

In support of

Fame Phase 3	
Workstream 2 2.2.1	Document title: FAME 3 Learning & Evaluation
Purpose: To report the Learning and Evaluation and complement the log of lessons learned	
Author: Sue Baines	
Version: 1.0	
Date: 31/8/06	

FAME Phase 3: a practical framework for working in Multi-agency environments

Table of Contents

Introduction _____	3
Some Key FAME lessons for working in multi agency environments ____	4
From multi agency single service: FAME 1 pilots and beyond_____	5
Engagement and Capacity Building _____	7
Regional reference implementations_____	11
Indicators for multi-agency environments _____	15
Reflection on the learning for partners from the FAME project _____	17
Conclusions_____	20

Introduction

Framework for Multi-Agency Environments (FAME) is one of 22 national projects established by the UK Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now the Department for Communities and Local Government) to support the adoption of electronic government (e-government) by English local authorities. The national projects cover a very wide range of aspects of local e-government including council websites, e-democracy and mobile technology. E-government has now become Transformational Government. In the Transformational Government scenario technology is the key enabler to meet the expectations of modern citizens about public services¹. FAME is designed to support local authorities working in partnership. It aims to establish a sustainable multi-agency approach to meeting the challenge of transformation in the delivery of local public services.

The first phase of FAME (April 2003 – October 2004) put information systems in place at a local level in pilot sites to support information sharing across agencies in specific services. FAME phase 1 developed a local, regional and national concept for multi-agency, multi-service working and created products to offer practical advice and guidance to partnerships. The second phase (November 2004 – March 2005) was concerned with disseminating the products. This report is about FAME phase 3 (October 2005 to June 2006). FAME Phase 3 was based in the North East of England and aimed to demonstrate to a national audience how transition to a multi-agency, multi-service shared infrastructure could be applied in practice at sub-regional and regional levels. Project tasks were organised in two separate but interrelated workstreams, 'Engagement and Capacity Building' and the 'Regional Reference Implementation'.

The Engagement and Capacity Building workstream aimed to position FAME as the way forward for the national information sharing agenda by updating the FAME products and continuing to communicate the benefits of the FAME approach to key stakeholders. The Regional Reference Implementation set out to work with partnerships in the North East of England to prove the concept of FAME in practice. This workstream produced a tool known as the 'FAME demonstrator' which uses visualisation and simulation to enable stakeholders to work through different views a complex multi-agency environment.

A third workstream was concerned with project management. Newcastle City Council was the lead authority and other partners were the North East Regional Centre of Excellence; North East Connect; and Newcastle University. The voluntary sector was represented on the core team by the national organisation Barnardos.

¹ Cabinet Office (2005) Transformational Government: Enabled by Technology.
http://www.cio.gov.uk/transformational_government/strategy/contents/introduction.asp

Evaluation and learning were built into the development, extension and validation of the FAME Framework. The evaluation was designed to offer an account of the project process and outcomes. The 'learning' element, however, involved more than this. It included ongoing dialogue with the project participants to promote learning and reflection. This is the final report of the Learning & Evaluation task (2.2.1), documenting evidence of what has been achieved and learned. It complements and can be read alongside the log of lessons learned. The report is in six parts:

- Key lessons for multi-agency environments
- From multi agency single service: FAME 1 pilots and beyond
- Regional reference implementation
- Engagement and capacity building
- Indicators
- Reflection on the partners' learning from the FAME project

Some Key FAME lessons for working in multi agency environments

Understanding the environment

Establishing a baseline of activity that impacts on information sharing in a region requires extensive consultation with stakeholders, and examination of documentary sources. There are no easy short cuts to gaining this knowledge.

Multi service and multi agency

The 'single service – multi-agency' approach of the FAME phase 1 local pilots achieved success in identifying issues for different professional cultures sharing information. That approach, however, was often the result of responding to specific policy initiatives (e.g. Single Assessment of Older People, Information Sharing and Assessment for children). It risks the creation of new silos and barriers whilst breaking down old ones.

Limits to integration

Joining-up public services is typically approached in terms of 'integration', with the pooling of resources (e.g. using health act flexibilities) and the procurement and design of an information system to support service delivery. The resulting technical integration is usually based on a model from the domain of commerce. In this model single enterprises integrate information from internal sources to provide a single view of the customer. This is not appropriate to the problem of sharing information in a partnership where there are always separate responsibilities, identities and relationships. FAME offers a coherent alternative to the 'integration solution' of the joining-up problem in public services. This alternative has become embedded in the thinking of key stakeholders from within and beyond the North East in the local authority and supplier communities (demonstrated in the FAME Information Sharing Workshop and Suppliers Day).

