

## **Improvement Service Outcome-Focused Partnership Checklist**

### **Purpose of Partnership Checklist**

This checklist has been developed to encourage partnerships to critically review their ‘fitness for purpose’ in achieving shared outcomes.

The checklist is issued to all members of a partnership as an electronic survey. Once the survey is completed, a workshop is held to consider the issues emerging.

The Checklist is aimed at Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). It can be used by CPP Boards and by CPP thematic groups (e.g. *Groups focused on a particular theme, such as Community Safety, Economic Development, Health Improvement, etc.*). The checklist can also be tweaked to make it suitable for other types of partnership.

The checklist is used to survey the views of those involved in a partnership in order to:-

- Assess views on the effectiveness of current partnership arrangements and how well it meets the challenges of the ‘outcomes approach’; and
- Identify areas where there may be scope for improving the operation of the partnership and the impact that it has.

The overall purpose of the checklist is to help partnerships identify improvement actions that can result in more effective working and in the achievement of enhanced outcomes.

### **Focus of Partnership Checklist**

The checklist asks members of a partnership about their experience of partnership working and respondents are asked to give their views on a range of statements with reference to the particular partnership group under review.

The areas that the checklist focuses upon are derived from research evidence and good practice concerning what makes for effective, outcome-focused partnership working.

The checklist is fairly detailed in order to help gain a deep understanding of how the partnership is operating and where there may be scope to further strengthen its operation and impact.

The checklist should take approximately 25 minutes to complete. Whilst this is relatively long, the main benefit is that the level of detail covered provides a comprehensive overview of the partnership and helps pinpoint areas for improvement.

The statements contained within the checklist can be tailored to meet the specific needs of individual partnerships. This includes the ability to cut out sections or specific statements that are not of particular interest to the partnership (*i.e. the Partnership Checklist is highly flexible and can be tailored to meet the specific requirements of each individual partnership*).

The checklist sets out a number of statements concerning partnership working. Respondents are invited to rate the extent to which they agree / disagree with each statement.

Each statement in the checklist should be scored against the undernoted scale:-

Strongly Disagree		Neither Agree nor Disagree		Strongly Agree		Not Applicable		Don't Know	
1	2	3	4	5					

The 'Not Applicable' option should be used when the respondent feels the particular statement does not apply to the partnership.

The 'Don't Know' option should be used when the respondent feels they do not have sufficient information about the particular statement to enable them to make a judgement.

At the end of each section there is a 'comments' box and respondents are invited to provide additional information or to elaborate on specific issues that they think require attention.

### **Survey / Workshop**

The checklist will be issued by the Improvement Service as an electronic survey to all members of the partnership that is being reviewed. The survey should be completed by each individual involved in the partnership.

**All survey responses will be anonymous and will not be attributed to individual respondents.**

Survey findings will then be analysed and a short report compiled setting out the responses and main comments.

This report will then be used as the basis for facilitating a structured workshop discussion of the partners. The workshop session typically takes half a day. The purpose of the workshop is to discuss the issues emerging from the survey with a clear focus on agreeing issues to be addressed and developing an improvement plan.

In some instances, further workshop sessions may be agreed, which will consider in more detail specific issues that have been raised (*e.g. prioritisation of outcomes, performance management, etc*).

### **Improvement Plan**

The workshop session will be focused on the development of an Improvement Plan, which sets out the specific areas for improvement, the key actions agreed, a note of who is responsible for driving the actions and the timescale for affecting the improvement.

### **PSIF**

A variant of the Outcomes-Focused Partnership Checklist has been mapped into the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF) and this is available to organisations that have signed up to PSIF. For further information on this contact:-  
[sarah.gadsden@improvementservice.org.uk](mailto:sarah.gadsden@improvementservice.org.uk)

### **Version Control**

This is version 2 of the Checklist, which reflects a range of changes that have been made following initial experience of using the checklist within partnerships.

### **Further information**

For further information on the Outcomes-Focused Partnership Checklist contact:-  
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## **Improvement Service Outcome-Focused Partnership Checklist**

### **Section A - Partnership Remit, Structure, Membership, and Meetings**

1. The partnership has a clear and unambiguous remit.
2. There is clarity about the role that this partnership group plays within the overall CPP.
3. The structures and responsibilities of the CPP's thematic groups do not result in overlap or duplication with other elements of the CPP or other areas of local partnership working.
4. The CPP has an effective mechanism for addressing issues that cut across different thematic areas, for joining-up issues that straddle a number of theme groups and for avoiding 'siloed' working.
5. Each of the individual organisations involved in the partnership has a clear role in the partnership and an agreed understanding of what is expected of them.
6. Each of the individual organisations involved in the partnership 'adds value' to the partnership in terms of contributing to the partnership's priority outcomes (*i.e. the difference it ultimately aims to make within the community*).
7. By working together, the partnership achieves more than could otherwise be achieved operating as individual organisations.
8. The key organisations that can contribute to achieving the partnership's priority outcomes are involved and there is no obvious partner missing.
9. There is reasonable continuity of input from individual partners (*i.e. representatives of partner organisations do not continuously change*).
10. The individuals involved in the partnership group are sufficiently empowered and influential to significantly advance the key issues.
11. The size of the partnership / number of organisations involved is of an appropriate size to allow for the effective functioning of meetings.
12. Partnership meetings are well organised, well attended, effective and generally a good use of time (*e.g. Inc. being well chaired, a clear agenda, papers circulated in advance, accurate minutes taken, agreed actions acted upon, etc*).
13. The partnership has strong and effective leadership
14. Members of the partnership effectively communicate decisions of the partnership within their own organisations and ensure that key partnership decisions are acted upon.
15. Partnership meetings take place within a positive spirit of transparency, openness and trust.
16. The overall culture of the partnership and the behaviours typically displayed by individual members demonstrate a commitment to work together effectively.
17. The individuals involved in the partnership offer constructive criticism and regularly challenge each other and the partnership as a whole to 'do more' in achieving priority outcomes.
18. Thinking about the issues covered in this section, do you have any other comments or suggestions on how the partnership can improve its operation and impact?  
(*Insert space for text response*)

