

Lessons are routinely extracted from Gateway and other Assurance Review final reports and published via the CoE web portal. These lessons are intended to support and assist those involved in current Programmes and Projects, as well as those embarking on new initiatives, by learning from the experiences of others.

The lessons below have been extracted from the final reports of reviews conducted during the first half of 2015-16. These emergent lessons have been anonymised and edited in order to recast any constructive criticism, focusing less on the particulars of the programme or project involved, and more on programme and project management best practice. Lessons are listed under the following themes:

Benefits	Communications	Planning	Resourcing	Scope
Business Case	Configuration Management	Procurement	Risk	Stakeholders
Change	Governance	Programme & Project Management	Roles & Responsibilities	Value for Money

These lessons will be added to the web portal’s separate themed PDF files at the end of 2015-16, for ease of reference.

Benefits:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	One of this project’s objectives is <i>“To ensure the replacement service improves upon the functionality of the existing service”</i> , although some stakeholders may question if the new system provides such an improvement...	... with such a large and disparate number of stakeholders and a constrained budget, it would be difficult to realise this objective benefit fully and the project team need to ensure they can achieve this objective for the majority.
Business Case:		
	The project is supported by a Strategic Outline Case (SOC), and the next iteration of the business justification will be development of an Outline Business Case (OBC)...	<p>...the key purpose of this will be the evaluation of options through a long- and short-listing process, to arrive at a preferred way forward underpinned by a robust statement of future requirement/demand...</p> <p>...the Project Manager should manage and monitor the production of the OBC, however, a suitably experienced resource should be responsible for all drafting, collation and presentation of data.</p>

Change:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	This programme of work will need continuous management attention as the organisation changes, and it would benefit from a change management programme approach...	...to ensure that the impact is maximised and integrated, where appropriate, with other changes occurring in the organisation.
Communications:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	There does not appear to be a regular customer forum for all service users so there is a risk that the key messages are not getting to everybody...	<p>...some aspects of the key messages and intentions are still not clear, leading to potential misunderstandings about the Programme...</p> <p>...communicating a vision, strategy and plans set in the context of likely resources would prevent further misunderstanding.</p>
Configuration Management:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	With the expectation that the contract will be signed and the project will move forward to the delivery stage, it is essential that key project management artefacts are kept up to date...	...while these might appear to be housekeeping matters, the project would benefit from key project documentation having formal version control, complete with authors and dates.
Governance:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	The current arrangements are based on running as a large project rather than as a complex programme with multiple stakeholders, interdependencies, and strategic outcomes...	<p>...adopting a programme approach would allow the current Sponsor Group to take the role of Programme Board, providing high level co-ordination and oversight and focused on achieving an integrated set of outcomes from the various projects...</p> <p>...key stakeholders are under-engaged, and there is a need to bring external delivery partners into the governance framework.</p>
Planning:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	The Programme recognises the need to develop an overarching programme plan with all key milestones identified...	...input from projects will facilitate creation of this plan; alignment of activities across all projects; and identification of the resulting critical path.

Procurement:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	As the contract for service provision could not be awarded without significant negotiation of potential solutions and commercial models, it was concluded that the 'Competitive Dialogue' procedure was the most appropriate route to market, rather than the 'Open' and 'Restricted' Procedures...	<p>...the contract award was seen as particularly complex and there was difficulty in specifying the legal and/or financial make-up of the project...</p> <p>...and the market for these services is relatively mature yet small, which - coupled with the business critical nature of the requirement - also make it difficult to present the most appropriate way of allocating commercial risk and legal responsibilities without dialogue with prospective suppliers.</p>
Programme and Project Management:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	Both the organisation and its sponsoring department are involved with numerous similar projects, however, there is no formal process for identifying the learning from earlier projects to inform later ones...	...Post Project Evaluation (PPE) reports and/or Gateway 5 Review reports (focusing on Operational Review and Benefits Realisation) for completed projects should provide a useful source of information on these matters.
Resourcing:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	Confidence in successful delivery will be greatly enhanced when key personnel are removed from business as usual operations to devote to full time project work...	...and given an adequately resourced Project Management Office (PMO) support team.
Risk:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	Risk management appears to be in its early days of development - further work is required to embed risk management into day to day project and programme activity...	...risk reporting should inform the Programme and Project Boards and clearly identify risk owners who are best positioned to manage the respective risks.

Roles and Responsibilities:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	<p>The position of SRO is the most senior leadership position on the programme, and it is this role that is ultimately accountable for delivery of the programme's benefits...</p>	<p>...in large scale government programmes it is not unusual to find part-time SROs, who take the role alongside other responsibilities, working alongside full-time Programme Directors who provide day to day leadership over many aspects of the programme...</p> <p>...even the best project leader will be unable to realise a step change in delivery unless they have substantial authority and financial control conferred upon them that links responsibility for successful delivery with the authority to direct operations.</p>
Scope:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	<p>Unused contingency funding and optimism bias were used - following approval - to extend the scope of the project to include various additional facilities, and while there is a sense of direction, there is no business plan, nor sense of urgency for development of the additional facilities...</p>	<p>...there is a draft high level 'project timeline' for the extended scope of the project, but no formal project plan, and no firm dates for practical completion, testing, start up and planned ramp up toward envisaged usage of the additional facilities.</p>
Stakeholders:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	<p>The full ramifications of constraining the project at this stage by short-term financial considerations, while possibly understood, needs to be presented to all key stakeholders in order to limit and manage their expectations...</p>	<p>... there is no formal stakeholder engagement strategy as such, however, it is clear that active engagement is taking place at a number of levels.</p>
Value for Money:	Key Lesson	Additional Detail
	<p>The full life cycle costing of each option may not have been taken into account when making decisions, which appears to be a common error...</p>	<p>... there is a lack of consensus on how to achieve the right balance between capital expenditure on environmental sustainability measures, and the corresponding environmental and revenue benefits.</p>