

In 2002, the Innovation Unit of the Department of Education and Skills was established with a strong focus on innovation in education and children's services. Since 2006 the Innovation Unit is independent of the government and is defined as a UK non-profit social enterprise which aims at improving public services so to address timely social challenges. Notwithstanding the original idea, the work of Innovation Unit is also focused on innovation in healthcare and local government in the UK, through which it has been promoting the principles of co-production and service design approach.

The Open Public Services White Paper¹ was published in 2011 to promote: the imperative of passing power to service users (e.g. lay people) to increase their choice in service providers and grant them more control over decision-making; access to public services by all UK citizens; and decentralization to the lowest levels, so that individuals and communities are in charge. Preceding the White Paper, the Institute for Government published a report *Policymaking in the real world*² for the period of 1997- 2011 that stressed unsynchronized timescales for evaluation and policy making, due to lack of embedding evaluations directly into the policy design and/or evaluations not being recognized as cross-departmental knowledge repositories. The need for openness of government was recognized globally in 2011 – the government leaders of seventy-nine countries and numerous local governments, together with thousands of civil society organizations formed Open Government Partnership (OGP)³ to promote accountable, responsive and inclusive governance. For example, the Open Government Pioneers Project⁴ is a society-led initiative which promotes capacity of civil society and UK citizens to use open government methods as a way to secure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)⁵. The initiative uses Open Wiki to transparently plan the development of an open government civil society movement across the whole UK.

Nowadays, the UK Government has a strong opinion on the use of evidence-based policy making, believing that the core idea of good public services is the one in which decisions are based on collected evidence and generated evidence synthesis of what works best (UK Cabinet Office, 2013). In this manner, it established seven What Works Centres⁶ to serve as a network which is covering a wide range of social policy areas (UK Cabinet Office, 2013). The generation and use of evidence are implemented by the local authorities, commissioners, policy makers and local practitioners, in collaboration with What Works Team in the Cabinet Office (responsible to bridge the information uptake and decision-making between local and national governance) and the Cross-Government Trial Advice Panel (TAP). TAP is coordinated by the What Works Team and is directed by a steering group consisting of members inside and outside the government. Thus, What Works Centres are funded by governmental and non-governmental sources (e.g. Economic and Social Research Council – ESRC). Through the network of What Works Centres, it is possible to test, validate and evaluate variations of policies being implemented in public services. This enables iterations through evidence generations, so the policy makers can make informed decision-making on investment in services that lead both to social impact and have monetary values for citizens.

Organization

Name of the Policy Lab: UK Policy Lab

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The UK Policy Lab⁷ was funded in 2014 as a consequence of the Civil Service Reform Plan⁸ (2012) in which it was emphasized the need to make policy making more open – to draw conclusions for policy making based on a wider range of expertise and inputs in order to ensure that “policy advisers have up to date tools and data.”⁹ The lab is situated at the UK Cabinet Office and its main purpose is to promote and facilitate better policy making in regards to design management of civil services. This is achieved through the lab being a neutral space which encourages cross-departmental collaboration and ensures public engagement together with external experts in key policy areas. The UK Policy Lab model is bestowed on precedent good practices such as MindLab (Denmark), Helsinki Design Lab (Finland), LAB at the Office of Personnel Management (United States of America) and DesignGov (Australia)¹⁰.

The lab is coordinated by a small team of professionals who have a sound background in design, research, ethnography and policy making. The lab’s efforts are supported by a network of external experts for key policy areas who are invited to participate in any one of the initiatives, depending on the policy area, the issue and their expertise. The lab works closely with Future Policy Network, including Government Digital Service, Behavioral Insights Team, GO Science and Office for National Statistics. The primary function of the lab is responding to any request from policy teams which need and want to trial and test new ways of working. The government’s departments financially support the operations of the lab closely collaborating with and for them and reaching to external organizations and its representatives. The lab facilitates and builds capacity regarding the process of policymaking through use of people-centered design approaches so to improve user experience of departments within civil service. In general, there are three types of services the lab can offer (Figure 1).

