



EDSHIFT STRATEGY 2026

EVERY CHILD SEEN.

EVERY CHILD HEARD.

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Contents

CEO Foreword.....	3
Understanding The Challenge.....	5
The Challenge Facing Children Exposed to Domestic Abuse.....	5
Trauma, Brain Development and Survival.....	8
What Children Need: Safety, Connection and Voice.....	10
Our Approach.....	11
The YouthBase: A Place to Belong.....	11
EdShift's Pathway of Support.....	12
A Community of Support.....	14
Strategic Direction.....	15
Strategy Delivery Framework.....	15
Strategic Pillars.....	16
Pillar One: Marketing & Fundraising.....	17
Pillar Two: Strategic Partnerships.....	20
Pillar Three: Capacity & Delivery.....	22
Pillar Four: Quality & Impact.....	25
Pillar Five: Governance.....	27
Organisational Development.....	29
Organisational Structure.....	29
Delivering the Strategy.....	30
Monitoring, Measurement & Accountability.....	32
Conclusion	
Strategic Commitment.....	34

CEO FOREWORD

Children exposed to domestic abuse have long been the hidden victims.

For too many years, their experiences were minimised, overlooked or treated as secondary to the adults around them. Yet we know that the impact of living with domestic abuse is profound. It shapes how a child regulates emotion, forms relationships, experiences safety and makes sense of the world around them.

Exposure to domestic abuse is not simply a difficult childhood experience. It is a form of chronic trauma. It is linked to poor mental health, anxiety, depression, self-harm, disrupted attachment, educational disengagement and long-term health inequalities. Without timely and specialist support, that trauma can remain unprocessed and persist into adulthood, placing lasting pressure on health, education and social care systems.

Recognising and responding to this early is not only the right thing to do for children, but also one of the most important ways we can prevent long-term harm across our communities.

Despite this, domestic abuse has too often been understood only through the lenses of safeguarding, policing, housing and children's social care. What has been missing from the conversation for too long is the recognition that domestic abuse is also a public health issue. If we fail to recognise the impact of domestic abuse on children's long-term health, wellbeing and life chances, we fail the next generation.

EdShift exists because children affected by domestic abuse are victims in their own right. They deserve to be seen. They deserve to be heard. They deserve safe, specialist and trauma-informed support that meets them wherever they are on their journey.

Through the power of the arts, EdShift creates safe, creative spaces where children and young people can process their experiences, rebuild connection and find their voice. Whether a child needs someone to talk to, a place to belong, group therapeutic support or complex intervention, our pathway exists so there is always a space for them.

We do this work well.

Our practice is trauma-informed, clinically guided and grounded in strong safeguarding frameworks. We work in partnership with Local Authorities, health partners and community organisations, delivering specialist support within an increasingly complex and performance-driven landscape.

But doing good work is not enough.

Domestic abuse continues to exist behind closed doors, hidden by stigma, shame and silence. Many children remain unknown to services. Many wait too long for help. Many are left to carry trauma that was never theirs to hold.

Silence only gives domestic abuse more power.

As CEO, my commitment is to dare EdShift and the systems that surround children and young people affected by domestic abuse, to be better.

- ⇒ Better in the standards we set.
- ⇒ Better in how we respond to children's experiences.
- ⇒ Better in how we work together to ensure no child is left to carry the impact of domestic abuse alone.

Because that is the standard children and young people deserve.

2026 marks a defining chapter in EdShift's development as a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Over the past year, we have strengthened governance, secured commissioned funding and reflected deeply on what is needed to grow safely, sustainably and with integrity.

Our strategic priority for 2026 is clear: to reach more children and young people affected by domestic abuse, safely, sustainably and with measurable impact.

From this point forward, reaching more children becomes the lens through which every decision is judged.

This strategy is about more than growth. It is about building the capacity, leadership and influence required to ensure children affected by domestic abuse are no longer overlooked, no longer waiting at the edges of systems, and no longer left without a voice.

EdShift is more than a charity. It is a movement to dismantle outdated systems and shift mindsets, using the arts as a tool for connection, expression and change, with children and young people at the heart of building a world beyond domestic abuse.

EVERY CHILD SEEN.**EVERY CHILD HEARD.**

Elspeth Lea Brook
EdShift Founder and CEO

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGE



The Challenge Facing Children Exposed to Domestic Abuse

For too many years children's experiences were minimised, overlooked or treated as secondary to the adults around them. Systems often focused on the incident of abuse itself rather than the child living within it, the fear they carry, the instability they experience and the trauma that shapes their development.

The **Domestic Abuse Act 2021** marked a significant shift by formally recognising children who see, hear or experience the effects of domestic abuse as victims in their own right. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner's report *Victims in their Own Right?* reinforced this recognition, highlighting the profound and lasting impact domestic abuse has on children's emotional wellbeing, development and life chances.

However, the systems designed to support children are still catching up with that recognition. While legislation has acknowledged children as victims, provision for specialist recovery support remains inconsistent and often fragile within an already pressured funding landscape.

The scale of the challenge is significant.

Domestic abuse is a factor in approximately 80% of social work caseloads, demonstrating the extent to which it intersects with safeguarding concerns across the country. For many children, domestic abuse is not a single incident but a pattern of fear, and control that shapes their everyday environment.

Children growing up in homes where domestic abuse is present are more likely to experience:

- ⇒ emotional dysregulation and chronic anxiety
- ⇒ disrupted attachment and difficulties forming trusting relationships
- ⇒ educational disengagement
- ⇒ increased vulnerability to exploitation
- ⇒ involvement in youth offending or gang-related activity
- ⇒ entry into the care system
- ⇒ increased risk of sexual exploitation

Domestic abuse is frequently a root cause behind many of the complex safeguarding concerns that emerge later in a child's life.

Without early intervention and trauma-informed support, children may carry the psychological impact of domestic abuse into adolescence and adulthood, increasing the likelihood of crisis intervention by statutory services.

The impact is social, emotional and physiological.

