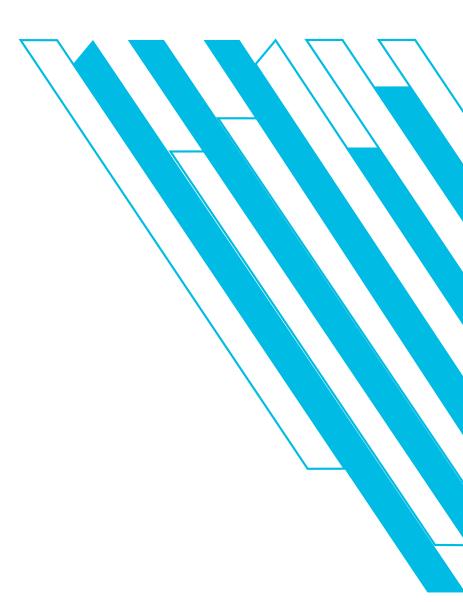


# Joining up public services around local, citizen needs

Perennial challenges and insights on how to tackle them



Sophie Wilson, Nehal Davison, Molly Clarke and Jo Casebourne

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### **About the project**

The Institute for Government has begun a major research project on public service delivery at a local level in England. This is a vast, complex terrain and there are many important areas that require urgent attention – whether it is how to drive efficiency savings, deliver digital transformation or make effective use of all providers in a local area, including voluntary and private sector organisations. We have decided to focus on one aspect that is critical to achieving better public service outcomes for citizens in the context of the current parliament: joining up and integrating public services around local, citizen needs.

Although this is well-trodden territory, questions around whether and how joining up improves services for citizens appear to feature less in the debate. We therefore focus on front-line public services that are delivered by people, for people – such as care, employment support and social housing. We do not intend to cover all front-line public services delivered locally, for example transport and waste collection. Likewise, transactional services such as tax collection, or back-office functions such as human resources, are outside the remit of this paper. We are interested in how joined up and integrated services affect citizens' day-to-day lives, rather than whether they generate efficiency savings – an important topic which is being explored extensively by others.<sup>1</sup>

This project builds on previous Institute research and learning activities in the areas of public service markets, connecting policymakers with practitioners and devolution in England. We also have a related project on engaging citizens in tough public policy decisions.<sup>2</sup>

### About the paper

This is an early discussion paper that aims to synthesise the existing literature on the barriers to joining up and insights on how to overcome these. As part of this, we have identified several case studies where joining up has been successful. However, this is only a short stimulus on the topic and we have highlighted many unanswered questions that merit further examination. We will interrogate some of these and explore the different perspectives of local leaders, civil servants, regulators, front-line providers and citizens in the next phase of the project. This will involve providing practical support and challenge to local partners aiming to deliver more joined up outcomes for citizens on the ground, and finding effective ways to share ideas and practices between them.

### About the authors

### Sophie Wilson

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### **Executive summary**

Heralded as the solution by many, joining up is seen as a way to reduce duplication, make efficiency savings and improve public service outcomes. In recent years, fiscal constraint and rising demand have only increased the pressure on local and central leaders to join up and break down entrenched organisational silos. But although there is broad agreement on the need to join up, there is little agreement on what this actually means, what approaches work best or whether particular models are more effective than others.

#### Why is joining up so difficult to do in practice?

Countless attempts to join up public services have demonstrated that it is not easy, and significant barriers and up-front investments are needed before benefits are seen. From the New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Renewal Funds and Total Place, to Troubled Families and Community Budgets, we are still grappling with the challenge of how to effectively join up services on the ground. Five challenges repeatedly hinder joint working and collaboration:

- Short-term policy and funding cycles can restrict the ability of local actors to invest in the long-term partnerships needed to meet local, citizen needs.
- Misaligned geographies and the patchwork of commissioning, funding and regulatory processes can make it difficult for local actors to design services around a 'whole person'.
- Cultural differences between professions and organisations can discourage collaboration on the ground.
- · Barriers to data sharing can make joint working between distinct teams or organisations practically difficult.
- Limited sharing of 'what works' in different circumstances can mean that lessons from effective models and practices are rarely built on.

There has been a strong push from both local and central government to overcome these long-standing challenges. Setting out his vision for a 'smarter state' in September 2015, the Prime Minister called on 'departments, local authorities and charities to work together collaboratively' and overcome these challenges.<sup>3</sup> The 2015 Spending Review provides an opportunity to realise this as organisations consider how they might work more effectively to re-design services.<sup>4</sup> However, the current fiscal climate can make joining up more difficult to realise in practice. Publicly funded organisations are currently working hard to maintain business-as-usual activities, deliver multiple reform agendas and survive in an increasingly competitive financial environment. The instinct may therefore be to protect, rather than join up, shrinking budgets and resources.

### What lies behind the most successful approaches to joining up?

The case studies in this report demonstrate that joining up is hard, but can be achieved if the right building blocks are in place. Below are 10 insights on how to overcome some of the barriers and join up around local, citizen needs.

- Using multi-disciplinary teams can focus attention on complex issues.
- Agreeing on clear, outcomes-focused goals can help front-line organisations prioritise resources effectively.
- Using evidence can build consensus and help to draw in resources from a range of organisations.
- Building on existing programmes and structures can enhance existing good practice and partnerships on the ground.
- Giving local areas greater flexibility can help local actors form the partnerships needed to deliver cross-cutting outcomes.
- Balancing this with some central government support can provide the additional resources and political momentum needed to get an initiative off the ground.
- Building the desire for joined up services into the aims and processes of commissioning can incentivise organisations to collaborate.
- Engaging a broad range of stakeholders throughout the design process can help to build buy-in and commitment to partnership working.

- Sharing learning and experiences widely can help to ensure that effective models are built on.
- Physically bringing organisations together can help to overcome entrenched cultural differences and data-sharing challenges.

These insights provide a starting point for thinking about how to effectively join up services in any particular sector or area.

### Where next for joining up around local, citizen needs?

However, some thorny questions remain about how to practically take this agenda forward and embed new, collaborative models of working on a wide scale.

