Learning
Belonging
Doing
Likewise
Our Strategic Frame
Honest
Optimistic
Playful
Authentic
Supportive
Open

Likewise
Our Strategic Frame

For 35 years, we've been showing up for people who need it most. No judgement. No barriers. Just kindness, connection, and practical support.

We want Camden to be a place where everyone belongs. Where no one falls through the cracks.

This strategic frame is intended to shape our work for the coming years, while making space for being adaptable, responsive and human.



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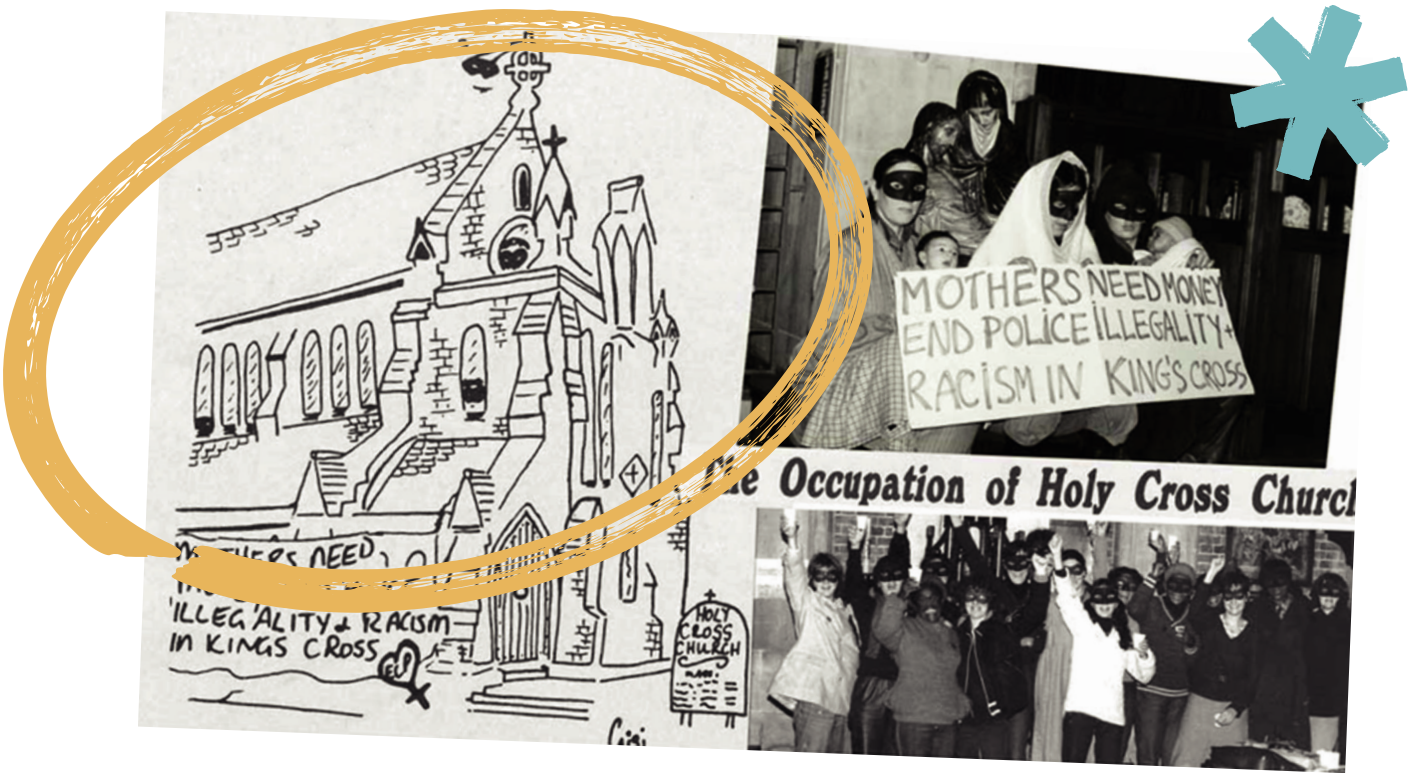
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OUR ROOTS

Likewise was founded in 1988 as the Holy Cross Centre Trust, to support the marginalised, socially excluded communities around Kings Cross. The simple vision at the start was to address the need for companionship, support and a place to meet to have essential human contact. The intention was to create a community space for all people to be safe to be themselves, supported by staff and volunteers.

