

Is impact mapping the service designer's secret weapon?

September 2022



How can we define 'impact'?

1

2

3

Effect

Impact is the sustained effect of what we deliver, over the long-term

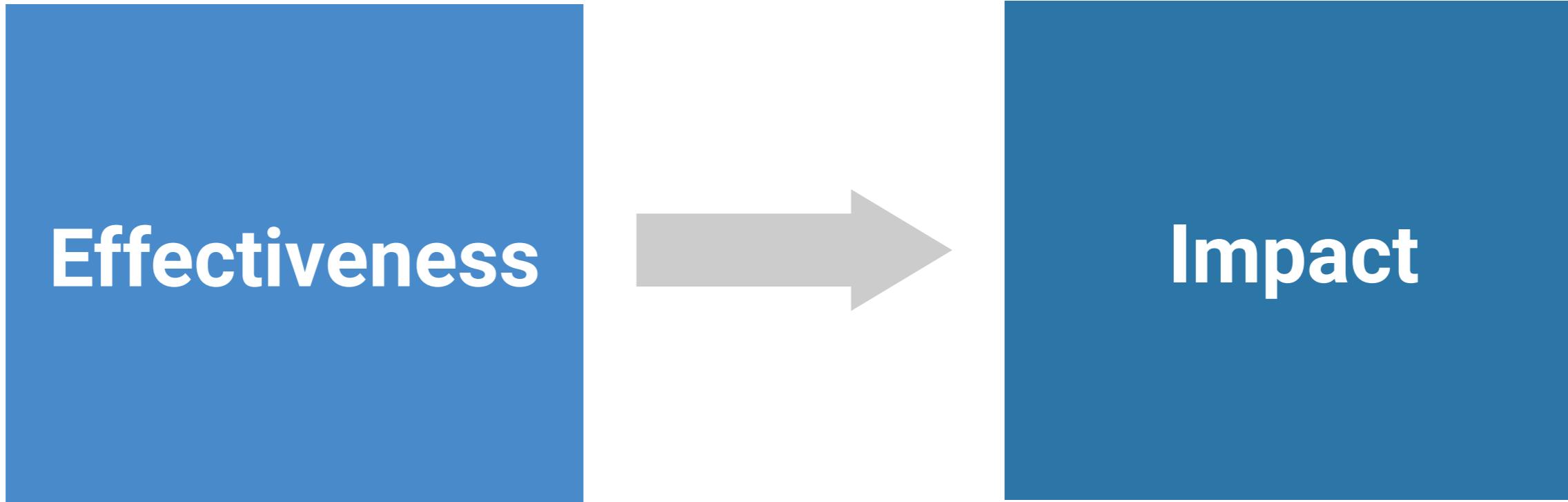
Meaningful

Impact is something important and meaningful to our users, not just the service or organisation

Scale

Impact happens at different scales - individual, community, society, planet

How does it differ from effectiveness?



'Our organisation is growing, our staff are happy, our users engage and enjoy our products and services'

'As a result of what we (and others) do, people's lives are changed for the better'

