Sharing power and fragmenting public services: complex government in Northern Ireland

Colin Knox

There are obvious complexities in the governance of Northern Ireland. Long-awaited political stability, power-sharing and settled devolution come with a highly-fragmented structure of public services. In addition, because of its pre-occupation with constitutional and security matters, Northern Ireland is playing catch-up in public sector reform. There are greater expectations that local politicians can tackle endemic issues of poverty and social deprivation than their British 'direct rule' predecessors. This paper looks at a new initiative, which aims to address the complexities of power-sharing and its attendant fragmented governance arrangements.

Northern Ireland has moved from a conflict society to one where there is a devolved power-sharing legislative Assembly and the absence of large-scale violence. There are, of course, ongoing challenges to the political institutions but as the governmental structures settle into place, politicians are seeking new ways of addressing systemic social and economic problems. Issues which need to be tackled include multi-generational poverty, high levels of unemployment, public sector dependency, and lack of basic skills, particularly among young people. There are also sporadic community tensions associated with legacy issues of the conflict such as flags, parades and dealing with the past.

One of the key features of the political settlement emerging from the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998 and the St Andrew's Agreement 2006 was the establishment of a power-sharing executive, rooted in consociational theory, between the five largest political parties (Lijphart, 1968; 1975). 'Consociation' is a system where 'political power is shared by rival cultures on a proportional basis—in the Northern Ireland Executive, the legislature and public employment. Each cultural community enjoys rights of veto and autonomy' (McGarry and O'Leary, 1995, p. 509). The outworking of the consociational model in Northern Ireland led to an increase in the number of government departments from six to 12 to ensure that pro-Agreement parties obtained ministerial office, rather than for reasons of administrative efficiency. While this model promotes the inclusion of various political views in the structures, one consequence has been a diffusion of power across different parts of government. This paper attempts to do three things. First, it describes the complexity of the devolved administration in Northern Ireland, accentuated by the power-sharing arrangements which are in place. Second, it provides an example of the limitations, so far, of tackling cross-departmental 'wicked' issues. Third, it presents an alternative approach in which the Northern Ireland Executive is attempting to hard-wire political and managerial inputs into a new initiative entitled Delivering Social Change (DSC) aimed at delivering integrated public services.

Background

The fragmentation of government is not unique to Northern Ireland and has been the subject of scholarly research for some time (Challis *et al.*, 1988; Peters, 1998; Clark, 2002; James, 2002; Pollitt, 2003; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; 6, 2002; 2004; Bogdanor, 2005). Exworthy and Hunter (2011, p. 202), for example, trace the origins of ways to address fragmentation in the UK back to 1975 in an initiative entitled a *Joint Approach to Social Policy* (CPRS, 1975), which recognized 'complex, wicked issues that transcended organizational and departmental

Colin Knox is Professor of Comparative Public Policy, University of Ulster, UK.

boundaries at all levels of government'. Wicked issues, or seemingly intractable problems, according to Clarke and Stewart (1997), cannot be tackled by an individual organization or agency, even if it has direct responsibility, but require a capacity to work across organizational boundaries. In an assessment of these early attempts to develop more co-ordinated ways of addressing wicked issues, Challis *et al.*, 1988 concluded that the *Joint Approach to Social Policy* (JASP) was 'too rational and apolitical'. JASP was seen variously by many ministers as: 'an unwelcome intrusion into their fiefdoms which ultimately faltered and petered out and became a victim of 'ministerial indifference and departmental obstruction'' (Webb, 1998; and Challis *et al.*, 1998; cited in Exworthy and Hunter, 2011, p. 203)

The election of the New Labour government in 1997 and its promise of major public sector reform heralded the call for 'joined-up government'. Ling (2002, p. 616) defined joined-up government in Britain as 'a group of responses to the perception that services had become fragmented and that this fragmentation was preventing the achievement of important goals of public policy'. Several modernizing initiatives ensued under the Labour government aimed at achieving joined-up government, the most prominent of which were *Modernising Government* (Cabinet Office, 1999) and the Performance and Innovation Unit Report entitled *Wiring It Up* (Cabinet Office, 2000). These reports encouraged new ways of working across organizations: pooled budgets, joint action teams, shared objectives and outcome targets, combined leadership, and joint public consultation processes. The modernizing agenda in Great Britain coincided with devolution in Northern Ireland (1999), which suffered a series of setbacks and suspensions before stable devolved government was finally established in 2007. As a result, Northern Ireland sat at the margins of a British reform agenda and made limited progress in the reform of public services. Typical of this was the policy document on *The UK Government's Approach to Public Sector Reform* (Cabinet Office, 2006). Despite the reference to the 'UK' in the title, there was no mention of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) or the different circumstances which prevailed. One NI-specific example entitled *Fit for Purpose: The Reform Agenda in the Northern Ireland Civil Service* (NICS, 2004) committed officials to taking forward reforms containing three key elements: prioritization of front-line services; building capability within the NICS; and, embracing diversity through external recruitment and exchange.

