Quest Active Wellbeing – Partnership and System Working Guidance Notes

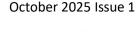|	
Focus:	To understand the depth and value of partnerships that support community impact, particularly across health, local government, VCFSE, and other systems.

Key elements:

- Active, purposeful partnerships across sectors
- Shared outcomes and joint delivery plans
- Connection to integrated care systems and community hubs
- Governance, accountability, and communication in partnership.

General Guidance for Organisations

- Map stakeholders across health (ICS, PCNs), local authorities, education, housing, and VCFSE
- Develop shared priorities using outcomes-based planning (e.g. Results-Based Accountability)
- Establish regular cross-partner review meetings with clear governance structures
- Use Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to clarify shared goals and roles
- Build partnerships that support inclusive, long-term, and scalable delivery.

Best Practice Examples

- Align work with Integrated Care Strategies and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategies.
- Collaborate with community anchor organisations and place-based partnerships.
- Use co-design workshops with multiple partners to shape delivery.
- Adopt shared metrics, dashboards, or theory of change frameworks.
- Partner on bids or pooled budgets to support long-term investment.
- Share staff or physical spaces with system partners to maximise impact.

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PLAN	
Challenge: How do you plan to identify and prioritise strategic partnerships to support shared goals in your place?	
Unsatisfactory	• Partnerships are ad hoc or informal. • No clear criteria for selecting partners. • Limited understanding of potential shared goals or local system priorities.
Satisfactory	• Some partnerships exist and support basic objectives. • Partner selection is reactive or opportunistic rather than strategic. • Limited focus on shared outcomes or place-based priorities.
Good	• Strategic partnerships are actively identified based on shared goals and local priorities. • Criteria for partner selection are clear and consistently applied. • Partnerships support delivery of key organisational objectives.
Very Good	• Strategic mapping of partners across sectors. • Prioritisation considers mutual benefits and long-term outcomes. • Partnerships chosen to maximise system-wide impact. • Involves community and stakeholder input in prioritisation.
Excellent	• Strategic partnership identification is embedded in organisational strategy. • Partnerships are purpose-driven, evidence-informed, and co-designed with partners. • Partner selection maximises systemic impact, contributes to place-based outcomes, and drives innovation. • Partnerships mapping aligned to devolution and system transformation. • Prioritisation reflects equity, SEND, and wider determinants of wellbeing. • Relationships are continuously reviewed and refined to enhance value for all stakeholders.

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DO	
Challenge: How do you establish clear roles, responsibilities, and governance within partnerships?	
Unsatisfactory	• No clear mutual purpose or agreed-upon outcomes • Partnerships lack shared objectives • Conflicting or unclear roles.
Satisfactory	• Basic understanding of mutual value • Some agreed outcomes • Roles are generally understood but informal.
Good	• Clear agreements on shared purpose and outcomes • Mutual benefits recognised and documented • Roles and responsibilities defined.
Very Good	• Formalised agreements or memoranda of understanding • Outcomes co-created with partners • Regular review of mutual value and impact • Transparent communication on shared goals.
Excellent	• Partnerships built on trust with explicit co-ownership • Jointly developed outcome frameworks with explicit roles for community voices in governance • Continuous alignment of purpose and value • Partners engaged in decision-making at all levels • Outcomes linked to wider system ambitions and equity • Accountability includes independent checks and challenges.

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DO	
Challenge: How do you maintain productive and inclusive working relationships with partners?	
Unsatisfactory	- Relationships are transactional or ad hoc - Limited engagement or communication - Conflict is poorly managed.
Satisfactory	- Basic communication and collaboration occur - Relationships exist but are not consistently inclusive - Some issues are resolved, but reactively rather than proactively.
Good	- Regular communication and collaboration with partners - Inclusive practices ensure all relevant stakeholders are engaged - Conflicts are managed effectively and learning is shared.
Very Good	- Strong, trust-based relationships - Mechanisms for inclusive decision-making - Regular forums or meetings for shared learning - Responsive to partner and community feedback.
Excellent	- Partnerships are characterised by deep collaboration and mutual respect. - Inclusive leadership and governance structures. - Shared accountability and joint ownership of challenges. - Proactive conflict resolution. - Recognition and celebration of partnership successes.

