



Closing the Gap Strategy

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Anna Freud
building the mental
wellbeing of the
next generation

Our mission

Our mission is to close the gap in mental health and wellbeing by advancing, translating, delivering and sharing the best science and practice with **everyone who impacts on the lives of children, young people and families.**



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The need

The UK has a mental health divide. Prior to the pandemic, in England alone, over 1.5 million children and young people needed support, but only a fifth were receiving it. Referrals to children and young people's mental health services have doubled since 2019 and services are struggling to keep pace.

1 in 6 young people in England (aged 5 to 16) experienced a mental health problem in 2020, up from 1 in 9 in 2017. (NHS Digital, 2020). The 2022 NHS Digital report showed that among 17 to 19 year olds, the proportion with a probable mental disorder increased from 17.4% in 2021 to 25.7% in 2022.

We are committed to doing our part to address this inequitable access to the right support at the right time and changing this story for both current and future generations.



Our strategy: closing the gap

There is an urgent need to close the gap so that the children, young people and families in the UK that need mental health support can receive it.

The three key gaps we have identified are:



Closing gaps in science

Understanding and tackling the root causes of mental illness. Listening to lived experience and widening public participation in research to help achieve scientific breakthroughs.



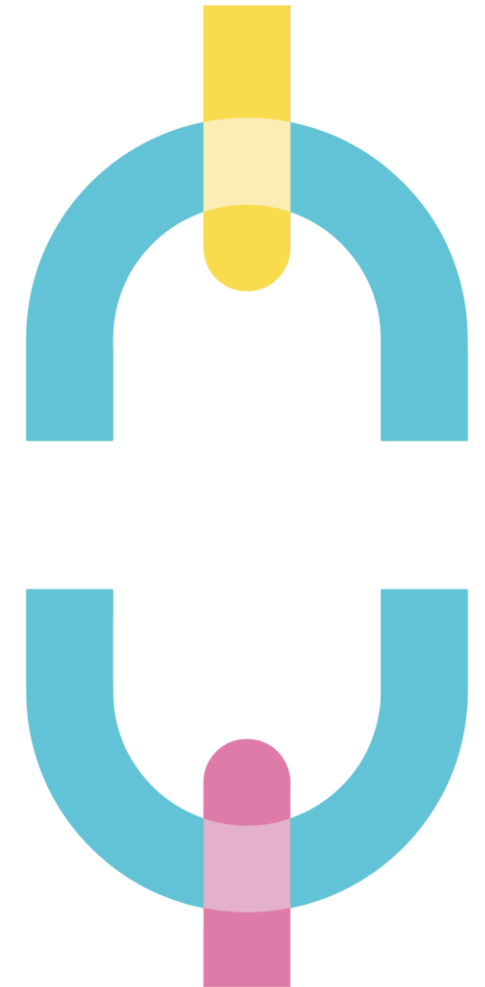
Closing gaps in implementation

Designing, testing and expanding new approaches, interventions and models to improve the effectiveness of how help is experienced by children, families and communities regardless of their social, ethnic or economic background or geographical location.



