

Comisiynu Cyngghreirio a Chontractio Cyngghrair

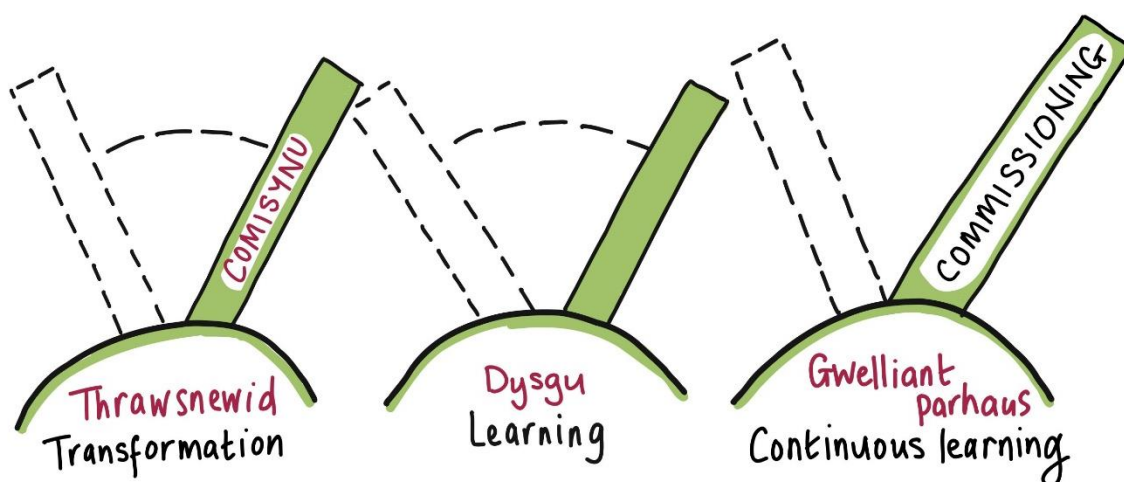
COMMISSIONING ALLIANCES AND ALLIANCE CONTRACTING

This briefing is an introduction to alliance contracting. The term 'alliance' is used in a variety of contexts within the health and social care sector; sometimes there is a difference between an 'alliance' and an 'alliance contract' and for the purpose of this paper, we are focusing on the latter.

This briefing probably won't answer all of your questions, but it should provide you with a starter for ten. For further information, see the details at the end.

1. Overview of alliance and what it means

People working directly to provide support and the people in receipt of that support often know what works well and what doesn't. They can often tell us how we could change things for the better. Commissioning constantly reoccurs as a crucial lever to making change happen; it is about transformation, learning and continuous improvement.



However, some more traditional ways of commissioning can compound the challenges and barriers people face when accessing support. Providers are often required to deliver to a specification determined at a point in time – a service determined by others and delivered in a fairly standard way. One size doesn't fit all and when we create the conditions that enable those being supported and

those delivering the support on a day-to-day basis to come together and collaborate, we find new solutions to enduring challenges.



There has been more collaborative commissioning for health care and well-being in West Wales in recent years. With some interest in creating formal contracted alliances.

A previous attempt in South Wales to move to formal contract alliance commissioning has been paused for further consultation with the third sector. A report from this recommends engaging more fully with the sector to answer

questions and concerns. With a co-produced approach to collaborative commissioning to meet individual and community needs.

Cardiff and Vale Drug and Alcohol Service (CAVDAS) is an example of a successful and ongoing collaboratively commissioned formal alliance contract. It is led by three Welsh substance use organisations and the Cardiff and Vale Area Planning Board. With other alliances in Scotland and England delivering services based on the needs of the people in their areas.

