



Cabinet Office

# Developing a Theory of Change

Evaluation Task Force Academy 2.0

# Hello

---



# ETF Evaluation Academy

---

**Module 1:** Introduction to Evaluation

**Module 2: Developing a Theory of Change**

**Module 3:** Scoping an Evaluation

**Module 4:** Process Evaluation

**Module 5:** Impact Evaluation - Experimental Designs

**Module 6:** Impact Evaluation - Quasi-Experimental Designs

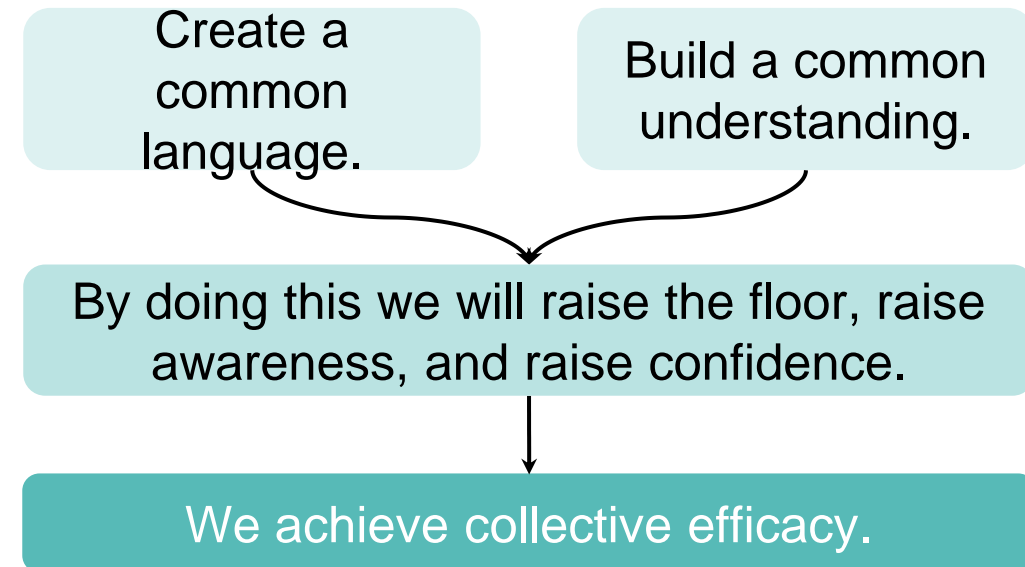
**Module 7:** Impact Evaluation - Theory-Based Designs

**Module 8:** Value for Money Evaluation

**Module 9:** Planning and Managing an Evaluation

**Module 10:** Communicating Evidence and Decision Making

*The Evaluation Academy will upskill analysts across HMG departments in key evaluation methodologies and evaluation management techniques and will result in better and more evaluation across HMG.*



# Module 2: Overview of content

---

- [Learning outcomes](#)
- [What is a Theory of Change?](#)
- [Using a Theory of Change during an Evaluation](#)
- [Building a Theory of Change](#)
- [Advocacy and application of learning](#)

# Learning outcomes

---



I can **explain** what a Theory of Change is, why a ToC is useful, who it is useful to, and how it can be used



I can **describe** how to facilitate a ToC workshop that helps translate a complex policy idea into a simplified ToC model



I can **recognise** clear logical links between elements in a ToC



I can **select** the right stakeholders to attend a ToC workshop



I can **integrate** a ToC into a wider evaluation framework



I can **contrast** various evaluation methods based on the implementation outlined in the ToC



I can **examine** appropriate outcome and monitoring measures for an evaluation based on the ToC



I can **advocate** for including ToCs across the policy cycle

# What is a Theory of Change?

# What is a Theory of Change?

---

A programme map describing how your programme works and how planned activities will lead to intended outcomes.

