Collaborative working across the B&NES Children and Young People's Network

A research project

Children and Young People's Network

Disclaimer

This document has been prepared for the B&NES Children and Young People's Network as part of the research project to consult third sector groups on how they would like to be supported to work collaboratively with other agencies.

Unless otherwise stated or agreed in writing, we accept no liability to anyone for any purpose in the use of these findings and it may not be provided to any other parties.

Interview groups	Description
Groups operationally run by volunteers	Not defined specifically by size but typically smaller groups with very few, if any, full-time equivalent staff.
Groups operationally run by paid staff	Not defined specifically by size but typically larger organisations with operational decisions made by paid staff. This definition acknowledges the volunteer nature of trustee roles in these organisations.
Glossary of terms	Description
Back office services	Administrative work of a business as opposed to its dealings with customers (e.g. payroll, database management).
Business as usual (BAU)	The normal execution of standard operations within an organisation in contrast to projects which might introduce significant organisational change.
Delivery-focused collaboration	Collaboration that is typically linked to the normal 'delivery-focused' activities of the organisation (e.g. signposting service users, networking).
Joint bidding / commissioning	Groups forming a collaboration or partnership in order to bid for a commission or other sources of funding. Assumes shared delivery as a result of a successful bid.
Member	Member of the Children and Young People's Network.
Operations-focused collaboration	Collaboration that is typically project-based, outside of the business as usual activities and is focused on impacting the operations of the organisation (e.g. shared procurement).
Shared delivery	The delivery of services to service users with another separate organisation (i.e. where both groups are not named in commission or funding bid).
Shared procurement	Collaborative purchasing of office supplies, IT services, advisory services etc by more than one organisation to achieve economies of scale.
'Suggested needs'	The support or projects that members suggested would help drive collaboration.
Third Sector or Voluntary Sector	*"Although many of these organisations have paid staff, a defining characteristic is their voluntary nature, whether in governance through a trustee board, in finance through donations and grants, or in resources through the help of volunteers."* National Council for Voluntary Organisations definition

Background

Collaboration amongst voluntary groups and organisations is increasingly discussed as a option to make the most effective use of resources and improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people. It is increasingly relevant to demonstrate a greater understanding of how third sector organisations can prepare for the future through collaboration.

> **"**
>
> *"B&NES council has approved budget reductions for youth services in 2018/19 and 2019/20 totalling £500,000."*
> B&NES Full Council Budget decisions 13 Feb-18
>
> **"**

Collaboration can mean one-off projects, joint service delivery or long-term strategic arrangements and can involve voluntary, public or private sector organisations. Cross-sector collaboration is not just for large national organisations. Research by the Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) indicated that 66% of small charities report some form of collaboration. There are many benefits available including improved services, increased reach and financial savings.

However, the FSI research showed that collaboration is focused on networking and delivery of direct services. In many cases, the reason for low levels of broader collaboration is a lack of understanding as to what's involved, or a fear of failure.

The Children and Young People's Network consists of 160 groups and organisations working with Children and Young People in B&NES. The network aims to raise the voice and profile of the local voluntary and community sector and empower voluntary and community groups to use their collective influence for the benefit of the children, young people and families they serve.

The underlying objective of this research was to improve the lives of local children, their families and communities by increasing collaboration across our third sector.

> **"**
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> *"We don't have that organisation ego where we say we need a site. We don't need a site. But we know that children and young people need spaces, as do their families."*
>
> **"**

The project was enabled by a grant from Quartet, funded by specific individuals with charitable interests in the B&NES area. The Quartet Community Foundation is a charity that aims to enrich lives, connect people and build stronger communities, in Bristol, B&NES, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Aims of the research project

The original stated aim of the research project was to undertake research, using case studies, interviews and a survey to consult third sector organisations on how they would like to be supported to work collaboratively with third sector agencies.

It is important to note that this project is designed to gather the perceptions of the network members about collaboration and what is needed to drive more collaborative projects. By definition, this will mean views may be based on personal preferences, beliefs and outdated or even incorrect information. It is important to recognise that every organisation has different experience and expertise and that a perceived barrier can be as much of a restriction to collaboration as a tangible barrier.

As inclusiveness was deemed to be a key factor, the research approach set out to establish how the fullest range of groups and organisations could be involved in the research. The objective was to include a range of organisations based on size, age groups served and geographical spread across Bath & North East Somerset.

An objective of this project quickly emerged to provide tangible recommendations and options rather than general themes without actionable next steps.

Role of the steering group

A steering group, representing the network, oversaw the research and made overall decisions on the direction and focus of the research. It also provided signoff on research methodology prior to presentation to the wider network. The cross-organisational steering group was, in itself, a model of collaboration and consisted of:

— Caroline Haworth - Director, Bath Area Play Project

— Roz Lambert - Chief Executive, First Steps (Bath)

— Jamie Luck - Director, Mentoring Plus

— Phil Walters - Director, Off The Record Bath

— Jason Pegg - Development Manager, Black Families Education Support Group (from May-18)

— Roy Maguire - Senior Young Carers' Officer, B&NES Carers' Centre (to Dec-17).

Initial Assumptions – collaborative working in the third sector

The steering group and the researchers identified, at an early stage, that it was important to transparently define their assumptions in relation to collaborative working, given the potential breadth of interpretations by individuals in third sector. These assumptions were:

— That collaboration has the potential to develop the quality of service provided for Children and Young People (CYP);

— That collaboration can lead to enhanced organisational capacity for CYP groups or organisations;

— That cost effectiveness could be increased by collaboration;

— That collaboration facilitates the co-ordination and expression of influential 'voice';

— That longer-term adaptation to change (resilience) may be promoted through collaboration; and

— That collaborative working is not an easy process, but investment of time and resource can lead to benefits for the organisations involved.

These assumptions were presented at the Children and Young People's Network meeting on 5 Dec-17.

Appointment of co-researchers

The research role was advertised using local networks to find an independent researcher. After interviewing applicants, the steering group decided to split the original scope between two researchers. The decision was made to further incorporate the theme of collaboration into the research itself by allocating the scope to reflect the experience and expertise of the researchers.

Dan Shreeve – commercial consultant with extensive research and interview experience. Dan runs a Bath-based consultancy focusing on social investment readiness and is well connected to many of the charities and social enterprises in B&NES.

Dr Linda Watts – community development and voluntary sector funding experience prior to management roles in local government including B&NES, prior to retirement. Linda has research expertise in qualitative research methods including development of new models of research.

Each section was authored by one researcher to reflect the split of the scope. The report has purposefully not been edited to reflect a 'single voice' to highlight the different approach and style of the researchers. The objective was to reflect that collaboration, at its best, represents the combined but distinct qualities of the individual partners.

Structure of this report

The B&NES third sector functions in a national third sector environment and in the context of social and economic trends. Accordingly, this report includes summaries of research and relevant published work.

— Summary of findings

— Review of published studies

— Interview findings

- Groups operationally run by paid staff

- Groups operationally run by volunteers

- Feedback from online survey

— Appendix

- Case studies of collaboration

- Research methodology

- B&NES social profile

- Additional feedback from online survey

- Additional interview commentary

- References
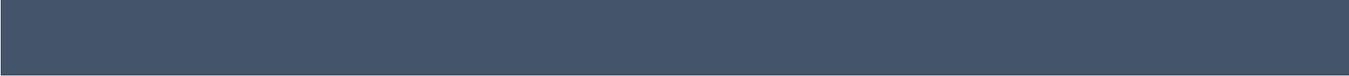
Summary of findings

This project set out to consult third sector organisations on how they would like to be supported to work collaboratively with other agencies. However, as outlined in the introduction, an additional objective emerged to provide tangible recommendations.

This summary section brings together the different workstreams.

— **Conclusions from interview process**

As the primary objective of the project, the conclusions summarise the key findings from the interview process, in particular, the key barriers and an outline of the requirements to overcome them.

— **Comparison with other research sources**

We have included a summary of the conclusions from other workstreams (a review of national published studies on collaboration and analysis of the online survey) to compare and contrast with the findings from the interview process.

— **'Suggested needs' vs barriers to collaboration**

These interviews have identified barriers to collaboration but, importantly, they have also presented tangible solutions. Therefore, we have presented the barriers alongside the solutions as suggested by the network members. We have grouped this analysis into themed categories to highlight that a barrier may require more than one solution.

— **Practical next steps**

In line with the secondary objective to create a tangible output from this research project, we have provided recommended next steps that could help meet the identified needs of the interviewed groups.

Our next steps are differentiated between what can be affected by direct network action, both quick wins and longer term projects, and what could be affected through influence (e.g. lobbying to build more time into pre-delivery establishment of partnerships).

The final part of this summary provides an assessment of the support that exists to help the Children and Young People's Network progress the recommended next steps and also highlights relevant case studies.

We have focused on key opportunities that we believe could enhance collaboration. We acknowledge that the scope of this project does not extend to the additional challenges of implementing these suggestions.

It appears, though, that the interview process itself has increased engagement in the network – it identified new members and reconnected existing members – which should provide some support for implementation. The recommended next steps are focused on activities that could better resource members that are engaged with the network, as well as the smaller groups that need support but are less engaged.

Hypotheses for interview process

Many of the challenges highlighted by the interview process will not be a surprise and some findings are confirmatory. At the start of the process, the researchers made a number of hypotheses to test, based on existing research, to ensure next steps aren't based on flawed assumptions. These included:

1. Groups operationally run by volunteers will be focused on improving outcomes and groups operationally run by paid staff are likely to consider improved outcomes, increased fundraising and reducing costs

2. Groups operationally run by volunteers will have less infrastructure that lends itself to back office collaboration

3. Central dedicated resource will be important to maintain collaboration

4. There may be a 'perceived' risk that collaborative projects affect the ability to seek future funding as a discrete organisation

Broadening the definition of collaboration is a first hurdle

There are many drivers for collaboration - broadly categorised as:

1. Improving service delivery

2. Becoming more sustainable as an organisation

The sector appears well positioned to be able to deliver improved service delivery through collaboration and there is specific feedback from some organisations that additional resource to support signposting is an unnecessary complication and creates additional administration.

Whilst unnecessary administration should be avoided, it is noted that signposting may benefit from some further support given the findings that awareness of the potential collaborative projects and partners could be improved.

As a result, the definition of collaboration for many organisations is relatively narrow. The majority of groups focus on delivery-focused collaborations that are a natural extension of the business as usual work.

Among the groups operationally run by volunteers, in particular, existing collaborative activity is focused on the short-term practical needs to ease the delivery challenges of the organisation. This activity can broadly be categorised as informal, based on personal or geographical relationships and not systematic. It is also closely linked to the business as usual service delivery. The actual term 'collaboration' is reserved for large projects that would have a step change impact on their organisation.

Organisations are rightly focused on the best interests of the service user, but this appears to have reduced their capacity to look at the best interests of the organisation. Longer-term projects that enhance organisational sustainability are deprioritised or even not considered possible.

In general, the differences between the two interview groups were less pronounced than expected. We must acknowledge that an interest in collaboration is likely to increase the likelihood of a contact responding to the interview invitation. However, it also means that suggested needs and next steps should have a positive impact on a broad range of organisations, particularly if concentrating on the common themes and needs.

