A FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNERSHIPS

2024

YMCA
GEORGE WILLIAMS
COLLEGE

YPF
TRUST

CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS FRAMEWORK	**3**
LITERATURE REVIEW	**4**
FOCUS GROUPS	**4**
PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK	**5**
WHO WE ARE	**7**
HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT	**8**
SUMMARY OF THE MARKERS	**10**
A NOTE ABOUT GROUPING, SEQUENCE, AND HIERARCHY	**10**
THE ROLE OF EDI	**11**
ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS	**11**
THE FRAMEWORK	**14**
1. Power sharing	15
2. Place-based insight and youth voice	17
3. Shared vision and purpose	19
4. Partnership delivery	21
5. Partnership systems and processes	23
6. Collaborative practice	25
7. Partnership operations and governance	27
8. Partnership leverage	29
APPENDICES	**31**
Appendix A - What are local youth partnerships?	32
Appendix B - Good questions	33
Bibliography/References	36

YMCA GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE

YPF TRUST

ABOUT THIS FRAMEWORK

This document sets out the features and principles that evidence suggests enable the development and maintenance of effective partnerships that are working at a local level to improve provision and outcomes for young people.

This Framework is designed specifically for use by local youth partnerships (LYPs) and Young People's Foundations (YPFs) (see Appendix A for definition). It is intended to serve as a valuable tool for guidance, self-assessment, planning, and evaluation.

The first draft of this Framework was developed between September 2022 and March 2023. During this time, YMCA George Williams College identified ten 'markers' of effective partnership working following desk-based research that identified the common features of effective local partnerships. This created the first version of this Framework, where we gathered initial feedback from the Young People's Foundation (YPF) Trust and emerging LYPs. Since then, we have reviewed the initial draft Framework, undertaken a focused literature search and consulted with local practitioners at different stages on their journey to becoming an LYP.



Read the definition of an LYP in Appendix A - page 32

FOCUS GROUPS

Crucially, sitting alongside the literature review was the practical application and interpretation of the Framework. Five focus groups were held to gather feedback from as many emerging LYPs as possible:

1. National focus group, London, November 2023, during the LYP Winter Conference to capture feedback from LYPs across England;
2. North West regional focus group, Warrington, October 2023, to gather feedback from local areas to review the existing Framework;
3. North West regional focus group, Manchester, March 2024, a second regional focus group to gain feedback on the revised markers and an understanding of the practical application of the Framework;
4. North East regional focus group, held online, March 2024, to enable local LYPs to review the revised markers presented in this iteration as well as the practical application; and
5. South West regional focus group, Swindon, March 2024, to review the revised markers and practical application in more detail.



LITERATURE REVIEW

In autumn 2023, we completed a focused literature search using Google and Google Scholar (grey and academic literature respectively). The literature search used a combination of free text terms and keywords relating to partnership working in the youth sector, for example, 'partnership working', 'cross-sector partnership' and 'collaboration'. In addition to a broad search for literature relating to partnership working, a literature search was also conducted using keywords relating to each marker. This was supplemented by searching websites of pertinent organisations (for example the Tamarack Institute).

The summaries/abstracts of all literature identified were inspected by the research team to determine inclusion. A total of twenty four articles were identified, and four were excluded[1]. Data was extracted from the literature and mapped onto the ten original markers from the first iteration of the Framework. Evidence to support the inclusion of additional themes was recorded alongside. Following the literature review, three additional pertinent documents were identified during the consultation process, which included informal conversations with colleagues and specific focus groups with LYPs and other stakeholders such as the YPF Trust and John Lyons Charity.

---

[1] *The four articles were excluded as they related to a very specific form of partnership working (multi-agency safeguarding partnerships in response to young people at risk of exploitation), which on initial review was not relevant to this work.*

PURPOSE OF THE FRAMEWORK

This Framework is written for the wide variety of stakeholders involved in the establishment and evolution of LYPs and YPFs. It can be used in several ways.

The Framework is designed to support and inform the journey of an LYP, as it moves from an initial group of partners and organisations collectively exploring collaboration, through an expanded group of partners committing to developing their work together with shared intent, to an active and established LYP or YPF affecting positive change in their area. The 'markers' of effective partnership are the landmarks and waypoints on this journey, and so present opportunities to stop and reflect on progress, and plan the way ahead. The markers are not sequential – some LYPs will arrive at some markers earlier than others, and the practice of individual LYPs will evolve at different speeds.