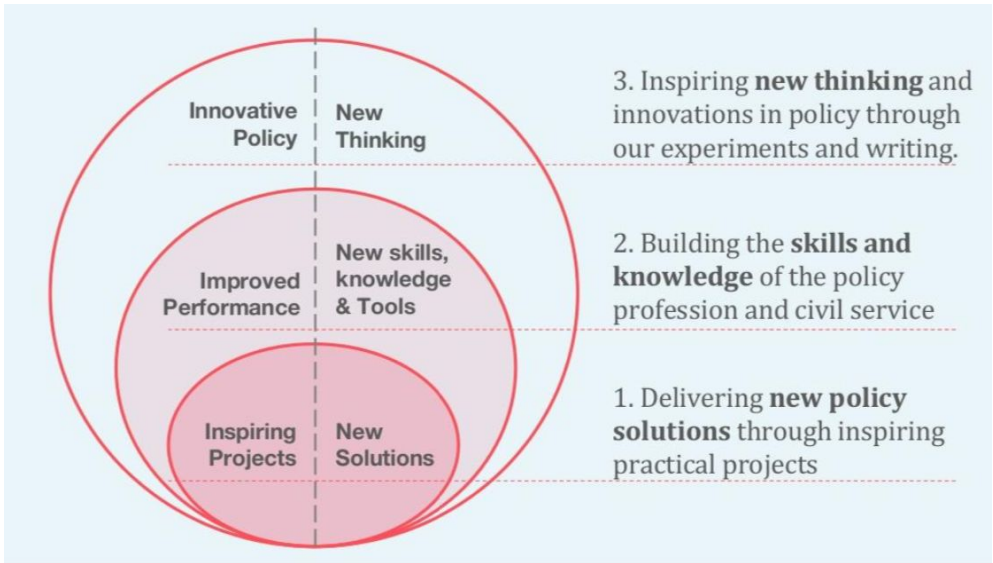


Figure 1 - Types of services¹¹

Up to 2017, the lab has worked in more than 20 policy projects, with over 5000 servants. Some of the projects are enlisted below (Figure 2).



Figure 2 - Example of projects¹²

Besides design, UK Policy Lab also uses data science for analysis of large data and digital tools to reach wider audiences with an online tailored service.

PROCESSES AND TOOLS

According to the Design Thinking Diamond model, UK Policy Lab develops iterative and participatory processes through four stages (Figure 3).

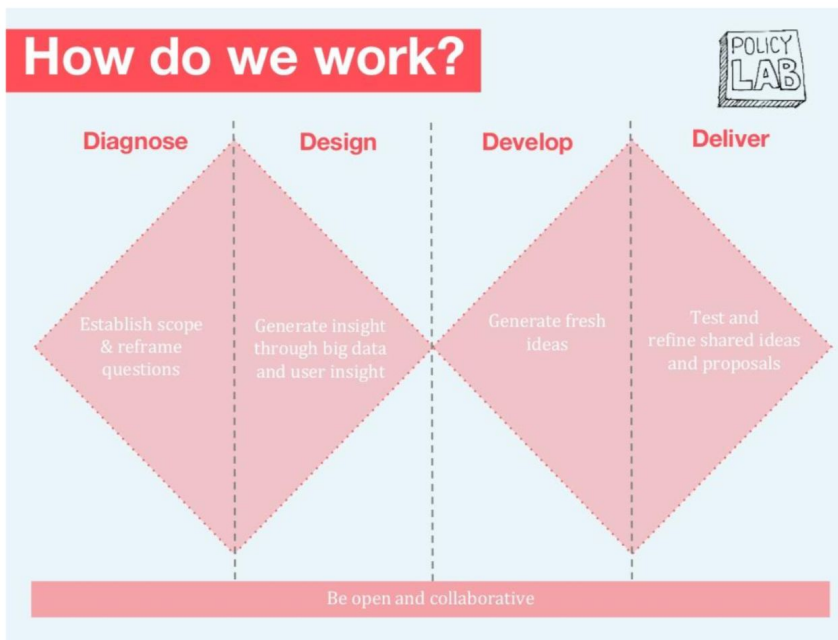


Figure 3 - Design Thinking diamond applied to UK Policy Lab¹³

The lab's effectiveness is bestowed on appropriation, flexibility and iterations. Its primary concern is how its methodologies can be adjusted to understand necessities and respond by designing solutions. Therefore, the lab operates in different ways, always respecting time restriction imposed by the service commissioners:

- "Lab Light" is a 1-day workshop with the policy team to get to know each other and the policy challenge (i.e. contextualization and preliminary problem definition).
- "Policy sprints" is a cycle of collaborative workshops, implemented in one to three days which either serves to kick-off larger projects or as a stand-alone process. This is used to bring a variety of stakeholders working together on mapping and generating new ideas, creating energy and shared responsibility (e.g. Open Policy Days).
- Service design is used for long-term projects. It can be run from three months to a year, and usually it combines the engagement of service designers, ethnographers, data scientists and subject specialists. The process is based on the double diamond: define, discover, develop, and deliver.
- Future scenarios and speculative design techniques are used to experiment and produce a number of policy "firsts" (e.g. what rail travel might look like in 2035).

Each type of intervention can be also located in the Diamond model shown earlier, depending on its purpose and formats (Figure 4).

