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System Leadership: developing and using political skill

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Welcome and Introduction

- Aim of the workshop:

To support you in taking forward your plans for system change through understanding and navigating the political landscape

- Ground rules and team etiquette:

- Respect different views & opinions
- The importance of feeling safe & speaking freely
- Raise (virtual) hand to ask a question
- ‘Acting with integrity by behaving in an open, honest and ethical manner’
- No right or wrong views – we are all learning
- If it doesn’t work, don’t worry



The NIHR 'HeLPA' Study

- Implementing system change is difficult ... system leaders face lots of challenges, especially competing interests and agendas
- System leadership involves balancing different positions to engender **coordinated and consensus-based change**
- The HeLPA study has investigated the acquisition, use and contribution of leadership with '**political astuteness**' in the implementation of major health system change
- The findings are informing the **co-production** of resources for current and future service leaders



The main study themes

- System leaders face lots of '**controversies**' – issues where people tend to disagree
- System actors often have **divergent agendas** that makes change difficult
- Systems leaders need to **influence** a large number of people and groups to bring about change
- System leadership involves **personal and shared responsibility** for making change happen



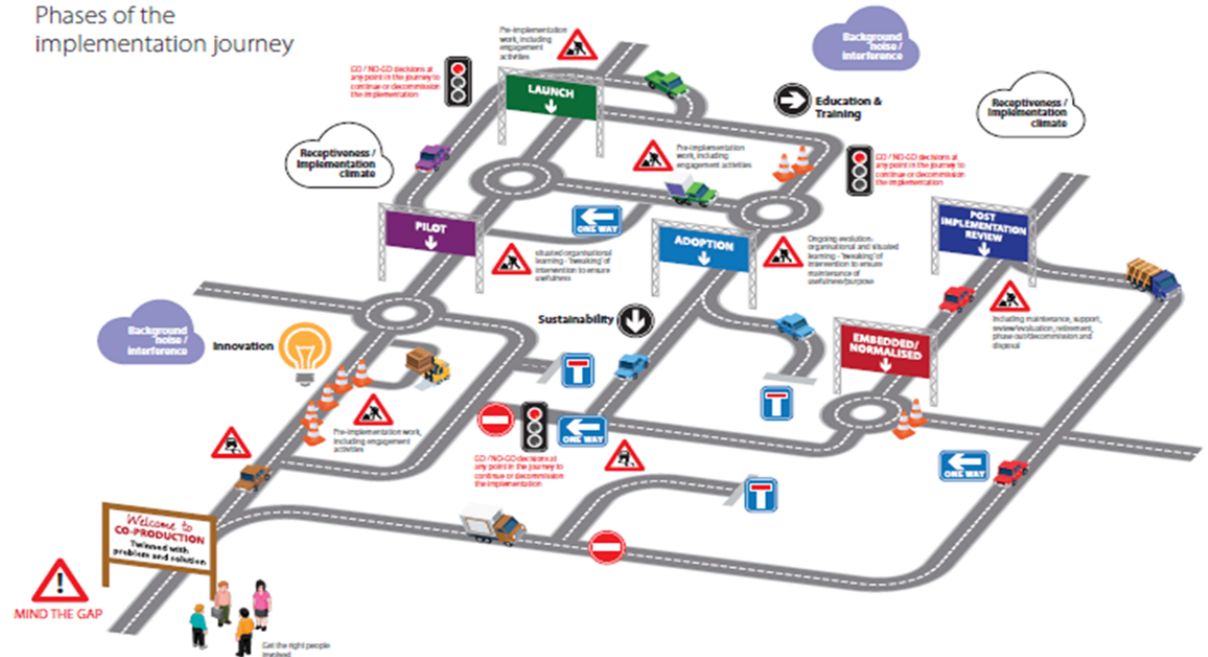
Today's Workshop

- *Recognising the 'political landscape'* – understanding the types of environments
- *Mapping the 'controversies'* – locating the issues around which people disagree
- *Understanding the 'stakeholders'* – understanding the key actors, their motives and strategies
- *Thinking about 'strategies'* – understanding how you can respond positively to challenges