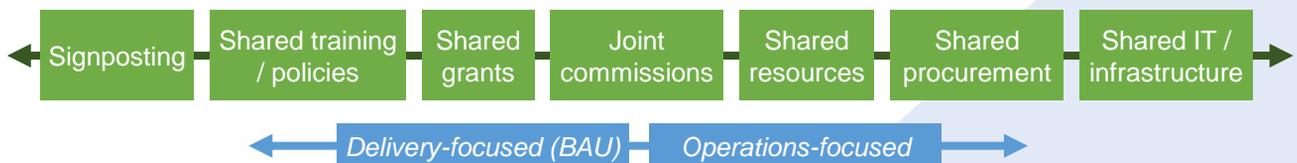**Groups need support to engage in operational collaboration**

Delivery-focused collaboration is a clearly not a bad thing as it fundamentally provides improved outcomes for service users and can create efficiency through reduced delivery duplication. Furthermore, it helps groups to learn more about each other. A group is potentially more likely to engage in a back office collaboration with another group if there has been previous positive experience of collaboration on delivery. Training could also be an important stepping stone to deeper partnerships as it naturally steers working styles and processes together.

However, there is a potential risk that a focus on service delivery can create a tension with the responsibilities of management teams to ensure the sustainability of their organisations. Collaboration based around service delivery appears to create administrative costs for the partners and may constrain some projects as a result. Assuming continuing pressure on funding, this approach could theoretically increase the risk of mergers or closures.

Operations-focused collaboration is a significant strategic and organisational change for groups but this research indicates that it may be helpful to consider collaboration as a spectrum.

Below is an illustrative diagram that represents our summary of how collaboration could be ordered as a spectrum. This ranges from the projects that can be done as part of business as usual operations, through to collaborative projects that require more long-term planning, implementation and integration. These types of project are assumed to require time and resources outside of business as usual processes and impact the operations of the organisation.

Illustrative spectrum of the types of collaborations (from organisations' perspective)

Signposting	Shared training / policies	Shared grants	Joint commissions	Shared resources	Shared procurement	Shared IT / infrastructure

Delivery-focused (BAU) — *Operations-focused*

Interviews show that the barriers stopping groups engaging in different types of collaboration are all organisational. The interviews also indicate there is a need to set up structure and best practice around projects to help increase operational collaboration. Some types of collaboration will clearly not be relevant for all groups but interviewees indicate that they need support to understand how to engage with these different opportunities.

A potential first step appears to be an educational process to show organisations what collaboration could be, and how it can improve organisational efficiency as well as service delivery.

Awareness is a potentially underestimated barrier

Knowledge of potential partners and projects was not seen as a major barrier to collaboration by the groups but the feedback suggests that there are still silos of information and relationships. Increased awareness of other organisations and opportunities appears necessary to stimulate collaborative projects. It also appears to be important to limit the time spent working with organisations that have fundamentally different values – a key limitation to some partnerships.

The issue of awareness is more significant among groups operationally run by volunteers as these groups typically have less regular contact with other organisations.

Capacity is limited across the sector

Unsurprisingly, the capacity to focus beyond the day to day is a key stumbling block. This is particularly true for groups that rely on volunteers. Out of necessity, time that is spent away from service delivery is often focused on trying to develop funding streams. For those that are part of more formal tenders or bids, this is often exacerbated by the typically narrow window to establish partnerships. This is an example of where members feel there is a need to engage and influence funders.

Across all members, a need has been highlighted for a central administrative function to facilitate and formalise collaborative relationships.

There is a clear need for external support

Even without capacity constraints, many of the groups feel that expertise is needed to help with organisational change projects. External support is also needed to overcome barriers such as working styles and competitive tension.

For groups operationally run by volunteers, the main support required is help with sharing best practice, policies and procedures and volunteer recruitment. These groups see limited value in infrastructure collaboration (as they don't have many back office functions themselves) but have identified the need for information about sharing existing infrastructure. Findings suggest a need for an 'exchange hub' mechanism to link up demand and supply of space, training or transport. An example of this could be a platform to link up groups with space with groups that need space to deliver services. This could enhance the sustainability of organisations but appears only likely to happen with a central resource.

The network is seen to have a role to play

Currently, the existing support networks are seen as patchy but there are things that the CYPN itself can focus on. There is a growing pool of experience of partnership structures among network members. Establishing a more formal action learning set approach (of which some members have experience) may allow better sharing of learnings and challenges. This could help overcome some of the barriers on issues like data sharing that had been raised by some groups.

There are a number of quick wins included in our recommended next steps that the network could follow up in the short-term.

The network could also explore how it can better engage with members to improve knowledge of the rest of the network and specific suggestions have been made to achieve this (e.g. ebulletin boards). Groups operationally run by volunteers, in particular, see a role for the network to facilitate collaboration for them.

The national affiliations of some groups (of all sizes) do reduce some collaboration opportunities but these may also provide tried-and-tested approaches that can be shared with other members.

Summary of published studies

The key findings from the review of national published studies on collaboration are broadly aligned with the findings from this interview programme.

— While the focus should remain on outcomes and demonstrable impact, there should be a clear understanding of the financial implications and a recognition that human factors could be a barrier

— There is clear value in inclusivity and building partnerships across the frontline of service delivery

— Setting up a consortium or merger is higher profile than joint 'back office' arrangements which contributes to a narrow definition of collaboration

— Meaningful collaboration will be restricted if organisations do not have the time to fully understand the drivers, purpose and benefits of partnership

— A mutually beneficial collaboration relies on shared vision, mutuality and strong interpersonal relationships as much as operational logic

— There is a need for collaborative models to ensure coordinated and accessible support

— The collaborative process requires and benefits from independent facilitation and expert guidance

Summary of online survey results

The most suitable areas of collaboration that are highlighted by the online survey are broadly aligned with the outlined 'suggested needs' on the next page.

It should be noted that the only areas that are not referenced in the 'suggested needs' are 'Collaborative fundraising' and 'Support to seek alternative funding'. However, case study research has highlighted existing collaborative frameworks that could provide support in these areas.

Question: Please indicate, in your opinion, which of the three categories is most suitable for each area of potential collaboration (% of responses, one response per area of collaboration per respondent)

Area	Quick win	Long term objective	Not suitable
Sharing principles of best practice	42%	33%	24%
Support to seek alternative funding (e.g. social investment)	18%	58%	24%
Sharing best practice below senior level (i.e. delivery level)	47%	26%	26%
General training	33%	33%	33%
Cross referrals/signposting	35%	29%	35%
Collaborative fundraising	21%	42%	36%
Delivery of services (with another organisation)	15%	48%	36%
Shared experience sessions (e.g. specialist staff meetings)	34%	28%	38%
Volunteer recruitment	30%	30%	39%
General policies and procedures	33%	21%	45%
Shared buildings and infrastructure	21%	29%	50%

'Suggested needs' vs barriers to collaboration

The barriers to collaboration and the 'suggested needs' can be broadly grouped into 4 categories.

Barriers	'Suggested needs' [1]

Help to develop partnerships

Challenges that affect an organisation's ability to form partnerships. These are barriers that might exist even if organisational capacity was not a limiting factor. 'Suggested needs' relate to time, expertise and advice.

Barriers:
- Expertise required
- Reputational risk
- Shared vision & values
- Narrow specification of tenders
- Protecting territory
- Human factor

'Suggested needs':
- Organisational expertise
- Partnership frameworks
- Time to set up collaborations
- Funder engagement
- Pre-delivery investment
- One-off events
- Shared impact measurement

Increase capacity for collaboration

The capacity for organisations to engage in activities outside business as usual operations. 'Suggested needs' are focused on extra resource or upskilling staff.

Barriers:
- Ongoing admin burden
- Capacity to organise
- Logistics

'Suggested needs':
- Central resource
- Secondments
- Upskilling for smaller groups

Increase awareness of opportunities

Knowledge of active or potential opportunities, which can be improved through increased sharing of information.

Barriers:
- Awareness

'Suggested needs':
- Info about other organisations
- Sharing learnings & challenges

Specific initiatives

Specific collaborative projects (proposed in interviews) that could address tangible challenges that organisations are facing.

Barriers:
- Lack of infrastructure

'Suggested needs':
- Shared procurement
- Single strategic network voice
- Support to meet training needs
- Shared location
- Volunteer recruitment
- Shared transport
- Shared IT skills

Key – highlighted by groups…

…operationally run by paid staff	…in both interview groups	…operationally run by volunteers

Note: 1) Further details on P.33

Summary of findings

Our recommended next steps

'Suggested needs'	Recommended next steps

Help to develop partnerships

- Organisational expertise
- Partnership frameworks
- Time to set up collaborations
- Funder engagement
- Pre-delivery investment
- One-off events
- Shared impact measurement

Quick Win — Agree with network which frameworks, sample agreements, policies etc. would be most useful for collaboration

Longer term objectives — Explore existing collaboration frameworks and networks (see next page) about:
- Collaboration models / expertise
- Models to engage private and university resources
- Shared impact measurement

Influence — Engage with funders to outline concerns on tender and bid structures and timescales

Increasing capacity for collaboration

- Central resource
- Secondments
- Upskilling for smaller groups

Quick Win — Create database of organisations interested in secondments. Engage small groups in reciprocal training (below)

Influence — Engage with funders to evidence requirements for central resource support

Increasing awareness of opportunities

- Info about other organisations
- Sharing learnings & challenges

Quick Wins — Create proposals for sharing of information and best practice (e.g. ebulletin boards). Build on existing experience of action learning sets

Specific initiatives

- Shared procurement
- Single strategic network voice
- Support to meet training needs
- Shared location
- Volunteer recruitment
- Shared transport
- Shared IT skills

Quick Win — Create database of organisations interested in reciprocal training. Review previous experience across network of shared procurement to highlight potential. Invite existing B&NES networks (see next page) to present to network regarding technical support available

Longer term objectives — Explore existing collaboration frameworks (see next page) about:
- Advocacy
- Shared location and transport
- Volunteer recruitment

Influence — Engage with funders and existing hubs to explore options for shared hub

Key – see previous page

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Private sector

Interviews indicated that organisations are open to working with private sector groups on the basis that objectives are aligned. Members differentiated between private sector organisations being paid for their time and being involved in an income-generating model where profits are shared. However, there was a concern that private sector organisations would only engage until the money ran out. It appears that many organisations feel that formal collaboration with the private sector may be a step too far.

The current focus is on pro-bono support but members are open to the concept of private businesses working at a reduced rate. Current interaction with the private sector is largely informal and based on private relationships. Organisations are understandably keen to maintain relationships with the private sector to raise funds.

Established collaboration frameworks and broader networks

An example of an established collaborative framework is the **Young People's Foundation** model. This established model appears to align with a number of the areas of 'suggested needs' and may reduce the need to 'reinvent the wheel'.

An added benefit of the Young People's Foundation model is that collaborative fundraising is a major objective. As mentioned, this is the area of collaboration that was seen as most suitable in the online survey but not specifically listed as a 'suggested need' in the interview feedback itself. Given the financial pressures in the third sector, the Foundation's model of identifying alternative funding options appears to be particularly relevant. However, there is a cost consideration to take into account as funding would be required for the central administrative and managerial roles. See case studies for more details.

There are other networks that could be further engaged on specific areas, such as **Exeter CoLabs** or the **South West Youth Impact Network**.

Existing B&NES networks and projects

The 3SG (Third Sector Group) is a relatively new network (2016/17) with a wider membership of organisations working in the voluntary and community sector in B&NES, not solely for those working with children and young people. It has developed out of the lack of a CVS or equivalent in B&NES, to enable the voice of the sector to be heard and to ensure B&NES is represented at a wider regional level given the changes with the West of England Mayor and devolution. Caroline Haworth, a CYPN Steering Group member is also a Core Group member for 3SG, ensuring the groups share good practice and have a consistency in approach, yet have distinct agendas to try and avoid duplication, whilst maintaining links.

Assessment Made Easy – an IT platform in B&NES that automates the admin and referral processes to signpost service users to relevant support.

