

Our strategy to 2030

**British Heart
Foundation**



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Our story

The BHF is here to Beat Heartbreak Forever.

We are working towards a world free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases.

A world where families are not devastated by the sudden loss of a loved one.

A world where every child born with a heart condition has a long and healthy life.

A world where broken hearts are mended.

Our strategy will guide us to get there sooner.

When the BHF was founded in 1961, heart and circulatory diseases caused over half of all deaths in the UK. Sudden death from a heart attack at the age of only 50 or 60 was so common it was thought to be just a fact of life.

But with unwavering public support, BHF-funded researchers began to pioneer a revolution in the understanding and treatment of conditions like coronary heart disease. Today, 7 out of 10 people survive a heart attack.

Since we were founded, our research has helped to reduce deaths from heart and circulatory diseases by more than half.

But we cannot stop now.

Heart and circulatory diseases still cause untold heartbreak for millions of families. And although we have made great strides in solving many big problems in the past, continued and emerging challenges demand a bold new approach. As survival from heart attack and stroke continues to rise, more people are living into old age, often with multiple chronic conditions that require new kinds of treatment and care. The number of people living with dementia, for instance, is expected to almost double every 20 years. Rising risk factors like obesity and diabetes are putting our progress at risk, and health inequalities still persist.

We know research is the answer to these challenges. And we need to act now. Only through continuing to push the frontiers of scientific discovery, embracing the opportunities of our digital new world, and developing truly innovative solutions, will we be able to turn back the tide.

By building evidence, influencing decision-makers and involving people in their own health and care, together we can drive change at a national, local and community level.

We can prevent more people developing heart and circulatory diseases in the future, and make sure those with existing conditions and risk factors are detected and treated early, with more effective medicines and interventions.

We can ensure that everyone, regardless of factors like gender, age, ethnicity, or where they live, has access to the treatment, care and support that they need.

And we're ready for the challenge.

Our track record speaks for itself.

Heart transplants, pacemakers, clot-busting drugs and statins are just a few examples of the countless advances in heart and circulatory health and care propelled by our world-class medical research.

The BHF currently funds over half of all non-commercial research into heart and circulatory diseases carried out in the UK, supporting around £100m of new projects every year. But it's not enough. We know that overall investment in research into heart and circulatory diseases is disproportionately low compared to the burden of suffering. And we need to close that gap.

We and others must work together to raise the overall amount of funding and support available, so that all the visionary researchers, innovators and care providers can keep shifting the dial.

It won't be easy, and we cannot do it alone.

Heart and circulatory diseases will touch us all, and we all need to work together to tackle them. We need communities to mobilise. We need national leaders to take action. And we need to build strong partnerships that allow us to achieve more than we ever could in isolation. We will be driven in our pursuit of impact.

And we will Beat Heartbreak Forever.



Russell was just 35 when a stroke robbed him of the ability to speak

The changes we want to see in the world by 2030

Our vision is a world free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases.

It's a bold ambition, and we cannot achieve it alone. But by working towards game-changing research-driven milestones, and inspiring support from others, we believe the next ten years will see unparalleled progress.

By no means do these milestones represent the entirety of our efforts or aspirations. One thing we can be sure of is that we will achieve things in the next decade that we cannot even conceive of today. But they do serve as important examples of the changes we want to see in the world by 2030.

Each has been informed by our supporters, researchers, staff and people affected by heart and circulatory diseases.

We hope they will galvanise everyone – from across research charities, the health service, academia, government, communities and industry – to come together in a way we never have before, and help to Beat Heartbreak Forever.

Ghayan saved his son Jady's
life after performing CPR on him
when he was six years old



By 2030, we want to see advances across the spectrum of heart and circulatory diseases; we want to prevent these conditions from developing and we want those with existing conditions to have better, longer lives. These advances include:

Better survival and recovery from heart disease

- **We want cures for inherited heart conditions**

Inherited heart conditions kill at least 12 young people in the UK every week. And our research has already found many of the genes responsible. We want the possibility of an effective cure for some of these diseases

- **We want every child born with a heart condition to lead a long and healthy life**

Congenital heart disease is the most common birth defect. Our research has helped most children born with heart defects to survive to adulthood, but many require lifelong invasive treatment to prevent premature heart failure and sudden death. We urgently need research breakthroughs to ensure survivors lead longer and healthier lives

- **We want thousands more people to survive a heart attack**

Thanks to decades of research breakthroughs, 7 out of 10 people now survive a heart attack. But we know we can do better. We want that figure to be 9 out of 10

- **We want to mend broken hearts**

Right now, the damage caused by heart disease is permanent and often life-changing. We want to find new ways to repair the damage, so that millions of people don't lose their quality of life to heart failure

