

2026- 2030

People Strategy

Stabilising, Strengthening and Sustaining HelpAge's People and Culture

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1. Introduction & Strategic Intent

HelpAge International works to ensure that older people can lead dignified, healthy and secure lives in an ageing world. [Our Strategy, 2030 Ageing in a Just World](#), calls for systemic change through network-led programming, strengthened network relationships and collective action across contexts.

Our people are central to this ambition.

As HelpAge continues to evolve as a network-led, globally distributed organisation and a remote-first organisation we must ensure that our people systems, leadership practices and ways of working are consistent, sustainable and aligned with our Strategy 2030.

Following a period of organisational redesign, high-volume recruitment and structural transition, this People Strategy focuses on consolidation, sustainability and disciplined strengthening of our foundations and commitments to HelpAge staff.

This strategy sets out how we will create greater clarity, consistency and resilience in how we attract, support and retain our people — in ways that are aligned to our values of impact, inclusion, partnership and learning.

Our approach is guided by four principles:

- **Network-led and network-oriented:** Our people systems must support decentralised, collaborative ways of working across the HelpAge network.
- **Realistic and phased:** Implementation of the People strategy will be prioritised in line with HR capacity and organisational resources.
- 1. **Behaviour-led:** The [HelpAge Competency Framework](#) underpins how we work, lead and collaborate.
- **Sustainable:** Workforce wellbeing, equitable treatment, manageable workloads and safeguarding remain central to long-term impact.

Over the next five years, our focus is to stabilise what has changed, strengthen core people systems and practices, and sustain a culture that enables effective delivery of our mission.

Delivery of this strategy is a shared responsibility across the Leadership Group (LG), with HR providing guidance, coordination and enabling frameworks, leaders and line managers are accountable for consistent application within their teams.

Progress will be subject to oversight through existing governance structures, including the Board's People Committee.

2. Our Context and Strategic Reality

HelpAge operates as a globally distributed, remote-first organisation currently employing over 80 staff across more than 22 countries. Our colleagues work across time zones, legal jurisdictions and cultural contexts, with some employed directly by HelpAge International and others hosted by partners or through Employer of Record (EoR) arrangements.

Over time, the organisation intends to consolidate employment arrangements into a more focused global footprint, with staff employed in a defined number of strategic locations reflecting considerations of organisational efficiency, cost, compliance and partnership opportunities.

Specific scenarios such as humanitarian responses would continue to be managed case-by-case within operational decision-making frameworks.

This structure enables global reach, flexibility and responsiveness. However, it also introduces **complexity**, particularly in employment compliance, safeguarding oversight, payroll administration, workforce planning and cross-team coordination.

As HelpAge continues to strengthen its network-led approach, our people practices must support decentralised, collaborative ways of working. This requires:

- Clear role definition and shared accountability

- Strong people management capability across teams
- Consistent guidance and application of policies and standards
- Digital enablement to support efficiency and data visibility
- Safeguarding embedded across all employment models

Recent organisational changes have clarified structures and filled key posts. Recruitment into the new structure has been completed, and important foundations — including salary benchmarking, induction review, manager workshops and the development of a Global Staff Handbook — are either completed or underway.

At the same time, the organisation is increasingly operating with a mix of core roles, project-based positions and consultancy arrangements, reflecting funding patterns and a more flexible, network-led model.

At the same time, recent staff feedback highlights gaps in:

- Workload sustainability and realistic pacing and planning
- Clear prioritisation aligned to strategy
- Embedding new ways of working consistently across teams
- Stability following a period of change

This People Strategy responds directly to that context. It does not introduce large-scale structural reform. Instead, it focuses on strengthening clarity, consistency and sustainability in how we attract, support, develop and safeguard our people.

To deliver Strategy 2030 successfully through a network-led organisation operating via Impact Vehicles, our people foundations must be stable, reliable and proportionate to our scale and resources.

3. Our People Ambition for 2030

By 2030, HelpAge will be:

- A stable and well-governed global employer, operating responsibly across multiple jurisdictions, with a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, including gender equity
- Digitally supported through simple, standardised and accessible HR processes
- Inclusive and safe, with safeguarding embedded across the employment lifecycle
- Clear and consistent in how HR supports Impact Vehicles and network-led ways of working
- Behaviour-led, with the [HelpAge Competency Framework](#) consistently applied in recruitment, performance and leadership. Our ambition is maturity, not expansion practice
- Proportionate in ambition, aligning priorities to organisational scale and HR capacity

Our ambition is maturity, not expansion.

We will focus on embedding what works, strengthening what needs improvement, and sustaining a diverse, inclusive and accountable culture that supports impact, avoiding unnecessary complexity

3.1 Our Behavioural Foundation: The Competency Framework

The [HelpAge Competency Framework](#) provides the behavioural backbone of our organisation. It defines how we work, lead and collaborate, and is directly aligned with our network-led and Impact Vehicle-based approach.

