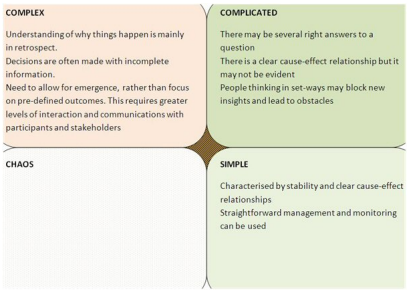
Behaviour change interventions are often planned and evaluated as simple, linear processes of change. Snowden & Boone (2007) suggest that cultural change, amongst other, requires an understanding of complexity and how this impacts on decision making (see figure below). They called this the Cynefin Framework. A complex system is noted to have the following characteristics (Snowden & Boone, 2007: 3):

- It involves large numbers of interacting elements
- The interactions are nonlinear, and minor changes can produce disproportionately major consequences.
- The system is dynamic, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and the solutions can't be imposed. This is frequently referred to as emergence.
- The system has a history, and the past is integrated with the present; the elements evolve with one another and with the environment; and the evolution is irreversible.
- Though a complex system may, in retrospect, appear ordered and predictable, hindsight does not lead to foresight because the external conditions and systems constantly change.

Complex systems require different management and evaluation frameworks

Snowden & Boone (2007)




## Further Links & Resources

If you want to find out more about complexity, or the **Cynefin Framework**, see:

A Simple Explanation of the Cynefin Framework from Anecdote

The Cynefin Framework explained by David Snowden

A Complexity Science Primer