



Civil Service

Policymaker perspectives on reform

October 2020

Policymaking perspectives on a page...

We asked policymakers:

How might policymakers work with Ministers and the public so that they consistently deliver meaningful change for citizens?



178 policymakers participated in primary research



14

public bodies mapped how they make policy



24

people from 11 public bodies in the research team

Policymakers need:

The policymaking community need Civil Service to...

- commission work to guard against siloed-thinking and to improve outcomes for citizens
- enable policymakers to give robust evidence-based advice
- enable the community to specialise and diversify and collaborate

The timeline for change:

- understand how policymakers work, what they value and what they need - **DONE**
- policymakers collaborate on an ideas bank to address needs - **NOW**
- collaborate with x-gov delivery partners - **NOW**
- design and test interventions with policymakers - **SPRING '21**

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Summary of report

The policymaking community is extraordinary

Policymakers have come together to tell the story of a unique and valuable national institution. They have explained how Civil Service can help them to deliver even more meaningful change for citizens

Hundreds of people contributed to this report and revealed the story of an extraordinary profession of over 25,000 people in the United Kingdom. Policymakers work in the most complex and uncertain environments found anywhere. They design public policy and services for everyone, at a scale that people outside of government find difficult to comprehend. This can only happen because the policymaking community is comprised of talented and caring people.

Recent years have presented policymakers with unprecedented demands and pressures. Policymakers have got a lot of things right, but they also recognise that they haven't always been able to give everyone what they need. This plays on the conscience of policymakers, many of whom are driven by a strong sense of public duty. Many policymakers say they want to have a clear focus on delivering meaningful change for citizens, but some feel there is a tension with serving ministers. It's time to reframe the story: policymakers and ministers work together for citizens and we all need to understand citizens to make policies and services that are meaningful to them.

Because the policymaking community is so central to national life, the question on how to improve the way policy is made is raised routinely. There have been numerous attempts to reform Civil Service over the past 50 years, but in 2014 Institute for Government found only 6 attempts that were successful. There is no shortage of people with valid opinions about how policymaking should be improved, but often there is an absence of credible evidence about what policymakers need and how they will respond to change.

Much of the focus for prior initiatives has been on how to make policymakers function better within the bureaucracy, like the quest to ‘write the perfect sub’. But this research finds that that policymakers instead need enabling infrastructure to get on with the job of delivering meaningful outcomes for citizens.

If Civil Service wants policymakers to be in the vanguard of public affairs, then it must enable them to convene and collaborate effectively, and create space for them to think deeply and plan strategically.

We asked policymakers:

How might policymakers work with Ministers and the public so that they consistently deliver meaningful change for citizens?

The work in this report is the collective product of many policymakers. This report presents the weighted views of policymakers, not the research team. Policymakers described how they work, what they value and what they need from Civil Service to enable them to deliver meaningful change for citizens. This report tells their story.

Our research is powered by collaboration...



25

hours of interviews



227

items of evidence



128

policy mapping
workshop participants



25

diversity and inclusion
workshop participants

25,000

policymakers will be surveyed



14

public bodies mapped
how they make policy



4

all nations participated



24

people from 11 public
bodies formed the policy
design team

We also worked with...

10 x



policy labs

5 x



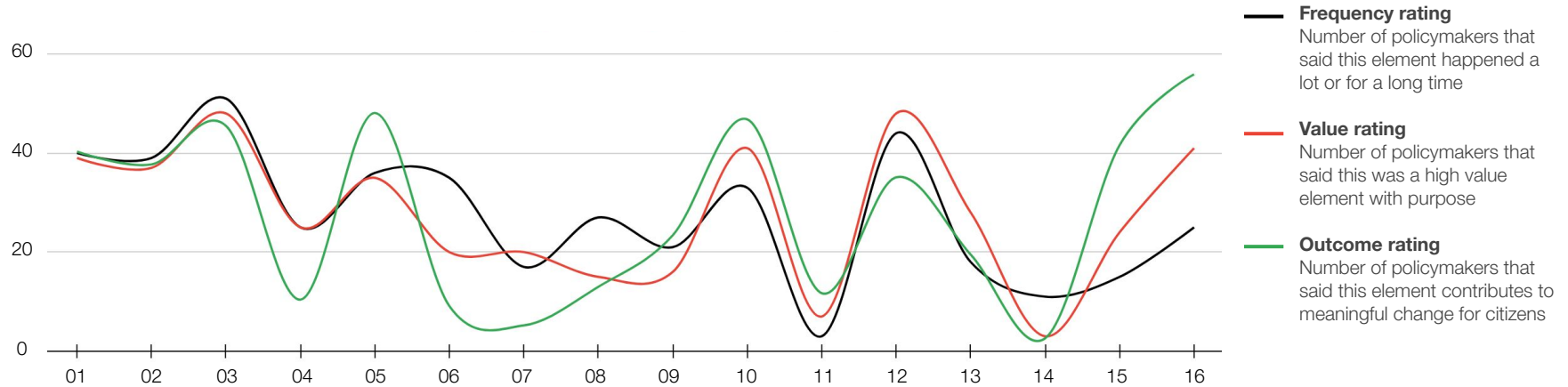
universities

1 x



think tank

Policymakers have clear views on what they value...



01 Idea, opportunity or threat arises

02 Receive briefing/ information on event

03 Understand the problem

04 Understand the people (users)

05 Define the policy question and intent

06 Plan and estimate work

07 Find or build a team to respond

08 Get permission and assure others

09 Collaborate with stakeholders

10 Evidence gathering

11 Consultation

12 Identify solutions

13 Test a solution

14 Receive sign-off from minister

15 Build and implement a solution

16 Evaluate the solution


Data from policymaker workshop sessions that were a blend of research & workshop techniques:

- Journey mapping
- Card sorting
- Stakeholder mapping
- Dot voting (participants had 12 votes across all stages and activities in the journey)
- Observational note taking

Civil Service should commission work to guard against siloed-thinking and to improve outcomes for citizens

Policymakers say they are highly involved with early stages of making a policy or service but they are often commissioned to deliver part of a bureaucratic process, not a meaningful outcome for citizens. Policymakers say they rarely get involved with delivery or find out whether their ideas have delivered meaningful change for citizens.

Increasingly, the problems that government are planning for are multifaceted, cutting across policy areas and the remits of public bodies. These include issues like zero-carbon, Brexit and coronavirus. Consequently, citizens are using public services that cut across multiple policy areas. Policymakers' objectives and the way that their work is funded by HM Treasury drives a narrow focus on departmental issues which may not align with broader needs and issues, or enable large-scale social or economic change. Working across public bodies presents persistent practical difficulties for policymakers due to differing culture and processes, like the sharing of data and evidence.

A woman with blonde hair is smiling and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a patterned top. The background shows an office environment with a desk, a printer, and a hallway.

Policymakers need to be incentivised to deliver meaningful outcomes for citizens, not to deliver part of a bureaucratic process


Policymakers need to understand complex systems and collaborate across public bodies and society on grand challenges

Civil Service should enable policymakers to give robust evidence-based advice

Policymakers think that using evidence is important for delivering meaningful change for citizens and think that they should use it more. They regularly work with experts like analysts, economists, statisticians, but they do not currently value citizen-centred insight and rarely use it. Historical evidence is rarely used either.

Failed policy and service ideas are repeated, time and funding is wasted on duplicating prior research efforts, and time and good will of citizens is squandered because the Civil Service does not enable existing evidence on citizens to be shared. Mismatched technology platforms and data taxonomies, lack of awareness, and parochial privacy agreements all present barriers to sharing evidence.

When policymakers describe how they understand citizens, they talk about working with stakeholders, not people who use policies or services, like citizens. They don't consistently understand the difference and sometimes use evidence that does not fairly represent the views of everyone, so policies and services do not meet the needs of everyone.



Policymakers need to share existing evidence about types of citizen and re-use good citizen-centred service ideas

Policymakers need to find new evidence about types of citizen

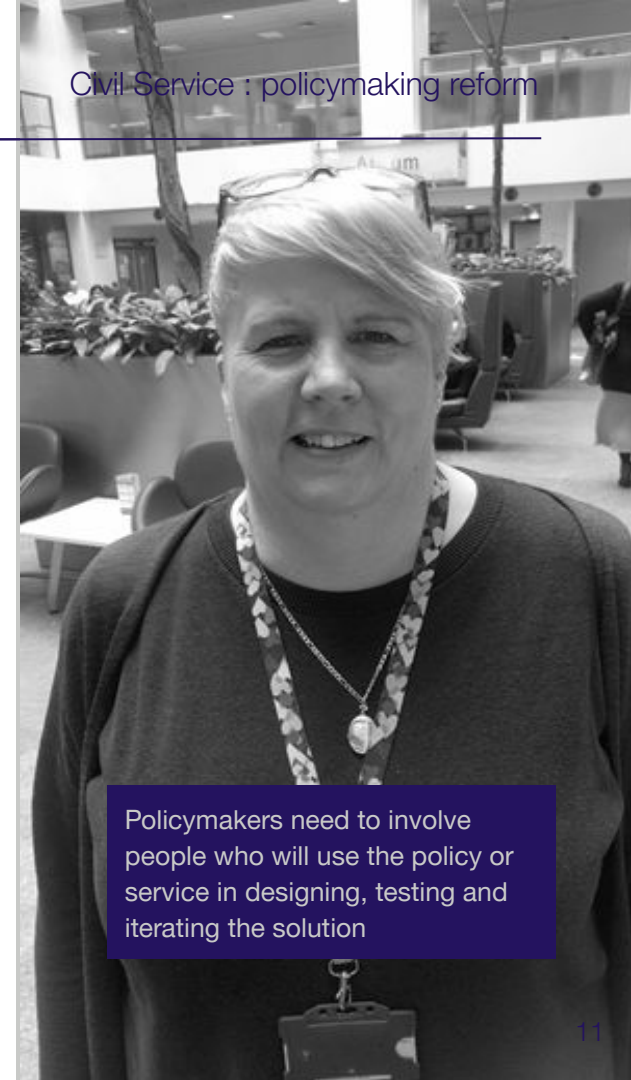
Policymakers need to give advice based on evidence that fairly reflects the needs of the cross-section of people that will use the policy or service

Policymakers say they are often given a solution and asked to implement it, but the solution doesn't always meet the needs of people who will use the policy or service. The ideas are rarely tested with those that will use them before they are implemented, so policymakers cannot be sure they will have the intended effect. By testing ideas early, policymakers are more likely to mitigate risk early and establish assurance that the policy or service will land well and be adopted by people who will use it, like citizens.

Policymakers have low confidence on working directly with the public and they associate a failed test as a personal or professional failure, rather than proving or disproving an uncertain aspect of a policy or service. Often citizen insight is too slow, difficult or expensive to incorporate in the policymaking process.

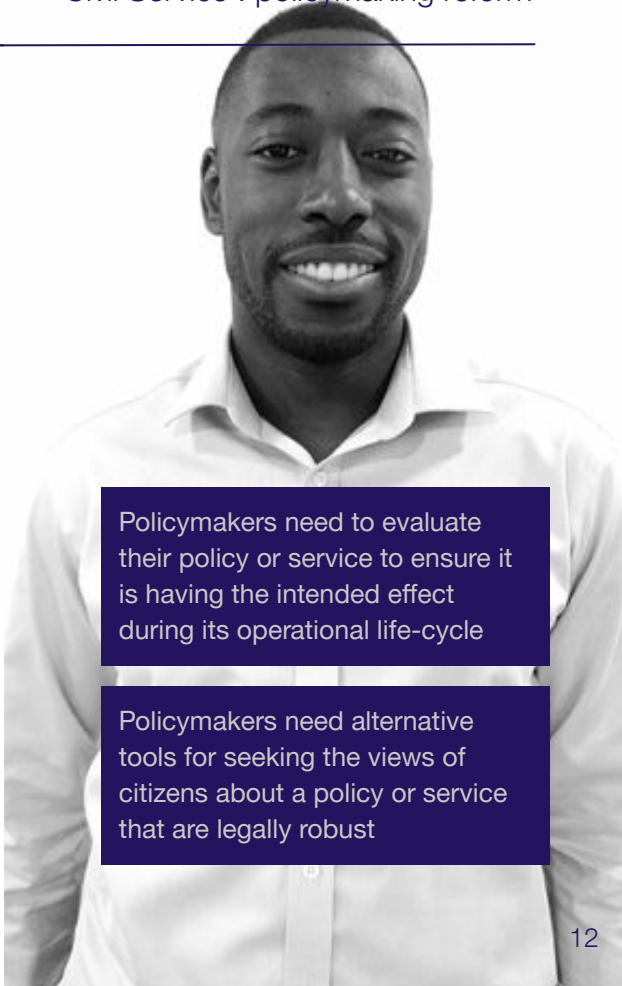
There are some pockets of government, like labs and What Works centres, where expertise in citizen-focused research, testing and prototyping is provided to policymakers, but its current scale cannot support all of the policymaking community.

Policymakers need to involve people who will use the policy or service in designing, testing and iterating the solution



Evaluation is a feature of all theoretical policy making models and policymakers recognise its value, but it is often not done even though policymakers think they should do it more. Where it is done, evaluation is typically a single event which occurs years (policymakers frequently mentioned 5 years) after the policy or service has been implemented. It is rare that the policymaker is present 5 years later to receive insight from the evaluation of their work or that it can inform the live policy or service.

Policymakers think consultation offers little value to themselves or to citizens. Consultation is seen as a tick-box exercise. It is usually a confirmatory activity conducted after a solution has already been determined. Participants are usually stakeholders that represent particular groups or interests, not citizens who will use the policy or service.



Policymakers need to evaluate their policy or service to ensure it is having the intended effect during its operational life-cycle


Policymakers need alternative tools for seeking the views of citizens about a policy or service that are legally robust

Civil Service should enable the policymaking community to specialise and diversify and collaborate

Policymakers are predominantly generalists with a high frequency of transition between roles. This causes poor institutional memory and diminishes deep knowledge of subject matter. They often don't have space to think strategically.

Policy teams are often not diverse and do not reflect the types of citizen they are making policy and services for, so have limited understanding of their lives. This can result in bias in the evidence base, so some citizens are treated less favourably than others.

Policymakers need to work with other professional experts to do their job, but say that they often can't because of bureaucratic barriers, like misaligned funding or objectives, or commercial and HR processes that are too slow for the pace of political work. Because policymakers have limited time, people and money to make policy, sometimes collaboration is too slow, difficult or expensive to incorporate in the policymaking process.