#### Understanding and sharing effective models and practices

- Which models of joining up (or combination of models) are most effective in improving service quality for citizens?
- How does this vary according to sector, location or user group?
- What are the most effective ways of sharing learning from different models?

#### Putting powers and capabilities in the right areas

- What powers and flexibilities do local areas need to join up around citizens?
- Who should receive these (e.g. individuals, communities or places)? And in what ways do the chosen geographies affect the ability of local actors to deliver citizen-focused outcomes?
- What mix of people, capabilities and ways of working are required to support this?
- What needs to change in Whitehall to support a locally joined up system?

#### Getting the right leadership and governance in place

- How do the qualities required to lead a single organisation align with, or differ from, those needed for whole system change?
- What types of governance arrangements have the potential to improve clarity around roles and responsibilities when outcomes are shared and leadership is distributed across a system?
- What types of local scrutiny arrangements could help incentivise a focus on citizens in efforts to join up and integrate different services?

Of course, there is unlikely to be one 'right' answer to each of these questions. But if services at a local level are to better meet the needs of individual citizens, families and whole communities, it will be essential to interrogate these questions further and understand how potential solutions may vary according to the nature of the place, service or outcomes being sought.

### Why does joining up matter?

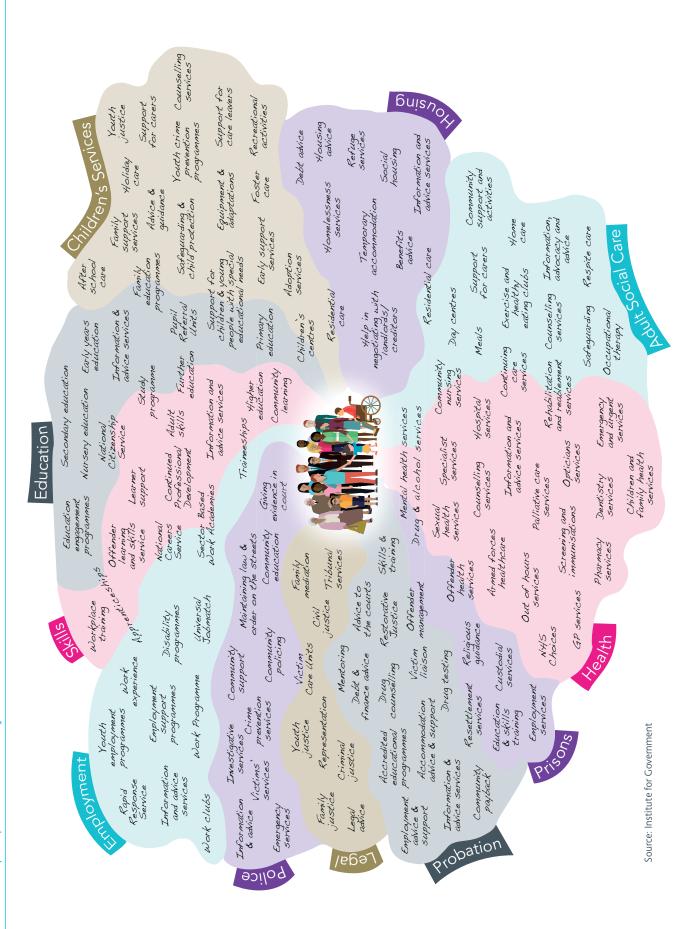
The public service landscape is wide, varied and complex (see Figure 1), with a mix of organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors delivering a huge range of services which are rarely co-ordinated with one another. People can find it difficult to navigate the system and access the support they need, particularly at crucial life transitions or when their needs are multiple and complex.

- They may find it hard to find information, not know where to start, or who to go to, particularly when multiple
  organisations offer similar services. For example, a school leaver thinking about options for further education, training
  or work may not know who to go to for advice first their school's careers service, the local Jobcentre, or another
  organisation offering skills training.
- They may have to tell and re-tell their story in order to access related services, as information is not shared between organisations for example, an elderly person trying to access care at home through their GP, social services or the local charity befriending service.
- They may experience several problems at the same time, such as mental ill health, drug and alcohol dependency, homelessness and family breakdown, but find that many existing services focus on dealing with only one of these issues. This can mean individuals are not always treated as a whole person and have to get support from a number of different and unco-ordinated services.<sup>5</sup>

Everyone will have their own experience of when a public service has fallen short of their expectations. And these challenges are, of course, not new. Public services have been delivered in silos for decades and local areas have little flexibility to work around these to deliver joined up outcomes on the ground. But the 2015 Spending Review and the recent 'devolution deals' process have added political momentum behind the need to devolve and join up public services in areas such as health, social care, employment and skills.<sup>6</sup>

However, joining up should not be seen as an end in itself. The pressure to reduce costs and demand has focused much of the policy attention on the potential for generating efficiencies, to some degree crowding out one of the key goals of joining up – better services for citizens. Many current initiatives tend to start with existing organisations, structures and processes, rather than the citizen, missing the crux of why joining up matters. Indeed, the assumption is that joined up services are inherently more responsive to citizen needs, but there is still only limited understanding of whether any actually make a difference to citizens' experiences, what combination of approaches work best, and whether this might vary by the nature of the service or location.

Figure 1: Landscape of public service delivery at a local level



### What does joining up actually mean?

There is an extensive literature on joining up public services (see the Bibliography), but few studies define what it means in practice, often using 'joining up', 'collaboration', 'partnership working' and 'service integration' interchangeably.

In its broadest sense, 'joining up' is used to describe *co-ordination* between multiple actors within a system to achieve a shared goal or outcome. This can centre around a particular client group ('horizontal integration') or throughout a delivery chain ('vertical integration'), and take place in various forms and levels within a system. The actors involved can come from different sectors, or from different organisations within the same sector, and can include government, businesses, charities, communities and the public. Likewise, joining up can take place locally, centrally, or at both levels.