Including the third sector

An expanded role of the voluntary sector in service delivery is a government target to which multi agency environments must be able to respond. This demands awareness of the diversity of the voluntary sector and of voluntary sector organisations' relationships with clients, and with their clients' information. A federated approach to data gathering and sharing rather than an integrated model is essential in order to support the unique, distinctive contribution of the voluntary sector.

Resilience to change

The current promotion of the third sector as a government priority is just one example of a policy imperative that profoundly impacts upon multi-agency working and information sharing. Change is a constant and this is unlikely to cease. Recently announced reforms (e.g. super PCTs) need an information structure that can cope with change and new relationships. This underlines the need for strategic procurement of a regionally coherent 'infrastructure' (rather than just application systems) to support information sharing across a wide range of agencies and locations

Local priorities

From the locality level FAME repeatedly heard the complaint that Information sharing is not taken as seriously as it should be because it is not a performance indicator and inspection bodies don't take account of partnerships. (Joint Area Review is currently the only imperative to work together that is inspected). The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) 2005 Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Assessment, however, include, 'What is the council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?' There is an inspection focus on ability to work in partnership².

Support for people in owning their solutions

Service users, practitioners and service managers, and technologists can not easily enter each others' worlds, techniques and languages. The FAME demonstrator was developed to facilitate a process of building a common language and understanding around objects (prototypes, simulations, story-boards). The FAME team has used the demonstrator to engage with eCAF co-ordinators across the region, and with Revenues and Benefits in County Durham. These sessions have helped participants to work through different views of a problem and explore future possibilities. They highlight the value of supporting people in discovering their own solutions.

From multi agency single service: FAME 1 pilots and beyond

The first phase of FAME implemented a series of multi-agency single service developments led by local authorities. These pilot projects (known as strands) involved the negotiation of partnership arrangements and the implementation of information sharing protocols and agreements through the deployment of a common "information hub". The phase local 1 strands, which were largely in

² Audit Commission 2005 CPA 2005 Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Assessment'

the area of caring services, achieved some impressive successes. They did excellent work in identifying the issues involved for different professional cultures sharing information. They engaged service staff, trained them, and gave them the opportunity to become familiar with IT based searches for information. Most notably, they provided clear evidence that local authorities and their partners can create multi-agency environments in which information is made accessible electronically to practitioners across traditional service boundaries. The full Learning & Evaluation report for the FAME Phase 1 local strands is available on the FAME website³.

One of the six FAME Phase 1 strands was in the North East region. This was the Newcastle Children with disabilities (CWD) strand, now called Link-it. (See box 1). As the electronic system did not go live until October 2004 it was not possible to include evidence of its implementation in the Learning & Evaluation report for FAME Phase 1. Link-it had trained people across services in multi-agency working facilitated by electronic systems. It was important therefore to collect evidence of this experience as part of the context for the regional aspect of FAME phase 3. The FAME phase 3 evaluation team therefore consulted managers and professionals involved in Link-it, and examined documents (e.g. minutes of board meetings).

The FAME Children with Disabilities (CWD) project (later renamed Link-it) aimed to improve the co-ordination of services to disabled children and their families in Newcastle upon Tyne. The rationale for this pilot was that children and families affected by disabling and life limiting conditions need the many professionals who support them to work closely together. Yet traditionally professionals deal with certain aspects of a child and have bits of information about them. As a result, the delivery of care can be fragmented and parents have to repeat information over and over again. The FAME local project in Newcastle developed an electronic multi-agency assessment tool to allow agencies working with disabled children and their carers to share information and to support co-ordination of processes. The CWD team put a high priority on ensuring that both practitioners and service users participated actively in the design process. Practitioners' and parents' groups were used to reflect on and discuss numerous issues such as information sharing, confidentiality, and the multi-agency assessment tool that would form the basis of the ICT system. The CWD project went live in October 2004 with 30 – 40 practitioners trained to use the system.

Box 1: FAME Phase 1 in Newcastle upon Tyne

Several months after going live levels of usage for Link-it were, as in the other FAME local strands, causing concern. In January 2005 the project board discussed the possibilities of using a distance learning programme and introducing a cancellation fee to encourage workers to take up training. Two months later training take-up had improved but usage of the system was still reported to be limited. According to one service manager interviewed in March 2006, the CWD project was successful as a vehicle to promote multi-

³ Baines, S., Gannon-Leary, P. and Walsh, S. 2004 Framework for Multi-Agency Environments (FAME): Final Report of the Learning & Evaluation, <http://www.fame-uk.org/archive/strand/downloads/decemberReport.pdf>

agency working from service managers to front-line staff. However she went on to report that actual usage of the IT system was still low because staff perceive it to be 'not as user friendly as it needs to be'.

