

How can ICT enable more joined-up, efficient and citizen-focused public services?



An overview of our findings



Executive summary

This report is the conclusion of The Work Foundation's third phase of work on public services and information communication technology (ICT), all of which have been supported by Adobe.

This work builds on the findings of the previous two phases. The first phase involved speaking to the public, frontline public service staff and senior managers to understand more about how ICT can help deliver greater efficiency, choice and quality in public services. It highlighted the immense potential of ICT to transform interactions – but also the cultural challenges in particular that needed to be addressed for this potential to be realised. The second phase followed up the Transformational Government strategy and highlighted that, despite its initial impact, more work needed to be done to ensure that its emphasis on ICT as an enabler of delivery was embedded throughout the public sector.

This third phase of work looked in more detail at how public service managers are using ICT to deliver better quality public services in three sectors: the Criminal Justice System, the National Health Service (NHS) and local government. Focusing primarily on how ICT can support better partnership working, each workshop enabled senior representatives from the public and private sector to discuss their experience of implementing successful ICT-enabled partnerships and how they overcame the associated challenges. The findings of each workshop are detailed in three reports available at The Work Foundation website¹.

This report summarises the findings of the three workshops. Whilst it notes that each sector has a different programme, works with different customer groups and has a different 'purpose', it was also clear that each faced very similar overall challenges to delivering successful ICT-enabled partnerships. The key challenges included:

- Lack of clarity about the purpose of programmes;
- A poor track record of successful ICT-enabled programmes making it difficult to create a 'case for change';
- Legacy ICT and working systems;
- Making use of scarce resources;
- Cultural barriers and lack of staff engagement;
- Poor information provided in the systems discouraging further use of those systems.

When discussing ICT-enabled programmes that had been implemented, all three sectors also identified similar enablers of success. These included:

- Clear leadership;

¹ See <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/products/publicservicesandict.aspx>

- Clear objectives and customer focus;
- Accountability and responsibility;
- Strong programme and project management structures;
- Consultation and engagement with staff;
- Demonstration of progress in a common language that helped to motivate staff;
- Building supplier relationships.

What the workshops and report findings suggest is that public sector organisations should not only seek to learn from one another within the boundaries of their sector but also seek innovative solutions in other public service organisations. Workshop participants highlighted how valuable they had found the opportunity to talk in detail about the challenges they face and how to overcome them – as well as how encouraged they were by the progress being made within their sector. Widening these conversations to work in partnership across sector boundaries could contribute even further to realising the potential that ICT has to transform public service delivery.

1. Background to public services and ICT programme

The rapidity with which Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is developing and then altering the way people live day to day is little short of a revolution. It is unsurprising then that our changing habits of interaction are feeding into our expectations of public services. If, ten years ago, a member of the public was asked to describe what a high quality public service looked like, the chances are that 'text message reminders of appointments' or 'ability to pay taxes online' would not have even featured amongst the suggestions. Today not only would they be unsurprising recommendations: they are also already a reality in some public services, with text messages being used to reduce missed appointments in the NHS, whilst online payments enable individuals to quickly renew their car tax or pay council taxes. ICT is already making a difference to the way in which public services are delivered. But to what extent is ICT realising its potential to support public services being more responsive to customer need, more efficient and overall higher quality?

This is a question that The Work Foundation has investigated for the last four years in three phases of work, all supported by Adobe. The first phase of work sought to understand more about what potential ICT has to change public services. Building on a literature review and surveys of 1,000 members of the public, 500 frontline staff working in public services and interviews with 25 senior managers, The Work Foundation reviewed the why, what and how issues connected with ICT to assess the answer to the question 'how can ICT deliver quality, choice and efficiency in public services?'. The findings from this initial year-long Public Services & ICT research project were clear: that ICT has an important contribution to make, but that too often senior managers and frontline staff are struggling to realise the potential benefits of ICT for efficiency and customer service. The main messages from this project are set out in Section Four.

Building on this work, Adobe then supported a second phase of work after the publication of the Transformational Government Strategy in November 2005. Based on a series of interviews the report reviewed the impact of the Transformational Government Strategy on the work of senior managers across the public sector. This report, whilst it praised the shift in the Transformational Government Strategy from focusing on ICT as an end in itself to seeing ICT as a process to achieve wider objectives, highlighted that key challenges remained around learning lessons from successes and failures. The key findings are in Section Four.

