COLLABORATIVE WORKING

*Emily Miles with William Trott*

INSIDE

*Inside*OUT

A series of personal perspectives on government effectiveness

INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNMENT

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COLLABORATIVE WORKING

How publicly funded services can take a whole systems approach
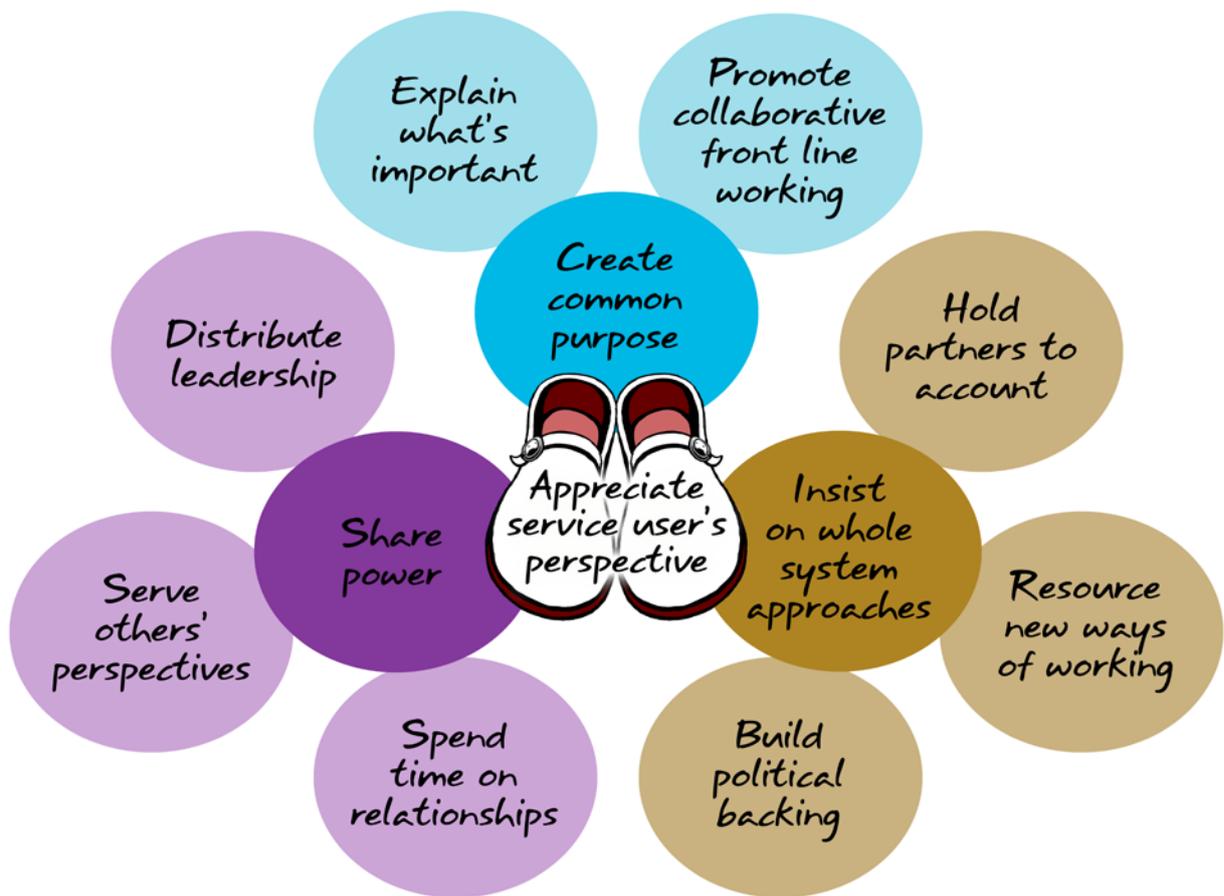
Foreword

Trying to promote collaboration between publicly funded organisations has often been very difficult in the UK. Many attempts to encourage collaboration have been met with stiff resistance and the resulting fragmentation has meant a less effective way of translating policy into services which meet the needs of citizens.

Better ways of making policy and new models for public services are two of the Institute's core themes and that is why we are delighted to provide a platform for Emily Miles to publish the findings from the work that she carried out as part of her Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship. She has found some brilliant examples of successful collaborations as far apart as Toronto and Bangalore; but she also found a lot of common agreement on what made those collaborations work. Emily has built on her own experience both at the centre of government and in one of the big Executive Agencies to ask how Whitehall might need to change to enable (or at least not get in the way of) collaboration.

Discussions about collaboration are often abstract. Emily's focus on a grassroots view of what is needed for effective collaborative working is a refreshing and excellent contribution to this debate.
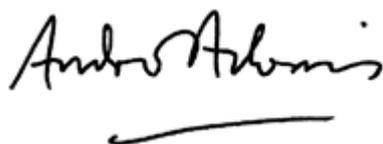
Andrew Adonis

The Rt. Hon. Lord Adonis, Director, Institute for Government

About our InsideOUT series

There is little systematic attempt to capture the knowledge and insights of people who have worked closely with government and share them with a wider audience. The Institute for Government is keen to remedy that. Our InsideOUT series gives people with an interesting perspective on government effectiveness an opportunity to share their personal views on a topic that sheds light on one of the Institute's core themes. The Institute for Government is pleased to be able to provide a platform to contribute to public knowledge and debate, but the views expressed are those of the author.

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About the authors

Emily Miles has been a civil servant since 2000 in the Home Office, in Downing Street, in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, and in the UK Border Agency where she led the programme to clear the UK's asylum backlog. She has taught system thinking to civil servants at the National School of Government, and was awarded a Winston Churchill Fellowship in 2010-11. Before joining the Civil Service she did degrees in English Literature and in the International Law of Armed Conflict, and worked for the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva. She has been a Trustee of the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust since 2000.

William Trott has worked at the Institute for Government since March 2011. He studied Politics at Warwick University and since graduating has worked for the European Citizen Action Service in Brussels, New Statesman Magazine and the parliamentary office of Ben Bradshaw MP.

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Executive summary

In 2010 and 2011, I spent eight weeks meeting people in the USA, Canada and India who were funded by the public sector and working collaboratively. They were working collaboratively across departments, between agencies, between national and local government, between the public sector, social enterprises and NGO sector, and with the private sector. I talked to nearly 70 different people in three countries, working in 49 different organisations, on 47 different collaborative projects. I wanted a bottom-up, grassroots view of what was needed to work collaboratively, rather than a theory based on my experience of working in the centre of government.

Why did I do this? I had become frustrated at the amount of effort and money I saw being wasted as publicly funded organisations struggled to work with each other. 'We are all funded by the taxpayer', I would say to myself, 'Why can we not sort this out better?' This was in spite of at least a decade of central government initiatives that had mandated much collaborative working at regional and local level in the UK, especially on cutting crime, regeneration, and dysfunctional families.

The people I interviewed told me what assisted them in working collaboratively and they told me what got in their way. I learnt three major lessons from these conversations.

Lesson 1: **Successful collaborations have a common purpose, strong insistence on a whole systems approach, shared power, and used the service user's perspective to stimulate change. Neglecting any of these four core themes makes the collaboration less successful.**

There was much more coalescence from this gallimaufry of interviewees than I had anticipated. Four core themes significantly support successful collaborative working, and this was true in India and in North America. The themes were to:

- create common purpose, supported by explaining what is important and promoting collaborative front line working (Chapter 1, section 3).

- insist on whole system approaches, supported by holding partners to account, resourcing new ways of working, and building political backing (Chapter 1, section 4).

- share power, supported by distributing leadership, serving others' perspectives (thinking it possible that your own perspective is partial), and spending time on relationships (Chapter 2).

The most significant magnetic attractor for doing this was:

- appreciating the service user's perspective, or walking in the service user's shoes. This was supported by using appropriate outcome measures, getting service users into the heart of governance, and listening to citizens and communities (Chapter 1, section 2).
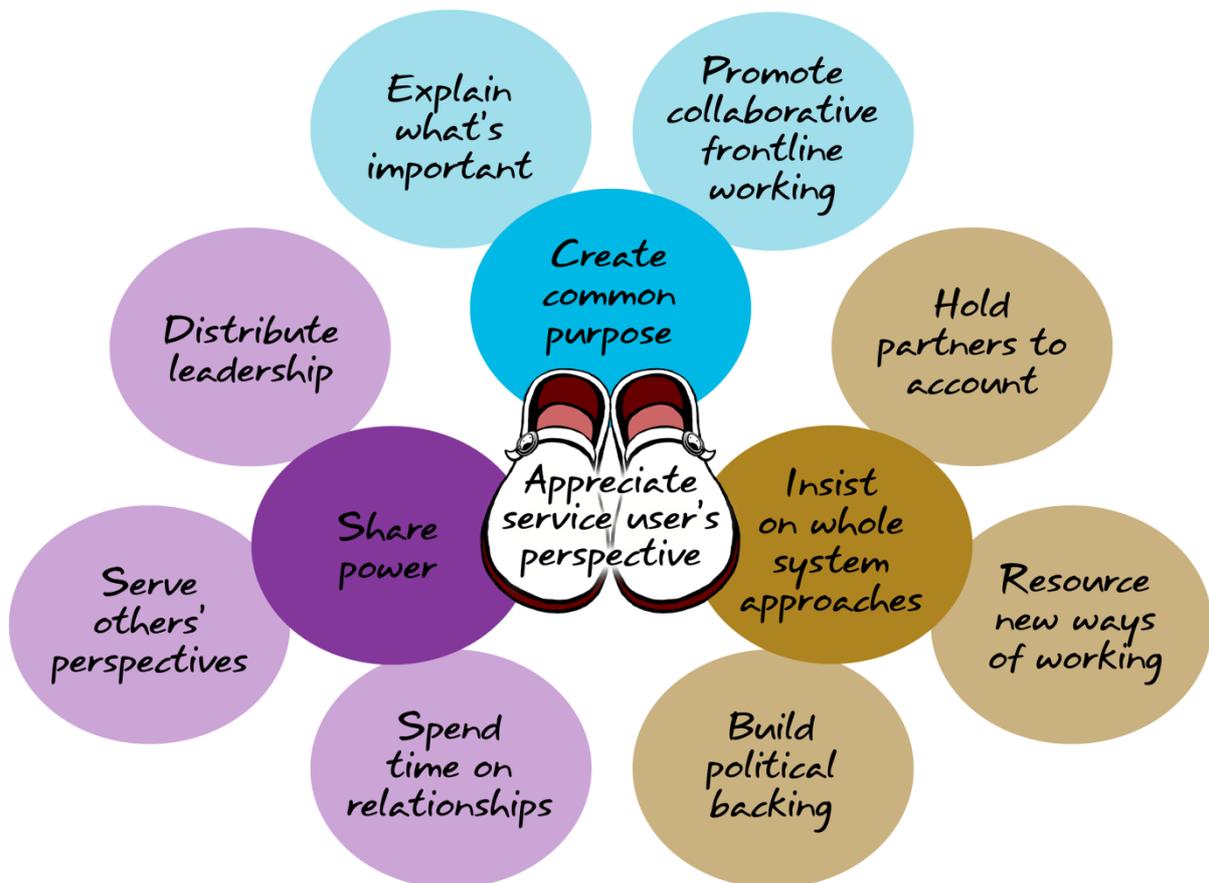
Given the significant convergence of views around these four principal themes, my hypothesis is that UK efforts on collaboration in the last decade focused mostly on the theme of 'insisting on collaboration' (for example through legislation, pooled budgets, joint targets) but failed to attend in a systematic way to the other themes. I believe that where all four themes are given attention either accidentally or by design, the collaborations will be more successful.

Lesson 2: The theme of 'sharing power' is the hardest one of these for Whitehall to do well.

I learnt the second lesson by noticing how uncomfortable I felt around the issue of sharing power. Wikipedia and the the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (Chapter 2, sections 1.1 and 1.2) provided me with two examples of a radically different approach to working collaboratively. Both used a networked model where the power is shared broadly and deeply across a community of interest, as opposed to being held by one or two key leaders or departments. My

instinct to control and contain, in order to provide certainty, stemmed from my desire to serve the minister, and to protect my Whitehall department's reputation. Living with the possibility that it all might go wrong, that the community of interest might adapt in a way I had not planned or wanted, felt scary. I was touching on the core of Whitehall's immunity to change. What surprised me further was that it was clear from my interviews that 'not knowing' and 'letting go' had to happen at the same time as insisting on whole system approaches. So strength was needed alongside surrender. It was both/and, not either/or.

The Coalition Government has done a lot to counteract this tendency of Whitehall and the more 'command and control' predilections of the previous Government. The current UK Government has legislated for directly elected mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners, abolished the Audit Commission, and done away with huge suites of targets for local bodies. They are eager to put the purchasing power, not in the hands of officials, but in the hands of citizens. The surrendering of power has been happening, in spite of Whitehall's discomfort (Introduction).

What my travels taught me, however, was that the surrender of power must not be done 'cold turkey'. There does need to be some leadership about the behaviours and service design in the reformed landscape, at the same time as offering autonomy. The 'both/and' lesson for insisting on collaborative working AND sharing power is critical. So while the Coalition Government is devolving power, it needs also to do some insisting. I am not suggesting that this insistence should necessarily come from Whitehall. I learnt that the source of power can be one you looked up to (vertical) or a source from the community (horizontal). Neither am I convinced that relying solely on the citizen as customer will be a sufficiently robust pull towards the necessary service redesign that needs to happen. A baby does not go from crawling to walking without the 'coasting' and 'clinging to fingers' stages. We need to let go of power wisely. (Chapter 2, section 1.3)

Lesson 3: Collaboration is hard. But it is worth it.

My third lesson was that collaboration is not easy, but from what I have seen, the benefits can significantly outweigh the costs.

Collaboration can take effort, emotional resilience, and courage. There are significant barriers to collaboration, including power struggles, institutional inertia, lack of passion and time, changes in leadership, and impatience. (Chapter 3, section 1)

I learnt that collaboration can require trade-offs between equally legitimate and competing demands of 'public value', or 'public good'. Staff try their best to prioritise one 'public value' purpose over another, and institutions often mirror these divisions. The prison service 'punishes'. The probation service primarily 'rehabilitates'. The police 'enforce'. The health service 'heals'. But all of these 'public goods' are needed in relation to one person. An offender might need catching, punishing, rehabilitating and help with their drug habit. These activities can often strain against each other, with different agencies responsible for delivering on each need with the same offender. (Chapter 3, section 1)

There are, however, strong reasons to collaborate. I found evidence on my travels and from the UK that successful collaboration saves money and makes services more effective. Without strong

common purpose, a commitment to a whole system view, sharing power, and the ability to appreciate the service user's perspective, the barriers to collaboration are inevitably going to overwhelm and prevent the collaboration being successful (Chapter 3, section 2).

My lesson? It will not always work and it certainly will not be easy. But it is worth a try.

Conclusions

I am left with some general queries (throughout chapters 1 and 2) for those leaders who are trying to promote collaborative working. They include:

- How much privilege do you give to the voices of service users in service design and policy design and in the way money flows? Who have you invited to witness the collaborative working? Who holds a 'whole system perspective'? What more could you do to promote consistent and regular service user participation in the system?

- How often have you explained 'why' the collaboration is worth it recently? How have you challenged and supported service professionals to adapt to working more collaboratively? What more training might you offer to help people understand the need to work in this way? How are professional competencies, professional development, and selection criteria geared to working collaboratively in order to improve services?

- What more could you do to insist on collaborative working? Have you put in place enough people to work out the details so that organisations can join up and 'stuff' doesn't get in the way? Have you policed your partners' behaviours and challenged those who are not operating collaboratively? What other sources of authority can you create for working collaboratively, including financial sources? Can you move beyond it happening because the leader says so? Alternatively, to what extent are you over-emphasising this strand without giving attention to 'creating common purpose', 'sharing power', and 'walking in the service user's shoes'?

- How could you share power more, to enable the complex system you lead, to adapt without you dictating the details? To what extent are you involving the community of practice in design and oversight, not just in implementation? How are you handling not being 'in control'? How can you buy political space to give the time and authority to others in the system to change how the system is run, as opposed to limiting others' room for manoeuvre?

- How can you build on existing strong relationships? In what ways are you supporting relationship building within the collaboration? If the departure of key leaders is a significant risk to the collaboration, how can you use the other factors to help the collaboration sustain?

It is difficult, as a central Government civil servant, to resist 'top down' answers to all this. I naturally reach for guidance, legislation, performance management, 'strategy' and regulation as a way of creating the system I want to see. I do not have any answers, but I do feel that bravery and some experimentation is required. In Chapter 4 are some ideas that I think are promising and we could dare to develop further. I hope they would result in increased collaboration between siloed public services.

1. Continue to devolve power and money down to headteachers, doctors, Police and Crime Commissioners etc, so that those nearest the service users can lead collaborative working.
- Whitehall needs to ensure that these local actors have sufficient freedoms to work together, both financially, and legally.

2. Do more to ensure that nationally delivered services have empowered local interlocutors who can join in the deal making locally.
- National services, like DWP, the UK Border Agency, even HMRC, could be authorised to act even more locally. As for idea 1, they would need sufficient financial, legal and performance management freedoms and incentives to work with others.

- This may involve looking closely at the way benefits spend and criminal justice spend, in particular, are parcelled up and who is incentivised to invest it across organisations to save money for the whole, not the part.

3. Support early innovators of collaborative working in local areas, once existing public service reforms in health, schools and policing have been implemented.
- Once Police and Crime Commissioners, and GP Fundholders, and the Universal Credit are established, the Government could support some pathfinding areas with extra assistance (e.g. legal and financial) to help them do deals between themselves for better whole systems approaches. The current central Government work which supports early free schools, and mutuals is a model for how to support early adopters.

4. Support local communities working with certain high-cost service users to demand their local group of service providers take a whole systems approach.
- E.g. A '5 local organisations agree that there's a problem' then triggers a service redesign debate. Would mirror the '100,000 signatures triggers Commons Debate' rule.

- Or trial a 'wiki' or 'networked' approach locally where service providers and other groups set their own rules for how they plan to work together.

5. Consider ways to protect public service users where publicly funded bodies fail to provide a sufficiently joined up (and therefore cheaper and more effective) service.

- Are there ways to protect or help vulnerable public sector service users in the same way that consumers are protected and helped by the Office of Fair Trading?