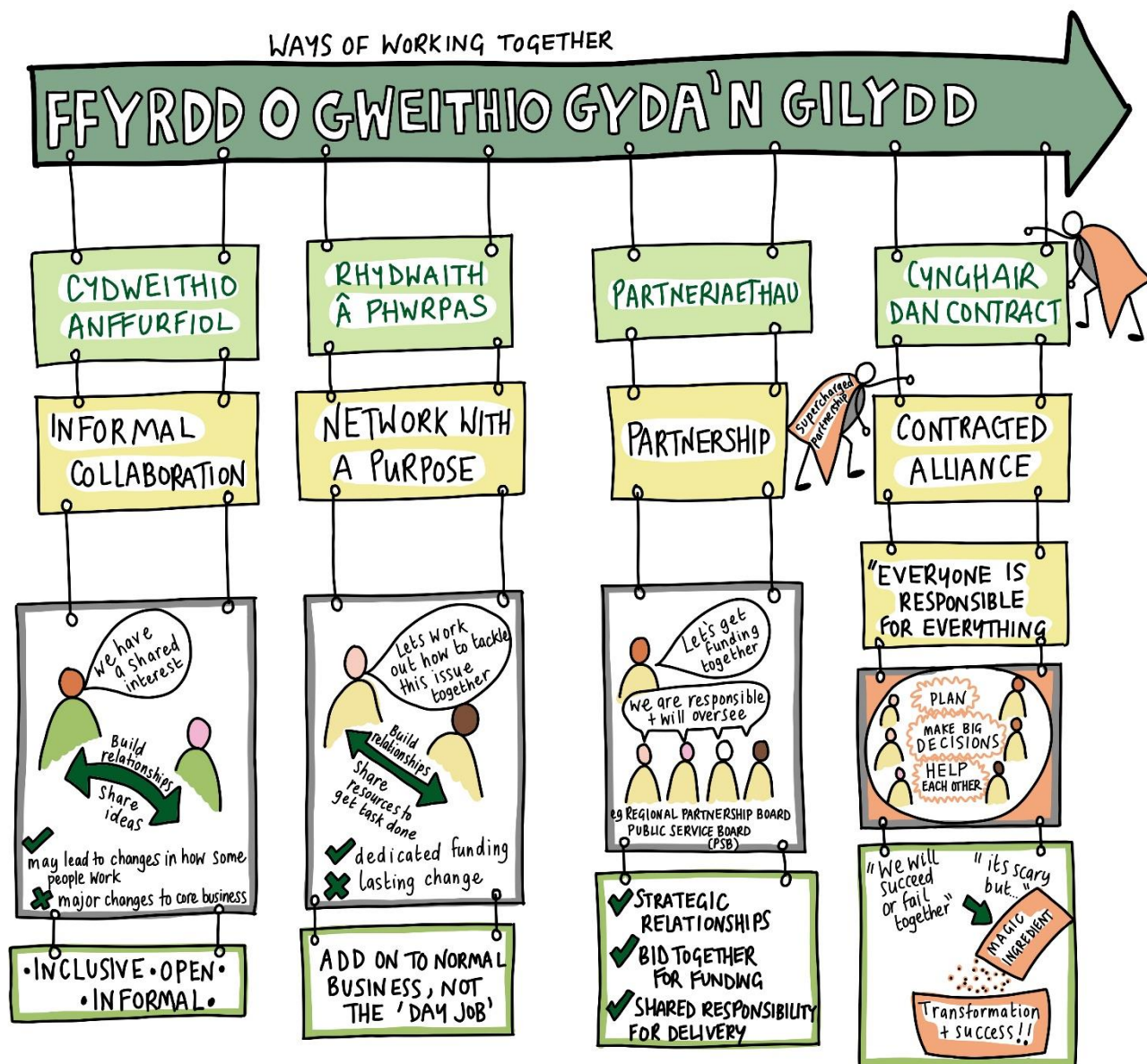
Alliancing is a transformative way to work together and realise shared ambitions across a whole system. It formalises collaboration between service providers and commissioners without the need for new organisational forms and can become the mechanism to drive cultural shift within the sector towards strength based working and co-production where people with lived experience have a full role in service design and delivery.

2. Description of different types of collaboration ie. network, alliance, consortium

Before we get into the nuts and bolts of alliance contracts, it's important to recognise, there are many different ways to collaborate and often the same word can mean different things to different people. It is helpful to be clear about the differences, especially when considering the options:

Informal collaboration: At one end there are informal collaborations that happen all the time in our working and personal life. People coming together because they have something in common, a shared interest. These are good for building relationships and swapping ideas. They can be inclusive, open invitation and involve a large number of people. The informality and openness are important.