The extent and type of 'joining up' also vary significantly, encompassing anything from fully integrated teams (with joint budgets, management structures and resources) to co-location and informal information sharing between practitioners (see Figure 2). This diversity mirrors variation in the aims of 'joining up': some put citizens at the centre and seek to build services around their needs, others emphasise the 'place' and the need to achieve shared priorities for a particular community, neighbourhood, local authority or region.

Figure 2: Different ways of joining up services



Source: Institute for Government

## Why is joining up so difficult to do in practice?

Since 1997, there have been countless attempts to join up public services at a local level. We have captured 59 individual attempts to do so in England in our timeline (see Figure 3). These are only what we have identified as the key national initiatives; there have been many more at all tiers of local government, and from outside government, particularly in the voluntary and community sector. Yet, this has failed to translate into system-wide change and collaboration between organisations still remains rare.

Drawing on existing Institute for Government research, a literature review and conversations with 40 people across local government, central government and the wider policy community, we have identified five perennial challenges that hinder joint working and collaboration in public services.

#### 1. Short-term policy and funding cycles

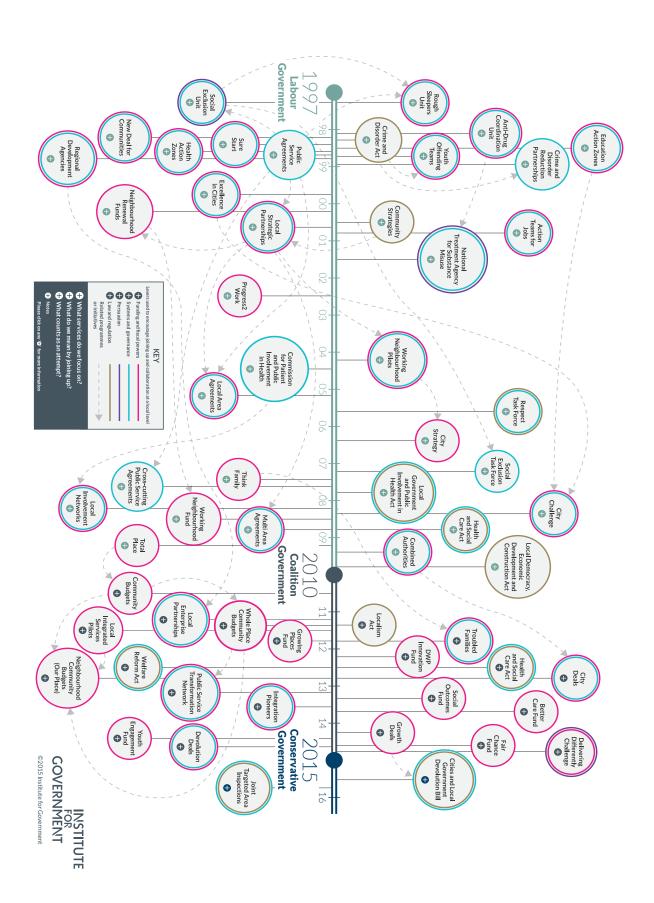
A constant challenge for local actors is trying to deliver long-term, cross-cutting outcomes within the constraint of short-term budgets and frequently changing policy requirements.<sup>12</sup> It takes time to invest in partnerships, pool funds and design services around citizens. But short-term funding cycles risk perpetuating a costly bidding culture in which local areas spend more time and money putting together bids for different funding pots from central government, rather than building the necessary capability to join up and collaborate across organisations. Indeed, the Local Government Association (LGA) estimates that council bids for central government funds cost around £30,000 per bid.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, constant policy churn makes it harder for organisations to get collaborative arrangements off the ground and implement lasting reforms.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, Whitehall is often nervous about devolving further funding and power to local areas with varying levels of leadership, accountability and capability – the rationale being that ministers will continue to be held accountable for ensuring value for money in areas they no longer bear formal responsibility for.<sup>15</sup> The Institute for Government has shown in *Achieving Political Decentralisation* that there is little consensus among central government about *how much* freedom and flexibility local areas should have.<sup>16</sup> Deciding what to devolve (e.g. which services or powers) and to who (e.g. combined authorities, local authorities, service providers or citizens) is therefore incredibly tricky and likely to vary significantly across places and sectors.<sup>17</sup> This lack of criteria has meant that local areas tend to focus on what they can get in the short term rather than on long-term goals, hindering co-ordination at a local level.<sup>18</sup> For example, in the recent Greater Manchester Devolution Agreement, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority has been given the power to lead on recommissioning the further education system, as well as taking control of several small pots of money (e.g. the apprenticeship grant for employers, and skills capital funding). However, these powers do not extend to large parts of the skills system – such as apprenticeships and 16–19 provision – which continue to be commissioned nationally. This limits the levers that local actors have to co-ordinate service provision around local, citizen needs.<sup>19</sup>

#### 2. Misaligned geographies and the patchwork of commissioning, funding and regulatory processes

Accountability arrangements can incentivise Whitehall officials and ministers to develop policies that work towards specific departmental priorities rather than wider goals. Central government policymakers tend to focus on specific 'life events' or needs that relate to departmental responsibilities rather than taking a 'whole person' approach that deals with a range of issues at the same time.<sup>20</sup> For example, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) prioritises getting people into work while the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) prioritises improving people's skills.

Much has been written about how these policy silos result in inconsistent commissioning, funding and regulatory processes – all of which operate according to different geographies, timescales, rules, regulations and targets.<sup>21</sup> For example, there are currently over 30 funds available for local service transformation from different departments with different criteria and allocation methods.<sup>22</sup> It is not uncommon for central government departments to end up commissioning similar or overlapping activities with no knowledge of those being commissioned by other departments.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the DWP launched its Families with Multiple Problems programme around the same time as the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Troubled Families programme. Although funded differently, the two programmes target similar groups, risking unnecessary duplication and inefficiencies on the ground.<sup>24</sup>



This lack of coherence and fragmentation in Whitehall is reflected across the system – creating an irregular patchwork of programmes and funding arrangements within local authorities, regulators, agencies and provider organisations.<sup>25</sup> For example, in the early stages of the Work Programme, providers often found it difficult to access relevant funding pots outside of the Work Programme (e.g. the skills budget), or co-ordinate with parallel employment support initiatives, limiting their ability to offer a whole person package of services to individuals.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, commissioning specifications often disincentivise joining up by paying providers for single activities rather than broader outcomes.

