

## **INTEGRATED WORKING**

'Integrated Working' can include many models of collaboration such as multi-agency and partnership working for specific tasks, to a collaboration of professionals within a single team, but commonly is a result of agencies and Services working together in the pursuit of common objectives. Integrated working is of value when each agency is able to deliver agreed outcomes for users of the services, more effectively and efficiently than they could on their own or when the outcome could not have been achieved by a single agency. This requires the development of a common understanding of needs. As a result, the traditional professional boundaries which commonly exist between agencies, Services and workers become less distinct. The barriers which can develop through the use of distinctive professional language can be reduced.

Integrated working can exist at various organisational levels. It exists in groups of senior managers who may meet to develop common policies or joint funding arrangements, and it exists in operationally collaborative teams or workers from different Services or professions. In all of these, objectives of the group or team will take precedence over individual Service objectives, and common practices will develop between workers.

Authorities have a legislative duty to advance the well-being of the communities they serve, and to deliver services under Best Value principles through long term community planning. In doing so, it is implicit that partnership working is at the core of service delivery. Increasingly, Services are subject to external audit which has a focus on integrated working and a requirement to evidence genuine engagement with the communities they serve.