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Public-Private Partnership Improvement Toolkit

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Public-Private Partnership Improvement Toolkit

Successive governments have promoted joint working between the public and private sectors (often known as 'public-private partnerships' or 'PPPs') as a way of improving the delivery of health care, making the best of the different skills/experience which both sectors bring. However, although there has been a lot of research and helpful advice published around public agencies working together, partnerships between the public and private sector have often been neglected. This toolkit aims to fill this gap.

Although initiating a public-private partnership is a positive first step, building a successful partnership that achieves its potential over the long term is a totally different scale of challenge. It takes skill, care, and a lot of hard work and it is hoped you will find this toolkit helpful in meeting the challenge. This toolkit has been designed to be used to help existing partnerships to take stock and develop further in the future.

If you are not at this stage, the appendix of the toolkit highlights several useful resources to help you prepare for getting a partnership off the ground, as well as structuring your written partnership agreement (Partnering Initiative, 2011, WWF, 2015, Nesta, 2019).

Use of the toolkit will allow partner organisations to explore how relationships are developing and whether there are areas that need work on in the future. The task of making these relationships work on the ground often falls to individual leaders/practitioners (known as 'boundary-spanners' in the broader literature). While we know an increasing amount about the role of boundary-spanners in public-public partnerships, the toolkit summarises the findings of recent PhD research (Alexander, 2022) which explored these concepts in the context of relationships between the public and private sectors (where the cultural differences to be overcome are likely to be even more significant).



What is included in this toolkit?

Section 1: Description of toolkit	2
Section 2: How can the toolkit help you?	4
Section 3: Using the toolkit	5
Appendix	20

Don't hesitate to email me at duncan@helpinghealth.co.uk to enquire about consultancy and independent facilitator services to help organisations get the best out of the toolkit.

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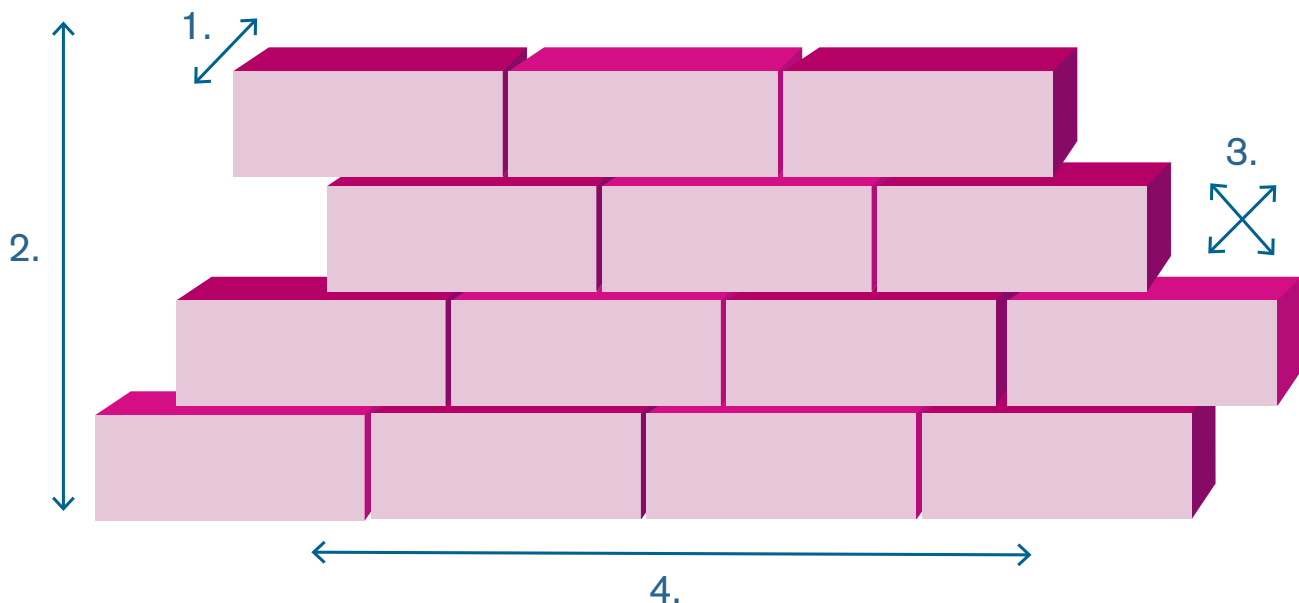
Section 1:

Description of toolkit

The hybrid nature of PPPs makes them more complicated and under-researched than partnerships involving only public organisations or only private companies. PhD researchers reviewed the previous literature/theory, researched a series of case study partnerships across the country and developed a new framework to help understand these issues. It draws on elements of the Partnership Assessment Tool ('PAT') (Hardy *et al.*, 2003) which has been extensively used in partnership research and has been independently verified as a useful way of assessing the strengths and limitations of relationships within a partnership (Petch, 2008).

This toolkit takes the PAT questions and uses the boundary wall framework developed from the PhD research to focus in particular on the role of boundary spanners within PPPs (i.e. how easy or otherwise it is to work across agency boundaries between partners – these are described in terms of a 'wall' and potential differences are explored in terms of the 'height', 'density' and 'thickness' of the wall, as well as the foundations on which the wall is built).

