A Primer on Implementing Whole of Government Approaches
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Foreword
Foreword

The mission of the Centre for Effective Services is to connect research, policy and practice to improve outcomes for communities, children and young people across the island of Ireland. We are working to improve the evidence that policy-makers and practitioners draw on to make their decisions and also supporting how evidence-informed policies and practices are implemented.

This requires considerable connecting and joining-up of systems, practices and policies. CES strives to strengthen the links and the connections vertically in the system, for example, between policy-makers, commissioners of services and practitioners at the service delivery end.

Our work experience at CES has taught us that strengthening vertical connections is not enough. The system needs to be ‘joined-up’ better horizontally. For example, the national and international evidence on reforming children’s services identifies interagency work as a key ingredient to improving services and eventually outcomes for children and young people. The Children’s Services Committees in Ireland and the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership in Northern Ireland are key government policies geared towards achieving better interagency work in services for children.

Given the range of Government departments that have a remit for children and families, there is also a need to achieve considerable joining-up and integration of policies at ‘whole of government’ level. The rationale for whole of government work is to eliminate ‘silos’, or departments working in isolation from one another, to achieve seamless government. It aims to avoid having different policies cut across and undermine each other, and to optimise the impact of government by using all of the instruments at the disposal of the State in an integrated way in support of particular outcomes. In Ireland, one of the aims at the establishment of a full, Cabinet-level Department of Children and Youth Affairs was to strengthen its capacity to coordinate, influence and integrate across government to improve outcomes for children and young people. The development of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020 is a whole of government policy framework with a central theme of whole of government implementation. The need to work across government is also highlighted in the Public Service Reform Plan, 2014-2016. It places a high priority on crucial enabling conditions for a whole of government approach and lays the foundation for this work across the public sector in Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, the Programme for Government, 2011-2015 commits to promoting cross-departmental working in areas that could most benefit from it. Delivering Social Change was set up as a framework to coordinate key actions across Government departments to progress work on priority social policy areas. It is taking forward a number of signature programmes that bring together several Government departments to jointly fund activities and work together to deliver new ways of working. The 10-year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland represents a coordinated approach across Government departments and the wider public sector. The Civil Service Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland also provides useful guidance for cross-departmental working.

The focus of this Primer on implementing whole of government approaches was influenced by these Government developments and the experience of CES working to support systems change. The report looks internationally to establish how other countries and jurisdictions have been engaging in whole of government work.

There are relatively few systematic evaluations of whole of government approaches and those that are available point to limited success. Nevertheless, those jurisdictions that have invested heavily are continuing to commit to this work and take a long-term view to demonstrating effectiveness. The positive results are in the areas of strengthening seamless service delivery.
Countries such as Australia, Canada and Britain in particular intensified their focus on this approach in the 1990s. In Australia, New Zealand and Scotland, there has been a strong emphasis on integrated service delivery driven by whole of government policy. Other countries, including Finland and the Netherlands, have adopted a whole of government approach as a central part of public sector reform.

The experience of implementing a whole of government approach in several countries over many decades and the valuable learning that has emerged is distilled in this Primer. It also explores the barriers and enablers to whole of government work and this is where we get to the fundamental elements of the approach. The success of joined-up government depends on clear objectives, political commitment, viable joined-up Government structures, strong cultures of collaboration and incentives to collaborate.

A set of practical structures or arrangements are needed to make whole of government work happen. Short-term initiatives may rely on more informal structures, while projects intended to bring about significant long-term change may need more strongly embedded systems. However, the different structures are seen as having strengths and weaknesses, and will always be trumped by the vertically defined structure which remains at the heart of government machinery. There can often be an overemphasis on structures to achieve change and while necessary, structures are not by themselves a sufficient ingredient to deliver this way of working. They must be accompanied by significant changes in leadership and in culture, both of which are integral active ingredients in the whole of government approach. The literature describes a ‘craftsman’ style of political leadership, one that has to focus on building and sustaining relationships, managing complexity and interdependence, and managing multiple and conflicting accountabilities (Fafard, 2013). A whole of government approach is described as ‘boundary-spanning work’, which calls for the enhancement of a collaborative mind-set among public servants and Government Ministers.

This culture shift is at the core of whole of government work and needs to be led, supported, prioritised and incentivised. It presents a significant challenge for the existing systems and culture, but resonates well with the articulated public sector reform initiatives in Ireland and Northern Ireland.

This Primer examines the potential of Implementation Science to support a whole of government approach in a practical way. An implementation framework is described to assist with both the phasing and sequencing of the work, along with the enablers that need to be attended to at each of the stages of implementation. The value of this approach is that it is grounded in solid research and could offer support to building the evidence base required to measure the progress of the work and its impact.

Finally, whole of government working is likely to be a feature of the policy implementation landscape in some form for the future given the increasing complexities of modern government. There is a sense that the approach which has interdepartmental collaboration as a core feature is likely to benefit policies and initiatives across the board, not just whole of government projects. In fact, there is evidence that a whole of government approach is becoming the norm in policy development/implementation and may be adopted as ‘business as usual’.

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A Primer on Implementing Whole of Government Approaches
Summary

What is a ‘whole of government’ approach?

‘Whole of government’ is an overarching term for a group of responses to the problem of increased fragmentation of the public sector and public services and a wish to increase integration, coordination and capacity (Ling, 2002). A desire for increased effectiveness and increased efficiency generally drives the adoption of whole of government approaches. However, untangling the concept of ‘whole of government’ is complicated by the range of terms and definitions associated with it.

The case for whole of government approaches

Many benefits have been associated with whole of government approaches to policy issues. These are generally related to the following issues:

• **Outcomes-focused**: Whole of government work seeks to enable Government departments and agencies to achieve outcomes that cannot be achieved by working in isolation and to optimise those outcomes by using all the resources at the disposal of the State.

• **Boundary-spanning**: Policy implementation regularly goes beyond the remit of a single Minister, department or agency. Children’s well-being, for example, depends on linking policy development and implementation across several levels of public policy and several actors within and outside Government. Boundary-spanning interventions can cross agency lines to secure citizen-centred outcomes.

• **Enabling**: Whole of government approaches to policy are seen as enabling Government to address complex policy challenges, use knowledge and expertise within and outside Government more effectively, and integrate levels of Government in support of more efficient and effective service delivery.

• **Strengthening prevention**: Whole of government approaches can strengthen a preventive focus by tackling issues from a systemic perspective as they emerge, before they become embedded.

The scope of whole of government work

Whole of government work has been applied:

• to deep-seated or ‘wicked’ problems, such as poverty, health or homelessness;

• to crises and to strategic challenges, such as climate change, global terrorism and disease outbreaks;

• as a means of delivering integrated service delivery to the population as a whole or to a particular geographic community or to a community of interest, such as young people, older people or businesses.

Whole of government approaches can be costly. Their suitability must be assessed since not every policy implementation challenge is amenable to a whole of government approach. Nevertheless, a culture that facilitates interdepartmental collaboration is also likely to benefit projects that do not necessarily require a whole of government approach.

The international experience

Several countries have been engaging in whole of government work over many years. Canada, Australia and Britain, in particular, intensified their focus on this approach throughout the 1990s. In Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Scotland, there has been a strong push for integrated service delivery driven by whole of government policy development at the centre and linking central policy-making with local delivery. Other
countries, including Finland and the Netherlands, have adopted a whole of government approach as a central part of public sector reform.

In Ireland, various public sector reforms over many years have been aimed at supporting whole of government work and several whole of government initiatives have focused on particular groups, geographic areas and specific policy areas.

In Northern Ireland, the formal guidance for policy-makers promotes joined-up working as a core part of all policy development. There has been a strong focus on partnerships, both formal and informal, as a way of implementing whole of government policy.

**What does whole of government work involve?**

Whole of government approaches require a particular way of working, which involves:

- **Joining up at the centre to achieve a shared vision**: Whole of government work involves joining up policy-making at the centre in support of implementation. This is the feature that distinguishes it from interagency work. All stakeholders should have the same vision and buy-in to the same strategic priorities; furthermore, they should be consulted from the beginning (i.e. at the stage of agenda-setting and policy development).

- **Boundary management**: In complex policy implementation, the boundaries between Government departments, between policy-makers and implementation bodies, and between levels (national and local, policy-makers and front-line personnel, administrative and professional personnel) must be managed if implementation is to be effective.

- **Managing interdependencies**: Whole of government work also involves recognising and managing the interdependencies across areas of Government and among levels of implementation – national, local, professional and administrative.

- **Shared understanding**: In the case of deep-seated social problems (so-called ‘wicked’ problems), such as poverty, crime or obesity, a shared view among the stakeholders about the underlying causes of the problem is an essential foundation for effective whole of government work.

**Doing whole of government work**

Successful whole of government work depends on clear objectives, political commitment, viable joined-up Government structures, strong cultures of collaboration and incentives to collaborate. In particular, engaging successfully in whole of government work requires:

- **Leadership**: A high level of leadership at the political and administrative level is essential for whole of government work. Both Ministers and senior public servants need to be committed to the approach.

- **Culture**: Whole of government structures are necessary, but not sufficient for effective whole of government work – new cultural capacities, cultural readiness and behavioural change are essential. Key cultural capacities include the ability to work across boundaries, build strategic alliances and relationships, negotiate, manage complexity and capitalise on opportunities afforded by interdependence.

- **New ways of thinking**: Whole of government work requires a re-alignment of understandings about goals, roles and outcomes, and a shift away from narrower departmental objectives.

- **Networked governance**: This involves new forms of accountability, targets, budgetary management systems and performance indicators. It also requires a focus on monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation and outcomes.

- **Structures that align with purpose**: Whole of government teams and other interagency/interdepartmental structures must align with purpose. The more long-term the objective, the
greater the need for formal structures. Short-term projects may rely on informal arrangements, whereas initiatives aimed at achieving long-term change may need more permanent structures, including legislation.

- **New work processes**: The work processes that matter most in whole of government work include clear and sometimes restructured lines of accountability, budgetary parameters, and roles, risk management systems and performance management systems that reward whole of government work and whole of government reporting arrangements.

- **Managing ‘gaps’**: Core dimensions of the linkages among key actors to be managed as part of a whole of government initiative have been termed ‘gaps’ by the OECD (Chabit and Michalun, 2009). These include the information gap, the capacity gap, the fiscal gap, the administrative gap and the policy gap.

