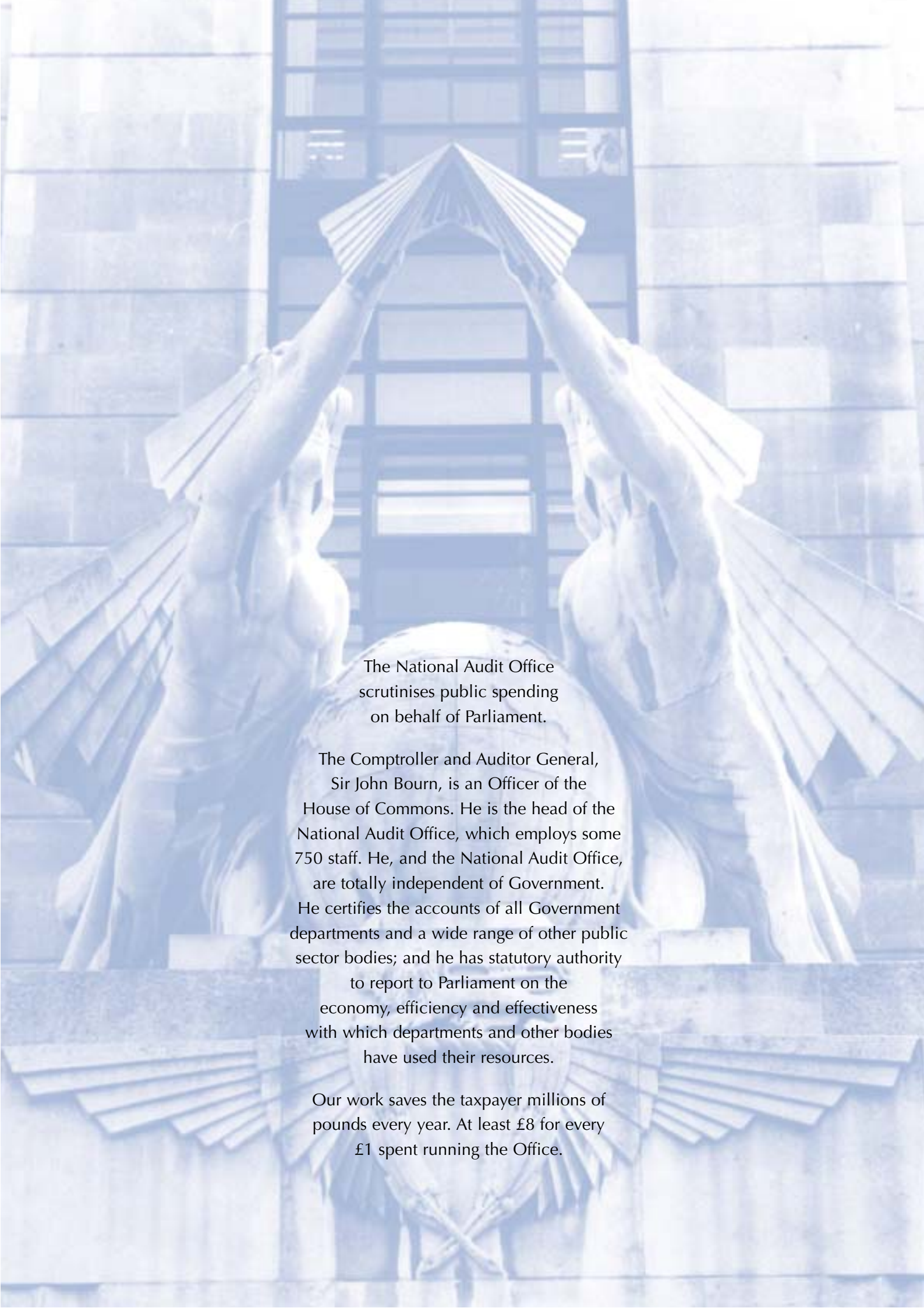


# Joining Up to Improve Public Services

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL  
HC 383 Session 2001-2002: 7 December 2001



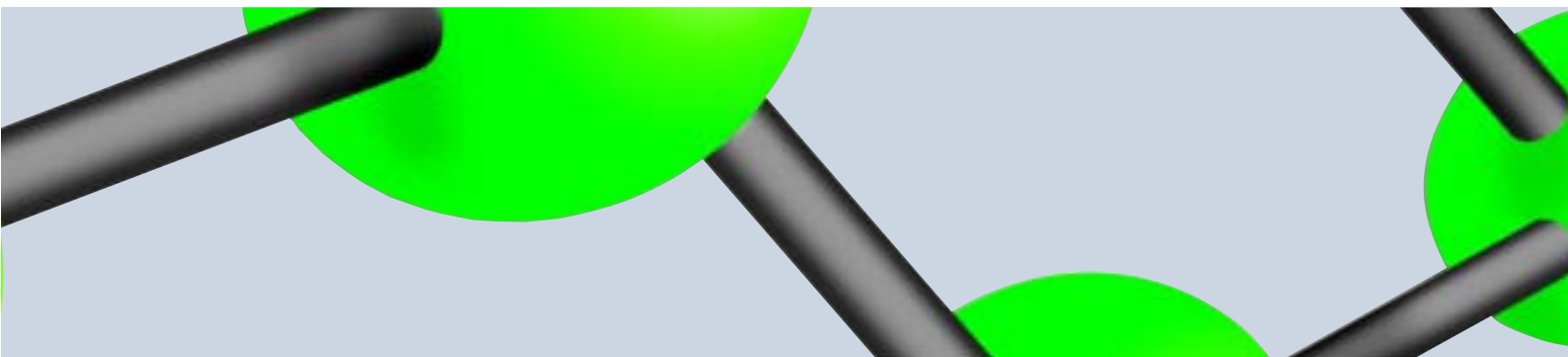


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# Joining Up to Improve Public Services



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This report has been prepared under Section 6 of the National Audit Act 1983 for presentation to the House of Commons in accordance with Section 9 of the Act.

**John Bourn** National Audit Office  
Comptroller and Auditor General 26 November 2001

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NOP Consumer Ltd ran the focus groups of parents and rough sleepers.

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Sure Start Aylesbury Plus - pages 5, 27, 30, 32, 42, 76, and 82

# executive summary

- 1 Many organisations are involved in delivering public services - for example, support and advice for the elderly is provided by the NHS, the Department for Work and Pensions, local authority social services departments, private sector providers of residential care and the voluntary sector. How well such organisations work together and co-ordinate their activities can have a significant impact on the quality of public services.
- 2 In the past departments have often been concerned exclusively with achieving their own specific objectives reflecting responsibilities and funding which they can directly control. While this can be effective in delivering many of the Government's priorities, it can result in departments adopting a too narrow "silo" approach and not considering the wider contribution which they can make to cross-cutting programmes for groups such as children, the elderly and the long term unemployed. As Sue Richards, Professor of Public Management, University of Birmingham highlights in her research paper<sup>1</sup> which sets out an analysis of the public policy problems that joined up government is seeking to address, many of the most difficult issues faced by society - drug abuse, social deprivation, juvenile crime and inner city decline cut across traditional departmental responsibilities. They require a co-ordinated and combined response by departments, local authorities and other bodies in delivering public services.
- 3 The Government requires public, private and voluntary organisations involved in delivering public services to work together much more to design programmes that are better interconnected and mutually supportive thus increasing their chances of success and their overall quality (Figure 2). The Modernising Government White Paper (Cm 4310) published in March 1999 called for public sector staff to work in partnership across organisational boundaries to deliver integrated or seamless services. The Modernising Government Action Plan, published July 1999, along with subsequent progress reports, set out a range of initiatives and activities for departments to support the objective of joint working.

## 1 Joint working or "joined up" government

**Joint working or "joined up" government** is the bringing together of a number of public, private and voluntary sector bodies to work across organisational boundaries towards a common goal.

Joint working can take different forms:

**Realigning organisational boundaries-** bringing together the whole or parts of two or more organisations to create a new organisation.

**Formal partnerships** - working together by contract, protocol or framework agreement.

**Informal partnerships** - working together by liaison, consultation or unwritten mutual agreement.

*Source: National Audit Office examination of joint working initiatives*

<sup>1</sup> Four types of joined up government and the problem of accountability, Sue Richards Professor of Public Management, University of Birmingham - Appendix 2 to this report.

## 2 How joint working can help improve public services

### Benefits

#### Joint working between:

- departments
- agencies
- voluntary organisations
- private sector



**Taking a wider view** so that departments' activities make a contribution to cross-cutting programmes for client groups such as the elderly and children.

**Tackling intractable social issues** such as drug abuse, rough sleeping, juvenile crime and inner city regeneration by promoting the design of programmes which are better interconnected and mutually supportive thus increasing their chances of success.

**Improving delivery** for example, by delivering services through "one stop shops", integrated with websites accessible 24 hours a day, and by citizens only having to provide information on a range of issues once and to one location.

**Promoting innovation** by bringing people together from different backgrounds and experiences.

**Improving cost effectiveness** of public services by removing overlaps and realising economies of scale.

*Source: National Audit Office*

- 4 Departments and their agencies are responsible for achieving more joint working when appropriate in the policies for which they are responsible. The Cabinet Office and the Treasury are responsible for promoting joint working and monitoring its achievement. They are doing this through funding new innovative joint working approaches, training, and disseminating good practice, particularly on refocusing services to meet customers' needs. The Office of Public Services Reform, established in 2001 and based in the Cabinet Office, will have a key role to play in improving joint working, through the scrutiny of structures, systems, incentives and skills currently in use across the public sector.
- 5 This report assesses the impact of five joint working initiatives in achieving improvements in public services for three client groups - rough sleepers, pre-school children and small and medium sized businesses (**Part 2**). Drawing on our fieldwork and research we also highlight a range of good practice likely to support successful joint working (**Part 3**). This good practice is intended to help departments which are considering establishing joint working arrangements.

## 3 Five initiatives

- Rough Sleepers
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships
- Sure Start
- Business Link partnerships
- British Trade International

## Achievements so far (Part 2)

- 6 Each of the five initiatives which we examined has in place joint working arrangements. These range from - establishing a completely new organisation such as British Trade International bringing together the responsibilities of two departments, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for international trade promotion and development - to formal contractual partnerships between local authorities, NHS Community Trusts and voluntary organisations such as those funded by the Sure Start Unit to improve the health and well-being of children particularly those most in need, and local business service partnerships established as non-profit companies (Figure 4).
- 7 Some of the initiatives are already achieving tangible benefits (Figure 5). The number of people counted as sleeping rough has reduced by 62 per cent from 1850 in June 1998 to 700 in June 2001. At 31 March 2001 the target to provide a free part-time nursery place for 4 year olds had been achieved as planned; free part-time places were available for over 50 per cent of 3 year olds; and 140,000 new childcare<sup>2</sup> places had been created exceeding the target of 82,000 by 70 per cent. The productivity and profitability of businesses assisted by Business Link partnerships is higher than those of non-assisted businesses. For the other initiatives - Sure Start and British Trade International - it is too early for there to be any measurable long term benefit although systems are in place or being established to assess their impact.
- 8 These early achievements demonstrate good progress in establishing joint working to improve public services. But getting a wide range of diverse organisations with different responsibilities to work together is a complex process. It requires a willingness on the part of service providers to adopt new ways of delivering public services and new management approaches. Not surprisingly there are a number of risks which require careful management:-
- 9 **Removing barriers to joint working.** Not all organisations are sufficiently committed to joint working. For example, the Rough Sleepers Unit has found in some instances when it is not providing direct funding that it can be difficult to influence local authorities and NHS Trusts to treat rough sleepers as a priority. Organisations need incentives to work together because their established practices and procedures can reinforce the primacy of achieving their own objectives rather than joining up. A change in culture is also needed so that those involved in joint working recognise that they may have to compromise and negotiate to ensure that the partnership achieves its goals.
- 10 **Better joint working by departments.** Some of the organisations involved in local partnerships told us that while joint working was now much better locally, they considered that departments needed to work together more centrally. This was particularly so where there was no dedicated central unit such as Sure Start giving strategic direction. Cross-cutting Public Service Agreements<sup>3</sup> which include joint objectives and targets which several departments share responsibility for achieving should promote better co-ordination. To be effective these agreements will, however, require implementation plans designed and delivered by departments working together.

2 *Childcare is the provision of a safe environment for children while parents are at work. It does not normally involve any element of teaching. Childcare can be provided by public, private and voluntary organisations.*

3 *Public Service Agreements set out each department's objectives for public services with measurable targets for the delivery of the objectives. There are currently four cross-cutting Public Service Agreements covering the Criminal Justice System, Action against Illegal Drugs, Sure Start and Welfare to Work.*



#### 4 Client groups and joint working initiatives covered by this report

Client group	Initiative	Expenditure	Partners	Key features of joint working
<b>Rough Sleepers</b> An estimated 10,000 people slept rough at some time during 1998 in England, a smaller number sleep rough for prolonged periods of time	<b>Rough Sleepers Unit</b> to reduce the numbers sleeping rough	£200 million over the three years April 1999 - March 2002	Voluntary organisations Local authorities Health services Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ dedicated central government unit with a pooled budget to co-ordinate activity</li> <li>■ outside London, partners agree a strategy to tackle rough sleeping</li> <li>■ in London, voluntary agencies work together to provide support to individuals</li> </ul>
<b>Pre-school children</b> There are around 4 million children aged 0-4 years in the UK	<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships</b> to improve the co-ordination and delivery of childcare and early education services	£300 million in 2000-01 rising to £650 million in 2003-04	Local authorities Private nursery and childcare providers Voluntary nursery and childcare providers Schools Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ broad partnership of providers and other stakeholders</li> <li>■ work together to assess need in a geographic area and plan how to meet it</li> </ul>
	<b>Sure Start</b> to improve the health and well being of children and their families so that children are sufficiently well developed to flourish when they start school	£81 million in 1999-2000 rising to £499 million in 2003-04	Community groups Voluntary organisations Local authorities Health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ dedicated central government unit with a single budget to co-ordinate activity</li> <li>■ multi-agency partnership to plan and deliver services to families in a neighbourhood</li> <li>■ emphasis on co-ordinated action and community involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Small and medium sized businesses</b> There are 3.7 million businesses in the UK of which almost all have fewer than 250 employees	<b>Business Link partnerships</b> to provide support for small businesses	£160 million a year	Learning and Skills Councils Local authorities Chambers of Commerce Enterprise Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ partnership of local business support services</li> <li>■ single point of access for businesses</li> <li>■ supported by a new central government agency, the Small Business Service</li> </ul>
	<b>British Trade International</b> help all businesses to develop new business overseas and improve existing service	£220 million a year	Foreign and Commonwealth Office Department of Trade and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ unique government partnership bringing staff from two departments together under unified management</li> <li>■ single point of contact to integrated support services for exporters</li> </ul>

## 5 Impact of joint working initiatives and how performance is measured

### How performance is measured

### Impact

### Initiative

#### Rough Sleepers

By a single measure - to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in England by at least two thirds from 1850 to around 600 by April 2002.

The number of people counted sleeping rough in England was 700 in June 2001, a reduction of 62 per cent from 1850 in June 1998.



#### Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

By measuring the number of nursery places for 3 and 4 year olds and the number of childcare places against the targets, for example to provide a free part time nursery place for two thirds of 3 year olds by March 2002.

At March 2001 all 4 year olds and over half of 3 year olds had a free part-time nursery education place and 140,000 new childcare places had been created (against a target of 82,000).



#### Sure Start

By a national evaluation and local evaluations of achievement by 2004 against four objectives and linked targets, for example to improve the health of young children by reducing the number of mothers who smoke during pregnancy by 10 per cent.

It is too soon to measure the impact of the initiative.



#### Business Link partnerships

By using a range of information to assess Business Link partnership performance including market penetration, customer satisfaction and impact on customer productivity and profitability.

Customer satisfaction with services was 75 per cent in 1997. Survey work in 2001, using different methodology, suggests satisfaction levels among the wider small and medium sized business community may now be lower, but more work is needed to provide firm data.



#### British Trade International

By measuring, for firms receiving assistance, the improvement in business performance of established exporters and new exporters against quantified targets.

Data collection and measurement systems are being developed, first results are not expected until 2002.



#### HOW JOINT WORKING INITIATIVES ASSESS CLIENT SATISFACTION

- **Customer surveys and consultation exercises**  
Business Link partnerships, British Trade Inter-national and Rough Sleepers Unit
- **National and local evaluations**  
Sure Start
- **Feedback from outreach workers**  
Rough Sleepers Unit

- 11 **Avoiding exclusion.** All the five joint working initiatives had been designed to ensure that there is equal access to the services for those intended to benefit from them. Often, however, the users of public services have varied needs - for example, Sure Start local programmes have many families on low incomes with low levels of education or who do not speak English fluently. To ensure that these families are not excluded Sure Start workers visit them in their homes to assess their needs and discuss the support available. The parents of pre-school children whom we consulted<sup>4</sup> welcomed the increase in childcare places. But parents, especially those on low incomes, often work shifts and weekends and said that they also needed high quality, inexpensive childcare outside normal weekday working hours. The Department for Education and Skills has assessed the needs of all parents, including these groups and is developing proposals to meet their requirements. These two examples illustrate that those involved in delivering public services need to assess carefully the requirements of client groups through consultation and research. In so doing departments should also consider the costs and benefits of different ways of meeting people's needs so as to adopt the most cost effective option.
- 12 **Informing intended beneficiaries of the services available.** For joined up services to be effective those intended to benefit must be aware of the support available to them and how to access it. For example, parents in our focus groups were less aware that the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships existed and suggested that more should be done to publicise the services which parents could call upon. Publicising and marketing services to maximise take up by those intended to benefit is very important.
- 13 **Changing behaviour.** Remedying long term social problems often requires changing people's behaviour particularly in encouraging them to take up services intended to help them. For example, the Rough Sleepers Unit and its partners have often had to devote considerable time persuading those living on the streets to accept the help available. Sustainable changes in behaviour are unlikely to be achieved in the short term; they usually require concentrated effort over a long period and this has to be taken account of in planning joint working initiatives.
- 14 **Ensuring benefits are sustainable.** Central specialist units such as those for Sure Start and Rough Sleepers are increasingly being established to give strategic direction in tackling social issues. Such units can promote joint working by bringing together staff from a number of departments and other organisations to integrate policy planning and service delivery both centrally and locally. While these specialist units are playing an important role in achieving more joint working, their long term success will depend on how well the new methods of working which they are promoting are accepted by departments and local agencies and become an integral part of their normal day to day working.
- 15 **Measuring performance.** Both those funding joint working initiatives and those involved in carrying them out need reliable and comprehensive information and performance targets to assess whether the initiatives are achieving their intended benefits and to take action to address shortfalls in performance. Each of the five initiatives have appropriate performance targets and systems for measuring their achievement as well as having procedures for assessing satisfaction with the services provided. Some of the targets are easily understood but others are more difficult to measure for example, improvements in the well-being of children and increases in the profitability of small businesses.

<sup>4</sup> We held 6 focus groups each consisting of between 7 and 10 parents of pre-school children. Separate groups of parents of pre-school children were held for Sure Start and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships.

- 16 Many of the initiatives rely on data collected on their behalf by partners or contractors and there is a need to ensure that such information is reliable and not at risk of misinterpretation. If performance targets are too narrowly defined they can have a perverse effect. For example, a school seeking to meet its targets and improve its position on a league table of school performance may decide to expel a difficult pupil who may ultimately become a charge on the social security budget if she or he is ill equipped for employment.<sup>5</sup>
- 17 **Assessing cost effectiveness.** Joint working may result in additional costs. Conversely by working together organisations can improve efficiency by removing overlaps and duplication in service delivery. The costs of joint working have to be considered in terms of sustainable improvements in public services. Evaluating the effectiveness of expenditure is difficult because of the many different organisations involved, who produce a broad range of impacts at different times, and the need to assess whether the impact is lasting. For example, constructing supported housing for rough sleepers takes longer to have an impact than an alcohol detoxification treatment lasting six months or a year.
- 18 Without carrying out a full evaluation, it is possible to make some assessment of the cost effectiveness of joint working. For example with Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, the average cost of providing a childcare place is £650, which compares with the average cost of £640 for providing an out of school childcare place under the previous arrangements. The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships ensure there are places for children of all ages rather than solely for those of school age as with the previous initiative. Places for pre-school children and those with special educational needs are more expensive to provide because the children need more support from staff and, in some instances, more specialised equipment. Conversely, before the establishment of the Rough Sleepers Unit the average cost of reducing the number of people counted sleeping rough by one was approximately £120,000 per person. The joint working initiative has decreased costs - the average cost of reducing rough sleeping is now about £70,000 per person (costs are in real terms).<sup>6</sup> This decrease suggests that the provision of more integrated services including health and social support is more cost effective in helping rough sleepers and preventing rough sleeping than the previous arrangements.
- 19 As yet because many of the joint working initiatives have not been long established there have been very few independent evaluations of their cost effectiveness. There is now a need for more detailed assessments of the cost effectiveness of different forms of joint working including their productivity; the difference which they make in terms of sustainable improvements in the quality of public services; and the contribution made by the different members of the joint working arrangement.

<sup>5</sup> *Measuring the Performance of Government Departments, HC 301, Session 2000-01, 22 March 2001, paragraphs 5 and 11 explain the potential for perverse behaviours in response to targets. Also see the report 'Truancy and Social Exclusion', Social Exclusion Unit, Cm 3957, May 1998'.*

<sup>6</sup> *Comparing the reduction in rough sleepers between 1998 and 1999 and between 1999 and 2001 with the expenditure on rough sleeping over these years. The difference in the number of people counted sleeping rough between two points in time reflects the change in the balance between those who have left the streets, those who move in and out of accommodation and the number of new people coming onto the streets. It does not measure the number of people housed in the period.*



- 20 Promoting accountability.** There are two aspects to accountability for public expenditure: (i) having reliable mechanisms for reporting expenditure and performance to those funding an initiative and ultimately to Parliament; and (ii) citizens having a means of redress where the quality of public services is poor. Joint working will involve a number of organisations possibly receiving funds from a number of different sources. Some of the organisations may be small and have limited experience of working in the public sector. For each joint working initiative the roles and responsibilities of partners, how their performance is to be measured and reported, and the accounting and audit arrangements to ensure propriety over public expenditure all need to be clearly set out and understood.
- 21** In addition, there should be well publicised ways for those intended to benefit from joint working initiatives to raise concerns if they are not satisfied with the services which they receive and for these concerns to be given serious consideration. For example with Sure Start, local partnerships agree which partner will be responsible for administering funding and producing accounts and agree also who is to be the lead partner to report performance to the Sure Start Unit. Each service provider operates their own complaints procedures as under partnership arrangements legal responsibility for quality of service remains with the organisation which provides the service.
- 22** For small community groups and voluntary organisations keeping the necessary records of expenditure and data on performance which are essential for accountability can be a considerable administrative and costly burden. In designing joint working initiatives departments need to consider how reporting and other associated procedures can be streamlined. In particular they should look for ways to integrate different reporting requirements and share information so that organisations only have to provide information in one format and to one location.

## How joint working can be made more successful (Part 3)

### Five requirements of joint working

- 23** Our examination identified five requirements which as a minimum are needed to promote successful joint working.

1

*Goals - working towards clearly defined, mutually valued, shared goals*

if objectives are unclear or not shared, partners may work towards different, incompatible goals and fail to achieve desired outcomes.

2

*Progress measurement - evaluating progress towards achieving the desired goal and taking remedial action when necessary*

joined up initiatives are no different from other activities in that their progress must be monitored and remedial action taken when performance is less than satisfactory.

3

*Resources - ensuring that sufficient and appropriate resources are available*

without sufficient resources including appropriate skills, a joint working initiative will not be capable of being sustained in the longer term; and value for money and propriety may be put at risk.

4

*Leadership - directing the team and the initiative towards the goal*

joined up initiatives can be difficult to keep on track because of the additional complexity arising from the number of players involved. Good leadership is important as part of the "glue" to hold the initiative together.

5

*Working well together - to achieve a shared responsibility*

if organisations do not establish good working relationships, based on mutual support and trust, acknowledging their differences and sharing information openly, then joint working will fail and improvements in public services will not be achieved.

## Key stages in designing joint working arrangements

- 24 The long term success of joint working initiatives depends ultimately on how well they are designed. Each of the above five requirements needs careful consideration in designing joint working arrangements, particularly in deciding:

### Who needs to be involved

This requires determining whether an existing partnership or organisation could take on a new role, and if not which organisations need to be part of the joint working arrangement. Departments need to balance involving all organisations and community groups who have an interest with avoiding the practical difficulties of organising and motivating large numbers of partners. There is no "one size fits" all for joint working. It should reflect the best way of delivering a service. Some Sure Start partnerships are companies limited by guarantee to enable them to contract for services; others have decided not to incorporate to give them greater flexibility. The geographical boundaries of partnerships should be coterminous with existing administrative boundaries whenever possible and new joint working initiatives should link effectively with existing initiatives both locally and within central government.

### What incentives are needed to reinforce joint working

Incentives can take different forms, strong leadership can be an important incentive particularly if this convinces participants of the high priority and commitment underpinning the joint working. The better the fit between the objectives of the initiative and those of partner organisations the easier it is to join up. Additional funds can be a powerful incentive to work together as can allowing partnerships greater flexibility in the use of resources. For example, Kent County Council has committed itself to getting all the different agencies in the county to work together to meet national targets to reduce social deprivation. If it achieves the targets the Council will receive a Government Performance Reward Grant of £26 million in addition to having more flexibility over its spending.

### What support is needed to improve the capacity of organisations to work together

Careful consideration needs to be given to how to build and develop the capacity of local community groups, and other organisations with limited experience of working in partnership, to join up and work together effectively. This can be done by providing (i) advice and guidance; (ii) expert assistance available locally - for example British Trade International has regional directors whose role is to support and manage the network of export advisers in Business Link partnerships; and (iii) learning networks including conferences, seminars, training events and local networking meetings - for example, the Sure Start Unit hosts a forum for questions and answers from partnerships on its website to share learning and good practice between programmes.

### How to provide funding in ways which promote joint working

Consideration needs to be given to whether it is important for the joint working arrangement to have flexibility in the way money is used or whether tighter control by the central unit or department responsible for the policy is needed to target spending on national priorities. In general it is better for joint working for the partnership to have control over its funds. Pooled budgets allow greater flexibility, make it easier for partnerships to design solutions that fit local circumstances and encourage partnerships to develop a strategic approach. For example, the Rough Sleepers Unit has brought together funding previously administered by several different government departments and agencies. This has enabled the Unit to have greater flexibility in pursuing its strategy to reduce rough sleeping. In this case, the freedom to direct spending is also buttressed by a specific target to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds over three years.

### How long should joint working last

Some partnerships are set up to achieve a defined goal within a set period of time and others are established to provide a continuous role and have no finite lifetime. Again there is no single approach which is appropriate for all. When designing an initiative, consideration needs to be given to which form is the most appropriate. For those with a finite lifetime the exit strategy should be designed to ensure that the outcome of the initiative is sustained. Those without finite lives will develop and evolve their ways of working and it is important that the partnerships are monitored to ensure that their work continues to have a purpose and value. The partnerships should be re-evaluated periodically, which may point to new objectives and incentives, to a reorganisation and relaunch, or that the joint working is no longer necessary. For example the Rough Sleepers Unit is planning a succession strategy designed to ensure that the reduction in numbers of rough sleepers is sustained when the Unit is wound up. The Business Link partnerships are an example of where the Small Business Service has taken the opportunity of reorganising and relaunching an existing initiative to improve quality of service.

### What accountability and regulatory framework will best support joint working

Accountability arrangements may differ depending on the nature of the joint working but as a minimum they should include:

- Clear definition of roles and responsibilities;
- Unambiguous targets and performance measures;
- Clear statement of those intended to benefit from the initiative;
- Reliable and regular performance information;
- Clear understanding of who is responsible for taking remedial action if needed;
- Audited financial statements; and
- Periodic independent evaluations

At the same time departments should seek to minimise the administrative burden on small organisations. Joined up programmes may also have implications for departmental structures. Programmes designed around client groups often cut across existing policy responsibilities and departments should consider whether their own organisational structures are appropriate to support the initiative at an early stage. For example, policy responsibility for nursery education and childcare in the Department for Education and Skills has been brought together within one unit. The Unit has specialist partnership advisers from local government, located in Government Offices for the Regions.



# Recommendations

- 25 The Modernising Government White Paper, together with the successive reports by the Cabinet Office and the Treasury, set out ways in which joint working can improve service delivery. To reinforce these messages and to realise the potential to improve public services by delivering them in a joined up way whilst securing value for money, we recommend:

## For the Cabinet Office

- 1 **Improve the dissemination of good practice on joint working.** The Cabinet Office have carried out considerable research into good practice in joint working and issued guidance on refocusing services to meet customers' needs. Many departments have also produced guidance based on their own experience of joint working. Most of this guidance has, however, been prepared by departments independently. To prevent the reinventing and rediscovery of similar lessons the time is now right for the Cabinet Office to evaluate existing guidance, and bring the key lessons together in a concise but comprehensive set of guidance for all those involved, or likely to become involved, in joint working. This could usefully include a self assessment tool to help partnerships evaluate how well their approach to joint working reflects good practice.

The Cabinet Office should also promote their website as a central source of advice and good practice with links to proven exemplar practice elsewhere which organisations can draw upon.

- 2 **Assess the benefits and disadvantages of different forms of joint working and the circumstances when they are most appropriate.** Joint working is taking a variety of different forms - from establishing new organisations such as British Trade International bringing together the responsibilities of two departments to having a dedicated single unit such as the Rough Sleepers Unit to give strategic direction and priority to tackling important social issues. Each of these forms of joint working have associated costs and benefits and their success in improving public services and remedying social and economic issues will depend on how well they are suited to the circumstances they have to deal with. The cost effectiveness of the different forms of joint working, and when they are likely to be most appropriate, needs to be carefully evaluated so that criteria can be produced to help departments decide which model to adopt.

## For the Treasury

- 3 **Disseminate the lessons learned from introducing cross-cutting Public Service Agreements to departments.** Cross-cutting Public Service Agreements have considerable potential to improve joint working between departments. They need, however, to be reinforced by carefully thought through and developed implementation plans designed and delivered by departments working together and working with local authorities and other bodies involved in delivering public services. Drawing on the work that was carried out as part of the 1998 and 2000 Spending Reviews the lessons learned from developing and implementing cross-cutting Public Service Agreements need to be evaluated and disseminated. This should cover how to set and secure commitment to shared goals, and how to develop reliable performance measurement systems for shared responsibilities.

## For Departments

- 26 Departments should ensure that their procedures and management approaches support joint working by:
- 4 **Identifying clearly when joint working is needed.** Departments need to consult widely with client groups and other departments and organisations delivering services to identify when there is a need for joint working. For example, joint working may be needed to:
  - address policy objectives or improve services that cut across existing departmental boundaries;
  - provide a single point of service to clients; whether by a case worker as the first point for assessing the need for and securing access to a range of support services such as health, counselling, housing and skills training; call centre; or as web-based services; and
  - improve value for money in delivering services, by reducing duplication, streamlining processes and realising efficiency gains.

- 5 **Determining the most appropriate form of joint working.** Working in partnership has costs as well as benefits and departments should evaluate the different options for joint working, the risks associated with each option and how best to manage them. Criteria for determining the most appropriate form of joint working should include - (i) the extent to which it is likely to meet customers needs and thereby promote maximum take up by those intended to benefit and avoid any groups of people being excluded; (ii) how easy it will be for citizens to access the service in a seamless way and with least inconvenience; (iii) how well the proposed arrangement is likely to achieve sustainable benefits for example, by ensuring that support services are fully integrated within the joint working; and (iv) the relative costs and likely benefits of the joint working initiative. Departments also need to ensure that joint working locally is supported and reinforced by effective co-ordination between departments and their agencies.
- 6 **Providing appropriate support for joint working.** Joint working remains a relatively new concept for many organisations. Smaller bodies particularly those based in communities often need considerable support to help develop their capacity and skills to work effectively with other organisations. Staff in departments and agencies also have to develop their skills to change their style of working. In designing joint working initiatives departments should assess their own capacity for joint working and that of the other organisations that need to come together and allocate sufficient time and resources to develop the skills and joint working capacity of all those involved.
- 7 **Establishing reliable accountability arrangements.** How organisations participating in joint working have to account for how they use public money and report performance achieved should be clearly defined and agreed by all parties involved in the initiative from the outset. Departments should also monitor progress in achieving the intended benefits of joint working and investigate the reasons for variations in achievement so as to raise the performance of partnerships that are less successful. There should also be easy to access and widely understood ways for the users to express their concerns when they are not satisfied with the services provided by the joint working initiative. Where joint working fails to produce an appreciable improvement in public services departments need to consider carefully the justification for continuing with the initiative.
- 27 There is no single model for joint working and departments need to consider the best arrangements depending on circumstances and the specific needs of the client group which the joined up service is intended to help and support. The Annex to this Executive Summary sets out some key questions which departments should consider in designing joint working initiatives.
- 28 In addition, the following National Audit Office reports include a range of other good practice which is also relevant for joint working:
  - Supporting innovation: managing risk in government departments (HC 864, 1999-2000) August 2000;
  - Measuring the Performance of Government Departments (HC 301, 2000-01) March 2001;
  - Modern Policy-Making: Ensuring Policies Deliver Value for Money (HC 289, Session 2001-02) November 2001; and
  - Better Regulation: Making Good Use of Regulatory Impact Assessments (HC 329 Session 2001-02) November 2001.

