



Working together: Improving school to work transitions for students with disability

A Collaboration Guide





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About the guide

This guide is designed to help identify the key elements of good practice in collaborating with partners to improve school to work transitions for young people with disability. It is based on the basic tenet that collective response and collaborating with others can better solve complex issues. The content has been shaped by experience and feedback from our Ticket to Work network partners, in addition to international studies on effective school to work transitions.

The Ticket to Work approach

Ticket to Work, an initiative of National Disability Services (NDS) has been researching and exploring good practice in school to work transition for students with disability. We have scoped the literature, explored international experience and implemented initiatives to drive better outcomes for young people with disability. The main finding of the scoping was that collaboration between sectors was key to better outcomes. We developed the Ticket to Work model that uses a network approach to support collaboration.

Specifically, Ticket to Work networks:

- Bring together disability-specific and mainstream representatives from a variety of sectors to work strategically and collaboratively;
- Supports young people to gain access to early experiences that positively influence their views of themselves as workers;
- Prepare young people with disability for the workplace and gives them an employment pathway that is typical of other young adults; and
- Increases opportunities for meaningful work experience and learning prior to exiting school.

“Neither schools, nor workforce investment programs, human service agencies, or any other single system alone can pay for and provide the array of services needed to effectively meet the often complex needs of youth with disabilities. When collectively pooled, however, these resources can produce positive outcomes for youth, well beyond the scope of what any single system can hope to mobilise on its own”

National Governors' Association Centre for Best Practice

We do better together, it's no secret!

“Collaboration between providers of different services has been beneficial in creating a network that is able to better support young people with disabilities to take up an employment pathway”

Ticket to Work school partner

Transition to adulthood, the journey towards work and community purpose, is a process all young people are encouraged to learn from and explore during their secondary and post-secondary school years. In an ideal world, this journey is continuous, it is seamless and each part of the road will lead to new experiences, periods of reflection, adjustment and consolidation of skills and knowledge. It promises development, dreams, aspirations and purpose and it belongs to each individual. In short, every young person should have opportunities to transition successfully to an adult life, including young people with disability.

But how can we collectively ensure that young people with disability have access to tailored interventions to support their post-school goals? For over a decade, studies have consistently shown that one of the key drivers for successful school to work transitions for young people with disability is collaboration, a mechanism to bring education, employment and disability services together to help young people navigate their journey to post-school life.

Collaboration essentially helps each service or agency to work better together, to deliver a coordinated approach and maximise opportunities, as opposed to promoting a separated and disparate set of services. Too often families and students are left to self-navigate through a broad range of transition services, creating “variable and ad-hoc school to work transitions” that undermine the student’s potential and aspirations. (Wakeford, 2020)

Collaborative approaches, such as Ticket to Work, prioritise a student-centred model where students are actively engaged in their planning and have support and access to a range of programs and expertise. The process relies on effective interconnection across agencies, organizations and services. This approach can be extremely effective when we allow ourselves to think across boundaries and consider how we connect together.

Collectively, we can do better together.

So, what is collaboration?

Collaboration, sometimes referred to as Interagency Collaboration, brings together “two or more parties to work towards common goals by sharing responsibility, authority and accountability” (Fabien & Luecking, 2012).

Successful collaborations are built on durable relationships with partners that have a shared purpose and vision. Interagency teams work collaboratively to improve school to work transitions for young people with disability (the vision) and combine their skills to make this happen (outcomes), such as creating opportunities for work experience, career development or other work preparation activities.

Importantly, collaboration between partners is more than information sharing, more than networking; it is collectively working together to achieve an outcome, using shared resources, expertise and strengths of those people and organisations involved.

A collaborative approach means you can drive forward policy ideas more effectively and efficiently than one agency acting alone. It overcomes siloing of ideas and programs, expands possibilities and helps to coordinate services together to avoid duplication and increase efficiency. This is beneficial for the young person transitioning to post-school life and their families, but also for the collaborative partners by broadening their understanding and knowledge of different services in the transition process. Strong collaboration is therefore mutually beneficial.

“Everyone is on the same page; expectations can be set in the open and together; meetings are more effective”

Ticket to Work network partner





Why is it Important?

In the Australian context, where schools are primarily funded by states and post-school services by the federal government, there has traditionally been the ‘siloeing’ of programmes in either schools, post-school employment services or adult disability services. There is a great need to improve how these sectors can work together by adopting measures proven to work (Children with Disability Australia, 2015; Meadows, 2020). A collaborative team approach is essential in producing seamless transitions for students, so that their “last day of high school will look like their first day after high school” (Kohler et al, 2017, p.175). Rather than a ‘drop into the unknown’ scenario at the end of schooling, or a ‘hand-off’ to yet another service, students are prepared and have planning in place, goals developed and individual strengths ready to promote. (Wakeford, 2020, p.8)

Interagency collaboration has been identified as one of the critical elements for improving outcomes for young people with disability. For many years, collaboration between schools, agencies and employers in preparing people with disability for the world of work has been recognised as a key component in creating employment opportunities (Meadows, 2020).

