



System Stewardship in practice:

What it is and how to get started

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Addressing complex social issues is beyond the control of single services or organisations. Outcomes emerge from the interaction of many different actors and factors. This means we need to take a systems perspective and work collaboratively to help achieve the outcomes we care about. Working in this way often requires us to fundamentally rethink traditional relationships, behaviours, and ways of working.

System stewardship is the work of purposefully nurturing healthier systems. This is about developing the conditions that help people and places to flourish. Stewards bring together actors to see themselves as a system, build trusting relationships, share power, and learn and act together. Developing these conditions helps make best use of collective relationships, insights, and resources to achieve shared goals.

Stewardship is a function and set of behaviours that can be seen across different organisations, places, and roles adopting [Human Learning Systems](#)¹ (HLS) approaches. Exploring the practice of stewardship provides valuable insights into the capabilities required to work effectively in complexity.

In this resource we explain what system stewardship is, why it's important, and how to go about it, drawing on guidance and examples of practice from across the HLS network and beyond.



¹ [Human Learning Systems](#) (HLS) is an approach to managing, governing, funding and delivering public service in complexity to enable human flourishing. HLS is characterised by ways of working that are relational, co-designed, collaborative and focused on ongoing adaptation and improvement.

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This resource

This resource aims to be a supportive guide for those acting as system steward or those who are interested in playing this role. System stewardship is one role in a family of roles and practices – systems leadership, systems convening, system diplomats, system brokers – that others have researched, written, and spoken about. We believe that stewardship is a distinct approach due to the explicit focus on building the conditions for a healthy system, but recognise the overlaps between these other approaches and the complementarity in features and principles. Ultimately it matters less what we call this set of practices, and more that we recognise its value and advocate for its importance in helping improve outcomes when working in complexity.

There can be no single ‘how to’ guide for being a system steward as the practice is context-specific. But there are some common core features across people and organisations taking on stewardship roles in different places, policy areas, and sectors that are distinct from traditional ways of working, and a growing number of examples of organisations and partnerships in places across the UK that are adopting these practices.

“Everything we do is always guided by building relationships between people – collaborative, trusting working relationships – and then the detail emerges from the local place. So whilst it is possible to generalise about stewardship, a huge portion of it will depend, in the actual task, on the individual context of place.”

– Julian Penton, Hartlepower Community Trust

The version of stewardship described in this resource is based on action learning about the roles, activities, and impacts of people and partnerships working in this way, which we’ve found is often common among organisations taking HLS approaches. But stewardship is a practice that has been in existence for millennia, and more recently, Elinor Ostrom’s work has inspired a focus on stewardship as a means to manage common resources in the US and UK.² This resource is a contribution to the development of this wider field of stewardship practice which we believe is essential to enabling sustainable and effective social change.

“The practice [of shared stewardship] has evolved over millennia as certain people in each generation (albeit too few) have endeavored to set aside unjust or inhumane legacies and instead pass along a world that enables everyone to survive and thrive – continually learning what it takes to create systems for people and places that are prosperous, sustainable, and equitable.”

– Milstein et al, 2020³

² See, for example, Erickson, J. et al., [Action Learning Synthesis of ReThink Health’s Amplifying Stewardship Together Project](#) and Wilson, T. et al., [Developing a culture of Stewardship: how to prevent the Tragedy of the Commons in Universal Health Systems](#)

³ Bobby Milstein, Pedja Stojicic, Ella Auchincloss and Christopher Kelleher (2020) Civic Life and System Stewardship on the Job: How Can Workers in Every Industry Strengthen the Belonging and Civic Muscle Everyone Needs to Thrive? The Good Society, Vol. 29, No. 1-2 (2020).

What is system stewardship?

"It's not simply collaborating... we create the conditions in which better outcomes can happen. Creating the culture, building the trust, building relationships... revealing the system to itself... By knowing and by sharing information, data, knowledge, and learning together, you nurture the system and create the conditions where good outcomes are possible. Even if each individual organisation is doing some great stuff, it doesn't add up to the changes that are needed unless the conditions are right."

– Lela Kogbara, Place Matters

Whether we're seeking to improve mental health, reduce health inequalities or enable better early years outcomes, none of these issues can be addressed by single projects, services or organisations working alone – these outcomes emerge from complex systems.

To enable better outcomes we need to focus on how we can nurture healthier systems. But currently we are far more likely to encounter 'unhealthy' systems, characterised by siloes, competition and power imbalances, than healthy ones. Characteristics of healthy systems include common purpose, trusting relationships, diverse perspectives, aligned resources, a learning culture, and shared power.

Healthy systems don't develop by accident – it takes purposeful, continuous work. This is where system stewardship comes in. System stewardship is the work of purposefully nurturing healthier systems. This is about developing the conditions that help enable people and places to flourish. Stewards bring together actors to see themselves as a system, build trusting relationships, share power and learn and act together. Developing these conditions helps make best use of collective relationships, insights and resources to achieve shared goals.

"System health means working towards more of what we want intentionally. We want to build everyone's capabilities to improve system health."

– Kathleen Kelly, LocalMotion

Stewardship requires challenging dominant narratives and inherited ways of working and thinking to imagine more collaborative and equitable futures. For example, Gloucestershire Healthier Communities Together describe their focus on *"paradigm-shifting, systemic changes and the profoundly different relationships, behaviours and collaborations we believe lead towards 'fairer health'."* Similarly, Gateshead Community Builders see their work as *"fundamentally about how to organise differently – how we might rewrite, reinvent or reimagine rules, norms and laws of organising, governance, and asset flows"* as a way to build community power. Stewards model complexity-friendly and collaborative behaviours (e.g. listening, the ability to embrace discomfort and ambiguity, patience and persistence, curiosity and self-reflection) to show what different can look like, and help create the conditions (both relational and structural) for others to adopt these new practices.

This is not easy work – it involves being attentive to the needs and priorities of diverse actors, bridging between different perspectives, judging when to step in and step back,

seeking to rebalance power, and taking action that runs against the grain of accepted ways of doing things. System stewards we've engaged with emphasise the potential for joy, but also the personal toll this work can take. It is emotional work that can involve personal change – the questioning of your beliefs, the power you hold, the role you should be playing. This requires a lot of resilience and putting the necessary support in place. Stewards need to pay attention to looking after themselves, and peer support can play an invaluable role in helping provide the practical and emotional support this work requires.

