

# WREN wheel [background and context]

With dual expertise in people-centred design and digital transformation, Phillippa Rose and Victoria Betton have developed the WREN wheel as a deliberative tool to aid critical reflection in the design journey.

Through our tacit experience in the health sector, we noticed an absence of holistic, reflective thinking whereby deployment of technologies is elevated over use and adoption by patients, citizens and employees. Considerations of equity and environmental sustainability are largely ignored or invisible in over-stretched organisational contexts, where there is limited capacity and capability to truly understand the problem to be solved and enable adoption of digital technologies within complex systems.

This is also our experience, in other sectors, notably, Higher Education. In Transforming Higher Education with Human Centred Design anthology to be published in 2024, Phillippa Rose and Sharon Jones make the case that people-centred design offers more than a method for improving services for users - people-centred design disrupts thinking, broadens

perspectives and builds capability to surface innovation in group settings. Drawing upon our combined experience, we propose that humility, and making thinking visible are foundational competencies in developing a people-centred design mindset.

WREN is influenced by, but intentionally moves beyond, the IDEO Design Thinking framework which combines 'desirability', 'feasibility' and 'viability' lenses. It is also influenced by 'Jobs-To-Be-Done' theory, the NASSS Framework and 'Doughnut Economics'. WREN seeks to expand focus beyond end users of digital systems, adopting a more relational ecosystem view, incorporating social and environmental factors. Each lens is assessed separately and then reviewed in combination at different points in the digital transformation journey.

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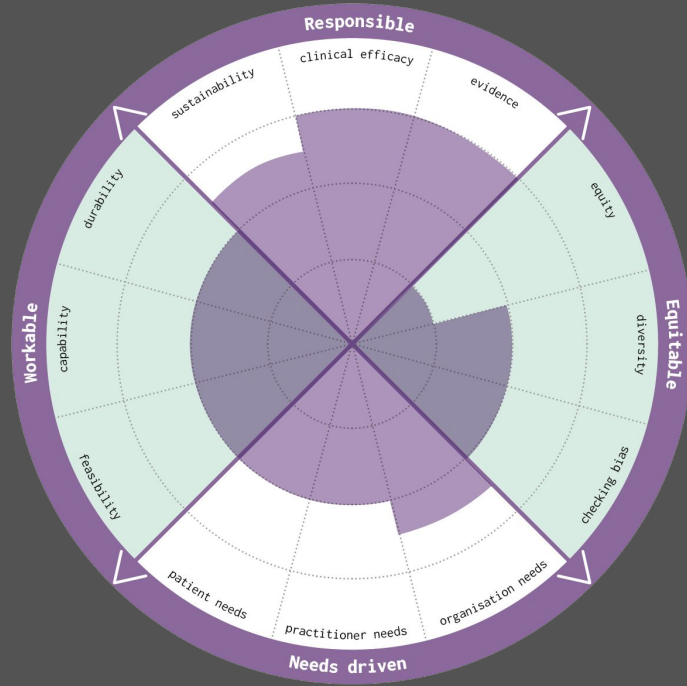


Fig. 1: Health sector completed example

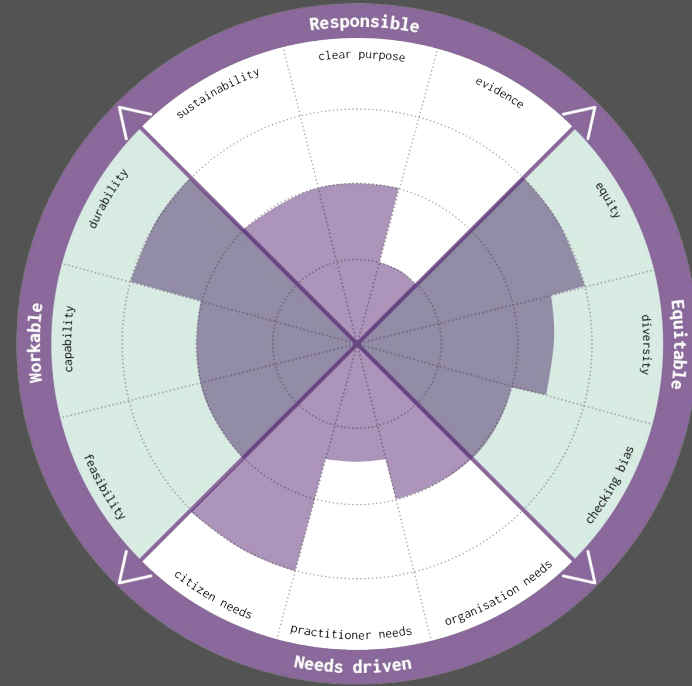


Fig. 2: Universal completed example

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## The key differences are:

1. Under the 'Responsible' lens, in the universal version we cite 'clarity of purpose' as a strategic consideration, which is replaced with 'clinical efficacy' in the health sector version as a key consideration in relation to governance
2. Under the 'Needs driven' lens in the universal version we cite 'citizen needs', whereas in the health sector WREN wheel this is replaced with 'patient needs' as more context specific.

Although we included a score-card element, the WREN wheel is not designed as a transactional tool. The score-card element was included to focus group discussion and reach alignment upon which topics to prioritise for further development, bringing together different perspectives.

In summary, the WREN wheel is a practical tool crafted and validated for use in service design (to aid review of current state services or in prioritisation of future state concepts).

It represents a forward-looking response to the dynamic evolution of our planetary and societal values, as well as paradigm shifts in systemic design.

WREN has been developed iteratively in 2023 through use in University of the Arts London, two NHS trusts and the Youth Futures Foundation. We now offer the universal WREN wheel to those involved in design and those involved in digital transformation to try out WREN and give us your feedback.

Please email [phillippa@current.works](mailto:phillippa@current.works) or [hello@peopledotcom.com](mailto:hello@peopledotcom.com) for information, or to enquire about the healthcare version of WREN.