



Collaborative Working: Resources



Collaborative working covers a spectrum of ways that two or more organisations can work together, through joint delivery of projects to a full merger. Collaborative working can last for a fixed time or be permanent.

Collaboration has been suggested as one response to the public expenditure crisis, but voluntary and community organisations should ensure that they are exploring collaboration or merger from a position of strength. They should plan early, identify potential partners, and make informed decisions about whether and how to proceed with collaborative projects.

Decisions should always be made with the beneficiaries in mind. Will collaboration improve their experience?

Collaboration is always about working together to achieve a common goal. It should be creative in nature; sharing knowledge, learning and building consensus.

Collaborative working covers a spectrum:

Ad Hoc collaboration or Associations— where groups get together and share information and resources informally

Joint working/programming – where there is a formal level of agreed communication, steering groups, and shared practices – may deliver a project together but no legal actions.

Partnerships – formal arrangements which are normally around some type of joint working arrangements. This might be a collaborative contractual relationship between larger and smaller organisation or between organisations with some form of similarity e.g. size or mission coming together for a shared purpose. It can also be a newly constituted organisation, for example, a consortium with a Partnership Agreement.

Merger – where organisations come together in a new legal partnership – often ceasing to have their own distinct identities in order to create a single new identity.

Working with others can offer opportunities to:

- Deliver new, improved or more integrated services
- Make efficiency savings through sharing costs
- Develop a stronger, more united voice
- Share knowledge and information
- Reduce duplication
- Develop joint funding bids