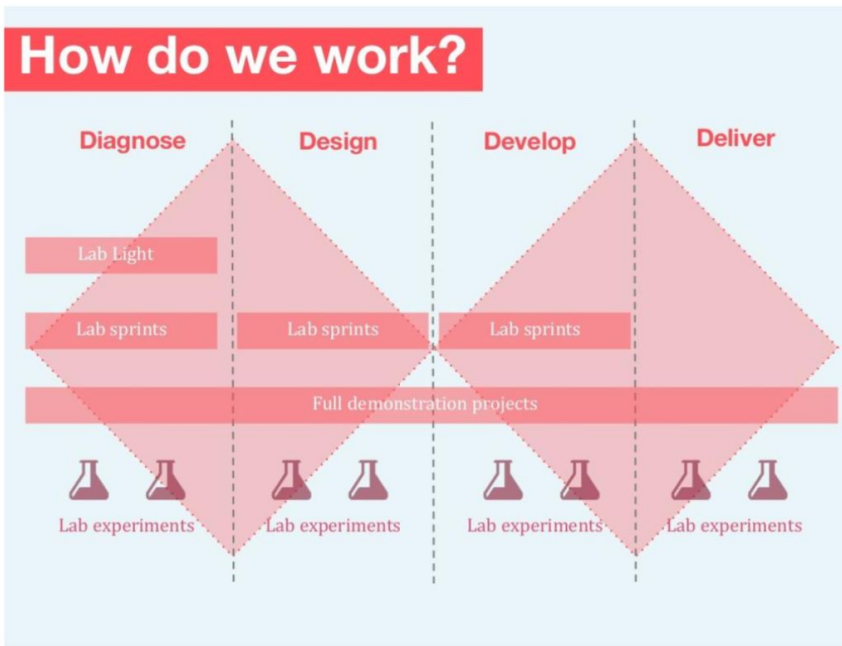


Figure 4 - Stages of policy design process¹⁴

Considering each stage of the design process, the UK Policy Lab proposes specific tools and techniques (Figure 5).

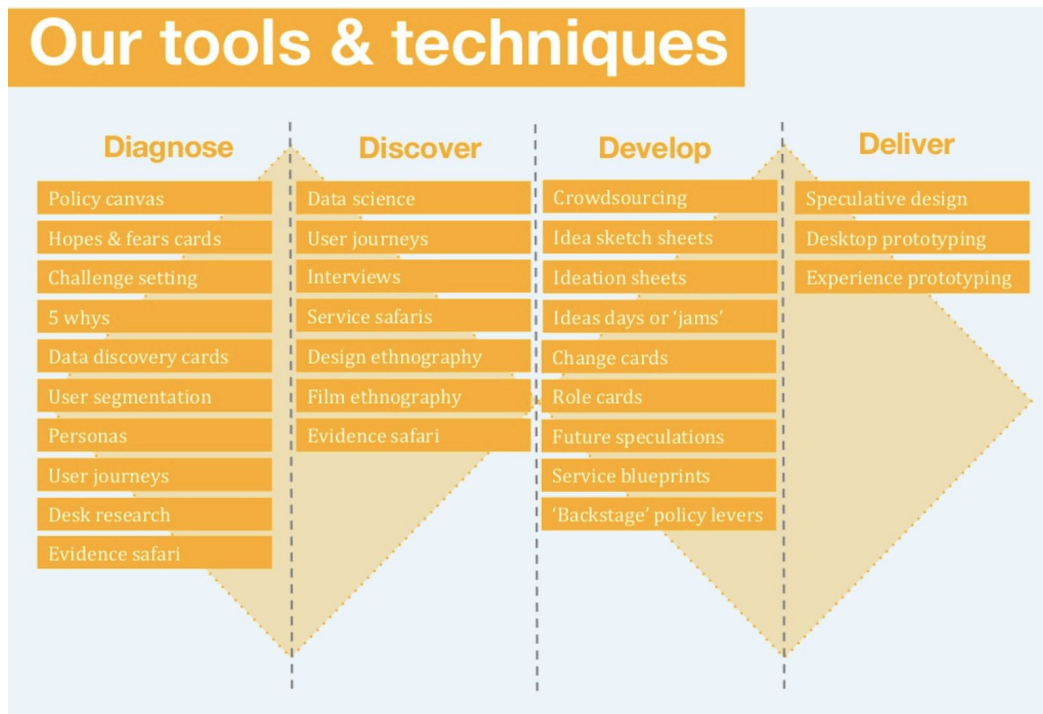


Figure 5 - Tools and techniques for policy design processes¹⁵

Policy lab demonstrator project with the department of work and pensions and department of health

General description

Name of the Initiative: Policy Lab demonstrator project with the Department of Work and Pensions and Department of Health

Website/ link: <https://researchingdesignforpolicy.wordpress.com/category/policy-lab-workshop/>;
<https://researchingdesignforpolicy.wordpress.com/category/policy-lab-demonstator/>

Location: United Kingdom

Initiative Domain: Health

Starting and ending date of the initiative: 5 months

This initiative aimed at understanding how the life of people with (or at risk of developing) a health condition is affected, especially in relation to employment. The objective was to support these persons by designing ways of helping them keep on working or returning to it faster.

The team involved in this initiative included policy makers and analysts from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department of Health (DH) who worked together with the Policy Lab for 5 months.

The steps taken were (this information was retrieved from the report Applying Design Approaches to Policy Making Discovering Policy Lab¹⁶):

1. Set up a collective inquiry into the issue, involving a broad range of participants
2. Take an exploratory approach resulting in new insights, new concepts, new framings and new connections between participants
3. Maintain a consistent focus on creating and using research findings
4. Reorder the policy area by focusing on the experiences of people involved in the issue, both those with a health condition and but also professionals working with them such as doctors and support staff in public and voluntary services
5. Build capabilities across the civil services
6. Develop concepts to a point where there were ready to be explored in more depth using conventional policy making approaches.

Governance

The initiative was a joint cooperation between the lab and the two governmental departments, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Department of Health (DH). The action was initiated with a top-down approach and was implemented at the municipal/local level.

