



Collaboration Works: the Community Partnership Network

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Foreword by Gareth Parry



Our employability services are about more than helping people into work. We are passionate about the role we can play in building stronger communities by delivering truly integrated services that make a lasting difference to people and places. By spreading opportunity and reducing inequality we are contributing to the levelling up of the UK.

Our Community Partnership Network (CPN) is at the heart of our approach to employability. The premise is a straightforward one. Bring together the best of public, private and voluntary sector provision and collaborate to deliver results that transform lives. Straightforward in theory, but requiring a real team effort to realise in practice.

For us, social value is not a box-ticking exercise to show that we are doing the right thing. It is part of a lived experience of our service delivery. The CPN nurtures and channels social value through harnessing a diverse supplier base all focused upon a common goal: giving people the tools they need to live productive and happy working lives.

Our experience tells us that the CPN works because it is built upon the principle of collaboration and collective gain. It is a key component in our track record of high performance across our employability contracts. Whilst Maximus delivers

employability programmes throughout the UK as a prime contractor, it would be unrealistic to suggest that we alone possess all the answers for everyone we interact with. Our service users have different stories, different needs, different skillsets. Offering a one-size-fits-all solution would not reflect this diversity of challenge, and it would not deliver the kind of sustainable employment outcomes that we strive towards. This is where the CPN really comes into its own, as it allows us to work with a broad range of organisations and match what they are good at with what our service users require. Importantly, the CPN is rooted in the communities we serve so that we can really drill down to the local level and find solutions that are close to home and that strengthen local labour markets.

When we designed the CPN, we sought to realise a number of principles that would help drive improved employability outcomes, such as strengthening networking opportunities with other providers and commissioners; creating co-location of services wherever possible; and simplifying the employment journey for our service users. We have put those design principles to the test by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the CPN. I'm really pleased to say that what we have found is incredibly positive and thanks to the feedback of our CPN partners, colleagues and service users

we can take forward some clear learnings to make the CPN even more effective in the months ahead.

Inside, we report back on a survey we carried out with our CPN member organisations to really test our assumptions about what the CPN is and what it delivers. The headlines are really encouraging. Our CPN members strongly believe that being part of the network has a positive impact on the work of their own organisations and that, most pleasingly, they really value their membership of the CPN.

We also get good insight into the steps forward we can take to develop best practice in local partnership working. For instance, it's clear that whilst the impact of the pandemic in driving more employability provision online has created positive change, such as

many disabled service users being able to enjoy a wider degree of choice, there is also still a demand for high quality face-to-face delivery of services, so there is a heightened expectation for the best of both worlds – more hybrid solutions are the answer.

Over 350 partner organisations are already part of our CPN. We are currently adding to that number at a rate of 20 a month so that by 2023 we should be looking at over 400 quality, locally based providers, working with us to deliver targeted and outcome-driven employability solutions. I am proud of our CPN and I want even more service users to benefit from the change that it is delivering. It is central to realising our objective of being the leading provider of employment services in the UK. These are exciting times for Maximus and all our CPN partners.



Programme Director, Employability Division
Gareth Parry

“

... by 2023 we should be looking at over 400 quality, locally based providers, working with us to deliver targeted and outcome-driven employability solutions.

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The Community Partnership Network



Created and facilitated by Maximus to support people on our employment programmes, the CPN represents a long-term partnership between organisations in the public, private and third sectors, with a shared belief that supporting more people into quality work helps individuals and communities to thrive.

Operating at a regional level, the CPN reflects local need and provision, bringing together a wide range of organisations to integrate and align the various services they provide for people accessing support from Maximus.

Through referrals to CPN members, we are able to complement our own expertise in employment, skills and employer engagement, with tailored and appropriate support to help people move forward, access support to address barriers, achieve their goals, and ultimately enable them to progress into sustainable employment.

The intention is that all CPN members should benefit from more effective collaborative working and collectively make the communities we all serve stronger.