- **We want to prevent people having heart rhythm problems**

Atrial fibrillation impairs heart function and increases risk of stroke fivefold. By increasing understanding of the mechanisms that cause this type of rhythm disturbance, we want to be able to prevent people from developing the condition at all rather than just managing its consequences

- **We want to triple the number of people surviving a cardiac arrest**

Today, just 1 in 10 people survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. We want to dramatically increase access to life saving defibrillators and see a huge uptake in CPR training, so that survival rates are more than tripled

New and better treatments for circulatory diseases

- **We want to halve the number of people dying from or being disabled by a stroke**

Through ground-breaking research we have helped to halve the death rate from heart attacks – now we want the same for stroke. And what's more, we want treatments that radically limit the power of stroke to cause life-long disabilities

- **We want to find ways to prevent and treat vascular dementia**

Vascular dementia is a devastating circulatory condition which is taking an increasing toll. We want to have better ways to prevent it and an effective treatment in our sights by 2030

Better prevention and management of risk factors

- **We want better ways to identify people at risk and help them avoid disease**

Millions of people are at risk of heart and circulatory diseases without knowing it. Through advances in areas like genomics, data science and artificial intelligence, we want to be able to more accurately predict this risk earlier so we can prevent rather than treat

- **We want everyone to breathe clean air and to live in a smoke-free UK**

Our research has shown that the environment we live in hugely affects our risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases. So we want levels of smoking and air pollution to have plummeted by 2030, preventing thousands of unnecessary deaths

- **We want a world in which the healthy choice is the easy choice**

Obesity is fast becoming a major risk factor for heart and circulatory diseases. Most of us live in environments that encourage unhealthy diets and discourage physical activity. By working with government, industry and the public, we want to create an environment that makes living a healthy lifestyle easy

- **We want everyone to know how to reduce their risk of heart and circulatory diseases**

High blood pressure, cholesterol and body mass index (BMI) are major risk factors for heart and circulatory diseases. We want the millions of people at risk to be able to take control of their health

Longer, better lives for everyone

- **We want everyone's treatment to be personal to them**

Through new knowledge, we want everyone with a heart or circulatory condition to receive treatment that's best tailored to them

- **We want everyone to have access to the best available treatment and care**

Where you live, how much money you have, and factors like your gender, ethnicity and age shouldn't affect the care you receive. But too often they do. We want to end the inequality

- **We want everyone to get the physical, psychological and social support they need**

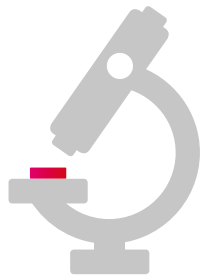
Surviving a heart or circulatory event can be traumatic, and too often people are left feeling anxious, depressed, and unsure how to cope. We want everyone to receive the physical, psychological and social support they need to make a good recovery and live free from the fear of heart and circulatory diseases



Our strategy to 2030



We work with patients and the public for better health and care



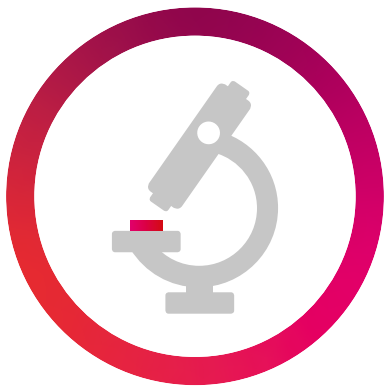
We fund research to save and improve lives



We grow support and income



We strive for excellence



We fund research to save and improve lives

Funding pioneering research is at the heart of what we do. It is our core mission. It drives every breakthrough we've made, and every advance we will make in the future. It spans everything from prevention to transformational treatments and innovative new services. As the largest independent funder of research into heart and circulatory diseases in the UK, we will focus our efforts on accelerating discovery and turning discoveries into life saving medical advances.

So, with the ambition of investing more than £1bn in research over the next ten years, we will...

