Better together? A comparative study of joined-up practice and youth policy in England and New Zealand

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Trinity College

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“If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange ideas, then each of us will have two ideas.”
-George Bernard Shaw

This is a thesis about the exchange of information and ideas. Writing this thesis was very much an exchange of both.

I am indebted to the 200+ civil servants who shared their practice, perspectives, and ideas with me. Four civil servants deserve mention by name – David Rea (NZ), Marcus Bell (UK), Trina Anglin (US), and Kari Gloppen (US) – for their role as both brokers and mentors. Thanks to them, I gained extraordinary access to the youth policy players in New Zealand, England and the United States. I left the three placements with almost 400 hours of tape and 150 kilograms of documents.

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Thank You.
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Abstract

\textbf{Better together?}
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Sarah Schulman  
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DPhil in Social Policy  
Trinity Term 2010

Joined-up government is a frequent policy prescription, yet an incompletely studied practice. This thesis explores how civil servants with youth policy portfolios in England and New Zealand join up and to what effect. Most existing research focuses on the structures and processes behind joining-up; not on the behaviours of civil servants who join up, nor on the outputs they produce. These authors draw largely on retrospective interviews and documents collected at one point in time, rather than on observational data collected over time.

By contrast, I use an immersive research methodology to co-construct theory from the ground-up: interviewing and observing civil servants inside and outside of joined-up settings over time; as well as facilitating enquiry groups to reflect on, and improve civil servant practice. This qualitative, grounded, and participatory approach helps discern the added value of joining-up on output quality.

Of the twenty case studies of joined-up government included in this thesis, only three yielded outputs reflective of joined-up thinking and integrated analysis. Although these were from New Zealand, case studies with low and average quality outputs were the norm in both countries. High quality outputs were the result of variations in joined-up routines. Civil servants in high performing case studies planned the spaces for, and the sequences of, meetings and interactions; organised conversations around critical questions; and invested in regular capacity-building. They practiced differently because of a set of enabling factors: their personal and professional experiences, a shared external audience, strong but flexible organisational and institutional accountabilities, and attention to an important, though not urgent, youth policy problem.

I argue that rather than see these enabling factors and behaviours as a template for joining-up, we should encourage – and then measure – variation in practice against better youth policy outputs, and ultimately better youth outcomes.
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<tr>
<td>ALAC</td>
<td>Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCLG</td>
<td>Department for Communities and Local Government (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCMS</td>
<td>Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEFRA</td>
<td>Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH</td>
<td>Department of Health (England)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DIA</td>
<td>Department of Internal Affairs (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPMC</td>
<td>Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWP</td>
<td>Department for Work and Pensions (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECM</td>
<td>Every Child Matters (England)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCN</td>
<td>High and Complex Needs Unit (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HMT</td>
<td>Her Majesty Treasury (England)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HO</td>
<td>Home Office (England)</td>
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<tr>
<td>IACSP</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Committee on Suicide Prevention (New Zealand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IACD</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JUG</td>
<td>Joined-up Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED</td>
<td>Ministry of Economic Development (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOJ</td>
<td>Ministry of Justice (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPIA</td>
<td>Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSD</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MYD</td>
<td>Ministry of Youth Development (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTA</td>
<td>National Treatment Agency (England)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMDU</td>
<td>Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (England)</td>
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<td>PMSU</td>
<td>Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (England)</td>
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<td>RYP</td>
<td>Realising Youth Potential Initiative (New Zealand)</td>
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<td>SCPYG</td>
<td>Supporting Children and Young People’s Group (England)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPARC</td>
<td>Sports and Recreation New Zealand (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSC</td>
<td>State Services Commission (New Zealand)</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPK</td>
<td>Te Puni Kokiri / Ministry of Maori Affairs (New Zealand)</td>
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<td>TYS</td>
<td>Targeted Youth Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>YJB</td>
<td>Youth Justice Board (England)</td>
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<td>YJLG</td>
<td>Youth Justice Leadership Group (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>YM</td>
<td>Youth Matters (England)</td>
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1.

Chapter One: Beginnings

This chapter introduces readers to the four research questions underpinning this thesis, describes the researcher’s motivations, approach and learning journey, and explains the document’s structure and writing style.

The four questions

This thesis seeks to answer four core questions:

1. What does it look like for civil servants to join up?
2. Does joining-up change what civil servants do and the outputs they produce?
3. What factors enable civil servants to produce different outputs?
4. What can cross-national comparisons between England and New Zealand tell us about how civil servants join up and to what effect?

Section 1.1: The researcher’s motivations

I wrote this thesis to learn if joined-up government lived up to the policy rhetoric and enabled complex social problem-solving. We are told that fragmented government underpins much preventable tragedy – from the death of seven-year old Victoria Climbié to the 9/11 terrorist attacks – and that joined-up government can make us collectively smarter, safer, even healthier.1 As I will argue in Chapter Two, joining-up occurs when civil servants from two or more government agencies come together to share information, methods, goals and/

---

or resources. Existing political and academic discourse on joining-up tells us about the structures and processes through which civil servants come together to share information, methods, goals and/or resources. But this political and academic discourse tells us little about the content of what civil servants share or the quality of what civil servants produce as a result of that sharing. It is my contention that the substance of joining-up matters to the problem-solving it offers. This thesis starts with the premise that solving complex social problems requires civil servants to think and work differently. In order for joining-up to have direct impact on the social problems for which it has been prescribed, civil servants must produce different outputs when they join up than when they work separately.

Over the chapters that follow, I look at whether joining-up changes what civil servants in central government agencies do and the quality of the outputs they produce. I do not explore whether changing what civil servants do and produce improves social outcomes. I see shifting what civil servants do and the outputs they produce—e.g. the policy reports, ministerial briefs, and funding guidance—as a necessary precondition for shifting how public services are run and the on-the-ground outcomes those services achieve. The logic is such: the policy outputs which civil servants produce at a central government level set the context within which local services operate and the way in which social needs are met.

Identifying how joining-up differs from the default requires comparison points. I chose to work with middle to senior level civil servants with youth policy portfolios in central government agencies.² Youth policy is a fruitful space for identifying and observing joined-up practice because it is inherently cross-jurisdictional. Addressing the needs of young people, aged 12-24, spans single-issue agencies like health, education, welfare and justice (Coles, 2002). The direct costs of youth policy problems like teenage pregnancy, youth crime, youth unemployment and childhood obesity tend to accrue to one agency; yet

² See Appendix A for a list of the youth policy portfolios included in this research.
the solution set lies between agencies. I study how civil servants work between central government agencies, not how they work with local government or with non-governmental stakeholders. Civil servants’ relationships with local and non-governmental stakeholders are important to social problem-solving, but boundary lines are also important for robust and time efficient research.

Table 1.1: Research boundary lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In bounds</th>
<th>Out of bounds</th>
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<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Civil servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Central government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Inter-agency working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Youth policy</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-governmental stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local or regional government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legislative or judiciary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public-private or intergovernmental working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youth services delivery</td>
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</table>

Place offers another boundary line. This thesis looks at civil servants in England and New Zealand. Although this research originally sought to compare civil servants in New Zealand, England and the United States, I chose to analyse results from England and New Zealand only. This decision will be further explained in Chapter Three. I excluded non-Anglophone governments with different bureaucratic structures, selecting countries where civil servants spoke English and performed similar jobs. The idea behind doing a cross-national piece of work was to learn what enables civil servants, at a central level, to join up. Had I worked in countries where the job of a civil servant differs, I would not have been able to disentangle joining-up from government as usual. It was a change in everyday practice and not simply variations in international practice that I wanted to document and explain.

To this end I spent a year and a half working alongside civil servants in their daily practice. Such activities included going to meetings, attending conferences, reviewing policy briefs, preparing for ministerial interactions, reading funding proposals, and editing policy guidance. I was both a researcher and active
participant. This deeply immersive methodological approach was chosen because I wanted to co-create a ‘theory-in-how’ from the ground up rather than test a ‘theory-in-why’ from the top down. My goal is to offer new insight into how to join up and to develop a model that helps civil servants understand what they do in inter-agency settings. This thesis thus serves to complement, rather than to validate, existing theory.

Section 1.2: The co-creation process

My desire to co-create a ‘theory-in-how’ comes from my experiences advising local governments on complex youth policy issues. Project after project, I observed frontline practitioners struggle to do the joining-up which they agreed was necessary yet absent. These practitioners would lament that they could not join up because of the separate rules, expectations, reporting lines, and resources propagated by central government agencies. They believed that if civil servants across central government would work together and align youth policy, youth services would run better and outcomes for young people would improve. My hypothesis was that joined-up government was a frequent policy recommendation and an infrequent policy practice. I chose to relegate out-of-bounds the question of whether joined-up policy and practice were sufficient conditions for better youth services and youth outcomes. My research agenda continued to evolve as I read the literature and entered the field. This evolution explains the look and feel of this thesis.

My initial research question was: What mechanisms exist to cross central government agencies and develop effective policy for young people? I focused on mechanisms because rather than just rhetoric they were an indicator of practice.
Yet I was not only interested in what mechanisms existed but also in the purpose of those mechanisms: I was looking for a relationship between joining-up and the quality of the youth policy produced. At the start, youth policy was the dominant focus. As I delved into the literature, I found that youth policy was just one example of a multi-jurisdictional policy domain. Older people’s policy and family policy, for example, faced similar inter-agency challenges. The literature on inter-agency working did not segment its analysis by issue area. Nor did this literature systematically link the mechanisms used for inter-agency working with the reasons why agencies sought to work together. At this stage, I defined agencies as the primary policy actors, as seen in Figure 1.2.

Early conversations with, and observations of civil servants, challenged my thinking about how policy change happens. I learned agencies do not make policy decisions; people in agencies make policy decisions. Youth policy was the product of a series of decisions made by civil servants and policymakers. Civil servants were constantly making choices, some big and some small, some proactive and
some reactive, which shaped policy outputs and outcomes. I wanted to know, if, and then how, joining-up influenced what civil servants did and the policies they helped produce. When the focus shifted to civil servants, the ‘why join up’ question lost resonance. I was starting with civil servants engaged in joined-up government and not with agencies deciding whether or not to join up.

Figure 1.3: Research questions: Iteration 3

This iteration of research questions, illustrated in Figure 1.3, shows four important conceptual shifts: (1) moving from agencies as the policy players to civil servants, (2) de-emphasising why agencies join up, (3) viewing civil servant practice rather than policy output as the first point of change, and (4) evaluating youth policy by its deviation from the norm rather than its effectiveness. ‘Different’ youth policy diverges from what has come before, while ‘effective’ youth policy has an externally defined impact. Ideally the standard for effectiveness is set by those who deliver the policy and the user groups that the policy targets. Given the bounds of this study, and the exclusion of local government and non-governmental stakeholders, the ideal was out of reach, whereas changes in civil servant practice and different policy outputs were more comfortably within reach.

Fieldwork took me to England, New Zealand and the United States and to the realisation that structures were not the same as practice. Although inter-agency boards, taskforces, and committees proliferated in all three countries, their existence did not always equate to a change in civil servant behaviour. Focusing on structural mechanisms overlooked how civil servants performed when in those structures.
This next iteration of research questions, seen in Figure 1.4, displays two important conceptual shifts: (1) an emphasis on the performative rather than just the structural elements of joining-up and (2) a focus on the factors that enable civil servants to produce different outputs. For civil servants to repeatedly work in a joined-up way, they must know how and be supported to act differently. To explain how joining-up changes everyday practice and policy outputs, it was necessary to move beyond describing joining-up to examining the factors that enabled different joined-up practice and different policy outputs.

It was only when I started to identify those enabling factors that I understood the difficulty of carrying out a three country comparison. While England, the United States, and New Zealand relied on similar inter-agency mechanisms, there were very different institutional and political determinants at play. Civil servants in both England and New Zealand could, with ministers’ direction, set the policy agenda, and they also had access to direct delivery levers (e.g. health and justice services). Civil servants in the United States could only implement a policy agenda set by legislators; they had few direct delivery levers (e.g. state and then local governments). These major constitutional differences made it difficult to draw specific conclusions regarding civil servants’ joined-up practice. Had I included another federalist country in the sample, I would have had more confidence in describing and explaining patterns. To ensure a tight analysis (and one that conformed to DPhil word count requirements), I withdrew the United States from my final results. Please refer to Chapter 3 for a full explanation.
This decision led me to the four research questions that now form the basis of this document:

1. What does it look like for civil servants to join up?
2. Does joining-up change what civil servants do and the outputs they produce?
3. What factors enable civil servants to produce different outputs?
4. What can cross-national comparisons between England and New Zealand tell us about how civil servants join up and to what effect?

Section 1.3: Theory of change

My research questions reflect a shift in how to conceptualise change. Initially, I tried to directly link joined-up government with changed youth policy outcomes. Early fieldwork helped me to identify the missing links: civil servant practice had to change before policy outputs could change, and policy outputs had to change before policy outcomes might change. As data collection progressed, I continually asked myself: what is the change I want to explain, what led to that change, and what has that change led to? These prompts led me to think and rethink the sequence and flow of the thesis.

A change sequence can also be called a theory of change. Theories of change are heuristic tools designed to make assumptions explicit about how to bring about desired outputs and outcomes (Aspen Institute, 2002). While theories of change are often used to prospectively identify who or what is predicted to change and how and why that change is expected to happen, theories of change can also be used to retrospectively make sense of a change pathway.

Used in the latter way, theories of change become a means of identifying what different theoretical perspectives and academic traditions have to offer. This is achieved by bringing together hypotheses and evidence around a set of themes, starting with the core phenomena (in this case, joining-up): its conditions (why join up?); its enablers (factors that influence how civil servants join up); its associated
practice (how civil servants join up); and its consequences (what outputs and outcomes does joining-up yield?). Given how these thematic headings map onto the four research questions, I have found them to be a useful way of structuring chapters and interrogating data.

Figure 1.5: ‘Theory of Change’ thesis structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What led to joining up?</td>
<td>What does it mean to join up?</td>
<td>What factors influence how civil servants join up?</td>
<td>Does joining up change what civil servants do?</td>
<td>Does joining up change what civil servants produce?</td>
<td>Does joining up change on-the-ground outcomes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 1.4: Thesis structure

Chapter Two, What the literature says about joined-up government, begins with defining joined-up government by synthesising academic articles and policy reports to distinguish between concepts such as communication, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. This leads to the conditions section, looking across the management studies, organisational sociology, and political science literatures to understand the reasons why organisations and the civil servants within those organisations join up. What follows is an examination of the enabling factors, and identifying the structures, processes and cultural factors which influence how civil servants join up. While I try to separate out what civil servants do when they join up from the structures, processes, and cultural factors which influence how they join up, I find that the literature rarely makes such a distinction. Finally, I weave together case studies and empirical studies to share what we know about the impact of joined-up working on policy, services, and people. Changes to policy are labelled as outputs, and changes to services and people are construed as outcomes. Where possible, I link what we know about how joining-up takes place to the outputs joining-up yields.
Chapter Three, *Methodology*, argues that gaps in the existing literature base are a byproduct of similar research methodologies. We know little about what civil servants do when they join up because of a reliance on interviews, surveys, and documentary analysis rather than on observation. I outline the immersive research techniques used in this thesis, situating the research methods within the qualitative, grounded theory, and action research traditions.

Chapter Four, *Joined-up practice in England*, presents results to the first research question, introducing readers to ten case studies of joined-up practice across England’s youth policy space. This chapter describes how joined-up government unfolded in England during fieldwork, and highlights the history of each joined-up case study. The chapter thus addresses the intervention and condition sections of the theory of change.

Chapter Five, *Joined-up practice in New Zealand*, also presents results of the first research question, introducing readers to ten case studies of joined-up practice in the New Zealand youth policy space. Like in Chapter Four, I explore the intervention and condition sections of the theory of change, this time with reference to New Zealand.

Chapter Six, *A comparison of joined-up practice between England and New Zealand*, compares and contrasts the ten case studies in the two countries and summarises similarities and differences in observed practice.

Chapter Seven, *The impact of joining-up on what civil servants do and produce*, presents the results to the second research question, concentrating on the practice and output sections of the theory of change. Identifying the factors which enable civil servants to do and produce different youth policy first requires naming that different practice and those different outputs. I offer a framework for assessing the quality of joined-up policy outputs, drawn from the dataset and informed by three key authors (Bardach, 1998; Huxham, 1993a; Huxham, 1993b; Huxham and Vangen, 2004).
Chapter Eight, *Factors that enable civil servants to produce different outputs*, presents the results to the third research question, completing the enabler section of the theory of change. Enabling factors move us from the descriptive to the analytic realm. The literature on organisational change and routine (Feldman and Pentland, 2003; Hardy, Lawrence and Grant, 2005) is to be particularly useful in explaining why some civil servants are able to produce different outputs. This literature argues that organisational routines, which are often used to explain inertia, can also be a source of flexibility and change. I then adapt Pollitt and Bouckaert’s public management reform model (2004) to map the individual, group, organisational, institutional and situational factors influencing the adoption of new and adaptation of old routines. While I integrate research question four into Chapters Four through Seven, it is here, in Chapter Eight, that I illustrate performative variation within and between England and New Zealand and highlight the different contextual factors at play.

Chapter Nine, *Conclusions*, summarises the results and highlights the major limitations of this study, namely that it does not, by design, reach the outcome section of the theory of change. The chapter concludes by making recommendations to academics, policymakers, and civil servants for future research and practice.

Section 1.5: The language

In writing the nine chapters, I faced a choice: present a detached account of the research results or tell a personal story of the research process. I chose the latter. It is my hope that readers will find that the text, written in first-person narration, still exhibits the rigour that a doctoral thesis demands.

Qualitative research seeks to explain why particular people hold the beliefs they do, and not simply how many hold a particular belief. To convey consensus, dissension, and neutrality, I use words like ‘minority’ and ‘majority’, but try to qualify this with who exactly makes up each category. I also differentiate words
like ‘say’, ‘tell’ and ‘describe’ from words like ‘suggest’, ‘insinuate’ and ‘reveal.’
Whereas the first sets of words introduce verbatim ideas from the civil servants I
worked with, the second set of words are my interpretation of what civil servants
mean.

The data that resulted from my placement would not be the data that
would emerge were fieldwork to occur today. I do not intend for my findings to
be seen as a reflection of decisions and practice unfolding in present time, but as
having unfolded in ‘real-time’ during each fieldwork placement. I use the present
tense to capture the ‘real-time’ interactions I observed. Where data is based on
third-person recollections, I switch to the past tense. I also make note of any
inconsistencies between data sources in the tables of the results chapters. I do
this in the interest of transparency, and an uninterrupted narrative flow.
2.

Chapter Two: What does the literature say about joined-up government?

This chapter serves as the literature review, collating and critiquing the theory and evidence of joined-up government. Taken together, the literature answers a different set of questions than the four questions underpinning this thesis.

Section 2:1: Chapter structure

A wide range of books and articles discuss joined-up government. The inter-organisational relations field to which joined-up government belongs draws in sociologists, political scientists, economists and historians, among others. To make sense of what I was reading, I created a concept map, as shown in Figure 2.1, that records what we know about joining-up based on existing theory and empirical study. The map serves to highlight reoccurring themes and terms, which are then explored in the pages that follow, beginning with ‘What is joining-up?’

Figure 2.1: Joined-up government concept map

What is joining-up?

- Coordination
- Collaboration
- Networks

How to join up?

- Interpersonal relationships
- Processes & Tools
- Stages / Phases
- Boundary spanners

Why join up?

- Resource dependency theory
- Exchange theory
- Social ecology theory
- Institutional theory
- Public choice theory
- Organisational learning theory
- Network theory
- Contingency theory
- Neo-Durkheimian theory
- Managerial ideologies

For what results of joining-up?

- Outputs
- Outcomes
- Individual-level
- Network-level
- Community-level

Culture
The literature is, on the whole, complementary rather than contradictory. The ‘Why join up’ literature base is the most disparate, pitting altruistic against self-interested motivations. The ‘How to join up?’ and ‘What does joining-up yield?’ literature bases are the most congruous, containing theories and evidence which can be separated with an ‘and’ rather than an ‘or.’ I argue that the existing theory and evidence is incomplete. The literature tends to overlook context, failing to systematically differentiate joining-up within the public versus private sectors, or joining-up at a policy versus a service delivery level. The literature also overlooks practice, exploring the structures and processes for, rather than the behaviours and routines behind joined-up government. This research has been designed to help bridge the gap; to add to, rather than replace, the existing literature.

Section 2.2: What is joined-up government (JUG)?

Joined-up government can be defined by its absence.

On 7 January 1973, eight-year old Maria Colwell was brought to Royal Sussex County Hospital in a wheelbarrow. She died on arrival, with severe bruising, broken limbs and brain damage. Despite thirty calls to social service agencies from concerned neighbours, teachers and health professionals, Maria was left in the care of her abusive stepfather. Public outcry prompted a large-scale government inquiry into how the state could better protect children. The inquiry concluded that public services had failed to collect, assimilate, and act on information coming from its many delivery agencies and oversight units (Scott, 1975, p.88).
On 24 February 2000, nine-year old Victoria Climbié was rushed by ambulance to London's St. Mary's Hospital. After months of torture and neglect at the hands of her aunt, Victoria died from hypothermia and multiple organ failure, with the marks of 128 injuries on her small body. She died despite the fact that social service, health and education agencies were alerted dozens of times. Another government inquiry was launched, which once again concluded that public services had failed to collect, assimilate, and act on information coming from its many delivery agencies and oversight units (House of Commons Health Committee, 2003, p.13).

In both cases, government responded with new inter-agency decision-making structures and revised information-sharing protocols designed to bring together its many delivery agencies and oversight units. These protocols and structures are two examples of joined-up government.

Ling (2002) characterises joined-up government by its plurality, noting that the term "covers a wide range of different terms … and is a cluster of competing strategies being advocated and implemented" (p.616). Pollitt (2003) offers a fuller description:

"Joined up government is a phrase which denotes the aspiration to achieve horizontally and vertically coordinated thinking and action. Through this co-ordination it is hoped that a number of benefits can be achieved. First, situations in which different policies undermine each other can be eliminated. Second, better use can be made of scarce resources. Third, synergies may be created through the bringing together of different key stakeholders in a particular policy field or network. Fourth, it becomes possible to offer citizens seamless rather than fragmented access to a set of related services" (p.35).

Joined-up government tends to be described in either concrete or conceptual terms. Whereas concrete definitions specify the structure joined-up government takes (e.g. networks and committees), conceptual definitions describe its purpose (e.g. coordination and collaboration).

I use the word joined-up government because of this inclusivity; it provides the space for differentiating structure from purpose, or the means and ends
of joint work. Coordination, collaboration, networks, and partnerships are not synonyms. While some authors deem this delineation mere semantics (e.g. Hudson et al., 1999), a central argument of this thesis is that disentangling the intention of an activity from the practice of that activity is critical for understanding if and how change takes place.

Public administration literature focuses much more on the concrete means of joined-up government, highlighting the mechanisms used between people and organisations. Taking an organisational perspective, Bichard (2007) identifies ministerial champions, cabinet committees, and central policy units as means by which joined-up government can be achieved. Taking a practitioner perspective, Ling (2002) identifies referral processes and joint consultations as the means by which frontline staff can advance joined-up government. Neither list of mechanisms provides much clarity on their different purposes.

Organisational theory literature tends to move in the opposite direction. It uses conceptual definitions of joined-up government to examine the function of inter-organisational relationships rather than just the form that those relationships take. Here, academics use words like collaboration to talk about agencies developing collective policy goals. Their definition is not conditional on the vehicle used to enable collaboration – such as a committee or taskforce - but on the reason for the interaction.

Table 2.1 outlines the terms that organisational theorists commonly use to talk about people or organisations working together. To illustrate each term, direct quotes are extracted from key sources (Alter and Hage, 1993; Bardach, 1998; Hall et al., 1977; Levine and White, 1961) and meta-texts (Hudson, 1993; Horwath and Morrison, 2006; Ling, 2002; Mattessich, 2001; Wood and Gray, 1991).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conflict</strong></td>
<td>“When the goal achievement of one or more organisations occurs at the expense of the goal achievement of the other.” (Hudson, 1993, p.342)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resource Exchange</strong></td>
<td>“Any voluntary activity between two or more organisations which has consequences, actual or anticipated, for the realization of their respective goals and objectives.” (Levine and White, 1961, p.583)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooperation</strong></td>
<td>“Low key joint working on a case-by-case basis.” (Horwath and Morrison, 2007, p.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coordination</strong></td>
<td>“The extent to which organisations attempt to ensure that their activities take into account those of other organisations.” (Hall, et al. 1977, p.459)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A structure or process of concerted decision-making or action where in the decisions or action of two or more organisations are made simultaneously in part or in whole with some deliberate degree of adjustment to each other.” (Warren, et al. 1974 as quoted in Mulford and Rogers, 1983, p.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>“Activities by agencies intended to increase public value by having the agencies work together rather than separately.” (Bardach, 1998, p.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organisations to achieve common goals.” (Mattessich, 2001, p.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“…Occurs when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issues related to that domain.” (Wood and Gray, 1991, p.146)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consolidation</strong></td>
<td>“Building seamless programmes [between agencies].” (6, in Bogdanor 2005, p.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Networks</strong></td>
<td>“Any moderately stable pattern of ties or links between organisations or between organisations and individuals, where those ties represent some form of recognisable accountability whether formal or informal in character, whether weak or strong, loose or tight bounded or unbounded.” (6 in, et al., 2006, p.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The mechanisms used by two or more organisations to work together on a shared agenda while keeping their own organisational identity and purpose.” (Ling, 2002, p.625)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnership</strong></td>
<td>“Formal administrative unification, maintaining some distinct identities” (6 in Bogdanor, 2005, p.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Union</strong></td>
<td>“Fusion to create a new structure with a single new identity” (6 in Bogdanor, 2005, p.50)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These definitions are laden with dimensionality, perhaps the most important of which is goal orientation. Concepts like conflict, resource exchange, and collaboration are presented as a means to an end – be it a single organisation’s goal or a collective goal – while concepts like cooperation and coordination are described as an end point. The concepts ‘union’ and ‘partnership’ are linked to organisational goals, but highlight a structure rather than a process or activity. They seem to suggest an ongoing relationship -- something more intense and reciprocal than the informality of cooperation, but quite similar to collaboration.

Hudson, *et al.* (1999) identify degree of intensity, reciprocity, formalisation, and standardisation as the significant dimensions of inter-organisational exchanges (p.346). The frequency of contact, the reciprocal flow of information and resources, and the formality of structure and purpose differ between each interactional form. Rogers and Whetten (1982) offer a similar set of modulators. Inter-organisational exchanges vary according to five variables: their rules and formality, their goals and activities, their level of operation, the resources involved, and their threat to individual organisational autonomy (p.13).

The public administration literature adds a second layer of complexity. Relational forms can be further differentiated according to level, function, and unit of focus. Each form – from cooperation to collaboration – can occur at a horizontal or vertical level, for a policymaking purpose or a service delivery purpose, and can focus on a discrete problem, policy sector, geographical area, and/or a client population (Pollitt, 2003, p.37).

Horizontal interaction occurs between organisations that operate at the same vantage point, such as two central government agencies, while vertical interaction occurs between organisations with vantage points of a different scale and scope. Inter-organisational relationships serving a policymaking function are necessarily more abstract than those with a direct delivery function; the types of tasks differ accordingly. Similarly, tasks will vary by focal point; in part, because
orientating an inter-organisational relationship around a national policy problem versus a local geographic area will involve different actors and different resource bases.

While the range of inter-agency interaction is well articulated within the literature, systematic description of this variation is lacking. To make sense of the many variables, I have developed a typology of terms, summarised in Table 2.2. This typology was informed by organisational theory, public management, and policy analysis literature. It builds on the concepts cited in Table 2.1 while also drawing on key empirical and case study research (El Ansari, 2001; Provan and Milward, 1998; Huxham and Vangen, 2003). My focus on horizontal joined-up government at a policy level has narrowed the viewfinder and enabled me to exclude joined-up government that occurs vertically or at a delivery level.

### Table 2.2: Joined-up government: a proposed typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Linking</th>
<th></th>
<th>Bonding</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To share information</td>
<td>To apply information</td>
<td>To align means</td>
<td>To share ends means and ends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>List-serves • Conferences • Clearance Processes • Intranets • Emails • Phone calls</td>
<td>Networks • Committees • Consultation • Protocols Workgroups • Teams • Partnerships</td>
<td>Mega-organisations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications (for individuals &amp; organisations)</td>
<td>Individual accountability; no loss of autonomy</td>
<td>Individual accountability; limited loss of autonomy</td>
<td>Individual accountability; some loss of autonomy</td>
<td>Joint accountability; moderate loss of autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vary by level (horizontal, vertical)</td>
<td>Vary by formality (voluntary, mandated)</td>
<td>Vary by task (policymaking, delivery)</td>
<td>Vary by unit of focus (geography, population, problem, opportunity)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications (for policy domain)</td>
<td>Domain awareness</td>
<td>Conflict avoidance</td>
<td>Reduced duplication, overlap, and lacunae</td>
<td>Creation of something new</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What.** Five forms of joined-up government are captured by this typology. Concepts were selected for their frequency in the literature, and for describing an evolving act rather than a structure (like a network). This was a decision made after I amended the research questions to focus on joined-up practice, rather than on
joined-up mechanisms. While presented in linear form, the order of concepts is not a statement of importance, and similarly, while each concept inhabits its own cell, inter-organisational forms can and often do co-mingle, unfolding at different points in an organisation’s lifespan.

**Why.** This row of cells summarises the aim of each of the five forms of joined-up government. At the most basic level, communication transpires when two or more organisational units exchange information, such as current work plans or data. When organisational units both exchange and use information to make decisions, cooperation occurs. Each organisation applies information learned in an inter-organisational setting to internal planning or decision-making processes. When those organisations apply shared information to reduce redundant transactions, and align existing processes or products, coordination takes place. For example, if two organisations planned to release a public brochure on the same topic, in a communicative situation, the organisations would discuss the possible overlap; in a cooperative situation, the organisations would tweak their respective versions to take into account the other; and in a coordinative situation, one organisation would abandon the brochure or both organisations would combine existing material.

Together, communication, cooperation and coordination serve to link multiple organisations. By streamlining how organisations accomplish their respective goals, linking relationships can increase an individual organisation’s success.

Collaboration and consolidation, on the other hand, can increase an entire policy domain’s success. This is done by bonding or adhering organisations to one another. Two or more organisations that share a common goal, but pursue it through their own means and expertise, can be said to be collaborating. When those organisations share a common goal and pursue it with common means, such that they operate as a single entity, consolidation occurs. Even when organisations achieve consolidation, other forms of joined-up government are still
necessary. Communication remains critical, and cooperation, coordination, and collaboration may still be relevant between intra-organisational units, or new inter-organisational partners.

*How.* Although many definitions of joined-up government confuse function with form, not every form facilitates every function. To achieve collaboration or consolidation, joint decision-making and resourcing is required. While this need not be codified in a formal partnership or structured workgroup, some enduring process and procedure is required. Communication does not necessarily require a durable connection: one-off events and unplanned phone calls or emails can often be adequate for the purpose at hand.

*Implications.* Engaging in joined-up government carries both costs and benefits. The more organisations share, the more pronounced the costs. Public organisations which only periodically exchange information face fewer risks, as fewer resources are required and there is less of a threat to individual identity and autonomy. In return, these public organisations can gain a greater understanding of the policy domain. Organisations tied to a single outcome, however, place greater resources on the line, along with their organisation’s independence. In return, they can advance their own individual goals as well as address collective challenges and opportunities.

*Variations.* Each of the five types of joined-up government can vary by level, formality, task, and unit of focus. As the boundary lines make clear in Chapter One, I am not exploring variation in joined-up government by level (central versus local) or by task (policymaking versus service delivery). However, my dataset does include examples of joined-up government that are voluntary versus mandated, and those organised around a population group versus a policy problem or opportunity, as described in Chapters Four and Five. These points of difference have not been comprehensively explored in the literature to date.
Joining-up, at its most basic, is a purposeful exchange. Why would organisations and the individuals who work for them share resources, be they intellectual, human, or financial? What kind of purpose would warrant such expenditure, and the potential risks that new relationships and interdependencies bring? The inter-organisational literature that I examine in this section is rife with responses.

Responses can be categorised by the underlying question they answer.

- Why do organisations join up?
- Why do individuals join up?
- Why do organisations join up now, at this point in time?
- Why should organisations not join up?

Cutting across these questions are three primary themes.

- Self-interest
- Collective interest
- Situational interests

Bringing questions and themes together yields an organising framework for making sense of existing theoretical and empirical perspectives, as illustrated in Table 2.3. Some perspectives are hybrids, falling into more than one category.
Table 2.3: Why join up? An organising framework

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Resource Dependency Theory</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Public Choice Theory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transaction Cost Theory</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Contingency Theory</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Organisational Learning Theory</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Knaves and Knights</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organisational Ecology Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>New Institutionalism Theory</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Management ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Macro-economic Theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>Policy problems</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Redundancy</td>
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2.3.1: Why do organisations join up?

The literature defines ‘organisation’ broadly, and does not generally separate out the reasons government agencies join up from businesses or third-sector bodies. Yet motivations for joining-up likely differ by sector and organisational type. Central government agencies have an inbuilt coordinative mechanism: hierarchy (Downs, 1966). When coordination through hierarchy collapses, as in the tragedies of Maria Caldwell and Victoria Climbié, calls for joined-up government abound (House of Commons Health Committee, 2003). Joined-up government becomes a political issue, spurred by policy failure. Is failure a pre-requisite for joining-up? The literature is inconclusive, instead cataloging a broad range of conditions that lead organisations, governmental or otherwise, to come together.

Behind the multitude of theories is a basic account of organisational behaviour. Organisations are driven to join up by either self-interest or altruism. Self-interest, the more dominant explanatory variable, is emblematic of a ‘survival of the fittest’ world where individual resilience is the most important outcome. Collective interest, by contrast, is emblematic of a ‘survival of all’ world where mutual success is the most important outcome. When self-interest prevails, organisations join up to either gain or preserve the resources required for survival. That is the genesis of Exchange Theory, Transaction Cost Theory, and Contingency Theory. When altruism prevails, organisations join up to learn, grow, and advance
a common cause, and this is the basis of Organisational Learning Theory and Organisational Ecology Theory. Both sets of theories assume organisations have complete agency. A third set of theories, based on situational interests, questions that assumption by attributing joining-up to larger historical or macro-economic forces. Theories within this group include New Institutionalism Theory and Technology Deterministic Theory.

**Quadrant A: Organisational self-interest perspectives.** Competition, not cooperation, seems a logical outgrowth of self-interest. In a world of limited resources, survival demands self-protection at the expense of others. While economists have long linked self-interest and competition, Levine and White, in their widely-read 1961 paper, *Exchange as a conceptual framework for the study of inter-organisational relationships*, add cooperation to the analytic mix. Sometimes self-protection requires external resource; however, acquiring this resource need not threaten participating organisations and might even prove mutually beneficial. Levine and White reason that “the scarcity of elements… impels the organisation to restrict its activity to limited specific functions. The fulfillment of these limited functions, in turn, requires access to certain kinds of elements, which an organisation seeks to obtain by entering into exchanges with other organisations” (p.587). Using twenty-two local health organisations as the basis for their study, Levine and White conclude that organisational exchange is a voluntary activity undertaken to further individual goals and objectives.

Research by Hall and associates (1977) found that exchange theory underpinned most voluntary inter-organisational relationships, but could not adequately explain those relationships mandated in law or by political circumstance. Raelin (1982) expands exchange theory to accommodate

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<th>Table 2.4: Theories of self-interest</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theory</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Exchange Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transaction Cost Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contingency Theory</td>
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</table>
compulsory inter-organisational relationships by arguing that legal-political mandates are the products of prior exchanges of one kind or another (p.243).

Transaction Cost Theory takes exchange theory to the next level. Organisations enter into longer-term, more formalised exchange relationships so as to lower the costs of repetitive activity and increase individual efficiencies. When exchanges unfold frequently over time, it becomes more economical to establish a coordinated arrangement, rather than continuously re-negotiate the terms and conditions of exchange. Coordinative structures, like networks and partnerships, emerge only to maximise individual organisational interests and minimise transaction costs. As 6, et al. (2006) write, “Transaction cost theories of networks argue that inter-organisational forms are driven by factors that are predominantly negative, that is by the pressure to reduce costs and by the imperative to avoid failures in transactions”(p.16).

Contingency Theory, like Transaction Cost Theory, integrates time into the explanatory framework, examining what it takes for an organisation to survive when environmental changes unfold and surrounding organisations enter and exit. As the landscape changes, so too does the basis for exchange. Organisations enter into relationships with others to adapt, and as explained in Darwinian evolutionary theory, those best able to adapt are most likely to survive. What distinguishes Contingency Theory from Exchange Theory is its focus on long-term adaptation, rather than short-term survival. Alexander (1995) suggests that the two theories can be reconciled by adopting a life-cycle approach to inter-organisational relationships. Basic resources are critical in an organisation’s infancy, while strategic or adaptive resources are crucial to its maturation and growth.

**Quadrant B: Organisational collective interest.** Maturation and growth are central features of altruistic inter-organisational coordination theories. Rather than survival the

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<th>Table 2.5: Theories of altruism</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Theory</strong></td>
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<td>----------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational Learning Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organisational Ecology Theory</td>
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explicit focus is learning, contributing, and advancing domain knowledge. In Learning Theory, organisations seek out relationships with others to gain new expertise and build domain competency. Since no one organisation has a perfect understanding of the environment in which they operate, individual organisations can profit by linking with others and sharing information and skills. More efficient and effective divisions of labour between organisational partners often occur as a result (6, et al., 2006, p.17).

Organisational Ecology Theory attempts to explain the behaviour of groups of organisations, rather than just a single organisation. Organisations in the same ‘niche’ interact in order to enhance group survival. The collective unit of focus differentiates this theory from theories of self-interest. Like Contingency Theory, though, Organisational Ecology Theory borrows heavily from evolutionary frameworks. In symbiosis, organisations seek out relationships for mutual benefit. In commensalism, organisations seek out relationships in order to protect a common resource base. A range of interdependencies can be explained according to the niche organisations occupy (Alexander, 1995, p.11).

**Quadrant C: Organisational situational interests.** This set of organisational theories focus on environmental determinants. Macro-economic and Technological Change Theories attribute inter-organisational relationships to large-scale social shifts. New environmental realities, along with new tools and mechanisms, compel organisations to work with one another. Joined-up ways of working are driven “by the collective interests of fractions of capital and to a lesser extent by social movements and by innovations in technology” (6, et al., 2006, p.19).

New realities and innovations are not the only drivers of inter-organisational relationships. Neo-institutionalism, a

<table>
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<th>Table 2.6: Theories of situational interests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Institutionalism Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Macro-economic Theory</td>
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</table>
term coined by 6, looks to the future and to the past to explain patterns of joined-up government. Political institutions and prior decisions both constrain and shape inter-organisational interactions. While path dependency models are often used to explain inertia, negative feedback from past activities can also create momentum for a divergent or detoured pathway forward, as seen by the deaths of Maria Caldwell and Victoria Climbié. But, how much negative feedback is required to change course? Neo-institutionalism offers only a vague answer. Cycles of increased and decreased joined-up government are the result of positive feedback, self-reinforcement and self-radicalization, followed by perceptions of failure and a change in policy and joined-up style (6 in Bogdanor 2005, p.62).

Limitations of organisational theory. Even the most contextualised of the theories, Neo-institutionalism, does not account for the full variation in joining-up. 6 uses Neo-institutionalism to explain hierarchical versus networked forms of joined-up government, but does not identify the conditions leading organisations to share information versus to share resources. None of the theories help us to understand why organisations enter into particular forms of joined-up government (e.g. communication versus collaboration), nor do they provide much insight into whether the motivations of public sector organisations differ from private sector organisations. Is self-interest a legitimate explanation for organisations charged with representing the public’s interests? Skelcher and Sullivan (2006) point out that even if agencies join up out of a collective interest, this may be at odds with public sector values of transparency and independence. They note that “working in collaboration has become institutionalized both as a form of practice and as a value set within the normative regime extant in the public sector, yet exhibits features which are in contradiction to the traditional values of good government” (p.218). Organisational values are missing from mainstream inter-organisational relations theories.
2.3.2: Why do individuals join up?

While all of the above theories take organisations as the unit of analysis, the day-to-day practice of joined-up government involves public servants interacting with other public servants. Marchington and Vincent (2004) write that “there is virtually no discussion of the processes that characterise interpersonal relations within and between organisations” (p. 1030). Williams (2002) argues that the inter-organisational relations literature overlooks the people who do the joining-up, whom he calls boundary spanners. He explores the role of the individual in inter-organisational relationships. While he offers new insights into how boundary spanners work, he sheds little light onto why boundary spanners join up and how those motivations might affect practice. Williams names three reasons for boundary spanning: (1) collaborative hegemony; (2) resource dependencies; and (3) mandates. Only collaborative hegemony recognises that individuals’ motivations might differ from their organisation’s motivations. Williams notes, “This model of collaboration includes the deep-rooted motivation expressed by some boundary spanners of a commitment to service users or citizens as the basis for service delivery - as opposed to approaches based on convenience of existing bureaucratic structures and administrative arrangements” (p. 18). Williams does not tell us when an individual’s deep-rooted motivations prevail over organisational resource dependencies and mandates. He does not answer the question: what is the relationship between civil servant agency and bureaucratic structure?

The wider literature on individual motivations offers a little more clarity. Like the literature on organisational motivations, it offers a bifurcated explanation of behaviour. People are either self-interested or altruistic. Both world views are rooted in a common assumption: people are purposive or rational; they weigh costs against benefits. The difference between the two views is what constitutes a cost versus benefit. Hudson (1993), in his article *Collaboration in social welfare*, recounts the traditional altruistic view that public sector managers calculate costs
and benefits in terms of clients and citizens. “This is premised upon certain assumptions about the motivation of principal decision-makers, most notably that a prevailing spirit of altruism will result in cooperation as soon as individual or community needs become known” (p.341). He contrasts this with the ‘self-interest’ view where public sector managers calculate costs and benefits in terms of personal resource and organisational investment. Since joined-up government is often time and labour intensive, its existence is predicated on the altruistic public manager.

I propose that both views are overly simplistic, incorrectly linking altruism and cooperation, and self-interest and competition. LeGrand (2003) persuasively argues for the middle ground. He contends that civil servants can act for their own and the public good at the same time. Civil servant behaviour is a product of agency and structure. Public sector organisations can therefore increase joined-up government by aligning structural incentives with civil servant motivations. The altruistic, self-interest and middle-ground perspectives are explored in more depth below.

**Quadrant D: Individual self-interest.** Academics writing within the ‘public choice’ tradition regard rationality and self-interest as intertwined: in other words, rational behaviour is that which reaps self-reward. Downs (1966) captures this belief system when he concludes that “whenever we speak of rational behaviour, we mean rational behaviour directed at least partly towards ends that serve the self-interest of the actors concerned” (p.85). While Downs does not preclude behaviour directed towards others, he assumes those ‘others’ share a common set of goals, such that “when the costs of attaining any goal rises in terms of time, effort, or money, they seek to attain less of their goal” (p.2). Niskanen (1973) applies Downs’ model and argues that bureaucrats’ self-interested behaviour leads them to maximise the size and budgets of their bureaux. As a product of a neo-classical framework, Niskanen’s ‘budget-maximising model’ deems budgetary and bureau growth to be the only way bureaucrats can advance their self-interest and
maximise utility. Parsons (1995) clarifies the connection by pointing out that while markets make decisions by maximising the difference between marginal utility and marginal cost, bureaucrats can only improve marginal utility by increasing the size of their bureau (p.311).

Dunleavy (1993) criticizes the simplicity of Niskanen’s model, and offers a fuller account of bureaucratic behaviour, albeit one still rooted in self-interest. ‘Rational bureaucrats’ don’t just focus on budget maximization but on ‘bureau-shaping strategies’ which confer high status, agreeable work tasks, and personal well-being. Since bureaux are large and rarely controlled by a single individual, budget maximization requires collective mobilisation. Since collective mobilisation is resource-intensive, individual activities—like vertical promotion, work reduction, resource diversion, organisational redesign, and lateral transfers—actually have a more direct and a less costly effect on individual well-being. Dunleavy goes on to argue that public servants “only pursue collective goods strategies if other options are foreclosed or are already fully exploited” (p.98). According to this argument, we should only see joined-up government when it confers immediate and quantifiable advantages to the individual.

**Quadrant E: Individual collective interest** For academics immersed in the ‘optimistic’ tradition, civil servants are driven to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of policymaking. Joining-up is a perfectly rational tool for achieving that aim. Challis, *et al.* (1988) explain that “coordination is seen as the rational response to the complex, untidy sprawl of social problems which do not conform neatly or conveniently to administrative boundaries… Only coordinated policies, defined in terms of their coherence, comprehensiveness, and consistency, can then, in turn, lead to efficiency and effectiveness” (p.2). Barnard (1938) offers a similar view. Efficiency and effectiveness can only be achieved by cultivating cooperation and common purpose, and cooperation and common purpose come from individual willingness and personal experience. Bureaucrats must balance a number of socially-constructed roles (husband, wife, son, daughter,
community member), which serve to blur the boundaries between self-interest and collective interest. Although the self-interested ‘economic man’ is a poor fit for the real-life bureaucrat, self-interest still comes into play. Wilson (1989) starts with the premise that “only part of their [civil servant] behaviour can be explained by assuming they are struggling to get bigger salaries or fancier offices or larger budgets” (p. xviii).

**Quadrant F: Mixed motives.** LeGrand expands Wilson’s nuanced picture of civil servant behaviour, contending that self-interest and altruism vary across time and place and are often synonymous. Public servants exhibit a high degree of altruistic behaviour, but also operate with some self-centred propensities. The behaviours that promote self-interest and altruism are not fixed. Joined-up government is a behaviour that can thus fulfil both self-interest and altruistic motivations. To buy-into such a statement, we must untangle rationality from self-interest and recognise that “there is no reason why an individual engaging in a rational calculus of the costs and benefits of an activity should confine the analysis to those costs and benefits that impact the individual themselves” (p.28).

LeGrand’s empirical study of the prevalence of knaves (a person whose principal concern is to further his/her self-interest) and knights (individuals who help others for no private reward) leads him to make a case for the state maximising the overlap between collective and individual goals. In other words, it is not only possible to pursue collective goals alongside individual goals, but these can be cultivated through the right structures and incentives. Whereas ‘command and control’ models of state power can corrupt even knights, distributed models of state power, combined with ‘robust incentives’ that cultivate individuals’ non-material concerns, reinforce knight-like behaviour (p.64).

Ostrom (1971) reaches a similar conclusion. His version of public choice theory shows that collective benefits can accrue despite the individual’s tendency for utility maximization. Ostrom suggests by moving away from strict hierarchical control and towards a multi-organisational structure with overlapping boundaries,
individual and collective interests can be more effectively balanced.

What distinguishes LeGrand’s argument from Ostrom’s is the assumption that collective interests are a legitimate driver of behaviour, not just a by-product of the right structures. What is missing from LeGrand’s analysis is a discussion of what constitutes a collective goal, and when collective goals are pursued in the absence of individual goals. On page 35, I define communication, cooperation, and coordination in terms of individual goals. I contrast this with collaboration and consolidation, which arise out of collective goals. While LeGrand shows us that acting in pursuit of collective goals can and does happen, mixed motives are far more common. We might expect to see less collaborative and consolidating behaviour, and more structures and incentives to engender it.

2.3.3: Why join up now?

Over the last ten years, Western governments have put in place an increasing number of structures and incentives for joined-up government (Skelcher and Sullivan, 2005). Why? While inter-organisational relationships are not new phenomena, the frequency with which they are now prescribed is unsatisfactorily explained by dominant inter-organisational relations theories. Resource Dependency, Transaction Cost and Organisation Learning Theories do not tell us why we see more or less joining-up over time. They do not seek to explain contemporary patterns or historic anomalies. If we want to understand the popularity of joined-up government, we must look at the influence of politics and ideology, which brings us to the public management literature.

Keeling (1972) defines public management as an interpretive and dynamic process, in contrast to public administration, which is about static duties and preset rules. Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004), in their book Public Management Reform, are more specific, writing that “public management reform consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organisations with the objective of getting them (in some sense) to run better” (p. 8). Joined-up government, from this perspective, is construed as a ‘deliberate change’ with
clear objectives. Like Contingency Theory, Public Management Theory draws a firm connection between context and outputs, viewing structures and processes as the result of a particular time and place. Public Management Theory also interweaves multiple perspectives, looking at decisions and practice at the civil servant and organisational level. Joining up occurs when people, structures, and circumstances align.

**Quadrant G: Situational interests.** Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) present readers with a model for understanding when people, structures, and circumstances align to yield public sector change. Five sets of forces influence what and how change emerges. These include socio-economic forces, the political system, elite decision-making processes, the make-up of the existing administrative system, and chance events like the Victoria Climbie tragedy referenced on page 31.

Decision-making is at the core of this model. Bureaucrats have to decide to join up, which involves some level of planning and resource expenditure. Yet that decision may not be proactive. Reactive, ad hoc action underpins much reform. Globalization and worldwide market forces can unpredictably shape the content and scale of decisions. So too can the political landscape. Political structures, policies, and ideas commingle to create a preferred and feasible set of decision-making options. The literature places particular emphasis on prior policies and ideas, and the feedback loops that ensue. These are seen as both more malleable and unpredictable than deep political structures.

emanate from new kinds of policy problems. They put the focus on the nature of the problem, rather than on the nature of the management approach. Both perspectives are explored below.

**New management ideas.** Rogers and Whetten (1982) probe the link between ‘managerial ideologies’ and inter-organisational relationships within American human service organisations. They view managerial ideologies as deeply reflective of the general environmental conditions of a particular time (p.32). Moving through four time periods, from 1850 to 1980, the authors identify four distinct ideologies. While American-centric, these ideologies have a broader Anglo-Saxon resonance. They are described here not only for their historical value, but based on the assumption that ideas are re-emergent and can seep across geographic boundaries.

*Utilitarian ideology.* Values of economic freedom, individual self-interest, and small government underpin utilitarian frameworks. In the early twentieth century, these values translated into a management philosophy organised around incentives, efficiency, aligning rewards with contributions, and individual competition. Organisations entered into informal, transactional relationships with one other to avoid going after the same funds. Individual mutual adjustment proliferated, enabling competition and conflict to remain the dominant interactional form.

*Altruism ideology.* Following World Wars I and II, and the explosive growth of the modern welfare state, social solidarity and collective well-being emerged alongside individual competition as core values. Chester Barnard, writing in the 1930s, introduced the notion that organisations are cooperative, open systems rather than power-holding, closed systems. He wrote that “cooperation and organisation as they are observed and experienced are concrete syntheses of opposed facts… It is precisely the function of the executive to facilitate the synthesis in concrete action of contradictory forces, to reconcile conflicting forces, instincts, interests, conditions, positions, and ideals” (Barnard, 1938,
Managers achieved coordination through the use of ‘normative’ rather than ‘economic’ motives (Warren, 1967). At the same time, the reliance on norms rather than on formal structures meant that categorical programmes proliferated and fragmentation actually worsened over the inter-war period.

**Bureaucratic ideology.** By the 1950s, the continued increase in categorical programmes and growing professionalisation yielded a high degree of specialisation and centralisation of authority. Bureaucracy became a visible and highly influential form of organisational activity. Management techniques were imported from the defence and private sectors, and emphasised programme budgeting and rational planning techniques. The Services Integration (SI) Movement emerged as a way to join up frontline services (Office of Inspector General, Department of Health and Human Services, 1991). Top-down strategic planning, integrative tools, joint budgeting arrangements, and integrated policy bodies were the joined-up mechanisms of choice. Challis (1988) translates SI to a British context, stating that “The primary focus of this tradition in recent times, apart from the process of rational synoptic planning itself, has been the organisational framework necessary for the survival of that process…organisational structures, formal machinery and planning processes were highlighted as the crucial prerequisites of success” (p.33).

**Consumer ideology.** The proliferation of programmes, strategies and plans led to a growth in single-issue advocacy groups and consumer participation. During the 1970s and early 1980s, consumer-directed services gained traction, resulting in a return to competition between organisations. Mutual adjustment returned as a principal strategy of inter-organisational relations. As Rogers and Whetten (1982) note, “Emphasis now is on citizen control over individual agencies. An implicit assumption seems to be that when this type of control occurs the system will somehow be more effective in serving client needs…As each agency adjusts to take others into account, the benefits of the total ‘system’ become greater” (p.53).
New Public Management (NPM) ideology. Rogers and Whetten’s analysis ends in the early 1980s, which is where a number of academics begin. Much has been written about the management ideas of the late 1980s and 1990s. Somewhat confusingly entitled ‘New Public Management’ (NPM), the ideas are, in many ways, a return to the individualism/utilitarianism of the early twentieth century. New economic and structural mechanisms were used to reduce the direct role of the state, increase the prominence of the private sector, and advocate for greater efficiencies. Dunleavy and Hood (1994) summarise NPM as a “shift in the two basic design co-ordinates of public sector organisation, moving it ‘down-grid’ and ‘down-group’ in social science jargon. Going ‘down-group’ means making the public sector less distinctive as a unit from the private sector…Going ‘down-grid’ means reducing the extent to which discretionary power is limited by uniform and general rules of procedure” (p.9).

Rhodes (1996) outlines the consequences of NPM: the privatisation of public services, the loss of functions by central governments, and greater emphasis on managerial accountability through target setting and incentives (p.661). How did NPM shape inter-organisational relations? Ling (2002) argues that “coordination was made more difficult because the incentives to achieve each organisation’s aims were greater than the incentives to achieve more system-wide objectives” (p.618). Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004) offer another perspective, suggesting that NPM shifted co-ordination from hierarchical mechanisms to market mechanisms. Contractual and quasi-contractual arrangements replaced informal, voluntary coordination as the primary relational form (p.84). Such arrangements interjected power differentials between organisations and institutionalised role differentiation and policy-delivery splits.

Joined-up government and deliverology...A new ideology? The late 1990s witnessed a reaction to intense privatisation, competition, differentiation, and policy-delivery splits. Increasing specialisation once again led to calls for greater coordination. 6 (1997), in his report Holistic Government, contends that NPM
reforms had “one overriding failure – they left government less, rather than more able to solve the important ‘wicked’ problems... The vertical links between departments and agencies in any one field and professional group such as the police, teachers, doctors and nurses are strong. The horizontal links are weak or non-existent” (pp.9-10). The term ‘joined-up’ was coined in Britain during this period, and promoted as a key strategy for forging horizontal links and improving government performance. This is not unlike the historical switch that occurred between utilitarian and altruism ideologies.

**New policy problems.** Another cohort of theorists sees problems, not ideologies, as the dominant driver of problem-solving approaches like joined-up government. The nature of the problem should dictate how we respond. Bardach (1998) defines this as the ‘obsolescence problem’, explaining that “even if the basis for differentiation is technically optimal at the time agencies and their missions are created, changes in the nature of problems and the availability of solutions - or perhaps changes in our understanding if not necessarily in the realities - make the older patterns...obsolete” (p.11).

Richards (2002) clarifies the type of problems that require a distinct problem-solving approach. She differentiates ‘intractable’ from ‘tame’ problems, describing the former as those with multiple interlocking causes related to economics, employment, individual and group psychology, geography, ethnicity, and culture. Whereas tame problems can be deciphered through research and evaluation, intractable problems are ‘fundamentally situational in character’ and demand entrepreneurial energy and user-centred, rather than institution-centred, problem-solving logics (p.64). Intractable problems receive their most thorough analysis in Rittel and Webber’s work, *Dilemmas in a general theory of planning*. They call into question the scientific management paradigm, writing that social problems are qualitatively different from the problems scientists and engineers address. Using the phrase ‘wicked’ to capture their core essence, these problems defy definition, quantifiable metrics, neutral diagnosis, standardised responses,
and sequential solutions (1973, p.165). Since every wicked problem is a symptom of another equally ambiguous problem, addressing parts in isolation can inhibit resolution.

Ling (2002) suggests that such problems demand a new cognitive structure: a new way of conceptualising problems and an evolving capacity to work creatively and systematically. Continuous evolution is also necessary to accommodate what Gray (1985) calls ‘increased environmental turbulence’. Rapid economic and technological change, global interdependence, blurred boundaries, shrinking revenues, and dissatisfaction with traditional institutional responses have yielded a climate rife with seemingly intractable policy problems (p.29). Iterative, rather than linear, collaborative problem-solving approaches are needed. Cottam and Leadbeater (2007) propose “a new way to create public goods that takes its lead from the culture of self-organisation and participation emerging from the web” (p.112). For these authors, it is less about joined-up government and more about joined-up thinking. Underpinning this thesis is a belief that joined-up government should not be seen as a set of structures, but rather as a range of interactions for solving social problems.

2.3.4: Why not join up?

Sometimes the best problem-solving approach may be not to formally intervene. Chisholm (1989) contends that informal mutual adjustment leads to better results than hierarchical coordination. Enabling individuals to act on their own terms, independent of formal structures, might actually yield more effective and efficient problem-solving.

**Quadrant H: Redundancy.** Redundancy and duplication in public services need not always be avoided. On the contrary, according to Landau (1969), redundancy and duplication facilitate innovation and self-improvement. “Redundancy serves many vital functions in the conduct of public administration. It provides safety factors, permits flexible responses to anomalous situations and provides a creative potential for those who are able to see it. If there is no
duplication, if there is no overlap, if there is no ambiguity, an organisation will neither be able to suppress error nor generate alternate routes of action” (p.356).

Researchers like Landeau and Chisholm question the efficacy of joined-up government, in particular highly-structured, top-down forms. They see the rules and rigidity of government as antithetical to meaningful coordination. Chisholm elaborates, stating that “the assumed virtues and economies of vertical integration schemes and of efforts to streamline multi-organisational sectors by eliminating duplication and overlap are exaggerated. In fact, they have more to do with bureaucratic politics than with effective performance” (p.6).

Politics rather than problem-solving may very well drive joined-up government. In this thesis, however, I assess joint initiatives against their potential to solve social problems, rather than win political points. I take the policy reports like those footnoted on page 17 at face-value, looking at how joined-up government contributes to stated policy problems and goals. I am unable to evaluate joint initiatives against unstated political aims.
In Section 2.3, I looked to the literature to answer the question: why do civil servants and public sector organisations join-up? In Section 2.4, I start with the premise that civil servants and public sector organisations are joining-up, and bring together the literature to answer the question: how do they join up? The ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions are connected. Knowing the ideological origins of joining-up (for example, a bureaucratic versus utilitarian ideology) tells us something about the form joined-up government takes (for example, mutual adjustment versus hierarchy). Form, in turn, alludes to the structures behind joining-up: the informal and formal mechanisms through which resources are exchanged, like emails or top-down committees. Knowing the structural mechanisms behind joining-up does not tell us what civil servants write in those emails or do in those committees. Structure is not the same as practice, just as form is not the same as function. I argue the literature predominantly overlooks practice.

A growing number of government policy reports (Attorney General, 1999; Cabinet Office, 1999; State Services Commission, 2003; Department for Education and Skills, 2005), independent audits (Government Accountability Office, 2000 and 2005), academic books and articles (Bardach, 1998; Huxham and Vangen, 2004; Ling, 2002; McGuire, 2006; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Thomson and Perry, 2006), and practitioner handbooks (Blank and Melaville, 1993; Wilson and Charlton, 1997; Mattessich et al., 2001) purport to offer pragmatic guidance on how to join up. While these publications move beyond structure, to process and culture, they remain fixated on the enablers of joined-up government rather
than the day-to-day practice of joined-up government. For example, knowing that civil servants convene monthly in a steering group, use a consensus-driven decision-making process, and have a high degree of trust still does not tell us what civil servants actually do when they join up: the content of their decision-making or the activities which cultivate trust. Indeed, read together, the texts give the false impression that joined-up government is the sum of many discrete parts: a structure, a governance strategy, a process, a set of values and core competencies. We do not learn how these parts come together in real-time.

Nonetheless, the parts, as named in Figure 2.5, are a useful launch pad for study. They draw attention to both the static and dynamic features of joining-up; to what we can observe at one point in time versus over time. Whereas structures and accountability mechanisms tend to be set at the start of joining-up, processes and culture are more fluid, unfolding over the life course of a joint initiative. In the pages that follow, I summarise the literature on the static and dynamic parts or enablers of joined-up government while highlighting what we still do not know about joined-up practice.

Figure 2.5: Dynamic and static enablers of joined-up government

**Dynamic enablers**
- Processes
- Culture

**Static enablers**
- Structures
- Accountability

2.4.1: Structural mechanisms

Structures make visible the distribution of control, authority, and work tasks. Authors in public management see such distributions both as facilitators of,
and hindrances to inter-agency work. Three types of power-sharing arrangements appear in the literature: hierarchies, networks, and mutual adjustment. These arrangements vary on a continuum from formal to informal, and top-down to bottom-up. They are introduced below.

**Mutual adjustment.** Mutual adjustment describes the lack of formal structure. Actors engage in mutual adjustment when they exchange resources and make decisions through devolved and adaptive means. Unlike in hierarchies or networks, the distribution of power is not codified. Norms and values serve as the edifice, rather than a formal chain of command. Simon (1945), in his landmark book *Administrative Behaviour*, describes how bureaucrats bring their activities into alignment through observation that is then reinforced by an organisation’s communication plans, norms and tools (p.103).

Lindbolm argues that individual alignment has advantages over centralised coordinating bodies: “it is often the defect of central coordination that it seeks coordination and nothing else. Mutual adjustment...is motivated not solely by desires for coordination but by desires of its participants to remove obstacles to new achievements and to give effect to reconsidered volitions”(p.251). With mutual adjustment, actors act intentionally and perform to a set of goals.

**Networks.** Networks sit midway between mutual adjustment and hierarchy on the formality continuum. They operate independently of centralised authority, but with a clear organising framework. Frances, et al. clarify: “A network is often thought of as a ‘flat’ organisational form in contrast to the vertically organised hierarchical forms... These kinds of organisational units are often cooperatively run. They can be informal, operating on the basis of friendship, gender or kin relationships”(p.14). Rhodes, in his seminal 1996 article on new governance, views self-organising networks as a threat to ‘competitive management reforms’ and governability because of their autonomy and resistance to central control (p.652).
Agranoff (2003) urges that networks be understood by their underlying purpose, not their outward form. Expanding Alter and Hage’s (1993) typology, he describes four network types: information, developmental, outreach, and action networks. While all networks are engaged in exchange activities, not all build capacity, craft strategy, or make decisions. Agranoff does not, however, differentiate between public sector networks and public-private networks, or between networks designed to strengthen the public sector and those designed to weaken the public sector – what Rhodes calls ‘hollowing out the state.’ Challis (1988) reminds readers that networks and partnerships can often be an excuse for cutting public funds and reducing the scope of public intervention. In these cases, private and third-sector network partners take on increasing shares of government work.

Hierarchies. Hierarchy plays a dual role within the literature: it is presented both as the cause of, and solution for government’s wicked problems. This duality is core to the concept of bureaucracy. The deductive scientific management philosophy, from which the concept of bureaucracy comes, intentionally fragments problems in order to solve them. Frederick Taylor, the father of scientific management, wrote at the turn of the twentieth century that “perhaps the most prominent single element in modern scientific management is the task idea” (Taylor 1911, p.39). Task management unfolds under the premise that complexity can be reduced to definable tasks and discrete activities. Roles are set around these tasks and activities, enabling specialisation and professionalisation.

At the same time as specialisation and professionalisation disassemble problems, hierarchy reassembles responses. Downs (1966) explains that government bureaux follow the ‘law of hierarchy’ wherein, “coordination of large-scale activities without markets requires a hierarchical authority structure” (p.265). Frances, et al. (1991) elaborate, noting that “Hierarchy involves the overt operation of relations of superordination and subordination in the process of coordination. The administration of a hierarchy...is by the operationalising of a set of rules”
When these rules break down, and hierarchy fails to reassemble coherent responses to problems, new operating procedures are propagated downwards.

Peters, in a report entitled *Managing Horizontal Government* (1998), explores this paradox. Why is hierarchy reapplied time and again when it is the root of the failure? He concludes that structural remedies reflect an inherent belief in authority relationships and central government control. Explicit top-down permission is perceived as a prerequisite for coordinated action. Since top-down, political pressures often impede joining-up, working with rather than against the hierarchy becomes the preferred way forward (Bardach, 1998). Ashkenas, *et al.*, (2002) call this the ‘healthy hierarchy’ solution.

‘Healthy hierarchy’ solutions are evident, but manifest differently within central policy units versus functional line agencies. With their whole-of-government view, central policy units like prime ministerial offices, treasuries, and personnel management bodies are well placed to spot policy overlaps and reconcile conflicts. Five core interventions are available to central policy units to ‘force’ joined-up government down through the system: (1) strengthening the core executive; (2) instituting greater central agency steering and intervention; (3) establishing high-level cross-portfolio committees; (4) creating cross-portfolio ministerial or political appointee level posts; and (5) mandating or strongly encouraging joined-up government through orders and targets (Peters, 1998, pp.26-37). While the strength of these mechanisms will vary across country contexts and bureaucratic systems, the theory suggests that amplifying executive and political control will lead to more coherent policy. Whether coherent policy leads to coherent service delivery is not at all clear. Peters cautions that, “Central agencies can play a significant role in creating coordination but they can also generate substantial conflict with the line organisations actually providing public services. These conflicts reflect the conventional conflicts encountered between ‘line’ and ‘staff’ organisations” (p.29).

Functional line agencies have their own set of joined-up structural
mechanisms. At the top of the organisation, ministers and political appointees can have significant coordinating authority, including powers to share strategic priorities and convene inter-agency meetings. A large number of governance arrangements exist to bring bureaucrats from within and between agencies together. From formal boards and advisory committees to more informal, ad-hoc workgroups, there is no shortage of staff configurations (Jennings and Ewalt, 1998). Inter-agency agreements outlining access to staff, information and financial resources underpin most committee and workgroup structures (Golden, 1991). While agreements and contracts tend to signify an ongoing relationship, the literature does not explore the relationship between mechanisms and inter-organisational forms (from coordination to consolidation).

When are agreements, rules, and protocols necessary and useful to joint problem-solving? Each can exist both at a policy and a service delivery level. Yet more resource intensive structural arrangements, like integrated budgeting and physical co-location, are only described in the literature with reference to service delivery organisations. Even then, the literature offers only vague explanations of how and when to co-locate. For example, Bardach (1998) states, “whether co-location qualifies as a smart practice in any particular situation depends on whether its advantages outweigh the financial costs of moving and the less tangible costs of disrupting and reconstituting organisational routines” (p.138).

2.4.2: Accountability mechanisms

Carrying out inter-agency work involves more than just carving out space for it to take place. When boxes within an organisational chart shift, new patterns of interaction occur. Yet, incentives and resources do not always follow. Merging individual and collective interests is complex and labour intensive (Thomson and Perry, 2006; Huxham and Vangen, 1999, 2005). Individuals have to balance representing the views of their agency with those of an inter-agency group. If resources and incentives are not aligned between the individual, their agency, and the inter-agency group, joined-up structures quickly become unworkable.
Ling (2002) and Peters (1998) highlight a growing number of tools used by public sector agencies to both incentivise and reward joined-up behaviour. Many of these tools link to budgetary processes and involve giving more discretion to managers, professionals, and boundary spanners (Peters, p.46). Budget holding, for example, gives key frontline workers the ability to merge divergent funding streams and offer a holistic package of support to local users.

‘Policy tsars’ assume similar functions at a central policy level. For example, the US government appointed a ‘homeland security’ tsar after September 11 to oversee work going on in over thirteen different departments. Tsars have a mixed bag of tools at their disposal, from symbolic power to budgetary authority to performance management (Bakvis and Juillet, 2004, p.2). 360-degree reviews of top-tier CEOs and managers are now more common, illustrating a growing emphasis on cross-governmental feedback (State Services Commission, 2003). Buttressing these individual reviews are organisational-level targets and integrated performance measures. Cross-cutting reviews, joint funding agreements, comprehensive auditing, and multi-agency funding pools are designed to hold two or more organisations accountable for the same outputs or even outcomes (6, 2004). Formative process evaluations now regularly document the role inter-agency stakeholders play in the operational success of policy initiatives (Bouckaert and Halligan, 2008, p.381). Prizes and awards to ‘effective’ inter-agency groups are meant to raise the profile of joined-up government within bureaucratic settings.