OUR PURPOSE

Today Likewise exists to create compassionate, human-centred relationships and spaces where people feel valued, accepted, and connected.

We support often isolated or excluded people by building authentic relationships and community together. Through these connections, we nurture wellbeing and inspire systemic change toward a more human, empathetic, and inclusive health and social care system with people at the heart.

OUR VISION

At Likewise, we imagine a vibrant, welcoming community where everyone feels at home. A place where people from all walks of life come together—as neighbours and community members —building real connections, sharing support, and growing alongside each other.

Our dream is a space that runs on the energy and care of the people who fill it, where the community truly owns it. By sharing what we do and standing for change, we hope to spark a shift toward a kinder, more human way of supporting each other.

Together, we're rediscovering what it means to belong, connect and be there for each other.

OUR FOCUS

Because there's an epidemic of loneliness, isolation, mental health struggles and people not coping, we work in Camden to support often vulnerable adults find connection, community, care and practical support in order that people live happier lives and don't end up in crisis

Over the years we've supported people experiencing homelessness, people who are refugees or seeking asylum, people experiencing mental health challenges or who have social care needs and people feeling lonely, isolated or excluded.

Today much of our focus is on supporting people facing enduring mental health challenges, ongoing social care needs, and those who feel socially isolated or vulnerable. We offer preventative, community-based, and holistic approaches in a landscape that can be reactive, clinical, or highly specialised.

We're here for people if they want to connect over a cup of tea, join a group, see an art therapist or sit quietly in our community garden.

HOW WE WORK

We see people in their fullness, providing them with a sense of acceptance and belonging, maintaining a learning mentality to ensure we stay open to the complexity of individuals and their situations, and think in terms of a pragmatic and flexible 'doing' that is defined by the complexities of our clients lives rather than any specific remit or rigid 'solution.' We put relationships before outcomes, in the process enabling more positive outcomes to emerge.



THE NEED WE MEET

Likewise was founded over 30 years ago to offer a community space built upon the importance of shared humanity, where marginalised, socially excluded communities could find acceptance and connection. Whilst our support offer, membership and physical space have changed over time, our founding purpose and values remain. Too many people are excluded from society on the grounds of their apparent difference – mental health challenges, neurodivergence, immigration status, poverty or other often complex needs – leading to isolation and loneliness, which are proven to further compound mental and physical health problems.

On top of this, the systems that exist to support people who are struggling with life are often disempowering, pushing people to frame themselves through the lens of their problem and yield to an expert to 'fix' them. By seeing and valuing people in their fullness and providing them with a sense of acceptance and belonging, Likewise have built a reputation for successfully supporting clients with complex needs who have struggled to engage elsewhere and/or have chronically ended up in crisis.

We now receive referrals from across health and care services, including specialist mental health teams, GPs, social prescribers, community organisations and more. Many of our clients credit our support with preventing them from getting to the point of crisis.

Communities need community hubs where people from all backgrounds can bump along with each other building the essential connective tissue of communities. Communities thrive when people have spaces they can depend on to gather, collaborate and share experiences.





> "The highest levels of social isolation and loneliness are estimated to have an equivalent health-harming effect as obesity and physical inactivity, and national prevalence of both are increasing with predictions that they will reach epidemic status by 2030." **– Social Isolation, Loneliness and Community Connectedness in Camden: Health Needs Assessment, 2022**

IMPACT AND CHANGE

Change happens through relationships and trust, we listen, learn, and adapt alongside the people and communities we support. This section shares some of their voices—quotes and vignettes that reflect some of the impact of our work.

Community Hub Attendees

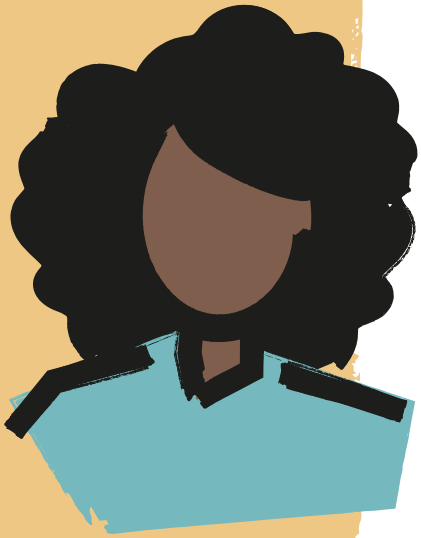
> I feel the hub is a sanctuary, a place to feel free and socialise"

> I get appreciated, which makes me feel like I belong."