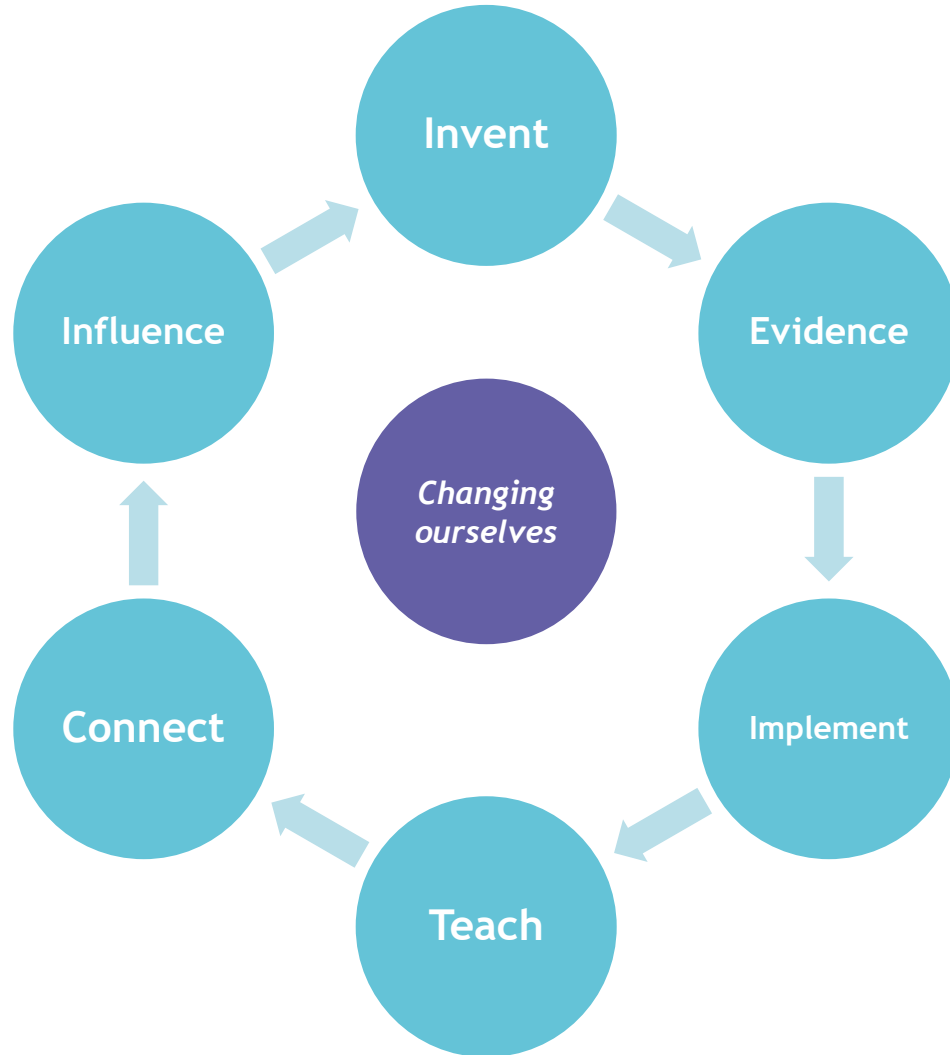
Closing gaps in access to knowledge

Disseminating knowledge about what works, building tools, providing training and hosting peer support networks for parents, carers, professionals and policy makers. Growing the confidence, skills and understanding of everyone who has an impact on the lives of children and families.



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Our strategic goals 2022-26



Each goal has a programme of transformation which will contribute to closing the gaps in the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

Our seventh goal is about transforming our organisation and the way we work to enable us to achieve our strategic goals, from our digital infrastructure to our commitments to EDI and looking after our people.



