Manifesto for partnership research between academic and other organisations

1 Identifying the partners

- Build a network of potential partners and be open to opportunities
- Publicise that you want to work in partnership
- Involve people early on - all partners should have an opportunity to shape the research process and any funding applications
- Remember it's a two-way process: languages of exchange rather than transfer

2 Starting partnerships

- Think about what you want to gain from and what you want to contribute to partnership research
- Define what partnership means: be clear about the difference between partnership research and consultancy, commissioning and evaluation
- Start conversations early and take time to understand each other's language and motivations
- Ask what knowledge and capacity partners already have and don't assume knowledge/capacity on either side
- Have clear terms of reference with clear roles and ways of resolving disagreement
- Have a conversation about what you might and might not find out
- Explore and develop the different perspectives on what makes good evidence
- Acknowledge that all partners will have costs associated with taking part
- Agree what a successful partnership looks like for each partner

3 Developing funding bids

- Negotiate costs openly, and ensure appropriate resources for participation
- Properly fund knowledge exchange activities to ensure impact
- Think about the ethics from different perspectives – who will be involved as research participants and what effect will it have on them?
- Agree how the partnership will be evaluated and how success will be measured
- Be realistic about deadlines and what you can deliver on
- Identify what parts of the research process your organisation can be involved in

4 Developing partnerships

- Have an open mind about what the partnership might involve
- Spend time in each other's organisations to understand each other's contexts, challenges and enablers
- Take turns to host meetings
- Question each other's assumptions and be prepared for conflict!
- Address power dynamics
- Be clear about which roles will be shared and to what extent
- Explore what training needs exist within the partnership to best support the research process
- Be open to different interpretations of data and have a process for agreeing
- Commit time and have a back-up plan if people and roles change

5 Sharing research findings

- Agree on reporting roles and styles and share authorship if possible
- Circulate research widely and share with colleagues, and other relevant organisations – be creative
- Split engagement roles – media / engagement
- Give all partners the opportunity to pre-approve publications, and respect each other's points of view

6 And finally

- Choose your partners carefully – it will work better if you get on
- Do reflect on the process – be honest about what is good and what is challenging for each partner
- Think about what impact you are making and how you can show it – feedback from service users can be helpful

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