Stakeholders' landscape

The three main actors involved in this process and responsible for the implementation of the initiative included:

- UK Policy Lab
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Department of Health

Keep your shoes dirty (a UK based firm) and Uscreates (part of the FutureGov initiative) also supported the implementation.

The main beneficiaries of this initiative were people with health conditions.

Nevertheless, doctors, employers, service providers and civil servants, who have direct or indirect contact with people with health conditions, also participated in some of the activities, namely the co-design workshops.

The evaluation of the initiative was the responsibility of a board comprised of civil servants from both departments and from the UK Cabinet Office.

The project team (Policy Lab, Department of Work and Pensions, Department of Health, Keep Your Shoes Dirty, and Uscreates) developed an initial policy sprint in which they shared their expectations for the initiative, their core competencies and the areas in which they needed more knowledge. Their expectations included “a vision for a simple and user need informed customer experience; new ways of seeing/understanding why people remain in work/leave work and how (they) can be supported better”¹⁷. The team feared that no actual solution was achieved and that the tools produced were not used.

This sprint also served to map the needs of the beneficiaries, define research questions and develop an effective action plan.

Part of the research and data science analysis was conducted by Policy Lab; Keep Your Shoes Dirty was involved in depth interviews with the main beneficiaries.

Process structuring and engagement

The initiative included 6 different phases. In addition to the project team and the main beneficiaries – people with health conditions – the participants of these phases included doctors, employers, service providers, and civil servants.

Below is a description of the 6 phases:

Phase 1: Policy sprint

A policy sprint is, as explained above, a cycle of collaborative workshops, implemented in one to three days aiming to kick-off larger projects or as a stand-alone process. The objective is to bring a variety of stakeholders working together on mapping and generating new ideas, creating energy and shared responsibility.

This initiative started with a 2 and half day workshop (policy sprint) where the project team discussed needs, expectation and competences. In addition, this activity served to define the research question, plan the strategy and define the next steps.

During this workshop, the team members exchanged views and experiences with other colleagues who had worked directly with disabled or people with ill-health.

Phase 2: Data collection

Phase 2.1: Ethnographically-informed research - the observation and interaction with people in their own environment.

The second phase of this initiative started with this research. It involved 30 people (9 doctors, 9 people with health conditions, 4 Job Centre Plus staff, 3 other service providers and 5 employers). The direct beneficiaries were interviewed to understand their needs and expectations considering their condition. The interviews of the indirect beneficiaries helped also to shape the situation of the people with disabilities or health conditions.

Phase 2.2: Guided visual research (or guided imagery) - a process in which a practitioner helps a participant or patient to generate mental images that stimulate or recreate a perception of the 5 senses. This is often used to complement the data collection done through interviews.

In the second step of phase 2 the participants were asked by the team members to share an image that captured their experience of having or supporting someone with a disease.

The Policy Lab used results from the four-year UK's Understanding Society survey¹⁸ to study those who self-reported being unemployed due to long term illness or disability. These were used to compare it to other types of unemployment and work situations.

Phase 3: Insight sharing workshop - an activity used to share insights during the development of the initiatives.

In the third phase of the project the project's team conducted an insight sharing workshop to review and discuss the research findings at that moment. This workshop served to identify opportunities on how to change from the theory to the practice and define the next steps.

Phase 4: Co-design ideation workshop - a workshop which aims to come up with ideas to solve a specific challenge; this is done through co-creation methods and tools.

The 4th phase of the initiative aimed at the co-creation of ideas: 26 participants (direct and indirect beneficiaries) were involved in this co-design workshop where they came up with ideas on how to actually support the beneficiaries.

In a first moment, 6 ideas were discussed; in a second moment, these were narrowed down to 2. A second workshop was conducted with some of the main beneficiaries (people with health conditions) to involve them in the idea generation. The project team synthesized all the ideas.

Phase 5: Prototyping - the development of a model or product to test a concept or process or to be replicated or learned from.

The 5th phase of the initiative involved the project's team in the prototyping phase. The members worked on some of the ideas developed in the co-design ideation workshop. The solutions were tested by a group of 52 people. The validation test and feedback received allowed to understand if the ideas would be feasible.

Phase 6: Evaluation

The final phase of the initiative included an evaluation process that was the responsibility of a board comprised of civil servants from both of the departments (Department of Work and Pensions and Department of Health) and the Cabinet Office. The evaluation was positive, and the next steps were approved.

As expressed in the report, the main aim was to: "...go beyond looking at people's experiences of the service propositions. For example, week-long prototyping in job centers or with other organizations would explore the fit with existing services and the resources required to deliver the services. The project's research findings are also being used in other ways inside the departments".¹⁹

Political influence (insights)

This initiative involved two central government bodies from the UK Government's Cabinet Office: The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and The Department of Health (DH). The involvement of the political institutions in the demonstrator was a driving force for the success of the initiative, as the representatives seemed to be highly motivated to reshape the way policy was produced taking into account the perspectives of the users and external expertise, as one of the DWP policy advisor's comments: "Thinking about things from the user end is alluring because policy tends to come down from central government and ends up with the people on the front line doing their best to try and combine all of that with what's in front of them. So, we need to reverse some of that thinking, to strengthen that input from the user end, to counterbalance some of the centrally driven stuff. That's why it's appealing. What we've been trying to do is look at all the tiers together. And make sure there isn't such a big gap between head office and the front end".²⁰

The involvement of both political and non-political entities in the demonstrator produced positive impact in the way of engaging in policy work. The grassroots and civil society level participation was able to introduce inputs that originated a new hybrid format of policy work, which responds to the needs both from the governmental side, as the representatives described, and from society's side, as the new policies arising from the co-creative policy design would better represent their needs and priorities.

