Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Designing our Public Services

Design principles for
Government in Ireland

Prepared by the Department of
Public Expenditure and Reform
gov.ie

Draft 1 - October 2022

This document is a prototype. We hope it will serve
to spark interest, conversation and ideas. Like any
good prototype, it can only get better with your
feedback. If the ideas outlined here resonate, if you
see opportunities for improvement or if you think
something might be missing, let us know.

design@per.gov.ie

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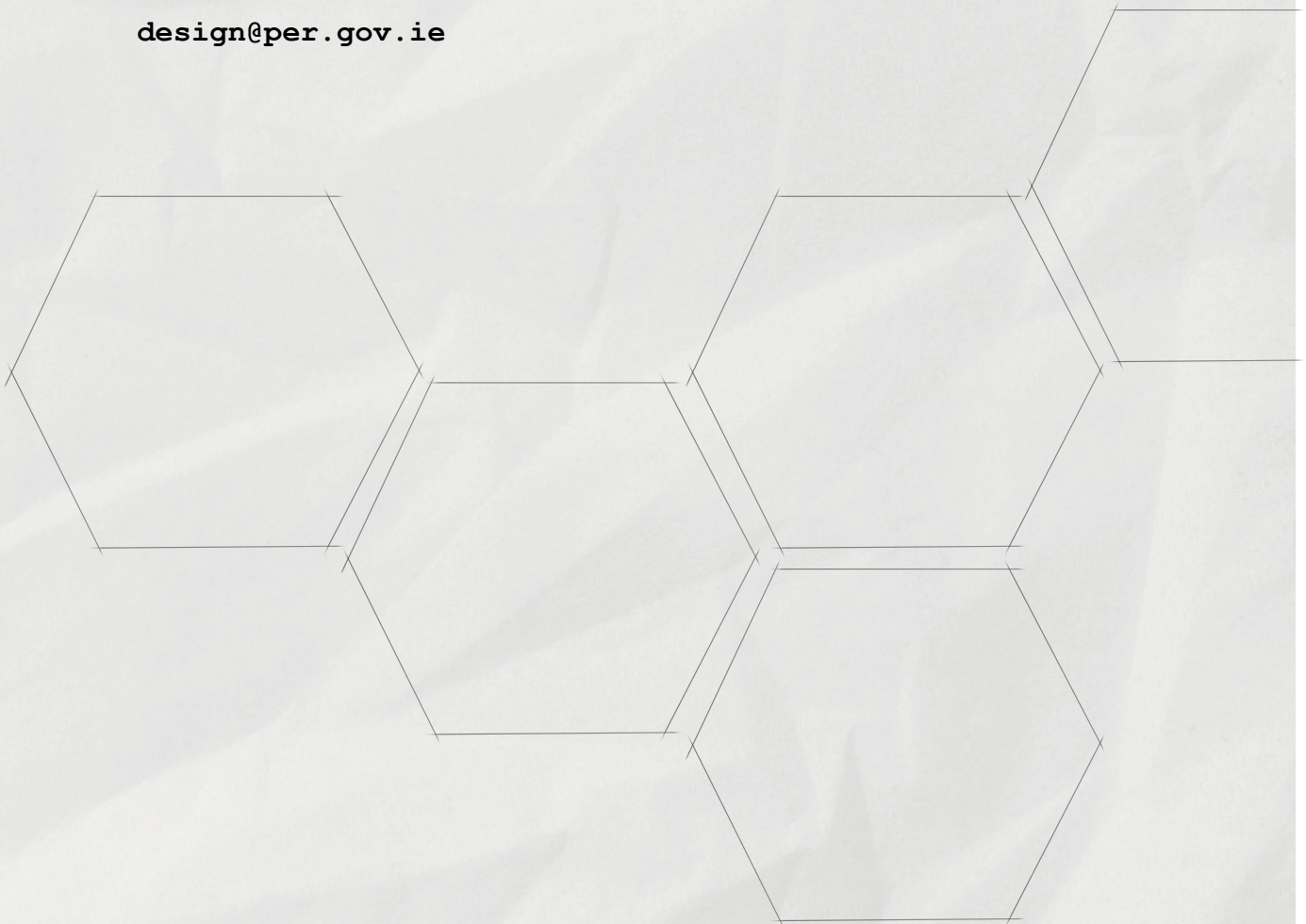
By embracing a design approach, we have an opportunity **rethink**, **reimagine** and **redesign** public service in Ireland

Trevor Vaugh
Chair - Design in Government Working Group
Asst. Professor of Strategic Design
Maynooth University

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Table of Contents

Designing our public services to be more **effective**, **accessible** and **simpler**

Evidence from around the world shows that design is a powerful tool for transformation and innovation in how public services are delivered. This is not design as we have known it previously, limited to aesthetics or communications considerations - but the holistic design of service experiences & delivery focused on the needs of people.

Designing our Public Services is an aid for public servants that are eager to put people at the forefront of service provision. This set of principles should serve to empower our public service to embrace a new way of working, to incorporate powerful tools and techniques, and to deliver human centric solutions to complex social issues.

These principles are just the beginning of our efforts to put design, and the people we are designing our services for, at the heart of our public service. In the spirit of learning, building, testing, and iterating, there is plenty more to come.

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

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Minister's Foreword

> **A design approach utilises proven methods and tools to engage both service users and delivery teams to create and deliver excellent quality services for the people of Ireland.**

I am delighted to publish this first prototype setting out the principles we believe should underpin the design of our future public services in Ireland. As Minister with responsibility for the modernisation of our public services, it is particularly important to me that the services we provide are accessible, effective and represent value for money. In addition, as technology continues to transform how we operate, it is vital to ensure our business processes and services are optimised to put the experience and needs of the public at the centre of everything we do.