Where is system stewardship happening?

System stewardship is a growing and maturing practice across the UK and beyond. We've seen stewardship in action across a range of sectors – health, local and national government, and civil society. It can be called different things – and a system stewardship role can be played by a range of people, organisations or groups.

Sometimes funders and commissioners are best placed as they hold the resource and convening power, while in other cases civil society organisations are better able to play this role – bridging between formal services and local communities, and questioning and disrupting the way things are done. The most important question is who is trusted and seen as legitimate by other local actors. Over time, the goal is that more and more actors across a system adopt shared stewardship practices and behaviours.

Below we describe a range of examples which aim to illustrate the breadth and depth of system stewardship in action (more in-depth descriptions of each of these case studies can be found in our examples section on page 26).

[The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority](#) (LCRCA) is rethinking how homelessness services are commissioned and monitored across its six local authority areas. Adopting an HLS approach, LCRCA has moved away from traditional contract management and towards a stewardship model that emphasises learning, collaboration and collective problem solving to enable better outcomes.

[Hackney Council](#) is one of Sport England's place partners working on a whole systems approach to reducing physical inactivity. Over the last five years, Hackney Council's approach has shifted from traditional programme management to a more learning-focused way of working that centres lived experience and long-term relationship-building. They stand back to see the bigger picture, notice where connections could be made, and foster relationships over time, recognising that change is a gradual process, requiring patience, adaptability, and ongoing commitment.

[Barnwood Trust](#) is a charitable foundation based in Gloucestershire. Previously a more traditional grant making foundation, in recent years Barnwood has explored its broader role as an 'agent of social change'. Barnwood [sees its role](#) not only as stewarding money but also the capacity, expertise, and connections to make change in Gloucestershire for disability and mental health.

[Plymouth Octopus Project POP](#) is a collective in Plymouth dedicated to supporting communities, citizen action, and grassroots activity. As system stewards (or what they call System Convener), they 'bring together different sectors, opinions, and perspectives into liminal space to find shared ways forward, with an aim for Plymouth to be able to demonstrate more just, fairer, and greener approaches in the work we do.'

[Surrey Youth Focus](#) is a collaboration charity working across the public and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sectors to improve outcomes for children and

young people in Surrey. Their work is underpinned by a system stewardship approach and focuses on nurturing the health of the system – building and enabling relationships, collaborative learning, and collective action – to create the conditions for long-term change.

[Gloucestershire Healthy Communities Together](#) (HCT) is a cross-sector partnership focused on long-term system change to address health inequalities. Bringing together leaders and practitioners from the NHS, local government, and the voluntary and community sector, HCT operates not as a programme with predefined deliverables, but as a collaborative effort to shift relationships, behaviours, and ways of working across the system. Through what they call their “structures of togetherness”, the partnership has modelled what it looks like to steward a system by focusing on relationships first, and staying with complexity rather than trying to control it.

The [Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System](#) promises to ‘work together for better lives’. This means delivering the triple aim of improved population health, improved quality of care, and better and more equitable and sustainable use of resources. To enable this they are fostering a culture and practice of stewardship and have developed a programme to support this since April 2021, which involves bringing together teams of health and care staff within a care area to get the best value from shared health and care resources.

Practices of system stewards

System stewardship typically involves a set of practices, many of which are interconnected. We recognise that some system stewards are focussed on the stewarding of learning, or the stewarding of resources, and others on fostering collaboration and shared action. However, we still believe these are practices which are necessary for all system stewards to some degree.

“Stewardship is at the nexus between intentionality and intuition. It’s about sensing – what could this mean?”

– Sally Byng, Barnwood Trust

Fostering trusting relationships

Creating understanding and empathy as a foundation for collaboration.

While structural changes like collaborative governance and aligned resources can be important enablers of a healthy system, these only enable meaningful change when based on fundamental shifts in our relationships and behaviours. This requires moving beyond organisation-focused, siloed, and competitive behaviours and connecting at a more human level – focusing on our intrinsic motivation to do the best we can for the people and places we serve.

System stewards are connectors and conveners – this work is often about putting people in touch with others who have shared ambitions, helping people navigate the system, and creating opportunities for people to develop empathy through seeing things from each other’s perspectives. This helps create a web of connections beyond organisational boundaries and a foundation of trusted relationships which are essential for enabling collaboration, learning together, and creative problem solving.

“We try to lead by example by developing trusting relationships that are based on learning and understanding that mitigated risk taking is required to achieve learning and meaningful outcomes. We feel that we play a key role in bridging, enabling and facilitating conversations with various partners trying to find solutions for individuals that will provide a meaningful outcome.”

– Katie Fleeman, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

“It’s not revolutionary or likely to be surprising but investing time in relationships is important and also being clear about who you want to be ‘in relationship’ with. We can often be led into relationships as a result of traditional and/or historic context, but those relationships may be the very things that need to change in order to work differently and produce different outcomes.”

– Lola Akindoyin, Hackney Council

Convening around around a common purpose

Bringing people together to build collective understanding of the system, our interdependent roles within it, and how we can make best use of collective insight and resources.

Stewards are often uniquely placed to 'see' the system – to step back and observe the different actors, factors, influences, and dynamics at play that can impact the outcomes we are working towards. Stewards not only observe the system, but invite others to work alongside them to better understand it, see their role in it, and identify how to nurture a healthier system together. This can be particularly effective when bridging across and connecting different parts of the system that often don't come together, enabling new insights and opportunities to surface.

It's important to recognise that this practice involves bringing people together who don't – and won't – agree on everything. People from different parts of the system will inevitably have different motivations, drivers, and constraints. The skill here is to help people to find their common ground and build coalitions around the work that can be done together. System stewards have to be able to embrace difference and hold people through conflict in order to help them work purposefully and productively together. This includes helping people to see what they can uniquely bring to the table.

"[We work to] surface awareness of there being a system and the importance of people understanding their own role in relation to others."

– Julian Penton, Hartlepower Community Trust

"We have helped to connect the system by hosting events and intentionally inviting a broad and unusual range of people that might never normally be in a room together. We have also invited people to bespoke conversations about topics we are interested in, simply to offer a space where the territory isn't 'owned' by someone and where the conversation is allowed to take a different form and format. These have all been some of our best catalysing conversations that have kick-started or changed the shape of coproduced work."

– Jo Underwood, Gloucestershire Healthier Communities Together

Enabling shared learning

Creating a culture of collective learning that enables ongoing adaptation and improvement.