The Policy Lab and the Keep Your Shoes Dirty organization were key in the introduction of new knowledge during the initiative's workshops. They were responsible for providing in-depth ethnographic information based on research from interviews directly with people with health conditions. This information was particularly important to deliver the end-users' perspectives in the policy work, providing a glance into how policies impact them, what they need, what is there that is unnecessary and what they view the priorities should be. This information was a valuable input for the political level participants, as described by a Policy Advisor from DWP: "It would have been weird if we had been surprised by anything. I think the value is in reordering things. There are multiple considerations and it added more power and authority to some. It gives them a status which they might not otherwise have. Like

some of the softer things around user experience... It's stuff that people are aware of, but it gives it a stronger status."²¹

The engagement between the different stakeholders involved and impacted by policy resulted in the identification of opportunities and new ideas for services. The involved departments from the Cabinet Office reviewed the research and the new insights and decided to move the project forward, providing further in-depth involvement of grassroots and civil society in the design of services and policy.

Cultural, behavioral, organizational (insights)

In the UK, following the growing trend around Europe over the last decade, the interest in shifting the way of doing policy into a more design-thinking approach has been more and more prominent. This approach is largely influenced by data (Ipsos Mori survey) showing that only 19% of the people in the UK trust politicians (2018). Politicians are the second least trusted professions, only better than advertising executives. The Open Government Network members (part of the Open Government Partnership, described previously in this case study) call for the UK government, among other things²², to:

- increase lobbying transparency
- improve consultation practice
- open policy making pilot projects
- Provide a single point of contact for public requests for evidence
- Make all parliamentary data freely available
- Increase citizen involvement in the legislative process

Trustlab (an OECD initiative with academic partners) studied the factors associated with people's distrust in government in UK²³ (Figure 6). The perception that the government is unreliable, and that corruption is highest at the political level, have

strengthened the disconnection with the neighborhood and in other people:

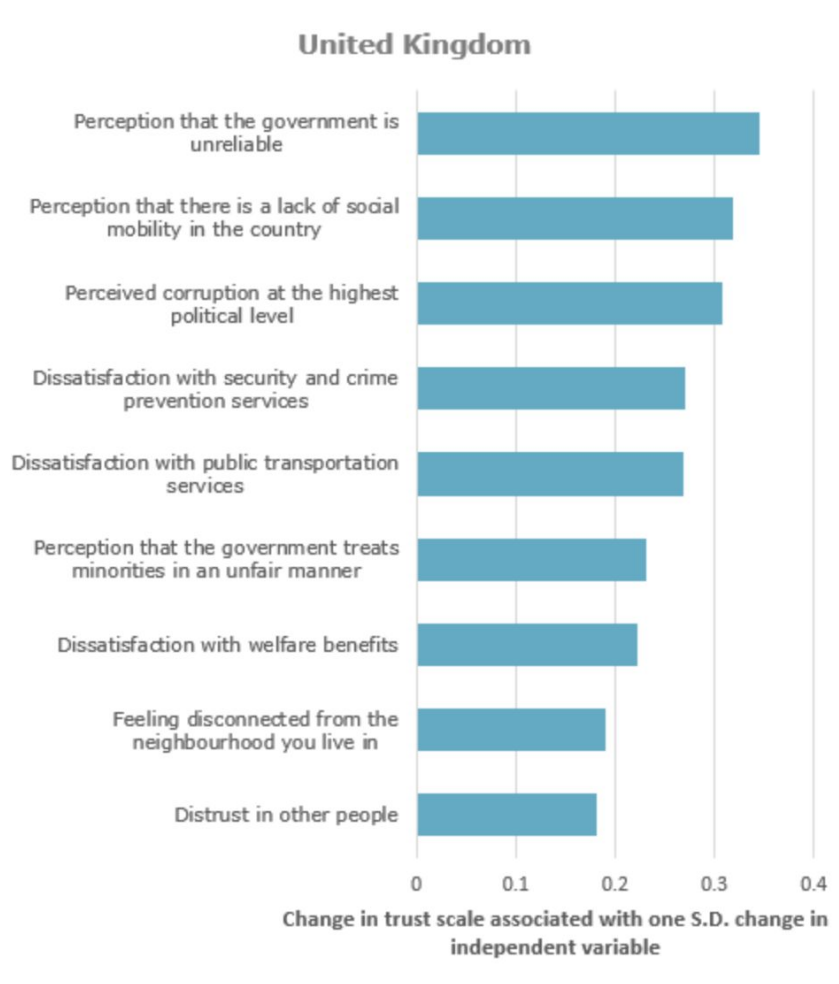


Figure 6 - Factors more strongly associated with people's distrust in government²⁴

Based on these statistics and with many new initiatives emerging in civil society's landscape, there is a rising recognition that an effort should be made for policy work to address the many and diverse challenges communities are facing in the UK^{25,26}. The Policy Lab demonstrator can be recognized as one of the ways government entities are reaching out for expertise in design-thinking to improve the response to these challenges.

