



**Delivering excellence and fairness in public services**

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Strategy Unit**

**Making  
government  
work better**

## The World Class Public Services Programme reports to the Minister for the Cabinet Office, Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Prime Minister. It has three objectives..

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- i. **Set out a strong and clear narrative for the next phase of reform**, in order to help provide a more unified direction and approach, and to inform communication.
- ii. **Develop proposals for systemic changes** in order to deliver the next phase of reform, for example changes that will help to drive more innovation at the front line. CO and HMT levers include performance measures, departmental agreements and investment decisions
- iii. **Highlight and develop specific approaches to service reform/improvement**, in order to fertilise innovative ideas across service sectors

# Excellence and fairness in public services is a vision of services built around the needs and aspirations of users and delivering consistent high standards and greater equity

## ***From recipients***

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Inflexible services built around the needs of service providers

Service users viewed primarily as recipients

Highly variable performance levels with poor levels of equality

## ***To empowered users***

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Responsive, personalised services built around the needs and aspirations of service users

Service users working in partnership with services

Consistent high standards with greater equality of opportunity and outcomes

Supported by the continued drive to improve value for money

# The context is that substantial improvements have been made across the public services over the past decade...

## Education example

### Significant extra investment

- Government expenditure on education has increased rapidly (CAGR of 8.3% between 1998 and 2004) and is growing faster than in many of the largest OECD economies
- Significant new investment in school buildings and equipment

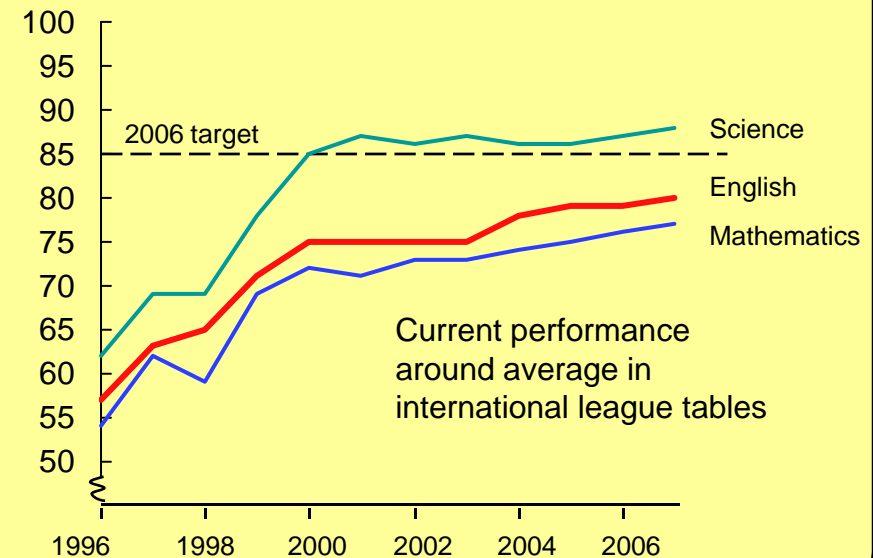


### Radical reforms

- National Strategies for literacy and numeracy
- Specialist schools and academies
- Choice and flexibility of curriculum pathways in 14-19 agenda
- Every Child Matters agenda etc.

### Performance

Students achieving level 4 or above at KS2 (%)



# The focus of reform has already developed over the last ten years

## Targets and minimum standards

## + Expanded user choice and diversity of supply

### Description

- Minimum standards and national targets were used to rapidly improve performance

- Structural reforms increased provider autonomy, broadened the diversity of suppliers and widened user choice creating quasi-market forces

### Limitations

- Natural limit to the number of top-down targets that can be meaningfully engaged by a single service at any one time
- Tackling high level issues simply exposes a larger sub-set of contributing factors that may be less suited to a target-driven approach
- Top-down performance management tends to antagonise the public service workforce and risks setting-up perverse incentives and 'target-hitting' behaviour

- The extent to which quasi-markets can operate within certain public services is necessarily limited by the nature of those services (e.g. policing) and/or the ability of service users to exercise genuine choice (e.g. schools)
- Unrestricted market entry and exit not possible in most public services
- Risk of undermining public service ethos if workforce do not see clear link between quasi-markets and quality improvements