A design approach can employ proven methods and tools to engage both service users and delivery teams to create and deliver excellent quality services for the people of Ireland. It involves adopting a mindset that focuses on user-centricity, and values co-creation and consultation to map out and test solutions on the basis of evidence. This is important because it moves our services away from a reliance on assumptions and biases, which may often lack real insights about the service users' experiences and needs.

Design approaches are already being used to great effect internationally, where they have enabled significant improvements in efficiency and efficacy of public services. In Ireland, there are also many examples of how design improved services and business processes across the public sector, and I am glad to have the opportunity to acknowledge and document some of the good work already taking place.

This publication presents an important opportunity to bring greater awareness of the power of a design approach to create and deliver innovative public services which are fit for purpose.

When I launched the Public Service Innovation Strategy, Making Innovation Real, in November 2020, I provided a clear commitment to making

the services we manage across our Public Service more user-focussed. The priorities I outlined to deliver innovation were incorporated into our ten-year plan for Civil Service Renewal and I am confident these goals will feature prominently in the forthcoming programme of transformation for the wider Public Service.

The principles set out in this document reflect our ambition for seamless, inclusive, accessible and simplified services that provide value for money to the citizen. Moreover, they are imbued with the values that our public servants demonstrate in their daily lives.

This is the first prototype of principles for designing our public services. I have no doubt that, in the true spirit of the design process, these principles will be revisited and improved into the future as we learn from our own lived experience in applying them in practical settings.

These principles will shortly be followed up with the development of an action plan to help our public service bodies to become proficient in this important area and to provide our organisations with the relevant tools to design services to meet our citizens' needs. This will involve wider stakeholder engagement and I would like to encourage public servants at every level to get involved in contributing to this action plan to help us to put the citizen at the heart of the services we provide.

Finally, I would like to thank the working group who gave generously of their time, experience and knowledge to enable us to set a new direction for how we create and deliver excellence in service provision to the people of Ireland.

Michael McGrath, TD
Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform

What is Design?

Design is not just about how a product or service looks. At its simplest, design is a process to find and understand the needs of people and to find creative ways to solve problems to meet those needs.

Design is about developing empathy and understanding of people's changing needs and circumstances by talking directly with the people we are designing for. Using those insights, possible solutions are imagined, prototyped and tested with people to see if there is harmony between what is actually desirable (does it meet their needs?), what is viable (does it make economic sense?) and what is feasible (is it technically possible?). Learning is then applied to develop and deliver well considered products and services.

Why use design in Government?

Our world changes fast, influenced by economic uncertainty, rapid social and technological change, changing demographics combined with public expectations for greater openness, transparency, accountability and involvement. This fast pace of change makes it difficult for policy developers and those who deliver public services to keep up.

Design has been identified as a valuable approach for navigating some of these challenges. Design in government is about developing a deeper understanding of people, their needs and challenges, getting to the root cause of issues – *designing the right thing*.

With that understanding we can then intentionally design our processes, systems, services and policies to deliver better experience and value for the public – *designing the thing right*.

There is strong evidence suggesting that governments who adopt a design approach are seeing higher levels of satisfaction, increased efficiencies, cost savings and policies that connect more closely with the people who work and live in their countries.

What does the design Process look like?

Figure 1 below demonstrates the typical phases of a design approach. Although presented here as a step-by-step process, design is a non-linear, iterative process, with phases often conducted concurrently and repeated as required to reach an optimal solution.
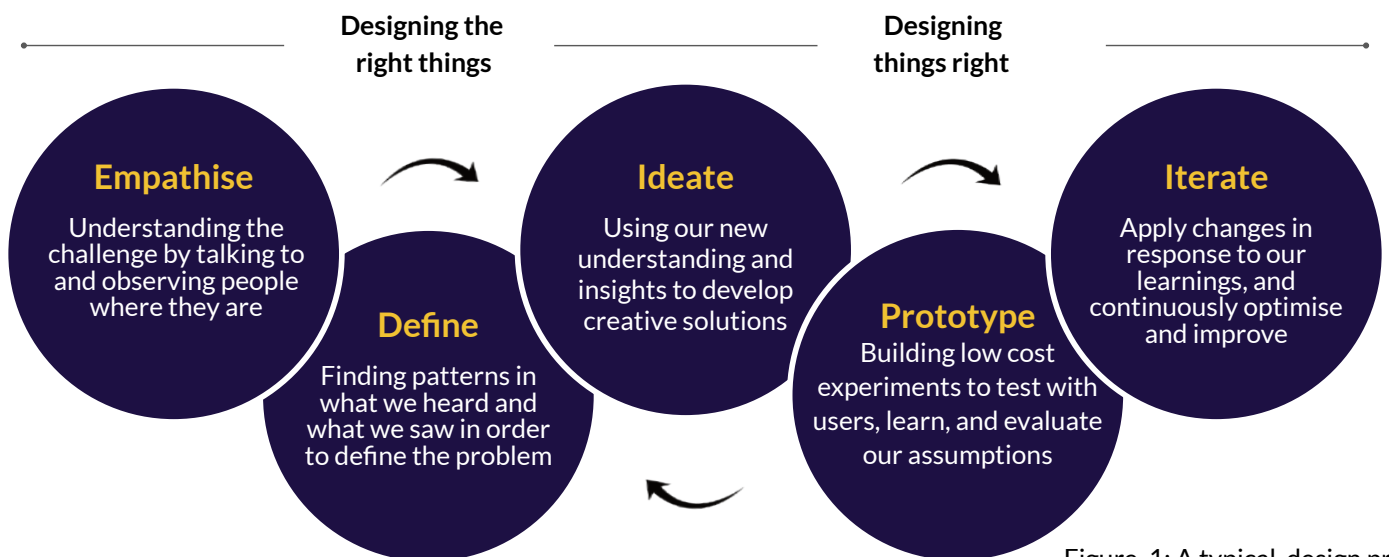

Designing the right things

Designing things right

Empathise
Understanding the challenge by talking to and observing people where they are

Define
Finding patterns in what we heard and what we saw in order to define the problem

Ideate
Using our new understanding and insights to develop creative solutions

Prototype
Building low cost experiments to test with users, learn, and evaluate our assumptions

Iterate
Apply changes in response to our learnings, and continuously optimise and improve

Figure. 1: A typical design process

Design is a mindset

Design is often explained as a way to move from the known to the unknown, with confidence. It brings unique diagnostic and analytical tools which help frame challenges by understanding more deeply the behavioural complexity of social systems. Design offers a valuable approach to tackling challenges when designing products and services. Using an effective design approach places a focus on developing practices and insights that lead to better outcomes. It allows for an effective process that responds to and challenges mindsets, keeping attention on creating and delivering value for the people the products and services are for. The table below highlights and number of differences between a more traditional approach and a design-led approach.

