United Nations University
Operating Unit on Policy-Driven Electronic Governance

From digital by default to government by foresight

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Public service delivery under pressure

- Ageing populations are changing demand for social security and public services.
- Financial commitments are growing within constrained resources.
- Workforce shortages limit capacity to expand service delivery.

NORWAY

Double the proportion of seniors
Population aged 80+ by 2050.

NOK 95+ billion in spending
Additional annual National Insurance expenditure, 2025-2035 in constant 2026 prices.

9,200 employee gap
Health, nursing and care shortage, 2026.

SSB (2026) - National population projections
NAV (2026) - National Insurance projections, 2015–2035
NAV (2026) - Employer survey

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Growing demand for social security services

- Demographic change increases demand for assessment, equipment and support.
- Service delivery must coordinate across organisational boundaries.
- Early intervention offers an opportunity to respond differently.

NAV: 27+% more devices needed

Projected annual assistive-device loan users, 2024-2035.

OECD: Seniors as a proportion raise from 33% to 52%

People aged 65+ per 100 aged in 2025 compared with 2050 (projected).

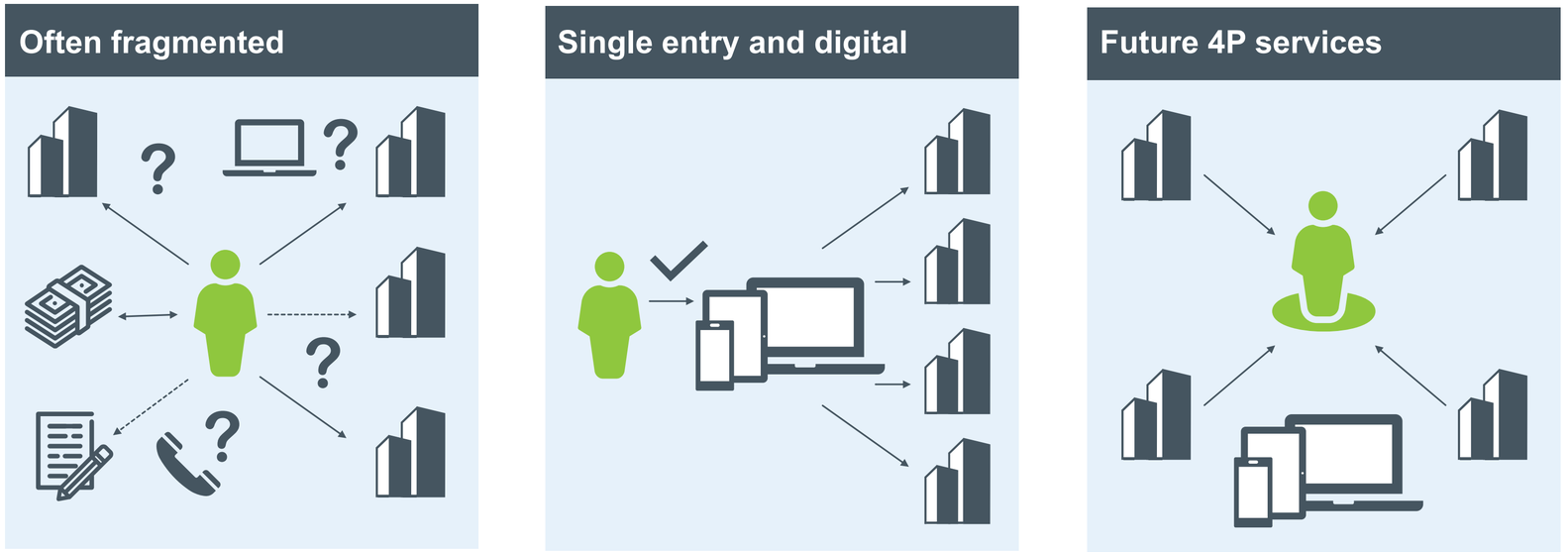
NAV (2025) - Assistive-device projections, Table 1

OECD (2025) - Pensions at a Glance

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The opportunity: Next-gen 4P public services

Services must be design around user's needs.



- **Preventive:** address needs before problems escalate.
- **Predictive:** anticipate likely needs.
- **Proactive:** initiate support before people ask.
- **Personalised:** adapt to individual circumstances.

Data reuse, interoperable systems and AI support the 4Ps.