## Why do we build them?



To illustrate **how** and **why** a programme **works**

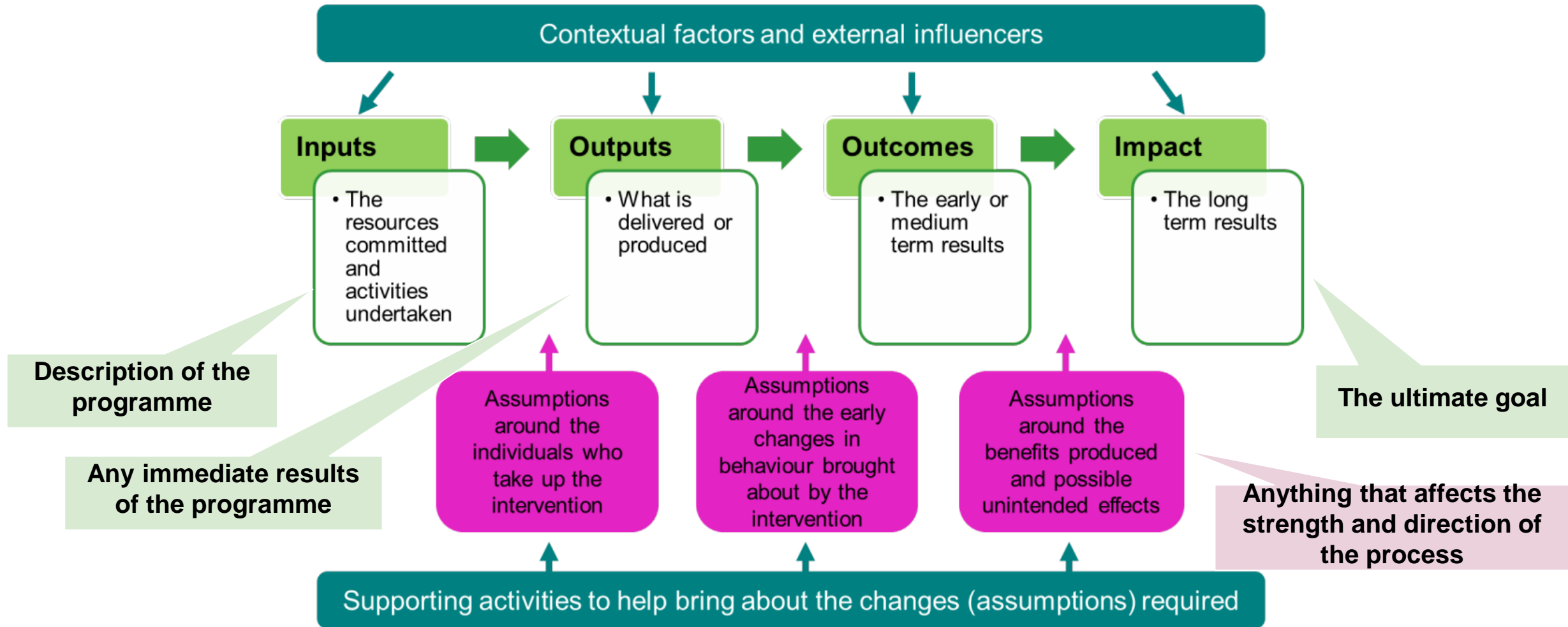


To facilitate shared understanding



To review and summarise existing evidence (and understand where gaps lie)

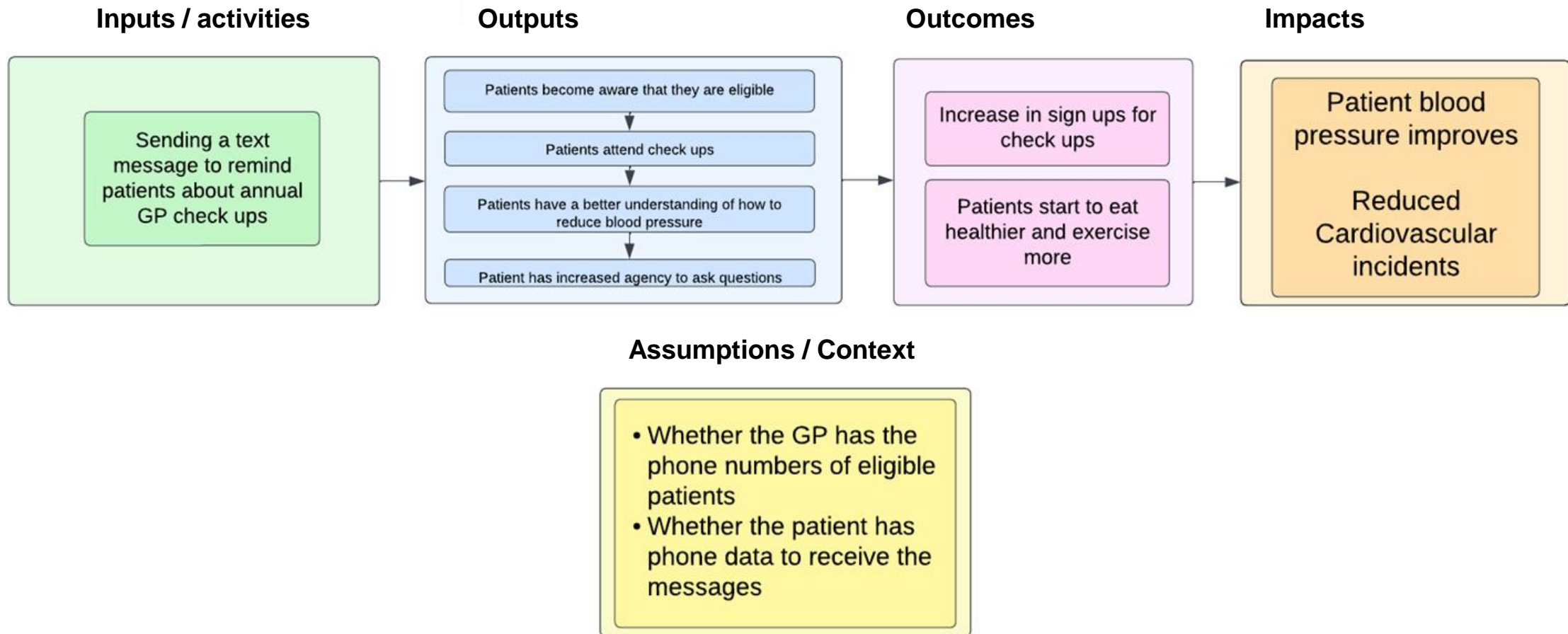
# What are the key elements of a ToC?