Practitioners who are expected to use the system reiterated this point (some more emphatically than others). Things that were particularly disliked were the seven-stage log-in procedure, delays in fixing technical problems in the face of the tight timescales allowed for referrals, and inability to make changes to material entered without asking for technical support. Practitioners agreed with the logic of Link-it as an aid to multi-agency working and 'joined-up' referral and information sharing. The story, however, is overwhelmingly one of dashed hopes and frustration with a technology that is perceived as ill fitting into everyday working practice.

The FAME Phase 1 local strands highlighted some important lessons which have directly informed FAME 3. These included:

- 'Over integration' of data resulted in resistance from practitioners (when de-contextualised information about service users could be viewed by other practitioners);
- The limitations of local solutions and the likelihood of new silos;
- High expectations of what an IT system would deliver that were sometimes unfulfilled, leading to a potential legacy of cynicism about IT

The first two points are at the heart of the FAME 3 approach. The third point is a lesson about the ability of the worlds of IT, practise, and governance to converse and make progress towards achieving shared goals. This is the problem to which the FAME demonstrator responds by trying to build common understanding of what is practical now, and of visions for the future.

Engagement and Capacity Building

The Engagement and Capacity Building activities (Workstream 1) focused on the external aspect of FAME, primarily in the three key areas of engaging stakeholders, supporting local authorities and their partner agencies in take up of FAME Products, and promoting the information sharing agenda. The objectives stated in the Project Initiation Document (PID) included: 'Help bring together the different government departments and national bodies which have multi agency information sharing and electronic information systems on their agendas'. This was an ambitious task and one that was not easily represented in 'product' form. The very long list of meetings attended in central government departments and national bodies by FAME team members is given in the Report on 'Communications and Engagement Activity' and need not be re-iterated here. In this section the most significant events are highlighted and some lessons drawn from the experience.

Information sharing climbed up the policy agenda of central government during the life of the project. The formation of the cabinet committee MISC 31 was a significant event and FAME was on the inside track. The team's first encounter with MISC 31 was in November 2005 (before it was formally announced) at a seminar in London for a recently completed research project

on data sharing. This was a study entitled 'Joined-up Public Services: Data-Sharing and Privacy in Multi-Agency Working'⁴, undertaken for the Economic and Social Research Council and led by Professor Bellamy from Nottingham Trent University. The event was part of a programme of dissemination which the research council requires. Cass Chiddock from the Cabinet Office was present. There was no opportunity to present FAME in any detail at this event but Ms Chiddock was extremely interested in FAME from the short discussion that was possible and suggested a visit to the team in Newcastle. When she came to Newcastle in early February, MISC 31 had been announced and she was leading on data sharing. She responded to the team's presentation by saying it made intellectual sense but that she needed more information about what was happening practically. At that time little progress had been made with the reference implementation (see below). FAME attended a further meeting with MISC 31 in London in May 2006 and future contact will be maintained.

Important as it is, MISC 31 is not the only route between FAME and central government. Core team members sometimes complained of what appeared to be limited ability in individual central government departments to 'see the bigger picture'. For example DfES had separate teams working on ECAF, ICS and the Children's index. When FAME met DFES they seemed to emphasise the project basis of individual initiatives rather than taking a local perspective on thinking about joining up strategic investment across service areas. Nevertheless there is evidence of FAME's input into the DfES approach to information sharing. Throughout the lifetime of the FAME project there was ongoing dialogue between the technical and operational members of the ISA team at DfES and FAME. (The main contacts were Peter Mucklow, Terry Knowles and Julie Laughton). The technical team on the Child Index, including Terry Knowles, can testify that FAME has been a key factor in shaping their thinking. Pat Cummins of Barnardos is a member of the FAME core team and of ISAG, the Advisory Group made up of national stakeholder bodies. The DfES identify ISAG as the key body for consultation on all policy matters related to the Index, the business case, and the technical solutions. FAME ideas have often been raised there by other parties.

There are three main lessons from all this activity:

- **It is essential to be alert to opportunities** and to respond with agility to changing concerns of policy makers. Opportunities that were fruitful (such as the first meeting with Ms Chiddock) were not always obvious in the first instance.
- **Engagement with the sorts of challenges posed by multi-agency partnership is best thought of as a 'learning journey'**. Credibility was based on personal relationships and trust formed by team members. Progress was usually made over several meetings with an individual or group.

⁴ <http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/ViewAwardPage.aspx?AwardId=2666>

- **Stakeholder mapping needs to be adapted and supplemented with other techniques.** . A stakeholder map can only be provisional in an environment subject to unpredictable change.

A stakeholder map was one of the deliverables identified in the product descriptions for workstream 1. The map produced in March 2006, with some supporting commentary, is given as an appendix in the Communications and Engagement Report. At the learning workshop in June 2006 the team revisited this map and noted changes that reminded them of the many challenges, and how far the project had travelled in a few months.

