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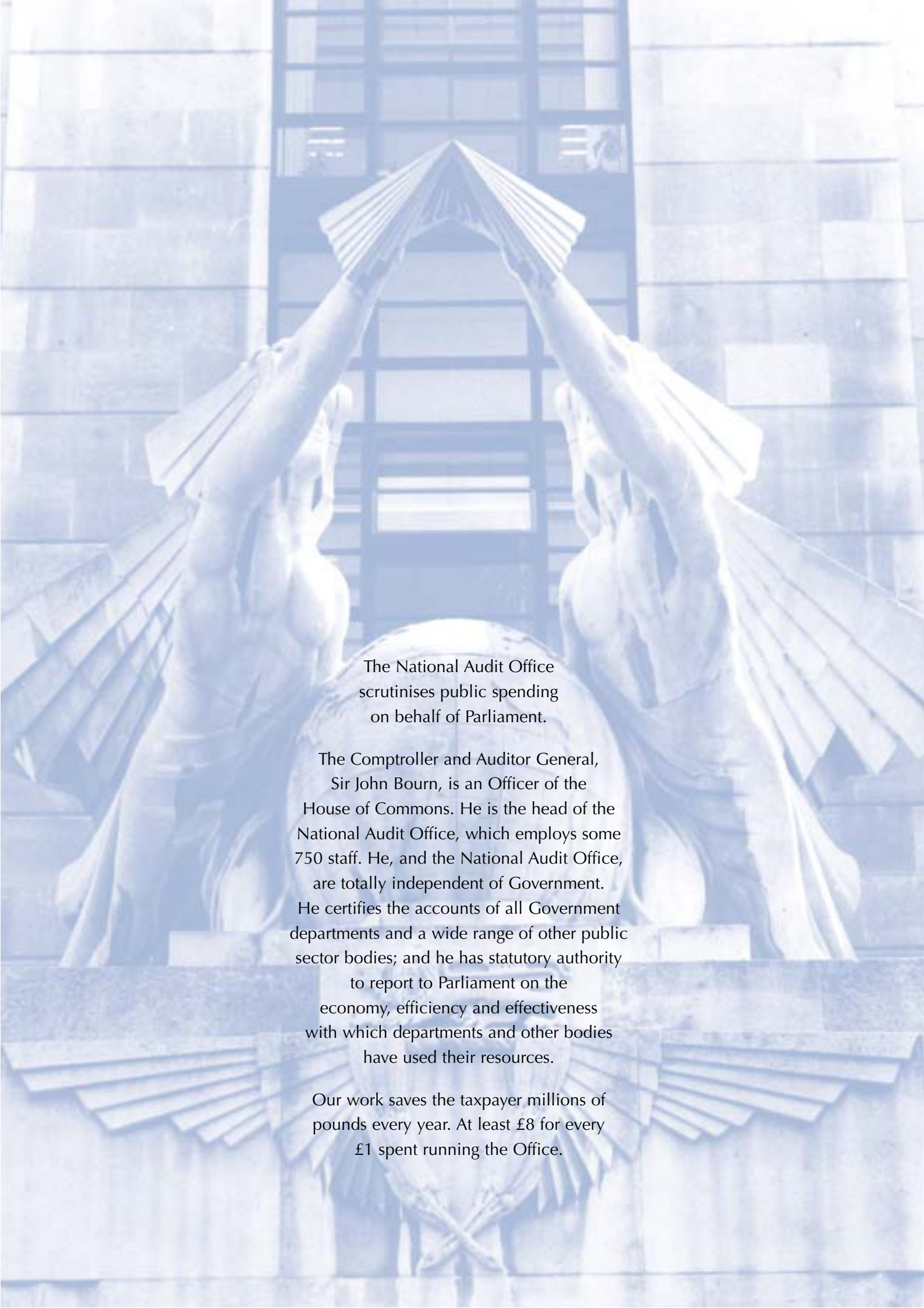
NATIONAL AUDIT OFFICE

Developing Effective Services for Older People

REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL
HC 518 Session 2002-2003: 26 March 2003



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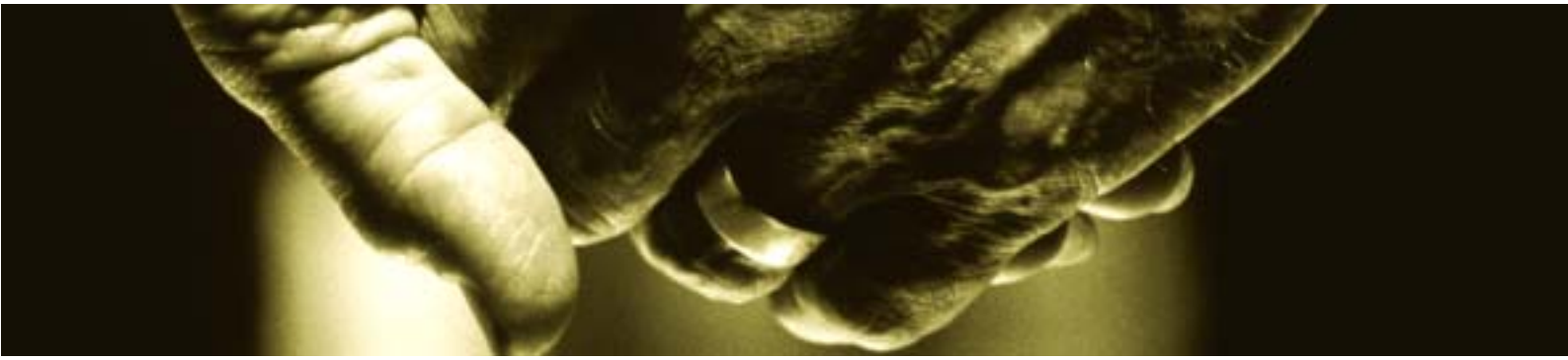
Developing Effective Services for Older People



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John Bourn
Comptroller and Auditor General

National Audit Office
18 March 2003

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Photographs are kindly provided by:
Better Government for Older People - Contents page, pages 1, 4, 5, 8, 9 and 15
Sheffield City Council and Sheffield 50+ - Contents page, pages 24 and 26

Summary & recommendations

1 Older people are major users of public services provided by a diverse range of bodies in central Government, local government and the independent sector **(Figure 1 overleaf)**. The Government has committed itself to improving provision. This report examines whether, in line with the Government's stated aims, the development of services relevant to older people is joined up, avoids duplication and takes account of older people's characteristics and needs.

2 The population of the United Kingdom is becoming older. More than 10.5 million people are currently over state pension age, a number forecast to rise by 2040 to 16 million, or one-quarter of the population. Within this group there are great disparities of health, wealth and activity. On average, older people are more likely than younger people to report lifestyle-limiting illness, to live alone and to rely on public services. Although the current generation of older people is on average the most affluent ever, in 2000-01 welfare benefits are estimated to have made up the entire income of 13 per cent of them.

3 Population ageing has significant implications for many public services such as health, transport, housing and care. People over pension age are expected to receive around £63 billion in state pensions and benefits in 2002-03[1]. In the most recent year for which data have been separated (1998-99), National Health Service expenditure on people over 65 was £10 billion and local authority care expenditure was £5 billion[2]. Total expenditure on state pensions and benefits, National Health Service care and local authority care is about 8 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

We found that the Government has:

- recognised the varied needs of older people in a wide range of initiatives;
- made progress towards better co-ordination, establishing a Cabinet Committee on Older People, appointing a Cabinet Champion for Older People, designating the Department for Work and Pensions to take the lead on older people's issues and establishing The Pensions Service to provide a dedicated benefits service for pensioners;
- successfully used a variety of methods to consult a wide range of older people; and
- made some progress towards including older people in policy-making.

However, there is scope, by adopting our recommendations, for further improvements in co-ordination, consultation and the use of evidence in formulating policy.

1 *Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report - The Government's expenditure plans 2002-03 to 2003-04, Cm 5424.*
2 *Department of Health - Departmental Report 2001 Cm 5103.*

1 Services used by older people

Social care e.g. community care

Social services, private and voluntary sector organisations

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department of Health, Lord Chancellor's Department

Health e.g. doctor and dental appointments

NHS and private sector health organisations

Department of Health, HM Treasury, Lord Chancellor's Department

Housing e.g. sheltered housing, extra care housing, Home Improvement Agencies, Supporting People programme

Local authorities, housing associations, private and voluntary sector organisations

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor's Department

Travel e.g. local bus services

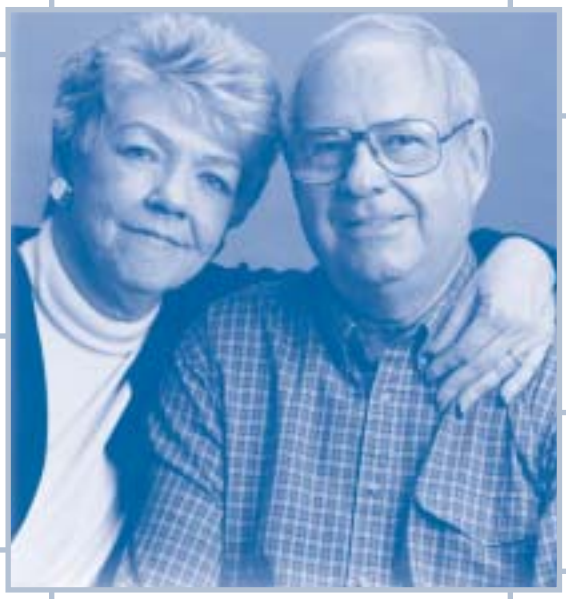
Local authorities, private sector and voluntary sector organisations

Department for Transport

Information and advice e.g. older people's issues

Departments, local authorities, private and voluntary sector organisations

All Departments listed in this diagram, Ministry of Defence and Department of Trade and Industry



Pensions e.g. State Retirement Pension, occupational pensions

Department for Work and Pensions, Post Office, private sector amd voluntary sector organisations

Department for Work and Pensions, Inland Revenue, Lord Chancellor's Department

Benefits e.g. Winter Fuel Payments, Minimum Income Guarantee

Department for Work and Pensions, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations

Department for Work and Pensions, Lord Chancellor's Department

Learning e.g. local educational facilities

Wide range of providers including further education institutions and libraries

Department for Education and Skills, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, local authorities

Leisure e.g. local leisure facilities and volunteering

Local authorities, sports clubs, voluntary sector organisations

Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Home Office

Other local services e.g. dayclubs

Local authorities and voluntary sector organisations

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Key:

Service

Primary contacts

Relevant Departments

Source: National Audit Office analysis

4 Many older people find the divisions between service providers, which are not reflected in their own lives, confusing. Often those in most need have to contact the largest number of agencies. In various surveys and consultations[3], older people have called for simplification and co-ordination of information and access to public services, as well as sharing information on older people's views and needs better between Government Departments. Integrating provision from the perspective of users is now a major driving force in service delivery, and the measure of success will be customers' perception of whether the Government appears to be more joined up than in the past. The booklet and website *Are you over 50? (www.over50.gov.uk)*, prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions, provide the most recent illustration of work to integrate government information.

5 The Government has introduced many policy initiatives relevant to older people. It established the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People in 1998 "to ensure that government strategy and policy affecting older people is effectively co-ordinated, avoids duplication and takes account of the needs of older people". The Better Government for Older People programme was also launched in 1998 "to improve public services for older people by better meeting their needs, listening to their views, and encouraging and recognising their contribution". In 1999, Cabinet Office guidance recommended "that all areas of policy are appraised from older people's perspective from the outset and, where necessary, that special measures are built in to address their needs". Many other initiatives concentrate on more specific issues.

Joining up to develop effective services affecting older people

6 The Government has taken a more strategic approach to policy-making on issues affecting older people and has used a range of approaches to produce tangible benefits for them. Joining up has involved outside parties, such as experts and older people, as well as many central Government Departments. It has generated new ideas, helped to ensure a client-group focus and brought together diverse parties. It has also helped to co-ordinate activities across government, to establish more coherence, to focus on specific problems and to raise the profile of older people's issues.

7 Our examination focussed on five initiatives, each reflecting a different form of joining up:

- **The Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People**, now replaced by the Cabinet Committee on Older People, is an example of **cross-government co-ordination**. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions is the Government Champion for Older People and the Department for Work and Pensions are the designated lead Department for older people. It is responsible for monitoring progress across Government by means of updates from other Departments and for liaising with them regularly on the development and expansion of a strategic approach to older people. A Partnership Group of professionals and national experts in the field of older people, as well as older people from the Older People's Advisory Group (below), informs the work of the Committee.
- **Better Government for Older People** was a **government wide programme** designed to improve public services for older people and learn lessons for the future by combining action, research and consultation. It stimulated a diverse range of local improvements and innovations and fed into central Government developments. It has continued as an on-going Network, with an associated Older People's Advisory Group.

3 *Attitudes and Aspirations of Older People: A Qualitative Study, Department of Social Security 1999; Buidling a Better Society for Older People: report on the listening events to the Ministerial Group on Older People, University of Warkwick, 2000.*

- **Winning the Generation Game**, a report by the Performance and Innovation Unit, was a **centrally-driven initiative**. It examined the declining economic activity of people aged 50 to 65, successfully taking a view across the whole of Government that would have been difficult for a single Department. A range of experts, including from the voluntary sector, provided input. The Department for Work and Pensions were responsible for reporting to the Prime Minister on progress against recommendations.
- **The National Service Framework for Older People** is a **client-focused approach** that defines eight areas of standards applicable to health and social care for older people. It demonstrates how the Department of Health raised their effectiveness by recognising the contribution of other organisations and involving them in policy development. Partner organisations include local government, the voluntary sector and older people themselves.
- **Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing** is a **strategic framework** developed jointly by the Department of Health and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in bilateral co-operation to achieve greater impact through collaboration. Representatives from the voluntary sector contributed to the development of the strategic framework.

8 These initiatives have all had major beneficial impacts but there are also important elements of unfinished business. For example:

- The Department for Work and Pensions have been developing an Older People Strategy for the Cabinet Committee on Older People. The Strategy will summarise progress, set out a forward work programme and provide a framework across Government for work relevant to older people.

- The Government published commitments in May 2000 and January 2001 to repeat "Listening to Older People" events and to report progress on matters related to older people. Although there was not necessarily an implication of repeating them annually, it is three years since the listening events were held. Three key reports *(Life begins at 50, Building on partnership* and *Winning the Generation Game)* include recommendations on which public reporting might be expected. One report *(The Age Shift)* contains recommendations that cover many Departments and other parties, but for which no organisation has overall monitoring responsibility, in line with policy on the conduct of the Foresight exercise generally. There is a risk that this failure to continue consulting and to report progress could undermine confidence amongst non-governmental parties.
- The National Service Framework for Older People has 29 Milestone Targets, 16 of them due on or before April 2002. The Department of Health intend to report in March 2003 on progress against Milestone Targets. This public reporting will be important in sustaining partners' involvement and commitment.
- The report *Building on partnership*, published in January 2001, included a recommendation for more cross-cutting Public Service Agreement targets affecting older people. Of those targets specifically relevant to older people, the proportion assigned jointly to Departments reduced from just over a third in 2000 to just under a quarter in 2002.

