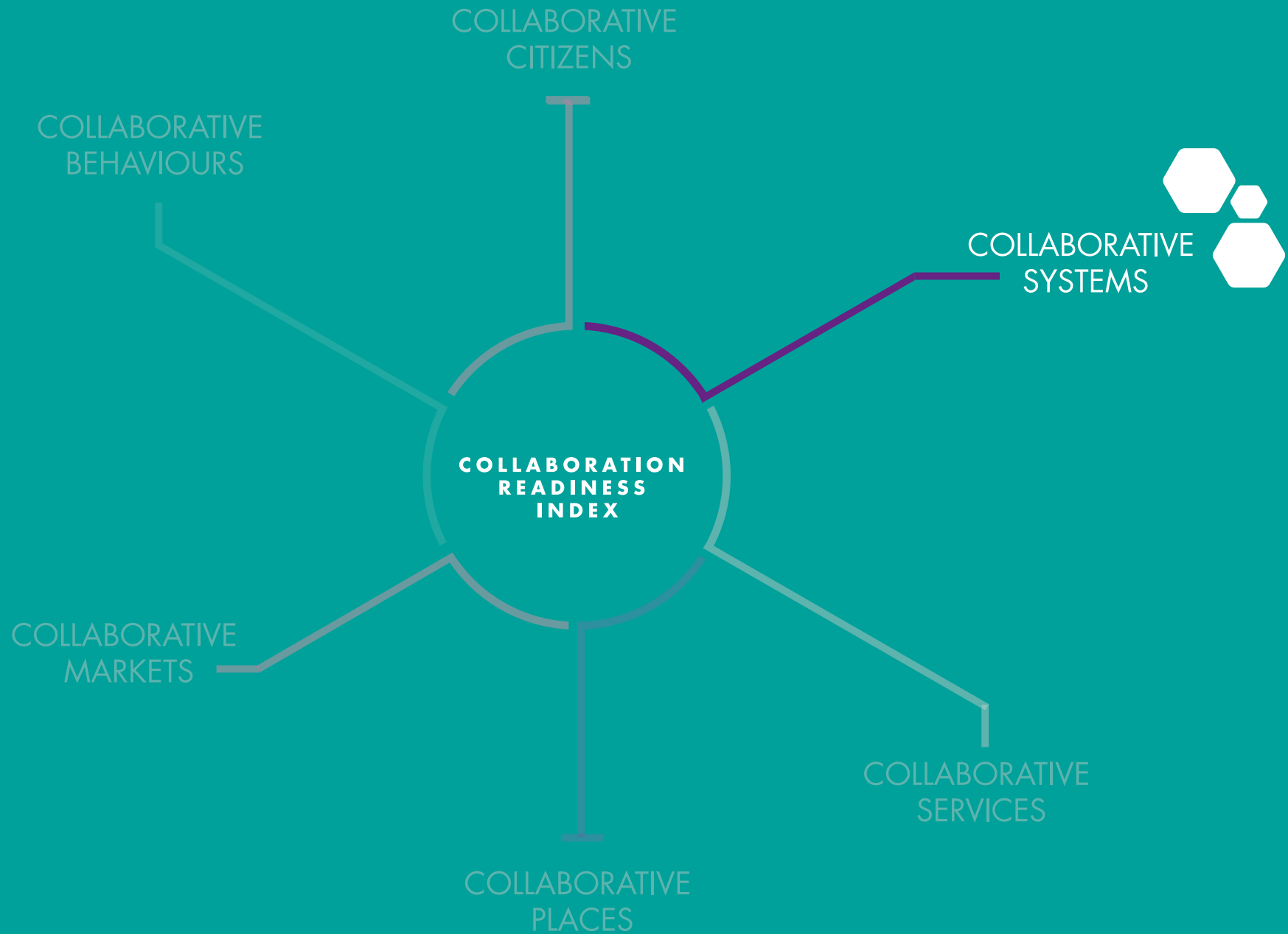


BEHAVING LIKE A SYSTEM?

collaborate

THINKING • CULTURE • PRACTICE

**Lankelly
Chase**



INTRODUCTION

This report examines the preconditions for systems change in a place. It unpicks the critical behaviours and vision that makes system change more likely, more deliverable and more sustainable. In doing so it addresses a critical gap in the thinking and practice of system change - the need to systematically build readiness to work towards outcomes in more collaborative ways.

'Behaving like a system' is more than a tag line. It is a critical part of delivering more effective services to support people facing multiple and complex needs. The following pages show why this is the case drawing on a period of deep collaboration between Collaborate, the City of Coventry and the Lankelly Chase Foundation. Our conclusion is that without understanding and getting the system preconditions right, transformation in public services cannot achieve lasting and fundamental change for citizens.

