees of SWAN came together, over 5 sessions, with Caplor Horizons, to develop an organisational strategy to the year 2022. The sessions focussed on exploring the strengths of SWAN, the vision, its mission, purpose, values and beliefs, what it will have achieved by 2022 (envisaged future) and strategic goals. In addition, organisational culture was considered. The sessions also explored how the organisation would achieve its emerging goals, including exploring the risks to implementation and the opportunities on the horizon

There was great energy in the room on each occasion, and important topics were discussed and a clearer vision for the future began to emerge.

There was an overwhelming level of similarity between what staff, volunteers and trustees felt about SWAN and its future direction, with one staff member remarking that it was wonderful to see that “everyone is singing from the same song sheet”.

The Board of Trustees worked with staff through the development process and then worked as a team to consider and refine the draft plan.



5. Mission Statement and Beliefs

Defining and communicating the organisation's values and beliefs were a key part of developing the strategy. These are outlined below; the values in particular were from the perspective of delivering services to our clients.

Values
<i>Independence – we answer to you!</i>
<i>Empowerment – we support you to be confident, to take control and to claim your rights.</i>
<i>Inclusion – we remove barriers with you.</i>

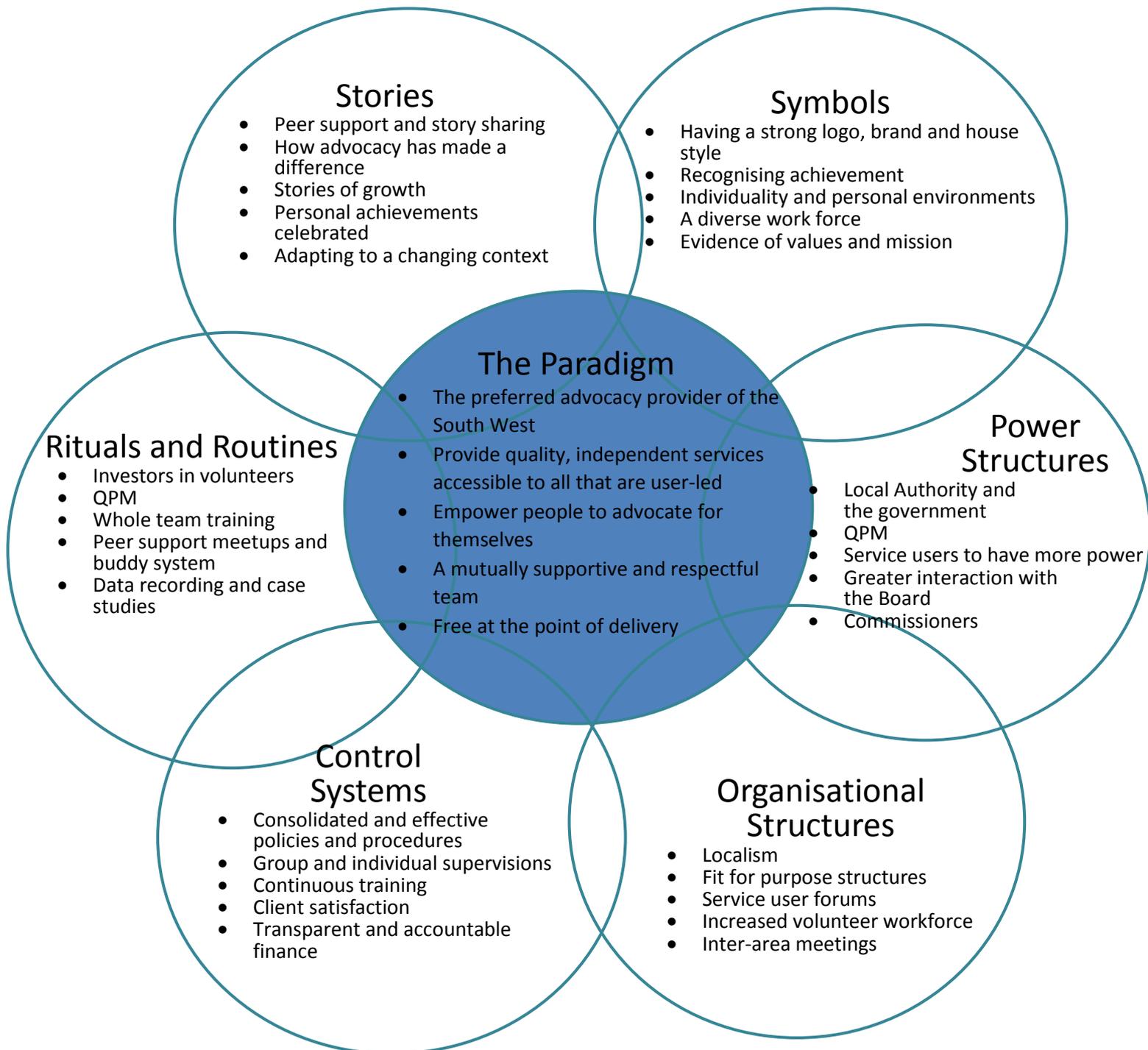
Beliefs
Everyone has the right to be heard and respected
Everyone has the right to choice in decisions about them
Everyone has the right to be safe
Everyone needs someone on their side

