



Sharing Front Office Services: The Journey to Citizen-Centric Delivery

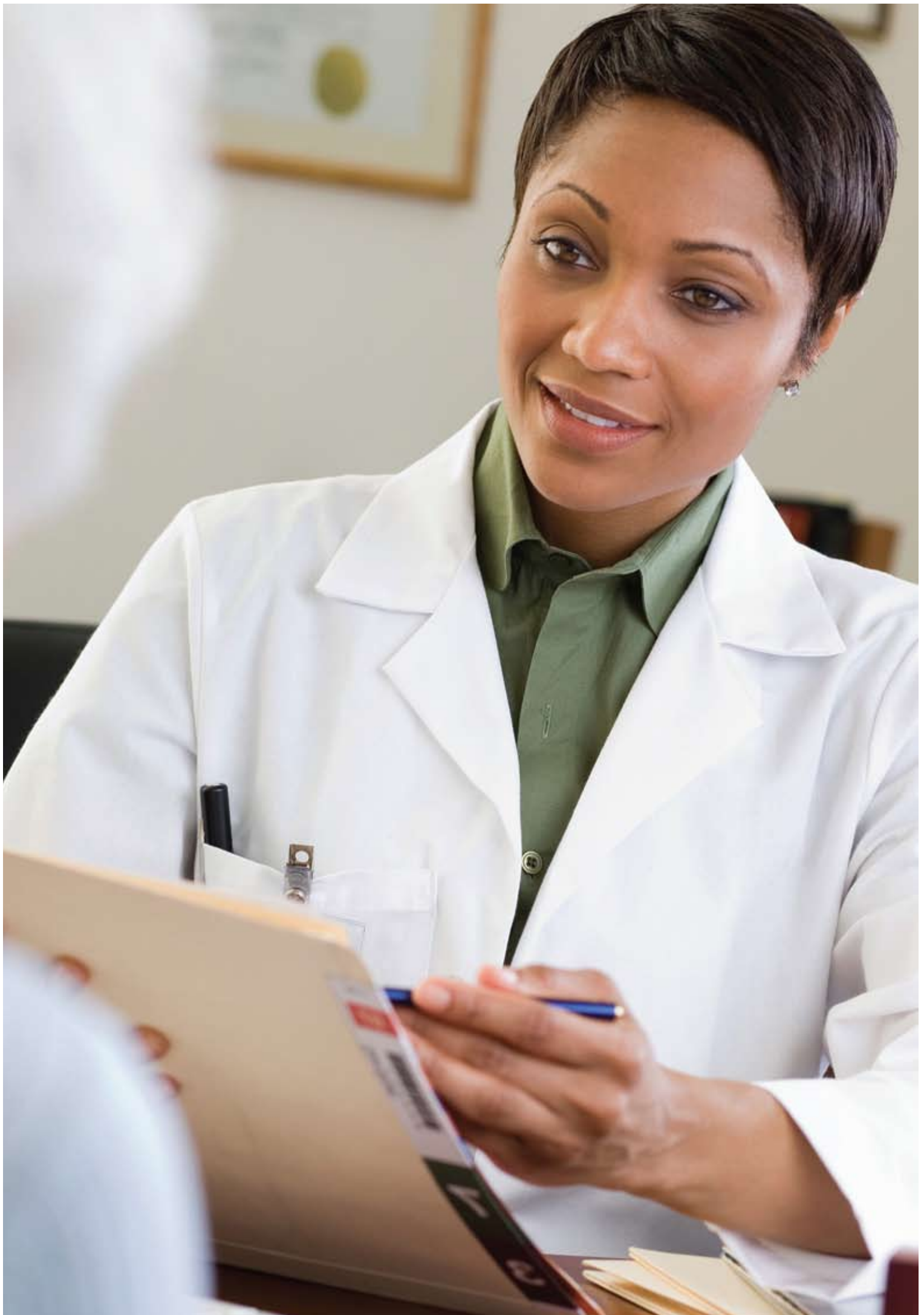
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Executive summary

This report from the Accenture Institute for Health & Public Service Value shares the findings from a broad study of front office shared service initiatives. The study involved detailed case studies of different types of front office shared service initiatives representing a range of service areas from around the world. We supplemented the case studies with secondary research and interviews with experts from Accenture and other organizations.

Front office shared services represent an opportunity for government agencies to respond to citizens' demands for public services that take a coordinated, holistic approach to delivery. Well implemented, these initiatives can transform agencies from separate organizations that deliver according to service boundaries into citizen-centric agencies that take a strategic approach to supporting people's whole life needs. This transformation is especially important now. Today, citizens expect more from government, and government is seeking ways to

achieve better outcomes in the face of increasingly tight budgets and scarce resources. Front office shared services can support greater efficiency and enhanced effectiveness by enabling agencies to orient delivery around citizens' holistic needs.

While the potential advantages are clear, how to implement shared services is more challenging. For some agencies, even getting started can seem a daunting task. By identifying steps to take now, agencies can achieve immediate improvements in public value, build their own facilities for continuing change, and develop an evolutionary approach most appropriate to tackling the complexity of outcomes they face.

The structure and focus of front office shared service initiatives vary significantly and involve different levels of service integration. In our study, we found four broad models of front office shared services: collaborative information and assessment systems, collaborative customer interface,

networked delivery and joint delivery.

The first two models of collaborative working tend to involve the sharing of systems and interactions with users, whereas the third and fourth models involve collaboration among agencies to ensure seamless delivery of a range of related services.

Each of the models offers different benefits and is better suited to different circumstances. This report asserts that the nature of the target outcome should be the guiding principle in choosing the appropriate type of shared service initiative. The greater the complexity of target outcome, the greater the level of integration required. If an agency is dealing with a particularly complex outcome, an effective response requires a high level of integration, such as the networked or joint delivery models.

Where the nature of the outcome is less complex, the collaborative information and assessment systems and the collaborative customer interfaces are generally more appropriate.

Regardless of the model chosen, sharing front office services offers a powerful means for delivering integrated services more effectively and efficiently and for improving the customer experience.

The report presents a diagnostic framework that can serve as a prompt for change leaders wishing to implement shared front office services initiatives. The diagnostic comprises three steps:

- Step one prompts change leaders to assess the complexity of the initiative's intended outcomes to identify the appropriate shared services model for their organization.
- Step two allows them to consider the scale and nature of the challenges they face, and to assess the capacity and capabilities of their agencies to deal with these challenges.
- Step three offers a framework for considering the most appropriate implementation journey, along with examples of initiatives that have taken one of the two routes

to change: direct transformational change or an evolutionary approach.

Whatever the approach, implementing a shared service initiative is not easy. Those embarking upon the journey toward greater service integration face a number of critical challenges, and success depends on the organizations' ability to address these. The challenges relate to governance, performance management, workforce change and information sharing and systems. Building on our learning from the case studies, this report explores these critical challenges.

The structure of the report

This report is structured as follows:

- The first chapter looks at the drive for front office shared service initiatives, setting out the main benefits that such initiatives can achieve.
- Chapter two presents the four different models of front office shared service initiatives, along with an analysis of when and where each model is most appropriate.

- Chapter three discusses the implementation efforts required to successfully set up front office shared service initiatives. It briefly describes four critical implementation challenges and provides a diagnostic framework designed to help guide decisions about the change approach most likely to succeed.

Appendix A provides a more detailed description of the critical challenges government agencies must address to integrate services successfully, along with lessons learned about managing these challenges. Appendix B provides an overview of each case study examined during this study.

Chapter one: The drive for shared front office services

"For the most part, people don't really know which agency they should deal with to meet their need. And they shouldn't really need to know or care either. We need to give them an experience of dealing with government, not just with agency A or B or C."

Kent County Council change leader

Recent decades have brought fundamental shifts in public service provision. Driven by the need to use public money more efficiently and spurred by citizens who have become increasingly sophisticated consumers of public services, government agencies are continuously reevaluating how they deliver services to improve public service value. Organizationally, these drivers have led many government agencies to seek efficiencies by sharing back office functions, such as payroll, human resources and procurement. Many have also used information and communications technology to transform the way they interact directly with citizens, often adopting commercial customer service techniques. To their credit, many individual agencies have achieved significant efficiency improvements.

Even so, pursuing excellence within individual agencies' operational "silos" is not enough. Citizens experience a broad range of needs, which are rarely confined to distinct organizational

or service boundaries. Rarely, either, does any one agency control all of the resources required to improve quality of life or to deliver economic and social outcomes. Rather, tackling complex social problems frequently requires a joined-up effort on the part of different agencies. To maximize public value, government and public service agencies need to look beyond organizational and service boundaries. They must establish ways of working by focusing on how best to serve citizens and improve outcomes.

Over the past two years, the Accenture Institute for Health & Public Service Value has engaged in a program of ongoing engagement with citizens around the world—the Accenture Global Cities Forum—to understand more about people's expectations of the role of their governments.¹ Citizens who participated in the Forums are clear about what they want. As one said:

"The basic principle [for government] should be that people want a good quality of life. Public service agencies

need to work together to improve people's lives by linking one service to another."

Through the Accenture Global Cities Forum, we also learned that people do not want to deal with a bewildering range of professionals to receive public services. As one Forum member observed, "My child has special needs and, yes, there are a lot of different people turning up trying to help. I don't really care where they are from—but why do we have to see so many? It needs to be coordinated better."²

People expect government agencies to respond to their needs in a holistic, joined-up manner. Yet, public service agencies traditionally have served citizens from within the agencies' own narrow service boundaries. Too often, people have been forced to "connect the dots" themselves—that is, to find the right agency or the right program for their circumstances or eligibility. This complexity significantly increases the cost to citizens, who

must spend time and resources to tap into the various services they may need to improve their social and economic conditions. This inefficient, ineffective way of working also leads to a fractured relationship between government and citizens. Understandably, people have little time or inclination to understand how to navigate different government services—and in the 21st century, they should not have to. Throughout the Global Cities Forum panels, citizens argued that government should think more innovatively about how best to focus on citizens' needs, which can often cut across departments and agencies, and to develop common, collaborative responses to social problems.

Front office shared service initiatives offer a powerful means for integrating service delivery effectively and efficiently while improving the customer experience. By joining up services, these initiatives have the potential to transform the relationship between citizens and government—moving beyond a focus on singular transactions toward a more holistic, co-productive relationship.

The benefits of front office shared services

The Institute defines front office shared service initiatives as those in which two or more agencies work together to deliver services jointly to citizens. Partner agencies can be purely governmental or may involve collaborations with nongovernmental agencies. Front office shared services take a variety of forms and involve different levels of service integration. In some cases, they involve merging agencies or parts of agencies into a single new body or a de facto agency to deliver services in a strategic, coordinated manner. Other initiatives involve more limited levels of service integration, such as sharing information and assessment frameworks, partnering around customer service interfaces or collaborating on specific cases.

In its variety of forms, sharing front office services enables government to:

- **Develop more effective responses to complex needs.** Improving citizens' well-being or social outcomes requires a coordinated response from public service agencies. For example, health is often determined by factors—such as lifestyle, living and working conditions or even disease prevention and control—that are outside hospital control. Similarly, to improve community safety, local police forces may need to work with other government agencies, such as schools, social services and housing agencies. Sharing front office services provides a powerful, coordinated method of responding to the complex needs of people and communities.
- **Provide users with a seamless service experience.** To access services, citizens often must deal with a large, complex web of agencies. As a person's needs intensify, the number of agencies and officials that he or she must deal with can increase exponentially. It can require significant resources—time, effort, knowledge—just to access services. If such resources are lacking, people run a real risk of falling through the cracks. Front office shared service initiatives help to reduce the complexity at the point of transaction, thereby improving users' service experience.
- **Reduce the cost-to-be-served.** Using shared initiatives, government agencies can often reduce the cost in time, effort and even money that it takes for citizens to access the services and support they need. When users can obtain services through the Internet rather than taking time to visit a government office, or if they can have all their needs met in one place, it reduces the cost to citizens.

- **Achieve efficiencies and reduce the cost-to-serve.** By sharing front office services, government agencies can achieve economies of scale by avoiding duplication of effort, particularly around information gathering, case management and client contact. In many cases, they can reduce the number of public estates required or pool their resources for information technologies. In most of the front office shared services initiatives we studied, government agencies have also been able to transform workforce deployment so human resources are used more effectively. They have done this by streamlining customer contact or, importantly, introducing "tiering" of services so that generalist staff focus on the more procedural requests while specialists focus on the more complex cases and inquiries.

Shared front office service initiatives offer the potential to reform the relationship between government agencies and the citizens they serve while bringing great gains in efficiency and effectiveness. Government agencies seeking to embark on a journey of sharing front office services need to consider carefully which type of shared service initiative is most appropriate to deliver value and match their specific circumstances. In the next chapter, we outline four different models of front office shared service initiatives and discuss what benefits each can offer.

Chapter two: The four models of front office shared service initiatives

In the quest to achieve high performance by delivering public value and improving the customer experience, governments are increasingly considering sharing front office services. While the goal remains the same, government agencies take different approaches to joining up services. The Accenture Institute for Health & Public Service Value has identified four broad models according to what they seek to share and how they seek to share it:

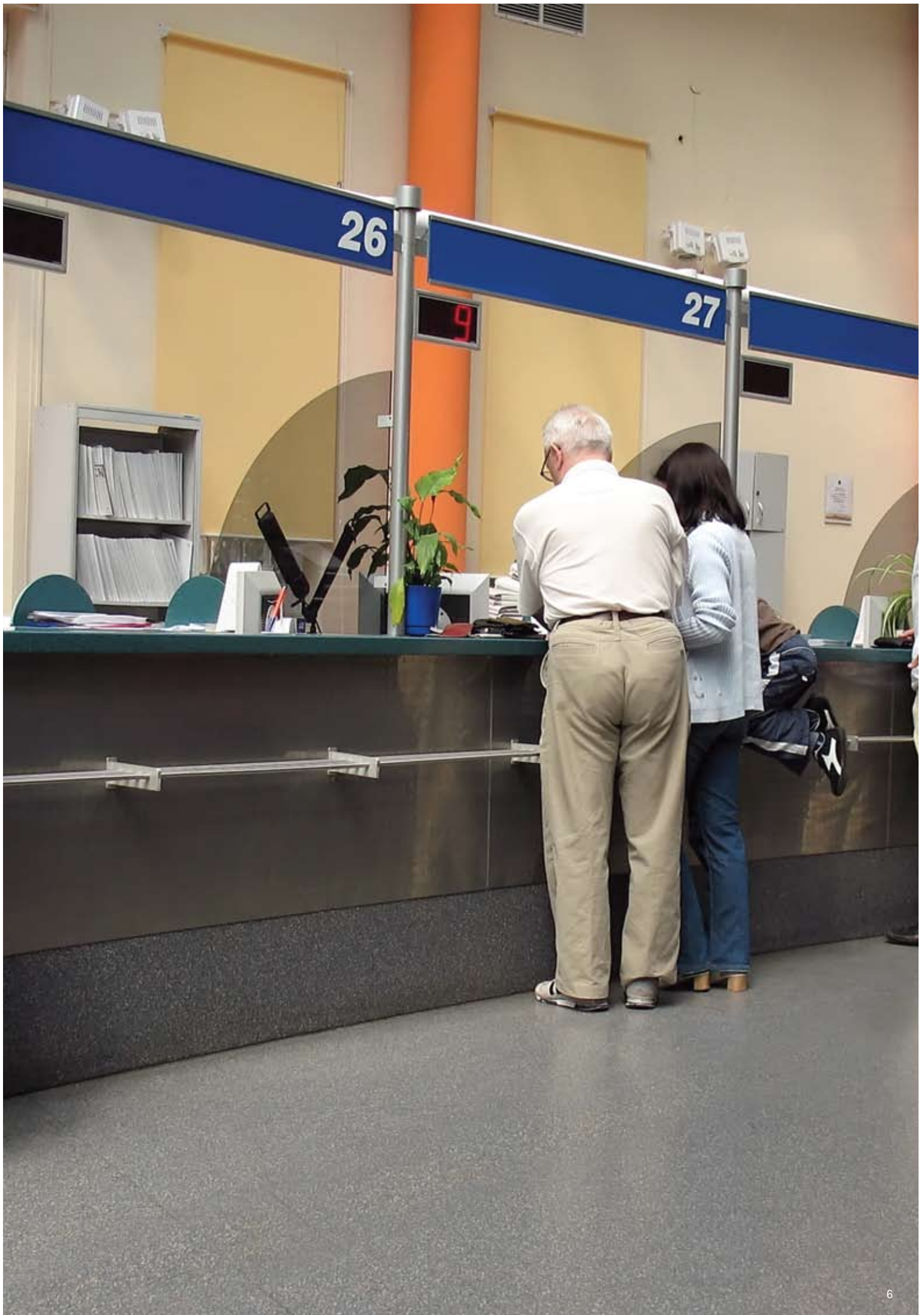
- Collaborative information and assessment systems
- Collaborative customer interface
- Networked delivery
- Joint delivery

The first two models are those in which government agencies share defined functions, systems and even space but do not share delivery functions. The second two models are ones in which multiple government agencies actually share responsibility for service delivery to customers or users.

These models can also be defined by considering the benefits they offer and how users experience the changed delivery format. All four offer ways of reducing the cost-to-serve (driving efficiencies for organizations) and cost-to-be-served (creating savings for individual users or consumers). The collaborative information and assessment systems and collaborative customer interface models are appropriate in situations where government agencies wish to extend access and improve joint case management processes. The networked delivery and joint delivery models are more useful in situations where users have complex needs that cannot be addressed through simple or single service transactions; these latter two models entail a fundamental transformation so that users enjoy an integrated service experience that addresses their complex needs. Regardless of which model is chosen, if used in the right circumstances, front office shared service initiatives

offer an effective way of significantly improving the user experience.

In this chapter, we explain the four models, broadly describing the characteristics and potential benefits of each. Although we present these models as distinct, our research suggests that organizations often use a mix of approaches—drawing characteristics from more than one of the models.



Collaborative information and assessment systems

Definition

Collaborative information and assessment systems comprise initiatives in which multiple agencies or multiple programs within government establish shared systems for managing citizen information and/or processing eligibility assessments and referrals. This model generally involves creating unified systems that bring together case information gathered and held by a range of agencies. In some cases, this includes—or, indeed, is primarily geared toward—providing systems that allow citizens' information to be collected only once for a range of programs delivered by various organizations.

This model is characterized by:

- The removal of duplicative processes of identifying the services for which the user may be eligible.
- A shift towards joint case management.
- Greater uniformity of process across partner agencies.
- Processes that are faster, more efficient and can reduce operational costs.
- The establishment of lifetime case records for individuals.

Examples of collaborative information and assessment systems

HHS-Connect (New York City, US) aims to break down information "silos" and coordinate business practices among government agencies. HHS Connect is developing a shared information system across its agencies in New York so they can access and share case information. The system also supports joint working. Presently, HHS-Connect provides an online eligibility tool for 35 city, state and federal benefit programs, as well as a common client index, worker portal, client portal and document management system.

The Crossroads Bank for Social Security (Belgium) acts as a clearing bank that "brokers" information between all areas of social security, thereby allowing government agencies to view case information across service areas. The system has also replaced a large number of paper-based application forms with faster, more reliable electronic applications.

Utah eREP (US), or electronic Resource and Eligibility Product, is an automated system to determine eligibility for several state-managed programs, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, food stamps and Medicaid. It is designed to enable single assessment of citizens for a range of programs. Some functions are directly accessible by citizens who can, for example, enter their information to return a list of services that may be available to them; others are used by government staff to enter information into the system, which is then used to assess eligibility for a range of services.