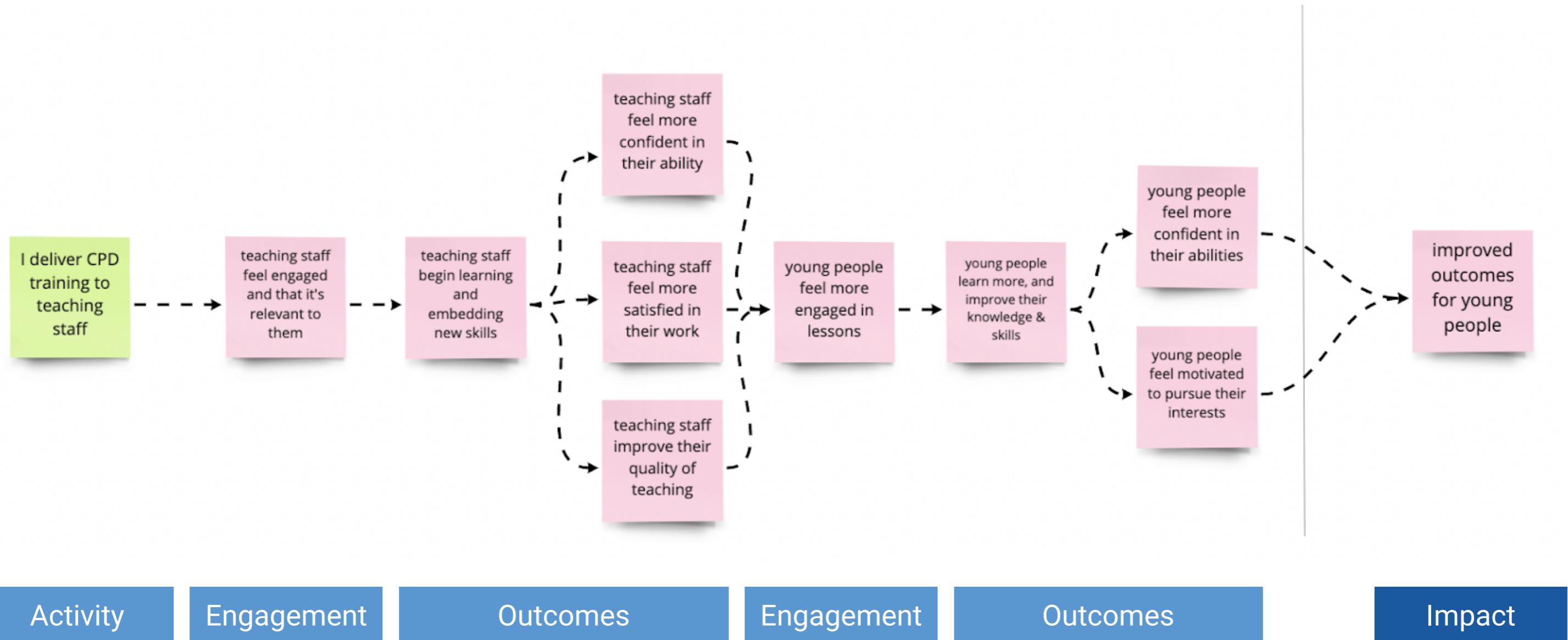
As a result of what we (and others) do, people's lives are made worse

What is impact mapping?

What is impact mapping?

- Impact mapping is a **strategic process and a tool** for setting clear intent around the positive impact we want to achieve in our projects, and mapping the journey for getting there
- It is a method for **gathering team consensus** on our longer term objectives, and challenging our assumptions around how we think positive change occurs
- The **collaborative and inclusive process** is as important as the output
- It helps us **contextualise our service**, and helps us to see the bigger picture of how what we do contributes to long term change.

Example impact map



How does impact mapping help us?

1

Challenge assumptions

Challenge our assumptions and develop hypotheses around if and how positive change is likely to happen

2

Establish a process

Establish a process for setting impact targets and a roadmap for getting there

3

Focus on small steps

Focus on the journey of change and the short term steps laddering up to long term impact