Research increasingly demonstrates that prolonged exposure to chronic stress and trauma during childhood can have lasting consequences for long-term health. When children grow up in environments where abuse and violence are constant, their bodies remain in a heightened state of stress. Over time this can affect brain development, immune functioning and cardiovascular health.

Long-term exposure to trauma is associated with increased risks of:

- ⇒ depression and anxiety
- ⇒ self-harm
- ⇒ substance misuse
- ⇒ cardiovascular disease
- ⇒ stroke
- ⇒ certain cancers

Evidence from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Victims in Their Own Right? report further highlights the mental health risks associated with childhood exposure to domestic abuse. **Children growing up in these environments are more likely to experience:**

- ⇒ 20% increased likelihood of a psychological development disorder
- ⇒ 40% increased likelihood of a depressive disorder
- ⇒ 40% increased likelihood of schizophrenia or psychosis
- ⇒ 50% increased likelihood of an anxiety disorder
- ⇒ 60% increased likelihood of intentional self-harm
- ⇒ 80% increased likelihood of a personality disorder

These statistics underline an important reality:

Domestic abuse is not only a safeguarding issue. It is also a public health issue.

Domestic abuse also intersects with wider structural inequalities and social challenges that shape families' experiences. At EdShift we work with a diverse community.

Approximately 50% of the children and families we support identify as White British and 50% come from Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic communities.

Many families experience additional barriers linked to language, migration experiences, housing instability and social isolation. For some families, English is an additional language, making it difficult to navigate services, understand rights and access support.

Others are living with the psychological impact of displacement, having fled conflict, persecution or war before arriving in the UK. These experiences often bring their own layers of trauma, including post-traumatic stress, loss of community networks and uncertainty about safety and stability.

Domestic abuse therefore often exists within a wider context of multiple adversities.

Families may face poverty, insecure housing, immigration-related stress or the lingering trauma of violence experienced in their countries of origin. Some families supported by EdShift have experienced extreme instability, including periods of homelessness while attempting to find safety.

Recognising these realities requires an intersectional approach to supporting children affected by domestic abuse.

Children's experiences are shaped not only by the abuse they witness or experience, but also by the wider social, cultural and structural environments in which their families live. Understanding these overlapping pressures allows EdShift to provide culturally responsive, trauma-informed support that reflects the full context of children's lives.

Despite the scale of need, access to specialist support for children remains uneven.

- ⇒ Waiting lists are long.
- ⇒ Thresholds for intervention are high.
- ⇒ Funding is often fragmented.

Children affected by domestic abuse deserve more than crisis responses once harm has already taken hold. They deserve timely, trauma-informed support that allows them to process their experiences safely, rebuild confidence and develop healthier, more hopeful futures.

EdShift exists to ensure that support is available when children need it most.

Trauma, Brain Development and Survival

Children who grow up in homes where domestic abuse is present are not simply witnessing isolated incidents of violence. They are living within environments marked by unpredictability, fear and emotional instability, conditions that shape their sense of safety, their relationships and their developing identity.

For many children, domestic abuse is not a single traumatic event but a pattern of chronic stress. Living in an environment where threat may occur at any moment profoundly affects how children regulate emotion, interpret relationships and navigate the world around them.

A child's recovery from trauma depends on the interaction between two essential forms of safety: external safety and internal safety.

External safety is created through the environments that surround a child, their home, school and community, and whether these spaces feel predictable, stable and supportive.

Internal safety refers to a child's ability to feel safe within their own body and mind. It includes emotional regulation, the capacity to manage stress and the ability to trust others and build relationships. Internal safety also depends on interoception, the brain's ability to recognise and interpret internal signals such as fear, stress or calm. For children who have lived with chronic stress, these signals can become confused or overwhelming, making it harder for them to feel grounded or in control.

Children begin to build internal safety through attunement, the consistent, responsive presence of safe adults who notice, validate and respond to their emotional states. Through attunement, children experience being understood, which forms the foundation of emotional safety and trust.

For children exposed to domestic abuse, however, both internal and external safety are often disrupted. The environments that should provide protection instead become sources of tension and fear.

Advances in developmental neuroscience have deepened our understanding of how these experiences shape the developing brain. Children exposed to ongoing fear or violence experience prolonged activation of the body's stress response systems. The nervous system becomes primed for danger, a state known as hypervigilance.

When the brain is focused on survival, neural pathways for detecting threat strengthen, while pathways involved in emotional regulation, learning and connection become harder to access. The brain becomes wired for protection rather than connection.

These adaptations help children survive unsafe environments, but they can make it more difficult to experience safety, trust or calm once the immediate threat has passed. Children may struggle with regulating emotions, concentrating, managing impulses or forming relationships. In education settings, these survival-based responses may appear as withdrawal, anxiety, aggression or defiance, behaviours often misunderstood without an awareness of trauma and brain development.

Trauma is not only about what happens to a child; it is about what happens inside a child when those experiences cannot be processed. **As trauma specialist Dr Gabor Maté writes:** *“Trauma is not what happens to you. Trauma is what happens inside you as a result of what happens to you, particularly when you are left alone with those experiences.”*

For many children affected by domestic abuse, the most damaging experience is not only the violence itself but the absence of safe spaces to speak, process and make sense of what has happened. Without opportunities to reflect, children often internalise confusion, shame or a misplaced sense of responsibility for events beyond their control.

The work of Dr Bruce Perry highlights the importance of the **Three Rs** in trauma recovery: **Regulate, Relate, Reason**. Children must first experience physiological and emotional regulation. Only then can they build safe relationships. Only through those relationships can they access the cognitive capacities required for learning, reflection and reasoning.

For children affected by domestic abuse, this sequence is essential. Without support to regulate their nervous systems and rebuild safe relational connections, children cannot fully engage in learning, development or healing.

Creative and arts-based therapeutic approaches offer a powerful pathway through this process. Trauma is not expressed solely through language, it is held in the body, in the nervous system and in emotional memory. For many children, especially younger ones, words alone are not enough.

Art therapy and creative expression offer children alternative, developmentally appropriate ways to communicate their internal experiences. Through creative practice, children can explore emotions, express memories and begin forming new, healthier narratives about their lives, all within a contained and supported environment.