Part 1: The Journey

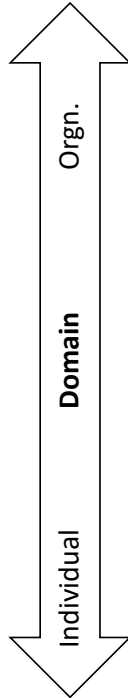
- Starting point
- The landscape
- The planned route
- The hazards (and detours)



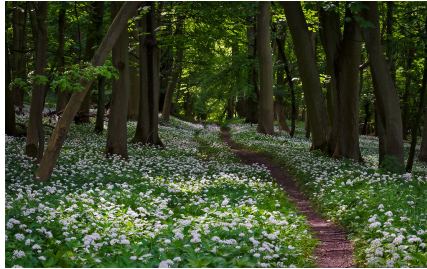
Thinking about your landscape

- Organisations involves (1) different forms of influence at (2) different levels
- **The weeds:** inter-personal influence and informal rules – informal groups that work behind the scenes
- **The rocks:** inter-personal influence with formal authority – an experts, professionals or authority figure
- **The high ground:** formal authority and rules – bureaucratic, national policies, regulation etc
- **The woods:** The custom or informal rules that shape how work gets done – the underlying interests
- Not necessarily one or other, can be combined!





Woods



High Ground



Weeds



Rocks



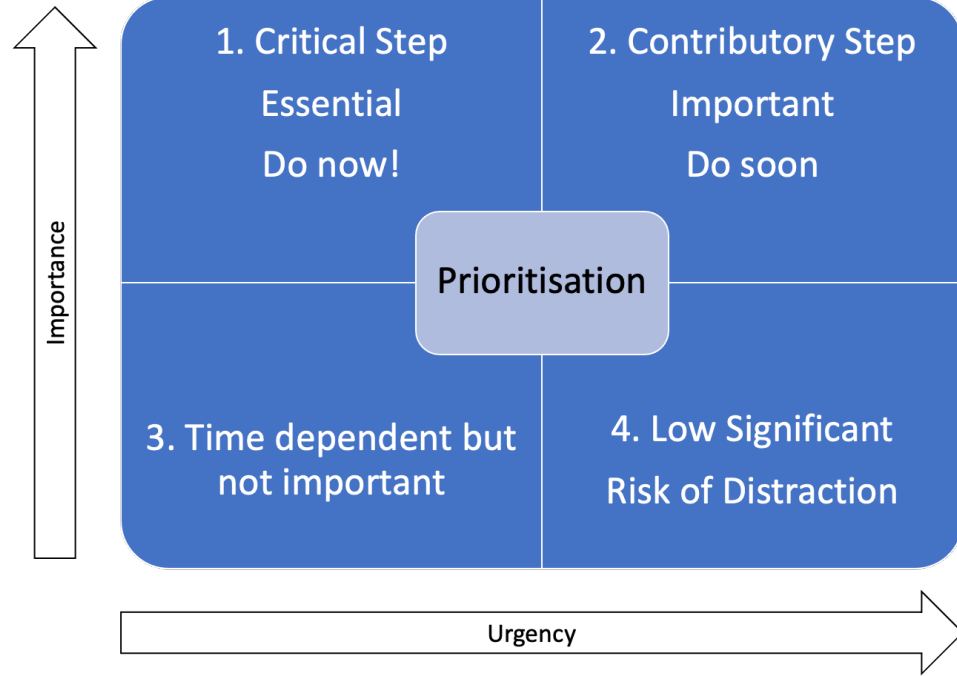
Activity 1a: Your landscape & journey

- Talk us through the **specific project or** activity you are leading
- Do you all see the plan in the same way?
- Using the **comments function** write-down the key controversies or challenges that the project might face, e.g.
 - Different stages or critical points
 - Data, Resources, Staffing
 - Roles and responsibilities
 - Coordination or competition



What are the priority issues?