St. John's round tables series – a series of collaborative events designed to explore solutions to some of the biggest challenges facing our community (e.g. mental health).

Good for Nothing Bath – a generosity network that brings creative ideas and skills to those innovating on social issues but doing so with very limited resources.

Tech4Good Bath – events and talks for those interested in how technology is used within social impact projects and organisations

Bath: Hacked – a joint council / community initiative that aims to bring bright people and open data together to do useful things for the community.

Case studies relevant to next steps

Case studies provide potential frameworks

The case study research identifies a number of projects in the UK that appear to be aligned with the 'suggested needs' highlighted by the interviews. Please see the relevant case study reference number in the appendix for more details.

1 The Young People's Foundations, which exist in eight boroughs in London, follow an established model that focuses on a number of key objectives:

— Provides access to national funding by bidding on behalf of the foundation members and apportioning delivery to its members who gain the advantages of larger organisation without losing their individuality

— Venue bank technology platform to link demand and supply of space / venues

— Mechanism for external engagement and donations from the private sector and universities

— Mapping the local sector and find areas of missing services or service overlap

— Support and expertise, including training, advocacy and best practice

— A single access point for service users, media and stakeholders

The Young People's Foundation model appears well aligned to a number of the priorities raised by the network.

3 Harlem Children's Zone, a holistic approach providing an interlocking network of best-practice programs focusing on effective service delivery and signposting.

12 Exeter CoLabs, which has established a shared working space for organisations in the South West.

Review of published studies

This overview identifies the main features of published material that focuses on the analysis of the practice of collaboration between voluntary or third sector organisations. It is not intended to be a comprehensive review – instead, it highlights relevant findings in the published work from a range of sources. The reference index also includes publications from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Charity Commission that provide information resources on collaboration for voluntary or third sector organisations.

Relevant published work also includes the recent detailed profiling of the third sector in Bath & North East Somerset – in the analysis set out in the West of England Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector survey: 'State of the Sector in Bath and North East Somerset 2017-18.' An example of the survey findings is that of 30 organisations who responded with regard to whether they were working in partnership with other voluntary sector and / or community organisations in Bath and North East Somerset, 22 organisations were in partnership with other organisations in their community.

National reports on collaboration in the third sector

Much of the published research and analysis primarily during the last fifteen years, concerning collaboration examines relationships between the statutory sector (national government, local government or health services) and the third or voluntary sector. The policy shift from competition to collaboration, the uneven dynamics of partnership working, increasingly marked resource restrictions and the conflicts created for non-statutory organisations especially with regard to an effective 'voice,' have all been subject to examination. The ever-changing impetus of service delivery in a context of statutory planning has meant that there has been less attention to collaborative working within the third or voluntary sector itself.

As would be expected in the commissioning environment, there have been a range of features and articles advocating collaboration within the voluntary / third sector as a means of greater success in levering in funding in the context of commissioning.

A research paper produced by the University of Birmingham Third Sector Research Centre in 2010 is a significant source of broader analysis in that it collated findings from some forty-eight separate research studies. In '**The Third Sector: An Evidence Review**,' the impact of the developing delivery landscape of procurement and commissioning was assessed including concerns being expressed in some studies, as to the impacts for smaller organisations and organisations in rural areas. This research indicates that:

— in purely numerical terms, the majority of third or voluntary sector organisations in mixed urban / rural areas may not be engaged in procurement or commissioning and may not have, or desire to have, sufficient organisational capacity or business orientation to do so; and

— their strength more often lies in their depth of local knowledge, client or service user trust, volunteer capacity and their informal, enduring relationships with other groups in local areas.

The report's summary of findings in relation to the sector's support needs and responses to those needs states that responses have been generally geared to the requirements of procurement and commissioning rather than to directly improving service provision for service users.

During the last decade there has been more attention to the critical factors for the success of collaborative initiatives, in general terms. A Guardian newspaper article in 2013 on **Why Collaboration is Important for Charities?** featured the work of a private equity company in supporting collaboration initiatives. The company's research set out to examine how opportunities for collaboration could be identified and how barriers could be overcome. The research report set out the findings of the key factors for successful collaboration:

— Keeping a clear focus on the best possible outcome for service users;

— Understanding pricing issues and financial implications;

— Demonstrating social impact; and

— Understanding that social culture could impede collaboration.

The first key factor is vital to avoid an emphasis on the process of collaboration rather than the outcomes.

Author: Dr Linda Watts

A report from CLINKS – the Centre for Justice innovation, examining four case studies in the criminal justice systems, asks questions from the perspectives of the voluntary organisations involved – **Why do we collaborate and why do we sometimes fail?** The report demonstrates how collaboration can help expand established models to new settings, create new services, or transform the way that services are commissioned. It makes recommendations about partnership working;

— building partnerships at every level;

— ensuring that collaboration extends to communication across those working at the frontline;

— standardising and minimising monitoring systems; and

— continually assessing partner engagement.

As a major non-statutory funder, the BIG Lottery Fund has initiated a number of relevant national research projects and produced reports. Most relevant is their 2011 report commissioned from IVAR **on Supporting Collaboration and Partnerships in a Changing Context**. One of the principal challenges is stated as being the increased pressure towards collaboration while at the same time, voluntary sector organisations were finding that they had less time, resources or capacity to dedicate to collaboration initiatives. Interestingly, the report observes that merger and setting up a consortium had a far higher profile than say joint 'back office' arrangements, in terms of the sector's understanding of what collaborative options were available.

The pattern of engagement in collaboration by smaller charities and voluntary sector organisations was assessed by the **Foundation for Social Improvement** (FSI) in a research report. Over 700 smaller charities responded to the research which showed that two thirds of them engaged in some form of collaboration, predominantly networking, while one third were not engaged at all. Unsurprisingly to the FSI, of those engaged in collaboration, only 5% were pursuing mergers.

Relatively recently there has been more acknowledgement of the role of leadership and of infrastructure bodies such as Councils for Voluntary Service and Children and Young People's Networks. The 2017 Cabinet Office report '**Stronger Charities for a Stronger Society**' incorporated a clear message, that infrastructure bodies themselves should explore collaborative service models to ensure more effective co-ordinated and accessible support services, in a climate where CVS activity is declining due to resource issues and other factors.

Collaboration to organise services supporting young people with mental health issues has been discussed in detail in a report by the **BOND consortium led by YoungMinds**. Other organisations involved in BOND include Youth Access and Place2Be. This comprehensive practical report sets out models of consortia, partnerships and other models, plus an overview of resources. In all cases, advantages and disadvantages of differing models are analysed. The report states that the choice of collaborative structure will be informed by factors including:

— The values which underpin your mission

— The relationships that you want to have and nurture with professional peers and young people themselves

— The type of business model that you want to adopt

— The local market and the 'whole system' within which your service provision sits with other providers.

Author: Dr Linda Watts

For groups and organisations working with children and young people in Bath & North East Somerset, the published work summarised above in this overview has some contextual relevance but may have limited applicability for the following reasons:

— The tendency to focus on larger voluntary sector organisations;

— The emphasis in some published work on the commissioning context – that does not apply to a wide range of groups and organisations;

— An under representation of research on collaboration in relation to the youngest age groups; and

— Relatively little discussion of collaboration potential in rural areas.

In relation to the way forward, a positive reflection that is relevant to this research study has been contributed by the **independent Institute for Voluntary Action Research** (IVAR) which has had a focus on Collaboration Through Partnerships. In 2016 IVAR conducted an interactive review of the experience of support for collaboration. The findings in their report include these points:

— Organisations will always struggle to collaborate meaningfully and effectively if they do not have the time and space to fully understand the drivers, purpose and potential benefits of coming together;

— A mutually beneficial collaboration relies on shared vision, mutuality and strong interpersonal relationships as much as it does on operational logic; and

— Invariably, that process requires and benefits from independent facilitation and expert guidance.

Interview findings

Author: Dan Shreeve

The interview feedback highlights some of the general concerns and trends for organisations regarding collaboration.

YMCA

"I think there is a higher need for more complex services for young people around mental health. That is lacking, especially with accommodation, so that is a real issue at the moment."

Anonymous

"Where is the Guild hub in Radstock? How do you support charities to use space in a different way? Where do charities go when they need a consultant?"

Bath City Football Club

"Historically, we have had a small number of volunteers doing everything. Collaborations which increase our network and enable us to staff those groups is a good thing."

citizens advice Bath & North East Somerset

"A few of our projects were hampered by a failure to fully engage with collaborative working. However, there is a definite sense that the appetite for collaborative working is changing."

During this process, interviews were conducted with 19 organisations in B&NES with variations in focus on region and end user.

Local, wider community focus	National, wider community focus
DHI Developing Health & Independence / Project 28, southside, Bath City Farm growing together, SWALLOW, BATH CITY FOOTBALL CLUB, First Steps Bath, Carers' Centre Bath and North East Somerset	citizens advice Bath & North East Somerset, mind for better mental health Bath, cycling projects Making cycling accessible to all.
off the record You talk. We listen. support for young people, BLACK FAMILIES EDUCATION SUPPORT GROUP, Bath YOUTH FOR CHRIST, MentoringPlus Inspiring young lives, Jessie May Children's Hospice at Home., Bath Area Play Project www.bapp.org.uk (01225) 832479	YMCA, catch 22
Local, young person focus	**National, young person focus**

During this process an additional 27 organisations were contacted (41% response rate). Due to the number of positive responses, further interviewees were not contacted when the target interviews were reached.

Author: Dan Shreeve
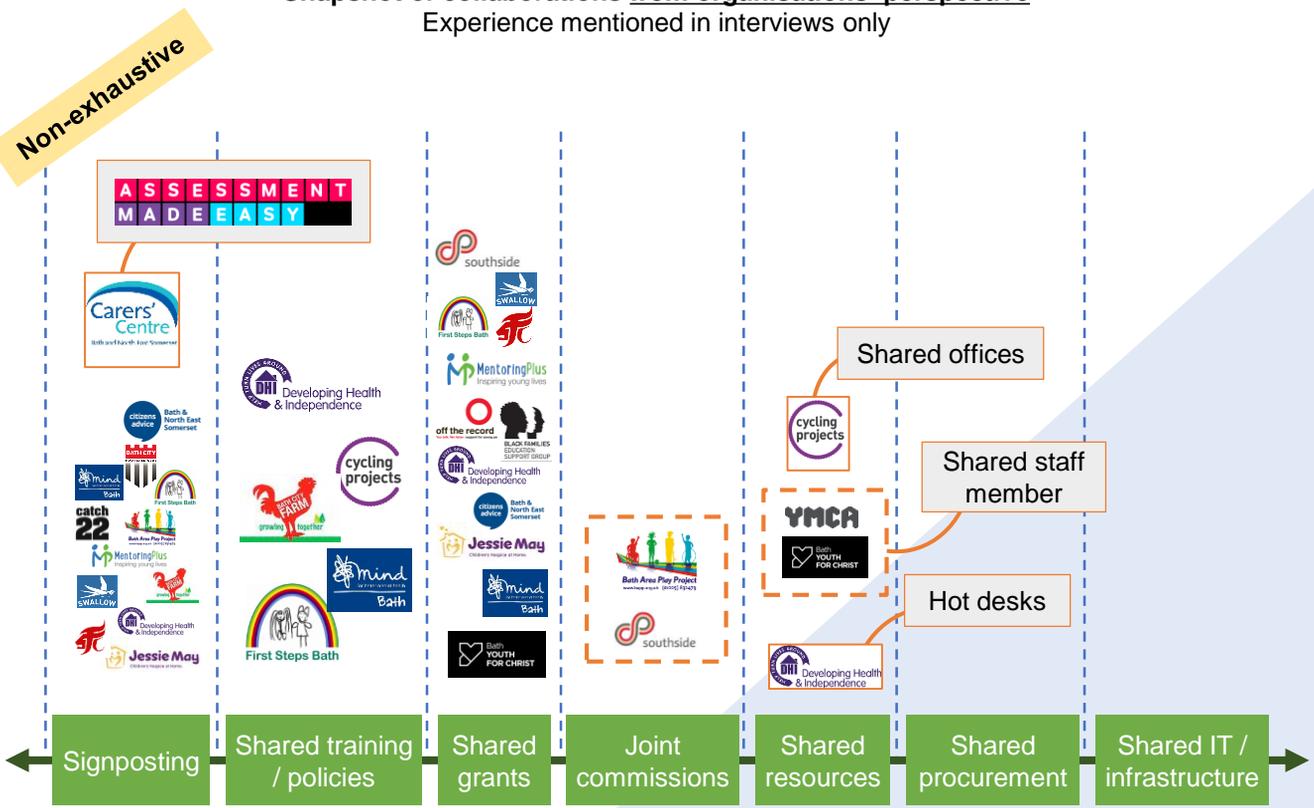
Principles of collaboration

The difference between delivery and operations-focused collaborations emerged through the interview process and helps to frame the way that organisations define collaboration.