Research from NDS Ticket to Work strongly indicates that coordinated and staged careers and employment interventions throughout secondary school have a lasting and positive impact on post school employment outcomes. This is particularly evident for Ticket to Work participants supported through over 30 Ticket to Work collaborative networks, each designed to connect students, school and post school services together to give every student the opportunity to achieve their employment and training goals.

The findings are compelling.

Participants who were connected with a Ticket to Work network were 3 times more likely to be in open employment post and nearly twice as likely to complete Year 12 schooling or equivalent. Recent key outcome evaluations reveal that Ticket to Work participants are more likely to complete post-school training, have higher levels of confidence and independence, and 50% less likely to become disengaged from education or training (ARTD, 2019; SVA, 2020).

Studies overseas similarly show positive outcomes, with increased research, development and implementation of collaborative approaches for school to work transitions. Service collaboration is now mandated in the USA, with several technical assistance centres providing research and information for schools, parents and employers (Meadows, 2019, p.11).

In Australia, there is a strong case to include interagency collaboration as part of the school to work transition process for all young people with disability. The figures above clearly demonstrate improved outcomes for post-school employment, career planning and social participation for young people who might otherwise face multiple barriers in moving towards their goals.

..... “Being part of Ticket to Work has given us the confidence to tackle the naysayers, who think these kids cannot work”

..... **Ticket to Work network partner**



Who should I collaborate with?

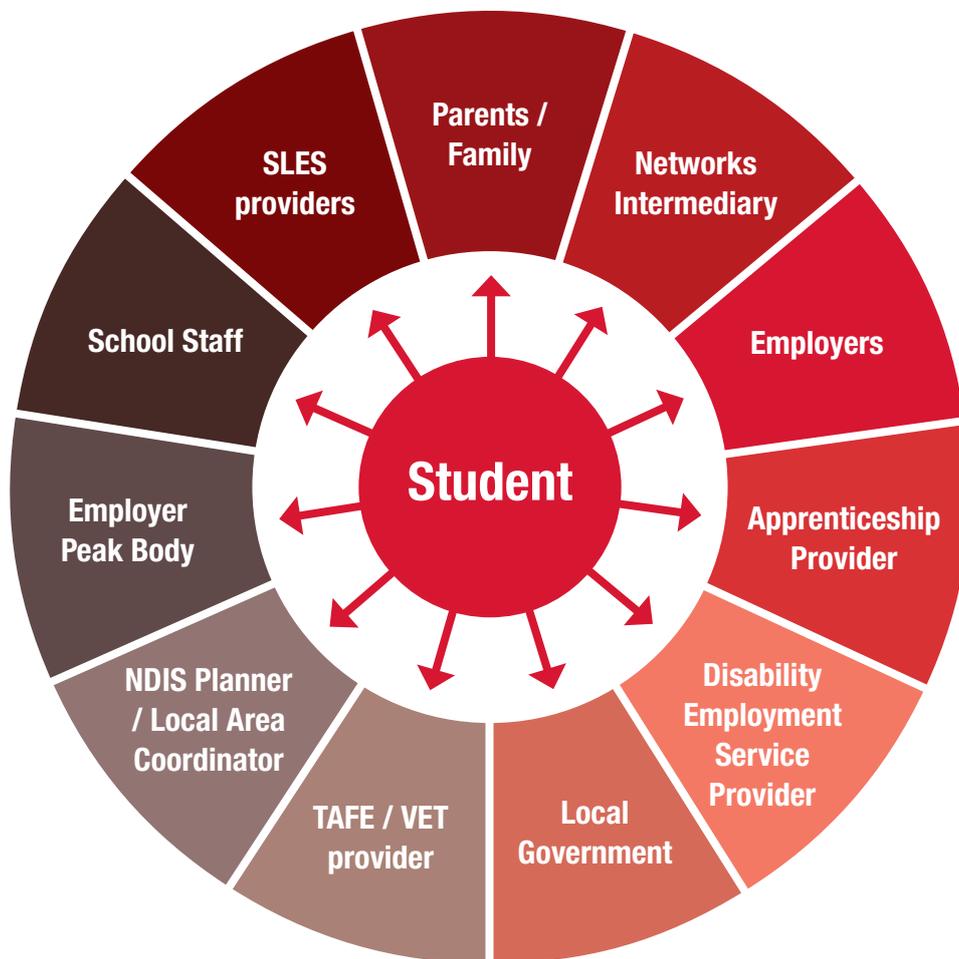
Interagency Collaboration is identified as one of the key practices for improved post school transitions. Paula Kohler's influential and evidence-based Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 provides a framework that positions Interagency Collaboration as one of five predictors of successful transitions for young people with disability.