As devolved government has stabilized in Northern Ireland, attention to improving public services has increased. These two issues (devolution and public sector reform) are inextricably linked not least because the consociational model of devolved government has accentuated the potential for fragmentation in public services, an issue which is exacerbated by societal divisions. The characterizing features of devolved government in Northern Ireland which have resulted in a disjointed approach include:

• There is a large number of government departments (12) for a relatively small population (1.8 million). Attempts to reform the machinery of government began in 2002 under the Review of Public Administration (RPA). Government departments were left out of the process because of the fragility of devolved institutions at that time. Including government departments and their associated ministers could have been used as a way of renegotiating the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 'by the back door' (Knox, 2012, p. 120). NI has very weak local government with limited functional responsibilities, although some additional services will follow the reorganization of councils this year.

• There is a large number of non-departmental public bodies for functions normally under the control of local government in GB (housing, education, social services). Birrell (2008) points out that the expected cull of quangos signalled in the RPA has led to a transformation into 'super-quangos' in education, health, social services and libraries.

• The five-party mandatory coalition which constitutes the Northern Ireland Executive has no formal opposition and ministers carefully protect their political portfolios. Legally (under the Northern Ireland Act 1998) ministers must participate with Executive colleagues in the preparation of a *Programme for Government* (PfG) and operate within the framework of that programme. Under the ministerial code, where any matter cuts across the responsibilities of two or more ministers; requires the adoption of a common position; is significant or controversial and outside the scope of the agreed PfG; then the minister

---

*Parallel consent: a majority of those MLAs present and voting, including a majority of the unionist and nationalist designations present and voting.
**Weighted majority: 60% of MLAs present and voting, including at least 40% of each of the nationalist and unionist designations present and voting.

needs to bring it to the attention of the Executive. In practice, ministers have been accused of doing 'solo runs'. The most recent examples of these include: the SDLP environment minister taking unilateral action not to progress a major planning bill to legislation; the Sinn Féin education minister's proposed reforms of the funding arrangements in schools; and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) health minister's stance on gay blood donations and adoption by gay and lesbian couples. As one local newspaper put it: 'the Executive isn't behaving as a partnership, power-sharing government should—ministers are operating in a political cocoon. Stormont is not a collegiate business' (Curran, 2013, p. 2).

• The nature of the consocational model gives veto rights to the minority. Certain Assembly decisions require cross-community support either through parallel consent* or a weighted majority**. Aughey (2012, pp. 155–154) describes the Executive as 'enforced coalition' which means 'that parties are involved in stopping their ethnic rivals getting what they want rather than considering what is best for Northern Ireland as a whole'. There is therefore a lack of collective responsibility and 'an absence of an overarching allegiance to the shared polity which can counteract sectarian instincts'.

These features of devolved government in Northern Ireland build-in the potential for greater fragmentation in the implementation of public policies agreed in the Programme for Government. Importantly, given the historic voting patterns of the electorate, there is not a direct line of accountability between ministerial performance and how he/she polls in elections.

In fact, public reaction to the performance of the devolved government is underwhelming as judged by participants in the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (see figure 1). The 2012 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey involved 1,204 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 years or over. The main stage of the fieldwork was carried out between 1 October 2012 and 10 January 2013. The sample for the 2012 survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Postcode Address File (PAF) database of addresses. This is the most up-to-date and complete listing of addresses. Private business addresses were removed from the database prior to sample selection. Since 2007, following previous on-off devolution, there has been a modest increase in the percentage of respondents who feel the Assembly has achieved

'a little' (53% in 2012); an upward trend in those who feel 'nothing' has been achieved (21% in 2012) and a low percentage of respondents who feel the Assembly has achieved 'a lot' (14% in 2012).

