

Service Transformation Agreement

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VISION

1.1 Citizens' time is not free, yet often the way public services are delivered assumes it to be so. The aim of this Service Transformation Agreement (STA) is to change public services so they more often meet the needs of people and businesses, rather than the needs of government, and by doing so reduce the frustration and stress of accessing them. The result will be services that are better for the customer, better for front line staff and better for the taxpayer.

Tailoring services to needs

1.2 Service transformation is about changing public services so they are tailored more to the needs of people and businesses and less to the structures of government. Public services should be delivered in the ways and at the times that people now expect them; the public service should get it right first time so that people do not have to initiate contact again and again; and rather than expecting people to "join up" government for themselves it should be done for them. Government will do this by engaging users of public services to learn what really matters to them, and by acting on what is learnt.

1.3 People are busier and their time is an increasingly precious commodity. They expect services that respond to their individual needs ("I've been made redundant") rather than to the needs of individual delivery agencies ("fill in Form D123"). And they expect to deal with government in ways and at times that are convenient for their personal circumstances, for example out of normal office hours and from home over the internet.

1.4 Yet carrying out a simple task – reporting a house move, notifying a change in circumstances – can involve being shuffled from office to office, phone line to phone line giving the same information again and again. And services that appear confusing and inaccessible may deter people from seeking them with the result that citizens are denied the help that the Government, in its policies, seeks to offer.

1.5 This is self-perpetuating. The entire public sector faces a constant battle with "avoidable contact" – demand caused by customers initiating contact because they are confused, need to check on progress, pass on information they have already given to other parts of the public sector and so on. This is contact that would not be necessary if the public sector could get things right first time. It simply frustrates customers and wastes their time; erodes public trust in government; clogs up government offices so that more important demand goes unmet; and wastes money. The challenge for the public sector is to follow the example of leading private sector providers who have rethought the ways in which they interact with people and businesses to improve customer value and reduce costs.

Reducing avoidable contact

1.6 The key aim of service transformation is to reduce the number of unnecessary contacts that people need to have with government. Achieving this will require the whole of government to look critically and fundamentally at the way in which it designs and delivers services, and at the relationships between those organisations, whether in the public, private or third sectors, who have an interest in a particular area or customer group. By doing this the public sector will improve quality, accuracy and joining up across government. It will also save money and create more satisfying jobs for public sector staff.

1.7 This change will require action right across the public sector, specifically in the context of delivering the 30 PSA priority outcomes, and will not be complete within a single Spending Review period. But during the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) period the Government will make practical reductions in the number of contacts; introduce the core services on which further change can be built; make the policy changes which will underpin further improvement; and engage with citizens, businesses and front line staff involving them, listening to them and learning from them, to improve public services.

1.8 The Government's aim for this STA is to establish across the public sector a sustainable culture built upon an understanding of the needs and behaviours of citizens and businesses to create services that are:

- ***better for customers.*** Services are simpler, more streamlined and intuitive, more accessible and convenient. Services are not designed to trip customers up, even though it sometimes seems that way. Customers will progressively find that when they deal with government each contact they have is easy and joined-up. Each one fulfils a need, adds value to the outcome and is trusted.
- ***better for staff.*** Front line public sector staff – not just those in face-to-face offices, but also those answering calls in contact centres and developing services for the web – have a strong culture of service. They are closest to the customer and feel the public service's strengths and weaknesses the most acutely. By using their own experience front line staff will increasingly find that they can get on with delivering services of which they can feel proud.
- ***better for the taxpayer.*** Unnecessary and duplicative contact, cumbersome and complicated processes, fragmented and inaccessible services are as frustrating and costly for government as they are for staff and the customer. Each unnecessary contact removed is a saving giving greater value for money for the taxpayer.

2

GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Overall leadership and direction

2.1 The Minister for the Cabinet Office, who chairs the new Cabinet Committee on Public Engagement and the Delivery of Services, and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury will hold departments to account for the delivery of the commitments within this STA. Each Secretary of State will be responsible for the delivery of service transformation within his or her department.

2.2 The Civil Service Steering Board, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, consists of a small number of departmental permanent secretaries and non-executive members. It is responsible for the overall leadership and direction of this Agreement. This includes endorsing the overall strategy, assigning leadership of cross-government projects to specific departments, and reviewing overall progress against plans.

2.3 A senior official Delivery Council, including all lead and supporting departments together with other service delivery organisations, will monitor progress, regularly review delivery, and be responsible for programme management and the development of strategies and plans. The Delivery Council will have a particularly important role in identifying areas of future work and making proposals to the Civil Service Steering Board.

2.4 To complement the Delivery Council the Local Government Delivery Council (LGDC) has been established to manage the interface between local and central government. It is responsible for leadership on service transformation on behalf of local government. This includes facilitating support for councils in implementing this Agreement, and developing mechanisms by which progress at the local government level will be monitored and evaluated.

Lead departments

2.5 The Civil Service Steering Board has appointed a lead department to each specific area of transformation, with the Delivery Council providing support and coordination as required. These departments and the service transformation areas they are leading on are as follows: Department of Work and Pensions for citizen focused services; Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs for business focused services; Home Office for identity management; Ministry of Justice for helplines and Local Government for face-to-face services. As new specific areas of transformation are agreed other lead departments will be appointed.

2.6 At official level, service transformation will continue to be led by the Cabinet Secretary, supported by the Civil Service Steering Board and a secretariat in the Cabinet Office (CO), as recommended in Sir David Varney's Report¹ on service transformation.

Adviser to the Prime Minister

2.7 The Prime Minister has appointed Sir David Varney as his adviser on public service transformation. In this role Sir David will:

- advise the Prime Minister and Secretaries of State directly on all aspects of service transformation delivery, reporting annually to the Cabinet on progress against service transformation goals, which will be made available to the Public Administration Select Committee of the House of Commons;

¹ Responding to being asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for advice on opportunities for transforming the delivery of public services, Sir David Varney published *Service Transformation: better services for citizens and businesses, a better deal for the taxpayer* in December 2006.

- chair the cross-Whitehall Delivery Council; and
- work closely with the senior leadership of the civil service, and in particular Director General of Service Transformation at the CO, to advise on the Government's approach at all levels to improvements of services. To facilitate this further he will remain a non-executive member of the Civil Service Steering Board, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary.

MEASURING PROGRESS

2.8 Measuring progress purely from the customer's subjective point of view is not enough. Whilst government will monitor the customer experience through journey mapping and customer satisfaction tracking mechanisms at the front line (explained further in chapter 3), it will complement these with more objective data in the form of two key progress measures.

Reducing avoidable contact

2.9 All too often people find they have to contact the public sector again and again even for the simplest thing because it has got it wrong. They have to initiate contact to provide information which the public sector already has or because the public sector has not explained something properly. They also initiate contact to chase public service providers for action that they are not confident will be carried out. This type of contact is what is termed "avoidable".

2.10 The first progress measure will track how much contact between government and citizens is "avoidable". This will be done by asking those who are closest to the citizen in local and central government to identify when and why that type of contact happens.² By bringing this information together the public sector will be better able to see how this contact could have been avoided had things been done right first time. And by comparing the results across similar services and organisations the public sector will be able to gather better information on why citizens and businesses need to initiate contact in the first place.

2.11 The intention is to halve the proportion of "avoidable" contact by the end of the CSR07 period in line with the recommendations made in Sir David Varney's report.

Faster and more effective services

2.12 Reducing avoidable contact in this way will mean that the public sector delivers existing services more quickly and effectively. However, it will also inform how the public sector fundamentally re-designs those services to be more streamlined and accessible in the future. New cross-government initiatives such as "Tell Us Once" and Free School Meals will be putting this approach into practice. And already across government organisations are starting to use avoidable contact to highlight where a form needs to be shorter and clearer, where information needs to be more accessible, where closer links need to be made between different services.

² based on the Varney definition of avoidable as a contact which is duplicate, made in error or nugatory.

Progress Measure 1	Reduction in the amount of avoidable contact
Aim	The aim is to achieve a 50 per cent reduction in avoidable contact by the end of the CSR07 period as recommended by Sir David Varney in his report.
Data provider	Local government and central government contact centres; and local government face-to-face outlets.
Data set	<p>There is no existing data set to draw on. The progress measure will be based on two proposed data streams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data collected from government contact centres and collated by the Contact Council on the number of contacts which add no value (either to supplier or customer) to the outcome - data collected through the local government National Indicator Set on the number of contacts it takes customers to complete the key services which together represent the bulk of Local Authority service delivery <p>Data will be combined, with duplicate data removed, to show the total number of unnecessary contacts occurring in the system.</p>
Data coverage	Local and central government across the UK.
Baseline	To be determined by April 2008 and published on the CO website.
Frequency of reporting	Quarterly.
95 per cent confidence interval	To be determined by April 2008 and published on the CO website.
Data Quality Officer	To be determined by April 2008 and published on the CO website.
Definition of key terms	<i>Avoidable contact</i> - contact that adds no value to the outcome. It includes contact that is nugatory, duplicative or caused by failures in business processes.

Building better online services

2.13 Citizens are increasingly turning to government websites as a means of accessing public services, yet often people find it hard to locate the information they need. It doesn't help that in the past the public sector has spread information across many departmental websites, often failing to make connections between them and assuming that the citizen knows how to navigate around them.

2.14 This approach ignores the fact that citizens' needs are individual and often fall across a number of organisations. People often are not even aware of the support which the Government is able to offer.

Two key websites **2.15** The public sector can better strategically manage customer online access to services by progressively moving e-services onto two websites where they can be presented and linked in ways which customers understand. Those two sites are Directgov for citizens and Businesslink.gov for businesses.

2.16 The second progress measure will therefore track the movement of services onto Directgov and Businesslink.gov. By the end of the CSR07 period the aim is that almost all online information and transactions will be easily available through these two sites.

2.17 Whilst the Government will focus upon Directgov and Businesslink.gov, it is acknowledged there will be a small number of exceptions as government organisations may need to retain a separate site (for instance, for their own internal corporate information). However the CO will ensure that these remaining sites do not include any customer information or transactions which should be on Directgov or Businesslink.gov.

2.18 This progress measure will record the number of sites actually closed and the (much smaller) number confirmed as being clear of relevant material. It will be reported both in terms of site numbers as well as a percentage of the total task.

Progress Measure 2	Citizen and business e-services content migrated to Directgov and Businesslink.gov
Aim	The aim (in percentage terms) is to migrate more than 95 per cent of the total identified websites by the end of the CSR07 period, with the remaining 5 per cent migrating soon thereafter.
Data provider	Central Office of Information.
Data set	Data will be derived from a set of departmental agreements setting out, quarter by quarter, the material that will be moved and as a consequence the sites that will be closed or, in a small number of cases, remaining open (most usually to provide corporate information) but confirmed as holding no further relevant information or transactions. Progress will be monitored through departmental returns to the CO.
Data coverage	Central Government websites.
Baseline	Both the number of websites already closed (or cleared of relevant content if not tagged for closure) and the total number of relevant websites will be determined by April 2008 and published on the CO website.
Frequency of reporting	Quarterly.
95 per cent confidence interval	N/A, as no sampling is required for measurement.
Data Quality Officer	Lead, Government Website Review, COI.

Definition of key terms	<p><i>Migration</i> - the process by which information and transactions become integrated with Directgov and/or Businesslink.gov. Migration involves more than simply moving material from one site to another. It involves weaving information and transactions into these two sites, making connections and cross-referring so that customers see a coherent service that responds to their needs.</p> <p><i>Corporate information</i> - information that is aimed at an audience interested in the organisation itself.</p>
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Efficiency savings

2.19 Sir David Varney’s report made some estimates of efficiency savings which service transformation should release. This is an important part of service transformation: what is wasteful for the customer is inefficient for government. While not explicitly setting a level of efficiency savings as a primary progress measure of service transformation, the value in recording the level of savings achieved by departments is recognised, and the CO will track these as this STA is delivered.

3

DELIVERY

3.1 Following the direction of travel set out in the Transformational Government strategy,¹ the Government is adopting the recommendations of Sir David Varney's report that it should focus in the CSR07 period on actions at both of two levels:

- a wide programme of activity across the whole of the public sector in which every organisation puts into practice the principles of service transformation; and
- a small number of strategic initiatives, such as "Tell Us Once", which would not only provide immediate benefit to customers and greater efficiency for government, but which would also lay the foundations for a new generation of public services.

Detailed plans for each department

3.2 At the first level, relevant departments have developed individual service transformation plans for the CSR07 period in the context of their settlements. These summarise the service transformation activities each department plans to implement over the period. Detailed summaries of each department's plans can be found in Annex A. Departments will continue to develop these plans during the CSR07 period.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

3.3 Six areas of strategic action are needed to deliver the vision of service transformation.

1. **Learning from citizens and businesses.** The best service providers in the public, private and third sectors start by making sure they have a real, evidence-based understanding of the behaviours of the people they are trying to reach, including by directly engaging with their end users. The Government's vision is that it establishes across the public sector a culture and systems which make this routine.
2. **Grouping services in ways that are meaningful to the customer.** Each service solution offered by the public sector is what Sir David Varney's report described as "...a child of its time and circumstances...", presenting the citizen and business with a fragmented picture which can appear to have little relevance to the task in hand. This is inefficient for government and frustrating for the user. The Government's vision is to develop ways in which the public sector can offer integrated packages of services which respond directly to the tasks which citizens and businesses face in their day to day lives and which offer a timely response to immediate needs.
3. **Rationalising services for efficiency and service improvement.** Public sector structures and processes allow a proliferation of websites, helplines, and front offices which make little sense to those they are intended to reach. The performance of services is managed individually with little opportunity for comparison. The Government's vision is to present a service framework which is simpler, clearer and more accessible.