### Future focus

- Zero tolerance of underperformance balanced with greater freedoms for the highest performers and incentives to encourage continuous improvement
- Greater ambition to reduce performance variation and ensure consistent quality across the systems and close the equity gap

- Accelerate and deepen reforms where appropriate to ensure they become irreversible and that their full benefits are realised
- Strengthen the role of alternative service providers from the third sector as well as the private sector

## The big 'problems' driving the need for further development of our improvement approach include...

**Services need clear standards, but too many top-down targets can be counterproductive**

**User choice is vital, yet it needs to be complemented with other approaches if citizens are to be empowered**

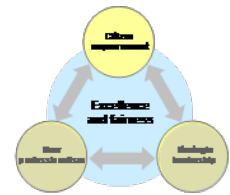
**There are limits to what central government can achieve; too much involvement can stifle innovation.**

**Services must value professionals if we are to foster innovation and excellence**

# Excellence and fairness is usually driven by empowering service users and unlocking the potential of public service workforce, with a more strategic role for government



# Citizens should be increasingly empowered to become genuine partners with flexible services that are built around their individual needs



## Description

**Choice:** The opportunity for users and communities to choose the provider of their services or select important dimensions of their service from a range of options (e.g. choice of hospital)

**Accountability mechanisms:** Opportunities for service users and citizens to hold their local public services to account (e.g. elections to boards)

**Collaboration:** The user and the provider sharing responsibility for the achievement of a particular outcome (e.g. parents reading to their children at home)

**Networks:** Groups of service users coming together to provide mutual support, advice and share information (e.g. expert patients programme)

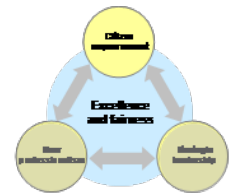
**Transparency:** The provision of performance data and other information about the quality of services at a local level (e.g. local crime mapping, inspectorate reports); much greater uses of customer feedback

## Benefits

- Allows users to select their service provider based on their individual needs and priorities
- Encourages the development of quasi-market forces when combined with other reforms leading to increased competition and innovation
- Provides users / the public with a 'voice' so they can make their views known
- Incentivises providers to ensure they are taking account of the public's point of view
- Enables users to add value to services themselves creating better outcomes
- Increases user engagement earlier in the process increasing opportunities for prevention
- Provides deeper, more extensive support that would be possible through professionals alone
- Allows professionals to focus their time on the harder cases
- Enables people to make better informed decisions with regards selecting, accessing and navigating services
- Highlights very good (and very bad) service and creates pressure for change

Different aspects of user empowerment will be appropriate for different services, although it is likely that a mix of approaches will result in the best outcomes rather than relying on a single dimension.

# Citizens should be increasingly empowered to become genuine partners with flexible services that are built around their individual needs and priorities



## Description

**Choice:** The opportunity for service users to select their service provider to choose the provider of their choice or select important dimensions of their service from a range of options (e.g. choice of hospital)

e.g. Personal budgets for mental health patients in Florida

e.g. Locally accountable education and health services in Finland and Sweden

**Accountability mechanisms:** Opportunities for service users and citizens to hold their local public services to account (e.g. elections to boards)

**Collaboration:** The sharing of responsibility between service users and providers to create better outcomes (e.g. parent engagement programmes for children at home)

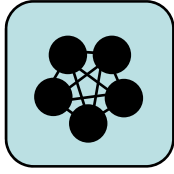
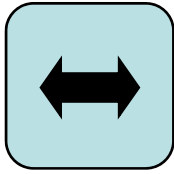
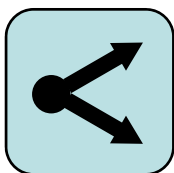
e.g. Emphasis on parenting in Denmark

**Networks:** Groups of service users coming together to provide mutual support, advice and share information (e.g. expert patients programme)