Working in complexity requires constant exploration and problem solving. Rather than sticking to a rigid plan, we need to be constantly reflecting and adapting based on what we're learning and the changing context around us. System stewards help create a learning culture and the infrastructure to support this as a route to improving outcomes.

Fostering a learning culture typically involves creating opportunities for people to be curious and become more comfortable with not knowing – developing the ability to sit with questions rather than immediately jump to solutions. This includes helping people to reflect on their own positionality and be open to exploring different experiences and perspectives. Collective sensemaking can be an important enabler of this – an approach that involves people coming together to make sense of data and insight to identify patterns and implications. The aim is to involve multiple and diverse perspectives in synthesising information and drawing conclusions to foster curiosity, deepen understanding, and enable more effective responses.

Creating the infrastructure to support learning can involve bringing together data across the system to enable collective sensemaking, convening reflective spaces, and coordinating action learning cycles to help partners to make use of existing service or programme data, and to test and embed new ways of working. Experiential approaches are often the most impactful way to help people see the benefits of learning, and so involving a wide range of people in these opportunities is key.

System stewards also help create the relationships and infrastructure to connect learning across different parts and levels of a system – horizontally and vertically – for example, ensuring a flow of insight between practitioners and strategic decision-making forums so that practitioner insight informs decisions, and decision makers can help address system-wide barriers.

“Stewardship requires us to change our minds everyday.”

– Lela Kogbara, Place Matters

“We need spaces to be in ‘unknowing’ together – and figuring out a way together. Dialogue is a way to embed equity and begin personalisation.”

– Civil society stewardship learning group

“When doing new work the emotional and cognitive load is high. At the same time that the new is being ‘held’ it can be very difficult to explain to others exactly what is being ‘done’, especially because of the relational emphasis in the work. The ‘business as usual’ expectation is to have very clear plans and delivery, mapped out with certainty – even though when investigated this certainty proves to be a false security. Within the team doing the work, uncertainty has to be managed well, not seeking to arrive at certainty too quickly, but using the drive for certainty to push the work forwards.”

– Matt Bell, Plymouth Octopus Project

Rebalancing power

Addressing power imbalances to increase the voice and agency of those who are least heard.

One of the most fundamental shifts required to create healthier systems is a move towards more equal power dynamics. People and communities, and the people that directly support them, need far more voice and agency if systems are to serve them better.

System stewards help centre the voice of those with lived experience (or people who are not thriving in the existing system) so that decision making happens closer to the people who are directly impacted. This is about listening to these voices, bringing people into the conversation in an appropriately supported way, and playing a bridging role to ensure the wider system hears and values these perspectives, acts on them, and embeds ongoing processes for co-production. This includes reimagining exclusionary power structures so that marginalised voices are centred, not just invited.⁴

In the spaces they convene, stewards play an important role in creating opportunities to collectively identify and work to address systemic oppression that creates inequitable patterns in outcomes. Personalised support that takes an intersectional lens is crucial, and we also need to create space to identify the underlying systemic causes of inequity (for example, relating to race, disability, and class) rather than seeing them as individualised problems.

Brent Care Journeys has an intentional focus on *“transparency about who is powerful and who has been disempowered; bravery around how to disrupt and redress that.”* This both helps enable individual young people (especially those who are least heard) to experience more meaningful relationships, and embeds deep change through the creation of structures and ways of working across Brent that give more power and agency to care-experienced young people.

“Emboldened by our pillar to redistribute power we facilitated collaborative experiences between these stakeholders which disrupted and inverted power and authority. Effort was invested here so that systems could learn together on account of working within a flatter structure where all routes to and types of expertise (learned and lived) were of equal value.”

– Anna Willows, Brent Care Journeys, Barnardos

Sometimes system stewards can be nervous about hoarding power. However, power is not zero sum and the role of steward is to help increase collective power. To do this, whether you're a commissioner or a charity, as a steward, it's about making the most of the power and legitimacy you *do* have to address power imbalances in the system. This means helping increase the voice and agency of those who have least power, and harnessing the collective power of people and organisations across a system to create change together. Stewards should continually reflect and seek feedback on their legitimacy and how to use their power in an enabling way.

⁴ See our Human Learning Systems equity resources for more.

"Our role as stewards is to make sure the right people are in the room having the conversation. And if it's always us, then we have no legitimacy because we can't speak for every situation. So our legitimacy is the effectiveness by which we get the right people in the room, and that starts to build a track record and trust. I mean [...] this is all about relationships. And we have to keep going wider and, and adding the right people rather than just the same faces."

– Avril McIntyre, BD Collective

Fostering hope and collective responsibility

Helping people imagine the possibility of better futures and creating shared accountability for change.

"It's about challenge with empathy. Often the barriers we face are human created. We need to support actors to reconsider and see things from different perspectives to open up new possibility. Things can change. They are not fixed, they are within our gift to change."

– Civil Society stewardship learning group.

Nurturing healthier systems requires reflection and deep work to reimagine existing systems. Often it requires slowing down to develop new perspectives and approaches, rather than defaulting to what's always been done. This is not at odds with taking action and shifting day-to-day practice. Action that emerges from stewardship approaches might be in the form of collective programmes of work, running small experiments and, most importantly, practicing and modelling stewardship behaviours as part of day-to-day roles. This can all contribute to longer term systemic change.

Stewards play an important role in helping people move to action in these ways. Fostering a sense of hope is part of this – there needs to be room for anger and frustration, and stewards play a key role in harnessing this to help people see new opportunities and identify what's possible individually and collectively. This is about supporting people to step into their agency and also about putting a focus on collective responsibility. Stewards are not responsible for doing all the work, they are responsible for helping groups work together with shared accountability – making best use of the power and resources that exist within the system to work towards better outcomes. Whatever our position in the system and however much formal authority we have, we can all be part of making change.

"We are all accountable – stewards focus on that. It's very clear that everyone in the system is responsible and accountable."

– Katie Fleeman, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Principles for practising system stewardship

"The main thing is about mindset. I think going into this work, being open to collaborate, recognising that it does take a lot of hard work and graft, but also staying true to why you're working in this way and allowing that to be the thing that really fuels you and fuels us to continue doing this work."

– Lola Akindoyin, Hackney Council

Based on our research, we've identified a set of principles which we offer as a compass to help guide stewardship.