# Annex

## Key questions which departments need to consider to achieve successful joint working

### decide whether joined up working is necessary

Have departments identified how the client group is expected to benefit from joined up working, weighed the costs and benefits of taking a joined up approach and the risks associated with each option for achieving the policy goals?

For example, departments may wish to pursue joined up working because they have identified that this is more likely to achieve policy goals or is necessary to achieve greater efficiency in the delivery of services. In other cases, however, joined up working may not be necessary to achieve the goals and may add to the cost of service delivery.

### design the most appropriate form of joint working

Have departments identified the possible range of joint working options and assessed the advantages, disadvantages and risks of each?

For example, departments should consider whether an existing partnership could take on the new policy goal, look at a range of organisational forms drawing on experience from elsewhere and consider how to create a good fit with other initiatives to promote synergies between programmes at a local level.

### provide incentives for joint working

Have departments assessed what incentives are needed to secure commitment from partner organisations to the joint working?

For example, partner organisations may need incentives to commit their limited resources to joined up initiatives, such as financial incentives, flexibility over spending decisions or other means to raise the priority of the initiative.

### ensure that partner organisations share the policy objective

Are the goals of the initiative clearly defined and shared by the intended partners?

For example, partner organisations have their own sets of objectives; departments need to ensure that there is overlap between partners' objectives and the policy objectives for joint working initiatives. Departments should ensure that the goals of the initiative are clear and that they can manage any conflict between partners' own objectives and the goals of the joint working.

### establish appropriate performance measurement systems

Have departments established systems for measuring performance which reinforce effective joint working towards the objectives?

For example, the performance measures put in place should provide regular feedback to partners, managers and departments on progress towards achieving the goals of the joined up working.

### provide funding in ways which support joined up working

Does the way in which the initiative is funded support or impede joined up working?

For example, departments should assess the advantages and disadvantages of pooling funding for the joined up working, try to minimise the number of funding streams partnerships have to deal with and assess whether additional resources are needed to support local partnerships.

### minimise the burden of administration on departments and local partnerships

Do departments' administrative systems place unnecessary burdens on local organisations, especially smaller ones; can systems be made simpler and more efficient?

For example, departments should assess the scope for reducing the burden of administration by working with other funders and regulators on joint systems and streamlining their own procedures.

### set realistic timescales

Have departments allowed for the time needed to set up a new initiative and for new partnerships to form and start working together effectively?

For example, it may take time for a new partnership to establish itself to the position where it can submit a well-considered bid for funding to the department. It also takes time to employ staff and find premises from which the service can be delivered. Departments need to use their experience from past initiatives to plan realistically, being aware that decision-making in joint working initiatives may be slow because of the need, for example, to consult with the community and secure commitment and agreement from a range of organisations to a course of action.

Joining up with other partners presents those who design, implement and deliver public services with different challenges to working through single organisations. Our work indicates that there is no single method of joining up that is appropriate in all cases, each initiative must take into account a range of factors to maximise the chances of delivering successful joined up services. To improve the likelihood of joined up initiatives achieving what is intended, departments may wish to consider how to:

<p>Have departments recognised the importance of leadership in promoting successful joint working and taken steps to build this requirement into the design of the initiative?</p> <p>For example, good leadership, through a Chairperson or lead manager, can help secure the co-operation of partners and other stakeholders. Leadership is also important to maintain a sense of direction and enthusiasm and to encourage compromise, where necessary, between partners. Departments should promote and support good leadership of joint working arrangements.</p>	<b>encourage good leadership</b>
<p>Have departments considered the skills needed to implement the joint working and whether they need to take steps to increase the pool of talent available?</p> <p>For example, partnerships have found that they need staff who have the ability to think innovatively and flexibly, understand the different cultures and values of the partner organisations and who are able to work collectively and negotiate around difficulties. In addition, many initiatives draw on specialist professional skills which are in short supply. Departments need to consider where the skills are to come from and whether it will be necessary to develop training schemes to increase the skills available and mitigate the possible impact on other services of drawing talent away to joint working initiatives.</p>	<b>enable those implementing the initiative to draw on the right skills</b>
<p>Do new partnerships have the information they need to carry out their functions?</p> <p>For example, individuals involved in joint working arrangements may be inexperienced at working in partnership and need advice and guidance on a number of different aspects of joint working. Departments should consider how to encourage partner organisations and individuals to understand their role, improve their skills, learn how to work together well and share lessons about what works.</p>	<b>provide appropriate guidance and advice</b>
<p>Have departments set out when they will review whether the joint working is still needed, or whether it requires new goals or incentives?</p> <p>For example, a partnership's continuing role may be affected by external pressures such as changes in its client group, or the law of diminishing returns may make its continuing efforts less cost effective. An evaluation of the joint working may point to the need to reorganise or revitalise the joint working or to draw it to a close.</p>	<b>establish an appropriate time in the future to evaluate the continuing need for the joint working</b>
<p>Have departments set out how clients who have a complaint about the services delivered through joint working can seek redress via a complaints procedure or ombudsman?</p> <p>For example, ensuring that partnerships are required to have a local complaints procedure and that the partnerships and initiatives will be covered by an ombudsman, either by the Parliamentary Ombudsman or by the Local Government Ombudsmen.</p>	<b>ensure that there are clear lines of redress for citizens</b>
<p>Have departments set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of partners, how performance is to be measured and reported and the accounting and audit arrangements for public expenditure?</p> <p>For example, those organisations receiving funds to participate in a joint working initiative need to know what their responsibilities are for the stewardship of public funds including propriety. If this is not understood and reliable reporting arrangements in place there is a risk that public money may not be used for its intended purpose and intended benefits may not be achieved.</p>	<b>ensure that there is a clear accountability framework</b>



# Part 1

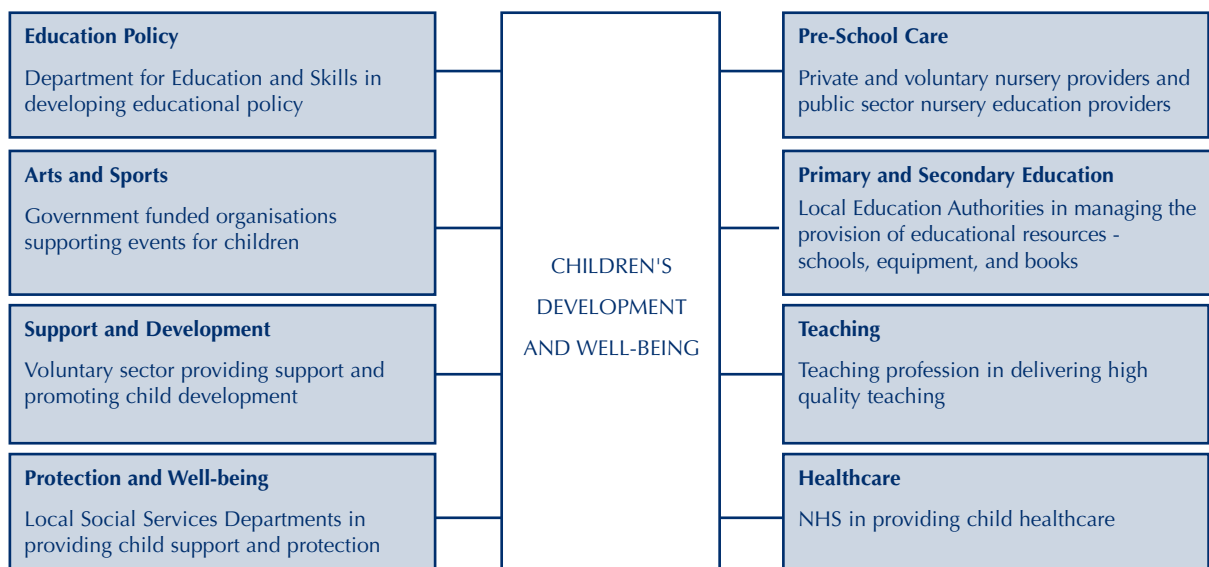
## Introduction

- 1.1 Many of the services which citizens rely on the public sector to provide are the responsibility of more than one department or agency. Responsibility for the development and well-being of children for example, is shared by many organisations (**Figure 6**). How well such organisations and their staff work together to deliver services in a joined up and co-ordinated way, share experience, and learn lessons are central to the provision of public services which meet the needs of their client groups and deliver value for money.
- 1.2 This part of the report of the report covers:
- How joint working is intended to improve the delivery of public services. The section sets out the context for joint working including the problems it can solve and the forms it can take;
  - The Cabinet Office's and Treasury's role in promoting joint working and their progress on key initiatives to improve and increase joint working; and
  - How we carried out the examination and the case studies of joint working we examined.

## How joint working is intended to improve the delivery of public services

- 1.3 If those involved in the delivery of public services do not work together the consequences can be serious.<sup>7</sup> The impact of a service such as support for the elderly can be reduced if its various components - social care, social housing, health prevention and support, and pensions advice are not co-ordinated, are delivered late, or unintentionally work against one another. Citizens can be inconvenienced if they have to visit a number of different geographically dispersed local offices for complementary public services rather than being able to access them from a single co-ordinated delivery point. Value for money can also be put at risk if services are duplicated, economies of scale made possible by joint working are not realised, or if a critical element of service delivery is under resourced or poorly planned.

### 6 Better public services require service providers to work together



Source: National Audit Office

<sup>7</sup> Four types of joined up government and the problem of accountability, Sue Richards, Professor of Public Management, University of Birmingham - Appendix 2 to this report.

- 1.4 Joint working is increasingly recognised by governments around the world as having considerable potential to deliver better public services. A recent survey of joined up government in Europe cited over 100 case study examples from 11 countries.<sup>8</sup> **Figure 7** shows examples of joined up initiatives in other countries providing services to the client groups examined by this report.

## 7 Examples of joined up initiatives in other countries

### Homelessness

Canada's federal government funds community partnerships to plan and implement comprehensive local strategies to reduce and prevent homelessness

### Childcare

In the USA, four federal government agencies jointly fund the National Child Care Information Center a web-based resource providing information on childcare services throughout the country

### Small businesses

Spain has brought together three levels of government in a network of one stop shops where citizens can find information and start the administrative procedures for launching a business

### Child development

New Zealand's Family Start programme provides high risk families with a key worker to teach parenting skills and link the family in to health, education and social services and local community groups

*Source: National Audit Office*

- 1.5 Delivering high quality public services is becoming more complex. In order to attract and retain customers many commercial organisations put considerable effort into providing higher quality services and citizens expect similar improvements in the quality of public services. But better quality can be expensive and departments have to balance improvements in quality with achieving value for money. Technological advances are making it possible to deliver a range of public services electronically in ways and at times more convenient to citizens. At the same time departments are having to develop and implement solutions to a number of difficult social issues such as long term drug abuse, rough sleepers, juvenile crime and how to regenerate inner cities which have experienced long periods of urban decline. Better co-ordination and joint working between organisations involved in public service delivery is considered by the Government to have considerable potential to improve public services by:

- **Taking a wider view** Departments have historically been concerned with achieving their own objectives reflecting responsibilities and funding which they can directly control. This narrow "silo" approach can mean that departments give insufficient attention to the wider impact which their activities can have on service delivery. Joint working should make departments consider the wider contribution which their activities can make to cross-cutting

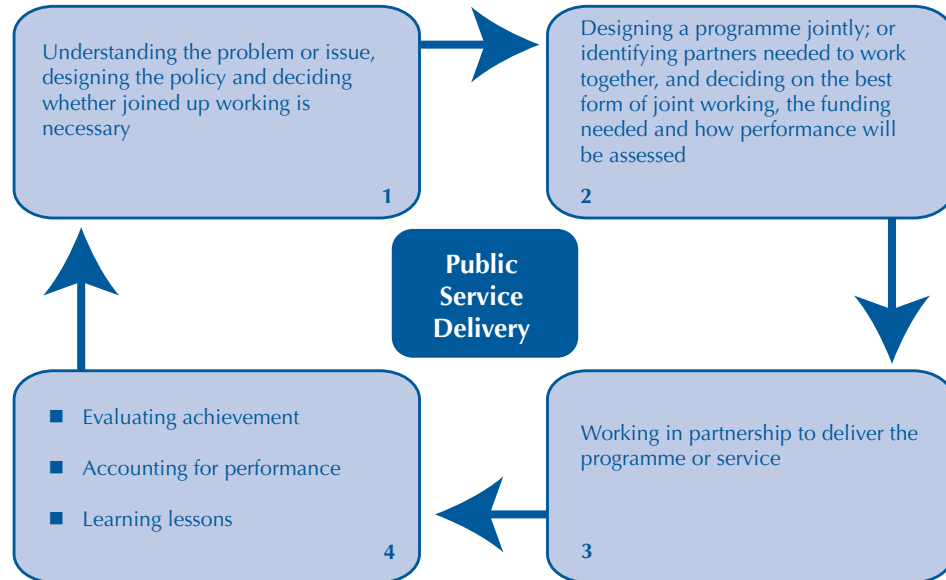
The Government has set the target that by 2005 100 per cent of public services will be available electronically.

*Source: Modernising Government White Paper 1999*

programmes for client groups such as children, the elderly, the long term unemployed and small businesses.

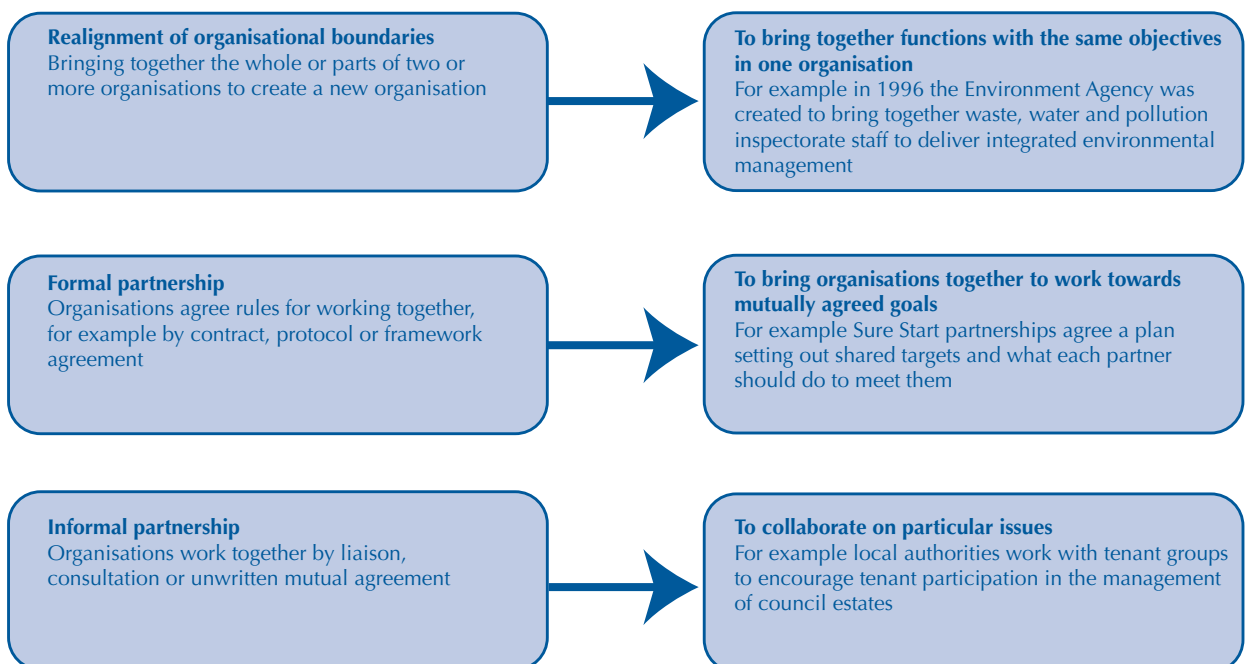
- **Tackling intractable social issues** Despite a range of policies and programmes some long term social issues prove difficult to resolve or alleviate. This may be partly explained by departments adopting a piecemeal approach for example, having a range of actions such as training, counselling, advice, work experience, financial support, incentives which because they are unco-ordinated their individual impacts are reduced. Alternatively, departments may deal with the symptoms of the problem rather than its cause for example, providing training to develop skills of the unemployed when there is no incentive for them to take up the training. Joint working should promote the design of programmes which are better interconnected and mutually supportive thus increasing their chances of success.
  - **Improving delivery** Joint working can improve the accessibility of public services, and the speed with which they are delivered. For example, by delivering services through "one stop shops"; integrated websites accessible 24 hours a day; and by citizens only having to provide information on a range of issues once and to one location.
  - **Promoting innovation** By bringing together people from different backgrounds with a wide range of skills and experience, and who are likely to have different views on what is needed to improve services, can help promote a culture of challenge which increases the chances of new thinking and innovation.
  - **Improving cost effectiveness** Joint working should remove overlaps in the delivery of services, help drive out waste and inefficiency in interconnected processes, enable organisations to harness their collective purchasing power, and realise economies of scale.
- 1.6 Joint working can be appropriate at any or all of the stages of policy development - designing public services, implementing them and reviewing their effectiveness (**Figure 8**). Joint working can also take different forms ranging from informal relationships with partners having considerable discretion to more structured approaches with targets, milestones and clearly defined methods of working. Alternatively a number of organisations can be brought together or realigned in a new single organisation (**Figure 9**).

## 8 Joint working may be needed at any stage in the design and delivery of public services



Source: National Audit Office

## 9 Joint working can take different forms



Source: National Audit Office

- 1.7 Whatever the form of joint working there are risks which need to be managed. Those involved in partnerships have to work in new ways and this requires changes in behaviour. Working in partnership requires balancing multiple goals, looking beyond one's own organisational boundaries to understand others' perspectives and working cultures and a willingness to collaborate and compromise. If this does not happen the success of joint working can be undermined. A diverse range of public, private and voluntary organisations are receiving public money to finance their contribution to

joint working arrangements. There needs to be appropriate mechanisms to account for how this money is used particularly in reporting what it achieves and that it is used for its intended purpose. Balance is needed, however, so that accountability arrangements do not become such an administrative burden that they stifle initiative. Previous reports by the Committee of Public Accounts and the National Audit Office have highlighted some of the risks with joint working which require careful management (**Figure 10**).

## 10 Risks which if not given sufficient attention can result in joint working not being successful

	Risks to joint working	Examples
Clearly defined shared goal(s) for the initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If partners work to different goals and fail to manage the differences then they may fail to achieve desired outcomes.</li> </ul>	<p>The Department of Social Security and Post Office Counters Ltd had different objectives for the Benefits Payment Card project. Although there was an agreement between the two parties on how this would be dealt with, this did not prevent later disputes. This was one of a number of inter-related factors and has resulted in the cancellation of the project. (The Cancellation of the Benefits Payment Card project, HC 857 1999-00)</p> <p>Completion of the new British Library was hampered by the lack of shared objectives between the then Department of Heritage and the British Library. (Progress in completing the new British Library, HC 362 1995-96)</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If information on client groups is not accessible to the various agencies involved in delivering services then delays may occur in processing applications, claims or customer enquiries.</li> <li>■ If funding is not pooled or co-ordinated there may be inefficiency and delay.</li> <li>■ If there is not enough funding, this may delay progress in implementing an initiative.</li> <li>■ If there are not enough people with the right skills then the initiative or project may not achieve its objectives.</li> </ul>	<p>Most parole clerks have some difficulty in obtaining parole reports from the police, the courts, and the Probation Service. The problems with police and court reports illustrate the need for criminal justice organisations to share appropriate information, for example on the nature of a prisoner's offences. Otherwise organisations at the end of the chain have to carry out their responsibilities without important information. (Parole, HC 456 1999-00)</p> <p>As a result of a lack of allocated resources, the British Antarctic Survey's pre-contract work sometimes overlapped with detailed design or began very close to the start of detailed design after being abandoned at an earlier stage. This greatly limited the value of the pre-contract work carried out and it meant there was not enough time available for the lessons of the pre-contract work to be evaluated and fed into the formulation of the detailed design contracts. (The British Antarctic Survey - management of major capital projects and scientific programmes, HC 572 1992-93)</p> <p>The system for assessing and paying claims for incapacity and disability benefits depends on the efficient processing by Benefits Agency offices together with advice from doctors and hospital consultants, and outsourced service providers. Bottlenecks occur, however, which result in delays in processing some referrals for examination, for example some of the Benefits Agency's offices defer referrals when they have insufficient funds. (The Medical Assessment of Incapacity and Disability Benefits, HC 280 2000-01)</p> <p>The New Millennium Experience company lacked senior staff with experience of running a large visitor attraction. In view of the operational difficulties being experienced in the early days following the opening of the Dome, the company replaced the then Chief Executive with some one who had most recently worked at Euro Disney as a Vice-President. (The Millennium Dome, HC 936 1999-00)</p>



## 10 Risks which if not given sufficient attention can result in joint working not being successful (Continued)

	Risks to joint working	Examples
<b>Performance measurement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If there is a failure to take account of any variations in results, this may limit progress in achieving the desired outcome.</li> </ul>	Measuring outcomes of hip replacement is important to determine the success of the operation and the prosthesis. Fewer than half of consultants measured outcomes and even fewer did so regularly. (Hip replacements: Getting it right first time, HC 417 1999-00)
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If there is unclear leadership, the project could founder and fail to meet its objectives</li> </ul>	The Home Office's programme management team responsible for implementing the National Probation Service Information Systems Strategy suffered from a lack of continuity in its leadership and was not fully resourced to deal with the scale of issues facing it. In its first seven years, for example, the programme team had seven different programme directors. This was one of the factors contributing to the project being delayed. (The Implementation of the National Probation Service Information Systems Strategy, HC 401 2000-01)
<b>Working together well</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If not all those in the partnership are committed to the aims then the benefits of joint working may be lost. If the partners do not value each others' contributions or understand each others' cultures and constraints they may not work effectively together</li> </ul>	Underpinning the success of the work to combat fraud is the need for co-operation between local authorities and central government agencies, such as the Benefits Agency and the Employment Service. However many local authorities are unwilling to tackle fraud seriously, some because they believed there was none in their area. (Progress on measures to combat Housing Benefit fraud, HC 391 1998-99)
<b>Clear accountability for services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If partners responsibilities are not clear Parliament and the public may not know who to hold to account for the success or failure of the partnership.</li> <li>■ If Parliament is not able to identify total expenditure and outcomes achieved by the joint initiatives then Parliament cannot take assurance that taxpayers' money has been well spent.</li> <li>■ If it is not clear which organisation is responsible for service quality then clients may be unable to obtain redress for poor services.</li> </ul>	<p>The administrative arrangements for the provision of flood defences are highly complex. In reviewing the lessons learned from flooding in late 2000, the Environment Agency and the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food should consider whether the division of responsibility for provision of flood defences and the operation and permissive nature of the powers increased the risks of suffering flood damage for some citizens. (Inland Flood Defence, HC 299 2000-2001)</p> <p>Some Education Action Zones were spending large sums of public money before they had sound financial controls in place. (Education Action Zones: Meeting the Challenge - The Lessons Identified From Auditing the First 25 Zones, HC 130 2000-01)</p> <p>English Partnerships relied on estimates when reporting its achievements in its annual reports between 1994-95 and 1997-98. These estimates were based on the outputs that might be expected from each £1 million spent, drawing on experience from previous programmes and projects. The figures were reported as 'estimates' in the Agency's annual reports although the basis of the calculation and the uncertainties associated with the reported figures were not disclosed or explained. (Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions: English Partnerships: Assisting Local Regeneration, HC 642 1998-99)</p> <p>Following rail privatisation in 1993, the division of responsibilities between the two supervisory bodies, the Office of the Rail Regulator and the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising, was not clear cut. In 1997 a review of rail regulation concluded that there was confusion about the role of the two regulatory bodies, especially in relation to passengers' rights. (Action to improve passenger rail services, HC 842 1999-2000)</p>

### Role of the Cabinet Office

- co-ordinate work on a wide range of cross-cutting issues
- lead department on the Modernising Government agenda
- corporate headquarters for the Civil Service
- support the Cabinet and Cabinet committees
- support Prime Minister's Office

Source: Cabinet Office

### There are nine Government Offices for the Regions which are responsible for:

- supporting a coherent approach to regional programmes
- providing co-ordinated input into regional and local partnerships
- advising departments who are formulating policies on regional issues and views

Source: Cabinet Office

## The role of the Cabinet Office and the Treasury

1.8 The Modernising Government White Paper (CM 4310) published in March 1999 emphasised the importance of public services being more responsive to the needs of citizens. To help achieve this the White Paper called for public sector staff to work in partnership across organisational boundaries to deliver integrated or seamless services. The Modernising Government Action Plan, published July 1999, along with subsequent progress reports set out a range of initiatives and activities by the Cabinet Office to support the objective of improving joint working. Departments and their agencies are responsible for achieving more joint working when appropriate in the policies for which they are responsible. The Cabinet Office and the Treasury have a role in promoting joint working and monitoring its achievement.

### The Cabinet Office

1.9 The Cabinet Office has adopted four main approaches to promote joint working in delivering public services (Figure 11).

1.10 Reaching out - The role of Central Government at Regional and Local level, published by the Performance and Innovation Unit<sup>9</sup> of the Cabinet Office in February 2000 considered the impact which departments' policies and programmes were having at a regional and local level. The report concluded that:

- A central and co-ordinated overview of the regional impact of departments' policies including the contribution which they made to improving public services was needed.
- Departments had a wide variety of regional offices, sources of information and networks which were too fragmented and needed to be better co-ordinated.
- Departmental initiatives and programmes implemented locally were often not linked or joined up which reduced their effectiveness and created burdens for local, public, private and voluntary organisations.

1.11 The Regional Co-ordination Unit was set up in 2000 to address these issues and transferred to the Cabinet Office in June 2001 together with the Government Offices for the Regions. One of the Unit's key roles is to ensure better co-ordination of Area Based Initiatives - policy initiatives intended to have a geographically-focused impact - and to scrutinise new proposals to ensure that existing delivery mechanisms are properly considered before creating new ones. By so doing the Unit's overall aim is to increase the impact of locally

<sup>9</sup> *The Performance and Innovation Unit in the Cabinet Office uses teams from the civil service, the voluntary, public and private sectors to carry out studies on cross-cutting issues; identify what needs to be improved, and propose innovative approaches to delivering services.*

based initiatives in improving service delivery while minimising the burden of "red tape" on local organisations.

1.12 In June 2001 a number of new units were established as part of the Cabinet Office to improve policy making and service delivery including promoting more joined up working:

- The **Prime Minister's Delivery Unit** will strengthen the capacity of Whitehall to deliver the Government's key objectives. The role of the Unit is to ensure that the Government achieves its delivery priorities during this Parliament across the key areas of public service: health, education, crime and

asylum, and transport. The Unit will develop a defined set of best practices in policy implementation and delivery. This will enable more effective learning across departmental boundaries than has been possible in the past.

- The **Office of Public Services Reform**, which was established to strengthen the capacity of the public sector to deliver the Government's key objectives, will advise on the reform of public services, through the scrutiny of the structures, systems, incentives and skills currently in use. The Office intends to focus principally on change in the delivery of policy and effective nation-wide implementation, including better joining up of services.

## 11 Four approaches taken by the Cabinet Office to promote joint working

### Approach

### Progress at 31 August 2001

#### 1 Developing new thinking

A number of reports by the Cabinet Office's Performance and Innovation Unit - "Wiring it up"<sup>1</sup>, "Adding it up"<sup>2</sup> and "Reaching out"<sup>3</sup> have analysed what needs to be in place to improve joint working and partnerships for example, leadership, flexible budgeting, incentives, and skill improvement. New units in the Cabinet Office to tackle issues such as social exclusion have been established with a remit to develop and implement policies cutting across existing departmental boundaries. For example, the Social Exclusion Unit established a series of policy action teams focusing on issues such as how to bring about neighbourhood renewal. These were made up of Whitehall officials, outside experts and people working in deprived areas to ensure that the recommendations were based on a wide range of experience, on evidence, and were realistically deliverable. In addition, the Service First Unit commissioned research using the People's Panel: to examine the experiences of citizens when using public services; evaluate the service provided within or across organisations; and identify any opportunities for, or obstacles to, improvement. The project fed into the Modernising Government White Paper.

#### 2 Providing guidance and carrying out initiatives to recognise good practice

The Cabinet Office has developed a range of guidance and sponsored a large number of initiatives to encourage successful joint working. For example, a good practice database relating to service delivery, the Public Sector Benchmarking Service and the TNT Partnership award and Beacon Schemes to recognise and publicise good practice and are developing a repository of best practice in policy-making. Service Action Teams, made up of people from departments, local government and the voluntary sector were set up to remedy practical problems facing people during particular life episodes. Their work led to improved guidance and fed into the development of UK Online.

#### 3 Encouraging and facilitating experimentation

Learning laboratories have been established to encourage innovation and tackle barriers to joint working and service improvement. They work experimentally and are not subject to existing regulations as a means of determining if there are significant barriers to joint working which need to be removed. For example, the Cabinet Office say that in the Northeast where a number of organisations are working together to help prisoners integrate more quickly into the community when released there are indications that there has been a fall in re-offending rates among prisoners at participating prisons.

The Cabinet Office with the Treasury established the Invest to Save Budget in 1999. Departments and agencies can apply for funding from the Budget for innovative projects which have a strong joined up component and deliver joined up public services. At 31 August 2001 250 projects were in progress and receiving £260 million from total funding available of £400 million.

#### 4 Developing resources and skills

The Centre for Management and Policy Studies of the Cabinet Office runs training and development courses, programmes and seminars on aspects of joint working.

### NOTES:

1. Wiring it up: Whitehall's management of cross-cutting policies and services - Performance and Innovation Unit January 2000.
2. Adding it up: Improving Analysis and Modelling in Central Government - Performance and Innovation Unit January 2000.
3. Reaching out: The role of Central Government at Regional and Local Level - Performance and Innovation Unit February 2000.

The role of the Treasury is to manage the overall policy for the economy and the overall management framework for public finances and services. In respect of joined up government the Treasury have introduced Public Service Agreements, the Public Services Productivity Panel, and advised on the accounting and budgetary framework for joint working arrangements.

Source: HM Treasury

## The Treasury

1.13 The Treasury is promoting improvements in public services and joint working in a number of ways:

- **Public Service Agreements** were first introduced in 1998 to cover the three financial years 1999-2002. Each Agreement sets out the aim of the department or policy, supporting objectives and related performance targets. To promote joint working there were initially three cross-cutting Public Service Agreements covering the criminal justice system, action against illegal drugs, and Sure Start for pre-school children. In 2000 the Public Service Agreements were revised and a further cross-cutting Agreement was added covering Welfare to Work. In June 2001 the Government allocated £300 million for local authorities which entered into local Public Service Agreements committing themselves to working to achieve 12 key outcomes reflecting national and local priorities for improving public services.
- **Public Services Productivity Panel** advises on ways of improving the productivity and efficiency of departments. In May 2000 the Panel published *Working in Partnership* to assist local health communities involved in joint planning to implement systems to support the NHS's national information strategy. The report concluded that for joint working to be successful there needed to be sustained senior management commitment, explicit agreement on clear and common objectives and the participation of the right people. The report recommended a self-assessment tool for partners to use to identify areas of strength and weakness around six facets of joint working: policy and goal setting, accountability, networking and alliances, culture and learning, resources, and skills and competencies.
- **Accounting and budgetary framework.** The Treasury are providing advice on appropriate accountability and reporting arrangements that need to be in place for new organisations established to promote joint working and for public money allocated to partner organisations.