6. **Organisational Culture** – “Culture eats strategy for breakfast” (Peter Drucker)

We examined what kind of culture would be needed to support the emerging strategy using the tool of a cultural web (pictured below).

Similar to other discussions there was an enormous amount of similarity in the desired future paradigm expressed by staff, volunteers and trustees. Additionally, there was a general sense of agreement to the themes presented back.

The future culture of SWAN is presented as below:



The cultural web tool helped us identify 6 key areas that required further attention and that became the main focus of our strategy.

1	Ensuring quality through processes and procedures
2	Internal communications
3	External communications
4	Localism and standardisation
5	Staff support, recognition and value
6	Demonstrating value and impact

Strategy to 2022

Our Envisaged Future: By 2022...

- Our services will be community focused, high quality and influenced by our users
- Staff and volunteers will feel valued, supported, and engage with high quality training and development opportunities
- We will be a respected organisation in our field with our activities focused on the South West region

Our Vision:

For everyone to have access to high quality, independent advocacy

Our Purpose:

To support and empower people to have a voice

Our Mission:

To be a high quality, influential advocacy provider and model of best practice

Our Strategic Goals

Building Capability

- Develop structures and systems
- Develop and support our workforce and trustees
- Develop internal communication

Improve Effectiveness

- Develop quality services
- Embed locally
- build core resources

Future Proofing

- Demonstrate our impact
- Engage partners
- Promote advocacy

How we will work:

We will:

- Be advocacy focused
- Be flexible and ready to respond to emerging need
- Invest and train high quality staff and volunteers
- Build self-advocacy into all our work

Our Values

Message to our clients...

Independence

'we only answer to you'

Empowerment

'we support you to be confident, to take control of your life and to realise your rights'

Inclusion

'we work with you to remove barriers'

We believe...

- Everyone has the right to be heard and respected
- Everyone has the right to choice in decisions about them
- Everyone has the right to be safe

Our Strategic Goals: making a measurable, positive difference to the lives of more people

Building Capability

To have the foundations in place to support sustainability and development

Develop structures and systems

- ✓ Periodically review and adapt our workforce structures
- ✓ Develop co-production working groups
- ✓ Improve the way we use our systems and processes including Breathe, Cygnet, Website

Develop and support our workforce and trustees

- ✓ Recruit, induct, train and develop a diverse staff and volunteer base
- ✓ Develop comprehensive training and development plans with individuals
- ✓ Recruit trustees with relevant expertise and connections to support organisational development

Develop internal communication

- ✓ Staff to be active participants in quarterly workforce meetings
- ✓ Develop a better culture and network of communication across the organisation
- ✓ Develop an intranet to enhance our communication, celebrate our success and share our stories

Improve Effectiveness

To provide high quality and effective advocacy services which are efficient and streamlined

Develop quality services

- ✓ Renew our Advocacy Quality Performance Mark accreditation
- ✓ Obtain resources to drive our quality aspirations
- ✓ Use feedback, evaluation and learning to shape our continuous improvement
- ✓ Develop models of advocacy services to include diverse groups

Embed locally

- ✓ Increase our presence in and understanding of local communities
- ✓ Establish local user groups in communities
- ✓ Widen our local partnership base

Build core resources

- ✓ Diversify our income streams from: Trust and foundations, Major donors, Corporate partnerships and selling services and office space
- ✓ Seek funding to develop the core of our organisation
- ✓ Increase and maintain our unrestricted income

Future Proofing

Understand the changing external influences and demonstrate our Impact and Value

Demonstrate our impact

- ✓ Identify opportunities to extend our service reach
- ✓ Sustain key public service contracts in the South West
- ✓ Demonstrate our value for money
- ✓ Continually develop monitoring and evaluation and impact reporting
- ✓ Promote a 'House Style' and brand
- ✓ Understand and evidence our social value