1. **Be collaborative:** Help everyone in the system to understand it better and to connect with each other. Don't underestimate the value of time spent connecting and understanding.
2. **Be purposeful:** Keep returning to core purpose and positive outcomes for people. Serve the outcomes of the system, not your own needs or those of individual organisations.
3. **Be curious:** Never miss an opportunity to surface insight. Follow your curiosity. Don't be afraid to not know the answer. In fact, always question certainty.
4. **Be patient:** Don't worry if not everyone's with you from the start. Play the long game, start with fellow travellers and keep bringing new people in.
5. **Be human:** Behave with honesty and authenticity. Don't sit in your office; get out, meet people, and get to know what makes them tick.
6. **Be fractal:** In the spaces you convene, model the behaviours you want to see in the wider system. Stewardship behaviours can spread virally.
7. **Be brave:** Don't be afraid to cross boundaries, take risks, and question rules if this can shift something that is preventing change.
8. **Be equitable:** Continually redistribute power and resources. Keep asking who is not 'in the room' and which perspectives are missing.
9. **Be hopeful:** Balance ambition with pragmatism; recognise small achievements to foster hope, but make space for anger.
10. **Be humble:** Don't see yourself as indispensable. Know when to step back. Recognise the emotional toll of the work and practise self-care.

"Emotional resilience is so important for stewardship when bringing very different perspectives together where there can be historic and current conflict. Patience, hope and persistence is key – it's in the darkest moments when it all seems to be falling apart, that the biggest breakthroughs often happen"

– Kathleen Kelly, Local Motion

Role description for a system steward

"It's the person who connects the system to more of itself. It's always someone who's not at the top of the pile. Someone in the middle making things happen. They often don't have stewardship officially in their job title but everyone knows who they are. They are passionate, person-centred, not egotistical. Projects I've worked on that have failed have lacked this person."

– Diana Hekerem, NHS Healthcare Improvement Scotland

There are a growing number of places where a system steward or similar role has been created and recruited. We were curious to know more about what capabilities and tasks were seen as important so we have taken a look at some relevant job descriptions and created an example Role Description for an imaginary system steward.

We recognise that in reality this role might not sit with one person or be created as a specific job; the tasks and responsibilities might be shared across several people; and that often system stewards are creating their own role as they go along. In future, we'd like to see more of these roles being created, funded and recruited.

[Read our illustrative role description for an imaginary system steward.](#)

The value and impact of stewardship

“Making visible the invisible and the not valued, valued...Even when it doesn't have tangible outcomes – how can we value it? How can we articulate the difference it makes and give it credibility. Grow the field, make it visible and valued. We don't have the language for it – it's so upstream, but we're always focused on downstream.”

– Sally Byng, Barnwood Trust

Collaboration and relational working often seem like a nice to have, rather than an essential, particularly in contexts where everyone is working at full stretch to get their jobs done and provide essential services. The value of the system stewardship role, when set against the pressing need for resources to support frontline work, can be hard to evidence. There is an ongoing issue when it comes to the funding of stewardship. As resources and time become ever more scarce, system stewardship may seem like a luxury we can't afford.

Our conversations and examples of practice suggest the opposite. Collaboration and cross-system working are essential to avoid wasting scarce resources, duplication of effort and system failure – with its silo working and continual failure to address root problems and meet people's real needs. Meaningful learning at all levels of the system is essential in helping to constantly improve the support practitioners provide and the way they are supported. This work can literally save lives.

“When we came across the Human Learning Systems work we were very excited, particularly about the term ‘System Steward’. Finally, someone else was describing our working methods which brought a sense of validation... The results of our work are not always visible – things happen in people's minds and organisations that we don't see – we are putting a lot of effort into methods to find out some of the impact we've had, although we'll never know it all.”

– Surrey Youth Focus

How are people measuring or capturing the impact of stewardship?

Measuring and capturing the impact of System Stewardship can be challenging. The work is often several steps removed from direct service delivery, and rooted in relationships and learning. Despite this, people and places are finding creative, authentic and practical ways to understand and communicate the value and impact of their work.

Plymouth is leading the way in the development of HLS, and in testing various methods for evaluating the broader impacts of whole system and HLS approaches. . You can read more about the establishment of the Plymouth Alliance in [this case study](#).

Ripple Effect Mapping

[Ripple Effect Mapping](#) (REM) is being used as a participatory approach to follow and understand the wider impacts of systems change efforts. It brings together stakeholders to reflect on what's changed, who has been impacted (or not), and how learning and relationships have evolved over time. The method values contribution over attribution, helping surface both intended and unintended outcomes, and allowing participants to see where their work fits within the wider system.

REM is being used to [evaluate Thrive Plymouth](#), which is Plymouth's approach to tackling health inequalities. Thrive is run by the public health team but consists of a network of organisations and individuals convened from across the city, who are all committed to addressing the unfair health outcomes between communities and improving the wellbeing of Plymouth residents. Thrive Plymouth is using a REM approach to evaluate the overall approach and specific themes and interventions. There will be at least one REM exercise per year as well as training to enable wider use of the approach amongst network members.

Comparing outcomes

Another evaluation method being used is to compare outcomes for one group of people who benefitted from a stewardship approach, compared to another that didn't. The Plymouth [Creative Solutions Forum](#) aims to provide a multi-disciplinary response, designing bespoke packages of care, enabling risk sharing between agencies and facilitating better outcomes for people experiencing homelessness and substance misuse, than could be achieved with a 'usual care' approach. While its primary aim is to find support solutions for people with complex needs, it also aims to share and encourage the development of learning, good practice, knowledge, and skills across the city in both community and targeted services. The key to its success seems to be in how the 'chair' fosters a collegiate, supportive, and open environment with a 'no blame culture'.

The evaluation approach taken by the [Plymouth Health Determinants Research Collaboration](#) is soon to be published, and will demonstrate that taking a stewardship approach has been literally life-saving. The evaluation of Plymouth's Creative Solutions Forum has demonstrated that this approach has prevented avoidable deaths through its multi-agency, learning, 'no blame' approach to designing support for people with complex needs and at high risk for whom standardised services do not work.

I think, (name), who obviously chairs the meeting, does a really good job of holding that space and for it to feel like it's a really kind, welcoming environment for people to present their case and kind of there's no stupid questions type thing. And I think he is very good at supporting or challenging organisations to look at changing their thresholds so that it does meet the needs of the person.