Boundary Wall Framework



Key:

- 1. Thickness = Cultural Differences
- 2. Height = Strategic Differences
- 3. Density = Balance of Power
- 4. Foundations = Environmental Factors

Table 1 over the page depicts how the differences or similarities between partners in strategy, culture, power and the environment can create a strong boundary wall or a weak boundary wall.



Table 1: Varying strength of the boundary wall

Dimension	Strong Boundary Wall	Weak Boundary Wall
Height	High: lack of agreed partnership aims and objectives	Low: shared partnership aims and objectives
Thickness	Thick: significant cultural differences between partners	Thin: small cultural differences between partners
Density	Impenetrable: large power differential between partners	Porous: negligible power differential between partners
Foundations	Stable: impactful environmental factors	Unstable: benign environmental factors
Result	Communication, collaboration and teamwork between partners harder to achieve	Communication, collaboration and teamwork between partners easier to achieve
Implications for people working across boundaries ('boundary spanners')	Increased difficulty of working across boundaries. This means that key people who work across partners ('boundary spanners') may need to spend more time engaging key stakeholders and bridging potentially very different ways of doing things	Increased ease of working across boundaries. This means that the 'boundary spanner' has to expend less energy and time in bridging the different partners and can focus on ensuring all aspects of the partnership run smoothly



Section 2:

How can the toolkit help you?

It provides material for a 'diagnostic phase' (using tools tested during the PhD research to provide practical support to the development of the partnership). This will identify key barriers/success factors that need to be worked with for the partnership to be successful.

It provides material to construct an Organisational Development (OD) plan for the partnership. The aim of the plan is three-fold:

- To provide opportunities to compare and contrast the views of 'boundary spanners' which will highlight things to celebrate as well as areas where additional effort and resources may be needed
- To provide structured information about participants' perceptions throughout the partnership
- Use of the diagnostic phase will hopefully provide more openness and transparency about partners' views on partnership working, which in turn will underpin the OD plan

It provides guidance on how to assess the initial impact of the toolkit. This is achieved by re-completing the material provided in the toolkit at the finish of the OD plan period, which in turn may contribute to an updated OD plan as well as a baseline for repeat exercises to measure changes over time.

The toolkit provides a practical way of:



- Helping recently formed partnerships to explore the views and aspirations of those having just embarked on a new venture. It provides insights to help develop an OD plan that will help devise a framework for partnership success



- Helping established partnerships take stock on a routine basis of how effective the relationship is between partners (i.e. it provides an opportunity for 'health checking' the partnership)



- Helping partnerships which are experiencing difficulties to identify areas of conflict (and consensus) in a supportive and developmental way, highlighting potential solutions through the formulation of an agreed OD plan



Section 3:

Using the toolkit



Stage 1 – Preparation

- Both partners agree to a partnership assessment
- Facilitator appointed (internal or external consultant)
- Creation of partnership assessment plan by facilitator (see next page for a worked example)
- Identify senior stakeholders and boundary spanners in each organisation



Stage 2 – Assessment

- Carry out semi-structured interview and administer PAT for senior stakeholders and boundary spanners in each organisation
- Additional boundary spanners are often uncovered from the interviews of the initial cohort. Interview and complete a PAT for these additional people



Stage 3 – Analysis

- The facilitator analyses the results of the questionnaire as well as picking out key themes from the semi structured interviews of the boundary spanners
- Using the methodology set out below, a first draft OD plan is generated



Stage 4 – Feedback/Next Steps

- Sense check the results of the OD plan with one or two selected individuals
- The OD plan to be issued to all stakeholders
- An optional (but recommended) workshop can be run which will allow the partners the chance to look in more detail at the areas of the partnership that have been identified as needing work
- Next steps for the partnership should then be agreed and communicated to all stakeholders



Section 3: Using the toolkit

Stage 1: preparation



For the toolkit to work effectively, there needs to be clarity amongst the partners about the purpose of using the toolkit to assess partnership working. Its main aim is to increase the likelihood of partnership success, but it is also possible to use it as a 'health check' on partnership progress either near the start of the partnership or as an exercise to help in the process of renewing or revising partnership arrangements.

Whatever the purpose, it is important that the partners have the chance to discuss and agree the remit of the toolkit and what is expected/hoped/intended to achieve, and what will be done following production of the organisation development plan.

Facilitation of the process is important at every stage of using the toolkit. This facilitation can be conducted

internally but it should be done by an experienced practitioner as sensitive issues are likely to be raised. Sometimes, and especially where the partnership is in difficulties, it may be better conducted externally as the facilitator is likely to be seen as independent with no particular axe to grind. It is important that those participating in the toolkit process are assured not only that taking the trouble to undertake the assessment is worthwhile, but that they can be, and should be, frank and honest in their responses.

Finally, as part of the OD plan, it is important a section is included about the wider policy and organisational context within which the partnership operates. This will allow stakeholders to become acquainted with and mindful of the external factors operating on the partnership.

