

**Joint
Working
That
Works**

Insights from
an expert
round table
meeting on
effective
collaboration
in healthcare



INTRODUCTION

In a complex healthcare environment, collaboration between pharma and clinicians has the potential to bring tremendous benefits, especially for patients. The sharing of resources and skills leads not only to better outcomes, but also to shared learning and important strategic insights. Too often, however, joint working projects fail to deliver a real win-win. Having invested significant time and energy, sponsors and stakeholders are left feeling disappointed with the results.

In this paper, we analyse the barriers to effective collaboration and summarise our experts' recommendations on how to do joint working that works for everyone.

WHY JOINT WORKING?

Both pharma and healthcare professionals can see the potential for achieving things they couldn't do alone, by sharing resources, knowledge and skills, and jointly committing to a successful outcome. Working with their stakeholders on common ground enables pharma companies to help improve patient outcomes and experience, while meeting commercial aims; the results can be greater than the sum of their parts. And there are also significant benefits in terms of insights and experience that are gained. In an increasingly complex healthcare landscape, these strategic insights are invaluable, providing significant competitive advantage.

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION	
OUTCOMES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are areas of commonality, where it's more efficient to work together.• Sharing resources, knowledge and skills results in better value for all partners.• Collaborating partners achieve things they couldn't do alone, and can get results that are more than the sum of their parts.• Effective collaboration results in improving patient outcomes and experience, while also achieving commercial goals.
EXPERIENCE AND LEARNING	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diverse viewpoints help people discover things they wouldn't otherwise see, uncovering the real underlying challenges.• The collaboration process helps stakeholders and customers understand each other, enabling participants to "walk a mile in their shoes."• Joint working allows participants to learn together in real time.• It provides opportunity to show leadership and to pioneer innovation.• The experience can be intellectually stimulating and fun.



HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?

Dovetail brought together a group of experts from a broad range of clinical specialities and industry roles to examine the key elements of effective collaboration, analyse the problems that can arise, and explore ways of optimising joint working so that it delivers value for patients, the NHS and commercial companies.

OUR EXPERT PANEL

Janet Catt, Nurse Consultant, King's College Hospital NHS Trust

Fraser Cummings, Consultant Gastroenterologist, Southampton University Hospital NHS Trust

Faye Dack, Head of Value and Access, Sanofi

Bill Gillespie, CEO, Wessex Academic Health Science Network

Anthony Leung, GP, Hampshire

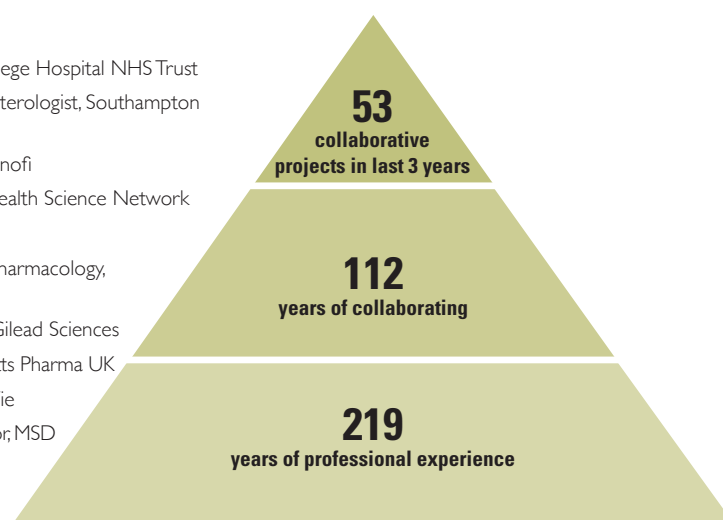
David Nutt, Professor of Neuropsychopharmacology, Imperial College NHS Trust

Murad Ruf, Associate Medical Director, Gilead Sciences

Jeremy Thorpe, Managing Director, Tillotts Pharma UK

Stijn van Haaren, Medical Advisor, AbbVie

Catherine Williams, Business Unit Director, MSD



Between them, our panel has extensive experience of collaboration between industry, academia, clinical and patient organisations, including research and committees, as well as initiatives set up under formal joint working agreements. All of the group members, whether they work in industry or the NHS, think that each of their organisations could do significantly more and better collaboration. When asked how effective they were at collaboration, healthcare professionals gave their institutions an average of 6.9 out of 10, and industry only 5.1 [Fig 1].