– Creative Solutions Forum practitioner

It's incredibly person centred. It's about the rights of the person. We leave our political and organisational agendas at the doorstep and everybody there (is) expected to come with the offer of something, whether that be psychological support of the people in the meeting, whether it is just putting an idea out there, whether it's offering a solutions focused plan, whether it's offering a physical intervention. But the plan is that everybody around that table is there for that person and that person alone and takes any restraints of their organisation away at the door, to help that person move forward in a safe way.

– Creative Solutions Forum practitioner

Storytelling

At Surrey Youth Focus, a focus on values-led impact has emerged and been developed – grounded in their values of connect, trust, hope, belong, and believe. Using tools like impact statements, Surrey Youth Focus is articulating the difference it makes across three core outcomes: connection and relationships, collaborative learning, and collective impact. Alongside quantitative data on attendance numbers and confidence shifts (which participants score), they deliberately layer in stories and experiential feedback to build a more human, meaningful picture of their impact – one that they hope speaks to both funders and the Surrey Youth Focus team themselves.

"[Surrey Youth Focus has] helped us to harness stronger relationships with like-minded charities and have access to key people in the public sector, this has enabled us to identify and target key people who would be beneficial to our organisation. By forming relationships, [we have] been able to share ideas and concerns generally, sharing documents and in some cases benchmarking."

– Charity CEO, via Surrey Youth Focus

"I think the steward post should be mainstreamed into everything we do as system leaders, not just commissioning but delivery and assurance going forward ... the lens they bring reminds us every day why we do our jobs."

– Health Leader / Commissioner, via Surrey Youth Focus

Systems change maturity model

Save the Children UK's [Early Learning Communities](#) (ELC) programme takes a stewardship approach to improving early learning outcomes for children growing up in poverty in Bettws (Newport), Feltham (London), Margate, and Sheffield. The focus of Early Learning Communities is to convene and coordinate key partners from across local early learning systems, develop a shared vision for how those early learning systems need to change, and work together to create this change.

At the start, it was challenging for the ELC programme to develop a shared understanding of systems change, and to identify and communicate what change was

happening as a result of the stewardship work in each area. As evaluation and learning partner alongside NPC, Collaborate developed a [system change maturity model](#) to help clarify the system conditions the programme aimed to nurture, and provide a way to understand and learn from change in these conditions over time. The ELCs have gone on to continue using the model to evaluate progress, train staff, communicate their work to partners, and influence locally.

Financial evaluation

The British Science Association's (BSA's) [Ideas Fund](#) team have considered the financial value of a stewardship approach to funding. They created the role of Development Coordinator, a brokerage role which sits between the BSA as funder and local community groups being invited to apply for funding for equitable community-research collaborations. The Ideas Fund works in four places across the UK and in each place there is a Development Coordinator role, sometimes split across two people and/or organisations.

Reflecting recently on the value of the role, the team have recognised how essential it has been in helping them to understand the local system, take risks as a funder, create trust and support deep learning. Being connected into wider networks, and also connecting among others was highly valued by grantholders. Development Coordinators brokered relationships at multiple levels: between the Fund and the projects, between community groups and researchers, between projects themselves, and between projects and local or even national activity and opportunities. This has added value to the projects and their impact, enabling new opportunities and partnerships to emerge. Working alongside a team of locally based Development Coordinators has of course come at a cost to the Fund, costing on average the equivalent of one large grant in each area. The Ideas Fund team believe this investment in support and connection for projects has been more than justified by the added value it has brought to the grantees and the local system.

"We've seen this connectedness described in various ways – e.g. taking a systems approach or 'weaving' - and the ability to identify and knit together people and groups who might find common ground for collaboration has been a key part of the work of the broker alongside the more personalised support and encouragement."

– Ideas Fund Team

What do people say about the value of system stewardship?

System stewards help to build strong relationships

Strong relationships create trust, allow for courageous conversations and provide a foundation that holds firm during uncertainty and conflict. Relationships can outlast projects and enable deeper, longer term change.

For example: Healthy Communities Together Gloucestershire's "Structures of Togetherness" event brought people across the system together not around a predefined agenda, but to connect around shared humanity and curiosity. The event enabled participants to hear each other's experiences, fostering deeper understanding and empathy. Over time, those in the partnership have found that spending time together, without the pressure of specific deliverables, has allowed them to practice the skills of complexity-informed working. The relationships built in these spaces, and nurtured over time, are helping to shift the systems they operate within, even as they remain "under the ground," supporting larger changes in health outcomes across Gloucestershire.

"We believe HOW we work alongside each other is important to focus on because initiatives and projects run their course, but connection and trust endure, forming the foundations for deeper and more radical change."

– Jo Underwood, Healthy Communities Together Gloucestershire

System stewards bring people together to learn and build shared understanding

When people across a system come together to interpret challenges and explore solutions collectively, it creates a richer and more holistic idea of what's needed. The shared understanding built in these spaces can increase the likelihood of designing more effective approaches and interventions.

For example: during the commissioning of the [Plymouth Alliance](#), there was an Open Space visioning event held on the theme of 'Your Needs. Your Service', asking 'What does a great multiple needs service for Plymouth look like and how can we work together to make it happen?' The 2.5 day event was attended by a total of 148 people, of whom 40 were people who use 'multiple needs' services (homelessness, substance misuse, ex-offending & mental ill-health) across Plymouth. Learning continues to be an integral part of 'the work' of the alliance occurring in both formal and informal spaces, at different levels within and across organisations, and involving different groups of people. On an informal level learning happens through regular catch-ups between the core leadership team of a number of organisations, including those both within and outside the alliance.

"We invite people to spend time in our system and services, we share the stories we have gathered through Appreciative Enquiry and we encourage people to feel part of our story"

– Alliance Leadership Team member

For example: in 2019 the Scottish Government started moving to a more locally relevant, integrated and person-centred approach to commissioning employability services, informed by the voices of those who seek support. The [Opportunities Fife Partnership](#) invested resource in working with people who use services as well as service providers to co-produce a large-scale series of Collaborative Conversations and a survey during lockdown 2020. The findings led to a fundamental shift in how employability services in the area are delivered, commissioned and overseen. The journey has been started, but the learning is ongoing.

'A huge effort was made to plan and prepare for these meetings. I must admit to impatiently wishing we could 'just get on with it'. However, it proved time well spent, gradually encouraging people to take part, learning to listen and facilitate without leading. This was the basis of all subsequent work.'