Examples of collaboration (below) were mentioned during the interview process. This is not an exhaustive list but indicates the types of collaboration that are occurring or that most readily come to mind.

> "We have done some good proactive collaboration around service delivery but developing the foundations of other opportunities, back office functions as an example, has been less successful."

Snapshot of collaborations <u>from organisations' perspective</u>
Experience mentioned in interviews only

Non-exhaustive

Shared offices

Shared staff member

Hot desks

| Signposting | Shared training / policies | Shared grants | Joint commissions | Shared resources | Shared procurement | Shared IT / infrastructure |

Illustrative spectrum of the types of collaborations (from organisations' perspective)

Delivery-focused — *Operations-focused*

Note:

1) The fact that an organisation does not appear in a column does not mean that it does not carry out this activity, only that it was not mentioned in the interview process.

2) Excludes collaboration that occurs with other offices / locations within national organisations.

Author: Dan Shreeve

Drivers of collaboration

Drivers of collaboration
Mentioned in interviews, All interviews[1]

Driver	Count
Improving delivery and outcomes	12
Need for holistic services	12
More complex delivery landscape	5
Organisational sustainability	5
Avoid duplication of services	4
Funder demand	3
Reducing costs	2
Making use of existing asset	2
Manage growth	1
Sharing information	1
Competing with larger organisations	1

"There is less money and money is going from grant to commission and tender structures. Local groups have to change their processes or national organisations will win these tenders."

Key

1 Factors that directly improve experience for service users

2 Organisation factors

1

Unsurprisingly, the focus for most members is on improving outcomes in line with the ultimate mission of each organisation. This aligns with the majority of examples of existing collaboration, which have been focused on providing a more holistic service.

"The greatest driver is how we enable a society in which all children and young people can thrive. It is important to remind ourselves of that wider mission."

2

Whilst a number of members also discuss organisational pressures that are driving collaboration, there is some frustration that there has not been enough action.

"We have talked about collaborations for so long, but I don't think it's happened enough."
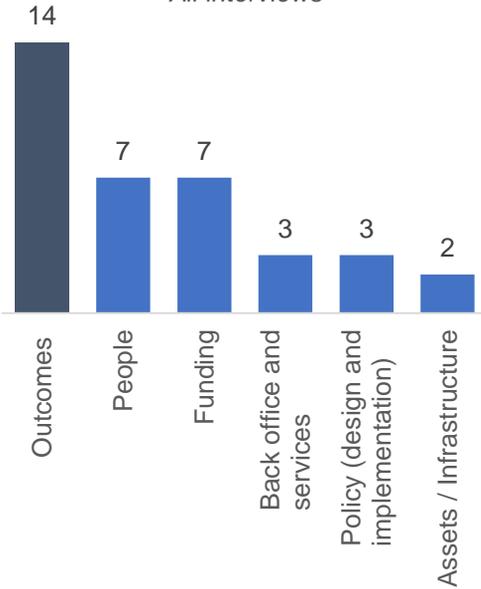
This analysis focuses on the barriers to collaboration and what support members need to overcome these barriers.

1

Which are the 2 most interesting areas of collaboration?
All interviews

Category	Count
Outcomes	14
People	7
Funding	7
Back office and services	3
Policy (design and implementation)	3
Assets / Infrastructure	2

The need to collaborate to best support the service users is a dominant theme. Therefore, members define collaboration mostly in those terms.

"We recognise that the work we do is a small segment of what is required to support any young person / family. In order to deliver the holistic support that individuals need, we work alongside other organisations in collaboration."

"I've always taken the collaborative approach, that you absolutely need to engage with other agencies."

The majority of the collaborative experiences relate to cross referrals or signposting of service users to other organisations. This is part of the day-to-day activities and fits within existing resource models and business as usual processes. For most members, an informal approach to signposting is the most effective tool.

"Being able to signpost to a specific person, someone you have a name of, can be the difference that makes a service user getting in contact with that service."

"Being able to meet those workers and be familiar is probably the best process for young people. A lot of handholding needs to be done to get them from A to B."

One interview highlights a risk that the referral process needs to be at an organisational level rather than purely on a personal basis.

"Signposting is really hard because a lot of it sits in our management team's brains. I know things like the one big database exist but in reality, it is based on people's knowledge."

There is mixed feedback on a more formal signposting approach.

"If there was an external person I'm not sure that would be much of a time saver. It would be an extra link in the chain."

"The [formal] referral system didn't work terribly well. The idea was that each organisation would check their referrals on a daily basis. But there were really only three (of eight) services who used it."

2

Barriers to collaboration
Mentioned in interviews, All interviews[1]

a	Capacity to organise	9
b	Human factor	7
c	Protecting territory	5
d	Reputational risk	4
e	Ongoing admin burden	4
f	Expertise required	4
g	Shared vision / values	3
h	Sufficient information	2
i	Logistics	2
j	Narrow specification of tenders	2

While drivers are mostly focused on the delivery side, the barriers are all organisational, so there does not appear to be a concern that delivery would be affected by more collaboration.

"The reluctance to collaborate is now dissipating, as organisations are realising that the landscape has changed and not working collaboratively is no longer an option."

This section outlines these barriers to further collaboration and highlights:

— The background to these barriers and the underlying reasons for them.

— The existing experience in the network that may be able to help overcome some of these barriers.

Note: 1) Multiple mentions of the same driver by single interviewee counted as one mention

Author: Dan Shreeve

a Capacity to organise | 9

A predictable barrier is the time and resource available to plan, organise and manage collaborations.

"

"Resource, in particular, time, is the key barrier. It takes time on both sides and people are up against it. Often we don't have the time to respond to an email or call."

"Sometimes timescales can be a real driver. You don't necessarily have a huge amount of time from when they advertise to when we need to pull it all together."

"

There is clear willing to engage but often it is a matter of priorities and potentially still seen as a 'nice to have'.

"

"We're all too busy fighting the fire at front line. We're all too busy to tell the bigger story that will help continue our contracts, with our funding."

"The core day-to-day operations is obviously a priority as we need to keep the BAU going."

"

b Human factor | 7

There is a view that personal ego is still a barrier to further collaboration.

"

"I think one of the barriers is the idea that the practitioner can solve everything."

"I found that one barrier is ego."

"

There are some concerns but, for most, different working styles are not insurmountable and can be positive learning experiences.

"

"The question is whether you try to fix these barriers, or only work with those organisations where those barriers don't exist."

"If both organisations have mutual goals but different working styles, it can be an exciting challenge and a great way to learn."

"

Members highlight the need to remember the human element in this process, and that front-line staff and volunteers may be resistant to different approaches.

"

"From a volunteer point of view, you do see a resistance to changing their way of working internally."

"Change can be quite difficult in an established culture."

"

c	Protecting territory		5

Management teams need to ensure the sustainability of their organisations which can create competition.

> "[I am] responsible for keeping us solvent and reducing costs and increasing income."

> "Organisations have a fear of losing their territory."

Organisations acknowledge that mergers cannot be ignored but see it as difficult to proactively explore themselves as a sector.

> "We have to be open to it because we don't know what's coming down the line."

> "It is a really tricky one to deal with, as a community of 3rd sector providers, who are we to play God?"

Members are aware of potential competitiveness between organisations but many appear to be trying to actively avoid it.

> "The temptation is to go into competition mode with the other charities. But I think we have to really resist that."

The perceived competitors vary by size of organisation.

> "The national organisations have taken over but they don't have the relationships we do."

> "[The larger local groups] keep things behind walls sometimes and it requires a step change to work together more collaboratively."

| d | Reputational risk | | 4 |

There is some fear of collaborative failures affecting the relationships with the funders, although that is acknowledged as unlikely.

"

"I don't actually think there are many funders or commissioners that would object to honest conversations. I think there is a fear that they would - then we would step back into self-preservation mode."

"

There is valuable experience in the network regarding best practice on models of collaboration. Below is a summary of the interview feedback:

Number of partners	Set up process	Governance	Resource model	Dealing with conflict / failure
2-3 partners with a lead partner to drive project	Ensure clarity of roles upfront, planning discussions are not wasted time	Transparency on roles, responsibilities and budgets of all other partners	Dedicated funded resource rather than allocating % of time of existing staff	Clear exit strategy and frameworks to regularly review progress

Smaller groups are keen to play a part of larger bids but it appears that it isn't always the usual arrangement for other groups.

"

"We have a specific expertise, so we can certainly add value to a bigger bid."

"It seems to be easier to work with charities of a similar size."

"

| e | Ongoing admin burden | | 4 |

There is recognition that collaboration is not a shortcut to cost savings and can create an unexpected administrative burden.

"I'm never convinced that collaboration reduces costs, but it is worth it for better outcomes."

"Collaboration has been like a full-time job."

Members feel broadly happy with their ability to budget for the costs of collaboration, but accept that full cost recovery rarely works in practice.

"We have a full cost recovery formula but you never get that."

"There is no way that [this project] really washes its face. It's more of a strategic partnership."

This highlights the focus on delivery rather than costs, meaning the admin burden is likely to remain.

"For us it automatically pays even though there's no money that changes hands. What we are less interested in is when the outcomes are vague."

It also highlights the need to have time and support for potentially initial difficult conversations.

"There is a passive aggressive assertiveness from some partners to try and get the costs down."

f | Expertise required | | 4

There is an acknowledgement that technical expertise or specialist roles, needed to support collaboration, do not exist in all management teams.

"My background is not in organisational change or capacity building - all I know about collaboration is the practical ones we have done."

There is a broadly consistent view that the current support networks are patchy but that 3SG is the most well known.

"It is a bit piece meal in many ways. 3SG is the closest to an overarching network."

There are concerns about the conflict between asking service users to repeat their story and sharing their data.

"Families say they don't like seeing too many organisations with different assessments - having to tell their story over and over again can be quite painful."

There appears to be an opportunity to share best practice across the network.

"The regulations are quite clear around consent and confidentiality, but people feel wary. Generally, we see it from the service user's POV - why wouldn't you share?"

Author: Dan Shreeve

g   Shared vision / values   3

Collaboration between organisations that do not share the same vision and values or objectives appears to be more challenging to overcome than different working styles.

"

"There is a concern about the compatibility of values in relation to youth work aims and style."

"A key barrier is the different cultures and values."