A traditional approach	A design-led approach
Well defined goals and constraints	Goals and constraints uncovered through the design process
Planning and analysis precedes action	Thinking and doing are intertwined
The organisation is at the centre, the user is an important factor	The user is at the centre
Factual and numerical logic	Human insights derived through qualitative and quantitative research
Linear approach	Iterative with frequent adaptations
Minimising risk through analysis	Embracing and reducing risk through prototyping and experimenting
Systems considered in isolation	Systems considered in relationship to others
Formal and hierarchical	Flexible, collaborative & inclusive
Failure is to be avoided	Failure is embraced as a chance to learn
Risk-aware: focus on enabling change through incremental steps	Opportunity-driven: focus on purposeful and significant change

Source: Compiled by the authors from various sources

Meeting our objectives, by design

Both the *Our Public Service 2020* and the *Civil Service Renewal 2030* strategies place a strong emphasis on delivering important outcomes. These range from becoming more citizen-centered, delivering more digital services and empowering the workforce. Design can play an important role in supporting the objectives outlined in both of these publications.
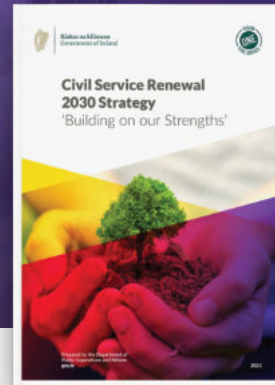
How a design approach can help

Design is people-centered

A design approach offers tools and techniques that facilitate a more holistic and systematic understanding of service users' experiences, needs and pain points. This allows us to intentionally design and optimise public services to meet those needs, leading to increased user satisfaction and engagement

We can design to build trust

A design approach engages the public with empathy, through dialogue and action. This leads to new and improved relationships, the implementation of meaningful service improvements and narrowing of the 'trust gap' between government and the people it serves

Design for service effectiveness

An effective service is one that meets a service user's needs and delivers a seamless experience. A design approach is driven by service user needs and focused on delivering outcomes that meet those needs. It offers tools and methods that allow teams to discover service weaknesses, to eliminate redundancies and to coordinate future improvements

Design makes digital work

A design approach will ensure that digital services keep service users at the centre of decision making. It considers their journey across all public services, helps to design out complexity and ensures public services are accessible for all

Design for quality

A design approach offers a lens through which we can assess and question our existing offerings. It encourages us to ask; does our current service put people first, does it consider the larger user journey, have we questioned conventional wisdom, and can we remove unnecessary complexity?

Design for workforce engagement

A design approach can help us understand and innovatively respond to the needs of our public servants. It also offers new ways of working that blend innovation and motivation, helping teams to connect to the purpose of their roles, work in new ways and with new people and empower them to use their skills to deliver greater impact for the public

> **"**
>
> **We're really only starting out on our service design journey but from our experience so far, it is clear that we can make a real difference for people**
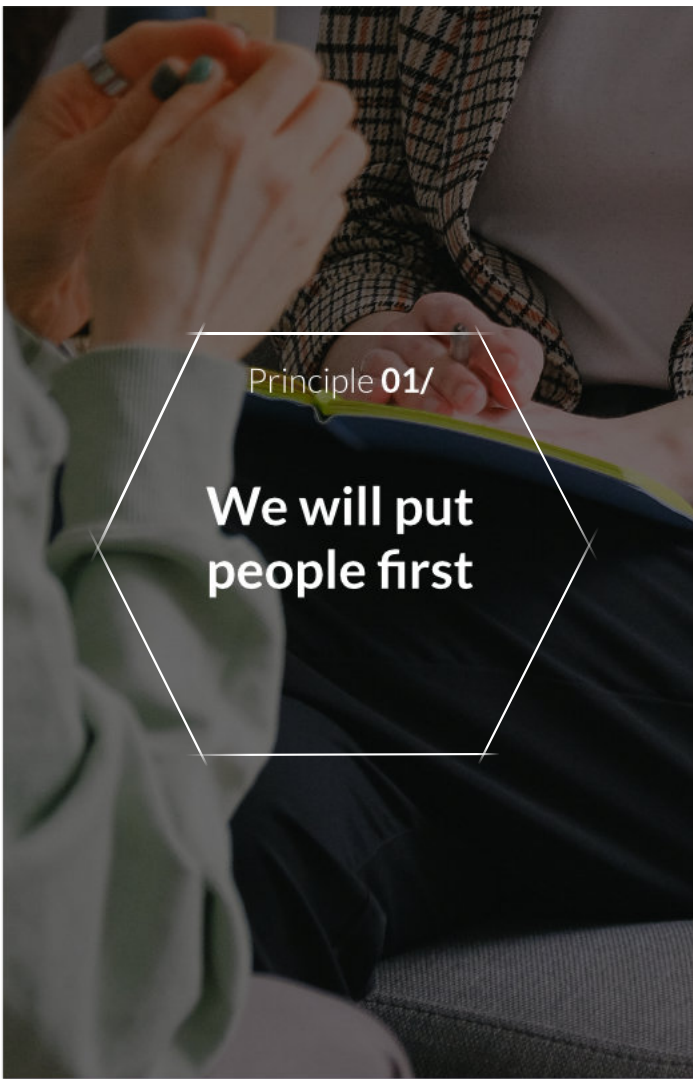
Angela Denning
CEO - **Courts Service**

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10 Design Principles for Government in Ireland

This set of 10 founding principles identify simple ways we can begin to introduce a design mindset to government. Over the next pages we will provide more detail on each principle and describe what each principle might look like in action. As we learn and as our work matures, these principles will evolve with us.

