

**Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister**

**Interim Evaluation of New TSN**

**Process Evaluation**

**April 2003**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

This report assesses the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to drive forward and support the implementation of New TSN. In particular, it includes an examination of:

- the central roles of OFMDFM in driving forward implementation of the policy, particularly the role of the New TSN Unit;
- the roles of the cross-Departmental groups;
- the roles of Departments for driving forward New TSN and for representing their Departments on the relevant cross-Departmental groups.

## 1.2 Model for Assessing Implementation of New TSN

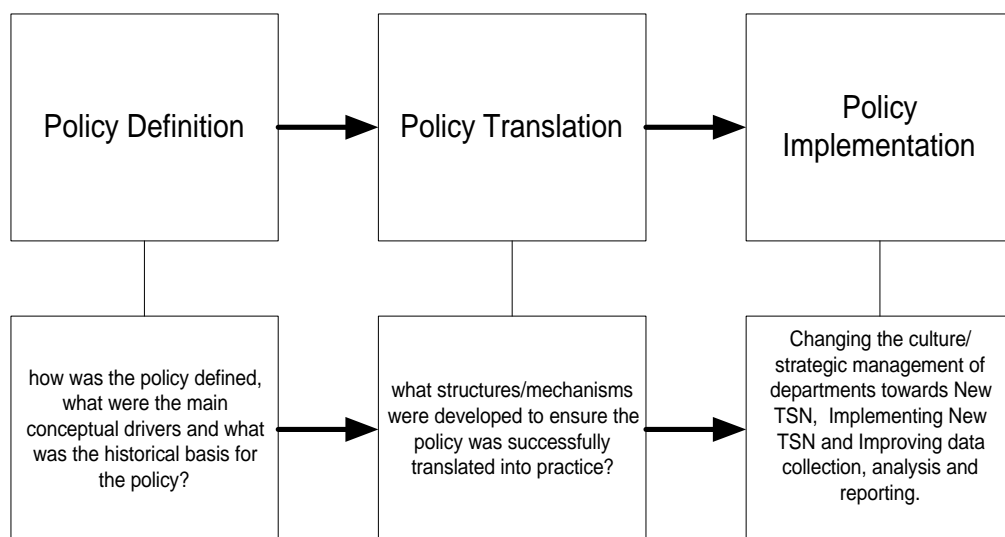
Figure 1.1 defines the three levels against which the effectiveness of implementation is assessed. Our assessment on each of the three areas is based on the following methods:

- review of relevant documents and literature;
- interviews with key personnel within departments; and
- focus groups with middle managers across the NICS.

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Figure 1.1  
**Model for Assessing Effectiveness of New TSN Processes**

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Source: Deloitte & Touche

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## 1.3 Policy Definition

Assessing the effectiveness of implementation requires an examination of the key attributes of the policy, notably in relation to how the policy was defined. New TSN has its roots in the previous policy of Targeting Social Need, the Partnership for

Equality White (March 1998) paper and the recommendations of the Employment Equality Review (December 1997). Significantly, the White Paper indicated that New TSN should have **a particular focus** on combating the problems of unemployment and employability, as well as inequalities in other areas such as health, housing and education.

The employability- unemployment focus of the policy was based on the view that ‘obtaining work is often, indeed, the most effective way to counter the effects of social disadvantage on unemployed people and their families’. Whilst primacy was given to the employability-unemployment dimension, Partnership for Equality recognised that ‘some forms of inequality and need must be targeted more directly and would not be adequately addressed by a strategy which dealt solely with unemployment. Departments must ensure that available resources are appropriately targeted on people and areas in need and on key inequalities in fields of health, housing and education’.

### **1.3.1 Defining Social Need and Social Exclusion**

Whilst early policy documents defined social need as ‘socio-economic need or disadvantage’, Making It Work noted that by ‘social need we mean poverty – in all its forms’. Unemployment, it argued, was the most profound cause of poverty, hence the focus of New TSN on tackling unemployment and employability. New TSN recognised that poverty tended to be associated with other types of need, such as poor health, low educational achievement and fewer choices across a range of areas including housing and general access to services. Making it Work states that ‘getting a job and increased employment does not address all the problems that disadvantaged people face’. In spite of providing examples of the key issues to be tackled, the policy did not specify policy objectives or targets in relation to changes in unemployment, educational attainment levels or health inequalities. Evidence provided by OFMDFM suggest that this decision was taken as a result of a dearth of relevant data and also because, it was argued, government had no control over these key issues.

In relation to social exclusion, New TSN noted that although social exclusion is related to poverty and joblessness - ‘it is more than that.... It is about being cut off from the social and economic life of our community’. The Promoting Social Inclusion dimension of New TSN sought to reduce social exclusion through identifying the factors that contributed to exclusion.

### **1.3.2 Other Key Definitional Issues**

In addition to core definitional areas, policy documents clearly stated that New TSN would not have a budget and that it would be focused on ‘areas, groups and individuals in greatest social need’. It was further argued that the policy would also contribute to the erosion of community differentials between the two communities. The community differentials issues, which was a key driver behind TSN, resulted from evidence that demonstrating that the Catholic community fared less well on a number key policy fronts, notably in relation to unemployment rates.

The following section summarises key findings in relation to how the policy was defined. Our report on the implementation of departmental action plans provides further detail on key definitions of the policy on a department by department level.

## **1.4 Key Findings on Policy Definition**

### **1.4.1 Social Need and Social Exclusion**

For a number of Departments, the definition of social need was very wide and tended to have a limited association with tackling poverty as defined in Making it Work (DRD, DoE). In such cases, social need was broadly defined as ‘social disadvantaged among people, areas and groups’. For other departments, tackling social need was a central element of their activities (DETI, DHSSPS, DSD, DE and DEL) and the definition of social need was quite clear cut and could be directly related to definitions contained within Making It Work. In such cases, departments noted they targeted social need before New TSN – whereas other departments had either a limited interface with socially disadvantaged areas, groups or individuals and their statutory remit had limited association to addressing social need or poverty (DoE, DRD, DARD and DCAL). The issue of ‘relevance’ is examined below, however, in terms of an overall assessment, Departments defined social need at three levels:

- general headings including ‘disadvantage experienced by people, groups and areas in Northern Ireland’; ‘multiple disadvantage in all NI District Council Areas’ and ‘accessibility and mobility’;
- specific types of disadvantage including ‘the 1% of houses that do not have a public water supply’, and ‘unemployment among 18-24 year olds in receipt of JSA for 6 months and those 18-24 year olds eligible for early entry into New Deal’; and
- information required by Departments to monitor New TSN impacts eg ‘any correlation between socio-economic disadvantage and gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age, marital status, having dependants’; ‘lack of existing information on New TSN expenditure and programme outputs and/or impacts’ and ‘low levels of awareness of how TSN can contribute to consumer protection and inadequacy of current data on New TSN specific consumer issues’.

### **1.4.2 Relevance of Policy**

The issue of how the policy was defined had a direct effect on the applicability or relevance of New TSN within departments. The focus on employability and tackling unemployment resulted in a number of departments being automatically defined as at the forefront of the policy (DE, DEL, DETI, and DSD). For these departments, demonstrating the additional impact of New TSN was difficult because they were ‘in the business of targeting social need before New TSN’. DHSSPS found itself in a broadly similar position although it was not focused on employability or

unemployment, rather the critical issue for the Department was that it had always targeted health need.

