

Strategy

2026-28

St John
Ambulance



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A message from our Prior and CEO



St John Ambulance has always been about people helping people. Whether teaching life-saving skills, caring for a patient in the community, engaging young people, or doing any one of the thousand essential tasks that make this work possible, our people and supporters are part of a powerful first aid movement.

This strategy sets out how we will grow the power of first aid together. We start from a position of strength. In recent years we have come through a period of significant challenge and change with focus and determination. We are now more stable, more united and better placed to look outwards and forwards with a renewed sense of purpose and ambition.

The focus of our new strategy is simple. We will do what we do best by teaching more people to help in an emergency and delivering expert first aid care when it matters most. To achieve this, we will invest in the things that make the biggest difference to the quality of our offer: our people, our systems, and our partnerships. We will stay disciplined about what we take on, maintaining our first aid focus and making clear choices about how we can deliver the greatest impact possible.

This plan is also about creating the St John of tomorrow. The world around us is changing fast, from how people volunteer, to how healthcare is delivered, and how we use technology. In the face of this change, one thing remains constant: the difference first aid makes to people's lives. To keep leading the way in first aid, we will embrace change with confidence, building the insight, innovation, and income needed to sustain our mission into the future.

At its heart, this strategy is about making it as easy as possible for everyone to play their part in saving lives through first aid. Together, we will grow the reach and impact of first aid, strengthen our charity, and ensure that we continue to stand ready to serve those who need us.

Thank you for the part you will play in making that possible.

Simon Williams CB CVO KStJ
The Prior and Chair

Shona Dunn CB
Chief Executive Officer

Our story



We are **St John** **Ambulance**

We are England's leading first aid charity, built on centuries of service to meet the needs of today. We are:

- A vibrant volunteer-powered first aid movement, rooted in communities across the nation and reaching out to those who need us
- A national leader in first aid education, providing unmatched first aid training, supplies, and resources that support first aid, health and safety, and wellbeing
- A trusted specialist provider of first aid care, delivering expert support at events, as part of local health and care systems, and in a crisis
- An inspiring and inclusive place for young people, equipping our Badgers and Cadets with first aid skills, confidence, and purpose



Our purpose

Our purpose is to put the power of first aid into everybody's hands.

So we are all closer to help in an emergency. Every person. Every place. Every time. We do this by responding to health emergencies ourselves and by educating the public to feel confident to do so too.

Our vision

Everyone receives the first aid they need in a health emergency from those around them.

Our mission

To put first aid at the heart of every community:

- Educating and equipping others to ensure resilient communities and safer workplaces; inspiring every generation with the confidence to act in a health crisis
- Responding as volunteers and as first responders at events, in communities and as a trusted partner to the NHS



Our first aid identity

First aid is the first and immediate assistance given to anyone experiencing a medical emergency. It is delivered to preserve life, prevent a condition from worsening, and promote recovery, either as standalone care, or as part of an ongoing response alongside other health and emergency services.

At St John, we educate the public in first aid skills and we respond as trained first aiders, in roles ranging from community first aider to critical care clinicians. All our trained first aiders, whether volunteer or employee, are united by compassion, expertise, and a commitment to excellent first aid care.

Our people

Our volunteers and employees work side by side in every county across England to deliver our mission. Our values are at the **HEART of this work: Humanity, Excellence, Accountability, Responsiveness, Teamwork.**

We know that inclusion strengthens our first aid movement and makes our purpose possible by helping us to reflect and respond to the diverse communities we serve. We are intentional about improving the diversity of our people and creating a culture where everyone feels respected, valued, and able to thrive, whatever their background, identity, or experience.

For 150 years St John people have saved lives and strengthened their communities. Today we reach over **600,000 people a year** through first aid care, workplace training, and community engagement and we are rightly proud of the skills, commitment, and resilience that make this happen.



A group of people, likely a sports team, are shown in a close-up shot. In the foreground, a woman wearing a black turban and a green and black uniform is smiling broadly. Behind her, a man in a similar uniform is partially visible on the left. To the right, a woman with glasses and a green and black uniform looks towards the camera. Further right, another woman in a green and black uniform is partially visible. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Our context

St John Ambulance stands at a **pivotal** **moment**

As the world around us changes, the need for trusted, community-connected first aid care has never been clearer. We face real external challenges, from stretched public services to cost of living pressures, but we bring great strengths.