At EdShift, the arts are not an optional enhancement. They are a core element of how children process experiences, rebuild safety and reclaim their voice. Through attuned relationships and creative therapeutic practice, children move from patterns of survival toward connection, curiosity and growth.

What Children Need: Safety, Connection and Voice

When children are asked what they need after experiencing domestic abuse, two responses appear again and again:

- ⇒ Safety
- ⇒ Someone to talk to

Safety means far more than physical protection. It includes feeling psychologically safe, emotionally supported and free from blame. For many children affected by domestic abuse, that sense of safety, which should exist within the home, has been disrupted. Rebuilding safety, both internally and externally, becomes a crucial part of healing.

Children consistently tell us that one of the most transformative moments in their support journey is understanding:

"It wasn't my fault."

For many, this realisation does not come easily. Children often internalise confusion, shame and a misplaced sense of responsibility for what is happening within their family. Without safe, supportive opportunities to speak about their experiences, these feelings can remain unacknowledged for years.

Research with children affected by domestic abuse repeatedly highlights the importance of trusted spaces where they can speak openly. The difference between children who had access to safe relationships, and those who did not, is significant. Children who were able to talk with trusted adults described these relationships as life-changing. In contrast, those without support often spoke of regret, frustration and the absence of help, even when adults around them were aware abuse was taking place.

Many children learn to hide what is happening at home. As they grow older, this can involve concealing the truth from friends, teachers and relatives. The fear of being judged, misunderstood or "seen differently" can lead them to remain silent, reinforcing isolation and self-blame.

Just as adult victims often need others to name the abuse they are experiencing, children also need permission to talk. They need reassurance that speaking about their experiences is neither disloyal nor a reflection of their worth.

EdShift exists to create the conditions where children can reach that understanding. Through safe relationships, attuned support, creative expression and trauma-informed practice, children are supported to make sense of their experiences, rebuild their confidence and rediscover trust in themselves and others.

OUR APPROACH



The YouthBase: A Place to Belong

This vision sits at the heart of The YouthBase. The YouthBase was created as a space where children affected by domestic abuse can experience something many have never had before, a place to belong, a sense of community and the reassurance that they are not alone.

As soon as you enter the building, you are greeted by the Wonder Wall. Covered in drawings, words and messages left by children and young people who have spent time in the space, it reflects the voices of those who have walked similar journeys. These messages are not decorative; they are acts of connection between children who may never meet yet share experiences of domestic abuse.

Across the walls of The YouthBase, children write and draw messages of encouragement and solidarity. Staff, professionals and partners add their own messages too, creating a visible culture of support, healing and belonging.

The messages are simple, but powerful:

- ⇒ You are not alone
- ⇒ This is not your fault
- ⇒ You are not to blame

For many children, these words represent the first time their experiences have been acknowledged without judgement or blame. Over time, these messages become part of the foundation children use to rebuild identity, self-worth and possibility.

The YouthBase is also home to EdShift's tiered pathway of support, enabling children to access the right support at the right time as they move through their recovery.

The name **EdShift @ The YouthBase** is intentional. The space belongs to the children and young people who fill it with their voices, creativity and experiences. EdShift exists alongside them, helping them navigate their journey from survival toward safety, connection and recovery.

EdShift's Pathway of Support

At EdShift we recognise that supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence requires more than a single intervention. Recovery from trauma is rarely linear, and children's needs change over time.

Children need a **cohesive, creative and trauma-informed pathway of support** that meets them wherever they are on their journey, from early identification of risk to longer-term recovery and connection.

EdShift's pathway has been designed to respond flexibly to these changing needs. Children can move between different forms of support at different stages, ensuring they are never left without somewhere to turn.

Early Identification and Safety Planning

Our pathway begins with **BraveBox**, a trauma-informed safety planning resource designed to support children at the earliest possible stage.

BraveBox includes a physical resource and a structured three-week booklet that helps children explore safety, relationships and emotional wellbeing in developmentally appropriate ways. It was developed in response to growing demand for EdShift's services. As waiting lists increased, it became clear that children could not be left without support while waiting for more intensive intervention. BraveBox enables children to begin receiving meaningful support immediately.

Through guided activities and reflective exercises, children begin exploring what safety means to them, identifying trusted adults and making sense of their experiences.

Alongside the resource, **BraveBox Safety Planning Training** equips professionals with the language and tools needed to have safe, trauma-informed conversations with children about physical and emotional safety. Delivered across West Yorkshire, the training strengthens the ability of schools and frontline services to respond effectively. BraveBox, therefore, extends EdShift's reach beyond its core programmes and helps children access support earlier.

Early Support and Connection

For many children, the first step into support is not formal therapy, but connection.

In Touch provides a safe peer space for young people who may be stepping into support for the first time, stepping down from more intensive programmes or navigating ongoing risk or instability.

Through creative activity, conversation and peer connection, In Touch helps young people build relationships, strengthen emotional regulation and maintain supportive networks.

Early Intervention and Creative Healing

SpotLight provides early intervention support using creative approaches that help children process experiences, develop emotional literacy and build resilience.

Recognising that trauma affects the wider family system, EdShift also developed Little Nests, a group art therapy programme for siblings and peers of children affected by domestic abuse. Little Nests supports children to explore emotions, share experiences and build supportive peer relationships through therapeutic artmaking

Specialist Therapeutic Intervention

For children experiencing more complex trauma, EdShift offers specialist therapeutic support through **The Nest**, our art psychotherapy programme. The Nest provides structured therapeutic intervention for children whose experiences of domestic abuse have led to deeper emotional or psychological needs.

This includes both individual and **dyadic** art therapy, recognising that domestic abuse often disrupts relationships between children and their caregivers. Dyadic therapy creates a space where children and parents or carers can strengthen attachment and shared understanding through creative expression.

In 2025, EdShift secured its first pilot contract with the Local Authority, establishing a new referral pathway under the Domestic Abuse Act Safe Accommodation Duty. This enables specialist therapeutic support for children and families living in refuge accommodation, target-hardened properties, dispersed safe accommodation, foster care placements and adoptive families.

