

Test, Learn and Grow principles

- 1. We're here to change the centre because that's where the rules of the game are set**
- 2. We value hands on experience**
- 3. Participation improves things**
- 4. Relationships, not transactions**
- 5. We deliver in teams**
- 6. We keep learning, always**
- 7. Networks, not hierarchies**
- 8. Outcomes, not technologies**
- 9. We strengthen localities**
- 10. We build for scale and to grow this way of working**
- 11. We improve things quickly**
- 12. We work in the open**
- 13. Solving complex problems needs diverse perspectives**

1

We're here to change the centre because that's where the rules of the game are set

We work locally because we're ambitious - it's how you change the system. As we work, we hit barriers and we do our best, with colleagues, to remove them. We want a world in which you don't have to fight the system to improve things. That means everything we do needs to lead to reform at the centre.

2

We value hands on experience

We like dirty fingernails. All our teams include people with direct operational experience of the problem, no exceptions. Other skills - design, policy, economics - bring huge value. But without hands-on experience, solutions are brittle and prone to fail. We build solutions close to the problem.

3

Participation improves things

We involve citizens, and we actually listen. We think people know best, but we don't think this means abandoning them to deal with life's problems. So we find people with skin in the game and, with their help, we design better solutions. We believe in people over processes.

4

Relationships, not transactions

We don't like silos. We mix policy and delivery, local and national, operational and digital. This makes our work less transactional. We don't pass instructions back and forth, or engage by consulting. We collaborate. This shares ownership and reduces buck-passing. And it reduces dependencies, making the work less risky. You don't fly a plane by sending letters to ground control, waiting for instructions. So that's not how we work either.

5

We deliver in teams

We build self-sufficient teams around outcomes. Each team has what they need to do things. All teams include policy, design, operations, and local and national experience. Teams can resolve most issues without asking. If the work needs new skills, we add them to the team. If the work needs more capacity to scale, we add new teams.

6

We keep learning, always

If a service is running we're still learning. It's the only way we can work in complexity. We don't see learning as a phase, like a one-off pilot, looking for an answer to roll out. We see learning as continuous. We learn locally but nationally too, making the case for what needs to change to make this work the norm.

7

Networks, not hierarchies

We recognise the need for decision-makers. But hierarchy can slow things down, add risk, and inhibit learning. People stand on ceremony, or fall into parent-child relationships. That's why we work as equals. We each play different roles with clear accountabilities, including decision-makers. But we swap ideas, information, and feedback freely - up, down, and sideways. We're improving services, not running an army.

8

Outcomes, not technologies

We love technology, but we never build our work around it and we challenge others to always see it as part of the solution. We see it as a given that we'd use modern technologies to solve important social problems; why wouldn't we? But technology sits in the background. We don't name teams after technologies and we're wary of technological solutions looking for problems. And of course we build everything for accessibility; it makes it better for everyone.

9

We strengthen localities

We don't extract value, we cultivate it. When we work in a place, it gets stronger because of the work we do there. We share skills - in both directions. We're as generous as we are curious. Our work is infrastructural. We improve outcomes by improving services and we also build local capacity.

10

We build for scale and to grow this way of working

We design for adoption. We learn as hungrily when we're growing a service as when we're designing it in the first place. We work locally, with everywhere in mind. We grow the reach of services, we don't replicate them. We understand local nuance and don't think scaling is an industrial process (which is why we prefer the word grow).

We improve this quickly

We aim to make things better by next Friday. This doesn't mean we rush things. It means we start small, learn deeply, and fail as small as possible. We learn by making contact with reality, early. When we see something broken, we get on with fixing it. And when something's not working, we stop and pivot. We're running a marathon in little steps.

We work in the open

We aren't afraid of our mistakes; we invite challenge, and share our work-in-progress. We write and talk openly about our work because it makes the work better. People cannot learn if we don't tell them what we're up to. And our mistakes will persist if we don't expose them. We also work openly because we're a movement, and movements run on motivation and participation. So we celebrate wins together and invite people in.

We solve complex problems with diverse perspectives

We build diverse teams because they produce better outcomes and reduce the risk of group think. We ensure our work is inclusive and accessible. We involve those affected by our work in the design of it. We recognise that not everyone is the same or needs the same - some individuals and communities need something more or something different.