Scholars like Downs (1967) and Challis (1989) caution that accountability mechanisms are particularly susceptible to changing economic conditions. When there is fiscal scarcity, joint budgets and accountabilities tend to be discarded in favor of agency-specific goals. The literature rarely describes what led to the adoption of particular tools and incentives. This context is important for understanding when to use one tool or incentive over another, and which have long-term viability.
2.4.3: Process mechanisms

It is much harder to divorce context from process, as processes are performed over time and depend on people and place for form and shape. Processes include stakeholder identification, problem identification, direction-setting, role negotiation, trust-building, facilitation, decision-making, conflict resolution and strategic planning (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). Thomson and Perry (2006) name ‘synergistic processes’ as the essential feature of joined-up government, underlying the success of structural configurations. That is because they are iterative and the means through which real work is performed. Yet the literature rarely describes that ‘real work’ and instead remains at a broadly thematic level.

Trust-building is consistently presented as a prerequisite for all other joined-up processes, including goal-setting and decision-making. Bardach (1998) defines trust as “confidence that the trustworthiness of another party is adequate to justify remaining in a condition of vulnerability” (p.252). Hudson, et al. (1999) tell us trust comes about through setting appropriate expectations, establishing fairness and honesty as the norm, and investing in personal relationships. Yet we don’t learn what participants actually do to set those expectations, establish fairness as a norm, or invest in personal relationships. Without that detail, we cannot replicate the findings.

We do know that expectations are intertwined with goals. Huxham and Vangen (2005), using data from local public-private partnerships, argue that there are three types of goals: meta-goals, individual agency goals, and individual agency representative goals. Distinguishing between them helps cultivate role clarity and strategic planning. Horwath and Morrison (2007), based on a meta-review of local collaborative groups, determine that strategic planning and commissioning “is crucial in translating shared goals into achievable outcomes” (p.62). While each of these authors is able to name the crucial processes behind joined-up government, none break down these processes in terms of people’s
routines, actions, or behaviours. We do not learn what people need to do, or not do, to put each crucial process in place.

2.4.4: Cultural mechanisms

Culture shapes the look and feel of joined-up government. Authors like Huxham and Vangen (2005) describe joined-up government as a cultural orientation as much as a technical exercise: by shifting underlying values and motivations, culture creates the intrinsic incentives for joining-up. Unlike structures, accountability mechanisms, or processes, culture cannot be reduced to one thing. It arises from organisational tradition, mythology and language, and is fueled by the type of people an organisation hires, promotes, and deems a leader. People’s core competencies and skills both shape and reinforce cultural beliefs and routines.

Peters (1998) recommends structuring the careers of civil servants in such a way that they have a broad base of experience and comprehensive understanding of government-wide policy. Functional public service organisations tend to rely on a single professional discipline (e.g. health, education, law) rendering interdisciplinary staff training necessary for sparking big-picture understanding and thinking. Promoting collaborative, rather than hierarchical management, through training and professional development also seems to be crucial for turning joined-up government into an observable practice (Holton, 2001). Ingraham (2004) concludes from a review of public management and governance literature that “management appears to matter throughout the policy process. It is important in choices about policy design; in choice, arrangement, and operation of service delivery systems, in the location of authority and representation in decision systems; in the creation and development of integrated capacity within managing themselves; and in the ability to measure quality and program performance” (p.226).

Matesich, et al. (2001) distil the key factors of joined-up management, and find that group leaders possess process skills, a positive image and an intimate knowledge of the subject area; they maintain a balance between macro-level and
task-oriented activities; and they are unconcerned with status or personal power (p.28). Williams (2002) names the capability set of boundary spanners, including: reticulist skills (e.g. political skills, acquiring information, flexibility), entrepreneurial skills (e.g. lateral thinking, opportunism, rule breaking), communication and listening skills, conflict resolution skills, along with traits like respect, honesty, openness, tolerance, approachability, reliability, and sensitivity (p.116). Williams’ specificity is unusual for the literature, which offers broad descriptors over measurable constructs.

People placed in learning organisations where cultures are consensual rather than authoritative are more likely to develop these skills. Newman (1994) acknowledges the challenge of establishing a consensual culture within a hierarchically structured environment. She suggests more explicit exploration of the tensions and mixed messages that are liable to arise between “old and new patterns of authority and hierarchy” (p.63). Part of consistent messaging is the development and adoption of a common language. Salmon (2004), in her study of multi-agency mental health arrangements, finds that the absence of agreed upon definitions impedes collective understanding and therefore endangers processes like trust-building and agenda-setting.

As with the literature on structures, processes, and accountability, the literature on culture suffers from being excessively generic and removed from its context. One exception that a number of authors consider is the phase of the inter-organisational relationship. Gray (1985) pinpoints three sequential phases: problem-setting, direction-setting, and implementation. Wilson and Charlton (1997) identify five discrete phases, including recognising the need for joined-up government, building common ground, structuring joined-up government, delivering the action plan, and exiting. Process factors are of particular importance in the first phases as the operating framework is set. Whether different factors vary in importance to central-level, horizontal joined-up government remains unexplored.

Despite these obvious oversights, the body of ‘how to’ literature does tell
us that a set of mechanisms, many of them sanctioned and put in place by central
governments, exist for joined-up government. Complementing these structural
and accountability mechanisms is a range of processes, cultural attributes, and
personal capabilities, which are summarised in Table 2.7 below. These indicate
that joined-up government is not just a theoretical idea but a concrete practice
that can be studied, critiqued, and improved. Indeed, if anything, the vagueness of
the literature offers researchers a useful starting point for probing what happens
within joined-up structures and processes across different contexts.

Table 2.7: How to do joined-up government: A summary of the literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central agency</td>
<td>• Strong core executives • Central agency steering • Cross-portfolio cabinet committees • Ministers without portfolios • Mandates/clearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line agency</td>
<td>• Ministers with coordinating authority • Boards, workgroups, taskforces, committees • Inter-agency agreements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-agency</td>
<td>• Co-location and integrated budgeting • Shared staff and joint teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>• Individual performance plans • Rewards/bonuses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td>• Targets and strategic objectives • Programme performance • Budget-holding professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-agency</td>
<td>• Joint budget agreements • Monitoring and sanctions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-agency</td>
<td>• Stakeholder identification • Role negotiation • Facilitation • Agenda-setting • Decision-making • Strategic planning • Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>• Trust-building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-agency</td>
<td>• Values • Contracting processes • Training and orientation • Active learning strategies • Language • Political leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>• Reticulist skills • Entrepreneurial skills • Communication and listening • Empathy • Conflict resolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this section, I compile and distil the literature on what joining-up yields and how to measure its impact on policy outputs and on-the-ground outcomes. The prior ‘why’ and ‘how’ sections might have led readers to ask: does the practice of joined-up government fulfil expectations? Peters (1998) reiterates the problems joined-up government is expected to help solve, writing,

“Citizens feel the effects of inadequate coordination in a number of ways, such as when, as clients of programs that do not work horizontally as well as they might, they find themselves confronted with difficulties in obtaining the full range of services they need from government… Businesses also find that they face contradictory of incompatible requirements for regulatory compliance… Citizens also feel the impact of these failures to coordinate in their role as taxpayers...” (pp. 2-3).

Existing research tells us that joined-up government often falls short of expectations, although the quality of the research varies considerably. While a plethora of formative evaluations exist (e.g. Agranoff, 1991; Asthana, et al., 2002; Bardach, 1998; Holtom, 2001; Salmon, 2004), there are only a handful of summative evaluations (e.g. Hall et al., 1977, Jennings and Ewalt, 1998; Provan and Milward, 1995) with an even smaller subset of cost-benefit analyses (e.g. Provan and Milward, 2001).

2.5.1: Measuring impact: the variables

Measuring the impact of joined-up government raises several challenges. El Ansari, et al. (2001) offer a thorough list of these challenges, including “the diversity of perspectives, multiplicity of conceptual facets, difficulty in measurement of notions, selectivity of macro or micro evaluation, variety of
proximal or distal indicators, array of short and long-term effects, assortment of individual-level or collective outcomes, measuring a moving target, and mixed methods requirements” (p.217). What this long list illustrates is the methodological complexity of selecting appropriate dependent and independent variables.

If joined-up government is the independent variable, how is it to be operationalised? Should it be a dichotomous variable (the existence of an inter-organisational relationship) or a dimensional variable (like the frequency of contact, the strength of relationships, or the interdependence between organisations, etc.)? Bardach (1998) suggests using collaborative capacity as the dependent variable. His theory of collaborative craftsmanship treats collaboration as a creative endeavour which requires the skilful manipulation of materials. In his own words, “it is the potential to engage in collaborative activities rather than the activities themselves that is what we really care about when we talk about inter-agency collaboration” (p.20). Inter-agency collaborative capacity (ICC) has objective and subjective components, both of which can be measured. Objective components include formal inter-agency agreements personnel, budgets, and accountability structures, while subjective components relate to a participating individual’s expectations of others’ availability for, and competency at, performing particular collaborative tasks.

In addition to the array of independent variables, there are many potential dependent variables, from organisational goals which might include efficiency and cost effectiveness; to policy goals which might involve the passage or publication of a new regulatory framework; to client goals which might consist of consumer satisfaction, accessibility of services, or actual social outcomes. Mandell and Keast (2008) add operational goals to the list, arguing that group-level interactions ought to be measured and interpreted in tandem with wider organisational and policy goals.

Linking independent and dependent variables is both conceptually and practically difficult. Tracing the impact of joined-up government from a central
policy level to individual level, on-the-ground outcomes may be too distal and long-term an aim. A client’s overall health and well-being is the product of a multitude of factors, of which the organisation of public services plays only a small role.

Locating points of comparison also proves logistically demanding. While randomized control trials generate the most robust evidence, the costs often render them impractical. Time series or multiple comparison groups at least establish a baseline with which to weigh the impact of joined-up government. Because joined-up government is not a single, identifiable activity, however, it often evades consistent measurement. Indeed, as a process, joined-up government evolves over time. Measures of relationship strength, autonomy, and interdependence are fluid, nor are the phases of the relationship fixed. There is no uniform sequence through which all inter-organisational relationships unfold. Joint initiatives in the direction-setting stages have different goals, capacities, and expected outputs and outcomes compared to those in the implementation stage. To escape these difficulties, joint initiatives are frequently assessed against themselves, but comparing expected with actual outputs and outcomes gives us little sense as to whether those expectations were realistic or well matched to context. Expected outputs and outcomes will also vary between different forms of joined-up government. Figure 2.7 outlines this complexity.

**Figure 2.7: Evaluating joined-up government: a confluence of variables**

Huxham and MacDonald (1992) examine what we should realistically expect collaboration to yield. Their work is among the most sophisticated I
reviewed: they recognise that joined-up impact cannot just be measured by goals, capacities or outputs, but by the *quality of* what joint initiatives produce. When two or more organisations “produce something unusually creative that no organisation could have produced on their own and are able to achieve their own objectives better than they could alone,” there is value in engaging in collaborative practice (p.51). Huxham and MacDonald call this collaborative advantage, in direct parallel to competitive advantage, and see the development of an environment conducive to “taking advantage of collaboration” as an incremental step worthy of measurement. A second incremental step is the creation of a meta-strategy, or a blueprint for action that sits above the strategies of any of the collaborating organisations. These objectives relate to the purpose of the collaborative - be it solving a discrete problem, advancing a particular sector, improving services within a geographical area, or improving outcomes for a common client group. Huxham (1993a) clarifies that the absence of a mega-strategy does not mean collaboration cannot be achieved; rather without a meta-strategy, shared internal outcomes take precedence over external, societal outcomes (p.608). In this sense, meta-strategies are particularly relevant to joined-up *government*. While meeting incrementalist milestones does not guarantee successful outcomes, it nonetheless serves to unearth the logic behind joined-up practice. Indeed, Huxham’s work makes clear that the ‘value add’ of joining-up cannot be captured by any one transactional variable. I build on Huxham’s work in Chapter Seven, using ‘collaborative advantage’ as one starting point for measuring the performance of joined-up initiatives in England and New Zealand.

2.5.2: Measuring impact: the relationship between variables

A small contingent of authors has begun to look at the interplay between many of the ‘intervention’, ‘output’ and ‘outcome’ level variables outlined in Figure 2.7 (e.g. Bardach and Lesser, 1996; Mandell and Keast, 2008; Page, 2004; Sullivan and Stewart, 2008; Voets, *et al*., 2008). Skelcher and Sullivan (2008) have led the way with the introduction of theory-driven evaluation. They contrast theory-
driven evaluation with metric-driven approaches, noting that whereas the former “proceeds from the causalities that connect different purposes to outcomes,” the latter focuses on “what can be measured, typically employing quantitative indicators, and then working backwards into the question of causal attribution” (p.752).

Theory-driven evaluations, just like the theory of change used to structure this thesis and explained on page 24, link the context (the ‘why’) of an initiative with its activities (the ‘what’) and its outputs and outcomes (the ‘for what’). Context includes the theoretical framework behind the joined-up initiative. Skelcher and Sullivan highlight five theoretical frameworks: Democratic Theory, Dependency Theory, Institutional Theory, Network Theory, and Discourse Theory. Each framework asks different questions, and thus reflects a distinct performance domain. Institutional theory, for instance, asks how institutional factors construct a normative space for collaboration. From this vantage point, joined-up initiatives that demonstrate ‘path-breaking’ behaviour and achieve ‘synergy’ are considered successful.

Page (2004) also connects context to outputs, using political rather than theoretical frameworks. Context includes ‘external authorisation’ and ‘internal inclusion’ arrangements, meaning that the joint initiative is authorised, legitimate, and has diverse membership. Joint initiatives are successful when there is alignment between their mission, goals, and indicators, tight links between indicators and the actors responsible for achieving them, and systematic use of measurement data.

Koppenjan (2008) cautions against such tightly-prescribed logic models. He summarises recent debates in the public management literature on the advantages and disadvantages of using performance measures. Judging success by ex-ante formulated objectives fails to acknowledge the dynamic nature of joined-up working and the unforeseen implications – some good, some bad – that may emerge. Instead, he recommends focusing on the process by which
measures are negotiated, rather than the measures themselves, and avoiding setting fixed outcomes at the start.

Mandell and Keast’s (2008) performance logic tries to address many of the limiting factors raised by Koppenjan and others. Unlike Skelcher and Sullivan (2002) and Page (2004), they note that performance will differ by joined-up form (cooperation versus coordination or collaboration), project phase (formation versus stability versus routinization) and operational level. Their suggested performance criteria capture context, goals, and the processes by which these goals are met. Adaptability is a key measure; adjusting rules, norms, and goals over time qualifies as success. Success is also determined by the “extent to which participants have developed not only a better understanding of each other, but they have shared language and culture, new ways of communicating and ability to find common ground” (p.722). This is measured by self-report and by tracking the productivity of joint initiatives. While Mandell and Keast take a step forward by connecting joined-up practice to joined-up outputs, their evaluative logic - like the others presented here - does not describe how changes in practice affect the quality of outputs. Measuring the number of outputs – like the number of meetings, the number of members, and the number of issues addressed – does not tell us what members actually do differently to yield different quality results. Indeed such numeric measures do not indicate whether there is any advantage to joined-up over independent working. This analysis is what I attempt to do in Chapter Seven.

2.5.3: Measured impact: Empirical results

There is more theorising about performance than actual measurement of performance. How evaluative logics play out in real time with real-life constraints is explored below. Five different evaluations are reviewed: one of the studies offers a descriptive typology of joining-up; and four other studies assess impact, two of which link coordination with on-the-ground client outcomes (Jennings and Ewalt, 1998; Provan and Milward, 1995). Coordination and consolidation are the most common dependent variables, with only one study looking at the full
range of joined-up forms. Taken together, these studies present a mixed story of joined-up government’s success. Coordination correlates less strongly than consolidation with improved client outcomes (Jennings and Ewalt, 1998), but coordination achieved through centralisation and hierarchy correlates with better client outcomes than more devolved forms of coordination (Provan and Milward, 1995). Inter-agency groups organised around a common client population show a higher degree of success. These conclusions and the methods used to reach them are set out in Table 2.8.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Intervention variables</th>
<th>Output / Outcome variables</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hall, et al., 1977</td>
<td>What is the degree of coordination amongst youth-serving organisations in eleven US mid-sized cities?</td>
<td>Coordination</td>
<td>Frequency of contact • Method of contact • Extent of coordination, conflict • Perceptions of power, philosophy, performance</td>
<td>Questionnaires to professional staff of agencies</td>
<td>Most coordination is voluntary • Basis of relationships varied when coordination was mandated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agranoff, 2003</td>
<td>In what ways do networks add value?</td>
<td>Communication, coordination, collaboration</td>
<td>Benefits for participants • Benefits for participating organisations • Inter-agency outputs</td>
<td>Grounded theory field study of 14 case studies, with interviews and observations</td>
<td>Benefits generally outweighed network costs. Costs include opportunity costs; protracted processing; exercise of organisational power; risk aversive agendas; resource hoarding; and policy barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennings and Ewalt, 1998</td>
<td>Does coordination and consolidation increase the objective performance of job training (JTPA) programmes?</td>
<td>Coordination, Consolidation</td>
<td>• Job training programme performance measures (e.g., % of clients in unsubsidised employment)</td>
<td>Survey of state agency directors responsible for programme implementation</td>
<td>Coordination had a limited effect on employment outcomes; administrative consolidation had strong, positive effects on six of the ten outcome measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provan and Milward, 2001</td>
<td>Are networks more effective at providing a complex array of community-based services than organisations are able to do on their own?</td>
<td>Does not offer definition</td>
<td>Agency survival • Absence of duplication • Client well-being</td>
<td>Little detail provided</td>
<td>Public sector networks are most effective when they enhance the capacity of organisations to solve problems and to serve clientele</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provan and Milward, 1995</td>
<td>What, if any, is the relationship between the structure and context of mental health networks and their effectiveness?</td>
<td>Collaboration, consolidation</td>
<td>Client outcomes from 5% random sample • Caseworker perceptions</td>
<td>Questionnaires and interviews with key informants in 4 cities</td>
<td>Positive relationship between network integration and effectiveness. Integration came from top-down, not ad hoc structures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given the challenges of carrying out research on joined-up government, it is not surprising that each of the studies has significant limitations. Hall, *et al.* (1977) looked only at dyadic relationships, rather than more complex multi-party configurations. While they were one of the first research teams to quantify the strength of coordinative relationships, they construe coordination as an end in and of itself. Their focus on local delivery organisations is also less applicable to the work of this thesis on central-level policy organisations.

Agranoff (2003) considers both delivery and policy organisations in his analysis, but does not differentiate between inter-organisational relationships within the public sector and those between the public and private sectors. While he distinguishes between multiple forms of joined-up government, he does not disaggregate outputs by joined-up form.

Jennings and Ewalt (1998) offer a more robust accounting of outcomes, concentrating on client outcomes. They use both objective and subjective measures of performance, but find that the two correlate poorly with one another. Since most other studies use subjective accounting of performance, such as perceptions of organisational strength and productivity, this is a critical finding. So too is the conclusion that more resource intensive forms of joined-up government, in this case consolidation, have a stronger association with positive client outcomes. Since it is a predominantly quantitative study, though, there is no discussion of what consolidation looks like in practice, or why coordination may not be leading to as favourable a set of outcomes.

Provan and Milward (2001) put forward a useful framework for capturing the multi-dimensional nature of joined-up outcomes. However, perhaps because their work is still at a conceptual stage, they are prone to making assumptions about what counts as a ‘good’ outcome. They also define outcomes at a policy level, rather than an on-the-ground level. For example, reduced duplication is one measure they consider, independent of its potential costs or benefits to service users. In this research, I call a measure like ‘reduced duplication’ a policy output,
reserving the word ‘outcomes’ for those results experienced by local service users. Chapter Seven offers a full explanation of outputs and outcomes.

Provan and Milward’s 1995 study has a stronger empirical basis than their 2001 work, and interestingly finds that the multi-dimensionality of coordination is best managed within a hierarchy. This finding goes against much of the current literature advocating networked governance. Yet their focus on service-delivery organisations makes the findings less relevant for this thesis. Chapter Eight aims to identify the range of factors which influence joined-up performance at a central government level.

**Section 2.6: Gaps in the literature**

**Figure 2.8: Unanswered questions in the literature**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What leads to joined-up government?</td>
<td>What does joined-up government look like?</td>
<td>What factors enable civil servants to join up?</td>
<td>What do civil servants do differently when they join up?</td>
<td>How do joined-up practice shape joined-up policy outputs?</td>
<td>What is the link between joined-up outputs and outcomes?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the growing body of theory and evidence about joined-up government, there is more to know. Returning to the initial theory of change raises many unanswered questions, captured in Figure 2.8 and summarised in the pages that follow. The gaps in the literature directly shaped my choice of research questions.

**Conditions.** Inter-organisational relations theory focuses on why organisations and individuals join up, not why government agencies and civil servants do so. Government agencies are assumed to have similar motivations to their private sector counterparts. According to the dominant theories, organisations join up when personal survival is at stake, when transaction costs need to be reduced, when common resources are under siege, or when macro-economic and technological changes demand new alliances. While some
contextual factors like resource scarcity are common to private and public sector organizations, Provan and Milward (2001) note that what constitutes survival differs between the two sectors. “Cooperation is particularly appealing when the profit motive is absent, because the potential downsides of cooperation, such as reduced autonomy, shared resources, and increased dependence, are less likely to be seen as a threat to survival” (p. 415).

Even when government agencies are the explicit unit of focus, as they are in public management theories, joined-up government remains conceptualized as a single construct: communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration and consolidation are inconsistently distinguished from each other. While public management theory names contextual factors specific to the public sector – like institutional history, political and managerial ideologies, and new kinds of public problems – even these more tailored explanations do not elucidate which contextual factors cluster with which joined-up forms, or what the implications are for how civil servants work. Indeed, few studies link the reason for setting up joint initiatives with the way joining-up plays out in real-time. While in Chapter Seven, I measure joint initiatives against their stated policy goals, I do not explore the unstated political or environmental reasons for joining-up.

**Intervention.** Few studies link the rationale for a joint initiative with its actual practice because few studies describe joined-up practice. Even the most detailed case studies of joint initiatives (Huxham and Vangen, 2005) remain at a thematic rather than a behavioural level. We do not learn what exactly civil servants do when they join-up; just that joining-up has to do with themes like trust and consensus building. This is the reason for research question one, “What does it look like for civil servants to join up?” I focus on what joining-up looks like at a central government level because few studies take the perspective of civil servants, or differentiate between a policy versus service delivery level.

**Enablers.** The ‘how to’ literature has a more practical and less theoretical focus because it is written for practitioners as a primary audience. Structures are
described most frequently. Boards, committees, taskforces, ministerial positions, tsars, networks, and partnerships are presented as primary mechanisms for working in different ways. Authors like Bardach (1998) shift the discussion towards processes and culture, describing activities like agenda shaping and decision-making. Often processes and culture are described like structures. For example, Gray (1989) introduces collaboration as an emergent inter-organisational process, and yet still outlines a number of discrete ‘steps’ to be applied regardless of context. Authors like Williams (2002) add a personal dimension, pinpointing skills and competencies conducive to joining-up, and others, such as Mandell and Keast (2008), bring these factors together into an overarching performative logic. These texts do not address, however, how these structural, process, cultural, and personal factors shape what civil servants do and produce when they join up. This is the reason research question two comes before research question three. Research question two analyses what civil servants do and produce when they join up, while research question three explores the factors which enable civil servants to produce joined-up outputs. These enabling factors are discussed in Chapter Eight.

Practice. Most literature overlooks practice, and as a result, is unable to probe the relationship between practice and outputs, and outputs and outcomes. We read about some of the protocols and processes of collaborative groups – like consensus-building – but not about the routines and interactions underlying those processes or what those routines and interactions yield. Agranoff (2003) is one of the few authors to ask explicit research questions about what public managers do and what has changed as a result – what he calls the ‘value-add’ of joining-up. Research question two explores the value-add of joining-up by assessing what civil servants do and produce when they join-up. Chapter Seven offers readers answers to research question two.

Outputs. In Chapter Seven, I argue that we should assess joined-up performance by the quality of the outputs produced. While there is increasing
academic focus on evaluating the performance of joint initiatives, the amount of activity still seems to be a dominant proxy for effectiveness. Numbers of meetings, diversity of membership, quantity of goals achieved and collaborative endurance are frequently-cited measures. The quality of the products generally goes unexplored. Huxham and MacDonald (1992) introduce the concept of collaborative advantage to describe what we should expect to achieve from joining-up, but do not systematically measure those achievements. Indeed, much of the research assumes good, joined-up processes are a proxy for good, joined-up outputs. When joined-up outputs are described, whether policy documents or programmes, they are not compared with single-agency outputs. As a result, the literature tells us little about whether joining-up adds value.

Outcomes. Joined-up initiatives that deliver services can track changes in user outcomes, as demonstrated by Provan and Milward (1995). But joined-up initiatives that create policy often see user outcomes as too distal to accurately measure. There are a few exceptions to this. Page (2004) looks at state-level collaborative practice, and finds that this can have an effect on a population’s health and well-being, while Skelcher and Sullivan (2008) make a conceptual case for theory of change measurement. I was unable, however, to find any researchers who explicitly linked the quality of outputs with the range of on-the-ground outcomes expected or achieved. As stated in my introduction, I am unable to link outputs with outcomes in this study.

The contribution this thesis tries to make. This thesis is designed to complement the literature by: (1) describing what it means for central-level civil servants to join up; (2) measuring joined-up performance by the quality of the outputs produced; (3) naming the practice underpinning high performance; and (4) identifying the factors which enabled different practice and high performance. In the next chapter, I describe the methodological approach to answering these open questions.
Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter describes my methodological approach, including the rationale for its design and key decisions regarding data collection, analysis, and theory building.

Section 3.1: Structure of chapter

In Chapter Two, I argued that the existing literature overlooks key questions about joined-up practice and its effects on policy outputs. In Chapter Three, I argue that one of the reasons for these oversights is research design. Existing research relies more on surveys, interviews, and documents than on direct observation. I use interviews, documents, and observation. In the pages that follow, I detail my research methodology and approach, including philosophy, research design, ethics, country and site selection, data treatment, and data analysis. I conclude the chapter by acknowledging the limitations of this methodology and approach.

Section 3.2: Explaining gaps in the literature

Methods matter: they shape the questions we can answer and the conclusions which we can draw. The literature has not, to date, answered comparative questions or used comparative methods. By and large, researchers have not asked what is different about joined-up practice, nor collected data inside and outside of joined-up settings or in multiple countries. As a result, they have only had scope to describe what joined-up government does, not what it does not do. Another review of the evidence base – this time, to collate methodologies rather than findings – highlights the similarities and limitations of much existing research design.
Existing research design can be grouped into three broad categories: (1) theory building, (2) theory testing and (3) theory synthesis. Theory building is an inductive process wherein the researcher collects and then makes sense of on-the-ground data without relying on pre-existing frameworks. Within this tradition, there are a variety of data collection and analysis techniques, including semi-structured interviews, observations, grounded theory and narrative case studies.

Theory testing is a deductive process wherein the researcher applies a theoretical framework to a particular context, using the framework to guide the development of a research protocol and analysis process. Again, there exists a wide variety of data collection and analysis techniques, from surveys to documentary analysis to statistical modeling.

Theory synthesis involves bringing together existing data in new ways or reinterpreting another author’s conclusions: this takes the forms of meta-reviews and secondary literary analysis. Below are examples from each category, with examples drawn from the most frequently cited studies in Chapter Two.

### Table 3.1: Existing research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theory building</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Research Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To co-develop a theory of collaborative advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huxham and Vangen, 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To determine how networks add value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agranoff, 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To develop a theory of collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gray, 1989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Theory testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Research Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To test the exchange model of inter-organisational relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hall, et al., 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To test the effectiveness of coordination and administrative consolidation on policy goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jennings and Ewalt, 1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To test the effectiveness of network integration and stability on client outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provan and Milward, 1995</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Theory building approaches tend towards ‘how to’ research questions; they produce bottom-up frameworks to help explain what happens and why in joined-up settings. To do this, researchers work closely with participants of joined-up initiatives, conducting interviews, observations, and workshops. Data collection can be a deeply immersive process. Huxham and Vangen’s (2005) work is the most immersive I reviewed, as it is based on several years working alongside participants in joined-up settings to improve joined-up practice. Their book identifies nine themes of joined-up practice. While the authors observed joining-up unfold, they analyse their data at a thematic rather than behavioural level. They report on recurring interpretations rather than on detailed interactions. Their goal is to identify how joining-up works, not pinpoint the differences between what joined-up and default practice yields. The methodology with which my research is most aligned is the theory building approach, but because I am interested in points of difference, I compare behaviours and interactions rather than extrapolated themes.

Theory testing approaches, like most theory building approaches, look to explain what joining-up entails and not how it is different. Unlike theory building approaches, they tend towards the ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions. They rely on large-scale surveys that have the power to offer statistical generalisations and widely applicable conclusions. Although these surveys are often based on qualitative interviewing, such interviews serve to quantify constructs like coordination and
integration. These studies do not describe what coordination and integration look like in real-time, and are unable to link the way in which coordination is practiced with its impact, but are able to measure its presence and correlate that with either policy or client outcomes.

Theory synthesis approaches offer some compelling hypotheses about the link between joined-up practice and performance, but they are also not contextualised in everyday doing. These hypotheses are only as good as the literature reviewed. Often this literature is at too abstract a level to say much about what is going on in a boardroom or partnership meeting; instead, it focuses on official policy documents and statements, leaving researchers with broad, generic conclusions. That is what 6 (2005) found when he tried to compile literature on joining-up across countries. Although he is one of the only authors to provide a cross-national perspective of joining-up, he acknowledges that “as one moves away from the strictest forms of top-down definition of coordination and integration, examples begin to proliferate to the point that it becomes very difficult, at least with the evidence available from the existing literature, to identify real differences between countries” (p.78).

All of the above suggests that there is room for an immersive ‘how to’ study of joined-up practice across countries: one that can describe civil servant behaviour in boardrooms and committee meetings, noting the differences between joined-up and single agency work product.

Over the past five years, I have delved into that immersive research process, which has taken me to three countries, enabled me to observe hundreds of meetings and interactions, have conversations with over 200 civil servants, and review several boxes of internal documents. My thinking evolved over time. Table 3.2 captures key points in the research process, and the decisions about research design that have been made along the way.
Table 3.2: Timeline of key research design decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2006</td>
<td>Background reading</td>
<td>Set boundaries for research study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2006</td>
<td>Methodological review</td>
<td>Adopted qualitative, grounded theory methodology; chose data sources; wrote interview questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2006</td>
<td>Placement negotiation</td>
<td>Selected host departments in three countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2006</td>
<td>England Placement</td>
<td>Focused on structures behind joining-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>United States Placement</td>
<td>Focused on processes behind joining-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Learned practice was not same as structure or process; re-analysed data set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2007</td>
<td>New Zealand Placement</td>
<td>Focused on routines behind joining-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2007</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>Focused on differences between joint and default practice; re-analysed data set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Writing version 1.0</td>
<td>Presented data country-by-country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2008</td>
<td>Time away from DPhil</td>
<td>Introduced to design and information management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Writing version 2.0</td>
<td>Removed US from final analysis; presented data using theory-of-change structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3.3: Research paradigm and approach

One of the first research design decisions I faced was selecting a methodological approach facilitative of my research aims. Given that existing research did not satisfactorily address ‘how to’ and ‘how different’ questions, I looked for a methodological approach that could capture everyday doing, placing interactions and relationships at the centre of the study. This approach, introduced as theory building at the start of this chapter, can also be described by the following concepts: constructivist, qualitative, grounded, participatory and comparative.

*Constructivist.* Constructivism is a philosophy more than a single methodology. Constructivists believe that knowledge comes from understanding,
interpreting and reconciling multiple versions of experience. There is no single
truth. Reality does not exist independently of us; it is built by us. Evidentiary
claims about the nature of human beings are intertwined with our own sense-
making processes (Hamilton in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p. 63). What we know is
‘historical’, ‘practical’, ‘applied’, ‘particular’, ‘personal’, and ‘judgemental’ (Upshur,
2001, p.10).

Constructivism counters positivism. Positivists search for one objective,
underlying reality (Trigg, 2001). They acknowledge that people describe reality
differently, but believe that “essentially we are all experiencing the same things
and we can come to some agreement about the nature of this world” (Gibbs,
2002, p.4). These agreements, or facts, constitute knowledge (Ritchie and Lewis,
2003). Positivism arises from Galilean concepts of science, evidence, and truth.
Upshur (2001) describes these concepts as ‘mathematical’, ‘theoretical’, ‘pure’,
‘general’, ‘predictive’, and ‘algorithmic’ (p.10).

Qualitative. Constructivists use a set of qualitative research methods that
are contextual and inductive. They build theory. Positivists, on the other hand, rely
on quantitative methods that are deterministic and deductive. They test theory.
While qualitative methods help to answer ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions, quantitative
methods are better at responding to ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘where’ questions.

The two approaches need not always be in conflict. When used in tandem,
as in mixed-method research designs, they can probe a subject deeply and apply
findings widely. Dreher (1994) reminds researchers that choosing or blending
methods “should not be a treatise on the relative merits of phenomenology
or logical positivism, but rather the clearest explanation for why the proposed
strategy has the potential for answering the specific research question” (p.286).
Because qualitative methods capture multiple viewpoints in-context, they are
well matched to a study such as this of how behaviours and interactions unfold in
real-time (Morse, et al., 2001). Indeed, qualitative research takes the researcher
to messy and lived-in environments to document relationships between people,
time, and place (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).
Labelling research ‘qualitative’ misleadingly suggests a single strategy or set of tools. Rather qualitative methods do vary, arising from different beliefs about the foundations of naturalistic study. Creswell (2007) labels these belief systems postpositivism, social constructivism, advocacy/participation and pragmatism. Each belief system lends itself to a style of qualitative enquiry. These belief systems are not mutually exclusive and edges can blur. My work interweaves social constructivism with advocacy/participation, as highlighted in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Qualitative enquiry belief systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualitative Belief System</th>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-positivism</td>
<td>Is logical, reductionist and focused on cause-effect</td>
<td>Starts with theory, uses multiple levels of data analysis, focuses on validity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social constructivism</td>
<td>Is interpretive, interactional, focused on the complexity of views</td>
<td>Ends with theory, open-ended and concerned with researcher’s position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy/participation</td>
<td>Is recursive, dialectical, and action-oriented</td>
<td>Does research ‘with’ rather than “on” participants; learns through action and reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
<td>Is applied, flexible, and outcome focused</td>
<td>Uses mixed-methods; implements with what works</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grounded. Grounded theory helps make social constructivism visible and tangible. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) situate grounded theory within a set of enquiry methods that includes ethnography, phenomenology, discourse analysis, and critical theory. While each method has a different analytic emphasis, all take into account interactions, behaviours, perceptions, and perspectives. What sets grounded theory apart is the bottom-up nature of its analytic frameworks. Indeed, grounded theory produces localised explanatory accounts. It interweaves participants’ interpretations, rather than just the researchers’ version of events. This means grounded theory constantly evolves. Strauss (1987), one of the originators of grounded theory, underscores that grounded theory is not one
prescriptive method or technique but rather “a style” of qualitative analysis oriented towards the development of theory (p.5). Charmaz (2006) concurs, writing “Grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves” (p.2).

Grounded theorists diverge on just how ‘grounded’ the theory development process should be. Even Glaser and Strauss, the co-creators of grounded theory, express conflicting views. Both see ‘coding’ as the central task, but disagree over the sequence of steps and the source of codes. Coding involves chunking and labelling data by themes and concepts, and over time, specifying properties and dimensions of the codes as well as re-configuring the relationships between codes. The question is, should the codes come solely from the data or can literature and heuristic tools be used to develop the coding scheme?

Strauss and his colleague Corbin (1998) offer a set of critical questions and basic operations to guide the researcher through what is an inherently unstructured process. Still Strauss and Corbin, like Glaser, do not bring ‘preconceived’ themes and concepts into data gathering and coding. Other academic researchers, like Ritchie and Lewis (2003) and Rubin and Rubin (1995), take a less prescriptive approach. Codes can come from the research proposal and from prior theory. While coding will be explored more thoroughly in the ‘Data analysis’ section of this chapter, my decision to adopt what Ritchie and Lewis call a ‘modified grounded theory approach’ influenced what counted as data, how data was collected, and how participants engaged.

**Participatory.** Using the word ‘participant’ rather than ‘subject’ is intentional. It denotes a shift away from doing research on people to doing research with people. The researcher does not own the research process or products, but rather facilitates joint discovery. Joint discovery is the core of participatory action research. Reason and Bradbury’s (2006) definition of action research highlights its collectivist roots. They describe action research as a “participatory, democratic
process concerned with developing practical knowing.... It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people (p.1)’. Participatory frameworks pay particular attention to power dynamics, and try to minimise power differentials so as to elicit honest and contextually rich data.

Kurt Lewin, writing in the early 1950s, laid the theoretical groundwork for action research, characterising knowledge as that which emanates from, and remains immersed in the field. Events, experiences, behaviours and interactions cannot be understood without also understanding the field from which they emerge. This understanding arises from both direct, real-time experience in the field and also through transformational action. Unlike other forms of research, action research explicitly aims to improve practice, develop individuals, and challenge the status quo. Action comes about through a deliberate, iterative process of observation, planning, and reflection (Hem and Anderson, 2005). For the action researcher, the research product is more than an account of the findings, but the actual application and testing out of what was learned. In this sense, the data is ‘owned’ and ‘used’ by participants, rather than collected and removed from the field to be applied at the researcher’s discretion.

Action research shares grounded theory’s inductive approach and moves a step further by turning theory construction into a shared ritual. Argyris and Schön (1978) conceptualise theory construction as an ongoing, rather than summative process. They introduce the idea of “tacit theories-in-use”: participants name the assumptions and protocols governing decision-making, only to critique them and build shared theories. “Tacit theories-in-use” arose from Argyris and Schön’s work on organisational behaviour.

Organisational, teacher and community-based research are types of action research. While each type involves a cyclical process of fact-finding, diagnosing, planning, executing and reflecting, they differ in their motives, structure and
constraints. Dickens and Watkins (1999) encapsulate the main difference when they state that “participatory action researchers focus on participation and empowerment. Teacher action researchers rely in data to transform individual behaviour. Organisational action researchers focus on research and data-driven decision-making” (p.127).

Organisational action research has the added complexity of navigating systems and structures, and negotiating the relationship between researcher, staff and management. Organisational ethnography offers a toolset for probing these complex and multi-layered relationships. Schwartzman (1993) names routines, gatherings, events and stories as the ‘raw material’ for making sense of organisations. She writes, “Because ethnographers are directed to examine both what people say and what people do, it is possible to understand the way that everyday routines constitute and reconstitute organisational and societal structures” (p.7). Using the famous Hawthorne experiments as a case study, Schwartzman argues that researchers in organisational settings need to be able to manage different roles: observer, diagnostician, listener, helper and communicator. The Hawthorne experiments, conducted in Chicago in the 1920s, intended to study the relationship between productivity and the physical environment, namely light. Researchers discovered that, rather than light, it was participation in the research interviews which shifted productivity levels. Instead of calling this finding a diversion or aberration, researchers allowed their process to evolve. They did not need to explain away changes in behaviour, but to show how these changes came about. This thesis takes a similar approach: through direct engagement with civil servants, I seek to understand what factors enable behavioural change.

Policy Process. Understanding civil servant behaviour requires understanding the policymaking environments in which civil servants work. Indeed the decisions civil servants make on how to join up cannot be divorced from the norms, protocols and expectations of policymaking. Public policy analysts ascribe to different methodologies based on how they define the word ‘policy’. Hogwood
and Gunn (1984) identify ten different definitions: 1) a label for governmental activity; 2) an expression of general purpose and aims; 3) specific proposals; 4) decisions of government; 5) formal authorisation; 6) a programme; 7) an output; 8) an outcome; 9) a theory of change; and 10) a process.

My research questions frame joined-up working as a means to producing different quality outputs. Outputs are the concrete products (e.g. legislation, reports, funding streams, programmes) that emerge from bureaucratic policymaking. Different quality outputs are the product of different content generation processes, including different thinking about how change happens. Process-focused policy analysis proceeds in stages. Bardach (2000) proposes eight steps, starting with problem definition and ending at communicating the solution. Although other academics offer other process models, most view these steps as dynamic and flexible.

Process models offer a useful lens for making sense of behaviours and relationships between civil servants and stakeholders over time. Hogwood and Gunn (1984) note that “process frameworks do lend themselves to the identification and study of interactions, not only among the various stages in the process but also among various participating organisations and between organisations and the larger social and economic environment” (p.25). To adequately study behaviours and interactions, then, we must identify how these behaviours change over time and across different contexts.

Comparative. Cross-national comparative studies help us to identify the relationship between behaviours and context, particularly where that context is central government. Such studies enable social researchers to devise general theories explaining why national institutions or centralised systems are the way they are (May, 1993). Critics charge that general theories offer such common-denominator statements that they have little value. These researchers believe that localised knowledge tells us more about why things are the way they are. A third group of researchers claims the middle ground. They believe that neither
universalistic nor particularistic theories enhance our grasp of patterns and anomalies, and see their task as identifying the circumstances under which variations occur.

I see myself as belonging to this third group. Generalisable theory is not the aim, and nor is it compatible with a grounded theory approach. Rather, I seek to name the factors that influence what civil servants do and the outputs they produce. These include: 1) Endogenous factors, unique to a particular place, like institutional structures, historical events, cultural conventions, and chance occurrences and 2) Exogenous factors like broader economic, social, and political trends (May, 1993). No two countries are alike. An effort was made to match countries with similar bureaucratic structures, public management philosophies and youth policy issues so as to minimise the sheer number of differences and expedite the discovery of factors relevant to joined-up practice. The results of the matching process are described in the next section entitled ‘Data sources.’

Section summary. My decision to blend multiple research approaches stems from a desire to study joined-up working in a multi-dimensional way. Numbers, quantities, and correlations cannot, by themselves, capture the iterative and dynamic behaviours underlying joined-up working. Grounded theory helps to capture behaviour in-context; organisational action research helps to analyse behaviour in terms of structures and stakeholders; and cross-national research helps to identify behavioural determinants and trends. Table 3.4 clarifies the contribution that each tradition and methodology makes to the research.
**Table 3.4: Fit between research questions and research methodology**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Grounded Theory</th>
<th>Organisational Action Research</th>
<th>Policy Analysis</th>
<th>Comparative Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What does it look like for civil servants to join up?</td>
<td>Focuses on interactions and behaviours</td>
<td>Enables civil servants to interpret their interactions and behaviours</td>
<td>Focuses on policy processes and ideas</td>
<td>Expands the number of joined-up settings under study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does joining-up change what civil servants do and the outputs they produce?</td>
<td>Focuses on behaviours, patterns, and exceptions</td>
<td>Elicits civil servants observations and critical reflection</td>
<td>Focuses on the policy outputs to emerge</td>
<td>Allows for behaviours and outputs to be compared and contrasted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What factors enable civil servants to produce different outputs?</td>
<td>Identifies perceived and observed behavioural enablers and constraints</td>
<td>Engages civil servants in changing everyday practice</td>
<td>Offers the researcher a set of process questions</td>
<td>Widens the pool of behavioural enablers and constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can cross-national comparisons tell us about how civil servants join up and to what effect?</td>
<td>Emphasises the specificity of local context</td>
<td>Examines the relationship between behaviours and local context</td>
<td>Provides framework for understanding role of politics, institutions, and decision-makers</td>
<td>Enables a systematic examination of variation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section 3.4: Data sources**

A discussion of research approaches signals to readers the lenses through which I examine data, but does not specify what constitutes this data. Qualitative researchers see everything around them as potential data. Richards (2005) explains that “qualitative data are records of observation or interaction that are complex and contexted, and they are not easily reduced immediately (or, sometimes, ever) to numbers” (p.34). Richards’ definition draws a clear distinction between qualitative and quantitative data sources. Qualitative data do not come in defined boxes like empirical surveys; indeed qualitative data are often shapeless, arising from text, pictures, and conversations. Text may be the product of the researcher’s field notes, transcripts, or documents; pictures may be both physical
artefacts and mental images; and conversations may be formal interviews, informal chats in the corridor or structured focus groups.

While quantitative researchers often make use of interviews and documents, they seek to transfer what they are hearing and seeing to standardised categories. The qualitative researcher conducts interviews, collects documents, and logs observations to construct a layered and emergent explanation, rather than validate a preset hypothesis. The researcher can only construct such an account by ‘being with’ the data first, and categorising later. In this research, I have relied on four types of data: interviews, enquiry groups, field notes, and documents.

3.4.1: Interviews

Exploratory, one-on-one conversations allow first-hand experiences and interpretations to surface. Conversations became a space for participants to step back from the ‘doing’ of joint work and reflect on how interactions unfolded and why decisions were made. As a result, they functioned like the ‘cathartic interviews’ in the Hawthorne experiments: a blend of direct question asking and open discussion. Charmaz (2006) describes two styles of interviewing: informational and intensive. Whereas informational interviewing elicits facts and stories, intensive interviewing tries to extract the participant’s motivations, thoughts, feelings, and assessments. Informational interviewing most often proceeds from a set of structured questions, with follow-up questions introduced as required, while intensive interviewing tends to start with a list of topics and progress organically. The data that flows from these interviews should be “deep, detailed, vivid, and nuanced” (Rubin and Rubin, 1995, p.76).

I have used both informational interviewing and intensive interviewing techniques. My first research question led me to ask civil servants to identify and detail their inter-agency practice within the youth policy space. The second and third research questions led me to ask civil servants about the value of those joint initiatives and the quality of the products they produced. I crafted a 60-minute
interview schedule to prompt me to ask civil servants about what they do, with whom they work, and how they work with them.¹

Interviewees received blank white paper and markers to draw inter-agency relationships. Behind the specific questions and drawing tasks were a series of themes I hoped to more informally explore through follow-up questions and informal conversation, which included: (1) how civil servants conceptualised their role, who they served, and how success was defined; (2) how civil servants approached joined-up versus non joined-up work; (3) when to join up; (4) what joining-up yielded; and (5) the role of joint work when young people were the focus. Themes evolved over time. As is characteristic of qualitative interviewing, the ideas that emerged in the early interviews were tested in later interviews, and tentative theories were built up, critiqued, and modified continuously.

While interview schedules guide the researcher in asking the right questions, they do not help find the right people. That is why Lewis and Ritchie (2003) advocate adopting an explicit sampling strategy. They describe both criterion and theoretical sampling. Criterion sampling enables the researcher to search for participants by particular features or characteristics salient to the research study. Theoretical sampling occurs later in the research process, after the researcher is comfortable with what the data is saying and wishes to refine categories and relationships. I used criterion sampling to identify mid to senior level civil servants with a youth policy portfolio. I excluded civil servants who did not work on policy issues related to young people, those who worked exclusively in operations and delivery domains, and those too low in the hierarchy to have a meaningful role in inter-agency work.

Even with applying such exclusion criteria, there was still a large pool of potential interviewees. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggest narrowing the search by selecting interviewees who “are knowledgeable about the cultural area or the

¹ See Appendix B for a copy of the interview schedule.
situation or experience being studied; willing to talk; and represent the range of points of view” (p.66). To find civil servants knowledgeable about joined-up working, I began by interviewing members of formal inter-agency committees whom I tracked down by using agendas from prior groups and meetings. Using a snowballing technique, I asked interviewees to name colleagues with whom they worked. I also sought out the views of senior policy advisors, and developed lists of civil servants in relationship management roles. Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed and no personal identifiers were used to encourage interviewees to openly share their experiences and value judgements. Verbal consent was necessary before interviews could commence.²

3.4.2: Collaborative enquiry groups

One-on-one interviews gave civil servants the opportunity to look back at their behaviours and interactions, but could not offer a real-time account of practice. While observation enables researchers to watch practice unfold, it tells us little about participants’ intentions. Collaborative enquiry groups, a mainstay of organisational action research, are a more active form of observation. They emphasise intentional action, by blending thinking and doing (Mwaluko and Ryan, 2000). In a collaborative enquiry group, a group of three to ten practitioners at roughly the same hierarchical level voluntarily convene over a period of time (generally one day a month for three to six months) to engage in dialogue, solve problems, and uncover tacit theories-in-use.

Theories-in-use assume a standard form: in situation x, do z, to achieve y (Argyris and Schön, 1978). In this research civil servants were encouraged to develop theories-in-use about joining-up, and place joining-up within their larger work context. Joined-up working emerged as an ‘x’, ‘y’, and ‘z’: sometimes joining-up was an antecedent condition; sometimes an action; and at other times

² See Appendix C for a copy of the verbal consent script and Appendix L for a listing of interviewees by agency and civil service grade.
an outcome. I established four enquiry groups over the course of the project (one in England, one in New Zealand, and two in the United States), each of which served as a space where civil servants set a learning goal, analysed prior actions, planned new actions, and reflected on ongoing joint practice. Learning goals including troubleshooting joined-up problems and taking up joined-up opportunities. Participation in enquiry groups was voluntary. At the beginning of each country placement, I sent out an email invite to mid-level civil servants with youth policy responsibilities, compiled with the help of my host agency.

Cultivating a safe environment for sharing, hypothesising, acting, and reflecting is critical to the success of collaborative enquiry groups. Group members devise a set of ground rules for dialogue. Martin (2006) suggests the following ground rules: (1) all perceptions are valid; (2) ask questions to clarify, not to challenge; (3) speak to be understood, not to score a point; (4) listen to understand, listen to yourself listening; (4) treat difference as an opportunity to learn; and (6) make sure everyone has a chance to speak (p.171). Although ground rules are necessary they are insufficient for addressing power differentials in a group setting. Thus the researcher/facilitator must explicitly address and talk about power differentials, acting as a facilitator rather than as an expert. Indeed the researcher, together with the participants, plans the agenda for meetings, leads interactive group activities, and helps to initiate conversation. Raw data took the form of field notes, participant journal entries, post-it notes, easel paper generated during sessions, and transcripts of key audio-taped dialogues.

3.4.3: Observations and Field Notes

For qualitative researchers, field notes are an important tool for understanding context and considering the relationship between what people say and how they act. Field notes are written by the researcher based on observation

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3 See Appendix D for a list of the learning goals in the England and New Zealand enquiry groups.
4 See Appendix E for a copy of the collaborative enquiry group invite.
5 See Appendix F for session agendas and facilitative materials.
and participation (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I observed inter-agency boards, committees, and meetings at both ministerial and civil servant levels, and made notes of such features as spatial arrangements, facilitation style, purpose and structure, information sharing techniques, decision-making processes, cultural dynamics, task distribution, and meeting outputs. I was invited to these boards, committees, and meetings by interview and enquiry group participants. I also observed everyday civil servant practice, including informal hallway chats, desk work, phone calls, and work patterns. These day-to-day observations centred on the agency within which I was placed. Agency placements are fully explained in Section 3.5.

Observations underpin the twenty case studies of joint initiatives presented in Chapters Four and Five. Such detailed observation differentiates this study from others: they enabled me to link what civil servants do in joined-up settings with the products generated from those settings. To capture the full detail of my observations, I recorded what I experienced in notebooks and transferred these notes to formal summary sheets, as seen in Appendix G.

3.4.4: Documents

Most qualitative data takes the form of text: interviews are transcribed into written form; observations are recorded as field notes; and enquiry group proceedings are logged as transcripts, in journal entries, and diagrams. Charmaz (2005) distinguishes between documents written by the researcher, by participants at the researcher’s request, and those that are independent of the researcher. This last category of documents, called extant texts, include such items as government reports, internal organisational memos, emails, and other forms of correspondence. Charmaz writes that researchers incorporate extant texts “because of their relative availability, typically unobtrusive methods of data collection, and seeming objectivity” (p.37).

I use extant texts because they help me to identify the internal and external factors which shape how civil servants approach youth policy. Policy papers,
performance management frameworks, statements of organisational priorities, communications between policy officials, and inter-agency agendas and minutes have the potential to provide insight into the role of joined-up working in policy development and everyday practice. They also have value from a comparative perspective in identifying the similarities and differences between country’s youth policy landscapes.  

3.4.5: Cross-national data

The use of interviews, enquiry groups, observations, and documents brings depth to the study of joined-up practice. The use of these data sources across two countries aims to bring breadth. While this thesis focuses on England and New Zealand, I also carried out fieldwork in the United States. Although I decided to exclude the United States in my final comparative analysis due to the quantity of data, I describe all three countries here in the methodology section. It seems important to view what I learned about the process of doing research in three countries separately from the conclusions I have drawn from comparing only two countries.

Countries were selected using criteria developed on both theoretical and pragmatic grounds. As I outlined in Chapter 2, much of the literature on joined-up government is linked to politico-administrative culture and public management reforms like increased specialisation and strategic planning (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2000, p.85). The New Public Management (NPM) movement of the 1980s shifted the ‘substance and style’ of most Anglo-Saxon governments (Bekke, et al., 1996, p.269). But, backlash to the renewed emphasis on private sector delivery, decentralisation, single-purpose agencies, and strong vertical accountability led to calls for joined-up working in the 1990s (6, 1997). Since this study is only concerned with joined-up working in the field of youth policy, it made sense to

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6 See Appendix H for a copy of the document summary form I used to summarise and compare documents.
look for countries with comparable sets of youth policy problems and for whom joined-up working was one visible policy solution. From a practical perspective, countries had to be English-speaking and willing to participate in the research at a central policy level.

In 2006 five countries emerged using these criteria: Australia, Canada, England, New Zealand and the United States. Due to timing and resource constraints I chose only three countries: England, New Zealand and the United States. Table 3.5 provides a summary. All three shared the same prominent youth policy issues: namely teenage pregnancy, obesity, alcohol, drugs and youth crime; and they all had recently released national policy reports calling for more joined-up working across the youth policy space.

When I began my study, I assumed incorrectly that their parallel policy backdrops would mean that civil servants in the three countries would be charged with doing similar things. However, the job of a US civil servant differed substantially from English and New Zealand civil servants. In addition, the United States had a different political and institutional context, and as stated previously, its large size precluded a robust analysis. For these reasons, I decided to remove the United States from the final analysis. This decision is explained more fully over the course of Section 3.5.
### Table 3.5: Country selection criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>England</th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Politico- Administrative Culture</strong>&lt;sup&gt;7&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Public Interest</td>
<td>Public Interest</td>
<td>Public Interest</td>
<td>Public Interest</td>
<td>Public Interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Management Philosophy</strong></td>
<td>Direct influence of NPM; Target-focused performance management</td>
<td>Direct influence of NPM; Output-focused performance management</td>
<td>Direct influence of NPM; Output-focused performance management</td>
<td>Weak influence of NPM; Output-focused performance management</td>
<td>Weak influence of NPM; no central public management reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youth Policy Landscape</strong></td>
<td>Teenage pregnancy, obesity, drugs, alcohol, crime, youth transitions</td>
<td>Suicide, obesity, drugs, alcohol, crime, youth transitions crime, unemployment</td>
<td>Teenage pregnancy, obesity, drugs, alcohol, crime, youth transitions</td>
<td>Youth transitions, Family support, Homelessness,</td>
<td>Mental health, Crime, Risk behaviour&lt;sup&gt;8&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of Joined-Up Working</strong></td>
<td>Every Child Matters, Youth Matters</td>
<td>Youth Development Strategy</td>
<td>White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth</td>
<td>Footprints to the Future</td>
<td>No national youth policy document identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Willingness to Participate</strong></td>
<td>At national level</td>
<td>At national level</td>
<td>At national level</td>
<td>At state level</td>
<td>At province level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 3.5: Data collection

Research reliant on fieldwork requires flexibility and quick adaptation. My ability to identify relevant civil servants, conduct interviews with them, run collaborative enquiry groups, observe inter-agency meetings, and collect internal documents hinged on gaining access to central government agencies. If I wanted to document joined-up and everyday practice, I needed to be placed in an agency full-time. I searched for agencies with lead or coordinating responsibility for comprehensive youth policy. While there are multiple agencies and units

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<sup>7</sup> Pollitt and Bouckaert (2000) define ‘public interest’ oriented cultures as those where ministers and officials are held to account by the public through regular elections. In these cultures, there is scepticism of the state and a tendency to minimise its size. This is contrasted with Rechtsstaat cultural models, which deem the state to be a force for good and where ministers and officials are held to account by administrative law (p.53).

<sup>8</sup> No document outlining Canada’s national priorities in the youth policy space was located. These youth issues arise from province-specific reports and statistics.
with responsibility for a particular policy, such as youth crime or adolescent mental health, I sought out organisations charged with taking a broader, big-picture view. This responsibility might be articulated in formal legislation, or by the breadth of the unit’s policy portfolio. With the help of published policy reports and key informants in each of the three countries, I identified three ideal research sites, as recorded in Table 3.6.

Next, I approached the director of each unit, presented the research proposal and offered to allocate up to 30% of my time to working on a policy project of their choice. I believed that if I offered myself as a ‘contract researcher’ charged with an actual project, I would acquire a different perspective on how work gets done. Placement duration would be between three and four months, depending on country size and ease of setting up interviews and enquiry groups. Directors of all three identified units agreed to fully participate.

Participation was negotiated site-by-site, addressing reciprocal roles, expectations, ethics, and ownership over data. In each of the sites, I assumed a dual role as researcher and staffer. Although I was not a paid employee (so as to ensure a level of independence), I received security clearance, official identification tags, desk space, access to internal and inter-agency computer networks, and invitations to staff meetings and informal social events. I also had direct access to the unit director or chief policy official, and the freedom to schedule my days as needed. In return, I would regularly share emergent findings with the unit, offer troubleshooting advice to staff engaged in inter-agency work, organise an inter-agency seminar at the conclusion of my placement, and work on a policy project that was understaffed and in need of external assistance. I would also clearly articulate my role to civil servants, explain the research aims and ask

Table 3.6: Research placement locations

- **New Zealand:** Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) in Ministry of Social Development (MSD)
- **England:** Supporting Children and Young People’s Group (SCYPG) in Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
- **United States:** Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) and Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) in Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)
explicit permission to make use of observations and conversations, ensuring that all personal identifiers including name and job title would be removed. Ethics procedures were identified to participants in an information sheet about the project, which was distributed prior to interviews and meeting observations. These ethics procedures were approved by the University of Oxford’s Central University Research Ethics Committee in 2006.9

While, as lead researcher, I would have the final say over data included in the final report, data collection and analysis was designed to be a transparent process. Analysis workshops were held to critique, debate, and discuss early interpretations and conclusions. When placements ended, I continued to seek feedback from staff through email and, in the case of New Zealand, through a website and blog.10 I have committed to sending a final version of the dissertation to participants, and offered the anonymised raw data to interested civil servants.

While the structure and sequence of my placement unfolded consistently across the three countries, inevitable differences emerged. Beginning with the three months I spent with the English civil service, I began to acquire a ‘civil servant speak’, which made it easier to communicate my research needs, recruit enquiry group participants, and offer joined-up troubleshooting advice. This shaped my approach in the United States and New Zealand and the ability to collect more data in these subsequent placements. While the quantity of data is not a suitable proxy for its quality and usefulness, such measures do convey the scale of analysis required in each country. Table 3.10 lists the amount of data collected during each placement.

How I defined ‘quality’ and ‘usefulness’ matured over the course of the research. Not only was this because I became more aware of my intentions as

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9 See Appendix I for a copy of the Participant Information Sheet.
10 To visit the blog, go to http://joinedup.blogspot.com/. To respect the anonymity of respondents, this URL only shows the comments I have posted. The blog was designed to post and solicit feedback after the placement concluded. It was created for New Zealand participants as a result of a suggestion given in the analysis seminar held at the conclusion of my placement.
a researcher, but also because of the experiences, perspectives, and biases I accumulated as a staff member. Qualitative researchers seek to transparently air their perceptions rather than minimise them.

Reflexivity is one tool available to the qualitative researcher. Finlay and Gough (2003) write that “Reflexivity requires critical self-reflection of the ways in which researchers’ social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process. It demands acknowledgement of how researchers (co)-construct their research findings. Reflexivity both challenges treasured research traditions and is challenging to apply in practice” (p.ix). Reflexivity can take the form of 1) introspection: when researchers use their own personal experiences to make sense of their research encounters; 2) critical consciousness: when researchers investigate the way in which their relationships to research settings and participants influence their approach; 3) mutual collaboration: when participants and researchers engage in ongoing cycles of reflection and action; and 4) social critique: an examination of the impact of structures, power, and constructed categories (such as race or gender).

In the next three sub-sections, I describe each country placement in an attempt to inject critical consciousness into the data analysis process. Each description summarises the journal entries I wrote while doing field work, and is designed to give readers an understanding of the dynamics behind, and differences between, each placement.

3.5.1: England placement

I was placed within the Targeted Support Division of the Children and Young People’s Group at the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) because it was the unit responsible for comprehensive youth policy. Youth Matters, the 2005 green paper on joined-up youth policy, was written and coordinated by the Targeted Support Division. I entered the placement, outlined in Table 3.7, with weekly research benchmarks. Recruitment of the collaborative enquiry group became my initial priority to ensure that it benefited from a full three-month run.
I reached out to mid-level civil servants in the Supporting Children and Young People’s Group, with the intention of making contact with civil servants in external departments. However, the group’s explicit inter-agency remit meant there was a high level of joined-up interest and capacity in-house. Indeed, the collaborative enquiry group was comprised entirely of civil servants from DfES. No civil servants from other government departments volunteered to participate.

I actively leveraged the division director’s networks to increase the level of cross-departmental participation in interviews and observations. While this meant that my core list of interviewees reflected one person’s world view, the director was highly regarded in policy circles and had regular access to senior civil servants and key decision-makers. Indeed his ability to condense complex information into organised sound bites, his understanding of subtle policy processes, and his adept negotiation skills made it all too easy not to question his joined-up approach. Thus, I made a particular effort to debrief with civil servants after meetings led by the director to garner their feedback, dissent, and critical reflection.

These debriefs shaped how I conducted formal interviews. Debriefs tended to focus on how civil servants approached their joined-up work; whereas, interviews emphasised joint structural and accountability mechanisms. I was asking civil servants to verbally draw up organisational charts that placed inter-agency groups within the larger hierarchy. Hearing civil servants talk about the processes and strategies they used to join up was more useful than seeing boxes sketched on a piece of paper. I amended the interviewee schedule accordingly.

Data collection was also influenced by an ethos of urgency that permeated DfES at the time of field work. The frequency and scale of youth policy reforms shaped the civil servants’ sense of purpose. They often commented that they felt like they were doing something important, and were eager to share examples of joined-up policy products. Artefacts included internal reports, ministerial briefs, memorandums of understanding, and delivery tools. I concluded the placement with over a hundred internal documents.
### Table 3.7: England placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Targeted Support Division → Supporting Children and Young People’s Group → Children, Young People, and Families Directorate → Department for Education and Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Host Agency Status</td>
<td>Led by a high-profile, non-cabinet minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>August - November 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Quantity</td>
<td>Interviews: 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enquiry Group Members: 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Documents: 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observations of joint meetings: 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Project</td>
<td>Writing youth alcohol briefs; providing advice to minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.5.2: United States placement

Unlike in England, in the United States there was neither an ethos of urgency nor one unit with a recognised lead role in youth policy. I formally based myself within the Department for Health and Human Services (DHHS) because, at a national level, the department controlled the most resources for young people (See Table 3.8). DHHS is a mega-organisation. With over 60,000 staff spread across hundreds of physical offices in Washington D.C, Maryland, Virginia, and Georgia, it was necessary to set up two placements. I chose organisational units where young people were the sole focus. For three weeks of every month I was based in Washington D.C with the Office of Adolescent Health (OAH) in the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB), and for one week each month I travelled to Atlanta, Georgia and sought the perspectives of staff at the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) within the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The geographical distance demanded two separate enquiry groups.

Due to the longer duration of my overall placement (four months instead of three), I was able to allocate more time to recruiting enquiry group members. One of the two enquiry groups comprised mid-level officials from five federal departments, while the second was composed solely of mid-level CDC staff. The inter-agency enquiry group, both because of its larger size and make-up, yielded
considerable introspective dialogue. This group also proved helpful in connecting with senior civil servants across government. The low status of youth policy issues within the federal government meant it took time and persistence to engage senior level civil servants in interviews. Interview lists were initially compiled from minutes and phone lists of formal inter-agency meetings. I conducted 92 interviews, reflecting the larger scale of the US federal government and the challenge of finding the right people with whom to talk.

The sheer number of interviews was one reason I decided not to include the US in the final analysis. Time constraints made it difficult to fully transcribe the vast dataset. However, this larger dataset did help me to refine my research questions, and to become more attuned to issues of sequence and task distribution. It also shaped my interview schedule in New Zealand, and the coding structure I developed as I analysed both England and New Zealand datasets.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.8: United States placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Office of Adolescent Health → Bureau of Maternal and Child Health → Department of Health and Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Division of Adolescent and School Health → Centres for Disease Control and Prevention → Department of Health and Human Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Host Agency Status</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Quantity</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews: 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enquiry Group Members: 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents: 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations of joint meetings: 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Project</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5.3: New Zealand placement

Selecting the host agency in New Zealand was straightforward. Unlike in the United States or England, New Zealand had a Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) with an explicit inter-agency coordinating role. Although the MYD suffered from low status, due to a low-ranking cabinet minister and its location within the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the MYD was required to provide second-
opinion advice on any policy with implications for young people. Thus, staff had a
good understanding of the youth policy landscape and helped construct a diverse
interviewee list. Regular internal team meetings enabled me to keep abreast
of the latest policy developments and inter-agency initiatives and to observe
everyday practice. In addition, the relatively flat organisational structure ensured I
had access to both mid-level and senior-level civil servants.

The close physical proximity of government agencies precipitated many
word-of-mouth conversations, and through these conversations I recruited civil
servants from across six agencies to take part in the collaborative enquiry group.
This snowballing recruitment technique necessitated a later start to the enquiry
group. Unlike in England and the United States, we met three times instead
of four. The same general process was nonetheless followed, as highlighted in
Appendix F.

While data collection progressed smoothly, thanks in large part to my
prior placements, I was conscious to challenge my findings and not become too
comfortable with the research process. Therefore to ensure critical reflection, I
shared my observations and interpretations with enquiry group members and
interviewees and incorporated their sometimes divergent interpretations into my
analysis. I also wrote regularly on the New Zealand blog and invited comment.
At this point in the fieldwork, my analysis was sharper and more focused on civil
servant behaviour within joined-up and non-joined-up spaces.
### Table 3.9: New Zealand placement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Policy Team → Ministry of Youth Development → Ministry of Social Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Host Agency Status</td>
<td>Led by low-ranking cabinet minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>July - October 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Quantity</td>
<td>Interviews: 67, Enquiry Group Members: 9, Documents: 60, Observations of joint meetings: 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Project</td>
<td>Writing policy briefs on youth policy frameworks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section 3.6: Data analysis framework

In qualitative analysis, data collection and data analysis are conceptualised as simultaneous rather than sequential steps. Because they are immersed in the field, qualitative researchers gain an early intimacy with their data. Ideas and hunches are explored in-the-moment, and either quickly discarded or taken forward. What makes data analysis distinct from data collection is the systematic process of zooming-in and zooming-out. Researchers begin ‘in’ the data, take a step out to name concepts and themes, step back in to organise concepts and themes, back out to search for patterns, and then once again move inward to propose explanations and contextualised theories. I see this stepping in and stepping out as cycles of convergence and divergence, as diagrammed in Figure 3.1.

![Figure 3.1: The divergent and convergent analysis process](image-url)
Qualitative researchers use a range of techniques and tools to move between cycles; most use words like ‘coding’, ‘tagging’ ‘and ‘identifying’ to capture the first wave of analysis; ‘grouping’, ‘dimensions’ and ‘relationships’ to describe the next wave; and ‘ordering’, ‘refining’ and ‘abstraction’ to express the lead-up to explanation and theory construction. During each wave, the researcher ‘constantly compares’ chunks of data with emergent codes, categories, and themes (Creswell, 2007). Data continuously streams in and out of codes and categories until saturation occurs, and the codes and categories cogently reflect their contents.