With thousands of skilled and committed volunteers, strong public trust built throughout our proud history, and deep connection to local communities, we are ready to step forward into the future with purpose and ambition.

Our refreshed strategy is grounded in a recognition of the challenges we face and a belief in the possibilities. We've listened carefully to our people, partners and customers and the message is clear - St John can and should continue to lead the way in first aid.





Understanding a changing world

We talked to our people and partners and analysed our environment, and five shifts stand out:

Growing inequality

Need is rising fastest in communities already facing exclusion, from health to digital access, and from social belonging to climate risks. In response, we must deliver **more impactful support** that is capable of meeting higher patient and community demands, complexity, and risk.

Shifting systems

The NHS is under pressure, commercial markets are tightening, place-based devolved leadership models are embedding, and all systems are at risk of climate, geopolitical, and economic disruption. In response, we must **strengthen our partnerships** to help us adapt faster and adopt new ways of working.

Changing participation

People are rethinking how they give their time, money and trust, and are either reducing civic service, or seeking more flexible, purposeful ways to engage. In response, we must **connect with our volunteers and supporters**, including younger people, in a different way, showing our understanding of their needs and supporting their continued engagement.

Digital disruption

AI, automation and data-driven services are transforming how organisations connect, deliver and improve. In response, we must **keep pace with digital innovation** to be relevant, inclusive, and efficient in how we deliver training and care, and how we engage with our people.

Evolving workplaces

The world of work and the systems, processes, and ways of working that support our workplaces are changing fast and need to reflect the modern world. In response, we need to **make it easier to volunteer and work at St John**, removing barriers and inefficiencies to best enable our people to deliver impact every day.

These shifts create pressure on people, providers and systems, but they also create opportunities for us to step up to meet the demand for trusted, community-first care and to engage with people differently in communities and digitally.

We intend to rise to that challenge.

Looking to the future

Our refreshed strategy is not about reinventing who we are. It is about providing clarity and focus to drive forward our powerful first aid mission. We can't predict the future but we can build the agility and resilience to meet it with confidence.

Over the next three years, we will strengthen our foundations and, in response to the shifts we see, we will develop new community services, build stronger partnerships, develop our volunteer models, and invest now in our digital future.

Alongside this we will build the St John of tomorrow by developing the insight to guide future decisions and new innovation capabilities to grow our income and increase our impact. Together this work will make us more effective and better able to deliver our mission, today and tomorrow.



Our aim

To grow the power of first aid together





By 2028:

We will grow the power of first aid by teaching more people to help in an emergency, and by delivering expert care when it matters most.

We will achieve this by keeping first aid at the centre of everything we do: amplifying our purpose, setting the standard through the quality of our work, and unlocking our potential for even greater future impact.

1

Amplifying our purpose

2

Setting the standard

3

Unlocking potential

Amplifying our purpose

We are St John Ambulance, England's leading first aid charity and our mission saves lives.

In a changing world we cannot take this for granted and we must maintain our focus, direction, and ambition.

The first shift we need to make is to amplify our purpose, avoiding distractions and focusing on reaching as many people as possible with first aid. To achieve this all our plans, resources, and efforts will centre on two goals:

Educate

Most health emergencies will happen when our responders are not around – at home, at school or at work. Our research shows that only four in ten people know how to give CPR. Our 'why' is that:

We want to put the power of first aid in everyone's hands, so they are confident to step up when it matters most and save lives.

Our goals:

- Everyone should know first aid and feel confident to use it
- By 2028 we will aim to train 800,000 people a year in first aid, with at least 85% feeling confident to use their skills

We will do this by growing our:

- Best-in-class workplace training
- Community education and outreach for adults and young people
- Valued youth programmes for our Badgers and Cadets

Respond

Our first aid responses save lives and improve health outcomes but too many people still go without the help that they need in a health emergency.

Our 'why' is that:

We want first aid to always be within reach, so nobody faces a health emergency alone.

Our goals:

- Together, we will act to deliver first aid when it matters most
- By 2028 we will aim to support more than 70,000 patients a year at events, in communities, and in times of crisis

We will do this by growing our:

- Specialist event healthcare provision
- Patient-centred community healthcare services
- Active resilience and response partnership work



1



Our core ways of delivering our mission will not change and volunteers will remain at the heart of our work. We will offer an evolving first aid portfolio centred on first aid education and response, including growing our best-in-class commercial training and our highly-specialist clinical care.

