

Spectra Strategic Plan

2026 - 2029

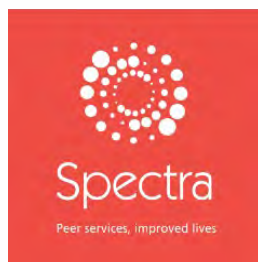


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STRATEGY SUMMARY

Vision

Spectra envision a world where LGBTQ+ people and people from other marginalised communities facing health inequalities, discrimination, and systemic barriers can make informed choices about their health and wellbeing. We strive for a future where everyone can access effective, inclusive support and feel supported in making choices that reflect their needs and identities.

Mission

Spectra is a sexual health, HIV and wellbeing organisation rooted in the LGBTQ+ community with a broader commitment to supporting other marginalised communities. We deliver inclusive, supportive, and accessible services led by and centred on people with lived experience. We support LGBTQ+ communities, trans and non-binary people, sex workers, people living with HIV, asylum seekers, people of colour, young people, and others facing systemic barriers. We challenge structural harms, reduce stigma, and build community through accessible, anti-oppressive approaches.

Values

Our values shape how we work, interact with one another, and support the communities we serve. They are grounded in lived experience and reflect our commitment to equity, care, and collaboration.

We aim to be:

- Inclusive
- Supportive and emotionally aware
- Accessible
- Anti-oppressive
- Lived experience-centred
- Community-driven

Our Activities

We deliver sexual health, HIV and mental wellbeing services to people from LGBTQ+ communities, those from other marginalised communities and those most in need.

Through peer support, counselling, education, mentoring, advocacy, advice, peer-led group work, outreach, and HIV and STI testing, we aim to help people make choices that leave them feeling supported, positive, and more empowered to reach their full potential.

We build coalitions with other agencies and partnerships to better deliver sexual health, mental wellbeing and advice and advocacy services that meet the needs of marginalised communities.

We are developing our contributions to coalition building, policy development, research, and lobbying to ensure better outcomes for communities.

We incubate and foster innovative approaches to meeting community needs. We often develop small projects that then evolve into larger projects with greater reach.

Needs and wider context

In London, where our work is predominantly focused, we work in boroughs that have higher rates of STIs and HIV than in many places in England.

Our mental and psychological wellbeing services work with people from marginalised backgrounds and in a range of London boroughs. For example, our trans empowerment services give advocacy support, social group and mentor support, and counselling to trans and non-binary communities across London.

Our services work with people from marginalised communities such as trans and non-binary people, sex workers, the broader LGBTQ+ population, asylum seekers and refugees, Black and Global Majority communities, people experiencing homelessness, people with addiction to drugs and alcohol, and people who are neurodivergent, as well as people with learning and physical disabilities.

Our approach is to take our services to where people live, work and socialise. Often, we place our groups, outreach services, and one-to-one services in local communities, in non-clinical settings, and where we reach people, rather than expecting them to come to us.

Our Strategic goals and priorities

1. Deliver and develop high-quality health and well-being support services for marginalised communities
2. Further our brand to become a recognisable health and wellbeing organisation, delivering to communities in need in London
3. We aim to create a sustainable future by diversifying our funding sources, including a substantial increase in individual and corporate donors
4. Resource and stabilise our office functions to support frontline service delivery

Insight, impact and improvement

Spectra is committed to embedding a culture of learning and accountability through robust data practices and evidence-informed decision-making. Evidence will be used to shape service design, influence policy, and strengthen our funding bids.

We will strengthen our monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to ensure our services are impactful, transparent, and responsive to the communities we serve.

We recognise that data is not neutral. Our approach will centre ethics, equity, and lived experience—prioritising participatory methods, co-produced evaluation, and qualitative insights alongside quantitative metrics.

We will also build partnerships with academic institutions, community researchers, and peer-led networks to deepen our understanding of emerging needs and amplify the impact of our work.





Welcome from the CEO

When I joined Spectra as the new CEO in November 2024, I was inspired by the organisation's deep commitment to equity, lived experience, and community-led support.

Like all organisations, though, we had adapted our support to a new world after the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our support services now offer new options for online delivery, and these changes continue to shape our offerings. Over the past year, we've built on this foundation to shape a bold and ambitious strategic plan for 2026–2029.