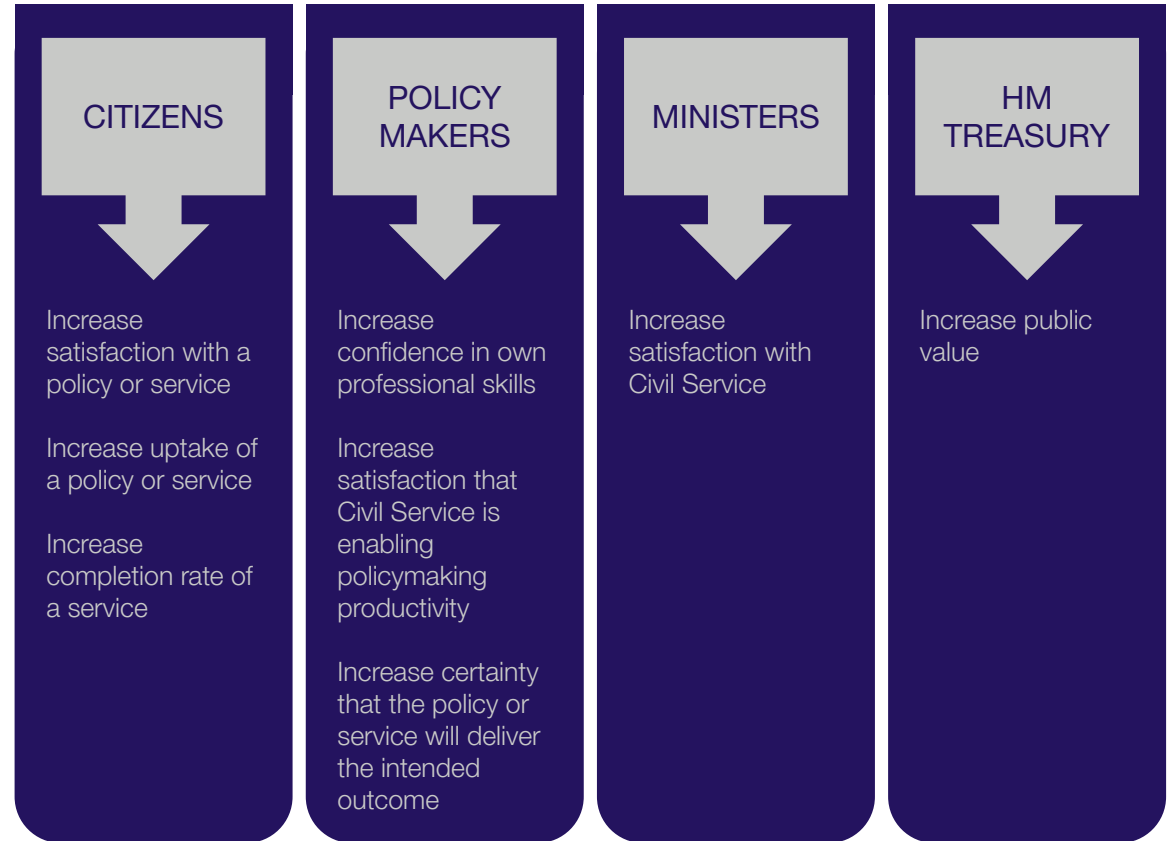
Policymakers need their role to be professionalised and divided into specialisms

Policymaking teams need to reflect the mix of citizens that they are designing policy and services for and operate inclusively for all team members

Policymakers need quick access to professional experts, subject matter experts, and policy designers

Policymakers can work together to target change

Policymakers can work together - across the full span of UK public services - to incisively shift a small set of important measures. All findings in this report have been mapped to four beneficiaries: citizens, policymakers, ministers and HMT



NB: further detail on sources of metrics and definitions are in the main report

Change should be locally-led by policymakers

There are a number of things that Civil Service could do to address the needs of policymakers. Some interventions will need to be made locally in response to the unique way each public body operates, and some interventions will need to delivered centrally because they will enable all policymakers or require the action of others in government.

What to change: commission work to guard against siloed-thinking and to improve outcomes for citizens

| | | | |
|---------|--|---|--|
| Local | Increase the proportion of policymakers who are commissioned, performance -managed and funded to delivery meaningful outcomes for citizens | Coordinate policies and services with a citizen-centred perspective (understand the range of government interests, identify synergies and make connections) | Coordinate policies and services with a system-wide perspective (understand the range of government interests, identify synergies, make connections) |
| Central | Increase the number of policymakers who are incentivised to work collaboratively across public bodies and society on grand challenges | Define priority types of citizen / user in each public body and agree cross-government taxonomy | |

What to change: enable policymakers to give robust evidence-based advice

| | | | | |
|---------|--|--|--|---|
| Local | Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using existing evidence about citizens | Increase visibility of senior leader support for working with the citizens | Increase in the proportion of evidence gathering exercises that segment the types of citizen that will use the policy or service | Increase in the proportion of policies and services that test policy ideas, with the people that will use them, before implementation |
| | Increase the proportion of policies and services that re-use existing successful patterns for working with citizen | Increase the proportion of policies and services that involve citizens in the policymaking process | Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using new research / evidence about citizens | Increase the proportion of policies and service that commence their obligatory equality impact assessment during the research stage |
| Central | Reduce the friction of sharing data and evidence between public bodies | Increase in the number of evidence gathering tools that are perceived as legally robust | Increase in the proportion of services that use a common taxonomy for citizen segmentation like protected characteristics, geographical location and socio-economic background | Increase the proportion of policies and services have a live feed of evaluation data during their operational life-cycle |
| | Reduce the friction of accessing and working with citizens | | | |

What to change: enable the community to specialise and diversify and collaborate

Local

Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using a multidisciplinary team

Increase proportion of policy teams that adapt their operational model to maximise the ability and perspective of all team members

Increase the proportion of policy teams that reflect the profile of citizens that they design policy and services for

Increase the proportion of policies and services that have access to a historian

Increase in the proportion of SCS from each policymaking specialism

Central

Recruit people to the Civil Service that mirror the profile of citizens' protected characteristics, geographical location and socio-economic background

Increase in the number of policymakers that choose a policymaking specialism (Government Business Expert, Subject Matter Expert, Policy Design Expert)

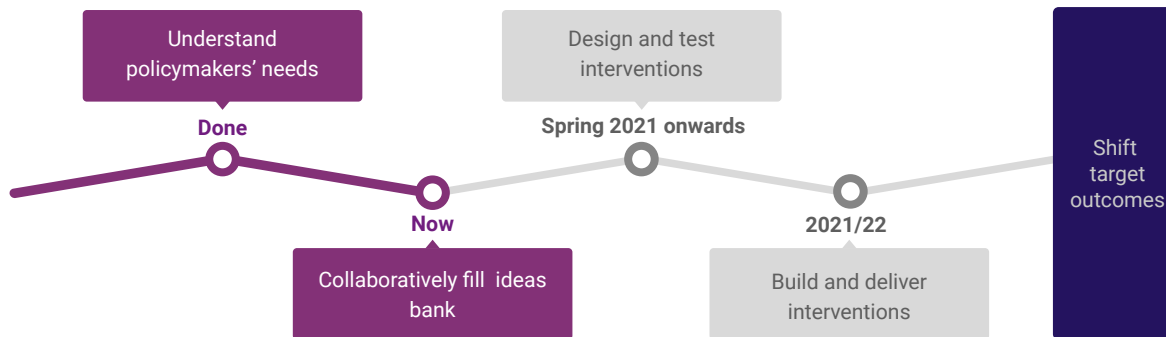
Effective delivery requires collaboration

Changing how policy is made in the UK will be most effective if it is done collaboratively and openly, both within the policymaking community and with others in government and beyond. Action will need to be taken by:

- each public body with policymakers
- a central, multidisciplinary policy design team
- Cabinet Office, HMT, and other professions and functions

Each unique public body needs bespoke interventions

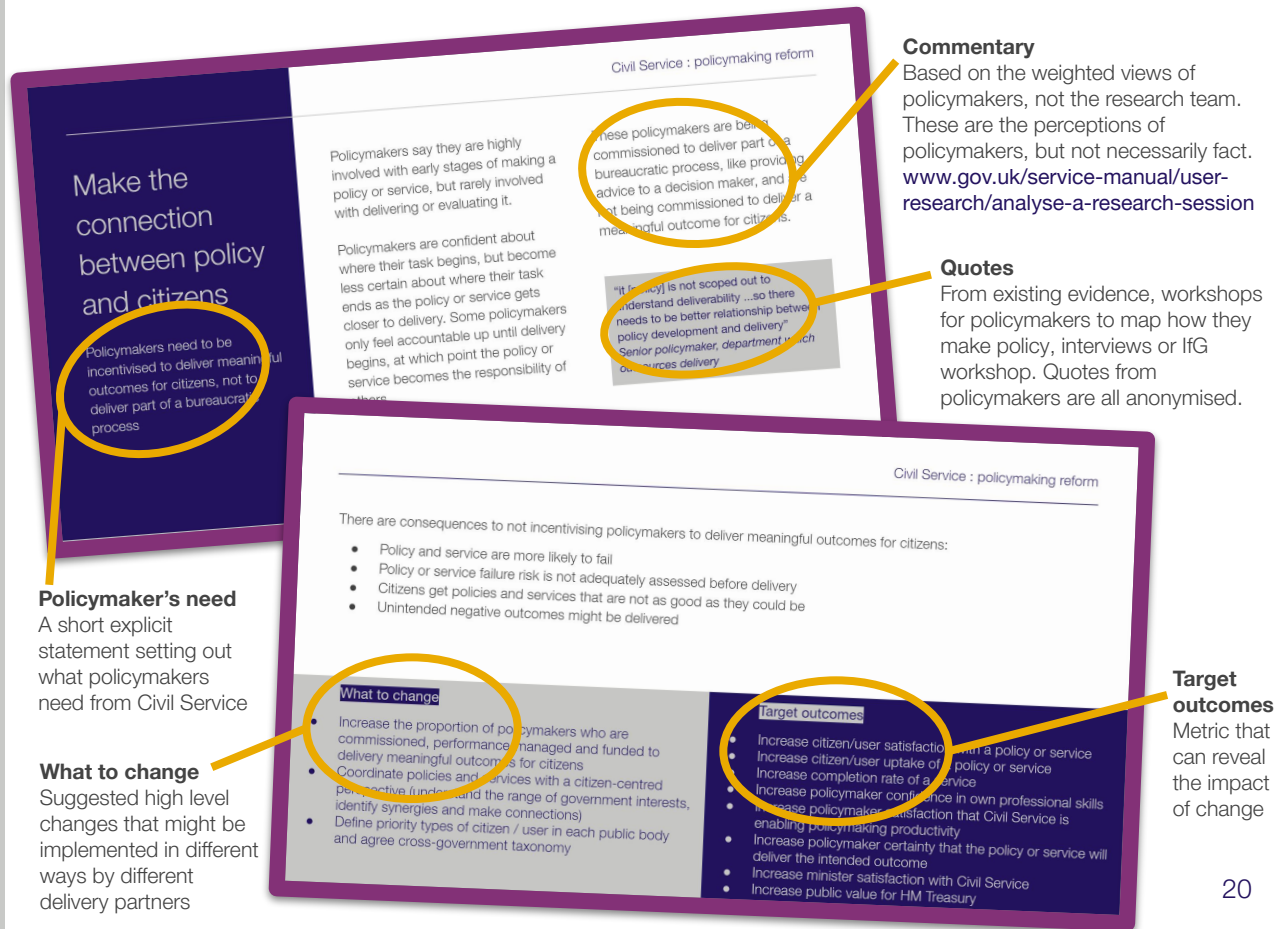
Policymakers' have articulated their needs in this report. Civil Service should decide how it will respond. Each public body could seek to understand which of the issues are most pertinent to the unique way they operate. We have already built an open ideas bank to generate ideas to address those needs and policymakers could contribute their ideas to the bank during Winter 2020. This would provide the policymaking community and its delivery partners with prioritised ideas for incisively changing how it makes policy in a bespoke way.



How to read this report

A guide to reading this report

This report is written in a specific way to enable the policy design process. Framing evidence and research in a specific manner makes it more readily usable when designing and testing interventions and ensures that solutions meet the needs of people that will use them. A guide to applying these methods in your work is at: www.deliverybook.uk



Language used in this report

This report aims to use the language that the policymaking community use themselves. However, the community is large and incorporates many unique ways of working, so it not always possible to use universal language that reflect every way of working. Here are some explanations of the terms used

Citizen: this indicates a person that uses a government service or is affected by a government policy. In many cases this will be a UK citizen, but there are some public bodies that make policies or services that are for other people like citizens of foreign states or frontline public professionals like teachers or nurses. Although the term 'citizen' is used here in shorthand the finding are equally applicable to others that use government policies and services

Service: a transaction between government and a person like a citizen

Policymaker: a catch-all term for anyone that self-identifies as part of the policymaking community. The community has taken an open and welcoming approach in the past, so individuals have an array of specialisms and activities

Stakeholder: a person that represents an interest group, but does not directly use the service or policy

Meaningful change: an outcome that citizens see, understand and value. Note that in some cases, a meaningful outcome may rely on stability not change, like nuclear deterrence policy

Changing how policy is made

Senior leaders indicated clear future intent

From the outset, the research team worked closely with senior policymakers to understand what they wanted to understand and change in the world of policymaking

The research team's first step was to talk to some of Civil Service's most senior policymakers at Director, Director General and Permanent Secretary level to understand their ambitions for the future of the policymaking community. They gave clear direction that policymakers should be focused on delivering 'real world improvement for citizens' and that Civil Service might do this by enabling policymakers to collaborate with others, including citizens, to build understanding. This early work provided a framework for lines of inquiry and a headline question:

How might policymakers work with Ministers and the public so that they consistently deliver meaningful change for citizens?

Policymakers in some public bodies might query the relevance of this question to their work. There are different types of public body that form the policymaking community. Some work exclusively with ministers or citizens and some work with both or neither. Regardless of type of organisation, policymakers consistently said that understanding the people who will use the policy or service is critical to delivery of public value. If your organisation doesn't work directly or indirectly with UK citizens, then you might respond to these findings by replacing the 'citizen' with a 'policy or service user'.

Proudly talk about success

The policymaking community do extraordinary things in the most complex and uncertain environments. There is plenty to be proud of and the community is always looking for ways to improve. A focus on increasing benefits for its most important partners will enable everyone in the community to pull in the same direction and to compare the impact of any interventions for supporting policymakers

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| CITIZENS | Metrics based on established GDS reporting model at gov.uk/performance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase satisfaction with a policy or service • Increase uptake of a policy or service • Increase completion rate of a service |
| POLICY MAKERS | Metrics based on policymakers' needs and IPA's metric on delivery confidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase confidence in own professional skills • Increase satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity • Increase certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome |
| MINISTERS | Metric to be validated based on ministers' needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase satisfaction with Civil Service |
| HM TREASURY | Metric based on the Public Value Framework | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public value |

NB: not all metrics will be applicable to all policies or services; relevant ones should be selected

Collaboration is critical for reform

Policymakers are in the vanguard of public service. They are often the first to a problem or opportunity and they specialise in convening talented people to tackle the response.

Policymakers rely on others to help make policy and will need the support of others to improve how policy is made.

The policymaking community cannot operate in isolation. It is heavily dependent on the expertise of others in government and beyond. Therefore to evolve how policy is made, it must turn to others to support and enact change.

This report identifies 11 important partners for reforming how Civil Service enables the policymaking process:

- Policymaking community in public bodies
- A central, multidisciplinary policy design team and Policy Profession Unit
- HM Treasury
- Cabinet Office
- Professions that specialise in research
- Government Digital Service
- Civil Service HR
- Government Commercial Function
- Government Finance Function
- Data Profession
- Other professions

Further detail can be found in the appendix on the activities that potential partners might collaborate on.

Fit with wider Civil Service reform

There is a strong correlation between policymakers’ needs identified in this report and Civil Service’s wider modernisation and reform programme that was initiated in 2020 (respectively on the right and left of the table opposite)

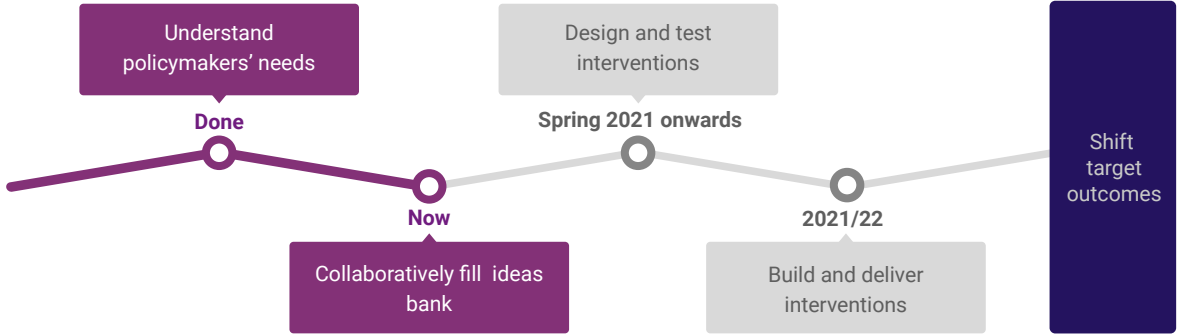
| | |
|---|--|
| Stay in post longer, develop subject expertise | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policymakers need their role to be professionalised and fragmented into specialisms |
| Work in multi-disciplinary teams across organisational boundaries | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policymakers need quick access to professional experts, subject matter experts, and policy designers |
| Have ownership and accountability for policy from inception to implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policymakers need to be incentivised to deliver meaningful outcomes for citizens, not to deliver part of a bureaucratic process• Policymakers need to understand complex systems and collaborate across public bodies and society on grand challenges |
| Co-design policies and services with citizens and partners and understand their needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policymakers need to find new evidence about types of citizen• Policymakers need to give advice based on evidence that fairly reflects the needs of the cross-section of people that will use the policy or service• Policymakers need to involve people who will use the policy or service in designing, testing and iterating the solution• Policymaking teams need to reflect the mix of citizens that they are designing policy and services for and operate inclusively for all team members |
| Be skilled in evidence-driven policymaking and competent in data literacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policymakers need to share existing evidence about types of citizen and re-use good citizen-centred service ideas |
| Evaluate policy delivery using real time data so implementation can be refined | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policymakers need to evaluate their policy or service to ensure it is having the intended effect during its operational life-cycle |
| Evaluate and assess the impact of the policies post-implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policymakers need alternative tools for seeking the views of citizens about a policy or service that are legally robust |

Moving from understanding to action

The policymaking community is big. There are over 25,000 people who identify as a policymaker and their public bodies are each unique in the way they operate. Implementing change needs to be incisive and coordinated.