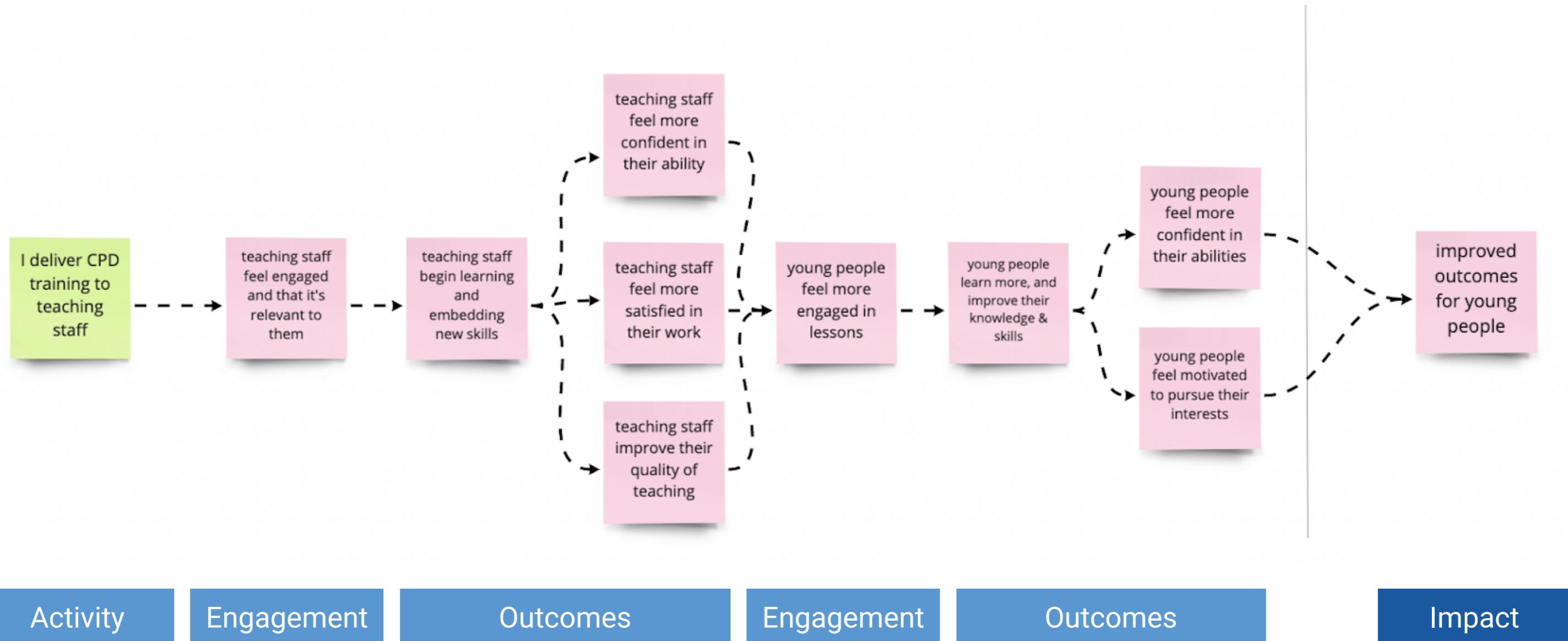
4

Measure what works

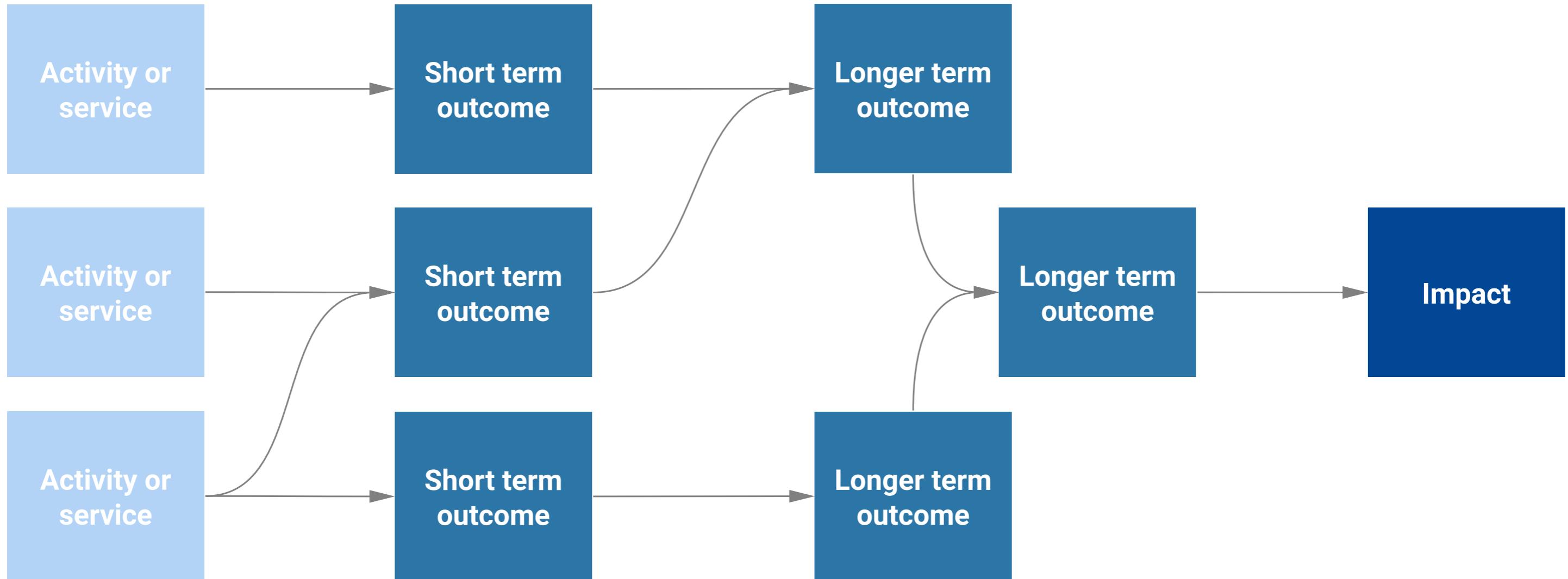
It provides the foundations for what and how to measure the changes you're looking for

