Developing collaborative, community-focused approaches in Devon

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Overview

Introductions

Complexity and Human Learning Systems

Deep dives: what this looks like in practice

How this applies to your work: breakout discussions

Collaborative Commissioning

Reflections

1. The context: complexity

Cynefin Framework

Complex: The relationship between cause and effect is hard to attribute and can only be perceived in retrospect. EMERGENT PRACTICE	**Complicated:** The relationship between cause and effect requires analysis, investigation and/or expert knowledge. The known of unknowns GOOD PRACTICE
Chaotic: No relationship between cause and effect at a systems level NOVEL PRACTICE	**Simple:** The relationship between cause and effect is obvious to all. The known knowns BEST PRACTICE

Source: Dave Snowden, http://www.managingforimpact.org/tool/cynefin-framework-0

Complex Systems

From an individual's perspective

Actors and factors which could constitute someone's "life as a system" that creates the outcome of wellbeing (or not)
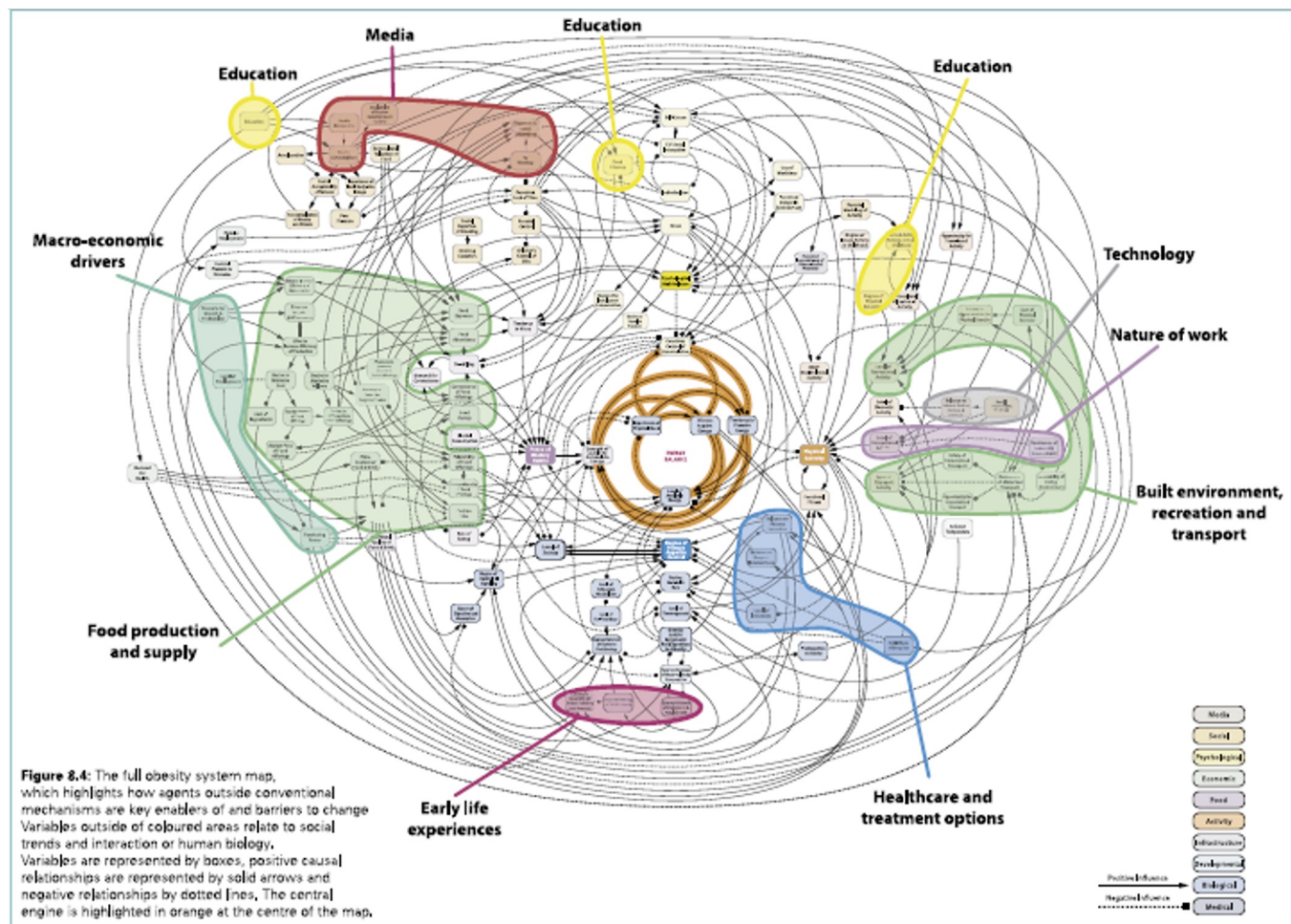
Actors **Factors**