9 Some aspects of joined up policy development have been easier than have others. However, Departments can take a number of steps to get past the obstacles. Key elements are:

- **Strong leadership** is required in joined up initiatives because they tackle complex issues, involve many people and have the potential to cause disillusionment if they do not make progress. High-profile individual leadership, including by Ministers, has been a feature of many initiatives that we examined.
- Members of staff need **new skills and incentives** for joined up working, although their objectives rarely encourage it and it is not systematically or openly recognised in appraisal. The Cabinet Office reported that, in 2000-01, 56 per cent of the Senior Civil Service had experience outside their own department, against a 2005 target of 75 per cent, but secondments at all levels between Departments are still much less common than those with outside partners, even though they are a valuable means of developing trust and understanding.
- **Certainty about funding** can help to promote joint working, but some initiatives lacked dedicated funding or experienced difficulties in securing it. Such funding problems have caused service deliverers and third parties to infer negative messages about the importance that Departments attach to initiatives. Members of staff have spent time clarifying funding when they could have been concentrating on service delivery. There have, for example, been particular difficulties in agreeing financial contributions from different Departments to the Better Government for Older People Network and the English Longitudinal Study on Ageing.
- Mechanisms, such as the designation of older people's champions, need to be in place to **maintain the momentum** of joined up initiatives. The National Service Framework provides for champions in health and social care bodies, but a report in 2002 by Age Concern and the British Geriatrics Society identified confusion about their roles. The Department for Work and Pensions run a network of co-ordinators across Government but have no power to require Departments to co-operate. Such mechanisms can work. In a different context, the Cabinet Office requires every Department, along with other public bodies, to appoint a champion responsible for leading the consumer agenda.

Understanding the needs of older people

10 Services developed on a sound understanding of what older people believe, want or need are more likely to deliver intended outcomes effectively. Consultation and research are the main means for understanding these matters and how they might change in the future. The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health, in particular, have substantial consultation and research programmes on older people's issues. The National Collaboration on Ageing Research aims to raise the profile and relevance of ageing research for which the Research Councils are responsible, including the promotion of multidisciplinary approaches. The Funders' Forum for Research on Ageing and Older People aims to stimulate and facilitate interdisciplinary research and collaborative working. It is chaired by the Department of Health, with representatives from the health departments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the Office of Science and Technology, the Research Councils, the National Collaboration on Ageing Research and the voluntary sector.

11 **Consultation** has been at the heart of many of the initiatives for older people we examined. Through a range of innovative consultation methods the Government has achieved much, including better informed policy-making, identifying priorities, placing issues on the agenda, understanding older people's needs better, and sustaining contact with older people.

12 Comments from parties consulted by Government show that some aspects of consultation have proved easier to manage than have others. There are some key issues that Departments need to take into account when running consultations. They are:

- The main concern, raised by almost every third party whom we contacted, was lack of **feedback**. Participants want to know what has changed as a result of consultation and why some suggestions have been rejected. They accept that not all their wishes can be met, but dislike the idea that their contributions might have been ignored and their time wasted. Consultation raises expectations that may later be undermined if feedback is inadequate.
- Consultations need to be **open** enough to enable people to discuss issues that most concern them. They need to be **early** enough to allow people the opportunity to comment before decisions have been made, to have time for considered responses, and to seek the views of any other parties they represent.
- Active steps are needed to avoid any hint of **tokenism**, for example ensuring that older people are not heavily outnumbered by professionals, that official speakers are able to stay to listen, and that any constraints on consultation are explained.
- Small outside organisations, in particular, could better **manage the demands** on them if there was greater co-ordination across Government in relation to the timing of consultations and engagements, and the sharing of information when different Departments need to ask the same or similar questions.
- The Government needs to avoid imposing too great a consultation **burden** on the voluntary sector, and must create mechanisms that respect partners' independence and their right to hold different views.
- The Government can increase the **effectiveness** of consultation by using existing knowledge, networks and experience in the voluntary sector and elsewhere, by making its own consultations more accessible across different Departments and by maintaining ongoing engagement following consultation.

13 The Government has a substantial **research** programme on older people's issues, cutting across many Departments and other public sector bodies. All of the initiatives that we examined incorporated research through mechanisms such as reviewing pre-existing work, commissioning new work and convening meetings of experts. Third parties told us that the application of research had substantially enhanced the quality of the initiatives.

14 Some aspects of applying research to older people's issues have been more successful than others, and Departments can take steps to increase their effectiveness. For example:

- There is a need for better **co-ordination** of research requirements and funding agreements, and better dissemination of results, developing the example of the National Collaboration on Ageing Research promoted by the Research Councils.
- Steps to improve the **communication** of research to policy makers include placing people with research experience in policy teams, designating expert staff to facilitate communication, requiring research projects to bring out policy implications and bringing time scales closer through presenting interim results.
- There is a **Strategic Futures** Group within the Cabinet Office promoting interest in techniques that aim to prepare policy-makers for a variety of possible future circumstances. Strategic futures work occurs across Government, for example in the report *The Age Shift*, but none of the five main initiatives that we examined referred to it.

Recommendations

15 Our recommendations are:

On joining up to develop effective services affecting older people

i There is an outstanding need to provide an overall framework for work across Government affecting older people because, despite progress in joining up policy-making, there remains a lack of co-ordination in some areas. This could be addressed by the publication of the planned Older People Strategy. The Department for Work and Pensions should work with the Cabinet Committee on Older People to publish the Strategy as soon as possible (paragraphs 2.4 and 2.16).

ii The Department for Work and Pensions should work with the Cabinet Committee on Older People to consider how to fulfil the Government's commitments of May 2000 to repeat the "Listening to Older People" programme, taking into account what frequency would be appropriate. The original consultation was generally well received and effective, but raised expectations which risk being undermined if there is insufficient follow up (Case Study A, page 22).

iii The Department for Work and Pensions should work with the Cabinet Committee on Older People to consider how to fulfil the Government's commitments of January 2001 to report progress on matters related to older people. Whilst a new openness in Government has been welcomed, more attention should be given to reporting publicly. The absence of feedback following consultation can lead to disillusionment amongst the older people and voluntary organisations involved. Public commitments to report progress regularly on *Life begins at 50* and *Building on partnership* need to be met and there is a high level of expectation that there would be a report on progress on *Winning the Generation Game* recommendations (paragraphs 2.16 and 3.12).

iv The Department of Health should clarify publicly the role of older people's champions in the National Health Service in order to help those so designated to discharge their responsibilities, to provide stronger leadership on older people's issues, and to dispel the confusion identified in research by Age Concern and the British Geriatrics Society (paragraph 2.16).

v The Cabinet Office should consider the merits of requiring every Department to appoint an older people's champion (along the lines of e-champions or consumer champions) to work with the Department for Work and Pensions in co-ordinating work across Government on older people's issues, in raising issues that require resolution among Departments, and in providing progress reports to the Cabinet Committee on Older People. A possible model is the National Director for Older People's Services at the Department of Health (paragraph 2.16).

vi In order to aid co-ordination in setting strategic priorities across Government, the Treasury should work with other Departments to identify synergies in future Public Service Agreement targets affecting older people and to assign more of them jointly to relevant Departments where this would help to promote more effective service delivery (paragraph 2.9).

vii In order to enable staff and organisations responsible for joined up programmes to focus on delivering them, sponsoring Departments should ensure that responsibility for funding issues is clarified from the outset, to avoid the uncertainty that has affected, for example, the Better Government for Older People Network and the English Longitudinal Study on Ageing. Approaches that involve seeking individual contributions from all Departments concerned are time consuming and have not always proved effective (paragraph 2.15).

On understanding the needs of older people

viii In order to minimise burdens on third parties and to avoid duplication by Departments, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health should develop a joined up approach across Government to consultation on older people's issues. This approach should maximise the use of existing structures, such as older people's advisory groups and voluntary organisations, and deploy internet technology to make results easily available across Government (paragraphs 3.10 and 3.13).

ix The Cabinet Office should include in their guidance on consultation a stronger emphasis on the importance of providing timely and informative feedback in order to maintain the commitment and interest of third parties with whom Departments consult, and to avoid raising expectations that may later be undermined if feedback is inadequate (paragraph 3.12).

x In order to maximise value for money and avoid duplication in research on older people's issues, Government Departments and the Research Councils should work together to improve co-ordination of requirements, agreements on funding and dissemination of results. The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health are well placed, as the main research commissioners, to promote improvement. The approach would also involve the National Collaboration on Ageing Research and might build on the Funders' Forum for Research on Ageing and Older People (paragraphs 3.18 to 3.21).

xi The Department for Work and Pensions, in their role supporting the Cabinet Committee on Older People as the key cross-Government co-ordination mechanism, may wish to encourage the use of strategic futures work routinely in areas relevant to older people in order to ensure that policy-making takes account of the long term nature of population ageing (paragraphs 3.23 and 3.24).

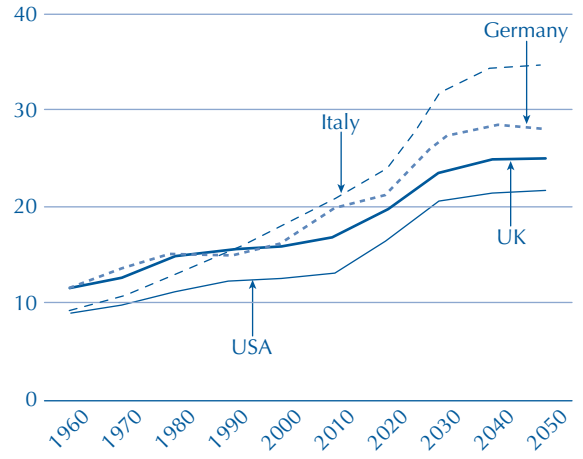
Part 1

Developing effective services for older people

1.1 The population of the United Kingdom **(Figure 2)** is becoming older. There are currently 10.5 million people over state pension age, and 19 million over 50. By 2040 there are expected to be around 16 million people over state pension age or one-quarter of the population.

1.2 Older people are a far from homogenous group. They are as varied as other sections of the population in terms of such characteristics as income, gender, social class, ethnicity, literacy, and health status. Even within particular groups - pensioners on low incomes, for example - there are wide differences in terms of access to information or willingness to claim benefits[4]. Despite this diversity, there are characteristics common to many older people. For example, as people age they are more likely to experience health problems, tend to have lower incomes than other age groups and are likely to have more time available. Older people commonly experience a number of major life changes, including retirement and bereavement, and, for many, growing dependence on others.

2 Growth in different countries in the percentage of the population over 65



Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Statistical and Analytical Information on Ageing, 2000

1.3 Older people are no different from others in many of their wants and needs. In April 2002 the Political Declaration and International Plan of Action from the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing - to which the United Kingdom Government contributed - stated that older people should be able to age with security and dignity and continue to take part in society as citizens with full rights. The Declaration spoke out against negative stereotypes of ageing and the associated tendency to marginalise older people.

Population ageing has significant implications for public services

1.4 Older people are major users of public services provided by both central and local government **(Figure 3 on page 12)**. Expenditure is spread across the budgets of a wide range of public bodies and is only occasionally separately identified. People over pension age are expected to receive around £63 billion in state pensions and benefits in 2002-03. In the most recent year for which data have been separated (1998-99), National Health Service expenditure on health and social care for people over 65 was £10 billion (approximately 40 per cent of the total) and local authority care expenditure was £5 billion. This was before the implementation of the National Service Framework for Older People and the National Health Service Plan. In July 2002, the Government announced that £1 billion of its planned increase in expenditure on social services, from 2003-2004 to 2005-2006, would be used to develop services for older people.

4 *Tackling pensioner poverty: encouraging take-up of entitlements, HC 37 2002-03.*

3 Examples of common services used by older people

Health	Health check up at 75	People aged 75 and over are entitled to have an annual health check, either at a doctor's surgery or in their own home.
	Hospital appointments	Almost two-thirds of general and acute hospital beds are used by people over 65.
	Flu vaccinations	People over the age of 65 are offered flu vaccinations, given by General Practitioners or nurses.
	Dental and optical checks	People aged 60 and over are entitled to free National Health Service dental treatment and free National Health Service eye tests.
	District nurses	Older people are more likely than others to receive health care from district nurses visiting them in their homes.
	GP appointments	Those aged 75 and over are more likely than younger adults to see their GP or have an outpatient appointment.
Travel	Discounts for public transport	Free, or in some cases discounted, bus passes are available to pensioners for public transport. These are available from local authorities.
Pensions	Pensions and Minimum Income Guarantee	Men aged 65 and over and women aged 60 and over can claim a State Retirement Pension subject to having made the necessary contributions. Pensioners on low incomes can also claim Minimum Income Guarantee (formerly Income Support).
	Winter Fuel Payments	People aged 60 and over may be entitled to Winter Fuel Payments.
	Bereavement	The Pension Service can advise pensioners who have experienced the bereavement of a partner of their pension entitlements.
Leisure	Adult education courses	Older people can access a range of educational courses from a wide range of providers, including further education institutions and libraries.
	Volunteering programmes	There are a variety of schemes and initiatives that promote voluntary work among older people and encourage them to use their skills and experience for their community.

Source: National Audit Office analysis

1.5 As the number of older people grows, so will their use of these public services. A recent report suggested that health spending would need to increase by 125 per cent over the next 20 years, partly because of population ageing, while the impact on social care costs will be even greater[5]. The Government's reform of pensions policy was informed by the expected increase in the number of people over state pension age and the resulting rise in state spending on pensions[6]. The 2002 Pensions Green paper expressed the Government's determination to end compulsory retirement ages and do more for those in employment who are prevented by tax rules from carrying on working[7].

1.6 The ageing of the population - an indication of rising standards of health and prosperity - presents new opportunities. Older people contribute to society in much the same way as any others, but particularly in areas such as volunteering, helping with child rearing, caring for relatives and helping neighbours. Approximately three in five people will care for a chronically sick friend or relative at some point in their lives, with many carers of older people also older people themselves. For many, retirement is the opportunity to pursue activities that a busy working life restricted, but it also gives rise to policy challenges.

Services for older people are provided by many organisations

1.7 Many types of public, private and voluntary sector organisations provide services used by older people. Most central Government Departments have an interest to a greater or less extent **(Figure 4)**. This diverse range of providers can be a problem. At times, citizens may have to approach different parts of the same organisation, and often those most in need have contact with the largest number of agencies. For example, various pensioner benefit entitlements are administered by local authorities, by three different Government Departments and their agencies and by the central offices and local services of The Pension Service.

