



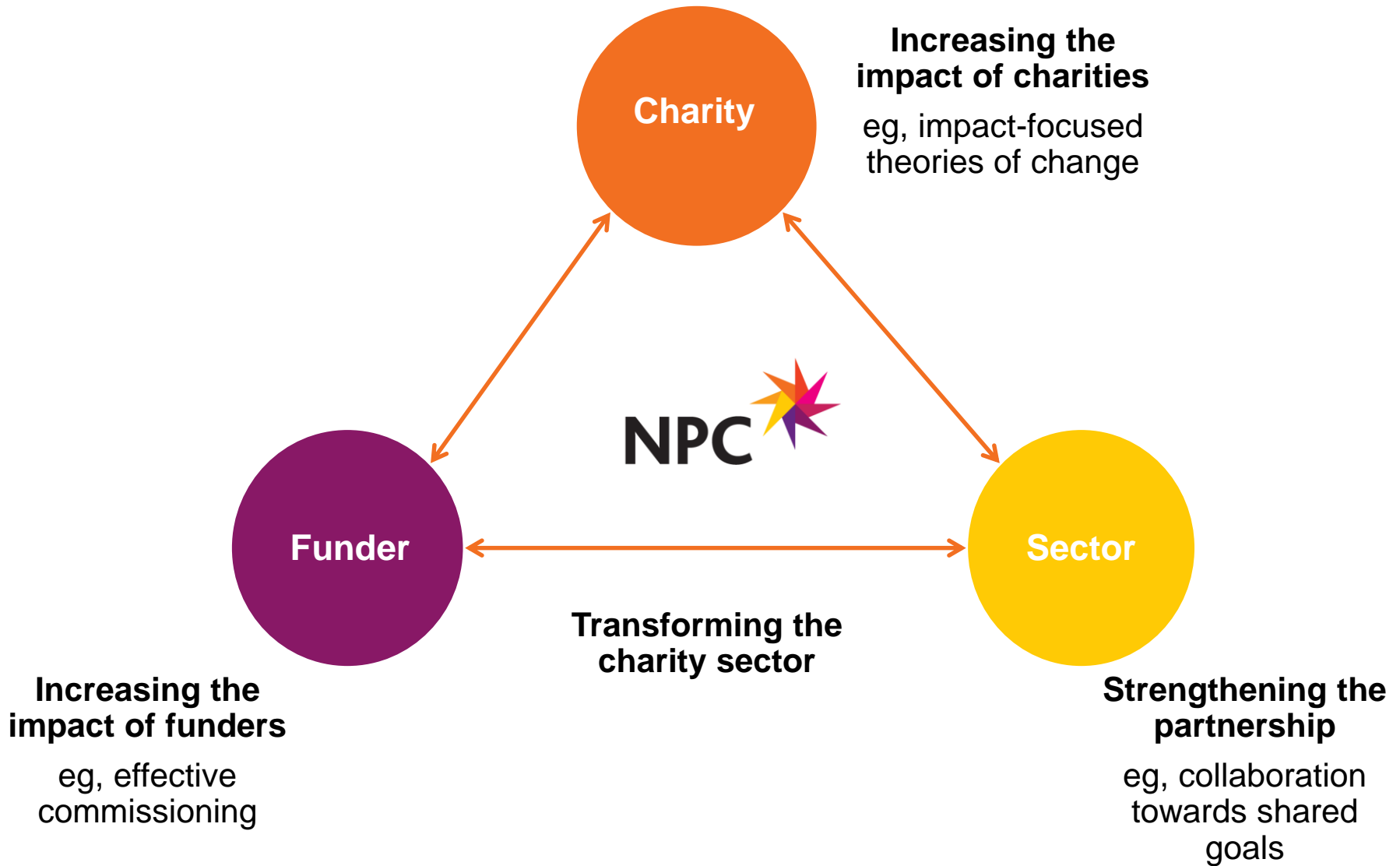
@katie\_boswell

# **THEORY OF CHANGE AND SYSTEMS CHANGE: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN TWO DISCIPLINES COLLIDE?**

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Katie Boswell, Deputy Head of Funders, June 2018


# ABOUT NPC





The background features a large white triangle on the left side, which is bordered by several overlapping purple triangles of varying shades. The purple triangles are arranged in a way that they appear to be part of a larger geometric composition, with some pointing towards the center and others towards the corners.


# **WHY INVESTIGATE THEORY OF CHANGE AND SYSTEMS CHANGE?**


# OUR STARTING POINT

- 

Organisations and practitioners are increasingly taking a **systems change** approach to dealing with social problems.
- 

Campaigners and those aiming to influence policy development often instinctively think in systems.
- 

**Theory of change**—the dominant method for tracking impact—is seen as hindering systems change.
- 

Raises the question: how can we bring the disciplines together in practical and accessible ways?
- 

NPC collaborated with Lankelly Chase Foundation to explore perspectives, challenges and opportunities.



# BUILDING ON OUR PREVIOUS WORK



**WHAT DID PEOPLE  
TELL US?**

# WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT SYSTEMS CHANGE



- > A way of thinking about the world
- > Vital for tackling intractable social problems
- > A variety of perspectives, tools, and approaches
- > Inaccessible, jargon-filled, overly technical
- > Self-indulgent, navel-gazing, time-consuming, paralysing