Similarly, regulators tend to focus on a single theme or service area rather than user outcomes or pathways, often failing to investigate the extent of collaboration across the whole system and the role different organisations play in contributing towards an outcome.<sup>27</sup> This can result in providers being penalised for adapting services to meet particular local needs, but failing to meet national or statutory specifications.<sup>28</sup>

### 3. Cultural differences between professions

Siloed policy, commissioning and funding structures can create siloed ways of thinking across the system. Different organisations and teams are likely to come at a problem from a different angle or context, or find they use different language to describe the same challenge.<sup>29</sup> This may limit collaboration, as they have alternative assumptions about what approach to take to deliver a particular outcome and how to prioritise particular groups, activities and goals; as argued in the Institute for Government's case study on the 2001 *Fuel Poverty Strategy*.<sup>30</sup>

The wealth of skills and expertise held by professionals can similarly create ingrained cultures that are resistant to change. Whether as a healthcare professional, social worker, Jobcentre Plus adviser or probation officer, all have spent their careers working towards delivering a specific set of goals and statutory duties, undertaking a specific set of activities and developing specific ways of working. As a result, there are likely to be varying levels of appetite among these professions for greater collaboration, and heads of different organisations may even end up vying for control of joined up schemes, rather than working together.<sup>31</sup> This can make 'mixed teams' or 'information sharing' hard to realise in practice.<sup>32</sup>

Overcoming this inherent disconnect between professions requires extensive investment in partnership working and relationship building. These tend to be dependent on the reputation of a few individuals in each area. But, when they move on, the personal relationships that sustain collaboration often dissipate, making it more difficult to maintain joined up service delivery.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4. Barriers to data sharing

In some cases, people may want to join up services, but find it difficult to do because of practical operational challenges. Much has been written about the inherent difficulties of data sharing – whether because of unhelpful data protection legislation, incompatible IT systems and differences in the way data is collected.<sup>34</sup> For example, 61% of senior staff in local authorities, NHS providers and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs), surveyed in May 2015, felt that data protection rules hindered progress on their health and social care integration plans.<sup>35</sup> Even if there are ways to navigate legislative and technical blockages, cultural barriers and confusion around what is allowed can heighten resistance to data sharing.<sup>36</sup>

#### 5. Limited sharing of 'what works'

A related challenge is the lack of credible evidence about which joined up delivery models are most likely to deliver better results for citizens, the underlying skills and ways of working needed to support these, and how to share learning effectively.<sup>37</sup> This is largely because of limited incentives to rigorously evaluate programmes.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, in a bidding culture, where innovation in terms of new ideas is often rewarded over and above imitation of existing ideas, places may be reluctant to learn from, and build on, past initiatives.<sup>39</sup> This means that lessons and experiences are not systematically shared and improvements made. While there have been various attempts to change this – for example through the Local Government Association's *peer challenge* process<sup>40</sup> and the What Works Network<sup>41</sup> – currently no one is responsible for addressing this knowledge and capability gap on a wide scale – at central, sub-regional or local government levels. This risks incoherence in the approaches taken to join up service delivery at a local level.<sup>42</sup>

All of the challenges mentioned so far have been around for years. But the pressures of austerity and spending reductions are new and will continue to dominate the agenda of the current parliament.<sup>43</sup> The assumption in much of the literature is that budget cuts and joining up go hand in hand as local actors see the cost-saving potential of reducing waste and duplication. However, the pressure to deliver more for less can potentially make local actors less inclined to share resources and look outside usual roles and ways of working.<sup>44</sup> The Institute for Government has previously shown that funding constraints can sometimes incentivise competition over collaboration as organisations are more likely to see each other as rivals for limited funds.<sup>45</sup>

Constrained budgets also mean organisations may be reluctant to support programmes that produce savings for other actors in the system – whether it is another council, provider or the Treasury – without direct benefits to themselves. <sup>46</sup> Resistance to investing in joined up services is exacerbated where high up-front costs are likely to only produce savings in the long term. What local leaders want to know is whether joining up will actually make a difference to their organisation – in terms of either reducing demand for services or producing more savings – and when these results might start to be realised. <sup>47</sup>

## What lies behind the most successful approaches to joining up?

Although difficult, joining up around local, citizen needs can be achieved. In this chapter we outline several examples where joining up has been successful and 10 insights about the underlying reasons for this success.<sup>48</sup> These initiatives were all introduced at different times, cover different geographies, focus on different services and involve different actors. But, regardless of this diversity, there is a recurrent theme: the need for strong, collaborative leadership that focuses energies on a set of common aims for the benefit of the whole system, rather than a single organisation. The following leadership characteristics come up time and again in the literature and the Institute for Government has explored them extensively:<sup>49</sup>

- communicating a compelling vision and narrative for change
- giving permission and encouragement to partners and front-line staff to work differently
- building strong and trusting relationships between organisations
- sustaining momentum and buy-in from all those involved.

Political support can also significantly help to signal the importance of, and build momentum behind, a collaborative agenda.<sup>50</sup>

The case studies below are listed in chronological order, starting with the 1997 Labour Government, moving on to the Coalition Government and ending with the current Conservative Government.

#### Social Exclusion Unit, 1997–2007

The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) aimed to reduce social exclusion by producing 'joined up solutions to joined up problems'. The unit was initially part of the Cabinet Office and moved over to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2002. The team comprised a mixture of civil servants, professionals from the voluntary sector, the police, and religious and community groups. They worked on issues that affected a range of government departments such as rough sleeping, teenage pregnancy, education for children in care and jobs in deprived areas. The unit published over 50 reports, which aimed to broaden the focus of a particular issue, show how different social problems interacted with one another and demonstrate how organisations needed to work effectively together to address these. Many reports included detailed action plans, with targets and outcome measures.