The C-IV System (US) in the C-IV Consortium in California significantly streamlines the process of determining eligibility for state welfare recipients. It is a user-friendly, customer-based, online and fully integrated information system designed to manage the data used by a range of social service programs.

Collaborative information and assessment systems are put in place by government agencies looking to develop a framework for coherent services that respond well to people's broader needs. The systems are designed to ensure that the agencies link up what is often separate information and that clients' needs are understood and assessed across the range of services offered by the participating agencies. Citizens usually need provide their personal information only once. Multiple government agencies can then use this information to assess eligibility for the range of benefits and services to which citizens might be entitled.

This model can deliver real efficiencies and improve the citizen experience of government by removing duplication. Under this model, citizens often can avoid the difficult and time-consuming process of identifying which agencies they should approach, filling out repetitious forms and undergoing multiple assessments. It helps to

ensure citizens get all the benefits to which they are entitled from the participating agencies, even if they do not themselves know what is available to them or where to access it. Utah eREP, for example, allows residents to provide personal information once for use by a wide range of government agencies that can also advise them of sources of nongovernmental support. And in California's C-IV project, a parent applying for emergency assistance will also automatically be considered for a range of child support programs—some of which the parent may not be aware of at the time. As one of the C-IV project leads explained, **"The philosophy is simple: We have a 'no wrong door' policy. It does not matter where the family comes in."** A collaborative information and assessment system has the potential to improve the relationship between government and the citizen. It prevents users of services being "left to join up the islands of service" and creates a relationship in which they are a client of government agencies that will find the best responses to their needs.³

Collaborative information and assessment systems form the basis of a shift toward **joint case management** where the full case history of clients is shared and accessed across all partnering agencies. This enables case workers to understand and respond to their users' broader needs either by offering services from their own agencies or by referring them to other agencies that are better placed to respond. In California, C-IV has adopted this approach, with common assessment frameworks ensuring that clients are served by all appropriate agencies and do not fall into the gaps between agencies.

The model also allows government agencies to create **greater uniformity of process**. Having a single system to receive and process information helps avoid disparities in data handling and assessments among participating agencies. Furthermore, as the systems often allow real-time electronic information sharing, the **processes are**

faster, more efficient and can reduce operational costs, as the Crossroads Bank in Belgium has discovered.

Similarly, as this model often entails the creation of a centralized eligibility assessment team, there are opportunities to improve economies of scale and, as C-IV has found, free up frontline staff for other work. At the same time, it is possible to build a **lifetime case record for individuals**. This is a great resource both for managing individual cases and, when the aggregated picture is considered, for the strategic development of service priorities. By analyzing individuals' interactions with a range of services, it may be possible to create new, more effective responses to people's needs.

In some cases, the development of collaborative information and assessment systems is considered as a **first step toward greater integration between services** by developing a common understanding of clients' needs across partner agencies. At the same time, sharing systems can increase the likelihood of partner agencies re-aligning the way in which they record and manage case work. HHS-Connect is an example of an organization that considers the development of a collaborative information and assessment system as a first step to greater integration. Those leading the change in HHS-Connect hope that part of its success will be to break down some of the traditional silo barriers—both operational and cultural—among government agencies.

Collaborative customer interface

Definition

A collaborative customer interface describes collaboration between a government agency and at least one other agency (government or nongovernment) in which the apparatus for customer interaction is shared. Under this model, government agencies collaborate to provide ways in which citizens can access multiple services (or obtain information about those services) in one place or through a single transaction. These can take the form of web portals, telephone information systems or customer access centers or one stop shops.

This model is characterized by:

- Signposting of services to provide clearer, faster and more effective means of access.
- Improvements in customer care.
- The establishment of an easily recognized "brand identity" for the public.
- Optimizing transaction processes and creating efficiencies.
- A common source of knowledge of citizen and community needs.
- Changes in usage patterns toward greater self service.

Examples of collaborative customer interface initiatives

Access Washington (US) is Washington State's Internet portal and the gateway to hundreds of online government services. Through the portal, citizens can open an account for secure transactions with the state, order certificates, find a contractor, file a claim, reserve a campsite, report a fraud, find a job, file and pay state taxes, and more.

Citizen Shops (Portugal) are single points of contact, or "one-stop shops," where citizens can access a wide range of central and local public services, as well as some private sector services. Primarily based in shopping centers, the shops are physical front office integration points where each participating agency is represented. The second iteration of the shops is just coming online. These will aim to provide even greater levels of service integration.

Kent Gateway (UK) consists of a number of customer access centers or "gateways." Located in major shopping areas, these gateways provide citizens with information about and direct access to public services provided by Kent County Council and a range of other partners, including the local borough council.

Poupatempo (Brazil), or "Time Saver" centers, bring together multiple state, municipal and federal government agencies within the state of Sao Paolo, to provide services to citizens in a single location. The centers aim to reduce service delivery times and increase service levels through a customer service approach backed by comprehensive information systems.

Service BC (Canada) is the first point of call for frontline government services and information in British Columbia. It delivers hundreds of programs and services to residents, businesses and visitors—in person, online and over the phone. It operates service centers in 60 of British Columbia's communities, as well as the web portal and phone service, and provides services on behalf of other

government departments through service agreements.

South Africa—Thusong Service Centres bring together government services within communities in "one-stop shops." These offer a range of government products and services under one roof, simplifying processing of applications for passports, identity documents, pensions and other social grants.

Winnipeg Integrated Services (Canada) is a partnership between Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) and Manitoba Family Services and Housing (FSH) whose goal is to integrate health and social services. The aim is to join forces to provide efficient, effective and holistic services that are person or family focused. Services are provided through local access centers where staff of the two agencies are co-located. These centers provide a range of services from access to social services personnel and information to hosting general practitioner surgeries and community healthcare facilities.

The collaborative customer interface model entails developing one place (physical or virtual) where citizens can access a range of government services and/or obtain information about services from different agencies. Collaborative customer interfaces are particularly appropriate when governments wish to gain efficiencies and provide a more integrated customer experience across a broad range of services. The model does not entail a transformation of the service delivery mechanisms or joint case management.

The collaborative interface acts as a funnel for services, directing clients to them and handling routine inquiries. The services themselves and the mechanisms for delivering them to citizens usually remain unchanged. Indeed, in many cases the model lends itself to having government agencies work together at the point of interface—such as an access center—but remain separate when it comes to actual service delivery, with much of the underlying organizational structures remaining unchanged.

The signposting of services in the collaborative customer interface model provides clearer, faster and more effective means of accessing services within a defined geographic area. Signposting is the bringing together of the access and information points for multiple services into one place so that citizens can be directed to the specific services they need. A web portal, phone service or physical access center gives information and links citizens directly to service providers. Examples of this model include the Poupatempo shops that provide a single recognizable point of contact with government that is uniform across the state of Sao Paulo. In the State of Washington, the web portal Access Washington is widely known by the public as the place where citizens can access almost all types of public services. Shifting usage patterns from physical to online access has allowed the citizens of Washington State—whether they live in urban or rural areas— to access services more

quickly and easily and has been an important element in bringing government closer to its citizens.

Shared customer interfaces can also offer great **improvements in customer care**, partly through allowing an opportunity to create a new or improved customer care function. The impact on customer care and satisfaction is marked. Service BC, for example, regularly receives customer satisfaction scores in the high 90 percent range and one survey of Kent Gateway customers returned a 100 percent customer satisfaction rating.

The collaborative customer interface provides a means for government agencies to **establish an easily recognized "brand identity" for the public**. In the UK, for example, the Kent Gateway initiative has allowed Kent County Council to push the "single brand" idea as a key plank of its public relations strategy. The council insists that all gateways are branded consistently so that citizens come to view government as a single entity rather than a conglomerate of disconnected agencies. In the words of a Kent County Council change leader: **"For the most part, people don't really know which agency they should deal with to meet their need. And they shouldn't really need to know or care either. We need to give them an experience of dealing with government, not just with agency A or B or C."**

The collaborative customer interface approach is also commonly used for its role in **optimizing transaction processes and creating efficiencies**. It can deliver significant economies of scale for the agencies involved and free up valuable resources within the partner agencies. As is the case with Winnipeg Integrated Services, for example, the partner agencies have consolidated their offices into a few access centers, thereby avoiding duplication of estates. Service BC is a strong example of an initiative in which shared interface systems take over much of the transaction work from government agencies. The

service acts, in effect, as an internal outsourcer for the different agencies, handling most of their customer transactions and interactions on their behalf.

The collaborative customer interface model can be the basis for creating a **common source of knowledge of local citizen and community needs**. These services deal with a very wide range of citizens across a number of service areas. Thus, if their customer interface is set up appropriately, they can gather huge amounts of information on service usage and client needs. Previously this was generally only done—indeed, often only possible—service by service. Shared client interface systems can track customers' journeys across government agencies. The information gathered can be the basis for developing more targeted service delivery, new front office shared initiatives to offer cross-cutting support to match client needs, and strong community-based service planning. In the case of Winnipeg, locally based partnerships produce broader insights into the community's needs. These are then used to develop the joint working arrangements where services come together to offer new types of community-based initiatives.

The model can also help **change user patterns toward greater self service** through a stronger emphasis on information and signposting. Kent Gateway, for example, has made it part of its approach to customer care that staff not only respond to the particular query raised but also help to educate citizens about the services available and how they can be accessed. Over time, the goal is to promote greater knowledge and self sufficiency among citizens—reducing the need for citizens to seek assistance from gateway staff.

Networked Delivery

Definition

Networked delivery describes initiatives in which agencies participate to deliver multiagency interventions on a case-by-case basis within a general framework for cooperative working. The various agencies continue to provide their own services separately but work together to manage specific classes of cases and deliver a range of interventions in a cooperative manner. In most cases, this cooperation falls within a general collaborative agreement that delineates the cases on which they will work together and the process for doing so. The particular agencies involved in any given case tend to vary, as does their level of involvement. They function as a network of agencies that coalesce as appropriate around specified types of cases.

This model is characterized by:

- Service agencies providing integrated support to users on a case-by-case basis.
- Selective collaboration on cases where objectives are shared.
- Governance arrangements that allow for collaborative networks across the public, private and nongovernmental sectors.
- Framework arrangements and service protocols that allow agencies to be flexible in the way in which services are packaged.
- Limited organizational transformation, thereby enabling change where resistance to change is high.
- A strong sense of ownership among staff.

Examples of networked delivery initiatives

Strengthening Families (NZ) is a structured, whole-of-government, early-intervention process for government agencies and community organizations to work together to improve outcomes for families. This goal is addressed through local interagency case management, which involves relevant agencies working with families to develop an action plan, established and monitored through independently facilitated meetings. A lead agency is assigned to oversee the process, including ensuring implementation of the action plan.

Florida Shared Services Network (US) is a range of initiatives set up in Florida with start-up funding from the state government. Each Shared Services Network differs in focus and constitution according to the organizations that set it up, but all aim to address a particular local issue through collaborative working practices. In each, a local coordinator oversees the work and coordinates the project, including ensuring that cases are responded to jointly.

The networked delivery model allows for integrated support from a wide range of agencies without changing organizational structures through agencies providing integrated support to customers on a case-by-case basis. It provides a way of responding to complex situations by bringing together a large number of individual agencies to provide a coordinated support package to the client. The networked approach is built upon the notion that each case is different and therefore the agencies that form the network around each case will vary according to the needs of that case. This variation can also occur by area, as it does within the Florida Shared Services Network, where the network of agencies engaged varies according to the needs of the local community being served. These initiatives are designed to enable support that varies according to those needs by providing a framework through which the set of agencies demanded by that case can come together around it. This is in

contrast to some of the more formal shared initiatives, which often have a fixed group of agencies involved in every case and no capacity to engage other agencies.

The networked approach derives much of its strength from this focus on cases and integrated delivery around the needs of a specified case. It enables government agencies to undertake an initiative that focuses solely on a particular client group or outcome, and brings together agencies and workforces around that focus. It is particularly powerful where there is a large number of very diverse agencies involved in delivery. In these situations, it offers an arrangement that can **allow for collaborative networks across the public, private and nongovernmental sectors**. It is uniquely suited to this situation as it does not require that agencies share structures or staff, or even that they share methods of working beyond the joint case protocol. As a result, it can enable cooperative working between

disparate agencies in a way that more formal or restrictive initiatives cannot.

The networked approach can be a particularly useful means of developing an initiative in cases where there is no history of collaboration and in which it can be difficult to get agreement for a formal joint delivery initiative. In such instances, the networked model allows for a **focused collaboration on cases, where objectives are shared**. It allows agencies to agree to collaborate only where they see clear overlaps in their work and can comfortably work together without requiring extensive collaboration or integrated delivery structures. Strengthening Families adopted this approach, which enables agencies to come together to focus on one specified class of cases—families with multiple needs—and deliver services appropriately for those cases. To succeed, agencies must provide a means of undertaking joint case management. Setting up a protocol for working together around particular types of cases, or indeed more generally, allows cases to be jointly managed. This, in turn, allows agencies to collaborate effectively on an identified class of cases where they share similar objectives. For instance, within Strengthening Families, a lead agency takes responsibility for overseeing the case and coordinates it by working with the other agencies—all of whom can then use the case information to manage their own involvement.

By putting in place **framework arrangements and service protocols**, it provides agencies with a defined process for collaboration but does not restrict their organizational autonomy or affect their core functions. This flexibility is the key to the approach, with protocols and agreements allowing agencies to be formally engaged and to structure each intervention cooperatively. Because the model does not require significant change to the fundamental organizational structures or governance of agencies working in a network, the approach enables a broader range of agencies to work

closely together than may be possible in other integration initiatives. For example, for Strengthening Families and the Florida Shared Services Network, the networked approach has proven very successful at engaging nongovernmental organizations in delivery. As a result of its flexibility and the fact that it does not require structural or workforce changes, there are relatively fewer organizational change challenges in the networked approach compared to the other models. It requires a strong framework and service protocols, but it allows for arrangements to develop as networks mature.

While posing strategic and managerial challenges in terms of ensuring consistency and sustainability, these initiatives often start with locally led projects, which extend their membership over time. As many of the Florida Shared Services Networks have shown, it is possible to start with a limited initiative that grows organically as other agencies opt to get involved. This tends to limit the challenges the change presents and offers an effective way of **producing significant change when the resistance to change is very high**. As a result, networks lend themselves to creating delivery change by, for instance, seeding lots of small local projects that, over time, can change the way that agencies work together. This is the approach adopted in the Florida Shared Services Network where the state government offered funding for local projects across Florida and allowed them to grow and produce change in the ways agencies worked together. Networks like these generally have little capital cost and require only limited ongoing funding, which helps reduce the challenges to implementation.

A clear message from people working within the networked delivery examples that we have studied is that they feel a **very strong sense of ownership**. This is because networked delivery initiatives tend to rely very heavily upon the people within them and give those people significant

power to shape the work as they see fit. Within Strengthening Families, for instance, each local area had the right to develop its own protocol. Consequently, from the start, each area felt the work was its own and not something with which it simply had to comply. Equally, in the Florida Shared Services Networks, each initiative developed its own governance arrangement, its own protocol and even identifies its own work programme. These networked initiatives, driven by the people on the ground, can gain great benefits from harnessing their enthusiasm.

Joint Delivery

Definition

Joint delivery initiatives are those in which previously separate government agencies or parts of agencies are reorganized to operate as a single entity, delivering services to citizens either as a single organization or as a de facto single organization. This may involve a range of changes—from the transformation of disparate parts of one organization to the coming together of separate organizations to operate as a unified team. All are characterized by shared delivery methods, joint case management and staff interchangeability.

This model is further characterized by:

- A full integration of service delivery, which allows agencies to address the complex needs of their users in a holistic manner, given the range of partner agencies' services.
 - Fundamental changes in the operational setup, case management procedures, information handling, governance, performance management and workforce deployment.
 - The provision of a truly seamless service experience to the user that prevents citizens from "falling through the cracks."
 - A reduction in the cost-to-be-served.
- Considerable start-up cost, but the potential for significant economies of scale in the operations over time.
 - Overarching control of services around policy agendas.
 - A strong emphasis on sustainability due to the establishment of joint focus and purpose, strong governance and common performance management structures.

Examples of joint delivery initiatives

NAV (Norway) is a merger of the National Insurance organization, the National Employment Service and the Social Welfare System. The initiative aims to get more people into employment and activity and to have fewer people on benefit; to make interaction with the service easier for users and to adapt services to users' needs; and to create a comprehensive, efficient labor and welfare administration.

Massachusetts Executive Office for Health and Human Services (EOHHS; US) has been created to take overall responsibility for providing and managing health and human services in Massachusetts. It oversees the 16 state agencies that develop policy and deliver services for Medicaid, public health, mental health, developmental disabilities, transitional assistance, welfare, and a host of related programs.

Tameside Joint Pensions and Benefits Team (UK) is a combined team consisting of staff from the Tameside local authority and the Department for Work and Pensions. Its role is to undertake financial assessments of elderly people to ensure they are receiving the benefits for which they are entitled and to assess them for government support toward the cost of their care services. Previously, the local authority team had assessed elderly people for financial support and the Department for Work and Pensions for their benefits entitlements. Both saw many of the same clients and used much of the same information.

Joint delivery is the most transformational model of the four types of front office shared services. It offers a **full integration of service delivery** and the opportunity to address complex needs in a holistic way. By reengineering service delivery so that it is based on citizen needs and not traditional organizational boundaries, it can improve the quality of life of citizens, tackle complex social problems and improve social outcomes. It is characterized by a move away from services organized by operational "silos" to a delivery model designed around the multiple, broad needs of the user group in question.

Joint delivery usually involves **fundamental changes in the operational setup** as well as significant shifts in case management, information handling and organizational strategy and systems. In some cases, such as the NAV reform in Norway, joint delivery entailed creating one agency where several previously existed. In others, a new entity is created, which is separate from but made up of, parts of the parent organizations. Joint delivery also covers initiatives where two or more previously independent organizations act as a de facto single organization while remaining separate. For example, in the case of the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC)/Pension Service Joint Team, staff from the national Department for Work and Pensions and those from the local authority remain within their own organizations but operate interchangeably.

Regardless of the nature and type of the specific joint delivery adopted, service delivery is structured around the needs of the user, **providing a seamless user experience** that enables citizens to deal with a single organization rather than managing several relationships. For example, clients of the Tameside team now see one worker who not only assesses their eligibility for pension and disability benefits but also conducts a financial review to assess the client contribution to any care provided by the local authority. Whether the case worker in question is actually employed by the Department for Work and Pensions or the local authority is not important.

The case management that may previously have been spread across a number of agencies is unified in a joint delivery model, which **reduces the cost-to-be-served for the client** (by minimizing the time and effort involved in accessing multiple services) and helps ensure the client receives the full range of support needed by coordinating previously disparate services. The NAV reform, for example, is based on a broad understanding of the interconnectedness of social

need and seeks to provide users with a range of alternative "entry points" into the service.

The joint delivery model requires **significant startup costs** but also offers **significant economies of scale in the operations**. The initial change to the new setup usually requires investment in new infrastructure and systems, transfer of staff, hiring of new staff and changes to estates management and organizational systems—all of which can be expensive. However, in terms of workforce deployment, for instance, joint delivery approaches allow for new forms of staff specialization and make organizations less vulnerable to the effects of staff turnover. For example, where previously the local authority was very susceptible to problems related to illness or staff turnover, Tameside now benefits from a larger pool of assessors. Similarly, the NAV reform allows for different levels of customer segmentation, with generalist staff dealing with relatively straightforward inquiries, leaving a pool of specialist workers to focus on more complex cases.

