



THE JO COX  
FOUNDATION

# OUR 2023–2025 STRATEGY





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# ABOUT THE JO COX FOUNDATION

Jo Cox was a passionate campaigner, activist and humanitarian; a proud Yorkshire lass and internationalist; and a devoted mum, daughter, sister, wife, friend and MP.

The Jo Cox Foundation makes meaningful change on issues that Jo was passionate about. Like Jo, we believe that a kinder, fairer and more connected world is possible. Underpinning this belief is the understanding that we have more in common\* than that which divides us. As we work to make change, we follow Jo's example of collaborating with others and bringing people together to achieve more than we can alone.

We work in three areas. We nurture stronger communities, champion respect in politics and advocate for a fairer world.

We focus on making change led by the values by which Jo lived her life and are guided by the following **VALUES**:

## AMBITIOUS



### **This means:**

We believe, like Jo, that there should be no 'too difficult to deal with' pile.

### **To achieve this:**

- We're clear about what we want to change and how we will go about it
- We're bold in calling for change where it is needed and encourage others to be so too
- We always seek to make measurable and meaningful impact through our work



## COLLABORATIVE

**This means:**

We believe that achieving real change requires us all to pool our strengths and exchange our skills and resources.

**To achieve this:**

- We lend our expertise and resources to partners in the service of our shared aims
- We build relationships and trust with organisations with whom we have a common goal
- We ask what our unique contribution is and bring our energy to places where we can make a difference

## EMPATHETIC

**This means:**

We believe that kindness and compassion are signs of strength, and that only by understanding others can we build relationships and bridge divides.

**To achieve this:**

- We believe we have more in common than that which divides us and seek to build connections especially across divides
- We seek to tackle inequalities that undermine those connections
- We seek to understand and engage with people who might disagree with us
- We listen to those who are less often heard, and amplify their voices

### **\*UNDERSTANDING 'MORE IN COMMON'**

At the heart of our work is Jo's belief that we have more in common than that which divides us. Jo recognised that the needs and desires we share as human beings provide common ground and a basis for mutual understanding and connection.

Too often our politics and society emphasises our differences rather than our commonality. We believe that helping people to recognise that commonality allows us to feel more connected, build empathy and increase trust. It also builds understanding of the stark inequalities that many groups face within our society and strengthens the collective will to take action.

# THE CHANGE WE SEEK TO MAKE

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES



We want less lonely, better connected communities across the UK, where everyone feels that they belong.

### WHY?

Jo's career took her around the world, yet her sense of belonging and her identity were always firmly rooted in Yorkshire. It was while canvassing in Batley and Spen that Jo came to understand the extent of the UK's loneliness problem, and by becoming so involved in the community she came to appreciate how much common ground our communities share. Jo knew that developing social connections with people like us and with those who are different, helps to build individual and collective wellbeing, trust, resilience and cohesion, creating stronger communities.

### OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, WE WILL:

- **Deepen our relationships locally**, increasing the social support networks and feelings of belonging of individuals within West Yorkshire.
- **Nurture strong networks**, ensuring that people working to create less lonely, better connected communities are better equipped to do so, by increasing their wellbeing, connections, knowledge, skills and confidence.
- **Focus on building connections across lines of difference**, using the understanding that we have more in common than that which divides us, to increase trust, empathy, and feelings of belonging, and decrease prejudice and hate in the communities and networks where we work.





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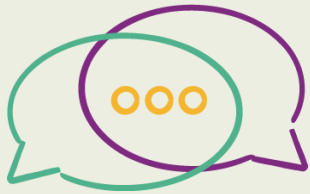
## MODEL FOR STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Through collaboration and building relationships with community members and local partners, we work locally in West Yorkshire to bring people together across lines of difference – particularly through the Great Get Together, the Great Winter Get Together and our More in Common Network.

Rooting our Stronger Communities work in West Yorkshire enables us to improve lives locally, while also building our knowledge, credibility and evidence to share with communities and platforms across the UK. Through our national work, we create moments of celebration where we raise awareness of the brilliant work happening in communities across the UK and share stories of the power of social connection to help seed wider change.



## RESPECTFUL POLITICS



We want anyone, regardless of their background, to feel able to participate in our political discourse and be treated with respect. In particular, we seek to end the abuse and intimidation that discourages so many from entering political life, and particularly impacts diverse representation.