Children in these environments are often navigating significant disruption, including relocation, changes in schooling and the emotional impact of leaving their home. The pilot ensures that children can access trauma-informed therapeutic support during these critical periods of transition.



A Community of Support

Through this pathway of care, EdShift has become a trusted presence for families navigating the impact of domestic abuse. Children move through different parts of the pathway at different times, depending on their needs. Some begin with peer support, others enter therapeutic programmes directly and many move between services as their needs evolve.

What remains constant is that EdShift continues to walk alongside them.

This consistent, relational approach has strengthened outcomes for children and deepened trust with families and professionals across the Borough. For many, EdShift is no longer viewed as a short-term service, but as a steady and supportive presence in their lives.

Many families supported by EdShift face additional challenges, including poverty, housing instability, immigration uncertainty and the long-term effects of trauma. For children to meaningfully engage in recovery, these wider pressures must be acknowledged.

EdShift's **added value offer** provides practical and relational support that strengthens the impact of our therapeutic work. This support has grown organically in response to families' real-life needs. Through discreet shopping bags of essential items and emergency gas and electric top-up vouchers, EdShift has quietly supported families facing financial hardship. These small but meaningful acts help maintain dignity and stability during times of crisis.

These initiatives are not separate from our therapeutic work. They are the threads that hold everything together, building trust, meeting immediate needs and strengthening the relationships between families and EdShift.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION



2026 marks a defining year in EdShift's development. Following our transition to a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), we are entering a new phase of organisational maturity, strengthened accountability and structured growth.

Over the past year, EdShift has made significant progress in building the foundations required to grow responsibly and sustainably.

This includes:

- ⇒ transitioning from CIC to CIO status,
- ⇒ securing our first Local Authority therapeutic contract,
- ⇒ strengthening governance oversight and Board accountability,
- ⇒ navigating sector-wide recruitment and workforce pressures, and
- ⇒ increasing organisational income from £181,000 to £236,000.

These developments demonstrate real progress in strengthening EdShift's organisational foundations. However, the demand for our services continues to exceed our current capacity. Referrals are increasing from across the region, reflecting both the scale of need among children affected by domestic abuse and the growing recognition of EdShift's specialist model.

Despite recent income growth, our current operating level does not yet enable us to meet the needs of the children and young people being referred to us. To operate at the level required to respond effectively to this demand, EdShift must significantly expand its capacity.

The Board and the CEO have therefore set a clear strategic ambition: to increase organisational income from £236,000 to £500,000, and to reduce our waiting list by 50 percent over the next 12 months.

Achieving this will require strengthened leadership, diversified income streams, deeper strategic partnerships and continued investment in trauma-informed practice. This evolution has required reflection, not on our purpose, but on the infrastructure that supports it. As demand for our services continues to grow, we recognise that reaching more children safely depends on strong systems, clear leadership and sustainable resources.

Our strategic priority for 2026 is clear:

To reach more children and young people affected by domestic abuse, safely, sustainably and with measurable impact.

This strategy outlines the steps EdShift will take to build the capacity, partnerships and financial sustainability required to achieve that goal.

Our Strategic Priority and Strategic Pillars

The demand for specialist support for children affected by domestic abuse continues to rise. Referrals are increasing, waiting lists across services remain long, and thresholds for intervention continue to grow. EdShift's role is clear and urgent: to ensure that no child affected by domestic abuse is left waiting for support or navigating trauma alone.

Achieving this requires more than expanding delivery. It requires strong governance, sustainable funding, powerful partnerships and the organisational capacity to respond confidently and safely to regional need.

To drive this ambition, EdShift's 2026 strategy is built around five strategic pillars:

- ⇒ Marketing and Fundraising
- ⇒ Strategic Partnerships
- ⇒ Capacity and Delivery
- ⇒ Quality and Impact
- ⇒ Governance

Each pillar sets out a clear purpose, strategic actions for 2026, measurable outcomes and the structural developments needed to support growth.

Progress across all pillars will be tracked through a strengthened governance framework that includes:

- ⇒ Quarterly Board reporting
- ⇒ Operational performance monitoring
- ⇒ Oversight of delivery ratios and waiting list movement
- ⇒ Financial tracking and income analysis
- ⇒ Safeguarding and case management review
- ⇒ Workforce development aligned to organisational priorities

These mechanisms ensure the strategy remains directional, measurable and anchored in accountability. EdShift's evolution into a registered charity brings increased responsibility strategy is no longer aspirational, but operational. It is about disciplined progress, measurable impact and responsible stewardship of public and charitable resources.

The following refined pillar sections outline how EdShift will deliver pioneering, scalable and high-quality support for children affected by domestic abuse.



Pillar One: Marketing & Fundraising

Purpose

To secure the financial infrastructure needed to reach more children and young people affected by domestic abuse safely and sustainably. Growth requires more than ambition, it demands structured, strategic and predictable income that enables frontline delivery to expand without compromising quality, safeguarding standards or staff wellbeing. This pillar focuses on strengthening EdShift's financial sustainability through diversified income streams, strategic funding partnerships and increased fundraising capacity.

Strategic Context

Despite recent income growth, EdShift's current operating level does not yet allow the organisation to meet rising demand. To reduce waiting times and increase safe delivery capacity, EdShift must reinforce its financial foundations and secure sustainable funding that supports both frontline provision and organisational leadership.

Increased income will enable:

- ⇒ strengthened operational leadership
- ⇒ expanded frontline delivery capacity
- ⇒ improved clinical governance
- ⇒ reduced waiting times for children seeking support

Financial Ambition for 2026

In 2026, EdShift is working toward a £500,000 income position. This target is grounded in a layered funding strategy comprising:

- ⇒ secured contracts
- ⇒ strategic grant applications
- ⇒ targeted trust funding
- ⇒ fundraising income
- ⇒ earned income from training

Income Strategy

EdShift will pursue a diversified funding model blending commissioned services, strategic grants, partnerships, fundraising and earned income. Key priorities include securing multi-year funding from national funders such as the National Lottery, strengthening relationships with charitable trusts, expanding corporate partnerships and growing earned income through professional training.