3.6.1: Decision to exclude the United States in data analysis

The data-streaming process takes time and continual iteration. In the first stages of formal analysis, I included data from all three countries, to develop an early coding schema and structured interrogation process. As I moved into the second stages of regrouping and recoding, I faced a trade-off: depth versus breadth. The vastness of the dataset, and the time and length constraints of the DPhil, meant that I could choose to recode all texts in a cursory fashion or else deeply recode some texts. I opted for the latter, choosing to take the US out of the final analysis. Another factor in that decision was how to reconcile early US findings with those from England and New Zealand. Civil servants in the US adopted some different behaviour in joined-up settings, and to explain these differences, it would have been necessary to name what influenced joined-up versus default practice. However, because default civil servant practice was significantly different to England and New Zealand, I also would have needed to spend time explaining the broader institutional and political factors at play. In the final analysis, I chose to allocate time and space to descriptions of joined-up practice, rather than to the secondary literature on the US’ exceptional political and constitutional structures.

Once I opted to reduce the dataset from three to two countries, I was confronted with five other key analysis decisions: (1) data management; (2) unit of
focus; (3) coding sources; (4) coding sequence; and (5) interrogation techniques.

### 3.6.2: Data management

One of the first decisions the researcher must make is how to format, arrange, and display their data. Richards (2005) refers to collected data as ‘records’ to convey the need to develop indexes, retrieval systems, and storage procedures just as one would for office papers and personal files. Yet the simple act of organising raises analytical questions. What does the researcher decide to keep? Are only verbatim transcripts and original documents included, or are summaries and early interpretations? Miles and Huberman (1994) make use of charts, matrices, and flowcharts to visually depict verbatim excerpts alongside early interpretations, explaining that “the typical mode of display has been extended, unreduced text... Our experience tells us that extended, unreduced text alone is a weak and cumbersome form of display. It is hard on analysts because it is dispersed over many pages and is not easy to see as a whole. It is sequential rather than simultaneous... It is usually poorly ordered and it can get very bulky, monotonously overloading” (p.91). Pure grounded theorists critique Miles and Huberman’s movement away from the raw data. Charmaz (2006) notes that grounded theory’s emphasis on ‘emergence’ means that coding must come from the data itself, rather than from the structure that a matrix or chart automatically imposes. For these researchers, computer-assisted qualitative software packages (CAQDAS) pose similar challenges. While software simplifies data organisation, particularly for large unwieldy datasets, the way the platform is designed influences the researcher’s thinking. Lewins and Silver (2007) counter by stating that “CAQDAS programs do not dictate the order in which you perform various tasks...using the software liberates you from the clerical constraints which may have prejudiced flexibility using more traditional ‘craft’ methods” (p.14).

The volume of data here necessitated using software and matrices. Without such tools, I would have lost the ability to shift between categories and reorder groupings as necessary. To ensure agility within the dataset, I opted not to import
every single interview transcript. I excluded transcripts of a small minority of interviewees who were located at too low a hierarchical level to helpfully comment on joined-up work. They had neither the expertise nor the authority to recount how and why inter-agency decisions were made; and simply executed decisions made by others. Interviewees who were situated at a substantive decision-making level, regardless whether they were engaged in inter-agency work, were entered into the software package for analysis. Chart 3.10 compares the amount of data collected with the amount directly inputted into the software package.

The software package, MAXQDA, was selected because of its intuitive interface and the ease of data entry. While NVivo was initially my software of choice, the visual architecture of its program and system requirements seemed better suited to smaller datasets: it produces large, cumbersome files that can be quite slow to navigate. Simplicity and speed became two important considerations. While rival software packages require the researcher to format transcripts in a particular style, MAXQDA accommodates minimally formatted Word documents, and retains its functionality as the dataset grows. It is the only qualitative software package that enables colour-coding of data, making it easier to flag data segments of interest without prematurely committing to a particular code or coding structure. Its ‘activation’ feature is unlike that of other software packages and enables very quick retrieval of combinations of text files and codes. Lewins and Silver (2007), in a review of MAXQDA, write that “Interrogation of the dataset is easy to grasp and manipulate. The Code Relation Browser and Code Matrix browser provide quick access without the need to construct complicated search expressions” (p.256). That said, with MAXQDA, like any qualitative software

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>England</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews collected</td>
<td>67 (x 13 depts)</td>
<td>45 (x 9 depts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews transcribed</td>
<td>47 (x 13 depts)</td>
<td>35 (x 9 depts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enquiry group</td>
<td>9 (x 6 depts)</td>
<td>4 (x 1 dept)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
<td>~85</td>
<td>~100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
package, the researcher must still manually determine the content of codes and categories.

3.6.3: Coding unit of focus

Generating codes and categories requires the researcher to decide how best to segment the data. Discourse analysts pay close attention to the structure of speech and underlying linguistic blueprint. Phenomenologists and grounded theorists, on the other hand, tend to focus on what people have said rather than how they have said it. What people say unravels in words, sentences, paragraphs, and by event or incident. Researchers must make decisions about which narrative unit forms the basis for naming, tagging, and coding. Whereas line-by-line coding opens up nuance and detailed explanation, incident-by-incident coding facilitates broad comparison. Because of the large size of my dataset, I chose to code incident-by-incident, which was both more realistic and better aligned with my research aims. Each joined-up initiative was construed as an incident.

3.6.4: Coding source

Once researchers have determined the unit of focus for coding, they must give the code a name. Traditional grounded theorists look to in vivo codes or words within the data segment that are indicative of its core meaning. Other researchers look outside of the dataset for inspiration. These external tags or labels, whether taken from prior studies or established theory, differentiate grounded theory from modified grounded theory approaches. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Lewis and Ritchie (2004) both espouse modified grounded theory approaches, citing its practicality. Miles and Huberman craft a ‘provisional start list’ of codes arising from the research questions, interview schedule, and hypothesised key variables (p.58). Ritchie and Lewis also develop a start list, called a conceptual framework or index, with origins in the data – just not all of the data. To use Ritchie and Lewis’ method, the researcher reviews core interviews, observations, and notes to come up with an inventory of recurrent ideas and themes. Core pieces of data are
those that reflect the researcher’s sampling strategy and speak to its diversity and dimensionality. I have adopted Ritchie and Lewis’ approach because of both its pragmatism and its genesis within the data. The resultant conceptual framework has changed several times as I read more and more transcripts. My initial list came from a close reading of 30 transcripts, ten from each country (including the United States), which were selected for their breadth.\textsuperscript{11} Table 3.11 displays the latest iteration based on the 82 transcripts included in the full analysis.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{11} The initial coding list can be found in Appendix J.

\textsuperscript{12} Appendix K fleshes out the most recent coding framework by including all sub-codes and categories.
Table 3.11: Coding framework, Latest iteration

**Role and tasks**: Civil servants gave their ‘official’ job title and then shared what it was they actually did on a day-to-day basis, including common versus uncommon tasks and the kinds of outputs they generated.

**Client**: Civil servants named their primary client. Some interviewees talked about their minister as their primary client; some saw government as their client; and others conceptualised the end-users as their client. Still others viewed ‘the policy issue’ and its stakeholder community as their client.

**Success**: Civil servants talked about how they measured success in their job and what good work looked like.

**Joined-up case studies**: Civil servants named all the joined-up initiatives in which they were involved. For each initiative, civil servants talked about its role, and then outlined their role. Initiatives might be set-up to exchange information, oversee an inter-agency strategy, solve a problem, or take-up an opportunity. Civil servants might be participants, or they might be facilitators or initiators of the joint initiative.

**Descriptors**: For each joined-up initiative, civil servants described what joined-up practice looked like and the factors in place shaping that practice.

**Enablers or constraints**: Each of the factors shaping joined-up practice was categorised as an enabler or constraint, depending on whether it facilitated or hindered civil servants from doing joined-up practice.

**Conditions**: For each joined-up initiative, civil servants talked about what led to the decision to join up and who made that decision. Conditions look to explain the existence of a joined-up initiative rather than the performance of a joined-up initiative. Enablers can also be coded as conditions.

**Barriers**: For each joined-up initiative, civil servants talked about what hurdles had to be overcome in order to join up. Again, barriers look to explain the existence of each joined-up initiative (including its initial form and function) rather than the performance of a joined-up initiative.

**’What if’ factors**: Civil servants sometimes hypothesised about what might have happened had a particular factor been in place. These ‘what if’ factors give some insight into what civil servants believe shapes joined-up practice.

**Expected impact**: Civil servants noted what each joint initiative was intended to yield.

**Actual impact**: Civil servants described what emerged from the joint initiative to date, often characterising these things as ‘positive results’ or ‘negative results.’ As many initiatives were ongoing, what emerged could still be in progress. They were coded as such.

**Individual layer**: Conditions, barriers, enablers and constraints included in this layer are related to civil servants’ personal experiences, beliefs, skills, and values.

**Group layer**: Conditions, barriers, enablers and constraints included in this layer are related to civil servants’ relationships and interactions with each other.

**Organisational layer**: Conditions, barriers, enablers and constraints included in this layer are related to the individual’s organisational affiliation, including the agency’s structure, processes, and culture.

**Institutional layer**: Conditions, barriers, enablers and constraints included in this layer are related to the wider government context.

**Situational layer**: Conditions, barriers, and impacts included in this layer are related to current events or ideas which put pressure on agencies and the political system.
3.6.5: Coding sequence

Coding is not a discrete, one-time event. As the analysis process unfolds, data is coded at progressively higher levels of abstraction. Qualitative researchers disagree over how abstract is too abstract – in other words, too de-contextualised to be useful – and what methods to employ along the way. In their well-cited text, Basics of Qualitative Research (1998), Strauss and Corbin outline three layers of coding: open, axial, and selective. During open coding, the researcher detects and names phenomenon, places similar phenomena within categories, and assigns properties and dimensions to each category. As Strauss and Corbin explain, “Whereas properties are the general or specific characteristics or attributes of a category, dimensions represent the location of a property along a continuum or range” (p.117). Axial coding goes one step further: it is the process of grouping and regrouping categories, and creating sub-categories according to their essential properties and dimensions. Strauss and Corbin recommend asking a series of ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions to distinguish categories from sub-categories, conditions from consequences, and means from ends. Selective coding then enables the researcher to move from a set of relationships to a concrete explanation or theory. It requires the selection of a central category and the integration of concepts around that single category. Central categories are those which reappear frequently and help to explain variation.

Glaser proposes a different step-by-step coding process. His version of open-coding, called substantive coding, is unstructured. Properties and dimensions do not play a role until later stages. Axial coding is also missing from Glaser’s procedures. Indeed, Glaser argues that axial coding ‘forces’ the data into a single conceptual family (Walker and Myrick, 2006). Glaser’s third-step, theoretical coding, like selective coding, aims to create a reconstituted whole, a theory with which to explain concepts and relationships between categories. Glaser describes eighteen theoretical coding families, or groups of concepts like situations, units, causes, and degree, to assist the researcher with theory building.
Charmaz (2006) offers a Glaser-Strauss hybrid approach. She interweaves both axial and theoretical coding into her analysis platform, making use of Strauss and Corbin's critical questions and Glaser's theoretical coding families. Ritchie and Lewis (2003) go through a similar analysis process, but use a different conceptual framework and language (like the one I have developed) to label and tag the full body of data, creating new themes and codes as necessary. Once data is tagged, it is ready to be sorted and summarised, and as in axial coding, reclassified and redefined according to its relationship with other parts of the dataset. Emergent trends are solidified into typologies, combining multiple categories or dimensions and producing a coherent, explanatory account. Using the researchers cited above as guides, I devised a three-stage coding process. Rather than engage in full open coding, I tested and revised my initial framework of codes, examined how the codes related to one another, and finally identified the core ideas and explanatory theory which appear in Chapters Seven and Eight. Diagram 3.2 displays a snippet of transcript, and along the left-hand side, the open codes I have assigned.

Figure 3.2: Open coding example in MAXQDA

3.6.6: Interrogation techniques

How are ‘core’ ideas within the dataset identified? Once texts have been coded, using the conceptual framework, researchers can look for at least three themes: the frequency of codes throughout the dataset, the depth of codes in any one text, and the relationships between codes. Qualitative software packages
like MAXQDA assist with all three functions. In MAXQDA, the frequency of
codes is easily established with the Code Matrix Browser. Using the activation
button, texts with certain characteristics can be searched; for instance, texts
from a country (e.g. England), texts from one particular agency (e.g. Department
of Health), or texts at one hierarchical level (e.g. mid-level civil servants). Once
texts and codes of interest are activated, a frequency matrix can be run with dots
representing the occurrence of codes across texts. The dots can then be double-
clicked on and the text fully retrieved. Figure 3.3 displays the results of a Code
Matrix Browser when all England texts are activated.

Figure 3.3: MAXQDA Code Matrix Browser example

While the Code Matrix Browser captures frequency, it does not give a
sense of the variation. Perhaps the frequency dots are a product of only a few
civil servants repeatedly mentioning a single issue? To determine the underlying
distribution of data, numbers are useful. The number of times a code is coded
for in a particular text is displayed directly in the code system. Such numbers
gives a rough sense of the salience of a particular code: is it much talked about or
peripheral? If it is talked about, which groups of civil servants talk about it more -
those in certain agencies, at particular hierarchical levels, with particular role types?
The Code Relations Browser is particularly useful for understanding where codes are talked about in tandem with each other. It captures links between two or more sets of codes among a set of activated texts. This means that researchers can search for a connection between the conditions that interviewees say need to be in place to join up, and the perceived performance of joint initiatives. Searches can be bound by paragraphs; in other words, connections can be located that are proximal in the text or that are distal. Connections that are physically closer in the text are more likely to reflect a self-identified relationship; whereas those that are farther apart can simply be two unrelated concepts. That is why matrices, by themselves, tell us very little. Only by going back to the data can the researcher gain a sense of what is going in and classify the type of relationship at hand.

Figure 3.4 shows the results of a Code Relations Browser; examples of joint initiatives where the civil servant was a participant, rather than an initiator or organiser, are ordered by joined-up government type (coordination, collaboration, etc.). The matrix suggests a potential relationship between coordination and a participation role. Perhaps civil servants engaged in joined-up government as participants, rather than as organisers or initiators, are more likely to take on coordinative tasks. Re-reading transcripts would be the only way to make such a determination.
As Figure 3.4 shows, instances of joined-up practice provide a clear organising structure to the dataset. Every time a civil servant mentioned engaging in joined-up work or doing work without joining-up, a code was created, along with the civil servant’s relationship to that work (as participant, initiator, or organiser). These codes can be activated, and their affiliations to other codes then become quickly ascertainable using matrices and MAXQDA maps. Since joined-up practice is at the heart of this research, the ability to locate and probe around given instances of joined-up government is especially useful for theory building.

Section 3.7: Theory authentication

Any discussion of theory building raises questions of authenticity and validity. Readers are left to evaluate whether they trust the researcher’s transition from description to explanation, as I do in Chapters Seven and Eight. Is the research methodologically sound? Assessing the methodological rigour of qualitative studies, like the qualitative research process itself, is neither linear nor universal. Whereas post-positivist qualitative researchers are more inclined to adapt quantitative internal and external validity standards, social constructivists, the type of researcher with whom I most identify, believe the concept of validity should be redefined.

Altheide and Johnson (1994) summarise the debate when they write: “All knowledge and claims to knowledge are reflexive of the process, assumptions, location, history, and context of knowing and the knower. From this point of view, validity depends on the ‘interpretive communities’ or the audiences... Validity will be quite different for different audiences. From another point of view, the one we suggest, a narrower conception of validity is tied more to the researcher/design/academic audiences” (p.488). Under this narrower conception, researchers seek to demonstrate descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity. Descriptive validity refers to the factual accuracy of observable events. The researcher carefully uses frequency words like ‘sometimes’ and ‘most’ so as to correctly
reflect points of consensus and dissent. *Interpretive validity* requires that the researcher assign accurate meanings to objects, events, and behaviours. If the researcher notes a participant was screaming, (s)he must also tell readers why and how that screaming was interpreted. *Theoretical validity* has more to do with appropriateness than accuracy. The researcher must convince the reader that the concepts, patterns, and theories they have identified are a legitimate outgrowth of the raw data (Miles and Huberman, 2002).

Ritchie and Spencer (2002) put forward their own set of validity criteria. For qualitative research findings to be trustworthy and applicable, they must be contextual, diagnostic, evaluative, and strategic: findings that are contextual fully describe the nature and dimensions of the participant’s experiences, behaviours, and decisions; those that are diagnostic explore the reasons why particular behaviours or decisions were made, or not made; findings that are evaluative examine whether the participant’s intentions and objectives have been met, and what factors might have stood in the way; and findings that are strategic make a carefully constructed case for recommendations and improvements. These conclusions and recommendations are not generalisable in the empirical sense, but they are transferrable to similar contexts. That is why highlighting the contextual nature of the data carries such importance.

Mays and Pope (2000a, 2000b) expand on the idea of contextualisation and suggest incorporating triangulation, respondent validation, clear exposition of methods, reflexivity, attention to negative cases, and fair dealing. I highlight the implications of putting Mays and Pope’s list into practice below.

*Triangulation.* Triangulation refers to cross-checking a finding using two or more sources. I am using multiple data sources to disentangle my research questions. Findings and interpretations derived from interviews, collaborative enquiry groups, informal observations, and document analysis are directly compared with each other. Information from across agencies and from civil servants at different levels of the hierarchy is also looked at side by side.
Consistency between sources can tell us the strength of a particular finding – provided that dissent is not overlooked.

**Respondent validation.** Once interviews and collaborative enquiry groups came to an end, I continued to engage with participants to create a space for them to comment on and contribute to the analysis process. Theory construction was very much consensual in nature, achieved through “congruence of prepositional, practical, experiential, and presentational knowledge” (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2002, p.349). Clearly there are limitations to such a consensus-laden process. An individual’s reactions to the data are constrained by his/her perspective, and do not take into account the ‘bigger-picture’ view that the researcher has formed. At the very least, the researcher can reduce interpretative errors and bias by giving respondents a chance to respond to findings and conclusions. The inter-agency seminars held at the conclusion of each of my three placements provided that space; comments emerging from those seminars were treated as another source of data and re-woven into data analysis.

**Reflexivity.** Researchers, by virtue of their presence, alter what is observed and understood. The famous Hawthorne experiments recounted at the start of this chapter illustrate unintended effects. Power dynamics, perceptions, and personal biases clearly shape how data is collected and interpreted. While this prevents exact replication of this study, reflexivity can bring biases and prior assumptions to the surface. As discussed earlier, the collaborative enquiry groups were designed as reflexive forums where assumptions could be explicitly named and biases debunked. Introducing myself as a student, researcher, and learner made it easier to openly air our preconceived notions and beliefs. The New Zealand blog was another forum for the upfront airing of perspectives and uncertainties.

**Attention to negative cases.** While qualitative researchers look for trends and patterns, they also seek to explain differences. Tensions, interpretative differences, and contradictions that emerged during analysis of interview transcripts, documents, and observations have been fully noted and are flagged in
the 20 case studies of joint initiatives presented in Chapters Four and Five.

*Fair dealing.* Diversity of background and opinion are important components of the research design. Civil servants from across government, and not just from a single government agency, were invited to, and took part in the data collection process. An exception to this was England’s collaborative enquiry group where participants represented different divisions within a single agency: the Department for Education and Skills, though they came with different civil service backgrounds.

**Section 3.8: Limitations**

Although the research was designed around a set of philosophical principles and methodological approaches, carrying out the research required negotiation and compromise. Qualitative enquiry, in particular, is dependent on time and place. Thus readers should read the results of this thesis with an understanding of its limitations. I further reflect on these limitations and the implications for future research in Chapter Nine.

*Timing.* Site visit duration was determined for logistical rather than for methodological purposes. There is no research that exists examining the effect of placement length on organisational action research studies, and projects with similar goals have varied in length from one-day seminars to year-long examinations. While three months of a full-time placement afforded me a suitably nuanced and complex picture of the organisation, it did not turn me into a true insider. True insiders are those who are formal members of the civil service, or who are at least perceived as ‘permanent’ and around long enough to trust with information and background intelligence. Research projects that focus on a single organisation may benefit from greater internal access and information disclosure. It is hoped that the depth that longer placements can bring was offset by the breadth of multiple placements.

*Single-agency perspective.* The cross-country comparative approach
enabled entry to multiple agencies, but did not allow equal immersion in each agency. I was placed in a single youth-serving organisational unit, and while I saw that unit as a home base from which to visit other government agencies, my perspective was certainly shaped by where I sat. Had I chosen a different focal point, what I saw and whom I talked with would have shifted.

*Comparable data sources.* While research sites in each of the three countries signed agreements giving me access to key people and documents, differences between civil servant systems meant that I did not have access to the same hierarchy of individuals or documents across all sites. My access was most similar between England and New Zealand, the two countries featured in this thesis. Any differences are noted in the blue sidebars of Chapters Four and Five.

*Reliance on single researcher.* The placement experience was similar across sites if only because the researcher remained the same. While using a single researcher across sites helps take into account variations in methodological style, it also complicates external replication efforts. My hope is that this chapter has served to clarify the methodological steps I have taken and thereby enables others to conduct research in a similar way. This is one reason I have elected to provide readers with very detailed descriptions of joined-up initiatives in Chapters Four and Five. The detail not only adds to a literature base which has relatively scant observational data, but also allows for some amount of methods transfer.
Section 4.1: Chapter structure

In Chapter Two I argued that, while we know more and more about the structures and processes of joined-up government, we know very little about the practice of joining-up or how joining-up differs from single-agency practice. We do not know if and when joined-up government changes civil servants’ approach to policy problems -- if it changes the thinking behind and quality of the outputs produced. Policymakers present joined-up government as a response to wicked social problems: a way to achieve a different set of solutions. However pointing to new joined-up structures and processes does not tell us about the nature of the work emerging from those structures and processes.

In Chapter Three, I suggested that the emphasis on structures and processes has much to do with preferred research methodologies. Few researchers take a fully immersive and participatory approach, and thus are unable to compare joined-up with everyday practice. Yet the two types of practice differ. English civil servants described joining-up as a distinct way of working; it meant leaving the office, attending meetings, and responding to inter-agency communications.

What did civil servants do when they left the office, attended meetings, or responded to inter-agency communications? In other words, what did it look like for civil servants in England’s youth policy space to join up? To examine research
question one, this chapter offers ten case studies of joined-up practice blending observations, informal debriefs, formal interviews, and documentary evidence. These case studies reflect one-sixth of the examples of joined-up practice mentioned in interviews of English civil servants. Chapter Five will present ten more case studies of joined-up government in New Zealand. Case studies were selected because of the range of data available. Each case presents perspectives of at least two civil servants; and all incorporate agendas, meeting notes and internal communications. While sources vary from example to example, every case study is constructed with more than one source. I use these sources – which are documented in the overview tables accompanying each case study – to describe the origins of the joined-up initiative, its operational structure, and recount at least one interaction point. I chose to include specific details in the write-up of each case study precisely because this specificity is absent from the literature, where themes rather than interactions and behaviours are reported. If the interactions and behaviours observed were perceived as ‘different’ from the interaction points recounted in interviews or documents, I also share an atypical interaction point.

Some researchers might express concern about how case studies were selected and described. But, as I argued in Chapter Three, grounded theory emphasises ‘applicable insights’ over ‘generalisable conclusions.’ In other words, I did not look for representative case studies using a set of pre-existing criteria, but rather sought to explain how the triangulated case studies varied from one another.

Section 4.2: Joined-up basics: Civil servants, policy context, and tools

In England, civil servants identified thirty-three separate examples of joined-up practice across the youth policy space. At the start of interviews, civil servants listed their points of contact with central government agencies. For each point of contact, interviewees discussed what was exchanged between agencies. If agencies shared information about activities, I classified the case as
either communication or cooperation, according to the definitions presented in Chapter Two. Because I was often unable to determine how that information was applied to intra-agency decision-making, I could not differentiate between communication and cooperation. If agencies shared goals, I classified the case as either coordination or collaboration. If those goals were to do with creating a joint product, such as a research report or strategy document, the case was categorised as coordination. Goals that were about joint outcome measures were taken as an indicator of collaboration. There were no cases of consolidation.

Of these thirty-three joined-up cases, twelve were ongoing during my stay. I was able to collect observational and documentary data from ten of the twelve cases, which is why they are the case studies presented in this chapter. To make sense of the case studies, some background information is necessary, namely, which civil servants were joining-up, what was the youth policy context in which the joining-up occurred, and what tools were available to join up?

Section 4.2.1: Civil servants

Over the course of fieldwork I worked with forty-five civil servants in the youth policy space, identified through snowballing research techniques. Since
the English Civil Service relies on a single human-resourcing platform, and inter-
agency mobility for top-tier members is common, civil servants knew of and
readily named each other. Top-tier civil servants at Grades 3 and 5 comprised
approximately half of the dataset, and the other half was mid-level civil servants
at Grades 6 and 7.¹ Thirty-seven participants reported to a line agency, one to a
quasi-governmental agency, and six to central agencies. Whereas civil servants
based within central agencies described their work in terms of policy processes,
those within line agencies tended to define their work either in terms of young
people, or a categorical issue related to young people such as drugs, teenage
pregnancy, obesity, etc.²

Most participants worked for the Department for Education and Skills
(DfES). At the time of fieldwork, the DfES was the focal point of England’s
youth policy space. The Minister for Children and Families sat within the DfES,
overseeing implementation of the government’s broad youth strategy: Every Child
Matters (DfES, 2003) and the Youth Matters Green Paper (DfES, 2005). The Home
Office (HO), Department of Health (DH), Department for Culture, Media and Sport
(DCMS), and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) were responsible for
significant, but discrete, areas of youth policy. During my placement, a fifth agency
entered the youth policy space, the Department for Communities and Local
Government (DCLG), although the part played by this Department was less clear.
DCLG was a new agency just negotiating its portfolio. Three central agencies
also cycled in and out of the youth policy space. Treasury (HMT) served as both a
financier and agenda setter, and the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (PMSU) and
Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU) acted as strategists, depending on political
interest in the issue.³

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¹ Study participants, along with their agency and rank, are listed in Appendix L.
² Workloads of civil servants in line versus central agencies are described more fully in Appendix M.
³ Agency roles and perceptions are briefly set out in Appendix N.
Section 4.2.2: Policy context

Each of the case studies unfolded within the youth policy space, the dimensions of which shifted when Prime Minister Tony Blair took office in 1997. Coles (2002) notes that “...since 1997, youth policy in the UK has been taken seriously by government, and developed holistically, probably for the first time” (p.210). I briefly spotlight the policies and reports, introduced between 1997 and 2006, which formed the backdrop to my fieldwork. Understanding trends in youth policy is critical for assessing the quality of the joined-up outputs produced.

Youth unemployment took centre stage at the start of Blair’s Labour government. The New Deal for Young People (1998) was one of the first youth strategy documents to emerge from the cross-departmental Social Exclusion Unit (SEU), a unit designed to coordinate social policy and encourage joined-up working. The strategy featured a carrot-and-stick approach where financial benefits were linked to youth participation in training and apprenticeship programmes. A year later, in 1999, the SEU shifted its focus downstream, proposing reforms to the education and support sectors. Bridging the Gap (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999) and Learning to Succeed (Department for Education and Employment, 1999) viewed the school as the first point of intervention; curriculum reforms and vocational education opportunities were presented as one answer to poor student engagement and retention rates. A universal support service, named Connexions, was established to provide information, advice, and guidance to students outside of schools through its own centrally-managed delivery network.

Underpinning these policies was a belief that young people, particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds, faced multiple problems and poor family values and supports. Colley and Hodkinson, in a 2001 article, question these assumptions, writing: “Bridging the Gap describes the young people, to which it refers, almost exclusively in terms of their lacks and needs. As we have seen, their attitudes, values and beliefs are key factors in reinforcing their non-participation and, therefore, as aspects of self-exclusion. Overwhelmingly, they are portrayed...
as deficient, delinquent, or a combination of the two, as are their dysfunctional families and communities” (p.342). ‘Young people at risk’ was also the starting point of the Policy Action Team 12 Report (PAT 12), the first official document to move beyond unemployment and educational failure to a broader set of youth outcomes. Written by representatives of the voluntary and statutory sectors, and published in 2000, the document builds on Labour’s wider poverty and social mobility agenda. Chapter One of the document sets out a clear analytical frame, stating that “A significant minority of young people today experience a wide range of problems and acute crises in adolescence...The problems are concentrated in, but not confined to, the most deprived neighbourhoods. There is an increasing body of knowledge about the risk factors that increase the likelihood of experiencing acute crises, and the protective factors that help young people to overcome the odds” (National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, 2000, p.12).

Rather than propose an entirely new set of policies, the report recommends better policy coordination. New structures and policy-making processes, including a ministerial post for children and young people, are proposed as remedies. The DfES became the dominant player within the youth policy space at that time, expanding its focus from institutions (schools) to populations (children, young people, and families).

Five months into the implementation of PAT 12, a single event brought the absence of coordination back to the policy forefront. As described in Chapter Two, nine-year old Victoria Climbié died at hospital, after months of physical, sexual and emotional abuse. The tragedy was not simply that she died at the hands of her carers, but that she had repeatedly come into contact with health and social care services. A high-profile inquiry commenced, highlighting both systematic flaws and situational oversights (House of Commons Health Committee, 2003). The recommendations – for more joined-up national structures, better information-sharing protocols, and improved professional training – explicitly linked policy structures and processes to child and youth outcomes. This has been a recurring
Indeed, the relationship between bureaucratic structures and youth well-being is explored in every post-1997 youth policy report, perhaps nowhere more strongly than in the 2003 *Every Child Matters* (ECM) reforms. Following on the heels of the Victoria Climbié inquiry, and in the face of mounting pressure from child advocacy groups, government developed a package and brand name for its child and youth reforms. ECM was notable for its scale and scope. Signed off by sixteen ministers across eleven government departments, ECM supposedly ushered in an era of outcome-centred policymaking, one where children and youth, rather than services and institutions, stood at the heart of day-to-day practice. Five positively framed outcomes were presented as platforms for further action; they included being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being (DfES, 2004). Frontline health, education and social care services signed up to these common outcomes, and to a new delivery structure called Children’s Trusts. The youth policy space was repositioned with inclusion rather than exclusion as the leading organising logic.

Inclusion was, however, a far more comfortable fit for the *child* policy space than for the *youth* policy space. ECM conceptualised children as vulnerable; their well-being was a product of systems and institutions largely beyond their control. *Youth Matters* (2005), released two years after ECM, purported to apply the same thinking to teenagers and youth adults, yet, unlike in ECM, young people were construed as full contributors to social problems.

Indeed the ‘rights and responsibilities’ mantra entered into discussions on youth, but remained absent from those on children. Policy recommendations continued to focus on governmental structures and processes – joined-up government remained a well-used phrase – but punishment and deterrence also emerged as conceptual threads. As the introduction to *Youth Matters* straightforwardly asserts, “This paper is not just about providing more opportunities and support to young people, it is also about challenge. We need
to strike the right balance between rights and responsibilities, appreciating the enormous contribution that young people can make while expecting them in return to appreciate and respect the opportunities available to them...” (DfES, 2005, p.4).

Youth Matters went on to promise a range of ‘things to do’ and ‘places to go’ for young people to divert them away from problem behaviour. Once those places were built and those activities were offered, responsibility for youth well-being shifted from service providers to individual young people.

Individual responsibility lay at the heart of the Respect Action Plan, the government’s 2006 youth policy publication. Frustrated by the lack of progress in youth offending and the rise in reported antisocial behaviour, policymakers tilted the balance between rights and responsibilities towards the latter. Written predominantly by policymakers from the criminal justice sectors, rather than the education or social care sectors, a more targeted perspective was propagated: youth crime cannot always be prevented, and in those cases, strict consequences are required. The introduction begins with the statement, “It is unjust to allow the small minority of people who perpetrate the vast majority of bad behaviour to ruin homes, villages and towns with impunity” (Respect Taskforce, 2006, p.5). A tone of resignation fills the pages; at the time of publication, Labour had been in power for nearly ten years, and some of the same youth policy issues persisted.

I began fieldwork six months after the release of the Respect Action Plan. Youth offending, teenage pregnancy, educational underachievement, and substance misuse remained at the top of the agenda, just as they had been at the start of the Blair government.  

The 2006 Action Plan on Social Exclusion, published during my second week of fieldwork in England, reiterated the policy proposals of the last ten years. The document signposted existing housing, teenage pregnancy, education, and early intervention policies, reinforcing the same assumptions and operating logics (Social Exclusion Taskforce, 2006). It

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[4] See Appendix A for a complete listing of the youth policy portfolios included in this research.
epitomised the uneasy tension between inclusion and exclusion discourses, the
tendency to define young people in terms of needs rather than capabilities, and,
most of all, the persistence of sector-specific responses. The boundaries between
health, education, social care, and justice had not dissipated, and the youth policy
space was still largely segmented by agency and by profession.

Section 4.2.3: Tools

Civil servants in the youth policy space faced a common set of policy
problems over the Blair years – youth offending, teenage pregnancy, educational
disengagement and substance misuse – but the ways in which they approached
these problems shifted, at least on paper. Policies over the proceeding decade
promoted a range of new tools for civil servants to join up. These tools were
government-wide, rather than youth-specific. Labour came into power promising
better public sector management: management that placed the needs of
citizens ahead of the needs of government. Joining-up around citizens’ needs
became a key theme across all areas of policy, not just youth policy. For instance,
administrative reform documents like Modernising Government (Cabinet Office,
1999) and Wiring It Up (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2000) outlined new
mechanisms for cross-jurisdictional working. Looking across these documents,
we can identify five different kinds of tools for joining-up: rhetorical tools,
accountability and financial tools, structural tools, process tools, and networks.

Rhetorical tools. These introduce a new vocabulary for naming problems
and solutions. Speeches, reports, strategies and internal memos reinforced a
dominant problem-solving narrative: complex issues can be untangled with joined-
up working (e.g. Cabinet Office, 1999a, 1999b; SEU, 1999.). ‘Good’ policies were
those with language that told a ‘joined-up story’. They reflected ‘shared outcomes’
and ‘collective interests’; came about through an ‘inclusive’ and ‘participatory’
process; and led to ‘coordinated delivery.’ Words used by prior governments like
‘departmental inputs’, ‘state monopolies’ and ‘privatisation’ no longer appeared
regularly. The Modernising Government agenda of the late 1990s claimed to be
pragmatic, rather than ideological. Civil servants were not inherent ‘budget maximisers’ who had to be rigorously constrained, but ‘reasonable managers’ who were motivated by their ‘clients’ and ‘customers.’ What this practically meant for civil servants at a central government level was never clear. While internal documents framed the clients as ministers, external documents referred to an outward-facing civil service.

Financial and Accountability tools. Financial and accountability tools were those that, at the very least, permitted and, at the very most, incentivised joined-up civil servant practice. The Comprehensive Spending Review process opened up funding for cross-cutting initiatives. Joint Public Service Agreements (PSAs) held multiple departments accountable for the same outcome measures, and Joint Delivery Agreements, overseen by the Prime Minister’s newly established Delivery Unit, crafted common delivery targets. For a time, the Performance and Innovation Unit sat alongside the Delivery Unit, developing new kinds of targets and performance management techniques, instituting 360-degree reviews of senior civil servants and regularly highlighting best management practice. ‘Stakeholder participation’ and ‘collaborative working’ were described as key elements of best management practice (Cabinet Office, 1999b).

Structural tools. The Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit and Performance and Innovation Unit are examples of structural tools. Structural tools result in rearranged organisational charts; they change who reports to whom, how tasks

### Table 4.1: Documentary evidence for UK joined-up tools

The section documents the existence, rather than the usage of, joined-up tools. It was written using four kinds of documents:

3. Internal intra-departmental communications including intra-organisational strategies, working documents, and ministerial communications (e.g. Extant Documents T3 and B10)
4. Internal inter-departmental communications including agendas, reports, strategies, minutes from cabinet meetings, etc (e.g. Extant Document B9)
are distributed, and where resources flow. Modernising Government highlighted new ‘cross-cutting organisational machinery’ like the Sure Start Unit and the Social Exclusion Unit. Both units brought staff together from line agencies under a common reporting minister. While Modernising Government acknowledged that building new organisations would not automatically enable integrated working, new or remodelled organisational forms proliferated. These included taskforces, committees, partnership boards, delivery boards, virtual teams, and ministerial posts. Every Child Matters: Change for Children (2004) introduced a range of new organisational forms specifically for children and youth policy: children’s trusts and safeguarding boards on the ground, a children’s commissioner outside government, a children, young people and families directorate within the DfES (the unit in which I was placed), a new cabinet sub-committee MISC9(D), a Minister for Children, Young People and Families, a youth board, and a key stakeholder board. Repositioned ministerial portfolios, renamed departments, and merged agencies (e.g. housing became part of the Department for Communities and Local Government) were weekly occurrences during my placement.

Process tools. Accompanying the restructuring were a range of change management processes, including professional development protocols and knowledge management techniques. Wiring It Up, written in 2000, was the follow-up to Modernising Government and addressed the processes behind joining-up. It identified three critical collaborative factors: ‘leadership’, ‘incentives’ and ‘skills’. The message was that new structures were insufficient conditions. “More needs to be done if cross-cutting policy initiatives are to hold their own against purely departmental objectives. There is no simple or standard answer” (Performance and Innovation Unit, p.5). Working Together expanded on the theme of intentional joined-up practice, and suggested reducing the number of partnership initiatives and, if partnership was a legitimate response, using a series of heuristic tools (Public Services Productivity Panel, 2002). These included heuristics like the DfES’ system reform model which looked at prioritisation, stakeholder communication,
and partnership working (P17). Process tools for frontline staff were more concrete than for central-level civil servants. The 2005 *Every Child Matters* toolkit called *Multiagency Working* offered a number of methods to ground-level practitioners for creating trust, establishing consensus, and navigating conflicts. Nothing similar existed for central-level civil servants.

*Networks.* A fifth category of tools, networks, are far more informal than structures or processes, and may be less explicit than rhetorical or accountability mechanisms. They are based upon professional networks and interpersonal relationships, and can either reinforce old or cultivate new standards of practice. The senior civil service is an example of a powerful network where skills, experience, and techniques are passed member to member. There was a high level of mobility in senior civil servant positions, which likely led to some amount of natural cross-pollination and practice transfer.

**Section 4.3: Joined-up case studies, an organising framework**

I have described the policy actors, policy context, and tools available for joining-up. In Section 4.3, I explore how these elements came together in each of the ten case studies. The ten case studies vary by the number of civil servants involved, the frequency with which civil servants interacted, their reasons for interacting, the kinds of information and resources exchanged, and how long they had been convening. I use the following terminology to highlight these differences:

- **Form** refers to communication, coordination, collaboration or consolidation. As was discussed in Chapter Two and in Section 4.1 of this chapter, these ‘c’ words can be differentiated by what is exchanged between civil servants: information, goals, and/or resources.
- **Purpose** refers to the reason for joining-up: was it to solve a wicked policy problem, implement a policy solution, or fill a persistent structural gap between agencies? Stated differently, some joint initiatives were set-up to...
propose a policy response to an identified problem; others were set-up to implement that response across agencies or in the field; and still others were set-up without reference to a particular problem or solution, but to enable ongoing information or resource sharing.

- **Size** refers to interactions between two agencies (bilaterals) versus multiple agencies (multilaterals). Multilaterals are more complex simply because there are more participants and interests in the room.

- **Life stage** refers to the stage at which I captured the joint initiative: the design phase, early production phase, production phase, or closure phase. During the design phase, joint initiatives are establishing their purpose and inviting new members. During the early production phase, joint initiatives are working on some sort of product or output. In the production stage, joint initiatives have produced outputs together in the past and are continuing the relationship with some sort of further work programme. In the closure phase, joint initiatives are coming to an end; there is no future work programme.

- **Formality** refers to whether joining-up was voluntary, initiated by civil servant participants, or mandated from ministers.

- **Frequency** refers to how often joining-up took place: was it a discrete or ad hoc event or did the initiative unfold weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc.?

Given the number of factors at play, I examined which ones best described differences between case studies. I created a series of 2 x 2 matrices with each of the above factors as a dimension, and grouped the ten case studies accordingly. Form and purpose emerged as the two most descriptive dimensions, and yielded three distinct groups of case studies: 1) those focused on solving a shared social problem, like drug use or antisocial behaviour, and with a common target or output; 2) those implementing a change programme and orientated around either sharing information or progressing a common output; and 3) those set-up to bridge a persistent structural gap and address the relationship between two or
Table 4.2: England case study segmentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form →</th>
<th>Share Information</th>
<th>Share Goals</th>
<th>Share Resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>↓Purpose</td>
<td>Communication / Cooperation</td>
<td>Coordination / Collaboration</td>
<td>Consolidation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solve wicked problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement solutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overcome structural gaps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of the joined-up case studies used structures as their primary tool. Boards and committees were the dominant structural mechanism, but in two instances, virtual teams were also used to organise the work (the Respect Team and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Team) and in one, a partnership agreement (DH-DfES). Accountability and rhetorical tools sometimes preceded structures. The Young People and Drugs Programme Board formed to progress a joint Public Service Agreement; and the Respect Team, Every Child Matters Programme Board, and Youth Matters Programme Board emerged from highly visible, multi-departmental strategies. These differences are drawn out in each of the descriptions below. Descriptions start with the history of the joint initiative; identify its operational structure; document a typical interaction point; share an atypical interaction point, if observed; and present participants’ impressions of
their practice. Interactions are retold in present tense to underscore that they were recorded in ‘real-time’ during fieldwork. Interactions where I was not present are retold in past tense. Alongside each case study are two summary tables: the first presents the relevant descriptive factors and highlights the data on which the case is based; the second captures the sequence of interactions behind the featured joint initiative.

Section 4.4: Problem-solving case studies

4.4.1: Alcohol Harm Officials Group

_History._ The Alcohol Harm Officials Group, reconvened in 2006, was initially set-up in 2004 to develop a strategy to reduce problem drinking. At the time of fieldwork, young people’s alcohol use had emerged as a serious but unaddressed youth policy problem. While a national alcohol harm reduction strategy had been released in 2004, followed by a significant change in alcohol licensing legislation, no specific youth policies had been proposed at that time. A senior Department of Education and Skills (DfES) civil servant explained that “Alcohol is an emerging issue for us. We have actually done quite little historically with pressure to do more… I worry about whether I have got the resources to do very much. Substance abuse is a sort of shared responsibility between this department, the Department of Health (DH) and the Home Office (HO) because we all have different interests on the subject… (UK001D)” HO held the secretariat position for the 2004 strategy, making crime and public safety a primary policy lens. Addiction and chronic health was a secondary lens, courtesy of the DH. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) presented the counter-argument: too much intervention risked unfair business practice. Not surprisingly, they viewed price controls and regulation as policy tools of last resort. DfES, as the newest policy player, believed policing and public health interventions were not enough to substantially affect youth alcohol use. They viewed price, alongside marketing and education, as desirable and viable policy tools.

_Operational structure._ Top-tier civil servants in the DfES approached their
HO counterparts to advocate including young people in a follow-up alcohol strategy. HO civil servants broached the issue at a meeting between the HO, DH and DCMS ministers, a group that met periodically during and following the 2004 alcohol review. The trilateral ministerial group authorised expanding the viewfinder and gaining a better understanding of youth alcohol use patterns. A HO-led group met to take the work forward. This group, called the Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme Officials Group, included civil servants from the three original departments, in addition to the DfES, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit (PMSU). Together, they were to update the alcohol strategy with youth as one work strand. A firm date of publication was set, and decisions about workgroup structure and task distribution were made accordingly. The Terms of Reference, written by the HO and circulated at the first meeting with the DfES, stated that this group was to ‘secure organisational buy-in’, ‘provide critical challenge’ and ‘ensure content agreement.’ These purpose statements were operationalised with a set of procedures: submitting and reviewing papers a week prior to meetings. Meetings were to be held every six weeks, with weekly meetings as the publication deadline approached. The Terms of Reference did not describe the relationship between the officials group and the ministerial group. The ministerial group was not seen as the primary client; primary client status was afforded to each civil servant’s reporting minister.

Interaction point. Fifteen people file into a HO boardroom, nine of whom
work for the HO, including the chair: a newly-promoted Grade 3 civil servant. DCMS participants sit to the left of the chair, DH participants to the right, DfES in the far corner, and everyone else is interspersed. Tea and coffee are set out at the back, and participants get up to pour themselves a cup and exchange niceties. The meeting begins with quick introductions followed by ten minutes of discussion on dates and times. Home Office participants offer a proposed timeline for completing the new strategy document on time. There are no conflicting views. A top-tier DH participant interjects a critical question about the purpose of the strategy document, and distributes a piece of paper with his views. DfES and DCMS participants respond with statements referencing their minister; statements like: “My minister would say this…” or “My minister would be concerned with that”. Another participant queries the process for resolving disagreements. The question is left up in the air, as the chair moves the group to a discussion about the data sources informing the strategy. Participants engage in fifteen minutes of back-and-forth discussion about the types of data they have access to, and what types of data they would like to collect or commission. Again, a participant queries the process for making decisions. The chair spends ten minutes clarifying the group’s process by reiterating the Terms of Reference, highlighting the frequency of meetings and escalation to ministerial group meetings, where necessary. A DH worker speaks up to say that he has discussed jointly chairing the group with the HO. Joint chairmanship is presented as a means to alleviate tensions and blend perspectives. Future meetings are then set up, with the chair promising to ‘consider’ different types of data collection and how to engage voluntary sector stakeholders. The meeting ends and individuals quickly file out.

I observed the group interact two other times over the course of fieldwork. Both interactions looked very similar, only with fewer stakeholders, and a tighter focus on the content of the strategy document. In all three interaction points, tensions were escalated to ministers and there was little time or space for civil servant resolution.
Perspectives and impressions.

The group’s single-minded output focus seemed to provide a false sense of consensus. Civil servants from the HO, DCMS and DfES acknowledged that logistical and procedural questions often overtook content questions, and relegated thinking and discussion to offline meetings and catch-ups. Processes for sharing ideas or resolving conflict were never explicitly outlined, though structural issues like the Terms of Reference did receive airtime at meetings. While the group’s narrow output focus enabled inter-agency timelines to be met, DfES participants believed the group perpetuated fragmentation. “I think it is much easier to collaborate around single issues and HO is postmaster of the single issue hit… in the discussion yesterday, you know the notion of, well we have a programme on drugs and we have a programme on alcohol. People think, I confine myself to drugs, I confine myself to alcohol, whereas people who are likely to be heavily engaged in more than one… (UK033D)” Indeed, the distribution of work arising from the meeting reflected traditional departmental proclivities. The DfES was responsible for the ‘youth alcohol section’ and the DH for the ‘health section.’ HO participants structured the final document by departmental theme: a chapter on chronic health, a chapter on young people, and a chapter on regulation. The introduction and organising
framework were written last.

Section 4.5: Overseeing case studies

4.5.1: Young People and Drugs Programme Board

History. The Young People and Drugs Programme Board was established in 2005 “to reduce use of Class A drugs and the frequent use of any illicit drug amongst all young people under 24, especially the most vulnerable”. The goal, set out in a 2004 joint Public Service Agreement between the HO and DfES, came with a deadline but without measurable targets. An Early Delivery Plan, crafted with Treasury’s guidance, looked to redress the omission, outlining three action areas: universal provision, targeted intervention, and specialist services. The board, composed of mid-level civil servants from three departments (HO, DfES, DH) and two quasi-departmental bodies (National Treatment Agency, NTA, and Youth Justice Board, YJB), was mandated to flesh out each of the three action areas and develop a strategy for measuring progress.

A 2006 internal progress report lists outputs against each of the three areas, but reads more like a compendium of each department’s existing programmes than a deliberate set of interventions. Despite making public claims about their progress, at the time of fieldwork, ministers and civil servants privately expressed concern about the pace and scale of change. The DfES worried about the HO’s single-minded focus on drugs and crime, while the HO worried about the DfES’ comprehensive youth focus. Both adhered to their own framework documents: the DfES promoted Every Child Matters (2003) and Youth Matters

Table 4.5: Young People and Drugs Programme Board Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To reduce youth substance misuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>Meeting a shared PSA target</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Mandated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Every six weeks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA
Observations of one meeting
Debriefs after three meetings
Interviews with four civil servants
Meeting agendas and notes (SM16)
(2005), while HO relied on the National Drugs Strategy (2002). Every Child Matters and Youth Matters were signed off by HO ministers, but they were not the HO’s guiding documents.

The two departments might not have shared the same policy frameworks; but on paper, they shared a common delivery vehicle. The HO and the DfES invested in Drug Action Teams, made up of health professionals, law enforcement officials, and community workers. But, the DfES’ 2005 announcement of a new delivery platform, known as Targeted Youth Support, raised the HO’s alarm bells. Targeted Youth Support would bring together preventative and specialist services for young people through a budget-holding lead professional. Under this model, Drug Action Teams would be accessed via a Targeted Youth Support Service. HO participants worried that without an explicit emphasis on drugs, practice would be diluted and targets would slip.

The HO and the DfES also shared parallel work structures, with each agency staffing a young people and drugs team. Yet these work structures were resourced very differently. As a DfES civil servant explained, “There is perpetual pressure from the HO to do more although I have to spend a lot of time explaining to them that I have four people and no money and there are limits to what we can actually achieve...we find the drug strategy really hard to keep up with because there are literally hundreds of people in the HO working on different aspects of drugs... (UK001D)” Even though the two agencies benefited from joined-up machinery, tensions remained. The programme board became the space where these tensions politely played out.

Operational structure. The Young People and Drugs Programme Board followed what participants called ‘standard operating procedures’: monthly meetings organised around formal papers, data-driven presentations, and updates. HO staff outnumbered their DfES, DH, NTA, and YJB colleagues. Meetings were called and facilitated by the HO, and held in HO meeting rooms. In the months leading up to fieldwork, the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU) assumed a
larger mediation role. Their interest was in the timely delivery of the drugs PSA target. PMDU staff turnover, however, resulted in inconsistent leadership and created confusion. The Board reported up to DfES’ Every Child Matters Board, to the HO’s Drug Strategy Board, and to a Ministerial Working Group on Young People and Drugs. Regular trilateral meetings between Justice, Education, and Health ministers added to the collaborative hierarchy.

*Interaction point.* Ten people shuffle into the HO boardroom, adorned with security badges that suggest a common path from the lobby through security to the lifts. Individuals quickly grab seats next to their departmental colleagues, and peruse the one-page agenda strewn across the table. Coffee, tea and biscuits are served, accompanied by a few minutes of idle chit-chat about the weather and an upcoming bank holiday. The top-tier HO participant clears his throat to begin. Individuals extract their *Black and Red* notebooks from their bags, and place their Blackberries on the table, with the red lights blinking. The chair announces apologies, and quickly moves to updates. DfES participants provide a run-down of the latest departmental wide activities, noting that the Targeted Youth Support pathfinders are ongoing. DH and HO participants shift in their seats. One asks a question about the challenges on-the-ground teams are facing. The DfES participant says she will have to ask her Targeted Youth Support colleague, not present, to provide an update at the next meeting. The DH participant offers a similarly high-level rundown, ceding to his colleague from the NTA to provide the numbers receiving or waiting for specialist services. The head of the HO research and evaluation unit then launches into a longer numerical assessment of drug offences and hotspots. Participants raise points of clarification. The chair suggests the board move on to discussing the next joint ministerial meeting. Deadlines are set for submissions to the ministerial meeting; the meeting will address the upcoming Comprehensive Spending Review and the six-month strategy. Civil servants from each department counter with statements that start with the phrase, “My minister is concerned about…” One DfES participant explicitly notes
that she has come into the meeting “briefed on the DfES position, what DfES ministers want, and what DfES policy is from a DfES point of view”. The chair asks that each department send language for the submission by email, and promises to send along the compiled document as soon as possible. The board is adjourned. A few quiet one-on-one conversations proceed between colleagues as the group makes their way to the lift and out of the door.

An atypical interaction. Following the joint ministerial meeting, civil servants attended an away day to bring pressure points to the surface. Participants from both the HO and DfES make it known in their debrief interviews that ‘away days’ and ‘focused reflection’ have not been business as usual. As I was not present at the away day, I have reconstructed this account from three participants.

The day started in a typical fashion, with civil servants filing into a large, square room. The DfES participants entered last, taking up position around one corner of the table. Unlike at most meetings, there were an equal number of HO and DfES participants. The PMDU facilitated. Markers and Post-it notes were laid out on the table, but there was no preset agenda. For the first fifteen minutes, participants discussed what questions they wanted to answer: those emerging from the joint ministerial meeting or those suggested by the PMDU? The latter was selected as a path forward. There was a back-and-forth conversation. Participants wrote down actions on Post-it notes, and assessed what impacts those actions might have in the short and long-term. Everyone agreed on the impact assessment. The PMDU continued to interject critical questions, some of which were characterised as ‘brutal’.

“PMDU kept coming up with a set of issues they thought we needed to deal with… that we should be looking at the evidence because would we really put our hand on our hearts and say we understood exactly what was going on at the moment in terms of young people’s drug use? Those fundamental questions that made everybody go ‘Hmmmmm’. And because they were quite senior people in PMDU they do carry a lot of weight” (UK004D).

The PMDU’s questioning style enabled an exchange of ideas and garnered consensus: there was shared desire to understand how the drug supply chain
operated and to gather local intelligence from dealers about community prevalence rates. As another participant said, “We actually all had quite similar ideas and were testing out our thoughts. That helped us agree on actions going forward (UK035G)...” The day ended with a decision to set up a smaller working group to further discuss the issues raised.

_Perspectives and impressions._ Participants noted a real difference between the away day and typical board meetings. Typical meetings were perceived as a, “Rubber stamp on things...Just to argue things...No proper communication happens. The communication happens like, ‘can you give me a line on this?’ There’s lots of badgering people to do things for you and making sure that you do those things, but there is no proper dialogue on policy initiatives in each department” (004D). When dialogue did not lead towards preferred solutions, the board structure was discarded for bilateral negotiations and direct ministerial interventions. The away day gave voice to the protectionist attitudes which often

### Table 4.6: Young People and Drugs Programme Board Interaction Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Treasury sets shared PSA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Programme board established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Regular, formal meetings held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Periodic ministerial meetings held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Interagency tension identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PMDU-led away day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Content jointly brainstormed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Workgroups set-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regular, formal meetings continued</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Outputs: strategy documents &amp; revised targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
shaped interactions, but could be hidden behind professional politeness and time constraints. “Once that was out then everybody had to think especially about the budget coming out and going forward. We had those questions beforehand and everybody had time to finally digest them, think about them, and review our position... which was great and absolutely amazing. We were all a bit shocked” (UK042I). There was space for real thinking, not just procedural posturing, which participants attributed to the PMDU’s skilled facilitation.

In debrief interviews, participants named what stood in the way of a well functioning board: (1) unclear targets; (2) uneven task distribution; (3) competing client groups; and (4) differing conceptions of evidence. Although DfES and HO shared a common outcome measure, they ultimately reported to separate ministers, who each made decisions based on their own agency’s dataset and strategic objectives. There was no co-designed strategy. Interventions were developed by each agency on their own and then compiled for publication. Nonetheless, these participants left the away day optimistic about future meetings. I was unable to observe other meetings, but subsequent debriefs with civil servants suggested they followed the ‘standard operating procedures’ described in the first interaction point.

4.5.2: Respect Taskforce

History. In January 2006 government published the Respect Action Plan designed to tackle, in Prime Minister Tony Blair’s words, “intractable problems with the behaviours of some individuals and families, behaviour which can make life a misery for others” (Respect Taskforce, 2006). While ministers from the DH, DfES, DWP, DCLG, HO, DCMS and HMT signed off on the Plan, it was written by the Respect Taskforce, a unit based at the HO and staffed by officials from the PMSU. Participants outside of HO described the months leading up to publication as “un-collaborative”, “frustrating” and “unsatisfying.” Hastily assembled and overtly political, the process was driven from the Prime Minister downward. There
was no time or space for collaborative thinking. As one top-tier participant from DH noted, “My frustration with it all stems from the fact that we were never really given a chance to be involved in the policy inspection behind it. We were told, ‘right we want something from you on this issue, deliver at 4 o’clock and if you don’t, I’ll ring up your boss and tell her how uncooperative you are being.’ So there’s no sense of satisfaction in good work done really” (UK010G). Another top-tier participant from DfES described how preventative youth policy proposals were added as an afterthought, moments before the publication deadline. “The decision to include positive activities was at the very last minute, in part, because we already had Youth Matters and it was lock, stock and barrel and fit into the new plan” (UK014D). The plan compiled new and existing policy proposals for schools, social housing, police, and the youth service; and assigned a new policy area to the DfES: families. Following the plan’s release in January 2006, the DfES formed an in-house Respect team to liaise with the HO-based Respect Taskforce and take the proposals forward. At the time of fieldwork, the DfES’ Respect Team – staffed by two mid-level civil servants – had been up and running for five months.

Operational structure. The Respect Team cultivated informal and formal links between and across the DfES and the HO. Informal links meant emails, phone chats, and day-to-day meetings. Formal links meant participation on programme boards for particular policy proposals, like Family Intervention Projects. The DfES team leader described her role as follows: “I own the Respect brand for this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.7: Respect Taskforce Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reduce antisocial behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success is...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing guidance; distributing money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Life Stage</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Formality**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations of two meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefs after four meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with nine civil servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting agendas (IR3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
department and I coordinate across DfES’ Children, Young People and Families Directorate, the School Directorate and a number of divisions within that, and liaise with different departments on their contributions. Primarily we’re being managed by the Respect Taskforce in the Home Office” (UK014D).

HO civil servants talked about the novelty of sitting in one department and managing projects in another. While they viewed cross-departmental programme boards as sites for official decision-making, negotiations took place on a much more informal basis. Such negotiations were most often about project costs and timing. As the HO team leader explained, “My role under the Respect Taskforce is really very much to make sure that happens within the time scale that DfES committed to them and to challenge them when we think that perhaps they are not doing things in the best possible way. So I’m kind of in touch with them daily and they have to give us kind of status, update reports… it is quite unusual. I’ve not worked this way before in government” (UK008G).

Formal interaction point. Top-tier HO, DfES, and DH officials have been summoned to No. 10 Downing Street to meet with PMSU officials. There is no agenda. The chair, a Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, makes it clear that the meeting will not last long. No tea or coffee is served. There is a single objective: to secure a greater spend on health visitors, which is framed as a key preventative strand of the problem family work. DfES participants argue that their department is fronting all of the cost, when the DH will be responsible for much of the delivery. DH participants make it clear that their department is under severe fiscal pressure, and their Ministers will not allocate any more funds to the project. DfES participants counter that neither will their Ministers. Their Ministers want to know how the funding will flow locally - through Children’s Trusts or through Primary Care Trusts. The chair asks for funding pathways to be researched and articulated at the Family Intervention Programme Board the following day, and then included in subsequent Ministerial briefing papers so that a quick decision can be made.

The Family Intervention Programme board convenes the following day,
with members from the Respect Taskforce, the DH, DfES, and DWP. An agenda is circulated. Minutes from the prior meeting are reviewed, and participants check off the tasks completed: meetings were held with external stakeholders and data were compiled on problem families eligible for support. Then, the project manager recounts how many local authorities they have visited and how much funding has been allocated to date. During departmental updates, DfES participants describe their plan to open a parenting academy; DWP participants describe their efforts to put in place protocols for identifying troubled families through local job centres. Respect Taskforce members interject a few questions about unexpected challenges or foreseen obstacles. One of the Taskforce members notes, “We try to challenge them just a bit because they always say in their updates, ‘It’s going so well’” (UK08G)! The meeting concludes with a discussion of longer-term funding and evaluation issues, reiterating the need for additional resource for interventions like health visitors. DfES officials continue to push back, noting that this will need to be addressed at the next Ministerial-level board meeting.

*Informal interaction point.* Day-to-day interactions often occurred in DfES or HO meeting spaces, but without the set agendas imposed by programme boards. One such interaction took place in a small DfES conference room between three Respect Taskforce members, based at the HO, and six DfES civil servants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.8 Respect Taskforce Interaction Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respect Taskforce set up within the HO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect strategy published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES Respect Team formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Programme Boards established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal meetings held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks distributed to originating agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs: work plans, ministerial briefs, communication strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The meeting was called by the DfES in order to develop a more positive ‘public-facing’ narrative about the work of the Respect Team. The most senior DfES member in the room frames the next hour, stating that “We feel we have not told the DfES side of the Respect story. Sometimes we think it is too much about challenge and not enough about support. Our ministers have asked us to develop a communication strategy. We know if we do this in isolation it will not work” (UK001D). Respect Taskforce members respond by noting that they are organising eight upcoming public events and that they would appreciate some organisational help. DfES participants note that they want a plan that will take them through the next six months, and that they often see Taskforce activity plans too late in the game. A DfES participant, from the communications division, abruptly interjects to ask about branding protocols. With the end of the hour quickly approaching, Respect Taskforce members agree to draw up a communication strategy. The senior DfES official scurries out of the room, late for his next appointment.

_Perspectives and impressions._ While the Respect Taskforce was publicly touted as an example of inter-agency collaboration, participants questioned whether their agencies actually shared a common goal. The HO’s aim – to reduce antisocial behaviour – was not the DfES’ primary aim. Although the DfES heavily resourced the Respect Taskforce, their funds flowed to programmes promoting pro-social behaviour. DfES officials argued pro-social behaviour reduced antisocial behaviour, but this was a distinct policy goal requiring distinct metrics and targets. Because of these differences, DfES officials saw their role as preventing the HO from pursuing contradictory work. HO officials acknowledged they needed DfES money and delivery vehicles to meet their principal aims. Rather than come together to construct a middle policy ground, HO officials often exerted their power and pulled rank. A DfES participant reflected that

“The way that relationship works is that they come and try to influence us to deliver things that are conducive to their agenda... That is a very powerful relationship because it is very much a Prime Ministerial priority and it is their baby. The other players are the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit and the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit. That is quite a powerful nexus which impacts very strongly on what we do and how we do things, frankly...There is a less of a sense that we work with them as partners in delivering things” (UK028D).
Other participants expressed similar views: “The key thing with collaboration is a sense of joint ownership. That is definitely lacking. Maybe it is something that we will be able to build over time, but it is not there with the Respect Action Plan” (UK020D).

4.5.3: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Team

History. In 2004, both the DfES and DH published their ‘flagship’ strategies for children and young people. For the DfES, it was the follow-up strategy to Every Child Matters called the Change for Children Programme. For the DH, it was the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services. The Change for Children Programme focused on five broad goals, the first of which was ‘Be Healthy’ and measured using physical and mental health indicators. At the same time, the National Service Framework announced a series of health service targets including, “All children from birth to 18 who have mental health problems and disorders have access to timely, high quality and multidisciplinary mental health services” (p.7). The National Service Framework defined services broadly: from preventative programmes delivered in schools to specialist support services delivered in hospitals. The DH recognised that advancing the preventative agenda required the DfES’ resources and delivery levers. A DfES special advisor lobbied strongly for her department’s participation after an experience on her local primary care trust (UK009D). An 18-year old boy’s suicide exposed the seams between adolescent and adult services, and preventive and specialist support. These transitions were seen as an opportunity space for ‘deep’ collaboration.

Table 4.9: Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Team Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To improve access to mental health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is…</td>
<td>Progress against shared indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA
Day-to-day observations
Interviews with three civil servants
Meeting agendas and notes
In 2005, the DfES and DH agreed to a joint Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Team comprised of four civil servants.

Operational structure. The DfES-DH CAMHS Team, in many ways, functioned like a single agency. Team members subscribed to a common set of goals, but had access to a different set of means. The DH relied on primary care trusts, and the DfES on schools and Children’s Trusts. Children’s Trusts were so new that there was room to shape their brief and their tools; this shaping process tended to play out informally, over email and phone. At the time of fieldwork, there were no standing boards or committees. Team members did convene ad-hoc bilateral ministerial meetings when political decisions needed to be made or when departmental perspectives could not be resolved.

Interaction point. A DH team member arrives at work, turns on his computer, reads an email and calls his fellow DfES team member on a speakerphone. They chat about their commutes to work, and then, for the next hour, discuss how to write a paper to ministers on the state of adolescent mental health services across the country. The DH team member is pressing to include language he knows his minister will like on ‘patient choice’, but the DfES team member pushes back, noting that his ministers are concerned about what ‘patient choice’ means. Table 4.10: CAMHS Team Interaction Sequence.

Table 4.10: CAMHS Team Interaction Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Every Child Matters published</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Service Framework published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES-DH CAHMS Team set-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal day-to-day working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents jointly written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministerial meetings held when necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs: work plans, ministerial briefs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
choice’ means when the patient is under the age of 18. They cobble together a few vague sentences and agree to send the draft up the hierarchy, laughing at the differences in their bosses’ styles and approaches. The team members hang up, saying that they will probably speak to each other later in the day. The DH team member comments on his daily routine, noting “We’re always on the phone; we share documents with each other at their earliest stages. We have team lunches together and socialise. We complain about our bosses to each other... It’s just like you interact with the team that sits next to you” (UK024G).

**Perspectives and impressions.** When reflecting on the CAMHS Team, members emphasised both its casualness and constancy. Unlike programme boards that took place every six weeks, these civil servants were working with each other, virtually, most days. That meant decisions were often made in real time, rather than relegated to another time and place. The DfES special advisor explained that “the real decision-making comes in the thrashing out together what gets recommended to Ministers… I’ve seen lots of drafts and they started out really poor. They got better and better…” Midway through her explanation, the Special Advisor disclosed a dilemma. The draft was still not good enough for her Minister, and she felt torn: should she submit the document as it was or alert her Minister to her concerns? She did the latter, noting that, “I did it not because I wanted to undercut my civil service colleagues but because I just thought we’d get a better document and therefore better advice out there for children” (UK009D). ‘Deep’ collaboration did not always produce the best outputs for each agency; in these cases, hierarchy was needed to move beyond the ‘safe’ middle-ground position.

**4.5.4: Every Child Matters Programme Board**

*History.* Every Child Matters (2003) and the follow-up Change for Children strategy document (2004) served as blueprints for DfES action, and yet many of the featured policy proposals necessitated that the DH, DCMS, DWP, HO and DCLG also act. Cabinet ministers from across government agreed to a cross-
departmental governance structure, including a programme board comprised of Grade 3 civil servants. In speeches and public events, ministers pointed to this Every Child Matters Programme Board as evidence of joined-up government. The focus of the Board evolved over time. In 2003, the Board developed and reviewed relevant cross-departmental policy. By 2006, with most of the formal policies written and in place, the Board oversaw implementation. Keeping to the stated timeline became a top priority which often meant applying pressure to programme boards situated one rung of the hierarchy down, chaired by Grade 5 civil servants. These included the Youth Matters Programme Board, the Safeguarding Children Programme Board, the Criminal Justice Reform Programme Board, etc. Day-to-day coordination was the responsibility of a small secretariat unit within the DfES Child, Youth and Family Directorate. At the time of fieldwork, the unit had been in place for approximately eighteen months.

Operational structure. The 26-member board convened for two hours four times a year under the leadership of the Director-General (Grade 2) of the DfES Child, Youth and Family Directorate. The Director-General’s role was unique in Whitehall: to manage the inter-agency Every Child Matters reforms as well as a large DfES division. He reported to a DfES Minister, while the Every Child Matters Board reported to a cross-departmental ministerial sub-committee. Every six months, ministers were invited to board meetings, mostly to bolster civil servant attendance. Prior to board meetings, members received a formal set of written papers and time permitting, the chair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.11: Every Child Matters (ECM) Board Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication / Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To oversee the ECM: Change for Children Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success is...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-time implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Life Stage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations of one meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debrief after one meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with four civil servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting agendas and notes from secretariat (SM15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
initiated bilateral phone calls, also designed to bolster civil servant attendance. The secretariat unit organised all papers and meeting agendas. The format and sequence of meetings followed a prescribed ‘programme board’ format, beginning with introductions/ apologies and followed by programme updates, delivery risks, new business, and upcoming communications and events.

