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GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH

The structure of analytical support within government

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The structure of analytical support within government

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Context

This paper reviews different approaches to organising analytical support in central government departments, looking into the drivers and experiences of structural change within departments. It also examines what has been learnt from the implementation of different structural models and non-organisational solutions to the effective supply and demand of evidence, giving recommendations on how things can be improved in the future.

Using data provided by the Government Social Research (GSR) Heads of Profession (HoPs), comments from the Government Economic Service (GES), Government Operational Research Service (GORS) and the Science in Government team (SIG), and the 'Analysis for Policy' report produced by GSRU (Campbell et al, 2006), this review details the different structural models currently used in departments and the pros and cons of each. Pros and cons are set out in terms of the analysts' professional skills; the benefit or otherwise to policy/delivery colleagues; and resources more generally. Other, non-structural, changes that have been made to improve the relationship between analysts and policy makers are also detailed.

Conclusions as to the most important features of analytical support are then presented, alongside recommendation as to how things could be improved. The different models currently adopted by each of the departments who responded to the review are detailed in Annex A.

Background

Since the turn of the century, there have been large changes in how analytical support is given to departments, resulting in a number of models each trying to more effectively ensure co-ordinated and focused evidence for policy.

A number of factors led to these changes, most importantly the series of initiatives that came out the Cabinet Office, starting with the 'Modernising Government'¹ agenda in 1999, which detailed three aims of modernising government: ensuring that policy making is more joined-up and efficient; that public service users are the focus; and that public services are high quality and efficient. This was followed by 'Professional Policy Making for the 21st Century'² later that year, which again emphasised that all government should be joined-up and that policy making should be based on evidence of 'what works'. The civil service was to make best use of evidence and improve the accessibility of the evidence available to policy makers.

These documents were followed by 'Adding It Up'³ in 2000 which focused specifically on improving analysis and modelling in central government. Adding It Up set out a programme for creating the conditions in which rigorous analysis is routinely demanded and delivered. Many of these conditions related to the structures of analytical support in departments and the relationships between analysts and their policy colleagues:

¹ <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm43/4310/4310.htm>

² <http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/docs/profpolicymaking.pdf>

³ <http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/su/adding/coiaddin.pdf>

- *Leadership.* Ministers and senior officials have a crucial role in expecting and demanding soundly based analysis in support of policy. Policy officials also need to know what analysis can offer.
- *Openness.* All work needs to be openly available.
- *Planning.* Analysis needs to be jointly planned by policy makers and analysts to ensure present and future policies have a robust analytical underpinning. Central departments have a crucial ‘challenge’ function in ensuring that policies and programmes in departments are underpinned by good analysis.
- *Spreading Best practice.* Government should be better at knowing what it knows by: making better use of pilots; making better use of government data; communicating across government about available data; and by better networking between specialists in government.
- *Employing the best people.* To obtain the best analysis, you need the best analysts.

These issues all influenced thinking about the structures of analytical support in government and suggestions as to the types of structural model that might be effective were made in the report.

More recently, the Professional Skills for Government (PSG) initiative⁴ has influenced thinking on the shape of analytical support. PSG is a key part of the government’s delivery and reform agenda, designed to ensure everyone in the civil service, wherever they work, has the right mix of skills and expertise to enable departments to deliver effective services. One of the four key skills for all officials – regardless of whether they are in a policy, operational or specialist role – is ‘analysis and use of evidence’; yet another incentive to ensure analysts and policy makers are working as effectively as possible together.

Importantly, PSG states that all staff will be expected to have the professional skills and experience needed to do their job well, giving professional recognition to those skills and experiences previously associated with ‘generalists’ and ‘specialists’, and giving each a parity of esteem.

Behind all of this is the continuing delivery and reform agenda across government,⁵ which focuses attention on efficiency and responsiveness, and the delivery of better services to the public. Again, these are powerful drivers for departments to reappraise their systems and structures to ensure they best match their customers needs.

The purpose of change

In response to these initiatives, it was evident to many policy makers and analysts that change was necessary. ‘Adding It Up’ had highlighted a number of different problems with the effective production and use of evidence. These related to:

- weak demand for good analysis, caused by:
 - external pressures, such as EU agreements, manifesto commitments
 - a difference in the policy and analytical timetable
 - a reluctance amongst policy officials to collect data that might provide unwelcome results

⁴ <http://psg.civilservice.gov.uk>

⁵ www.civilservice.gov.uk/archive/delivery_and_reform/about_delivery_and_reform/index.asp

- a lack of demand from policy officials
- a lack of oversight and interest in the 'bigger picture'.
- weak supply of good analysis, caused by:
 - failure of adequate long-term planning, resulting in long-term work being crowded out by short-term priorities
 - weak planning for cross-cutting issues
 - poor joint-working between policy makers and analysts
 - specialist skills being in short supply.