### WHY?

This work reflects Jo's desire for more women to become involved in politics. She was passionate about achieving a 50/50 parliament and we know that the issue of abuse and intimidation directly impacts women's participation.

Jo's murder in 2016 was a turning point in the recognition of the need for better politics. Taking the lead from Jo's 'more in common' message, we should be able to passionately debate and disagree without resorting to insults and threats.

### OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, WE WILL:

- **Convene** a commission of key stakeholders to examine the issue of abuse and intimidation of elected officials and produce a set of recommendations for tackling it. We will then use our **influence** to secure cross-party support for and implementation of the commission's key recommendations.
- Run Civility Pledge **campaigns** for local elections, and a high-profile campaign at the next General Election that achieves meaningful actions from candidates and engagement from the general public, with the aim of improving the tone of political campaigning.
- Be the **leading voice** on the issue of civility in politics through celebrating positive examples, raising awareness of the issue of abuse and intimidation of elected officials, and promoting solutions.







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## FAIRER WORLD



We want responses to the world's complex problems to be informed by humanitarian approaches.

### WHY?

Jo was a lifelong humanitarian and committed most of her career to supporting those in need around the world. She advocated for early intervention to prevent mass atrocities, championed the power of foreign aid and believed passionately in protecting civilians during conflict.

### OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, WE WILL:

- **Make the case** for continued funding for the Jo Cox Memorial Grants and **champion** the partners' work. We will use the example of this positive funding to advocate for increased aid spending and the restoration of the 0.7% commitment.



# HOW WE WORK

The way that we work is as important to us as what we do. We lead by example and stay true to the values by which Jo lived her life in all of our day-to-day operations.

## PEOPLE

Our employees are the most valuable asset that we have as an organisation; we couldn't achieve anything without them. We treat them with dignity and respect in the way that we manage our relationships with them, and support them to thrive both at The Jo Cox Foundation and in their future careers.

A diverse and inclusive workforce is central to achieving our mission. We recognise the broader context of a lack of diversity in the voluntary sector and embrace our responsibility to make change through our recruitment practices.

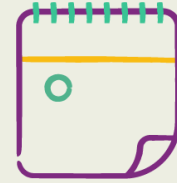


### OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, WE WILL:

- Continue our work to create a **culture of belonging** among the staff team. We will develop our first People Strategy to underpin and drive this work.
- Build on our successes developing our recruitment processes so that we attract a **talented and diverse workforce**. We will actively create opportunities for those from under-represented backgrounds to enter the voluntary sector.
- Embed a **staff development** programme, supporting staff to maximise their skills during their time at the Foundation, and also equip them for their future careers.

## OPERATIONS

Operations – including governance, finance and fundraising – is central to how the Foundation functions. We want to ensure that these internal (and essential) elements are as integrally linked to our values as the rest of our work.



### OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, WE WILL:

- **Prioritise collaboration** as a way of working, ensuring that staff are supported and equipped to do their best work within our hybrid working environment.
- Build the organisation's on-going **financial sustainability**, ensuring the future of our work in Jo's name.
- Further develop our **financial systems**, ensuring that they drive us to allocate resources in the ways that make the most difference for our beneficiaries.
- Review our **governance**, identifying areas for development and creating a framework that maximises the impact of trustees' skills and experience.
- Ensure that our **impact on the environment** is considered in our decision making and that we prioritise sustainability, even if it is not the cheapest or easiest option.

## COMMUNICATING OUR WORK

We understand that for a small charity we have a loud voice! We will continue to use this to make change on issues Jo cared about, and also to amplify the voices of those in our communities.



### OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS, WE WILL:

- Listen to those in our communities and networks and work together to **engage policymakers and campaign for change**. Wherever possible we will amplify those who have lived experience of the issues at hand.
- **Deepen public understanding** of the work and impact of the Foundation.
- Review and **update our use of digital tools**, including websites, and strengthen our brand in order to make it as seamless as possible for individuals to get involved in our projects and support the Foundation.



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**WEB:** [jocoxfoundation.org](http://jocoxfoundation.org)

**EMAIL:** [info@jocoxfoundation.org](mailto:info@jocoxfoundation.org)

**TWITTER:** [@jocoxfoundation](https://twitter.com/jocoxfoundation)

**INSTAGRAM:** [@jocoxfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/jocoxfoundation)

**FACEBOOK:** The Jo Cox Foundation

**LINKEDIN:** The Jo Cox Foundation

**The Jo Cox Foundation is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 1170836).**