– No-one Left Behind Case Study

'Involving people with lived experience was vital in the redesign of employment services and strategy in Fife. Traditional measures of success in employability focus on what services do and numbers of people supported. However people on their journey to work spoke about the importance, or lack, of feeling respected, trusted and hopeful: Basically how someone is treated is often the thing that makes the biggest difference. This led to a fundamental change in how we commissioned and oversaw employability service delivery in Fife, as well as investment in training for staff to grow delivery of strengths-based, solution-focussed services.'

– Pegs Bailey, Fife No One Left Behind

System stewards help to redistribute power and develop more equitable forms of governance and accountability

System stewardship can bring a focus to power, encouraging traditional hierarchies to be challenged and power to be shared with people who are structurally disempowered. Redistribution of power can lead to better-designed support and stronger communities who are more able to support people.

For example: in Gateshead, the Community Bridgebuilders initiative is challenging and reimagining who gets to make decisions and how power is shared. Gateshead Community Bridgebuilders is a team of individuals rooted in their communities. With funding from the Lankelly Chase Foundation and in collaboration with the Collective Impact Agency, the Bridgebuilders hold an annual budget which it uses to run experiments that build the power of local communities and challenge the systems that marginalise.

"[Gateshead Community Bridgebuilders] is a relational collaboration of concrete individuals whose lived experience of disadvantage and marginalisation, and whose networks of personal relationships across their community, are what 'qualify' them to be part of this team. [...] This work has taken a body of people and a network of communities who are normally excluded from power and decision-making and has supported them to realise and step into their own power. The growth and development of the Bridgebuilders themselves has been a sight to behold. The communities of which the Bridgebuilders are a part have been able to develop and commence a number of initiatives that they care about. These include a Saturday School for children from migrant communities, a d/Deaf Festival led by young people, a peer support network for refugees and asylum seekers, a language barriers inquiry, and many more things."

– Gateshead Community Bridge Builders

System stewards model a different way of working, which can shift culture and behaviours across the wider system

When stewards work differently – building trust, sharing power, listening deeply, and learning together – they act as an example of what's possible, influencing the norms, behaviours and culture of the wider system around them. By embodying these 'new' ways of working, stewards can inspire and legitimise change across the system.

For example: Hackney Council is one of Sport England's place partners working on a whole systems approach to reducing physical inactivity. Their work over the last 5 years has been a learning journey, through which they've sought to understand the barriers to being active in Hackney and how these can be addressed.

The Hackney team recognised early in the programme that they wanted to approach this challenge differently. Rather than launching into delivery, they spent time building relationships with local residents, community groups and organisations and partners across the council and NHS. Through their approach they sought to understand the place deeply, uncovering how wider inequalities shape people's experiences and opportunities to be active. As the programme team's understanding grew, so did their approach, becoming increasingly collaborative and tailored to Hackney's local context.

One of Hackney's key areas of focus was influencing system partners. Through the programme, some partners who hadn't previously seen their role in this kind of work began to engage, and new relationships formed across sectors as a sense of shared purpose developed. Over time, the programme team have seen partners and colleagues think differently about how the system operates – with shifts towards a more open, connected and human way of working.

"The emphasis on process learning is almost the most necessary and valuable in helping to understand the steps that help to create change and we have seen colleagues challenge their own thinking and respond positively to the need for developing more relational ways of working."

– Lola Akindoyin, Hackney Council

"It's improved our programme and helped us to start demonstrating the value of working in this way and taking a HLS approach when seeking to reduce inequalities in physical activity. It has strengthened our confidence to keep working in this way and is beginning to give us the framing around how to articulate our work. It has provided richer and more detailed insight that has continued to shape and improve our approach and the work that we're doing together. And most importantly, it is reaching the people who are our primary focus and leading to improved outcomes for those who are least likely to be active."

– Lola Akindoyin, Hackney Council

System stewards help to reduce competition and make the best use of limited resources

"Elinor Ostrom found that when those who use resources are collectively responsible for them, people more naturally collaborate and cooperate to use resources sustainably for everyone's benefit. Importantly, it is those directly using or requesting the resources that are best placed to be the stewards."

– Dr Tim Wilson and Ayesha Janjua⁵

In conditions of scarcity, there is an ever greater need to collaborate and transform systems to make best use of shared resources, so that they produce better outcomes. System stewardship is a necessary practice and skill in ensuring this happens, alongside the collaborative governance, shared data, adaptive learning, and system mapping and analysis which are needed to work systemically and collaboratively.

For example: in 2021, [Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System](#) introduced a stewardship approach, bringing together teams of health and care staff within a care area, to get the best value from shared health and care resources. Ageing Well Stewards identified a problem in frailty services with incorrect data and limited staff tools available to ensure that patients were receiving best practice care. Stewards co-designed a new assessment tool, focusing on the use of seven high impact personalised actions. This was introduced within a new electronic Frailty Care Co-ordination system, to be used across Primary Care Networks, community teams, hospices, dementia teams and virtual wards. This led to a 50% reduction in older people with more than 3 unplanned hospital admissions in their last 90 days of life and a 5% reduction in 30-day hospital readmission rates.

"Uniting colleagues under a whole-person culture, using integrated tools so partners seamlessly collaborate for better patient outcomes, as opposed to siloed organisational practice. The real-time access to the same data, no matter what team you're in or who you work for, is driving new ideas too. What a boost to morale!"

– Ageing Well Steward

System stewards facilitate action towards shared goals and outcomes

"A few times we have seen people being attracted into a room because there's a little bit of money for them to collectively agree how to spend. However, once they are in the room, they realise that between them they can solve the issue together without the money!"

– Civil Society Stewardship Group

Complex challenges don't sit within the remit of a single organisation or sector. Stewardship can bring people together across boundaries to align around a common purpose, share responsibility, and act collectively. This kind of collaboration creates the conditions for more

⁵ <https://healthcareleadernews.com/views/what-is-stewardship-and-why-does-it-matter-to-icbs/>

joined-up, effective, and lasting responses to the challenges that matter most to communities.

For example: Diabetes Scotland, part of the larger Diabetes UK charity, has been working closely with local organisations in Inverclyde to address type 2 diabetes prevention and the social determinants of health. As part of their work, Diabetes Scotland convened gatherings which brought together stakeholders from statutory and voluntary organisations. Through these events new connections were built and existing relationships were re-energised, with the events creating a platform for learning and co-creation. One such collaboration led to postpartum buggy walks being offered to women diagnosed with gestational diabetes.