In this report policymakers articulate their needs and the barriers they face day-to-day. This report does not dictate how those needs should be addressed. Instead the policymaking community should look to its own policymakers for inspiration and to tailor interventions to each of its unique public bodies.

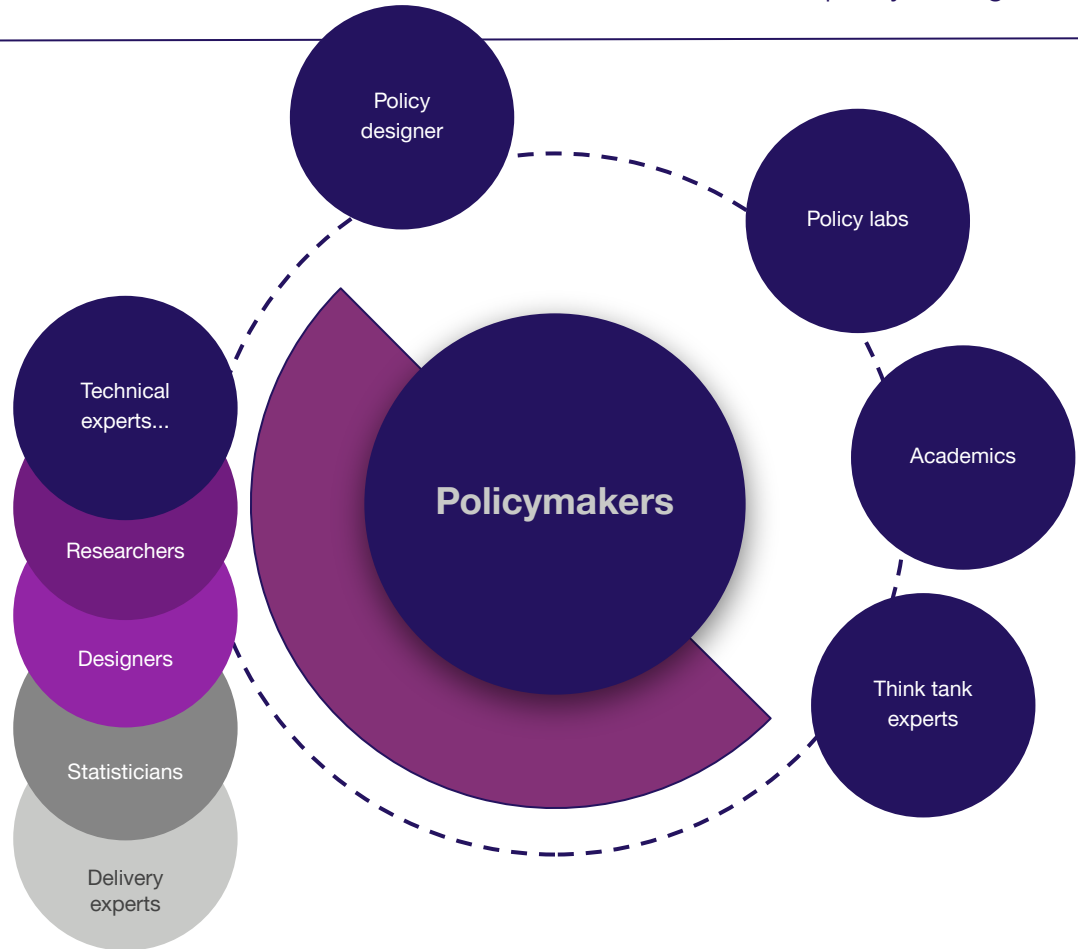
The research team have already built an open ideas bank and have begun to generate ideas on how to support policymaking work. During winter 2020, there will be open workshops for policymakers to generate and prioritise ideas for addressing their community’s needs. Delivery partners will then be able to choose from the ideas and tailor interventions to suit the unique way that they operate.



How the research team worked

We built a multi-disciplinary team around policymakers

It is important that policymakers feel they own this work and will continue to do so in the future. So we ensured they were at the heart of the team, building deep understanding of the evidence and decisions, so they can carry this work forward.



Policy design



Andrew Knight
Principal Policy Designer
DfE

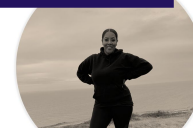
Research operations



Nana Gyamfi
Policymaker
PPU

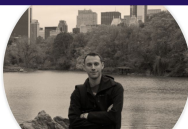


Eilidh McCracken
Policymaker
PPU



Lauren Olukoya
Policymaker
PPU

Technical experts



Ben Tate
Service Designer
GDS



Deepa Patel
User Researcher
GDS



Heather Madden
Service Designer
MOJ



Puja Kohli
Delivery Manager
GDS



Ella Dorfman
Service Designer
GDS



Abdur Rahman
User Researcher
Spark



Bethany Hughes
Statistician
ONS

Policymakers



Niamh Webster
Policymaker
Scottish Government



Henry Reed
Policymaker
PPU



Mark Wilson
Policymaker
DfE



Caroline Cooke
Policymaker
PPU



Richard Banks
Policymaker
PPU



Niall Robertson
Policymaker
DfT

Diversity & inclusion



Lianne Dillsworth
HR Professional
Cabinet Office



Kate Lloyd
Policymaker
Home Office



Sukhvinder Sohpal
Tax professional
HMRC



Helen Olojo
Policymaker
DfE



Sheela Lukose
Tax professional
HMRC



Jenny Dibb
Operational delivery
DWP



Toyin Owolabi
Policymaker
PPU

The research team brought together people from...



Department
for Education



Government
Digital Service



Ministry
of Justice



Department
for Transport



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot



Office for
National Statistics

They were supported by diversity and inclusion volunteers from...



Cabinet Office



Home Office



HM Revenue
& Customs



Department
for Work &
Pensions

16 people from 6 public bodies
worked together in the research
team

They were supported on
diversity and inclusion by 7
volunteers from a further 4
departments

10 departmental policy labs
provided evidence and advice

Institute for Government
provided evidence on the views
of government's partners

The team took evidence and
advice from academics at: UCL
IIPP, RCA, LSE, Cardiff Met Uni
& Uni of Strathclyde



All work and research
was conducted remotely

NR

TO

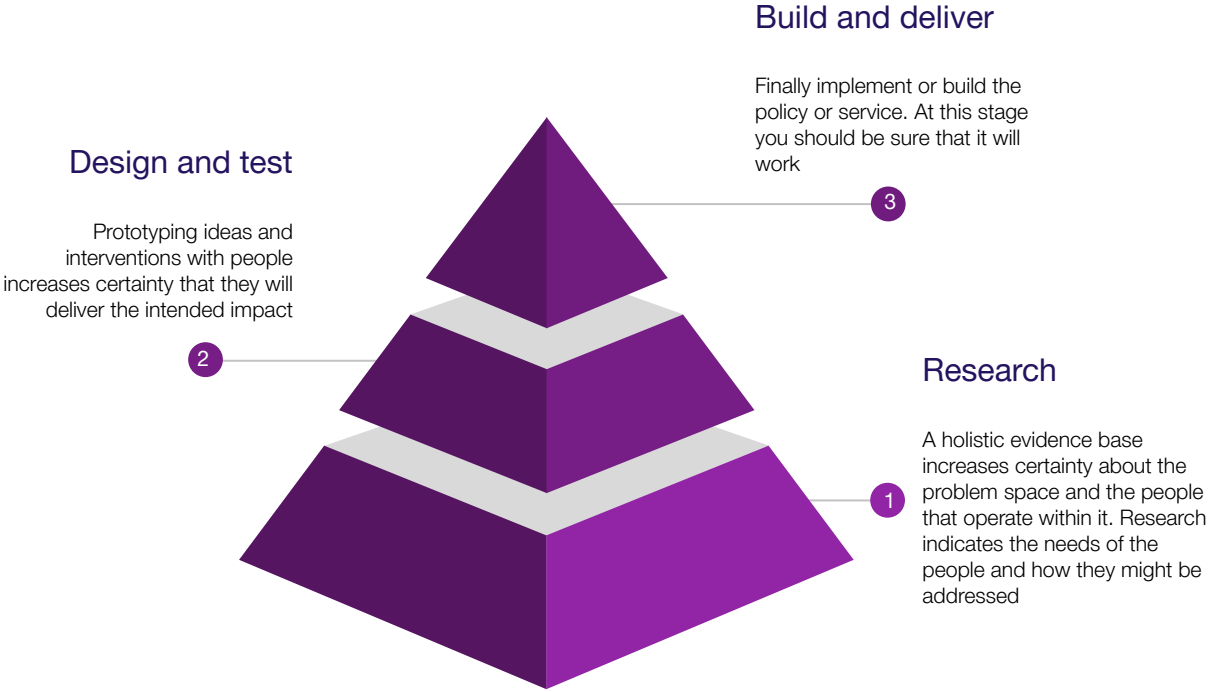
DD

HM

HR

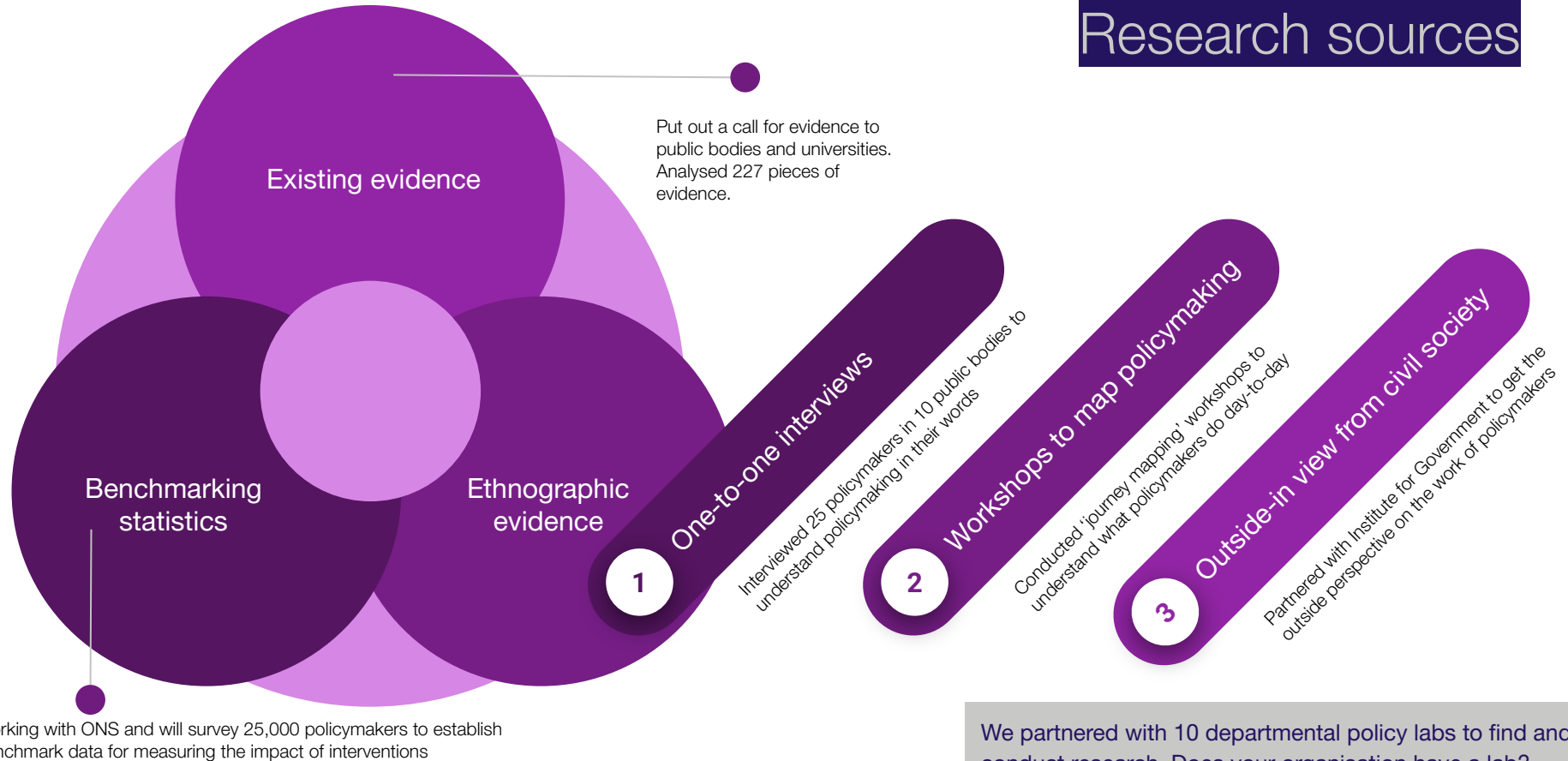
The policy research and design model

The model being used is evidence-focused and addresses uncertainty early, so everyone can be sure that interventions will succeed. This report covers the first stage: research.



Try the research and design model with your policy team.
Find out more at: www.deliverybook.uk

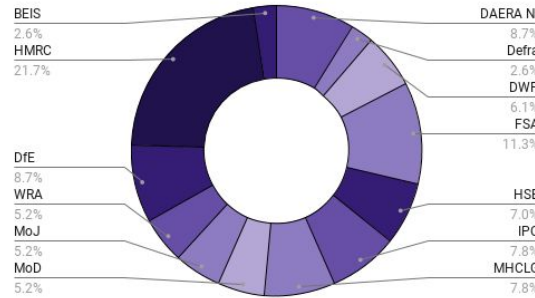
Research sources



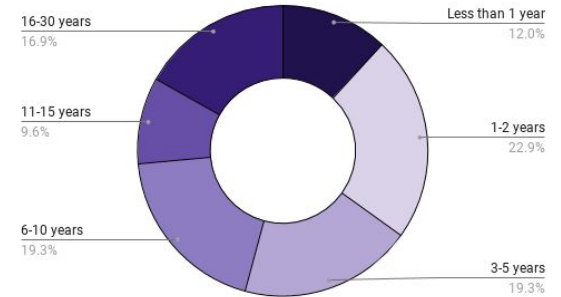
A range of policymakers took part in workshops

- 14 public bodies conducted workshops to understand how they make policy
- Each of the 4 nations held workshops
- The 128 policymakers who participated had a wide mix of experience, grade and location

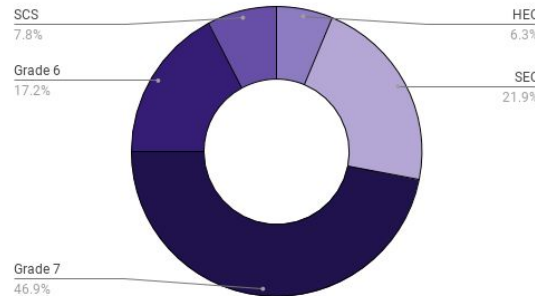
Department



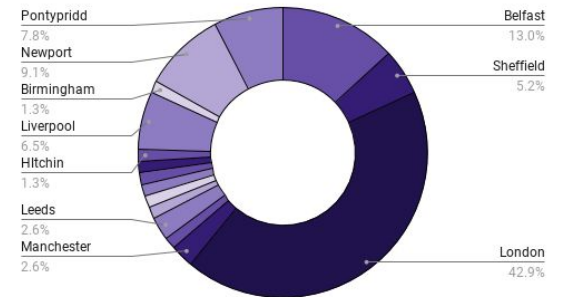
Experience



Grade



Location



Proposed delivery schedule

May 2020

Commissioning and understanding intent

Worked with Director General leaders across government to fix the question and understand their intent. Public bodies generously lent people to form a research team.