Although stakeholder mapping has some utility as a working tool the experience of FAME 3 was that it was more limited than expected. For example, stakeholder mapping according to conventional templates does not recognize the *quality* of the relationships. The team experimented with different templates and techniques for stakeholder mapping and for identifying forces for and against change. Techniques that can usefully supplement stakeholder mapping include ‘force field analysis’ in which the driving and restraining forces are listed and themed. A stakeholder map is true only for a specific point in time in a dynamic environment. Revising the map helps to record of change and highlight where to place attention.

Ascertaining success (or failure) in the objective of ‘national embedding’ is not straightforward. Success can best be recognised by detecting changes in the ways people talk about things. When people start using ‘FAME’ words as if they were their own we know we are succeeding. For example, ‘the need to publish’ [rather than share] information is starting to be heard’ (observation at the Learning Workshop, 20th March 2006).

This workstream also included updating the FAME Generic Framework and the Readiness Assessment Toolkit. The purpose of these products is to push partnerships to look at their intentions, their policy drivers, legal powers, vehicles etc. Together these products provide a process within which practitioners, ICT and governance/managers can learn about the issues underlying the partnership and form an action plan. The Readiness Assessment Toolkit [RAT] is a good place for partnerships to begin. The updated version has been simplified for ease of use. Figure 1 illustrates the way in which the RAT has been used in practice with an assessment and score against the nine FAME dimensions.

FAME	Assessment	Score (max 5)
Legal Powers and Responsibilities	Protocols	3
Governance	Boards, PRINCE2 (Project Management) control. Possibly time pressures that could impact quality of products	4
Scoping Statements and Business Cases	Strategy seems OK	3.5
Messages, Events and Transactions	Awareness of need	0.5
Sustainability	[not completed]	0
Information Sharing	Principles agreed – but not necessarily solutions identified. Health may not be fully engaged	1.5
Infrastructure	Basic internal systems	2
Identity Management	Child index only. Authentication not visible	1
Federation	Not considered	0

Figure 1: Example of pragmatic use of the FAME RAT

Regional reference implementations

The FAME project promised to work with two 'regional reference implementations' in order to prove the concept of FAME in practice. To achieve this it was necessary to establish close working relationships with partnerships in the North East. The initial workstream tasks were surveying the current state of multi agency initiatives in the region and identifying two regional contexts for implementations of multi agency multi service information sharing. The other main tasks were:

- Development of the FAME demonstrator to provide multi-agency systems architects, practitioners, managers and policy makers with a tool for creating realistic scenarios and ultimately developing sustainable shared service systems
- Creation of roadmaps to supplement the other products and provide practical guidelines for partnerships

The Cap Gemini 'regional symposium' held in Gateshead in November 2005 was a significant learning event for the regional reference implementation part of FAME, although not entirely in the ways anticipated. The event reinforced the FAME agenda, emphasising the need for the coherence of practice, governance and ICT. The Symposium background papers included, for example, 'Detailed Champion Consultations from Every Child Matters'. On the other hand some of the statements made at the symposium made it clear that there remained a long distance for FAME to travel in communicating its key ideas in the region, in particular that it offers an alternative to the 'integration solution'. Participants at the symposium called for 'standardisation' and 'integration' of local authority ICT without any acknowledgement of the separate responsibilities, identities and relationships that are characteristic of partnerships. Moreover, 'partnership' as discussed at the symposium was identified exclusively with the interface between health and social care.

It was hoped that analysis of the regional survey part of the regional symposium would provide baseline data about the North-East region relating to government programmes that impacted the FAME project. Unfortunately this hope proved to have been optimistic. In order to survey the current state of the region it was necessary to collect information from diverse sources including meetings with key organisational representatives, IEG reports, Local area agreements (LAAs), Local Public Service Agreements (LPSAs) etc. The lesson is that establishing a baseline of activity in a region will require extensive consultation with stakeholders and examination of documentary sources - there are no easy short cuts

The criteria for selecting contexts were that they should be: multi agency, multi authority and multi service; supported by a government national initiative; and intrinsically demand regional networking. The first phase of FAME had included three product development streams which directly

corresponded to aspects of the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda⁵. In October 2005 the action at the regional level in the North East appeared to be mostly in the Children's Services, particularly around changes in governance on the Gateshead/Newcastle Passport to Services trailblazer project. FAME had already influenced the thinking of the trailblazer. It therefore seemed obvious that one of the reference implementations would be in Children's Services and the Every Child Matters agenda. It was important to demonstrate that the FAME principles extended beyond social care. The second reference implementation – the Single Non Emergency Number (SNEN) - was selected to take multi agency working into a much wider range of services.