Through the CPN, Maximus is committed to meeting the needs of local communities, working together to respond to the challenges of the pandemic, long-term unemployment, and physical and mental well-being. The CPN provides members with a forum to collaborate and share information, resources, skills and knowledge. It also helps organisations access funding for their services, and promotes co-referral and co-location wherever possible.

Our CPN has been independently assessed as a 'significant strength' which 'incorporates a wide range of local providers that have mutually agreed joint-working principles' (DWP Merlin Standard).

“

*Being a member of the Community Partnership Network has **enabled us to work with a variety of partners.** It's a great way to **build strong partnerships** which, in turn, result in a **stronger output of services.***

”

Anita Boyle, CEO, LAMH

CPN: Key Principles

» Network

Engage with hundreds of likeminded organisations across a range of sectors to promote services, cross-refer, and develop new partnerships

» Funding for services

We are committed to investment in our CPN around the country where there are gaps in funded provision through spot purchasing and the commissioning of new initiatives

» Co-locate services

Community integration is at the heart of the CPN. Partner organisations can use our local Hubs, and we work out of partner sites wherever possible to improve the experience for service users of our programmes

» Increase referrals to funded provision

Reducing duplication and streamlining referrals to funded provision wherever possible to improve access to support for service users

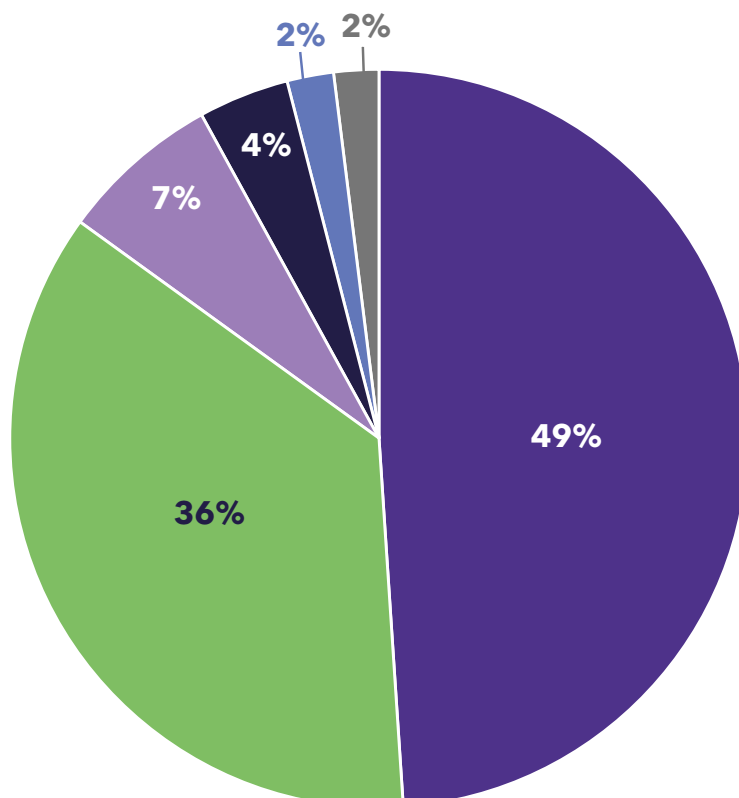
» Build capacity and share best practice

Maximus works with smaller organisations to develop capacity, and across our CPN we host forums to share good practice and raise awareness of effective interventions

» Independent oversight

An elected Board for the regional CPN, with a senior external Chair, to monitor spend and referrals, and encourage innovation in delivery through new projects

Organisations in the CPN



The CPN and Social Value

The concept of social value has been recognised and contested by policy-makers and academics for several decades, with a wide range of definitions, frameworks and calculations for its measurement.



From the perspective of providing public services, social value can be broadly understood as the additional benefits generated by organisations with the aim of promoting community development and strengthening social inclusion.