Components of an impact map

Example impact map



What are the components?



What are the main components?

Activities

I deliver a product or service

Engagement

People engage with my product or service
- they value what it gives them

Outcomes

As a result of engaging with my product/service, there are changes - in people's capabilities, attitudes, motivations, behaviours

Impact

Over the longer term, people's lives are changed for the better

What are the other components?

Enablers

The conditions that support me to achieve outcomes

Evidence

The proof that what we're doing is working

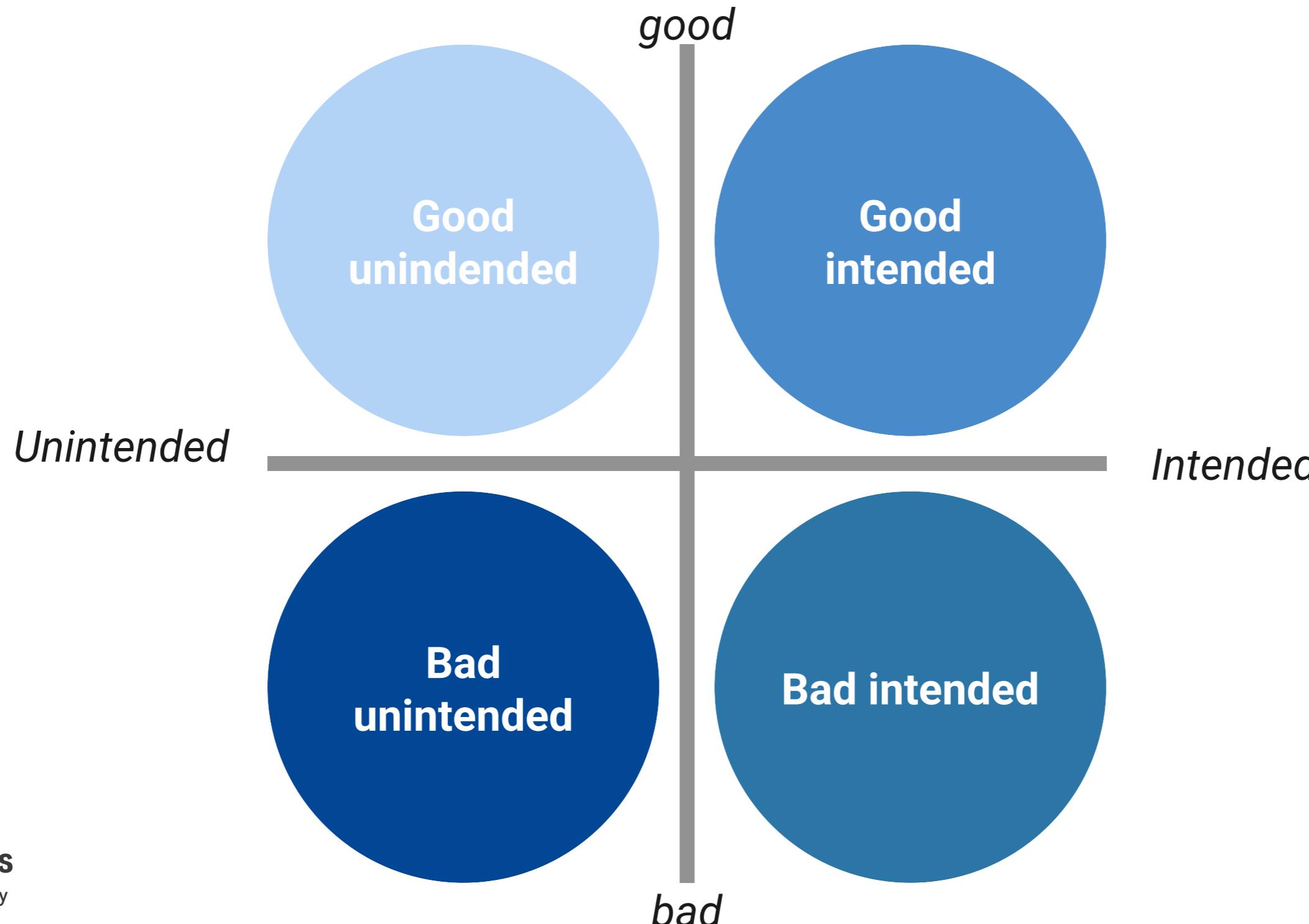
Feedback loops

The evidence that outcomes are leading to further outcomes - recognising change is rarely linear

