



# **Change Management in the Public Sector: The Use of Cross-Functional Teams**

## **ABSTRACT**

Adoption of change management best practices continues to be offered as a route towards improved cost, quality and productivity of public services. These practices are predominantly drawn from private sector research and their application by the public sector remains a relatively under-researched area. In this paper we investigate in the local authority context the application of one popular change management approach - cross-functional team-based working. We investigate the success of three cross-functional teams and the organisational mechanisms that supported their success. Findings indicate cross-functional teams delivered significant improvements in each case. We identify four requirements for success: the need for the organisational leader to clearly support the team; cultural and structural issues that support cross-functional integration; funding support; and, fourth, the need to break the status-quo and overcome resistance to change. We find no evidence that these conditions cannot be met in the public sector and suggest cross-functional teams as a positive approach to be integrated in public sector change programmes.

### **Keywords**

Cross-functional, change management, team, public sector