"

This indicates that there is a need to improve the knowledge of other organisations in order to avoid wasted time.

"

"We all know what we do in practice but not our values or our ethos."

"

h   Sufficient information   2

Although sharing of information is not seen as a major barrier, there appears to be some limitations on the breadth of knowledge.

"

"I think it is a limitation but not because the information isn't there. It's just that there's so much noise that we're not always looking at it or listening."

"I often meet people who tell me about [my organisation], but they're telling me about the organisation as it was 10-15 years ago."

"

While there is real value in collaborative meetings, there are limits to what can be achieved.

"

"It gives me time to step away from the day-to-day and innovate."

"We all turn up to a meeting every quarter and then we all head back to our offices and get on with it and then don't speak that much in between."

"If one organisation doesn't attend then suddenly you don't have any contact with them."

"

Author: Dan Shreeve

i — Logistics — 2

The basic logistics of collaboration are understandably a limitation for some projects.

> *"The challenges are being a small team, there's only seven of us, having quite a heavy caseload and logistically having to travel to different locations."*

There are a number of network members that are part of, or are affiliated to national organisations.

> *"We have a policy department. I think we would naturally collaborate with our [national] affiliates on best practice and advice."*

This does create areas of natural collaboration with those national parent bodies but also opportunities for the local networks to benefit.

> *"We have some shared infrastructure with [the national organisation] because it is a cost saving, an economy of scale. Insurance is a good example of that. It is something that maybe that B&NES 3rd sector groups could look at and learn from."*
>
> *"We can easily work with a policy template [from our central team], but it is about tweaking them to a local context and sharing with other local 3rd sector providers."*

j — Narrow specification of tenders — 2

One of the underlying barriers that exists is the relatively narrow specifications of the tenders and contracts.

> *"It is very much about recognising what can be done within the specifications. The specifications are pre-determined, so you need to identify partners that can deliver aspects that you can't or would work better with by doing it together…unless the certification changes, there wouldn't be a reason to change the partnership."*

This is an area where members wanted further involvement from funders and also recognise the need for support.

> *"A relationship with the commissioners needs to be very close. I think accountability is important and it makes me feel safer as an organisation."*

Author: Dan Shreeve

The members identified solutions that they feel can help them to collaborate. These can be broadly categorised into **theoretical support to develop collaborative projects** or **specific initiatives**.

Help to develop partnerships

Organisational expertise	▪ Organisational or capacity building expertise to complement organisation's delivery expertise
Partnership frameworks	▪ Templates, frameworks, training and legal advice specifically around structure and process to establish effective collaborations and partnerships
Time to set up collaborations	▪ Increased provision for getting collaborations set up effectively
Funder engagement	▪ Increased engagement with funders through collaborative processes
Pre-delivery investment	▪ Increased provision for time to establish collaborations, post-funding but pre-delivery (i.e. gelling period)
One-off events	▪ Single collaborative events to gain experience of working with other organisations, before committing to long term projects
Shared impact measurement	▪ Tools to measure and evaluate individual collaborative projects and consistently track impact across the sector

Increasing capacity for collaboration

Central resource	▪ Funded resource to support administration, facilitate early discussions and drive awareness of collaboration opportunities
Secondments	▪ Staff placements in other organisations to increase knowledge of their activities and working styles and share best practice
Upskilling for smaller groups	▪ Supporting leadership roles in smaller organisations to drive inclusivity

Increasing awareness of opportunities

Info about other organisations	▪ Variety of options to further expand knowledge of other organisations from e-bulletin boards to round tables to showcase events
Sharing learnings & challenges	▪ Established forum to discuss learnings from projects and challenges faced (e.g. volunteer recruitment, how to engage trustees in collaboration)

Specific initiatives

Reciprocal training	▪ Provide training in a specialist area to other third sector group and receive training from other third sector groups
Shared location	▪ Physical space to create links between organisations as well as a single location for service users to access different services
Shared procurement	▪ Gaining economies of scale in purchasing common items including IT and HR services, insurance, phone contracts and other specialist services
Single strategic network voice	▪ Create a stronger single voice for local organisations to vocalise strategic issues and compete with larger national groups

"

"It is a great location for young people to be, between McDonald's and Pathways. it's the safe place and it's their place so, whether it's a social services appt or a CAMS appt, it's more likely that they'll turn up."

"Dividing the service responsibilities can be simple. What is difficult is getting the service users to participate. Implementation is the challenge."

Developing Health & Independence

"Our organisations met at various meetings, followed by our Chief Execs having the same objectives. It was borne out of discussions and became a joint vision of the two organisations."

YMCA

"Working together with new partners can be tough but I see no point in complaining. I prefer to try to resolve those issues."

Anonymous

"

"

"We often make our meetings for 10am so everyone can arrive on time. Is that really the best use of time because what are we doing between 9am and 10am?"

"The school of social entrepreneur training is an action learning set, so you are supported by other people trying to set up social enterprises. I think action learning would be really helpful to do locally as it brings in expertise in a formulaic way."

"If we are collaborating, we need to make sure it doesn't just end up as a moaning shop where you just complain about your problems. It's interesting to hear what people are doing but there needs to be a need or have an ask rather than a casual conversation."

Carers' Centre
Bath and North East Somerset

"I was impressed by how Exeter CoLabs have a group of local organisations under one roof. It's based around a GP surgery for homelessness and the model seem to work quite well."
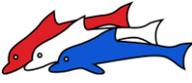
cycling projects

"Anything with higher safeguarding levels, makes stuff more complicated."

Anonymous

"

Author: Dr Linda Watts

During this interview process, interviews were conducted with 15 organisations in B&NES with variations in focus on region and activities.

Uniformed	Local groups

Uniformed

2nd Bath Boys Brigade

2nd Paulton Scout Group

1st Paulton Guides

BATH

Bath Dolphins

Garraway Youth Hub
Bath Judo Club

Sport

Local groups

Widcombe Acorns — A City Centre Forest School

BATH TOY LIBRARY

Bath Welcomes Refugees

THE COMMUNITY BUS

Toybox Toy Library

Frederick Chopin Integrated Saturday School

BathAbbey
Anchor Youth

North East Somerset & Bath Methodist Circuit
Youth Clubs

Keynsham & District Mencap Society

Groups with national affiliation

During this process an additional 32 organisations were contacted (32% response rate). Further interviewees were not contacted when the target interviews were reached.

Definitions of collaboration

- Where there was an impetus for collaboration to meet operational needs, interviewees usually referred to the short term – say, to initiate specific structured joint working within the next six months. Collaborative working needs that were discussed in these interviews were most often described as easing operational problems in relation to service delivery.

- Many groups and organisations had experience of informal joint working arrangements that had been relevant and productive in their experience. In these interviews they often needed to be prompted before they identified long standing arrangements as being examples of collaborative working. In some cases, high value was placed on informal collaborative working in relation to shared values, mutual support and practical assistance.

The key drivers for collaborative working

Short term survival

- For those groups and organisations who are relatively reliant on volunteers for their operation, the key drivers for collaborative working were very specific to each group. The drivers might relate to current operational issues concerning regular activity or foreseeable challenges, often related to funding, that needed to be tackled in the relatively short term.

Improving delivery

- By far the most interesting area of collaborative working for interviewees was improving delivery. Outcomes and funding were most frequently highlighted. In some cases, increasing funding was raised as an imperative to maintain delivery currently, or within the foreseeable future. Given that groups that are reliant on volunteers tend to have minimal back office functions, the emphasis on operational issues related to delivery was perhaps inevitable.

Complex needs

- In a few cases, more complex needs were identified

> "
> *"We need help with working with children who've experienced trauma, with advice on immigration status and with meeting the needs of individuals such as an isolated teenager who would benefit from mentoring."'*
> "

Desire to remain competitive

- A few of the groups or organisations interviewed were aware of collaborative joint bidding for funding in the region and had assumed that collaborative bids had a competitive edge.

Declining funding sources

- Specific drivers to working collaboratively in B&NES included declining funding sources. Opportunities identified in the interviews related to immediate challenges.

> "
> *"Heritage Lottery funding is coming to an end later this year after six years. We won't be able to cover staff costs without that funding. A joint bid could bring back a play 'offer' in the area (North East Somerset) that has been lost."*
> "

User need and practical requirements

- Interviewees generally wished to remain specialised – but users' needs and practical requirements are clearly a stimulus for informal collaborative working.

> ❝
> *"We are focussed on providing a particular service that families value but to widen our provision, we have introduced sessions on healthy eating and other ideas that could lead to more joint working with other groups."*
> ❞

Dealing with things out of their control

- Relatively short-term changes that are not in the control of groups are problematic and challenging:

> ❝
> *"'B&NES council has proposed that the premises that we share is to be subject to Asset Transfer. We are volunteer led, it is very daunting for us and we don't think that we have the capacity to lead an Asset Transfer process."*
> ❞

Supportive funders

- There are no generalisations that can be made from these interviews. Some positive observations were made about local funders' roles:

> ❝
> *"We had a good experience of networking sessions that St John's arranged – they were helpful and we enjoyed getting together with other groups and exploring possible ways that we could support each other."*
> ❞

Volunteers

> " "
>
> *"There is a Bath University Scouts and Guides Society who for some years have provided volunteer leaders for us. It would be a problem if we didn't have student leaders."*
>
> " "

Policies

- Groups dedicated to sport discussed collaborative working with regional and national organisations who could provide a policy framework for their sport, rather than developing formal collaboration with other sporting groups in B&NES:

> " "
>
> *"We use the Wavepower policies developed by Swim England – national policies and procedures for safeguarding and welfare of children."*
>
> *"Our affiliation to Young Bristol is very positive for us as we get advice on different issues including policies and insurance."*
>
> " "

Premises - churches involvement

- The churches in B&NES play a significant role for many groups.

> " "
>
> *"We have a long-term relationship with the Moravian Church, in Weston, who support our use of the hall."*
>
> *"St Michaels Church in Twerton has the Rose Cottage community facility that we are able to use for social get togethers."*
>
> " "

Fundraising

- Keynsham MENCAP have participated in the Bath Trustee Network – fundraising workshops were arranged by the Volunteer Centre, and they are involved in the Keynsham Action Network – to link with other groups operating in Keynsham.

> " "
>
> *"We participate in a needs research programme with Bath Youth for Christ and we hope that work will help guide our youth work in the future."*
>
> " "

Author: Dr Linda Watts

Other collaboration experience

> ❝
>
> *"We have free first aid training from a qualified St Johns Ambulance volunteer."*
>
> *"We participate in a needs research programme with Bath Youth for Christ and we hope that work will help guide our youth work in the future."*
>
> *"We have informal partnerships with other (swimming) service providers in the Bath area for swimmer pathway / development and we intend to formalise these in the next twelve months."*
>
> ❞

Groups' experience of signposting

- Most of these groups and organisations wished to address children's or young people's diverse needs themselves in an integrated way as far as possible and placed a value on that inclusivity.

> ❝
>
> *"We're supporting a group of autistic children to participate in our activities with volunteer leaders who give extra time and attention to their needs, also children with other disabilities."*
>
> ❞

- This support does not rule out potential signposting to other groups.

> ❝
>
> *"We cater for children and young people with a range of differing needs where practical, safe and beneficial to do so – though we will when appropriate, refer young disabled swimmers to others including Keynsham Seals who specialise in swimming club activity for disabled children and young people."*
>
> ❞

Barriers to working collaboratively in this area

Time / prioritisation

- The main barrier to collaborative working was lack of available time, given the need to focus very substantially on keeping activities running for children and young people. Staff referred to other commitments such as parenting and paid work – time to spare for collaboration activity was in some cases an aspiration but in effect was often a luxury. This issue was mentioned by a number of groups including the Toy Libraries.