Importantly, Adding It Up stated explicitly that:

"some departments 'bed out' their specialists into the policy management line (to greater or lesser degrees) to help promote joint working. Departments that have bedded out analysts agree that this has improved joint working. Other departments believe that there may be a price to be paid if it leads (possibly in the longer-term) to the erosion of specialist skills."

'Adding It Up' stated that joint working was necessary to ensure successful analysis, and directly encouraged departments towards structures that facilitated the face-to-face communication between analysts and policy makers. A number of different models were presented, from fully merged analysts who are functionally indistinct from policy makers, to bedded out specialists under a higher grade specialist for more technical and longer-term work. The report acknowledged that the models presented were a simplification, and stressed that departments will need to retain some central capacity to provide advice in areas where there is not the demand for a dedicated resource.

In conclusion to these points, Adding It Up recommended that departments should:

"review policy on bedding out once per Parliament with a view to maintaining the right balance between central expertise and bedded-out effectiveness"

"ensure that where analysts continue to form part of central specialist units, they also form part of an integral part of the work of policy teams; and that where analysts are bedded out, appropriate professional training and development programmes are in place."

In making such structural changes, Adding It Up and other initiatives were attempting to ensure departmental analysis became fully integrated with the policy process and acted as a driver for policy development. A key goal was for analysts and evidence to be readily available to policy officials, asked for when considering policy options and used as effectively as possible to produce the most efficient policy response. Analysts were also to provide a 'challenge' function, with certain structures better facilitating analysts' ability to challenge aspects of the policy process and policy decisions. Interestingly, Adding It Up focused on organisational structures, but did not pay particular attention to cultural issues.

In sum, in order to meet the challenges of the delivery and reform agenda, most guidance recommended, and most departments agreed, that both cultural and structural changes were required to ensure better services, better tailored for the public's needs. In terms of analysis, evidence needed to be readily available; used effectively; and challenge as well as support ongoing policy.

Customers for this review

The impetus behind this current review was to investigate what has been learned through such changes. Two main groups supported this work: the Co-ordinating Research and Analysis Group (CRAG)⁶ and the GSR HoPs both indicated interest in understanding more about the pros and cons of different structures and the sharing of good practice. There is also obvious relevance to the work of GES, GSS and GORS, who all expressed an interest.

CRAG agreed that there was a need to facilitate learning about the effective provision of analysis for policy development by ensuring, for example, that experiences, both of success and failure, were gathered and shared and that ideas for improvement were trialled and evaluated. Findings from such work could then feed into CRAG's three aims:

1. improve policy making by promoting cross-departmental, cross-discipline approach to identification of, and R&D response to, government priorities
2. oversee and join-up, where appropriate, activities currently undertaken by separate analytical groups
3. provide a stronger voice for the analytical community in government and strengthen opportunities for promoting the demand for high quality evidence.

Importantly, one of CRAG's key motivators is to join up the supply and demand side of analysis for policy, one of the key themes in 'Adding It Up'.

Social Research HoPs within departments had also observed that a wide number of different models and structures had been tried, but that little attempt has been made to share the learning of the success or otherwise of these attempts.

Most importantly for both CRAG and the HoPs was the fact that, although much change has occurred, there is no empirical evidence of the effectiveness of any of the structures currently being used. In addition, no attempt was being made to compile and share learning in this area. This review is the first step towards gathering together the evidence base.

Sources and methods

A request was made to all GSR HoPs asking them to contribute to this review. Responses were received from Defra, DWP, the Scottish Executive, HMRC, Department of Health, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Home Office and DCLG.

Comments and input have also been received from the Government Economic Service and the Science in Government team in the Office of Science and Technology.

The review details the various structures used across government and records the opinions of some of those using these structures. As discussed above, a number of different models are currently being used across government, from a central analytical function with analysts structurally distinct from policy officials, through to embedded teams of either single disciplinary or multi-disciplinary analysts within a policy division to a single analysts completely embedded within a policy team.

