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Purpose: To describe the FAME approach to building and resourcing multi-agency partnerships and provide support to the Readiness Assessment Tool and FAME Demonstrator processes	
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FAME Phase 3: a practical framework for working in Multi-agency environment.

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0: INTRODUCTION

0.1 Introduction to the FAME Generic Framework

The function of the FAME Generic Framework is twofold:

- By providing a language to discuss multi-agency partnership working to build a bridge between those who have responsibility within multi-agency partnerships for:
  - Developing practice, particularly information sharing practice.
  - Acquiring and implementing ICT, and particularly infrastructure, to support information sharing across agency boundaries and across partnership and geographical boundaries.
  - Developing governance arrangements for multi-agency partnerships including information governance.
- To illustrate the **READNINESS ASSESSMENT TOOL** (RAT) statements against which multi-agency partnerships self assess their progress, what further knowledge they need, and decide the actions they should take.

The FAME Generic Framework is relevant to all public sector multi-agency partnerships. Many of these will be formed to achieve inter working between practitioners in the major statutory agencies, the voluntary and community sectors and the private sector to improve outcomes for service users. Others will provide support to the business of the public sector, e.g. revenue and benefit services and to initiatives such as the Single Non-Emergency Number Services.

The Generic Framework does not set out to cover the project management or human resource dimension to partnership formation processes except in relation to the culture change that changes in practice imply. These techniques are well documented elsewhere. Many of the multi-agency partnerships formed are involved in transformational change. They often have the task of locally joining-up and making sense of multiple government initiatives. The information systems need to enable communication within partnerships between the different agencies involved and between partnerships (both in the same and in different practice or business areas). Some of those agencies such as health, the police and the voluntary sector will be partners in a number of multi-agency partnerships.

In this rapidly changing environment the solution of a new application system for each new initiative is untenable. Instead, a WEB based service oriented infrastructural approach is proposed. The FAME Demonstrator will enable the development of solutions using the RAT and Generic Framework through envisioning policies and intentions, representing the real worlds of practice and systems, specifying and re-configuring practice, ICT and governance.

0.2 Summary of the nine building blocks of the Generic Framework

The Generic Framework text is broken into nine cross-referenced building blocks that draw on documentation and guidance from the government and other experts. It signposts further sources of information to help in partnership development. The text is used within the web based readiness assessment tool.

Scoping statement and business case development

Increasingly, both government policy and guidance, and practice itself require joined-up working focused on service users to deliver better outcomes. Such multi-agency working is enshrined in partnerships and can not be delivered without information sharing. It is important to be clear about the scope and nature of a partnership, the drivers that caused it to be built, the ICT that enables it and its legal powers to operate. The voices of service users need to be heard in identifying outcomes. A partnership development group drawn from key agencies should have the range of skills to undertake the task of defining the partnership. When infrastructure is required to support partnership operation, business cases should take account of a 'public value' approach so that efficiency and effectiveness can both be demonstrated.

Legal powers, responsibilities and policy

During their formation, partnerships have to establish their powers to act and the responsibilities they must fulfil. They must take into account the continuing stream of legislation and guidance from government departments and the ways in which they may share information. The latter is subject to specific legislation such as the Data Protection Act, Human Rights Act and Freedom of Information Act as well as professional ethics and codes of practice. Agencies within a partnership will have their own legislative frameworks that need to be taken into account when negotiating the agreement underpinning the partnership.

Information Sharing

Numerous enquiries, most latterly the Lord Laming and Bichard government enquiries have highlighted the need for improved information sharing between practitioners from different agencies. Legislation protects the privacy of the individual requiring proportionality in the actions of practitioners and agencies. Practitioners must be confident about their responsibilities, both to share information and to protect privacy. When information is to be shared, they must understand the role of informed consent by the service user taking into account that this sharing is increasingly implemented through electronic means and the use of infrastructure. Practitioners from different agencies may need to explore changes to their own professional cultures for the benefit of service users.

Governance

Partnerships are often formed by written agreement between agencies who need to be assured that they will operate with due probity and be subject to appropriate scrutiny and audit. They must be fit for the agreed purposes and outcomes and properly resourced to deliver them. The structure, membership and organisation of partnerships as well as the processes they undertake need to be carefully thought through. There is an increasing emphasis on information governance, as information sharing becomes a mechanism for joined-up working. Governing infrastructure and federation are new tasks that partnerships must undertake.

Identity management

Although individuals are unique, the way they are identified within multiple systems may not be. Identity management is at the heart of the FAME jigsaw. Multi-agency partners and practitioners must be assured that they are dealing with the same person and that information that they hold and share does actually refer to them. Similarly, the identity of authorised users of information systems is critical to maintain security. The separation of identity information from record content is an important feature of identity management if indexes are to support information sharing across systems. Responsibilities surrounding identity management need to be clear and transparent. Individuals will always need to be assured that they can trust identity management processes and benefit from them through the seamlessness and reliability of services offered.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure provides the joining-up systems for information helping to permeate silo boundaries. It shares technical resources through networks of channels. It is used to collate and present information through 'portals', to ensure that secure messages can be sent to the right destination through 'switches' being sure about the identities involved through 'indexes'. FAME adopts the idea of a 'hub and spoke' architecture using a WEB service oriented approach. This architecture uses readily available technologies that are compliant with the relevant standards.

Messages, events and transactions

FAME establishes a common language for partner agencies. An 'event' is something of significance that occurs in the world of the service user and provider. It must be recorded in the information system to ensure that the information about it can be shared or of value in the future.   A 'transaction' involves changes in resources and in responsibilities that become part of the history of a relationship and may have implications on its progress. A 'message'

transmits information securely about events and transactions to where they need to go. Multi-agency service oriented solutions need clarity on what information flows between people and agencies enabling the agency sharing information to maintain responsibility for its release.

Federation

Service users are usually unconcerned about the boundaries drawn by agencies. They are mobile between geographic areas as they travel to work or school, live and have significant caring relationships in different areas. Partnerships always need to be aware of which other partnerships exist and they can communicate with. This may be within the same area of practice or a different one. Service users will want to control, through their consent to share, which agencies are involved. Federation shares infrastructure between partner agencies. It connects hubs and spokes through 'axles' joining the index, portal and switch functions across the network. It is not a mechanism for central control but instead is minimalist to enable the necessary function to operate.

Sustainability

Partnerships need to be sustainable for as long as they are needed. A partnership may have started as a project and will need to manage the transition to the mainstream. If this involves substituting agency funding for a government project grant this will require leadership, networking and negotiation skills. The partners themselves have to survive in an ever-changing environment potentially affecting their role in the partnership. The partnership has to be robust, able to respond to its partners, changes in its internal organisation and to the external environment. The latter will include continuing legislative and policy developments. Technology will continue to advance and continuity of resource including (both people and funds) has to be secured. More than anything, partnerships need to be valued by their service users because of the outcomes they deliver to them and able to demonstrate 'value for money' to their sponsoring agencies.

1: SCOPING STATEMENT AND BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Summary

The Generic Framework sets out the FAME approach to building and developing all kinds of multi-agency partnerships that have information sharing at their heart. It consists of nine inter-related building blocks:

- Scoping statement and business case development

- Legal powers and responsibilities

- Information sharing

- Governance

- Identity management

- Infrastructure

- Messages, events and transactions

- Federation

- Sustainability

The formation and sustainability of multi-agency partnerships designed to improve outcomes for service users demands collaboration across the longstanding boundaries of agencies and organisations. In providing a wide range of local services, including but not limited to the support and caring services, statutory bodies e.g. local authorities, health trusts, criminal justice and the voluntary and private sectors form partnerships to deliver services. This collaboration needs to be supported by an environment that facilitates practice or business development, information sharing and governance. Rhetorically, this is expressed as 'joined-up solutions for joined-up problems'. This cannot, however, mean the integration of everything - not everything can simply be joined up. Successful progress is likely to be incremental. It is important to be clear about the levels at which partnership working is to be achieved – is the aim primarily strategic planning or is it service delivery?   It helps to look from the perspectives at which multi-agency environments operate at four different levels or 'world-views':

- The world of *citizens/service users*

- The world of *service delivery*

- The world of *corporate commissioning*

- The world of *national governance*

Multi-agency working is most often located in the service delivery world to provide better services to citizens. Individual agencies within a partnership will

have their own lines of accountability, probably to the 'corporate commissioning' level within each agency. This level is in turn influenced by policies and initiatives from national governance. These national initiatives may appear to be less 'joined up' than the multi-agency partnership itself.

Partnership working takes time and effort to become established, often needing some kind of cultural change or transformation programme to build a consistent vision across the partners. A small 'partnership development group' may be a useful vehicle to start the process off or review the effectiveness of an individual partnership. This will be particularly important if legislation or national guidance changes.

The development group must be clear about the scope of the partnership's activities and this is best stated with reference to the **OUTCOMES** that it intends to deliver for service users. It also needs to be sure of the legislative and policy framework within which it exists, and the impact of regulation, audit, inspection and administrative law such as the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and Human Rights legislation as well as guidance on information sharing. The group must specify the level of resource that it needs to perform its developmental role as well as the resources needed for the partnership once it is established. A business case will need to be prepared to justify the level of resources proposed.

If the partnership's role is primarily concerned with strategy, (e.g. at the corporate commissioning level), resourcing of the partnership may be limited to the members themselves and their back-up, with other budgets being aligned to support its activities. However, if the partnership is concerned with the multi-agency delivery of services, this will involve the commitment of significant resource that must match the task that has been scoped. In constructing the multi-agency environment the availability of ICT skills with the capability to specify and acquire **INFRASTRUCTURE** will be essential.

During their formation process, and afterwards, when undertaking evaluation of outcomes, partnerships will need to achieve the requisite level of participation by service users (and staff). They will have views about the realities of receiving services, where things just don't connect and often recount having to tell their 'story' to many different agencies. This repetition is both frustrating and wasteful and is why ICT is such a vital component in FAME.

Even at the early stages of partnership building thought should be given to sustainability. If the partnership relates to a time limited project the earlier that the issues of gaining mainstream funding and organisational buy-in the better.

1.2 The focus of the FAME programme

The focus of the FAME programme is to improve both the **OUTCOMES** for service users through multi agency working, and the efficiency of that joint

working.   Service users expect seamless services that don't require them to continually re-tell their story and fast access to available services.

Scoping the multi-agency service is about both the range of services to be coordinated or locally integrated (and how this might be done) and about the information **INFRASTRUCTURE** that will be needed. It will say how this allows the processes of **FEDERATION** with other areas or partnerships (cross boundary working) to be undertaken. There needs to be clarity about both short term and long term outcomes.

Each local authority and its partners may be at a different stage of their deliberations about multi-agency services. They may have different approaches to practice and have a different inventory of ICT skills and experience. To help start the process a **FAME Readiness Assessment Tool for Multi-Agency Partnership Development** has been devised. This takes the form of a set of (assertive) statements relating to each of the FAME building blocks against which partners may compare their situation. Its use is designed to result in a set of actions and the learning development that will progress the initiative.

1.3 Partnership

Partnership may be defined as follows:

"*Partnership is a dynamic relationship amongst diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labour based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner. Partnership expresses mutual influence, with a careful balance between synergy and respective autonomy, which incorporates mutual respect, equal participation in decision making, mutual accountability and transparency.*"[1]

Part of the process of defining the Scoping Statement is to propose the nature of the partnership that will be required. Multi agency working is often located in the service delivery world to shape services that result in better outcomes for service users. Practitioners from individual agencies within a partnership will continue to have their own lines of professional accountability to their agencies. The partnership will have to demonstrate continuing value for money to their service users, corporate commissioning agencies and ultimately to national governance. Nationally framed polices may be less 'joined up' than the multi agency partnership which is faced with making sense of what may sometimes feel like tidal waves of policy. It is important to scan all relevant departmental web sites and guidance documentation to ensure that a sufficiently wide view is taken of polices that affect the partnership.

The key question will be "What is the nature of the partnership that is most appropriate to the multi agency initiative?" It may be that an extension to the

responsibility and resources of an existing partnership will be sufficient. However, a new partnership may be required. This can be seen to lie on a spectrum that ranges from an informal steering group, through a formal partnership to improve co-ordination, to a fully integrated service with pooled budgets, a single management structure and staff seconded to or employed by the partnership.

In assigning roles and responsibilities, the strengths and weaknesses that each partner brings will need to be taken into account. Uncertainty about powers and position can easily lead to confusion and conflict. It is also important that partnerships ensure that key partnership functions (such as producing agendas, briefings, minutes and maintaining web sites) are adequately resourced.[2] (The needs of the voluntary and community sectors should be given particular thought.) The partnership will have to take responsibility for harnessing the available or acquired infrastructure to provide its own ICT. Should the partnership have an Information Officer to co-ordinate the responsibility for information governance – a complex area in multi-agency working described in **GOVERNANCE?**

It may be that a separate partnership, perhaps a strategic service partnership or a company limited by guarantee will be formed to provide the infrastructure as a 'utility' in a sub-regional area. In this case there will need to be a service level agreement between that vehicle and the multi-agency partnership. The scoping statement should, however, at least refer to an outline of the functionality required of the ICT necessary to support the multi-agency partnership and the mechanism by which the acquisition process will be undertaken.

1.4 Partnership working

The Government encourages partnership working amongst the main statutory bodies and with the voluntary, community and private sector bodies. Whilst this encourages 'whole systems thinking' it does not change the individual, legal integrity of agencies. It provides a mechanism through which agencies acting together can respond flexibly to the developing needs and priorities of society. Partnership working does not mean the removal of responsibility from agencies but the delegation of management supported by the alignment of budgets or perhaps the pooling of budgets. Setting up successful partnerships is difficult because of the differences of culture between agencies and so transformational development skills both within agencies and within partnerships are essential. Partnerships must be seen as offsprings of their agency parents not as orphans cast adrift to make their own way. FAME envisages a 'mainstreamed' environment within which service user focused multi agency working can thrive sustainably.

1.5 Partnership Development Group

If a new partnership has to be formed then it will need to be championed by a small group that has been tasked to bring a partnership into being. This 'development group' will have the tasks of:

- Mapping the environment of the partnership
- Putting forward its intended outcomes (both internal and external)
- Researching the legal and policy framework
- Identifying the proposed multi-agency practice
- Describing the appropriate level of information sharing
- Proposing the partnership membership and governance arrangements.
- Proposing the ICT infrastructure.
- Writing the Scoping Statement.
- Constructing the business case.
- Drafting the written agreement between the partners.

The **FAME Readiness Assessment Tool** is designed to assist partnership formation and review by ensuring that the partners think widely enough about the issues affecting the partnership. It is useful in evaluating the existing position, deciding what knowledge and actions are necessary before the business plan can be formulated and the partnership formally initiated.   It is particularly important to ensure that the skills needed for this preparatory work are available. The development group will want to outline the membership of the partnership on an inclusive but rigorous basis and that the early stages of partnership formation are well documented. The issue of appropriate representation can be challenging:

"*The potential for ambiguity is clearly one of the attractions of a partnership model. A partnership whose objectives are not clearly defined may be able to bring on board a number of agencies with apparently contradictory interests. A lack of detailed and explicit objectives may therefore be a crucial means of creating 'buy-in' at an early stage in inter-organisational collaborations. However, in the longer term a lack of agreed common purpose is almost certainly a recipe for ineffectiveness. Disillusionment is likely to creep in and agencies will disengage as the partnership fails to live up to their expectations.*" [2]

1.6 The Scoping Statement

In planning to implement multi agency working the following issues need to be covered through writing a **SCOPING STATEMENT**:

- What is to be achieved? In other words, what outcomes are to be met for service users, what is driving this? What efficiencies are to be delivered

through multi agency working? How will evaluation show whether these are being achieved?

- What will need to be done? This relates to the processes that will need to be implemented, the practice to be developed and the ICT to be acquired.
- How will this be organised and governed? This will cover partnership arrangements, legal powers and responsibilities and governance and sustainability.

These questions need to be answered by reference to the changes from the existing situation so that the intended impact of the proposed changes is clear. The answers are likely to include options on the ways forward or the phasing of developments that will have different benefit/investment profiles. This material is important to the development of business cases.

The scoping statement is the input to the business case used to justify the investment in multi agency working supported by an ICT infrastructure. Although the process of setting up a new multi-agency service may be conceptualised as a project, it is one that is to be mainstreamed.   Although project managers dislike scope creep, joining up partnerships beyond the context of an individual partnership is increasingly seen as an emergent, transformational development. It is vital that information system solutions are capable of this extension - there is no point in simply building another set of silos. This issue is covered in the **INFRASTRUCTURE** and **FEDERATION** building blocks.

The scoping statement must take account of the views of service users, the existing landscape of services and the changes that the initiative aims to make. It will propose changes to the way in which agencies work together and specify the information and communications technology needed to support the initiative. It will also show awareness of the changes in practice that practitioners may make resulting from the facilities provided by ICT. The FAME Generic Framework is much more than an ICT project and that is why it covers broader issues.

E-Government is not easy to bring about. Practitioners and ICT technologists often see the world from different perspectives and bridging the two can be problematic. One intention of the nine building blocks of the Generic Framework is to encourage mutual learning. The framework does not set out to be overly prescriptive but to provide a context within which knowledge can be shared and accumulated.

1.7 Summary of questions for the Scoping Statement

The detail of the scoping statement will lie in the answers to the following questions:

- What, and from where, are the drivers for change?
- What are the citizen needs/rights that are to be addressed?
- How is the subject group of citizens defined and reached?
- What are the **OUTCOMES** for service users that the multi agency partnership is setting out to improve?
- Who should be the member agencies of the partnership – have we been inclusive?
- How will the achievement of these outcomes be evaluated?
- What is the impact on internal efficiencies and costs of 'joined up working' in a multi agency partnership?
- What scale of investment and ongoing expenditure is envisaged?
- Is there a clear process for determining **PURPOSE** for appropriate **INFORMATION SHARING**?
- How will the appropriate technical systems expressed in terms of **INFRASTRUCTURE, IDENTITY MANAGEMENT AND EVENTS, MESSAGING AND TRANSACTIONS and FEDERATION** be specified?
- What kind of partnership and related **GOVERNANCE** arrangements are required?
- Are the **LEGAL POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES** of all the prospective partners clear and sufficient for the task?
- How are we to make sure that an initiative that may start as a project can be **SUSTAINED** to become part of the mainstream?

1.8 Drivers

The sources of change in the public sector emanate both from major government modernisation programmes (e.g. Transformational Government[3]), legislation and guidance as well as from practitioner led change within a local context that becomes shared practice. Both these forces for improvement are important. Although the government modernisation agenda often has the headlines, it is the leadership by practitioners and managers at a local level that will actually implement successful change, sensitive to the needs of service users.

Individual agencies will be aware of policy documentation and will search the web sites of the relevant departments of state (e.g. DCLG, DH, DfES, DCA, and HO) as well as cross cutting studies carried out by inspectorates, Treasury and the Cabinet Office. In addition, individual professional bodies and associations (i.e. the Royal Colleges, the NHS Confederation, ACPO, ADSS, LGA) write position and guidance papers that help this process. The process of forming legislative and guidance programmes draws heavily on both exceptional local practice and more widespread research and it is important for agencies to make themselves aware of this through their own networks. Together these form the drivers for change.

Parts of the scoping statement will explicitly record the drivers so that the partnership is clear about why it is setting out to make the changes and as new policies emerge, it can be systematically updated.

1.9 Outcomes

A working definition of 'outcome' is *the impact, effect or consequence of help received.*[4]   A focus on outcomes is integral to the core business of modern social and health care agencies as defined in a wide range of recent policy initiatives. It is a 'whole systems' approach. North Lincolnshire Council describes the development of an outcomes-based approach as stressing:

- The importance of thinking about the target of intervention as the system itself as well as the individual service users passing through it. This means investing effort in systems-based interventions – not just service user based interventions.
- The imperative of partnership working – better outcomes come through collective efforts, not the actions of single agencies.
- The need for clarity and consistency of purpose. This means expressing goals concisely and in plain English. It is not about high blown mission statements but a collective understanding of the 'big idea' around which people need to organise their efforts.
- The importance of systems monitoring that makes the systems visible and allows practitioners and managers to manage and judge the effect of their effort.
- The need to be aware of, and guard against, unintended consequences of actions.
- That, actions need to take place at different levels in the system. There is rarely 'one big thing' that needs to happen – change usually comes from the cumulative effects of lots of small actions.

Outcomes may be defined for service users as individuals or as collective demographic groups. These higher level outcomes are important to both the service delivery and corporate commissioning worlds to evaluate their performance. It is also important to define internal outcomes, the results of multi agency working on the effectiveness and motivation of practitioners.

In the case of children and young people, multi agency working may be directed towards improving health, social functioning and educational attainment outcomes. The Green Paper Every Child Matters[5] lists the outcomes which mattered most to children and young people and were enshrined in the Children Act 2004:

- **Being healthy**: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle.

- **Staying safe**: being protected from harm and neglect.
- **Enjoying and achieving**: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood.
- **Making a positive contribution**: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour.
- **Economic well-being**: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

In the case of vulnerable adults or older people, activity may be directed towards trying to maintain their present level, or to support gradually deteriorating levels of independence. In this case outcomes of social and health care can be thought of in terms of[1]:

- Maintenance – (continuing) e.g. maintaining aspects of quality of life such as comfort, safety, access to company and activity, control over one's life.
- Change – (time limited) e.g. improving confidence and regaining skills, reducing risks, improving communication.
- Service Process – (the impact of) e.g. service users feeling treated as a person, valued and respected, care-giving choices within the family being supported.

The service process is, for all groups, a vital part of achieving better outcomes. For example a pre-natal service session specifically devoted to single, teenage mothers-to-be helps to build self-confidence away from unsympathetic adults. In configuring multi agency services both the objective outcomes and the service process as outcome should be defined.

SPRU[6] has identified the following seven stages for the practice considerations of individual service user's outcomes-focused care:

- **Publishing information**: informing citizens/service users about eligibility, intended outcomes for whom and to what level or standard.
- **Screening:** (determining the level of assessment: initial judgements about who has what level of assessment are transparent and informed by:
  - A general awareness of, and sensitive enquiry about, the outcomes which might be important to service users and carers.
  - An understanding of the role and responsibility of all relevant agencies in exploring and responding to these outcomes.
- **Assessment** (at all levels): the user, carer and assessor(s) exchange information with a view to exploring and clarifying desired outcomes as well as needs. Any differing or conflicting views are identified and negotiated and where possible, agreement is reached about priority outcomes to be aimed for. Preferred options for achieving outcomes are identified (including the type of help and the way this should be managed or delivered). Conclusions are recorded and checked with the service user and carer, including any differences in perspective.

- **Care planning:** eligibility for services is considered, available options explored, the care plan includes a statement of intended outcomes and how these will be achieved (including any important aspects of the process). Review arrangements are decided including the type of feedback and how this will be obtained.
- **Implementing the care plan**:
  - Assessors ensure the communication of intended outcomes and preferences to providers.
  - Providers aim to ensure that those frontline staff delivering the service to the service user and carer are fully informed about the purpose of intervention, individuals' preferred ways of doing things and to whom to refer any significant changes that may subsequently arise.
- **Co-ordination**: aims to facilitate shared understanding and co-operation between all contributors towards achieving the intended outcomes.
- **Monitoring**: ongoing monitoring of the impacts/effects of help provided on the user's and carer's lives. Service users, carers and providers are supported in working towards agreed outcomes in the ways that are most effective and suitable for the individuals concerned.
- **Reviewing**: The review should seek to evaluate the impact of the service/care package (and the way nit is delivered) on the user and carer, in addition to identifying any changed needs. Where care management records are to be a source of aggregated data on outcomes, relevant information is collated, interpreted and fed into planning mechanisms.

There are two complementary sources of information – recording within routine agency procedures and separate exercises involving direct feedback from service users, carers and staff. In the latter case it is important to be clear about why outcomes data is being collected and the specific purpose this will serve. People will generally sign up to the importance of accountability, assessing service quality, effectiveness and fairness and informing service development and improvement.

In thinking about the information and communications technology to be procured, this rather broad set of information processes should be considered. Whilst storing records, process mapping and work-flow analysis are important they are not the whole story. A Service Oriented approach is proposed in the FAME framework. Practitioners need to be able to search for and locate good practice, collate information, communicate securely with other practitioners and present both routine performance data as well as one off information exercises and surveys to build a more complete picture of the effectiveness of their interventions.

1.10 Participation

Much of the work to identify drivers is carried out by policy analysts and enthusiastic practitioners and managers, but represents only one perspective. Partnership working involves building horizontal communication and co-ordination between agencies and at the same time, vertical communication between different layers. It helps to think about the layers at which multi agency working operates from four different perspectives or 'world-views' of the different participants:

- The world of *citizens/service users* and their supporting social networks, carers, families, self-help and community groups. This is where vulnerability, exclusion and need are experienced and from where people try to make sense of their problems and the help or advice that is on offer. The key question here is the availability of information and information systems to support their own sensemaking and care self-management.
- The world of *service delivery* including, for example, children's centres, one-stop-shops, social services, voluntary services, GPs, hospitals, nursing homes and schools. This is where need and vulnerability are often observed first hand and where practitioners and managers try to shape services to meet needs. Here, there is a concern with horizontal communication between practitioners within and between the multi agency partnership(s) to share knowledge and practice; and vertical communication with service users and carers to establish outcomes.
- The world of *corporate commissioning* where local political and professional processes within agencies seek to make sense of the local demography of need, the culture and geography of populations, in configuring and commissioning services within the context of national policies. This is where the major agencies such as Local Authorities, PCTs, Health Trusts, the Voluntary Organisations and Criminal Justice make strategies and plans and resolve funding. It is where the accountability for value for money and performance management is focused. Information systems are needed to map need as well as service availability within the geography of the partnership and to evaluate the effectiveness of partnership working in delivering desired outcomes.
- The world of *national governance* is where government departments and national organisations (e.g. the Royal Colleges, ADSS) form policies and the democratic process results in the development of guidance and legislation passed by Parliament. Government is a great consumer of information but also has problems in communicating national policy initiatives locally in a way that is easy for local government to absorb.

Although, the world of national governance may take the lead in setting out policy frameworks there is, properly, considerable pressure on agencies and partnerships to involve service users as active participants in the development of local solutions. This should be seen to extend beyond simple consultation on

established plans, to playing a role in the development of the strategies themselves. A token presence of a service user or carer on a partnership board is an inadequate mechanism for participation. Instead processes must be developed to enable service users to set their own agenda in making their views known.

Successful multi-agency partnerships will involve practitioners and service managers as important participants in shaping service configuration and internal processes such as training and the implementation of ICT. Practitioners must be able to influence how multi agency working develops, satisfying their professional values.

1.11 Practice

The scoping statement will include a description of how the partnership intends to deliver multi agency services i.e. what it will actually do. This service configuration will result from a process of discussion and negotiation between individual agencies led by a 'development group' for the partnership. The aim is to agree a common approach to the mechanisms by which the outcomes will be achieved. This is important, not simply for the purpose of organisational clarity, but also to aid the process of evaluation. In the complex world of public service delivery e.g. in health and social care, the question of what is actually making the difference is often difficult to isolate. As a part of the **GOVERNANCE** processes a 'theory of change approach' to evaluation enables better learning than a simple post hoc rationalisation of what might have been the cause of change.

Problems to be handled and the need for care by service users increasingly require a co-ordinated approach from a number of different agencies ('joined up problems need joined up solutions').