Principle 01/

We will put people first

Principle 02/

We will design to be inclusive

Principle 03/

We will design services together

Principle 04/

We will design for trust

Principle 05/

We will design so knowledge can be reused & shared

Principle 06/

We will challenge assumptions & design with evidence

Principle 07/

We will design from the top down & the bottom up

Principle 08/

We will design to deliver value. In all its forms

Principle 09/

We will build, test, learn & iterate

Principle 10/

We will work to make things simpler

Principle 01/

We will put people first

We start by understanding the needs, goals and motivations of people. Our services will be designed in collaboration with users, staff and stakeholders, to ensure we understand their experience, that we meet their needs and that delivery is possible. We will design to meet the needs of people first, rather than the internal needs of the organisation.

What this looks like in action

- Speaking directly with service users to hear their lived experiences and challenges

- Mapping and visualising the experience of people who use our services.

- Beginning with what the user is trying achieve when accessing our service, not what we already offer.

- Involving users and those who support them, public servants and stakeholders in the research, design, testing and improvement of services

- Aligning processes in organisations and across the public services to create seamless services

Principle 02/

We will design to be inclusive

We serve people, and people are diverse in their requirements. We will design our services to be accessible by all. We will design for a more inclusive future, because good design in inclusive.

What this looks like in action

- Working to understand people with diverse needs and designing with, not for them

- Embracing Universal Design principles and adhering to relevant accessibility standards

- Testing with people who have diverse needs

- Taking an "amplified needs first" approach, because services designed this way work better for everyone.

- Learning as we support service users through their journey, and adjusting to provide greater accessibility

Principle 03/

We will design services together

We will collaborate across silos, functions and organisations to develop a shared understanding of how services interlink and how users navigate our public services. This work will allow us to design better, more seamless experiences.

What this looks like in action

- Creating evidence-informed personas and journey maps

- Using service blueprints to define all components of a project, clarify all steps and stages of a user journey and identify stakeholders

- Working in multi-disciplinary agile project teams - designers, subject matter experts, analysts, ICT developers, policymakers working together to deliver outcomes

- Collaborating internally across teams and between organisations to respond to service users' needs
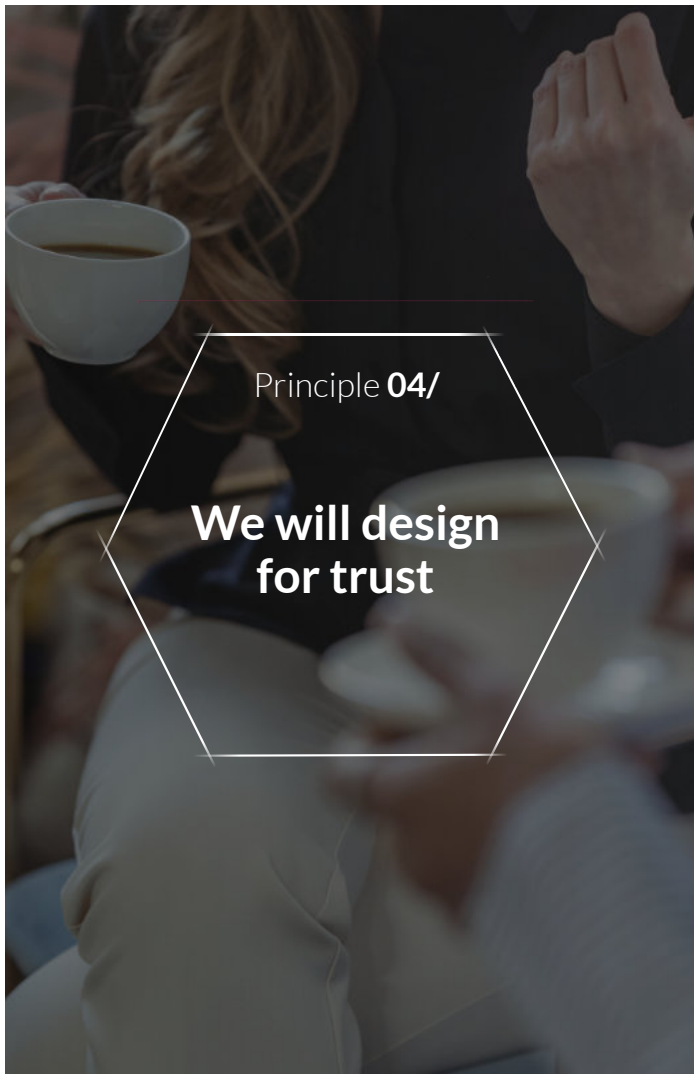
Principle 04/

We will design for trust

Building and maintaining trust is vital. We will design our services with users, those who support them, staff, and stakeholders and engage them with empathy, through dialogue and action. We will continue to build trust by designing and delivering services that people actually need and value.

What this looks like in action

- Listening to our users openly and without judgement to understand their experience

- Co-creating products and services

- Publishing details on our projects, sharing learning, insights and progress

- Providing feedback to those who participate in the process of designing our service

- Designing services to give users choice and allow them to feel in control. In other words, making choices clear and simple

Principle 05/

We design so knowledge can be reused & shared

We work in the public interest. We learn from each other by sharing our research insights, methods and solutions with colleagues across the public service.