Any ideas that are shared may lead to changes in how some people work but there is unlikely to be any major changes to core business or implementation of significant development or change. This is not what these informal collaborations are about.



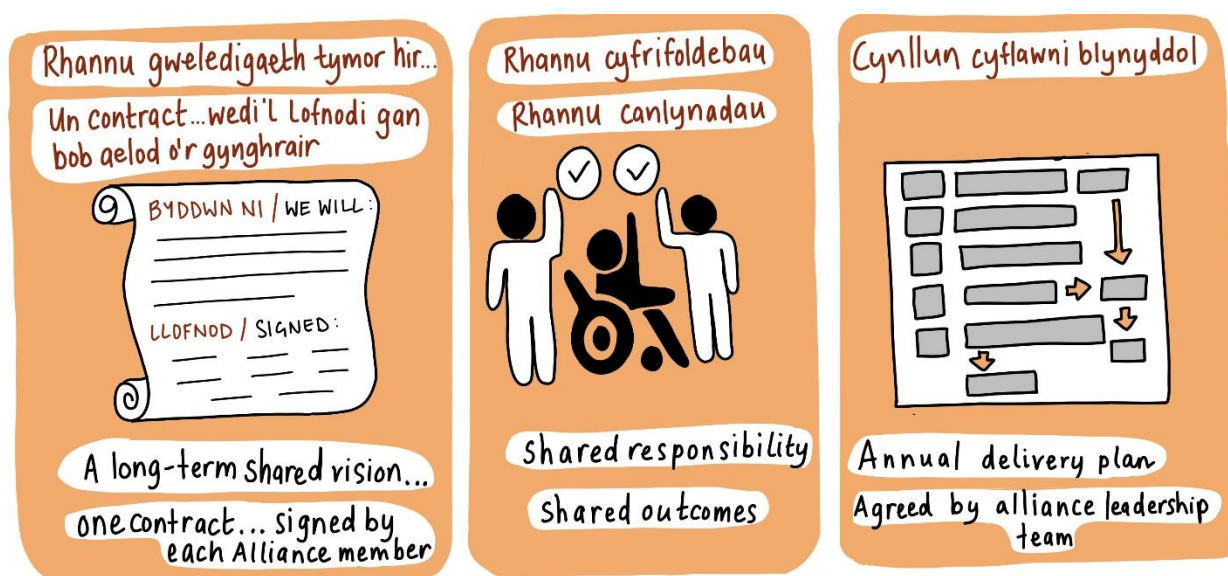
Network with a purpose: Here a group of people come together for a specific reason. It may be a team put together for a few months, a new committee or group to tackle a specific issue. There may be dedicated funding, either externally granted or developed by members of the network by pooling funds.

Again, these are good for relationship building and may result in people working differently for a while. There may even be some sharing of resources and people to get the task done. However there is still unlikely to be lasting change to working practices and the activity is usually seen as an 'add on' to normal business not the 'day job'.

Partnerships: These can range from strategic relationships where organisations, for example, bid together for funding, through to shared responsibility for manufacture or delivery, e.g. Section 33 or Part 9 Agreements or Partnership Boards

An alliance is like a supercharged partnership. In most partnerships you see arrangements where each party carries out its share of the work and people come together monthly or at intervals to talk about how they are each getting on. There may be some joint reporting or other collective working but not always.

Formal contracted alliances: When we talk about alliances we mean a collaboration where everyone is responsible for everything, not just their own area of expertise or delivery. It is not a new legal entity – the alliance contract is signed by each member and members retain their own identity and internal controls. However, members of the alliance plan together, make the big decisions together and help each other out. They fully share all opportunities, responsibilities and risks.