- e.g. Collect and publish data on 'service user experience of publicly funded services' for particularly expensive segments of the benefits population, by local area.

6. In Whitehall, try out new approaches to developing key national decision-making process guidance which share power more broadly.

- E.g. Wiki-Guidance writing for applying for CRB checks, doing self-assessment tax returns, applying for an extension of leave to remain, to involve communities of interest in co-creating guidance rather than the traditional 'draft, consult, amend' model.

7. In Whitehall, establish some crosscutting delivery projects to help people through critical life events for high volume, low complexity services that are done nationally and online.

- E.g. single online service for employers taking on new staff - to deal with CRB checks, right to work and registration for tax purposes, Single online service for new parents - to deal with child tax credit, child benefit, tax-free savings, maternity and paternity payments, birth certificate, etc. Single online service for new pensioners and one for new migrants.

8. Bring the service user's perspective into design and delivery by electing service users from the community of practice onto Whitehall and Agency executive boards, a bit like non-executive directors at Departmental level.

- Would probably have to be at sub-departmental level to have the most impact.

- E.g. a benefits recipient or Citizens Advice Bureau volunteer on the JobCentre Plus Board; someone with a long-term health condition onto the governance arrangements for Social Care or long-term health conditions in the Department of Health.

- They would need to have real input into strategy and policy. Not just a 'consultative forum'.

9. Make policy makers and service deliverers alive to the service user perspective by requiring policy makers to get deep and broad exposure to citizen perspectives in their career path.

Introduction

Why collaboration?

In late 2009 I applied to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for a grant to explore how to promote collaborative working between publicly funded services. I was awarded a Fellowship for the year 2010-11. The Trust funded me for up to 8 weeks of travel in that period, and I chose to go to the USA and Canada in October and November 2010 and to India in May 2011. I took a leave of absence from the Home Office from April 2010 until August 2011.

In applying for my Fellowship, I had been struck by the story of Winston Churchill wooing the USA before and during the Second World War.

> *Their (Franklin D Roosevelt and Winston Churchill's) story is a kind of love story. There was an early period of scepticism and courting from the invasion of Poland to Pearl Harbor; once America was in the war, Churchill and FDR spent two years in a grand pageant of personal intimacy and diplomacy. ... But there is no doubt their friendship helped win the war.*[1]

This practice of alliance building, particularly the emphasis on maintaining personal relationships, and then the way in which allegiances to one's own institution or nation overrode the common purpose, were what tugged at me. How on earth do you collaborate successfully when the priorities and needs of your parent institution or nation end up yanking you back to a more parochial, less holistic point of view?

I was interested because I had just spent three years running the programme to clear the UK's historic asylum casework backlog. Those asylum seekers in my caseload who were legally entitled to stay in the UK interacted with a number of different parts of government, from the Department for Work and Pensions, to local authorities, to the UK Border Agency. I had improved the way my directorate worked with local authorities, but we did not get as good at it as I would have liked, and our coordination with DWP was challenging.

I also saw, when I was working in the Downing Street Policy Directorate, the way in which setting a target had galvanised collaborative action - but how these cross-cutting targets diverted attention from other important priorities, or competed with local targets.

And the more I looked, the more I saw that lack of collaboration was causing increased public sector spending, and much poorer services to those in need. It seemed to be true for those seeking work, those who were long-term sick and on housing benefit, those who had just lost a loved one, and so on. I was not the first person to notice this: there had been a decade of efforts to join things up, from drug action teams to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, to the efforts of Every Child Matters to join up education and social services departments in local authorities, to Local Strategic Partnerships which aimed to bring together agencies and organisations in a local area. But these did not seem to be making the difference that was clearly needed.

I realised that the government organograms and formal accountability relationships did not reflect the actual relationships and networks of connections that exist to administer the system, and achieve the public outcome desired: reduced crime, dignified care, healthy and responsible young adults, the elderly living safely and well at home etc. To tackle any of these problems and to make services more citizen-centric, collaborative working was fundamental.

So how could we do collaboration better? Did it really require top-down leadership? Did ministers help or hinder? Were local areas getting on with it while Whitehall just got in the way? Could we get the budgets and incentive structures better aligned? How could the experience of the service user be harnessed to improve service design and implementation? Surely we could save money and improve citizen satisfaction this way? I did not want to sit in Whitehall and come up with the answers. I wanted to talk to people who were already doing it well, in other contexts, and see whether there was anything I could learn from them.

Method

In October and November 2010, I visited Washington DC; Richmond, Virginia; New York; New Haven, Connecticut; Ottawa and Toronto in Ontario, Canada; and Santa Fe and Albuquerque in New Mexico. In May 2011, I visited Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bangalore in India.

In each of these cities I sought out projects, usually funded in some way by the local or national government, where 'collaborative working' was a key element to the project's realisation. In some cases, I also talked to people working in exclusively non-profit or social enterprise collaborations. In total I interviewed 69 people in 49 organisations working on 47 projects. As Appendix A on methodology explains, I kept the interview structure relatively loose and tended to ask questions like, 'what caused the collaboration to be successful?' and 'when was it difficult?'

A full list of those I interviewed is at Appendix B. But here is a flavour of some of the people I met.

- A judge, a probation officer, a psychotherapist and a data analyst in a collaboration which had halved the rate of detention of juveniles (and cut costs) in one county in New Mexico.

- A Chief Operating Officer, a director of training, a regional government director, a citizen-centric think tank, and the senior lead on partnerships in Service Canada (which has saved money by offering a combined service to deal with Canadians' pensions, birth certificates, and welfare benefits).

- The Director of the Education service of a Canadian town, who had used collaborative working to improve literacy rates for primary school aged children from 59% being able to read, to 91% being able to read at the end of Grade 1.

- The former Commissioner for Corrections and the former Commissioner for Homelessness in New York, who had collaborated with other departments and with many non-profit organisations and community groups to get prisoners jobs and houses on release from prison and reduced reoffending (see Box 1).

- The Director of an NGO project, working with city government on adult literacy in the Mumbai slums, who also worked with 97 other NGOs in Maharashtra state, on improving community advocacy for the disenfranchised, poor and excluded.

- The instigator of the first ever social worker presence in an Indian police station, which has turned into a widespread model of collaborative working between social workers and police officers on domestic violence in most Indian states.

- The founders of the Indian website, IPaidABribe.Com who have also had a game changing impact on the way that megacities do citizen participation throughout India.

- The Indian board member for the Wikimedia Foundation, which runs the website Wikipedia. Wikipedia has 10 million people registered as editors, of which 100,000 are active every month, and between them they have collaborated to produce the most extensive and multilingual encyclopaedia ever known, accessed by over 360 million readers.

I have been asking them, 'when it works, why does it work?' And 'when it has been difficult, what has been difficult?' I have not asked everyone the same questions, and our conversations have often roamed from structure to culture to personality to power. I am not a scientist, and a social scientist would probably pick legitimate holes in my method. However, I did come to some conclusions about the critical ingredients for successful collaboration, thanks to the technique of cognitive mapping which I describe more fully in Appendix 1. I then brought all that back to the UK and, with the excellent support and challenge of the Institute for Government, pulled it together into a something more digestible and provocative than a set of interview notes and some good memories.

Current UK Context

The Coalition Government's public services agenda aims to put the user at the centre of public services:

> *Too many of our public services are still run according to the maxim 'the man in Whitehall really does know best'. Decades of top-down prescription and centralisation have put bureaucratic imperatives above the needs of service users, while damaging the public service ethos by continually second-guessing highly trained professionals.* [2]

'Sharing power', one of the themes in my model, has therefore been a key part of the Coalition Government's work. There have been many initiatives in the last 15 months to take this forward, including:

- The abolition of Local Area Agreements, the Audit Commission, Police Authorities, and statutory Regional Development Agencies.

- The establishment of Local Enterprise Partnerships to encourage local economic with no statutory basis, no central funding and a hope for high levels of private sector investment. [3]

- Community budgets where 16 areas are being given direct control of a pooled Whitehall funding pot for families with complex needs, although as yet no pooling has taken place.[4]

- The drive towards having directly elected city mayors through referenda in 2012 as outlined in the Localism Bill.

- Police and Crime Commissioners, replacing Police Authorities in England and Wales to keep the police more directly accountable to the public for delivering safer communities and cutting crime and antisocial behaviour.[5]

- The Office for Civil Society (in England) promoting public sector working with the voluntary and community sector, including with mutuals, cooperatives, charities and social enterprises.

- GP commissioners replacing Primary Care Trusts in commissioning health care for local people.

- Increased community powers over planning, giving councils a general power of competence and giving residents the power to instigate local referenda on any local issue, as well as to veto excessive council tax increases.[6]

Few of these initiatives have specifically addressed the theme of collaboration between services at a local or national level. There is a massive decentralisation going on, but mostly in a direct vertical relationship between one local body and one national body, for example from DCLG to local authorities, from the Home Office to the police, and from the Department of Health to the NHS. Community budgets and directly elected mayors are the, as yet unproven, exception to this. There are also some areas of public sector spending that remain resolutely national, from the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Agency to HMRC.

Definition of collaboration

The word 'collaboration' can mean different things to different people. I want to be clear here about what I mean by 'collaboration'. I do not mean interdepartmental communication. I also do not mean partnership working, where just two organisations are working together. Neither do I mean a contracting relationship like a public-private partnership, where one agency procures a service from another body. These all have their complexities, and in a sense are versions of collaborative working, but they have not been the focus of my inquiry.

I wanted to look particularly at situations where three or more publicly funded organisations were working together with the same service users to deliver something of public value, but where the organisations might have competing priorities. They were working consistently together, rather than just consulting each other on an ad hoc basis.

In the main, then, this was about collaboration between Whitehall departments and national agencies (in the UK this would be organisations like the UK Border Agency, HM Revenue and Customs, Job Centre Plus, the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Authority, the Criminal Records Bureau, the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Agency etc), and collaboration between national

agencies and local bodies, and finally, collaboration between local bodies (like local authorities, police forces, prisons and probation services, social services, housing associations, prisons, commissioners of health and social care and so on).

Whole Systems Approach

In this report I often refer to a 'whole systems approach'. By this, I mean efforts which try and expand the interaction with the service user from focusing on one of their needs (for example, the need for good healthcare) to more of their needs simultaneously (for example, the need for decent housing and a source of income). Whole systems, for me, means seeing the service user or citizen as a whole human being. Organising public services with a 'whole systems' perspective tries to encompass more agencies and departments in its scope and looks at the relationships *between* agencies and actors, not just the constituent parts of the system as if they were independent of one another.

Devolved Administrations

This report does not successfully cover the context of devolved administrations. Where I talk about the role of Whitehall, I am largely talking about it in relation to public services in England. The questions and ideas I am describing are likely to have relevance for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - and for those governing and working in public sectors in other countries - but the ideas I reach in chapter 4 are mainly focused on Whitehall and its relationship to public services in the English configuration.

I intend this report to do three things:

- give Whitehall policymakers ideas about promoting collaborative public services which take a whole systems view

- give those leading local collaborations insights into how to lead these more effectively so that a whole systems approach is more possible

and

- convince you that collaborative working is worth pursuing more widely.

I hope the debate can continue beyond this report.

Emily Miles, London, October 2011

1. What needs to be in place for successful collaborative working?

Box 1: New York Prisoner Discharge Planning

I interviewed former New York Commissioner for Corrections, Marty Horn, about his experiences of working in collaboration to reduce reoffending by planning services for prisoners leaving prison. The collaboration arose from Marty Horn and Linda Gibbs, the Commissioner for Homelessness, riding in a lift together. They had both just discovered the same thing: that the population going in and out of the jails had a massive overlap with the population of people who were homeless. They established the New York Discharge Planning Collaboration together.

The Frequent Users Service Enhancement project targeted individuals who had constantly shuttled back and forth between the jail and shelter systems. Clients were housed through the Department of Health and New York City Housing Authority, and social service providers acted as master-lease holders for accommodation, ensuring that rents were paid to landlords in time. The main benefit of this collaboration effort was that it enabled partners to identify the population that had a high impact on both shelter and jail systems and then, as a result, they could define a set of intense, tailored interventions and case management to address that population. In a preliminary evaluation, 92% of clients remained housed, and 89% avoided going back to jail. Marty also involved community organisations and other NGOs at Rikers Island prison, giving them access in jail to prisoners so that jobs, housing and even debt repayment schedules could be planned prior to release. A more detailed evaluation for one project relating to the Rikers Island prison saw 59% of those who had completed the post release programme not returning to jail over a 12-month period compared to 30% of those who failed to complete it.

Marty said that there was nothing in the incentives that encouraged him to work collaboratively. The Mayor's priority was to ensure that no inmates had escaped, and that he stuck to the budget. But Marty had a partner, a common purpose, a long history of working in this field and good relationships. He shared power with other groups, and insisted on a whole system approach. The magnet for all of this was the experience of the offenders themselves.

Sifting through my interview notes on my return to the UK, I noticed there was a considerable amount of coalescence and overlap between what people had said about working in collaboration. I painstakingly grouped the evidence into a list of themes. It seemed to me this was more than a set of 12 bullet points. These themes influenced and pulled and pushed against each other. They were in relationship.
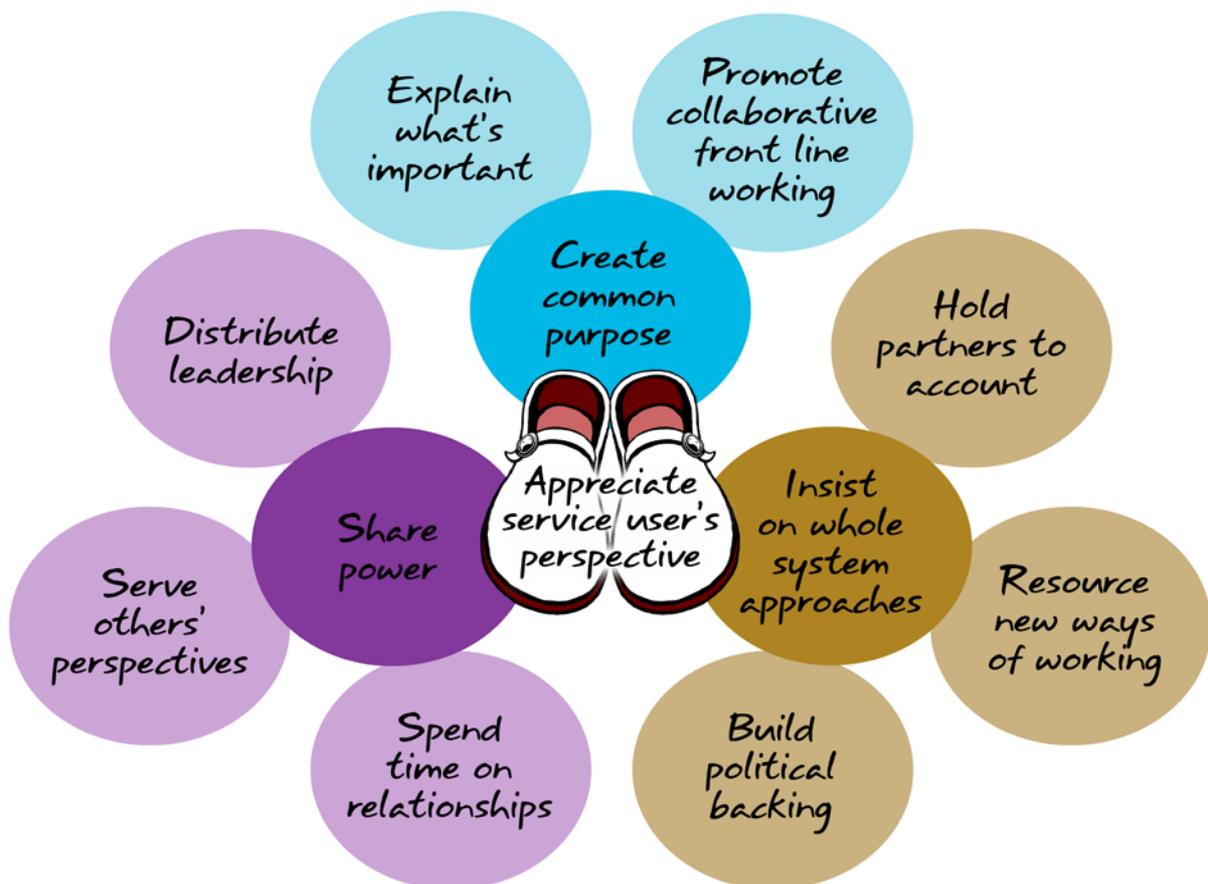
1.1   The Model

I arranged the themes into four groups, three of which are expanded in the model above.

At the centre was the theme that seemed to me to be the 'magnetic attractor', that of appreciating the service user's perspective.[7] Either explicitly or obliquely, almost all of my interviewees were trying to see the system in which they worked through the eyes of the service user. They were attempting to walk in their shoes. The interviewees who did not talk about the service user's perspective were either working on broad-brush policy issues that did not have an explicit 'user' (like foreign policy), or were working in the very centre of government, and seemed more absorbed in agency perspectives than those of the citizen or service user.

There were then three themes which seemed to support the delivery of a service that was more attuned to the service user's perspective.

The first was creating common purpose. This was about the collaborating organisations wanting to achieve the same thing, having a shared vision about where they were going.

The second was insisting on whole system approaches. By this, I mean a source of power insisting that those working on the service looked more broadly than just their own agency, and thought about the 'system' rather than just the 'organisation'.

The third was almost the opposite of the second, sharing power. This was about letting go of control, not insisting, and allowing others' perspectives and authority to have power in the system.
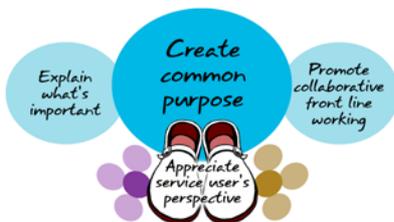
Each of these three themes had supporting activities. Under common purpose was 'explaining what is important' and 'promote collaborative front line working', which was activity focused on internal culture like training, selection of staff and supporting those who already crossed boundaries.