A number of strategies are suggested in Kohler's Taxonomy to maximise the effectiveness of the collaborative process, starting with identifying possible people and agencies to form an 'interagency coordinating body'. No two collaborative teams will be the same; they might consist of many members across a range of services and sectors, or they can simply start with building a partnership between two groups. Generally, however, they will include school and post-school services across the following categories:

- Students
- Parents/Families
- Educators (including teachers, careers transition coordinators, support staff, in-school mentors, Principals or other school leaders)
- Service providers, including employment support providers, NDIS providers
- Community agencies, such youth agencies, disability, advocacy or Government sponsored agencies
- Post-Secondary Education, such as TAFE, Apprenticeship providers
- Employers, such as Chamber of Commerce representatives, or individual employers interested in building opportunities in their business or industry
- Other Stakeholders



Example of collaborative network to support school to work transitions

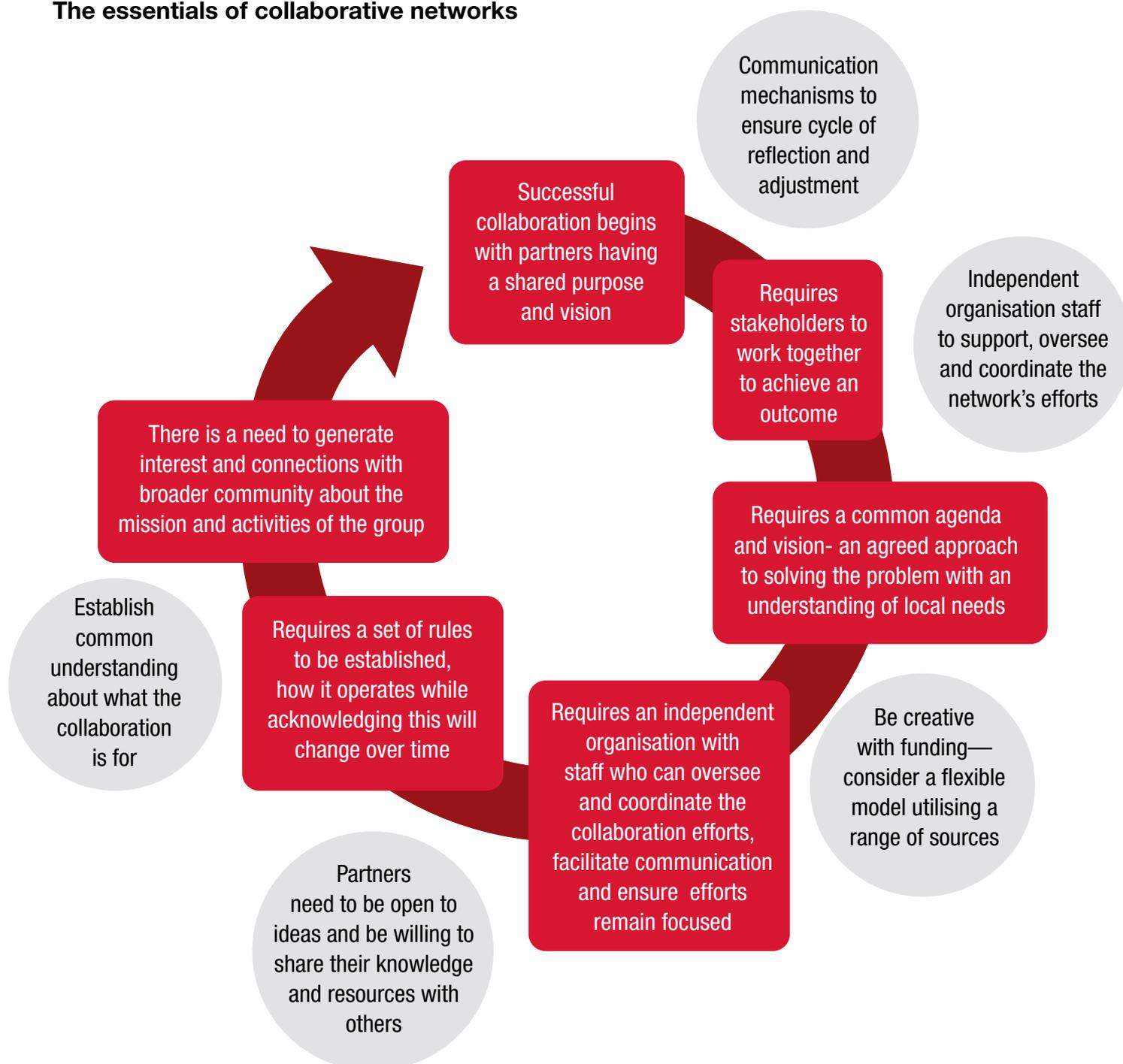


The interaction between partners is just as important as getting the right people on board.