What this looks like in action

- Being open with our time to help others

- Sharing and publishing user research

- Openly sharing our ways of working so that others in the public sector and beyond can use and adapt our methods and tools

- Sharing successes and failures

Principle 06/

We will challenge assumptions & design with evidence

We work to understand what happens within a service, and why these things happen. We collect data, and we learn from the experiences of our service users to inform change. We do not accept "conventional wisdom" on face value, and we acknowledge that contexts can change, and so too should services.

What this looks like in action

- Using quantitative and qualitative data collection methods - surveys, workshops and interviews

- Enabling change when insights suggest it should happen

- Measuring the impact of changes we make, and not being afraid to roll back if needed

- Building system maps which illuminate the invisible forces shaping many of our systems behaviours

Principle 07/

We will design from the top down and the bottom up

Public service goes beyond the frontline. These principles apply from strategy and policy to service delivery. They are as important for leaders as they are for delivery teams, and everyone involved in our public service. The design approach is supported by leadership, and a culture which accepts ambiguity and experimentation, encourages bravery and puts people at the centre of decision making.

What this looks like in action

- Management and leadership working to understand the design approach

- Leadership support for new metrics that allow for and incentivise the application of design

- Reducing the fear of failure, and acknowledging that learning and improvement is the objective

- Encouraging bravery, so that people feel comfortable challenging the status quo and exploring what might be possible

- Asking, at every level, "What does this mean for the service user?"

- Leaders and staff embracing the idea that service user needs stretch beyond traditional accountability lines. Taking responsibility for creating coalitions across agencies and departments to tackle complex issues
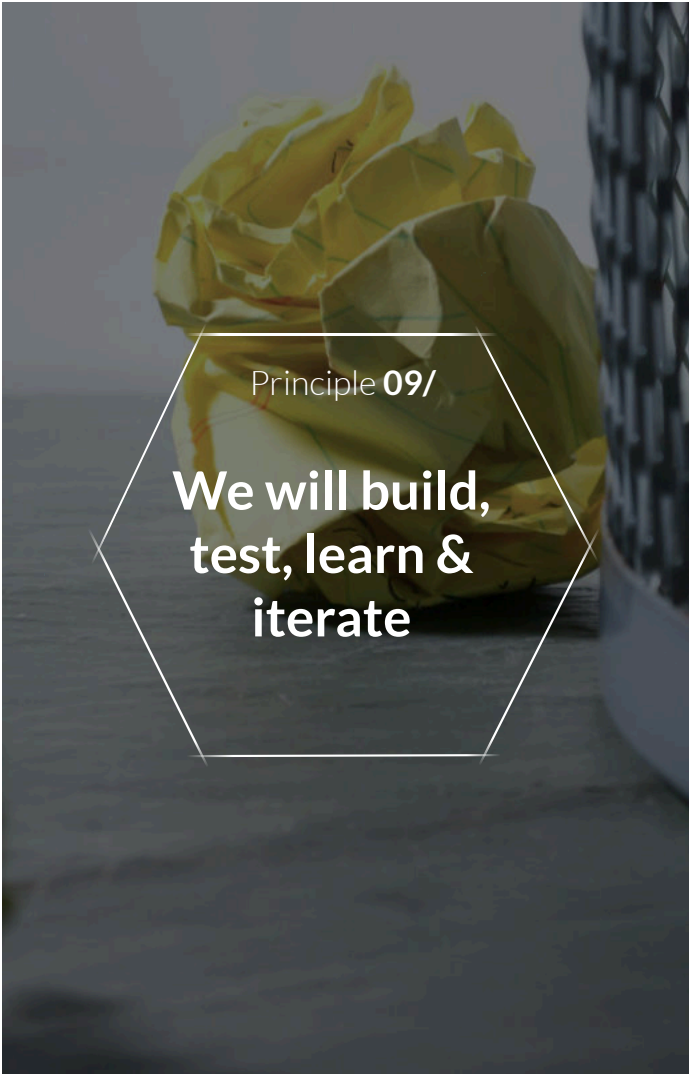

Principle 08/

We will design to deliver value. In all its forms

Value comes in many forms, but it always relates to outcomes. We will use design to create efficiencies and create well considered services that deliver valuable outcomes for the public and value for money.

What this looks like in action

- Co-creating services with users to identify and understand what would be valuable for them

- Visually mapping the service to identify weaknesses, redundancies and opportunities for streamlining

- §could be used to streamline processes. Prioritising for the outcomes most valuable to our service users

- Sometimes the simplest thing can make the greatest difference, if it comes at the right time. Focus on the *when* as much as the *what* when designing great services.

Principle 09/

We will build, test, learn & iterate

We will harness the agility of the design approach to rapidly demonstrate ideas, evaluate performance, and improve solutions before implementing at scale. Services are never "done", they require continuous improvement, iteration, and optimisation. Testing with users, while building services, and continuing to test and iterate at scale, will ensure a public service that continues to meet and respond to public needs.

What this looks like in action

- Establishing robust quantitative and qualitative feedback mechanisms for existing services.

- Ensuring ongoing iteration of services

- Empowering service delivery teams to suggest and to make changes in response to new insights and user needs

- Putting meaningful, human centric performance indicators in place to understand and quantify how well the solution meets the needs of the public

Principle 10/

We will design to make things simpler

Public services should not be difficult to use. We will work hard to make sure that services are easier to understand and engage with, so that users get the best outcomes. We align processes, systems, and teams to achieve these goals.

What this looks like in action

- Collecting information from customers once and reusing it across all of the touchpoints of a service

- Involving frontline service delivery staff in the development of policy and legislation to ensure workable initiatives

- Designing to remove redundant activities and behaviours

- Questioning assumptions and orthodoxies

" Design methods can bring a vital new energy to public services by helping them to listen to citizens about their lived experiences, prototyping fast and learning by doing, and using visualisations as well as texts. All of these quicken the pulse of innovation and help governments get to better solutions more quickly

Sir Geoff Mulgan

Professor of Collective Intelligence,
Public Policy and Social Innovation
University College London (UCL)

"

Who is Using Design?