1.1 This report

For this third phase of work, Adobe supported The Work Foundation to contribute to filling the 'lessons learned' gap identified in previous research: the need to increase exchange of best practice from ICT-enabled projects within and between different public services. The focus of this work was on how ICT can be used most effectively to achieve broader public service outcomes, in particular **partnership working**.

This project was carried out through holding three workshops attended by senior managers from the public and private sectors, held between June and November 2007. The central theme was the question: **'how can Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilitate closer partnership working to better meet the needs of users within different sectors?'**. Each workshop focused on a different sector, however: the first on the Criminal Justice System (CJS); the second on the National Health Service (NHS); and the third on local government. These sectors were identified as particularly interesting from a partnership working and ICT perspective because of particular programmes ongoing in each one (see Section Two).

Each event focused on specific examples of ICT-enabled projects in the different sectors to enable participants to find out more about the detail of how ICT-enabled projects have been implemented and what lessons have been learned. Each workshop was then written up into a report highlighting the key themes of debate: these are available on The Work Foundation's website².

This report is the final in the series and in this third phase of work. It identifies the key themes emerging across all three workshops, particularly looking at the **challenges** of partnership working enabled by ICT and the **enablers** of successful ICT-enabled partnership projects. The report concludes by highlighting the lessons that sectors can learn from each other about running successful ICT-enabled projects.

² See <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/products/publicservicesandict.aspx>

2. Why these sectors?

Before discussing the workshop findings it is useful to have some context for each of the three sectors selected. All sectors already have in common the significant programmes of investment in ICT-enabled programmes going on within each one, as well as the growing need for partnership working. More detail on each sector is set out below.

a) Criminal Justice System

Within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) the government is investing over £2 billion to implement a modern, linked IT infrastructure as part of wider significant reforms. The programme has three phases: introducing and modernising basic IT infrastructure across the CJS (completed March 2006); establishing case management systems in the CJS agencies; and joining up all systems and allowing information sharing via the CJS Exchange.

The aim of the system is to prevent unnecessary duplication, facilitate information sharing and better case handling between agencies, and keep witnesses, victims and defendants better informed about their case.

The scale of the project (the CJS IT programme ranks alongside the NHS and the Ministry of Defence as one of the largest in the UK), the complexity of instigating change across numerous inter-dependent agencies and organisations, each with their own institutional cultures, and the way that these changes have been managed make the CJS an interesting case study of the challenges and successes of implementing government ICT programmes.

With so many different agencies involved, the CJS has some important lessons in managing the varied working practices and demands of partners. More importantly, Criminal Justice IT, the organisation overseeing the IT programme, has not simply addressed the technological issues but has demonstrated a realistic approach to business planning, rigorous benefits management, close partnership working and a commitment to managing organisation change that provides relevant learning for other parts of the public sector.

b) National Health Service

The NHS National Programme for IT is, at a cost of £12.4 billion, the largest outsourced IT project from the public sector ever undertaken. It came into operation on 1 April 2005 with the creation of NHS Connecting for Health to oversee delivery of the National Programme for IT. Its objective is to support the NHS in delivering better, safer care to patients by changing the way information is managed in order to improve the quality of the 'patient's journey' through the

NHS. It aims to do this using new computer systems and services that link GPs and community services to hospitals, whilst maintaining the critical business systems at a national level that were previously provided by the former NHS Information Authority.

The Connecting for Health Agency's mission is:

- To provide patients with more choice and control;
- Create a health service designed around the patient;
- Provide health professionals and patients with better access to information;
- Help health professionals deliver better patient care;
- Provide a service fit for the 21st Century.

This vision is predicated upon increased participation of NHS staff in the decision-making process and successful implementation of key policy changes as it is predicted that more efficient communication will enhance clinical performance.

The aims are ambitious, and the challenges associated with realising those aims are appropriately high. Numerous inter-dependent agencies, organisations and professions, each with their own cultures, need to work together to share information more effectively to 'join up the patient journey'. Whilst it tends to be the less successful projects that are publicised – and it is undeniable that the programme has faced serious problems – there are lessons to be learned from these experiences, as well as insights from best practice for the NHS itself and for other sectors. These include lessons around:

- Communicating with many different stakeholder groups;
- Managing culture change;
- Managing information;
- Engaging with staff.

c) Local government

Local government has no single overarching programme for ICT but as the holder of multiple policy responsibilities at the local level, practitioners need to use ICT to implement a wide variety of projects, from creating Children's Services to ensuring that waste management is operating effectively. What links most projects in local government, however, is the common goal of trying to deliver a better result for local communities. Recent national policy drivers of partnership working using ICT have included:

Why these sectors?