This approach reduces reliance on short-term, reactive grants and builds the financial stability required to expand delivery and reduce waiting times.

Key Strategic Funding Priorities

National Lottery Application

EdShift has submitted a three-year funding application to strengthen organisational infrastructure and frontline delivery.

The bid includes funding for:

- ⇒ Programme Lead
- ⇒ Two Community Practitioners
- ⇒ Data and Referrals Coordinator
- ⇒ Core organisational costs
- ⇒ A percentage of the CEO salary

Securing this funding would provide significant stability over a three-year period and support long-term sustainability.

Targeted Funding

Alongside major grants, EdShift is seeking targeted investment to strengthen operational and clinical leadership. Funding applications focus on securing:

- ⇒ an Operations Manager
- ⇒ a Therapeutic Lead

These roles are essential to safe growth, ensuring strong operational systems, clinical oversight and robust safeguarding.

Fundraising and Earned Income

EdShift has set a £20,000 fundraising target for 2026, supported by corporate partnerships, community fundraising and donor engagement.

Earned income will continue to be generated through the BraveBox safety planning training programme, which equips professionals to support children affected by domestic abuse. In 2026, development will begin on digital training resources to increase accessibility, scale delivery and generate additional unrestricted income.

Earned income will therefore support both organisational sustainability and strengthened professional responses across the region.

Strategic Outcome

Financial sustainability underpins EdShift's impact. By strengthening its financial infrastructure, the organisation will build the capacity required to:

- ⇒ increase frontline delivery
- ⇒ reduce waiting times
- ⇒ strengthen clinical governance and operational oversight
- ⇒ ensure safe and sustainable organisational growth

Alongside pursuing grant funding, EdShift will continue to develop its fundraising infrastructure through corporate partnerships, community initiatives and deeper engagement with local supporters and businesses. Training delivery will also continue to grow as a key earned-income stream, building on the success of BraveBox training delivered across West Yorkshire.





Pillar Two: Strategic Partnerships

Positioning Children Affected by Domestic Abuse as a Public Health Priority

Purpose

To strengthen EdShift's position within public health, safeguarding and commissioning systems in order to secure sustainable partnerships and expand access to specialist support for children affected by domestic abuse.

Strategic partnerships determine whether organisations remain small delivery charities or become recognised contributors within wider systems. This pillar focuses on embedding EdShift within statutory, health and community networks so that children affected by domestic abuse are seen not only within safeguarding frameworks, but also as a population requiring early intervention and specialist therapeutic support.

Strategic Context

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 formally recognised children who see, hear or experience domestic abuse as victims in their own right. While this was a significant legislative shift, support systems have been slow to fully adapt to this change.

Children exposed to domestic abuse frequently experience long-term impacts, including:

- ⇒ emotional trauma
- ⇒ disrupted attachment
- ⇒ mental health difficulties
- ⇒ increased vulnerability to exploitation or harmful behaviours in adolescence

These outcomes demonstrate that domestic abuse is not only a safeguarding concern but also a public health issue, with profound implications for mental health services, education, youth justice and health inequalities.

Despite this evidence, children affected by domestic abuse are rarely identified as a distinct prevention cohort within local public health strategies. Responses often remain reactive, focusing on crisis intervention rather than early recovery and long-term wellbeing.

EdShift operates within this gap—delivering specialist support while advocating for the recognition of children affected by domestic abuse across health, safeguarding and community systems.

Strategic Actions for 2026

In 2026, EdShift will strengthen its strategic partnerships through collaboration with local authorities, health partners, education providers and regional safeguarding networks.

A key focus will be developing EdShift's partnership with Northpoint, expanding therapeutic capacity and strengthening links between community-based support and wider mental health systems.

Through this collaboration, EdShift will broaden its therapeutic offer, including the development of additional creative therapeutic interventions that complement existing programmes such as The Nest.

Alongside this, EdShift will continue to enhance its presence within regional safeguarding and domestic abuse networks, including multi-agency safeguarding forums and public health discussions.

These partnerships ensure children's voices remain visible in strategic decision-making and contribute to wider system learning.

Measurable Outcomes for 2026

Through this pillar, EdShift aims to achieve:

- ⇒ strengthened partnership working with local authority and health partners
- ⇒ successful development of the Northpoint collaboration
- ⇒ expanded therapeutic capacity through partnership funding
- ⇒ increased representation within regional safeguarding and prevention networks
- ⇒ strengthened referral pathways across West Yorkshire

Strategic Outcome

Robust partnerships enable EdShift to move beyond standalone service delivery and become part of a coordinated, multi-agency response to domestic abuse.

By working closely with public health, safeguarding and mental health partners, EdShift can help ensure that children affected by domestic abuse receive:

- ⇒ earlier support
- ⇒ more consistent pathways to recovery
- ⇒ stronger recognition within the systems designed to protect them

Strategic partnerships therefore directly support EdShift's central priority: reaching more children and young people affected by domestic abuse safely, sustainably and with measurable impact.



Pillar Three: Capacity & Delivery

Increasing Reach Through Structured Accountability

Purpose

To increase EdShift's frontline delivery capacity, reduce waiting times for children and young people seeking support, and ensure staffing structures align with the organisation's purpose, contractual commitments and safeguarding responsibilities.

Reaching more children affected by domestic abuse requires more than strong partnerships or increased funding. It requires the organisational capacity to translate those resources into safe, consistent and measurable frontline delivery. This pillar focuses on strengthening operational systems, clarifying delivery expectations and ensuring that the workforce is structured to respond effectively to rising demand.

Strategic Context

Demand for EdShift's services continues to exceed current capacity. Referrals from across Calderdale and neighbouring areas reflect both the scale of need and the growing recognition of EdShift's specialist model of support.

At present, waiting times for children seeking support can extend to 18–24 months. While this mirrors pressures across the wider sector, it underscores the urgent need to increase delivery capacity so that children affected by domestic abuse can access support earlier in their recovery journey.

Reducing waiting times is therefore a central organisational priority. The Board of Trustees has set a clear target to reduce the waiting list by 50% over the next 12 months.