Health Service Case

StrokeLINK: transition home from hospital after a stroke
The Mater Hospital

Local Authority Case

Community Fund - Online Applications Designed With and For Communities
Cork County Council

Higher Education Case

Maynooth University Launchpad programme
Maynooth University & Mi:Lab

International Case

Radical transformation of Canterbury district health board
Canterbury District Health Board

StrokeLINK: transition home from hospital after a stroke.

The Mater Hospital

One in five people will have a stroke at some time in their life. Over half of these people will have a further stroke or die within 5 years. A majority of stroke patients report feeling afraid, ill-prepared and unsure where to turn for help after going home from hospital. This can lead to poor engagement with the health advice and medications they were given in hospital and resultant crisis readmissions. The cost of stroke in Ireland is estimated at more than €1 billion per year. Many second strokes and other complications are preventable through better patient education and empowerment which enables patients to take control of their own recovery and develop healthy lifestyle habits.

The design solution

StrokeLINK is a unique programme of post-hospital care consisting of a new specialist nurse clinical team supported by complimentary physical and digital tools designed to encourage patients to do the things that will speed their recovery and keep them well at home. It was co-designed with patients and their hospital and community healthcare teams. The result is a service that truly meets patient's needs, giving them the right support and information, at the right time, in the right way. The project was led by the Mater Hospital Stroke and Transformation Teams and the National College of Art and Design Interaction Design Team.

Initial funding was from Sláintecare Integration Fund, the Public Service Innovation Fund and HSE Spark Innovation.

Impact

1. Before StrokeLINK, approximately 1 in every 10 stroke patients re-presented to the hospital with emergencies that are now dealt with or averted in the community by StrokeLINK.

2. Before StrokeLINK, approximately 1 in every 25 stroke patients suffered serious complications that could have been avoided had StrokeLINK been available to them.

3. 64% of StrokeLINK patients stopped smoking compared with 14% before.

4. 97% of patients monitor their blood pressure compared with 58% before.

5. 93% of patients make healthier dietary choices compared with 42% before.

6. 98% of patients rated their post-hospital care as excellent compared with 63% before the cost of providing StrokeLINK is estimated to be less than one quarter of the cost of the hospital admissions that it prevents.

THE MATER HOSPITAL

Sláintecare.

NCAD DUBLIN
National College of Art and Design

Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Spark
Innovation Programme

pobal
government supporting communities

Community Fund - Online Applications Designed With and For Communities

Cork County Council

There is an annual budget of approximately €1.6 million allocated by Cork County Council to fund Community projects. Approximately 600 community and voluntary groups around the County are funded each year. The fund is administered in 8 different municipal districts into which the County is split for the management of local services. Before the design project, applicants were applying in hardcopy which was difficult to understand and was accompanied by guidelines that were also extremely complicated.

"If you read the guidelines you'd be more confused, it's like a legal document"

Quote from a member of the public

The manual application process was often implemented in different ways from district to district. Applications were filed in boxes. Records were kept from year to year so storage of files was an issue. Tracking applications, and monitoring multiple applications for different grants types from the same applicant, was impossible. Reporting on the applications and grant allocations was also completely manual and extremely time consuming. Using a service design approach, a discovery phase was initiated where staff, members of the public and politicians (who sign off on the allocations) were engaged.

This design project was a unique collaboration of Councillors, Council staff and local community groups. Councillors from various political parties were involved in the user research, design and testing of the new Community Fund service. Active community groups, newly formed groups, and individuals new to the application process, were all part of the co-design process. The role of the Social Inclusion, Community and Rural Affairs Strategic Policy Committee in supporting the collaborative approach to the design of the service at the policy making and decision making level was crucial to it's success.

Impact

1. Because all stakeholders were included in the discovery, define, develop and deliver phases, significant changes to the process were agreed even at policy level

2. Three separate application forms were reduced to one simplified form

3. One of the key policy changes around this service was the development and adoption of a new scoring framework for the assessment of Community Fund applications. This satisfies internal audit protocols for the allocation of financial resources as well as lending greater transparency to the allocation process for customers, staff and elected members.

4. The online grants service has been given a rating of 4.5 stars out of 5 by the public.

Cork County Council
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí
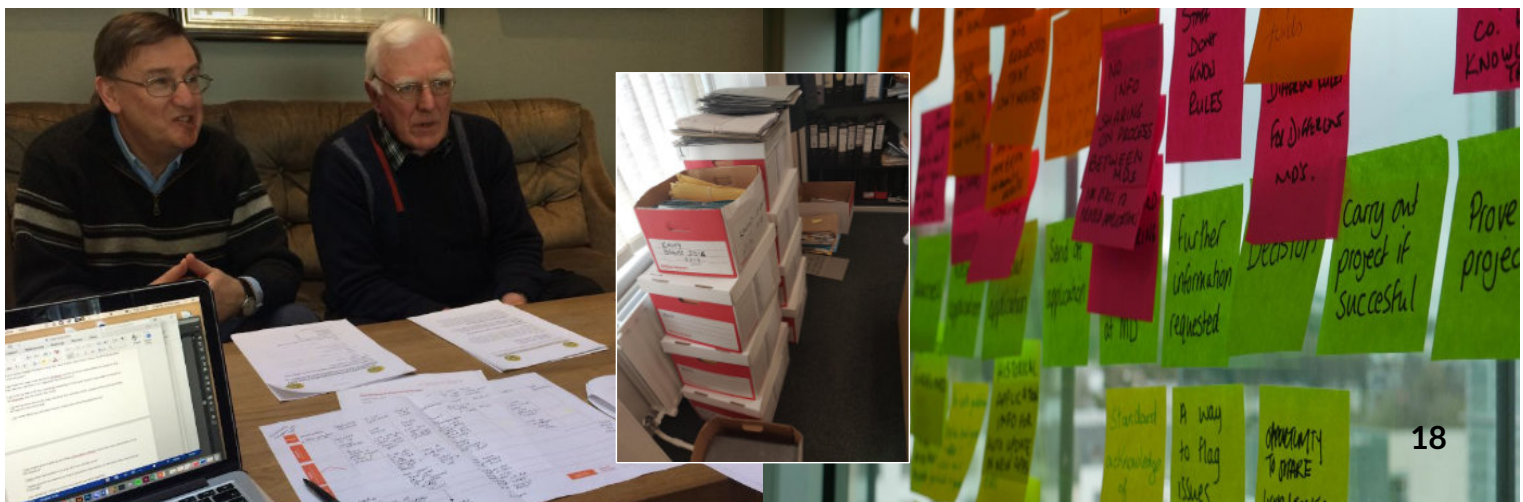
Maynooth University Launchpad programme