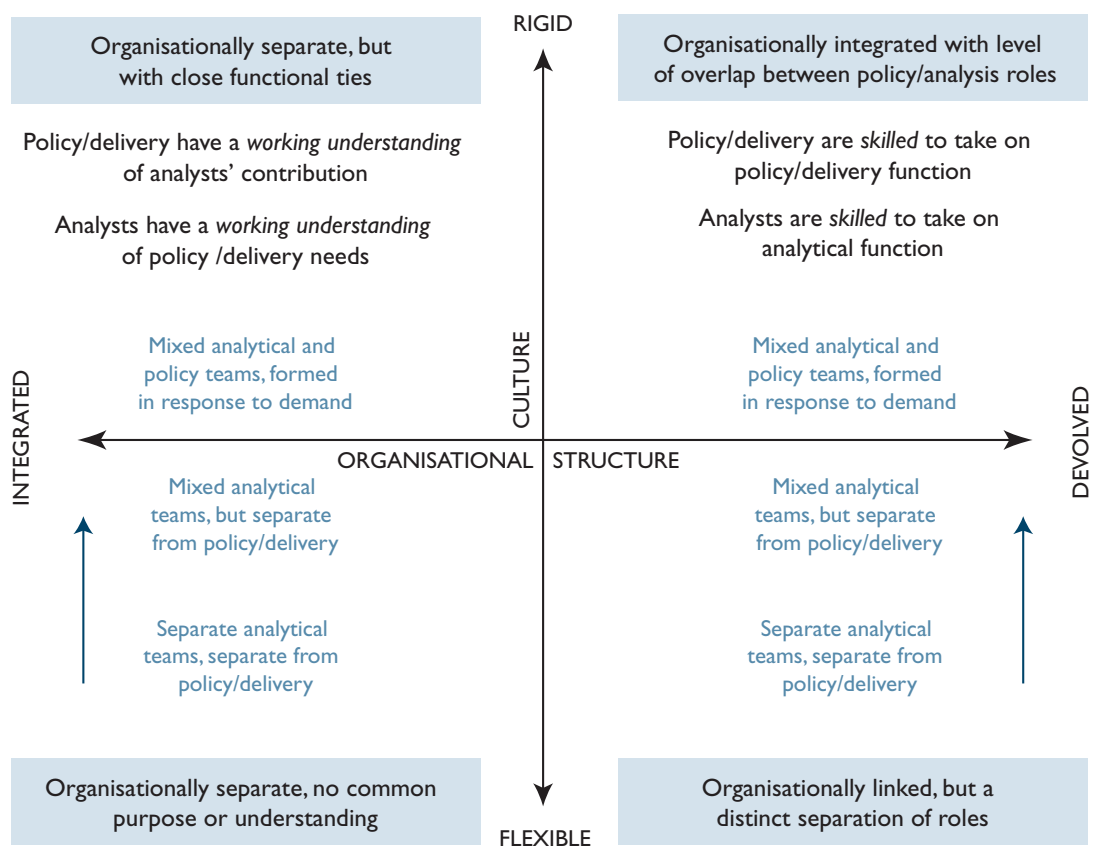
⁶ In October 2006, CRAG merged with the Permanent Secretary Management Group (PMSG)'s Strategy Sub-Group, to ensure that decisions about cross-government strategic policy are co-ordinated with strategic analysis. The findings of this review remain relevant to the merged Strategy Sub-Group.

2

Different organisational models

As discussed above, a number of different models are currently being used across government, from a central analytical function with analysts structurally distinct from policy officials, through to embedded teams of either single disciplinary or multi-disciplinary analysts within a policy division to a single analysts completely embedded within a policy team.

'Adding It Up' suggested that the best structure would depend both on the type of analytical input required and the policy demands of the project. As discussed in this report, there is a need for the appropriate structures, but also an appropriate culture. An illustration of the relationship between structure and culture can be seen below.



A more detailed description of the most commonly used models identified by this review are detailed below.

(1) Central analytical function

Historically, most departments had a central analytical function, in which analysts, either in multi-disciplinary teams or more commonly in teams of their own discipline, were located centrally and used as a resource for policy colleagues. Policy colleagues from across the department could call upon this resource when they required analytical support. Such a

system provides flexibility to reallocate resources as departmental priorities change, but organisational separateness means that close working relationships with policy colleagues can be a challenge.

There has gradually been a move away from this model in many departments, primarily because it can be perceived as distancing the analysts, and therefore the evidence, from the policy process. It has also been perceived negatively in that communication and good working relationships between analysts and policy makers can be made more difficult by the distance. However, this model continues to be used by some, particularly departments that are undergoing a great deal of change or have a small analytical resource. The flexibility offered by a central analytical function means that limited resources can be allocated where they are most needed and that reallocation can be achieved relatively easily.

(2) Co-location

There are two primary ways to try to ensure analysts and those making and delivering policy have a close, co-operative working relationship. The first is simply to place them beside the policy-makers, so they are in close proximity to them, but the management structure supporting the analysts remains in a central function.

Such an arrangement enhances the operation of the central analytical team by ensuring their work is policy-facing and relates directly to the priorities of their policy colleagues. In the majority of cases, the structure of the analytical team will replicate the structure of the policy team.

(3) 'Embedding'

The second way to ensure a close, co-operative working relationship is to 'embed' the analysts in the policy division, so they are an integral part of the policy team and report to a management structure ultimately made up of policy makers.