- **Local Government White Paper 2006:** This stipulated that local citizens and communities must be consulted and involved in the design and delivery of local services, meaning their needs must be understood. Collaborative working between local authorities was also signalled as a means of improving effectiveness and efficiency through new and existing partnerships, including Local Area Agreements, Multi Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships.
- **The Comprehensive Area Assessment:** The new proposed performance management framework for local authorities will focus on outcomes for the local area as a whole and its citizens, whether it is secured by the local authority alone or in partnership, taking into account their views and experiences. This means that partnership working and effective use of ICT to enable sharing of data and information will be even more vital to achieving local authority targets in the future.
- **The Varney Review:** The report, published in 2006, identified opportunities to make public services more efficient, accessible, convenient and responsive to the needs of citizens and businesses. Particular recommendations include the need to improve information and transaction channels for citizens, reduce duplication and better understand customer need, with technology seen as a vital tool.
- **Comprehensive Spending Review 2007:** The CSR announced a tight settlement over the next three years, meaning local authorities will be tasked with improving public services within increasingly tighter budgets.
- **Service Transformational Agreement:** This set out a programme of action to change public services to meet the needs of people and businesses, with customer satisfaction monitored by reducing avoidable contact and building better online services.

Local government has been working in partnership using ICT for some time, meaning there are a number of lessons for other sectors in their approaches.

Whilst all the sectors face distinctive challenges, as the rest of this report shows there are also some common themes and challenges.

3. Challenges of partnership working

Before highlighting how challenging partnership working can be it is worth highlighting the benefits of working in partnership. Joined-up government is a phrase used so frequently that it becomes easy to overlook its meaning, and the significant benefits of closer working between different public service organisations. The nature of the benefits can vary: from quality of service, such as knowing about Mr Smith's payment history when he phones about council tax; to efficiency, such as visiting Mrs Edwards' house to fill in her benefits claim form there and then, avoiding multiple visits; to both, when bereaved Mr Thomas needs to update multiple public service organisations that his wife has died. But the fact that benefits can be derived from joint working remains the same.

Yet there are significant challenges associated with 'joined-up government' or 'partnership working' as we have termed it here. All too often public service organisations already have the information that other organisations need, but ways of working combined with ICT systems can make it almost impossible to share the data in a timely way. In all the sectors we investigated during the workshops it was clear that there were some common challenges around partnership working and making better use of ICT to support this. These common themes were:

3.1 Lack of clarity about purpose of programme

All three workshops highlighted the challenge of identifying clear objectives for ICT-enabled programmes. For example, in the criminal justice and local government workshops the involvement of so many partners meant there were competing priorities and differing targets that projects had to achieve. As described in the local government report: *'even trying to work together to meet similar outcomes can require very complex arrangements and reporting structures to be put in place, as well as dealing with very different ICT systems.'*³

Within the NHS workshop it was agreed that there was a lack of clarity about who the customer is that made it difficult to design ICT systems. For example, if the ICT system was designed for the patient it would look very different than if designed for the staff – but which would deliver the best outcomes for that patient? As one participant highlighted, *'Technology is just a tool, you only notice when it goes wrong. It's like a pen – if it works, you don't say how good your pen is, it's only when it doesn't work that you notice it.'*⁴ The participant went on to highlight that it is staff using the ICT, whilst patients only care about the results and not about how staff achieve them. The debate was not resolved in the workshop but participants acknowledged that ultimately it did need to be resolved as it was vital to the success of ICT programmes to know who they should be designed for.

³ Local Government report, p. 16

⁴ NHS report, p.15-16

3.2 Poor track record of successful ICT-enabled programmes

One of the key challenges noted in all the workshops was the fact that, as one participant in the Criminal Justice workshop noted, *‘Success, IT and government are not words that are often linked.’*⁵ For example, by 2004 the Criminal Justice IT programme (CJIT) was experiencing delivery slippage and reduced benefits realisation. In the NHS there has been a well publicised lack of success in implementing the NHS IT programme, and in local government a similar cynicism prevailed: there was a sense that many doubted the public sector’s ability to deliver a successful change programme when ICT was involved.