Following the Public Services (Social Value) Act in 2012, public bodies in England and Wales were obliged to consider social value in their commissioning of contracts. Since the start of 2021, Central Government has been required to go further, with the explicit evaluation of social value in appropriate procurements (with a minimum

10% weighting), and an expectation that departments will report on the social impact of major contracts.

With the suitability, even validity, of some of the most popular methods to calculate a monetary social value - such as Social Return on Investment (SROI) - becoming increasingly questioned, government has moved away from this form of metric and developed a New Social Value Model. This defines social value as 'the positive legacy created through the performance of a contract' and highlights 3 areas of focus, social, environmental and economic:



» Social

(e.g. activities that promote a united community)



» Environmental

(e.g. efforts to assist the community in reducing waste or pollution)



» Economic

(e.g. training, employment or apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged groups).

The expressed aim of the model is to ensure a consistent approach to applying social value in procurement activity. It stresses that evaluation of social value should be qualitative, so all potential suppliers, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), Voluntary Community Social Enterprises (VCSEs), and those new to government business, can successfully bid by describing what they will deliver and how they will deliver it. It further articulates the areas of priority focus for social value delivery in central government procurement, in the form of policy themes and outcomes (see table).

The Scottish Government has also rejected the use of metrics such as SROI, and in a similar vein to the new model, states that social impact will be considered on a 'case-by-case basis', with the focus on bodies illustrating how they will deliver social impact based on alignment with Scotland's National Outcomes.

Improving communities and creating more inclusive societies is already an inherent part of our core mission of transforming lives, and we continue to demonstrate additional social value through the Maximus Foundation and other commitments such as paying the Real Living Wage, offering apprenticeships and being an inclusive employer. A testament to our success so far came this year when we were shortlisted for the 'Best Private Sector Project' at the 2022 Social Value Awards.

Demonstrating social value is at the heart of the design of the CPN, and our ambitions for its future. As set out in the following table, it is already helping us in achieving many of the delivery objectives specified in the New Social Value Model.



New Social Value Model: Themes and Outcomes

Theme	Policy Outcome	Delivery objectives	The CPN is helping to deliver this by...
Covid-19 recovery	Help local communities to manage and recover from the impact of Covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create employment, re-training and other return to work opportunities for those left unemployed by Covid-19. • Support people and communities to manage and recover from the impacts of Covid-19. • Support organisations and businesses to manage and recover from the impacts of Covid-19. • Support the physical and mental health of people affected by Covid-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting our own work through the Restart Scheme and other employability programmes to secure sustained employment for those out of work due to Covid-19. • Providing specialist training to unlock employment opportunities in new areas. • Strengthening localities with support for organisations embedded in communities. • Supporting the physical and mental health of people through specialist interventions delivered by partners.
Tackling economic inequality	Create new businesses, new jobs and new skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for entrepreneurship and help new, small organisations to grow, supporting economic growth and business creation. • Create employment opportunities particularly for those who face barriers to employment and/or who are located in deprived areas. • Create employment and training opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting a range of organisations including SMEs and VCSEs to strengthen and grow. • Enhancing our work to support people with barriers into sustained employment. • Providing greater employment opportunities, and a range of general and sector-specific training.
	Increase supply chain resilience and capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a diverse supply chain to deliver the contract including new businesses and entrepreneurs, start-ups, SMEs, VCSEs and mutuals. • Demonstrate collaboration throughout the supply chain, and a fair and responsible approach to working with supply chain partners in delivery of the contract. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a membership with a hugely diverse range of organisations. • Strengthening all partners to increase resilience and capacity. • Promoting genuine collaboration through a structured approach based on partnership working.
Equal opportunity	Reduce the disability employment gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support disabled people in developing new skills relevant to the contract, including through training schemes that result in recognised qualifications. • Influence staff, suppliers, customers and communities through the delivery of the contract to support disabled people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting organisations with diverse workforces, including disabled people. • Sharing our expertise on the employment of disabled people, including providing access to Disability Confidence Training and Mental Health First Aid courses.
Wellbeing	Improve community integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate collaboration with users and communities in the co-design and delivery of the contract to support strong integrated communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating collaboration among organisations embedded within local communities.