Tackling wicked problems: neighbourhood renewal

Urban policy in England was one of the areas which attracted significant potential for integrated public services. The Social Exclusion Unit, for example, highlighted the huge needs of people living in areas suffering from multiple deprivation which could only be addressed by a range of public bodies and agencies, illustrated in the report *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (Cabinet Office, 1998). The equivalent approach was adopted in Northern Ireland in 2003 when the government launched a policy document entitled *People and Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*. This long term (10+ years) strategy targeted those communities experiencing the highest levels of deprivation. Neighbourhood renewal is a cross government strategy, led by the Department for Social Development (DSD), aiming to bring together the work of all government departments in partnership with local people to tackle disadvantage and deprivation in all aspects of everyday life. The purpose of the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme (DSD, 2003) was therefore to reduce the social and economic inequalities which characterize the most deprived areas. It does so by making a long-term commitment to communities to work in partnership with them, identify and prioritize

Figure 1. What has the Northern Ireland Assembly achieved? Submit as a PDF good enough for camera ready reporodyction. No caption. Or, better, a table.

needs, and co-ordinate interventions designed to address the underlying causes of poverty.

Resources were targeted using the following selection process. Neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% of electoral wards across Northern Ireland were identified using a multiple deprivation index and designated neighbourhood renewal areas (NRAs). Following extensive consultation, this resulted in a total of 36 areas, and a population of approximately 280,000 (one person in six), being targeted for intervention. The areas included 15 in Belfast; six in the north west (including four in the city of Derry/Londonderry) and 15 in other towns and cities across Northern Ireland.

In the seven-year period (2003–2010) some £140 million was spent on the neighbourhood renewal programme to improve social, economic and physical conditions. In addition, £77.5 million was spent in 2008–2011 on urban regeneration projects including the transformation of the city centre of Derry/Londonderry, the new peace bridge over the river Foyle, the Belfast Streets Ahead project (implemented to transform Belfast city centre) and major public realm improvements (Northern Ireland Executive, 2011, p. 17). From 2011 onwards, there is a £20 million recurrent and £6–£8 million capital funding yearly resource commitment for a four-year period.

The DSD, the lead department in government, which co-ordinated neighbourhood renewal completed an internal mid-term review of its *People and Place Strategy* that monitored progress up until 2008/09—effectively an interim evaluation of the policy to that point (DSD, 2011). The evaluation noted that the main aim of the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme was to reduce the gap between the most deprived neighbourhood and the rest of the country and flagged the importance of being 'realistic about what the programme has or might have achieved' (DSD, 2011: 3). The report concluded with a number of key findings which included:

• While there has been some narrowing of the gap between the neighbourhood renewal areas and the rest of Northern Ireland on a range of outcome indicators, the areas remain some way behind in both relative and absolute terms.
• The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy has laid the foundations necessary for future action.
• Given the scale of the problems still remaining in the most deprived areas, the regeneration programmes will not be enough on their own to achieve significant change (DSD, 2011, pp. 6–7).

The tone and substance of these conclusions suggest that the internal (DSD) evaluators were dampening expectations of narrowing the gap between NRAs and non-NRAs. The internal evaluators expressed concerns about their 'ability to assess the impact of the programme'. More specifically they argued: 'there is generally a lack of solid evidence of the overall impact of geographically targeted programmes on multiple deprivation' (DSD, 2011, p. 138). It proved impossible to secure cross-departmental buy-in to a policy which requires not only a commitment across government but also a sustained relationship with the voluntary and community sectors.

Tackling wicked problems: multi-generational poverty

With the experience of the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme in the background, the devolved government has been hugely conscious of the most pervasive wicked issue in Northern Ireland, multi-generational poverty and social exclusion. As the manifestations of the conflict reduce, there is also a need for people on the ground to see the benefits of peace, particularly in areas most affected by the terrorism. Persistent and multi-faceted deprivation has a negative impact on a whole range of outcomes, including education, health, wellbeing and economic activity, and must therefore be a priority issue for any government. Addressing these problems requires a combination of flexible and tailored measures to help people find their way out of poverty. This demands a scale of response which can break the vicious cycle of poverty manifest in poor education and health outcomes, low levels of economic activity, and, in turn, poor life opportunities for the next generation.