Our study is grounded in Coventry but the preconditions have much wider resonance: both geographically and for different services. This is why we have developed this shorter, action focused report as a summary of our more in-depth paper

http://collaboratei.com/wp-content/uploads/Collaborate_17_11_15_Behaving-like-a-system_Long-Version2.pdf

In it, we set out:

- Nine preconditions for systems change (focusing on vision and behaviours)
- What these preconditions look like to people when they do (and don't) exist
- Ways in which places might use these preconditions to support place-based system change

We have found that these preconditions, now identified, are starting to act as a convening narrative; enabling people and organisations in a place to have an honest conversation about what really needs to be done together to enable individuals to flourish within a system of services. Developing this approach across service areas and into the granular challenges of delivery could not be more critical at a time of acute spending cuts and sustained social demand. We are delighted to be working with Lankelly Chase to develop this thinking by considering other places, other services and most importantly the system infrastructure required to enable outcome-focused delivery.

Sarah Billiald

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INTRODUCING OUR PRE-CONDITIONS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE: A FOCUS ON VISION AND BEHAVIOURS...

These preconditions are neither linear nor independent: they are adaptive and interdependent as people, relationships and priorities change.



NINE PRE-CONDITIONS FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE:

VISION

These pre-conditions are neither linear nor independent: they are adaptive and inter-dependent as people, relationships and priorities change.

A. BENEFICIARY IMPACT OVER ORGANISATION FOCUS: setting aside the boundaries of organisations and focusing on the outcomes for the place and people, above and beyond what it might mean for you and your organisation.

B. CITIZEN-CENTRED: FROM CONCEPT TO DELIVERY: getting under the skin of what we really mean by 'citizen-centred', where the system challenges itself to put the clients at the centre of its decisions and business approach.

C. ISSUES ARE ACKNOWLEDGED AS SYSTEMIC AND REQUIRING COLLABORATION: a genuine acknowledgement early on that the change being sought is systemic and will require multiple actors to work together.

D. GROUNDED IN PLACE BUT OPEN TO NEW APPROACHES: harnessing the assets of the place as the starting point but without being constrained by 'the way things are done around here' in order to learn, try new things and leapfrog traditional routes to change.

BEHAVIOURS

E. TRUSTED PARTNERS: UNDERSTAND AND ADAPT TO EACH OTHERS VALUES: supportive relationships and ways of working that can aid delivery – honesty, trust and the ability to challenge one another being key – this is not about sharing values but about understanding each other's values and adapting accordingly.

F. STRENGTHS BASED: UTILISING THE ASSETS OF PEOPLE AND PLACE: focusing on the positive capacity of individuals and communities – rather than on their needs, deficits and problems – applying this way of thinking to the whole system and considering the place as well as the people.

G. DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP: ENABLING, CONVENING, FLUID, NO EGOS: **LEADING** from behind and building guiding coalitions across the system – rather than being 'owned' by a single person or organisation – recognising that this will change over time as the system evolves.

H. RESILIENT & RISK EMBRACING: SAFE TO FAIL, ABLE TO BOUNCE BACK AND LEARN: acting as a multiplier for other pre-conditions, this is about the ability to take risks – to fail fast, to learn and to try again – not letting individual or collective resilience be drained.