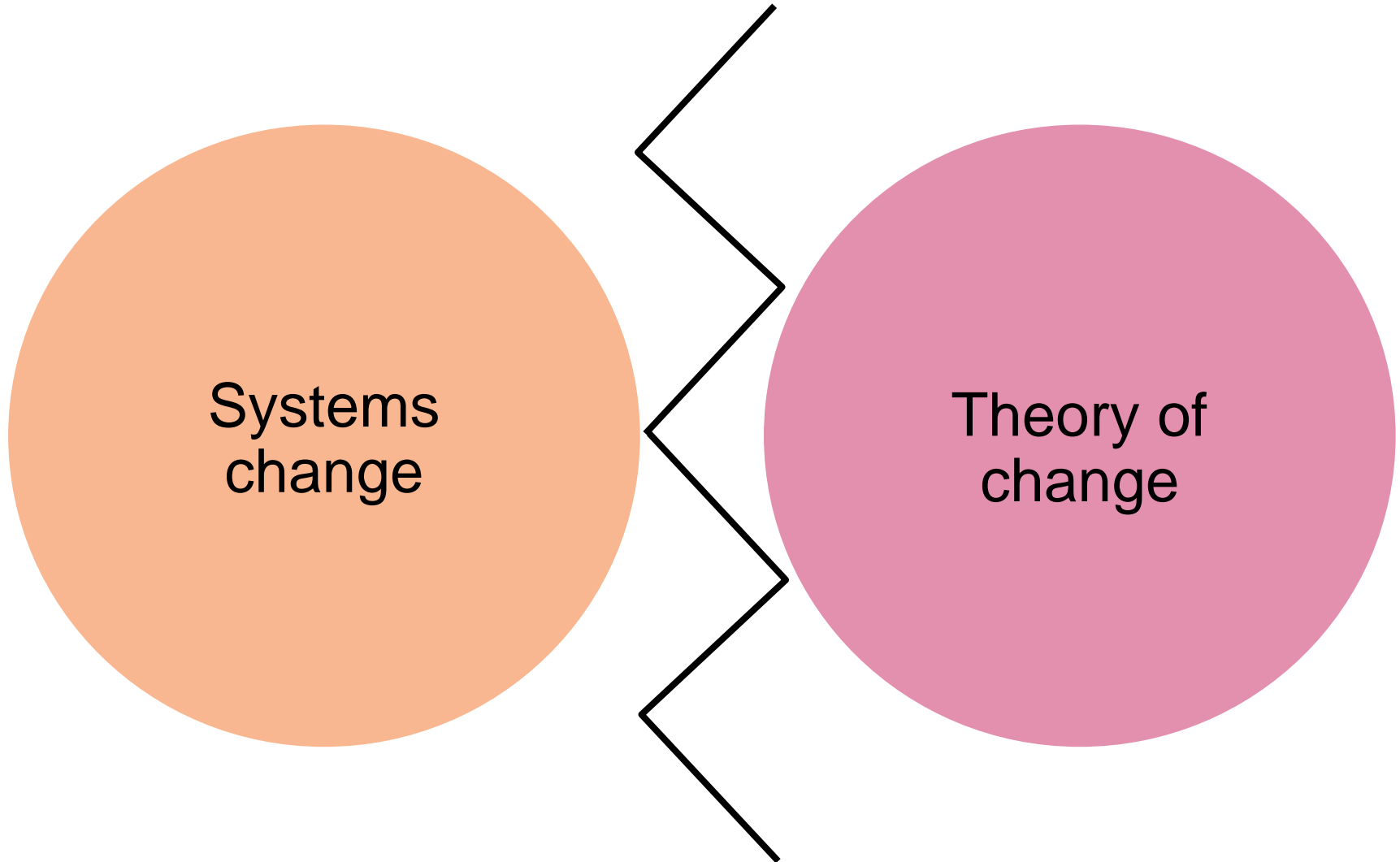
# WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT THEORY OF CHANGE NPC



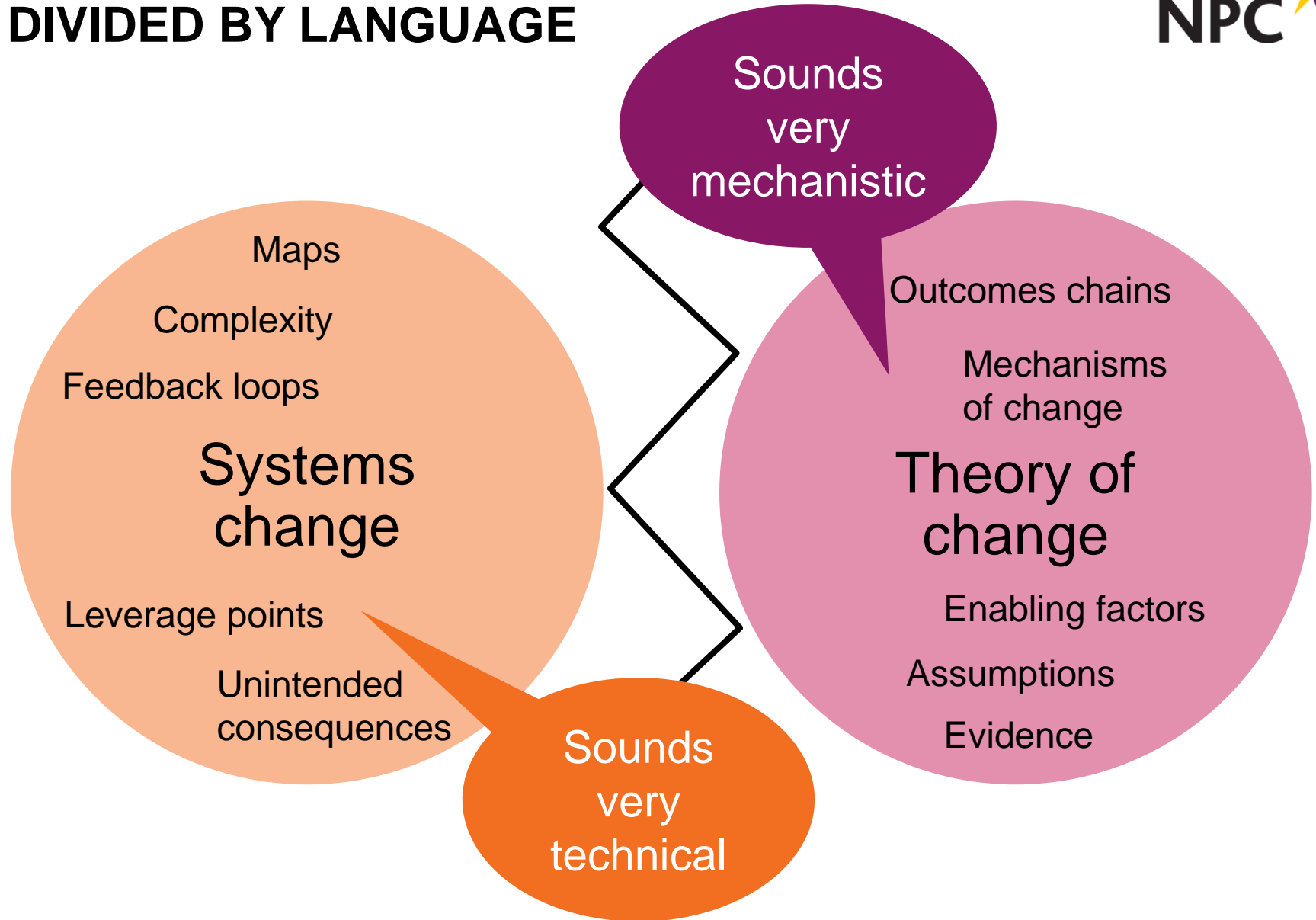
- Originally developed to model complex change initiatives
- Now widely used across the charity sector
- Practical, useful, accessible, common language
- Can oversimplify a complex reality
- Has become governed by unhelpful practices