There is a move away from a central function or even co-location in many departments towards embedding. The drive for this has been to try to ensure that evidence forms an integral part of all policy and delivery processes at all stages and for analytical support to be as efficient and focused as possible, directly relating to the key priorities of the department's policies. Embedding is seen by many to enable analysts to be more proactive in identifying and answering the key evidence needs of policy makers, but its effectiveness is clearly highly dependent on the numbers, status, experience and skills of those who are bedded out and the effectiveness of the relationships they form.

Three main types of embedded structure were identified.

(3.1) Group of analysts from one specialism in policy division/group

In this model, those from each analytical discipline – social research, operational research, statistics and economics – remain in teams made up solely of colleagues from the same discipline. Such teams are commonly headed by a Grade 7, with oversight from a Grade

5 and sometimes a Grade 6. These senior staff, especially the Grade 5, are commonly responsible for a number of teams of many disciplines and are therefore responsible for joining up the evidence across the disciplines.

This model allows analysts to retain their professional integrity and ensures they are directly supported by peers in the same team. However, there can remain a sense of distance between analysts from different specialisms and between analysts and policy makers. Managing customer relationships can remain difficult.

(3.2) Multi-disciplinary teams in policy division/group

These are fully integrated cross-disciplinary teams with shared business planning and goals with their policy colleagues. This model simply takes the previous model one-step further by having analysts work in cross-disciplinary teams (in some cases including policy makers) to ensure all aspects of a piece of work are covered. Such a model was seen by many to break down the barriers to involving analysts in policy development, as they were physically present at all stages of the process and shared the same business objectives. Analytical colleagues are involved in the same meetings and policy discussions and can become involved in giving analytical advice very early on in the process.

However, this is not to say that this model is risk-free. There are examples of such a model failing to deliver a joined-up approach, with communication between the analysts, and analysts and policy makers remaining difficult, despite the structure.

(3.3) Single analyst in policy division

The simplest type of 'embedding' in terms of structure, but one of the most difficult to execute effectively, is for a single analyst to join a policy team to support the development of their work. This is usually in response to a specific policy need. The embedded analyst can either be quite junior, and situated within the policy team for a limited time, or else be more senior and fully integrated, effectively taking on the role of a policy maker with an expertise in analysis. In this latter situation, the analyst becomes a 'technical policy maker': acting as a professional policy maker, but with the additional skills of being able to commission, analyse and interpret evidence, thus performing a dual function.

Such a model gives the policy team an obvious analytical resource that they can call on whenever necessary. It also maximises the potential for analysis to be at the centre of any policies developed or implemented. However, there are concerns about such a model, primarily relating to the isolation of the lone analyst. It is more difficult to retain professional integrity under such circumstances, particularly for more junior staff, and that there is a danger of 'going native' and losing their additional specialist skills. It is also very difficult for such a lone analysts to think strategically and in a cross-cutting way. In practice, this model is not very commonly used, and when it is used, it works best if a strong central professional support team is in place or as a good career development opportunity for more experienced analysts.

Pros and cons of structural models

Across departments, there is a general feeling that embedding analysts has been welcomed by policy makers. However, there is no robust, empirical evidence as to whether different models lead to:

- more or less effective deployment of analytical resources
- greater or lesser awareness by analysts of the policy/delivery role or of policy/delivery professional's understanding of what analysis has to offer
- a greater or smaller impact of evidence on policy
- adequate professional support for analysts
- a compromising of the integrity of the evidence produced.

There are three primary ways the structure of analytical support can impact, either positively or negatively: in terms of the impact on the analyst; impact on the policy/delivery colleague and impact on the departmental or unit resources.

Analysts

Analytical work needs to be robust and fit for purpose; analysts themselves need to be supported and developed in their role.

Policy/delivery colleagues

Policy colleagues need timely work that meets their needs and facilitates better policy making and delivery; the need to understand how analysis can support and inform their work.

However, there is no single customer for analysis, and different customers can have different or even competing needs. Demand and use of analysis can come from a policy division, a directorate, a department and from a broader cross-government focus. Bedding out can result in the loss of a strategic overview of analytical needs and can, by default, encourage a siloed approach, and make analysts 'challenge' function more difficult. Identifying and then joining up these competing demands can be a very difficult task, and make the production (and funding) of evidence gathering more difficult. It also makes flexibility to reallocate resources, as priorities change, more difficult.

Resources

There are, of course, resource issues in terms of analytical support; in terms of the analysts, the work they do and the ability to respond to policy priorities, possibly at short notice. This can be a complicated area; a dedicated analytical resource within a policy division can allow that policy team to prioritise and assign resources where they feel it is necessary, but could perhaps not be the most efficient way of distributing analysts across the department or the best structure to respond to changing departmental priorities.