Competencies such as Working Collaboratively with Others, Supporting and Facilitating Change, Diversity and Inclusion, Adaptability and Flexibility, and Leading Others are critical to operating effectively across distributed teams and cross-functional Impact Vehicles.

Between 2026 and 2030, we will focus on strengthening consistent application of the framework across key stages of the employee lifecycle, including recruitment, performance management and leadership practice.

We will not redesign the framework at this stage. Our priority is rather consistent implementation. Particular attention will be given to reinforcing inclusive leadership practices, including reflection on bias, power and decision-making across diverse teams and contexts.

3.2 Our Culture Commitments

Our culture is grounded in:

- Accountability for all
- Trust, respect and inclusion
- Collaboration across individuals, teams, [Impact Vehicles](#) and network members
- Transparency in communication and decision-making
- Collective responsibility and accountability for delivery

HelpAge will continue to promote a less hierarchical and more distributed leadership approach, recognising leadership responsibilities across roles and encouraging broader participation in decision-making and organisational dialogue.

Delivery of this strategy is a shared responsibility across the organisation. HR will provide guidance, coordination and enabling frameworks; the Leadership Group will oversee delivery; and leaders and line managers will be accountable for consistent application within their teams.

Progress will be subject to oversight through existing governance structures, including the Board's People Committee. Sustaining this culture requires more than policy. It requires clarity of expectations, manageable workloads and consistent leadership practice.

Embedding these behaviours across the organisation will remain central to our People Strategy through to 2030.

4. Strategic Pillars 2026–2030

Each pillar directly aligns with the **HR Key Performance Indicators** set within our Global Indicator Framework in line with [HelpAge Strategic Framework](#). Together, they provide a structured and proportionate approach to strengthening our people foundations through to 2030.

Pillar 1: Workforce Resourcing and Stability

Global Indicator Framework KPI

By 2030, HelpAge sustains workforce stability, with key roles resourced effectively and staff turnover maintained within agreed organisational benchmarks. These benchmarks will progressively defined based on organisational data and context.

Strategic Intent

To ensure HelpAge maintains a stable and appropriately resourced workforce, with core roles sustained and additional capacity flexibly aligned to project and funding needs, enabling delivery of Strategy 2030 through a network-led and Impact Vehicle-based model.

Why This Matters

Following organisational redesign and recruitment into the new structure, stability and sustainability are now priorities. A disciplined approach to workforce planning, role clarity and workload management is essential to long-term impact.

Our Focus (2026–2030)

- Maintain effective and proportionate inclusive and diverse recruitment processes in a high-volume applicant environment.
- Embed workforce planning conversations into annual planning cycles and Impact Vehicle reviews.
- Monitor and review core workforce indicators, including turnover and resourcing pressures, on an annual basis.
- Implement salary benchmarking outcomes responsibly, transparently and sustainably.
- Continue the transition from Employer of Record arrangements to partner-hosted models where appropriate.
- Strengthen clarity of roles, decision-making authority and accountability.

What Success Looks Like by 2030

- Workforce turnover maintained within agreed organisational benchmarks, with evolving skills and capabilities aligned to the organisation's network-led model and the increasing role of Network Members.
- Clearer alignment between organisational priorities and staffing capacity.
- Sustainable partner-hosted employment models in agreed contexts.
- Recruitment processes that are efficient, fair and aligned to the [Competency Framework](#) and promote diversity, inclusion and gender equity.

Pillar 2: Digitally Enabled HR

Global Indicator Framework KPI By 2030, HR processes are digitised and standardised, enabling efficient service delivery, reliable people data, consistent HR guidance across HelpAge, improved employee experience, and support to network-led organisational models.

Strategic Intent

To progressively modernise HR systems and reduce manual workload through proportionate digital solutions that improve efficiency and employee experience, while maintaining the importance of human interaction and relationship-based HR support and strong line management.

Why This Matters

Operating across multiple countries and employment models requires reliable systems and accessible data. At present, several HR processes remain manual and time intensive. Digital enablement is necessary to support scalability and reduce risk.

Our Focus (2026–2030)

- Explore and, where feasible, introduce AI-supported recruitment screening tools.
- Improve digital access to policies, documentation and guidance.
- Develop and maintain a basic HR dashboard of workforce data.
- Strengthen payroll oversight and administrative consistency.
- Standardise core HR processes to reduce duplication and ambiguity.

Digital development will be phased and dependent on available HR capacity, funding and IT support. Ambition will be balanced with realism and accountability.

What Success Looks Like by 2030

- Reduced manual processing time in recruitment and administration, while maintaining quality and alignment of staffing to organisational needs.
- Core workforce data defined and reviewed annually.

- Standardised HR processes applied consistently across teams and employment models.

Pillar 3: Inclusion, Wellbeing and Sustainable Pace

Global Indicator Framework KPI

By 2030, HelpAge monitors and reviews a defined set of inclusion and wellbeing indicators on an annual basis, using them to support a healthy, inclusive, and resilient organisation.