Interaction point. Twenty-four civil servants convene in a top-floor DfES conference room where they are greeted with teas and coffees. A Secretariat staff member checks attendance. Many officials have sent lower level deputies shifting the power balance of the room from Grade 3 to Grade 5. The chair, noting new faces, proceeds with introductions followed by round-robin updates. Civil servants from each department summarise their department’s latest publications and those in clearance stages. Each calls out dates for comment periods and final submissions. Secretariat staff interject to clarify details for the meeting minutes. The chair then opens the floor to questions. A civil servant inquires when the newly set-up DCLG will release its new list of local authority indicators, and what the implications will be for local children and youth services. There are no additional questions.

The chair introduces the meeting’s presenters: the DfES team responsible for delivering Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), an intervention underpinning a range of education, training, employment, and health policies. They present a deck of PowerPoint slides with an overview of current policy, highlighting plans to shift IAG responsibility to local authorities. The presentation outlines the transference process and commissioning standards, rather than the rationale behind the change. Civil servants from the DH air their concern that devolving responsibility will lead to variation in quality. The presenters note that the government’s independent regulator, Ofsted, will incorporate IAG into their review of local authorities’ children and youth services.

After a short break, the Chair reconvenes the board to review emergent risks and communication messages, and to assess the likelihood of delivery
delays using a standard risk matrix. The meeting concludes with a series of action points, including ‘DfES to update the risk matrix prior to each meeting’ and ‘Board members to contribute to the communications tracker and publicise upcoming events’. The chair gives the date of the next meeting, and urges higher-level civil servant engagement as the Minister for Children, Youth and Families will be in attendance. The meeting is adjourned. As he takes the lift down to his office, the chair asks his staff to rate the meeting out of a 10. They give it 7s. The chair notes that, “Sometimes you walk out of a meeting and think it was really good, but not much got done or accomplished. It is just really hard to know” (UK037D).

**Perspectives and impressions.**

Information sharing, rather than decision-making, took centre stage at *Every Child Matters* Board Meetings. DfES participants conceded that the board structure emphasised routine over dynamic conversation, and was not able to overcome institutional design challenges. A member of the secretariat staff noted that

> “Ideally we would have agenda items that really required that discussion and debate to resolve issues and tensions so [members] felt like they needed to be there… The reality is that the programme board can never be that decision-making forum. Most of the policies that are discussed will be the subject of formal clearance by cabinet committees and through other routes so there is usually another way for people to have their input” (UK002D).

High-level civil servants knew the ‘real’ decision-making hierarchy, and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 4.12: Every Child Matters Programme Board Interaction Sequence</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Every Child Matters (ECM) published</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECM Programme Board established</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECM Secretariat placed in DfES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Board convened quarterly</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information shared and signposted</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministerial committee convened 2x/year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs: ministerial briefs, communication messages</strong></td>
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often sent their deputies. The chair expressed frustration with cross-Whitehall attendance, but participants from outside the DfES saw the board as much a mechanism for the DfES to align itself as to advance an inter-agency agenda. They were uncertain of its inter-agency motivations. As one participant put it, “There was a huge amount of business that needed to be conducted and the DfES knew it needed these boards to join itself up because there were so many bits of the department. So it was very heavily committed to the structures. They were not some add-on. They were its core business. And then they worked out that on some level they needed us or at least they needed us not to be attacking it” (UK034D).

Participants did see value in conflict neutralisation and relationship building. “You see loads of routine stuff and meet loads of people at meetings and people start realising that they should be sharing things with you - at an early enough stage for you to have a relaxed one-on-one conversation about it rather than the stage where it has to be cleared tomorrow” (UK034D). Often, little of the information shared at meetings was new. Participants received the same policy updates as they did at other inter-agency forums, and consistently referred substantive content discussions to offline or bilateral ministerial meetings. The Grade 2 chair of the board saw content repetition as a good thing, particularly for his managers. “One of the advantages of is that it forces senior managers in DfES to regularly think about something after it has been published” (UK037D).

4.5.5: Youth Matters Programme Board

History. The Youth Matters Programme Board stemmed from the 2005 publication of Youth Matters, the DfES strategy document for young people aged 12-18. The strategy writing process was uniformly described as contentious, rife with power plays and inter-agency competition. All of the participants cited poor ministerial direction and unrealistic timelines as the source of the tension. While an output eventually emerged that all ministers could sign off, participants
noted that the process was often the antithesis of collaboration. As one of the lead DfES civil servants explained, “It sounds a bit selfish but we had to convene other groups to be able to achieve what we wanted because we were asked [by ministers] to do something and not tell anybody and develop certain policies in isolation from the cross-Whitehall networks that we set up. And that was a kind of explicit order really” (UK15D). Following the document’s release, the DfES agreed to form a new cross-Whitehall governance structure. They replicated the Every Child Matters Programme Board model, and re-calibrated the collaborative hierarchy accordingly. Youth Matters Programme Board officials reported to the Every Child Matters Programme Board.

Operational Structure. A Grade 3 DfES civil servant chaired the Youth Matters Programme Board, which was regularly attended by mid-level civil servants from the HO, DWP, DCMS, DCLG and DWP, and intermittently attended by senior civil servants from the PMDU and PMSU. Participants convened six times a year for two hours at a time. A DfES-based secretariat coordinated meetings, prepared agendas, and tracked interim activities. Like its parent board, meetings proceeded according to a standard format: introductions, apologies, milestones and risks, presentations and questions, round-robin updates, and closure. Meetings served as a platform for information exchange: milestone updates were a list of the latest outputs (e.g. guidance documents, research reports, toolkits), and presentations followed from formal written papers. The Terms of Reference, however, emphasised information synthesis as much as

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 4.13: Youth Matters Programme Board Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form Communication / Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose To oversee the Youth Matters programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is... On-time implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency Every two months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATA Observations of two meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefs after two meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with eight civil servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting agendas and notes (SM4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
information sharing. It stated that the board was to “bring together contributions across departments to provide coherence.” Coherence was not defined. Meeting frequency, format and attendance were clearly defined.

Interaction point. Eighteen civil servants, ten of whom are from the DfES, enter a large DfES conference room. Tea, coffee, and biscuits are laid out at the entrance. Participants stop to chat: conversations range from the bank holiday that ended the week prior to post-summer workloads. The chair arrives, participants rush to take seats, and agendas are distributed. The meeting begins with introductions. There are three new faces; each has replaced a prior participant who left for a different department or policy portfolio.

The chair then passes the baton over to a DfES colleague to outline a joint communications strategy, prefacing with, “Our minister is keen to keep ahead of the curve. If we could do this with colleagues across Whitehall that would be even better” (UK003D). The DfES speaker talks about wanting to be more proactive, engage in better stakeholder management, and write better briefs to ministers. A civil servant participant wonders what types of policy updates are relevant for a joint communications strategy: what are the inclusion criteria? The DfES speaker responds that she would hate to write inclusion criteria for fear it might exclude a relevant policy. The chair re-enters the conversation to ask if agencies have designated communication staff with whom to liaise. Participants promise to email names to the secretariat. The discussion swiftly moves to milestones and risk analysis, and to exchanges like this:

**DfES participant 1:** So on the milestones paper: are we slipping on the targeted youth support guidance to the field?

**DfES participant 2:** Just to be clear Integrated Youth Support is not the same as Targeted Youth Support. Sorry about the language.

**DfES participant 1:** OK, and so where are we on the guidance for targeted youth support?

**DfES participant 2:** On track to be published in December.

Participants proceed to brainstorming new and unforeseen delivery risks. A
DfES participant mentions that “there is a perpetual risk that will always be there: policies aimed at vulnerable children and young people that are not joined-up” (UK001D). Participants from the DH add to this, saying they are ‘desperate’ to join up their respective policy strands, and another participant concurs, stating “I am living with the fact that we are not joined-up. I have some people toiling away on school-age offenders and I don’t have to go very far to see looked after children, antisocial behaviour, and vulnerable youth. It feels like we need to identify the right occasions to have the right conversations” (UK041D). The chair wonders if the Treasury can put more pressure on departments to join up, or at least to disclose budget proposals with inter-agency implications. A DCLG participant suggests a follow-up action: to ask board members to send in updates on their department’s budget proposals. The secretariat makes a note of this. Participants come up with additional risks, including workforce capacity and professional boundaries, and again participants across agencies take turns emphasising the magnitude of the challenge.

The chair glances at her watch and interrupts to say that they must move on to the scheduled presentation. She introduces the guest presenter: the Director of Children’s Services at a London local authority. He begins by stating that it is heartening to hear civil servants discuss exactly the same issues that he faces at a local level. Then, using PowerPoint, he outlines how *Youth Matters* is playing out in his area: the amount of money set aside for youth activities, the youth engagement team he has assembled, and the number of training programmes on offer for youth.
A DfES participant asks the guest presenter to define success. The presenter replies by saying there is a real dearth of local qualitative data about young people. Much of the data is quantitative, focused on academic achievement, but not on the broader youth well-being policy goals. A PMDU participant jumps in to ask about governance arrangements, and the role of the voluntary sector. The presenter mentions a voluntary sector network. Participants open their notebooks to write down the details. The chair, noting the time, asks the group if there are any closing thoughts and reflections. The table is silent. She adjourns the board.

**Perspectives and impressions.** Participants noted that the procedural focus of the board was well suited for information sharing, enabling them to be kept up to date with inter-agency policy developments. At the same time, several participants noted that questions of fact, rather than questions of judgment, dominated the discussion. Because factual questions only garnered a single response, they did not create a platform for deeper debate. Few participants could recall instances of whole group debate: when participants did interact as a group, it was to talk about joint work, rather than to do joint work. Statements like “We have to link across government because it needs to be a government programme, not a DfES programme” were recorded in the two separate observational transcripts.

The chair acknowledged that joint ownership was not yet a reality. Most joint issues were resolved outside of the Board, politically between ministers, and mid-level civil servants knew this reality. All the mid-level civil servants interviewed referred to deliberately using the boardroom to air, rather than to resolve, issues. “I use the board to get a message out and maybe influence their thinking a bit” (UK007G). ‘Their’ referred to DfES participants. Participants outside the DfES recognised that the DfES did most of the work, and that nearly all risks were owned by the DfES, as were most tasks. Departments retained separate work
portfolios. In a post-meeting debrief, a DfES participant explained that “what you saw yesterday in the Youth Matters Board was that you’ve got reasonably senior people who sit around a table and they’re all coming from their own agendas and objectives and doing some sharing... But it tends to be that you keep going around the table, and say, from DCMS’ perspective, it is not really collaborative” (UK020D). Other participants questioned whether collaborative resolution really mattered when ministers made the final call anyway. “It’s better to leave the meeting and feel you’ve had your say because ministers will decide to go in a different direction” (UK010G).

4.5.6: Targeted Youth Support Programme Board

_History._ Targeted Youth Support (TYS), introduced in _Youth Matters_, was an ambitious policy package designed to change the content and delivery of support services for vulnerable young people and their families. Government pledged to embed TYS within every English local authority by 2008, despite concurrent changes to children’s services as a result of the _Every Child Matters_ agenda. By 2006, 30 local authorities were piloting TYS, but there were another 120 local authorities to bring on line in less than two years.

Given the delivery scale, the DfES asked the PMDU to help them chart out an optimal implementation strategy. The PMDU, using consultancy methods, conducted a ‘design review’ with the HO, DH, DfES, and Youth Justice Board, YJB, to name what enabled and blocked change. The review recommended seven work streams to manage two main challenges: a lack of shared understanding and system design complexities. Work stream seven, monitoring and responding to risks and issues, involved setting up a new cross-Whitehall programme board. The DfES assigned a Grade 7 civil servant to organise this new board. At the time of fieldwork, the organiser was immersed in planning and board recruitment. No meetings had yet been held. The organiser was part of the collaborative enquiry group I facilitated, which enabled me to observe and contribute to the early ‘design’ phase of this joint initiative.
Operational structure. The PMDU’s design review conceptualised the Targeted Youth Support Board as the “main official level decision-making body.” The board was to be responsible for advancing all seven work streams and managing associated risks. Senior DfES participants saw the board in similar terms and emphasised its visibility-raising potential, arguing that “because TYS is quite an umbrella sort of project and has a lot of interests, and it’s got a lower profile than I think it should, my current thing is the need to raise its profile... When I attend meetings, it’s as much to tell some important stakeholders about policy and what’s happening as it is to do their business frankly” (UK013D). Mid-level DfES participants responsible for Targeted Youth Support described needing a ‘piece of machinery’ to denote the boundaries and significance of their work.

The TYS Board would report to the Youth Matters Programme Board, which in turn reported to the ECM Programme Board and to ministers. TYS was at the ‘bottom’ of a larger collaborative hierarchy, and closer to the staff responsible for writing the commissioning frameworks, guidance documents and ministerial briefs. The collaborative hierarchy came with operating procedures. Programme Boards followed the same operating sequence: introductions/apologies, papers/presentations, questions, risks, communications, any other business (AOB), and closure. The predictability of the programme board fitted the short timeline faced by TYS staff for the launch of the new structure. As the organiser commented at the first collaborative enquiry group session, “there is no time to put together a problems. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Communication / Coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To oversee Targeted Youth Support reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>Not yet defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Not yet defined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA
Four enquiry group sessions
Two post-enquiry group debriefs
Interviews with 4 civil servants
full process” (UK043I).

Interaction point. At the first collaborative enquiry group session, the organiser decides that she wants to think through the traditional sequence of the programme board and ensure it is fit for purpose. Fellow enquiry group members ask her what ‘fit for purpose’ means and how she might define success. The organiser lists the performance benchmarks to which she is held accountable: identifying the key policy areas which overlap with TYS, meeting with participants from those overlapping areas, writing a draft of the guidance document, and ensuring cross-departmental colleagues have time to input and not just ‘okay’ emergent products.

In subsequent enquiry group sessions, the organiser brainstorms the conditions that need to be in place to enable civil servants to truly input. She resolves to ask the civil servants with whom she has been having preparatory bilateral meetings. A week later, she crafts an email to civil servant colleagues and includes a very early draft of the Terms of Reference, which starts with a section on purpose. Rather than propose language, the organiser poses a series of questions: what do participants see as the reason for meeting? How might they use the board meeting to develop products? She notes that the first product, the guidance document, has a strict deadline and wonders how to manage the development process in a time-pressured context.

The email goes out, and over the next two days, the organiser receives a number of responses. They are not what she expects. “I learned through this process of sending a very early draft document around that… their responses were quite hostile. They couldn’t believe the timeline and felt ignored up to this point. I think the email hit against normal practice because I showed them such an early draft without everything included or set” (UK043I). Rather than respond to the questions, participants express dismay that they have not been asked sooner. They want to see a full draft of documents first, not co-develop them from the beginning. From these exchanges, the organiser concludes that the most useful
function of the TYS Board is to ensure that participants feel heard. She adds this as an explicit purpose to the Terms of Reference and continues to work on the guidance document on her own, aiming to have a full draft to share by the inaugural meeting.

*Impressions and perspectives.*

Because of the number of programme boards in existence, the TYS Board organiser discovered that participants were reluctant to perform differently. They expected to see full drafts on which to comment rather than questions to openly answer. Participants were accustomed to using the board as a platform to air departmental concerns. HO civil servants were particularly worried about the ability of TYS to help them deliver on their priorities. There was a high-level of scepticism about ‘yet another’ DfES reform, and a growing sense of policy fatigue. As a top-tier DfES participant noted after a presentation on TYS to colleagues, “I felt that the response to this was chilly; it was very hard to read faces and felt even more like a formal boardroom than normal” (UK013D). Civil servants from across Whitehall were volunteering to take part in the board, but many wanted to monitor what was going on rather than actively contribute. The programme board structure was seen as the best mechanism for managing risks; it was not necessarily seen as a mechanism for product development.

Table 4.16: Targeted Youth Support Board Interaction Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Matters published with TYS proposal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMDU conducted ‘design review’ of TYS and recommended Programme Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES assigned Programme Board to civil servant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servant organiser asked for participant input</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant responses indicated preference for standard operating procedure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First meeting scheduled</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected output: guidance document</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section 4.6: Bridging performances

4.6.1: Department of Health-Department for Education and Skills Partnership Agreement

History. In 2004, the DH’s Corporate Communications Division commissioned research on external stakeholder perceptions. The study concluded that “Stakeholders generally found DH itself hard to navigate; they didn’t always feel that they were being listened to; they didn’t necessarily understand the DH agenda and felt that in relation to other government departments, there wasn’t a lot of coherence between their objectives and DH objectives” (UK017G). Top-tier DfES civil servants uniformly expressed frustration with the poor visibility of children and youth issues within the DH. One senior DfES manager characterised the relationship with DH as “generally, reasonably good, but it can be prickly… I mean that prickly often reflects how limited their resources are in this area. Their priorities are not quite the same as ours and their ways of working are very different as well” (UK033D). Another DfES civil servant noted the difficulty of progressing joint policies because DH performance indicators were disease-specific, rather than population-focused.

In 2005, the DH responded by setting up a two-person Partnership Unit charged with coordinating their inter-agency work. That meant having a longer-term strategic view and establishing formal bilateral relationships between the DH and other agencies with health interests, from the Department of Defence to the HO. Relationships were cemented in Partnership Agreements, which specified overlapping policy areas and often established a bilateral board. To prepare the agreements, unit staff would ‘google’ agencies, read their online strategy documents, and compile a list of shared priorities. They noted that since there was no government-wide database, the internet was often the best source of information. At the time of the fieldwork, the DH civil servants were finishing a draft of the DH-DfES Agreement.

Operational structure. The DH-DfES Partnership Agreement references
shared policies (Every Child Matters and the National Services Framework) and shared public management strategies (clear national standards, devolution and delegation to the frontline, flexibility, and diversity). The document suggests a formal bilateral governance board, but acknowledges that the ECM Programme Board already exists and may be the preferred mechanism. Unit staff argued that new bilateral structures focus on communication and advocacy, not policy development. “…We are not building on the policy or taking the policy issue forward, what we are doing is saying this policy issue has hit the bottom a bit, and that representatives from the department should go back to their teams and say we’re aware that there is a problem and what can we do in order to get it back on track” (UK017G)? When asked to describe how to judge the success of bilateral structures, DH participants cited improved awareness and inter-agency relations; the first to be measured by ‘how well the word has been spread’ and the latter by “senior people meeting and using the meetings to help steer agendas for the Permanent Secretary and Secretary of State.” At the time of fieldwork, unit staff used the ECM Programme Board as their primary communication platform, and supplemented this with more informal, bilateral meetings if and as needed.

*Interaction point.* There were no formal bilateral meetings held during fieldwork, but I was able to read high-level bilateral communications between DfES and DH officials and discuss the chain of events with those officials.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To proactively respond to structural DH-DfES issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>Better inter-agency relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>As needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA**

Interviews with four civil servants
Meeting agendas, notes, minutes, letters (SM5)

This case study does not have a corresponding observational point.
describe these interactions—which included formal letter exchanges—in the past tense, as I was privy to them after the fact. Formal letter exchanges are a joined-up mechanism, just like formal boards and committees.

The DfES Director-General of Children, Youth and Families initiated a letter exchange with the DH’s Director of Health and Care Partnerships (Grade 2). The DfES Director-General’s letter noted his concern with the DH’s revised departmental priorities: children and youth were not one of the six priorities. The DfES believed that this would have a detrimental effect on joined-up service delivery. The DH’s Director replied saying that the National Service Framework clearly communicated their commitment to child and youth well-being. The DH Director then suggested working on a series of communication materials for the field that reiterated the DH and DfES’ commitment to joined-up delivery. The DfES Director-General agreed to a series of bilateral meetings on the topic; meetings were scheduled after fieldwork ended.

_Perspectives and impressions._

While the Partnership Unit and its Partnership Agreements were designed to improve relations with the DfES, none of the DfES participants I interviewed identified these two mechanisms. Instead, they continued to talk about the need for the two agencies to come together. The letter exchange between the two agencies’ Director-Generals underlined the desire for more inter-agency alignment. The Partnership Agreement was not conceptualised as

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**Table 4.18: DH-DfES Partnership Agreement Interaction Sequence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction Sequence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DH commissioned research on stakeholder perceptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH set-up Partnership Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH drafted Partnership Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director-Generals exchanged letters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future bilateral meetings agreed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected output: bi-lateral meetings, field guidance, communication messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
a mechanism for achieving that alignment, but rather as a means for opening up communication channels. DH and DfES officials noted that the letter exchange would have occurred with or without a Partnership Agreement, and central agency officials saw the letter exchange as indicative of a deeper divide between the DH and DfES, one that could not be solved through joint agreements or partnership units. A top-tier PMDU official, having just finished a review of on-the-ground service delivery between the DH and DfES, commented that the two organisations “in effect have two parallel delivery systems for the world of education and elements of children’s services and the world of health... The thing that struck us is that they are incompatible at every level. Structurally, in terms of methodology, outlook, funding, and management, they are completely independent. It’s not just about the top not working; it’s about the bottom not working too” (UK018G).

4.6.2: Children and Young People’s Steering Group

*History.* By all civil servant and ministerial accounts, the DfES and the HO had a complex relationship, which played out in a range of standing bilateral meetings between ministers and top-tier civil servants, and in programme boards and parallel teams. The DfES hired an independent consultant to improve the flow of work between the DfES and HO; a clearer joint governance structure was recommended. The Children and Young People’s Steering Group, once internal to the HO, was expanded to include the DfES. As one of the organisers recalled, “The consultant’s recommendations are about getting a very high level overview discussion, which the [Director General of DfES] and his counterpart at HO chair every couple of months and that is designed to really understand what the priorities are and squeeze out some subsidiary discussions... so that you do not to generate masses of stuff needing to be escalated” (UK035D). The assumption was a new top-down structure would minimise bottom-up discord. HO civil servants described DfES as ‘very process-driven’, while DfES civil servants described the HO as ‘very ministerial-driven.’ Asked to provide examples, civil servants used
similar terminology to talk about each other. A HO manager said of the DfES, “They see their job to send off agendas to their ministers two weeks before the meeting, whether the right things are on the agenda is less important it seems to them… They see their job to tick boxes basically a little bit”… (UK017G) A DfES manager said of the HO, meanwhile, that “they just create meetings for the sake of meetings, and programme boards for the sake of having one, even if there was something else where it would seem there was another way of doing it” (UK003D).

**Operational structure.** The Children and Young People’s Steering Group, co-chaired by the Director-Generals (Grade 2) of the DfES and the HO, met for one hour every quarter. During fieldwork, the inaugural meeting was held. Meetings were intended to facilitate open conversation. The Terms of Reference talked about meetings as a space for horizon scanning and conflict resolution. Given that meetings were short, participants questioned whether they could meet such broad aims. Aware of the scepticism, a HO official responsible for arranging meetings stated, “One of the things I am struggling with is making that a really, really useful meeting. Rather than the meeting where people sit there in their own department and moan, or there is a really big cultural divide going on but it never ever gets properly surfaced because everyone is too scared to do it”… (UK017G)

**Meeting.** Fifteen participants make their way through the brightly-lit DfES lobby, up the glass lift, and into a conference room overlooking seven floors of open-plan offices. Participants from the HO and DfES know each other, and sit
interspersed. Everyone, except the two steering group chairs, has their boss in the room. Agendas are distributed, and the DfES Director-General calls the meeting to order. He announces he is the facilitator, but that his HO counterpart will assume the facilitation role next time when they meet at the HO. He turns to the Terms of Reference and asks if participants can agree to the group structure outlined, which includes meeting frequency, members, and paper-sharing protocols. There are no substantive comments.

With the Terms of Reference approved, the DfES chair opens up a discussion about the steering group’s core purpose. He offers his rationale for meeting: “Joined-up working is happening on the ground, but the question is how can we oversee services better and oversee the people on the ground better” (UK037D). The Home Office Director-General offers her version of the purpose: “From the DfES perspective, we hear it can be difficult to relate to the HO because you don’t know who to talk to about child protection and the prevention of crime. But, we are increasingly joining up, and we thought this group could help provide an overview” (UK044G). A question is posed: what value can the steering group add? A HO participant says that the group should focus on vulnerable young people, while another remarks that the two organisations have been making steady progress. A DfES participant describes the philosophical differences between the two organisations, and wonders if these can actually be resolved; another participant says that the group can add value by taking on the point of view of young people. Yet another HO participant proposes that the group address immigration issues. A mid-level DfES participant speaks up, questioning how the group can help manage the different targets and data sources used in policymaking.

The DfES chair clarifies that the group should not set new priorities, but advance existing ones. He suggests that they learn how priorities are playing out on the ground by compiling data on the issues front-line deliverers face. A HO participant points out that the PMDU has already collated some perceptions data:
could they just acquire that? A DfES participant shakes his head and says that collecting data does not address the fundamental issue: does the DfES and the HO share the same priorities? The DfES is ultimately about educational attainment and reducing the numbers of young people not engaged in education, training, or employment. What are the HO’s priorities? A HO participant retorts: “Our goals are to reduce re-offending and to decrease first time entrance into the criminal justice system. Our priorities are related if not expressed in the same way”(UK027G).

The DfES chair reiterates his belief that local data would help the group move outside their boxes, and asks a DfES colleague to pull existing data together and present it at the next meeting. In the final ten minutes, there are round-robin updates. Participants mention the strategy documents and ministerial briefs on which they are working. The chair thanks participants for their time and closes by saying he is very encouraged by their open conversation.

Perspectives and impressions.
In debriefs, participants described a disconnect between the group’s purpose and function. Participants engaged in a monologue, rather than a dialogue, according to one participant: “A lot of things were tossed into the air… wouldn’t it be a great forum to do this or that? Everyone just said a few things about the two departments and the way they worked. But they were completely and utterly unrelated to each other... We didn’t really get anywhere, I don’t think”(UK027G). A top-tier DfES official still struggled to see the relevance of the Steering Group. “I personally think this

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.20: Children and Young People’s Steering Group Interaction Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research commissioned on DfES-HO relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Reference written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and perceptions shared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
particular collaborative mechanism is pointless. There are of course many other areas we do or will need to do business with the HO, but I struggle a little to see why we would raise them through this mechanism rather than directly with X, Y, or Z… (UK001D)” Another HO official felt it was less about the mechanism, and more about the poor facilitation. She hoped future meetings would take on a single challenge point, map out options, and tease out what a good decision looked like. But, she doubted that was realistic in an hour. The second meeting of the steering group took place after fieldwork concluded, but emails with civil servants suggest similar frustrations emerged.

4.6.3: Department for Education and Skills Away Day

*History.* *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters* were both cross-departmental strategies led by the DfES. Within the DfES, the Children and Young People’s Directorate steered the package of reforms, and within that directorate, the Supporting Children and Young People’s Group (SCYPG) took responsibility for both universal and targeted youth policy. SCYPG was spread across two cities (London and Sheffield), and was split between two policy frames (positive youth engagement and negative risk behaviour). Recent staff turnover and structural shifts meant that many DfES civil servants had never met, and were unfamiliar with each other’s policy briefs. These civil servants shared one major task: writing the new 10-Year Youth Strategy, which was to be the follow-up to *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters*. While the strategy was to have a cross-departmental seal of approval, the DfES would do the legwork. SCYPG’s Director organised an Away Day for staff to meet and chart out how to work collectively on the task that lay ahead. While this case study describes intra-agency rather than inter-agency joining-up, I include it because its complexity and context mirrors that of the other inter-agency joined-up initiatives presented in this chapter.

*Operational structure.* The Away Day was facilitated by an external consultant and modelled on the PMDU’s interactive workshops. Tools and technology, such as whiteboards, Post-it notes, and small group work, were
explicitly incorporated into the design of the two-day session. The agenda showcased a mixture of fun time and group thinking time, including sessions on future strategy, barriers, and implementation processes.

Interaction point. Thirty-five civil servants roll their wheelie bags into a hotel conference room and take seats in front of a projector, just as they would in a cinema. Many of the participants have taken the same train to get here, and are now in a playful and chatty mood. The SCYPG Director welcomes staff and begins by ‘rallying the troops.’ She lists the group’s accomplishments, highlighting the number of projects completed, ministerial briefs written, and resources commandeered. Reading from the Chancellor of the Exchequer’s recent speech on young people, she excitedly notes their work has only increased in importance and visibility. She then cedes the floor to an ‘inspirational’ guest speaker who will ‘get everyone in the right space’ for the day ahead.

The ‘inspirational’ guest speaker introduces himself as a former civil servant, comedian and author. For an hour, he tells story after story of the young ‘misfits’ and ‘troublemakers’ he has encountered over his many years as a teacher and schools inspector. There is the eight-year old who asks questions no one else dares utter, and the fifteen year-old who leads his peers in a revolt over the school’s ‘cruel’ toilet paper. The audience rolls with laughter, some even wiping tears from their faces. Food follows laughter. At a big group dinner, participants exchange their favourite childhood tales and tribulations.

The next morning, the ‘group thinking’ begins. SCYPG’s Deputy Director

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.21: DfES Away Day Overview</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coordination</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To bring together the Supporting Children and Young People's Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success is...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better relationships across the group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral (within one department)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Stage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of two days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debrief after each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with eight civil servants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting agendas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
frames the day’s activities. The core message is: “We’re about children and young people. Success is delivering to our ministers, helping them to set a bigger-picture strategic vision for children and young people” (UK020D). The professional facilitator steps in to announce that they will discuss this strategic vision in small groups, and then reconvene as one large group later in the afternoon.

In the first small group, ten participants sit around a blank wall with markers and Post-it notes to brainstorm the elements of a strategic vision. They arrive at a point of consensus: there needs to be more joining-up, within and between agencies and around ‘real’ young people. Here is a snippet of their conversation:

**Participant 1**: Can we learn from the local level? They always say they don’t work in silos. We’ve got to be seen to join up. If we at the central level cannot work within our own department and with schools, how do we expect local authorities to?

**Participant 2**: How do we best capture that?

**Participant 3**: Understanding your delivery chain? Involving the field in some way would be good. The biggest complaint I get from regional government offices is that it doesn’t feel joined-up when they try to make sense of it all.

**Participant 4**: We are very good at programme boards and working with ministers, but don’t know how at the ground level. We need to be able to integrate discrete programmes into the existing delivery chain.

**Participant 1**: Yes and we don’t have a real understanding of young people’s lives. It was so lovely hearing our speaker last night because he brought children back into our world.

**Participant 6**: We want real stuff from young people, not just case studies, to bring us together.

In a second small group, nine participants stand around an easel and generate questions for the 10-Year Youth Strategy. They come up with four: (1) what are our priorities? (2) How can we better engage with non-governmental stakeholders?; (3) What is the relationship between what we have designed and what is delivered locally?; and (4) Are the right incentives and outcomes in place? They agree that in order to answer these questions they need to figure out how to ‘work better together’ across the group and with other agencies.

When the full group reconvenes later in the afternoon, the facilitator names the common themes: the need to join up ‘side-to-side’ and ‘bottom-up’. The SCYPG leadership promises to assemble a smaller working group to lead integrative practice across the group. The day concludes with an evaluation of the
Away Day. Each participant receives a sticker to place along a continuum from zero to ten. Nine is the most popular.

*Perspectives and impressions.* Compared to other observational points, this example stood out for its informality and length. There was more time and space for conversation and analysis. Honest dialogue was made easier because all the participants worked within the same political and policy context and reported to the same minister. While the Away Day was designed to increase joining-up, participants spent much of the day proclaiming the need to join up.

Participants reasoned that they needed to model joining-up, but struggled to visualise what that would look like. The day after the Away Day, a participant argued that “there is a lot of cross-divisional and cross-group work that is the same. There are collisions on policy priorities. I think we could theme our work strands more” (UK011D). A week later, another participant commented that “we need a sense of where we are heading to help us better integrate. I would like to see us agree how to work together” (UK005D). The SCYPG Director began to look at how to restructure the group, but most participants were weary of structural change as a mechanism for joining-up. They noted that the ECM reforms were all about structures and systems, and that they have not been able to solve the joining-up dilemma.
Section 4.7: Chapter summary

Comparing the ‘overview tables’ accompanying each case study underscores the range of joined-up practice observed: three case studies were bilateral and seven were multilateral; three were in the design phase and seven were in the early production/production phase; two were teams, seven were boards and one was a discrete event; two qualified as collaboration, four as coordination, and another four wavered between communication and coordination. Despite these differences, the ten case studies shared some similar features:

- Joint initiatives, with the exception of the DfES Away Day, came out of published strategy documents or commissioned research. These strategies and research documents set the rationale for joining-up, and suggested particular structures and roles. These recommendations tended to serve as a template from which organisers worked.
- All but two case studies relied on formal joined-up structures, including programme boards, officials groups, ministerial groups, and secretariat units. The CAMHS and Respect Teams were the only examples of ongoing informal structures, although the latter fed into formal programme boards and ministerial groups.
- Formal structures enabled participants to voice their minister’s position and to both hear and provide inter-agency updates. Yet participants did not always equate joined-up structures with joined-up government. In over half of the observed interaction points, participants talked about the need for joined-up government whilst participating in a joined-up programme board, officials group, or away day.
- Most work happened outside of joined-up structures, and was assigned to single agencies to take forward. Full drafts might then receive airtime in joined-up structures, though just as often, concerns were escalated to ministers for resolution. Once ministers engaged, civil servants reverted
to single-agency mode: writing ministerial briefs defending their agency’s position, and clearly articulating organisational interests. In the one example where work was completed jointly and informally – within the CAMHS Team – top-tier DfES civil servants raised concerns about work quality and circumvented joined-up negotiating for direct ministerial decision-making.

- Participants in joint initiatives ultimately performed to and for their ministers. Each joint initiative, except the DfES Away Day, sat within a clearly defined collaborative hierarchy with ministers on top. Consequently, participants spoke of having limited decision-making authority. Joint initiatives were organised less around decision-making and more around information sharing, risk analysis, and communications planning. These three tasks appeared on every formal meeting agenda in England’s dataset.

In Chapter Five, I present ten case studies of joint initiatives in the New Zealand youth policy space, and as with England, highlight the range of practice observed. An examination of the differences and similarities in joined-up practice between the two countries can help us to better understand the relationship between practice and performance, and to identify the factors which shape both practice and performance.
Chapter Five: Joined-up practice in New Zealand

This chapter describes joined-up working across the youth policy space in New Zealand, answering the first research question: What does it look like for civil servants to join up?

Section 5.1: Chapter structure

This chapter offers readers a closer look at New Zealand civil servants’ joined-up practice. The New Zealand dataset contains thirty examples of joining-up in and across the youth policy space. For each joined-up example, participants were asked about what they exchanged with their inter-agency colleagues. In twelve instances, civil servants shared information with each other. In another fourteen instances, civil servants worked towards a shared product, such as a piece of legislation, a research report, or a guidance document. In two instances, civil servants described sharing a common outcome measure. In another two instances, I did not have enough information to classify the type of joined-up work.

Figure 5.1: Amount and form of joined-up practice in the New Zealand youth policy space

- Sharing information (communication or cooperation)
- Sharing products (coordination)
- Sharing outcomes (collaboration)
- Not enough information to classify
Of the thirty examples, eleven occurred at the time of fieldwork. I use ten of these examples as case studies, selecting those where I had access to interview, observational, and documentary data. To help readers make sense of these case studies, I first identify the civil servants and agencies engaged in joining-up, the youth policy backdrop against which civil servants joined-up, and the types of tools available to join up.

Section 5.2: Civil servants

In comparison to the forty-four civil servants interviewed in England, in New Zealand I conducted full-length interviews with sixty-seven civil servants across thirteen public sector bodies. The large number of organisations with a stake in youth policymaking reflects the country’s 1980s reforms, when large departments were split into much smaller policy and delivery agencies (see Section 5.3 section for more details). This policy-delivery split was still evident in civil servants’ job titles and job descriptions, and in the variation of agency structures and hierarchies. Agencies used their own naming conventions: policy managers in one agency were policy advisors in another, while operational managers in some agencies were known as coordinators in others. I have recalibrated job titles according to rank and distribution of tasks, which yielded six categories: chief executives, general managers, directors, policy advisors, managers, and senior policy analysts. Chief executives directed large agencies, setting strategy and internal organisational policies. General managers oversaw organisational units and managed relationships with ministers. Directors managed sub-units or operational divisions. Policy advisors provided high-level ministerial guidance and strategic foresight. Managers led teams of policy analysts. Senior policy analysts wrote policy briefs and took forward programmes of work.  

1 See Appendix M for more detailed descriptions of civil servant roles and responsibilities.
Civil servants spanned a range of public sector bodies, including central agencies, functional agencies, population-based agencies, and crown entities. While on paper, the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) coordinated comprehensive youth policy, its parent agency -- the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) -- controlled the larger budget, reported to the higher-ranking cabinet minister, and administered key delivery systems such as welfare benefits, student benefits, and child protection.

The MYD had not always existed within the MSD. First established in 1989, the Ministry of Youth Affairs, as it was then called, was an independent agency charged with providing second-opinion policy advice on issues affecting young people, ages 12 to 24. In 2003, a government-wide capability review concluded that the Ministry of Youth Affairs had “insufficient policy capability, resources, and systems to operate as a sector leader” and recommended a merger with the MSD (State Services Commission, 2003). The MYD’s own internal research indicated they struggled, as a small agency, to gain a legitimate seat at the policy table. External stakeholders perceived the MYD as an advocacy network rather than a serious policy outfit capable of direct negotiation with larger functional agencies (e.g. NZ014D). The merger decreased the MYD’s autonomy and visibility, but increased its access to larger, functional agencies.

While the MSD was the largest functional agency, and the dominant player in the youth policy space, other functional agencies played a supportive youth policy role. These agencies included the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and Police. Each oversaw an on-the-ground delivery system that had young people as one core user group. Functional agencies without responsibility for local delivery systems played a more variable role in youth policy. For example, the Department of Labour (DOL) and the Ministry of Economic Development (MED) cycled in and out of youth policy spaces, depending on ministerial interest. Regulation, rather than direct service, was their primary lever. Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) was another
peripheral policy player. SPARC entered youth policy spaces to address a narrow subset of issues—nutrition and exercise—using marketing and mobilisation as primary policy levers. Two other population agencies, the Ministry of Maori Affairs (TPK) and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA), inconsistently contributed to youth policy. These agencies relied on policy levers like stakeholder engagement processes and interest group advocacy to influence policy outcomes.

Two crown entities interacted in the youth policy space during fieldwork: the Alcohol Advisory Council (AAC) and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Like both functional and population agencies, crown entities reported to ministers. Unlike these government agencies, they had narrower policy remits and could take explicitly political stances. Their deep issue expertise and networks served as their most potent levers.

The last class of public sector bodies, central or executive agencies, had access to very potent policy levers. At the time of fieldwork, in 2007-2008, central agencies were reasserting their public management authority following the 1980s reforms; they were rethinking the levers they had access to: money, personnel, and performance. The Treasury oversaw spending; the State Services Commission (SSC) oversaw personnel; and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) monitored agency performance and set government-wide priorities. These central agencies, unlike England’s central agencies, infrequently intervened in youth policy. See Table 5.1 for a summary of what differentiated public sector bodies.²

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levers</th>
<th>Functional agencies</th>
<th>Population agencies</th>
<th>Crown entities</th>
<th>Central agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local delivery systems</td>
<td>Programme funding</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme funding</td>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
<td>Professional Networks</td>
<td>Personnel</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

² See Appendix N for a full description of agency roles and perceptions.
Section 5.3: Policy context

New Zealand’s youth policy space was defined by international rankings. Family poverty, youth suicide, school-leaving, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases, and obesity rates exceeded the Western average. A 2005 UNICEF report found that the proportion of New Zealand children living in homes below 50 percent of the median income was increasing at a higher rate than in other OECD countries (UNICEF, 2005). New Zealand’s teenage pregnancy rates were the third highest in the Western world, and youth female suicide rates were the highest in the world. The number of early school-leavers in New Zealand also hovered at the top of international league tables (Ministry of Social Development, 2005). These were the issues which interested ministers.

At the time of the fieldwork, the Labour-led coalition government argued that prior government actions were to blame. In the 1980s, a decline in trade, oil shocks, chronic inflation and high interest rates were met with a sharp reduction in governmental intervention and a sweeping restructuring of New Zealand public services. Domestic markets were deregulated, imported good protection mechanisms were dropped, welfare benefits were cut, eligibility criteria tightened, core government functions privatised, policy and delivery functions split, and competition was introduced in the public sector, particularly after 1990 when a National government came into power (Boston, *et al*., 1999). New Public Management principles firmly took root.

Academic researchers have statistically linked these policy reforms with New Zealand’s poor child and youth outcomes. Blaiklock, *et al* conclude that, “From 1984 the major policy emphasis was on restoring the New Zealand economy, with an assumption that strong economic growth would allow the well-being of children and their families to improve. Universal policies for children were abandoned in favour of highly targeted provisions…The reforms have been associated with growing inequality and levels of poverty” (2002).

At the same time, the reforms have been widely credited with improved
fiscal performance, transparency, and efficiency (Scott, et al., 1997). In 1999, Helen Clark’s Labour-Progressive Party Alliance came into power promising a better balance between fiscal performance and social sector performance. The Alliance looked to increase the strategic capacity of government to solve social problems. This corresponded with academic analysis that “the strategic capacity of government had been neglected in the [New Public Management] framework, producing a short-term focus and inattention to the collective side of government” (Halligan, 2007, p.222).

Increased strategic capacity translated into a range of high-level strategy documents, released after 2000. In the youth policy field, that has included a youth development strategy, a youth offending strategy, a suicide prevention strategy, and youth health strategies.

The Youth Development Strategy, published by the then Ministry of Youth Affairs in 2002, was intended to offer a government-wide framework for youth policy issues. Internal cabinet documents authorising the strategy argued that it would “shift thinking across all sectors of Government… to a positive focus on young people with a role as active participants in their development” (SEQ 01 14, 2001, p.2). The document embraced an asset-based view of young people, as evidenced by its vision statement, “All young people in New Zealand are supported and empowered to take up new challenges and to see a fulfilling role” (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2002, p.1). Rather than outline a set of policies, the strategy set out an approach to youth policymaking: young people were not problems to be fixed, but assets to their families and communities. Risk behaviour was to be looked at from a developmental and environmental lens. In late 2001, Cabinet approved the strategy and instructed functional agencies to ‘consider’ its implications in their own policy development processes.

A 2004 study, commissioned by the MYD, found low take-up of the strategy in cross-governmental policy processes (Hong, 2004). While policy development was a prime role of the Ministry of Youth Development, with a
policy team of ten, there were simply not enough human resources or political muscle to embed the strategy within all the larger functional agencies. Even the Ministry’s policy manager was aware that “the Youth Development Strategy is more a statement of philosophy. It didn’t go into specifics of intervention logic or a delineation of what the gaps are in terms of quality of practice across the sectors…For it to have been a strategy in any literal sense, it would have had to have that level of direction with a cabinet endorsement and a subsequent impact on agency work programmes” (NZ001D).

Far more embedded was Government’s 2002 Youth Offending Strategy. Co-written by the MOJ and the Ministry of Social Services and Employment (the precursor to the MSD), the document introduced a new delivery mechanism, Youth Offending Teams, and described a range of new performance and governance tools. Seven action areas were identified to bolster system leadership, shift resources towards prevention, and adopt a coherent, multi-systemic response to offending (p.1). In interviews, civil servants from across the youth justice space, including police, child protection, courts, health, and education, held the strategy up as one of the ‘best’ examples of joined-up working. Those in charge of implementing the strategy believed that it had “provided a degree of leadership to the ground and across government departments, and enabled discussions of some quite critical and strategic issues for youth offending, but now needed to be revisited and reprioritised” (NZ32D).

The New Zealand Youth Suicide Strategy was also being revisited at the time of fieldwork. First published in 1998 by the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the document was, on paper, a partnership between the MOH, TPK, and the MYD. In 1999, delivery responsibility shifted from the Ministry of Youth Affairs to the MOH, but in 2000 responsibility fell back to the Ministry of Youth Affairs, and then in 2005 the MOH once again assumed delivery responsibilities under the auspices of an all-age suicide prevention strategy. Whereas the youth-specific strategy highlighted increasing protective factors in communities, such as the role
of cultural development, the all-age suicide strategy placed more focus on mental health services and on reducing the means available for suicide. At the time of the fieldwork, stakeholders were developing an action plan to put the all-age suicide strategy into practice.

The *Youth Health Action Plan*, written by the MOH at the same time as the Youth Development and Youth Offending Strategies, had no means to influence practice (2002). No new resources, delivery mechanisms, or performance frameworks were put forward. The document simply signposted future work, such as to “develop clear communication, collaboration and evaluation strategies” in a wide variety of settings: families, schools, communities, district health boards, etc. Not a single civil servant, inside or outside the MOH, referenced the Action Plan. Instead, they talked about issue-specific documents, like the 2006 *Mission-on* Action Plan tackling poor nutrition and childhood obesity. Unlike the Action Plan, *Mission-on* came with a defined policy programme and a dedicated funding stream.

While civil servants identified other youth policy programmes, such as school to employment transitions and a youth minimum wage, they were not active or visible at the time of the fieldwork. The programmes which were visible reinforced a dominant youth policy frame: one which contextualised young people in the environments in which they lived and interacted. Authors Wyn and Harris (2004) describe New Zealand’s youth policy space as a conceptual blend between indigenous discourse, an American-style positive psychology, and a British-style sociological deviance. Adolescence is viewed as “interdependent with a complex matrix of kin and environmental relationships and responsibilities” (p.278).

**Section 5.4: Tools**

The contextualised view of young people was embedded as a philosophical, rather than a managerial framework. Youth policy documents offered few specific tools for embedding the philosophy. They broadly emphasised ‘working together’ and ‘increased coordination and collaboration’. These phrases were used more
widely than ‘joined-up government’. I continue to use the phrase joined-up government for consistency, and because civil servants defined ‘working together’ and ‘joined-up government’ in the same way. Central agencies, at the time of field work, were producing a growing number of documents detailing how agencies could better work together. These documents applied across all policy areas, not just youth policy.

The Government’s 2002 Review of the Centre was the first document to signal a shift in public management style, away from departmentalism and towards what they termed ‘coordinated state agencies’. In 2005, the SSC put in place metrics to capture progress. Coordinated state agencies were to be measured by: (1) the extent to which behaviours exhibited by civil servants supported coordination in pursuit of results and (2) the extent to which systems supported strategy, design and service delivery staff to work together (SSC, 2006, p.43). While civil servant behaviours were never codified or systematically measured, both central and functional agencies began to create new tools for working together at a strategic policy and a local delivery level; these included rhetorical, structural, process, financial, and accountability tools.

Rhetorical tools shaped what civil servants defined as ‘normal’ and ‘expected’ practice. The public service code of conduct, which was frequently referenced by participants, stated that civil servants were to be “fair, impartial, responsible and trustworthy.” The code of conduct said nothing about working together, and actually encouraged civil servants to think in terms of their

Table 5.2: Documentary evidence for New Zealand joined-up tools

| (1) Publicly-released public management documents like the seminal Review of the Centre (SSC, 2002) |
| (2) Publicly-released departmental accountability documents like Statements of Intent |
| (3) Internal guidance from executive agencies (SSC, DPMC and Treasury) to departments on new accountability frameworks |
| (4) Observations of staff meetings within the Ministry of Youth Development and the Ministry of Social Development |
organisations and their ministers rather than in whole-of-government terms. Indeed ‘good’ civil servants served the aims and objectives of their minister (SSC, 2001). In 2006, the DPMC introduced three government-wide goals to try and foster whole-of-government approaches. These goals -- economic transformation, families’ young and old, and national identity -- were cited in nearly every subsequent government document. Civil servants incorporated the language into their own, regularly discussing their work in reference to one or more of the goals. Rather than the phrase joined-up government, civil servants used a range of phrases like alignment, collaboration, coordinated delivery, and shared outcomes.

Financial & Accountability tools. The new language of shared outcomes accompanied new financial and accountability mechanisms detailing what public monies could be spent on, and how they were to be accounted. In 2005, the Treasury revised the Public Finance Act, which permitted agencies to pool monies. Multi-class output expenses and interdepartmental output purchases enabled agencies to jointly deliver outputs for policy advice, research, evaluation or services. While agencies submitted an ‘output agreement’ to ministers each year, spelling out the products they were to produce, a new set of accountability mechanisms featured outcomes alongside outputs.

Managing for Outcomes (MfO) was the ‘brand name’ for a series of new accountability requirements. The guidance notes state that “Governments exist to make a tangible difference to the lives of their country’s citizens and residents. Consequently New Zealand, like many other countries, is placing greater emphasis on management systems that demonstrate how the activities of government agencies contribute to the results, or outcomes, that the Government is seeking for the community” (SSC, 2003, p.2). At the beginning of each fiscal year, agencies were required to submit a Statement of Intent (SOI) where they outlined organisational objectives, intervention logics, and high-level work programmes. At the end of the fiscal year, agencies had to prepare an Annual Report describing their actual performance. SOIs and Annual Reports were expected to tell a
coherent ‘performance story’ that focused on outcomes and impact measures, and showed the link between programmes and outcomes (Treasury, 2006, p.2). Agencies were not required to consider the linkages between programmes and outcomes of other agencies, and few did so.

**Process tools.** Central agencies did, however, encourage joint programme planning by introducing a range of process tools. *Getting better at managing for shared outcomes* (SSC, 2004) described a decision-making framework for joined-up working. The document served as a heuristic device for top-tier managers and team leaders to judge their readiness to engage in inter-agency work. Questions included: (1) Are you clear about the outcome desired?; (2) Is this outcome a high priority for your agency/minister(s)?; (3) Is the outcome best pursued by joint working?; (4) Have you agreed the best way of working together?; and (5) Can informal barriers be managed, and are enough success factors in place? These tools, unlike financial and accountability mechanisms, were recommended, not obligatory. The document’s preface clarified this: “Currently, there is no requirement that information on outcomes, intervention logic, capability or risk must be included in the financial statements” (p.5).

Intervention logics did, however, appear in SOIs as a way to rationalise proposed activities and programmes of work. For instance, the MOJ justified the activity ‘implement the Youth Offending Strategy’ by pairing it to the high-level outcome, ‘reduce youth re-offending’. Intervention logics were also used at the frontline, where a new initiative, *Funding for Outcomes*, enabled agencies to bring together contracts for the same service deliverer. Although there were was no similar joint contracting processes for central-level policy agencies, there was a joint consultation process. Called the Cab100 process, civil servants had to receive ‘sign-off’ from relevant government agencies prior to submitting a formal cabinet paper. Ministers had the right to ‘pull’ papers if their agency was not ‘sufficiently’ consulted.

**Structural tools.** Structural mechanisms gave agencies a shared space
to work together. The 2006 State of the development goals report suggested standing inter-agency structures led to more coordinated practice. While the report focused on coordination between central or executive agencies, it argued that these agencies model practice for the rest of the public sector. Specific structural mechanisms included a standing board for the chief executives of social sector ministries, a staff-level inter-agency team, and parallel roles between agencies. The report also proposed developing integrated work programmes, establishing joint monitoring and evaluation frameworks, and using regular, collective communication channels.

Networks & places. Collective communication channels denote another class of joined-up mechanisms: networks. Unlike structures, where patterns of interactions are often codified in protocols or agreements, networks rely on interpersonal relationships to persist. The MSD’s intranet, Doogle, functioned as a platform for interpersonal relationships. Staff could read profiles of people and initiatives, send messages, and access other units’ documents. Civil servants could use Doogle to share information, and build peer-to-peer relationships. Although no government-wide intranet existed at the time of the fieldwork, because of the small size of the civil service, informal networks often operated at a whole-of-government scale. This was evidenced in my field notes of staff meetings when civil servants offered to connect colleagues via statements like, “I knew them from school” or “I knew them when I worked for the Ministry of X.’

Not only were virtual spaces enablers of joined-up practice, so too were physical places. The following observation was made on my second day of field work:

“I was introduced to the Ministry of Food today, a café poised to pick up civil servant traffic. Everybody knows everybody and the big group tables function as a second boardroom. Already, I’ve overheard staff in the Ministry of Youth Development tell colleagues to meet them at the Ministry of Food to chat about this, that, or the other. Colleagues bump into each other from other departments and strike up conversation” (Field Notes 9 July 2007).

Places provided a very literal platform for civil servants to meet and interact with colleagues; they were about relationships rather than particular tasks or activities.
Section 5.5: Joined-up case studies, an organising framework

What kinds of ongoing interactions were civil servants engaged with in the youth policy space? The ten joined-up case studies witnessed at the time of fieldwork vary according to the purpose, form, size, formality and life stage of the group, and by the hierarchical level of the participants and the frequency with which participants met. This is the same list of factors used to characterise England’s case studies, only with ‘hierarchical level’ added to the mix. Participants’ hierarchical level emerged as a relevant factor because of the New Zealand dataset’s larger size and greater hierarchical spread.

- **Form** refers to the type of joining-up: communication, coordination, collaboration or consolidation. As in Chapter Four, I determined form by asking participants to describe what they exchanged with colleagues in each joined-up example. Sharing information was a proxy for communication or cooperation; sharing a product was a proxy for coordination; sharing a set of outcomes was a proxy for collaboration; and sharing resources was a proxy for consolidation.

- **Purpose** refers to the reason for the joint initiative: was it to explore a new opportunity area, solve an identified social policy problem, oversee an existing strategy or programme of work, or improve relations by bridging structural gaps between agencies?

- **Size** refers to case studies with two agencies (bilaterals) versus multiple agencies or organisational units (multilaterals).

- **Formality** refers to whether the joint initiative was voluntary, initiated by civil servants, or mandated from chief executives or ministers.

- **Life stage** refers to case studies in the initial set-up and design phase, early production phase, full production phase, or closure phase. In the design phase, participants are inviting members, determining role and purpose, and writing Terms of References. In early production, participants
are working towards a first output or benchmark. In full production, civil servants are reviewing, revising, and creating new outputs or benchmarks. In closure, civil servants are wrapping up the joint initiative.

- **Level** refers to the participants’ hierarchical reporting line: were they at an analyst, senior analyst, manager, director, or general manager level?
- **Frequency** refers to how often participants interacted as a group: once only or weekly, monthly, quarterly?

I have grouped case studies by form and purpose, as in the prior chapter. Grouping by size, formality, level, frequency, or life stage did not elucidate any useful descriptive patterns, or offer much insight into variations in performance. Table 5.3 presents the results of this grouping, or segmenting. Two groups of case studies emerged that were not present in England: proactive and integrative case studies. Proactive case studies are those where civil servants explore a joint opportunity, rather than a policy problem, and share a common product. Integrative case studies are those where civil servants come together to solve a policy problem by sharing resources. This chapter serves to describe each case study, detailing the interactions which constitute ‘working together’. As in Chapter Four, I highlight any ‘atypical’ interaction points observed, contrasting those with interaction points perceived as reflecting the norm.
Structures were the tools of choice. All ten case studies used groups, committees, or parallel role structures. Two case studies also used joint accountability mechanisms and strategic planning processes: the High and Complex Needs Unit and the Youth Justice Leadership Group.

Section 5.6: Proactive case studies

5.6.1: Ministry of Economic Development-Ministry of Youth Development Entrepreneurship Group

History. The Ministry of Economic Development (MED) and the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) teamed up to write an exploratory proposal on ways to increase youth entrepreneurship. They worked together to further an undefined opportunity rather than solve an identified problem. There are two versions of events about what led the ministries to enter into a joint opportunity space: both the MYD and MED participants say they invited the other agency to the table. An analyst from the MYD recalled that “the first thing we did was I walked down and saw them and said, ‘This is what we are thinking about doing. What are you
doing? Is this of interest to you?’ and ‘Do you want to work with us’” (NZ005D)? An MED manager, meanwhile, described the starting point differently: “I did some work on youth entrepreneurship. And then, the Minister of Youth Affairs asked her team to produce some advice on youth entrepreneurship. They discovered our research and came to us and said we would like you to comment on our paper and I said, ‘Why would we comment on your paper? Why would we not just do it jointly’” (NZ028G)? In 2007, civil servants from both agencies began developing a joint ministerial proposal. The relationship was output-focused and time-limited. There were no plans for the two ministries to work together beyond the proposal.

Operational structure. Working together meant meeting in person periodically, and communicating by email regularly. While interactions were informal, and there were no MOUs or official partnership agreements, in-person meetings did follow a prescribed format. Agencies with an interest in entrepreneurship – the Career Services, the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and New Zealand Trade and Industry – were invited to the table. Introductions were followed by presentations and the distribution of tasks. Tasks were divided between the MED and the MYD. While the MYD assigned senior policy analysts to the group, the MED brought their policy managers and advisors. MED staff frequently noted the hierarchical mismatch, particularly because of the type of tasks the MYD assumed. MYD staff did much of the document writing, with veto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To explore youth entrepreneurship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>Producing a paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Early Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Bilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Analyst to Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>As required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA
- Observation of one meeting
- Debrief after one meeting
- Interviews with 3 civil servants
- Copies of emails and draft documents (AG8)

Table 5.4: MED-MYD Entrepreneurship Group Overview
power held by the MED. At the time of fieldwork, the MYD had submitted a draft to the MED, and was waiting for a response.

Interaction point. Ten civil servants make their way to the MYD’s conference room: three from the MYD, two from the MED, one from Career Services, two from the MPIA, and one from New Zealand Trade and Industry. Those that want tea or coffee are directed to the MYD’s kitchen, and told to help themselves. The MYD’s policy manager begins the meeting with apologies, noting that their General Manager is unable to attend as planned, but wants to hear what emerges. She outlines the purpose of the next hour as “to make sure everyone here around the table shares a common vision for this piece of work. The work came about because of a conversation between our minister and the minister of small businesses. They want initiatives” (NZ003D). The MYD policy analyst assigned to the work hears his cue, turns on the projector, and shares a list of potential initiatives to encourage young entrepreneurs. He notes that such initiatives are important for four reasons: “(1) the minister says so; (2) it fits the Prime Minister’s priorities for economic transformation, national identity, and families young and old; (3) research shows young people could know more about entrepreneurship as a career; and (4) there are multiple players with untapped resources like the Ministry of Research and Science and Tourism” (NZ005D). His list of initiatives includes a national entrepreneurship week, a TV concept, better information in schools, a steering group, and a day-long summit. His descriptions are filled with anecdotal stories and jokes. The MED policy manager does not laugh, but does note that he had not seen the initiatives before today. He comments, “I am curious about the TV proposal. I am not sure it is worth pursuing. We are particularly focused on increasing coordination... Is there a better way to get bigger bang for government’s buck” (NZ028G)? The MPIA policy analyst adds his opinion: “Looking at this issue in the context of economic transformation, I like the TV show and don’t know about the day-long summit” (NZ063G). The Career Services representative concurs, explaining ‘their’ research
shows young people want impartial information available throughout the year, not just at one point. The MYD’s policy manager wants participants’ feedback on which ideas might influence young Maori; her minister wants something ‘really sexy’ involving Maoris. Somebody suggests a competition and a website. There is a back-and-forth discussion about who would own the website, and how it might feed into YouTube or Facebook. Recognising that the hour allotted to the meeting is rapidly approaching, the chair asks the group if they have any final suggestions. A participant suggests that they ‘do a stocktake’ first, but the MYD policy analyst says that the minister will not be impressed with yet another stocktake. The chair closes the meeting by announcing that MYD will be finalising the proposed initiatives over the next two weeks, and that they need to move forward because they are behind schedule. The participants filter out of the room.

**Perspectives and impressions.** Even though the MYD and the MED agreed to produce a joint proposal, the way tasks were distributed meant that the MYD shouldered the majority of the work, the quality of which did not impress the MED. In a debrief interview, the MED manager said he was uncomfortable with the ‘tone’, ‘style’ and ‘evidence base’, and threatened to pull ministerial rank and discredit the final product. The MYD policy analyst knew that the MED was stalling; their latest draft had yet to be returned. He had hoped to diffuse some of the tension in the meeting with jokes and anecdotal stories, but his approach only cemented the MED’s perception that the MYD excelled at emotional advocacy, not fact-based policy. The policy analyst’s comparatively low-level rank and the absence of the MYD’s

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 5.5: MED-MYD Entrepreneurship Group Interaction Sequence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MED and MYD agreed to joint proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYD and MED distributed tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYD produced draft document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint meetings held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output in progress</td>
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5.6.1
General Manager left the MED manager incensed at the ‘waste of time.’ The hour-and-a-half meeting was spent volleying critiques back and forth, rather than generating shared ideas. No decisions were made. The MYD was left to make sense of what had been said, yet had only its own interpretations, rather than an agreed list of next steps or a whiteboard full of comments. Reflecting on the experience, the MYD policy analyst remarked that

“What we found – it was a good old fashioned clash of organisations and what is driving them, what their priorities are, what their pressure points are? Those guys had bigger things on their plate at that time, and we were competing. So, they had different priorities and we had to try to force ourselves into their priorities, and as charming as I was, all the jokes and they were really funny, at the end of the day what his boss wanted and what his minister wanted was more important” (NZ005).

Yet he could not describe what the MED minister wanted and how that differed from the MYD minister. By the time fieldwork ended, a joint product had not yet been completed and no further meetings were scheduled or held.

### 5.6.2: Youth Justice Conference Planning Committee

**History.** For over a year, local youth offending teams advocated for a national, inter-sectoral youth justice conference. Ministry of Justice civil servants listened, and in early 2007, began approaching other central government agencies and regional delivery partners to co-finance the event. The response was positive. As one of the Ministry of Justice organisers recounted, “It was an idea that had been festering for a long time and when we decided earlier this year that we were going to do it and

Table 5.6: Youth Justice Conference Planning Committee Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To organise an inter-sectoral conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>A conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Early Production</td>
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<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
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<td>Size</td>
<td>Multi-lateral</td>
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<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>As required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA**

- Observation of one meeting
- Debrief after one meeting
- Interviews with two civil servants
- Enquiry group notes
- Meeting agendas
- Copies of emails and drafts
wrote to other ministries, we got pretty quick responses back offering support of finances and people to represent the various levels of organisational tiers that we set-up”(NZ21G). One organisational tier was comprised of analysts who managed the logistics and behind-the-scenes work; the other was composed of senior analysts and managers making decisions about conference content and resource spends. The latter group had been meeting for around four months at the time of the fieldwork.

Operational structure. The Youth Justice Conference Planning Committee was a voluntary, time-limited and clearly-bounded structure. There was a single objective: to put on an inter-agency conference. The conference goal, as stated on promotional materials, was to “raise awareness and understanding of recent developments in research, policy, legislation and practice; and to provide delegates with an opportunity to discuss the major issues faced and explore new and creative ways of working with young offenders”(Field Notes 9 August). Early into the planning process, participants used meetings to brainstorm venues, conference theme, speakers, and workshops. Further into the process, meetings became informational spaces, used for updating and logistics management on topics like advertising, recruitment, scheduling, and conference materials. Meetings lasted two hours and were chaired by senior analysts from the Ministry of Justice. Participants included representatives from New Zealand Police, Child Youth and Family, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

Interaction point. Ten people from six agencies sit around a large round table in a bright, sterile room; they have been convening regularly for several months and openly chat about their families, weekend plans, and workloads. The chair passes around an agenda, which is a numbered list of updates. The theme of the conference - working together on youth offending - is printed in large letters at the top. Most of the decisions have already been made; the keynote speaker is New Zealand’s Justice Minister and workshops are to be facilitated by a mixture of local practitioners, academics, and civil servants. Individuals have been assigned
tasks: to manage the registration process, to organise chairs for sessions, to finalise conference booklets, to update the website, and to draft evaluation forms. Each individual provides a status report, colleagues ask a few clarifying questions, and outstanding tasks are noted by the chair. The group has hired an external events manager to ensure smooth running on the day, and she runs through venues and times. The chair notes that there is only one scheduled meeting left until the conference, and participants talk about how excited they are that the date is finally approaching.

**Perspectives and impressions.** Meetings were devoted to details. The chair assumed that participants were clear about the purpose, and knew what success looked like. While one of the participants was assigned the task of ‘conference evaluation,’ there was no group discussion about potential evaluative measures. By the time of field work, meetings were spaces for group communication, not group work. Participants were comfortable with the distribution of work, and felt that there had been equal and consistent inter-agency engagement. A MOJ organiser commented that “the conference is a really good example of collaboration. And from day one, we had really good input into planning the key themes, the workshops, and the programme. Lots of people have given up time and energy to help us out and I would be really surprised if anyone saw it as a justice project” (NZ021G).
While I did not attend the conference, conversations with participants echoed that sentiment. There was a sense that the conference modelled its own theme, working together – even if it was unclear what that working together was intended to yield.

Section 5.7: Problem-solving case studies

5.7.1: Alcohol Review Steering Group

History. The Alcohol Review Steering Group was set up in 2007 to strengthen the ‘Sale and Supply of Liquor to Minors’ Act’ and thereby address a growing social problem: too many underage young people purchasing alcohol. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) led the legislative review, with input from senior managers at the Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Ministry of Trade and Enterprise, and the Alcohol Advisory Committee (AAC). The MYD was not invited to the decision-making table. A manager at the MOJ attributed their absence to her agency’s risk aversion, saying that “I think that comes from how you perceive the project that you are doing. What do you perceive as why you are doing it? Is it about batting something off or is it about actually trying to achieve something? If you are actually trying to change something and you have got a group of people who are actually trying to achieve something, even if you disagree, you can usually find something to agree on…” (NZ036G) She went on to note that the group was established by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.8: Alcohol Review Steering Group Overview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To reduce the sale and supply of alcohol to minors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success is...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing new legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Stage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debriefs after two meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with four actors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting agendas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copies of emails and drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This case study does not have a corresponding observational point.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the Minister of Justice, whose primary interest was the quick passage of new legislation.

A few weeks into the steering group’s meetings, decision-makers concluded that ‘quick passage’ required a higher-intensity level of work. They established a smaller working group of senior analysts, and this time the MYD was invited to join. The MYD participant explained the chain of events leading to her inclusion: “I spoke to our General Manager and he talked to our Minister; our Minister talked with the Minister of Justice who appeased her and said we could join the working group. I am annoyed because it is a copout - it means we are going to be contributing to the work, but actually have no say in the decision-making and that doesn’t seem fair” (NZ009D).

Operational structure. The steering group convened every two to three weeks to review proposed amendments prior to submission to the relevant parliamentary subcommittee. Its legislative focus provided clear time frames and benchmarks. Given the technical nature of the product, the group discussed the intent behind amendments, but left much of the production work to lawyers at the MOJ. The workgroup met nearly every week, as well as communicated via email and telephone.

Interaction point. I was unable to attend a steering group meeting, but spoke with four participants following two meetings. This interaction point is written in the past tense to reflect the fact that I constructed the sequence of events after, rather than during the meetings. The meetings were different than those that had come before because the MYD asserted their ‘right’ to be at the table. Although not an invited member of the steering group, the MYD representative decided to attend so that she could see first-hand how decisions were made. Her inter-agency colleagues allowed her to stay, but requested that she leave the room if a decision needed to be made. No decisions were made in the two meetings in question. Meetings proceeded formally. They focused on key issues like penalties for vendors, penalties for young people, parental rights, and
enforcement procedures. The MOJ chair explained that there were some complex philosophical questions underlying the more pragmatic questions such as, “At what point does the state not get involved when is it about individual choice?” However since the group was always pressed for time, the practical matters took precedence over the philosophical.

Steering group meetings began with a stocktake of literature and evidence, most often provided by the AAC. The MYD contributed a different kind of information: opinions from their Youth Advisory Board and data from polls and surveys. The MOJ civil servants then focused discussion on the existing legislative statute and recommended changes to intent or language. Officials asked questions, often seeking examples from other country’s legislation. The chair referred those questions to the workgroup, or asked that they be addressed in formal briefs. Between meetings, agencies prepared briefs and comments to the legislation. The MOJ civil servants were responsible for analysing and synthesising comments prior to meetings.