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Source: Meyerhoff Nielsen (2022)

Capacity for change

- Daily operations compete with transformation for time and resources.
- Innovation requires changes in behaviour, incentives and established practices.
- Political and organisational risk aversion can discourage experimentation.
- Workforce renewal requires skills development and knowledge transfer.

27.1%

NAV

Central administration employees aged 55+ across the

OECD

2023 data, published in 2025.

OECD (2025) - Government at a Glance; data for 2023

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Institutional boundaries and regulation must be broken down

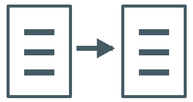
- People’s needs cross organisational and governmental boundaries.
- Responsibilities, budgets and accountability remain divided.
- Legal frameworks shape eligibility, processes and service design.
- Scaling innovation requires changes beyond the individual pilot.

What is stopping us?

If we have the technology, data and insights to anticipate people's needs, what must change to make 4P services part of everyday service delivery?

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The solution is anchored in a holistic approach to innovation



Process innovation: simplify workflows and remove unnecessary steps.



Service and product innovation: design around needs and outcomes.



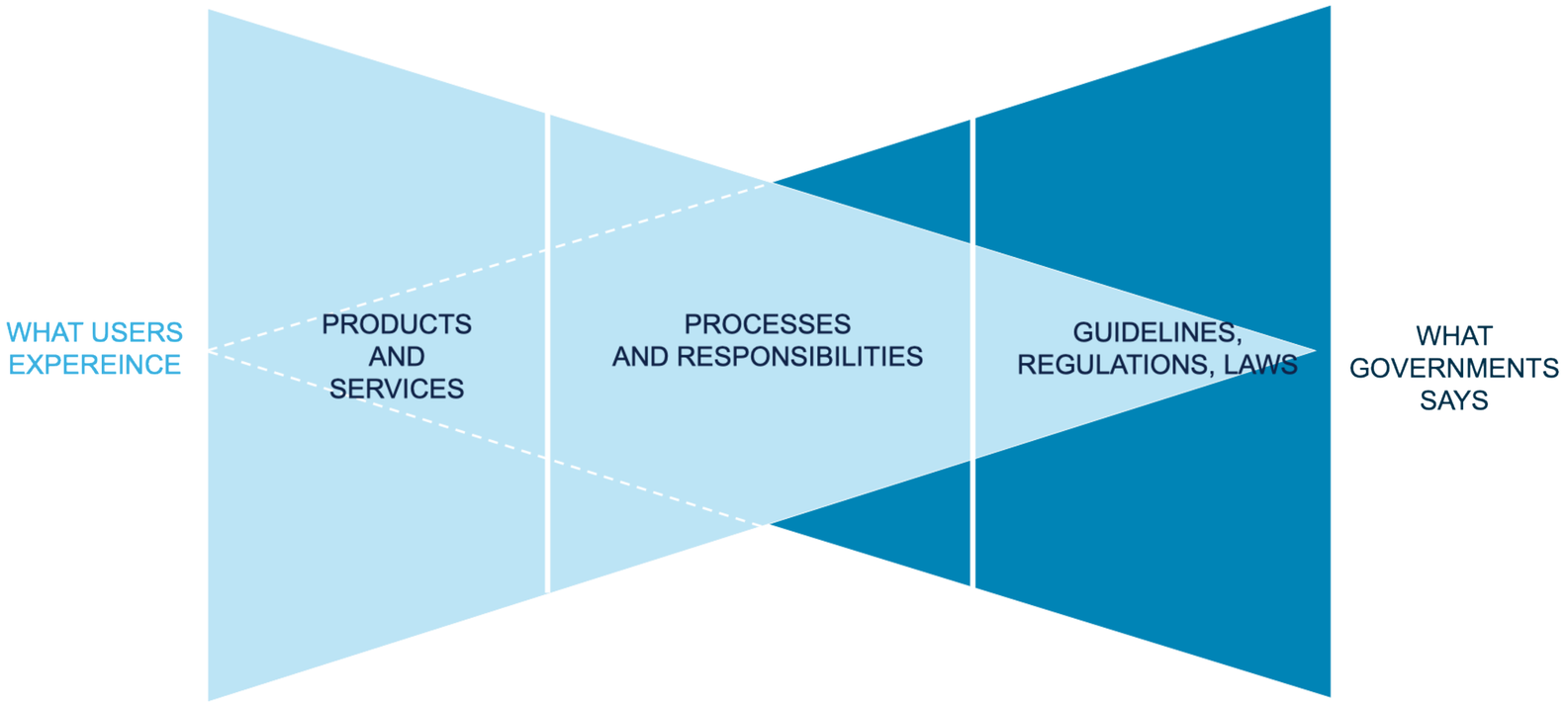
Organisational innovation: align responsibilities and collaboration.