August 2020

Research

12 week research project to understand the policymaking environment in the UK.

November 2020

Share findings and build an ideas bank with policymakers

Share findings amongst the policymaking community and develop local action plans for each public body, collaboratively build an ideas bank, and recruit a scaled team (subject to Civil Service decision on response)

April 2021

Design, test, build and deliver

Collaboration by delivery partners: each public body with policymakers; PPU and policy transformation; Cabinet Office, HMT, and other professions (subject to Civil Service decision on response)

The context for policymaking

Diversity and inclusion is a fundamental of policymaking

Fairly representing communities that use policy and services should be hardwired into everything policymakers do

You will not find a section of this report on diversity or inclusion because all findings relate to it.

Government has a unique challenge because it needs to provide policy and public services for all citizens.

“How can we ensure that we’re reaching out to not just the people using our system but to those who want to use our system and can’t?”

Senior policymaker, large department

Designing in an inclusive way means fairly understanding the needs of people that will use the policy or service and how they will respond to the intervention. If policymakers don’t do this, then some groups of citizens

might be treated differently from the original policy intent and less public value would be delivered.

“we will... ensure we better understand the experiences of people in all the different parts of our society and use that insight to make decisions which are informed by local need and context.”

Civil Service Reform Prospectus, 2020

A lack of diversity in the civil service presents a significant risk because it reduces understanding of citizens, making it more difficult to deliver public value.

“Engaging a range of people from different backgrounds and cultures and understanding is vital. Diversity and inclusion are mission critical” *Sir Mark Sedwill*

Policymaking happens in a political context

Policymakers operate within a political environment and have a lot to say about it because ministers have a strong influence on their work.

It is not the intention of this report to make recommendations about changing how policymakers and ministers interact because it focuses on the perspective of policymakers, not ministers.

To make this type of recommendation the analysis would need to fairly weigh the needs of policymakers and ministers. If the Civil Service wish to pursue this, then it is recommended that a short minister-centred research exercise be conducted as a companion piece to the evidence gathered here. This section intends to provide context for other findings in this report.

Policymaker's advice focuses on balancing the tension between a minister's needs, the needs of citizens and practical deliverability. If ministers and policymakers have a clear and shared sense of purpose and drive, this creates enough trust between the two sides so that policymakers can use evidence and analysis to talk to ministers about their assumptions and help them find the optimal way to deliver meaningful outcomes for citizens.

"For the right balance to be achieved, ministers and civil servants need to recognise these roles [political and technocrat] and create effective working relationships that respect and value the contributions both can bring" IfG, 2011

Policymakers say that they don't feel they are always able to provide balanced advice because of the power dynamic between themselves and ministers and the pace of the political environment. Policymakers sometimes provide inconsistent advice to ministers that isn't balanced or weighed against citizen needs and deliverability. Instead ministers are given advice that they want to hear and there is a culture of only providing 'good news'. Some policymakers feel high anxiety about working with ministers.

"Policymakers want to please Ministers and may fear presenting challenge"
Policymaker in workshop

"If the culture extols or promotes civil servants who prioritise satisfying their minister, as opposed to upholding value for money or the public's wider interests, the credibility of the system can be undermined" *IfG, 2018*

"I think part of the challenge is how Whitehall is becoming increasingly political. We are seeing more and more senior leaders resigning or being pushed out" *Senior policymaker, large dpm*

"The danger is that civil servants, faced with the desire to please and help ministers, too readily tell them what they think they want to hear" *IfG, 2011*

"So there is often a tension between the you know what's best for the customer and you know, let's say the politics or the political priorities"
Senior policymaker, large department

"The relationship between ministers and officials should be characterised by mutual respect for their different roles, and also by proactivity, curiosity and constructive challenge" *Windrush review*

The bureaucratic process of interacting with a minister is seen as somewhat of a dark art. Policymakers heavily rely on private offices to navigate a diverse range of personalities and personal preferences. This acts as a barrier to standardising the format and quality of policymakers' advice.

"There is no, single approach for communicating problems, evidence and options to ministers. Instead, policymakers must learn what the Minister is willing to see" *Policymaker in workshop*

"The chemistry between the Secretary of State and Permanent Secretary crucially determines the effectiveness of policy delivery" *Civil Service Effectiveness Inquiry, 2018*

"In my experience if you don't have a good relationship with private office it will have an impact on the steering and not in a good way. Ministers usually trust their officials and their officials will give them a steer which means that someone like me will have to be really proactive in making sure that they sort of know what's going on which is part of the job. But if you have someone brand new or someone that does not understand the context of your area it could lead to bad decisions" *Senior policymaker, large department*

There is also a concern that policy advice happens in a secretive, 'black box' manner. More transparency of the advice given by policymakers and the decisions taken by ministers could drive up the standard of policymaking.

"Of course we politicians are principally to blame. We go for the sugar rush that comes from announcing radical initiatives, unveiling dramatic overhauls, launching new spending programmes, ramping up this and rolling out that. Done right, such moments can galvanise the system into action. But at times we risk the hunger for new policy announcements becoming insatiable"

Michael Gove, 2020

The outside-in perspective on policymaking

Civil society partners say that a focus on citizens is of utmost importance and policymakers need to get much better at working with them

Institute for Government were research partners for this report. They convened 14 top leaders from local government, arms length bodies, charities, think tanks, research and design organisations to discuss:

- how policymakers can better understand citizens to deliver meaningful change
- how well policymakers currently understand the public
- where they have successfully and unsuccessfully engaged with citizens
- what practical actions they can take to incorporate citizens' voices into the policymaking process

Their comments can be found throughout this report and a summary of their views is on the following page.

The leaders' views strongly correlated with findings of this report. They said that delivering meaningful change for citizens should be a high priority for policymakers, but that policymakers do not value the insights of citizens and do not have the capacity or capability to work with them.

The view of civil society leaders on policymaking

Policymakers don't have the time or incentives to engage with citizens, so this work is often 'bolted on' or viewed as an aside

There is scepticism (and fear) in the senior civil service about the value of citizen engagement

Policymakers lack understanding of the options available to them for engaging with citizens

The language policymakers use can come across as patronising

Policymakers need to understand the importance of 'place' and engaging with people where they are about what their concerns are

• Policymakers need to be transparent about how citizens' views are going to be used in the policy making process, and how this will be followed up

Policymakers should be trained in how to engage with citizens (from skills assessments to job swaps)

There are examples of good practice in engaging citizens which policymakers can build on and learn from

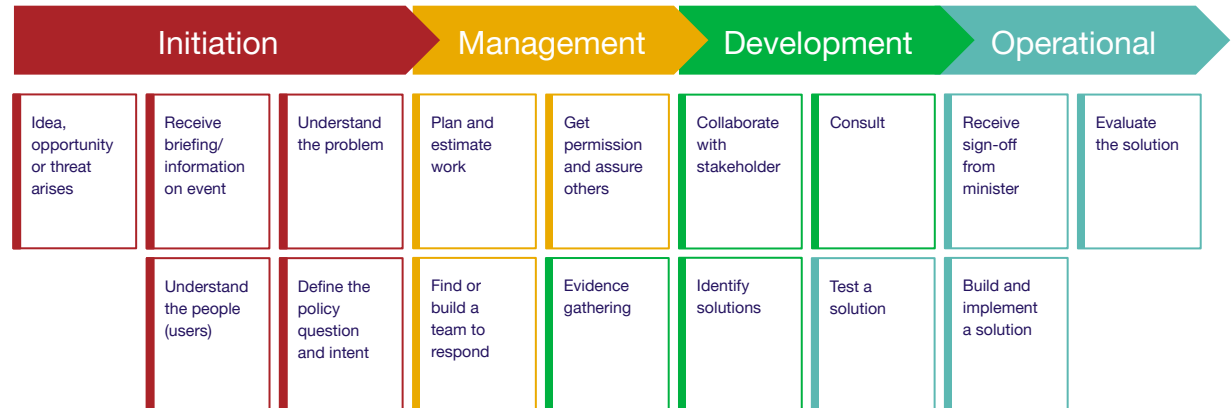
Policymaking is not sequential

There are many theoretical models for making policy, like ROAMEF. But policymakers say they do not use them in practice because policymaking is not sequential and the nature of each problem or opportunity is different. However there are common elements to the policy making process. Although few policymakers remain involved in the operational delivery elements, particularly for transactional services

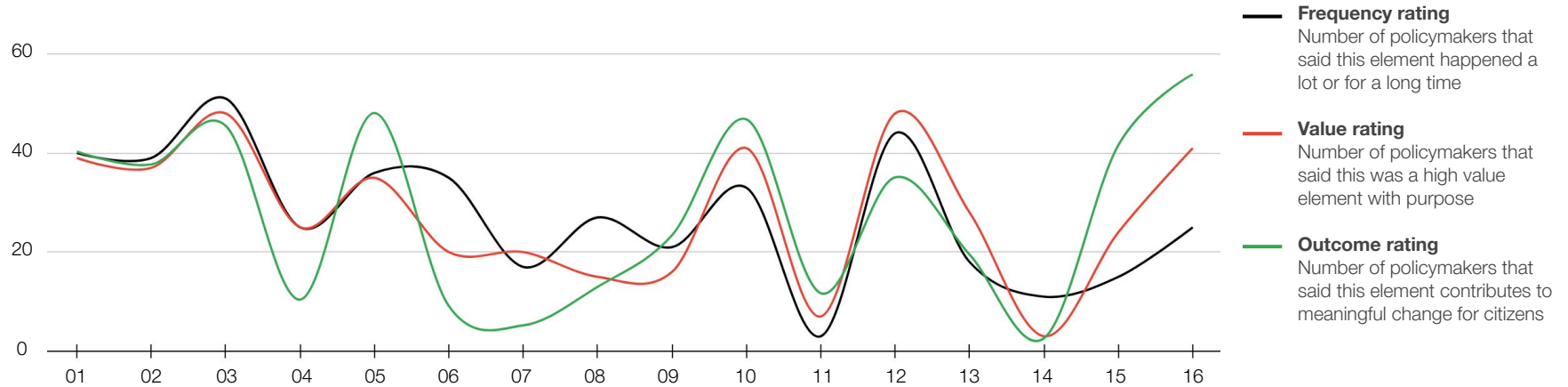
“Policymaking isn't a linear process. The steps repeat and overlap in various ways depending on types of change and the change actors involved” *Policymaker in workshop*

“It's a linear process if you follow the model, but it's never really that sequential in reality” *Policymaker in workshop*

It is helpful to think of policy formulation as having an array of elements that might or might not be used in any order depending on the nature of the problem or opportunity.



Policymakers have clear views on what they value...



01 Idea, opportunity or threat arises

02 Receive briefing/ information on event

03 Understand the problem

04 Understand the people (users)

05 Define the policy question and intent

06 Plan and estimate work

07 Find or build a team to respond

08 Get permission and assure others

09 Collaborate with stakeholders

10 Evidence gathering

11 Consultation

12 Identify solutions

13 Test a solution

14 Receive sign-off from minister

15 Build and implement a solution

16 Evaluate the solution

Data from policymaker workshop sessions that were a blend of research & workshop techniques:

- Journey mapping
- Card sorting
- Stakeholder mapping
- Dot voting (participants had 12 votes across all stages and activities in the journey)
- Observational note taking

Initiation

These elements are about initial reactions to an opportunity or event that trigger the policymaking process. They contain activities that generally come at the beginning of the policymaking process.

Idea, opportunity or threat arises

This element is the trigger point for starting to work on a policy. Common activities are horizon scanning, responding to an incident and deciding if a piece of work is a priority.

Receive briefing/information on event

This element is where action starts to be taken. Common activities are responding to ministers, initial scoping and identifying timescales.

Understand the problem

This element is about gathering information about the issue that needs to be addressed. Common activities are analysing evidence, preliminary stakeholder communication and identifying what's happening elsewhere.

Understand the people (users)

This element is about understanding the needs of people who the policy or service is for. Common activities are talking to subject matter experts, sending out surveys and analysing data.

Define the policy question and intent

This element is about being ready for the next phase of the process. Common activities are defining project outcomes, gaining buy-in from stakeholders and conducting further research

Management

These elements are about creating an environment in which a policy or service can be created. They contain activities that often occur earlier on in the process.

Plan and estimate work

This element is about defining what is needed to fully design a new policy or service. Common activities are confirming if this work is a priority for the department, formally agreeing scope and gaining project approval.

Find or build a team to respond

This element is about having the people in place to do the work. Common activities are workstream planning, recruitment and promoting a positive working culture within teams.

Get permission and assure others

This element is about getting permission to proceed. Common activities are gaining ministerial approval as well as receiving sign-off from senior leaders, comms and finance.

Development

These elements are about gathering information and buy-in as well as coming up with solutions. They contain activities that often occur throughout the entire process.

Collaborate with stakeholders

This element is about engaging key stakeholders including subject matter experts and colleagues from across departments. Common activities are stakeholder mapping, regular meetings and working with industry experts.

Evidence gathering

This element is about collecting all the data and insights needed to inform decision making. Common activities are primary and secondary research - both qualitative and quantitative.

Consult

This element is about engaging with the people affected by potential change and carrying out formal processes. Common activities are gaining clearance, hosting events, publishing and reviewing consultation findings.

Identify solutions

This element is about coming up with policy ideas that will solve the problem. Common activities are developing options, further research and planning for delivery.

Operational

These elements are about the practicalities of making the policy live. They contain activities that generally come at the end of the policy making process.

Test a solution

This element is about testing and piloting potential solutions. Some common activities in this element are prototyping with users, setting up a trial and evaluating the potential risks.

Receive sign-off from minister

This element is about the minister agreeing to go ahead with the new policy. Common activities are generating write-rounds and submissions, iterating policy based on feedback and officially receiving ministerial sign-off.

Build and implement a solution

This element is about turning the new or improved policy into reality. Common activities are writing legal agreements, comms planning and operational set up.

Evaluate the solution

This element is about understanding the impact of the new solution. Common activities are gathering feedback, monitoring data and scheduling reviews.

The changes that policymakers need

Make the connection between policy and citizens


Policymakers need to be incentivised to deliver meaningful outcomes for citizens, not to deliver part of a bureaucratic process

Policymakers say they are highly involved with early stages of making a policy or service, but rarely involved with delivering or evaluating it.

Policymakers are confident about where their task begins, but become less certain about where their task ends as the policy or service gets closer to delivery. Some policymakers only feel accountable up until delivery begins, at which point the policy or service becomes the responsibility of others.

These policymakers are being commissioned to deliver part of a bureaucratic process, like providing advice to a decision maker, and are not being commissioned to deliver a meaningful outcome for citizens.

*“it [policy] is not scoped out to understand deliverability ...so there needs to be better relationship between policy development and delivery”
Senior policymaker, department which outsources delivery*



“Because we have the service delivery in our organisation, we’re also quite good at getting that perspective on deliverability. You might have a grand idea but no idea of how to make it happen, whereas our policy makers have worked in service delivery” Senior policymaker, in-house delivery department

There are some public bodies with in-house delivery teams and they are more likely to consider success frameworks early on in the process. By collaborating with delivery experts, policymakers are more likely to develop an evidence base that shows what is deliverable and needed, and delivery experts are more likely to understand the wider context and decisions that underpin a policy or service.