 "*The aim is that in a highly -coordinated, networked or integrated system all practitioners and clinicians will consider user needs simultaneously and act on them as members of a team, rather than sequentially along a chain of cross-agency referral." (ICN guidance)* [7]

From the service user's point of view the aim is not only to receive care and support more quickly and effectively but to ease the process of access to care. A common difficulty expressed by users and carers, is the frustration they feel in having to 'tell their story' and provide assessment information repeatedly to different agencies. From their perspective there is an expectation that public services ought to be more joined-up than they actually are. The processes of co-ordination require the interchange of personal information between agencies. At some stage there may be a need to interchange sensitive information relating, for example, to health or social care. This is a difficult area where technology is available that can facilitate ease of information sharing but where the law (Data

Protection Act or the Human Rights Act) places clear constraints in order to protect the privacy of the citizen. This legislation is in addition to the professional codes of practice, which have long protected the confidentiality of information about individual service users. Practitioners often feel both a strong sense of responsibility and the dilemma of what and how much to share. These issues are discussed further in **IFORMATION SHARING.**

1.12 Sharing Information

An important, underpinning principle of FAME is that the ICT facilities should always be driven by practice guided by legislation, guidance and codes of practice. The purpose of sharing must always be clear. A second principle within the FAME approach is that of the separation between the information needed to be clear about the **IDENTITY** of a service user and sensitive personal information (e.g. a health record). The technology architecture of FAME enables the former whilst protecting the latter until practitioners have determined that selective sharing of sensitive information is necessary with appropriate consent.

These issues naturally lead to the requirement that the **GOVERNANCE** of these processes is undertaken to the highest standards of probity. The question of who should be responsible for governance depends on the level of co-ordination being sought. A useful way of thinking about this is to imagine a spectrum ranging from an informal steering group where one agency hosts the governance processes, through a formal steering group, a multi agency partnership to an integrated care team. In the case of the latter it is likely that practitioners will have been seconded from their agencies to work within a single budget and management structure. Whilst this may be appropriate for certain specialist services the assumption lying behind much of the FAME framework is that the vehicle for governance will be a formal multi-agency partnership that must overtly manage information governance.

1.13 Processes

One of the key practice processes will be the approach to **INFORMATION SHARING** and here it should be recognised that agencies and individual practitioners may have different practice models of what is desirable.

The lesson is that responses to the problem of information governance will need to be worked out amongst the agencies, taking account of government guidance and the different world views of service delivery and corporate commissioning as well as the different institutional perspectives. For this reason, although the Information Sharing Protocols of many partnerships may be similar, it is the process of their agreement amongst the agencies involved as well as clarity of purpose that is important to their successful implementation.

1.14 Legal powers, responsibilities and policy

The scoping statement will set out the legal basis for any partnership arrangements and for information sharing. These issues are described in **LEGAL POWERS, RESPONSIBILITIES and POLICY** and the need for regulation of the operations of the partnership in **GOVERNANCE**. Multi-agency working entails information sharing. The limits placed on information sharing by legislation and codes of practice therefore define the extent of multi agency working possible. The scoping statement will need to take explicit account of:

- Administrative law which is the body of law that regulates the activities of public bodies. The actions of all public bodies are subject to control by the courts by way of judicial review. A public body may not act in excess of its powers.
- The provisions of the Human Rights Act, the common law duty of confidentiality and the Data Protection Act all have to be considered in terms of the impact of the proposed policy or service on the legitimate rights of the individual whose data is to be used. The watchword is proportionality – how intrusive is the proposed use of data and is this use reasonable and proportionate in relation to the ultimate purpose to which the data is put.
- The legislation and guidance that directly influences their service development e.g. the Children Act 2004 and the Health and Social Care Acts most latterly the white paper 'Our health, our care, our say'.   These provide a directive framework setting out the duties on individual agencies acting alone or in partnership.

Other guidance issued provides duties on agencies. The National Service Frameworks from the Department of Health set the agenda for the delivery of care to specific groups of patients. Those relating to mental health, older people and children have a particular impact on multi agency working. Similarly, guidance issued by the Department of Health, and more latterly by the Department for Education and Skills, has provided a framework within which multi-agency services have been developed e.g. Sure Start programmes, Children's Fund Projects, Local Preventative Strategies, and Children's Centres and so on.

1.15 ICT Development

The FAME Generic Framework seeks to apply technology that has evolved in the private sector world to multi-agency working in the public sector. Some of this technology will be new to IT teams and will be applied in ways that may seem innovative to some suppliers. It is important to ensure that this process is lead by someone who either has experience of, or is in a position to understand, the potential of this new approach. The formation of ICT strategy must lead to adequate capacity within systems and networks as well as towards infrastructure.

ICT should become embedded in practice and this requires that practitioners have access to PCs and mobile devices as appropriate.

The impact of information technology on the joined up working of the partnership is intended to provide substantial benefits. For example, putting 'catalogues' of services (directories) on-line so that they are easily accessible by service users can help them to understand what help and advice may be available and where best to access them. Not all service users are computer literate but increasingly' organisations such as local authority contact centres, libraries or digital TV are able to provide initial help. Technology can, through well-designed web sites, enable practitioners to share knowledge and practice and provide secure communication between practitioners increasingly extending to mobile communications enabling case management in the service user's home. Much of the information collection for government performance indicators can be extracted automatically to reduce the bureaucratic load on practitioners.

Establishing the identity of a service user ("Is this person known to you?") not just within a local area but if necessary across the country can be greatly simplified. The forthcoming Information Sharing Index for children is an example. A proportion of people move in and out of areas and service providers and it may be vital to find their records quickly in the case of emergency. All these are realistic possibilities but they will have to be prioritised and built incrementally if they are to succeed.

Information sharing will increasingly be facilitated by technology that offers enormous capacity to simplify the task as well as significant risks if poorly implemented. An approach that develops a new ICT application for each new initiative is unsustainable. The FAME Generic Framework identifies a general purpose web based infrastructure within which individual initiatives can be provided. It is important to avoid the creation of new silos, reinforced by application software packages that will not inter-communicate effectively. In addition, it is unlikely that the wave of policy will slow down and so an approach is needed that facilitates adaptation to policy development. The FAME technical architecture is designed to provide an **INFRASTRUCTURE** that will martial shared computing resources in a way that supports a number of cross cutting functions:

- **IDENTITY MANAGEMENT** This is needed in order to co-ordinate multi agency working. The concept of identity separates ideas of identifiers, registers, databases and indexes. Authentication and identity management are two separate processes. Authentication verifies a claimed identity – this is important for service users and practitioners and managers. Identity management mandates and facilitates the flow of information. Processes of identity management need to be able to operate outside immediate partnership areas to sub-regional, regional and national areas. People are very mobile and the question "Is this service user known to you?" has to

operate, when necessary, nation wide. This linking of partnership information 'hubs' in a network (i.e. without simply trying to form one big hub) is known as **FEDERATION.** The scoping statement must set out the approach to identity management in a partnership.

- **MESSAGES, EVENTS and TRANSACTIONS**   In multi-agency environments it is important to communicate between agencies as well as exchanging information from database records. An event is an occasion when something of significance for service users or providers is recognised and information is generated, communicated in a message. When messages lead to the commitment of service resources this is known as a transaction. These ideas are embedded in the task of process mapping reflecting routine procedures in a partnership. Process maps may not adequately reflect the sequencing, agility, complexity and sensitivity of processes required during crises.

- **FEDERATION**   A 'hub' is a shared ICT resource that delivers and supports co-ordinated services within a partnership. Hubs maybe connected to create an intercommunicating network of partnerships. It will not always be possible to envisage a priori how such networks will emerge. For this reason the functionality for federation must be a feature of the design of the hub. In order to federate, three areas of functionality are needed: portal functions as an information gateway; switch functions for delivery and direction and index functions to link identifiers. A scoping statement should set out the strategy towards federation.

The scoping statement will show how these features are to be combined in the case of a particular multi agency partnership to deliver the ICT functionality to support that partnership's operations.

The incremental development of infrastructure is possible without being tied to particular systems vendors. Aspects of these solutions have been demonstrated in the FAME strands. However, it is important that the functional specification, reflected in the scoping statement, encompasses the required infrastructural functionality rather than a stand-alone applications package.

1.16 The Nature of FAME Business Cases

There is a wealth of literature and guidance on writing business cases and in this paper only a very brief outline is given. Agencies are likely to have their own practice and format in which business cases are considered and these need not be varied for the Generic Framework. However, as multiple agencies will need to consider the business as it affects them, the development group will need to negotiate a structure that will be acceptable to the funding agencies. If the development of the multi agency service is envisaged as a 'project' it is likely to

be undertaken within a PRINCE2 framework. Some words of caution may be appropriate:

"*It is argued that the sources of conflict that can result when managers and professionals are engaged in public sector IT systems and their implementation is derived from their different narratives. The managerial narrative focuses on outputs and outcomes while the professional sees complex and adaptive processes as inevitable given the human subject nature. Professionals are more hesitant to separate process from outcome, preferring to see the two as entangled and characterized by feedback and interaction.*"[8]

There is a history of attempts to implement ICT in the public sector as focusing mainly on structural work processes and routine project planning rather than cultural implementation in the context of transformational change.

"*A cultural approach to IT systems will put less faith in a time-limited system that separates system design from implementation. A cultural approach will favour a broad approach to the long-term impact of IT on the working life of the organisation, the values, beliefs, practices within the organisation…it implies that an organisation will see how it can use IT to partner the growth and evolution of the whole organisation…PRINCE2 can certainly play its part, but it may become too rigid a method over the longer term and the model itself needs to be adaptable to fast changing environments.*"[9]

1.17 Producing the Business Case

The SSU Discussion Paper: 'How to produce a business case'[10] includes the following issues:

- The business case is for the Project Board who will oversee progress.
- The skills required for producing a business case are:
    - Project management skills
    - Practice knowledge.
    - Service user/carer knowledge
    - Specialist skills – change management, process mapping and re-design, systems design, financial knowledge including investment appraisal.

At each project stage the business case needs to be sufficiently developed to persuade the Project Board to release resources for the nest stage or to stop it if its business case no longer makes sense. It typically includes a 'do-nothing' option maintaining the as-is position as a benchmark. The scoping statement will then be used to develop a series of alternative projects or project phases, each of which may be subjected to a standard investment appraisal process. However, many of the benefits identified may not easily be converted into money

terms. Indeed, the investment justification of infrastructure is very often problematic because it is one step removed from operational systems. An explicit discussion of the increased 'public value' brought about by infrastructure may be useful and this is covered under **SUSTAINABILITY**.

The nature of the changes to be brought about under the FAME Generic Framework is intended ultimately to be transformational. By their nature, such changes are emergent and not always easy to identify at the outset. The scoping statement is intended to give a clear and comprehensive sense of direction to the project that will carry it forward to being embedded in the mainstream of services.

2: LEGALPOWERS, RESPONSIBILITIES AND POLICY

2.1 Summary

Although this section highlights partnerships relating particularly to health, social care and services to children and older people the general principles are applicable to all public sector partnerships. Sometimes in the latter cases, the word 'business' may be more accurate than 'practice'.

The environment in which practitioners work is shaped by professional ethics, codes of practice, policy, legislation and legislative guidance as well as organisational policies and procedures. Legal frameworks need to be interpreted in the context of each particular multi-agency environment. This can be a complex process because participating agencies may be established under different statutory and professional frameworks. It is important to identify who, or which group, drawn from legal departments or external legal advice, can take the lead in developing the required legal framework of the multi agency partnership.

A multi-agency environment needs to be established within a legal framework. This should be researched to ensure that the proposed ' partnership' has the powers to do what it intends. As outlined in Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA) guidance[11], these powers may come directly or be implied from or be limited by:

- Specific legislation e.g. the Children Acts, the Health and Social Care Acts or the Mental Health Act or statutory guidance relating to this legislation which imposes specific duties on agencies, including local authorities.
- General enabling legislation e.g. the Local Government Act 1972 which in section 111(1) provides that local authorities are expressly empowered to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conductive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions. Similarly under section 2(1) of the Local Government Act 2000 a local authority shall have power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of their area.
- General, regulatory legislation e.g. Human Rights Act, Data Protection Act 1998 or common law.

It is important to be clear from where the powers come:

- To establish a body such as a partnership and whether it is envisaged for it to become a statutory or corporate body, or, if not, what agreements will be made to govern its operations. An agreement to pool funding under Health Act flexibility arrangements would be an example of the latter.
- To procure goods and services or employment of staff.
- To share information and to govern such sharing.

The last point is key because a multi-agency care environment that supports joined up service delivery requires participating agencies to share personal information. Rationales for the sharing of information, concerns for confidentiality, and agreements for governance, are discussed under **INFORMATION SHARING**. No single source of law regulates the powers that a public body has to use and to share personal information. First they must determine if, under administrative law (the laws that regulate the activities of public bodies), they have the power to carry out the function to which any proposed sharing relates. Then they must ensure that the information sharing operates within the principles established by legislation (e.g. the Data Protection Act, the Human Rights Act) as well as the common law duty of confidence.

In addition to complying with the legal framework, agencies sharing information have a responsibility to conform to national policies, for example the Caldicott principles that concern flows of information between NHS organisations and between NHS and non-NHS organisations and codes of ethics. Finally, the activities of the public sector take place in the public eye and the media will often influence opinions about the probity of information sharing in high profile cases. Communicating the impact of the law and statutory guidance is likely to fall to a prospective partnership co-ordinator or to the source of legal advice if they are comfortable with the role.

Issues surrounding employment law, accounting principles and standing financial instructions, audit and scrutiny, accountability, procurement processes all need to be checked through legal advice (and the advice of auditors) prior to developing mainstream vehicles.

It should be noted that beyond the boundaries of the legal framework that applies in England there are different frameworks that may apply e.g. Scotland or European level.

2.2 The legislative, policy and guidance context

This section sets out the legislative, policy and guidance framework impacting the formation of multi agency services in the areas of social and health care (mental health, older people, children and young people) and the multi agency organisation itself. This is only a part of local authority driven multi agency services. It is necessarily very selective in the sources on which it draws seeking to give a flavour of the process of investigation that those with a role in providing policy analysis and advice to agencies would undertake in setting up partnerships. It is not exhaustive, making no reference for example to multi agency partnerships relating to crime and disorder or to housing and benefits, to Single Non-Emergency Number partnerships or to Local Strategic Partnerships. The processes relating to scanning legislation, guidance, departmental websites are, however, common. The concentration here is on those partnerships that deliver multi agency services. Legal powers and responsibilities often constitute major drivers for multi-agency partnerships underlying the **SCOPING**

STATEMENT AND BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT. Additionally they form the framework within which **GOVERNANCE** arrangements are made.

The processes and underlying themes of citizen centred services, citizen participation and the joining up of services for improved service user outcomes are generic. The examples given support the ideas set out in the rest of the FAME Generic Framework and in particular the need for infrastructure and federation. The complexity of the issues discussed supports the idea that an ICT 'applications approach' has limited utility and that practitioners and service users have an important role in the appropriation of the affordances of the now widely available Services Oriented technology.

2.3 Understanding and Accessing Legislation, Guidance and Codes of Practice

"The Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) 1998 report on deprived neighbourhoods painted a stark picture of decline in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The problems affecting these areas – high levels of crime, low levels of educational attainment and poor health – are acute. These problems are also related, or 'joined-up'. At the same time, no single organisation holds the key to addressing these problems. A combination of public, private, voluntary and community sector effort will be needed to crack them. All of this means that only a joined up response will be effective in tackling the problems of deprived neighbourhoods."[12]

SEU has looked at the role of new technologies in inclusion[13]. It concludes that ICT can be used to address social exclusion in three main ways:

- Strategic planning and evaluating services to target services and develop efficient, tailored local plans to improve delivery.
- Joining up services around the needs of the person is of particular value to people who are clients of several agencies. Developing these systems requires understanding of risk factors affecting vulnerable groups, and agreeing protocols and partnership arrangements regarding data sharing and co-ordinating actions.
- Personal development and active inclusion in employment, social groups and community participation can all be helped by technology.

The government's rhetoric that 'joined up problems need joined up solutions' underlies much of the policy and legislative drive on reforming public services:

…public services work best when they work together. Most of the Government's key objectives – ranging from cutting crime to helping people back to work – depend on co-operation between many different services.[14]

Multi agency working is spreading widely but has a complex policy and legal basis. In FAME the concentration is on the co-development of practice and information sharing. Multi-agency working entails information sharing and the government is, through guidance (e.g. Information Sharing: Further Guidance on legal issues: Every Child Matters), actively encouraging more confidence that practitioners may share information. There are, however, both legal and practice limitations that give the practical limits to the extent of information sharing. On the one hand there is great pressure to share information more widely but on the other there are complicated legal issue to be understood.

In setting up or developing a multi-agency service there are four strands that should be considered:

- **The multi agency vehicle.** Co-operative arrangements where a steering group sets out to co-ordinate services may need little more than an informal agreement between the agencies. On the other hand, there will be statutory arrangements underpinning partnerships such as a Children's Trust with a need for formal written agreement between the agencies. Generally the legal powers that enable organisations come under the heading of Administrative Law.
- **The legal framework of services.** Legislation giving both powers to act and a regulatory and inspection framework normally surrounds the provision of services to the public.
- **Policy, guidance and advice for the provision of services**. This often parallels the legislative framework to elaborate it but may also be issued on a continuing basis by ministers and professional bodies and associations as thinking develops and experience is shared.
- **The legal framework for information sharing**. This is a complex area of law and for the practitioner, complicated by the fact that the legal framework of Data Protection is largely about restrictions whereas there is considerable pressure through policy for information to be shared. Practitioners often feel, and indeed are, exposed by the need to balance the conflicting needs for privacy with the need to deliver more effective services.

These four strands interweave. For example, an organisation must have appropriate functions enabled under administrative law requiring the sharing of information to which the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act may then be applied. If sharing information is ultra vires then even if consent is given it would be illegal.

The role of regulation is pervasive. For example, in planning the new Single Non Emergency Service, it is Ofcom's responsibility to administer the UK's telephone numbering resource. In 2005 Ofcom undertook a consultation on proposals to make a 3-digit number (101) available for use by communications providers to 'provide access through a single and memorable telephone number to a co-ordinated means of enquiring about or reporting non-emergency issues'. Other

issues include interconnection arrangements and access from communications providers to the SNEN service. Following this consultation Ofcom decided to designate 101 as the UK's SNEN.

Policy, guidance, advice and codes of practice develop alongside (leading or following) developments in practice. Where pressures for change necessitate legislation this is enacted relatively infrequently and normally following research and consultation. Whilst there is a great deal of guidance and advice on creating and maintaining partnership working in the public sector the legal framework is less developed. Some underpinning processes can be framed within powers from the Health Act 1999 s31 – health act flexibilities - but the powers of partnership boards are less certain. Legislation underpinning data protection, freedom of information and human rights by their very nature are landmark acts that often require court decisions on their interpretation in specific instances. For example the Information Commissioner has the responsibility for issuing rulings under the Data Protection Act.

The sources of policy, guidance and advice will be found:

- On the main government departmental websites and in publications (including green and white papers) Department of Health (including the National Service Framework sites and the National Programme for IT – Connecting for Health), Department for Education and Skills, Department for Communities and Local Government, Home Office, Department of Transport, HM Treasury, Department for Constitutional Affairs, the Cabinet Office etc.
- Audit, regulatory and inspection websites e.g. National Audit Office, Audit Commission, Ofsted, Healthcare Commission (brought into being under the Health and Social Care (Community health and Standards) Act 2003, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and many others.
- National Associations, Association of Directors of Social Services, Local Government Association, NHS Confederation etc
- Knowledge based and research organisations e.g. SCIE (the Social Care Institute for Excellence, an independent charity), The Joseph Rowntree Trust, Office of Public Management and the various University based research centres etc.

Policy advisors to agencies must keep all these under review to enable the development of multi agency working to progress.

2.4 The Multi-Agency Vehicle

Partnerships may be formed by two or more agencies reaching agreement to collaborate with an appropriate level of formality. Such partnerships need to be underpinned by a formal written and signed agreement demonstrating that the parent agencies have bought-in to the partnership and will support it. (See

GOVERNANCE) Where such partnerships are formed to carry out a strategic planning task or to manage a joint project, perhaps funded by ring fenced funding provided through some government initiative there are relatively few problems. One agency is likely to 'host' the project, as 'accountable body', and provide the systems of accountability and scrutiny delegating the management of the project to a partnership board.

However, when partnerships are set up to manage mainstream revenue streams and joint services this will require at least alignment (and perhaps pooling) of budgets and formal agreement between agencies to underpin their governance. Specific legislative provisions may be called on (e.g. Health Act's flexibilities [15] i.e. lead commissioning, pooled funds and integrated provision) where appropriate legal advice should be taken to ensure that partnerships are acting *intra vires* (within their powers).

Administrative law is called on to determine the powers or *vires* available[16]. Government Departments headed by a Crown Minister derive their powers from express or implied statutory powers and prerogative and common law powers. However, government departments and bodies such as local authorities established by statute may only look to their express or implied statutory powers. Local Authorities for example have the following statutory powers:

- Section 111(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 that provides that a local authority 'shall have the power to do anything…which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their statutory functions'.
- Section 31 partnership arrangements in the Health Act 1999 have been developed to give NHS bodies and local authorities the flexibility to respond effectively to improve services, either by joining up existing services, or developing new, co-ordinated services and to work with other organisations to fulfil this.
- Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 places a duty of best value on local authorities to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which they exercise their functions, taking account of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Section 2(1) of the local Government Act 2000 that provides that a local authority shall 'have power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one of the following objects – (a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well being of their area; (b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area; (c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area'.
- Objectives and priorities have been set out nationally in:
  - Modernising Health and Social Care National Priorities 2000/1-2002/3
  - The local Government, NHS, Modernising Government, Public Health and Social Services White Papers

2.5 Strategic Service Partnerships

A recent report 'Rethinking Service Delivery'[17] now updated - 'Service Transformation through Partnership'[18] sets out a comprehensive analysis of a particular approach to partnership working:

By working with other local authorities, or with other public bodies, new ideas and new ways of working will become apparent. Similarly, by working with the private sector or the not-for-profit sector or voluntary sectors, new ideas, new approaches and external investment may be available to push the boundaries of enhancement forward. Partnership working in a SSP approach should become increasingly the delivery mechanism of choice between public sector bodies. This is particularly so for authorities that are comparatively small or where the skills required for a service are in short supply and where authorities are effectively competing between themselves for that resource.

SSPs can involve partnerships between any type of organisation and the local authority. The issue is not who the partner is, but what the partnership is seeking to achieve and how the partnership works. Consequently they can be between public bodies or between public bodies and private, voluntary or social enterprise organisations. In a SSP between a local authority and other local authorities, or other public bodies, the output or outcome specification can take the form of a partnership agreement. Alternatively it is incorporated within the constitution setting out the expected deliverables from the partnership. SSPs require a high degree of shared commitment by the partners to the delivery of services covered by the partnership. The partners will have different objectives and performance aims but there will be a core of common purpose. There are statutory and administrative barriers to be overcome in involving other public bodies – different governance arrangements, different legal powers, different employment terms and conditions and different performance regimes. But this is true of all public sector partnerships.

2.6 Other models of collaboration

It is possible to migrate incrementally to joint ventures between local authorities. A Joint Committee may be set up under s101(5) Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authority (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) Regulations 2000. The joint committee can discharge the operational side of the respective commercial service divisions of both authorities subject to such matters being within the policy and budget framework approved by both councils. In one case three executive members from each authority sit on the Joint Committee which is empowered to delegate to officers of each authority.

If the argument is accepted that it is unsustainable to develop a new application system for each new government initiative it follows that the provision of infrastructure and its federation will be shared amongst services. This may lead

to ICT strategic partnerships being developed providing ICT on a sub regional or even regional basis. The Local Government Act 2003 contains powers to enable the Secretary of State to authorise Best Value local authorities to set up a company to trade in relation to any of their ordinary functions.

In addition to the standard PFI structure NHS LIFT is a further model for achieving longer-term investment in public services, including local authority services. Its aim is to procure investment in primary health and social care. It is aimed at PCTs or local authorities in collaboration with PCTs. A similar model is targeted at the school building programme Building Schools for the Future.

Issues surrounding employment law, accounting principles and standing financial instructions, audit and scrutiny, accountability, procurement processes all need to be checked through legal advice (and the advice of auditors) prior to developing mainstream vehicles.

Another approach to multi-agency vehicles is represented by Social Enterprises[19]. They are businesses engaged in some form of trading, primarily to support a social purpose. The enterprise aims to generate surpluses but it seeks to reinvest those surpluses principally in the business or in the community to enable it to deliver on its social objectives. For example, Aspire, a company limited by shares creates full-time employment for rough sleepers and other homeless people. Social enterprises can provide solutions to some of the problems faced by many of the UK's most disadvantaged areas by providing inclusive economic activity. The government believes that social enterprises have the potential to play a far greater role in the delivery and reform of public services.

Regional Development Agencies were brought into being by the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, one agency for each region. They are 'bodies corporate' and have the following purposes:

- To further the economic development and regeneration of its area.

- To promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness in its area.

- To promote employment in its area.

- To enhance the development and application of skills relevant to employment in its area.

- To contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK where it is relevant to its area to do so.

Subject to the consent of the Secretary of State a RDA may do anything which it considers expedient for its purposes, or purposes incidental thereto including giving financial assistance, forming or acquiring an interest in a body corporate. A RDA formulates, keeps under review (and has regard to in exercising its functions) a strategy in relation to its purposes. The current review of Government Offices sees the potential for a 'strong role in supporting local and regional delivery and promoting flexibility within the devolved decision making framework. Within this framework RDAs, Regional Assemblies and local

authorities all play important roles in both setting out regional strategies and delivering them'. The review proposes a new set of strategic objectives for the Government offices including:

- Transforming the way central government focuses on places by working with local and regional partners to understand priorities and stretch performance e.g. GO role in negotiating LAAs, promoting Every Child Matters.

- Helping departments translate policies into operational delivery.

- Supporting and challenging regional strategies to improve their quality and consistency.

In summary, the number of options for local partnership structures and investment is now much wider and partnerships have the opportunity to look for an appropriate vehicle. There are a number of case studies of improving public services through learning from CPA in Patterns for Improvement[20].

2.7 Mental Health: The Legal Framework for Services

This section contains signposts to some of the key legislation affecting multi agency services. It is important that policy advisors of multi agency partnerships carry out an exhaustive survey of the relevant legislation.

The Mental health Act 1983 makes provision for the compulsory detention and treatment in hospital of those with a mental disorder. It remains in force until modified by the prospective legislation. The Department of Health paper Improving Mental health Law[21] is a guide to the development of policy over the last few years and the need for legislation in this area:

"The current Mental Health Act is now more than twenty years old. A Bill is to be introduced to amend the 1983 Act. The intention is to bring in a number of changes 'to help protect patients and the wider public from harm, to strengthen patient safeguards, to support service modernisation and to tackle incompatibilities with the European Convention on Human Rights. It will pave the way for substantially increasing investment and developing new and innovative community services".

2.8 Mental Health: policy, guidance and advice

Policy advisors will explore sites of interest to them and gradually build up an inventory of sites to be regularly scanned. The following are examples of what is available.

A 'century of slow progress' is described in the Department of Health paper 'The Journey to Recovery'[22]. Reports and enquiries in the 1990's found that there were still many defects in mental health services including poor communication between the responsible agencies, especially health and social services, and the inadequate use of care plans. A white paper (Modernising Mental Health Services), the National Service Framework for Mental Health and the proposed legislation are amongst the responses made.