Please note that the ToC model in these slides is for illustrative purposes only. Departmental teams are welcome to use their own ToC template, if available.

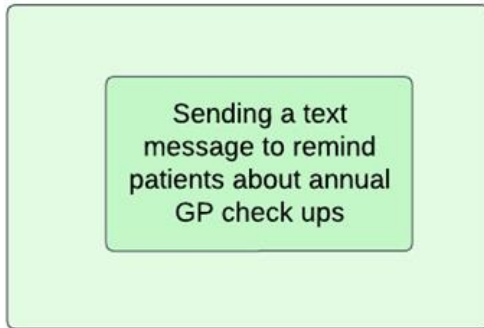


# Using text messages to reduce blood pressure

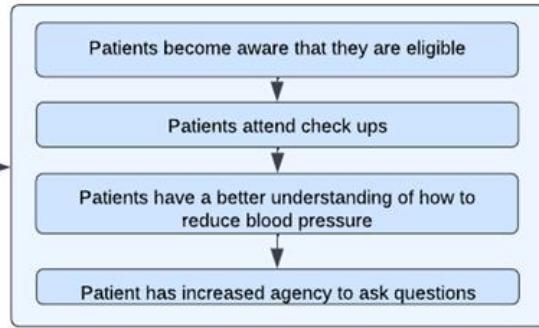


# Building a ToC

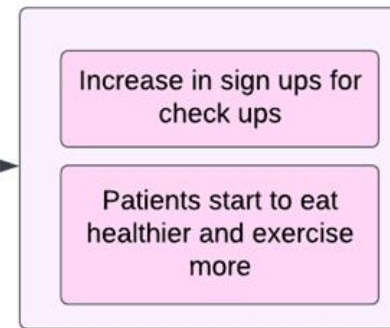
## Inputs / activities



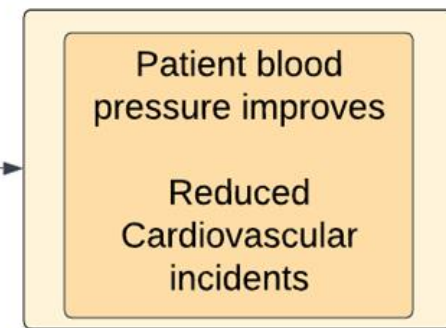
## Outputs



## Outcomes



## Impacts



**Activity:** Can you think of any additional moderating factors for our example? What else might affect whether our programme achieves desired outcomes?

## Assumptions / Context

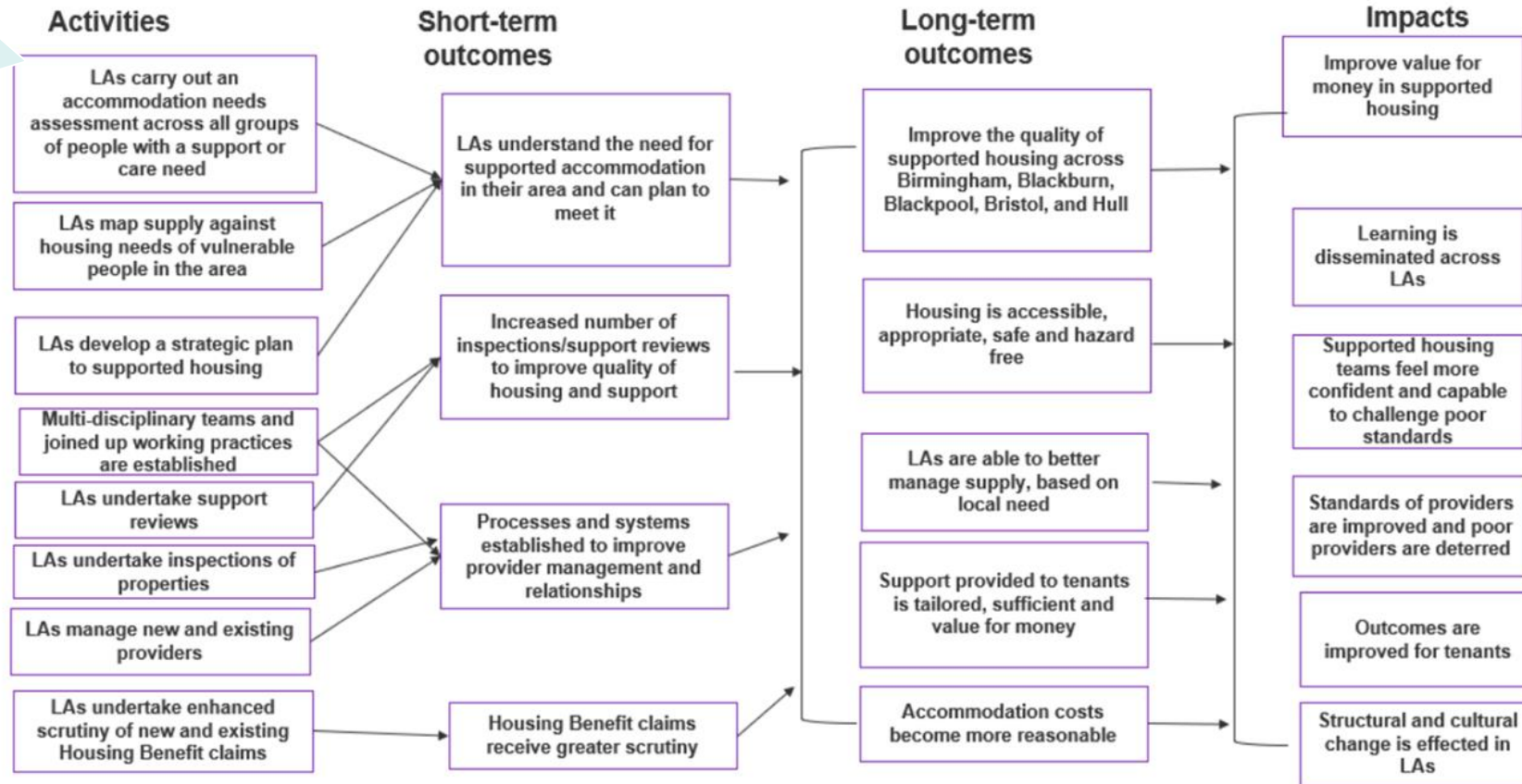
- Whether the GP has the phone numbers of eligible patients
- Whether the patient has phone data to receive the messages