The impact of the SEU is much debated primarily because it published reports to persuade departments on the need for joining up, but did not directly implement any programmes itself. However, some reports did lead to tangible initiatives. For example, a 1998 report on rough sleeping led to the creation of the Rough Sleepers Unit in 1999, which:

- funded outreach teams and night centres
- worked with hostels to increase the beds available for homeless people
- increased the use of mental health assessments for rough sleepers
- included multi-needs workers in outreach teams
- advocated a stronger role for the police.<sup>54</sup>

'Making sure that we have good, up-to-date information and that it is read and that it is talked about throughout Government, throughout Parliament, about what is actually going on in terms of social exclusion is one of the most important things we can do.'

Moira Wallace, Director of the Social Exclusion Unit, Public Administration Select Committee, 2001<sup>57</sup>

Likewise, a 2001 report on neighbourhood renewal aimed to

broaden the policy focus to encompass unemployment, crime, education and health as well.<sup>55</sup> This provided the impetus for a range of programmes including the New Deal for Communities, Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders and Neighbourhood Renewal Funds, which encouraged partnerships between the police, primary care trusts, colleges, housing providers and the local community to improve outcomes for disadvantaged communities. However, there were also areas where few improvements were achieved, for example in reducing the number of people not in education, employment or training ('NEETs').<sup>56</sup>

#### Insight 1: Using multi-disciplinary teams can focus attention on complex issues

Multi-disciplinary teams, like cross-cutting units, can be an effective way to focus efforts around a complex policy agenda, bring together a diverse group of skills and interests and support people to develop new ways of working when other co-ordination mechanisms are insufficient. In the specific case of social exclusion, the SEU was established to grapple with a 'niche issue which left Whitehall perplexed'.<sup>58</sup> It brought together a mixture of 'outsiders', who had spent years working on the issues outside of government, as well as long-standing civil servants, who knew how to operate effectively in Whitehall. This approach was crucial to the success of the unit in the early years.<sup>59</sup>

### Insight 2: Agreeing on clear, outcomes-focused goals can help front-line organisations prioritise resources effectively

Clarity around goals and straightforward policy signals are crucial for ensuring actors understand the aims and intentions behind a policy. <sup>60</sup> The most successful SEU projects were underpinned by a clear diagnosis of the problem and detailed actions plans, which gave those tasked with implementation a defined set of goals to coalesce around. For example, the Rough Sleepers Unit had a clear target to reduce the number of people sleeping on the streets by two-thirds, which was achieved by 2002. <sup>61</sup> In contrast, independent analysis of the SEU's work on NEETs demonstrates that it was plagued by far more ambiguous objectives, leading to organisations prioritising different target groups, which did little to reduce the overall number of NEETs. <sup>62</sup> Therefore, clarity around goals and regular communication are critical to helping those responsible for implementation make the right choices about where resources should be prioritised.

### Insight 3: Using evidence can build consensus and help to draw in resources from a range of organisations

The SEU focused on issues that were by nature highly complex and contested, which significantly increased the challenge of building consensus around cross-departmental initiatives. Rigorous analysis of data and evidence was crucial to overcoming this. Reports by the SEU were based on extensive research and analysis of users' needs and experiences, the underlying causes of particular social problems, and how best to approach these issues. This helped to develop a common language and, importantly, convince government departments – especially the Treasury – to commit resources to tackling particular social issues.

Using evidence to build consensus around the aims of a particular programme and draw in resources from a range of organisations has been a feature of many other approaches to joining up, including Community Budgets (see the case study on page 16), the Troubled Families programme (see the case study on page 17) and the Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark partnership to tackle unemployment (see the case study on page 19). Collecting data and conducting evaluations to build a credible evidence base can help to make the case for collaboration to other organisations in a local area as well as funders and central government decision makers.<sup>63</sup>

### Community Budgets, 2011 to the present

Community Budgets were launched in the context of the Coalition Government's programme of spending reductions and the drive for efficiency. By pooling funds and removing ring-fences around certain funding streams, the Government aimed to give councils and local partners the freedom to develop 'local solutions to local problems'.<sup>64</sup> The first 16 pilots focused on tackling social problems faced by families with complex needs. These were subsequently followed by Whole Place Community Budgets and Neighbourhood Community Budgets (which later became 'Our Place'), which focused on a broader range of issues including:

- health and social care
- economic growth
- work and skills
- reducing reoffending
- early years.

Local areas have used the Community Budget programme to develop tailored initiatives to tackle particular local issues. For example, Essex launched 'By uprooting the silos, unlocking and relinquishing the spending controls administered by Whitehall, we can give towns and places the freedom to direct spending to best meet the needs of the citizens within their boundaries.'

Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government,  $2010^{67}$ 

a Work and Skills project in response to the finding that only 60 people were training for over 8,000 marketing vacancies, while hundreds of people were training for fewer hair and beauty vacancies.<sup>65</sup> Birmingham chose to focus on families with complex needs, building on its previous engagement with the 'Total Place' pilot. Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, and Kensington and Chelsea councils have launched a reoffending service to target offenders (receiving a sentence of less than 12 months), which brings together existing drug intervention programmes.<sup>66</sup>

### Insight 4: Building on existing programmes and structures can enhance existing good practice and partnerships on the ground

Building on the aims and approaches of previous initiatives, notably Total Place in 2009, helped the Community Budgets pilots to improve on some technical aspects – such as data sharing between partners – instead of having to reinvent the wheel with a completely new programme.<sup>68</sup>

Likewise, the Community Budget programme did not mandate the creation of new structures or units, but allowed local areas to subsume the programme within existing structures and ways of working. For example, Birmingham's Community Budget programme is administered by the local strategic partnership (LSP), 'Be Birmingham', and delivered by the existing multiagency Family Common Assessment Framework, which brings together the business, community, voluntary, faith and public sectors. Being sensitive to existing arrangements can prevent unnecessary disruption on the ground.<sup>69</sup>

The Community Budget programme has also laid the foundation for other national initiatives. For example, the initial Community Budget focus on families with complex needs has been built on by Leicestershire's Troubled Families programme, which targets a broader range of families than those specified under the national Troubled Families programme.