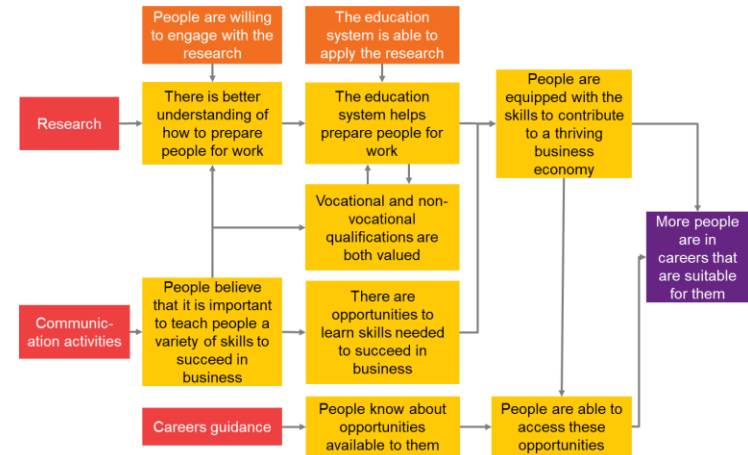
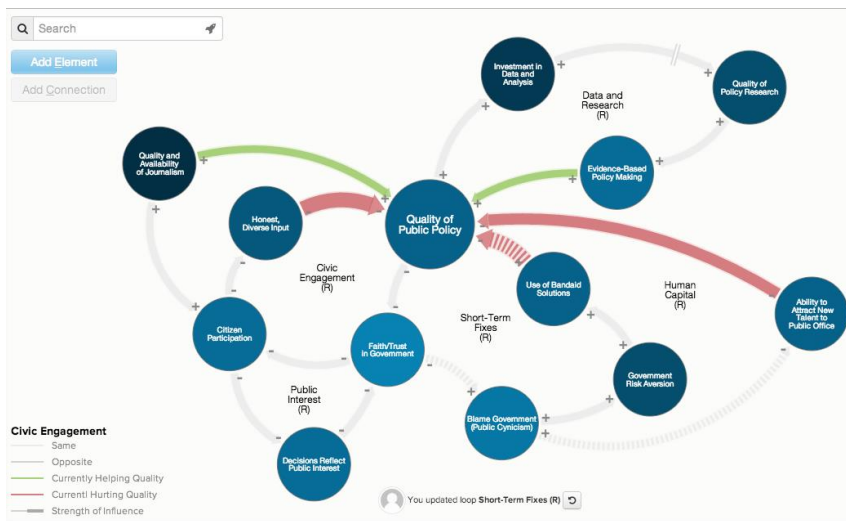
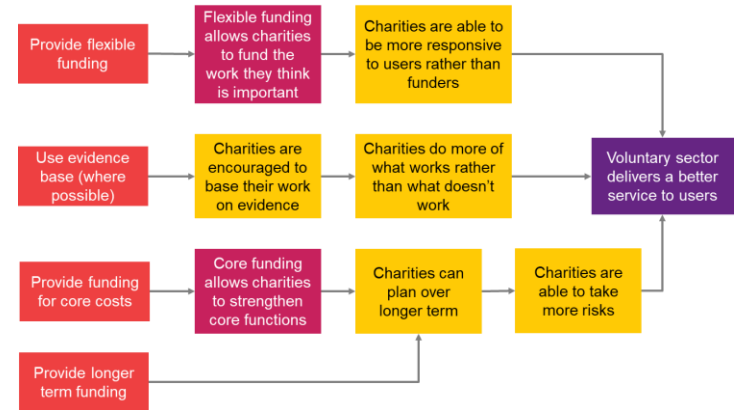
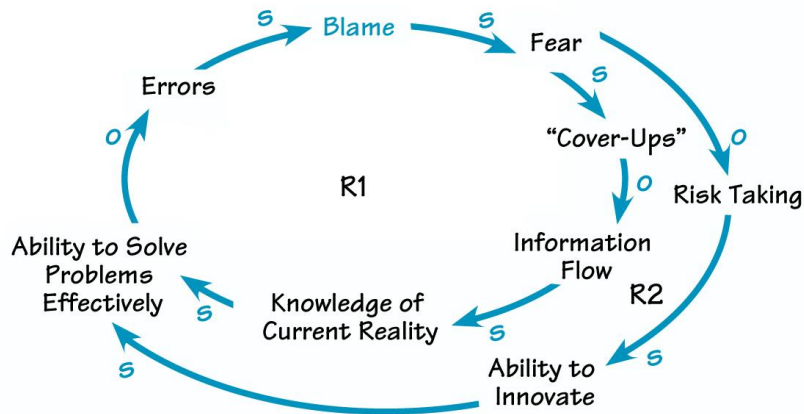
# TWO SEPARATE DISCIPLINES?