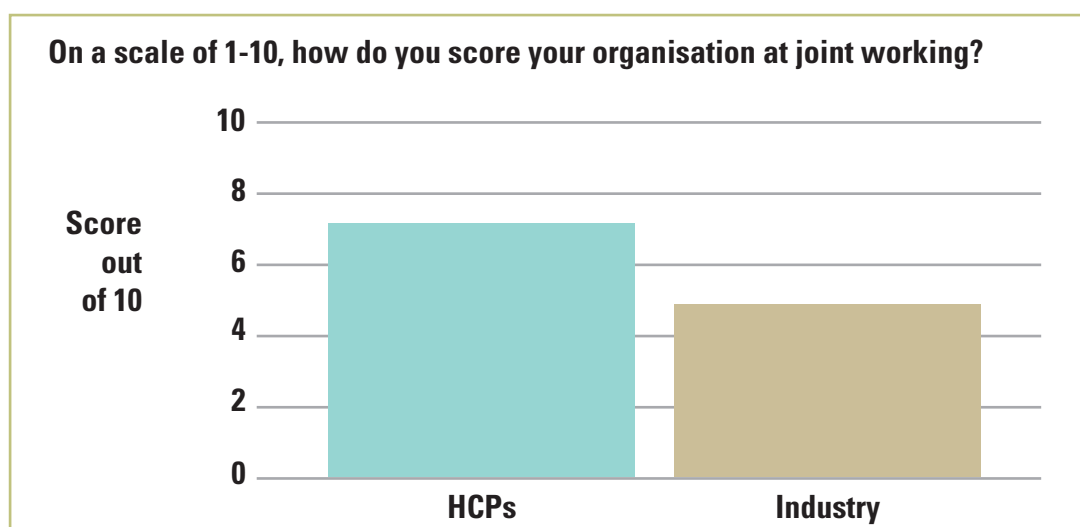


Fig 1. We asked HCPs and industry to score their organisation at joint working



So why the modest scores? Some of our industry experts say that, in pursuing a joint working approach with customers, they are the exception in their company. Other reasons put forward are the tendency in pharma to focus on prescribers rather than considering the whole healthcare system, and a lack of people in companies with personal experience of working in the NHS.

For our healthcare and academic experts, there can be an institutional mistrust of industry, and departments working in silos, which see no need to work differently.

With the best will in the world, achieving all the aims for all the partners is a challenge. Some projects don't work out as expected or hoped. When asked to think about and score a recent joint working project in terms of the value it delivered for the company involved, for the NHS and for patients, there was a perceived disparity in the projects meeting this triple aim. This snapshot suggests there's a view in industry that collaborative projects often work better for patients and clinicians than for the company. Conversely, while there was less overall disparity among our healthcare professionals, some clinicians had experience of projects that delivered strong commercial outcomes but poor patient benefits [Fig 2].