The person themselves

Their family and friends

The people or organisations responsible for public/green space near to them

Those who provide cultural and sporting provision in their place

Their neighbourhood association and community centre(s)

The health service (in all its local and national manifestations)

Welfare/benefits agencies

Emergency services

The local authority

Income/wealth

Employment status

Education and skill levels

Participation in neighbourhood activities

Participation in democratic processes

Participation in hobbies/interests

Relationship to dominant culture(s)

Housing and neighbourhood conditions

Health

Ability to exercise agency

Source: Human Learning Systems: Public Service for the Real World, 2021

Obesity Systems Map

Figure 8.4: The full obesity system map, which highlights how agents outside conventional mechanisms are key enablers of and barriers to change. Variables outside of coloured areas relate to social trends and interaction or human biology. Variables are represented by boxes, positive causal relationships are represented by solid arrows and negative relationships by dotted lines. The central engine is highlighted in orange at the centre of the map.

Source: Government Office for Science, 2007

Outcomes are not delivered by organisations!

Reflection

Reflect individually and share in the chat:

- An example of a time you've experienced or worked on a complex issue

- What did it feel like?

The current public management approach

New Public Management:
"Markets, Managers, Metrics"

Markets: We get organisations to compete to deliver against pre-set outcomes

Managers: We test whether desired objectives are being achieved and reward or punish achievement against those measures, regardless of real outcomes

Metrics: We set, work towards and monitor targets and KPIs
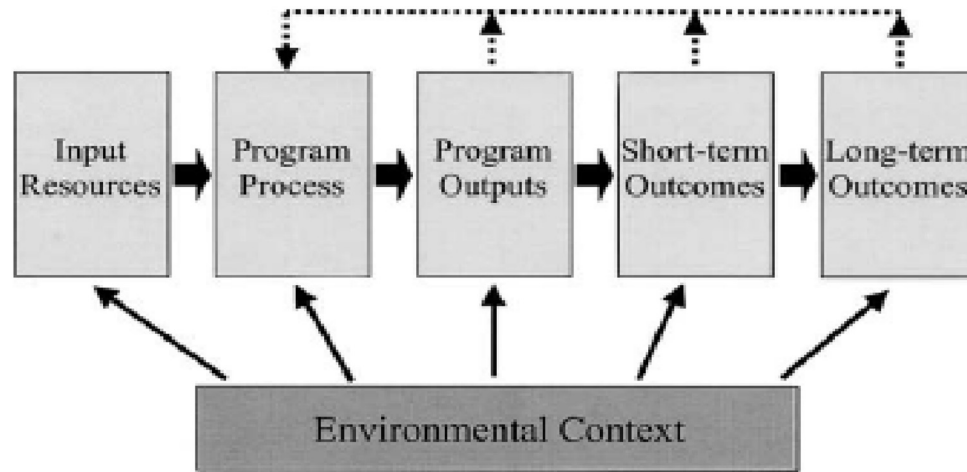
How this might show up…

Fig. 2. Program logic model.

2. A response to complexity: Human Learning Systems

Starting Points

- The purpose of public service is to enable **human flourishing**

- To enable this, we need to **acknowledge and work with** (not seek to control) **complexity**

- We need to **reframe commissioning**: from purchasing of outcomes to nurturing a healthy system

Human Learning Systems: a response to complexity

Being Human: valuing relationships and enabling decision making closer to communities

Learning: focusing on learning and adaptation as a continuous driver of improvement

Recognising that Systems are connected and interdependent. Systems stewards nurture *healthy* systems.

collaborate
for social change

Human

The purpose of public service is to enable human flourishing. To enable this we need to:

- Understand and respond to people's specific context - based on the **actors and factors** that make up their lives

- Develop strong **relationships** based on **empathy**

- View people from a **strengths-based** perspective

- **Trust**: put decision making into hands of people who know best – people and communities, and the people that support them

Human

"'Liberating' workers from attempts to proceduralise what happens in good human relationships, and instead focus on the capabilities and contexts which help enable these relationships"

– Mark Smith, Director of Public Service Reform, Gateshead Council

"By focusing on the individual, their strengths and unique context, people can utilise their existing skills, access the appropriate resources and build the right network to ensure they are prepared for a life away from services."

- Mayday Trust

Learning

Learning is the **strategy for purposeful change** in complex systems.
It is a **continuous process.**

Learning is enabled by:

- Funding and managing for learning, not control

- Cycles of experimentation

- Curiosity (not implementing what you know is right)

- Creating a learning culture: reducing competition, positive error culture, spaces for collective sensemaking, making it part of the day job

- Using data to learn and enable (not constrain)

Learning

"Learning is a mindset. It makes us more open to the humanity of each person, it helps us get beyond defining people by labels."

