Title of Report	Future Proofing Programme Lessons Learned Report
Public/Confidential	Public
Summary/purpose of report	To highlight the key lessons learned from the Future Proofing Programme and highlight recommendations for future projects and programmes.
Recommendations	The Programme board is asked to note • the contents of the report and the key lessons learned from this programme. • to note the actions to address the key themes and recommendations learned from the programme.
Author	Lesley Small. Programme Management Office Manager
Responsible Officer	Hannah Coleman, Acting Director of Regulation
Link to Strategic Plan	The information in this report links to: Outcome 1: **Trusted** People who use services are protected by a workforce that is fit to practise. Outcome 2: **Skilled** Our work supports the workforce to deliver high standards of professional practice. Outcome 3: **Confident** Our work enhances the confidence, competence and wellbeing of the workforce. Outcome 4: **Valued** The social work, social care and children and young people workforce is valued for the difference it makes to people's lives.
Link to Risk Register Risks as of 1 April 2024	Risk 4: We fail to provide value to stakeholders and demonstrate our impact.

	Risk 5: We fail to develop and support SSSC staff appropriately to ensure we have a motivated and skilled workforce.
Impact Assessment	An Impact Assessment (IA) was not required. as this is not a policy or procedure.
Documents attached	Appendix A: Future Proofing Lessons Learned
Background papers	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Lessons learned are an important part of project management. They help project and programme managers identify and understand what went well and what did not go so well in previous projects and programmes. By capturing these, project and programme managers can develop strategies to avoid repeating them in the future. This helps to reduce risks, improve project outcomes, and ensures continuous improvement.

2. In line with best practice, PMO conducted lessons learned sessions at several points in the programme lifecycle and at the closure of the programme. This report covers the key findings and recommendations from these lessons learned.

3. We will share the lessons learned on the intranet so that they can be used to inform future projects and programmes. We will also communicate a 'you said/we did (or will do)' for the recommendations. Because we captured lessons learned at various points in the programme, we were able to change things based on feedback during delivery and we can make change based on newer recommendations for future projects. Full detail of the recommendations and what did or will do can be found on the recommendations tab of Appendix A.

4. We use lessons learned to inform new business cases and project initiation documents (PID). We ask project leads to identify the top three lessons learned from previous projects that they can apply to their project.

5. Our Planning and Risk Officer also uses previous lessons to help project leads identify risks for new projects.

INFORMATION

6. The following were asked to contribute to lessons learned via surveys and/or lesson learned workshops:

   - Council
   - Executive Management Team
   - Programme Board
   - Sponsor Group
   - Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG)
   - OCSWA
   - Telefonica Tech (TT) – formerly Incremental Group
   - Project teams
   - Programme Team
   - All members of staff.

7. PMO then categorised and analysed the lessons learned to identify key trends and themes.

8. Because Lessons Learned were captured and reviewed throughout the programme, we were able to make adjustments throughout programme

delivery. These changes are identified in Appendix A as well as recommendations for future changes.

9. The same top three themes were identified in what went well, what didn't go so well, and in the recommendations. These are Communication and Engagement, Programme Management and Governance, and Digital Development. This report will examine these in more detail.

10. It is important to note that lessons learned are the perceptions of stakeholders. Overall, the stakeholder perceptions were that the programme went very well and the comments and recommendations were overwhelmingly positive.

11. Due to the lessons learned being captured anonymously, the context of comments is not always clear so we cannot always know what experience the comments are based on.

12. The full comments are detailed verbatim in Appendix A. The appendix also contains management responses to some comments.