This offer was born out of conversations and shared learning that took place during Diabetes Scotland gatherings, illustrating how creating space for dialogue and experimentation can lead to innovative practices and in this case, a 'completely new initiative'.

"Simply providing the space and opportunity to meet and creating a learning environment, initiated new conversations and opportunities for experiments in the local system." – Judith Kennon, Diabetes UK

Where next for system stewardship?

We've compiled this resource because we believe that stewardship is an essential practice for nurturing healthier systems that enable people and places to flourish. We want to help it grow through sharing inspiration and examples.

In this guide, we've focused on those who practice stewardship, however, it's also important to acknowledge the wider recognition and support needed to enable stewardship. We've heard examples where people have been playing valuable stewardship roles but they've been undermined by behaviours or lack of backing from other parts of the system, especially those with the most formal power. It is important that managers of those who practice stewardship provide permission and help create space and time for people to practice stewardship, and for funders, commissioners and public services to recognise and resource this important role.

Key questions we are interested in collaborating with others to explore include:

- How to demonstrate the impact and value of stewardship.
- How to increase resourcing and funding of stewardship.
- How organisations enable stewardship, and particularly take a new approach to assessing and managing risk.
- How stewardship evolves over time, including how to grow shared stewardship practices across places and systems.
- How stewards navigate questions of power and legitimacy.
- How to steward learning effectively both vertically and horizontally in a system.
- What support stewards need to play this role effectively.
- What conditions are required to enable stewardship to flourish.

Getting started

- Zoom out, ask yourself who's part of the system? How might you start a conversation with others in the system to explore your collective understanding? You may find tools like [Lankelly Chase's system behaviours](#) helpful.
- Get talking. Ideally informally over a cup of tea and cake! Find ways to understand each other's motivations, constraints and contexts.
- Start asking how healthy your system is and what conditions you need to build to enable better outcomes. Test the question on others. Figure out how you might explore it.
- Explore your own legitimacy and positionality. What legitimacy do you have to act as system steward? Where do you derive power from and how can you use your power mindfully?
- Start somewhere. Where can you start testing something different, even if on a small scale? Can you approach a challenge more collaboratively with partners, shifting normal meeting structures and dynamics to centre relationships more, creating space for practitioners to reflect on their learning and test new ways of doing things.

"What does it look like? It looks like one meeting. Have a meeting and explore. That is the start of so many things. Don't do a two year project plan. You don't need to go and try and get masses of resources. Get a group of like-minded people together and start having a conversation and then see if there's something in this thing and evolve it. That would be my tip."

– Cate Newnes-Smith, Surrey Youth Focus

Examples of system stewardship

Plymouth Octopus Project

[Plymouth Octopus Project POP](#) is a collective in Plymouth dedicated to supporting communities, citizen action, and grassroots activity. Their work is rooted in a decade of building networks, offering capacity support, experimenting with grant-making, and being a voice of strategic change. POP aims to fulfil two roles in Plymouth. As Grassroots Champion they connect, support, and amplify the voice of communities and the grassroots, so that people can shape and improve the places in which they live. As system stewards, or what they call System Convener, they 'bring together different sectors, opinions and perspectives into liminal space to find shared ways forward, with an aim for Plymouth to be able to demonstrate more just, fairer, and greener approaches in the work we do.' Over the last 3.5 years POP say they have been learning how to collaborate and how to go from listening to influencing the 'system', which they define as Plymouth, the place.

For example, POP convenes '[Belong in Plymouth](#)', which aims to create a movement to make Plymouth a city where no one feels forgotten, a city that is inclusive, welcoming, and supportive of all its residents. The goal is to bring people together to share ideas, resources, and experiences that will help build a stronger, more connected community. 'Belong in Plymouth' is a partnership between the health sector, the local authority and the voluntary sector. Its focus is on tackling loneliness and social isolation and creating a city where everybody feels like they belong. [The work is very emergent, based around experimentation, building trust, learning and relationships.](#)

"For POP, the way forward is through a networked vision of city-wide leadership. Occupying liminal space to nurture systemic and incremental change requires new ways of working. We believe those ways of working will need to prioritise relationships above all. We can't wait for a charismatic leader or an optimised organisation to lead, everyone has leadership capacity and networks can harness that... They create welcoming liminal spaces as they invite people into a wider purpose than any organisation can hold."

– Simon Travers, POP [blog](#)

Barnwood Trust

[Barnwood Trust](#) is charitable foundation based in Gloucestershire that describes itself as an 'agent of social change' across the county. Barnwood draws its income from a portfolio of investments and uses its funds to benefit disabled people and people with mental health conditions in Gloucestershire.

Previously a more traditional grant making foundation, in recent years Barnwood has explored its broader role as an agent of social change. Barnwood [sees their role](#) not only as stewarding money but also the capacity, expertise and connections to make change in

Gloucestershire for disability and mental health. This offers opportunities to get upstream and focus on working towards a future in which disabled people and people with mental health conditions are [equal, empowered and their rights are upheld](#).

Building relationships and fostering connection is at the heart of Barnwood's work. They describe their approach as listening, learning, funding, and influencing to make change. They do this through: *"bringing people together to explore big ideas, listen and add clout where we can, to help make changes happen. Together, we have a chance to build belonging and make a difference in the life of the county."*

One example of playing a stewardship role in practice is its work to improve short breaks for disabled young people across the County. In 2023, Barnwood Trust [published research](#) on accessing and delivering short breaks and respite care services in Gloucestershire. The study included insights from parent-carers, disabled young people, and service providers. Based on this research, Barnwood Trust funded six short-break projects across the county, co-designed with parent-carers and disabled young people. This generated valuable insights about better practices for delivering and commissioning short breaks which revealed opportunities for innovation. This was the starting point for a [new collaboration](#) with Gloucestershire Children's Services, Gloucestershire VCS Alliance and short breaks providers to reimagine the commissioning of short breaks by the County Council. Convening shared learning spaces is a key part of this work.

"Stewardship is a critical way of being able to deliver on our purpose. Our goals are about opportunity, inclusion and rights. And so in everything we're doing, we're looking to create the conditions for those, which may mean that we don't work directly with disabled people and people with mental health conditions, but with the system as a whole..."