- Facilitators will summarise the main controversies
- Think about which are **urgent & important**
- **Vote for 3 priority issues**



Activity 1b: Deep dive into the issues

- What makes the **priority issues** controversial or problematic – how do you know its issues, where does it come from, what form does it take?
- How are the issues manifest in behaviours of different groups – who does what?
- What impact does the controversy have on the change process – how does it complicate or divert change?



Part 2: Understanding your stakeholders

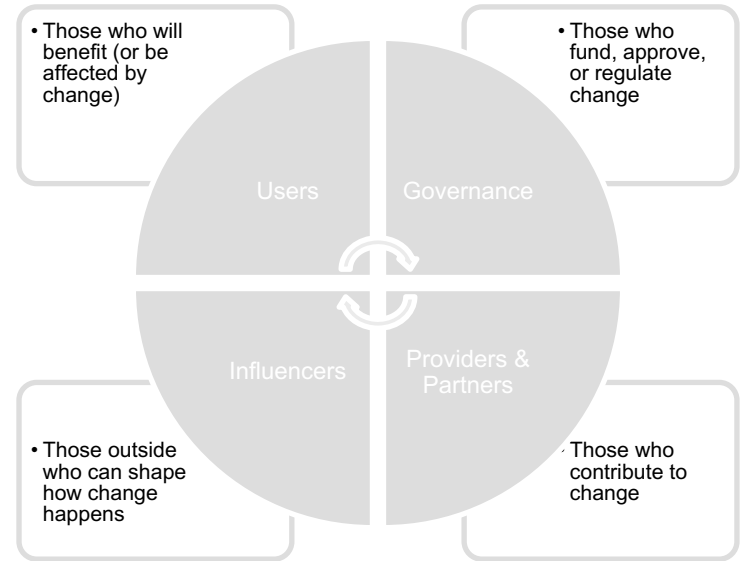
- Your stakeholders will be for, against or indifferent about your proposed change
 - Your supporters can become flag bearers and build networks to spread the word
 - Your indifferent colleagues can be converted to join the movement
 - Those opposed can be won over or their influence can be controlled

- So, your stakeholders will also vary in terms of:
 - Their interests and agenda – what is motivating them
 - The strategies and tactics – how they will support or resist change
 - Their skills and capabilities – their awareness of issues or ability to leverage resources



Activity 2a: Identifying your Stakeholders *(optional pre-work)*

- In your groups can you identify your stakeholders
- You might think 5-10 – who are your upward (strategic) and downward (community) stakeholders?
- (We will then focus on your top 3)

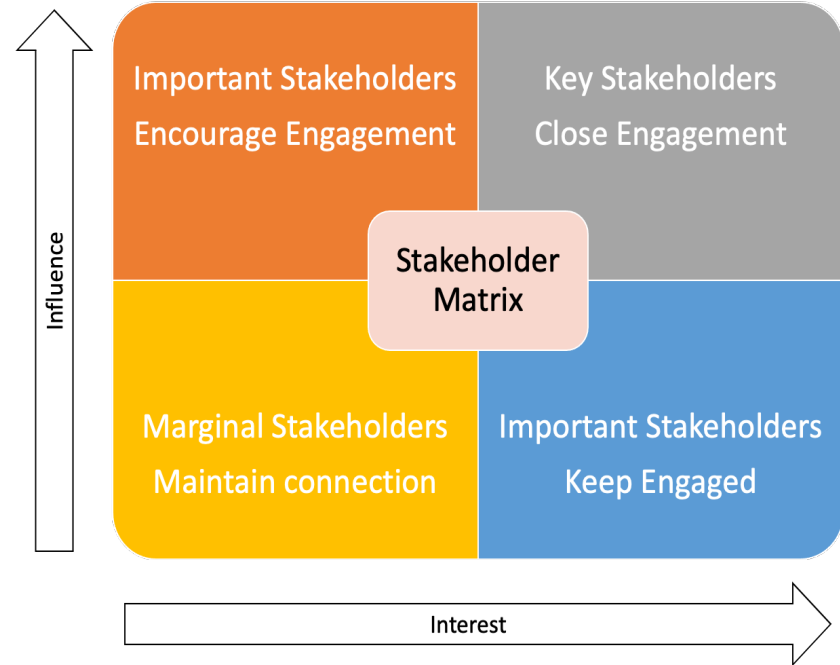


Stakeholder matrix (optional pre-work)

