Evaluation of the UCLH-Macmillan Partnership to deliver improvements in the care, treatment, support, and information to patients with cancer throughout their individual journeys

Maturity Model

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Published by the RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, Calif., and Cambridge, UK

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Preface

Informed by the 2010 NHS National Cancer Patient Experience Survey, which highlighted weaknesses in patient experience at University College London Hospitals (UCLH) NHS Trust, the trust and Macmillan Cancer Support entered into a partnership, which formally launched in April 2012. RAND Europe and the Health Services Research Group at Cambridge University, who together form the Cambridge Centre for Health Services Research, were commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the UCLH–Macmillan Cancer Support partnership. The evaluation, which commenced in March 2012, aimed to take an explicit whole systems approach, with a particular focus on the ability of the partnership to enhance care coordination at transition points along the cancer care pathway. Findings from the evaluation are published in the accompanying document *Evaluation of the UCLH-Macmillan Partnership to deliver improvements in the care, treatment, support and information to patients with cancer throughout their individual journeys* (RR-1446-UCLH/Mac).

This document presents a 'maturity model' that was developed during the evaluation. A maturity model is a means to help a partnership systematically: review where it has currently reached and identify where it wants to get to and what the immediate and specific next steps should be. The model is intended to help guide efforts in the next steps of the development of the partnership, to identify areas of improvement and dimensions of the partnership that require particular attention in order to improve effectiveness of the collaboration. In this way the model can be used to measure progress and to set goals. This model should be used in a flexible manner and should be amended according to the needs and evolution of the partnership.

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1. Improving partnership effectiveness through synergy

1.1. Dimensions of partnership synergy

An emerging theme from the interviews with partners (undertaken as part of the evaluation, see *Evaluation of the UCLH-Macmillan Partnership to deliver improvements in the care, treatment, support and information to patients with cancer throughout their individual journeys*) was the concept of synergy. Many partners considered the UCLH–Macmillan partnership to be about 'combining the best of both worlds' in terms of the perspectives, skills and resources of both organisations. In that context, and when reviewing the wider literature on partnerships, we chose to use the Lasker et al.'s (2001) framework of the determinants of partnership synergy to guide our approach to the development of a maturity model [1]. Lasker et al. present a framework for operationalising and assessing partnership synergy and identify likely determinants of synergy (Table 1). This framework identifies elements of partnership functioning that are likely to influence the ability of the partnership to achieve high levels of synergy. Four overarching dimensions are identified:

Partnership characteristics – A number of factors, including leadership, administration and management, governance, and efficiency, affect the ability of partnerships to actively engage an optimal mix of partners, create an environment that fosters good working relationships among partners and combine the perspectives, resources and skills of different partners.

Relationships among partners – To achieve high levels of synergy, partnerships need to build strong working relationships among the partners. It is only possible for the group to think in new ways if partners are able to talk to each other and are influenced by what they hear. To carry out comprehensive interventions, partners need to be willing to coordinate their activities.

Partner characteristics – Partners are the source of most partnership resources. They provide partnerships with both direct resources, though their skills and expertise, and indirect benefit, through credibility and connections.

Resources – Financial and in-kind resources are the basic building blocks of synergy. It is by combining these resources in various ways that partners create something new and valuable that transcends what they can accomplish alone.

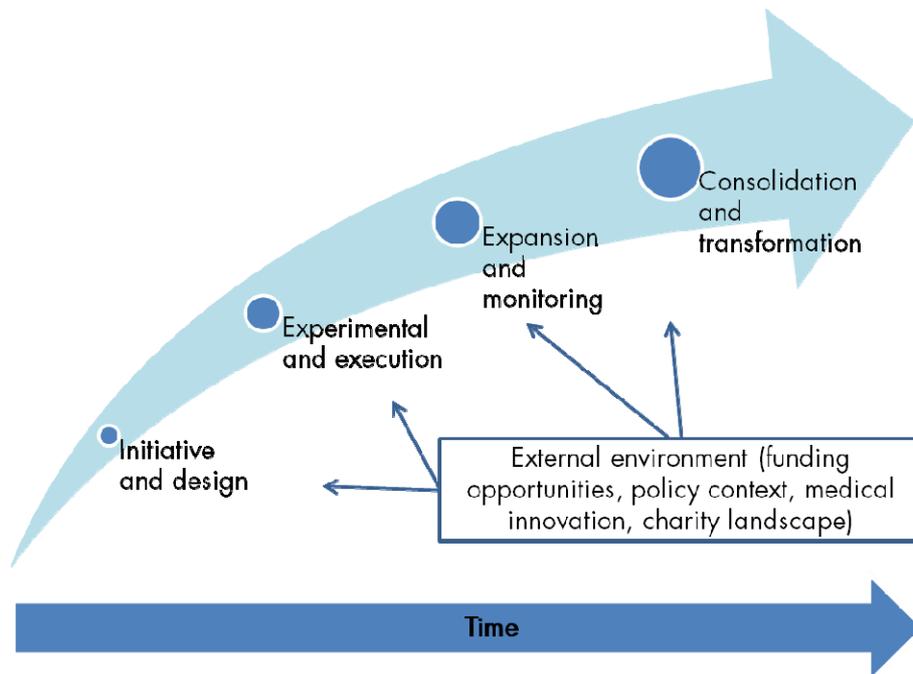**Table 1 Dimensions of partnership synergy. Adapted from Lasker et al. 2001.**