Logistics

- More generally, a barrier to working collaboratively in B&NES identified during the interviews was the difficulty of creating time for engagement and travel within the area, especially North East Somerset. This difficulty was raised by Keynsham MENCAP and Bath Division Guides.

Back office and services, assets and infrastructure

- Structured information sharing was in general not carried out by these groups and organisations due to capacity and organisational limitations although in the longer term, data sharing could be of benefit to some groups. Data sharing was therefore not explored in these interviews. These groups and organisations do not tend to have resources or are not able to access resources, for 'upfront' investment in organisational development.

Capacity issues

- Most groups would have little or no capacity to engage in a tender process, though a number of these groups were concerned to be able to prepare competent funding bids. An example is a North East Somerset group that is concerned as to how to effectively frame future bids.

- The smaller groups and organisations also have limited capacity to engage with multiple projects and very few groups are running more than one project.

Competition

- In these interviews, little reference was made to competitive threats – assumptions about collaboration were largely positive. But one group commented about fundraising:

"We are all vying for the same pots"

Need for facilitation

> *"We really want to take children on activity trips – canoeing, sailing etc but need to 'hook up' with another organisation to help us to have enough organising and practical capacity. Children in this area may not be taken out anywhere for visits or activities unless we organise trips for them. Any opportunities that can be taken to widen the Cubs' knowledge and experience can only benefit all."*

Awareness

- More generally in these interviews, there was little or no awareness of collaborative working apart from those arrangements where there was active involvement by the interviewee.

- The level of awareness of existing support was an issue that emerged in the interviews. The representatives of groups and organisations interviewed generally did not have a full understanding of the role of the B&NES Children and Young People's Network. Where there had been significant volunteer turnover in a few groups, there was little or no knowledge of the Network's current role and updated contact details may not have been provided to the Network. There were indications that it was hoped or assumed that the Network's role would take forward aspects of the findings of this research.

> *"The Network could bring together groups who are working with young people who have disabilities."*
>
> *"The Network meeting will help me to make contact with groups who can support our work."*
>
> *"A B&NES wide youth forum is very much needed to bring paid and voluntary youth workers together, for mutual support and co-ordination."*

'Suggested needs'

Volunteer recruitment

- In a context where groups are reliant solely on small scale subscriptions and donations to keep their activities going, approaches to volunteer recruitment, signposting and support are vital for the future of the sector in B&NES. There are issues for groups in relation to staff cover, consistent volunteer availability and some concern about the prospective closure of the Volunteer Centre – for example:

> "We need a volunteer recruitment effort in Keynsham – we can only operate with locally based volunteers."
>
> "We need volunteer Guide Leaders – we can't recruit student leaders from the universities because we aren't within reach of the universities."
>
> "The closing of the Volunteer Centre will create a gap and new joint working with another agency or arrangement may be needed so that we can recruit the volunteers that we need."

- The interviews indicate that collective approaches for the future need to be put in place that acknowledge the critical role of volunteers in these organisations, to ensure that stimulus is maintained for volunteer recruitment and signposting for volunteers. Interview findings indicate that this could most effectively be done on an area basis.

Support to meet training needs

- Training need were highlighted by a number of groups.

> "There is a need for locally based training to avoid sending staff long distances on expensive courses."
>
> "First Aid training is important and needed for our leaders but it must be Bath based and low cost or free – we can't send volunteer leaders a long way out of the area for a training session."
>
> "Training is very important; however, we feel that we need more than the basic training that is sometimes on offer. Ideally, we are looking for locally accessible training at a deeper level."

- In summary, training needs relate to the need for locally based, low cost or free training in first aid. Training in child development, and in supporting children who have experienced trauma is required - this is training that is developmental, not briefing for relatively inexperienced staff or volunteers.

- Group work and development needs articulated in the interviews were B&NES based, focussing on fundraising skills for core costs applications or specific activity costs such as transport. This acknowledges that core costs are an increasing concern – both in the short term and in the medium / longer term.

Some groups were concerned with assessing space / premises, IT and transportation needs – they all thought that their needs could optionally be met through some form of collaboration but cost was a key consideration:

Shared premises

- These two groups need storage or meeting space.

> *"We've had projected the needs of young people with learning disabilities moving into the Keynsham area because of the new developments here. We need more activity to take place on their premises and this leads to our needing storage space in the Keynsham area."*
>
> *"We need meeting space for a group class for teenage refugees and regular space one day a week in the summer holidays for children's activities."*

- This group has space to offer.

> *"Our grants were withdrawn ten years ago so we are reliant on our hall being fully used – it is underused in the afternoons at the moment. We have martial arts activities but with say judo, it is run on a shoestring. We could do with help with advertising our facilities more widely."*

Shared transport

- An issue for a number of groups is access to low cost or free transport with suitably experienced drivers to take children on outings. These groups wished to share transportation assets such as a minibus etc because the current lower cost provision is often oversubscribed in terms of booking.

> *"We are in contact with children who may not be taken on any outing at all out of school. We want to take them on trips but must have access to affordable transport."*
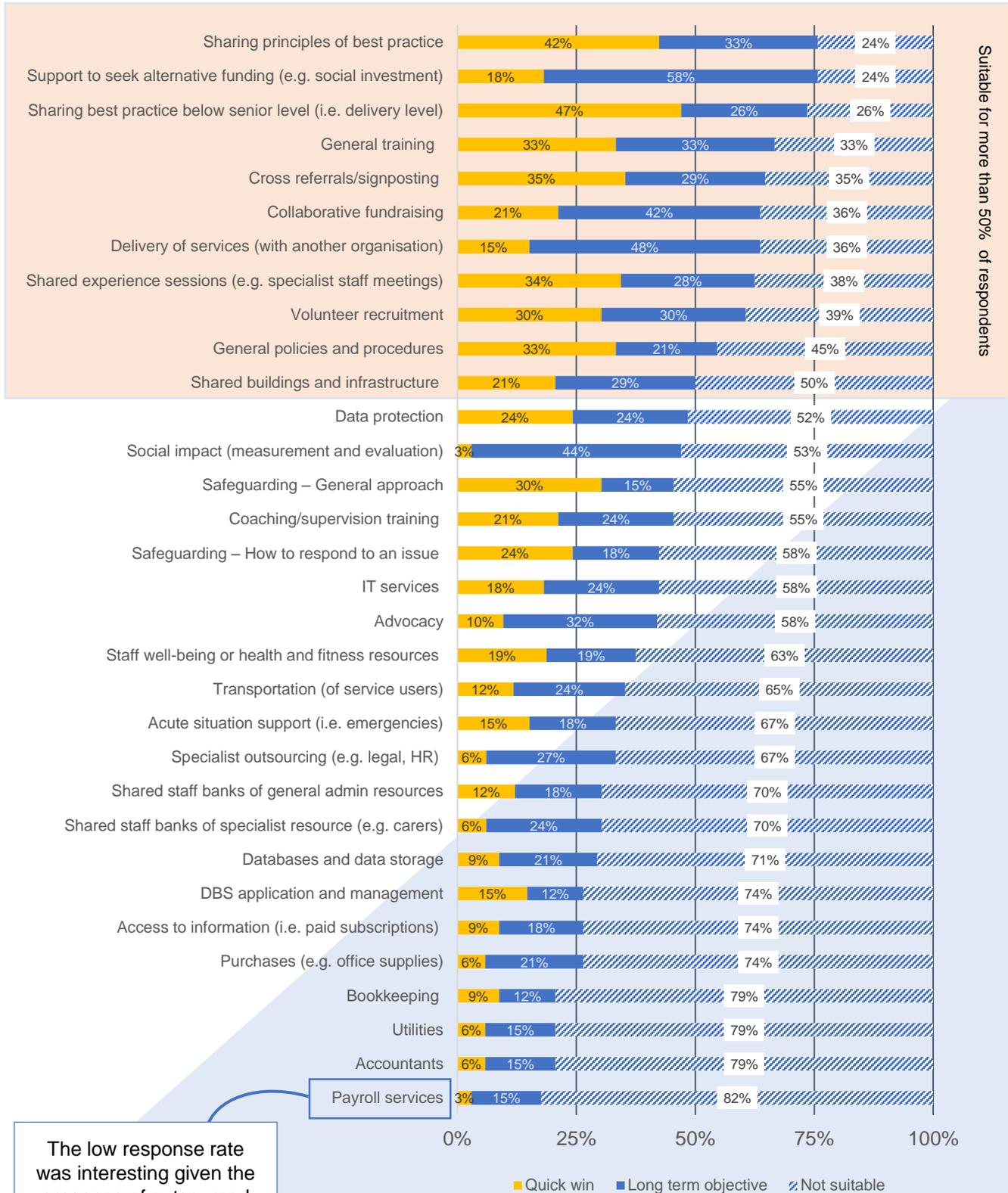
Shared IT skills

> *"Our website should be developed and we should have proper toy cataloguing. - IT development would need to be provided free or at very low cost through joint working or through a skilled volunteer."*

In the case of both premises and transport, many groups in B&NES will have varying needs for differing lengths of time, for additional activity / meeting space and for occasional use of transport especially minibus type transport. Other groups, albeit a lesser number, may have activity / meeting space and transport to offer to other groups. Without extensive and time-consuming contact between groups, the 'matching' of needs with offered resources (in other words, demand and supply) may not happen. There is a need for a means of systematically pooling information about needs and availability, given the potential positive impacts for children and young people. This could be some form of digital hub or easy access solution.

Question:
Below is a list of potential areas of collaboration. Please indicate, in your opinion, which of the three categories is most suitable for each area of potential collaboration
(% of responses, one response per area of collaboration per respondent)

Area of collaboration	Quick win	Long term objective	Not suitable
Sharing principles of best practice	42%	33%	24%
Support to seek alternative funding (e.g. social investment)	18%	58%	24%
Sharing best practice below senior level (i.e. delivery level)	47%	26%	26%
General training	33%	33%	33%
Cross referrals/signposting	35%	29%	35%
Collaborative fundraising	21%	42%	36%
Delivery of services (with another organisation)	15%	48%	36%
Shared experience sessions (e.g. specialist staff meetings)	34%	28%	38%
Volunteer recruitment	30%	30%	39%
General policies and procedures	33%	21%	45%
Shared buildings and infrastructure	21%	29%	50%
Data protection	24%	24%	52%
Social impact (measurement and evaluation)	3%	44%	53%
Safeguarding – General approach	30%	15%	55%
Coaching/supervision training	21%	24%	55%
Safeguarding – How to respond to an issue	24%	18%	58%
IT services	18%	24%	58%
Advocacy	10%	32%	58%
Staff well-being or health and fitness resources	19%	19%	63%
Transportation (of service users)	12%	24%	65%
Acute situation support (i.e. emergencies)	15%	18%	67%
Specialist outsourcing (e.g. legal, HR)	6%	27%	67%
Shared staff banks of general admin resources	12%	18%	70%
Shared staff banks of specialist resource (e.g. carers)	6%	24%	70%
Databases and data storage	9%	21%	71%
DBS application and management	15%	12%	74%
Access to information (i.e. paid subscriptions)	9%	18%	74%
Purchases (e.g. office supplies)	6%	21%	74%
Bookkeeping	9%	12%	79%
Utilities	6%	15%	79%
Accountants	6%	15%	79%
Payroll services	3%	15%	82%

Suitable for more than 50% of respondents

■ Quick win ■ Long term objective ▨ Not suitable

The low response rate was interesting given the presence of outsourced providers.