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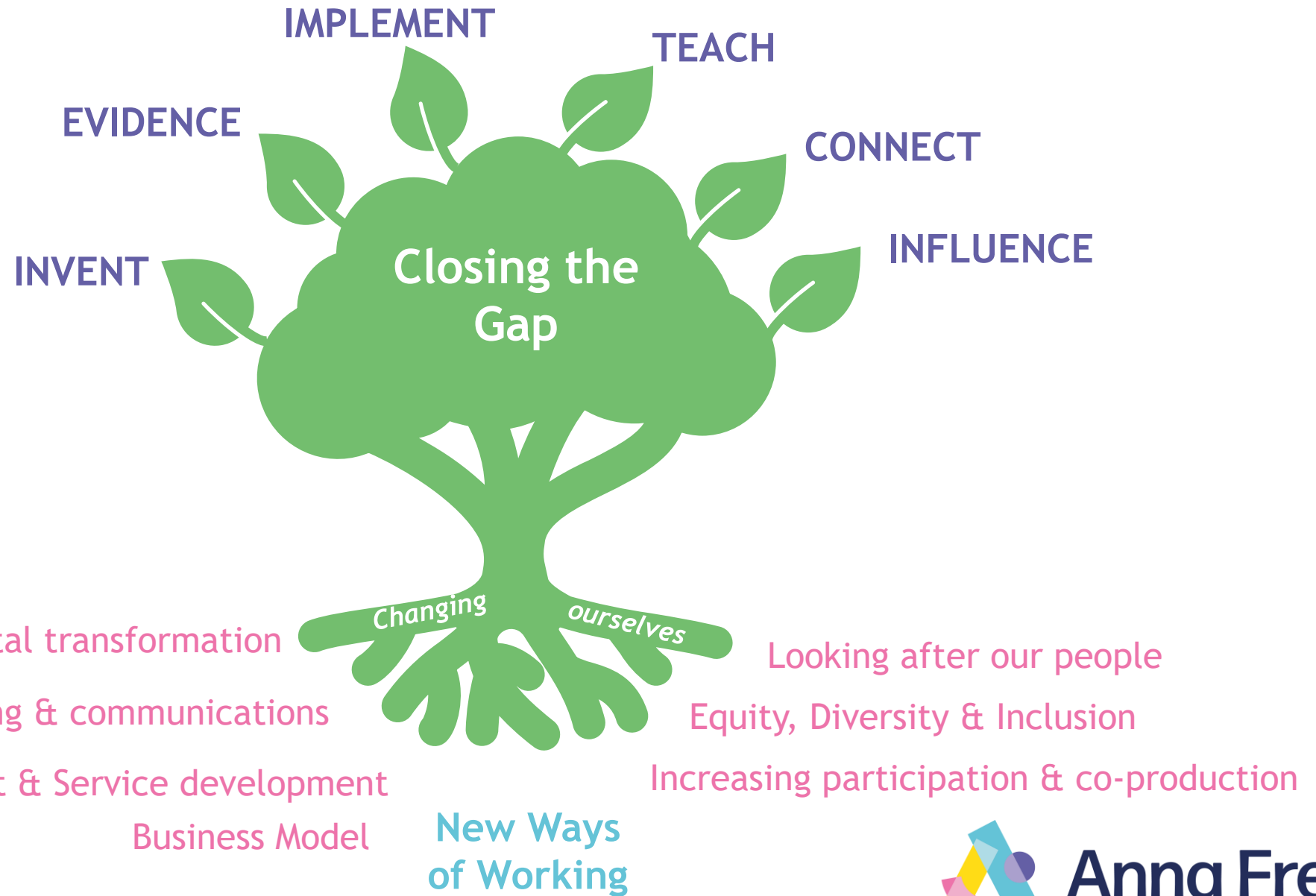
Our strategic goals explained

- **Invent:** co-developing scientific breakthroughs and new models of practice using the exciting and emerging evidence base.
- **Evidence:** advancing the understanding of mental health and wellbeing in children and young people; evaluating what works for who, why and in which contexts.
- **Implement:** helping implement more effective systems of support to improve prevention, early intervention, and to deliver services within system partnerships.
- **Teach:** empowering all adults engaged in the care of children and young people and supporting development of the next generation of practitioners and researchers.
- **Connect:** fostering relationships within and between professionals and communities to share lived experience and knowledge, provide peer-to-peer support and sustain impact.
- **Influence:** speaking out and influencing those in power by curating and disseminating the best research and evidence, delivering training, advising policymakers and individually supporting system leaders.



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The relationship between changing ourselves and our strategic goals



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Examples of how we are closing the gaps



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Invent: My Story and Me

A storytelling intervention for young women and girls to help them to understand and talk about their mental health, based on their experiences and the principle of mentalizing. Participants, including professionals, described the project as ‘unique’, ‘much needed’, and ‘adding value to existing interventions.’

Using evidence to transform communities

Co-created with young people from its founding region, Greater Manchester, #BeeWell annually measures the wellbeing of young people, combining academic expertise with support from the education, voluntary and business sectors in order to **make the wellbeing of young people everybody’s business**. #BeeWell is the biggest project of its kind in the UK, putting children’s wellbeing at the heart of education and the community.



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Implement: Let's talk about anxiety

'Let's talk about anxiety' is an animation and accompanying teacher toolkit that was co-created with young people. Aimed at students in the early years of secondary school, it offers top tips on how to manage feelings of anxiety when they arise and helps to explain that anxiety is a normal emotion. It gives them the tools to manage feelings of anxiety, and to tell the difference between normal emotions and more severe anxiety which is interfering with their everyday life.



Teach: Systems change in Schools through Senior Mental Health Lead Training

This accredited training empowers education staff with the practical skills to identify and support students' mental health needs. The aim is to give SMHLs the understanding and skills to develop and embed a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing and create lasting, sustainable, long-term change in schools and colleges.