Suggested partnership assessment plan

Stage	Facilitator activity	Output / Outcome
1a	Facilitator identified to carry out partnership assessment	Facilitator creates a partnership assessment plan using the toolkit as a guide
1b	Present partnership assessment goals to senior stakeholders	Buy in from senior stakeholders to the assessment. Agreement to be interviewed by facilitator
2a	Carry out semi-structured interviews and administer PAT with senior stakeholders. Identify boundary spanners	PAT scores for each senior stakeholder and identification of boundary spanners
2b	Carry out semi-structured interviews and administer PAT with boundary spanners	PAT scores for each boundary spanner and identification of key issues for OD plan
3	Formulation of first draft of OD plan by facilitator using the results of semi-structured interviews and PAT	Creation of first draft OD plan
4a	Sense check the results of the OD plan with one or two selected individuals	Make any alterations suggested by the review of the OD plan
4b	Finalise OD plan and get sign off from senior stakeholders of each partner	OD plan to be published. Partners can reflect on the themes from the partnership assessment
4c	Optional workshop	Any insights from this discussion could perhaps help in the next stage of the partnership's development
4d	Agree next steps for the partnership	Partnership next steps communicated to all stakeholders

Section 3: Using the toolkit

Stage 2: assessment



There are two parts to collecting data from each individual that is participating in the partnership assessment process:

1. Semi-structured interview
2. Completion of PAT

The facilitator should start by conducting a semi-structured interview. This will typically take around 30 minutes and will be an opportunity for the individual to talk openly about the partnership and their particular role and responsibilities.

A suggested template for the semi-structured interview is as follows:

- Background and how you became involved in the Partnership
- Current role and responsibilities in managing the Partnership
- How has this changed since you started the role?
- How will the role change in the future?
- Who else is involved in managing the Partnership?

There are a number of benefits to conducting an initial interview before administering the PAT. It allows the facilitator and individual to meet (particularly if the facilitator is an external appointment) and provides the opportunity for the facilitator to gently probe the feelings of the individual concerning the partnership.

It allows the individual to ask any questions concerning the process in a supportive environment and the facilitator can reassure the individual about the confidential nature of the information that they provide. It has also been shown to improve the quality of PAT answers as the individual has had time to really think about the performance of the partnership through the interview and that generally leads to more thoughtful responses.

The facilitator should ensure that they leave around 15 minutes of the allotted interview time to run through the PAT set out in the following pages. The facilitator will ask individuals to consider a series of statements about the Partnership. They need to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each of these statements using the following scoring system:

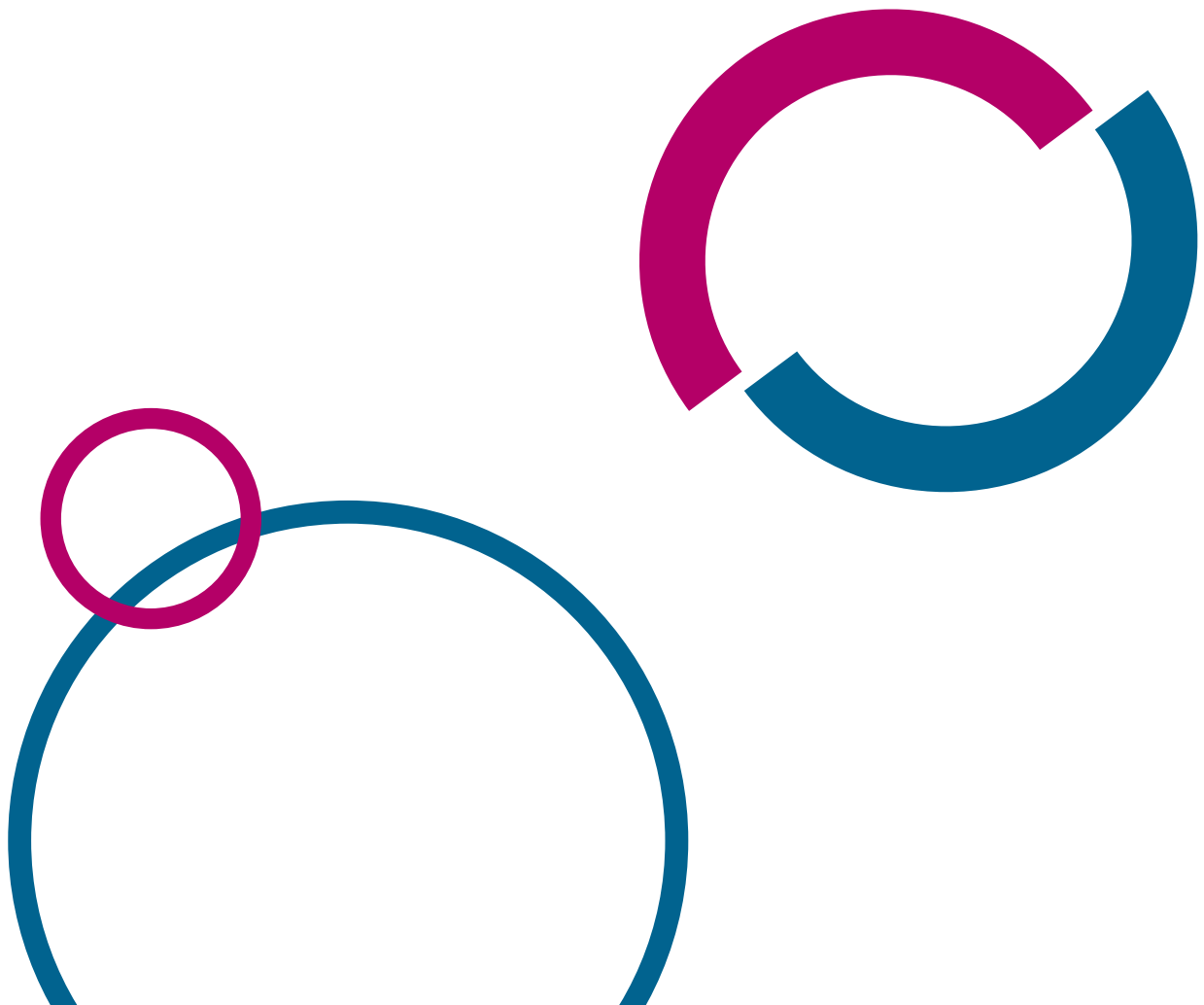


The facilitator should read out each question and then tick the box to record the answer of the boundary spanner/senior stakeholder. The following is an illustration of this scoring, using the example of imagined responses to Section 1 of the PAT.



Example

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the partnership?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There have been substantial past achievements within the partnership	✓			
The factors associated with successful working are known and understood		✓		
The principal barriers to making this partnership work are known and understood		✓		
The extent to which the partnership is voluntary or mandated is recognised and understood			✓	
There is a clear understanding of partners' interdependence in achieving some of their goals	✓			
There is mutual understanding of those areas of activity where partners can achieve some goals by working independently of each other		✓		



Set out below are the PAT questions to ask each participant. They should consider each statement about the partnership and indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. There are six sections with six questions in each section. Tick each box with the response provided by the participant.



Section 1: Recognise and Accept the Need for Partnership

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the partnership?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.1 There have been substantial past achievements within the partnership				
1.2 The factors associated with successful working are known and understood				
1.3 The principal barriers to making this partnership work are known and understood				
1.4 The extent to which the partnership is voluntary or mandated is recognised and understood				
1.5 There is a clear understanding of partners' interdependence in achieving some of their goals				
1.6 There is mutual understanding of those areas of activity where partners can achieve some goals by working independently of each other				

Section 2: Develop Clarity and Realism of Purpose

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the partnership?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
2.1 Our partnership has a clear vision, shared values and agreed service principles				
2.2 We have clearly defined joint aims and objectives				
2.3 These joint aims and objectives are realistic				
2.4 The partnership has defined clear service outcomes				
2.5 The reason why each partner is engaged in the partnership is understood and accepted				
2.6 We have identified where early partnership success is most likely				

Section 3: Ensure Commitment and Ownership

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the partnership?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
3.1 There is a clear commitment to partnership working from the most senior levels of each partnership organisation				
3.2 There is widespread ownership of the partnership across and within all partners				
3.3 Commitment to partnership working is sufficiently robust to withstand most threats to its working				
3.4 The partnership recognises and encourages networking skills				
3.5 The partnership is not dependent for its success solely upon individuals with these skills				
3.6 Not working in partnership is discouraged and dealt with				

Section 4: Develop and Maintain Trust

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the partnership?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
4.1 The way the partnership is structured recognises and values each partner's contribution				
4.2 The way the partnership's work is conducted appropriately recognises each partner's contribution				
4.3 Benefits derived from the partnership are fairly distributed among all partners				
4.4 There is sufficient trust within the partnership to survive any mistrust that arises elsewhere				
4.5 Levels of trust within the partnership are high enough to encourage significant risk-taking				
4.6 The partnership has succeeded in having the right people in the right place at the right time to promote partnership working				

Section 5: Create Clear and Robust Partnership Arrangements

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the partnership?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5.1 It is clear what financial resources each partner brings to the partnership				
5.2 The resources, other than finance, each partner brings to the partnership are understood and appreciated				
5.3 Each partner's areas of responsibility are clear and understood				
5.4 There are clear lines of accountability for the performance of the partnership as a whole				
5.5 Operational partnership arrangements are simple, time-limited and task-orientated				
5.6 The partnership's principal focus is on process, outcomes and innovation				

Section 6: Monitor, Measure and Learn

To what extent do you agree with each of the following six statements in respect of the partnership?	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6.1 The partnership has clear success criteria in terms of both service goals and the partnership itself				
6.2 The partnership has clear arrangements to effectively monitor and review how successfully its service aims and objectives are being met				
6.3 There are clear arrangements to effectively monitor and review how the partnership itself is working				
6.4 There are clear arrangements to ensure that monitoring and review findings are, or will be, widely shared and disseminated amongst the partners				
6.5 Partnership successes are well communicated outside of the partnership				
6.6 There are clear arrangements to ensure that partnership aims, objectives and working arrangements are reconsidered and, where necessary, revised in the light of monitoring and review findings				

Complete the interviews and PAT for all participants.



Section 3: *Using the toolkit*

Stage 3: analysis



There are two parts to the analysis of the data. The first is to pick out any common themes from the semi-structured interviews that have not been explicitly picked up by the PAT. For instance, it might become apparent that it is difficult to obtain clinical engagement in the partnership or that a recent change in the senior management team of one partner has altered the dynamic of the partnership. These external factors are important to include in the OD plan so that they can be discussed as part of the feedback/next steps workshop.