- **Providing supports**: Capacity development initiatives are a feature of whole of government work in several countries and include building repositories of shared lessons and experiences, practice guidelines, joint training, networking initiatives and access to learning and development supports.

## Conclusion

A significant body of international experience, learning and initiatives about implementing whole of government policy has emerged over recent decades. This has resulted in a massive repository of ‘how to’ material, but a dearth of reflective, ‘how we actually did’ material. The reasons to adopt a whole of government approach remain strong and sound. However, implementing such approaches requires due care and attention from an early stage.

The growing number of challenges to governments today that require joined-up thinking and joined-up working, along with the increasing complexity of government itself, new technological opportunities and the challenges of economic constraints – all point to the need for and value of whole of government approaches.

A central challenge to investment in whole of government working is the absence of hard evidence about ‘does it work?’ (Ling, 2002). There are several jurisdictions, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Scotland and the Netherlands, that have invested heavily in whole of government working and are not reversing out of that approach. However, there is relatively little systematic evaluation and those evaluations that are available point to limited success. Nevertheless, the aforementioned countries report positive results in strengthening seamless service delivery, alongside challenges in managing the continuing dominance of vertically defined structures. Generally, issues with realising and sustaining the benefits of whole of government appear to be common and the outcomes are regarded as mixed (de Bri and Bannister, 2010). These countries report positive results in integrating back-office functions, but also report the continuing dominance of ‘silos’, political barriers and structural barriers (Fafard, 2013). It seems that the vertically defined structure remains at the heart of government machinery, at least in OECD countries (ibid).

Whole of government working is likely to be a feature of the policy implementation landscape in some form for the future given the increasing complexities of the social and economic landscape, both nationally and internationally. The challenge is to find ways of making it work to best effect. Implementation Science offers scope to link the theory and research on whole of government approaches with emerging work on evidence-informed policy implementation to inform and guide future development.

## Structure of report

This Primer on implementing whole of government approaches is presented in two main sections, as follows:

- **Section 1** offers an overview of whole of government approaches, drawing on the experience of several countries. Descriptions and definitions are offered and an account of the scope and range of whole of government working (Section 1.1). The benefits claimed for this approach to achieving
the goals and outcomes of public policy are described (Section 1.2). A high-level account of the experience and processes of whole of government work in a number of countries is provided (Section 1.3); this account does not set out to be evaluative or to describe how far these initiatives have succeeded in their intent.

- **Section 2** provides an overview of policy development and policy implementation generally as a context for thinking about whole of government policy-making (Section 2.1). Within the policy implementation framework, the range of practical structures and work methods in use in various countries to deliver whole of government initiatives are described (Section 2.2). The scope of Implementation Science frameworks to offer a systematic approach to whole of government policy implementation is put forward (Section 2.3) and some overarching conclusions are drawn.
Section 1:
Whole of government approaches – An Overview
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Whole of government approaches – An Overview

1.1 What is a ‘whole of government’ approach?

The concept of ‘whole of government’ has been described as an overarching term for a group of responses to the problem of increased fragmentation of the public sector and public services and a wish to increase integration, coordination and capacity (Ling, 2002).

It has to be said at the outset that there is difficulty in untangling the concept of ‘whole of government’. The literature points to the ‘bewildering blizzard of terms’ in use and the diversity of meanings attributed to these terms (Fafard, 2013). Concepts are inconsistent and practices overlap, with different terminologies used in undefined ways (Halligan et al, 2011).

Terminology differs across countries. Terms used include ‘joined-up government’ (in Britain), ‘horizontal management/government’ (in Canada), ‘integrated government’ (in New Zealand) and ‘whole of government’ (in Australia). These terms have been described as ‘fashionable slogans’ rather than precise scientific concepts and they are often used interchangeably (Lægreid et al, 2013).

Definitions of ‘whole of government’ also vary. Some definitions capture operational objectives, such as coordination and integration, while others focus on expected outcomes; yet others address the scope or ‘reach’ of the reform intent, and some attempt to address all of these concepts. Some examples include (authors’ emphasis in bold):

‘Joined up government initiatives seek to enhance coordination and integration within public sectors that have become too disjointed. They also seek to align incentives, structures and cultures of authority in order to fit critical tasks that cross organisational boundaries’ (The Efficacy Unit, 2009).

‘Whole of Government denotes public service agencies working across portfolio boundaries to achieve a shared goal and an integrated response to particular issues’ (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004).

‘... coordination and management of a set of activities between two organisational units that do not have hierarchical control over each other and where the aim is to generate outcomes that cannot be achieved by units working in isolation’ (Halligan et al, 2011).
THE FOCUS OF WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT WORK

As will be seen in Section 2, the focus of whole of government work can vary considerably. The emphasis may be on:

- **Organisational levels** (e.g. interdepartmental, national – local), as with *Healthy Ireland*, where the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy, chaired by An Taoiseach, oversees the implementation of a multi-stakeholder Health and Wellbeing Programme spearheaded by the Department of Health.

- **Particular social groups** (e.g. pensioners, immigrants), as with the UK’s *Positive for Youth* initiative, which reflects a new approach to cross-Government policy for young people aged 13 to 19, or Ireland’s *Disability Strategy Towards 2016*, which is a strategy to underpin the participation of people with disabilities in Irish society.

- **Policy issue/sector** (e.g. transport, education), as in Scotland’s whole system approach to youth justice, which supports partners to promote development of a whole system approach involving streamlining and consistent planning, assessment and decision-making processes for young people who offend, to ensure they receive the right help at the right time.

- **Geographical area** (e.g. neighbourhood, country), as with Ireland’s *Limerick Regeneration*, which brings together officials from the key Government departments and statutory agencies, partnership-based structures at city and local levels, and key local stakeholders.

- **Mode of service delivery** (e.g. one-stop shop, e-Government portal), as with Canada’s *Service Canada*, which provides Canadians with one-stop, personalised access to Government of Canada services and benefits, or Australia’s collaborative case management aspect of the *Strengthening Families* initiative.

In response to diverse purposes, whole of government approaches differ also in their scope – the focus may be intra-government or more broadly on governance (boundary-spanning that crosses boundaries between the public, private and third sectors).
1.2 Why adopt a whole of government approach?

The rationale for whole of government work is to eliminate ‘silos’, or departments working in isolation from one another, and achieve seamless government. It aims to avoid having different policies cut across and undermine each other, and to optimise the impact of government by using all the instruments at the disposal of the State in an integrated way in support of particular outcomes. A desire to reduce costs (Kearney, 2005) and inefficiencies (Roy and Langford, 2008) can also drive the adoption of a whole of government approach. Figure 1 shows the main factors that drive adoption of a whole of government approach.

The OECD describes the rationale for whole of government work as recognition of the interdependence among levels of government – between national and local levels, and among peer levels (ministries, regions, local authorities):

‘The public sector has become a matrix of crossing perspectives and a key issue rests on the ability to capitalise on synergies between different domains of public intervention. Thus, to accomplish policy objectives in an environment dominated by a criss-cross of vertical, horizontal, or networked contexts, a strong degree of co-ordination is required, as well as an understanding of mutual dependence ... in a networked system, each stakeholder depends on the other to meet their individual responsibilities, which collectively help realise a larger goal’ (Chabit and Michalun, 2009).
USES OF A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH

Christensen and Lægreid (2007) state:

‘Approaches can ... focus on policy development, programme management and service delivery. Whole of Government processes may be broadly and comprehensively applied, or may be highly specific, or targeted.’

A key theme in the literature is that whole of government approaches should only be used where there is a clear case that this is the best means of achieving the desired outcomes. Whole of government approaches can be costly, time-consuming and may not be the best approach for straightforward problems. Indeed, it can be the case that a whole of government approach could slow down the resolution of an issue that could more easily and efficiently be tackled by a single department or agency (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004). A key challenge then is to have clear criteria and good decision-making as to when and how departments join up (State Services Authority, 2007a, p. 29; Whelan et al, 2003).

BENEFITS OF ADOPTING A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH

The benefits of adopting a whole of government approach to a policy issue centre on the potential improvements and efficiencies that can be realised (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Benefits of adopting a whole of government approach

- INCREASES OR IMPROVES
  - Efficiency
  - Information sharing
  - Working environment
  - Competitiveness
  - Accountability
  - Policy coherence

- DECREASES OR REDUCES
  - Costs
  - Waste
  - Duplication of work
  - Conflicting policies
  - Time needed to complete a task
These benefits are achieved through the ability to combine resources, to tackle problems early and through other practical benefits associated with whole of government working, such as more timely information-sharing.

- **Combining resources**: A key practical benefit of a whole of government approach is the capacity to apply the combined resources of government to a high-level national goal. The rationale is summed up in this comment from the Secretary of the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship:

  ‘Whole of Government solutions are not restricted by the “tunnel vision” of individual agencies. These agencies, who know their own business so well, can unconsciously exclude the interests of other agencies or the unknown consequences of their policy initiatives. This is because they have not engaged with the full range of skills, knowledge, expertise, experience and information held by other agencies with common interests’ (Metcalf, 2011).

- **Prevention and early intervention**: Whole of government or joined-up government approaches are thought to facilitate acting preventatively and pre-emptively by dealing with problems before they become too acute and costly (Mulgan, 2009). Many of the whole of government initiatives in areas such as health promotion, obesity and youth justice are prompted by the evidence of the benefits of preventive work involving multiple agencies and stakeholders.

**THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH INCLUDE:**

- Macro-political objectives.
- A response to ‘wicked’ problems.
- A strategic enabler.
- A means of managing crises.
- A response to external pressure.

**Macro/political objectives**

One rationale for whole of government approaches can be found in some countries at a broad political level, linked to stances of governments regarding the delivery of public services. The term ‘joined-up government’ (JUG) was coined by Britain’s New Labour Government in 1997 to capture its emphasis on redressing the fragmentation that characterised New Public Management (NPM) – ‘a reaction to the disaggregation of government and the problems associated with portfolio-driven agendas, working in silos and hierarchical organisational structures’ (Drechsler, 2005).

Following New Public Management reform in New Zealand, for example, the system of government was arguably the most disaggregated vertically and horizontally. Minister from State Services, Trevor Mallard, observed that:

‘Departments compete against each other to hire the same staff, sometimes to the detriment of the government overall. Some sectors ... require major co-ordination from the centre that soaks up resources. There’s an absence of ... feedback on whether policies actually work – because the policy advisors work in a department other than the delivery one and the connections between operations and advice aren’t established ... In a fragmented system the centre needs to be strong. But – paradoxically ... the centre has been struggling for definition’ (cited in Boston and Eichbaum, 2007, p. 152).