¹ *Transformational Government – enabled by technology*, Cabinet Office, 2005.

4. **Making better use of the customer information the public sector already holds.** The types of transformation covered by this Agreement will simply not be possible unless the public sector can establish the identity of the customer it is dealing with simply and with certainty, and be able to pass relevant information between different parts of government. This is especially important for identifying vulnerable groups in society and assessing their needs and entitlement to support.
5. **Linking local and central government.** Ensuring that public service delivery is joined up across both central and local government is a key component of this Agreement and the Government recognises that successful service transformation is dependent on close collaborative working between departments and local government bodies. This is reflected in the alignment of central progress measures and the local government performance framework, and in the establishment of the LGDC to mirror at local level the central role of the Delivery Council.
6. **Engaging front line staff.** The public sector will seek to harness the energy, input and customer insight of front line staff who it believes is strongly committed to the vision set out here and are well placed to deliver service improvements.

LEARNING FROM CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES

The Customer Insight Forum

3.4 Sir David Varney's report on service transformation argued that each department should have a customer insight function. These functions may be structured differently according to the needs of each organisation, but the role is the same: to bring the true voice of citizens and businesses into the way in which services are designed, delivered and enhanced over time. These functions offer the ability for a department to gather (and commission where necessary) the information it needs to build a picture of what really matters to the people it is trying to reach; and to use this information to drive service transformation.

Supporting culture change

3.5 To support these functions the Customer Insight Forum, first established under the Transformational Government Strategy and reporting to the Delivery Council, will play a more formal and active role through the CSR07 period supporting the culture change that is needed to create more customer-focused services.

3.6 A counterpart Business Insight Forum has also been established by Businesslink.gov. This will be a special interest group linked to the Customer Insight Forum, championing the business experience when interacting with government, sharing best practice and business insight. Alignment with the Customer Insight Forum will ensure the group has links into the Delivery Council and where appropriate common issues will be shared as they arise.

3.7 The role of the Customer Insight Forum includes:

- spreading good practice and sharing information/learning;
- enabling cross-government service transformation by tackling barriers to change from a customer perspective;

- acting as a resource to inform major cross-government policy issues or delivery initiatives by the provision of targeted, timely insight;
- establishing the training requirements for achieving competence in customer insight for public sector service providers;
- exploring closer working relationships with users and their representative bodies to ensure effective user engagement; and
- sponsorship of cross-government customer insight initiatives.

Customer journey mapping

3.8 The two progress measures outlined in chapter 2 will give the Government a view across the public sector of progress being made towards what Sir David Varney described as a service economy which is "...slicker, more immediate, more convenient to the citizen and less intrusive on (their) time...". But in order to understand what this looks like to the citizen, the public sector needs to be able to follow and understand representative customer journeys through their various stages in accessing public services.

Valuing customer's point of view

3.9 The technique of "customer journey mapping" is widely used in the commercial world and there are some excellent examples in public services. It enables a service provider to look at each step a customer takes towards completion of a task but from the point of view of that customer. Taking this viewpoint is critical for government because it exposes those steps which lie outside the immediate horizon but which hold part of the solution to streamlining the whole journey. So, for example, a call to a government helpline might be preceded by a visit to the Citizen's Advice Bureau; a completed application may conceal research in a library.

3.10 By its nature customer journey mapping is qualitative. It is often complex, covering journeys which extend over long periods of time and which are often disjointed and sometimes ambiguous. But it is one of the best ways available to the public sector to understand what needs to be done to streamline a particular area.

3.11 In advance of the CSR07 period the Customer Insight Forum will be providing guidance on customer journey mapping, drawing on the best techniques currently in use. It will then continue to act as clearing house to ensure that good practice is shared and that government as a whole extracts the greatest understanding and value from customer journey mapping.

Customer satisfaction

3.12 In the commercial world better services lead directly to more loyal and satisfied customers. In the public sector the linkage is less straightforward. Very few citizens have a strong sense of what a "public service" is and, without anything to compare it with, find it hard to express a firm opinion as to how satisfied they are.

Careful interpretation necessary

3.13 Used appropriately customer satisfaction monitoring is a valuable tool, although it does require careful interpretation if it is not to mislead. For example, the expectations of citizens change faster than their reported levels of satisfaction and so it is not unusual for the improvement of a service initially to have little, or even negative, impact on reported satisfaction levels.

3.14 Many parts of the public sector monitor customer satisfaction as part of their performance management regimes. At the moment, these activities are rarely linked or comparable, either within or across departments and agencies. This means that service delivery organisations are not able to compare their findings with peers, and are missing opportunities for benchmarking and sharing learning.

3.15 The Customer Insight Forum has already provided departments with guidelines and a framework aimed at improving the consistency and comparability of customer satisfaction measurement across government.

GROUPING SERVICES IN WAYS THAT ARE MEANINGFUL TO THE CUSTOMER

The “Tell Us Once” project

3.16 Redesigning services so that they match the needs of the customer rather than government raises some real challenges, both cultural and practical. These are quite well understood at a theoretical level, but Sir David Varney’s report recommended that they be tested through practical application. The "Tell Us Once" project, led by DWP but involving a broad cross-government partnership, will achieve just that.

3.17 The overall vision for the end of the CSR07 period for this project is for a service whereby citizens can report changes in circumstances (initially dealing with bereavement, change of address and birth) just once and with government responding in a coordinated way. This is a worthwhile service in its own right, but this work will also provide the frameworks and lessons for developing other similar cross-government services that citizens and businesses are saying they need.

Service piloted from April 2008

3.18 Tell Us Once prototypes are being tested with the aim of pilots of the service being launched from April 2008. The Government will provide more detail on how the service will be developed over the CSR07 period as this becomes available.

Directgov and Businesslink.gov

3.19 Directgov and Businesslink.gov will also, by presenting all citizen and business-facing government transactions and information on single, customer focused, websites, contribute to this strategic action. These two sites are also important for the rationalisation and efficiency of delivery, and are described below.

RATIONALISING SERVICES FOR EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

3.20 A key outcome of service transformation will be the better coordination of service delivery across all the channels through which citizens and businesses access public services. In order to move towards more efficient and integrated channel management, the Government is commencing a programme of service delivery rationalisation, with actions in this area falling into four parts: online, telephone, face-to-face, and helplines.

Online

Single point of access

3.21 The overall vision for online services is for Directgov and Businesslink.gov to become the primary informational and transactional channels for citizens and

businesses, reducing the number of departmental specific websites and providing a single secure point of access to information and services. This will involve the convergence and streamlining of information and transactions from those government websites which are aimed at individuals and businesses to Directgov and Businesslink.gov.

3.22 During this process the power and user-appeal of Directgov and Businesslink.gov will be built in line with customer needs and priorities;² aligned with departmental plans; and achieved within the technical, service design, policy and financial resources available. The scale of this process is significant and will be underpinned by an overall implementation plan giving a clear indication of the number of sites, audience types and service areas involved.

3.23 Making access to information and transactional services easier via Directgov and Businesslink.gov will mean that the public sector no longer needs the plethora of websites which citizens find so confusing. The process of closing websites which are no longer needed is already underway and the aim is to complete the process by the end of the CSR07 period. As this is done, checks will be made to ensure that no material which should be on Directgov or businesslink.gov.uk has been left on a website aimed at those interested in information only about the organisation (for example, annual reports, details of ministers and so on). It will be clear that the process of migration in a particular area is complete when a) redundant customer-facing websites can be closed and b) it can be confirmed that any customer-facing material has been transferred from any corporate websites.

Telephone

3.24 Public sector contact centres are significant to service transformation. The phone channel handles over 400 million calls each year. Because people often turn to the telephone when they are confused, impatient, or uncertain, what happens in a contact centre is often indicative of an organisation's overall service delivery capability. So improving contact centre performance often requires fundamental service transformation across the organisation.

Contact centre accreditation **3.25** Sir David Varney recommended that all public sector contact centres be accredited by the end of 2008.³ This work is being taken forward by the Contact Council⁴ which has:

- agreed a set of specific operating standards (a blueprint), applicable to all publicly funded contact centres but using where possible recognised and accepted industry-wide models aimed at delivering a better service for callers and improved efficiency for operators. Adoption of these standards will allow the process of external accreditation to be carried out by any recognised body; and

² These were initially identified in their respective strategy studies; but are continually refined and updated in line with website management information and ongoing research, both specific and general.

³ Accreditation is a process by which a contact centre is reviewed by an external body to show that it has implemented an agreed set of operating standards; established a common measurement framework to track performance; and achieved a minimum level of performance.

⁴ In line with the recommendations in Sir David Varney's report departments have appointed Contact Directors to carry overall responsibility in their department for customer contact. These Contact Directors together form the Contact Council, which is responsible for providing oversight across the public sector on all matters relating to customer contact.

- set out a performance framework which will allow consistent measurement across the public sector.

3.26 Over the CSR07 period and beyond the Contact Council will take the lead in using these tools to benchmark and improve performance across public sector contact centres.

Face-to-face

3.27 A number of Local Authorities are achieving significant improvements in the quality, penetration and accessibility of services by bringing them together in single face-to-face locations. Some of the best examples have been brought together under the "Front Office Shared Service" programme (FOSS). These initiatives also enable central and local government services to be delivered alongside those from the third sector and other partners to provide local solutions to local needs. The LGDC will be encouraging the development of these initiatives.

One-stop-shops

3.28 The objective for the CSR07 period is to move towards more one-stop shops in places which the public will find convenient; towards greater sharing of generic administrative back office space (for example shared service centres, especially where this makes for improved front-of-house delivery); and towards finding ways of delivering face-to-face services at a place of the customer's convenience through the use of mobile service provision.

3.29 The LGDC will develop a progress measure reflecting the FOSS approach for later inclusion in this Agreement.

3.30 There is a link between this work and the rationalisation of the Government estate which is being implemented by the Office for Government Commerce through the High Performing Property Programme.

Helplines

3.31 Phone helplines provide vital support to people in crisis or seeking expert advice on a broad range of personal difficulties. They are often the first port of call for the most vulnerable. Government funds around two-thirds of the 1500 helplines in the UK.

3.32 Publicly funded helplines are possibly the most over-stretched of all phone-based services in the public sector, with callers either failing to find the help they need or simply failing to get through. The onus to coordinate help where a number of services are required is clearly placed on the citizen. The potential for failure in this situation is high and with an increase in issues such as personal indebtedness and obesity, helpline services, if left unchanged, will require higher levels of funding and may still find it increasingly hard to reach those who need them. The Ministry of Justice is leading work to find better ways of managing publicly funded helplines. This is complex – from the point of view of the customer the existing landscape is extremely fragmented, and it is not always clear where to go for help. The issues which these services deal with – such as indebtedness, relationships, health – almost invariably overlap and conventional customer or task segmentations have proven ineffective.

3.33 To support this work, the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform is developing a pilot to explore options to simplify and rationalise helplines related to employment, delivering an improved service to both citizens and business, and savings for government.

MAKING BETTER USE OF THE CUSTOMER INFORMATION THE PUBLIC SECTOR ALREADY HOLDS

3.34 This is a highly complex challenge which will not be entirely solved within the CSR07 period. The public sector can, however, make progress:

- at a strategic level; with the work being lead by the Home Office (on identity management) and by the Ministry of Justice (on information sharing). The aim is that the implementation of these strategic plans is largely complete by the end of the CSR07 period; and
- at a tactical level by tackling these issues within the context of specific projects, most importantly “Tell Us Once”. This approach allows progress to be made while also providing valuable information for the wider strategy. In addition to “Tell Us Once” the Government will also sponsor and facilitate other specific projects including the Free School Meals pilot which is already underway in conjunction with DCSF, Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

LINKING LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

3.35 To ensure alignment between service transformation activity in central and local government, the service transformation indicator within the local government performance framework will reflect the key theme of this Service Transformation Agreement to save citizens and business time in their dealings with government. As such, the local government indicator focuses on reducing avoidable contact and maximising first point of contact resolution.

3.36 Central government departments will also engage actively with local government partners to drive through the strategic initiatives set out above, as well as the wider programme of activity across the whole public sector, which will involve more effective joining up across the whole delivery chain. The establishment of the LGDC will play a key role in facilitating this engagement.

ENGAGING FRONT LINE STAFF

3.37 There is a recognised link⁵ between service quality, customer satisfaction and the engagement of front line staff (not just those in face-to-face situations, but also those answering phones and delivering web services). The Government will build upon this link by assessing the drivers of front line employee buy-in and developing the use of cross-government staff surveys as a means of maximizing the potential for staff to contribute to the delivery of more customer-focused public services. Work in this area is ongoing and will link with the outputs and objectives of the Permanent Secretaries’ Employee Engagement Working Group.