Features of a strong collaboration include:

- Keeping the network place-based with a common agenda and vision. Agreed approach to solving the problem and understanding local needs
- Having independent/neutral organisation or staff that can support, oversee and coordinate the network, facilitate effective communication and help keep the collaboration focussed, (the intermediary), preferably from a not-for-profit or education sector
- Having agreed governance and processes, establishing understanding outlining the groups' purpose, goals and expectations
- Willingness to promote an open mindset and shared responsibility for structure, processes of communication and roles and responsibilities of its members
- Ability to review and reflect on the effectiveness of the partnership, effective data collection that recognises and celebrates achievements, and have a conscious commitment to resolve potential conflicts

The essentials of collaborative networks



“It’s not about one party getting their way or asserting dominance. You need to establish that you are motivated by the common good, not narrow self-interest.”
(BSL, 2018)

“Ticket to Work members are aligned to put their own needs to the side while the student is paramount in the thinking /planning and the outcomes that are best for the student”
Ticket to Work Member

Got it! Now how do I do it?

I believe that collaboration is the key. But we as a species are not particularly good at it!
Ticket to Work network partner

Research from Ticket to Work and overseas identify common features of successful interagency collaborations, namely communication, structure, evaluation and purpose. These are represented in the Ticket to Work wheel diagram for post-school employment, with categories broadly outlining four tenets of good practice for collaborative teams in school-to-work transitions. This section of the guide unpacks what this looks like in practice.



Keep your eye on the prize: Common agendas and partnership governance

Collaborations do better when there is a common understanding about what the collaboration is for. This seems a very simple concept, however sometimes collaborations fail because we do not take time to clearly set goals, articulate the purpose and list expectations of how the collaboration is going to work on a practical level. Goodwill and relationships are important, but they do not in themselves create collaborations.

To avoid 'meeting to meet' and move towards a model that achieves outcomes for young people, teams need to establish processes that are understood by all partners involved. Developing a non-binding agreement, such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), can help to clarify expectations between partners. A Terms of Reference document (TOR), is also an effective way to keep the group focussed and moving forward, establishing focus, purpose and process that can be referred back to. Structural documentation of the collaboration should include:

A mission statement to define the purpose of the collaboration.

- Ideally this would be created in collaboration with those in the group and it is important that all members understand and have a commitment to keeping the mission statement central to their involvement.
- It should be short and broad enough to relate to a range of services, and not so prescriptive that ideas or flexibility is limited. It is the overarching purpose.
- Be willing to refer and measure against the mission statement to evaluate and refocus as a group. If the mission statement is no longer your core business, does the group need to rethink the purpose of the collaboration?
- An example of a Ticket to Work mission statement, "To increase opportunities for young people with disability to participate in activities that will increase their capacity to have successful transitions from school into meaningful employment and training."

Establish 'rules' of the collaboration, how it operates. This will shift over time, so it's important to build in some review processes (see section 4)

- Create a set of desired outcomes and activities that align with the mission statement. For example, 'increase number of students undertaking ASbATs, increase school awareness of employers in the region.' Keep these realistic and achievable within a time frame, developed and understood by the group, and documented. It will be important to revisit these when identifying potential focus areas, service gaps in the collaboration and on-boarding new partners.
- Decide how to meet. All successful collaborations include meetings, and this is important for relationship building, communication and knowing your partners. Your group should decide how often to meet, where meetings will take place and for how long. Take into consideration the various time commitments of members and other logistical issues. Should

you meet online or always face to face? Should the meeting be at an agreed place every time or rotate? Are members required to attend every meeting? While there are numerous ways a group can manage practical issues, it is important an agreement is documented and that members commit to the agreement collectively.

- Agree on structure and responsibility. Successful collaborations outline the roles within the group and the overall structure. The role of ‘intermediary’ is key to success, with responsibility to help to facilitate meetings, send out meeting agendas and minutes, collect reporting information and keep the group connected. This doesn’t have to be a huge commitment, but it is an important role, essentially being the ‘glue’ or ‘backbone’ for the group by helping to coordinate how collaboration is taking place. Ideally this is someone from a not-for-profit organisation or other neutral agency that can encourage broad, cross-sectoral thinking.
- Develop a set of group principles. Think about if you need to create an agreed set of principles for how members interact and how agencies use information gained from the collaboration. Do you need to consider any boundaries for referrals and privacy, what permissions might the group need to work with students and families? What processes will be in place to manage conflict or breach of the MoU?
- Ask members to individually sign a document expressing their commitment to the collaboration, their understanding of the purpose and their obligations towards the success of the group.