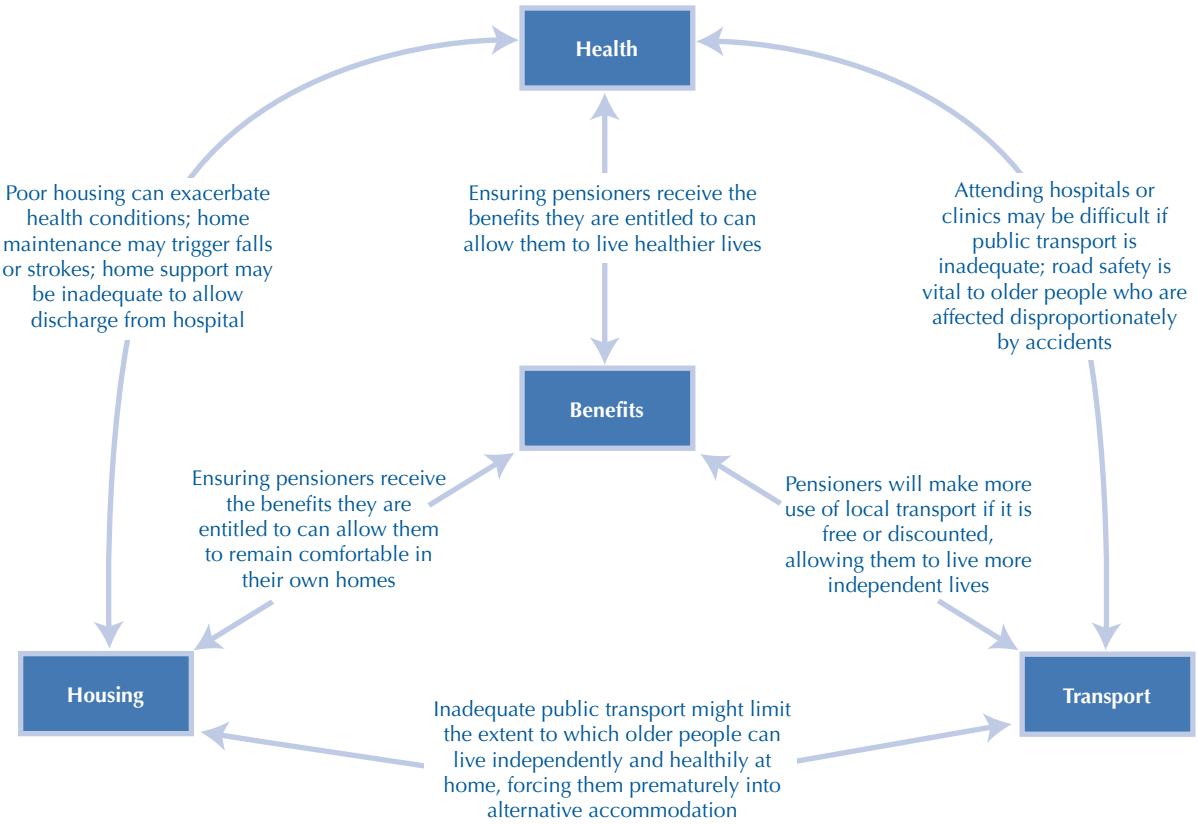
5 *Securing our future health: taking a long term view, Derek Wanless, 2002.*
6 *A new contract for welfare: Partnership in Pensions, Department of Social Security, 1998.*
7 *Simplicity, security and choice: working and saving for retirement, Cm 5677, December 2002.*

4 Government Departments involved in older people's issues

Department	Main older people issues covered
Cabinet Office	Central initiatives
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	Active ageing
Ministry of Defence	Veterans' affairs
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	Local government responsibilities including housing
Department for Education and Skills	Lifelong learning
Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Elderly in rural areas, the "Warm Front" initiative
Department of Health	Healthcare and Personal Social Services
Home Office	Volunteering, impact of crime on older people
Inland Revenue	Interaction of rules on tax, pensions and benefits
Lord Chancellor's Department	General legal and advice services, interests of people with mental incapacity
Department of Trade and Industry	Legislation on age discrimination in employment and training, suitability of consumer products, basic research on ageing
Department for Transport	Access to public transport, mobility, inclusion
Her Majesty's Treasury	Financial implications of pensions, healthcare and benefits
Department for Work and Pensions	Pensions, benefits related to disability, age discrimination

Source: Department for Work and Pensions

5 How some different aspects of older people's lives are inter-related



Source: National Audit Office

1.8 Divisions between service providers are not mirrored in older people's lives. For example, our report on *Tackling pensioner poverty: encouraging take-up of entitlements* (HC 37 2002-03) showed that ensuring that pensioners receive the benefits to which they are entitled is about more than just increasing income, but can also have health benefits and allow them to live more independent lives[8]. The Audit Commission commented in their 2002 report on *Integrated services for older people: Building a whole system approach in England* that "it is all too easy for services to suffer from fragmentation, duplication and a lack of direction and co-ordination". The booklet and website *Are you over 50? (www.over50.gov.uk)*, prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions, provide a most recent illustration of work to integrate provision. **Figure 5 on page 13** illustrates interconnections for benefits, health, housing and transport.

1.9 Inter-relationships between services emphasise the importance of co-ordination within Government to avoid conflicts in policy objectives and to help deliver effective services. The Government has recognised that Departments and other organisations have sometimes worked in isolation from each other, with problems occurring and opportunities being missed as a result. Lack of co-ordination in policy design can make different public bodies unintentionally undermine or constrain the effectiveness of each other's efforts. There may be policy conflicts to be resolved or practical problems of co-ordination **(Figure 6)**.

6 Policy conflicts and practical problems of co-ordination

Resolving policy conflicts

Incentives to save: The Government is keen for older people to remain independent, including through saving for retirement. Income Support created disincentives to saving and working after retirement because the poorest pensioners lost a pound of benefit for every pound of other income. The new Pension Credit, to be introduced in 2003, is designed to reduce this problem by providing a cash reward for pensioners on low and modest incomes for every pound of income from savings, second pension or earnings.

Encouraging volunteering: The Government aims to increase the number of older people who volunteer, but voluntary sector organisations found that fear of losing entitlement to benefits deterred many people. The Home Office Active Community Unit held discussions with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that claimants who volunteered would not lose benefits through not being available for work. The Department clarified that this was the case, although the message was slow to reach all local offices.

Flexible retirement: The Government aims to increase the employment rate of older people. The Performance and Innovation Unit's report *Winning the Generation Game* found many older people wanted to reduce hours or responsibilities towards the end of their working lives. However, tax-approved pension schemes did not allow staff to work reduced hours and receive a part pension to tide them over to retirement. The effect was to encourage many to retire early as the only alternative was to continue with a full workload. The Performance and Innovation Unit's report recommended a review of these arrangements. The Pensions Green paper[9], published in December 2002, opens consultation about future policy and legislation, including providing better information on choices about retirement, reaffirming employers' roles in pensions, encouraging simple and flexible savings products and extending working lives.

Practical problems

Between implementers and policymakers: In our report *State Earning-Related Pension: The failure to inform the public of reduced rights for widows and widowers* (HC 320 1999-2000), we found that a 10-year failure to update pensions leaflets correctly had caused considerable distress to many thousands of people and would cost the taxpayer at least £12 billion to put right, over the period 2000 to 2050. Legislation passed in 1986 changed future pension arrangements, but co-ordination failures within the former Department of Social Security resulted in staff giving incorrect information to the public until 1999. The Government became aware of the problem only when it was raised by Age Concern.

Across Government: In its report on the Extend Quality of Life (EQUAL) programme initiated by the Department of Trade and Industry, the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee criticised a lack of interaction and collaboration between Government Departments, Research Councils and others engaged in research into ageing. In the Committee's view this had the effect of marginalising a research initiative that should have been central to the Government's policy on ageing. The Government responded by pointing to the steps the Research Councils were taking through the National Collaboration on Ageing Research to increase the profile and relevance of ageing research for which they were responsible, including the promotion of multidisciplinary approaches.

Between health and social care: People suffer delays in discharge from hospital because there is nowhere appropriate to transfer them or because local government social service departments are not able to assess and care for them. The Government is taking action to address this problem by changing the funding mechanisms, by introducing joint commissioning and provision between the National Health Service, local government and the private sector, and by providing more resources for intermediate care[10].

Source: National Audit Office

8 *Tackling pensioner poverty: encouraging take-up of entitlements, HC 37 2002-03.*
9 *Simplicity, security and choice: working and saving for retirement, Cm 5677, December 2002.*
10 *Ensuring the effective discharge of older patients from NHS acute hospitals, HC 392 2002-03.*

1.10 Government commissioned research[11] has shown that, on average, older people are more satisfied with public services than younger people, but many felt public transport, social care and health services were not well geared to their needs even though they were high users. They were uncertain about what services the Government provided and about the division of responsibilities between different parts of the public sector such as central Government Departments, local government departments and health bodies. They also thought the Government should be more joined up in order to avoid unnecessary duplication[12]. They suggested simplifying and co-ordinating information and access to public services and sharing information on older people's views and needs between Government Departments.

The Government has introduced many policy initiatives relevant to older people

1.11 Since 1998, the Government has introduced many policy initiatives for older people, focusing on such issues as health and social care, benefits, housing, education and employment, leisure and volunteering **(Figure 7)**. In 1998, an Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People was set up as a cross-Government group designed to develop a joined up approach to older people's issues and co-ordinate Government policy. In 2001, the group was replaced by a Cabinet Committee on Older People, set up to co-ordinate and drive forward the cross-Government strategy for the over 50s. Better Government for Older People was also launched in 1998 "to improve public services for older people by better meeting their needs, listening to their views, and encouraging and recognising their contribution". More generally, Cabinet Office guidance published in 1999 recommended "that all areas of policy are appraised from older people's perspective from the outset and, where necessary, that special measures are built in to address their needs".

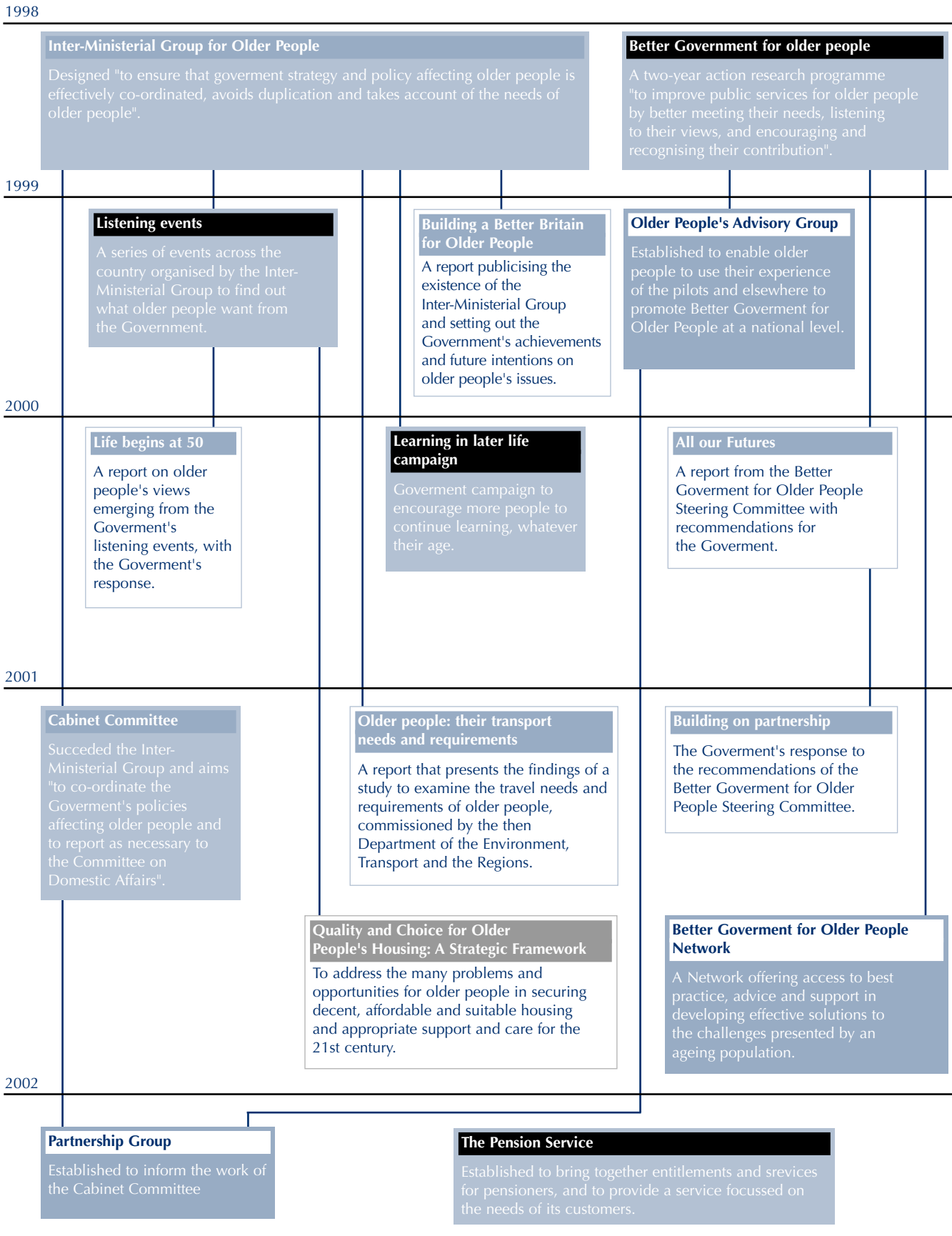
1.12 This report follows up our recent reports on policy design and joint working[13]. It accompanies three others on older people's issues, each demonstrating the importance of joining up in a specific area of activity:

- *Tackling pensioner poverty: encouraging take-up of entitlements* (HC 37 2002-03) highlights the importance of collaboration between The Pension Service, local authorities and the voluntary sector in assisting pensioners to obtain their entitlements.
- *Progress in making e-services accessible to all - encouraging use by older people* (HC 428 2002-03) notes the potential benefits of an electronic portal for older people, along with a common approach to branding and layout, in presenting a consistent entry point to a wide range of Government services.
- *Ensuring the effective discharge of older patients from NHS acute hospitals* (HC 392 2002-03) identifies the need for health and social care services to work together to enable patients to leave hospital at the right time and with the right support.

1.13 This report examines whether service development in areas relevant to older people is joined up and avoids duplication (Part 2), and whether it takes account of older people's needs (Part 3). We consider achievements to date, the barriers to joined up working and what more needs to be done. Details of our methodology are at Appendix 1.

11 *Attitudes and Aspirations of Older People: A Qualitative Study, Department of Social Security 1999; Monitoring Satisfaction: Trends from 1998 - 2002, Office of Public Services Reform, 2002; The views of people aged 50+ towards public services, Cabinet Office, 2000.*
12 *Building a Better Society for Older People: report on the listening event to the Inter-Ministerial Group on Older People, University of Warwick, 2000.*
13 *Modern policy-making: ensuring policies deliver value for money (HC 289 2001-02); Joining up to improve public services (HC 383 2001-02).*

7 Goverment initiatives relevant to older people



Source: National Audit Office

A new contract for welfare: partnership in pensions

Green paper that sets out the Goverment's plans for reforms to the pensions system.

Passport 50+

A guide from the Cabinet Office on rights in such areas as healthcare, pensions, benefits, housing, safety and leisure.

Minimum Income Guarantee

Designed to help the poorest pensioners.

Health and Older Peoples Group

Established to gain the views of older people on issues surrounding the development of the National Service Framework for Older People.

Winning the Generation Game

A report and recommendations from the Performance and Innovation Unit examining how to increase economic and community activity by people aged 50 to 65.

New deal 50+

To assist older people looking for practical help to find employment, including training grants for updating job skills.

Foresight Ageing Population Panel report, The Age Shift

A report and recommendations, from an initiative sponsored by the Department of Trade and Industry, on the social and economic impacts of population ageing.

Experience Corps

A Home Office initiative to provide mechanisms for more older people to become involved in volunteer work.

Age positive

Promotion and guidance from the Department for Work and Pensions to help businesses tackle age discriminatoin in the workplace, including a non-statutory Code of Practice. The Goverment is working actively to introduce related legalisation.

Pensioner's Guide

Explaining the help available to older people in a wide range of areas (revised in 2002 in consultation with older people).

National Service Framework for Older People

Guidance from the Department of Health to improve services for older people

Simplicity, Security and Choice: Working and Saving for Retirement

Pensions Green paper that proposes a package of pensions reforms. Published alongside Simplifying the taxation of pensions- increasing choice and flexibility for all.

Are you over 50?

Guide which offers people over 50 years of age practical advice, support and services across Goverment.