Each marker is defined at three levels, aligned to the point that LYPs are on in their individual journeys. As such, the Framework can be used as follows:

1. Planning: working through the Framework to develop a shared action plan for how you will progress towards effective practice under each marker;

2. Reflection: using the Framework to support active reflection on the progress of your LYP and your collaborative practice; and

3. Evaluation and improvement: drawing on the Framework to self-assess, identifying areas of strength and priorities for development.



Most importantly, the Framework is designed to strengthen and embed partnership working in practice. Through using the Framework, there are many opportunities to embody effective collaboration: for example, using the content to provide the agenda for partnership meetings and working groups; convening around the individual experience that relates to each marker and how they are different for diverse stakeholder groups; or structuring your governance cycle around a regular review of each marker.

"The fundamental premise is that if local partnerships are thriving, then the local area and service providers will be thriving too, which in turn leads to outstanding high-quality opportunities to enable all children and young people to thrive through their local youth partnership."

-

YPF Trust

Fundamentally, the Framework is intended to function as a 'blueprint' for effective partnership in service of high quality out-of-school provision and improved outcomes for young people. LYPs respond to and meet the needs of children and young people locally, through partnerships and collaboration. Robust, inclusive and varied partnerships encourage higher investment and support for youth and play, resulting in better outcomes for children, young people and communities.



WHO WE ARE

YMCA GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE

YMCA George Williams College is an independent charity affiliated to the YMCA Federation of England & Wales. For over fifty years, the College devoted itself to the training and education of youth workers from pre- to post-graduate levels. More recently, the College has broadened its offer to draw on the principles of relational practice to support and develop all practitioners working with and for children, young people, and families.

The College merged with the Centre for Youth Impact in April 2022, combining expertise in understanding and improving quality and impact with the training and development of practitioners. Our work is now focused across our three centres of expertise, which aim to transform our support to the sector to be broader, deeper, and more accessible, therefore transforming the quality and impact of the youth sector in its work with and for young people.



YPF TRUST

The Young People's Foundation Trust (YPF Trust) is a charity that grows, supports and enables place-based collaboration and partnerships focused on the needs of young people and the organisations that support them. We do this through a growing network of local youth partnerships (LYPs) and Young People's Foundations (YPFs).

We know that children and young people will thrive if the organisations that work with them are supported, resourced, recognised and connected, locally and nationally.

LYPs may take various forms, ranging from informal collaborations to formal partnerships or legally constituted organisations. By collaborating under a shared vision informed by local insight, needs, and ambitions, LYPs improve outcomes for children and young people by expanding and shaping local provision, securing new resources, providing training and capacity, and creating spaces for leaders, youth workers, and groups and organisations to come together.

An "effective" YPF or LYP takes collaborative action to improve outcomes for children and young people by enabling access to high-quality local provision. The approach to the partnership is shaped locally and can draw on resources and learning from the YPF Trust.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This Framework can serve three core purposes:

1. **Planning:** working through the Framework to develop a shared action plan for how you will progress towards effective practice under each of the markers;
2. **Reflection:** using the Framework to support active reflection on the progress of your LYP and your collaborative practice; and
3. **Evaluation and improvement:** drawing on the Framework to self-assess, identifying areas of strength and priorities for development.

In line with these purposes, the Framework:

- Sets out eight markers that represent core principles and/or features that underpin effective local partnership working;
- Defines three stages of practice against each marker: collective exploration, committed to development, and active and established; and
- Shares an example of effective practice against that marker.

This document is intended to be used alongside other resources from YPF Trust such as "YPF in a box" and embodies a low-stakes accountability approach. This approach aims to move away from high-stakes accountability regimes that are based on judgmental decisions that can lead to fear of failure, penalties, public shaming, and perverse incentives. In contrast, low-stakes accountability means that no one will be penalised for a low score, and the set standards are attainable for everyone. Support is available for improvement, and the process is continuous. Participants typically view this approach as a valuable use of their time.

LYPs form their partnerships in many ways, and they are an expression of the local context. Therefore, this document emphasises the hallmarks of sustainable, long-term, and effective partnerships that enable young people to thrive in their community. A thriving LYP provides thriving opportunities for young people.

To use the Framework for planning, you could:

- Review the markers collectively to consider which are priorities for your LYP over the next year;
- Use each marker to develop a shared view of what it would look and feel like for your LYP: how would all stakeholders know it had been achieved?
- Develop an action plan for your LYP that sets out your plans for progress against each marker, quarter by quarter; or
- Work together to set objectives for where you hope your LYP will be at key points in the future.



To use the Framework for reflection, you could:

- Come together as an "Action Learning Set" to support one another to generate new responses to the challenges inherent in partnership working;
- Dedicate a section of all partnership meetings to reflecting on one marker at a time: how important does this marker feel to your LYP? What are the opportunities and barriers to progress?
- Pair up with another LYP to 'coach' one another on developing effective practice against each marker; or
- Structure community engagement opportunities around specific markers to collectively explore perceptions and experiences.