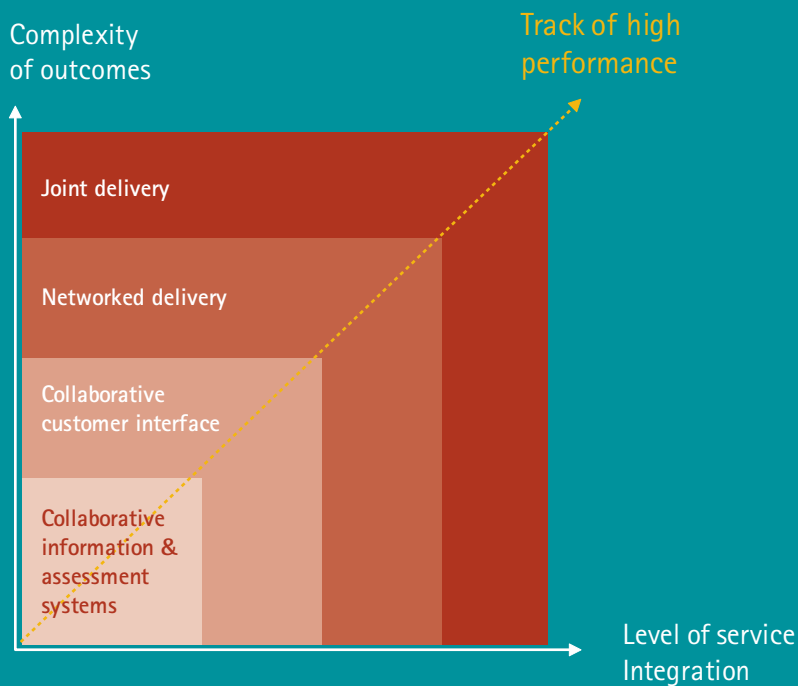
The model can also be used to **develop overarching control of a particular set of services that are delivered by a range of organizations**. Massachusetts, for instance, has created the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS), which technically sits above all HHS organizations in the state and guides strategy and delivery. This approach does not merge partner agencies. However, it does make them accountable to a single body while coordinating the delivery of services between those agencies. In this way, agencies can achieve joint delivery without facing what may be perceived as the more difficult undertaking of merging a number of sizeable organizations into a single entity.

The creation of a single entity or de facto organization with control over delivery provides a sound foundation for securing sustainable solutions over time. Establishing a shared overarching

operational framework sets the foundation for **clarity of purpose, strong governance and common performance management structures**. This approach reduces the risk of conflict between the goals of the various partner organizations. It also helps to avoid overlaps on geographic or client responsibility. This is one of the advantages of the NAV reforms, for example, where three separate organizations were brought together in an effort to clarify the focus on human services outcomes. Large-scale reform initiatives using the joint delivery model are likely to be more sustainable over time.

Which model works best?

Figure 1: The Track of High Performance



Each of the four models of front office shared services offers a range of benefits, both for the operations of public services and for citizens. Implementing any of the models, however, is a complex task that requires significant change management capacity, stakeholder support and financial resources. Therefore, public service leaders wishing to integrate services need to consider carefully which of the models would be most effective in meeting the objectives of their specific services.

Deciding which model is appropriate depends on the type of service and, in particular, the nature of the outcomes that the service aims to achieve. A fundamental principle to guide the choice of model is simple: **the greater the complexity of the target outcome, the greater the level of integration required.**

If a service works with very complex outcomes (for instance, responding to the needs of people suffering from multi-dimensional disadvantage), an extensive level of integration—such as that offered by the joint or networked models—is probably most appropriate. At the other end of the scale, where services are often transactional in nature and respond to less complex outcomes, other models of front office shared services—such as the collaborative information and assessment systems or the collaborative customer interface approaches—are likely to work best.

Each of the four models delivers a different level of service integration. At the lowest level of integration, the collaborative information and assessment model integrates the internal systems—the management of case information and the assessment of eligibility—to deliver holistic management of client information across the partner agencies. At the next level of integration, the

collaborative customer interface, the partner agencies share frontline interactions with clients, allowing users to access services in one place, while the partner agencies still operate as separate entities. The networked delivery model represents a high level of service integration where agencies develop protocols around classes of cases or groups of clients to allow them to operate, case by case, to deliver a coordinated response to client needs. At the most extensive level of integration, through a joint delivery model, agencies integrate part or all of their delivery of services. While this could be a new, single organization, it could be separate agencies operating as though they were one organization while retaining separate organizational structures.

The chart above sets out the four models in terms of the relationship between the level of service integration and the complexity of target outcomes.

To produce increased public value from front office shared service initiatives, form should follow function. That is, to determine the optimal model, change leaders need to consider the ultimate goals or outcomes that their services are aiming to achieve. As the "track of high performance" in the chart illustrates, each model is the optimal choice only in specific circumstances where the level of service integration matches the level of complexity of the target outcomes. In practice, the different models do not always match completely; specific service initiatives often entail a mix of elements, each with greater or lesser degrees of integration. While the overall relationship between the level of service integration and complexity of outcomes remains, there are large areas of overlap in which partner agencies can effectively apply more than one model depending on the exact circumstances and how they choose to structure their initiative. In spite of this, our research shows that complex outcomes require high levels of integration and the models that offer lower levels of integration are simply not effective in tackling the most complex outcomes. Conversely, when the complexity is lower, the highest levels of integration may not be the most effective means of providing services and may lead to inefficiency in those circumstances.

Determining the level of complexity

Determining the complexity of outcome requires making considered judgments about a number of factors:

- **The range of need**, which refers to the overarching problems that are presented by citizens and should be addressed (or partly addressed) by the services involved. This spectrum ranges from a need for relatively simple provision of information and transactions, such as submission of tax returns or vehicle registration applications, to the complex needs of citizens experiencing multi-dimensional disadvantage and interrelated problems that seriously affect their quality of life.

- **The frequency of interaction**, which ranges from a single interaction and irregular episodic interactions to continuous support, depending upon the clients' needs and the service. It is important to consider both the number and frequency of interactions.
- **The nature of the interaction**, which refers to the primary form of interaction needed to serve the client. This might range from a simple interaction in which the client seeks and is given information to the processing of an application and the provision of payment to—at the far end of the spectrum—the direct provision of multiple interventions by a number of professionals. It is also necessary to consider whether the interaction required is face to face, online or by phone.
- **The level of expertise required** to serve the clients' needs, which ranges from relatively simple information competencies (for instance, to direct customers to specific services or agencies) and transactional competencies (required to process claims or applications) to relatively broad service knowledge (required to facilitate appropriate support, such as bringing together services from multiple agencies) and deep service expertise (such as that required to respond to the complex needs of clients suffering multi-dimensional disadvantage).

It is important to note that the complexity of outcomes relates to the organization's remit and the core aim of the service it seeks to deliver. For example, an agency providing information to help people live healthfully will share an overall health outcome focus with that of an agency providing nursing care. Nevertheless, they are operating at different levels of complexity because the complexity of outcome is determined in each case by what they are actually seeking to achieve.

Other examples of the spectrum of complexity in outcomes can be drawn from the case studies in this report. Access Washington, for example, is a very successful service operating at the lower end of the complexity spectrum. Its mission is to provide citizens with information on government services so that they can find answers to basic questions, enable them to undertake simple transactions and determine where to go for other services they need. Even though Access Washington covers a broad range of services, it is limited to information provision and signposting services. Thus, the level of complexity is low and the approach adopted is at the lower level of integration: the collaborative customer interface. By contrast, Strengthening Families delivers supportive interventions to families facing multi-dimensional disadvantage. Consequently, the complexity of target outcomes is extremely high. Strengthening Families has therefore adopted a networked delivery approach. Only through a model that enables high levels of integration can the necessary resources and expertise be provided in a holistic, citizen-centric way.

The journey of implementation

Whatever the complexity of outcome and whichever model is determined as the associated optimal model of front office shared services, successful implementation is a significant and complicated undertaking that involves a number of challenges. Agencies' facilities for tackling those challenges will play a crucial role in determining the implementation path. Although the exact circumstances of each initiative may differ, implementation is a journey of organizational change. Some challenges will be particular to the circumstances, but most are universally confronted in some form.

From our research, we have identified four sets of critical challenges: governance, performance management, workforce issues, and information sharing. All agencies must manage these challenges if they are to implement a front office shared service initiative successfully. But some will find themselves with a greater facility for change and so better placed than others to respond to the challenges. For those whose facility for change at least matches the challenges they face, the journey will be shorter; for those whose challenges are greater than their facility for change, the journey will be longer.

In the initiatives studied, we have seen two broad implementation journeys: the "transformational change" approach and the "evolutionary change" approach. We have found that those agencies whose change facility is sufficient to tackle the challenges they face can implement the model they have determined is optimal for their services by taking a transformational journey directly to that model. By contrast, agencies that are less well equipped to tackle the challenges more frequently take an evolutionary approach. They advance step by step—plotting a course toward the optimal model but starting with more limited integration or with manageable parts of the required change. Agencies taking the evolutionary approach can build their facility for change while on the journey and thus are able to tackle their challenges over time, gradually moving closer toward their optimal level of integration.

Regardless of the specific challenges faced at the outset, the end goal should not differ; agencies should be looking to implement the model that best suits the complexity of need they face. It is therefore critical for change agents to keep in mind at all times a vision of their chosen model of service integration, and let that guide the journey of implementation—whether on a transformational change or an evolutionary change path. The key is to start with the end in mind, focus upon the outcomes to be delivered, and let this determine the model chosen.

In the next chapter, we focus on making the change. We consider how government agencies can plan an implementation journey that allows them to tackle their challenges and reach their desired end point.

Part two of the report then discusses the nature of the four sets of critical challenges which government agencies will face while implementing an initiative. It examines how different government agencies have approached them and draws out the key lessons for those wishing to embark upon the journey toward more citizen-centric service delivery.



Chapter three: The journey to citizen-centric delivery

Front office shared service initiatives can help agencies move beyond traditional organizational boundaries to tailor services to the needs of citizens. These initiatives can transform the way in which government agencies operate so they deliver a strategic, coordinated approach to services and make the services truly citizen centric. But achieving this and successfully implementing a front office shared service initiative is a journey. It requires a clear vision of the optimal approach for delivering the services in question and a strong understanding of how to manage the challenges that implementing the change will present.

Building on our analysis of the various front office shared service models and of the challenges they face, in this chapter we explore how government agencies can begin their journey toward citizen-centric delivery. In doing so, we provide a step-by-step approach and a broad diagnostic framework to guide decision making and discuss how the implementation journey may need to be structured to fit the shape of the challenges faced

and the facility for change within the partner organizations.

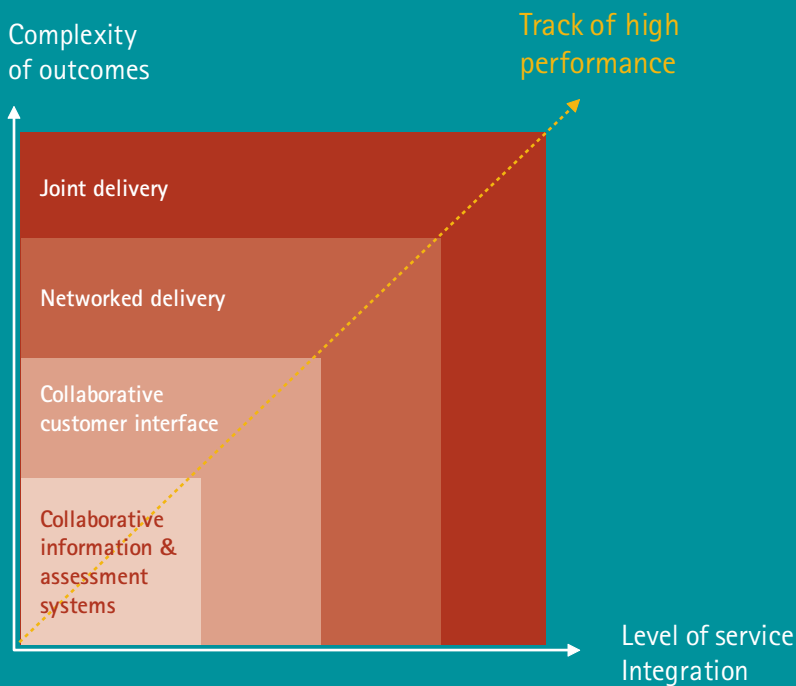
There are three steps in planning a front office shared service initiative:

1. Identify the optimal model.
2. Assess the challenges that will be faced and the facility for change within the partner agencies.
3. Determine the most expeditious journey.

We discuss each of these steps and how public service agencies can use the diagnostic to guide decisions about successful implementation of their front office shared service initiatives.

Step one: Identify the optimal model

Figure 2: The Four Models of front office shared service initiative



Public service leaders seeking to reform the delivery of services must focus first on outcomes and should revisit the fundamental question of: 'What are we trying to achieve?' As discussed in detail in chapter two of this report, the form of the initiative must follow its function. Therefore, the first step should be to consider the nature of the outcomes delivered by the service. The more complex the outcomes being addressed, the greater the level of integration required. This insight should guide the partner agencies in their choice of model that will best meet the needs of citizens. To do this, the partner agencies need to consider four questions that will allow them to analyze the complexity of outcomes being served:

- What is the range of need you seek to serve?
- What is the frequency of interaction?
- What is the nature of the interaction?
- What level of expertise is required to serve the clients' needs?

As discussed in chapter two, partner agencies need to consider these questions very carefully vis-à-vis the proposed initiative. It is vital to be specific and think carefully about the initiative and what part of the overall outcomes it is serving. By focusing on those questions, it is possible to understand the relative complexity of outcomes for that initiative. Applying the chart above, that understanding will point to the broad type of front office shared service initiative that it may be most beneficial to pursue.

Step two: Assess the challenges and the facility to manage change

Implementing a front office shared service initiative is a significant task and requires careful planning of the change journey. The specific nature of the journey depends on two factors:

- The nature and scale of the challenges faced in the particular context in which the service is placed
- The level of capacity within the system to address these challenges.

The critical issues to be considered relate to four main implementation challenges. The four are: governance, performance management, workforce change and information sharing.

1. Governance:

With any public service, strong governance arrangements are critical to success. Good governance is necessary to manage performance, provide stewardship of public money, engage with users and citizens and, ultimately, deliver good outcomes.⁴

For front office shared service initiatives, however, establishing

appropriate governance is of particular importance. When embarking upon the journey toward sharing front office services, previously independent government agencies, which are accustomed to working in operational “silos” and with clear lines of accountability, will be required to tackle the challenge of establishing new forms of governance and accountability structures in the new setup. They will need to share political and operational control, often in areas where they have previously not had to do so.

This challenge is particularly great for front office services. Because citizens will be directly affected by front office organizational change, the process of change is likely to be subject to close scrutiny by the media, politicians, user advocacy groups and other stakeholders. This pressure adds greatly to the impetus for strong governance, which should be in place to ensure stakeholder buy-in and support.

Good governance is needed to exert sufficient levels of control, tackle any

organizational authority gaps, manage differences in the commitment and investment of partner agencies and create collaborative working arrangements across all the relevant subdivisions of the agencies involved. The governance entity— which can be a group of the initiative leaders charged with the authority to make strategic decisions and oversee the running of the initiative or merely an agreement between agencies—will need to put in place an appropriate plan for change implementation and, where nongovernmental agencies are involved, take into account the different service contexts in which partner agencies operate. Finally, the governance body will need sufficient capacity and capability to address these challenges. In the following section, we briefly describe these challenges and give examples of how different front office shared service initiatives are managing them.

2. Performance Management

In their efforts to improve public value, government agencies are increasingly focused on developing and implementing sound performance management practices and tools that shape continued organizational improvement and the delivery of social outcomes.⁵ For front office shared services, the focus on performance management is critical to success. Because front office shared services initiatives are designed to make services more citizen centric, they require performance management processes and systems that capture the direct impact of the work on the customer experience and, crucially, its impact on the social and economic conditions of the citizens being served. Managing performance to drive improvements on the ground and demonstrate success is particularly important in securing continued support and buy-in from stakeholders.

Our research has identified three particular performance management challenges, which— if well met—will allow the initiative to develop operational capability and capacity, continually learn, and drive future performance improvement. These challenges include establishing a link between the change and the impact; defining outcomes in a way that is meaningful to all; and establishing a joint performance management system.

3. Workforce Change:

All four models of front office collaboration and integration pose large potential challenges for the management of the workforces involved in a front office shared service initiative. While some of these challenges are common across most change projects in the public sector, others are unique to this type of initiative.⁶

The challenges may vary depending on which model is chosen and the particular starting point of the journey. For instance, implementing a collaborative customer interface or a joint delivery model is likely to have more severe implications for the management of the workforce than implementing a collaborative information system or networked delivery. A collaborative customer interface and joint delivery model typically involve more fundamental changes to business processes and organizational structures. Even those initiatives that do not involve significant organizational change demand that staff operate in different roles and interact with citizens in different ways. Specifically, they require changes to the skill and knowledge mix of the workforce, including development of broader service knowledge, the ability to look beyond their own area of expertise and manage cases in a holistic manner, and very strong communication skills to work with the broader set of stakeholders involved in these initiatives. Organizationally, these initiatives also present challenges in bringing together different workforces with different backgrounds, working practices and employment terms.

4. Information Sharing and Systems

Sharing information is an essential element of any multiagency shared service initiative. It can be a powerful means of improving services to citizens and can act as the very foundation of a cooperative relationship between agencies. Very often it is the starting point, and sometimes even the end point, for a front office shared service initiative. As such, it is of fundamental importance to the initiative's success.

However, information sharing presents some formidable challenges to government agencies, which can inhibit the move toward a shared service initiative. Most notably, government agencies often face regulatory and legal constraints on the amount and type of information they can share with other agencies.

They may face technical problems in integrating different legacy systems and getting their own people to move to new, unfamiliar systems. In some cases, there may even be a fundamental lack of understanding about what kinds of data are collected and held by different agencies. And they face a general lack of public trust—not always substantiated in fact—in government agencies' abilities to safeguard people's sensitive personal information. All these factors can create uncertainties about how to even begin the process of sharing information.

Each of these challenges is critical to the successful implementation of a front office shared service initiative. Though they will each manifest differently in different circumstances all agencies will face them in some shape or form whilst attempting to design and implement an initiative of this type. It is vital that these are understood and that agencies look at how they will affect them and what degree of difficulty they will present. Only by doing this can they seek to design an effective implementation. Each of the cases studied in this report has faced these challenges and sought to develop mechanisms to respond to them.

The challenges are explored in greater detail in Appendix A to this report. We describe fully the nature of each of the challenges, explain how they are pertinent to each model and list the main lessons learned from each of the initiatives featured in our case studies.

Diagnosis

The critical element in designing the implementation approach is to carefully consider the challenges faced and the agencies' ability to overcome these challenges and manage the change. From our research we have identified some of the core elements of each challenge, consideration of which will aid government agencies in determining the scale of the challenges they face and their facility to manage change they enjoy. The list of diagnostic questions is not exhaustive and within each specific change context there may be other relevant dimensions to consider. Similarly, the relative weight of each of the challenges and the importance of the different types of capacity is likely to vary. But these are the critical questions that all government agencies will need to consider when planning a front office shared service initiative.

Government agencies considering a front office shared services initiative of this type need to consider these questions carefully and then determine how well their facility to manage change can meet the challenges they will face. Much of the nature of the challenge will be determined by the approach selected (further details are included in part two). The rest, which is particularly important in understanding the difficulty those challenges will present, is a product of the organizational context in which the agencies are operating. For instance, how great the information system challenge will be depends upon the current legislative and regulatory context, the information systems the agencies use, along with their experience around sharing and managing information across organizations.

