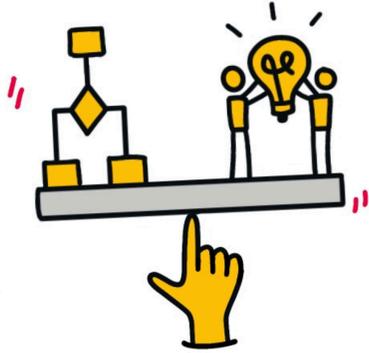# Top tips for
Collaboration-based approaches

Balance structure and autonomy

Provide enough structure to help a collaboration organise itself without imposing levels of control that can stifle cooperation.

Don't rely on goodwill

Collaborations shouldn't depend entirely on volunteers. Provide sustainable methods for participation, leadership, and support.
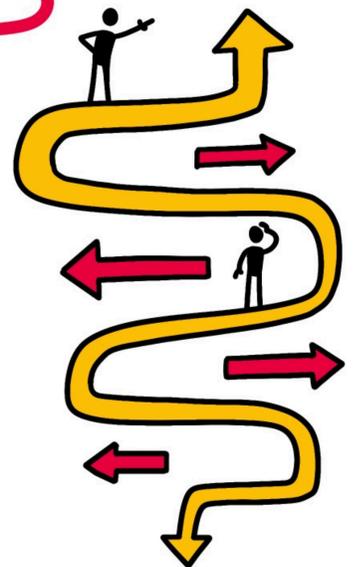
Plan for sustainability

Trust, reciprocity, and a strong collaborative culture take time to develop. Avoid taking a short-term focus — this can undermine long-lasting impact.

Be flexible

Different contexts require different strategies. Clearly define the improvement goal and measurement approach but avoid rigidly following specific templates or models.
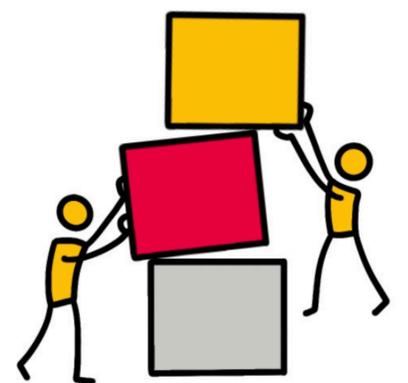
Consider the wider context

External pressures and organisational priorities can challenge collaboration. Think about how you will deal with these from the start.

Be inclusive

Engage a diverse range of participants. This strengthens collective knowledge and action and increases influence within organisations.

Weigh up costs and benefits

Collaboration-based approaches can be resource-intensive, and the balance between cost and impact is not always clear. Consider if they are the best use of resources to achieve improvement.
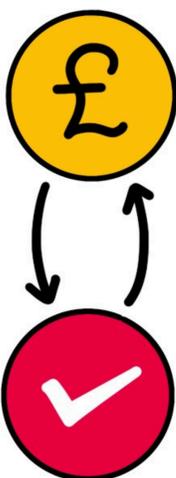
Involve a range of voices

Patient, service user, and carer involvement is essential to broaden insights and inform objectives. Use co-production and co-design to incorporate these perspectives.

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