To use the Framework for evaluation and improvement, you could:

- Gather the views and feedback of all partners and stakeholders anonymously, drawing on the markers for the structure of a survey or listening exercise;
- Assess your LYP's progress against each marker to create a 'heat map', collating evidence to underpin your 'rating', including documents, observations, anecdotes, performance data, and feedback;
- Focus on one marker at a time to do a 'deep dive' into that area of practice, including focused engagement and conversations with key stakeholders; or
- Identify, through self-assessment, which markers are priorities for improvement within your LYP and collectively agree to the steps you will take before re-assessing how far you've progressed.

Appendix B: Good Questions, suggests some effective questions to aid your **planning**, **reflection** and **evaluation**.

Regardless of how it is used, it is important that the Framework does not simply become a tool or document that is used by the 'leader(s)' of the LYP. The Framework is in service of equitable partnerships and equitable outcomes for children and young people.

SUMMARY OF THE MARKERS

YMCA George Williams College has identified eight markers that serve as core principles and features of effective partnership. These markers enable LYPs to plan, reflect on, and evaluate their progress on their journey towards collaboration for children and young people.

1 Power sharing

2 Place-based insight and voice

3 Shared vision and purpose

4 Partnership delivery

5 Partnership systems and processes

6 Collaborative practice

7 Partnership governance

8 Partnership leverage

A note about grouping, sequence, and hierarchy

In the previous version of this Framework, we noticed natural groupings such as those oriented to process, performance or progress. We also recognised that there was a sequencing that one could assume is implicit in the Framework, and that markers must be 'achieved' in order. This is, of course, not the case. From listening to participants in the Focus Groups, it was clear that each local area is unique and whilst a sequence might 'feel' logical, there was unanimous feedback that experience shows that any and all of these markers can be in development at any given time and will 'evolve' at different points on LYPs' journeys. Progress may not always look and feel like 'moving forward', and evolution against one marker may well affect other markers, both positively and negatively.

THE ROLE OF EDI

Equity, diversity and inclusion are the golden threads that run through effective partnerships. Inequity, cultural incompetence, lack of representation and exclusion are fundamentally counter to the relational intent of partnership working. Given the critical nature of EDI within this Framework, it is not a standalone marker but woven into each one.

> *"Centering equity means ensuring that individuals impacted by the collaboration are involved in the process".*

Equity is a critical and fundamental aspect of every effective LYP. It ensures that the partnership operates with integrity and helps to identify wilful blindness and work against inequality and disadvantage in communities. Equity is both aspirational and achievable, and it ensures that no young person is left out or left behind.

Collective impact (CI) is a named thing, which is one example of structured partnership and collaboration. Practitioners of CI have done lots of work on the role of equity, and have spelled it out within the five 'features' of CI:

1. **A common agenda:** Collaborating with community members, and particularly those most affected by work of the partnership, to establish shared goals and priorities that focus on equity and inclusion.

2. **Shared measurement:** Establishing a system for tracking progress towards equity-related outcomes to identify areas that need improvement and measure the effectiveness of strategies.

3. **Mutually reinforcing activities:** Partnering with community members to implement activities that reinforce and promote equity and inclusion in all aspects of the partnership

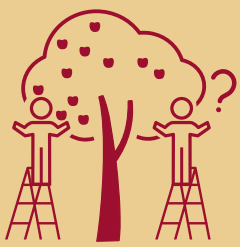
4. **Continuous communication:** Ensuring regular and open communication with all stakeholders, including those who may have traditionally been left out of decision-making processes, for transparency and accountability.

5. **A backbone team:** Having a dedicated team to support the partnership's work, including focusing on equity and inclusion, to keep the partnership on track and able to adapt to changing circumstances.

https://ssir.org/articles/entry/centering_equity_in_collective_impact



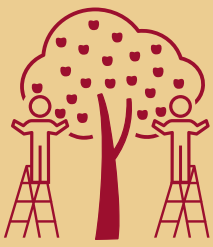
INEQUALITY
Unequal access to opportunities



EQUALITY
Evenly distributed tools and assistance



EQUITY
Custom tools that identify and address inequality



JUSTICE
Fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities

ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

"Relationships move at the speed of trust; and social change moves at the speed of relationships".

-

Steven Covey

WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP?

The term 'partnership' is part of common language and can be used in reference to many areas of our lives. At its heart, 'partnership' means a formal agreement or association between two or more 'partners', and a commitment to share something. The definition reminds us that working or being in a partnership is an active decision and requires effort and reflection to maintain it and keep it functioning well.