The relevance issue was closely related to assessing the ‘additionality’ of New TSN. In other words, what activities/initiatives were a direct consequence of the New TSN policy and would they have happened without the policy. The ‘additionality’ question was of even greater significance to departments that were tied to the delivery of UK wide initiatives, notably DEL and the SSA of DSD.

In the case of all other spending departments (DARD, DCAL, DoE, DRD), the heavy focus on employability and tackling unemployment raised issues, particularly in relation to assessing how they could measure the impact and effectiveness of their interventions and also in respect of addressing inequalities. Our review of evidence further highlights the difficulties encountered in respect of measuring the impact on reducing unemployment and increasing employability. For a number of these departments, Promoting Social Inclusion represented the most relevant and meaningful element of New TSN and it provided some departments with an ‘opt out’ of linking activities to poverty reduction. As with the other elements however, it was recognised that assessing social inclusion effects was difficult and that processes need to be set in place to define and monitor the contribution of activities to promoting social inclusion.

Table 1.1 summarises our assessment of the relevance of New TSN to Departments and we have also included an assessment of the additionality (ie, what activities/initiatives were a direct consequence of the New TSN policy and would they have happened without the policy). In relation to our categorisation of relevance, high relevance relates to being able to have a direct impact on areas, groups and/or individuals and low relevance means that there is limited potential to directly impact on areas, groups and individuals.

**Table 1.1**  
**Assessment of Relevance and Additionality**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Additionality</b>
DARD	Employability- Low Unemployment – Low Other Inequalities - Low PSI – Medium	Low
DCAL	Employability- Low Unemployment – Low Other Inequalities - Low PSI – Medium	Low
DE	Employability- High Unemployment – High Other Inequalities - High PSI – High	Medium
DETI	Employability- High Unemployment – High Other Inequalities - Medium PSI – Medium	High
DOE	Employability- Low Unemployment – Low Other Inequalities - Low PSI – Medium	Low
DFP	Employability- Low Unemployment – Low Other Inequalities - Low PSI – Low	Medium
DEL	Employability- High Unemployment – High Other Inequalities - High PSI – High	Low
DHSSPS	Employability- Medium Unemployment – Medium Other Inequalities - High PSI – High	Medium
DRD	Employability- Medium (Transportation only) Unemployment – Low Other Inequalities - Low PSI – Medium	Low
DSD	Employability- Medium Unemployment – Medium Other Inequalities - High PSI – High	Low (SSA) – High (Other)
OFMDFM	Employability- Low Unemployment – Low Other Inequalities - Low PSI – High	High

Source: Deloitte & Touche

### 1.4.3 Focus Group Findings on Policy Definition

Focus groups were designed to examine a range of issues, including questions focused on assessing how the key elements of New TSN were understood. The following summarises the key findings that emerged from the focus groups in relation to policy definition and these tie closely with our assessment of evidence.

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Table 1.2  
**Focus Group Findings**

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#### **Policy Definition**

- there was mixed levels of understanding as to how social need is defined and identified within Departments. Some participants were well informed on mechanisms for measuring social need. Others were unable to outline the process for finding out what ‘social need’ means in the context of their particular business area;
- participants felt that the emphasis of New TSN tended to focus on the employability aspects of New TSN and less priority was accorded to the other two objectives of reducing inequalities and Promoting Social Inclusion (PSI);
- there was a sense in some quarters that this is an extremely complex policy area – overly complicated perhaps, and that it needs to be simplified if it is to be understood and implemented effectively throughout the system;
- a number of participants raised the issue of the ‘spectrum of applicability’ of New TSN and indicated that they felt that New TSN had little or no relevance to their business area. Some suggested they were ‘scraping the barrel’ to come up with New TSN objectives which really were not terribly relevant or likely to have any positive impact in real terms; and
- some participants suggested that the activities contained Departmental action plans were already underway before New TSN and that it had been convenient to ‘badge’ them as New TSN. The activity was not ‘new’ however and additional skewing had not taken place.

Source: Deloitte & Touche

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### 1.5 Policy Translation

In terms of developing mechanisms for translating White Paper commitments into actions, Partnership for Equality stated that responsibility for political direction and oversight rested with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with departmental implementation being the responsibility of individual ministers. The White Paper set out that the then CCRU would have responsibility for training, advice and monitoring and evaluation in respect of New TSN and if necessary challenging the Departments, as well as responsibility for the publication of an annual report on New TSN to enhance the public accountability of Government in relation to New TSN.



Following devolution, the NI Executive formally endorsed New TSN and political responsibility transferred to the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and other Ministers were responsible for driving New TSN forward within their respective Departments. This section is concerned with examining the effectiveness of policy translation through the operation of inter-departmental working groups, the New TSN Unit and departmental structures that sought to embed New TSN within the ‘lifeblood’ of departments.

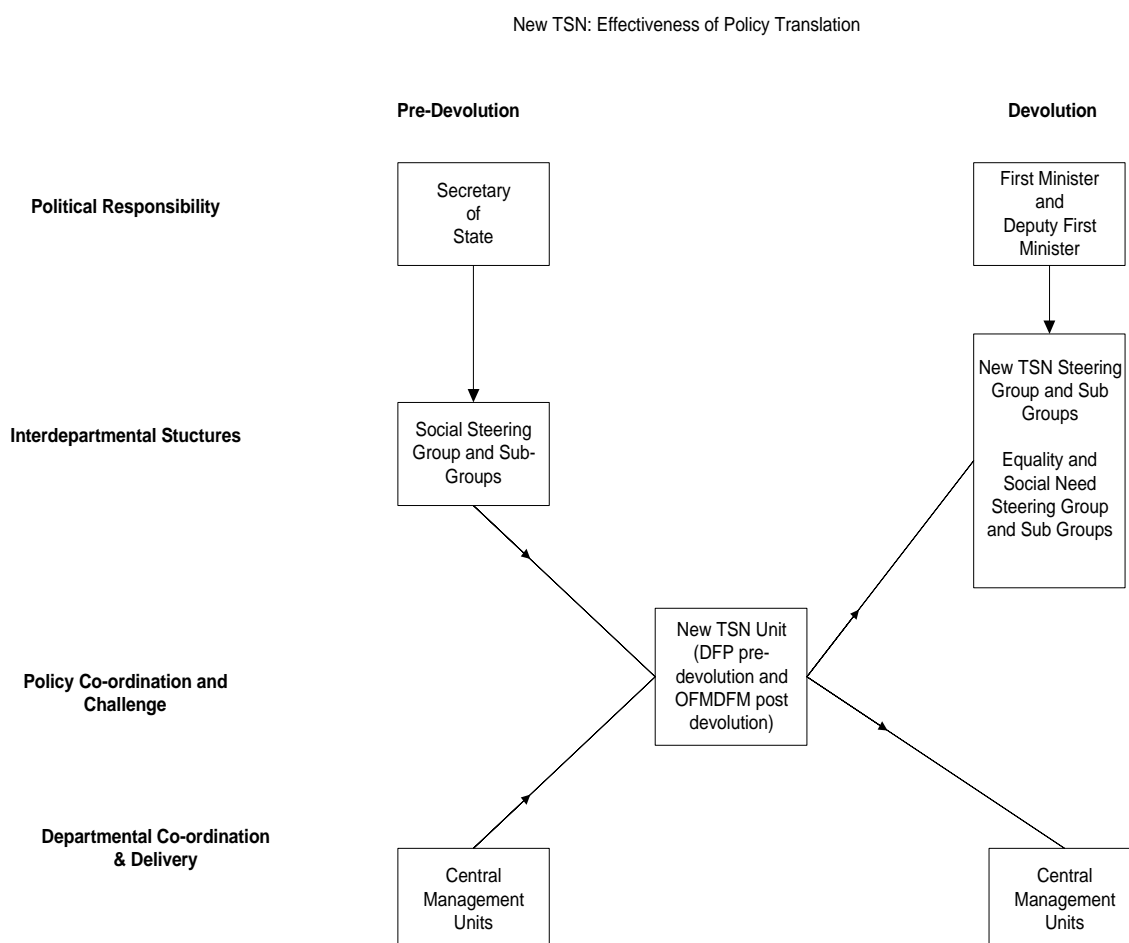
## **1.6 Assessment of Central Structures**