1.14 The Treasury is also with the Cabinet Office, supporting the Invest to Save Budget to fund innovative projects which have a strong joined up element (**Figure 11**).

## How we carried out the examination

1.15 We examined five different joined up initiatives benefiting three client groups - rough sleepers, pre-school children and small and medium sized businesses (**Figure 12**). The initiatives are:

- The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions' **Rough Sleepers** initiative to reduce rough sleeping (Appendix 3).
- The Department for Education and Skills' **Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships** to plan early education provision and create and support childcare places (Appendix 4).
- The Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health's **Sure Start** to improve the health and well-being of families and children, before and from birth, so that children are ready to flourish when they go to school (Appendix 5).

- The Department of Trade and Industry's **Business Link partnerships** to improve the competitiveness of small firms by encouraging their use of high quality business support services. The partnerships include International Trade Advisers funded by British Trade International (Appendix 6).

- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's and the Department of Trade and Industry's **British Trade International (Trade Partners UK)** to provide help for firms wishing to export and invest overseas. The report does not deal with British Trade International's responsibility for inward investment promotion known as Invest UK (Appendix 7).

For each initiative we interviewed departmental staff and those involved in local partnerships to obtain their views on what was making the initiative work well, the barriers they had encountered to successful joint working and how these were being overcome. More detail on the methodology is at Appendix 1.

## 12 Client groups covered by this report





# Part 2

## Achievements so far

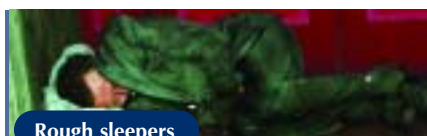
- 2.1 The success of joint working depends on the contribution it makes to improving both the quality and impact of public services. In some cases the benefit may be immediate for example, being able to obtain advice on a range of issues from one government local office; in other cases it may take some time for the benefit to be realised or to be capable of measurement. For example, the impact of initiatives such as Sure Start to improve the well-being and educational development of young children so that they are better equipped to learn will only become apparent when they attend school.
- 2.2 It is important, however, that joint working initiatives have in place reliable means of measuring and monitoring their impact and the difference which they make to the delivery of public services. This is essential for ensuring that resources are deployed cost effectively, deciding whether an initiative needs to be modified or terminated if it is not working as planned, and to learn lessons for wider application.

This part of the report covers:

- i) The progress made by the five joint working initiatives we examined including what is different about each initiative, how its performance is measured, and the impact it has had to date;
- ii) What those intended to benefit think about the joint working initiatives, drawing on focus groups with clients to assess their satisfaction with services and their awareness of the services available; and
- iii) How cross-cutting Public Service Agreements are promoting joint working, focusing on the four cross-cutting agreements and the ways in which they measure performance against targets.

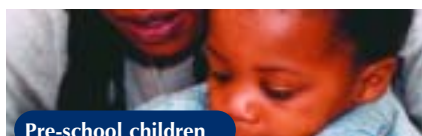
**Figure 13** shows the key characteristics of each of the client groups which the five joint working initiatives are intended to benefit.

### 13 Key characteristics of the client groups which the five joint working initiatives are intended to benefit



**Rough sleepers**

- a person sleeping outside or in a place not designed for habitation
- 9 out of 10 are male
- three quarters are aged over 25 with 6 per cent aged over 60
- three quarters have mental health, alcohol and/or drug problems
- rough sleepers are likely to have a troubled family background and/or have been in institutional care eg children's home, armed forces or prison



**Pre-school children**

- children aged 0 to 4 years
- around 750,000 children are born each year in the UK
- 45,000 children attending nursery school have special educational needs
- 14,000 pre-school children are on child protection registers
- one quarter of all children live in single parent families



**Small and medium sized businesses**

- an economic enterprise with fewer than 250 employees
- there are 3.7 million in the UK
- they employ 55 per cent of the workforce
- they comprise 99 per cent of firms in all sectors, except utilities
- around 100,000 are active exporters

Source: National Audit Office.

# Progress by five joint working

## Rough Sleepers Unit

See  
Appendix 3  
for more  
details

### Partners are:

- Voluntary organisations such as Centrepont
- Local authorities
- Social services
- Police

### Someone sleeping rough will be:

- befriended on the street by an outreach worker who will assess their needs and direct them to specialist help
- referred to a hostel when a suitable place is available
- receive continuing support
- when ready, move to permanent accommodation
- receive continuing support to prevent a return to rough sleeping

Between 1990 and 1999 the government spent some £250 million in England on a rough sleepers initiative helping approximately 4,500 rough sleepers off the streets into permanent accommodation. About 50 per cent of rough sleepers live in London with half the remainder in 33 other towns and cities. In 1998 there were still on average 2000 people sleeping rough on any one night (in the course of a year an estimated 10,000) and in order to assess what more could be done the Social Exclusion Unit of the Cabinet Office initiated a multi-agency review of rough sleeping. This concluded in 1998 that "without better integration at both policy planning and delivery level there is little that can be done to reduce the numbers sleeping rough". In response a dedicated Rough Sleepers Unit (the Unit) was established in 1999 in what is now the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions. The Unit is headed by a Director with national responsibility for tackling rough sleeping supported by a multi-disciplinary skilled team of 35 staff, with a budget of £201 million over the three years April 1999 to March 2002.

# initiatives



## WHAT IS DIFFERENT

The Rough Sleeping initiative has introduced both new structures and new ways of working

**High level commitment.** A Ministerial Steering Committee with representation from key government departments oversees progress and acts as an enabler to bring departments together. It approves spending plans put forward by the Rough Sleepers Unit.

**Leadership, co-ordination and shared funding.** The Rough Sleepers Unit co-ordinates the activity of the voluntary sector and takes the lead in working with other departments. It plans how to spend the budget which is pooled bringing together funding from the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, the Department of Health and the Housing Corporation.

**Contractual arrangements.** The Rough Sleepers Unit provides grant funding to voluntary organisations. Grant agreements specify the posts to be funded, the work programme, target and milestones and monitoring requirements. Grant agreements also give some of the voluntary agencies the power to deploy specialist staff from other agencies.

**Integration.** Rough sleepers willing to accept assistance can expect to have a key worker to put together a package of help tailored to their individual needs, including help with claiming benefits, and tackling drug, alcohol and emotional problems, mental illness, and training for employment. The rough sleeper will continue to have a key worker even after they are housed to provide ongoing support.

**Joined up implementation.** Local authority homelessness officers work with local voluntary and statutory agencies to develop and implement a rough sleeping strategy. The Unit's grant agreements with voluntary agencies requires them to work with each other as a pre-requisite for funding.

**Better information and reduced "red tape".** Better information is available and actively shared between agencies to track rough sleepers and to monitor the impact of support provided to help them get off the streets. There is greater control over access to hostel places so that sleeping rough is not used as a fast track method for obtaining a flat. There are protocols for handing over responsibility for a rough sleeper from one agency to another so that they do not slip through the system. And procedures which voluntary organisations have to follow to apply for grants have been simplified.

## HOW PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED

By a single measure - to reduce the number of people sleeping rough by at least two thirds from 1850 to 616 or lower by March 2002. This measure is included in the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions' Public Service Agreement.

## IMPACT

At 31 July 2001 information collected by the Rough Sleepers Unit indicated that the number of people sleeping rough had reduced to 700. In London the reduction was from 635 to around 350. The number of entrenched rough sleepers in London - those who have multiple health and social needs requiring sustained help reduced from 427 to 110.



# Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships

See  
Appendix 4  
for more  
details

- Department for Education and Skills
- Local Authority support and oversight
- Partnerships of local authorities, private and voluntary organisations plan childcare and nursery education provision
- Childcare and nursery education providers

In May 1998 the now Department for Education and Skills launched its National Childcare Strategy for children up to 14 years (16 years for children with special educational needs). This identified a need for better co-ordination of all those organisations involved in the delivery of childcare services. The key aim of the National Childcare Strategy is the creation of new childcare places for 1.6 million children by March 2004. Since September 1998, the Department's early education strategy has provided all 4 year olds with a free part-time nursery place, with free part-time early education provision for all 3 year olds by September 2004. The total expenditure made available for childcare and early education programmes was £300 million in 2000-01 and this will rise to £650 million in 2003-04. These programmes are being implemented through 150 partnerships bringing together private, voluntary and public sector organisations providing childcare and early education.

A private or voluntary sector organisation wishing to provide childcare facilities must register with its local social services department and be inspected. The role of the Partnership in this process is to provide advice and guidance to childcare providers on the standards they must meet. The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) took over the registration and inspection of childcare providers from September 2001.



## WHAT IS DIFFERENT

The main features of the joint working are:

**Private and voluntary sector involvement.** The partnerships bring together for the first time all sectors to develop and implement local authority wide plans setting out how each partnership will meet government targets for the expansion of early education and childcare.

**Clear rules of working.** Partnerships set up to facilitate the provision of childcare places receive support from local authorities. There is typically a lead officer who provides advice on how the partnership should operate. Funding from the Department for Education and Skills depends on partnerships meeting requirements such as representing local views including health services, parents, employers, religious institutions and childcare providers.

**Contractual arrangements.** The Department for Education and Skills pays grants to local authorities to employ staff to carry out the work of the partnerships. In addition, there are separate funding streams from the Department and the New Opportunities Fund<sup>10</sup> to providers of nursery education.

**Support and training.** Comprehensive training is made available to anyone working with pre-school children so that they are better equipped to organise and deliver high quality childcare and nursery education provision.

**Quality assurance.** Partnerships are working to enhance the quality of pre-school education and childcare. The partnerships are doing this by paying for voluntary and private sector groups to take part in national schemes such as the Pre-school Learning Alliance's Aiming for Quality scheme which set standards for pre-schools in curriculum planning, staffing, safety and other areas; or by setting up their own quality assurance scheme. OFSTED regulates early years.

## HOW PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED

The Department for Education and Skills has set a number of quantified targets for example to increase the number of free part-time nursery places for 3 years old from 34 per cent in 1999 to 66 per cent by 2002.

### IMPACT

At 31 March 2001 the target to provide a free part-time nursery place for all 4 year olds had been achieved as planned; free part-time places were available for over 50 per cent of 3 year olds; and 140,000 new childcare places had been created exceeding the target of 82,000 by 70 per cent.

<sup>10</sup> The New Opportunities Fund is a UK wide National Lottery distributor focusing on health, environment and education.



# Sure Start



See  
Appendix 5  
for more  
details

## Partners are:

- Community groups
- Voluntary organisations such as NEWPIN and NSPCC
- Local authorities
- Health services
- Parents

## Services provided by Sure Start programmes include:

- advice on parenting
- health promotion and referral to specialist services
- support for families with special needs children
- family support for ethnic minorities
- childcare
- drop in centres
- language and literacy projects
- volunteers befriending projects

Sure Start was launched in July 1998 following a cross departmental review of children's services involving 13 departments. The review recommended that a range of services should be brought together to support the complex and varied physical, developmental and emotional needs of young children and families in deprived areas with the aim of improving the health and well-being of children so that they are ready to flourish when they start school. Some £1.4 billion is allocated over the five years 1999 to 2004 to support child and primary healthcare, early education, play and support for families in most need. Sure Start is being implemented through local partnerships involving public, private and voluntary organisations.

The programme is led and co-ordinated by the Sure Start Unit linking the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health. Each partnership is located in a community with a lead partner, a programme board and an accountable organisation responsible for expenditure. By July 2001, 437 programmes had been announced in five phases; the first phase of 59 local programmes began delivering services in 2000-01.



## WHAT IS DIFFERENT

The main features of Sure Start are

**Strategic direction.** The Sure Start Unit has national responsibility for the programme with the backing of a Ministerial Steering Committee covering the Department for Education and Skills, the Department of Health, the Home Office, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions and the Treasury. The Unit has 100 staff drawn from many backgrounds. The emphasis is on combining experience rather than drawing on the expertise of one department.

**Targeted intervention.** Local programmes focus intensively on a relatively small number of families within a small geographical area about the size of an estate or neighbourhood with 400-1000 children under the age of four. Previous approaches were linked to GP surgeries, community health trusts rather than focusing on a specific area.

**Contractual arrangement.** The Sure Start Unit provides grant funding to a designated 'accountable body' for each partnership, for example the local NHS Primary Care Trust. A legally-binding agreement between the partners ensures that the accountable body distributes funds to service providers in accordance with the partnership's agreed delivery plan.

**Multi-agency.** Each partnership is planned and managed locally according to local priorities and is both multi-agency and multi-disciplinary instead of having a series of separate disconnected services delivered by a range of organisations.

**Community involvement.** Sure Start aims to involve parents and the wider community in planning and providing services. Parents are encouraged to join the partnership and to provide volunteer support to services. Community involvement also helps persuade families who may be reluctant to take up the services on offer.

**Tackling deprivation.** Sure Start is directing increased funding into deprived areas which allows more services to be targeted on need. Each programme receives access to capital funding of £750,000 and around £700,000 a year for additional services.

## HOW PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED

Sure Start has four national objectives and linked targets set out in its Public Service Agreement to be achieved by March 2004. The objectives cover improving the social, emotional and physical development of young children; their ability to learn; strengthening families and communities; and increasing the productivity of programmes. Each local programme works towards achieving those targets but may also set additional local objectives and targets.

## IMPACT

It is too early for there to be any measurable benefit from Sure Start programmes. A national evaluation will run from 2000-01 to 2006-07 and cover how well programmes are being implemented, local context (social, demographic and economic factors), the impact of programmes and their cost effectiveness, and provide support to the more detailed evaluations of local programmes.

# Business Link partnerships



See  
Appendix 6  
for more  
details

Business Link partnerships offer:

- A first point of contact for businesses seeking advice
- A personal business adviser service
- Support such as marketing and IT development
- Referral to other expertise to provide business support

In the early 1990s support and advice for businesses was fragmented. To remedy this the Department of Trade and Industry set up in 1993 the first Business Link partnership and by 1996-97 there was 89 partnerships. Key partners were local Training and Enterprise Councils,<sup>11</sup> Chambers of Commerce, local authorities and enterprise agencies<sup>12</sup>. During 2000-01 the Small Business Service, a new executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry restructured the network of Business Link partnerships, in part because of the variation in their performance - some were effective others were less so. Funding from the Small Business Service is some £160 million a year. Individual Business Link partnerships also receive funding from other sources such as the European Structural Funds. They also obtain fee income from assisted businesses for higher value support, such as diagnostic reports from business advisers.

<sup>11</sup> Training and Enterprise Councils provided employment and business related training. They were replaced by Learning and Skills Councils in 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Enterprise agencies provide support and training to people who want to start a business.





## WHAT IS DIFFERENT

Some key differences with the new partnership working are:

**Joining up government.** In 1998 half of partners surveyed said that lack of co-ordination between central government departments was a barrier to partnership development. The Small Business Service now has the role of co-ordinating the government's strategy for small businesses. It is doing this by liaising with government departments on policy initiatives and reviewing proposals for new business regulations to protect the interests of small businesses. Small Business Service regional teams are based in the nine Regional Development Agencies and work closely with them to ensure that the plans of Business Link partnerships reflect regional economic strategies.

**Customer focus.** The new Business Link partnerships are required to demonstrate that their primary focus is on meeting their customers needs. Their target market now also includes social enterprises and disadvantaged and under-represented communities.

**Streamlining.** Partnerships were reduced from 89 to 45 and a direct contract established between each partnership and the Small Business Service. The intervening layer provided by the Training and Enterprise Councils was removed.

**Contractual arrangements.** The Small Business Service awarded franchises to local business service partnerships, usually set up as not-for-profit companies, to co-ordinate and provide services under the Business Link brand name. Under the franchise agreement Business Link partnerships receive funds from several sources, including the Small Business Service, to deliver services specified in separate contracts.

**Wider focus.** Support is extended to include businesses with fewer than ten employees and those thinking of starting a business. Previously support had focused primarily on more medium sized businesses.

**Targets.** The Department of Trade and Industry's Public Service Agreement for 1999-2002 includes targets to increase the productivity and profitability of small and medium sized businesses assisted by Business Link partnerships.

**Private sector leadership.** Some new partnerships have been established which are private sector led by 'for profit' organisations. Other new partnerships, for example Northumberland Business Service, have local business people on their board.

**Branding.** The Business Link name and logo are recognised by firms as the established brand for subsidised advice and support for small businesses. This is increasing the profile of the service so that the businesses community is more aware of support which is available.

## HOW IS PERFORMANCE MEASURED

The Small Business Service assess the performance of Business Link partnerships by surveying firms assisted to assess their satisfaction; and by monitoring improvements in the productivity of businesses which the partnerships have helped and by comparing their performance with a sample of firms which have not been assisted. In addition, Business Link partnerships provide a range of management information which is used by the Small Business Service regional teams to assess performance against plans.

## IMPACT

Prior to the changes to partnership working an independent evaluation in 1998 indicated that the productivity of firms assisted by Business Links increased by 13 per cent compared to one per cent for a sample of firms that were not assisted. In 1997, 75 per cent of firms in Business Link partnerships' then target market, those with 10 to 200 employees, were satisfied with the service which they received; in 2000 it remained virtually unchanged at 74 per cent. More recent research in Summer 2001, covering the very smallest businesses previously not part of the target market, suggests the baseline of customer satisfaction faced by the new network is lower. This research is part of a regular series of studies - a clear picture will emerge over time.

# British Trade International



See  
Appendix 7  
for more  
details

Examples of support for exporters include:

- help to exhibit at overseas trade fairs
- tailored market research
- sales leads from abroad
- enquiry service about opportunities in specific markets and economic sectors
- local support and advice through Business Links to help firms develop their export skills

In February 1999 a Government review<sup>13</sup> of support to promote UK exports found a lack of cohesion among the various organisations responsible for support to exporters. Support was not sufficiently focused on businesses' needs and arrangements for allocating resources were complex with too many funding streams. In response British Trade International was established in May 1999 to join up international trade promotion and development services to be branded as Trade Partners UK.

British Trade International is a partnership between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and has put in place a unified management structure over existing staff to create a notional organisation without legal status. All staff remain employed by their parent department. A Memorandum of Understanding sets out the partnership arrangements. British Trade International's Group Chief Executive reports to a board chaired by the Minister of State for International Trade and Investment who holds office at both the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Permanent Secretaries of both Departments are represented on British Trade International's Board.

<sup>13</sup> *The Review of Export Promotion. A Report by the Secretary to the Cabinet. February 1999.*





## WHAT IS DIFFERENT

The key differences arising from the establishment of British Trade International include:

**Strategic direction.** An overall joined up strategy for trade promotion and development is now in place. This covers the trade development and promotion work undertaken in the English regions, inward investment promotion work and national co-ordination across other government departments.

**Customer focus.** There is a greater focus on customers particularly the needs of small and medium sized businesses which make up over 80 per cent of the target group.

**Funding arrangements.** British Trade International receives direct funding from the Exchequer for its programme expenditure of around £85 million a year. Its staff, administration and capital costs are paid for out of the budgets of the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

**Coherence.** A more coherent and high profile is presented to businesses by introducing in May 2000 the Trade Partners UK brand. This is intended to make it clearer to the business community the support which they can call upon to help them export.

**Single point of contact.** Establishing the Trade Partner's UK website [www.tradepartners.gov.uk](http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk) will provide a single integrated point of contact - a gateway -for export services and sources of information.

**Assessing impact.** The more unified structure of British Trade International is intended also to improve the monitoring of the various types of support to assess their effectiveness in improving business performance.

## HOW PERFORMANCE IS MEASURED

British Trade International's Public Service Agreement target is to enhance the competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas sales and investments. This includes specific targets such as at least 15 per cent of firms assisted which have not exported before, and at least 50 per cent of established exporters assisted improve their business performance within two years. British Trade International are developing data collection and measurement systems to assess the achievement of these targets.

## IMPACT

The Department of Trade and Foreign and Commonwealth Office used to assess the impact of their support for exporters on a programme by programme basis as well as by customer satisfaction. It is too soon to measure the impact of the new joined up support provided by British Trade International.

## Assessment of progress

### Overall impact

- 2.3 Each of the joint working initiatives is improving service delivery. Business Links have a track record of assisting small businesses; the number of Rough Sleepers is falling and the number of nursery and childcare places are increasing. While it is too soon to form a judgement on the full extent of the benefits from British Trade International and Sure Start, there is some initial evidence that clients are receiving better services. For example, customers are making increasing use of the Trade Partners UK website to access information on possible export markets (Figure 14); and Sure Start interventions, such as earlier detection that a child needs speech therapy and so can start therapy more quickly, are improving people's lives.

### Identifying the need for joint working

- 2.4 Departments determined that the joint working initiatives were required by various means for example, cross-cutting policy reviews (Sure Start), analysis of the performance of existing ways of delivering services (British Trade International) and detailed assessment of client group needs (Rough Sleepers). Departments generally do not adopt one single approach or model to design policies (Modern Policy-Making: Ensuring Policies Deliver Value for Money (HC 289, Session 2001-02) November 2001) and a standard approach to determine whether joint working is needed is unlikely to be feasible. Departments, however, need to take a wide view to identify opportunities for joint working to improve service delivery. In particular, they should assess the needs of their client groups, the risk that current policies may not realise their intended benefits and the costs and benefits of joining up. Factors suggesting that some form of joint working is needed include benefits being short term and not sustainable (for example, initiatives to help those who are already drug dependent not being supported by longer term preventive education programmes); gaps in delivery (for example, advice on getting employment not being co-ordinated with skills training); and inefficiencies such as support and advice being duplicated.

### Barriers to joint working

- 2.5 We found that not all organisations are sufficiently committed to joint working. For example, the Rough Sleepers Unit has found, in some instances when it is not providing direct funding, that it can be difficult to influence local authorities and NHS Trusts to treat rough sleepers as a high priority. Some of the organisations

involved in local partnerships told us that while joint working was now much better locally, they considered that this was not always happening centrally. This was particularly so where there was no dedicated central unit giving strategic direction. The need for better joint working between departments was supported by our interviews with organisations representing the interests of small businesses which considered that it would take some time for the Small Business Service to have an impact on co-ordinating departments' initiatives for small businesses.

### Avoiding exclusion

- 2.6 All the joint working initiatives we examined had been designed to ensure that there is equal access to the services for those intended to benefit from them. Each of the initiatives have a varied set of clients with different needs, for example businesses just starting require different often more intensive support than those which have been in business for some time. The joint initiatives are tailoring their services to meet the needs of different clients, particularly those such as rough sleepers who often have complex health and emotional problems as well as needing accommodation. These differences emphasise the importance of carefully researching and analysing the characteristics of those intended to benefit so that services can be targeted on those most in need and delivered in ways that they can access easily. For example Sure Start local programmes have many families on low incomes, with low levels of education, or who do not speak English fluently. To ensure that these families are not excluded, Sure Start workers visit them in their homes to assess their needs and inform them of the help available.

### Innovation and need for careful marketing

- 2.7 Joint working is also leading to innovation, for example Sure Start programmes are teaching parenting skills, such as a training programme run by psychologists to create a secure emotional bond between mother and infant, whilst local authorities, voluntary organisations and the police are working together for the first time to develop and deliver joint strategies for tackling rough sleeping. Increasing use is also being made of information technology to deliver services for example, the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships are using the Web and call centres to make childcare information more easily accessible (Figure 14). There is scope, however, for more marketing of services so that those intended to benefit from the joint working initiatives are fully aware of the support which is available to them and know how to obtain it. If services are not publicised and carefully marketed those intended to benefit may not do so or groups of society may be inadvertently excluded.

## 14 Websites used by joint working initiatives to improve service delivery

Joint working initiative	Website and who it is directed at	What the website provides	Number of visits per month (July 2001)
<b>Rough Sleepers</b> 	<a href="http://www.housing.dtlr.gov.uk/rsu/index.htm">www.housing.dtlr.gov.uk/rsu/index.htm</a> Operational since January 2000, the web pages are intended primarily for those interested in policy on rough sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information about the initiative</li> </ul>	500
	<a href="http://www.changealife.org.uk">www.changealife.org.uk</a> Operational since November 2000 and aimed at the general public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how the public can help rough sleepers</li> <li>links to partner voluntary organisations</li> </ul>	1200
<b>Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships</b> 	<a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/eydcp/index.htm">www.dfes.gov.uk/eydcp/index.htm</a> Operational since October 1998 and intended primarily for partnerships and childcare providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information about the initiative</li> <li>planning guidance for partnerships</li> <li>examples of good practice</li> </ul>	Not separately identified
	<a href="http://www.childcarelink.gov.uk">www.childcarelink.gov.uk</a> Operational since December 1999, the website is intended specifically to help parents find childcare in their area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>childcare providers, searchable by post code</li> </ul>	63,000
<b>Sure Start</b> 	<a href="http://www.surestart.gov.uk/home.cfm">www.surestart.gov.uk/home.cfm</a> Operational since July 2000, the website is intended for parents, the general public, partnerships and providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information about the initiative</li> <li>planning guidance</li> <li>examples of good practice</li> <li>notice board for questions</li> <li>contact details of Sure Start team members</li> <li>information on local programmes</li> </ul>	10,000
<b>Business Link partnerships</b> 	<a href="http://www.businesslink.gov.uk">www.businesslink.gov.uk</a> Operational since June 2001 and aimed at all small and medium sized businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>information on key topics of interest to small businesses</li> <li>e-mail link to national call centre</li> <li>extensive links to other sites, for example <a href="http://www.dag-business.gov.uk">www.dag-business.gov.uk</a> a database of regulations</li> <li>information on Business Link partnerships, with an appointments facility</li> </ul>	125,000
<b>British Trade International</b> 	<a href="http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk">www.tradepartners.gov.uk</a> Operational since May 2000, aimed at all businesses interested in exporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>general information on exporting</li> <li>self assessment diagnostic questionnaire for new exporters</li> <li>information on overseas markets and sectors</li> <li>sales leads</li> <li>links to other sites including commercial sites for exporters</li> <li>information on help available locally and links to international trade teams in Business Link partnerships</li> </ul>	102,000

Source: NAO analysis of departments' websites and visit figures supplied by departments

## Measuring performance and effectiveness

2.8 Reliable information is needed as a minimum on the extent to which joint initiatives meet their objectives and achieve sustainable improvements in service delivery. All of the five joint working initiatives we examined have appropriate performance targets and have in place or are developing with their partners measurement systems to track progress against their targets. Some of the targets are easily understood and measured for example, the number of nursery places established can be calculated from local authority returns on the number of nursery grants awarded. Other targets are more difficult to measure for example, increases in the productivity and profitability of small firms. At present many of the initiatives rely on data collected on their behalf by their partners or by contractors and there is a need to ensure that such information is reliable and not at risk of misinterpretation or manipulation. For example, the Sure Start targets require programmes to work to keep children safe from abuse and so reduce the number recorded on the child protection register. Once a child no longer needs to be on the register Sure Start aims to keep them off by providing on-going support. There is potential, however, that this requirement could act as a

disincentive to re-register children who for whatever reason once again become at risk. To counter this the Sure Start's programme staff monitor their catchment area to ensure that children removed from the child protection register receive the services which they need.

## Need for formal evaluations of cost effectiveness

2.9 Some initiatives such as Sure Start have strategies to commission independent evaluations of the extent to which planned outcomes such as improvements in child health are achieved. **Figure 15** shows the cost effectiveness of two of the joint working initiatives we examined. In the case of rough sleeping it would appear that the new integrated approach is more cost effective than the previous initiative in reducing rough sleeping, although we cannot say whether these benefits will be sustained. With Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, the average cost of providing a childcare place is £650 which compares with £640 for providing an out of school childcare place under the previous arrangements. The increased cost per place is because pre-school children and those with special needs need

### 15 Assessing the cost effectiveness of joint working initiatives

Measure	Cost effectiveness	
	Before joint working began in 1999	From 1999-2001
<b>Rough sleeping:</b> cost <sup>1</sup> per reduction by one of individuals counted sleeping rough <sup>2</sup>	£117,000  (£183,000 including capital expenditure)	£71,000  (£119,000 including capital expenditure)
<b>Childcare:</b> cost <sup>1</sup> per additional childcare place <sup>3</sup>	£640	£650

#### NOTES

1. Cost is central government expenditure only in real terms at 2001 prices. Data on other spending directed towards reducing rough sleeping or creating childcare places by local authorities, voluntary agencies and businesses is not available.
2. A rough sleeper is defined as someone sleeping outdoors or in a place not designed for human habitation, such as a warehouse or shed. Rough sleepers have been counted each June in London and 33 other towns and cities in England since 1998, in addition some other towns where there are few rough sleepers also submit count data or estimates. Counts are carried out by voluntary workers with knowledge of where people sleep. The extent of undercounting because people sleeping rough are hidden from the counters is not known. The 'before' figure for rough sleeping is calculated on expenditure in 1998-99 and the fall in rough sleepers between June 1998 and June 1999.
3. A childcare place is a place provided for children up to the age of 14 years (16 with special needs) by a registered child carer. Local authorities collect data on the number of registered places in their areas. The 'before' figure is based on the Out of School Childcare Initiative which ran for four years from 1994-95 to 1997-98 and included out of school clubs and holiday schemes. Since 1999 funding has also been provided to develop childminding, creches and play schemes for pre-school children and to provide facilities for children with special needs.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of data supplied by departments

more support from staff and, in some instances, more specialised equipment than other children. Our calculations, however, contain a number of underlying assumptions: that measurement is accurate and consistent over time; that the results of expenditure have an immediate impact; and that external factors not under the control of government, for example spending by voluntary agencies, have not changed significantly over the period. There is, therefore, a need for more detailed assessments of the cost effectiveness of different forms of joint working including their productivity; the difference which they make to the quality of public services; and the relative contribution made by the different members of the joint working arrangement.

## What those intended to benefit think about joint working

2.10 In order to assess whether those intended to benefit from joint working are receiving a better service we commissioned NOP Consumer Ltd to hold focus groups<sup>14</sup> of rough sleepers in London and Manchester and of the carers of pre-school children in Leeds, Southwark and Sunderland. Focus group participants were asked whether they had noticed any change in services following the introduction of joint working. As the new Business Link partnerships and the establishment of British Trade International are more recent developments it is too early for them to have had a discernible impact. It was not practicable, therefore, at this stage to consult the users of these services. The views of the focus groups are summarised in **Figure 16 overleaf** and they highlight three key points.

2.11 **Clients' satisfaction with services.** Those intended to benefit from joint working have a varied range of requirements. For example, families needing childcare facilities while they are at work want low cost high quality care. Many parents especially those on lower

incomes, however, work weekends and evenings and they want childcare outside normal weekday working hours. Those involved in delivering public services need therefore to assess carefully the requirements of client groups through consultation and research. In seeking to meet these requirements departments and agencies must also consider what is affordable and likely to represent value for money.

2.12 **Peoples' awareness of what support is available.** People are usually not concerned with the internal procedures involved in delivering public services. This is only likely to be an issue for people if they are not able to get the service or support they need when they want it with minimum inconvenience. Therefore for citizens the issue is not how services are joined up but that they are delivered in a seamless co-ordinated way. With Sure Start for example, parents were enthusiastic and very aware of the support and services available; parents perceived them as being an integrated package rather than delivered as part of a partnership. For joined up services to be effective, however, those intended to benefit must be aware of the support available to them. For example, parents in our focus groups were less aware that the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships existed and suggested that more should be done to publicise the services which parents could call upon. Publicising and marketing services to maximise take up by those intended to benefit is therefore very important.

2.13 **Difficulties in changing behaviour.** The success of some joint working initiatives particularly those focusing on social issues often depends on their ability to influence people to change their behaviour. For example, the Rough Sleepers Unit has to persuade those living on the streets to take up the services intended to help them since the Unit cannot compel them to do so. Some rough sleepers often those who have recently started living on the streets are very willing to move into supported housing. For others sleeping rough has become an

### CASE STUDIES

#### 1 PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN - NATIONALLY

**Jackie** "I know you have got out of hours creches now, but none of them normally go into night work. There are a lot of people who have shifts".

**Karen** "The only private nursery that I found that would take him and only have to pay half days was very expensive. And then I would have to pay for someone to pick him up from nursery (a half day place at the local school) and take him there".