# DIVIDED BY LANGUAGE



# DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING THE WORLD



# **THEORY OF CHANGE CAN UNDERMINE SYSTEMS CHANGE WHEN YOU...**

**NEGLECT CONTEXT**

**CHANGE OTHERS ONLY**

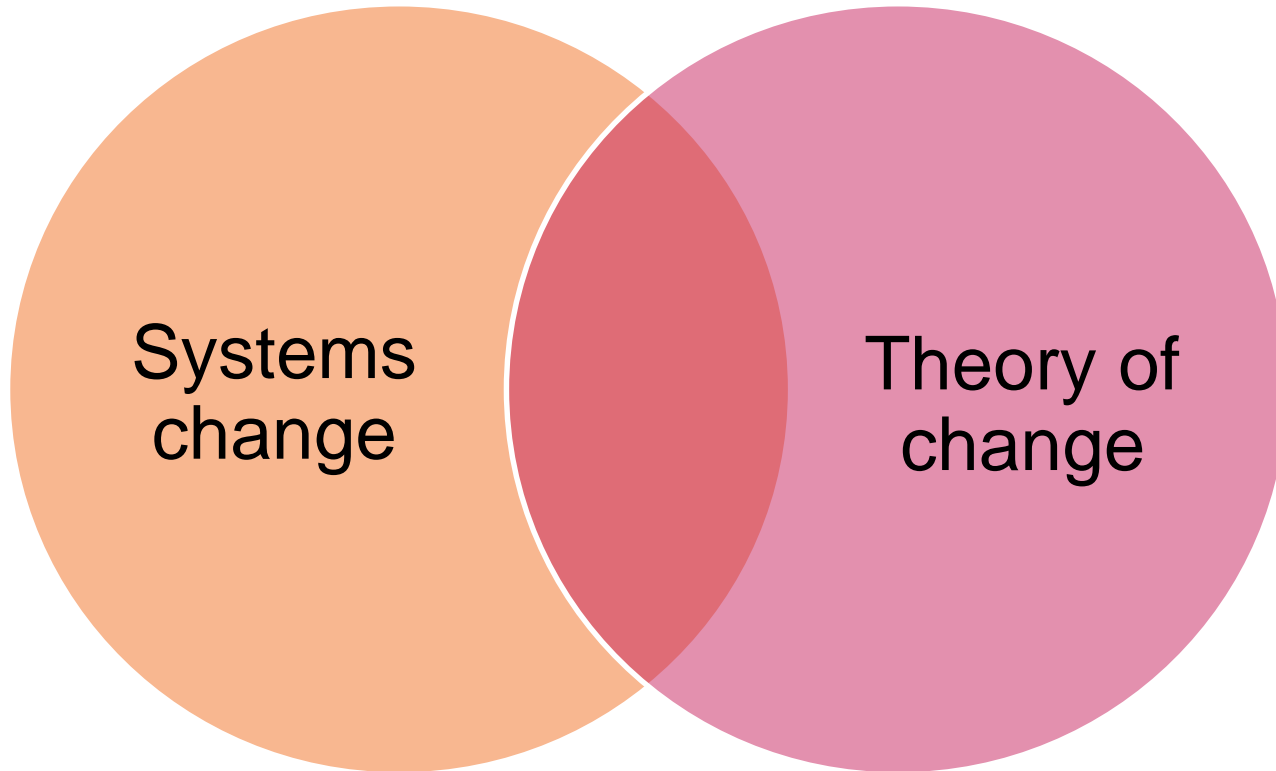
**THINK IN LINEAR TERMS**

**CHANGE IS TECHNICAL**

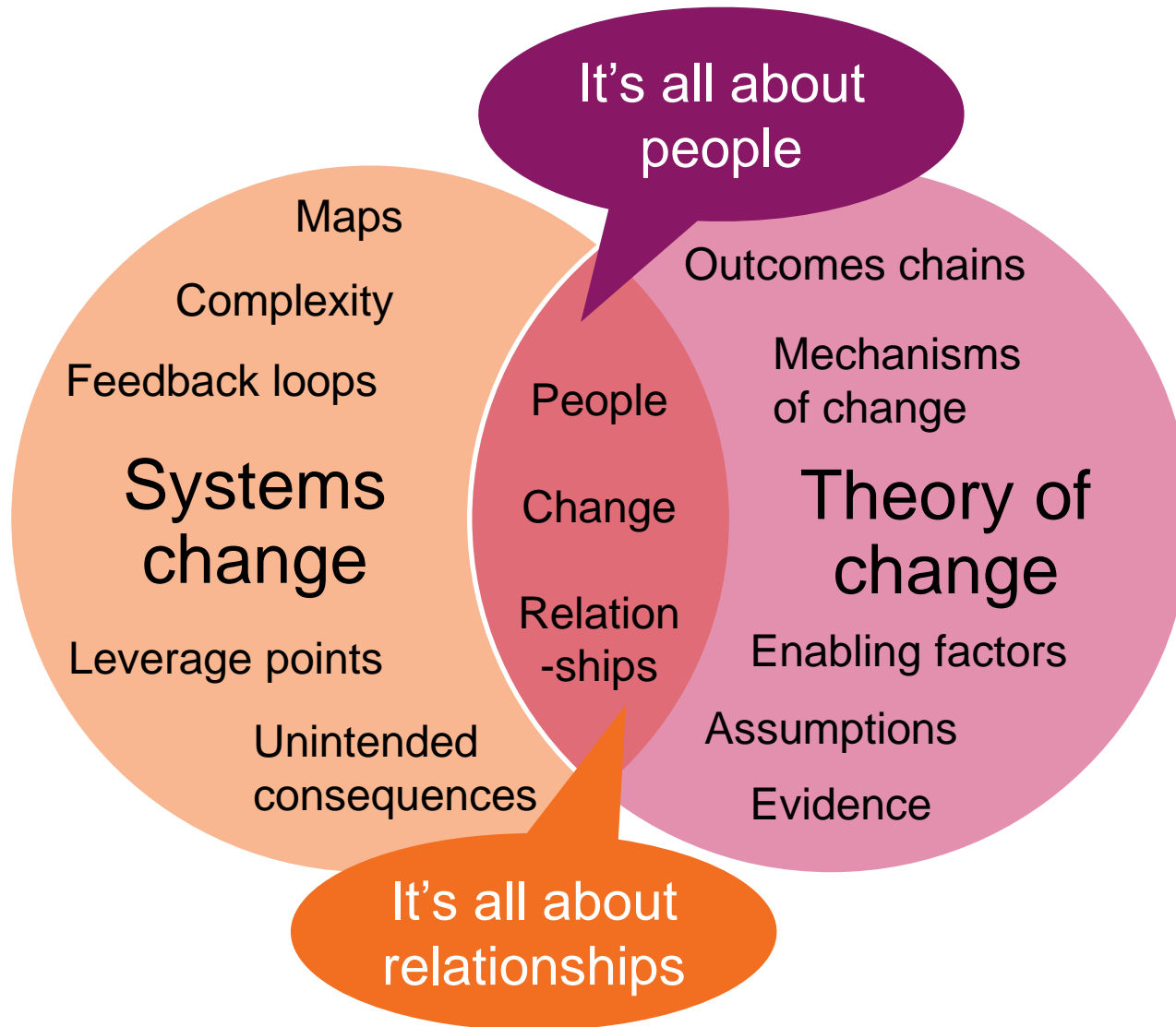