To manage change successfully, government agencies need to be clear on the level of challenge they face and the facility to manage change they enjoy. Is the level of challenge high or low? Is the facility to manage change high or low? How well do the two match up? The match between the capacity of the agency and the nature of the challenges is crucial. An agency may feel it has the required capabilities to manage change, but it still may find it lacks the facility to respond to certain elements of the challenges it faces. For example, it may be that there are particularly strong challenges relating to workforce change but the agency, though it enjoys strong capacity elsewhere, lacks capacity in this area. This will greatly affect the approach it takes to implementation.

Figure 3: The Diagnostic Framework

Critical assessments of the: Scale of challenges

Critical assessments of the: Facility to manage change

Governance

- The extent to which the initiative is politically sensitive and subject to public scrutiny
- The impact of service disruption or failure on citizens
- The number and diversity of partner agencies in terms of their area of focus, ways of working, organizational structures and lines of accountability
- The ability of the initiative's leaders to influence and control partner agencies
- The experience, capacity and capability of those who need to undertake governance roles
- The extent to which the missions and goals of the partner agencies can be aligned or integrated
- The experience of and facility for collaboration among the agencies

Performance management

- The difficulty of defining clear and operational outcome measures for the initiative
- The degree of difference between the partner agencies' performance systems and organizational structures
- The extent to which the initiative is essential to the different partner agencies' service delivery and performance
- The extent to which the partner agencies share the same lines of accountability
- The facility to develop operational performance measures applicable to all partner agencies
- The ability of the agencies to control the policy agenda and determine the goals to which they work
- The extent to which the missions and goals of the partner agencies can be aligned or integrated
- The strength and maturity of the performance cultures within the partner agencies

Workforce change

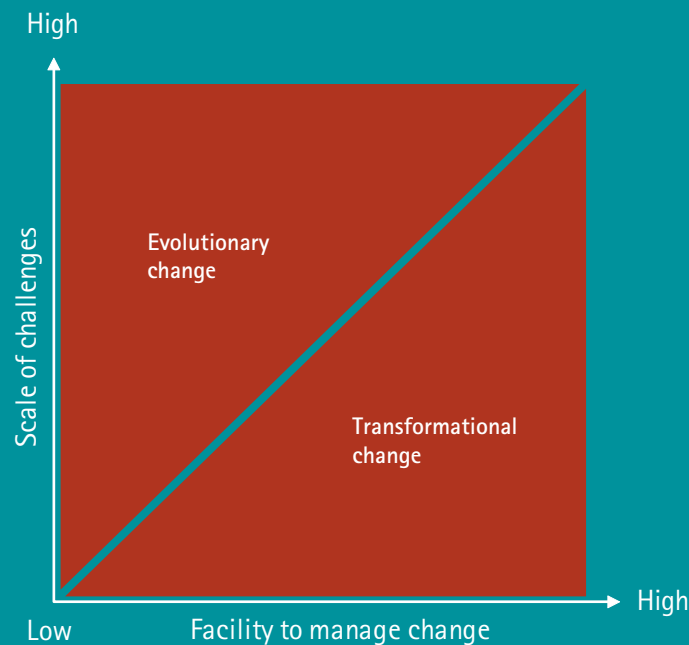
- The diversity and level of difference between partner agencies' workforces
- The number and diversity of professional bodies, trade unions and other workforce stakeholders involved
- The extent to which the skills and knowledge profile of the current workforce match the skills and knowledge profile required by the initiative
- The extent and restrictiveness of professional regulations and legislation governing working practices
- The extent to which the working practices and cultures of the agencies' workforces can be harmonized
- The experience and facility for collaboration between the workforce groups
- The facility of the partner agencies to marshal the support of external workforce stakeholders and professional bodies

Information sharing

- The volume, complexity and sensitivity of information that needs to be shared
- The extent and restrictiveness of legislation and regulation governing information management and sharing
- The compatibility of agencies' current information systems and data handling processes
- The level of change required to create the information systems necessary to support the initiative
- The ability of partner agencies to influence and shape regulation and legislation of information sharing
- The facility of the initiative's leaders to influence or direct partner agencies' use of information
- The experience of information sharing within the agencies
- The extent to which the agencies have the experience and knowledge to support the desired information systems

Step three: Determine the most expeditious journey

Figure 4: Evolutionary Change v. Transformational Change



Having selected the appropriate model and assessed the challenges and their facility to manage change, government agencies must bring these together to determine the appropriate implementation journey for their initiative. In our study of front office shared service initiatives, we have found that the scale of the challenges faced and the facility to manage change are the key determinants in how agencies are charting their journey of service integration. We have identified two types of implementation journeys: evolutionary change and transformational change. The choice of approach can be depicted against the two dimensions of challenge and facility as it is in the chart above.

Fundamentally, where the agencies' facility to manage change matches or exceeds the degree of challenge faced, a transformational change approach can work. However, public agencies often find themselves in a position where the challenges they face actually exceed their current facility

for change. In such situations, it can be tempting to delay the proposed change until sufficient facility for change is developed. However, high-performing agencies recognize that change capacity and capabilities can be developed while in the process of change itself—so long as agencies do not attempt to undertake more change than they have the capacity to manage. Challenges can be overcome and barriers broken down by starting small and demonstrating early successes from more limited integration initiatives. By adopting an evolutionary approach, agencies can achieve early results and build the foundation for further change—positioning themselves to achieve high performance.

Journey 1: Evolutionary change

When government agencies find themselves with political and organizational capacity below what is required to tackle the challenges they face, it is usually impossible for them to proceed directly to large-scale

transformation aimed at reaching the ideal delivery solution. This situation could result in them failing to directly implement the chosen approach or abandoning the initiative altogether. In these cases, rather than pursue an overly aggressive and ambitious change agenda, which poses the significant risk of failure, government agencies seeking to achieve high performance should choose an evolutionary approach to change.

This approach entails a long and often gradual implementation journey in which change agents start the journey toward the most appropriate level of integration by adopting other change objectives in the interim, objectives that are less challenging and require less organizational and political capacity to implement. In such instances, the collaborative information and assessment model is a realistic first step toward any of the other models.

By approaching the journey in an evolutionary manner, change agents are able to achieve momentum and establish the foundation for greater integration in a way that builds capacity for ongoing change. In our research, we saw two differing approaches to evolutionary change. The first approach is one that seeks to move toward the desired approach by first adopting other approaches. Doing so helps to build capacity and reduce challenges so that agencies can move on to the next stage of the change.

HHS-Connect began its change in just such a manner. The partnering agencies serve people with complex needs. Thus, there is a strong political and administrative understanding of the importance of integrating the delivery of all health and human services in New York City. The ultimate goal: to achieve a joint delivery model, where users' needs are considered as a whole and addressed in a seamless, integrated manner. Reaching this goal, however, poses significant challenges. The nine health and human service organizations are all very diverse and autonomous in the way in which they operate. Further, their track record of collaboration is limited and they all have different outcomes and goals. Their performance management systems are different, too, and they hold and manage information and data in different, often incompatible, ways. Last, but certainly not least, the agencies' workforces are all highly professionalized, highly institutionalized in their different ways of working, and have very different operational structures with different rules and regulations. As one interviewee put it, "They don't even speak the same language."

Despite enjoying strong political support for the integration initiative, which is backed by legislative changes to enable further integration, leaders felt that the scale of the challenges were so great that a direct route toward a joint delivery model was not feasible. The well resourced change team judged that a full, large-scale change would be too lengthy and risky to pursue immediately. As a change

leader from New York HHS, put it, "If we did a full, top-down approach and business process analysis, we would have spent years analyzing business processes and fighting to break down barriers within and outside the system." Instead, the change team opted to build a collaborative information and assessment system as a first step toward further integration. The rationale: by sharing information and assessment processes, disparate agencies will begin to develop a shared understanding of their clients' needs. Consequently, the level of collaboration will mature and the case for further integration will be strengthened. In addition, over time the governance will develop the necessary capacity to drive further change.

Ultimately, HHS-Connect feels that the evolutionary approach is a pragmatic but effective approach that will produce quick wins while fostering a change in the attitudes, culture, ways of working, systems and governance required for a move to the next level of integration and seamless service delivery.

The second approach to evolutionary change is a more traditional structuring of the change. Teams break down change into manageable parts that work toward the desired result without implementing different approaches along the way. Each step allows the agency to implement a different element of the change—overcoming the challenges one at a time until the desired end is reached.

Winnipeg Integrated Services (WIS) initiative has adopted this approach to change. The ultimate aim of the reform is to achieve joint delivery between its two constituent organizations through broad integration. However, while many of the challenges are manageable, there is a mismatch between the nature of the challenges and the political and organizational capacity to respond to the challenges. Specifically, the organizations are very different; one is a government body, and the other a nonprofit organization. They have different geographic scopes, different workforce structures and

employment terms, and significant compartmentalization within the organizations. These challenges are not insurmountable, and the initiative enjoys good capacity in some areas—strong political support, the buy-in of influential workforce stakeholders and an excellent record of collaboration. Nevertheless, the capacity to meet these challenges is low. It is not possible, for example, to immediately respond to the differences in the workforce and to reform the organizations to create a joint delivery initiative. Because of the different natures of the organizations, it is also impossible to create a joint management structure. The differences in the organizations and their funding arrangements (one a government department, the other a government-funded nonprofit) also present significant barriers that there simply is not yet the capacity to overcome.

The journey that WIS has opted for as a result is one of incremental change. As one interviewee put it, "First it was about getting the services co-located. Secondly, we said, 'Let's have joint employment authority so we have a common governance structure.' The next step is then to move toward a broader integration of the system. But there are considerable barriers to that, such as distinct IT and funding systems. It is also difficult because FSH is government and the WHRA is not."

WIS has broken down the move toward joint delivery into a number of discrete steps—each intended to lay the foundation for the next by overcoming an immediate challenge and creating new capacity to address the next obstacle. The first step involved the co-location of staff into community access centers. Not only did this provide one place for citizens to go for services—a clear improvement in the customer experience—but it began the process of bringing together the workforces. Having them in the same location, and often with the same clients, has built a sense of unity and begun to reduce cultural differences.

The second step involved developing a common governance structure for the initiative. The WIS organizational and governance working group meets monthly, setting policy and taking decisions for the initiative as a whole. As part of this second stage of change, WIS has also appointed community area directors (CADs) who are jointly employed by the two agencies. Each CAD manages a specific community area and its centers and is empowered to innovate and direct the way in which operations occur within their center. Staff working in access centers are technically accountable to the CAD for working practices and daily operations of the center but remain employed by and accountable to their parent organization.

The planned next step is to begin developing common IT systems to join up the staff within and across the centers as a means of significantly changing the ways of working. While steps beyond that are not yet completely determined, the team is giving serious consideration to creating a joint organization that employs the staff and runs the centers.

Significant challenges remain. Different employment terms for staff remains an issue, as does different funding and accountability regimes that apply to the two parent organizations. But the approach to the journey is clear. Its strength is that it allows the building of capacity before each next step is taken. This ensures that progress is made and that no single challenge becomes sufficient reason to stop the initiative. Each step is built to manage what can be managed while implementing the capacity needed to manage the next one. Already, having the CADs jointly employed has helped build the capacity for future development of performance management within the centers so that staff can become accountable to the initiative rather than to their parent organizations. This may well put them in a much stronger position to create a single workforce and organizational structure.

Journey 2: Transformational change

"Transformational change" describes a journey where there is a fundamental change in the underlying strategy and processes which enables the chosen model to be implemented through a more direct approach. Any transformational change requires significant change capacity to address the series of highly complex challenges that are bound to arise. It involves a full transformation of existing ways of working and demands that change agents have sizable resources, political support and stakeholder buy-in, enabling them to tackle challenges head on and implement the preferred model in one step.

The approach is characterized by a strong vision of the most appropriate front office shared service model and a comprehensive program of change managed by a multi-skilled and well resourced change team. The new model is introduced as quickly as possible, with modifications and adaptations occurring as change leaders gain experience of what works well and what could be improved. How the approach is structured depends greatly upon the individual circumstances of the agencies involved, but the key question is that of political and organizational capacity. If the capacity for change is high, then the transformational change approach can proceed very quickly and essentially be completed in one move, with the agencies able to marshal the required capacity to meet all of the challenges immediately. However, if capacity is low or there are key areas in which capacity is insufficient to meet the challenges, then the change will have to proceed more slowly and adopt a more structured approach. In these cases, it is likely that the agencies will need to undertake the core changes first and then structure a program of subsequent changes to complete the journey.

This is the approach adopted by the NAV reform, which found itself facing significant challenges but with a high level of political and organizational capacity. The journey took a measured transformational change approach in which the bulk of the changes needed to institute the new model were undertaken in one go. Even so, the reform was not entirely complete and a program of subsequent changes was then implemented to complete it. The NAV reform is a merger of the three agencies that deal with all employment and welfare services in Norway. The creation of a single overarching organization was a major undertaking that posed significant challenges for the change team. The organizations involved have very different organizational structures, focus areas and ways of working. They span central and local levels of government, and the workforce is diverse with a wide range of skill profiles and different terms of employment. Similarly, all three organizations use separate information systems, and existing legislation and regulation limits their ability to share data and case files. Adding to this complexity, the reform spans a wide range of services that respond to a very broad, complex set of needs across the whole population in Norway.

Nevertheless, there was a strong political will and organizational support for change. Recognizing the need for services to be more citizen-centric, the then-newly appointed minister brokered a deal with the national parliament and administrative leaders. Consequently, a legislative change was enacted that enabled organizational change. The proposed change enjoyed support from the partner agencies that acknowledged the fact that they shared many of their goals and geographic focus and that, importantly, they could better serve their clients' broad range of needs by joining forces. Furthermore, the longstanding tradition for engaging public service administrative leaders in developing policy in Norway meant that the partner agencies felt "part of the solution," which helped build a

good level of support among affected workforces and professional bodies.

The NAV change leaders therefore had a relatively high degree of political and organizational capacity, which enabled them to adopt a transformational change toward a joint delivery model. The complex merger has been implemented relatively quickly over the past two years. While the NAV change leadership team still faces significant challenges and has room to improve, the employment and welfare services now operate in a truly integrated manner.

A quicker transformational change approach, in which the change is completed in a single effort, requires an agency to have significantly greater political and organizational capacity than is required by the level of challenges the change presents. A few government agencies are fortunate enough to find themselves in this position. Tameside's Pension Service Joint Team was in just such a position when it was first conceived and implemented. While it seeks to address a complex need (the financial health of elderly people), it does so by performing very specific tasks—namely, assessing eligibility for pension support and local authority funding. Before the initiative, the workforces were quite similar despite being employed by different agencies. Most of the case workers faced similar requirements around competencies, skills and knowledge. Both workforces had comparable terms of employment, and both undertook similar tasks. There were large overlaps in client base, too. As a result, the challenges the initiative faced were generally quite low, particularly since they had complete control over delivery mechanisms in the area and policy in place to support them. Crucially, the change required was also relatively limited; there was no need for new staff or changes in skills profile, limited need to share information beyond current practices, and only a minimal need for new governance or performance management systems. With this relatively low

level of challenge and because of the similarities between the two partner agencies, their existing track record of cooperation and very strong leadership support, they enjoyed high political and organizational capacity to support the change.

Tameside adopted a transformational change approach, moving swiftly and decisively to set up the joint delivery system that they felt best served their clients. They put in place a partnership agreement through which the teams would work as one unit, with staff operating interchangeably and seeing clients on behalf of both organizations. They co-located staff, gave staff access to each other's information systems and training so that they could use the information gathered from a client to process applications for support from both organizations. A joint management team was established to oversee the work. While the two organizations remain separate, they operate as a de facto single organization and clients experience fully integrated services.

Getting started

Front office shared service initiatives represent a significant change. Determining which model to adopt and how to implement it requires the careful consideration of a very complex range of questions and factors. This report provides a roadmap for working through those issues, but it cannot provide a simple answer. The best way for agencies to move forward and find the right answer for their circumstances is through careful deliberation. This is most effectively achieved by bringing together the principal stakeholders in a facilitated workshop. In this way, the agency or agencies involved can bring together a network of partners to build insight and understanding and to analyze the questions of complexity of outcome and facility for change as they apply to their circumstances. The products of those discussions can then be used to decide which model of approach and which change journey is right for that initiative. A workshop of this kind

can produce a strategy for change built upon deeper insight than any one agency could manage on its own, and which already has buy-in from the key stakeholders in the process. This workshop can provide a way to manage the complexity, to answer these difficult questions and to build momentum for the change in a way that few other approaches can. Though it is only the first step, it provides strong foundations for the change.

Conclusion



Ultimately, front office shared service initiatives are about citizen-centric delivery. They enable government agencies to reorient their services around citizens' needs rather than simply managing within traditional organizational boundaries. They offer powerful means of joining forces to effectively focus on citizens' whole needs—however complex and interdependent these may be. They can offer economies of scale and improve efficiency in delivery. And they offer the potential to reshape the relationship between the citizen and government, moving away from a set of independent transactions toward a broader, more holistic approach to addressing citizens' needs and improving social outcomes.

There are a number of different models of approach to delivering a shared front office service, each of which is appropriate in different circumstances and for the achievement of different aims. This report argues that the choice of model should follow from

a consideration of the nature of the outcomes the service should address. The more complex the target outcomes, the greater the level of integration required.

As change leaders around the world know, implementing a front office shared service initiative is a complex task, which presents significant challenges and requires strong capacity and capabilities to manage change. Some agencies will find themselves with the facility required to meet the challenges of their circumstances. But often the challenges seem too significant to be overcome, and the facility for change insufficient, to allow the optimal model of delivery to be implemented as a direct, one-off transformation. While such a situation may discourage change agents to act, agencies seeking to achieve high performance embark on an evolutionary journey of change. They initially pursue less extensive integration initiatives, with change agents building crucial change

capacity and capability in the process. This, in turn, sets the foundation for gaining quick wins that can help secure the greater stakeholder support necessary to pursue further integration initiatives.

Whether adopting a transformational or an evolutionary approach, change leaders embarking upon a journey of integrating services should be guided by their ultimate goal: to deliver social outcomes more effectively and efficiently and, as a result, improve the quality of life of the people they serve.

Appendix A: Implementation challenges

As we noted earlier in the report, there are four critical challenges facing all front office shared service initiatives. These also exist for other change initiatives and back office initiatives, but their shape and emphasis is often quite different when considered in front office service delivery. The four are:

- Governance
- Performance Management
- Workforce Change
- Information Sharing and Systems

For every agency the nature of these challenges and the difficulty in managing them will be different but every agency will need to manage them if they are to successfully implement their initiative. In this Appendix, we examine these challenges in detail and consider how organizations in the cases studied have experienced and responded to them. For each challenge we describe the major elements of each challenge, how they may manifest for those implementing different models of front office shared service and what agencies may need to consider if they are to ensure they understand the challenges facing them. When this knowledge is combined with the discussion of how to determine the appropriate model of delivery and the right change approach this will arm government agencies to begin planning their change.

1. Governance

The nature of the challenge

As front office services affect users directly, one of the primary challenges for the governance body is to manage stakeholder perceptions and to ensure continued political buy-in. If the governance body does not act as an effective champion and succeed in building and maintaining support among different stakeholders—including the public—the initiative will fail. All the front office change leaders interviewed for this study talked of the need to set out clearly defined objectives, goals and sub-goals and to obtain quick wins that demonstrate early successes.

In the case of the HHS-Connect initiative, this meant implementing the information systems in stages to give early access to certain functions that were likely to be of great interest to the workforce, political leaders and users. In the case of Kent Gateway, early customer survey polls were conducted and disseminated to partners and policy makers so they could see how popular the initiative was proving.

The management of stakeholder perceptions and the drive to secure buy-in is often complicated by the politics and political structures involved in front office service delivery. Unlike back office shared service initiatives, which largely fall within the remit of organizational and managerial control, front office service delivery happens in the public eye. Governance board members must therefore understand and reflect the views of all main stakeholders, either by means of representational membership or through strong consultation and engagement processes.