Maynooth University & Mi:Lab

Higher Education Institutions are seeking, more and more, to open access routes and identify ways of encouraging under-represented groups to consider higher education as an option. Maynooth University (MU), through the Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP) and the Launchpad induction programme, has proven very successful in supporting these groups.

However, students from target groups underrepresented in higher education often experience distinct challenges that can lead to increased, often unarticulated difficulties, resulting in greater reliance on services and higher dropout rates than the average student.

MAP was delivering four discrete orientation programmes for students entering through non-traditional entry routes and there was growing pressure on staff to find ways of making the delivery more efficient while maintaining a high quality student experience.

MAP students and staff, facilitated by the Maynooth University Innovation Lab (Mi:Lab), worked together to understand and co-design the transition of students to higher education through a design led process. A cohort of over 100 new university students from under represented groups participated in a large-scale Co-Design programme to help improve their transition into higher education, and enhance the understanding of student needs by MAP staff. The format adopted was a multi-session programme consisting of data gathering through experience and empathy mapping, data synthesis and affinity diagrams, personas and problem statements, brainstorming workshops and concept creation.

Impact

1. The findings of this initiative enabled the four individual programmes to merged into one flagship event in the university calendar. This has greatly increased efficiencies for the university in terms of staff, costs and infrastructure

2. Over 25% of all new entrants now take part in Launchpad orientation programme and a large increase in engagement with MAP in terms of seeking assistance and wishing to contribute

3. MAP created the 'outreach ambassador programme' where 30 experienced Launchpad Ambassadors are trained to visit schools and support incoming students

4. Semester long induction is designed around themes relevant to the first year student life-cycle such as budgeting, essay writing, work life balance, and exam preparation. A daily drop-in advisory service was developed

5. Co-design has become central to the way the Maynooth University Access Programme does business. The design principles were particularly important during COVID-19 as they allowed MAP to better understand the disruption and challenges faced by students and co-create solutions to mitigate against the impact of the abrupt campus closure and shift to remote learning. Understanding how to apply the design tools and how to co-create with our students has helped the university to have an increased insight into the student and staff experience and to create more inclusive practices.

6. Launchpad received the The President's Award for Service Innovation in 2019

Radical transformation of Canterbury district health board

Canterbury district health board

Canterbury Health System has transformed over the past decade, particularly through alliancing under the Canterbury Clinical Network, and it's efforts to create people centred health care along with the technology and systems to support and enable staff to do the right thing.

A key part of this was a commitment to working more collaboratively and embracing new decision making approaches to service design and delivery across the Canterbury health system. This helped the Canterbury district health board to re-evaluate their relationships with health providers, and with the people they care for. According to CHS leadership;

"We've become more integrated, more connected and we've reduced waste and duplication"

Three key approaches for service design were identified that remain at the core of the Canterbury health system strategy.

- Development of services that support people to take increased responsibility for their health and a change of approach within existing services to support this.

- Development of primary healthcare and community services to support people in a community-based setting and provide a point of ongoing continuity.

- Freeing up secondary care-based specialist resources to be responsive to episodic events, more complex cases, and the provision of advice and support to primary and community care.

Impact

1. The Canterbury health system can claim this approach contributed to a 43% increase in population access to elective surgery and saved millions of days of waiting time

2. By integrating service delivery models and expanding the role of primary and community providers, they were able to moderate the growth rate in acute demand for hospital services

3. Redesigning of shared clinical pathways and service delivery models allowed them to address service gaps and improve access to the right services at the right time.

4. They were able to significantly reduce the proportion of people living in aged residential care and reduce their length of stay, creating savings which were used to better support people in their own homes and communities

5. Created a system resilient enough to tackle the consequences of the largest natural disaster that has occurred in New Zealand- a magnitude 7.1 earthquake on the 4th September 2010

Case Source:
Gullery, C., & Hamilton, G. (2015). Towards integrated person-centred healthcare–the Canterbury journey. Future Hospital Journal, 2(2), 111.

Who is Using Design?

Whilst the private sector has been on the journey of building design capabilities in it's organisations for many years, the approach is relatively nascent in the public sector. However, evidence suggests that governments who use design approaches are seeing higher satisfaction with the services they deliver. In governments that have more established experience with incorporating design in the policy formulation space, early signs suggest they are designing policies that connect more closely with citizens.

In some cases, design has been transformational, for example Lee Hsien Loong, Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore has has said *"Good design thinking was a key reason for Singapore's successful journey from third world to first, and it will be* critical in the country's future transformation, for it to remain an outstanding city in the world".

Jan Vapaavuori, former Mayor of Helsinki said: *"Design is and should be present in everything we do. Now more than ever we must ask ourselves how design can improve lives, create commitment to modern democratic values, promote sustainability and innovation in urbanization, and provide us the tools needed for championing in the post-COVID world. I believe in exposing people to these questions through design"*

Over the next pages, we hear from a number of our colleagues from across the public sector explaining how their experience using design approaches has impacted what they do.