Whole of government approaches were thus seen in some jurisdictions as addressing a need to re-establish tighter central and direct control over public agencies, overcome silo effects and the competitive mentality that had resulted from the New Public Management strategy (Halligan et al, 2011), as well as strengthening central leadership, financial management and levels of accountability.
As a response to ‘wicked’ problems

The term ‘wicked’ problems describes public policy efforts to tackle far-reaching issues such as poverty, crime, education and health (de Brí and Bannister, 2010). Traditional hierarchical government organisations have tended to fail at dealing with the complexity and interaction among many of these tough social and economic policy challenges facing societies (Roy and Langford, 2008). Such intractable social issues require a range of expertise (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004). Examples include obesity and climate change. ‘Wicked’ problems are contrasted with ‘tame’ problems that have ‘clear missions, outcomes and solutions’ (Halligan et al, 2011).

The boundaries of ‘wicked’ problems today may be expanding – the range of issues that constitute such problems is extensive and therefore requires a whole of government approach. As Williams (2002, p. 104) observes:

‘The public policy landscape is characterised by a host of complex and seemingly intractable problems and issues – community safety, poverty, social inclusion, health inequalities, teenage pregnancies, urban regeneration, substance misuse, climate change and homelessness – an ever-growing and assorted list of community concerns.’

Challenges needing a whole of government approach may now become the norm and part of the mainstream of policy development. This point is reinforced in A Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland (OFMDFM, 2003, p. 5):

‘The world for which policies have to be developed is becoming increasingly complex, uncertain and unpredictable ... Key policy issues, such as social need, low educational achievement and poor health, are connected and cannot be tackled effectively by departments or agencies acting individually.’

As a strategic enabler

Some governments see whole of government approaches as an effective means of dealing with high-level strategic policy issues, such as defence and national security.

As a response to demand for more accessible and citizen-centred service delivery

Probably the most commonly cited example of whole of government work and the most extensive analysis of structures and processes relate to models of integrated service to citizens. These involve joined-up policy development and mechanisms for seamless local delivery, supported by an e-Government strategy and infrastructure.

Whole of government service delivery models can focus on citizens in general or on a particular community (such as indigenous populations), an industry sector or categories of individual, like young people or older people (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004, p. 99).

The pressure for seamless service delivery is seen as coming from rising community expectations and associated citizen-centred integration efforts, modernisation and advances in technology, and associated experimentation with new service-delivery modes (Roy and Langford, 2008; Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004; Kearney, 2009).

As a means of managing crises

Planning for crises, such as natural or man-made disasters or major health pandemics, represent a relatively common focus of whole of government (time-limited) project work.

As a response to external pressures

External drivers can include the competitive challenge of globalisation (Kearney, 2009), the global financial crisis (Halligan et al, 2011) or responses to security and terrorism (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004; Kearney, 2009).
1.3 International experience: How whole of government has been evolving across a range of countries

THE CHALLENGE OF INTERPRETING INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Several countries have been engaging in whole of government work over many years. Canada, Australia and Britain, in particular, intensified their focus on this approach throughout the 1990s. In Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Scotland, there has been a strong push for integrated service delivery driven by whole of government policy development at the centre and linking central policy-making with local delivery. Other countries, including Finland and the Netherlands, have adopted a whole of government approach as a central part of public sector reform. In Ireland, the need to work across Government departments is highlighted in the Public Service Reform Plan, 2014-2016 (OFMDFM, 2014), while in Northern Ireland the Programme for Government, 2011-2015 commits to promoting cross-departmental working in the areas that could most benefit from it (OFMDFM, 2011).

A key point raised in the literature is that not enough attention is paid in accounts of whole of government initiatives to underlying national context; there are broad generalisations, but very little extended discussion of the extent to which what is being done is rooted in the underlying political and administrative system, e.g. parliamentary democracy, federal, congressional systems (Fafard, 2013, p. 16). This is an important consideration when reviewing integrated service delivery case studies, given the huge variability in the levels of autonomy and scope of local government and other local agencies from country to country. A further challenge in reviewing international experience is the absence of systematic evaluations of whole of government work.

These limitations must be borne in mind in relation to the following descriptive accounts of country experiences. Whole of government approaches in Britain, Scotland, Canada, Australia, Finland and on the island of Ireland are outlined below. A more detailed account of specific whole of government initiatives in Scotland and New Zealand are given in Appendix 1.

BRITAIN

The New Labour Government in Britain coined the term ‘joined-up government’ to describe its plans for public sector reform following its 1997 election victory. The intention was to improve governmental responses to ‘wicked’ problems, including intractable social issues such as drug abuse and social exclusion.

The 1999 White Paper, Modernising Government, called for the public sector to work across organisational boundaries with the aim of providing more integrated and seamless service delivery. Subsequent action plans from the Cabinet Office outlined various initiatives to support joined-up working. At the national level, examples of such initiatives included the allocation of inter-ministerial portfolios to Ministers and new structures such as cross-departmental policy development and delivery units within the Cabinet Office. Cross-cutting policy reviews were also undertaken, resulting in the Wiring it up reports for reform.

At the sub-national level, the creation of Regional Development Agencies in 1999 promised to bring a new focus to enterprise and employment by working with universities, businesses and local authorities. Local Strategic Partnerships brought representatives from public, private and non-profit sectors together with the aim of progressing shared local objectives.

The Government experimented with various ways of pursuing joined-up working, leading to a range of mutually reinforcing changes (Mulgan, 2009), including:

- A cross-cutting approach to policy-making. Mechanisms to achieve this included Policy Action Teams (set up by the Social Exclusion Unit within the Cabinet Office), cross-cutting reviews of spending and the establishment of cross-cutting units to cover issues that involve multiple departments and have been difficult to solve.
• **Managing joined-up working** through seminars, reports (e.g. the National Audit Office report, *Joining up to improve public services*), networks such as the New Local Government Network and the role and implementation of the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit in the Cabinet Office.

• **Joining up implementation of policies** through tools such as training and support in project management and implementation, the establishment of the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit, consolidation of local structures, coordination of purchasing through the Office of Government Commerce and the integration of services through portals such as www.gov.uk (Dunleavy, 2010).

The rhetoric of joined-up government (JUG) may be winding down in England, where it has been noted by Talbot (cited in MacCarthaigh and Boyle, 2011) that ‘many JUG developments are being dismantled without comment following the 2010 election’ as the new Coalition Government pursues its *Big Society vision*, which focuses on stronger cooperation with society rather than internal integration.

*Positive for Youth*, launched in 2011, was a new approach to cross-government policy for young people aged 13 to 19 in England. It brought together all of the Government’s policies for this age group and presented a single vision across the interests of nine Government departments. A 2013 review indicated that progress had been made in terms of implementation and outcomes (HM Government, 2013).

**SCOTLAND**

In 2006, the Scottish Government launched a major service transformation initiative, called **Public Value Management**, aimed at redesigning public services around the needs of service users and citizens, and driving up quality, standards, innovation, creativity and continuous improvement. A high level of public consultation and dialogue with all those involved in delivering public services was a cornerstone of the reform process.

The Scottish approach to this redesign of seamless and citizen-led services adopts a stance of partnership, dialogue and meaningful engagement of citizens with service design, rather than treating citizens purely as consumers of services. In terms of structures, a shared knowledge management infrastructure, joining up government and the public, is an essential enabler of integrated service delivery.

The Scottish approach also involves strengthening the role of local municipalities as front-line service providers. The longer term aim is to enable local authorities to be the first point of contact and the primary route into both the Scottish and UK public service.

The Snook (2012) report on *Customer Views on Digital Public Services* discussed the findings of a workshop which explored the themes outlined in the existing Digital Public Service and Public Sector ICT combined strategy. The importance of transparency and co-design were emphasized, as was the need to explore the evolving needs of users.

**CANADA**

Canada’s investment in whole of government work since 2000 has been primarily driven by the intention to develop seamless, citizen-centred service delivery (The Efficiency Unit, 2009; Roy and Langford, 2008). A major e-Government initiative, called the **Government On-Line Initiative**, was partnered by the **Modernising Services for Canadians** (MSC), the purpose of which was to bring together 170 different Government websites. This led to the setting up of **Service Canada**, with the aim of providing a one-stop point of access for citizens to all federal services.

The setting up of Service Canada was a major structural reform project. One of its core goals is to build whole of government approaches to services that enables information-sharing and integrated service delivery for the
benefit of all Canadians. The integration of services across the levels of government is central to this goal.

To support the whole of government work, two Councils and an Institute were set up to promote research and dialogue around common standards and approaches to integrating services and technology between agencies and levels of government:

- the Public Sector Chief information Officer Council and the Public Sector Service Delivery Council bring together service policy and delivery officials to exchange best practices and collaborate on service delivery;
- the Institute for Citizen Service Delivery was established in 2005 to promote high levels of citizen satisfaction with public sector service delivery, mainly through use of research and application of innovative, best practice solutions to support quality service delivery.

In Canada, Government departments and agencies are required to indicate in their Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP) and Departmental Performance Report (DPR) the alignment of programme activities to Government of Canada outcome areas. The alignment of strategic outcomes and their corresponding programme activities to the whole of government framework makes it possible to calculate spending by Government of Canada outcome area and also to total correctly all government spending. A programme activity can only be aligned to one Government of Canada outcome area. A strategic outcome, however, can contribute to more than one outcome area.

AUSTRALIA

Whole of government work has a long track record in Australia, motivated strongly by a drive for integrated local service delivery (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004). A 1976 Report of the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration (RCAGA) argued for a new style of public citizen-centred administration. The focus of reform in the 1980s and 1990s was structural, involving larger portfolios and stronger Cabinet capacity for strategic decision-making, aimed at integrating policy, programme and service delivery across federal agencies.

The concept of a ‘one-stop shop’ for service delivery bore fruit in 1997 with the establishment of Centrelink as an integrated delivery mechanism for employment and income support across all levels of government. During the 1980s, new structures and processes, such as taskforces for whole of government work, took over from traditional interdepartmental committees. These primarily top-down approaches gave way in the 1990s to a stronger focus on community consultation, participation and partnerships.

The Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) was established in 1992 to act as a forum for considering whole of government issues and identifying priorities for whole of government work. In the early 2000s, the Prime Minister’s role in setting these priorities was strengthened through the establishment of the Cabinet Implementation Unit, with a core function of supporting whole of government work. A key feature of the Australian approach has been the provision of guidelines for working across boundaries, prepared under the auspices of the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) – a group of departmental secretaries and agency heads.

Whole of government initiatives in Australia have spanned a wide range of purposes. Priorities have included work and family life, national security and defence, demographics, education, science and innovation, sustainable environment, energy, rural and regional affairs, transport and health. Specific projects have included:

- Australians Working Together (welfare reform policy proposals);
- Goodna Service Integration Project (a Queensland community);
- ictconsult (a project to develop a secure electronic information exchange system about community consultations – deemed to have failed);
- National Illicit Drugs Strategy;
- response to Bali bombings.
FINLAND

Improving the way government worked horizontally has been a major focus of Finnish governmental reform over the last three decades. It was decided that reform could be achieved without instituting formal changes in authority or power between organisations, but rather by altering the working methods of government.

The Government set out its agenda in the Government Programme, introduced in 2003. This concentrates on horizontal activity of the government and identifies four priority areas: employment, entrepreneurship, information society and civil participation. Each area has its own programme, outlined in the Government Strategic Document, which focuses on horizontal policies and identifies the targets, measures and concrete acts required for success, in line with financial prerequisites as set out in the Government’s Budget documents.

Each programme has a Coordinating Group of Ministers (comprised of Ministers of all relevant portfolios) and a Coordinating Minister, who is responsible for the overall Government Programme as well as their own portfolio. Each programme is managed by a Programme Director, who has no formal power but runs a network of representatives from the participating portfolios. The Programme Director has limited direct funding, but appropriations for programme purposes are set aside in the budget, using a matrix technique. Success of this process relies on political will for consensus and support from the Prime Minister.

The Government Strategy Document provides concrete, quantifiable targets for each area in order to facilitate evaluation. The focus is on outcomes rather than outputs, and the findings are used mainly for political rather than managerial purposes. Since 2006, all ministries and agencies are required to enter their performance information onto a State Internet reporting system, further increasing the transparency of public administration (Autero, 2006).

Early evaluation of the Finnish whole of government reform suggested that it had assisted government to become more strategic and results-focused. It has also improved transparency and horizontal thinking across government (Harrinvirta and Kekkonen, 2005). However, a more recent OECD (2010) evaluation has identified further areas that require improvement:

In 2010, an OECD governance review indicated that Finland could strengthen its capacity to act effectively by establishing more coherent service delivery, improving planning and foresight capacity from a whole of government perspective, reinforcing horizontal linkages across State government and reinforcing capacity and leadership at all levels of government to better communicate and implement a common vision.

THE ISLAND OF IRELAND (REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND)

In Ireland, departmental re-organisations, social partnership and Coalition government requiring merging of policy platforms have been key influences on the policy-making process (MacCarthaigh and Boyle, 2011). An early manifestation of joined-up administrative structures at a senior level was the establishment of the coordinating group of Secretaries General to oversee the implementation of a major public sector reform initiative, the Strategic Management Initiative (1994), by means of a specific civil service reform programme entitled Delivering Better Government (1996) (ibid). This programme instituted many of the infrastructural changes commonly associated with high-level management of whole of government policy development and implementation, including Cabinet Sub-Committees, coordinating roles for Ministers and Ministers for State, networks for sharing knowledge and expertise, and 3-year strategic plans with a specific requirement that joined-up government issues should be addressed in those plans.

In 2005, the NESC report on The Developmental Welfare State identified joined-up government as one of 5 broad areas of change needed to support integrated, person-centred services across the lifespan of citizens. Later, in 2008, the OECD report Towards an Integrated Public Service made recommendations aimed at addressing the
absence of joined-up government, one of which was the plan to develop a Senior Public Service system to drive increased mobility across the public service. The Public Service Reform Plan, 2014-2016 prioritises many features fundamental to effective whole of government working (DPER, 2014).

In Northern Ireland, there has been an ongoing emphasis on partnership working. In this context, ‘partnerships’ cover a wide range of relations, from informal networking to formal established partnerships. This reflects the perceived value of partnerships as a means of engaging communities and building good relations (OFMDFM, 2003). In the Programme for Government, 2011-2015, the Northern Ireland Executive (2011) recognised that making a real difference demands:

‘effective collaboration and, within the programme as well as working more effectively across Government Departments, we are signalling our intention to work in partnership with the private and the voluntary and community sectors in ways that will deliver tangible outcomes’.

Within the Programme for Government, the Government laid down its commitment to the promotion of cross-departmental working in particular areas that are in a position to benefit most. One example of this is the commitment to a Cross-Departmental Strategic Framework on Reducing Offending. Further, Delivering Social Change was set up as a framework to coordinate key actions across Government departments to progress work on priority social policy areas and it has created a number of signature programmes, such as the Social Investment Fund (SIF) (see http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/social-investment-fund) to deliver social change. The SIF aims to make life better for people living in targeted areas by reducing poverty, unemployment and physical deterioration. The 10-Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland also represents a coordinated approach across Government departments, and the wider public sector, to the development of policies that impact on the lives of children and young people (see http://www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/ten-year-strategy.pdf).

Table 1 outlines some current and planned whole of government initiatives on the island of Ireland and the key actors involved.
### Table 1: Whole of government initiatives on the island of Ireland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy issue</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Key actors involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-cutting</strong></td>
<td>Healthy Ireland: A Framework for improved health and wellbeing, 2013–2025 (RoI)</td>
<td>The Cabinet Committee on Social Policy, chaired by An Taoiseach; Department of Health; Cross-sectoral Group of other Departments and key agencies; multistakeholder Healthy Ireland Council; HSE Health and Wellbeing Division.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lifetime Opportunities (2020) NI Anti-Poverty initiative</td>
<td>All Departments; an Interdepartmental Equality and Social Needs Steering Group, chaired by a senior official in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location-based</strong></td>
<td>Limerick Regeneration Scheme (RoI)</td>
<td>Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government; HSE, Gardai and the Local Authorities of Limerick City, Limerick County and Clare County.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership (NI)</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Partnerships established in each Neighbourhood Renewal Area as a vehicle for local planning and implementation, with representatives of political, statutory, voluntary, community and private sector stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Alcohol Programme, City of Derry (NI)</td>
<td>Derry City Council; PSNI; WELB; PHA; Derry Healthy Cities Project; public, private and community organisations working together to tackle alcohol misuse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population-based</strong></td>
<td>National Positive Ageing Strategy (2013) (RoI)</td>
<td>Department of Health; Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation; Department of Social Protection; Department of Education and Skills; Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government; Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; National Transport Authority; Road Safety Authority; Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Central Statistics Office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Disability Strategy, 2013-2015 (RoI)</td>
<td>Department of Justice and Equality; Department of Health; HSE; Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; Commission for Energy Regulation; Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; Department of Social Protection; Fáilte Ireland; Office of Government Procurement; An Post.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pathways to Success (NEET) Strategy, 2012 (NI)</td>
<td>Department of Employment and Learning; Department of Education; Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety; and voluntary and community sector, taken forward under Delivering Social Change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:**

Section 2:
Making and implementing whole of government policy
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Making and implementing whole of government policy

2.1 Making and implementing whole of government policy

‘A policy may be a beautiful thing to behold in the isolation of bureaucracy, but what really counts is how the policy is implemented and how it translates into service delivery’ (Metcalfe, 2011).

To provide a context for looking at whole of government policy-making, it is useful to locate it within the framework of policy implementation more generally. Implementation can be described as the carrying out of a plan for doing something. Its focus is on operationalising the plan, rather than what the plan is (Burke et al, 2012). The ‘implementation gap’ occurs when the intended outcomes of a plan are not realised. As Whelan et al (2003) warned, ‘A policy without implementation is worse than no policy at all’. Implementation of whole of government initiatives can fall short of intentions and the gap between intention and implementation echoes the wider issue of the ‘implementation gap’ in policy and practice.

APPROACHES TO POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The literature on policy implementation describes ‘top down’ and ‘bottom up’ approaches (State Services Authority, 2011), as follows:

- **‘Top down’** perspectives emphasize the goals to be achieved by a particular policy, decision-making processes, competencies of the implementers, political support and the support of influential leaders. The focus of ‘top down’ approaches is on compliance and monitoring; policy outcomes that differ from intended outcomes are seen as failures. Research stemming from this perspective typically locates the reasons for such failures in a lack of willingness among staff in field operations, legislative interference, other levels of government and failure of third-party providers to comply with central policy edicts.

- **‘Bottom up’** perspectives emphasize the role of front-line staff in the implementation of policies. These perspectives seek to explain why outcomes may diverge from policy intentions through studying the behaviour of actors in the implementation chain. This approach brings to the fore the role of front-line staff, the behaviour of individuals and groups, the impact of good or poor communication, ambiguity and divergent interests. It also looks at the role of bargaining and negotiation.

Other frameworks integrate these perspectives, recognising that policy development and implementation will have elements of both. For example, Berman (1978 and 1980) describes more nuanced approaches that highlight the influence of context, circumstances and the environment in which the policy will operate.

Following Fixen and Blase (2009), the pioneers of Implementation Science, key success factors in policy development and implementation include a clear evidence and research base to support the policy, active consideration of the implementation challenges and a Theory of Change that maps the causal pathway, from where things are to where they need to be (Williams, 2002, p. 109). The essential implementation ‘drivers’ are leadership, competency drivers and organisational drivers. Implementation teams have special expertise with both the innovation and implementation, and are accountable for guiding the overall strategy. Monitoring and evaluation ensures that emerging learning is used to inform the policy cycle and that the policy implementation is not subject to ‘drift’ as other priorities emerge or key policies change.
INTEGRATING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Integrating policy development with implementation is regarded as an important advance on more traditional approaches, where the policy development process was separated from implementation planning. This thinking sits well with a whole of government approach, which aims to integrate the involvement of stakeholders across networks at national and local level in support of achieving best outcomes.

The rationale for joining policy development and policy implementation centres on an early focus on effective implementation, by drawing in all those on whose work the success of the policy depends. Lessons from Northern Ireland’s *A Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland* (OFMDFM, 2003) include:

‘One of the key messages which I hope this guide will help to send out is that policy development should not be seen as the preserve of a few specialists. Those involved at the “front line” of service delivery, whether in schools, hospitals or social security offices, have a vital role in helping to gauge what is deliverable. They have a keen awareness of what really matters to the citizen. In order to develop policies which work in practice, the guide emphasises the importance of engaging those familiar with delivery issues, and service users themselves, early in the process … Whilst organisational and management changes in the late 1980s and early 1990s emphasised the separation of policy-making and policy implementation, more recent good practice in policy-making demands that they be reintegrated into a single, seamless, flexible process’.