The NSF for Mental Health was published in 1999[23] and set out standards in five areas:

- Mental health promotion
- Primary care and access to services
- Effective services for people with severe mental illness
- Caring about carers
- Preventing suicide

It was recognised that there had been a lack of investment in information systems affecting, inter alia, joint working between health and social care. Care Trusts represent a model for the merger of mental health trusts and social services in partnership with local authorities but all management arrangements should move towards integration with social care services.

A commentary and resource document on mental health services for older people sets out a case for integration for Community Mental Health Teams[24] as part of the NSF Standard Seven (…the development of an integrated mental health service for older people…). It emphasises that through integration (rather than health and social care professionals working alongside each other) all health and social care processes to provide assessment, diagnosis, treatment and care for older people with mental health problems are delivered by a carefully planned, monitored and reviewed single service system. Separate assessment and care management processes provided by health from those provided by social care organisations entail duplication of effort and cost by public sector services. They also entail the service user and their family having to engage with many different professionals – 'an unwarranted invasion of privacy and an unnecessary cause of confusion'.

2.9 Older people: The Legal Framework for Services

This section contains signposts to some of the key legislation affecting multi agency services. It is important that policy advisors of multi agency partnerships carry out an exhaustive survey of the relevant legislation.

There has been significant health service legislation over the last thirty years with much of it relating to structural change in the organisation of health and social

care and guidance documents (especially those that are recent) may well provide the best way of navigating the changes enabled. Some of the key legislation is:

- NHS Health Services Act 1977 and NHS Health Services (Primary care) Act 1977
- The Human Rights Act 1998 (See European convention On Human Rights case studies in health and social care)
- Health Act 1999 particularly in relation to partnership arrangements with new powers covering pooled funds, lead commissioning and integrated provision – see s31.
- Care Standards Act 2000 established a major regulatory framework for social care to ensure high standards of care and to improve the protection of vulnerable people. Also, relates to the responsibilities of local authorities and health authorities following the transfer of registration and inspection to the National Care Standards Commission.
- Health and Social Care Act 2001
- NHS Reform and Health Care Professions Act 2002 including guidance issued to PCTs and SHAs as a reference for major legislative and organisational changes.
- Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 which inter alia established the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection (CHAI) which took over from the Commission for Health Improvement and the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) which took over from the National Care Standards Commission.
- The White Paper (2006) - Our health, our care, our say

2.10 Older people: Policy, guidance and advice

Policy advisors will explore sites of interest to them and gradually build up an inventory of sites to be regularly scanned. The following are examples of what is available.

An overview of performance of improving services to older people[25] highlighted four significant areas emerging from evidence:

- Care management and assessment – systems are too cumbersome, repetitive and bureaucratic.
- Services to promote independence – councils increasingly recognise that a broad range of services and partnerships are needed to maximise independence for older people, as well as gaps in specialist provision.
- Commissioning capacity - progress is undermined by limited management capacity and the variable state of partnerships with the independent sector.
- Managing change – councils had made progress in driving change and modernisation and in bringing together health and social care services for

older people. Good leadership is critical in transforming strategic direction into achievable plans and good outcomes.

Councils' self assessments showed more integrated strategic planning between health and social care, with improved connections into mainstream council business and into the agendas of Local Strategic Partnerships. However, councils recognised that the lack of suitable ICT systems was preventing the full implementation of the single assessment process (SAP). Major concerns included the need to improve the IT infrastructure in social care so that individual summary records can be generated and agencies can communicate confidentially with each other. Wider concerns about the impact of the lack of comprehensive ICT support on performance management and commissioning were also raised as barriers to modernisation. The NHS and Social Care Planning and Priorities Framework 2003-6 established detailed targets for improving services for older people:

- Person centred care, respecting dignity and promoting choice
- The promotion of independent living and a healthy and active life
- User satisfaction through timely access to high-quality services that meet people's needs
- Partnership with carers

An Audit Commission report under the Better Government for Older People Initiative[26] sets out the challenges for the public sector of an ageing population requiring a fundamental shift if the aspirations of older people are to be met. The means of achieving integrated services for older people is described in a further Audit Commission report.[27] This draws on the four guiding principles of the National Service Framework[28]:

- Respecting the individual
- Joining up care
- Providing timely access to best specialist care
- Promoting healthy and active living

It sets out, in detail, the case for taking a whole systems approach based on a foundation of partnership (whilst pointing out that not all partnerships operate in the context of a whole system

The report argues that whole system working requires information to flow freely between organisations and professionals. Information sharing is required at the level of the individual older person, when different agencies and teams who are involved in their care need to have mechanisms in place to access information on progress. At a management level, it is important to share information on trends and service use by the local population in order to inform whole system planning and service development.

A range of organisations has produced a combined report[29] 'to share common messages from their separate work programmes, to influence future policy development, and to offer to work alongside Government to bring about the changes in attitudes and public services which respond to the challenges set out in the various recent publications':

- Living Well in Later Life: From prevention to promotion (2003) Nuffield Institute for Health
- All Our Tomorrows: Inverting the Triangle of Care (2003) ADSS/LGA
- Older People – independence and well-being: The challenge for Public Services (2004) Audit Commission/BGOP
- Quality of life for Older People: From welfare to well-being (2004) Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Older people Shaping Policy and Practice[30] reviews a programme of completed projects that, rather than beginning with the latest initiative on Person-centred Services, a Single Assessment Tool, or service targets, has focused on what older people say and want about their lives.

'Our health, our care, our say'[31] proposes to achieve better prevention services with earlier intervention, more choice for people and a louder voice, tackling inequalities and improving access to community services, more support for people with long term needs. 'A Sure Start to Later Life'[32] proposes that the Sure Start model developed for children's services can be applied to improve access and bring together service around older people. It aims to improve participation and prevention through a single accessible gateway to services.

The above brief and selective review of the policy towards older people gives a wide framework for the development of multi agency working and of the involvement of older people themselves in that process. Although the Single Assessment Process has been prominent in ICT applications the approach to using an **INFRASTRUCTURE** provides the scope for a much wider range of information services through service user portals. This is an example of allowing the user to configure the priorities of systems development rather than the user being configured only by the systems development effort.

2.11 Children's Services: The Legal Framework for Services

This section contains signposts to some of the key legislation affecting multi agency services. It is important that policy advisors of multi agency partnerships carry out an exhaustive survey of the relevant legislation and its corresponding guidance that can be found on the DfES website Every Child Matters.

The Children Act 1989 represented a landmark in the conceptualisation and delivery of services to children. Its main principles are:

- The welfare of the child is the paramount consideration.
- Wherever possible, children should be brought up and cared for within their own families.
  - Parents with children in need should be helped to bring up their children themselves; this help would be provided as a service to the child and his family
- Children should be safe and be protected by effective intervention if they are in danger
- When dealing with children, courts should ensure that delay is avoided, and may only make an Order if to do so is better than making no order at all
- Children should be kept informed about what happens to them, and should participate when decisions are made about their future
- Parents will continue to have parental responsibility for their children, even when their children are no longer living with them. They should be kept informed about their children and participate when decisions are made about their children's future.

Two general duties with respect to children in need are imposed on local authorities under s17: to safeguard and promote their welfare; to promote wherever possible their upbringing by their families. The Act defines a child in need as follows:

- He is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority; or
- His health or development is likely to be significantly impaired; or
- Further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or
- He is disabled

Child protection is a vital area of inter-agency responsibility in which the Children Act requires schools and LEAs to co-operate with social services. A Child Protection register is a central record, generally maintained by social services, of al children in a given area for whom support is being provided via inter-agency planning. Generally these are children who are considered to be at risk of abuse or neglect. There has been a widespread implementation of the Integrated Children's System[33] and all authorities have to have fully operational systems in place by 2007. ICS has been developed to improve outcomes for children in need and consists of a practice conceptual framework and a case-based information system.

Following the green paper 'Every Child matters' and in response to the Lord Laming Inquiry to the death of Victoria Climbie the government introduced a Bill into the House of Lords that became the Children Act 2004[34]:

- Clauses 1-9 establish the office, functions and reporting of **the Children's Commissioner.**
- Clause 10 creates **a statutory framework for local co-operation between local authorities and key partner agencies and other relevant bodies** including the voluntary and community sectors. The duty to make these arrangements is placed on the local authority. As well as underpinning wide co-operation arrangements, these duties and powers will also provide the statutory context within which agencies will be encouraged to integrate commissioning and delivery of children's services underpinned by pooled budgeting arrangements in Children's Trusts. Those subject to these duties will have regard to guidance from the Secretary of State issued jointly by the relevant government departments to all the relevant partners.
- Clause 11 imposes a duty on specified agencies to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children including the **sharing of early concerns** about the safety and welfare of children and to ensure preventative action before a crisis develops.
- Clause 12 creates a power for the Secretary of State by regulations made by an affirmative resolution procedure to require local authorities to establish and operate a **database or databases of information about all children** and other young people to whom arrangements under clause 10 or 11 or s175 of the Education Act 2002 may relate. Alternatively the Secretary of State may set up and set up and to operate such databases. Such databases may be set up at a local, regional or national level. This is to facilitate contact between professionals who are supporting individual children or who have concerns about their development, well-being or welfare with the aim of securing early coherent intervention. No material relating to case notes or case history about an individual may be included on the database but the flexibility exists to require the inclusion of further basic data e.g. to provide for future organisational change.
1 Clauses 10-16 establish **Local Safeguarding Children Boards** in each local authority placing local arrangements for co-ordinating the work of key agencies on a statutory footing. The aim of the LSCB is to ensure that each local area has a coherent approach to safeguarding children based on contributions from all key agencies and that this approach is managed effectively. The Secretary of State can prescribe the functions of the LSCB by regulations. A single pooled fund is allowed for establishing and running the LSCB as well as non-pecuniary resources being provided by partners in support of its activities.

- Clauses 17-19 allow for the Secretary of State to require a children's services authority in England to prepare and publish a **Children and Young People's Plan** setting out the authority's strategy for discharging their functions in relation to children and young persons. It also allows for the appointment or to be required by the Secretary of State to appoint a **Director of Children's Services** instead of a chief education officer and a director of social services and **a Lead Member for Children's Services**. Directors of Children's

Services will be expected to steer local co-operation arrangements in relation to children's services as set out in guidance.

- Clauses 20-24 makes provision for the review of all children's services in a local authority area (a **Joint Area Review**). The purpose of the review is to evaluate the extent to which, taken together, the children's services being reviewed improve the well-being of children and relevant young persons. The review will, in particular, consider the quality of children's services and how the bodies that provide those services work together.
- Clauses 25-43 Provisions for Wales
- Clauses 44-48 Private fostering, child minding and day care
- Clauses 49-63 Intervention in failing local authority services, inspection of local education authority functions, promotion of educational achievement miscellaneous provisions including ascertaining children's wishes under s17 of the Children Act 1989, information about individual children (e.g. UPN and post code) amending s83 of the Children Act 1989 'reasonable punishment' of children, power to give financial assistance, child safety orders.
- Clauses 64-69 General provisions. Necessary repeals in other Acts, interpretation, regulation and orders etc.

The Research Paper 04-68[35] in the House of Commons Library gives a good account of the development of the Bill's provisions from the green paper Every Child Matters to its passage through the House of Lords.

2.12 Children's Services: Policy, guidance and advice

Policy advisors will explore web sites of interest to them, especially that of the DfES and gradually build up an inventory of sites to be regularly scanned. The following are examples of what is available.

The catalyst for the recent policy developments in children's services was the tragic death of Victoria Climbie and the inquiry into her death by Lord Laming[36] emphasised the need for agencies to more effectively work together and share information. The green paper Every Child Matters[37] took the Laming recommendations together with work emanating from a stream of other policy papers[38][39][40][41][42] to provide a coherent approach to the development of multi agency services for children and young people. It recorded that the five outcomes that mattered most to children and young people were:

- Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
- Staying safe: being protected from harm and neglect
- Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood

- Making a positive contribution: being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
- Economic well-being: not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life

The Children Act has given rise to a great deal of guidance accessible through the Every Child Matters series of websites – in particular:
- http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/
- http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications

To give a flavour of the guidance available, the ECM website categorises links as follows:

- Delivering Services
  - Setting up multi-agency services
  - Common Assessment Framework for children and young people
  - Common Core of Skills and Knowledge
  - Information sharing
  - Lead professional
  - Workforce reform and professional development
  - Integrated working to improve outcomes for children and young people
- Strategy and Governance
  - Children's Fund
  - Children's trust pathfinders
  - Local network Fund for children and young people
  - Voluntary and Community sector
  - Joint Planning and Commissioning
  - Regional Change Advisers
  - Children's Services inspection
  - Children Act 2004 guidance
- Information for parents
- Children and young people

Three major information sharing initiatives are being developed and rolled out by DfES. Theses are the Information sharing Index, the Common Assessment Framework and the Integrated Children's System. The ways these are intended to work together are set out in "How ICS, CAF and the IS Index fit together"[43]

The implementation of the NHS National Service Framework for Children[44] will be a major part of the Every Child Matters Change for Children programme, driving up standards and leading to improved outcomes for children and hence to the outcomes under Every Child Matters. The involvement of the NHS in multi agency services for children can be evaluated against the NSF. The NSF is a lengthy document providing detailed provisions accessible through:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/ChildrenServices/ChildrenServicesInformation/fs/en

'At the heart of the Children's NSF is a fundamental change in thinking about health and social care services. It is intended to lead to a cultural shift, resulting in services that are designed and delivered around the needs of children and families using those services, not around the needs of organisations. The Children's NSF is aimed at everyone who comes into contact with, or delivers services to children and young people.

The NSF also contains an Information Strategy to ensure that the building blocks are in place both nationally and locally for

- sharing data within the NHS and with and between other agencies
- identifying children and young people and having their up-to-date records available wherever they present to the NHS
- making knowledge accessible to improve care
- identifying children with additional needs and ensuring early effective intervention to address these either by the NHS or other children's services agencies
- the development of information for children and young people, their parents and carers and for the general public
- recording, analysing and interpreting data for the direct care of children and young people
- commissioning, managing and planning services
- ensuring that NHS staff, children, young people, parents and carers know how to use the IT facilities that are available to them

There are some difficult issues in the NHS with relation to information sharing. For example, the state of health or mind of the carer is often one of the biggest determinants of a child's welfare. The disclosure or non-disclosure of information about carers to other care professionals could, therefore, make the difference between either protecting the child or exposing him or her to serious harm. Care professionals will need to understand how far they can go in making this type of information available.

Information about third parties or given by third parties needs to be given special consideration. It may be necessary to keep such information separate from the main part of the notes because of the need to protect people who report abuse or to ensure that children are adequately prepared for unexpected information such as paternity issues or adoption. These issues are discussed further in the Information Strategy document[45].

The Department for Education and Skills has produced a five-year strategy for children and learners.[46] This sets out the education and schools agenda as a partner in multi agency services for children and young people.   It includes plans

for Sure Start Children's Centres and involvement in Children's Trusts. Children's Centres are an important building block in the provision of services to younger children. Information may be accessed through:
http://www.surestart.gov.uk/surestartservices/settings/surestartchildrenscentres/

2.13 The Legal Basis for Information Sharing

The Department of Constitutional Affairs has provided guidance to data sharing in the public sector[47] to provide a route map through a complex area of law. Lord Falconer says in its introduction:

Our view is that there is no inherent incompatibility between the increasingly ambitious scope of public authority service delivery and the legal and administrative conditions that have to be met in order to share data to achieve that goal. The law rightly puts in place safeguards for the use of individual's data and there are organisational costs involved in meeting those conditions. In a democratic society, it is important that those safeguards exist and are properly applied. This does not mean, however, that further and better use of information should not serve the best interests of the individual, of groups, and of society more widely. An appropriate balance must be struck in the specific circumstances that surround each service or policy.

The problem of course is expressed in the last sentence – where <u>does</u> that balance lie?

The DCA guidance suggests that there is a straightforward sequence of consideration which should enable 'a sound judgement to be made about the ability of a public body to share personal data in the public interest:

- Establish whether you have the power to carry out the function to which data sharing relates. In doing so it will be important to ascertain whether there are express statutory restrictions on the data sharing activity proposed, or any restrictions which may be implied by the existence of other statutory, common law or other provisions. Note this comes under Administrative Law.
- Decide whether the sharing of the data would interfere with rights under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights in a way which would be disproportionate to the achievement of a legitimate aim and unnecessary in a democratic society.
- Decide whether the sharing of the data would breach any common law obligations of confidence. (Note the provisions in relation to the obligations of confidence under clause 9 of the Children Bill).
- Decide whether the sharing of data would be in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, in particular with the Data Protection Principles.

The guidance then provides a detailed analysis of each of these steps'. There is also legislation that contains express powers or which imply powers to share:

- The Children Acts 1989, 2004
- Local Government Act 2000
- Education Act 1996, 2002
- Learning and Skills Act 2000
- Education (SEN) regulations 2001
- Leaving care Act 2000
- Protection of Children Act 1999
- Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- National health service Act 1977
- The Health and Social Care Act 2003

It is therefore, at present, advisable that multi agency partnerships take legal advice on their approach to information sharing when drafting Information Sharing Protocols. 'Information Sharing: Further guidance on legal issues'[48] and the Information Sharing Practitioner's Guide are useful resources in providing re-assurance to practitioners.

The common law duty of confidentiality provides that where there is a confidential relationship, the person receiving the confidential information is under a duty not to pass on the information to a third party. The duty is not absolute and information can be shared without breaching the common law duty if:

- The information is not confidential in nature
- The person to whom the duty is owed has given explicit consent
- There is an overriding public interest in disclosure
- Sharing is required by a court order or other legal obligation.

The Children's Act makes specific exception to the common law duty of confidentiality.

2.14 The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act 1998 came into force on 2 October 2000 and it gives effect to the principal rights guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. It is unlawful for a public body to act in a way that is incompatible with convention rights. Article 8 of the Convention provides that:

- 8.1: Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

- 8.2: There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

In relation to 'necessary in a democratic society' courts are required to look at all the circumstances of the case and assess whether the exercise of the power was '*proportionate*'. This involves the court in considering whether the means chosen were necessary, whether adequate safeguards are in place and whether the aims were legitimate and sufficiently well defined. In looking prospectively at potential compliance the issue of proportionality is vital.

2.15 The Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act deals with privacy issues. It applies when:

- Processing personal data that relates to living, identifiable individuals. The definition (following Durant vs. Financial Services Authority) is restricted to something that is biographical and focuses specifically on the individual's personal, family and /or professional life.
- The information is automated or filed manually through a system that is structured according to the individual or criteria relating to him/her and easily accessible.

The Act gives seven rights to individuals in respect of their own personal data. In general the age of competence is taken to be 12 years. The rights are:

- Of subject access.
- To prevent processing likely to cause damage or distress.
- To prevent processing for the purposes of direct marketing.
- In relation to automated decision making.
- To take action for compensation if the individual suffers damage (as a result of any breach of the Act).
- To take action to rectify, block, erase or destroy inaccurate data.
- To request the Information Commissioner for an assessment to be made as to whether any provision of the Act has been contravened.

A brief description of the eight principles of the legislation is taken from a leaflet, The Data Protection Act 1998: a brief guide for Data Controllers[49]. "Data must be:

- Fairly and lawfully processed

- Processed for limited purposes and not in any manner incompatible with those processes
- Adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Accurate and where necessary up-to-date
- Not kept for longer than is necessary
- Processed in line with the data subject's rights
- Secure from unauthorised or unlawful processing and from accidental loss or destruction of, or damage to
- Not transferred to countries outside the EU without adequate protection.

Personal data covers both facts and opinions about the individual. It also includes information regarding the intentions of the data controller towards the individual."

If the general requirements that the processing be 'fair' and 'lawful' are met, it is a particular requirement that at least one of the conditions of Schedule 2 of the Act is met; and in the case of sensitive personal data at least one of the conditions in Schedule 3 of the Act is also met. In many of the conditions referred to it is required that the processing is 'necessary' for a particular function or purpose. In the view of the DCA "the word 'necessary' in this context encompasses matters which are 'reasonably required or legally ancillary to' the accomplishment of the specified purposes, it is not limited to those matters which are 'absolutely essential' to the accomplishment of those purposes."

Note that when data is shared, there are two instances of processing: one by the person making the disclosure, the other by the recipient of the disclosure. Each of these must be justified by reference to a schedule condition.

Consent may form the basis of legitimate data sharing. However, in the context of public sector data sharing that is *intra vires* it is likely that the processing involved at least one of the conditions in Schedules 2 or 3. Where this is the case consent is not a necessary precondition. However, it is best practice to seek consent in most cases whether required or not 9unless to do so would put the child at risk).

2.16 The Information Commissioner

The Information Commissioner is responsible for issuing Guidance and Codes of Practice on the DPA and is also responsible for enforcing the data protection regime. Data Controllers are required to notify with the Commissioner, which includes setting out the purposes for which data will be processed, and the persons or organisations to which data may be disclosed. The Commissioner has the power, subject to appeal, to issue an enforcement notice requiring a data controller to cease certain actions or to take others.

It is important to have an Information Sharing Protocol in place when data is shared on a regular basis, for example between partners. Although merely having a protocol does not mean that the sharing is lawful (and the agreement itself is not legally binding), the Information commissioner is likely to be more lenient towards organisations that break the law if they have one in place. Negotiating a protocol (even if model protocols are available) is itself a way of ensuring that the partners in a multi agency partnership have properly considered the impact of legislation.

'Establishing a Framework for Information Sharing'[50] suggests "that a framework of documents each targeted on a clear audience rather than one, perhaps unwieldy, ISP is a more useful approach.

In Information Sharing: Information Rights,[51] the UK Information Commissioner explains his role as promoting public access to official information and protecting your personal information. His research shows that protecting personal information ranked third alongside other issues of social concern, behind prevention of crime, behind improving education, but alongside concerns about the NHS, ahead of equal Rights, ahead of protecting freedom of Speech, ahead of national Security, ahead of concern about environmental issues. At the same time there are substantial pressures for increased data sharing, driven by both public policy and service delivery consideration. "But I do have to say the enthusiasts for data sharing, if they are to retain public trust, must be very focused on the risks… practical risks of inaccuracy, loss of accountability where information is shared, risks of lack of security."

3: INFORMATION SHARING

3.1 Summary

Information sharing is at the heart of the FAME programme and, indeed, of the government's modernisation agenda. One rationale for increased exchange of information across organisational and practice boundaries is to reduce delays and inefficiencies in service delivery (for example when service users need to repeat their stories to several agencies). More importantly, there is evidence that incomplete information increases the risk that vulnerable children and adults will 'slip through the net'[52]. Nevertheless, practitioners are often anxious about requirements to pass on client information especially across agency boundaries. Boundaries do a job – they are 'protective' - it is barriers that are 'obstructive'.

'*To enable people to get the help and care they need, we should be getting rid of the barriers, but managing the boundaries that contain and protect their personal information*'[53]

Reasons for their concern include:

- Different beliefs, ethics, ways of working, and attitudes to personal information among agencies;
- Lack of confidence in the safeguards around consent and confidentiality of other organisations and professions;
- Lack of clarity surrounding the relevant legislation

- Fears about the security and reliability of ICT.

However, the imperatives to share information are equally pressing. For example in children's services[54]:

- Improvements in the way information is shared within and between agencies are imperative if children are to be adequately safeguarded. (Lord Lamming)

- A consistent finding of inquiries over past years has been about weaknesses and failings in information sharing, this is a serious concern. There were very few formal arrangements between agencies about how and when information should be shared. (Safeguarding Children - Joint Chief Inspectors' report)

- One of the key failings was the inability of Humberside police and Social Services to identify Huntley's behaviour pattern soon enough. That was because both viewed each case in isolation and because Social Services failed to share information effectively with the Police. (Bichard Inquiriy)

Procedures to ensure consent and confidentiality in relationships between a professional practitioner and service user must be re-examined in an environment in which service provision is increasingly a shared responsibility. Multi-agency working entails information sharing. Information sharing needs to be underpinned by agreements that are both robust and sensitive to the diversity

of the organisations, professions, hierarchies and communities that are actually, and potentially, partners in the provision of services.

An Information Governance Framework has been assembled, consisting of:

- Establishing A Framework for Information Sharing

- Standards Audit Tool

- Standards linked to examples

- Information sharing toolkit

- Supporting documents

These are all available on:

http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice

'Establishing a framework for Information Sharing'[55] takes the issue beyond the serious cases referred to above to the development of integrated services. Here, there is a wider range of agencies with an increasing use of ICT and an increasing range of information that may need to be shared on a regular basis. (The advent of the e-Common Assessment Framework will be a particular example.) The strategic level of the Framework will encompass all agencies with a common commitment to the sharing of information and all purposes for which those agencies may wish to share information. It will provide a community focused charter, a document that identifies the common principles that will underpin the disclosure, sharing and exchange of data and information between all or any of the signatory agencies.

In summary:

- An Information Sharing Framework will define the principles underpinning information sharing;
- Information sharing may apply in all contexts - amongst citizens, services, commissioning and national policy making;
- There are costs attached to increased information sharing, particularly the need for staff training;
- Technical solutions will facilitate a variety of information sharing modes.

- FAME explores information communication technologies (ICT's) within public services, specifically facilitating the access to and sharing of information – often personal information - about service users (and their families).
- There are a number of influences affecting the governance of information, including how it is held, obtained, recorded, used and shared[56].

3.2 The impact of the Government's Modernisation agenda

Since the election of New Labour in 1997, there has been a raft of policy and legislation influencing the modernisation of public services. For example the scene was set by:

- The Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Health and Social Care Act 2001
- Children Act 2004
- NHS Plan
- Caldicott Report (for both NHS and Social Care)
- Information for Health (and subsequently: Building the Information Core; Protecting & Using Confidential Information)
- Information for Social Care
- E-Government

Within this modernisation agenda, there is an emphasis on 'joining-up' and 'multi-agency' working between primarily the NHS and local authorities, but also more widely to include agencies ranging from the voluntary sector to the police. This 'joining-up' agenda is said to reduce delays and inefficiencies and deliver timely, more efficient and effective services for the user. The drive for multi-agency working consequently has implications for 'Information Sharing' – if agencies are to join up to deliver more seamless care and services (and reduce the need for users to repeat their stories to several different agencies), information sharing becomes a pre-requisite. As part of this modernisation agenda, the emphasis is towards increasing the use of ICT. A third major feature is the changing relationship between service users and service providers. This is evident in both legislation and policy where the rights of citizens and choice are being affirmed.

It is important that agencies establish consistent processes to ensure that disclosure or exchange of information is managed effectively. There is a great deal of guidance available for the front-line practitioner, much of which emphasises the need to make decisions on a risk assessed case by case basis. However, front line services will struggle to deliver this kind of approach if the organisations that support them do not provide a managed framework within which it can sit. With the development of more integrated services, and the increasing introduction of electronic systems, the range of information that may need to be shared on a regular basis is increasing. A wider range of agencies are becoming involved, and the public sector service users have expectations of more seamless services with a consequent reduction in form filling and the need to provide the same information over and over again. [57]

3.3 Information Governance Framework[58]

Colleran sets out the case for implementing an Information Governance Framework. He points out that information sharing needs to be managed effectively at all levels and consistently across a range of organisations from a strategic perspective, through managerial policies, to day to day operational procedures and its subsequent impact on service users. Although agencies have collaborated in the production of joint information sharing protocols, these have often been large and unwieldy with little link to operational processes. Their maintenance is time consuming and in many cases no longer reflects current requirements.