What evidence is available in terms of the pros and cons of different analytical structures is summarised below, looking at the pros and cons of the three main structural models, looking specifically at the issues around the analysts; their policy/delivery colleagues and resources. It must be noted that the pros and cons are not necessary products of each structural model, but can happen if the will is, or is not, there. Knowledge and culture are as important as organisational structure. Organisational structure alone does not guarantee effective deployment of the analytical function in the policy and delivery function.

Summary

	Pros	Cons
Central analytical function	Professional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesion, leadership, guidance and professional development within each analytical discipline is facilitated. • Ability to be able to have strategic, cross-cutting overview of departmental work/priorities. • Prioritisation typically occurs at a higher level than with embedded units, resulting in more strategic, coherent work programme. • Depending on the relationship with policy colleagues, the separateness can facilitate the 'challenge' function. • Enables analysts to retain an independent voice. • Flexibility of response as departmental priorities change. • Integrity of analysis is easier to maintain. 	Professional <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance to policy colleagues can lead to a poor awareness of their needs. • Distance to policy colleagues can result in evidence-gathering without focus and/or applicability and/or relevance. • Depending on the relationship with policy colleagues, the 'challenge' function may be more difficult. • Early involvement in policy process can be more difficult. • There can be tension between analysis and political/policy imperatives.
	Policy/Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability for a small number of analysts to support a relatively large team of policy makers. • Independence of analysts from policy process. • Independence can result in analysts more easily playing the role of a 'critical friend' and challenging decisions. • Ability to engage in longer-term work that is not an immediate priority for policy, but might be in the future. • Facilitates the provision of a broader view of the evidence base. 	Policy/Delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication between analysts and policy leads can be more difficult. • Getting analysts to understand the policy issues, and policy makers to understand the contribution analysis can make, can be more difficult. • Analysis can be thought of as an add-on late in the process, rather than an integral element of a policy throughout its lifecycle. • Early engagement in the policy/ delivery process can be more difficult. • The active engagement of analysts in policy development/review may be more difficult.
	Resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to quickly adapt and respond to changing business focus. • Staff can easily move between teams, without major structural changes. • Economies of scale: fewer analysts cover a broader range of work. 	Resource <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence can be produced and not used because of poor communication, resulting in poor value for money.

	Pros	Cons
Embedded single/multi-disciplinary team in policy division/group	<p>Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the policy imperatives can lead to more focused evidence gathering. • Analytical programme development can be easier. • Co-ordination can lead to more focused work. • Analysts’ policy understanding increases. 	<p>Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohesion within each analytical discipline can become more difficult; leadership and guidance can be more difficult. • Continuing development and existing analytical skills can suffer. • There can be a lack of cross-cutting work, both within the department and across other departments. • Analysts can be drawn into non-analytical work at the expense of analysis.
	<p>Policy/Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysts are included in policy discussions from an early stage and can be invited to contribute to all aspects of policy development and delivery. • Better integration of analysts into policy and delivery. • Policy leads can be more involved in the development and delivery of analysis, resulting in a better fit between their needs and the evidence provided. • Policy division heads are more likely to take notice of evidence. 	<p>Policy/Delivery</p> <p>There can be a lack of a strategic overview, joining up different policy ideas and understanding the read-across within and beyond the department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There can be a lack of long-term strategic work, with analysts simply responding to the immediate needs of their policy colleagues. • There can often be a lack of impetus to look at the ‘bigger picture’.
	<p>Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical function is used more and more directly reflects policy needs. • Policy teams can allocate resources as needed, rather than bidding for resources from a central unit. 	<p>Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There can be duplication, with different policy divisions commissioning very similar work. • A number of embedded analysts is likely to be more expensive than a central, shared resource. • There is less flexibility in responding to changing priorities by moving analysts around the directorate/department.

	Pros	Cons
Single analyst in policy division	<p>Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysts develop an in-depth understanding of the policy making/delivery process, and vice-versa. As a lone analyst, the range of work required is typically broader than when working in a team. Development of policy/delivery skills. 	<p>Professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The analyst can suffer professional isolation. The policy pressures can be very strong on a lone analyst, and there can be difficulties retaining professional integrity. Quality assurance can be more difficult. Continuous professional development can be hindered.
	<p>Policy/Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is focused specifically on the policy needs of the division. Analytical support is available at all stages of the process. An analyst turned policy maker can be in the best position to efficiently specify and use evidence. 	<p>Policy/Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without professional support, a lone analyst can quickly become deskilled. A lone analyst does not represent all analytical professions, and so might not be adequately representing some parts of the evidence base. A lone analyst can lack the capacity to look beyond the immediate needs of the policy division to longer-term strategic or cross-cutting work.
	<p>Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A lone analyst is a dedicated resource to be used by the unit to fit in with their priorities. An individual with both policy and analytical skills will be more cost-effective. 	<p>Resource</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is less flexibility in moving the analyst to areas of higher priority within the directorate/department.