Achieving this will require:

- ⇒ structured and disciplined delivery planning
- ⇒ strengthened operational oversight
- ⇒ improved scheduling and workflow systems
- ⇒ clear expectations around how professional time is allocated across frontline roles

Increasing capacity is not simply about doing more, it is about using time, expertise and systems more effectively to generate the greatest impact for children and young people.

Strategic Actions for 2026

In 2026, EdShift will strengthen its operational capacity to ensure that more children and young people affected by domestic abuse can access timely, specialist support.

Key developments will include:

1. Increasing Frontline Delivery Capacity

EdShift will expand delivery across both community-based provision and therapeutic programmes at the YouthBase. Strengthening the workforce and improving referral coordination will ensure that children are able to access support in a more consistent and timely way.

2. Strengthening Operational and Clinical Leadership

Roles such as Programme Lead, Operations Manager and Therapeutic Lead will be central to supporting safe organisational growth. These posts will reinforce safeguarding oversight, case management and workforce support as delivery expands.

3. Enhancing Systems that Support Service Delivery

EdShift will review and strengthen:

- ⇒ referral pathways
- ⇒ waiting list management
- ⇒ programme coordination
- ⇒ scheduling and workflow systems

These improvements will ensure that resources are used effectively and that the organisation can respond responsibly to increasing demand.

Together, these developments will allow EdShift to grow its reach while maintaining the high standards of trauma-informed practice, safeguarding and professional integrity that underpin its work.

Measurable Outcomes for 2026

Through this pillar, EdShift aims to achieve:

- ⇒ increased frontline delivery capacity across community and YouthBase programmes
- ⇒ strengthened operational leadership and workforce structure
- ⇒ improved access to specialist support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse
- ⇒ measurable progress toward reducing the waiting list by 50%

Strategic Outcome

Strengthening delivery capacity enables EdShift to translate its strategic ambition into meaningful, timely support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

By aligning workforce expectations, operational systems and safeguarding structures, the organisation will increase the number of children it is able to support while protecting the quality and integrity of its trauma-informed practice.

Expanding capacity in this way directly supports EdShift's core strategic priority: reaching more children and young people affected by domestic abuse safely, sustainably and with measurable impact.





Pillar Four: Quality & Impact

Raising Standards, Strengthening Learning and Demonstrating Impact

To ensure that as EdShift increases delivery capacity, the quality of practice, safeguarding standards and measurable impact of its work remain strong, consistent and evidence-based.

Growth must never come at the expense of quality. Supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse requires skilled, reflective practice grounded in trauma-informed principles and robust safeguarding oversight. This pillar focuses on protecting the integrity of EdShift's work while strengthening the systems that evidence the impact of its support.

Strategic Context

Children affected by domestic abuse often present with complex emotional, relational and psychological needs. Recovery requires more than short-term intervention, it depends on safe relationships, specialist knowledge and approaches that recognise the long-term impact of trauma on development, wellbeing and identity.

EdShift's model is rooted in trauma-informed practice, creative therapeutic approaches and relational support that enables children to process their experiences safely and rebuild confidence, trust and emotional regulation.

As the organisation grows, maintaining the quality of this practice becomes increasingly important. Strong safeguarding systems, professional supervision and structured case management are essential to ensuring that children receive safe, appropriate and effective support.

At the same time, organisations working with vulnerable children are increasingly required to demonstrate measurable impact. Commissioners, partners and funders expect clear evidence of progress and improved outcomes. Strengthening impact measurement is therefore vital not only for accountability, but also for learning, development and long-term sustainability.

Strategic Actions for 2026

In 2026, EdShift will strengthen the professional frameworks that underpin safe and effective delivery.

1. Safeguarding and Risk Management

Safeguarding and risk management processes will remain central to practice, ensuring that concerns are identified and responded to consistently and appropriately.

2. Strengthening Monitoring and Impact Systems

The organisation will continue to improve its systems for data collection, programme evaluation and outcome reporting. These developments will provide clearer evidence of the difference EdShift's support makes in children's lives.

3. Investing in Reflective Practice and Professional Learning

Supervision, shared learning and partnership collaboration will support practitioners to deepen their skills and maintain high standards of trauma-informed practice.

By embedding these approaches, EdShift will ensure that increased delivery is matched by continued investment in quality, safety and organisational learning.

Measurable Outcomes for 2026

EdShift aims to achieve:

- ⇒ strengthened safeguarding and case-management oversight
- ⇒ improved data collection and impact reporting
- ⇒ clearer evidence of improved outcomes for children and young people
- ⇒ strengthened professional learning and reflective practice across the team
- ⇒ increased credibility with commissioners, partners and funders through robust impact evidence

Strategic Outcome

Strengthening quality assurance and impact measurement will ensure that EdShift continues to deliver meaningful, life-changing support for children and young people affected by domestic abuse.

High-quality practice, combined with strong evidence of impact, will enable the organisation to grow responsibly, strengthen partnerships and demonstrate the value of specialist support.



Pillar Five: Governance

Strengthening Accountability, Oversight and Organisational Maturity

Purpose

To ensure that EdShift operates with strong governance, clear accountability and effective oversight as a registered charity, supporting responsible growth and protecting the children and young people it serves.

Strong governance provides the structure that keeps organisations focused on their purpose while ensuring that decisions, finances and safeguarding responsibilities are managed with integrity and transparency. This pillar strengthens the systems that support the Board of Trustees and ensures that EdShift continues to meet the standards expected of a charitable organisation.

Strategic Context

In November 2025, EdShift transitioned from a Community Interest Company (CIC) to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This marked a significant step in the organisation's development, formalising the role of the Board of Trustees and strengthening governance oversight.

As a CIO, EdShift is regulated by the Charity Commission. Trustees hold legal responsibility for ensuring that the organisation pursues its charitable purpose, demonstrates public benefit and maintains appropriate financial, legal and safeguarding standards.

This transition reflects EdShift's growth and its expanding role within the regional response to domestic abuse affecting children and young people. It also requires continued investment in governance structures that support transparency, accountability and responsible stewardship of public and charitable funds.