3. Why become an alliance?

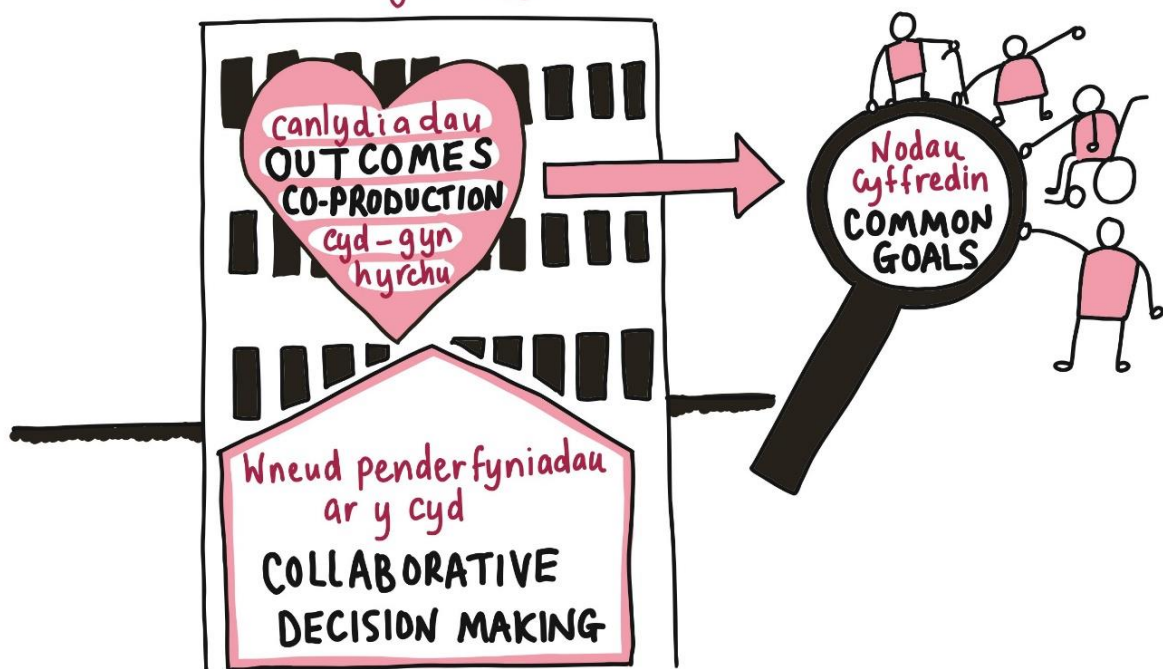
Alliancing is a way of working that focuses on relationships and creating an environment of trust, collaboration and innovation. All alliances are developed with outcomes and co-production at their heart and these run through every step of their development and subsequent delivery.

One of the key benefits of alliances come from the strong foundation of collaborative decision making. This requires clarity about the common goals and collective commitment to achieving them. There is team and individual

accountability within an appropriate governance and management structure for the 'virtual organisation'. With these in place there is a high trust environment that enables:

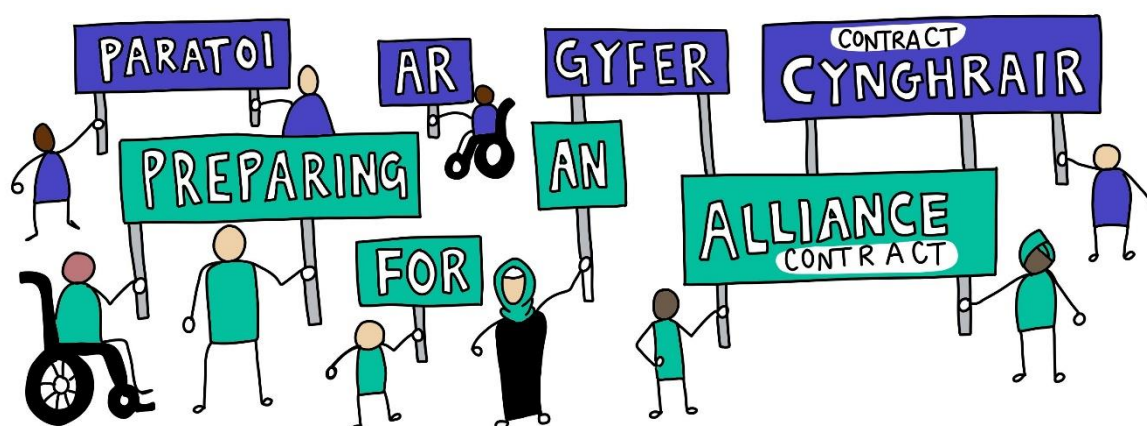
- collective ownership, responsibility and accountability
- collective response to external influences and risk
- best for system decision making
- pooling of skills, resources and experience
- Shared opportunity and responsibility means a strong sense of 'your problem is my problem – your success is my success'
- flexibility to evolve over time