Engage partners

- ✓ Explore collaborative partnerships
- ✓ Seek opportunities to learn from other organisations
- ✓ Develop a wider presence on local, regional and national boards

Promote advocacy

- ✓ Raise awareness of advocacy services to users, carers, commissioners, professionals
- ✓ Expand public understanding of advocacy, what it is and why it is necessary
- ✓ Engage with national campaigns to raise awareness of advocacy.
- ✓ Use our knowledge, experience and evidence to influence policy makers and service providers
- ✓ Develop and provide self advocacy models, resources and information

9. Delivering the plan

We recognise that in order to achieve our strategic aims we need to ensure that our internal environment is fit for purpose and able to sustain continued growth, development and innovation. We aim to create a culture that is transparent, enabling and supportive to those we support as well as for staff and volunteers. We expect staff, volunteers and those we support to benefit positively from their time with SWAN

Governance	We have a highly committed and skilled board of Trustees. We will recruit additional trustees that provide additional skills in key areas including fundraising, marketing and social media.
Organisational Core posts.	Over the last 12 months we have recruited to 3 new roles including the Director of Income Generation, Finance and Central Support Manager and Office Manager, there has also been a review of the Director of Operations role. To meet our strategic aims we need to recruit other roles including Quality and Performance Manager, Volunteer coordinator and Trust and Grant officer.
Operational Staff	We need to continually review our management structure in light of new development and changes to contracts including a review of the 'lead advocate role'. We will continue to provide opportunities for staff growth and development.
Volunteers	To increase our added value and support community development we will invest in our volunteering offer ensuring we provide a high quality, consistent volunteering experience within SWAN.

We will keep our strategy alive by:

- Working with all staff and volunteers on reviewing progress and developing yearly work plans
- Developing work streams to evidence progress/barriers to achievement
- Providing quarterly reports to the board
- Communicating successes to staff through CEO briefings and staff events

10. Financial Plan

Our work is underpinned by sound financial management, value for money and cost effectiveness

We will continue to make improvements to our financial monitoring and reporting to strengthen our business decision making, as well as continually refreshing our service models and reviewing our performance, productivity and added value.

The trustees view is that the charity should diversify its income streams in order to achieve our strategic aims. SWAN has a long history of delivering flexible and responsive advocacy services to vulnerable people and wants to continue to do that to more people especially to those not eligible for statutory advocacy.

The next 5 years will be challenging but we are confident that we can succeed and meet our aims with a combination of income from existing work and generating income from a wider range of services and funding sources.

11. Managing risk

A key task in developing our strategy was identifying potential risks to the implementation of the strategy, and looking at ways to address these. SWAN currently has a comprehensive risk register. This was updated during our sessions and is reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees.

It was felt that the appetite for risk within the organisation is medium. The approach we take to risk is prudent, appropriate and well thought through.

One overarching risk was highlighted: this was felt to be a combination of the potential implications of *'rapid expansion, without sufficient consolidation, and facing the threat of a loss of a major contract'*.

The challenge is balancing growth on the one hand, with consolidating sufficiently to minimise risk of losing a major contract on the other.

Therefore our strategy focuses on how we will meet that challenge with a focus on maintaining and improving our quality, reviewing and developing our systems and processes and developing a growth strategy that supports retention of existing income, as well as planned sustainable growth built on our strengths and expertise.

Other risks explored included

- Our reputation for quality, including through lack of innovation and resources
- Insufficient differential with competitors
- Inability to retain or recruit key staff
- Failure to diversify income.

All of these risks are addressed through the organisational strategy and the income generation strategy including, creating an awareness of our major competitors; being an organisation that is open and flexible to change; joint working with other like minded organisations and valuing our staff and volunteers.

12. Income Generation Strategy

Our Income Generation Strategy details how SWAN will retain its existing income level and service portfolio whilst developing sustained growth in a planned way. Bearing in mind our roots and history there will be a clear plan on how we build on the work of Dementia Advocacy Service and increase our presence and service delivery in Wiltshire.

We believe our growth strategy is built on being realistic, being ambitious, being innovative and being clear about investment needs. See appendix 1.

13. Trustees

Irene Kohler Chair
Alan Guyver Treasurer
Alan Mitchel vice Chair
Peter Curbishley
Ken Howard
Liz Garrett

This strategic plan was agreed by Trustees in November 2017. The CEO on behalf of the executive team reports to the Trustees throughout the year to inform of progress against the objectives set out in this plan.

If you would like to know more about the work of SWAN please visit our website www.swanadvocacy.org.uk