Part 2

Joining up to develop effective services affecting older people

2.1 Part 1 highlighted the need for more co-ordinated working between the organisations involved in developing and providing services for older people. This part examines progress by Departments in working together, and with a range of other bodies, to develop policies affecting older people.

The Government is trying to deliver more efficient and effective services through joined up policy-making

2.2 Joining up is one of nine competencies that the Government has identified for professional policy-making[14]. Joined up policy-making is 'built around shared goals rather than organisational structures or existing functions'. The Government has a variety of reasons for wanting policy-making to be more joined up, including to:

- focus on specific groups of people and issues in order to ensure that **organisational boundaries do not cause problems for service users or prevent difficult problems from being tackled;**
- involve all interested parties to **generate a wider range of ideas,** including from service users so that **policies address real needs,** and from service deliverers so that **policies are capable of being effectively implemented;**
- use the widest possible range of evidence, including academic research, experience in other countries and predictions about the future, in order to **maximise the likelihood that policies will deliver intended outcomes;**
- ensure consistency between the activities of different Departments so that **money is not wasted because different policies duplicate or undermine each other;**
- build in performance measurement and evaluation so that **policies are sustained, achieve their aims and are modified where necessary for success;** and
- learn from past experience so that the **characteristics of past policy successes can be replicated and those of past failures avoided.**

There are costs and benefits to joined up policy-making

2.3 The desirability of joining up has been contrasted by some to more 'traditional' policy-making approaches, where organisations tended to work in isolation and in sequence[15]. The advantages of more traditional approaches were deemed to be greater speed through simpler lines of communication, coupled with working methods that were more consistent with the hierarchical structure then characterising Departments. In contrast, joining up promises new benefits such as more robust and successful outcomes. There are risks, which need to be managed, in joining up and in not doing so **(Figure 8)**.

The Government has taken a more strategic approach to policy-making on older people's issues and has used a range of approaches

2.4 The Government has made various public statements about how it is trying to take a more strategic and joined up approach to produce tangible benefits for older people **(Figure 9)**. These have highlighted the importance of co-ordination. The Department for Work and Pensions have been developing an Older People Strategy for the Cabinet Committee on Older People. The Strategy will summarise progress, set out a forward work programme and provide a framework across Government for work relevant to older people. The document *Are you over 50?,* published by the Department for Work and Pensions in 2002, provides an element of progress reporting by setting out the range of amenities, services and facilities available to people approaching pension age.

14 *Professional policy making for the 21st century, Cabinet Office, 1999.*
15 *Better Policy Making, Cabinet Office, 2001.*

8 Risks associated with joining up policy-making

Risks of not joining up	Risks of joining up
Citizens' needs are not well served - Policies contradict each other, are not co-ordinated, have unintended effects, address the wrong problems or only parts of the right problems, fail to optimise services or react too slowly to change.	**Communication is costly** - Civil servants spend time establishing and maintaining networks, consulting and reporting to many stakeholders. Disagreements may bring delay. Trust in sharing sensitive information may be abused.
Resources are wasted - Work is duplicated across organisations, while existing knowledge and skills are not exploited. Work in one area is wasted because complementary work from another area is missing. Synergies between different arms of Government are not seen or exploited. Policies do not have the intended effects but continue to be implemented.	**Complexity increases** - Lack of clear accountability may cause delays, deadlock or policy failure. Shared accountability may require special performance-measurement systems. The complexity of inputs and outcomes may make evaluation difficult.
Policies have a higher risk of failure - Not taking predictable future change into account leads to unnecessary review. Not properly budgeting for implementation and evaluation, not persuading implementers, not understanding their capacities or not telling them about foreseeable problems can all lead to failure or expensive reviews and fixes.	**Experience is low** - Policies that cut across Departments may not have the intended effects because of a low knowledge base among staff.
	Stakeholders may lose enthusiasm - Stakeholders may become disaffected if expectations are raised and not fulfilled. Partnership fatigue may reduce commitment. Increasing burdens on implementers may lead to policies not being properly implemented.
	New barriers may emerge - Cross-cutting structures may create new barriers with traditional organisations.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of published Government documents

9 Government statements on co-ordinating policy development for older people

- The **Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People** (1998) aimed to ensure that Government strategy and policy affecting older people was effectively co-ordinated, avoided duplication and took account of the needs of older people.
- **Modernising Government** (1999) recognised that older people are among the major users of public services but often suffer from a lack of service integration and a failure to respond to their particular needs.
- **Building a Better Britain for Older People** (1999) stressed that, to help older people shape their own lives, all Government Departments should work together to make sure they complement rather than contradict each other. The Government set up the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People to achieve this end.
- **Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing** (2001) emphasised that the approach taken by Government, local councils and service providers to housing for older people should be integrated, working across all sectors, tiers and Departments in a joined up way and in partnership.
- The **National Service Framework for Older People** (2001) recognised that services sometimes fail to meet older people's needs by allowing organisational structures to become a barrier to proper assessment of need and access to care.
- **Building on partnership** (2001) noted that issues affecting older people were not always the responsibility of a single Government Department. The Government promised to continue to work to break down artificial barriers in policy-making and delivery by encouraging Departments to think about their joint priorities and to work together to deliver change.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of published Government documents

2.5 The Government has used a variety of different models for joining up policy-making on older people's issues **(Figure 10).** These range from high-level and strategic oversight exercised by a Cabinet Committee, to bilateral developments such as the co-operation between the Department of Health and what is now the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on *Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing*. They include co-ordinated programmes of work such as the Better Government for Older People programme and better integration between policymakers and implementers.

2.6 The five case studies on **pages 22-26** illustrate different types of joining up and demonstrate how they have delivered outcomes that would not have been achieved as effectively - or at all - by more traditional approaches. The remainder of this Part considers the achievements of the **case studies**, and other examples, and draws lessons for the future.

10 Different approaches to joining up policy-making for older people

Type of joining up	Description and example
Cross-Government co-ordination	A group of Ministers or officials from many Departments co-ordinating activities across Government
	Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People / Cabinet Committee on Older People
Government wide programme	A cross-Government programme led by one Department and involving other Departments and organisations
	Better Government for Older People (Cabinet Office lead, also involved the voluntary sector)
Centrally driven	A centrally driven report with recommendations for the whole of Government
	Winning the Generation Game (from a cross-cutting unit within the Cabinet Office)
Client focused	A Department seeking the assistance of other Departments and organisations in its work
	National Service Framework for Older People (Department of Health)
Bilateral development	Two Departments with shared interests developing a joint project
	Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing (Department of Health, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)
Vertical integration	Co-ordination between policy-makers, implementers and end-users
	Better Government for Older People (Cabinet Office lead, also involved the voluntary sector)

Source: National Audit Office

CASE STUDY A

Cross-Government co-ordination mechanisms - Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People / Cabinet Committee on Older People

Purpose

The remit of the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People was "to ensure that Government strategy and policy affecting older people is effectively co-ordinated, avoids duplication and takes account of the needs of older people". The successor Cabinet Committee on Older People aims "to co-ordinate the Government's policies affecting older people and to report as necessary to the Committee on Domestic Affairs".

Participants

Ministers from every major Department are on the Committee. The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions chairs the Committee, and the Secretaries of State for Health and for Trade and Industry also serve. More junior Ministers represent other Departments. The Committee is supported by officials from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Main features

The Prime Minister established the Inter-Ministerial Group in 1998. It commissioned a literature review of the *Attitudes and Aspirations of Older People* and shaped its subsequent work around the three themes of active ageing, health and care, and consultation and involvement. The Group ran a national programme of ten *Listening to Older People* events around the country, together with a further "virtual event" on the internet. The aim was to give older people the opportunity to engage in dialogue with Ministers. The Group established four sub-groups, each with a remit to draw up, communicate and take forward a programme of action. The *Life Long Learning and Leisure* sub-group aimed to widen older people's participation in learning and leisure activities. *Good Life at Home* aimed to help older people remain independent in their own homes. The *Transport* sub-group aimed to promote older people's ease of use of public transport in urban and rural areas and the *Work* sub-group sought to challenge compulsory retirement and promote progressive retirement.

The Government replaced the Group with a Cabinet Committee in 2001. This was set up to ensure progress in a number of areas to provide tangible benefits for the over 50s, including good practice in pensions, encouraging more flexible approaches to retirement, more opportunities for volunteering and learning, and further labour market help. Its immediate tasks included to give impetus to finalising the implementation of the Performance and Innovation Unit's report *Winning the Generation Game* (Case Study C) and developing proposals for formal mechanisms for consultation with older people and representative groups. It also covers issues such as combating negative stereotypes, promoting healthy living, and active lifestyles. The Government's work will also be influenced by the Better Government for Older People programme's recommendations in *Building on partnership* (Case Study B), which will help to shape future policy development and service delivery.

Achievements

The Inter-Ministerial Group raised the profile of older people's issues and contributed to the Government's understanding of their concerns. Independent evaluation of the listening events found that older people had valued the opportunity to speak directly to Ministers and appreciated their active listening. Through its sub-groups, the Group produced the *Learning in Later Life Campaign* and the publications *Older People: Their Transport Needs and Requirements* and *Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing - A Strategic Framework* (Case Study E).

Lessons learned

The listening events provided valuable lessons about older people's priorities and identified the key areas of learning and leisure, independent living at home, transport and work. Commissioned research provided insights into older people's lifestyles, their relations with local, regional and national Government and how they want to be represented. Independent evaluation of the listening events generated reports on lessons about managing future consultations, discussed in Part 3 of this report. The Inter-Ministerial Group demonstrated the importance of a clear Ministerial lead on joined up working.

Outstanding issues

There is limited public information on how the Government is responding to the concerns and wishes expressed by older people at listening events. The events took place between June and December 1999 and the Government published its response, *Life begins at 50 - A Better Society for Older People,* in May 2000. The response included 31 undertakings. There has been no progress report, although many significant commitments have been delivered, such as establishing the national Experience Corps to aid volunteering by people age 50 to 65 and the Department of Health's *National Service Framework for Older People* (Case Study D). Other matters remain outstanding, including promises to repeat the *Listening to Older People* programme regularly in the future, and to report regularly on progress in taking forward the programme of action in the Government's response.

CASE STUDY B

Government-wide programme - Better Government for Older People

Purpose
The aim of the Better Government for Older People programme was "to improve public services for older people by better meeting their needs, listening to their views, and encouraging and recognising their contribution".

Participants
The Cabinet Office ran the programme with partners from local government, the voluntary sector, the private sector and some central Government Departments. A national Older People's Advisory Group represented the interests of older people. The steering committee comprised representatives from the Cabinet Office, Age Concern, Anchor Trust, the Carnegie Third Age Programme, Help the Aged and the Local Government Centre of the University of Warwick.

Main features
The programme started in 1998 and ran for two years. It combined action and research to improve services for older people and learn lessons for the future. Evaluation, by the University of Warwick, was integrated into the programme from the outset. The main element of the programme consisted of 28 local pilot projects developing action plans to meet local priorities. Each pilot included a local authority and other partners. A Programme Director with a small team supported the pilots and developed the overall programme. A Network shared good practice and disseminated learning. The Benefits Agency contributed a complementary programme of eight prototypes to examine how to improve front-line services for pensioners and to assess the practicality of combining benefit services with other local providers. Activities at pilot projects varied from information provision to addressing the needs of particular groups of older people.

Achievements
Independent evaluation identified various achievements under the broad themes of 'listening to older people's views', 'better meeting their needs' and 'encouraging and recognising their contribution'. In particular, the programme: improved service providers' understanding of older people's needs and aspirations, documented lessons about consulting and engaging with older people and produced recommendations for the future. It developed ways to meet older people's needs better through improved information dissemination and different service delivery, including greater involvement of older people themselves. It identified how older people want to participate in their communities, helped to tackle ageism and promote positive images of older people, and provided insights into how to develop a strategic approach to an ageing population.

Ongoing achievements include the Better Government for Older People Network, which has continued as a forum offering access to best-practice advice and support to local authorities, other service providers and older people and their organisations. The national Older People's Advisory Group has continued and expanded as part of the Network, with regional and local sub-groups. It is consulted regularly by statutory and other bodies. Other ongoing legacies include older people's forums and advisory groups at many local authorities, working to help councillors and officers understand the needs and contributions of older people. The Pension Service, created in 2002, drew for its design on experiences at the Benefits Agency prototypes.

Lessons learned
Integrated evaluation ensured that lessons were documented systematically. Timely dissemination enabled learning to be applied as the programme progressed. The key success factors in developing local strategic approaches to older people were explicit links with local community and corporate priorities, backing from Government, political and managerial leadership, co-ordination and community development skills, financial resources for change, mechanisms to engage older people and an inclusive decision-making partnership process. The main barriers were a lack of joining up in performance assessment, which was based on single-service indicators, and negative images of older people within public and private organisations as well as in the media. The steering committee report made 28 recommendations, with a particular emphasis on applying to central Government the lessons learned locally.

Outstanding issues
The programme's recommendations to the Government were published in June 2000. The Government's interim response, *Building on partnership,* appeared in January 2001 and there has been no subsequent progress report. Some recommendations are now implemented, for example the launch of The Pension Service. Others, such as the widespread development by various levels of Government of integrated strategies for ageing populations, remain incomplete. There is scope for progress, in particular, on cross-cutting targets and performance indicators.

CASE STUDY C

Centrally-driven initiative - Performance and Innovation Unit report Winning the Generation Game

Purpose

The Prime Minister asked the Performance and Innovation Unit to examine how to increase economic and community activity among people aged between 50 and 65. *Winning the Generation Game* was the resulting report. Most people leaving work early do not do so voluntarily and the drop in work rates among people over 50 since 1979 costs about £16 billion a year in lost Gross Domestic Product and £3-5 billion in extra benefits and lost taxes.

Participants

The report was prepared by a multi-disciplinary team comprising five people working full time on the task with five others working part time. Members of the team came from the public, private and voluntary sectors. The team consulted a broad range of stakeholders and a steering group, chaired by a sponsor Minister and comprising twelve experts from inside and outside Government. Final decisions on projects undertaken by the Performance and Innovation Unit were taken by the Prime Minister.

Main features

The Performance and Innovation Unit was formed in 1998 within the Cabinet Office to improve the Government's capacity to address strategic, cross-cutting issues and to promote innovation in developing policy and delivering objectives. It merged with other parts of the Cabinet Office in 2002 to form the Strategy Unit. The Performance and Innovation Unit had a small central team that helped to recommend project subjects, managed the Unit's work and followed up projects' recommendations. It assembled project teams from central Government, local government and the private, academic and voluntary sectors.

The project strategy for *Winning the Generation Game* involved listening to almost 100 organisations and people from outside Government and over 60 people from all Government Departments with an interest in the project. The report was published in April 2000. The Prime Minister asked the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People (Case Study A) to oversee implementation of the report's recommendations. This responsibility subsequently passed to the Cabinet Committee on Older People. The Department for Work and Pensions supported the Cabinet Committee in driving forward progress.

Achievements

The report contributed to the debate on flexible retirement and the need to combat age discrimination, making 75 recommendations. Many parties outside Government welcomed it. The report was based on broad consultation and knowledge gathering. It covered a wide range of Departments, successfully taking a view across the whole of Government that would have been difficult for a single Department to do. Many recommendations, which the Department for Work and Pensions have assessed as implemented, required Departments to co-operate. A particularly significant achievement is the simultaneous publication in December 2002 of *Simplicity, Security and Choice: Working and Saving for Retirement* by the Department for Work and Pensions and *Simplifying the taxation of pensions - increasing choice and flexibility for all* by the Inland Revenue. Proposals in these publications aim to make it easier for people to stay in work for longer, including through ending compulsory retirement ages and addressing tax rules that prevent people from continuing in work.