Building on existing assets and ways of working saves both time and money, minimising teething problems, and allows new programmes to get off the ground quickly in the midst of constant policy churn.

### Insight 5: Giving local areas greater flexibility can help local actors form the partnerships needed to deliver cross-cutting outcomes

The Community Budget programme gives local areas a degree of flexibility to tackle different problems, fund different projects and prioritise different groups depending on local needs. As a result, there is a great deal of variation in the aims and approaches of different Community Budget areas. For example, in West Cheshire the emphasis is on creating proactive, preventative interventions, while in Greater Manchester the emphasis is on driving economic growth and generating cashable savings. Similarly, in the Troubled Families programme (see the case study below), places are weaving together different initiatives and targeting services to meet the specific needs of citizens in their area. This allows local areas to join up services in a way that works for them.

### Troubled Families programme, 2011 to the present

The Troubled Families programme was established to provide a holistic approach to all the problems faced by different members of a single family. Many of the aims of the programme are not new, but build on the earlier 'whole family approaches' and Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) of Think Family (first established in 2007) and the Community Budget pilots (introduced in 2011), which focused on families with complex needs. The stated ambition was to 'turn around' the lives of 120,000 families by 2015, which were said to be costing the Treasury £9 billion a year. A Troubled Families Team was established in 2012 to oversee the programme and provide support to local partners. It is based in the DCLG and headed by Louise Casey. The programme expanded in 2014/15 to include another 40,000 families, and is set to expand by a further 400,000 families from 2015.

'I think the success of a programme like this is that the relationship between workers and families builds trust and gets to grips with things in a way that public services haven't always done before.'

Louise Casey, Director General, Troubled Families,  $2015^{77}$ 

So far, central government has funded 40% of the programme, with the remaining 60% being funded out of existing local authority budgets.<sup>73</sup> The central government budget of £448 million is pooled from various government department contributions (DCLG, DWP, Department for Education, Department of Health, Home Office and Ministry of Justice). Most of this funding is provided on a payment by results basis to local delivery partners – local authorities, health, police, probation, Jobcentre Plus, local colleges, children services, adult social care and housing providers.<sup>74</sup>

The Government's primary success measure is reduced demand for public services and associated savings.<sup>75</sup> In June 2015, the Government claimed that the programme had saved taxpayers £1.2 billion, but this figure is contested.<sup>76</sup> The DCLG has commissioned an independent evaluation of the programme, which is currently underway.

### Insight 6: Balancing this with some central government support can provide the additional resources and political momentum needed to get an initiative off the ground

Whitehall can play a useful role in facilitating and supporting joining up at a local level – whether through direct funding, seconding expertise, signalling political backing or setting up support networks – though it is often difficult to negotiate the right balance between central support and local flexibilities.

In the Troubled Families programme, the central team assisted the local delivery of the programme by providing a 'what works' guide and 'on the ground' support in the form of local area teams. Strong prime ministerial backing has also provided added momentum to the programme in local areas.<sup>78</sup> However, some argue that the nationally defined criteria of the Troubled Families programme could be made more flexible to better fit the diversity of local needs.<sup>79</sup>

Striking a balance between local freedoms and central support was also crucial to the design of the Community Budget programme, in which civil servants have been seconded to local authorities to help them develop their business cases so that they can access more funds from central government (see the case study on page 16). What is more, the Community Budget programme has provided the impetus for collaboration between local authorities, as shown in the Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark Pathways to Employment programme (see the case study on page 19). As such, central government can help to encourage joining up, providing the political backing and practical support for local initiatives, but striking the right balance is both critical and difficult.

### Insight 7: Building the desire for joined up services into the aims and processes of commissioning can incentivise organisations to collaborate

Central government can use the commissioning process to incentivise joint working. As can local commissioners – where commissioning powers have been devolved, areas are able to flex service specifications according to local, citizen needs.<sup>80</sup> A number of models can be effective. In the case of the Troubled Families programme, pooled budgets, payment by results funding and 'black box' commissioning encourage organisations to provide a range of services through a single funding stream, develop partnerships, and design services around the 'whole family'.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, the Better Care Fund – a £5.3 billion pooled budget focused on bringing health and social care services together – has been used to encourage local authorities and CCGs to join up at a local level, as illustrated by the tri-borough partnership (see the case study below).

These examples demonstrate that commissioning decisions can be a useful way to encourage consortia or partnership working as well as signal a wider policy commitment to joining up.

### Tri-borough councils: integrating health and social care, 2013

The tri-borough councils – Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster, and Kensington and Chelsea – and corresponding CCGs have come together to integrate health and social care services by combining a significantly larger proportion of their health and social care budgets than the minimum required for the Better Care Fund: £193 million for 2015/16 rather than the required £47.8 million.  $^{82}$  This initiative builds on the progress made during the local Community Budget programme, which targeted the top 20% of the population with the most serious health conditions, and the Whole Systems Integrated Care Pilot for North West London, which aims to save money, improve care and drive collaboration across organisations.

The councils aim to push these initiatives further by:

- creating multi-disciplinary teams
- introducing single assessments for health and social care
- ensuring that every GP surgery has someone responsible for coordinating individual care plans
- establishing a single patient care record so that patients only need to explain their condition once.<sup>83</sup>

'Over the next five years, community healthcare and social care teams will work together in an increasingly integrated way, with single assessments for health and social care and rapid and effective joint responses to identified needs, provided in and around the home.'