One of the hints that the attitudes from Government officials are shifting toward a co- design approach to policy is the UK Open Government National Action Plan 2016-18, which is the third document and follows the open policy-making approach through co- creation that was already in motion in the previous version, however learning from experience. The foreword by the Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General gives a revealing glimpse into the thought process of this Action Plan: "Open government means accepting that we don't have all the answers and putting data and power in the hands of people who might".²⁷ However, Bailey and Loyd (2016), based on several interviews with government officials, argue that the driving agenda is, indeed, frugal and quantifiable: saving resources and reaching higher efficiencies.²⁸

In terms of the attitude from policy experts and researchers towards the design-thinking approach and co-creation, Kimbell (2015) argues that there has been an interest in some decades. However, even though there seems to be curiosity toward the design-approach, there is still not a lot of engagement in understanding the latest advances in the practice.²⁹

Design ethnography, used in the Policy Lab demonstrator, has been regarded as useful as a research method for advising policy, but it has also raised issues for policymakers as not being “sufficiently representative, quantifiable, or reliable.”³⁰

The approach from Policy Lab delivered a channel that can bridge the gap between policy intent and its results by bringing to the discussion table a range of people in cooperative examination of a policy issue. The concept of what is important is, thus, rearranged by introducing the complexities involved in the experiences of the people impacted by the policy or policy making process, enhancing trust in the production and delivery of policy. Kimbell (2015) explains: “The approach enables people inside and outside of government to collaborate effectively by enabling more equal participation, generating a shared language and approach and acknowledging difference constructively.”³¹

Insights on the co-creation process

SPI believes that the approach for this initiative was suitable, however, it seemed to be only for an initial stage and could be implemented further. In general, the report does not detail several of the phases, namely the prototyping stage which does not allow taking in-depth conclusions. Five-months part-time seemed enough to conduct the initial phase of the project. It seems that next steps were taken, but no information is given on the chosen case study. No information is given on adjustments made, even if an insight sharing workshop occurred to evaluate the initiative internally. It is unsure if there was a lasting dialogue with all the stakeholders outside the scope of the initiative. In the interview with a former representative of the UK Policy Lab it was stated that there were overall financial and structural constraints.

The UK Policy Lab surely benefits from its connections with the UK Government as shown in this initiative developed jointly by the lab and two of its departments.

The success rate of the policies that were co-produced in cross-sectoral collaboration among civil servants and other stakeholders is unknown, so is the overall impact on the societal change (i.e. how they were implemented, how they were accepted, what they contributed to, how they were monitored and evaluated). The UK Policy Lab informs the UK Government and policymakers on the benefits from incorporating participatory and qualitative design methods and techniques into evidence-based policymaking (e.g. iterative experimentation and prototyping). Taking into account the information collected on the initial policy sprint, some of the project’s team members seem to have some concerns on how to actually implement the ideas.

Conversely, the UK Policy Lab still needs to put efforts in building capacities for awareness and responsiveness of government and policymakers towards embedding co-creation when: i) identifying matters of concern/challenges; ii) defining methodologies for design and

implementation of policy-making; iii) prototyping and co-production of policies with other stakeholders (i.e. issue of anticipation of possible solutions “which are bound up with ideological and political narratives”; and iv) monitoring and evaluating implemented policies.

Comparative analysis and lessons learnt

As mentioned in paragraph 3. Methodology, the comparative analysis of the cases has been conducted on the basis of a set of dimensions explored in the cases and connected issues, implications and questions drawn from literature review. The comparative analysis thus draws generalizations and insights from the cases, that finally converge in a set of recommendations that contingently aim at providing guidance to the project but also, and much more broadly, to increase and systemize knowledge on emerging questions to inform the current debate.

In the following table (Table 1 - List of dimensions explored in comparative analysis), we report a list of the explored dimensions and main issues to be discussed in the comparative analysis.

Explored dimension	Implications and questions
Background and Context	<p>Discuss background and context at different scales and levels of governance: organizational; local; regional, national and systemic.</p> <p>With reference to the cultural context, examine to which extent and how it influences the capacity for co-creation.</p> <p>With reference to governing paradigms, examine if co-creation takes place only under the most favorable (networked governance) or if labs are challenging other paradigms and using co-creation also as a tool for organizational and systemic change.</p> <p>With reference to the political context, question the neutrality of PSI labs with respect to politics and political agendas that are backing the same labs or the issues and challenges that they deal with (set the ground for the discussion about the specific dimension “Relationship between politics and policies”).</p> <p>Question if the characteristics of the context and background conditions determine a sort of “co-creation readiness” of the ecosystem or of the single organization.</p>