This is where cooperation, collaboration, and coalition operate alongside emotions such as trust and openness.

In business or profit-making enterprises, the 'sharing' bit of a partnership usually means the running/managing the business and then splitting the profits generated.

In non-profit sectors, the context becomes much more nuanced. What is shared is often a commitment to a vision or mission, and an acknowledgement that no one partner can achieve the vision alone. Partners then need to share their geographies, ways of working, relationships, methods and insights in pursuit of a common goal. This requires hard work!





WHAT DO HIGH-QUALITY PARTNERSHIPS LOOK LIKE?

There is no shortage of literature – both academic and applied – that focuses on the value of partnership working, and features of effective partnerships. However, there is less research on features of partnerships that are effective because they improve outcomes for children and young people, or how to set up such partnerships in practice. This is the gap this Framework intends to address.

The literature we reviewed, and the feedback from focus groups, described high-quality, functioning partnerships using common words such as strong, trusting, purposeful, friendly, transparent, and generous. These descriptors revealed a humanity in partnership that goes beyond regular meetings with an articulated vision. Examples of effective partnerships also had emotive features such as "the partnership brought more money to [an overlooked, under-funded] area" as well as "so powerful it had me in tears". The latter described the voices of young people that had previously gone unheard, and as a direct result of the LYP these voices had been amplified beyond the local area and into parliamentary corridors.

It was also clear that when examples of dysfunctional or poor-quality partnerships were discussed, even the most compliant, gold-standard collaboration could be undermined by a sour relationship. Equally, an emerging partnership can also make rapid progress with high-functioning relationships. Regular informal meetings with potential collaborators, to catch up and make time for common work-related interests, were considered more agile when responding to new opportunities for collaboration because of the high-functioning relationships in place.

"Closeness is the degree of intimacy, understanding and mutual support which exists between partners and reflects the degree of interdependence of the partners…

Interpersonal intimacy relies on the attitude with which individuals approach the relationship with their partner/ friend and this is also affected by an accumulation of individual actions. Both are important. Intimacy relies on each partner's belief in the other's attitude and motivation in maintaining the relationship. It is that belief that helps dispel any doubt that we can rely on supportive actions from our partner. It is also those actions, which over time, deepen and enhance the positive beliefs concerning the relationship itself.

In this way, closeness can be seen as both the result of, and the objective of, the interplay between attitudes towards the relationship and the ongoing activities which are the day-to-day manifestations of the relationship.[2]"

---

[2] *Slack, N., Lewis, M., (2008), Operations Strategy 2nd edition, Financial Times Prentice Hall pp118*

THE FRAMEWORK

1 POWER SHARING

What does this marker include?

This marker is about the importance of naming and sharing the power that exists within partnerships. It recognises the potential for power imbalances to affect engagement, active participation, representation and influence within the group.

This marker includes consciously and thoughtfully implementing – as a collective – the processes, systems and behaviours that support power-sharing. This includes creating 'safe spaces' to reflect and address power differences and imbalances.

An effective partnership will collectively identify the different aspects of 'power' that are important in its work, including access to resources, lived experience, professional expertise, and influence. This is not as simple as 'sharing' the power that is held by a certain group; it's about valuing and celebrating the diverse forms of power that resides within each of us and recognising what can be achieved when this power is brought into service of a shared vision and mission.

What does power sharing look like?

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- Power is not discussed within the partnership
- Power is exercised hierarchically in line with more 'traditional' characteristics such as seniority, age, confidence and resources
- There is little, if any recognition, of the experience of those with fewer of these characteristics, or who have been historically disempowered.

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- Power is referenced in partnership meetings, but not systematically and with limited sense of how to shift dynamics
- Power tends to be concentrated within a small group, although there are some structured opportunities for others to be 'invited' in
- There is routine reference to an aspiration for power to be more equitably distributed within the partnership

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- The diverse types of power that reside within and are needed by the partnership are collectively named and recognised
- Processes are in place to enable different forms of power to be celebrated and 'deployed'
- There is a shared commitment in principle and in practice to centre the voices and experiences of those who have been historically disempowered



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

2 PLACE-BASED INSIGHT AND YOUTH VOICE

What does this marker include?

This marker is about the importance of the partnership being guided by local, place-based insights, and establishing effective systems and processes to listen to, gather, reflect on and update these insights. These systems and processes will also need to consider how to reach out to, engage and respond to the experiences of those who are seldom heard.