By early 2006 the team became concerned that FAME 3 had achieved only limited success in these two test areas. FAME 3 team members who had been involved in FAME 1 recalled that working closely with the local strands contributed to the development of the Framework material. In FAME 3, in contrast, there seemed to be a lack of similar engagement with people struggling with real-life multi agency problems. The team reflected that reasons for slow engagement included: an over-estimation of the overall readiness for FAME approaches in the region; lack of progress in key areas where development was due to take place; and slow progress in securing the support of some key players. They re-examined the reference contexts and added two new ones, eCAF co-ordinators and County Durham Revenues and Benefits. The team also continued to communicate with SNEN although the tight timescales for that project made it particularly difficult for the partnership to engage with FAME. However, In May 2006 The SNEN 101 Partnership Programme manager came to look at the demonstrator and immediately became interested in adapting it to help communications within and beyond the partnership. As a result the SNEN partnership accepted the FAME proposal for developing an animated and visual representation of the Partnerships Processes. There was a workshop with SNEN later that month which made a contribution to the regional roadmap deliverable. The core team analysed this workshop and revised the formula for the next one with TSI (Trusted Services Infrastructure). These two workshops together provided experience in facilitating a process that can be applied in other multi agency partnerships.

All local areas should be implementing the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) from 2006 with a view to embedding it across the full range of relevant services by 2008⁶. People in the region involved in implementing electronically enabled CAF (eCAF) were extremely receptive to FAME - especially the use of the 'demonstrator'. ECAF co-ordinators from Newcastle and Northumberland were invited to work with the FAME demonstrator. The aim working with eCAF co-ordinators was to collect raw material about what is going on now in response to eCAF, and then presenting it back to the group. The individuals invited brought their counterparts from other local authorities across the region. The three meetings with eCAF co-ordinators in May and

⁵ Information Sharing and Assessment in Lewisham; Child Protection in West Yorkshire and a Children with Disabilities system in Newcastle.

⁶ <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/caf/e-caf/>

June more than fulfilled the team's expectations. Participants responded to, and interacted with, representations of their 'problem', and took ownership of the material. The meetings were constructed around three themes:

- Represent – where practitioners want to be
- Specify – what that means for systems
- Configure – existing and new infrastructure

Twenty people attended the second meeting. Attendees wanted a version of the material they had contributed to take away with them. They were also keen to continue the momentum of the meetings. In the boxed text below is a short extract from the second meeting. This illustrates the lively discussion in which participants in the group responded to the material about their working practices and needs that the FAME team presented back to them using visual images. As a piece of text it does not do full justice to the dynamic, interactive event.

Typical presentations show delivery of care moving in an orderly fashion [laughter from the group].....

Can there be more than one [eCAF]?

No only one.

Why?

It would undermine the principle – a CAF is one point of reference prevents people going from one service to another.

What about sensitive services?

I could see a situation where somebody wants to initiate a CAF in a school and somebody else in another area of a child's life – how would you resolve that say if the family has less faith in one service?

You should go with the service they use most

Overlapping into the lead professional

You should be fostering collaboration among agencies

There are consent issues around drugs and alcohol

So is a key worker the mechanism for ensuring that there is usually only one CAF?

If there are two services it is an opportunity to bring them together

Some services may not want to work with us – eg sexual health and bullying may be kept separate

Or a sexual health worker thinks there are more issues and then thinks the family needs more help

It looks like more than one CAF can start so don't try to programme only one CAF into the system

(Contributions of the FAME team members facilitating the session in bold)

Box 2: Extract from a session with eCAF co-ordinators facilitated by the FAME demonstrator

Support for engagement and uptake of Government Connect was one of the project objectives. There were 16 references to GC in the FAME PID. One of the 'medium' risks to the project logged in November 2005 was: 'Lack of clarity from Government Connect resulting in inability to support engagement and uptake of Government Connect'. Mitigation was: 'Keeping in close contact with GC through North East Connects with the identification of regional pilots'.

The 'migration' of GC from Bolton to Tameside in March 2006 was not anticipated and proved to be a severe challenge to the project. Five months later, when FAME was presented to stakeholders regionally and nationally they usually asked to understand how FAME relates to Government Connect. This happened at the second user reference group in late June, and in July at the 'Suppliers Day' and a meeting of the SOCTIM Information Age Group (SIAG). Within the region some valuable work, similar to that with the eCAF co-ordinators, has been initiated in County Durham with Revenues and Benefits via ongoing contact with the North East adaptors group. At a more strategic level, a half-day session was held for all the partners to identify 10 'levers for change' in the region. This exercise could be replicated in other regions. (See Box 3).