Activities which supported 'insist on whole system approaches' were the use of power to hold partners to account (this was done vertically, by someone senior, or horizontally, by communities of practice or communities of interest); making sure new ways of working were resourced with staff and time; and doing what you could to build political backing, including taking courage personally as a leader.
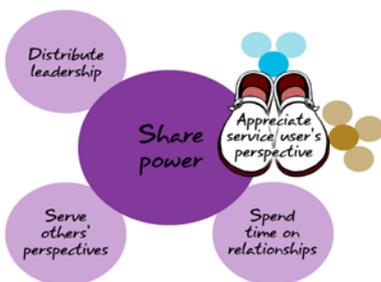
The activities which related to the 'sharing power' section were: spending time on relationships (including people staying in jobs for more than a few years); serving other perspectives (another way of saying, disassociating from your own perspective and allowing others' versions of the world to be valid); and distributing leadership so that others closer to the service user had power and authority to allow the service to flex and adapt.

A few of these 'outer ring' supporting activities actually supported more than one of the other supporting activities. For example, spending time on relationships helped people hold partners to account and resource new ways of working. Explaining what was important was also critical for

influencing junior staff, building political backing, and shoring up efforts to share power. The diagram does not show these relationships, in order to keep the graphic readable, but these relationships were there.

These 'outer ring' supporting activities were occasionally mentioned as frequently as the 'inner ring', so their location on the outer ring does not necessarily diminish their importance to the collaborative effort. The activities are arranged in a way that tries to show what causes what, not what is more or less important.

In order to come up with these themes, I did a considerable amount of amalgamation and interpretation, grouping comments from my interviewees under different headings. This map does not mirror any single map from any of my interviewees, but is a synthesis of all 69 interviews.

I used an interview format which invited interviewees to reflect on the critical factors that had made a difference to their collaborative project. The fact that there was any reiteration of themes was therefore not as a result of my questions but because these were factors that people independently identified as important. I did not present this list to my interviewees and ask them which ones they would 'tick' - in which case they might have ticked all 12, or none of them. This is a list that was created inductively after the interviews.

Below is a table which shows how often the different themes were mentioned.[8]

Activity	Out of 69
Create Common Purpose	66
Insist on Whole System Approaches	62
Explain what is important	61
Appreciate Service User's Perspective	60
Hold partners to account	55
Share power	55
Resource new ways of working	53
Spend time of relationships	48
Serve others' perspectives	42
Build political backing	41
Distribute leadership	39
Promote collaborative working at the front line	36

The table implies that 'create common purpose' would be a priority activity, followed by 'insisting on whole system approaches', then 'appreciating service user's perspective' and finally 'share power' (to pick out the four main themes). I cannot say that that would be true in practice. The activities are in relationship to each other. Without a 'common purpose' or 'appreciating the service user's perspective', 'insisting on whole system approaches' and 'sharing power' are collaboration without a point.

What I want to show by using the table is that the twelve themes were mentioned by many people, in many different projects, and this coalescence is striking and therefore noteworthy. I also want to show that the four core themes are in the top half of the table. They are therefore a good short-hand summary for what interviewees claimed were essential for collaborative working. The fact that between 80% and 90% of the people I interviewed listed these four themes as being important for collaborative working is also important.

I did not choose the top four themes as my core themes, because it was clear to me that some of these activities supported other activities. Explaining what is important was an activity in the service of creating common purpose. Holding partners to account was an activity in the service of insisting on whole systems approaches. The four themes I chose were the activities which seemed to hold the model together.

I explain much more about these 12 activities in the rest of this chapter.

1.2 Appreciate service user's perspective

At the heart of everyone's successful collaboration was the service user's perspective. Almost everyone mentioned this, either obliquely or in depth. Looking at, and appreciating, the system from this point of view increased the desire of those working in the system to facilitate change. The metaphors of 'walking in someone else's shoes' and 'looking at it through their eyes' describe this well, and resulted in the shoes on the diagram of my model. This also meant disassociating from one's own perspective, in order to understand what someone else might feel or experience. Of course, service users themselves come in many shapes and sizes, with varying levels of education, motivation, and hugely varied needs. But the effort to see the world from their perspective nevertheless took place.

There were several ways that projects had of doing this. I was told about using outcome measures, institutionalising the service user perspective through governance, paying attention to what front line staff were saying, and broadening community participation. The more these methods were used, the more the collaboration survived changes in personnel and other challenges to sustainability.

1.2.1 Outcome measures

Outcome measures were cited by 42 interviewees, involved with 14 projects. These are indicators of progress on something of importance to the citizen, or the project. They are distinct from input or output measures.[9] For example,

- The New York project to prevent homelessness in the ex-offender population had a joint set of indicators on key outcomes that were reviewed quarterly by the whole collaboration.

- The Council on Virginia's Future had pioneered a scorecard so that you could assess the progress of the Commonwealth of Virginia by glancing at one page - and in fact this was on display in their meeting room.[10] Jane Kusiak, Executive Director of the Council, commented that *"It was only by setting the outcome measures that people could start drilling down into what was going on."* As an example, the State had, apparently, been performing unusually badly on infant mortality. They had discovered, for example, that the emergency medical technicians, in the ambulances, had never talked to the neonatologists. The ambulances had been taking the babies in trouble to the wrong hospitals, which did not have the right expertise. Rectifying this had started to have a positive impact on infant mortality.

- Having the measures alone did not make the difference. It worked only if the measures were being used to start new conversations. Bill Hogarth, the Director of the Board of Education in the York region of Ontario, Canada asked, *"How many pupils can read in kindergarten, at the start of Grade 1, and at the end of Grade 1? What about at the end of Grade 2?"* He commented, *"No one knew the answers when I started asking. The questions forced the thinking."* It got to the point where each school had a case management approach to monitoring students' progress in literacy, with whiteboards up in the staffroom tracking the progress of every single pupil.

In Virginia, Nancy Roberts from the Council on Virginia's Future told me that the Governor let it be known he was looking at the data and this had made Agency directors sit up and start focusing on the outcomes.

There are, in my experience, significant risks in over-relying on outcome measures. Targets can lead to perverse management behaviours which drive disconnected behaviour in parts of the system. However, as a prompt to start envisioning public services from the service-user's perspective, and as a way of starting to get rigorous about what data is collected and getting underneath the story behind poor performance, measures were useful for those working collaboratively.

1.2.1 Involving the service user perspective in governance

Roughly ten of the collaborative projects I saw (equating to about 27 interviewees) had deliberately opened up the governance of the collaboration to external perspectives that had a stake in 'the whole solution'. This was not just about having experienced non-executive directors sitting on the

board of the collaborative project, or in one of the partner agencies. This was about having people who were extremely well informed about the service user's perspective, sitting on the Board and/or operating very near the centre of power.

In Canada, this role was played by an independent and tiny non-governmental organisation, the Institute for Citizen-Centred Service (ICCS). They have played a key role in establishing a common methodology across the country in measuring and understanding citizen satisfaction with public services and the drivers of that satisfaction. They have established that a 2% increase in employee engagement directly relates to a 1% increase in customer satisfaction. They also administer a biennial meet-up of top officials from the key delivery government departments which 10 people mentioned separately to me as critical to the joining-up of services in Canada.

Richard Steele from Service Ontario, commenting on the thinktank, described their impact: *"You have to identify, at the macro-level, opportunities for opening up people's minds. The ICCS has been successful at this. It has changed the way people talk."* It seemed to me that it was no accident that the Service Canada project had been so successful. I suspected that the invitation to a thinktank to come and witness and comment on the government's progress, forcing them to think from the service user's perspective, had made a big difference.

Another independent thinktank that I met in India, had had a huge impact on government's £25billion dollar Urban Renewal Programme. Ramesh Ramanathan explained:

> *"My role is to be an irritant. These third parties do make a difference, often holding the institutional memory, and being the champions of good ideas."*

Wikipedia (which is a worldwide organisation, but I met it in India) has three of its eight board members elected from the community of practice, the editors. Bangalore had experimented with citizen participation over budgeting, as had Hubli-Dharwad city. The Corporation for Supportive Housing performed this role on prisoner discharge planning in Connecticut.

These independent voices, in the heart of the system, provoked, irritated, and witnessed. They kept pulling the collaborative effort back to the core purpose of the citizen's experience if one agency seemed to be sucking the collaboration towards one siloed version of reality.

1.2.3   Listening to citizens and communities

I heard about seven examples where citizens were not so centrally involved in governance, but where their advocacy had a significant impact, or where wide community participation did. All but one of these were in India. This was 'more than elections'; it was about consistent and intentional citizen participation, and it did make a difference. I heard about communities pressurising government to reopen a rape investigation, resurvey common land that had been appropriated by a private contractor, and reopen a health centre that had been closed. People power did have an impact in India, though its impact on cross-departmental working was less visible to me.

Box 2: Citizen Participation in India

Swati and Ramesh Ramanathan set up the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy in Bangalore and have been working for over a decade in Bangalore and nationally on improving citizen participation. They had started with citizen participation in budgeting, inspired by the Porto Alegre experience of participatory budgeting. They initiated a 'ward vision' campaign where 5% of the City budget could be allocated with community involvement. They did a big advertisement campaign with a local celebrity businessman, a cricketer from the India World Cup and others, with the headline, 'Dreams are Made by Fools'. They had thousands of volunteers asking to be involved with the community budgeting process and identified hundreds of projects. However, the councillors for the local wards were not enthusiastic about the process and the mayor described it as 'inciting a parallel democracy'. The project was successful in the first year, due to the surprise factor, but struggled in its second and third years, brought down by internal reluctance.

> *"We learnt that participation doesn't work for a single project or a one-off idea. If you do that, you get self-selected groups. You can't treat participation like scaffolding, putting it up and taking it down for one event."*

Swati and Ramesh then campaigned in Delhi for political reforms which mandated participatory platforms in urban areas, creating the equivalent of the village level participation mechanism which is widespread throughout India. These are now in the process of being enacted. In the pathfinding state, Andhra Pradesh, Area Sabhas and Ward Committees have been constituted, with thousands of community representatives. The political process is now well under way, with local councillors chafing at this sudden accountability and sharing of political and decision-making space. The city commissioner said, *"when I asked one of the councillors what it was like, he said, it's like I have 20 sons-in-law"*. (Ramesh explained, *"This is a very demanding person in Indian custom!"*)

These insights around 'appreciating the service user's perspective' and walking in the customer's shoes, lead me to a set of queries that managers might find useful as they take forward their collaborations.

1.3 Creating Common Purpose
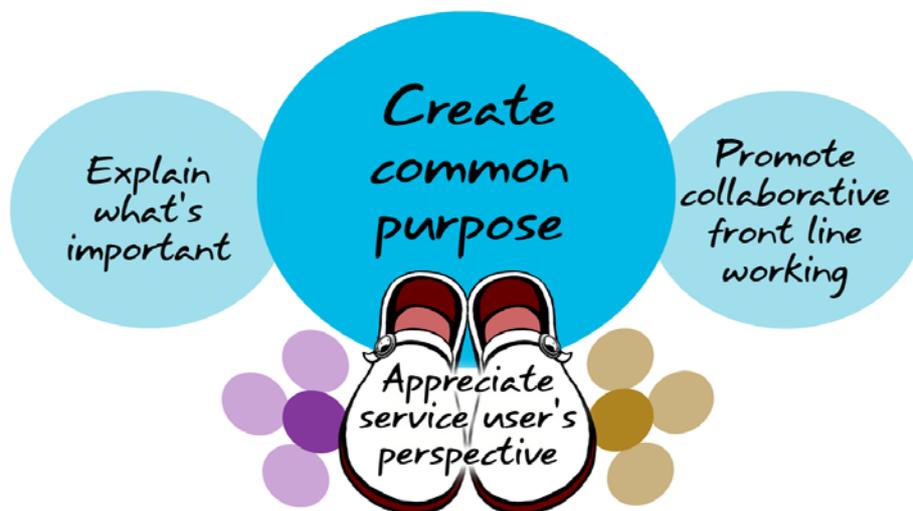
66 out of 69 people mentioned 'creating common purpose' as a critical factor in collaborative working. This was the top scoring factor of all of my twelve themes. Diane Baillargeon, the former Chief Executive of Seedco, which leads a New York collaboration of local community organisations providing welfare to work for the government, and an advisor to President Obama, put it best for me. *"Working in collaboration is messy. It's not clean. In my field there was a history of Foundations supporting neighbourhood collaboratives but nothing happened. There was a lot of talk, a lot of planning, but no action. You need a thing that mobilises, and the thing needs to be worth it."*

The activity of creating common purpose was supported by a number of other activities: explaining what is important, and promoting collaborative working at the front line.

1.3.1   Explain what is important

An impressive 61 people mentioned this spontaneously. Leaders and partners needed to explain why: what was at stake if no change happened, and what would be achieved by change. This is the territory of 'vision', 'mission', 'common purpose', 'value propositions' 'moral imperative' and 'purpose'. *"You have to keep coming back to, what's the incentive? What do they get out of it? Who do they serve? We all have a global incentive to get kids on the right path"*, said Art Murphy, acting director of the Bernalillo County Youth Services Center in New Mexico.

A lot of my interviewees found themselves utilising a current sense of crisis to trigger change. Homelessness had turned into a crisis for United Way, Toronto, in 1998 when freezing weather had generated a lot of public attention. This was similar for the Corporation for Supportive Housing and the collaboration to prevent homelessness in New Haven, Connecticut. In Canada, the economic downturn in 2008 had provided a 'common cause' for Canada's governments to address labour market issues, as had the demographic context of a shrinking labour pool, and shrinking budgets. With Impact India, it was the evidence in the early 1980s that over half of disabilities in the world could be prevented, and a chief Minister of a State which decided that polio should not affect their children.

1.3.2   Promote collaborative working at the front line
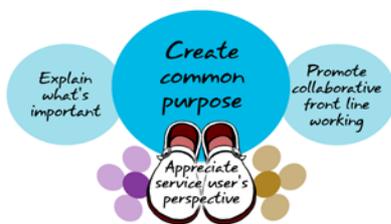
Those I interviewed from Service Canada and Service Ontario were probably the most vocal about working with front line staff, though 36 people mentioned this spontaneously. An American official in a senior position commented, *"Low level employees are important too. If they don't like it, the resistance is tremendous."* For others it was middle managers who could act as the biggest barrier to change. A Service Canada senior leader said: *"These people are in charge of the day to day, in maintaining the stability of the organisation. Asking them to lead transformation and guarantee stability was almost too much."*

To do this, Service Canada decided to 'professionalise the notion of service excellence'. They re-worked their competency framework for all of their junior staff, the ones who served on the front-end counters. They were no longer described as 'administrators' but as 'service agents', and they put 5000 of them through a two-week residential training in how to give good service. *"It was a shift from staff being experts in the back office, to serving the people. In the end, the culture piece transcended all other elements."*[11] In many instances, they simply had to tap into the public service pride that already existed. *"People at the front line knew it wasn't working. These staff wanted to go the extra mile, but they couldn't even deliver the silo product."*[12]

For a couple of my interviewees, the resistance of some key staff had triggered a deliberate effort to move them on into roles which did not jeopardise collaboration, or to move them out of the business entirely.[13] Retraining had not been enough.

One of the implications of working to put the service user first is that staff need to be convinced that organising the service in this collaborative way is worthwhile and appropriate. Training, feedback, and selecting staff carefully for key roles, were ways of achieving this.

Box 3: Training helps police think differently: Special Cells for Violence against Women in India

The first special cell was established in 1984 in Mumbai by Anjali Dave and Ashutosh Daharmadikari. It was a cell in a Police Commissioner's office, staffed by social workers, and there to help women who had suffered violence. This was the first time that 'outsiders' were allowed to work in a police station in India on violence against women. I interviewed Anjali in her office at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, in Mumbai.

Nearly 18 years later, in 2002, the cells expanded in to 10 districts in Maharashtra State. The expansion was a result of increased senior backing. A female Deputy Inspector had been in charge of the Unit for the Prevention of Atrocities in the State. She had personally been very supportive and interested in the special cell model. She invited Anjali Dave on to a State level 'High Powered Committee' on violence against women. In turn, the Additional Chief Secretary for the State (the most senior official) was persuaded to approve funding for a broader programme.

Then in 2005 and 2006 there were national Acts protecting women from Domestic Violence and prohibiting child marriage, and multiagency working on Domestic Violence was prescribed. In 2011, every district in Maharashtra will have three special cells, and there are now cells in other Indian states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Orissa, Gujarat, Delhi and Andhar Pradesh.

Along with extremely senior backing, a key factor in the adoption of this as a model was training. Anjali had given a lot of police training, including at the National Police Academy, to police officers, government officials and to NGOs. Her role as a professor of Social Work at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences had opened doors. She knew that it was as a result of this wide exposure that led Haryana and Rajasthan to implementing the special cell model. Even in Delhi, where there had been many decades of resistance to involving social workers in domestic violence work, the police had talked to each other following Anjali's training sessions and had finally decided that involving social workers did make the efforts more effective.

These insights around creating common purpose, lead me to a set of queries that managers might find useful as they take forward their collaborations.

1.4   Insist on whole system approaches
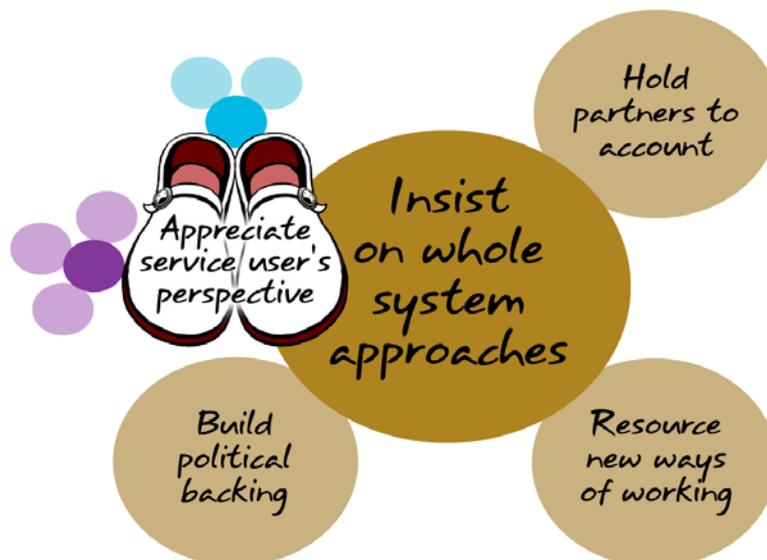
This section is about using power: the power of convening, of setting rules of engagement, of deadlines, goals and tight processes, even, occasionally, of imposing ideas.