This marker includes effective approaches to mapping local insight, including developing the relationships with other local agencies, organisations and individuals necessary. It is about developing a deep understanding of context, and the realities for individuals and communities that live in that place (including experiences that appear to be in tension or contradictory), alongside processes that allow this understanding to be reviewed and revised over time.

Finally, this marker is about how the voices of young people are enabled and listened to within and by the partnership. How does the partnership feedback to young people about its decisions and actions? How are the voices of young people influencing these choices and decisions, in line with their rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)?

What does place-based insight and youth voice look like?

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- Local insight is drawn only from members of the partnership, with no processes to seek or gather any broader insights
- There are no relationships with other agencies that hold, collate or have access to data and insights about that place
- The inclusion of young people's voices in any process or space is ad hoc

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- A one- off exercise is planned to collate insight from a range of community members
- A youth voice group or panel has been convened, or is at planning stage
- Local agencies that may hold insight into experiences and needs have been identified, and conversations with them are beginning

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- There is a structured and regular process for gathering local, place-based insights, including collective meaning-making, sharing learning, and publishing data
- Formal relationships with local agencies support this process
- There is a dedicated process for reporting on whose voices are heard in this process, and whose are not, with an action plan in place to address inequity
- The voices of diverse young people are enabled and heard in every area of the partnership's work, both reactively and proactively, and young people are supported by skilled staff



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

3 SHARED VISION AND PURPOSE

What does this marker include?

This marker is about the importance of the partnership developing and working towards a shared vision for children and young people. A shared vision is a powerful unifying statement that bonds and connects partners, but also reminds partners of what can only be achieved when they work together, raising collective sights beyond individual organisational aims and objectives.

The shared vision needs to be developed collectively, drawing on the previous markers of power-sharing, and local insight and voice. The vision should reflect the experiences, perceptions, needs and wants of people and communities in the local area. It also needs to reflect deep understanding of the equity factors that influence life chances and circumstance.

Finally, the shared vision should be underpinned by goals or objectives that set out how the partnership will work together and what it will do to create positive change. The optimum way of illustrating this is through a theory of change. An effective theory of change will also enable partnerships to monitor and measure their progress towards their vision, and share their progress.

What does shared vision and purpose look like?

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- There is no shared vision statement, or the vision statement is vague/not specific to the area, and/or developed without collaboration
- The vision statement does not encourage partners to work together beyond their individual/organisational aims
- The vision is not supported by goals or objectives that set out how the vision will be achieved
- There is no review of progress towards the vision

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- A vision statement has been developed by a small group of partners
- The vision focuses on the development of the partnership primarily, and the roles of partners and stakeholders
- There is a set of high levels goals for the partnership, which are reviewed at some meetings

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- The partnership has a shared vision statement that was developed collaboratively, including a diverse range of perspectives and voices
- The shared vision centres outcomes for children and young people, and focuses on the specific role of the partnership
- The vision reflects understanding of the local place, its people and communities, and a contextualised framing of equity
- The vision is underpinned by a theory of change, that sets out how the activities of the partnership will bring about change, and how this will be monitored/evaluated



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

4 PARTNERSHIP DELIVERY

What does this marker include?

This marker focuses on how partnerships are contributing to measurable change for children and young people locally, through clearly defined activities or 'work strands' and clear roles for partners.

These clearly defined activities and roles should be aligned with, and in pursuit of, the partnership's shared vision. Defining activities and roles may start as part of the theory of change development process, but also needs to be captured in a shared workplan, with regular points at which progress (and intended outcomes) are reviewed.

Clear roles for partners are important for effective communication and accountability, and enable assets to be matched well with delivery. The negotiation and agreement of roles also creates space to surface assumptions about how roles are assigned, and to ensure equal representation and visibility of all partners and stakeholders.

This marker is also about a collaborative approach to delivery, rather than defaulting to each partner acting independently so that the delivered plan is simply an aggregate of each partner's existing activities.

Finally, this marker is about partnerships reflecting their commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion across their strands of activity, including dedicating activities to equity goals.

What does partnership delivery look like?

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- There is no workplan for the partnership, with only limited discussion of activities that might be undertaken collectively
- The roles of the partners are not clear or specified, or mirror existing hierarchies or power structures
- Most partners continue to deliver their own work independently
- There is no plan for how the partnership will make active progress towards EDI goals

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- A high level workplan exists but mainly draws together collective ambitions without the details of exactly how it will be accomplished
- There is a high level theory of change but it doesn't directly link to the roles and actions of partners
- There is a dedicated EDI statement agreed or in development

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- A delivery plan has been collaboratively developed and agreed, which defines activities that can only be achieved through partnership
- The delivery plan aligns with the theory of change
- The roles of each partner are clearly defined, through consultation, alongside agreement on accountability mechanisms
- The partnership's commitment to EDI is evident in the work plan, with clear roles assigned to specific activities and a plan for reporting against progress



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

5 PARTNERSHIP SYSTEMS AND PROCESSES

What does this marker include?

