




The Children's Trust
For children with brain injury

Helping a national children's charity develop inclusive values to drive high-performing behaviours and support the delivery of a new strategy.

THE CHILDREN'S TRUST

Shaping a culture where everyone can thrive.

Defining culture Promises to drive a new strategy.

A truly inclusive and purpose-led culture programme.

Fundamental to The Children's Trust's culture programme was a focus on being truly inclusive. We worked with the charity to ensure that the approach connected with as many different audiences as possible in the shaping of the new behaviours.

As a result, the consultation was one of the most inclusive dragonfish has ever facilitated.



OUR CHALLENGE

The Children's Trust is an inspiring national charity (with international reach) supporting children and young people with brain injury and neurodisability through rehabilitation, educational and community services. They selected dragonfish as their culture partner to help them shape a new set of values that would drive the right high performing behaviours across employees and volunteers, and propel their new strategy.

This 5-year Strategy: Hope and Ambition, was launched in 2020 with the aim of growing services to achieve the vision 'To ensure all children with brain injury and neurodisability have the opportunity to live the best life possible.'

Identified as key to this transformation was their culture and the way they worked together to create an environment where everyone thrived; where employees and volunteers were inspired to do their best and children, young people and their families had the best possible outcomes.

Yet, as an organisation with wide ranging expertise, from clinical and educational services to fundraising, there was an added need to ensure their evolving culture created a greater sense of unity, connectivity and alignment, something that was made even more important through the various lockdowns of 2020-2021.

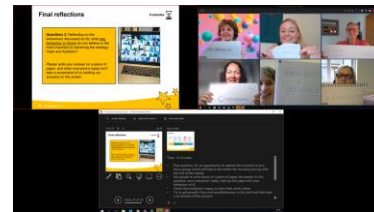


OUR SOLUTION

To gain a full picture of The Children's Trust, both qualitative and quantitative research was conducted. We started by hosting a series of surveys with employees, volunteers, the Board of Trustees and School Governing Body, as well as the general public.

This process alone engaged with over 50% of employees, which enabled us to explore their culture through the lens of our independent research 'Cracking the Culture Code'. Also, to benchmark them against high-performing organisations.

Despite the lockdowns, getting the opportunity to engage with people face-to-face was still critical, and we took the opportunity to safely connect both in-person and online. Visiting Tadworth Court, the home of The Children's Trust, enabled a greater sense of understanding for their environment and we connected with employees and volunteers, running focus groups around their culture.



As part of this process, we also recruited and trained a series of internal Children's Trust facilitators, this not only allowed us to reach many more people but enabled The Children's Trust to own and start to embed the new values at an early stage in the process. This was very powerful, with participants saying that they felt the culture was already changing as a result of the process.

The discovery process was further enriched through conversations with stakeholders and leaders, understanding cultural strengths and challenges. In addition to connecting with internal audiences, we reached out to partners, clinical professionals, and referrers to gain a different professional perspective.

No consultation at The Children's Trust would be complete without engaging children, young people, their families, and carers. The children have complex health needs so in discovery, conversations were facilitated by experts and those closest to the children. Questions were translated into more accessible and engaging mediums, using methods of play and new technologies to capture their thoughts, feelings and feedback.

From these valuable conversations came an insight that would ultimately shape the values and indeed their final name. The children suggested that the term 'values and behaviours' did not connect. They suggested instead the term 'Our Promises'. This resonated deeply when socialised across the charity, being termed the new name for the values and helping to make the Promises feel unique to The Children's Trust and truly ownable.

Throughout the culture journey, Dragonfish facilitated and captured conversations across audiences to identify the best way to launch and embed the values with impact. This enabled us to develop a high-level roadmap for the launch on the 8th November 2021, considering activities beyond launch that would sustain momentum and ensure longevity.

This resulted in a launch week that brought the charity, its employees, volunteers, children and supporters together in a celebration of their culture and created understanding for what behaviours it takes to achieve the strategy and vision.

OUR OUTPUT

The Children's Trust now have five Promises, each promise has a clear descriptor that explains more about the promise and supporting this are three behaviours statements. These help everyone understand what living that Promise looks like in practice.

Whilst it is currently early days since the launch of the Promises, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with the general sentiment being that the Promises really resonate with everyone. The facilitators recruited as part of the discovery phase have now become Promise Planters to help drive the conversation around the Promises, capture stories, and promote the new behaviours throughout the charity. Since the launch, even more people have signed up to become a Promise Planter and throughout different departments, the Promises have started to become common language and are being used as part of work and conversations.





"I am extremely proud of our new Promises and strongly believe that they will be a transformative force in helping us to achieve our strategy and create an inspiring and productive workplace. They have landed extremely positively with everyone, and I believe that is because of the consultative and inclusive approach we took, and that we remained open-minded as to where we would end up.

We listened closely to what we heard, analysed it, played it back and continued to evolve the values over several months so that by the time they launched, they felt genuine, unique to us and everyone could recognise and relate to them. Central to this was the voice of the child, which was evident in the name, desired behaviours, and our joyful launch!

Dragonfish were an amazing partner in this work. Their extensive experience across charity and other sectors was invaluable, as was their advice on process, objective analysis of literally thousands of pieces of feedback and thoughtful and specific recommendations for our organisation. The team were great to work with, respectful of the nature of our work and supportive at all stages."

**Angela Robertshaw, Head of Strategic Transformation,
The Children's Trust**

"We launched our new Strategy Hope and Ambition in 2020 with aspirations to grow The Children's Trust to support many more young people. We know our staff and volunteers are already doing a brilliant job, but our new Strategy gave us an opportunity to consider the type of organisation we want to be in the future, and to ask our staff what type of culture they would find inspirational.

With fantastic support from dragonfish, the process that we have undertaken has been both insightful and rewarding. I love our Promises because they came from the young people, our staff, and volunteers. With dragonfish's help, we have been able to develop them in collaboration with those that we work, partner with, or support. Our Promises are unique to us and convey what is special about The Children's Trust. Importantly, they build on the things we are already getting right but offer some opportunity to question, learn, and improve.

The fact that they have been universally embraced and are already being woven organically into our language and practices tells me that they are perfect for The Children's Trust. I am confident that they will make a tangible difference to our work."

**Dalton Leong, Chief Executive,
The Children's Trust**