Figure 1.2 summarises the main structures established to translate New TSN across NICS. In terms of the intended purpose of each structure:

- inter-departmental working groups were tasked with promoting and co-ordinating New TSN across Departments and latterly, to provide high level policy input on implementation and development of the policy;
- the New TSN Unit was described as having policy and executive responsibility for the development and implementation of New TSN; and
- Central Secretariat 2/98 noted that departments would be key to implementation and a range of key actions were highlighted (see Table 1.3).

Our assessment of evidence has highlighted a number of key issues in respect to the effectiveness of policy translation, notably in relation to the linkages and the roles and responsibilities associated with each of the structures identified in Figure 1.2. Prior to undertaking an assessment of these issues, we provide summary detail on the workings of the IDWG, the New TSN Unit and actions taken by Departments.

Figure 1.2  
New TSN: Key Structures for Policy Translation



Source: Deloitte & Touche

## Interdepartmental Working Groups

Table 1.2 details the characteristics of each of the main working groups responsible for promoting and co-ordinating New TSN across the NICS.

### 1.6.1 Role of Social Steering Group

In relation to the workings of SSG, the bulk of activity related to producing and developing action plans. For the most part, action planning was undertaken through the SSG Action Plan Sub Group which met on 15 occasions between February 1999 and July 2000. Discussions with officials noted that the focus of activity was dominated by a need on the part of the New TSN unit to meet timetables that were viewed as unrealistic and the opportunity for discussion on alternative approaches to planning were not provided. To this end, the Action Plan Sub Group did not provide an effective forum for addressing issues or problems on Action Plans and evidence reviewed indicates that Departments had few opportunities to meaningfully share Action Plans with other departments. In relation to meeting collectively

with Ministers on cross departmental strategic issues, we found no evidence of this happening although Central Secretariat actively liaised with the Secretary of State on the policy.

**Table 1.3**  
**Characteristics of Inter-departmental Working Groups**

<b>Social Steering Group</b>	<b>New TSN Steering Group</b>	<b>Equality and Social Need Steering Group</b>
Established:	Established: September 2000	Established: September 2001
Membership: Grade 5	Membership: Grade 5	Membership: Grade 5
Chair: Permanent Secretary, DHSSPS	Chair: Grade 3, OFMDFM	Chair: Grade 3, OFMDFM
Sub Groups: 7	Sub Groups: 2	Sub Groups:2 although a series of working groups on themes (PSI) have been convened
Objectives:  Providing a forum for tackling issues relating to the development and implementation of New TSN  Advising Central Secretariat on implementation issues and;  Meeting collectively with Ministers on cross departmental strategic issues relating to New TSN	Objectives:  Providing a forum for tackling issues relating to the development and implementation of New TSN  Advising New TSN Unit on implementation issues.	Objectives:  To provide high level policy input for the implementation and development of New TSN across Departments, their agent bodies, NDPBs and North South Implementation bodies;  To provide high level policy input for the advancement of the PSI initiative, by way of support and guidance to PSI Working Groups; and  To assist Departments, their NDPBS and NIO on the implementation of the statutory equality obligations.

Source: Deloitte & Touche

### **1.6.2 Role of New TSN Steering Group**

The New TSN Steering Group emerged as a result of amalgamating the SSG Action Plan Sub Group with SSG PSI Sub Group. Aside from trying to reduce the number of inter-departmental working groups and avoid duplication of effort, the establishment of the group stemmed from progress achieved in relation to the publication of New TSN Action Plans. It was argued that significant groundwork had been achieved through both groups and there was no justification to meet as frequently or indeed separately on issues that needed to be interrelated to ensure effective delivery.

### **1.6.3 Role of Equality and Social Need Steering Group**

The establishment of the Equality and Social Needs Steering Group needs to be viewed in the context of an attempt by OFMDFM to streamline and merge the inter-connected issues of equality, as driven by Section 75 of the NI Act, and tackling social need: “such a concentration under a broad Equality Agenda, would further highlight the ‘joined up’ Government approach and emphasise the link between New TSN and Section 75”. The group subsumed the responsibilities of the New TSN Steering Group (which includes PSI Working Group) and that of the inter-departmental Statutory Duty Group.

Since September 2001, the full group has met on 8 occasions and agenda items have been mostly focused on New TSN and the statutory duty obligations. As with SSG structures, the Equality and Social Need Steering Group established a number of sub-groups as detailed in Table 1.2. Departmental representatives interviewed were broadly positive about the amalgamation of equality and social need group. Members felt that the group was tightly focused and that OFMDFM provided useful support in terms of agenda setting, forward planning and there was a reasonable degree of issue generation, especially in relation to PSI work. The primary reasons provided related to both policy and administrative concerns, although the key driver related to reducing the administrative burden on the number of inter-departmental meetings. The key issues raised in relation to policy benefits included:

- the very clear tie across between work on equality and social need, especially in relation to research and data issues; and
- there was a need to ensure that New TSN and PSI were more closely aligned;

Issues raised in relation to administrative benefits included:

- reduced duplication of work, as most representatives were members of both groups;
- perceived reduction in number of meetings, issue generated rather than meeting for meetings sake; and
- practitioner groups (sub-groups) useful as they enabled officials from across departments to share good practice.

### **1.6.4 Promoting Social Inclusion and Interdepartmental Groups**

Interdepartmental working groups have proved most effective in relation to the identification of PSI priorities, particularly since devolution. The consultation process on establishing priorities for the second round of PSI themes demonstrated the ‘joined up’ nature of decision making within the Equality and Social Need Steering Group. The actual process of consultation, which was managed by the New TSN Unit, involved a high profile consultation exercise which also involved representations from the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA). ENSG played a critical role in assessing evidence and determining whether responses fitted with the

agreed criteria. The consultation findings on the new PSI Priorities, which was comprehensively analysed by the New TSN Unit, was widely discussed through the workings of ESNSG and the evidence examined showed a high degree of joined up working and reflection. In terms of processes (as opposed to impacts), the identification of PSI priorities and the selection of a 'lead' department has created a successful mode of operation for encouraging joined up working and it has lessened the perceived dominance role of OFMDFM and placed an onus on 'lead' departments to work with other departments and key stakeholders. The decision of making PSI working groups accountable to ESNSG further cements the 'joined up' government.