Ffordd drawsnewidiol o gydweithio a gwireddu uchelgeisiau
a rennir draws system gyfan.



A transformative way to work together + realise shared ambitions
across a whole system

4. Preparing for an alliance



Alliances are one of many ways to collaborate. Whichever approach you take, it must be right for what you are aiming to achieve and the environment you are in. It is imperative to think about the collaboration first and then the method for achieving that, which might be through an alliance contract.

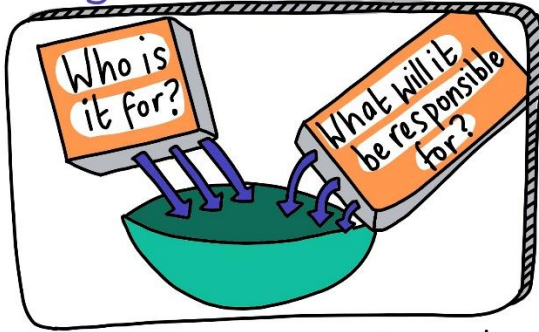
So your first task is to ask yourself a series of questions about your proposed collaboration: who is it being set up for, what will be its responsibilities? Then you can look at whether an alliance approach is the right one, the reasons it is and the reasons it might not be.

Who is your collaboration for? There are no right or wrong answers for the size of population of people an Alliance is for. You may be wanting to define a set of people by age group, clinical or social description.

When deciding on the target group, check that it is realistic. If it is for adults, what about young people in transition? If it is for residents, what about those outside the area but registered with a GP within?

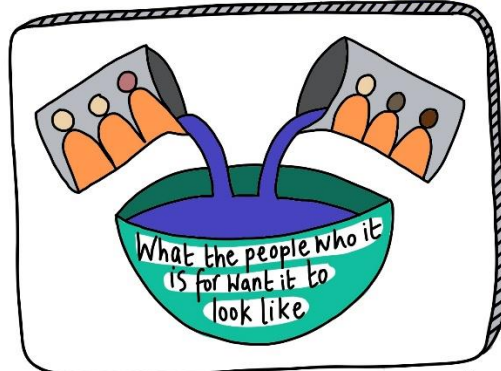
Now you can turn to the activities you want the collaboration to do. Ideally you will have those who the collaboration is being set up for, describe what they want it to look and feel like. This will help you move from thinking about services to thinking about people.

1 Meddylwch am gydweithrediad...



Think about the collaboration...