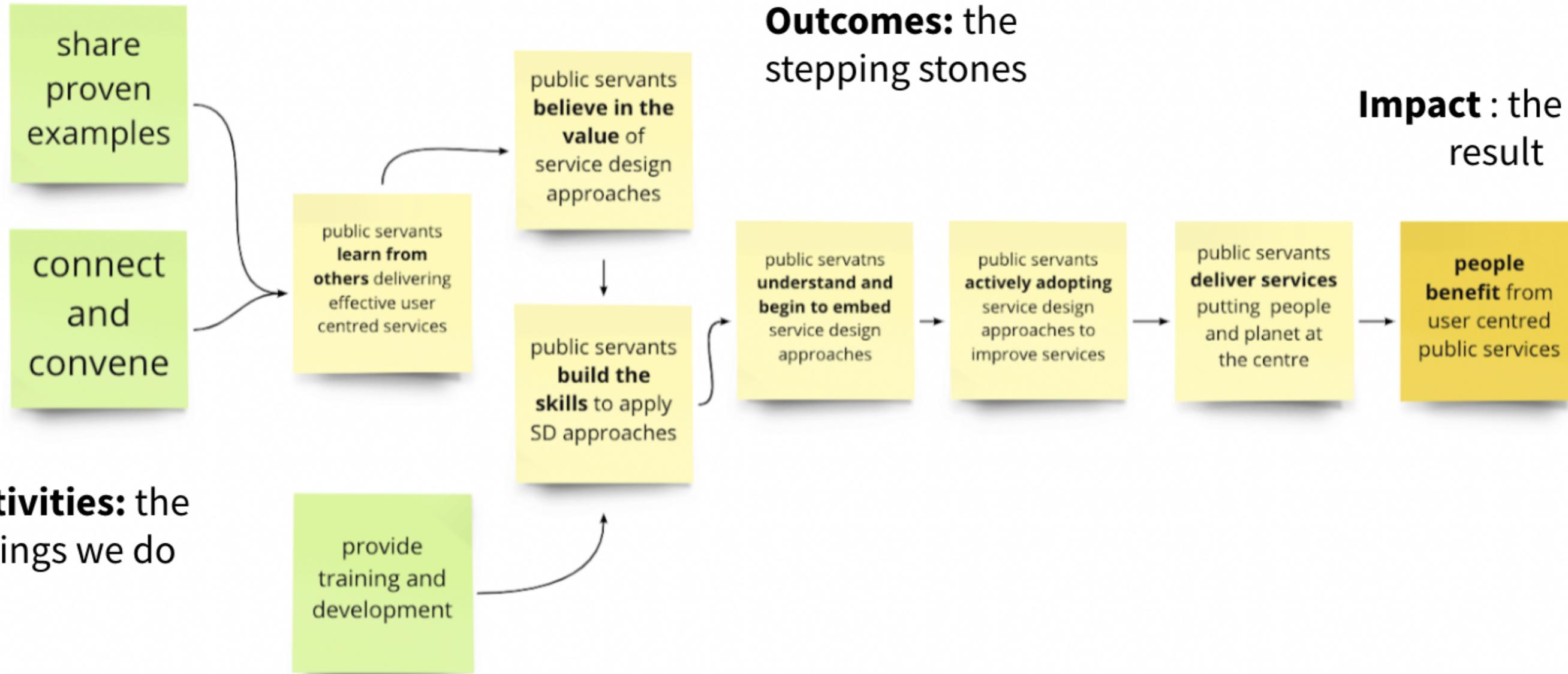
Assumptions

Articulating the beliefs underpinning our impact map

Using consequence scanning to generate ideas



An example



Create your own impact map

The brief

The government has decided that they want the UK to adopt a cycle-first approach to