**Peter** "We need adequate childcare, you want to make sure that your child is looked after properly but at the end of the day there isn't that here"

#### 2 PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN - SURE START

**Gloria** "I had really bad post natal depression and it was through here that they got me out of it."




**Sinead** "I have made an awful lot of friends here by doing courses and I have gained a lot of knowledge as well. I went on the course that teaches me how to look after James properly... different ways to bring him up without smacking him"

**Toni** "My health visitor actually got one of the guys (from the advice centre) to come and see me at home when I first had the baby to help me out with certain things".

14 We held 8 focus groups each consisting of between 7 and 10 individuals. Separate groups of parents of pre-school children were held for Sure Start and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships.



## 16 What the intended beneficiaries think about the support they receive

	 <b>Rough Sleepers</b>	 <b>Early years Childcare and development partnerships</b>	 <b>Sure Start</b>
Are you aware of the new initiatives and how they are intended to help you?	Rough sleepers were aware of the changes introduced by the Rough Sleepers Unit and how it can support them to stop sleeping on the streets.	Parents said that they had little awareness of the initiative, but most knew that information on nursery schools and childcare is available from the local authority.	Parents were very aware of the Sure Start initiative and the range of services offered, for example parenting classes, creches, advice services.
How easy is it for you to get the service or support available?	<p>Rough sleepers were generally well informed about the range of services available, particularly food, showers, advice and support and where to get them.</p> <p>Rough sleepers also knew they can access accommodation and detoxification treatment through outreach workers.</p>	<p>Parents thought it was very difficult to find good quality childcare that they can afford.</p> <p>Parents appreciated part-time nursery classes in schools, but working parents found it difficult to co-ordinate the school place with a childcare place.</p>	<p>Non-working parents said that they use the services and consider that they benefit from them.</p> <p>Working parents said that it is hard for them to attend support classes and facilities because they tend to be open only between 9 and 5 on weekdays.</p>
How have you benefited from the service provided - has it made a difference?	<p>Younger rough sleepers who have been on the streets for less time said they use supported living arrangements such as hostels.</p> <p>Many rough sleepers chose not to take up accommodation rather than be separated from their friends, partners, or pets and because they consider the hostels' regulations stop them from behaving as they wish.</p>	<p>Parents are benefiting from new provision for their older children such as after-school clubs.</p> <p>Most of the parents were happy with the quality of their child's nursery.</p>	Parents who attended parenting classes considered they make a real difference to their ability to bring up their children.
Was the support you received co-ordinated?	Rough sleepers pointed to co-ordinated services such as healthcare available in drop-in centres and the outreach workers in London who make sure that they receive support.	Parents were less aware that Partnerships plan and co-ordinate nursery education and childcare services across the local authority area.	Parents regarded Sure Start as one service and not a co-ordinated programme involving many. Their experience of Sure Start was of a programme providing a range of different types of support from one source.
How could the service be improved? What would help you most?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increase the times services are open to bridge the gaps in opening times between day centres and night centres.</li> <li>■ Return to the previous arrangement where rough sleepers could book into hostels without being referred by an outreach worker. Rough sleepers thought this would allow them to hold down a job more easily in winter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide more high quality and low cost childcare so that working is more attractive because some money is left over. After paying for childcare low income families or single parents have little disposable income left which provides no incentive to work.</li> <li>■ Provide more childcare covering weekends / shift workers hours.</li> <li>■ Advertise what is available and where to find information on what is available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Provide more childcare in the evenings.</li> <li>■ Provide more courses in the evenings.</li> <li>■ Give more encouragement to fathers to attend parenting skills classes.</li> </ul>

Source: Focus groups with rough sleepers and parents of pre-school children facilitated by NOP Consumer Ltd.

accepted way of life which they say they prefer. Our focus groups indicated that these rough sleepers preferred the previous policy of being able to sleep in a hostel on occasional nights in winter rather than having to be referred by an outreach worker, which is part of a more integrated approach to providing support. For example, by assessing rough sleepers' health, social and psychological needs as part of a co-ordinated strategy to help them move off the streets. Changing the behaviour of client groups is often therefore something which joint working initiatives have to bring about if long term social issues are to be remedied. How this is to be done and, in particular, the incentives needed to change behaviour require careful consideration. Sustainable changes in behaviour are unlikely to be achieved in the short term; they usually require concentrated effort over a long period and this has to be taken account of in planning joint working initiatives.

## How cross-cutting Public Service Agreements are promoting joint working

2.14 Public Service Agreements were first introduced in 1998 setting out each department's objectives for the public services which they were responsible for together with measurable targets to monitor the delivery of the objectives. This first set of Public Service Agreements covered the three financial years 1999-02. Following the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2000 the Agreements were developed further and supplemented by Service Delivery Agreements which set out in more detail how the targets in the Public Service Agreements were to be achieved. The current Agreements cover the years 2001-04.

2.15 Public Service Agreements are intended to focus departments' efforts on delivering and improving the services which they are responsible for while at the same time ensuring that departments are accountable for their performance. To promote more joint working between departments cross-cutting Public Service Agreements were introduced including joint targets which several departments share responsibility for achieving. Currently there are four cross-cutting Public Service Agreements:

- **Criminal Justice System** comprising the crime-related work of the Home Office (The Prison, Police and Probation Services and Victim Support), the Lord Chancellor's Department (the Crown Court, the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division), magistrates courts and legally-aided criminal defence services); the Law Officers' Departments (the Crown Prosecution Service and Serious Fraud Office), the judiciary; and the magistracy.

### CASE STUDY

#### 3 ROUGH SLEEPERS

**Terry** "They get people booked in the hostels and bed and breakfasts but even if you are booked into a hostel, all of a sudden you are not homeless, you have got a home but it is not a home."

**Mike** "We have got a five day nurse and a three day doctor. You have got referrals for the chiropodist, dentist and opticians. Health isn't a problem."

**Richard** "They come and they talk to me but they know that I don't want to get involved with the type of help they want to give me...I am on the streets but I don't have somebody telling me when to get up, what to wear, what to do"

**John** "Come the winter a lot of blokes on the street go out and work and they go and book in (to hostels). The government has taken that opportunity away, you can not go and book in, you have to be referred by a worker".

The Public Service Agreement is intended to provide clear strategic direction to the system as a whole, with joint strategic planning and performance management. The Criminal Justice System's aims are: to reduce crime and the fear of crime and their social and economic costs; and to dispense justice fairly and efficiently and to promote confidence in the rule of law.

- **Action against Illegal Drugs** comprising activity delivered by the Home Office, the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Skills, HM Customs and Excise, the Treasury, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development.

The aim is to reduce drugs related harm and costs to society by co-ordinating the planning, delivery, resourcing and performance monitoring of action against illegal drugs as part of an anti-drugs strategy.

- **Sure Start** to improve the well-being of younger children through better access to family support, advice on nurturing, health services and early education. Sure Start provides services to all families with children under four within 500 disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- **Welfare to Work** to improve the co-ordination of the work of the Department for Education and Skills, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Treasury to move as many unemployed and inactive welfare recipients into jobs and to help welfare recipients facing severe disadvantages to compete effectively for jobs.

2.16 Each Agreement has a series of performance measures to monitor and assess achievement of their targets (Figure 17 overleaf).

## 17 Examples of targets included in cross cutting Public Service Agreements and how their achievement is being assessed

Cross-cutting Public Service Agreement	Example of target	How target is being measured
<b>Criminal Justice System</b>	<p>Improve by 5 percentage points the satisfaction of victims and witnesses with their treatment by the Criminal Justice System by 2002 and thereafter at least maintain that level of performance.</p> <p>There are eight other targets.</p>	<p>Data will be drawn from three main sources:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Users of both the civil and criminal courts (including jurors) will be covered by the Court service customer satisfaction survey<sup>1</sup></li> <li>2) Victims of crime will be covered by the annual British Crime Survey, and</li> <li>3) Witnesses by a new witness satisfaction survey, both commissioned by the Home Office.</li> </ol> <p>The British Crime Survey will be conducted annually and the Witness survey at intervals agreed by the Criminal Justice Strategic Planning Group. The baseline year for victims will be 1998-99 and for witnesses it will be 2000. An independent market research company will conduct the witness satisfaction survey.</p>
<b>Action against Illegal Drugs</b>	<p>Reduce the levels of repeat offending amongst drugs-misusing offenders by 25 per cent by 2005 (and by 50 per cent by 2008).</p> <p>The target covers adults aged 17 and over, arrested in England and Wales. Arrestees under the age of 17 are classed as juveniles and therefore ineligible to be interviewed (as the presence of a guardian is required). Those under 17 are also less likely than older offenders to have become heavily drug dependent.</p> <p>There are three other targets.</p>	<p>Performance is being measured nationally by the NEW-ADAM research programme (New English &amp; Welsh Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring)<sup>1</sup>.</p> <p>Self-reported data is used to determine both:</p> <p><b>"Repeat offending"</b>: arrestees who admitted offending twice or more per month during the last year, ie repeat offending in the last month.</p> <p><b>"Drugs-misusing"</b>: those reporting using heroin and/or crack/cocaine at least once a week during the last year. The exact relationship between drugs and crime is complex but NEW_ADAM<sup>1</sup> research indicates that heroin and crack/cocaine are the drugs most implicated in determining the highest levels offending and illegal income.</p> <p>Baseline data will be derived from 16 custody suites in selected police forces across England and Wales. The baseline will be set over two financial years (8 sites in 1999-2000 and 8 more in 2000-2001). The selected sites were chosen to provide as full a geographical coverage of England and Wales as possible.</p>
<b>Sure Start</b>	<p><b>Improving health.</b> Achieve by 2004 in the 500 Sure Start areas, a 10 per cent reduction in mothers who smoke in pregnancy.</p> <p>This target is a proxy for improved health. Babies whose mother did not smoke during pregnancy are more likely have normal birth weight, experience less respiratory illness, more likely to be breastfed and be generally healthier.</p>	<p>Health visitors, midwives and Sure Start workers will collect baseline data when they visit families with new borns within two months of birth. They will ask mothers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Did you smoke before you pregnancy was confirmed?</li> <li>■ Did you give up smoking completely, at any time during your pregnancy, until after the baby was born?</li> <li>■ Did you start smoking again after the birth of you baby?</li> </ul> <p>In some cases, baselines may have to be established on the basis of data collected during home visits in the first three months of operation of the programme. A national baseline based on an aggregation of data from individual programmes, or data collected by the national evaluation or national surveys, is to be established by 31 December 2002.</p>

## Cross-cutting Public Service Agreement

### Sure Start (continued)

## Example of target

### Strengthening families and communities.

Reduce by 12 per cent the number of 0-3 year old children in Sure Start areas living in households where no one is working by 2004.

This target is a real outcome in its own right. Programmes will work on reducing the barriers to employment and training that parents of young children living in disadvantaged areas face. The target will be concerned with reducing the differential between parents of young children living in Sure start areas and the wider population. There are two other targets.

## How target is being measured

- An aggregated baseline for the programme, referring to the 12 month period 1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001, is being established using data from the Labour Force survey or using data on benefit recipients. This is to be established by December 2001.
- In the longer term, data to measure progress against the target will be collected centrally as part of the Sure Start evaluation and distributed to local sure Start programmes.

### Welfare to Work

**Reduce** the number of children in households with no one in work over the 3 years to 2004 (the target is shared with the Treasury and the Department for Work and Pensions).

Over the 3 years to 2004 increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups, taking account of the economic cycle - people with disabilities, lone parents, ethnic minorities and the over 50s, the 30 local authority districts with the poorest initial labour market position and reduce the difference between their employment rates and the overall rate (the target is shared with the Treasury and Department for Work and Pensions).

There are three other targets.

This target monitors households where at least one adult is of working age, has a child under the age of 16 and where no one in the household is in employment. The target will be measured using seasonally unadjusted Great Britain Labour Force Survey data. This is a national statistic. The baseline will be Spring 2001 with the target monitored every six months, using Spring and Autumn data.

The target will separately monitor the employment rate for the following groups:

- Lone parents
- Ethnic minorities
- Over 50's
- People with disabilities
- 30 areas with poorest initial labour market position. Data will be derived from the Labour Force Survey.

## NOTE

1. New English and Welsh Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Programme (New Adam) was established in July 1999 as a national programme of research on interviewing and voluntary drug testing of arrestees. It is currently managed by the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate and conducted by the University of Cambridge.

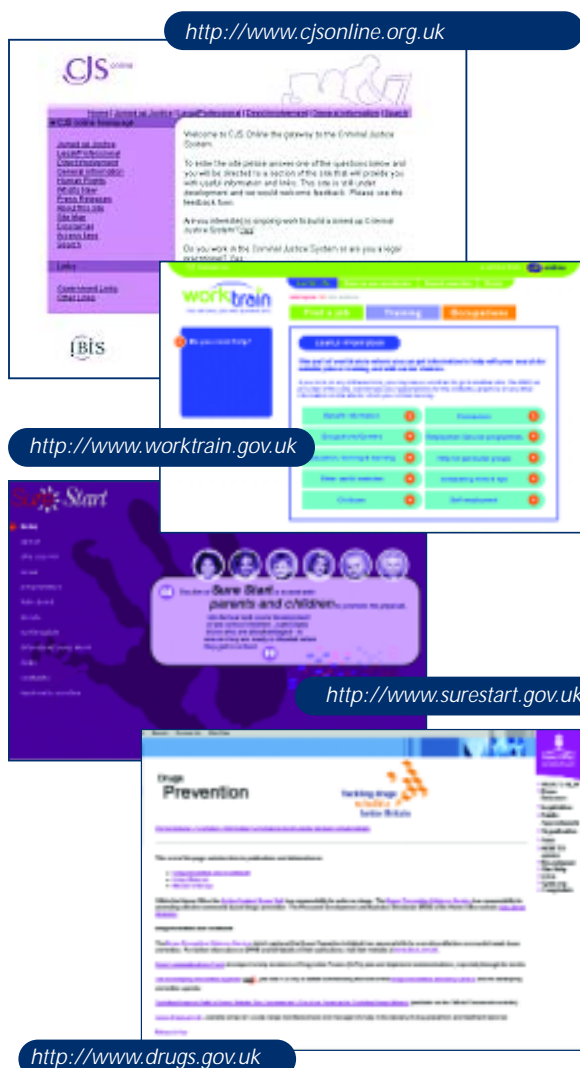
Source: National Audit Office analysis of Public Service Agreements and Technical notes.

Departments report progress against these targets for example:

- In February 2001 the Criminal Justice System Annual Report<sup>15</sup> highlighted that the time taken from arrest to sentence of persistent young offenders had fallen from 142 to 95 days by September 2000. For all other offenders there had been a reduction of 10 days in the time taken from being charged to being sentenced.
- In 2000 a national witness survey indicated that 76 per cent of those surveyed were satisfied with their treatment.

- By March 2001 the Sure Start Unit had established local programmes that were delivering services to 10,000 children each month including visiting almost 100 per cent of parents within two months of the birth of their baby.

## 18 The four programmes supported by a cross cutting Public Service Agreement each have an integrated website



2.17 Departments publish on their websites the details of their targets and associated performance measures in the Public Service Agreements, Service Delivery Agreements and Technical Notes (which define the measures and baseline performance against which the targets will be measured). The websites for the cross-cutting Public Services Agreements (Figure 18) provide general information on each joint working initiative and how those intended to benefit can access services and support.

2.18 In addition, many departments' Agreements include the same target. For example the target to deliver a measurable improvement in the performance of Trade Partners UK in providing support for businesses is included in both the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's and the Department of Trade and Industry's Agreements. There is also a Public Service Agreement for Local Government which brings together all the

targets in departments' individual agreements which rely on local authorities and their local partners to deliver. Each Local Authority is required to develop its own Public Service Agreement incorporating the targets which it is responsible for within its area.

2.19 The Government also intends to use targets to bridge the gap between deprived and more prosperous areas.<sup>16</sup> It is considering setting minimum targets for outcomes in health, education, employment and crime in deprived areas combined with convergence targets for raising standards in these areas towards the national average. Local strategic partnerships would have a role in co-ordinating services at a local level to meet these new targets.

2.20 Cross-cutting Public Service Agreements have worked well in encouraging joint working and setting shared targets and priorities where a manageable small number of departments are involved.<sup>17</sup> Departments are now developing their performance measurement systems to monitor better progress in achieving the targets. For example, during 2001 the Home Office are introducing new questions into the British Crime Survey to enable the Department to assess the effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System both in reducing crime and in dealing with young people accused of crime. The National Audit Office are working with the Treasury and departments on options for providing assurance about the quality of data systems to monitor and assess progress in meeting Public Service Agreement targets.

The annual British Crime Survey covers a randomly selected sample of those aged 16 or over living in England and Wales who have been affected by crime.

2.21 Whether Public Service Agreements and supporting Service Delivery Agreements will lead to sustainable improvements in public services will ultimately depend on the action taken by departments to achieve the targets. This will require (i) carefully thought through and developed implementation plans designed and delivered by departments working together and through partnerships involving the health service, local authorities and voluntary and private sector organisations; and (ii) reliable independent information to monitor and measure performance and to take remedial action quickly where progress is less than planned or value for money is not being delivered.

16 Government Intervention in Deprived Areas; report of the SR 2000 cross-cutting review, HM Treasury, April 2000

17 Measuring the Performance of Government Departments, NAO HC 301, (2000-01) paragraph 6.



# Part 3

## What is needed for successful joint working

3.1 This part of the report discusses how to create successful joint working initiatives. We draw principally on our examination of five joint working initiatives for which we analysed the features of the joint working in each case and asked those whom we interviewed about the success factors and barriers to joint working which they had to overcome. We also considered evidence from academic research, the views of our expert panel, international comparisons and previous reports by the Committee of Public Accounts and the National Audit Office. In this part we focus on:

- i) What needs to be in place to promote successful joint working. We set out the key success factors for joined up or partnership working; and
- ii) The questions which programme designers should address when designing joined up initiatives to enhance their chances of delivering successful outcomes.

### What needs to be in place to promote successful joint working

3.2 A wide range of organisations deliver public services - local offices of government departments such as Benefit Offices; local authorities; non-departmental public bodies such as the Environment Agency; non-profit making companies such as housing associations; and profit making companies such as Consignia (formerly the Post Office). All of these service providers have their own objectives and work within different regulatory frameworks. For example local authority Social Services departments operate in a complex arena of regulation and well-established ways of working reinforced by the Social Services Inspectorate, local authority structures and practices and social workers' professional training. To be successful joint working has to establish an environment in which all these different requirements are mutually supportive and work towards a common goal. When, where and how to join up therefore requires careful consideration.

3.3 Our examination identified five requirements which as a minimum are needed to promote successful joint working. **Figure 19** provides examples of how each of these requirements are being met by the five joined up initiatives covered by this report.

### 1 Goals - working towards clearly defined, mutually valued, shared goals

#### **Risk from failing to focus on goals**

If objectives are unclear or not shared, partners may work towards different, incompatible goals and fail to achieve desired outcomes.

The Safer Cities Programme distributed funds to local partnerships to develop crime prevention strategies and schemes, but no overall goals or targets were set for programme co-ordinators and steering groups. The overall programme had only a marginal effect on reducing recorded crime.<sup>18</sup>

3.4 People and organisations working together have to focus on achieving the goals of the initiative or project. To do this, they must have a clear, shared understanding of what the goals are and an agreed time frame in which to achieve them. In some cases government departments set goals for local partnerships and the time frame for delivery. In other cases, local partnerships have more freedom to set their own goals and to establish the best way for them to contribute to government's overall aims. In both situations it is important that partners are clear about what they are trying to achieve and by when.

<sup>18</sup> *Partnerships in Community Safety, an evaluation of Phase 2 of the Safer Cities Programme, J Knox, A Pemberton and P Wiles, Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions 2000*

## 2 Progress measurement - evaluating progress towards achieving the desired goal and taking remedial action when necessary

### Risk from failing to monitor progress and evaluate achievements

Joined up initiatives are no different from other activities in that their progress must be monitored and remedial action taken when performance is less than satisfactory. If partners do not measure their progress and compare this against their plans and available external benchmarks, such as the progress made by other similar initiatives, they may fail to identify where and how they could improve.

The Audit Commission found that many pre-1999 Community Safety partnerships, set up to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour, had been unable to monitor and evaluate progress because they had not identified clearly their starting position or clearly linked their local implementation plans to their overall strategy. This hindered the learning and development of the partnerships.<sup>19</sup>

- 3.5 Joint working can involve a few or many organisations but ensuring that each makes its designated contribution to the partnership at the right time and of appropriate quality requires careful monitoring. This requires (i) an agreed action plan specifying the responsibilities of each partner with a timetable for delivery; and (ii) reliable information to track progress and assess performance. Our examination of the five joint working initiatives found that working with partners to develop an action plan and monitor achievement against the plan was usually the full time responsibility of a dedicated member of staff.
- 3.6 Partnerships may be set up to be time-limited or ongoing, depending upon their objectives. It is good practice, however, for all partnerships to recognise when they are near to achieving their original objectives and make plans to close down the partnership or set new objectives.

## 3 Resources - ensuring that sufficient and appropriate resources are available

### Risk from insufficient or inappropriate resources

Without sufficient resources, including appropriate skills, a joint working initiative will not achieve its intended benefits or these will not be capable of being sustained in the longer term; and value for money and propriety may be put at risk. Shortages of resources may result in staff having to "fire fight" a variety of problems at the expense of the core objective of the joint working initiative.

A lack of finance skills meant that in the early days of Education Action Zones, some Zones were spending large sums of public money before they had reliable financial controls in place creating risks of poor accounting, impropriety and poor value for money.<sup>20</sup>

- 3.7 Joint working often requires additional or different skills and resources to working through a single organisation. There is always a cost to working in partnership, even if it is only the time partners have to give to meetings. Joint working initiatives usually need:

- **Dedicated budgets** to underpin the initiative and to avoid funds being diverted to other programmes.
- **Sufficient time** to establish effective working relationships. We found that if organisations had some prior knowledge or experience of working together they made swifter progress than organisations which were completely new to one another. For example, the Southwark Sure Start programme established itself quickly because the partnership built on existing good working relations between staff from the Community Health Trust and other local agencies.
- **Skills.** Typical skills required for joint working are project management, marketing, consultation particularly in the context of obtaining and understanding the views of community groups, financial planning and IT. More specialist skills may have to be bought in such as accountancy and legal advice. For example, in setting up the new Northumberland Business Service the implementation project team had to carry out an extensive consultation exercise with small firms, define the tasks needed to get the new service up and running, develop a business plan, contract for a new IT system, liaise with the Small Business Service and other funders and develop a marketing plan for the new service.
- **Guidance and advice.** Those involved in joint working may have little prior experience of working with government organisations and, therefore, need guidance and advice on a range of issues including - establishing appropriate governance and accountability arrangements; how to engage local communities; the type and extent of information needed to monitor the progress of joint working and how such data should be collected; and quality assurance - how to assess and enhance the quality of the key outputs of joint working.

<sup>19</sup> *Safety in Numbers - Promoting Community Safety, Audit Commission, 1999.*

<sup>20</sup> *Education Action Zones, Meeting the Challenge - The Lessons Identified From Auditing the First 25 Zones, National Audit Office, HC 130 2000-01, January 2001.*

## 4 Leadership - directing the team and the initiative towards the goal

### Risk from lack of appropriate leadership

Joined up programmes can be difficult to keep on track because of the additional complexity arising from the number of players involved. Good leadership is important as part of the "glue" to hold the programme together. The leader must drive the initiative forward but also engender a co-operative spirit. Where there is no clear leadership or the leader is unable to secure the co-operation of key partners then turf wars may result with the energies of partners being distracted from key goals.

Research shows that strong leadership was important in creating successful joint working in partnerships set up to regenerate neighbourhoods in deprived areas.<sup>21</sup>

3.8 Most joint working initiatives are not partnerships of equals. Some organisations have more authority, resources or status than others. For joint working to be effective these differences need to be managed so that all parties are committed to achieving the intended benefits. Typical leadership skills required to make joint working successful include:

- **Facilitation** - particularly the ability to secure the involvement and commitment of a wide range of organisations in discussion and decision making.
- **Influencing and communication** such as the ability to convince partners and a range of stakeholders of the purpose of the initiative and what it can achieve and that there are no hidden agenda - that the real business and decision making is not taking place elsewhere.
- **Organisation and planning** - particularly to co-ordinate a range of partners and activities to achieving a common goal and sustainable improvements in public services.

## 5 Working well together - to achieve a shared responsibility

### Risk from poor working relationship between partners

If organisations do not establish good working relationships based on mutual support and trust and open sharing of information then joint working will fail and improvements in public services will not be achieved.

If mistrust develops the consequences for service delivery and value for money can be serious. For example, the tendency for an adversarial relationship to exist between construction firms, subcontractors, consultants and their clients contributed to poor performance, cost and time overruns in the delivery of construction projects.<sup>22</sup>

3.9 The aim of working in partnership is to harness the energies and expertise of individuals from different organisations towards the same goal, whether that goal is to provide a better quality, more efficient service or to tackle an intractable social problem. If individuals from different organisations cannot work effectively together then the benefits of joint working may be lost. Individuals taking part in partnership working can find it an uncomfortable process trying to balance the goals and priorities of the partnership with those of their own organisation which is why it is important that their organisations support the partnership's goals and priorities.

3.10 Joint working requires different approaches and attitudes to working as a single organisation. Partners have to share responsibility and authority but traditional ways of working may influence organisations to seek to protect their own interests. Developing trust between partners is key in creating a working environment where the concerns of individual organisations can be entrusted to the partnership. For example, in the Sunderland Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, the partner representing play groups trusted the local authority to negotiate with schools over their admissions policies, a matter of great concern to play groups.

3.11 Barriers can arise from individuals' preconceived notions of the attitudes or skills of people from different working backgrounds compounded by a lack of understanding of partner organisations' different cultures and ways of working. Partners need to be aware of their own and others' expectations and viewpoints and to make positive efforts to develop open and honest communication. This can be helped by specific team-building events and joint activities.

3.12 As partnerships mature other problems can arise. The original enthusiasm and drive of the partners can wane or the partnership comes to resemble a cosy club, appearing exclusive to outsiders. Partnerships need to constantly re-evaluate their goals, their achievements and their expectations to ensure that they keep up the work rate and remain open to new ideas and people.

<sup>21</sup> Policy Action Team 17. *Joining it up Locally, National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 2000.

<sup>22</sup> *Modernising Construction*, National Audit Office, HC 87 2000-01, January 2001.

## 19 Examples of good practice in joint working

### 1 Goals - working towards a clearly defined, mutually valued, shared goal.

Northumberland Business Service was formed when a group of local business people got together with the County Council to develop a new service. The steering group worked together to define what they wanted the new service to be like. Their starting point was that the service should meet the business support and advice needs of all small businesses in the county. The Small Business Service reinforced this client-centred approach by adopting appropriate performance measures for example, setting minimum customer service standards and competence standards and accreditation of advice providers.

**Benefit secured.** The Northumberland Business Service won the franchise for Business Link services in Northumberland because their client-centred approach enabled them to develop a suite of services to meet local needs following extensive consultation with small businesses.

### 2 Progress measurement - evaluating progress towards achieving the desired goal and taking action as a result.

Sure Start programmes involve local partnerships creating an action plan with milestones and targets under each of Sure Start's key objectives. The programme manager is principally responsible for monitoring progress against the plan. The Sure Start Unit has also put in place an evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the initiative and its components.

**Benefit secured.** The performance framework allows partnerships to try out new approaches and test whether they work. Partnerships can assess their progress, learn from others and take action to refine their programme as a result.

### 3 Resources - ensuring that sufficient and appropriate resources are available.

The Department for Education and Skills provides resources direct to Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, paid via the local education authority, to underpin their partnership working and to develop services. The Department provides funding for a small team to give administrative and managerial support to each partnership and provides a range of other support through its partnership advisers, website and conferences.

**Benefit secured.** Partners can draw on the expertise and assistance of partnership staff allowing them to fulfil their strategic role.

### 4 Leadership - directing the team and the initiative towards the goal.

The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions appointed a rough sleeping Director to take personal responsibility for driving the initiative forward. The Department chose someone with strong communication skills and drive to promote the goal to the team and to partner organisations.

**Benefit secured.** The leader was able to enthuse the team and partner organisations. As a result, partners committed themselves to the goal, believing it could be achieved if they worked together for the benefit of clients.

### 5 Working well together - to deliver a shared responsibility.

The Department for Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office joined together to form British Trade International. Managers and staff from both departments are working to overcome differences in culture and working practices between the two organisations. British Trade International are implementing joint training and secondments to reinforce joint working.

**Benefit secured.** Staff from the two organisations are learning to work with one another and barriers are being broken down to encourage staff to pursue common goals.

Source: National Audit Office examination of five joint working initiatives



## Designing joined up programmes

3.13 The long term success of joint working initiatives depend ultimately on how well they are designed at the outset. This section of the report focuses on six key questions which require careful consideration in designing joined up programmes.

- A who needs to be involved
- B what incentives are needed to reinforce joint working
- C what support is needed to improve the capacity of organisations to work together
- D how to fund the initiative to support joint working
- E how long should the joint working last
- F what accountability and regulatory framework will best support joint working

When the Department for Education and Skills were considering how to implement its national childcare strategy it identified that it could expand the role of the existing **Early Years Development Partnerships** to include childcare. This was a more efficient use of local resources and also improved the integration of early education with childcare.

The Department for Education and Skills requires **Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships** to include representatives from a wide range of local organisations including churches, higher education and health. This is important for a partnership whose role is to plan services for the whole community. Partnership meetings can be very large, however, and involve over 50 people making it difficult to engage all partners.

Some **Sure Start** partnerships have become companies limited by guarantee, with a board of directors, to enable them to contract for services whilst other partnerships have decided not to incorporate because they wish to preserve their flexibility to adapt their partnership arrangements to new circumstances which may develop.

In 2000, the Small Business Service reduced the number of **Business Link partnerships** from 89 to 45 and made their boundaries co-terminous with those of one of their principal partners, Learning and Skills Councils. The new partnership areas are also aligned with the boundaries of Regional Development Agencies. County councils, in particular, now work with only one Business Link partnership instead of several.

## A Who needs to be involved?

3.14 The starting point for the design of any policy or service is considering a range of options, one or more of which may involve joint working. If joint working is appropriate a decision about which organisations need to work together has to be made. This can involve various stages:

### ■ **Deciding whether to establish a new partnership.**

The first consideration should be whether a new partnership or other joint working arrangement is required. Departments need a good knowledge of the extent and track record of partnerships and service providers that already exist particularly at a local level and consider whether an existing partnership or organisation could take on a new role. Departments need, however, also to guard against the temptation to use existing service providers simply because they believe it will be easier and cheaper to do so.

### ■ **Determining the number of organisations to be part of the joint working arrangement.**

The number and range of people and organisations invited to be part of a joint working initiative will depend on what the initiative is intended to achieve. Departments need to balance involving all organisations and community groups who have an interest or some role to play with avoiding the practical difficulties of organising and motivating large numbers of partners. Departments may need to consider whether there are other ways of involving large numbers of stakeholders and community groups without them needing to be formal partners for example, through regular consultation.

### ■ **Deciding the organisational form which joint working should take.**

There is no "one size fits all" for joint working. The appropriate legal framework will depend on circumstances, for example a partnership may be set up as a legal entity if it needs to own property or contract for services in its own right. Having clear governance arrangements, so that partners understand their role and responsibilities is, however, important.

### ■ **Determining geographical boundaries and linkages**

to other initiatives and bodies. Departments need to examine the proposed geographical boundaries of new partnerships they wish to set up to ensure that these are co-terminous with existing administrative boundaries wherever possible. This should simplify partnership arrangements and make liaison with other initiatives and bodies more effective. Departments should identify other local and national initiatives which will impact upon the work of the new partnership and consider how to ensure that the new initiative links effectively with existing initiatives both locally and within central government.

## What incentives are needed to reinforce joint working?

3.15 Organisations need incentives to work together effectively because their customs, functions, and regulatory frameworks can tend to reinforce the primacy of directing resources towards organisations' own objectives rather than joining up with others. Incentives can take different forms:

- **Promoting action through leadership.** Strong leadership can be an important incentive particularly if this convinces joint working participants of the high priority and commitment behind the initiative.
- **Ensuring that objectives have direct relevance to partner organisations.** The better the fit between the objectives of the initiative and those of organisations involved in the partnership the easier it becomes to join up. This means ensuring that objectives are defined in a way that is relevant and meaningful to participating organisations.
- **Providing financial incentives.** Additional funds can be a powerful incentive to work together. For example, the new Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions requires local authorities to set up a local strategic partnership to co-ordinate all the partnership activity within their areas as a condition of access to funding from the £900 million Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.
- **Allowing partnerships greater flexibility in their use of resources.** An alternative way of incentivising organisations to work together is to give them greater control over how they use their resources. In 2001, 20 local authorities agreed to pilot local Public Service Agreements. In return for greater freedom, for example the ability to borrow money or to disapply government regulations and administrative procedures - such as freedom to keep revenue raised from fines or to switch grants between different programmes, local authorities have committed themselves to achieving a range of performance targets which address both local and national priorities. For example, Kent County Council has committed itself to getting all the different agencies in the county to work together to meet new targets including closing the gap between its deprived areas and the rest of the county. If it achieves its targets Kent County Council will receive a Performance Reward Grant of £26 million in addition to having more flexibility over its spending.