In response to the perception that engagement within the region at a strategic level was slow, the core team arranged a half-day session in March 2006 to brainstorm the actions to take next. The FAME chair and deputy chair, as well as the core team contributed. The aim was to produce a list of 'ten levers for change' that could be acted upon. (Levers could be individuals, groups, policies, events). The levers were divided into short, medium and long term. The immediate practical output was a list of individuals to meet within the next few weeks. Participants came away convinced by their analysis of the situation in the region that there was a vacuum of leadership capable of engaging with information sharing and making a difference. After the '10 levers' meeting the question remained, 'who are the regional leaders'? These issues are not peculiar to the North East. At the second User Reference Group (June 2006) there was discussion on the regional context by participants from all over the country interested in information sharing. One URG participant observed that in his region, 'we have single agency fiefdoms sort of working together'.

In the medium to longer term one positive development looks likely to be the Northern Leadership Academy, a £5 million flagship initiative to strengthen leadership across the North of England. There is the possibility of alignment of FAME with the Northern Leadership Academy (NLA). The NE region (in line with other regions) is facing a set of public, private and third sector collective leadership challenges to which the NLA initiative is responding. FAME can potentially make a significant contribution to progress towards partnership or collective leadership across multi-purpose; multi-enterprise contexts.

Box 3: Identifying 'levers for change' in a regional context

The voluntary sector did not contribute to Transformational Government and Government Connect does not propose to offer facilities that can include it. Yet it is no exaggeration to say that if the voluntary sector does not participate in the development and implementation of information sharing, the policy is likely to fail. In February 2006 Public Accounts Committee report *Working with the voluntary sector* criticized the Government's modest targets for increasing the involvement of voluntary organisations in public services and recommended more 'meaningful and stretching targets' to encourage the use of the voluntary sector. The newly created Office of the Third Sector has now been tasked with enhancing the role of the sector. One of the strongest voices in the North East region for a regional approach to the joining up problem has come from parts of the voluntary sector. A position paper by NCVCCO stated that:

'working together does not mean becoming the same; it is in everybody's interest that [voluntary] agencies make their own unique distinctive contribution and that the independence of agencies and their ability to relate in a positive way to their service users is retained ... The North East NCVCCO supports and promotes a federated approach to data gathering and sharing rather than an integrated model.' Jonathan Ewen, Chair NE NCVCCO, 2nd June 2006

Indicators for multi-agency environments

The importance of an outcome-led approach is emphasised in the FAME Generic Framework and in the new FAME Roadmap process. Outcomes, as discussed in the Generic Framework, are the actual impact of a service, programme, initiative or intervention. FAME supports the high level of inter agency and inter professional working that is demanded in order to achieve desirable outcomes. Indicators are designed to provide objective measure of the success of a policy or intervention. In this section some definitions of good and poor indicators are considered. Then some of the contributions from stakeholders during the FAME Roadmap workshops are reported in order to comment further upon useful indicators for multi-agency partnerships. Alternative sources of indicators (specifically constructed or adapted from available sources) are examined.

A practical approach to evaluating the achievement of outcomes uses the notion of a hierarchy of objectives designed to build a logical set of links from high level outcomes via intermediate objectives to broadly measurable indicators. In the Every Child Matters agenda, for example, 'enjoying and achieving' includes the objective of achieving 'stretching educational standards', which are measured by school attendance and attainment. Outcomes related to economic development include: creating employment, supporting new firm formation, and improving the quality of the skills base. At a further level of dis-aggregation, for example under 'improve the quality of the skills base', it is possible to consider: educational attainment levels, and other measurable phenomena such as the attraction and retention of skilled labour. For example, one of the claims for the success of a cultural

partnership between Newcastle and Gateshead Councils is the presence of a 'brain gain', skilled people attracted to the area⁷.

Indicators are valuable because they communicate complex information in a simple way. Good indicators will be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timebound).⁸ Indicators, however, can be over simple, or DUMB. DUMB stands for Doable, Usable, Measurable and Believable. DUMB indicators measure what can be easily measured and either ignore what can not, or else define it as unimportant. In this scenario the dictum 'what counts is what works' is reiterated cynically as 'what counts is what can be counted'. Numerical indicators are widely used and accepted. Numerical indicators may usefully be combined with more qualitative ones that are better at capturing context and complexity. For example, evidence may be gathered from case studies of individuals in receipt of multi agency services.

As part of the reference implementation activity FAME 3 included Roadmap workshops in which partnerships were asked to articulate their desired outcomes. Outcomes proposed included:

- Trusting, robust partnerships
- New forms of collaborative working
- More community responsibility for reporting crime
- Ability to deliver services better
- Happy, safe citizens
- Accountability – knowing who to call if something breaks
- Citizens who have more control over their destiny (ie of the data they give to others)
- Efficiency

These are high level ambitions which have in common that they demand co-ordinated effort across agencies. Indicators for the first two items on the above list would include:

- Evidence that practitioners from different disciplines draw on the same ideas about working with service users;
- Practitioners' accounts of new ways of working with professionals from different specialisms and agencies;
- Signs of a common language developing among practitioners.