transport. They want cycling to be the preferred mode of transport for most short journeys and have a Dutch-style approach to cycling infrastructure.

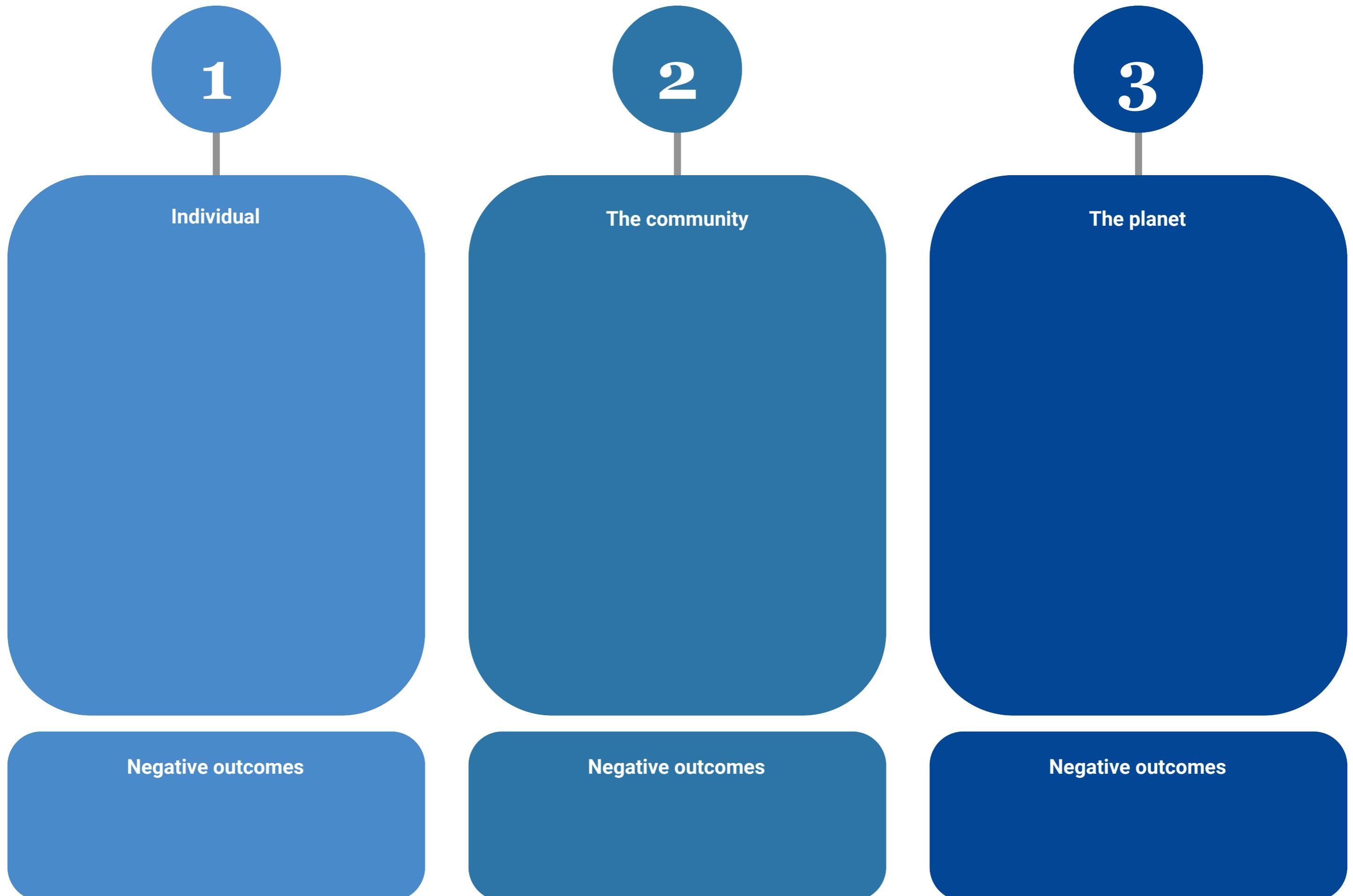
Your job is to build an impact map to understand how this can be achieved, and what outcomes can be expected.

