

New System Alliance Directory: Commissioners' guide



The New System Alliance directory of **strengths-based** work is designed to:

Inspire through sharing what's possible within our public service system, despite its flaws

Connect innovators and practitioners of work that aligns to the New System Alliance values

Inform and support commissioners to make more informed and structured decisions

Our public service system is not able to offer consistently effective support to the people who need it most. People who experience inequalities can find those inequalities are also present in the services they try to access, particularly if they don't 'fit the box' of a service or need support from more than one. This is why every area needs a range of person-led and strengths-based services which can rebuild trust and relationships, and develop more human approaches which work for us all.

But strengths-based and relational work which is isolated within deficit-based systems can struggle to create impact. Conversely, where a number of strengths-based approaches are able to connect in an area, their impact can multiply. The directory aims to help commissioners and planners to identify strengths-based alternatives to traditional services, across a wide range of different kinds of work. The nine categories of the Strengths-based Directory are replicated in the **grid below**, which invites you to map your existing work under the three main headings and consider these questions:

- **Do you have some boxes with several examples of work in them, but others which are blank?** If so, it would be worth considering how to use your commissioning, investment and convening capacity to create a more balanced picture.
- **Is your strengths-based work strong in the whole-community column, but weaker in the support column?** Or, is your strengths-based work strong around prevention and early intervention, but weaker around crisis response and long-term support services? If either of those is the case, a goal to consider is to create pathways which remained strengths-based and person-led across the support pathway, as people move in and out of having higher or lower levels of need.
- **Do you have strategic input in becoming a strengths-based area, as well as practical interventions and support services?** If not, there is a risk that you are creating lots of individual support services and projects, but these are not joining up, and you may lack compelling evidence of the impact of your new approaches.

Mayday Trust, Platform and Homeless Network Scotland offer commissioners advice and support with planning, commissioning and supporting strengths-based and person-led work. You can contact us for more advice at info@newsystemalliance.org

Map your Strengths-based Work

People & families seeking support	Organisations or work that's here now Strengths-based work to explore	Community development	Organisations or work that's here now Strengths-based work to explore	Strategic support	Organisations or work that's here now Strengths-based work to explore
People & families in crisis		Place based community work		Support for Organisations & providers	
People & families with long term challenges		Equalities groups & identity groups		Support for Commissioners	
Prevention, resilience and skills		Enterprise, activities & arts		National & sector partnerships, & research	