The second aspect of data analysis is to connect the individual PAT answers from all participants in order to pick out which areas of the partnership are allocated to which themes of how the partnership is performing. These themes are: partnership strengths; partnership areas to work on; areas where there is a range of opinions. Deciding which questions fall into which category is detailed below.

Partnership strengths

Individual questions where **all** participants agree or strongly agree with the statement fall into this category. These will be used in the OD plan to show which aspects are real strengths of the partnership, and they are things that should be celebrated.

Partnership areas to work on

Individual questions where there are divergent views between the partners with a statement fall into this category. The suggested OD action for each statement is set out below under the heading 'OD plan creator'. For example, if three out of seven

participants disagree with the PAT statement 2.2 ('We have clearly defined joint aims and objectives') then find 2.2 in OD plan creator and the appropriate OD action should be included in the overall OD plan for the partnership. So, in this case statement 2.2 has the following OD action attached: 'Work together to define clear joint aims and objectives. This task should serve several purposes: provide a focus around which the partners can adhere; help to clarify boundaries and commitments; define more clearly the scale and scope of joint work; and provide a framework for the regulation of joint arrangements.'

Here is another example. Let us say four out of seven participants don't agree with the PAT statement 6.3 ('There are clear arrangements to effectively monitor and review how the partnership itself is working'). Using the OD plan creator, the following OD action should be included in the overall OD plan: 'Regularly review how well the partnership itself is working. Even if the jointly agreed service aims and objectives are being successfully met it is important to reflect on how far this is due to a healthy and smoothly functioning partnership or whether by contrast they are being achieved only at some cost to individual partnership members'.

Areas where there is a range of opinions

Where a participant from one organisation scores a PAT statement as strongly agree and another participant from the other organisation scores the same statement as strongly disagree then these are areas which could prove fruitful. Exploring them in more detail may tease out any helpful next steps for the partnership.



OD plan creator

Statement number	PAT statement	Possible OD plan action (to be tailored to individual partnerships – current wording is for indicative purposes only) To be used where some participants have disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement
1.1	There have been substantial past achievements within the partnership	There is no fully agreed account of what has already been achieved through partnership working. It would be helpful to discuss this and achieve consensus
1.2	The factors associated with successful working are known and understood	Identify the main factors associated with successful working in this partnership and commit them to paper
1.3	The principal barriers to making this partnership work are known and understood	Obtain consensus as to the broad barriers that hinder this partnership. Several type of barrier can be distinguished: structural, procedural, financial, professional, cultural and matters of status and legitimacy
1.4	The extent to which the partnership is voluntary or mandated is recognised and understood	The policy context of the partnership needs to be recognised. It is vital to the success of the partnership that the 'why the partnership exists' is recognised and understood
1.5	There is a clear understanding of partners' interdependence in achieving some of their goals	There is disputed consensus around the partners' interdependence to achieving their mutual goals. This means it is insufficiently acknowledged or inadequately understood. A discussion to rectify this might be helpful
1.6	There is mutual understanding of those areas of activity where partners can achieve some goals by working	Organisations normally have some 'core business' which they would expect to undertake with little or no reference to the other partner. A discussion might be required to highlight and agree these core business areas for each partner
2.1	Our partnership has a clear vision, shared values and agreed service principles	Ensure that the partnership is built on shared vision, shared values and agreed service principles. Where there are clear differences of perspective, these may need to be resolved if further partnership development is to flourish
2.2	We have clearly defined joint aims and objectives	Work together to define clear joint aims and objectives. This task should serve several purposes: provide a focus around which the partners can adhere; help to clarify boundaries and commitments; define more clearly the scale and scope of joint work; and provide a framework for the regulation of joint arrangements
2.3	These joint aims and objectives are realistic	Review the joint aims and objectives of the partnership to ensure they are realistic. Aims and objectives which are not realistically capable of attainment will soon diminish enthusiasm for the partnership
2.4	The partnership has defined clear service outcomes	It is important that the partnership aims and objectives are also expressed as outcomes for service recipients. There needs to be a clear indication of how the partnership will lead to these improved service outcomes

Statement number	PAT statement	Possible OD plan action <small>(to be tailored to individual partnerships – current wording is for indicative purposes only) To be used where some participants have disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement</small>
2.5	The reason why each partner is engaged in the partnership is understood and accepted	A discussion between the partners is needed to ensure that there is an understanding and acceptance of why each partner is engaged in the partnership. Partnership working can flounder if based on partner motivations and purposes that are misunderstood or not overtly expressed
2.6	We have identified where early partnership success is most likely	Often partnership working is a long-term task. It is useful to look for 'quick wins' and 'small wins' which can bring impetus and stability to the partnership
3.1	There is a clear commitment to partnership working from the most senior levels of each partnership organisation	Organisational commitment to partnership working is more likely to be sustained where there is senior management support. It could be helpful to arrange a meeting of senior stakeholders to enhance individual commitment to the venture
3.2	There is widespread ownership of the partnership across and within all partners	Operational staff often possess the capacity to 'make or break' shared arrangements. It is recommended that a communications strategy is constructed that involves all stakeholders of the PPP. This could involve personal contact by senior stakeholders, quarterly and annual reports, regular newsletter, website and public meetings
3.3	Commitment to partnership working is sufficiently robust to withstand most threats to its working	Commitment at whatever level in the organisation needs to be consistent. Talk through the consequences of unilateral action to change, or varying of agreed protocols and discourage these actions as this can potentially put the partnership at risk
3.4	The partnership recognises and encourages networking skills	Recognise and encourage individuals with networking skills to participate in managing the partnership
3.5	The partnership is not dependent for its success solely upon individuals with these skills	Reward partnership working and discourage and deal with those not working in partnership. Both organisations and individuals need to see that there are incentives for partnership working and disincentives for not working collaboratively
3.6	Not working in partnership is discouraged and dealt with	Work together to define clear joint aims and objectives. This task should serve several purposes: provide a focus around which the partners can adhere; help to clarify boundaries and commitments; define more clearly the scale and scope of joint work; and provide a framework for the regulation of joint arrangements