⁵ See *People, Service and Trust: Links in a Public Sector Service Value Chain*, Ralph Heintzman and Brian Marson, Canadian Government Executive June/July 2006, http://www.psagency-agencefp.gc.ca/veo-bve/publications/atricle_e.asp

A

DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PLANS

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE

Vision

A.1 The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) serves the public by providing a framework within which the state promotes and enforces rights and responsibilities, and upholds and protects justice and democracy. The department's work in criminal and civil law, human and democratic rights defines its core rights and responsibilities - the protection the public is entitled to expect from others, and the department's reciprocal obligations. The department is also responsible for providing support where rights and responsibilities are not respected - for example through legal aid, tribunals, and the resolution of disputes through the civil and family courts - and for ensuring that there are consequences for the breaching of rights and responsibilities. This includes sentencing policy, the effective administration of prison and probation service, and the enforcement of court judgments.

A.2 The MoJ is focused on delivering key outcomes for society, including more effective public protection from dangerous offenders, ensuring that people have confidence in the criminal justice system and that fewer offenders re-offend. The MoJ is focused on ensuring that people can understand and access their rights, and are given appropriate help and assistance to avoid and resolve conflicts. The MoJ is also responsible for taking forward one of the Government's key priorities – giving people have a greater say in the way they are governed.

A.3 The creation of the MoJ also provides new opportunities for working better together, right across the justice system, in order to deliver improvements to public services. Building on the rationale for the creation of the MoJ on 9 May 2007, the new Secretary of State has re-iterated the importance of delivering these improvements. In order to achieve this the MoJ will create an organisation that is focused on outcomes; takes a whole system approach; shows decisive leadership; and is customer focused.

A.4 The MoJ is the lead government department on service transformation in two main areas:

Data sharing

A.5 The MoJ is leading a cross-government programme to deliver a package of measures over the next 3-5 years to overcome current barriers to information sharing within the public sector.

A.6 The vision of this programme is to “develop frameworks and mechanisms that enable public sector organisations to share information to improve personalised public services, increase public safety and tackle social exclusion in an environment of openness and respect for citizens' privacy and access rights”.

A.7 The information sharing programme will take account of all major government initiatives involving data sharing, including identity management, which in itself is key to facilitating effective service delivery.

Helplines

A.8 The MoJ is leading a cross-government project to rationalise the 1500 helplines operated or funded by central or local government. The main objective of the project is to: consider whether existing helplines should be grouped into broad clusters of subject areas such as money/tax/benefits, employment, family, housing and health etc., each of which could be accessed through a single telephone number. Alternatively, a single helpline number, a “one-stop-shop” for all government funded helplines, or possible groupings of helplines may be appropriate based on their ability to cope with customer demand.

A.9 Other key steps are:

- to gather and map data on existing helplines. This will help identify the areas where potential exists for increased cooperation and joining up of services between departments so as to increase ease of access for citizens and allow the pooling of resources which will lead to a better, more joined up service to citizens;
- to initiate a data gathering and mapping project involving all government departments, third sector helpline providers and privately run helplines who receive government funding. At present there is no register of government helplines and the project team will be addressing this issue; and
- to conduct a survey of the 1500 helplines over the summer 2007. The survey will include Performance Framework Indicators set out by the CO as well as detailed information requests regarding inter-agency relationships currently used by helplines. Survey forms will be distributed via respective departments in early September with the results expected in October 2007.

A.10 A practitioners’ group, made up of contact representatives from all departments, has been convened to oversee the development of the project. A formal Steering Group and Programme Board, based in the MoJ but also including members from other government departments who have previously worked on similar projects, and third and private sector representatives, held its inaugural meeting in September.

A.11 The MoJ is also actively working in the following areas in order to transform its service delivery:

Customer insight

A.12 In May 2007, the Permanent Secretary commissioned an Organisation Review to ensure that the new department is able to exploit opportunities for improving services and delivering on the issues that matter to citizens.

A.13 During the current Organisational Review, the department has been consulting with a range of staff across MoJ. The Review has identified four critical success factors for the new organisation. Being customer focused was one of these factors and another was taking a whole system approach. Taking a whole system approach refers not only to ensuring that systems are managed end-to-end from a customer perspective, but also to working with other government departments and other stakeholders to consider common client groups and customers.

A.14 The detailed structure of the new department will be developed over the coming months. The four critical success factors will be at the heart of the design criteria and so being customer focused and taking a whole system approach will soon be hard-wired into the structure of the MoJ. The MoJ will ensure that concrete actions are taken once the new structure is in place to fulfil the department's commitment to focus on the needs of the public it serves.

A.15 The MoJ has been working on a number of customer focused projects over the past 18 months including: "Breakthrough", a project to establish key elements across criminal, civil, family and tribunals that will make a real difference in the service being offered; delivering a real improvement in the users' experience of the justice system. The department is currently looking at the introduction of performance league tables for all courts to help further improve courts' performance.

A.16 The National Offenders Management Service is formulating a strategy of the future work required to best meet the needs of users. This includes a new approach to offender management by way of a single approach in dealing with offenders. It provides an end-to-end, seamless and integrated service with a single offender manager responsible for the whole of an offender's sentence. It also seeks to reduce re-offending by working with offenders to change their behaviour and addressing the issues that may lead them to re-offend. This work is delivered under "seven pathways".

A.17 HM Court Service (HMCS) is undertaking a three-year programme of user surveys (2006-09). Exit surveys will be conducted face-to-face with users from Ipsos MORI (the HMCS survey provider) and separate postal surveys will be conducted in respect of jurors and complainants. Surveys will be conducted in most courts each year but all courts will be surveyed at least once during the three-year programme. The first year surveys have concluded and an annual report will be published this autumn. Survey results have, and will in the future, be published on a secure online interactive reporting portal (accessible by password) and will provide data down to area level. It will also contain court level verbatim comments. Results from the juror survey are displayed on a separate part of the portal and those for the complainant's survey will be included on the portal later in the year.

A.18 The Tribunal Service is undertaking a 5 year programme of administrative reforms aligned to its five year strategy. Together with the legal reforms of the Tribunals Court and Enforcement Bill the Change Programme will radically transform the delivery of services to users of Tribunals. It will deliver a new multi-jurisdictional business model providing a high quality, efficient, independent and customer focused business.

A.19 The National Archives has produced a 5 year strategic plan with a vision to transform information and guarantee the survival of information. Given the expectation for increasing numbers of people to find and use information online, the National Archives will focus on providing practical support through areas such as supporting the development of a government digital preservation service and conducting a Digitisation Programme to provide digital copies of all its most popular records online.

A.20 The National Archive's strategy is also to provide as wide as possible access to its content online, so that researchers can find information wherever they are based. It will also focus on its reading rooms for those who need to consult original records or require specific expertise. The transfer of the National Archive's current services to Kew in 2008

¹ Seven Pathways: accommodation; education, training and employment; health; drugs and alcohol; finance, benefits and debt; children and families; attitude, thinking and behaviour

to allow an integrated online and records service will facilitate this goal. Further, there will be a development of a wiki site to create a repository of information about the content and interpretation of the National Archive's records.

A.21 The Land Registry is currently developing an electronic system to make conveyancing easier for all. Its aim is to make buying and selling property easier for the general public, conveyancing professionals and other parties involved in the process.

A.22 All registered properties are computerised and the Land Registry online website now allows the public to download copies of title information as well as a service for the public to register properties through Land Registry Direct.

Channel strategy

A.23 As part of customer insight, the MoJ is working on a channel strategy project, which has been commissioned by the MoJ Departmental Management Board, to:

- Understand the rationale behind the department's current service delivery;
- Know whom the department is trying to reach and their preferred delivery channels;
- Develop a strategy that underpins the development of contact channels; and
- Understand the cost and efficiencies involved in using different channels.

A.24 The project is building on previous and current work activity and mapping an activity point in understanding the MoJ universe "as is" and "will be". In looking at existing change MoJ is ensuring this does not limit the strategic thinking and that planned change must not constrain the vision of how services could be delivered. The project will demonstrate a clear vision for the future but referenced to an awareness of existing projects and programmes.

A.25 The next stage of the work will address customer segmentation, providing an assessment of the range of channel preferences associated with particular groups and the channels MoJ should aim to use for delivering services. It will also look at the scope of potential for new technology to transform the services MoJ provides e.g. predictive software suggesting, based on other cases, the type of decision a court might reach in a divorce or civil case.

A.26 MoJ is aiming to produce:

- A vision for how justice services would be delivered in the future;
- A channel strategy setting out the channels MoJ would use to deliver those services to particular user groups;
- A checklist against which projects and programmes could be measured for strategic fit with the vision; and
- A draft assessment of where key projects and programmes fit using that checklist.

A.27 The project team will be producing an internal report on this work by the end of October 2007.

DirectGov

A.28 The MoJ will continue to ensure that the online potential that DirectGov and Businesslink.gov offer in providing citizens with easily accessible information and advice is used to best effect. Prioritisation of citizen facing content has begun and over the next 12 months web convergence will take place based upon citizen's needs, appropriate channel usage and business priorities.

A.29 Key milestones include:

- By mid-2008, MoJ will have finalised the web convergence plans and begun to introduce audio and visual digital content in multiple formats such as DVD, online and audio leaflets;
- During 2008 MoJ will be looking to improve access to existing transactions and develop new applications to provide procedural information and advice in areas such as voting, housing, wills and consumer issues;
- Seven of MoJ's active websites, representing 10 per cent of the website portfolio, have already been archived. Firm plans are in place to archive two additional sites this financial year. Planning is taking place for phased migration of agency/Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) sites over the next CSR07 period, including an online hub for all currently separate tribunals' websites. MoJ is working closely with National Archives and the British Library to develop the proposition for the digital archiving of online information and publications during this financial year; and
- The web convergence review will be completed by 2011.

Asset and estate management

A.30 Through its Organisational Review and Change Programme, the MoJ has, as stated above, drawn up a blueprint which includes plans to rationalise its headquarters for national, regional and area management.

A.31 MoJ headquarters will be moving to refurbished premises (50 Queen Anne's Gate) in Spring 2008 which will provide a modern office environment to support flexible ways of working and business change. This will release other premises from its current portfolio.

A.32 The Tribunal Service's longer-term aim is to reduce their estate potentially by up to 50 per cent and create a network of multi-jurisdictional hearing centres - 40 will be permanent and based in cities and large towns. It will also move all of its administrative processes to six regional multi-jurisdictional bulk centres.

A.33 The Unified Family Service will consolidate family jurisdiction either into unified family courts and enable clearer network of family courts and flexibility of venues.

A.34 The Legal Services Commission is undergoing organisational change and anticipates being able to operate from 50 per cent fewer regional premises and to consider the possibility of co-locating/sharing accommodation with other members of MoJ. It is also reviewing central functions with a view to moving them out of London.

A.35 The National Offender Management Service is looking at four key programmes of change to deliver the policy and organisational changes needed to bring about a new

approach for managing offenders and to deliver more effective services. The key strands are:

- Offender management – to design and implement end-to-end offender management with I.T. infrastructures and applications to support it across prisons and probation;
- Commissioning and contestability – to implement commissioning of services required by the courts and offender managers;
- Probation change – to establish probation trusts from April 2008 devolving responsibility to front line staff supported by a programme of training to develop business acumen. This will deliver 3 per cent efficiency savings; and
- Performance and information – to deliver performance reporting, metrics and management information to support NOMS business needs.

Mobile working

A.36 The Community Justice Centre pilots in North Liverpool and Salford promote collaborative working between criminal justice agencies all under one roof. Magistrates also go out into the community to hear and learn at first hand the types of problems and concerns that are present in the local areas. Plans are underway to expand the concept of community justice centres to a further 10 areas and the flexibility and potential to provide outreach facilities to support some community justice initiatives.

A.37 The Tribunal Service will also hire venues or share premises in other geographical locations as required.

A.38 The youth justice system will benefit from the implementation of the "Wiring up Youth Justice" programme which will ensure that practitioners in the system have the tools and the shared information they need to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people. Improved connectivity in the youth justice system will be facilitated by the implementation of secure email and automated case management systems.

Virtual court

A.39 The virtual court prototype is very exciting in terms of its potential to deliver speedy justice, by shortening the process from arrest to charge to sentence. Camberwell Magistrates is the site for further tests to establish whether it is possible to deal with some cases via a virtual court hearing, based on a video link from the police station to the courtroom, and testing of an expedited "quick process" to reduce the amount of preparation required for simple guilty plea cases.

A.40 The tests apply only to the most simple cases. Only the key evidence is provided to the Crown Prosecution Service, the defence and the court. This work is looking at whether it may be possible to further simplify the procedure for all agencies. The key aim is to see whether it is possible to reduce the burden of preparation by the police without impacting upon effectiveness at the court. The tests so far have demonstrated a saving in preparation time, but work is on-going to ensure that legal aid processes are built into any business ready model and that there is no detrimental impact on effectiveness at court (which would be counterproductive).

DEPARTMENT FOR BUSINESS, ENTERPRISE AND REGULATORY REFORM (BERR)

Overview

A.41 Transformational Government is already influencing how BERR delivers services. In the past 18 months the department has introduced new service transformation activities, for example the BERR Ministerial Response Unit, electronic services at Companies House and better project and programme management through the BERR Project Pool.