This view of the policy development/implementation process is echoed in the views of the Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship in Canberra (Metcalf, 2010):

‘For the successful involvement of a range of agencies in [policy] implementation and service delivery, it is paramount that those agencies are involved in the development of the policy in the first place … If we do not include other agencies in the development process, a resulting policy may involve things that they do not agree with; obligations they may not be able to deliver on or things that are just plain unlawful or dangerous.’

POLITICS, POLITICAL SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP

The role of politics and political support is a key theme in policy implementation literature:

‘It is clear that strong political leadership is required to develop policies on a whole of government basis, meeting the needs of society over the longer term. To do this effectively, a shared vision of the type of society we wish to have in the future, and in particular the vision for the public sector, are fundamental requirements. Political leadership is central to the development of this vision and to achieving its objectives’ (Whelan et al, 2003, pp. 52-53).

When implementation includes governance across the cycle, from policy development to implementation and review, the political role also extends beyond the early stage of deciding on a policy direction. Leadership is seen as critical to effective policy implementation (Williams, 2002). Furthermore:

‘A huge tension inherent in delivering policy reform is the need for public sector leaders to strike the right balance between implementing (or imposing) a given strategic reform versus leaving scope for learning and adjustment in the face of unknown and/or changing conditions for implementing organisations … Leaders must be constantly attentive to all realms: the political, the wider community, the world of implementation partners and, of course, their own organisation and its capacity to contribute effectively’ (State Services Authority, 2011, p. 9).
AN ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT FOCUS

An organisation development perspective is also a strong theme in policy implementation literature. Policy implementation is centrally an organisational change challenge:

‘The greater the change flowing from policy implementation (breadth and amount of departure from current practice), the more demand there will be for significant organisational change’ (State Services Authority, 2011, p. 8).

A key dimension of change from this perspective is an understanding of and attention to cultural factors, i.e. the norms, values and beliefs in an organisation. Culture may be thought of as a ‘soft’ factor, yet it has been identified by Fixen et al (2005) as critical in ensuring sustainable implementation. Indeed, according to these authors, ‘the essence of implementation is behaviour change’ whether in relation to policy or practice.

WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Whole of government policy development and implementation differs from policy development more generally only to the extent of the range of issues, inputs and stakeholders who need to be involved, and the relatively more complex policy analysis needed to underpin the work (Whelan et al, 2003).

This convergence of general policy development with whole of government approaches is highlighted in Northern Ireland’s A Practical Guide to Policy Making in Northern Ireland (OFMDFM, 2003, pp. 6-7), which includes ‘joined-up policy-making’ as one of the 10 features of effective policy work on any policy area and regards the ability to develop implementation systems as a critical skill of senior civil servants involved in policy development. The implication of the convergence is to point to the need for a whole of government approach to be the norm in policy development/implementation and to represent ‘business as usual’, rather than a subset of wider policy work.
2.2 The infrastructure for whole of government work

CREATING A BOUNDARY-SPANNING INFRASTRUCTURE

Whole of government work is essentially about spanning boundaries – managing across boundaries within and between Government departments and agencies, and, depending on the scale and scope of the initiative, between levels of government (local and national) and between policy development and policy implementation.

The literature points to contrasting structural and cultural approaches to building a whole of government boundary-spanning infrastructure (Christensen et al, 2007, p. 1061). The structural approach assumes homogeneity among different administrative units and tends to rely on organisational arrangements to create the linkages. The cultural view recognises the diversity of roles and cultures within administrative units and sets about building a culture that supports whole of government work. These approaches are essentially complementary rather than alternatives.

ENABLERS OF A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The enablers of a whole of government infrastructure can be considered under the following headings:

- structures;
- work processes;
- political and administrative leadership;
- culture and capacities;
- supports for capacity-building.

Structures

For any whole of government initiative, a set of practical structures or arrangements are needed to make it happen. The choice of these depends on purpose and on the lifetime of the initiative: short-term initiatives may rely on more informal structures, while projects intended to bring about significant long-term change may need more strongly embedded systems, including legislation, organisational redesign, new processes and new competencies (de Brí and Bannister, 2010, p. 12).

The most commonly used structures are:

- interdepartmental committees;
- taskforces;
- interdepartmental partnerships;
- cross-departmental partnerships;
- special purpose agencies (also sometimes known as ‘frontier agencies’).

In countries where whole of government approaches have been invested in heavily, the traditional interdepartmental committee has been supplemented by newer structures, such as dedicated taskforces, formal partnerships, special purpose agencies, new Cabinet committees, cross-sectoral programmes, circuit-breaker teams and supernetworks (Christensen et al, 2007, p. 1061). As noted already, the mechanism must match the purpose and different structures are seen as having strengths and weaknesses, depending on that purpose. A detailed assessment of some of these mechanisms is given in Appendix 2, based on the Australian experience.

Initiatives aimed at designing seamless service delivery to citizens (e.g. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Scotland) across departmental, federal and agency boundaries are complex initiatives that require a move from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ since they may have to include non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private service providers. Such whole of government initiatives have prompted the concept of ‘network models
of service delivery’ and a focus on collaboration, as an alternative to re-organising government into single large units and ‘wasting time’ on re-organisation (Roy and Langford, 2008).

Any whole of government work involving both vertical and horizontal boundary-spanning must build structures around a clear understanding of where expertise, authority and competencies lie (Fafard, 2013, p. 5). There is a need for a clear mandate for the implementation structures. The nature of the task, the accountabilities and the outcomes sought must be clear from the outset, otherwise the project is likely to run into difficulty at an early stage when boundary issues inevitably come into play.

**Work processes**

Effective whole of government work depends on the alignment of core work processes so that these are supportive of a whole of government approach. Key processes include accountability systems, budgets and information management, as well as, according to a 2009 OECD report, the management of critical gaps.

**Accountability systems**

Depending on their complexity, whole of government approaches tend to make accountability relations more ambiguous (Filmreite et al, 2013; Whelan et al, 2013). Norwegian reform of the employment and national insurance administration (which involved a major restructuring at national, regional and local levels) involved several forms and levels of accountability realignment challenges – political, administrative, legal, professional, social, hierarchical and horizontal. The conclusion drawn by Filmreite et al (2013, p. 9) is that:

‘As accountability relations have become more blurred and ambiguous, it seems hard to live up to the intentions and ambitions in the joined-up government approach ... A multidimensional accountability approach is needed to handle accountability in a pluralistic political administrative system ... but so far, this has not evolved in the [Norwegian] reform.’

**Budgets**

One of the central processes to be decided in whole of government projects is how budgets are managed and accounted for. There are contradictory views about effective strategies for this purpose. Some case studies suggest that shared budgets should be avoided because the different budgetary rules and processes are too difficult to manage (Kearney, 2009, p. 4). Others argue for dedicated funding for intersectoral projects, partly on the grounds that without such dedicated funding, initiatives are vulnerable in times of cutbacks (Fafard, 2013, p. 17).

**Information management**

e-Government and ‘interoperability’ of data systems figure strongly in the literature on whole of government work. This is especially the case with regard to integrated national service delivery initiatives, design and implementation of which depend on building sophisticated information-sharing among providers at national and local levels. The technological challenge and the experience of various jurisdictions in undertaking this work is well documented and represents an area of study in its own right (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004).

The literature draws attention to the fact that technological developments in information-sharing are only part of the solution to whole of government work and cannot address the many non-technical challenges involved in breaking down silos. In the case of seamless service delivery that is authentically driven by citizen participation in planning, the view is that the barriers to citizen engagement are cultural, organisational and constitutional, rather than technological (de Brí and Bannister, 2010, p. 4).

Other work processes regarded as of particular importance include (Management Advisory Committee, Australian Government, 2014):
• an outcomes and outputs framework;
• effective implementation planning processes;
• risk management systems;
• performance management systems that reward whole of government work;
• clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
• specifically delegated authority;
• reporting procedures on a whole of government basis;
• record keeping.

The literature deals in varying levels of detail with all of these processes, how they impact on whole of government work and design options. The detail of these aspects is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this report.

Management of critical gaps

The OECD (2009) suggests that critical gaps arise between levels of government in networked or multi-level governance in five areas, namely: information, capacity, fiscal, administrative and policy. Bridging these gaps or asymmetries is seen as being at the core of whole of government work (Chabit and Michalun, 2009, p. 20).

Political and administrative leadership

Whole of government leadership is seen as a specialised kind of leadership that enables politicians to manage the complex institutional arrangements that whole of government work requires. The style of political leadership is referred to as a ‘craftsman’ style – the ability to shape policy implementation processes to be a better fit for community needs by reshaping mandates, systems, structures and programmes (O’Flynn et al, 2011, p. 250). The expectations of government need to be made very explicit by tying career development opportunities to the capacity to lead and manage whole of government projects (State Services Authority, 2007a, p. ix). Administrative leadership for whole of government has to focus on building and sustaining relationships, managing complexity and interdependence, and managing multiple and conflicting accountabilities (Fafard, 2013, p. 8).

Culture and capacities

The links between organisational behaviour and organisational performance are well researched in Organisation Development literature. Not surprisingly, these links emerge as a strong focus in whole of government work. Commentators note how organisational culture can support or frustrate the achievement of joined-up organisational goals. The key personnel operating in inter-organisational settings are ‘boundary spanners’ with certain essential competencies and their crucial role is often overlooked in the literature on whole of government working (Williams, 2002).

The networking skills of the effective boundary spanner include capacity to cultivate interpersonal relationships, communication, political skills and an appreciation of the interdependencies involved in understanding and solving complex problems. Empathy, reciprocity and trust, and a capacity to see the problem from the social and values perspective of other stakeholders are key capacities. Other specific boundary-spanning capacities include the ability to manage the complexity and interdependence involved in working across horizontal and vertical boundaries, and the capacity to manage multiple and potentially conflicting accountabilities.

A further skills category is the ability to manage by influence (Boyle, 1999). This refers to the ability of public servants to analyse and shape their external environments and the main stakeholder interests. Achieving change through influencing is described as being crucial to the management of cross-cutting issues.