This is a source of frustration for people and organisations who deliver policy and services to citizens. They feel that the instructions given by policymakers are not grounded in operational reality about how people on the frontline work or the needs of citizens

“ ...caseworkers have followed the guidance set out for them and have not been encouraged to challenge decisions where the guidance had led them to what they felt was the wrong outcome...” *Windrush Review, 2020*

It is problematic to take a sequential view of policymaking where policymakers come up with the ideas, and then delivery people operationalise them, and then an evaluation takes place. Policymakers frequently said that evaluation may not take place until 5 years after delivery, so policymakers rarely find out whether their ideas have delivered meaningful change for citizens. This effectively 'kicks the can down the road', leaving others to find and deal with the risk of policy or service failure in future years.

“One thing missing is ongoing monitoring of the policy: is it working?”

Policymaker in workshop

It is better to mitigate the risk of failure early by building a robust evidence base on the needs of people that will use the policy or service, so by the time it gets to the delivery stage there is high certainty that it will drive meaningful change for citizens.



There are consequences to not incentivising policymakers to deliver meaningful outcomes for citizens:

- Policy and service are more likely to fail
- Policy or service failure risk is not adequately assessed before delivery
- Citizens get policies and services that are not as good as they could be
- Unintended negative outcomes might be delivered

What to change

- Increase the proportion of policymakers who are commissioned, performance-managed and funded to deliver meaningful outcomes for citizens
- Coordinate policies and services with a citizen-centred perspective (understand the range of government interests, identify synergies and make connections)
- Define priority types of citizen / user in each public body and agree cross-government taxonomy

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Tackle grand challenges

Policymakers need to understand complex systems and collaborate across public bodies and society on grand challenges

The policymaking process can be initiated in many ways, but mostly it is reactive to triggers like public pressure, new ministerial interests, decisions taken elsewhere, and stakeholder interests. Policymakers prefer not to work in a reactive way because they have to spend a lot of time untangling issues like misunderstood problems, misaligned intent and citizen need, being rushed to advise, solutions looking for problems, etc. Working in reactive way can lead to fragmented advice and solutions that may not make sense to the users of a policy or service.

“When you’ve got big complex policy, you need time and resources to be able to look into those problems. And constantly changing priorities, because of constantly changing leadership, means that every-time that happens, everything falls and you’re starting from scratch” *Senior policymaker, large department*

Some policymakers do work proactively using tools like horizon scanning. Increasingly, the problems that government are planning for are multifaceted, cutting across policy areas and the remits of public bodies. These are issues like zero-carbon, Brexit and coronavirus.

“When dealing with complex problems, there is no ‘optimum solution’ or ‘silver bullet’ ...concerted action by several parts of the collaborating community rather than singular policy changes [is required]” *Strategic Framework, Systems Unit*

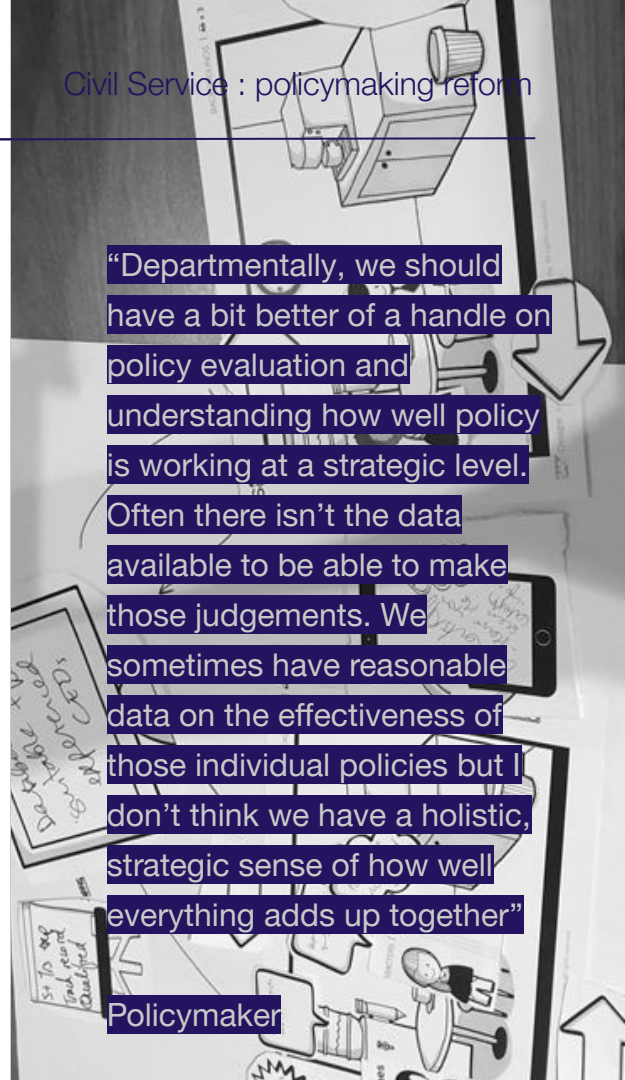
Working across public bodies presents persistent practical difficulties for policymakers due to differing culture, technology and processes, but the primary concern is the difficulty of sharing of data and evidence across organisations.


“Significant barriers between departments remain. These include: differing departmental cultures; the division of budgets into separate departmental pots; incompatibility of systems and other restrictions on sharing information across departmental boundaries; incentive and accountability structures (for both officials and ministers) that reward a focus on narrow departmental concerns; limited shared evidence bases to inform collaborative decision-making” *IfG, 2010*

More importantly, policymakers are not incentivised to work together across public bodies or civil society, even if they are working on the same issue. Different public bodies have different priorities which do not align.

“Departmentally, we should have a bit better of a handle on policy evaluation and understanding how well policy is working at a strategic level. Often there isn’t the data available to be able to make those judgements. We sometimes have reasonable data on the effectiveness of those individual policies but I don’t think we have a holistic, strategic sense of how well everything adds up together”

Policymaker





“Using missions to drive industrial strategy or innovation policy means focussing less on sectors and more on problems that multiple sectors need to solve together... [missions] are more granular and concrete in that you can answer whether you have or have not achieved them”

UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose,
for BEIS, 2020

“Large-scale social change comes from better cross-sector coordination rather than from the isolated intervention of individual organizations”

Collective Impact, Stanford University

Policymakers' objectives and the way that their work is funded by HM Treasury drives a narrow focus on departmental issues which may not align with broader needs and issues, or enable large-scale social or economic change.

“Complex policy issues cannot be solved by government alone. Delivering high-quality public services at the least cost and achieving shared public policy goals requires innovative approaches and greater involvement of citizens” *OECD, 2009*

There are some pockets of good practice across government like policy labs, however most policymakers do not consistently have the skills, incentive or infrastructure to understand and design for problems at a system level.

Policymakers need a system level understanding of a policy area because the public services that individual citizens use can cut across multiple policy areas.

There are consequences to getting the commissioning of grand challenges wrong:

- Policymakers' time is consumed by reactive 'fire-fighting' activities instead of providing forward thinking advice
- A policy or service that is made in a silo and does not address the wider system that it sits within, might not deliver the intended outcome or might deliver unintended consequences. Policymakers are not able to respond effectively to grand challenges like zero-carbon, coronavirus, or Brexit
- Public policy and services seems fragmented and confusing to citizens, and some types of citizens are treated differently from the intent of the policy or law, because of the cumulative effect of multiple parts of the system.

What to change

- Increase the number of policymakers who are incentivised to work collaboratively across public bodies and society on grand challenges
- Coordinate policies and services with a system-wide perspective (understand the range of government interests, identify synergies, make connections)

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Share existing evidence on citizens

Policymakers need to share existing evidence about types of citizen and re-use good citizen-centred service ideas

Policymakers think that using existing evidence is important for delivering meaningful change for citizens, and they think that they should do more of this.

Policymakers think it is really important to use existing evidence from a range of experts like analysts, economists, statisticians. But they do not currently value the use of citizen-centred insight for delivering meaningful change for citizens and they don't do it often.

"Senior levels [policymakers] are very policy-oriented, Whitehall born-and-bred, and maybe hold that 'Whitehall is best' view" *Public opinion professional, IfG workshop*

"For public officials, it is often unclear to what extent public services can be improved by incorporating citizens or how co-creation creates budgetary benefits or even increases customer interest. Without clarity about these incentives, administrators do not see its usefulness" *Voorberg, Bekkers & Tummers, 2015*

“We need to draw upon expertise that sits inside and outside government, across different specialists and involving people with different experiences...it’s important we do this regularly in order to bring new perspectives and build partnerships that enable us to solve these challenges.” *MOJ Digital & Technology Blog, 2018*

There are some pockets of good practice across government like policy labs. However most policymakers do not consistently have the skills, incentives or infrastructure to share evidence about types of citizen or re-use good

citizen-centred service ideas (like the best way to take a payment from a citizen).

“Some ministers felt that civil servants may not be ‘plugged into’ an external network that provides them with the latest, high-quality thinking” *IfG, 2011*

Policymakers and ministers think a holistic evidence base that includes citizen insight is a persuasive way to inform ministerial decisions.

Policymakers are not incentivised to incorporate citizen-centred insight because it is not enforced in policymaking standards or guidance.

There is an absence of infrastructure for sharing existing evidence about citizens inside of Civil Service, between public bodies.

Mismatched technology platforms and data taxonomies, lack of awareness and parochial privacy agreements all present barriers to sharing evidence. Consequently, time and funding is wasted on duplicating prior research efforts and time and good will of citizens is squandered.

"Organisations aren't incentivised or funded to share privately-stored data about users. This leads to users repeatedly proving the same thing to government" *GDS Discovery, 2020*

Policymakers need evidence on the history of the policy area and how it has affected citizens. Without this they can't understand what came before and how that applies to the present, which leads to failed policy and service ideas, not good ones, being repeated.

“...an institutional ignorance and thoughtlessness towards the issue of race and the history of the Windrush generation ...What I have found ...is a generation whose history was institutionally forgotten” *Wendy Williams, Windrush Review, 2020*

“long-term historical amnesia” [or] “Historical Attention Span Deficit Disorder” [in today’s policy-making] *Christopher Andrew, MI5 historian*

“Given the movement of staff, history is seen as something that could help bind a department together. It is also a reminder of the pace of events and challenges the department has faced and would continue to face: the ‘continuous memory of events’”

What is the value of history in policy making, IfG

Policymakers are not practiced at using historical information because there is a lack of institutional memory and systems for accessing, searching, understanding, applying and sharing it. Most policymakers don’t have access to historian experts, with a few exceptions like FCDO.



There are consequences to not sharing evidence on citizens:

- A policy or service that does not address the needs of the person that will use it might not deliver the intended outcome, or might deliver unintended consequences
- Citizens, particularly diverse groups, have low trust and confidence in public services and government
- Failed policy and service ideas are repeated

What to change

- Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using a multidisciplinary team
- Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using existing evidence about citizens
- Increase the proportion of policies and services that re-use existing successful patterns for working with citizens
- Increase visibility of senior leader support for working with the citizens
- Define priority types of citizen / user in each public body and agree cross-government taxonomy
- Reduce the friction of sharing data and evidence between public bodies

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Find new evidence about citizens

Policymakers need to find new evidence about types of citizen

Policymakers think that gathering new evidence is important for delivering meaningful change for citizens, and policymakers think that they should do more of this. However most policymakers do not consistently have the skills, incentives or infrastructure to find new evidence about citizens.

When policymakers describe how they understand citizens, they talk about working with stakeholders, not the people who use the policy or service, like citizens. They do not consistently understand the different value and use of stakeholder evidence vs citizen evidence.

“If you have only half the story you are never going to come to a sane conclusion. Policymakers deal with this partly by doing policy research before a consultation and taking the responses into account after a consultation” *Policymaker in a large dpm*



"Policymakers talk about people,
rather than with people"

Public opinion professional in IfG workshop

Policymakers have low confidence on working directly with the public.

[There's] "discomfort to be that close and personal with members of the public who were going to tell them stories about services ...if policymakers don't hide behind barriers of language and are not scared, they can have fabulous conversations with the public" *Public opinion professional, IfG wkshop*

"There is demand for training on working with people from outside national government, particularly from more junior staff, on: confidently representing government; dealing with hostile audiences and building trust; group management techniques; recording and analysing what people say" *DfE, 2020*

They are also unsure how to deal with citizens who are unsatisfied and are worried about raising expectations.

"Policymakers feared raising users' expectations that significant change might happen as a result of their engagement. They typically preferred to go through civil society and representative groups" *Policy Lab, 2018*

Policymakers can be 'hesitant' about face-to-face engagement for some groups of people because 'easier for officials to turn to groups which represent these people than it is to contact them individually' because this can 'whip up emotions, making it harder to actually do their job' *DWP Lab, 2018*

They are not confident or effective at talking to diverse groups of people, who's background and culture differs from their own.

To work with the public effectively, policymakers need support and buy-in from senior leaders and ministers.

Polymakers have limited time, people and money to make policy. Polymakers sometimes try to overcome this by deploying technical experts, but there are many bureaucratic barriers like commercial and HR. Often citizen insight is too slow, difficult or expensive to incorporate in the policymaking process.

“...and we don’t have much money to spend on things like research. And ministers tend to want things done now, rather than next year when we had a chance to do our research into it.”
Polymaker in a large department

“It can take 6 months or more to actually commission and deliver primary research... This is especially frustrating if you have got a new and very dynamic policy and things change on a day-to-day basis almost. You run the risk of spending 40 or 50 grand on a project. And because it was focussed on the policy as it was at the time the research was commissioned versus where the policy sits now, the research is now more or less irrelevant”

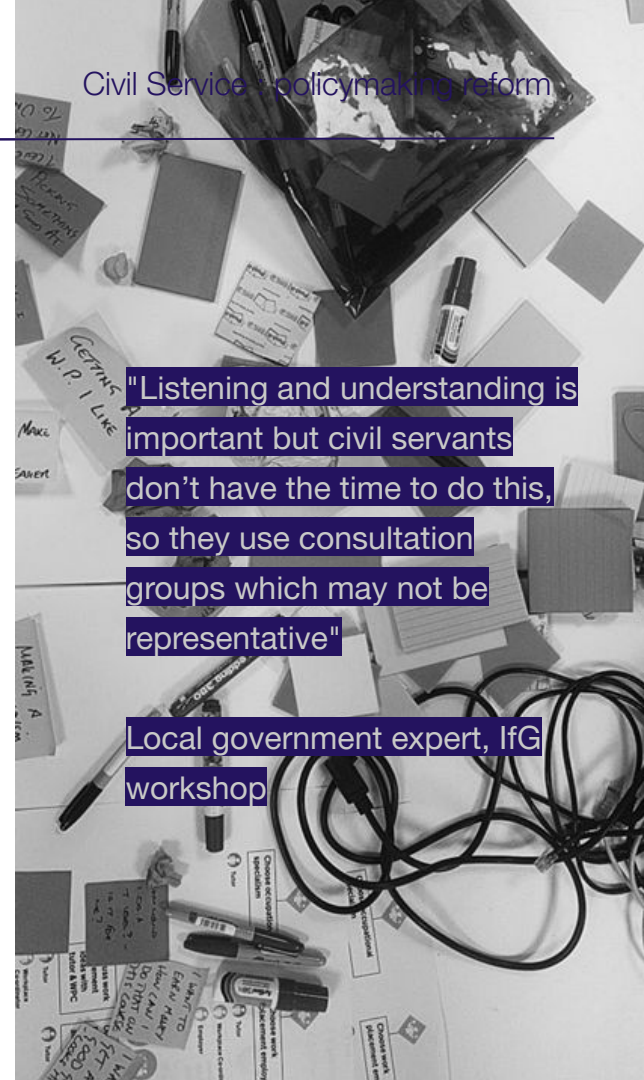
Polymaker in a large department

Polymakers are not strongly incentivised to incorporate citizen centred insight because it is only mentioned, not mandated, in policymaking standards or guidance.

