



# ukgovcamp

**Session: 1**

**Room: HMS Daring Room**

**Session title :** Impact of Discoveries done badly

**Session leader :**

**Volunteer to continue conversation after :**

Notes taken by : Ben Welby

## Notes

Done so many discoveries but when it comes later on there are many things that get lost and missed. When you've had multiple previous discoveries that should have been clear and captured things but you find you've got to rework it and do re-discoveries.

Expectation from the service manual content on discovery - what are the constraints? Or the problem space? Or data? Or process? Does everyone have the same upfront understanding and expectation of a discovery despite the clarity of the service manual?

How far is AI causing conversations to be technology led rather than user needs led?  
Implement tech first, need second.

How do we get suppliers to engage with business partners at the start of the process without being seen as blockers? But instead to think about the value they add as embedded parts of the conversation.

Aspiration being: we want AI rather than having fallen in love with the problem and their needs up front.

Are SROs bold and brave enough to look at the discovery report and conclude that it has missed the mark. Are they bold enough to say 'this isn't good enough'.

What is the procurement angle? Trusting that the work that should be done has been done. What happens for a supplier who comes in and then picks up work and discovers that it isn't done effectively.

What is the role of the service standard here? Is it effective?

Relationship with the business partner who can determine what the service is and what the discovery should be showing

First ever discovery - value of having someone in the room who is pushing to define the scope and keeps the team honest.

Understanding the end to end user journey and recognising the full user journey and all those it impacts.

Some of the experience around discovery is that you are brought in to look at a problem but the problem isn't well defined in the first place. As part of the discovery - do we have risky assumptions to test? Not that we have everything in place? Have we got the value to do the alpha?

Should the presence of particular artefacts define what is good or what is bad as a discovery? You can't have everything - what you need is to have scoped the problem and target the next work.

The way in which identifying new users and unseen edges create ever expanding scope and focus. How do you fit that into an '8 week discovery'.

What tools are people finding effective to narrow the scope at the early stages?

- Research questions?
- What other tools?
- Business case is one of those → how do you validate the problem? Successful discoveries are able to establish a direction of travel.
- Planning for validation → the upfront planning that creates the scope to go into the discovery phase
- Canvas
- Templates for briefs

Part of the purpose of discovery should change the scope → the example of [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) Notify's initial brief of status tracking actually being wrong and the right need to solve being the proactive messaging that offsets anxiety and underpins the product that every knows and loves.

It should be OK to revisit Discovery. Things change. Research differs.

Balancing the challenge of landing the team in an existing policy team that has a lot of research already and formed views. Accept that some of the activity has already been done. The most important thing → where are you at with this and where do we meet you on it?

Discovery → Alpha → Beta is helpful but has it become too constraining, too dogmatic. Once you're out of discovery people feel like you can't go back to doing learning because now you're meant to be testing

Pilotitus - need to make decisions and get it out and learning from

How does test, learn and grow point us at agile/UCD practices but rethought and rewired?

[Important to connect this conversation in Linda Humphries session on Stranger things](#)

When we talk about multi-disciplinary teams do we mean multi-disciplinary of UCD and DDaT job titles or do we actually mean genuinely multi-disciplinary practice?

Is the service standard/assessment process still functional? Does it still carry the 'threat' that was both challenging but also part of the purpose. A discovery needs to be held to a discovery. Suppliers aren't being held to a standard and this is the result.

What would things look like if you were assessed at the end of discovery and you weren't fast tracked just to get to build? And that Alpha maybe needs to be couched in different terms in order to help assist the quality of discoveries and impact the rest of the process.

- [Important to connect this conversation into Ben Carpenter's session on the service standard and assessment process](#)

Is there a difference between where the idea comes from? If it comes top down or bottom up in how the discovery plays out. Top down ideas make it to discovery but the ideation process doesn't.

Story from history about Government as a Platform work where the initial focus on what should be researched and investigated came out of the Exemplar programme and the considered take on what was most needed but that also reflected top down priority setting. After the Pay/Notify/PaaS focus (which sat next to [GOV.UK](#) and Verify) then the question 'what's next?' needed to be answered → the "GaaP Customers Discovery" that researched 100+ different service teams and understanding their needs that gave clear prioritisation to the needs that should be met: primarily that around 'submitting information to government' (ie forms) which kicked off bottom up product work that was ultimately stopped by top down decision making

([https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/reports\\_following\\_discovery\\_and](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/reports_following_discovery_and)) but where [GOV.UK Forms](#) finally fulfils that clear and obvious need. At least we get there in the end...

From the NHS pov there is so much information and user research and wider research and knowledge and insight. There are a few cases where you're starting from scratch. Is that the common experience?

Hard part is finding the right people with whom to have the conversations

There is an overwhelming quantity of user research material that teams have to wade through to get any value.

Maybe this is a genuinely useful application of AI