A Standards Audit Tool allows existing information sharing protocols to be checked against DCA based standards. The tool consists of standards and examples based on guidance provided by DCA and DH including the minimum requirements that should be included in all inter-agency information sharing arrangements.

Hill (2006) discusses the imperatives that arise from handling issues relating to boundaries and barriers to information sharing:

- Cultural:

  - Building confidence about what, how and when to share

  - Establishing trust between practitioner groups

  - Developing common guidance for services

  - Knowing who to contact for support

  - Sharing experience and discussing issues

  - Expressing and clarifying concerns

  - Developing common objectives and expectations

  - Providing training, learning opportunities and relevant feedback

- Organisational:

  - Developing partnership and multi-agency working

  - Using structured frameworks (e.g. FAME)

  - Coming to agreement on ownership and process

  - Using points of change (legal, statutory powers, codes of practice) to define/clarify boundaries

  - Establishing formal agreements (budget arrangements, management of staff, provision of services/support, information sharing frameworks)

  - Developing common standards in Information Governance

- Geographical:

  - Identifying common functionality and practice

- Development/agreement of cross boundary/border standards e.g. coding and categorisation.

- Developing federated approaches

- Using national networks and 'highways'

- Moving from paper to electronic records

- Clarity of mapping and responsibilities

- National guidance, local flexibility

- Technical:

  - Move from monolithic systems to modular services

  - Establish standards for functionality, interfacing, messages and data exchange

  - Hub and spoke architectures – plug in rather than replace legacy systems, message based exchange, identity management

  - Business (practice) driven specification and design

- Legal:

  - Collect, record and share information for a given purpose

  - Make obtaining consent an integral part of customer/client interaction – keep them informed, check their understanding, respect their wishes and address their concerns, allow them to change their mind!

  - Use risk assessment to inform decisions to share without consent

  - Give clear guidance to practitioners

  - Provide training and update it regularly

  - Review policies and procedures for legal compliance

The most developed structures for information governance come from the Department of Health covering information security, records management, DPA and FOI compliance, data quality and information sharing agreements. The acronym HORUS is used to list the aims of information governance:

 (See: http://www.chelwest.nhs.uk/info_govern_pages/info_govern.htm)

- **H**olding information securely and confidentially

- **O**btaining information fairly and effectively

- **R**ecording information accurately and reliably

- **U**sing information effectively and ethically

- **S**haring information appropriately and lawfully

There needs to be a balance between personal privacy and the need for public authorities to share personal data in the delivery of public services. The NHS has taken steps to clarify how it will deal with patient identifiable information by publishing the NHS Care record Guarantee for England. The 'Making a Difference' report[59] suggests practical changes for delivery that will reduce unnecessary bureaucracy associated with dealing with requests for information and clarify information sharing requirements within the health and adult social care sectors whilst respecting the need to maintain patient confidentiality and information security.

The Department of Health in conjunction with the Care Record Development Board and groups representing patient and service users intends to develop a single information sharing protocol for health and adult social care staff by December 2006. Meanwhile, the NHS Care Record Guarantee for England[60] makes twelve commitments to patients about their records, including the following pledges:

- Access to records by NHS staff will be strictly limited to those having a 'need to know' to provide effective treatment to a patient.

- In due course, patients will be able to block off parts of their record to stop it being shared with anyone in the NHS, except in an emergency.

- Individuals will even be able to stop their information being seen by anyone outside the organisation that created it – although doing so may have an impact on the quality of care they receive.

Information sharing governance will remain a complex area.

3.4 Establishing a Framework for Information Sharing[61]

Information sharing should only occur where there is a clear reason for it to happen and legal powers exist that enable the agencies involved to do so. The information concerned should be both relevant and proportionate for the purpose concerned. It can take place in a number of ways:

- Disclosure: an agency acknowledges that it possesses relevant data. It may make that data accessible to a requesting agency or individual, but retains ownership and responsibility.
- Sharing: agencies (usually through establishing a multi-agency team) pool available data and maintain single service based records. Ownership and responsibility for the record also need to be shared.
- Exchange: one agency provides one or more other agencies with relevant data. Ownership and responsibility pass to the new agency, which may add, update, or amend the record to meet further requirements.

There are also three types of information that public sector agencies manage and may share:

- Organisational material: plans, policies, guidelines, minutes of meetings generally freely available under the Freedom of Information Act. An information sharing framework probably does not need to take this into account as it will be publicly available though agencies will need to manage accessibility in their own organisation.
- Statistical, aggregated or anonymised data and analysis: usually disclosed by publication or exchanged between agencies. Only if individuals can be identified need it be treated as person-identifiable information.
- Person-identifiable information: information that may identify a living individual on its own or when combined with any other data or relating to a group of individuals from which a single individual may be identified.

An Information Sharing Framework will need to establish where the relevant purposes are best served through the use of aggregated or anonymised data and the use of person-identifiable data. It will need to be agreed and owned across the range of organisations, each of who will need to identify the specific commitments that the Framework requires. These include an explicit commitment to protecting the absolute safety and security of all person-identifiable information that it owns or uses.

An Information Sharing Framework consists of a number of documents, each with a clear target audience, and each with a localised route for ensuring their review and maintenance. It can be developed over time, can support adaptations to take account of changes in the law or organisational restructuring, and ensure that the necessary detail is accounted for in each informational transaction. It also enables those organisations whose boundaries encompass a multiplicity of other agencies to maintain a consistency of approach to their management of information sharing processes. This may mean signing up to a range of sponsored frameworks at the higher levels but these need to be structured to support single common detailed agreements at operational level. Agencies need to agree ownership for the Framework and it may be appropriate to identify a lead agency or each area in the Framework. It is important to note that not all of the agencies that will be involved in the delivery of the framework will have equal input to all areas of it. Because this is a structured Framework and not a single all encompassing protocol, it will only be necessary to involve the relevant members of a given information community in the production of any one particular document.

Four tiers are proposed for the Framework for person-identifiable information:

- A Strategic Framework Document: sets out common rules, values and principles for information processing and sharing between organisations irrespective of the purpose - to which all organisations must adhere. It is aimed at senior management.

- An Information Community Operational Agreement: a means of defining a specific information community who have come together for a common purpose and have a shared objective in relation to information processing and sharing. It will detail those organisations, identify the service users they impact, describe the purposes and legislative powers appropriate to the information processing/sharing and determine any common policies and standards including the process for review. This is aimed at middle management.
- An Operational Practitioner Arrangement: a means of capturing the relevant business processes that will support effective information processing/sharing for a particular purpose and then communicating those to the appropriate operational staff within and across organisations. It is aimed at operational managers and practitioners.
- A Privacy, Confidentiality and Consent (Service User): a practical guide that covers the range of processes and documentation that will directly impact service users and includes e.g. Privacy/Confidentiality Statement, 'Fair processing Notice', 'Consent', 'Subject Access' etc. It is aimed at the organisation's service users.

DfES has a template based on DCA guidance for a service privacy statement[62] that includes:
- "Who we are and what we will use your information for. (*Purpose*)
- How we may share your information with others.
- Retention and destruction of information.
- Keeping your information secure.
- Checking the information held.
- How to complain.
- The data Protection Act (Who is the data controller?)

A further 'tier 99' Appendix to the Framework is a reference guide and supports the application of tiers 1 to 4. The Framework is the result of advice from a wide range of organisations, particularly health and local government. It conforms to 'Standards, Criteria and Guidance for IS Protocols' (LeGSB/DfES), DfES Cross Government Information Sharing Guidance and related training materials and that produced by ICO, DCA, DH, Home Office etc. Further discussion on Information Governance is covered in **GOVERNANCE**.

3.5 Cross government information sharing guidance[63] Every Child Matters

This is an important document designed to re-assure practitioners about information sharing. There are three main parts:

- Core guidance giving practitioners clear practical guidance, drawing on experience and the public consultation.

- A set of case examples that illustrate information sharing situations.
- A summary of the laws affecting information sharing in respect of children and young people.

The guidance is clear that practitioners must:

- Be supported by their employers. Management and organisational support must provide:
    - A systematic approach within their agency to explaining to children, young people and their families how and why information may be shared.
    - Clear systems, standards and protocols for sharing information within and across agencies.
    - Access to multi-agency training, professional advice and support.
- Understand what information is confidential and how to handle it.
- Understand and apply good practice in sharing information as part of early preventative work (as well as to safeguard and promote welfare).
- Be clear that information can normally be shared where the practitioner judges that a child or young person is at risk of significant harm or that an adult is at risk of serious harm.

The six key points on information sharing are:

- Explain openly and honestly what, how and why information will be shared. Seek consent unless to do so increases risk.
- Always consider a child's safety and welfare when making decisions about sharing.
- If consent is not secured, this should be respected where possible (unless there is sufficient need to override the lack of consent).
- Seek advice when in doubt
- Ensure information is accurate, up to date, necessary, shared only with appropriate people and shared securely.
- Record the reasons for the decision – whether it is to share or not.

3.6 The need for clarity surrounding the relevant legislation

Professionals can only work together to safeguard vulnerable users of their services if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. This has been recognised in the case of children in principle by the courts.[64] The legal framework governing information sharing is described in **LEGAL POWERS, RESPONSIBILITIES and POLICY**.

Practitioners are often anxious about new requirements to pass on client information (Secker and Hill (2001) [65] and emergent issues revolve around reluctance (or inability) to share information about clients on the grounds of

confidentiality. The study reports problems between social services staff and health & education agencies; between voluntary mental health organisations and statutory mental health agencies; and between workers in the housing sector and social & health services. In all such cases there were considerable difficulties in obtaining adequate information although participants believed they had much to offer and gain from multi-agency working.

Voluntary sector staff in the study perceived reluctance on the part of statutory agencies to provide information as stemming from a perception on the part of the latter that the former were unprofessional, inexperienced 'do-gooders'. Notions of professionalism may be perceived as under threat when information is shared for, along with the transfer of information enabled by technological capabilities, there may be fear that the concomitant skills and competencies that distinguish the professional are being 'transferred' or undermined.

Poor multi-agency working stemming from problems in sharing information was exacerbated in many cases, by role boundary conflicts or tensions between agencies. They give examples from several sectors, including child and adolescent services, housing agencies and learning disability teams.

The recommendations of the Caldicott Review[66] helped create a better inter-agency framework within which to achieve this co-ordination while the HAZ initiative[67] explored the practical and technical limits of patient/client record sharing between health and social care agencies.

3.7 Publication

Although 'Information sharing' is a well-established term, the word 'sharing' is a poor way of evoking how information can be exchanged and managed in multi-agency environments. Instead of thinking of a *shared resource* of information, it may be more helpful to envisage a *publication space.* Within such a space members of a partnership or community can publish, with their clients, the fact of their relationship and agencies can signal their willingness to co-operate in the interests of their common clients. This may have implications for the future development of information sharing protocols. Are any proposed encounters' information flows envisaged or already justified (in Caldicott terms) in information sharing protocols? This was recognised by *Defining the Electronic Social Care Record*[68] *(2003)* which identified points for further discussion.

3.8 Training needs

There are costs attached to increased information sharing, particularly the need for staff training. As part of the move towards integrated structures, it will be

important for local authorities to lead a process of cultural change that includes not only information sharing but also developing a common understanding of terms across services.

The Knowsley survey [69] (2003) examined the interface between statutory and non-statutory community mental health services and service user consent for sharing information across agencies. In respect of joint training one Knowsley participant commented: *"We need a better understanding of each others roles, processes and difficulties…Joint training should be organised for the new information sharing policy when it is implemented by the 5 Boroughs Partnership."*   The Knowsley report recommended the provision of a rolling programme of joint induction training for new staff on issues including information sharing protocols.

A Multi-agency training guide, *Training Together To Safeguard Children*[70] advises that training should develop a shared understanding of tasks, processes, roles, responsibilities etc. It should result in improved communications between professionals including a common understanding of the terminology employed and thresholds for action. It should foster effective working relationships based on respect for, and understanding of, the role and contribution of others and sound decision making based on information sharing, through assessment, critical analysis and professional judgement.

Although events such as inter-agency meetings were seen by professionals in Stead's[71] (2004) study to be central to their work, viewed as a valuable and necessary forum for sharing opinion, widening understanding and for decision making - observation revealed careful adherence to guidelines and procedures, strict time management, and *limited sharing of information*. Stead reports several occasions when professional boundaries and lack of communication between professionals, appeared to result in tensions and misunderstandings.

The key factors essential for successful multi-agency working, according to Atkinson et al[72] (2002) are wide-ranging and varied including understanding the roles and responsibilities of other agencies; the need for common aims, and communication and information sharing.

Embedding new ways of working at every level of partner organisations and throughout a range of professions in a multi-agency environment is discussed by Banks[73] (2002) as providing major challenges with partnerships extending beyond health and social services appearing equally *"fragile and varied"* (Banks 2002). Training and induction is clearly vital to overcome the challenges.

The DfES ECM website sets out details of common core training between professionals as well as specific training related to the Common Assessment framework.

4: GOVERNANCE

4.1 Summary

Multi agency 'governance' in public services is about how multiple stakeholders interact with probity in order to achieve their intended outcomes for a citizen group. There are numerous models for multi-agency partnerships but their key characteristics include common purpose and shared vision while acknowledging, maintaining and respecting the integrity of the individual agencies.

Discussion of governance in the public sector is relatively recent whereas in the private sector it has been common for some time. The term 'corporate governance' came into common use in the UK in the private sector following the publication of the Cadbury Report[74] in 1992. Since then it has been widely used in both the private and public sectors. Cadbury defined Corporate Governance as 'the system by which organisations are directed and controlled' and identified the three fundamental principles of corporate governance as *Openness, integrity and accountability***.**

The Audit Commission's definition of the concept emphasises *accountability*:

'*The framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives'*.[75]

Corporate governance is an important and challenging concept in the context of multi-agency environments. Good corporate governance combines robust systems and practices with effective leadership and high standards of behaviour. Whichever model is chosen for a multi-agency partnership its processes of governance must be adequate for its function.

Systems and practices (e.g. risk management, strategy, performance management framework) should support accountability and produce reliable information to inform decision-making. Leadership should establish agreed and clear strategic objectives along with clarity and focus on the vision and mission of the organisation. Roles and responsibilities should be defined - to ensure accountability and transparency - and professional relationships fostered. High standards of behaviour such as openness and integrity should facilitate the challenging of decisions when necessary and should engender a culture in which accountability is clear.

In addition to the above internal characteristics there should be an external focus on the needs of service users. This should reflect diverse views in decision-making, increase a sense of ownership and inclusivity among stakeholders and ensure the maintenance of clarity of purpose.

A recent report by The Independent Commission on Good Governance in Public Services, The Good Governance Standard for Public Services'[76] sets out guidance on applying, reviewing and improving common principles of good governance making specific reference to partnerships. These principles are:

- Focussing on the organisation's purposes and on outcomes for citizens and service users.

- Performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles.

- Promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour.

- Taking informed transparent decisions and managing risk.

- Developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective.

- Engaging stakeholders and making accountability real.

In the context of multi-agency partnership working the governance processes will need to cover:

- The ongoing development of strategy to achieve the intended outcomes for service users, informed by national policy, local priorities and the service users themselves.
- Joint planning and commissioning.
- Joint preparation for inspection.
- The organisation of multi-agency services and practice.
- Information governance - information sharing under appropriate conditions of access and security.
- The management of identities.
- The procurement, ownership and asset management of infrastructure, hardware and software.
- Participation by stakeholders (particularly service users) in the evaluation of outcomes and service configuration.
- Financial, risk and performance management.
- Clear public accountability as well as to the participating agencies.
- Appropriate challenge, scrutiny and audit.
- Workforce planning and development.

The governance processes must be underpinned by a clear understanding of the framework of **LEGAL POWERS, REPONSIBILITIES and POLICY** from which the partnership derives its powers.

4.2 Governance and FAME

Governance is a key concept in multi-agency working environments because it deals with the formal and informal rules by which action can be agreed and pursued by multiple stakeholders.   Multi-agency partnerships in the context of FAME have the following overriding purposes:

- To provide a mainstreamed environment within which multi agency working focused on service users - can thrive.
- To operate the processes of Information Governance.
- To promote the development and acquisition of a technical infrastructure of shared resources and capability.

The latter point is a cross cutting theme of the FAME framework that sees different multi-agency services and structures being supported by the same technical infrastructure.

Partnerships will have to work together and share information with other partnerships. The development of a partnership thus needs to take into account the wider landscape of agencies and partnerships within which it will work. Some agencies will have a national basis (the major voluntary sector organisations) and some a regional basis (Strategic health Authorities). **IDENTITY MANAGEMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, MESSAGES, EVENTS and TRANSACTIONS,** and **FEDERATION** are all part of the way in which ICT can help to enable information sharing in this situation. It is important that governance is seen to take responsibility for:

- The development of multi-agency practice including multi-agency information sharing practice.
- The harnessing of appropriate ICT infrastructure and applications, and the governance of information.
- The governance of partnership processes.

Maintaining constructive relationships with other partnerships is an essential part of leadership to prevent partnerships becoming isolationist silos.

4.3 Governance in public services

'Governance' in public services is about how multiple stakeholders interact with probity in order to achieve intended outcomes. 'Corporate governance' is a concept adapted from the private sector. In the context of the public sector 'corporate governance' has been defined by the Audit Commission as 'the framework of accountability to users, stakeholders and the wider community, within which organisations take decisions, and lead and control their functions, to achieve their objectives'[77].

Multi-agency partnerships can involve two or more – often many more – agencies. National government policy has encouraged partnership between different statutory agencies - and the professionals who work within them - and between statutory, voluntary sector and private organisations. It has done this in pursuit not only of improved services but of the improved governance of those services. The extent of partnership can be seen to lie on a spectrum from *better co-ordination between services* to *fully integrated services*. One of the first tasks

of the strategising process for new partnerships is to decide where the multi agency working should be located on that spectrum.

The Good Governance Standard for Public Service sets out a clear, generalised framework for the governance issues to be considered for a partnership:

- Good governance means focusing on the organisation's purpose and on outcomes for citizens and service users:
  - Being clear about the organisation's purpose and its intended outcomes for citizens and service users.
  - Making sure that users receive a high quality service.
  - Making sure that taxpayers receive value for money.
- Good governance means performing effectively in clearly defined functions and roles:
  - Being clear about the functions of the governing body.
  - Being clear about the responsibilities of non-executives and the executive, and making sure that those responsibilities are carried out.
  - Being clear about relationships between 'governors' and the public.
- Good governance means promoting values for the whole organisation and demonstrating the values of good governance through behaviour:
  - Putting organisational values into practice.
  - Individual governors behaving in ways that uphold and exemplify effective governance.
- Good governance means taking informed, transparent decisions and managing risk:
  - Being rigorous about how decisions are taken.
  - Having and using good quality information, advice and support.
  - Making sure that an effective risk management system is in operation.
- Good governance means developing the capacity and capability of the governing body to be effective:
  - Making sure that appointed and elected 'governors' have the skills, knowledge and experience they need to perform well.
  - Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.
  - Striking a balance in the membership of the governing body between continuity and renewal.
- Good governance means engaging stakeholders and making accountability real:

- Understanding formal and informal accountability and relationships.

- Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public.

- Taking an active and planned approach to responsibility to staff.

- Engaging effectively with institutional stakeholders.

Where members of the governing body are appointed from the voluntary or community sectors particular thought needs to be given to the extent to which such appointments can be assumed to be 'representative'.   Representation demands appropriate resourcing for communication as well as appropriate structures. However, such members can legitimately be said to 'represent the voice' of the voluntary or community sectors if this is made clear in their appointment.

There is by now a substantial body of writing about partnerships covering rationales for their formation, advice on how to create and govern them, and analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. Central Government departments have produced guidelines to support local authorities and the main statutory bodies in their duty to work in partnership. Multi-agency working from the perspective of professional practice has been examined in some detail, notably in publications aimed at practitioners. In this document we draw upon these resources selectively in order to examine the main challenges of governance for multi agency environments of the kind FAME had created, and to highlight usable advice and guidance.

4.4 Creating and maintaining partnerships

This section is concerned with strategy and organisation. It considers various models of partnership and the critical issues affecting them. A 'theory of change' approach to evaluation (of whether value is being added) is proposed, embedded in the strategising process of the partners seeking to establish multi-agency working. Then front-line workers, whose day-to-day practices are likely to be challenged by the formation of partnerships across employing agencies, are considered. The users of public services, according to recent policy statements, should be at the centre of the modernisation of public service and their role in governance of those services is explored. Then ways in which these levels sit within the national policy context are suggested. In the final section all this material is drawn upon to offer a checklist for proposed partnerships.

4.5 Models of partnership working

The term 'partnership' can refer to informal understandings and to formal agreements and terms of reference. Partnerships vary enormously in their size, geographical coverage, and working culture. They can have different objectives,

structures and life spans. The Audit Commission paper 'A Fruitful Partnership'[78] identifies four main partnership structure models:

Steering group (*or partnership board*) without dedicated staff resources:

- Co-ordinates service delivery across organisational boundaries.
- Steering group (*or partnership board*) has sufficient authority to change the ways of working within the partner organisations.
- Outputs are implemented through the partner organisations' mainstream staff and resources.
- Less useful for partnerships that have a long lifespan or need a separate identity for resources or credibility.

Co-locating staff from partner organisations:

- Less formal arrangement where staff remain in their original organisations but work together under a common agenda – perhaps as a steering group.
- Can work well where there is trust between partners.

'Virtual' organisation:

- Separate identity but without a formal legal identity.
- Separate logo, premises and staff who are accountable to the partnership but employed by one of the partners.
- Advantages of distinct identity but without the potentially fraught legal issues.
- Risk of responsibilities being blurred.

Separate organisation:

- A longer-term lifespan, a large area of activity and the need to employ people might require a separate organisation to be formed.
- Advantages are a clear identity, freedom from restrictions (remit) of individual partners, staff dedicated to that purpose, reduced risk of one partner dominating.
- Disadvantages might be the formality of commitments and the risk of the partnership losing touch with the original organisations.

Whichever model or combination of models is chosen it is essential that the managers and practitioners involved have the appropriate skills and capability. Partnership working is hard to effect and requires the ability to work with different professional and managerial cultures. A failure mode for new partnerships is allocating insufficient human resource. People who are seconded or employed by partnerships must have clear responsibilities and actually be released to undertake those responsibilities with appropriate administrative resource. The temptation to treat partnership tasks as an un-resourced addition to the 'day job' should be resisted.

Children and Young People's Strategic Partnerships and Children's Trust arrangements may have elements of the first three of these models – none of which are separate legal entities. One emerging form of separate partnership organisation – a Strategic Service Delivery Partnership – is appropriate where councils seek to 'improve their services through working more effectively in partnership with the private sector, voluntary sector, different tiers of authority, and across geographical boundaries' (ODPM Strategic Partnering Taskforce Vol 1 p5)[79].   See **LEGAL POWERS, RESPONSIBILITIES and POLICY** for more details and explanation of Strategic Service Partnerships.

4.6 The Integrated Care Network

The Integrated Care Network (DCLG (ODPM), I&DeA, The NHS Confederation, LGA, National Primary Care Trust Development programme, DH, and ADSS) has produced guidance:

http://www.integratedcarenetwork.gov.uk/themes/policy.php

on integrated working between the NHS and local government. Government has placed a duty of partnership on the main statutory bodies and 'integration' remains a major aspect of its modernisation plans for public services. It emphasises the need for 'whole systems thinking'. The following draws on that guidance.

"*Integration refers to a single system of service planning and /or provision put in place and managed together by partners (parent bodies) who nevertheless remain legally independent. A single system for a particular service would unite mission, culture, management, budgets, accommodation, administration and records and would apply at any level of integration – team, service or organisation. This is absolutely differentiated from an approach which aims to co-ordinate separate systems.*"

A partnership is needed to create an integrated system; but a partnership is not the same as integration. Partners are not tied to a partnership forever; it can be varied or ended by agreement e.g. a Care Trust is a local choice and not a statutory requirement.

"Government aims to eliminate the problems attributable to the fragmentation of services among professions and organisations by encouraging the creation of single organisational or service entities."

This is particularly important for the longer term planning of FAME partnerships where the technical infrastructure supports both the variation of partnerships whilst underpinning notions of integration.

As more integrated forms of service delivery are conceived for particular groups of people with complex needs (e.g. children with disabilities or older people with mental health needs), teams from the range of existing backgrounds and agencies will need to be formally or informally assembled for the purpose.   In a

highly co-ordinated, networked, or integrated system all practitioners and clinicians will consider user needs simultaneously and act on them as members of a team, rather than sequentially along a chain of cross-agency referral. Initiatives such as user-held records and the design of integrated pathways represent aspects of the practical response by professionals to national goals (e.g. NSFs) and user needs. All serve to create common ground and more effective communication between historically divided practice. (For example see www.nelh.nhs.uk/carepathways/ and www.modern.nhs.uk/protocolbasedcare/)

The interdependence of the strategic, operational and practice elements of the integration process are highlighted by such situations: 'change needs investment as well as vision.' SureStart and intermediate care services are good examples of integrated teamwork in care provision. Research shows that teamwork is often underdeveloped and that multi-disciplinary teams struggle to be cohesive – organisational development resource is well invested in team building. At the practice level the question is whether to co-ordinate or to integrate.

"There may be scope for self-organisation among practitioners and other stakeholders if they can be made to feel they are partners in determining how a collaborative approach might work, and how it will benefit service users and carers."

Multi-disciplinary teams or co-ordinated networks are the main means of collaboration between practitioners to commission and deliver services, and to ensure the collection and distribution of information on needs and outcomes. They should:

- Have a single manager (or co-ordinator)
- Include a mix of staff appropriate to the role of the team.
- Have a single point of access, single assessment process, record or case management system and administration.
- Work within a delegated budget.
- Commission individual care programmes.

4.7 Strategic Service Partnerships

Strategic Service Delivery Partnerships ('Service Transformation through Partnership') [80] can be between public bodies or between public bodies and private, voluntary or social enterprise organisations. They are 'focused on results, not process… the outcome specification can take the form of a partnership agreement. Alternatively, it is incorporated within the constitution setting out the expected deliverables from the partnership.' A SSP is distinguished from other forms of strategic partnership by the fact that it is designed to *deliver* services – not just plan, co-ordinate or monitor. A public/private partnership may be an appropriate vehicle for providing ICT services to a network of public/public partnerships.

In principle any local authority can enter a SSP but for a partnership to be appropriate it has to fit in with many other issues that comprise the strategic vision for that authority. A sound options appraisal and the development of a business case will also be a prime requirement to ensure that all the right considerations are taken into account. The Taskforce's work has shown that both individual and corporate leadership in all the major partners involved in the partnership is crucial to the development of a robust partnership.

In establishing a public/public SSP there needs to be a clear, if sometimes incremental, development process with proper gateway reviews and formal agreements between the public partners for the way in which their partnership is to be conducted.   (It should be noted that governance arrangements might have to change as the partnership evolves for example as trust and understanding improve, decisions might be accelerated.)   These formal agreements will include such matters as:

- Shared objectives regarding the benefits to users of services.
- Vires (powers) to form the partnership.
- The responsibilities of each partner.
- The composition of the partnership board.
- The management and reporting arrangements.
- The financial, risk sharing and insurance arrangements
- The employees
- The accommodation and support services.
- An exit strategy.