### **1.6.5 Effectiveness of Inter-Departmental Structures**

In relation to SSG, the time pressures associated with the production of Action Plans, coupled with the introduction of devolution had, it was argued, a limiting effect on the ability of inter-departmental groups to function outside the very mechanical processes associated with implementation (Action Planning). To this end, departments noted that there was limited inter-departmental working as originally envisaged and the promotion role of the policy largely fell to OFMDFM and the New TSN Unit. In relation to the co-ordination of New TSN, the working groups, as a result of the grade mix of members, provided central departmental co-ordination units with critical leverage in relation to ensuring that business units provided relevant information on New TSN.

Whilst the streamlining of interdepartmental working groups was welcomed, the dominance of OFMDFM was noted in relation to the functioning and operation of interdepartmental groups. Departments noted that current working arrangements, particularly the use of practitioners groups and the reduced number of sub-groups, were more focused and subsequently, they were more effective as a means for bringing departments together. The PSI approach of working, notably the process of consultation and debate held within ESNSG through to the identification of lead departments was viewed as promoting good practice.

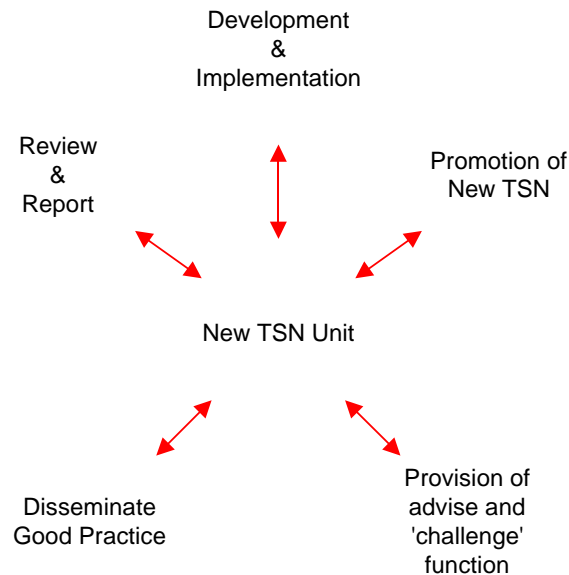
### **1.7 Role of New TSN Unit**

Throughout the development of New TSN, the role of the New TSN Unit, which was established in September 1998 has been critical to driving forward the policy. The Unit, which is currently staffed by **10** civil servants, reports directly, through the current Principal Officer, to the Head of the Equality and Social Need Division. Prior to devolution, the Unit's staffing complement averaged 5 including the Head of Unit.

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Figure 1.3  
**Key Functions of New TSN Unit**

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Source: Deloitte & Touche

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Figure 1.3 above summarises the key functions of the New TSN Unit. As noted in *Making It Work*, the Unit has policy and executive responsibility for the development and implementation of New TSN.

### 1.7.1 Effectiveness of New TSN Unit

Operationally, policy responsibility focused on ensuring that White Paper Commitments were fulfilled. To this end, the Unit was effective although it was suggested that the rigid adherence to the White Paper stymied the development of important policy discussions amongst interdepartmental working groups at the early stages of New TSN. On a similar issue, departments also argued that the Unit tended to be very prescriptive in its approach. For some departments, affording policy and executive responsibility to OFMDFM meant that New TSN was clearly marked as a central initiative rather than being a ‘joined up’ policy. Following devolution and as a result of Executive and Programme for Government commitments, departments noted that the ownership base of the policy extended beyond OFMDFM and a number of departments were more embracing of New TSN.

The following section highlights the key achievements/drawbacks of the Unit against the key roles and responsibilities ascribed to the unit (see also section on OFMDFM within reports on departments).

- **driving forward the initiative and setting overall objectives** - the Unit has successfully managed to drive New TSN forward in relation to providing core support to Interdepartmental working groups, producing policy guidance and detailed training materials to departments. More critically, the Unit has played a significant role in

relation to ensuring that Action Plans were developed and updated by Departments and it facilitated discussions with relevant NDPBS. In relation to setting overall objectives, an early policy decision was taken by Central Secretariat not to develop specific objectives for the policy and this hampered the development of the policy particularly in relation to the identification of clear policy outcomes and indicators;

- **promotion of New TSN** – the Unit has played the leading role in relation to promoting the policy both internally and externally. On the internal front, the Unit has taken on board promotional activities that should have been provided through interdepartmental working groups and units responsible for New TSN within Departments. The Unit, through OFMDFM, has also played a leading role in informally influencing a number of important policy decisions on New TSN, notably in relation to incorporating New TSN considerations into budgetary arrangements (see OFMDFM). Externally, the Unit has undertaken and facilitated a range of workshops with NDPBs and the voluntary and community sector on New TSN;
- **to advise Departments on the implementation of New TSN, challenging current arrangements where necessary** - whilst detailed guidance was issued to departments on the key implementation mechanism (Action Plans), the Unit's 'challenge' role has been mostly limited to ensuring compliance with process issues rather than actively challenging the contents of Action Plans by way the appropriateness of objectives, targets and reasons why certain activities were not achieved. In relation to Vision into Practice, the tight timeframe clearly effected the Unit's ability to 'challenge'. Prior to the publication of Making It Work, the Unit undertook an assessment of plans and asked a number of departments to provide detail on what they meant by social need, how were they defining disadvantaged areas and groups and what type of indicators would they be using. Evidence reviewed indicates that a number of departments did not address the questions raised by the Unit and only minimal consideration was given to advise provided.

## 1.8 Departmental Structures

Partnership for Equality stated that the 'key role' in implementing New TSN would fall to Departments, notably through the development and implementation of Action Plans. Central Secretariat 2/98 indicated that departments would be responsible for a range of tasks and Table 1.4 summarises how departments have fulfilled these commitments.