3.16 Incentives do not always have the impact originally intended and this risk has to be carefully managed. Incentives need to be designed carefully and their various potential impacts thought through. In a number of the joint working initiatives which we examined we found examples where despite incentives being in place organisations did not act in ways originally intended. In addition, established partnerships may need new incentives and challenges from time to time to prevent them becoming stale.

The lead officers of each of the **Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships** which we spoke to said that the support given by their MP or local councillors was important in securing the co-operation of partners. They considered that without this support the partnership would be seen as low priority by the Council's education or social services departments which would also affect how other organisations saw the work of the partnership.

The effect of the target to reduce **rough sleeping** by two thirds within three years galvanised activity within key voluntary sector organisations. Generally managers welcomed the target as providing a sharper focus for their activities although the reaction of workers trying to move people away from the streets was more mixed.

The **Rough Sleepers Unit** found that despite its work in communicating its objectives to partner organisations, a few pursued goals which were not fully in accordance with those of the Unit's policy. This situation arose from genuine differences of opinion between the Unit and voluntary organisations over how to address rough sleeping and homelessness. The Unit found that it was not enough that the organisation deliver the services set out in grant agreements. If they did not fully agree with the aims or approach of the initiative then they would not work effectively with others to provide joined up innovative solutions. For example, working with police to tackle a street drugs culture which attracts young people to the streets.

## What support is needed to improve the capacity of organisations to work together

- 3.17 The size and nature of organisations working together in joint initiatives varies considerably. Some organisations have well established procedures and are familiar with working with departments. Others, and in particular local community groups, may have little experience of working with public sector bodies. In designing joint working initiatives careful consideration needs to be given to how to build and develop the capacity of local community groups, and other organisations with limited experience of working in partnership, to join up and work together effectively.
- 3.18 Support to develop the capacity of organisations to work together can be provided in various ways.

- **Advice and guidance.** Departments routinely provide guidance to those organisations which receive funding in the form of grants. The guidance typically sets out grant conditions and departments' grant administration procedures. For joint working and partnership initiatives departments provide additional advice. We found this guidance to be of varying quality and focus - some set out general good practice principles for partnership working supported by examples, some provide specific advice relevant to particular partnership models. Most of the guidance had been prepared by departments independently of one another suggesting that there is a need for more generic guidance on the principles of joint working based on a wide range of experience.
- **Expert assistance available locally.** Four of the joint working initiatives which we examined had established expertise in regional offices either in the Government Offices for the Regions or the Regional Development Agency as a source of advice and assistance. The role of these individuals is to provide advice to partnerships on a range of issues, facilitate networking between partnerships and monitor their performance and give feedback. The Rough Sleepers Unit carries out these functions itself from London although it delegates the networking role in London to a voluntary organisation, the Homeless Network.
- **Learning networks.** Organisations involved in joint working need easy access to information on good practice. We found that departments used a range of approaches to disseminate and promote good practice. These included conferences, seminars, training events, local networking meetings and websites.

### EXAMPLES OF GUIDANCE ON JOINT WORKING CURRENTLY AVAILABLE:

- **Building Partnerships in the English Regions: A Good Practice Guide**, Department of the Environment Transport and the Regions, 1998.
- **Working in partnership: developing a whole systems approach.** Good Practice Guide, NHS Executive, 2000.
- **Working with local agencies and other partnerships and networks**, Department for Education and Employment, 2000.
- **Partnership Programmes - A Guide Written by H M Customs and Excise**, 2000.

**Sure Start** has appointed regional development officers who work from Government Offices for the Regions to advise and monitor Sure Start partnerships. The officers have their own expertise but also work to ensure that lessons learned from one partnership are disseminated more widely. **British Trade International** has appointed regional directors part of whose role is to support and manage the network of international trade advisers in Business Links.

The Department for Education and Skills has held a number of events for **Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships** to identify problem areas where further guidance is needed and to promote networking between partnerships. The Small Business Service promotes the sharing of knowledge and ideas between **Business Link partnerships** by holding training events whilst the **Sure Start** Unit hosts a forum for questions and answers from partnerships on its website to share learning and good practice between programmes.



**Sure Start** partnerships have a single capital budget and a single programme budget. This gives the partnerships the flexibility to design programmes which draw on what is already available and plug any gaps in existing services. It also promotes innovation because partnerships have freedom to try out different approaches. Departmental control is exercised by scrutiny of partnerships' plans and by having a set of targets which partnerships must aim to meet.

The **Rough Sleepers Unit** has brought together funding previously administered by several different government departments and agencies. This has enabled the Unit to have greater flexibility in pursuing its strategy to reduce rough sleeping. In this case, the freedom to direct spending is also buttressed by a specific target to reduce rough sleeping by two thirds over three years.

## How to provide funding in ways which promote joint working

- 3.19 How joint working is financed can influence how successful it is. Consideration has to be given to whether it is important for the joint working arrangement to have flexibility in the way money is used or whether tighter control by the central unit or department responsible for the policy is needed to target spending on national priorities. The financing of joint working usually takes two forms - it can either be "ring-fenced" or "pooled". There are advantages with both approaches (**Figure 20**).
- 3.20 In general it is better for joint working for the partnership to have control over its funds. Pooled budgets allow greater flexibility, make it easier for partnerships to design solutions that fit local circumstances and encourage partnerships to develop a strategic approach. Separate ring-fenced budgets, especially combined with short-term or annual bidding for funds, militate against this. Where appropriate, departments should consider whether they can set meaningful, measurable targets for achievement which can be carefully monitored in place of ring-fenced budgets.
- 3.21 In funding joint working arrangements there are additional or increased support services likely to be needed including administrative and secretarial support, financial management, premises for meetings, attendance allowances to cover for staff absence at meetings and training for partners.

### 20 Advantages of pooled and ring-fenced budgets

**POOLED BUDGET:** funds which can be used to finance a range of activities are provided by a number of departments, agencies and local authorities.

#### Advantages include:

- Partners have greater flexibility in the way in which they can use funds.
- Partners can design solutions which fit local circumstances.
- Joint working is promoted because a number of organisations have an interest in how their money is spent.
- Accountability can be promoted by defining the outcomes to be achieved (with the partnership having discretion as to how they are achieved) and having measures to monitor progress.

**RING-FENCED BUDGET:** funds are designated by the sponsoring department for a clearly defined purpose and cannot be used for anything else without prior agreement of the department.

#### Advantages include:

- Partners have to focus on achieving a specific objective often within a designated time period.
- Sponsoring departments have much greater control over how money is used.
- Clearly specified amounts of money are allocated to priorities with guaranteed funding often for a number of years.
- There are clear lines of accountability because responsibility for expenditure is clearly specified.

The **Rough Sleepers Unit** was established to reduce the number of people sleeping rough by two-thirds by April 2002. The Unit has been working on a succession strategy to ensure that the reductions it achieves in rough sleeping are sustained beyond April 2002.

The national network of **Business Link partnerships** was formed between 1993 and 1997. The early enthusiasm for the initiative waned in some areas and some partnerships lost their focus on customers. The Small Business Service restructured the network in 2000-01 in part because of the variation in their performance.

## How long should the joint working last

3.22 All forms of organisation need renewal after a period of time to respond to new circumstances and to prevent them becoming stale. Depending upon the nature of the problem the initiative is intended to solve, departments intend some joint working initiatives to produce an impact in a short period of time whilst others are designed as long term initiatives. There are two points programme designers need to consider:

- **Succession strategies.** It is important that, for time-limited initiatives, there is a properly thought-through succession strategy to ensure that the achievements of the initiative are sustained and that lessons are learned from the joint working and, where applicable, transferred to mainstream services. Departments should ensure that they build in time to develop succession strategies into their work-planning.
- **Maintenance.** For longer term initiatives the problem becomes one of maintaining the drive towards the goals. This may be more of a problem for partnerships than other organisational forms because partnerships often require greater effort to work well. Departments need to have a good handle on partnership performance and be ready to provide fresh incentives and challenges to partnerships from time to time. They should also re-evaluate the rationale behind the joint working and assess whether the initiative still fulfils a valid purpose which cannot be met in some other, simpler way.

## What accountability and regulatory framework will best support joint working

3.23 In designing joint working arrangements departments need to establish a clear accountability framework which does not impose unnecessary burdens on partnerships and service providers. Departments also need to consider whether their own internal organisational structures will adequately support joint working.

- **Establishing a clear accountability framework.** A number of organisations may make a contribution to service delivery and receive public money to do so as part of joint working. Reliable accountability depends on (i) there being clear and accurate reporting of how public money is used by each organisation and what it has achieved; and (ii) those intended to benefit from the service having adequate means of redress where quality of service is poor.

The sometimes complex nature of joint working arrangements mean that it is important for the role and responsibilities of each organisation to be clearly defined and understood by all those involved in the joint working and those who use the service. The latter is particularly important if citizens are to know to whom they should complain if they are not satisfied with the service. Service providers should make clients aware of complaints procedures and the partnership should undertake regular surveys of client satisfaction.

The minimum requirements needed to promote sound accountability include:

- clear definition of the roles and responsibility of each organisation involved in joint working, and in particular partners' responsibility for ensuring propriety in the use of public money;
- unambiguous targets setting out the improvements in service delivery to be achieved and over what time period;
- clear statement of the client groups who are intended to benefit from the initiative;
- reliable information regularly provided on progress in meeting targets;
- clear understanding of who is responsible for taking remedial action if progress is less than satisfactory;
- audited financial statements reporting expenditure; and
- periodic independent evaluations to assess the achievement of planned benefits and to learn lessons.

In setting up joint working initiatives these basic requirements should be formally communicated to each partner organisation and a lead officer designated as having responsibility for ensuring that they are complied with.

**Sure Start** programmes have the most complex accountability arrangements of any of the five joint working initiatives which we examined. Local partnerships agree which partner will be responsible for administering funding and producing financial accounts. The partnership as a whole is responsible for meeting Sure Start's objectives although the lead partner has the responsibility of reporting on performance to the Sure Start Unit. Each service provider operates their own complaints procedures and is responsible for the staff they employ and the services they deliver. Clients can complain to their service provider in the first instance if they are not satisfied with the quality of service they receive. The partnership has no legal responsibility for quality of service, this rests with each individual organisation within the partnership.

The **Rough Sleepers Unit** reduced the number of monitoring reports it required from voluntary organisations. These organisations, however, felt that whilst the Unit had made some progress, there was more that could be achieved. In particular, voluntary organisations which received funding from a number of different departments and agencies have suggested that departments should share information and work together to develop a single system of regulation and inspection.

- **Minimising the administrative burden.** Joint working is often funded by a number of different departments and agencies all of which can have separate grant application and reporting of expenditure and performance procedures. There may also be separate regulation, inspection and evaluation requirements. All of this can result in an increased administrative burden particularly for smaller organisations. In designing joint working initiatives departments need to consider ways in which reporting and other associated procedures can be streamlined. In particular they should look for ways to integrate different reporting requirements and share information so that organisations only have to provide information in one format and to one location. For example, the Regional Co-ordination Unit of the Cabinet Office is currently carrying out a review of regeneration funding to try to make grant application procedures more accessible and to streamline monitoring. This builds on earlier work carried out by the Better Regulation Task Force on voluntary sector funding arrangements.
- **Considering whether existing departmental structures support joint working.** Implementing joined up programmes may have implications for departmental structures. Programmes designed around client groups often cut across existing policy responsibilities and departments should consider at an early stage in the design of programmes whether their own organisational structures are appropriate to support the initiative. We found that each of the five joint working initiatives which we examined had resulted in organisational changes for departments to enable them to provide a joined up policy response to the needs of specific client groups (**Figure 21**).



## 21 Organisational changes in departments to promote joint working

Initiative	Department	Organisational change
Rough Sleepers	Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions	A specialist unit established in the department overseen by a Ministerial steering group with representation from key government departments. Key positions are staffed by secondees from voluntary sector homelessness organisations.
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships	Department for Education and Skills	Policy responsibility for nursery education and childcare has been brought together within one unit. The Unit has specialist partnership advisers, brought in from local government and elsewhere, located in Government Offices for the Regions.
Sure Start	Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health	A specialist unit was established between the Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health. It is overseen by a Ministerial steering group with representation from key government departments and staffed by civil servants from departments and secondees from local government. The Unit has specialist development officers located in Government Offices for the Regions.
Business Link partnerships	Department of Trade and Industry	The Small Business Service was established as an executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry to manage Business Link partnerships and to promote joined up policy towards small business from across government. The Small Business Service has regional directors brought in from the private sector and located in the Regional Development Agencies.
British Trade International	Department of Trade and Industry and Foreign and Commonwealth Office	British Trade International is itself a unique form of central government organisation bringing staff from two departments together into a single operation without formal status either as a separate government department or as an Agency. The Group Chief Executive reports to a Board including representatives from the two departments and the private sector and to a Minister who holds office in both departments. It has regional directors - most from the private sector - and in most cases located in the Regional Development Agencies.

Source: National Audit Office examination of five joint working initiatives

# Appendix 1

## The Methodology

### 1 The main features of our methodology were:

- We undertook five case examinations of services to three client groups - rough sleepers, pre school children and small and medium sized businesses - conducting structured interviews with staff in departments and in local partnerships to understand the different circumstances and ways in which joined up government is being implemented and to identify the lessons that have been learned which have the potential for wider application;
  - The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions' **rough sleepers** initiative which has a dedicated unit within the department and partners comprising voluntary organisations, local authorities, health services and the police.
  - The Department for Education and Skills; local **Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships** which has partners including local authorities, private nursery and childcare providers, voluntary nursery and childcare providers, schools and parents.
  - The Department for Education and Skills and the Department of Health's **Sure Start** initiative, with local partnerships whose membership varies and often includes local authorities, health services, voluntary organisations and community groups.
  - The Department of Trade and Industry's **Business Link partnerships** involving the learning and skills councils, local authorities, Chambers of Commerce, and enterprise agencies.
  - The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Trade and Industry's **British Trade International**.
- To support the findings of our case studies, we also met with the following organisations who represent the interests of different client groups:
  - i) **Rough sleepers**
    - Crisis
    - Centrepoint
  - ii) **Pre-school children**
    - National Childminding Association
    - National Children's Bureau
    - Pre-school Learning Alliance
    - The NSPCC
    - The Children's Society

### iii) Small and medium sized businesses

CBI  
 Federation of Small Businesses  
 Institute of Directors  
 National Federation of Enterprise Agencies  
 The British Chambers of Commerce

And to provide a perspective from local partnerships

### iv) Local Government Association

- We commissioned NOP Consumer Ltd to carry out focus groups of rough sleepers and the parents of pre-school children to find out their views of the services they received, their perceptions of the changes brought about by the joined up initiatives and what additional services they would like. They carried out the focus groups with rough sleepers in London and Manchester and with parents of pre-school children in London, Leeds and Sunderland.
- To supplement the case examinations, we carried out a review of recent research into the factors that are important to achieve successful cross boundary working.
- We looked at practice in other countries to learn from their approach to working across boundaries: Australia, Canada, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and the United States of America.
- We reviewed previous reports by the National Audit Office and the Committee of Public Accounts to identify examples of joint working and the scope of lessons to be learnt.
- We commissioned an academic research paper from Sue Richards, Professor of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, on the types of joined up government and the problem of accountability.
- We consulted an expert panel comprising Ian Handford (outgoing Chairman, Federation of Small Businesses), Lin Homer (Chief Executive, Suffolk County Council), David Prince (Director of Operations, Audit Commission), Sue Richards (Professor of Public Management, University of Birmingham), Nicola Simpson (Director of Public Affairs, NACAB), Gerry Stoker (Professor of Politics, University of Manchester) and Alan Whysall (Deputy Director, Cabinet Office).

# Appendix 2

## Four types of joined up government and the problem of accountability

Sue Richards, Professor of Public Management, University of Birmingham

### Introduction

- 1 'Joined up government' has been seen as the answer to many of the public policy problems, which have emerged in the last few years. There is glibness about the term which disguises the significance of the fundamental system design questions which relate to these policy problems. Like joined up writing, the implication is that this is a relatively straightforward process which one can easily accomplish. New initiatives which promise to solve difficult and complex problems need to be based on careful analysis of the nature of those problems, and it is hoped that this paper will assist in that analysis.
- 2 Joined up government has become the fashionable solution to some of the problems of co-ordination and control in government. It raises issues of organisational and system design which are inherent in any complex situation. All governments wish to use public policy to achieve change in the real world, and require joined up government and public service in order to do so. They have to decide how to define their problem and what the best policy is for solving it, how best to mobilise support for these changes, what policy instruments are likely to lead to the right results, how to allocate resources to incentivise and enable people to deliver those results, how to deploy organisational responsibilities and accountabilities for delivery, and how to evaluate and learn from the experience in order to do better next time.
- 3 How this is done in any given circumstance is likely to reflect the core strategic purposes a particular government sets itself. What are the key themes by which they will be judged? The approach to organisational and system design also reflects the key drivers and enablers of change in the wider political, economic, social and technological environment, all of which will impact on a government's capacity to achieve purpose.
- 4 This paper argues that an older paradigm of public policy and public service, in place in the three decades following the second world war, was characterised by government joined up through policy consensus and the community of professional practice. As the conditions for this paradigm decayed, it was replaced by another paradigm, which was designed to achieve increased economy and efficiency in public spending, but in achieving these fragmented the system for delivering service outputs. This paradigm too ran its course, achieving some of the core purpose of increased economic competitiveness, until being replaced, as seems to be happening now, by a new paradigm, which focuses on the effectiveness of the outcomes of public policy and service. All governments have to deal with issues of co-ordination, but these have been made particularly problematic at the present time by the legacy of this second paradigm and its fragmentation.
- 5 In the first section, this paper tracks those big changes in the core strategies of governments and relates them to issues of co-ordination and control. Following that, it explores the nature of the types of problems to which joined up government may be the answer, and assesses what processes for joining up are likely to be appropriate for different types of policy and service problem. Finally, the implications for accountability are considered. Does joined up government need to be mirrored by joined up accountability, or does it require accountability to be more focused on outcomes and less on inputs and processes - more on the ends and less on the means.

### Paradigm change in public policy

- 6 Public policy and public services change constantly, adapting to new circumstances in the polity, the economy and the society to which they relate. However, there appear to be times when change is of a different order, when it is step change - or paradigm change - rather than incremental. These are periodic moments when many of the old institutionalised 'rules of the game', which in normal times go unquestioned and even unacknowledged, are overtly challenged. This seems to be such a moment, and 'joined up government' indicates one feature of this step change.
- 7 It is possible that there may not be a paradigm change at the present time. The picture is not altogether clear. It is easier to see paradigm changes in the past, where time has allowed the pattern to emerge more clearly, than of those currently taking place. The management theorist Henry Mintzberg uses the term 'emergent strategy' to indicate a pattern of behaviour and action whose

- direction becomes clear over time (Mintzberg, 1994). The distance of time allows us to distinguish rhetoric from reality in government action.
- 8 In order to understand the nature of the current situation it is important to explore more of its origins. There appear to be three fundamental paradigms of public policy and public service in the UK's post-war history, each relating to the 'core project' of governments at the time, involving mission and strategy which for much of the time came to dominate the policy agenda.
  - 9 The first paradigm had its peak in the war-time and post-war creation of a welfare state providing planned security from cradle to grave, with a protected economy to maintain full employment, and powerful professionals to ration resources according to their judgements about need. This paradigm itself grew out of a reaction to a previous paradigm characterised by *ad hoc* and uncertain provision of welfare, provided by local boards, friendly societies and charitable bodies, and from *laissez-faire* economic management, which led to periods of high unemployment.
  - 10 Planning and co-ordination at the top combined with a pluralist distribution of power between central and local government, and between elected politicians and key groups of public service professionals. This distributed system of decision-making ensured that many different perspectives contributed. Changes in the nature of services delivered required the development of a consensus amongst the key players. Change did happen but it took time to happen.
  - 11 The characteristic organisational form was the large bureaucracy, ideally suited to the delivery of planned outputs to a standard level in conditions of environmental stability. Mintzberg (1993) divides bureaucracy into two forms - 'machine bureaucracy' and 'professional bureaucracy', and both were characteristic of this time. In some cases the task to be undertaken by the organisation was straightforward enough to be turned into a set of simple rules and procedures requiring little front-line discretion - as for instance in the case of delivering non-discretionary social security benefits. Machine bureaucracies like this deliver standard outputs by having a standardised process. Where the task is not so easily simplified, as for instance in the application of complex medical sciences to observable symptoms in the human body, the more appropriate model is the professional bureaucracy, where standardisation is through the skills and knowledge of the front line practitioners, acquired through initial training and then through continuing professional development. This description has been elaborated in order to remind us what in this first post-war paradigm were the characteristic modes of co-ordination - joined up government through planning and professional consensus.
  - 12 There were characteristic flaws in this paradigm - the paternalism of dominant professionals who decided things for us, not with us, and the relatively weak levers for keeping down costs. But no one talked about 'joined up government' because they were actually doing it, in a form appropriate for the paradigm. In the end, this paradigm lost legitimacy and the way was opened by the end of the 1970s for a wholly different recipe. The second paradigm was born out of the decay of the social and economic conditions which had earlier applied, the rise of individualism and the fiscal crisis that accompanied it. The core project of this new paradigm was global competitiveness, a reaction against the perceived failure of protectionism in economic policy.
  - 13 For public services the significance of this change was massively increased attention to unit costs and their reduction, as the state 'overhead' was cut back, and increases in the opportunity for the private sector as public services were opened up to market forces. Local government and public service professionals were subject to measures which reduced their scope for autonomous action, and powers were concentrated in Whitehall - perhaps necessary to break the old paradigm. The pressure to reduce costs led to new organisational design principles coming into play. Simplified structures, focused on delivery of cost - and in some cases quality improvement within narrow boundaries became the order of the day. The key change was a belief in the necessity of separating out the strategic commissioning of services from their provision, thus avoiding 'producer capture' by public service professionals. Executive agencies in central government, the purchaser provider split in health and the divide into client and contractor functions in local government - these were all structures designed to improve performance by narrowing the focus and injecting competition. These developments in the UK were mirrored in many other countries as they responded to the same international pressures - although the response in each case was conditioned by its internal factors.
  - 14 For the UK, while there were many improvements in productivity achieved, overcoming the underlying flaw in the 'welfare state' paradigm - lack of cost consciousness. But all such institutional arrangements have their flaws, and the flaw in this 'efficiency' paradigm was that power was centralised into a Whitehall structure and a culture built on silo principles. In the past, the presence of corporate planning mechanisms, with collective responsibility in the cabinet at the centre, and the more distributed nature of power - in local government and amongst professionals - had counter-balanced this tendency. Now, however, these checks and balances were reduced in importance.

- 15 One effect of this was the emergence of 'wicked problems' (Clarke and Stewart, 1997, Jervis and Richards, 1997). The term 'wicked problems' was identified as a product of the silo structures, occurring because rational efficient behaviour - narrowly defined - had consequences for other policy and service areas, creating irrationality and inefficiency at an overall system level. The classic example is the difficult pupil, excluded from school by a head teacher who needs to improve his or her school's performance measurement and thus position on league tables of measured outputs. The young person then frequently becomes a charge on the criminal justice budget in the first instance, and then later on the social security budget as they face adult life ill-equipped for modern employment conditions.
- 16 That kind of problem is obviously the product of the perverse incentives created by a narrowly defined, output driven performance management system, and the term 'wicked problem' has been used to refer to this. But the term had a slightly different meaning originally. It was used in the operational research field to denote an intractable problem that we do not know how to solve (Nelson, 1968). The emergence of a raft of such wicked problems in this paradigm seems to have undermined its legitimacy with the general public, just as the flaws in the previous paradigm had. The 'wicked problems' were interlocking and deep-seated social problems relating to worklessness, low skills, poor health, drug abuse, the rise in crime, the fear of crime, the desertion of public spaces and consequent reduction in informal social control of disaffected young people. What seems to have occurred - not everywhere but in particular 'hot spots' - is a break down of civil society, leaving public services with tasks they were ill equipped to handle.
- 17 The two paradigms outlined here represent archetypal positions in the continuing dilemmas about the state and the market, each bringing characteristic benefits and disbenefits in its wake. So a new paradigm, aimed at achieving both 'economic dynamism' and 'social justice' seems to be emerging, a form of social democratic politics, which seeks to maintain the momentum of competitiveness but also intervene heavily on the supply side to solve these social problems. These interventions are not merely compensatory, to ease the pain of change, but instead are designed to enhance competitiveness by solving the 'wicked problems', focusing on developing skills and employability in individuals, and by addressing social and community conditions which might harm employability and thus competitiveness. This paradigm, too, will have its flaws, since all paradigms do. We do not yet have a clear picture of what those flaws might be.
- 18 The term 'wicked problems' has been used in two ways. The first refers to problems which persist because the design of the public policy system hinders their solution. The second concerns a set of intractable social and economic problems which no one knows how to solve.

Although in practice both may apply at once, it is worth keeping an analytic distinction. I will pick up this distinction in the section after next.

- 19 Before going on to explore the varying nature of those problems, it is worth reflecting on a major change in the strategic environment of government which is changing the technology it may employ in its work. The changes in information and communications technology promise to have such an impact on information handling that this needs to be encompassed in considering issues of joined up government. In the next section the paper explores the potential impact on joined up government of the revolution in information and communications technology (ICT).

## Technology and organisational structuring

- 20 Despite the obvious difficulties of introducing ICT in government, well documented in NAO reports, no-one can doubt that this revolution in information handling capacity will fundamentally affect issues of co-ordination and control, and the nature of the joined up government problem. 'Knowledge base' - and the grouping together in single organisations of the people who share that knowledge base - is the key principle which lies behind the traditional structure of Whitehall and the local agencies it sponsors. It is also the main way in which local government activities have been structured in the past. As long ago as 1918, the Royal Commission on the Machinery of Government established 'knowledge base' as the factor which should determine organisational structure (Haldane, 1918). At some stage in the future, ICT developments may be such as to undermine the notion that the knowledge and expertise of people should be the key determinants of structural design. If information handling capacities became sufficiently great, the kind of structure Mintzberg described as 'professional bureaucracy' would no longer be needed, as even complex tasks could be accomplished by carefully designed processes which could be carried out by people without traditional professional skills and knowledge. Although this is already happening at the margins, we have not yet moved very far down this path. For the 'machine bureaucracy', however, we are already in the midst of fundamental change.
- 21 Changes in the handling of process information are transforming traditional structures. This is well illustrated in the criminal justice system, where there are plans to set up a data warehouse which stores information about offences and the charges brought as a result against defendants. The information in the warehouse will be accessible in regulated ways on line to all the agencies of the criminal justice system, for trial, sentencing and the supervision of sentences. Three government



departments and six local criminal justice agencies are directly involved in the criminal justice process which will be covered. Joined up information will lower costs, speed up the process and increase the transparency and reliability of the system, which to victims and other public stakeholders currently seems extremely opaque and uncertain.

- 22 This is standard technology, not leading edge, although it is immensely difficult in organisational terms to make it happen. This is partly because the required expertise is in very short supply, not least because the same processes are happening in the private sector, where such capacities are a key element in competitive advantage. The price goes up for specialist skills where demand exceeds supply, and human resource practices in the public sector make it difficult to compete. So there are obstacles in the way, but it is clear that ICT will have a crucial part to play in joined up management and process information and, by implication, joined up government.

## Intractable problems, tamable problems and seamless service

- 23 It is clear that the problems to which joined up government is an answer are quite diverse in nature, and it seems sensible to suppose that the type of joining up required will be different in each case. The next section explores the different types of problem and then examines the issues for joining up.

## Intractable problems

- 24 There is a set of policy problems which tends to focus on the issues of social exclusion. A vicious circle prevails. Having lost their traditional economic base, and the disciplines and self respect that go with employment, some communities which did not have access to the new prosperity - for reasons of geography, ethnicity, culture or other excluding factors - seem to have suffered a steep decline in social order, with people hiding behind their front doors, reluctant to take on the role of active citizen and community member.
- 25 The full impact of this emerged as the last paradigm matured. Health inequalities between the top and bottom strata of society had grown; while educational standards achieved in the mainstream began to rise, for sink schools on sink estates they remained firmly at the bottom, and crime rose, with the fear of crime coming out as the top issue in studies of public opinion.
- 26 This is the situation for which the term 'wicked problem' was originally coined in the USA. In the UK 'wicked problems' were less racially differentiated, but this did not make the problems any less intractable. Certainly public services seem not to have helped. The pattern of

provision in services like education and health has been based on values of universalism, where special need was - and probably still is - under-recognised in the policy planning process. The need to retain the support of the mainstream for public services has ensured that they have not been as redistributive as they might have been. The government's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and the floor targets which came out of the last spending review may begin to shift the pattern of priorities, although there will always be the countervailing force of the demands made by those with better resources for influencing policy decisions.

- 27 While improved public services for these communities are part of the answer, there is more to it than that. What is needed is, in effect, the redevelopment or strengthening of community capacity, networks between people that become the means for ensuring community safety, mutual support for well-being, better health and quality of life, and all of this resulting in the re-establishing of social control that keeps down anti-social behaviour, a task which is impossible for the police without public support and assistance.
- 28 For these intractable problems, it is necessary to recognise the fundamentally situational character of both the problems and the solutions. In driving public services to achieve better results, ministers frequently have in mind 'average' service users, and require service deliverers to work to this norm. If by doing that they remove the scope and the drive for responding in a situationally distinctive way to the intractable problems outlined above, they will have diminished rather than enhanced joined up government. While no one knows how to solve these problems in a general way - hence the term 'intractable' - because there are many examples of success it is possible for local leadership and entrepreneurial energy to emerge and flourish (Leadbeater, 1997).
- 29 It is possible that careful learning from these many situations will provide us with more generalisable knowledge of what works. In which case, by definition, the problems would stop being intractable and be defined as tame instead. While they remain intractable, a strategy of decentralised policy and service development, integrated into structures that focus on locality or community, seems to be the key to appropriate joining up. The central drive should be on facilitating local players to achieve outcomes. Forcing them to try to achieve outputs defined at the centre will not work.

## Tame problems

- 30 Tame problems are those where solutions are known, or where there is a chance through investment in research and evaluation of finding an answer. Looking at the rise in many social indicators which occurred during the

post-war years, it is evident that this was a time when intractable problems were tamed, and solutions embedded in the professional practice and policies of the welfare state. Situations change, and the old solutions may no longer be relevant, but the extent to which practitioners know how to achieve better outcomes in public policy should not be underestimated. The key problem is that during the last twenty years the policy priorities, and the structures, processes, cultures and competencies that went with them, were different.

- 31 There does appear to be a new class of problems - tame rather than intractable - which lie on the boundaries between different jurisdictions, and which have remained relatively unaddressed in the recent past. One example would be in the rehabilitation of offenders, as it becomes clear that a large proportion of the population of offenders suffer severe educational disadvantage, lacking the skills that might enable them to build a stake in society. In the modern economy, those without life and work skills will go to the wall. A proportion will be drawn into crime as their own personal salvation. Working across the boundaries of prisons, probation and the employment service allows a focus on the particular needs of this special group, with the development of programmes which address their offending behaviour and also their educational disadvantage.
- 32 These problems are individual to the service user or client rather than situational in the 'community' sense outlined above. They are therefore susceptible to the 'what works' approach, and to a top-down strategy which requires partnership working across the silo structures. Whereas in the case of intractable problems it is right to let a 'thousand flowers bloom', each plant within its own unique habitat, in this case, joining up through a programmatic design may be the best way of achieving desired outcomes. This will require considerable attention to the performance management frameworks designed in the days when cost reduction was king to allow for the effective use of resources wherever most needed in the service process to achieve the right results.
- 33 Since by definition the knowledge and skill base required to solve these 'tame' problems will be distributed across a number of service structures, a design which gives access to the required knowledge and skill is essential. This is likely to involve the following:
  - **Ambitious national strategy.** Defining the problem and assessing potential solutions will lie outside the scope of local agencies. Although their knowledge will be needed in the development of the strategy. It falls to central government to develop the strategy and the

programme for its delivery. That will involve programme, objectives, targets, performance monitoring and performance comparison. Apart from exceptional cases, this will not require newly created silo structures, but the process of two or more existing structures working in partnership to achieve results. Creating new structures adds to the problems of complexity expressed in the term 'congested state' (Sullivan and Skelcher, forthcoming).