KEY TRENDS

What went well

Theme	Number of Comments	%
Programme Management and Governance	50	37.0%
Communication and Engagement	49	36.2%
Digital Development	19	14.1%
Staff Knowledge and Expertise	15	11.1%
Impact on Sector	1	0.7%
Resourcing	1	0.7%
Budget	0	0.0%
Miscellaneous	0	0.0%
Total	**135**	**100.0%**

What didn't go so well

Theme	Number of Comments	%
Programme Management and Governance	67	43.2%
Digital Development	33	21.3%
Communication and Engagement	29	18.7%
Budget	12	7.7%
Resourcing	10	6.5%
Impact on Sector	2	1.3%
Miscellaneous	1	0.6%
Staff Knowledge and Expertise	1	0.6%
Total	**155**	**100.0%**

Recommendations

Theme	Number of Comments	%
Programme Management and Governance	100	57.5%
Digital Development	28	16.1%
Communication and Engagement	21	12.1%
Budget	12	6.9%
Resourcing	8	4.6%
Staff Knowledge and Expertise	3	1.7%
Impact on Sector	2	1.1%
Miscellaneous	0	0.0%
Total	**174**	**100.0%**

THEME 1: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

13. 37% of positive comments were about programme management in comparison to 43% of what didn't go so well and 58% of the recommendations.

What went well

	Number of Comments	%
Programme Management	12	24.5%
Implementation	10	20.4%
Governance	8	16.3%
Agile	6	12.2%
Service Design	5	10.2%
Audits and Reviews	4	8.2%
Impact Assessments	2	4.1%
Risk Management	1	2.0%
Benefits Realisation Management	1	2.0%
Reporting	0	0.0%
Totals	**49**	**100.0%**

14. The majority of the comments around what went well with our programme management and governance were related to the programme management of the programme (25%). These were all around how well the programme was managed and facilitated.

"Using the PMO approach meant that objectives were set from the start and followed through and that we had a solid framework for the programme."

15. The second highest area was the implementation of the programme (20%) with both SSSC staff finding the planning and execution of the complex

programme was well planned and advance preparation helped with the transition.

"The programme covered so many areas of the SSSC's work, to get it all to come together and be implemented as one programme is a big success."

16. 16% of the programme management and governance comments were the governance of the programme and how effective this was.

"Programme Governance went well. Positive feedback from external reviews and Council about it."

What didn't go so well

	Number of Comments	%
Agile	23	34.3%
Governance	19	28.4%
Implementation	8	11.9%
Programme Management	7	10.4%
Risk Management	5	7.5%
Audits and Reviews	2	3.0%
Benefits Realisation Management	2	3.0%
Impact Assessments	1	1.5%
Reporting	0	0.0%
Service Design	0	0.0%
Totals	**67**	**100.0%**

17. Our approach to working the digital elements of the programme in an Agile way received 34% of the comments around what didn't go so well. Most of the comments (67%) related to how we gathered and managed requirements. This is only four comments in total however. Typically, in an Agile project only a maximum of 60% of requirements are must have requirements; however for future proofing 100% of our requirements were must haves which caused issues when further requirements were identified. Requirements also weren't captured at a more granular detail which led to confusion with Telefonica Tech over what was or was not scope creep.

"All user stories were must have so no ability to descope items from project when new requirements were requested."

"Was there scope creep - was it refinement of user story into more granular detail - came up for debate many times."

18. Governance received 28% of the comments around what didn't go so well. This was mainly around some issues with roles and responsibilities and getting quorate for decisions which were a problem early in the programme. This was rectified early in the programme by revising the

Terms of Reference to allow for decisions by email when appropriate, and changing the quorate requirements.

"Limited availability [initially] of Council members for meetings and making decisions."

19. 12% of the comments were the programme implementation although this accounts for only 8 comments overall. Comments were mainly around the challenges with the website on go live and the impact this had on the phone lines. There was, however, recognition that this was out of our control and that colleagues worked well together to resolve the issues.

"Slow running of the system in the first week affected our volume of calls (and abandoned calls) and increased our emails coming in. There were bugs raised too but I think these were dealt with and reported well with a good system in place so I think these went as well as expected."

Recommendations

	Number of Comments	%
Agile	28	28.0%
Governance	21	21.0%
Programme Management	16	16.0%
Implementation	15	15.0%
Audits and Reviews	8	8.0%
Benefits Realisation Management	6	6.0%
Risk Management	3	3.0%
Impact Assessments	2	2.0%
Reporting	1	1.0%
Service Design	0	0.0%
Totals	**100**	**100.0%**

20. Agile methodology received the most recommendations (28%). The recommendations were mainly around doing full internal Discovery sessions to scope requirements and applying proper prioritisation to user stories and the product backlog during development.