**Impressions and perspectives.**

The decision to exclude the MYD from the steering group raised concerns of confirmatory bias: the feeling that the inter-agency group was a rubber stamp, not an idea-generating body. Civil servant participants noted that the MYD usefully functioned as both a critic and an advocate. The role of critic took on

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.9: Alcohol Review Steering Group Interaction Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MOJ announced review of legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering group set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work group set up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYD invited to work group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks distributed to MOJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agencies commented on drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Output: revised legislation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
increasing importance as time pressures prevented joint work. As one participant reported, “I think it started off collaboratively, and then as the time frames get really tight and the ministerial group got stronger, it kind of changed into this process whereby...they moved from being genuinely able to collaborate to having to achieve something” (NZ009D). Another participant concurred, frustrated that there was little time or space to discuss collective ideas. “We were coming at it from a harm minimisation perspective. MOJ were coming at it from, how can we write this into law and how will it be enforced? So it didn’t matter what the ideas were because of the way they analyse things and look at things, they weren’t taking a bigger picture” (NZ23G).

Indeed, by the end, with the legislative deadline looming, there was more independent working than joint working. Much of the thinking and writing happened outside steering group and workgroup meetings by MOJ civil servants. External agencies could submit formal comments. For some participants, this level of engagement was enough to constitute successful joint working. Participants from the AAC had long lobbied the MOJ to revisit the ‘sale and supply of liquor to minors’ act; any work towards that goal was construed as success. The MYD held a different definition of success: they wanted a more considered piece of legislation. “Had ministerial decision-making been different, we would have gotten to a better outcome, but I’m not sure it was possible to be more collaborative given all the constraints” (NZ003D). The MOJ civil servants acutely felt the constraints, and the weight of the work. As the chair of the steering group said, “we are putting in a hell of a lot more resource than we are getting back because our minister said, ‘I want you to lead this.’ So we are doing a public good here. That is what it feels like. It feels like we are doing a public good [leading the steering group]. We will not get much for our ministry other than that the minister might be happy that we have done something” (NZ028G).

5.7.2: Realising Youth Potential

History. In December 2006, the Prime Minister announced two policy
priorities for 2007: sustainability and better outcomes for young people aged 14 to 19. By late December 2006, the Department for Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) had prepared a short brief for the Prime Minister recommending a whole-of-government response. Chief executives and policy advisors from the MOH, MOE, MSD, and MOJ were asked to identify two to three youth policy areas for ‘concentrated and collective attention’.

In February 2007, the Chief Executives of these agencies met, compiled their list of policy areas, and selected three to discuss with frontbench ministers: (1) educational retention and achievement, (2) violent offending and gangs and (3) teenage pregnancy and parenting.

Frontbench ministers chose educational retention and achievement as the focus. The MOE took the lead, while the chief executives of the MOH, MSD, and MOJ remained engaged at an oversight level. Policy advisors from these other agencies no longer had an ongoing role. A policy advisor from the Treasury explained that “Once ministers decided that they wanted to focus on keeping 15 to 19 year olds in education then from the Ministry of Education’s side we did not invest enough into building the cross-agency conversation... and the other agencies did not really invest in it because it was not their problem; education had been told to take the lead” (NZ061G) By the summer of 2007, with an education proposal drawn up and ready to be presented again to frontbench ministers, central agency officials recognised the work was no longer ‘whole-of-government’.

### Table 5.10: Realising Youth Potential

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To produce a joint options paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>Sign-off from frontbench ministers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>General manager / Policy advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Discrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Prior to frontbench ministerial meetings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA**

- Observations of two meetings
- Interviews with four civil servants
- Meeting agendas (AG4)
- Copies of emails and drafts

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Policy advisors from the MOH, MSD, and MOJ were reconvened as a group to add content to the proposal.

**Operational structure.** *Realising Youth Potential* served as a title for a yet to be defined programme of work. Even when ownership over the initiative officially shifted to the MOE, Chief executives of the MSD, MOJ and MOH maintained oversight through their standing Social Sector Forum. There was no similar standing body for senior civil servants. Instead DPMC called periodic civil servant meetings prior to front-bench ministerial meetings. These periodic meetings unfolded in a structured format, proceeding from updates to project plans to next steps.

**Interaction point.** 17 policy advisors from the MOH, MPIA, MYD, MPIA, DOL, and TEC file into an oversized MOE conference room. A MOE official has the role of chair, but DPMC and Treasury officials are in attendance to steer where necessary. Agendas are scattered across the table; the first agenda item is an MOE update. The MOE chair describes their work as a “well-thought-through package of reforms” in need of some “links to other social programmes”. Frontbench ministers have asked that the education policy proposal articulate whole-of-government outcomes for 14-19 year olds, demonstrate alignment with other policy areas, and present case studies of good inter-agency practice. The chair notes that a smaller workgroup will convene in the afternoon to draw up a set of inter-agency outcomes, metrics, and indicators. The MOE introduces the afternoon as a ‘technical’ cut-and-paste exercise. Despite attempts by participants from other agencies to shift thinking, the MOE steers the meeting down a preset path.

**MOE Participant:** Here is the bride-of-Frankenstein report of all your agency indicators. It is simply a cut-and-paste of your materials. DPMC is keen to see telling indicators.

**DOL Participant:** What is the balance between the big and little picture and the situation for all young people versus subgroups of young people?

**DPMC Participant:** The problem is that you can get drowned in data. The next job is to work out what it is telling us - what is the intersection between school leaving and job market. Is the good economy driving young people out of school?

**TEC Participant:** Where is the voice of the kid in all of this?
**MOE Participant:** Well, we are struggling just to get the basic data right now. *(Field Notes, 27 August 2007)*

DPMC officials emphasise that the indicators must tell a coherent story. Participants are told that they are working towards a seamless presentation to ministers, not a decision from ministers. Case studies are framed as another important storytelling device. Agencies are given a format and a deadline for writing up case studies of on-the-ground joined-up practice; case studies are to include sections on purpose, barriers to coordination, and conditions for coordination like information sharing, governance, leadership, accountability, and appropriate structure. All case studies are to be submitted in the next week so they can be added into the final proposal. The chair closes by pleading with colleagues to send along all their materials as soon as possible. The deadline is tight. Participants disperse.

The afternoon ‘outcomes mapping’ session draws in a smaller group of seven civil servants. The MOE chair states that “we need an intervention logic to tell a coherent story. How do we do this in two hours? Let's start with the outcome: keeping young people in school.” She moves to the whiteboard, picks up a coloured pen, and begins to scribble notes for all to see. ‘Under 16s in school’ appears at the top, below which is ‘presence in school’, ‘youth offending strategy’, ‘strengthening families’, and ‘schooling environment’. DOL participants suggest shifting the focus from existing policy initiatives to data-driven indicators, bringing together departments’ different definitions of success, such as more young people in training and employment, better health, etc. Another participant suggests bringing the MOE’s proposed interventions into this frame. There is a back-and-forth discussion before the chair asks her staff to flesh out a framework for next week, thanks participants for their feedback, and calls the session to a close *(Field Notes, 27 August 2007)*. The way forward is unclear.

**Perspectives and impressions.** Participants unanimously agreed that *Realising Youth Potential* was a poor example of joined-up practice. Instead
of shared outcomes, there were educational outcomes. Instead of a shared work programme, there was a cut-and-paste document of existing agency work programmes. Instead of shared ownership, there were agencies vying to be ‘the’ policy owner. Indeed the MYD participants viewed *Realising Youth Potential* as an opportunity to direct a major piece of policy, and they actively lobbied central agency officials for coordinating authority.

Ownership struggles, at both a political and civil servant level, stalled the work. A DPMC advisor acknowledged that “we should have identified much sooner that the clients of this work—ministers—we were not bought into the role different agencies would play… One of the ministers got very uncomfortable about the idea that we would take his agency’s material and take it to a colleague. This has been a political tripwire” (NZ018G). Civil servants, reliant on their minister for direction, had even less clarity about their roles. One participant complained that “all of the meetings have just been a reporting thing… just creating another bureaucratic monstrosity. I’m thinking, where does our role end in terms of free and frank advice, in terms of being honest and saying this is what I think would work and this is not…” (NZ058G)? Participants particularly wanted to say something about the quality of the proposals. As one policy advisor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.11: Realising Youth Potential Interaction Sequence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prime Minister</strong> prioritised youth outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>†</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social sector chief executives identified three areas for action</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>†</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frontbench ministers chose educational disengagement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>†</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOE took the lead</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>†</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOE drafted proposals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>†</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interagency group reconvened</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>†</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Output: proposal for ministers</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
noted, “Maybe I’m greedy but I’d like to see a deeper level of thinking... I would like to have seen us going back to question some of the initial assumptions. Just because it has always been this way, is it the best way to proceed? The way we look at jobs and employment has changed so significantly from when we set up the original education system, how about if we worked differently” (NZ010G)?

The sequence of work precluded asking these kinds of questions. The draft proposal was already written when civil servants reconvened to identify the outcomes, compile the indicators, and find the case studies. There was no space to re-litigate the argument or to come up with a different intervention logic. Officials from Treasury and the DPMC noted that if they were to organise Realising Youth Potential again, they would establish a formal inter-agency steering group and expect ongoing joint work, top-down and bottom-up. Policy advisors struggled to set that expectation mid-way in the process. One policy advisor said in exasperation that “we are almost at the point where all of the chief executives involved are going to be called in front of their central agency counterparts to explain how they are contributing to it. We are not getting the kind of traction that we want and so I think, you know, we have tried all the nice things working with them” (NZ059G). By the end of fieldwork, there was still little inter-agency traction. Frontbench ministers had yet to respond to the proposal. Civil servants talked of Realising Youth Potential as a substanceless slogan.

Section 5.8: Integrative case studies

5.8.1: High and Complex Needs Unit

History. In 2001, frontbench Ministers approved the High and Complex Needs Strategy, an inter-agency initiative designed to streamline government’s approach to young people with multiple needs. The Ministries of Health, Education, and Social Development co-wrote the strategy to reduce long-term costs, decrease service dependencies, and improve outcomes for the most at-risk young people. A spate of high-profile child protection cases led to the
development of the strategy. Case reviews indicated that with better coordinated and more intensive support, fewer children would require acute interventions and expensive out-of-home care. Ministers not only agreed to the strategy document, but to the formation of a new inter-agency unit (HCN Unit) and a joint funding stream known as the ‘exception fund’. The ‘exception fund’ was designed to resource specialist services and coordinated case management. The Ministries of Health and Education transferred $2 million to this fund, which was to be ring-fenced within the MSD’s budget and administered by an inter-agency governance board. This inter-agency board would performance manage the HCN Unit’s director, approve the business and communications plan, set success benchmarks, and provide inter-sectoral leadership. At the time of the fieldwork, the Board and the HCN Unit had reviewed and revised the protocols underpinning their working relationship. The year before, the MSD rolled the HCN fund underspend into their baseline budget and failed to consult with the governance board. Civil servants from the Ministries of Health and Education perceived this move as an attempt to undermine inter-agency collaboration. To improve perceptions, HCN Unit staff hired a contractor to strengthen the inter-agency code of conduct and rejuvenate the partnership.

**Operational structure.** The HCN Unit sat within two reporting hierarchies: the MSD and an inter-agency governance board. The HCN Manager was employed by the Board, but also accountable to a general manager and minister within the MSD’s Child, Youth, and Family Agency. As the HCN Unit manager described it, “I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Collaboration – Consolidation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To improve outcomes of young people with the most complex needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>Pressure on the fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Every other month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA**
- Observations of unit
- Debriefs after two meetings
- Interviews with five actors
- Meeting agendas and notes (S3)
definitely think I am in the Child, Youth, and Family line but I actually think I report to the board… There is a whole dispute process if there is ever any difference with the chair of the board and my general manager; they have a pathway to discuss these differences” (NZ052D).

The Board convened every other month and was composed of senior managers from the MOH, MOE, and MSD and chaired by a general manager from the MSD. This top-down inter-agency structure was mirrored from the ground-up. The HCN Unit addressed cases that were brought to them by local inter-agency coordinators and regional inter-agency panels. This parallel policy and delivery structure was unusual. As one of the senior managers noted, “We have a structure that runs from the delivery end up and a whole inter-sectoral planning process, right down to the level of looking at the young person’s needs and making sure that the plans are developed to give them the best opportunity to achieve different outcomes” (NZ052.2D).

Interaction point. Board members who took part in revising the HCN inter-agency protocol outlined, in detail, the negotiation process. I was not present, but was able to combine stories heard through interviews, debriefing sessions, documents, informal meetings, and observations of unit staff. Since I was not in the room, I retell the sequence of events in the past tense.

Policy and operations managers from each participating agency, the HCN Unit manager, an external contractor, and a professional facilitator crowded into a MSD boardroom. Participants knew of and worked with each other for five years, and openly expressed disappointment with how the MSD handled inter-agency monies. Participants discussed the strategy’s “teething difficulties” and the risk of it becoming too deeply embedded within any one agency, namely the MSD. Chief Executives had already exchanged a series of ‘ugly letters’ articulating these concerns. As the collaborative challenges were well documented, the facilitator shifted the focus to what worked well and lessons learned.

The contractor shared insights from focus groups with local service
coordinators and regional stakeholders, and used these findings to reshape job descriptions, checklists, and templates. Hearing from local stakeholders and reading stories of the 400+ young people who had benefited from the fund helped board members reaffirm their joint purpose: “to allow professionals to look at the whole picture for the child, young person and their whanau\(^3\).” They hoped that joint funding would let services “step out of the limitations of the complexity and intensity of issues facing them and dream a little, to have a joint vision of the long-term outcomes for the young person” (Document S3). Participants reaffirmed that success would be measured by ‘pressure on the fund’ and active usage of the shared tools and templates.

Expressing the vision aloud led the facilitator to pose a series of critical questions: “What do we need to do at the board level to give local service providers and professionals that inter-agency space? How can we future-proof this vision?” One by one, civil servants listed potential barriers to change. For example, suppose a minister insists on a piece of work which runs contrary to the

\[\begin{array}{|c|}
\hline
HCN strategy released \\
\hline
HCN Unit and Fund established \\
\hline
HCN Board set up for oversight \\
\hline
HCN Manager hired \\
\hline
Ground-level coordinators hired \\
\hline
Budget conflict \\
\hline
Facilitator hired; Board workshop \\
\hline
Interagency protocols reset \\
\hline
Outcomes: fund usage, case plans \\
\hline
\end{array}\]

\(^3\) Whanua is the Maori word for extended family.
governance board. Civil servants brainstormed how to prevent each worst-case scenario. These scenarios, scrawled on a whiteboard, formed the basis of the new protocol between the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development. The protocol articulated common outcome domains, responsibilities of the partner agencies, the host agency, and the HCN Unit; a conflict resolution process; and a ‘joint’ vocabulary. These documents were bound together with a Maori proverb: Me mahi tahi tatou (Together we will work as one). Participants described leaving the room optimistic about their ability to avert future inter-agency breakdowns.

**Perspectives and impressions.** Civil servants not involved in the HCN Unit consistently named it New Zealand’s best example of joined-up practice. They saw it as the only instance of joined-up government permeating day-to-day decision-making from a policy to a delivery level. Participants were less effusive. They saw just what it took to do inter-agency work day in and day out: the resource required to keep everyone informed and actively engaged. Participants commented on just how much their working relationships hinged on a strong leader within the host agency, like the HCN Unit manager. Without somebody willing and able to hold the inter-agency space, horizontal working was quickly crowded out by vertical accountabilities. The best inter-agency leaders were those who were “clear that you must work together, you can be creative, and you can innovate. They mind the business, do it well, but find solutions for their clients” (NZ045G). Leadership was a necessary but insufficient condition for consolidated action. Sharing a common client base was deemed essential. Participants cautioned that if agencies did not share a common client group, the HCN Unit model would carry more costs than benefits.

**Section 5.9: Overseeing case studies**

**5.9.1: Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs**

*History.* Since its inception in 1998, the National Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs (IACD) has overseen implementation of New Zealand’s National Drug
Policy. The National Drug Policy took a harm reduction approach to tackling tobacco, drug and alcohol misuse. The IACD was responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing related projects, activities, and priorities. Committee members were to ‘scrutinise’ drug-related matters, ‘advise’ ministers, and ‘implement’ ministerial decisions that reflected policy on research and service delivery. Each year, they recommended how to spend the National Drug Policy Discretionary Grant Fund, a pool of $2 million for governmental and non-governmental projects. Recommendations were reviewed and approved by a parallel ministerial committee which met three times a year.

**Operational structure.** The IACD met for two hours twice a year, and held a strategic planning workshop once a year. Like its Ministerial counterpart, it included representatives from fifteen government agencies and crown entities including the Ministries of Education, Health, Justice, Social Development, Transport, Corrections, Police, Intelligence, Pacific Island Affairs, Maori Affairs, and Youth Development, along with the Alcohol Advisory Council and the Accident Compensation Corporation. Whilst the Committee’s Terms of Reference specified that representatives should be “at a position to represent their whole agency”, in reality, representatives were senior analysts with variable decision-making authority. The Terms of Reference addressed structural and representational issues as well as values and ethos. Although open discussion and disagreement were encouraged on paper, group time was allocated to tightly-scripted presentations.

**Table 5.14: Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Communication – Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To oversee implementation of the National Drug Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is</td>
<td>Consistent and mutually supportive drug policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Senior Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Twice a year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA**
- Observation of one meeting
- Debrief after one meeting
- Interviews with six civil servants
- Meeting agendas and notes (AG6)
and papers. Meetings followed a precise format, a template for which was even included in the Terms of Reference: (1) apologies; (2) approval of minutes from the prior meeting; (3) administration and governance issues; (4) workgroup updates; (5) discretionary funding; (6) action plans; (7) ministerial committee updates; (8) agency updates; (9) general business; (10) a reminder about the next meeting. Meeting preparation and facilitation was the responsibility of the MOH-based secretariat.

Interaction Point. Twenty-six civil servants make their way to a conference room at the top of the New Zealand Customs Service. Tea, coffee, and snacks are arranged at the back of the room. There is hushed chit-chat. People take seats at the vast board table, and the MOH chair calls the meeting to order. Following introductions and apologies, minutes from the prior meeting are distributed. As there are no substantive corrections, presentations begin. The LCD projector is switched on, and the first speaker discusses methamphetamine usage. There are no questions. The second speaker walks members through a formal paper on illegal tobacco manufacturing that he submitted to the Committee. He asks the group whether there could be a total ban of tobacco growing under New Zealand Bill of Rights. An MOJ civil servant responds ‘maybe’ and suggests discussing the issue outside the meeting.

The chair requests that the sub-committee responsible for reviewing grant proposals provide an update. The members describe their plans to distribute $1.9 million to a range of research projects and on-the-ground programmes, describing proposed outputs over projected outcomes. The chair thanks the sub-committee for their work, and invites the sub-committee responsible for reviewing the Terms of Reference to share their proposals. Members of this group suggest rephrasing the statement of purpose so that it emphasises the role of inter-agency coordination, such as, “We ensure that drug-related policies are consistent and mutually supportive” (NZ Document AG6). They highlight the committee’s information sharing and conflict resolution functions, and also hint at a co-creation
function with the statement: “We are committed to developing mechanisms to ensure that formalised processes are developed to achieve a collaborative and engaged approach to strategic working groups and the developing of action plans including innovative ways to address drug issues” (NZ Document AG6). The sub-committee recommends that other changes to the Terms of Reference focus on structural and process mechanisms: establishing a rotating chair, publicising an annual schedule of meetings, producing an annual report, and streamlining the paper writing format.

The chair moves the meeting along, noting that alongside the Terms of Reference review, he asked a sub-committee to consider how to increase general manager and chief executive-level engagement in the IACD. A sub-committee member suggests shifting process, explaining: “My recommendations are that CEs should get a copy of the minutes for information, annually we invite CEOs to the meeting, and we do a shared report for their high-level CE group. It is very competitive to get on that agenda so we as members need to advocate in our agencies” (Fieldwork Notes, 24 July 2007). An MSD participant wonders if they might be able to tell better stories to chief executives if they created, and regularly updated, an IACD action plan. There is a discussion about what to include in the action plan, and consensus that each agency should, before committee meetings, submit a list of relevant projects that are not ‘business as usual’. The chair interjects to say: “Let’s add ‘inter-agency’ to the title. This report should tell ministers a coherent story of what, as a group of agencies, we are all doing... Also there is a question about how best to organise this information? If we want to demonstrate to ministers that we are all playing together nicely, then I don’t think it should be organised by agency. I would like to paint a more comprehensive picture” (Fieldwork Notes, 24 July 2007). Heads nod, and the chair moves to adjourn the meeting, reminding members of the date of the next meeting.

Perspectives and impressions. IACD meetings demonstrated a high level of fidelity to the committee model, as laid out in the Terms of Reference. The large
number of agencies at the table, along with the time lag between meetings, ensured crowded agendas with limited space for open debate and disagreement. In debrief interviews, general managers cited this strict adherence to process—a process which emphasised information sharing over shared products—as a reason for irregular attendance. Poor top-tier attendance frustrated IACD organisers, who reflected that “ministers have been signalling to us for a while that they would like chief executive officers making up the membership and not policy managers... but the officers and managers don’t see the relevance of drug and alcohol policy to the rest of their work” (NZ23G). Even when General Managers did see the relevance of drug and alcohol policy to their work, they struggled to see the purpose of the IACD committee. The IACD’s explicit public health frame was not always a comfortable fit with other agency’s policy frames, and the presentation and paper format did not allow for these frames to be broached or reconciled. As one participant noted:

“I do not get a lot out of the inter-agency committee. It just feels like an imposition, like if somebody says you must produce a paper for IACD, I do not gain anything by doing that. I do not get any feedback on most of the work I do through that. The way the IACD operates in the moment, I am even questioning why we have it. Perhaps it is just to tick the box to say that we are working inter-governmentally across agencies...” (NZ041G).

Indeed, most participants noted they would circumvent the committee and go directly to a colleague to address an issue.
5.9.2: Inter-Agency Committee on Suicide Prevention

History. The Inter-Agency Committee on Suicide Prevention (IACSP) began in 1999 under the leadership of the MYD to promote the 1998 Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, *In Our Hands*. In 2006, with the release of the MOH-led Suicide Prevention Strategy, the Committee’s focus broadened to include all population groups. The MOH took over facilitation and secretariat duties from the MYD. The Committee, as outlined in its Terms of Reference, had fourteen ‘key’ tasks, which can be grouped into two categories: those having to do with sharing information, and those with reviewing information. The first category included such actions as disseminating resources, serving as a key point of contact, and passing along relevant documentation; the second category included such areas as commenting on papers and advising on processes for obtaining inter-agency agreement. The assumption was that these tasks would help the IACSP meet its core objective: facilitating a whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention.

At the time of the fieldwork, the Ministry of Health was working on what it called a ‘whole-of-government’ suicide action plan. The role of IACSP members was to broker agency sign-off.

Operational structure. IACSP members convened on the fourth Thursday of every month between 2 and 4pm. Members were a mixture of analysts and senior analysts from twelve ministries and crown entities, including the MOH, MOH, MYD, MSD, MPIA, TPK, Women’s Affairs, Police, Corrections, the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), and the Injury Prevention Secretariat. Meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Communication – Cooperation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To oversee the National Suicide Prevention Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>A whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Analyst - Senior Analyst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA
Observations of three meetings
Debriefs after three meetings
Interviews with six civil servants
Meeting agendas and notes (AG3)
followed a preset format: twenty minutes were spent on ‘standing items’, including introductions, apologies, confirmation of minutes, and actions arising from the last meeting; forty minutes were spent on a presentation from a member of the group or an invited speaker; another thirty minutes were devoted to addressing timely issues such as the action plan; and the final twenty minutes were spent on round-robin style updates. Twice a year, the IACSP reported to a Ministerial Inter-agency Committee on Suicide Prevention.

Interaction point. Twelve civil servants enter Boardroom 2.08 at the Ministry of Health complex; five have come from within the building and the seven other participants span from the MSD, MOE, MYD, MPIA, Women’s Affairs, Police and the ACC. As participants take their seats and fall quiet, a MOH staffer recites a karakia, a prayer thanking the Maori gods for creating this collective moment to ‘bring together all our energies and spirits and reaffirm our common purpose of suicide prevention’ (Fieldwork Notes, 23 August 2007). Heads drop, some participants close their eyes, and others nod. The MOH chair pauses, and then launches into official business, noting the ten members who are absent. Copies of last meeting’s minutes are circulated, and, as there are no corrections or additions, they are approved.

Attention shifts to last meeting’s action item: receiving more information about the MOE’s new school support handbook. The MOE participant notes that while she did receive formal comments from IACSP members, she has not yet incorporated them, and that there are no plans for a separate publication addressing youth suicide. The chair responds that she is very pleased that MOE civil servants are more regularly attending IACSP, and suggests that the next meeting include a more formal presentation about the education work programme. The chair reminds members that “this suicide meeting always has a presentation at each meeting so let me know if there are ideas. We are not as formalised as the Inter-agency Committee on Drugs and you do not have to submit a formal paper first to present” (NZ033G).
An academic researcher who has been invited to give the day’s presentation describes a randomised controlled trial to study the effects of treating depression online. Participants ask several factual questions, and one wonders what would happen if the intervention proved to be successful. MOH civil servants respond, stating that it could be written into their guidelines for general practitioners. They note that guidelines, promotional tools and funding agreements are their primary policy levers. A conversation follows on the action plan, which includes a listing of each agency’s suicide prevention activities. An MOH member says, with a noticeable sigh, that “we have not had much progress on it: the researchers the MOH hired to write it are not happy with some of our edits. We’re continuing to negotiate and hope to be able to have the full draft out for you for final comments soon” (Fieldwork Notes, 23 August 2007). The MYD civil servants asks what members can do to be supportive, to which the chair answers that there is not much to do, and that they will approach members separately should there be key issues. The chair notes progress in other areas: the MOH is actively planning an upcoming symposium on cross-sectoral mental health approaches, a new prevention website for adults is live, and they have hired web developers to create a new prevention website for young people. The chair then inquires about other agency’s current programmes of work, which leads to round-robin updates:

**ACC participant**: Same old, same old, really.
**MYD participant**: Not that much. We are stepping up our work on youth access to health care. We’re writing a paper, which we’ll send around.
**DIA participant**: We are running a few local projects with young people.
**TPK participant**: Nothing really. We are undergoing a restructuring. There will be a unit to increase inter-agency collaboration.
**Ministry of Women’s Affairs participant**: Our sexual health document is about to be released.
**Police participant**: Senior police officers are going through the Assist Training and 5000 copies of Feeling Suicidal have been purchased for them.

The chair thanks members for their time and closes with ‘See you next month!’

5.9.2
Perspectives and impressions. Participants were aware that the IACSP functioned primarily as a platform for information sharing. IACSP members might comment on each other’s documents or answer questions, but they did not jointly develop products or engage in collective strategic planning. In debriefs, the MOH chair reflected that “we know our role is around information sharing. And you kind of think, ‘Well, That is a waste of time for two hours every month.’ But it’s through information sharing we’ve established some good relationships which has facilitated much easier cross agency working when we’ve needed to do something in a short time... (NZ033G)”

MOH participants saw ‘relationship maintenance’ as a key success benchmark, particularly in light of the committee’s inconsistent agency leadership. A committee that regularly convened signaled to the field that suicide prevention was being taken seriously. Participants external to the MOH questioned whether updating colleagues every month could lead to an inter-agency approach to suicide prevention. As a participant from the Police said, “When someone tries to commit suicide, do we really ask the next set of questions about why? At the moment, we just seem to deal with it... We’re just not sufficiently well resourced to look earlier, to intervene much earlier in the life cycle... (NZ11G)” The MYD and Women’s Affairs participants noted that

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.17: Inter-agency Suicide Prevention Committee Interaction Sequence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Committee set-up to promote youth suicide strategy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYD in facilitation role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-age suicide prevention strategy released</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOH in facilitation role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information shared &amp; signposted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs: updates, document sign-offs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the MOH did not even set ‘suicide prevention’ as a priority area for on-the-ground health deliverers. They hoped questions about joint resourcing and intervention logics would one day make it to the IACSP decision-making table.

5.9.3: Mission-on Initiative

*History.* Results from the 2002 National Children’s Nutrition Survey revealed a significant rise in childhood obesity: one in twelve New Zealand children aged two to fourteen was obese, and one in five was overweight (Ministry of Health, 2003). Ministers called for a ‘whole-of-government’ response. In 2006, DPMC invited agencies with a stake in youth nutrition and physical activity, including the MOH, MOE, MYD, and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), to compile a list of potential initiatives for front-bench ministers. From over seventy proposals, ministers selected ten to form the Mission-on childhood obesity campaign. Civil servants perceived the selection process as highly politicised, creating only the appearance of a whole-of-government approach. A MYD participant reflected that “with Mission-on, you all went away writing your comments and nothing changed. No comments from any other agency except Sports and Recreation were there. That was an incredibly frustrating and time consuming collaboration and it was not collaboration at all”… (NZ001D)

There was no articulated intervention logic. Success was to be measured by a change in nutrition and exercise practices, not by a reduction in obesity itself. One civil servant described his first interaction with Mission-on: “I came in right after there had been sign-off and relationships were raging and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.18: Mission-on Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success is...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Stage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Formality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Frame</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA**
- Observation of one meeting
- Debriefs after three meetings
- Interviews with five civil servants
- Emails and communications
- Meeting agendas and notes (S4)
they were writing the first cabinet paper, and it was like where is the logic? Why are we doing this? What are the assumptions we are making” (NZ007D)? Once sign-off occurred, the focus shifted to inter-agency governance structures. SPARC received lead agency status, charged with ensuring the ten separate initiatives reflected a 'single brand'. Responsibility for individual proposals was redistributed to the originating agency. Two of the ten initiatives were a partnership between the MOH and MOE, while the remaining eight were progressed through single-agency channels.

**Operational structure.** *Mission-on* relied on a parallel work structure: decision-making authority resided with a joint ministerial group and a joint officials group, while day-to-day work filtered to a campaign coordinator and project teams from the MOH, MOE, MYD, and SPARC. SPARC hired and managed the campaign coordinator; the MOE supported a project team with three full-time staff; the MOH supported a part-time project lead; and the MYD provided periodic expertise. The fact that all four agencies contributed resources, but coordinating authority resided within one agency, was a consistent point of tension. The SPARC-based campaign coordinator acknowledged that, “I’ve only been in the position for six months and I spend all of the time saying I am not SPARC, I am *Mission-on* and I still have to work quite hard at that and there are a lot of superficial things that I do to create my role in the minds of all of the participants of *Mission-on* delivery that I am not SPARC” (NZ056G). Indeed, the campaign coordinator organised standing meetings between MOE and MOH civil servants, monthly synergy meetings with civil servants from each of the ten initiatives, a series of seminars, and a regular newsletter. Despite the range of joined-up mechanisms, participants continued to be held accountable by senior civil servants in their home agency, only some of whom were a part of the joint officials group. Even though participants reported up the traditional bureaucratic ladder, several described working down to new end-user groups. MOE officials noted that *Mission-on* enabled them to target young people directly, rather than just work through schools and educational institutions.
Interaction point (Multilateral). Thirteen civil servants convene in a conference room at the MOH for another synergy meeting, one of a series of monthly meetings designed to surface emergent issues and connect ongoing activities. The campaign coordinator starts by advertising dinner and drinks for all participants in the following week. One participant laughs and says after their last night out she has learned to take leave the day after. Laughter gives way to updates; participants describe what they have done in the past month and what they will be doing in the next month to take their initiatives forward. A SPARC participant has the floor, and explains their ‘lifestyle ambassador’s programme’, which brings celebrity role models into schools to promote regular exercise and good nutrition. The MOE participant talks about planning a series of school-based events to launch some of their new informational resources which have been developed with the MOH. She asks for help troubleshooting a problem: one of their ministers had decided that he cannot headline an upcoming school-based event for political reasons. The participant notes that “the school is hugely disappointed, really furious actually, and my staff member who made the call to the school looked quite bad as she could not give a good enough reason. What can we do”(NZ048G)? The campaign coordinator makes eye contact with another SPARC participant, wondering aloud if SPARC could provide a suitable lifestyle ambassador. The SPARC participant mentions that they have just signed up a well-known New Zealand band, and as soon as the meeting concludes, he will make a call to try to arrange something. Participants continue to offer updates and suggestions on each other’s events and materials. The coordinator declares that Mission Control, their online project space, which includes a calendar to coordinate timings of events, will soon be live. She also notes that she is working on the next cabinet paper for approval at the ministerial committee, which she will soon send around for comments and additions. Although the formal meeting comes to a close, participants linger to chat.
Interaction point (Bilateral). The MOH and MOE co-lead an initiative to develop new nutritional guidelines for schools. Civil servants from these two agencies meet face-to-face each week to review the draft, which is written mostly by Education. As the MOE official puts it, “We can write things in a way that we know our principals and our teachers will understand” (NZ048G). The MOH nutritionist wants to ensure that the information is not oversimplified, and that it correctly reflects the science. After batting words back and forth, looking for a phrasing that might suit both perspectives, they craft a section they are comfortable sharing with their respective ministers. One of the participants contextualises what I have just seen: “This was only wording between two agencies. You can imagine how big a process it is when you have to go through four chief executives across four government departments, and changes that each are suggesting which differ from what the other agency wants…. it is not unusual to have a two-month period from start to drafting a paper to getting it signed off”… (NZ009D)

Impressions and perspectives. Mission-on was a collaborative contradiction. On the one hand, its overtly political genesis meant visibility could take precedence over content.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.19: Mission-on Interaction Sequence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obese statistics released</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministers requested policy response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agencies submitted 70 initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers selected 10 initiatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPARC assigned lead agency status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign coordinator hired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workgroup and ministerial meetings held</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synergy meetings identified links</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs: events, materials, guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ministers selected ten initiatives out of seventy, without explaining how they collectively contributed to childhood obesity outcomes. There was no shared intervention logic. On the other hand, participants noted that unlike in other joint initiatives, they used meetings to do and not just talk about shared work. Synergy meetings and social get-togethers were perceived as very different to day-to-day civil servant practice. None of the participants interviewed had worked in such a way before. For the campaign coordinator, attendance at joint meetings and get-togethers was one early indicator of success. As she stated “Well, at first, it was, will these people get together after formal meetings and have a drink together? Are they getting on, are they talking freely to one another, are they exchanging confidences about the difficulties they are having in their own agencies? Or are they just doing that with me” (NZ56G)? Later, as the initiatives progressed, she looked at how well participants averted conflict and confusion. “There are markers on the sort of negative side: how many fires one has to put out in terms of, are people continuing to use inappropriate and inconsistent habits around our Mission-on brand or the way they talk about Mission-on in relation to the other work they do” (NZ56G).

One of the challenges in communicating Mission-on was brand confusion. There was other inter-agency work unfolding at the same time with similar intent. The MOH managed a separate cross-governmental campaign called Healthy Eating, Healthy Action, addressing nutrition and physical activity across all age groups. The relationship between the two projects was unclear. What was clear to Mission-on participants was that, at the end of the day, they needed to deliver to their agency and to their minister. There were no cross-governmental accountabilities. “In the end, responsibility for the ten initiatives drops down to each agency. Even in the two instances where we share initiatives, there are discrete pieces. So I know for the nutrition in schools project, for instance, that Education is in charge of the bulk of it, and the Ministry of Health comes in to classify the food groups. So it’s possible to break it all down and say this is an education issue, and this is a health issue” (NZ48G).
5.9.4: Youth Justice Leadership Group

History. The *Youth Offending Strategy* aimed to prevent and reduce offending and reoffending by children and young people (Ministry of Justice, 2002). It was part of Labour’s political pledge to address high rates of youth crime. The strategy emphasised inter-agency structures and governance arrangements. Rather than set common outcome measures, it recommended four new mechanisms for coordinating policy development and service delivery. These mechanisms sat at each hierarchical rung: local youth offending teams, a senior officials group, a ministerial group, and an independent advisory council comprised of community representatives. The strategy’s focus on mechanisms reveals two core assumptions: (1) youth crime rates are affected by policy and delivery coordination; (2) coordination is best achieved through joined-up structures. The senior officials group was set-up to coordinate the coordinating bodies. The goal of the group was to “monitor and report quarterly to the Ministers Group on the performance of local teams and the implementation of the Youth Offending Strategy” (Document AG2). The group met quarterly as a core group of five agencies: MOJ, MSD, MOH, MOE, and Police. Twice a year, the group invited civil servants from population agencies, including the MYD, MPIA, and TPK, to provide feedback. The MOJ assumed secretarial and facilitation duties.

*Operational structure*. When the senior officials group began meeting in 2003, it drew in most of the civil servants responsible for writing the Youth Offending Strategy – a small and familiar group of

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Table 5.20: Youth Justice Leadership Group Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Coordination-Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To oversee implementation of the Youth Offending Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success is...</td>
<td>Being redefined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Stage</td>
<td>Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formality</td>
<td>Mandatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>Multilateral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>Manager / Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATA
Observation of one meeting
Debrief after one meeting
Interviews with nine civil servants
Meeting agendas and notes (AG2)
eleven people. The group’s Terms of Reference included a very succinct statement of purpose alongside a verbose section on membership, voting processes, reporting lines, and responsibilities. The group had seven key responsibilities. The first six related to monitoring and information analysis. The seventh responsibility related to product development, and read, “To develop a strategic focus for the youth justice sector that ensures policy and service development over and above what is currently detailed in the youth offending strategy” (Document AG3). Yet the work processes group members set-up emphasised information sharing over strategic planning. Prior to quarterly meetings, Youth Offending Teams provided updates to the MOJ, and secretariat staff would pass that data directly to officials. After each quarterly meeting, secretariat staff would compile meeting minutes, a milestone report, and a newsletter and send them on to the Ministerial Group and the Independent Advisory Group. Information flow was a clear priority. The Terms of Reference also recommended that secretariat staff periodically hold ‘community meetings’ to serve as a conduit between service deliverers and policymakers in Wellington. The MOJ was accountable for reporting the group’s activities upward to ministers.

Interaction point. Senior official group members had been meeting for four years, and had convened at least twenty-eight times by the time my fieldwork began. A review of meeting agendas and minutes along with interviews of long-term members pointed to a typical meeting pattern. Secretariat staff noted that they used an agenda template: meetings started with a youth offending team update, moved on to a legislative and topical issues update, and then onward to the agency milestones chart. When asked to summarise the group’s regular practice, a MOJ participant straightforwardly noted, “It is agency information sharing so each agency will sort of update everybody on any new developments or changes within their agency” (NZ21G). Actors from the Police and the MSD offered similar accounts. As one of them observed, “You can meet every other month and spend the time together and not do anything. This is also happening
with the Youth Offending Teams. We have collaboration guidelines and protocols, you can apply them, but do you understand everyone’s roles? How much clarity is there really”(NZ52G)? The MOH and MOE participants felt that they often lacked role clarity. While Police and the MSD delivered targeted youth justice interventions, the MOH and MOE oversaw much broader, universal systems. MOJ officials acknowledged the challenge. “We have not been clear about what we want them to do… agencies are largely driven by their own work programmes and this can be seen as something additional”(NZ021G). Despite the lack of clarity, all eleven members clearly valued the relationships built through the officials group. They began a monthly lunch club to address issues that the standard meeting formats did not enable them to do. At the time of the fieldwork, group members recognised that if the lunch club was becoming more valuable than official meetings, they should revisit the group’s functionality. A six hour planning meeting was scheduled to do just that.

Atypical interaction point. The day prior to the six hour planning session, I sat down with the group’s chair to review his approach. He clarified that the session was about “how to make the group effective; the challenge is that we don’t revisit our intentions often enough, and things can trundle along for a long time. As chair, I need to ensure that energy levels stay up and that everything proceeds in a timely way”(NZ26G). In the weeks prior, he consulted with members to develop the agenda, and was planning on sharing facilitation duties with colleagues from each agency. I was able to discuss expectations with participants from each agency. One MSD civil servant tellingly said, “They need to refocus what it is they are going to prioritise for attention over the next 12 or 18 months... If you were to say to me rate them out of 10 for how well they function as a group, I think they are halfway there in terms of the relationships and mandate to be there, but the time is right for them to reset their agenda and think about where to from here and how”… (NZ032D) There is clear consensus on the need for the planning session, but ambivalence as to what can be achieved in six hours.
The planning session is held in a historic house, not a government meeting room. The boardroom is bright and airy with windows overlooking parliament house. There is tea and pastries, and lots of laughing and conversation. The MOJ chair asks for group consensus to start. Everybody takes their seats. He describes the purpose of the day, which has been printed on the top of the agenda. The meeting is an ‘opportunity to review the group’s role, functions, processes and relationships, to discuss work programmes, and set some priorities’. He emphasises the word relationship, observing that in the past week he has had a conversation with every single person at the table. That level of contact, he notes, is not unusual. While he hoped members would be reflective and self-critical about the group, he also wanted to acknowledge the frequency with which civil servants already interacted.

The MOH representative assumes the facilitative role, and opens up a space to reexamine the Youth Justice Leadership Group’s Terms of Reference. Everyone wants to flesh out the purpose, and refocus the Terms of Reference on functions rather than membership. The MOH chair moves to the whiteboard and creates a list of what the group actually does. The list reads: share information, maintain relationships, update the ministerial group, compile progress reports, serve as a foil for the Independent Advisory Committee, and model inter-agency meetings for the youth offending teams. The list is weighted towards information sharing, and members wonder if they should be doing more information creation. One participant inquires about the added value of the group. Colleagues cite relationships. The police participant says, to lots of head-nodding, that “The group helps me to cut through the bureaucracy and go straight to the source when I need to” (NZ011G). The MOH chair asks what the group would like to be doing. The list includes prioritising areas of work, predicting trends, going in-depth on issues, and developing a clear strategy. Another participant wonders how the group is perceived by ministers, and if it is seen as contributing to government-wide policy or to an individual minister’s policy. This comment sparks a debate: MSD
participants strongly believe that they should service their individual ministers. The police participants believe that the group could increase its profile amongst all ministers, and feed into wider political debates. A MOE official jumps in to ask the big question: what is success and what are the outcomes we are working towards? The following exchange unravels.

**MOJ participant:** I would also like to see good practice and good outcomes. It has to be something about making a difference.

**Police participant:** And ensuring our work is aligned, so a coordinated response.

**Health participant:** So our role is to actually improve outcomes? I don’t think we can.

**MSD participant:** If we cannot, who can? We influence the frontline.

**Police participant:** Our ultimate outcome is to reduce youth offending.

*(Fieldwork Notes, 10 August 2007)*

After much back and forth, participants collectively resolve to focus more explicitly on outcomes. They mark up the Terms of Reference to reflect their discussion, and the MOJ agrees to work on the precise wording, and circulate for further revision. One of the civil servants from Police then takes on the rotating facilitative role, and moves the group from outcomes to tasks. The chair draws an empty matrix on the whiteboard, with agencies on one axis and action areas on the other axis. One by one, participants fill in their square, naming the relationship between individual agency projects and the broader youth justice strategy. Once the matrix is complete, the Police chair offers her opinion: “We should be doing stuff as a group, not just sharing our individual work programmes. We need to be able to say what the population of young people we are working with looks like and where we want them to be in five to ten years” (NZ011.3G). There is widespread agreement. The afternoon is spent on a visioning exercise, and brainstorming common priorities and potential joint initiatives. While participants like the idea of spending meetings doing real problem-solving rather than problem sharing, there is concern about how to best influence their individual agency’s work programmes. The meeting ends with a decision to explore what it would take to run a joint work programme.
Although the planning session was not business as usual, members hoped it would set a new precedent and override the regular meeting format. They spoke of wanting more space for reflection, of having time to move past formal updates and do shared work. The year prior, group members collaborated to write a piece of legislation. Ministers commented on the high quality of the joint product. Participants repeatedly pointed to the legislation as an example of what they hoped to do more of: work that built on their collective capability set. For all of their collective aspiration, participants expressed some hesitancy in the post-session debrief interviews. They didn’t want to risk overloading what was already a successful group. Indeed, most participants rated the Youth Justice Leadership Group as one of the ‘best’ examples of collaboration they had experienced and the one that they would prioritise over all their other joined-up initiatives. As one civil servant explained, “The group already is already much more sort of strategic and has a closer link to ministers so it’s got a more political focus as well. It’s definitely the one I would prioritise” (NZ044G). That meant there was little sense of urgency behind the proposed reforms; the rationale for reform was incremental improvement. Poor outputs or outcomes were not explicit drivers.
of change. Informal follow-up with participants after fieldwork suggested they were moving forward with a joint work programme, and continuing to iterate their meetings.

**Section 5.10: Bridging case studies**

5.10.1: Ministry of Social Development Youth Network

*History.* In 2003, Cabinet merged the Ministry of Youth Development (MYD) with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) following a capability review which concluded that the MYD had insufficient capability and resource to lead youth policy. The MSD ‘owned’ a wide range of policies that impacted young people, including adoption, child protection, student loans, unemployment benefits, and family intervention. The MYD lacked a clear and distinct role. Was it a service deliverer, policymaker, or policy coordinator? In 2005, the MYD laid claim for the latter. It established an MSD youth network to “provide a level of coordination and consistency within the MSD on youth projects.” Its initial Terms of Reference presented a set of modest goals: to develop relationships, to enable discussion, to share information, and to improve the quality of information available for policy development and decision-making. The MYD managers were clear what the network was not: it was not a governance body or a formal peer review mechanism. As they wrote in their early meeting invites, “Agreement on matters is desirable but not essential – ministerially-directed differences will be respected” (Document AG1). At the first meeting held in September 2005, participants suggested broadening its scope to include “setting strategic priorities” and “developing MSD positions on youth matters.” Both of these functions suggested a role beyond information sharing and relationship development. By 2007, the MYD looked to formally reposition the network as an overseeing body, responsible for developing and monitoring a formal MSD youth work programme. In an internal memo, MYD managers wrote that the MSD Youth Network should be “viewed by participants as the centre of operations for the youth-related activity that
government is interested in and therefore a critical component of their work” (Document IC14).

Operational structure. The MSD Youth Network met every month for one hour. Meetings were chaired by the Managing Director of the MYD and also attended by the agency’s policy and operations managers. While the invitation list contained fifty names, fifteen civil servants regularly attended. Most were at an analyst or senior analyst level, but occasionally managers or policy advisors would come to give or hear a relevant presentation. Agendas followed a preset format: 1) an MYD update; 2) presentations; and 3) round-robin style updates.

Interaction point. Fourteen civil servants filter into the Rangatahi Meeting Room for a 10am start. The meeting chair welcomes members and launches into the first agenda item, a presentation titled MYD Youth Outcomes Framework. “MYD has an outcome of more vibrant and optimistic young people and we want to be able to tell a coherent story to ministers” (NZ014D). This means compiling all the statistics and known indicators about young people, including demographics, risk behaviours, educational achievements and government resource spends. The MYD plans to submit a Cabinet Paper sharing this story, and putting forth a set of priorities. When a participant notes that he is doing work on unemployment services for young people aged 15-19, attention shifts from the outcomes framework to service delivery. Examples of the questions asked, include: Will

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<th>Table 5.22: MSD Youth Network Overview</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Form</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Success is...</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Life Stage</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Formality</strong></td>
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the services include mental health? What are the financial incentives? When will the service be online? What is the brand? The answers, the speaker says, will be clearer once cabinet signs off on the concept. It is now 10:45 am, and the chair suggests that in the remaining fifteen minutes, participants offer brief updates. Updates include:

**Social Inclusion participant:** We are going to lots of conferences about gay, lesbian, and transgender youth.

**Child, Youth and Family participant:** We are working on a cabinet paper on sentencing options... We are also working on youth gangs.

**Work and Income participant:** We are trying to look at the support offered to 15-19 year olds and not reinventing youth transitions services...

**StudyLink participant:** We are working on a collaboration with the Tertiary Education Commission. We are focused on student support. We have a ‘request-for-proposal’ out on student support services and outcomes framework.

**Family and Community Services participant:** We have now recruited teen parent coordinators and are doing some work on parenting services. Also, we’re finding Maori males are a big issue; the statistics are shocking. What can we do about this? *(Fieldwork Notes, 17 July 2007)*

There are no follow-up questions or discussion points. The chair then suggests that Family and Community Services present on Maori males at next month’s network meeting. This month’s network meeting is closed.

*Perspectives and impressions.*

The MSD Youth Network, from its inception, experienced role confusion: was it a forum to share, synthesise, or prioritise information? Meetings focused on presentations and updates, and observations and interviews indicated that there was little room for critical questioning or idea generation. As one participant noted, “It’s been going on

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<th>Table 5.23: MSD Youth Network Interaction Sequence</th>
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<tr>
<td>MYD merged with MSD</td>
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<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>MYD established MSD Youth Network</td>
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<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings held monthly</td>
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<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information shared &amp; signposted</td>
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<tr>
<td>↓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outputs unclear</td>
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**Table 5.23: MSD Youth Network Interaction Sequence**
for a while on a monthly basis and I don’t see anything constructive coming out of it… [It needs] to be more than just information sharing. I have no sense of everybody coming around the table and discussing and representing their different departmental views and coming up with a consensus view about the information…(NZ002D).” While all the Network members worked for the MSD, they did not all work for the same minister. Concern about ministerial positioning was a reason to retain organisational boundary lines. The MYD managers frequently reminded participants that “we need to respect ministerial interests.” Information sharing was a risk adverse collective activity.

Section 5.11: Chapter summary

The ten case studies presented in this chapter feature the range of descriptive factors outlined in Section 5.5. Three of the case studies were one-off initiatives, while seven were ongoing. One of the case studies was in the design phase, three were in the early production phase, and six were in the full production phase. Six of the case studies were voluntary, initiated by civil servants, while four of the case studies were mandatory, directly established by ministers. Despite these differences, the interactions observed were strikingly similar. Common themes across case studies included:

- Joining-up began most often with a written script: either a published strategy document (e.g. In Our Hands: Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy) or a ministerial directive (e.g. Realising Youth Potential). One exception was the Youth Justice Leadership Conference which began bottom-up, with an expression of interest from local youth offending teams.
- Joining-up was most often operationalised as an officials group. Officials groups started with a Terms of Reference. All of the Terms of References presented information sharing as the primary mechanism for coordination and alignment. Most also noted the need to use that information for
strategic planning or agency decision-making. The High and Complex Needs Unit’s Terms of Reference was the only document to explicitly argue that working together is not just about sharing or using information, but about sharing outcomes and workloads.

- Interactions unfolded in close accordance with the Terms of Reference. Meetings were most often a place to talk about rather than to do work. They proceeded in a formal, pre-set way, starting with agency updates, moving to presentations and papers, and concluding with round-robin updates. Rarely did the chair leave time for introductory remarks. Indeed, in only three case studies, did meeting chairs offer participants a reason for meeting: the chair of the Inter-agency Committee on Suicide Prevention did so through a Maori karakia; the chair of the Youth Justice Leadership Group described the goals behind the planning day; and the MYD manager reminded participants the objective of the MYD-MED youth entrepreneurship proposal.

- Case studies orientated around shared information (e.g. the Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs) did not regularly distribute group work to members. Members were invited to write papers or give presentations, but the concepts and ideas for these papers and presentations came from the individual rather than the group. Questions following these papers and presentations were nearly always points of fact, rather than critical conversation starters.

- Case studies orientated around a shared product (e.g. Mission-on) consistently distributed group work back to the originating agency. Nutritional guidelines ‘jointly’ produced by the MOH and MOE were actually written by the MOE with language slightly modified by the MOH. The MYD-MED proposal on youth entrepreneurship was put together by MYD officials, while the Realising Youth Potential proposal was conceived by MOE officials. There was one exception. At the Youth Justice Leadership
Group planning session, participants spent the morning reworking and co-developing the concepts behind their revised Terms of Reference.

- The High and Complex Needs Unit was the only case study orientated around a shared funding stream. It was also the only case study where success was defined in terms of an end-user group (at-risk young people) rather than a product (e.g. new legislation) or a process (e.g. better coordination).

- In all ten case studies, civil servant participants remained fully accountable to their agency and to their minister. Even though most case studies featured an inter-agency ministerial decision-making body, actors did not talk about working for a group of ministers. Civil servants followed their Code of Practice, which clearly stated they worked for their assigned minister (SSC, 2001).

How do these ten New Zealand case studies compare with the ten English case studies described in Chapter Four? In Chapter Six, I compare joined-up practice across the two countries, drawing out similarities and differences in civil servant interactions and behaviours. These similarities and differences are used in Chapter Eight to examine variations in case study performance, rather than just to highlight variations in case study practice.
Chapter Six: How does joined-up practice compare between England and New Zealand?

This chapter highlights similarities and differences in how civil servants in England and New Zealand join up, arguing that there are more similarities than differences.

Section 6.1: Chapter structure

Using the theory of change organising framework introduced in Chapter One, this chapter seeks to compare and contrast case studies using a common set of questions and prompts: what led to the joint initiative (the conditions)?; what is the structure of the joint initiative (the intervention)?; how did civil servants join-up (the practice)?; and what contextual factors influenced practice (enablers and barriers)? Chapter Seven will explore the answer to the last question asked in a theory of change: what are the results of joining-up? Chapter Eight will explore which contextual factors seemed to enable high performing joint initiatives.

Institutional differences. Although civil servants in England and New Zealand addressed similar youth policy problems, they operated within differently sized and shaped institutional spaces. The agencies most likely to be seated at the joined-up table in England were not the same as those in New Zealand. In England, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Home Office (HO), the Department of Health (DH), and a central agency, the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU), were the most dominant inter-agency players. In New Zealand, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), Ministry of Youth Development (MYD), Ministry of Health (MOH), Ministry of Justice (MOJ), and Ministry of Education (MOE) were the most dominant inter-agency players. Unlike
in England, there were few examples of central agencies in New Zealand serving in an explicit brokerage or facilitation role. Perhaps as a result, New Zealand had far fewer government-wide strategy documents. Where *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters* provided civil servants in England with a common reference point, New Zealand civil servants relied on issue-specific strategies as framing devices.

*Common trends.* Despite these differences, civil servants joined-up similarly, largely relying on prior templates to guide interactions and work distributions. This was particularly true of civil servants in overseeing and problem-solving case studies. Table 6.1 lists the twenty case studies by type. Similarities and differences by case study type are explored in the pages that follow.

**Table 6.1: England and New Zealand case studies by type**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proactive</th>
<th>Problem-Solving</th>
<th>Overseeing</th>
<th>Bridging</th>
<th>Integrative</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENG</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Alcohol Harm Officials Group</td>
<td>- <em>Every Child Matters</em> Programme Board</td>
<td>- DH-DFES Partnership Agreement</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- <em>Youth Matters</em> Programme Board</td>
<td>- Children and Young People’s Steering Group</td>
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<td>- Young People and Drugs Programme Board</td>
<td>- DfES Away Day</td>
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<td>- <em>Respect</em> Taskforce</td>
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<td>- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Team</td>
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<td>- Targeted Youth Support Programme Board</td>
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<td><strong>NZ</strong></td>
<td>MED-MYD Youth Entrepreneurship Group</td>
<td>- Alcohol Review Steering Group</td>
<td>- Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs</td>
<td>- MSD Youth Network</td>
<td>- High and Complex Needs Unit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Youth Justice Conference</td>
<td>- Realising Youth Potential</td>
<td>- Inter-Agency Committee on Suicide Prevention</td>
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<td>- Mission-on Initiative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Youth Justice Leadership Group</td>
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Section 6.2: Proactive case studies

Proactive case studies are those orientated around an opportunity rather than a policy problem or existing strategy. As there are only two instances in the New Zealand dataset and none in the English dataset, we cannot comfortably identify patterns, but can identify points of divergence and convergence.

Conditions. Both proactive case studies began with an external stimulus. In the case of the Youth Justice Conference, this was a bottom-up stimulus, and in the case of the MED-MYD Youth Entrepreneurship Group, this was a top-down stimulus. Local youth offending teams put pressure on their MOJ colleagues to organise a sector-wide conference. While MYD and MED ministers did not mandate civil servants to address youth entrepreneurship, they did express interest, which was enough to spark joint working.

Intervention. Civil servants in the two examples used joined-up structures with varying formality. The Youth Justice Conference set a regular meeting schedule to distribute tasks and provide informational updates. One agency took the lead. The MED-MYD civil servants met in-person irregularly; meetings were not regularly timetabled or consistently facilitated. Yet both joined-up structures were time-limited and product-focused. The goal was to produce a conference or a proposal; once these outputs were generated, the structures would cease to exist.

Practice. Observations and debriefing sessions suggested that civil servants in the two case studies worked differently. Civil servants engaged in the Youth Justice Conference co-designed the tasks: they generated content together, collectively brainstorming conference themes, tracks, and speakers which were then distributed back to originating agencies. In the MED-MYD case study, content was generated separately and then critiqued jointly. Task distribution was never explicitly discussed; instead, one agency became the document writer, and the other, the editor. The MED civil servant in the editor role used ministerial sign-off as leverage and power.
Influencing factors. There were three contextual factors of note: 1) Deadlines: Conference organisers worked to a strict deadline. This stands in contrast to the MED-MYD partnership where ministers asked to review a product, but did not name a date. 2) Civil servant status: The Youth Justice Conference involved civil servants at the same hierarchical levels; in contrast, the MED-MYD partnership involved civil servants at analyst, senior analyst, and managerial levels. 3) Target audience: The Youth Justice Conference was targeted towards on-the-ground practitioners while the MED-MYD partnership was targeted to upwards to ministers. The MED minister ranked higher than the MYD minister; MED participants made it known that their minister was the more important target audience.

Section 6.3: Problem-solving case studies

Problem-solving case studies respond to named policy problems, and yield formal legislation or cross-departmental strategies. There are three problem-solving case studies across the dataset: England’s Alcohol Harm Officials Group, and in New Zealand, the Alcohol Review Steering Group and Realising Youth Potential. All three unfolded similarly, although Realising Youth Potential’s was both more politicised and unstructured than the two alcohol-related initiatives.

Conditions. All three initiatives began top-down. Ministers either named the problem, or authorised top-tier civil servants to investigate the problem. Realising Youth Potential responded to the New Zealand Prime Minister’s call for improved youth outcomes. Both alcohol initiatives responded to ministerial concern over high youth drinking rates. Ministers were alerted to these rates by senior civil servants in regular briefing documents.

Intervention. The two alcohol initiatives from England and New Zealand used formal, inter-agency board structures. Civil servants representing law enforcement, health, industry, and young people convened regularly to review an agenda compiled by a lead functional agency: the MOJ in New Zealand and the
HO in England. That agenda included presentations, updates, and risk analysis. Progress was monitored by a ministerial group. In contrast, *Realising Youth Potential* relied on ad-hoc inter-agency board meetings. Meetings were convened and facilitated by central agency staff prior to ministerial presentations, and day-to-day work was assigned to a single functional agency, the MOE.

*Practice.* In all three examples, inter-agency meetings were spaces to talk about work that had been completed independently by individual agencies. Civil servants came to the table with positions approved by their bosses or ministers, and left the table with tasks to codify those positions, either as official comments or as sections of strategy documents. Shared logic and language were developed after the content of the strategy documents. Civil servants involved with *Realising Youth Potential* constructed a shared intervention logic after the lead agency, the MOE, had completed a draft strategy document, while those involved with England’s Alcohol Harm Officials Group wrote the introductory organising framework after each functional agency submitted their chapters.

*Influencing factors:* The England and New Zealand alcohol-related case studies operated within similar contexts: both defined problems in terms of a legislative solution. In New Zealand, the problem was defined by ministers as access to alcohol, which narrowed the policy levers to legislation and enforcement. In England, where the problem was defined as the oversupply of and excessive demand for alcohol, the policy levers were wider and included both prevention and enforcement. *Realising Youth Potential* suffered from too narrow a set of policy levers. Framing the problem as educational disengagement winnowed what was to be an inter-agency policy response to schools and led to the MOE gaining sole agency status. When central agencies realised the one-dimensionality of the solution set, they reconvened an inter-agency group to expand the focus. Yet this inter-agency group was set-up too late in the process to fundamentally alter the solution set.
Section 6.4: Overseeing case studies

Overseeing case studies are those formed to implement an existing policy or strategy document. Implementation often requires developing new policies, strategies, and action plans. Overseeing case studies thus share problem-solving case study features. There are ten overseeing case studies in the dataset: six in England and four in New Zealand. Nine of the ten case studies relied on formal governance structures, all of which emanated from the publication of an inter-agency strategy document and fed into an inter-agency ministerial group. For seven of the ten case studies, practice mirrored structure, with civil servants adhering to a preset board agenda. Three of the ten case studies -- two in England and one in New Zealand -- involved less scripted work outside the boardroom.

**Conditions.** There were few notable differences between countries. Overseeing case studies in both England and New Zealand had clear starting points, with Terms of References spelling out the purpose and logistics of interactions. These Terms of Reference were drawn directly from the original strategy documents, which provided civil servants with an initial problem analysis and solution space. How that solution space was conceptualised determined which agencies were invited to the table. For example, because New Zealand’s Suicide Prevention Committee promoted an all-age suicide prevention strategy, there was a greater range of participating agencies than when the committee focused exclusively on youth suicide.

One of the ten overseeing case studies started differently than the rest: England’s Young People and Drugs Programme Board. Rather than stem from a joint strategy document, it originated from a joint Public Service Agreement (PSA), which tied two agencies to the same target: a reduction in illicit drug use amongst young people.

**Intervention.** In nine of the ten case studies, strategy documents outlined the joined-up structure: a regularly-convening board. In England, these were known as programme boards, and in New Zealand, as inter-agency committees or...
officials groups. Programme boards, inter-agency committees, and officials groups were more than structures; they were also practice sets. Civil servants followed a consistent set of motions in the boardroom. An exception to this practice was England’s Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service which did not have a regularly convening board. While civil servants engaged in CAMHS reported to a ministerial committee, they relied on an informal team-based structure. The two lead agencies, the DfES and the DH, supported parallel roles. Two other case studies similarly incorporated team-based structures in addition to their formal boards; England’s Respect Taskforce and New Zealand’s Mission-on initiative both had full-time staff responsible for implementing inter-agency proposals.

Practice. Structure and function were tightly linked. Regularly convening boards proceeded similarly, with agendas emphasising information sharing over information synthesis. Information sharing took place in an ordered fashion: the lead agency would start the meeting and provide an update, and civil servants would move around the table and share their agency’s latest activities. There might be a formal presentation and paper, followed by a fact-based question and answer period, and any tasks would be referred back to the originating agency.

New Zealand’s Youth Justice Leadership Group and England’s Young People and Drugs Programme Board were two groups whose board meetings diverged from this sequence. During fieldwork, civil servants from both case studies were reassessing the functionality of the board structure and held an away day to jointly develop new Terms of References. A third case study, England’s new Targeted Youth Support Programme Board, tried to co-develop its Terms of Reference, but participants questioned why they would not just follow standard operating procedures.

Influencing factors. All ten of the case studies experienced high-level political buy-in, which meant that ministers from a range of agencies served as the actors’ audience. Two of the ten case studies, England’s Respect Taskforce and New Zealand’s Mission-on initiative, had front-bench ministers as their audience.
One of the ten case studies, the Young People and Drugs Programme Board, was under the stewardship of a central agency, which not only facilitated meetings, but monitored progress against the shared performance target.

**Section 6.5: Bridging case studies**

Bridging case studies address structural problems rather than policy problems. They focus on the relationship between organisations over time. There are four bridging case studies in the dataset: three from England and one from New Zealand. Two of the four case studies emphasised improved intra-organisational relations: New Zealand’s MSD Youth Network and England’s DfES Away Day. Civil servants from England referenced inter-agency conflicts in their rationale for joined-up ‘bridging’ practice more than their New Zealand counterparts.

*Conditions.* Each of the four case studies began when a proactive top-tier civil servant identified a pattern of challenging interactions with another agency or parts of their own agency, and suggested an away day or a regular standing board to air those challenges. Both the boards and the away day were composed of civil servants and had no formal ministerial engagement, though conflicts could escalate to ministerial bilateral meetings.

*Intervention.* Three of the case studies used standing boards and followed a prescribed agenda, emphasising information sharing and risk management as a means to relationship building. The DfES Away Day was less formal, combining social and strategic activities and painting a bigger policy picture.

*Practice.* The boards acted in a similar fashion: civil servants used the boardroom to talk about their department’s latest strategy documents and legislation; they informed each other of looming deadlines to submit formal comments; and offered their minister’s position on the policy issue of the day. There was limited back-and-forth conversation. The main task was to resolve factual matters, such as clarifying final submission dates. The DfES Away Day
had a different beginning and middle: it started with an inspirational speech about young people rather than with a particular policy, and proceeded to small group work and brainstorming. An external facilitator asked civil servants to discuss key questions, and to use Post-it notes and a whiteboard to come to an agreed position. The day ended similarly to the more formal programme boards, with tasks distributed back to individuals.

_Influencing factors._ These case studies depended on civil servant leadership. However, because of the lack of direct ministerial engagement, meeting chairs often struggled to set a concise agenda. Each of the bridging case studies was open-ended and exploratory: they were not set up to advance any one policy or issue; and they had wider bounds on what could be shared. In the case of the DfES Away Day, external facilitation and the use of basic technology provided more structure to this open-ended space.

**Section 6.6: Integrative case studies**

Integrative case studies blend agency resources to achieve a common outcome. There is only one example in the dataset: New Zealand’s High and Complex Needs Unit. Civil servant leadership, combined with direct ministerial engagement, led to the establishment of the unit following a series of high-profile child protection cases. It was believed that prevention was cheaper than intervention. The Unit was funded by three functional agencies, and overseen by a governance board that hired and fired Unit staff. This made the High and Complex Needs Unit stand apart from the other examples in the dataset: it followed ‘purpose-built’ protocols attached to the Unit rather than to any one agency; and had full-time staff managed by an inter-agency governance board. It also had a very clear target audience: young people with multiple and complex needs.
Section 6.7: Chapter summary

Civil servants from England and New Zealand who were engaged in overseeing, bridging, and problem-solving case studies performed a parallel set of motions: they attended inter-agency meetings, followed an agenda compiled and facilitated by a lead agency, provided agency updates, articulated their minister’s official position, and often left with a clarifying or codifying task. One of the most notable difference between the countries was the absence of proactive and integrative joined-up case studies in England. New Zealand case studies exhibited a greater range of practice. Civil servants were more likely to talk about team-based work units and joint resourcing as part of their joined-up repertoire. They relied less heavily on set-piece inter-agency structures. Indeed one might conclude that civil servants in England saw the programme board, with its frequency and uniformity of application, as synonymous with joining-up.

What can be made of these subtle practice differences? Chapters Seven and Eight will examine how joined-up practice, with all of its subtleties, affects the quality of policy outputs.
Chapter Seven: Does joining-up change what civil servants do and the outputs they produce?

This chapter explores what joined-up practice yields, answering the second research question: Does joining-up change what civil servants do and the outputs they produce? First, I review how the literature measures joined-up performance. Next, I introduce four performance benchmarks derived from the dataset. Finally, I apply three of these performance benchmarks to the twenty joined-up case studies in England and New Zealand.

Section 7.1: Chapter structure

Chapter Six presented a comparative overview of twenty examples of joined-up practice in England and New Zealand. This chapter offers readers a framework for determining the value of that practice. Joining-up costs time, money, and independence. All twenty examples required start-up resources: negotiating inter-agency agreements, allocating ongoing staff time and, in some cases, redistributing money. How might we determine whether there was a return on this investment? In other words, how can we conceptualise the success of joined-up practice?

In Chapter Two, Section Five, I noted that researchers tend to count outputs as an indicator of joined-up success: the number of meetings, inter-agency partners, published products, and deadlines met. These are all absolute measures. There is no inbuilt comparative benchmark with which to gauge if joined-up practice outperforms single-agency practice. I argue that instead of just measuring quantity, we should assess the quality of what emerges. Producing more of the same should not qualify as success.
Voets and Van Dooren (2008) make a case for using both qualitative and quantitative performance benchmarks. They differentiate between performance assessment and performance measurement. Whereas performance assessment takes into account qualitative values and perceptions, such as the usefulness of a meeting, performance measurement focuses on quantifiable fact, such as attendance at a meeting. Yet neither the perceptual nor factual benchmarks provide an explicit point of comparison. By themselves, they do not tell us what would constitute a useful meeting or an optimally attended meeting, given the context or purpose of joining-up. For instance, we might expect a useful meeting to look differently at a policy versus a service delivery level, or an optimally attended meeting to vary by the purpose of that meeting. In the pages that follow, I place context back into the performance picture by analysing joined-up performance according to each case study type.