- **Cross-sector leadership capacity.** This kind of change cannot be created by incentives and sanctions alone. While a certain level of incentive to achieve results can be built into this process via comparative evaluation, a key component in joining up this type of problem is leadership which focuses attention on results. Ministerial leadership in central government needs to be structured so as to facilitate this, and not be narrowly departmental in nature. The development of self-motivating problem solving leadership in local service agencies is vital, since such people will be required to balance the twin aspects of this 'third way' paradigm. Where there are well-established ways of delivering outcomes through known outputs, the job will be to continue to drive down costs, delivering more outputs for less input. Where outcomes can only be achieved through new outputs, which require partnership working for their production, leadership will be needed to create and maintain this capacity. These two quite different tasks will need to be led by the same people, a mix of transformational and transactional leadership competences (Alimo-Metcalfe, 1998; Newman, 2001).
- **Flexible/pooled budgets.** Ideally, budgetary frameworks should be built around the nature of the outcome to be achieved. Where outcomes need partnership-based outputs to achieve them, it makes sense to have a flexible approach to budgets, allowing the money to be spent as seems to the partners most likely to lead to the desired results. Public service has already started moving in this direction, as in the case of the £500 million budget agreed at the last spending review for the criminal justice system, to be used in whatever agency would provide most system-wide benefit. Change needs to be a step at a time so as to build assurance that the gains in outcomes outweigh the apparent disbenefits of reduced levels of detailed control and accountability.
- **Evaluation and learning.** Problems of this nature - no longer as intractable but not well-established routine operations within existing structures - will benefit from a heavy emphasis on experimentation, evaluation and learning.

While major investment is now taking place in the first two activities, this cannot be said of the third. Learning from and learning by public service practitioners is essential to delivering better outcomes on tame problems.

## Seamless service

- 34 The final category of problems to which joined up government is the answer relates to a wide range of services which have been established in the past, using the technology of the time, and which technological change now allows to be delivered differently. In the past, people have taken for granted inconvenience and high transaction costs for users as they deal with different parts of the public sector. Advances in customer service in the private sector, supported by the ICT revolution, have had the effect of ratcheting up expectations of public service, meeting the needs of users, rather than users fitting in to the historic pattern of service delivery.
- 35 It is important to draw a distinction between using ICT to provide information services in a more efficient way, and re-engineering the business process to provide a better - in this case more joined up - service. Designing systems so that they link up a range of currently separate services that the user needs will be important. Whether it be life episodes such as birth, starting school, starting work, retirement, or particular client needs, such as the multiple needs of disabled children, electronic links are one answer to the propensity of different organisations in a service delivery network not to communicate with each other. Call-centre technology and systems provide further linkage, in that they typically involve codifying knowledge and information which was previously dispersed in separate organisations, so that it can be handled by generalist staff who do not have specialist background knowledge.
- 36 The direction of travel is to move from mere provision of information - useful as that may be - to be able to undertake transactions on line or through the call-centre. In order to achieve this, the frequently implicit knowledge held by staff members about the nature of service delivery has to be made explicit. Once it becomes explicit, and therefore independent of its source, the service can be packaged together with other services the same user might need, and be accessed all at the same time - even though the organisations which historically delivered the services were diverse in purpose, culture, location and form of governance.
- 37 This enables the joining up of services around other principles than function, principles such as 'life episode' which make a great deal more sense to service users. Given the raised expectations which result from private sector advances in this capacity, it will no longer be good enough to structure services and manage around function. Instead, client need will become the dominant design principle, as governments search for legitimacy by enhancing service quality.
- 38 It is hard to imagine the changes which will flow from this. But a number of issues for government obviously arise:
  - **Managing the change.** While the technology involved in this kind of change may not be leading edge, the organisational and systems design competence required is, and such skills are in short supply. Making human-operated implicit processes into explicit machine-based systems is difficult. Minimising the risk of system crashes and gaining the benefits from making these changes requires significant levels of skill. Government will inevitably be tempted to try to reap the benefit without ensuring that it has bought sufficient skill and knowledge to achieve this.
  - **Mixed governance.** It is likely that services for which there will be a single point of entry will come from different governance frameworks. Pilot projects offering one-stop-shops for a mixture of central and local government services have already taken place. Different systems for setting strategic direction and for accountability and audit illustrate a substantial mis-match between the systems developed in the past and what is needed for a future of joined up service. Dealing with these issues will take a well-developed capacity for corporate management at the highest levels in government, with overall system effectiveness as the goal rather than the vested interests of the component parts. What were once vast empires of staff will disappear as their skills are made redundant, and with them will go the traditional career expectations of their senior managers. If fear of the future predominates in the minds of those senior managers, there are plenty of obstacles to change to provide an excuse for slow progress.
- 39 While there is no exact equivalent of the bottom line which drives innovation in the private sector, ministers and senior officials need to be conscious that this type of joined up government will be crucial in maintaining the legitimacy of public service provision amongst citizens.

Four types of Joined up Government	Degree of Centralisation in Governance	Key performance indicators	Key element of knowledge base	Key structure
1 Traditional professional services	Decentralised	Input	Community of professional practice	Specialised service unit
2 Dealing with intractable problems	Decentralised	Outcome	Situational	Community partnership
3 Cross-boundary solutions to tame problems	Centralised	Outcome	Evaluation and research-based	Service provider partnership
4 Seamless Service	Centralised	Output	Expert systems based on explicit knowledge	Call-centre/internet service

## Horses for courses

40 In summary, joined up government is a phrase which hides a multitude of different sorts of problems, with diverse solutions. The table above summarises the differences which have been discussed above.

- Degree of centralisation appropriate in setting the policy framework and the framework for accountability;
- The type of indicator to be used to assess performance - input, output or outcome;
- What the nature of the knowledge base is; and
- What structural choices are appropriate.

The table sets out the different types of joined up problem against these factors. It includes the traditional professional public services which were characteristic of the public policy system in the early post-war era.

## Joined up government and accountability

41 In Hirschmann's seminal book 'Exit, Voice and Loyalty', he argues that processes of accountability are the most significant factor in the health of the public sector (Hirschmann, 1970). The customers of firms providing services in the market place make individual choices about whether to stay as customers, or whether to exit from the arrangement and take their business elsewhere. Obviously this only applies where there is competition and the customer does have a choice. These market signals allow shareholders to hold managers to account for their performance, with capital markets reinforcing the point through changes in market capitalisation.

42 Hirschmann argues that for the public domain, from which most individuals cannot exit, there must be equivalent processes of discipline exercised through 'voice', the generic term he uses for accountability. If the capacity to exit is what makes market provision efficient, it is equally important in the public domain for people to exercise their voice in such a way as to exert the same disciplines on public bodies. There is no dichotomy - in principle - between efficiency and the accountability. 'Exit' in the market sector produces efficiency, and 'voice' in the public domain should do the same.

43 That is not to say that the actual processes through which accountability is exercised are necessarily fit for purpose. Indeed, as quasi-constitutional features of the public policy system they are likely to have changed less than the rest of the system. Earlier, the paper suggested that analysis of the development of the public sector after 1945 reveals three substantial step changes in its organising principles. The first of these paradigms, with its focus on planned, universalistic provision of welfare and economic protection, was dominated by bureaucratic organisational forms - machine bureaucracy and professional bureaucracy.

44 Public accountability systems were rather well aligned with machine bureaucracy. The notion that one person at the top of the pyramid could decide on policy, which would then be delivered through a carefully designed cascade, fitted well with constitutional notions of ministerial responsibility. For professional bureaucracies, accountability was primarily to self-regulating professional bodies, such as the Royal Colleges in health, and to local government structured into committees, which in turn mirrored local government professionals. Self-regulation fitted the culture of paternalism and deference, which still prevailed.



- 45 The paradigm change which began in the late 1970s brought greater challenges to existing processes of accountability. The bureaucratic forms which aligned so well with old processes of accountability lost legitimacy and public support because a more demanding set of service users were no longer content with the quality of service received. Structural and cultural changes designed to enhance service quality and value for money moved public bodies out of alignment with traditional accountability processes.
- 46 Machine bureaucracies like the system for delivering social security benefits were substantially altered in becoming executive agencies in order to improve their performance. Perhaps the most significant change was the appointment of a chief executive, to act as the managerial leader of the organisation, rather than as a mere functionary who would report up the line to the Secretary of State. Taking the strategic direction set by ministers, as expressed in the policy and resources framework, chief executives were to work within that framework in leading change.
- 47 The place of public accountability in the story of public management reform in the UK reveals the system's characteristic difficulty in addressing constitutional issues directly. No change was made in the formal process of ministerial responsibility and accountability, thus ensuring one of two outcomes. Either the significance of the processes of accountability would be diminished as they were seen to be out of touch with the modern world, or the reforms would be undermined because the dimension of accountability had not been addressed. In fact, the picture which emerged was mixed. Some holders of the office of chief executive took that to mean that they were just civil servants like any other, and under-performed in terms of the leadership of service improvements. Others managed a careful balance, and one at least came to grief through acting as he thought a chief executive should act, being sacked by his Secretary of State for not behaving like a civil servant. Over time, however, new conventions on value for money have taken root to legitimate a more modern approach to public management.
- 48 Professional bureaucracies were subject to changes in formal accountability. The purchaser/provider split in health placed decisions about how best to meet the health needs of a particular local population and the assurance of quality in health service in the hands of health authorities, rather than with senior doctors, who in turn were to be held to account through contracts for the delivery of the service. But this was a plan that failed. Doctors were able to claim greater legitimacy than the ministerially appointed small businessman who was the typical non-executive appointee to local health boards. The provider side of the NHS was in fact able to retain the initiative and before the internal market was abolished it had stopped functioning as a full market, still incurring the transaction costs of the market, but without its benefits.
- 49 Rather more successful was the introduction of new forms of accountability in school education. The new inspectorial regime established under Ofsted was focused on providing parents and the wider public with information about comparative school performance, rather than being focused on helping teachers improve as the previous HMI had been - holding the profession to account rather than being part of the professional community. Teachers were unable to retain the initiative in the same way as doctors, and found themselves accountable for performance to others, particularly boards of governors, outside the profession for the first time. The key difference between the two cases seems to be the involvement of consumers, the parents. While no quasi-market for state schooling ever materialised, Ofsted's practice involved treating parents as customers who needed information in order to make a choice of school. In mimicking the practice of the market, Ofsted was able to invest itself with the legitimacy of market-like behaviour.
- 50 The case also raises the significance of what Professor John Stewart refers to as twin aspects of accountability - being held to account for your stewardship by a superior body, and rendering account to consumers and citizens about how you are serving their needs.
- 51 Codes of stewardship require that those who act as agents of the public be held to account for their stewardship. The principle is a deeply embedded feature of the processes for legitimisation of collective action in this country. It cannot be substituted by rendering an account to the public about performance, but it is not the only source of legitimacy, and wise public servants will seek to expand their influence by opening up channels of communication with consumers of the service and the wider public.
- 52 What this suggests is that there was no smooth adjustment in the processes of accountability to enable them to cope with the new patterns of public service activity developing in that second paradigm. The nature of the way that public bodies were directed and managed changed, and the institutions of accountability ceased to be as fit for purpose as they had previously been. Nonetheless there was a process of adaptation, characterised by a renewed focus on value for money, evident in the work of elected chambers and in the work of the public audit bodies.



53 As a new outcomes-focused paradigm develops, new challenges to old accountability systems will emerge, and many of these will focus on joined up government. Each of the types of joined up government will present its own accountability challenges. The three categories of joined up government discussed above - dealing with intractable problems, tame problems and developing seamless service - each will need different accountability treatments.

■ **Intractable problems and accountability.** In the model described at the end of the previous section of this paper, it was indicated that in order to address these issues, a decentralised approach is needed, driven by outcome based performance targets, recognising the situational nature of the problem and its solution, with community based partnership as the key structure. Accountability mechanisms will need to be developed which are congruent with these principles, empowering local people to be responsible and accountable for their actions. The major challenge will be to ensure that the national accountability of many of the public services which will be important in those local situations does not override their local contribution. There are indications, for example, of police forces too busy meeting nationally set targets to give proper attention to their crime and disorder partnership work; of schools so busy meeting individualised targets that they play the performance management game and dump the youngsters who need them most; of GP practices unwilling to provide care for homeless people because it would interfere with their capacity to deliver nationally set targets on vaccination and screening, on which part of their remuneration is based. Public officials, schooled under the second paradigm, assume that their national accountability requires them to impose this centralised framework. In order clearly to legitimate a more appropriate set of behaviours innovation is needed in the accountability processes involved.

■ **Tame problems and accountability.** For this class of problems, where solutions are known but whose solution requires effective working across boundaries, the accountability issues will be different. The model suggests that this kind of joined up government should be centrally driven, based on outcome targets through knowledge that is research based and through service partnerships, probably underpinned by contracts. This requires a degree of innovation in accountability in order to provide legitimacy for cross-boundary flows to achieve

outcomes. There will need to be shared ministerial responsibility, and relationships with centrally and locally accountable bodies which need to work together co-operatively. But many of these arrangements have already piloted, notably in cross-departmental ministerial responsibility for the Sure Start programme, and joint ministerial responsibility for the performance of the criminal justice system. Such innovations will need to become part of the standard repertoire of design options from which policy makers draw their choices.

■ **Seamless service and accountability.** The model gives us the following conditions for this kind of joined up government - a centralised framework based on output targets, using explicit knowledge programmed into expert systems, using internet or call-centre based delivery. The key challenges for public accountability will emerge as these new areas of seamless service intersect with other aspects of public policy and public service. It will be necessary to manage the interface appropriately. As with the rest of this ICT enabled change, not everything can be predicted. But it is already clear that the ICT infrastructure will be jointly owned by government and private sector partners, each using it for their own purposes. This will bring to the fore the many issues which relate to the governance of public private relationships, and test accountability design capacity to the maximum, so as to ensure the benefits of partnership while ensuring the protection of the public interest.

54 To maintain its key role in building legitimacy for collective action, the system of accountability must be seen as relevant to the achievement of the legitimate purposes of elected governments. This does not mean following every twist and turn of the moment, but it does mean being broadly in tune with major shifts of direction, which have underlying public support. So if there are paradigm shifts in public policy and public service, along the lines indicated in this paper, there need to be matching paradigm shifts in the system of accountability. The suggestions here are indicative but certainly not definitive, and more work is required in this area.

## Conclusions

- 55 This paper has presented an argument that the public policy system is undergoing one of its periodic step changes, and that the issues of joined up government are intimately connected with these changes. The last major step change had, in focusing effort on efficient performance, actually created or made worse the problems of integration and joined up working. While there had been increased efficiency in a narrowly defined sense as a result of this, the wider impact on the public policy system was to reduce effectiveness for some services and some clients. When faced with the challenges of a globalised economy, a revolution in the working technology of public service and the social malaise resulting from a period of rapid economic change, this was enough to propel us into seeking a new way - the Third Way - which would achieve both economic dynamism and social justice, ensuring effective outcomes in solving difficult social and economic policy problems.
- 56 The paper suggested that such policy and service problems ought to be differentiated. 'Wicked problems' consist of two types - intractable problems that are situationally dependent, and problems that can only be solved by working across organisational boundaries. In addition, the revolution in ICT creates the potential for reconfiguring a vast array of services better to meet the needs of users, following the lead of the fundamental changes in private sector service management. All of these issues have been labeled as requiring 'joined up government' solutions, but the argument here is that very different sorts of problem require very different approaches to their solution.
- 57 Whatever solutions are found, it is important that the accountability arrangements are fully integrated into the new approach. Accountability should be valued as a key mechanism for ensuring public support of collective choices, and seen as part of the answer not part of the problem. Public officials working on system changes should not demur from addressing the design of accountability out of a sense that it is improper to enter the domain of elected representatives. Elected representatives need to recognise that the way they hold public sector bodies to account, and for what they are accountable, is a crucial component in the delivery of better outcomes in public policy. Ancient institutions lose their legitimacy at times of rapid change unless they also change. A more open and transparent dialogue about such matters is an important first step.

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# Appendix 3

## Rough Sleepers

### Client group

Rough sleepers, former rough sleepers and people at risk of rough sleeping

### Purpose

To reduce the number of people sleeping rough

### Ways of working

Use grant funding and strategic direction to bring voluntary and statutory agencies together to develop co-ordinated services and influence government departments to develop preventative measures

### Funding

£201 million over 3 years, including £73 million of capital expenditure

### Time frame

3 years from April 1999 to March 2002

### Responsibility for delivery

Director, Rough Sleepers Unit, Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

### What has worked well

- underpinning work to understand the problem
- clear objective and target
- pooled budget
- adequate resources
- leadership
- skills

### Risks to success

- lack of buy-in to the objectives
- lack of agreement over priorities
- impact of short timescales
- burden of administration

### Key lessons

- Understanding the nature of the problem can help identify where joined up solutions are needed
- Pooling budgets can reinforce joint working by giving planners more control over resources directed towards the client group. Pooled budgets should, however, be reinforced by clear outcome based targets
- Reducing the burden of administration on departments and other agencies would make joining up easier

## Why join up?

- 1 Between 1990 and 1999 the government spent £250 million in England on a rough sleepers initiative helping approximately 4,500 rough sleepers off the streets and into permanent accommodation. In central London, where the problem is greatest and where it has been measured consistently, the number of people sleeping rough on any one night fell from around 2,000 in the early 1990's to 400 in 1997. Research has suggested, however, that around five times this number may spend some time sleeping rough over the course of a year. Data for England suggests that in 1998 nearly 2,000 people slept rough each night. These figures show that while many people were helped off the streets the overall numbers remained high.
- 2 In 1998 the Social Exclusion Unit of the Cabinet Office carried out a multi-agency review of rough sleeping. It reported<sup>1</sup> that whilst the earlier rough sleepers initiative had reduced the numbers sleeping rough in central London substantially, those that remained tended to be those with the most difficult problems and it had not prevented new people from arriving onto the streets. The Unit reported that "without better integration at both policy planning and delivery levels, there is little that can be done to reduce the numbers sleeping rough". It recommended action across a range of agencies and government departments:
  - to co-ordinate services better;
  - to tackle the needs of those with complex problems such as addiction or emotional problems; and
  - to provide help to those at risk of homelessness, such as people leaving care or prison, to prevent them ending up on the streets.

In 1999, in response to the Social Exclusion Unit's report, a Rough Sleepers Unit (the Unit) was established in the former Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions with a three year remit to reduce rough sleeping to as near to zero as possible, and by at least two thirds by 2002.

## What is different

- 3 The new initiative on rough sleeping has put in place both new structures and new ways of working (shown in the table below):
- 4 Other key differences include:
  - a clear outcome-focused target;
  - a greater focus on helping those with more complex or multiple needs;
  - a pooled budget, bringing together funding from the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, the Department of Health (part of Homeless Mentally Ill Initiative funding) and the Housing Corporation;
  - greater emphasis on control over access to hostel places and development of other accommodation to ensure that rough sleepers get access to appropriate housing;
  - a requirement for voluntary sector agencies to work together which is set out in service level agreements with the agencies; and
  - better data on and tracking of individual rough sleepers.
- 5 London is home to an estimated 50 per cent of England's rough sleepers with around 50 per cent of the remainder living in 33 other towns and cities. The Unit funds 80 organisations to deliver its strategy in London. The Unit's method of achieving co-ordinated action in London was to assign geographical areas of responsibility to the key outreach and resettlement organisations and to award grants on condition that agencies worked together. Agencies are required to co-ordinate service provision and ensure that individuals always have a key worker as they move from street towards a permanent home. For example, St Mungo's North West London tenancy sustainment team includes a substance misuse worker from the Hungerford project and a youth worker from London Connection.

### Organisational structures

Ministerial Steering Committee with representation from key government departments

Rough Sleepers Unit within the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, headed by a Director with national responsibility for tackling the problem

Local authority homelessness officers in 33 towns and cities outside London which have recorded high numbers of rough sleepers

### Ways of working

The Committee oversees progress and acts as an enabler to bring departments together. It approves the spending plans put forward by the Rough Sleepers Unit

The dedicated unit co-ordinates the activity of the voluntary sector agencies and takes the lead on working with other government departments. It plans how to spend the budget

Local authorities work with local voluntary and statutory agencies to develop and implement a rough sleeping strategy

<sup>1</sup> *Rough Sleeping, Report by the Social Exclusion Unit, Cm 4008, July 1998*



- 6 The Rough Sleepers Unit also funds agencies to provide central co-ordinating services for the initiative in London. The Homeless Network holds regular meetings for partner agencies to help overcome some of the cultural and practical issues that arise. For example, it worked with agencies to agree a protocol for the handover of responsibility for an individual rough sleeper from one agency to another. Whilst the Housing Services Agency developed a database to make it easier for outreach teams to keep track of and share information about individuals.
- 7 In the 33 towns and cities outside London which have recorded high numbers of rough sleepers, the Rough Sleepers Unit required the local authority to establish a consortium of key agencies to develop a local strategy. The Unit only supported bids for funding which were part of this strategy. In Manchester, the city's rough sleeping co-ordinating group represents the city council's housing and social services departments, the police, the health authority and the voluntary agencies. The Group agreed a strategy for the city and continues to hold regular meetings to facilitate communication between the different agencies and to agree action plans for specific individuals.

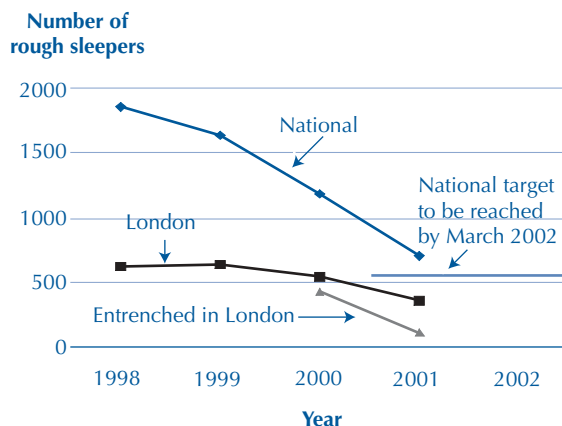
group of rough sleepers in London who have been on the streets for some time and who access accommodation sporadically but do not wish to leave the streets permanently. The number of vulnerable entrenched rough sleepers<sup>2</sup> in London has fallen sharply from 427 to 110. In June 2001, the Unit published a consultation document on its future strategy beyond 2002 for preventing a new generation of rough sleepers.

- 10 We commissioned consultants NOP Consumer Ltd to carry out focus group research with rough sleepers in London and Manchester. The rough sleepers identified some impact from greater co-ordination of services. Positive comments were made about advice and support services, training opportunities, healthcare services and improved access to help for people new to the streets. The changed priorities, however, for access to accommodation were felt to benefit some but disadvantage others. In Manchester, the views of rough sleepers were generally less positive than in London, in part due to discontent over police action against street begging.
- 11 Our examination of the initiative's joined up working in London and Manchester identified the following points as factors in driving it towards success.

## Achievements to date

- 8 The headline target for the initiative is to reduce the number of people sleeping rough in England by at least two thirds from June 1998 to March 2002, from 1,850 to 616 or lower. At June 2001, the number counted sleeping rough was 703. Thus the overall target is in sight.
- 9 The number of rough sleepers in London, however, is not falling as fast as outside London because there is a

### 1 Number of people estimated to be sleeping rough in England



Source: Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

## What has worked well

### Underpinning work to understand the problem

- 12 The Social Exclusion Unit analysed what was known about the client group, the experience of previous initiatives directed towards rough sleeping, and consulted with the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations working with rough sleepers. This analysis identified the need for a different, more joined up approach which would be led by the Rough Sleepers Unit. The Unit built on this work and consulted widely to develop its strategy.

### Ministers' interest leading to a clear objective and target

- 13 The impetus behind the initiative, combined with clear objectives and a simple outcome-focused target, has created a strong drive to achieve the initiative's goals which is felt in both Whitehall, particularly in the Rough Sleepers Unit itself, and in the voluntary agencies. The voluntary agencies welcomed the focus on outcomes as being more dynamic and providing crisper priority.

<sup>2</sup> Entrenched rough sleepers are a group of known individuals sleeping rough in London who the Unit identified in 2000 as having multiple needs and needing sustained co-ordinated help to improve their situation.

## Pooled budget

- 14 The Rough Sleepers Unit has brought together different programme moneys from within the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions and obtained control over some other sources of funding, for example as part of the Department of Health's Homeless Mentally Ill Initiative. The Unit regards its ability to control and prioritise funding as very important in enabling it to pursue its strategic goals.

## Adequate resources

- 15 Since the Rough Sleepers Unit was set up, more money has been made available to address the needs of rough sleepers other than their housing needs. Voluntary agencies very much welcome the opportunity to bid for additional money for a variety of specialist provision. For example, in Manchester, a night centre was opened to provide a range of services such as outreach, health, mental health and substance abuse workers who can work with individuals to help them access the longer term services they need. The centre works as a drop-in centre rather than providing beds as in a hostel.

## Leadership

- 16 Voluntary agencies welcomed the leadership shown by the Director of the Rough Sleepers Unit in reinforcing a sense of urgency and encouraging agencies to be more creative in finding solutions. The Director has also encouraged the Rough Sleepers Unit to take a hands-on approach. For example, members of the Unit help carry out the regular street counts of rough sleepers. This approach has led to a level of dialogue between the voluntary agencies and the Unit that has, on the whole, promoted the feeling amongst all concerned of working in partnership.

## Skills

- 17 The Rough Sleepers Unit was established as a multi-disciplinary team bringing together civil servants with experience of working in different government departments and people from the voluntary sector with a depth of knowledge of both the client group and how voluntary agencies work. This combination of skills and knowledge has been important in developing and implementing the Unit's strategy.

## Managing the risks to success

- 18 The Rough Sleepers Unit has encountered a number of obstacles to joined up working and some of them have proved to be difficult to resolve within the timeframe of the current initiative.

## Ensuring buy-in to the objectives

- 19 It has been important to get buy-in from other bodies, in particular local authorities and the voluntary sector, to the policy and the accompanying strategy. On the whole the voluntary agencies have welcomed the emphasis on providing a co-ordinated service to their clients. Some have criticised, however, the policy of focusing on rough sleeping rather than all forms of homelessness and the Unit has had to manage the difference between its own objectives and that of voluntary organisations.

## Securing agreement over priorities

- 20 Initially the Unit found it easier to work with some government departments than others. This may be because of differences in the departments' perceptions of their priorities and responsibilities. Departments responded very well to requests to carry out prevention work for a relatively narrow group of people toward whom they owed a clear duty of care, such as prisoners or former members of the Armed Forces. The Unit found it harder to engage effectively with some other government departments with wider responsibilities and the Ministerial Steering Group has been an effective force for raising the needs of rough sleepers as priorities. The Unit also found that their knowledge of other government departments has been helpful. For example, when working with the Benefits Agency to develop a way for rough sleepers who have no proof of their identity to claim Housing Benefit.
- 21 The Unit still lacks leverage, however, over some important players, principally local authorities and NHS Trusts. The Unit has sometimes found it difficult, particularly where it is not providing direct funding, to get these bodies to share its priorities or focus on rough sleepers. For example, in London, an area of huge housing need, the Unit has had greater success persuading some local authorities to make housing available for former rough sleepers than others.

## Managing the impact of short timescales on service delivery

- 22 The Rough Sleepers Unit was given three years to solve a problem that had not been solved during the previous ten years. The Unit faced a number of challenges before new services could be delivered, including:
  - setting up the Unit with the right mix of skills and experience;
  - consulting stakeholders and developing the strategy; and
  - implementing the strategy.

- 23 Voluntary and other agencies then had to gear themselves up to develop services and create the new working arrangements. Some of the improved co-ordinated services to rough sleepers will have been available for only about 18 months when the three year initiative is finished. The voluntary agencies have told us that what they perceive as unrealistic timescales has led to rushed planning. They also report difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff due to the short-term nature of the funding available. In Manchester we were told that a key worker had just left to take up a permanent post elsewhere and that his work with vulnerable young rough sleepers had been lost. Other staff were also looking for jobs which offered permanent contracts.

### Reducing the burden of administration

- 24 Excessive administration, for example requiring voluntary agencies to provide information that is not really needed or used, has diverted voluntary sector resources away from planning and delivering services. The Unit wanted to simplify the grant application and monitoring processes typically used by the former Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions. They made some progress, for example reducing the number of monitoring reports required from agencies; but it was largely too little too late to help the voluntary sector.
- 25 The Unit also tried to reduce the number of grant agreements it needed to have in place by requiring key agencies to sub-contract for specialist services. It found this arrangement could, however, have adverse VAT consequences for the agencies. The VAT issues were complex and it took three months to ascertain that an exemption might apply. As the Unit was unable to resolve the problem in time, it was forced to let the grant agreements in order to make progress with the initiative. As a consequence the Unit had to set up and maintain an additional 100 grant agreements.

## Key lessons

### Understanding the nature of the problem can help identify where joined up solutions are needed

The Social Exclusion Unit, in 1998, analysed why people continued to sleep rough despite the help made available through different government schemes. It identified a need for more joined up action across government departments and between voluntary organisations to prevent rough sleeping. For example, it showed that people leaving institutional care need special help. The Rough Sleepers Unit was set up to work with government departments to implement policies and procedures which make it less likely that individuals will end up on the streets. It also designed ways it wanted voluntary and other agencies to work together to prevent duplication and gaps in services.

### Pooling budgets can reinforce joint working by giving planners more control over resources directed towards the client group. Pooled budgets should, however, be reinforced by clear outcome based targets.

During the 1990's, at least six different government departments and agencies controlled elements of funding for rough sleepers; for example both the Department of the Environment and the Department of Social Security funded advice services, and the Department of Health funded health initiatives. Whilst the services were intended to be complementary, in practice mechanisms to join up on the ground were weak. In contrast, the Rough Sleepers Unit was given control over all central government resources directed towards rough sleeping. This enabled it to implement a strategy for how different organisations should work together. It assigned voluntary organisations responsibility for particular geographical areas and made it a condition of funding that organisations work together to provide packages of support tailored to individual needs. It reinforced this joined up approach with clear outcome - related targets.

### Reducing the burden of administration on departments and other agencies would make joining up easier

Voluntary organisations working with the homeless are often funded from a number of sources. They find the different funding and regulatory requirements of government departments a considerable burden on their resources. Both the voluntary organisations and the Rough Sleepers Unit identified that elements of the former Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions' standard grant making procedures were no longer necessary and took up valuable time. The Rough Sleepers Unit questioned the existing procedures and simplified its monitoring as a result. Both the Unit and the voluntary agencies, however, believe that further streamlining may be possible without increasing the risk of resources being misapplied.



# Appendix 4

## Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships

### Client group

Children aged 0-14 years (16 years with special needs)

### Purpose

To plan early education provision and create and support childcare places in partnership with local authorities

### Ways of working

150 formal partnerships bringing together private, voluntary and public sector providers to plan and implement local strategies

### Funding

Approximately £300 million in 2000-01 rising to £650 million in 2003-04

### Time frame

Since 1999, not time limited

### Responsibility for delivery

Local authority

### What has worked well

- leaders regard the work as important
- building relationships around shared goals
- resources to underpin partnership working
- leadership skills
- working arrangements support partnership working
- sharing information on practices that work

### Risks to success

- key parties not engaging in the partnership
- funding arrangements place disproportionate burden on partners
- impact of short timescale

### Key lessons

- Partnerships need support from local councillors and senior council officials to ensure that partners give sufficient priority to the work of the partnership and resources are not diverted elsewhere
- Good leadership is needed to create effective working relationships between partners
- Partnerships need to focus on their aims and on establishing and carrying out the tasks needed to achieve those aims



## Why join up?

- 1 In May 1997, the Government announced its broad policy approach to early years education. A key element of the approach was that early years educational services should be planned in each local education authority through an Early Years Development Plan, drawn up by the local authority in full co-operation and consultation with a forum representing parents, providers, local education authorities and the private and voluntary sectors. Early Years Development Partnerships were formed to provide that forum in early 1998.
- 2 In May 1998, Ministers launched a National Childcare Strategy to create more childcare places, improve the quality of childcare and make it more affordable. The Department for Education and Employment<sup>3</sup> decided, rather than creating a new body, to expand the remit of Early Years Development Partnerships to include childcare. Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships produced their first Plans for 1999-2000.
- 3 Public funding for early education and childcare comes from three main sources: the Department for Education and Skills, the New Opportunities Fund and the European Social Fund. Funding from the Department for Education and Skills in particular covers a number of different elements of the policy initiative, for example funding for nurseries in deprived areas and training of childcare workers. Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships provide a way to join up much of the funding with the exception of early education funding which the Department for Education and Skills pay to schools (via the local education authority) on a per pupil basis.