The concept of insisting on whole systems approaches was evident everywhere although few described it in this way. I noticed that there was often someone who had decided to try and work across boundaries and silos in a system. They were taking a much broader view of who should and

could be involved with offering the service, whether that service was preventing reoffending, helping new parents in Canada, or providing information on a website called Wikipedia. This is what I mean by a 'whole system approach'. It is not technically 'whole', but it is a much more rounded view of the service to the citizen than would traditionally have happened when a departmental or agency lens was applied.

In all of the examples, a source of authority over the system - whether it was vertically through leadership (47 mentions), or horizontally through rules of engagement, and the community of practice (8 mentions) - determined that collaboration should happen, that the service should be more holistic rather than fragmented. This approach was then promoted, policed, and protected.

1.4.1　Hold partners to account

53 people mentioned this spontaneously. People would talk about 'cracking the whip', needing 'a driver', being 'the glue', 'dealing with resistance' and challenging partners and staff.[14] But critically this vertical challenge would not just be over outcomes, it would also be about ways of working. *"Some did not like to collaborate. Some liked to dictate. But group pressure helped, as did a bit of guilt."*[15]

For many, a common pitfall was lack of accountability. In a networked system, people often fall to blaming others for inaction and lack of progress. There were different ways of solving this.

In the statutory sector, people talked about 'holding people to account.' Bill Hogarth (Director of the York Board of Education in Ontario, working on children's literacy) said: *"I wouldn't let anyone get into the weeds, the 'woe is me', or the 'can't do this' or 'it's the fault of the ministry' or 'it's the fault of the parents'. They all had to get into the big picture, to transcend all of that. In the end, we led the ministry and the parents."*

In the voluntary sector, the accountability mechanisms that were mentioned were more likely to be agreements that clarified roles and responsibilities. Gramya Resource Centre in India relied on clear agreements about how to share resources, and good reporting systems. *"For programmatic service delivery work, Memoranda of Understanding work well. For joint work on advocacy, it's less structured and more about common perspectives and coordination."*[16]

There were two examples where the source of accountability for the collaboration did not come from an individual or a group of leaders, in a top-down way, but from the community of practice itself in more of a 'horizontal' or 'bottom-up' way. These were the Wikimedia Foundation, and the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (detailed in Chapter 2). Here, the community of practice created the rules for operating, and (particularly in Wikimedia's case) enforced them.

These organisational forms struck me as utterly radical and different to the usual ways of operating, and potentially more sustainable. Vertical accountability relied on a leader who 'got' that a whole system approach was needed, who had the skills to challenge where collaboration was

failing, and who was able to be sensitive to the collaboration adapting and changing in its own way. Once these leaders moved on, and inevitably they did, the collaborations often suffered. With Wikimedia and the Ontario Non-Profit Network, the collaborations have a self-organising quality. The system itself promotes a way of working, rather than a 'leader' at the 'top' of the system.

1.4.2   Resource new ways of working

53 people mentioned this spontaneously. For one it was about supporting boundary crossers, those who were working covertly to join up services.[17] For several, it was about resolving 'the detail' once the intention to join up had been made clear.[18] A typical view was: *"If you really had the will you could hammer out the legal and funding issues that have been raised".*[19] For most, it was about giving permission to those working in the system to use their time to collaborate.[20]

Working on the detail between services did require resource. The following serves as an example:

Sarah Gallagher used to work in discharge planning in New York, organising services for recently discharged prisoners. Another department, the Human Resources Administration, was involved because they were working with the Department of Correction to assist former inmates in accessing benefits for which they were eligible, such as food stamps, when they left prison. Some of this population of ex-offenders, however, also had a relationship with HRA over child support. The absent dads were often in jail, had a mental illness, or at risk of homelessness upon release. Many of the prisoners were significantly in arrears in their child support payments. Even though there were both benefits for prisoners in terms of recovery and reintegration and families as well as cross systems collaborative benefits, bringing this need to the discharge planners was hugely unpopular. These professionals saw how clawing back child support payments as the offenders left prison was a surefire way of risking their relationships with clients, disrupting their earnings from their new job, and a disincentive to stay out of offending.

Sarah found herself negotiating solutions that would suit both the discharge planners and the Office for Child Support Enforcement. She worked with them to encourage flexibility about payment schedules so the dads did not have to pay all of their arrears in one go making work still productive and worthwhile for the transitioning dads. She reflected, *"It feels like a risk, to let your system be scrutinised by another system. It can take a lot of handholding junior staff. And some horse trading between agencies. There are constant compromises between systems."*

Doug E. Mitchell, the coordinator of the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative in Bernalillo County, New Mexico, said the same thing.

"Underneath the leadership we needed people to make it work in practice. The technical, 'We're the Getting it Done' people. At that point, the leadership were wise enough to get out of the way! My role was critical. You've gotta have someone like me to constantly put things on the table."

1.4.3 Build political backing

41 people mentioned this spontaneously. This was about public perceptions of the individuals in the leadership, and the perceptions of the political masters and mistresses. Typical statements included: *"It helped that the Republican Leadership were bought in"*,[21] and *"Having Cabinet direction towards working collaboratively helps. This means more junior people spend time discussing the how, rather than the whether."*[22]

In India, having political or extremely senior official backing was mentioned more frequently as being critical to moving the project forward,[23] reflecting a more hierarchical approach to change. Both Impact India, which worked to immunise children against preventable disability, and the Special Cell for Domestic Violence against Women, started being significant entities once senior ministers and very senior civil servants had given out a directive that these collaborations would and should happen.

'Build political backing' was also about the personal courage of those in the lead, who chose to step outside the 'norm', and provoke the system to behave differently. In so doing, they managed to change the political climate in which they operated. Impact India, an NGO that works with local government to prevent disability, even had the phrase, 'Stick Your Neck Out' on a T-shirt pinned to the wall of its meeting room.

Being prepared to make mistakes was part of this. Marty Horn, the former Commissioner for Corrections in New York told me that he was at that stage of his career where *"I didn't have to please anyone else any more. I could take a few risks."* From this I learnt that public sector leaders can shape politics by their own courage.

The Virginia First Lady working on children in residential care (see Box 4), and the New Mexico Behavioural Health Collaborative (see Box 6) show how uncertainties about political backing can make the collaborative working feel rocky. The public sector leader who is courageous has traction only if the constellation of senior political elements somehow permits rather than rejects their approach.

Box 4: Virginia: Where legislation did not help but strong leadership and relationships did.

Charlotte McNulty, the Executive Director of the Office of Comprehensive Services in Virginia explained to me that the Comprehensive Services Act was passed in 1993 in Virginia. The Act intended to get agencies to spend less money on residential care for children by providing better collaboration and continuum of care.

> *The Act is particularly clear about the 'collaboration' part of its agenda... It was a beautiful document, full of foresight, quite inspired, very prescriptive and clear. It pooled funds from criminal justice, child service boards, schools, social services and the department for juvenile justice. However, it didn't work.*

Charlotte explained that the Act cannot legislate for attitudes, and the funding was inadequate. The front line had not been involved in planning, and the roll out itself was under-resourced, with a one-person office trying to make the new approach work in 131 localities. The majority of the 131 localities in the Commonwealth of Virginia floundered to make sense of the Act. *"It couldn't have been clearer in writing. It was a great plan, poorly implemented."* In the localities that floundered, collaboration often got worse and as a consequence the cost of residential care went up. They ended up falling back on residential care as a rescue package.

All this changed in 2007. The First Lady of the then Governor, Anne Holton, had been a Juvenile Domestic Relations Judge. She had a passion because she had seen a lot of the children coming in front of her. For some of them, the only consistent person in their life was her - the judge. Together with the Secretary for Health and Human Resources, and a key Special Adviser, Ray Radke, they 'drove the system', said Charlotte. They convened a collaborative working group at State level to improve matters. They got key State agencies, from schools to the courts, in a room every two weeks.

Charlotte said, *"We collaborated and we talked. Localities saw that things were different up there - the centre was developing policies that related to us."*

It was not easy, but implementation improved. Fifteen years late, the Comprehensive Services Act was implemented with technical assistance and support to localities rather than a framework they did not understand. The number of children in care reduced from 4300 in 2008, costing $167.5 million, to 2900 in 2010, costing $88.5 million, with spend on residential care falling from 44% to 27% of the Comprehensive Services budget. Before the First Lady's initiative, spend and population had been on a consistently upward curve.

In 2010, the Governor left and with him, his First Lady and Ray Radke. Virginia allows its Governor to preside for only one term at a time. It was clear that the collaboration then plateaud in the following few months. "It's easy to forget, easy to get in to silos again," said Charlotte. "However, changed policy and practice remained and the numbers of children and dollars continues to decline." In this system, strong leadership had been critical.

These insights around insisting on whole system approaches, lead me to a set of queries for those who are working to promote collaborative working.

Queries

- What more could you do to insist on collaborative working?

- Have you put in place enough people to work out the details so that organisations can join up and 'stuff' doesn't get in the way?

- Have you policed your partners' behaviours and challenged those who are not operating collaboratively?

- What other sources of authority can you create for working collaboratively including financial sources? Can you move beyond it happening 'because the leader says so'?

- Alternatively, to what extent are you over-emphasising this strand without giving attention to 'creating common purpose', 'sharing power', and 'walking in the service user's shoes'?

2. Sharing power
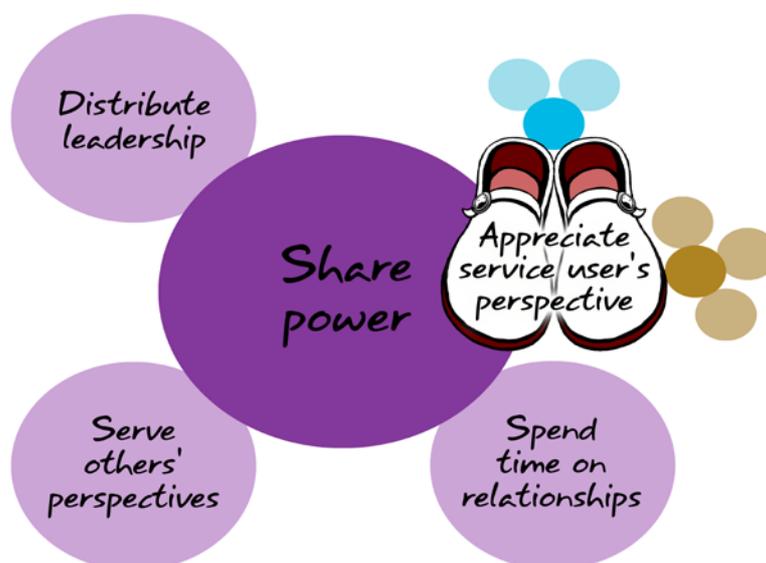
I have devoted a whole chapter to this last part of the model because I think it raises the most interesting questions for Whitehall.

Fifty-five of the people I interviewed talked, in some way or another, about sharing power. This is the opposite to the third theme, of 'insisting on whole systems approaches'. Sharing power implies giving up control and autonomy. Insisting on collaborative working implies some form of 'enforcement'. For some months I found myself confused by this. Were some collaborations led by 'strong leaders' and others led by 'soft touches' who let go and trusted? In the end, as I analysed the interview data, I realised that actually both attributes were at play in many of the successful collaborations. This was a case of polarities co-existing within the same person and the same project.

Sharing power was about tolerating failures along the way and not blaming people for making mistakes. It was about bearing financial risk on behalf of partners, ensuring there was local ownership, promoting inclusiveness even when you disagreed with partners, and promoting a sense of participation and agency. Who needed to participate? Partners, junior staff, and service users, rather than those in the centre or in the 'lead'.

The activity of sharing power was supported by two main other activities: distributing leadership, and serving others' perspectives.
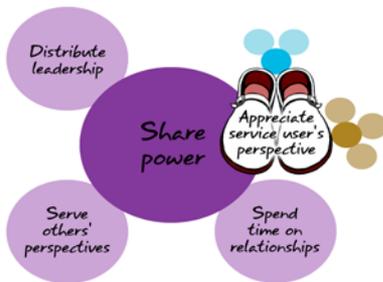
2.1 Distribute leadership

Thirty-nine people talked about sharing and distributing leadership in my discussions with them. As one Canadian interviewee said, *"You need to set up an opportunity for people to feel they are participating in the whole. Otherwise you don't get distributed leadership and learning."*[24] Others described 'local ownership' of projects[25] and using flexible, local providers including the private sector, community groups, and social enterprises.[26] The common theme was about a leader choosing **not** to be in control. The assumed result was greater ownership and effectiveness, and more adaptation and flexibility.

One of my New York City interviewees found that when there are many different players operating, and where many of the players are not directly reporting to you, running a broad and inclusive process achieved more buy in.

> *"If you are willing to share your power, and people see you giving it away, that gets a lot of buy-in, even when you, in the end, settle for 75% consensus rather than 100% consensus. The fact that you have gone through a process already of sharing power means that even the 25% that aren't on board have more buy-in to what the final solution is."*

John Buckovich leads the state-wide gang effort for the Governor of Virginia. He described the way he was choosing to work.

> *"The old way would have been for the State to work out a gang strategy and implement it with little to no local involvement. Now you don't have them come to you, you go to them."*

Governments find this difficult. In our sensitivity to criticism, our effort to treat all service users fairly and equally, and our general bureaucratic inertia, we try and eliminate risk and variation through standardisation and control.

Box 5: Distributed Leadership in Mysore, India

I was surprised to find examples of distributed leadership in the Karnataka State Government, in India. Panchalinga Darshana is a holy festival held once every twelve years in the town of Talakad in Karnataka, India. Around 2.5 million pilgrims flood the area around Mysore and Talakad at this time, putting enormous pressure on the local infrastructure. My interviewee, Manivannan, was the District Commissioner for Mysore when the pilgrimage was last held, in 2006. Manivannan told me:

> *In the past it had been chaos... Even the Chief Minister couldn't get in to the temple. I got the key staff and citizens together for two days to them and said, you think about it. You can have my power. I will give you anything you ask for to prepare for the pilgrimage. Let's think outside the box to make it work.*

The group ended up creating a 41 kilometre one-way system for walking pilgrims. The group decided to lay on free public buses to take villagers who would otherwise have walked anti-clockwise to the next village, clockwise around the whole route, to their destination. For the first time ever pilgrims were able to get around to the temple and out again.

Manivannan told me that in principle he believes in handing over power.

> *It's like cycling. You need to learn it for yourself, and you can't learn it without falling off. You have to give them the power and allow them first to abuse it and misuse it. The question of course is who will take the blame while the learning is happening. You need to sacrifice the present for the future.*

Deciding what to insist on and what to let go is an extremely delicate choice. The act of exercising control is usually an effort to stem or eliminate variety, to make an approach more standard. One way of appreciating the variety of the system being controlled is to allow the controlling to happen closer to the front line, closer to where the variety actually is. Another essential pre-requisite to making this choice well is the ability to disassociate from your own perspective, described in section 3.2.

I came across two radical versions of 'shared power' in my travels. The first was the Wikimedia Foundation and Wikipedia, through meeting Bishakha Datta, the Indian Board Member for the Wikimedia Foundation; the second was a series of NGO collaborations that had taken place in Ontario, Canada.

2.1.1 Wikipedia and the Wikimedia Foundation: Making collaboration an art form

Wikimedia is big. According to an estimate, the projects run by Wikimedia receive more than 393 million unique visitors per month, making it the 5th most popular web property worldwide (July 2011). Wikipedia alone comes in at number 7 on the May 2011 list of most popular websites, behind giants like YouTube, Google.com and Facebook. Compare that to the BBC who were at number 40. In size terms, the combined Wikipedias currently have over 1.74 billion words in 9.25 million articles in approximately 250 languages. About 3.6million of these articles are in English.

What I had not appreciated before is quite how self-organising and disciplined this community is. Bishakha Datta, board member of the Foundation who I interviewed in Mumbai, described them as *"making collaboration an art form"*. This is huge freedom, firmly held together by some self-policed rules and principles. There are 10 million people registered as editors, of which 100,000 are active every month. These editors do not accept the Wikimedia Foundation as an authority. They are in charge of their own editorial policies, and their own rules for working together. These principles are things like 'verifiability', 'assume good faith', 'no original research' and 'neutral point of view'. Bishakha commented,

> *"There are principles that the editing community has established over time. Someone like me cannot change them. The community of editors is in charge, not me."*

The Wikimedia Foundation owns the Wikipedia trademark but not the site content. Its role is also to provide organisational strategy, for example giving support to help grow the smaller Wikipedia communities that are not in English, or agonising about whether the number of editors can grow sufficiently to match the volume of content. They are 'serving' and 'facilitating' the community, not 'leading' it.

So, Wikimedia is not a hierarchy with the Wikimedia Foundation at the top, and the community divided into country chapters. This is a balance of power. Wikipedia's structure is bottom heavy, the editorial community having most of the power.

The Board of Trustees of the Wikimedia foundation has 10 trustees, but only 4 are co-opted by the Board (Bishakha is one of these). Three trustees are elected by the community of editors. The thirty chapters in different countries select two candidates by consensus, and one post is reserved for the founder. There are about 70 paid staff for the whole Wikimedia Foundation.

2.1.2 Canadian partnership for Children's Health and Environment and the Ontario Non-Profit Network.

Tonya Surman is the founding Executive Director of the Centre for Social Innovation in Toronto. Her work at the Centre is focused on catalyzing collaboration and entrepreneurship for social innovation. She was the co-creator of the constellation model for the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment, a partnership of about 11 core organisations who were anxious about toxicity and children's health. She has now also brought that model to the Ontario Nonprofit Network, which serves the 40,000 charities and non-profit organisations in the Province of Ontario in Canada.

Tonya says she turned the idea of who is in the lead, completely on its head, and deliberately set up a structure to honour 'chaos and complexity'. Her guiding principles were to 'break rules', 'be provocative' and 'have fun'. This turned into the constellation governance model.

> *Constellations are self-organizing action teams that operate within the broader strategic vision of a partnership. These constellations are outwardly focused, placing their attention on creating value for those in the external environment, rather than on the partnership itself. While serious effort is invested into core partnership governance and management, most of the energy is devoted to the decision-making, resources and collaborative effort required to create social value. The constellations drive and define the partnership.[27]*

In her model, there was a 'magnetic attractor' - an issue that pulled lots of different organisations and people towards it. This was sufficient to create trust to ensure that people revealed their true self interest and then were able to find common interest.