Dr Ruth Freeman
Director, Science for Society
Science Foundation Ireland

Every year, design thinking is playing a more important role in Science Foundation Ireland's activities. Whether it is how we design our research funding calls, how we bring design thinking into our challenge funding programmes, or how we consider initiatives that open discussions with the public about science – we constantly think about who we are designing for, and how we can co-create with stakeholders and end users to ensure that what we are doing meets their needs.

Siobhan Manning
Service Innovation & Design Lead
Mater Transformation

When we connect hospital staff with designers, it's always so energising. Staff constantly say "they just think so differently". And they really do. Design provides a way of looking at old problems through a completely new lens – a much more collaborative, curious and human focussed lens. The solutions that emerge are grounded in reality and in service user and staff needs. And as result, they work! A few years on and we are seeing some incredible outcomes for our patients. Design-led innovation has now become a core part of our approach to transforming healthcare

Paul Fusco
County Librarian
South Dublin County Council

Librarians have never settled on what we call the people who use our service—borrowers, users, patrons, members. My studies in Customer Experience Excellence, as well as my own experiences as a customer, have given me an appreciation that no matter what term we assign, we are dealing with humans first and foremost. South Dublin Libraries are currently in the process of drafting a new development plan, taking a human-centred design approach. My ambition for this process is to hear the voice of the individual in amongst the consensus of the crowd, the sparks of service innovation contained in the affirmation of positive collective feedback from our… members.

Jared Gormly
Head of Spark
Innovation Programme
Health Services Executive

The significant value that Service Design can offer to healthcare is only beginning to be truly recognised. Though 'patient centric' services have been a long held aim of health care providers, services have traditionally been developed from the perspective of the system and its existing constraints. Service design provides a framework for us to deliberately create services and experiences that address the real challenges for patients and healthcare professionals while leveraging insights, opportunities and new technologies. Design enables us to integrate empathetic touch-points into the lives and experiences of our patients/service users and empowers them to be active agents in shaping services.

Julianne Coughlan
Service Design Manager
Cork County Council

Service Design and Design Thinking has been invaluable in Cork County Council over the last 5 years. It has allowed the Council to adopt a user-centred approach to online services, service transformation and strategy design. Through Design we are bringing people with us, our citizens, businesses, communities and staff in the Council, so that their values and needs are at the core of everything we do.

Design has also become fundamental to how we innovate and respond to disruption and change. This rapid and effective response was never more visible than during the COVID pandemic. Not only did we rise to the challenge of business continuity and delivery of new COVID support services, but we seized the opportunity to embrace and build on that dramatic change through Service Design

Dr Shawna Coxon
Deputy Commissioner Strategy,
Governance and Performance
An Garda Síochána

Design thinking keeps our communities at the heart of our service delivery. Police agencies around the world often use words like public trust, policing by consent and legitimacy, yet all these ideas are really about how different communities experience policing. Design thinking is about how we work together to co-create the society we want; the kind of place we want our kids to grow up in. This model allows us to be thoughtful and effective about the systems we create and their outcomes. Every day, I see how much Gardaí and Garda staff care deeply about the communities they serve. These service design principles allow us to bring together this dedication to serve with what communities want, to create a safer, better Ireland.

Angela Denning
CEO
Courts Service

People working in the Courts Service have a very strong sense of purpose. They know that one of our key reasons for existing is to support access to justice, and they want to do that well. As part of our Modernisation Programme our reform teams are using design methodology to co-create the future plan for services with court users, delivery partners, members of the judiciary and stakeholders. We also use that methodology for projects/changes identified as part of delivering on that future plan.

By following a design model and principles on these projects we're applying user insights, developing prototypes, testing and iterating to best meet user needs. Working with our courts users, and those who support them, has given us a completely different perspective on how to approach re-designing our services from the user view point. We're really only starting out on our service design journey but from our experience so far, it is clear that we can make a real difference for people.

Our Commitment & Next Steps

These 10 principles mark the beginning of our journey towards embedding design approaches and competencies across our public sector.

It is our hope that this publication will inspire public servants to reflect on the services they currently offer, and begin to consider how they might be optimised, reimagined and redesigned to better meet the needs of the public we serve.

Design approaches are already being used and adding value across our public sector, but much more can be done. Over the coming months and years it is our ambition to build awareness and capability so that design approaches become a integral part of how we provide public services.

Our next steps;

- We will engage with all relevant stakeholders

- We will develop an action plan aimed at supporting public service bodies to build skills in design approaches

- We will establish a community of practice for design in government

- We will apply these principles to a number of service improvement and service creation projects

Design Process

The development of this document stayed true to the design process and principles it advocates. The working group was made up of individuals from across the public and private sector. The online collaboration tool *Miro* was used to capture international exemplars of design in government, relevant materials and provide a space to think and to collaborate. Through desk research, over 150 existing principles were identified and these were analysed, debated and prioritised through voting exercises. This work supported the following phases;

Empathise Phase

The team spoke to individuals involved in the creation, improvement and delivery of services and carried out empathy exercises to identify their unmet needs, challenges and motivations.

Define Phase

Thematic analysis was carried out to identify emerging patterns. These were used to inform the development of potential principles and propose elements that should and should not be included in the document.

Ideate Phase

Group ideation was carried out to identify ways of addressing identified needs, navigate constraints and achieve desired outcomes.

Prototype Phase

The working group was split into two teams, each independently developing a concept direction and structure for the document. Both concepts were developed into high-fidelity prototypes, reviewed, voted on and then amalgamated.

Test Phase

A final, high-fidelity document was created for review. This document was shared with the working group and with various individuals outside the process. It was then iteratively improved based on their feedback.

The document you are viewing now is the latest iteration. Staying true to our principles, we will continue to test, learn & iterate

Figure 2: The Design in Gov team Miro workspace

Working Group

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Having reviewed this publication, we ask you to consider three things;

1. Do the services you offer, and the way you currently work align with these Design Principles for Government?

2. Could you or someone in your organisation become a champion for introducing design approaches?

3. Do you have a service improvement or service creation project that could act as a first step towards applying these principles?

Notes