Strong governance is therefore essential not only for compliance but also for credibility, sustainability and trust.

Strategic Actions for 2026

In 2026, EdShift will continue to strengthen the governance systems that support its work.

1. Strengthening Board Oversight

The Board of Trustees will continue to provide strategic challenge and support, ensuring alignment with the organisation's charitable purpose and monitoring progress against strategic priorities.

2. Reviewing Performance, Sustainability and Risk

Trustees will maintain oversight of organisational performance, financial sustainability and risk management, ensuring the organisation's long-term stability.

3. Enhancing Reporting and Accountability

EdShift will further strengthen transparency through clear reporting processes that allow funders, partners and stakeholders to understand the impact and outcomes of its work.

4. Benchmarking Against Governance Standards

The organisation will continue to assess its governance practices against recognised frameworks, including the Charity Governance Code, ensuring strong leadership, effective decision-making and a culture of integrity.

Measurable Outcomes for 2026

EdShift aims to achieve:

- ⇒ strengthened governance oversight aligned with Charity Commission expectations
- ⇒ effective Board monitoring of strategy delivery and organisational performance
- ⇒ improved transparency and accountability through strengthened reporting
- ⇒ continued development of governance structures to support organisational growth
- ⇒ increased organisational credibility with commissioners, partners and funders

Strategic Outcome

Strong governance provides the foundation for responsible growth and ensures that EdShift maintains the trust of children, families, partners and the wider community.

By strengthening oversight, accountability and transparency, EdShift will remain focused on its purpose while continuing to develop as a sustainable, credible and resilient charitable organisation.

Effective governance underpins EdShift's ability to deliver its central strategic priority: reaching more children and young people affected by domestic abuse safely, sustainably and with measurable impact.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organisational Structure

As EdShift continues to grow, the organisation is developing a leadership and operational structure that supports safe expansion, strong safeguarding oversight and sustainable delivery. Historically, many operational responsibilities have sat within the CEO role. As the organisation matures, these responsibilities will be distributed across specialist leadership roles to ensure that governance, clinical practice and frontline delivery are appropriately supported.

The organisational structure below reflects the intended operating model as EdShift works toward its strategic ambition of reaching more children affected by domestic abuse.

This structure strengthens the organisation by:

- ⇒ distributing leadership responsibility across operational and therapeutic domains
- ⇒ strengthening safeguarding and clinical governance
- ⇒ supporting increased frontline delivery capacity
- ⇒ improving referral management and data oversight
- ⇒ strengthening fundraising and volunteer infrastructure

The model enables EdShift to expand delivery safely while maintaining the high standards of trauma-informed practice that underpin its work.

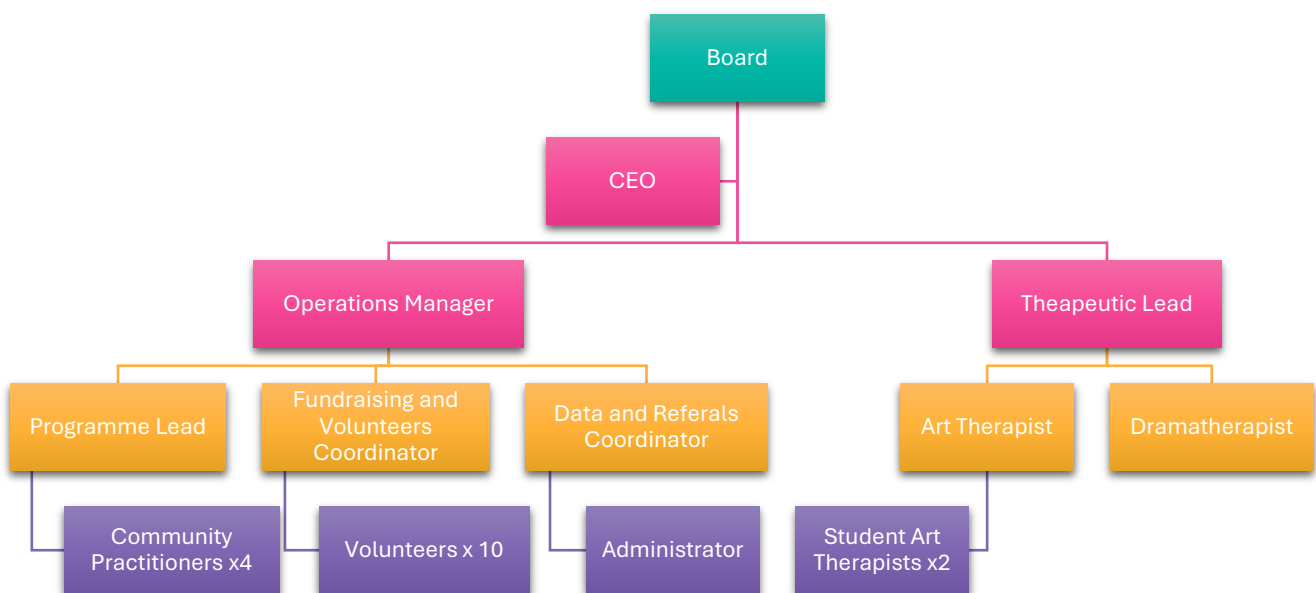


Figure: EdShift Organisational Structure (Strategic Growth Model)

Delivering the Strategy

EdShift's strategy will be delivered through a phased approach across 2026. Each quarter focuses on strengthening organisational foundations, increasing delivery capacity and positioning the organisation for long-term sustainability.

This phased approach ensures that growth is structured, accountable and aligned with the organisation's central priority: reaching more children and young people affected by domestic abuse safely, sustainably and with measurable impact.

Quarter One: Foundations and Organisational Alignment

(January – March 2026)

Quarter One focuses on building the foundations required to support increased delivery. During this period, EdShift will strengthen leadership infrastructure, refine operational systems and prepare the workforce for the capacity increase planned for April.