> "I now go out by myself and that's down to the hub helping me."

> It's crucial for wellbeing, to belong somewhere. I've always felt that here. People remember my name, and I'm just blown away by how welcoming it is."

> It's nice to be able to talk to people who've got similar mental health problems like myself and they understand each other. There's no questions, there's no judgment. Especially with the staff. You know you can come in and just be yourself. I might start rocking if I'm in pain, but I can do that, and no one will be judging me. I feel like I can belong. Right now, it's my staple, my core place that I come to."



> The support I receive has been so helpful and has kept me out of hospital."

> I've made a lot of friends here."

> "Connecting with people and sharing a meal gives me a sense of belonging. Being on good terms with people feels nice."

> It's helped with my mood. Being around others helps. Sometimes I isolate myself. It's a reason to get out of the house."

One-to-One Support Clients

"You could be really down in the dumps, and she comes in here and it will be pure laughter. There's no sadness or nothing like that, you feel so happy… You have so much fun, you really look forward to the visits, you feel lifted when they go."

"The enjoyment of having somebody coming every week. The continuity and the friendship aspect of the service. It has been nice being in touch with the real world and feeling less isolated."



"We went out, which I wouldn't have done on my own. We sat on a bench on a lovely afternoon that wasn't too hot. So that was lovely for me."

"I have stopped self-harming because of Likewise support"

"It felt like Likewise could adapt to my needs, as opposed to forcing me into a mould."

"Um, now, I just accept that sometimes things are bad, I get unwell, sometimes I feel really anxious, sometimes I feel depressed, I know I'm gonna come out of it with support. I can work through it. That's made a big difference, it really has. In fact, I have not been in the Crisis House for nearly two years. So that is really a big step for me."

"My support worker didn't give up, was patient and kind and didn't judge me."

"Both my mental and physical health are significantly better, my insomnia is much improved"

"The support-worker noticed my kindness, pointed it out to me, and nurtured and watered it like a flower."



"You have someone who can feel your pain and the distress you have suffered in your life and can be there to help you in that situation."

"I've allowed myself to be more comfortable with [my support worker], normally I would have given up by now. I feel like I can face difficult things even though I know it can be painful."



"I was frightened to see people when I first came; now I've got no fear. I like that we're all vulnerable'

"It's hard to overstate how helpful music therapy has been for me. I was in a dark place and was troubled by a lot of suicidal & self-harm thoughts. I no longer feel that I am untreatable or beyond help…I am very grateful to Likewise."

"I feel like I didn't need any more clinical support while working with Likewise."

"The best thing is having a good relationship with my support worker and having a bit of a laugh."

"It has opened my world up a bit. I had been bedbound for years, unable to talk or write, and this helped me get out."

"I feel protected. I feel safe. I know that whatever I'm talking about is confidential. I can tell likewise if I feel unwell which is very valuable. This helps prevent relapse."



"My support worker's calmness washes over me."

"I am not alone in the world, I don't need to be embarrassed to need that kind of support"

"Likewise helped with the removal of despair and having no hope. I was in a negative cycle, focusing on myself and not integrating any other view points. Likewise support worker helped me to bring in some other perspectives and hope. Like a knotted necklace, which Likewise helped to slowly unknot."

"Likewise has helped me get out into the world and be comfortable with other people. I was in isolation, but Likewise has helped me reconnect. Even my physical health has improved since we've started working together."

"The service has given me confidence, and that's important."



Partnerships

"Likewise, have shown commitment and determination in supporting the transformation of NHS mental Health services. They have demonstrated leadership through bringing their own learning as an organisation to support the development of new approaches in local NHS services. Alongside this, they have shown a willingness to listen and engage in meaningful, and if necessary challenging conversations. Underneath this, is a clear sense of values which hold as intention for the organisation and the individuals that work for Likewise" **– Tom Costley, Head of Community Mental Health Services in Camden, C&I NHS Trust**

"Likewise have been a crucial part of our Covid response, and the way you have come together in partnership with the Council, Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust and other voluntary and community sector organisations has been exemplary. I have heard about your drive to coordinate a single support offer for some of our most at-risk residents at this time, and your contribution to this deserves particular recognition." **– Jenny Rowlands, Chief Executive London Borough of Camden**

IN OUR WORK AT LIKEWISE WE ARE...