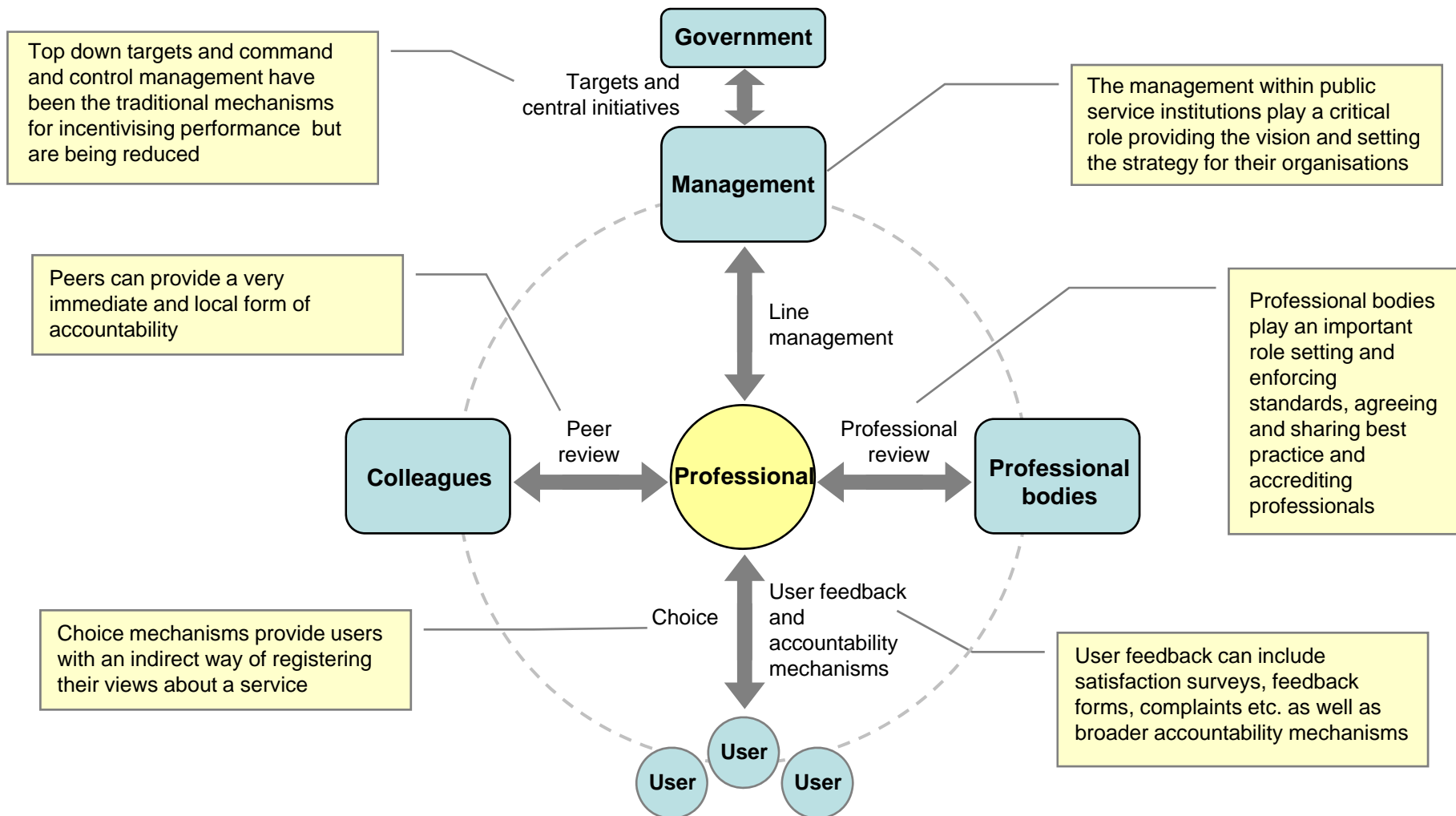
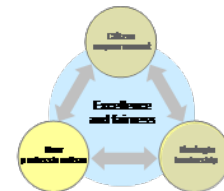
e.g. New York School Report Cards

**Transparency:** The provision of performance data and other information about the quality of services at a local level (e.g. local crime mapping, inspectorate reports); much greater uses of customer feedback