Key priorities include:

- ⇒ progressing strategic funding applications to support organisational infrastructure
- ⇒ strengthening operational systems that support referral management and scheduling
- ⇒ clarifying workforce expectations and delivery capacity across frontline roles
- ⇒ embedding safeguarding oversight and structured case management processes
- ⇒ expanding administrative and volunteer support to reduce operational pressure on specialist staff

By the end of Quarter One, the organisation will be ready to implement a structured increase in frontline delivery.

Quarter Two: Implementation and Capacity Growth

(April – June 2026)

Quarter Two marks the transition from preparation to implementation.

During this period EdShift will begin to increase frontline delivery capacity and implement the workforce structures required to reduce waiting times for children and young people seeking support.

Key priorities include:

- ⇒ implementing the minimum frontline delivery baseline across practitioner roles
- ⇒ expanding delivery capacity through workforce development and recruitment where funding allows
- ⇒ strengthening referral pathways and programme coordination

- ⇒ progressing strategic partnerships that strengthen therapeutic capacity and regional collaboration
- ⇒ expanding fundraising and earned income activity to support long-term sustainability

Quarter Two will also strengthen EdShift's external positioning through increased engagement with partners across safeguarding, health and community systems.

Quarter Three: Growth, Visibility and Partnership Development

(July – September 2026)

Quarter Three focuses on consolidating delivery improvements while increasing the organisation's external visibility and strategic influence.

During this period EdShift will:

- ⇒ review referral pathways and undertake a structured review of the waiting list
- ⇒ strengthen community engagement and partnership activity across West Yorkshire
- ⇒ expand training delivery and professional development opportunities for partner organisations
- ⇒ increase community awareness and engagement through public events and fundraising initiatives

This period will also provide opportunities to strengthen relationships with commissioners and partners by sharing evidence of delivery improvements and organisational progress.

Quarter Four: Impact, Sustainability and Strategic Planning

(October – December 2026)

Quarter Four focuses on consolidating the progress made throughout the year and preparing the organisation for the next phase of development.

Key priorities include:

- ⇒ evaluating progress toward the organisational target of reducing waiting times for children seeking support
- ⇒ reviewing delivery capacity and workforce structures
- ⇒ strengthening financial sustainability through diversified income generation
- ⇒ sharing evidence of impact with partners, funders and stakeholders
- ⇒ reviewing governance and organisational systems in line with Charity Commission expectations

This period will also inform the development of EdShift's strategic priorities for 2027.

Strategic Outcome

By the end of 2026, EdShift aims to demonstrate measurable progress toward its central strategic priority:

- ⇒ increased access to specialist support for children affected by domestic abuse
- ⇒ reduced waiting times for children and young people seeking support
- ⇒ strengthened partnerships across safeguarding, health and community systems
- ⇒ improved financial sustainability and organisational infrastructure
- ⇒ continued delivery of high-quality trauma-informed practice

Through this structured approach, EdShift will continue to build the capacity, credibility and partnerships required to support children affected by domestic abuse across the region.

Monitoring, Measurement & Accountability

A strategy is only meaningful if progress can be clearly measured.

Throughout 2026, EdShift will monitor the implementation of this strategy through structured governance, operational oversight and transparent reporting. Progress will be reviewed regularly to ensure that the organisation remains focused on its central strategic priority: reaching more children and young people affected by domestic abuse safely, sustainably and with measurable impact.

2026 Organisational Targets

Success in 2026 will be measured through progress across three key areas: impact, financial sustainability and organisational maturity.

Impact & Delivery

- ⇒ Reduce the waiting list for children and young people seeking support by 50% by the end of 2026.
- ⇒ Increase frontline delivery capacity while maintaining high standards of safeguarding and trauma-informed practice.
- ⇒ Embed consistent safeguarding oversight and structured case management across all programmes.

Financial Sustainability

- ⇒ Progress toward a £500,000 income position through diversified funding streams.
- ⇒ Secure investment in key infrastructure roles, including an Operations Manager and Therapeutic Lead (subject to funding outcomes).
- ⇒ Increase fundraising and training-generated income to strengthen long-term sustainability.

Organisational Development

- ⇒ Strengthen distributed leadership across operational and clinical functions.
- ⇒ Maintain governance standards aligned with the Charity Governance Code.
- ⇒ Expand volunteer capacity to support the organisation's community-based work.
- ⇒ Strengthen stakeholder engagement through transparent reporting and shared learning.

These targets are interdependent. Strengthened infrastructure supports delivery. Increased delivery reduces waiting times. Strong governance ensures that growth remains safe, ethical and sustainable.

Governance and Accountability

Clear governance is essential to delivering the strategy.

The Board of Trustees will provide strategic oversight, financial stewardship and risk assurance, ensuring that the organisation remains aligned with its charitable purpose and regulatory responsibilities.

The Chief Executive Officer holds overall responsibility for strategy implementation, partnership development and organisational leadership.

Operational and clinical leadership roles will support delivery, safeguarding oversight and workforce development as the organisation grows.

Together, these roles ensure that accountability for strategy delivery is distributed across leadership, governance and frontline teams.

Review and Reporting

Progress against the strategy will be monitored through a structured review cycle throughout 2026.

This includes:

- ⇒ regular monitoring of delivery capacity and waiting list movement
- ⇒ financial oversight and income tracking
- ⇒ safeguarding and case management review
- ⇒ periodic governance and risk assessment
- ⇒ stakeholder feedback and impact reporting

This structured review process ensures that the strategy remains active and responsive rather than static.

Measurement is not punitive. It is protective. It ensures that the organisation remains accountable to the children, families and communities it serves.

CONCLUSION

Strategic Commitment

EdShift exists for one reason: to support children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Every element of this strategy returns to that purpose.

2026 is not a year of expansion for its own sake.

It is a year of alignment, discipline and structural strengthening—a year of building the capacity required to reach more children safely and sustainably.

By the end of 2026, EdShift aims to be:

- ⇒ stronger in its governance
- ⇒ clearer in its operational structure
- ⇒ more sustainable in its funding
- ⇒ more visible within the systems supporting children affected by domestic abuse

Most importantly, EdShift aims to ensure that more children and young people can access the support they need, when they need it.

EVERY CHILD SEEN.

EVERY CHILD HEARD.

This is our commitment.