**SEEK SAFETY IN CERTAINTY**

**HOW DO WE DEAL  
WITH THESE  
TENSIONS?**

# BRINGING THE DISCIPLINES TOGETHER



# FINDING A COMMON LANGUAGE



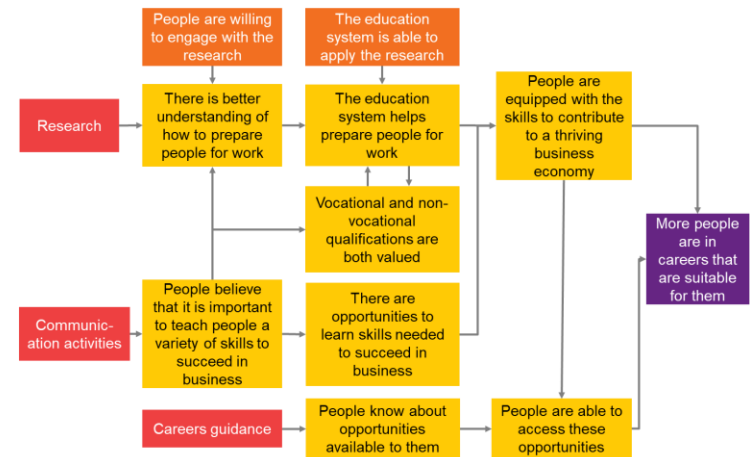
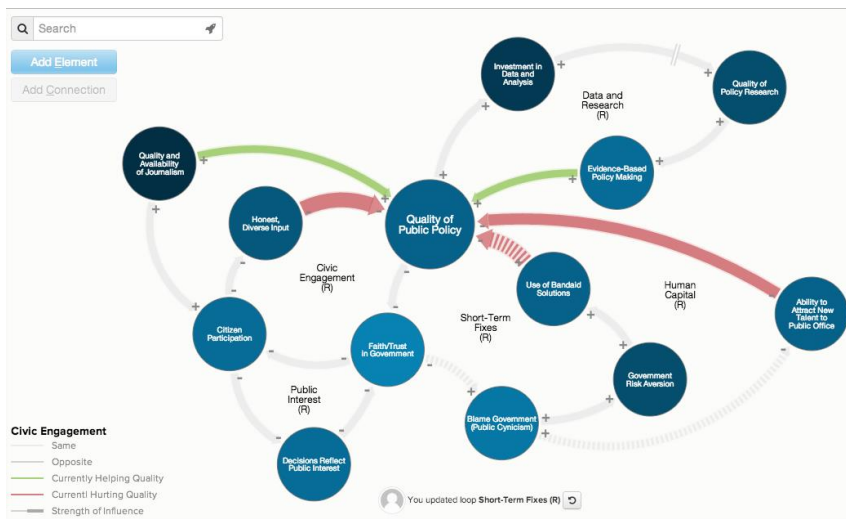
# MAKING THE MOST OF DIFFERENT WAYS OF SEEING THE WORLD