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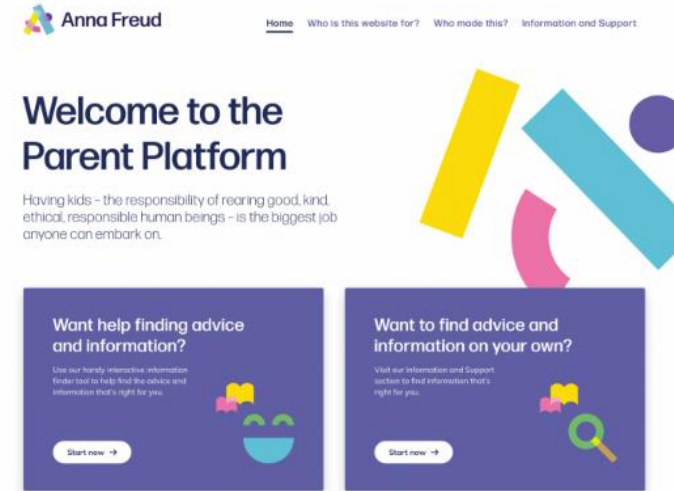
Forming **connection** for parents and carers through peer support

We are developing a parent platform co-designed with our Parent Champions, to provide a digital space where parents and carers can learn from each other, share experiences and build a supportive network. The parent platform aims to **shift power from the hands of experts into the hands of experts by experience.**



Building **influence** at Westminster

We are building our influence with those who write policy and have the power to transform services that affect children and young people's lives. We have established the first pan-governmental working group bringing over 60 senior civil servants from 12 government departments together. One of our most significant achievements to date, was securing an increase in investment in family hubs in the spending review.



Changing ourselves



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Enabling Conditions

Brand & Marketing

Creating a clear and recognisable identity that expresses our vision, mission and values and supports our ambitions to build our profile and grow our reach, engagement, influence and income.

Business Model

Developing income-generating activities that will support core functions and ensure effective cost recovery to realise our strategic goals. This will help us to generate profit for purpose, so we can invest in our strategic goals and future-proof our offer for children, young people and families.

Product & Service Development

Supporting the innovation of new ways to help children, young people and families from experimental, discovery phases to scalable products. Driven by a user centred approach.



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Digital Transformation: Our vision



HELP

Digitally powered services, tools and datasets to support innovative frontline prevention and intervention. Providing digital systems to support direct help (e.g. clinical work).



LIVE

Hosting all our digital materials in one accessible place, including video and podcasts. Providing new ways to drive public engagement, awareness and education to support child and family mental health.



ACADEMY

Digitising our training offering to professionals and for postgraduate students. Offering an expanded range of blended mental health training and education .



COMMUNITY

Supporting peer to peer exchange through scalable solutions that enable the sharing of experience, knowledge and models.



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Digital Transformation: Our platforms

Our digital vision will be underpinned by cross-cutting platforms including: our new Relationships Platform, Learning Platform and Content Platform.

Relationships Platform

To manage interactions with the people we serve and our wider stakeholders, helping us to streamline our processes to increase reach and improve our relationships with service users and stakeholders by engaging with them in more personal and relevant ways.

Learning Platform

To provide an easy-to-use, accessible, social and mobile learning experience to deliver training and education online.

Content Platform

To manage the multi-media content on our websites, platforms and social media. It will better support us to fulfil our strategy and grow our reach with new and existing audiences.



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Enabling Conditions continued

EDI

Our EDI strategy seeks to shape us into an organisation enriched by diversity and therefore better placed to meet the needs of the children, young people and families we serve. The strategy has four core objectives: Representation, inclusion and belonging, continuous learning and community wellbeing.

Participation

We will empower children, young people and families to collaboratively improve the services and projects that we offer throughout the whole organisation, by increasing opportunities for participation and co-production. We are adopting the Lundy Model of participation, a rights-respecting approach.

People

We want Anna Freud to be a great place to work, where every contribution is appreciated and acknowledged. This means enhancing our learning and development offer, prioritising staff wellbeing and developing our internal comms to promote staff involvement and participation in decision making.



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