Regardless of the model of front office shared service initiative in question, the governance arrangements will need to be sufficiently strong to **exert an appropriate level of control**. This control will take different forms, depending on the maturity of the collaboration and the model

adopted. In some cases—most notably where the proposed change involves establishing a new organizational entity—the governance board will need strong executive authority. In other cases, such as in the networked delivery approach, the appropriate governance model may reflect looser arrangements characterized by a high degree of flexibility because the key is persuasion, not direction.

In the case of HHS-Connect, for instance, the level of control is extremely high. The governance body in each initiative enjoys strong political support underpinned by legislative frameworks. HHS-Connect operates a strong and rigid governance structure that has executive authority over different elements of the work. The most senior-level departmental commissioners sit on the governance board that reports directly to the deputy mayor of New York City. The board is therefore empowered to make difficult strategic and operational decisions, direct policy for the overall initiative and lock-in the partner agencies. Without this level of senior executive participation, the danger is that the governance body would be reduced to little more than a discussion forum that considers issues but lacks the power to execute decisions.

The same is true of EOHHHS, which has been set up to direct policy for health and human services in Massachusetts. Although it works through consensus and agreement, it has the mandate to direct policy. And in other initiatives in which new agencies have been established to operate the work (such as Poupatempo and the Portuguese Citizen Shops), the governance structure reflects a command-and-control arrangement where the governance body has authority over the agency involved, but participation of other agencies is through negotiation and contracts for service.

By contrast, however, initiatives such as Strengthening Families in New Zealand and Kent Gateway in the UK have little or no mandate or control over partner agencies. As a result they

must operate through cooperative arrangement with agencies that are persuaded of the value of the work. In the case of Strengthening Families, this has taken the form of a Strategic Framework to which the 11 relevant government ministries have subscribed. This is supported by a governance structure that enables local control and invites agencies to participate and direct the work. The governance structure has two levels: Regional Governance Groups and Local Management Groups. The 12 Regional Governance Groups, comprising senior regional managers from key government agencies, local authorities, community organizations and other appropriate stakeholder groups, play an important advocacy role. They identify how resources are being used within their region, how services can work together more effectively, and how to fill gaps in local services. Each of the 57 Local Management Groups develops a protocol for how the interagency case management process will work locally. Similarly, Kent Gateway operates a governance structure in which each region that develops a gateway identifies its own group of partners and manages its own governance board (though these are subject to the overall Kent Gateway governance board).

With both Strengthening Families and Kent Gateway, the chosen governance structure is the result of the local context in which the partner agencies found themselves at the start of the journey toward closer integration. The agencies are dealing with complex service areas with a large and diverse range of organizations that previously had little history of collaboration. It has not been possible for the lead agencies to mandate the work, as they have no direct control over the other agencies involved, so the change agents have opted for a looser level of integration. This means that all of the different areas work slightly differently and that it is difficult to control activity. As one interviewee put it, **"The center doesn't even really know how the different areas operate**

so it would be impossible for them to direct it." Nevertheless, there are real benefits to this approach, as is evident in the case of Strengthening Families, which draws much of its strength from the flexibility that enables the passion of the people involved to shape and drive the work.

Most front office shared service initiatives involve a number of disparate agencies that are responsible for different geographic areas, or cater to separate populations. Often, this requires **management of partner agencies that may have differing levels of commitment and investment** in the shared work. Where the initiative is not equally mission critical to all, and where there is no clear alignment of roles and responsibilities, some agencies may be less likely to emphasize the importance of the initiative. For instance, Lee Clarke, who oversaw the Florida Shared Service Network development, believes that this made the difference between success and failure: **"Those that succeeded were initiatives in which the subject was critical to everyone."** The governance challenge grows exponentially greater the greater the geographical disparity, the number of agencies involved and the size of target population.

When the partner agencies are particularly large, a key challenge is **to create collaborative working arrangements across subdivisions of agencies involved**. Many government agencies are internally "siloes," either geographically or by area of responsibility. A shared service initiative involving changed work patterns, however, requires significant internal operational change across different divisions, subsections and teams. For Winnipeg Integrated Services this has proved a significant challenge for the development of the integrated services initiative as all of the different parts of the agencies work differently, to different budgets and with different regimes. This motivated their decision to start with co-location and access centers and build toward more networked or joint

delivery. The Thusong centers in South Africa each face a similar challenge. In every new area, it is a different part of the agency that needs to be engaged, and this demands a fresh approach in each area. In these cases, central buy-in and a clear drive from the agency leads is important, as is the authority of the governance body.

As with any major service transformation, the change team must ensure that there is **in place an appropriate plan for change implementation**, which is comprehensive and clear but allows for some degree of flexibility to address unforeseen obstacles. The implementation plan will need to be pragmatic and address ways of gaining quick wins. As one interviewee from HHS-Connect states, the key philosophy is **"Don't sacrifice the good for the perfect."** Equally important, the plan must include what outcomes it is working toward and what success will look like. It should also include a considered process of how to engage partners and other stakeholders. This is particularly important because front office service changes, while offering the possibility to revolutionize the impact on outcomes, carry a risk of failure that will be highly visible to stakeholders and affect citizens' quality of life.

When a front office shared service initiative involves nongovernment organizations, the governance arrangements must recognize the significant skills, capabilities and resources of NGOs but **allow for the fact that some partner agencies operate differently and have different service cultures**. Kent Gateway, for instance, has found that some of their voluntary sector partners lack the professional capacity to work within the gateway setup—something that has had to be managed. The response has been to provide ongoing support and partnering to enable those organizations to develop this capacity. Similarly, Strengthening Families relies heavily upon nongovernmental organizations that are often staffed by part-time volunteers or whose

structures change year to year as their funding fluctuates. Strengthening Families has addressed this by introducing lead agency funding, enabling the NGOs to gain a reliable income stream, which, in turn, allows them to offer staff longer hours and to strengthen their structures.

To tackle these significant challenges, **the governance body needs significant capacity and capability to perform its governance role**. In some cases, this aspect has been lacking. In the case of Strengthening Families, for example, it was found that in many instances, the people sitting on the Local Management Groups did not have any training in governance, did not understand the role, and often lacked the time and resources to do the job. A significant amount of support may therefore be needed in the form of training, advice, support and even resources. We witnessed this situation in many of the initiatives we studied, noticing significant strains on the governance capacity of systems because people lacked the time, skills or resources to fulfill the role.

Understanding the governance challenge across the four models

The governance challenge is different in each of the four front office shared service models. Here, we explore the challenges that are particularly pertinent to each model, and list the main lessons learned by those practitioners who are managing front office shared service initiatives and that we examined for this research.

Governance lessons for the collaborative information and assessment systems model

People are rightly concerned about the privacy and security of their personal data and it is vital that governance arrangements reflect good practices in data management and adhere to applicable rules and legislation. All the examples of collaborative and information assessment systems studied in this research have a separate subgroup of governors, with legal expertise, whose role it is to manage these issues. However, the boundaries around sharing of personal information often fall within a "grey zone" and considerable judgment is necessary to interpret the rules. In some cases, such as the Crossroads Bank, members of the governing board are able to influence the local interpretations of rules because they participate in key governmental advisory groups on privacy and data handling. In other areas, however, the governance bodies of collaborative information and assessment systems must simply manage this "grey zone" by interpreting legislation and policies within the specific context of the change initiative.

In addition, there is the question of mandate. Shared information systems may come to be regarded as an IT project and not part of the "core" operations of the partner agencies. In these instances, there is a real risk that the collaborative systems are considered additional, rather than an essential, to the work of the agencies involved. HHS-Connect, for example, was established under the auspices of the chief information officer for health

and human services, the first time that a domain CIO position has been created in New York City government. This was a powerful message that the project is more than IT but is a transformational change.

It is a crucial role of the governance system to "sell" the new information and assessment system to professionals to encourage its use. Often the CIOs of each agency are members of the governance body or closely linked to it. As such, they can perform an important role in encouraging and enforcing changes in their own agencies. Some, like HHS-Connect, also choose to appoint a CIO working across all agencies.

Similarly, it will be important for the governing board to be accountable to its stakeholders—whether these are policy makers, local partner agencies, employees or users—and demonstrate early successes and value for money. This is particularly important to secure continuity and sustainability. Because these types of initiatives complement rather than supplant "core" agency working, they are at risk of being questioned or cut back when budgets are tight.

Finally, it is important not to underestimate the time and resources it takes to implement a large-scale collaborative information and assessment system. As these tend to be fairly capital-intensive projects, it is important to devote significant resources to designing and implementing them. Arrangements must also be made to ensure the same volume and quality of work can be achieved during the lengthy, and at times disruptive, change process.

As you embark upon a journey to share front office services, have you considered how you...?

- Demonstrate success and secure buy-in across all groups of stakeholders, including policy makers, partner agencies, staff, professional bodies, users and citizens?
- Establish governance structures that take into account the diversity of partner agencies, including the number of partner agencies involved and the degree to which they vary in work processes, area of focus and geography?
- Determine what type of control is required to manage the initiative and what level of autonomy partner agencies have in their current operations and delivery, including that of departments or subdivisions?
- Assess the maturity of existing collaboration arrangements between partner agencies and whether the partners have equal levels of commitment and investment in the proposed changes?
- Develop a clear plan of implementation to which all partner agencies have agreed?
- Ensure that governors have sufficient capacity and expertise to fulfill their role?

Key lessons for governance in a collaborative information and assessment system approach

- Establish the right levels of control to get partner agencies to participate on an equal footing.
- Ensure that the governance board membership includes senior level representatives (at CEO or CIO levels) who are fully committed and locked into an agreement.
- Understand and manage the legislative and regulatory issues around the management and sharing of personal information.
- "Sell" the solutions to the professionals who are expected to use the system.
- Identify early successes and make them known to stakeholders.
- Put in place strong stakeholder engagement processes.

Key lessons for governance in a collaborative customer interface approach

- Establish flexible governance arrangements that allow for the initiative to grow organically.
- Focus efforts on ensuring that all partner agencies buy into the proposed changes.
- Demonstrate early successes to promote wider participation.

Governance lessons for the collaborative customer interface model

Compared to other models, the collaborative customer interface initiatives we studied have tended to have fewer specific difficulties in establishing appropriate governance structures. Nevertheless, there are clear challenges in relation to governing what is often a large number of diverse partner agencies. Engaging these partners in the initiative, and keeping them engaged, requires significant effort, and the governance arrangements will need to be sufficiently flexible to allow for the initiative to grow organically and for changes over time if membership changes. In some cases, like Service BC, this is achieved by establishing a standalone organization with whom other government agencies make service agreements. As a result, the core organizational structure remains constant in the face of changes to the membership.

One of the core governance challenges under this model is to create impetus for engagement. This has been the experience of the Kent Gateway initiative, for example, where there is little imperative for partner agencies to participate. From the start, Kent Gateway has sought to build its success on demonstrating results and using a track record of achievement and popularity among citizens to persuade partners to engage with gateways in new areas. This, along with the Kent County Council's mandate to have core services in each gateway, secures the necessary levels of participation and, consequently, funding.

Collaborative customer interfaces are often set up in stages, allowing for pilots or "front runners" to pave the way for larger-scale change. For example, the Thusong service centers were established in stages, allowing for lessons to be learned and impact achieved before rolling out the initiative country-wide. In Kent, the gateways have put in place both a central governance board and local subboards, helping ensure that the initiative can develop without being slowed by partners who take longer to engage.



Key lessons for governance in a networked delivery approach

- Put in place comprehensive service level agreements and sound protocols focused on citizen centricity.
- Ensure that governance arrangements are sufficiently flexible to empower partners to shape their own solutions.
- Demonstrate the value of participation and joint case management.
- Focus on the engagement of different partners to build sustainable solutions.

Key lessons for governance in a joint delivery approach

- Abolish old governance structures and establish new ones that cover the breadth of the joint delivery initiative's work.
- Maintain the high level of political support that is required to ensure sustainability.
- Ensure sufficient skill and capacity to govern and manage the process of change.
- Manage risks in the change process to secure the necessary volume and quality of services.
- Do not underestimate the need for public relations strategies and strong stakeholder engagement processes.

Governance lessons for the networked delivery model

The governance challenges in the networked delivery approach are significantly different as its focus is not on organizational change. These initiatives are generally joint protocols or processes for delivery to a specified group or under specified circumstances. Generally these shared protocols or frameworks are additional to the agencies' normal day-to-day work and will relate to only part of what they do. As a result, they rarely set out the sole process for achieving delivery. In Strengthening Families, for instance, it is possible for the partner agencies to provide their service without ever using the network. The primary role of governance in any of these initiatives, therefore, is to gain and retain support and involvement, to drive the use of the initiative through the various organizations and to foster partnership working.

Governance will have to be flexible if it is to enable variations between areas, and to cope with different degrees of commitment and involvement between the partner agencies. If the governance structure is too rigid, partners may well lose interest, leave the network or simply revert to old ways of working.

Often, when spread across different areas, a networked delivery model has a central governance body but allows each area its own autonomy in determining the constitution of the initiative and the way protocols are maintained. Meanwhile, broad service level agreements assure the volume and quality of the work. However, while this flexibility is important, there is a difficult balance to strike. Governance that is too loose can lead to a lack of drive or engagement and thus threaten the initiative's sustainability.

Governance lessons for the joint delivery model

In many ways, the joint delivery approach (as adopted in Norway's NAV for instance) can simplify the governance challenges. Because this model often entails creation of a single organization, the main governance challenge is similar to those that arise when establishing any type of new public service agency, whether or not it is a shared entity. The general approach in joint delivery is to establish vertical lines of "command-and-control" accountability, with linkages across different departments and subdivisions.

As most joint delivery initiatives entail fundamental changes in the operational setup, there are significant governance challenges involved in managing their implementation. Firstly, at the initiation stage, this model is reliant on strong political support. In the case of the NAV reform, for instance, the specific solution chosen was a result of a political and administrative compromise brokered by the minister in charge. One interviewee described it in these terms:

"Political resistance against the first [nation-wide] model forced us to go for a county solution. There were few who thought this was the optimal solution, but it was the compromise that we were able to reach. But we still hope to introduce more comprehensive solutions across all the municipalities sometime in the future...but it will be quite a long journey."

The NAV change team has devoted significant resources to agreeing to the specific shape and remit of the new approach, which spans three layers of government: local municipalities, regional agencies and central agencies. This was, and continues to be, a significant change management challenge that requires a change team with sufficient capacity and skills to drive change forward.

As the joint delivery model is the most transformational approach to front office shared services, it is also the model that has the most direct impact on users. The cost of failure is therefore particularly high, and risks will have to be managed accordingly. Again, early NAV experiences provide a powerful lesson: early “teething” problems led to delays in the processing and payment of benefits to the unemployed. Naturally, this caused an uproar that was picked up by the media. The change team then had to devote significant resources to public relations and stakeholder engagement activities with the broad range of interested parties including politicians, the media, users and a range of interest groups. All these groups will need to be communicated to and managed in the future.

2. Performance management

The nature of the challenge

Front office shared service initiatives are often resource intensive to implement, highly visible to stakeholders and have a direct impact on citizens. Thus, it is crucial that efforts are made to track progress and demonstrate the actual impact. The difficulty in establishing a chain of causation between the changes initiated and the effects these have on citizens has been a major challenge in all of the cases we have studied. Because it often takes time to realize the effects of large-scale change initiatives, many agencies opt to supplement internal performance information with extensive user experience data. For example, Poupatempo in Sao Paolo and the Citizen Shops in Portugal have each adopted a performance management framework based largely on measuring the customer experience. This provides strong pointers about the level of satisfaction and customer support for the initiative, but does not always enable the organization to identify the full effect in terms of outcomes.

The Strengthening Families initiative tracks performance through contract monitoring reports and user feedback on how they found the process and what it achieved. Tameside's Pension Service Joint Team goes one step further; they monitor the rate of take-up of pension credits for the elderly and the overall financial health of pensioners in the area. This is a particularly strong example of how clear outcome measures are established and used as the main guide to performance.

As you embark upon a journey to share front office services, have you considered how you...?

- Track progress and measure success across the range of services offered and across the different agencies involved in its delivery?
- Align the different partner agencies' different performance management processes and systems to track progress and outcomes delivered by the joint initiatives?
- Engage with all partner agencies to ensure that they understand and buy into the performance management regime proposed?
- Ensure that the performance objectives and targets are relevant and contribute to the core mission of partner agencies?

Key lessons for performance management in a collaborative information and assessment system approach

- Establish meaningful performance indicators that capture how processes and outputs deliver value for money and contribute to the outcomes of the partner agencies.
- Manage performance of the shared information and assessment systems and create strong incentives for the users to make best use of the systems.
- Consult regularly with staff and users and learn from their feedback on how usable the system is.
- Set up the performance management system in a way that ensures all partners are contributing to success.

The second challenge, closely linked to the first, is finding ways of **defining outcomes in a way that is meaningful to all partner agencies**. Different agencies will have different frames of reference, different objectives, different performance management processes and systems and different concepts of success. When target outcomes are more complex and the number of partner agencies is larger, this challenge can grow exponentially. The key is to define performance measures that allow impact on overall outcomes to be identified while remaining specific enough to each agency's work so that every workforce feels the necessary connection and ownership to the shared services initiative and understands its role in contributing to intended outcomes.

The EOHHHS in Massachusetts takes an advanced, systematic approach to developing a performance management system across a complex human services system. The leadership team has undertaken a vast mapping exercise to establish shared understanding and ownership of defined outcome targets. First, they asked agencies to identify the key outcome areas that the state's HHS agencies were there to affect. Then each agency mapped the work it does in relation to those outcome areas to show what areas it felt it could directly influence. The result is a huge and complex map, which shows how hundreds of outputs from different agencies and initiatives can influence each of the outcome areas. Although it was a difficult process, the change leaders felt that it was the key to success as they developed a framework for measuring performance. HHS-Connect in New York is adopting a similar approach, seeking to develop a number of broad outcomes and then mapping the different agencies' outputs and contributions to those outcomes. This allows a meaningful measure of performance for the front office shared initiative; all agencies can see where their work is having an impact and feel their success is being appropriately measured.

Third, the establishment of many joint office shared services requires a **clear linkage from a set of disparate processes and systems to a single shared, overarching performance management framework for the activities under the shared initiative**. The greater the number and variation of agencies, the greater this challenge is likely to be. It can range from two agencies operating in the same field of work with similar performance systems to a multitude of agencies working in several different fields—police, social care, health or local government, for example—all with their own systems, their own professional regulations and very different missions. Marrying up these different frameworks and practices can be extremely difficult. It is vital to overcome the differences and find a way to establish a system that embeds the shared initiative in the performance management of all partner agencies.

In the case of Winnipeg Integrated Services, for example, staff have been placed under community area directors to whom they are responsible for their day-to-day activities; however, the management of their performance continues to be handled through their parent agencies with their different performance management systems. By contrast, in the Strengthening Families initiative, the workforces' performance is managed through their own agencies. They are not assessed on the success or failure of the Strengthening Families work as part of those performance management systems. The consequence can be that when under pressure, staff may choose to focus on their respective agency's core work rather than on the Strengthening Families work because the latter does not have a direct impact on their performance assessment.

It is a major challenge to **find ways of ensuring that the performance of the initiative is aligned with the performance management system of the partner agencies**. This may take the form of a separate performance management regime under which all staff are placed and for which all agencies are responsible. Alternatively, the measures that define success for

the initiative can be written into the existing systems of the agencies and staff. Whatever approach is taken, the key is to ensure that the staff and agencies involved are accountable for the success of the shared initiative. If they are not, the danger is that the initiative becomes "nice to have" rather than a key part of the staff's daily working lives.

