



# THINKFORWARD

## LIVING OUR VALUES



**Think  
Forward**

Coaching  
Connecting  
Inspiring  
Young People

# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the ThinkForward Values Handbook – a guide to living and embodying the values that define our organisation. Our values were developed through a collaborative process, reflecting the collective voice and heart of our team.

This handbook is designed to inspire and guide you in your daily interactions and decisions. By embracing these values, you help cultivate an environment where everyone can thrive, and where our shared goals become a reality.

## How we devised our new values

Our previous set of values was devised in 2018 under the stewardship of an Executive Team that have since moved on from ThinkForward, and at a time where only 25% of our existing staff were in post.

Significant change emanated from the pandemic period and we saw a peak in staff turnover in the following months, resulting in nearly half of our staff having under 2 years' service by Spring 2023. As turnover settled, an opportunity arose to engage and unite our teams in our organisational life and culture through a collaborative review and refresh of our organisational values, with the shared aim of cultivating a sense of belonging and connection within ThinkForward.

With an emphasis on making sure every voice was heard, our team have facilitated a series of workshops over the past 18 months. Through focussing on what is important to our collective self, we have articulated a comprehensive definition of our values, with a set of guiding principles and indicators that embody our commitment to fostering meaningful connections and relationships within our organisation and with young people and partners.



Authentic



Collaborative



Compassionate



Inclusive



Innovative

Our values are more than words; they are the principles that guide our actions and decisions every day. By embodying these values, we create a positive and empowering environment for ourselves, our colleagues, and the young people we serve.

Accountability is a principle that unifies and strengthens each of our values. It is our commitment to take responsibility for our actions, support each other's growth and work with integrity. By holding ourselves accountable, we ensure that our values are not just ideals but are practiced and upheld in all we do.

Together, we can achieve our common goals, support each other's growth, and make a lasting impact. Let this handbook guide your work at ThinkForward, remembering that every action you take and idea you bring forward is an opportunity to live our values and contribute to the collective success of our mission.

Thank you for being a part of ThinkForward. Let's continue to build a future that is authentic, collaborative, compassionate, inclusive, and innovative together.



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# 1) AUTHENTIC

## **Principle:**

Our work is driven by a deep belief in its impact, supported by a strong evidence base and centred on the voices of young people. We value autonomy and agency for all, committing to show up authentically for ourselves and each other.

We are committed to living up to our values and promises. By being transparent in our decisions and taking ownership of our actions, we maintain trust and respect among our team and the young people we serve.

## **Behaviours:**

- Be honest, open, and transparent: Our work is rooted in integrity. By being genuine and truthful, we build trust and create strong, meaningful relationships.
- Be inquisitive: Curiosity drives us forward. We ask questions and seek to understand, knowing that this exploration leads to deeper insights and better outcomes.
- Create safe spaces for people to show up as their authentic selves and share their voices: We value every individual's unique perspective and encourage everyone to express themselves freely.
- Celebrate and uplift others: We recognise and honour the achievements and strengths of those around us, fostering a supportive and positive community.
- Operate with self-awareness: Understanding our own strengths and areas for growth allows us to engage authentically and contribute effectively.



## 2) COLLABORATIVE

### **Principle:**

We are united by a common goal, fostering a culture of trust, respect, and open communication in all our relationships. Guided by the voices of young people, we support and learn from one another, embracing opportunities for crucial conversations in our decision-making.

In a collaborative environment, we rely on each other to deliver on our commitments and contribute meaningfully. By taking responsibility for our roles and actively supporting one another, we create a culture where accountability strengthens teamwork and mutual trust.

### **Behaviours:**

- **Ask questions:** Open dialogue is key to collaboration. We seek clarity and understanding by asking thoughtful questions.
- **Give constructive feedback:** We offer and receive feedback with the intention of fostering growth and improvement.
- **Be open to new ways of doing things:** Flexibility and adaptability are central to our approach, allowing us to evolve and innovate together.
- **Respect other people's boundaries:** We honour each other's limits and create a respectful and considerate work environment.
- **Share successes, failures, and accountability:** We celebrate our achievements together, learn from our setbacks, and take responsibility for our actions.
- **Work cross-team and cross-programme:** Collaboration across different teams and programmes strengthens our collective impact and ensures a holistic approach to our mission.



## 3) COMPASSIONATE

### **Principle:**

We are committed to integrity, consciously empathising with others, even in challenging situations. We foster kindness and respect, creating safe and supportive environments for our colleagues and young people.

Compassion requires us to take responsibility for the impact we have on others. By being accountable to our commitment to empathy, we foster a supportive and kind environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

### **Behaviours:**

- **Be empathetic and conscientious:** We strive to understand the feelings and experiences of others, responding with care and consideration.
- **Work with kindness and understanding:** While maintaining professionalism, we approach each situation with compassion.
- **Create safe spaces:** We ensure that everyone feels secure and supported, fostering an environment where people can thrive.
- **Actively listen:** We give our full attention to others, validating their experiences and feelings.
- **Be supportive:** We offer help and encouragement, recognising the importance of community and team work.
- **Be patient, warm, and trusting:** Building strong relationships takes time and understanding, and we are committed to nurturing these connections.



## 4) INCLUSIVE

### **Principle:**

We celebrate diversity and strive to create an inclusive space where everyone is encouraged and equipped to bring their best self. We ensure that all voices are heard and that each person's strengths are valued and utilised.

Inclusivity requires a commitment to creating equal opportunities and acknowledging diverse perspectives. By holding ourselves accountable to fair practices and continuous learning, we create a culture where everyone has a voice and the tools they need to succeed.

### **Behaviours:**

- Recognise and value everyone and their contributions: We see the unique strengths in each individual and appreciate the diversity they bring.
- Use an equitable approach to allocating tools, aids, and resources to ensure everyone has fair access to opportunity and growth: We strive for fairness in all our processes, ensuring everyone has what they need to succeed.
- Create space for everyone to talk: We encourage open dialogue and actively listen to all perspectives, making sure every voice is heard.
- Create opportunities for diversity of decision-making: We involve diverse voices in our decision-making processes to ensure well-rounded and inclusive outcomes.
- Use inclusive language: Our communication is mindful and respectful, reflecting our commitment to inclusion.
- Use inclusive, debiased recruitment processes: We are dedicated to fair hiring practices that reflect our values of diversity and inclusion.
- Show continuous willingness to learn and undertake training: We are committed to personal and professional growth, embracing learning opportunities that enhance our inclusivity.



## 5) INNOVATIVE

### **Principle:**

We are committed to adapting to the ever-changing needs of a dynamic world, continually seeking new methods, ideas, and solutions to support young people. We nurture an environment where everyone's unique abilities and experiences are valued, and we approach our work with courage and boldness.

Innovation requires us to take ownership of our ideas and be willing to learn from both successes and setbacks. By being accountable for our creative pursuits, we maintain a culture where bold ideas are encouraged, and continuous improvement is a shared responsibility.

### **Behaviours:**

- Trial new ways of working based on our own data and evidence base: We are committed to continuous improvement, using our insights to test and refine new approaches.
- Be solution-focused: We approach challenges with a mindset geared towards finding effective and sustainable solutions.
- Be open and bold to new approaches, opportunities, and ideas: Innovation requires courage and an openness to the unknown; we embrace this mindset wholeheartedly.
- Embrace change: We see change as an opportunity for growth and are agile in our response to new developments.
- Accept failure as an opportunity for growth: We understand that failure is a natural part of the innovation process and use it as a learning experience.