This marker is about the development and implementation of systems that actively support effective partnership working. This includes:

- collaborative work planning, plus transparent monitoring and reporting;
- consistent and accessible communication for all partners;
- a defined structure and cycle of meetings, working groups, key roles etc;
- the identification and management of risks to the achievement of the partnership's vision;
- regular knowledge sharing;
- opportunities to reflect and learn together, alongside acknowledging failure safely;
- the gathering and reporting of data in line with EDI goals; and
- systems that are sufficiently agile to respond to short-term pressures, changes in context and the need for swift decisions.

All systems need to facilitate partnership working – that is, make it easier for all partners to collaborate and support the work to 'flow', reducing friction – and have EDI embedded throughout, so that all voices are actively included, an anti-oppressive approach is prioritised, and the impact of all systems on equity goals is considered.

Finally, effective partnerships regularly review their systems, seeking and making improvements where necessary and possible based on a greed criteria.

There is a clear connection between EDI goals and the established systems and processes, including reviewing how equitably these systems and processes are being implemented and experienced

What do partnership systems and processes look like?

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- The partnership's 'ways of working' are loose and undefined, with little structure to meetings or roles
- There are few formal systems or processes that support the partnership, such as shared documents, or routine communications
- No clarity over who decides or implements systems and processes
- No processes to review or discuss systems and processes in order to improve partnership working

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- There is a structure and routine to partnership meetings, supported by shared documents
- The systems and processes needed by the partnership are largely carried out by individual partners in addition to their day to day roles
- Informal or ad hoc reflection on what's working well/not so well
- Some time dedicated to developing an EDI plan

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- The partnership has a shared approach to key systems and processes, including document sharing, work planning, and financial management
- The partnership has a regular cycle of structured meetings, with established communication channels in between
- The partnership meets regularly to reflect, share learning, and discuss improvements to systems and processes
- There is a clear connection between EDI goals and the established systems and processes, including reviewing how equitably these systems and processes are being implemented and experienced



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

6 COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

What does this marker include?

This marker considers the commitment and effectiveness of collaboration across the partnership, and the nurturing of strong and trusting relationships that underpin this collaboration.

Specifically, this marker looks at the time and resources dedicated by the partnership to building strong and trusting relationships, and how the partnership reflects on the 'health' of these relationships. Partnerships will need to draw on their deep knowledge of local context to understand what is most meaningful in fostering relationships built on trust. This includes contextual approaches to addressing equity, diversity and inclusion within relationships, and understanding where relationships are challenging – or reinforcing – oppressive practice.

Finally, this marker is focused on the commitment of all partners to the collaboration, and the extent to which relationships and collaboration are facilitated by the practices of the partnership.

What does collaborative practice look like?

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- There is no time or resource dedicated to developing relationships outside of routine partnership meetings
- There is no approach to checking the commitment of all partners to collaboration, or how they are experiencing the partnership
- The partnership has no established view on how its local context might influence the health of relationships

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- Partners meet annually to focus on developing their collaboration and relationships
- The partnership is developing a set of principles about positive working relationships
- Partners are aware that there are potential stakeholders that are potentially excluded from relationships, but aren't yet clear how to address this

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- There is time and resource dedicated to the nurturing of strong and trusting relationships, outside the delivery of specific work strands
- There is a structured approach to monitoring the health of relationships and the commitment of partners to collaboration
- Partnerships have a place-based perspective on what constitutes strong and trusting relationships, informed by context
- There is a structured approach to understanding whether there are patterns of inequity within relationships



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

7 PARTNERSHIP OPERATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

What do partnership operations and governance look like?

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- There is no dedicated operational support for the partnership, or pooled resource for operations
- There is no, or minimal, formal governance for the partnership, including a lack of scrutiny, transparency or due process for decision making
- There is no process for reviewing the impact of the partnership's governance on EDI goals

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- Dedicated operational resource is 'borrowed' from one partner organisation
- Formal governance processes are in development, but are not yet operating transparently
- EDI goals are largely considered at an operational rather than governance level

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- There is dedicated operational capacity to support the partnership, with pooled funding (or funding secured collectively) and agreement on where it is hosted
- There is a formalised governance structure for the partnership that details the process for agreeing decisions/actions, how diverse voices are consulted and included, and how this process is 'open' to external scrutiny
- There is a scheme of delegation for the partnership
- There is a regular process for considering the impact of governance structures on equity goals

What does this marker include?

