



Profile Summary

Senior leader who has delivered **63** design led end-to-end change. Combining strategic direction, current practice with research, psychology and behavioural science to unlock scalable impact, service transformation, transition, innovation, and measurable business value 📍 Essex, UK

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RACHEL A. WOOD

Leadership Style

visionary | change orientated
| participative | ideological |

Skills (Leadership & Practice)

- 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).
- GDS Service Assessments
- Portfolio & Programme Management.
- Agile, PRINCE2, Lean & Test-and-Learn
- Operating Model transition & Change Management.
- Journey Management and Orchestration (Phygital and Digital).
- User Research (UR/CX/UX).
- [Frameworks development](#) (and embedding).
- Stakeholder management, Governance & Assurance.

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 business 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 validated through external audit 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 (**150** outcomes), 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 the Council 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 (model of good practice).

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 framer and-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.

Research, Practice and Professional Contribution

- Practice based [Doctoral Research](#) with Systemic Design and Co-design practice (PhD Design, Engineering, and Innovation) - Open University (**P/T 2022+**) including design education, mentoring and teaching, prototypes.
- MSc Forensic Psychology | PG Cert Integrated Centre Leadership.
- BSc Psychology | BSc Social Sciences (Social Policy with Criminology).
- Graduate Member - British Psychological Society | Certified Member - GAABS.
- [Design Patterns for Mental Health](#) (Volunteer pattern steward)
- [GAABS Writer and Editor](#).
- [Design Research Society - Service Design Studio Co-Convenor](#)

- Established governance through a Council's Service Design Framework and Roadmap, ensuring consistent assurance, compliance, policy adherence, and continuous improvement.
- Provided coaching and leadership to **50** service design champions.
- Led cross-government Service Assessments (Design, **GDS Lifecycle and compliance**, 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 health), 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%**.
- Practice leadership and education of a student social work unit (Postgraduate and Undergraduate).
- Successful execution and management of successful high value bids and grant applications (inc. [commissioning of oral history publication](#), and community development services).

1988 - 2004 - Various senior and higher roles

(HM Customs and Excise - Central Government) On-Site

Public 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**).