2 Penderfynwch beth hoffech wneud

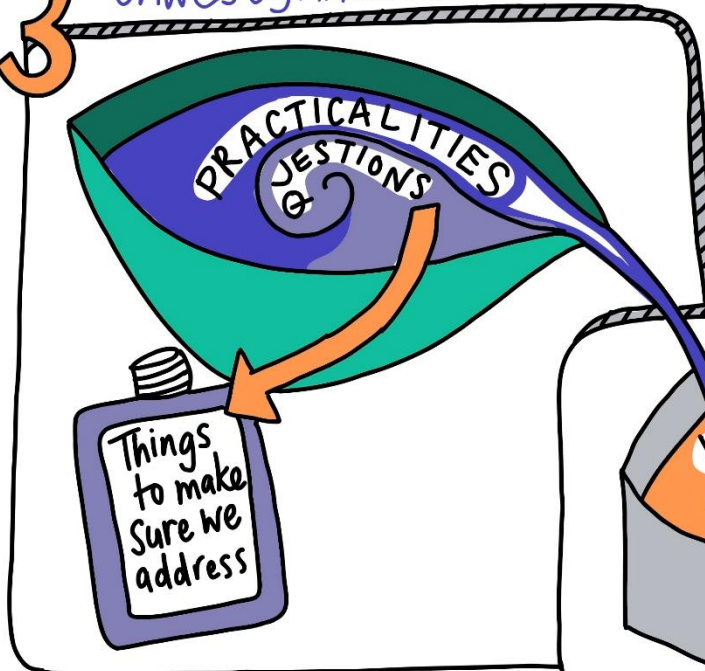


Decide what you want to do

Once you are given that overall picture, the practicalities will become more obvious. It is common at this stage for there to be some questions to be resolved about scope. This is normal and should not hold you up.

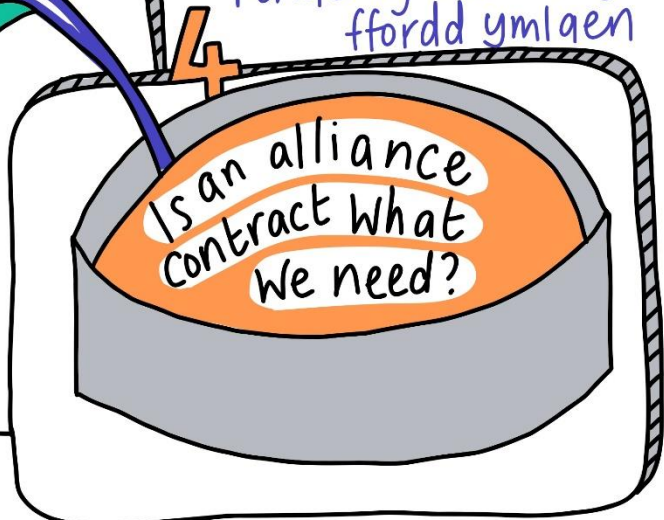
Now you have confirmed what you want from the collaboration you are setting up, you can consider whether an alliance is a suitable vehicle.