"SSSC to scope more fully, internally, prior to discovery sessions - review what is there, what needs to be there, what works, what doesn't work - what does the business actually need."

"More involvement/facilitation from PM with focus on and review of MOSCOW criteria in relation to development asks."

21. 21% of the recommendations were around governance with 48% of these focusing on roles and responsibilities, although this is only 10 comments overall. In line with what didn't go so well, the recommendations were around ensuring roles and responsibilities are clear across projects and programmes.

"At the start of the programme, setting out clear roles and responsibilities for each member of the team would mean everyone is clear about what is in scope for them."

22. 16% of the recommendations were around programme management with 69% of these focusing on planning. Themes were around including business critical work in the plans and trying to ensure realistic timelines were in place.

"Some of the decisions were reliant on other organisations and their processes so we need to factor in more realistic and less optimistic timescales."

Next steps

23. Based on the feedback on the theme of Programme Management there are key actions for projects and programme teams to consider. Some of these have already been actioned or are in progress:

24. Agile methodology

- In any future projects or programmes, PMO will work with the supplier and Systems Development Team to agree what level of granularity is needed in the requirements and to scope these appropriately.

- SSSC's Agile approach is maturing and the PMO now have two AgilePM practitioners. This means PMO are better placed to support the development of user stories and prioritisation of these in a product backlog. The PMO will manage the development of the product backlog on any future Agile projects or programmes.

25. Governance

- The PMO and LCG are looking at introducing training or workshops to help those on programme boards and sponsor groups understand their responsibilities.
- Since the start of FPP, the PMO introduced a project kick-off pack which is used at the start of each project to summarise the governance structure, how the PMO will work with the project team, the roles and responsibilities etc.
- Part of PMO's plan for 2025/26 is to introduce an agile way of working workshop what can be used at the start of any agile project this will include how we work, clear roles and responsibilities etc.

THEME 2: COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

26. 36% of positive comments were about communication and engagement in comparison to 19% of what didn't go so well and 12% of the recommendations.

What went well

	Number of Comments	%
External	21	42.9%
SAG	8	16.3%
Internal	8	16.3%
Consultation	6	12.2%
Council	5	10.2%
Communications Team	1	2.0%
Totals	**49**	**100.0%**

27. The majority of the comments around what went well with our communication and engagement were related to external communication (43%) in particular the engagement events and communication to registrants and employers.

"Programme was complex and challenging and as a registrant and Council member I am appreciative of the excellent communication. Well done and thanks."

28. The joint second highest area was the Stakeholder Advisory Group (16%) with both SSSC staff and SAG members finding the group useful. Due to the success of the SAG we have already created a national SAG that will support the work of the SSSC going forward.

"SSSC are earnest in approach to consultation with all stakeholders (SAG), SSSC staff have a sincerity and there is a willingness to discuss conflicting views and demonstrations of humility in being prepared to further discuss plans and at times revise them. It feels like genuine collaboration."

29. 16% of the communication and engagement comments were around internal communication and how we kept staff informed of what was happening.

"I felt well informed about the changes about to come through and that despite a couple of issues the overall execution of the change was great. Considering how many spinning plates there were to this and how it could have gone wrong it was a really well delivered piece of work."

What didn't go so well

	Number of Comments	%
External	8	27.6%
Internal	8	27.6%
SAG	6	20.7%
Communications Team	5	17.2%
Consultation	2	6.9%
Council	0	0.0%
Totals	**29**	**100.0%**

30. External communication received 27% of the what didn't go so well comments, however this is only 8 comments out of the overall 155 comments on what didn't go so well. The majority of the comments were around potentially underselling what we have achieved.

"We almost certainly understood how extraordinary it was. Any other regulator would have had a higher prominence'"

31. Internal communication also received 27% of the comments. The majority of the feedback was related to internal communication not being strong enough and some areas of the organisation not engaging with the programme.