<p>Organization, structure and governance</p>	<p>Investigate the implications of the location and ownership of PSI labs: inside or outside government.</p> <p>Discuss the permanence of PSI labs, also in connection with the previous question.</p> <p>Discuss the connecting competences and processes of PSI labs, and the ways in which they build internal links with their parent organization and external links with citizens and stakeholders, acting as a bridge between the two.</p> <p>Investigate matters of agency and autonomy.</p> <p>Investigate the ways in which PSI labs create buy-in and gain trust.</p> <p>Deepen questions of organizational legitimacy and knowledge transfer for organizational transformation.</p>
<p>Sustainability/business model and budget allocated</p>	<p>Discuss business and sustainability models of PSI labs: allocated to single initiatives, to the lab, or both.</p> <p>Investigate connections between budget allocation and impact measurement (i.e. is there any explicit connection between the results achieved by the labs and their financing?).</p> <p>Draw possible connections between this dimension and the life expectancy/permanence of the labs already discussed.</p>
<p>Skills and team</p>	<p>Investigate the characteristics of the i-teams and competences that they include.</p> <p>Investigate how they manage transversal and vertical competences: specialized versus interdisciplinary teams.</p>
<p>Impact measurement</p>	<p>Investigate the timeframe of the expected impacts (short, medium, long).</p> <p>Verify if the impact measured at the level of the projects or at the level of the organization, or both.</p>

	Verify if PSI labs adopt any impact measurement framework and tools, and their characteristics (qualitative, quantitative, mixed).
Methodologies and stakeholder engagement	Investigate the methodologies used and for which reasons. Verify if experimentation and iteration are part of the methodology, and investigate how they are managed. Investigate if and how PSI labs are able to integrate new approaches, methodologies and tools in daily practices, transforming the “ways of doing things” in their parent organization or network. Investigate the “who” behind participatory processes. Discuss questions of (democratic) representation: direct participation of citizens or use of stakeholders as “proxies” to gather public opinions and sentiment. Investigate the forms of engagement and incentives, as well as the management of conflict resolution and negotiations.
Relationship between politics and policies	Investigate PSI labs’ political relationships, mandates and or sponsorships. Question the ways in which they manage the relationship between the policies that are object of co-creation and the political landscape.

Table 1 - List of dimensions explored in comparative analysis

Context, organization, structure and governance

The cases analyzed revealed interesting insight on the importance of context and location and structure of PSI labs in co-creation processes.

PSI labs work under traces of all three governing paradigms in the public sector.

Most of the PSI labs in our collection were tasked by the heads of government to disrupt public sector practices and create innovative solutions to 21st century problems (e.g. democracy deficits through technological solutions allowing for direct democracy (Decidim) and participatory policymaking (Geneve Lab; GovLab Austria)), as well as to understand how to digitalize the public sector and make use of new technological solutions (Inland; 27 Région; GovLab Arnsberg). What we observed was

that logics and infrastructure under the ‘traditional’ public administration paradigm constrained the co-creation processes and likewise shaped how the process unfolded (primarily in the first, framing stages, as well as in the very last, implementation and evaluation). This was evident in the framing stages, in which how the problem was framed was important for receiving authorization and support from leadership. DTF for example frames the problem before the co-creation process begins in order for the project to get approval. The Director, Niels Martin Andersen, stresses the importance of language and knowing the system from the inside. It is for this reason that the communication choice was that of memos and reports “because that’s just how it’s done”. Likewise, GovLab Arnsberg hired only internally from within the public administration in order to have staff that knew how

to navigate the system's internal structures but that also brought along a network of allies. Likewise, DTF's Director stated the need for people that are slightly different than the rest of the ministry, but who can also navigate a political system with a complicated stakeholder landscape. Pragmatism was seen as a value here. It is evident that in order to push innovations through the public sector, with its siloed structure and hierarchical management, 'speaking the language' and understanding the system is pivotal to getting things done (differently, yet through the same channels).

The labs acted as knowledge providers harking back to NPM's focus on externalization of public policy advice. This conceptualization of how to source and generate knowledge (i.e. through commissioning) also influenced how and mostly where the labs were located and their connecting power to influence, which will be seen in the next insight. The cases implicitly demonstrated that the reinforcement of these schemes made the issue of communication and legitimization of extreme importance in order to have impact, find resources and survive political turbulence and turnover (i.e. political mandates). For example, GovLab Austria needed to rebuild its network of allies due to a restructuring of ministries and public administrations following the elections in Autumn 2017. This case, along with others (27e Région, GovLab Arnsberg,) showed the need to scan the political environment in order align activities with politicized topics as well to frame problems and initiatives in ways that resonate and speak to political objectives. This, in turn, highlights an obstacle towards the integration of bottom-up and top-down processes, and speaks also to the not often mentioned political nature of co-creation processes.