Lessons learned

A central unit with high-level backing was able to undertake a thorough examination of issues across the whole of central Government and produce recommendations. Giving one Department the lead in co-ordinating implementation and continued senior backing was essential to maintain pressure to ensure that recommendations were implemented.

Outstanding issues

There is a lack of public information on progress in implementing recommendations, with some disillusionment outside Government as a consequence.

CASE STUDY D

Development of client-focused framework - National Service Framework for Older People

Purpose

The National Service Framework for Older People aims "to improve services for older people through setting national standards to drive up quality and tackle existing variations in care". It seeks to help root out age discrimination, promote the provision of person-centred care, promote older people's health and independence, and fit services around older people's needs.

Participants

The Department of Health are responsible for the Framework. The Department involved a wide range of groups in developing and delivering it. These included National Health Service Trusts, local authority social services departments, representative bodies of health and social care professionals, voluntary sector organisations and representative groups of older people, patients and carers. The Department sought advice from an External Reference Group. This Group was supported by nine task groups examining different aspects of the system of health care for older people and two reference groups, one of older people and one of carers, convened and supported by Help the Aged and the Carers' National Association respectively.

Main features

The Department of Health published the Framework in March 2001. The Framework set out eight standards applicable to health care for older people relating to age discrimination; person-centred care; intermediate care; general hospital care; stroke; falls; mental health; and health promotion and active life. It identified 29 Milestone Targets to be achieved between June 2001 and April 2004. Local performance assessment is the responsibility of National Health Service and Social Care Regional Offices. The National Taskforce for Older People is responsible for tracking delivery at the national level, and is supported by a reference group of older people and carers, serviced by Help the Aged and Age Concern. It has an additional remit to develop further proposals where required and to communicate key messages throughout the National Health Service and local authority social services.

Achievements

The Department reported in April 2002 that 74 per cent of age discrimination audits (for which the Milestone Target was October 2001) were complete and the Social Services Inspectorate reported in October 2002 on progress in 23 local authorities. The Department have reported internally on the proportion of National Health Service bodies that have implemented the Milestone Targets due by April 2002. They plan to report publicly in March 2003 on the results of monitoring that has taken place. From a more qualitative perspective, service providers and voluntary sector organisations welcomed the Framework and saw it as giving an important lead in promoting co-operation between health bodies and local government. Older people themselves were especially pleased with Standards 1 (rooting out age discrimination), 2 (person-centred care) and 8 (promoting good health and active life), included in response to consultation. By the end of 2002, the Department had commissioned research totalling £3.5 million to help support the implementation of the Framework.

Lessons learned

There were clear benefits in involving service users in developing the Framework. They brought different perspectives and opened up new areas that professionals had not included. Older people identified the need to emphasise health promotion and active life, whereas professionals had concentrated on treating sickness after it occurs.

Outstanding issues

The main concern about the Framework is the absence of an overall public progress report, which the Department plan to produce in March 2003. Such a report will be welcome because 16 of the 29 Milestone Targets were for April 2002 or earlier. The Department is monitoring some Milestone Targets but has yet to decide how to monitor others in the light of new requirements for a lighter touch. The Department will need to consider carefully how to secure sufficient information to ensure delivery and to take remedial action where necessary. The report on age discrimination audits indicates some slippage against plan. The implementation date for the single assessment has slipped from 2002 to 2004 (see the Comptroller and Auditor General's report *Ensuring the effective discharge of older people from NHS acute hospitals*). We were told that many hospitals had not appointed older people's champions (for which the Milestone Target was April 2002) and that implementation strategies for the Framework for different stakeholder groups were still being produced.

There is also a lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of older people's champions. There is poor linkage between the Frameworks for Mental Health and for Older People, so the transition from the first to the second as a patient ages causes difficulties for implementers. The Learning and Skills Council has a remit to promote age diversity in line with the Framework's Standard 8 policy of learning to promote healthy ageing. It has, for example, funded IT training and exercise classes for people over 60 in some parts of the country, and recently funded a learner aged 108. It has also funded initiatives championing an age diverse workforce. However, it mainly focuses funds on people of working age and younger in line with targets set for it by the Department for Education and Skills. There appears to be no linkage between Standard 6 on falls and the campaign by the Department for Trade and Industry on *Avoiding Slips, Trips and Broken Hips*. There is no clear linkage between Healthy Living Centres being established through bids to the New Opportunities Fund and Standard 8 on health promotion and active life.

CASE STUDY E

Bilateral co-operation - Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing - A Strategic Framework

Purpose

The purpose of the Strategic Framework is "to address the many problems and opportunities for older people in securing decent, affordable and suitable housing and adequate and appropriate support and care for the 21st century". It has two objectives: to ensure that older people are able to secure and sustain their independence in a home appropriate to their circumstances; and to support older people to make active and informed choices about their accommodation by providing access to appropriate housing and services and advice on suitable services and options.

Participants

The Framework is a joint initiative between the Department of Health and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. It was developed by a sub-group of the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People (Case Study A), in consultation with representatives from the Better Government for Older People programme (Case Study B) and a wide range of voluntary sector organisations.

Main features

The objectives for the Framework came from views expressed by older people at the Inter-Ministerial Group Listening to Older People events. The report *Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing* was published in January 2001 on the basis of a consultative seminar with practitioners, policy-makers and older people, a focussed consultation with black and minority organisations and interests, and further discussions with stakeholders. The report identified five priority areas for new policy and service development: diversity and choice; information and advice; flexible service provision; quality; and joint working. It proposed an initial set of national performance measures with a view to refining them subsequently. It set out 15 actions that the Government needed to take. The Department of Health and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have established a Housing and Older People Development Group to track progress in implementing the Framework. Its role is to assess the impact of the Framework, to identify gaps in current provision and to advise and assist the Government on how best to fill those gaps. It includes older people and statutory agencies responsible for developing local strategies and is chaired by Age Concern.

Achievements

The Story So Far, an update on progress made against the 15 actions set for Government, was published in November 2002. It showed progress in all five priority areas including, for example, local authority choice-based letting pilots, secondary legislation to give greater freedom over housing renewal assistance and the Independent Living Network to develop and disseminate effective and replicable approaches that enable older people to live as independently as they wish. In February 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Department of Health and the Housing Corporation published a toolkit for local authorities and their partner organisations to assist in preparing local strategies that consider the wider needs of older people, entitled *Preparing older people's strategies: linking housing to health, social care and other local strategies*. External perception is that this initiative has made a promising start, with successful joining up across two Government Departments and well managed consultation and involvement of stakeholders.

Lessons learned

Open consultation brings out issues that are important to service users, in contrast to more restricted consultation tied to an agenda determined by service providers. The Framework came about in response to views that older people expressed to the Government at listening events. Seconding in experts with front-line service-delivery experience can help policy-makers to take account of practical implementation issues, gaining credibility with implementers and securing their commitment. The Department of Health used such a secondment from the housing sector.

A cross-cutting team sitting within co-operating Departments can build links and understanding between Departments and lead to further joining up on other issues. The Department of Health's *National Service Framework for Older People* (Case Study D) includes housing matters and the Housing Corporation's review of its programme for older people's housing is taking account of health issues.

Outstanding issues

Lack of specific funding or visible senior leadership has given the impression to outside parties that the Framework may not be a high priority for the two sponsoring Departments.

Joining up policy-making has had positive results but there are barriers to success

2.7 Joining up to develop policy is not an end in itself. The costs and risks involved require clear offsetting benefits. Drawing on the five case studies we identified a range of positive results. In particular:

- initiatives involving many parties, particularly those with an open agenda and a research approach, can be highly effective in **generating new ideas (Figure 11)**;
- initiatives developed with older people and the voluntary sector have been able to take the **perspective of end-users** rather than service providers. Such initiatives might have been less comprehensive or not have existed at all without such input. For example, Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing came about because of views expressed by older people at the listening events organised by the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People;
- bringing **different groups of people together** can help to identify where co-operation could lead to better services for end-users. Participants in our focus groups highlighted such instances. For example, the Ministry of Defence, in their Veterans' Initiative, and the Lord Chancellor's Department, in their work to protect the rights of vulnerable individuals, both deal with issues affecting older people who have mental health problems;
- the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People and its successor Cabinet Committee on Older People have helped to **establish a more coherent programme of work** across Government on older people's issues. In an example of extending the approach elsewhere, the New Zealand Government's Positive Ageing Strategy sets out aims, objectives and targets across Government **(Figure 12)**;
- some problems require action by so many organisations that progress is unlikely without **co-ordination across Government** in order to **focus on a specific issue**. The Performance and Innovation Unit report on *Winning the Generation Game* tackled the declining economic activity of older people which touches on the responsibilities of many public bodies;
- many initiatives have succeeded in **raising the profile of older people's issues.** For example, the National Service Framework for Older People highlights the issue of age discrimination in health care provision and designates older people's champions, while The Pension Service, established in 2002, is dedicated to serving the needs of pensioners; and
- cross-cutting initiatives have often led to **further developments.** The development of The Pension Service drew on lessons that the Department for Work and Pensions learnt through their participation in Better Government for Older People. The Experience Corps, designed to help people aged over 50 to become involved in volunteering activities, came about in response to recommendations in the report *Winning the Generation Game*.

11 New ideas generated by joined up initiatives

Better Government for Older People - The 28 local pilots generated a wide range of ideas, including those below.

- The Newcastle pilot used the experience of joint work with older people to develop a Drama in Training programme that helps workers in health and social care to understand older people's perspectives better.
- The Watford pilot developed a 'Time Swap' volunteering initiative in which the exchange of Asian cooking skills for English language teaching proved popular among older women.
- Warwickshire County Council, a founder Network member, developed a subsidised gardening scheme to help older people live independently at home. The scheme worked in partnership with the Environmental Trust element of the New Deal for Young People.

Winning the Generation Game - The cross-cutting report led to some novel developments.

- Recommendations on age diversity in employment led to the Age Positive campaign, website and associated award for employers, run by the Department for Work and Pensions, and the Equality Direct advice line, run by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service.
- The Experience Corps, which aims to increase the number of older people involved in volunteering activities, was launched in November 2001 in response to a specific recommendation.

Source: Making a difference - Better Government for Older People Evaluation Report, Better Government for Older People Network Stratagem, unpublished progress review of recommendations from Winning the Generation Game

12 Positive Ageing Strategy in New Zealand

The New Zealand Government published its Positive Ageing Strategy in April 2001. It sets out 10 principles to guide the development of policies and services across the Government sector into the future. It covered 26 Government portfolios. In developing the strategy, the Government reviewed existing policies and services to ensure consistency with the principles. Through consultation, the Government identified priority areas of health, income support, positive ageing, transport, home support services and carers, and Government planning and policy. Common themes concerned affordability, access and information. The strategy's action framework covers income, health, housing, transport, being able to choose where to live and grow older, cultural diversity, rural issues, attitudes to ageing, employment, and opportunities for personal growth and community participation. Each Department will report its progress annually against the framework for action.

Source: Positive Ageing Strategy, Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand

2.8 The case studies also showed that there are some cultural obstacles in joining up on older people's issues that need to be addressed. In particular:

- there is a **continuing emphasis on short-term success and immediate problems, rather than longer term developments.** This is inevitable to some extent, making it all the more important for Departments to promote vigorously their joined up projects in order to sustain the work. Many issues affecting older people, such as housing, care provision and transport, require high levels of investment over time and cannot be resolved quickly;
- third parties told us that **Government Departments sometimes tend to exercise a prescriptive form of control rather than engaging as equal partners.** This limits the extent to which policy-making takes account of practical implementation issues and can waste opportunities to explore and develop ideas through dialogue. Better Government for Older People is an example of a project that was established as a partnership of equals and owed its success significantly to this fact;
- **some Departments inevitably give greater priority to older people's issues than others.** Older people are the main clients of The Pension Service and account for a large part of Department of Health expenditure. Other Departments focus primarily on issues where older people do not predominate, or where they form only one of many client groups. Nevertheless, they can still have significant influence on older people's issues;
- the heading **"older people" covers so many people and issues that co-ordination is difficult.** Central Government uses the term "older people" to include anyone over 50, covering a vast range of needs and interests. Different contexts emphasise different sub-groups. The report *Winning the Generation Game* concentrates on the 50 to 65 age range; the state pension applies to women over 60 and men over 65; and the National Service Framework for Older People identifies a transition from active life to frailty in the seventh or eighth decades onwards.

2.9 Our case studies also identified some **practical obstacles** in joining up on older people's issues. These included that:

- cross-cutting projects often experience a **lack of clarity or certainty about funding,** which can cause delays while partners try to reach agreement about cost sharing. The National Service Framework for Older People lacks a dedicated budget, conveying to some responsible for its implementation the idea that it represents aspirations rather than definite intentions;
- Departments **focus on Public Service Agreement targets.** Among targets relevant to older people, the proportion crossing two or more Departments reduced between the 2000 and 2002 Spending Reviews from just over one-third to just under one-quarter, despite a recommendation in 2001 in *Building on partnership* to increase it. There is an example of successful joining up of targets. The Social Exclusion Unit worked with six different Departments to ensure consistency between eleven targets relevant to neighbourhood renewal;
- it is often **easier for Departments to join up with third parties than with other Departments.** The local government and voluntary sectors reported that they often experience poor joining up between central Government Departments. The Department of Health were slow to participate in Better Government for Older People, while the Department for Work and Pensions became involved centrally only after some of their offices took the initiative at the local level. Secondments between Departments are far less common than those with third parties such as local government, the health sector and voluntary bodies;
- **policy development needs to take account of implementation issues.** Implementers told us that they value freedom to develop local solutions but also appreciate help and guidance. Finding the right balance is a challenge for policy makers. The Better Government for Older People pilot phase developed possible implementation models without imposing them. Health staff would have appreciated optional guidance or suggestions on implementing the National Service Framework for Older People in order not to repeat the learning processes of others; and

- **some issues remain split across Departments.** Age discrimination legislation is the responsibility of the Department of Trade and Industry, but work to encourage age diversity and combat discrimination rests with the Department for Work and Pensions. Good working relationships between the two Departments help to mitigate awkward effects of the split.

Departments can take steps to overcome these barriers to ensure effective joining up in policy-making

2.10 Our examination has identified key steps that Departments can take to ensure effective joining up in policy-making for older people. They cover leadership, staff skills and incentives, practical tools, funding, and maintaining momentum.

(a) Strong leadership

2.11 Policy-makers and third parties stressed the importance of leadership in securing and maintaining commitment to joint policy initiatives, because such initiatives tackle complex issues, involve many people and have the potential for disillusionment. Many saw the Inter-Ministerial Group and Better Government for Older People initiative as benefiting from an energetic Ministerial lead. The National Director for Older People's Services at the Department of Health has invested personal commitment and drive, making himself visible by visiting widely across the National Health Service.

(b) Staff skills and incentives

2.12 The need to co-ordinate policy development requires new skills to meet the challenges **(Figure 13)**. Our interviews and focus groups highlighted widespread enthusiasm for joint working because staff saw that it had the potential to deliver better and more seamless services for older people and provide satisfying work. The main disadvantage was the extra time requirements of joint working, cited almost universally. This was exacerbated because benefits are often not immediate, whereas local pressures usually are.

2.13 Policymakers need incentives to work in joined up ways because it is demanding. They need clear statements about its importance, particularly in their objectives and appraisal systems. Most managers we interviewed told us that staff objectives do not include joined up working. Appraisals are beginning to recognise joined up working informally at local managerial discretion, for example in the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health, but this is not happening systematically or publicly.