Poverty levels in Northern Ireland have remained stubbornly high. The trend in relative poverty has changed little over a 10-year period increasing from 21% in 2002/03 to 23% in 2011/12. The latter accounts for about 406,000 people (from a population of approximately 1.8 million). The impact of poverty on children and young people is of particular concern, given the effects of deprivation on child development and therefore life opportunities (Allen and Duncan Smith, 2009). The percentage of children in relative poverty after housing costs was 27% in 2011/12, which is 3% higher than in 2010/11. This equates to over 119,000 children (Department of Social Development, 2013).

Delivering Social Change (DSC)
In light of these high levels of poverty and failure in tackling wicked issues, the Northern Ireland

Executive is trying to find new joined-up ways to address the root causes of poverty through a new initiative entitled, Delivering Social Change (DSC). The aims of DSC are to:

• Deliver a sustained reduction in poverty and associated issues across all ages; improve children and young people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities.
• Break the long-term cycle of multi-generational problems (OFMDFM, 2012)

At its launch in March 2012, the first minister made reference to the framework as follows:

> *We are determined to work together across government to make a real impact on the divisions that have blighted our community. That is why we have developed the Delivering Social Change delivery framework. The reality is that we cannot continue to address the so-called intractable problems of poverty and social inclusion using the methods employed in the past. We have too many strategies, too many policies and too many action plans, many of which refer to work already proposed or under way and do not add real value* (Robinson, 2012).

The deputy first minister endorsed these comments and added 'it is our clear intention to develop a single, coherent action plan that will address the needs of children and young people, tackle multigenerational poverty and improve people's life opportunities' (McGuinness, 2012 **reference?**). These statements set out very clearly the intention of a new cross-departmental approach in implementing public policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion. DSC has been framed in order to focus attention on the root causes of poverty and to provide a rationale for intervening early in the life-cycle to end the cycle of multi-generational poverty.

Signature programmes
Having committed to early action, in October 2012 the first minister and deputy first minister launched six major signature programmes at a total value of £26 million. (To put this in context, Northern Ireland spent £968 million on personal social services in 2011/12.) The rationale for the programmes included: early interventions and early years programmes; measures to improve literacy and numeracy; services to support transitions from one stage of life to another (for example leaving home, family breakdown or illness: integrated delivery of public services within communities); and, joined-up planning and commissioning arrangements to prepare the way for future community planning proposals, an integral aspect of the reform of local government due in 2015.

The signature programmes were developed through rapid, intensive planning by ministerial special advisers, informed by research and good practice materials supplied by officials. The overarching aim was to provide momentum, secure some early wins for the new approach and demonstrate the ability of intensive, collaborative, cross-departmental working to produce better results in tackling poverty. There were three key considerations in the development of the programmes. First, the aim was to enhance mainstream services, providing additionality and acting as a catalyst for the reform of existing services. While £26 million is a very significant budget, it is eclipsed by the scale of the needs and therefore requires influencing the development of mainstream services. The second consideration was to stimulate a response which can make a difference at population level. While the aim was to incorporate recent innovations in the programmes (for example family resource hubs and nurture units had been piloted), the intention was not to run a series of small scale pilots.

Figure 2. Relative income poverty

Absolute poverty: An individual is considered to be in absolute poverty if they are living in a household with an equivalized income below 60% of the (inflation adjusted) median income in 2010/11. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are seeing their incomes rise in real terms.

Relative poverty: An individual is considered to be in relative poverty if they are living in a household with an equivalized income below 60% of UK median income in the year in question. This is a measure of whether those in the lowest income households are keeping pace with the growth of incomes in the population as a whole.

Rather, it was to establish additional interventions at NI wide scale. Finally, the plan was to intervene early in the life-cycle, and at a family level, to provide a basis for improved long-term outcomes.

While the approach in developing this programme was considered to be innovative, there is a significant body of practical evidence to support the different constituent parts, namely: for enhanced parenting programmes (NHS, 2013; Incredible Years, 2013, Nurture Group Network, 2013); for tailored support to assist children who are struggling at school (Ofsted, 2011); and for the benefits of social enterprise (EC, 2013). In addition, major partnerships of stakeholders have identified the need for joined-up services through the family resource hubs. The signature programmes included the following:

- *Education*: employment of 150 recently graduated teachers, without permanent employment, on two-year contracts to deliver one-to-one tuition in English and maths to year 11 and 12 post-primary school pupils who are not projected to get a 'C' grade in English and/or maths. Employment of 80 recently graduated teachers, without permanent employment, on two-year contracts to deliver one-to-one tuition to primary school pupils who are struggling with reading and maths at key stage 2. The establishment of 20 new children's 'nurture units' to improve the lives and educational attainment of children by offering support, help and guidance to targeted pupils within the school environment.
- *Health and social care*: additional funding for parenting programmes including additional health workers to support new parents. The programme will provide support for up to 1,200 parents living in areas of deprivation and will potentially employ up to 50 additional health workers. The establishment of 10 family support hubs to provide co-ordinated early intervention services in local areas to provide a range of holistic family support services.
- *Enterprise and employment*: a pilot intervention to support young people, not in education, employment or training (NEETs), which will be rolled out to 700 families through the Department of Employment and Learning. The creation of 10 social enterprise incubation hubs to encourage business start-ups in empty or derelict clusters of units and shops to reduce unemployment in local areas of deprivation (OFMDFM, 2012).

All of these programmes are being implemented.

The first and deputy first ministers intend to consolidate available Executive funds into a £118 million budget which will support the implementation of DSC. Several key planned initiatives were incorporated under the DSC rubric. These include a framework and supporting research to tackle multi-generational poverty and social exclusion; an £80 million social investment fund; compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and a childcare strategy with key actions to provide integrated and affordable childcare. In September 2013, the *Bright Start* strategic childcare framework was published which included a range of strategic actions including the commissioning of up to 7,000 additional childcare places (OFMDFM, 2013a).

Plus ça change
So, will DSC result in a shift towards more integrated public services capable to tackling wicked issues? It differs from the traditional approach where broadly based strategies are developed followed by long lists of actions. The framework was therefore designed to promote:

- More focused and effective working between political leaders and senior officials (special political advisers, ministers and civil servants) across departments through the delivery of signature programmes to achieve early results but, in the longer term, can effect system-wide policy change.
- Greater flexibility in the use of available resources to fund those programmes which are additional to existing services and which can promote more joined-up working between services in the community.
- A more positive and practical approach to tackling poverty, both in the medium and in the longer terms, and the removal of unhelpful and essentially artificial divisions between areas of policy which can obscure the root problems (for example child poverty and family-level poverty have similar root causes).

One of the earliest changes arising from the DSC framework was to hard-wire political and managerial inputs into new governance structures. Typically cross-departmental initiatives have been undertaken through groups of officials from the various government departments, either in the form of steering groups, more formal programme boards or *ad hoc* 'champions' groups. In some cases, such as the Ministerial Group for Public Health or the Cross-Departmental Group on Climate Change,

these have been chaired by ministers but, for the most part, the majority of their membership has consisted of officials.

These groups have had varying levels of success depending on the nature of the issues in question and the people involved. However, in many cases it has been difficult to maintain adequate membership of these groups over extended periods. This tends to be observed in non-attendance by members of the group and/ or substitute members attending on behalf of permanent members. This leads to a situation where those in attendance do not feel empowered to provide commitments on behalf of their respective departments.

The governance structures for DSC (see figure 3) aimed to tackle these issues in a number of ways:

- A single set of governance structures with Ministerial Sub-Committees for Children and Young People, and Poverty and Social Inclusion, at the top. One outcome has been a reduction in the number of papers issued to ministers in order to encourage a more free-flowing discussion around the issues.
- Personal leadership of the framework by the junior ministers in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).
- An overarching Programme Board, chaired by junior ministers, with membership drawn exclusively from senior officials across all key government departments.
- A mixture of political (special adviser) and official (civil servant) membership on all of the governance structures and programme boards which collectively seek to manage the programme of work.
- A single DSC Policy Board chaired by the civil service 'policy champion' and permanent secretary of the DSD.

The challenge, in progressing these initiatives, will be to take DSC into the community, moving away from an emphasis on projects and programmes towards genuine, long-term partnerships and reforms. In doing so, it needs to align with other major cross-governmental initiatives, such as the *Together: Building a United Community* which is focused on developing good relations across Northern Ireland (OFMDFM, 2013b).