Civil Service - policymaking reform

"Listening and understanding is important but civil servants don't have the time to do this, so they use consultation groups which may not be representative"

Local government expert, IfG workshop



There are consequences to not finding new evidence about citizens:

- A policy or service that does not address the needs of the person that will use it, might not deliver the intended outcome or might deliver unintended consequences.
- Citizens, particularly diverse groups, have low trust and confidence in public services and government.

What to change

- Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using a multidisciplinary team
- Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using new research / evidence about citizens
- Reduce the friction of accessing and working with citizens
- Increase visibility of senior leader support for working with the citizens

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Research fairly

Policymakers need to give advice based on evidence that fairly reflects the needs of the cross-section of people that will use the policy or service

Policymakers sometimes seek and use evidence about citizens that does not fairly represent the needs and views of everyone that will use the policy or service. This is because they only talk to a section of citizens or because they only talk to stakeholders who represent particular groups or interests. Policymakers who draw on their own frame of reference risk unconsciously excluding those whose background and experiences differ from their own. Policymakers need practical ways to find and access data about types of people, across policy areas, that can be used as a baseline for measuring impact.

“So, I get really frustrated by government consultations where they say, ‘the majority of respondents agreed with us’. But, in no way have you shown how those respondents were representative of the population”
Senior policymaker, small department

“If 90% of individuals say that this is a terrible idea, but that represents 5 people, or maybe it represents 1 million people, but it’s a million men talking about a gender pay gap policy - you shouldn’t listen to them”
Senior policymaker, small department

“How can we ensure that we’re reaching out to not just the people using our system but to those who want to use our system and can’t? So getting round that pre-built bias of only being able to access your existing customer base” *Senior policymaker, large department*

There are consequences to not researching fairly:

- Decisions about policies or services are based on biased evidence, assumptions and hunches
- Policies and services do not meet the needs of everyone that use them
- Some citizens are treated differently from the intention of the policy
- Lower levels of trust and confidence in public services
- Policymakers are unable to measure the impact of policies and services fairly

What to change

- Increase in the proportion of evidence gathering exercises that segment the types of citizen that will use the policy or service
- Increase in the proportion of services that use a common taxonomy for citizen segmentation like protected characteristics, geographical location and socio-economic background
- Increase the proportion of policies and service that commence their obligatory equality impact assessment during the research stage

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Involve people who will use the policy or service

Policymakers need to involve people who will use the policy or service in designing, testing and iterating the solution

Policymakers are often given a solution and asked to implement it, but the solution doesn't always meet the needs of people who will use the policy or service. There is a sense that policymakers sometimes just retrofit a solution with evidence that justifies it.

“The incentives architecture in national government acts as a barrier to working inclusively. Serving ministers’ needs overrides the needs of all others. The way that ministers commission work is solution-prescriptive rather than problem-solving in nature” *DfE-MHCLG research, 2020*

Committing to a solution at the outset, before the problem is understood, is a source of frustration for frontline civil servants who deliver services to citizens because they have the clearest view of how intent and citizen needs are misaligned.

“By the time a policy team explains their rationale to their delivery colleagues, the idea has often been solidified, thereby removing the opportunity for implementation to challenge or inform the programme” *Policy Lab Blog*

“A minister wants quick answers. They don’t want to understand the problem, but just suggest solutions” *GDS 2019*

“Policy is developed according to ministerial desire but also developed in silos to understand if it is implementable ...so it is not scoped out to understand deliverability ...so there needs to be better relationship between policy development and delivery”
Senior policymaker, large department

“The desire to capture the news agenda, generate headlines, or be seen to be acting, could lead to over-hasty announcements.”
IfG, 2011

A more logical way to design a solution is to determine the intent, then understand the problem and the needs of the people that will use the policy or service, and then design and test the solution.

"Not going into solution mode and really unpicking the basic policy intent is good training for my team. [Such as] stripping things back to basics in terms of what's the desired outcome what does good look like... Putting the customer at the centre of that, and seeing how different customers are affected differently is fascinating. It has really changed the way we are trying to bring customer insight upstream pre announcements"
Policymaker, department with in-house delivery

"Citizens rarely want to take decisions, but they want to be involved"
Public opinion professional, IfG workshop

"When researching a policy we may be drawn to familiar information that supports our current perspective and ignore alternative realities ...The very nature of co-design, of course, is to avoid the risk of confirmation bias by effectively creating the opposite of an 'echo chamber'" *Policy Lab, Bias Busters blog, 2018*

However, policy or service ideas are rarely designed and tested with those that will use them before they are implemented, so policymakers do not know if they will have the intended effect.

"You will develop and develop and develop a policy. Once you implement it, it will stick regardless of its effectiveness, because the minister doesn't want to admit that they got it wrong. That's a key thing to be aware of in government"
Senior policymaker, large department

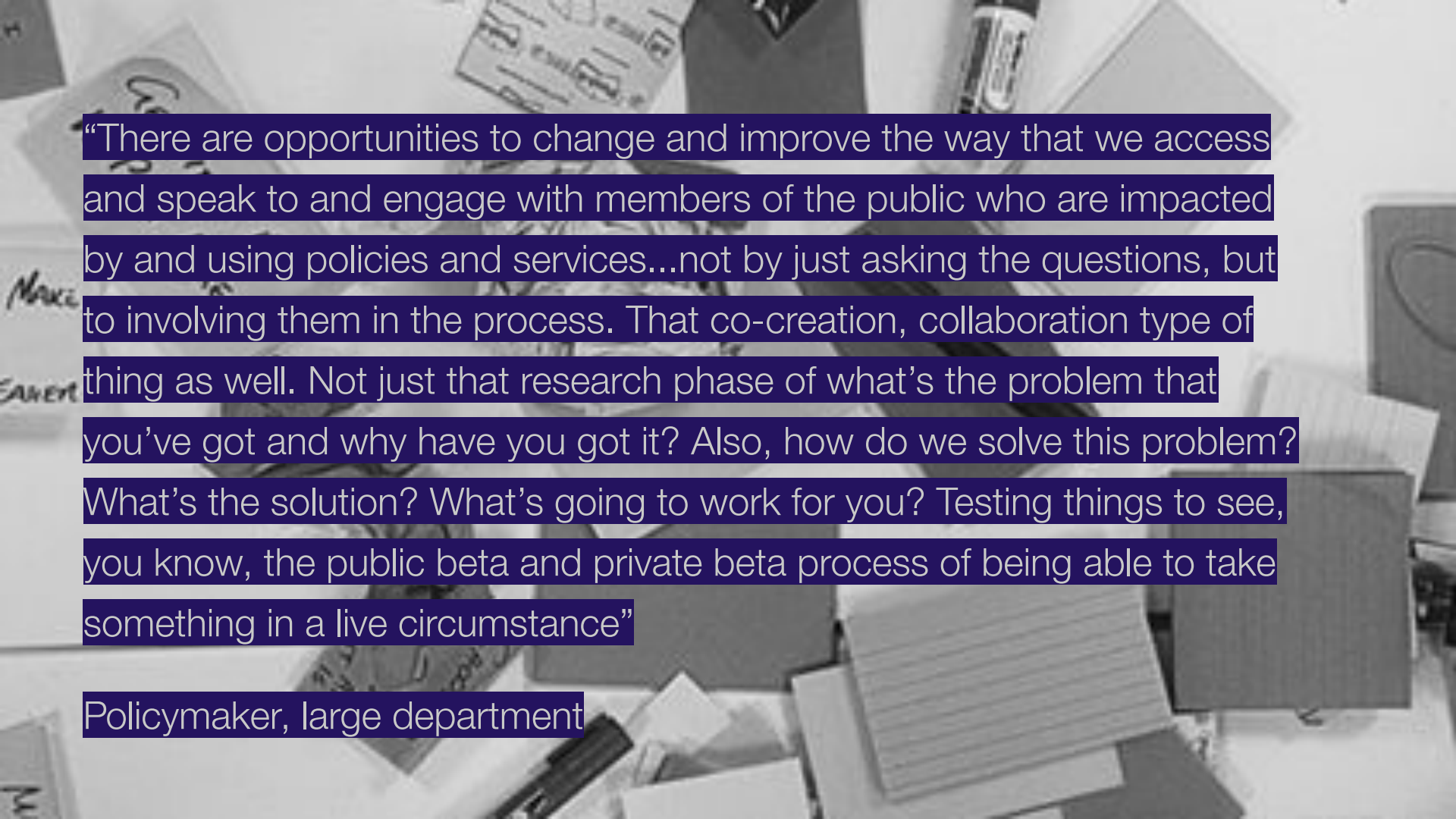
"We spend a lot of time on submissions, but this isn't always the best way of rapidly developing and testing ideas"
Policymaker at CS Live 2019

"[We've] never tested a solution before delivery. [We] just do stuff." *Policymaker in workshop*

“Our current system has made officials too unresponsive to the electorate, and it has given politicians insufficient numbers of people who can drive through their reforms”

Baroness Wolf, RSA Journal 2019



The background is a grayscale image of a desk cluttered with various items. There are numerous sticky notes of different colors and shapes scattered across the surface. A pen is visible in the upper right corner. The overall scene suggests a workspace for brainstorming or planning.

“There are opportunities to change and improve the way that we access and speak to and engage with members of the public who are impacted by and using policies and services...not by just asking the questions, but to involving them in the process. That co-creation, collaboration type of thing as well. Not just that research phase of what’s the problem that you’ve got and why have you got it? Also, how do we solve this problem? What’s the solution? What’s going to work for you? Testing things to see, you know, the public beta and private beta process of being able to take something in a live circumstance”

Policymaker, large department

There is a perverse incentive infrastructure for testing.

Policymakers associate a failed test as a personal or professional failure, rather than proving or disproving an uncertain aspect of a policy or service.

"It always gets presented in the press as failure or a U-turn, as opposed to 'no, this is us testing a service and that bit didn't work so now we'll fix it. That's part of the process of improving the service"
Senior policymaker, large department

This might be because policymakers associate testing with 'piloting'. These tend to be large scale, infrequent and high profile.

"We often don't pilot stuff ...you pilot big policies" *Policymaker in workshop*

This might be addressed by normalising tests to be smaller and more frequent.

If a policymaker doesn't test their idea before delivery, then they are storing up risk that the intervention will fail by not delivering the intended outcome. They may not know that policy or service has failed until years after (evaluations typically happen 5 years after implementation).

"If you don't involve users and test your in policy making it is speculative, based on ideas and hypothesise that has not been tested" *GDS, 2016*

Instead, they can test ideas early to manage the risk of failure before resources are invested in building and implementing the policy or service.

"Rapid policy prototyping at the early stages of the policy cycle, design approaches can de-risk delivery further down the line" *Anna Whicher, Cardiff Metropolitan University, 2020*

"prototypes are tested not only in terms of their technical robustness and effectiveness, but also of their fit with users' needs" *Nick de Leon, RCA, 2018*

There are some pockets of government, like labs and What Works centres, where expertise in co-design, testing and prototyping is provided to policymakers. Its current scale cannot support all of the policymaking community.

“Since 2015, the Cabinet Office What Works Team has run a Trial Advice Panel to help civil servants design and implement high quality trials. Made up of around 50 trialling experts from across government and academia, it offers technical support and champions the use of experimental and quasi-experimental methods as the best way to find out which policies and interventions work, for whom, and in what context” *What Works Network, 2018*

Policymakers sometimes try to mitigate this by buying-in expertise, but they are often unable to do so because the pace of policy making is not compatible with slow access to funding, or slow commercial and HR processes.

“The capacity for policy profession to listen is not good, they have a time scale and agendas and they are under pressure to deliver a certain type of policy” *Charity CEO, IfG workshop*



There are consequences to not designing, testing and iterating a policy or service with people who will use it:

- Policy and service solutions are implemented without evidence they are needed or that they will deliver the intended impact
- Fewer citizens will use the service and poorer public value is delivered
- Citizens don't get public services that fully meet their needs

What to change

- Increase the proportion of policies and services that involve citizens in the policymaking process
- Increase in the proportion of policies and services that test policy ideas, with the people that will use them, before implementation
- Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using a multidisciplinary team
- Reduce the friction of accessing and working with citizens

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Evaluate whether the intended outcome has been delivered

Policymakers need to evaluate their policy or service to ensure it is having the intended effect during its operational life-cycle

Evaluation is a feature of all theoretical policy making models and policymakers recognise its value, but it is often not done and policymakers think they should do it more. Evaluation indicates if the policy or service is delivering its intended outcome.

“We don't do much evaluation in this department, we don't have the evaluation culture in our department, policy officials are not thinking about it, we don't have the expert knowledge with social researchers, ministers are not interested enough so it is very difficult to be able to get funding for them” *Senior policy advisor, large dept*

“Poor measurement of what projects achieve, reduces accountability and transparency for government and Parliament, and makes it difficult to assess whether the costs of projects are justified. It also means that government is missing an opportunity to learn about what constitutes success.” *National Audit Office, 2018*

“I am not aware of any metrics for evaluation and impact in this policy area... one metric might be the number of complaints a minister receives” *Senior policymaker, small dept*

In some instances, evaluation does not happen at all due to lack of resources and capability. Where it is done, evaluation is typically a single event which occurs years (some policymakers said 5 years) after the policy or service has been implemented, and often because there is a legal requirement. It is rare that the policymakers who designed the policy or service are present 5 years later to receive the insight from the evaluation of their work or that it can inform the live policy or service.

It is not always possible to clearly demonstrate that a policy has a direct causal impact if the evaluation is conducted years after implementation or if related to a complex policy issue.

"When the cause of a social problem is complex or contested, it can be difficult to determine what is most important to measure during implementation" *IfG, 2014*

"We need to define early on what success looks like, so at the end we can evaluate the solution against that" *Policymaker in workshop*

Evaluation sometimes happens in a more meaningful way in departments that have in-house delivery teams, like HMRC and DWP.

"We will keep having potentially similar unintended consequences if we don't learn where those have happened in previous cases. ... Understanding, where there's a disjoint, how might that have happened? Was there something we could have done to anticipate it?and should we actually do things in a different way in future?" *Policymaker, department with in-house delivery*

Policymakers who work in departments that outsource delivery seldom think about success frameworks early on the process. They are more inclined to define their personal success as whether they have completed the initial policy making process rather than delivering a meaningful service to a citizen.

"...still swathes of government policy and practice where we just do not know whether programmes are delivering their desired outcomes. [Instead you should...] draw on the expertise in your departments, work with analyst colleagues, and devise trials to understand the impacts for citizens"

Jeremy Heywood, 2015

There are consequences to not evaluating whether the intended outcome has been delivered:

- Policymakers do not get feedback about whether the policy or service they have designed has had the intended effect
- Policies and services are frequently not iterated during their operational life-cycle
- It is very difficult to hold anyone to account for success or failure of a policy or service

What to change

- Increase the proportion of policies and services have a live feed of evaluation data during their operational life-cycle

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Consult effectively

Polymakers need alternative tools for seeking the views of citizens about a policy or service that is legally robust

Polymakers think consultation offers little value to themselves or to citizens.

Consultation is seen as a tick-box exercise. It is usually a confirmatory activity conducted after a solution has already been determined.

“There’s been lots of push back from digital colleagues (on consultations) because the understanding of policy consultation is that it’s used by a government when they’ve already determined what the answer is and they’re not consulting to get views from people, but they’re doing it as a tick box exercise.”

Senior policymaker, large department

“Even though you make a change to your policy because it’s actually better for customers, the response is, ‘Well why didn’t you see that coming in the first place?...ideally you shouldn’t need to change your policy because you have consulted, you have thought it through, and when you do change there tends to be politically a nightmare” GDS, 2016

The people that participate in consultations are usually stakeholders that represent particular groups or interests. Consultations are not the strongest mechanism for gathering insight on citizen views because they do not participate in them.