A.42 Together with Businesslink.gov and Directgov, BERR is also working to deliver the platforms on which joined up online transactions and services will be delivered to UK businesses and citizens. This is evidence of BERR's commitment to putting the needs of stakeholders, businesses and citizens at the heart of what the department does.

A.43 BERR has established a transformational government board, to take the strategic lead on developing a coordinated work programme around service transformation. Different service transformation work streams, such as website rationalisation and helplines rationalisation, report to this board.

A.44 The department has also nominated a contact director who sits on the Contact Council, and has director general-level representation on the Delivery Council.

A.45 BERR has been able to group its service transformation activities around seven themes, set out below.

Customer insight

A.46 UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) has invested in a single comprehensive Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System used both at home and overseas to ensure the UK Companies they help to export get the services they need in today's global economy. This improves the UKTI understanding of Business needs, and helps deliver services more quickly and efficiently. The system, used by over 1500 staff, already holds almost 130,000 records and is growing as it is extended beyond the 46 countries initially covered.

Channel strategies

A.47 Companies House is transforming service delivery from paper-based operations, to e based, to improve services to customers. In the future, companies and their agents will have personalised web portals, which will be faster to use, more cost effective and more secure.

A.48 BERR website rationalisation is progressing well. During Autumn 2007, the department will develop migration plans for moving content from BERR websites onto Businesslink.gov and Directgov.

A.49 The department is leading a cross-departmental pilot to explore options to simplify and rationalise helplines related to employment, delivering an improved service to customers and savings for government. This will feed into the wider work programme looking at all government funded helplines, led by MoJ.

A.50 Delivery management responsibility for Business Link was devolved to the RDAs from April 2005 and the RDAs have now completed a process of rationalisation. In most

regions the RDAs have opted for a single Business Link operator, rather than a model with several sub regional contracts with different suppliers. The South East has opted to retain their six existing operators and Yorkshire Forward still has their four sub regional operators. This means that there are now only eighteen Business Link websites under the national site.

A.51 In addition, all of these Business Link websites are now delivered via the Businesslink.gov Local Site Development model (LSD). This means that there will be a consistent online presence, where every Business Link website is a minor variation on the national businesslink.gov.uk website.

A.52 They therefore provide consistent guidance for businesses, regardless of which website they visit. This also leads to greater efficiency as the online presence across Business Link is a much more manageable proposition. New site developments are deployed once and automatically replicated across the entire network without additional resource or complication.

A.53 From April 2007 HMRC have stewardship of the Businesslink.gov programme. This change aligns the online channel with the primary transactional department and has injected new impetus to the programme. Consequently, Treasury have allocated additional funding for the CSR07 period to help enable web rationalisation delivery.

A.54 BERR remains the owner of the Business Link brand and continues to have a strong governance role through this responsibility. For Businesslink.gov, transformational government is the logical next stage in the online integration process. The site already hosts content from most business facing government owned sites and new service developments are moving towards transactional relationships with the customer.

A.55 4,000 UK Businesses have registered for online access to the UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) Introduction Services. This supports UK Businesses entering new overseas markets. It provides access to International Trade Advisors in the English Regions and staff in 68 Embassies and Consulates worldwide, and a range of adaptable services including a mix of pre-visit research and advice, and support for market visits. It's now easier to pay for chargeable services, securely using a credit card online, with 2,500 orders placed in 2006, and 900 in the first quarter of 2007.

Identity management

A.56 In a unique collaboration between HMRC, Business Link operators in England, Invest Northern Ireland, Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, all web users have been migrated to the Government Gateway User ID and password to manage online identities. The My Business service, available on all these organisations' websites, offers a simple, quick way of acquiring a Government Gateway User ID that can then be used not only to log in to businesslink.gov.uk and other websites, but also for tax filing with HMRC, and a range of other government services. Around 6,000 users a month are acquiring their ID in this way.

Data sharing

A.57 The Retail Enforcement Pilot provides a framework for collaborative working between Local Authorities and national regulators, which will help reduce the burden of inspections for compliant businesses; promote targeting of risk based interventions

across the regulatory piece; increase the efficiency of Local Authority regulatory services through joint local working, and enhance consumer and employee protection.

A.58 Through the use of mobile technology and data sharing, regulators are able to work jointly across trading standards, health and safety, environmental health and fire safety, and generate intelligence. By analysing this intelligence, regulators are able to assess the competence of businesses in how they manage risk. This allows regulators to act flexibly by differentiating between businesses and targeting their efforts away from well-run businesses and onto poor performing businesses and illegal traders.

A.59 The savings in regulatory capacity made from reducing routine visits will be redirected into methods of alternative regulatory intervention such as business advice and information provision.

A.60 The Retail Enforcement Pilot is being rolled out in up to 70 county, unitary and district councils nationwide during 2007-08.

Asset and estate management

A.61 The former Department of Trade and Industry broke new ground when rent rises put seemingly insurmountable pressures on accommodation budgets, by sharing desks across its London estate. Over a 2 year period to 2006, everyone in London moved to using a standardised desk space with a ratio of 8 desks to 10 staff. This, combined with some staff reductions and some moves out of London inspired by the Gershon and Lyons reviews has allowed BERR to go from 8 London buildings to 2, with a massive saving of £25m per annum.

A.62 Technology played a key part in enabling this change as everyone needed access to their computer systems from anywhere on the estate, and new telephone systems were needed to allow staff to use their allocated number wherever they sat. Electronic records played their part by allowing a drastic reduction in the space needed for filing cabinets.

A.63 But this was a massive change project as over 2,500 staff adopted new ways of working, where they now sit in team villages, but not the same desk. Staff had substantial concerns, not least that they would not be able to find a desk. But these were successfully addressed, and the new ways of working and more efficient use of space has now become the norm.

A.64 With any organisation there is an amount of expensive 'churn', as accommodation needs change. But BERR's new approach minimises these costs by moving people from one standard environment to another, with no accommodation changes. This means lower cost and faster moves when re-organisation is needed.

A.65 BERR has cracked down on individual printers and printers shared with just a few colleagues to provide better quality, more energy efficient, higher speed printers with greater functionality printing services shared by more staff. BERR moved from a 1:7 ratio with a number of personal printers to an aggressive 1:24 ratio in shared printer bays. During the change project over 900 personal printers were recovered, and the new more efficient printing equipment has saved over £200k pa in printing consumables.

Efficiencies / Deregulation

A.66 BERR's Enterprise directorate is leading the cross government programme to simplify business support. The department is consulting with stakeholders on what business support government might fund in the future; the policy of using Business Link as the primary route for business to get advice and support; and how to avoid business support schemes proliferating once they have been simplified.

A.67 As part of its work on better regulation and simplification, the department is working to deliver a 25 per cent reduction in the administrative burden imposed on business by employment law by 2010-11. The two key projects which will deliver this reduction are consistent with Transformational Government - reforming the dispute resolution procedures, with an improved helpline and advice service to encourage early resolution of problems in the workplace; and improving the guidance available to employers on employment issues, including online tools to help employers comply with the basic requirements of the law quickly, cheaply and easily.

A.68 Just as Directgov will be the primary online service for citizens, the businesslink.gov.uk website will serve businesses with a significantly expanded set of responsibilities under Transformational Government. The businesslink.gov.uk website currently reaches 800,000 unique users a month, reflecting steady growth from under 100,000 for its predecessor site businesslink.org. The growth rests on a large body of plain English content covering all the major business topics; more than 50 interactive diagnostic tools and alerting services; and a growing suite of transactional services to enable enrolment for online submissions.

A.69 An impact survey carried out at the end of 2006 was a jointly agreed project between an economic analysis unit within BERR and the service provider. Carried out with 805 established businesses in England, it gave a robust basis for demonstrating that over a 12 month period businesses in England using the service saved 2.9m hours of time (worth £61m); £94m by getting information and advice they would otherwise have paid for; and reported additional sales of £195m, increased profits of £31m and cost reductions of £7m that they believed they could not have otherwise achieved, without access to the service.

A.70 This economic impact analysis was praised by the National Audit Office as a model of how to understand the purpose, reach and impact of a web service. As more departmental information and transactions migrate to the businesslink.gov.uk website under service transformation, this economic impact is expected to grow in line with a greatly expanded reach.

A.71 The aim of the ITSW is to develop an online space where traders can fully understand import and export regulatory requirements, and submit declarations to government in one place using one form. A cross-government project delivered by Businesslink.gov, phase one was delivered on time and on budget in November 2006. It involved the development of 55 new guides and four interactive tools, to complement the 33 guides already in the international trade section of the site. The four tools were developed in collaboration with stakeholders from HM Revenue and Customs, Defra, SITPRO and the British Chambers of Commerce.

A.72 eAccounts enables customers to quickly and conveniently file business accounts online. Over 135,000 sets of accounts have been filed electronically since the launch of eAccounts in November 2005.

A.73 Companies House became the first company registry in the world to launch a service whereby accounts information could be submitted as electronic data. Companies House is also the first government organisation to accept XBRL filings on a large scale, and designed the system to enable efficiency gains elsewhere in Whitehall.

A.74 Companies House performance is significantly improved as eAccounts provides consistent examination and rejection rules. Templates are used with built-in checks to reduce errors and omissions to improve the quality of data capture. This has significantly reduced rejection rates below those of paper account filings, and electronically enabling what was formerly a paper-based service has lowered processing costs from is £0.35 for paper accounts to just £0.004 for electronically-filed accounts. Cost savings are reflected in reduced charges to customers.

A.75 The number of companies submitting their annual return of information on company details electronically has grown from 100,000 in 2004-05 to 1,000,000, with customer satisfaction approaching 90 per cent. Historically, annual returns have been filed on paper, but electronic filing is now widely recognised as the quickest, easiest and most secure way to file annual returns. Companies report a significant reduction in the administrative burden when filing electronically.

A.76 Electronic returns are made easier and quicker for companies, with onscreen forms pre-populated with the information Companies House already holds. The quality of information gathered is improved by automated checking procedures using intelligent templates. This minimises errors and omissions, and so reduces the chances of rejection. Electronic returns save time and effort which is illustrated by them being half the price of paper returns, with additional savings in postage.

A.77 BERR has overall responsibility for overseeing the Digital Strategy and is also responsible for the Digital Strategy Review. This is a cross-departmental project, with actions within the Digital Strategy owned by different government departments.

A.78 There are seven key actions outlined in the Strategy: transforming learning with ICT; setting up a digital strategy for Local Authorities; making the UK the safest place to use the Internet; promoting the creation of innovative broadband content; setting out a strategy for the transformation of the delivery of public services using new technology; asking Ofcom to consider how the regulatory framework can be used to improve competition and take-up in the broadband market; and improving accessibility for the digitally excluded.

Process improvement

A.79 The introduction and consolidation of the BERR Project Pool has been an important innovation with regard to the efficient and flexible deployment of resources within the department. The Project Pool provides a central resource of project-trained staff who work on specific projects alongside colleagues from standing directorates. They bring with them their expertise and experience of effective project management. Knowledge is also shared. Demand for the service is high.

A.80 PDAs have proved very useful tools to keep people in touch with their office and office systems, but are notoriously insecure. BERR has pushed the limits of this technology by being the first to develop a PDA system based on 'Blackberry' technology that is safe enough to use with 'Restricted' information with nearly 400 Blackberry's now deployed. BERR staff can now have mobile phone access, as well as access to their

office email and calendars anywhere with GSM coverage at costs about 20 per cent lower than using mobile PCs.

A.81 Throughout 2007 the Business Support Simplification Programme will be consulting and engaging with local government, business support organisations and business to shape the new portfolio of business support. There will be a formal public consultation in the summer. By the beginning of 2008 the department will have developed a comprehensive portfolio of one hundred or fewer business support schemes. Built-in flexibility will ensure the portfolio can be deployed to meet local, regional and national economic development needs, as well as business needs and public policy aims.

A.82 By the beginning of 2008 plans will be in place for the business support portfolio to be managed and monitored by those involved in its provision to enable strategic, evidence-based decisions to be made about future business support.

A.83 By 2010 all existing publicly-funded business support will be earmarked to close, merge into or be delivered through the new business support portfolio.

DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Introduction

A.84 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has a substantial set of service transformation activities which take on board the key service transformation theme of improving accessibility of services by grouping them together to make them easier to find. Defra does not run any major face-to-face services, but is taking steps to deliver key policy objectives via cost-efficient online channels. Examples of this are the Environment and Greener Living franchise on Directgov, and the Greener Business theme on businesslink.gov.uk. These services will reduce the time customers spend looking for services, as will the department's Whole Farm Approach (WFA) online channel and involvement with the International Trade Single Window (ITSW).

A.85 The department has key data-sharing approaches in the areas of customer and geographic data. The latter includes inter-agency access, public access and access across the EU. The department's EU/UN emissions trading register system is also being adopted by 17 states.

A.86 On deregulation, the department is combining some agencies and also creating a new Regulatory Science Agency which will take over the work of several scientifically-based agencies and directorates (and in the process, reduce the number of customer access points). The ITSW will make life easier for importers and exporters by providing a single access point for many regulatory activities, and the Environment Agency's NetRegs system provides a risk-based approach which combines and reduces regulatory activity.