“At the regular meetings, I see first-hand the communication that is happening, and I am almost positive that if we did not have the meetings no one would be aware of what other organisations are doing.”

Ticket to Work network partner

Tools:

1. Example Memorandum of Understanding Ticket to Work [MOU](#) [[MOU accessible](#)]
2. Example Ticket to Work Partner Meeting agenda [Stakeholder meeting agenda](#) [[Stakeholder meeting agenda accessible](#)]



Have a game-plan: Meaningful collaboration between stakeholders

Effective collaboration happens when the partners involved each have something to gain from being part of the collaborative group. When people are unclear of their motivation and reason for involvement, or feel uncertain if their skills and knowledge are useful, they are less likely to be effective. Without finding relevance in the group in a way that is meaningful for them, the collaboration is likely to be short-lived.

Meaningful collaboration recognizes where services and agencies have a vested interest in learning from each other and where partners see value in interconnecting. Ticket to Work collaborations, while designed to improve employment and transition options for young people, are stronger when they mutually benefit all the partners involved. Strong collaborations are strategic, responsive and flexible, enabling all partners to contribute meaningfully. Rather than being unplanned and ad hoc, effective collaborations follow a game plan; each member has a role to play and a reason for being part of the team.

Meaningful collaboration is achieved when:

- Partners have ownership in the collaborative process and come with recognised set of skills or expertise that the group values and requires for a purpose. Consider running a skills audit or doing some resource mapping to see where knowledge areas overlap, where there are existing gaps in service delivery in your local area, and where interconnections can

potentially lead to creative linkages between members.

- Reasons and motivations for joining the group are explored and recognised; what would partners like to gain? Examples might be: to expand professional knowledge and practice, connect with like-minded services, create better school relationships, or connect more with community. Once determined, decide if individual motivations are likely to improve the partnership or limit/steer away from the agreed goals and mission of the group. If motivations appear to be narrowly focused or unlikely to align with the outcomes of the group, meaningful collaboration will be lessened.
- Engaging or recruiting members is strategic. Try to recruit partners that best address a gap or need identified in the group; how does this improve outcomes and what insights can the partnership offer? Be clear on why their contribution is unique; take time to invest in new members and support them to understand how their contribution is important and how it fits in with the overall purpose.
- Collaboration represents ‘value’ for time spent not just for the individual, but more broadly for their organisation’s management, especially if this is an extension falling outside of their usual service delivery. Collaborative partnerships can fail if they don’t have ‘buy-in’ from management or work colleagues. Without backing and understanding from leadership, individual members may not have the professional capacity to achieve meaningful collaboration. Helping collaborative partners gain support from their management will mean they are more motivated to contribute actively to the group

“There was great support from the Ticket to Work network; I always felt supported, and could call someone if I had any questions.”

Ticket to Work employer partner

Tools:

3. [Partner Incentive Tool](#) [[Partner Incentive Tool Accessible](#)]

Moving forward: Shared knowledge, skills and resources

One of the main reasons to collaborate is to improve efficiency and reduce duplication of services for young people. This helps people to access a range of expertise and skills working in 'concert' rather than hopping from one service to another, which quickly leads to frustration. To 'do' collaboration well, partners need to be willing to share their skills and delegate which partner/s can best work together to achieve a goal. Do they have resources they can share, or a particular skill set that would suit an activity, or expertise in working with schools or with employers? Do they already have pre-existing relationships that would benefit the partnership and move the collaboration forward?

It is important that network partners are open to ideas and blending their knowledge and resources with others. This can be done formally or informally, depending on the type of resource being shared. Pooling resources, whether knowledge, time, skills or funding, in a flexible, coordinated and sustainable way, can be an important strategy to maximize the partnership results. Sometimes known as 'Blending and Braiding', sharing what the group can bring together collectively is often more effective than trying to do it alone. However, it relies on people understanding their commitment and role within the group and what they each bring to the table.

The intermediary is key to effectively managing the collaborative process, without this role successful collaboration is difficult to achieve. The intermediary role includes:

- Assisting guiding vision and strategy and supporting the development of governance
- Aligning activities, facilitating dialogue between partners and generally helping to coordinate the actions across the effort
- Establishing shared measurement practices between partners and collating the data and use of data for learning and evaluation of the effort
- Managing the secretariat role of the networks and representing the network to broader stakeholders.