– Sam Kammerling, Likewise

"We need leaders who acknowledge we don't know the answers and create the conditions to develop solutions together."

– Olli-Pekka Heinonen
Former Director General of the Finnish National Agency for Education

Systems

- **Systems** (not projects or organisations) **create outcomes.**

- Systems are the **set of relationships and interactions** that combine to produce outcomes in people's lives.

- A **healthy system** is one that is more likely to produce positive outcomes for people.

- Healthy systems require **purposeful work.**

- **System stewardship** is the act/role of nurturing a healthy system.

Systems Stewardship

What it involves

- Fostering trusting relationships

- Bringing people together around a common purpose

- Deep listening

- Enabling learning

- Paying attention to power dynamics

"[We work to] surface awareness of there being a system and the importance of people understanding their own role in relation to others."

– Julian Penton, Hartlepower

Break

Consider: where have you seen examples of this kind of practice in Devon?

Deep Dives:
Exploring HLS in Practice

Being Human

MAYDAY TRUST

Mayday Trust's Unique Story

We asked people using our services what life was like. They said our support wasn't working, and could even be part of the problem. We were:

1. Obsessed with people's problems
2. Believed only we can fix you
3. Segregated people in specialist services and activities

So we stopped doing traditional support and looked for a strengths-based alternative to deficit-based services.
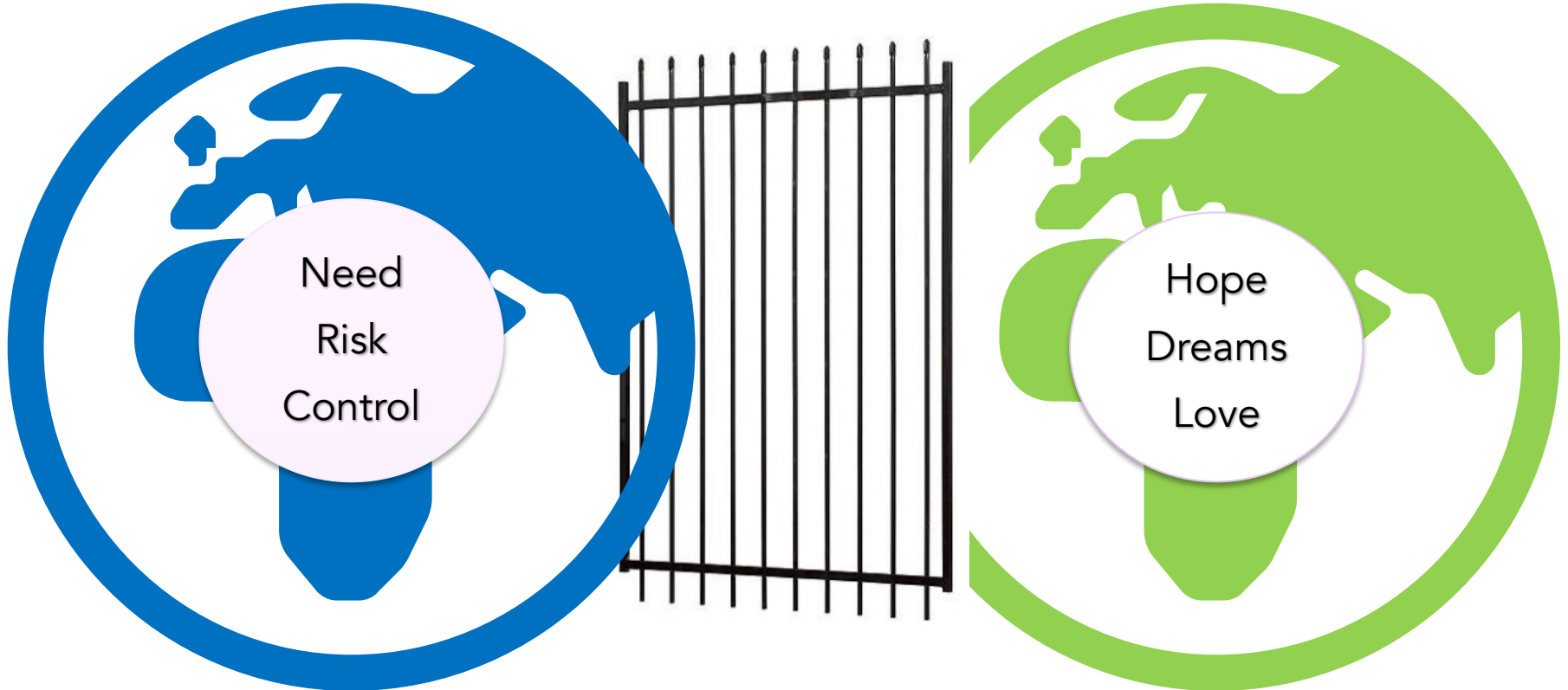
All or Nothing Services

One Size fits all: Some helped, Some Harmed?