# ToC Case Study - DLUHC

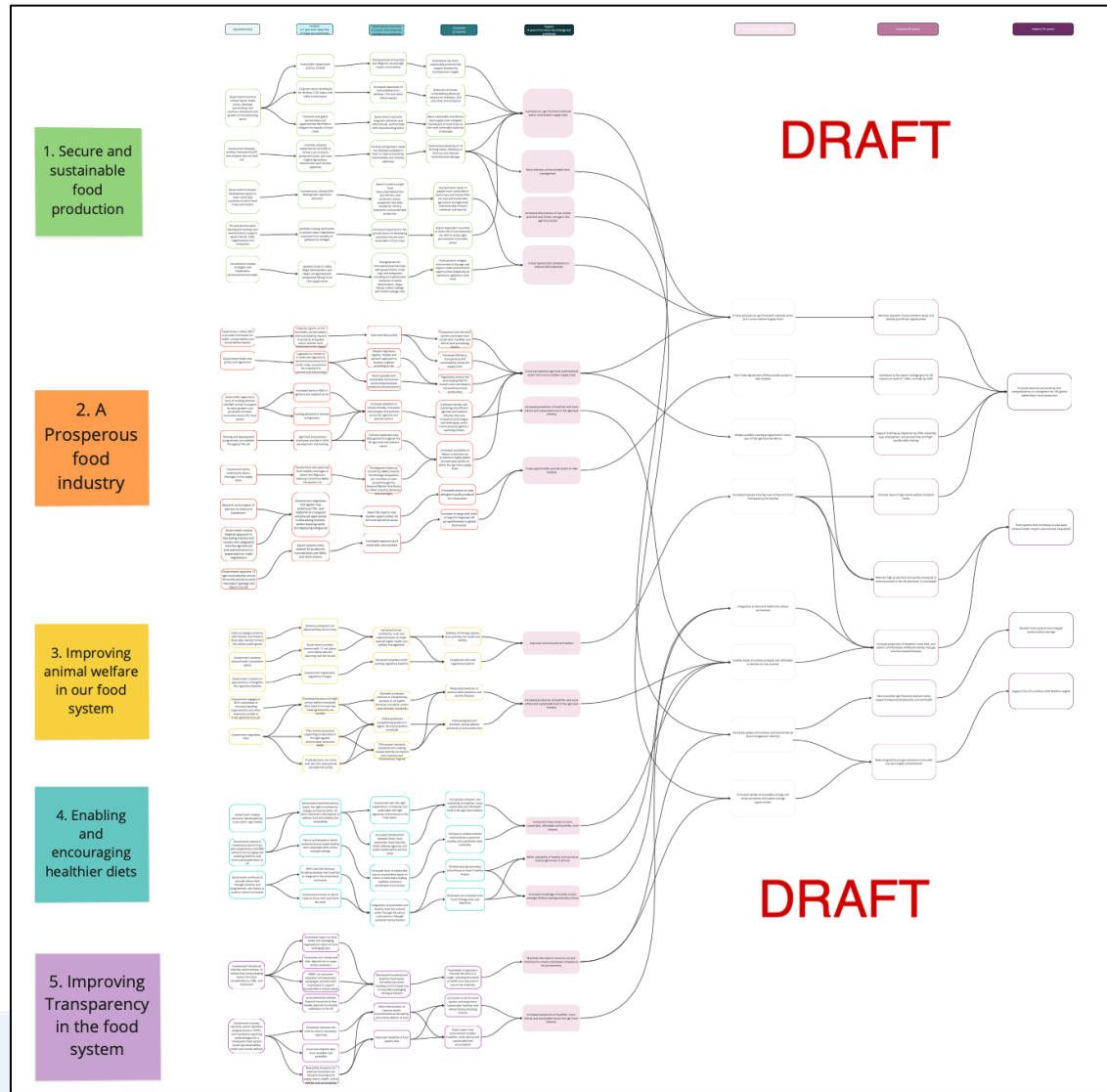
**Case study:** DLUHC ran Supported Housing Oversight Pilots across 5 Local Authorities and created a ToC to represent the programme