It is important to determine your key stakeholders: those who **are** integral to the change or controversy

Influence: the ability to influence or shape the change

Interest: the extent to which change aligns with or is at odds with their goals

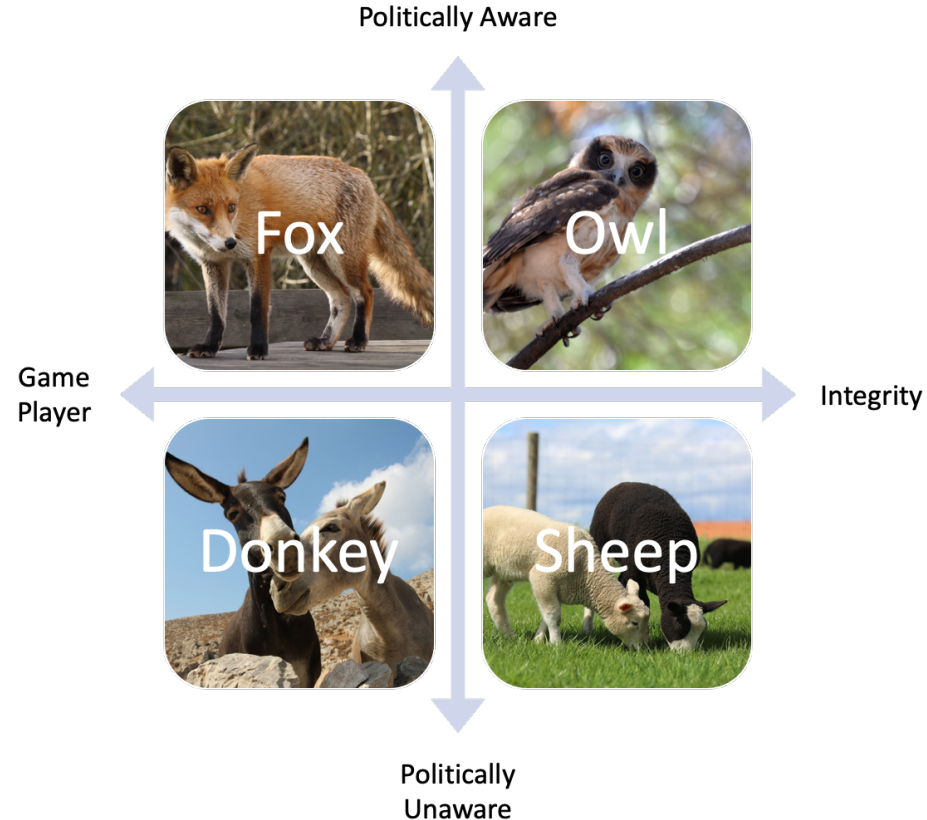


Activity 2b: Identifying your **key** stakeholders

- In the same groups, and focusing on the same controversy or issue:
 1. Discuss your stakeholders according to their **influence** and **interest**....who are your **key 3 stakeholders**
 2. Are you 3 key **stakeholders** promoters, defenders, latents, apathetic
 3. Feedback the **combined stakeholder analysis** the rest of the group

Thinking of stakeholders as ‘political animals’

- **Foxes:** politically aware, play games, use charm and interpersonal influence, usually behind the scenes, pulling the strings
- **Owls:** understand the lay of the land, act with integrity, use the formal and informal systems, emotionally intelligent
- **Donkeys:** try to play games but are inept, make poor decisions but can be very stubborn and difficult to change
- **Sheep:** try to do the right thing, tend to follow the rules or authority figures



Part 3: Thinking about ‘what’s in it for them’

- Stakeholders have different **interests** and agenda that motivates their response to change – their values or notions of **right or wrong** will shape their response
- Change can be perceived as a **threat** – so it is important to consider the **benefits and costs** for each stakeholder group
- Stakeholders will adopt different **strategies to maximise their position** – what have they done in the past
- It is important for you to think about how to **tailor your activities** to each stakeholder group – counter-strategies