Understanding the challenges across the four models

The performance management challenges are different for each of the four front office shared service models. We set out below the challenges that are particularly pertinent to each model, along with the main lessons learned by those practitioners who are managing front office shared service initiatives and that we interviewed for this research.

Performance management lessons for the collaborative information and assessment systems model

In many cases of performance management in the collaborative information and assessment model, it is particularly challenging to move beyond process and output management metrics and manage impact on outcomes. The shared databases in HHS-Connect, for example, currently only contribute to outcomes indirectly and the approach taken does not require significant changes in how the user engages with the service. Instead of developing overarching outcome metrics, HHS-Connect has developed proxy measures around the usage and take-up from staff, their experiences of how usable the functions are, and the functionality of the processes. Ultimately, HHS-Connect aims to develop a comprehensive, outcome-based performance system for the partner agencies and then link this back to the measurement of performance of the shared information system. Similarly, Utah's EREP is also reverting to a measure of process indicators, such as how many people use the system and how many programs and agencies it reaches.

Performance management lessons for the collaborative customer interface model

In all of the collaborative customer interface initiatives examples studied, performance management has been based largely on customer experience feedback and case handling metrics (for example, how many cases have been handled, how many were completed on first contact and so on). This is the case in Service BC, Poupatempo, Kent Gateway and the Portuguese Citizen Shops. This focus on customer experience and process indicators is entirely appropriate when the terms of reference of the initiative are based on the customer interface. Service BC, for example, manages performance internally through these types of metrics and externally through service agreements with partner agencies. With these agreements, Service BC agrees to handle certain transactions on behalf of partner agencies and to meet specified process handling and client satisfaction targets.

Performance management lessons for the networked delivery model

Networked delivery is the model that seems to face the most significant performance management challenges. Unlike joint delivery, no new organizational structure has been formed to deliver the initiative, and generally the work complements or is additional to the core work of the individual agencies. This presents challenges for managing performance of staff, whose jobs generally remain the same, and for the initiative as a whole because its success may not be easy to measure or may not be directly influenced by all partner agencies.

In Strengthening Families, the performance management system is generally quite loose. Strengthening Families faces two clear challenges in relation to performance management. The first is that there is no link between the success of the initiative and the performance management of the partner agencies' staff. The consequence is that even though agencies are committed to the initiative, it does not directly influence the staff's day-to-day work and is not embedded in their core activities. Members of staff who do not regard it as a useful initiative and are under pressure to show results in other areas are unlikely to engage fully with it. The second challenge is that there is really no clear means of measuring the initiative's overall impact or success. The initiative is designed to respond to the most complex cases and to help improve outcomes for those families, which makes it very difficult to measure the overall impact. Performance management of the initiative in local areas is generally limited to having the local management group look at the number of cases managed and feedback from customers. Not surprisingly, these groups find it very hard to track or show results or success.

Key lessons for performance management in a collaborative customer interface approach

- Measure customer feedback on satisfaction.
- Use this data to inform improvements and create a culture of customer service.
- Build performance measures into service agreements.

Key lessons for performance management in a networked delivery approach

- Design a performance management framework that supports and complements the performance management arrangements within the partner agencies.
- Allow for a flexible arrangement that enables each network to define its own objectives and develop its own solutions.
- Measure performance and make use of success stories to promote the initiative and increase participation.
- Align performance management of the initiative with management of staff to ensure that they are encouraged to engage in the shared services initiative.

Key lessons for performance management in a joint delivery approach

- Create comprehensive performance management systems that capture all the different parts of the initiative.
- Ensure that staff understand and buy into the new performance management measures.
- If operating across different levels of government or subdivisions, ensure that the links are clearly defined and that multiple lines of accountability are managed.

As you embark upon a journey to share front office services, have you considered how you...?

- Develop a strong plan to manage the differences between the workforces of the partner agencies, particularly where they come from different sectors, professional backgrounds or service areas? You need to get the staff working as a unified workforce if you want service delivery for citizens to be holistic and seamless.
- Ensure that key workforce groups, particularly the trade unions and professional groups in the workforce, are committed to the change?
- Determine whether you have the staff that you need to operate the shared initiative and develop a plan to ensure you can meet the skill and expertise mix the new approach demands?
- Put in place the training you need to support staff in their new roles and create a common culture?
- Develop a clear communication plan to engage staff in the change?

Performance management lessons for the joint delivery model

The challenges of performance management in joint delivery initiatives—where a new entity is created to deliver the shared services—are in many ways the same as those facing any public service agency. Nevertheless, in large change initiatives, such as the NAV reform in Norway, significant challenges also lie in developing a new and fully comprehensive performance management system that captures the complexity of the service design, works across organizational subdivisions and is supported by strong understanding and buy-in from staff at all levels.

The performance management challenge for the NAV partnership model is compounded by the fact that the performance management arrangements need to cover three levels of government, each with its own performance culture. In addition, the local solutions are different in different municipalities. This creates the need for an overarching framework alongside a cooperation agreement that regulates, among other things, performance targets. The cooperation agreement says that the state and the municipal government should be equal partners. But with local and national governments delivering different types of services, local authorities' pre-existing priorities do not always align with national targets. In these cases, discrepancies can arise between the performance targets to which the local government staff are contributing and the national priorities the NAV is working toward.

In cases where the initiative is not a newly integrated agency but a newly created team or organization jointly staffed by people from its parent agencies, as in Tameside, the key is to ensure that the performance frameworks and goals are connected to those of the partner agencies and enable a clear demonstration of how they and everyone else are contributing to improving outcomes.

3. Workforce change

The nature of the challenge

The first challenge is to determine the new ways of working that the initiative requires and to **engage the workforce in the change from the onset of planning the initiative**. If changes or new ways of working are planned or decided upon without engaging the workforce, this is likely to have an impact on both workforce satisfaction and productivity. What's more, it raises an immediate risk of affecting service delivery and hence outcomes for citizens. Issues therefore need to be dealt with quickly and effectively by **communicating to staff about the new work processes and the reasons behind the change**.

At the same time, the workforce should receive sufficient training so that people are confident about undertaking their jobs. External recruitment may also prove necessary to address the need for new skills. Undertaking front office shared service initiatives challenges partner agencies to consider how they meet the different **knowledge and skill requirements** that the new delivery approach demands. Successfully delivering a front office shared service initiative requires that people perform somewhat different roles; they will need different knowledge and skills to do this successfully. Changes here can take many forms. They may, for instance, place the emphasis on customer service skills or require that staff learn a new set of processes for assessing eligibility.

For front office shared service initiatives to succeed, and particularly for them to be citizen-centric, initiatives must focus on the development of **holistic case management skills**. Staff in all agencies need case management skills, but in front office shared service initiatives these skills must be developed so that staff can manage cases in a different way. To address people's broader needs, staff must be able to view each customer's needs more holistically and to identify

solutions that span several agencies. Case workers need a very specific skill set—including problem solving, teamwork and communication capabilities—to understand the whole needs of the person (and understand what clients need beyond the immediate services for which they present themselves) and assess how these can be met by different agencies. Staff will typically be required to facilitate, engage and manage multiple partners and agencies across different disciplines and, in some cases, to act as a liaison officer between the client and the different agencies. Such skills are critical to reap the benefits of cross-agency front office collaboration.

This, of course, requires that staff have much greater **cross-agency service knowledge**. When multiple agencies share a front office function, and their staff members are required to serve a wider range of customer needs, a broader knowledge of services, eligibility criteria and so on is required for all the service areas involved in the initiative. Staff may have to undertake training to acquire this broader understanding of the services available and how they can be brought together to address people's needs. It is also vital to develop protocols or systems that ensure that the knowledge required to respond to the full range of citizens' needs is always available. In some initiatives, like Service BC, staff must know how to undertake all processes covered by the service. The result is an extensive training system backed by strong information support. In Kent Gateway, the response has been to specialize customer service staff so they develop strong knowledge of a particular service area.

Developing a new unified workforce or a culture of cross-working requires that partner agencies tackle the **cultural, professional and organizational differences**. Such differences are often significant, particularly when bringing together staff from very diverse organizations or from a range of professional backgrounds. In some cases, it is

simply about professionals "talking different languages" and the varying terminology used by different services. But professionals from different backgrounds can sometimes also view the world, and the circumstances of their clients, entirely differently based on the area in which they work and their own responsibilities. For instance, a police officer may view an individual as an offender; a social worker taking a broader view might see the same person as a victim. This difference will often determine how they manage cases and the interventions they use to respond to situations. In instances where there is little overlap between the services delivered by each agency, this can cause problems, particularly in the management of multi-dimensional cases.

Other examples of culturally grounded differences can be related to how people operate in a professional environment. Kent Gateway found, for example, significant differences in the ways of working between the governmental and nongovernmental partners. This manifested itself in a range of ways, including working hours, dress code, information management and many other working practices. This was a significant challenge in establishing the centers and developing a coherent professional culture.

Strengthening Families relies very much on local coordinators who are tasked with engaging partners from a number of different organizations to deliver better outcomes. But they must do so in the absence of a performance management system that supports collaborative working. In fact, this issue can be seen as part of a broader challenge: territoriality or "patch protection." It is not always easy to give up control, particularly when staff may still remain accountable for delivering the same service. Consider an agency responsible for social care for elderly people. If the agency also has to work with another agency to deliver a shared outcome—but remains legally responsible for social care—there may be natural resistance to working collaboratively because

though they share clients their legal responsibilities differ.

In some cases, the differences relate to organizational nuances among the partner agencies. Salaries, working conditions and working practices may vary widely. For instance, the local government and central government staff in the newly unified NAV organization each come from organizations with very different working hours. As a result, there have been problems in creating and running a unified team. In the Winnipeg Integrated Services approach, there have been significant challenges in reconciling employment terms. As one organization is private and the other governmental, staff members are paid very differently and have very different terms of employment. That reality is proving a significant barrier to establishing a single organization.

It is important when bringing agencies together in a shared initiative that structures are set up to avoid the potential for an **operational authority gap**. In many shared initiatives, staff involved come from a variety of agencies and remain employed by and accountable to them through reporting lines and performance management. The consequence can be an "authority gap," as those running the initiative are unable to hold staff accountable for its success or even ensure they engage with the work. Staff members within the Winnipeg Integrated Services partnership, for example, work under community area directors within the centers but continue reporting to managers in their parent organizations. They find themselves with split accountabilities in which they are attempting to serve the needs of both, which may not always align. As Strengthening Families has found, the consequence is that when the pressure is on, staff are inclined to work toward the outcomes mandated by their reporting lines rather than in favor of the shared initiative.

Key lessons for workforce change in a collaborative information and assessment system approach

- Focus on strengthening the IT skills of the workforce.
- Sell the solution to the staff members who are expected to use the system.
- Engage users themselves in the design of the system.

Key lessons for workforce change in a collaborative customer interface approach

- Focus on developing customer service skills within the workforce.
- Establish training and information support that enables staff to deal with a full range of inquiries.
- Develop problem-solving skills among staff so they can more effectively help citizens find solutions.
- Design case management that places cases with staff with the appropriate levels of expertise. Not everything should be handled by frontline staff.

Understanding the challenges across the four models

The workforce change challenge is different in each of the four front office shared service models. We set out below the aspects of the challenge that are particularly pertinent to each model, and list the main lessons learned by those practitioners who are managing front office shared service initiatives and that we interviewed for this research.

Workforce change lessons for the collaborative information and assessment systems model

Implementing a collaborative information system typically involves less extensive workforce challenges than those facing the other models. There is normally less need for different agencies to work directly together, and it is often enough that staff in the partner agencies use the same information and assessment system.

However, as illustrated by the Californian C-IV case, the implementation of such projects may have a significant impact on ways of working if the case management process requires substantial change, such as a whole new way of viewing the customer. A system that allows the case worker to view the client's needs in a more holistic way, as the C-IV system does, requires case workers to address a wider range of articulated needs but also to consider needs that the client may not necessarily be communicating. This approach requires a much stronger emphasis on training to enable staff to make the most of the system and to view and manage all of the information about the client. C-IV management realized this early on and was successful in embedding a philosophy that supports a holistic client view.

Contrary to expectations, adopting a collaborative information system can increase the need for IT skills in the organization more than in other models. In the case of the Belgian Crossroads Bank, for example, a separate nonprofit IT organization was created to provide expertise and manage the IT infrastructure. This

provided both flexibility of resources and stability of skills and knowledge.

Workforce change lessons for the collaborative customer interface model

The collaborative customer interface approach typically requires significant workforce change. As a shared interface with the customer is established, challenges related to process change, as well as those to do with bringing together staff from different agencies, can place great strains on the workforce and potentially affect the success of the initiative.

The customer-facing unit must be staffed by people who have the right skills to operate on the front line, as well as robust knowledge of all the services offered by the partner agencies. Depending on the extent to which cases are segmented and the complexity of cases to be managed by frontline personnel at first instance, staff may require strong problem-solving skills, so they can understand complex needs that demand a response from numerous agencies. How far this becomes an issue is influenced by the complexity of the outcomes the initiative is seeking to produce and the range of agencies involved.

Bringing staff together from different agencies, often under the same manager, is also likely to be challenging, especially in cases where there is little tradition of collaboration. In the Winnipeg Integrated Services initiative, where two agencies at different government levels are sharing a customer interface, they had to look carefully at how they could encourage collaborative working. To overcome this challenge, they decided to bring the staff together under one roof and have them work alongside each other before creating a joint employment authority.

Workforce change lessons for the networked delivery model

Where agencies adopt a networked delivery approach, there are significant challenges for the coordinating entity in ensuring that staff members prioritize the work of the collaboration. The networked model relies heavily on strong coordination and talented, motivated staff who are able to engage with multiple agencies. A good example of this is Strengthening Families, in which success very much depends on the local coordinators responsible for bringing agencies together. As one interviewee pointed out, **"A lot depends on the personality of the coordinator, who they know and how passionate they are for the community. You obviously get better results when you have these traits."** However, such high dependence on certain individuals in the organization introduces risk and is a potential weakness.

Staff engagement can also prove a significant challenge in the networked delivery model. In most cases, front office shared service initiatives are additional to the daily working of the organizations. Without having a dedicated organizational structure, the work relies upon staff engagement. Staff must believe that the work is useful and that it has been designed to support their daily efforts. This requires careful management and consistent efforts to ensure the work of the initiative is compatible with the parent organizations' working processes and performance regimes.

Workforce change lessons for the joint delivery model

When agencies are brought together to work as a single entity, other substantial workforce challenges are likely to emerge. As we have seen in with the NAV organization in Norway, the tiered case management approach (with cases being directed to either frontline staff or specialists as appropriate) substantially changes the skill requirements for frontline case workers—the first point of contact for clients—both in the local offices and in the call centers. These case workers now need to specialize in dealing effectively with customers' complex needs during their first contact. To do so, they also need a deep knowledge of the broad range of services available. In the specialist teams, case managers have a dual responsibility for operating the phone service to which clients can be directed and undertaking their traditional case work. This creates prioritization challenges that are new to many staff. On the other hand, as the NAV model removes from specialist staff the burden of handling routine inquiries and places this in the hands of the frontline staff, it creates the potential for a more efficient use of the workforce.

The NAV case also illustrates the potential challenge of having people from different agencies working together in the same organization. In the local offices, social workers employed by the municipal government are working alongside the state employees under the same manager.

Key lessons for workforce change in a networked delivery approach

- Develop the "softer" skills of the workforce to aid communication and collaboration.
- Create strong protocols that guide staff use of the initiative.
- Alter the working practices and performance management of the partner agencies to promote and support staff involvement in the initiative.

Key lessons for workforce change in a joint delivery approach

- Develop a new workforce for the initiative: do not expect the previous roles or skill mix to necessarily support the new approach.
- Ensure staff work for the new initiative and do not find their line management and responsibilities split between it and the parent organization.
- Build a new organizational culture to ensure staff members feel they are working as a single workforce.
- Give staff the support and training they need to broaden their service knowledge.
- Create a protocol for the tiering of cases that ensures they are managed by staff with the right skills.



4. Information sharing and systems

The nature of the challenge

Unlike the other challenges Information sharing remains a somewhat contested area with many agencies reluctant to undertake sharing due to the challenges of legislative restrictions and the risks of privacy breaches. So first it is important to consider the advantages agencies have derived from information sharing.

The effective sharing of information can **drive process change and efficiencies and reduce the number of interactions required by individual citizens.** Sharing information can greatly reduce the cost-to-serve and the cost-to-be-served. Enabling customers to provide information relevant to, for instance, their eligibility for different benefits and programs in a single transaction reduces the time and effort required of them. The government agencies, likewise, experience a reduction in duplicative information processing and storage. The Tameside MBC/Pension Service initiative clearly illustrates the process efficiencies to be gained. Whereas previously the local authority and the Department for Work and Pensions had seen the same people and gathered the same information, they now work jointly and the client only has to be seen once. The process gains are significant—from the reduction in the number of interactions with clients to the increase in the take-up of benefits.

Sharing information also **provides learning and insights that will help to improve processes and outcomes.** Given citizens' often complex and interrelated needs, it is important that disparate information held by individual agencies is brought together to develop a holistic picture of customer needs and also of desired outcomes. Creating a shared set of information can make clearer how different needs interrelate, where clients and their needs may overlap, and what the potential impact of different interventions might be. One of the primary drivers behind the approach adopted by HHS-Connect in New York, for example, was that the

agencies felt they simply did not know enough about their clients to design the best possible approaches to improving outcomes. Only through developing a coordinated view of their citizens could they hope to identify actions that would make the most difference. The ultimate aim for HHS-Connect is that this sharing of information will empower staff with the knowledge they need to redesign processes and interventions to continue to improve outcomes for citizens while driving operational efficiencies.

Well coordinated information sharing can **reduce cultural barriers between partner agencies.** Often different agencies, particularly if their staff members come from different professional backgrounds, can perceive their clients and their clients' needs in very different ways. In many cases, they also hold different information about their clients. By sharing information and developing a common view of the client, agencies can begin to break down their own cultural barriers. Staff in each agency can gain more of an understanding of what those in the other agencies do and how they approach interactions with the client. The Belgian Crossroads Bank is a sophisticated example. The bank enables all social service-related agencies across Belgium to access the same information about clients. This allows each agency to develop a similar view of the citizen, something that has helped to reduce the cultural barriers among the agencies.

Sharing information is rarely easy. Regardless of what type of shared initiative is being undertaken, before agencies can even begin to share information they need to consider and manage some critical issues.

Agencies need to **understand what information is held, what systems are currently in place and how compatible these systems are.** Very often, different agencies work on different systems that record information in different ways and that may not be compatible. The first step to sharing information is for the partner agencies to take stock of

their current information architecture and determine how compatible their systems are. This will greatly influence the approach they take. Sometimes the conclusion may be that it is simply not going to be possible to share certain types of information.

It is important for agencies to **understand what information is beneficial to share.** Sharing everything is rarely the right approach. There is much information that may not be relevant to all agencies and some that may not actually improve the service to clients. Agencies need to look critically at the needs of the target client group and the services they require and then decide what information it would be most beneficial to share.

Likewise, agencies need to **consider what it is appropriate to share.** There are a number of legal restrictions on the handling and sharing of personal information, as well as a wealth of sensitivities among the public about use of such data. These need to be identified and understood and then used as the basis for deciding how and what information should be shared. As one interviewee from HHS in New York put it, "There are three areas of information: white, which we know it is ok to share; black, which we know we are not legally allowed to share; and grey, which we're unsure about, either because the law is unclear or because public opinion is unclear." Identifying where information falls is a vital step toward effective sharing.