Conclusions

The difference between tackling fragmented government in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK is that there is a confluence of

Figure 3. Governance structure: Delivering Social Change (DSC).
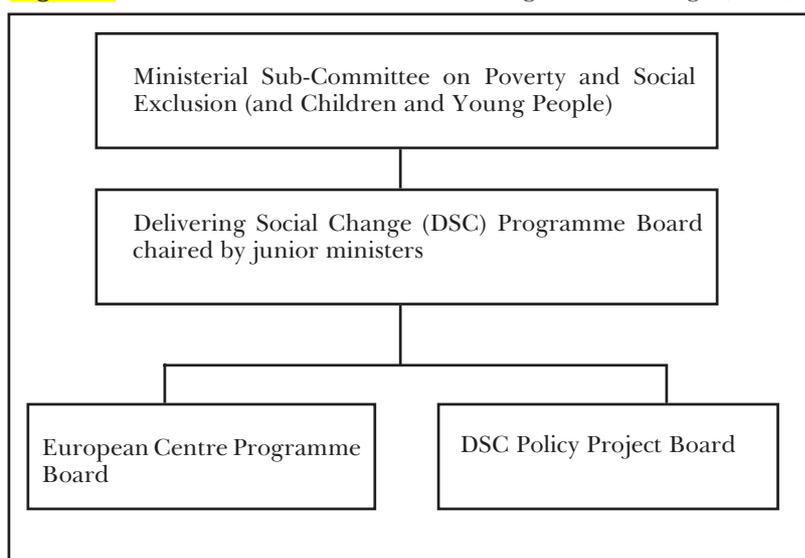
political and public administration interests. Politicians and civil servants, with advice from community stakeholders, have co-designed the policy interventions. Davies (2009, p. 94), for example, argues that approaches to joined-up government in Great Britain have tended to emphasise the technical and managerial dimensions of the challenge when, in fact, if joining-up is to occur 'the political challenge must be acknowledged openly and hard-wired into the institutional mechanism and cultural practices designed to bring it about'. He suggests 'the challenge of policy co-ordination is not solvable by eschewing politics for technocratic managerialism. On the contrary, joined-up politics is a prerequisite for effective managerial co-ordination'. Notwithstanding the significant ideological differences between the DUP and Sinn Féin in Northern Ireland, DSC has witnessed engagement with those differences and political endorsement of managerial actions in the implementation of a widespread programme of cross-departmental change. To use Davies' description: 'politics are hard-wired into the process' at both design and implementation stages in the form of the governance arrangements now in place.

There are, of course, lessons to be learned from elsewhere. Exworthy and Hunter's (2011, p. 210) research on the contribution which joined-up government made to tackling health inequalities in England, or narrowing the health gap between different social groups, was described as 'relatively modest'. In part, they attribute this to the prevailing performance culture in which targets 'invariably isolate the performance of individual organizations'. But they also generalize about the experience of

joined-up government, suggesting that it is a perfect example of 'path dependency' where it is exceedingly difficult to tackle organizational inertia 'resulting from a combination of previous decisions and existing institutions dominated by structural forces and vested interests' (Exworthy and Hunter, 2011). Research by Perri 6 (2004, p. 125) also highlights the distinction between managerial/political co-ordination at the centre and its limitations in tackling a lack of co-ordination and integration in the field. Central prescription 'can do little more than encourage an enable' an integrated approach in the face of strong bottom-up processes.

O'Flynn *et al.*'s research on joined-up government in Australia is also instructive for Northern Ireland in that they identify inhibitors or common factors which frustrate joined-up approaches as: the lack of a supporting architecture; a programmatic focus and centralized decision-making. They describe the need to support integrated services in a way which 'resets incentives, provides authority, builds long-term trusting-based relationships, and recognizes and rewards cooperative behaviors' (O'Flynn *et al.*, 2011, p. 248). They also identify tensions between vertical and horizontal relationships and over-centralization of decision-making. The lessons for Northern Ireland are useful here. While the over-arching DSC governance arrangements offer 'supportive architecture' and the political imprimatur to make significant change happen, there also needs to be sufficient decentralized decision-making to react to on-the-ground circumstances. Tensions may well arise over the lines of accountability. Senior departmental officials still have accountability upwards to their line-ministers and the Northern Ireland Assembly—joined-up government requires horizontal accountability to the DSC programme. In other words, DSC governance structures demand cross-departmental lines of accountability to tackle wicked issues which, in turn, intersect with officials' vertical departmental accountability to the minister responsible.

Delivering Social Change is Northern Ireland's adaptation of joined-up government in a very different set of political arrangements. The power-sharing devolved government has come late to the whole business of reforming public services because of its focus on resolving wider constitutional and security issues. These political arrangements have also presented more acute problems for integrated services delivery but, in so doing, have offered a real opportunity for collaborative working between politicians, civil servants and local communities.