“

*This partnership allows us to signpost to an **established service** who are passionate about **challenging some of the stigmas surrounding men's mental health** and sharing the same aims as us.*

”

Alex McClintock, Project Development Champion
at Andy's Man Club

The Theory: Benefits of the CPN

Whilst it is encouraging to see alignment with the objectives of the New Social Value Model, our commitment to generating social value is not limited to this. Consideration of some of the key research undertaken during the last 20 years on how best to generate social value offers some useful insights on the benefits of an approach such as the CPN. These include:



Driving real change

Research suggests that not all attempts to deliver social value are successful, and that genuine social value is best generated effectively and sustainably when it translates into large-scale impact and social change. In particular, this is associated with transforming the lives and prospects of marginalised and disadvantaged communities, such as providing employment and skills for disabled people, and improving well-being. This is a fundamental aspect of the work we do, and a core tenant of the CPN. The impact we make through our work in employment, skills and health, is enhanced by working with our partners to provide services which specifically target disadvantaged individuals and communities (such as disabled people, care-leavers, and ex-offenders) and directly address areas of well-being (such as mental health support) to deliver transformative individual and social change.

Supporting the strength of CPN members

It is well recognised that VCSEs can claim some unique strengths in generating social value. Doing so represents their fundamental mission, to which they can devote their full attention, and they can often deploy specific expertise to effectively address the needs of

particular individuals and communities. Such organisations are also adept at involving their local communities to mobilise resources and develop innovative approaches to deliver services which can have a profound impact on everyone involved. VCSEs represent a significant proportion of our partner organisations, and we are proud to support the vital contribution they make through the CPN.

The Best of Both Worlds: Local Collaboration - National Coordination

There are numerous benefits associated with delivering services through organisations routed in localities. These include the ability to harness local knowledge; to respond quickly to the needs of service users; and to promote community engagement, interaction, and social cohesion. Such benefits can best be realised with well-coordinated collaboration. The CPN offers a mechanism to enable this - serving to establish and strengthen lines of communication, foster collaboration, and provide coordination through a leading national service provider in Maximus. We believe our partnership work through the CPN represents the best of both worlds, supporting organisations embedded in local communities to deliver real social value and impact.

The Practice: Findings from our CPN Survey

As part of our drive to continuously improve the services we offer, we conducted an evaluation of the CPN. This included an anonymous survey of our CPN partners; surveys and discussions with colleagues across our business; and feedback sessions with service users themselves.



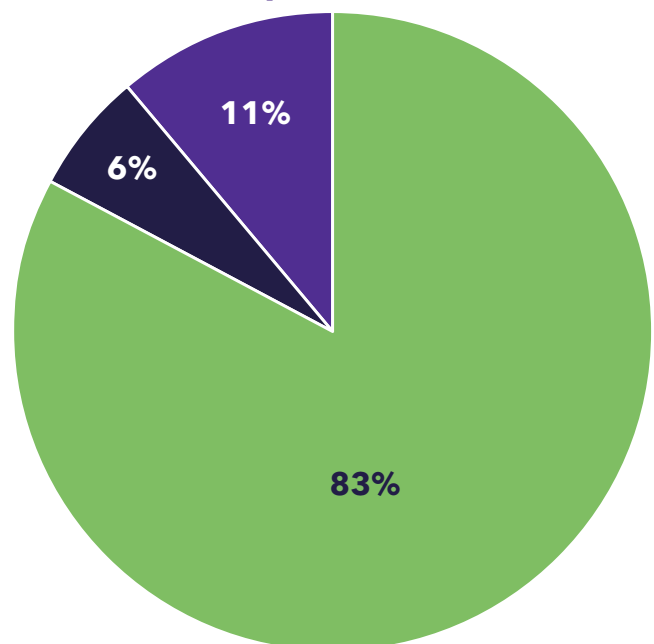
Benefits of the CPN for our Partners

We carried out a survey of our CPN partners across 3 of our Employability Programmes and corresponding regions: ¹

- Fair Start Scotland (Tayside, Lanarkshire)
- Restart (West and South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire)
- Work and Health Programme (Wales)

Partners were asked about the impact of membership of the CPN and their experiences so far.

