

## HOW-TO GUIDE 4: Partnership Agreement Checklist

*How to use this practical checklist to build clear, ethical, and youth-centred partnership agreements. This guide explains how to use the checklist across the full lifecycle of a partnership, from early discussions to drafting, delivery, and review.*

### ➤ BEFORE DRAFTING ANYTHING: USE THE CHECKLIST TO FRAME THE CONVERSATION

The checklist identifies the essential elements both partners must consider before committing to a collaboration. Use it early to shape expectations and highlight where alignment already exists or where further discussion is needed.

#### a. Share the checklist in one of your first meetings

Send it to partners ahead of time and ask them to note:

- Areas of clarity
- Areas requiring negotiation
- Any potential red flags

#### b. Use Sections 1 and 2 to ground the partnership

Start by exploring:

- Shared purpose and mission alignment
- Intended benefits for young people and communities
- Success indicators and impact aims

This ensures the partnership has a clear rationale rooted in youth outcomes.

#### c. Identify your organisation's non-negotiables

Before drafting, use the checklist internally to clarify:

- Minimum safeguarding standards
- Your expectations for youth participation
- Required governance structures
- Cultural boundaries or values you must protect

This strengthens your position and safeguards young people from the start.

### ➤ DURING AGREEMENT DEVELOPMENT: USE THE CHECKLIST AS THE STRUCTURE OF THE AGREEMENT

Work section by section, turning each item into a specific clause, process, or shared commitment.

### **Section 1: Partnership Purpose & Alignment**

Document:

- The shared purpose
- How the partnership aligns with each organisation's values
- The benefits for young people
- Agreed measures of success

This anchors the agreement in youth-centred outcomes.

### **Section 2: Roles, Responsibilities & Governance**

Clarify:

- Named leads
- Role descriptions
- Who holds final decision-making authority
- Governance structures (e.g., steering group)
- Escalation routes
- Meeting schedules and reporting processes

This prevents confusion and protects against power imbalances.

### **Section 3: Youth Engagement & Co-Design Commitments**

Define how young people will be involved:

- Consultation, co-design, advisory roles
- Safeguarding and ethical standards
- Payment and recognition
- How youth feedback influences decisions

Make these commitments contractual wherever possible.

### **Section 4: Culture, Ethos & Ways of Working**

Translate culture-preserving intentions into specifics:

- Shared language and working styles
- Commitments to respect, communication, and values

- Agreements on power awareness and humility

This keeps the partnership relational, not transactional.

### **Section 5: Resourcing, Funding & Contribution Transparency**

Detail every contribution:

- Funding, staffing, tech, networks, equipment
- Payment terms and timelines
- Restrictions or conditions
- Fair compensation for young people
- IP and ownership agreements
- How changes to funding will be handled

This ensures transparency and protects fairness.

### **Section 6: Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility**

Include commitments to:

- Inclusion across abilities, identities, backgrounds
- Removing participation barriers
- Accessibility standards
- Prioritising seldom-heard youth voices

This ensures the partnership centres equity from the beginning.

### **Section 7: Safety, Safeguarding & Risk Management**

Agree on:

- Shared safeguarding responsibilities
- Digital and online safety expectations
- Risk assessment and mitigation processes
- Commitment to children's rights over organisational interests

This keeps young people safe in both physical and digital environments.

### **Section 8: Transparency, Data & Storytelling**

Establish ethical rules on:

- Data collection, sharing, and security

- Youth and carer consent
- Use of images, stories, and case studies
- Branding and public communications
- Avoiding extractive or PR-driven narratives

This protects dignity and prevents reputational or emotional harm.

### **Section 9: Evaluation, Learning & Improvement**

Plan for:

- Monitoring and evaluation
- Honest reporting (including challenges)
- Learning loops
- Annual or end-of-project reviews
- Shared impact indicators

This builds reflection and adaptation into the partnership.

### **Section 10: Duration, Changes & Exit Strategy**

Define how the partnership will begin, adapt, and end:

- Start date, duration, renewal
- Conditions for withdrawal
- How changes are negotiated
- Ethical and safe wind-down processes
- Recognition of youth contributions at closure

This prevents abrupt or harmful endings — especially for young people.

#### ➤ DURING DELIVERY: USE THE CHECKLIST TO STAY ACCOUNTABLE

a. Review it at regular partnership meetings

Add a short “Agreement Checklist Check-In” to steering group agendas.  
Check which commitments are on track and where support is needed.

b. Keep it visible in documents and decision-making

Use it as a shared reference point when challenges or uncertainties arise.

If something feels misaligned, identify which section it relates to and address it together.

c. Use it to uphold youth-centred practice

Sections 3, 6, and 7 help ensure that young people remain safe, empowered, and engaged throughout the partnership.

➤ AT RENEWAL OR CLOSURE: RETURN TO THE CHECKLIST AS AN EVALUATION TOOL

a. Assess how well the partnership met its commitments

Walk through every section and identify:

- Achievements
- Gaps
- Lessons learned

b. Use it to guide ethical exit planning

Particularly Section 10, which covers:

- Safe wind-down
- Communication with young people
- Honouring contributions

c. Use it to inform future collaborations

Your documented reflections strengthen future agreements and reduce risk.

➤ IN SUMMARY: WHAT THE CHECKLIST ENABLES

Used well, the Partnership Agreement Checklist helps partners:

- Build clarity and alignment from the start
- Protect young people's rights, safety, and wellbeing
- Establish fair, transparent, non-extractive collaboration
- Create culture, equity, and governance structures that last
- Reduce risk and enhance community trust
- Plan responsibly for change and closure

It is not just a list — it's a practical roadmap for ethical, youth-centred partnership building.