3 Dawymarferoldeb a chwestynnau i'r amlwg... Mae hynny'n iawn.



Practicalities and questions will emerge ... that's ok

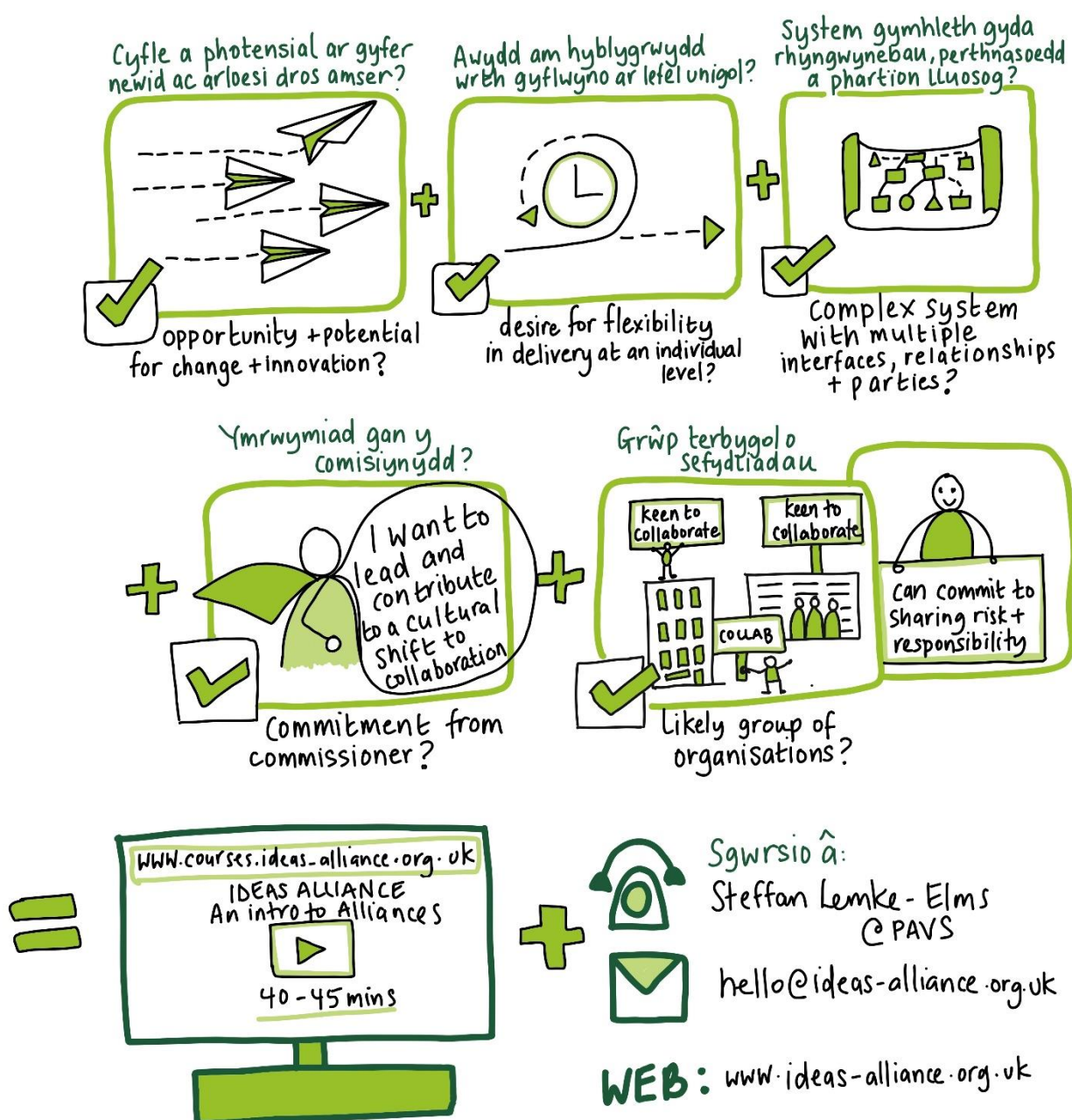
4 Penderfynwch ar y ffordd ymlaen



Decide on the way forward

An alliance will not be successful if it is the wrong choice but an alliance is very suitable where there is:

- opportunity and potential for change and innovation over time
- desire for flexibility in delivery at an individual level
- a complex system with multiple interfaces, relationships and parties
- commitment from the commissioner to leading and contributing to a cultural shift towards collaboration
- a likely group of organisations who are keen to collaborate and commit to risk and responsibility sharing



5. Developing an alliance

Co-production and outcomes are at the heart of an alliance; developing an alliance requires time to enable relationships to build and flourish and to co-design the outcomes, approach and operation of the alliance with everyone – commissioners, partners, service providers and people with lived or living experience.

It is vital that the invitation to this stage is open to everyone who may have an interest to ensure that the co-design includes a range of voices and that different sized organisations are represented and have equity in the process.

An alliance contract is an important vehicle for enabling smaller organisations to be commissioned as the members of an alliance can be mixed and include larger national organisations as well as local service providers. Additionally, an alliance can subcontract to ensure equity of reach and speciality across a local area.

Alliances are often contracted over a significant time period, sometimes up to ten years. Over this time, the context in which the alliance is working can change. In order for an alliance to respond to these changes, they develop an annual delivery plan which is agreed by the alliance leadership team. This flexibility enables them to focus on a learning approach to performance management, with alliance members and people with lived or living experience playing an active role in how this is developed.

6. Next Steps

Having read this briefing, you may have some unanswered questions so we would suggest you watch this free [introductory training course](#) on alliance contracting which goes into more detail about the nuts and bolts. For more information or an informal chat – have a look at www.ideas-alliance.org.uk or contact hello@ideas-alliance.org.uk

This document was written by Ideas Alliance CIC, Illustrated by Pobl Tir Mor CIC and is available in Welsh. A big thank you to all the organisations below and the local input from commissioners across West Wales.

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ALLIANCE**

 **PAVS**


pobl tir môr



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