Tri-borough Better Care Fund submission, September 2014<sup>85</sup>

The stated ambition is to reduce costs and demand for services. As a result, the area is focusing on maximising independence for older people and tackling social isolation. The councils claim to be on track to save £43 million a year by 2015/16, above their original estimate of £40 million.<sup>84</sup>

### Insight 8: Engaging a broad range of stakeholders throughout the design process can help to build buy-in and commitment to partnership working

Spending time at the outset engaging with a broad range of stakeholders can lay the foundations for stronger partnership arrangements and effective service delivery in the long term. It provides an early opportunity to collect views and understand different perspectives – including the front-line experience of service users and their needs.<sup>86</sup> In the case of the tri-borough health and social care integration programme, efforts have been made to involve health and social care providers in the design process and support them to deal with new ways of working.<sup>87</sup> Ongoing engagement with those critical to implementation can provide a forum for discussing challenges as they arise, help to build a common sense of endeavour and increase commitment to partnership working.<sup>88</sup>

### Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark: Pathways to Employment programme, 2014

Compared with the UK average, there is relatively high unemployment in the boroughs of Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark, with 15% of the working-age population on benefits, and 6% never having had a job.<sup>89</sup> The concern is that the most vulnerable members of the boroughs are being excluded from existing employment programmes, which fail to address complex needs that prevent some people from working such as combinations of low confidence, lack of motivation, drug and alcohol misuse and poor skills.

The Pathways to Employment programme was therefore established to work specifically with certain groups such as people aged 18–24, people aged over 50, lone parents and people with low-level mental health needs. <sup>90</sup> It is being rolled out through the Community Budget programme with a £1.1 million grant from the Public Service Transformation Network. <sup>91</sup>

'The aim of the new service is to get more residents into work by bringing together national, regional and local partners and by replacing a top-down package with collaborative, user and provider led designs.'

Public Service Transformation Network, 201494

The programme works with people at the point at which they apply for benefits, with referrals coming through Jobcentre Plus. The delivery model was designed using 'customer personas' that mapped the potential clients that might benefit from interventions with information from local residents, service providers, Jobcentre Plus and local authority staff. The national employment charity Tomorrow's People is contracted to provide 'key workers' who act as a single point of contact for jobseekers and are responsible for providing them with a

'wrap-around' service, personalised action plans and long-term support. This includes directing people towards related services such as skills training, health services, housing providers, financial services, and support for drug misuse and mental health issues.<sup>92</sup>

The pilot aims to assess 30,000 people for complex needs over six months and support 500 people into work. It is too early to assess impact, but according to the Public Service Transformation Network, initial results indicate that the programme has helped 60 residents gain employment, and is on track to save £0.25 million over three years.<sup>93</sup>

### Insight 9: Sharing learning and experiences widely can help to ensure that effective models are built on

Recognising that they were dealing with similar challenges formed the basis for collaboration between Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark councils. By sharing what was working, and not working, for specific citizen groups, the boroughs were able to find a unified approach to worklessness that met the needs of their overlapping populations. The process of data sharing further helped to build relationships and shared goals between the councils, providing a foundation for future collaboration.

However, sharing learning and experiences does not necessarily have to be confined to neighbouring urban boroughs. Although there is great diversity across the country, similarities and cross-overs do exist and areas can do more to learn from each other and adapt 'what works' to particular local circumstances. For example, the Service Transformation Challenge Panel has recommended a What Works Centre for Service Transformation, which would help areas more effectively 'pick up' successful approaches, including attempts to join up different public services. <sup>95</sup> This would help to ensure that effective models and practices are built and improved on, rather than having to be reinvented from scratch.

### Wiltshire: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, 2014

Wiltshire Council launched a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to encourage information sharing between providers that work with children and young people. MASH teams are based in hubs around Wiltshire and aim to facilitate a faster and more co-ordinated response to welfare concerns. Bringing all agencies under one roof gives those working with children and young people a wider picture of the environment they are operating in and access to useful information which can facilitate a more whole person approach to service delivery.<sup>96</sup>

A referral to the Hub is either passed on to the allocated social worker, if there is one, or followed by a risk assessment, which enables Hub staff to identify the services they should direct the young person to.<sup>97</sup> The first Hub was launched in 2014, employing 45 people and dealing with up to 100 cases a week.<sup>98</sup> The ambition is to expand, involve more organisations and broaden the co-location of different organisations.<sup>99</sup>

'The MASH will enable the sharing of key information in one secure place to reduce the risk of vulnerable people not being protected.'

Dick Tonge, Wiltshire councillor, 2014<sup>100</sup>

### Insight 10: Physically bringing organisations together can help to overcome entrenched cultural differences and data-sharing challenges

The benefits of co-location lie in the ability to share information more easily and reduce duplication, which should lead to a more timely and appropriate response to people's needs. In the case of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Wiltshire, measures like this have also helped to build relationships and a greater understanding between organisations, overcoming some of the entrenched cultural differences outlined earlier.<sup>101</sup> This can provide a solid basis for further and deeper joining up of different services.

Co-location has also been used, alongside other practical measures, to implement the Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark Pathways to Employment programme (see the case study on page 19). For example, the key worker model provides citizens with a single point of contact, minimising the confusion associated with navigating the complex public service delivery landscape. The long-term nature of the relationship helps the key worker to understand the particular problems faced by an individual in more depth and allows them to design tailored action plans that draw in interventions from multiple organisations depending on the individual's needs. The model is also central to the Troubled Families programme (see the case study on page 17).

Co-locating teams, creating shared spaces in which individuals can 'step outside' their silos and brokering secondments can all help to physically bring people together and overcome entrenched organisational, cultural and professional barriers.<sup>103</sup>

## Where next for joining up around local, citizen needs?

There are plenty of other examples to back up the 10 insights highlighted in the previous chapter, and much of the literature from local government, central government and the wider 'think-tank' community (from across the political spectrum) broadly shows that these fundamental building blocks are needed to support joining up at a local level.

So why are we still talking about this? Even though joining up and integration have been the centre of attention for many years now, and numerous examples have demonstrated that it can be achieved in specific areas, these initiatives have failed to translate into system-wide change. There is still little consensus on how to embed joined up and collaborative models of delivery and limited evidence to help people prioritise one approach over another. A number of unanswered questions therefore need to be urgently addressed to drive the debate forward, beyond the assumption that joining up is a *good thing*.