Customer insight

A.87 Defra has appointed a Director of Customer Focus and Regulation. The post will be expanded to include responsibilities for a Customer Intelligence function.

Online

A.88 Defra is the lead department partnering CO, Directgov and Businesslink.gov in the pilot phase of web rationalisation – this was completed in July 2007. Defra launched a new environment theme on the businesslink.gov.uk website in August 2007 and will have rationalised 11 core-Defra managed websites by April 2008. Rationalisation will achieve an overall efficiency saving (non-cash releasing) of around £4million a year once phase one is complete.

A.89 Defra has implemented a greener business theme on the businesslink.gov.uk website and will develop this further.

A.90 The ITSW Project delivers, via the businesslink.gov.uk website, an integrated, cross-government source of information and gateway for transactions that will reduce the burden of regulatory compliance on UK importers and exporters. Many Defra network transactions will be available on ITSW by May 2008.

A.91 The WFA provides an online channel through which farmers can interact with Defra and partner agencies thereby reducing the burden of regulation on the agricultural sector and providing a single source for targeted advice. WFA will contribute to Defra's commitment to deliver a 25 per cent reduction of total administrative burden by 2010-11 from the 2005 baseline. Electronic access to RPA's Single Payment System will be provided during 2008 and links to other transactional systems from the following year.

A.92 In summer 2007, Defra launched its new Act on CO2 carbon calculator which calculates citizens' personal carbon footprints from home energy, appliances and transport and then develops a personalised action plan with steps individuals can take to cut their emissions. Subject to future policy decisions, this will be extended to include personal carbon trading during 2012-13.

Mobile

A.93 Delivery staff are already using or piloting a range of mobile devices and staff can now connect to Defra's systems from any Internet-connected PC. This enables field staff to enter data etc. at the point of contacting customers. These facilities are particularly important in enabling the department to respond rapidly to flooding or animal health emergencies.

Contact centres

A.94 Defra has set up a group covering its Delivery Network to identify the steps delivery bodies must take to achieve accreditation within the timescales recommended by Sir David Varney and to achieve the goals set for contact centre performance for the end of the CSR07 period.

Identity management

A.95 Defra is re-assessing its strategy for customer identity management to ensure that anything the department does in the future will improve services to customers, provide efficiencies and be consistent with wider government initiatives.

Data sharing

A.96 Defra is developing a Customer Data Sharing service to give users access to information about customers, their activities and use of land to help improve customer experience, operational processes and research activities. An initial release will be made at the end of 2007 with capabilities and data sources being added in following years.

A.97 Defra will examine the feasibility of a joint land registration service that would provide data to different business areas. This would improve the customer experience and generate efficiency savings.

A.98 Defra is implementing a corporate Spatial Information Repository (SPIRE) together with a set of managed data services and tools for presentation and analysis of spatial data.

A.99 The Geographic Information Panel (which reports to DCLG ministers) has supported in principle, a Defra-network lead on implementation of the INSPIRE Directive and the UK GI Strategy given the similarities between the two initiatives. This would result in SPIRE becoming the UK access point for INSPIRE data services linking spatial information from across government. Note that the Inspire Directive requires all government departments, agencies and Local Authorities to share and re-use spatial data about the environment and, where appropriate, make spatial data available directly to the public across the internet.

Asset and estate management

A.100 Defra's Estate Strategy seeks to co-locate Defra Agency delivery bodies in accommodation with other members of the Defra Network, including NDPBs.

Shared services

A.101 Defra has established a Shared Services Organisation (SSO) which by 2010-11 will cover core-Defra, its executive agencies and natural England. The SSO will deliver approximately £12m efficiency savings year on year. Defra is in discussion with a number of other government departments who are interested in the SSO providing services to them.

Efficiencies/deregulation

A.102 The Environment Agency's Netregs service provides guidance on legislation and environmental topics to 105 industries. The Agency's approach to environmental regulation of agriculture is integrated and based on pollution risk. It is expected to deliver gross savings of £8m over five years (but additional agriculture related duties means that these savings will be not be cash-releasing but will allow the agency to deliver more outcomes for the same money).

A.103 Defra is combining several agencies with the Rural Payments Agency and Animal Health, and also creating a new Regulatory Science Agency which will take over the work of several scientifically-based agencies.

Process improvement

A.104 Animal Health Business Reform Programme (BRP) will design and implement a new operational model for the Animal Health Agency together with a new IS strategy implementing enabling technology. This will change the delivery of transactional services from the current model of local delivery in 24 Great Britain-wide offices by

bringing these together, thus rationalising the estate while using the WFA e-channel for services such as licensing or advice. In addition it will standardise business processes and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the field operations.

A.105 Animal Health is proposing to work with industry to develop a new approach for registering animal movements that will incorporate a simplified approach to defining movement locations and a more effective channel strategy and partnership with the industry.

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES (DCSF) AND DEPARTMENT FOR INNOVATION, UNIVERSITIES AND SKILLS (DIUS)

Note: This is a combined statement due to recent machinery of government changes and the strong links between the departments' sectors.

Introduction

A.106 DCSF and DIUS's purpose is to reach and support a larger and wider set of customers through streamlined, collaborative and inclusive delivery arrangements that better reflect their needs and rising expectations in the digital age. This will be underpinned and made possible by better customer insight, improved information and identity management and a shared service approach. It will result in a coherent set of services and facilities that enables: parents to engage with their children's education and wider welfare; pupils, learners and employers to access the services and resources they need to succeed; and sector workforces to share the knowledge and tools they need to work effectively and make best use of their time.

Customer insight

A.107 As part of a broader insight programme DCSF and DIUS are introducing a new six monthly survey of the views of the public including parents and learners, teaching staff and delivery partners. Starting in 2007, it is designed to help better understand, track over time and act on the issues that are most important to them.

A.108 For example, the work of the Schools Directorate in DCSF has been refocused around customer and front line feedback; and quarterly tracking of parent and head teacher views as well as weekly feedback from the contact centre is shaping policy and operational decision making. This approach will now be extended other areas of policy.

Channel strategy

A.109 To enable people to use the most appropriate and beneficial channel DCSF and DIUS will seek to remove barriers to their access and effective use.

A.110 Following a successful pilot, "myguide" will be rolled out during 2007-08 including through UK online centres. This is a service that makes the Internet more accessible and usable for people who currently do not use it or get benefit from it whether because of disability or lack of skills and confidence. The centres will, more generally, also help provide access to online public services often in the most disadvantaged areas.

A.111 By 2008 the Computers for Pupils initiative will have provided home internet access for the 100,000 most disadvantaged households with secondary school pupils in

England. A home access taskforce set up in 2007 is engaging industry and the voluntary sector in finding other ways to open up, to even more households with school-age children, the benefits of Internet access, including not only education but wider public services.

A.112 Given the new department's wider role for families, DCSF is actively exploring the scope for appointing a Customer Group Director for Parents. During 2007-08 a service transformation project will develop a model for joining up services for parents. This will build on the success of online school admissions and use it as a 'gateway' to a more holistic service offer, as part of the department's strategy programme for parents.

Face-to-face

A.113 Children's Centres are being set up to bring together a range of services based around the needs of parents of young children; the aim is to have 2,500 in place by 2008 and 3,500 by 2010, providing one for every community. Similarly over 4,700 'extended' schools in England provide community access and signposting to a wider set of public services; the aim is for all to do this by 2010.

Contact centres

A.114 In 2007 DCSF and DIUS will carry out a review of their contact centres and enquiry lines including the telephony tariff. They will also support sector contact centres to meet the new standards introduced following Sir David Varney's report.

A.115 During the CSR07 period DIUS will facilitate a gradual transfer of Local Authority responsibilities to a single assessment contact centre to deal with applications for student support.

Helplines

A.116 DCSF and DIUS are working with the MoJ, the lead department, on identifying appropriate clusters of helplines for collaboration. In parallel, from 2008 the Parent Know-How programme will include support for a group of helplines providing specialist parenting advice for different customer segments; and from the outset they will have access to information sharing and collaboration facilities.

Online

A.117 DCSF and DIUS's web strategy is to use Directgov, Businesslink.gov and workforce channels (for example, Teachernet) to streamline and improve their web offer for different customer groups.

A.118 DCSF and DIUS's approach includes sharing responsibility for delivery with stakeholders. For example, education and skills delivery partnerships will steer the future development of integrated services for both further and higher education using the shared Directgov channel. And from late 2007 lead bodies for those services (LSC and HEFCE) will take on a management role for relevant content areas on Directgov.

A.119 DCSF leads on the online government offer for three cross-government customer groups: parents, young people and children. For example, Directgov Kids is a dedicated public service channel for 5 to 11 year olds. Building on the successful launch of the first phase in 2007 the department will work with other departments to help them develop this shared facility to communicate and consult with young citizens.

A.120 With the Home Office and Department of Health, DCSF and DIUS have agreement on a distance-from-government web presence for appropriate issues for young people, scheduled to be operational by 2008-09.

A.121 The Parent Know-How programme will encourage third and private sector partnerships to propose Web 2.0 approaches to sharing parenting information and advice which can be trialled during 2008-09.

Mobile services

A.122 DCSF and DIUS have funded 'i-mode' pilots to provide mobile access to services provided by a number of departments on Directgov; this has now been rolled out and further extended. The Parent Know-How innovation fund will also encourage delivery partners to develop and test new ways of providing parenting advice and guidance including through SMS.

A.123 Many schools are already using text messages to alert parents to anything from pupil absences to the return of a bus from a school trip (for example 400 schools are being supported by BECTA in using text messaging to help reduce absenteeism during the 2007-08 academic year). DCSF and DIUS are also looking at how a range of technologies including text messaging will offer delivery options for future parent-school engagement including school reporting arrangements.

A.124 The department is providing an ICT capital grant to Local Authorities to invest in mobile technologies for children's social workers. This will enable the workforce to make better use of their time and to have real-time access to information and resources when dealing with vulnerable children.

Identity management

A.125 DCSF and DIUS are currently working with partners across government and in the education and children's system to develop a system-wide information strategy that will bring greater coherence and personalisation to customer services. Extensive consultation is planned with partners and stakeholders to ensure that the strategy will have their active support.

A.126 A key element of the strategy is the way the identities of children, learners and practitioners are managed to support personalisation. There is also an opportunity to provide citizens with improved access and control of their own learning records. Work is under way to capture, across a number of DCSF/DIUS policy areas, the potential high-level benefits from a more coordinated identity management approach. A programme will be rolled out in 2008 and will align the departments' approach with related cross-government work and the National Identity Scheme. It will build on work to establish a Learning Registration Service and Unique Learner Number. For example learners will be able to record their consent for others to view their learning records which will help improve services.

Data sharing

A.127 An education system-wide Chief Information Officer Council and an Information Standards Board were established in 2007 to bring greater coherence in decision making. This will enable gradual convergence between different approaches thereby improving interoperability and efficiency as well as providing better outcomes for the citizen.

A.128 Managing Information across Partners (MIAP) is a true partnership involving more than 40 organisations from across the education system and government, with a stakeholder group which includes CO, DWP and the NHS. The programme includes creating a standard set of data definitions and policies.

A.129 ContactPoint is a tool to enable children's service practitioners to identify and contact one another easily and quickly so they can share relevant information about children who need services. It will be introduced in all areas in England by the end of 2008.

A.130 Rather than sharing the data itself DCSF and DIUS are working with DWP on the potential for a 'hub' that will check if the data held by them confirms eligibility for Free School Meals. Not only will this significantly reduce the burden on Local Authorities when checking Free School Meals eligibility, it will also mean a much more streamlined process that will greatly benefit busy parents.

A.131 The Customer First initiative will deliver a transformed student finance service through improved data sharing arrangements between the Student Loan Company and UCAS, the Identity & Passport Service, and in later years possibly HMRC.

Shared services

A.132 Schools and Local Authorities will use national framework agreements to procure ICT and related services, offering national purchasing power while retaining local independence and flexibility.

A.133 During the CSR07 period DCSF and DIUS will develop the potential for shared services to create increased value for money across their sectors including universities, colleges, schools and children's services. Particular opportunities considered for pilot activities include adopting a shared approach to the delivery of: back office services of finance, human resources and ICT across the education system; recruitment services; and student management and other learner-facing activities.

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

A.134 The Department for Transport's (DfT's) aim is to provide "Transport that Works for Everyone". As one of the department's cross cutting themes, service transformation plays a key part in delivering the department's aim by ensuring systematic engagement with citizens and businesses to ensure that the services the department provides meets their needs, whilst at the same time enabling DfT staff to deliver better services and providing value for money for the taxpayer.

A.135 The department has been actively transforming its services for many years now, particularly for motorists, and has both new and ongoing programmes of service transformation activity, including the following:

Customer insight

A.136 DfT will continue to actively build its services around the needs of its customers. It carries out an extensive rolling programme of customer research every year, overseen by a well established cross-agency customer insight network.

A.137 This research uses a range of studies and surveys, customer testing, focus groups, and customer 'journey mapping' to test both existing and proposed services

and identify customers future needs. The results are then used to help target and prioritise investment and identify areas for future improvement.