“I wonder if there’s a reputation problem for the consultation process ...in some ways that negative perception of government consultation stops people from truthfully and properly engaging in the process, which means the policy official can’t get what [information] they need” *SEO policymaker, large department*

“It’s more consulting on the fact that we’re implementing it, the way that we’re implementing it, any guidance that we produce, even the legislation itself to some extent but unless you’re very expert on the area, it’s difficult to contribute to the actual drafting of the legislation” *Policymaker*



There are consequences to consultations attracting low participation from citizens:

- Policymakers could have a stronger evidence base
- Citizens might feel more included in the development of services aimed at them

What to change

- Increase in the number of evidence gathering tools that are perceived as legally robust

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Collaborate with others

Policymakers need quick access to professional experts, subject matter experts, and policy designers

Policymakers are mostly generalists and describe themselves as 'jack of all trades'. This is intentional because in recent years the policy profession has aimed to be an *open profession* so other professionals working in relevant roles can see themselves as policymakers too.

"As a policy person, you're expected to be a jack of all trades and somehow do all of those jobs even though they exist as specialisms in their own right."

Senior policymaker, large department

Consequently, policymakers need to work with experts to do their job. They already have a network of experts that they rely on like economists, analysts, solicitors, etc. But policymakers don't feel they have access to all of the types of professional expertise that they need. Particularly they say that don't have access to professionals, like service designers and user researchers, who can help them engage with citizens and design policy and services around citizen needs.

There is no fixed model for the type of professional experts that a multidisciplinary team should comprise of, instead each public body should form its own view based on the nature of its work.

Without access to these experts policymakers are forced to rely on the personal experience, knowledge and precedents. This can lead to poorer decisions based on assumptions.

“Policymakers and professionals are far too ready to conclude that existing practice is effective – that they already know ‘what works’” *What Works Network, 2018*

Policymakers say that getting access to professional experts is difficult because by the time they have got access to funding and been through commercial and HR processes, it is often too late to mobilise a multidisciplinary team and the policy process is likely to have moved on but with poorer quality of policy advice.

Initiatives like policy labs intend to mitigate the problem of accessing and coordinating professionals. Each lab has its own funding model, like ‘free to use but for restricted time’ or ‘full cost recovery’, but policymakers’ limited access acts as a barrier.



“I think building a multidisciplinary team is something that everyone would agree with, and everyone has a different idea of what that means”

Policymaker in workshop



“In policymaking you have access to analysts, lawyers, comms and press. However, there’s lots of resources in digital like service designers, user researchers, and content designers that would be very useful for policy makers to access.”

Policymaker, large department

There are consequences to ineffective collaboration:

- Policymakers have poor access to professional experts and subject matter experts
- The quality of policy advice is poorer than it could be
- Policies and services are not designed around the needs of citizens

What to change

- Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using a multidisciplinary team
- Increase in the number of policymakers that choose a policymaking specialism (Government Business Expert, Subject Matter Expert, Policy Design Expert)
- Increase the proportion of policies and services that have access to a historian
- Reduce the friction of funding, commercial and HR when accessing experts

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Mirror the mix of citizens

Policymaking teams need to reflect the mix of citizens that they are designing policy and services for and operate inclusively for all team members

Policy teams are often not diverse and do not reflect the types of citizen they are making policy and services for. Policymakers often have a narrow range of protected characteristics, geographical location and socio-economic background.

“Not enough diversity in terms of race, age, socio-economic background, disability. The lived experience of the civil service is far too homogeneous. If we’re all people who haven’t had that diversity of experience and exposure, you’re not going to reflect the realities of people’s lives” *Senior policymaker, large department*

“There’s not diversity everywhere. It’s getting better but it’s not there yet. Excuse the language but 50 years ago, it was all white, middle class men. It’s moved light years since then and is doing really well. But it goes beyond that. There are still parts of government that don’t see beyond London, in their views. It can be the most diverse team in the world, but they’re all London people, who don’t see what happens in the north of the country or rural areas or other bits of the UK” *Senior policymaker*

Policy solutions are sometimes designed by policymakers who have limited experience of the lives of citizens they are trying to solve problems for. This report discusses elsewhere that policymakers often don’t have the time, money or people to build a robust evidence base. In these circumstances, policymakers rely on their professional judgement to form advice. This can result in bias in the evidence base, so some citizens are treated less favourably than others.

Policy makers can be so divorced from the reality of the lives they are impacting on that even if they try to understand the lives they are impacting on they do it from a position of power that can make it difficult for them to relate. In a policy making context, biased decision making can unnecessarily reduce the wellbeing of citizens and lead to inefficient use of taxpayers' money" *Power, privilege and prejudice, GDS 2020*

Sometimes policy teams that have a team member with a protected characteristic or different background or life experience, do not adjust their operating style in response to the work needs of the team member. Instead the team continues to operate in the same way.

This can act as a barrier for the team member to fully participate in the policymaking process, leaving the team unable to reap the benefits of diversity.

"We will make the Civil Service less London-centric, with roles across the country, so that career progression no longer depends on location and civil servants are closer and more connected to the communities they serve. This will ensure we better understand the experiences of people in all the different parts of our society and use that insight to make decisions which are informed by local need and context" *Civil Service Reform Prospectus 2020*

"We need to get people to come into policy from different backgrounds, broader spread of people working there. Better use of anthropology, ethnography, or relational working to understand how people actually live their lives" *Local government leader, IfG workshop, 2020*

"The disconnect between the civil service and public is a real problem. Officials are professionals who tend to live in certain parts of the country (predominantly London). Their lived experience is one slice of the country, and of course that affects their attitudes and instinctive responses because they are human beings. And they talk, mostly, to people rather like them" *Baroness Wolf, RSA Journal 2019*

There are consequences to policy teams not reflecting the mix of people that use their policies and services:

- Policies and services don't work for everyone because of policymakers' confirmation bias in the evidence base, so some citizens are treated more favourably than others which contributes to an inequality of outcome for marginalised people
- Citizens, particularly diverse groups, have low trust and confidence in public services and government

What to change

- Increase the proportion of policy teams that reflect the profile of citizens that they design policy and services for
- Increase proportion of policy teams that adapt their operational model to maximise the ability and perspective of all team members
- Recruit people to the Civil Service that mirror the profile of citizens' protected characteristics, geographical location and socio-economic background

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Professionalise policymakers

Policymakers need their role to be professionalised and divided into specialisms

The policymaker role is simultaneously the most important and the most broad and indistinct role in Civil Service. It is currently not a formalised profession in the same manner of other professions and functions, like finance or social research.

As a policy person, you're expected to be a jack-of-all-trades and somehow do all of those jobs even though they exist as specialisms in their own right" *Junior policymaker, large department*

"Policymakers are generalist 'amateurs' with no real skills or time in post to develop skills and knowledge" *Fulton Report, 1968*

The senior ranks of the policymaking community, and the wider Civil Service, are mostly occupied by generalists. It is generalism that is incentivised and rewarded by the Civil Service. The characterisation of these senior officials as generalists does not imply that they are less valuable. They have an important role in getting government business done. However, the prevalence of a monoculture drives perverse outcomes. Other types of policymaker are also valuable. Individuals should be incentivised to specialise if they choose, and the senior civil service should represent these specialisms.

Over-reliance on generalists, combined with high frequency of transitions between roles, causes poor institutional memory and diminishes deep knowledge of subject matter. Civil Service attempts to mitigate this by buying-in expertise which, in turn, further hollows-out institutional memory and expertise.

"My senior people are saying 'you've been in this job for about 4 years, isn't it time you should be moving on?' Actually, my kind of deep knowledge is so valuable. If I left, I don't know what the team would do, because I'm the only one that remembers what was going on 4 years ago. I think that rapid turnover and the seeming devaluation of deep knowledge, rather than broad knowledge is a real shame. I think we need to try to hang onto our experts and value them and help them to progress" *Senior policymaker, large department*

"The lack of investment in in-house public capabilities has resulted in the loss of institutional memory and an increased dependence on consulting companies. Crucially, talented people are motivated not just by high salaries, but also by the prospect of being able to apply their skills for the advancement of the common good through challenging analytical work. Outsourcing has voided many government agencies of such challenging and motivating tasks" *Mazzucato & Kattel, UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose 2020*

"Whitehall simply does not value knowledge nearly enough. It expects everyone who succeeds to be good at management, able to swap areas and departments effortlessly, and to be simultaneously pleasant and incisive. These demands mean that those with 'spiky' profiles – and those who really know the areas – are often buried far deeper than they should be" *Baroness Wolf, RSA Journal 2019*

Policymakers commonly say that they do not have the space for deep thinking or to work in a strategic manner because they are 'fire-fighting' numerous issues, so tactical activity consumes much of their time. This could be mitigated by ring-fencing specialist roles.

"When you've got big complex policy you need time and resources to be able to look into those problems. And constantly changing priorities because of constantly changing leadership means that (every time that happens), everything falls and you're starting from scratch" *Senior policymaker, large department*

This report reveals many things that the 'perfect policymaker' could be an expert on, but it is simply not practical for a policymaker to be an expert on everything. However, the Civil Service does need experts, so it should incentivise officials to specialise.

Civil Service : policymaking reform

"Policy Profession has yet to turn into a profession. It hasn't fully taken to heart that there are skills and capabilities that you don't pick up by studying Classics at Oxford"

Behavioural expert, IfG workshop



During the primary research phase of this report, policymakers described the activities that they undertake. This report concludes that there are 3 specialist functions which policymakers should be incentivised to undertake:

Government Business Expert

- Work with ministers, political environment and media (including private offices)
- Operate parliamentary processes (legislation, accountability)
- Operate Civil Service processes (corporate strategy and performance, enabling others with resources like people and money)
- Understand, advise on and deploy government's levers for affecting change (laws and standards, commissioning, funding, stewardship)
- Coordinate policies and services with a system-wide perspective (understand the range of government interests, identify synergies and make connections)
- Coordinate policies and services with a citizen-centred perspective (understand the range of government interests, identify synergies and make connections)

Subject Matter Expert

- Develop deep subject expertise, including related citizen needs
- Develop, maintain and pass on the evidence base, history and institutional memory on the subject
- Manage stakeholders
- Maintain professional experience of frontline operations related to the subject
- Advise ministers and officials on the subject
- Business as usual management of the subject

Policy Design Expert

- Deploy to design policies or services that are novel, contentious or repercussive
- Make sense of complex systems and reduce uncertainty
- Facilitate different types of professional to work together in multidisciplinary teams
- Work with citizens to co-design policies and services through research and prototyping
- Advise on balancing value between ministerial needs, citizen needs and deliverability
- Reduce risk of policy or service failure and increase public value

There are consequences to policy teams not incentivising to specialise:

- Poor institutional memory and lack of experts
- Tactical behaviours are prevalent, not strategic
- Advice for ministers is poorer than it could be
- Policy and services for citizens are poorer than they could be

What to change

- Increase in the number of policymakers that choose a policymaking specialism (Government Business Expert, Subject Matter Expert, Policy Design Expert)
- Increase in the proportion of SCS from each policymaking specialism

Target outcomes

- Increase citizen/user satisfaction with a policy or service
- Increase citizen/user uptake of a policy or service
- Increase completion rate of a service
- Increase policymaker confidence in own professional skills
- Increase policymaker satisfaction that Civil Service is enabling policymaking productivity
- Increase policymaker certainty that the policy or service will deliver the intended outcome
- Increase minister satisfaction with Civil Service
- Increase public value for HM Treasury

Appendix: elements of policymaking

Idea, opportunity or threat arises

This element is the trigger point for starting to work on a policy.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Made aware of idea, opportunity or threat

Decide if it's a priority for the department

Research and understand the problem

Develop ideas/ solutions

Find resources for the project

Initial approval

Engage and consult with stakeholders

Insights from workshop data



Policy makers think about how to deal with the next few elements whilst feeling pressure to make quick decisions at this element



This element is important, it was in the top three highest scoring for frequency and value

Collaborators

Industry / Legal / Ministers / Experts / Citizens / OGDs / Scientific advisers

Receive briefing / information on event

This element is where action starts to be taken.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Early response to minister

Engage, communicate and consult with stakeholders

Find resources for the project

Research and understand the problem

Identify timescales

Develop ideas/ solutions

Define scope

Insights from workshop data



Positive relationships are particularly helpful and important during this element

Collaborators

OGDs/ ALBs / Analysts / Economists / HR / Legal / Scientists
/ Ministerial Advisers / Regulatory bodies / Senior managers

Understand the problem

This element is about gathering information about the issue that needs addressing.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Evidence
and analysis

Engage,
communi-
cate and
consult with
stakeholders

Identify what
is happening
elsewhere

Decide if it is
a priority for
the
department

Find
resources for
the project

Collaborators

Analysts / OGDs / Citizens / Legal / Industry /
Professional bodies

Insights from workshop data



Having access to well documented existing evidence is helpful at this element



A lot of time is spent on this element, it was in the top three highest scoring for frequency

Understand the people (users)

This element is about understanding the needs of people who the policy is for.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)



Collaborators

Analysts/ Citizens / OGDs / Legal / Interest groups / Local authorities / Volunteer sector / Regulators / Researchers

Insights from workshop data



It can be challenging taking into account varying stakeholder opinions at this element

Define the policy question and intent

This element is about being ready for the next phase of the process

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Decide on the right approach given the constraints

Research and understand the problem

Understand the people

Talk to colleagues/ subject matter experts

Define outcomes and how to measure them

Understand the context and existing landscape

Involvement and buy-in of senior stakeholders

Collaborators

OGDs/ SCS / Ministers and private offices / User researchers / NGOs / Researchers / The media / Specialist advisers / End user

Insights from workshop data



Reaching consensus and having clear direction and leadership is important at this element



This element is very important, it was the highest scoring for frequency, value and outcome

Plan and estimate work

This element is about defining what is needed to fully design a new policy.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Find
resources for
the project

Decide if it's
a priority for
the
department

Understand
the people

Set project
strategy and
scope

Talk to
colleagues/
subject
matter
experts

Identify
timescales

Involvement
and buy-in of
senior
stakeholders

Collaborators

Internal experts / IT teams / PMOs / Legal advisers /
Technical experts / Other countries

Insights from workshop data



Having the right project management capability can be a challenge at this element



This element was one of the lowest scoring for value and outcome



Too much time might be spent on this element, its frequency score is higher than value and outcome score

Find or build a team to respond

This element is about having the people in place to do the work.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Strategic planning of work and teams

Find resources for the project

Create the right team working culture

Involvement and buy-in of senior stakeholders

Talk to colleagues/subject matter experts

Commission research

Collaborators

HR / IT / Legal / SCS / Technical experts

Insights from workshop data



Lengthy recruitment process can take up valuable time at this element



This element was one of the lowest scoring for frequency and outcome



It's possible that not enough time is spent on this element, its value score is higher than its frequency score

Get permission and assure others

This element is about getting permission to proceed.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Keep
ministers
updated

Get
permission
from senior
stakeholders
and comms
to proceed

Financial
approval

Evidence
and analysis

Talk to
colleagues
/subject
matter
experts

Develop
implementati
on plan

Collaborators

Directors / Internal teams / OGDs / SPADs / Ministers and offices / Legal advisers / Number 10 / Press Office / SROs

Insights from workshop data



It is important to have clear approval and be allocated an adequate budget at this element



This element was the lowest scoring for value



Too much time might be spent on this element, its frequency score is higher than value and outcome score

Collaborate with stakeholders

This element is about engaging key stakeholders including subject matter experts and colleagues from across departments.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Identify what is happening elsewhere

Involvement and buy-in of senior stakeholders

Consultation

Stakeholder engagement

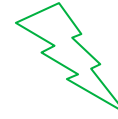
Talk to colleagues/s subject matter experts

Compromise

Research and evidence

Comms

Insights from workshop data



Having good existing networks and relationships helps at this element

Collaborators

Business groups / Lawyers / General public / Subject matter experts / Third sector / Operational stakeholders

Evidence gathering

This element is about pulling together all the data and insights needed to inform decision making.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Analysing evidence