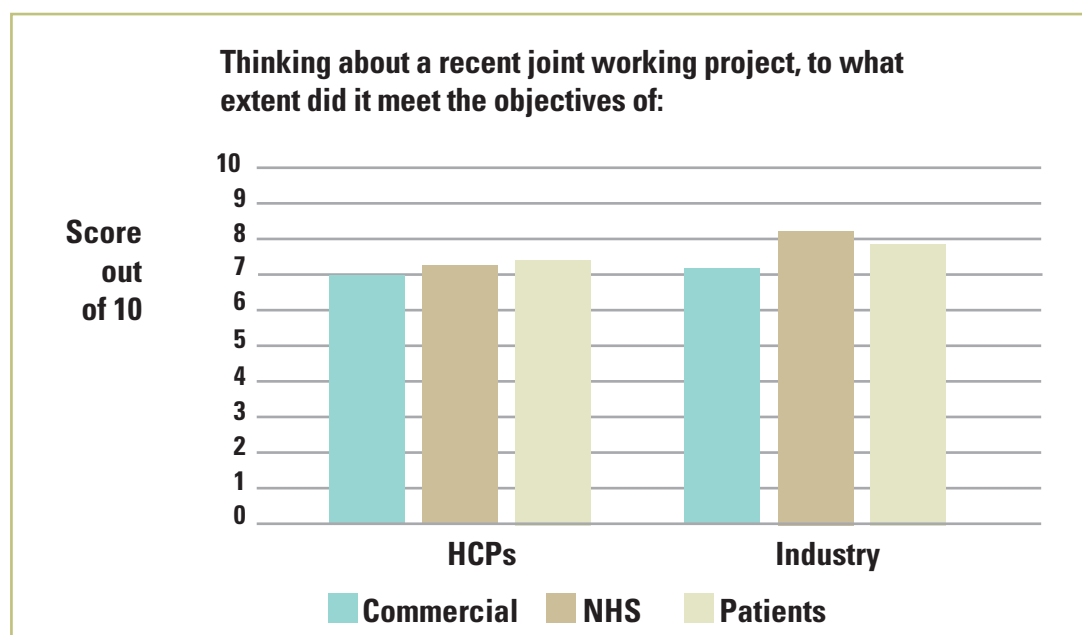


Fig 2. We asked HCPs and industry to score the effectiveness of a recent joint working project in terms of stakeholders' objectives.

WHAT'S IN THE WAY?

Individuals and organisations often have concerns when considering joint working, which our panel told us about. There can be a fear of investing time and energy in something that may not produce the results they wanted. Fear of reputational damage is also front of mind: clinicians and academics need to retain their independence and credibility when working with pharma. Industry, on the other hand, may face suspicion from the NHS when attempting to engage, and scandals cast a long shadow. As ever, bureaucracy, particularly compliance, and the workload associated with gaining approvals and documenting procedures, often puts people off.