## What is different

- 4 Before the creation of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships the private and voluntary sectors had no formal input into local authority policy on early education and childcare services. The partnerships bring all sectors together for the first time to develop and implement local authority-wide plans showing how a partnership will meet government targets for the expansion of early education and childcare. Previously local authorities, private sector and voluntary sector providers and interest groups acted independently of one another, although in some areas local authorities had informal links with the voluntary sector.

- 5 The annual plan sets out how the local authority in collaboration with the partnership will:
  - secure a free early education place for all 4 year olds;
  - secure the number of free early education places for 3 year olds required by the Department for Education and Skills;
  - expand childcare provision for children up to the age of 14 (16 for children with special needs);
  - improve the quality of the available early education and childcare; and
  - implement and develop a childcare information service.
- 6 The partnerships are not legal entities. Local authorities act as banker for partnerships and are legally responsible for their expenditure. The local authority also provides administrative support arrangements, typically a lead officer and one or two staff who support the Partnership, and may employ directly, or contract for, development workers and other specialist staff to implement elements of the Partnership's Plan. The Department for Education and Skills sets rules for Partnerships as a condition of grant funding. For example, the Department requires partnerships to represent the views of a wide range of local interests including the health service, employers and churches as well as education and childcare providers and users. But it allows partnerships to develop their own operational rules for matters such as how decisions are taken and choosing a Chair.

## Achievements to date

### Progress against key targets set by the Department

- 7 In 1999 the then Department for Education and Employment set targets for the expansion of nursery education places and, in 2000, a target for the expansion of childcare places. In all the initiative has 29 strategic targets. The Department has met or is on course to meet its key targets (**Figure 1**). Partnerships have had less impact in shaping the delivery of extra nursery education places for 4 year olds because these children are largely absorbed into reception and nursery classes in primary schools, a process which predates the establishment of the Partnerships.

<sup>3</sup> Known, since June 2001, as the Department for Education and Skills.



## 1 Progress against key targets

Target set	Target	Achievement by March 2001
1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ to provide a free part-time nursery place for all 4 year olds</li> <li>■ to increase the provision of free part-time nursery places for 3 year olds from 34 per cent to <b>66 per cent by 2002</b>, focusing on the most deprived areas of the country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ achieved</li> <li>■ free part-time places available for <b>50 per cent of 3 year olds</b></li> </ul>
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ to create 82,000 new childcare places by March 2001</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 140,000 places created, <b>70 per cent over target</b></li> </ul>

Source: Department for Education and Employment Departmental Reports and Main Estimates 2000, Cm 5102 and 2001, Cm 4602 and Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships Planning Guidance 2001-02

## Views from Partnerships

8 As part of our fieldwork we interviewed partnership members from the statutory, private and voluntary sectors in 3 local authority areas: Sunderland, Leeds and the London Borough of Southwark. We found that Partnership members were enthusiastic about their Partnership and pointed to benefits both for themselves as providers and for children and their parents. They identified achievements in the following areas of work:

- Places - they had met government targets for the provision of nursery education and childcare places;
- Training - they provided free comprehensive training to anyone working with pre-school children in the area; private and voluntary sector representatives were particularly pleased to be able to access good quality training for the first time;
- Quality - they were working to raise the quality of nursery education and childcare through training, quality assurance schemes and other means;
- Special Needs - they had employed Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators to ensure that children, particularly those in private and voluntary nurseries, receive the help they need; and
- Information - they had worked to make information available to parents on local childcare and nursery education. In Sunderland, for example, the partnership advertised its Children's Information Service using a variety of innovative means including releasing balloons from a local park with a free mobile phone to the child or parent whose balloon travelled furthest.

9 Partners also identified benefits to themselves and their sector from working together in partnership:

- all felt that planning of services was enhanced by bringing together their differing perspectives and non-local authority members representing private nurseries, maintained and independent schools and voluntary sector childcare and education providers were particularly pleased to be able to influence service provision for the first time; and
- non-local authority members valued the knowledge gained and the contacts made through the Partnership; for example, a voluntary sector co-ordinator of creche facilities found her new knowledge of the wider strategic picture helped her plan her own services, whilst the owner of a private nursery said she now knew who to contact to get information on a wide range of issues affecting her business.

## Views from parents

10 We commissioned NOP Consumer Ltd to carry out focus group research amongst parents of small children living in the local authority areas we visited. The principal findings from this research were:

- few parents could identify any change in the quality or quantity of early education and childcare services in their area;
- although parents were not aware of the work of the Partnership, most knew that information on the availability of childcare was available through the local council;
- several parents had benefited from new provision for their older children such as after-school clubs;
- most of the parents were happy with the quality of their child's nursery although a few felt their child did not receive enough attention or tuition;

- all the parents wanted cheaper, more flexible childcare to be available locally; and
- working parents, both men and women, were particularly concerned about the problems they encountered of getting affordable childcare which fitted in with their work patterns.

## What has worked well

- 11 During our fieldwork, we found a number of common factors that helped the partnerships achieve success.

### Leaders regard the work as important

- 12 The local authority is the key member of Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships. It is responsible to the Department for Education and Skills for the plan, is the guardian of much of the grant moneys and is often the largest provider of early education. Local authority officers identified the attitude of councillors and senior council officials towards the Partnership as very important in ensuring that the Partnership was able to gain support from other council departments such as Estates.

### Building effective relationships around shared goals

- 13 We found a great deal of commitment and enthusiasm amongst the partners we spoke to. They identified some key features in creating and maintaining this enthusiasm:
- all partners readily accepted the partnership goals of increasing access for parents to good quality childcare and early education for their young children;
  - the amount of money available to the partnership has created a sense of optimism which has helped partners work together and eased potential tensions over spending decisions; in addition, it has given partners a real job to do;
  - partnerships have become more focused and task-orientated as they have matured; in particular, sub-groups were successful in engaging the energies of partners on developing policy and solving problems;
  - special events such as awaydays were used very successfully by partnerships to break down barriers and bond people together. In Sunderland, partners went on a two day awayday to write their Plan. Partners agreed that this had not just improved the planning but had improved relationships overall.

## Resources to underpin partnership working

- 14 The Department for Education and Skills' Childcare Grant can be used to provide administrative support for Partnerships. In each of the three areas we visited, we found that this funding was essential to underpin the work of the partnership. Partnership members generally had full-time jobs within their own organisations and could not undertake the detailed work needed to prepare partnership plans. Without dedicated resources to organise meetings, prepare bids for funding, monitor budgets, plan and monitor the implementation of plans, partnerships would founder.

### Leadership skills

- 15 The non-local authority members of the Partnerships we spoke to identified the skills of the chair and the lead officer as important to the effective working of the Partnership. The core skills they identified were:
- facilitation skills; for example the ability to create an informal unthreatening atmosphere in meetings;
  - influencing and communication; for example the ability to convince others that there are no hidden agendas; and
  - organisation and planning.

### Working arrangements support partnership working

- 16 Partnership members identified a variety of practical considerations which were important in allowing them to contribute effectively to the work of the partnership:
- the size, location and timing of meetings are all important considerations which can influence the way the partnership works. In Leeds, for example, the Partnership's desire to be open and inclusive has led to very large formal Partnership meetings which could be off putting to some, so the partnership has used sub-groups and working groups as a way to engage members;
  - the cost of belonging to the partnership should not outweigh the benefits. Some Partnership members, particularly those from the private and voluntary sectors, need to engage staff to cover their absence at partnership meetings. We found this not to be a significant barrier in the locations we visited because the members recognised other benefits from being on the partnership. Southwark provides an allowance to cover partners' costs which can include the cost of providing cover for absence at meetings.

- new members may need assistance to get up to speed with partnership business. None of the partnerships we visited offered an induction to new members routinely; several members said that an induction would have been helpful, for example a parent on one partnership said that for some time she did not understand her role and felt left out;
- the volume and complexity of documents should not prevent partnership members from contributing towards decision making. In Sunderland, members valued the work of the lead officer in producing an easy to read commentary on the formal partnership papers and minutes which enabled members to identify quickly the issues of interest to them.

## Sharing information on practices that work

- 17 The Department for Education and Skills has provided a significant and growing amount of expert support to Partnerships on all aspects of their work. Within the last year, the Department has:
  - improved its core guidance on the preparation of Partnership Plans;
  - visited all Partnerships to assess their progress;
  - held conferences for chairs and lead officers of Partnerships to discuss common issues;
  - held training events on particular issues, such as Special Educational Needs;
  - promoted networking amongst lead officers in their regions;
  - employed Partnership advisors in the regions as a source of expert help on specialist issues around early education and childcare; and
  - provided extensive guidance on most aspects of Partnerships' work, available on the Department's website.
- 18 In 2001-02, the Department will deliver an enhanced training programme for Chairs, lead officers and members and a Partnership handbook and induction pack for new members. Lead officers welcomed the Department's increased support and praised the openness and problem-solving approach of the Department.

## Managing the risks to success

### Ensuring all relevant parties are engaged

- 19 All the Partnerships we visited found it difficult to maintain the active participation of all the groups nominally represented on the Partnership. For example, all Partnerships found it difficult to consult parents effectively, although they tried. Partnerships also found it difficult to maintain representation from other groups such as employers, schools and libraries but channelled their efforts towards trying to influence key providers such as primary school head teachers. Generally, we found that the Partnerships we visited were able to engage with the most important groups, the childcare and early education providers, for planning provision for their area.

### Reducing the burden of funding arrangements

- 20 Lead officers of Partnerships were critical of the complex funding arrangements for early education and childcare provision. Funding comes from several sources, including the Department for Education and Skills, New Opportunities Fund and European Social Fund and within a single funding stream there can be many different ring-fenced budgets. In Sunderland, one staff member works full-time monitoring around 20 different budgets. In addition, funders make new amounts of time-limited funding available at short notice. Lead officers have to be quick to apply for the money and quick to spend it; there is often insufficient time for the Partnership to ratify lead officers' decisions.

### Managing the impact of short timescales

- 21 Lead officers, in particular, were critical of the lack of time Partnerships have to prepare their Plans. In 2000, the Department for Education and Skills sent Partnerships the essential planning guidance for 2001-02 just before Christmas. This made it impossible in some cases for Partnerships to complete their Plans, get them approved by the Department and have new staff in post by 1 April, leading to a delay in starting new work whilst staff were recruited. The Department issued partnerships with the 2002-03 planning guidance in September 2001.

## Key lessons

### **Partnerships need support from local councillors and senior council officials to ensure that partners give sufficient priority to the work of the partnership and resources are not diverted elsewhere**

Local councillors and senior council officials need to give clear signals that they regard the work of the partnership as important if they are to mobilise and maintain support for the partnership from partner organisations. If key stakeholders regard the work of the partnership as low priority there is a risk that partners will divert resources elsewhere, particularly management time. In turn, this can affect the ability of the partnership to make decisions because staff attending partnership meetings are unable to commit their organisations to an agreed course of action. This risk was avoided in the partnerships we visited where, for example, support from the local MP and councillors ensured that the local authority did not reduce expenditure on nursery places when the funding mechanism changed in 2001.

### **Good leadership is needed to create effective working relationships between partners**

Lead officers, appointed by the local authority, organise the work of Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships, including persuading the right people to sit on the partnership. The chair of the partnership runs the partnership meetings including managing the discussion and securing agreement to action. Both individuals play a crucial role in creating an environment where partners feel they can make their views heard and business gets done. Without an open and consultative style of leadership, there is a risk that the partnership will split into factions because partners do not know who to trust. The particular leadership skills needed are facilitation skills (the ability to create an informal unthreatening atmosphere in meetings for example); influencing and communication (the ability to convince others that there are no hidden agendas); and organisation and planning skills.

### **Partnerships need to focus on their aims and on establishing and carrying out the tasks needed to achieve those aims**

Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships are planning bodies which decide how to spend new government moneys for the expansion of nursery and childcare provision. Most partners are not direct providers of nursery or childcare services and do not necessarily work with each other in any other capacity. They often come together solely to plan new services. In these circumstances there is an increased risk that if the partnership does not maintain a firm focus on achieving the end result it could become merely a talking shop, and that this could lead to disaffection amongst partners. We found that when partners take on specific tasks with target dates, progress towards overall goals is faster and partners' morale is boosted by their achievement.





# Appendix 5

Sure Start

## Client group

Children from birth to four and their families and pregnant women

## Purpose

To improve the health and well-being of families and children, before and from birth, so that children are ready to flourish when they go to school

## Ways of working

Partnerships of community groups, statutory authorities and voluntary organisations develop and then implement programmes for a catchment area of 500 families with children under four

## Funding

£81 million in 1999-2000 rising to £499 million in 2003-04

## Time frame

Programme announced in July 1998 and currently funding announced to end of March 2004

## Responsibility for delivery

Director, Sure Start Unit, Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health

## What has worked well

- previous experience of working together
- shared objectives and commitment
- key skills
- working arrangements support partnership working
- sharing information on practices that work

## Risks to success

- lack of data for effective planning
- insufficient time allowed for each stage
- lack of participation by the community
- lack of skilled partnership support

## Key lessons

- Partnerships need support from skilled professionals to avoid financial and administrative problems which can distract attention from achieving partnership goals
- Sharing information on practices that work, including approaches to joint working, can help partnerships provide more effective services
- Investing time and resources may be required to get effective community involvement in the partnership



## Why join up?

- 1 In 1997 the Government launched the Comprehensive Spending Review to ensure that departments' spending and programmes met priorities. Thirteen departments took part in the Review of services for young children, which drew on research on the characteristics of children at risk of becoming socially excluded, the impact of early interventions elsewhere in the world and the variation in provision existing in the United Kingdom. The Review concluded that although spending on young children costs the UK over £15 billion a year (£10 billion not including benefits), it was not providing the support needed by some of the most disadvantaged young children and their families. The Review recommended that a range of services should ideally be brought together to support the complex and varied physical, developmental and emotional needs of young children and families. And that these services should be easily accessible and backed up by outreach to offer support in the home.<sup>4</sup>
- 2 As a consequence the Government launched the Sure Start programme in July 1998 which aims to improve the health and well-being of families and children before and from birth, so children are ready to flourish when they go to school. Sure Start provides new funds for local partnerships to support the integrated and preventative provision of a range of services, targeted in particular on under fours and their families in areas of need. The services currently include childcare, primary healthcare, early education and play and support for families including advice on employment, training and benefits.
- 3 The Sure Start Unit selected local authority districts according to levels of deprivation. It then invited local partnerships to choose areas within the districts, each covering around 400 to 1,000 children under four years old, and develop a programme and apply for funds. The Unit has separate ring-fenced funds, which it allocates to programmes.
- 4 The programmes are based on communities and are spread across the country. Each partnership has a lead partner, a programme board responsible for the partnership or programme, and an accountable organisation, which is responsible for funding the programmes and accounting for the expenditure. By July 2001 437 programmes had been announced in five waves. The first wave of 59 local programmes began delivering services in 2000-01.

- 5 During our fieldwork we visited three partnerships: Southwark Aylesbury Plus, Leeds Bramley and Sunderland Thorney Close. The Southwark and Sunderland partnerships were part of the first wave of programmes and the Leeds partnership part of the second wave.

## What is different

- 6 The new initiative has brought both new structures and new ways of working. The Sure Start Unit has national responsibility for tackling the problem and runs the overall programme. The Unit has over 100 staff drawn from a variety of backgrounds, secondments from elsewhere in the Civil Service and from the voluntary sector. The emphasis is on combining experience and disciplines rather than drawing on the expertise of one department. This approach is repeated with the Ministerial Steering Committee which has representation from key government departments: Health; Education and Skills; Work and Pensions; Transport, Local Government and the Regions; Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; the Home Office; Lord Chancellor's Department and the Treasury.
- 7 Other key differences include:
  - The programmes are focused intensively on a relatively small number of families and a small geographical area - about the size of an estate or neighbourhood. Previous services were separate and linked to GP surgeries, community health trusts or local authorities rather than on a specific area.
  - The programme for each partnership is planned and managed locally according to local priorities and is both multi-agency and multi-disciplinary instead of having a series of separate services delivered by a range of agencies.
  - There is an emphasis on engaging the community in planning and delivering services. Partnership boards must include parents and plans must demonstrate consultation with local parents.
  - The initiative is directing increased funding into deprived areas which allows more services to be targeted on need.

## Achievements to date

- 8 Sure Start has four national objectives and linked targets, set out in its Public Service Agreement, to achieve by March 2004 (**Figure 1**). Each local programme works towards these targets but may also set additional local objectives and targets.

<sup>4</sup> Comprehensive Spending Review: new public spending plans 1999-2002, Cm 4011, July 1998, page 90

## 1 Aim, objectives, targets and reported achievements for Sure Start

Aim: To work with parents to be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of babies and young children - particularly those who are disadvantaged - so that they can flourish at home and when they get to school, and thereby break the cycle of disadvantage for the current generation of young children

Objectives	Targets 1999-02	Outcome March 2001	Targets 2001-04
Improving social and emotional development	<p>Parenting support and information for all parents</p> <p>A 10 per cent reduction in children re-registered on a child protection register</p> <p>All local Sure Start programmes to have agreed and implemented, in a culturally sensitive way, ways of identifying, caring for and supporting mothers with post-natal depression</p>	<p>All local programmes' plans include parenting support and information services.</p> <p>Trailblazers are now delivering services to over 10,000 children each month. This includes visiting almost 100 per cent of parents within two months of the birth of their baby to introduce them to Sure Start services. Each local programme is contacting an average of 50 new children every month.</p>	<p>Reduce the proportion of children aged 0-3 in the 500 Sure Start areas who are re-registered within the space of twelve months on the child protection register by 20 per cent by 2004</p>
Improving health	<p>A 5 per cent reduction in proportion of low birth weight babies</p> <p>A 10 per cent reduction in children admitted to hospital as an emergency during their first year of life with gastro-enteritis, a respiratory infection, or a severe injury</p>		<p>Achieve by 2004 in the 500 Sure Start areas, a 10 per cent reduction in mothers who smoke in pregnancy</p>
Improving children's ability to learn	<p>At least 90 per cent of children with normal speech and development at 18 months and 3 years</p> <p>100 per cent of children in Sure Start areas to have access to good quality play and early learning opportunities, helping progress towards early learning goals when they get to school</p>	<p>All programmes' plans include provision for good quality play and early learning opportunities. The 128 trailblazer and round two programmes plan to support an additional 16,000 childcare places including nurseries, daycare, childminders, wraparound care and creches.</p>	<p>Achieve by 2004 for children aged 0-3 in the 500 Sure Start areas, a reduction of 5 percentage points in the number of children with speech and language problems requiring specialist intervention by the age of 4</p>
Strengthening families and communities	<p>75 per cent of families report personal evidence of an improvement in the quality of services providing family support</p> <p>All local Sure Start programmes to have parent representation on local programme board</p>	<p>All local programmes are setting baselines.</p> <p>All approved programmes have parent representation on their programme boards. Many have their own local target of having between one third and one half parents on their programme board.</p>	<p>Reduce by 12 per cent the number of 0-3 year old children in Sure Start areas living in households where no-one is working by 2004</p>
Increasing productivity of operations	<p>At least 250 local programmes in England</p> <p>100 per cent of families in contact with the local Sure Start programme within the first two months after birth</p> <p>Evaluation strategy in place by 2000-01</p>	<p>260 programmes have been announced. Of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ 128 trailblazer and second wave programmes are up and running;</li> <li>■ 66 third wave programmes have drawn up plans and will start work from spring 2001;</li> <li>■ 66 fourth wave programmes were announced in January and should start work from autumn 2001.</li> </ul> <p>Programmes are visiting almost 100 per cent of parents within two months of the birth of their baby to introduce them to Sure Start services.</p> <p>Contract to carry out the national evaluation of the Sure Start programme in England is now in place and work began early in 2001. All local programmes have evaluation plans.</p>	<p>No target</p>

Source: Public Service Agreements for Sure Start and DfEE Annual Report March 2001, Cm 5102

- 9 It is too soon after the initiative was launched and the first local programmes began to deliver services, for there to be any measurable change in the long term outcomes as set out in the targets. A national evaluation of the programme will run from 2000-01 to 2006-07. In addition, each local programme has its own evaluation strategy which measures its progress and which will feed into the national evaluation. The comprehensive national evaluation is organised in five integrated core components:

- **implementation** covering what is being done in the local programmes;
- **local context analysis** looking at the social, demographic and economic context of each community over time;
- **impact** determining the effect of Sure Start on children, their families and communities in the short, medium and long term; which features prove most effective, and for which clients Sure Start works best - compared with children and families not in Sure Start communities;
- **cost-effectiveness** will determine whether the effects justify the investment of resources; and
- **support for the local evaluations** including advice to local programmes on possible approaches and methods for carrying out their evaluations. Local evaluations will measure programmes' progress towards the targets in the Public Service Agreement and will review their working practices and processes and assess whether the services being provided achieve good value for money.

- 10 The first wave of programmes began to deliver services in 2000-01 and as yet they have only their own monitoring of contacts and anecdotal evidence from case histories to indicate whether the programmes are making any impact. To help give an early indication of the impact of Sure Start on families, we commissioned NOP Consumer Ltd to run focus groups of parents in each of the three Sure Start programmes that we visited.
- 11 Our focus groups found some common themes emerged from the sessions. The families' perception of Sure Start was most favourable where the families had young children, particularly new babies; and those in the two programmes, Southwark and Sunderland, which had been established the longest, and therefore the families were likely to have had more contact with the programmes. The parents who had received Sure Start services were appreciative and thought that the programme had made a significant difference to their ability to bring up their children well. They referred to learning alternative ways of disciplining their children rather than smacking them, receiving help with post natal depression, creche services while attending classes on parenting skills, to receiving advice and support from health visitors in their own homes, and to receiving

regular information on events and services available. However, those who worked had a different experience as they considered the services to be only available during working hours, to mothers at home with their children, and therefore felt excluded for example, from support intended to improve parenting skills.

## What has worked well

- 12 Our work on the three programmes identified the following common factors that had led to a successful first year of operation.

### Previous experience of working together

- 13 All three programmes were initiated and the plans submitted to the Sure Start Unit by people who already had experience of working together. In Southwark a member of the staff of the Community Health Trust took the lead, together with a member of staff from a local voluntary organisation, and together they drew on contacts to identify other statutory authorities and voluntary organisations working in the area and then organised wider consultation. In Leeds the community group on the estate was already involved with other organisations working in the area and they put together their bid with the community group as the lead partner.

### Shared objectives and commitment

- 14 All Sure Start programmes share the same overarching objectives. In all three programmes, the staff had a great deal of commitment to these objectives. They were enthusiastic about the benefits of working in a client centred manner, rather than the previous less co-ordinated way, and they pointed to instances where they had been more effective in supporting their clients and achieving the targeted outcomes.

### Key skills

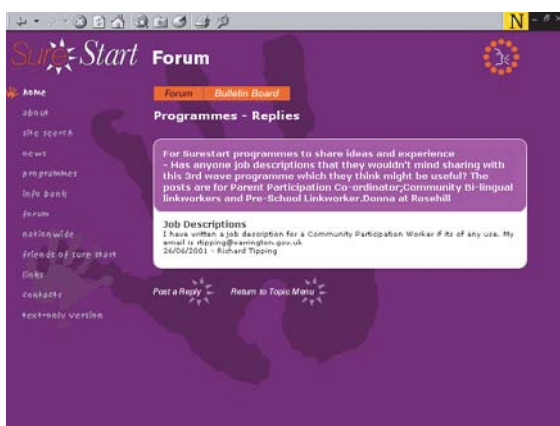
- 15 All three of the partnerships highlighted the importance of certain key skills amongst their staff. In Leeds they had seconded an accountant to help set up their financial systems. In Southwark a member of the Community Health Trusts' staff had carried out a similar role, advising each of the voluntary groups involved in the Sure Start programme about the records that they had to keep. In addition all the partnerships considered that the programme manager or director's leadership skills were vital to ensuring that the partnership developed effectively and that the partners remained focused on the outcomes that they wished to achieve.

## Working arrangements support joint working

- 16 All the programmes have established clear and visible structures for working together. In Southwark the programme board meets regularly and the team workers on the programme have a monthly meeting to share expertise and perspectives and work out ways to address shared problems. In Sunderland most of the programme team work in the same building and their close proximity allows the team to meet together at short notice to discuss and agree their joint approach to individual cases.

## Sharing information on practices that work

- 17 The Sure Start Unit has a regional network of advisers, located in the Government Offices, who provide advice and support for the programmes, a role which is currently being expanded. In addition the Unit has a website featuring all their guidance, contact details for all their programmes and a forum for exchanging information and sharing experiences in dealing with problems. The local programmes had found that the support they had been given was helpful and that the Unit was able to build on its experience with the early programmes to share experience with the next waves of projects. The Leeds programme found the web material particularly useful to identify contacts in other programmes who had previously dealt with problems.



## Managing the risks to success

- 18 All three programmes had faced a number of challenges in setting up their partnerships and have had to overcome those challenges to make progress.

## Ensuring that sufficient data is available

- 19 One of the challenges faced by each local Sure Start programme is to plan the key elements of their programme and for this they require sufficient accurate data on the clients within the programme area. The partnerships also need data to help evaluate their impact on the client group that they serve. The Leeds Programme considered that although some of the statutory authorities had data on the client groups and their needs and they were reluctant to make the data available to the programme in case it contravened the Data Protection Act. The experience of the other partnerships, however, was that much of the data had to be collected by the partnerships and that it was not held already. When collecting data on individual clients, it was important that the programme ensured that clients consented to information being passed on to other Sure Start workers within the local programme. Southwark Sure Start had set out a series of guidelines for each of the workers explaining the issues, the data that was needed and stressing that clients had to give their consent both to record the data and to pass it between workers.

## Ensuring that sufficient time is allowed for each stage

- 20 One of the distinctive elements of Sure Start is that each local programme determines the particular combination of activities needed for that area. A partnership, which identifies itself as being the appropriate group for the area, puts together the plan and bid for resources. All three partnerships had found that the consultation process and facilitating partnership working took longer than they had originally anticipated. They also pointed out that their initial experience was that it took time to build the trust of the communities within which the programmes were based because the communities often felt that they had been let down by schemes in the past.
- 21 Often the area covered by the programme overlaps with that of other initiatives for example the New Deal for Communities. In order to ensure that the initiatives support each other the programmes liaise with each other and attempt to remove duplication. In Southwark, the Sure Start programme initially only bid for revenue funding as they anticipated that any capital expenditure would be funded by the New Deal for Communities for the same estate. Both in Southwark and in Sunderland a representative from the Sure Start programmes sits on the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. However, the liaison is time consuming and often requires support from key statutory authorities or voluntary organisations.



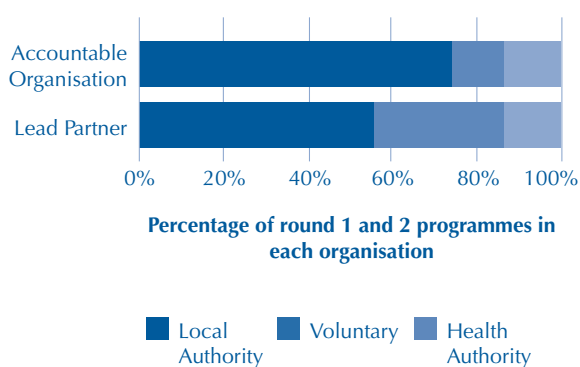
## Ensuring that communities have the skills to contribute effectively

- 22 One of Sure Start's aims is that each programme should involve the community and in particular represent the views of parents and carers. All three partnerships had had difficulties in involving parents and other community members. They considered that there were two issues that lead to the difficulty, the first was the other demands on parents' time - particularly parents of young children. The second was that some community members felt reluctant to take on roles for which they felt unskilled, for example membership of the partnership board. Both the Sunderland and the Southwark programme had found it difficult to retain parents on the programme board because of their other commitments and were making positive efforts to identify parents who were willing to serve on the board.

## Ensuring that partnerships obtain appropriate skilled support

- 23 Each Sure Start programme covers an identified area within a local authority. Over half of the lead partners are local authorities, and the remainder consists of health authorities and voluntary organisations such as the NSPCC and Barnardos (Figure 2). In contrast over three-quarters of the accountable organisations are local authorities compared with very few voluntary organisations. This reflects the support provided by professional staff within statutory authorities. In addition successive Sure Starts within a local authority area, may have varying lead partners but the accountable organisation is the same so as to reduce cost of setting up systems. In both Southwark and Sunderland, successive Sure Start programmes have the same accountable organisation.

### 2 The majority of Sure Start programmes are led by statutory authorities and more have statutory bodies as the accountable body



Source: Sure Start Unit

## Key lessons

### Partnerships need support from skilled professionals to avoid financial and administrative problems which can distract attention from achieving partnership goals

Sure Start partnerships usually include a wide variety of organisations, some quite small. The record keeping and financial systems required by the Sure Start Unit can seem complex to smaller voluntary or community groups. Lead partner organisations have also found they have needed to draw in professional support in the areas of finance, planning and administration to avoid the risk they become bogged down in solving short term problems, such as submitting bids for funding, and fail to give enough attention to strategic thinking. In Leeds, for example, the lead partner has seconded an accountant from a private firm to set up its financial systems.

### Sharing information on practices that work, including approaches to joint working, can help partnerships provide more effective services

Sure Start is a new initiative in the UK based on research of what has worked in other countries. The Sure Start Unit provided partnerships with advice on what has worked elsewhere but allows them to develop their own programme to fit in with what is already available locally and to promote innovation in both what is provided and how it is provided. Given this approach and the lack of experience of some of the partner organisations in working with others, there is an increased risk that some of the practices put into place will not work. In addition, it is more likely that the programme may become dominated by professionals from, for example, the health or education sectors, because they have confidence in their professional approaches. To counter these risks, the Sure Start Unit has a regional network of advisers, located in the Government Offices, who provide advice and support. It also hosts a web-based forum for exchanging information and sharing experiences in dealing with problems. This allows programme managers and partners to draw on the experience of other programmes around the country and makes them less reliant on the views of dominant professional groups.

### Investing time and resources may be required to get effective community involvement in the partnership

Sure Start partnerships need the involvement of parents to ensure that programmes are meeting local need and to encourage parents to take up services. If parents distrust the services on offer or do not see that they can benefit, then they may not take them up. Potentially, this could make the programme less effective because it does not reach all the families who could benefit. Two of the partnerships we visited had found it difficult to get parents or other community members actively involved because they were reluctant to take on roles for which they felt unskilled, for example membership of the partnership board. Partnerships are trying to encourage the involvement of the community in a number of ways, for example by holding Fun Days in a local park with invitations sent to every household in the Sure Start Area.