Spectra has also undergone a period of rapid growth. In the space of less than ten years, our turnover has doubled, and our staff team has grown. This year alone, we have increased our staff from 37 to 50.

Spectra centres its model of support on lived experience, where people affected by a particular experience or identity provide support to others with the same characteristics or experiences. The result of this model is moving, rewarding, energising and healing. Succeeding requires fostering a culture and environment where those delivering our services feel they have a basis of trust, support, and understanding for those in leadership and support office roles. We are working hard to provide this stability and resource in our support-office functions, and this is part of our strategic goals for the future.

The social and economic environment that Spectra works within is increasingly polarised, and there is still much to be done – improving sex education in schools, combating HIV stigma, advocating for sex workers' rights, helping asylum seekers so that their basic human needs can be met, challenging racism which still runs deeply within our communities and our systems, and challenging the toxic transphobia emanating from parts of the media, some public figures and key political leaders.

This plan outlines our vision for the future: to deliver high-quality, inclusive health and wellbeing support to marginalised communities across London. It reflects our commitment to innovation, sustainability, and impact. We are expanding our reach, strengthening our brand, and diversifying our funding to ensure long-term resilience.

Spectra's future is bright. We are proud of how far we've come and excited about what lies ahead. Together, we will continue to challenge inequality, build community, and create lasting change.

Joel Robinson, CEO

History

1996

West London Gay Men's Project

Spectra was first established in 1996 as the West London Gay Men's Project, a community-based initiative focused on HIV prevention and research among gay men and men who have sex with men. In 2012, Spectra transitioned from the jurisdiction of the London Borough of Hounslow to become an independent Community Interest Company. In 2015, it changed its name from West London Gay Men's Project CIC to Spectra CIC. In 2017, it expanded its services by launching a charitable arm dedicated to supporting grassroots organisations.

From the late 1990s through 2019, Spectra concentrated on sexual health, HIV prevention, and mental health support for marginalised groups. Starting in 2019, it introduced peer-led trans community programmes offering support, mentoring, social activities, and advocacy. In 2021, Spectra collaborated with other organisations to establish the Trans Learning Partnership, a research project that involves and serves trans communities.

2015
Spectra CIC

2010s +
Expansion & diversification

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Spectra, similar to many agencies, transitioned its services online and introduced new methods for reaching participants. This included offering online counselling, peer support, group work, and advice services. As a result, Spectra was able to reach more individuals, including those who may not typically access in-person support.

Continuing to broaden its mission, Spectra started supporting sex worker communities in 2022, offering advice, outreach, STI testing, and advocacy. Soon after, it helped launch a coalition-building programme to ensure sex workers' voices resonated across London.

Spectra utilises an approach based on lived experience, incorporating individuals with relevant backgrounds into service delivery and programme planning. Over time, Spectra expanded its scope to engage more diverse communities.

The story continued in 2024, as founder Karen Skipper stepped down and a new CEO took the lead. In 2025, Spectra relocated to South London, remaining devoted to serving diverse communities throughout the city.

Today
Continue growing

Aims, Vision, Values

Vision



Spectra envision a world where LGBTQ+ people and people from other marginalised communities facing health inequalities, discrimination, and systemic barriers can make informed choices about their health and wellbeing. We strive for a future where everyone can access effective, inclusive support and feel supported in making choices that reflect their needs and identities.

Spectra is a sexual health, HIV and wellbeing organisation rooted in the LGBTQ+ community with a broader commitment to supporting other marginalised communities. We deliver inclusive, supportive, and accessible services led by and centred on people with lived experience. We support LGBTQ+ communities, trans and non-binary people, sex workers, people living with HIV, asylum seekers, people of colour, young people, and others facing systemic barriers. We challenge structural harms, reduce stigma, and build community through accessible, anti-oppressive approaches.

Mission



Values



Our values shape how we work, interact with one another, and support the communities we serve. They are grounded in lived experience and reflect our commitment to equity, care, and collaboration.

We aim to be:

Inclusive

We welcome and support people of all identities, backgrounds, and cultures—especially those facing systemic barriers. We recognise how culture shapes experience and access, and we adapt our work with humility and respect.

