



CommunityCare
NORTHUMBERLAND

2023 – 2027 Strategic Plan

Community Care Northumberland

October 13, 2023

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1. Strategic Context

1.1. Executive Summary

At its core, Community Care Northumberland (CCN) is built on relationships. We prioritize a human-centred approach to building connections and service delivery, ensuring that people have access to the care they need where they are at. Offering a wide range of services, CCN actively helps people to remain healthy and independent.

From January to April 2023, Community Care Northumberland engaged Laridae, a leading management consulting firm, to guide the Board of Directors through a strategic planning process, leading to the adoption of a new strategic plan. Together, our approach to planning supported the Board of Directors throughout the process and provided oversight in developing the final strategy.

The process enabled the Board of Directors and senior leadership to reflect on the organization's current state and the environment in which it works. It also ensured that the voices of 349 important stakeholders were engaged and heard.

Strategic Directions

To support our mission, achieve our goals and in direct response to what we heard from our communities, as well as the internal and external considerations that shaped the planning process, our strategy is focused on the following:

- [Reenergized Capacity, Rejuvenated Culture](#)
- [Cohesive Identity, Empowered Community](#)
- [Accessible Programs, Quality Services](#)

Community Care Northumberland is committing to a three-year strategic plan. As such, these directions are broad and oriented to the future—providing a clear focus and direction while allowing us to respond and adapt as circumstances evolve.

These directions will provide a strong framework for developing annual operational plans with measurable goals and realistic objectives for the organization to monitor our progress effectively.

2. Strategic Directions

An effective strategic plan sets the foundation for a clear, focused future, uniting the organization under a common purpose and strategy.

Our strategic plan is shaped by our strategic directions, which provide clear focus and direction while allowing us to respond and adapt as circumstances evolve over the coming years.

Each of our strategic directions includes a corresponding set of tangible commitments.

Our strategic directions and commitments will provide a strong framework for developing annual operational plans with measurable goals and achievable objectives.

2.1. Reenergized Capacity, Rejuvenated Culture

We are proud of the great work our people do in the community. The last few years have taken a toll on our staff and volunteers. Prioritizing their well-being, development, and sense of belonging is integral to continuing their great work. We aim to have the capacity to build effective succession pathways by reinforcing existing practices and processes and exploring innovative solutions to support our team.

Enabling the flexibility and autonomy to invest in our organization, we will enhance our fundraising efforts and secure diversified funding to sustain operations.

Impact Statement

By 2027, we will have implemented strategies to strengthen our staff and volunteer capacity, refresh our workplace culture, and enable financial flexibility for intentionally investing in and maintaining a healthy organization.

Commitments

*Over the next three years, we will focus on **reenergized capacity, rejuvenated culture** by ...*

- **Reinforcing our staff and volunteer capacity through renewed strategies for attracting and retaining great people:** by evaluating and strengthening our recruitment and retention approaches, prioritizing effective onboarding practices, and supporting our volunteer management. In addition, we will explore ways to offer creative, responsive compensation addressing competitive wages, work-life balance, and well-being.

- **Prioritizing healthy succession across all core roles:** by embarking on a succession planning journey that results in understanding core roles and competencies and empowering our people to explore leadership development. Building intentional knowledge transfer systems to ensure our history, approaches, and best practices are effectively shared for the continuity of great care and strong relationships.
- **Driving fundraising strategies to promote financial stability:** by building on our reputation in the community, leveraging our momentum with Ed’s House, and engaging our deep relationships, exploring opportunities to diversify and maximize our funding. By building on past successes and positioning CCN as a top-of-mind non-profit organization for donors, we will secure organizational sustainability and financial flexibility to invest further in our people, programs, and community.

2.2. Cohesive Identity, Empowered Community

We are well-known for our programs and services among those who directly engage us. We want to amplify this recognition throughout our community, enhancing awareness, understanding and overall engagement with our organization. By building a cohesive brand and communicating consistently, we will further increase our ability to reach those who need our support. We will empower our supporters to champion our quality services and promote our community impact by rooting our efforts in meaningful relationships.

Together, we will ensure our community knows what is offered and how they can access us, enhancing the quality of their well-being throughout their life.

Impact Statement

By 2027, we will have enhanced our brand across Northumberland, built a strong network of champions, and increased awareness of the breadth of services and programs we offer to all age groups.

