



# PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

In the heart of Great Yarmouth, Feathers Futures serves as a beacon of hope for women seeking support and connections. This remarkable charity provides a safe space for women to come together, build friendships, and grow at their own pace through a variety of collaborative services, such as social groups, specialist support, peer mentoring, signposting, and courses. Each week, Feathers Futures makes a difference in the lives of approximately 200 women.



Recognising the need for long-term planning and sustainability following a period of extensive growth, Feathers Futures' Manager, Joanna Critch, reached out to Cranfield Trust for support in creating a new strategic business plan. Joanna knew that it was time to stop and take stock and evaluate Feathers Futures' current position to ensure its ongoing success and sustainability long into the future.

Following their enquiry, Ian Williams, Cranfield Trust's Regional Manager for the East of England, took the time to understand Feathers Futures' unique needs and goals. He introduced Joanna to Andrew Hodgson, a Cranfield Trust volunteer with extensive experience in strategic and business development. This marked the beginning of a collaborative journey towards a sustainable future for the charity.

Over several months, Andrew and Joanna worked together, carefully assessing Feathers Futures' existing plans, processes, and strategies. They also participated in Cranfield Trust's comprehensive Journey to Excellence programme, allowing them to evaluate their performance in various areas, including Performance and Impact, Leadership and Strategic Direction, Financial Management and Sustainability, and People Management.

As a result of this collaborative effort, Feathers Futures developed a robust 5-year strategic business plan, serving as a guiding framework for the charity's trustees and staff. This roadmap aimed to ensure the continued growth and stability of Feathers Futures for the women who rely on its services.

Robert facilitated a series of working sessions with the Board and Senior Leadership team of TSYT over a period of nine months, helping them to explore more innovative ways to deliver their programmes of support for young people, to extend their reach, and to look at possibilities for collaboration with other organisations in order to achieve their aims.

## Impact

The impact of this project was evident in the Journey to Excellence assessment results, which showed improvement across the board, most notably in Leadership and Strategic Direction. Feathers Futures' commitment to excellence and progress made through working with Cranfield Trust was clear, as they scored above average in all areas.

For the women who find comfort and support in Feathers Futures, this project has been a positive turning point. With a clearer vision and direction, the charity is better equipped to continue providing much-needed services to its community.



**Joanna of Feathers Futures commented on the experience working with Andrew and expressed her gratitude and delight at being matched with “the most brilliant, knowledgeable mentor.”**

On completion of this project, Feathers Futures Manager Joanna Critch said:

*“Thank you, Cranfield Trust, for your support in taking the time to understand my charity and matching me [with] the most brilliant, knowledgeable mentor to help me write a strategic plan that gives the charity a clear focus for the next five years.”*

Cranfield Trust Volunteer Consultant, Andrew Hodgson commented on this project saying:

*“It has been a privilege to have the opportunity to work with Jo and Feathers Futures. Understanding the work they do has been deeply inspiring, and the opportunity to contribute, in however small a way, to the evolution and development of the charity has been truly humbling. Seeing the dedication and compassion of the staff working tirelessly to support these women has also been a constant source of inspiration. I am very appreciative for the opportunity to be a part of this important cause. The work done by Feathers Futures is truly invaluable, and I will continue to be a vocal advocate and supporter in any way I can.”*



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