**Section 7.2: Performance benchmarks from the literature**

Researchers use outputs to judge joined-up performance for good reasons. On-the-ground outcomes are difficult to conclusively link to national policy practice. The greater the distance between joined-up practice and the intended results of that practice, the more convoluted the link (El Ansari, 1999). Indeed central-level joined-up initiatives, like those I have studied, can be so distant from the populations and issues they seek to influence—e.g. teenage pregnancy or youth suicide—that policy processes and products are the only visible phenomena to emerge within a short time frame.

Despite these limitations, the way in which policy processes and products are measured can tell us about the potential of a central-level joint initiative to shape on-the-ground outcomes. I contend that much of the literature imprecisely distinguishes between outputs and outcomes. Outputs are typically defined as processes and products, while outcomes are defined as changes in behaviour and the incidence of social phenomena (Bouckaert and Halligan, 2008). Another
way to measure outputs is by changes in their quality, rather than by their mere existence. If joint initiatives yield products with content which varies little from the status quo, I argue we should not expect joint initiatives to change public services or social phenomena.

At the same time, joining-up may yield outputs whose value lies not in their contribution to on-the-ground outcomes but in their contribution to institutional or individual outcomes. In these cases, the benchmarks against which outputs are measured could include concepts like efficiency and satisfaction, rather than change in the status quo. Below, I collate the range of benchmarks used in the literature and compare them with those described by civil servants in interviews and observations. The literature names four types of benchmarks: (1) expectations, (2) best practice, (3) theory, and (4) creativity.

*Expectation benchmarks.* Provan and Milward (2001) and Agranoff (2003a) look at how well joined-up outputs satisfy organisational, policy domain, and end user goals: an organisational goal might be to publish a new strategy document; a policy domain goal might be to reduce duplication; and an end user goal might be to reduce the number of separate contact points with delivery agencies or increase service uptake. Joined-up initiatives are successful when they meet their intended goals, or expectations. Yet the link between organisational, policy domain and end user goals is unclear. An unanswered question is whether joint initiatives need to reach organisational and policy domain goals in order to reach end user goals.

*Best practice benchmarks.* Mattessich, et al. (2001) and Wilson and Charlton (1997) compare joined-up outputs to best known practice, as named by academics and by participants. Best ‘academic’ practice includes measures such as clear purpose and values, while best ‘participant’ practice includes measures such as mutual respect and trust. Mandell and Keast (2008) base their performance framework on three types of best practice: ‘key elements’ at an environmental, organisational, and operational level which include resources, power and authority,
trust, and reciprocity. Although these will vary over the lifespan of a joined-up initiative, on balance they enable joined-up success.

Theory benchmarks. Skelcher and Sullivan (2008) argue that performance metrics should be based on how well a joint initiative practices good governance (democratic theory), marshals resources (exchange theory), shifts power (power-dependency theory), exhibits path-breaking behaviour (institutional theory), manages complex stakeholder relationships (network theory), and creates legitimising stories (discourse theory).

Creativity benchmarks. A small group of authors, led by Huxham and Bardach, describe measuring joined-up outputs (and outcomes) against dynamic, rather than preset benchmarks. Whereas expectations, best practice, and theory are defined prior to the start of a joint initiative, creativity is defined over the course of a joint initiative. A joint initiative adds value, or confers collaborative advantage, when something unusually creative is produced for participating organisations and the policy domain (Huxham and MacDonald, 1992; Huxham, 1993a and 1993b; Huxham, and Vangen, 2005). Bardach and Lesser (1996) conceptualise performance similarly, describing it as “achieving some sort of synergy...producing better or more valued outcomes than would otherwise be expected” (p.203). Bardach (1998, 2001) sets out to measure joint initiatives against their capacity to increase “public value”—defined as ongoing support from citizens and policymakers. Yet rather than operationalise these constructs, Bardach and Huxham assess whether joint initiatives have put in place the ingredients for enabling public value and collaborative advantage, such as trust, leadership, communication networks, and clear operating systems. In this way, the ‘creativity’ benchmark actually mirrors the ‘best practice’ benchmark. Bardach acknowledges these methodological limitations, and suggests using computer simulation models to track the feedback loops, chance events, and emergent phenomena which shape joined-up interactions and outputs in real-time.
Section 7.3: Performance benchmarks from the dataset

All of the above benchmarks take the joint initiative itself as the unit of focus. They do not look at what comes before or after the joint initiative: how civil servants interact outside of joined-up settings and the quality of the work that is produced independently versus jointly. As such, the benchmarks do not answer a critical question: namely, what does good joint work look like and how is that different to individual work? I asked this question of participants in interviews, debriefing sessions, and as I probed internal and public documents. I wanted to know what civil servants and ministers thought would measurably change as a result of inter-agency working. These points of change serve as ‘in vivo’ benchmarks against which to measure joined-up outputs, and include (1) a change in product logic, (2) a change in relationships, (3) a change in credibility, and (4) efficiency.

A change in logic. As outlined in Chapter Two, Section Three, joining-up reflects a set of management ideas about how to better organise public sector work. Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) document the United Kingdom and New Zealand’s recent movement towards coordination, integration, and whole-of-centre agendas (p.43). About ten years ago, both country’s Labour-led governments laid out their rationale for joined-up reform.

In 1999, the UK government published Modernising Government, which stated:

“Like some other countries, the United Kingdom has, over the past 20 years, implemented a series of reforms in the work of government. The main focus has been on improving value for money in service delivery… Little attention was paid to the policy process and the way it affects the government’s ability to meet the needs of the people…In general, too little effort has gone into making sure that policies are devised and delivered in a consistent and effective way across institutional boundaries – for example between different government departments…”(p.15)

In 2002, the New Zealand government published its Report of the Advisory Group on the Review of the Centre, writing:
“The first big issue requiring attention is the interface of Government with citizens, particularly on cross-cutting issues where multiple agencies are involved... A second important issue is fragmentation, and the loss of focus on the big picture that fragmentation can cause. This is caused by a proliferation of agencies; a proliferation of Ministerial portfolios leading to an excessive number of votes; and in some areas, by an over-emphasis on vertical accountabilities at the expense of whole of government approaches” (p.5).

These documents tell us that joining-up was put in place to change policymaking as usual: to yield policies which were more consistent, effective, and conveyed big picture logic. We can translate these intentions into performance benchmarks: joint initiatives are successful when what they produce is consistent, effective, and reflects the bigger picture. Whereas consistency and big picture logic can be measured at one point in time, effectiveness must be measured over time. As my research was not longitudinal, and just a three-month snapshot in time, I was unable to measure their effectiveness. Rather, I looked at whether the outputs of joined-up initiatives displayed a consistent, bigger picture logic: a logic that synthesised different thinking and approaches.

Examining the logic behind policy products serves to shift the focus from the existence of joined-up outputs to the content of those outputs. Logic refers to the argumentative structure: how policy positions are put together, and the kind of reasoning behind a strategy or set of recommendations. We can compare the logic behind a joined-up product to what an agency would be likely to produce by themselves. One civil servant described the difference as follows: “You want to see whether the initiative genuinely requires all the departments around the table... You want to see that by combining two or three different ideas, initiatives, schemes what you produce is something that is much more rounded, much more holistic, and much less silo based and which actually mirrors much more of what the end user actually wants” (UK004D).

A change in relationships. Joined-up processes do not have to produce better quality outputs for civil servants to derive value. Civil servants labeled joint
initiatives ‘successful’ when they developed new collegial relationships and gained new personal insights. These relationships and insights might shift how a civil servant conceptualised their job, or even make the job more satisfying. As one civil servant aptly explained, “If you’ve got a good process, you can feel very sort of energised and uplifted because it is an enjoyable thing to do actually. You can feel it breaking new ground; you’re doing really exciting things. You know, you’re linking up agendas. It is something you can feel very enthusiastic about I think” (UK021G).

Yet just as good processes do not necessarily yield better quality outputs, bad processes do not always function as a hindrance. Civil servants described processes which were neither enjoyable nor collegial, but which generated better than average products. “You can go through a hugely frustrating process where people do not feel bought into it and not consulted, don’t feel that they have an opportunity to just say whatever...But you might get to the whitepaper and it might be pretty good. But what about all the people who have to go about making it happen? How do you actually have a set of people who will say this is what I believe in”(UK025D)? Improved relationships might not be necessary for yielding better quality outputs, but they did seem to be necessary for translating those outputs into on-the-ground outcomes. In this way, relational benchmarks serve as complementary rather than stand-alone performance indicators.

**A change in credibility.** Civil servants used one performance indicator more than the rest: increased credibility, which came from meeting preset expectations. Nearly all joint initiatives in the dataset had stated reasons for being which were either written in Terms of References, ministerial briefing papers and email invitations, or articulated verbally at inaugural meetings. Civil servants identified hierarchical approval and ministerial sign-off as the mark of both individual and joined-up success. Products that did not receive hierarchical approval and ministerial sign-off not only missed the quality benchmark but decreased the credibility of the joint initiative. By coupling both quality and credibility with top-
down approval, both concepts lost their independent standing. Civil servants struggled to even define the concepts, making comments like: “It is very hard to self assess [quality] but in terms of written work, sign-off is the key. If you get sign off, that means that you have done enough... (NZ06D),” and “The end point of pretty much everything I do is to give ministers what they want whether it’s a specific product, either a speech or a piece of correspondence, or whether it’s the delivery of a target that they’ve set...So, it’s all to a purpose” (UK026D).

Credibly meeting expectations, like developing new relationships, says little about output quality. Civil servants spent little time talking about what constituted a quality product. In only three of the twenty-case studies did civil servants have an open, back-and-forth conversation about what would make a high quality joint output. Instead, civil servants’ prior experiences shaped what counted as passable or satisfying. A civil servant may have never experienced a truly dynamic process, or co-developed a product that was more than the sum of its parts. Civil servants knew how to compare ‘what was’ to ‘what came before’, but were unable to compare ‘what was’ to ‘what could have been’. What came before thus served as the real benchmark for many civil servants (e.g. the paper the minister signed-off on before or the relationships experienced in the last joint initiative). Indeed, both the ‘credibility’ and ‘relationship’ benchmarks tell us more about the status quo than how to shift the status quo.

**Efficiency.** Civil servants did reference one joined-up benchmark that challenged the status quo: efficiency, which can be viewed as a reduction in unnecessary duplication and elimination of repetitive costs. Unlike the other benchmarks, the absence of problems rather than the creation of some kind of value is the key litmus test. As one civil servant said, “it is the lack of big alarm bells going off that makes me think things are going okay” (NZ048G). Other civil servants talked about joined-up success as preventing bad products—ones their minister would be unhappy with—from leaving the boardroom. Systematically measuring the lack of alarm bells or the number of bad products averted is an
elusive task. Just because there are no alarm bells and there is less duplication does not ensure better quality outputs or outcomes. As I showed in Chapter Two, duplication can sometimes be a good thing, enabling natural variation and innovation.

*Benchmark comparisons.* The benchmarks that civil servants identified do not substantially differ from those in the literature: the expectation benchmark used by researchers mirrors civil servants’ credibility benchmark; and researchers’ best practice benchmark shares elements with civil servants’ relationship benchmark. Both are concerned with joined-up process. Huxham and Bardach’s creativity benchmark has much in common with the logic benchmark: both are about the quality of the outputs to emerge from a joined-up initiative. One important difference is how quality is measured. Both Huxham and Bardach conflate best practice with tangible outputs: they measure the factors that joint initiatives have in place to enable creativity, rather than measure the content of the thinking and materials that are generated by joint initiatives.

Given how infrequently civil servants and researchers *apply* the quality benchmark, I place particular emphasis on it in the following assessments of joined-up initiatives. I also assess joint initiatives using the relationship and credibility benchmarks. I do not use the efficiency benchmark as I was not able to collect data on alarm bells prevented or duplication reduced. The benchmarks I am using are summarised in Table 7.1.
Table 7.1: Performance benchmarks and questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From the literature</th>
<th>From the dataset</th>
<th>Used in this research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expectations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the joint initiative fulfil its reason for being? Does it fulfil participant expectations?</td>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Does the joint initiative meet its mandate? Are its products approved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Expectations &amp; Credibility</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Best Practice</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the joint initiative adopt best practices? Does it have in place processes for trust, decision-making, etc?</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Do civil servants feel they’ve gained new relationships and insights from joining-up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Process &amp; Relationships</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creativity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the joint initiative have the capacity to produce something unusually creative?</td>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Did the joint initiative produce products with bigger picture logic? Are these products different from products produced by individual agencies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Logic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theory</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the joint initiative marshal resources, shift power, exhibit path breaking behaviour, etc?</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Did the joint initiative cut red tape and bureaucratic waste?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applying these three benchmarks to the twenty case studies presented in Chapters Four and Five requires taking into account natural differences in joined-up expectations and processes. Problem-solving, proactive, overseeing, bridging and integrative case studies vary by form and function. Outputs from problem-solving case studies are likely to look different from those emanating from other case study types. Given these differences, I have devised a way to calibrate high versus low joined-up performance across all case study types and with reference to each of the three benchmarks. Table 7.2 defines what constitutes high versus low performance by benchmark. Sections 7.4 to 7.8 further contextualise high versus low performance for each case study type.
### Table 7.2: Performance rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Credibility benchmark</th>
<th>Relationships benchmark</th>
<th>Logic benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High performance</strong></td>
<td>Activities match goals</td>
<td>Gaining something</td>
<td>Reflect blended thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mixed performance</strong></td>
<td>Some activities match some goals</td>
<td>Potential to gain something</td>
<td>Reflect separable thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low performance</strong></td>
<td>Few activities match goals</td>
<td>Waste of time</td>
<td>Reflect individual thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Calibrating credibility.** We can gauge credibility by comparing what civil servants do in a joint initiative with what they were asked to do and what they said they would do. Since most of the joint initiatives in the dataset were ongoing at the time of fieldwork, we cannot conclusively determine whether all expectations have been met. Instead, we can determine whether activities during the time of fieldwork align with stated goals and intentions. When few activities align with the goals, or expressly diverge with the goals, we can say expectations are not being met, and performance ranks low according to the credibility benchmark. Conversely, when most activities align with the goals, we can say expectations are being met, and performance ranks high according to the credibility benchmark.

**Calibrating relationships.** We can evaluate whether joint initiatives improve relationships and perceptions by comparing what civil servants say in interviews, debriefs, and meetings. When there is consensus amongst participants that they are ‘gaining something’ from the joint initiative, performance ranks highly. That ‘something’ could be a relationship, a new way of looking at an issue, or a newfound sense of job satisfaction. In these high performing initiatives, civil servants note they would voluntarily participate because they see it as worth their time. When civil servants talk about the joint initiative as a waste of time, with little value derived, then we can say it ranks low on the relationships benchmark. Where there are divergent civil servant viewpoints, or where civil servants talk about the potential for personal value, we can label performance as mixed.
Calibrating logic. We can gauge the logic benchmark by examining work that has been produced, or is in its ideation stages. That work might be a written document (a piece of legislation, strategic plan, field guidance, etc.) or it might be a face-to-face event (a conference or a workshop). When work is still in progress, and not yet officially published, we can examine how tasks are distributed and how ideas are generated. Where ideas and work products weave different agency perspectives into a cohesive, big picture argument we can rank the joint initiative as a high performer. Where the product has been completely developed by one agency, with perhaps a few after-the-fact comments made by other agencies, we can rank the initiative as low on the logic benchmark. This does not necessarily mean the product is of poor quality just that it is of poor joint quality. Where the ideas and work products are a ‘cut-and-paste’ of different agency perspectives, such that they could be easily separated, we can rate the performance as mixed: although the ideas and products are different than what an agency might have developed on its own, they are not co-designed. Mixed quality products may receive inter-agency sign-off. While inter-agency sign-off demarcates a comprehensive product, it says little about the depth of thinking. Indeed mixed quality products are inclusive of multiple agency viewpoints, rather than an intentionally constructed and multi-dimensional viewpoint.

Section 7.4: Assessing problem-solving case studies

Problem-solving case studies are those formed to address a specific policy problem. There are three examples across the England and New Zealand datasets: the Alcohol Review Steering Group, the Alcohol Harm Officials Group, and Realising Youth Potential. Each was sanctioned by ministers with a clear intent: to develop joint legislation and/or strategic plans. Civil servants were expected to generate a product that could be signed off by cabinet ministers. These expectations were codified in Terms of References and in email correspondence. To meet expectations, civil servants had to engage in activities like brainstorming,
researching, consulting, drafting, commenting, and editing.

Receiving sign-off was enough to meet the credibility benchmark, but not enough to meet the logic benchmark. An inter-agency product is not the same as a blended product which results in a unified intervention logic. In other words, civil servants are not merely summarising what each agency can do to solve the problem, but are synthesising information, generating new responses, and prioritising and sequencing actions. They are coming together to propose a theory of how to solve the problem and create change.

For civil servants, the act of coming together to exchange ideas, gain new perspectives and influence the thinking of others was of value, regardless of the outputs produced. When asked to describe what they were looking for from initiatives oriented around policy problems, civil servants talked about feeling engaged and influential. Thus, to meet the relationship benchmark civil servants needed to believe their presence mattered.

Given these details, when looking at the three problem-solving case studies in the dataset, I was trying to determine whether:

- The initiative generated a product that had or was likely to receive inter-agency sign-off. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the credibility benchmark.
- Civil servants reported that process was consistently useful: they learned from others and others learned from them. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the relationship benchmark.
- The initiative yielded a joint product, or joint thinking, that espoused a unified theory of how and why change happens. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the logic benchmark.
Table 7.3: Problem-solving case study rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Credibility Benchmark</th>
<th>Relationship Benchmark</th>
<th>Logic Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Review Steering Group</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realising Youth Potential</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Harm Reduction Officials Group</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Zealand’s Alcohol Review Steering Group. This group was established to reduce minors’ access to alcohol. Like its English counterpart, the workgroup achieved its primary objective: submitting a proposal to parliament on amendments to the Sale and Supply of Liquor Act. Unlike in England, there was no stated deadline with which to contend. The group thus scores high on the credibility benchmark.

Despite meeting expectations, the group suffered from overt power plays and inter-personal friction. The MYD had not been invited to the decision-making table. Despite the formal exclusion, the MYD representative participated anyway, believing her presence was beneficial. Civil servants from the MOJ lamented at the higher-level politicking that prevented inclusivity. One of the organisers noted that while their process was not best practice, it could have been much worse. “I mean there is a lot of government work which is about blocking and burying. So if you got any of those people on your group, then you are stuffed. We have not had that. We have silence, in which case you know they are not interested, or sometimes you get complete enthusiasm. You can move with either of those two things” (NZ36G). Given that participants saw some value in their participation, in spite of the collaborative challenges, the initiative receives a mixed score on the relationship benchmark.

This mixed process resulted in two legislative proposals: an increase in the drinking age to twenty years and a restriction in liquor advertising. While both proposals contributed to external agency goals, they directly reflected the MOJ
who composed the legislative language, and sent the draft out for comment. Participating agencies did not actively contribute to the intellectual work, only to the peripheral edits. Indeed, it seems the MOJ would have produced a similar document with or without inter-agency participation. Inter-agency engagement played a confirmatory, rather than generative role. The initiative thus ranks low on the logic benchmark.

*Realising Youth Potential.* New Zealand’s *Realising Youth Potential* Initiative also never distributed its intellectual work. Although the initiative was set-up by the Prime Minister to develop an inter-agency response to poor youth outcomes, the work became quickly owned by the MOE. By September 2007, days before an inter-agency presentation to frontbench ministers, the product still reflected the views of a single agency. Thus the initiative had failed to meet its most basic remit: to produce an inter-agency response. Although central agencies attempted to broaden the scope of the product, by re-convening a range of agencies to the table, there was little time for a fundamental rethink.

Participants openly expressed their dissatisfaction with the last-minute nature of the process: “I think it is very schools-focused, it’s very internally focused. It is driven by people who just haven’t got the message about the wider world and external influences and so on... And it makes me very cross because we spent about 25 years, in my own personal experience, trying to work through some of the issues... And to be honest it’s made no impact...” (NZ42G). MOE civil servants were also frustrated by the sequence of events. “We do not often get frontbench ministers sitting around in an informal session in a room saying...can we really put some energy into putting some big ideas forward. If the MSD and the DOL had identified or had been encouraged to see it as an opportunity earlier then we would have had a more productive process. Because at this stage in the process, we have got clearly a fairly decent package of education ideas... and now when we were two weeks away from trying to set a frontbench meeting date, we have all those territorial disputes and inter-agency demarcations” (NZ61G).
The disorganised and conflict-ridden process directly affected civil servants ability to meet expectations. The initiative thus ranks low on both the credibility and relationship benchmarks.

Civil servants weren’t able to create an inter-agency product, let alone a product with a robust inter-agency logic. Indeed, the intervention logic was cobbled together *after* the product was already written. Rather than serve as a tool for idea generation, the intervention logic rationalised what had already been proposed. The presentation assembled for ministers included a set of inter-agency activities with little explanation of the relationship between activities or discussion of the appropriate sequencing of the solution; indeed each slide was prepared by agencies on their own, as a kind of wish list, without a commonly agreed policy frame. A central agency staff member acknowledged the inadequacy of the product. “I would have liked to see them going back to question some of the original assumptions; where we are really doing some innovative stuff around questioning assumptions. Just because it has always been this way, is that really the best way to proceed?... And we have not had the openness to re-litigate some of the work programmes or consider what significant changes might be for them” (NZ010G). The initiative thus scores low on the logic benchmark.

*England’s Alcohol Harm Reduction Officials Group*. This group, according to its Terms of Reference, was designed to “manage, strategically, delivery of the alcohol harm reduction programme as a cross-government piece of work,” “provide a critical challenge function,” and “support getting things done”. The greatest task to ‘get done’ was to publish an updated inter-agency alcohol harm reduction strategy in late 2006. In September 2007, nine months after the deadline, *Safe, Sensible, and Social: The Next Steps in the National Alcohol Strategy* was released, signed off by ministers from the DH, HO, the DfES, and DCMS. However expectations were only partially met because an inter-agency strategy was released after the target date. Thus it ranks mixed using the credibility benchmark.
The addition of a new agency to the group, the DfES, extended the writing process. While DfES actors agreed it was better to be at the table than not at all, they noted that the process was far from ideal. Driven by the HO, civil servants labeled it ‘procedural’ and ‘formal’. A DH actor agreed there was often little space to think laterally, or to critically challenge the lack of lateral thinking. “We tend to find it easier to talk about two or three topics at the same time. They don’t. They make the linkages, sort of. But they don’t make them as strongly...With alcohol, driven by the HO, we attack young people and that behaviour, and we don’t get to the linkage across to sexual health, other areas” (UK007G). Given these concerns, the case study ranks mixed using the relationship benchmark.

This lack of critical, lateral thinking is evident in the strategy document which is comprehensive, but not integrated. The four recommendations – for better education, improved treatment, enhanced enforcement, and more partnerships with industry – can be disaggregated by the four participating agencies. This is because each agency wrote its own chapter and its own recommendations. There is little discussion of the interplay between recommendations, and how they will collectively contribute to a reduction in alcohol harm. Instead of a common intervention logic, each agency’s intervention logic is cut and pasted together. Education sees schools and advertising as the most effective lever; Health sees health professionals; Justice sees law enforcement; and Culture, Media and Sport sees industry. This document may be better than a document with only one perspective, but it is still categorical and not at all cohesive. Thus, it ranks mixed using the logic benchmark.

Section 7.5: Assessing proactive case studies

Proactive case studies are designed to explore new, uncharted policy territory. Rather than react to an urgent problem, they identify and build on emergent opportunities. There are two examples in the dataset, both from New Zealand: the Youth Justice Conference and the MED-MYD Entrepreneurship
Group. The expectation behind both initiatives, as expressed in meetings and interviews with participants, was to do something new and different but still acceptable to ministers. To receive a high credibility score, civil servants needed to generate a product that was visible and legitimate.

Generating a new product was not sufficient for meeting the logic benchmark. To score high, the content needed to be something that could only have been derived from participating agencies co-designing together. A high quality product reflected creativity and critical thinking.

A sense of freshness and surprise was what civil servants looked for in an opportunity-oriented case study. When asked to talk about what would make a proactive case study worth their time, civil servants emphasised ‘a sense of possibility’ and ‘inventiveness’, having space to delve into uncharted areas, and a chance to work in-depth with new colleagues.

Thus, when looking at the two proactive performances in the dataset, I was trying to determine whether:

- The initiative did something, or proposed doing something, that was new for all agencies involved. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the credibility benchmark.
- Civil servants reported that the process was open and generative, about building new relationships and coming up with fresh ideas. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the relationship benchmark.
- The products or events spawned by the initiative featured blended content and a multi-dimensional organisational framework. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the logic benchmark.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.4: Proactive case study rankings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Zealand</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Justice Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MED-MYD Entrepreneurship Group</td>
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</table>
The Youth Justice Conference. This inter-agency event had a clear aim: to bring local and national youth justice stakeholders together to share and improve collaborative practice. It was an opportunity to create a space for new relationships and new projects to form. As the conference was held on schedule and drew in a broad range of policymakers and practitioners from across New Zealand, it squarely met expectations and scores high on the credibility benchmark.

The diversity of conference attendees reflected the diversity of the organising group. Civil servants engaged in the initiative described coming together to brainstorm the conference structure. While logistical tasks were later distributed to individual agencies, civil servants held a common vision of what it was they were doing and why. One civil servant labelled the conference the best example of collaboration in her professional career. Civil servants derived a palpable sense of satisfaction from their participation, and described forming strong collegial relationships. The initiative thus ranks high on the relationship benchmark.

To meet the high logic benchmark, though, the experience of the conference had to be different; the content and organisational framework needed to go beyond any one participating agency’s contributions. In other words, a conference with streams sponsored by each individual agency would not demonstrate a real blend of ideas. While I did not attend the conference, materials suggested a unified organisational framework. Participants took part in sessions focused on common challenges and themes, rather than around single-issue areas.

MED-MYD Entrepreneurship Group. MED and MYD participants met to develop an original proposal for ministers. While at the time of fieldwork, they did not agree on the content of that proposal or a timeline forward, they continued to convene, talk, and exchange drafts. There was still the possibility for a joint proposal to emerge. This initiative thus ranks mixed on the credibility benchmark.

Civil servants found joint meetings and communication to be a slow and
frustrating experience. MED participants were openly irritated with the level of MYD engagement, while MYD officials were quietly aggravated by the lack of MED responsiveness. This initiative thus ranks low on the relationship benchmark.

Inter-agency discomfort was evident in the face-to-face meeting and email communications included in the dataset. One agency presented a series of ideas, which were heavily critiqued by the other. Ideas were developed by agencies separately, with no space for joint brainstorming or concept generation. While the ideas to emerge were new, they were not created by both agencies. The initiative thus ranks low on the logic benchmark.

Section 7.6: Assessing overseeing case studies

Overseeing case studies are those which manage implementation of existing programmes and policies. There are ten examples in the dataset, making overseeing case studies the most frequently occurring type. This distribution seems to reflect the time period in which fieldwork unfolded. Both the English and New Zealand Labour governments had been in power for over six years at the time of research, and implementation was a much talked about political priority. Implementation does not preclude policy development as it often requires ongoing strategic policy and programme design, along with consistent communication. The ten case studies’ Terms of References highlight basic communication, monitoring, and strategic planning functions. They also emphasise processes over product development. Expected tasks include ‘advising’, ‘information sharing’, ‘reporting’, ‘addressing risks’, ‘developing strategic work programmes’, and ‘modeling whole-of-government approaches.’ Joint initiatives are thus credible when they control risks, publicise successes, and maintain focus.

Civil servants talked about the value they derived from overseeing case studies, differentiating rewarding experiences (which ranked high on the relationship benchmark) from the merely interesting experiences (which ranked mixed). In a rewarding case study, civil servants found they were doing their work
differently as a result of the information gained. They saw themselves as part of an ongoing team, rather than just attendees at a regular meeting. In an interesting case study, civil servants learned at least one new piece of information. When civil servants believed that they could acquire the information without attending the meeting, and could see the participants in other forums, they rated the initiative as a poor use of their time and therefore low on the relationship benchmark.

Information is generally the most visible output of overseeing initiatives, raising the question: what does high quality, bigger picture information look like? Simply sharing information is not enough. Both the content of that information, and its application, are critical for preventing communication failures and prompting strategic thinking. For the initiative to score high on the logic benchmark, civil servants must be able to interpret, understand, and act on information. Indeed, if overseeing case studies aim to enable forward planning, and not just firefight, information analysis becomes as important as information exchange. This requires a framework for making sense of and prioritising information. To gauge performance on the logic benchmark, we could look at whether meeting notes, presentations and other documentation facilitate joint analysis and not just individual awareness.

When ranking the ten overseeing performances in the dataset, therefore, I was trying to determine whether:

- The initiative held meetings to both monitor existing activities and jointly plan future priorities. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the credibility benchmark.
- Civil servants reported that they felt participation was rewarding, and that they were part of a team that looked at, and acted on information in new ways. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the relationship benchmark.
- Documentation from the initiative demonstrated collective analysis, not merely the compilation of basic facts. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the logic benchmark.
Table 7.5: Overseeing case study rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Credibility Benchmark</th>
<th>Relationship Benchmark</th>
<th>Logic Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Justice Leadership Group</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission-on</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Agency Committee on Suicide Prevention</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS Team</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young People and Drugs Programme Board</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect Team</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Child Matters Programme Board</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Matters Programme Board</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Zealand

Youth Justice Leadership Group. This long-standing inter-agency group ranks high on all three performance benchmarks. It is the only one of the ten overseeing case studies to do so. The group was formed to do three things: (1) to monitor and reinforce the national youth offending strategy; (2) to analyse new data; and (3) to develop a strategic focus for the youth justice sector. Formal quarterly meetings, informal lunches, and continual email traffic between participants demonstrated the monitoring function; while joint presentations and ministerial briefing papers illustrated the reinforcement function. Meeting time was frequently allocated to identifying trends in the data, thereby fulfilling its data analysis function. When participants conceded that its strategic focus function had slipped, they took concrete steps to refocus their strategy and generate joint priorities. For the above reasons, it ranks high on the credibility benchmark.

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1 I have not included the Targeted Youth Support Programme Board in the chart, or this chapter, as it was not fully functional at the time and there was not yet enough data to assess its performance.
Civil servants engaged in the Youth Justice Leadership Group recognised that there was something different about the way in which they worked. As one of the principal MOH civil servants stated, “If I had to make a choice about which meeting to go to, I would be most likely to go to the Youth Justice Leadership Group... I had never put it in that hierarchy before, but in that sort of hierarchy that is the one that is the most effective group” (NZ45G). What made it effective was that participants had such close collegial relationships that they could dispense with the formality of updates to ask challenging, often critical questions. They could, in other words, reflect. Reflection prompted the group to identify the need for more strategic thinking and better alignment between individual agency work programmes and group priorities.

Arriving at these conclusions demonstrated that meetings went beyond the usual exchange of technical information and provided a space for real conversation. One of the participants from Police described the slow evolution of the group: “When I first came into the role, I would have described the Youth Justice Leadership Group as a misnomer. I didn’t see the word leadership in it at all. But, when you’re naïve and new, you sit and listen for a little while and see what people are doing and the others are dealing with it. Over time, I’ve got a general agreement around the table that it could do better... And our planning day has enabled different work” (NZ11G). Whether that ‘kind of different’ work was consistent and sustained was, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this study. For these reasons, the Youth Justice Leadership Group ranks high on the relationship benchmark.

The renewed strategic focus was visible within joint meetings and from the documentation produced. Observations and notes from meetings show civil servants collectively rethinking the purpose of the Youth Justice Leadership Group, and working on a framework with which to make sense of existing and projected activities. Rather than update each other, civil servants first analysed what they were doing to advance strategic goals, and then explored the relationship between
the strategic goals and the desired outcome, namely reduced youth offending rates. This is an example of information synthesis, of blending information from different sources to construct a bigger and more rigorous picture. Because of this collective analysis, the initiative ranks high on the logic benchmark.

Mission-on. Mission-on was set up to manage a package of health promotion activities across three agencies: SPARC, the MOE, and the MOH. Its Terms of Reference highlight a ‘monitoring’ function along with a ‘critical assessment’ function. Participants were to ensure activities occurred on schedule and within branding guidelines, while also critically assessing the strategic direction of those activities. Mission-on participants convened regularly to share progress on individual agency activities, but their discussions remained mainly at a logistical rather than a strategic level. At synergy meetings, for instance, participants provided updates and helped to troubleshoot challenges. Participants did not revisit objectives or goals, or explore why and how activities linked to these goals. The initiative very clearly lived up to its expectation to “monitor ongoing activities,” but did not provide a space to “critically assess progress,” hence its mixed rating on the credibility benchmark.

Civil servants from SPARC, the MOE, and the MOH repeatedly commented how ‘good’ it was to work as a single team, and to be part of something important and high-profile. Of course, working together so closely could sometimes be frustrating and slow. One civil servant stated that “overall, Mission-on is a really good example of effective collaboration across the ministry because it involved a number of different groups across the ministry and I think at different levels... but at time it really struggled, particularly at the beginning” (NZ22G). The campaign coordinator facilitated synergy meetings and hosted informal social events to overcome its rocky beginnings and create a unifying dynamic. Participants reported that these team-building exercises were successful: “Collaboration is, more than just surface working, it’s every partner and project manager across the campaign having a voice and being able to talk freely and frankly. And that
happened really quickly from my perspective” (NZ48G). Thus the initiative scores high on the relationship benchmark.

While Mission-on participants enjoyed each other’s company, they weren’t often working together to generate content. Most activities were owned by a single agency, and accompanied by independently written field guidance and their own evaluation frameworks. Mission-on’s success was to be assessed by adding up results from each separate evaluation, rather than by measuring against its own intervention framework. It was not clear how the parts of Mission-on added up to a whole. Even the few activities co-owned by agencies distributed the ‘thinking’ tasks to individual agencies, relegating joined-up working to technical rather than creative tasks. That said, the documents produced by Mission-on compile individual agency activities into a common narrative—not just a list of bullet points—and are more comprehensive than if published by a single agency. This explains the initiative’s mixed logic rating.

Inter-Agency Committee on Suicide Prevention. This group was established to oversee implementation of the inter-agency youth suicide prevention strategy. Participants convened monthly to share information, and signpost relevant events and programmes. But information sharing was only one component of the committee’s Terms of Reference. Other components included, “advising on and contributing to the development of action plans” along with “ensuring high quality deliverables.” Yet civil servants spent little time on joint analysis or product development. The initiative thus rates mixed on the credibility benchmark.

Participants reported some value from sharing information, including learning from and gaining face time with colleagues from other agencies. Yet most participants, including the MOH chair, recognised they could get more from their time together. For these reasons, it rates mixed on the relationship benchmark.

The time civil servants spent together was taken up by listening to set-piece presentations. Civil servants did not probe the logic behind their individual agency activities. Meeting minutes simply listed dates and facts, not ideas or
concepts. The ranking for the logic benchmark is therefore low.

*Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs.* Participants met biannually to share the policies and programmes that their agency had put in place to affect tobacco, alcohol and drug use. By doing so, these civil servants met the committee’s formal overseeing objectives, but neglected its bigger picture objectives, namely preventing the uptake of drugs and reducing harm from drugs. As the committee’s overarching aim was not regularly questioned or critiqued, and it was unclear how individual agency work programmes worked in concert to reduce drug use, the initiative has a mixed credibility rating.

Participants rated the committee’s influence on policy as ‘negligible.’ While some participants wondered why they attended, others derived some value from connecting with colleagues. The committee had low content value but, at least some, networking value. “I do not, personally, feel we are making any incremental policy improvements by going through IACD... And it tends to be a peripheral thing that goes up there. There are some benefits, I will admit, perhaps it helps with networking”(NZ41G). Given the range of viewpoints, the initiative receives a mixed relationship rating.

Meetings were devoted to presentations, rather than to focused conversation on particular activities and interventions. Indeed, the documents that the committee produced were simply a compilation of each agency’s priorities and activities, rather than jointly analysed pieces. Agencies continued to analyse data from their existing perspectives, rather than adopting a joint frame or common set of questions to make sense of their actions. The consistent one-dimensionality of outputs explains why the Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs ranks low on the logic benchmark.
England

*Children and Adolescent Mental Health Team.* This team ranked high on two of the three performance benchmarks. The self-titled ‘virtual team’ drew in members from two agencies, but was designed to operate as a single collaborative platform. Team members were expected to oversee and reinforce a ‘whole-of-government’ agenda. They jointly published guidance documents for the field, fronted presentations together, and modelled inter-agency working. Such tasks clearly helped to reinforce the image of collaboration, and in this way, raised the credibility of the initiative to a high ranking.

Civil servants felt their collaborative public image accurately reflected the day-to-day reality. One of the lead participants noted that he had never worked so closely with colleagues before, and despite reporting to separate agencies, saw that they were all on the same side. This team-based mentality translates into a high score on the relationship benchmark.

Yet enjoying working together does not always mean producing the best work together. One of the senior policy advisors, to whom the team often submitted work, argued that the quality of products had suffered as a result of the friendly, collegial environment. In an effort to achieve consensus, civil servants did not adequately resolve conflicts. When agency positions differed, they looked for the ‘lowest common denominator’ position rather than raise critical questions or recommend tough trade-offs. Given the intellectual weakness of some work products, the initiative receives a mixed logic score.

*Young People and Drugs Programme Board.* This Board was set up to monitor progress against an inter-agency illicit drugs target. Its Terms of Reference specified that it was to develop and maintain an internal-facing delivery plan and public-facing strategic guide, review emergent data, identify trends, and manage risks. While delivery plans and strategic guidance had been published, there was a risk that the overarching drugs target would not be met. Participating agencies interpreted the data differently, and had divergent perspectives about how best to
respond. At the time of the fieldwork, the PMDU had intervened and organised an away day to address a set of critical questions, such as, “What does the target really measure?” “What factors influence the target?” and “What is the link between interventions, drug outcomes, and wider youth outcomes?” Together, participants began to generate a joint intervention logic, or what they called a drugs strategy impact model. Because of this joint future planning, the case study ranks high on the credibility benchmark.

Given the Young People and Drugs Board’s tense history, however, civil servants were reluctant to call the initiative rewarding. The away day was the high point – clear, critical, and forward focused – but that needed to be sustained in order for participants to feel confident that the initiative had strong forward momentum. As one participant put it,

“The whole group has been really unpleasant to date… And that’s largely due to a complete difference of opinion on how to go forward with the actions and that’s the problem the government has when you have a shared objective which includes financing and what have you…But today, we reached a consensus within ten to fifteen minutes and I was kind of stunned. It’s fantastic. I think there’s been lots of working on behind the scenes…” (UK004D).

Given the potential for the board to continue the PMDU-style of working, it receives a mixed score on the relationship benchmark.

Similarly, while documentation from the away day demonstrated a newfound depth of thinking, that had yet to be translated into action plans or field guidance. Agencies still oversaw independent streams of activity without explicit discussion of the relationship between activities, or the assumptions behind outputs. Each agency analysed and responded to conditions separately (they even relied on their own separate databases), and then assembled their analysis into a single document. The initiative those scores mixed on the logic benchmark. Had fieldwork continued for another three to six months, the quality of products may very well have shifted, elevating the ranking to high.

Respect Team. The Respect Team came out of the inter-agency Respect
Action Plan (2006). The Plan described a joint HO-DfES work programme which would, “Go broader – positively supporting respectful behaviour in schools, in sport and leisure activities and in the community; Go deeper – tackling the causes of lack of respect and antisocial behaviour, embedding the principle of early intervention; and Go further – taking action to make a difference in the short-term but embedding those changes into the mainstream to create cultural change” (p.7). While the Respect Team fulfilled its mandate to go broader, churning out a range of new initiatives, DfES participants did not feel that their joint work was particularly deep or long-term. From their perspective, prevention and early intervention was too often absent from the HO-driven philosophy. Thus, the initiative ranks mixed on the credibility benchmark.

Civil servants struggled to balance the two different agency frameworks in their public communications. They could not find a singular, cogent message. This language disconnect was present in personal communications too. Participants noted they had very different styles of talking and processing information. Ministerial interactions were often a barrier to finding a collective voice. “What stops us talking about that is probably because my minister wants to announce something and your minister wants to announce something and they are not the same thing, but actually they have the same aims too. So, I think we had a lot of discussions about things knowing we are not just going to crack this” (NZ14D). While ministerial in-fighting could further exacerbate interpersonal friction, participants acknowledged that a tense relationship was better than not having a relationship. The initiative thus receives a mixed relationship rating.

The Respect Team’s outputs reflected the unresolved inter-agency divide. Products, like a draft guidance document for the field, featured two sections: one prepared by DfES actors on preventative activities, and one prepared by HO actors on enforcement activities. Other than an introductory narrative that explained how the initiative brought together prevention with intervention, there was no melding of the two perspectives or discussion about the balance between them.
across contexts and scenarios. The document was more comprehensive than it otherwise would have been, but still not reflective of truly joined-up thinking, hence its mixed logic rating.

*Every Child Matters Programme Board.* This Board was set up to oversee implementation of the inter-agency strategy document, *Every Child Matters.* Its Terms of Reference emphasised regular information sharing, strategic direction setting, and coherent product development. Civil servants did regularly exchange information, but did not demonstrate joint product development. Products were largely developed by the lead agency, DfES, and sent around for comment. They were not often the result of collective brainstorming and idea generation. Therefore, the initiative ranks mixed on the credibility benchmark.

Participants reported learning few new things from meetings despite regular information sharing. Indeed, participants used meetings to articulate their minister's position on an issue, rather than workshop a joint position. At the same time, participants found meetings to be pleasant and a good opportunity to touch base with colleagues. Thus, the ranking is mixed on the relationships benchmark.

Given the fact that there was little space for joint analysis in meetings, and meetings ended with a summary of upcoming dates and facts, this Board ranks low on the logic benchmark.

*Youth Matters Programme Board.* The *Youth Matters* Programme Board shared many of the features of the *Every Child Matters* Programme Board. Information sharing was but one component of its Terms of Reference. Another component was to, “Bring together contributions across departments to provide coherence and an overall picture of how we can achieve the targets to reduce the number of young people not engaged in employment, education, or training; teenage conceptions; class A drugs and other Youth Programme priorities.” Participants shared information on a regular basis, but did not analyse how that information contributed to the given targets. Since no space was created to discuss what coherent contributions meant, or to reset joint priorities, the initiative
ranks mixed on the credibility benchmark.

Participants did value the board as a conduit for information, even if the information was not reframed or reorganised. A participant on this Board said the benefits were that, “We have very regular discussions and chats about how we will take that work forward. So I would say that work on that was very good. We know the people well and we get along well” (NZ010G). Another Youth Matters participant spoke of the challenge of moving groups beyond good interpersonal relationships. “With the Board, you have a group of reasonably senior people who sit around a table and they are all coming from their agendas and objectives and there is some coherence. But it tends to be that you keep going around the table and saying well this is from ‘X agency’ perspective”…(NZ020D). For these above reasons, the case study ranks mixed on the relationship benchmark.

Finally, there was no demonstrated collective analysis. Participants could have e-mailed bullet point updates to each other and achieved a similar output; in other words, the board’s minutes and ministerial updates simply listed each agency’s contribution without any added feedback or commentary. As such it ranks low on the logic benchmark.

Section 7.7: Assessing bridging case studies

Bridging case studies are set up to forge, and sometimes repair, inter-agency relationships. The focus is on the relationship, rather than on a particular policy problem or opportunity. This differentiates bridging case studies from the other types in the dataset. There are four examples in the dataset: three in England and one in New Zealand. All were intended to serve as proactive discussion forums: spaces for addressing issues of mutual interest or mutual concern. With the exception of the DfES Away Day, Terms of References highlighted regular information sharing and joint strategic planning. To meet expectations, therefore, case studies needed to demonstrate a regular meeting pattern, identify and address overlapping issues, and prioritise responses.
The products that came out of these meetings were notes, presentations, and agreed work programmes. As bridging initiatives responded to structural rather than policy issues, blended work flows and governance approaches were the benchmarks rather than blended policy thinking or unified intervention logics. Blended work flows and governance approaches explicitly address issues such as joint decision-making, ministerial preferences, clearance processes, conflict resolution, and performance standards. In high performing bridging initiatives, civil servants crafted a new approach to clear logjams and facilitate better relationships.

Successful bridging case studies addressed the interpersonal and institutional barriers to joining-up, translating into easier working. They offered the possibility of something different: that people could overlook, if not overcome, bureaucratic rules and procedures out of collective interest. One civil servant talked about bridging success as “being able to just pick up the phone and someone will give you free and frank information and not hide it. Officials tend to be quite obstructive in giving information and if I have a relationship where I can pick up the phone and get the answer straight away, then I characterise it as a good relationship” (NZ003D).

When looking at the four bridging performances in the dataset, therefore, I was trying to determine whether:

- The initiative held regular meetings to exchange, analyse, and prioritise information, as well as to engage in joint strategic planning. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the credibility benchmark.
- Civil servants reported cultivating interpersonal relationships and addressing some of the structural challenges that stood in the way of joined-up working. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the relationship benchmark.
- Civil servants followed, or were working towards, a jointly agreed work programme and decision-making approach. If so, the joint initiative ranked high on the logic benchmark.
Table 7.6: Bridging case study rankings

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Credibility Benchmark</th>
<th>Relationship Benchmark</th>
<th>Logic Benchmark</th>
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<td><strong>New Zealand</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>MSD Youth Network</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>England</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfES Away Day</td>
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<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Young People’s Steering Group</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DH-DfES Partnership Agreement</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
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</table>

**New Zealand**

*MSD Youth Network.* Notes from the inaugural MSD Youth Network meeting and its Terms of Reference indicate that ‘joint prioritisation’ was an explicit goal. Other goals included “mapping various youth specific activities being undertaken across units,” “setting strategic priorities” and “developing MSD positions on youth matters on an issue-by-issue basis.” Civil servants could not point to a shared position statement or agreed priority, but they could describe each other’s youth policy related activities. Since only the mapping task was consistently achieved, this initiative receives a mixed credibility rating.

Civil servants from across the MSD saw value in regularly convening to learn about youth policy related activities. Yet these civil servants wanted the opportunity to reconcile, rather than just share, what they were already doing. They had hoped to actively shape how youth work was approached across the ministry. A regularly attending civil servant explained that “I have no sense of everybody who is in that meeting in some way coming around the table and discussing their different departmental views and coming up with a consensus view… I think the view may well be discussed but at the end of the day, eight views still went separately rather than it being a collaborative consensus agreement” (NZ002D). Meetings were organised exclusively around information sharing, not analysis, hence its low logic score. Had analysis been built into the
structure of meetings, civil servants might have had the chance to develop criteria for consensus positions and allocate time to aligning views.

**England**

*DfES Away Day*. This bridging case study, unlike the three others, was a short-term intervention. Designed for mid-to-senior level civil servants across three organisational units, the two days focused on decision-making, not just information sharing. Stated objectives included “developing a cohesive wider leadership team,” “agreeing joint priorities,” and “ensuring everyone understands the bigger picture.”

Participation began with ice-breakers and an informal dinner: civil servants took part in games and a friendly competition, and split up into smaller groups with colleagues whom they did not know well. These activities served a team-building function. Presentations from the senior leadership team outlined one version of the policy context in which they all operated, and gave participants some sense of the bigger picture. Participants then subdivided into smaller working groups to translate the bigger picture into organisational priorities. Yet they did not first agree on a decision-making process. That meant that at the end of the two days, participants walked away with a lengthy list of proposed priorities and no concrete steps forward. Without an agreed set of priorities or approach for making sense of those priorities, the initiative receives a mixed credibility, relationship, and logic rating. Indeed, civil servants left disappointed that there was not more clarity on how to proceed, while top-tier civil servants left disappointed that there was not an agreed and measurable action plan.

*Children and Young People Steering Group*. This initiative was designed to “bring together the issues of children and young people from across the two agencies”; “streamline the governance arrangements between the two departments” and “gain clarity on each agency’s top priorities.” Participants met and shared issues related to children and young people, fulfilling the first part of
the group’s remit, but did not come up with a process for evaluating inter-agency governance arrangements or addressing competing priorities. The initiative thus receives a mixed rating on the credibility benchmark.

Although the group’s goal was to streamline interaction points between the two departments, most participants saw the meetings as the same as all the rest. An e-mail invitation to the *Children and Young People Steering Group* was forwarded to me by a top-tier civil servant with a note at the top which said “Yet another one. Not sure why” (UK001D). Much of the information shared in steering group meetings was repeated in other issue-based forums. Since few civil servants saw the value of meeting, this initiative ranks low on the relationship benchmark.

While the steering group was in its initial stages, civil servants were not constructing agendas in a way which would facilitate problem resolution or joint decision-making. The Terms of Reference was written prior to the first meeting, and no time was allocated for participants to question how meetings would unravel, what types of information to share, or when to jointly act. Indeed, no system was put in place to rationalise arrangements for meetings and forums between the two agencies. Products to emerge from these meetings—minutes and a risk management matrix—served an administrative function. Thus, this initiative ranks low on the logic benchmark.

*DH-DfES Partnership Agreement.* As with the above initiative, the DH-DfES partnership agreement outlined both regular information sharing and joint priority setting. Despite a signed agreement, the Director General of DfES wrote an official letter to his counterpart at DH articulating concerns over the two agency’s discordant priorities. The agreement did not offer a mechanism for resolving inter-agency debates. Yet behind the agreement was a DH Partnership Team who served to signpost information and function as a first point of call. This explains the initiative’s mixed credibility rating.

Civil servants had yet to meet in a face-to-face partnership meetings;
instead, they saw each other in other forums. Participants thus questioned the purpose of the agreement, and saw it as a piece of paper rather than a framework for action. The initiative scores low on the relationship benchmark.

The partnership agreement and the formal letters exchanged between agencies were the only two visible products to emerge from this case study. Both products articulated inter-agency challenges, rather than ideas or opportunities for how to proceed. The initiative thus ranks low on the logic benchmark.

**Section 7.8: Assessing integrative case studies**

Integrative case studies are the highest intensity case study type: they are set up to advance joint outcomes and involve an exchange of inter-agency financial resources. There is only one integrative case study in the dataset: the High and Complex Needs Unit in New Zealand. Underpinning the Unit was an inter-agency strategy document. Overseeing the Unit was an inter-agency governance board. The strategy articulated both a target population and key outcomes: at-risk young people were the focus; key outcomes included young people’s physical health, mental well-being, family relationships, cultural identity, independence, educational participation, social interaction, and sense of safety. The Board’s job was to free up resources for young people to access the services needed across each outcome domain; it required the Board to “provide inter-sectoral leadership”, “monitor the Unit’s financial and operational performance”, “set standards and evaluate its own performance”, and “facilitate information flows.”

In the past, the Board struggled to meet all of its objectives: in the year prior to fieldwork, an inter-agency accounting tussle had threatened the Unit’s very existence. However, Board members brought in an external facilitator to strengthen inter-agency protocols and agreements. This resulted in a renewed commitment to achieving shared outcomes, the development of contingency plans, and a new approach for doing joint work. This approach was written down and approved by actors and ministers from each participating agency: it included
methods for running meetings, resolving differences, reviewing progress, and communicating results. From observation points and debriefs, it appeared that these methods were being embraced and regularly used. Thus, expectations were now beginning to be met, and credibility was at a high point.

Civil servants’ own expectations were, for the most part, met too. They repeatedly highlighted the uniqueness of the High and Complex Needs Unit. It was in a collaborative league of its own. “In my opinion, that has worked quite well. In some respects, it is not an easy model to replicate. It works because it is so targeted to a small group of children…” (NZ21G). Having a definable population meant that civil servants had a strong sense of what success looked and felt like: “We had 80 young people drawing from the fund last year, and 80% of them were meeting their personal goals… we fund them for one, two or maybe even three years of intensive interventions that are really individualised and then generally, they do not need us. They can actually be maintained by existing services. Some of the adolescents will say, ‘Oh that stage of my life has passed now. I’m fine now, thanks’” (NZ52G).

Despite clarity about their collective purpose, participants acknowledged the difficulty of managing the inter-agency politics. Because the MSD held the money, they were perceived as having greater authority. Participants also acknowledged that this was an administrative reality and expressed cautious optimism for their newly revised approach. “It has had some really strong teething problems. But it’s now well managed and there is a really good manager. The processes have evolved over time in being fine-tuned and developed… It’s matured” (NZ45G). Given the Unit’s resilience, and civil servants strong belief in the initiative, it scores high on the relationship benchmark.

This initiative also scores highly on the quality of its outputs and even on its outcomes, which include the uptake of the fund, the coherence of local service delivery, and a measurable improvement in youth well-being. Public-facing guidance documents and internal-facing strategies reflected blended thinking and
different content; they were not simply a compilation of each agency’s existing policies and programmes. To receive funding, young people and their local service coordinators devised an inter-agency plan which examined the relationship between needs, outcomes and proposed interventions; the basis of the proposed interventions; how interventions played out over time; and the young person’s role in developing the plan. It required respondents to think about the whole picture, rather than just about a single intervention or a single professional discipline. Plans enabled Board members to collectively address any central-level policy barriers to integrated on-the-ground service delivery. In other words, these outputs provided a focal point for the continual co-design of policy. The initiative thus ranks high on the logic benchmark.

Were we to rate other integrative performances, we might look for whether:

- The initiative holds itself accountable for financial and operational performance, and has in place processes to manage the flow of information and resources between agencies. If so, the joint initiative ranks high on the credibility benchmark.

- Civil servants have a clear sense of purpose and are resilient in the face of inter-agency blockages and constraints. If so, the joint initiative ranks high on the relationship benchmark.

- The initiative yields products that reflect joint thinking and the co-design of both policies and services, rather than relies on the policy thinking and service delivery mechanisms of any one participating agency. If so, the joint initiative ranks high on the logic benchmark.

Table 7.7: Integrative case study rankings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Credibility Benchmark</th>
<th>Relationship Benchmark</th>
<th>Logic Benchmark</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>High and Complex Needs Unit</td>
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Section 7.9: Chapter summary

Performance is dynamic. How civil servants interact, the questions they ask, and the outputs they produce shift as conditions change and groups evolve over time. For example, two of the three highest performing initiatives in this study – New Zealand’s High and Complex Needs Unit and Youth Justice Leadership Group – did not perform well prior to the commencement of field work. They had dissatisfied participants, unmet expectations, and even one-dimensional products. When civil servants in both initiatives recognised that joining-up was falling short of what it could be, they deliberately reconfigured joint working by developing new approaches, priorities, and standards of success.

The High and Complex Needs Unit and the Youth Justice Leadership Group, along with the third high performing initiative, New Zealand’s Youth Justice Leadership Conference, stood out for their intentionality: civil servants debated the content of their Terms of References and agendas; and discussed decision-making and distribution of tasks. While all three high performing initiatives took place in New Zealand, they spanned three of the five joined-up case study types: integrative, proactive and problem-solving. Interestingly, the lowest-performing initiative, Realising Youth Potential was also based in New Zealand.

Realising Youth Potential was the only initiative in the dataset to rank low on all three benchmarks. By contrast, all of England’s joined-up initiatives clustered in the middle of the performance spectrum, along with six of New Zealand’s initiatives. These fifteen ‘average performers’ spanned all five joined-up case study types. None of these average performing initiatives scored high on the logic benchmark; though most scored mixed and some even scored high on the relationship and credibility benchmarks.
Why did so many initiatives score high on the relationship and credibility benchmarks yet low or mixed on the logic benchmark? Civil servants often rated relationships as a valuable by-product even when policy outputs were lacklustre; they saw networking with colleagues as worth their time. Good networking could reduce red tape and increase the speed of inter-agency responses, and a good relationship might even instigate incremental improvements. New Zealand’s MSD Youth Network is an instructive example.
Although the network did little beyond signposting existing information, many civil servants continued to attend, convinced that they could call on a colleague more easily as a result of their participation. This raises a critical question: is calling on a colleague to answer a question or speed up a slow clearance process a valuable enough output to warrant formal joining-up?

At the start of this chapter, I argued that joined-up initiatives which only yield relationships miss an opportunity to do something more: to develop an approach or way of thinking that could change the status quo. As all twenty joined-up initiatives in this study were formed to change a policy or practice, they should be judged on their capacity to do so. Unless the initiative has in place a way to produce different content – to enable different kinds of conversations and organise information in different ways – then it has limited capacity to solve problems or take up emergent opportunities. Where initiatives do support different kinds of conversations, as in New Zealand’s High and Complex Needs Unit, we see that new approaches to intractable social policy problems can emerge and on-the-ground outcomes can shift.

Chapter Eight will examine what practice underpins high performing initiatives like New Zealand’s High and Complex Needs Unit, and identify the individual, group, organisational, institutional, and situational factors which seemed to enable that different practice.
Chapter Eight: What factors enable civil servants to produce different outputs?

This chapter critically examines the relationship between joined-up practice and joined-up performance, first summarising the types of practice underpinning high, average and low performing initiatives, and then outlining the factors which enabled different practice and high performance.

Section 8.1: Chapter structure

The purpose of this chapter is to explain joined-up performance: to probe what enabled civil servants to produce high quality, joined-up outputs. In Chapter Seven, I presented three ways to assess joined-up performance, arguing that the logic benchmark was the most important of the three. High quality outputs with big picture logic were the exception and not the norm. To understand why only three of twenty joined-up case studies generated joined-up content, we must answer two questions: (1) what civil servant practice underpinned the three high performing initiatives and (2) what factors enabled civil servants to practice differently? This chapter identifies the factors which clustered with high performing joined-up case studies and links those factors with the different civil servant practice observed in those case studies.

In Chapters Four and Five, I described civil servant practice within problem-solving, proactive, overseeing, bridging and integrative case study types. Case study type is a poor predictor of performance: the three high performing case studies spanned three of the five case study types. In this chapter, by contrast, I group case studies by performance, comparing civil servant practice within high, low, and average performing case studies.
To make sense of the average and divergence from the average, I introduce the concept of routines. Civil servants used the word ‘routine’ to refer to standard, everyday practice. Most organisational theorists use a similar definition, drawing on routines to make sense of inertia within organisations. Two organisational theorists, Brian Feldman and Martha Pentland (2003), offer a more nuanced perspective, drawing on routines to explain both inertia and change within organisations. They argue routines are constantly performed and therefore constantly revised (p.94). This thinking complements my own bottom-up findings, and helps us to focus on what prompts routines to change.

Later in the chapter, I explore the factors which clustered with adapted routines and high performance. These factors sit at an individual, group, organisational, institutional and situational level. Rather than list all of the factors present in England and New Zealand, I highlight the factors which clustered with high performing case studies and help to explain adapted routines. I call these influencing factors ‘enablers’, as illustrated in Figure 8.1. All three high performing case studies took place in New Zealand. Indeed, my goal is not to explain differences between joined-up practice in England and New Zealand, but to explain performative variation within and between case studies in England and New Zealand.

**Figure 8.1: Explaining joined-up performance using the theory of change**

Explaining performative variation requires a deeper set of analytic tools: tools which can extricate relationships between practice, performance, and
enabling factors. Up until this point in the thesis, I have run analyses using the text retrieval and code-matrix functions available in MAXQDA. This means that I have looked at thematic codes on a case-by-case and attribute-by-attribute basis, collating parts of interviews, observations and documents related to a particular case study. In this chapter, in contrast, I run analyses using the code relations browser, which allows me to look for interactions between thematic codes; for example, the co-occurrence of performance and enabling factors across multiple case studies. Figure 8.2 displays the output from a code relations browser.¹

Figure 8.2: MAXQDA Code Relations Browser output

In Chapter Three, I explained how to read MAXQDA outputs. The size and shape of the dots tells us something about the strength of the relationship between thematic codes. The bigger the dot, the more civil servants referenced

¹ Appendix K lists all thematic codes.
the two themes within two paragraphs of speech. Of course, just because civil servants mention two concepts in close proximity to each other does not mean that there is a meaningful connection between the two; nor does the absence of a dot indicate there is no relationship between the two. We must return to the original texts to confirm the relationship.

Another way to test a relationship between civil servant practice and enabling factors is through planned intervention. This was the premise behind the enquiry groups I ran for three months in each research location, and which are explained more fully in Chapter Three and in Appendix F. Enquiry groups provided space for civil servants to explore how to shift practice, in contrast to interviews, which served to document existing practice. For example, one week enquiry group participants revised and prototyped inter-agency meeting agendas. Another week, participants brainstormed facilitation methods and conversation prompts. Enquiry group participants were not always successful in shifting joined-up practice; often the enquiry groups exposed the barriers to change. Since civil servants operate within larger organisational and institutional structures and do not always have complete agency over their practice, I identify both individual and structural level factors in the pages that follow.

Section 8.2: Explaining routine

The words practice and routine are related, but not identical. I use the word routine to describe recognisable behavioural patterns, and the word practice to capture civil servant behaviour. The latter includes but is not exclusive of the former. Routines are shorthand for repeated practice; often they are so ingrained that, as several civil servants noted, “It’s just the way things are done”. Often, it is hard to see beyond routines. Civil servants frequently described joined-up government in terms of inter-agency board meetings, even though board meetings are just one type of joined-up practice.

Feldman and Pentland, in their 2003 article *Reconceptualizing organisational*
routines as a source of flexibility and change, argue that we should not look at routines as one homogeneous activity, but instead comprised of multiple moving parts. The inter-agency board meeting routine may seem static and fixed, but what goes on within that routine is likely to change over time. Feldman and Pentland define routines as “repetitive, recognisable patterns of interdependent actions carried out by multiple actors,” but emphasise the multiplicity of the underlying patterns (p.94). Routines can be divided into two parts: ostensive and performative. The ostensive part of a routine is the core activity that encapsulates structure, while the performative part is the real-time enactment of that activity that encapsulates agency. For instance, the ostensive part of the programme board routine is a set-piece governance structure while the performative part is how civil servants organise the space and what they say within that structure. Such a conceptualisation recognises that civil servants will improvise, sometimes subtly and unknowingly; and other times, substantively and deliberately. In this way, routines are iterative and can be seen as a source of innovation. Feldman and Pentland contrast this conceptualisation with the standard academic view of routines:

“In contrast to traditional views of routines, which emphasise structure, our framework brings agency, and therefore subjectivity and power back into the picture. Agency involves the ability to remember the past, imagine the future, and respond to present circumstances. While organisational routines are commonly perceived as reenacting the past, the performance of routines can also involve adapting to contexts that require either idiosyncratic or ongoing changes and reflecting on the meaning of actions for future realities...they also entail self-reflective and other-reflective behaviour” (p.95).

Feldman and Pentland’s framework provides a useful vocabulary for differentiating average performing from high and low performing joined-up case studies. I contend that variation in civil servants’ joined-up routine underlies differences in joined-up performance. Such an argument hinges on joining-up qualifying as a routine. I have borrowed the word ‘routine’ from civil servants in the dataset. Indeed, civil servants described joining-up as a distinct, definable
activity. They could predict the motions they would go through just by the name of the joint initiative: be it programme board, officials group, conference, workshop, bilateral, trilateral, or ministerial meeting. These predictions played out in observation points. Despite their differences, all twenty case studies featured an identifiable and recurring pattern of behaviour: convening meetings and planning interactions, sequencing and distributing tasks, sharing information, and managing information flows within and between agencies. These four behaviours seemed to distinguish joining-up, in all its forms, from independent working. Joining-up, unlike independent working, requires creating the time and space for multiple stakeholders to meet, talk about work, divide work, and manage the politics and dynamics of the work.

The joined-up routine:

- **Convening**: where civil servants from two or more agencies meet and how they organise the physical and/or virtual environment.
- **Sequencing**: how civil servants order the tasks associated with joining-up.
- **Sharing**: the questions civil servants ask each other and the content of the information exchanged.
- **Capacity-building**: the skills and resources that civil servants draw upon, and how they manage internal and external information flows & dynamics.

These four joined-up behaviours are interconnected: what information is shared affects how tasks are distributed; how interactions are facilitated and managed affects what information is shared, etc. In this way, joining-up meets Feldman and Pentland’s four criteria of what makes a routine: behaviours that are (1) repetitive, (2) recognisable, (3) interdependent, and (4) carried out by multiple actors. If convening, sequencing, sharing, and capacity-building form the ostensive part of the routine, then it is the performative part of the routine which varies across case studies. Over the pages that follow, I describe how the performative
aspect of the routine varies in average performing versus high and low performing joined-up case studies.

8.3: Average performing routines
8.3.1: Convening

Meeting location generally reflected available space. Thirteen of the fifteen average performing initiatives took place in a nondescript conference room. In most cases, the conference room belonged to the organising agency. In order to gain entry, civil servants from outside the lead agency needed to proceed through security: this meant receiving a name badge, and sometimes, waiting for an escort. Such procedure served to mark external civil servants as ‘the other’. Once they had cleared security, external civil servants could enter the designated room, serve themselves tea and coffee, and take their seats along a large board table. They remained seated from the beginning to the end of the meeting. The host distributed a stack of papers, including an agenda and any formal submissions. Agendas featured a similar layout, with meeting name and date at the top, followed by a numbered list of items. At some point in the meeting, the lights dimmed, a screen lowered and an LCD projector switched on in order to view a PowerPoint presentation. This was the only point in the meeting where participants might share the same visual reference point. Outside of this presentation, civil servants’ attention was focused on whatever they had in front of them: the official stack of papers, their own documents, or

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<th>Table 8.1: Average performing case studies</th>
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<td><strong>ENGLAND</strong></td>
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<td>Alcohol Harm Reduction Group</td>
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<td>CAMHS Team</td>
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<td>Children and Young People Steering Group</td>
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<td>DfES Away Day</td>
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<td>DH-DfES Board</td>
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<td>Every Child Matters Programme Board</td>
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<td>Respect Team</td>
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<td>Young People and Drugs Programme Board</td>
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<td>Youth Matters Programme Board</td>
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<td><strong>NEW ZEALAND</strong></td>
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<td>Alcohol Review Steering Group</td>
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<td>Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs</td>
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<td>Inter-Agency Committee on Suicide</td>
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<td>Prevention</td>
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<td>MED-MYD Entrepreneurship Group</td>
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<td>MSD Youth Network</td>
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<td>Mission-on Team</td>
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frequently their BlackBerry. A designated note-taker recorded the proceedings, and minutes would then be included in the stack of papers distributed at the next meeting. Between meetings, civil servants might interact in a virtual space, using email and phone calls to follow up and plan. One initiative, Mission-on, talked of setting up a virtual inter-agency space where documents could be shared and officials could ‘instantly message’ each other. This had not happened during fieldwork.

The Exceptions: Both the CAMHS Team and the DfES Away Day stood apart. The DfES Away Day took place offsite in a hotel. Participants did not need to clear security, and there were no name tags. They received dinner and lunch, and not simply tea and coffee. There was a screen and an LCD projector, but there were also whiteboards, big sheets of paper, markers, and Post-it notes. Participants sat in a semi-circle, and there was no meeting table. Photographs of the space, with its Post-it note wallpaper, served as the official record of events. One of the Young People and Drugs Programme Board gatherings also incorporated Post-it notes and whiteboards, but that instance was labeled a one-time workshop rather than a regular board meeting. The next board meeting adopted standard spatial arrangements.

The CAMHS Team, by contrast, shared information over the phone more often than in person. When they did meet in person, it tended to be for an informal, social purpose rather than for a formal board meeting. Participants gave new meaning to the word ‘meeting’: they met for lunch at the pub or a walk outside of the office. Sometimes, they met in each other’s office space, sharing desks and the actual work environment with one another.