This marker considers the support and structures in place to enable the partnership to function effectively, efficiently and maintain high standards of governance.

This includes dedicated operational support roles and capacity within the partnership, underpinned by the resources required (collaboratively secured, if necessary). It also includes defined governance processes that hold the whole partnership to account for open, inclusive and effective governance in managing its resources, discharging its work, and promoting the rights and dignities of all partners and stakeholders.

.



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

8 PARTNERSHIP LEVERAGE

What does partnership leverage look like?

What does this marker include?

This marker considers the extent to which the partnership is able to leverage new assets, resources or support in pursuit of its vision for children and young people locally. An effective partnership functions as more than the sum of its parts, and this includes its ability to unlock or influence resources that were not available or accessible to one organisation acting alone.

This marker also focuses on how the partnership functions intentionally and 'plan-fully' to leverage this new support, and how ways of working create and encourage the identification and pursuit of opportunities. This is likely to include a process like a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis to identify pre-existing relationships and connections, alongside priority areas to develop credibility and leadership. This will enable the partnership to align its leverage 'ambitions' with its vision, and regularly review their success.

This marker also explores the extent to which partnership leverage advances its EDI goals. Partnerships will need to consciously prioritise opportunities for leverage that disrupt and address existing inequities, and de-prioritise those that maintain potentially harmful ways of working.

AT THE COLLECTIVE EXPLORATION STAGE...

- The partnership has not considered where and how it wants or needs to develop its leverage 'potential'
- Organisations and individuals tend to work independently in pursuit of new resources or support
- The partnership has not undertaken a SWOT or any similar process to map its existing relationships and connections – any activity here is ad hoc
- The partnership has not formalised the types of resources or support that would be well aligned to the achievement of their vision, and particularly their EDI goals

AT THE COMMITTED TO DEVELOPMENT STAGE...

- The partnership is working reactively when opportunities for partnership funding become available
- There are no clear processes yet to assess funding/support opportunities against the shared vision and goals of the partnership
- There is an emerging sense of the strengths upon which the partnership can build

AT THE ACTIVE AND ESTABLISHED STAGE...

- The partnership has completed a SWOT or similar process and has used this to develop a plan to secure new sources of support and resource that are aligned to the shared vision and reflect the local context
- The partnership has clear practice guidelines that structure the process for seeking partnership funding/support (as opposed to individual/organisational funding) and how it will be managed and governed, and any additional resources deployed
- The partnership has considered where new resources/support will particularly enable the achievement of its EDI goals, and has prioritised this within its plan



FOCUS

Where is your LYP now?



AMBITION

Where do you collectively want to get to?



PLAN

What's your collective path to get there?

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

WHAT ARE LOCAL YOUTH PARTNERSHIPS?

Local youth partnerships (LYPs) are locally established, cross-sectoral partnerships that seek to sustain and strengthen delivery for children and young people in a specific area, shaped by local needs and ambitions. In practice, they convene and coordinate local services, building the sector's capacity and increasing and shaping investment.

Because LYPs are locally driven and shaped, the precise model and structures vary from place to place in order to respond to and indeed shape local systems. All established LYPs adhere to a set of common principles which we believe are foundational to their approach:



- **Independence** - LYPs are neutral and independent, focused on delivering for their members/partners and on collective impact for all
- **Inclusivity** – LYPs seek to engage with and support all those sharing a vision for the local area and their ambitions for children and young people. An equal voice is given to all organisations, no matter their size, with support provided to ensure equity of opportunity
- **Diversity** - LYPs value the multitude of organisations that deliver youth and children's work, that local services should reflect the diversity of the communities they seek to serve
- **Collaboration** - LYPs are non-competitive and encourage collaboration across the area. They work to fundraise, coordinate and network to the benefit of all. They will not compete against their members/partners nor deliver services which their members could deliver
- **Cross-sector** – LYPs know the needs of children and young people must be addressed by the public, voluntary and private sectors as a group rather than individually
- **Grassroots** - LYPs work for, and with, small local organisations and retain their local focus. LYPs will prioritise their support and resources for small community organisations
- **Long-term** - LYPs are designed for the long term. They are a constant; there for local young people past the traditional three or four-year terms of funding programme and providing a mechanism for long-term thinking whatever the funding climate

Young People's Foundations (YPFs) are one approach to local youth partnerships and are themselves independent organisations. For some local areas, setting up an independent entity for the partnership is not required, or appropriate. YPF Trust seeks to support all local partnership work in the youth sector.

