

Fraser Smith

Public sector design leader, Edinburgh, Scotland

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Profile

I am a design leader in the Scottish public sector. I help teams design public services that are accessible and work well for the people who use them. I lead the Scottish public sector Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) community for service design. I work on design skills, strategy and joint working between organisations. I help embed the Scottish Approach to Service Design. I have built and grown multidisciplinary design teams. I care about inclusive, evidence-based design. I have set up design governance and standards, and I champion accessibility.

Experience

Head of Practice for Service Design

Scottish Public Sector DDaT Community • May 2025 to present

As Head of Practice for Service Design, I provide strategic leadership for the Service Design profession across the Scottish public sector, supporting the growth, engagement, and capability of practitioners within the DDaT community. I act as the professional lead for Service Design, shaping standards, frameworks, and community development in alignment with national digital priorities.

- Lead a cross-government community of practice connecting over 100 Service Designers across public bodies, agencies and local authorities.
- Represent the Service Design profession within national DDaT leadership forums, influencing strategy, capability planning and workforce development.
- Develop and maintain shared standards, tools and professional guidance to embed the Scottish Approach to Service Design across organisations.
- Oversee professional governance activities including job approvals, Certificates of Competency and role standardisation across the Service Design practice.
- Promote inclusion, knowledge sharing and continuous learning through monthly community events, mentoring initiatives and professional development programmes.

Service Design Lead

Digital Directorate, Scottish Government • July 2024 to present

Provide strategic service design leadership within the Digital Directorate, guiding multidisciplinary teams to deliver cross-government design programmes that shape the future of digital and service delivery in Scotland.

- Lead service design across the Directorate, embedding user-centred and evidence-based design in strategic programmes.
- Shaped the future Target Operating Model for service delivery, defining principles for consistent, inclusive and scalable design practice across government.
- Led User Centred Design team for the Ukraine Resettlement Programme, coordinating multi-agency collaboration to deliver accessible, inclusive services that measurably improved outcomes for displaced people, reduced processing times, and decreased administrative burden for partner organisations.
- Engage with senior executives and leadership teams to embed design thinking in strategic decision-making and investment priorities.
- Supported the facilitation of collaborative sessions to design the updated Digital Strategy for Scotland.
- Drive alignment between digital policy and design capabilities.

Service Design and Interaction Design Lead

Social Security Scotland, Scottish Government ● August 2021 to July 2024

Held a series of senior design leadership roles, including Service Design Lead, Interaction Design Lead, and Design & Research Operations Lead, during the establishment of Social Security Scotland - the largest delivery programme and transfer of powers under devolution to date. Led multidisciplinary user-centred design teams to deliver inclusive, accessible and evidence-based digital services supporting Scotland's new social security system.

- Led diverse teams comprising permanent staff, contractors and supplier teams, establishing clear standards and guidelines for digital products and services, managing workforce planning and priorities, ensuring effective use of budget and resources.
- Developed comprehensive UCD strategy during a challenging transition period marked by significant uncertainty, establishing Communities of Practice and defining ways of working.
- Established and chaired Design Authority panels, embedding governance, accessibility (WCAG) and professional standards across internal and supplier teams.
- Led teams through Digital Scotland Service Standard, Digital First and GDS assessments, ensuring consistent compliance and service assurance.
- Created and embedded a Design and Research Operations framework, streamlining user research processes, data governance and GDPR compliance for scalability and sustainability.
- Spearheaded creation of digital heuristics and non-functional requirements, informed by Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) research and industry best practice.
- Led cross-government design projects, including the digital Task List component, bringing together designers and researchers from Scottish Government, UK Government and other national departments.

Previous to this: **Senior Interaction Designer** (September 2020 to August 2021)

Senior User Experience Consultant

Sopra Steria • January 2019 to September 2020

Delivered UX consultancy for large-scale transformation projects across the public sector, including Scottish Government, Historic Environment Scotland, and Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service.

- Led design for the Child Disability Payment digital application and citizen portal.
- Led the digital transformation of Historic Environment Scotland's public-facing archives.
- Led the design for the new vision for Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service for both employees and citizens.
- Designed the new front-facing service for Broxbourne Environmental Services.

Earlier roles

User Experience Consultant, Deloitte • 2018 to 2019

User Experience Consultant, Sopra Steria • 2016 to 2018

UX Design Intern, Redgate Software • 2016

Delivered user experience and interaction design for large-scale digital transformation projects across public and private sector clients.

- Led the design stream for a new application for Sainsbury's and Sainsbury's Bank customers.
- Redesigned internal processes and workflows for employees at Prudential.
- Designed an internal knowledge-sharing platform for British American Tobacco.
- Led the design of specialised clinical software for Dentists and Orthodontists at NHS National Services Scotland.
- Designed and delivered the part-time student finance application process for the Student Loans Company, successfully guiding it through GDS assessment.

Education

BSc Interactive Media Design (With Distinction)

Edinburgh Napier University, June 2013 to September 2016

Certifications

User Experience Design (CXD)

Akendi, February 2017

Agile Foundation Certificate

BCS, December 2016

User Experience Fundamentals

QA, December 2016

Community and leadership

Fellow

The RSA (Royal Society for Arts, Manufactures and Commerce), 2023 to present

Board Trustee

Space at The Broomhouse Hub, 2025 to present

Team Leader

Scottish Government Resilience Room, 2024 to present

Industry expert / Student support

Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, 2023 to present

Youth Befriender

Big Hearts Community Trust, 2023 to 2025

Explorer Scout Leader

The Scout Association, 2013 to present

Tools

Figma, Sketch, Adobe Creative Suite, Axure RP Pro, Mural, Miro, Jira, Confluence, Microsoft Suite