2.14 On the basis of our examination, we identified the following main staffing issues.

- **More support for training.** Staff can develop new skills on the job and through formal training. However, training often falls below more immediate priorities as members of staff feel too busy to attend courses.
- **Networking skills.** Developing contacts with relevant organisations, inside and outside Government, is central to joint working. Staff can be encouraged to pursue external relations by including the activity explicitly in their objectives.
- **Allowing staff to take risks.** Building trust with external partners requires staff to take risks in sharing relevant information that is not yet in the public domain. Members of staff need the support of their managers in such risk-taking.
- **Bringing in wider experience.** Inward secondments enable Departments to bring in new skills and contacts.
- **Broadening horizons.** Outward secondments enable members of staff to develop a broader range of skills in different environments, improving their understanding of why joining up is necessary, of the skills required for it, and of wider implementation issues.

(c) Certainty about funding

2.15 Policy-makers, implementers and third parties told us that a common barrier to joined up working is a lack of clarity about the financial contribution that each Department will make. Officials spend time searching for funds when they could otherwise be working on projects. The Better Government for Older People

13 Staff skills needed for joined up working

Building relationships	Being flexible	Negotiating
Sustaining informal networks	Listening	Understanding the other party's position
Developing trust	Facilitating	Seeing the scope for shared benefits
Face-to-face communication	Explaining the message	Judging risks - particularly in sharing sensitive information

Source: National Audit Office analysis of interviews and focus groups

Network experienced difficulty in obtaining the central Government element of its funding because individual Departments could not agree their contributions and there was no mechanism to secure a settlement. The several Government Departments jointly responsible for funding half of the English Longitudinal Study on Ageing have been slow to agree their contributions, even though the United States National Institute on Aging has already provided the other half.

(d) Mechanisms to maintain momentum

2.16 Joined up projects can risk losing momentum because ownership is spread across organisations and the drive for progress might therefore be unfocussed. Our examination identified several mechanisms to maintain momentum.

- The National Service Framework introduced **champions** as an effective way of driving improvements and integrating the diverse range of service provision for older people, based on a recommendation by the Better Government for Older People programme. However, many people working in the National Health Service and in voluntary organisations were not clear about the roles, responsibilities and authority of champions[16] and many hospitals have not yet appointed them. The Department for Work and Pensions maintain a network of 'older people' co-ordinators across Government but have no power to require Departments to co-operate. But the approach can be made to work. In a different context, the Cabinet Office require every Department, along with other public bodies, to appoint a champion responsible for leading the consumer agenda.

14 Performance measures in policies for older people

National Service Framework for Older People - Each of the eight standards in the Framework identifies Milestone Targets and performance measures to help mark progress towards improved health and social care services. The Milestone Targets are intended to enable local implementation groups to monitor progress locally and to allow regional intervention where there are delivery problems.

Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing - A Strategic Framework - As part of preparatory work, consultants developed proposals for national performance measures to support the framework. Their report included eight primary and eleven secondary indicators. The implementation group is refining these performance measures.

Experience Corps - It has a target to recruit and place 250,000 older volunteers over three years with individual targets for each year. It has targets for the build-up of staff and has developed performance measures for volunteers, media monitoring and communication initiatives.

Source: National Audit Office analysis

- Monitoring progress against performance measures **(Figure 14)** enables organisations to ensure delivery and to identify and address problems quickly. The Department for Work and Pensions have monitored progress against recommendations from *Winning the Generation Game* and reported to the Prime Minister, although not publicly. In contrast, in line with policy of the Foresight exercise generally, no organisation has overall monitoring responsibility for recommendations in *The Age Shift,* which cover many Departments and other parties. There has also been no specific public progress reporting on the reports *Life begins at 50* and *Building on partnership,* although *Are you over 50?* provides an overview of what the Government has done for older people. The main concern about the National Service Framework for Older People is the absence of an overall public progress report, including the 16 of 29 Milestone Targets due by April 2002 or earlier. The Department of Health intend to report in March 2003 on progress against Milestone Targets. This public reporting will be important in sustaining partners' involvement and commitment.
- **Communication** is important for keeping partners informed. It can help to prevent repetitions of problems that we found, such as third parties being unaware of the change from the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People to the Cabinet Committee on Older People, or that Better Government for Older People had continued beyond the initial programme. To combat this, the Better Government for Older People Network now publishes a magazine, *Stratagem.* The Older People's Unit of the Scottish Executive issues a regular newsletter, AGEnda, which seeks contributions from older people and organisations on valuable local initiatives.

Good practice in joined up working is widely applicable

2.17 Our examination identified good practice in joined up working that is generally applicable to all Government Departments and agencies **(Figure 15)**.

16 *Implementation of the National Service Framework and Intermediate Care seen from geriatricians' and older people's perspectives, Age Concern and British Geriatrics Society, 2002.*

15 Good practice in joined up working

Strategic	
Set clear objectives	People need to understand the overall aim of a joined up project in order to give it an allegiance that transcends departmental loyalties.
Lead by example	People will put their commitment and effort into what they see their leaders doing. Joint projects require strong leadership to secure that commitment.
Be clear about where responsibilities lie	Areas of a joined up project will not be adequately covered if each party thinks they are the responsibility of others. There should be a clear map showing who is responsible for what.
Join up Public Service Agreement targets	Departments place priority on their Public Service Agreement targets so will put effort into joint projects that contribute to their targets.
Clarify budgets for joint projects	Co-ordinate funding bids on joint projects and provide dedicated budgets where appropriate so that staff can concentrate on delivery rather than securing financial support.
Staff	
Make clear statements	Staff need clear statements from the top of organisations about the importance of joined up working, for example the National Audit Office's core values of *looking outwards* and *co-operative spirit*.
Reflect in objectives	Staff need to know when joining up is important. Objectives should refer to joined up working where this is integral to the work.
Reward in appraisal	Departments' appraisal systems should reward joined up working, for example, the National Audit Office's appraises staff under the competency of *external relationships*.
Provide protected training time	Identify the joining up skills required in each project. Assess the extent to which team members already possess them. Provide training to fill the gaps.
Use secondments to build skills	Use secondments - inward, outward and between Departments - to build up the skills and contacts required for joined up working.
Partners	
Build in benefits for partners	Shared benefits provide the incentive for collaboration. Understand what partners value and design projects to provide it.
Understand the impact on partners	Understand how joining up affects partners beyond the immediate area of collaboration. Design projects to take this into account.
Learn from partners' experience	Better Government for Older People enabled Departments to learn from partners with more experience of joining up.
Plan for the end of fixed-life projects	Joined up projects raise expectations that, if not met, can lead to disillusionment. Plan at the outset what to do at the end. Communicate plans and changes to plans.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of interviews and focus groups

Part 3

Understanding the needs of older people

3.1 Services are more likely to deliver intended outcomes if they are developed on a sound knowledge and understanding of what people want, believe or need. Knowledge and understanding come from two main sources. Consultation encompasses the use of expert knowledge and stakeholder consultation. Research includes existing statistics and high-level data, national and international research, evaluations of previous and present policies, and an understanding of how the needs of older people might change in the future.

3.2 The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health, in particular, have substantial consultation and research programmes on older people's issues. The National Collaboration on Ageing Research also aims to raise the profile and relevance of ageing research for which the Research Councils are responsible, including the promotion of multi-disciplinary approaches.

3.3 This part of our report examines progress in understanding older people's issues and how the process could be managed more effectively.

The Government consults a wide range of parties to improve its understanding of older people's needs

The purpose of consultation is to improve decision-making

3.4 The purpose of Government consultation is to improve decision-making by ensuring that decisions are soundly based on evidence, and take account of the views and experience of those affected. It is also to ensure that innovative and creative options are considered and that new arrangements are workable. In terms of value for money, consultation can allow Departments to tap into new sources of policy-relevant ideas, information and resources. It can identify pitfalls and gaps in policies or services, help avoid costly mistakes caused by developing unwanted services, identify inconsistencies between different policies and focus resources where they are needed. As a consequence it can lead to tailored policies or services that better meet the requirements of the end-users.

3.5 Guidance on consultation is widely available from the Government and elsewhere. Centrally, the Cabinet Office runs a consultation website *(www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm)*. It has developed a Code of Practice on written consultation, and provides guidance on other consultation methods as well. Internationally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, for example, has developed a series of guiding principles.

The Government has employed a range of innovative methods to obtain the views of older people

3.6 Traditionally, consultation on older people's issues has been limited to public meetings, surveys or the circulation of documents for comments. However, since 1998 the Government has extended the range of methods to include reference panels and citizens' forums that bring together the knowledge of a range of stakeholders. It has used ministerial listening events, research by voluntary organisations with a wide knowledge base, focus groups and individual interviews that allow issues to be explored in depth.

3.7 Different consultation methods have been deployed in different ways. For example, they have been at the centre of a programme, as in Better Government for Older People, or have provided specific input, as for the National Service Framework for Older People. The development of the Welsh National Strategy for Older People is an example that combined several methods **(Figure 16)**. The aim of the Strategy is to promote the long term health, social care and well being of older people in Wales and to provide the basis for organisations involved with older people to work together. Consultation might be as fundamental as gathering new ideas and developing a knowledge base, or as specific as seeking feedback on particular choices. Consultation can involve older people directly or rely on representative bodies.

16 Consultation in the Welsh National Strategy for Older People

The National Assembly for Wales used a variety of approaches in developing its National Strategy for Older People.

- Older people sat on the expert steering committee.
- The Assembly's four regional committees held sessions on the Strategy.
- Written consultation resulted in over 250 responses.
- Over 120 people attended the national consultation conference.
- Consultation included the Welsh Pensioners' Forum, comprising 18 pensioner organisations.
- Older people across Wales contributed to 27 focus groups.
- An expert seconded from the University of Wales analysed responses from over 1,000 individuals and organisations.

Source: National Assembly for Wales

3.8 There has also been an increase in the breadth of consultation to cover a wider range of areas, notably health, work, welfare, local services and housing. Consultation has helped to establish major new organisations and initiatives such as The Pension Service and the National Service Framework for Older People. The boxes on pages 34-36 summarise how consultation featured in our five case studies.

CASE STUDY A

Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People / Cabinet Committee on Older People

Purpose
Consultation was a key part of the approach of the Inter-Ministerial Group for Older People, to find out about the real needs of older people.

Main features
Seminars were held with voluntary and representative organisations, which helped inform initial priorities including the need for further research and a review of policy on active ageing. A United Kingdom-wide programme of *Listening to Older People* events followed the seminars so that Ministers could learn directly about older people's concerns. Independent researchers prepared a report on each event, to be used in conjunction with other information gathered by the Group to inform its future work. Ten listening events were held around the United Kingdom between June and December 1999. A further virtual event took place on the internet. One of the events was specifically designed to engage ethnic minority elders. Each event included some 50 older people, and involved a Minister addressing participants on older people's issues and the role of the Group. The emphasis then moved to small group discussion and feedback, which enabled dialogue between older people and the Minister. Most events offered participants the opportunity to take part in discussions on a wide range of issues as diverse as care and health, transport, lifelong learning and active ageing, as well as consultation and involvement. The Cabinet Committee now consults with a Partnership Group, comprising professionals and national experts in the field of older people, and older people from the Older People's Advisory Group.

Achievements
Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing (Case Study E) is an example of an entire initiative developed directly as a result of feedback from older people at the listening events. It responds to the insight that older people want to remain independent in their own homes and need help to do so.

Lessons learned
Open consultation allows people to explain what is important to them without being restricted to imposed agendas, enabling Departments to make step changes in their level of understanding of what people want. The main challenges for future consultations were to engage with a wider range of older people and provide better feedback. Older people with health problems, living in remote areas with poor transport, or with poor basic skills presented particular challenges. Participants were less satisfied at listening events which no Minister was able to attend or where the Minister had to leave early immediately after speaking.

CASE STUDY B

Better Government for Older People

Purpose
Consultation was a priority for the pilots as most local partnerships felt that they needed to understand the views and needs of older people before finalising their action plans.

Main features
Most of the consultations relied on survey methods, focus-group discussions and individual interviews. Other methods included consultative panels, home visits, conferences, older people's congresses and road shows. A national Older People's Advisory Group was established to enable older people to use their experiences of the pilots and elsewhere to promote Better Government for Older People at a national level.

Achievements
Consultation in the pilots led to a range of local outcomes to meet older people's needs better. Some pilots achieved this through more user-friendly information from statutory agencies and new outreach approaches to excluded older people. Others changed how they delivered services, leading to better transport provision and improved house design and repair services to help people stay in their homes. Some pilots undertook groundbreaking work on user-focused arrangements for joint care assessment and management. Most pilots succeeded in moving beyond consulting older people to engaging them in an ongoing relationship through which they are able to participate actively in the development of Better Government for Older People work and other local decision-making processes. This has resulted in new forums, panels and other structures established to engage with older people. Many local authorities now have older people's forums, advisory groups, and networks to work with councillors and officers.

Many statutory agencies have consulted the Older People's Advisory Group on proposed national policy and service development. They include the Department for Work and Pensions, the Partnership Group associated with the Cabinet Committee on Older People, and the Community Legal Service of the Legal Services Commission, in a project to understand older people's legal advice needs. The Health Development Agency consulted about a project on pre-retirement pilots within the National Service Framework for Older People (Case Study D) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consulted about the Best Value Network Office and Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing (Case Study E).

Lessons learned
Better Government for Older People is an example of how consultation can deliver different local solutions tailored to the needs of different communities. Evaluation of the pilots' experiences identified seven good practice principles for consultation and five for effective engagement with older people.

CASE STUDY C

Winning the Generation Game

Purpose
The project strategy for Winning the Generation Game involved an extensive listening, data-gathering and consultation exercise to assess the implications of the trend towards economic inactivity of people between 50 and state pension age.

Main features
A multidisciplinary team comprising civil servants and secondees from outside Whitehall delivered the project. A steering group of experts from inside and outside Government guided it. The project included representatives from the business world, academia and the voluntary sector. An extensive consultation exercise was completed involving almost 100 organisations and individuals outside central Government including local government, European and American organisations, voluntary and private sector organisations, employers and academics, and over 60 people from a range of Government Departments. A variety of methods were employed including interviews, discussion and focus groups, a survey of businesses and written consultation. Eight focus groups involving people between 50 and state pension age who were not working were held to gain an understanding of the attitudes and motivations of people who are out of work.

Achievements
This is an example where a cross-Government project used extensive consultation with stakeholders to inform key issues and recommendations that cut across Government.

Lessons learned
The report was able to make wide-ranging recommendations on an important issue that will become even more pressing in the future because it drew on expert input from many quarters, through consultation. Civil servants and other parties told us that some implementation problems might have been avoided by wider consultation about the timetable for recommendations.

CASE STUDY D

National Service Framework for Older People

Purpose
The National Service Framework for Older People was developed using expert advice and research evidence.

Main features
The Framework was been developed as a result of extensive consultation with stakeholders. An External Reference Group provided advice and was supported by nine task groups examining different aspects of the system of health care for older people. Membership reflected the wide range of practitioner and management groups involved in care for older people as well as organisations representing users' and carers' interests. Older people were consulted through an Older People's Reference Group. It was established by Help the Aged and its views fed into the development of the National Service Framework. The Department of Health are continuing to seek the views of this group, now known as the Health and Older People Group, on the implementation of the Framework.