Partnership characteristics (How does the partnership operate?)	Leadership Administration and management Governance Efficiency
Relationships among partners (How do the partners relate to each other?)	Trust Respect Conflict Power differentials
Partner characteristics (What does each partner contribute?)	Skills and expertise Level of involvement Connections Endorsements Convening power
Resources (What resources are available to support the partnership?)	Money Space, goods and equipment Information

We believe that adapting and using these determinants to assess the synergy of the partnership could help the partnership to improve its effectiveness. For example, by looking across the individual dimensions of partnership synergy, it is possible to identify those areas where the partnership is operating more or less effectively.

1.2. The path to maturity

Progress within the individual dimensions of synergy can be measured using a path to maturity. In a partnership such as this we should not expect immediate transformations. Instead the path to maturity is more likely to develop over time, passing through key phases. We suggest that the phases can be broken down as shown in Figure 1 below, adapting the development model used by Minkman (2012) for integrated care services [2].

**Figure 1 The path to maturity. Adapted from Minkman et al. 2012.**

By assessing how far along the path to maturity the different dimensions of synergy are, it is possible to identify those areas which are more or less developed and thus those aspects of partnership synergy that require additional attention in order to improve the effectiveness of the collaboration. It should be noted that the partnership may be influenced by external, non-controllable factors, such as policy context, funding opportunities and competition. To some extent, being able to proactively anticipate or influence external factors could be considered as a proof of maturity. However, the maturity matrix that we have developed focuses solely on internal factors and dimensions, those which are more controllable.

1.3. Maturity model

A simple way of conceptualising all the aspects of the maturing partnership is presented in the framework summarised in Figure 2 below. The framework is conceptualised according to Lasker et al.'s four dimensions of synergy, introduced above, which relate to partnership effectiveness, partnership characteristics, relationships among partners, partners' characteristics, and resources. For each dimension, we consider how the partnership has developed along the four phases of the path to maturity: Phase 0, initiative and design; Phase 1, experimental and execution phase; Phase 2, expansion and monitoring phase; and Phase 3, consolidation and transformation phase. The different dimensions of partnership synergy can be at different phases of maturity.

Figure 2 Maturity model
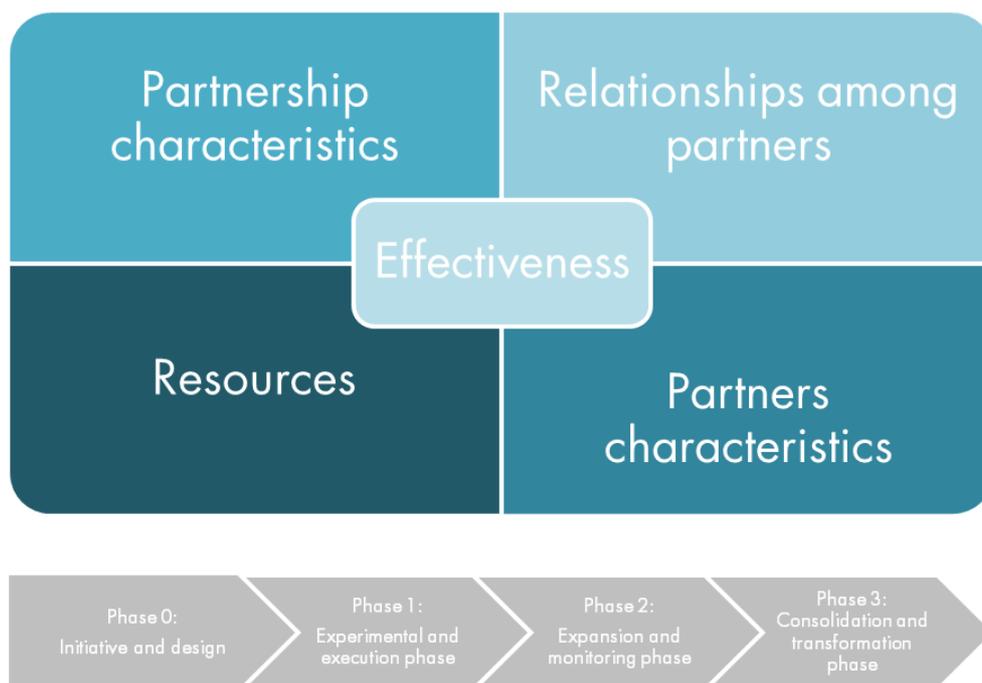
Building a maturity model helps assess the level of maturity of the partnership in terms of: (i) where the partnership is at now; (ii) where the partners want to end up/where they need to be to achieve the partnership goals (expected outcomes); and (iii) what they need to be doing over a defined period of time to get there. Over the following pages, we present four draft matrices that could be used to structure such discussions. The four matrices correspond to the four overarching dimensions of partnership synergy suggested by Lasker et al: (i) partnership characteristics, (ii) relationships among partners, (iii) partner characteristics and (iv) resources.