8.3.2: Sequencing

Civil servants in average performing initiatives adopted two different sequence routines, depending on the structural formality of the initiative. Inter-agency boards, committees and groups had more precise choreography than inter-agency teams. Both routine types are described below:
Boards, Committees and Groups: The eleven average performing inter-agency programme boards, groups and committees shared the same task sequence and communication flow. See Table 8.1 for a list of case studies. Meetings consisted of a series of pre-programmed items: introductions and apologies, approval of minutes, round-robin updates, a guest presentation, risk management, action items, and next meeting date. Interactions within meetings followed a corresponding template. Introductions were brief, with only name and agency, and perhaps prior agency if the speaker was a recent arrival. Approval of minutes proceeded with little comment, unless a key fact was missing or incorrect. Round-robin updates were succinct but thorough, offering an account of activities, events, publications and perhaps official ministerial views. Guest presentations, if there were any, were run didactically, with polite questioning reserved for the end. Risk management meant civil servants revised a risk matrix and sometimes collectively brainstormed ‘what if’ scenarios, although risk mitigation nearly always fell to the organising agency. Action items subscribed to a similar pattern, with the lead agency taking much of the responsibility. Civil servants from other agencies might also agree to circulate additional information or present at a subsequent meeting. Next meeting date was as straightforward as it sounds: time and place were announced along with the topic of the presentation, if known. Auxiliary events, for example a ministerial speech or an upcoming subcommittee session, might also be mentioned and the meeting would then be adjourned.

Interactions outside of meetings reinforced the standard meeting template. Before a meeting, civil servants might, via email or phone, suggest presentation topics and coordinate logistics. After a meeting, civil servants might follow-up regarding an update or ask for help obtaining inter-agency sign-off on one of their documents. Knowing the meeting formula enabled civil servants to plan their participation. While group agendas stayed constant – organisers spoke of preparing for meetings by simply modifying the date on the agenda and pressing
‘print’ – individual strategy evolved over time. Civil servant participants had to
determine when to introduce and how to frame a new policy; they also had to
determine whether what they had to say was simply a ‘for your information’ style
update or necessitated follow-up action like ‘setting a comment period’ or ‘holding
a consultative meeting’.

Teams: The three average performing inter-agency teams subscribed to a
looser sequence and communication flow than the programme boards and inter-
agency committees. At least once a week, and often every day, civil servants
emailed or telephoned each other to discuss the latest project developments and
any emergent challenges. Civil servants in these teams also periodically reported
to formal boards, which ran in boardrooms according to preset agendas, like those
detailed above. In these more structured settings, civil servants had an opportunity
to circumvent the informal working order and quickly escalate issues up the chain
of command. Tasks emanating from these ministerial boards were almost always
assigned to individual agencies rather than to the team. To complete a task, civil
servants applied their agency’s processes and protocols: this meant composing
and crafting policy statements and programme language independently; consulting
with colleagues; and negotiating revisions. Because of their close and continual
contact, consultation and revision could happen simultaneously.

The Exceptions: Again, the DfES Away Day was the anomaly. It featured
neither the formality of a standing structure, nor the ongoing back-and-forth
motion of teams. Civil servants followed a pre-planned and externally facilitated
agenda, and yet they also engaged in casual conversation over lunches and dinner.
Activities were deliberately ordered and diverse; including icebreakers, didactic
presentations, small group brainstorming and full group discussion. Light-hearted
team building exercises were paired with strategic policy presentations; and small
group work preceded large-group discussion. The day ended with a wrap-up and
summary session which included both next steps and formal evaluation.
8.3.3: Sharing

Civil servants within the fifteen average performing initiatives engaged in very similar conversations: they discussed how to frame, disseminate, and follow-up on information. Information tended to be diffuse and general, spanning a wide range of issues rather than concentrating on one topic area. Only certain kinds of talk were permissible in these joined-up spaces: friendly chatter about the weather (in England) and about weekend plans (in New Zealand); prepared monologues about departmental work products and ministerial interests; polite inquiries about facts and dates; dialogue about preferred processes and logistics; and persuasive pleas to join up. Indeed, civil servants in these joined-up initiatives passionately argued about the need to join up. Speech was more often procedural rather than deliberative: civil servants asked each other technical rather than conceptual questions, avoiding ideological or open-ended subject matters. They presented rather than constructed policy arguments, and listened to rather than debated each others’ arguments. They identified stumbling blocks instead of brainstorming ideas or opportunities forward. Overt controversies and conflicts were most often diverted or escalated to ministerial forums.

8.3.4: Capacity-building

Although civil servants within average performing initiatives focused on process and procedure, none of the initiatives had in place ongoing processes or procedures for internal review, reflection, learning, and improvement. Few of the average performing initiatives invested in internal collaborative capacity building, such as facilitation or skill building. Where initiatives did invest in facilitation, as in the DfES Away Day, external expertise was purchased without the resource for skills transfer.

Even when the expertise came from within the public sector, skills and methods remained the domain of a select few. For example, the SPARC facilitator of New Zealand’s Mission-on team was an expert in collaborative management, but there was no one who could assume her role when she was on leave. In
England, central agencies such as the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit took on a critical facilitation role, applying a private consultancy-like approach and using creative brainstorming tools. However, without PMDU officials at the helm, their creative methods were not sustained. For example, when the PMDU facilitated the Young People and Drugs Programme Board, civil servant participants reported entering a more generative and conceptual brainstorming space. Yet without the PMDU’s stewardship, they were unable to routinise that different practice and the joined-up space reverted back to technical and logistical troubleshooting.

One of the key insights from the enquiry groups was that the absence of a clear capacity-building routine perpetuated the space, sequence and substance routines. Actors were not systematically learning how to do anything different, and nor were they regularly making time to question the dominant joined-up style and approach. Through the enquiry group, fourteen actors in England and New Zealand found time for reflexive distance, and began asking questions like: ‘What makes joined-up initiatives fit for purpose?’ and ‘Is there a better model?’ Participants were genuinely surprised by these critical questions, underscoring the ‘out-of-ordinary’ nature of formal joined-up capacity building.

8.3.5: Section summary

The fifteen average performing initiatives, by and large, subscribed to a common template of activity. Civil servants met in the same kinds of spaces with the same kinds of visual stimuli, had the same kinds of conversations, in the same basic order, with little internal capacity to rethink or regroup. Table 8.2 summarises the average performing routine:

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<th>Table 8.2: The average performing routine</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convening behaviours</td>
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<td>Didactic</td>
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The exceptions to this routine are instructive: they help us to take note of behavioural patterns and tell us that subtle deviations from the routine are both possible and visible, albeit short-lived. Even when different practice was modeled, like in the PMDU-facilitated Young People and Drugs Programme Board workshop, civil servants reverted back to the default. In average performing joined-up initiatives, new practice was rarely embedded or sustained.

Section 8.4: Routines from high and low performing case studies

In both the low and high performing joined-up initiatives, civil servant behaviour deviated from the average performing norm. Convening, sequencing, sharing, and capacity-building looked different. What enabled civil servants to practice differently will be explored in Section 8.5. This section describes how the performative part of the joined-up routine differed between average performing and high and low performing joined-up initiatives.

8.4.1: Convening

The three high performing joined-up initiatives did not simply use any available space: civil servants considered issues like meeting purpose, agency ownership, and inter-agency buy-in when selecting suitable venues. For example, the Youth Justice Leadership Group convened in a historic house across the street from New Zealand’s government complex. This was neutral territory, not associated with any one of the participating agencies, where members could attend on equal footing. MOJ organisers were particularly conscious of creating a protected space, one where the group could operate as its own entity rather than as an extension of another.

The High and Complex Needs Unit operated as its own entity, despite

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<th>Table 8.3: High and low performing case studies</th>
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<td><strong>HIGH NEW ZEALAND</strong></td>
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<td>High and Complex Needs Unit</td>
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<td>Youth Justice Conference</td>
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<td><strong>LOW NEW ZEALAND</strong></td>
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<td>Realising Youth Potential</td>
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sitting within a single government agency, the MSD. Given its history of inter-agency financial strife, Unit staff worked hard to create a space that felt like it belonged to the cross-government team. The open plan office and meeting rooms highlighted the Unit’s inter-agency basis: logos from all the agencies were fixed on the walls, and folders and business cards were branded ‘High and Complex Needs Unit’ rather than as the MSD.

The Youth Justice Leadership Conference promoted multi-stakeholder engagement by rotating meeting spaces. Sometimes meetings were held in formal MOJ boardrooms, at other times in regional offices, and, as the conference approached, at the venue itself. Alternating the physical spaces ensured new kinds of interactions: the placement of teas and coffees, for instance, influenced the length and intimacy of informal conversation. There was little divide between informal and formal conversation, though, perhaps in part because there were never more than ten people at the table. There was also whiteboards, large sheets of paper and markers available. Whiteboards featured particularly prominently in the Youth Justice Leadership Group, where members used them to scribble information, list categories, rearrange text, erase parts of the text, and circle decisions.

Where the high performing initiatives created neutral space, the low performing initiative cultivated territorial divisions. *Realising Youth Potential*, the lowest performing initiative in the dataset, used a space that served to reinforce civil servants’ most prominent concern: by meeting in an MOE conference room, organisers underscored the feeling that *Realising Youth Potential* was not an inter-agency project. The conference room was very large and impersonal, with a table accommodating over twenty-five people. Civil servants had just one visual reference point: an agenda with the MOE’s logo at the top and a series of agenda items assigned to MOE officials. Although a portable whiteboard was placed in the corner, it was used only at the end of the meeting after presentations and discussion.
8.4.2: Sequencing

For the three high performing initiatives, meetings and interaction points matched to the purpose and context at hand. Prior to meetings, civil servants exchanged emails, phone calls, and corridor chats about how to make the most of face-to-face time. In these pre-meeting communications, participants discussed why they wanted to convene and what success would look like. Prior to formal meetings, the host of the Youth Justice Leadership Group interviewed members to surface intentions and tensions, and to build an agenda that could effectively address collective issues. The High and Complex Needs Unit Manager hired a neutral facilitator to talk to disillusioned members and suggest points for resolution. The chair of the Youth Justice Leadership Conference was in regular contact with field staff, and could structure meetings around the expectations of conference attendees.

When members of these initiatives did convene face-to-face, they focused on a key task or decision point. The meeting chair began with a statement of purpose and proposed an agenda to fulfil that purpose, looking to members for suggestions and substantive revisions. Members discussed the best decision-making process for the tasks at hand, often setting criteria for what would constitute a good decision. For example, the Youth Justice Leadership Group brainstormed what would make a good Terms of Reference before launching into the conversation about the Terms of Reference. Having established a common framework for the conversation, members had a reference point for information exchange and idea generation. By the end of the meeting, a series of ‘new’ tasks had been drawn up and distributed to individuals or small sub-groups. ‘New’ tasks were those that emanated from the discussion; they were rarely preset or pre-assigned. Meetings concluded with a summary of the day’s events, and an opportunity for members to reflect on (or lament the lack of) progress made. Civil servants could air frustrations within the meeting space, rather than as an aside in the corridor or lift.
Meetings in the low performing initiative were also bespoke, but unintentionally so. Inter-agency interactions were more of an afterthought than a planned occurrence. For example, a week before a major presentation to frontbench ministers, the DPMC hastily arranged a large inter-agency meeting. Over the history of the initiative, there was a pattern of inter-agency meetings being hastily called prior to ministerial report back sessions. Such an ad-hoc schedule ensured that deadlines became the major content piece of meetings. The meeting I observed began with generic introductions and moved on to project updates. MOE officials offered a thorough rundown of their work to date and distributed their most recent policy proposals. Where there were gaps or missing information, they asked colleagues around the table to assist. Tasks were set by the MOE and pre-assigned to particular agencies. Only when tasks were distributed did colleagues debate the merits of the proposals, and discuss how their work fit together. Thus the meeting proceeded in a backwards sequence, with idea generation happening after content had already been decided and tasks had already been distributed.

8.4.3: Sharing

In the three high performing initiatives, civil servants talked about ideas more than procedures. Organisers designed meetings for debate and participants volleyed perspectives back and forth around the same core questions. This was different from average performing initiatives, where civil servants presented information across a range of issues. Answering critical questions required civil servants to analyse, rather than just share prepared information, and to make and revise claims in real-time. For example, civil servants involved in the High and Complex Needs Unit often took a single case as their focal point, asking what barriers prevented seamless service delivery. In the Youth Justice Leadership Group, civil servants asked both existential and pragmatic questions such as, “What are we here for?” and “Are there things we are doing but should not be doing?” Similarly, actors in the Youth Justice Conference asked questions like,
“What do conference attendees need to leave the event knowing?” and “What’s the best structure for an interactive conference session?”

To arrive at a consensus answer, civil servants had to jointly make sense of information, interpretations, conjectures, and claims. To do this, civil servants crafted scenarios, constructed matrices, and tagged and categorised information. In other words, they used qualitative analysis techniques. For example, civil servants in the High and Complex Needs Unit constructed ‘what if’ scenarios to visualise what could go wrong with a particular policy, and then openly brainstormed ways to avert the worst-case scenarios. Youth Justice Leadership Group participants drew a very large matrix on a whiteboard where they first inputted their individual agency activities and then identified gaps and openings for joint work. Rather than steer clear of disagreements, civil servants used conflict to drill down to basic beliefs and assumptions. Sometimes basic beliefs could not be reconciled and required ministerial intervention as a last resort. In none of the observed meetings did civil servants invoke their minister, start a sentence with “My minister says…”, or passionately plea for more joining-up.

Civil servants in the low performing initiative consistently invoked their ministers. Conversation was overtly political, rather than procedural as in average performing initiatives or critical as in high performing initiatives. Civil servants spoke from entrenched policy positions: they entered meetings with the goal of securing authority over a piece of the policy agenda. Sometimes that meant forming coalitions and counting opponents prior to the meeting. In debriefs, civil servants acknowledged their pre-meeting strategising by making statements such as, “The minister was clear he wants to clarify who has the lead on youth transitions, and the MSD needs to have it. He is going to line up Education and MSD as bedfellows. The trade-off is that he will have to give some areas to the DOL” (NZ014D).

As agencies vied for ownership of Realising Youth Potential, very different ideological and organisational frameworks hung in the balance: education versus
unemployment versus youth development. These different frameworks were not addressed in the full group. Rather, civil servants sat quietly through meetings, only to report back to their ministers and advance issues in more polarised bilateral settings. The ad-hoc nature of meetings meant participants were unfamiliar with the latest policy proposals: time was spent answering questions about the origin and intent of the proposals, rather than jointly improving them. Civil servants reviewed the proposals on their own time, sitting at their own desks, rather than across the same board table where they could think and write together. MOE officials made it clear that they were looking for confirmatory feedback and local examples to illustrate their points, rather than a fresh perspective. Organisers believed there was ‘no time’ for substantive changes.

8.4.4: Capacity-building

Regular reflection was engrained within high performing initiatives. Even negative feedback was construed as actionable feedback. Indeed, discontent with existing practice led civil servants in two of the three high performing initiatives (the High and Complex Needs Unit and Youth Justice Leadership Group) to review and revise the sequence and substance of meetings. Without these changes, these two joint initiatives would not have ranked as highly on the three performance benchmarks. Calls for change emanated from within the joined-up initiative, and while external facilitators sometimes lent support, changes to practice were led from the inside-out. For example, the High and Complex Needs Unit brought in an external facilitator to air tensions and concerns, but the findings and recommendations were implemented by civil servants.

Civil servants in all three high performing initiatives thought about how to make the groups run better, read literature about collaboration, and sought out professional development on the subject. The chair of the Youth Justice Leadership Conference helped to start a ‘multi-sectoral leadership’ group that met every couple of months to share strategies for interdisciplinary working. This group had similar goals to the enquiry groups I facilitated during fieldwork.
By contrast, in the low performing initiative, it was unclear who was responsible for collaborative leadership. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) ceded day-to-day control to the Ministry of Education (MOE). MOE officials believed that they were in charge of developing education proposals, not managing a broader youth policy package. When it became clear that the proposal required greater inter-agency engagement, executive agencies intervened. Unfortunately, DPMC officials were much more comfortable in a ‘behind-the-scenes’ negotiating role, rather than in a ‘head-of-the-table’ facilitation role. Civil servants from executive agencies in New Zealand had little experience managing inter-agency groups. While executive-level civil servants recognised the value of increasing their own collaborative capacity, they were learning as they went along and had yet to define a particular methodology or style. Their agencies were not known, as the PMDU was in England, for their interactive sessions or use of consultancy techniques.

8.4.5: Section summary

High and low performing initiatives diverged from average performing initiatives in the following ways:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Convening behaviours</th>
<th>Sequencing behaviours</th>
<th>Sharing behaviours</th>
<th>Capacity-building behaviours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High performing</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>Critical conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low performing</td>
<td>Disordered</td>
<td>Hurried</td>
<td>Political posturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average performing</td>
<td>Didactic</td>
<td>Preprogrammed</td>
<td>Procedural talk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) **Convening.** High performing initiatives were not one size fits all: agendas, conversations, and spaces looked different over time as purpose, capacity, and context evolved. Although the one low performing initiative did not adopt a
standard template either, organisers did not establish an alternative process, making it disordered.

2) **Sequencing.** High performing initiatives struck a balance between solid structures and iterative methods. Civil servants planned interactions and meetings, distributed tasks after full discussion, and left time for reflection and not just fact-checking.

3) **Sharing.** In the high performing initiatives, civil servants used critical questions and idea generation to provide structure, rather than relying on procedures and protocols. Each meeting was a platform for addressing one key issue, not airing every issue. Having a single focal point enabled civil servants to proactively consider the question, What will make this meeting a success?; and to determine the best space, sequence and substance for achieving those expectations. As the history of the High and Complex Needs unit suggests, civil servants were not always successful in meeting expectations, but they did have a commitment to continuous improvement. In the low performing initiative, political posturing overtook both critical conversation and procedural planning.

4) **Capacity-building.** In high performing initiatives, improvement came from both the inside-out, and outside-in. Inside-out meant investing in joining-up, and recognising that joining-up amounted to more than putting people together in the same room with the same agenda. Outside-in meant knowing when joining-up was no longer adding value, and when to stop perpetuating the same ineffective practice. Civil servants in these initiatives, compared to those in low performing initiatives, regularly pondered what added value meant for external stakeholders, as well as for themselves. For example, High and Complex Needs Unit members considered what added value meant for service providers and young people; the Youth Justice Leadership Group considered added value for youth offending teams and ministers; and the Youth Justice Conference looked at what added value meant for practitioners and policymakers.
Section 8.5: What enabled different routines?

Civil servants engaged in high and low performing initiatives acted out the joined-up routine differently than civil servants engaged in average performing initiatives. What enabled some civil servants to act differently? Were they acting deliberately? What role did institutional and situational factors play?

As discussed in Chapter Three, qualitative research cannot untangle cause and effect, nor can it isolate and quantify how much one factor influenced performance over another factor. Instead, qualitative research can name all the factors at play and explore how these factors cluster together and in what contexts.

In this research, clusters of factors have greater explanatory reach than a single factor. We cannot, for instance, attribute performance solely to the country in which the initiative took place, as performance varied widely within each country. The majority of joined-up initiatives in New Zealand ranked average, and yet originated from the same institutional environment as the high and low performing initiatives: the same political parties, the same budget system, the same accountability requirements, etc. High, low, and average performing initiatives even shared some of the same civil servants. Instead of any one factor, a combination of factors seems to have made the difference. Particular civil servants, with particular backgrounds, working on particular issues with particular ministers, at particular times and places, performed different practice.

Pollitt and Bouckaert (2004), as I noted in Chapter Two, attribute changes in public management practice to a similar mix of contextual factors. They offer a multi-layered model to explain public management reforms, of which joined-up government is one. Similar to this thesis, civil servant behaviour is at the centre of their model. Reforms are the product of elite decision-making. Decisions are shaped by socio-economic forces, chance events, and the prevailing political and administrative system (p.25). Some of these factors are predictable, such as an election, while others are unpredictable, such as scandals and disasters.
Pollitt and Bouckaert’s model helps to differentiate between the different kinds of factors influencing decision-making: those at an individual, group, organisational, institutional, and situational level. These were the labels I used to code the influencing factors mentioned in interviews, meetings, internal and external documents. I operationalised the labels as follows:

- **Individual-level factors**: those that civil servants controlled, or could themselves shape -- their background, motivations, skills, etc.
- **Group-level factors**: those that civil servants could collectively shape -- the frequency of meetings, the facilitation of meetings, communication channels, etc.
- **Organisational-level factors**: those that each participating agency could internally influence -- their management structure, priorities, incentives, culture, etc.
- **Institutional-level factors**: those that operated across government, and impacted all agencies -- ministerial preferences, political leadership, public management ideologies, budgetary and accountability mechanisms, etc.
- **Situational-level factors**: those that were external, yet responsive to prior governmental action or inaction -- a high-profile death of a child, growing media attention on a problem, public perceptions, new academic research, etc.

Each influencing factor could function as an enabler, barrier, and/or condition. Enablers are conceptually distinct from conditions and barriers: whereas enablers influence *how* civil servants join up, conditions and barriers influence *if* civil servants join up. Factors were named conditions and barriers when civil servants talked about what led to a joined-up initiative, or the hurdles which had to be overcome to join up. Factors were named enablers when civil servants discussed what shaped the ways in which they joined-up. Conditions and enablers
are not mutually exclusive, and were often coded as both.

To understand the relationship between enabling factors, adapted routines, and joined-up performance, I grouped the twenty case studies by high, low, and average performance and identified which enablers clustered with each performance grouping, first by using the code relations browser in MAXQDA and then by re-reading whole transcripts. As explained in Chapter Three, the code relations browser offers only one starting point for analysis; to confirm and contextualise relationships between variables it is necessary to return to the original transcripts. In the sub-sections which follow, I outline the individual, group, organisational, institutional, and situational enablers connected to the three high performing initiatives, and go on to explain how these enabling factors might have shifted civil servants’ joined-up routine.

8.5.1: Individual enabling factors

Figure 8.3: Individual enabling factors associated with high performing joined-up initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code System</th>
<th>Performance Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>High</td>
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<td>Offline</td>
<td>Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>meetings</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
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<td>Experience</td>
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<td>Learning</td>
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<td>examples</td>
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<td>Non</td>
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<td>civil-serv</td>
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<td>ant experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Common</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Representation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Managing ministers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impetus</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>values</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Style</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Misplaced</td>
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<tr>
<td>leadership</td>
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</table>

Seven different individual enablers emerged within the dataset, but only two strongly clustered with high performing joined-up initiatives: civil servant
skills and stability. Both factors relate to civil servant experience: professional experience with the joined-up initiative in question and personal experience.

**Professional experience.** Because civil servants in high performing initiatives had been involved from the start of the initiative, there was very little staff turnover. Interestingly, many of these civil servants started their careers working bottom-up, rather than top-down. The *majority* were trained as practitioners where they engaged directly with children, young people, and vulnerable families. For example, the chair of the Youth Justice Leadership Conference Group was a social worker prior to her appointment as a Ministry of Justice programme officer, and nearly three quarters of the members of the Youth Justice Leadership Group had backgrounds as police officers, clinical psychologists, and teachers. There was significant overlap between membership on the Youth Justice Leadership Group and the High and Complex Needs Unit. Indeed, the clinical psychologist described how her professional background gave her a different vantage point in both initiatives: “I worked for ten years in a child and adolescent medicine mental health service and one of the things that we did there, just to bring that collaboration on the ground, is we set up Child Abuse Teams. And now I work with MSD’s Child, Youth and Family and Police and people from the mental health sector to actually work around the needs of kids… but we had worked collaboratively at that level and that was in the mid-80s when it was really quite early on for that sort of thing” (NZ045G).

**Personal experience.** It was not just professional experience that set participants in high performing initiatives apart, but also how they drew on their personal experiences. As one of the participants from Police put it, “I’m a father of three, so a lot of my understanding in young people has been provided by them. I came from a broken family. I also have that as a bias and understanding the prejudices around that. And a lot of my understandings around young people are driven by nearly thirty years of community policing” (NZ011G).

Rather than try to create a dividing line between their professional and
personal lives, civil servants in high performing initiatives openly acknowledged that their two lives were intertwined. For these civil servants, the civil service oath of neutrality did not mean they had to detach themselves from their other roles and experiences: it just meant these roles and experiences needed to be considered, critiqued, and contrasted with other evidence. Because there were such little turnover in the high performing joined-up initiatives, civil servants seemed far more comfortable sharing their personal histories and vigorously debating the implications. Indeed, starting with personal experience did not mean holding onto old thinking, but rather, contextualising new thinking.

Why were civil servants with more experience, both outside and inside the initiative, able to adopt different routines: to protect space, plan joined-up sequences, engage in critical conversation, and invest in internal capacity? Civil servants with a history of collaborating on the frontlines seemed to have a greater sense of what joining-up was for: they could visualise joined-up services for children and young people and construed joined-up policy as a means to providing joined-up services. Joining-up was personal and not just another technocratic exercise: they could see themselves and their families, along with their former clients, as service users. Civil servants invested in joined-up capacity because they were committed to joining-up better: they sequenced meetings and set up conversations around questions they were genuinely interested in answering. For these civil servants, successful joint practice was about the quality of what emerged from their conversations and meetings. Good, collegial relationships were not enough.

This kind of clarity about successful joint work was absent from the low performing initiative, *Realising Youth Potential*. In contrast to the high performing initiatives, most of the participants were career civil servants. Like their colleagues in the high performing initiatives, participants wanted to produce good work. They just did not always know what good work looked and felt like on the ground. Given that meetings were hastily arranged, without consistent membership, civil
servants were not able to build up enough of a rapport with each other to share common reference points and perspectives. Although many of the participants, particularly those from the population agencies, had diverse, non-governmental experiences relevant to the issues at hand, they did not have the space to share those experiences. Joining-up was very much a technocratic exercise subsumed by discussions of process, protocols and deadlines.

Factors that were less significant. While civil servant background and stability demarcated civil servants in high performing initiatives from the other initiatives, there were no other individual factors which clearly helped explain performance. One factor that nearly all civil servants in the dataset shared was a desire to make a difference. Civil servants in the dataset entered the public service to do public good. It was certainly not the case that civil servants involved in high performing initiatives were more motivated to contribute to the public good than those involved in average or low performing initiatives; rather the difference was how civil servants defined the public good according to their personal and professional histories. Civil servants in high performing initiatives shared the same range of statuses, workloads and styles as civil servants in average and even low performing initiatives, and indeed many of the actors in high performing initiatives were also involved in average performing ones. What was notable about the high performing initiatives was the concentration of civil servants with on-the-ground experiences and their openness to using those experiences in joined-up settings.

8.5.2: Group enabling factors

Overlapping membership between high and average performing initiatives suggests that we should look beyond the individuals in the group to the makeup of the whole group. What enabled particular combinations of people to work differently than other combinations of people? In much of the existing research, ‘the group’ serves only as the dependent variable – the phenomenon being explained – rather than an explanatory factor in its own right. Even in the dataset, much of what I have coded as a group-level factor constitutes a practice or
routine rather than an enabling factor. For example, when civil servants described the agenda used at their last joined-up meeting, this was tagged a ‘group-level’ practice. Naming the practice did not provide much insight into why the agenda looked as it did. Rather, naming some of the core features of the group – e.g. its size, remit, and reporting structure – does shed insight into civil servant interactions and behaviours. These features and conditions are what I define as group-level enablers. One of these group-level enablers, audience, was most strongly linked with high performing initiatives.

**Figure 8.4: Group enabling factors associated with high performing joined-up initiatives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code System</th>
<th>Performance Level</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Low</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
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<td>Recognition</td>
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<td>Peer support</td>
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<td>Group process</td>
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<td>Group logistics</td>
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<td>Set-Up</td>
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<td>Pilot projects</td>
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<td>Group accountability</td>
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<td>Inter-group relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role of JUG</td>
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<td>To bypass/thwart</td>
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<td>To learn</td>
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<td>To construct</td>
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<td>To advise</td>
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<td>To confirm or push</td>
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<td>To catalyze/get traction</td>
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<td>Orientation</td>
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<td>Approach or Method</td>
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<td>Departmental/Ministerial</td>
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<td>Practitioner</td>
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<td>Client</td>
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<td>Project/Problem</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role-Practice Disconnect</td>
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**Audience.** When joint initiatives are established, organisers set out an initial Terms of Reference, which typically offers a rationale and structure for joining-up. For instance, in the dataset, Terms of References with the title ‘programme board’
instigated a template for action that became hard to override. The organiser of the Targeted Youth Support Programme Board in England faced stiff resistance when she proposed a different operating structure: “But that’s not how a programme board works,” participants complained.

The three high performing initiatives began with Terms of References which specified the target audiences of the joint initiative, and not simply its structure. Accountability was expressed in terms of a defined population and delivery mechanism, instead of just an abstract policy process. The High and Complex Needs Unit was designed to serve the most vulnerable children and young people via a single delivery arm: integrated service teams; the Youth Justice Conference was designed to serve youth justice practitioners via a single platform: a conference; and the Youth Justice Leadership Group was designed to serve practitioners via a single network: youth offending teams, as well as to advise a single group of ministers. Each had specific goals and objectives. By contrast, the low performing initiative, Realising Youth Potential, lacked both a clear audience and a clear objective.

Audience differed from clients. The clients of the Youth Justice Conference were the Justice Minister who approved the initiative, and the chief executives of regional agencies who contributed resources. The clients of the Youth Justice Leadership Group and the High and Complex Needs Unit were the ministers of each participating agency. In none of the twenty initiatives, high, low or average performing, did civil servants share the same client. Even when civil servants in an initiative reported to a joint ministerial board – as participants of the Youth Justice Leadership Group or the Every Child Matters Programme Board did – they were still responsible for upholding the interests of their ministers before the interests of the group. Having the same audience gave civil servants a common reference point, while still ensuring they represented the perspectives and views of their minister.

*History of conflict.* Audience did not always serve as a collaborative tool.
Both the Youth Justice Leadership Group and the High and Complex Needs Unit had experienced periods where individual agency interests overrode collective interests. One of the civil servants involved in the Youth Justice Leadership Group recalled one such incident: “We were talking about developing a leadership group submission on a piece of legislation which would involve reaching an agreement on the main points and one key agency said they are here to represent their minister and could not possibly be part of a joint submission, which made us feel like what the hell is the purpose of this group in the first place” (NZ021G)? But the Leadership Group continued forward, and used dissent as a springboard for internal reforms. A history of conflict enabled civil servants to adapt routines and to build the capacity within the joint initiative to ask more critical questions. Although average performing initiatives also faced conflict, they lacked a common reference point onto which to fall back.

Group dynamic. Conflict resolution was eased by a strong group dynamic. Civil servants in high performing initiatives genuinely liked each other: their personalities fit together, and they could toggle between humor, sarcasm, and seriousness. This interpersonal comfort might have been cultivated by group routines like informal lunches and social events, but seemed to precede the presence of these. Civil servants noted that the first time they met each other they felt a connection and rapport. It is hard to discern which came first: a good group dynamic, or practice that created this good group dynamic. This is where separating enablers from routines is complex and counterproductive: practices build on each other in such a way that one might serve as an enabler of the other. While many other group-level factors emerged from the dataset, only the ones described here – audience, history, and group dynamic – seemed to help account for the high performing practice that was documented in the first half of this chapter.

Factors that were less significant. The literature on collaboration consistently names common aims and objectives as the most important success
The high performing initiatives in this thesis offer a different take on this finding. Aims and objectives followed audience. Indeed, civil servants involved in joint initiatives organised around a common audience found it much easier to craft specific aims and objectives.

If we compare England’s Respect Taskforce with New Zealand’s Youth Justice Leadership Group, we see that both initiatives started with a similar brief: reduce antisocial behaviour and prevent youth entry into the criminal justice system. The Respect Taskforce, however, had no agreed audience; it tried to affect children, vulnerable young people, chaotic families, youth offenders, and the myriad of practitioners working with these population groups. Without a common audience, participants continued to advance their agency’s separate agendas; there was no focal point for the multiple, sometimes competing, aims and objectives. New Zealand’s Youth Justice Leadership Group, by contrast, defined its audience as a common group of practitioners. Civil servants had to meld their different agency interests and perspectives to provide consistent guidance and support to local youth offending teams. Specific aims and objectives, like provide field guidance, were far more achievable and measurable once audience had been set.

8.5.3: Organisational enabling factors

Joined-up initiatives, by their very definition, bring together civil servants from multiple organisations. Civil servants are employees of their organisation first and members of joined-up initiatives second; they represent their agency in the boardroom and across the board table. Civil servants in high performing initiatives seemed to be able to invest in a different approach to joining-up because their organisation publicly prioritised the joined-up initiative and because their managers expected and accounted for joined-up work in their workloads.
Expectations and priorities. Organisational prioritisation meant more than a minister signing off an inter-agency strategy document. High performing initiatives such as the High and Complex Needs Unit and the Youth Justice Leadership Group, and many average performing initiatives like the Every Child Matters and Youth Matters Programme Boards, arose from joint inter-agency strategy documents. However, these inter-agency strategy documents were insufficient indicators of organisational commitment because they were not always integrated into intra-agency work programmes. The High and Complex Needs Unit appeared within each participating agency’s Statement of Intent and Annual Plan. A handful of average performing initiatives were also referenced in each agency’s Statement of Intent and Annual Plan (e.g. New Zealand’s Mission-on and Inter-Agency Suicide Prevention Committee). Written confirmation of an agency’s commitment to a joined-up initiative had to be complemented with verbal confirmation in staff meetings and intra-agency communications.

Thanks to written and verbal confirmation, civil servants in the three high performing initiatives perceived their work as mission critical for their agency. Even when the initiative was no longer visible or actively publicised, civil servants could draw a firm connection between the joint initiative and their own agency’s
objectives. For example, civil servants involved in the High and Complex Needs Unit noted that even though the initiative was not at the top of their agency’s agenda anymore, their senior managers kept the joined-up space open. The organiser of New Zealand’s average performing Inter-agency Suicide Prevention Committee described her envy of initiatives with strong managerial support: “Having that senior management support and mandate is really important – that could be at the chief executive or ministerial level, or the level right below, but people need to keep it as a priority” (NZ033G).

Management structure. Strong managerial support not only meant sending civil servants to inter-agency meetings but, most importantly, dedicating staff resources to do the work generated from those meetings. Each of the civil servants from the Youth Justice Leadership Group created time in their diaries to take on substantive tasks, such as co-writing new Terms of References and putting together inter-agency submissions. They did not need to distribute all tasks to the lead agency or to the agency with surplus staff resources. Indeed, these civil servants saw the joined-up initiative as a mechanism for doing work, rather than just providing feedback.

This was not the case for average and low performing initiatives, where organisations treated joined-up initiatives as a space for communicating existing work. Often, agencies had their own branded response to the issues addressed in joined-up settings. For instance, while Mission-on served as the inter-agency healthy eating and exercise campaign, Healthy Eating and Healthy Action served as the MOH healthy eating and exercise campaign. The MOH naturally talked about their initiative first. Similarly, in England, Every Child Matters: Change for Children was an inter-agency strategic plan, while the National Service Framework for Children and Young People was a DH strategic plan which, unsurprisingly, received top billing within the DH. Competing organisational messages seemed to make it much harder for civil servants to have the kinds of meaningful and creative conversations that differentiated high performing from average and low performing initiatives.
**Lead agency reputation.** Who filled the lead agency role also seemed to matter. The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) was the lead agency in two of the three highest performing initiatives, and was widely perceived by civil servants as an effective organisation with the capacity to skillfully manage inter-agency work. Effective agencies were stable, with consistent top leadership and strong intra-agency and sector-wide relationships. Lead agency reputation was, however, an insufficient explanatory factor for high performing initiatives. New Zealand’s Alcohol Review Steering Group was also chaired by the MOJ, and was unable to adopt the same practices as the Youth Justice Leadership Group or Conference. In the same vein, the High and Complex Needs Unit which was not chaired by the MOJ, but by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), and still qualified as a high performing initiative. Although the MSD was perceived as an organisation in transition with strained intra-agency relationships, for much of its existence, the High and Complex Needs Unit had been overseen by a more effective lead agency, Child, Youth and Family (which later merged with the MSD). In contrast, Realising Youth Potential was chaired by the MOE, an organisation widely perceived as being in internal disarray. Civil servants conveyed their frustration with the MOE in interviews, making statements like, “They have got such a big agency and the number of people there and it’s hard to pinpoint exactly who and what it is and where the challenges are”… (NZ58G). Civil servants engaged with Realising Youth Potential had never experienced better organisational leadership, and therefore unlike civil servants in the High and Complex Needs Unit, had little sense of what could be improved.

**Factors that were less significant.** There were other organisational factors identified in the dataset that did not cluster with high or low performance, namely those related to organisational methods and tools. With the exception of England’s central agencies, such as the Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU), none of the functional agencies consistently used a set of tools or methods to solve problems or make policies. While the PMDU became a highly sought after
collaborative partner, the tools remained with the agency rather than embedded within the joined-up initiative. Interestingly, New Zealand’s Ministry of Youth Development was not a highly sought after collaborative partner despite its youth policy framework. This lack of methods transfer characterises average performing initiatives.

8.5.4: Institutional enabling factors

Figure 8.6: Institutional enabling factors associated with high performing joined-up initiatives

Civil servants are employees of their agency first and members of any joint initiative second. Yet they report up a chain command that is ultimately interconnected: from managers to ministers to cabinet. As this thesis focuses
exclusively on central-level joined-up government, all of the civil servants operated within a common governmental context, with decision-making structures, processes, protocols, monies and accountabilities flowing top-down. Civil servants referred to institutional factors more than any other category to explain joined-up practice, although more often as a barrier rather than as an enabler. As Figure 8.6 shows, institutional factors clustered with low performing initiatives more than high performing ones. Where institutional factors did cluster with high performing initiatives, this tended to signal the absence or adaptation of that factor.

Ministerial servicing. On paper nearly all of the joined-up initiatives enjoyed joined-up accountability which took the form of inter-agency ministerial groups. Average performing initiatives reported to inter-agency ministerial groups more regularly than high performing initiatives; while the low performing initiative reported directly to front-bench ministers rather than to a ‘made-for-purpose’ inter-agency ministerial group. Why might this have mattered? Although inter-agency ministerial meetings were undoubtedly an impetus for writing documents, and specifying decision points, they spawned more individual than joint work. Prior to an inter-agency ministerial meeting, civil servants submitted briefing papers and reviewed salient arguments with their minister. That meant that in inter-agency interactions leading up to ministerial meetings, civil servants often looked for issues to raise, openings to exploit, and points to score with their minister. Far from being collaborative, ministerial briefings engendered a competitive spirit.

Civil servants in high performing initiatives kept their minister up to date, but reserved ministerial meetings for critical decision-making. For example, civil servants in the Youth Justice Leadership Board and High and Complex Needs Unit chose to engage with ministers when decisions needed to be made or conflicts required resolution rather than prepared for regularly scheduled ministerial meetings. They did not require central agency intervention or the exercise of overt political power, as was the case in the low performing initiative and in a handful of the average performing ones. In the case of another high performing initiative, the
Youth Justice Conference Group, there were no ministerial meetings. As a one-time event, there was little need for top-down approval, though organisers noted there was top-down interest.

Indeed, ministerial interest rather than ministerial ownership demarcated high performing initiatives from many of the average performing initiatives, and certainly the low performing initiative. Ministers were not vying for their agency to take on the lead role, to lay claim to successes, or to detach from failures. More often than not, they modeled the open, conversational style that civil servants practiced. Perhaps this had something to do with the comparatively low ministerial turnover in high performing initiatives. Indeed, high performing initiatives enjoyed both civil servant stability and ministerial stability.

Civil servant role. Civil servants in high performing initiatives broadly interpreted their institutional role. According to the civil servant code of conduct in both countries, civil servants were to serve their minister by providing neutral and evidenced advice. For civil servants in high performing initiatives, that meant comprehensively understanding and engaging with all sides of an issue, rather than defending a particular position. Comprehensiveness required joined-up thinking. Civil servant role was the only institutional enabling factor that varied between countries more than within countries. More than half of English civil servants felt that ‘being creative’ was at odds with ‘fulfilling their institutional role’. As one English civil servant put it, “I mean this is strange because the civil service was not set up to be creative. The civil service was set up to be in the safety net and implementation against the creativity of ministers. But increasingly they want us to be and I just don’t know” (UK025D).

Factors that were less significant. Institutional factors, by themselves, insufficiently explain variation but might help to explain stability in joined-up performance. England’s ten joined-up initiatives shared the same institutional context and the same average performance rankings. Although New Zealand’s ten joined-up initiatives also shared the same institutional context, they spanned
the full performance spectrum. Perhaps this was a result of New Zealand civil servants’ inconsistent usage of joined-up structures, accountability measures, and financial mechanisms. For instance, while the High and Complex Needs Unit used a little known budgetary clause to transfer monies between agencies, few civil servants realised inter-agency funding was possible. There were other institutional features in New Zealand that could have shaped joined-up practice, but did not. For instance, most ministers in New Zealand oversaw two different policy portfolios; yet there were no examples of ministers leveraging off of this common platform for joined-up initiatives. Nor were there examples of the population agencies bringing functional agencies together in different ways. While population agencies were unique to New Zealand’s institutional architecture, they had little sustained impact on joined-up performance.

8.5.5: Situational enabling factors

Figure 8.7: Situational enabling factors associated with high performing joined-up initiatives

Joined-up government takes place within government, but often responds to issues external to government. Youth offending, educational disengagement, employment, entrepreneurship, alcohol harm, drug use, dysfunctional families, and obesity were issues addressed by joined-up initiatives in the dataset. When, why and how did these issues rise to the forefront of the policy agenda? Time and place is one part of the answer; another part is the role institutions other than government – such as the media, the academic research community, constituent
groups, and political parties — played. We know, for example, that England’s *Every Child Matters* agenda was a reaction to a tragic event. But, how did situational factors affect *how* civil servants joined-up, and not just *whether* they joined-up? While interviews and observational data led to the identification of seven different situational factors, only two of those factors clustered with civil servant practice in high versus low performing initiatives: the nature of the problem and its urgency.

*Problem type.* All three of the high performing initiatives tackled bounded but visibly consequential youth policy issues. The Youth Justice Leadership Group and the Youth Justice Conference looked to coordinate the local delivery of youth justice services, while the High and Complex Needs Unit looked to better integrate services for vulnerable young people. Although youth justice and high-risk young people are major, complex issues, the way these problems were defined by government, the media, and advocacy group gave civil servant participants a concrete focus.

In contrast, the low performing initiative was set up to tackle a problem too complex to be defined: youth wellbeing, which included educational, employment, and health outcomes. The local media, child rights, and health advocacy groups all urged action. However, the involvement of so many players led agencies to revert to what they knew how to do: improve their core business rather than expand it. As one of the lead MOE officials noted:

“I think we could have got to a more useful description for ministers of what is currently available from a young person’s perspective and how that could change and what the options were for how you might deliver that, if we had those conversations really. But the core of our concern is the performance of the school sector. So if we miss the opportunity to get the transition services aligned and to have some inter-agency story about health and things then that is a missed opportunity, but the priorities for us are around accountability and funding incentives in schools. That is what we do” (NZ061G).

Rather than spark inter-agency thinking, the size and scope of the problem as well as the large number of young people, constituency groups and agencies with a stake in the problem complicated efforts to collectively move forward.
Problem timing/urgency. Problem size and scope corresponded with the amount of interest the problem generated and the length of time it remained in the public eye. Emergent problems like a child’s tragic death cultivated a sense of urgency, and as seen in the dataset, governments quickly responded with a new initiative. With no time to build internal capacity, to choose appropriate joined-up venues, or to think about the practice they adopted, civil servants applied what they knew and had seen: programme boards and information exchange. Indeed, when issues continued to be front-page news, civil servants remained in a reactive rather than a productive mode. Information sharing rather than information synthesis became the sole goal.

This ‘urgent’ and reactive’ context was the backdrop for some, but not all, of the poor and average performing initiatives, including Realising Youth Potential, Mission-on, Every Child Matters Programme Board, the Young People and Drugs Programme Board, Respect Team, and England’s Alcohol Harm Reduction Officials Group. Those average performing initiatives which did not take place in a particularly ‘urgent’ or ‘reactive’ environment, such as the HO-DfES Board, the MED-MYD Entrepreneurship Group, the DH-DfES Board and the MSD Youth Network, focused on internal conflicts over external problems.

Civil servants in high performing initiatives worked on an issue that was externally important, but not extremely urgent. Youth offending and vulnerable young people were critical issues, but on the periphery of the national spotlight. The enquiry groups provided some insight into how pressurised, highly-urgent environments prevent civil servants from asking critical questions about the meaning behind their practice. Civil servants described going into ‘rote’ or ‘default’ mode and not being ‘open’ to new ways of doing things when the stakes were perceived as high. As one enquiry group member said, “The enquiry group opened my mind to alternative ways to run meetings…I actually got everyone participating in a balanced way, and people had smiles on their faces, even though we had a lot to do and prove” (Field Notes, 19 September 2007).
demonstrated it was possible to take a more considered approach to joining-up even in the face of external demands and pressures.

Factors that were less significant. Although the twenty joined-up initiatives took place in two different countries and two different cultures, different cultural practices were not associated with performance. In Chapter Five, I described how participants of the Inter-Agency Suicide Prevention Committee began each meeting with a Maori prayer and how civil servants were more likely to personalise their idle chit-chat in terms of their families and personal lives. Yet neither high nor average performing initiatives regularly began with a prayer. Civil servants involved with Realising Youth Potential engaged in friendly banter prior to the meeting but did not bring that into the meeting. There was thus no recognisable pattern between these cultural traditions and the adapted routines underpinning high performing initiatives.

8.5.6: Towards a synthesis

Figure 8.8: The relationship between enabling factors and adapted routines
The individual, group, organisational, institutional and situational enabling factors presented here all interrelate. How an organisation prioritises a problem relates to the type and urgency of the problem; and how an organisation prioritises and resources a problem relates to the initial Terms of Reference. While the qualitative methods used in this thesis cannot help us pinpoint which factor preceded the other, or place factors within a hierarchy of importance, they can help us to understand how the package of factors enabled civil servants to adapt joined-up routines, and therefore to perform differently.

What was it about individual experience and stability; group audience, history of conflict and team dynamics; organisational prioritisation, resource and reputation; institutional role and ministerial servicing; and problem type and urgency that allowed civil servants in the dataset to carve out an interactive space, sequence meetings, discuss substance and build capacity?

I presented a very early model of these findings to civil servants at the end of each research placement. Seventy-five civil servants in England and New Zealand took part in joint analysis sessions where we collectively explored the interplay between enabling factors. New factors emerged from the dataset after sessions were held, and were fed back to civil servants for comment and critique. The enquiry group also served as a place for probing why particular factors, when grouped together, facilitated different practice. Following this first round of analysis, I re-read whole transcripts of civil servants engaged in high as compared to average performing initiatives to make further sense of the connections between enabling factors.

All of these sources reinforced the same premise. As a package, the enabling factors helped civil servants see beyond government, while still benefiting from government’s active support. Seeing outside government meant defining joined-up government in terms of people, not policies, protocols or processes. Benefiting from governmental support meant having just enough access to decision-making power to turn policies, protocols and processes into
tools for people. People included end service users (e.g. vulnerable young people), service deliverers (e.g. youth offending teams) and the wider community. In the high performing initiatives, the political and administrative core such as ministers, chief executives, and managers were responsive to people, allowing civil servants to build on their service delivery experience and focus on a common audience.

How exactly did the enabling factors function in this way? The two individual enabling factors – experience and stability – offered civil servants critical perspective and external exposure to service providers and service users; to different collaborative approaches and methods; and to each other’s personalities, histories, and skills. Exposure to different practice, and to each other’s practice, seemed to provide civil servants with a broader range of options for convening, sequencing, sharing, and building capacity in joined-up settings. Civil servants could adapt routines because they knew of, and had experienced other ways of joining-up.

The three group enablers – audience, conflict, and group dynamic – cultivated a cohesiveness which appeared crucial for moving beyond information sharing to robust debate, negotiation, and information synthesis. Although civil servants reported to separate agencies, they joined-up for, and around the same population groups. Rather than just share a common reference point, civil servants co-constructed a new set of policy options; and in the process, reconciled different agencies’ philosophies, approaches, and resources. In other words, despite strong formal vertical accountability, civil servants experienced informal horizontal accountability. In an environment where civil servants felt responsible to a common external audience, disagreement and friction prompted reflection rather than retreat: conflict became a reason to invest in capacity-building and to rethink the spaces for, and the sequence and substance of conversations.

The three organisational factors – prioritisation, management structure, and lead agency reputation – provided legitimacy and support. Because of their agency’s commitment to the joined-up initiative, civil servants were able to devote
time and energy to planning meeting sequences, setting up critical conversations, and building joined-up capacity. Perhaps most importantly, they could sign up to doing new joint work, rather than just providing feedback about existing work. With a competent agency experienced in partnership working at the helm, civil servants found that there were fewer bureaucratic distractions and more room to address how best to meet the needs of the external audience they shared.

The two institutional factors – ministerial servicing and civil servant role – functioned in much the same way as the organisational factors: they served to minimise the resources that civil servants spent servicing separate internal clients which helped to maximise the time they could focus on a shared external audience. At the same time, the political and administrative core – ministers, central agency staff, etc. – remained engaged and ready to intervene when needed. This meant that rather than prepare set-piece meetings or concentrate on internal facing work, civil servants could devise their own meeting sequences and engage in external facing work; choosing when and how to most constructively interface with officials. Because the civil servant role was not perceived as antithetical to creativity, civil servants in high performing initiatives could legitimately co-produce policy and devise new ideas to share with ministers; rather than wait for ministers to assign tasks that signaled their own direction.

Finally, the two situational factors – problem type and urgency – allowed civil servants to focus on the problem and not expend excessive resources dealing with political or advocacy group concerns. Although managing external concerns inhibited critical and creative conversations, the absence of political and advocacy group engagement provided civil servants with little leverage to actualise critical and creative conversations.

Section 8.6: What can we learn from cross-national comparisons?

If both the high performing and low performing initiatives took place in New Zealand, what is the relationship between enabling factors and country? Could
the high performing initiatives have taken place in England? From the comparative data highlighted over the preceding pages, the answer appears to be ‘yes’, with some caveats.

The variation in joined-up performances in New Zealand suggests that enabling factors are not embedded within a single country context. They came about at a particular time and place, with particular ministers, managers and civil servants, and were not ‘part and parcel’ to the New Zealand public management system. Indeed, many of the enabling factors were also present in England. For example, the CAMHS Team had an effortless team dynamic and the Every Child Matters Programme Board benefited from strong, persistent ministerial interest. However, there was one institutional enabling factor which was largely absent from the England dataset: the creative civil servant role. Only a handful of English civil servants described their role in terms of creative development; most saw their role in terms of consistent implementation, which meant delivering on already named priorities and work programmes. Although implementation might require setting up new processes and procedures, or even brainstorming new framing devices, rarely was it about initiating new areas of work. New policy ideas tended to be set by ministers, rather than introduced by civil servants and negotiated with ministers. Thus, tasks came from the top down, with very few flowing from the middle up. Of course, such a finding may simply reflect the time period in which fieldwork occurred, rather than a core behaviour of the English civil service.

Other enabling factors which appeared less frequently in the English dataset were: individual experience, group audience, and ad-hoc ministerial servicing. English civil servants working in youth policy were much more likely to have followed the career civil servant path than the youth professional path. Except for one participant with a background in the voluntary sector, all other members of England’s Young People and Drugs Programme Board were lifelong civil servants.
Joined-up initiatives in England were also more likely to be set up around a broad issue area than a common audience. The CAMHS Team was the only case study in England’s dataset with a definable group of young people (e.g. young people with a mental health diagnosis), though that population remained theoretical, without names, faces or stories. Perhaps England’s larger country size made it more difficult to delineate and describe a particular population group, as was possible in New Zealand with the High and Complex Needs Unit.

Finally, ministers in England were more likely to engage with civil servants in set-piece meetings, rather than on an as-needed basis. The two bridging performances, the Children and Young People’s Steering Group and the DH-DfES board, were exceptions.

While none of the ten joined-up examples from England benefited from the full package of enabling factors, the history of the three high performing initiatives tells us enabling factors can shift, and be shaped by civil servants. For example, it is possible to promote and build upon civil servants’ personal experiences when establishing joined-up teams; to define the joined-up brief around a core audience; and to move towards loose accountability for joined-up initiatives, while retaining the traditional top-down accountability framework for all single-agency initiatives. It is even possible to promote a more creative civil servant role for those engaged in joined-up initiatives, and still protect the default role outside those settings. This is what seemed to happen in New Zealand. Civil servants and ministers involved in the high performing initiatives understood that what unfolded in a joined-up initiative was a different template for action than what they followed when not joining-up. They could transition between different ways of working.

Section 8.7: What can we learn from the enquiry groups?

The enquiry groups further illustrate that it is possible to enable different joined-up working without radically redesigning existing public management systems. Most civil servants noted that vertical accountability was a critical tenet
of high functioning, transparent government. Indeed enquiry group participants were clear that joined-up practice was only one part of their overall practice, and sought to bring about more 'exceptions to the norm’ rather than a fundamental change to the norm. Participants found that they could do this by influencing individual, group, organisational, and institutional factors, and even leveraging off situational factors. Although situational factors had much to do with timing and chance, civil servants could spot emerging issues and trends, and work to gain the backing of ministers and managers. Such was the case with New Zealand’s MED-MYD partnership, where civil servants identified youth entrepreneurship as an up-and-coming issue that could address the urgency surrounding youth unemployment without being subsumed by its politics. The enquiry groups became a space for civil servants away from their meetings, research, writing and ministerial briefings to (re)consider their joined-up approach.

Enquiry groups convened every three to four weeks. The first enquiry group meeting was spent mapping current and prior joined-up experiences. The three English and ten New Zealand participants drew large, colourful maps and worked in teams to identify the factors at play, using prompt cards and critical questions. Between the first and second enquiry group meetings, participants were asked to jot down personal observations of all joined-up meetings and interactions. At the second enquiry group, participants developed a personal learning goal. Learning goals fell into two categories: those concerned with reviewing and revising existing practice, and those interested in initiating new practice. For each goal, participants worked in small groups to identify what successful joined-up practice would look like; to determine what they could do; and what they needed others to do to ensure success. In other words, participants worked to devise their own ‘theory-in-action’.  

An example of how a ‘theory-in-action’ was compiled in these enquiry

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2 See Appendix F for examples of questions and prompts.
3 See Appendix D for a listing of participants’ learning goals.
groups is the following: one civil servant wanted to devise guidance for youth service professionals that showcased integrated thinking, not simply thinking done by one agency and signed off by multiple agencies. She decided she could work with her minister to write an invitation for a new joined-up group, specifying the common audience (a particular group of practitioners), and have a conversation with her manager about how the group could be best supported and to whom it would be accountable. She could also send out some guidance to civil servants before the meeting addressing logistics, so that the meeting could be spent on content and not updates. Although she did not have any on-the-ground professional experience, she could arrange a visit with youth service professionals where she might learn other ways of structuring meetings and conversations.

The thirteen other enquiry group participants drafted similar ‘theories-in-action’ or ‘hunches’ about how they might do things differently, and we combined them into a single diagram. At the final enquiry groups, participants reviewed the actions they had taken, responses to those actions, and explored further steps to be taken. Figure 8.9 displays the New Zealand enquiry group participants’ compiled ‘theory-in-action’.

Figure 8.9: New Zealand Enquiry Group ‘Theory-in-Action’
Given the time, energy and resources required by civil servants to adapt routines, enquiry group participants wanted to know when to invest in joined-up practice. When would the benefits exceed the costs? Identifying civil servants’ readiness to change, and the likelihood of shifting enabling factors, would make a compelling topic for future research. This research only tells us is that it is possible to shift enabling factors, and that certain enabling factors clustered with the high performing joined-up case studies in this dataset.

Section 8.8: How does this analysis compare to the literature?

This research was designed to build and complement rather than test theory. The categories and interrelationships presented in this chapter come from within the dataset, and have been informed by the literature on organisational routines and public management reform. Using a coding schema devised from both the data and literature, I have been able to identify the joined-up practice which underpins high joined-up performance, and the factors which seemed to enable that different practice.

Eugene Bardach and Chris Huxham are the two authors whose research on joined-up performance most parallels my own. In Chapter Seven, I noted that Bardach and Huxham were the only authors in the reviewed literature to define performance in terms of quality. For Huxham, high performing joined-up initiatives are those which achieve something that participating organisations could not have achieved on their own; while for Bardach, high performing joined-up initiatives are those whose activities increase public value. I also noted that neither Huxham nor Bardach measured whether joint initiatives actually achieved collaborative advantage or increased public value. Instead, both assessed whether joint initiatives adopted the ‘successful processes’ and ‘smart practices’ which they believe underlie collaborative advantage and increased public value. Successful processes include ‘building trust’; and smart practices include ‘increased self-awareness’ (Bardach, 1998, p.203) and ‘managing risk’ (Huxham and Vangen, 2005,
Bardach and Huxham’s explanatory logic differs from the explanatory logic I have used in this thesis, as diagrammed in Figure 8.10. Rather than use quality outputs or outcomes as the performative reference point, the two authors use ‘best’ or ‘smart’ practice without connecting that practice to outputs or outcomes. This runs counter to the findings of this thesis.

Figure 8.10: Explanatory logic in this thesis

- **Enablers**: Individual, Group, Organisational, Institutional, Situational Factors
- **Practice**: Adapted Routines
- **Outputs**: High Quality, Big Picture Logic

Figure 8.11 Bardach and Huxham’s Explanatory Logic

- **Enablers**: Smart or Best Practices
- **Practice**: Successful Processes
- **Outputs**: ?

What differentiated high performing from low performing initiatives was not just a particular practice, but the match between practice and intent. Indeed, intentionality was critical to high performance. Civil servants planned the sequence of meetings and interactions; they did not simply update the prior agenda and project timeline. Civil servants chose the space for meetings and interactions: they did not use just any available venue. Civil servants organised conversations around critical, sometimes uncomfortable questions: they did not just automatically allocate time for updates. Civil servants invested in collaborative capacity-building: they did not always continue with business as usual. Reflection,
the asking of questions, the use of idea generating tools like Post-it notes, and flexible sequencing were routines that were both constantly adapted, and associated with high quality, big picture outputs.

It seems that variation in routines is critical to consistently quality outputs. Feldman and Pentland (2003) believe that variation comes from endogenous and exogenous change. Whereas endogenous change relates to the individual and group enabling factors introduced earlier in the chapter, exogenous change relates to the situational, institutional, and organisational enabling factors. Stated differently, endogenous change emanates from civil servants (e.g. trial and error) and exogenous change emanates from external sources (e.g. chance events) but can be shaped by civil servants.

For changes in routines to be useful there must be a selection process: a way to gauge the comparative advantage of one set of routines over another. This thesis has presented one set of selection criteria for gauging comparative advantage: output quality. Output quality means looking at the depth of thinking and action to emerge from joining-up. While I link output quality to a specific set of adapted routines, these routines might not always lead to better output quality. Therefore, more important than codifying a set of routines is specifying what constitutes output quality. Once we know what quality output looks like, we can compare new and emergent practices. None of the existing literature accounts for the introduction of new practice, in part, because most of this literature remains at a thematic rather than day-to-day practice level. Should civil servants innovate and develop new kinds of practice, there would be no ready way to assess its value. Rather than see the enabling factors in this chapter as a template or checklist, I argue we should understand when and how they enabled civil servants to produce high quality joined-up products. We should promote purposeful practice, rather than fidelity to preset practice.
Chapter Nine: Conclusions

This chapter presents readers with a few final thoughts on joined-up practice in England and New Zealand, including a summary of findings, oversights, limitations, and implications.

Section 9.1: Short summary

Readers who have reached this point most likely want to know the thesis of the thesis. This thesis is about what joined-up government looks like in practice, and the quality of the outputs produced when civil servants join up. As I described in Chapter One, policymakers portray joined-up government as a tool for solving wicked social problems. Nearly a year of fieldwork led me to conclude that joined-up government infrequently shifted policy content. I have argued that shifting what civil servants do and the outputs they produce are necessary preconditions for social problem-solving. Unless joining-up leads to measurably different policy outputs, there is little reason to expect different services or different outcomes.

In the case studies where joined-up government led to different quality outputs – products that reflected richer thinking and bigger picture logic – civil servants practiced differently: they came together in ‘fit-for-purpose’ venues to ask questions, synthesise information, and co-design responses before setting agendas and distributing tasks. These civil servants had permission to act differently and experience in doing so. While they reported to separate internal clients (managers and ministers), they responded to a common external audience (practitioners and users). Situational, institutional, and organisational factors enabled these civil servants to look proactively towards that audience, rather than internally at the government bureaucracy. It is in Chapter Eight that these factors have been more fully described.
9.1.1: The questions

This thesis stems from dissatisfaction with our existing knowledge of joined-up government. As I argued in Chapter Two, much of the academic literature describes joining-up as either a static structure or a dynamic process. We are told that joining-up means participating in inter-agency boards, committees, groups, and network meetings (e.g. Ling, 2002 and Peters, 1998). To successfully join up, we must negotiate purpose, manage aims, acquire resources, build trust, and cultivate leadership (e.g. Mattessich, et al., 2001 and Wilson, et al., 1997). None of the literature I read explained what it looked like for civil servants to participate in boards or negotiate common purpose. The literature offered little guidance to civil servants ensconced in big government agencies about how to work in joined-up versus single-agency settings. Nor did it link what civil servants did in joined-up settings to the outputs they produced. To fill these knowledge gaps, I developed four research questions: (1) What does it look like for civil servants to join up? (2) Does joining-up change what civil servants do and the outputs they produce? (3) What factors enable civil servants to produce different outputs? and (4) What can cross-national comparisons between England and New Zealand tell us about how civil servants join up and to what effect? Chapter One details how I arrived at these questions and two countries.

9.1.2: The methods

What makes this research different from other studies is its immersive methodology. In Chapter Three, I noted that much of the existing literature overlooks practice because researchers have been removed from day-to-day activity. They have relied on secondary data analysis, interviews, focus groups, and workshops, but they have not been embedded in civil service contexts, observing how civil servants work inside and outside of joined-up settings. I took on the roles of observer, documenter, interviewer, and facilitator; and convened enquiry groups to learn how civil servants adapted joined-up practice in-context and in real-time. The aim was to craft theory with civil servants: to co-construct an
explanation for how civil servants in the dataset joined-up and to what end.

Theory construction required repeated interrogation of the dataset. The sequence of the chapters reflects the stages of the research and analysis process: Selecting joined-up case studies → describing joined-up civil servant practice → assessing case studies by the quality of the outputs civil servants produced → identifying what civil servant practice clustered with high performing case studies → naming the factors which enabled different practice and high performance.

Not surprisingly, this analytic sequence differed from even the most comparable research. As I explained in Chapters Seven and Eight, only three authors – Eugene Bardach, Chris Huxham, and Siv Vangen – define joined-up performance in terms of results achieved. Despite their interest in what joining-up leads to, these authors’ research favours process over outputs. For example, Huxham and Vangen (2005) begin by: Identifying themes in collaboration practice → selecting case studies to explain each theme → analysing case studies according to the processes and strategies used → developing tools to improve collaborative success. That means collaborative performance is measured in terms of processes and strategies rather than what those processes and strategies tangibly yield.

Table 9.1: Comparison of analytic structure of key literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>This Thesis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Identify joined-up themes and processes</td>
<td>(1) Select case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Select case studies</td>
<td>(2) Describe practice behind case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Analyse case studies</td>
<td>(3) Assess case studies by quality of outputs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Name tools, strategies, ‘best’ / ‘smart’ practices</td>
<td>(4) Link practice with output quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5) Identify factors which enabled different practice and high performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9.1.3: The results

In this thesis, successful joint initiatives were those which produced outputs reflective of multi-agency thinking and integrated analysis. Only three

1 Drawn primarily from Bardach, 1998; Huxham and Vangen, 2005.
of twenty case studies produced such high quality outputs. Most case studies yielded outputs more reflective of individual agency thinking and separate analysis. Since research question three asks what enables civil servants to produce different outputs, I concentrated on the examples which deviated from the joined-up norm: the high and low performing joined-up initiatives. Figure 9.1 summarises what I learned from the exceptions to the average performing norm.

**Figure 9.1: This thesis’ theory of joined-up change**

Intervention

Joining-up

Enablers

Individual experience, stability;
Group audience, dynamic, history;
Organisational prioritisation, resource, reputation;
Institutional role & ministerial servicing;
Situational problem type & urgency

Practice

Convening, sequencing, sharing and capacity-building

Outputs

High quality products with big picture logic

Figure 9.1 reads best right to left. Joint initiatives that produced high quality outputs -- outputs which displayed integrated thinking and analysis -- came about because civil servants deliberately adapted their routine. Civil servants considered meeting location, the layout of the room, and the tools and technologies available; they sequenced meetings and interactions around doing work, and distributed tasks to individuals after ideas had been jointly generated and content collectively agreed; they organised conversations around critical questions and areas of conflict rather than around updates or objective points of fact; and they allocated time to reflect and assess.

Civil servants were able to adopt these practices because of their background and their supports. They had experience working outside government on the frontline, and shared a common external audience. Organisational and institutional accountabilities were loose enough to enable them to focus on that audience, and not on internal procedures or power plays. The core policy problem
was also not so politicised as to pull civil servants’ attention back towards the
centre.

Was ‘country’ a determining factor in high performing joined-up initiatives? While the three high performing initiatives did take place in New Zealand, average performing initiatives were the norm there too. This tells us that the individual, group, organisational, institutional and situational factors which seemed to enable high performance were not inherent to New Zealand, and could co-exist within a more traditional public sector environment. Indeed, promoting high quality joined-up practice did not require overturning bureaucratic features such as strong vertical accountability: it just required explicit permission to work differently.

The value of the cross-national research methodology was not to directly compare New Zealand with England, but to understand what might have brought about variations in practice and performance within and between the two countries. There is very little published research on joined-up government in two or more countries. In fact, 6 (2004) is the only author I read to analyse, rather than just describe, joining-up in multiple western countries. He writes that, “The information available in the literature is scattered, collected on very different bases and for different purposes, and of varying quality” (p.118). This research thus adds to the scant literature base.

Section 9.2: Oversights
This thesis intentionally omits two questions relevant to a theory of joined-up practice and performance: (1) What are the conditions leading agencies and civil servants to join up? (2) What is the relationship between joined-up outputs and improved on-the-ground outcomes? Figure 9.2 displays the omissions.

I chose not to address the first question for two reasons: (1) the quantity of existing literature examining why organisations join up and (2) my research design. Chapter Two reviews the relevant existing literature. While some of the ‘start-up’ factors mentioned in the literature have been captured as performance enablers
(for example, problem urgency), I do not systematically explore how the decision to join up was made, or whether there were other problem-solving approaches on the table. Joint initiatives may have been set-up to enhance public legitimacy or rationalise a policy position, rather than to improve the coherence of the policy response. To determine the rationale behind joint initiatives, I would have needed a different sampling strategy, one which sought out the initiators of joint initiatives rather than its current participants. Instead, I took the reason for each joint initiative at face value: to address the social issues for which it was established. Future research might check this assumption, and probe the difference between ‘stated’ and ‘actual’ motivations for joining-up.

**Figure 9.2: The questions this thesis does not answer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Intervention</th>
<th>Enablers</th>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What led to the decision to join up?</td>
<td>Do high quality outputs improve services?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

I also chose not to explore the relationship between outputs and outcomes. I have looked at joined-up government from the perspective of mid-level civil servants within central government agencies, and not from the perspective of a young person shuttling between health, education, and employment services. This means that the research cannot tell us if joined-up government at a central government level improves youth services and youth outcomes; nor can it tell us about the kind of practice that underpins joined-up initiatives with an on-the-ground impact.

What this research does tell us is that joined-up government at a central level can improve the quality of the policies produced. I began the thesis with the untested assumption that for joined-up government to solve wicked youth policy problems, it would need to change what civil servants did, what they produced,
and therefore the policy environments within which service providers and service users operated. This assumption deserves further study and research. Perhaps joined-up policy has little effect on services and outcomes? Or perhaps service providers join up without joined-up policy?

My focus on outputs and outcomes left little room to consider the unintended consequences of joining-up. Joining-up might have had limited external impact, but it could have re-energised civil servants and improved the quality of their non-joined-up work. Do these secondary gains warrant the resources required to join up, and how might we measure them? Both are interesting questions for future research.