4.8 Multi-agency organisational processes

Whichever model is chosen for a multi-agency partnership its processes of corporate governance must be adequate for its function. Forms of multi agency organisation can range from the informal group with or with out some written constitution through to equity based company vehicles with private sector participation. The latter is appropriate where the private sector is expected to provide substantial investment. In the FAME framework it is anticipated that the minimum required organisation will be a public/public partnership with a written agreement underpinning its activities. *Developing Productive Partnerships*[81] (Audit Commission 2002) sets out the three critical issues affecting many partnerships:

- Performance
    - How do you build the sort of relationships that deliver improvement?
    - How will you know if your partnership is making a difference?

- Inclusion

- How can you actively involve all the partners you need to reflect different perspectives in the local agencies/community
- How do you make partnership working attractive to both public organisations and, where appropriate, private business?

- Probity
  - To who is your partnership accountable and how can you ensure that public money is being properly spent?
  - What formal monitoring and appraisal systems do you need to have in place?
  - How can partners ensure that their partnership is adding value to the work they already undertake independently?

Although it may be relatively easy to *establish* a partnership it is often difficult to ensure that they *perform* at maximum effectiveness demonstrating *added value* to the agencies acting alone in delivering improved outcomes for service users. That is why an approach to continuous evaluation and monitoring recommended by which participants in a partnership can establish whether it is 'making a difference' to outcomes for its service users (Connell and Kubisch 1998)[82]

4.9 Strategy evaluation and monitoring: A theory of change approach

As part of their strategising process partnerships need to set out how they believe a coherent set of actions will result in desired outcomes, and ensure that these actions are embedded in the practice of the partnership. Evaluation can not be left until longer-term outcomes are either achieved or not. Outcomes, after all, can change for a number of reasons some of which will have nothing to do with the actions of the partnership. The process of evaluation - including the definition of *intermediate* outcomes - must be part of the planning processes. This is known as a 'theory of change' approach to evaluation.

There are three attributes of a good theory of change that stakeholders should confirm are present:

- It should be *plausible* – do evidence and common sense suggest that the activities, if implemented, will lead to desired outcomes?
- It should be *doable* – will the economic, technical, political, institutional and human resources be available to carry out the initiative?
- It should be *testable* – is the theory of change specific and complete enough for an evaluator to track its progress in credible and useful ways?

- The following questions need to be part of the strategic planning process:

- What longer-term outcomes does the partnership seek to accomplish?

- What interim outcomes and contextual conditions are necessary and sufficient to produce longer-term outcomes, beginning with penultimate outcomes and moving through intermediate to early outcomes?
- What activities should be initiated and what contextual supports are necessary to achieve the early and intermediate outcomes?
- What resources are required to implement the activities and maintain the contextual supports necessary for the activities to be effective and how does the initiative gain the commitment of those resources?

If the resources deemed to be required are not available then this gap must be closed or outcomes and activities adjusted. Once the process of articulating a theory of change begins it can become apparent that partners and stakeholders hold different views about what it will take to produce the long-term outcomes. In other words, multiple theories of change may be operating simultaneously within a partnership. An important part of strategising is the reconciliation of these multiple theories. The definition of early and intermediate outcomes may be an effective way of undertaking this reconciliation. Plausible theories of change may be complex and pluralistic, but if they are to be implemented (doable) they cannot be contradictory and if they are to be evaluated (testable) they cannot be unarticulated.

Two other approaches are useful as part of the strategic management process for achieving intended outcomes, use of the 'balanced score card'[83] and especially Mark Friedman's work on 'turning the curve' e.g.[84] which is becoming widely adopted in the UK.

4.10 Multi agency working on the front line

Agreements and mechanisms put in place by agencies at a strategic level may not produce the intended co-operation on the front line. This may be because workers in participating agencies are not fully aware of the needs, limitations and pressures of the others (Payne, 2002)[85]. Resource constraints have been identified as a major barrier to joint working, as has insufficient time to set up projects and develop relationships (Atkinson, 2000)[86]. More intractable barriers to multi agency working are repeatedly labelled 'cultural'. Policy documents demand 'culture change' for practitioners. For example, The Children's Green Paper *Every Child Matters*, states that local authorities are required to lead a process of 'cultural change' (DfES 2003)[87].

Some empirical studies have looked beneath the ubiquitous explanation 'culture' to identify practices and beliefs that can offer a more nuanced account of the challenges of implementing policies for multi-agency working.

- Short timescales and competitive culture hamper co-operation (and sharing of information);

- Power differentials exist between professional groups;
- Disciplinary approaches and service paradigms are different and possibly conflicting. 'Mindsets' of agencies are different (Green et al 2001)[88]

In general this body of literature emphasises the deep-seated nature of differences between agencies and professional groups that emerge from empirical study. Its messages are not in general optimistic. Some practical strategies to facilitate multi agency working include:

- 'Time out' for people from different agencies to come together, get to know each other, and work together as a group;
- External facilitators to promote this and to draw attention to group processes;
- Training in conflict management (Markwell, 2003)[89]

4.11 The voices of service users in multi agency environments

The government's modernisation agenda for public services insists upon making sure that service users, not providers, are the focus. This includes, but goes beyond, public accountability conceptualised through consumerist approaches. A shift from service-led to a needs-led approach involves service users in decision making about the governance of services.

Partnerships in Mental Health, for example, need to take account of the user movement both as a player in partnership and a source of information about services (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2000)[90]. The Children's National Service Framework (NSF) developed national standards for participation. The External Working Group on Disabled Children has participation as one its key themes and as one of the aims. The document states that one area to be covered by the standards is:

Disabled children and their parents are involved as active partners in making decisions about their treatment, care and services; and in shaping services.

 Although the NSF addresses the issues of participation, there is often a lack of guidance within policy and practice literature about how to do this, sometimes only a statement that it is a good thing to do. The Audit Commission (2003)[91] report on Services for Disabled Children mentions the need for 'two way communication' which suggests a change in relationships and power – from the traditional 'provider to user' towards a more equal relationship but one that involves the notion of reciprocity. There is now significant emphasis, for example in strategies for children and young people's services, on the need for participation by service users in improving the quality of service provision.

The Investing in Children project in County Durham has had particular success in providing the means for children both young and adolescent to articulate their concerns and handle the 'political' processes ensuing. It can demonstrate how such participation can bring about real change.

4.12 The national policy context

Joining up public services is intimately associated with the modernisation agenda of the present government. The theme of joining-up, in particular at the policy making level, is not new (Pollitt 2003)[92]. Twenty years of joining-up have been described as 'a manic depressive cycle' with 'fits of enthusiasm' followed by 'bursts of disillusion.' (Easen, 2000)[93] There is by now a long history of joint endeavour based on shared planning, co-location of services and other physical means of attempting to promote more co-ordinated public policy and policy delivery.

What is new is the *scale of ambition* of attempts at joining- up at the level of policy implementation and service delivery. And the new belief in the possibility of such joining up is substantially based on the claimed powers, and in particular the integrating capacity, of new information and communication technologies.

Yet there is evidence that counteracting forces from other policies can undermine the creation of multi-agency environments. A long term, continuous focus is necessary for professionals to establish rapport, trust and shared knowledge but cut backs, re-organisations and short-term funding initiatives often prevent this (Easen, 2000)[94]. Some recent reforms, it has been claimed, are more likely to inhibit than facilitate the creation of better co-ordinated services. For example, the recent development of 'organisational hybrids' within the UK health service has moved health service organisations towards a more 'low-trust' culture in which collaborative relationships become more difficult to assemble and sustain (Kitchener, 1998)[95]. Central government, it has been argued, should set a better example by making its own departments and agencies more 'joined-up' (McGregor, 2003).[96] It is clear that seamlessness needs to be worked at.

4.13 Checklist for partnership success

Multi-agency environments demand collaboration across organisations and agencies (including statutory bodies, voluntary groups and for-profit service providers) with different cultures, aims, incentives, management structures, and information systems. Formal mechanisms for collaboration may not produce incentives for organisations to work together. Below are some key points to consider on the formation and operation of partnerships. Most of the points are drawn from Audit Commission publications. They have been grouped under headings derived from the European Foundation Quality Management Model: drivers for partnership success.

Leadership:

- There should be an agreed document clearly setting out the responsibilities and roles of the partnership board (and any sub-committees), the partner agencies, the partnership executive team and multi agency service delivery.
- There should be clear processes for ensuring that decisions are taken at the right level in the partnership.
- There must be robust and inclusive processes for identifying partners and reviewing the membership of partnerships.
- Not all stakeholders will want to be deeply involved. 'Inclusivity' for a partnership should be about providing opportunities for them to contribute, *in ways and at times that are relevant to them,* to the work of the partnership.
- If the private sector is to be involved then there should be recognition of differences in pace, style, decision making and motivation to the public sector.
- There should be a strategy for sustaining the partnership.

Policy and strategy:

- Partnerships need a shared unambiguous mission or scoping statement and clear terms of reference incorporated in a written agreement between the partners.
- Given the focus on outcomes for service users it will be particularly important to develop mechanisms for their participation in defining and evaluating outcomes rather than limiting inclusion to consultation exercises.
- The partnership needs to develop its strategic approach to ICT i.e. identity management, infrastructure, messages, events and transactions and federation.
- 'Openness' may imply that meetings of any partnership board should be held in public.
- It is important for practitioners to participate in decisions on policy and practice.

People:

- The capacity of partners may need to be built – for many this will be uncharted territory.
- People with the appropriate ICT skills able to use service oriented tools and familiar with the concepts of identity management, infrastructure and federation are an essential component of the partnership's resources.
- Training in technical skills to participate fully in decision making.
- Partners need to get to know each other at every level – not just at the top.
- Partners need to be briefed to gain a shared understanding of the issues.
- A budget for capacity building and training needs to be set aside.
- If people are to be committed to the partnership they must be freed up from and backed filled in their 'home' agency.
- Reflective practice should be valued.

Partnership and resources:

- Be clear about the resources that are within the control of the partnership.
- There must be the capability for federable ICT infrastructure to be acquired and set to work.
- The resource requirement over project life cycles should be considered to ensure that resources are not over committed.
- It will be important for partners to commit funding to planning, policy analysis and administration as well as to direct service delivery.
- Public/public partnerships commonly designate one member to be the accountable body to ensure that proper standards and procedures for financial stewardship are in place. Differences between partners' procedures need to be resolved during the partnership formation phase so that procedures may be shared.
- The roles and responsibilities of the accountable body and the partnership need to be formally agreed and recorded.

Processes:

- Clear criteria for the allocation of resources must be established based on the objectives of the partnership and implemented through an appraisal system.
- Partnership performance must be evaluated on a continuing basis and this requires relevant indicators. (A Theory of Change model is described in this section).
- Information governance processes including identity management must be implemented and supported by training.
- Bid appraisal is a crucial part of the governance arrangements for any partnership and needs to be a formal, transparent process undertaken by independent people showing no bias or prejudice and meeting applicable legal and ethical standards.
- There should be procedures for conflict resolution and also for disputes that may arise between the partners.
- A partnership needs good systems by which to control, monitor and report on its activity and finances. It is likely to need:
- Common standing orders and financial regulations.
- Robust internal controls and standards for all partnership members.
- Appropriate internal audit arrangements.
- Each agency is likely to need reporting on their resource contribution in a form aligned to that agency's accountability processes.
- There should be processes for reviewing partnership membership.

Detailed guidance and examples of practice on the early stages of setting up a partnership and its operation may be found at www.ourpartnership.org.uk. Although this is slanted towards community partnerships much of the guidance is

relevant to FAME multi agency partnerships. Another valuable resource is the Integrated Care Network guidance that may be found at

http://www.integratedcarenetwork.gov.uk/themes/policy.php

4.14 Information governance and assurance

The governance of information is one of the major responsibilities of a multi-agency partnership. Effective information governance needs to be placed as an integral part of delivering e-government requirements and is a vital part of the recommendations from the Bichard enquiry. The Local e Government Standards Body worked with DoH, ADSS and the NHS to build on the work already done in developing the Social Care Information Governance (IG) Toolkit, to develop a generic IG toolkit for Local Government. Underpinning the IG toolkit there needs to be a robust model that enables standard processes to be adopted.

"*Information governance aims to support the provision of high quality services by promoting the effective and appropriate use of information*"

The Information Governance (IG) Toolkit[97] provides the rules for compliance to a set of legislation, standards and best practice. A Social Care Information Governance Framework and Toolkit have been developed by DoH, and is currently accepted as a best of breed model. It is mandated on Social Care departments to work to the requirements of the framework.

The 'HORUS' model is split into 5 areas, each of the areas is briefly described below.

Holding information securely and confidentially
Obtaining information fairly and efficiently
Recording information accurately and reliably
Using information effectively and ethically
Sharing information appropriately and lawfully

The scope of the toolkit applied to a local authority (or as an accountable body in a partnership) is:

- Information governance management:
  - The management of information governance at corporate, managerial and operational levels across the organisation
  - Outlines the need for an Information Governance Strategy and an Information Governance Group
  - Highlights the need for the entire initiative to be supported by the corporate management team or its equivalent
- Information security:

- Based on ISO 27001 (was BS 7799)
- Outlines the key requirements a local authority needs to fulfil
- Compliance with the main legislation impacting information management including the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act
- Records management covering the need to ensure the quality, accuracy, currency and other characteristics of information products.
- Information quality assurance

The toolkit is in the form of an Excel spreadsheet based checklist setting out the requirements under the above five headings and assessment criteria for the attainment level.

The issues of information governance within a partnership and between the partnership and its partners requires careful thought. The DfES Information Sharing Toolkit[98] aims to provide comprehensive and practical help on writing and reviewing inter-agency information sharing protocols. It consists of standards based on guidance provided by DCA and DH. It includes the template for the self-assessment checklist for information sharing standards and then template of these standards with explanations of why these are necessary. There are hyperlinks through9out the template to the guidance for each standard consisting of examples from information sharing protocols that have been developed by various local authorities. The 38 standards are grouped under the following headings:

- The purpose of information sharing
- The roles and responsibilities of partners
- Legislation
- Consent and the Data Protection Act
- Information shared or exchanged between parties
- Security
- Complaints procedures
- Building awareness training
- Additional information

Barnsley has put forward a recommended Information Governance Management and Policy Framework consisting of three tiers:

- A high level top tier led by a Multi-agency Information Governance Programme Board establishes the overall strategy and policy for Information Governance within the partnership. All agencies agree a common set of principles under which all information governance related activity will be directed. This overarching IG policy commits those who sign it to actively pursue a robust governance framework (policies, procedures and accountabilities) for information management:
- Partnership IG policy and strategy

- Information Charter
- Information Sharing Principles and Compliance Reviews
- IG Standards and principles
- IG Performance Monitoring
- A middle tier of organisational responsibilities defines the governance framework that a partner agency will need to adopt to meet its and the partnership's requirements. An agency could be a member of a number of partnerships and have other national and local objectives that are affected by in formation governance related issues. This middle tier would enable an agency to meet these additional needs:
- Information Governance Framework
- IG policy and strategy
- Partnership Information Sharing Compliance
- Legal Compliance
- Record management and data Quality Policy
- Information Security, Confidentiality Incident management System
- Information Governance Training Provision
- IG Internal and External reporting
- A lower tier of operational support activities that support organisational responsibilities and directly support partnership working:
- Subject Access Request (DPA)
- Information requests (FOI)
- Fair processing notifications (DPA)
- Record management and data quality audits
- Information security and confidentiality breaches
- Information governance training delivery

The question arises of how to implement information governance across multiple collaborating multi-agency partnership. This could be approached by establishing a regional information governance programme board or one at national level. Alternatively, until that position is reached, those partnerships that collaborate can establish such a board between their individual programme boards.

Information assurance is also part of governance.[99] While the information assurance governance framework is aimed at central Government at present it is intended for use in time by the wider public sector. The objectives of the framework are to:

- Propose a management function hierarchy for IA within government.
- Establish information risk management as a core function alongside other corporate governance functions.
- Provide a reference guide for those implementing information risk management within a corporate governance framework.

- Identify the procedures, mechanisms and support which are in place to facilitate IA in government.

A further Cabinet Office report[100] emphasises the essential nature of trust and confidence in information systems to ensure the uptake of online public services:
- Your organisation must ensure senior responsibility for the risks facing your information systems.
- Your organisation must ensure that good risk management systems and procedures are developed and maintained to ensure confidentiality, availability and integrity of your information systems.
- You must encourage awareness of information security issues within your sector in order to protect your ability to deliver public services.

In local government local authorities are also obliged to comply with the BS 7799 security standard as part of their implementing electronic government requirements. Partnerships may rely on other organisations to provide their infrastructural and applications systems and will need to assure themselves of information assurance.

5: IDENTITY MANAGEMENT

5.1 Summary

The delivery of public services generates information that is personal and sensitive - its misuse can result in harm. The providers of public services have duties and responsibilities for the care, safe and appropriate uses of information that are fundamental aspects of professional practice. This is why the way identity, and linked identifiable information, are handled is so important.

The issue of identity in technical systems is usually reduced to a simple problem of authentication: "Is this individual who they claim to be?" " Does this data in these records refer to that service user or customer?" This is the problem of identity from the point of view of a single agency with a single relationship with its clients or customers.

In a multi agency environment the problem is more complex: "Is the individual known as X in one agency the same as the one known as Y in another agency and, if so, what gives these agencies the right to share which information about this individual?" The way these questions can be answered is different within an agency, within a partnership and on the wider scales of regional or national federations.

In the FAME framework, the issue of identity is concerned with the following:

- What are the means by which the quality of the link between the identifiers within systems and the individuals they refer to in the real world are established and maintained? This is the *registration* problem.

- How are appropriate links established and maintained between identifiers in different systems so that the different agencies who own them know that they are talking about the same individual and have the legal rights and the appropriate consents to do so? This is the *relationship management* problem.

- How are both service users and agencies enabled and empowered to configure consents and capabilities to join up different elements of services and to control the way information about them is shared? This is the *identity management* problem.

The way these questions are addressed has a direct impact on the ability to share facilities within and across partnerships. In particular, the three problems defined here represent a demarcation between certain data controller and data processor responsibilities that must be respected if an infrastructure is to be produced that is governable, scalable and federable.

In the area of identity management, the FAME framework argues that neither a centralised nor a libertarian approach to the concept of identity can provide a complete and viable solution to the multi-agency information-sharing problem. A federated (see **FEDRERATION**) approach could, however, provide the means of addressing the issues of quality, capacity and inclusion.

5.2 Why is identity important?

Why should identity be taken care of, why should it be managed? Every day, in the real world, individuals reveal personal information to others who remember it. This happens through most financial transactions, as well as through social interactions. The individual decides or is coerced on the amount of information to share according to roles and situations. As citizens and as users of public services, personal identity, and the relationships in which it is exercised, can often be associated with information that is very private and sensitive. Information which, if not used in the ways that were intended by a person and by the suppliers of services and relationships, could result in harm.   As providers of public services, there are duties and responsibilities for the safe and appropriate use of information that cannot be out-sourced or divested. In the development of e-Government systems and infrastructures there must be confidence that the ability to discharge these responsibilities is not compromised. So, the way identity is handled in our public service infrastructure is very significant.

5.3 Registers and identities

If there is to be clarity in discussions of policy and of processes relating to sensitive personal information certain sorts of information and the responsibilities that are associated with them must be distinguished. The first distinction that must be made is concerned with the means by which a person can be recognised. It is usual practice in any record keeping system to collect and maintain sets of data that will be relied upon to recognise and to authenticate the claimed identity of an individual.

There are three different sorts of data which are indicative of someone and which can be used as the basis for recognition of that individual by an authentication service:

- *Demographic data* such as date and place of birth, names and occupations of parents and so on. The quality and consistency of this data can be established and maintained by reference to external shared data, e.g. the registers of births deaths and marriages, credit listings, the land registry, the register of post codes and other sources.

- *Biometric data* such as retinal scans, fingerprints, photographs and so on. The cost, acceptability and dependability of these different data sets and technologies vary.

- *Performative data* such as a secret – PIN, password or question –a signature or the possession of a token.

5.4 Being strict about definitions

In the FAME framework the term *register* has been used to signify a collection of managed data for the purposes of recognising individuals and providing an authentication service which matches a claimed identity with a registered individual. The responsibility for the creation and operation of a register belongs to a *registrar*. This is a very strict and narrow definition of the term register that is usually used in a much more relaxed and imprecise way. There are few pure registers in existence and sets of records that contain service and relationship content are usually self-registering - maintaining their own internal set of demographic and performative data for the purposes of local authentication.

The most important issue for the FAME framework is that, in the federal infrastructure approach, if *registers* are maintained only for the purposes of recognition, then *registrars* need only be data controllers for identification information not for service content. This means that the same register can offer services to more than one agency within a partnership or even to agencies in different partnerships. The development of the Citizen Account in Government Connect is an example of the move toward the separation and sharing of register functions. It aims to be inclusive and there is no notion of some individuals qualifying to be on this register while others do not. The concept of a national identity is not quite the same, however. This is a register of those with rights of residency who have been issued with a credential. Although the term 'citizen' is used throughout this documentation it should be remembered that services may be offered to immigrants (legal or illegal) who are not citizens.

In real systems several registers are required to deal with the identification of:

- Users of systems and the roles that have been allocated to them.

- Identification of systems themselves and the channels that they use.

- Identities of the subjects about whom information is held and, finally.

- The register of other actors and agencies within the federation and in the wider environment with whom transactions and relationships may be entered into.

Underlying the ability to create and manage these registers is a set of services at the federation level through which a federation wide co-ordinate system with a

guarantee of uniquely traceable identifiers is required. The clearest examples we have of these federation services are URLs and IP addresses for the Internet. Note that as federation services their purpose and use is strictly limited and their governance is a matter of federation wide concern. The maintenance of the uniqueness and one-to-one correspondence of identifiers, which are artefacts within the information system and of individuals who are themselves outside the system and are referred to by the identifiers within it is the core responsibility of a registrar.

5.5 The service quality of a register

None of the data types or data sets, individually or in combination, guarantees perfect authentication performance especially when it is considered that, as a technical system, they are embedded in social and organisational contexts. So the data in a register may:

- Under-determine and indicate more than one individual,

- Over-determine and not indicate any individual,

- Mis-determine and so indicate the wrong individual.

Such data failures may be traceable to errors in the second level registers against which presented data elements have been checked or to the deliberate or inadvertent subversion of the registration and authentication processes. The fact must accepted that, although it is possible to be systematic within technical and information systems, the notion of identity and relationship operate in a world that is usually complex and often chaotic and turbulent. What is often regarded, as an inconvenience to be controlled and constrained in the single agency context becomes the subject of a different form of coping and accommodation in the multi-agency federation context.

5.6 Could one register solve the identity problem?

There is a strong temptation, despite what has been said about the realities of identity and of registration processes, to take the simplistic approach of a single register with a single, universal identifier. – This may particularly apply to those with a command and control disposition who see the whole world in terms of a single boundary between the inside, which they control, and the rest against which they defend. Such attempts to hard wire policy into infrastructure at this large scale inevitably make the system brittle and subject to catastrophic rather than progressive, local and manageable or tolerable failure.

There are two broad approaches that are alternatives to centralism. The first of these represents its antithesis. A free and unfettered market of registers is allowed and promoted in an economy that signals their cost, dependability and

their quality. In the long term, within any naturally bounded and (lightly) regulated domain, this approach tends to stabilise to a handful of providers balancing the need for diversity and choice with the economies and externalities of scale. It can, however, fail through network and path effects (i.e. from where the starting point is and the nature of some of the early local decisions that are taken) leading to monopoly on the one hand or failure for any stable structure to emerge at the other. A more telling reason for rejection of the libertarian approach, however, is the inevitable association of registers with selection and their inevitable drift into becoming tools of inclusion and exclusion. The governance of registers is, therefore, an important public concern and an issue of public value.

The second alternative involves the creation of a federated identity management environment that allows register services to emerge and to be offered within an appropriately governed and accountable framework. This creates the conditions through which the services of different registrars can be combined and co-ordinated to deliver the benefits of diversity and multi-sourcing while still making many of the economies of scope and scale available.

This approach, which is advocated within the FAME framework as the safest and most pragmatic, calls for the development of sub-regional, regional and national registers. At the federation level, the ability to maintain a *register of registrars*, provide basic policing of minimum quality, escalation, recourse and resolution of disputes. Publishing the availability of new services provides the environment for nurturing and sustaining an appropriate balance of local autonomy and proportionality with global coherence. In such an approach, the Citizen Account would represent an important federation component with a major co-ordination role in relation to public service in England. It would also provide co-ordination means to other areas of public service, the third sector and commerce as well as participating in cross border facilitation globally.

In practice, many of these possible 'registers' will also include or imply some limited relationship content in terms of a selection criterion. For example, the individual is a legal resident (a national ID number and token) or was born after a certain date and is a recipient of universal services (a children and young persons' register). Other registers will be oriented to providing a subject oriented service that puts the control of personal information in the hands of the individual and may combine specific publication services under their control.

It must also be recognised that, to deliver a federated service, a registrar must make registration data available on-line at a capacity, latency and quality level that is appropriate for the public service transactions it supports. Registers designed to address the access needs of a narrow and specific clientele e.g. the security services, are unlikely to have the capacity to meet the general requirements of public service infrastructure. These capacity issues provide a further justification for the federated approach by opening the possibility for load

sharing and backup across diverse and independently deployed infrastructural resources.

5.7 The index and relationship management
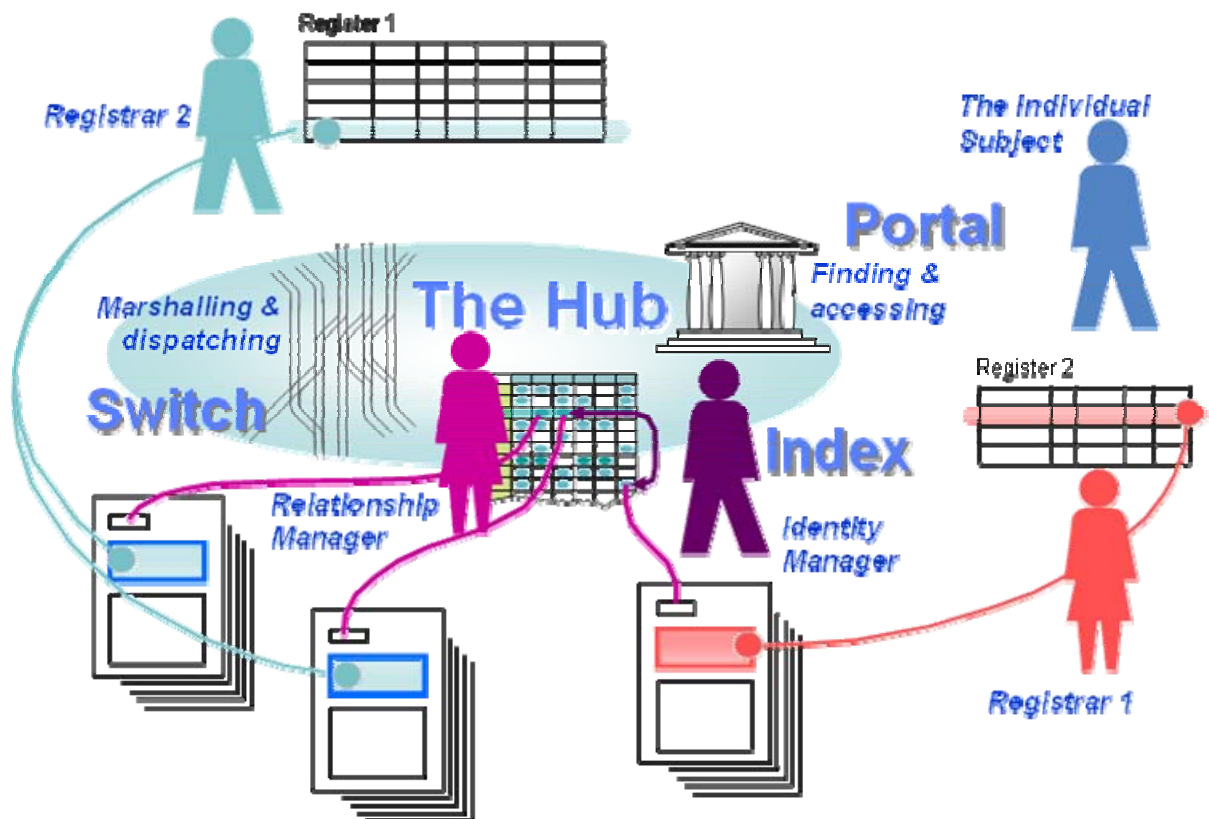
Identity related services.

The spoke systems on a hub each contain their own record and case management systems and allocate their own unique identifiers. Registrars maintain the information used to recognise the subjects of the records and are responsible for authentication services. Linking two identifiers and placing them on the same row of the hub index is an act of relationship management and the responsibility of a relationship manager. The ability to establish links for exceptional circumstances or occasions is the capability of an identity management service. The service oriented approach requires 'who' is responsible for a function must be identified as well 'what' it is and 'where' it is located.