**Activity:** Do you think a ToC is useful here? Without knowing much about the programme, do you have any reflections on the ToC representation?



# ToCs can range from simple pictures to more complex analyses

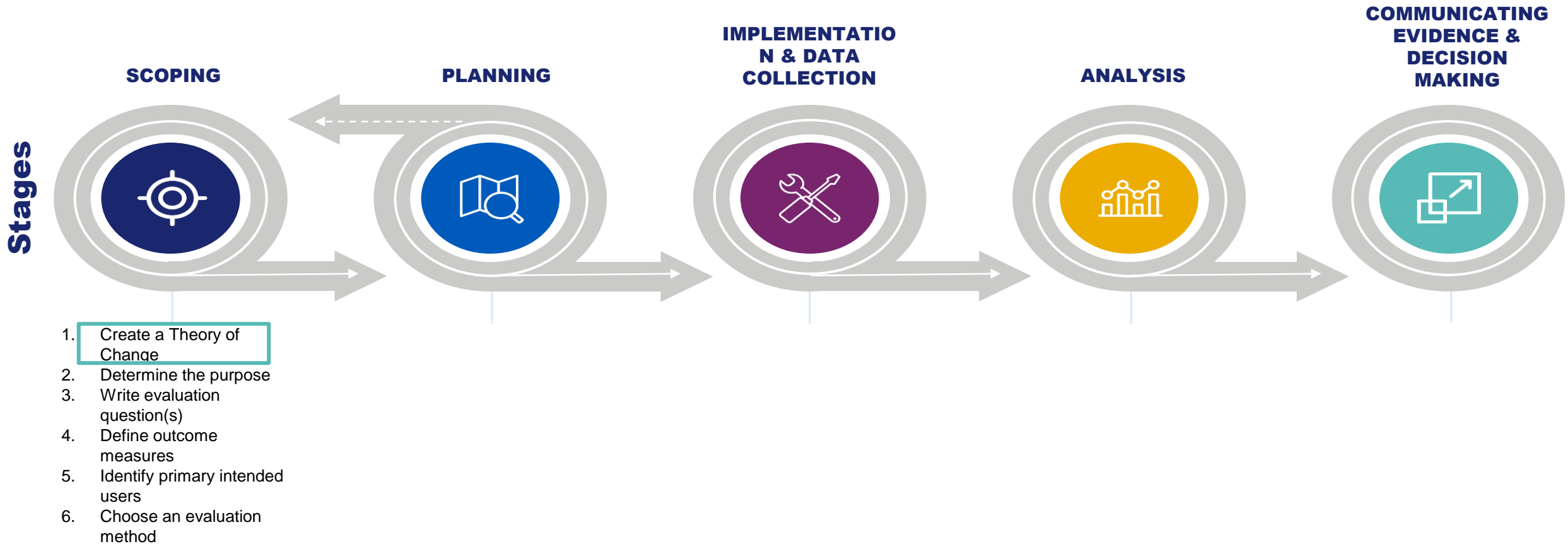


Example of a strategy-level Theory of Change using a nested approach, developed for the Food Strategy by DEFRA.

**See separate PDF document for more details.**

# Using a Theory of Change during an evaluation

# Stages of evaluation



# Using a ToC in the Scoping phase

---

During the **Scoping** phase, you can use the ToC to:

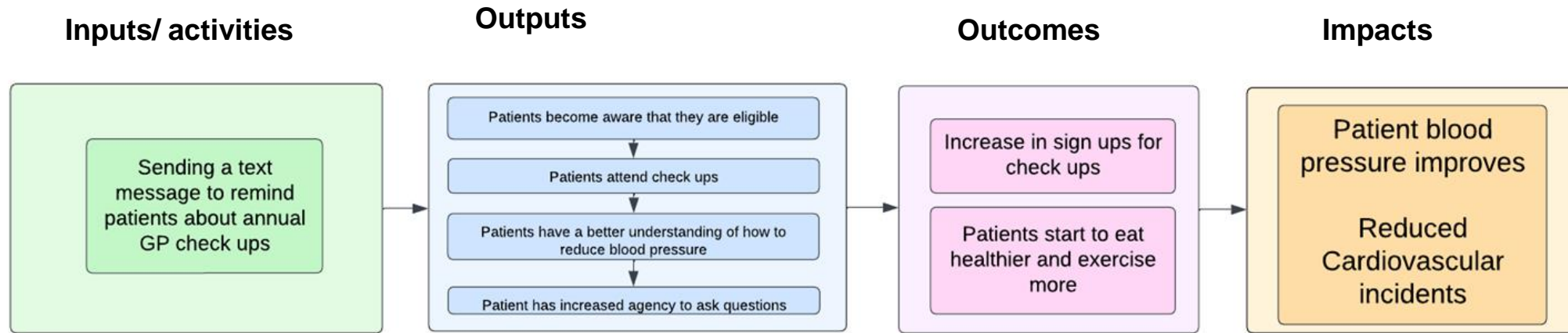


**Reach agreement with stakeholders**



**Prioritise evaluation questions based on existing evidence gaps and contextual / moderating factors**

# Using a ToC in the Scoping phase



## Assumptions / Context

- Whether the GP has the phone numbers of eligible patients
- Whether the patient has phone data to receive the messages



**Activity:** What are some evaluation questions that might arise from our Blood Pressure programme ToC?

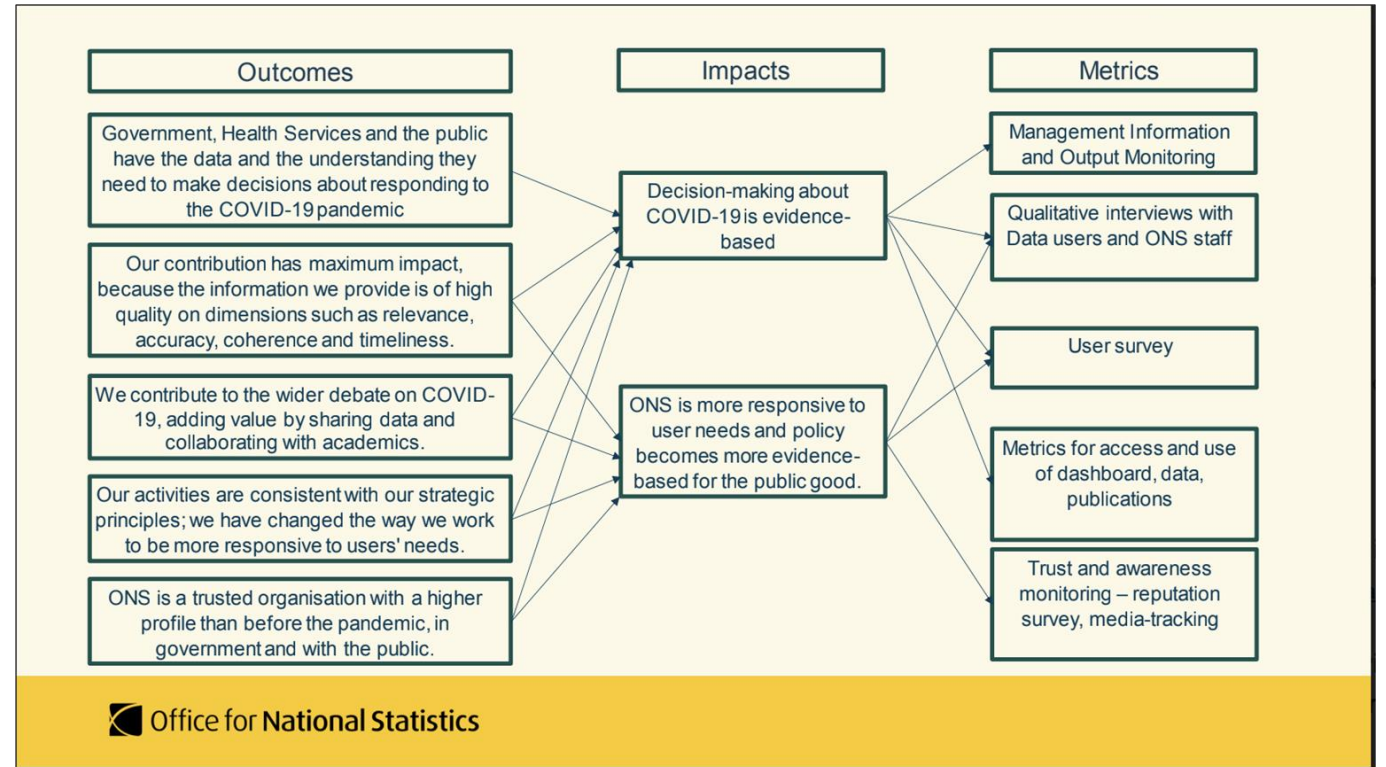


# Using a ToC in the Scoping phase of the ONS Infection Survey

Case study: When scoping the evaluation of the Covid Infection Survey (CIS), the ONS ran an interactive ToC workshop to:

- Engage senior leaders with the model
- Agree what the programme aimed to achieve

This ensured that all the key outcomes and impacts that the programme was expected to deliver were captured and included in the evaluation design.