Here are qualities and ways of being that we support in each other to make our work at Likewise as human as possible:

Optimistic
We see opportunity in challenge, trust each other and know that we will learn from our mistakes.

Honest
It's important that we are straightforward, honest and curious together. We talk with each other not about each other.

Playful
We take our work seriously, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. Lightness, humour and humanity mean we enjoy our work and stay grounded.



Authentic
We bring our humanity to work, try to be open and truly see each other beyond our roles, professional identity or labels. We're inclusive, accepting of difference and do our best to listen with presence and communicate in straightforward ways.

Supportive
We know that we impact each other and seek to create an environment that energises. We're conscious that maintaining energy requires good self-care and regenerative practices as part of our culture.

Open
We don't bury thoughts and feelings about each other or our work. We seek to be non-judgemental and accepting of ourselves and each other, listening and responding in service of an open culture. We love supporting each other's enquiries, helping to dig deeper, see and understand more.

PILLARS OF THE LIKEWISE APPROACH

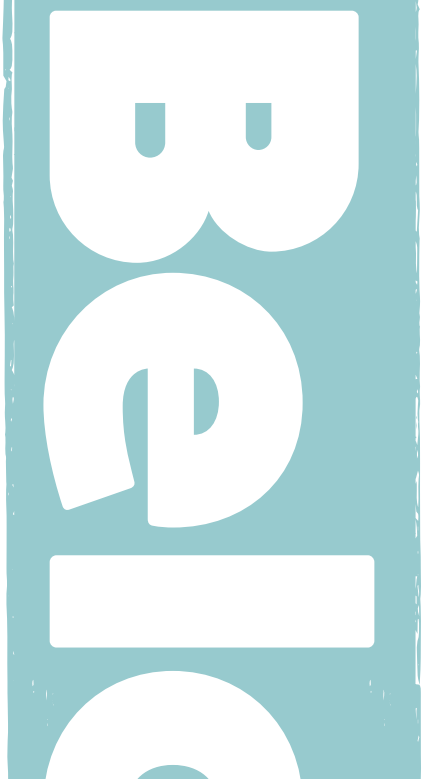
We keep coming back to these pillars to keep us grounded and orientated in the work we do

Learning
Learning summarises our entire approach to the work. We believe everyone – staff and clients alike – are engaged in a constant process of learning.

The learning frame of mind is an open one – for staff, it means we are always open to our clients and community members rather than fitting them into our pre–conceived notions. It also means we can be open about mistakes – a learner is not tied to the expectation of expertise, and is more inclined to accept and build on their mistakes rather than hide or dismiss them

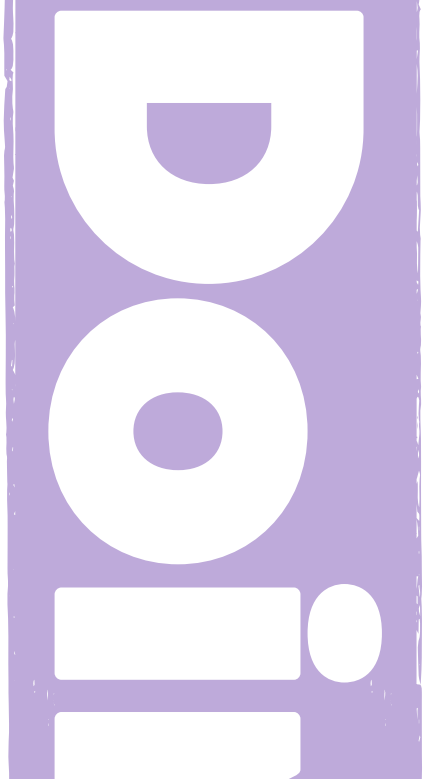
Belonging
At Likewise, we aim to create a real sense of belonging: people feeling genuinely valued as they are so that they can better and more sustainably engage with learning, discovery, and opportunity.

We practice acceptance of ourselves and others, making space for difference, noticing when we are judging or excluding.



Doing
Doing refers to the active role our clients and community members play – not as passive recipients, but as doers themselves. We recognise our community and clients for what they can do rather than framing them by their problems.

This doing is vital for change – we only learn and discover our capacity to feel and act differently through doing.