The models are typically used within a group setting. The assessment involves a facilitated group session in which individuals assess and compare where they think the partnership is across the different dimensions, to generate a consensus. Once agreed upon, the results can be used for objective setting. It is important to repeat the exercise in order to monitor progress, as it is possible to move both forward and backward along the maturity pathway.

Please note that the descriptions provided for each maturity level in the following slides have been defined by the evaluation team. In line with the path to maturity, the levels start at level 1, which aims to capture a state where what is in place is not sufficient or inadequate to achieve synergy, and extends through to level 4, which should describe the scenario in which both sides of the partnership consider it to be working in synergy and hence effectively.

The real benefit of using the model lies in developing a shared judgement. Both the dimensions of synergy and the definitions of maturity should be adapted and developed according to the (changing) needs of the partnership, and partners should be encouraged to be involved in the development of this tool. Accordingly, maturity level 4 has been left blank in all dimensions, reflecting the need for the partners themselves to define their vision of the partnership. It can therefore be used by partners to develop objectives and think about what it is they want to achieve in future. This is genuinely challenging, since

one vision would be that, having helped create new and more effective ways of working, the partnership might recede in visibility and day-to-day importance. An alternative vision would see the partnership working well into the future, stimulating internal learning and transformation and being an external beacon of good practice based on trust, respect and effective mechanisms for managing conflict and power differentials. In these two cases, the content of maturity level 4 would be different.

Partners may want to consider the following questions when using the maturity model:

- How do we strengthen the management of the partnership? (What can we do now to work better together/to increase levels of synergy in each dimension?)

- How do we best sustain the effectiveness of the partnership? (What do we need to monitor?)

- On which areas (dimensions) do we need/wish to focus our efforts?

- How do we know in which phase the partnership is? Are there any documents or measures that support the assessment of the partnership?

Table 2 Relevant partnership characteristics (How does the partnership operate?)

Dimensions	Maturity Level 1	Maturity level 2	Maturity level 3	Maturity level 4
Leadership	Structure and role of the leadership not clearly articulated. No role attributed to leading work streams across the organisations. Leadership concentrated in one or two individuals.	Limited inclusiveness; power in the hands of a few people. Leaders who are comfortable sharing ideas, resources and power and working across organisations.	Extended and distributed leadership. Partnership led by boundary-spanning individuals who can articulate what the partners can achieve together and who foster respect, trust, inclusiveness and openness, spanning both organisations.	
Administration and management	No clear ring-fenced funding for cross-organisation administrative and managerial support. No coordinated logistics.	Structures in place, including logistical support, effective communication strategies and analysis capacities, which make it possible for multiple, independent people and organisations to work together.	Dedicated partnership managers on both sides, who work in tandem. Managers taking a flexible and supportive approach. Support provided from dedicated administrative staff with a cross-organisation role. Continuity within the team.	
Governance	No clear governance line. Partners convene on an ad hoc basis to make decisions.	Clear governance structure and accountability lines. Roles well defined.	Procedures in place that determine who is involved in partnership decision-making and in how partners make decisions and do their work. Resilience mechanism to ensure continuity of governance despite staff turnover.	
Efficiency	Partners not systematically learning from each other or utilising each organisation's strength.	Partners' roles and responsibilities are matched to their interests and skills.	Partnership optimises the involvement of its partners in order to make the best use of what they have to offer. Most appropriate partners/resources are used for a task to enhance partnership efficiency.	