Map the system so you know the terrain



Use theory of change as a **compass** for navigating the terrain



# USING THEORY OF CHANGE FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

UNDERSTAND CONTEXT

KNOW YOURSELF

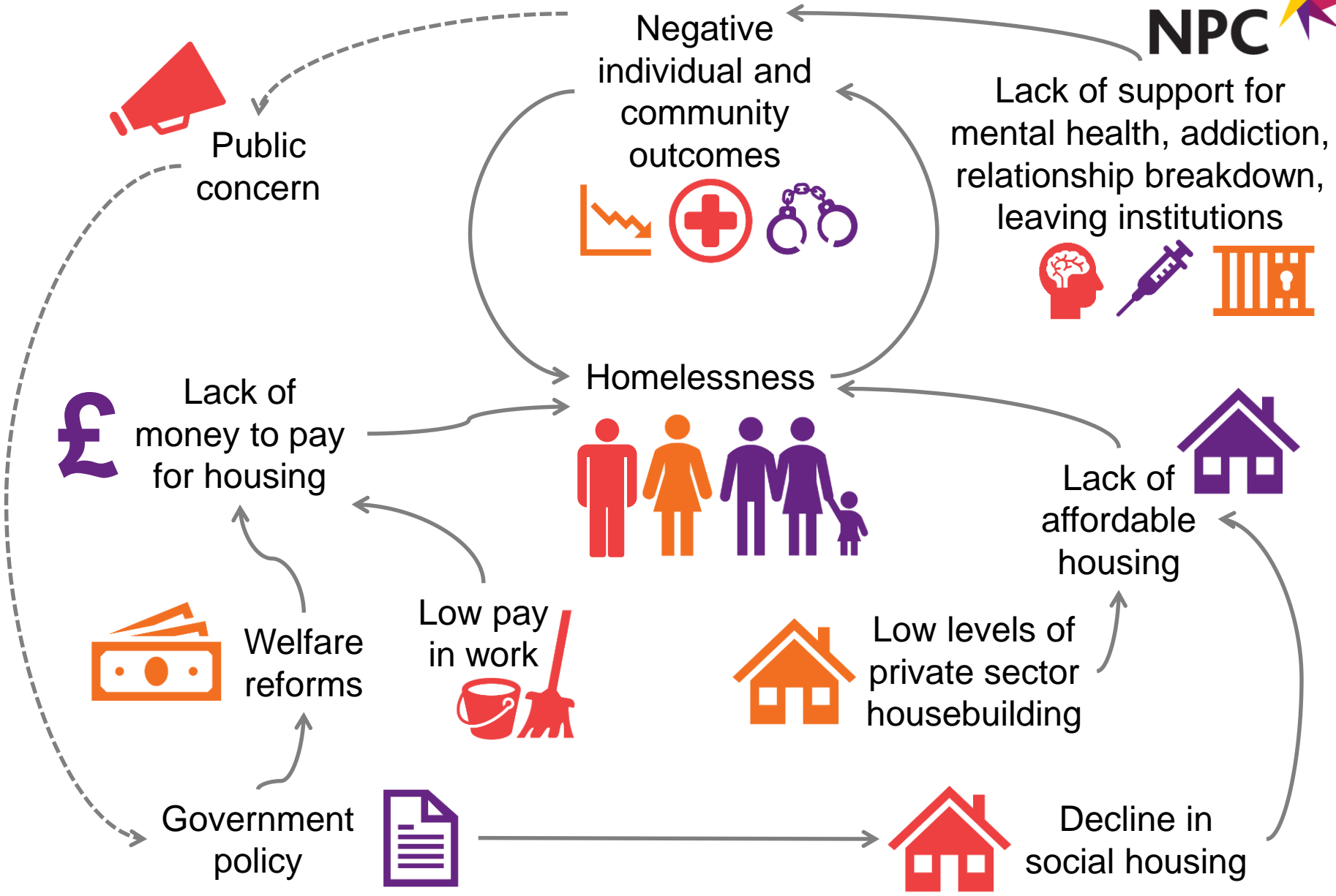
THINK SYSTEMICALLY

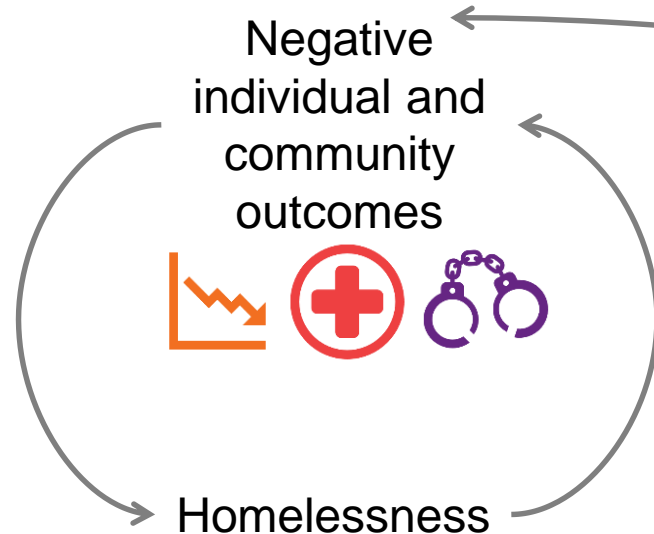
RECOGNISE CHANGE IS PERSONAL

LEARN AND ADAPT

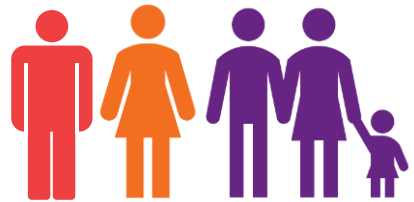
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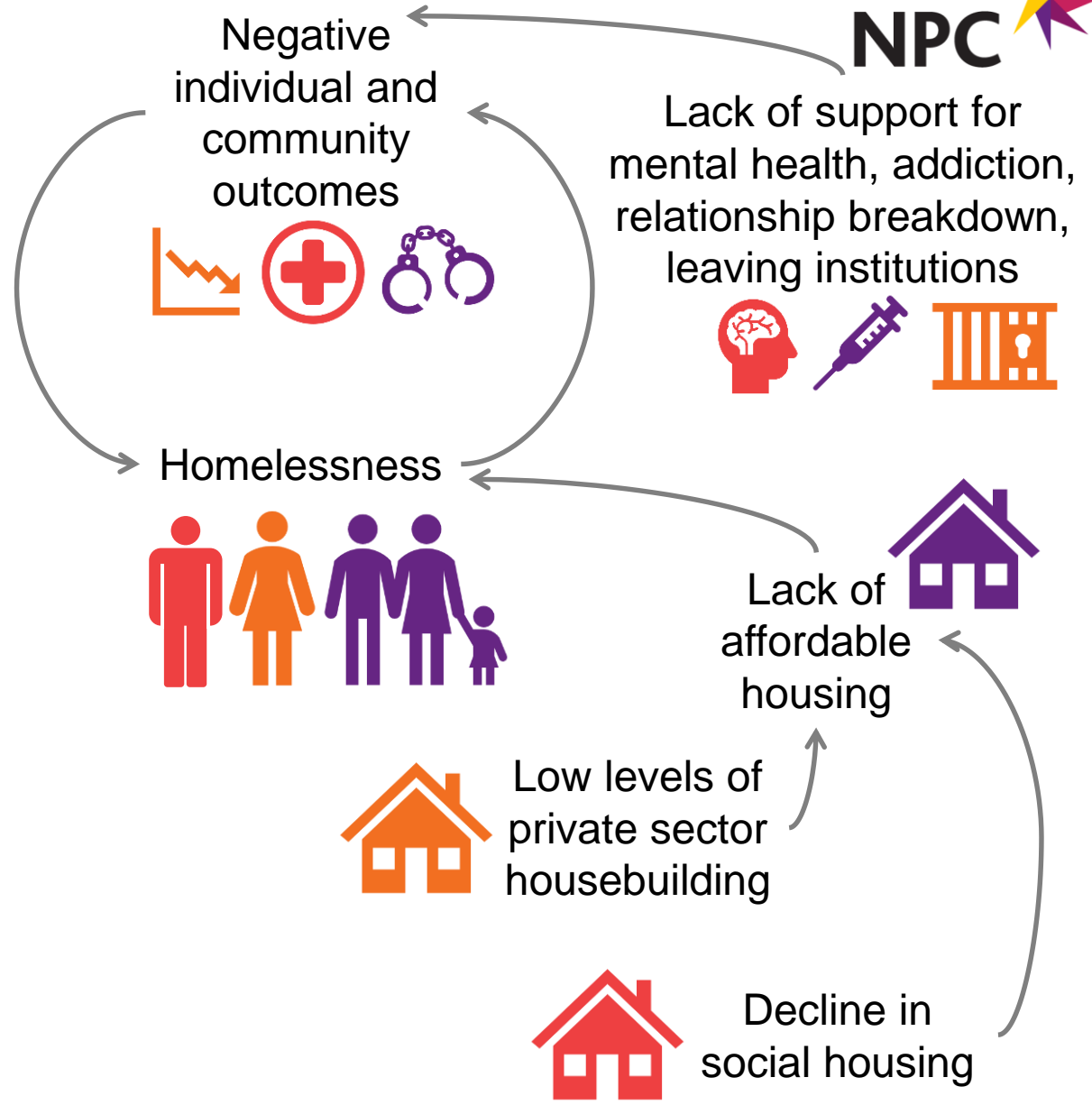
**PUTTING IT INTO  
PRACTICE: TACKLING  
HOMELESSNESS**