Collaboration is another key capacity and it takes on a specific meaning in whole of government work. Rather than being a ‘soft’ term that is interchangeable with terms such as ‘coordination’ or ‘partnership’, collaboration is described as having structural as well as attitudinal components:
‘[Collaboration is] a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals, a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility, mutual authority and accountability for success, and sharing of resources and rewards’ (Halligan et al, 2011, p. 85).

**Supports for boundary-spanning capacities**

Capacity development needs will vary according to pre-existing levels of experience and expertise. Capacity-building needs will be greater where new roles and procedures must be created.

Initiatives to support the development of a collaborative mind-set among public servants and Ministers include an expansion of knowledge repositories of ‘critically analysed and shared lessons and experiences among jurisdictions’ (Roy and Langford, 2008, p. 44), joint ventures, pathfinder projects, employee exchanges and opportunities for dialogue. People are more likely to act collaboratively if they realistically expect to have many future dealings with each other. The view that successful collaborations need stability is echoed by Williams (2002), who suggests that ‘inter-organisational capacity is unlikely to flourish in organizational structures that are based on hierarchical control and power’. This view poses a significant challenge to those who must manage vertical/hierarchical policy implementation projects, alongside and with the same staff who are expected to engage in whole of government work.

Moving away from traditional management training approaches, to prioritise joint training and networking initiatives, greater staff mobility, support for managing cultural differences and access to a panel of learning and development consultants – these are seen as some of the mechanisms for building the cultural and organisational capacities for whole of government working.
2.3 Challenges for whole of government approaches

RANGE OF CHALLENGES

The challenges and barriers facing whole of government work mirror the enablers discussed in Section 2.2. Just as there are structural and cultural enablers, there are potential blockages in these areas. A further critical challenge for whole of government work is the difficulty of evaluating its effectiveness and determining whether expected outcomes are realised.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CHALLENGES

The literature points to an absence of joined-up thinking about joined-up working. Silos operate not only within Government departments and agencies, but also within different fields of study and practitioner focus. For example, accounts of efforts to undertake whole of government approaches to health promotion suggest that the study of and planning for such initiatives pay limited attention to the study of whole of government initiatives from a Political Science perspective, and argue for closer integration of these fields of study – an example perhaps of the potential of integrated research and planning work in the service of integrated government (Fafard, 2013).

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

The problem of marrying coordination/collaboration across boundaries with autonomy of organisations and with vertical control appears to be a fundamental difficulty embedded in the structure of government:

‘Traditional mechanisms of accountability in parliamentary democracy were never designed to cope with multidimensional fragmented policy systems’ (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004).

Even effective structural reforms can still leave officials with the problem of how to bridge vertical separation and horizontal division (Halligan et al, 2011, p. 82).

CULTURAL CHALLENGES

Just as cultural change is seen as a fundamental enabler for whole of government work, cultural barriers are thought to present the greatest obstacle. Indeed, cultural issues were flagged by Whelan et al (2003, p. 85) as being among the most important to tackle:

‘Structural change is less important than overcoming the cultural barriers to operating across silos, whether such operations are between two or more departments, between departments and agencies, or even at times within single departments’.

Similarly, Halligan et al (2011, p. 94) comment:

‘Horizontal management and whole of government raise significant issues in organization design and behavioural challenges. The obstacles to inculcating cultural change, however, remain substantial. The imperative of the functional principle and the rigidity of organizational boundaries still looms prominently in all countries.’

PRACTICAL CHALLENGES

At a practical level, challenges and barriers to effective whole of government work include the fact that whole of government:

- Can be very time consuming (OECD, 2006). Time and effort is required to sustain healthy working
relationships, identify shared goals and priorities, allocate resources and work toward achieving shared objectives.

- **Requires individuals to put their own agendas aside** (OECD, 2006). It can be challenging to balance the different rationales and perspectives of the actors involved, as well as to clarify the roles of the actors and establish who should take a leadership role. Creating a shared service means that some stakeholders will potentially lose power, influence and control (Kearney, 2009).

- **Is difficult to measure in terms of its success.** The issue of whether stakeholders or departments have ‘worked well together’ is rarely measured or rewarded. It is difficult to demonstrate that collaboration has been successful, compared to, for example, determining whether a single Government department has reduced its expenditure. Therefore, a lack of priority is given to how well Ministers work with other departments (e.g. saving money is valued, rewarded and demonstrable – working well together is not).

- **May have poorly defined, incompatible goals and frequently involves competing political and community agendas.** It is difficult for departments to work together collaboratively if the goals are not clearly defined or if their priorities conflict.

Other practical challenges and barriers include:

- lack of incentives to share data;
- institutional, budgetary and financial ‘wells’ between departments;
- lack of time and other scarce resources;
- ‘unintended risks, ambitious agendas and uncontrolled consequences’ (Fafard, 2013);
- departmental cultures.

**EVALUATION**

Given the complex issues that whole of government approaches tend to tackle (e.g. intractable social issues, unexpected crises), evaluation is a multifaceted, complicated process. Such policy initiatives have to be viewed in combination as they interact with each other, leading to outcomes that are more than just the sum of individual programme outcomes. A few examples will illustrate the point.

- **In British Columbia**, as part of the ActNow BC health promotion initiative, a *Baseline Document* was prepared as a resource tool and baseline for programme planners and health authorities in the monitoring and evaluation of the province’s progress on healthy living goals and partnered programmes (ActNow BC, 2006).

- **In New Zealand**, the now ended *Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA) Strategy* explicitly recognised the importance of evaluation and the need to create an evidence base to support future initiatives (*see Appendix 7*). An implementation plan (2003-2010) was developed outlining timeframes, key actors, their roles and responsibilities, targets and desired outcomes. A companion document, *Healthy Eating – Healthy Action: A Background*, was published, which provided the scientific support and rationale for the directions proposed in the strategic framework (Ministry of Health, 2004). The Ministry of Health also commissioned a consortium of researchers to evaluate the strategy as a whole.

- **In Ireland, Healthy Ireland** has a focus on research, to ensure that goals, programmes and funding decisions are based on robust evidence about the determinants of health and best practice approaches in addressing them. Accordingly, there are plans to develop a Research, Data and Innovation Plan for Healthy Ireland to build the knowledge base and ensure that high-quality and up-to-date data, scientific knowledge and evaluation tools are available to support the implementation and monitoring of the Framework’s actions and guide the development of new policies into the future. An Outcomes Framework will also be developed, specifying key indicators to underpin each of the four high-level goals. Targets for quantifiable improvements will be set,
where appropriate. Regular measurement of these indicators will allow progress to be assessed over time.

- **In Scotland**, attempts have been made to measure cultural change in relation to the *Getting it Right for Every Child* initiative. To do this, HM Inspectors carried out a programme of visits over the period September 2011 to April 2012 to a sample of 11 Education Authorities across Scotland. They did this with the aim of examining the extent to which the education system was currently using *Getting it Right for Every Child* approaches to help ensure that children and families got the right help at the right time. The task sought to identify how fully authorities and establishments had embedded the foundations of the *Getting it Right for Every Child* approach. It also explored progress in implementing key elements of the approach.

However, measuring outcomes does not necessarily tell us about the cultural changes that are noted in this document as being important. In Australia, the Goodna Service Integration Project noted that they had been effective in encouraging changes in how Government and Government-funded agencies did business in the Goodna community, yet there were very few definitive outcome measures commonly utilised by Government agencies that could conclusively demonstrate these changes (Community Service and Research Centre, 2002).

It seems evaluation of whole of government initiatives in some cases is particularly challenging and requires a focused attempt by the evaluation research community to develop methodologies suited to their unique features.
2.4 An Implementation Science perspective on whole of government approaches

THE CONTEXT FOR FUTURE WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

In Ireland, the Public Service Reform Plan, 2014-2016 prioritises many of the features that are fundamental to effective whole of government working (DPER, 2014). The Plan places high priority on service user focus, strong emphasis on leadership and capability, mobility at senior levels of the public service and cultural change. It underlines the need to ensure real integration and collaborative working across the system, with the Senior Public Service (SPS) programme at the heart of that intent:

‘In line with a commitment in the Programme for Government, the Senior Public Service (SPS) was established “to nurture the collaborative culture needed to tackle the biggest cross-cutting social and economic challenges”, initially across the Civil Service and ultimately extending to the wider Public Service. This entails strengthening leadership and management capacity at an individual level, as well as developing leaders as a shared corporate resource for the system as a whole’ (DPER, 2014, p. 30).

This approach lays the foundation for strengthening whole of government work across the public sector in Ireland.

In Northern Ireland, as outlined previously, in the Programme for Government, 2011-2015 the Government recognised that making a real difference demands effective cross-departmental working in conjunction with effective collaboration. The Government had committed to promote cross-departmental working in particular areas.

THE POTENTIAL OF IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

The CES Introductory Guide to Implementation highlights the potential for applying systematic implementation approaches to policy development:

‘Implementation can refer to any innovation ... [It] can relate to policy, which involves a series of activities undertaken by government and its institutions to achieve the goals and objectives articulated in policy statements’ (Burke et al, 2012, p. 2).

The Stages and Enablers Framework (ibid, p. 9) forms the core of an Implementation Science approach to policy and programme implementation. This framework offers potential for an evidence-informed approach to whole of government policy implementation by drawing together the theory and research on whole of government working with the learning from Implementation Science (see Figure 3).

STAGES IN A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT-POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The literature suggests that whole of government policy implementation begins at the policy development stage. It is at this stage that policy-makers can ascertain that a whole of government approach is a good ‘fit’ for the particular policy challenge and lay the groundwork for successful implementation by:

- assessing the extent of the interdependencies involved in successful implementation, both across areas of government and also between levels of government;
- deciding whether the extent of these interdependencies warrants a whole of government approach;
- mapping the stakeholders whose work impacts on successful policy implementation (including NGOs and other non-governmental actors whose work can impact on implementation);
- drawing on the expertise and experience of the key stakeholders to help design and develop the policy with effective implementation in mind from the start.
Following policy development, the detailed planning can usefully draw on the framework of Enablers that have been identified for effective implementation (Burke et al, 2012).

**ENABLERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY**

In a whole of government context, the enablers for policy implementation and the key tasks associated with each enabler are illustrated in Figure 3. Each stage is discussed below.