# Using a ToC in the Planning phase

During the **Planning** phase, you can use a ToC to:



Select outcome measures



Select data collection methods



Create research materials

Creating a ToC early on enabled the ONS to identify the outcomes and impacts they expected to see in their evaluation findings, which informed the evaluation design and interview discussion guides.



**Activity:** Imagine you can't measure blood pressure or attendance at the appointment.

- **List** some additional outcome measures you could use.
- **Categorise your ideas** into long term and intermediate outcomes.

*These don't have to be perfect!*

# Using a ToC in the Implementation & Data Collection phase

During the **Implementation** phase, you can use a ToC to:



**Organise emerging findings**



**Monitor implementation**



**Activity:** Imagine that network outage means only 5% of your study population receives a text message. Would you need to take action?

# Using a ToC in the Analysis phase

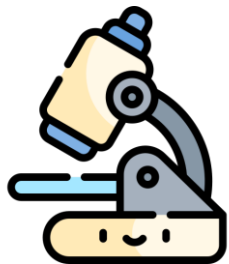
---

During the **Analysis** phase, you can use a ToC to:



**Categorise findings**

The ToC helped the ONS to identify which results of the programme were expected or unexpected. This enabled the team to draw out key learnings for future programme delivery.

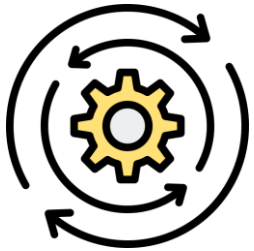


**Investigate why a programme did or didn't work**

# Using a ToC in the Communicating Evidence & Decision Making phase

---

During the **Communicating Evidence & Decision Making** phase, you can use a ToC to:



**Refine the programme model**



**Structure final report**

# Building a Theory of Change

# How do you create a ToC?

---

ToCs are typically created during **collaborative workshops** with key stakeholders during the Scoping phase.

The process of creating a ToC is **iterative**.

There are three stages of running a ToC workshop:

1. Before the session
2. During the session
3. After the session



# Before the Session

---

1. **Schedule your workshop**
2. **Invite participants**
3. **Brief participants**
4. **Identify a main presenter**
5. **Identify the facilitators**
6. **Decide on the software/ materials you need**



**Activity: Who would you want to invite to the ToC workshop for the blood pressure programme?**



# TiDieR checklist

---

## **BRIEF NAME**

1. Provide the name or a phrase that describes the intervention.

## **WHY**

2. Describe any rationale, theory, or goal of the elements essential to the intervention.

## **WHAT**

3. **Materials:** Describe any physical or informational materials used in the intervention, including those provided to participants or used in intervention delivery or in training of intervention providers. Provide information on where the materials can be accessed (e.g. online appendix, URL).
4. **Procedures:** Describe each of the procedures, activities, and/or processes used in the intervention, including any enabling or support activities.

## **WHO PROVIDED**

5. For each category of intervention provider (e.g. psychologist, nursing assistant), describe their expertise, background and any specific training given.

## **HOW**

6. Describe the modes of delivery (e.g. face-to-face or by some other mechanism, such as internet or telephone) of the intervention and whether it was provided individually or in a group.

## **WHERE**

7. Describe the type(s) of location(s) where the intervention occurred, including any necessary infrastructure or relevant features.

# During the Session

## Example session agenda - 90 min workshop

#	Agenda	Description	Timing
1	Introduction	Introduce the session	10 mins
2	Overview of ToC	Explain the components of a ToC	10 mins
3	TiDieR Check	Review or complete	10 mins
4	Breakout Groups to develop ToC model	Develop ToC model. Map out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Activities</li><li>• Outputs</li><li>• Outcomes</li><li>• Impacts</li></ul>	50 mins
5	Feedback and Close	Collect group feedback	10 mins

### Prompts to aid you in your workshop

#### Map out the activities:

- What does your project involve?
- Describe the programme in as much detail as possible.

#### Map out outcomes

- What are you trying to achieve/what is your goal?

#### Map out the outputs:

- What needs to happen to allow you to reach your goals?
- What are the changes that need to occur for it to happen?
- Can you link them to specific activities?

#### Map out moderating factors:

- What makes it work?
- What could go wrong?
- Is there anything within your context that makes it work particularly well or not so well?