Appendix

Author: Dan Shreeve

Case study research was additional to the original scope of this project. The researchers felt that it was important to provide real-world examples of the different types of collaboration to support the recommendations.

Presenting a list of collaboration examples can bring to life the opportunities for collaboration. This is particularly important given the feedback that there is not a clear definition of what collaboration could mean for many members of the network. It also provides a starting point for further research or potential contacts that could provide advice on best practice.

Within the scope of this project, it is acknowledged that this is a non-exhaustive list and provides a high-level review of a selection of case studies. It is easier to identify examples of joint delivery and fundraising, which are typically more high profile, as well the collaborations between larger organisations, so we note that there is some bias towards these types of collaboration.

Author: Dan Shreeve

1   **Young People's Foundations - Overview**

Children and Young People focus

Background	The foundations were set up by John Lyons in response to falling numbers of groups focused on young people, which they believed were due to: — A move to contracts and commissions favouring large organisations — The reduction in government funding also reduced the associated strategic guidance to organisations — The closure of council buildings focused on youth services under pressure to sell assets for commercial gain The first foundation started in Brent in 2014 and foundations now exist in eight boroughs in London (see map) with discussions in Trafford, Manchester, Hartlepool, Enfield, Redbridge etc.
Overview of operations	The foundations are all independent charities (CIO structure). The foundation acts as a local prime contractor by mapping out the delivery needs of the borough, mapping services and identifying duplication. Key functions include: 1. Facilitating centralised fundraising based on a consortia approach in order to access funding from a variety of sources 2. Providing a 'Venue Bank' for groups to share and access available sites for projects 3. Distributing a small grant fund to member organisations 4. Organising sector specific capacity building - networking events, training etc Foundations are inclusive membership organisations including voluntary and statutory services, local authority, police, clinical commissioning groups, housing associations, state schools, faith groups, uniformed groups, corporate sector and funders.
Key collaboration concepts	Any youth related service that has passed safeguarding checks can be members. Designed to break down silos and "reduce mistrust between groups" and "create access to new funds rather than competing for shrinking pots". The objective is not to create national organisations but a locally-owned organisation tailored to local needs. Input from the local authority, funders and wider business sectors is key but each foundation operates as a independent structure.
Types of partners	Foundations involve all organisations that deliver services to children and young people in the relevant areas.

Author: Dan Shreeve

1

1 **Young People's Foundations - Activities**

Children and Young People focus

Access to funding

— The foundation applies for and holds grants and then contracts member organisations to deliver.

— John Lyons reports there is typically 9-10 members with the ability to deliver in each issue area so it does not create competition between members.

> *"The foundations are able to target larger national grants that the smaller organisations couldn't access. It's not about merging organisations or losing their identity - the foundation is merely the prime contractor at a local level."*

Venue bank

— An online platform to help groups without a location to run their services by linking them into another organisation with space. An organisation can register for the online venue bank and, once safeguarding checks have been passed, they can then look for available space or advertise.

— Anonymity is key so no group can be excluded based on personal preferences. It aims to replace previous approaches where two groups formed a long-term relationship (which excluded others) and was a less efficient use of space. The technology platform is being built and reportedly would be "essentially free to access for members of new foundations".

Mechanism for external engagement and donations

— Mechanism for local businesses and smaller funders to donate to Youth Services. It has also been a vehicle to engage with schools and universities, which John Lyons believe have historically struggled to manage ongoing relationships with 3rd sector organisations.

Advocacy, training and support

— Creates a network for thematic issues, with investment in training and safeguarding via the network.

Single access point

— Creates a single point of access for media, young people and parents who want to find out what's going on for Youth Services, information for CSR, volunteering or apprenticeships.

Structure of foundations

Typically, a lean structure with CEO, a fundraising and development role, a capacity building and community engagement role and an operations and administration role. The team can be developed over time to reduce launch funding requirements.

Funding for foundations

The core income of c.£200k for the 4-5 staff members has come from John Lyons and other funders (e.g. Local authority, City Bridge Trust). This covers core costs so any funding received does not have to contribute to that central cost – 100% of funds goes to members to deliver projects.

Author: Dan Shreeve

2 Rotherham CYP's Independent Local Solutions

Children and Young People focus

Location	Rotherham
Overview of operations	Consortium of 35+ of the main providers of children, young people and families services with a trading arm to support collaborative tendering.
Key collaboration concepts	The Independent Local Solutions trading arm is designed to: — Enable smaller organisations to take part in the delivery of contracts — Enable members to jointly tender for contracts — Give funders easier access to the diverse range of services available from members
Types of partners	All organisations that deliver services to children and young people in Rotherham.
Impact	FaME: a project which contacted over 200 families to establish their needs and connect them with appropriate services. My Place: Rotherham's £3m flagship centre for young people In 2014, the consortium hosted a Safeguarding and CSE Conference.

Children, Young People and Families' Consortium
ROTHERHAM VOLUNTARY SECTOR

3 Harlem Children's Zone

Children and Young People focus

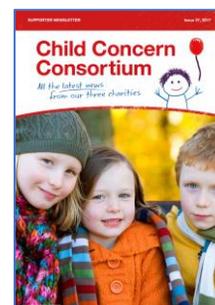|	
Location	Harlem, New York
Overview of operations	A non-profit organisation for poverty-stricken children and families living in Harlem, providing free support in the form of parenting workshops, a pre-school program, three charter schools, and child-oriented health programs for thousands of children and families.
Key collaboration concepts	A holistic approach providing an interlocking network of best-practice programs to support children at every stage of their development, from birth through college. Care worker assesses service users' needs and cross-refers to relevant partner support services. Formalised signposting process and diligence of collaborating partners by central delivery organisation.
Types of partners	All organisations that deliver services to children and young people in Harlem.
Impact	600 goals tracked each year including: — 97% college acceptance rate across programs in 2017 — 13,447 youth ages 0-23 served in 2017 — 14,126 adults served in 2017

Harlem Children's ZONE

EARLY CHILDHOOD
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
MIDDLE SCHOOL
HIGH SCHOOL
COLLEGE

COLLEGE PREPARATORY PROGRAM   THE COLLEGE SUCCESS OFFICE

OUR PIPELINE

EARLY CHILDHOOD   ELEMENTARY SCHOOL   MIDDLE SCHOOL   HIGH SCHOOL   COLLEGE

FAMILY + SOCIAL SERVICE + HEALTH PROGRAMS

COMMUNITY-BUILDING PROGRAMS

Author: Dan Shreeve

4   Child Concern Consortium

Children and Young People focus

Location	Nationwide
Overview of operations	A charitable company that raises funds for a group of three charities helping vulnerable children and their families across the UK. An initial £8.5k was invested by each of the five launch members to launch the new legal entity.
Key collaboration concepts	The consortium generates unrestricted income for its members: funds being distributed equally to all five after the Consortium's operating costs have been covered. The majority of income raised by the Consortium is through Payroll Giving, with the rest through regular giving via direct debit, collecting change in boxes, or one-off donations. The trustee board, which meets quarterly, is composed of staff representatives from each of the member charities.
Types of partners	Large national charities.
Impact	Since launching, the consortium has raised c.30 times the amount of each charity's original investment. A key learning was the need tor mechanisms to ensure an ongoing commitment from the members.

5   Evidence it / The Social Value and Social Impact toolkit

Children and Young People focus

Location	Derby
Overview of operations	The Derby CYPN has received funding from The Tudor Trust to create a shared resource using an outcome based model to measure and demonstrate the value and impact that services make to the lives of children, young people and families.
Key collaboration concepts	The Social Value and Social Impact toolkit is "interactive and responsive to the needs of our network members and commissioning bodies". The funding also covers a free bespoke service to CYPN members to work on data collection and outcomes measurement that fits with their services.
Types of partners	All organisations that deliver services to children and young people in Derby.
Impact	The project is still in development so outcomes are not yet evidenced.

Author: Dan Shreeve

6 Ambition East Midlands (Social Impact Bond)

Children and Young People focus

Location	Gloucestershire
Overview of operations	Aspire Gloucestershire helps the most vulnerable young homeless people in Gloucestershire. It offers innovative and intensive support to improve accommodation options and provide education, training and employment opportunities, delivered by P3 and CCP.
Key collaboration concepts	Collaboration between third sector organisations, private enterprise and commercial investors. Aspire Gloucestershire is funded through a Social Impact Bond (SIB). Repayment is under a "payment-by-results" contract with the Department of Communities and Local Government, out of long-term savings to the public purse.
Types of partners	Local organisations in Gloucester.
Impact	Over the three years of the programme, 150 young homeless people will take part in the programme. Performance will be measured by how many young people are successfully housed and maintain a tenancy, and enter and maintain employment, education or training.

7 Remember a Charity

Wider community focus

Location	Nationwide
Overview of operations	A consortium of over 140 charities working to raise awareness of charitable legacies and to increase legacy income to UK charities through advertising, direct mail, PR and national television campaigns
Key collaboration concepts	Remember a Charity is not a legal entity in its own right, but an initiative hosted by the Institute of Fundraising. The consortium employs three staff and is overseen by a steering group, nominated from the membership, and led by an elected Chair. Members represent a diverse range of sizes and causes, and pay a subscription fee based on the amount of their annual eligible voluntary income, which excludes an organisation's grants and its corporate sponsorship and donations.
Types of partners	Organisations of varying size nationwide.
Impact	10% increase in the number of UK charities included in wills since 2014-15. £2.5 billion legacy income in 2015 across the UK, with gifts from baby boomers accounting for one-in-ten charitable estates.

Author: Dan Shreeve

8 **9**

Wider community focus

8   Restore (mental health) - Oxfordshire

Location	Oxfordshire
Overview of operations	Restore has supported people with mental health problems for over 35 years
Key collaboration concepts	Restore has developed a number of collaborative projects in the past 10 years including: 1. A co-finance project to support people getting back into employment in the south east. 2. An ongoing Oxfordshire-focused collaboration that provides recovery services. In this project, Restore chose to collaborate with smaller locally focused organisations to support a diverse voluntary sector. 3. A sub-contract to deliver a well-being service in Oxford.
Types of partners	Focus on developing projects with smaller organisations.
Impact	Ensuring smaller organisations received funding to continue working and keeping the sector more resilient.

restore working for mental health

Stories of Recovery
Read the stories of people who have been supported by Restore.

Recovery Groups
Work in a supportive team undertaking activities such as gardening, woodwork, catering and craft.

Coaching
Get individual support to achieve your goals and start employment, volunteering or education.

Info for Carers
Find out how we can support you and your loved one, and the details of organisations who can support you.

9   Kent Charities Group

Wider community focus

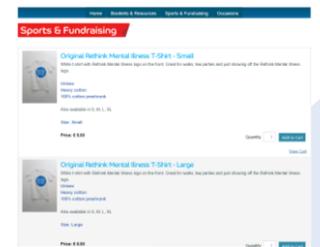| Location	Kent
Overview of operations	Specific collaboration founded in 2003 by twelve charities linked by area and size but with different objectives.
Key collaboration concepts	Initially, collaboration was focused on sharing resources to maximise fundraising potential, and enable them to compete more effectively with larger charities. In 2007, eight charities participated in a Christmas draw, all selling tickets and sharing the proceeds.
Types of partners	Organisations of varying size in Kent.
Impact	The initial broader scope didn't show immediate results which 'disappointed some trustees' so the focus on fundraising delivered quick outcomes and improved commitment.