Commitments

*Over the next three years, we will commit to increasing **cohesive identity, empowered community** by ...*

- **Building a cohesive brand that supports our healthy reputation and increases our visibility across our community:** by telling a consistent story across our many offerings and rooting our messaging in the experiences of those accessing support to enhance their connection to the community. Articulating who we are and sharing our human-centred approach will further connect us with like-minded people to support our purpose.
- **Increasing community awareness through ongoing outreach and reciprocal relationships:** by leveraging our brand and building on existing strategies to strengthen community awareness about who we are and all we offer to a wide range of age groups. Continuing to engage in reciprocal, open communication with community partners about activities, updates, and service changes, encouraging enhanced awareness.
- **Empowering our team and supporters with the information and tools to be champions:** by increasing information-sharing among staff and volunteers to increase awareness of all aspects of our offerings, we will encourage those who are interested and comfortable to act as ambassadors, furthering our voice and communicating all available supports to people in our community.

2.3. Accessible Programs, Quality Services

Our programs and services aim to close the gaps in the care system, ensuring community needs are met in an equitable, accessible, and inclusive way. With this focus, we will continue to deliver consistent, quality experiences.

Understanding our role in the community, we will lean into our strengths and collaborate effectively with partners to support the healthcare system.

Impact Statement

By 2027, we will have effectively implemented meaningful changes to our programs and services through consistency, continuous improvement, and being an active community partner.

Commitments

*Over the next three years, we will enhance **accessible programs, quality services** by...*

- **Focusing on the effective implementation of recent enhancements to service delivery:** by ensuring consistency while embedding these new approaches across the organization, prioritizing client experience, and monitoring outcomes, enabling a continuous improvement approach to support the well-being of our communities.
- **Collaborating across our community to streamline access to service:** by continuing to actively engage in leading the maturation of Ontario Health Team Northumberland and working with key partners to increase strategic referral pathways, align intake processes and information sharing, and enable effective, client-centred support together.
- **Modelling effective, engaging volunteer management practices:** by leveraging our experience of maintaining a strong volunteer base, we will continue to develop a comprehensive volunteer management practice

that supports volunteers and encourages community engagement. Leaning into our role as a strong partner, we will share our experience, approach and insights with other organizations, empowering others to build capacity through volunteerism.

3. Appendix: Stakeholder Engagement

3.1. Why Engage?

Leadership Through Genuine Engagement

Strategic plans that provide meaningful direction over their stated duration rely on an authentic engagement process that genuinely seeks input and allows those invested in an organization’s success to provide ideas and feedback.

Properly conducted, stakeholder engagement is in no way an abdication or devolution of leadership.

It’s the opposite.

Leaders who reach out to and seek the input of the people delivering or accessing services are far more likely to craft future strategic directions that will resonate with those they affect and those who must implement them.

The Multiple Purposes of Engagement



Listen

To listen to stakeholders by gathering input, ideas, and suggestions.



Include

To include stakeholders in the planning process, helping to generate buy-in.



Educate

To educate stakeholders about the great work you do.

3.2. Engagement Process

Engagement served as the foundation for the process, informing subsequent discussion, deliberation, and decision-making.

Laridae developed and facilitated the engagement process from January until April 2023. The process was designed to engage with and listen to Community Care Northumberland’s key stakeholders.

As a result of this engagement, our strategic plan is informed by experience, evidence, and the most broadly held perceptions of all those we serve.

Audiences

We engaged Community Care Northumberland’s primary stakeholders during the engagement process.

People accessing services	Caregivers & family members	Staff	Board members
Volunteers	Community partners	Interested community members	Funders & donors

Stakeholder Participation

Participation during the engagement process was enthusiastic and honest.



3.3. Common Themes

The following themes capture some of the common sentiments we heard during the stakeholder engagement process.

Passionate staff and volunteers

There was a consistent appreciation for the organization’s **passionate and dedicated staff and volunteers**. They recognized that staff and volunteers were connecting and had a strong feeling of belonging and a sense of reward working with CCN. Both staff and volunteers are effective at building **strong relationships** with the people they serve, and this was identified as an important aspect of care offered through CCN.

Stakeholders described staff as **dedicated, caring, resourceful, friendly, and passionate**. All stakeholders celebrated Community Care Northumberland’s ability to recruit and retain volunteers.

83% of survey respondents “**Strongly Agree**” or “**Agree**” that CCN’s programs/services are facilitated by **skilled and dedicated staff**.

Desirable partner and collaborator

Several stakeholders mentioned CCN's **reputation for being a generous partner** in the community, **providing transportation, offering resources and information, and sharing programming space** when needed.

Participants also appreciated CCN's **solutions-oriented approach**, connecting people with resources or the right service provider when they could not provide a service.

71% of survey respondents said that they **"Agree"** or **"Strongly Agree"** that CCN's **programs and services are collaborative**.

Quality services and programs

There was an appreciation for the organization's ability to remain **flexible and adaptable** during the pandemic. According to management, CCN's size allows for **agility when filling gaps across catchment areas**.

Many stakeholders identified the **quality and delivery of different programs and services** as an organizational strength.

83% of survey participants **"Strongly Agree"** or **"Agree"** that programs and services **provide positive outcomes**.