Within this, to reach more people, we will use our strengths in local engagement and connection to train more adults in lifesaving skills through community-based education; inspire more young people’s confidence and citizenship through inclusive outreach; reach more patients through community healthcare offers in collaboration with our partners; and be an active part of resilience planning and response.

In shaping this portfolio we will focus on the things that we can do exceptionally well, guided by evidence-based decision-making, an understanding of our strengths and resources, and alignment with the needs of the communities we exist to serve.

This will mean being disciplined in scoping our work carefully and in staying agile so that we are ready to learn, adapt and, importantly, stop doing things that don’t deliver impact.

All this work will be backed by clear objectives, results, and delivery plans, shared across St John so that we can all work together to achieve our first aid ambitions of:

- Training 800,000 people a year, in the workplace and in our communities
- Supporting 70,000 patients a year at events, in communities and in times of crisis.



Setting the standard

St John people make a difference every day and we are united in our first aid mission. However, we don't always make it easy for our volunteers and employees to work for us, or for our customers and partners to do business with us.

The second shift we need to make is to ensure we are setting the right standard in everything we do, by modernising our organisation so that the way we work gives confidence to everyone we work with, inside and outside St John.

To deliver on this we need to focus on strengthening the basics of how our organisation operates.

Our practical work will focus on:

Brilliant basics

We will make it easy for people to volunteer and work for us, and do business with us, by unblocking barriers and communicating well.

Thriving people

We will be a great, inclusive place to volunteer and work where everyone feels connected, empowered and inspired.

High quality

We will give patients, customers and partners an excellent experience built on quality, reliability and trust.

Stronger partnerships

We will be a confident and valued partner locally and nationally, working within an impact-led partnership approach.



Unlocking potential

We will celebrate 150 years of first aid service in 2027, and we know we are the custodians of the St John of yesterday and of tomorrow. We have always evolved to meet the challenges of the day, but the pace of change is unprecedented and greater resilience and agility is required.

The third shift we need to make is to strengthen the capabilities that will unlock our future potential. To be ready to lead first aid into the future we need to sustainably grow our long-term income and impact, and to do that we need to be able to learn and evolve at a faster pace, making better use of evidence and data.

Forward thinking

We will build a forward-thinking St John Ambulance for tomorrow so that we can sustainably grow our income and impact in the long-term.

Our attention will be focused on:

- **Insight:** Using good data well to guide our decisions and focus our resources
- **Income:** Building a sustainable, diversified income portfolio to fund our first aid mission
- **Innovation:** Growing our confidence to test, develop, and scale new ideas to grow our impact

We will phase this work alongside the immediate work to amplify our purpose and set the standard, and will flex our approach as we go.

2029 and beyond

This three year strategy is the first step on a ten-year horizon which will take us to the end of 2035.

Now is the time for us to build resilience in our core activities to lay strong foundations for future development.

The early activation of our work on potential will enable us to build wisely, developing the insights, skills, and capacity we need to secure long-term success.



3

Our strategy on a page

One Aim: **To grow the power of first aid together**
Three Ambitions. Seven Priorities.

1 Amplifying our purpose To reach more people with first aid

Educate

Most health emergencies will happen when our responders are not around – at home, at school or at work. Our research shows that only four in ten people know how to give CPR. Our ‘why’ is that:

We want to put the power of first aid in everyone's hands, so they are confident to step up when it matters most and save lives.

Our goals:

- Everyone should know first aid and feel confident to use it
- By 2028 we will aim to train 800,000 people a year in first aid, with at least 85% feeling confident to use their skills

We will do this by growing our:

- Best-in-class workplace training
- Community education and outreach for adults and young people
- Valued youth programmes for our Badgers and Cadets

Respond

Our first aid responses save lives and improve health outcomes but too many people still go without the help that they need in a health emergency. Our ‘why’ is that:

We want first aid to always be within reach, so nobody faces a health emergency alone.

Our goals:

- Together, we will act to deliver first aid when it matters most
- By 2028 we will aim to support more than 70,000 patients a year at events, in communities, and in times of crisis

We will do this by growing our:

- Specialist event healthcare provision
- Patient-centred community healthcare services
- Active resilience and response partnership work

2 Setting the standard To give confidence in our work, inside and outside of St John

Brilliant basics

We will make it easy for people to volunteer and work for us, and do business with us, by unblocking barriers and communicating well.