Activity 3: What's in it for them

Key people or group	W.I.I.F.T	What they could do to support or block the initiative	What you could do to reduce non-compliant activities and encourage support
Group A	Resources (gain/lose)	Withdraw support	Offer financial incentives
Group B	Access to specialist services	Use alternate provider	Improve access arrangements



Part 4. System Leadership

- System leadership is not about heroic or transformational leaders, it is a team activity that involves taking **individual and shared responsibility**
- It is about 'seeing the big picture' and appreciating the ways different parts of the system can work together and helping them to realise their potential
- System leadership often involves influence without authority – building relationships, shaping a vision, negotiating conflict
- Thinking about your collective or **combined skills** and capabilities to make change happen

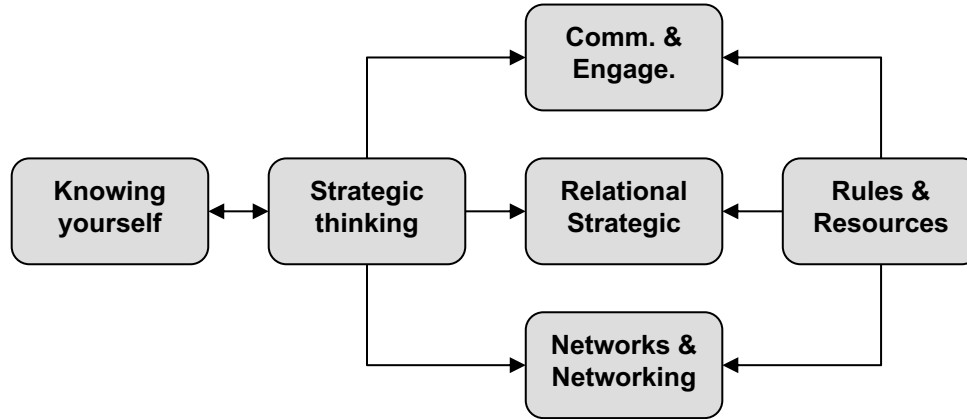


Influence beyond authority: political skill

- **'Social astuteness:** 'being diligently observant of others and keenly perceptive of even subtle social situations, and thus adjust their behaviours accordingly
- **Interpersonal influence:** 'the ability to produce desired changes in other people. These individuals use a subtle, convincing style to exercise influence over others
- **Networking ability:** access to information, resources and other assets based on a person's social networks and relationships, including the ability to identify and build relations with other people with useful resources, and to build connections amongst others
- **Apparent sincerity:** perceived as possessing a high degree of integrity and sincerity, to the extent that individual trust them as their actions are not perceived as manipulative



The political skills of health system change



The political skills of health system leadership

Self	Strategic Thinking	Comms & Engage.	Networks & Networking	Relational	Rules & Resources
Self-belief	The landscape Want is priority	Listening	Know stakeholders	Dealing with the egos	Stick to the rules
Resilience	What is possible	Open-up dialogue	Access networks and resources	Negotiating	Use resources
Emotional int.	Defining problem & solutions	Allowing others to set agenda	Building alliances	Deal-making	Report up the chain
Inter-personal Style		Using authority figures & patient voice	Create alignments	Manipulating	



Activity 4: Growing your influence

- Building on the last activity:
- Focusing on 2 or 3 stakeholders, what strategies you will adopt to either **'win them over'** or **'bring them to the table'**?
- What skills and resources do you have that appeal to your stakeholders?
- How will you use your skills and resources – individually and collectively ?
- What will success look like?



Activity4: Planning your influence

Stakeholder	Key interests	What is your relationship with them	How do you enhance influence and change your relationship	How and how will enhance the influence

Next Steps

- Today is about **trying out** different techniques and tools on a ‘snap shot’ of issues and stakeholders
- The hope is you will **keep using these tools** in your future planning activities
- To support you, we are giving you a template ‘**workbook**’ to take away and use



Acknowledgements

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Image Acknowledgements

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