Supportive and emotionally aware

We recognise how life experiences affect people's needs and responses. We create spaces that foster trust and emotional safety—supporting healing, growth, and empowerment.



Accessible

We design services that meet people where they are, removing barriers to care, information, and connection.

Anti-oppressive

We actively challenge discrimination, stigma, and structural harms in all areas of our work.

***Lived experience-centred**

We centre the knowledge and leadership of people with lived experience in service design, delivery, and decision-making.

Community-driven

We build relationships, foster solidarity, and support people in connecting, organising, and advocating for change.

***What we mean by lived experience:**

People with lived experience bring direct insight into the issues our services address—whether that's being LGBTQ+, living with HIV, navigating mental health, or facing systemic oppression. Their knowledge shapes how we design, deliver, and lead our work.

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- We deliver sexual health, HIV and mental wellbeing services to people from LGBTQ+ communities, those from other marginalised communities and those most in need.
 - Through peer support, counselling, education, mentoring, advocacy, advice, peer-led group work, outreach, and HIV and STI testing, we aim to help people make choices that leave them feeling supported, positive, and more empowered to reach their full potential.
 - We build coalitions with other agencies and partnerships to better deliver sexual health, mental wellbeing and advice and advocacy services that meet the needs of marginalised communities.
 - We are developing our contributions to coalition building, policy development, research, and lobbying to ensure better outcomes for communities.
 - We incubate and foster innovative approaches to meeting community needs. We often develop small projects that then evolve into larger projects with greater reach.

Needs and wider context

- In London, where our work is predominantly focused, we work in boroughs that have higher rates of STIs and HIV than in many places in England.
- Our mental and psychological wellbeing services work with people from marginalised backgrounds and in a range of London boroughs. For example, our trans empowerment services give advocacy support, social group and mentor support, and counselling to trans and non-binary communities across London.
- Our services work with people from marginalised communities such as trans and non-binary people, sex workers, the broader LGBTQ+ population, asylum seekers and refugees, Black and Global Majority communities, people experiencing homelessness, people with addiction to drugs and alcohol, and people who are neurodivergent, as well as people with learning and physical disabilities.
- Our approach is to take our services to where people live, work and socialise. Often, we place our groups, outreach services, and one-to-one services in local communities, in non-clinical settings, and where we reach people, rather than expecting them to come to us.

Our Activities

Our strategic goals and priorities

Deliver and develop high-quality health and well-being support services for marginalised communities

Spectra deliver services in various ways, aiming to reach and connect with multiple communities in need and to work alongside individuals with intersectional identities.

Spectra deliver:

- sexual health and HIV prevention education and outreach support, HIV and STI testing
- counselling, peer support and mentoring
- advice and advocacy
- peer-led groupwork and social group support
- research projects

We work with a wide range of marginalised communities including:

- Sex workers
- LGBTQ+ communities
- Homeless people
- young people
- people of colour

We aim to continue delivering our innovative, peer-led, and outcomes-based services and to empower people in need of our services.

We build coalitions and partnerships with other agencies, as we can deliver more effective services with a greater reach. We also develop coalition-building activities to support the development or growth of sectors, such as the sex worker community sector.



Further our brand to become a recognisable health and wellbeing organisation, delivering to communities in need in London

Our reach is far and wide, but we are not necessarily well-known, particularly outside the community networks we work within. We aim to become more recognisable both to the public and to potential new stakeholders and service users.

Our services are often delivered online, whether that is a counselling session, group work or peer-led mentoring. We are aware that many of our service users prefer to access services online rather than face-to-face. We advertise our services online and develop, influence, and communicate about our activities through online channels.

We have noticed and analysed that our website needs further development to ensure our offer is clear and inviting. We also want to utilise our website and other digital platforms (such as social media) to ensure that we can reach a wide range of stakeholders and raise our profile. We aim to increase traffic to our website and have it set up to reach a diverse range of stakeholders, including service users, professionals, funders, partner organisations, and donors.

In early 2026, we will launch a new website. We aim to focus on attracting new service users, as well as new individual donors who may not have been previously aware of our work.

We will continue to work on our digital strategy and support diversification of our fundraising efforts. We anticipate that this work will continue to evolve and progress throughout the life cycle of our strategic plan.