Section 9.3: Limitations

Studying how people join up in-context and in real-time is complex: actions, events, and interpretations are in constant motion. This thesis captures nearly a year of joining-up in England and New Zealand’s youth policy space; yet that context became out-of-date the moment fieldwork ended. The practice I have described, and the conclusions I have drawn, were relevant within that discrete time period, and might not hold true now. Some of the joint initiatives will no longer exist; many new initiatives will have come into being; and the practice within all of these initiatives will have shifted in response to emergent situational, institutional, organisational, group and individual factors. It is likely that some of the initiatives classified here as average performing may have moved into the high performing category; and that some of the high performing initiatives may have fallen into the average and low performing categories.

Practice, performance, and the factors which enable both are fluid. Future research might take a longitudinal approach, and determine whether there are certain enabling factors which ensure consistently different practice and consistently high quality outputs. Future research might also change the policy domain under study to determine whether the enabling factors are specific to the
youth policy space.

Focusing on the youth policy space was one way to limit the scope of study. Studies with too wide a scope of study risk incomplete analysis. While I set bounds on this study to try and enable robust interrogation of the dataset, the high volume of data could have compromised its analytic rigour. To manage the high volume of data, I adopted Ritchie and Lewis’ (2003) modified grounded theory approach and crafted an initial coding framework using ten transcripts from each country. Doing so might have too quickly winnowed the dataset.

Qualitative software packages, like MAXQDA, can also narrow the dataset too quickly. Although I used MAXQDA as a first step, and re-read transcripts to further explore patterns and anomalies, the quantity of data precluded re-visiting every transcript in the dataset and fully critiquing the initial coding framework.

My third research question further narrowed the dataset. Indeed, the third research question asks what factors enabled civil servants to produce different quality outputs. That meant I spent more time exploring similarities amongst the high performing case studies than exploring variation between the more frequently occurring average performing case studies. Were I to repeat the research, I would include fewer case studies to ensure that all are fully deconstructed, and relevant data is not inadvertently discarded.

Future research studies might also more systematically document the data deconstruction and reconstruction process, highlighting which data was used and how the researcher arrived at particular conclusions. One risk of immersive, in-context research is that the researcher loses perspective and incompletely challenges what he or she hears and observes. A critic could charge that collaborative enquiry groups exacerbate this loss of perspective – by blurring the boundary between observation and intervention. I tried to offset the risks by using the collaborative enquiry groups to ask questions rather than make recommendations. Were I to conduct this research again, I would fully transcribe each enquiry group, and where possible, include a non-participant observer to help
triangulate findings and garner greater self-reflexivity. Despite the methodological challenges of collaborative enquiry groups, they offer researchers a valuable and unique form of data: insight into how people make sense of and plan behaviours. Such insight is critical for any study about civil servant practice.

Finally, studies of joined-up practice would benefit from a more thorough examination of single-agency practice. While I looked at whether outputs emerging from joint initiatives diverged from single-agency work sequences and reflected joined-up thinking and analysis, I could have better evidenced single-agency work sequences and products. My understanding of single-agency work processes and products arrived from an immersion in each country’s civil service. Future studies should: (1) openly share these observations with the reader and (2) apply the quality benchmark used in this thesis – bigger picture logic and integrated analysis – to single-agency work products in order to differentiate the relationship between intra-agency and inter-agency joining-up.

Section 9.4: Implications

In spite of its oversights and limitations, this thesis adds to our understanding of joined-up government. I found that joined-up government did not often change the substance of governmental outputs. Civil servants met frequently with colleagues from other agencies; yet those meetings were not prompting different, multi-dimensional thinking or analysis. In Chapter Seven, I suggested that we should not be satisfied with joint initiatives that improve relationships or meet basic expectations if they only yield one-dimensional outputs that civil servants could have produced in their own agencies, by cutting and pasting sections of existing documents together.

Calls for joined-up government continue to fill the recommendation sections of policy documents and evaluation reports; yet with little mention of how to set-up joint initiatives such that they produce high quality outputs with the potential for on-the-ground impact. Civil servants then implement these
recommendations by emulating the joined-up practice they have seen before. Academic research could not only address these ‘how to’ questions, but could better collect and disseminate accounts of joint initiatives so as to increase civil servants’ exposure to different ways of joint working. Below, I outline what else academics, policymakers, and civil servants might draw from the research.

9.4.1: For academics

This thesis illustrates that there is value in documenting joined-up practice, as distinct from joined-up processes, as well as value in linking joined-up practice with joined-up performance. There is little precedence for either in the literature. While a growing number of authors (Bardach, 1998 and 2001; Gray 1989; Huxham and Vangen, 2005; Linden 2001; Page, 2005; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002) argue for a less structural and a more dynamic account of joining-up, much of the analysis still remains conceptual rather than behavioural. None of this literature reports on the relationship between joined-up behaviours and joined-up outputs.

For example, Sullivan and Skelcher write in their book, *Working Across Boundaries* (2002) that, “Leadership needs to be exercised through the employment of personal skills such as persuasion, through the application of processes and activities that nurture and facilitate cooperation between individuals and organisations, and through the use of personal authority to access necessary resources to contribute to the collaborative venture” (p. 104). In

### Table 9.2: Future research questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>About conditions</th>
<th>What leads to the decision to join up?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How do these reasons shape joined-up practice and performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About impact</td>
<td>What is the relationship between high quality outputs, high quality services, and user outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are there unintended consequences of joining-up? In the absence of quality outputs, do these unintended consequences warrant joining-up?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How might we systematise the measurement of quality outputs? What would a measurement tool look like for single-agency versus joined-up work products?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About costs</td>
<td>When do the costs of producing high quality outputs exceed the benefits of such outputs? When is average performance good enough?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When should civil servants not join up? When should civil servants stop joining-up?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
subsequent chapters the authors offer up examples, but they never quite describe how leadership unfolds in-context or what outputs leadership leads to; in other words, they do not capture the specific behaviours and routines that come to be known as leadership.

Similarly, though Linden (2002), whose book is as pragmatic as the practitioners he writes for, provides many case studies and anecdotes, he uses these stories to evidence broad themes (i.e. informal relationships) rather than to construct themes from behaviours and routines (i.e. calling participants prior to a meeting).

Although there are authors who move beyond describing broad themes to evaluating joined-up initiatives, they have measured success in terms of joined-up processes, rather than the quality of the outputs that those joined-up processes produce. A 2008 issue of *Public Management Review* looks at how to evaluate joined-up initiatives and networks. The contributing authors suggest a range of frameworks and potential evaluative variables, but do not mention output quality (Mandell and Keast, 2008; Skelcher and Sullivan, 2008; Voets *et al.*, 2008). This study therefore adds another important variable to the nascent discussion on how to evaluate joining-up.

The tendency to focus on generalisable processes and themes, rather than on contextualised behaviours and outputs, seems to coincide with the search for an all-inclusive theory of collaboration. Current collaborative theory tends to adopt a ‘macro’ vantage point, opting for wide applicability over contextual specificity. In contrast, this thesis has embraced ‘micro’ over ‘macro’ theory, searching for what Argyris and Schön (1978) have termed ‘theories-in-action’. Theories-in-action start with practice – with behaviours and routines – and end by looking at how behaviours and routines interplay in particular contexts. They are designed to be a reflective tool as much as an explanatory one; they help people to understand what they are doing, why, and the consequences of their actions.

Co-creating theories-in-action with civil servants may prove to be one
of the most important aspect of this research. Like the well known Hawthorne experiments of the 1930s, just the act of engaging in the research – taking part in the enquiry groups, observations and debrief interviews – seemed to spark some change for civil servants. That change was in terms of greater reflexivity, rather than productivity, as was the case in the Hawthorne studies. The fourteen civil servants who participated in the enquiry groups found that having a defined space for reflection heightened their intentionality. During the enquiry group, civil servants talked about joining-up shifting from being ‘just another thing I do’ to ‘something I can help to shape’. Enquiry groups demonstrated that joined-up practice could be shaped, but allowed civil servants to figure out how best to do that shaping. Watching civil servants shape their routines in real-time illustrated the relationship between practice and performance in a way that retrospective interviews and focus groups could not. Despite the previously stated limitations of collaborative enquiry groups, it is hoped that this study de-mystifies action research and helps academics creatively and critically curate spaces for data collection.

9.4.2: For policymakers

This research confirms that joined-up structures are insufficient conditions for high performing joined-up practice. Yet policymakers continue to prescribe joined-up structures as the remedy to complex social problems. While structures tell civil servants who reports to whom, how tasks are to be distributed and where accountability lies, they offer little clarity on what civil servants should report on, the content of the tasks to be distributed, or the best forms of accountability.

Structures are not creative. They come with a template for action, and a standard operating procedure which serves to define the committee, the board, the group, the unit, the team, etc. Structure and practice become inseparable. The board becomes a set of people who meet regularly to give updates, hear a formal presentation, and update a risk matrix. Civil servants engaged in high performing initiatives in the dataset decoupled structure from practice, resetting what
happened in the boardroom and across the board table.

Policymakers can help by not dictating structures and therefore not solidifying existing routine. Rather than announce a ‘new inter-agency committee’ to address the issue *du jour*, it would be more beneficial for policymakers to announce that they are setting an inter-agency brief: this would specify who the inter-agency work is to benefit; allow civil servants to create the structures and routines best suited to meeting that brief; and contain ground rules and expectations rather than a preset accountability process. At the same time, policymakers could highlight explicit selection criteria for choosing between the diversity of new routines likely to emerge by contrasting high quality joined-up work with single-agency work. The policymaker’s role would be to set the benchmarks from which civil servants work.

9.4.3: For civil servants

For civil servants ensconced in their cubicles inside large government agencies, this thesis might spark reflection and conversation. Rather than view the adapted routines and enabling factors as a checklist, civil servants might instead focus on the theory of change, or the order of this thesis. That theory of change starts from back to front: from determining the quality of the outputs produced, to naming the practices that led to the creation of those quality outputs, to pinpointing the factors that enabled those practices. Adopting this kind of sequential thinking would be far more useful than adopting any one of the practices highlighted. There are a range of concrete practices that seemed to facilitate joined-up thinking and doing, and not just joined-up meeting. For instance, civil servants could construct agendas with a meeting purpose at the top; order meetings around key questions rather than updates; and vary meeting lengths and spatial layout. However, even if civil servants did all of these things, they still might not produce high quality work. This research helps civil servants recognise that quality work comes about not by subscribing to a preset ‘how to’ guide, but by defining quality work in relation to a common audience, sharing
ideas over procedures, and making time to reassess their own practices. Best practice is not a substitute for intentional practice.

Section 9.5: Final thoughts

Regardless of its intellectual value, this thesis has been of personal value. Over the past five years, I have learned how to write, critically read, analyse, and synthesise. Most of all, I have learned that what questions we ask shape the things we look for, listen to, and think about. What if I had framed joined-up government as an innovation tool, rather than as a public sector reform tool? What if, instead of seeing joining-up as a way to make the public sector work better, I had conceptualised joining-up as a stimulant for changing what the public sector does? Such a framework would have yielded a very different research study.

My interest in joined-up government initially led me to the inter-organisational relations literature, and later to the public management literature. It did not lead me to the innovation literature. Where the innovation literature focuses on how to continuously catalyse new processes and products, the public management literature emphasises mainstreaming new processes and products. Innovation elicits ideas. Management elicits procedure. The big question is how the public sector can balance ideas with procedure so that civil servants can work better together to improve outputs and social outcomes.
References

External sources

**Government Documents and Reports**


**Books and Articles**


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### References

#### Extant texts

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<th>Title</th>
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<td>Drug treatment workforce agenda</td>
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<td>Interview</td>
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<td>Children, Young People, and Families Directorate update</td>
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SM15 Observations Young People and Drugs Programme Board
Away Day
SM18 Observations Youth Matters Programme Board Agenda and Notes
T1 Tools Young People and Drugs Strategy Workshop Materials
T2 Tools Knowledge Sharing Questionnaire
T3 Tools Cross-Government Briefing Document
B1 Background Reading Text for Youth Matters webpage
B2 Background Reading Targeted Youth Support Design Review
B3 Background Reading Ten-Year Youth Strategy
B4 Background Reading Measuring improvement in outcomes
B7 Background Reading Provision of positive activities summary paper
B8 Background Reading Young People and Drugs Target Checklist
B9 Background Reading Social Exclusion Action Plan Emails
B10 Background Reading Tony Blair Social Exclusion Speech
B12 Background Reading PMDU Design Review of Targeted Youth Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Zealand</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Ministry of Youth Development Quality Assurance Checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>High and Complex Needs Unit Guidance Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Inter-agency Funding Mechanisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Education Management Policy Business Plan 2007-08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Mission-on Performance Agreement and Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T7</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>MYD Policy Team Performance Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>MYD Tool: checklist for youth friendly policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>MYD Project Design Template</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T11</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Consultation on Cabinet and Cabinet Committee Submissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T12</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>State Services Commission Guidelines for Co-ordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T13</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Interdepartmental Ministerial Interest Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>T14</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector Partnerships Checklist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T15</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Funding For Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T16</td>
<td>Tools</td>
<td>Ministry of Social Development Performance Management</td>
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<td>C1</td>
<td>Central Agency</td>
<td>Performance through Outcomes Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Central Agency</td>
<td>Managing For Outcomes: Guidance Document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Central Agency</td>
<td>Getting Better at Managing for Shared Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Central Agency</td>
<td>Public Service Induction: What it means to be a Public Servant</td>
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<tr>
<td>AG5</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Youth Transition Services Agendas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG6</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Terms of Reference and Agenda: Inter-Agency Committee on Drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG7</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Inter-agency Steering Group on Healthy Eating and Healthy Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG8</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>MED-MYD Meeting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A

Youth portfolio areas

**England**

Alcohol and Substance Misuse  
Mental Health  
Antisocial Behaviour  
Youth Justice  
Looked After Children  
Teenage Pregnancy  
Educational Disengagement  
Youth Unemployment  
Healthy Eating and Exercise  
Positive Activities and Participation  
Targeted Youth Services  
Integrated Youth Services

**New Zealand**

Alcohol and Substance Misuse  
Access to Higher Education  
Educational Disengagement  
Youth Justice  
Looked After Children; Children with Multiple Needs  
Youth Unemployment  
Ethnic Inequality  
Youth Self-Harm and Suicide  
Youth Entrepreneurship  
Healthy Eating and Exercise  
Positive Activities and Participation  
Targeted Youth Services
# Appendix B

## Semi-structured interview schedule

**I'd like to start by just getting to learn more about what you do...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your role? What is your unit's role? What is your agency’s role?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you know when you have succeeded? When your unit has succeeded?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you work for? Who do you serve?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you work with outside of this department?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let's explore each relationship you mentioned above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you do on a day to day basis? What's an average day? What's an abnormal day?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who do you work with, outside of this department?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw concentric circles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draw bubbles external to circle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let's explore this joint working as collaboration? How would you define collaboration? (versus communication, coordination, cooperation, and consolidation, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you classify this joint working as collaboration? How do you know it is worth your time? What do you judge success by?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tell me about your experiences with joined-up working. What has been your best experience? What has been your worst experience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now's let's explore your best joined-up experience:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who initiated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the purpose of the joint initiative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the structure? Who led? How many people? What was the frequency of your meetings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were the dynamics between members? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you do? How did you divide the workload?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How was information shared/communicated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How were decisions made? What decisions were made?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the outputs of your joined-up efforts? How do you assess their quality?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the outcomes from the joined-up efforts? How do you know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now's let's explore your worst joined-up experience:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who initiated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the purpose of the joint initiative?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were the dynamics between members? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were the outcomes from the joined-up efforts? How do you know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was the structure? Who led? How many people? What was the frequency of your meetings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were the dynamics between members? Why?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What did you do? How did you divide the workload?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How was information shared/communicated?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How were decisions made? What decisions were made?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the outputs of your joined-up efforts? How do you assess their quality?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the outcomes from the joined-up efforts? How do you know?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What differentiates a good joined-up experience from a bad joined-up experience? And what differentiates a joined-up experience from a ‘normal’ single-agency experience?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s different about the structures?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s different about the people?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s different about the way in which work is done?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s different about the thinking?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s different about the outputs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When would you say joining-up has value? Can joining-up be valuable without being effective? What’s the difference?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much is joining-up valued within the civil service? What kind of incentives exist (if any) to join-up with other agencies?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kind of outputs and outcomes can you expect joining-up to produce?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How might you measure the day-to-day value of joining-up? What’s different from what you normally do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How, if at all, would your job look different if you were engaged in more joint work? What would change about the way you do your work? What would be the tangible outputs?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has to be in place in order for joining-up to be valuable, as defined above?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the barriers preventing valuable joining-up from taking place?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is engaging in joined-up government always best practice? In other words, is joining-up always a good thing? In what situations is it inappropriate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does joined-up practice look different when young people are the focus, as opposed to an issue or geographical region?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there a different set of challenges? A different set of opportunities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is joining-up any more important when young people are the policy focus?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let’s talk about the content of the joint initiative for a moment…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much do you adopt a population-based focus to your work?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you define the population of young people? How do you think about young people?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the youth outcomes you are working towards?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How much consensus exists around those outcomes?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What relationship do you see between what you do and the outcomes you are ultimately working towards?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you think you could improve your own joined-up practice? What do you need to do more of or less of?</td>
<td>So What Question?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there anything else you want to add?

Thanks for your time. One last thing: I am trying to hear from as many people as I can about their joined-up work for and around young people. Can you recommend one or two people with whom you think I should speak?

1) 

2) 

3)
Your Unit/Group

other units

Connections
(you initiated)

Connections
(they initiated)
Appendix C

Oral consent script

You are invited to participate in a research study about the ways in which civil servants from central government agencies work together to address youth issues. You will be asked to take part in a short interview or dialogue group.

There are no known risks associated with this interview or dialogue group.

Please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. Any quotations taken from our conversation will have all personal identifiers removed.

Our conversation will be digitally recorded and transcribed. The digital recordings are held on a secure, password-protected computer. The transcripts will not refer to you by name or position title, only by civil servant grade and agency.

I will provide you with my contact information if you have any questions for me about this study, or anything else. I will share the early findings from the study and hold an open analysis day at the end of the placement. I will email an invitation to you.

Do you agree to continue the interview or dialogue group?

Hand out business card to participants with the researcher’s contact information.
Appendix D

Enquiry group learning goals

Learning goals are the projects participants in enquiry groups selected to work on over the course of the enquiry groups. At each meeting, participants reflected on their learning goal, received constructive feedback from colleagues, and planned actions to test between action groups. The objective was to intentionally probe joined-up practice; to learn what civil servants construed as meaningful joined-up practice as well as what enabled (and constrained) that practice in real-time.

**England Enquiry Group Learning Goals**

*4 members*

*4 meetings over 3 month period*

- To learn how to make Targeted Youth Support truly collaborative, and to set up a project board that can facilitate collaboration.
- To improve our relationship with the Home Office and ensure our new policy paper helps both agencies.
- To integrate substance misuse into the Targeted Youth Support specification and project board.
- To learn how to bring the research we do into joined-up settings to inform decision making.

**New Zealand Enquiry Group Learning Goals**

*9 members*

*3 meetings over 2.5 month period*

- To successfully join with key agencies to ensure meaningful completion of the Pasifika youth project.
- To make the inter-sectoral justice initiatives group a successful/worthwhile and purposeful group.
- To consolidate relationships between officials and core group of Mayors Taskforce for Jobs.
- To bring people together and keep them on board and interested in my inter-agency meetings.
- To engage with the right people in other departments to progress development of the new youth suicide protocols.
- To get other civil servants excited and interested in the children’s employment programme.
- To learn how to best work with the justice sector to prioritize a reduction in Maori offending rates.
- To get more from my engagement in joined-up groups, like the Ministry of Youth Development Network.
Appendix E
Collaborative enquiry group invite

Dear all:
Thank you so much for your participation in my research project exploring inter-agency working around youth. I really appreciate your time thus far. I am writing because at one point you expressed an interest in taking part in an ongoing enquiry group looking at our everyday joined-up practice.

The enquiry group is designed to give us the space to talk about and work our way through current joined-up challenges and opportunities. We are always so busy that we often don’t have time to reflect on how we do things. Hopefully the enquiry group can facilitate critical reflection and learning.

Below, please find some additional information about the purpose and structure of the enquiry group. I think each of you would add a lot to the group and I would love you to take part. I am hoping to convene the first group in the first or second week of January.

How do enquiry groups work?
— Enquiry group meetings are held once a month and last 3 hours. However, the frequency and timing of meetings is negotiated at our first meeting.
— During the first meeting we will get to know each other, develop some guiding principles, and map out our current joined-up practice.
— Each of us comes up with a learning goal for improving our joined-up work.
— Meeting agendas are jointly set and each group member is given time to report on his/her own work and learning goals. We identify common themes and challenges, and troubleshoot when/where necessary.
— Everything said in the enquiry group is confidential.

What is the role of group members?
— To critically reflect on, question, and probe you and your organization’s joined-up practice.
— To bring your unique set of experiences and perspectives to meetings and challenge yourself to learn and grow.

What are the responsibilities of group members?
— To participate in meetings
— To critically reflect on your joined-up practice
— To identify an issue/area/challenge you’d like to learn more about
— To share your ongoing experiences and commit to working through the issue/area/challenge you’ve identified.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. I can be reached at XX. Thank you again for your interest in this process—I really hope it can be of value to us all.
Appendix F

Collaborative enquiry group meeting agendas

Meeting One
Meeting Two

**learning goal pack**

**the plan**
- Check-in & Distractions
- Learning Goal Inventory
- Share & Support
- Next...

**ask yourself**
use the index cards to delve deeper into your learning goal and identify the conditions for change: what are the pre-requisites for success?

**note to self**

- Are you trying to... solve a problem? collect an opportunity?

**getting there**

**perspective taking**

- My learning goal
- My role
- My big problem: what's the point?

- • planned conversations with colleagues • informal interview with supervisor • observation of meetings • completion and analysis of documents (reading, reports, for instance) • self-observation (self-evaluation style, for instance) • journal • read the literature • own ideas...
Meeting Three

collaborative inquiry group three

learning, growing, evolving?

Sarah Schulman  facilitator
February 10, 2007  Atlanta

it's all about process

learner needs

successive levels

behavioral indicators

1. Declarative knowledge
   - facts, details, information
   - learning all descriptive explanations
   - learning all declarative knowledge

2. Procedural knowledge
   - skills, how to do things
   - learning to perform
   - learning to do things
   - learning all procedural knowledge

3. Conceptual knowledge
   - knowledge of relationships, implications, consequences
   - learning to understand
   - learning to know
   - learning all conceptual knowledge

4. Experiential knowledge
   - knowledge of the world
   - learning to intuit, to know
   - learning all experiential knowledge

5. Meta-experiential knowledge
   - knowledge of the self
   - learning to experience
   - learning all meta-experiential knowledge

6. Strategic knowledge
   - knowledge of the learner
   - learning to develop
   - learning all strategic knowledge


cross-cutting 'process' strategy

effective meetings

[important?] variables

- Purpose
- Phase
- Stakeholders
- History
- Motivations

what next?

1. Set next benchmark
2. Identify areas of assistance
3. Come to final meeting with 10-minute written reflection on process learnings, emergent questions

Sarah's general principles?

- Start with a written statement of purpose
- Let the meeting purpose drive meeting structure and length
- Explicitly discuss what needs to happen in the meeting for it to be worth participants’ time and energy
- Set expectations and ground rules upfront
- Facilitate a common building experience
- Use multiple learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic)
- Have meetings with brief check-ins and group assessment
- Track progress overtime

explanatory maps
Meeting Four

Boiling it down:

- Learn from your learning goals

Wall of reflection:

- Observations
- Personal insights
- Questions/dilemmas

Conversation recommendations:

How could you be better supported in your collaborative working?
# Appendix G

## Contact summary form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Spatial Set-Up/Room Dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting #</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Purpose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actions / Behaviours / Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sequence of events (play by play)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Key issues / content areas addressed |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging Ideas</th>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Insights</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joining-up (how)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joining-up (how different)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value/meaning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outputs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Where are we at the end of the meeting that we were not at before?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ What happens next? Where does work happen?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix H

### Document summary sheet

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<tr>
<td>Document Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author/Publisher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where Found?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description**

**Significance or Importance of Document**

**Brief Summary of Contents**

**Relationship to other Documents**

**Relationship to other Interviews**

**Relationship to Group Inquiry Process**
Appendix I

Participant information sheet

Study Name and Contact Details
Improving Cross-Departmental Collaboration around Young People

Sarah Schulman
Lead Researcher / Doctoral Student
Department of Social Policy and Social Work
32 Wellington Square
Oxford, OX1 2ER
sarah.schulman@trin.ox.ac.uk / 44.07776.14483

Study Purpose
This is a study about the ways in which civil servants in central government agencies work together to formulate youth policy. The goals of the study are to (1) learn how civil servants join-up across agencies and (2) learn how civil servants can best work together to solve complex policy problems. To help meet these goals, the lead researcher will be holding in-person interviews and enquiry groups with staff, as well as observing inter-agency meetings.

Study Involvement
You were selected to participate in this research by colleagues from within the [Department for Education and Skills, DFES] or [Ministry of Youth Development, MYD]. Participation is voluntary and independent of the [DFES] or [MYD] or any other governmental agency with whom you interact. This research is supported by Oxford University and the Rhodes Trust.

As a participant in this study you may be asked to:
1. Complete up to a 2-hour interview with the lead researcher
2. Be observed in an inter-agency meeting
3. Take part in a collaborative enquiry group

Possible Risks
There are no risks associated with participation in this study.

Possible Benefits
There is no financial compensation for your participation in this study. The lead researcher will present early findings to you and your organization at the conclusion of field work.

Data Storage
All interviews, observations, and enquiry groups are confidential. You will be asked for information about your role and position within your organization, but you will not be identified by name or job title in any public documents resulting from this research. Your responses will be aggregated with those given by other participants—with the exception of direct quotes, none of which will include personal identifiers. All data will be kept on a secure password-protected and encrypted computer in accordance with the Data Protection Act of 1998.
This project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.
Appendix J

Initial coding structure

Initial Conceptual Framework

Role and Tasks: Civil servants gave their ‘official’ job title and then shared what it was they actually did on a day-to-day basis, including common versus uncommon tasks and the kinds of outputs they generated.

Client: Civil servants named their primary client. Some interviewees talked about their minister or political appointee boss as their primary client, while some saw government as their client, and others conceptualized the end-users as their core client. Several viewed ‘the policy issue’ and its stakeholder community as their client.

Action Points: Civil servants talked about their experiences with joined-up working. Each experience can be conceptualized as an action point: engaging in joined-up working; practising a particular kind of joint work (coordination versus collaboration; information sharing versus shared decision-making); deciding how to work together, including what joint structures and processes to set up and what tasks to assign. Action points were often influenced by the role the civil servant assumed in a particular situation. Sometimes interviewees were participants in joined-up projects, while at other times they were the key decision-makers who were assigning the tasks.

Conditions: Interviewees often identified the factors that contributed to joining-up. There seemed to be some change to the environment and/or within the mind of the interviewee (perhaps a change in leadership, a change in priorities, a change in resources, a change in how the decision-maker conceptualized the problem, etc.) that led to joining-up. These changes have been coded as conditions, and appear to fall into several categories: the individual layer, the group layer, the organizational layer, and/or the situational layer. For example, in one transcript, one interviewee said that he made a decision to collaborate because he finally had more time to after organizational priorities shifted. These conditions have been coded as ‘individual’ (time allocation) and as ‘organizational’ (priority shift).

Barriers: There were also a set of factors that had to be overcome for interviewees to take certain actions. These factors have been coded as barriers and categorized according to the same environmental layers highlighted above. For example, one interviewee talked about setting-up a cross-departmental committee, but this required the approval of multiple chief executives. This was coded as an institutional barrier since the factor lies outside the domain of any one agency.

‘What If’ Factors: Interviews gave interviewees space to reflect on the trajectory of a decision or action. Often, in retrospect, they named a factor which, had it been in place or removed, would have led to a different outcome. These factors need to be differentiated from those in existence at the time of the action point, but offer insight into how to shape future actions and decisions.

Expected Impact: A recurring theme in interviews was the intentionality required to carry out joined-up working. Decisions to join up were often made for a particular purpose. The expected impact or consequence contributed to how decisions were made or actions taken. These consequences have been coded under ‘expected impact’ and characterized as either positive or negative. For instance, if an interviewee made a decision to coordinate with a cross-departmental colleague so as to reduce duplication in the system, this ‘expected impact’ was labelled as positive because reducing duplication is seen as a ‘good thing.’

Actual Impact: If an action point yielded a favourable result, as perceived by the interviewee, it has been coded as a ‘positive impact’, while if it leads to an unfavourable result it has been coded as a ‘negative impact’. Many of the action points in the dataset are ‘ongoing’, meaning that they might not yet have led to anything. These points have been labelled as such.

Individual/Group Layer: Conditions, barriers, and impacts included in this layer are related to the individual’s personal experiences, beliefs, values, personality, and relationships.

Organizational Layer: Conditions, barriers, and impacts included in this layer are related to the individual’s organizational affiliation, including the agency’s structure, processes, and culture.

Institutional Layer: Conditions, barriers, and impacts included in this layer are related to the wider government context.

Situational Layer: Conditions, barriers, and impacts included in this layer are related to current events or ideas which put pressure on agencies and the political system. These events or ideas seem to amplify the urgency of decisions or change the contours of joined-up practice.
Appendix K

Full coding framework

**Interviewee Role**
*This code captures the role that each interviewee plays: are they a political official, senior advisor, policy manager, operations manager, mid-level policy analyst, mid-level operations analyst, frontline practitioner, etc.?*

- Frontline
- Mid-Level Operations
- Mid-Level Policy
- Operations Manager
- Policy Manager
- Coordinator
- Director
- Executive
- Advisor
- Politico

**Individual Tasks/ Business as usual**
*This code captures what the interviewee does on a day-to-day basis: what does their job entail; what types of tasks do they spend their time on?*

- Performance Management
- Administration/Secretariat
- Research
- Ministerial/politico advice
- Second opinion advice
- Budgetary decisions
- Human Resource Management
- Stakeholder Management
  - Intra-agency
  - Grant management
  - Inter-agency
- Strategy Development

**Interviewee Content Area**
*This code describes the primary policy focus of the civil servant interviewed.*

- Method/Process
- Issue
- Region
- Population
  - Children
  - Youth
  - Other

**Situational landscape**
*This code describes the background of the policy problem or issue that the interviewee addresses in his/her job.*

- Research and evidence
- Institutional design
- Policy feedback loops
- Demographic events
- Leadership /management events
Policy/Legislative events
Political events
Chance events

**Primary Client**
*This code captures answers to the interview question: Who do you predominantly serve?*

External
- Law
- Issue
- Population

Internal
- Minister/Politico
- Government
- Agency
- Inter-agency board
- Civil Servant Boss

**Motivators**
*This code describes who interviewees define 'good work' in terms of: is in terms of what their boss or another internal stakeholder thinks is good work or is it terms of the particular policy issue or population?*

External
- Population
- Issue

Internal
- Civil Servant Boss
- Agency
- Government
- Minister/Politico

**Definitions of Success**
*This code captures interviewee's notions of success and the benchmarks they use to figure out if they are doing good work.*

Lack of Definitions
- Idea focused
- Different logics

Individual focused
- Influence
- Convenience

Situational focused
- Problem solving
- New clients / protecting clients
- Evidence based
- Desired outcomes
- Incidence levels
- Policy passed
- External stakeholder engagement

Institutional focused
- Meeting deadlines
- Number of initiatives
- Attendance
Information quality  
Work environment  
Staff engagement  
Strategy set  
Perspective embedded  
Repeat business  
Political survival  
Political exit  
Hierarchical approval  
Lateral approval

**Organizational Role**  
*This code captures what interviewees say about their home organisation: the organisation’s role, structure, and history.*

**Unit Role**

**Organizational Fit**  
*This code captures what the interviewee says about the relationship between their organisational unit and the larger organisation.*

Tension Points  
Structural Changes  
Positively Perceived Implications  
Negatively Perceived Implications

**Organizational Perceptions**  
*This code captures how interviewee’s perceive their own and other governmental organisations; these perceptions may be broader than joining-up and about how the whole of the organisation functions.*

**Perception of Self**

Limitations  
Work process  
Role confusion  
Expertise/niche  
Size  
Small Player  
Big Player

**Perception of Other Agencies**

Population agencies  
Functional agencies  
Community Service  
Housing  
Sports  
Internal Affairs  
Labor  
Welfare/Social Services  
Justice  
Education  
Health  
Central agencies  
Executive  
Personnel
Definitions of Joined-Up Government
How civil servants describe the various ‘c’ words and if they differentiate between them.

Collaboration
NOT collaboration
Other words
Non-differentiated
Consolidation
Cooperation
Consultation
Coordination

Perceived Importance of Joined-Up Government
This code captures interviewee’s perceptions of the importance of JUG: is it mission critical to their organisation; does the importance depend on the policy issue or problem at hand; is it peripheral to their organisation, or is it completely irrelevant?
Irrelevant
Peripheral
Situational
Mission critical

Role of Competition
This code captures interviewee’s responses to questions on the role of competition, rather than joined-up government, in the public sector.

Perceived Value of JUG
This code captures what the interviewee sees as the value of joining-up, without specific reference to a case or example.
Because of resources
Because of outcomes
Because of products
Because of process
Because of relationships

Frequency of Joined-up Government
This code captures how often the interviewee engages in joint working.
Non-Specific JUG
Conditional
High
Low
Communication
High
Low
Coordination
High
Low
Collaboration
High
Low

When Not to Do Joined-up Government
This code captures interviewee’s thoughts of when not to seek out or participate in JUG, of any form.
Measuring Value of Joined-up Government

This code captures different ways interviewees measure the value of JUG: how do they determine if joining-up is worth their time? It includes any indicator, benchmark, or criterion interviewees’ use for measuring JUG.

Positive

External Change
Creating something new
Sustainability
Stakeholder engagement
Overcoming conflict
Meeting targets
Local government feedback
Stakeholder feedback
Citizen feedback
Finance flexibility

Internal Change
Relational
For individual civil servants
Between civil servants
Between agencies

Transactional
Absence of complaints
Legality
Cost
Hybrid processes
Deadlines
Response Speed
Meeting #
Consultancy requirements
Attendance/Usage
Ministerial feedback

Quality
Duplication
Speed/efficiency
Knowledge
Picking priorities
Perspective

Negative

Contextual
Willingness to participate

Uncertain
Process-Outcome Disconnect
Costs/Trade Offs:
This code captures the perceived costs and trade-offs associated with joining-up.
- Localized versus Distributed JUG
- JUG versus political accountability
- Unwieldy

Regular Joined-up Government players
This code captures which organisations interviewees regularly work with to do their job.
- Central agencies
- Delivery agencies
- Inter-agency, line
  - They come to us
  - We go to them
- Intra-agency, line
  - We go to them
  - They come to us

Wanted Joined-up Government Players
This code captures which organisations interviewees would like to work with to do their job.
- Intra-agency
- Inter-agency
- Central agencies

Mechanisms
This code captures the mechanisms used to join-up. These mechanisms may enable any form of joining-up, from communication to collaboration.
- Norms/Rhetoric
  - Lack of
- Place
  - Online
- Networks
  - Lack of
- Processes
  - Signposting
  - Lack of
- Performance
  - Individual
    - Lack of
    - Up to discretion of managers
    - Achieve goals
    - Getting work done
    - Performance agreements
- Organizational
  - Resource
  - CE Performance
  - Government themes
  - Performance agreements
- Lack of
- Structural
  - Quasi Organisations
  - Civil Service
Secondments
Standing groups
Bi-lateral
Ad hoc groups
Workshops
MOUs/Contracts
Project teams
Parallel structure
Lead agency
Lead Minister
Central agencies
Legislation
Ministerial meetings
CE meetings
Lack of
Resources
Interagency Agreements
Grants
Lack of

Mechanism Effectiveness
This code captures an interviewee’s general assessment of the effectiveness of a particular mechanism for JUG.

Networks
Depends
Negative
Positive
Norms
Positive
Negative
Place
Negative
Positive
Process
Positive
Negative
Performance
Depends
Positive
Negative
Structural
Depends
Negative
Positive

Case Study Players
This code captures who is engaged in the case study in question: civil servants from within the interviewee’s organisation, civil servants from other governmental departments, civil servants from central agencies.
Within agency
Between agencies
  Bi-lateral
  Multi-lateral
Central agencies

**Joined-Up Case Studies**

*This code captures all instances within the transcript where interviewees describe, in detail, an experience with joined-up government relevant to some aspect of their youth policy portfolio.*

Civil servant role

Not to engage in JUG
  - Instance 69
  - Instance 67
  - Instance 22

To initiate JUG (proactive)
  - Instance 132
  - Instance 129
  - Instance 128
  - Instance 127
  - Instance 117
  - Instance 110
  - Instance 111
  - Instance 112
  - Instance 101
  - Instance 103
  - Instance 100
  - Instance 99
  - Instance 98
  - Instance 97
  - Instance 81
  - Instance 80
  - Instance 78
  - Instance 77
  - Instance 73
  - Instance 63
  - Instance 46
  - Instance 45
  - Instance 35
  - Instance 26
  - Instance 25
  - Instance 19
  - Instance 16
  - Instance 11
  - Instance 8
  - Instance 7
  - Instance 3
  - Instance 2
  - Instance 1

To participate in JUG
Instance 134
Instance 135
Instance 130
Instance 126
Instance 125
Instance 124
Instance 120
Instance 119
Instance 118
Instance 116
Instance 115
Instance 114
Instance 105
Instance 107
Instance 109
Instance 102
Instance 96
Instance 95
Instance 94
Instance 87
Instance 88
Instance 90
Instance 91
Instance 86
Instance 85
Instance 84
Instance 83
Instance 82
Instance 75
Instance 74
Instance 72
Instance 71
Instance 70
Instance 68
Instance 66
Instance 61
Instance 59
Instance 58
Instance 56
Instance 54
Instance 53
Instance 52
Instance 51
Instance 50
Instance 47
Instance 44
Instance 42
Instance 40
To support JUG
How to organize JUG
Instance 33
Instance 32
Instance 30
Instance 27
Instance 24
Instance 4

Case Study Joined-up Government Type: interviewee
This code captures the type of JUG that each case study refers to as (and if) described by the interviewee. It may be communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration, consolidation, or a combination.
Not Defined
Consolidation
Collaboration
NOT collaboration
Coordination
Cooperation
Communication

Case Study Joined-up Government Type: researcher
This code captures the type of JUG that each case study refers to using the classifying system of the researcher. It may be communication, cooperation, coordination, collaboration, consolidation, or a combination.
Not enough info to classify
Consolidation
Collaboration
Coordination
Cooperation
Communication

Conditions
This code captures the factors that led up to or surrounded each case study of JUG. These include factors about the interviewee’s role and workload, about the joined-up group’s role or mandate, about the priorities and resources of the interviewee’s organisation, about broader political issues at an institutional level, and/or events and external pressures.
Individual
Impetus
Workload
Hierarchical access
Competency
Style

Group
Exit
Recognition
Power dynamics
Technology
Resource
Structure
Members
Exclusive
Orientation
Method
Departmental Practitioners
Clients
Project/Problem
None

Intent
To advance individual goal
Unsure
To gain resource
To build relationships
To construct/change
To collectively change
To change others
To advise
To learn
To confirm

Sequence
Expectations
Values/Vision
Inter-group relations

Organisational
Existing relationships
Mid-down expectation
Top down approval
Clients
Pressure
Role construction
Tools/Readiness Assessment
Size
Intra-agency coordination
Accountability system
Culture of openness
Agency reputation
Agency perspective
Agency levers
Agency process
Agency follow-through
Available resource
Top-down expectation
Strategic plan
Mission creep

Institutional/Governmental
Staff flexibility
Bypass central government
Models/Scripts from other agencies
Appropriations/vote system
Resource abundance
Resource scarcity
Information/Analysis
Confidentiality
Size
Civil service
Conflict/tension
Central agency engagement
Accountability system
Reforms feedback loop/management fads
Ministerial/politico priorities
Ministerial/politico capacity
Ministerial longevity
Inter-agency mandates
Inter-agency dependence/structure
Cross-government strategies

Situational
Consumer culture
Evidence base
Political change
Nature of problem
Chance event
Product/project phase
Stakeholder pressure
International obligations
International examples

Barriers
This code captures factors that hindered or complicated each case study of JUG. These include individual, group, organisational, institutional, and situational factors.

Individual
Collaborative competencies
Personal background
Professional background
Representation
Workloads/Demand-Driven
Positional level
Personality

Group
Inward focused
Performance
Language
Resource
Role clarity
Members
Orientation
Intent of JUG
To push down
To take resource
To confirm
Task importance/urgency
Lack of targets
Leadership
Lack of tools
Turnover
Conflict/Misperceptions

Organisational
Levers
Management tier
  Political influence
Vision
  Horizon scanning
Function
Expectations/Priorities
Role construction
Process
Languages / Culture
Turnover/Change
Buy-in
Fortress mentality /protective
  Ownership
Intra-agency relations and change
Advocacy role
Resource level
  Resourcing JUG
Recognition

Institutional/Governmental
Physical Proximity
Management fads/Machinery of government changes
Cross-government strategies / mandates
Central agency engagement
Urgency/Timing
Accountability systems
  Effort-reward
Appropriations/votes system
  Resource scarcity
Management modeling
Size
Career structures
Political structure
Agency structures
  Mission overlap
  Decentralization/fewer levers
  Policy/Delivery Split
Servicing Ministers
  Culture
Ministerial capacity
Servicing politicians (non ministers)
As opposed to other sectors
Situational
  Media coverage / pressure
  Data
  Politics
  International models
  Stakeholder relationships
  Poor press
  Timing
  Youth/population perspective

**Expected Impact**

*This code captures what the interviewee expects will come from the instance of joining up, be that a positive, negative, or negligible result. If the instance of joining-up has already taken place and is no longer occurring, this code captures what the interviewee believed joining-up would yield when they first took part.*

- No Impact
- Uncertain impact
- Civil servant practice

**Negative Impacts**
- Turnover/Dissolution
- Process
  - Relationship
- Outcome
- Output

**Positive Impacts**
- Process
  - Relationship
- Outcome
- Output

**Descriptors**

*This code captures all of the features of the joined-up case study: each of the factors the interviewee names when outlining what the case looks like or how it functions. Descriptors are different from conditions in that there is no assumed sequencing: these are factors which describe the case but did not necessarily precede the case study.*

**Individual**

- Workload
  - Offline meetings
- Skills
  - Competence
- Experience
  - Learning/examples
  - Non civil-servant experience
  - Common experiences
- Status
  - Representation
  - Managing ministers
- Motivation
  - Impetus/values
- Turnover
Lack of Style
Trust
  Misplaced Trust
  Transparent leadership
Group Practice
  Recognition
  Peer support
Group process
  Power Differentials
  Reflection and review
  Common experience/enemy
  Transparency/Flexibility
  Tools/Technology
  Languages/Culture
  Trust
  Thinking/Discussion
    Ask questions/question assumptions
  Sequence/Structure
  Facilitation
  Preparation
  Distribution of work
    Disproportionate
    Proportionate
  Allowing disagreement
  Not allowing disagreement
  Decision-making
    NON decisions
  Regular communication
  Role clarity
Group logistics
  Food/Spatial Set-Up
  Initiator
  Energy
  Resource
  Members
    External partners
    Gender balance
    Youth engagement
  Neutral staff
  Face-to-face meetings
  Size
  Time frames
Set-Up
  Pilot projects
  Group accountability
  How success is measured
Group benchmarks
Escalation
Ownership
  Individual
  Joint
  Leadership
Pressure to produce
Inter-group relations
Role of JUG
  To bypass/thwart
  To learn
  To construct
  To advise
  To confirm or push
  To catalyze/get traction
Orientation
  Approach or Method
  Departmental/Ministerial
  Practitioner
  Client
    Targeted
    Universal
  Project/Problem
  None
History
  Role-Practice Disconnect
Organizational
Role/Approach
  Perception
  Authorizing legislation
  Professional framework
  Learning/Engagement
  Role construction
  What counts as evidence
Structure
  Management
  Intra-agency relations
Expectation
Priorities
  Time Lines
  Pressure
Capacity
  Change
Institutional
Accountability
  Strong Interest
  Political Interest
  Ministerial servicing
Multiple ministers acting as one
Multiple ministers
Single minister
Money
Individual
Joint
Mixed
Roles & Relationships
Civil Service
Career-Political Relationship
Capacity
Mid-management engagement
Timing
CE-Director status/capacity
Ministerial status/capacity
Learning/capacity building
Management fads
Management modeling
Machinery
Policy/Delivery Split
Central agency engagement
Too much
Too little
Agency structures
History
Size
Situational
Nature of the problem
Evidence
Stakeholder pressure
Nature of the solution
Academic engagement
Party politics
At odds with civil servants
Youth perspective
Industry pressure
Timing

**Enablers or Constraints**

*This code captures those descriptors the interviewee specifically highlights as contributing or constraining the performance of the joined-up initiative.*

Could contribute to performance
Description of performance
Challenged joint performance
Challenged individual performance
Contributed to joint performance
Contributed to individual performance

**Actual Impact**
This code captures what the instance of joining-up yielded, be that a positive, negative, or negligible result. If the instance of joining-up is ongoing, results to date should be grouped within the relevant category, and the entire instance should be tagged as ongoing.

**Mixed Impacts**
Civil servant practice
  Scope of influence
  More time/resource
  Understanding/ thinking
  None
Negative Impacts
  Turnover / Dissolution
  Process
    Relationship
  Outputs
  Outcomes
Positive Impacts
  Stakeholder response
  Longevity
  Replication/Spread
  Process
    Relationship
  Outputs
  Outcomes
No Impact
Ongoing

**Performance Level**
This code groups joined-up case studies by high and low performance level, as defined by the expectation, value, and quality benchmarks presented in the text of the thesis.
Low
High
Average

**What if factor**
This code captures those factors that the interviewee believes would have influenced results had they been in place. This code gives insight into those factors that civil servants see as making a difference to joined-up outputs and outcomes.
Trade-off outcome
Worse outcome
Better outcome
Individual agency outcome

**Youth Conceptualization**
This code captures how the interviewee perceives young people in the course of their policy work: what frameworks, if any, do they use to make sense of the population group with whom they work?
None
Non-Differentiated
Factual
Rights Framework
Youth Outcomes
This code captures information the interviewee provides about the types of high-level youth outcomes they and their organizational unit are working towards.

Outcome Focus
Low
High

Joined-up Self-Improvement
This code captures what was typically the last question in the interview: what, if anything, would interviewee’s like to improve about their own joined-up practice? Answers to this question are broad: they may be about the individual’s own joined-up style, about the allocation of time/resource, or about the organizational or institutional supports.

Individual changes
Networking laterally
Ground-level knowledge
Approach
Expectations
More time

Organizational changes
Task distribution
Invest in making contact
Invest in evaluation
New technologies
New logics

Institutional support
More professional development
More regional interaction
More mandates
Fewer mandates
Nothing
Appendix L

Participants by agency and civil service grade

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**English Civil Servant Participant Breakdown**

![Bar chart showing the breakdown of English Civil Servant participants by grade and department.](image-url)
### New Zealand Civil Servant Participants

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Appendix M

Civil servant roles and responsibilities

**English Civil Servants**

*Senior Civil Servants, Executive Departments*

These actors had high status; they were in direct contact with the Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Cabinet, and Special Advisors. Unlike their colleagues in line departments, few were career civil servants; most had backgrounds in the private sector as consultants and research directors. Their work was organized into time-limited projects, and tasks were highly variable and closely aligned with political priorities, allowing them to circumvent standard processes and routines. “We don’t do parliamentary questions; we don’t brief ministers. Instead, we write two-page notes. Officials write 10-12 page submissions, which don’t say anything. They have to write endless pages and briefing for visits. We don’t” (UK40G). What they did produce was strictly confidential, cultivating the perception that they were important power brokers. They defined themselves in these same terms: as key players in the design or delivery of policies. Designing and delivering policies meant convening experts, monitoring departmental performance, providing recommendations, facilitating meetings, and pushing directives down a chain of command.

*Senior Civil Servants, Line Departments*

These individuals had worked up to their position; most had entered the civil service straight from university, and believed they had earned their status. They managed large teams of people, from 20 to 200 staff, but described their most important relationship as with their minister. In the dataset, all of these actors used the pronoun ‘their’ to refer to ministers, naming formal ministerial submissions and informal ministerial advice as their primary tasks. This involved synthesizing research compiled from staff, determining messaging and framing, and consulting with high-level external stakeholders. These actors were formally assessed according to their budgetary and managerial skills, including the percentage of staff with completed mid-year reviews and programme budgets, they talked most about the ‘quality of ministerial advice’ given. Quality was determined directly by ministers, and related to both style and content.

*Mid-Level Civil Servants, Line Departments*

These individuals were a mixture of career civil servants working towards senior civil servant status, and secondees from voluntary sector agencies with particular content expertise. For example, one actor was a nurse contributing to teenage pregnancy policy, while another had directed a drug treatment programme and was now involved in national drug policy. As mid-level actors they were assigned tasks from senior civil servants; tasks which they then distributed downwards to the small research and administrative teams which they oversaw. Tasks included compiling secondary research, writing briefs, crafting language for official reports and documents, attending conferences, monitoring contracts, meeting with external advocates, and actioning items upwards as required.
New Zealand Civil Servants

**General Managers**

General Managers ran large divisions within departments, or were at the helm of quasi-independent bodies, like the Alcohol Advisory Council or Accident Commission. While some general managers had climbed their way up the civil service ladder, most of those in the dataset came from think tanks and private sector organizations, where they had demonstrated prior managerial and budgetary capabilities. General managers set organizational strategy and staff work programmes, allocated funds, and were directly accountable to ministers. General managers also reported to the Chief Executives of their agencies, inputting into the organization’s longer-term vision and priorities. As one general manager explained, “I would describe my role best as a conductor. I very seldom start and finish anything, in fact. That is not my role. My role is to be making sure the right things are happening and the right papers are prepared. I act as the advocate of regional managers here in the national office to get things done, so I can pick over barriers for service delivery focus”… (NZ53D)

**Policy Advisors**

Policy Advisors either worked for central agencies, like the Department for the Prime Minister and Cabinet, or for the chief executives of line agencies. Advisors had diverse backgrounds: from working in ministers’ private offices to private consultancy firms or academia. Unlike general managers, policy advisors oversaw projects rather than organizational units. They collated best practice research and prepared policy proposals, liaised with high-level stakeholders, communicated ministerial preferences, and addressed emergent problems. As one policy advisor put it, “Our role falls into two kinds. Part of it is strategic so the positioning in the whole government and part of it is more reactive to the day-to-day issues that come out. But the thread that runs through both of those activities is it is about connecting across different portfolios… (NZ18D)”

**Managers**

Managers came in two varieties: policy managers and operations managers. Both typically reported to general managers. Whereas policy managers supervised policy analysts, operations managers supervised delivery agents. As this thesis focuses on joined-up policymaking, I talked far more with the former. On a day-to-day basis, policy managers implemented their General Manager’s work programme, distributing tasks downward to policy analysts, reviewing drafts of documents, crafting second-opinion advice for other departments, inputting into ministerial briefs, and attending external conferences and meetings. Most policy managers had worked their way up to the position having first been a policy analyst and then a senior policy analyst. In larger and more hierarchical agencies, ‘team leaders’ sat between senior policy analysts and policy managers, and were responsible for much of the day-to-day staff oversight. Managers, regardless of reporting agency, described core outputs as research, analysis, policy advice and presentations.
Senior Policy Analysts

Senior policy analysts might be likened to worker bees. They were assigned a policy portfolio, such as drug use, and delegated research and writing tasks related to that thematic strand. They drafted research reports, second-opinion advice, ministerial updates, and presentations. Drafts were first peer-reviewed and then sent to managers for revision and redrafting in line with strategic priorities. Performance was gauged by the timeliness and quality of documents, as well as by relationships with colleagues in other agencies. Policy analysts were expected to gather information from other departments when and where necessary. As one policy analyst described it. “The role is wide and varied in terms of second-opinion advice; once you start to develop connections with other agencies in your area, you see how many people are writing papers and there are lots to input into. Sometimes they are very technical. In one week, I had six to review. Then, in addition, I have meetings and try to get our position across or let people here know what others are doing” (NZ10D).
Appendix N

Agency roles and perceptions

England Functional Agencies

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)
The Department for Education and Skills’ 2006 mission statement, “Creating learning opportunities for people of all ages in England” did not reveal the extent of its influence: it set national standards and legislation on childcare, nursery education, primary and secondary school, colleges, apprenticeships, work-based training, post-19 education, youth policy, and specialist youth services (Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit, 2006). Actors inside and outside the department talked about the growth of its remit from an institution-based organization (schools) to a population-focused organization (young people), and the gradual accrual of policy functions once held by other departments. For instance, the teenage pregnancy unit moved from the Department of Health to the Department for Education and Skills in 2005. While structural changes were mostly cast in positive terms - phrases like ‘more consistency’ and ‘greater visibility’ repeatedly emerged in interviews - actors outside of the department worried it was becoming harder to counter the dominant organization’s dominant problem-solving approach. This was an approach described as ‘soft on children’ and favouring universal over targeted services.

Home Office (HO)
The Department of Health’s official role in 2006 was to “Improve people’s health and well-being through its strategic responsibility and accountability for the health and social care system in England” (Department of Health, 2006). Strategic is a key word; the Department of Health set standards, but had no direct control over the National Health Service. Social services were delivered by local authorities, while money and targets were determined centrally. Actors inside and outside the department consistently regarded it as poorly managed, with priorities poorly aligned with the children and youth agenda. Actors frequently mentioned that none of the agency’s targets or performance indicators addressed young people. This translated into weak top-down commitment to youth issues.

Department of Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS)
The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2006 “promoted the economic contribution and educational benefits of the arts, media sport and national heritage” (Department of Culture, Media, and Sport, 2006). As the primary funder of museums, galleries, libraries, arts and sports councils, the department was able to influence community level services available for young people. Despite its multi-
sectoral vantage point, DCMS was viewed as a minor player responsible for ‘nice-to-have’ rather than ‘critical’ policy issues. One actor explained that because the department was ‘thematical-driven’ their focus was on ‘activities’ rather than on ‘youth needs’ (UK020D).

**Department of Work and Pensions**

While the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) administered all employment and retirement benefits, making it the largest deliverer of public services, actors ascribed it as low-profile in youth policymaking. Parents, not young people, tended to be the DWP’s direct clients. When young people were clients, they were tagged as a ‘targeted’ minority rather than the ‘universal’ majority. Towards the end of fieldwork, an emergent focus on youth economic-well-being opened the door for DWP to play a larger role in the youth policy field.

**Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)**

The Department of Communities and Local Government, formally the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, was rebranded at the time of fieldwork. Functions included local housing, neighbourhood regeneration, planning, environmental and fire services. Designed to bring together policies by place, rather than population or issue, the department did not yet have a clear position on its role in youth policy. On the one hand, it had a real interest in actively promoting young people as part of its community cohesion agenda, but on the other, as a funder and protector of local authority interests, it displayed a clear interest in minimizing top-down policy initiatives and targets. Outside actors were taking a ‘wait-and-see’ attitude, curious as to how DCLG could contribute. “We have not yet caught up with the DCLG and we have not reflected on the relationship between what we’re trying to achieve with our youth population and what we’re trying to achieve through economic regeneration and neighborhood renewal, etc” (UK015D).

**England Kingdom Central Agencies**

**HM Treasury (HMT)**

HM Treasury oversaw taxes, banking, insurance, financial, and statistical services. Children and youth policy were not explicitly within its remit, but the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer’s focus on child poverty had significantly reshaped the youth policy space. Actors noted that the Treasury’s focus on children and youth people translated into both more resources and more micro-management. One DfES actor who helped to manage the department’s relationship with Treasury noted that, “Unlike finance ministries in other countries, HM Treasury has a much broader understanding of its role... They have their own very clear set of objectives for domestic policy and there are certain areas where they get very, very involved in the detail of particular issues. I say certain areas, but it is probably most areas, certainly most of the youth areas we deal with. This was much less true 10 – 15 years ago than there is now (UK01D).

**Prime Minister’s Delivery Unit (PMDU)**

The PMDU played a unique role as idea implementer. Unveiled in 2001 as a managerial innovation, the PMDU was designed to improve departmental performance against key public service targets. PMDU adopted management consulted techniques and emphasized evidence as a lever for change. By
collecting data on frontline services, PMDU elevated delivery issues to a national platform, working to troubleshoot ways around blockages, inaction, misalignment, and conflict. External actors differentiated between the PMDU and Prime Minister Strategy Unit’s (PMSU) approach. “The delivery unit is different in that it is primarily an organization in which we [departments] are the primary customers. That is certainly how they portray themselves, they actually have expertise in how to get things done and in how to frame and monitor and deliver policies... and this is different from strategy where they tell us what to do, they actually help us deliver them” (UK001D.)

Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit
The PMSU played a narrower strategic role in the child and youth policy space, engaging only in key policy priorities. At any one time, it generated strategic solutions to 6 to 8 complex policy problems identified by the Prime Minister. Its limited financial authority was compensated for by its commanding political authority, which was selectively exercised. There is only one example in the dataset with direct PMSU engagement. When PMSU did engage, they set the agenda and the policy process that other line agencies followed.

New Zealand Functional Agencies
Ministry of Social Development (MSD)
Official documents described the Ministry of Social Development’s role as “providing government with advice on strategic social policy, sectoral policy and social research and evaluation”. Citizens knew the MSD by the services they provided: income support, employment, child protection, family intervention, and youth justice. In the 1980s, these services were delivered by separate agencies. Between 2002 and 2005, these agencies merged into the Ministry of Social Development, but retained their independent identity and brand, while externally MSD became known as the ‘mothership’, reflecting its size, status and authority. Outside actors were concerned about how size impacted on collaborative style, although some had a ‘wait-and-see’ attitude, noting that MSD was still new and feeling its way through the restructuring. External actors produced statements like “They just take over. With big departments that is often the perception - they will just do their thing. But MSD in particular, it is them taking over the world and doing it their way and everybody else is being shut out... And so there’s a quite high-level distrust and it makes it extra hard. And people who work there, I don’t think are limited by that at all because they work for MSD. And MSD is so successful and ministers like them” (NZ15G).
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)
The Ministry of Justice’s mission - a safe and just society for New Zealand - overlapped with the mission of New Zealand Police, New Zealand Courts, and the Department of Corrections, the justice sector’s three delivery agencies. The MOJ wrote and monitored policies, rendering partnership working critical for implementation. Actors external to the department consistently noted the Ministry of Justice’s penchant for partnership working. For one actor, that meant that “if I was going to give a sort of bit of a ranking, MOJ would be the top dog. Because they don’t waste my time and know what they are trying to achieve so they know they need education to help but actually that doesn’t mean that education has to come to every boring meeting we ever have... I think from an efficiency point of view and a relationship point of view and actually getting the business done point of view that is just kind of a model. (NZ37G)” Others acknowledged that the Ministry of Justice’s ‘professionalism’ could also come across as ‘stodgy’ and ‘traditionalist’ and too wedded to process.

Ministry of Health (MOH)
The Ministry of Health, just like the Ministry of Justice, functioned as a policy agency. According to strategy documents it “served as principal advisor to the government on health and disability policy, and led the sector to achieve better health for New Zealanders, and reduce inequalities”. The sector included District Health Boards, public hospitals, public health units, professional bodies and non-profit organizations. In practical terms, that meant that the Ministry served as the funder but not the provider of health care services. It developed strategy and guidance documents, but day-to-day management of health and disability services fell to twenty-one regional health boards with elected representatives. Health care, rather than prevention, often took centre stage.

At the time of fieldwork, the Ministry was undergoing a restructuring to place more emphasis on public and population health. There was a top-level adolescent health advisor and a point person within the Director General’s Office, but no core staff responsible for adolescent health. For external civil servants that meant that young people were a variable priority. Policy managers who frequently interfaced with the Ministry of Health commented that “institutionally they’ve been organized to focus on other things... They’re too big. And they’re divided. They lack appropriate levers out to their delivery arms... The fact that they are kind of diagnosis or illness-oriented in the way that they split up their work means they are this cluster of these little insular teams that do their own thing”... (NZ001D)

Ministry of Education (MOE)
The Ministry of Education described itself as “the government’s lead advisor on the New Zealand education system, shaping direction for sector agencies and providers.” It funded but did not run schools; rather, it set minimum standards and developed long-term strategy. Internal civil servants talked about these ‘distal’ levers, and vented frustration with colleagues who perceived them as far more proximal. External civil servants frequently expressed frustration with the Ministry’s pace and scale of change, but often qualified this by noting that they enjoyed good interpersonal relationships with education colleagues. One typical statement was “I am very sympathetic to their role. They are in a very interesting sector where the legislation allows them to be a distant party to where the action is
happening. I think the tensions are when we get parts of that group they are very insular in making decisions without much consultation. They want to establish the theoretical thinking before they go out, so getting it signed off where it should actually go, you would want to be involved in that part” (NZ007D).

Ministry of Economic Affairs (MED)
The Ministry of Economic Affairs, as its name suggests, had a functional rather than population remit. Its mission was “to ensure New Zealand is one of the best places in the world to do business and to make a real difference to the country’s economic performance”. While young people were not a regular client group, increasing the number of small business owners was a priority. The Ministry saw young people as future small business owners, and wanted to see a greater enterprise focus within schools and communities. The Ministry had regulations and funds for programmes at their disposal. As an internal civil servant described it, “Generally, our role is in business environments, so making sure that competition policy and all those sort of things are in place but, as well we also design programmes aimed at assisting primarily small-to-medium enterprises to achieve their full potential” (NZ28G).

New Zealand Crown Entities
Alcohol Advisory Council (ALAC)
As a Crown Entity, the Alcohol Advisory Council advanced a single policy goal: namely, encouraging moderate alcohol assumption and addressing harm from alcohol misuse. Established in the 1970s and funded by an alcohol tax, the Council both advised government and the private sector on relevant programmes and policies. As their policy director clarified, “We are really big on facilitating, big on promoting debate, and on advocating for solutions that we have researched and think might be of some value to government. That might be promoting them directly with our minister or introducing new ideas to the sector itself” (NZ23G).

New Zealand Central Agencies
Treasury
The Treasury served as the New Zealand government’s lead advisor on economic and financial issues. For most civil servants, the Treasury authorized budgets and put in place accountability frameworks. As implementers of the Public Finance Act, the Treasury established the system whereby Ministers ‘purchased’ outputs like policy advice, from their Ministries. Outputs, rather than outcomes, were emphasized in the resourcing process. The Treasury was not often at the policymaking table shaping policy outcomes, and policy advisors made comments like “I have not seen them have a role. They have a right to comment on the paper, but the only time they would write is when they object. They do not shape. Maybe it is what it should be, but it is not very encouraging, is it?” (NZ006G)

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC)
The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provided “high-quality impartial advice” to the Prime Minister regarding strategic policy and operational delivery issues. External civil servants thought highly of DPMC staff: they were regarded as smart, savvy, and influential, and yet, like Treasury, they only
engaged selectively in departmental policymaking and were perceived as critical commentators rather than active facilitators. As a top advisor said, “Well, I do not see any central agencies actively engaging and brokering collaboration. What they can be useful at is signalling what are the key priorities of government at any one time and certainly DPMC does quite a lot of that” (NZ20G). One signalling tool were the ‘prime ministerial priorities’ set each year, which were supposed to permeate all levels and layers of government. At the time of the fieldwork, DPMC officials acknowledged that the central agencies could do a better job at signalling and shaping policies. The DPMC, the Treasury and the State Services Commission met regularly to improve central agency coordination.

State Services Commission (SSC)
The State Services Commission described itself as “the Government’s lead advisor on New Zealand’s public management system, working with government agencies to support the delivery of quality services to New Zealanders”. Hiring and performance frameworks were the tools of choice. The SSC appointed and held Chief Executives to account. In 2005, they released the Development Goals, a series of benchmarks for improving the way in which agencies plan and operate. Goals Three and Four focused explicitly on joined-up government, building on findings from the SSC-led project Review of the Centre, which set out to establish a new governance style following the Treasury-led New Public Management movement of the 1980s. SSC officials talked about their role in terms of reversing legacies from past management styles: “We still have a hangover from the 1990s with a very siloed approach and what we tried to gain through that was transparency and improved financial management and a focus on outputs. In all of that, I think, we gained a lot and we paid a big price, and the big price is actually those cross government results and That is still bugs us. So we’re working on that” (NZ59G).

New Zealand Population Agencies
Ministry of Youth Development (MYD)
The Ministry of Youth Development, first established in 1989, promoted “the interests of young people aged 12-24 years inclusive”. Their role was to raise the profile of young people in the policymaking process, and they had few formal policy responsibilities. Second-opinion policy advice was one of four official functions, and the others were information advocacy, youth voice, and grant administration. MYD, at the time of the fieldwork, had become part of the Ministry of Social Development’s ‘mothership’. While it retained the title ‘Ministry’ and a reporting minister, the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Youth Development reported both to the Chief Executive of the Ministry of Social Development and to the Minister of Youth Affairs. The decision to bring the MYD into the MSD followed a 2003 capability review conducted by the State Services Commission, which concluded that “MYA [then called the Ministry of Youth Affairs] had insufficient policy capability, resources and systems to operate as a sector leader. MYA’s struggle to influence and create high-level relationships across government was a major issue....” (p.2)

Central government officials worried that a population agency with a remit as broad as ‘young people’ could ‘create a precedent for other pressure groups’ when that population might not be ‘disadvantaged’ enough to warrant an exclusive organizational focus. Civil servants who regularly interacted with the
MYD expressed discomfort with the Ministry’s advocacy position; some saw this as a challenge to ‘neutral’ policy deliberation, while others simply saw it as ineffectual. An emblematic quote from the dataset was “in the ideal world, yes, they’d have a role [in policy]. In the real world, I would have to say they are spoilers. They do not actually add terribly much...They usually come in the end of the process. Because they only have one lobby group that they are looking at, they do not see the big picture, and they do not see the big tradeoffs that are being made. Essentially, big agencies tend to ignore them, which is not particularly satisfactory” (NZ30G).

**Ministry of Maori Affairs (TPK)**
The Ministry of Maori Affairs served as “the Crown’s principal advisor on Crown-Maori relationships”. They were to “guide public policy by advising Government on policy affecting Maori well-being and development”. The Ministry had a long and impassioned history, starting in the nineteenth century with the first Minister for Native Affairs. Unlike the Ministry of Youth Development, the present-day Minister of Maori Affairs enjoyed a high Cabinet rank, but like the Ministry of Youth Development, the Ministry of Maori Affairs lacked levers over service delivery chains. As a top-tier manager explained, “I don’t think we do have a great deal of leverage compared to some of the big, mainstream central agencies. The leverage points with MYD are not dissimilar, except the Minister of Youth Affairs is probably the last ranked cabinet minister. Whereas our Minister, he is on front bench and he is ranked at 7th on the front bench... But, at the end of the day, we don’t have much influence because we do not control services directly” (NZ057G). At the time of the fieldwork, the Ministry of Maori Affairs was undergoing a restructuring meant to ensure they had a ‘proactive’ rather than ‘reactive’ seat at the policy table. They developed a strengths-based policy framework called the *Maori Potential Approach* which stressed Maori capability and cultural distinctiveness. Civil servants the dataset had yet to understand what the approach meant for them, but were eager for the Ministry to play a part earlier in the policy process.

**Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA)**
The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs “promoted the development of Pacific peoples in New Zealand by providing high quality policy advice to Government and other agencies on key policies and issues affecting Pacific peoples”. Until 1998, the Ministry delivered services to Pacific communities, but a capability review determined that the Ministry’s small size hampered its reach. The Ministry moved towards policy advice and advocacy. While the Ministry benefited from a high-ranking Minister, Pacific peoples had a different status to Maori peoples. That meant, as one top advisor put it, that “we’ve always had to base our argument on the basis of Pacific people’s needs, rather than race, and we have to work closely to make sure that we can come up with the right type of argument to justify why there should be a focus on certain people”(NZ58G). These arguments were ensconced within a range of strategy documents: a Pacific Health Strategy, a Pacific Education Strategy, etc. Civil servants within the Ministry spent much of their time advocating for functional agencies to adopt these strategies, and monitoring their implementation.