A.138 Consumer and Commercial Customer Directors covering the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) and the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) are in place. Customer champion functions are also established in every agency.

A.139 The DfT agencies also have targets for maintaining or improving their customer satisfaction scores year on year.

Face-to-face services

A.140 DVLA, VOSA, DSA and VCA are considering how to improve customer accessibility to their face-to-face locations and looking for opportunities to further rationalise sites. DSA's regional offices are being rationalised from 5 to 2 and opportunities for co-locations between DSA and DVLA offices are also under consideration.

Online

A.141 The department will continue to expand the use of its electronic channels to make it easier for private and business customers to carry out transactions, comply with regulations and keep their records up to date, for example by taxing their vehicles online. For motorists the aim is that by 2011 an increased level of interactions with the department will take place through electronic channels.

A.142 To help customers find the information they need quickly and easily, 75 of the 89 DfT websites currently identified will close by 2011 (18 by the end of 2007) and the information they contain will be moved across to Directgov and the businesslink.gov.uk website. DVLA, DSA and VOSA already hold the majority of their information on Directgov and are in discussions with Businesslink.gov about transferring the remainder.

A.143 The Transport Direct website also offers a journey planning service and live travel information to customers, available through Directgov, and via mobile phones and digital television. Versions of the service are also available through third parties (such as Visit Britain and the BBC). These channels are set to increase in number and importance.

A.144 The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) are developing online ship registration and introducing a consolidated database of ship information, which will help staff to deliver improved services to customers.

Contact and call centres

A.145 The department is moving quickly to rationalise the number of contact centres it operates to reduce costs and improve customer service. DVLA has reduced its contact centres from seven to one, and DSA from two to one, with DVLA's contact centre due to be accredited by December 2007 using the Contact Centre Associations Global Accreditation criteria.

A.146 The Highways Agency have assessed their call centre against accreditation standards and are looking to improve their automated message service for major incidents and severe weather.

A.147 MCA provide 24/7 telephone and email support to customers through their rescue coordination centre and information line.

A.148 The department is working to increase its contact and call centre productivity further during the CSR07 period by improving processes, bringing in the latest call centre technology, and employing people management techniques.

Mobile services

A.149 The department will be working in partnership with Local Authorities and operators across the country encouraging the use of interoperable electronic 'smart ticketing' options to help streamline the way customers use public transport. A trial in February 2008 is also planned for introducing a chip onto driving licences to help improve card security and enable remote authentication of drivers.

A.150 The Highways Agency is also working to make wider use of mobile technology to keep customers up to date on delays and is developing their HA Radio service into a national digital (DAB) traffic radio station, including for Wales and Scotland.

Identity management and data sharing

A.151 The department is working closely with the Home Office and others to look at the opportunities for sharing data and identity management. DVLA are also in discussion with the MoJ on streamlining processes for prosecuting speeding offences.

A.152 This will allow a step change in customer service for the processing of both driver and vehicle transactions, allowing e-services for secure transactions and providing greater security for customers.

A.153 Transport Direct will increasingly be sharing the data it collects with government, private, voluntary and academic sectors to help them develop services for customers, e.g. using data on use of travel modes to help with planning and calculating the carbon footprint of travel to new offices.

Asset and estate management

A.154 The Highways Agency already co-locates its national call centre with its regional traffic control centre, and shares its facilities with contractors and the police. It is looking at further ways to share accommodation.

A.155 DSA's regional offices are being rationalised from 5 to 2 and opportunities for co-locations between DSA and DVLA offices are also under consideration.

A.156 MCA's Coastguard Rescue Coordination Centres also double up as information points for locals to visit.

Shared services and process improvement

A.157 The department's Shared Service Centre, hosted by DVLA in Swansea, opened for business in April 2007 to provide centralised personnel, payroll and financial support services. DfT is now looking at the scope for sharing other services such as procurement.

A.158 The Highways Agency is also carrying out a service review to ensure it has more efficient and effective IT services and systems to support front line service delivery.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

A.159 The Department of Health (DH) has embarked on an ambitious programme of reform of the NHS and social care. The aim is to create a self-improving, locally-driven, more innovative NHS that puts the public, patients and users at its heart and promotes a 'bottom-up' approach.

A.160 The department's devolved approach enables local organisations to engage with their local communities and partners to deliver locally-agreed priorities that best meet the local health and social care needs.

Customer insight

A.161 A Customer Insight Unit has been established to understand patients and the public's wants, needs and their use of the health and (adult) social care systems. This will be used to inform both policy and service development and evaluation. Example projects include working with DCSF and IDeA on understanding the public's preference to receiving complex information to aid decision-making, and developing a real understanding of how patients differ in their needs and wants, and how services might respond to those differences.

A.162 NHS Choices launched in June this year, a single information portal on health information and services to help the public make informed decisions about their health and well being, enabling them to get the most from the healthcare system.

A.163 Patients are now able to directly comment and feedback on their hospital experience, and hospitals will have the opportunity to respond to comments about their services. Citizens are involved through the 'Your Thoughts' service, regular customer insight sessions and a dedicated NHS Choices Users Council to represent their views.

A.164 NHS Choices will also engage with the Customer Insight Forum and will work closely with Directgov to establish a comprehensive and integrated service covering 'Health and Wellbeing' content area to allow the customer to seamlessly transfer between the two information sites.

Contact centres

A.165 The DH has responsibility for two contact centres: NHS Direct and Ambulance Trusts. Health and social care is fundamentally a face-to-face activity, an important interaction between trained healthcare professionals and the citizen seeking healthcare advice. NHS Direct is a national service providing 24/7 telephone, internet and digital TV access to health advice, information and support. Ambulance Trusts contact centres deals with 999 calls and planned patient journeys from home to hospital.

A.166 In this context, NHS Direct and Ambulance Trusts are not purely a contact centre or web-based information service, their primary role is to deliver secure, confidential, personal health advice staffed by specially trained healthcare professionals. Both NHS Direct and Ambulance Trusts therefore encourage citizens to contact them for urgent and life-threatening health problems.

Websites and channels

A.167 The DH / NHS is planning to align its online services based on the principles set-out by Transformation Government. The use of single destinations by customer

audience, such as NHS Choices for citizen health, will dramatically reduce the number the sites operated by DH / NHS and improve the quality of the of the online services provided to those customers.

A.168 The latest figures showed that DH had 140 websites. As part of the cross-government website rationalisation, DH has:

- closed 27 sites;
- agreed to close 53 sites and has a firm date/plan to do so; and
- agreed in principle to close 60 sites but has not yet brokered this with the relevant stakeholders.

Identity management and data sharing

A.169 The national programme for IT in the NHS is a key strategic programme providing the essential information infrastructure to help realise the Government's vision set out in the NHS plan of a health service focussed on the needs and wishes of patients and their carers. This strategic infrastructure also underpins other key policy goals for the NHS, including :

- patient choice and patient empowerment (in particular through the "Choose and Book" service, Healthspace, and the nhs.uk portal) i.e. patients can choose appointments at times and places convenient to them;
- the "Our health, our care, our say" White Paper objectives (in particular through the establishment of a national broadband network that enables the use of telemedicine and tele-care to deliver home based care, and the ability to share patient information across agencies in a secure, consent-based framework) i.e. enabling clinicians to share information about patients and with patients;
- Through the establishment of a national broadband network and related information infrastructure that enables the sharing of patient information across agencies in a secure consent-based framework; and
- Enabling tele-health and tele-care services to deliver home based care for people with chronic conditions and vulnerable older people through work to engage industry in the development of open technical standards and support for the Long Term Condition Whole System Demonstrator programme.

A.170 At the heart of the national programme is the NHS Care Records Service which will provide a lifelong electronic personal health record for NHS patients in England. Patients will be able to view, review and record their preferences for care and choose how their records are shared. The Summary Care Record went live in early adopter sites in Spring 2007. Full transformation to a digital NHS will be achieved in the next few years.

Process improvement and shared services

A.171 The NHS Shared Business Services (NHS SBS) focuses on the provision of finance, procurement, payroll and HR solutions. NHS organisations are free to choose NHS SBS and many do so on the strength of a jointly developed and agreed business

case. The NHS Shared Business Service has saved 108 health trusts an average of 34 per cent of the cost of processing finance transactions through shared finance services.

DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS

Overview

A.172 DWP is committed to delivering against the service transformation agenda and is doing so by fully integrating its vision and objectives into the DWP Change Programme. The department's current ways of working mean that many of its customers need to contact more than one part of the department to have their needs met. The Change Programme will bring in a "no wrong door" approach, which aims to meet all the customer's needs through a single contact. It will also explore how DWP can provide more joined up services with other government departments and other partners, widen customer choice and improve self-serve opportunities.

A.173 This is a long-term journey, but DWP now has an agreed and comprehensive blueprint for the programme and are beginning to pilot new ways of working that will start to make the blueprint a reality. DWP will ensure that all change effort within the department is in line with the blueprint through a new, robust governance authority to be introduced this year.

A.174 Understanding the department's customers, and using that understanding to design better policy and services, is central to the programme. DWP has put a corporate customer insight capability in place. Their work is informing many other programme strands and the department is creating customer service measures that reflect the quality of the whole customer experience.

A.175 The department is re-designing its services around customer needs, including those that cut across several delivery organisations, such as HMRC and Local Authorities. It will continue to drive through enhancements to services for people who need to tell government organisations about life events such as bereavement by leading on the "Tell Us Once" project.

A.176 Delivering the department's vision of an integrated service for its customers means that it needs to re-structure the way it delivers services and standardises processes. DWP has agreed a high-level model for this and, during CSR07, will further refine the model and restructure the organisation to help deliver against the model in the most efficient way possible.

A.177 The main resources the department has to achieve its ambitions are the skills, experience, capability and knowledge of its people - and their commitment to delivering the best possible service to the department's customers. DWP will set out how it will define, develop and harness its people's capability, maximise the quality of leadership, and identify the key HR enablers that are needed to deliver this in its People Strategy, later in 2007.

A.178 Staff engagement underpins the department's commitment to continuous improvement using Lean techniques. Learning from external experts to develop its own capability, DWP will remove waste from its processes and focus on the things that are most important to customers whilst simultaneously enabling the department to live within the constraints of a challenging CSR07 settlement.

Customer insight

A.179 A Customer Insight Director and team are in place, working with a network from across the department. Capability is being developed and embedded into DWP's business. Objectives are:

- to generate a deep knowledge and understanding of and with DWP's customers – to inform the design, development and delivery of services and policy;
- to create the organisational capability across the department to generate and apply customer insight; and
- to influence attitudes and behaviours - promoting a culture that values insight.

A.180 Already, the department has in train a joint piece of customer insight research with HMRC around co-owned customers aimed at understanding how both departments can better meet this group's needs.

Channels strategies (face-to-face, web, contact centres/phone, mobile, helplines)

A.181 The DWP channel strategy, to be in place by April 2008, will set out the department's vision for exploring new ways of bringing services to customers and giving them greater choice; increasing self-serve options; providing face-to-face contact that targets more intensive help where it adds most value and joining up contact services across DWP and externally. The department is already:

- scoping initiatives to standardise contact services and telephony across Agencies, paving the way for more integrated and efficient delivery;
- examining ways of achieving efficiencies within contact centres, e.g. by extending use of demand forecasting tools, specifying working patterns, improving performance management capability and sharing best practice;
- Identifying potential around integrating services for reporting fraud in HMRC and DWP – pilot starting by 2008;
- exploring with HMRC potential for smoothing workflow into the Winter Fuel helpline;
- preparing to lead on Directgov by April 2008 - investing an additional £5m into it in 2007-08 and planning to converge DWP content and services on to it, including The Pension Service by 2010 and Jobcentre Plus by 2011; and
- introducing a web-based tool through Directgov, bringing together a range of new and existing services for customers by March 2008, with incremental enhancements, based on customer insight, following throughout CSR07.

Identity management

A.182 DWP is working closely with the Home Office and other departments in supporting the development of the cross-government Identity Management Framework. It is directly engaged in a number of initiatives, including:

- enhancing the DWP Identity Management policy so that it supports and enables the cross-government strategy and Crosby's Public/Private Identity work;
- using and supporting Tell-Us-Once in developing and testing identity management service propositions - this includes research on data-sharing legislative frameworks;
- exploiting the department's Customer Information System (CIS) to support the National Identity Scheme;
- assessing the feasibility of a joint venture between Identity and Passport Services (IPS) and DWP to establish how the identity card will help customers to establish their identity quickly and securely, and improve access to DWP services; and
- working with UKvisas and HMRC to on how to streamline the National Insurance number allocation process, for benefit integrity purposes and to counter fraud.

Data sharing

A.183 DWP is a key provider of data for service improvement. For example, most recently this has included data for the Department for Children, Schools and Families contact point database and the Digital Switchover Help Scheme. The department has established a Data Sharing Strategy Unit and a new DWP Data-Sharing Protocol to continue enabling more effective and efficient approaches to agreeing information sharing proposals across government and beyond.

Asset and estates management

A.184 DWP has a strategy in place to optimise use of its estate and reduce space from 2.16m sq metres at March 2008 to 1.75m sq metres in 2011. Demand and cost will be reduced by better alignment of people, estate and IT planning; improved office design and better performance measures. The department will also exploit opportunities to work with central and local government partners and the 3rd sector to optimise estates usage.