'Bad help' deepens inequalities

From good service to good life
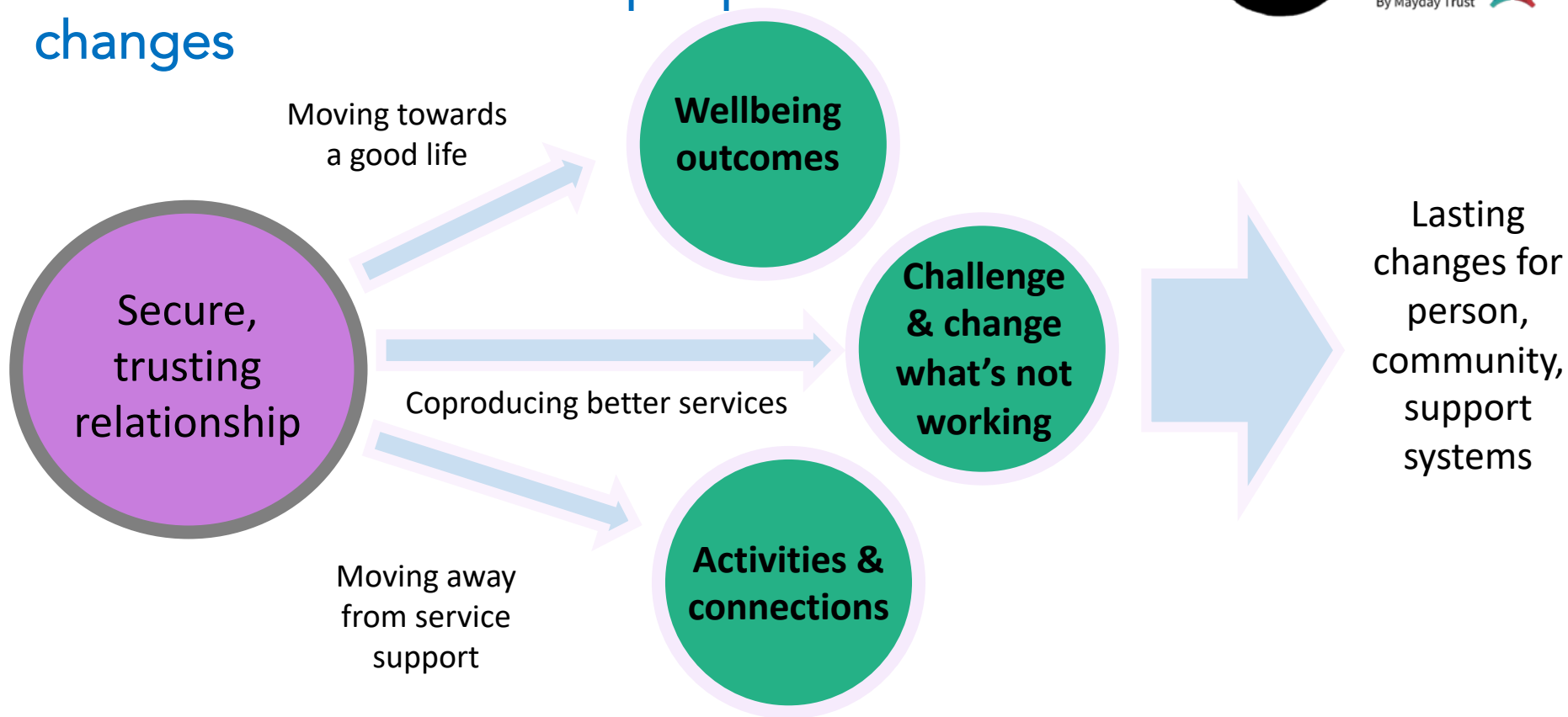
Resource
Money
Structure