We value our CPN Membership

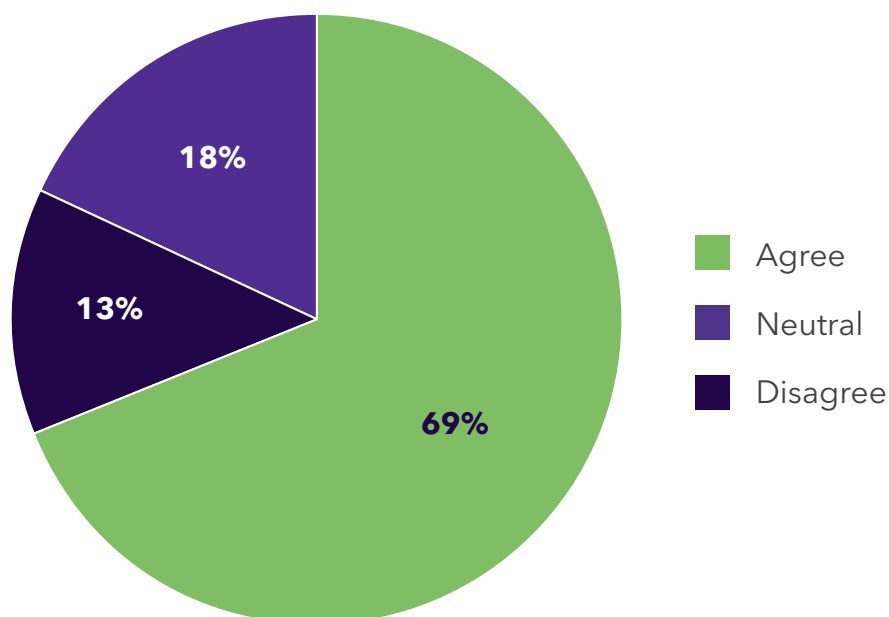


- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Is it extremely pleasing to see that the vast majority (83%) agreed that they value their membership of the CPN, with almost half (46%) strongly agreeing.

¹ Survey of 56 CPN members

Membership of the CPN has had a positive impact on our organisation



Similarly, a significant majority of respondents (69%) were in overall agreement that their membership of the CPN had had a positive impact on their organisation, and almost a quarter (24%) strongly agreed.

In the responses to both questions, the very small number of negative or neutral comments were mainly from respondents where the CPN was less mature. This reflects that in some areas our employability

programmes only started delivery in 2021, and the CPN here is still being developed. It is encouraging that from additional comments provided by these partners they are eager to engage with the CPN in the early stages of their membership. The evidence from this survey suggests that as the CPN becomes fully embedded and aligned to local provision the positive impact is more strongly felt.

What our partners say the CPN delivers:

- » Networking opportunities with other providers and commissioners.
- » Collaboration and the sharing of knowledge, expertise, and resources among members.
- » Additional referral routes and signposting to services provided by other members.
- » Stronger, holistic support for our service users.



Comments from our partners about the CPN:

- » It is a fantastic way to network to be able to offer customers the best possible service that we can provide them. We have certainly seen an increase in solid outcomes as well as employment opportunities.
- » It is a valuable network... enabling us to provide a holistic service to those we support.
- » It gives us new platforms to offer our services and offerings to your service users. We are also proud to be supporting / supplementing your work.
- » It is an excellent way to share services and ideas.



These results are a reassuring endorsement of our CPN approach. They also complement the understanding that our colleagues involved in working with the CPN have shared through their day-to-day interactions with partners and service users. We know that networking and collaboration are a huge benefit, with the CPN providing a forum to connect diverse organisations, establish referral routes, and to share knowledge, expertise, and best practice. It also facilitates co-location and provides access to events, workshops, and webinars. All of which ultimately serves to provide local holistic support for our service users.