Agencies also have to **balance privacy concerns and the risk of data loss against the benefits of information sharing.** Even if it is legally acceptable to share information, every agency needs to strike a balance between the benefits and risks of sharing. Data losses can have significant consequences, not least in terms of undermining public trust in government. This needs to be carefully considered before a decision is taken about sharing the data.

As you embark upon a journey to share front office services, have you considered how you...?

- Determine what information needs to be shared to enable staff to provide an integrated service to citizens and develop protocols to manage that sharing?
- Decide how much sensitive information needs to be shared and the professional and regulatory rules that control the use and sharing of such information and plan appropriately?
- Put in place a robust system for gaining informed consent from clients for the use and sharing of their data?
- Look at how different the existing information systems are and how to bring together the information systems of the partner agencies?
- Build the information systems the initiative requires to ensure that staff have the required information and can link into experts and other agencies as necessary?

Finally, agencies must find means of gaining public support and user authorization for the information sharing. An important yet often overlooked element of data sharing is that the ultimate owners of personal data are the citizens who are its subjects. Agencies need to engage citizens in gaining authorization for data sharing, to publicize it well and to educate citizens on what their data is held for, how it is to be used and who will have access to it.

For example, Strengthening Families works on a consent basis, with all clients informed by the lead worker what information will be shared and with whom. Clients are free to give full or partial consent to that information sharing. The strength of this approach is that authority is always with the client, who at any time can refuse to share information with particular agencies.

Nevertheless, an unintentional gap can arise between the client and the handling of information, not because the partner agencies lack a clear idea of their information usage but because they do not always effectively communicate the protocol for information sharing to frontline staff. For example, within Kent Gateway, much information held on databases is shared (although it is important to note that this happens between individual organizations, rather than under the auspices of the gateways). However, customer service staff are often not sure who has clearance to see that information. As one customer service advisor commented, **"I know the information can be seen by other people, and I tell clients that, but I don't know who, or what the rules are."** Ensuring that clients can give informed consent is vital, but this requires frontline staff to have sufficient training and understanding to effectively inform clients.

Through our research, we have noted a number of different approaches to information sharing depending on the circumstances and starting point for the initiative. The more complex and

fragmented the situation, the harder it is to develop shared information systems. We have identified three different approaches that organizations are taking.

First, some government agencies have responded by building a platform or network to join up their pre-existing systems and enable staff from each agency to access the various systems. Kent Gateway, for example, has taken this approach by developing networked access through which individuals with clearance can access partner agencies' different information systems, thereby enabling them to see what information is held on other systems. While it does not change their system or integrate the information, it does enable shared access. Tameside's Pension Service Joint Team has sought to share information by simply giving team members access to both agencies' existing systems and allowing them to keep using them as they previously would have done. This decision was driven by the fact that the Department for Work and Pensions system is bound by very strict national rules that could not be changed. As a result, the joint team sought a solution to sharing that circumvented the problem.

A second approach to information sharing is to design an augmenting system that provides the information that needs to be shared with all agencies. For instance, HHS-Connect has developed a new system that holds the joint information to which all partner agencies have access. The advantages are that it does not disrupt agencies' existing systems and it can be designed to give carefully controlled access to data. As HHS-Connect has found, the challenge is that staff will naturally lean toward using the extant systems that they already know. This is particularly true in the early stages of development when such systems tend to hold more information than the new one.

Understanding the challenges across the four models

The information sharing and systems challenge is different in each of the four front office shared service models. We set out below the challenges that are particularly pertinent to each model, and list the main lessons learned by those practitioners who are managing front office shared service initiatives and that we interviewed for this research.

Information sharing and systems lessons for the collaborative information and assessment systems model

Collaborative information and assessment systems approaches face two major challenges with regards to information sharing: legislation and legacy systems.

Legislation is often the trickier of the two. Rules can be restrictive and may date from a time when information was stored on paper. HHS-Connect, C-IV and Utah eREP have all faced significant legislative challenges. HHS-Connect even created a separate governance body made up of lawyers and legal experts whose role is to manage the legislative challenges of setting up and running the system. The response in HHS-Connect has been to use the mandate they have from the mayor, who issued a directive to agencies ordering them to share information. They also draw on the significant political support they have to manage the legislative challenges and seek to influence the rules where appropriate. The challenge is particularly acute for HHS-Connect because the multiple layers of legislation (federal and state) often conflict or fail to comprehensively cover the issue. Adding to the complexity is the fact that the legislation was designed before electronic storage and use enabled different means of data management and protection.

All agencies that seek to share information face the legacy system challenge, but it is particularly problematic in relation to collaborative information and assessment systems. Existing computer and information systems in different government agencies, and sometimes even within different parts of the same government agency, are often incompatible, frequently out of date and sometimes run on poor infrastructure. It can be extremely difficult just drawing the information out of those systems and translating it into a common format for entry and use in a new system. Unless the old systems are to be replaced entirely, IT personnel face the challenge of making the systems forward compatible (capable of working with the new systems) and finding ways of cross referencing among them.

The experience of HHS-Connect also points to another challenge in situations where the new system does not replace the old: uptake by staff. HHS-Connect has found that staff need much encouragement to use the new system because they are comfortable with the old systems and because those systems contain more detailed information related to their service than the shared system. Development of a new system needs to be staged so that it works effectively while containing enough information early on to be useful to staff. HHS-Connect has begun with a version one release with more limited functionality, which is soon to be replaced with an upgraded version two release. Leaders hope version two will drive uptake by offering more functionality. It must also be remembered that there will always be a time lag in changing business processes in this way. Staff must be educated about the change and then learn to operate differently, particularly if there are limited incentives for use.

Key lessons for information sharing and systems in the collaborative information and assessment system model

- Dedicate staff to understand and manage the rules restricting data use and sharing.
- Demonstrate benefits to staff early on to ensure uptake of the new system.
- Engage staff in the design and development of the new system.
- Develop a plan for joining up, replacing or upgrading the legacy systems.

Key lessons for information sharing and systems in the collaborative customer interface model

- Balance the sharing of information against the privacy of clients—only share as much information as is needed to underpin the new approach.
- Create information systems that ensure staff have access to the broad service knowledge they need to support clients effectively.
- Develop a case tracking system so clients are managed holistically.

Key lessons for information sharing and systems in networked delivery

- Develop a strong protocol for obtaining client consent for information sharing.
- Ensure staff are properly trained in the handling of client information and are sufficiently knowledgeable to advise clients about the handling and sharing of their data.
- Consider whether staff need access to the information systems of other partner agencies.

Information sharing and systems lessons for the collaborative customer interface model

Perhaps uniquely among the four front office shared service models, the information challenge within the collaborative customer interface models is quite flexible. It is entirely possible to share as much or as little information as desired depending on the particular circumstances of the shared initiative.

Kent Gateway, for instance, has initially begun work without any form of shared information system. Instead, gateway staff refer clients to the appropriate services or help them use the existing information systems. This choice was a practical one. Taking this approach meant the project could be established far more quickly and did not require the establishment of costly new information systems. It is also in line with the present gateway philosophy whereby staff deal with primary inquiries but do not oversee cases. The downside is that it limits the gateways' ability to case manage clients and that generally fewer services can be provided through the first point of contact. To address this, Kent Gateway is tendering for a case-tracking system, as well as building a platform to join up the various information systems within their agencies to enable more information sharing in the future. The advantage of taking this staged approach is that it will be done while the centers are up and running and with a better understanding of what the case tracking system needs to do.

Service BC, by contrast, has required extensive information systems from the outset. It is committed to handling all of the transactions for services that it is contracted to provide and to responding to any government-related inquiry. Meeting these commitments requires an information system that provides staff with detailed support tools that can guide them through a range of processes for the provision of those services, as well as access to the information systems of other

government agencies. The approach Service BC has adopted allows them to respond effectively to the multiple needs of clients who enter their centers and to enable all staff to undertake all transactions.

Another element that collaborative customer interface initiatives need to consider carefully is the question of data privacy. These initiatives are generally designed to handle transactional, informational or simple customer needs. It is often inappropriate for staff to have access to detailed and sensitive case information. Certainly Kent Gateway's approach specifically precludes such data from being shared. The stated intention for Kent Gateway's case tracking system is that it will "allow staff to see where customers have been but not the details of their cases." While there is less need and justification for collaborative customer interface initiatives to share detailed information extensively, the partner agencies do need to share enough to give the seamless customer experience, which is often their primary function. This level of information sharing is important. Where there are multiple interfaces that people can use, it is particularly vital that all parts of the organization(s) can see at least the complete record of interaction for each client.

Information sharing and systems lessons for the networked delivery model

The shared information challenges for networked delivery appear to be relatively minimal. None of the cases we studied involve the development of shared systems. Instead, they rely on case-by-case client consent. Strengthening Families, for instance, asks for signed consent from each client to share information. Such consent is rarely withheld. When it is, this has generally been resolved by removing one or another agency from the case. Client consent does, indeed, seem to be the key information area to manage for networked delivery. Doing so requires staff to be properly trained

so they can inform their clients about what information will be shared, who it will be shared with and how it will be used.

However, in some networked initiatives it may be beneficial for staff to have access to the information held by partner agencies. This is particularly so where there is a dedicated lead worker who oversees each case. Being able to access information held by the various agencies involved—rather than merely receiving information through case conferences—enables the lead worker to oversee and manage the work.

Information sharing and systems lessons for the joint delivery model

For multiple agencies to operate effectively in a joint delivery arrangement, the information that each holds must also be available to all of the others. Further, all staff must be able to access and process information across the partners. This can be a significant challenge. NAV has found that bringing together the three previously separate central government organizations and the local government agencies is a huge challenge. The agencies can bypass legislative problems, but they still struggle with significant implementation and IT challenges. Developing a single system applicable to all, training staff to use it, and developing the infrastructure to support it are all ongoing challenges. By contrast, less extensive approaches to joint delivery, such as the Tameside MBC/Pension Service Joint Team, seem able to avoid many of these issues. Tameside opted not to change systems but merely negotiated with the DWP to grant local authority staff access to the Department for Work and Pensions systems and vice versa.

However agencies opt to structure a joint delivery initiative, there will always be a degree of challenge. Unlike the collaborative customer interface or networked delivery models, it is impossible—almost by definition—for joint delivery to operate without a well developed system of shared information.

The four challenges

The four critical challenges, though they fall within different themes, are by no means separate. They all affect each other, and in some cases, the challenges of one are a different element of a challenge that occurs within one or more of the others. The governance challenges affect the workforce challenges, which affect the information challenges, which affect the performance management challenges. None of these challenges stands alone; all overlap with and have implications on the others. Government agencies need to consider these four as an interconnected whole if they are to understand the shape of the challenges they face and devise means of responding to them.

Key lessons for information sharing and systems in joint delivery

- Create strong integrated information systems that enable staff to have access to all relevant client data.
- Understand and manage the regulatory and professional rules governing the sharing and use of data.
- Train staff on the use and interpretation of data held by partner agencies.
- Invest in new infrastructure and systems to support integration. Legacy systems will rarely be sufficient.

Appendix B – The case studies

Collaborative Information and Assessment Systems

Initiative name

HHS-Connect

Country/location

New York City, NY, USA

Partner agencies

New York City government

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Local government and nongovernmental organizations

Subject area

Health and Human Services

Model of approach

Collaborative information and assessment systems

Date of inception

2008

For more information

[Http://www.NYC.gov](http://www.NYC.gov)

HHS-Connect is the first stage in a potential transformation that ultimately aims to ensure that health and human services in New York are delivered in a citizen-centric manner. It seeks to connect all of the health and human services agencies so that they share information and develop a holistic view of the citizen that will enable them to deliver seamless services. At its core is the development of a virtual integrated case file, which holds all information on a client and can be accessed by all relevant agencies, as well as the client. With this system, information would need to be given only once, and that information would remain accessible to all and transparent to the client.

To effectively administer the work, a new organization called HHS-Connect was developed. Partner agencies were all required to sign a charter that forms a binding contract between the agencies for the work. A chief information officer for health and human services was appointed to oversee delivery and to sit above and bring together the CIOs for all

HHS agencies. The program is run by an executive board chaired by the deputy mayor and consisting of the commissioners in charge of HHS departments. Its mandate is clear: to develop an information system to join up HHS agencies that will underpin the development of more holistic service delivery by bringing agencies together around the client and by gathering sufficient information to give government a holistic view of the needs of the clients it serves.

Recognizing that the delivery of a cross-agency system of this kind can be challenging, the mayor issued an executive order requiring all agencies to share all information that was legally allowable. They have also established a legal governance board whose role is to tackle legislative and regulatory questions around information sharing, as well as governance boards for data security and enterprise architecture. Beneath these, each project within the program has its own governance board that reports in to the executive board.

The development of the shared systems is still in relatively early stages but its implementation has been structured to bring early functionality and encourage uptake. At present, agencies can access the new case system, which contains some but not all information held and is yet to become the primary case management system. Early success and functionality have helped drive the project and engage staff within the agencies. As the information is brought together, it is then analyzed as the first step in developing a holistic view of clients and services. Initially, this has been through the decomposition of information into cross-cutting subjects, such as nutritional health, to identify those areas in which services are not necessarily effectively supporting clients. This analysis of data is seen as key to designing complex service delivery mechanisms around client needs.

Initiative name

Crossroads Bank for Social Security

Country/location

Belgium

Partner agencies

All human services agencies

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Central government, local government and nongovernmental agencies

Subject area

Human services

Model of approach

Collaborative information and assessment systems

Date of inception

1990

For more information

<http://www.bcsc.fgov.be>.

The Crossroads Bank acts as a broker and reference service for the social security system in Belgium. It aims to ensure that citizens have to give information only once and that a citizen who has been involved with any one of the 3,000 different agencies involved in the delivery of social services is known to all the agencies that need to know him or her. With user authorization, the bank is able to ensure that information held by one agency is available to all agencies and to provide continuous updates to information. When a client's information is changed by one agency, those changes can be notified to all agencies involved with that client.

The bank was set up in 1990 in a move to radically transform the way in which human service agencies in Belgium dealt with clients. It identified a number of failings with the previous approach based primarily around duplication of data, segregation of information that often led to inefficiency and failure to support

clients effectively, and increased administrative burden on services and citizens caused by the siloed management of information. The bank acts as a broker of information for the partner agencies. It does not hold any information itself but offers a reference directory through which partner agencies can see which agencies hold what data and make requests, via the bank, for access to and use of information held by other agencies. All government and nongovernmental agencies that offer human services in Belgium are partnered with the bank. Additionally, all employers in the country are linked into it and provide payroll and human resources information where appropriate. A number of information services, such as some service information and application systems, are also available to citizens through an Internet portal. The bank now provides over 200 information exchange and management services electronically to agencies and

has reduced the error rate in data management from as high as 40 percent when the information was paper based to less than 2 percent. It is estimated that the system saves around €1.7 billion in administration costs annually. It also protects privacy, with all electronic exchanges of personal data between agencies authorized by an independent sectoral committee of the Belgian Privacy Commission.

Initiative name

Access Washington

Country/location

State of Washington, USA

Partner agencies

All state and local agencies

Levels of government and other sectors involved

State and local government

Subject area

Cross governmental

Model of approach

Collaborative information and assessment systems

Date of inception

1998

For more informationhttp://www.iccs-isac.org/en/isd/cs_access_washington.htm

Access Washington is the state's Internet portal for government services. Its purpose is to enable citizens and businesses to access the full range of state government services in a single, user-friendly portal and to reduce the need for citizens to travel to physical locations to access services. It aims to offer the most complete access to services and transactions with government in the nation and to enable quick, efficient interaction with government.

The program is administered by the Department of Information Services (DIS), which operates the portal and engages partner agencies in its use. Access Washington was developed as a response to citizens' needs to access services in a state that is large and geographically diverse and in which population density tends to be low. Prior to its inception, access to services was offered through kiosks, where citizens could go to apply for services and seek information.

The Access Washington system brings together all of the services and agencies within the state and seeks to provide electronically all possible information, applications and referral systems. The system allows citizens to set up a secure account through which they can provide information to government agencies and undertake transactions ranging from applying for licenses and paying taxes and fines to finding a job or reporting suspected fraud. The range of possible transactions is extremely broad and is enabled by the very strong partnership model in place with agencies within the state. The system also holds comprehensive information on all state agencies and their services and enables citizens to easily search for and access that information.

Partner agencies provide information and links to their services and referral and assessment systems. The information is owned and held by the individual agencies with DIS working closely with the agencies and their

information officers to ensure accuracy and to develop comprehensive linking into the Access Washington portal. The partner agencies all contribute to the funding of the work through a cost recovery model; each agency is charged according to its size, budget and usage. DIS works with community groups and businesses to constantly review and update the system—helping ensure that it offers the functionality people require and that its operation reflects the needs of users.

Initiative name

Poupatempo

Country/location

State of Sao Paolo, Brazil

Partner agencies

All state and local agencies

Levels of government and other sectors involved

State and local government

Subject area

Cross-governmental

Model of approach

Collaborative information and assessment systems

Date of inception

1997

For more information

<http://www.poupatempo.sp.gov.br/home/>

Poupatempo aims to provide a single point of access for citizens and businesses to government services and information in the state of Sao Paolo. Through access centers and online information systems, it enables citizens to utilize the full range of government services in the state and aims to help citizens identify services appropriate for them. Ultimately, its aim is to make it as easy and efficient as possible for citizens to receive the services they require. The plan is for there to be a Poupatempo center in each of the 645 towns in the state, along with a comprehensive Internet service.

The initiative is run by the public management office of the state of Sao Paolo. Centers are run by either the data processing corporation of the state (a state-owned company) or through private providers that bid for the "franchise" through auctions. Each center offers information, as well as a range of transactions, including applications for licenses, social security numbers, application for state

programs and even other services, such as the sitting of medical exams. Its primary purpose is the provision of information, referral of citizens to relevant agencies and the processing and provision of documents. The centers vary in the services they offer according to the size of the area in which they are situated and whether or not the city hall for that area has engaged with the program. In each center, there are booths for each individual service as well as advisors to help citizens find the service appropriate to their needs. The citizens then enter a simple queuing system in which they are seen by a customer service advisor from the relevant agency who assists them in making an application, finding the information they need or by referring them onto another government agency. Staff training is overseen by the public management office, which sets down guidelines as to the skills and training staff should have. This focuses on staff having sufficient knowledge of services

to direct the clients and sufficient skills to help clients navigate and use the information and assessment systems they can access through the different booths. These offices have proven extremely popular and very successful. The average processing time for a social security number at a Poupatempo center is 24 hours versus 60 to 90 days in places without one. Ultimately, this is its primary objective: to significantly improve the efficiency of the application for and processing of government services and to reduce the administrative burden and time costs on citizens.

Initiative name

C-IV: The Statewide Automated Welfare System (SAWS) Consortium-IV

Country/location

State of California, USA

Partner agencies

State human services agencies

Levels of government and other sectors involved

State government

Subject area

Human services

Model of approach

Collaborative information and assessment systems

Date of inception

1997

For more information

<http://www.cwhonors.org/viewCaseStudy.asp?NominationID=301>
www.c-iv.org

C-IV is a collaboration of four counties within California—Merced, Riverside, San Bernardino and Stanislaus—as part of a broader statewide program to develop integrated solutions for the assessment and provision of welfare support. It aims to bring together all state welfare programs through a single information and assessment system that will enable each citizen who comes to the attention of one of these agencies to be referred to and assessed for all state welfare programs. The desired aim is that welfare services will take a citizen-centric approach to delivery in which each client is managed not as an applicant for an individual service but as a client for all state welfare services.