Table 1.4

**Assessment of Departmental New TSN Commitments**

Key Responsibilities	Commentary and Assessment
To ensure that relevant agencies and public bodies are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to New TSN and to encourage them to participate in the process	All departments fulfilled their obligations to this objective through the production and publication of Action Plans for NDPBs. The New TSN Unit, and departmental officials, have played a key role in facilitating training and action planning sessions with agencies and public bodies. DHSSPS, for example, encouraged all HSS boards to produce equity strategies that would set out how each Board intended to address any equity issues at a local level.
To ensure that relevant staff understand New TSN and demonstrate to them the Department's commitment to it through training	The New TSN Unit produced comprehensive 'Training the Trainers' training material and bespoke resources for departments. Departments also set out in their Action Plans how training would be delivered and an assessment of this is provided below. In broad terms, a number of departments fully embraced the principle of embedding New TSN through training whilst others paid limited attention to training actions on New TSN and have failed to undertake Departmental training.
To bring forward recommendations from New TSN audits	<p>The majority of Departments adapted in full the recommendations arising from the New TSN Audits. Although the New TSN Unit encouraged departments to go beyond what was contained in the audits, few departments did so and there is a very strong link between Action Plans and New TSN audits. The decision to include all business units unless a case could be made for exclusion was related to CCRU's interpretation of Partnership for Equality.</p> <p>It should be noted that the audits did not provide information on incorporating New TSN with the culture of departments and the inclusion of process related objectives emerged more from the workings of the Action Plan Sub Group and the subsequent guidance issued.</p>
To consult relevant voluntary sector and non-Governmental organisations about Action plans – it was noted that there may be a need for departments to consult on the development of plans and also through reviews and updates	The decision to take the views of external partners was the responsibility of individual departments. No department consulted on the development of plans prior to publication. The New TSN Unit and the SSG Action Plan group organised an extensive consultation process following the publication of Vision into Practice. The outcome of the consultation was subsequently recorded in Making It Work.
To develop New TSN Action plans which include clear time bounded objectives, and where possible, targets	Our summary of evidence reviewed would indicate that this objective had not been fully met and that SMART objectives were generally absent.
To implement Action Plans and to monitor	Departmental reports provide commentary on



progress and to review, evaluate and update plans, as required.	individual action plans.
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Source: Deloitte & Touche

In addition to the above assessment, *Making It Work* stated that the success of New TSN would depend on the rigour with which the policy was implemented by Departments. Two key areas of action were identified as a barometer of departmental commitments, namely, the establishment of top level machinery for driving the policy forward and the rolling out of training within Departments.

### 1.8.1 Establishing Top Level Machinery

In *Making It Work*, general reference is made to departmental arrangements for driving forward New TSN and the document notes that ‘generally this involves reports to the Departmental Board or to internal New TSN co-ordinating groups and to Ministers’. Additional guidance issued to departments made specific reference to establishing a top-level structure and Making It Work Action Plans provided detail on departmental approaches to establishing new structures.

The majority of departments, however, did not identify any new structures for New TSN (DARD, DHFETE, DCAL, DFP, DoE, DRD) in Making It Work although efforts were identified that sought to build on planning current structures. DETI and DHSSPS provided detail on how previous structures would be strengthened and DE and DSD indicated that new structures would be established. Table 1.5 details the current machinery in place for delivering New TSN and it highlights the differing levels of top level involvement with the policy. It should be noted that the introduction of Section 75 resulted in a number of departments combining New TSN and equality issues within one internal working group.

Table 1.5  
**Machinery for Delivering New TSN within Departments**

Department	Central Responsibility	Departmental Structures
OFMDFM	New TSN Unit	Equality & Social Need Steering Group
DARD	Central Management Unit	Equality Steering Group
DCAL	Corporate Management Division	Equality, New TSN and Human Rights Division
DE	Equality Rights and Social Inclusion Unit	DE Steering and Working Group
DETI	Equality Unit of Policy Evaluation and Organisational Change Division	Equality Working Group
DoE	Corporate Services Division	Equality & New TSN Group
DFP	Corporate Service Division	New TSN issues incorporated into Equality Working Group
DEL	Corporate Services Division	No specific
DHSSPS	Strategic Planning Branch	High level co-ordinating committee established comprising senior staff within DHSSPS, HSS Boards, HSS Trusts and representatives from the Community Development and Health Network and the Institute of Public Health
DRD	Central Policy Management Unit	New TSN Working Group

DSD	Equality and Corporate Policy Unit	Equality and New TSN Inter-Departmental Working Group
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Source : Deloitte & Touche

In relation to the role of Departmental Units *vis a vis* the New TSN Unit and interdepartmental working groups, there were generally close ties between departments and the New TSN unit in relation to reporting on progress and seeking general policy direction. The issue of relevance to New TSN was noted as a factor in respect of the role-played by departmental units. Departments with a low relevance tended to locate co-ordinating units inside central management or corporate units as against highly relevant departments that tended to locate New TSN within equality type structures. For those departments with low relevance, New TSN represented only a fraction of their work commitments and this worked against full participation in inter-departmental structures. The exception to this rule was DEL which located the co-ordination of New TSN within Corporate Services Division, reflecting their strong perception that targeting of social need was already within the ‘lifeblood’ of the Department.

### 1.8.2 Assessment of Training

In terms of embedding New TSN within the culture of Departments, actions identified included the provision of training for a range of grades and levels. Departments were assisted in the provision of training for New TSN through the production of ‘Training the Trainer’ packs that were developed and agreed by the New TSN Unit, Business Development Services and a number of departmental trainers. An inter-departmental Training Forum, which was established as a result of the need to provide equality training, considered and approved core training materials that were produced by the New TSN Unit to assist departments with training delivery. Evidence reviewed highlighted slight differences of opinion in relation to the level that should be provided. OFMDFM, for example, actively encouraged specialist in-depth training with policy officials rather than generalist awareness training that was favoured by a number of departments.

In reality, varying levels of training activity have taken place in Departments (see template of findings), ranging from no formal training (eg DE) to large numbers of staff (eg DoE ) and the specifics of training targets for Departments also vary considerably in relation to:

- **dates for completion of staff training** – ranging from no target dates (eg DE) to specific dates (eg DoE, DCAL);
- **number of staff to be trained** – ranging from all staff (eg DCAL) to relevant staff (eg OFMDFM); and
- **grades and type of staff to be trained** – ranging from specific to all staff.

### 1.8.3 Specialist Training

DETI, DSD, DHSSPS and OFMDFM have broadly met their targets of staff training levels although timetables have slipped, while others such as DoE,

DCAL and DFP have only partly achieved targets. DE, for example, advised that no formal training events have taken place for staff in spite of a target to 'ensure New TSN training is developed and delivered in DE by March 2001 and in partner bodies by September 2001'. The Department noted 'because of the wealth of understanding and the action taken to implement New TSN successfully into the Department's aims and strategic plans, we received very little in the way of requests for such training'.

#### 1.8.4 Awareness Raising

General awareness raising on New TSN was provided by DETI, DoE, DCAL, DHSSPS and OFMDFM in their induction programmes. DE and DSD do not currently include New TSN training in their induction programme, however DSD has advised that its induction programme is currently under review and it may be included in the future. DFP has advised that following a review of their induction programme in early 2002, there are plans to include New TSN training as part of future induction programmes.