Regulatory innovation: review eligibility and delivery requirements.

Four types of innovation must be taken as a whole

- Inclusive services support uptake, satisfaction and trust.
- Aligned processes and responsibilities support efficient delivery.
- Regulatory change can enable better services and policy outcomes
- Accessibility and customer-centric design are investments in productivity, user-satisfaction and legitimacy.

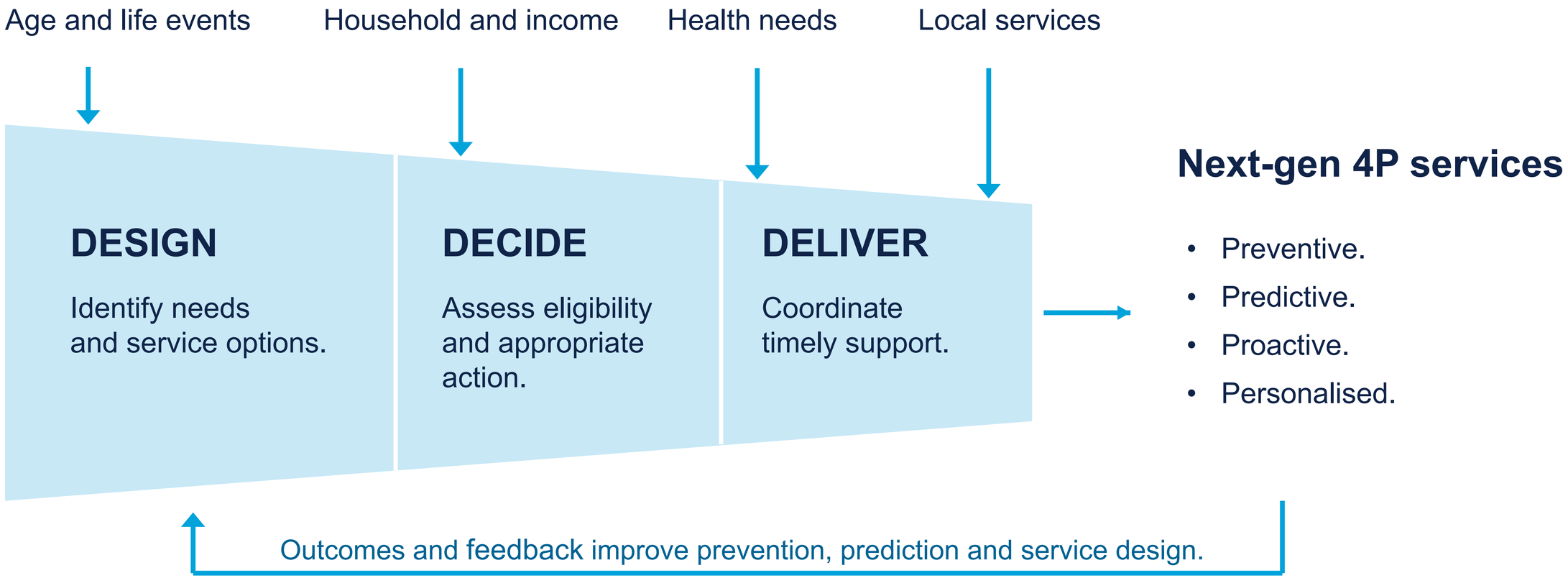


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Source: Meyerhoff Nielsen (2025)

