

WHAT IS A TEAM'S

SOCIAL CONTRACT?

PATIENT ZERO*

THE GENERAL IDEA:

A written set of agreements a team makes about how they'll work together. Some teams sit in a workshop to draft theirs; some just have conversations. You can run it either way. I find a short team workshop covering four areas does the job.

| LOGISTICS

When do we meet, and when do we *not*? In person, virtual, hybrid? Where do decisions get recorded, and where do they get communicated? Which channel is for what? Slack for chat, email for sign-off, Confluence for the record.

| CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

What decisions does this team actually own? How do we disagree safely? What's *our* version of the 24-hour rule? Naming this before there's conflict is much easier than naming it during one.

| SOCIAL CONVENTIONS

What can we count on from each other? What behaviour is in bounds, and what's out? What makes things uncomfortable that we should just avoid?

| VALUES & COMMITMENT

What do we need to add to make sure we're aligned? How do new team members get onboarded into the contract? What happens if someone breaks it?

Then, and this is the most important bit, everyone signs up to it. Not metaphorically. Verbally, in the room. It's not a contract if no one explicitly agrees to it.