

A Mutual Partner Checklist

Do we share the same values?

- Do we share a commitment to person centred, inclusive and high-quality support?
 - Do we genuinely understand and value each other's role and expertise?
 - Are our organisational cultures and ways of working compatible?
 - Are we both committed to acting with trust, transparency, fairness and respect?
 - Have we demonstrated collaborative behaviours in previous programmes?
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Are we clear about what we each bring?

- What strengths, expertise, relationships and resources are each organisation willing to share?
 - Are the roles and responsibilities for each partner clear?
 - Do we recognise the value of specialist VCSE knowledge, alongside the strengths of larger or lead organisations?
 - Are we both clear about what we need from each other to deliver successfully?
 - Is there a genuine opportunity for partners to influence and shape delivery, rather than simply implement a pre-determined model?
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Are expectations realistic and shared?

- Are delivery expectations, targets and outcomes realistic, transparent and jointly understood?
- Have conversations about performance management, quality and risk happened before contracts/Service Level Agreements are signed?
- Do we have a shared understanding of what success looks like?
- How will we respond if circumstances change or targets become difficult to achieve?
- Is there a commitment to honest conversations rather than surprises?

How is financial risk shared?

- Are payment terms fair, transparent and proportionate to the risks being carried?
 - Is adequate funding available to cover the true costs of delivery, including management, coordination and overheads?
 - Are liabilities and clawback arrangements clearly understood by all partners?
 - Is risk allocated to the organisation best placed to manage it?
 - Are all organisations financially sustainable within the partnership.
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How will we support each other to succeed?

- What support, development, learning and performance management will the lead partner provide?
 - How will we share knowledge, insight and good practice?
 - What happens when delivery becomes challenging?
 - Will performance conversations be constructive and focused on improvement?
 - Can the lead provider provide the right amount of support and challenge to delivery organisations?
 - Are both organisations willing to acknowledge when something is not working and work together to find a solution?
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How will we capture and demonstrate impact?

- Do we recognise outcomes beyond contract targets and volumes?
- How will we capture the difference being made to participants and communities?
- Will we share responsibility for collecting evidence, case studies and participant stories?
- Are reporting requirements proportionate, meaningful and useful?
- Will the partnership create opportunities to demonstrate the contribution of each organisation?
- Are we committed to learning, evaluation and continuous improvement?

Is communication genuinely two-way?

- Are difficult conversations encouraged and happening early?
 - Are communication channels and decision-making processes clear?
 - Will information be shared openly and in a timely way?
 - Do both partners feel able to challenge constructively?
 - Are decisions made with partners rather than simply communicated to them?
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Are we committed to long-term sustainability?

- Do we understand the true costs of quality delivery?
 - Are we both committed to strengthening organisational capability and resilience?
 - Will the partnership create opportunities for learning, development and future collaboration?
 - Are we considering what happens to the relationship beyond the current contract?
 - Will both organisations be stronger because of the partnership? ‘
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Is there evidence that we can trust each other?

- What do existing or previous partners say about working with us?
 - How have we each handled challenges, performance issues or changes in circumstances?
 - Is there evidence of fairness, consistency and mutual respect?
 - Do our actions demonstrate the values we say we hold?
 - Have we both been open about risks, limitations and expectations?
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