The rest of the list relate to positive outcomes for service users. Some valuable work on defining measurable indicators for cross cutting policies at local level has been done by the Audit Commission in the quality of life domain. These voluntary indicators were designed to paint a picture of the quality of life in a local area and to challenge all partners locally to address the issues within their community. Some examples that would denote 'happy, safe citizens', for example, include the percentage of residents satisfied with their

⁷ Minton, A. (2003). Northern Soul: Culture, creativity and quality of place in Newcastle and Gateshead. London, DEMOS.

⁸ Hughes, N. 2005 'Outcomes and Indicators: Evidencing Prevention and Well-Being' Practice Workshop on Outcomes and Indicators, NECF University of Birmingham

neighbourhood as a place to live and the percentage who perceive noise in their neighbourhood as a problem⁹. Evidence shows that Quality of life indicators (QoLIs) are useful in raising awareness and encouraging partnership working amongst statutory and non-statutory agencies¹⁰.

A major dimension to the selection of good indicators is whether data sources already in existence can be used or whether specially constructed customised data collection is necessary¹¹. Data routinely collected for administrative purposes are freely available and can be adapted with relatively little time, effort and skill. Such data may however be too crude, for example covering too wide, or too narrow, a geographical area. They will be restricted to existing targets for the individual partner agencies. This is an important weakness because existing measures may not have the breadth to capture new objectives of a partnership. Moreover, reliance on existing measures may result in those for one partner becoming a de facto standard for a partnership. For example, in the context of Every Child Matters there has been criticism of the use of education indicators to the exclusion of those of other core partners¹². And of course cynicism about performance data is rife in the public sector. As one of the SNEEN Roadmap workshop participants observed acidly, 'you can meet the criteria and still be crap'. Data collected specially to provide indicators for a multi-agency partnership to assess its own progress (eg repeat user satisfaction surveys) will be better targeted. This kind of exercise however can be expensive and often beyond the resources available to a partnership. In general partnerships in multi-agency environments should study available data sources carefully and ascertain, across the partnership, views on which indicators should move if success is achieved.

Reflection on the learning for partners from the FAME project

The FAME project included partners from different organisations. The relationship was not always a comfortable one. Partnership working with people from organisations and professions with different mindsets is not easy, as all the FAME work on multi agency environments (and a wider literature) attests. Within the FAME team itself tensions were present around different working cultures, especially in local government and a university-based research centre. There are several points about the process of project management in the log of lessons learned, reflecting that inter partner tensions focused at times on aspects of project management methodology. The purpose of this section is not to re-iterate these points in detail but to acknowledge the sincerely held differences about the lessons that can be learned from the same events and experiences. The interpretations here are

⁹ http://ww2.audit-commission.gov.uk/pis/doc/pi_q/F.doc

¹⁰ UWE_Bristol_Faculty_of_the_Built_Environment and N. E. Foundation (2003). "Making indicators count: Using quality of life indicators in local governance. Identifying the Missing Link."

¹¹ Barnes, M. 2004 'ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF THE CHILDREN'S FUND: THE ROLE OF INDICATORS', Birmingham: National Evaluation of the Children's Fund.

¹² Hudson, B. (2005). "Not a cigarette paper between us": Integrated inspection of children's services in England.' *Social Policy & Administration* **39**(5): 513-527.

inevitably those of the author (who is a member of the university team), although efforts have been made to represent a range of different views.

Sometimes assumptions were made by partners in the early stages of the project about what other partners were aware of. For example in January the FAME Core Project Team met at Newcastle University for a presentation by the university team to other partners of the Readiness Assessment Toolkit. One partner commented at the end, 'I have learned how long it takes, who should use it and what the benefits are'. To this a university team member responded, 'We assumed you knew.' This was a minor incident but indicative of the wider issue of team formation and mutual learning.

Some participants in the learning workshop held for the core team in June 2006 reflected that there had not been sufficient time given to 'storming and norming' for the team. (Others however dissented from this view in later discussion.) The 'Forming – Storming – Norming – Performing' model of team dynamics (first devised in the 1960s) is still influential in management and team building. The idea that mutual understanding and capacity to achieve together in teams go through these four stages is a widely used explanation of team development and behaviour. Some of the experiences and perspectives recorded in the FAME log of lessons learned suggest a strong case for more awareness of these stages. See Box 4 for a summary of the model.