3.3 Legacy ICT and working systems

All three sectors highlighted the challenges associated with legacy IT systems that make it more difficult to implement the new centralised system. As the NHS workshop highlighted, one of the main problems is that people are starting from different points but trying to get to the same place. Some NHS trusts have implemented individualised systems that are more functional than the nationally purchased system, meaning that NHS trusts could be sacrificing gains already made if they become part of the Connecting for Health agenda. Similarly, the Criminal Justice system has *‘old systems and even older buildings’*⁶ making it challenging to join up information.

3.4 Making use of scarce resources

All three workshops highlighted the *‘under-investment in change programmes across government and a lack of understanding of the complexity of end-to-end processes.’*⁷ Whilst it was acknowledged that the systems would eventually save money, participants highlighted that more investment was needed in the cultural change required to ensure ICT-enabled systems delivered (see below). In the NHS and local government, some participants suggested that the financial constraints being faced by some trusts/local authorities meant that many were reluctant to invest sufficient money in ICT-enabled projects to ensure that they were successful.

3.5 Cultural barriers and lack of staff engagement

As one person put it in the Local Government event, *‘the technology is perhaps the easiest part: the cultural barriers are more difficult to overcome. It is a macro business case issues [and you] have to look very carefully at it.’*⁸ This was acknowledged in all the sectors. If the case is not made as to why people should change the way they work, it is difficult to engage people in making those changes. For example, despite the duplication in the Criminal Justice System –

⁵ Criminal Justice report, p. 11

⁶ Criminal Justice report, p. 11

⁷ Criminal Justice report, p. 11

⁸ Local Government report, p. 15

some members of police staff had to re-key information up to 17 times over – many members of staff were used to local desk based ways of working and were not persuaded of the case for change. In all three sectors it was acknowledged that making the case for change by talking about the impact on customers, and supporting older staff who may be less familiar with technology, was vital if the ICT-enabled systems were to make any difference.

3.6 Poor information provided

The challenge of ensuring that the information within the ICT systems is of sufficient quality to encourage others to use it was also highlighted in all three workshops. For example, as one participant in the NHS workshop commented, some of the databases do not contain up-to-date information as staff are not persuaded to use them, and then when people do use them the information is not up-to-date and so they are discouraged further.⁹

⁹ NHS report, p.17

4. Enablers of partnership working

The previous two phases of research highlighted a number of enablers of partnership working. In the first phase, we identified the following enablers of successful ICT-enabled projects:

Box A: Main findings from the first phase of the Public Services & ICT research¹⁰

- **ICT projects must support business objectives:** Many ICT-enabled projects fail because they have not defined what the ICT is for and if it is appropriate to achieve these objectives. Too often, ICT drives rather than enables the project.
- **No clear vision of high-quality services:** There is a lack of clarity about what high-quality public services look like, and an urgent need to articulate a clear vision of 'better' services to public service workers and citizens alike.
- **Many people remain ICT sceptics:** The case for ICT has not yet been made effectively: two-thirds of frontline managers do not see ICT as integral to future reforms. E-enthusiasts need to advocate where ICT has benefits – and where it does not – in language relating directly to public service objectives.
- **Leadership is key:** Leaders of organisations must take responsibility for understanding and managing the potential of ICT, and managing the risks of its failure.
- **Customer segmentation matters:** Customers must be segmented to respond to the needs of different demographic groups and to the type of service. For example, people are more willing to pay taxes online than to discuss medical issues. Fit-for-purpose ICT must then be used for different services: the flashiest technology is not always the most appropriate.
- **Procurement must be improved:** Improved procurement and more effective supply chain management are critical to ICT delivering efficiencies.
- **Staff engagement is vital:** Public services continue to miss a trick by not listening to staff when designing and implementing ICT projects.
- **Communication is fundamental to the success of ICT-enabled projects:** The public needs to be encouraged to use ICT-enabled alternatives, such as online services, where possible. Staff should be made aware of how ICT can benefit their work and be given the space to realise these benefits.
- **More debate is needed:** ICT will transform information management in public services, and there is an urgent need for a high-quality debate about the implications this has for customer service and for privacy.