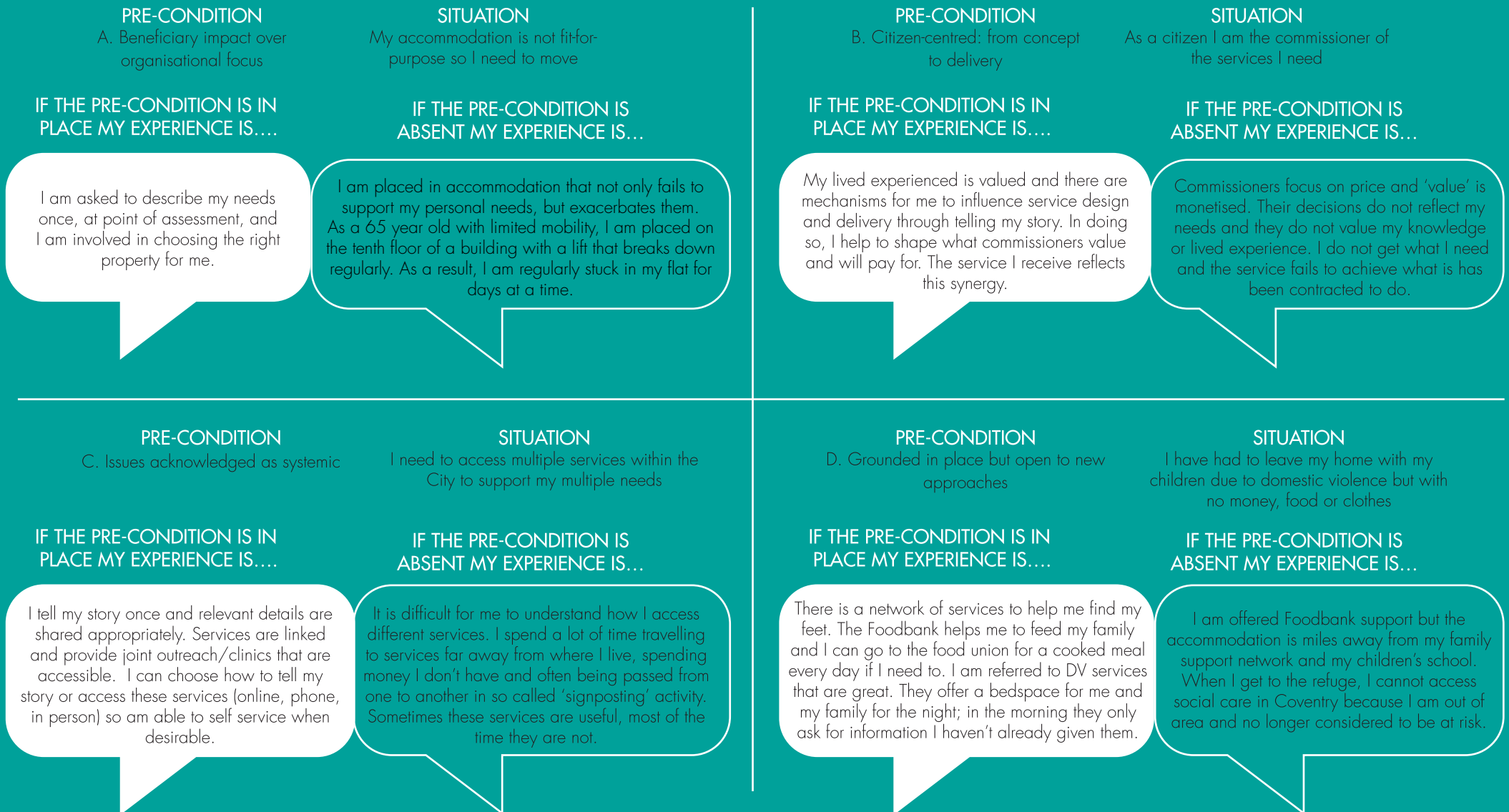
I. ABLE TO LET GO: ACT AS A PLATFORM FOR INNOVATION: moving from public servants as bureaucrats to public servants as entrepreneurs – receptive to disruption, able to seed and support innovation, sharing control and acting as a platform – rather than always delivering.

The first four pre-conditions fall under the heading of 'vision' because they speak to the ambition of the system. This is about more than a statement on a piece of paper, it is about setting the overall approach: a vision should define the behaviours, infrastructure, delivery, impact and learning of the whole system. The next five pre-conditions fall under the heading of 'behaviours' because they speak more to how systems change is likely to take place in an area given the behaviours of the actors in that system.

WHAT COULD THEY MEAN FOR AN INDIVIDUAL FACING COMPLEX NEEDS?

VISION PRE-CONDITIONS:

Up to this point, system pre-conditions have been discussed from the perspective of organisations and those delivering public services. What would it feel like for an individual facing multiple complex needs when these pre-conditions are in place? What would it feel like when they aren't? And how could the presence or absence of these pre-conditions act as a lever to re-design services with individuals at the centre?



BEHAVIOUR PRE-CONDITIONS:

Up to this point, system pre-conditions have been discussed from the perspective of organisations and those delivering public services. What would it feel like for an individual facing multiple complex needs when these pre-conditions are in place? What would it feel like when they aren't? And how could the presence or absence of these pre-conditions act as a lever to re-design services with individuals at the centre?



HOW MIGHT A PLACE USE THESE PRE-CONDITIONS?

ONE THING THE PRECONDITIONS ARE NOT, IS A CHECKLIST: SOMETHING TO TICK THINGS OFF FROM AND MOVE ON IF A CERTAIN NUMBER ARE ACHIEVED. INSTEAD, THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME WAYS THE PRE-CONDITIONS ARE BEING USED:

1. As a diagnostic tool to understand the prevalence of the pre-conditions in a given system before beginning a new piece of work in or with that system. Alternatively, as a diagnostic tool to understand why something is or isn't working well or to help design infrastructure to support systems change.
2. As a shared language to help build systems understanding across organisational boundaries and between people.
3. As a framework to broker conversations with those who do not yet consider themselves as part of a system or as a broader introduction as to what systems change means in a place.
4. As a set of connectors (vision, behaviours, language) between different smaller systems (or rapid prototypes) to allow larger scale system change in due course as the different mini-systems connect together.
5. As a set of things to consider before embarking on a major policy change (e.g. new legislation or a new national or regional initiative), using these nine issues to frame the debate rather than turning immediately to the payment mechanism or regulatory framework to set the approach.
6. To consider strategies beyond the immediate system. For example, once homelessness is 'working' as a system, it could be considered alongside housing, and then as part of the wider growth agenda for Coventry, and then as part of West Midlands region.
7. As a framework for those brought together via a governance structure (e.g. a Health and Well-Being Board) to consider how well they are placed for future system changes, what they need to do to build capability and what role they can play to enable a systems approach
8. As a set of behaviours or competencies to recruit people to (or appraise people against) to ensure a set of incentives and behaviours based on systems above and beyond individual organisations

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