# Appendix 6

## Business Link partnerships

### Client group

Small and medium sized businesses

### Purpose

Improve the competitiveness of small firms by encouraging their use of high quality business support services

### Ways of working

Bring together business support agencies in a locality to provide tailored assistance to individual businesses

### Funding

Approximately £160 million a year

### Time frame

Since 1993, not time limited

### Responsibility for delivery

Partnership board of each business link and the Small Business Service

### What has worked well

- securing backing from influential local players
- negotiating skills
- branding
- data sharing

### Risks to success

- conflicting objectives
- lack of customer focus
- lack of joining up by central government

### Key lessons

- Progress monitoring, followed by corrective action where necessary, by funders and partners can help ensure that partnerships continue to achieve and improve
- Having a clear customer focus can help partners overcome tensions in the partnership and maintain their sense of purpose
- Joining up central government to ensure that the demands placed on local partnerships do not compete or overlap helps reinforce partnerships' goals

## Why join up?

- 1 In the early 1990's support and advice for businesses was fragmented and overlapping. None of the providers in either the private sector or public sector supplied the complete range of businesses' support and advice needs; for example, obtaining finance; business planning; quality and design; employment issues; training and development; exporting; information technology and marketing. In addition, there was evidence that small businesses did not seek advice to improve their business competitiveness either because they could not afford it or because they did not realise they needed it.
- 2 The Business Link initiative stemmed from a recognition by the then Government that business support services can help enhance firms' competitiveness. It decided to create a network of new bodies which would bring existing service providers together in partnership and provide a single point of access to small businesses needing assistance. The Department of Trade and Industry set up the first Business Link partnerships in 1993 and gradually extended the scheme until by 1996-97 there were 89 Business Link partnerships covering the whole of England. The key aims of the initiative were to:
  - increase the use of business support by small firms;
  - rationalise the provision of support to reduce duplication and to make it more coherent; and
  - improve the quality of support services.
- 4 Business Link partnerships usually offer:
  - a first point of contact for small businesses seeking information and advice;
  - a personal business adviser service to assess business' needs;
  - direct provision of some commonly required services, for example, marketing and information technology development, either in-house or through partner organisations; and
  - appropriate referral to other expertise to meet their needs, these referrals are often to private sector specialists outside the partnership such as accountants.
- 5 They also seek out potential high growth businesses and help them realise their potential. Many Business Link services are subsidised to encourage small businesses to access business support, however partnerships can and do charge for some services and prior to 2000 the Department of Trade and Industry set partnerships targets for client fees.
- 6 During 2000-01, the Small Business Service, a new executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, restructured the network of Business Link partnerships. The restructuring was necessary because the then Department for Education and Employment decided to replace Training and Enterprise Councils with Learning and Skills Councils but it gave the Small Business Service the opportunity to address the variation in partnerships' performance. Whilst some partnerships were performing well, the Small Business Service judged others to be of poor quality. It reduced the number of partnerships from 89 to 45 and replaced the previous contracting arrangements with a direct contract between the Small Business Service and the partnership. It also put more emphasis on the need for Business Link's support to include very small businesses and those thinking of starting a business. In 2001, the Service introduced a quality management framework for the new network setting minimum standards of professional competence and customer service, and requiring partnerships to aim for continuous quality improvement.

## What is different

- 3 The early Business Link partnerships varied in form, from loose strategic partnerships to limited companies with a Board of Directors. In each case, however, the key partners were the local Training and Enterprise Council, Chamber of Commerce, local authorities and Enterprise Agency; together with other partners such as universities or development agencies. The Department of Trade and Industry provided funding for the partnerships via the Training and Enterprise Councils. Partnerships employed their own staff and seconded staff from partner organisations. Some set up separate Business Link offices whilst others co-located with a partner organisation, such as the Chamber of Commerce.
- 7 The new Business Link network became operational in April 2001. Some partnerships are relatively unchanged, some have merged, and some new partnerships have been established including several which are led by 'for profit' organisations, a new development for the service. We visited Business Link West which is a merged partnership and the Northumberland Business Service which is a newly established partnership.

## Achievements to date

- 8 Ernst and Young carried out the first evaluation of the effectiveness of Business Link partnerships for the Department of Trade and Industry in 1995. Their main findings were that:
  - around 40 per cent of the firms surveyed identified improvements in business performance resulting from the help they received;
  - 40 per cent also said they would probably not have gone to an alternative source of help if Business Link services had not been available; and
  - 64 per cent rated the assistance provided by Business Links better than what was there before, particularly the accessibility, range and cost of services.
- 9 A further evaluation of Business Link partnerships by PACEC Consultancy Ltd in 1998 gathered financial data from both users and non-users of Business Link services to assess the impact of Business Links on business performance. This study found that:
  - the productivity of firms assisted by Business Links increased by 13 per cent compared to 1 per cent among non-assisted firms; and
  - the profit margin in assisted firms improved by 7 per cent but deteriorated by 7 per cent in non-assisted firms.
- 10 In 1999, the Department of Trade and Industry set Public Service Agreement targets to increase the productivity and profitability of small and medium sized businesses assisted by Business Link partnerships and to improve the quality of services delivered under the Business Link brand. It has been tracking firms' performance since 1996 comparing the productivity and turnover of firms assisted by Business Links with a matched sample of firms which were not assisted. The Small Business Service published the full results from this work in November 2001. It also has a new Impact Assessment Framework, focusing on Business Links' customers only, which will report on a regular basis on a range of indicators of business performance, including profitability.

- 11 The Department assesses whether the quality of Business Links has improved through a number of measures including firms' satisfaction with the services they receive. In 1997, 75 per cent of firms were satisfied. By June 2000, however, satisfaction was virtually unchanged at 74 per cent. A recent survey of firms in June 2001 using a different methodology assessed satisfaction with Business Links at 65 per cent. Other research has found that satisfaction with individual Business Links varies considerably. In a 1999 survey<sup>5</sup> it ranged between 100 per cent and 63 per cent, indicating that some partnerships have been more successful than others at providing services which meet the needs of clients.

## What has worked well

### Securing backing from influential local players

- 12 Effective Business Link partnerships work within existing local political structures ensuring that they gain the support of important backers. Many Business Links work particularly closely with the local Chamber of Commerce. The office of Business Link West in Bristol is located in the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative, whilst its satellite offices in other areas are co-located with other partners. In Northumberland, the new Northumberland Business Service was formed under the Northumberland Strategic Partnership, the overarching partnership for the County, comprising the County Council, district councils, agencies and local business people.

### Negotiating skills

- 13 The negotiating skills, particularly of the dominant partners, are an important factor in managing the relationships between partners, especially where there is tension between partner organisations' objectives and Business Link objectives.

## Branding

- 14 The Business Link name and logo are recognised by firms as the established brand for subsidised advice and support for small businesses. Having a strong brand image has helped promote and reinforce partnership working amongst local providers of business support services. During the Small Business Service's consultation in 2000 on their plans for the network, some consultees recommended dropping the Business Link brand because it had become tarnished in some areas. However, overall it was felt that it provided a recognised badge which the Service could build on.

## Data sharing

- 15 Information and communication technology is being used increasingly to aid joined up working. Nationally, the Small Business Service is developing a sophisticated telephone and computer system to provide information to small businesses and people wanting advice on setting up a business and to refer them to their local Business Link partnership for in depth help. Both Business Link West and the Northumberland Business Service have a networked client database so that information on clients can be accessed and updated from each local satellite office and partners. Business Link West also shares its database with North Somerset Council with whom it carries out joint visits.

## Managing the risks to success

- 16 In 1998, Public and Corporate Economic Consultants carried out a value for money evaluation of Business Links for the Department of Trade and Industry. We draw on this work, which explored the barriers to partnership development, as well as our own independent examination.

## Managing partners' different objectives

- 17 In 1998, Business Link partners and Chief Executives cited differing aims and objectives as the biggest barrier to the partnership development. For example individual local authorities had a different approach to economic development and regeneration than Chambers of Commerce, which developed to represent their members and play an advocacy or lobbying role. Whilst most Business Links resolved these issues, in some areas turf wars persisted or else one partner came to dominate the partnership. This was usually the Training and Enterprise Council because it controlled funds from government.

- 18 Business Link partnerships varied between being a direct provider of services, possibly in competition with those offered by individual partners, or acting as a gateway or referral agency, signposting firms to other agencies when they required services. When, in 1997, the Department of Trade and Industry introduced fee targets for Business Links, some partners felt that this increased competition between Business Links and partners' agencies. Under the new franchise arrangements Business Links role will be to stimulate demand for business services and act as a referral agency with quality-assured sub-contractors; in addition, the Small Business Service dropped fee targets.

## Developing and maintaining a focus on the customer

- 19 When the Business Link partnerships were set up, there was much enthusiasm for the initiative amongst partner organisations. They recognised that small businesses were not always aware of how they could benefit from business support services and supported a proactive approach. However, after the initial period of change, some partnerships developed a more cynical attitude to their customers. For example, in Northumberland the previous Business Link service took the view that small business people know what business support they need and come to the Business Link only to obtain services at a subsidised cost. In contrast, the new Business Link team in Northumberland intends to return to the original ethos and take a much more proactive approach. An increased and improved focus on the customer is a key feature of the Small Business Service's requirements for new Business Link franchises.

## Providing a clear lead by joining up central government

- 20 The creation of the Small Business Service changed the relationship between Business Link partnerships and government in two important ways. Firstly the Small Business Service now has the role of co-ordinating government strategy towards Business Links and small businesses. In 1998, half of partners surveyed said that a lack of co-ordination between central government departments was an important barrier to partnership development because departments had differing roles, areas of responsibility and funding inputs in relation to Business Links.



- 21 Secondly, the Small Business Service has taken direct control over the Business Link network. The Department of Trade and Industry has always recognised that Business Link partnerships need local discretion over strategy and services. However, it found it difficult to address poor performance by specific Business Links because it routed funding to Business Links through Training and Enterprise Councils, bodies responsible to the former Department for Education and Employment.
- 22 Under the new franchises, the Small Business Service has a direct contractual arrangement with Business Links. It has appointed regional managers to liaise with Business Links and manage the contract. As the contract holder, it has also used its position of influence to bring Business Link partnerships closer to one another to create a sense of belonging to a national organisation, for example by holding national and regional training events and by setting common quality standards.

## Key lessons

### **Progress monitoring, followed by corrective action where necessary, by funders and partners can help ensure that partnerships continue to achieve and improve**

The Department of Trade and Industry had a number of aims in setting up Business Link partnerships. One of its aims was to improve the quality of advice and support services to small firms. Although the Department put performance measures in place it did not have the capacity in the regions to obtain a thorough understanding of the performance of each Business Link partnership. Partners and funders need to heed early warning signs that a partnership is failing to deliver good quality services as it is easier to challenge bad practice before it becomes entrenched. In 2001, the Small Business Service introduced a quality management framework for the new network setting minimum standards for professional competence and requiring that partnerships aim for continuous quality improvement. It has also appointed regional managers to monitor progress more closely.

### **Having a clear customer focus can help partners overcome tensions in the partnership and maintain their sense of purpose**

In the late 1990's some Business Link partnerships started to concentrate on providing services which were cheap to deliver and withdrew more complex, less profitable services. They lost sight of the need to put their customers' needs first in order to pursue other goals. In 2001 the Small Business Service, in the new Business Link network, has emphasised the need for partnerships to concentrate on the customer. We found that in the new Northumberland Business Service there was a very strong focus on providing services to meet the needs of their clients and potential clients. This focus was helping to promote good working relationships between the partners.

### **Joining up central government to ensure that the demands placed on local partnerships do not compete or overlap helps reinforce partnerships' goals**

An evaluation of Business Link partnerships in 1998 found that partners complained that a lack of co-ordination between central government departments was a barrier to partnership development because departments sent out different, and sometimes competing, messages and demands. There is a risk that a lack of joining up by departments can result in frustration at a local level which could undermine local partnerships' motivation. The Government created the Small Business Service, in 2000, to provide this joined up response to both Business Links and small firms in general.



# Appendix 7

## British Trade International (Trade Partners UK)

### Client group

Uk businesses

### Purpose

Provide help for firms wishing to export and invest overseas

### Ways of working

Partnership between Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to bring together trade development and export promotion activities under one management structure

### Funding

Approximately £220 million a year

### Time frame

Since May 1999, not time limited

### Responsibility for delivery

Group Chief Executive of British Trade International

### What has worked well

- leaders regard the work as important
- development of a clear strategic direction
- negotiating skills
- performance measurement

### Risks to success

- competing priorities
- control over resources
- lack of corporate culture
- accountability arrangements

### Key lessons

- Bringing organisations together to create effective partnership means resolving competing priorities, setting clear goals and establishing a strategy for achieving them
- Building partnerships takes time and determination to develop new relationships, facilitate cultural change and overcome entrenched points of view
- Partnerships may require new accounting and performance measurement systems to allow them to give an account to Parliament and the public for their use of public moneys and their achievements, these should be put in place when the partnership is formed

## Why join up?

- 1 Trade development is a complex area of activity and businesses have diverse needs. Different public sector organisations: Business Link partnerships; the Government Offices and the Regional Development Agencies; the Department of Trade and Industry and other government departments; and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office deliver services locally, regionally, nationally and overseas in support of business' international trade efforts.
- 2 In February 1999,<sup>1</sup> the Government carried out a review of the UK's export promotion work. The review team reported a number of failings of the structure of export promotion services:
  - no one person or organisation was responsible or accountable for the overall direction and management of Government support for exporters;
  - there was a lack of cohesion among the bodies involved causing significant confusion among business customers and undermining the effectiveness of the overall effort;
  - the arrangements for allocating resources were complex with too many funding streams;
  - the services offered were not sufficiently customer-focused; and
  - it was not possible to measure the overall impact of Government support for export promotion.
- 3 In May 1999, as a result of the review of export promotion, British Trade International was established to join up Government's export promotion and trade development activities, subsequently branded as Trade Partners UK. In July 2000, the Invest in Britain Bureau was also brought within British Trade International and renamed Invest UK. Our work has concentrated on British Trade International's role in providing trade promotion and development services to business, particularly small businesses.

## What is different

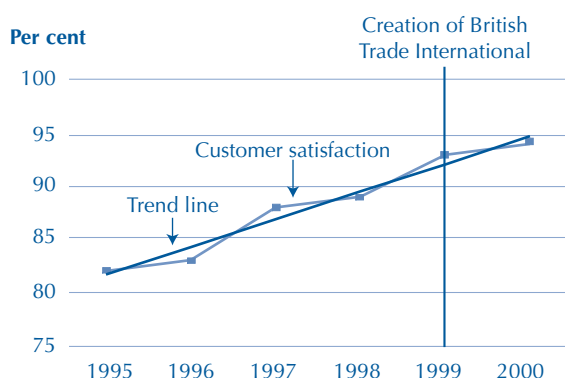
- 4 British Trade International is a partnership between the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office which has placed a unified management structure over existing staff and services to create a notional organisation without formal legal status. All staff remain employed and funded by their parent department. A Memorandum of Understanding sets out the partnership arrangements.
- 5 British Trade International's Group Chief Executive reports to a Board chaired by a newly created Minister of State for International Trade and Investment who holds office at both the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The Board, comprising civil servants and senior business people, advises on the strategic direction of British Trade International. The Group Chief Executive has a programme budget of around £85 million a year. In addition the two Departments also fund British Trade International's administration and capital costs and the Permanent Secretaries at the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office remain accountable to their Secretaries of State for British Trade International's use of their Departments' staff and other resources. They are also represented on British Trade International's Board.
- 6 The key difference arising from the creation of Trade Partners UK is that it enabled the Government to devise an organisation with a new role and a new overall strategy in the field of trade promotion and development. That role and strategy include:
  - a greater focus on customers, particularly the needs of small and medium-sized businesses which comprise over 80 per cent of Trade Partners UK's target group;
  - presenting a high, more coherent profile to business by introducing (in May 2000) the Trade Partners UK brand;
  - developing a single point of contact for exporters and potential exporters to web-based and other services through the Trade Partners UK website; and
  - developing ways of measuring the impact of Trade Partners UK services on business competitiveness.



## Achievements to date

- 7 The Department of Trade and Industry has measured customer satisfaction with export promotion services since 1995. This data shows that average customer satisfaction rose from 82 per cent in 1995 to 94 per cent in 2000 (**Figure 1**). Customer satisfaction has continued to increase since British Trade International was created in 1999.

### 1 Average customer satisfaction with export promotion services since 1995



Source: British Trade International

- 8 In 1999 there were around 30 different government websites providing information to exporters. British Trade International rationalised these with the objective of consolidating all web-based information on a single website [www.tradepartners.gov.uk](http://www.tradepartners.gov.uk) launched in May 2000. It has invested significant resources in developing the site as a comprehensive source of information for business and a gateway to Trade Partners UK services. The number of monthly visitors to the website more than doubled between June 2000 and July 2001 from 15,000 to 35,000, and the average

number of pages viewed per visit increased from four to seven over the same period. Research in 2000 by British Trade International's consultants indicated that greater promotion of the site and brand was needed to reach all the firms which could benefit. It is too soon to say with certainty how successful the brand and website will be. The website, in particular, is still being developed.

- 9 Prior to 1999, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office evaluated the effectiveness of their export promotion activities separately on a programme by programme basis. In 1999, the two Departments shared a Public Service Agreement target set prior to the formation of British Trade International. The following year as part of the 2000 Spending Review British Trade International set new Public Service Agreement targets to reflect better its new role of focusing on enhancing the competitiveness of British business rather than simply generating exports. These new targets are also shared by its parent departments in their own Public Service Agreements. British Trade International's progress against its Public Service Agreement targets is shown in **Figure 2**.
- 10 British Trade International has put in place a new framework of performance measurement which will seek to measure the impact of its activities on companies over time; the relative effectiveness of the different types of support; and the quality of service provided. British Trade International is co-ordinating its approach to measuring its impact on competitiveness with that of the Small Business Service. It will ask firms which have utilised its services for information on their turnover and profitability over a two year period and compare their business performance with a control group of firms which have not received export assistance.

### 2 Progress against Public Service Agreement Targets

#### PSA targets for 1999-00 to 2001-02

**Performance target:** To improve support for exporters, raise the quality of service, generate additional exports, and enhance the business image of the UK

Performance measure	Outcome by December 2000
50 per cent of firms adjust their approach to exporting as a result of assistance	✓
70 per cent of firms satisfied with the targeted market information provided	✓
£20 of additional exports generated for each £1 of DTI/FCO expenditure	Measure dropped
45 per cent of visitors to major 'image' events held abroad show an improvement in their perception of the UK	✓

#### PSA targets for 2001-02 to 2003-04

**Performance target:** Enhanced competitiveness of companies in the UK through overseas sales and investments

Performance measure	Current position
At least 15 per cent of new-to-export firms assisted improve their business performance within 2 years	Measures being developed Data to be collected from April 2001
At least 50 per cent of established exporters assisted improve their performance within 2 years	
At least 80 per cent of firms receiving assistance to win major overseas projects report that Trade Partners UK's help was a significant factor	Measures being developed

Source: British Trade International Expenditure Plans 2001-02 to 2003-04, Cm 5123



## What has worked well

### Leaders regard the work as important

- 11 The review of export promotion identified the consequences of the fragmentation of export promotion activities. The Government accepted the report and acted upon it to create British Trade International. The presence of a minister on British Trade International's Board has maintained the impetus behind the new organisation.

### Development of a clear strategic direction and customer focus

- 12 British Trade International published its National Strategy for trade promotion and development in October 1999. The work done to establish its overall objectives and sense of direction has provided a common sense of purpose that has helped weld the organisation together. The organisation's core values have changed by becoming a customer-focused organisation. Competing priorities can be held in balance by ongoing strategic work.

### Negotiating skills

- 13 In order to create a successful partnership organisation both the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department of Trade and Industry had to transfer control over some of their activities to British Trade International. Both departments had to find ways to achieve the shared British Trade International objective in tandem with other objectives. The key officials needed imagination and commitment when negotiating the terms of British Trade International's Memorandum of Understanding with its parent departments to agree an innovative but workable solution acceptable to all three organisations.

### Performance measurement

- 14 The creation of a single organisation to undertake international trade promotion has provided the opportunity to develop performance measurement systems which can demonstrate the impact of the UK's trade development and export promotion work. This both improves accountability to funders and stakeholders and provides useful management tools. The newly developed performance measurement systems and targets will reinforce customer focus and the emphasis on outcomes.

## Managing the risks to success

- 15 British Trade International is a compromise between the fragmentation that was there before and the creation of a separate export promotion and trade development body. The review of export promotion considered that it had advantages over a completely unified operation including the close co-ordination of commercial work with political work overseas and the ability to bring market, sectoral and regional information together at the centre.<sup>2</sup> It is an attempt to create an integrated and co-ordinated set of activities without creating a new silo. There are risks however.

### Resolving competing priorities

- 16 Before British Trade International was created, the UK lacked an overall strategy for trade promotion, firms could get government support to export to almost any country they wished to try, a market-led approach. In drawing up its strategy, British Trade International has tried to balance this approach with a sectoral approach based on developing different trade promotion strategies for different sectors of industry and on developing the capacity of individual firms to trade internationally. The two approaches are not necessarily incompatible and British Trade International is working towards a consensus with stakeholders on where the balance lies.

### Gaining control over resources

- 17 One of the key issues for British Trade International is to achieve effective management control over all the resources it has been given. For example, many of its staff overseas carry out both diplomatic and trade-related activities. British Trade International has agreed with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, through the Memorandum of Understanding, that it can redeploy these resources from one country to another if it so wishes, provided this does not prejudice the efficiency of the deployment of Foreign and Commonwealth Office resources as a whole.
- 18 British Trade International also secured management arrangements which include giving the Group Chief Executive input into the objective setting, performance appraisal and promotion systems of staff working overseas on trade-related activities. These arrangements will encourage senior embassy staff to work closely with British Trade International to deliver well managed trade promotion and development work overseas.

- 19 At the other end of the chain, British Trade International funds Business Link partnerships (Appendix 6) to employ international trade advisers (formerly export development counsellors) to provide advice and assistance on all aspects of exporting to local businesses. The Small Business Service, an executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, reorganised the network of Business Link partnerships in 2000-01. British Trade International took full advantage of this reorganisation to negotiate new contracts with Business Link partnerships refocusing and rebadging international trade teams in the Links because it had found that some export development counsellors were ignoring their broad role in developing the trade capabilities of local businesses in favour of working as unofficial export managers for fee-paying client companies in order to meet the Department of Trade and Industry's fee targets. A comprehensive development programme for international trade advisers and an initiative for new exporters will help to improve delivery.
- 20 British Trade International does not have direct management control over international trade teams but it has employed International Trade Directors in the regions to manage the contracts with Business Link partnerships and influence service delivery. For example, the International Trade Director in the North East region has agreed with the four Chief Executives of the new Business Links that they will co-manage the international trade teams.

## Developing a corporate culture

- 21 British Trade International's staff are employed by two different government departments on different pay and conditions. Cultural differences make it difficult for people to feel they are part of a single organisation. In addition, British Trade International's Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff are nearly all overseas, whereas its Department of Trade and Industry staff generally work in London. The Group Chief Executive and senior managers are working to create a sense of corporate identity for British Trade International. For example, by working to reconcile the personnel practices of the two Departments and by encouraging more secondments to allow Department of Trade and Industry staff to serve overseas and to bring more Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff into the London headquarters operation. British Trade International also holds joint training events to break down barriers and encourage a sense of corporate identity.

## Developing clear accountability arrangements

- 22 At present British Trade International's resources are accounted for in three separate places: its own account for programme expenditure and within the Department of Trade and Industry's and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's accounts for its staff and other administrative costs including capital expenditure. These accounting arrangements lack transparency, making it difficult for outsiders to compare British Trade International's costs with its achievements. When the Treasury is satisfied that the Memorandum of Understanding between British Trade International and its parent departments has been implemented giving the Group Chief Executive effective control over the resources deployed on British Trade International's work, it will appoint him as an Accounting Officer in relation to British Trade International's administration costs and thus give him the authority necessary as a basis for the production of an account for the whole organisation. This authority should be given from 2002.
23. To produce a single account for all its resources, British Trade International must be able to identify and place a value on the resources at its disposal. This involves determining the costs arising from its trade-related work overseas and the correct apportionment of capital costs such as IT expenditure which benefits both British Trade International and one of its parent departments.

## Key lessons

**Bringing organisations together to create effective partnership means resolving competing priorities, setting clear goals and establishing a strategy for achieving them**

The Department for Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have worked together on promoting exports for many years with established ways of working. Each Department, however, had little influence over how the other Department worked and where it saw its priorities. In coming together to create a new organisation, British Trade International, the Departments have examined their existing ways of working and agreed new priorities and goals for the new joined up organisation. This work has been fundamentally important to whether British Trade International will be a success because without clear goals the partners would have continued to deploy their resources to meet their own trade and investment priorities.

**Building partnerships takes time and determination to develop new relationships, facilitate cultural change and overcome entrenched points of view**

British Trade International is a partnership where all the staff engaged on the work of the partnership have remained the employees of the partner organisations. The global spread of the operation limits the scope for staff with different employers working together. This means that partnership staff remain within their accustomed cultural setting and, moreover, mix little with the staff of the other partner. In this situation there is an increased risk that partnership staff do not believe that the partnership is real and resist changes to their established ways of working. British Trade International is aware of these difficulties and has taken a number of steps to create its own organisational identity and ethos. These include traditional management tools such as staff appraisal systems and trying to create loyalty to the organisation through leadership. It has also used secondments between the two departments and joint training and other events.

**Partnerships may require new accounting and performance measurement systems to allow them to give an account to Parliament and the public for their use of public moneys and their achievements, these should be put in place when the partnership is formed**

British Trade International, set up in 1999, is a new form of government partnership. Its parent departments, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have worked together to agree a framework for how the partnership is to be run. At present, however, British Trade International's resources are accounted for in three separate places: its own account for programme expenditure and within the Department of Trade and Industry's and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's accounts for its staff and other administrative costs. These accounting arrangements lack transparency, making it difficult for outsiders to compare British Trade International's costs with its achievements. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding British Trade International will be able to produce an account, bringing together all its income and expenditure in one place, from 2002-03. British Trade International is also implementing new performance measures to account for its achievements.

# Appendix 8

## International perspectives on joining up government

### Australia



Government is divided between centre and states

#### Joining Up

- In Australia, the three main types of joined up working are: between central and state; between officials providing similar services across the country; and partnerships between public and private sectors.
- Until the 1990s, joined up working was mostly top-down. More recently local officials and politicians have led the way to provide co-ordinated services to citizens.
- Despite a long history of using performance measurement, government has been slow to develop cross-cutting measures.
- Partnership arrangements have often been secretive leaving the public unaware of why decisions were taken.
- Examples of joined up working include Centrelink, which provides information to the public on behalf of a number of services, and an inter-agency approach to combating drug misuse.

#### Key Points

- The need for joined up working is accepted both centrally and locally. For example, central government has led a co-ordinated response to external trade pressures and international agreements. More locally, the development of one stop shops has been successful at joining up information about services. Officials have benefited from the exchange of technical and practical information.
- Barriers to building further on these successes include: secrecy leading to suspicion from the public; the danger that partners exercise their veto leading to gridlock; and weakly developed cross-cutting measures leading to inadequate performance management.

### Canada



Government is divided between the central government, and the ten provinces and three territories

- Joined up working occurs in two ways. First, between the central government and the local states and territories. Secondly, across departments. The round of public sector reforms initiated by the 'Programme Review' in 1994 made it possible for public services to share their resources. These have contributed to a significant increase in joined up government.
- Performance targets are used to co-ordinate joined up working. These are concerned with what should be done rather than how it is achieved.
- The Auditor General of Canada has stated that these arrangements are too often hidden away from the public. This is especially common where delegated, voluntary, or private organisations are involved.

- Cross-cutting performance targets have proved helpful. For example, the Great Lakes 2000 initiative brought together Environment Canada, six other federal departments, and four Ontario Province ministries. It used 50 performance targets for environmental and health improvements.
- There are two main barriers to the further development of joined up working. First, decision making is often hidden from the public and from elected politicians. But the Treasury Board Secretariat is also concerned that too much formal accountability might stop partnerships responding flexibly to citizens' needs.
- Secondly, despite successes using performance targets, the Office of the Auditor General has concerns that the poor quality of information makes performance management less effective.



## Netherlands



Constitutionally centralised but with widely-spread decision making

### Joining Up

- Joined up government extends in three directions: between the central and the local levels of government (for example, the Ministry of Home Affairs promotes modernisation in local government); between government departments (for example, the cabinet's annual inter-departmental reviews); and between 'social partners' (for example, in advisory groups).
- Since the 1980s there has been media and public concern that with so many partners it becomes hard to co-ordinate the business of government.
- Performance targets have been used to improve co-ordination. For example, the Government's budget is now based on what politicians want to achieve rather than how to achieve it. The Cabinet also carries out cross-cutting reviews. However, the Finance and Interior Departments are unable to impose cross-cutting performance targets on other departments. It has been technically, and sometimes politically, difficult to keep the whole departments focused on achieving performance targets.

### Key Points

- The Dutch inclusive style of running public services has been successful in many respects. Successes are associated with low strike rates, the successful management of rising welfare costs, and the management of difficult ethical issues such as abortion.
- However, involving many partners in decision making and in delivering services also has a cost. Dutch Governments have tried to change the balance between inclusive partnerships, on the one hand, and co-ordinating costs and overall activities, on the other. By reducing the number of advisory councils, for example, it is hoped to provide more streamlined decision making.
- The barriers to successfully achieving this balance are, first, that powerful social partners in each public service limit central co-ordination. Secondly, the development of cross-cutting performance measures has been slow.

## New Zealand



Constitutionally centralised but with decision making also relatively centralised

- With a relatively small and centralised system of government, joined up government in New Zealand has mainly involved co-ordinating central government departments to provide joined up services on the ground. For example, Strengthening Families aims to improve the well being of families and it is supported by the Ministries of Health and Education, the Ministry of Social Policy and many other central agencies. At the local level, collaboration is strengthened by inter-agency case management, jointly identifying gaps, and joint use of resources.
- Central to achieving this co-ordination are the Strategic Priorities and Overarching Goals. These set out the Government's objectives, including cross-cutting targets. Each Department is then required to develop its own Key Results Areas within these priorities. Departments later publish their achievements against these targets.

- The use of Strategic Priorities and Overarching Goals is a bold attempt to co-ordinate joined up working. In areas such as care for older people it has helped to bring agencies together at both national and local levels.
- However, the impact of this on the core work of Departments is often limited. Strategic Priorities only partly determine the way Departments work.
- Overcoming these limitations would require the development of more tightly defined priorities. This is technically difficult to do. These would then need to be more closely linked to what each department does. In turn, this would require incentives to encourage the pursuit of Strategic Priorities.

## Sweden



Constitutionally centralised with widely spread decision making

- Joined up government in Sweden involves small central Ministries, relatively independent agencies managed by the Ministries, and regional and local authorities.
- Historically, negotiation and compromise have been important features of joined up working. More recently, Parliament has also set budgets for cross-cutting policies.

- The delivery of Swedish public services is characterised by negotiation, collaboration and compromise. Previously, limited 'joining up' was achieved through such negotiation. More recently, Governments have also used performance targets, including cross-cutting ones.
- The pursuit of joined up government is not a major public goal in Sweden. Government has responded to the pressures for improved co-ordination by a combination of joining together agencies, encouraging collaboration, and setting cross-cutting targets.

**Sweden - *continued*****Joining Up**

- In order to co-ordinate the work of so many partners, in recent years Government has reduced the number of agencies by joining some of them together. Remaining agencies have been given tighter performance and spending targets by central government.

**Key Points**

- Barriers to further improvements include: the limit to further amalgamations of agencies if they are to carry out their specialist tasks; the danger that collaboration and negotiation will lead to gridlock; and the difficulties experienced in setting targets which determine how partners work.

**United States of America**

Government is divided between the centre and the states with considerable diversity in public services

- Joined up government in the United States is, first of all, between the central government and the state governments. For example, the Federal Executive Boards spread best practice throughout the public sector. It is also between the public sector and the voluntary sector. Major programmes for delivering childcare, training and community safety depend upon the voluntary sector, for example Boost4Kids, the Child Care Partnership Project, 21st Century Skills, SafeCities.
- The states have independent powers in many areas and share responsibilities in others. Central government therefore often lacks the power to impose performance targets. It therefore often relies more on funding initiatives and legislating where it can rather than enforcing targets.
- Central government also identifies and spreads best practice in joined up working (for example, through the Federal Communications Network).
- However, some cross-cutting performance targets are used. These are proposed by each Department, considered by the Office of Management and Budget, and decided on by Congress. Under the Government Performance and Results Act, agencies must publish their performance reports.
- The United States provides a wide variety of joined up working with each state often finding new ways of delivering services. However, with so many programmes, and new programmes being developed all the time, it is often difficult to measure success.
- However, despite limited legal powers, the central government has successfully established widespread provision in areas such as services for homeless people, childcare support, and training.
- Joined up working has often been pursued, therefore, by spreading best practice. However, there is an increasing use of cross-cutting measures (for example, the Department of Health and Human Services has established targets for other agencies on reducing tobacco use).
- Barriers to further improvements include the incompleteness of performance data. Although targets are set very openly, the public can be less confident that agencies are accurate in describing their performance.
- The down side of encouraging innovation is that the opportunity to slowly improve a joined up service by carefully evaluating its long term effectiveness may be lost.

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