"Lack of communication with regard to more detailed requirements and developments. This was due to there being a lack of engagement from some departments until it was too late. There was a distinct theme of "FPP doesn't affect us" and reluctance to engage, until the hard work started which meant revisions and redevelopment."

32. The SAG received 21% of the comments. This was mainly around the roles and responsibilities within the SAG and being clear around its purpose. Whilst this was an issue early on in the programme it was identified and resolved very quickly.

"SAG members [initially] didn't seem to be clear on what their involvement is. There hasn't been much feedback from all members of group, attendance has also not been great. It's clear some attendees think it's a chance to discuss SSSC matters rather than FPP."

Recommendations

	Number of Comments	%
External	11	52.4%
Communications Team	4	19.0%
Internal	4	19.0%
SAG	2	9.5%
Consultation	0	0.0%
Council	0	0.0%
Totals	**21**	**100.0%**

33. External communications received 52% of the communication and engagement recommendations although this is only 11 out of the 174 recommendations. The recommendations were mainly around ensuring that the Communications Team is involved in the set up and support of engagement events and to ensure that engagement events continue to be offered in a mix of ways.

    "Comms involvement in setting up/ supporting engagement events."

    "Mixture of engagement sessions, in person (various locations) and online."

34. 19% of the recommendations were around the Communications Team involvement although this is only four comments overall. The recommendations were around ensuring the communications team are involved at the right time.

    "Ensure comms involved in planning stages for all comms/engagement for significant programmes."

35. 19% of the recommendations were around internal communication and engagement although is only four comments overall. The recommendations were around ensuring all teams and departments are engaged with the programme and are collaborating and sharing information.

    "While co-ordinating across many different teams and with individuals across the organisation worked to enhance the project there were some teams and individuals who did not engage until the last minute or when it was too late to take their feedback into account. Some departments held information that was not shared as they were unaware that it could impact the project, and the project team did not know about its existence. This could have been negated by making sure everyone within the organisation had a better understanding of the timelines and the impact on their own projects outwith FPP."

Next steps

36. Based on the feedback on the theme of Communications and Engagement there are key actions for projects and programme teams to consider. Some of these have already been actioned or are in progress:

37. Stakeholder Advisory Group

- The SAG added real value to the programme and should be continued after programme closure and be used to inform work across the SSSC. This has already been actioned.
- The purpose of the SAG and roles and responsibilities should be reviewed regularly to ensure they are still clear, fit for purpose and that everyone understands their part and what is expected of them.

38. Internal and external communication

- Continue to take a planned, structured approach to both our internal and external communication.
- Ensure we offer different types of engagement events such as in person and online. The Communications Team can advise project leads on what will work best for their project.

39. Communication Team

- The PMO will ensure that the Communication Team is involved in projects and programmes from the start this will allow them to give advice and guidance on the best communication approach to help.
- When running external engagement events, the Communications Team will agree with the project team to identify what is required and who has the appropriate skills and knowledge for organising dates, set up and technical advice, running the sessions etc.

THEME 3: DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

40. 14% of positive comments were about programme management in comparison to 21% of what didn't go so well and 16% of the recommendations.

41. It should be noted that whilst digital development is in the top three trends the comment count is low with the what went well equating to 19 comments, the didn't go so well equating to 33 comments and the recommendations 28 comments.

What went well

	Number of Comments	%
Telefonica Tech	6	31.6%
Development	4	21.1%
Go Live	4	21.1%
Systems Development Team	3	15.8%
Ways of Working	2	10.5%
Testing	0	0.0%
Totals	**19**	**100.0%**

42. The majority of the comments around what went well with our digital development were related to Telefonica Tech (32%). These were related to the relationship between the SSSC and Telefonica Tech and the resource and digital development skills withing Telefonica Tech.

   "Despite the changes internally, TT's work has been consistent throughout 3 year period and is a positive reflection on the quality of their work."

43. The development work accounted for 22% of what went well with praise for the ability to deliver such complex development.

   "The complex development work and data migration work went very well."

44. Go live also account for 22% of what went well. These comments were around the successful launch on the data planned and the weekend of go live.

   "Go Live weekend was a success in terms of steps being assigned and undertaken and communicated."