Fund research into all heart and circulatory diseases and their risk factors

- We will support research into the causes, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of any heart or circulatory disease, be it common, rare, inherited or acquired, and relevant risk factors including hypertension, diabetes and obesity
- We will increase our focus on stroke, vascular dementia and multi-morbidity in recognition of the growing burden imposed by these conditions

Fund research across the full spectrum from discovery science to innovation in practice

- We will support high-quality laboratory research which advances our understanding of cardiovascular diseases
- We will support innovative approaches aimed at the prevention of heart and circulatory diseases
- We will expand our investment in translation of discovery science towards patient benefit
- We will stimulate inter-disciplinary research through schemes such as our Research Excellence Awards and Accelerator Awards
- We will prioritise the development of clinical research studies with the highest potential impact through initiatives such as a national Cardiovascular Clinical Research Collaborative
- We will establish an Innovation Fund to support the implementation of research findings into practice, and to test new ideas and approaches to improve heart and circulatory health and care

Attract, nurture and support the brightest minds and the best ideas

- We will nurture and support the brightest researchers at all career stages, from PhD students to Professors, building future generations of international leaders
- The majority of our funding will be used to support the best research ideas put forward by researchers
- We will create new personal funding schemes to support research and innovation by nurses and allied health professionals

Make strategic investments to address unmet needs and seize new opportunities

- We will enhance our collaboration with external partners to exploit new opportunities arising from evolving technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital health
- We will establish the BHF Cardiovascular Data Science Centre in partnership with Health Data Research UK, other key stakeholders and with close public engagement to maximise the benefits of using routinely collected health and personal data for research and to inform healthcare delivery
- We will launch specific initiatives of scale, such as the Big Beat Challenge, where we see an opportunity to make transformational change
- We will consult with patients, the public and external experts through an external Research Strategy Advisory Group to help us identify new challenges and opportunities and enhance our agility in responding to them

Actively develop new national and international partnerships to maximise our impact

- We will continue to co-fund major national strategic initiatives such as UK Biobank and the UK Prevention Research Partnership
- We will develop new opportunities to co-fund research with other charity research funders, the National Institute for Health Research, research councils and the NHS
- We will formalise our principles and policy for co-funding research with commercial partners and actively seek new partnerships, particularly related to our new Innovation Fund
- We will build on successful current international partnerships (such as the Britain Israel Research and Academic Exchange and our partnership with the German Centre for Cardiovascular Research) and initiate further international partnerships that will enhance the impact of our research
- We will further develop the Global Cardiovascular Research Funders' Forum that we have recently convened, to facilitate the prioritisation and development of new international funding initiatives

Use our position as a major research funder to influence the research environment

- We will support and enhance the quality and breadth of heart and circulatory research through our Research Excellence, Accelerator and Infrastructure award schemes
- We will highlight the gap between the disease burden and the level of research funding for heart and circulatory diseases, and make the case for increased funding by governmental and non-governmental organisations
- We will advocate on behalf of the public and the research community to ensure that the best policies, regulations and opportunities are in place to support high-quality research and maintain the UK's premier position in this area

Measure and share the impact of the research we fund

- We will increase resources and use new ways to analyse the outcomes and benefits of the research we fund
- We will develop a series of compelling narratives that inform our supporters, the public and policy-makers of the impact arising from our research





We work with patients and the public for better health and care

As the nation's heart charity, we advocate for and with people affected by heart and circulatory diseases. We develop innovative ways of meeting their needs by listening carefully, working together and thinking big. We want to stop people developing heart and circulatory diseases in the future, make sure those with existing conditions and risk factors are detected early. And we want everyone, regardless of where they live or who they are, to receive the treatment, care and support they need.

So, with the ambition of achieving better heart and circulatory health for everyone, we will:

Provide information and support to help patients and the public take control of their health

- We will continue to provide high-quality information to reach all people affected by heart and circulatory diseases
- We will test new ways of improving our information and support offer in health and care settings
- We will support initiatives to motivate people, especially vulnerable groups, to take action to reduce preventable risks to manage their own conditions

Develop innovative products and services

- We will work with the NHS and other partners to develop new digital health products and services that support people with heart and circulatory diseases
- We will work with partners to develop and test innovative interventions aimed at reducing people's risk of developing heart and circulatory diseases
- We will work with the Ambulance Services and other partners to launch and embed The Circuit: the National Defibrillator Network for the whole of the UK

Engage people and communities affected by heart and circulatory diseases in new ways

- We will work with community leaders and networks to improve detection rates of the main risk factors for heart attack and stroke (atrial fibrillation, high blood pressure and high cholesterol)
- Through our Nation of Lifesavers programme, we will continue to support awareness of training in CPR to help improve survival rates from cardiac arrest in the community
- We will find new ways of engaging with health and care professionals to generate insights and to encourage support for the BHF's aims

Involve people affected by heart and circulatory diseases in the work of the BHF

- We will maintain a constant focus on the needs and views of people affected by heart and circulatory diseases across all of our work
- We will explore 'triple win' opportunities to involve people that support better health and care, provide research opportunities and increase engagement with the BHF
- We will use a variety of channels to listen to people affected by heart and circulatory diseases, and use their insights to inform the BHF's priorities and decision-making
- We will champion their views to the NHS, government and beyond
- We will work with patients and the public to co-design our health innovation programmes
- We will increase the opportunities for patients and the public to be involved in shaping our research programme