3

Non-organisation solutions

The discussion of different structural models does not mean that the only solutions to the challenges of the more effective use of analysis – better supply and demand for good quality evidence – are structural. There are also a number of potential non-structural solutions that could help achieve these goals.

Cultural change

Structure alone will not automatically create a culture of close partnership working between analysts and policy makers. Simply making different analysts sit next to each other and their policy colleagues will not automatically lead to better integration and a shared understanding of what needs to be done and what skills each can offer. Structure will not automatically lead to better policy making or delivery. What is more important is the *culture* of both the analytical and policy making/delivery communities; as highlighted in PSG there should be a parity of esteem between those bringing different skills and experiences, and analysts and their policy/delivery colleagues should be working in partnership to produce the most appropriate solution to a problem.

In order to achieve a cultural change, there needs to be a recognition of the value of cross-discipline working. Analysts from all disciplines need to understand the contribution that those from other disciplines can make and see themselves as part of a team. They need to be able to identify when a cross-disciplinary approach is necessary and do the ‘joining-up’ themselves. They need to be prepared to actively engage in the policy process, even when comprehensive evidence is not available; to challenge; and to be flexible and accept that the full benefit of evidence will only be realised when they do achieve that flexibility. Even when this is not possible, and analysts do not have the skills to do this, it is essential that someone plays this ‘knowledge brokerage’ role, and effectively communicates evidence to those that can use it.

Equally, policy and delivery colleagues need to work to break down barriers between policy/delivery and analysis and see the relationship as an equal partnership. They need to expose early policy thinking to analytical review/input and be prepared for – even welcome – challenge. It is important that policy/delivery colleagues take joint responsibility for ensuring a strong evidence base, as set out in PSG.

Within-departmental and cross-departmental co-ordination

Cross-departmental and within-departmental co-ordination were seen to be easier within smaller departments or with a smaller number of players. For example, in the Scottish Executive, the Grade 5 Heads of Analytical Service Divisions (of which there is one per major department) meet regularly with the Head of the Analytical Services Group and Heads of the Professions (social research, operational research, statistics and economics) to identify and co-ordinate shared activities. Thus, regardless of the structures within the department (there are some multi-disciplinary teams and some groups of single-specialism analysts in the Scottish Executive), there are people to take an overview of all the analytical work in a department and share it with others in a similar position.

With the CRAG theme work⁷, there was evidence that with embedded teams, there is the potential for the analytical support to become so policy-focused that there is a danger of not being able to see beyond the immediate policy concerns towards the more general, cross-government issues or the longer-term future issues. It is essential that analysts are able to conduct both immediate, policy-focused work, but also work that will lay the foundations for cross-government and longer-term thinking.

One common solution in departments, and a solution recommended by Adding It Up, is to have fully embedded teams within policy divisions, with a small, central, cross-cutting team which can act as a central resource for all the bedded-out analysts and can provide the strategic overview and join up all the bedded-out teams. Equally, many departments now have a central, strategic team to ensure the identification and co-ordination of high-level strategic work.

Heads of Profession

Heads of Profession (HoPs) within departments for each of the analytical disciplines have a key role to play in ensuring policy makers are adequately supported and challenged by the available evidence. All the structural responses listed above will require support and guidance to make them work. As discussed in 'Adding It Up', embedded analysts will require strong links to HoPs, and tailored training and continued development in their specialism. It is essential that such analysts while being integrated, retain their professional identity and professional skills. Equally, HoPs require the resources and authority to ensure the strategic and day-to-day needs of departments are being identified, prioritised and met. However, this can be a particularly difficult task for non senior civil service HoPs.

Training and development

There are a number of training needs for all government analysts. There is a continuing need for continuous professional development (CPD) and career progression, as well as the more general needs of increasing their policy focus identified in Adding It Up, which in turn feeds into the CPD requirements of the PSG initiative. There are also issues around succession planning, and the development requirements associated with this. It is also important for there to be some read-across between the different specialists in Government such as social researchers, operational researchers, economists and statisticians. These issues become even more profound when analysts are decentralised, bedded out or have a dual role as a 'technical policy maker'.

Equally, the training and guidance given to policy makers as a result of PSG will be influenced by the structure of the division that they are in. As stated in many publications, including Adding It Up and Professional Skills for Government, policy makers need to increase their knowledge of analytical skills; increase their use of analysis in their everyday work; and increase their understanding of what specialists have to contribute to the policy process. Whatever the final structure, it is clear that there is a need to retain a cadre of well-qualified analysts, who work closely and in synergy with their policy and delivery colleagues.