Design, decide and deliver with data

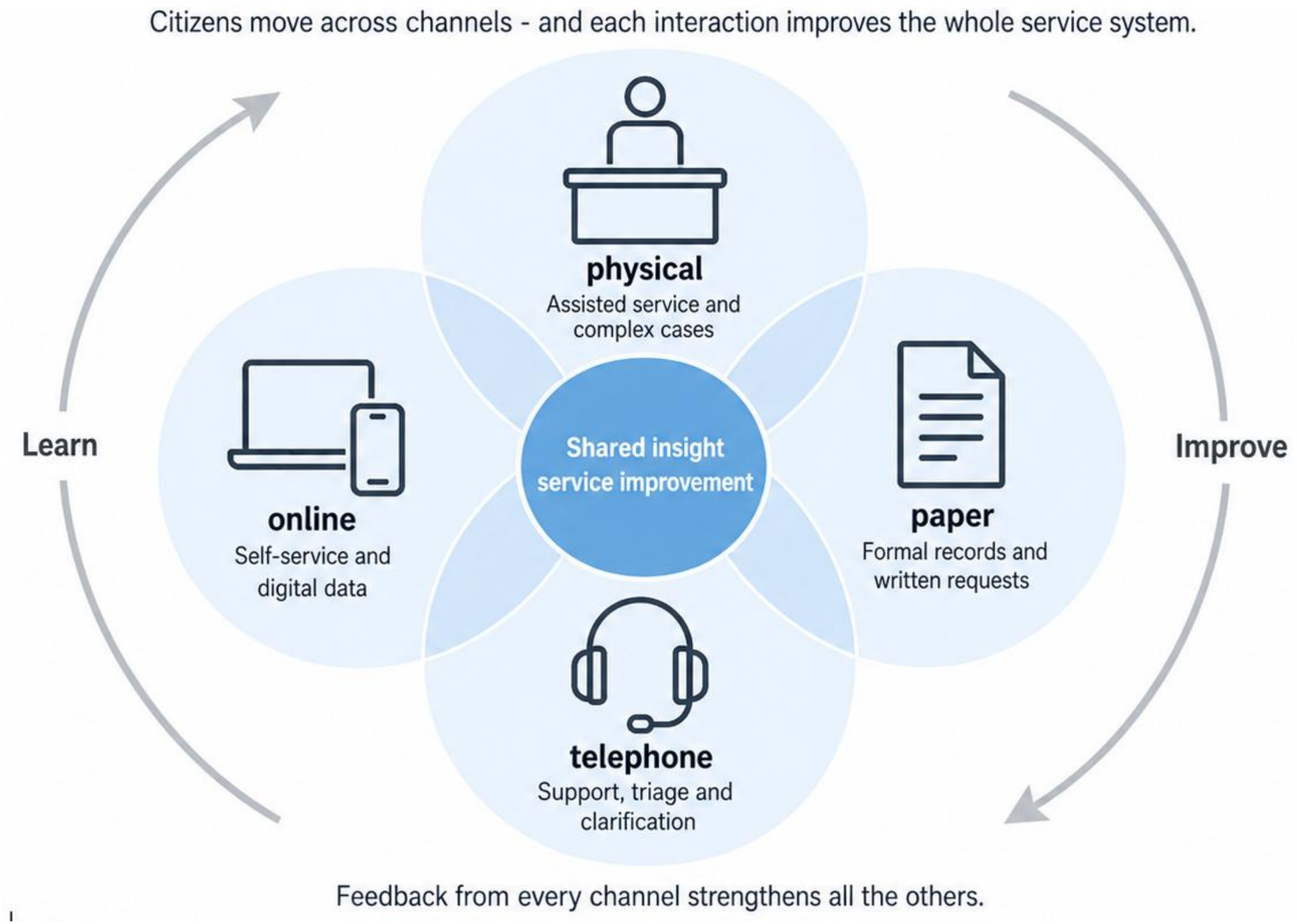
Funnels are good, data and personal indicators useful for design and delivery



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Source: Meyerhoff Nielsen, AI-generated (2026)

Feedback loops are essential for insights, continuous improvement and innovation



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Source: Meyerhoff Nielsen, AI-generated (2025)

The solution is anchored in trust, collaboration and accountability

- Coordinate ownership, funding and accountability across agencies.
- Reuse data and shared capabilities where legally permitted.
- Explain decisions and enable correction, challenge and human support.
- Assess inclusion and outcomes alongside administrative efficiency.

Start small, scale what works

Government by foresight requires that we develop the ability to act earlier on what we can anticipate.

- Select a specific need and define measurable outcomes.
- Take a holistic approach with the user at the center.
- Completely reimagine the service, its processes, organisational setting and adjust regulatory requirements.
- Give multidisciplinary teams time and authority to experiment.
- Evaluate results and scale quickly when the evidence supports it.

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