

Appendix 1 – Alliance Contract Summary

Alliance contract definition

An alliance contract is a collaborative legal agreement between different organisations (commonly a commissioner and more than one service provider) who come together to achieve shared objectives and outcomes. It includes mutual risk and reward sharing, joint governance and a commitment to work closely together. The focus is on getting providers to work together, alongside the commissioner, rather than competing.

History of Reach Out Camden

Established in April 2022, the Reach Out Camden Alliance evolved from the Mental Health Resilience Network (MHRN). It delivers preventative and early intervention support for residents experiencing poor mental health, isolation, and wider social and economic challenges.

The alliance model marked a significant shift in service delivery in Camden, bringing commissioners and providers together under a single contractual framework with shared accountability for outcomes, risks, and resources. This has reduced fragmentation, improved coordination, and enabled more timely, joined-up decision-making.

The model is underpinned by transparency, including open-book accounting, and a values-led, no-blame culture that supports continuous learning. Partners jointly plan and deliver services, resulting in more integrated, responsive and holistic support, and better use of collective resources.

Governance Structure

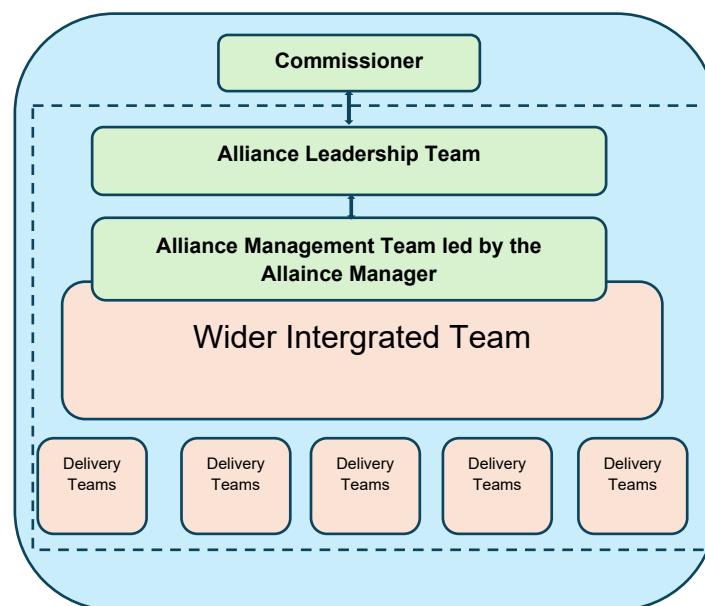
The alliance operates as a 'virtual organisation', with governance arrangements comparable to an organisation of similar scale and complexity. The core structure includes:

- **The commissioner (funder)** – sets overarching outcomes and principles and participates as an equal partner in the alliance.
- **Alliance Leadership Team (ALT)** – strategic oversight
 - Includes an independent chair, lived experience advisors, and senior representatives from each partner organisation
 - Members have equal voting rights and authority on behalf of their organisations
 - Responsible for setting direction, overseeing delivery, and holding collective accountability for outcomes and resources
 - May include non-voting advisors to support delivery of alliance objectives

- **Alliance Management Team (AMT)** – operational delivery
 - Oversees day-to-day service delivery
 - Accountable to the ALT.
- **Direct service teams** are responsible for delivering the services as set out by ALT and AMT.
- **Alliance Manager**
 - Appointed by ALT to lead the AMT
 - Provides executive leadership across the alliance
 - Responsible for delivery, coordination, and culture, and accountable to ALT

In Reach Out Camden, the model has embedded co-production and participatory approaches in strategic decision-making across ALT and AMT. This includes facilitation and support for Lived Experience Advisors (LExAs), who sit as equal voting members on ALT and are involved in AMT and working groups. This ensures living experience is central to decisions about the Alliance and its services.

Figure 1: generic alliance governance structure



Benefits of an alliance contract

- Improved integration – partners deliver coordinated, person-centred support, reducing fragmentation and improving user experience
- Stronger partnerships and reach – collaboration with VCS and community organisations enhances engagement and brings local insight
- Focus on shared outcomes – a collective framework supports early intervention and helps reduce escalation to acute services

- Greater flexibility – enables providers to adapt provision in response to emerging needs and encourages innovation

Potential drawbacks

- Complex governance – requires strong arrangements, trust, and coordination to support timely decision-making and clear accountability
- Resource-intensive – ongoing investment is needed to sustain partnerships, coordination, and performance management