# After the Session

---

1. Organise your notes
2. Develop your model
3. Gather feedback
4. Incorporate feedback

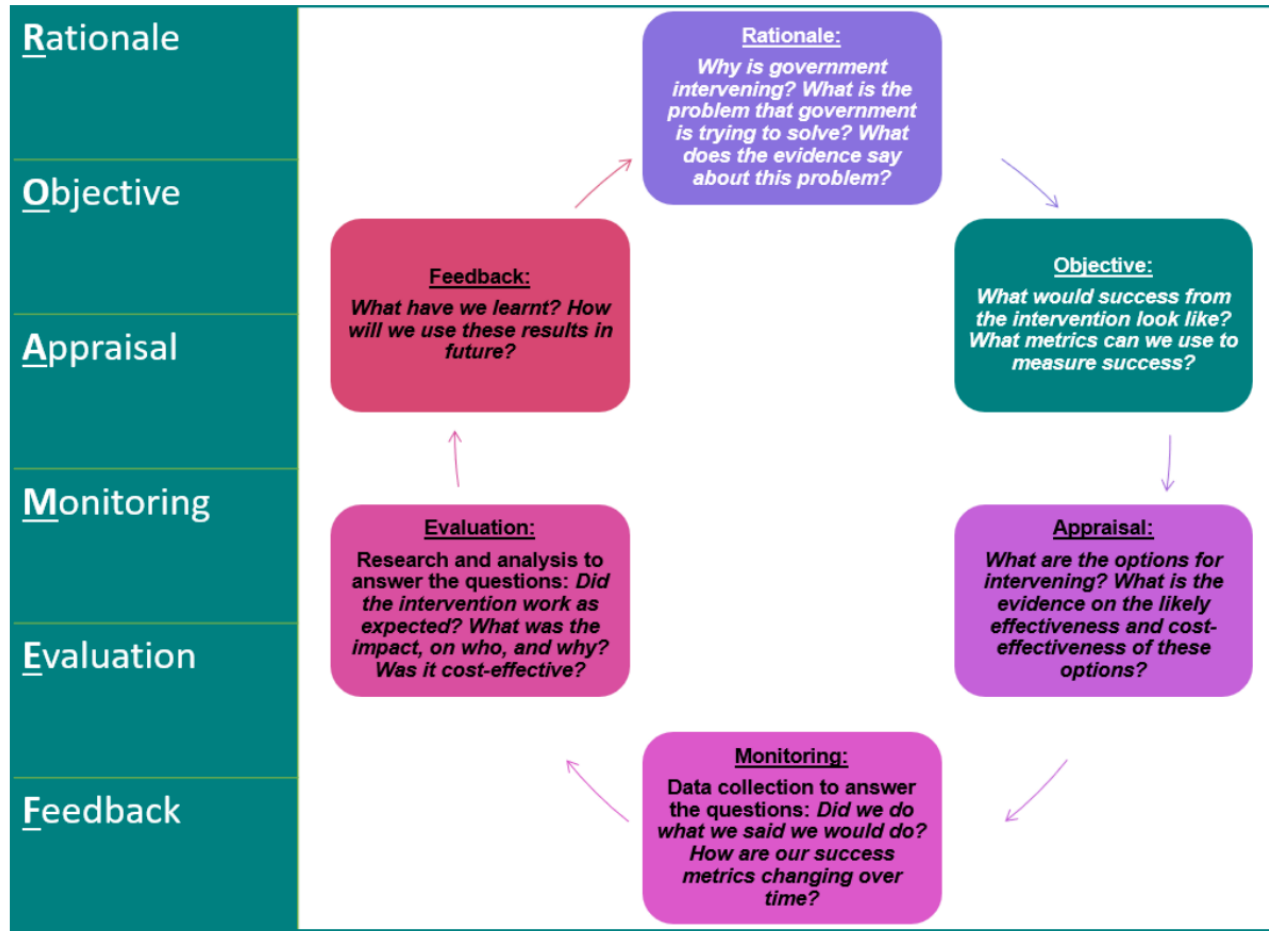
**Activity:** Try to group the following moderating factors into two themed groups:



- Ethnicity
- Doctor's rapport with patient
- Doctor's knowledge of blood pressure
- Gender
- Socioeconomic status
- Doctor's information about healthy diet

# Advocacy and application of learning

# Including Theory of Change across the policy lifecycle



**Activity:** How does what you have learned today fit into the ROAMEF cycle?

- Think about an upcoming or current evaluation or policy you are involved in. How can you apply your learning from this module to influence that work?
- What barriers exist? How do you push through? What people or resources can support you?
- Write an intention for how you will use this in your work in the next 1-2 months.

# Summary

---

In this module, we have learned:

- What a Theory of Change is and its key elements (inputs, outputs, outcomes, impacts).
- Factors to consider when building a Theory of Change.
- Theories of Change can illustrate simple interventions or more complex programmes.
- How to use a Theory of Change at all stages of an evaluation.
- How to create a Theory of Change, including:
  - How to run a ToC workshop
  - Select the right stakeholders to attend
  - How to map out activities, outcomes, outputs and moderating factors
  - Recognise logical links between elements in a ToC
- To integrate a ToC into a wider evaluation framework
- To contrast various evaluation methods based on the implementation outlined in the ToC
- To examine appropriate outcome and monitoring measures for an evaluation based on the ToC

# Further resources

---

Resource
<a href="#">Government Analysis Function</a> : Theory of Change toolkit
<a href="#">The Magenta Book</a> : Central Government guidance on evaluation
<a href="#">EIF</a> : Developing a good Theory of Change (video)
<a href="#">EIF</a> : Running a Theory of Change workshop
<a href="#">TASO</a> : Establishing a Theory of Change model (video)
<a href="#">TIDieR checklist</a>
<a href="#">The Green Book</a>
<a href="#">Theory of Change creation software</a>