What didn't go so well

	Number of Comments	%
Telefonica Tech	12	36.4%
Testing	9	27.3%
Development	7	21.2%
Go Live	4	12.1%
Ways of Working	1	3.0%
Systems Development Team	0	0.0%
Totals	**33**	**100.0%**

45. Telefonica Tech received 36% of the comments around what didn't go so well. These were mainly related to issues we had with them in late 2023/early 2024 with inconsistent project management, issues with communication, lack of and inconsistent reporting, and inaccurate budgeting.

   "Unplanned budget overspend. TT not aware of correct budget position and communicated late with SSSC."

46. During a lessons learned session with Telefonica Tech they acknowledged that they had gone through significant organisation changes around this time that had affected the service we received. They are now through this change and have better systems and processes in place to avoid similar issues happening in the future.

47. Testing received 27% of the comments around what didn't go so well. This was mainly around not having enough internal resources for testing and not doing enough end-to-end testing. This was particularly evident in the issue

with Notices of Decisions (NODs) which was not identified in testing because the email notification of a NOD, which is the last part of the process, was not tested.

"Obviously we have identified the NOD issue now. So there is an issue about decisions around testing, where that sits, risk identified with it that needs to be examined in detail."

48. 21% of the comments were the development work although this accounts for only 7 comments overall. There was a general theme around under appreciation of the technical effort involved in the changes.

"Under-appreciation of technical effort required; understandable to an extent but led to unreasonable expectations in terms of delivery."

Recommendations

	Number of Comments	%
Telefonica Tech	15	53.6%
Ways of Working	7	25.0%
Development	3	10.7%
Go Live	2	7.1%
Testing	1	3.6%
Systems Development Team	0	0.0%
Totals	**28**	**100.0%**

49. Telefonica Tech received the most recommendations at 54% of the digital development recommendations. Recommendations focused on refining the process of how the two organisations work together and having more open, honest communication.

"We can better define the processes of how we [SSSC and TT] work together and if TT understand internal process of SSSC and vice versa our relationship will become more of the partnership we want it to be which will help maintain it and our trust in each other in the long term."

50. 25% of the recommendations were around ways of working, although this is only 7 comments overall. Comments were around having the right resource in place at the right time and increasing in-house capacity for development work.

"Consider resourcing within sys dev team to deliver more capability in-house."

Next steps

51. Based on the feedback on the theme of Digital Development there are key actions for projects and programme teams to consider. Some of these have already been actioned or are in progress:

52. Telefonica Tech

  - The Systems Development Team and PMO will work with any suppliers at the start of any projects or programmes to define how we will work together, what level of reporting is required, meeting frequency etc. This will include appropriate levels of escalation and resolution.

53. Testing

  - The Systems Development Team will work with any suppliers to agree how testing will work. This will include how to use personas so that full end to end testing takes place including testing email notifications etc.

CONSULTATION

54. The following were asked to contribute to lessons learned via surveys and/or lesson learned workshops:

  - Council
  - Executive Management Team
  - Programme Board
  - Sponsor Group
  - Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG)
  - OCSWA
  - Telefonica Tech (TT) – formerly Incremental Group
  - Project teams
  - Programme Team
  - Members of staff.

55. Management comments on what went well and didn't go so well in Appendix A were written in consultation with the Senior Responsible Officer and Programme Manager.

56. We did/will do comments in Appendix A were written in consultation with the relevant Heads of Service.

RISKS

57. No specific risks were identified as part of this report.

IMPLICATIONS

Resourcing

58. There are no resourcing requirements identified as part of this report.

Compliance

59. There are no compliance issues identified as part of this report.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

60. Impact Assessment was not required because this report is part of the Future Proofing Programme which has an Impact Assessment.

CONCLUSION

61. There are some key themes and trends identified from the lessons learned sessions and we have identified actions to help future projects and programmes mitigate these themes and trends. These will also be used to inform future business cases and Project Initiation Documents as well as risk identification.

62. The Programme Board is asked to note

- the contents of the report and the key lessons learned from this programme.
- to note the actions to address the key themes and recommendations learned from the programme.