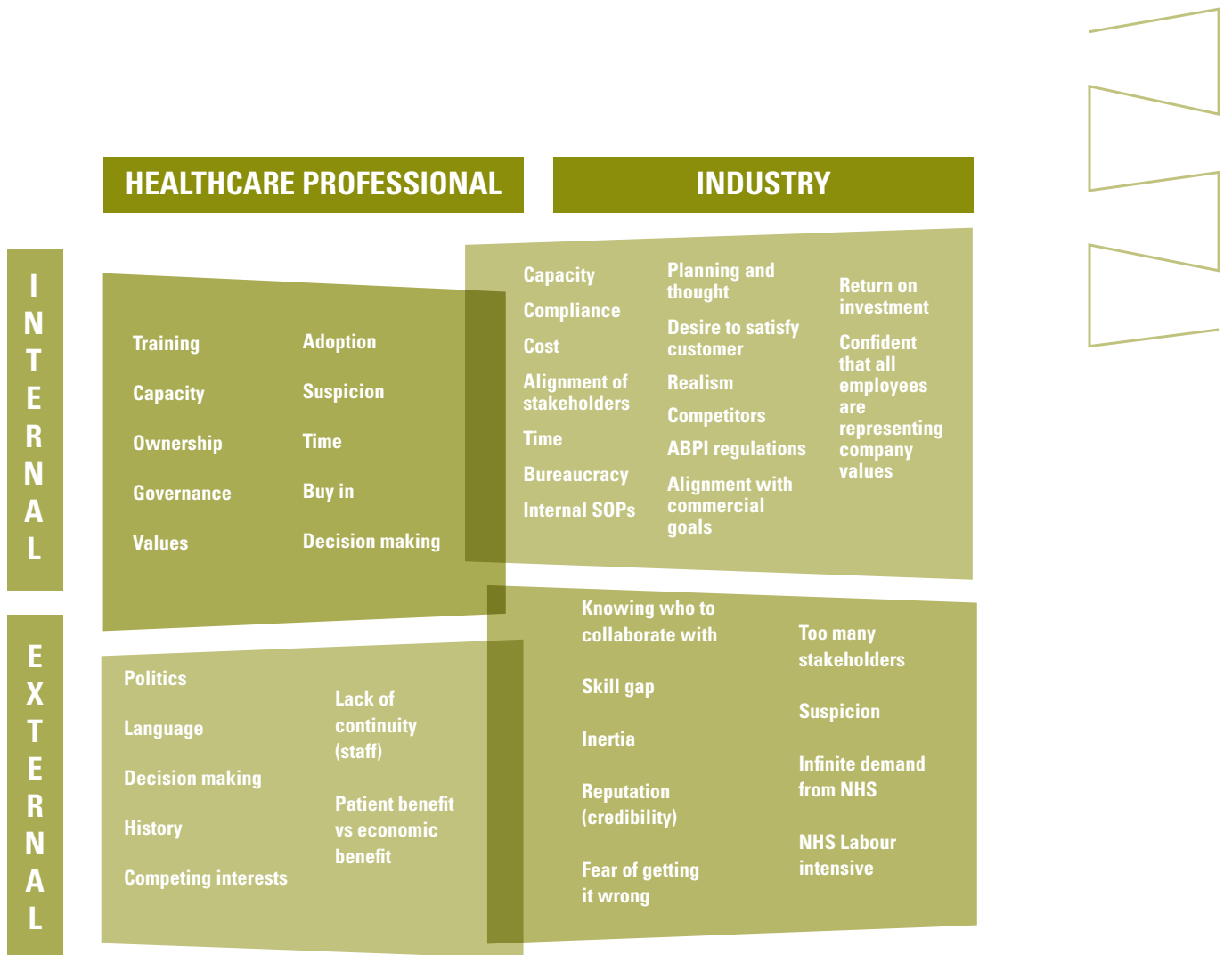


Fig 3. Mapping barriers to collaboration from separate HCP and industry perspectives reveals overlaps between them.

To find out what's getting in the way of effective collaboration, we asked about obstacles in more detail, from the different perspectives of industry and healthcare professionals [Fig 3].

Barriers to joint working

- a lack of time, capacity and resources to set up projects properly;
- teams not having the right skills and capabilities to plan and manage joint working effectively;
- a lack of long-term views;
- misaligned or conflicting objectives;
- communication problems between parties speaking different "institutional languages";
- bureaucracy;
- fear of reputational damage.

The perceived barriers described by both groups are strikingly similar, and our panel were surprised to find how much they each had in common with the "other" side. Time and time again, Dovetail has found that appreciating each other's perspective and realising the extent of common ground are fundamental starting points for working together.

An important observation, however, is that some barriers are useful. Governance frameworks like the ABPI Code of Practice and Joint Working Toolkit help to ensure that stakeholder objectives are aligned and the initiative compliant.



MAKING JOINT WORKING WORK – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OUR EXPERTS

There are some key building blocks for success, broadly consisting of solid foundations, realistic goals, appropriate skills, transparency and commitment.

- First of all, it's important to make sure that joint working is the right solution to the problem. It isn't always the best approach. Proposals, therefore, need to be critically assessed.
- It's vital that time is invested at the start of a joint working project in understanding the challenges and perspectives of all parties in order to get a shared view. Consideration needs to be given to the set-up and planning phase, taking care to align objectives, in order to satisfy the needs of all participants. It's essential to find the sweet spot where patients, the NHS and commercial stakeholders all benefit from the work.
- Goals should be appropriate, with obvious patient benefit at the heart of the project. But they must also be realistic – projects can fail through trying to do too much, while a modest project well executed can be transformative for patients.
- Transparent and compliant governance is essential so that roles, responsibilities and lines of communication are clear. As projects can evolve over time, it's a good idea to build adaptive mechanisms into agreements at the start.
- There is a capability gap, which needs to be addressed if the NHS, industry and patients are to reap the benefits of collaboration. Staff turnover means that institutional knowledge and know-how can be lost over time, so training resources should be developed to help teams maintain skills, and to promote best practice. One senior clinician concluded that "joint working is vital to the future of the NHS", and proposed it should be taught to the next generation of junior doctors.
- Good relationships are essential. There needs to be a level of maturity and honesty between the partners, to facilitate difficult conversations if the project stalls or goes off track. Successful joint working projects can form the basis of long-term relationships, and provide the opportunity to gain significant competitive advantage through strategic insights and ongoing horizon scanning.
- Endorsement or quality assurance from the Department of Health and/ or industry bodies such as the ABPI and EMIG could help to overcome mistrust on the part of the NHS, by certifying companies that have demonstrated due diligence, for example.
- The healthcare landscape has changed considerably since Moving Beyond Sponsorship was published by the ABPI and Department of Health, and an updated and simplified toolkit would be welcomed.

CONCLUSION

It's clear that there's an appreciation of the value that joint working can bring, and an appetite for doing it. However, too many joint working projects fail to deliver the promised outcomes. More than ever in our current resource-constrained climate, there's a need for companies to work with healthcare professionals for the common good. We need to invest in better strategic skills and project management expertise, in order to unlock the potential for collaboration and deliver tangible and lasting benefit to patients, the NHS and companies.

ABOUT DOVETAIL

We're award-winning healthcare collaboration specialists. We help our clients to gain insights and spark innovation through working together effectively with clinicians. The result? Strategic programmes that build trust, meet business goals and make a difference to patients' lives at the same time. We'd love to help you do the same. Get in touch and let's work together.

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