Family
Community
Friends

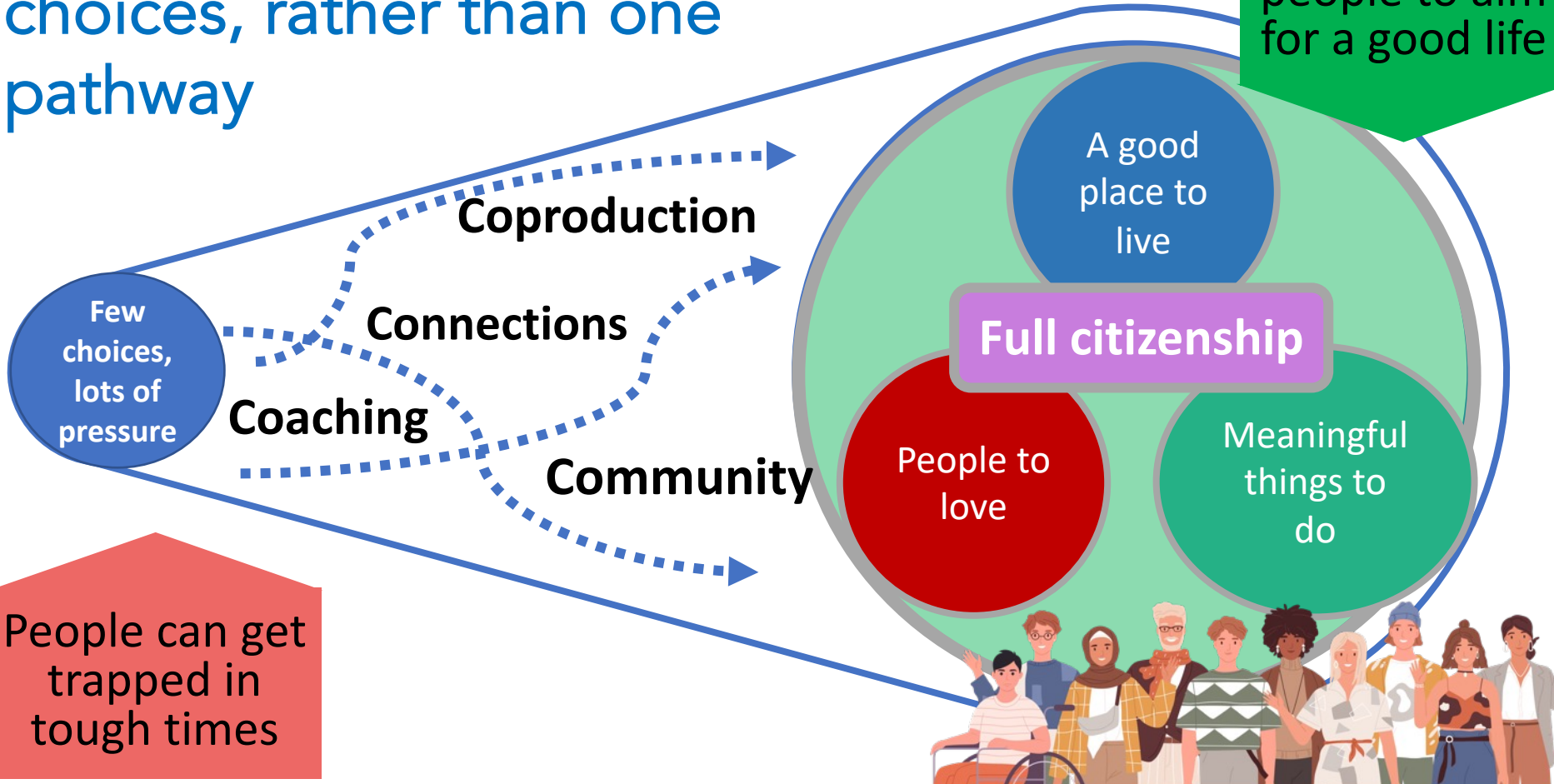# We've learned that putting the relationship first creates a base on which people can build real changes