Identify what is happening elsewhere

Engage, communicate and consult with stakeholder

Talk to colleagues/s subject matter experts

Quantitative research

Desk based research

Develop ideas/solutions

User research and co-design

Collaborators

Academia / Subject matter experts / Analysts / Social researchers / Comms specialists / Innovation units / International partners / NGOs / OGDs / Delivery bodies / Service designers / Unions

Insights from workshop data



It's important to have the right expertise at this element, including user research, analyst and service design capability

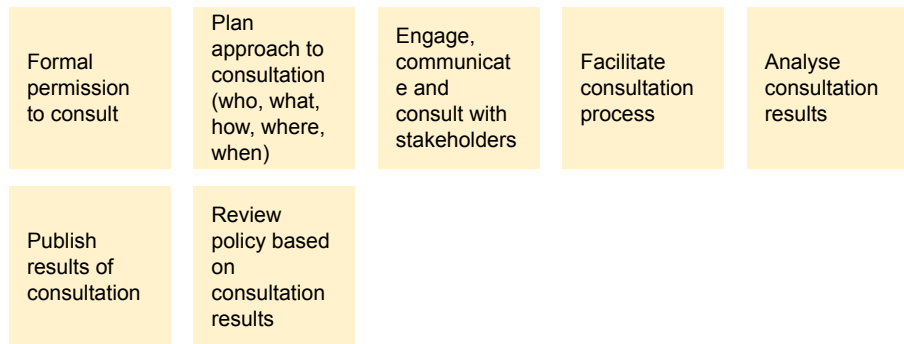


This element is important, it was in the top three highest scoring for outcome

Consultation

This element is about engaging with people and departments affected by potential policy changes and carrying out due diligence processes.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)



Collaborators

Industry / Legal / Consumer groups / Trade bodies

Insights from workshop data



It can be hard to get one department's input on another department's work because priorities don't always align



This element was one of the lowest scoring for frequency and value

Identify solutions

This element is about coming up with policy ideas that will solve the problem.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)



Collaborators

Analysts / Subject matter experts / Comms / Economists / Data strategy / Industry / Citizens / Legal / Media / Other countries / Economists / Social & user researchers

Insights from workshop data



Entrenched viewpoints and concern over reputational risk can restrict potential options at this element



This element is important, it was in the top three highest scoring for value and highest scoring total

Test a solution

This element is about testing, prototyping and piloting potential solutions.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---|---|
| Find resources for the project | Iterate based on feedback | Public consultation | Develop technical reqs. | Understand the context and existing landscape | Keep in line with ministerial direction |
| Mitigate and manage risks and issues | Legal advice and sign off | Pilot solution | Develop ideas/ solutions | Test solution | Delivery plan |

Collaborators

Business groups / Law enforcement / OGDs / Legal / Customer insight / Operations / SCS / Citizens / Ministers

Insights from workshop data



Sometimes ideas don't progress beyond this element

Receive sign-off from minister

This element is about the minister agreeing to go ahead with the new policy.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Talk to colleagues/
subject
matter
experts

Iterate based
on feedback

Soft
influencing

SpAd
engagement
and approval

Write-rounds

Submission

Ministerial
sign-off

Insights from workshop data



It can be challenging knowing who you need to contact at this element



This element was one of the lowest scoring frequency and outcome

Collaborators

ALBs / OGDs / Devolved administrations / MPs / Judiciary /
Legal / Ministers / Ministers office / other policy teams

Build and implement a solution

This element is about turning the new or improved policy into reality.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)



Collaborators

ALBs / Citizens / Interest groups / Comms / Devolved administrations /
Regulatory bodies / Technology / Lawyers / Operations / Policy leads

Insights from workshop data



Stakeholder relationships are still very important at this element, in particular with delivery colleagues



It's possible that not enough time is spent on this element, its value and outcome scores are higher than its frequency score

Evaluate the solution

This element is about understanding the impact of the new solution.

Common activities (the same activities occur across multiple elements)

Talk to colleagues/s
ubject matter
experts

Reflect and
make future
plans

Monitor
external
factors

Time bound
review of
policy

Monitor data

Gather
feedback

Formal
evaluation

Collaborators

Analysts / Citizens / Legal / Scientists / Consumers /
Industry / Law enforcement / Operations

Insights from workshop data



This element doesn't always happen because government priorities have often moved on and people who worked on the project often have too



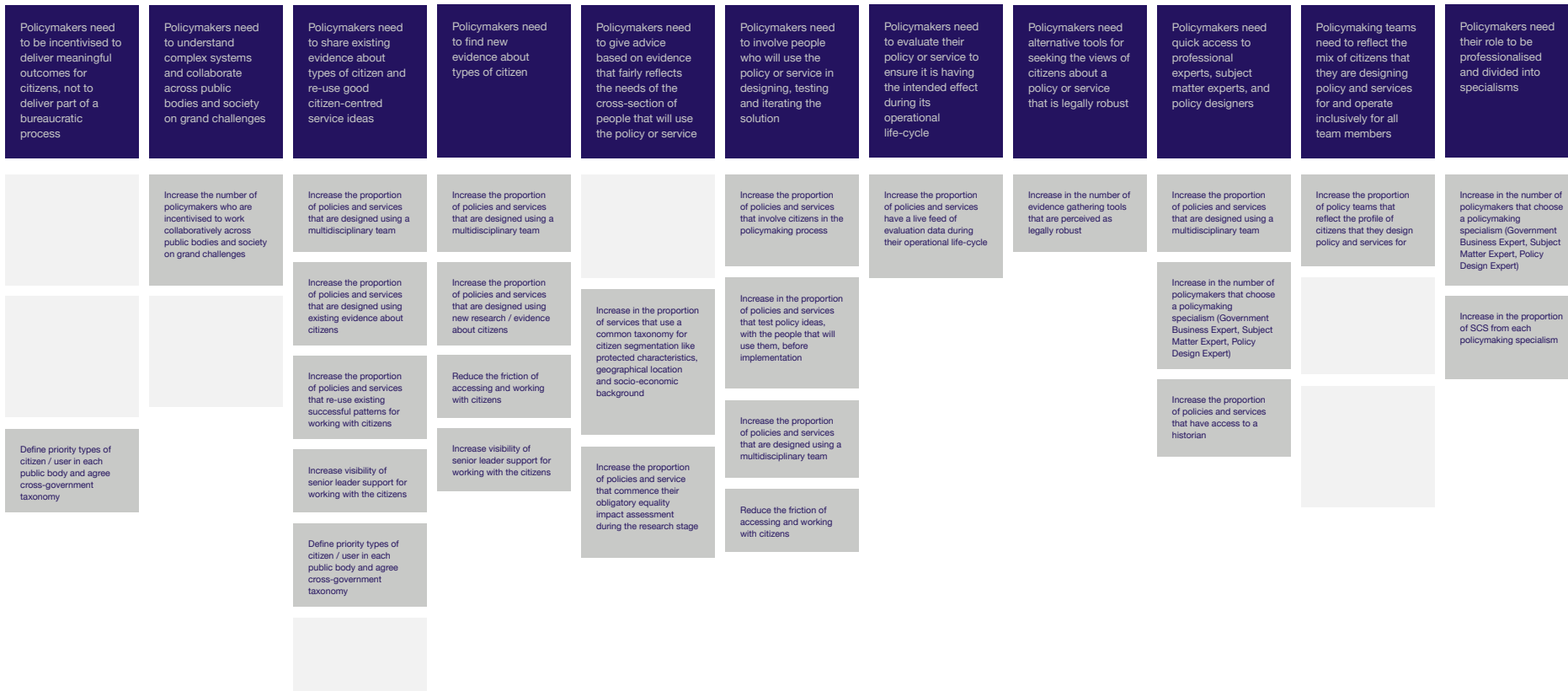
It's possible that not enough time is spent on this element, its value and outcome scores are higher than its frequency score

Appendix: activities that potential partners might collaborate on

Policymaking community in public bodies



A central, multidisciplinary policy design team and Policy Profession Unit



Civil Service : policymaking reform

HM Treasury

[illegible]

Cabinet Office

[illegible]

Other professions

Policymakers need
 to be incentivised to
 deliver meaningful
 outcomes for
 citizens, not to
 deliver part of a
 bureaucratic
 process

Policymakers need
 to understand
 complex systems
 and collaborate
 across public
 bodies and society
 on grand challenges

Policy-makers need to share existing evidence about types of citizen and re-use good citizen-centred service ideas

Policymakers need
 to find new
 evidence about
 types of citizen

Policymakers need
 to give advice
 based on evidence
 that fairly reflects
 the needs of the
 cross-section of
 people that will use
 the policy or service

Policy makers need to involve people who will use the policy or service in designing, testing and iterating the solution

Policymakers need
 to evaluate their
 policy or service to
 ensure it is having
 the intended effect
 during its
 operational
 life-cycle

Policymakers need
 alternative tools for
 seeking the views of
 citizens about a
 policy or service
 that is legally robust

Policymakers need quick access to professional experts, subject matter experts, and policy designers

Polymaking teams
need to reflect the
mix of citizens that
they are designing
policy and services
for and operate
inclusively for all
team members

Policymakers need their role to be professionalised and divided into specialisms

Increase the proportion of policies and services that are designed using a multidisciplinary team

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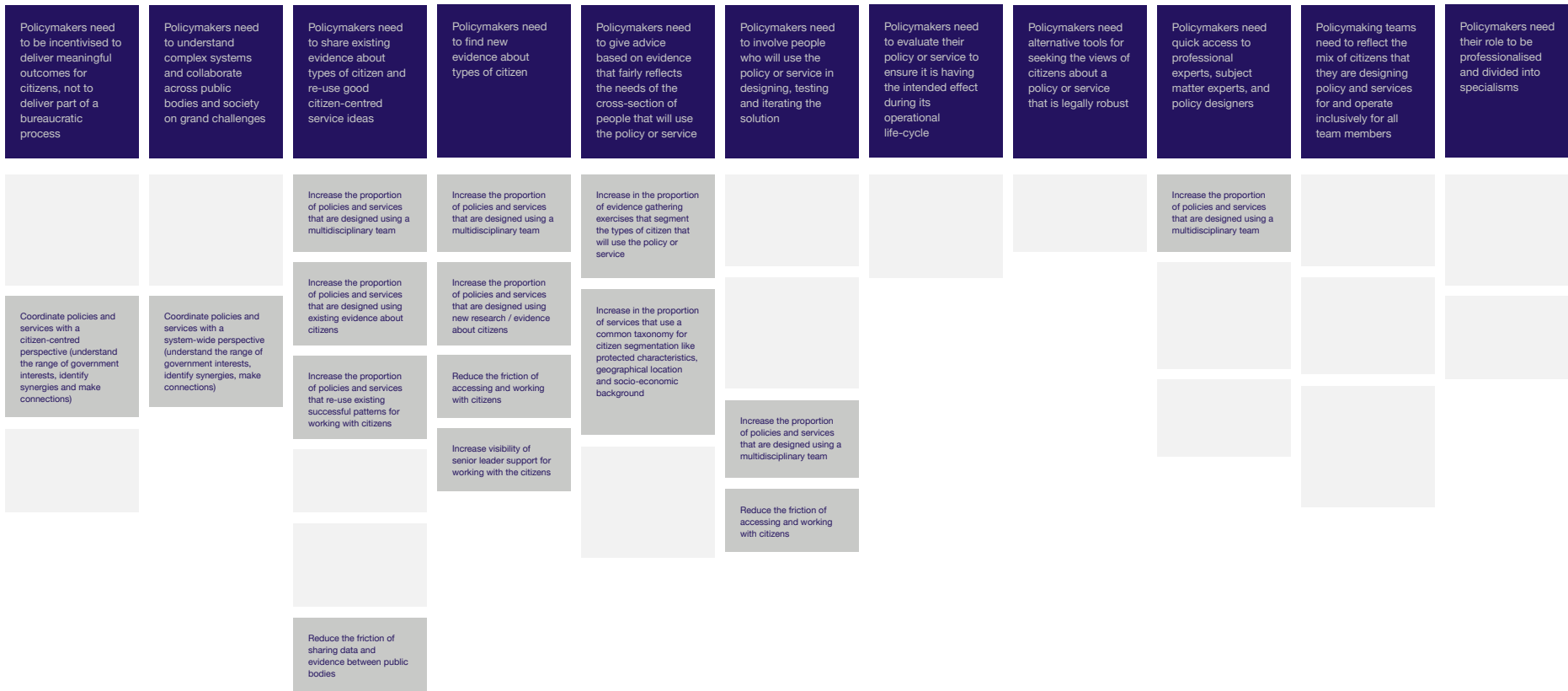
Civil Service HR



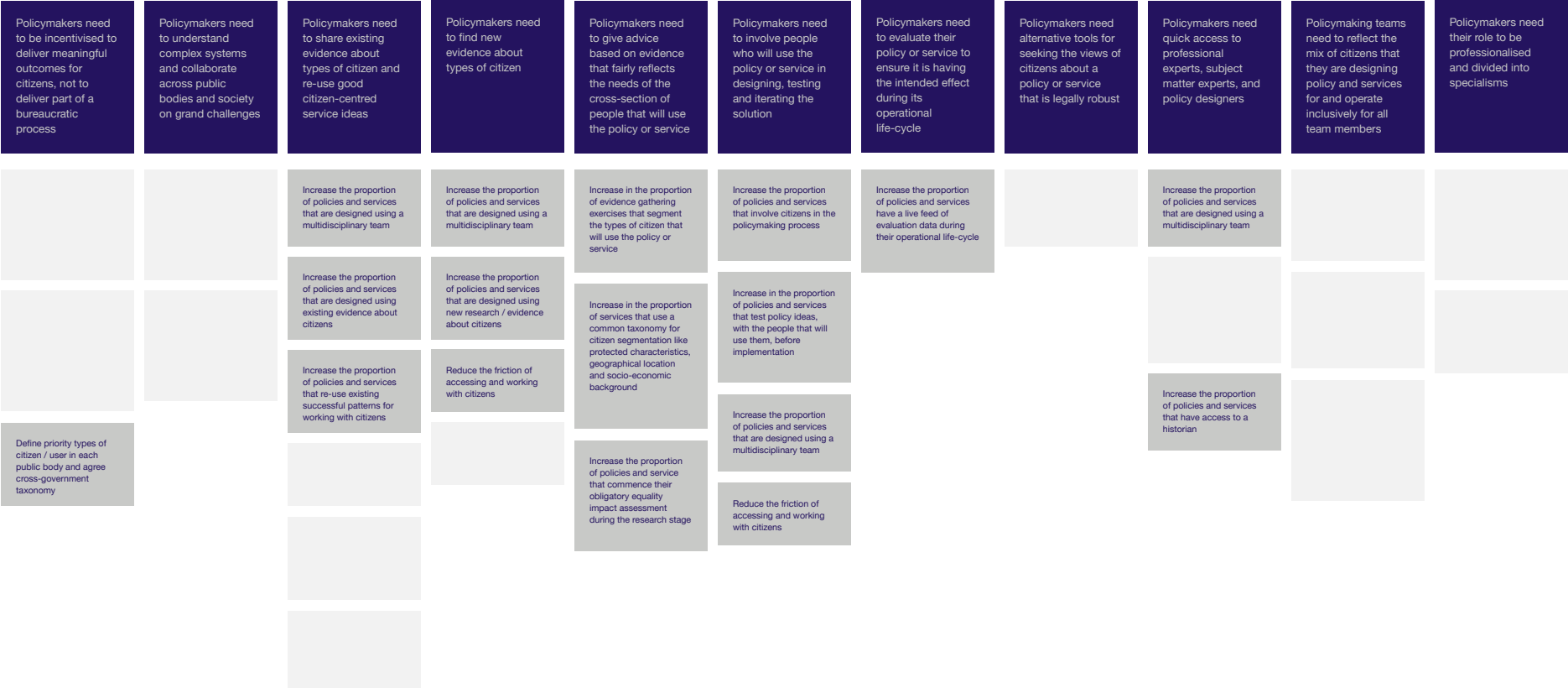
Government Commercial Function



Government Digital Service



Professions that specialise in research



Government Finance Function



Data Profession





Civil Service

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