

Executive Summary

Public Sector Regulation, Bureaucracy and Red Tape

The Government is concerned that the burden of regulation, bureaucracy and red tape has been increasing for a number of years. This is having an impact on the ability of the public sector to deliver front line services.

The results of this scoping study show that many public sector practitioners perceive regulation, bureaucracy and red tape to have increased in recent years. They view this trend as an inhibiting factor to achieving modernised and efficient public services.

The Public Sector Efficiency Team has been formed with the remit to find ways to reduce the regulatory burden on the public sector. It is located in the Regulatory Impact Unit in the Cabinet Office

This report marks the completion of the first phase of the team's work. The team has completed a scoping study across the whole of the public sector. A snapshot view of the extent of the problems caused by regulation, bureaucracy and red tape has been obtained. Over 80 people working in predominantly front line services in the public sector were interviewed.

This scoping study analyses the findings of the interviews and associated desk study. It identifies four key areas for the team to concentrate on in its future work:

- **Criminal justice;**
- **Health (GPs);**
- **Education (schools); and**
- **Local authorities.**

A series of recommendations for reducing the bureaucratic burden in each of these areas has been identified. The team intends to work in partnership with Departments to develop achievable means of reducing regulation, bureaucracy and red tape. This work will complement Departments' own ongoing initiatives.

Whilst Education has been identified as a high priority, the forthcoming publication of the Better Regulation Task Force's review of head teachers

has been taken into consideration when determining the timing of the team's future work. To avoid duplication of effort the team does not propose to take forward work in this area until after the Task Force's report has been published.

Following a series of meetings with senior officials, including Permanent Secretaries, the recommendations in this scoping study have been agreed with the Departments responsible for the key areas of work. The team will work with Departments to ensure that the recommendations in this scoping study are implemented.

A Business Plan has been produced alongside this scoping study. It sets out how the team intends to take forward its work in phase two of the project.

Areas for Future Work

Criminal Justice System

The criminal justice system is the top priority for the future work of the team.

The key areas are:

- paperwork and procedures;
- joined up IT; and,
- consultation and promulgation of new initiatives.

GP Practice

General Practice was found to be the top priority within the health sector.

Within General Practice, the following areas were identified for future work:

- delegation to nurses;
- new payment methods;
- information technology; and,
- paperwork.

Education

Education was found to be the second highest priority for future work. However, consideration will be given to the findings of the Better Regulation Task Force's Head teachers review before action is taken to progress the areas identified for future work.

The key areas in respect of schools are:

- bidding procedures;
- budgeting requirements;
- the provision of local services;
- collation of regulations affecting schools;
- information collection and statistical returns.

Local Government

Local Government is the fourth area of priority for future work. The specific areas identified were:

- Social Services including:
 - dissemination of information;
 - cumulative effect of new policy implementation;
 - paperwork; and,
 - statistical returns.
- Management of roads including:
 - dissemination of information.
- Local authority consent regimes; and,
- Streamlining statutory planning requirements.