Person-led, Transitional & Strength-based Response
By Mayday Trust

Secure, trusting relationship

Moving towards a good life → Wellbeing outcomes

Coproducing better services → Challenge & change what's not working

Moving away from service support → Activities & connections

Lasting changes for person, community, support systems

Good support creates choices, rather than one pathway

We enable people to aim for a good life

Few choices, lots of pressure

Coproduction

Connections

Coaching

Community
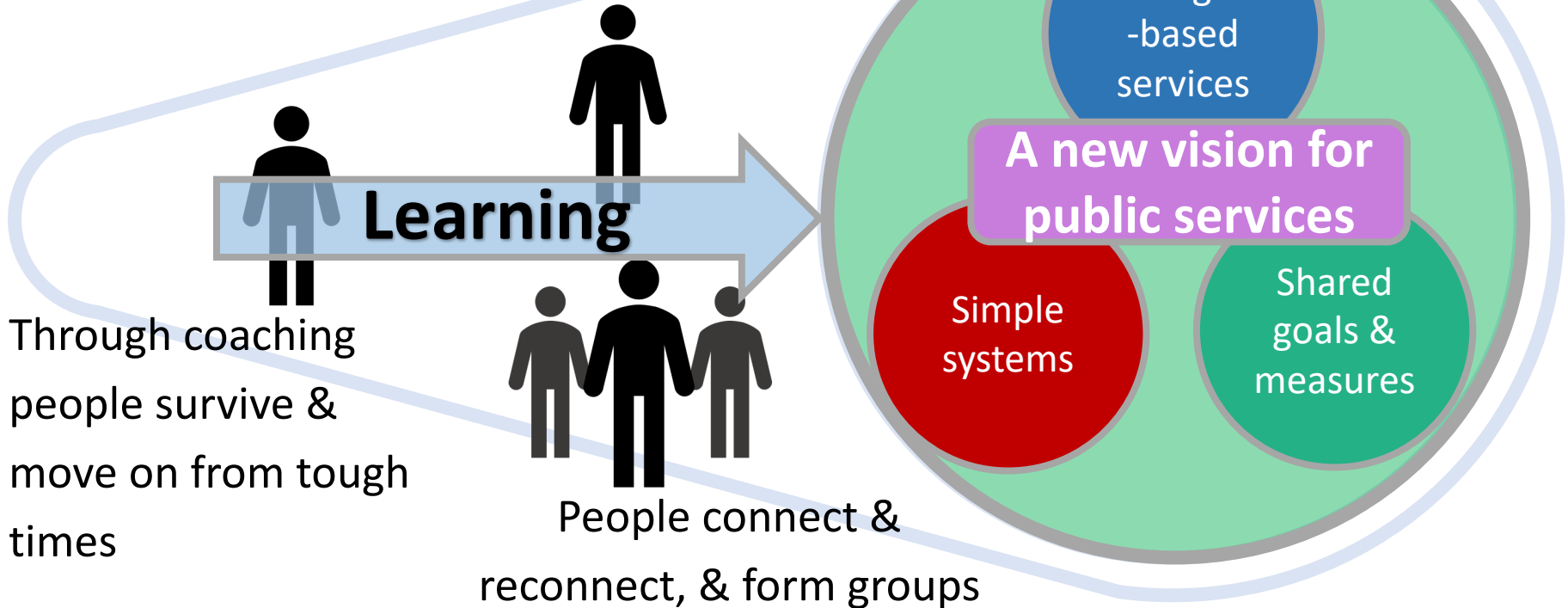
A good place to live

Full citizenship

People to love

Meaningful things to do

People can get trapped in tough times

Simple and human approaches in practice

What differences can you see in genuinely strengths-based and person-led work?

Area	Traditional support work	Strengths-based & person-led
Referral	Appointment, eligibility & assessment. Support planning early on.	Meet safely on your terms Get to know each other first
Support	Led by service's priorities and timetable.	Person-led goals & schedule. Brokerage & personal budgets.
If things don't work	Aim for service user's engagement and compliance.	Support individual to challenge and change what doesn't work.
Endings	Signposting to underfunded services. Cliff edges at the end of support.	Option to pause/ vary support. Build alternatives to reduce need for us.

Our model for creating Strengths-based Areas

Strengths-based areas need to:

1. Co-design a new **vision** and co-produce a **plan**

2. Invest in **simple and human** support approaches

3. Use their **money and power** intentionally for systems change and with a strong focus on reducing inequality

4. Co-produce a shared picture of **what good looks** like and user-friendly ways to **track its achievement**

Source: https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/Latest/Ten-Actions-for-an-Asset-based-Area/

think local act personal

scie social care institute for excellence

shared lives plus

TEN ACTIONS FOR AN ASSET-BASED AREA

scie social care institute for excellence

MAYDAY TRUST

think local act personal

What next for strengths-based areas?
Report from the Social Care Institute for Excellence, Mayday Trust and Think Local Act Personal

September 2022

Strengths-based areas need to:

Co-design a new **vision** and co-produce a **plan**

From customer to citizen.

From leadership to coproduction.

Example: Lincs ICB are coproducing with citizens, starting with the question, 'could we have a different relationship between people and health and care services?'

Invest in **simple and human** support approaches

From tightly-managed tasks to roles with real autonomy.

From multiple brief professional/client transactions to 'relationship-first' coaching approaches.

Example: Mayday Trust offers person-led, strengths-based coaching to people going through tough times, which draws on personal budgets & community development and builds learning loops for coproduction of more human systems.

Strengths-based areas need to:

Use **money and power** intentionally for systems change and to reduce inequalities

From poacher/gamekeeper to co-commissioning.

From focus on price & scale to focus on market building and impact

Example: Think Local Act Personal have a directory for commissioners of innovative community-powered alternatives to traditional services.
www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk

Strengths-based areas need to:

Co-produce a shared picture of **what good looks like** and user-friendly ways to **track its achievement.**

From sector-specific targets to shared measures of health, wellbeing and resilience.

From data for control, to data for learning.

Example: Gateshead Changing Futures Programme.

What will we do differently?

People with power	Workers and volunteers	Citizens
We show empathy and humanity, and feel valued.	We show empathy and humanity, and feel valued.	We show empathy and humanity, and feel valued.
We are open to change and being led. We are present in our community.	We work alongside (not for) citizens, connecting ourselves and others.	We are active – doing and starting stuff in the community, and we are well-connected with others.
We are happy in our roles, creating healthy, learning workplaces.	We are happy in our roles and help people to live good lives.	We pursue good lives and have positive relationships.
We aim to achieve wellbeing and resilience. We measure good and bad impacts of our work.	We are confident we do what matters to people (not the system), showing humility and courage at the right times.	We define the lives we want to live and the roles we want supporters to play. We know we can feedback and take the lead.