Those that were attracted would be in the 'ecosystem'. You could not choose who was in that ecosystem, or who your partners were, it was simply whoever was interested - so it might include the producers of the toxins as well as those campaigning against them.

> *I don't believe you can know who your partners are. The issue determines who's in or out... We align with all sorts of people!*

Then self-organising action teams coalesced around sub-themes. The people on these action teams would be completely self-interested in the outcome. In Tonya's case they had had an action team on 'mercury', one on 'education' and one on 'policy', and others too. From each self-organising action team, there would be a representative on a stewardship council. The stewardship council was deliberately charged with 'looking after the ecosystem'. So people who served on it would have their own partial view of their action team and be charged with looking at things from the whole. There was a secretariat for the stewardship council but this was deliberately in a third party and was not attached to any organisation in the ecosystem. The Secretariat's role was to incubate and support the stewardship group.

Most authority and decision-making was left with the constellations themselves. Only strategic and framework level decisions were left with the coordinating committee. This meant that the self-interest space could remain relatively chaotic and self-interested. The secretariat did not legally incorporate, it did not have money, so it never competed with the membership.

Tonya said it was really effective.

> *We are doing really successful advocacy. It allowed us to recruit the smartest minds around the issues that matter.*

Tonya has now introduced the constellation model to the Ontario Non-Profit Network. Its member organisations work in arts, social services, sport and recreation, the environment, community

health, newcomer services, and more. They claim to touch the lives of the 13 million Ontario residents.

2.1.3 Implications for government of Wikipedia and the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health

After each of my meetings with Tonya and Bishakha, I found myself stimulated, excited and a little afraid. What would it be like to run government like Wikipedia, or like the Ontario Non-Profit Network? I ran two thought experiments for myself.

Taking the Wikipedia model, I picked on guidance writing as an example. I imagined changing the guidance that my caseworkers in the UK Border Agency followed, setting up a 'wiki' and giving 'editors' rights' to anyone who was qualified and committed to having accurate guidance, including caseworkers, legal representatives and others and then letting the guidance exist in its own space, to be amended by that community of practice. It would be a conversation I could not control. It raised all sorts of anxieties for me. What if it was not legally accurate? How would those outside of government trust that this was an exercise done in good faith, given the history of legal antagonism? Would caseworkers accept the guidance's authority and legitimacy? Would the process be subverted for a particular interpretation of the law, when much of this was heavily contested territory? I wondered if this model could be used for tax guidance, for planning guidance, for benefits guidance, for professional practice in the police.[28]

Taking the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health model, I imagined doing this for local budgeting. Communities of interest might form around budget structures, or incentives, or commissioning practice, or professional training. They would set guidance and dictate to Whitehall or local bodies how the distribution of funds would take place, how to do contracting, or the content of training. It would completely invert the power relationship that is currently in place, changing it from local areas asking 'please can we?', and Whitehall saying, 'Hmmmm, we will think about it'. Again, imagining this, I ran into all sorts of expected challenges. How would officials and ministers handle it? What if the communities of interest proposed something a Whitehall department 'did not approve of'? Would we let different areas do things differently? How would we cope with variation in arrangements? How on earth could we set the boundaries of what was up for change, and what was not?

This led me to see that it is a mistake to see the 'sharing power' prompt as an absolute. There is a role for the steward, the regulator, or the container of a system, which sets some boundaries around the edges and allows for adaptation inside. Wikipedia's source of authority was its editing rules, and a single and very clear vision of what 'an encyclopaedia' should look like. The Canadian Partnership for Children's Health also had a source of authority for taking a whole system perspective, which was its rules around who got to be in the action teams, how they were represented on the stewardship body, and the purpose of the stewardship body. The surrender of power must not be done 'cold turkey', anarchically. The complex system can adapt but it needs boundaries within which to do so. There does need to be some leadership about the behaviours and service design in the reformed landscape, at the same time as offering autonomy. The 'both/and' lesson for insisting on collaborative working AND sharing power is critical.

These examples made me ask whether government could think even more radically about where it chose to share power and decentralise. As I described in my introduction, recent policy proposals to give power away from Whitehall have often been in a vertical relationship from a Whitehall department to a single local actor, such as the police, or the local authority. Alternatively the power has been devolved to the citizen but only in respect of one aspect of their family's needs - for example with the citizen's power to switch GPs, or schools. The challenge is for Whitehall to do this in a way that cuts across our own silos, and envisages the world through particular sets of service users, such as those who are geographically near each other, or who have a set of needs in common. Current decentralisation initiatives seem to struggle when they hit this as an issue.

Sharing power as a concept is woven through the Coalition Government's version of public service reform. In many cases they wish for the radical devolution of power – and flow of money – as far as it possibly will go. Giving the local citizen the power to choose their own school, their own GP, or having 'individualised budgets' for people with learning disabilities devolves power and money to the level of the citizen. Next, they devolve to frontline deliverers - the GP, the headteacher, aiming to bypass the local authority to the people doing the work. Next comes devolution to the community, one example of that being the Police and Crime Commissioner, held to account through citizens in an election. Local authorities are also being given significantly more freedom from central government.

How then, in these models, will the service user who is utilising not just a locally provided public service (like hospitals or housing) but a nationally provided public service (like benefits), promote integration?

In the radically devolved model above, it seems to me that the onus is on the local provider – the headteacher, the police chief, the GP – to 'do deals' to promote collaboration between services. In theory the state should neither mandate nor promote a whole systems approach. So, for instance, if the GP is spending a fortune on treating the mental health needs of a patient, but thinks that part-time work for the patient might reduce the GP's health spend, the GP could do a deal with the local 'welfare to work' provider. The GP would give some extra money to the welfare to work provider if the provider kept the patient both out of JobCentre Plus, and out of hospital.

Alternatively, the service providers themselves might integrate. The welfare to work provider could decide to run the local prison, own the GP consortium and own a social housing provider too. This provider could make money on reducing the reoffending of its prison population by finding former prisoners a home and some work, and then in turn save their health bill by reducing spend on drugs or hospital admissions by finding the ex-offender a job, to keep a mentally unstable person grounded.

2.1.4   What are the barriers in this model that might get in the way?

The most obvious barrier is the amount of complexity there might be to do a deal or integrate services like this. The benefits pot of money is held centrally and is heavily directed centrally. What if the mentally ill in Hull were to get a differing amount of money to live on to the mentally ill in

Llandrindod Wells, because they have different arrangements with welfare to work providers locally? Is that 'fair'? Will it get challenged in the courts?

Another angle on complexity is the way populations are not stable within a local area. For example, in the criminal justice system, there would be an attraction for the local prison to do a deal with the local benefits office or a local housing provider. However, the people going through the local prison may come from all over the country. When prisons fill up, those in prison are moved from prison to prison quite frequently. So how does the money follow the offender properly? There may not be a proper local link. This seems to me a fundamentally difficult problem to solve. Local leaders need to give themselves permission to do deals, and Whitehall needs to make sure they have the freedoms, financially and legally, to do them.

The second thing that might get in the way is lack of ambition or skill. There might be a lack of entrepreneurialism that spots that these deals can happen, and an absense of a sense of adventure to take the risk. You could tackle this by the sort of work the current government is doing to demonstrate and galvanise new thinking on mutuals and free schools. You would provide extra assistance to the frontrunners, helping them do it more successfully and then hope that others will follow once the long grass has been trampled down in to a path and the way is a bit clearer.

The third problem is that service users are not 'rational' in the way you might expect a consumer buying a new skirt to be rational, particularly in mental health and in criminal justice. Those who have most need of public services may make very short term decisions about what they want, not in the financial interest of the publicly funded services or even in their own long-term interest. It cannot be assumed that they will use their power of the purse to stimulate collaboration between services.

Will this really happen? The thing that is lacking in the radical devolution approach is the 'insistor'. The assumption that the answers 'should just emerge' or the complex system 'should simply adapt' does not, I think, offer the service users who have the most need, confidence that national and local services will join up for them. To solve this, you might need proxies for the service users, to intervene and ask for more collaborative working. There are many local bodies, including voluntary bodies, who could be encouraged to act more collectively in relation to high cost service users. They could be given more authority to demand a whole systems approach from local actors. Public service users could also be assisted to demand that those providers who are working with them collaborate better. Directly elected mayors are potentially local 'insistors' that can insist on services joining up. I make recommendations about these in the final chapter.

Wikipedia and the Ontario NonProfit Network show that the source of authority for the collaboration does not need to be top down. The authority could be horizontal, in the form of rules or expectations agreed by a community and self-enforced. Either way, there needs to be a source of authority promoting joined up services. Along with devolving, promoting plurality of supply, promoting mutuals, bringing on the big society, creating locally accountable officials, there needs to be some leadership shaping local services and integrating them.
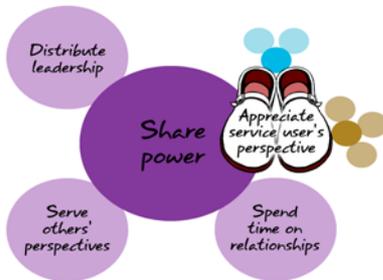
2.2　Serve others' perspectives

This category is about the mindset of those in leadership, in particular that they might consider it possible that they might be mistaken, or that other people might have a legitimate world view that they themselves did not share. It was about letting other perspectives win sometimes, and appreciating and honouring plurality. This was essential for keeping partners on board. *"The leader has to be relatively unselfish and keep his ego in check"*,[29] was a typical comment, and 42 people referred to the need to do this. Ramesh and Swati Ramanathan from the Janaagraha foundation for citizenship and democracy in Bangalore put it slightly differently:

> In a democracy, the State can never lead. You need leadership of a different kind, listening with antennae.

The skill of working collaboratively is one of working with several perspectives at once. *"My work is an elaborate dance, with 13 very differently shaped and sized partners"*[30] said one Canadian interviewee. People praised the leaders they worked with who *"resisted jumping to quick judgments"*, who did not seek to solve everything themselves.[31] One non-profit manager described how she had promised herself not to initiate anything without consulting.

Fifth Avenue Committee, a South Brooklyn based comprehensive community development corporation, advances economic and social justice through a range of programmes including developing and managing affordable housing and community facilities. Michelle de la Uz, their Executive Director, was for me, an excellent example of someone who has to manage many perspectives at once. In the course of our interview, she mentioned private investors who were providing funding, city and federal government, and different actors in the local community from politicians to cabinet-makers to first-time homebuyers. She understood how to appeal to all of these different perspectives. When the credit crunch struck, the renewed funding for two of her current projects, a 60-unit mixed income project called Red Hook Homes and an 80-unit eco-friendly building called Atlantic Terrace, looked precarious.

> The banks were losing 40% of their staff, to the point that it wasn't clear who I should talk to any more about the project. They kept changing their views to whom they would provide mortgages and brought in 'risk management' staff who knew little about the New York City housing market. Persuading the buyers of the property to stay interested after long but unavoidable delays, and persuading the bank not to foreclose on the loans and to extend them, required a lot of work.

It sounded like Michelle was spinning plates, keeping everyone on board.

There were other ways of different perspectives being honoured in collaboration. Professionals talked about respecting each other's professional domains: clinicians, social workers, lawyers.

There is something fundamental here about being able to allow for other people's versions of the world to have truth in them, a tolerance rather than a dominating world view.
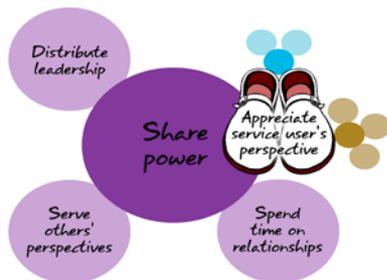
2.3 Spend time on relationships

Sharing power was more likely to happen where the relationships were strong. 48 people mentioned this spontaneously. Several interviewees used 'marriage' metaphors or talked about how they had known their partners for many years, or how in the end relationships trumped formal structures in terms of making things succeed or fail.[32] Having healthy relationships was usually critical to the success of the collaboration. *"You need to manufacture enough attachments for those in the collaboration to bind in their commitment."*[33]

Relationships were often manifold. I asked Kelly-Jo Parker, a Juvenile Probation Officer in New Mexico trying to prevent kids being detained on remand, how many relationships with other professionals she needed to manage.

> *It's probably two to three with each child. You have 20-25 kids in your caseload. So that's about 40 relationships.*

Some of these she met weekly, others she met daily.

Interviewees emphasised two aspects: the work to maintain relationships, and how having long-term relationships helped enormously. Two typical views: *"I make it a personal connection: the thank you cards, lunch, maintaining the relationship"*, and *"It helped that I was experienced and had worked with these guys for years. It's much easier than when the other officials are smart, new and enthusiastic."*[34]

I think the issue of longstanding relationships being critical to collaborations may be why the most established collaborations I saw had had leaders and coordinators in place for at least 6 years, and sometimes more than 10 years. Marty Horn in New York was in post for over 6 years, Bill Hogarth led the York Board of Education for 8 years, Tony Dean led Service Ontario and the Ontario Government for 6 years, Doug E. Mitchell at the Bernalillo County Juvenile Alternatives to Detention project had been there for 10 years. Anjali Dave led work on special cells for women in police stations in India for 27 years. Zelma Lazarus at Impact India Foundation had been there for 25 years.

Box 6: Change in leadership affects the New Mexico Behavioural Health Collaborative

I met the New Mexico Behavioural Health Collaborative on the day that a new Governor had been elected to New Mexico. Susana Martinez, a fairly right-wing Republican was to replace Bill Richardson, a Democrat.

The Behavioural Health Collaborative itself is a consultative body for the State agencies who work with people who have mental health problems or substance abuse issues. It is made up of people appointed by the Governor. Some were mental health consumers, others were advocates and providers, others still were parents of children who had mental health or substance abuse issues. More than half had to be consumers or family members.

The Committee was exercised about how to brief the incoming Republican Governor on their work. They were anxious to emphasise there were things that needed to stay in place and to reiterate the three year strategic plan they had already established. It was clear that the change of leadership was very likely to upset the planning they had already done and may well have unwound some of their work.

Doug E. Mitchell, at the New Mexico project on Juvenile Detention Alternatives, commented:

> *You have to understand this is a marathon and not a sprint. It can take a decade or longer to change a culture…. You can never say you've made it. There is always a tendency for the system to pull back. It's easier to do the old practices, to just lock people up. There are wolves waiting in the bush. We do get tired. And of course the easy initiatives are done in the first four or five years. The stuff we're working on now is really hard.*

Sharing power is supported by distributing leadership, serving others' perspectives other than your own, and working on relationships. The insights given to me by my interviews led me to a number of queries.

Queries

- How could you share power more, to enable the complex system you lead, to adapt without you dictating the details?

- In which domains do you need to be prescriptive and in which can you promote local autonomy? (e.g. process, recruitment, performance)

- To what extent are you involving the community of practice in design and oversight, not just in implementation?

- How are you handling not being 'in control'?

- How can you buy political space to give the time and authority to others in the system to change how the system is run, as opposed to limiting others' room for manoeuvre?

- How can you build on existing strong relationships?

- In what ways are you supporting relationship building within the collaboration?

- If the departure of key leaders is a significant risk to the collaboration, how can you use the citizen or service user's perspective, 'common purpose', sources of authority for collaborative working, and power sharing to help the collaboration sustain?

3. Why collaborate?
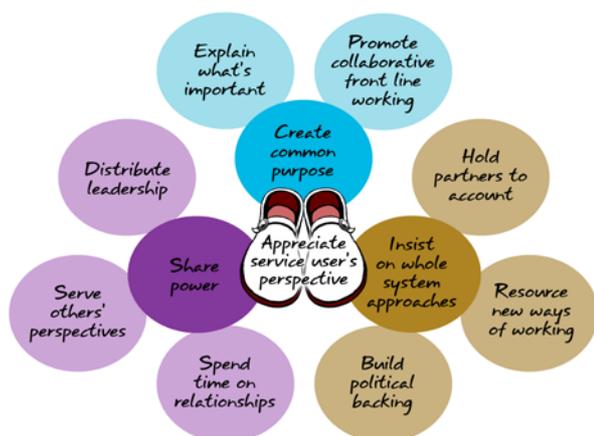
The previous two chapters explained in detail the key themes that arose from my discussions with nearly 70 interviewees who were working collaboratively. Four themes were particularly critical to successful collaborative working: appreciating the service user's perspective, creating common purpose, insisting on collaborative working (chapter 1), and sharing power (chapter 2).

But it is not easy. Many of those I interviewed described working collaboratively as hard emotional work.
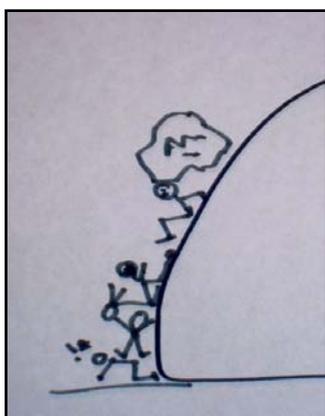
Interviewee 1: *"I spent 18 months trying to work with City Government over them commissioning our service. They wouldn't be clear about what they wanted, they were hard to reach, they wouldn't call back. I couldn't put a face on them. That kept me awake. It was the uncertainty of not knowing."*

Interviewee 2: (Artist of the rich picture to the left) "**I feel a bit like Sisyphus pushing the boulder up the hill**. *There are a lot of seething people. We're trying to work with them, and there's a lot of noise. Collaboration is hard."*

Rich Pictures[35]
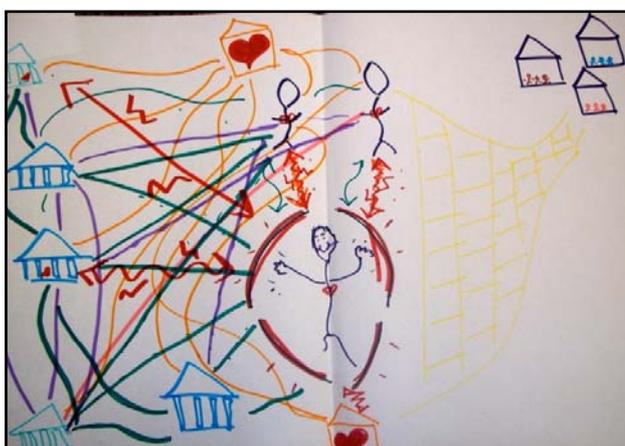
Interviewee 3: (Artist of the rich picture to the left) *"Here are the government agencies, and the hearts represent the providers. I'm in the middle. There are all these crazy paths - the green ones represent tension, as do the lightning bolts. My role, as the collaborator, is to engage with all this craziness with open arms and a smile on my face. Our goal is to weave a yellow brick road. But **I need a forcefield protecting myself from the tension**. Now I know why I get so tired by 2pm!"*

Me: *"Was it stressful?"* **Interviewee 4:** *"Oh my God! The resistance! It's personality driven. Oh man! I was going to kill someone! They were giving you a hundred reasons why it can't be done. But [the key instigator of the collaboration] persisted. And eventually those government departments got bought in. But taking on these discussions requires effort. That's why leadership really helps."*

Interviewee 5: (Artist of the rich picture to the right) *"I'm in the picture, trying to reach out to people on the edge, and trying to push the people in the middle further along. It's hard. It's lonely.* **The emotions I feel are hope and frustration all at the same time***."*

Interviewee 6: *"Why don't I forget about the partners? Why don't we just do it ourselves? It would be cheaper. The staff would behave better. But it's in the DNA of my organisation - and me - that the outcomes are better because it is being done through many local organisations, and this in turn builds a stronger civic infrastructure."*

There are definitely dark moments in collaboration.