The C-IV project is part of a statewide program within California that sought the development of innovative new systems for the coordinated delivery of welfare services. It is governed by an executive board made up of representatives from the different counties and the welfare agencies

involved who have worked with a private partner to develop an integrated system for welfare delivery. This system is an online information and assessment system that enables staff in any of the agencies to access information on programs and to determine the eligibility of clients not just for their service but for all state welfare services. It is also designed to enable the public to gain direct access to information about services and directories of service providers, both governmental and nongovernmental, within the state. The system was developed in a bottom-up manner through consultation with employees. This approach enabled the program to develop a system that suited the needs of those in the agencies. The new system significantly reduces processing time and enables a more holistic approach to delivery through staff's ability to deal with the full range of a client's needs rather than merely offering services from one agency. The system enables staff to

enter case information and upload relevant documents and then to calculate eligibility and level of support for the range of welfare systems. It has essentially created a single case management system for welfare services—enabling all agencies to see the information held by others and to process and update information and requests as appropriate. It has proven sufficiently successful that it is now being rolled out to a further 35 counties within the state.

Collaborative Customer Interface

Initiative name

Kent Gateway

Country/location

The county of Kent, England, United Kingdom

Partner agencies

Kent County Council (lead agency) plus Ashford Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Thanet Borough Council and a range of nongovernmental agencies in local areas.

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Local government and nongovernmental organizations

Subject area

Cross governmental

Model of approach

Collaborative customer interface

Date of inception

2005

For more information

<http://www.kent.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-the-council/council-services-in-kent/gateways.htm>

Kent Gateway is designed to offer one-stop access to government services in the county of Kent. It offers citizens easy access to frontline customer advisors from across local government, central government and related services. The centers combine access to government services with a range of other features, including Internet access, meeting space available to community organizations, "surgeries" held by governmental and nongovernmental agencies and support in accessing information on government.

The gateway program was established in 2005 with a pilot location in the town of Ashford. The initial vision was to bring a retail approach to the delivery of customer services in local government. That pilot brought together the county and borough councils along with police and local voluntary organizations in a town center location, using funding obtained from central government. The center is governed by a local governance board

that is made up of the partner agencies. The board reports in to the Kent Gateway board chaired by the county council, which oversees the entire initiative. The center operates primarily through a small group of customer service advisors whose role is to greet each customer, identify their needs, assess how they can be served and either resolve the case or refer them to the appropriate service provider. The cases generally handled by frontline staff are those where customers are looking for information or are seeking to make payments, as well as those where customers can be supported to find solutions for themselves by being shown the appropriate information source for their inquiries. Any cases requiring a service intervention are then referred to the appropriate service provider either within the center or within partner agencies. The center has proven very popular with citizens.

The stated aim of the initiative is to develop a gateway center in each of the county's major towns while also running mobile centers that can travel to smaller areas. The rollout plan aims to have 15 centers running by the end of 2011, with one mobile center as well as centers in Thanet, Ashford and Maidstone already established. All of these centers will have a consistent brand, but their services and partners vary according to the needs of the local community and the engagement of partner agencies in those areas. The initiative is also in the process of commissioning a single customer record system and a platform to join up the information systems of partner agencies as means of greatly improving the delivery of customer service to citizens.

Initiative name

Service BC

Country/location

British Columbia, Canada

Partner agencies

All of British Columbia provincial government

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Local government, federal government and nongovernmental organizations

Subject area

Cross governmental

Model of approach

Collaborative customer interface

Date of inception

2002

For more information

<http://www.servicebc.gov.bc.ca/>

Service BC is the frontline system for government services in British Columbia. It operates access centers, call centers and Internet services through which residents can access all provincial government services, undertake a range of government transactions and gain access to a number of programs and services operated by nongovernment agencies. It is a standalone agency within the provincial government, run by an assistant deputy minister.

Service BC developed out of a drive to deliver joined-up service to citizens. It was a natural next step from developments in consolidation of customer access across all service delivery channels that had been happening within the province and the nation. Building on the history of 150 years of service delivery by B.C.'s Government Agents, Service BC was established as the agency for the delivery of frontline customer service. Service BC's focus is the delivery of the frontline customer service for

citizens. It operates under service level agreements with the agencies on behalf of whom it delivers services. Service BC provides information, undertakes most government transactions from payment processing to applications for licenses, and helps citizens identify and access services and programs of support. Service BC has access centers in 60 British Columbia communities, as well as a single-number telephone support system and online information and access. Its staff members are trained to deliver all of the processes and transactions for which it has agreements with partner agencies. Personnel are expected to have sufficient knowledge of government services to solve problems on behalf of clients and to ensure they are able to locate and access the support they need. In some cases, Service BC staff can complete the transaction. In others, they can undertake the application and initial assessment, which is then referred to the relevant agency for approval. In still others, they help

clients apply for services, while the application is managed by the relevant agency. Service BC uses a balanced scorecard performance system based around core performance indicators and customer feedback information for overall program management. Service level agreements all include performance requirements. To date, Service BC has proven extremely successful and popular with an overall 98 percent customer satisfaction rating.

Initiative name

Winnipeg Integrated Services (WIS)

Country/location

Winnipeg, Canada

Partner agencies

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and Manitoba Family Services and Housing

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Provincial government and the government-funded nonprofit health authority

Subject area

Health and human services

Model of approach

Collaborative customer interface

Date of inception

2001

For more information

<http://www.wrha.mb.ca/community/wis/index.php>

The aim of the WIS initiative is to deliver integrated, community-based health and social services that are citizen centric and easily accessible. It began in 2000 with a broad vision of integrated delivery, which ultimately envisaged a situation in which all health and social services are delivered by a de facto single organization. The vision includes a holistic case management approach in which citizens' needs are served in one place with all services coordinated and delivered as a single service.

The first step in this process has been to develop community access centers in each of the 12 community areas. This was established under a partnership agreement between the two agencies that sets out performance targets, a general approach and funding arrangements for the centers. These centers involve the co-location of health and social services and include doctor's surgeries as well as customer advisors and the staff who administer social

programs in the community. They are intended as one-stop shops for citizens to access and receive the full range of services available to them. The initiative is overseen by the WIS Management Committee, which is responsible for program development and administration. This group is made up of the community area directors, who are joint appointees of the two bodies and who share information, develop protocol and guide the growth and development of the access centers. Program managers responsible for funding and policy also participate on this management committee. However, there is no central policy body at present; rather, the access centers are ultimately responsible to both organizations. The staff remain employed by their parent agencies, and though the centers are run by the area directors, the staff line management and accountability remain with the individual agencies and line managers. At present, there is no joint information system. However,

there are protocols in place to promote service coordination, and some access centers have developed internal referral processes at the front end. The initial vision for the model was to move beyond co-location toward greater integration of delivery with an ultimate aim of having the services effectively delivered as a single agency with unified systems and case management.

Initiative name

Lojas do Cidadão—Citizens' Shops

Country/location

Portugal

Partner agencies

Central government and local government agencies

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Central and local government and nongovernmental organizations

Subject area

Cross governmental

Model of approach

Collaborative customer interface

Date of inception

1999

For more information<http://www.5qualiconference.eu/bp.php?!=2&bp=122&p=0&c=0&t=0&k>

The Citizens' Shops aim to provide a single point of access for all government services, as well as a range of other related services, within a convenient, easily accessible setting. The aim of the first phase of development has been to put in place a "hypermarket for services" in which the widest possible range of support and services can be accessed by citizens. The future aim for the shops, now underway with second-generation shop development, is that they will offer access based around needs and life events rather than a traditional service-specific approach to delivery.

The Citizens' Shop concept arose from a stated desire within government to improve customer service, which led to the establishment of a mission team responsible for developing common contact services for citizens. Out of this developed the Management Institute for Citizens' Shops, which was a central government agency responsible for the administration of the shops. This has since become part of the Agency for Public Services Reform Administrative Modernization (AMA),

which is a merger of the Management Institute for Citizens' shops with part of the e-government agency portfolio (for example, the government portal for citizens and the citizen card) and also the network of Enterprise Shops (the equivalent of citizen shops for businesses). The aim is to build a truly integrated multi-channel capacity for delivering services. The decision was made to adopt a face-to-face model as the primary method of approach; it was felt the digital divide in Portugal was so significant that an electronic system would fail to reach those people with the greatest need for it. The shops themselves host the various services within the area with representatives of those services and electronic access points for their information systems available. There are over 50 partnership agreements in place between the Citizens' Shops and government agencies to provide services through the shops. It is these partnership agreements that manage and secure the involvement of agencies. A citizen entering one of the shops can go to whichever service they require and seek information, make an application or

gain a referral for services. There are 11 service areas offered at present: water, electricity, gas and telephones; banks; certificates and registrations; post office; personal documents; taxes; labor relations and professional training; social security; health services; services for public servants; communications and transports. The tax, social security and civil documentation services are those most used by citizens. The shops do not require any integration between agencies. Instead, they put those agencies in one place to enable efficient access for citizens. The second-generation shops, however, seek to coordinate services around life events so that rather than a citizen entering the shop and seeking out a defined agency or service, they seek out assistance according to needs—"I lost my wallet" or "I need a job," for example. In addition to the shops for citizens, there are citizen attendance posts, which are smaller units that offer more limited services directly but provide telephone or electronic access to a wider selection of services. These are gradually being phased out as the second-generation shops take over.

Initiative name

Thusong Service Centres

Country/location

South Africa

Partner agencies

The Government Communication and Information System (lead agency), as well as central government agencies and local community and nongovernmental groups

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Central and provincial government and nongovernmental organizations

Subject area

Cross governmental

Model of approach

Collaborative customer interface

Date of inception

1999

For more information

<http://www.thusong.gov.za/index.html>

The Thusong Service Centres are designed to support and empower citizens, particularly within rural or poorer areas, with the information, support and resources they need from government. The centers are one-stop community development centers that bring together a range of governmental and nongovernmental agencies within the local area and give citizens a single point of access to services. The vision is that these centers will bring government information and services and a range of related support closer to citizens—empowering them to improve their lives and communities.

The centers are administered by the government communication and information system, a central government agency charged with overseeing the delivery of government services to citizens. At the heart of the philosophy for these centers is the idea that they should empower citizens and the community by providing a set of resources that can improve the

lives of citizens and the social and economic conditions within the area. The centers are designed around a six-block service model that organizes the services within the center. The six blocks are government social and administrative services; office services; education and skills development; local development services; business services and community opportunities; and information and communication activities. The exact composition of each center varies according to the needs of the local area and the governmental and nongovernmental provision available. In all of them, citizens can apply for government services, carry out simple transactions such as license applications, gain supported access to government information and be directed and referred to a range of agencies that can support their needs. The emphasis within the centers is on community resources. Thus, much effort goes into providing services such as education and training, as

well as business support. The centers usually offer library and postal services and are staffed by community development workers and staff from the social services agency and health department. They also give citizens in rural areas access to the Internet as well as printing facilities and support for the use of technology (the lack of which disempowers and isolates people in rural areas). At present, there are 137 centers in operation. There are plans to establish one in every municipality in South Africa by 2014.

Networked Delivery

Initiative name

Strengthening Families

Country/location

New Zealand

Partner agencies

Ministry of Social Development, Accident Compensation Corporation; Child, Youth and Family; Department of Corrections; Department of Internal Affairs; District Health Boards; Housing NZ; Inland Revenue; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Justice; New Zealand Police; and a wide range of nongovernmental agencies in local areas.

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Central and local government; nongovernmental organizations; Maori, Pacific and other cultural/ethnic social service providers.

Subject area

Human services

Model of approach

Networked delivery

Date of inception

1997

For more information

<http://www.strengtheningfamilies.govt.nz/>

Strengthening Families was established in 1997 out of discussions between three central government departments. It is designed to provide a structured, multiagency approach to the delivery of support to families with multiple needs. Strengthening Families is a family-centered early intervention process where government agencies and community organizations work together to improve health, education and social outcomes for families. It uses a collaborative case management approach to provide support for families that require a coordinated multiagency approach.

Strengthening Families is a whole-of-government initiative administered by Family and Community Services (part of the Ministry of Social Development). FACS oversees Strengthening Families nationally, manages the funding and has broad responsibility for its operation and success. The governance and operations of Strengthening Families are managed at the local level. Each region has a Regional

Governance Group that provides regional oversight. Within each region, Local Management Groups are responsible for operations in their respective areas. They have substantial freedom to administer the initiative in a way that is most suited to local circumstances. Indeed, this local governance is key to the work. When Strengthening Families was first established, each local area was given the freedom to develop its own protocol for operating the initiative. This has led to some variation between areas but ensures that the structure and operation of the work fit the needs of the local community. Day-to-day operation of the work falls to the local Strengthening Families Coordinator, whose job is to oversee the collaborative case conference process. The coordinator role also includes assessing referrals to be sure they meet the initiative's criteria, ensuring a lead agency and facilitator is appointed for each family client, monitoring the progress of each case,

and reporting on progress and results to the Local Management Group.

A typical case begins when a family with multiple needs comes to the attention of an agency. That agency discusses Strengthening Families with the family. With the family's agreement, the agency refers the case to the Strengthening Families Coordinator. The next step is a case conference that involves all relevant agencies and the family and at which an action plan is developed and a lead agency appointed. That lead agency then oversees the case and ensures delivery of all support agreed at the case conference. Follow-up review meetings are held with the family as the support is delivered. A family's involvement with Strengthening Families generally lasts less than a year.

Joint Delivery

Initiative name

NAV

Country/location

Norway

Partner agencies

The National Insurance organization, the National Employment Service and the Social Welfare System

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Central and local government

Subject area

Human services

Model of approach

Joint delivery

Date of inception

2006

For more information

www.nav.no

NAV (the Norwegian employment and welfare services) is a merger of the three partner agencies into one body with responsibility for the administration of welfare and employment services across the country. It brings together the two central government agencies with the local government-run social welfare system in an effort to provide coordinated, holistic support for citizens who are out of work or claiming welfare support.

The NAV reforms were developed as a response to a perceived disjunction within welfare and employment support. The guiding philosophy: that support could be more effectively provided to those on welfare if done in a holistic manner that addresses both welfare and employment needs. The initiative was launched within parliament. The ultimate agreement sees the merger of the national insurance and national employment services and a partnership structure with the social welfare system in which local offices are responsible

to both the central body and local government. The new agency encompasses local delivery offices in every municipality (there are 300 now with another 160 to come), along with telephone and Internet services and specialist units focusing on pensions, welfare and employment support. Each of these channels can respond to the full range of inquiries and requests from citizens, with the specialist units providing support and advice to frontline staff and handling the most complex cases (about 20 percent) themselves. Each part of the organization—the local offices, telephone system, Internet service and specialist units—has its own service level agreements with the local partners and the central agency. These agreements set out the terms of each unit's work and interaction with other parts of the agency. The overall reform is still in a relatively early stage, though it has begun by creating the new organizations, staffing them and getting the offices up and running. There has been significant

movement of staff both geographically and organizationally. The process of developing a unified information system is in its early stages.

Initiative name

Tameside MBC/Pension Service Joint Team

Country/location

Tameside, England, United Kingdom

Partner agencies

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Levels of government and other sectors involved

Central and local government

Subject area

Human services

Model of approach

Joint delivery

Date of inception

2004

For more information

www.tameside.gov.uk/pensions

The joint local authority and DWP service is responsible for the take-up of pension credit and disability benefits, along with assessment of financial contribution toward provision of care. Its aim is to provide an integrated service to elderly people who may be in need of care or eligible for support. The ultimate goal: to reduce pensioner poverty.

Prior to the development of the joint team, the local authority and the DWP each operated separate teams that undertook financial assessments of older people. The local authority team was responsible for assessment of financial support for care, while the DWP team assessed clients' eligibility for pension support or benefits. Each of these teams dealt with the more complex cases in which a home visit was required for assessment, with clients coming to them by referral from a number of sources. The joint team was established with the aim of providing a holistic service that would help to increase take-up

while improving the efficiency of delivery and the need for clients to see multiple agencies to receive support. The two teams have now been brought together as one. They are co-located and operate as a de facto single team. Though staff remain employed by their parent agencies and responsible to individual line managers within those agencies, the joint team is overseen by a partnership board made up of the DWP, the local authority and local charities for the elderly. The work is governed by a joint partnership agreement and a range of operational protocols to which the partner agencies are signed up. Staff members have access to the information and assessment systems of both agencies and now undertake a single financial assessment to identify eligibility for the full range of DWP and local authority support. The team is responsible to the partnership board for a number of performance measures both operational (including efficiency of processing

and accuracy of assessments) and outcome-based measures ultimately designed to capture the impact of the financial well-being of pensioners within the area.

Initiative name

Executive Office of Health and Human Services Massachusetts (EOHHS)

Country/location

State of Massachusetts, USA

Partner agencies

16 health and human service agencies in Massachusetts

Levels of government and other sectors involved

State government

Subject area

Health and human services

Model of approach

Joint delivery

Date of inception

2004

For more information

<http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2homepage&L=1&sid=Eeohhs2&LO=Home>

The Executive Office for Health and Human Services arose out of an ultimate aim of providing integrated, holistic delivery of health and human services within the state of Massachusetts. The Executive Office is a state government body that holds the policy portfolio for all of health and human services and technically oversees all health and human services agencies within the state. It was put in place to coordinate the delivery of human services and to help break down institutional barriers among existing agencies. Ultimately, it is expected to develop and execute a strategy for citizen-centric delivery of services—the mantra for which is “One family, one client.”

Though the EOHHS oversees all health and human services within the state, the 16 agencies still operate autonomously and deal with different areas of service. The role of EOHHS is to coordinate all of these agencies, to develop a series of cross-cutting initiatives to better integrate services

and to develop a single performance management system to oversee the agencies. It has begun by developing a virtual gateway that is intended to enable easy access for citizens to HHS agencies. It is now in the process of working with agencies to develop a set of outcomes and outcome measures that will form the basis of more coordinated action. This has begun with the identification of a number of high-level outcomes for which the agencies are jointly responsible (the health of the population and so forth) and then working with agencies to decompose a number of sub-outcomes and indicators that directly relate the work of each agency to these goals. At the same time, there has been considerable work to link up and consolidate the IT systems with the aim of enabling each agency to easily access information held by others and to refer clients as appropriate. The next step: to develop a single customer record system to unify information and case management.

The EOHHS is there to act as the executive body for health and human services influencing and directing the agencies. Though they are technically responsible to EOHHS, the agencies all have complex accountability relationships and it is not as simple as the director of EOHHS telling them what to do. Rather, the office attempts to influence and coordinate the agencies and to bring them together in a number of forums to work toward greater coordination and integration. Having developed the joint outcomes, the EOHHS is developing an integration strategy for embedding coordination and integration into the practices of the agencies. As part of this effort, they are reviewing the facilities usage and seeking to consolidate offices and co-locate agencies. They are also examining the workforce structures to see if there is a need to reform or rethink the skills and personnel profile.

References

1 Accenture's Global Cities Forum is an ongoing deliberative research program. Please visit www.accenture.com/gcf for more information.

2 Accenture Global Cities Forum—London (2007). Also available at www.accenture.com/gcf

3 Varney, Sir David; Service transformation: A better service for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer, HM Treasury 2006

4 http://www.opm.co.uk/resources/papers/policy/Good_Gov_Standard.pdf

5 For a full discussion of performance management practices in public services, please see http://www.accenture.com/Global/Research_and_Insights/Institute_For_Public_Service_Value/ManagingValue.htm

6 For a full discussion of performance management in the public sector please see the institute's report 'Managing current and future performance' at http://www.accenture.com/Global/Research_and_Insights/Institute_For_Public_Service_Value/ManagingValue.htm



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The Accenture Institute for Health & Public Service Value is dedicated to promoting high performance in the health care sector and in public service delivery, policy-making and governance. Through research and development initiatives, the Institute aims to help health care and public service organizations deliver better social, economic and health outcomes for the people they serve. Its home page is www.accenture.com/healthpublicservicevalue.

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