While co-creation seeks to be a neutral, apolitical and democratic process, it revealed itself to be political, as each choice in the various stages carries implications. This is in line with literature on the political nature of design. Co-creation brings together lots of perspectives. This requires negotiation and is a fragile and long process that must always be curated. This was observed in the cases through the choice of who to involve in the process, when to engage them and how the contribution would take place. For example, in the case of Torino City Lab, citizens were only engaged as testers, similar to the case of 27e Région. In the first case, the decision was made because of knowledge gaps in terms of advanced technologies and in the second due to the nature of the project it was determined that their contribution, in terms of knowledge, was usage and experience and thus their contribution was made, "unconsciously" (notice was given) through their daily commute. Furthermore, the issue of problem framing and also how the knowledge and data coming from the lab (i.e. which political issues it is wielded to support) is contextualized and used can also become political and risks becoming manipulative. This could also work to the detriment of co-creation processes in terms of trust by actors. For example, in GovLab Austria, the difficulty of maintaining a neutral role as facilitator without bias was difficult as the lab was seen to never be free from political influence. The UK Policy Lab also stresses the importance of being a neutral space to encourage cross- departmental collaboration and ensure public engagement with external experts in key policy areas. In the case of the S3 drafting process with Aster, the project's lead, Giorgio Moretti, highlighted that trust was incremental, growing through the process itself. He furthermore emphasized that trust in the regional institution was a key issue for ensuring a genuine and committed stakeholder engagement. In particular, the need for precise objectives to be set and a clear agreement on the usage of

the process results were at the very core of process effectiveness. The cases evidence the need for co-creation leaders to consider the 'political' nature of their choices in going forward.

The labs, through the co-creation processes, encouraged policymakers and other public sector actors to adopt different roles in line with a networked governance interpretation. This was observed mostly through the creation of a collaborative space, either virtual (Geneve Lab, Inland Design, GovLab Arnsberg) or physical (Torino City Lab, Aster, GovLab Austria, Decidim, DTF, DDC, 27e Région, UK Policy Lab), that allowed for new forms of collaboration and empowerment.

Recommendations: Our cases demonstrated the need for PSI labs to tailor their strategy to the political context. Having to contend with constraints arising from the remains of the 'traditional' public administration (hierarchical systems, bureaucracy, one-size-fits-all solutions, etc.), PSI labs should equip themselves with the language and skills to navigate these systems and be entrepreneurial in acquiring the resources and authorizations needed, as well as spotting opportunities. Knowing how to speak the language and frame problems with the necessary stakeholders (especially from the top-level) can be pivotal in launching projects. This is important in the initial stages, as afterwards, like trust can be built through the process, frames are re-defined and aligned during the co-creation process. PSI leaders should also be aware of the 'political' aspect of design choices of inclusion/exclusion, sharing and adoption.

Developing and working in a 'protective space', being networked, and having top-level political support are instrumental to the success and positive impact of PSI labs. Alongside what was already discussed above, the need to operate autonomously and unburdened by organizational cultures and bureaucratic processes characterizing the public sector was found to be essential to the mission and daily operation of the labs. The team culture of GovLab Austria, for instance, is based on the principle of a "free room of interaction", detached from the existing hierarchical structures. At the same time, being highly networked in the system proved to be essential, as was clearly observed in DTF, but also being rooted in a specific organization carried with it valuable resources and connections, as seen in Geneve Lab and Inland Design. The latter case however also demonstrates the dangers of being too 'protected' and not embedded enough in the organization, preventing more strategic level actions and higher impact activities. Inland's case furthermore highlights the ephemeral nature of these labs, having contracts that only last a few years, signifying that all the trust and legitimacy acquired will just drop off. Longer term contracts and more strategic postings in the organization are necessary for the organization to accomplish and perhaps even propose more radical changes. This is quite paradoxical considering the vast majority have been established to disrupt.

What we can observe, regardless of the location (inside or outside government), is the high value of being networked both internally with other agencies, policymakers, public managers, departments, etc., and externally with private companies, third sector actors and civil society. As is mirrored in the case of Inland Design's network of chatbots, the networked level of the service allowed for multiple agencies to collaborate and communicate without radically changing the infrastructure. What we saw tangibly in that case is the use of technology to

support emerging socio-technical systems that link different locations. Likewise, what can be observed from a macro- perspective of the cases is the important role of networked individuals in creating links between different “resource beds” for innovation.

Another important aspect to this is understanding who to engage and when, as indicated above. The DTF case emphasizes the need to not “exhaust” the stakeholder network and only involve them when necessary and when their contribution can be valuable. What is observed across the cases is the “ad hoc” nature of the project support; in other words, the labs tend to engage stakeholders around the project as they come up and as needed based on how the process unfolds rather than having a fixed network. These actor networks are thus ever shifting and based on the needs of the day.

The cases support what was found in literature (Tönurist, Kattel, & Lember, 2017b) regarding the importance of having top-level support to help break out of niches and quite simply to survive. For example, in GovLab Arnsberg, having the mandate for the process from the President of the District Government allowed the process to go on rather smoothly without having to overcome huge cultural, organizational or behavioral barriers. Similarly, in the case of Aster, while the region did not interfere with the participative process and its output, the overall strong political commitment and presence of the councilor in many of the key phases, contributed to the speed and efficacy of the process.

Recommendations: PSI labs should take special care to cultivate and nurture their networks of actors, engaging them on a project-to-project basis. Fueling these relationships can not only ensure more positive and fruitful collaboration but also, and particularly when engaging top-level support, legitimize action and protect the quality of the process.

A favorable, cultural context was an important enabler of co-creation processes.

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