Apart from the intermediary, effective collaborations aim for a diverse range of partners that each contribute something useful to the whole. Possible contribution and knowledge/skills to share are outlined in the table below:

Table 1. Example of Partnerships and Roles in effective school transition

Partner	Role	Skills / Knowledge
Schools (careers staff, support staff, teachers, principals)	<p>Refer students to activities supported by the collaboration</p> <p>Connect activities to best support educational and career goals of students</p> <p>Connect work activities to school based curriculum</p> <p>Keep the group connected to student and families</p> <p>Communicate with school-based teams and increase staff capacity</p>	<p>Individual students and families</p> <p>School based learning and curriculum</p> <p>Skills in managing learning and individual learning plans</p> <p>Access to professional careers and vocational networks</p> <p>Have existing relationships with school community</p> <p>Knowledge of different layers of support within education system</p> <p>Knowledge of school planning, trends, opportunities in professional development to benefit group</p>
Employment Consultants	<p>Support or participate in activities to increase work preparation, including sourcing potential employers and work experience</p> <p>Potential to work with individual students and develop an employment plan, and authorize any supports that are available</p> <p>Work with employers and raise awareness of the goals of the group with employers</p> <p>Develop business and employer connections</p>	<p>Knowledge of work environments and local employers</p> <p>Skills in employment preparation</p> <p>Knowledge of schools and school process, can work with students while still at school</p> <p>Skills in engaging employers and help develop individual employment opportunities</p> <p>Have existing relationships with employers in the local area</p>

<p>Disability Support Services, e.g. Local Area Coordinators NDIS, Local Government Disability officers, NDIS Support coordinator</p>	<p>Connect student and families with potential support services</p> <p>Advise school partners of available supports, options and services in the local area</p> <p>Suggest ideas on how to maximise existing programs and funding through NDIS, for example, to enhance employment preparations while at school</p>	<p>Skills in disability services and knowledge of programs</p> <p>Existing relationships with service providers</p> <p>Ability to individualise programs and supports for students and advise partners</p> <p>Knowledge of NDIS funding for employment outcomes</p>
<p>Employers</p>	<p>Build opportunities for work experience, after school jobs, vocational placements</p> <p>Participate in work preparation activities, provide employer perspective</p> <p>Encourage connections with other employers in the local area</p> <p>Participate in employment training, disability awareness and customised employment approaches</p>	<p>Insight in employer perspectives and business related issues</p> <p>Community and employer contacts, can advocate for further opportunities</p> <p>Industry trends, recruitment and workplace issues</p>
<p>Post-School Education TAFE/University/ RTO</p>	<p>Link students with post-school training options and supports</p> <p>Participate and help set up information sessions, jobs fairs, taster days</p> <p>Support preparation activities, such as resume writing workshops, mock interviews</p>	<p>Knowledge of post school training options, certificate level training and supports to study</p> <p>Developed networks of trainers and employers</p> <p>Able to support school base apprenticeship and traineeship and vocational education in school</p> <p>Knowledge of taster days and pre-apprenticeship options</p> <p>Industry and employer trends</p>

<p>Apprenticeship providers</p> <p>Australian Apprenticeship Support Network representative (AASN)</p>	<p>Advise on school-based apprenticeships and can assist in setting up apprenticeship and traineeship</p> <p>Canvas pre-apprenticeship opportunities, potential to introduce students to employers or group training opportunities</p>	<p>Skills in engaging employers for apprenticeship pathways</p> <p>Knowledge of local industry and opportunities</p> <p>Knowledge of apprenticeship system and supports available for young people</p>
<p>Community / other</p> <p>Support organisations such as NDS Ticket to Work</p>	<p>Link students with advocacy or other programs in the community space, such as disability advocacy organisations, Learn Local and Neighbourhood Houses, volunteer organisations, Local Government programs or other place-based community services.</p> <p>Broaden support and champion for further opportunities at a local level</p>	<p>Skills in linking groups together, informal networks</p> <p>Local area knowledge and broader community connections</p>

“I’m really happy with the Ticket to Work process and how it’s handled. The way the school has worked with the employment services and I haven’t been left out of it – a real partnership approach. My daughter wasn’t just popped into any old work – there was the lead up, the work trial, the learning process throughout and the paperwork.”

Ticket to Work, parent partner

Tools:

4. Ticket to Work skills sharing tool: [Possible opportunities for your organisation](#)
[Possible opportunities for your organization accessible]
5. Ticket to Work stories: https://tackettowork.org.au/stories/?category=after_school

How to stay connected: Clear communication mechanisms and review

When establishing your collaboration, communication mechanisms might be about how frequently you meet, for how long and by what means. It might be about making sure you have contact information for all partners and deciding if people are comfortable to share their details, how much communication they want and the nature of that communication.