Statement number	PAT statement	Possible OD plan action <small>(to be tailored to individual partnerships – current wording is for indicative purposes only) To be used where some participants have disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement</small>
4.1	The way the partnership is structured recognises and values each partner's contribution	Ensure each partner's contribution is equally recognised and valued. If possible, remove any reference in the governance arrangements to having 'senior' and 'junior' partners or 'core groups'
4.2	The way the partnership's work is conducted appropriately recognises each partner's contribution	Ensure fairness in the conduct of the partnership. It means stopping one partner always setting the agenda or defining the language for partnership working; or hosting and chairing meetings at times and places of their convenience; or dictating agendas, priorities, timescales etc.
4.3	Benefits derived from the partnership are fairly distributed among all partners	Ensure fairness in distribution of partnership benefits. These should be transparent. Partnerships cannot be uniformly about 'win-win' solutions for all. On the contrary, the health of the partnership can be measured in terms of the 'sacrifice' which each partner is prepared to make for the collective good
4.4	There is sufficient trust within the partnership to survive any mistrust that arises elsewhere	Operational staff often possess the capacity to 'make or break' shared arrangements. It is recommended that a communications strategy is constructed that involves all stakeholders of the PPP. This could involve personal contact by senior stakeholders, quarterly and annual reports, regular newsletter, website and public meetings
4.5	Levels of trust within the partnership are high enough to encourage significant risk-taking	What more can be done to build trust within the partnership to encourage significant risk taking? Such risks most visibly would be in political or financial terms – with one partner, for example, being willing to risk some immediate individual 'loss' for the sake of some longer-term collective gain
4.6	The partnership has succeeded in having the right people in the right place at the right time to promote partnership working	Make plans to ensure that the right people within each partner are identified so that they can be in the right place at the right time. Having the right people involved in this way is a matter of careful selection, the exercise of peer pressure and strong performance management
5.1	It is clear what financial resources each partner brings to the partnership	Make sure there is transparency in the financial resources each partner brings to the partnership. There needs to be an understanding of the stability associated with each other's resources, and an appreciation that the partnership may have to cope with reductions in previously agreed resource levels
5.2	The resources, other than finance, each partner brings to the partnership are understood and appreciated	Make partner stakeholders aware of and appreciate the non-financial resources each partner brings to the partnership. These resources can be tangible such as HR, facilities and services such as IT. Others are less tangible, and may comprise knowledge, experience, power and legitimacy

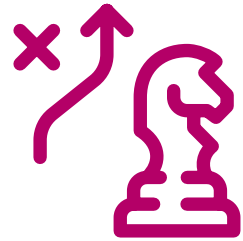
Statement number	PAT statement	Possible OD plan action <small>(to be tailored to individual partnerships – current wording is for indicative purposes only) To be used where some participants have disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement</small>
5.3	Each partner's areas of responsibility are clear and understood	Distinguish single from collective responsibilities and ensure they are clear and understood. Without clear delineations of responsibility there is potential for confusion and mistrust
5.4	There are clear lines of accountability for the performance of the partnership as a whole	Ensure there is clarity about lines of accountability. First, those involved need to know how they - and each other – are accountable for partnership work, both to their own organisation and to the partnership as a whole. Second, it is vital there is clear accountability for the performance of the partnership as a whole – across all partners
5.5	Operational partnership arrangements are simple, time-limited and task-orientated	Develop operational partnership arrangements which are simple, time-limited and task-orientated. Unduly complex or restrictive partnership working arrangements often reflect low levels of trust between partners and caution about 'giving too much away'. Instead, arrangements should reflect both urgency and a sharp focus to minimise the potential for drift
5.6	The partnership's principal focus is on process and outcomes	Ensure the prime focus of the partnership is on process and outcomes rather than structures and inputs
6.1	The partnership has clear success criteria in terms of both service goals and the partnership itself	The partners need to agree success criteria which are made explicit both for service aims and objectives and for the partnership itself
6.2	The partnership has clear arrangements to effectively monitor and review how successfully its service aims, and objectives are being met	Develop arrangements for monitoring and reviewing how well the partnership's service aims and objectives are being met. There is often scepticism, amongst partnership members and parent organisations, about the extent to which the benefits of collaborative working exceed the costs to individual partners. Monitoring the extent to which collectively agreed aims and objectives are being met helps mitigate this scepticism.
6.3	There are clear arrangements to effectively monitor and review how the partnership itself is working	Regularly review how well the partnership itself is working. Even if the jointly agreed service aims and objectives are being successfully met it is important to reflect on how far this is due to a healthy and smoothly functioning partnership or whether by contrast they are being achieved only at some cost to individual partnership members
6.4	There are clear arrangements to ensure that monitoring and review findings are, or will be, widely shared and disseminated amongst the partners	Ensure widespread dissemination of monitoring and review findings amongst partners. This should be incorporated into the communications strategy of the partnership, which if it doesn't exist needs to be created

