



## Profile Summary

Senior leader with a proven track record of design-led transformation, operating model change, and service innovation, balancing strategic leadership with hands-on craft to deliver scalable impact and business value across complex organisations. 📍 Essex, UK

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## RACHEL A. WOOD

### Leadership Style:

visionary | change orientated  
| participative | ideological |

### Skills

- Design, Systemic Service Design and Product Leadership.
- Combining strategic leadership with current hands-on craft.
- Evidence based digital and end-to-end Service Transformation (inc. AI).
- Portfolio & Programme Management.
- Operating Model transition & Change Management.
- Customer & Citizen Journey Management (strategy and 'hands on').
- User Research (UX), Practice based PhD Research (mixed methods), in Design.
- Stakeholder, Governance & Assurance.
- Agile, Lean & Test-and-Learn Delivery (through prototyping).

### Current Board Memberships:

[Global Association of Applied Behavioural Scientists \(GAABS\)](#)  
Editorial Board Member

## Professional Experience

### 2024 to April 2026 - Head of Customer Journey (Maximus UK - Global services to Government) - Remote

- Led service and ecosystem transformation across 53 user, customer and citizen journeys supported by service blueprints (healthcare and employability) in a highly regulated public sector commercial environment.
- Delivered measurable improvements in service trust (+6.75%) and operational effectiveness through evidence-led, user-centred change, and business transformation.
- Senior product leadership (inc. UI/UX) on an employability platform, setting strategic backlog prioritisation and influencing executive decision-making.
- Successfully delivered, defined, and implemented a unified customer and citizen journey roadmap, aligning services with user need, regulation, and organisational priorities.
- Championed end-to-end service improvement with operational teams, embedding ownership, governance, and continuous improvement across delivery teams.
- Embedded the Voice of the Customer (VoC) through user research, UAT, and co-design, ensuring inclusive and compliant outcomes.

### 2020 to 2024 - Service Design Lead (Basildon Council - Local Government services) - Remote

- Led service design performance management through Objectives and Key Results (OKRs).
- Oversaw, built and scaled 33 matrixed service design teams and programmes, spanning user research workshops, prototyping, journey management and service blueprinting, organisational design with end-to-end service transformation and change across digital technologies, policy, and people-centred delivery.
- Successful digitisation (inc. UX) of [case management \(CRM\)](#) and Equality Impact Assessments.

## Professional Strengths

- Leading multidisciplinary and matrix design teams (inc. UX).
- Strategic organisational capability and vision, with programme and portfolio management expertise.
- Inclusive (inc. WCAG), collaborative leader effective across complex stakeholder environments.
- Decisive under pressure, balancing priorities while maintaining delivery.
- High-performance leadership and hands on in agile, and test-and-learn environments, sustaining pace and quality across programmes.
- Strong analytical, written, and presentational skills, with attention to detail and clarity.
- Evidence-led problem-solver enabling confident decisions in complex and regulated contexts.
- Exploring and embedding AI-enabled design workflows, service innovation, and evidence-led decision support within regulated environments.

## Education, Memberships and Volunteering

- [PhD Researcher](#) (Design, Engineering, and Innovation) - Open University (**part time Current**) including design education, 54 prototypes, and research synthesis and communication.
- MSc Forensic Psychology | PGCert Integrated Centre Leadership.
- BSc Psychology | BSc Social Sciences (Social Policy with Criminology).
- Graduate Member - British Psychological Society | Certified Member - GAABS.
- [GAABS Writer and Editor](#).
- Design Research Society - Chair of On-line (UX) Experience (Conf. event 2026).

**Has a portable DBS and is eligible for UK Security Clearance.**

- Established governance through a Council's Service Design Framework and Roadmap, ensuring consistent assurance, compliance, policy adherence, and continuous improvement.
- Led cross-government Service Assessments (Design, GDS Lifecycle and design systems), offering expert assurance and constructive challenge.

### **2015 - 2020 - Service Design and Research Lead (Early Years Alliance - Strategic Partnership with Southend Council and Public Health) - Hybrid**

- Produced and presented health research and evaluations to drive 'test-and-learn' delivery inc. an innovative communication and language service (achieving 7% improvement in outcomes).
- Led a complex portfolio of 30 evidence and science-based (including clinical), and innovative service designs.
- Initiated and led transformational theories of change and logic modelling for a £40m programme, and portfolio of projects.
- Successful execution, publication, and implementation of [Service Design](#), and Evaluation Frameworks.
- Active member of the Senior Programme Team, Boards, and governance groups.

### **2014 - 2015 - Research Lead | Funding Bid Writer (Early Years Alliance - Strategic Partnership with Southend Council) On-Site**

- Led health-based research, and funding bid writing in a small team that successfully obtained £40m for a ten-year early year's programme.
- Led the mobilisation, implementation, and fund mapping for a complex project portfolio (inc. thirty projects).
- Led parenting and health intervention research, and service designs.

### **2004 - 2014 - Leadership and Management - various including Head of Community Development (Estuary Housing Association) On-Site**

- Led a multi-agency team and managed a £250k community development budget.
- Increased service-delivery satisfaction from 70% to 95% and increasing reach to Centre by 20%.
- Successful execution and management of successful high value bids and grant applications (inc. [commissioning of oral history publication](#)).

### **1988 - 2004 - Various senior and higher roles (HM Customs and Excise - Central Government) On-Site**

Civil servant with roles including team and project management, IT service management, web design, procurement, statistical analysis, training and facilitation of workshops and events, and quality management (ISO 9001).