From one of our Employment Advisors:



We build lasting relationships with partners through a shared commitment to better service users' lives and support their needs.



Benefits of the CPN for Service Users

Our CPN partners are as committed as we are to tangibly improving the lives of the people we serve. We also know from service user feedback how much they can benefit from getting the right kind of support for their circumstances. The CPN helps us all to do just that by providing:

Specialist Support

Service users get the advantage of quick and easy referrals to specialist support and interventions. The range available means individual needs can be addressed with support from people with distinct expertise and thorough understanding of specific barriers.

Trusted Support

Service users can be confident that our CPN members are trusted, vetted and safe. Our advisers are able to provide information on what to expect and how the referral will work.

Training Support

The CPN can provide funded qualifications without cost to the service user. This includes sector-specific courses which can unlock new employment opportunities.

Comments from our Employment Advisors about the CPN:

- » It provides specific, specialist support in the local area.
- » It offers specialist partners that service users can access and benefit from immediate intervention and support.
- » Service users can work with an organisation dedicated to offering training in a certain sector and obtain qualifications.
- » It provides a vast amount of support services to enable and support service users to overcome barriers, increase wellbeing, and develop new meaningful skills.

Benefits of the CPN for Maximus

We also recognise that Maximus benefits greatly from the support of our CPN partners. Of chief importance is the additional specialist support and training for our service users, easily and quickly accessed by our colleagues, and delivered by trusted partners. In a survey of our Employment Advisors in Wales, 90% said that access to the CPN had a positive impact on our service users. We also benefit from the same networking opportunities and really value the sharing of information, expertise and resources. The success of the CPN similarly strengthens us, and helps us to deliver our core mission of transforming lives.



Some of our colleagues shared their thoughts on the CPN:



The CPN provides access to a number of partners who are best placed to help and support our service users with specific needs.



It provides a network of support.



It allows us as colleagues to share our resources.



It has been a great support to many of my service users and we have it all at our fingertips!



What makes an effective network?

Feedback from our partners and colleagues has highlighted some key elements which will ensure we continue to deliver an effective CPN:



A mix of remote, hybrid and face-to-face events: so that these remain inclusive, effective, and enjoyable.



Mutual understanding of likely referral volumes: to ensure there is clarity and that expectations are agreed.



Regular communication: to continue to foster and enhance the strong relationships we have built.



Sharing of information: to promote and understand the range of services all parties provide.



Local knowledge / national coordination: to combine the strengths of Maximus and our partner organisations.

Conclusions



1

Our partners value the CPN

Our survey results validate what we see everyday – that our partners really value what is offered through membership of the CPN. We will continue to build on the existing strengths and fully harness the fantastic work done through the network.

2

Our partners want more of what the CPN offers

The survey results also illustrate that most of our partners are already enjoying tangible benefits from their membership of the CPN. The constructive feedback shows that where this is not yet being realised, our partners are eager to see these benefits and we will work tirelessly to see our newer networks fully established as soon as possible.

3

We can continue to improve the CPN

Our evaluation has established several areas for us to continue to improve the way we work through the network.

4

The CPN delivers real social value

It is reassuring to see that our work through the CPN aligns to the delivery of government social value policy objectives. Beyond this, however, it is clear that the CPN supports and greatly enhances the quantity and quality of the social value that is generated through our collective work to support people into employment.

5

It helps everyone realise our collective mission

What comes across clearly from our evaluation is that the benefits of the CPN are felt by everyone involved. This includes the organisations which form its membership and the communities and individuals we all serve.

“

Candidates for our courses are identified and **help is offered to support them to complete their training.** By working in partnership, we are **giving individuals every opportunity** available to them which **results in multiple success.** This is how strong relationships are built.

”

John McGranachan, Operations Manager
for Blueprint Training Solution

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