Table 1.6  
**Summary of Training Targets (MAKING IT WORK)**

<p><b>Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister</b></p> <p>Target: To provide training on New TSN to all relevant staff in 2001 and arrange further New TSN training as necessitated by staff changes.</p> <p>The Department has advised that training was provided on New TSN for all relevant staff in 2001 with 176 staff receiving training.</p>
<p><b>Department for Enterprise, Trade and Investment</b></p> <p>Target: To include New TSN in all induction and general management training and development throughout DETI</p> <p>The Department advised that New TSN training has been provided through its Induction programme to 135 staff and also to 124 management staff through the Introduction to Management course. In addition, staff have also been made aware of New TSN through staff briefs and "Newslines", an internal newsletter.</p>
<p><b>Department of the Environment</b></p> <p>Target: To train 30 key staff by 30 June 2000, 350 management staff by 31 March 2001 and a further 350 management staff by 31 March 2001.</p> <p>The June 2000 target was not achieved as no staff were trained by this date. By March 2001, 407 management staff had received training and a further 111 were trained by March 2002. However, this is still 182 short of the target of 700.</p>
<p><b>Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure</b></p> <p>Targets: to provide awareness training for all staff within DCAL by 31 March 2001 to provide in-depth training for staff who are involved in the policy formulation process by 30 April 2001.</p> <p>Only 51 staff within DCAL had received awareness training by 31 March 2001 and only 3 staff involved in policy formulation received in-depth training by 31 April 2001. DCAL advised that all staff in policy formulation that had requested this training had received it.</p>

### **Department of Education**

Target: To ensure New TSN training is developed and delivered in DE by March 2001 and in partner bodies by September 2001.

The Department has advised that there have been no formal training events on New TSN attended by staff in DE in the last two years, but that New TSN briefings took place with senior staff and trainers at the beginning of the programme. Awareness of New TSN has been raised through placing Q&As on the staff Intranet.

### **Department for Finance and Personnel**

Target: To ensure that statisticians have appropriate training in New TSN-related issues and that all NISRA branches are appropriately informed about ongoing developments in New TSN policy throughout the period of this Plan.

DPF have advised that New TSN training was rolled out to staff down to Staff Officer level by consultants and in-house trainers. The training was then cascaded down to staff below this level (no figures are available on the numbers trained below Staff Officer level). 390 DFP and 91 NISRA staff from Senior Civil Servant to Staff Officer have received New TSN training. NISRA have advised that they have not provided further specific training for their staff.

### **Department for Social Development**

Target: To raise and maintain staff awareness of New TSN through staff training, the Departmental Intranet and the team briefing system. Staff in key posts to have been trained by December 2000.

By December 2000, 28 staff in key posts had received formal training in New TSN and this figure represented all key staff that required training.

The Department has also made available information on New TSN and Action Plans on the Intranet for all staff to access. The Equality and Corporate Planning Unit supply regular information for "Team Briefs" and several internal publications have also featured articles relating to New TSN and equality. The Department also advertised further training on New TSN in April 2001 and will provide training to staff who can demonstrate a business need in relation to New TSN awareness.

### **Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety**

Target: By March 2001, ensure that New TSN is built into DHSSPS staff training and development programmes, so that all staff are aware of the aims, objectives and targets under the New TSN policy

The Department recorded that awareness training was delivered to staff in DHSSPS down to Grade 7 during the period March to May 2001. Training was also made available for staff who were nominated by their Head of Branch as "Key Players" and a total of 81 staff attended as follows:

Admin Assistant/Officer	2
Executive Officer II	2
Executive Officer I	1
Staff Officer	7
Deputy Principal	15
Principal Officer	36
Senior Civil Service	18

All those attending were given hand-outs and asked to cascade information within their respective areas of responsibility. New TSN awareness information is included in induction, and information has been placed on the DHSSPS Intranet site for all staff to access.

**Department for Regional Development**

Targets: To train 50 senior key staff by 30 September 2000.

To train 500 management staff by 31 March 2001, and a further 870 by 31 March 2002.

Nil Return

**Department for Employment and Learning**

Target: Provide in-depth training for staff who are involved in policy formulation by March 2001.

Nil Return

Source: Deloitte & Touche

## 1.9 Key Findings on Policy Translation

The above assessment has highlighted a number of key issues in relation to the structures set in place to translate the policy within NICS. The primary area for discussion relates to an overlap between the roles and responsibilities of the New TSN Unit, the inter-departmental working groups and central departmental management structures.

Our assessment has shown that the New TSN Unit (and OFMDFM) assumed a co-ordination and promotion that should have been more fully embraced by Interdepartmental Working Groups and Departments. The perception that New TSN is very OFMDFM centred contributed, in the early stages of the policy, to differing levels of engagement amongst Departments.

Evidence reviewed in relation to training provided and the establishment of top level machinery within Departments highlights varying levels of commitment to New TSN across NICS, raising issues about the extent of 'embedding' the policy.

In assessing how top level mechanisms worked, consideration needs to be given to the level of previous involvement with New TSN and also the relevance attached to the policy within Departments. For example, DETI and DHSSPS both had a history of TSN and Targeting Health and Social Need and structures for delivering the policy were largely in place prior to the launch of New TSN. Both these Departments demonstrated evidence of good practice in relation to how they strengthened mechanisms through the establishment of working groups and in the case of DETI, through involving the New TSN Unit within departmental arrangements.

Other departments such as DCAL, for example, were established as a new department following devolution and the location and establishment of best fit with New TSN has taken longer to establish. Significantly, DE failed to action the establishment of both a Steering Group and Working Group by September 2000. In the case of departments with limited relevance to New TSN, responsibility for driving the policy forward has tended to fall to central management or corporate services units and as noted above, departments have tried to combine New TSN functions with those of equality and human rights.

In relation to focus group findings, middle managers and business units were generally unaware of inter-departmental working arrangements and had limited contact with the New TSN unit other than through reporting progress.

Table 1.7

**Focus Group Findings – Policy Translation**

- the majority of participants outside of central management units were unclear as to what ESNSG did and had little awareness of the role or outputs of that group. Some examples of positive interdepartmental working in the form of PSI working groups were given;
- a general consensus emerged that Departmental corporate units responsible for New TSN and the Equality and Social Need Group in OFMDFM did not have sufficiently detailed knowledge of the business areas to advise on the application of New TSN in that area. NISRA statisticians had been able to help with statistical data, interpretation of Noble and establishment of baselines. However, the challenge function of the central units was not clear and they were generally perceived to have administrative, co-ordination functions;
- there was little contact with OFMDFM other than in relation to reporting ie none of the participants were aware of receiving advice or direction from OFMDFM or engaging in debate about the appropriateness of specific objectives or how challenging or otherwise targets were; and
- whilst training was provided within most Departments for New TSN, the depth and breadth varied and most training was described by participants as high-level awareness training. There was a clear view that training could be improved – some participants noted that they had been expected to make policy commitments on New TSN grounds without any relevant training.

Source: Deloitte & Touche

### 1.10 Policy Implementation

New TSN Action Plans were described as ‘the foundations on which the further development and implementation of New TSN are built’ and they were designed to demonstrate to Departmental personnel, commentators and external partners the extent of Government’s commitment to the policy. The Partnership for Equality White Paper stated that no department could opt out of New TSN and as a result, the then CCRU and New TSN Unit sought to include all business units unless a clear case could be made for exclusion. The original guidance to departments on Action Planning noted only a few exceptions including areas such as Personnel or Central Services. The resultant need to ensure full coverage of departmental business units resulted in the inclusion of a range of activities that had limited relevance to New TSN objectives (as set out in guidance notes).

The following assessment of policy implementation is, therefore, concerned with the clarity of guidance issued on Action Plans, the design and structure of Action Plans and the reporting and tracking processes associated with New TSN.