3.1 The main barriers to collaboration

My interviewees referred, in particular to four different barriers to collaboration:

- Power struggles

- Institutional inertia

- Lack of passion

- Changes in leadership

Reflecting on the issues when I got back to the UK, I would add:

- Impatience

3.1.1 Barrier to collaboration: Power struggles

One of the barriers to collaboration is about leaders of directorates and departments wanting to retain control. In Canada, one of my interviewees commented, *"Federal Ministers are very anxious for visibility over what they were doing. But in partnership working, the credit is often shared. There is a tension between delivering on an issue and collaboration. Ministers often want a short term return."*

This is not confined to elected politicians. When the Special Cell project in India became a state-wide initiative in the state of Maharashtra (see Box 3), there was an intense disagreement in the centre of Maharashtra Government about who should be in charge of

this program. The Home Department (in charge of policing) wanted the money to flow through them, but the Government budget for the program was approved under the Department of Women and Child Development (WCD). It took a minister to say, *"this will be done and it will be in police stations, and it will be funded by WCD."* and a very senior civil servant to point out, *"This money belongs to the state of Maharashtra, not Home or WCD. The Government decides."*

Power struggles have always affected collaborative efforts between government departments in the UK. Throughout the 1980s, departmentalism was prevalent as Cabinet Ministers attempted to keep contentious issues away from Prime Minister Thatcher.[36] Two decades later, in the early 2000s, Michael Barber described how poor interdepartmental collaboration:

> *bedevilled work not just on drugs, but also on most aspects of criminal justice and asylum and immigration. One of the unsung achievements of David Blunkett as Home Secretary and later Charlie Falconer as Lord Chancellor, with assistance from the Delivery Unit, was to shift these relationships from conflict to collaboration.*[37]

More recently, power struggles hampered the Total Place initiative. In 2009, Total Place aimed to address the impersonal, fragmented and complex nature of local public services by inviting pilot areas to radically rethink the allocation of monies and the incentive systems in their local areas. There were a few positive outcomes that emerged, such as the development of a more integrated approach to assessing individual needs and greater sharing of information across public sector agencies across Kent.[38] However, Whitehall was not entirely bought in and Total Place pilots struggled to lead on to something more ambitious and revolutionary.[39]

I suspect that these power struggles occur because of an attachment to making a difference, not because (or not simply because) of a hunger for control.

The example of Sarah Gallagher and child support payments and ex-offenders in Chapter 1 (section 4.2) illustrates this. Collaboration sometimes requires trade-offs between equally legitimate and competing demands of 'public value', or 'public good'. I think that staff are trying their best to prioritise one 'public value' purpose over another, and institutions often mirror these divisions.

Take 'cutting crime'. Protecting the public is dealt with by the Home Office, who lead on the relationship with the 42 police forces of England and Wales. The Ministry of Justice runs the justice system in England and Wales including courts, prisons, community sentencing and probation. The third of a million problematic drug users, who cause between one third and one half of crime,[40] receive treatment provided for by the National Health Service, and their benefits are administered by the Department for Work and Pensions - where this client group is small fry (267,000 people)[41] compared with the law abiding majority. The Department for Education has a keen interest in young offenders before they reach the age of 18, as do local authorities who are often trying to protect the same children, and to house the children and adults. Looked-after children are disproportionately represented in groups

of drug abusers and offenders. Locally, clearly, there are social services, police, probation, voluntary organisations, non-profit service providers, faith-based organisations, schools, and so on and so on. You could make the same case for adults with long-term health conditions, the frail elderly, problem families, failed asylum seeker families, all sorts of segments of society that cost the taxpayer a lot of money.

Each organisation prioritises a different activity in relation to the same service user group. Who gets to be in charge, who gets to be at the table, and whose priorities come first are major issues when dealing with publicly funded collaborations.

3.1.2   Barrier to collaboration: Institutional inertia

Of course, it is not just 'baronial behaviour', the 'me-them', as opposed to 'us' thinking, that prevents collaboration. It is also logistics and structures and systems.

Richard Steele, who had led work to join up departments in Service Ontario, described the process there.

> *In the first phase, participation by ministries in the service integration process was essentially optional. While there was incremental progress, this process was unable to deliver the pace and scale of desired change … In 2006, there was a clearer and more forceful mandate, so the next round of integration did happen. Again, there are policy and legislation barriers to integration, such as competing requirements for identification. You have to go in a cycle: putting it all together, making it make sense, then resuming growth. The second phase, making it make sense, can feel like it's all cobbled together with duct tape and string at the back. That's why you need to spend time on the second phase.*

The 'making it make sense' part follows on from the vision. As Nicole Berbeau in Service Canada said to me, *"Successful management of any change initiative depends 1% on strategy and 99% on effective implementation."* Perceived obstacles preventing collaborative working also include sorting out statutory authorities (organisations may have very narrow mandates), legal barriers (there may be very strong data protection issues) and anxieties about sharing information more generally. In the USA, Bill Howell from the US Partnership for Public Service explained to me that this latter issue had caused the Department for Homeland Security to be reluctant about sharing intelligence with local and state agencies.[42]

There are also issues about moving staff around. When you redesign a service, for example to wrap it around the citizen, you are likely to need to move staff and ask them to do slightly or substantially different work. Staff work for a range of different organisations, with different terms and conditions and (now) out-of-date job descriptions. Moving staff between organisations and restructuring them is the subject of consultation with staff and trade unions, and this takes time and, sometimes, compromise. Then, when those in these roles have professional disciplines and have been trained over many years (e.g. social work, counselling, law), the competition extends from 'different public goods' (above) to 'different ways of making meaning', and different professional bodies to whom they are accountable.

Structural barriers do have an impact. One example evident in the UK is an unintended consequence of the expansion of quangos and executive agencies throughout the 1990s. The Local Government Association argued that the proliferation of these agencies resulted in *"a fragmentation of public service delivery in localities as more and more services are provided by single service agencies, thereby losing the benefits of corporate working across multi-agency authorities."*[43]

In the words of Geoff Mulgan, former Director of Policy in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit:

> The 'tubes' or 'silos' down which money flows from government to people and localities have come to be seen as part of the reason why government is bad at solving problems. Many issues have fitted imperfectly, if at all, into departmental slots. Vertical organisation by its nature skews government efforts away from certain activities, such as prevention – since the benefits of preventative action often come to another department. It tends to make government less sensitive to particular client groups whose needs cut across departmental lines......At worst, it incentivises departments and agencies to dump problems onto each other.[44]

Reporting and planning systems affect the capacity of organisations to work collaboratively. The 1999 Health Act placed a statutory duty of partnership upon the NHS and local authorities and encouraged the development of joint budgets and integrated service provision. However, partnerships proved difficult to get off the ground. Structural impediments such as the different financial planning systems and performance management systems of the NHS and local government were still very much apparent.[45] Many sites also found it difficult to reconcile their respective VAT regimes and determine each other's budgetary contributions.[46]

Workforce planning, professional cultures, reporting and financial systems, 'single issue agencies' - these form the institutional inertia that resists change even where there is common purpose and political will. They take careful unwinding and a lot of creativity to surmount.

3.1.3   Barrier to Collaboration: Lack of passion, lack of time

Several interviewees described how a 'crisis' had caused the original collaboration. A shortage of money, or sustained exposure in the media, had resulted in renewed will to try and sort out an issue that had been a problem for a while. One manager in New Mexico described how in a crisis, her staff were really good at sharing information and communicating with other agencies. *"It's as if we forget which department we belong to"*. But getting her staff to do this in routine work seemed extremely difficult. Another explained this as having limited amount of energy. *"It's human nature that the amount of energy and passion you can bring to something for a long time is limited."* Making collaboration a routine act was surprisingly difficult.

At the front line, there were those who wanted to collaborate more, but there were also resistors. *"I either had to change my staff's views, or rely on attrition to bring in the right people"*, said one manager in the criminal justice system. Another described how *"there were*

perhaps 15% of people who resisted and 85% of people on board. It's a gut wrencher. A lot of it has to do with temperament. People don't want to share the roost."

This is echoed in studies from the UK. One reported a lack of enthusiasm from various actors in Liverpool's Local Strategic Partnership. The Regional Development Agency, the Urban Regeneration Company, Liverpool Vision, and Higher Education Institution partners reportedly had little interest initially in participating in the partnership due to the emphasis the partnership placed upon the quantity of local relations, rather than their quality. As one interviewee in the study claimed, the result was endless meetings involving too many people saying exactly the same thing.[47]

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships have also seen a lack of commitment for their mission from Primary Care Trusts and local schools. Just 18% of partnerships with a violent crime strategy group reported participation by the schools representative in their local authority.[48]

Cynicism, jadedness, lack of enthusiasm, lack of time, poorly led meetings, even moral objections to working more proactively with the service user (*"they should be locked up and then we'll throw away the key"*). These hamper collaborative work.

3.1.4   Barrier to Collaboration: Changes in leadership

Where a collaborative effort relies on vertical accountability to make it work, then changes in leadership can have an extremely detrimental impact on collaboration. I described on page 43 how significant it was that senior leaders had stayed working on a project for 6 or more years, and the impact a change in politician could have at the top of a collaborative effort.

A coordinator of projects in several schools described this vividly.

> *One of the key benefits to collaboration in the projects I have worked on in the past on is knowledge/skill sharing, both peer-to-peer and cross sector. This would be a major contribution to reduction in costs, if people were able to do it more regularly. You get a consortium together and once they have overcome their cynicism or fear, people suddenly cascade information, knowledge and contacts to each other incredibly quickly. However, shift on a year and quite often personnel/regime change will have effectively destroyed most of the network's power, any best practice discovered and agreed on by the group can easily have been filed somewhere obscure - including the hard won knowledge of why it's important to collaborate and how to do that effectively. This latter point can take so long to 'discover'! The hard won gains of the initial collaboration can unfortunately seem to melt away.*

This is an experience which is common to the UK, where senior officials often stay in jobs for three years or less, and junior ministers have an average tenure of 1.3 years.[49]

One of my interviewees, who coordinated a collaboration of elected politicians, recognised this barrier and organised the collaboration's work plan to accommodate it.

I needed to anticipate that good people would come and good people would go. So I kept an eye on the agenda and the workplan. I would combine some 'quick wins' with one or two more crunchy and controversial issues.

Her intention was that she had to keep rebuilding understanding and commitment to only two projects at a time, not a huge change agenda.

The changes can also occur because of external changes in context, not just because an individual changes job or organisation.

3.1.5   Barrier to Collaboration: Impatience

A final difficulty in getting collaboration to work is the impatience shown by government, stemming from its desire to see immediate results. This was not particularly mentioned by my interviewees, but comes out in the literature about what has been going on in the UK.

The importance attached to 'quick wins' by so many ministers in UK government is symptomatic of the dominance of short-termism in the political process. Examples include the expectation for quick results after the establishment of Local Strategic Partnerships,[50] ambitious targets and high pressure for the Health Action Zones established in 1998,[51] and the proliferation of regeneration initiatives in the late 1990s and early 2000s where, one commentator argues, the new government wanted to be seen to be doing something. The impact was increased fragmentation at the local level and greater difficulties in creating effective horizontal integration at the local level.[52]

Ministers themselves are inevitably reluctant to operate in ways that are slow and which display a lack of certainty and 'grip' about the way forward. These are not perceived to be the attributes of a successful politician. The following quote is from a radio program broadcast in 2008, by a former Secretary of State for Education.

Baroness Estelle Morris: *"People who do politics are not prone to doubt about their vision and about their values. They worked that out years before they went into politics and went into politics because they were certain about vision and values. In terms of policies, I think they are far less certain than they sound, but I think their certainty about the vision sometimes overflows into certainty about the means. And then the worst of politics is of course when you confuse it… We know in our heart that it's not black and white, that it's not 100% one policy and no percent another policy. We know that and yet we pretend with the public that you know it's absolutely this policy and it will deliver what we want. Politics needs to change in that respect."*

Michael Blastland: *"Can you give us an example? Can you describe any occasions?"*

Baroness Estelle Morris: *"Yeah, we had a policy that said all young children should do homework. The evidence is that it matters not a jot whether very young children do homework. I'm talking about 5 to 7 year olds. Were we going to go out and change our policy? No, we were not because common sense tells you that it's fine for children to do homework and we wanted to sound firm on that."*[53]

Ministers desire certainty and clarity and realised commitments. And so they should. We civil servants sometimes overplay the difficulties. We can be cautious about implementation timescales, and over-eager to point out risks. I think it is hard for Ministers to sit patiently through the gap between setting out the vision and seeing the implementation, in the knowledge that the Civil Service has a long term relationship with inertia. That said, a willingness to let collaborations develop long-term is essential, and impatience has jeopardized efforts towards successful collaboration in the past.

3.2   So why bother collaborating?

These barriers - the power struggles, the lack of passion and time, the leadership churn, the impatience, the institutional inertia - can all combine into a formidable set of blocks to collaboration. Shifting these issues can take an enormous amount of effort and skill, trust and faith. Often improvement relies on strong relationships, thoughtful interventions to tackle culture and reporting structures, and even issues like longevity of tenure, restructuring and reporting mechanisms.

It must, therefore, be worth it!

I have found many examples where collaboration has made a difference, both from the people I met on my travels, and from reviewing what has been happening in the UK. Improved collaboration has saved money and improved effectiveness.

3.2.1   Reasons to Collaborate: Saving money

Collaboration between public agencies and non-state actors can be much more cost-effective than detached working where services and policy are not integrated. Several of my interviewees described the trigger for more collaborative working as being a funding crisis. Collaboration can ensure that redundant and contradictory plans are eliminated or reformed, and therefore, be more cost-effective.[54] The lack of coherence in public services from separate funding streams and delivery frameworks, is costly for taxpayers. A joint National Audit Office and Audit Commission report estimated that for every additional layer of administration that is present within a delivery chain, up to 20% of funding is lost.[55]

Professor Patrick Dunleavy provides an example

> *In England alone we currently have 110 different local library services, and 110 different apparatuses for organizing the management of library services, and dozens of different small consortia for book procurement, each involving a small number of libraries. Yet approximately 80 per cent of the stock of public library systems is identical country-wide. If we had this set up organized in a different way, could we radically save costs and improve provision at the same time?[56]*

The Total Place Initiative, which sought to make efficiency savings and improve the often fragmented nature of public services through a holistic approach, and which in many respects failed to take off, demonstrated that collaborative action can significantly deliver savings on costs even in a short period. Leicester and Leicestershire are developing a single

customer service strategy which it hopes will save £3.75 million to £5.25 million per year by 2013-14.

The North West Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, which is dedicated to helping local authorities operate more efficiently, claims it helped to save £68 million through collaborative procurement over the period 2004-5 to 2008-9.[57]

The National Health Service has also embarked on small scale collaborations that have saved money. The Partnership for Older People Projects (POPP) were NHS-funded partnerships that were forged between primary and secondary care trusts, fire and police services, housing associations, and voluntary and private sector organizations. This initiative was set up to provide improved health and well-being for older people via a series of individual projects providing local services. 29 pilot sites were designated (each site was a local authority) running from May 2006 to March 2009. The projects ranged from low level services to more formal preventative initiatives, such as hospital discharge and rapid response services. The initiative was widely thought to be successful and the commissioned evaluation showed that this partnership way of working did actually produce some considerable savings. For instance, the reduction of hospital emergency bed days created substantial savings. For every £1 spent on POPP services, there had been a £1.20 additional benefit in savings on emergency bed days. There was also a total cost reduction of £2166 per person in physiotherapy/occupational therapy and clinic appointments.[58]

3.2.2   Reasons to Collaborate: Effectiveness

I have already referred to examples of where collaborative working has significantly improved the effectiveness of public services.

Box 1 describes the success of the New York Planning Discharge Collaborative, where 59% of offenders who had completed the post release programme did not return to jail over a 12-month period compared to 30% of those who failed to complete the programme.

Box 4 describes the impact of collaborative working on spend on children in residential care in Virginia. The number of children in care reduced from 4300 in 2008, costing $167.5 million, to 2900 in 2010, costing $88.5 million, with spend on residential care falling from 44% to 27% of the Comprehensive Services budget.

Boxes 7 and 8 below continue these case studies, the first showing how collaborative working reduced the number of children in detention in New Mexico and saved the State money while cutting crime; box 8 showing the effect of bringing together national public service departments in Service Canada.

Box 7: New Mexico Alternatives to Detention Initiative

I visited the Bernaillo County Youth Services Centre in November 2010. While there I met a probation officer, a judge, a psychotherapist, a prison director and others. Bernaillo County is on the wrong side of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and serves as a demonstration site for the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). JDAI's ambition is to ensure that all youths involved in the criminal justice system have the opportunity to develop into healthy productive adults and maximize their chances for personal transformation. This initiative was launched in 1992 by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and brought together major juvenile justice agencies, government bodies and community organizations. The primary case for the initiative was that many secure detention facilities across the USA were being overcrowded by the unnecessary confinement of young people. This had damaging long-term social, educational and employment prospects consequences. Current forms of detention also carried exceedingly great costs. As a result, the primary objective of JDAI involved implementing new non-secure alternatives to detention.