Statement number	PAT statement	Possible OD plan action <small>(to be tailored to individual partnerships – current wording is for indicative purposes only) To be used where some participants have disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement</small>
6.5	Partnership successes are well communicated outside of the partnership	Celebrate and publicise partnership success and root out continuing barriers. This is an important element of the partnership communications strategy, which if it doesn't exist might well need to be created
6.6	There are clear arrangements to ensure that partnership aims, objectives and working arrangements are reconsidered and, where necessary, revised in the light of monitoring and review findings	Reconsider/revise partnership aims, objectives and arrangements. Reconsideration need not lead to revision or refinement of aims, objectives or arrangements but it provides the opportunity for recognising, for example, previous over ambition or lack of ambition, lack of commitment or structures and process which marginalise rather than involve partners appropriately



Section 3: Using the toolkit

Stage 4: Feedback/Next Steps



It is now time to compile the OD plan. It is suggested that the following sections are included and examples of the type of comment to incorporate are provided in italics.

Executive Summary

The first paragraph should include a summary of the organisations involved. Here is an example:

This report is based on a review of joint working between X public organisation and Y private organisation as part of an assessment one year into the partnership. It draws on an innovative toolkit for assessing the strength of partnership working between public and private sector partners (Alexander, 2022).

The second paragraph should detail the length of the assessment and who was involved and how they approached the assessment process. Here is an example:

The X/Y partnership assessment was conducted between December 202X and March 202X. Ten participants were interviewed (five each from X and Y organisations) and all completed a questionnaire known as the 'Partnership Assessment Tool' (PAT). It was obvious that each participant thought carefully about their responses to the questions posed by both the semi structured interview and the PAT. This provides confidence that the suggestions contained in this report could have a positive impact on the success of the partnership moving forward.

The third paragraph should summarise the strengths of the partnership. Here is an example:

Participants identified a significant number of partnership strengths such as the robust way in which the partnership has been structured, recognisable and achievable joint aims and objectives, recognition of what has already been achieved, and significant and consistent senior management commitment. Above all that there is a pride in knowing that the partnership is improving patient outcomes.

The fourth paragraph should summarise where the partnership might focus attention to improve. Here is an example of the type of wording that could be used:

A small number of areas have been identified as needing work, the most important of which is an increased focus on monitoring, measuring and learning within the partnership. There is also an area where there was a range of opinions – exploring these together may be a helpful next step (more details are provided below). Several people also suggested that it can be difficult to ensure clinical engagement in driving forward the partnership. Clinical engagement is also seen as a key issue in the wider literature, and the implications of this may be relevant for this project as well as for other partnerships being undertaken by the Trust.

Positives about the partnership

Statements that obtain universal agreement of the participants should be highlighted here. The statements can be directly copied from the PAT into this section, or a number can be summarised if much the same point is being made in each statement. For instance, if the first two questions of the PAT to obtain universal approval are 1.1 and 2.2, the start of this section could look like the following:

All ten participants agree that the following are real strengths of the partnership, and they are things that should be celebrated:

- 1. There have been substantial past achievements within the partnership (if these have been discussed during a semi structured interview then add an example)*
- 2. The partnership have clearly defined joint aims and objectives*
- 3. Etc...*

Areas to work on within the partnership

Individual questions where some participants disagree with the statement fall into this category. For each statement in this section, include the corresponding wording from the OD plan creator shown above, as a separate bullet point. Here is a brief example of the start of this section that uses statements 5.1 and 6.3:

To help the partnership move forward, the following areas were each highlighted by three out of seven participants as needing some further work/thinking.

1. *Make sure there is transparency in the financial resources each partner brings to the partnership. There needs to be an understanding of the stability associated with each other's resources, and an appreciation that the partnership may have to cope with reductions in previously agreed resource levels*
2. *Regularly review how well the partnership itself is working. Even if the jointly agreed service aims and objectives are being successfully met it is important to reflect on how far this is due to a healthy and smoothly functioning partnership or whether by contrast they are being achieved only at some cost to individual partnership members*
3. *Etc...*