Table 3 Relevant relationships among partners (How do the partners relate to each other?)

Dimensions	Maturity Level 1	Maturity level 2	Maturity level 3	Maturity level 4
Trust	Lack of trust in the other organisation. Competition between the two organisations (e.g. for money, for reputation) hinders ability to work collaboratively.	Being confident that other partners will not take advantage of their responsibilities.	Trusting the other organisation as much as one's own. Aiming to achieve the same objectives. Joint decisions on the distribution of partnership tasks, with one organisation trusted to complete work without interference from other organisation.	
Respect	Lack of acknowledgement of contribution of others. Negative opinions of the other organisation held by partners/wider staff members.	Partners talk positively of those from other organisation. Understanding and acknowledgment of the value of the partnership and what the other organisation brings.	Appreciating the value of others' contributions and perspectives. Actively seek out the views and opinions of partners from across the two organisations before making decisions. Acknowledgement of partnership's leaders' work.	
Conflict	Conflict between partners not well managed, resulting in strained relations among partners and preventing the collaboration from happening. One original common vision but no plans for follow-up. Organisations driven by their own interest rather than common interest.	Difference in perspective is considered a positive attribute of the partnership. Conflict is well managed and issues are solved collaboratively.	Partners are encouraged to challenge their own and others ideas/ways of working in order to challenge perspectives and force partners to think in innovative ways. Recognising that differences can sharpen partners' discussions and stimulate new ideas.	
Power differentials	One partner organisation is much 'stronger' or more vocal than the other. Unilateral decision making.	Mechanism in place for partners from both organisations to feed into decision making process.	Clearly defined areas where partners have respective authority to ensure balance of power. Not arbitrary limitation about who participates, whose opinions are considered valid and who has influence over decisions made.	

Table 4 Relevant partner characteristics (What does each partner contribute?)

Dimensions	Maturity Level 1	Maturity level 2	Maturity level 3	Maturity level 4
Level of involvement	Reliance on individuals' motivations/willingness to collaborate.	Ways partners participate influenced by the perceived relative benefits of involvement and by the degree of authority that the organisations grant them.	Endorsement and commitment from senior leadership within each organisation showing that they value the partnership. Commitment is part of the description of the role, 'enshrined' in contractual arrangements; adequate time is allocated to carry out partnership commitments.	
Skills and expertise	Insufficient expertise across the range of skill sets required to ensure the functioning and sustainability of the partnership.	Appropriate mix of partners/range of perspectives, resources and skills to get the bigger picture and find innovative solutions.	Optimal range of the skills and expertise needed to engage partners, support the collaboration process and carry out and coordinate the multiple components of the partnership.	
Connections and endorsements	Weak or insufficient connections to people, organisations and policymakers within field. Partnership is relatively unknown	Partners have a strong track record of delivering work. Partners are well known and respected in their field of work	Partners have connections to a network of people, organisations and policymakers that provide the partnership with credibility and legitimacy among different stakeholders.	
Convening power	Inability to bring all of the key stakeholders together.	Influence and ability to bring people together for meetings and other activities.	Ability to influence local and national policymaking.	

Table 5 Relevant resources (What resources are available to support the partnership?)

Dimensions	Maturity Level 1	Maturity level 2	Maturity level 3	Maturity level 4
Capital: Money	Initial funding to initiate the partnership.	Sustained and coordinated funding, demonstrating commitment of both organisations to the partnership.	Joint decisions with regard to streams of funding and strategy for ensuring future funding.	
Capital: Space, equipment, goods	Initial investment in building infrastructure and IT infrastructure.	Cohabitation of partners in the same buildings. Shared use of other equipment and goods.	Dedicated space for partnership meetings, in a neutral environment in order to facilitate positive interaction. Joint development of equipment and goods procurement according to the needs of the partnership.	
Information	Limited information available to either organisation. Information that is available is siloed, limited to a restricted number of 'information holders'.	Information available to all partners, although no routine exchange of information or code of practice for how to store shared information. Appropriate information available to wider members of staff from both organisations, articulating the value and objectives of the partnership, and their role, if relevant, within it.	Effective mechanism for flow of information across the two organisations. Mechanism in place to ensure the joint storage of data across organisations, including agreed code of practice for saving information to ensure easy retrieval and accessibility for new partners. Information available that informs new decisions and next steps of the partnership (monitoring and evaluation).	

References

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2. Minkman MM. Developing integrated care. Towards a development model for integrated care. International Journal of Integrated Care 2012;**12**