Remember, communication can take many forms and vary in frequency:

- Face to face meetings at a chosen location
- Virtual meetings/video conferencing/online forums, e.g. google groups
- Phone meetings
- Emails
- Social networking

Effective communication with partners underpins important structural decisions. This includes documenting decisions early in the process so that everyone in the partnership is clear about how the collaboration operates.

However, to achieve a flexible and forward thinking network, communication is also about relationship building, trust and being able to review the value of the network and evaluate outcomes.

Communication mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that collaborations can be renewed through a cycle of reflection and adjustment. Trusted and continued communication within the network helps to build good relationships, allowing ideas to flow. Without the right balance of communication and built in reflection time, there is a risk the collaboration can be too restrictive, inflexible or resistant to change. Even worse, without trusted and respectful communication, partners may not feel safe to say how they really feel about something they see is not working or needing improvement. This can quickly lead to disinterest and lack of commitment.

We have found Ticket to Work networks are more sustainable and active when they incorporate the following communication guidelines into their structure.

Build in scheduled time for reflection and review.

Review should always come back to the central mission of the group, i.e. to deliver better school to work transitions for young people and families. Better networks will factor in time to review their processes and be able to communicate in a trusted manner with partners on how to improve or adapt policies and priorities. This should include:

- Review session face to face, consultation with stakeholders and an honest look at the role of each partner and if roles are sustainable.

- Checking in with partners and stakeholders to review effectiveness, even if this means changes are flagged.
- Acceptance that change is inevitable and that something positive can be gained from change.
- Clear communication around the current needs and priorities of the group is essential if the group is to remain relevant, purposeful and inclusive of all partners.

Communicate with outside stakeholders and community.

While internal communication within the group is important, communication more broadly is also something to be considered. Generally speaking, the more interest and connection with community about the mission and activity of the group, the more support and validation for the work being done in the collaboration. The networks that achieve successful outcomes demonstrate they use a variety of communication techniques to achieve this and factor it into their strategic planning. We have found that:

- Communicating and sharing success stories can be highly motivating and help gain further support and interest from potential new partners.
- Strong collaborative teams understand the need to collectively celebrate successes to the broader community. This could be using shared communication resources, such as social media, development of materials for schools, employers and parents, keeping a list of collective results, following up on students with published case studies, facilitating mentor or training sessions, or just being available for a coffee and chat with interested people.

Have a communication plan for succession.

Sustainable networks are able to adapt to inevitable changes in roles and responsibilities by building in mechanisms for good communication. With cross-agency collaborations between employers, employment consultants, education and disability services, it is a certainty there will be changes to the roles and availability of partners over time. You will need effective ways to communicate with potential new partners to ensure any gaps in the partnership can be filled when someone leaves or if the purpose of the group changes. Think about whether your group needs some further communication tools to help identify and support new members. Ideas could include:

- Developing a network brochure or other marketing collateral
- Finding ways to invite interested partners to an introductory meeting
- Designing a 'history' map of the project so new members can easily understand its development over time
- Running a community engagement session, or have developing ways to meet and greet with potential new employer contacts.

Whichever way you choose to communicate with potential new partners, remember to evaluate your approach as a critical part of your planning and review process, using the shared resources and skills of the group.

Develop and communicate an identity unique to the group.

Your group might like to consider how developing a name for the group that represents the purpose broadly. Some networks like to steer away from representing one particular partner in the collaboration, even if that partner is acting as the intermediary for the group. There might be an acronym or region name that is more inclusive of the range of partners involved. Strong networks are those that are not 'owned' by any one partner, but have a partnership brand that can be listed in a reciprocal arrangement common to all. Many Ticket to Work collaborations will have their own identity or brand alongside NDS Ticket to Work to help identify their purpose and location.

“Providing young people with disability to gain access to employment needs to be our social contract, and we need the wider community to understand that they can play a key role in supporting youth with disabilities.”

Ticket to Work community partner

Tools:

6. Ticket to Work information Example booklet for stakeholders: [Ticket to Work About Us Booklet](#) [[Ticket to Work About Us Booklet accessible](#)]



A Final Word...

“Partnerships in action are when people who belong to the network are working towards a common/the same goal and willing to assist other organisations to achieve this goal, whether it be through expertise, resources, ideas etc.”

Ticket to Work network partner

Essentially the ability to share is fundamental to collaboration, whether it be resources, ideas, expertise, time or enthusiasm. Openness and honesty are integral elements to ensure the collaboration succeeds, with evaluation of goals, activities and outcomes reviewed and actively sought.