The impact statement is

"People choose cycling as their preferred mode of transport."

Brainstorm outcomes

What are the changes that you hope to see in things like awareness, knowledge, attitudes and skills amongst these groups?



Activities

Short term outcomes

Medium term outcomes

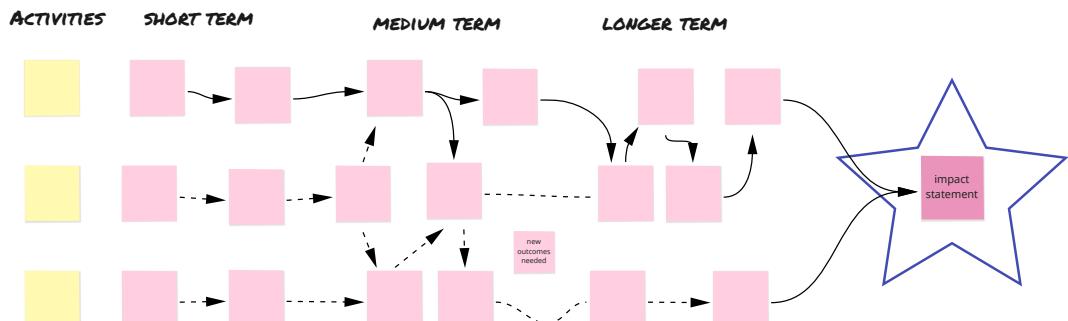
Long term outcomes

Impact

People choose cycling as their preferred mode of transport

Workshop agenda

16.15 - 16.30	Introduction to impact mapping An intro what impact mapping is, and its components Briefing on the impact mapping exercise	15 minutes
16.30 - 16.40	Brainstorm outcomes In your groups spend time brainstorming positive outcomes against the 3 boxes provided (individual, community, planet). Leave a few minutes to brainstorm any possible negative outcomes and fill those sections in	10 minutes
16.40 - 16.50	Organise outcomes Copy your outcomes over to the new board Arrange the outcomes based on whether you think they are likely to happen in the short, medium or longer term Draw connecting arrows between outcomes that lead to one another. Add any outcomes that you find are missing in the logic	10 minutes
16.50 - 16.55	Add activities Add post its for activities - the things you will deliver - that will lead to your outcomes Link up your activities with their related outcomes	5 minutes
16.55 - 17.00	Review map Read through the your map aloud as a team from left to right - does the logic make sense? Is it plausible that these things will lead to each other? Are there outcomes missing?	5 minutes
17.00 - 17.05	Reflections and close Review what we've learnt and where to get more resources	5 minutes
17.05 - 17.15	Review other team's maps Move around the room reviewing how others have completed their maps. Ask any questions you like!	10 minutes



Main takeaways

Impact mapping in service design helps us to...

Challenge our logic

Think further ahead

Plan for good and bad consequences

Measure what works

Make better decisions

Do you think it could be applied in our work? If so, how?

Get in touch!

Nicola Pritchard

nicola.pritchard@cxpartners.co.uk

[Linkedin](#)

Hannah Whiteley

hannah.whiteley@cxpartners.co.uk

[Linkedin](#)