Service outcomes of the initiative have been impressive. Bernalillo County in New Mexico reduced their average daily detention population by 58% between 1999 and 2004 and reductions continue. Multnomah County in Portland, Oregon, had reduced theirs by 65% between 1995 and 2002. Bernalillo County saw the number of juvenile arrests decrease by 37% between 1999 and 2006. In Cook County in Chicago, this decrease was 54% between 1993 and 2000.

Cost is a growing worry in juvenile detention in the United States. In some places the average cost to operate a detention bed exceeds $70,000 annually. Art Murphy, Acting Director of the Bernalillo County Youth Services Centre, argued that saving money was a "critical selling point in the initiative" and the Centre has "been very successful at doing that in 10 years".

Looking country-wide, Multnomah County was able to close three 16-bed detention units between 1998 and 2001 due to the decreasing reliance on detention, and has saved $2.4 million each year since then. Cook County had authorized the construction of 200 new detention beds in response to chronic overcrowding, costing $300 million over 20 years. Instead, the County spent $3 million annually on alternative-to-detention programmes, saving the County almost $250 million over two decades.

Box 8: Service Canada and the cost and impact of joining-up departmental working

Service Canada was established as an organization that reported to the Minister for Human Resources and Skills Development and has the responsibility for providing a single-window service for citizens. It takes on the activities of the former Department of Human Resource Development and provides services on behalf of twelve other departments and agencies. It provides access to over 77 different government programmes, including offering a combined service to deal with citizens' pensions, birth certificates and welfare benefits. In particular, it aims to bundle services around life event, so that a new parent, the newly unemployed, or the newly retired, can access all local and national government services from one counter or one website portal.

Its collaboration network is expansive. As well as working with government departments, it works with provincial governments, labour unions, businesses and voluntary and community organizations.

I asked a Senior Officer of Service Canada what the incentives were for all of these actors to work together, and she replied "There's no downside! It's even doing the same thing at a lower cost". She argued that the burning platform of shrinking budgets was a huge incentive for departments and agencies to join the partnership. In the first year of its operations, Service Canada accumulated savings of $292 million (Canadian) for taxpayers. Between 2006 and 2007, savings of $424 million were realized, which mainly resulted from day-to-day partnership working.

By 2009, Service Canada developed 330 full-service Service Canada centres, enabling 93% of Canadians to have access to government services within 50 kilometres of where they live. In a 2008 citizen satisfaction survey, 84% of users believed that the online service had the information they were looking for, and 87% of users thought this was the case with in-person services. Its impact on service delivery has undoubtedly transformed the experience of service users across the country.

Another example of collaboration being necessary to improve effectiveness can be found in the security field. The US Government Accountability Office looked at the issue of 'inter agency collaboration' on security in 2009. They found *"in some cases, such as U.S. government efforts to improve the capacity of Iraq's ministries to govern, U.S. efforts have been hindered by multiple agencies pursuing individual efforts without an overarching strategy... Organizational differences—including differences in agencies' structures, planning processes, and funding sources— can hinder interagency collaboration, potentially wasting scarce funds and limiting the effectiveness of federal efforts."* At a micro-level, they gave the example of two law enforcement agencies moving in, unknowingly, on the same terrorist suspect abroad.[59]

Being more effective as a collective set of providers rather than an individual provider is true particularly for those outside government who are trying to influence government. Working collaboratively was the preferred method for two of the non-governmental actors I interviewed. The Connect U.S. Fund only funds those NGOs who work collaboratively.

> *We know we can get more impact that way… The government can't turn round and say they don't know what was going on. It's so powerful to bring disparate voices, from faith groups to top level researchers and say, 'all of these people agree on these five things.* [60]

The Children's Partnership on Health in Ontario said exactly the same. Having such a diverse range of voices, speaking jointly, meant their voice was particularly powerful.

> *In the end, we just wrote one letter. That's unusual for an NGO campaign! We wrote one letter to the minister, and we all signed it. And we got the policy change we asked for, because everybody was on board, from several different perspectives.*

Local services in the UK echo the experience of collaboration leading to improved effectiveness. Devon County Council talks about throwing open its budget to families of those with special needs, and prioritising and designing services very differently and very much more economically through doing so. Melton Borough Council also created improved outcomes and reduced expenditure on high needs families, through co-designing services with these families. Enfield Borough Council has worked collaboratively with police, the fire service, a range of voluntary groups such as Age Concern, and housing providers, in the borough, to reduce burglary by 53% in target areas while comparable areas not in the project saw burglary rise by 4%. [61]

3.3   To sum up

The 'common purpose' for collaboration can be significant, with financial gains to be had, alongside improved customer experience. The trouble is that collaboration is often fraught with challenges. Power struggles, systems that are not designed for collaboration, leadership churn, impatience for quick results, all threaten collaboration. I would argue that in the face of such challenges, the four central themes of appreciating the service user's perspective, creating common purpose, insisting on whole system approaches and sharing power, become essential as an antidote to such barriers.

4. So what?
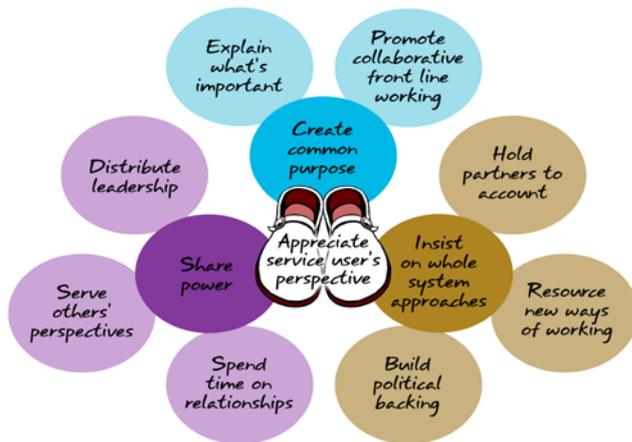
Chapters 1 and 2 explain in detail the twelve key themes that arose from my discussions with nearly 70 interviewees who were working collaboratively. Four themes were particularly critical to successful collaborative working: appreciating the service user's perspective, creating common purpose, insisting on collaborative working, and sharing power. Chapter 3 describes the barriers to collaborative working, and the reasons why taking a whole systems approach is worth it.

I wondered what the efforts in the last decade to work collaboratively might look like when assessed against these four themes. I looked at three examples: the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit between 2001 and 2005 and its work on targets, Every Child Matters, and Local Area Agreements. I chose these because I felt each had had significant political will behind them, the expectation of making a big difference, and their intention had been about getting public services to improve for the service user and the public. All three were a Whitehall-imposed approach to joining-up a complex system and insisting on a whole systems approach.

4.1   PMDU

The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit was a significant creation in terms of implementing interdepartmental collaborative working within Whitehall. The Delivery Unit organized stocktake meetings for priority policy areas, which were mainly covered by Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. The Prime Minister, members of the Delivery Unit and leaders from the relevant departments all participated, with the Prime Minister chairing, and they would review and discuss each area in great depth. This was a method for bringing departments together in shared purpose in order to meet the targets. For example, asylum stocktakes involved the Foreign Secretary, the Lord Chancellor, Attorney General and the International Development Secretary as well as the Home Secretary. This undoubtedly engineered a greater degree of joined-up government within Whitehall.

The targets set and overseen by the Delivery Unit were intended to act as a proxy for the service user experience, from how long they had to wait in an Accident and Emergency (A&E) department to see a doctor, to the timeliness of rail services, to the standard of education. There were significant improvements. But the activity was controversial. The health targets, according to senior doctors, sometimes compromised the overall quality of patient care. Doctors claimed that patients were often moved inappropriately and a large number of casualty units admitted that patients were discharged from A&E before they had been properly assessed or stabilized.[62] In asylum,

managerial effort on reducing asylum intake and clearing up asylum cases may have meant that effort was not prioritised on foreign national prisoners, causing a political crisis in 2006. As Michael Barber, former head of the Delivery Unit, described, this sort of scenario did mean *"hitting the target, but missing the point"*, where target attainment was unintentionally regarded as more important than overarching mission goals. My analysis is that this top-down approach, though nuanced in thought and design at the centre, ended up being applied bluntly at the end of the delivery chain in an effort to please upwards. The service user was at the heart of the system in the middle, but not always at the heart of the system at the extremities. The Prime Minister insisted on collaborative working and in so doing created common purpose between departments, (though some chafed against this) but there was not a significant effort to share power. A 'sharing power' approach might have enabled these local adjustments to be made more effectively.

4.2   Every Child Matters

Every Child Matters, an ambitious initiative launched in 2003, aimed to merge social services and educational departments across England in order to ensure that social workers took an interest in educational outcomes of their caseload and commissioned education as well as social care. Almost a decade later, councils often still have two cultures working alongside each other rather than one organization, and the objectives were probably not achieved as successfully as the designers of the policy hoped. There was also a failure in getting health and social services to collaborate with other children's services.[63] A lack of insistence towards getting these services working together was a key part in this failure, as well as not convincing the various actors to agree on a common purpose.

4.3   Local Area Agreements

Local Area Agreements (LAAs, now abolished) were a set of targets agreed between central government and each Local Strategic Partnership, and were placed on a statutory footing in 2007. For most of their existence, LAA central government funding was ring-fenced for LAA targets. The importance the government placed on local authorities reporting back to the centre caused many LAA actors to feel overwhelmed and burdened by performance reporting. They also felt that this burden was deflecting attention from actually improving service delivery and serving the local need.[64] The service user's perspective did not always come first. This was further accentuated by a feeling that many of the targets were inappropriate and unachievable.[65] In order for a collaboration to run smoothly, the top tiers of government must be willing to let go of control and trust fellow partners' perspectives in the process.

I conclude from these three examples that in the last decade, the previous government often insisted on collaboration through targets, joint budgets and legislation. In many ways, these efforts were heroic, resulting in changes to the public sector from frontline services to Whitehall. Data was collected in ways it was not before, social workers reported in to a different head of department, whole units in local authorities were devoted to reporting back up to Whitehall. However, there were gaps in sharing power, appreciating the service user's perspective, and creating genuine common purpose. The style of 'insistence', happening at the national level rather than at the local level, may also not have helped.

4.4　Conclusions

The conversations I have had with nearly 70 people working collaboratively and funded by the public purse, and the reflection I have done on the themes that have come up, have left me with a set of queries for those (including myself) who are trying to promote collaborative working. These are in box 9.

Asking myself these questions has provoked some 'what ifs' and 'why nots'. The last section of this report floats some highly tentative balloons in this territory. I am not attached to these solutions but intend them, in the best tradition of a 'brainstorm', to provoke a discussion. The prize of a whole systems approach is significant. Getting there will be a story of many initiatives, some of which might provoke change, others may not. My ideas arise out of my four themes: walking in the service user's shoes, insisting on collaborative working, sharing power, and creating common purpose but are particularly influenced by my reflections in chapter 2 on sharing power. These are in box 10.

There is still much more to be done on joining-up government departments and local services to save money and improve service users' experience. To do so requires bold action and new thinking. I hope this report contributes to that discussion.
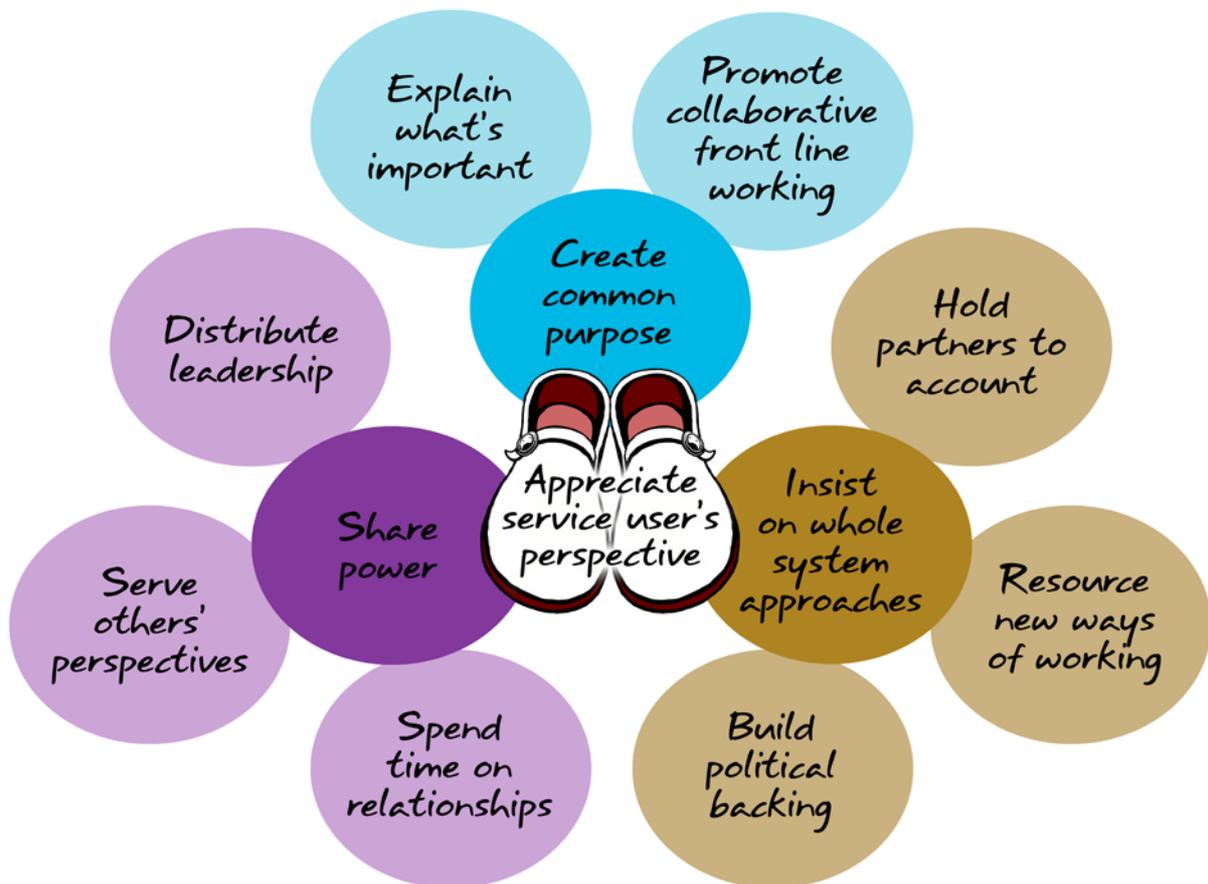
Box 9: Queries for Those Promoting Collaborative Working

- How much privilege do you give to the voices of service users in service design and policy design and in the way money flows? Who have you invited to witness the collaborative working? Who holds a 'whole system perspective'? What more could you do to promote consistent and regular service user participation in the system?

- How often have you explained 'why' the collaboration is worth it recently? How have you challenged and supported service professionals to adapt to working more collaboratively? What more training might you offer to help people understand the need to work in this way? How are professional competencies, professional development, and selection criteria geared to working collaboratively in order to improve services?

- What more could you do to insist on collaborative working? Have you put in place enough people to work out the details so that organisations can join up and 'stuff' doesn't get in the way? Have you policed your partners' behaviours and challenged those who are not operating collaboratively? What other sources of authority can you create for working collaboratively, including financial sources? Can you move beyond it happening because the leader says so? Alternatively, to what extent are you over-emphasising this strand without giving attention to 'creating common purpose', 'sharing power', and 'walking in the service user's shoes'?

- How could you share power more, to enable the complex system you lead, to adapt without you dictating the details? To what extent are you involving the community of practice in design and oversight, not just in implementation? How are you handling not being 'in control'? How can you buy political space to give the time and authority to others in the system to change how the system is run, as opposed to limiting others' room for manoeuvre?

- How can you build on existing strong relationships? In what ways are you supporting relationship building within the collaboration? If the departure of key leaders is a significant risk to the collaboration, how can you use the other factors to help the collaboration sustain?

Box 10: Ideas to Promote a Whole Systems Approach in British Public Services

1. Continue to devolve power and money down to headteachers, doctors, Police and Crime Commissioners etc, so that those nearest the service users can lead collaborative working.

- Whitehall needs to ensure that these local actors have sufficient freedoms to work together, both financially, and legally.

2. Do more to ensure that nationally delivered services have empowered local interlocutors who can join in the deal making locally.

- National services, like DWP, the UK Border Agency, even HMRC, could be authorised to act even more locally. As for idea 1, they would need sufficient financial, legal and performance management freedoms and incentives to work with others.

- This may involve looking closely at the way benefits spend and criminal justice spend, in particular, are parcelled up and who is incentivised to invest it across organisations to save money for the whole, not the part.

3. Support early innovators of collaborative working in local areas, once existing public service reforms in health, schools and policing have been implemented.

- Once Police and Crime Commissioners, and GP Fundholders, and the Universal Credit are established, the Government could support some pathfinding areas with extra assistance (e.g. legal and financial) to help them do deals between themselves for better whole systems approaches. The current central Government work which supports early free schools, and mutuals is a model for how to support early adopters.

4. Support local communities working with certain high-cost service users to demand their local group of service providers take a whole systems approach.

- E.g. A '5 local organisations agree that there's a problem' then triggers a service redesign debate. Would mirror the '100,000 signatures triggers Commons Debate' rule.

- Or trial a 'wiki' or 'networked' approach locally where service providers and other groups set their own rules for how they plan to work together.

5. Consider ways to protect public service users where publicly funded bodies fail to provide a sufficiently joined up (and therefore cheaper and more effective) service.

- Are there ways to protect or help vulnerable public sector service users in the same way that consumers are protected and helped by the Office of Fair Trading?

- e.g. Collect and publish data on 'service user experience of publicly funded services' for particularly expensive segments of the benefits population, by local area.

6. In Whitehall, try out new approaches to developing key national decision-making process guidance which share power more broadly.
- E.g. Wiki-Guidance writing for applying for CRB checks, doing self-assessment tax returns, applying for an extension of leave to remain, to involve communities of interest in co-creating guidance rather than the traditional 'draft, consult, amend' model.