⁷ A paper was written on the learning points from the CRAG theme work up to summer 2006. A copy can be obtained from Siobhan Campbell (siobhan.campbell@hm-treasury.x.gsi.gov.uk)

4

Conclusions

Policy and delivery colleagues clearly value dedicated analytical services which are often provided by an embedded team. They value having a 'one-stop shop' in terms of analytical support, rather than discussing an issue with any number of different types of analyst, and a 'joined-up' response across analytical professions. This places the onus on analysts to fully understand the different contributions of their colleagues in other analytical disciplines and work closely together. Policy/delivery officials appreciate the fact that the analytical support they receive is dedicated, and so they are able to prioritise their own resources. Co-location was also seen to encourage a greater understanding of the respective skills and contributions of the different professions, both between analysts, and between analysts and policy leads.

However, there are other models, and there are advantages and disadvantages to each. Three key factors were identified as crucial: the impact on the analyst themselves and their professional capacity and outputs; the impact on the policy/delivery team and whether they were being given timely, useful analytical support; and the impact on the resources available to the policy team and to the department more generally. Addressing one factor almost inevitably means compromising on another.

Business drivers and size and make-up of the analytical resource available are key determinants of the most appropriate structural model to be used, but in all cases effective communication and joint working are crucial. Communication can be facilitated by organisational structure, but structures are no panacea and effort has to be directed towards ensuring a shared understanding of the pressures and abilities of both the policy makers and the analysts. Even within a shared structure, analysts and policy leads can continue to work largely independently without effective communication and a culture of evidence use and joint-working. Ultimately, a successful working relationship between analysts in different disciplines and between analysts and policy/delivery colleagues will come down to the culture and attitudes of each of these players. The respective roles and skills need to be explained and understood, and a partnership with shared goals formed. Even once a relationship has been formed, this needs to be managed and dialogue maintained.

Weaknesses in each structural model need to be identified and managed. For example, the isolation and lack of professional support and development associated with bedded out analysts can be aided by a strong line of accountability to, and support from, departmental HoPs.

Balance needs to be achieved between the competing factors. For example, the inflexibility of embedded models – such structures make it more difficult to move staff resources around the department in response to departmental priority changes – must be acknowledged and strategies to deal with this problem, perhaps by establishing short-term reactive teams, or a strategic analytical resource, developed. Such a team would also deal with the criticism that embedded teams are less able to take a strategic approach to evidence gathering.

Recommendations

Analysts

1. Analysts need to have strong professional support, continuing professional development in their specialist area, and opportunities for progression. Some structures facilitate this better than others (centralised teams), others will need the input and support of a central team and/or HoP to overcome any deficits.
2. In a bedded out structure, HoPs need to have both the resources and authority to fulfil their role and to identify and respond to strategic needs.
3. As recognised in Adding It Up, the 'challenge' function is a key aspect of the work of analysts. Structures and cultures need to be able to accommodate analysts questioning and challenging policy decisions based on the available evidence. The skills of constructively challenging should be built into analysts' continuous professional development and job specification.
4. The rigour and independence of analytical products is essential: government analysis needs to be trusted. Whatever structure is used, mechanisms for ensuring rigour and independence need to be developed and made explicit and analysts must be given clear responsibility for quality, with professional quality at a senior level.
5. Training and support needs to be available to analysts in policy focus and awareness; professional development; potential contribution of other analytical specialisms; and working in multi-disciplinary teams.

Policy colleagues

6. There are a number of levels in which analytical support is useful: at a division/directorate level; at a department level; and at a government level. Analysts and policy makers need to be aware of the potential competing demands this can create. Project initiation of any analytical service should always look to the breadth of stakeholder and the potential overlap with other government or departmental initiatives.
7. Continuing work on the PSG skills of 'analysis and use of evidence' is necessary to ensure the effective use of evidence throughout the policy making process.
8. Adding an 'evidence' heading in all submissions can help ensure that policy makers are constantly reminded to reflect on the evidence base of decisions and consult with their analytical colleagues.
9. Programmes of work – both policy and analytical – should always be developed as a collaborative exercise between policy makers and analysts.

Resources

10. There is a constant need to respond to change within government. The structure of analytical support needs to accommodate this and build in some flexibility. This could be through having a central analytical function; creating project teams for specific policies; creating a floating, responsive team, or reviewing priorities in relation to analytical allocation at regular intervals.

11. There is no single appropriate structure for analytical support. It is likely to be the case that a mixture of structures (for example a central unit supported by embedded units) will meet a departmental-wide need.
12. The structures used to give analytical support should be frequently reviewed. As part of this exercise, the costs of different structures should be considered, as well as the likelihood that changing priorities will require a structural upheaval.
13. Regardless of structure, a strategic oversight function needs to be retained.

