Seizing the moment
Twins Trust’s revised strategic plan 2020-2022
Why update our plans now?

We published our five year strategic plan in 2017. Circumstances mean that we have reviewed it quicker than planned. There are ten reasons for the timing and work prioritised.

1. Inspired by other charities with more motivating and measurable targets, which act as a clearer guide to decision making,
2. Keen to make our values more meaningful to understand how best to work as a team and with others,
3. Project funding ended and we wanted to make sure what success looked like before deciding what to stop, continue or expand,
4. National reports showing the record breaking impact our work is already having in reducing stillbirth, neonatal deaths, and neonatal admissions,
5. Our projects have shown the potential to reduce these even further,
6. Success in changing national policies to acknowledge our families and the importance placed on making pregnancy, childbirth safe by governments across the UK is once in a generation opportunity,
7. Feedback from midwives and doctors, as part of our rebranding process, found that few newer ones are aware of our work,
8. Assessments of our support services show the positive impact on users especially those struggling to cope,
9. Investment in updating our digital services, alongside our new name and brand, provides a significant opportunity to reach many more families and professionals,
10. Supporters continue to favour focusing the majority of our efforts in pregnancy, birth and the early years where the challenges tend to be the greatest.
Key achievements in the past two years

■ Working with partners to improve practice during pregnancy and birth has saved an estimated 600 babies’ lives.

■ Our project supporting doctors and midwives to improve care has shown that it can reduce emergency treatment, neonatal admissions and further reduce stillbirths. It has already prevented 200 babies ending up in neonatal care.

■ The TTTS specialist multiple birth register we sponsor has received national recognition and is set to be used by a third of all hospitals leading to a better understanding of how to improve care.

■ Research projects sponsored by us are now beginning to publish or have also attracted national support and will help to improve treatments and reduce risks to babies and mothers.

■ Those attending one of our courses or using our resources are less likely to develop postnatal depression and are more likely to be more confident or well prepared for becoming parents.

■ In Scotland, we successfully campaigned for the new Pregnancy and Baby Payment, Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment to reflect the additional costs of multiples. Consequently families with twins and triplets receive £1,200 and £1,500 respectively when they have their babies, significantly reducing financial stress at a challenging time.

■ Our successful campaign for our families to be exempt from the two child limit for Universal Credit and Child Tax Credit if it was as a result of having multiples has protected 5,000 of our poorest babies and children from additional hardship.

An estimated 600 babies’ lives have been saved by working with partners to improve clinical practice for multiples.

Our campaign to exempt multiples from the two child limit for benefits has protected 5,000 multiples from additional hardship.

Our project supporting doctors and midwives has helped keep 200 multiple babies out of neo-natal care units.
Families of multiple birth children continue to need support, perhaps even more than ever before

The numbers of multiple births are at an all time high. Approximately 12,000 multiple birth babies are born each year.

The growing trend for mothers delaying pregnancy until they are older appears to be having a direct impact on the growth in multiple pregnancies. The risks of having twins increase significantly after 30 years old.

Devastatingly a multiple birth baby still dies nearly every day.

Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome (TTTS) continues to destroy lives. TTTS is a life-threatening condition which affects 10 to 15 per cent of identical twins who share a placenta (monochorionic twins). TTTS can also affect triplets and higher order pregnancies which include monochorionic twins.

Multiple birth babies are six times more likely to have cerebral palsy.

Admission to a neonatal intensive care unit, which is far more common in multiples and the separation entailed in that, can lead to considerable anxiety which may last for up to 3 years.

Independent research has shown that a considerable proportion of health professionals in maternity settings are unaware of the challenges faced by our families and the specialist care and guidance that will help overcome them.

Rates of Postnatal Depression (PND) were found to be higher in both mothers and fathers of multiples at two month and at two years postpartum and, for mothers of triplets, even at 4 years.

The costs of childcare for many families are prohibitive and mean that many, often mothers, have to give up work for far longer than they would like.

This can push many families into poverty or real financial hardship. For those families which are able to find and afford suitable childcare, the costs place a high burden on their finances and often result in considerable financial difficulties.

But we know that many of these problems are avoidable. And we know that many of our families who don’t encounter them, or receive support overcoming them, have a wonderful experience of being parents. This is what we are working to achieve.
Our vision
Our vision is a world where families of twins, triplets and more are happy, healthy and supported.

Our mission
Our mission is to provide our families with the information and support they need to enable them to thrive. We raise awareness, invest in research and campaign for the best possible outcomes for our families.

Our values
- **WE’RE PASSIONATE**: We care about what we do and are committed to the cause.
- **WE’RE SUPPORTIVE**: We want to be the trusted place for information, help and support.
- **WE’RE POSITIVE**: We are ambitious and determined to make having twins, triplets and more a great experience.

Our objectives
**By 2022, we will:**
- Save 580 babies’ lives
- Stop 1,100 babies needing neonatal care
- Reduce 8,300 expectant parents’ anxiety and prevent up to 800 from developing PND
- Support 7,500 concerned or upset parents
- Be the first place our families go to for information.

**We will Save 580 babies’ lives and stop 1,100 babies needing neonatal care by:**
- Publishing a national audit of maternity care highlighting where good care is currently being delivered and where further improvements are needed.
- Engaging with units across the UK to offer support from our quality improvement team.
- Supporting a national TTTS registry, and prioritising data analysis that addresses the highest risks in twin and triplet pregnancies.
- Commissioning clinical research projects that address these risks.
- Looking at partnering with a hospital trust to provide peer support for other hospital teams and training opportunities for individual midwives and doctors.

Money and people
We know to achieve our vision, we need enough money and the right people to help deliver it. That’s why in the coming years we will be:
- Reviewing our member and supporter package so it’s clearer how supporting the charity has a direct impact on improving families’ lives.
- Reviewing our fundraising plans to ensure we are maximising our income for future work. Looking to see if we can introduce further paid for services whether this is other organisations commissioning us to undertake work or the services we directly offer to families.
- Recruiting and retaining well qualified staff and volunteers who share our vision and values. Together these will help us reach our objectives.
We will Reduce 8,300 expectant parents’ anxiety and prevent up to 800 from developing PND, Support 7,500 concerned or upset parents, and be the first place our families go to for information by:

- Delivering classes and webinars that confirm what good pregnancy care looks like and how to prepare for becoming parents of twins, triplets or more.
- Undertaking an independent evaluation of our crisis support service.
- Launching a new website with updated content, and piloting a new online community support forum.
- Updating our pregnancy and early years information and resources.
- Campaigning to improve parental leave and benefits for families with one or more babies in neonatal care.
- Reach out to health professionals via direct unit engagement, conference attendance, specialist media, and asking our families to educate them directly.
- Improve our website rankings and awareness across all media leading to an increase in traffic to our website by families.

Compared with our original plans

We're taking a lighter touch on:

- Campaigning around financial support and childcare.
- Creating new resources and updating existing resources.

We're not going to do the following for now:

- Roll out building up our local clubs and support groups until our Northern Ireland local club pilot project has reported.
- Focus on building up a specialist group and services for families with a child or children with special needs.
- Recruit a Welsh officer at this point.
- Create new resources for early years practitioners.
- Campaign intensively for greater parental input into classroom placement decisions.

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