The 'Forming – Storming – Norming – Performing' model of team dynamics was based on observations of group behaviour in a variety of settings by Bruce W. Tuckman and first published in 1965¹³. It remains influential today because it has practical application in team building activities. According to this model the four phases are all necessary and inevitable in order for a team to tackle problems, to find solutions, to plan work, and to deliver results. In the first or *forming* stage the team meets, agrees on goals and begins to tackle the tasks. Teams will then enter the *storming* stage in which different ideas compete for consideration. The storming stage is necessary to team growth but can be contentious and occasionally unpleasant. In some cases storming can be resolved quickly. In others, the team never leaves this stage. Most teams will then go on to the *norming* stage in which team members begin to trust each other, motivation increases, and relationships become more cooperative. If this phase lasts too long, however, teams may lose their creativity and stifle healthy dissent. A *performing* team will function as an effective, cohesive unit in which dissent is permissible. Sometimes a crisis may cause a team to revert to the *storming* stage. (Later versions of the model added a fifth *adjourning* or *mourning* stage which involves the dissolution of the team after completion of its tasks, often followed by sense of loss.)

Box 4: A model of team dynamics'

FAME followed the PRINCE2 project management framework in order to ensure that reporting procedures were robust, deliverables and milestones

¹³ Tuckman, B.W. Developmental Sequence in Small Groups. (1965) Psychological Bulletin, vol. 63: 384-399.

clearly defined, and risks systematically logged. PRINCE2 has become the UK's de facto standard for project management in central and local government and to some extent the private sector¹⁴. However, it is less firmly established in other contexts such as Higher Education and the voluntary sector, which were also participants in FAME 3.

For some members of the FAME core team the lessons learned by the end of the project were about the project management process. In the words of a local authority core team member, 'Newcastle University still resent the use of PRINCE2'. Based on this analysis, his recommendation for the future would be, 'train product leaders in PRINCE - either on the job or via a certified course.' For the team members from the university lessons from FAME 3 point in a different direction. FAME 3 reinforces their experience of other change projects that are inherently complex and uncertain. One of the team summed up this perspective in the learning workshop in March 2006, 'you can not get control of a transformation project by being controlling'. PRINCE stands for Projects in Controlled Environments. Newer methodologies have been proposed in which the project "emerges" rather than being fully preplanned^{15 16}.

The differences in approach to FAME as a *project* did not preclude working together to convey the benefits of the FAME outputs to national and regional audiences. The 'demonstrator' was innovative, unlike anything with which people were familiar, and not easy to describe. For the partners from outside the university it often seemed in the first few months to be abstract and 'academic' in the worst sense of the word. There was an observable step change in team cohesion when the early iteration of the demonstrator was made available to the core team. This was heightened when others were observed viewing it and recognising its value for helping them to work through their own multi agency challenges. Particularly significant was the meeting in May 2006 with the Northumbria Partnership's SNEN Project Manager, who immediately (in the presence of most of the core team) grasped the potential of the demonstrator for work with the partnership

After this point, the benefits of the demonstrator were most articulately and enthusiastically expressed by non university partners. In other words there was a sudden turnaround in which project cohesion emerged through shared understanding focused upon one of the products. This was an important and valuable moment. It is essential however to ensure that FAME does not become identified with an object to the exclusion of the ideas that support the transformation processes.

¹⁴ http://www.ogc.gov.uk/methods_prince_2__background.asp

¹⁵ Pitsis, T. S., S. R. Clegg, et al. (2003). "Constructing the Olympic dream: A future perfect strategy of project management." *Organization Science* 14(5): 574-590.

¹⁶ Williams, T. (2005). "Assessing and moving on from the dominant project management discourse in the light of project overruns." *Ieee Transactions on Engineering Management* 52(4): 497-508.

Conclusions

FAME Phase 3 was a project that took place over a relatively short period (October 2005 to June 2006) in which the environment for information sharing and multi-agency working changed rapidly. At some points the volatility of the environment looked set to frustrate the hard work of the team and even derail the project. On the positive side information sharing climbed up the policy agenda. There are two interrelated sets of achievements which correspond to the two workstreams:

- Promoting the information sharing agenda, engaging stakeholders, and supporting local authorities and their partner agencies in take up of the FAME Generic Framework and the Readiness Assessment Tool: These products push partnerships to look at their intentions, their policy drivers, legal powers, vehicles etc.
- Creating the FAME demonstrator: Using multi-media based visualisation and simulation, the demonstrator enables practitioners, managers and ICT professionals to work through different views of their world and explore future possibilities.

FAME Phase 3: Partnership

Partnership working in the North East under North East Connects includes:



North East Connects: Andrew De'Ath



North East Centre of Excellence: David Wright & Julie Brown



Newcastle City Council: Ray Ward & Carol Wade



Newcastle University: Rob Wilson, Mike Martin & Roger Vaughan