¹⁰ All reports can be downloaded from <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/products/publicservicesandict.aspx>

Reviewing, six months after publication, the impact that the Transformational Government Strategy had upon implementation of ICT-enabled projects reinforced these findings and also highlighted the following lessons:

Box B: Main findings from the second phase of the Public Services & ICT research¹¹

- **Managing risk:** Government is too eager to take risks when it comes to ICT-enabled projects. There is an urgent need to: be clear about what ICT projects are trying to do; keep the scope focused – avoiding ‘scope creep’; get the balance between innovation and tried-and tested-technology right.
- **Piloting projects:** This needs to be done rigorously, against clear measures of success, and lessons must be learned and implemented from these pilots and from ongoing evaluations.
- **Using tried and tested methods:** Trying to achieve too many outcomes from one project increases the likelihood of failure. The likelihood of success is increased if, where possible, projects make use of tried-and-tested technologies with proven business benefits.
- **Segmenting customers:** Understanding the needs of different groups at different stages of different government interactions.
- **Understanding the value of ICT:** Leaders need to recognise and value ICT as a crucial organisational tool, and investment needs to be made in the professionalisation of ICT services and solutions.
- **Engaging stakeholders:** Consulting and engaging key stakeholders early on and throughout the process.
- **Bridging the chasm between policy and delivery:** Ensuring there is clarity about the feasibility of delivering different ICT-enabled projects and that any changes to policy during a project are informed by an understanding of the impact the changes will have on the chances of delivery.
- **ICT projects must support business objectives:** Many ICT-enabled projects fail because they have not defined what the ICT is for and if it is appropriate to achieve these objectives. Too often, ICT drives rather than enables the project.

The report also made ten recommendations to government to address these needs, including a recommendation that government should publish ‘ICT accounts’, there should be greater clarity about desired policy outcomes and project objectives, and that partnership working for ICT-enabled projects should be improved.

¹¹ All reports can be downloaded from <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/products/publicservicesandict.aspx>

This third phase of work has further reinforced some of these lessons, but also identified some more detailed enablers of its own.

4.1 Clear leadership

Leading change from every level emerges as vital to the success of ICT-enabled projects in all three sectors. As the local government report highlights, *'clear leadership, both political and managerial, and vision are fundamental to the success of collaborative projects and partnership working using ICT'*¹². Participants in the criminal justice workshop concurred, arguing that high level recognition of the value of ICT is essential, as is investment in the professionalisation of ICT services and solutions.

Vital too is ensuring that recognition of the importance of ICT is embedded throughout the organisation. As the NHS workshop highlighted, existing organisational behaviours that seemingly have nothing to do with the programme can still cause it to fail. For example, in some NHS studies nurses felt that the new technology exaggerated hierarchy as they did not have access to the same information as the doctors, which impeded them from doing their jobs correctly.

4.2 Clear objectives and customer focus

*'Having an agreed vision across all partners with outcomes focused on customers'*¹³ was cited in the local government report but seen as critical in all three sector workshops. Different processes existed in different sectors, however, from which each other could learn. For example, the Criminal Justice System has a rigorous portfolio management process, with an Independent Portfolio Unit that appraises investment decisions to ensure there is a clear line of sight from strategy to execution of ICT-enabled projects. The Unit challenges the presumptions of the business cases presented to it by evaluating each proposal against available data. In the local government sector, on the other hand, participants made use of sub-regional agencies such as London Connects and Kent Connects to broker relationships, offer advice and solutions and help ensure that objectives are clear.

4.3 Accountability and responsibility

All three workshops highlighted in different ways that leadership and clear objectives were supported by having clear lines of accountability and responsibility within the organisation. The NHS in particular highlighted this as important, arguing that, *'when it is clear who is accountable for ensuring the programme works, and who is responsible for day-to-day implementation, it is*

¹² Local Government report, p. 17

¹³ Local Government report, p. 17

*much more likely that change will happen at all levels of the organisation.*¹⁴ Accountabilities and responsibilities for consultation and communication were seen as important to establish early on.

The local government workshop also highlighted that setting clear objectives and ensuring transparency and accountability between partners helped to build a culture of trust that supported greater partnership working.