– Sally Byng, Barnwood Trust

Mid and South Essex ICS

The [Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System](#) promises to *'work together for better lives'*. This means delivering the Triple Aim: improved population health, improved quality of care and better, and more equitable and sustainable use of resources. To enable this they are aiming to engender a culture of stewardship and have developed a programme to support this since April 2021, which involves bringing together teams of health and care staff within a care area, to get the best value from shared health and care resources.

Their approach to stewardship is based on Elinor Ostrom's Noble Prize winning work on stewardship of common resources. The Stewardship Programme reflects learning that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic; in the early phases of the pandemic, partners focussed on patients' specific needs and worked in ways that transcended organisational boundaries. There was a desire to build on this, developing a programme that engages clinical and multi-professional leaders across organisations, and aims to join up resources and align accountabilities accordingly. This drew on ideas from the article: "Developing a

culture of stewardship: how to prevent the Tragedy of the Commons in universal health systems” .

The stewardship approach involves forming teams that bring together perspectives from across the whole cycle of care to lead and support the ICS in stewarding resources better. There are now stewardship groups in 10 out of 25 care areas tasked with identifying opportunities where evidence-based practice and more joined-up working can improve quality and make best use of the available health and care resources (i.e. pooled resources between all organisations) on outcomes that matter most to individual patients and to the whole population. Results from the first 10 stewardship teams have been promising – with positive impacts on hospital capacity, personalised care and shifting to community care options.

“Uniting colleagues under a whole-person culture, using integrated tools so partners seamlessly collaborate for better patient outcomes, as opposed to siloed organisational practice. The real-time access to the same data, no matter what team you’re in or who you work for, is driving new ideas too. What a boost to morale!”

– Ageing Well Steward

“I think in a system like ours where you’ve got people working across several different sectors, 15 different organisations... this is a really useful chance to come together so that everybody’s got visibility of the huge amount of stuff that we’re all doing, in our different care areas.”

– Dr Pete Scolding, Essex

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

[The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority](#) (LCRCA) is rethinking how homelessness services are commissioned and monitored across its six local authority areas. Adopting an HLS approach, LCRCA is moving away from traditional contract management and towards a stewardship model that emphasises learning, collaboration and meaningful outcomes for individuals.

With no statutory duty to provide homelessness services, LCRCA has used this flexibility to co-design support with local partners and people with lived experience. Commissioning is seen as a tool for learning and improving outcomes rather than having a narrow focus on performance metrics.

At the heart of this approach is a reimagined contract monitoring role – now positioned using a system stewardship approach. This role involves actively bringing together service providers and system partners to understand what’s really happening on the ground. They facilitate honest conversations, helping partners identify what works, where barriers exist, and how to unblock them together. The stewardship role enables LCRCA to develop services that are adaptable to different local contexts and responsive to the complexities people face.

"What we don't want to do is fund services and work with them and just contract monitor them every 6 months and say, right, everything's fine, their outcomes are great. We're getting reports, but actually we're not seeing the system change. We're not seeing the people able to access services who need them. So a lot of what we try and do is work with our providers, with our partners, and we bring those actors together. To have meaningful conversations that are good and bad. [...] It is hard work and it takes time, but this is the most rewarding thing I've ever got involved in in 30 years of [working] in homelessness."

– Katie Fleeman, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

Hackney Council: A whole systems approach to tackling physical activity inequalities

[Hackney Council](#) is one of Sport England's place partners working on a whole systems approach to reducing physical inactivity. Over the last five years, Hackney Council's approach has shifted from traditional programme management to a more adaptive, learning-driven way of working that centres lived experience and long-term relationship-building.

At the start of Hackney Council's work on the programme, they found that much of the local narrative focused on individual behaviour change – assuming people simply needed to make different choices to become more active. The Council team realised that this didn't reflect the wider factors influencing people's lives. In response, they began by listening – creating spaces for community members to share experiences, frustrations, and aspirations, even when these didn't focus on physical activity directly.

The Council's approach has also involved a shift in how they see their role, towards one which focuses on convening, relationship-building, and supporting collaboration across the system. They stand back to see the bigger picture, notice where connections could be made, and foster relationships over time, recognising that change is a gradual process, requiring patience, adaptability, and ongoing commitment.

"At the heart of what we were doing is [...] recognising that the only way really to move things forward would be by working together."

– Lola Akindoyin, Hackney Council

Gloucestershire Healthy Communities Together

[Gloucestershire Healthy Communities Together](#) (HCT) is a cross-sector partnership focused on long-term system change to address health inequalities. Bringing together leaders and practitioners from the NHS, local government and the voluntary and community sector, HCT operates not as a programme with predefined deliverables, but as a collaborative effort to shift relationships, behaviours and ways of working across the system.

Part of the national *Healthy Communities Together* programme led by The King's Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund, Gloucestershire HCT made a deliberate choice to step away from traditional models of delivery and instead focus on building the foundations for connection, trust, and shared learning.

While Gloucestershire HCT itself doesn't directly deliver change, it enables it. Gloucestershire HCT describes its role as being "in the substrate" – not always visible, but supporting the conditions in which change can take root and grow. Through what they call their "structures of togetherness", the partnership has modelled what it looks like to steward a system by focusing on relationships first, and staying with complexity rather than trying to control it.

"our top tip is to 'embrace not knowing' and probably also 'spend time not knowing together'"

– Jo Underwood, Gloucestershire HCT

Surrey Youth Focus

[Surrey Youth Focus](#) is a collaboration charity working across the public and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sectors to improve outcomes for children and young people in Surrey. Their work is underpinned by a system stewardship approach and focuses on nurturing the health of the system – building and enabling relationships, collaborative learning and collective action – to create the conditions for long-term change.

Surrey Youth Focus plays a bridging role across the children's system. It supports children and youth charities and community organisations, and also it engages directly with statutory bodies such as Surrey County Council, NHS organisations, and the police – often representing the VCSE on key strategic boards. Their dual positioning gives the Surrey Youth Focus team a wide view of the system and a unique position to enable cross-sector collaboration.

"I think it's about [...] sprinkling fairy dust across the system. Sometimes the difference we make is through lots and lots and lots of small actions in different places, other times its much bigger activities."

– Cate Newnes-Smith, Surrey Youth Focus

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With thanks to all of the individuals and organisations featured in this resource who have generously shared their learning. Thank you to participants of the Civil Society Stewardship Learning group.

For more on system stewardship, see:

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