*Figure 3: Enablers for implementation of whole of government policy*

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**Stakeholder consultation and buy-in**

- Identify all the stakeholders on whose work, involvement or cooperation the success of implementation depends.
- Ensure that front-line delivery personnel and professionals are brought into the policy development and implementation planning cycle from the start.
- Work with the stakeholders to build a shared vision of the outcomes, in particular a shared view of the nature and causes of the challenge being addressed, and a common picture of the path to the outcomes.

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*Adapted from CES’ Introductory Guide to Implementation (2012).*
• Develop joined-up thinking among all stakeholders about the process through which change will be achieved and the barriers to be overcome.

Leadership
• Secure political and administrative leadership of key Ministers and senior public officials at the outset and across the lifetime of the project.
• Ensure the initiative is a clear strategic priority of Government, with high status.
• Create opportunities for visible endorsement and constant communication about the change involved arising from this whole of government initiative.
• Identify an operational leader or leadership group to drive the project.
• Ensure that the Leadership Team driving the policy implementation reflects the nature of the whole of government initiative.
• Construct Implementation Networks with appropriate skills, authority and accountability.
• Provide leadership supports for whole of government work.

Resources
• Determine how the budget for the policy implementation will be secured, where accountability rests and how accountabilities will be shared, if appropriate.
• Identify and secure the staff with the skillsets and expertise needed for the work.

Implementation structures and teams
• Identify the whole of government structures that fit with the particular initiative.
• Ensure there is a clear mandate for the initiative and that accountability for delivering on the mandate is agreed.
• Work out the key accountabilities and accountability frameworks.
• Work out the areas of expertise required and where authority and competencies lie.
• Assign formal roles and responsibilities in the initiative.
• Establish Implementation Teams with relevant expertise in policy development and organisational strategy, expert knowledge and boundary-spanning skills to guide the initiative.
• Include people from diverse backgrounds, including whole of government knowledge, organisation development, relevant specialist professional backgrounds and service delivery experience.

Implementation planning
• Set the objective of the whole of government initiative and the expected outcomes.
• Identify the key ‘boundaries’ and interdependencies.
• Map the interdepartmental/interagency ‘gaps’ in information, capacities, funding, operational policies.
• Develop an Implementation Plan for the whole of government policy.
• Develop performance indicators, targets and measures.
• Develop accountability frameworks and budgetary frameworks.
• Jointly develop and enter into formal collaboration agreements.

Staff capacity
• Prepare and implement the strategy for building staff capacity, including staff selection, training, ongoing coaching and support for boundary-spanning skills.
• Identify career pathways for specialist staff who can offer expertise in whole of government work.
• Consider using a panel of advisors/mentors with expertise in whole of government work.
• Offer joint training with people from all the relevant agencies/units.
• Provide support for developing:
  o networking skills;
- capacity to cultivate cross-boundary relationships;
- relationship skills and collaboration;
- understanding of the interdependencies involved in solving complex problems;
- support for managing organisational cultural differences.

**Supportive culture**
- Build and sustain a supportive and enabling culture for the policy that is being implemented on a whole of government basis.

**Communication**
- Set up a communications plan to ensure that all of the key stakeholders involved or affected by the whole of government initiative are kept informed about progress.
- Communicate the whole of government dimension of the work routinely.

**Monitoring and evaluation**
- Establish a robust system for gathering data, monitoring and evaluation, suited to the challenges of a whole of government context.

**Learning from experience**
- Set up formal systems to capture and share the learning and experience about whole of government work.
- Create and maintain a repository of knowledge.

### 2.5 Summary and Conclusions

Whole of government is likely to be a feature of the policy implementation landscape in some form for the future, given the increasing complexities of the social and economic landscape, nationally and internationally. As the issues that governments face today become increasingly complex, and as technology continues to advance to provide new and novel ways to interact and share information, whole of government working becomes progressively more necessary.

The potential benefits of adopting whole of government approaches include a focus on prevention, increased user satisfaction, better outcomes and a better working environment for those implementing whole of government policy. The benefits of these approaches can only be realised if they are implemented well. In such cases, the benefits will be felt across Government departments and society, although not necessarily immediately.

Early adopters of whole of government approaches have typically recognised the benefits and have not reversed out of their decisions to endorse whole of government working. However, there are implementation challenges that must be recognised and dealt with. The literature on Implementation Science offers a resource to guide thinking on how the challenges of implementation can be met. Linking the theory and research on whole of government approaches with emerging work on evidence-informed policy implementation can inform and guide future developments.
References
References


Appendix 1:
Whole of government in action – Scotland and New Zealand

Two international examples are described here of how whole of government initiatives have been applied in practice. The examples come from Scotland and New Zealand, and consider projects at various stages of development and implementation. The accounts are descriptive rather than evaluative.

Scotland’s Whole System Approach to Youth Justice

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

Scotland’s Whole System Approach to Youth Justice is intended to ensure that the right service is provided by the right person or agency at the right time for young people. The approach applies across the age range 8-18 years. It aims to ensure a consistent approach among agencies and to keep young people out of the statutory systems where possible. It involves a multi-pronged strategy, operating at the following tiered levels: early and effective intervention and support; diversion from prosecution; community alternatives to secure care and custody; effective risk management measures, where risk is managed through children’s hearing system rather than Court; Court support; changing behaviours of those in secure care and custody; and support for re-integration and transition.

The approach involves a range of practitioners working together to support families and taking early action at the first signs of difficulty. It was piloted in a number of counties in 2010 and 2011, and has now been rolled-out across Scotland.

The Aberdeen Youth Justice Development Pilot Programme, based on the Whole System Approach model, ran from 2010 to 2012. Material in this case study is drawn from accounts of the national policy frameworks (see below) and the Aberdeen Pilot Programme.

POLICY CONTEXT

The main policy framework is Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC). This is the national child-centred framework that requires all services (social work, health, education, police, housing and voluntary organisations) to adopt streamlined systems to work together to support children and young people. The other policy frameworks for youth justice are:

- Protecting Scotland’s Communities (2008), the Scottish blueprint for reducing offending and re-offending and enhancing public safety;
- Preventing Offending by Young People: A Framework for Action (2008), which set down procedures for interagency working to prevent and reduce offending;
- Securing Our Future Initiative (2009), which is the strategy for community-based alternatives to secure care.

STRUCTURES TO DELIVER THE PROGRAMME

Structures operate at national and local level to support the Whole System Approach.

National level

- National Youth Justice Advisory Group: The role of this national body of representatives from all 32...
local authorities in Scotland is to act as the link between local youth justice representatives within the authorities and the Government, providing a conduit for information, policy and national development. The group meets quarterly.

- **National Youth Justice Strategic Group:** This group was set up in 2007 to develop a framework for dealing with young people who offend or who are at risk of offending. Members have a dual role – to represent their organisation or constituency, and to share the responsibility of delivering the framework.

**County level**

- **Steering Group:** At county level, the Aberdeen Youth Justice Development Pilot Programme was supported by a Steering Group, chaired by Grampian Police, with the remit to ensure high-level support, be responsible for governance and gain high-level buy-in.
- **Strategy Group:** This group was chaired by Children’s Services and made up of representatives from a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies.
- **Partnerships:** The Aberdeen Programme Team worked in partnership with Aberdeen City Council, Grampian Police, NHS Grampian, Education Services, Scottish Children’s Reporter Administration (SCRA), Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS), Scottish Court Service (SCS) and the Third Sector.

**SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES**

The key systems and processes that have been introduced are mainly the professional tools for interagency working. These include a pre-referral screening process, the ‘diversion from prosecution process’, introduction of the Court Support Worker, as well as several other new types of service provision to match the tiers of the Whole System Approach.

Practice guidance for the various strands of the Whole System Approach is provided by the Criminal Justice Social Work Development Centre, working closely with the National Youth Justice Advisory Group.

**OUTCOMES TO DATE AND BENEFITS REALISED**

The Aberdeen Pilot Programme was evaluated in 2011 and found to be successful on a number of key metrics, including significant reductions in the number of children being referred on both offending and non-offending grounds, and reduction in the number of young people accommodated in secure or residential accommodation. The evaluation stresses that it was, at that point (2011), too early to determine the impact of the programme on outcomes for young people. The evaluation and other documents highlight positive changes in processes, including:

- altered relationship between Youth Justice Management Unit of Grampian Police (YJMU) and Education;
- increased contact between YJMU and Social Work;
- radical changes in policing practice;
- improvements in the range of services and better communication between agencies.

**CHALLENGES**

Early evaluation of the Aberdeen Pilot Programme highlights challenges common to all whole of government and interagency initiatives. The interim evaluation, carried out after a year of operation of the Whole System Approach in Aberdeen, refers to the need for top-down guidance from the Scottish Government; a shared set of outcome targets and indicators aligned to the performance metrics tracked by the programme and the wider Youth Justice Strategy, to provide a focus for all delivery partners; and investment in knowledge-sharing platforms. The evaluation also highlights the importance of a partnership-level vision to support mainstreaming, effective governance and a single shared budget.
New Zealand’s Healthy Eating – Healthy Action Strategy Framework

SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The Healthy Eating – Healthy Action: Oranga Kai – Oranga Pumau: Strategy Framework (known as the HEHA Strategy) provided an integrated policy framework intended to bring about changes in the environment in which New Zealanders live, work and play as this relates to nutrition, physical activity and obesity. It was the Ministry of Health’s response to 3 of the 13 priority population health objectives outlined in the New Zealand Health Strategy (Minister of Health, 2000).

TIMEFRAMES

The Implementation Plan, 2003-2010 for the HEHA Strategy had a 6+ year perspective. It was to be reviewed after 5 years. The majority of the actions should have been implemented, or at least initiated, within that timeframe. It was recognised from the start that progress would have to be made on the actions in a step-by-step fashion, depending in part on the availability of resources, including the appropriate workforce.

POLICY AREAS INVOLVED

The work to improve nutrition, increase physical activity and reduce obesity would require multiple actions by multiple players, including the Health and Physical Activity sectors, as well as a wide range of other sectors as detailed below.

Health sector
- Ministry of Health;
- District Health Boards;
- hospitals, clinical and specialist services;
- Primary Health Organisations;
- primary healthcare providers;
- Public Health Units, non-governmental organisations, community-based providers and organisations (including Māori and Pacific) and health professionals.

Physical Activity sector
- SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand);
- regional sports trusts, physical activity providers and community providers and organisations.

Education sector
- Ministry of Education;
- academics and researchers, tertiary institutions and schools.