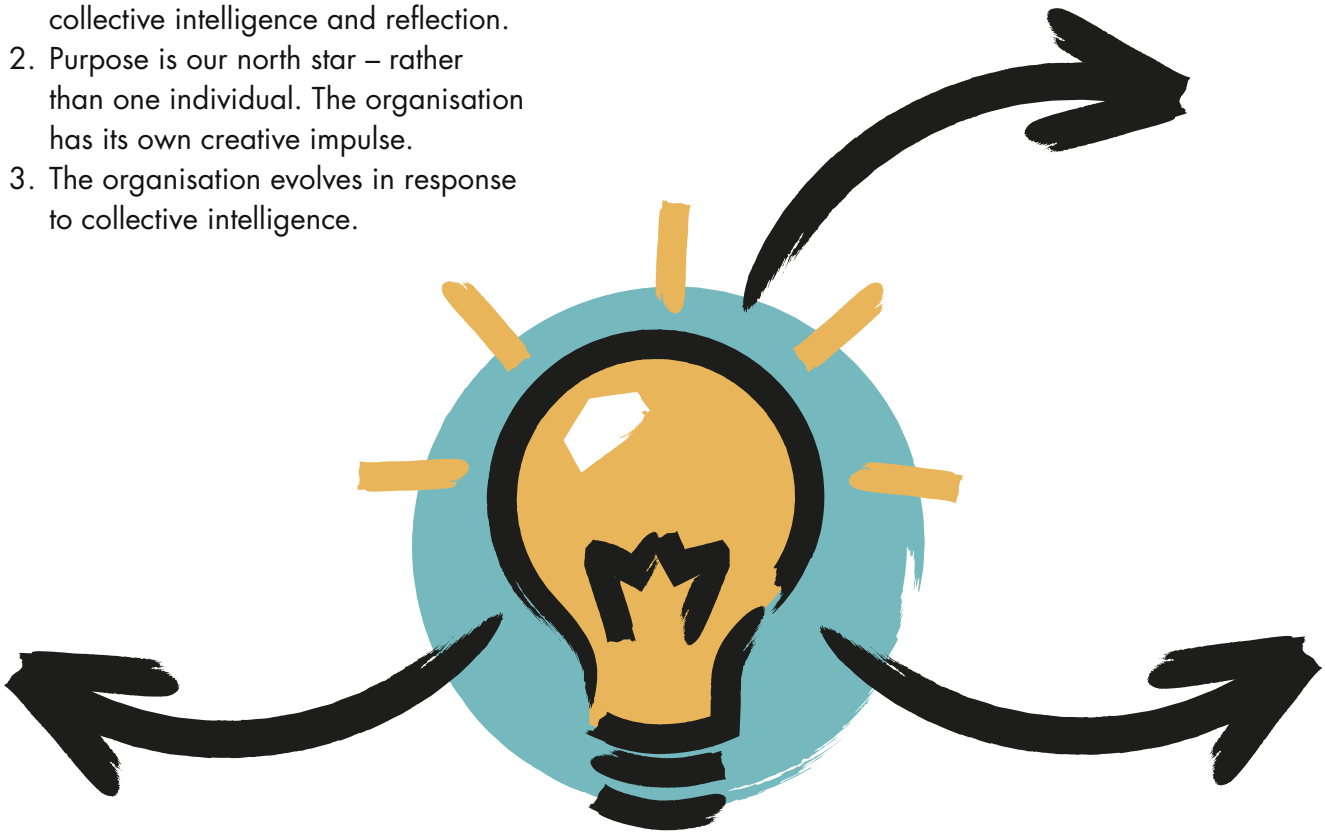
DYNAMIC STEERING: OUR APPROACH TO STRATEGY

At Likewise we see developing strategy as an organic process of listening and responding to organisational purpose. Ideally 'purpose' is our north star rather than one person or group asserting positional power to dictate direction. This requires a sense of ownership through the organisation, and tuning to collective intelligence (the combined capacity and capability that grows out of a group, an intelligence that cannot exist on an individual level).

At an organisational level we make sense of this as "dynamic steering" – we need to know who we are, understanding our organisational roots, what is important to us and why, so that we can respond to the need in the world flexibly, adaptably and in a human way (rather than focussing too much on pre-laid long-term plans).