Influence government bodies, regulators, educators and industry to tackle the major heart and circulatory health and care challenges

- We will drive forward our influencing priorities for health and care: population health; early detection, variation in treatment; rehabilitation and support
- We will take an evidence-based and insight-led approach to inform all of our influencing activity
- We will develop targeted, integrated campaigns that raise awareness and inspire change amongst the public and policy makers
- We will build national partnerships in all four countries of the UK to achieve our policy and influencing goals
- We will act as a bridge between health and research, ensuring that health policy and practice reflect the best available research insights



Becky was diagnosed with ARVC at 36, a rare genetic disease of the heart muscle, which can cause sudden cardiac arrest



We grow support and income

We have come a long way since we were founded. But the world around us is changing, with new and more complex challenges arising that require bold action. If we do not invest more in life saving research and innovation now, the burden of heart and circulatory diseases will only grow. We need to raise more money to save more lives, and we want everyone to join us in helping to beat heartbreak forever.

So, to enable us to continue our life saving work at the pace that's required, we will:

Reinforce the urgency of our cause and inspire more people to support us

- We will highlight the scale and impact of all heart and circulatory diseases
- We will show people the powerful impact of our work, and the role they can play in helping to make a difference
- We will inspire individuals and communities to turn good will into action – to donate, volunteer, champion or fundraise for our cause

Provide new and compelling opportunities for more people to be more actively involved

- We will actively listen to our supporters, and ensure everyone finds a way to get involved that excites and inspires them
- We will develop new physical and digital touchpoints so our supporters can engage with us in the way that best suits their needs
- We will collaborate and partner with industry, other charities and public bodies, combining resources to achieve more than we ever could in isolation

Deepen engagement with all of our supporters

- We will build and nurture lasting, meaningful and mutually valuable relationships based on trust, respect and shared values
- We will provide a great supporter experience and the best possible customer care
- We will create innovative products and services to meet the needs of our supporters at all points on their journey with us

Make sure that supporting us is as easy as possible

- We will continually review the way we work to make it as easy as possible to support the BHF
- We will invest in the technology needed to simplify the experience for our supporters





We strive for excellence

We are a leading organisation both within and beyond our sector, with a reputation hard-earned by the dedication and commitment of our people. People who are brave, informed, compassionate and driven in everything they do. By living our values, we will make sure we never take this reputation for granted.

So, to make the most of every pound entrusted to us, we will:

Ensure working and volunteering inspires a sense of purpose and connection to our cause

- We will help those that work and volunteer with us to understand our cause, why it matters and what we've achieved so far
- We will make sure everyone understands what we want to achieve in the future and how their contribution will help solve the biggest problems in heart and circulatory health
- We will forge lasting relationships with our people, so that they remain life-long advocates of the BHF

Help our people achieve their full potential

- We will support our people to do the best work of their lives, making sure they have the skills, tools and freedom to make the best of their talents and time
- We will support our people to lead with heart, empowering teams to flourish
- We will recruit, develop and promote people according to our values, supporting and trusting them to find better ways to beat heartbreak forever
- We will make sure our tools, systems and ways of working allow everyone to work as effectively as possible, at any time and from anywhere

Be an organisation that continually learns, improves and innovates

- We will constantly challenge ourselves and the way we work so that we can increase our impact and efficiency
- We will improve the way we measure and evaluate what we do and the impact we have
- We will be agile and responsive to changes in the external world
- We will embed a culture of innovation and collaboration across the BHF
- We will celebrate successes and learn from mistakes

Be a healthy and inclusive place to work and volunteer

- We will position health and wellbeing as central to our societal responsibility, as well as to the way we work together
- We will create an environment where everyone can be themselves
- We will ensure we are as diverse as our supporters and beneficiaries, and take positive steps to address any inequalities that exist

Be a leading force for good in society

- We will live and breathe our values and encourage our people and others to always do the right thing
- We will take seriously our wider social responsibility, and reduce our environmental impact wherever possible
- We will learn from others, aiming to share knowledge about what works



We can't do it alone

In the next ten years, we can get closer than ever to beating heartbreak forever. But we can't do it alone. To beat the world's biggest killers, we need the collective effort of millions.

From across research charities, the health service, academia, government, supporters, industry and beyond – we are calling on the nation to get behind our strategy and help us deliver on our promises.

So to be part of a decade of life saving progress, contact strategy@bhf.org.uk

Beat heartbreak from  heart diseases  stroke  vascular dementia  diabetes