In addition to these key factors, work in an additional two areas would also help facilitate the joining up of the demand-and supply-side of analysis, by ensuring that both culture and function support policy needs.

Culture

14. With any structure there is an overriding need for a robust culture of professional analysis and science, coupled with strong leadership such that all analysts are supported and have the opportunity to develop and grow.
15. Policy makers need a culture of partnership working between analysts and policy/delivery colleagues.
16. The key to a successful working relationship between analysts and between analysts and policy makers is communication. Regardless of structure, without efficient communication and a shared understanding of objectives and outcomes, there will be a breakdown between the demand and supply of evidence.
17. There needs to be a culture of joined up analysis and cross-profession and cross-departmental working, both within and across departments. Heads of professions need to lead from the front on this, as do groups such as CRAG.

Quality of evidence

18. Evidence should always be fit for purpose and of the highest quality, and organisational structures should focus on encouraging provision of the most needed, highest quality and timely evidence available.
19. There needs to be clearly defined responsibility for quality assuring analytical work at an appropriately senior level and processes to ensure that proper oversight of quality can take place.
20. There should be a balance between analytical work that is short-term and responsive and more strategic work. Structures and processes should be devised to ensure that strategic needs are identified and analytical work is conducted to answer these needs.

5

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Annex

Department	Model
Department for Communities and Local Government	<p>Central Analytical Services Directorate, with 3x multi-disciplinary policy-focused teams and 1x multi-disciplinary strategic team.</p> <p>In addition, a number of bedded out analysts, some in teams of the same discipline, some in multi-disciplinary teams.</p>
Department for Food and Rural Affairs	<p>Two structures:</p> <p>1x Central Analytical Directorate</p> <p>1x Bedded out analysts in a multi-disciplinary team</p>
Department for Work and Pensions	
DWP Work	Mixed policy/analyst divisions
DWP Pensions	Multidisciplinary analysts directorate
Department of Health	<p>2x central multi-disciplinary teams supporting 2x directorates (mainly economists and OR)</p> <p>Bedded-out single analysts (mainly economists)</p> <p>1x central R&D multi-disciplinary (including scientists) directorate</p> <p>1x independent statistical information centre</p>
Food Standards Agency	<p>Central analytical support Division, headed by a Grade 5 economist. The Division provides central analytical support, covering both social and natural sciences. Branches cover economics, statistics, OR, scientific/analytical methods, exposure assessment and research policy. Work is currently underway to develop a Social Research branch. The Division reports to the Chief Scientist.</p>

Department	Model
Health and Safety Executive	The Chief Scientist, GSR, GES and GSS HoPs all sit within a central Corporate Statistical and Analytical Services Directorate. Analysts form multi-disciplinary teams which provide dedicated support to policy teams. Each support team is co-ordinated by a G7 analyst. Oversight is provided by the Directorate management team, which includes the analytical HoPs.
HM Revenue and Customs	A mixed team of analysts work within a central Analytical Team. The teams within Analysis are responsible for different parts of the policy work and work closely with them. The 'bedded-out' model has been proposed and rejected.
Home Office	Teams of the same specialism sit within a larger multi-disciplinary analytical team which in turn sits within a policy/operational directorate. Quality assurance for all analytical work lies with the Director of Research, Development and Statistics and the Chief Scientific Advisor.
Welsh Assembly Government	Primarily embedded multi-disciplinary teams.
Scottish Executive	Chief Researcher, Chief Statistician and Chief Economic Advisor, all SCS, sit within a central Analytical Services Group in the Office of the Permanent Secretary. This group is led by the Head of the Analytical Services Group.
SE Education Department	Grade 5 head. 3 x multi-disciplinary analytical services units each headed by a Grade 6. AS Units reflect policy groups within the department.
SE Enterprise and Lifelong Learning	Grade 5 head. Separate analytical teams (research x1, statistics x3 and economics x3) each headed by a Grade 7.
SE Health Department	Grade 5 head. 3 x multi-disciplinary AS teams headed by a Grade 6. AS teams organised by theme.
SE Finance and Central Services	Grade 5 head. Separate analytical teams (research x2, statistics x2 and economics x2) each headed by a Grade 7.

Department	Model
SE Development Department	Grade 5 head. Separate analytical teams each headed by a Grade 6.
SE Environment and Rural Affairs	Grade 5 head. Separate analytical teams (research x2, statistics x2 and economics x4) each headed by a Grade 7. Some Grade 6 leadership.
SE Justice Department	Grade 5 head. 3 x multi-disciplinary teams, matrix managed. Each team headed by a Grade 6.
SE Transport Department	Grade 5 head. 1 x multi-disciplinary team headed by a Grade 6..

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