### Understanding and sharing effective models and practices

Which models of joining up (or combination of models) are most effective in improving service quality for citizens?

How does this vary according to sector, location or user group?

It is often taken for granted that joined up public services will inherently be more responsive to citizens' needs. But 'joining up' encompasses a wide range of different initiatives, from loose information sharing to fully integrated management teams. Do all of these approaches improve outcomes for citizens? Or do certain combinations work better than others? There is currently limited evidence of whether joining up actually drives improvements for citizens, what combination of approaches works best, and whether this might vary by sector, location or outcome.

#### What are the most effective ways of sharing learning from different models?

Given the lack of conclusive evidence around which approaches are more or less effective in different circumstances, practitioners and policymakers currently find it difficult to identify what might help them to solve the problems they are grappling with. To ensure that existing initiatives are built on and drive meaningful change on a wide scale, it is essential that best practice is shared widely and easily between practitioners, policymakers and wider stakeholders, while taking account of the contextual factors that might affect how an approach is adapted from one place to another.

#### Putting powers and capabilities in the right areas

What powers and flexibilities do local areas need to join up around citizens?

Who should receive these (e.g. individuals, communities or places)? And in what ways do the chosen geographies affect the ability of local actors to deliver citizen-focused outcomes?

In much of the literature, the assumption is that more devolution and more joined up service delivery go hand in hand. <sup>104</sup> But, what is devolved and who receives devolved powers – a combined authority, a local authority, a provider or an individual – will affect how services can join up. In some cases, aggregating at a local level can result in freedoms being taken from local authorities and given to larger geographies, which can hinder their ability to join up around local, citizen needs. For example, the current devolution agenda focuses on economic growth, which has led to an emphasis on combined authorities and city regions rather than local authorities. As the devolution agenda progresses over the course of the current parliament, it is essential to think strategically about whether certain geographies may help or hinder joining up around local, citizen needs and how this might inform the distribution of powers and functions across the system.

#### What mix of people, capabilities and ways of working are required to support this?

#### What needs to change in Whitehall to support a locally joined up system?

Much of the current debate on English devolution focuses on how local areas can get the freedoms they need from Whitehall, with little analysis of what role, if any, central government should continue to play. At the Institute for Government, we have previously argued that central government needs to see its role as one of 'system steward'. Here, central policymakers set the 'rules of the game' to steer local actors towards achieving high-level aims, but do not get involved in the everyday practicalities of delivering services. Instead they grant local actors the flexibility to continually adjust what they provide to meet local needs.<sup>105</sup> In a similar vein, the National Audit Office has called on the Cabinet Office and the Treasury to improve their 'sponsorship' of service integration efforts across government by sending a clear signal about its importance and co-ordinating across departments to identify promising areas for service integration.<sup>106</sup>

But more clarity is needed on the role that different central government departments play vis-à-vis local actors, the mix of people, capabilities and ways of working required to support service integration, and whether changes are needed to the structures and processes of central government to enable greater joining up at a local level.

#### Getting the right leadership and governance in place

#### How do the qualities required to lead a single organisation align with, or differ from, those needed for whole system change?

Much of the literature refers to the need for better leadership, whether in the form of 'collaborative leadership',107 'systems leadership'108 or 'strong leadership'.109 But there is not much agreement on what this looks like and the extent to which these qualities align with, or differ from, those required to lead a single organisation or service area. For example, in what circumstances might it be effective if leadership:

- came from a politician, civil servant or local authority chief executive
- operated horizontally (across a delivery chain) or vertically (down a delivery chain)
- · resided in the hands of someone at the top of the organisational hierarchy or came from elsewhere in the system
- focused on directing others to carry out specific tasks or empowering them to explore and experiment?

The reality, of course, is that different forms of leadership may be needed in different times, places and stages of joining up. For those trying to get new initiatives off the ground, steers around what works in particular circumstances are currently lacking.

Effective leadership is of course only the first step. The success of a programme often relies on a key individual, or individuals, to get things off the ground; but, our previous research has shown that if the initiative stays with them, it will also leave with them. Therefore, how do you balance stability of leadership (which is crucial for maintaining momentum) with the need to build outwards to a broader coalition of leaders (which risks diluting momentum)? At what point, does it make sense to transition from a personalised to a collective leadership model? And how do you prevent the agenda weakening as a result?

### What types of governance arrangements have the potential to improve clarity around roles and responsibilities when outcomes are shared and leadership is distributed across a system?

Joined up services at a local level significantly complicate accountability. Where two or more organisations share responsibility horizontally, for example by pooling funding, or vertically, through central and local collaboration, it can be unclear who is accountable for shared outcomes, and who is responsible for failure. For example, where a programme is funded and overseen by central government, but designed and delivered at a local level, is it the central government department or the local authority that is responsible for ensuring success against desired outcomes? The assumption is both, but without clarifying these relationships, accountability is likely to 'bounce back' to central government, fuelling reluctance to devolve any further powers to local areas.<sup>111</sup>

### What types of local scrutiny arrangements could help incentivise a focus on citizens in efforts to join up and integrate different services?

Local areas need stronger scrutiny powers, including powers for local authorities to investigate and challenge services funded from the public purse on behalf of their citizens and communities. Strengthening local accountability must also be balanced with national minimum standards and the expectation that central government should intervene to protect these. However, how this balance is achieved, and the process for distributing roles and responsibilities, is up for debate.

### **Next phase**

These gaps in our knowledge need to be addressed if public services are to better meet local, citizen needs. We will explore some of these questions in the next phase of our work, which will involve 'deep dive' visits to local areas to understand how joining up affects citizens' day-to-day lives and how learning can be shared more widely.

### List of abbreviations

BIS Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

CCG Clinical commissioning group

DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government

DWP Department for Work and Pensions

LGA Local Government Association

MASH Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

NEET Not in education, employment or training

ODPM Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

SEU Social Exclusion Unit

### **Endnotes**

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