Spectrum of collaboration

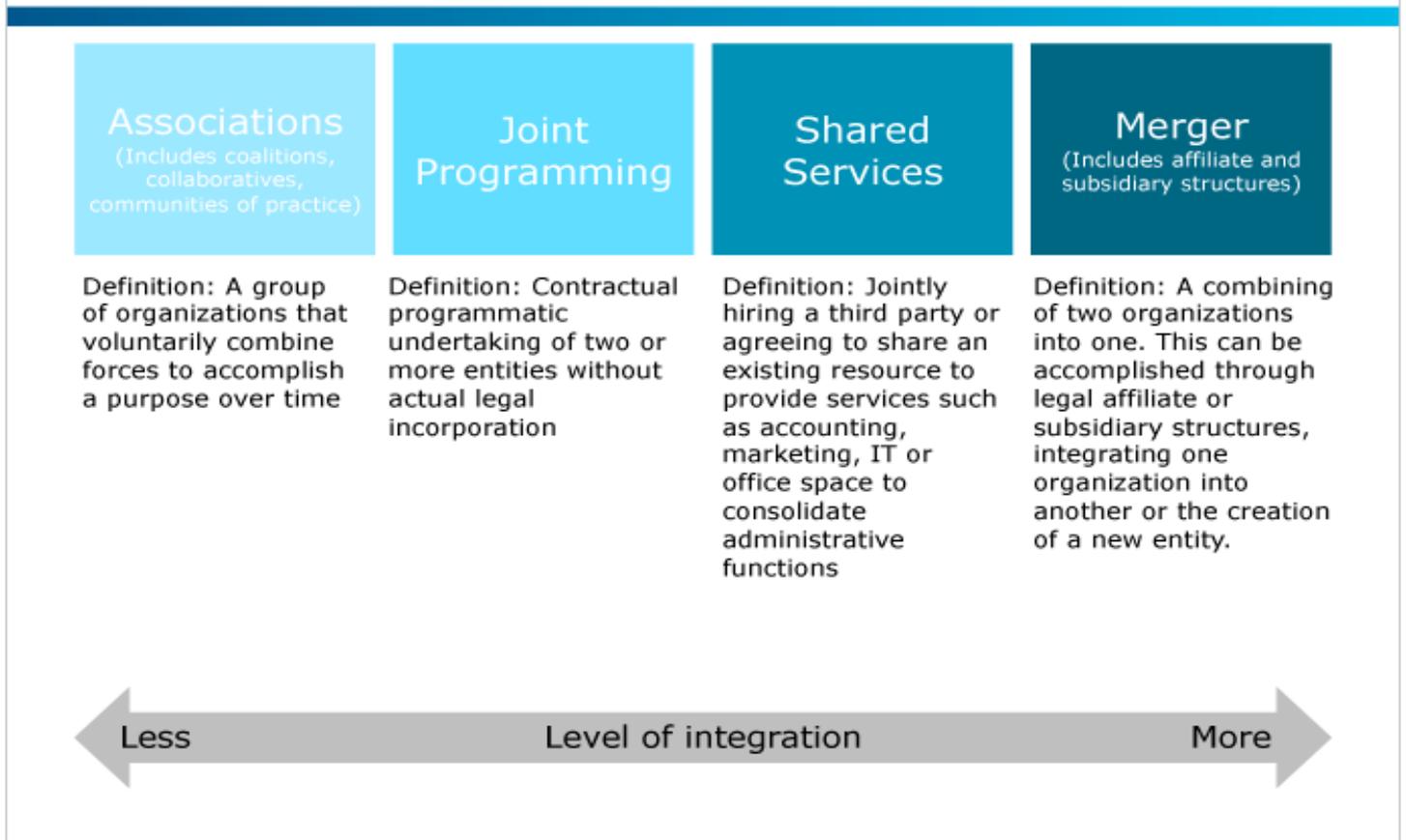


Figure 1. The Bridgespan Group

Resources for Collaborative Working

This fact sheet aims to provide readers with resources and further reading around collaborative working in all its forms:

- [A guide to tendering as a consortium](#), Tendering for Care, 2008.
- Big Lottery: [Working in partnership: a sourcebook](#), New Opportunities Fund. Intended as a practical source of ideas and suggestions for both new and existing partnerships.
- Charity Commission Guidance [Choosing to Collaborate: Helping you succeed](#): Charity Commission (Sept 2009). A useful guide for trustees.
- Charity Commission Guidance: [Charities and Risk Management](#): Charity Commission (June 2010)
- Charity Commission. [Making mergers work: Helping you succeed](#): Charity Commission (2009). A useful guide for trustees.
- Charity Commissions Guidance: [Strength in Numbers – Small charities’ experience of working together](#). Charity Commission (June 2010)
- Charity Commissions Guidance: [Setting up and running a charity – guidance Work with other charities](#). Charity Commission (May 2013). Now on GOV.UK site.

- [Collaborate resource kit](#), Housing Associations' Charitable Trust and the Department of Communities and Local Government, 2008. Guidance on how how small providers can thrive by developing collaborative approaches to tendering and delivering services, between themselves and with larger organisations.
- Collaboration for communities: Giving power to partnership was produced by bassac as part of the Collaboration Benefits programme funded by Capacitybuilders through Improving Support. Now finished there are a number of useful resources available through [Locality](#).
- Department of Health ULO Development Fund, led by Fusion: [Consortium Toolkit for User Led Organisations](#); (2008-9)
- Fleming, J. et al for Participation Works (2010) [How to use a consortium-working approach](#). London: NCB
- Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) works for local government improvement so councils can serve people and places better. Its website contains information on cross-sector partnership working. www.idea.gov.uk
- Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) conducts action research with voluntary and community sector organisations and have particular expertise in the area of collaborative working, mergers and cross sector partnerships. Its publications and research findings respond to the practical issues faced by voluntary sector organisations in the context of their policy environment. www.ivar.org.uk.
- [Know How Non Profit](#): NCVO produced guidance materials around specific areas of partnership working which is now available via Know How Non Profit.
- Locality: [Collaboration in London Report](#). Community Links (July 2013)
- LVSC report '[Vital Ingredients when collaboration and merger are on the menu](#)' (January 2013).
- National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) - Improving Local Partnerships (ILP) Project, funded by the Big Lottery until 2011, aimed to support local infrastructure organisations to increase their influence on local partnerships (in particular local public service agreements and local area agreements), as well as promote collaboration between generalist and specialist infrastructure organisations. In addition, its Local Commissioning and Procurement Unit (LCPU) provides support on procurement including consortia models of providing public services. www.navca.org.uk
- National Children's Bureau (NCB) is an umbrella body for organisations working with children and young people in England & Northern Ireland. It has experience in partnership working, commissioning, resources and services. www.ncb.org.uk/
- NCVO [Due Diligence Demystified: What it is and how you manage it.](#); NCVO (2006)
- Nesta: [Networks that work: Partnerships for integrated care and services](#); (2013)

- NPC: [Collaborating for Impact: Working in partnership to boost growth and improve outcomes](#) (January 2013)
- [Sharing without merging: A review of collaborative and sharing back office support in the VCS](#), J.Pepin for bassac, 2005.
- Social Enterprise South East: A [Beginners Guide to Building Consortia in the Social Enterprise Sector](#). More information can be found on their website: www.se2partnership.co.uk
- The Guardian: [Expert round up: flexible commissioning in public services](#) (8 December 2012)
- The Guardian: [Why charities must collaborate to maximise limited resources](#). (16 May 2012)
- [Working in a consortium: A guide for third sector organisations involved in public service delivery](#), Office of the Third Sector, Cabinet Office, 2008.
- The Institute of Risk Management (IRM) has guides and briefings on their website about risk management, a crucial aspect of collaborative working. www.theirm.org/

Support

If you would like any support with collaboration, partnerships or any other issues facing your organisation, please contact the Development Team at Community Southwark by emailing development@communitysouthwark.org.uk or calling 020 7358 7020.