Making the investment & commissioning case

Traditional support work	Strengths-based & person-led	Advantage to commissioner
Exclusive focus inwards on service activity & own workforce	More development of individual and community capacity, with new relationship between person & service	Greater engagement, more meaningful outcomes. Increase in social capital & opportunities to move away from services.
Tightly-defined and formulaic support roles, with high management levels	Values- & communication-based recruitment attracts and retains higher-performing workers able to add more value with less supervision	More resources go to front line; lower middle management costs possible. Better staff recruitment, morale, retention. Greater productivity and impact.
Tight referral & eligibility criteria, service schedules & time limits	Person-led means more flexibility for individual & worker to shape support More variation in individual packages; results measured at cohort level.	Fewer hand-offs, reduces cost of cycle of case opening/closing & re-referrals. More results-led: more impactful interventions, better targeted.
Services slow to change in response to poor experiences/outcomes.	Reflective practice. Learning culture. Openness to challenge & change.	Fewer formal complaints, more innovation. Coproduction built into services. Able to recognise & tackle inequalities.

Learning through Listening

To care is to do…

- We listen so we can learn
- We learn so we can change what we do
- Replace routine with thoughtfulness
- Create a learning environment
- Engage people in experiments based on what we have learned
- Work to understand 'value' rather than targets

Impact of standardised services

I've been into (names social care office) on ***** Road a couple of times just begging for help. But you don't get any really. There isn't any real help out there. I went in once and just kept saying 'help me' 'help me' 'please help me'

…youngest daughter has developmental issues but since she had her PIP changed we are down £700/month and now we're in debt. (Name) came to see us but she wasn't very helpful. She looked at our food diary, asked 'where's the vegetables?' and told us to get a slow cooker.

I asked to stay on the child protection plan for longer. But nothing gets better, it just gets worse… I've got a FIP worker to help me with parenting, but nothing is better.

I go somewhere for my autism and a person sent us to see a psychologist. To talk about stuff that's happened and my anger management. That was good but I only had eight sessions

I'm getting worse being in here (Hostel)… I'm getting worse – I shut myself in my room. I just stay there. I haven't had a shower or bath since the end of August. People knock on my door and ask "can I use your phone (they know I'm on contract)" to phone their drug dealers.

When I go into the Council I never speak to the same person. It's like whenever you try to get them to see you need help they put that black cross against your name a little bit bigger and a little bit harder and it messes everything up.

People tell us what will work for them

Everyone needs choices. The assistants here have an important role to play too, they're friendly and understanding.

I think that a whole family approach would be helpful for us, especially for our eldest daughter.

In a perfect world the mainstream school would provide a good quality of life and care to my daughter not just playing and painting. They would help her learn proper skills like opening a can of beans and heating them up. Maybe one day she could be independent then

I need to keep things light and not… light and not going deeper. The person in control needs to be warm and open and welcoming.

Experimentation, 'learn and do'

- Should be a constant process
- Good ideas are not an artefact of hierarchy, anybody can have one
- Encourage everybody to try things – it is infectious
- Minimal governance around this. Is it legal? Is it safe? If yes then go for it!
- Gather the learning (good and bad, it's all learning) and repeat or try something else
- Embed what has worked well (but be prepared to change it if learning or circumstances change)
- **This is as much about introducing thoughtful (as opposed to routinised) approaches as the experiments themselves**

Commit to

- Listening to citizens – actively, iteratively and with multiple methods
- Acting on what we learn and then listening again
- Developing a shared sense of place with citizens
- Critically examining all our service responses
- Taking a curatorial role with a broad group of partners (VCSE, public, private, SME)
- Being a compassionate and trauma informed city/county/community
- Experimentation – with forms, functions, conceptualisation of issues
- Providing a permissive, supportive and appropriately challenging ethos for officers

Implications for your work

Discussion

To enable this practice in your work:

- What needs to shift?

- What do we need to let go of?

___

Feedback

Share something you learnt from someone in your group - something new, an assumption that was challenged…

Collaborative Commissioning

# Outcomes are not delivered by organisations!

Rethinking the role of commissioners

- Commissioners, are part of the system, with a **shared responsibility for system change.**

- When we start to think of commissioners in that way, we can start to see **their roles shift from ensuring compliance** as "contract manager" to recognising that they have **active roles to play** in contributing to and nurturing healthy systems.

- At the heart of this shift is developing, embedding and nurturing a culture of **collaboration, listening and learning.**

Questions to ask to help get started

- Which people/organisations are part of the systems which produce the outcomes you care about in Devon?