[Click here to return to page 3]

APPENDIX B: GOOD QUESTIONS

EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS – LYP FRAMEWORK



Planning

- Why does this marker matter to your LYP specifically?
- How and when will you make progress in this marker?
- How will you know when you've succeeded?
- What are your goals for this marker?
- How will all your members and wider stakeholders be involved in developing the plan for this marker?
- How often and when will you review progress?
- Who will be involved in reviewing progress?
- What information do you need to track progress?

Your notes:

APPENDIX B: GOOD QUESTIONS



Reflection

- Do we have all the insight we need to assess our progress in this marker?
- Does everyone feel invested in our shared journey, and that it's one worth travelling together?
- Is there anything we should stop doing?
- Does it feel like our LYP is developing the way it needs to?
- Whose voices are loudest when we make decisions? Whose voices are seldom heard?
- Where are we most proud of our collective progress? Where are we still experiencing barriers?
- How are we making our plans reality?

Your notes:



Evaluation and improvement

- Did we meet our objectives for this marker? How do we know?
- How well are we delivering our activities? Do we know what 'good' looks like?
- Are we staying true to our shared plans?
- Where did we innovate?
- What are the features of our work and the context that have made a positive difference?
- Did we use partnership resources effectively?
- Did we address identified need and demand?

Your notes:

APPENDIX C

BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES

Adie, E., Akhtar. A. (2024) The Centre for Youth Voice Project Discovery Consultation Summary. The YMCA George Williams College

Ball, N., Gibson, M. (2022) Partnerships with Principles: putting relationships at the heart of public contracts for better social outcomes. Government Outcomes Lab: University of Oxford

Centre for Public Impact (2019) The Shared Power Principle: How governments are changing to achieve better outcomes: https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/assets/documents/shared-power-principle.pdf

Charity Commission (2010) Strength in numbers: small charities' experience of working together: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/284713/rs24text.pdf

Collaborate CIC (2023) A Guide to Collaboration: What it is, why it matters and what it takes to make it work: https://collaboratecic.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/A-Guide-to-Collaboration-Final-Public.pdf

Fenney, D., Chikwira, L., Chauhan, C. (2023) Transforming Power Relationships in Partnership Working. The Kings Fund: https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/insight-and-analysis/long-reads/transforming-power-relationships-partnership-working

Madzura, C., M. (2023) Sharing Power in a Place. Young Manchester: https://youngmanchester.org/images/downloads/ypfWebsite/Sharing-Power-in-a-Place_Spreads_2-2-1.pdf

Orlando, C (2021) What Works in Youth Employment Partnerships: A guide to improve practice. Institute for Employment studies: https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/Partnership%20_Guide.pdf

Taylor, I., Ball, N. (2023) The Collaboration Playbook: A Leaders' Guide to Cross-Sector Collaboration. Government Outcomes Lab: University of Oxford

The Council For Wales Voluntary Youth Services (2014) Working in collaboration: Youth Work Methodology Handbook: https://www.cwvys.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/HB-Partnerships-Working-in-Collaboration.pdf

The Local Government Association (2022) The state of strategic relationships between councils and their local voluntary and community sector: https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/state-strategic-relationships-between-councils-and-their-local-voluntary-and-community

Prince's Trust Making Partnerships work - https://asauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Making-Partnerships-Work.pdf

Tamarack Institute (2023) https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/10-a-guide-for-building-a-sustainable-and-resilient-collaboration

The Prince's Trust (2005) The Prince's Trust: Making Partnerships Work: https://asauk.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Making-Partnerships-Work.pdf

The Tamarack Institute (2023) A guide for building a sustainable and resilient collaboration: https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/10-a-guide-for-building-a-sustainable-and-resilient-collaboration

Vangen, S., Huxham, C. (2013) Building and using the theory of collaborative advantage. In: Keast, R Mandell., Myrna, P., Agranoff, R. eds. Network Theory in the Public Sector: Building New Theoretical Frameworks. New York: Routledge, pp. 51–69

Velazquez, T. (2023) The Five Tenets of Successful Cross-System Collaboration. The Forum for Youth Investment: https://forumfyi.org/blog/the-five-tenets-of-successful-cross-system-collaboration/

Wolpert, M., Harris, R., Hodges, S., Fuggle, P., James, R., Wiener, A., Munk, S. (2019). THRIVE Framework for system change. London: CAMHS Press

Buckley, E., Turner, K., Taylor, M. (2017) Working in Place: Collaborative funding in practice, Learning from five case studies. London: IVAR

Slack, N., Lewis, M., (2008), Operations Strategy 2nd edition, Financial Times Prentice Hall