The sort of federal registration environment described in the FAME framework provides the means for individual agency domains to independently manage and use their own internal system of identifiers. It also provides the means by which the holders of independent sets of records could establish, through the authentication services of shared registers, that they have a common client. A local information sharing protocol, including the service user consent process, may permit or mandate the sharing of different aspects of the recorded content. For this to happen there is a need for local unique identifiers to be associated. In the strict definitions of the FAME Framework, the relationship manager operating the index service within a hub provides this function. An index is a component that is presently implemented in a Customer Relationship Management system as a simple, two dimensional data structure of rows and columns.

The columns of the index correspond to the identities of relationship providers who hold records. Depending on the nature of the service and the agency this might be all or any of the following:

- A named individual

- A generic role within a service delivery organisation

- A team or group within or across a number of members of the service partnership

- A service delivery unit

- A service agency

The rows of an index represent a set of identifiers of the same individual which, by an act of Relationship Management, have been correlated. FAME 'promotes' the process of adding identifiers to the special status of an 'act' to emphasise that when it is performed something significant has happened which could have an impact on an individual's well being. This is a connotation that tends to be lost in the language of data cleansing and automation and to cause problems when the language of enterprise solutions is applied to the development of partnership supporting infrastructure.

5.8 Publication and consent

Placing local identifiers in a shared index is sharing the fact that certain relationships exist. Placing identifiers on the same row establishes a channel between the set of relationship providers to a particular service user. Access to an index generates the possibility of the following offer:

"I am the GP or teacher or mentor of an individual I know under the identifier 'abc'. I am willing to co-ordinate care, make certain information available or would like to be informed about any changes in the care status of this individual."

There is a corresponding query:

"With whom can I engage in transaction 'e', regarding the individual I know as 'LMN'?"

Exactly who has the right to correlate identifiers in a shared index is a matter of policy and governance. It may be initiated by the subject of the relationships, it may require their consent, it could be a joint act of publication between subject and supplier of the relationship or it might be imposed on the subject. Each case has consequent editorial rights and responsibilities.

5.9 Data processors and data controllers

The relationship manager, as defined here, handles only identifiers. The structured messaging service delivered by the 'switch' in the local partnership hub interprets only 'envelope' information which identifies not only the sender and the receiver but also the type of message and its context in some pathway or process but not its content.

All subject identifiers, however, could, if required, be encrypted so that the structured message service has no access to message or transaction payload or to the identity of the subject. In this way it is limited to data processor responsibility and has no data controller responsibility for the traffic it handles.

The development of GSx in Government Connect provides the underlying service required to deliver the structured messaging described here and to support the emergence of federated solutions. Initially the focus is on Government to Government messaging but, as with Citizen Account, this can not be regarded a single enterprise, complete 'solution' but as part of a richer emerging community of service oriented components operating across multiple sectors and domains. Characterising the process of development as emergent means that there is no requirement or possibility of designing the whole thing. However, there is a requirement to respect the openness to federation and the recognition that the services and facilities that are being constructed operate in a wider world of similar services which can not be ignored or simply relegated to being the 'outside'.

5.10 Identity management issues

It is quite possible and, in some cases appropriate, that even within the boundaries of a partnership, members could have relationships with the same individual but for these relationships and the identifiers associated with them to remain un-correlated. An example might be that a young person receives birth control advice that is not linked to her school record.

If, in an encounter with her pastoral teacher, the young person raises the matter and trust is established and consent given for the teacher to pass on some relevant information to the community nurse there is a need for the creation of a, perhaps, temporary and certainly specific link between professionals.

The FAME framework makes a distinction between these sorts of links and the more permanent, institutionalised links of relationship management in the index. We call the functionalities and services required to establish, manage and exploit these specifically permissioned or mandated links 'Identity Management'. It represents an adaptation and evolution of many of the ideas that are currently being discussed in such contexts as 'Liberty Alliance', 'Shibboleth', 'Ping-Id' and others to the more stringent requirements of multi-agency public service.

One way of picturing an identity manager is as a relationship sitting on a column of the index with its own private set of identity correlations intervening in a process and pathway, perhaps generating extra notifications or generating temporary access rights on the basis of a special rule or consent and the fact that there are two identifiers on different rows which are the same individual.

5.11 Trust models

The identity management literature makes reference to a range of trust models that fall into three categories:

- Direct trust that is established between two participants who take mutual responsibility for recognition and for the closure of transactions.

- Third party trust where the transacting parties make use of the services of a single third party, which they both trust to protect their interests and to deliver closure and recourse.

- The four cornered model which corresponds to 'your lawyers talking to my lawyers' and it is only if they fall out that they talk to the judge.

The last of these could be implemented by the presence of more than one identity manager operation within one or more hubs. One of these could be attempting to implement a set of service user instructions while another could be operating on a set of rules defined in the interests of service rationing or prioritisation. The detection of certain clashes between the execution of these rules, e.g. one says "grant access to some information or resource" and the other says, "withhold access", would trigger an escalation mechanism. (Clearly the cost

and complexity implications of such mechanisms mean that they would be used only in very special circumstances. However, such circumstances certainly exist within the public service domain where the system of appeals and adjudication is extensive and complex. The public service infrastructure must be able to accommodate such complexity.)

The framework of relationship and identity managers that are defined here at the architectural level is capable of delivering all of these models and of supporting transitions between them. A FAME infrastructure must allow for the establishment of new domains of trust and the withdrawal of trust as a dynamic process at the structural level but using the same infrastructural resources.

6: INFRASTRUCTURE

6.1 Introduction

The FAME framework advocates a shift in the conceptual approach to the provision of ICT support to partnership working. Instead of a purely applications approach (i.e. the systemisation of well-structured tasks such as recording) – the framework proposes an infrastructural approach. This sets out to provide an information service (i.e. "Who else is working with the person I know as XXX?"). The Cabinet Office Transformational Government programme[101] also highlights this agenda. The infrastructural approach to the fixed electronic communications networks that connect computers is well understood. However, multi-agency partnerships have to be more flexible to respond to changing policy. This flexibility requires some additional infrastructural capabilities and shared capacity. Creating and introducing these new technical services is itself a major transformational change in parallel with the transformation of practice. It means that the nature of resources and relationships must be understood in a different way. This is best illustrated by the idea of the e-Government learning journey:

- First generation: learning to manage and exploit new channels and media through which individual services are published, offered and accessed. This is the initial adoption of the Internet/web infrastructure and channels.
- Second generation: learning to transform the agency into a customer centred unit so that different services can be linked and co-ordinated to meet complex needs. This involves the creation of enterprise hubs that allow internal sharing of function and resource using Internet Protocol and WEB technologies.
- Third generation: learning to work in partnership to link services across organisational boundaries by sharing certain technical components in partnership hubs. This is the introduction of a new level of infrastructure (through sharing) which is additional to the familiar ones of basic electronic communications.
- Fourth generation: learning to respond to new policies and priorities by extending and reconfiguring existing internal and shared technical service capacity rather than building new, special purpose systems.

This fourth generation represents the vision of a truly infrastructural approach to supporting public service towards which current developments are converging. This learning journey is simply a description of the trends that can be seen in developments in local authorities up and down the country - and in the public sector in general. It also reflects the way the ICT supply sector is thinking and is embodied in concepts such as WEB services and the application of the service oriented architecture (SOA). These are being applied in second generation contexts to provide 'enterprise solutions:

- In partnership contexts where there is a continuing struggle between the interests and needs of individual agencies and the pooling and integration of function and data.
- In national developments such as Government Connect, to provide the capability for nationally shared functions to provide a basis for government to government and public to government interactions to be facilitated through sharing.

The argument for infrastructure can not be separated from the need for leadership and vision and the reassessment of risk. The FAME framework argues strongly that the infrastructural thinking previously applied only to basic utility functions (such as communications and data processing) now has to be applied at higher levels that have previously been treated as separate and independent application domains but are nowadays referred to as 'front office' functionality. It further argues that this applies not only within the enterprise solution of the single agency multi-service context but is also essential to create multi-agency multi-service contexts. The management of infrastructure is an important part of the overall responsibilities of the multi-agency partnership requiring a manager who understands the technological, practice and governance dimensions to the issue.

The FAME Demonstrator tool can be used to explore and articulate the proposed developments of practice, infrastructure and governance that result from the FAME methodology.

6.2 From applications to infrastructure

When an application his being discussed, someone – usually an analyst who works for a supplier or for the agency's IT department – sets an agenda and introduces the concepts and language that will be used. To complete a development and implementation project, material must be produced which designers and programmers can use or which suppliers will understand in the context of an open procurement. So the use of terms like 'databases' and 'data sets', 'workflows' and 'use cases' is necessary. This is seen in every Project Initiation Document.

The capability of and the way technology is used are changing all the time. In many e-Government and service partnership development projects, the language used to express what the technology can do has not kept pace. At the moment there seems to be a gap between the way information technology is talked about and deployed in the commercial sector and the language that is being used across the public sector to discuss requirements and possibilities. The language used in the industrial world is one that has the needs and values of commerce embedded in it. This is a relatively simple, if highly competitive world of single enterprises where relationships are about doing business. Even when things get

complicated, the balance sheet indicates the challenge in terms of profitability and survival. The world of public administration, policing, a developmental and caring service is much more complicated than this involving political and social values as well as economic performance.

The difference between these two worlds arises from very real issues and differences between the public sector and commerce. Care is needed in moving ideas and systems concepts from one context to another. For example, re-labelling social or health care service users as 'customers' and the delivery of services as 'customer relationship management' does not mean the same as the way these terms are understood by a producer of consumer durables or an airline. It is necessary to fundamentally rethink these issues and engage, not just ICT departments and suppliers, but also practitioners, managers, policy makers and citizens in the process of defining how modern technologically is discussed and shaped for use in the development and delivery of public services.

6.3 Differences between the private sector and the public sector

How information technology is conceived, and the supply relationships through which it is delivered, change and develop in parallel. A major factor in the private sector has been the move to outsourcing and applications service provision. Organisations can no longer afford either the human or the financial capital to own, manage and operate the physical aspects of their information systems – even though they may be dependent upon their content for their continued existence. They must treat them as utilities and commodities supplied and maintained by third parties.

The world, seen through the eyes of a bank or a global product manufacturer, is a relatively stable, if highly competitive, marketplace. Public services operate in a much more dynamic and unpredictable world of complex legislation, relationships and of politics which is not always well matched to the approaches which are embedded in current commercial systems practice. 'Business Process Re-engineering', which has been widely practiced in industry, is a relatively cumbersome and expensive exercise. It can be seen as a sound, long term, one off investment in which both technical and organisational systems are 'unfrozen', changed and then 'refrozen'.

The public sector is characterised by a continual process of new policy initiatives which must be responded to by defining new processes and applications which then need to be integrated with, rather than replace, legacy systems. And by the time this is sorted out, a new initiative comes along demanding yet more processes and applications. Neither BPR nor continuous applications procurement seems appropriate for the creation and maintenance of systems resources that will support responsive and efficient public service development and delivery. What is needed instead is an approach which allows flexible

information systems resources to be re-configured, re-deployed and, where necessary, extended by their users and managers in response to ever changing political, social and economic priorities and opportunities. This is what is meant by an infrastructural approach. It is not the exclusive requirement of the public sector but public service, and particularly the caring and developmental services, represents the most complex and significant demands for security, safety, consent, flexibility and accountability on technical services and systems.

6.4 Communicating horizontally and vertically

The metaphor of the 'silo' has become a very common way of talking about the way the world is seemingly divided up into distinct areas of responsibility and functionality. There is a mental picture of a tall vertical structure within which things move up and down but not sideways. It is a graphic representation of the absence of cross connections and sharing.

In its most basic sense, infrastructure is about drawing horizontal lines in the way resources are represented and used. Lower layers are designed to be generic and to be re-configured and re-used by higher layers in more and more specialised and specific ways until a structural level is arrived at where what are regarded as specific and individual examples of use are seen.

These ideas have always been applied explicitly to the world of computing and communications - the same hardware runs many different applications. The 'spell checker' is used by both the word processor and by the e-mail applications. The word processing application is used for many different sorts and instances of documents, and so on.

The process by which the services and capabilities which are provided by one layer then are used at the next vary enormously. In the higher layers, control is in the hands of the user - a new word document can be created and its format and content configured. At lower levels, there are programming languages and technical configuration tools and even lower hardware design and logic circuits entirely under the control of technical specialists.

In discussing the ICT systems needed to support the delivery of public service, one of the most important questions concerns the nature of the horizontal layer above which control is in the hands of the public service providers and below which is in the hands of systems suppliers. Any changes, adaptations or re-configuration of the system requiring intervention below the line must be the subject of a process involving discussion and negotiation between the technicians and users, between suppliers and procurers. The ownership of the IPR and architecture may be contested. Changes above the line clearly remain under the control and ownership of the users and are part of their professional competence and practice.

The issue of in-house rather than outsourced provision of IT services is relevant here. The argument has been put that the special requirements of the public service ethos means that its requirements capture – design conversation should be kept in the public sector. However, the FAME framework proposes that if the level of functionality and the concepts being used are structural (above the line) then they should be embodied in user oriented tools.   If they are infrastructural then they belong in a different sort of conversation about architecture and capacity rather than about the support of specific processes and relationships and may be provided by trusted third parties.

Re- positioning of the structure / infrastructure boundary to give users more freedom to construct systems is a major objective of the FAME framework. Systems suppliers must be able to do business and deliver value in an open and competitive market while procurers must be able to maintain the required responsiveness and control which allows professionals and their agencies to exercise responsibility for public service brands and citizen relationships.

6.5 Multi-agency working and hubs, spokes and axles

All of the discussion so far applies to a single organisation such as a local authority and the way it deploys and manages its own information systems resources. When multi-agency working is considered, there is a set of additional considerations.   Whether talking about local authorities pooling their resources to achieve sub-Regional and Regional efficiencies or about multi-agency partnerships pooling to deliver better co-ordinated multi-sourced service packages to the citizen, what is being considered, is the creation of shared infrastructure which each participant can access and use. If a structural, applications oriented approach to joining up and sharing information systems is taken, then, in this scenario, this produces a 'one-size-fits-all', lowest common denominator and a loss of identity and flexibility. In the contexts of multi-agency co-operation scenario, the single agency integration approaches produce what is often seen is the over integration of data warehousing and a loss of discrimination of who needs which information and for what purpose.

The metaphor of hub and spokes joined by axles paints a picture of sharing which allows distinguishing between common resources are used to support the common processes and the individual resources for which local responsibilities are retained. It serves to separate quite distinct motivations for sharing at the technical level:

• Sharing third party services in order to provide the means of co-ordination and the delivery of partnership.
• Sharing resources on bilateral and multilateral basis to deliver economies. This is the usual shared service scenario.

- Deploying and mandating central technical services as a means of ensuring centralised control and monitoring.

Each of these approaches generates common resources offered as infrastructural services but their scope and implications are very different. It is particularly important to understand that, if a function is to be shared then its scope and its scale are inversely related. The wider the application the narrower more specific the functionality. This effect is clearly seen in the IS Index of the Every Child Matters initiatives which can not be regarded as a shared national record but as a tool for publishing service relationships and facilitating professional contacts and co-operation.

But shared infrastructure raises the question of trust and control: who owns it? Who is responsible for its design, its correct and safe operation, its capacity and its performance? How are these responsibilities distinguished from, and relate to the local responsibilities (at the structural level) within each of the members of a partnership? These are questions of **GOVERNANCE** that are addressed in another part of the framework.
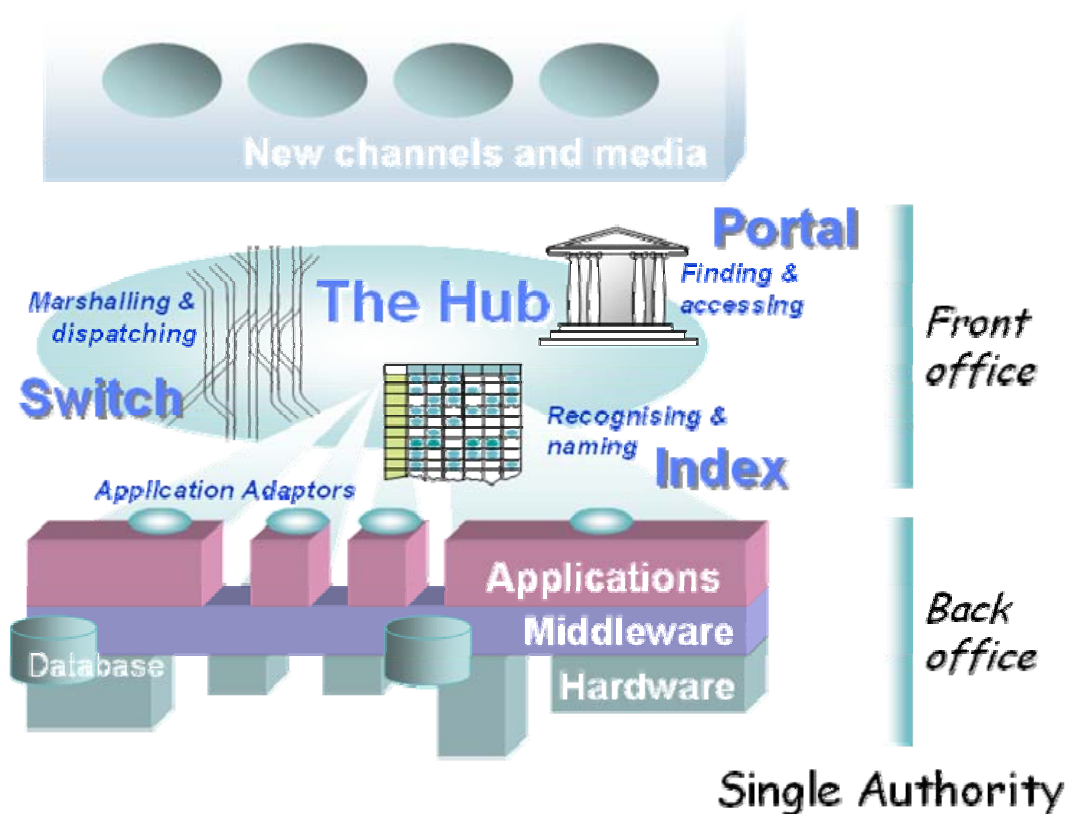
The Enterprise Hub

This picture shows the old middleware as part of back office functionality and the 'new middle' as the space between the back office and the multiple channels and

media through with both internal and external interactions are conducted. It also shows the three key areas of functionality of the service oriented infrastructure approach namely 'portaling', 'switching' and 'indexing'. The original concept of encapsulation (wrappers) and adapters to connect the original vertical applications concept is now replaced by the WEB service approach.
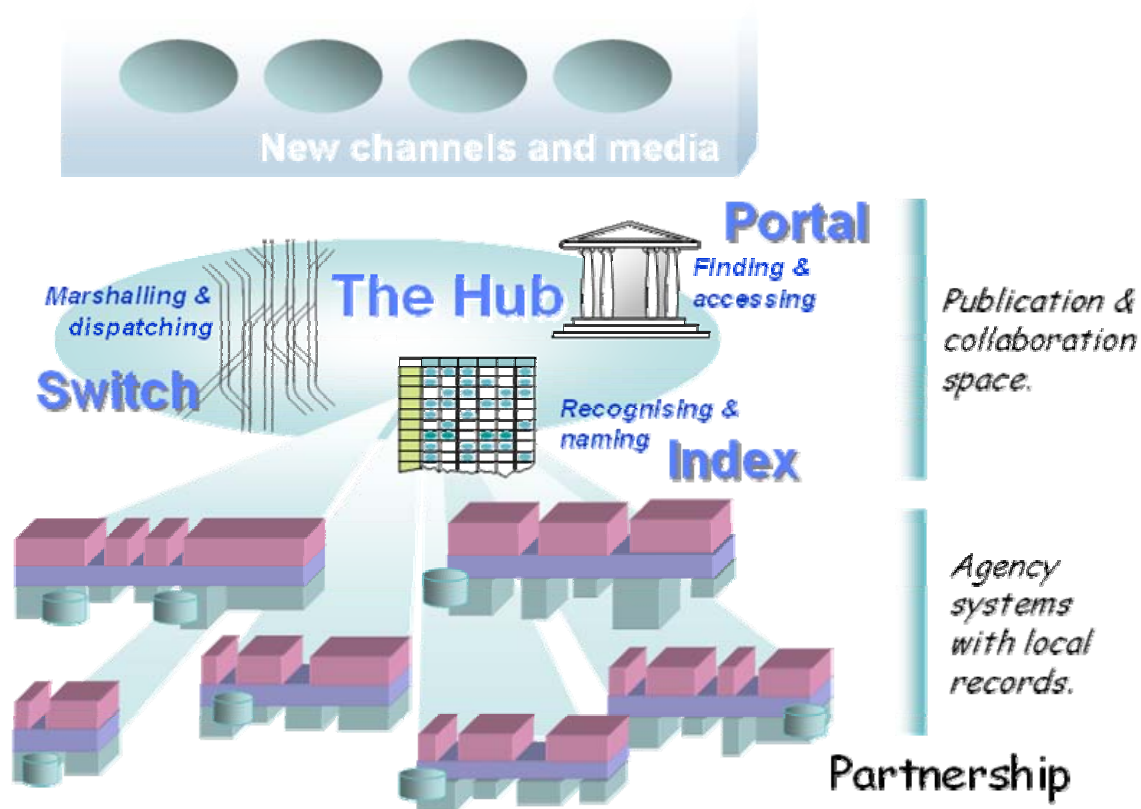
The partnership hub

When enterprise integration technologies are applied to a partnership, the systems and applications can not be relegated to the status of 'back office'. They are agency systems with their own records and client relationships that may not be simply submerged into a common system. This changes the language that is appropriate to 'federation' rather than 'integration'.

6.6 Defining infrastructure

It is very difficult to define infrastructure concisely and simply. This is because infrastructure is not so much about what a service or function consists of or the sort of benefit it delivers. It is really about the way it is offered and used. So, the

telephone is the clearest example of an infrastructural service but the hot line between the White House and the Kremlin is a dedicated structural resource.

Staying with the telephone, for a moment, if its structure/ infrastructure boundary is to be identified, then it is to do with the nature of the sounds of speech. The service is responsible for delivering the speech signal in a way that is intelligible but is not responsible for what is being said. The infrastructural nature of the telephone is understood instinctively. Infrastructure is invisible to its users – except for the means by which it is offered and only becomes visible when it fails.

This division of responsibility, which is implied by infrastructure, is particularly important. In an infrastructural approach, the functions and capabilities of the system are designed to respect this division. So, in a messaging infrastructure, the system interprets the information carried on the envelopes but does not have access to their contents. So, creating a shared hub by implementing a common data warehouse would be a structural approach. It is known that the database administrator can, in principle, see everything. In the context of a single organisation with a single sort of relationship with its clients, this approach yields efficiency and control. In an infrastructural approach, very particular attention is paid to the relationship between what things can be done, where they can be done and who can do them.

6.7 Messaging and publication services

There are two sorts of services that are important in understanding the structure and infrastructure boundaries in the hub and spoke architecture. They are both concerned with the way information is communicated and shared.

In the idea of a postal service the name and address on the envelope is read and, maybe, the address of the sender in case of mishap, but there is no access to the contents of the message. The postal service can go further than this but still stay short of reading the content of the messages it carries. In a Structured Messaging Service, the role of the sender and the recipient may be put on the envelope, a code may also be put on it to say that the subject referred to in this message is the same as the one referred to in some previous messages. In this context, 'structured' does not require some pre definition of the message itself.

If this sort of information is on the wrapper then the postal service can do more than simply deliver messages to addresses, it can take into account that the message represents a stage in a service plan or pathway. It can construct and maintain secure audit trails and it can detect whether rules and policies which have been defined through governance processes are being followed. These are infrastructural capabilities because they are shared by many individual instances of messages, of service plans and cases.

The metaphor of the message switch as a 'marshalling yard' assembling messages in the right order and sending them to the right places is part of the representation of a federable hub and spoke architecture for public service infrastructure.

These are the sorts of infrastructural services that are offered by the Government Connect GSx product which takes the form of a national XML message switch. The metaphor of the envelope used above would imply that the 'payloads' i.e. the message content, would be encrypted. Where the network is considered an extranet which is secured at its boundary (every user belongs to an organisation which has been inspected and granted a Code of Connection) then the content of messages is in practice available to the infrastructure service providers and we have an infrastructure appropriate for Government to Government traffic.

Extending these characteristics to the wider world, in which multi-agency partnership operates, including non-statutory agencies, represents the next federation challenge in the evolution of this infrastructure.

There is a second type of information sharing process where the interpretation and use of information is expected to take place at some time in the future according to future needs and circumstances. When this happens within an agency it is called a 'record' and it can be assumed that records are shared within the boundaries. When the people outside the organisation that has custodianship, need or has a right to know (e.g. through consent on the part of the citizen) about aspects of the record then it is necessary to make this information available across the boundary. This is called publication and with it comes the following set of responsibilities:

- Authorship is concerned with the appropriateness and usefulness of the content.
- Editorial responsibility is concerned with accuracy and coverage
- Publication responsibility is concerned with ownership and the use to which content is put.

These concepts are familiar through exposure to the world of mass media and print. They must now be applied in the way the information infrastructure is thought about in the world of privacy and data protection.

Access to the information in a publication service may be widespread as in a broadcast or may be specific and limited – 'narrowcast'. This hub and spoke infrastructure supports publication services that are the means of delivering and sharing information for continued and future use. To recap, in the media world the print machine is infrastructural to the world of publishing but the designer of the print machine wouldn't be expected to decide editorial policy. Publishers do, however, need to understand quite technical issues e.g. the insertion of full colour pictures, to undertake their roles. They decide how to use the

infrastructure to produce varying print runs, book sizes, leaflets, and broadsheets to suit their audiences.

In any information infrastructure, where there are many publishers of many different sorts of information, the general means of organising this complexity to meet specific sets of requirements and roles is needed. This is what is called the portal service that uses the metaphor of a door to a space in which things have been selected and organised for a purpose.

The safety, security and acceptability of the sort of information infrastructure being described here depends on the operation of effective gateway and access control mechanisms which are based on concepts of **IDENTITY MANAGEMENT** that are explored in that section of this framework.