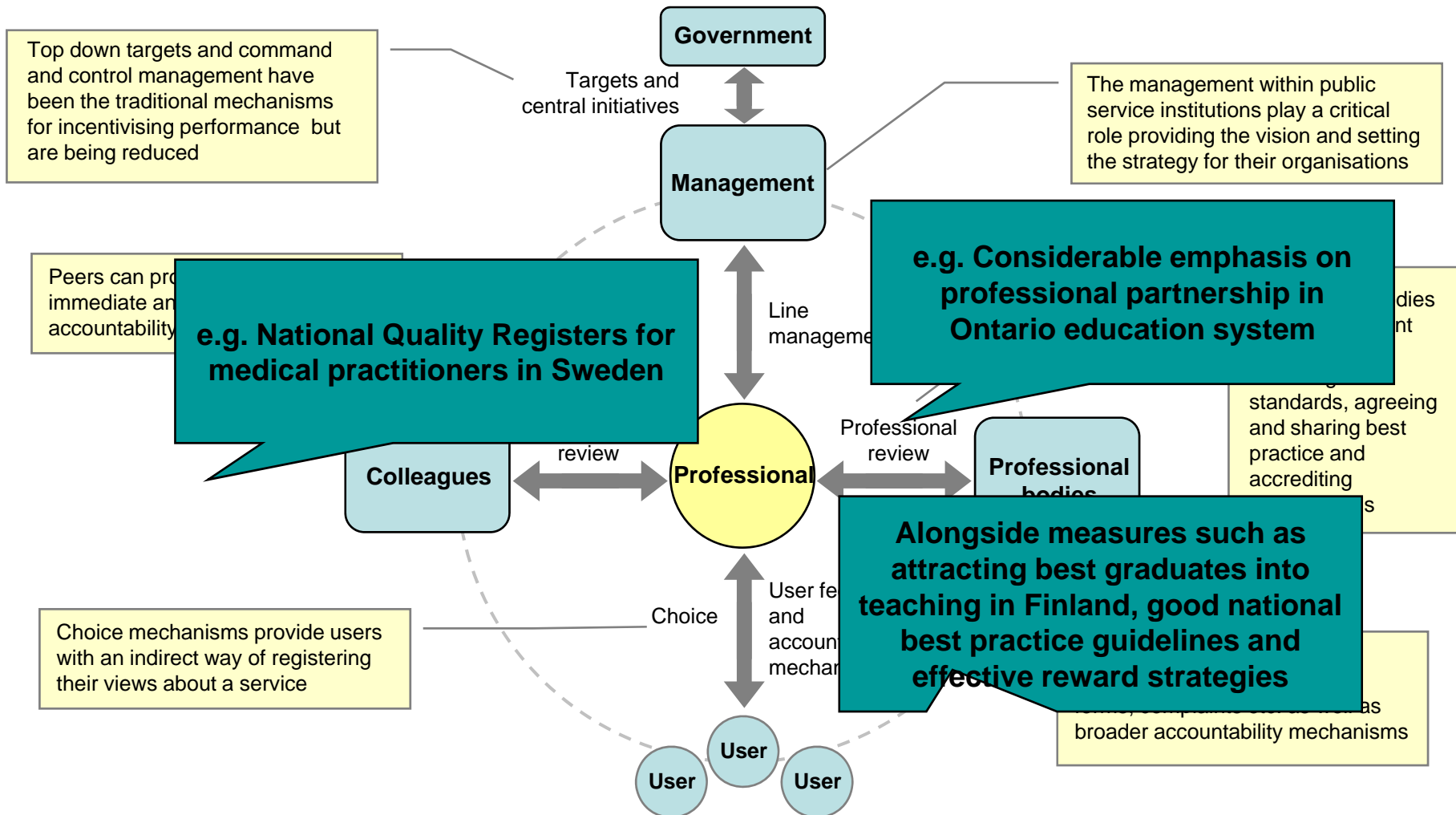
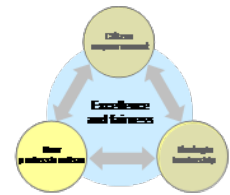
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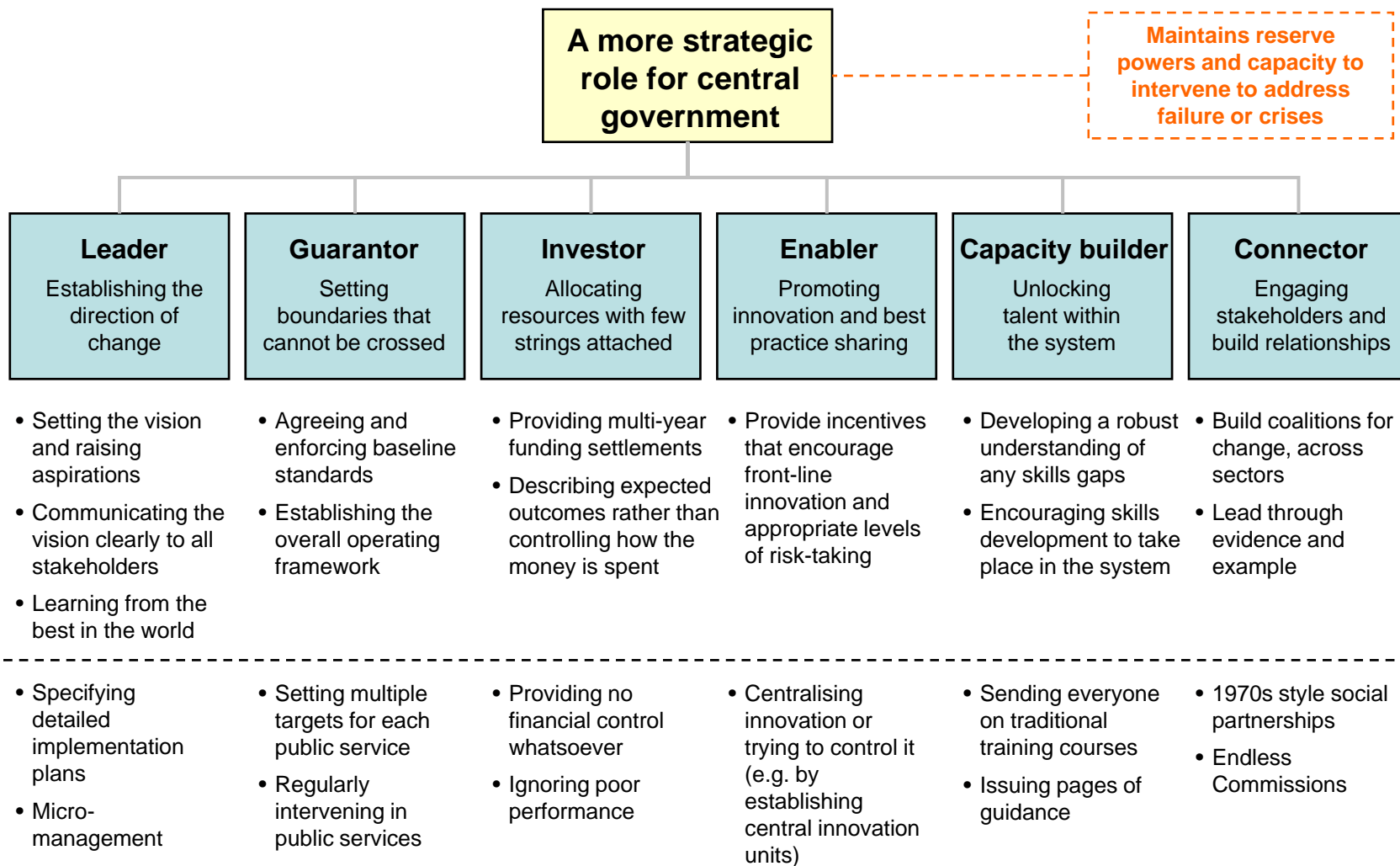
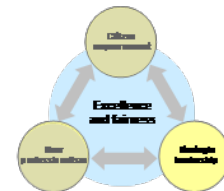
# A transition from 'top-down' to '360' professional accountability should be accompanied by greater attention to skills, freedoms and professional dialogue