Thriving people

We will be a great, inclusive place to volunteer and work where everyone feels connected, empowered and inspired.

High quality

We will give patients, customers and partners an excellent experience built on quality, reliability and trust.

Stronger partnerships

We will be a confident and valued partner locally and nationally, working within an impact-led partnership approach.

3 Unlocking potential To lead first aid into the future

Forward thinking

We will build a forward-thinking St John Ambulance for tomorrow so that we can sustainably grow our income and impact in the long-term.

Turning ambition into **action**

To achieve our aim we will be clear on our ambitions, our priorities, and where we will focus our efforts:

1 Amplifying our purpose

Our ambition

To reach more people with first aid

Our priorities

Educate, Respond

Our actions

We will:

- Do more First Aid Training than ever before, in workplaces, in communities, and in schools
- Strengthen our valued Badgers and Cadets youth programmes and grow student volunteering
- Consolidate our position as England's leading Event Healthcare provider, helping more patients every year
- Build new Community Healthcare services that meet local need, supported by our Urgent and Emergency Care skills
- Be active partners in emergency Resilience and Response work so that we can step up with others in times of crisis

2 Setting the standard

Our ambition

To give confidence in our work, inside and outside of St John

Our priorities

Brilliant basics, High quality, Thriving people, Stronger partnerships

Our actions

We will:

- Make visible improvements to our systems and ways of working so we are more joined-up, communicate better, and can fix problems faster
- Build One St John where all our people feel valued, included and developed, and our volunteer experience is fit for the future
- Set and meet high standards for our work with patients and customers, within a culture where we're always learning and improving together
- Grow our local and national partnerships to do more together within a new partnership framework

3 Unlocking potential

Our ambition

To lead first aid into the future

Our priorities

Forward thinking

Our actions

We will:

- Use good quality data to guide our decisions, make best use of our resources and evidence the difference that we make
- Grow our confidence to develop, test, and scale new ideas that help us reach more people and deliver better first aid outcomes
- Work with St John people to co-design new service delivery models that build on our strengths and experience to meet first aid needs
- Build sustainable, diversified income supported by smart partnership, fundraising and business development work

What this means for you

To turn our strategy ambitions into visible and meaningful change, we need to make sure that everyone connected with St John knows what we are trying to achieve, feels part of that journey and can see the difference we are making together.

To do this we will work to the following principles:

- **Clarity:** we'll be clear on how our strategy connects to our stakeholders and why it matters
- **Consistency:** we'll speak with one voice to make sure everyone hears the same strategy story
- **Inclusion:** we'll use accessible, varied channels to make sure everyone can take part
- **Transparency:** we'll share priorities, goals and challenges openly to build trust
- **Participation:** we'll create space for dialogue to strengthen insight and ownership
- **Connection:** we'll celebrate success and tell first aid stories to build belonging and confidence



Over the course of the strategy, this is what we aim to achieve for you:

For volunteers

You will be part of a national movement with shared goals and local freedom to deliver them. Your time will be spent where it matters most, supported by easier systems and confident leadership. You will see clear delivery plans for your locality and areas of focus in your role, such as ambulance or events.

For employees

You will work in a focused organisation with clear priorities, joined-up plans and shared results. Day-to-day decisions will feel purposeful, connected to outcomes, and supported by easier systems. You will see clear delivery plans for your area of work.

For young people

You will see greater opportunity to participate, learn, respond, and lead through youth programmes, community education and volunteering. Your voice will shape how we grow and what matters most.

For patients and communities

You will see a visible and responsive St John embedded in community life and offering more community education and support, shaped to meet local needs and backed by high safety and quality standards.

For learners and employers

You will experience best-in-class, evidence-based first aid education from a trusted expert able to add value through a modern, relevant, and flexible approach.

For customers and commissioners

You will work with a confident, professional first aid specialist provider that delivers services as promised and demonstrates value through quality, reliability and measured impact.

For supporters and donors

You will see how your contribution saves lives, strengthens communities and sustains our critical First aid mission, through transparent reporting and visible outcomes.

For partners

You will find a collaborative, outward-looking organisation that builds relationships based on shared purpose, reliability and mutual respect and is ready to act together to extend shared reach and impact.