Achievements
An inclusive approach was used throughout. Standard 8, concerning the promotion of health and active life in older age, was included solely as a result of consultation with the Older People's Reference Group.

Lessons learned
Initial drafts of the Framework, developed by professionals prior to consultation with older people, excluded the issue of the promotion of health and active life in old age. This reflects the view put to us by older people that, without input from consultation, professionals emphasise the treatment of sickness rather than the promotion of health.

CASE STUDY E

Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing - A Strategic Framework

Purpose
Development of the Strategic Framework took account of the views of older people and other stakeholders because it recognised from the start that they would be vital.

Main features
A consultative seminar on the initial draft of the Framework was held with practitioners, policy-makers and older people. A further focussed consultation was held with black and ethnic minority organisations. These consultations, along with the reports from the Inter-Ministerial Group Listening Events (Case Study A) and further discussions with stakeholders, have informed the Strategic Framework. An External Reference Group has been established to carry forward the implementation of the Framework. Members include local authorities, social services, housing associations, the voluntary and private sectors and older people from Better Government for Older People (Case Study B).

Achievements
This is an example where two Government Departments have moved from one off consultations to ongoing engagement with stakeholders, including older people. Third parties cited this initiative as one that used consultation particularly effectively.

Lessons learned
Early and open consultation helped to identify the main themes of the Strategic Framework. Subsequent ongoing engagement has helped to develop these themes and then carry them forward to implementation.

Much has been achieved through consultation

3.9 Consultation is not an end in itself. A major test of its effectiveness and value must be whether it has informed decision-making within Government and led to outcomes that might not have been achieved without consultation. Based on our work, we found that consultation has generated the following benefits:

- **Better informed policy-making**. The Department for Work and Pension's development of the Pension Credit (the benefit which will replace Minimum Income Guarantee in October 2003) was informed by discussions with the 'Partnerships against Poverty' group of representatives from local government and the voluntary sector as well as other experts.
- **Identification of priorities**. The Inter-Ministerial Group focused on issues identified through extensive consultation and research with older people, including listening events.
- **Placing issues on the agenda**. Feedback from the group of older people involved in supporting the National Service Framework led directly to inclusion of Standard 8 on the promotion of health and active life. Older people have also driven the emphasis given to age discrimination.
- **Greater understanding of older people's needs.** The Better Government for Older People programme generated an extensive literature on forms and style of consultation with older people, and what works and in what circumstances. Policy-makers told us that consultation with older people had helped them appreciate much better the impact of policies on individuals.

3.10 Outside parties consider the Government is more committed to consultation than in the past. Many people told us that Departments have become increasingly open in how they consult, doing so earlier in the process of policy development with fewer constraints on the scope of discussion. They considered they were becoming better at using existing networks, knowledge and experience in order to avoid duplication, speed up the process and tap into the widest range of sources of information. Examples include using voluntary sector organisations as intermediaries and consulting Local Senior Citizens Forums that have been established by older people, some with local authority or Primary Care Trust funding. Nevertheless, it was also clear from our interviews that Government needs to avoid imposing too great a burden on the voluntary sector without providing support, and must create mechanisms that respect partners' independence and their right to hold different views. It also needs to accept that consulting voluntary sector bodies is not a substitute for seeking the views of end-users.

3.11 Departments have, in some cases, been able to progress from one-off consultation to engaging people in a continuing relationship in which they contribute actively to decision-making and the development of initiatives. Engagement can be an effective way for Government to obtain additional benefits from its original investment in establishing consultation contacts. It helps to build trust and understanding between parties and allows citizens and their representatives the opportunity to raise issues of importance to them. **Figure 17 and Figure 18** summarise examples of ongoing engagement designed to maintain momentum and share knowledge and best practice.

Some aspects of consultation have proved easier to manage than others

3.12 There are some major barriers to successful consultation, which are also relevant to other client groups.

- The main concern raised by almost every third party we contacted was **lack of feedback**. Those involved want to know what has changed as a result of consultation and why some suggestions have been rejected. They accept that not all their wishes can be met, but dislike the idea that their contributions might have been ignored and their time wasted. Consultation raises expectations that may later be undermined if feedback is inadequate. Feedback was seen as a key factor in avoiding what some described as 'consultation fatigue'.
- It can be difficult to ensure that consultation is sufficiently **open** to enable people to express what is important to them. Consultation may help to throw up issues which a narrow interpretation of a subject would not identify. For example, older people cited transport as a major health issue because of its significance for accessing services. The Performance and Innovation Unit[17] noted that highly-structured methods of consultation on specific proposals reduce the likelihood of identifying problems and issues that cut across Departmental boundaries.
- The **timing** of consultation and the time given to people to respond are closely linked to commitment and openness. Late consultation carries the message that views on fundamental issues are not welcome. Short consultations, which make it difficult for those consulted to marshal arguments and secure a range of views, imply little interest in substantial responses. In both cases, those consulted can feel unable to do justice to the subject. Many implementers, voluntary organisations and older people told us that consultation sometimes occurred too late in the process when decisions had already been made.

17 *Wiring It Up, Performance and Innovation Unit, Cabinet Office, January 2000.*

- It is important to **avoid tokenism** because a key concern of those consulted is whether the exercise is genuine. Some older people told us of consultative groups dominated by professionals, with just one or two older people included. Evaluation of the Inter-Ministerial Group's listening events suggested that the most successful events were those where Ministers were able to stay and discuss the issues raised.

17 Examples of ongoing engagement

Older People's Advisory Group
A national Older People's Advisory Group was established in July 1999, following a three-day conference of older people from the Better Government for Older People pilots, with representatives from each of the 28 pilots, six Network authorities and two national pensioners' organisations. The original programme for the conference was designed by officials, which left the participants feeling they had no ownership. Participants re-designed the programme on the first day and included an additional workshop that discussed the need to move beyond consultation to more active participation. They proposed that an Advisory Group of Older People be set up. The Group's main aim was to enable older people to use their experiences of the pilots and elsewhere to promote Better Government for Older People at a national level. It has grown and eight regional groups now support the national group. The Group is diverse in terms of occupational background, gender and ethnicity, and spans an age range from 50 to over 80. The Group produced a report, *Our present for the future,* which gave its perspective on the Better Government for Older People programme. A wide range of statutory agencies have consulted the group on proposed national policy and service development.

Health and Older Peoples Group
This group was established in 1999 by Help the Aged to gain the views of older people on issues surrounding the development of the National Service Framework for Older People. The Group, comprising 15 older people drawn from a wide variety of backgrounds, has met regularly. Their views have fed into Government thinking in several ways: civil servants and the National Director for Older People's Services have attended meetings; the group produced a report that influenced the final report from the main reference group for the Framework; and the Department of Health continue to seek the Group's views on the implementation of the Framework.

Partnership Group
This group, established in 2002, is chaired by a member of the Cabinet Committee on Older People. It comprises representatives from the main older people's voluntary organisations such as Help the Aged, Age Concern and the Third Age Employment Network, representatives from the Older People's Advisory Group, the Director of the Better Government for Older People Network, and other professionals and experts such as the National Director for Older People's Services and a media expert. It will meet periodically to inform the work of the Cabinet Committee.

Partnerships against Poverty
The Department for Work and Pensions established this forum with the Local Government Association and voluntary organisations to promote an increase in take-up of social security benefits among older people through working in partnership. The nature of the forum allows for joint consideration of new initiatives and ensures a co-ordinated approach to take-up issues across the Department and other organisations that share a common interest in providing services to older people.

Quality and Choice in Older People's Housing external reference group
The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department of Health have established this group to carry forward the implementation of their housing framework for older people.

Older people's councils
The Better Government for Older People programme resulted in several local authorities establishing older people's councils that work with councillors and officers. For example, the Brighton and Hove Older People's Council is an elected council that has specific rights concerning the city council's business - the right to ask questions, the right to receive information and the right to make suggestions. Sheffield has an elected Elders' Congress, which mirrors the structure of the City Council and contributes to policy-making.

Source: National Audit Office analysis

18 Knowledge sharing - the Better Government for Older People Network

The Better Government for Older People Network developed out of the original pilot phase as a forum offering access to best practice, advice and support in developing effective solutions to the challenges presented by an ageing population. It provides this range of inter-linking services to local authorities, other service providers and older people and their organisations. There is a membership fee for joining the Network. Services include: a regular bulletin, *Stratagem*, which reports on developments across the programme; access to a database of good practice, events, seminars and workshops; and a forum where members can post and debate issues within the Network, share information and seek networking partners. A wide range of local authorities and other service providers, including health authorities, National Health Service and Primary Care Trusts, housing associations and voluntary organisations, subscribe to the Network.

Source: Better Government for Older People Network

3.13 In addition, Departments need to take account of other issues when running consultations. In particular:

- Policy makers emphasised to us the importance of **strong Ministerial support** for consultation as an element of policy development. In the past, the demands of developing and implementing major Government policies, often to tight timescales and in complex and changing environments, have made consultation seem a luxury. This view has now changed and most officials whom we interviewed pointed to a growing amount of consultation.
- The **resource demands on third parties**, particularly small organisations, need to be considered. One voluntary body told us it employs a person full time to respond to consultation documents. Representatives from others said they had to prioritise and sometimes could not respond to all. Small organisations, in particular, could better manage the demands on them if there was greater co-ordination across Government in relation to the timing of consultations and the sharing of information when different Departments need to ask the same or similar questions.
- The Government can increase the **effectiveness** of consultation by using existing knowledge, networks and experience in the voluntary sector and elsewhere, by making its own consultations more accessible across different Departments and by maintaining ongoing engagement following consultation.
- Those consulted want Departments to be **honest** in explaining constraints on consultation and the extent of change that might be possible following it. At the same time, policy-makers pointed out to us that it can be difficult to be associated with wide-ranging public discussion on matters of intense media or political interest because views expressed to them in debate might later be presented by others as potential Government policy.
- It is important to **reach all relevant groups**, not just the most articulate, vocal, healthy and financially secure who are not necessarily representative of all older people or of those who most use public services. People with mental health problems, on low incomes, from ethnic minorities or those who are housebound can be particularly hard to reach. The Better Government for Older People initiative identified the need to mix large-scale methods of consultation with intensive techniques for more vulnerable people.
- It should be **easy for people to respond to consultation requests**. For example, Help the Aged pays travel expenses on the day it hosts consultation meetings so that finance is not a barrier. Older people, especially women, prefer meetings before it gets dark, and those who are less mobile prefer meetings where they live or they may need transport. Providing good information helps people to understand issues and construct valid arguments. Departments need to understand the barriers that prevent older people from participating in consultation.
- Departments need to **avoid a narrow view** in deciding whom to consult. One organisation told us that the Government frequently contacts it on disability issues, but never on older people issues, even though disability is much more common among older than younger people. Departments may not always see the relevance of their work to older people. Equally, people of all ages may have views on older people's issues because they are likely to have older relatives and friends and because they expect to become older people themselves in the future **(Figure 19)**.

19 Generating a broad debate on older people's issues in Sweden

In April 2002, the Swedish Government produced a discussion document on the National Action Plan on Policy for the Elderly. It sought comments from Government bodies, regions, research bodies, trades unions, voluntary bodies and churches. The material was circulated to youth groups as well in order to generate a broad debate to include people who would be old in the future. A short version of the report appeared in every Swedish newspaper. Swedish celebrities gave their perspective on ageing in a book of articles. Around 15,000 people were invited to attend six regional conferences.

Source: National Audit Office analysis

Good practice in consultation is widely applicable

3.14 Our examination identified good practice in consultation that is generally applicable to all Government Departments and agencies **(Figure 20)**.

20 Good practice in consultation

Planning consultation	
Ensure that consultation is necessary	There may be enough knowledge available on which to base decisions or there may be gaps that need to be filled by consultation.
Provide adequate support for consultation	Plan consultations from the outset of projects and allocate adequate resources for them.
Consult as early as possible	Early consultations enable Departments to make the maximum use of new ideas and views.
Explain the objectives and scope of consultation to those consulted	People need a clear understanding of why they are being consulted and what could change as a result of consultation. Define and communicate these matters.
Use an open agenda	Open agendas enable discussion to focus on what is important to service users.
Allow enough time for consultation	Reaching and consulting older people can take time. Those initially consulted may wish to seek views from those they represent.
Provide practical assistance	Paying travel expenses promptly or providing transport will help people with restricted finance or mobility. Concise documents free of technical terminology will help people who are unfamiliar with Government machinery and professional issues.
Provide support	Most people need help to participate in consultation, for example to form their ideas, to ask questions and to build their confidence.
Reaching the right people	
Consult a wide range of stakeholders	Consulting a wide range of stakeholders will help to ensure that results represent the views of the target population.
Consult with groups outside the target population	For example, people who will soon be older, as well as much younger people, have views on what they want in their later years.
Choose appropriate consultation methods for the topic and target groups	Different people like to be consulted in different ways. Use a range of methods to help in reaching all relevant groups.
Work with existing infrastructure	Voluntary organisations have experience in reaching vulnerable people and can act as intermediaries in consultation. For example, networks such as the Older People's Advisory Group and the Health and Older People Group provide ready means of access to older people.
Feedback and ongoing engagement	
Provide feedback during consultation	Immediate feedback at consultation shows that those consulting have listened and understood.
Provide feedback after consultation	People who take time to respond to consultation want to know what action has been taken as a result or why none has occurred.
Engage with citizens and their representatives	Ongoing engagement helps people to appreciate what is practically possible. It helps the Government to understand people's priorities better. It enables feedback to take place as a matter of course.
Evaluation	
Evaluate consultation exercises	Learn lessons from what has worked well and what has not, in terms both of outcomes and of participants' views of the process.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of interviews and focus groups

The Government uses research to improve its understanding of older people's needs

The Government has a substantial research programme on older people's issues

3.15 Departments use research to help them understand the needs of older people, the ageing process and other issues related to an ageing population. Twelve Departments and four Research Councils fund age-related research. In addition, Government researchers, for example from the Department for Work and Pensions, are frequently on advisory groups for research funded by other bodies. Research may be contracted out to organisations such as universities or undertaken by in-house staff. Methods include literature reviews, experiments, mathematical models, surveys and analysis of data collected routinely. Research is relevant to a range of Government decisions in areas such as health care and pensions provision.

The Government has improved policy development on older people's issues through applying research

3.16 **Figure 21** summarises the use of research in developing the five case studies that we examined. The mechanisms included reviewing pre-existing research, commissioning new work and convening meetings of experts to exchange and develop views. In each case, third parties told us that the application of research had substantially enhanced the quality of the policies developed.

Departments can take steps to apply research more effectively to policy-making on older people's issues

3.17 Research could be undertaken and used more effectively by improving co-ordination, communicating results better, drawing on international evidence and making greater use of strategic futures work.

21 Using knowledge in polices for older people

Policy	Key evidence used
Inter-Ministerial Group / Cabinet Committee	Seminars with voluntary and representative organisations identified the need for further research and a review of policy on active ageing. The Group commissioned research into the attitudes and aspirations of older people, published in 1999, based on a literature review and qualitative data. This complemented the consultation work.
Better Government for Older People	This programme originated from research undertaken by Warwick Local Authorities Consortium on the challenges of an ageing population. Expert views fed into the programme through a Steering Committee comprising central and local government, the academic community and the voluntary sector and in pilots driven by partnerships of statutory and voluntary organisations, private sector interests, and older people and their organisations.
Winning the Generation Game	The project commissioned research on attitudes and aspirations of people aged between 50 and state pension age who were out of work.
National Service Framework for Older People	The National Service Framework was based on expert advice and research evidence, involving 140 researchers and 500 documents. In order for some weight to be attached to the supporting evidence a typology was developed to distinguish between evidence stemming from, for instance, systematic reviews of existing information, the experience of patients and carers and case studies of individual interventions. Nine task groups representing professionals, users and carers supported the External Reference Group. A research strategy to support the Framework will be implemented with the advice of experts from a variety of disciplines and from the Funders' Forum for Research on Ageing and Older People.
Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing - A Strategic Framework	Early consultation helped to identify the main themes of the Strategic Framework. Discussions with policy-makers, practitioners and older people helped to develop those themes. The report draws on a wide range of existing research on the views of older people and housing completed by academic institutions, central and local government, housing associations, international networks, and the voluntary sector. It also draws on current or recent housing-related initiatives.