### **Section B - Informed by Evidence**

19. The partnership has used the available evidence base (*Incl. data trends, research, evaluations, area profile*) to develop a good understanding of the issues, challenges & opportunities in the area and to help determine priority outcomes.
20. The partnership has a good understanding of the distribution of positive and negative outcomes across its area, including information relating both to inequalities and the range of equalities groupings.
21. The partnership has effective engagement mechanisms for understanding the needs of individuals / communities.
22. Feedback from individuals / communities influences the priority outcomes, the activities undertaken and the way that activities are delivered.
23. The partnership draws upon research and evaluation evidence to inform its understanding of which activities represent good value for money and make a tangible difference to achieving priority outcomes.
24. The partnership is outward looking and actively encourages innovation and discussion concerning the best ways to achieve priority outcomes.
25. Thinking about the issues covered in this section, do you have any other comments or suggestions on how the partnership can improve its operation and impact?  
(*Insert space for text response*)

### **Section C - Outcomes Focus**

26. The partnership has a clear statement of the outcomes that it is focusing upon (*i.e. the difference that it ultimately aims to make within the community*).
27. The partnership has effectively prioritised the key outcomes that it is focusing upon (*e.g. as opposed to 'spreading the jam too thinly' across a large number of outcomes*).
28. The partnership's priority outcomes and activities reflect the need for targeting on specific equalities / inequalities issues.
29. The partnership's priority outcomes are reflected clearly in the CPP's Single Outcome Agreement (*and Community Plan, where it exists as a distinct document*).
30. Using the agreed priority outcomes as a starting point, the partnership has identified and prioritised the key activities and activities that will make the greatest contribution to achieving the outcomes.
31. The partnership has developed a useful, outcome-focused action plan for achieving its priority outcomes.
32. The partnership is appropriately resourced relative to the priority outcomes that it seeks to achieve.
33. The key focus of the partnership's activities is upon addressing the root causes of the issues that it has prioritised.
34. Partners are committed to shifting resources to other partners that can better deliver early intervention and prevention approaches.

35. There is a genuinely shared commitment to the achievement of the priority outcomes amongst everyone that is involved in the partnership.
36. The partnership's priority outcomes are reflected clearly in the strategic and operational plans of *my own* organisation.
37. The partnership's priority outcomes are reflected clearly in the strategic and operational plans of the *other* key partners.
38. The partnership's priority outcomes are reflected clearly in the resource allocation processes / decisions made by *my* organisation (*including decision-making about resource reductions*).
39. The partnership's priority outcomes are reflected clearly in the resource allocation processes / decisions made by the *other* partner organisations (*including decision-making about resource reductions*).
40. Thinking about the issues covered in this section, do you have any other comments or suggestions on how the partnership can improve its operation and impact?  
(*Insert space for text response*)

#### **Section D – Impact, Performance Management & Reporting**

41. The partnership has an agreed set of targets, which clearly reflect its priority outcomes.
42. The targets set for the partnership are as 'SMART' (*specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timebound*) as is appropriate / reasonably possible.
43. The targets set for the partnership are ambitious and stretching, whilst being realistic.
44. There is an efficient and robust system in place for recording progress made towards the achievement of outcome targets and the inputs, activities and outputs that contribute towards them.
45. The partnership regularly reviews progress made against key targets.
46. The performance information considered by the partnership is timely, relevant and provides a good measure of progress towards the desired outcomes.
47. The partnership actively uses performance information to facilitate constructive strategic discussion and, where required, to instigate corrective action in order to address under-performance against key targets.
48. The partnership's action plan acts as a strong basis for accountability & challenge due to it clearly identifying individual partner inputs, actions, responsibilities and delivery timescales.
49. There is a publicly available performance report, setting out the partnership's progress (*including successes and failures*) against its priority outcomes, which is published at least annually.
50. There is a clear reporting linkage between thematic partnership groups and the overall CPP Board.
51. There are clear linkages made between performance reporting by the CPP Board, thematic groups and each individual partner organisation.
52. The partnership has ensured appropriate political input in scrutinising its performance.

53. The partnership has effective mechanisms for communicating with key stakeholders / individuals / communities.
54. The partnership has an effective mechanism in place for managing collective risks, which is regularly reviewed.
55. By working together, the partnership has demonstrably:-
- Tackled cross-cutting issues more effectively
  - Developed a better shared understanding of key issues
  - Made better use of the partners' collective resources
  - Provided individuals/ communities with a more convenient, effective and joined-up service
  - Shifted resources towards a greater emphasis on early intervention / prevention
  - Delivered a higher *quantity* of priority outcomes
  - Delivered a higher *quality* of priority outcomes
  - Delivered more sustainable outcomes
  - Achieved other benefits / added value (please specify)
56. Thinking about the issues covered in this section, do you have any other comments or suggestions on how the partnership can improve its operation and impact?  
*(Insert space for text response)*

**Thank you for taking time to participate in the survey.**