

# WHEN THERE'S AN ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM, INTRODUCE THEM

Creating systems of  
justice and compassion  
so that people live with  
dignity and opportunity.



**People with the hardest lives experience multiple problems.**

These are often rooted in long-term experiences of poverty, deprivation, trauma, abuse and neglect.

These inequalities can lead to a combination of experiences, including homelessness, substance misuse, domestic violence, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill-health.

**People have often been failed by systems that focus on single issues.** These make it hard for them to lead fulfilling lives.

This is made worse when no one wants to talk about the 'elephants in the room'.

The Elephants Trail has been developed over many years by people with personal experience of multiple disadvantage.

The Elephants Trail is about local people and professionals **working equally together to solve challenges** that people think are most important.

**Together, they create relaxed and informal 'Elephants spaces'.**

These spaces help people from very different backgrounds to explore difficult issues, such as power, wealth, and different knowledges.

**Teams lean into these issues, learn and make decisions together. They test practical solutions to key issues faced by communities and by agencies.**


People with lived experience and professionals working equally together to solve the challenges that people face requires:

- valuing and investing in people and communities
- focusing on a clear purpose – change
- creating a supportive environment and trusting relationships
- supporting and sharing action learning

**CHANGE  
MAKE**

**CREATE**





**The Elephants Trail works to change systems that create injustice and perpetuate disadvantage.**

This changes how decisions are made and who makes them, and creates space to imagine better systems.

**In system change, what communities can best do themselves is to:**

- organise
- take collaborative action
- spread with others

**What needs to be done at a system level is to:**

- focus on prevention, rather than reaction
- increase power held by communities
- build social/mutual ownership of wealth by communities
- work mutually alongside communities

**We want to spread and share the Elephants approach with communities and agencies, so that people can live meaningful lives with dignity and opportunity in supportive communities.**

**[elephantstrail.org.uk](http://elephantstrail.org.uk)**

