Tool 5
Understanding my organisation

Remember, from mutual understanding and appreciation of differences comes trust and willingness to share.

Tool 5 poses a number of questions for team members to seek answers from their respective employing organisations and to share them with the wider group.

Not only is it important to understand each other as professionals and individuals, for multi-agency teams to really succeed, you must also make time to really understand each other's organisations, their drivers and the constraints they face.

Without this combination of insights, multi-agency teams can find themselves 'rubbing up against each other' rather than 'going with the grain'. Even low level friction can impede the cohesion of the team and affect its performance.

It's all about hilltops and assets.

Each of your employing organisations will have objectives and targets to hit, quality standards to maintain, reporting mechanisms to adhere to, and cultural differences mark them out as unique. All of this helps to shape the perspective a partnering organisation will bring to our shared goal or challenge.

Understanding each other's organisation is equally as important as understanding each team member. Like us, organisations too bring with them different kinds of assets and carry certain pre-conceptions and stereotypes that need to be up-packed, understood and addressed.

Sometimes there are misunderstandings about the level of commitment a partner organisation brings to the multi-agency team activity. The Work Foundation[1] identified a number of 'commitment' factors that could undermine partnership working: misunderstanding around purpose, expectations, behaviours and mandates can really undermine the success of the team. Flushing them out is really important.

[1] Jones, S and Morris, K (2008) *Can collaboration help places respond to the changing economy?* The Work Foundation

How to use this tool:

Tool 5 helps you to build a better understanding of each other's organisation.

It helps you unpack differences between the goals they have, the assets they bring, the constraints they face and how best they each see the partnership working.

Step 1: Create a blank version of the 'understanding your organisation' template, with contributions from each team member.

Step 2: Seek agreement from each team member to go back to their own organisation and seek out the right person/persons to secure organisational answers to the questions posed. The people interviewed must be of sufficient seniority to answer these questions on behalf of their organisation.

Step 3: Team members to conduct their in-house interviews, thereby gaining a clear sense of their organisation's 'asks' and commitment to the project

Step 4: At your next team meeting, share insights with one another, allowing questions for insight understanding.

Consider any potential friction points. Use *Tool 1 'What could possibly go wrong'* to identify remedies and next step actions

The questions are both simple yet fundamental. They 'cut to the quick' by asking the what, why and how questions.

Tool 5

Understanding my organisation

To introduce your organisation to the other partners, please complete this simple form and be prepared to share it with others

Name of organisation	
What we want from collaborative working between xxx and xx is…? *List the areas of service and back office support where you see benefit in more collaborative and joint working.*	
What are you prepared to contribute to realise these benefits? *What are we prepared to put on the table and where are our red-lines?*	**What's on the table?** **What's off the table?**
Why is this important to your organisation? *What goals do you want to achieve as a result?*	
Where are we coming from….? Understanding my organisation *What are the top 5 things others will need to understand about our organisation, to make a success of this new way of working together?*	
How we work together? *What must we do differently to make our partnership a success? List the characteristics and behaviours sought of the partners.*	
Your Challenges *Intuitively, what are the challenges your organisation is facing when working with others?*	

Collaborative Leadership and Multi-Disciplinary Team working

Tool 5

USER LOG

Project & date tool used	What was the desired outcome of using this tool?	What actually happened?	What would you do differently next time?

Collaborative Leadership and Multi-Disciplinary Team working