Source: National Audit Office analysis

(a) Improving the co-ordination of research

3.18 A lack of co-ordination creates the risk of duplication. Reviews of two approaches by the Government to research into older people's issues have criticised insufficient co-ordination between different research funders, a lack of consistent links between researchers and end-user groups, particularly policy-makers, and a lack of multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research[18]. The National Collaboration on Ageing Research **(Figure 22)**, launched in 2001, is the centrepiece of the Research Councils' response to these reviews. The Funders' Forum for Research on Ageing and Older People aims to stimulate and facilitate interdisciplinary research and collaborative working. It is chaired by the Department of Health, with representatives from the health departments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, the Office of Science and Technology, the Research Councils, the National Collaboration on Ageing Research and the voluntary sector

3.19 There are further developments to improve co-ordination. The Research Councils continue to strengthen interaction with Government Departments and policy makers on an individual basis. For example, each project in the Economic and Social Research Council's Growing Older programme, which focuses on how the quality of older people's lives can be extended, has a link with a civil servant with responsibilities for older people's issues. The Department of Health have appointed a Portfolio Director of Research on Older People, responsible for co-ordinating research on older people across the Department.

22 National Collaboration on Ageing Research

The National Collaboration on Ageing Research (NCAR) is a joint initiative funded by the Medical Research Council, the Economic and Social Research Council, the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. The initiative consists of a Director and support staff and its primary aim is to encourage multidisciplinary research to address fundamental issues raised by the ageing population. Other elements of the collaboration include:

- a cross-Council Co-ordinating Committee comprising the four Research Councils and the Office of Science and Technology and NCAR staff as observers; and
- representation on the Funders' Forum for Research on Ageing and Older People, which brings together the major United Kingdom stakeholders in ageing research funding to discuss matters of mutual interest and facilitate co-ordination.

In addition, NCAR is promoting other domestic and international links, for example the European Forum on Population Ageing Research which brings together the 30 countries covered by the European Union's Research Framework Programme.

Source: National Collaboration on Ageing Research

3.20 Departments have taken measures to share information on older people's issues in order to make more effective use of research results and to avoid duplication. For example:

- the Department for Work and Pensions have undertaken joint research with the Department of Health on older people in care homes;
- work associated with the National Collaboration on Ageing Research generated a summary of ageing research funded by Government Departments;
- the English Longitudinal Study on Ageing is half-funded by several Government Departments and half by the United States National Institute on Aging;
- the Age Diversity project in the Department for Work and Pensions makes its intranet available across Government;
- the National Research Register is a comprehensive register of ongoing and completed research funded by, or of interest to, the National Health Service and is accessible through the Department of Health's website at *www.doh.gov.uk/research/nrr.htm*; and
- cross-Departmental networks of analysts and researchers, for example the Analysts Network Pensioner's Interest Group, help to promote communication.

(b) Improving the communication of research

3.21 Policy-makers do not always appreciate how valuable research evidence can be for them and may not have the skills to interpret research data. Researchers may not appreciate policy-makers' time-scales and may not see a role in helping to apply research after they have completed it. Policy-makers and researchers told us of measures **(Figure 23)** to tackle these challenges.

(c) Using international evidence to inform policy development

3.22 Population ageing is an international phenomenon and many other countries are generating evidence and policies on older people. There are examples of Government Departments using international experience as a source of knowledge for informing policy development.

- The project team for *Winning the Generation Game* sought the views of officials and organisations from several countries including Finland, the Netherlands, and the United States, as well as from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- *Quality and Choice for Older People's Housing - A Strategic Framework* highlighted the work of the Housing for Older People in Europe network, which operates across Europe on housing and care issues. The network maintains a database of new initiatives.

18 *Select Committee on Science and Technology report on EQUAL (Extend Quality Life) January 2001, and unpublished evaluation of Age Net.*

23 Measures to improve communication between researchers and policy-makers

Policy-makers with research experience	Some policy-makers in the Department of Health and the Department for Work and Pensions have research experience, providing policy teams with a greater understanding of how research can be used.
Facilitating communications - Departments	The Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health each have people whose role is to facilitate communications between researchers and policy-makers. These people understand research and policy-making and have good networks of contacts in both fields. They help policy-makers to frame questions that research is able to answer.
Facilitating communications - researchers	Each project in the Economic and Social Research Council's Growing Older research programme has a link with civil servants in the policy areas to which the research relates. These projects have a responsibility to bring out policy implications and conclusions and to produce overview documents for policy-makers. The programme is holding workshops with civil servants.
Bringing research and policy-making time scales closer	Researchers often work over longer time scales than policy-makers. One way to overcome this problem is for researchers to present unpublished or interim findings early to Ministers.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of interviews and focus groups

(d) Making greater use of strategic futures work

3.23 Given the projected increase in the population of older people and the implications for society, an aspect of understanding the needs of older people is to consider how they might change in the future, by using strategic futures work. These techniques prepare policy-makers for a variety of possible future circumstances without quantifying their likelihood. The *Modernising Government* White Paper emphasised the need for forward-looking policy making. A Strategic Futures Group now exists within the Cabinet Office. The Foresight programme **(Figure 24)**, which begun in 1993, is an example of strategic futures work.

3.24 There are other examples of public sector thinking about strategic futures that are relevant to delivering better services for older people, although none of our case studies made explicit reference to strategic futures. There is scope to build better links between such work and the development of policies. Public sector use of strategic futures work include the following:

- The Department of Health are using a computer simulation model and a range of scenarios to project to 2031 demand for long-term care of older people.
- The Wanless Review examined what funding and other resources the National Health Service would need in 2022. The report identifies six main influences on the demand for health spending, including the ageing population.
- The Department for Work and Pensions uses strategic futures work on research into pensions and savings behaviour over a time horizon of 50 years. It is developing a computer model to estimate future pensioner incomes, replacing an earlier model used for its 1998 paper *A new contract for welfare: partnership in pensions*.

24 Foresight programme

The Foresight programme aims to develop knowledge and ideas to help prepare better for the future. The Office of Science and Technology manages it. In its various Panels, it brings together business, the science base, Government, the voluntary sector and others to think about what might happen in the future and what can be done about it now to increase prosperity and enhance the quality of life for all. The Foresight Ageing Population Panel was established in 1999 to look at the social and economic impact of an ageing population. It produced a report, *The Age Shift,* in June 2000. The report is a good example of knowledge use, through the contributions of a very wide range of experts, and of broad consultation. It made recommendations in three areas: helping businesses meet the age shift, planning for an ageing society and new research directions. It contributed to some important outcomes, including stakeholder pensions, integration of health and social care, and Ministry of Defence consideration of issues affecting age limits for air and tank crews.

Source: National Audit Office analysis

Appendix 1 Methodology

1 We used a variety of methods to collect evidence to examine:

- how the Government ensures that policy-making on older people is joined up;
- how the Government uses consultation and research to take account of the needs of older people; and
- how the Government ensures that research on older people's issues is co-ordinated and utilised.

Literature review

2 We reviewed and analysed Government reports, academic papers and voluntary sector publications on joined up policy-making, use of knowledge and consultation. We reviewed literature on older people, including publications by voluntary organisations such as Age Concern and Help the Aged. We analysed a wide range of published documents in order to establish consensus on what characterises the joined up competency of policy-making.

Commissioned research

3 We commissioned a research paper by Christopher Pollitt, Professor of Public Management at Erasmus University Rotterdam. The paper summarised previous literature on the concept of joining up and identified success and risk factors. We commissioned a paper by Tom Ling, National Audit Office Research Fellow and Professor in Public Policy at Anglia Polytechnic University, on strategic futures thinking across Government.

Case studies

4 We examined, as case studies, five initiatives focused on older people. The aim of the case studies was to establish whether policies were joined up and took account of the needs of older people, to identify good practice and to provide examples where problems had been overcome. We subjected the five main case studies to a systematic evaluation on the basis of 10 joining up criteria, 11 consultation criteria and five use of knowledge in policy-making criteria. Joining up criteria were derived from an analysis of Government statements on the characteristics of good joined up policy-making and on commonly held views among policy-makers and others as to key issues. Consultation criteria were derived from Government guidance and other sources. Five of the Government's nine competencies of professional policy-making relate to the use of knowledge and we used these as criteria for assessing the application of research to policy-making in the case studies. We also examined the use of research on older people's issues more widely through interviews with policy-makers, researchers and third parties, including on some specific research projects focused on an ageing population.

5 In addition to these case studies we also examined other initiatives including:

- the Experience Corps;
- the Foresight Ageing Population Panel report, *The Age Shift;*
- age-related research, including the National Collaboration on Ageing Research and the English Longitudinal Study on Ageing;
- the Ministry of Defence's Veterans' Initiative; and
- the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal.

Key criteria used for assessment of case studies

Criteria for successful joining up

1	Clear objectives	Overarching aims are important in joint policies so that all parties are clear about policy aims
2	Strong leadership	Joint working requires strong leadership to secure and maintain the commitment of all parties
3	Staff skills	Joint working demands new staff skills, particularly on communication issues, and sharing of information
4	Specific budgets	Lack of clarity about the financial contribution required from each party can delay progress
5	All relevant parties involved	The investment in joint working can be threatened if a relevant party is accidentally excluded
6	Implementation considered	Policy-makers need to ensure that their proposals are capable of being implemented in practice
7	No contradictions	A failure to identify all relevant policies can show up in subsequent contradictions with those policies
8	Stakeholders' perspectives	Stakeholders' assessments are important tests of whether policies are joined up in practice
9	Sustained over time	Joined up policies may not be sustained if they are not built into mainstream Departmental work
10	Joining up more widely	Successful joining up in one project should be reflected elsewhere in the Departments involved

Criteria for successful consultation

1	Necessity	Was consultation necessary because there was insufficient information already available?
2	Timing	Did consultation take place as early as possible in the policy process?
3	Right people	Were the right people consulted, including a range of stakeholders?
4	Multiple methods	Were different methods of consultation employed?
5	Commitment	Was there sufficient commitment in terms of resources and commitment from the top?
6	Time to respond	Were participants given sufficient time to comment?
7	Feedback	Was feedback provided on what was or was not done as a result of consultation?
8	Engagement	Has consultation moved on to ongoing engagement?
9	Evaluation	Did evaluation take place after consultation to learn lessons?
10	Visible outcome	Did consultation have an impact on the initiative or policy?
11	Satisfaction	Were those consulted satisfied with the consultation process?

Criteria for successful use of knowledge in policy-making

1	Forward looking	Takes a long-term view
2	Outward looking	Takes account of factors in the national, European and international situation
3	Evidence based	Uses the best evidence from a wide range of sources and involves key stakeholders at an early stage
4	Based on lessons learned	Learned from experience of what works and what doesn't
5	Evaluated	Build systematic evaluation of early outcomes into the policy process

Focus groups

6 We commissioned NOP World to undertake six focus groups: five in London and one in Leeds. The groups explored whether policies for older people are joined up in practice and take account of implementers' and end-users' views, and how closer working could be improved. Each group comprised between 5 and 10 people. Two people unable to attend the groups provided their views in face-to-face interviews. There were two groups for each of three sets of people:

- policy-makers involved in issues directly affecting older people;
- implementers of policies affecting older people, including local government officials and health bodies; and
- voluntary sector bodies representing older people.

7 We held a focus group jointly with the Centre for Management and Policy Studies at the Cabinet Office. This group of policy-makers from across Government explored the practicalities of joining up. Seventeen policy-makers attended.

8 We held two focus groups with older people's groups. These were the Older People's Advisory Group associated with Better Government for Older People programme and the Health and Older People Group organised by Help the Aged. Twenty-eight older people attended these meetings.

Interviews

9 We conducted 76 interviews for our examination. Our interviews covered policy-makers in Departments and policy implementers in local government and health bodies. We sought end-user views from voluntary sector organisations, academics and private sector organisations. Fifty-one of our interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by an external contractor, Rachel Bogen. Paul Mason, a postgraduate student at the University of Surrey, helped us to analyse the transcripts using NVivo software.

Evidence from local government and the voluntary sector

10 We invited 18 local government authorities involved in the Better Government for Older People programme and 17 voluntary sector organisations to submit comments on joined up policy-making for older people. We received nine responses from local government authorities and nine from voluntary sector organisations.

International benchmarks

11 We collected evidence on how Governments in other countries co-ordinate and develop policies for older people. We collected evidence initially through the worldwide web and then in benchmarking visits for this and eight other studies.

Expert panel

12 We convened an expert panel to comment on our emerging findings:

Tessa Harding
Head of Policy, Help the Aged

Carol Hayden
Regeneration Strategic Policy Advisor, Audit Commission and former evaluator of the Better Government for Older People programme, Warwick University

Alice Hopkins
Pensions Strategy, Department for Work and Pensions

Alan Walker
Professor of Social Policy at the Department of Sociological Studies, University of Sheffield

Organisations consulted

13 We consulted the following organisations during this study:

Abbeyfield Society	Disability Alliance	National Institute for Adult Continuing Education
Active Community Unit, Home Office	Devon County Council	National Pensioners Convention
Age Concern	Elderly Accommodation	North Yorkshire County Councill
Age Concern Cymru	Environment Agency	Office of Science and Technology
Alzheimer's Society	Employers Forum on Age	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Anchor Trust	English Longitudinal Study on Ageing	Older People's Advisory Group
Association of Retired and Persons over 50	Experience Corps	Oxfordshire County Council
Barking and Dagenham Primary Care Trust	Help and Care	Policy Research Institute into Ageing and Ethnicity
Better Government for Older People	Help the Aged	Pre-Retirement Society
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	Health and Older People Group	REACH
Bournemouth Borough Council	King's Fund	Research into Ageing
Brighton and Hove City Council	Local Government Association	Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme
BUPA	London Borough of Hackney	Royal College of General Practitioners
Cambridgeshire County Council	London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	SAGA
Carers National Association	London Borough of Lambeth	Older People's Unit, Scottish Executive
Centre for Management and Policy Studies, Cabinet Office	Lord Chancellor's Department	School of Social Relations and School of Social Gerontology, University of Keele
Centre for Research on Ageing and Gender,University of Surrey	Ministry of Defence	Sheffield City Council
Coventry City Council	McCarthy & Stone	Social Exclusion Unit
Department of Culture, Media and Sport	Social Care Policy Division, National Assembly for Wales	Third Age Trust
Department of Geriatric Medicine, University of Newcastle	National Association of Pension Funds	United Kingdom Home Care Association
Department of Government, London School of Economics	National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux	Waverly Borough Council
Department of Health	National Association of Volunteer Bureaux	Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council
Department of Trade and Industry	National Centre for Independent Living	Welsh Pensioners Association
Department for Transport	National Collaboration on Ageing Research	
Department for Work and Pensions	National Health Service Older People's Taskforces	