Strategic Intent

To foster an inclusive, diverse, gender-balanced respectful, physical and psychologically safe working environment, with manageable workloads and clear expectations, and proportionate support for performance, learning and staff development.

Why This Matters

Staff feedback highlights the importance of workload sustainability, clarity of prioritisation and consistent leadership behaviours. Sustainable impact depends on sustainable people practices.

Our Focus (2026–2030)

- Strengthen line manager capability through practical workshops and ongoing guidance.
- Embed the Competency Framework's inclusion and collaboration competencies in daily practice.
- Monitor inclusion and wellbeing indicators annually.
- Reinforce prioritisation as a core responsibility of leaders and line managers, ensuring workloads remain realistic and aligned with organisational priorities.
- Promote targeted and prioritised learning and skills development aligned to the Competency Framework, organisational needs, available resources and existing budget frameworks.
- Reinforce expectations for line managers and leaders in supporting staff development through regular feedback, evidence-based performance appraisal, peer support, on the job learning and aligned learning opportunities with performance appraisals.
- Strengthen performance management and appraisal processes to improve clarity, accountability and quality of feedback conversations, ensuring they remain proportionate and meaningful.

This pillar prioritises embedding and consistency rather than introducing additional change initiatives.

What Success Looks Like by 2030

- Improved staff perceptions of workload sustainability, supported by strengthened line management and clearer organisational prioritisation.
- Embed the new structure and Impact Vehicles model
- Strong psychological safety across teams and Impact Vehicles.
- Reinforce inclusive leadership behaviours through the application of the Competency Framework and existing manager support mechanisms.
- Consistent demonstration of inclusive leadership behaviours across staff, with particular responsibility held by line managers and leaders.

Pillar 4: Safeguarding and Responsible People Practice

Global Indicator Framework KPI

By 2030, safeguarding practices are embedded across the employment lifecycle, with annual monitoring confirming strong compliance across all teams and contexts.

Strategic Intent

To ensure safeguarding principles and responsible employment practices are embedded across all stages of the employment lifecycle and across all employment models.

Why This Matters

As a global organisation working with partners and network members, safeguarding and ethical practice are fundamental to our credibility and impact.

Our Focus (2026–2030)

- Clarify responsibilities across HR, managers and governance bodies in safeguarding oversight.
- Embed safeguarding requirements into recruitment, onboarding and contracting processes. Prioritisation of key safeguarding actions will be defined through annual HR planning cycles, aligned with organisational risk and capacity.
- Ensure consistent application of safeguarding standards across direct and hosted staff arrangements.
- Maintain and regularly review the [Global Staff Handbook](#) and core [HR policies](#).

What Success Looks Like by 2030

- Safeguarding compliance embedded and monitored annually.
- Clear and accessible [HR policies](#) applied consistently.
- Consistent safeguarding standards and processes applied to all staff, regardless of employment model.

5. How We Will Deliver

This strategy will be implemented through disciplined prioritisation, phased sequencing and alignment with the annual HR planning cycle and Impact Vehicles model.

Timeframes are aligned to the UK fiscal year to ensure consistency with organisational planning, performance management and reporting cycles.

Delivery will be guided by three phases:

Phase	Focus	What This Means in Practice
2026–2027	Stabilise	Support embedding of the new structure and Impact Vehicles model through workforce planning, guidance and people management support along with line managers.; introduce the Global Staff Handbook ; complete EOR-to-hosted transitions where appropriate; implement salary benchmarking outcomes responsibly; pilot digital improvements in recruitment; define and track core workforce indicators.
2028–2029	Strengthen	Consolidate workforce planning and dashboard reporting; deepen manager capability; streamline core HR processes; strengthen safeguarding embedding across employment models; improve clarity of priorities and workload monitoring.
2030	Sustain	Maintain stable and proportionate HR systems; review impact of digital improvements; assess workforce stability; refresh People Strategy priorities for the next cycle.

Alignment and Monitoring

Progress will be monitored through the four HR KPIs within our Global Indicator Framework in line with HelpAge Strategic Framework :

- Workforce Resourcing & Stability
- Digitally Enabled and Scalable HR
- Inclusion & Wellbeing
- Safeguarding

Annual HR plans, aligned to the Impact Vehicles planning process, will define specific deliverables and sequencing for each year.

Closing Statement

Between 2026 and 2030, HelpAge will focus — through its HR function and leadership — on stabilising the foundations established through recent organisational change, strengthening core people systems and leadership practice, and sustaining a culture that enables network-led delivery.

Through disciplined prioritisation, consistent application of our [Competency Framework](#), proportionate digital enablement and embedded safeguarding standards, we will support a stable and resilient organisation capable of delivering [Strategy 2030](#).

This People Strategy is designed not for expansion, but for maturity, ensuring that our people practices remain ethical, sustainable and aligned to our mission in a changing global context.