A.185 As part of its channel strategy DWP will explore how it can maximise the effectiveness of its estate in terms of the quality and accessibility of services it offers to its customers. Already, DWP is working with HMRC on three pilots to start in 2007-08, in which both departments will share office space with a view to providing increased estate efficiency and a more integrated service.

Shared services

A.186 DWP has an established HR and Finance shared services business within DWP and, as a preferred supplier of shared services within government, it will start to deliver CO services in 2009 and are actively pursuing further delivery opportunities with other departments.

A.187 CIS is an IT system that provides a single view of key information about DWP's customers. The information it holds is available to 80,000 users in DWP and a further 60,000 in several other government departments and 400 Local Authorities. DWP is planning to further extend use of the system to become a true shared service across

government. This includes the addition of the IPS within CSR07 and positive discussions ongoing with others, such as HMRC.

Efficiencies / deregulation

A.188 The Change Programme is a key enabler that will help DWP to live within the challenging CSR07 financial environment. This requires the department to make real terms annual savings of 5 per cent over the period of the settlement. DWP has included the cost and efficiencies of its Change Programme in its plans for achieving the CSR07 settlement. The programme will achieve significant efficiencies whilst delivering a better service to customers by:

- streamlining processes through the application of Lean techniques;
- dealing with more of the customers' needs in one contact;
- collaborative working with other government departments and other partners; and
- shifting appropriate contacts to self-serve channels.

Process improvement

A.189 The development of the DWP operating model; use of Lean techniques; the design of new processes built around the needs of particular customer groups and the delivery of the "Tell Us Once" project, will all help to improve processes that impact upon DWP's customers and to provide more customer-centred services. Already the department is:

- trialling 6 Lean initiatives over 7 sites – building on the learning of 3 pathfinders;
- working with HMRC and Local Authorities on pilots focused on meeting the needs of people who are frequently in and out of work, in 6 diverse locations;
- consulting with people with disabilities with a view to piloting redesigned services around their needs – and planning two further pilots, in 2008;
- learning lessons from customer needs-focussed pilots – planning how to scale up activities, ensuring that CSR07 resources are channelled most effectively;
- preparing to launch two "Tell Us Once" pilots in 2008, with an indicative full launch in 2011; and
- scoping and prioritising over 40 potential, wide-ranging initiatives to move DWP towards the new Operating Model – some will make very early enhancements to customer service – for example, providing a consistent greeting and better signposting to customers across DWP.

HM REVENUE AND CUSTOMS

Introduction

A.190 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is transforming tax administration in the UK. The department is committed to making it as easy as possible for people and

businesses to deal with it. Putting the customer at the heart of everything it does – understanding and acting on their needs – is the basis of HMRC’s strategic approach to transforming its services to customers and achieving its ambition.

A.191 By focussing on the customer, HMRC will improve the customer experience and realise business benefits:

- Ensuring customers know what they have to do and are confident they (and HMRC) have got it right will lead to less reassurance contact and less rework;
- Guiding customers to the most efficient and easy to use mix of channels for their needs will reduce costs for customers and HMRC, ease and speed compliance and lead to less paper production; and
- Being responsive and simple to deal with will lead to fewer complaints and increased levels of take up to entitlements.

A.192 This approach to transforming delivery to customers is supported by a range of strategies and programmes of delivery built on improved customer understanding and insight.

A.193 Note that this summary focuses on how the department deals with predominantly compliant customers. It does not cover the additional work in hand to address the potentially or actually non-compliant, from those who make errors to those who carry out criminal activity. But that work shares the same agenda, to put customers at the heart of everything HMRC does and to understand its customers better so as to tune its responses to the behaviours it observes.

Customer insight

A.194 HMRC has two units specifically representing and championing the interest of business and individual customers with the rest of the department.

A.195 Within the customer units is a well established and cross-disciplinary customer insight team. The team is positioned to become a centre of expertise, capturing synergies between independent programmes within (and potentially beyond) HMRC, creating best practice in customer understanding activity and establishing a central repository of customer data to prevent duplication of effort.

A.196 The leader of the team is chairing the Business Insight Forum. The forum will focus on the needs of business and will provide expert advice and support in the development of the programme of business customer research and insight, particularly around the development of the [businesslink.gov.uk](https://www.businesslink.gov.uk) website.

A.197 HMRC is currently rolling out the SIMPLE customer understanding process internally. The process provides a series of checkpoints and a toolkit for building customer.

A.198 understanding into every stage of the design and delivery of services. The intention via the Business Insight Forum is to agree a cross-departmental approach based on this or a related process.

Channel strategies and management

A.199 The overarching objective of HMRC’s Channel Strategy is to improve business results by making it as easy and as efficient as possible for customers to get it right. The

department wants customers to be able to use the channel that most effectively meets their needs at the lowest cost to them and to us.

A.200 The HMRC Channel Strategy sets the strategic direction and looks across all channels – online, face-to-face, telephone and post – to ensure it delivers a multi channel solution.

A.201 HMRC is using extensive customer research and analysis about who is using which channel and why to drive out customer focussed changes to its channels. This evidence is allowing the department to plan migration strategies to move the key customer groups into the most effective channels for their needs.

A.202 HMRC is using data from total contact modelling to identify the causes and types of unnecessary contact (e.g. progress chasing linked to the processing of a particular claim) that it will then target and reduce in the future.

A.203 HMRC is also identifying the long term vision for each channel and identifying and prioritising key enablers to deliver change in the short, medium and long term.

Contact centres

A.204 The capacity of the department's call centres has increased through increasing staff numbers and increasing efficiency. It has reduced the number of occasions where customers have to make a further call to get through by around 70 per cent, from 80 million in 2005-06 to around 24 million in 2006-07.

A.205 The department is improving and rationalising customer touch points by reducing the many helpline telephone numbers and addresses for communication that HMRC currently offers to create a more logical gateway and signposting system for customers. The exact scope and timing of the overall rationalisation programme has not yet been finalised, but initial opportunities for rationalisation have already been identified and are being implemented.

A.206 HMRC is working with DWP on identifying the seasonal variations in workload in each department, and is developing a detailed plan with DWP collaborating on the delivery of telephone services. This will be piloted in one area – fraud hotlines – in 2007-08. Other potential areas for collaboration are under consideration.

A.207 HMRC submitted its application for formal external accreditation by the Contact Council Association (CCA) accreditation in June, and is aiming for full accreditation by the end of September. The Contact Council has now agreed that accreditation by recognised external bodies, such as the CCA, will meet public sector accreditation requirements identified in Sir David Varney's report.

A.208 HMRC are playing an active role in the development and implementation of public sector contact centre standards. It is working with the Central Office of Information and other public sector bodies on development of public sector contact centre best practice standards. It has played a lead role in defining the public sector contact centre performance measurement framework and is currently implementing this across its contact centre organisation, with the aim of producing initial reports by the end of October 2007.

Online

A.209 HMRC is taking a leading role across government in delivering the web convergence vision. Since April the department has established and resourced a Web Convergence Project to plan for and deliver the changes required for HMRC to achieve convergence with businesslink.gov.uk and Directgov by 2011. In particular the project will:

- deliver high quality, customer centric content to Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk starting with the rewriting and migration of priority content areas in 2007-08;
- completely redesign its processes to align with Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk – starting with the content production process in 2007-08;
- work with other government departments and with Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk to define and agree on cross-cutting requirements and priorities (the department has already established a cross-government requirements working group to support this); and
- work closely with businesslink.gov.uk and Directgov to develop and agree proposals that meet defined requirements to ensure that the needs of HMRC's customers are met.

A.210 HMRC has also been working closely with Defra through businesslink.gov.uk on the ITSW to deliver an integrated cross-government source of information and a gateway for transactions. The first release was in November 2006 and when fully rolled out the site should enable traders or their agents to submit all regulatory information required in a single message which can be shared by the relevant departments.

A.211 In addition to the work currently under way on web convergence, HMRC is also delivering the Carter Programme. This programme is taking forward the work necessary to support the mandating of online services for in-year PAYE (phased from 2009), VAT (for some categories of trader from April 2010 at the earliest) and Corporation Tax (April 2011). The department is reviewing how best to deliver this in collaboration with Directgov and businesslink.gov.uk. The programme is also investing in the Self Assessment online service and implementing changes to self assessment filing dates. HMRC is introducing an improved main tax return for 2007-08, including a new online version, which will be shorter and easier for most taxpayers to complete.

Face-to-face

A.212 HMRC has a national network of 279 Enquiry Centres (ECs). A recent redesign has improved efficiency and service to customers by:

- Continuing to deliver a high quality service to those customers who need to use a face-to-face service; and
- Directing other customers to lower cost channels, where those channels would meet their needs.

A.213 The redesigned service introduced a floorwalker process to deal immediately with very quick and simple enquiries, channel customers to the phone (or intranet in the 40 largest ECs) where appropriate, or make appointments to see an adviser where needed.

A.214 HMRC is currently exploring options for the future to deliver a more cost effective, efficient and tailored service that is both better aligned to customer needs and maximises the potential benefits of technology and Joint Working, but will still have sufficient coverage and flexibility to deliver a core service to those who need it. As part of this we are running pilots in the Sheffield and Ballymena Enquiry Centres testing access to HMRC IT systems via broadband. The department is due to report in the autumn, and can then start to make recommendations and decisions about how it might use this technology in the future.

Mobile working

A.215 The Sheffield and Ballymena pilots are testing the technology for mobile working while a pilot with the department's debt management staff will test mobile working more fully. These are supporting HMRC's efforts to develop a generic remote and mobile capability which will enable flexible working throughout the UK. This will facilitate more convenient contact, both in terms of time and location for those customers for whom this is necessary or most efficient.

Helplines

A.216 While the department classes many of its telephone services as "helplines" (e.g. Tax Credits helpline, Self Assessment Helpline, Employers' Helpline) these do not in the main address the same kinds of critical needs as outlined in the service transformation report. The handling of HMRC helplines is set out under Contact Centres.

Identity management and data sharing

A.217 The department is seeking an Identity Management Service to provide a core customer record. It has developed its requirements around individual and business identity. Having provisionally concluded that CIS is the right technical solution it is working with DWP and IPS to develop their requirements with the prospect of addressing the HMRC position when appropriate funding is identified.

A.218 The department is also participating in the development of a cross government identity management strategy via membership of the Home Office led Identity Management Strategy Group. In addition, HMRC has engaged with the Crosby Forum to present a joint employer/HMRC perspective to inform development of proposals for a one-stop-shop for employers potentially likely to feature in the Crosby Review.

A.219 HMRC/DWP and 12 Local Authorities have carried out proof of concept work to identify practical evidence of the benefits of providing a consistent approach to identity management and developing a shared identity service. This research will usefully feed into the next stage of the 'Tell Us Once' feasibility work as it moves into prototype and pilot stages.

A.220 The department has been heavily involved in the "Tell Us Once" feasibility project, in particular coordinating the participation of Local Authorities, and developing the model to give a line of sight through the vision, benefits, capabilities, change activities and costs. DWP are the lead department for this work. HMRC will continue participation as appropriate from the feasibility studies through to prototype and pilot stages.

A.221 DWP, HMRC and North Tyneside Council have trialled a single transaction approach for people moving in and out of work to capture from customers at first point of contact all the information necessary to start or stop Jobseekers Allowance/Income Support, Working Tax Credit, and Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit. The processes devised in North Tyneside have been further enhanced in the light of other developments in Jobcentre Plus. The Trial is now (from September) being extended to give the trialled processes a further test across a broader range of Local Authority types. A national roll-out from 2008-09 will be considered in the light of results from the six pilots.

Asset and estate management

A.222 The major cross-government aspect of HMRC activities around estate management relates to Enquiry Centres. Of the HMRC network, some are already housed in one-stop shops (for example Livingstone and Bradford), or are co-located with JobCentre Plus (Cardiff and Melton Mowbray), or Local Authorities (Goole).

A.223 As part of DWP/HMRC joint working, the departments want to see how far it is possible to use their respective estates to serve each other's customers. They are, as a first step, trialling locating HMRC enquiry centres in Jobcentre Plus offices in Widnes, Alfreton and Buckie. Planning for IT, telephony etc. is well advanced and the three offices should start joint working from these locations later this year. The trials will run for a bedding-in period of three months, a further three months to collect evaluation data, and a further two months to report and make recommendations. If these trials prove successful this could be the forerunner to a wider programme of co-location.

A.224 In addition HMRC has plans to reduce its estate holding by around one third by March 2011, saving £100 million in annual running costs.

Shared services

A.225 A major cross-departmental initiative, the Government Banking Programme, will create a new service to deliver the future banking needs of HMRC, including the Office of HM Paymaster General which has some 800 public sector customers, and of National Savings and Investments.

A.226 On shared corporate services more generally, HMRC has been taking forward implementation of the plan it published for its sector – HMRC plus its Valuation Agency (VOA) – in January 2007 as part of the CIO Council Annual Report 2006. Following the successful launch of VOA onto HMRC's Enterprise Resource Planning online IT system in July (which covers finance, procurement and HR), the department remains on target to develop by 2008 the internal capacity to provide wider shared corporate services to VOA and some of the smaller central departments.