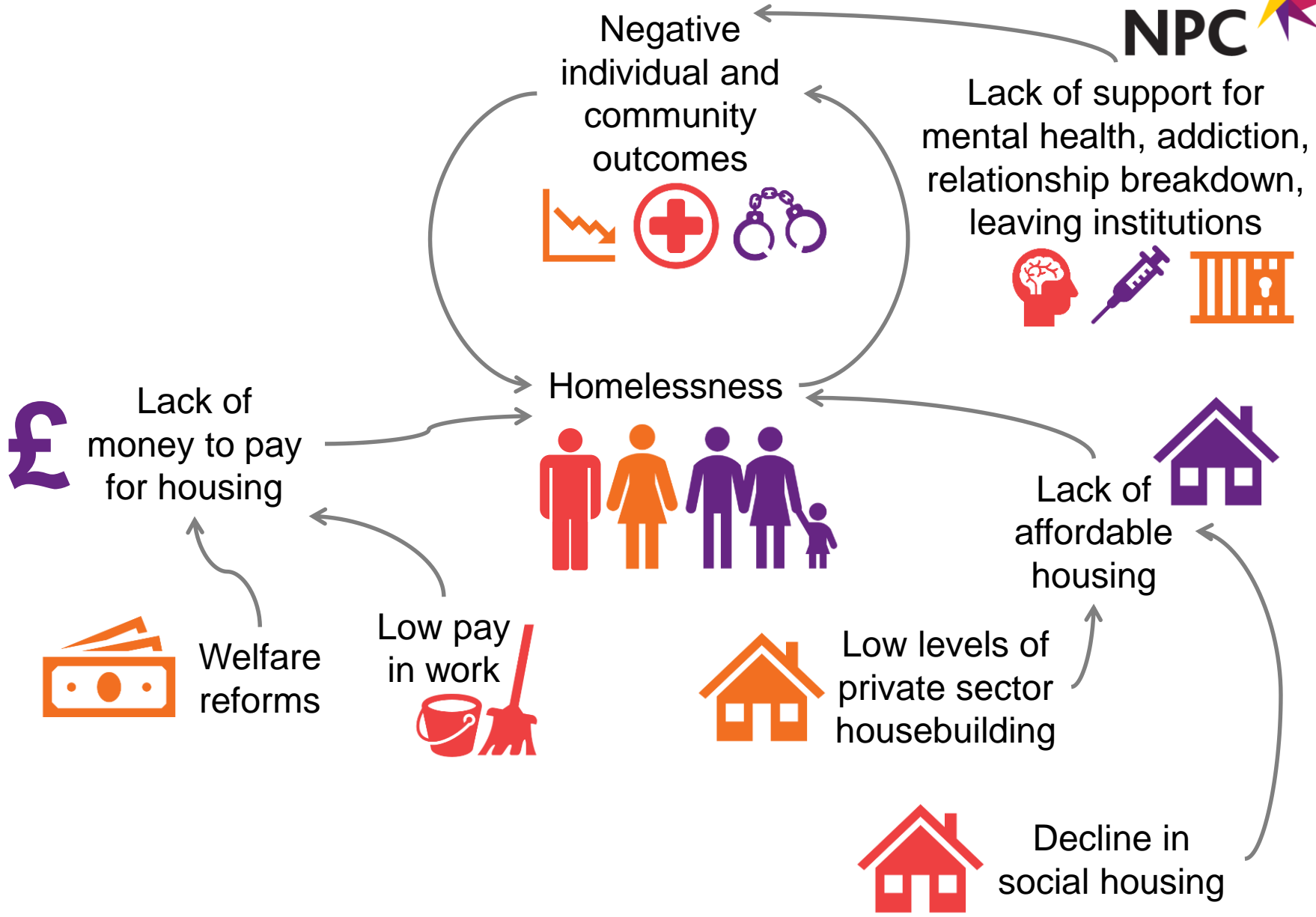


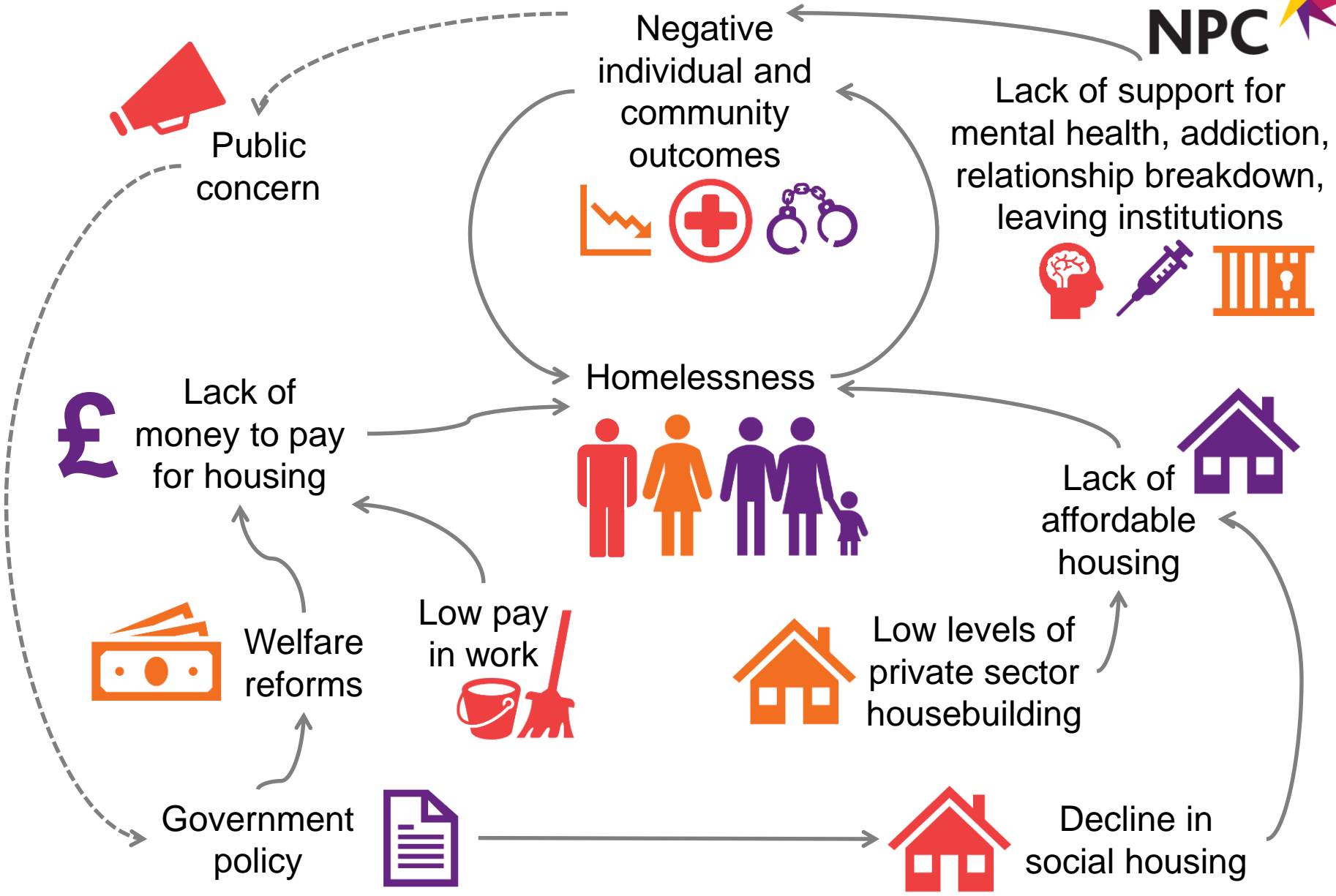


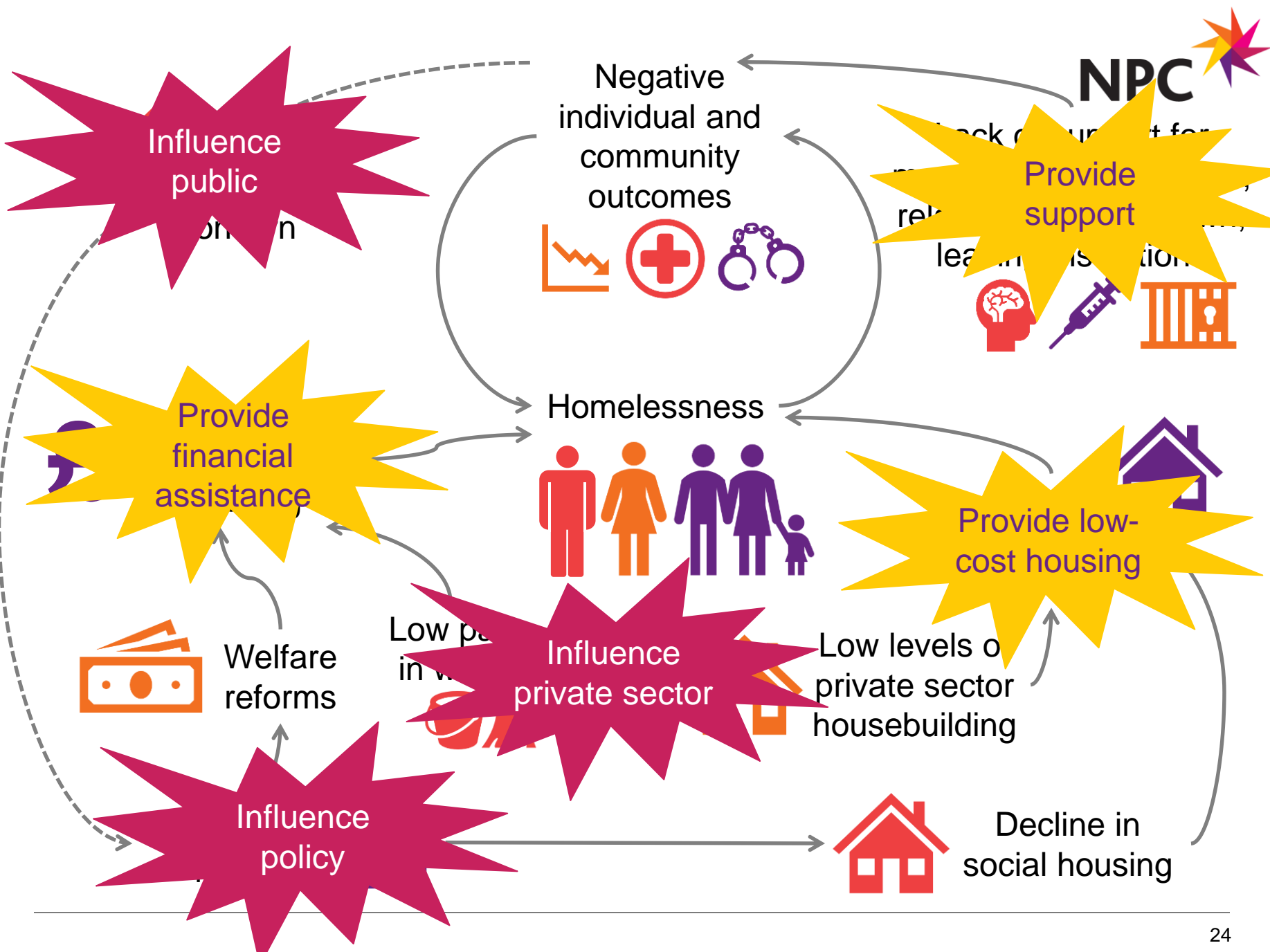
Lack of support for mental health, addiction, relationship breakdown, leaving institutions









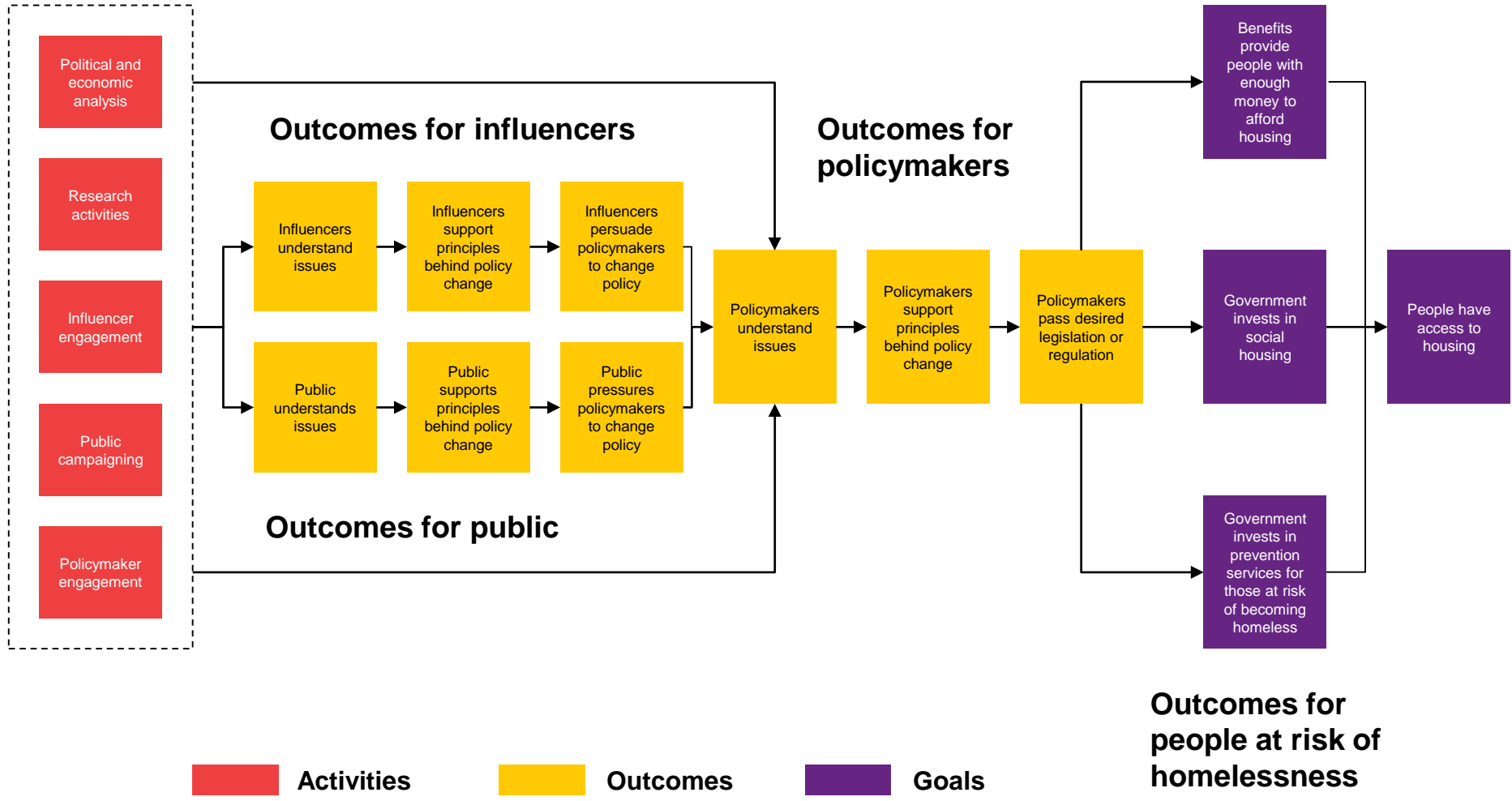


# TAKING THE LEAP

*Mapping complex contexts  
will leave you feeling queasy...  
'Having looked, it is  
necessary to leap.'*



# THEORY OF CHANGE: INFLUENCING POLICY



# USING THEORY OF CHANGE FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE

**UNDERSTAND CONTEXT**

**KNOW YOURSELF**

**THINK SYSTEMICALLY**

**RECOGNISE CHANGE IS PERSONAL**

**LEARN AND ADAPT**



# THANK YOU

New Philanthropy Capital

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June 2018