### 1.10.1 Design and Structure of Action Planning

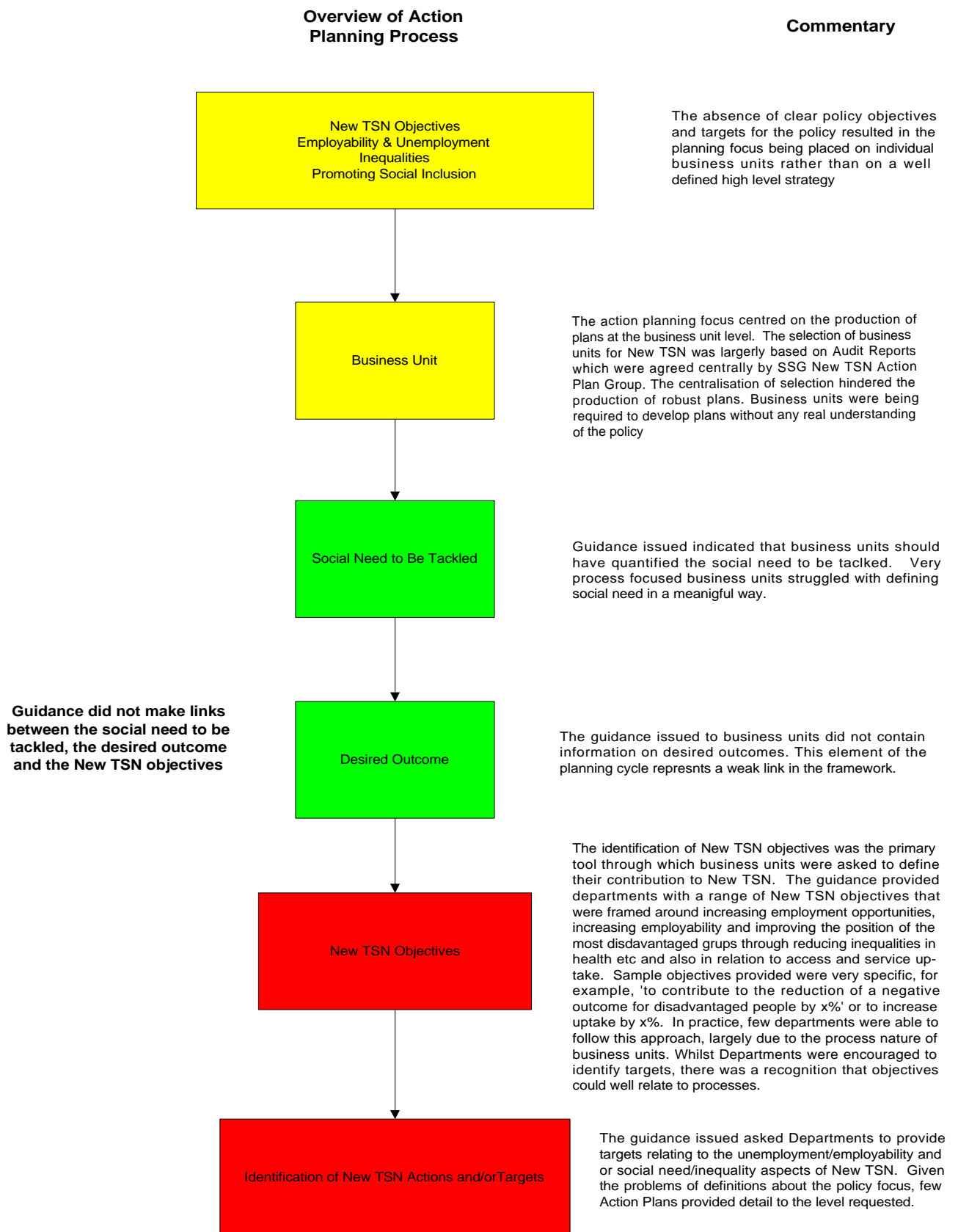
The SSG Guidance on Action Planning was the main source of information that departments and business units used to produce Action Plans. The Guidance, which was agreed by the SSG Action Plan Group, noted that plans should cover three specific areas:

- changing the culture/strategic management;
- implementing New TSN; and
- data collection, analysis and reporting.

Although comprehensive in content, departments (notably business units) generally viewed the guidance as too abstract and theoretical, particularly in relation to identifying actions on how to implement New TSN. Business units within departments (other than central management units) felt that the guidance lacked practical examples that departmental business could use and apply to their own activities.

Figure 1.4 shows the planning structure that departments followed to put Action Plans in place. In this diagram, we set out our assessment of the key issues involved in each stage of the Action Planning process.

Figure 1.4  
**Overview of Planning Process**



Source: Deloitte & Touche



## 1.11 Reporting and Tracking

The design of action plans resulted in the production of 11 departmental plans containing 196 objectives and 562 individual actions or targets (Making It Work). Whilst most plans focused on business units within departments, the DHSSPS plan combined directorates for planning purposes and DEL opted to produce plans on the basis of both themes (Lifelong Learning) and key programmes (New Deal, Worktrack etc). In addition to different units of analysis across plans, the content and quality varied considerably in relation to the setting of New TSN objectives and the inclusion of timeframes and target dates. A number of departments, for example, detailed actual completion dates for actions whilst other simply stated that actions would be completed in a calendar year or 'in each year of the plan'. The above inconsistencies coupled with ambiguous language and the sheer number of objectives presented considerable difficulties in relation to tracking and monitoring the progress of New TSN within Departments.

A number of issues were raised in relation to current reporting on New TSN. In the first instance, a number of departments noted that there were time lags between the submission of reports and their eventual publication. The considerable time lags, it was argued, undermined the credibility of policy and gave rise to external criticism in relation to action planning. Table 1.5 compares due publication dates with actual release dates although it should be noted that delays in publications were viewed as beyond the control of departments and subject to wider political pressures, including suspension of the NI executive. The critical point being made by a number of departments was that delays in publication created unnecessary suspicion about a policy that was already not well received externally. In terms of the delays in publishing plans, McGill (2002) noted, for example, that one third of the actions in Making It Work had been completed prior to publication. McGill also highlighted considerable delays in planning as evidenced through alteration to target dates.

Table 1.8  
New TSN Reports

Publication	Due Date	Date Published
Vision into Practice,	June 1999	November 1999
Making It Work	September 2000	March 2001
Revised Action Plans	April 2001	September 2001
Annual Report,	September 2001	March 2002
Revised Action Plans	April 2002	March 2002
Annual Report	September 2002	December, 2002

Source: Deloitte & Touche

The final issue raised in relation to reporting concerns current arrangements in respect of quarterly reporting. A range of views were expressed in relation to the burden placed on departments with respect to reporting for New TSN particularly in relation to reporting commitments arising out of PfG and SDA, PSAs. The majority of departments felt that quarterly reporting was not appropriate given the process focus of actions and the fact that change was rarely discernible over three monthly cycles. In a number of cases, it was argued that the discipline of reporting ensured that New TSN was kept 'alive' within Departments.