Efficiencies/deregulation

A.227 Since its formation in April 2005 one of HMRC's main aims has been the reduction of customer compliance costs. In summer 2005 the department measured and baselined the administrative burden that the tax system places on business and in his 2006 Budget the then Chancellor set HMRC two targets to reduce that burden. These are to:

- reduce the administrative burdens on business of dealing with HMRC forms and returns by at least 10 per cent over 5 years; and

- reduce the administrative burden on business of dealing with HMRC's audits and inspections, by 10 per cent over three years and at least 15 per cent over five years.

A.228 Since then HMRC has consulted widely and developed a long-term vision to both reduce those compliance costs and to improve its service to customers. These plans are set out in two papers entitled "Delivering a New Relationship with business" published in November 2006 and March 2007. By April 2007 HMRC delivered £130 million towards its targets for forms and returns and £43 million towards its target for audits and inspections. As well as this HMRC delivered a further £134 million in wider administrative burden reductions through improvements such as a simplified pensions regime and a new construction industry scheme.

A.229 HMRC is also acting on the stock and flow of regulation through its impact assessment regime and the Administrative Burdens Advisory Board together with its robust regime of internal Challenge Panels. It also participates in the wider simplification suggestion scheme run by the Better Regulation Executive enabling the public to suggest ways of reducing regulation.

A.230 In addition and although not within the remit of Phillip Hampton's report on risk and regulation, the department is committed to reflecting the need to reduce the burden of unnecessary regulation and old style enforcement and to focusing resources on areas where the risks are the greatest.

Process improvement

A.231 HMRC is addressing process improvement across the range of its activities, introducing Lean ways of working in PAYE & SA Processing, Child Benefit Office, Tax Credit Office, National Insurance Contributions Office and National Operational Services; and transforming debt management activities through a more risk-based approach and tailored responses.

A.232 Introducing Lean has helped to streamline key work processes by reducing lead times, increasing productivity, improving quality and establishing standard ways of working which means HMRC is able to provide a much more consistent service to its customers. The frequent and real-time quality checks carried out in teams using Lean ways of working help the department to prevent errors from reaching customers and also to identify and resolve the root causes of problems. Managers and team members are then able to identify any additional training, coaching or mentoring that may be needed. In this way 'continuous improvement' becomes part of everything the department does.

A.233 While the initial roll out has been completed individual location assessments are completed every 6 months to continually assess the department's progress. Continuous improvement is a key element of PaceSetter and HMRC will be launching its approach to problem solving this month. It expects everyone to be involved in evidence based problem solving and will use best practice derived from its people to continuously improve its standards.

A.234 On debt management and banking HMRC is committed to offering more flexible payment methods and making changes to make it easier for its customers to pay on time. HMRC is changing the way it looks at amounts it is owed, focusing less on the debts arising from individual taxes, and more on the whole of a customer's interaction with HMRC, reducing unnecessary transactions.

A.235 HMRC wants paying tax to be no different from paying other bills, and aims to make it as easy as possible for customers to pay what they owe by providing a range of flexible payment methods. Payment methods currently vary according to the tax to be paid. There are advantages in extending these methods and introducing new ones to make it easier to pay. HMRC already accepts debit cards as payment for a wide range of tax debts and will be extending this facility to take payment for debts across a number of regimes in a single transaction. Customers can also pay various tax liabilities using the Billpay system on the HMRC internet, allowing them to pay by debit card at a time of their choosing. The department has recently published a consultation paper seeking views on extending these services to include the use of Credit Cards. HMRC will be extending the use of direct debit in 2008, allowing payments for a wide range of taxes, and will provide online direct debit facilities, during 2008, helping customers to budget for their tax obligations and to keep up to date with their payments.

THE HOME OFFICE

Introduction

A.236 To transform the services it provides, the Home Office (HO) has a comprehensive Reform Programme to improve and strengthen all aspects of its internal operations as well as – whether directly or work through others – to the public. A customer and citizen focus is at the heart of this programme and to deliver this the HO is joining its efforts particularly with those of the Criminal Justice departments and others. One of the four priorities that have guided its reform programme since then has been the creation of “a Home Office organised to support frontline delivery and high performance”. HO has already made substantial progress in implementing these plans, and will continue to build on them.

A.237 In particular, the HO is working much more closely internally within directorates and between the wider criminal justice landscapes. Closer cooperation between the police, the Border & Immigration Agency (BIA) and other government departments means that users have less contact points to negotiate in receiving public services from us. The department’s commitment to consulting and involving the public will enable services to be measured more accurately and improved more quickly to meet individual needs. Lastly, a thorough review of the department’s communications strategy and channels has been undertaken with a confident expectation of a much more streamlined and easy-to-do-business-with organisation. All of the points are exemplified below. These improvements address frontline issues such as victim support, border protection and counter terrorism as well as dealing with internal process improvements particularly in the area of corporate services. The HO is also taking the lead across government in identity management which is one of the foundations of the wider public services transformation agenda.

A.238 As part of the Government’s transformation programme, the IPS will have biometrics recorded for all visa application by the end of 2008. They will also introduce the first Identity cards to British citizens by the end of 2009. The Border and Immigration Agency will introduce Biometric Immigration Documents (BIDs) for non-EEA foreign nationals already in the UK who reapply to stay here by the end of 2008.

Customer insight

A.239 Police Authorities are now fully obliged to consult with the public on policing matters.

A.240 The new PSA and performance frameworks for police and Local Authorities emphasise the need to improve public satisfaction with services as well as perceived confidence in local community safety agencies to deal with local priorities. The Assessments of Policing and Community Safety will start in April 2008.

A.241 Police reform is focused on making policing more citizen focused. This requires community engagement to agree on priorities in dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour. Neighbourhood policing is one of the tools used. The aim here is to provide more visible, accessible and responsive policing which demonstrably links in with community safety partners to resolve local issues. By 2008 a neighbourhood policing team will be present in every area.

A.242 Working with other Criminal Justice System (CJS) departments, the HO is improving the experience victims and witnesses have of the criminal justice system. This aims to place the needs of the victim and not the public sector at the heart of CJS processes. Together with the MoJ and the Crown Prosecution Service, the HO has introduced a Victim's Code of Practice setting out minimum service standards and will be introducing an equivalent Witness Charter from April 2008.

A.243 The Border & Immigration Agency is introducing new regional services, led by regional directors to improve performance and Local Accountability. This will help give local communities a much stronger sense of how BIA is performing and how decisions affect people in their area.

A.244 The new Migration Advisory Committee has also been established to advise the Government on where the UK economy migration should sensibly fill the skills gaps.

A.245 HO will encourage the highest level of customer feedback so as to improve its witness and victim support. With the MoJ and the Crown Prosecution Service, HO will continue to improve the Witness and Victim Experience Survey (WAVES) which gives detailed national and local performance data on user satisfaction with the criminal justice system.

Online

A.246 To ensure a single point of contact by a dedicated Witness Care Officer for victims and witnesses in cases going before the court, police forces and the Crown Prosecution Service will support 165 Witness Care Units across England and Wales.

A.247 The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) National Contact Management Programme is taking forward work on improving National Call Handling Standards and National Standards for Incident Reporting.

A.248 The IPS's channel strategy is to increase the proportion of online applications.

A.249 Within the HO itself, website rationalisation is being aggressively pursued with 16 out of 39 central sites closed this year with further 21 sites due to be removed by 2010. Information held, including on HO sponsored NDPB sites, is being actively migrated to Directgov or the businesslink.gov.uk website.

A.250 HO correspondence tracking system has been improved to ensure published targets for replying to customers are met. Consideration now being given to developing a correspondence shared service with other departments.

A.251 At present some forces are making use of PDAs and a number of trials are being conducted through the NPIA. The aim is to use the Airwave (the police radio system) capability as the bearer of preference

Identity management and information sharing

A.252 The HO is the lead department on identity management with the IPS leading on identity management policy and introducing the National Identity Scheme. Design work was completed in June 2007 on using the Department for Work and Pensions' Customer Information System database technology as a basis of the National Identity Register, which will be managed as a shared service on behalf of the IPS. Further plans regarding identity management include:

- a National Identity Scheme Commissioner to be appointed by end of 2008 (the Commissioner will oversee the scheme and will make regular reports on the scheme's operation that will be laid before Parliament and published);
- by end of 2007 a network of offices to meet first-time passport applicants operational;
- by end of 2008 biometric Immigration Documents (BIDs) introduced for non-EEA foreign nationals already in the UK who reapply to stay here and biometrics recorded for all visa applicants;
- by end of 2009, first identity cards issued to British citizens and additional identity checking services operational; and
- plans to screen pre-arrival data for 30m passenger movements over 90 routes, to stop 85 per cent of all detected illegal immigrants before reaching the UK and to proactively manage action plans for the top ten countries of harm are all in place for the 2007-08 period.

Joint services

A.253 The IPS has developed a passport verification service which is used across a number of other government departments and the public sector. IPS is piloting other joint venture partnerships with other parts of government and the private sector to further develop those identity checking services.

Process improvement and shared services

A.254 Process improvement projects are underway through the Police Service and wider criminal justice system. Projects under the department's FrontRunner strategy have already delivered policing improvements such as increasing victim satisfaction in Ipswich by 10 per cent, and reducing crime in South Liverpool and Ipswich by more than 5 per cent.

A.255 Further FrontRunner projects are underway in four police forces, under the title, Operation Quest, with the aim to achieve productivity improvements and release gains to the front line. Implementation is due to commence in September.

A.256 The strategy also supports the 10 criminal justice areas that are now recognised as 'Beacons'. These are working closely with the Office for Criminal Justice Reform to join up and improve the whole criminal justice process from the point of charge through to the sentence of the court.

A.257 Further projects are being developed for the Border and Immigration Agency to assist the Case Resolution Directorate and the development of one single primary checkpoint for both passport control and customs.

A.258 FrontRunner aims to create a culture of continuous improvement – nurturing the space and skills to pursue solid, incremental business change capable of transforming the citizen’s experience of HO delivery.

A.259 Process improvements will be realised from implementation of the Points Based System. The key outcomes of the new system will be:

- better identifying and attracting of migrants who have most to contribute to the UK;
- a more efficient, transparent and objective application process; and
- improved compliance and reduced scope for abuse.

Quality of service commitment

A.260 HO is committed to shared services. The HO departmental framework states “Shared Service business will deliver high-quality customer services, speedier access to information and data, increased flexibility and a long term, sustainable platform for future cost reductions and service improvements“. It includes all sharable functions and all HO organisations and is planning for commercial relationships.

A.261 The HO has created a Shared Services Directorate to manage Corporate Service provision specifically IT, Information and Records Management, Estates, Finance, Procurement and HR. It also has a Strategy and Business Development group identifying and exploiting shared service opportunities across the department.

A.262 The HO has established a programme to deliver a shared service to the Border and Immigration Agency and HO headquarters which will be delivered alongside HM Prison Service at Newport.

A.263 The HO has established a General Property Shared Service for the provision of accommodation across the HO. This is already working across MoJ and the HO, taking a joint approach to facilities procurement.

A.264 The HO has engaged with other organisations e.g. the IPS to expand Shared Service provision. There is standard “Engagement and Take On” process in place for potential customers of shared services.

A.265 The HO continues to explore the potential for other services to be delivered through shared services e.g. the Correspondence Unit.

A.266 Newport Shared Service Centre starts to deliver services to the HO alongside those delivered to the MoJ in February 2008. Once fully operational there will be a single contact point for queries on HR, Finance and Procurement transactions.

A.267 The HO is working closely with MoJ to build on this and establish a joint strategic approach to shared services.

A.268 The HO will implement new processes and systems for HR, Finance and Procurement, utilising the Shared Service Centre, to improve service provision and enable staff greater control starting Summer 2008.

A.269 The HO will establish a customer service and management frameworks and ethos across all shared services and develop charging models that relate service to cost.

Asset and estates management

A.270 In line with the creation of the estates shared service strategy the HO is developing a detailed estates plan which includes to commitments to cost savings, improved working conditions, best utilisation of space and carbon neutrality.

Specific projects

A.271 The department's borders will be transformed by the rollout of phase 1 of the visible border programme in 2007-08 including a visible uniformed border service in place at major ports and Heathrow. Online visa applications will be expanded to all customers and the outsourcing of application services will cover 87 per cent of all visa applications by the end of 2007.

A.272 Critical to the success of the borders transformation agenda is the e-Borders programme due for final approval in autumn 2007.

A.273 Fast tracked asylum decisions will be made significantly more cost effective, speeded up and strongly enforced. Asylum support costs are to be reduced by £80m by December 2008, 60 per cent or more of asylum cases will be concluded within 6 months and enforcement will deliver the removal of more failed asylum seekers than unfounded applicants.

A.274 Ensuring and enforcing compliance requires a whole variety of collaboration activities inside and outside of the Borders and Immigration Agency. The HO is already building new partnerships with the police, HMRC, DWP, Gangmaster Licensing Authority, Health and Safety Executive, and BERR and these will be strengthened as it puts in place plans for a unified Border Force, announced in July 2007.

A.275 Success will be measured on the rate of deportation and removal, the number of illegal workers found and removed, the number of failed asylum seekers removed and for overall throughput of the detention estate.

