

Culture change case study:
**Building a culture to enable a
vision and strategy**



Shelter

Shelter helps millions of people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness.

With rising societal demands and the launch of a new strategy, Shelter recognised a new way of working was needed if they were to accomplish their vision.

The challenge

The launch of Shelter's strategy heralded a big vision – not just for the organisation, but nationwide as it looked to answer the country's housing crisis.

Shelter's strategy would be accomplished by fulfilling a suite of goals over a 3 and 10-year period that would only be achieved by leveraging the power and passion of its employees and volunteers – the people who work tirelessly to alleviate the destitution that they see day in and day out.

To do this, some fundamental changes had to happen in terms of how work was done, and how people worked together both in and outside of the organisation.

The solution

Shelter had already identified what they wanted their culture to be (their cultural aspiration). But they looked to Rubica to help make it a reality.

Our work began by making Shelter's cultural aspiration more tangible. To do this, we co-created 5 outcomes and measures that would clearly indicate success and evidence when things were being done right (at every level of the organisation across the country).

We then worked with Shelter leaders and managers from across the UK to develop and initiate a framework (the Culture Canvas) that would help to achieve those outcomes. The Canvas outlined:

- The behaviours that were needed at a leadership, team, and individual level to achieve Shelter's cultural aspiration.
- The mechanisms e.g. communication, processes etc. that would encourage and embed those behaviours.

The process pinpointed where desired behaviours already existed (cultural hotspots) and ways to further amplify them e.g.:

- **Beacons** – a group of 60 influential people who would act as role models for important behaviours and act as a catalyst for the change in culture.
- **Hotspot sessions** – dedicated meetings for major geographical hubs, that sought to align the Culture Canvas to these geographies and therefore encourage greater individual and team commitment.

It also addressed areas that could hinder progression of the Canvas e.g.:

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- **Decentralising decision-making and instead leveraging local expertise** – ensuring decisions were made based on what was right for the local customer whilst remaining aligned to the organisation’s strategy.
- **Empowering people to make decisions** – equipping people with the tools, confidence and accountability to make decisions.

As we supported Shelter with these interventions, a series of pulse-surveys were conducted – designed to show progress and inform ‘what to do next’ – encouraging desired behaviours and minimising those that could hinder progress. This was accompanied with 1-2-1 coaching sessions for leaders at all levels of the organisation – ensuring they felt equipped and able to take Shelter’s strategy forward.

The results: Impressive fast-track culture change

6-months on from the programme’s launch, organisation-wide recognition already exists for the behaviours and mind-sets that are needed to achieve Shelter’s strategic vision. What’s more, early survey results indicate a shift in behaviour at every level of the organisation:

- **92%** of Hub Managers reported an increase in confidence about leading the changes associated to culture within their Hub – supporting the fulfilment of Shelter’s strategy.
- **91%** of Hub Managers reported an increase in how they perceived their team’s support for Shelter’s new strategy.
- **↑ 6%** people feel they have real influence on decision making and feel empowered to make decisions based on local needs – supporting the fulfilment of the cultural aspiration and the organisation’s strategy.
- **↑ 4%** people feel the organisation takes effective action when the external environment changes – demonstrating a change in terms of how decisions are made.

Furthermore, there is a demonstratable change in mind-sets, with Hub Managers committing to support and challenge one another in upholding the behaviours and ways of working developed over the last 6-months – ultimately supporting Shelter to fulfil its objective: stopping suffering at the source and defending the right to a safe home.

“The culture at Shelter was holding it back from greatness. Initially I was super sceptical we could nudge it in the right direction but then Rubica came along and everything changed. We’ve done so much more than nudge it forwards...we’ve made a giant leap in the right direction. The programme delivered by Rubica has hit the spot – with fresh, relevant and useful interventions and support. I have also found the individual support and coaching first class – I am missing them already!

As a result of the programme we are already reaping the benefits. A great example, of this has been the success of our emergency appeal which has raised millions more than we thought possible.”

Andy Harris, Director of Income Generation, Shelter

“We saw a need for a cultural shift to deliver our strategy and make improvements in areas including leadership, risk taking, decision making and accountability. Working with Rubica through a series of workshops and activities with staff and leaders, we’ve identified the culture

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we're working towards, the behaviours that will help to build it, and the key processes and systems that will enable it. In addition, a number of leadership development activities – including executive coaching – have happened to drive this new culture forward.

Furthermore, we set up a Beacons network – a staff group whose role is to promote and champion the new culture and provide input to the Executive Leadership Team and other projects from a cultural perspective. More than 60 Beacons from across the organisation have been actively involved in the network throughout the year.

Progress on our culture change has been monitored regularly through a series of pulse surveys, allowing us to take responsive action and maintain positive momentum. The outcomes of the latest survey show good progress, and we will build on this success by continuing to embed and cement the culture we want through the development of key processes and systems.

Rubica have been a fantastic partner – providing inspirational, passionate and expert support. Above all Rubica are real “doers” – they leave you equipped to deliver and maintain real change.”

David Evans, Director for People, Shelter

“Rubica have worked alongside us to support a major cross-organisational cultural transformation programme. In partnership, we have addressed fundamental beliefs about how our people work together, and as a result we have built greater trust and empowerment across our geographically dispersed workforce.”

Anne Baxendale, Internal Strategy & Culture Consultant, Shelter

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