1. Strategy is an organic process. It's about a process of listening to organisational purpose and responding. This requires collective intelligence and reflection.
2. Purpose is our north star – rather than one individual. The organisation has its own creative impulse.
3. The organisation evolves in response to collective intelligence.
4. We pay attention to where the energy is in the organisation (and where it wants to go) – what works gathers momentum.
5. An organisation based on sense and respond as opposed to command and control can evolve and move with changes to the environment.
6. Dynamic steering means constant adjustment in light of feedback, which makes for a more organic and emergent path. We try to face reality and adapt.

We know we want to do strategic direction in a way that puts learning, relationship and being human at the heart of things; we know we want this to be about approaching power and participation in ways that support decision making to happen in the most useful place. We know we want collaborative leadership and trusting relationships where people are safe to be themselves. We know we want people to feel their interconnected place across the organisation, experiencing and drawing on each other's resources.



STRATEGIC CORNERSTONES: VEHICLES FOR ENACTING OUR PURPOSE AND VISION

To fulfill our purpose and enact our vision, Likewise has four strategic cornerstones that shape our work together:

Providing one-to-one support through human centred relationships where we're alongside people as they navigate life, cultivate wellbeing and learn.

Evolving and building community spaces, places and relationships, focussed on belonging, learning together and wellbeing.

Collaborating and working in partnerships where we learn, act together and model human centred services for greater impact, influence and sustainable change.

Being a human, relationship centred organisation where we take good care of each other. We're adaptable, responsive, dynamic and always learning.

There are aims, goals and intentions we need to focus on under these cornerstones to help fulfil our purpose and enact our vision. Here, shared as "we will" statements to build plans from, prioritise and orientate to across the organisation:

Providing one-to-one support through human centred relationships where we're alongside people as they navigate life, cultivate wellbeing and learn.

- We will make it easier for people who need our 1-1 support to find us and feel included, by reaching out better, listening to who we're missing, and removing the barriers that get in the way.
- We will make sure our Floating Support service is easy to find, flexible to people's needs, and something we can keep doing well for the long term. A high quality, financially sustainable service.
- We will grow our Creative Therapies service so more people can take part and stay engaged in the support they receive.
- We will get better at understanding and sharing the difference our 1-1 work makes, so we stay true to our values and help more people feel seen, heard, and supported in ways that matter to them.
- We will grow our placements and volunteering by building a strong learning journey, so students feel well-supported, grow their skills, and can offer high-quality support that reflects our values.

Evolving and building community spaces, places and relationships, focussed on belonging, learning together and wellbeing

- We will shape and articulate a clear direction for our community programme, helping us grow the hub in a way that's thoughtful, welcoming and full of opportunity.
- We will reach more people and grow our impact by building stronger connections—through better outreach, clearer communication, and a more recognisable presence.
- We will keep building an inclusive and accessible programme shaped by the voices, experiences, and ideas of the people who are part of the community.
- We will grow our community wellbeing garden as a shared space for connection, contribution, and time in nature.
- We will develop the Likewise Community Kitchen to bring people together over food, develop skills and nourish.
- We will create spaces where people can build their confidence, find support, and feel part of something bigger than themselves.

Collaborating and working in partnerships where we learn, act together and model human centred services for greater impact, influence and sustainable change.

- We will shape a clear and sustainable partnership with the NHS—one where we stay true to our values, learn from others, and work alongside the system without getting lost in it.
- We will become more intentional about finding the right partners—those who share our vision, strengthen our work, and are ready to build something meaningful together.
- We will build on the Mind in Camden and Reach Out Camden partnerships to create lasting, Camden-wide offers—deepening our work together and growing what's possible beyond the current contracts.
- We will work with partners in the Human Learning Systems approach, building a movement for more human, relational public services and working to embed this approach across the system.
- We will develop a clear strategy for influencing change, by focusing on the voices of people and communities, sharing what we learn, and making sure human experiences stay at the heart of every system we're part of.

Being a human, relationship centred organisation where we take good care of each other. We're adaptable, responsive, dynamic and always learning.

- We will invest in the skills and capacity we need—at every level of the organisation—so people feel supported to do their best work.
- We will map out a clear learning journey for new team members, so everyone feels confident and grounded in how we work with people and communities.
- We will make our approach to governance clearer, so it reflects who we are and helps guide us well as we grow.
- We will strengthen how we support and hold each other accountable, by evolving our systems of supervision, reflection and care.
- We will keep improving how we learn together—individually, as teams, and as a whole organisation—so we stay open, curious and always growing.
- We will keep building a culture where everyone feels safe, respected, and able to be themselves—because that's what allows people to thrive.



Likewise

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