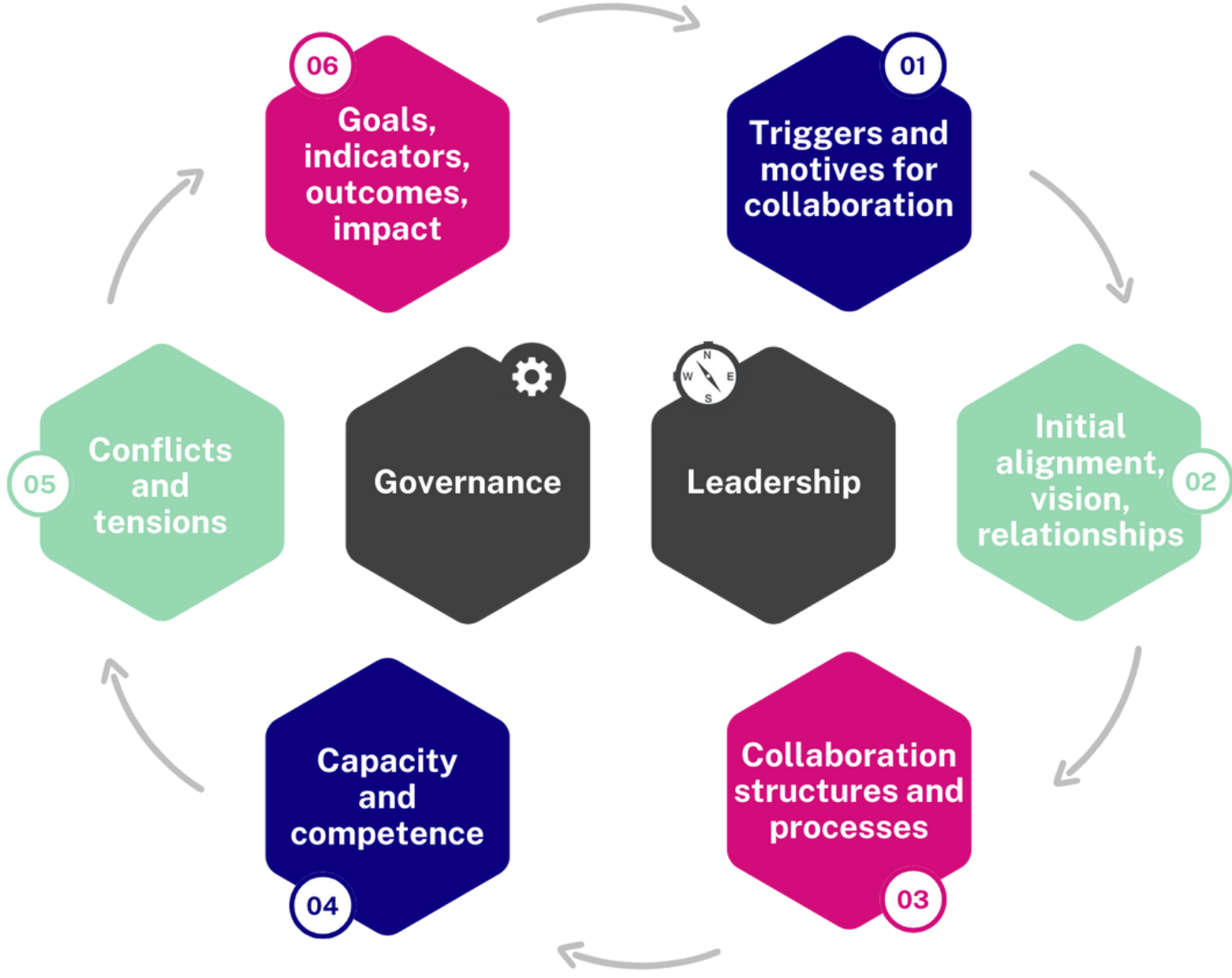


North East Together Collaboration framework



About...

...the framework

The framework is based around the collaboration model that emerged from the Collaboration Action Fund activity and evaluation created by NET team member Dr Jo James in 2019 adapted from 2015 research by Bryson, Crosby and Stone.

...the toolkit

The North East Together collaboration toolkit based around the framework will be published in December 2022. It collates and remixes resources, tools, information and thoughts about collaboration to help North East Together members and others collaborate.

The toolkit has been created by the following

- Version 1: North East Together team of Marie Foalle, Robert Laycock and Stephanie Cole, Yes We Can, and Dr Joanne James and Cissie Tsang, Newcastle University
- Version 2: co-created with participants of Leading, together: Growing and developing collaborative leadership practice event in March 2022

...North East Together

Our collective mission here at NET is to create the conditions, and platform for, collaboration to become the norm in the north east and to nurture a healthier social change system. Together we can do this.

...NET member-led collaboration activity

Collaboration working group 1: Collaboration superheroes I

Armed only with a flip chart pen and a passion for collaboration, Stephanie Cole led a discussion all about collaboration and social change at the first gathering of North East Together: leaders network for social change in November 2014. And from these humble beginnings Collaboration Superheroes was formed.