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DO	
Challenge: How do you collaborate on joint delivery and innovation?	
Unsatisfactory	• Limited or no joint delivery. • Innovation is rare or absent. • Activities operate in isolation
Satisfactory	• Occasional joint delivery projects. • Innovation occurs sporadically. • Collaboration is basic and reactive.
Good	• Regular joint delivery with partners. • Innovation is supported and piloted. • Collaboration improves service efficiency or reach.
Very Good	• Structured, coordinated joint delivery programs. • Innovative solutions are co-designed and tested collaboratively. • Collaboration enhances outcomes for communities and partners.
Excellent	• Highly integrated joint delivery embedded in strategy. • Innovation is systematic, scaled, and informs sector-wide practice. • Partnerships drive measurable improvements in reach, equity, and system performance.

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DO	
Challenge: How do you influence local systems through partnership working?	
Unsatisfactory	• Limited or no influence on local systems • Partnerships operate in isolation • No engagement in system-wide planning or change.
Satisfactory	• Some involvement in local system discussions • Partnerships recognised by local stakeholders • Initial steps to influence shared agendas.
Good	• Active participation in local system initiatives • Partnerships contribute to local planning and priorities • Influencing through shared outcomes and delivery.
Very Good	• Recognised as a key partner within local systems • Leadership roles or working groups engaged • Joint strategies influencing system change • Evidence of partnership impact on system priorities.
Excellent	• Partnerships shape and lead local system transformation • Formal roles in governance and strategic decision-making • Driving innovation and best practice at the system level • Influencing policy and resource allocation • Empowering communities through system change • Explicit involvement in devolution, ICS/ICB, and integrated care system planning.

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MEASURE, MONITOR AND REVIEW	
Challenge: How do you evaluate partnership effectiveness and collective progress?	
Unsatisfactory	• No evaluation of partnerships. • Collective progress is not monitored. • Limited accountability.
Satisfactory	• Basic review of partnership activities. • Some measurement of joint progress. • Informal feedback mechanisms.
Good	• Regular evaluation of partnership effectiveness. • Shared performance indicators. • Use of feedback to improve collaboration.
Very Good	• Comprehensive, joint evaluation frameworks. • Transparent reporting of progress. • Continuous improvement cycles. • Engagement of all partners in evaluation.
Excellent	• Evaluation triangulates quantitative data, qualitative insights, and partner feedback. • Use of independent evaluation and community accountability panels. • Evidence of impact on outcomes and system change. • Lessons learned are shared widely. • Adaptation and evolution are driven by evaluation. • Evaluation highlights contribution to place-based health and social care outcomes.

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IMPACT	
Challenge: What difference have your partnerships made to reach outcomes or system change?	
Unsatisfactory	• No clear evidence of partnership impact • Outcomes not linked to partnership work • System change absent or negligible.
Satisfactory	• Some positive outcomes are attributable to partnerships • Initial system-level influence • Impact examples are anecdotal or limited.
Good	• Clear evidence of improved outcomes through partnerships • Contribution to system change documented • Outcomes communicated internally and externally.
Very Good	• Partnerships have demonstrable, measurable impact • Significant contribution to system transformation • Broad stakeholder recognition of partnership value • Outcomes aligned with strategic priorities.
Excellent	• Evidence demonstrates sustained outcomes in health, social care, education, and equity • Impact triangulated with external stakeholders and validated by communities • Partnerships demonstrate contributions to system transformation (e.g. ICS/ICB, LA integration, devolution) • Recognition includes national awards, policy influence, and sector leadership.