Other sectors
- Central Government agencies, e.g. Social Development; Transport; Environment; Local Government;
- food and food service industry, including fast food, vegetable and fruit, grocery, restaurants;
- physical activity industry, including gyms, weight loss industry, advertising and the media;
- employers/the workplace.

LEADERSHIP ROLES

The Ministry of Health’s Sector Capability and Innovation Directorate formed an Inter-Agency Steering Group on HEHA. Key contributors to the objectives of this group included Government agencies, Sport and Recreation
New Zealand (SPARC), and District Health Boards. The Ministry adopted a national coordinating role with these contributors and other key stakeholders.

STRUCTURES SET UP TO DELIVER THE PROJECT

An Implementation Steering Group was established to provide leadership and expert advice to the Ministry of Health during the implementation phase.

In response to the Inquiry into Obesity and Type 2 Diabetes, the Government proposed that the Inter-Agency Steering Group be expanded to become the HEHA Sector Steering Group, to provide expert advice to the new ministerial committee for HEHA, led by the Minister of Health. This group has membership from a number of relevant Government organisations and others, including representatives of non-governmental organisations, agencies for Nutrition Action, the Chronic Diseases Peak Group, members of Māori and Pacific communities, obesity experts and food industry representatives.

Crown funding agreement variations were put in place between the Ministry of Health and the 21 District Health Boards. The variations included specifying the need for District Health Boards to coordinate partnerships for HEHA implementation at both regional and district level. These partnerships include regional sports trusts, the Ministry of Education (through School Support Services) and other relevant sectors.

SUPPORTS

The Implementation Plan, 2003-2010 was developed, outlining timeframes, key actors, their roles and responsibilities, targets and desired outcomes. A companion document, Healthy Eating – Healthy Action: A Background, provided the scientific support and rationale for the directions proposed in the strategic framework (Ministry of Health, 2004).

WHAT HELPED?

The HEHA Strategy was congruent with a number of other strategies and policies underway at the time of implementation. The overarching strategies for the health and disability services are the New Zealand Health Strategy (Minister of Health, 2000) and the New Zealand Disability Strategy (Minister for Disability Issues, 2000). Nutrition, physical activity and obesity are also related to the development of several diseases. As a result, there are synergies with a number of other Ministry of Health strategies, including: He Korowai Oranga: Māori Health Strategy and Whakatātaka: Māori Health Action Plan (Minister of Health and Associate Minister of Health, 2002); Pacific Health and Disability Action Plan (Minister of Health, 2002); New Zealand Cancer Control Strategy (Minister of Health, 2003); Reducing Inequalities in Health (Ministry of Health, 2002); Breastfeeding: A guide to action (Ministry of Health, 2002); Child Health Strategy (Minister of Health, 1998); Health of Older People Strategy (Associate Minister of Health and Associate Minister for Disability Issues, 2002); and Achieving Health for All People (Ministry of Health, 2003).

Particular agencies were identified to take part in the actions specified. Milestones and measures of progress towards the outcomes were established.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS

Significant concerns were expressed about workforce development and the workload that implementation would create, especially for the small, already stretched Maori and Pacific workforces, with little scope or resources to train specialists in nutrition-related interventions to address the skills shortage.
Despite a broad consultation process, communication with Maori was found wanting, mostly due to the Ministry’s lack of networks with local providers, leading to decreased participation and potential buy-in to the underlying rationale and structure of the HEHA Strategy.

A potential unintended consequence of HEHA was identified in that it could re-enforce the status quo or exacerbate existing inequalities by meeting the needs of those who already have the best health.

OUTCOMES

Early activity included the ‘Fruit in Schools’ campaign and efforts to stop the selling of fizzy drinks in schools and improve the nutritional content of food sold in schools. In 2008, HEHA initiatives included updating the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers aged 0-2, reviewing the Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Older People, and launching the National Strategic Plan of Action for Breastfeeding.

EVALUATION

Because the HEHA Strategy explicitly recognised the importance of evaluation and the need to create an evidence base to support future initiatives, the Ministry of Health commissioned a consortium of researchers to evaluate the strategy as a whole.

A stocktake of HEHA-related initiatives was undertaken across New Zealand to answer questions about health impact and value for money. In 2008/2009, over 1,200 local initiatives were underway in New Zealand and several nation-wide programmes were in place. In 2009/2010, the database was updated to incorporate new programmes initiated following the completion of the original database and update information on those programmes that had ceased. At this time, as with the first stocktake, Physical Activity programmes outnumbered Nutrition programmes, although a combined approach was still the most popular. Overall, there remained a spread of initiatives across a range of policy, environmental, and other activities, although the numbers of these were found to have decreased substantially.
Appendix 2:  
Structures used for whole of government work, their features and uses

The following tables show the types of structures that can be used for whole of government work, some of the features they display and their uses. Based on Connecting Government: Whole of Government responses to Australia’s priority challenges (Management Advisory Committee (Australian Government), 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Features</th>
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</table>
| Interdepartmental committees | • Employees meet formally as representatives of their departments.  
• They are expected to speak with their department’s authority and seek appropriate clearance for the positions they advance.  
• The scope of business and membership of the committee is defined and its establishment authorised at an appropriate level.  
• Decision-making is by consensus.  
• Records of outcomes are kept.  
• The minimum expectation is to clarify options and to establish agreed facts.  
• Can be efficient and responsive to government, but less useful for an agreement on contentious issues where stakeholders disagree.  
• Interdepartmental committees can become a bureaucratic habit. |
| Taskforces           | • Taskforces focus on joint problem-solving for a shared outcome.  
• Members have time limits and objectives to provide a clear outcome.  
• Members are engaged to bring skills and experiences to joint problem-solving.  
• Members are sometimes expected to keep their home agency informed and engaged in support of the taskforce’s work.  
• Members can be drawn from outside the public service, as well as from the departments directly concerned, and reflect an appropriate range of disciplines and experience.  
• Members are frequently engaged full-time with the whole of government task and work to the taskforce leader.  
• Members frequently undergo a conscious separation from line accountabilities in the host department.  
• Members often work to a Cabinet committee of Ministers.  
• Members often engage with a consultative interdepartmental committee drawn from the affected departments and conduct consultations with community organisations.  
• Members put their agency’s interests behind them.  
• Taskforces can be expensive and may fail to canvass all the options.  
• Taskforces offer participants valuable development opportunities, but can distance people from their home agencies. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interdepartmental partnerships –</td>
<td>• Blended, not standalone, structures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joint teams</td>
<td>• Employees from two or more departments work together to deliver shared outcomes in a blended functional organisation with an expected life of several years.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• No agency has the lead role and joint decision-making occurs between the team managers, the executives of the departments and the Ministers, as appropriate.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• There are appropriate governance arrangements to allow this to happen efficiently.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Formal financial accountability rests with each department for funds appropriated to it and each department remains accountable under the Public Service Act for its employees, who continue to work under the personnel provisions of their home department.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Cross-delegations enable joint team managers to administer blended groups.</td>
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<td>• To external clients, employees are identified as members of the joint team rather than in terms of their home agencies.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Trust at the highest level is essential.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Joint teams are comprised of employees from two agencies, but co-located.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Funding is appropriated to one agency, but decisions about allocations are made jointly.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Joint governance mechanisms are needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cross-departmental partnerships:</td>
<td>• An existing Government department or agency delivers services on behalf of one or more others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency arrangements</td>
<td>• Agency services are provided through:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• core platforms;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• staffing networks;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• functions;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• skill sets.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Policy agencies set standards that providers deliver.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• One-stop shops provide a single point of service.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• One-stop shops aim to meet citizens’ demands for seamless delivery.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• There is potential for involvement in policy development processes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special-purpose agencies:</td>
<td>• ‘Frontier agencies’ are structures that symbolise to stakeholders a coherent whole of government approach to a contentious and complex issue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frontier agencies</td>
<td>• They provide expertise, dispassionate advice and programme administration on complex issues.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Employees will probably derive from several different home departments and at first might represent policy views previously in conflict, or will focus on the narrower group of external stakeholders that they dealt with before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Useful for Policy development where ...</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interdepartmental Committees</strong></td>
<td>• There is an accepted factual and analytic base (or commitment to develop it).&lt;br&gt;• Members are authorised to compromise.&lt;br&gt;• Definition of areas of disagreement and options is acceptable.&lt;br&gt;• There are subsequent decision-making steps.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Taskforces</strong></td>
<td>• There is high government priority.&lt;br&gt;• There is a complex problem.&lt;br&gt;• Creative solutions are required.&lt;br&gt;• There is contention across key stakeholders or within government.&lt;br&gt;• There are tight timelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interdepartmental partnerships: Joint teams</strong></td>
<td>• There is need for ongoing work.&lt;br&gt;• It is of equal importance to partners.&lt;br&gt;• There can be a high level of trust.&lt;br&gt;• There are clear benefits in terms of cost or quality from joint work.&lt;br&gt;• There is no disadvantage in loss of separate policy voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful for</td>
<td>Policy development where …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Cross-departmental partnerships: Agency arrangements | Not applicable | Not applicable – see ‘Taskforces’ or ‘Interdepartmental Committees’ for preferable alternatives | • Engagement in services is medium to long term.  
• Agency offers key infrastructure networks or skills.  
• Agencies share clients or transactions.  
• Agencies’ values are compatible. | • There is a high level of trust and willingness to contract out programme delivery.  
• There is no disadvantage from loss of separate Government agency branding.  
• Agencies’ values are compatible. | Not applicable — see Taskforce or ‘Interdepartmental Committees’ for preferable alternatives |
| Special purpose agencies: Frontier agencies | • There are new complex issues that require more extended effort than a taskforce can provide.  
• There are contentious issues across a range of stakeholders.  
• The symbolism of separate agency is important.  
• There are clear governance arrangements to ensure whole of government approaches. | • New instruments and measures cut across traditional boundaries.  
• Multidisciplinary skills are drawn from other agencies.  
• Delivery and programme design needs to be tightly aligned for effective outcomes.  
• There are clear governance arrangements to ensure whole of government approaches. | • Mutual support and coherence between programmes in a non-mature field are a high priority.  
• There are clear governance arrangements to ensure whole of government approaches. | Not likely to be applicable | Not likely to be applicable |
The Centre for Effective Services connects research, policy and practice to improve outcomes for communities, children and young people across the island of Ireland. Part of a new generation of intermediary organisations, CES is a not-for-profit that helps communities, children and young people thrive.