From December 2014, Stephanie hosted several Collaboration Superheroes open conversations for network members to share their experiences of collaboration. Towards the end of 2015, Stephanie teamed up with fellow Collaboration Superheroes Robert Laycock and Marc Jones to think about we could do next.

Collaboration working group 2: Collaboration superheroes II

In 2016, Stephanie and Robert hosted four workshop events to unpack and make better sense of what's going on when we collaborate for social change. From the workshops, a Collaboration Superheroes framework was created capturing the feelings, skills, behaviours and systems that enable great collaboration.

Collaboration working group 3: Collaboration Action Group and the Collaboration Action Fund

The third iteration led by Ngozi Lyn Cole came together in 2017 after Ngozi took to the North East Together soapbox to ask the question: ***'If we agreed to find ways to get past any real or perceived barriers, what would it look like if collaboration were the norm across the north east, and how can we take the first steps towards making it happen?'*** The new working group explored this question.

The group embraced this challenge and its activity included

- **2018:** hosting the North East Collaboration Conference with 139 attendees; researching and publishing *Collaboration in the north east: Learning from current practice*; and six social leaders forming an action learning set around collaboration
- **2019:** securing funding for the Collaboration Action Fund (CAF) and launching it in February 2019; funding eight cross-sector partnerships to start work on laying good foundations for their collaborations; publishing *North East Collaboration Conference 2018* report; researching and publishing *Collaboration Action Fund evaluation report*
- **2020:** sharing the CAF evaluation report and hearing stories from three of the CAF-funded projects at our 18th NET whole network event in February 2020

North East Together Collaboration framework

1

Triggers and motives for collaboration

We know why we are collaborating, and me and my organisation are ready to collaborate.

We understand our own motivations and triggers for collaborating. We understand ourselves well and we're prepared to share who we are with others so together we are ready to collaborate.

This is about making sure each individual and organisation is in the right place to collaborate with others, and is prepared to be open and vulnerable with each other to get off to a good start. 'Being in the right place' might be being confident in ourselves, our organisation is healthy and not in crisis, having a plan, clear about our own motivations for wanting to collaborate with others, having the time and commitment to do it, open to working differently, with the right mindset (collaborative not competitive).

2

Initial alignment, vision, relationships

We understand each other well and have been open and honest about who we are and what we want to do

We have created the right conditions for our collaboration. We understand each other well and have been open and honest about who we are and what we want to do, about our relationships and our experience.

We have enough shared goals, values and vision to work together. We can trust and have confidence in each other. We recognise the strengths we all bring, power or resource asymmetries, our existing independence and our capacity for taking joint action.

We understand the system we all work within. We have been open about our histories and understand what has happened – to us, between us – will influence our collaboration now and depending upon what that is we may need to do extra work. We have a true understanding of our starting point.

3

Collaboration structures and processes

We have processes, structures and ways of working in place to nurture, care for and run the collaboration and our work together

This includes building trust; creating psychological safety; deepening our relationships; how we communicate between us and with others; how we share information between us; ways of planning; tools, practices and systems we use for the work; using inclusive processes; how we reflect and learn together; creating documentation and recording our collaboration and the work we do; dedicating enough time and energy to the collaboration; and, how we make decisions.

We know collaborating is complex and dynamic so we know we need to pay attention to all this and take a design approach, starting with the end in mind, and be adaptive.



Capacity and competence

We have what we need to collaborate. We have the right skills, experience, knowledge, behaviours, mindset and time, individually and together.

We're willing to learn and practice to get better at it. These include emotional intelligence/ interpersonal understanding, openness to collaboration, a concern for the common good, ability to work across boundaries, strategic planning and teamwork.



Conflicts and tension

We know how, why and when conflicts and tensions happen, and how to resolve them.

We know how, why and when conflicts and tensions can happen in collaborations. We have thought about this early on (while everything is going well!) and know what to do if they arise. We have strong relationships — because of the work we've done so far, the structures and processes we've designed and put in place and the capacities and competences we all bring — and we can be open and vulnerable with each other.



Goals, indicators, outcomes, impact

We have ways to plan, measure what we're doing, reflect and learn, and share what we're doing with others.

We know what we're doing together. We have a plan and we know what good looks like. We have ways to measure what we're doing, to reflect and learn, and to share what we're doing with others.



Leadership

We have the leadership roles, practices and skills to nurture, care for and lead our collaboration.

This might include creating common purpose, acting as a sponsor or champion, creating and holding the right boundaries between your organisation and the collaboration, coping with the ambiguity, risk and loss of control when collaborating.



Governance

We have the right governance for our collaboration.

We have the right governance for our collaboration, making sure it is proportionate and appropriate for our size, scope and needs. We can manage our risks, accountability to others, and other legal matters. We have the right formal and informal agreements and documentation and decision making processes in place, and can allocate resources, and manage and report on our work as we need to. We have the right permissions from our home organisations. We know who is part of our collaboration, how people join and how people leave.

North East Together

North East Together: network
medium.com/northeasttogether
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