7. In Whitehall, establish some crosscutting delivery projects to help people through critical life events for high volume, low complexity services that are done nationally and online.
- E.g. single online service for employers taking on new staff - to deal with CRB checks, right to work and registration for tax purposes, Single online service for new parents - to deal with child tax credit, child benefit, tax-free savings, maternity and paternity payments, birth certificate, etc. Single online service for new pensioners and one for new migrants.

8. Bring the service user's perspective into design and delivery by electing service users from the community of practice onto Whitehall and Agency executive boards, a bit like non-executive directors at Departmental level.
- Would probably have to be at sub-departmental level to have the most impact.

- E.g. a benefits recipient or Citizens Advice Bureau volunteer on the JobCentre Plus Board; someone with a long-term health condition onto the governance arrangements for Social Care or long-term health conditions in the Department of Health.

- They would need to have real input into strategy and policy. Not just a 'consultative forum'.

9. Make policy makers and service deliverers alive to the service user perspective by requiring policy makers to get deep and broad exposure to citizen perspectives in their career path.

Appendix 1: Methodology

The findings in this report have been largely drawn from conversations with people in the USA, Canada and India. I met a huge range of people, in a wide array of roles, and with varying levels of power and influence. They worked in government, universities, the private sector, and non-governmental organisations including thinktanks, service delivery bodies, and philanthropic funders. What connected them all was passion for what they were doing, and a willingness to share their experiences with a civil servant from England whom they had never met.

My 'research question' was 'What should central government do, and avoid doing, to allow effective collaboration over publicly funded services?' This, however, was not the question I asked my interviewees. I wanted to understand what it was that meant they could collaborate well, and extrapolate from that what central government should do.

My process of selecting collaborations was both targeted and serendipitous. I found examples through web searches that excited my interest, including Service Canada, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's work on Alternatives to Juvenile Detention, and the New Mexico Behavioural Health Collaborative. In most other cases, however, I found my interviewees through introductions from friends, colleagues, and friends of friends. Finding interviewees was, therefore, a very collaborative process, though hardly a scientific one.

In my interviews, I decided to trust that whatever was germane to the success of collaborative working, and its challenges, would emerge in most of the conversations I would have. My task was to create a sense of trust with my interviewee so that they would feel comfortable sharing with me what was important. I tended to do that by explaining my own personal enthusiasm for collaboration and talking about a time when I had found it difficult. My theory was that by revealing something about myself, particularly when I had struggled, rather than when I had been successful, my interviewees would in turn feel able to reveal something personal about themselves. I then tended to ask only a few questions, including 'What made the collaboration successful?', 'What else was important?', 'How did you make that work?' and 'When did you find it hard, or when did it keep you awake at night?'

Either during or after the interview, I would usually create a 'cognitive map' of what the interviewee had said. Cognitive mapping is a systems thinking tool and is a way of recording an individual's point of view, in particular their way of making sense of the world. I would place the relevant key purpose at the top of the map (such as 'collaborating to improve services'), and then ask myself, 'how did they say they achieved that?'.[66] I would then list the separate activities and elements they mentioned, that they said added together to achieve that purpose, underneath the top purpose, and connect them up with arrows. I would then take one item on the second line and ask, 'how did you do that?' and expand it beneath, again with separate items listed, adding up to the how the second order purpose was achieved. And so on. After the interview, I would usually try to check back with the interviewee to ensure that I had recorded their point of view correctly. If I was

making notes in the interview itself, I would often summarise what I had recorded towards the end of the interview, and ask if I had captured everything, or if anything was missing.

This mapping was no good for the fantastic stories that I heard, from the women's group that blocked the main roads in India to get a rape case taken seriously, to the Probation Officer who described going to the first ever high school graduation of one of her clients. I recorded stories separately, in narrative form. The cognitive map focused me exclusively on the 'hows' and 'whys' of aspects of working collaboratively.

Where possible, I checked back my notes with my interviewees, and have asked their permission to attribute quotes to them. Sometimes they asked for their views to be left unattributed.

In a few interviews I invited my subjects to draw a rich picture. They were invited to use as few words and as many images as possible to show how they felt about working collaboratively, and to ensure they put themselves in the picture somewhere.

I revisited all of my notes and cognitive maps and made a single overarching map which incorporated all the ingredients of success listed by my interviewees. It was striking how many interviewees mentioned the same core ideas. I grouped them up and noticed how people related one thing to another. This is explained more fully in Chapter 1.

I also kept a note of how many people had mentioned each theme. In the few meetings where I met people in groups, I assumed that the individuals had mainly agreed with each other (for example if one person said, "a common objective *was critical"*, I assumed that the other two attending the meeting had agreed with that point). I also inferred support for certain themes from comments in interviews. For example, I inferred that people supported the idea of 'sharing power' if they, for example,

- described how they had tried to create a sense of local ownership of a project in communities or local areas.

- described how they listened to what was needed rather than directed what was needed.

- talked about themes like 'not being rigid', 'creating space for adaptation'.

- described key qualities like 'keeping your ego in check' or acknowledging different perspectives.

I am very grateful to Nigel Keohane, Jake Chapman, Kemp Battle and Gene Early for suggestions that influenced my methodology, though I alone take responsibility for the method I chose.

Example of a cognitive map from one interview

Successful wraparound services for high need kids

- Philosophical agreement on how to help kids ... having conflict between 'justice' and 'treatment'
  - A set of articulated values and principles to which everyone commits
  - Line managers who make it clear what is expected when something is under dispute
  - Top-down clarity about the vision and values, forming a universal language
    - Federal articulation of a vision and values
    - State adopts vision and values
    - Systems of care articulated and implemented... talk and no clear model, or just a think tank approach
- Genuine partnership with providers ... consultative approach (like behavioral health collaborative)
  - Accountability of those in partnership ... just getting closer, or blaming each other if it doesn't happen
  - State leadership in support ... failing to follow through
- Strong leadership ... folding to resistance
  - Hold a clear picture and be relentless about it
  - Make adjustments ... giving up on the whole thing
  - Mustn't let it start and then die. Difficult to reignite then.
  - Create a sense of movement, sorting out the details
    - Someone to work out the details... relying on leadership to do this
- Persuade staff this is about the kids' life, not their likes/dislikes.
  - Call in their boss if staff member not cooperating... letting one person sabotage whole system of care.
  - Use research to convince people ... not using data
- Use private providers. Much more flexible than State.

In the cognitive map, three dots (...) mean "as opposed to".

Appendix 2: List of interviewees

Location	Interviewee	Organisation
Canada	Nicole Berbeau	Service Canada
	Dr Marie Boutilier-Dean, Associate Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health	University of Toronto
	Alan Bulley, Director, Policy and Negotiations, Federal-Provincial/Territorial Partnerships	Department of Human Resources and Skills Development, Government of Canada
	Bernadette Da Sousa, Director	Institute for Citizen Centred Service
	Tony Dean, Former Secretary of the Cabinet, Head of the Ontario Public Service, and the Clerk of the Executive Council from 2002 to 2008	Service Ontario
	Liseanne Forand, Chief Operating Officer	Service Canada
	Bill Hogarth, former Director	York Region District School Board, Ontario
	Anne Jamieson, lead for the Toronto Enterprise Fund	United Way, Toronto
	Gillian Mason, Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives and Community Partnerships	United Way, Toronto
	Douglas Perry, Manager, Strategic Planning	Service Ontario
	Lyn Roseberry, Director	Service Canada College
	Richard Steele, Assistant Deputy Minister, Business Improvement	Service Ontario
	Tonya Surman, Executive Director, Centre for Social Innovation	Toronto Centre for Social Innovation, Ontario Nonprofit Network
	Patti-Anne Valenta, Consultant, Partner Services Branch	Service Ontario
	Janet Zaharia, Director of Learning Design	Service Canada College

New York	Diane Baillargeon, Former Chief Executive Officer of Seedco, and now on President Obama's Council on Faith-Based and Neighbourhood Partnerships.	Seedco, national non-profit organisation advancing community economic development including through workforce development and community finance.
	Michelle de la Uz, Executive Director	Fifth Avenue Committee, Inc. non-profit community development corporation, advancing social and economic justice in South Brooklyn by developing and managing affordable housing and community facilities
	Helaine Geismar Katz, Associate Executive Director	92nd Street Y, non profit community and cultural centre
	Larisa Gelman, Director of Educational Outreach	92nd Street Y
	Linda Gibbs, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services, New York City and formerly Commissioner for New York City Department for Homeless Services.	New York City Government
	Professor Martin Horn, Distinguished Lecturer, Executive Director New York State Permanent Sentencing Commission, and formerly the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Correction and Department of Probation, from 2003 to 2009	John Jay College of Criminal Justice New York City Government
	Robin Thompson, FRSA	Independent Marketing and Brand Strategy Consultant, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts
Commonwealth of Virginia	John Buckovich, Deputy Secretary of Public Safety	Office of Governor Robert F. McDonnell, Commonwealth of Virginia
	Jane Kusiak, Executive Director	Council on Virginia's Future, an Advisory Board to the Governor and General Assembly of Virginia, charged with assessing the State's progress towards long-term goals
	Jeffrey Lake, Deputy Commissioner for Community Health Services	Department of Health, Government of the Commonwealth of Virginia

	Charlotte McNulty, Executive Director	Office of Comprehensive Services, for at risk Youth and Families
	Nancy Roberts, Senior Advisor	Council on Virginia's Future
	Banci Tewolde, Prisoner Re-Entry Coordinator and Special Assistant to the Governor	Office of Governor Robert F. McDonnell, Commonwealth of Virginia
Washington D.C.	Terri Lee Freeman, President	The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region
	Bill Howell, Director, Strategic Advisors to Government Executives Program	Partnership for Public Service, non-profit, nonpartisan organisation working to revitalise US federal government by inspiring a new generation to serve and 'transforming the way government works'
	Ariane Snowdon, Trustee	Hill-Snowdon Foundation
	Alex Toma, Executive Director	Connect US Fund, philanthropic funder working on US global engagement that funds NGOs working collaboratively on advocacy
	Amy Vruno, Associate Organizer	Washington DC Interfaith Network
	Dr. Nat Chioke Williams, Executive Director	Hill-Snowdon Foundation
New Mexico	Ray Espinoza	Ageing and Long Term Services Department, New Mexico Government
	Steve Johnson, Executive Director	New Day Youth and Family Services
	Karen Meador, Senior Policy Director	New Mexico Behavioural Health Collaborative
	Doug E. Mitchell, Coordinator, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative	Bernalillo County Youth Services Center
	Eleanor Molina	Alternatives to Detention Programming, Bernalillo County
	Dr Nicole Morland, lead on data collection and analysis, Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative	Bernalillo County Youth Services Center
	Art Murphy, Acting Director	Bernalillo County Youth Services Center

	Matt Onstott	Ageing and Long Term Services Department, New Mexico Government
	Kelly Jo Parker, Juvenile Probation Officer	Bernalillo Juvenile Justice Center
	Dr Linda Smith, Behavioral Health Manager	Children Youth and Families Department, Bernalillo County
	Judge Monica Zamora, Presiding Judge	Children's Court, Bernalillo County
Connecticut	Richard Cho, Executive Director	Corporation for Supportive Housing
	John Michael Dunne	Corporation for Supportive Housing
	Sarah Gallagher	Corporation for Supportive Housing
Bangalore	Ashok Kamath	Akshara Foundation, which publishes performance information on all local schools in Bangalore and provides library and other learning resources
	Rahil Mehdi, Barathi Ghanashyam	Akshaya Patra School Meals Project in Bangalore
	Anjum Parwez, I.A.S., Commissioner Municipal Administration	Government of Karnataka
	Manivannan Ponniah, Head of the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Ltd, Former District Commissioner of Mysore and Hubli-Dharwad	Government of Karnataka
	Ramesh Ramanathan, co-Founder	The Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, a Bangalore-based not-for-profit organisation that works to change the quality of life in urban India
	Swati Ramanathan, co-Founder	The Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy
	S V Ranganath, Chief Secretary, Government of Karnataka	Government of Karnataka
	N. Sivasailam, Metro Corporation	Government of Karnataka
	Ramesh Swami, CEO	Unnati education centre, social enterprise working to educate adults in professional skills

	Rajiv Vasudevan, Chief Executive Officer	AyurVAID, a social enterprise providing holistic ayurvedic health care to poor communities in Mumbai and Bangalore
Hyderabad	Dr. Rukmini Rao	Gramya Resource Centre for Women, a non-profit grassroots NGO, working in particular to prevent infanticide and human trafficking
Mumbai	Anonymous	A Minority Rights Organisation
	Bishakha Datta, Board Member	Wikimedia Foundation and Point of View NGO. Point of View brings the points of view of women into community, social, cultural and public domains through a sustained and creative use of media, art and culture
	Dr. Anjali Dave, Professor of Social Work	Tata Institute of Social Sciences
	Ms Ilmas Futehally, Executive Director	Strategic Foresight Group, Mumbai-based thinktank
	Sujata Khandekar, founding Member and Director	Coro for Literacy
	Ms Zelma Lazarus, Chief Executive Officer	Impact India Foundation, NGO tackling preventable disability
	Ms Olga Monteiro, Manager, Administration and Public Relations	Impact India Foundation
	Sukant Panigrahy, Set Designer	"Bollywood"
	Ms Varsha Parchure, Assistant Director	Apnalaya, NGO working with slum children
	Sanaa Shaikh, Director, Education	Aseema, providing education to underprivileged children in Mumbai in partnership with the Mumbai Government

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[2] Cabinet Office (2011), *Open Public Services* White Paper, p. 7.

[3] Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2010), *Local Growth: Realising every place's potential*, p. 15.

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[7] The terminology 'service user' is not ideal. It hints obliquely at substance abuse and already defines the recipient in terms of a single service rather than as a whole person. Many Whitehall departments use 'customer' as a way of trying to persuade staff to treat those who use the service with more deference. This is not always popular with front line staff particularly those who undertake enforcement activity, nor with service users themselves. The 'customer' does not have much choice over paying tax, claiming benefit or being checked as they cross a border. 'Client' implies that they are paying for the service. 'Citizen' I much prefer, but does not distinguish between the taxpayer, the newspaper reader, and the actual recipient of a service, and excludes foreign nationals, with whom many public services interact. 'Service recipient' has a 'wait by the letterbox' mentality, which goes along side the 'delivery' of services, a metaphor which has all the activity happening by the publicly funded actors, and the waiting and receiving being done by the service user. This is also not helpful. 'End-user' is another option, but implies a huge long delivery chain with the citizen dangling off the end, almost an afterthought. So I have settled, uncomfortably, on service user.

[8] When considering the numbers, you should note that if a factor was mentioned by all Service Canada and Service Ontario interviewees, this would contribute 10 'votes' to the factor. If it was mentioned by all those in New Mexico Alternatives to Detention Initiative, this would have contributed 8 'votes'. (Though I have to say, not everyone in New Mexico or Service Canada always mentioned the same things!) So this table is weighted towards the projects where I interviewed several people.

[9] As an example, an input measure would be the number of police on the beat, an output measure would be the number of arrests or successful convictions, and an outcome measure would be falling crime. Outcome measures often served as a proxy for the perspective of the service user or citizen.

[10] Scotland has copied this and has its own 'Scotland Performs' approach, www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms/indicators.

[11] Nicole Berbeau, Service Canada.

[12] Tony Dean, former Head of Ontario Public Service.

[13] Mentioned by a junior and a senior manager in New Mexico and Canada.

[14] Five separate interviewees from all three countries, working locally and nationally.

[15] Bill Hogarth Director of the Board of Education in the York region, Ontario.

[16] Dr Rukmini Rao, Director, Gramya Resource Centre, Hyderabad, India.

[17] Interviewee 3.

[18] Interviewees 6, 9, 27, 40, 44, 45.

[19] Interviewee 6.

[20] Interviewees 46, 48, 49, 51, 55, 62, 64.

[21] Interviewee working on prisoner release.

[22] Service Canada interviewee.

[23] 9 separate Indian interviewees.

[24] Interviewee 12.

[25] Interviewees 17, 19, 26, 28, 46, 48, 53, 60.

[26] Interviewees 13, 19 and 40.

[27] Surman, T. and Surman, M. (2008), 'Open Sourcing Social Change: Inside the Constellation Model', The Open Source Business Resource, p. 9.

[28] I later met James Forrester, an editor for Wikipedia since its very early days in 2002, and he pointed out that Wikipedia's success has been assisted by the very clear and simple product that they are trying to create. *"Everyone knows what an Encyclopaedia is, and roughly what we're aiming at. One entry on each topic, which is objectively sourced."*

[29] Interviewee 42.

[30] Interviewee 1.

[31] 3 Interviewees in Canada, New York and Virginia.

[32] Interviewees 21, 24, 38, 41.

[33] Interviewee 9.

[34] Interviewees 13, 17, 24, 38, 41, 64.

[35] Rich pictures are another interviewing tool, especially useful for group interviewing. They are designed to surface difference in perspective, allowing interviewees to point to emotions, general climate, and really explore their own perspective. The concept of Rich pictures was introduced by Peter Checkland in his book *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice* (1981).

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[42] Also described in United States Government Accountability Office (2009), *Report to Congressional Committees, Interagency Collaboration: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight of National Security Strategies, Organizations, Workforce and Information Sharing*, p. 46.

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[55] National Audit Office and Audit Commission (2006), *Delivering Efficiently: Strengthening the links in public service delivery chains*, p. 42.

[56] Dunleavy, P. (2010), *The Future of Joined-up Public Services*, 2020 Public Services Trust, p. 13.

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[60] Alex Toma, Executive Director, Connect US Fund.

[61] Department for Communities and Local Government, Local Government Delivery Council, and Improvement and Delivery Agency (2010), *Customer Insight through a Total Place Lens*, p. 14.

[62] BBC News, 'Target "putting A&E care at risk"', news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4339653.stm.

[63] Conversation with government minister.

[64] Gash, T. et al (2008), *Performance Art: Enabling better management of public services, Institute for Government*, p. 52.

[65] Gash, T. et al (2008), *Performance Art: Enabling better management of public services, Institute for Government*, p. 54.

[66] More information on cognitive mapping can be found here:
http://ns310278.ovh.net:8001/rid=1244116268359_1251406318_3109/Getting%20Started%20with%20Cognitive%20Mapping.pdf

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