4.4 Strong programme and project management structures

Having effective project and programme management systems in place emerged in different forms in all three workshops. For local government, participants highlighted the importance of having a clear definition of partnership working, agreed roles and responsibilities, a clear timeline and realistic deadlines. For the NHS participants it was particularly about ensuring that issues such as consultation and communication were identified and managed early on.

The Criminal Justice System had the most centralised approach to project management, with the Independent Portfolio Unit appraising investment decisions and setting up integrated, active, repeatable processes to evaluate projects and help ensure they are based on sound economic analysis and are achievable. The CJIT also created a proven services database against which new projects were tested: their experience is that projects that fall below a certain standard tend not to deliver, as well as highlighting that shorter timescales are more likely to be achievable. They say this rigorous approach to project and programme management as one of the most important contributors to their success.

4.5 Consultation and engagement with staff

Staff consultation and engagement were also seen as integral to successful ICT-enabled projects in all three sectors. For the NHS in particular, their experience was that the imposition of new technologies that had not undergone formative, iterative evaluation meant they did not readily fit with working practices and so were not fully integrated into ways of working. Participants also argued that culture change is vital, and that this requires staff engagement through training, developing and educating people, as well as changing attitudes through identifying project 'champions' who have seen the benefits of the ICT-enabled programmes. These champions were most useful in the NHS when they were both at senior and more junior levels. Some of the most successful examples of culture change in the NHS cited in the workshop involved multi-disciplinary support teams, 360 degree feedback, organisational analysis and working with the most vocal opponents.

¹⁴ NHS report, p.22

4.6 Demonstration of progress in a common language

Focusing on customer needs when discussing changes to working practices was seen as the most helpful way to demonstrate progress and encourage change to happen in the three workshops. In local government, their experience was that focusing on systems that helped staff to understand the public's needs and do a better job helped encourage change to happen. In the NHS, having a common language about 'helping the patient' was seen as the best way to engage with staff and get a wider conversation about how working practices could and should change. In the Criminal Justice System, rigorous portfolio management and summary reports allow CJIT to demonstrate what is working well and providing value for money, as well as giving them the licence to deliver programmes effectively and to change the process by adapting to new political objectives and ways of working.

4.7 Building supplier relationships

Suppliers were also seen as important components of a successful ICT-enabled project and examples of good practice were cited in the workshops. In the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), for example, a user assurance group was put together of staff from a cross section of roles and responsibilities to focus on the requirements of an ideal IT solution before going out to tender. The CPS partly attribute the results of the work to this move: 70 per cent of lawyers now use the case management system to its fullest extent. In the NHS, participants highlighted the importance of good relationships between trusts and NHS suppliers, with clearly drawn up contracts, clarity over the objectives of each system and process and good relationship management highlighted as particularly important. For local government there was a need to think about how they could work together to learn lessons and reduce the cost of procurement.

5. Conclusions

At first glance the Criminal Justice System, the National Health Service and local government might not appear to have a great deal in common, and certainly the tone of conversation in each of the workshops we held with these groups was quite different. So too were the details: in the Criminal Justice System workshop the focus was on ensuring information was managed effectively; in the NHS workshop there was a fierce debate about who the customer was and how to manage patient care most effectively; whilst in the local government workshop it was about delivering a wide range of services in the most efficient way possible. Yet what our three sector-specific workshops highlighted was the level of similarity in the issues that each sector faces when it seeks to use ICT to support better partnership working.

All three sectors faced challenges around:

- Lack of clarity about the purpose of programmes;
- A poor track record of successful ICT-enabled programmes making it difficult to create a 'case for change';
- Legacy ICT and working systems;
- Making use of scarce resources;
- Cultural barriers and lack of staff engagement;
- Poor information provided in the systems discouraging further use of those systems.

All three sectors identified similar enablers around:

- Clear leadership;
- Clear objectives and customer focus;
- Accountability and responsibility;
- Strong programme and project management structures;
- Consultation and engagement with staff;
- Demonstration of progress in a common language that helped to motivate staff;
- Building supplier relationships.

The detailed examples of best practice provided in the sector reports suggest that organisations should not only seek to learn from one another within the boundaries of their sector but also seek innovative solutions in other public service organisations. Workshop participants highlighted how valuable they had found the opportunity to talk in detail about the challenges they face and how to overcome them – as well as how encouraged they were by the progress being made within their sector. Widening these conversations to work in partnership across sector boundaries could contribute even further to realising the potential that ICT has to transform public service delivery.

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