By the end of 2028, we aim to position Spectra as a well-known health and well-being organisation in London, attracting reputation, increased media and PR opportunities, and raising our profile so that new service users and donors are reached.



We aim to create a sustainable future by diversifying our funding sources, including a substantial increase in individual and corporate donors

We aim to have a more sustainable organisation by diversifying our income. The background to this is that we are an organisation heavily reliant on trusts and foundations funding, as well as statutory contracts, for our income. Approximately 99% of our income is derived from this type of grant or contract.

We would like to continue our funding from trusts and foundations, as well as statutory contracts, over the next three years. To ensure the sustainability of projects, we will focus on securing income from larger trusts and foundations over longer time periods. Spectra have historically been good at this: for example, our current active grants are mainly multi-year.

However, we aim to shift the balance of our funding from 99% of income derived from these sources to 95% over the three-year period, with an increase in funding that comes from unrestricted sources making up 5% of our income.

This will mean gaining more income from sources such as individual giving, events and corporate giving. We will also explore other, more entrepreneurial ways of generating income, such as through the development of products and services.

In 2026, we will focus on building a new donor base of individual donors, including organising new donor events and celebrating our 30th anniversary year. We will invest in a donor management system and focus on relationship building with new donors, including major donors.

In 2027, we will continue to build our relationships with donors while also exploring legacy giving and corporate partnerships.

In 2028, we will develop two major corporate partnerships and invest in these as longer-term relationships.

We also aim to develop our entrepreneurial skills and review whether some of our services could offer donation-based, low-cost options. This would enable those who can donate to us in receipt of a service to do so in an integrated way (for example, by paying a small donation for counselling or group work support). This is particularly necessary because the demand for our services, which are free at the point of access, exceeds our ability to meet it. Hence, we have waiting lists of people who, if we were able to raise more money through donations, could be provided with a service more easily.



Resource and stabilise our office functions to support frontline service delivery

Spectra has grown quickly from a small organisation to a medium-sized organisation. In 2024/2025, we initiated a project to identify and engage with funders who have the resources to cover our core costs, aiming to improve our income and support our office functions. We have been successful in securing these trust and foundation awards, and now we need to continue developing our office support functions to ensure they are robust enough to support the frontline services.

There is a balance between securing funding for new and innovative projects and services, and ensuring we have a financially sustainable and stable future. Our plans for raising more unrestricted funds will ensure we can focus on the following priorities for our office support functions:

We aim to put resources into developing the following areas:

- People and culture development and management, including recruiting a permanent manager for this function
- A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategy, including training and development for our staff around anti-oppressive approaches, targeting key areas such as anti-racism and neurodiversity.
- Management and leadership training and development
- Improving recruitment and retention processes, and training
- Reviewing and renewing our people and culture policies, including our remuneration policies and practices.
- Improving our financial information management and improving financial literacy amongst managers and staff
- Developing relationships and communication between staff at all levels of the organisation, so that we can collectively address common issues. We believe that together we can find more creative solutions.
- Develop staff health and wellbeing through a range of developments around better pay, terms and conditions, employee assistance programmes and training and development.
- Better and clearer File management, IT systems, and processes, including databases and the way we store data.
- Creating an office environment that is collaborative, social and easy to access and use.
- Ensuring we develop our brand and recognisability, and that there are more opportunities to support us and diversify our income, so that we have more unrestricted funds and can support our core functions.

Spectra is committed to embedding a culture of learning and accountability through robust data practices and evidence-informed decision-making.

We will strengthen our monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to ensure our services are impactful, transparent, and responsive to the communities we serve.

This includes developing clear indicators of success, enhancing data collection tools, and supporting staff in using data meaningfully in their day-to-day work.

We will invest in systems and training that enable teams to analyse and act on data in real time, fostering continuous improvement and shared learning across departments.

We recognise that data is not neutral. Our approach will centre ethics, equity, and lived experience—prioritising participatory methods, co-produced evaluation, and qualitative insights alongside quantitative metrics.

Evidence will be used to shape service design, influence policy, and strengthen our funding bids.

We will also build partnerships with academic institutions, community researchers, and peer-led networks to deepen our understanding of emerging needs and amplify the impact of our work.

Insight, Impact and Improvement