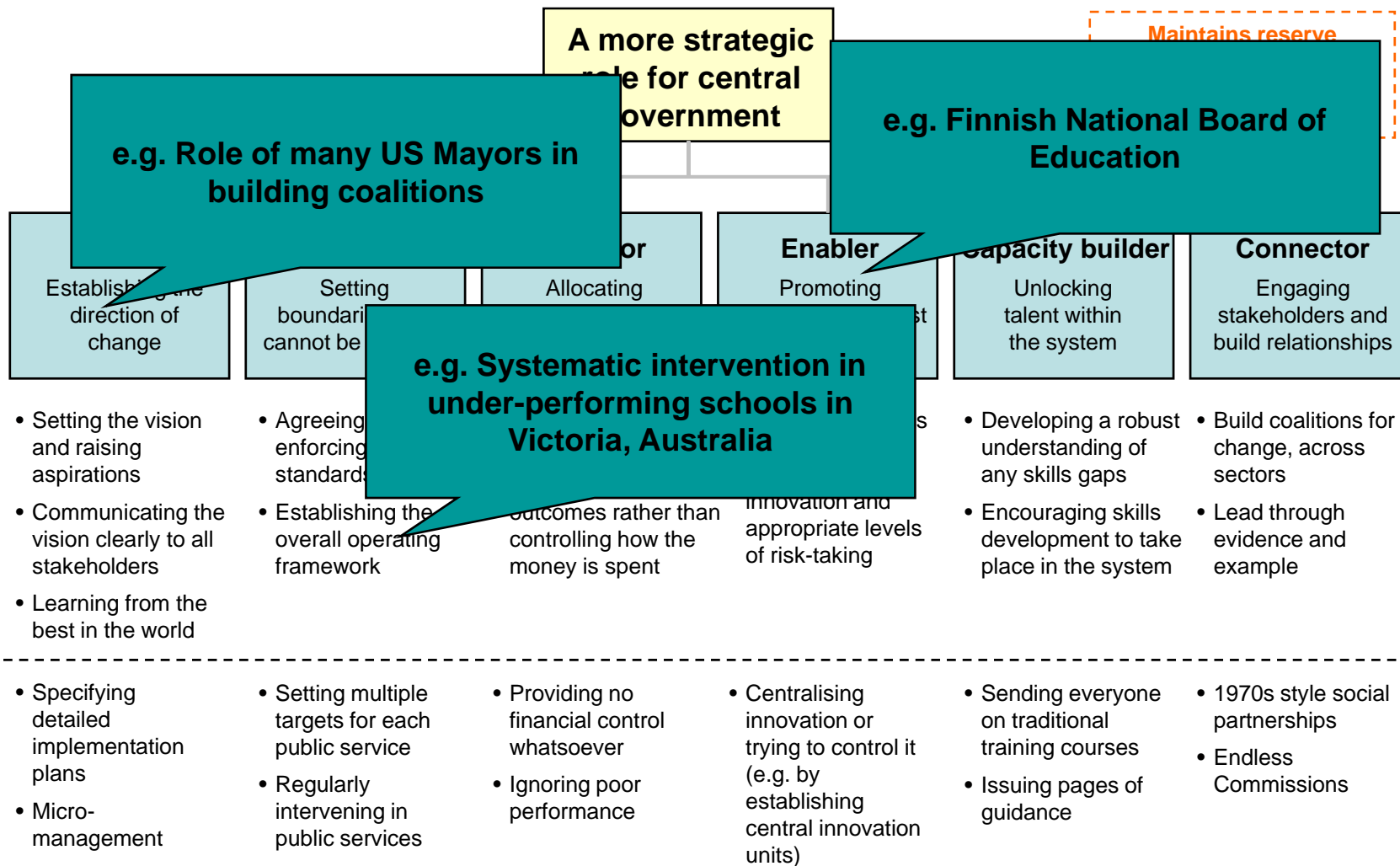
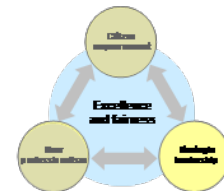
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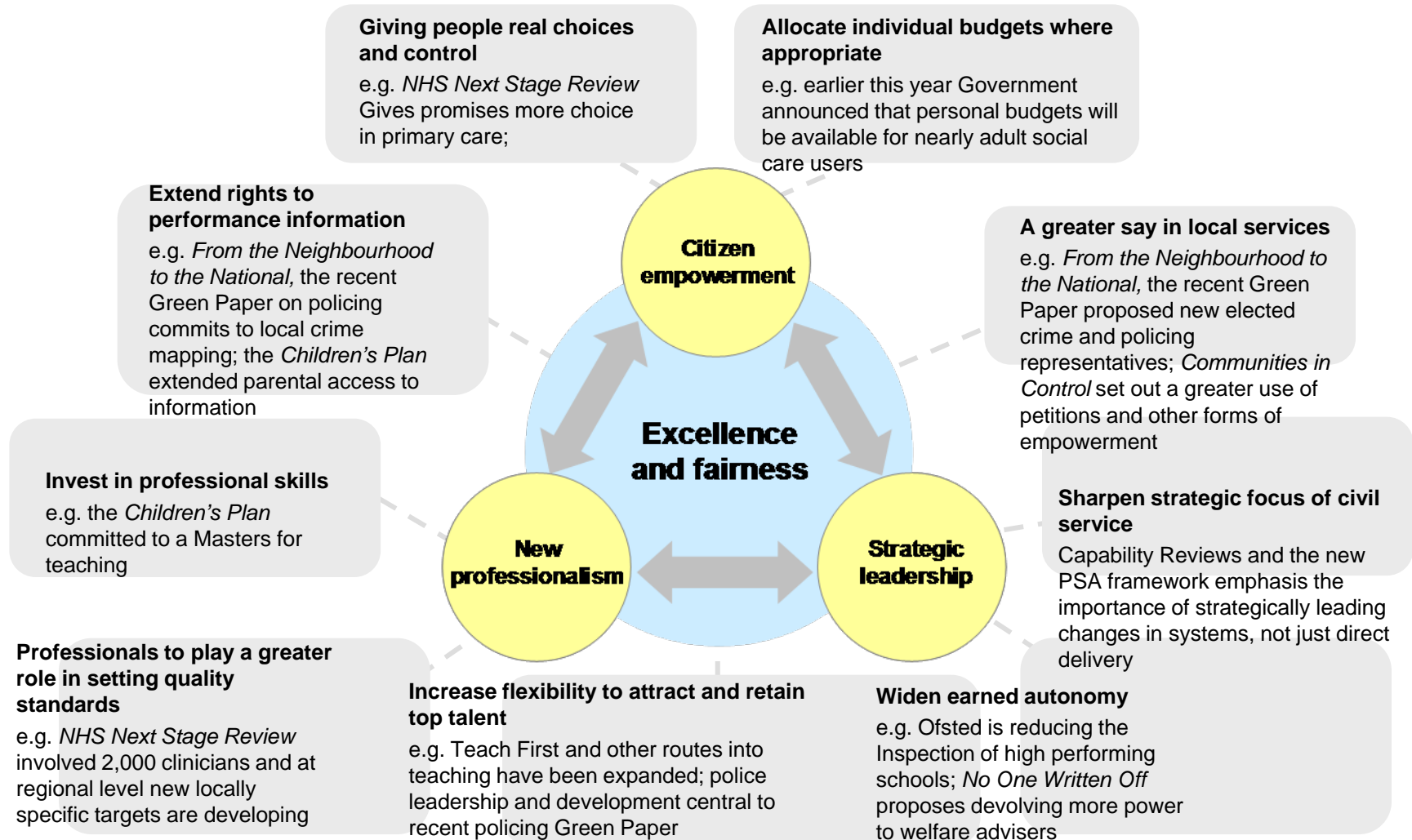
# Central government should play a more strategic role, setting the overall direction and building capacity within the system



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# This approach implies a distinctive policy agenda, which recent announcements are putting into practice\*



\*indicative policies shown for illustration purposes only

## Questions

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- i. Do you agree with problem analysis?**
- ii. Are there tensions in the approach which we need to do more to resolve or areas in which we need to better articulate approach?**
- iii. How can Assessment Framework support implementation of the approach?**
- iv. Are there specific opportunities for empowering citizens, fostering professionalism and more strategic leadership which you think are particularly important in individual services?**