It was noted that while the community recognizes CCN's larger programs, there is still an **opportunity to increase awareness of some other services**.

Fund development and donor relations

Many acknowledged funding as a challenge for CCN. It was noted that a **lack of financial resources** may limit the organization's ability to **attract and retain quality staff**. Some participants commented on the **restrictions this puts on service delivery** as well.

It was advised to continue to **apply for funding, to leverage success with securing donations for Ed's House towards the whole organization**, and to explore other ways to diversify income for future **financial sustainability**.

Some individuals acknowledged that the **funding and donations pool is limited** for CCN, given the population and number of other organizations in the fundraising space.

Communications and awareness

Several stakeholders commented on the opportunity and need to build **awareness and enhance the clarity** of all services and programs provided by CCN.

It was reported that most people only find out about the organization when they need access to services. Participants shared broad **misunderstandings across the community regarding criteria to access programs**, whether there are **fees to access services, what funding structures exist related to services**, and the breadth of services offered by CCN. Many participants are clear about programs and services with recognized names and stand-alone brands such as Meals on Wheels, transportation services, and Ed's House; however, they are less clear about other valuable services.

During the online survey, participants were asked to reflect on how they currently receive information about CCN and their preferred communication channels moving forward. Many stakeholders emphasized the importance of **using email, newsletters, and the organization's website to promote effective communication**.

Need for human resources

A recurring theme throughout engagement was human resources—specifically the ongoing **staffing crisis** in community-based care. Recruiting new staff was acknowledged as a sector-wide challenge, while **retention and turnover** were identified as concerns. This theme was also discussed concerning the future, understanding that the pressures will continue.

Further to the impacts of the changing labour market, it was suggested that CCN explore ways to **enhance compensation** to attract and retain great people.

Volunteer engagement was identified as a core strength of the organization and was also discussed as an area of focus in the coming years. **Continuing to build a strong volunteer base** was noted as an issue, given the **aging population in the area** and **paused engagement throughout the pandemic**.

Addressing sector pressures

Stakeholders identified several pressures that are currently impacting CCN's work and the communities across Northumberland, including:

- The **residual influence of the pandemic** on how people access and receive care. It was noted that rural clients and families were especially difficult to care for.
- **Demographic changes across the region** from people moving farther out of the Greater Toronto Area and a particular increase in the aging population.
- **The cost of living** has impacted everyone and is increasing existing challenges such as housing, food security, and job security.
- Other pressures exacerbate **the increasing demand and complexity of community needs** that the organization can support.

Clarity on services and increased awareness

Stakeholders recognized an opportunity for CCN to **strengthen clarity and awareness** regarding the organization's **role as a non-profit** that can **access the services and programs** and **continuously communicate the breadth of services** CCN provides.

With such a **strong volunteer base**, it was suggested that there is an opportunity to **engage them in championing and sharing information**. Participants shared that by ensuring that volunteers are empowered with the information and possibly some training about all services offered at CCN, they can better connect with the community and build awareness among those with whom they connect.

Several participants acknowledged improvement in this area already and spoke to focusing on **educating the community** about CCN's story and all the good work they do.

- Some volunteers suggested providing tours of facilities and presentations at different events to enhance visibility. Community partners emphasized the use of social media to engage with younger generations.

51% of survey respondents identified **community profile and presence as a top area of focus** for the organization over the next few years.

Financial Sustainability

Stakeholders emphasized the need to **strengthen financial sustainability to support human resources** and continue to **provide quality programming and services**.

Exploring ways to diversify revenue through **new funding opportunities**, as well as **expanding efforts in fundraising by raising awareness** about CCN's non-profit status, was raised by several stakeholders. Some respondents commented that **people believe the organization to be government funded**, leading to confusion concerning public funding and donations. A few individuals recommended that the organization strive **“to attract funds to support and move beyond year-to-year.”**

In addition, some participants acknowledged the success achieved with Ed's House and encouraged CCN to explore how to expand this success across all of CCN's fundraising efforts.

Leveraging partnerships and leaning into leadership

CCN was described as an effective leader rooted in **collaboration and strong relationships**. Many stakeholders spoke to CCN's natural inclination to **“jump in”** and offer the necessary support to ensure **client needs are being met where they are**. It is encouraged that CCN continues to lean in as a leader, as partners appreciate it and benefits the communities CCN serves.

Several participants in the engagement process discussed a desire to see CCN continue to build on the relationships and prioritize partnerships and collaboration through resource sharing and ongoing communications.

Succession planning

Various participants noted that the organization should consider **developing appropriate succession plans for all core roles** to support current practices and disseminate information across CCN for continued success independent from individuals. Some respondents mentioned the importance of **ensuring knowledge is well documented and accessible** to enable effective knowledge transfer across roles and teams.