### **1.12 Assessing Performance Against Targets**

In relation to measuring performance against targets, the current action planning process made it very difficult to clearly match performance against objectives for two reasons:

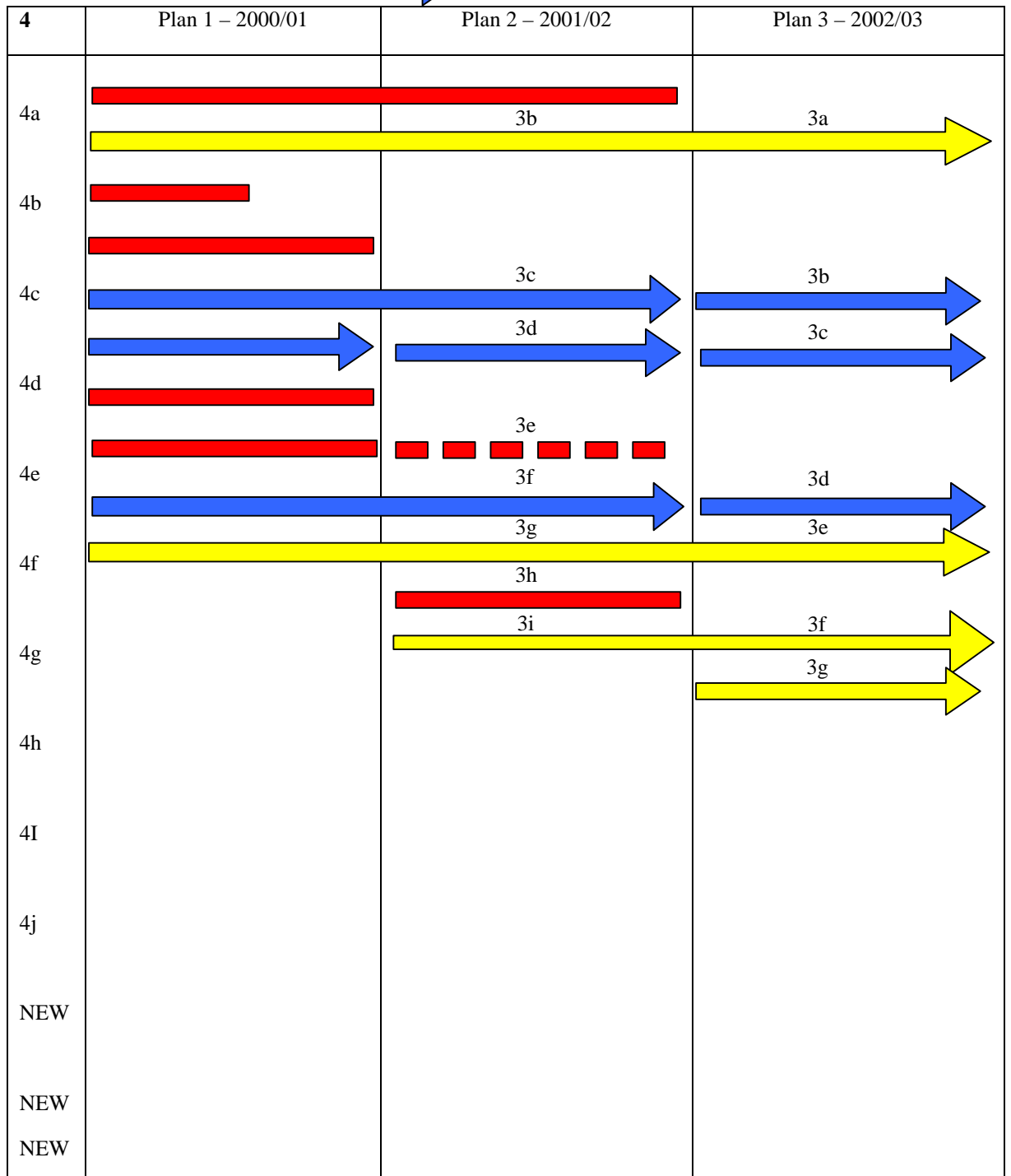
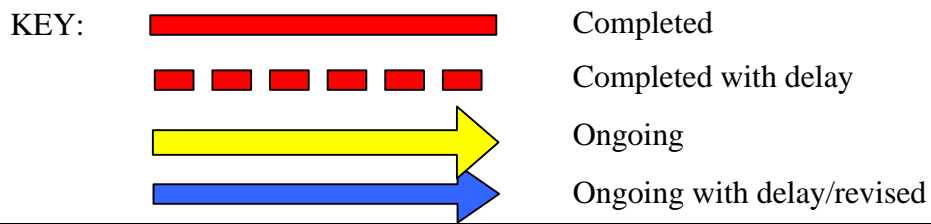
- the sheer number of objectives (196 in Making it Work); and
- the lack of continuity in objectives from year to year and across plans.

In an attempt to understand progress throughout the three-year action planning process, we tracked the implementation of the original and new objectives using timelines and performance against targets. The timelines were based on information contained within the three actions plans:

- *Making It Work* (Plan 1);
- New TSN Action Plan April 2001 – March 2003 (Plan 2); and
- Revised New TSN Action Plan Targets 2002/2003 (Plan 3).

In relation to the process of charting changes, Figure 1.5 illustrates the difficulties of tracking individual actions for one objective out of a total of 196 objectives.

Figure 1.5  
**Action Planning Process**



Source: Deloitte & Touche

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Table 1.9

**Focus Group Findings – Policy Implementation**

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- some focus group participants showed high levels of enthusiasm for and commitment to the policy. Others saw it as a purely administrative burden and resented the policy as an additional and unnecessary layer in the Departmental planning process
- the view was expressed by a number of participants that New TSN is recognised as a priority within the system and it is a fundamental part of the Department’s planning processes. However, there was a suggestion in some areas that the exercise is undertaken to meet the fundamental requirements rather than the spirit of the policy. Most agreed that more debate and challenging of objectives and targets should take place
- action plans needed to be more focused ie a smaller number of highly relevant, outcome focused targets and targets should be more specific eg awareness training for key staff – is too general a target. Participants provided examples of targets remaining unchanged over a significant period of time and noted that nobody had either challenged and questioned why these targets were not met
- there was a general sense that quarterly monitoring was quite onerous and that it was important to be realistic about the timeframe for change. Others felt that if the management information is being gathered anyway, simply updating the data is not unreasonable to expect on a quarterly basis.

Source: Deloitte & Touche

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### **1.13 Key Findings on Implementation**

In terms of our process evaluation, implementation related to assessing the design and structure of the action planning process as opposed to how the actions themselves were implemented. The decision to employ an action plan approach emerged from recommendations arising out of the previous review of Targeting Social Need. The Equality White Paper further recommended that departments could not opt out of New TSN unless a clear case could be made for exclusion. It was felt that this particular stipulation resulted in the production of Action Plans that included business units with limited capacity to contribute the core aims of New TSN. In our view, the actual design and structure of the action plans had a number of critical flaws and resulted in the production of plans that were overly bureaucratic, complex in language and presentation and too heavily focused on processes rather than outputs.

Our assessment of the action planning process, as provided in Figure 1.4 above, highlights the key problems relating to the action planning process. In sum, the early action planning process did not provide business units with sufficient detail on what New TSN sought to achieve and ‘buy in’ to the policy was not, in a number of cases, fully achieved. In relation to tracking and reporting, the processes were overly complicated and reporting mechanisms did not lend themselves to public consumption.