7: MESSAGES, EVENTS AND TRANSACTIONS

7.1 Introduction

Multi-agency working entails information sharing. Services require there to be communication between agencies, practitioners and service users to streamline co-ordination processes as well as to exchange information from database records. This communication is best understood in terms of messages associated with transactions relating to events.

- An *event* is an occasion where something of significance for the service users or providers is recognised and information is generated.

- When this information is communicated it is embodied in a *message*.

- Where messages lead to the commitment of service resources that results in a *transaction*.

The current approach to service design for multi-agency service delivery involves process mapping. Process maps express practice and procedures in terms of events, messages and transactions. This affords an opportunity to review and re-negotiate multi-agency service design and responsibilities.

The results are embodied in process maps and workflows that define and inter-relate events, messages and transactions. These documents are intended to bridge the gap between the practitioners and users, on the one hand, and the designers and programmers on the other. Ideally they must remain accessible to the former while being precise enough to guide the activities of the latter. A dilemma remains. Workflows can be described in a technical language such as UML (Universal Modelling Language) and achieve technical precision and completeness. Alternatively, less formal languages are possible, retaining the ability for non-technical people to interpret and evaluate them, but leave specifications open to misinterpretation. The practical, short term solution to this dilemma lies in prototyping and testing - showing users interim implementations and asking the question "Would this work in practice?"

In the longer term, it is an emerging requirement of the public service infrastructure that the users can themselves configure their environments directly in response to changing service user, service and policy needs without the necessity for technical design and programming interventions.

The process of 'e-enabling' a service produces an important by-product - as well as the information and communications infrastructure being a medium of delivery it is also the medium of record. Maintaining the chronology (what happened, and when), is part of the delivery of the service itself.

For single agency services, what counts as an event is un-contentious. When considering the complexities and sensitivities of services in multi-agency domains involving health and social care or education, the relationship between basic systems concepts such as events, messages and transactions and the

higher level aspects of governance and outcomes needs to be considered In more depth. Amongst other things, **GOVERNANCE** determines who participates in:

- Deciding what counts as an event.
- Saying what sort of messages can be exchanged and what they will mean.
- Negotiating the rules of a transaction.

7.2 Background

Until quite recently, the systems and technologies used in:

- Storing and processing information.

- Moving it about and communicating it.

- Making it available to the audiences for whom it was intended.

were quite distinct. Now these systems and technologies have converged and the information and communications infrastructure has taken on a pervasiveness and importance that cannot be ignored. The e-Government Programme has had the objective of ensuring developments in commercial and social contexts, in this respect, can be harnessed in public service and administration. It does not matter whether a person sees himself as a strategist and policy maker, a manager and planner, a practitioner and deliverer of service or as a user of public service. This person can not choose to ignore the fact that engagement in the shaping and the use of information and communications technology is an essential part of that individual's role and responsibility. Without such engagement users are denied, or are denying themselves, a voice.

This does not imply that everyone must be a programmer and systems architect. The purpose of the distinction between structure and infrastructure is precisely to make the distinction between those aspects of the system that need to be under the control of its owners, managers and users and those for which responsibility can be appropriately and safely divested to third parties as suppliers of systems and services. However, this still implies new skills and a new language. An illustration of this division of responsibilities which is now universally understood is that the telephone service is responsible for making and maintaining connections and delivering traffic. It is users who are responsible for what is communicated. In the early days of the application of information systems, the idea was to provide management with information. So, *events* were recorded in the system as separate processes from those of actually delivering the business. Unfortunately, in public services, this mode of operation often still prevails and the purpose for which data is collected is, too often, for reporting against output targets or in case a Minister is asked a parliamentary question. This is changing. The information and communications system, even in public services, is

increasingly becoming the actual medium and channel for service support, development and delivery. Data collection is becoming a by-product or consequence of acts of delivery. So, where there is electronic booking, for example, there is no need for a separate mechanism to detect, record and report demand.

This evolution of the way systems are deployed is significant and welcome from the point of view of efficiency but it raises a new set of challenges about flexibility and responsiveness. This is why the engagement of all the stakeholders in the shaping and governance of these systems has become so important and why some basic ideas about events, messages and transactions must be re-examined. Any relationship between the real world and the picture that is held in information systems depends on how these concepts are used and understood. The traditional, applications oriented view that all actions must be specific, concrete, must have immediate and manifest relevance and be immediately and simply understandable needs to be re-thought. Given the way that the information and communications infrastructure is coming to pervade all aspects of strategy, planning, practice and delivery, engagement with systems becomes essential.

7.3 Events

An event is defined as an occasion on which information is generated. If this information is captured in the information system then items of data will be created. So events occur in the real world and *data* appears in the system - they are not, of course the same things. There may be significant real world events that occur but do not find their way into the system. This could be because the designers and shapers of the system made certain decisions which meant that they do not count as events for the system or it may be because the system (human and technical) failed to detect a particular occurrence.

There are a number of important questions to be asked of any proposed partnership system. They include:

- Who gets to say what counts as an event.
- Who defines the means by which it is detected and recorded within the information system and becomes data and
- Who has the power to review and change these decisions in the face of experience and revised policy?

Because of the constantly changing environment of public service and changing levels of trust and expectation, this can not be as a one-off project based activity but must be part of the sustainable governance of the system. Equally, it must be within the power and capability of the users and administrators of the system

to effect these changes rather than require the intervention of the supplier of the system.

These demands for new levels of flexibility challenge the traditional, vertically integrated applications approach based on the delivery of predefined business logic. It is fully in line with the emerging 'Service Oriented' approach to the architecture of technical systems. The introduction of these concepts and language has an important impact on the discussions between technical people – whether internal IT staff or suppliers – and the practitioner and user community. On the one hand, the service oriented approach removes the perceived need to generate ever more elaborate workflows as the only means of defining what is to be constructed in the technical system. The Service Oriented approach provides an alternative based on analysing the information and communications needs to discharge responsibilities and achieve outcomes at the point of contact. The balance that is struck between these two approaches - of enablement and empowerment on the one hand and rational process support on the other depends on the nature of the service tasks and relationships and the environments in which they are situated.

7.4 Transactions

There is a particular class of events called *transactions*. These involve two or more individuals – people or systems – and have the special significance that their nature and meaning have been predefined and agreed between the parties or by some higher authority. They result in changes in the distribution of resources and responsibilities among the transacting parties. There are many points of view from which the significance of a transaction can be judged. It can represent:

- The commitment or consumption of resource.

- The delivery of some stage or aspect of a service, of professional practice or of care delivery.

- A change in the condition or perception of a service user.

Within the information systems, the representation of a transaction takes the following form:

> - Establishing a *set of pre-conditions* among the transacting parties. In the case of a commercial transaction, for example, the purchaser has the money and the seller has offered the selected good for sale.

- *Commitment* that takes a number of different forms depending on the type of transaction. It may take the form of signing a document or shaking hands or may be implicit in the exchange.

- Discharging the transaction in which possession and ownership of the goods and the payment are transferred.

- Post-transaction in which the outcomes are evaluated and *recourse* offered in case of complaint.

The planned and conventional nature of transactions is important. Parties may interact and, as a result of these interactions new, even novel, changes in the distribution of responsibilities and resources may result. These only become transactions when they are formalised and institutionalised in some way. They become aspects of the way a society, organisation or community does things. New transactions can be invented and emerge in practice. If the information system is the medium and channel of transaction and is permanently hard wired and programmed, then what happens, in practice, is that reality and the partial representation of reality within the system become even more partial and divergent.

It is therefore very important to identify those events in the real world, which are taken to be transactional and ensure that the means of detecting and recording them in the system are appropriate and dependable. An example of this sort of issue is the introduction of service level agreements between the 101 (Single Non-Emergency Number) service and the service providers in the partnership. The 101 service, in its interactions with some callers, commits the service to deliver i.e. transacts on their behalf. Developing the levels of trust and reliability at the systems and organisational levels to make this work in practice represents a significant challenge.

7.5 Messages

Because transactions involve multiple parties, the events that are taken to establish pre-conditions, their commitment and discharge involve acts of communication. In systems terms, this means sets of messages. In pre-electronic days, the messages were outside the information system and were implemented, for example, by paper orders and invoices in a communications system. With e-enablement, the electronic messages have become the actual instruments of transaction. A separate record does not have to be kept.

7.6 Process and Resource Mapping

Armed with the three concepts of events, transactions and messages, there is now a vocabulary available for process mapping. But "the map is not the territory" - when a set of real world events is selected to count as *events in the system* and

institutionalises certain transactions in terms of protocols and sequences of messages the decision being made is about what can make a difference within the information system. The objective is to make sure that this approximates as closely and usefully as is possible to what makes a difference in the real world. But they are not the same and the real world has a distinct propensity for changing. The problem then is of maintaining the quality of the contents of the system as well as maintaining its structure and design.

A process map defines certain orderings of events and transactions as mandatory, allowed or prohibited, placing constraints and creating flexibilities on the shape of future pathways. This approach to the systematisation of practice has become dominant in the Business Process Re-engineering tradition. It is embodied, for example, in the concept of customer relationship management where the objective is to have a script to meet every eventuality - the process map is inscribed into the information and communications system. In those areas of social and economic action where uncertainty is low and things can be relied upon to be clearly recognisable and predictable, the systematisation and formalisation of process represents a useful and appropriate response. Other areas demand more flexibility and a different approach, hence the use of a Service Oriented approach.

So far, organisational behaviour has been considered in terms of transactions, i.e. events that correspond to the exchange of resources and responsibilities. In some contexts that are characterised by high uncertainty e.g. in emergency situations, what is to be done, in process terms, can not be predefined - the process map says "Do whatever is possible to help". The only area that can be systematised and formalised is the stock of resources and capabilities which have been allocated or which can be co-opted. In this view of the world, specific processes are extemporised, negotiated or enforced according to local and immediate need. The role of the information system is to organise and make accessible the resources that are available and to audit their use bearing in mind the fact that the higher the emergency, the more local and incomplete is the information available.

In this approach, the catalogue, the service map and the directory are the significant tools. The principle value delivered by the information infrastructure is supporting the processes of publication and of discovery. Acts of publication represent a transaction distributed over space and time (a number of individuals accessing it on a number of occasions) with a future audience and a discharge of the responsibility to inform. The 'electronic record' becomes an information intermediation function that locates and gathers what has been published for the present purpose of the enquirer in the current relationship with a shared client. This is a different language and conceptual frame from that of the database and the filing cabinet.

These two approaches of process and resource mapping must be seen as the extremes of a continuum and responsiveness as the ability of all stakeholders to negotiate and migrate their activities and relationships within this spectrum.

7.7 Mapping to the Architecture

The metaphor of the hub has been used to discuss the creation of shared systems resources within partnerships. The two concepts of the '*Portal* 'and the '*Switch'* correspond to the two approaches to systematisation discussed here. The portal is about mapping shared resources and the switch is about mapping shared processes. Both are required because public service partnerships operate in complex domains where they need to be agile and able to position themselves appropriately and move efficiently between the process oriented and the resource oriented approach.

The idea of the index, and the representation of identity within systems, builds on these ideas of transaction. When the same parties engage in a series of transactions and information from previous ones is used in subsequent ones then it can be said that a relationship exists. It is within this concept of relationship that the representation of identity can be defined within the system so that it usefully corresponds to the way identity is experienced and exercised– having a voice, rights and responsibilities - in the real world. (See **IDENTITY MANAGEMENT**)

8: FEDERATION

8.1 Introduction

This section of the FAME framework is less about partnership formation and development and more about how partnerships are supported by systems. It provides some pointers to the new concepts that have proved useful to people and organisations involved in transformational change.

When integration within a single enterprise or agency is considered, a boundary is drawn. The resources, processes and relationships within it are organised to achieve a coherent and unified response to relationships which cross the boundary. These relationships may involve service users, customers, suppliers or other external agencies. The multi-agency context addressed by the FAME framework involves another form of 'integration' which delivers co-ordination *across the boundaries of organisations within a partnership*, through shared workflow, message co-ordination and the correlation of identifiers. The same software products and technologies can be used to deliver this integration as for integration within an agency. However, there are greater constraints that reflect the retention by individual members of the partnership of individual responsibilities - both for the control of data and for relationships that they are not allowed to devolve or outsource. This is what the framework refers to as *hub and spoke integration.*

Partnerships do not exist in isolation but are part of wider territorial and practice-based networks and hierarchies of both similar and different agencies and partnerships. The delivery of coherent and effective public service requires co-ordination at wider levels, from the sub-regional to the regional and the national, and in terms of client groups and service areas. The linking of partnership hubs to deliver this wider coherence is called *federation* and is achieved through the operation of *federation services*.

A federation service has the unusual characteristic that its functionality and the value it delivers to the systems that use it are minimised. In other words, its purpose is limited to providing the means for hubs to interact in a well ordered way and to allow for the emergence of new hubs - not to provide centralised points of control. For this reason, federation services are limited to the basic functions by which an overall co-ordinate, addressing and identifier system can be maintained, providing the mechanism for universal publication and providing the basic mechanisms through which escalation and recourse can be delivered. The Internet provides an example of a complex system that is based on such federation services. The question that is posed to public service is how an appropriate set of services can be governed and delivered in ways that are accepted and trusted by both service users and service providers.

The term 'federation' is used in a *political* sense to describe a way that power and responsibility can be distributed and exercised within groups. Here, it is used as a metaphor, to describe ways of distributing functionality and resources round a technical system. The architecture of technical systems must reflect the ways practice, managerial and inter-agency relationships are configured if they are to do their job and deliver their benefits. Federation, therefore, represents one of the more challenging headings in the FAME framework.

Much of the language of systems suppliers and of procurement is that of the single enterprise and the objective of integration. The world is divided into an inside and an outside and the relationships that cross this boundary are seen in idealistic terms as unified and coherent.

The realities of the public sector are that agencies are constantly forming and reforming boundaries round partnerships and networks in response to changing policies and demands. The ideas of federation are presented at the technical and systems levels as a response to these organisational and political realities and as a language in which negotiation of new structures and practices and the formulation and shaping of technical systems and services can be undertaken with greater clarity and purpose.

8.2 Integration and federation

FAME addresses a range of different sorts of joining-up and co-ordination. As well as single agency contexts, it also covers multi-agency partnership where the members may retain aspects of their individual identity and external relationships while pooling others. FAME also addresses how new partnerships are able to deliver co-ordination at larger scales (such as the sub-regional and regional and, ultimately, national levels). The degree of 'coupling' and co-ordination at these levels can not be as great as at the local partnership level but the requirement remains to be able to join things up appropriately at different levels of granularity and scale. It is for this reason that the two distinct terms '*integration'* and '*federation'* are needed in the language of the FAME framework. In describing aspects of a technical architecture at the highest level, the interactions that take place within a *hub and spoke system* and those that might occur between them on what are called '*axles'* must be distinguished.

Sometimes services work in a well co-ordinated and effective way. The different resources that deliver a process, whether they are human or technical, seem to be in the right place at the right time and to work together smoothly and effectively. Such an outcome can be, and often is, the result of the commitment and professionalism of individuals acting in a responsive way to a given situation. However, in addition to delivering appropriate outcomes, there is a collective responsibility to:

- Design and maintain an organisational and technical system to ensure that such results will be the usual and expected experience of service users,

- Ensure that there is evidence to show that this is being achieved

- Ensure that when and where the approach needs modifying in response to changes in needs and priorities are detected.

The purpose of the FAME framework is to provide tools and resources to address these responsibilities and to share experience and practice developed in the process. In the case of a single organisation, the ideal of integration is assumed to be that internal components and divisions of responsibility are not visible from the outside - even when the relationship is complex and multi-facetted. In a multi-agency partnership, the ideal involves achieving an appropriate balance between:

- The visibility and distinctiveness of the individual members' identities and relationships.

- The completeness and effectiveness of interactions in relation to the spectrum of needs and purposes of the user of the multi-agency service.

There must, therefore, be degrees of integration that offer different levels of visibility of the individual constituent component identities. There may be a seamless integration, for example, of all revenues and benefits transactions at a local authority citizen contact counter. Even though different aspects of a complex life event may be routed to, and handled by, different back offices or even remote agencies, this is not visible or relevant to the client. Alternatively, in a local health centre, the patient may move from the GP consulting room to the pharmacy and then visit the nurse, (recognising these as different practitioners with different responsibilities), but expect them all to have access to the same patient record system. The degree of integration that is appropriate, effective and acceptable depends on the particular circumstances and relationships that are involved.

Just as *integration* has a scope defined in terms of the visibility of the identities of the provider components and the degree of 'coupling' of processes and functions, it also has a scale defined in terms of the range of services and service elements that are included. While integration is presented as an evidently beneficial property, integration on too wide a scale can result in diminishing returns of service user benefit. The service becomes too generic and universal and the process of navigation to, and construction of, a specific service response becomes too cumbersome.

So, the integration of different elements has limits of both scale and scope. The metaphor of 'hub and spokes' has been used to signify the unit of integration. It applies at the organisational level as the organisation of a set of relationships between the individual units where they have rationalised their commitment to

work together by creation a common focus – the hub. This represents the new collective identity they have constructed. It also represents the configuration of some physical resources which support and sustain the integrated unit and the hub, in particular, represents shared resources by use of which, activities and relationships can be co-ordinated.

8.3 The index and relationship management

A key aspect of integration is the creation of the new collective identity which, seen from the *outside*, may supersede the individual identities of the members. In these examples of integration, the member agencies will usually maintain many aspects of their own independent existence and activities outside the partnership. While there are many examples of partnership which fall short of what are usually regarded as examples of integration, the idea that the member agencies will work more effectively and efficiently together in the interests of their common clients or users lies at the centre of the idea of multi-agency partnership working.

Just as the members of a partnership display at least some aspects of a group or collective identity to their clients, it is usually, but not necessarily, the case that the client is known by a single common identity to them. Agencies cannot deliver a co-ordinated approach if they do not know when they are dealing with the same individual - and the individual does not usually want to re-introduce themselves to each of the members in the context of what s/he may regard as a single issue or encounter. This issue is discussed in detail under **IDENTITY MANAGEMENT**.

8.4 Portals and switches

The two sorts of functionality that the hub delivers and that are made coherent through the index are known as 'portal' and 'switch'. This division of functionality has evolved from the gradual convergence of two traditional approaches to integration in the context of a single enterprise as the purchaser of a web-based infrastructure. *Portals* concentrate on the problems of discovering, organising and accessing resources. This approach has grown out of products and technologies of content management and presentation - document management and the more abstract notion of knowledge management. While the term *portal* has acquired a range of meanings and connotations, at its centre is the idea of managing the complexity of a large collection of information resources, offers of service and of relationships by selecting, organising and cataloguing them and providing a single point of discovery and access.

The most familiar and obvious current examples of 'portaling' are service directories. The creation and delivery of virtual records –often referred to as 'real time' integration. Information from multiple sources brought together and

presented to a user in a specific context for a clearly defined purpose and in the context of a specific relationship with a client is another example. This is, in effect, creating a bespoke portal on demand and through it offering information and transaction services by means of which a multi-agency response can be orchestrated by a professional or even by the service users themselves or their carer.

The second integration approach is process oriented and is represented by a shared workflow engine and message hub. This is based on the idea that organisational activities are re-mapped, including the interactions and data sharing between individual applications and processes, and inscribe them onto a common workflow controller and message exchange. This is often associated with the concept of business process re-engineering (BPR).

In the first generations of hub architecture, the integration layer elements were linked to the back office applications by 'adapters' which allowed for common approaches to presentation and transaction capabilities. The technology for the adaptation layer grew out of the concepts of WEB publication and is based on mark–up-language, typically, XML and Internet protocols (http, SOAP, etc). It has grown into what are now called 'WEB services' where the back office systems offer reusable functionality that can be combined in new cross cutting enterprise (or partnership) wide applications. The integration layer is linked to the world through a set of channels which include the web, telecommunications and broadcast, and physical channels such as point of sale, call centres or postal and publication channels.

These are not new concepts or technologies but are elements of current systems practice which have emerged in the world of commerce as it faced the imperatives of globalisation and, for many, the consequent requirement to outsource the provision of a corporate communications and information systems infrastructure. It is these same products and technologies that are being reshaped for the needs of public service, generating two major additional requirements over and above those of the world of commerce:

- The need for flexibility and dynamic reconfiguration is in general much higher in the public sector which must respond to constant change in the managerial, legal and policy contexts of practice. This means that the simple outsourcing of the support for a re-engineered business process is not viable - the process of re-engineering is, in fact, continuous.

- The need for the integration hubs to link together to produce many levels of federation is much more obvious and pressing in the public sector than in commerce.

8.5 Federation services

There are two sets of technical mechanisms for supporting co-ordination processes - those that are delivered within a hub to sustain a partnership and those that are delivered between hubs to ensure coherence on larger scales. The former are accounted for in terms of three metaphors: the portal, the switch and the index. At the federation level there are three corresponding federation services which address the issue of how portals interact and can be combined, how switches can be connected and how distinct indexes can co-ordinate the management of identifiers and identities across partnership boundaries.

The single most important aspect of a federation service is that it minimises the functionality and value added to be only that required for federation. It does not usurp functions or capabilities that can and should be devolved to federation member levels and they are not a means for exercising central control of the federation. The fact that the federation is dependent on federation services is, however, inescapable and, for this reason, the issues of governance and trust that appear at the partnership level reappear here. "Who can be trusted to be in charge of federation services and how do users at all levels participate in their governance?"   These problems are not new and there is experience of the continuing struggle to maintain federal structures in the face of the forces of centralisation, competition and monopoly in the governance of the Internet.

In that context, the emergence of a global information infrastructure for commerce and publication has depended on:

- The maintenance of a balance between the scope of functionality defined in open universal standards.
- The ability of technology suppliers to innovate and differentiate and the continued delivery of added value of network externalities and economies to users.

The required property of the federation level is that it allows for the emergence of structure out of complexity rather than attempting to impose a pre-designed order. The nature of the minimal federation services has emerged from the practice of the Internet. The question faced in FAME is how these could be extended to provide the infrastructure for public service and how they should be provisioned deployed and governed in this new context.

At their most basic level, federation services are represented by mechanisms to support universal publication including location and access, universal points of escalation and recourse and, finally, the universal identification service. The universality of these services refers to the property that they are always available and can be relied upon wherever you are in the federation space:

- *Universal publication*: the universal resource locator (URL) is an example of the embodiment of this type of federation service and the requirement is to provide the means of ensuring that there is a non-overlapping identifier and location address space within the federation. Names (even abstract ones) are not neutral and value free as can be seen with car registration plates or the arguments about renumbering of national telephone access codes. However, a universal system is required and a structure must be in place within the federation to administer and enforce it.

- *Universal recourse*: it is always possible within a network to receive a message that is not understood. There are three possible responses: return to sender, discard or escalate. The third of these options requires that, wherever you are, there is a known point of escalation that can be relied upon to accept the message and to perform some appropriate action. In this way, federal responsibility is discharged to remain appropriately active. The objective of the design of the escalation hierarchy is to ensure that activities within the federation do not deadlock or die.

- *Federal identity:* This federation service depends on universal publication and the availability of a coherent, non overlapping identifier and address space but this is concerned with the means by which identifiers are attached to things within the federation. The universal identity service, in its most general form, allows the construction of a 'register of registrars' within the federation whose duty it is to maintain information that links specific identifiers to particular individuals and resources.

The Internet already provides an example of a universal publication service that is embodied in the basic standards and protocols and in the international governance mechanisms. The recourse and identity services are, at present, implemented at the enterprise level.

In a world of public service programmes, projects and developments, it is very difficult to see how the requirement for federation can simply emerge and be justified as against its need being identified. Looking beyond the immediate needs for the formation of specific partnerships in response to new policies and programmes is usually regarded as scope creep and discouraged. The national programme for e-Government has made great efforts at the level of the individual authority in a wide range of specific application areas - 'shrink wrapped' products running the risk of a one size fits all approach within the bounds of local adaptation and configuration. At the same time, there is considerable investment in central ICT systems and services. Their developers naturally want to maximise the value and benefit of the systems and services they are constructing. This approach does not lead naturally to the definition and development of federation services as defined but instead to monolithic point solutions. The FAME Generic

Framework project has the unique advantage in having the remit and the vantagepoint to identify this gap in the programme.
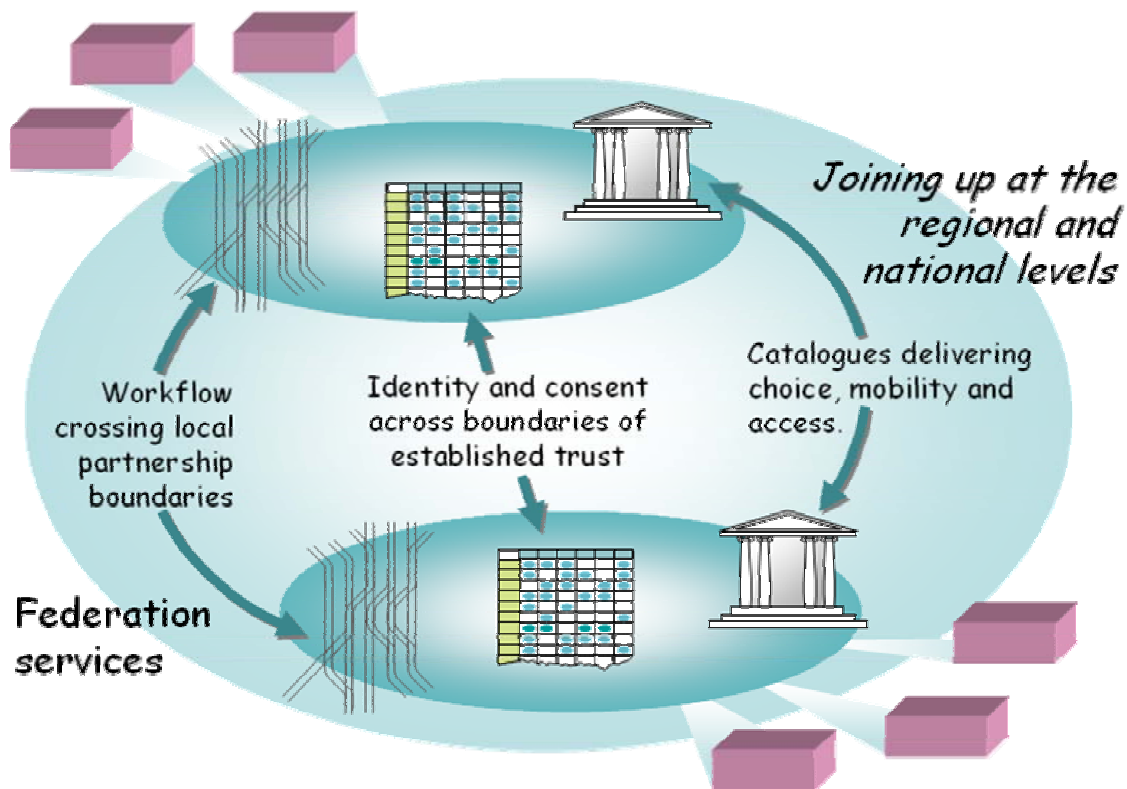
Hub to Hub interaction

The federation principle states that there are always other external hubs and that each hub must cater for both internal 'spoke' relationships and external 'axle' relationships. This figure shows that the structure of the axle relationships is based on the three types of middleware functionality and service and indicates that the axle links are created by the use of third party services designed to support the three categories of interaction. The technologies and standards of the federation level, the partnership levels and the individual agency levels are all the same. The difference is the scope and nature of the messages, transactions and events that they handle and, as a consequence, the location and structure of their governance.

