It ain’t what you do, it’s the way that you do it – people make the difference
This series is all about people. People make change happen. People turn policy into practice and strategy into a movement. This episode explores the evolution of mindsets, values, and behaviours crucial for systemic change from places that are putting it into practice, providing insights from their transformative journeys and key takeaways on creating meaningful and sustainable change happen.

“It’s about people – surround yourself with the right people doing the right stuff.”

Lola Akindoyin
Why is it important?

Specific delivery models, programmes or projects are not easily transferable, but **HOW** we work can be applied and adapted across contexts.

These ways of working can only be applied and embedded effectively if people have the right values, mindsets and behaviours, as well as capacity and capability.

This extends to anyone working in and across the various layers of the system. From senior leaders, to those who are working directly with our priority people and communities, and even those working behind the scenes developing processes and providing a variety of support functions. All of these people have an integral role to play in creating (and sustaining) the conditions for enabling successful place based systemic working.

It’s only when people across all parts of the system are willing and able to change, that approaches and ways of working will become embedded, and long-lasting, transformational change within communities can be achieved.

“**Systemic work is about seeing everything.**”

Lola Akindoyin
The speakers

**Tom Hughes**  
**Development Manager, Yorkshire Sport Foundation**

Tom describes his role as providing a backbone support function for Sheffield City’s mission to **move more**. Tom loves helping communities to help themselves to move more and building long-lasting relationships.

**Lola Akindoyin**  
**Head of Programme, Hackney Council**

Lola is head of programme for Hackney Place Partner (one of Sport England’s initial 12 local delivery pilots), focussing on community development to reduce inequalities and widen participation. Lola aims to get better outcomes for local people through her belief in people and communities and sees her role as an enabler for communities.

“Trust comes on a tortoise and leaves on a horse.”

Tom Hughes
Skills, mindsets and behaviours that are important

- relational working
- reflector
- adaptive
- embracing uncertainty
- Being human
- collaboration
- Being curious — willing to think and work differently
- mutual respect

### Listen

**Ability to articulate** what the work is and demonstrating its value / storytelling (as you go)

### humility

**persistence**

**being resilient**

- influencing senior leadership (strategic and political)

### collaboration

**connector**

- mutual respect

### Be a decent human being and do the right thing.

- Be a decent human being and do the right thing.

- Openness to go on a different journey and find different approaches

- Confidence to challenge and change things early on

- Knowing when to let others lead
“Take a step back. Who has their nose pressed up against the glass? Who is showing a keen interest?”

Tom Hughes

Key takeaways

Start with values/mindsets/behaviours – then look to build on this foundation with relevant skills and knowledge.

Start by finding the right people to talk to and building effective relationships. The rest comes later.

You can’t underestimate the importance of having a diverse and well balanced team, including people with a mix of experiences, capabilities and perspectives.

This is about collective capacity and competencies across teams/organisations, and systems.

You don’t always need to be lead goose – look at who else can do the work; who is best placed to learn to step out of the way? Unlock the skills across the system and build the skills of others.

Lay the early, good, key foundations with the community. Empower the individuals and organisations – hear what they are going through.

As the work evolves, so do the workforce needs – you need to be agile and responsive to the changing context and demands of the system.
You will doubt yourself and others will doubt you. The work can be challenging and frustrating.

Define your role – do that with others – and work out where you can add value and where you can enable others. Don’t replicate something that is already happening.

It won’t happen overnight – trust comes on a tortoise and leaves on a horse.

Every place is different and so are the people needed to drive the work.

Be uncomfortable with uncertainty.

Find a way to tell the story early including the journey – don’t just wait for demonstrable impact. Tell the story from all perspectives.
When you connect the system you see the great work you can achieve.

Lola Akindoyin

10 Conditions for tackling inequalities in physical activity:
Take a look at the learning and resources developed by Sport England’s National Evaluation & Learning Partner and people working in local place partnerships. Access the recordings from the ‘conditions for change’ learning series. Episodes of interest include:

- Co-production, local people-led initiatives (community power).
- Distributed and collective leadership.
- Capacity and capability across the workforce, volunteers and in communities.

Putting it into practice:
Check out the Sport England resource ‘putting it into practice’, which brings to life some of the approaches, models, and tools used by places taking a place-based, whole system approach. Content you might be interested in includes:

- Understand the lived experience
- Capacity and time to reflect
- Having the right conversations

• Lola refers to the balcony and dancefloor method of adaptive leadership: (Heifetz & Linsky – 2009): be prepared to get on the dancefloor to see what is happening then step back to reflect.

• Find out more about Move More Sheffield and some blogs about the work happening in Hackney.

Models/tools/weblinks

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