Areas of the partnership that lacked consensus

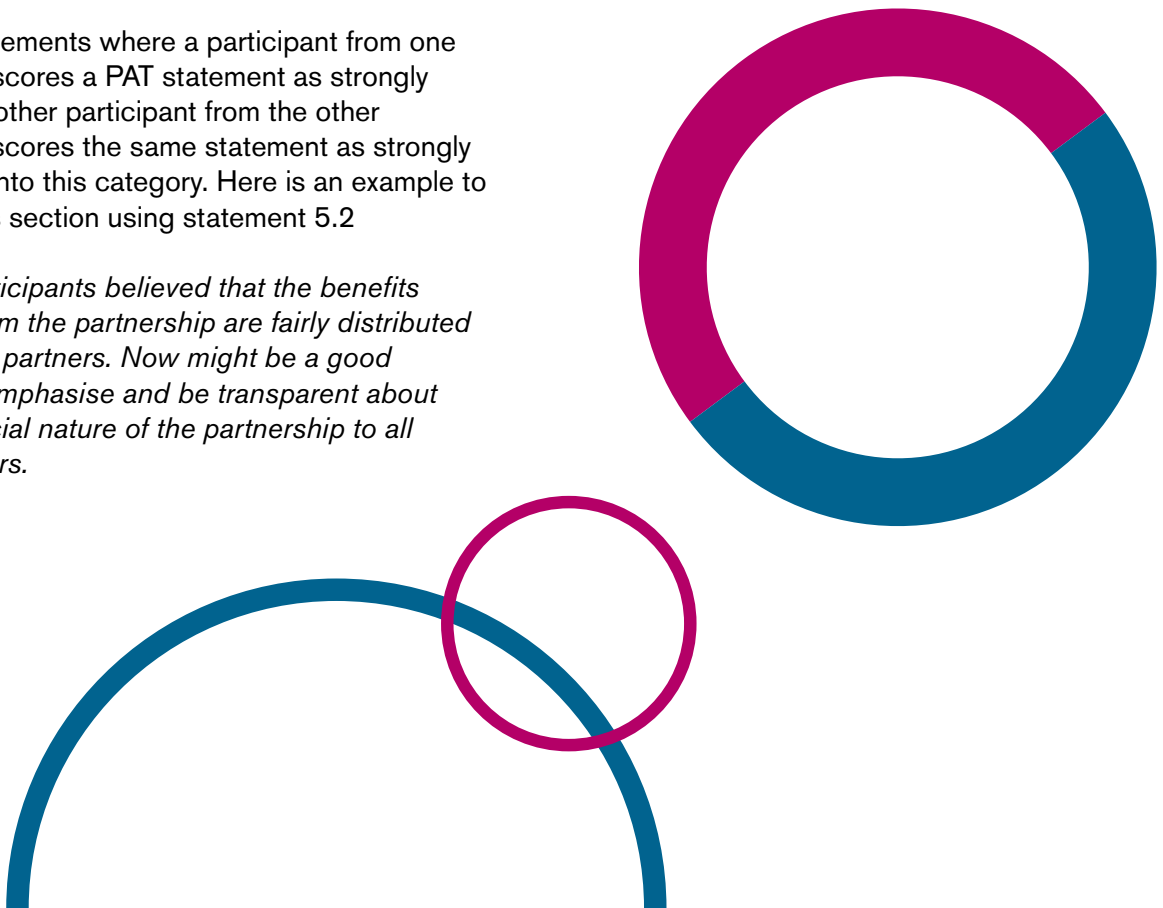
Individual statements where a participant from one organisation scores a PAT statement as strongly agree and another participant from the other organisation scores the same statement as strongly disagree fall into this category. Here is an example to include in this section using statement 5.2

1. *Not all participants believed that the benefits derived from the partnership are fairly distributed among the partners. Now might be a good time to reemphasise and be transparent about the beneficial nature of the partnership to all stakeholders.*
2. *Etc...*

Next Steps

Finally, the OD plan finishes with a next steps section. This could include an offer from the facilitator to hold a focus group/meeting with all interested parties to review the findings of the OD plan and agree next steps for the partnership. Here is an example of what you might want to include in this concluding paragraph:

The partnership report will be distributed to key stakeholders so that the partners can reflect on the themes from the partnership assessment. To get the full benefit of this analysis it is important for the key participants to take part in a structured forum that systematically builds on the written analysis and plan. In that forum the things that work well in the partnership can be celebrated, and the lessons from the bits that work well can be used to improve the areas where improvement is needed. In a structured and controlled face to face environment misunderstandings or misperceptions which underpin many problems in partnerships can be teased out and collaborative ways identified to modify behaviours and improve working, to everyone's mutual benefit. The best person to organise and chair the forum is the (independent) facilitator, who in this role moves from analysing the properties of the boundary wall to help reduce its overall strength that will make the partnership work better.



Appendix

Useful resources on partnership working include the following. This toolkit is based on research by Alexander, J.D. (2022).

ALEXANDER, J. D. 2022. Public-Private Partnerships, *Boundary Spanners and the Boundary Wall in the English National Health Service*. PhD, University of Birmingham.

HARDY, B., HUDSON, B. & WADDINGTON, E. 2003. *Assessing strategic partnership: the partnership assessment tool*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister London.

NESTA. 2019. Partnership Toolkit. Available: https://www.nesta.org.uk/toolkit/partnership-toolkit/?gclid=CjwKCAjw_MqgBhAGEiwAnYOAehxzdEKQluH_5M97gSQDpujkCmWCtX3OKoHgH4SNbJoXexh7-G0MdxoCKUEQAvD_BwE [Accessed 15/03/2023].

PARTNERING INITIATIVE, T. 2011. *The Partnering Toolkit*. Available: <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/the-partnering-toolbook/> [Accessed 12/03/2023].

PETCH, A. 2008. *Health and social care: establishing a joint future?*, Dunedin Academic Press Ltd.

WWF. 2015. The Partnership Toolbox. Available: http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_partnershiptoolboxartweb.pdf [Accessed 15/03/2023].

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