8.6 Why federate?

FAME is concerned with multi-agency partnership working. The motivation for partnership is harnessing difference. Bringing different specialisms together to address a complex need involves a re-balancing of the emphasis on individual identities and the creation of new collective identities. There is another context in

which new integration and federation structures are required; this is motivated by similarity, the fact that, for example, different local authorities have similar core functions and that significant economies and improvements in service quality can be achieved through sharing systems resources. The challenge here once again concerns identity - can these economies be exploited without compromising individual identities and brands? The response to these two pressures to federate involves the creation of **INFRASTRUCTURE** – shared resources – and the formation of new shared organisations to deploy and manage them. In the first instance, it would seem that the sub regional and regional groupings of local authorities have an important role to play in the development of a federal infrastructure.

8.7 Connecting for Health and federation

The areas of partnership in public service which have been represented in FAME are those where the local authority is a natural focus of leadership and the partner most likely to be in a position to deploy a hub. At the same time the National Health Service is executing its national programme for IT which, on the face of it, appears to be taking a hierarchical rather than federal approach. How these two approaches can mesh is an important question because health is an important member of many of the multi-agency partnerships that deliver caring services.

The architecture of Connecting for Health is articulated round a spine with five regional delivery domains - a hub and spoke approach on a very grand scale. The technologies and products that are being deployed are the same as the ones that have been discussed here. This, after all, is the technology available today and it is a characteristic of these products and technologies that they are federable and allow their users to intermediate and present themselves as required to external systems and to create networks of networks.

While the spine is described as providing a universal publication space (the spine data) it provides an initial set of federation services for health care communities. So the issues of joining up appropriate health care components with social care and vice-versa, is not likely to be primarily a technical problem but an issue of organisational politics and practice.

The scenario which has been produced as an example of the operation of hubs, spokes and axles in a national context illustrates how NHS spine data could be accessed and presented in a local partnership context in a way that conforms to the emerging standards and approaches of NPfIT. It is not intended to define a specific, fixed approach but to show that federation is possible delivering service benefits without threatening the autonomy and integrity of separate domains of interest and control.

8.8 The relationship with central services

There are certain services and service agencies that are, by nature or by policy, central and are delivered through central Government Departments. The Government Gateway has been developed to provide a centralised authentication and access control mechanism and a set of service navigation and single log-on facilities to the central services. This is now being mediated to local authority relations through the Citizen Account service and the deployment of the Single Sign-On Server and the Sign-Up Manager services. The federation approach asserts that it is possible to have different authentication and access control mechanisms for services that are not central, that such mechanisms can be made coherent and synergistic with the centralised ones. This flexibility, in fact, creates the opportunity for better fit to the dynamics and the constraints of public services.

The conclusion of the work in the FAME framework in this area is that while a centralised identification, authentication and access control mechanism is required for certain sets of public service and administration functions, and that this fully justifies the investment in Government Connect, it is neither complete nor universal in the long-term. It must be supported by and support federated approaches at other levels of scope and granularity.

This becomes evident when the extension of the Citizen Account to higher levels of trust is considered. The delivery of the underlying communications capacities and security services (infrastructure to the infrastructure) must be on the basis of diversity and heterogeneity of supply. Monolithic and globally unified approaches on a national scale produce brittleness and catastrophic single point failure modes. These lessons have been learned in the private sector where the requirement for risk management associated with dependence on technical systems can only be addressed through independent diversity. The public service infrastructure must be at least this robust.

9: SUSTAINABILITY

9.1 Summary

Most multi-agency initiatives start in a project environment and their sustainability depends on successfully moving into the organisational mainstream. A multi-agency project must become capable of being implemented, governed *and sustained*. That is to say that it must be able to secure funding, respond flexibly to changes, foreseen and unforeseen, in its wider environment and to changes in the objectives and priorities of its stakeholders. This is a task that requires extra leadership skills, an ability to network at senior management level in participating agencies, and to understand the pressures they are under, as well as with service user communities. It is a task that will involve the development of strategy that helps agencies to achieve their own objectives through the achievement of partnership outcomes.

Sustainability thus goes beyond the maintenance of an **INFRASTRUCTURE** designed for a given purpose (maintaining a steady state) to encompassing processes of revision, development and continuous improvement. This implies a constant monitoring of the performance and outcomes of the environment against the objectives of the multi-agency activities which it supports.

Sustainability includes the following components:

- Internal organisational sustainability: The multi-agency partnership should be able to adapt to changes in the roles and responsibilities of the participating agencies, to changes at the level of business processes and practice, and to new agencies joining or existing agencies leaving the partnership. In other words the partnership must be scalable.
- External organisational sustainability: The multi agency environment should support integration and **FEDERATION** where appropriate, with similar environments and systems.
- Data management sustainability: The environment should support processes and procedures to ensure that the quality of data is maintained (e.g., back up, duplication).
- Technical sustainability: The environment must be able to respond to changes in underlying technologies and systems, including upgrades and changes to system architectures and interfaces.
- Resource sustainability: The environment should provide appropriate, human, developmental, financial and managerial assets.

The core requirement for the sustainability of a multi-agency partnership is that its parent agencies and service users value it. **GOVERNANCE** by the participating agencies needs to fully embrace the requirements created under these headings which may imply changes in senior management responsibilities.

'*Sustainability should be conceived not as a measure of performance in itself but, rather, as an expression of the value which collaborative working commands and of the processes by which collaborative efforts construct their value*'[102] .

9.2 Managing the transition

The move from a project with a set of specific aims, with a beginning and end, to a multi-agency partnership, which is capable of evolving, being governed and sustained, is challenging. Arrangements for financial and service responsibility and risk management also change in the transition to the mainstream particularly because of the multi-agency nature of partnership working and this can require the creation of new collective entities and arrangements. Leadership of this transition including the maintenance of relationships with all partners is a key requirement of the partnership. This again calls for excellent leadership skills in a networked environment – different from those needed in a single enterprise.

A multi-agency partnership needs to be able to respond flexibly to changes foreseen and unforeseen, in its wider environment and to changes in the objectives and priorities of its partner organisations and service users.

9.3 A role for 'Public Value'

E-government is a relatively new field and business cases are predicated on the idea that carrying out transactions electronically will reduce the inputs required to process and manage such transactions and that there is some evidence of reduced costs. Such notions overlook two important issues. Firstly, by opening an additional channel of communication there may be an increased number of transactions in some service delivery contexts. Secondly, by opening another set of e-enabled access channels these will need to be developed, maintained and sustained in parallel with existing service channels - potentially adding to sustainability costs (at least in the short term). Thinking of sustainability in terms of the relatively simple context of business economics may not create an appropriate set of concepts and metrics for ICT enabled public sector multi-agency working. It is extremely difficult to forecast the extra volume of transactions resulting from e-enabling a service channel.

Recognising this, the UK government has begun to outline a new way of looking at defining the requirements of public sector policy. The concept of 'public value can be helpful when thinking about the unique purpose of public services and therefore of their governance. Public value refers to the things that public services produce either directly or indirectly, using public money. Public value

includes outcomes (such as improved health and improved safety), services (such as primary care services and policing), and trust in public governance.[103]

The notion of 'public value' reflects a view about service delivery assessment. The public defines 'value' in service delivery. In the context of changing services and service users, public accountability is paramount and quality assessment is becoming an increasingly important but complex task. According to the public value framework, service quality is seen to consist of three domains - services, outcomes, and trust/legitimacy. Assessment of public perspective on issues of quality in all these domains is considered necessary to demonstrate the public value – and hence, quality and effectiveness – of specific public services.
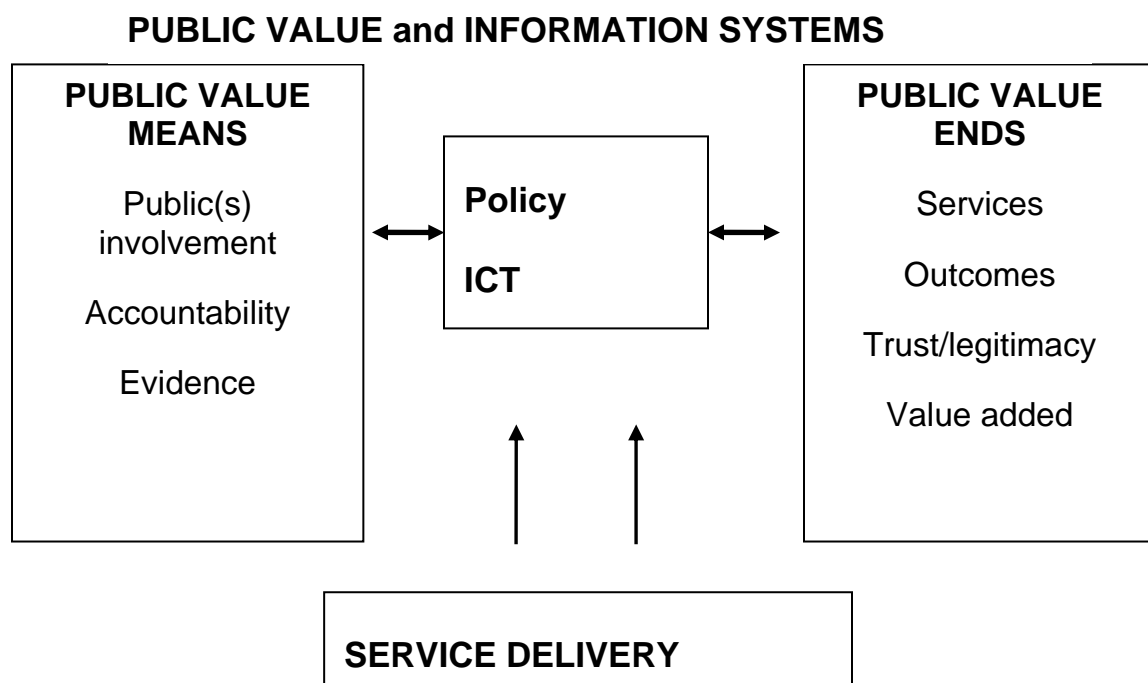
PUBLIC VALUE and INFORMATION SYSTEMS

PUBLIC VALUE MEANS	Policy ICT	PUBLIC VALUE ENDS
Public(s) involvement Accountability Evidence		Services Outcomes Trust/legitimacy Value added

SERVICE DELIVERY

Figure 1: Model of Public Value and Information Systems

9.4 Operationalising sustainability as an outcome

For the ideas of public value to be useful to a partnership then a clearly stated, shared vision (**SCOPING STATEMENT**) of what the purpose of that partnership is, how and what it does succeeds (or fails), is required. A change and development model establishes the shared understanding of the purpose of joint working and the required approach to practice. It also establishes the outcome measures that will be used to evaluate its effect. A theory of change evaluation method described in **GOVERNANCE** is a way forward.

Many partnerships experience difficulty documenting the outcomes of their efforts. This is especially true for short-term projects and preventative programmes. However, a lack of documented improvements can makes it difficult for services and partnerships to make their case for continuing an initiative. The following tabulates examples of data that could be documented in four areas of sustainability (adapted from Weiss[104] et al (2002)).

Sustainability Focus	Evaluation Focus
1) *The initiative*	• Presence of initiative effort to obtain additional funding • Initiative success in obtaining additional funding • Presence of generating strategies to support initiative-related work • Presence of multiple funders to support Initiative-related work
2) *Ideas* – maintaining the initiative's core principles, values, beliefs, and commitment	• Core ideas operationalised in partnership policies, structures • Initiative principles applied to other partnership projects • Commitment to continuing work started or supported under the initiative (e.g., generation of new ideas, migration of initiative ideas, new research projects, etc.)
3) *Relationships* – maintaining connections among people and institutions	• Partnership involving higher-order ways of working together (e.g. joint reports, joint training, joint meetings, joint preparation of proposals) • History of partnership • Partnership that is not only initiative-driven
4) *Outcomes* – maintaining initiative results	• Codification of outcomes (e.g., in policy, procedures, legislation) • Support/demand (public, policymakers, etc.) for outcomes • Continued involvement/commitment of people over time

9.5 The FAME approach to sustainability

Thinking about sustainability is widespread and developments in thinking have come from three fields: development studies (e.g. the precautionary principle), environmental studies (e.g. the 3Rs: Reduce, Re-use, Re-cycle) and community studies (e.g. participation 'ladder'). In these approaches the essence of sustainability is striking the balance between social, economic and environment imperatives and this is just as applicable to multi-agency working. The UK government describes sustainable development as "a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come"[105]. Overall sustainability consists of the following components:

- Internal organisational sustainability
- External organisational sustainability
- Technical sustainability
- Resource sustainability

9.6 Internal organisational sustainability

Individual organisations participating in a multi-agency partnership should be able to adapt to changes in their roles and responsibilities in the way they deliver services and in their relationships with other organisations, with practice and more widely with service and user communities. This adaptability needs to be both organisational and technical. It relies equally on governance structures and processes, the partnership's legal powers and responsibilities and its technical capacity and infrastructural resource. It includes the ability of systems to publish to hubs, manage relationships and identities and to support events, messages and transactions. Although the intention of the framework is to be a resource for use by those multi-agency contexts it could also be used in the context of single services seeking to reconfigure themselves to be more agile and responsive to demands to join-up by making more sophisticated demands on their local ICT infrastructure and existing application providers.

Internal sustainability of a partnership also demands that it is able to demonstrate to service users (and their representatives), auditors/inspectors and sponsors the achievements and progress that it has made in terms that they can relate to. The ability to participate in multi-agency working and, at the same time, enhance the delivery of key local organisational objectives is important in this respect.

A theory of change approach to evaluation is described in **GOVERNANCE**. At the beginning of an initiative, a partnership should determine what criteria will need to be answered in order to decide whether the initiative should become mainstreamed. Some of those criteria may relate to the effectiveness of the programme and partnership, cost effectiveness, elimination of the duplication of services, support of key decision-makers, etc. Once such criteria have been

developed the partnership should determine how to gather the information needed to assess achievement. These information-gathering activities should be included in their work plans. Since decisions regarding sustainability must often be made prior to the publication of the final evaluation findings, it can be helpful to collect data on intermediate outcome measures to show whether key trends indicate movement in the right direction.

Another important question for the partnership to ask is: "If people in our community don't know what we're doing and what we've accomplished, will they support our sustainability plans?" There are a number of communication and participation strategies requiring varying amounts of time and resources that can educate potential advocates, decision-makers and service users.

The trigger that causes most partnerships to work on sustainability is the prospect of a loss of funding. This focus on funding may lead to the assumption that all aspects of an initiative must be sustained, whether or not each is leading to the intended outcomes, more accountable decision making systems, more empowered individuals and a cohesive and sustainable community of practice. An alternative way of examining the issue is to focus on outcomes for citizens. What is known about the impact of these outcomes? Do they match the needs and strengths of the community? Are they worth continuing? Partnerships can use their evaluation findings to aid them in the selection of their sustainability priorities as the initiatives that have the most positive impact on the community's health or quality of life.

To recap, ensuring an initiative's sustainability involves building considerations about sustainability into its strategy from the very beginning. Evaluators can act as key informants and facilitators during the strategy development process to ensure that information relevant to sustainability is being considered and that key sustainability decisions are not being overlooked. Sustainability should be seen as an outcome to be tracked over time and, accordingly, plans should be put in place for that tracking and revisiting sustainability throughout the initiative.

Sustainability should be operationalised as more than just continued funding or mainstreaming but also how the sustainability of an initiative's ideas, relationships, and outcomes can be tracked. Contextual factors likely to impact on sustainability over time should be considered so that the initiative's strategic approach to sustainability takes those factors into account to the extent possible.

9.7 External organisational sustainability

Within a multi-agency partnership all the participating agencies need to be able to respond to changes at the level of joint business processes and practice, and to new agencies joining or existing agencies leaving the local context. In other words the environment must be scalable and relatively stable.

In order to achieve this equilibrium, significant investment needs to take place in terms of creating, securing and maintaining the strategic plans, business cases, governance structures (e.g. organisational vehicles) and a continued commitment to resources. This work in turn needs to be led and supported by sets of roles, responsibilities and policies that have been clearly identified and allocated to appropriately skilled and experienced staff/teams. The delivery of multi-agency services should, as a rule, embrace an outcome-based approach to drawing up priorities and evaluation with the full participation of practitioners and service users. In short, multi-agency external sustainability needs to be produced and re-produced on an ongoing basis by the partnership and its stakeholders.

When investment is made in organisational, technical and social change, an 'exit or transition strategy' is useful. There needs to be a mechanism for 'passing on the baton' or mainstreaming. In order to better position an initiative and to manage the risks that accompany it, an 'exit or transition' plan needs to be integrated into the focus on sustainability by being an intentional part of the strategic choices made from the earliest planning stages of the initiative.

The operating environment of multi-agency working is complex. If we look at the range of agencies involved in the development of policy and frameworks of accountability, for example, in social care we see a complex network of government departments. These include DfES, DH, DWP, DCA, HO, DCLG, HMT and Cabinet Office as well as lobbying agencies LGA, ADSS, NHS Confederation and performance monitoring agencies (e.g. Audit Commission, Ofsted, the Information Centre for Health and Social Care, CSCI). Individual agency members of multi-agency partnerships need to be able to understand, respond and deliver to the range of inputs and outputs required by these networks. This is a challenging task and the resources which agencies can put into making sense of the operating environment vary widely. One option may be to establish and sustain a shared capacity both organisational and technical to support this sense making activity.

In the case of children's services individual authorities have to complete an Annual Performance Assessment and periodically partnerships are inspected in a Joint Area Review process[106] that highlights the effectiveness of agencies' working together in an area.

9.8 Technical sustainability

Technically, the ability to join-up through an appropriate hub-and-spoke approach and federation supported by appropriate identity management is a key part of the infrastructure of any multi-agency partnership in a public sector where the delivery of services is increasingly interdependent. Each individual agency needs to recognise the requirements of multi-agency practice putting plans and

resources in place to meet the joining-up agenda both organisationally and technically. Similarly the sustainability of the technical aspects (including information governance) of a multi-agency environment must be considered in order to support processes and procedures to ensure that the quality of the services and provenance of both data and individuals are established and maintained (e.g. service agreements, authentication, back up, duplication).

The current stance and business models of applications suppliers present some problems regarding the long terms sustainability of what must be delivered as infrastructure to partnerships. If the re-configuration and adaptation of the system is regarded as further development and subject to additional costs then the situation is one of building what amounts to a new application in response to each change in policy. This is not sustainable in the constantly changing world of public services.

For hub resources to be sustainable the tools and capabilities for their configuration must accompany them and this must deliver their functionality in a form which is appropriate and usable by customers. The development and delivery of improved capability at the level of programming and configuration tools with which users can reconstruct and evolve their shared processes, and manage the way they offer and select services represents the important new area of supplier value. The opportunity to replace existing system approaches to provide the sort of flexibility and user control that multi-agency working in public services demands will offer a major step forward.

The FAME framework is a means by which partners can discuss, understand, structure and communicate the requirements for multi-agency services to suppliers through strategic procurement processes (see **INFRASTRUCTURE**). The multi-agency environment must be able to respond to changes in underlying technologies and systems, including upgrades and changes to system architectures and interfaces. This raises to the issue of defining the team responsible for procurement and how it should negotiate with suppliers and providers as well as how the technical infrastructure should be continuously evolved and governed.

Technical standards have a key role to play in the facilitation of an environment where agencies can work together both locally within partnerships but also between partnerships supported by federation services. Web services Technical Standards can exist as XML schema all the way to exemplars of information sharing practice (information sharing protocols and the means to set them up using an information governance toolkit). However, no technical standard should restrict multi-agency practice. It is there to *support* the delivery of services and needs to evolve as practice evolves.

DCLG (ODPM) has recognised the importance of standards and has made a significant investment in the Local E-Government Standards body which has set

up a repository containing the outputs of the range of projects and initiatives over the past few years. These range from the CRM, Workflow and Smartcard projects to NOMAD (Mobile Working project) and Electronic Social Care Records (previously a DH initiative). The Standards body is also leading work to develop an Information Governance Toolkit for Local Government (see **GOVERNANCE**).

ODPM and I&DeA have supported the development of practice communities and competencies for e-government such as the e-Champions network, ESD toolkit and organisational level support offered by I&DeA strategic support unit. Similarly, networks such as the Society of IT Managers (SOCITM) and the Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS IMG) are sources of information and expertise to draw upon.

9.9 Resource sustainability

The resources of the public sector are finite and the prioritisation and delivery of services can be contentious. A multi-agency partnership should provide appropriate human, developmental, financial and managerial assets to support both the technical and organisational infrastructures that are required for joined-up working.

The Gerschon report 'Releasing Resources to the Front Line'[107] has had significant impact on the thinking about the public sector. It lists six potential areas for savings to be generated:

- Back Office
- Procurement
- Transactional Services
- Policy funding and regulation public sector
- Policy funding and regulation private sector
- Productive time of front line professionals

Gerschon talks about supporting efficiency by defining it in terms of outputs for inputs. The use of appropriate multi-agency governance structures and organisational vehicles will support multi-agency planning and commissioning. This may have the effect of reducing inputs to particular aspects of service delivery by identifying points of service/skills overlap and duplication in the context of multi-agency service delivery. This should in turn allow the re-use of existing resource to produce additional outputs in terms of enhanced quality and quantity for the same level of input. For instance more joined-up services and ICT systems should mean more 'productive time' on practice issues for frontline staff and managers. Improvements in communication between agencies (including private and third sector suppliers) should reduce time and lower the risk of inappropriate service provision, contracting and procurements. The report also makes the observation that government departments (read public sector

bodies) attempt to provide their own support for all their internal functions. Self-sufficiency is identified as a significant barrier to efficiency.

There are increasing initiatives for developing sustainable infrastructure in partnership with other agencies such as the LIFT programme. New approaches and means to creating shared structures and resources to support joining-up have the potential to support the realisation of benefits and investments made and being made in staff and systems. The technical elements of the Generic Framework in particular provide a means (partly through the technical architecture and infrastructure) to explore the alternatives of regional procurements and provision for the delivery and governance of services such as identity management and federation.

There are further aspects of resource sustainability to be covered. One of the crucial parts of an organisation is the knowledge, experience and wellbeing of its staff. In a multi-agency environment this is also the case and the importance of reflective practice and joint service training initiatives and continuing professional development must be recognised and resourced. This activity should in turn support both the sustainability and improvement of practice processes and learning at the organisational level. The current situation in care services delivery (based inter alia on the observations coming from the FAME phase 1 work-streams) is that there is a significant shortage of staff in key roles and professions which leads to over stretching the existing resources. In this light the need for sustained investment and capacity building across the range of technical and service roles required in the delivery of multi-agency partnerships is clear.

The key elements of establishing and maintaining resource sustainability are the scoping statement and business case at the inception of a project where the establishment of governance of and agency participation in a service and outline requirements for technical infrastructures are made. These are the foundations on which projects are built and it is crucial to establish explicit understanding of the broad aims, project governance processes and most importantly good working relationships at this stage.

Finally, one of the major challenges of working in the current environment is the regime of project funding. This has significant effects on an individual project's ability to sustain a service, and support it to evolve into a mainstream activity. The Audit Commission's 'Project Survival toolkit' based on research work into Housing Renewal partnerships describes four elements (including key questions) of moving from a 'project' based pilot to a mainstream service.

The first of the elements is the operating environment including the rules of the project grant and the local political landscape (e.g. relationships with other agencies). The risks are when that project reaches an end, a range of events can occur from losing resources from staff turnover to agencies withdrawing from the

partnership. Failure to address the 'cultural factors' is described as a barrier particularly where the project is challenging existing modes of working.

The next element is the idea of 'partnerships'. Partnerships are described as sometimes being a double-edged sword. Good partnerships where agencies participated were invaluable particularly where individual agencies reflected the projects aims in their individual strategic aims this increased the chance of a project-based service becoming mainstreamed. However, so-called 'paper' partnerships where the emphasis was the maximisation of resources coming into an area-based partnership rather than effective multi-agency working can lead to a swift end to joint working when the resource concluded.

The Audit Commission toolkit[108] emphasises the participation of communities as a key part of the sustainability of project initiated services (see **GOVERNANCE**). The engagement of stakeholders is an ongoing and time-consuming process and should be built into the core of a project. Carried out appropriately, it has significant benefits at all stages of the process e.g. when designing a project or service, when prioritising the needs of the local community and practitioner groups during the project and when looking for support to mainstream a project.

In terms of project management the toolkit identified four survival factors:

- Senior management engagement and leadership
- A well resourced and enthusiastic project team
- A reputable, realistic and experienced project manager able to understand and deliver project deliverables with the flexibility to respond to unforeseen problems
- The importance of demonstrating the benefits/evaluation of the project is seen as a key factor in decisions to continue funding or mainstream projects. (see **GOVERNANCE, SCOPING STASTEMENT and BUSINESS CASE DEVELOPMENT**)

Many projects have discovered the importance of a well-positioned leader or 'champion' for sustaining project initiated services. Champions are often mid- to senior-level personnel within the partnership. As well as nurturing champions, good relationships should be cultivated with community members and leaders who are external to the lead agency and who may constitute an influential sub group. This fosters a sense of ownership and reduces the pressure on one agency to implement and continue the work. It can also be helpful in succession planning and reducing the impact of staff changes. Research has indicated that sustainability of initiatives championed by community members and leaders has been more successful than that of initiatives driven by project staff since the project sustainability maybe viewed as the responsibility of that staff.

9.10 Realising the benefits of multi-agency partnerships

The benefits of multi-agency working are often difficult to measure explicitly (during the lifetime of a project) even if an outcomes based approach is adopted. However, in this context the precautionary principle comes into play. The precautionary principle of sustainability suggests that the risks of not setting up a multi-agency environment far outweigh the potential costs. Further, the expectation of citizens that information is joined-up means that for public sector services to maintain aspects of their legitimacy then action needs to be taken.

Multi-agency activity should lead to improved co-ordination of key services which should lead to direct improvements in the experience of individual citizens whether they are customers, clients, service users, patients, carers or dependants. In terms of benefits for citizens the framework is a means to explore the participation by a range of stakeholders (including citizens). Current government policy emphasises choice and participation in the delivery of public services.

The range of clients, service users, patients, carer or dependants and those working with them either as practitioners of volunteers should be taken into account. These voices need to be heard and balanced against each other, the research evidence and the evidence that comes from deriving information about local outcomes. Specifically, improvement should be observed in the setting of local priorities (including the means of representing the results of public involvement), planning of the individual configuration of services at the case level and their effective delivery and management of such plans (and evaluation of outcomes).

Underpinned by an appropriately implemented regional federated identity management infrastructure citizens will be able to make more informed choices about their services and choose and be able to find out (where appropriate) how, where and why personal information is being used by the government (thereby fulfilling Data Protection requirements). The broad outcome sought in the longer term is that citizens will more satisfied and have increased trust in government services.

Effective implementation of multi-agency environments should support:

- Improvements in the effectiveness of the implementation of policy be it national, regional or local.
- Improvements in the means of engaging in participation with the various communities and groups who have a key role in shaping and prioritising local service delivery.
- Improvements in the understanding of the business, of the scope and boundaries of an organisation and its services.

- Joint learning within and between partnerships and communities about what can be common and shared (this applies to information and to infrastructure) and what needs to be kept within the boundaries of the partnership or service (both information and structure).

By learning and reflecting on the Generic Framework, partnerships and member agencies should be able to construct robust business cases, build and sustain excellent public services, reflect on strategy more effectively and express joint requirements and plans more efficiently.

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