- How can you convene the system to help it understand itself better?

- How can you allocate, distribute and manage resources to build trust and understanding as a key asset across the system in Devon?

- How can you enable collaboration between actors across Devon?

- How as commissioner can you enable rather than control?

HLS approach to commissioning
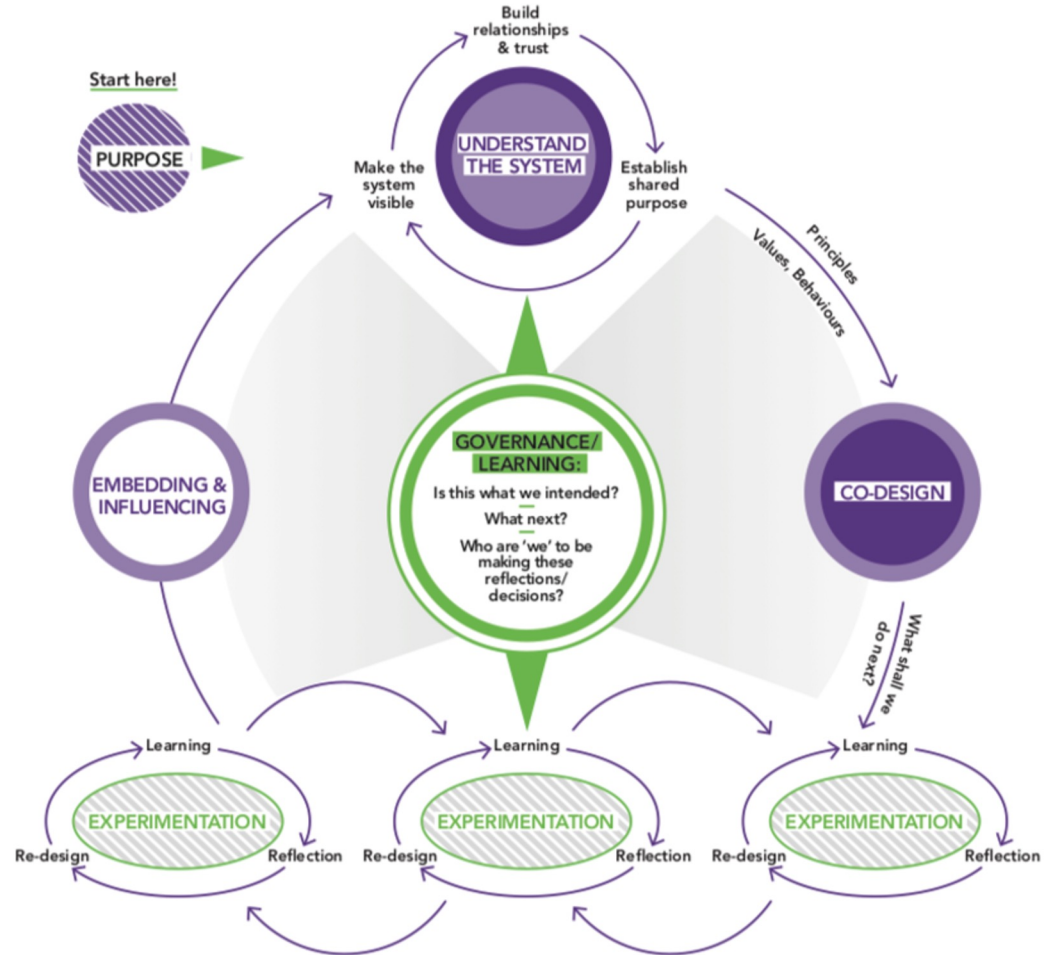
Procurement options for collaborative commissioning

Procurement options aren't the starting point, but when you get to that point, they could include:

Informal Alliance Based on good relationships and understanding, may be written or contractual	**Grants** Collaboration supported through grant funding	**Alliance Contract** Commissioners sitting alongside providers as part of a formal contract	**Innovation Partnership** Contract with research & development built in to allow adaptation & iteration as part of delivery

Alliance Contracting

As part of an Alliance contract, a set of providers enter into a single agreement with a commissioner(s) to deliver services.

Commissioners and providers work together as a single integrated team, working collectively towards agreed outcomes.

Key principles include:

- Everyone working collectively towards agreed, shared objectives
- Members have an equal say in decisions
- Risks and responsibilities are shared and managed collectively
- No blame culture
- Transparent and open communication
- An integrated management team

Reflections

Reflections

- What will you do differently after today?

- What are the opportunities to put HLS into practice in Devon?

- What are your asks of us? (further, tools, advice)

Next steps

- We will compile and share further tools, resources and examples

- Follow up session to discuss how you will work together to further develop this practice in Devon