The Ticket to Work model uses an intermediary to help steer the collaboration, and this has been adopted by many networks across the country. However your collaboration might use a different model, and function in a way that best suits your partnerships and goals; no two networks will be exactly the same. Whichever model you adopt, we hope that this guide has helped to highlight the main features of good practice in collaboration. It isn't always easy to share, and it can be challenging at first, but the results are much stronger when we do things together.

If you would like some further information to build your own network, we're here to help. You can find lots of resources and information on our Ticket to Work website, tickettowork.org.au or contact us at info@tickettowork.org.au.

Happy collaborating!

Glossary and Acronyms

AASN — Australian Apprenticeship Support Network provider.

See <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/search-aasn>

Backbone organization — Collective Impact term for an organisation that can dedicate staff and resources to guide vision and strategy, support aligned activities, and establish shared measurement practice.

Blending and Braiding — mechanism to utilise shared funding or resources, whether bringing funding together for the purpose of the collaboration or braiding existing funding or resources from multiple partners.

Collaboration — process by which two or more people or organizations work together to achieve a common goal.

Collective Impact — A collaborative framework that builds on collaborative relationships to bring people and organisations together in a structured way, to achieve social change. Collective Impact has five main conditions: Common agenda and shared vision; shared measurement and means to track progress; mutually reinforcing activities through coordinated plan of action; continuous communication to build trust, objectives and motivation; and a backbone organisation with skills and resources to coordinate the group. See <https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact>

Customised Employment — flexible process designed to personalise the employment relationship between the job seeker and employer in a way that meets the needs of both. Customised Employment involves a process of discovery to gather information on the job seeker's skills, interests and preferences; individualised employment planning; job development and negotiation; and post-placement support. See <https://tickettowork.org.au/customised-employment/>

Interagency collaboration — a process in which services establish partnerships with multiple agencies to achieve a common goal. For school to work transitions, interagency collaboration can avoid unnecessary duplication, create targeted and coordinated employment interventions, build communication and trust between providers and raise community awareness of a concerted approach.

Intermediary — the person or group of people from the backbone organisation that will coordinate and support effective collaboration between partners.

Local Area Coordinator with National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), a role to assist people to navigate the NDIS. Local Area Coordination is delivered by NDIA 'Partners' in the community. Partners are organisations with strong community connections, local knowledge and expertise.

Marketing Collateral — any materials used to help promote or inform about your collaborative network, such as brochures, social media posts, information booklets, etc.

MoU — Memorandum of Understanding. A document that defines the responsibilities of each party in an agreement, provides the scope and authority of the agreement, clarifies terms and outlines compliance issues.

NDIS — National Disability Insurance Scheme. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the new way of providing support to Australians with disability, their families and carers.

NDS Ticket to Work — National Disability Services Ticket to Work, a nationally based initiative that seeks to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for young people with disability. The initiative grew out of research that showed participation in work and career experience during secondary school are key indicators of post-school success for young people with disability.

Network partner — a stakeholder or agency with commitment to the values and shared vision of the network. Schools, employment services, employers, parents, advocacy groups, careers practitioners, disability support services could be examples of network partners.

Outcome — Measurable, shared and documented progress towards a goal.

RTO — Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) are providers and assessors of nationally recognised training that have been registered by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA). Only RTOs can issue nationally recognised qualifications.

School to Work Transition — process of transitioning from senior secondary school into work and post-school employment pathways. Transition activities could include career guidance, industry immersions, on the job work experience, part time or after school work, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, micro business development and vocational training.

Stakeholders — People, groups, organisations or businesses that have interest or concern in the work of the network. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the actions, objectives and policies of the collaborative network. In Ticket to Work network, this could include students, families, schools, education providers, employers, disability employment services, and other community or government agencies with interest in school to work transitions for young people with a disability.

Student Centred learning — where learning experiences, instructional approaches, and support strategies are intended to address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of an individual student.

Support Coordination — An NDIS service to coordinate the implementation of funded supports for those with NDIS plans and help to link community, mainstream and other government services. A Support Coordinator will focus on supporting individual participants to build skills and connections with providers best suited to their needs.

TAFE — Technical and Further Education. TAFE institutes are government funded Registered Training Organisations (RTO) that offer Vocational Education and Training relating to a specific industry or occupation.

Vision Statement — a short description of overarching purpose of the collaborative effort and what it aims to achieve. A vision statement tells readers who the effort will benefit (e.g. young people with disability), what will be different for those individuals if the effort is successful (e.g. improved employment opportunities), and where the effort occurs (e.g. Outer East Melbourne).

Work Experience — short-term placement of secondary school students with employers to provide insights into the industry and the workplace in which they are located. It provides students with the valuable opportunity to develop employability skills, explore possible career options, understand employer expectations and increase their self-understanding, maturity, independence and self-confidence.

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