References

6, P. (2002), *Towards Holistic Government: The New Reform Agenda* (Palgrave, Basingstoke).

6, P. (2004), Joined-up government in the western world in comparative perspective. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *14*, 1, pp. 103–138.

Allen, G. and Duncan Smith, I. (2009), *Early Intervention: Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens* (Centre for Social Justice, London).

Aughey, A. (2012), Northern Ireland narratives of British democracy. *Policy Studies, 33*, 2, pp. 145-158.

Birrell, D. (2008), Devolution and quangos in the United Kingdom. *Policy Studies, 29*, 1, pp. 35-49,

Bogdanor, V. (Ed), (2005), *Joined-Up Government* (Oxford University Press. Oxford).

Cabinet Office (1998), *Bringing Britain Together: A National Strategy for Neighbourhood Revival* (London).

Cabinet Office (1999), *Modernising Government,* Cm 4310 (The Stationery Office, London).

Cabinet Office. (2000), *Wiring It Up: Whitehall's Management of Crosscutting Policies and Services* (London).

Cabinet Office (2006), *The UK Government's Approach to Public Service Reform—A Discussion Paper* (Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, London).

Challis, L. *et al.* (1988), *Joint Approaches to Social Policy: Rationality and Practice* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge).

Clark, T. (2002), New Labour's big idea —joined-up government. *Social Policy and Society*, *1*, 2, pp. 107–117.

Clarke, M. and Stewart, J. (1997), *Handling the Wicked Issues* (INLOGOV, Birmingham).

Curran, E. (2013), Ministers operating in a political cocoon. *Belfast Telegraph* (28 October).

DSD (2003), *People and Place—A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal* (Belfast).

DSD (2011), *People and Place: A Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal—Mid Term Review* (Belfast).

DSD (2013), *Northern Ireland Poverty Bulletin 2011/12* (Belfast).

EC (2013), *Social Economy and Social Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 4 (http://ec.europa.eu).

Exworthy, M. and Hunter, D. (2011), The challenge of joined-up government in tackling health inequalities. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *34*, 4, pp. 201–212.

Incredible Years (2013), See http://incredibleyears.com/for-researchers/

James, O. (2002), Executive agencies and joined-up government in the UK. In Pollitt, C. and Talbot, C. (Eds). *Unbundled Government*

(Routledge, London).

Knox, C. (2012), The reform of public administration in Northern Ireland: a squandered opportunity? *Administration, 60*, 1, pp. 117–138.

Lijphart, A. (1968), *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (University of California Press, Berkeley).

Lijphart, A. (1975), The Northern Ireland problem: cases, theories and solutions. *British Journal of Political Science,* 5, 1, pp. 83–106.

McGarry, J. and O'Leary, B. (1995), *Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images* (Blackwell, Oxford).

NHS (2013), See http://fnp.nhs.uk/research-and-development/proven-results

NICS (2004), *Fit for Purpose: the Reform Agenda in the Northern Ireland Civil Service* (Belfast).

Northern Ireland Executive (2011), *Programme for Government 2011-15: Building a Better Future* (Belfast).

Nurture Group Network (2013), See http://www.nurturegroups.org/pages/our-impact.html

O'Flynn, J. *et al.* (2011), You win some, you lose some: experiments with joined-up government. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *34*, 4, pp. 244–254.

OFMDFM (2012), *Delivering Social Change Signature Projects* (Belfast).

OFMDFM (2013a), *Bright Start: Programme for Affordable and Integrated Childcare—Strategic Framework and Key First Actions* (Belfast).

OFMDFM (2013b), *Together: Building a United Community* (Belfast).

Ofsted (2011), *Removing Barriers to Literacy* (Manchester).

Peters, B. G. (1998), Managing horizontal government: the politics of co-ordination. *Public Administration*, *76*, 2, pp. 295–311.

Pollitt, C. (2003), Joined-up government: a survey. *Political Studies Review*, *1*, pp. 34–49.

Robinson, P. (2012), *Statements by the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the Programme for Government*. Northern Ireland Assembly, Hansard (12 March).

Sullivan, H. and Skelcher, C. (2002), *Working Across Boundaries* (Palgrave, Basingstoke).

Webb, A. (1988), Collaboration at the centre: barriers and opportunities. In Wistow, G. and Brooks, T. (Eds), *Joint Planning and Joint Management* (RIPA, London).