Kent Charities Group
COT
Powell-Cotton Museum
M4S
BLACKTHORN TRUST
Hi Kent

Author: Dan Shreeve

10 Mental Health Shop

Wider community focus

Location	Nationwide
Overview of operations	Two charities, Rethink and Mental Health Media, collaborated to found an online and telephone shop selling mental health publications, booklets, videos and DVDs. Mental Health Shop was established in response to an identified need for a single point where information on mental health could be accessed.
Key collaboration concepts	An initial grant was received from Lloyds TSB Foundation funded a part-time staff member. A steering group, composed of two staff members from each charity, met quarterly to oversee the work. The partners shared a detailed written agreement regarding all the financial implications of the project: how profits and losses would be divided, and the structure of the collaboration.
Types of partners	Large national charities.
Impact	The Mental Health Shop website is still thriving, and receives around 200 unique visitors a day. The collaborative element has now ended but has strengthened the partnerships between the charities which continue to work together on the 'Time to Change' anti-stigma campaign.

11 Devon advocacy

Wider community focus

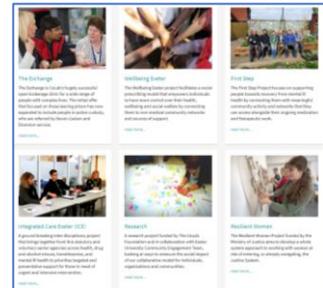|	
Location	Devon
Overview of operations	A partnership of six charitable advocacy organisations, brought together in 2014 providing free and independent commissioned advocacy services across Devon and Torbay: — General and Health Complaints Advocacy — Independent Care Act Advocacy — Independent Mental Health Advocacy — Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy
Key collaboration concepts	Each organisation within the consortium has a specialist area, such as Mental Health, Learning Disabilities, older people so referrals can be allocated to the most appropriate provider. The consortium are committed to the principles of the 2002 Advocacy Charter to ensure consistent policies and procedure.
Types of partners	Six established charities across Devon.

Case studies

Author: Dan Shreeve

`12` `13`

`12` Exeter CoLab

Wider community focus

Location	Exeter
Overview of operations	Developed by Exeter CVS, CoLab was developed as an initiative to act as a broker, enabler, and catalyst for projects to meet local need. *"A hub where organisations work together, support one another, and through an innovative model of collaboration, seek to bring out positive change and social justice for individuals and communities."*
Key collaboration concepts	CoLab Exeter is an integrated wellbeing and innovation hub that works in collaboration with agencies across sectors to strengthen local services and achieve positive whole community outcomes around homelessness, addiction, (re)offending, and health inequality. The focus is on the service user who can access a variety of services, support, learning and social experiences in one place.
Types of partners	Organisations of varying size based in Exeter.
Impact	The building now hosts over 30 organisations from community, social enterprise, public and business sectors working together to tackle some of the most challenging issues facing the local community.

`13` Charity Share Ltd.

Wider community focus

Location	Nationwide
Overview of operations	Charityshare is an award-winning limited company owned by its member charities and built on an ethos of "achieving more by working together". Charityshare's vision is to deliver fit-for-purpose information technology services in a cost-effective, shared fashion that is agile and scalable.
Key collaboration concepts	Local and national technical support and two shared data centres. By pooling IT infrastructure, each member charity gains economies of scale for hosting, networking and support services.
Types of partners	Large national charities.
Impact	As the organisation is Not-for-profit and levies no VAT, it is reportedly a highly cost-effective approach. It has also significantly improved user satisfaction and reliability metrics.

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Author: Dan Shreeve

14 **15**

14 CollaborationNI

Wider community focus

Location	Northern Ireland
Overview of operations	CollaborationNI is a programme commissioned by the Building Change Trust and run by a consortium of NICVA, Stellar Leadership and CO3.
Key collaboration concepts	Originally funded by Building Change Trust, between 2011 and 2016 the programme supported over 1,000 organisations and 6,000 individuals to work in partnership in Northern Ireland. Any VCSE organisation interested in collaboration was able to access free support from CollaborationNI irrespective of size, geographical location or type of work covering: — develop or strengthen a network or alliance — form a new group structure or merge — jointly deliver services, influence and campaign — share staff / resources / space — share information or establish referral systems — jointly fundraise or prepare / apply for consortia tendering
Types of partners	Organisations of varying size in Northern Ireland interested in collaboration.
Impact	CollaborationNI funding ceased at the end of Sep-16 but each of the three original partner organisations, NICVA, CO3 and Stellar Leadership continue to provide collaboration support and can be contacted directly.

15 Community Transport Association

Wider community focus

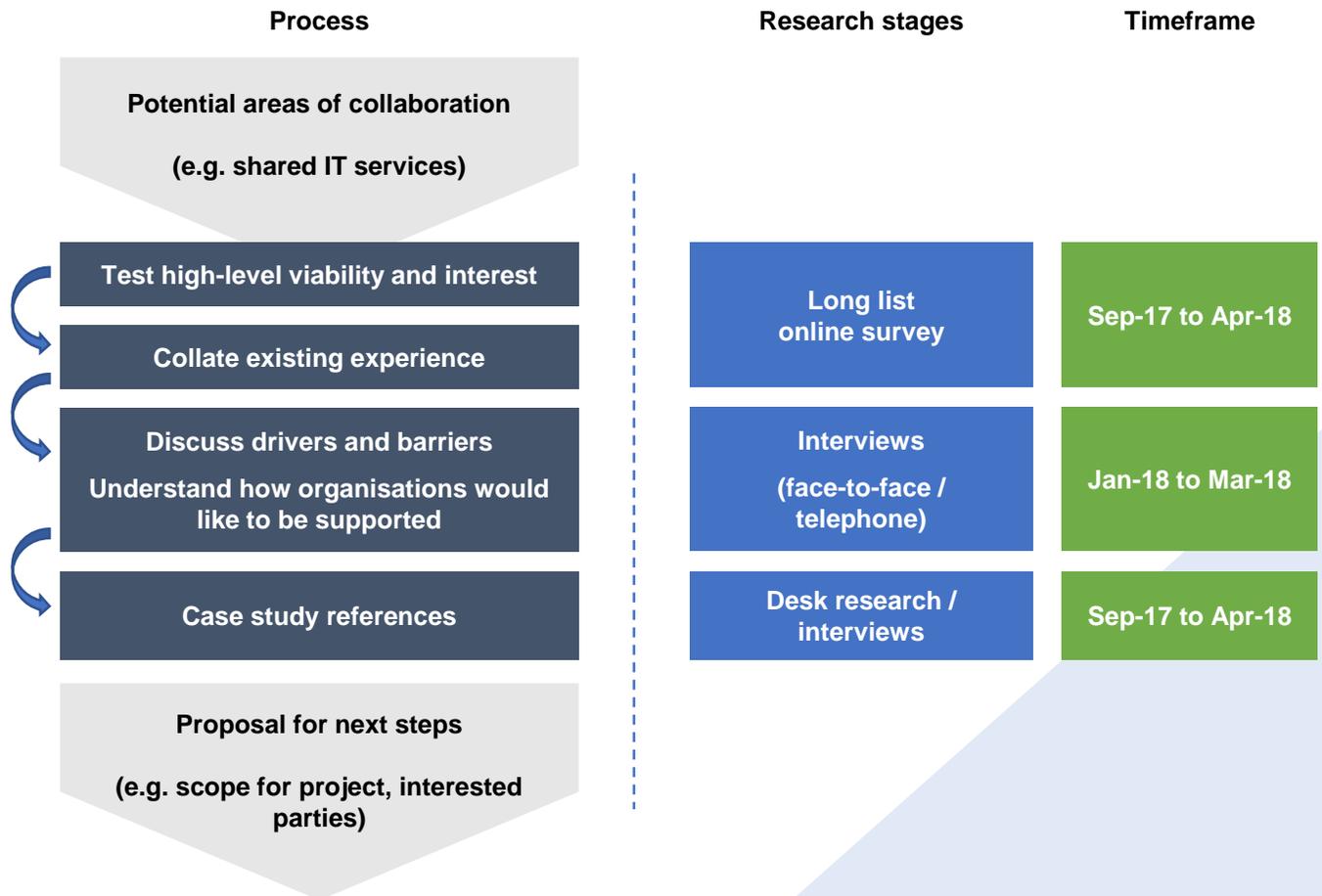| Location	Nationwide
Overview of operations	The CTA exists to support its members and to act as the lead UK body for voluntary and community transport. Our members are organisations embedded in the communities they serve.
Key collaboration concepts	Community transport is about freedom and fairness of opportunity. It meets the needs of people who do not have access to cars, taxis or buses, and provides a lifeline in both rural and urban areas. It takes disabled people to work, children to school, sick people to healthcare and older people to the shops. It runs local bus routes and provides transport for a wide range of clubs, voluntary bodies and care homes.
Types of partners	Organisations of varying size nationwide.

Author: Dr Linda Watts

Overall approach

The research process was split into stages:

Process	Research stages	Timeframe

Potential areas of collaboration

(e.g. shared IT services)

Process	Research stages	Timeframe
Test high-level viability and interest	**Long list online survey**	**Sep-17 to Apr-18**
Collate existing experience		
Discuss drivers and barriers **Understand how organisations would like to be supported**	**Interviews (face-to-face / telephone)**	**Jan-18 to Mar-18**
Case study references	**Desk research / interviews**	**Sep-17 to Apr-18**

Proposal for next steps

(e.g. scope for project, interested parties)

The aims of this project were to provide tangible recommendations and next steps rather than general themes. For this reasons we included:

- Additional research and case studies

- An online survey to understand which areas the members would be most interested in working collaboratively

- Interview questions about drivers and barriers to collaboration but also specifically for suggestions of support needed

Long list online survey

An online survey was disseminated to test the high-level viability and interest in a range of areas of potential collaboration. This long list was derived by the researchers and the steering group.

The organisations were asked to indicate which of the three categories is most suitable for each area of potential collaboration:

— Quick win - Something relatively quick and simple that you would be interested in collaborating on with other organisations in the short term.

— Long term objective - Something that requires more time and resource to implement and manage but is interesting as it is more potentially transformative to your organisation.

— Not suitable for collaboration - Something that is not of interest, not relevant or not appropriate for your organisation.

This process was designed to:

— Allow quantitative analysis of the areas of most interest across a range of organisations

— Focus the 1-2-1 interviews on specific areas of most interest

It also potentially enabled a response from groups and organisations that could not be part of the interview process. Secondly, responses to the survey would indicate which groups were more likely to be willing to be interviewed.

Ease of completion was a key consideration - the survey was intended to take 5-10 minutes to complete. It was agreed with the steering group that if groups who participated in the interviews had not completed the online survey, they would be assisted to do so as part of the interview process. Some groups did not completed the survey as they felt it was not appropriate, did not have capacity or did not feel like they were the right person to complete it. In some cases, the relevant information was gathered during the interview and the researcher advised the group contact that the information would be used to complete the survey. This ensured that as many groups as possible completed the online survey.

The survey was promoted by the B&NES Children and Young People's Network to all members of the Network through the online bulletin and at the network meeting on 5th Dec-17.

In Apr-18, the online survey database incorporates returns from 33 groups and organisations.

Author: Dr Linda Watts

Interview - structure and method

The next stage was to conduct 1-2-1 interviews with members of the network to discuss the driver and barriers to collaboration and the support that the organisations felt they needed to increase collaboration. The interview structure addressed in summary, the following headings:

Section 1 - Introductory questions

— Key drivers and barriers for collaborative working

— Prioritisation of collaborative working vs business as usual

— Awareness of local and national collaborations

Section 2 – Thematic questions

— Impact on collaborative working due to:

  • Complexity of the service need

  • Specialisation of provision

  • Signposting needs

— Other challenges of collaborative working, including:

  • Impact on your staff and / or volunteers

  • Funder / commissioner relationship

  • Safeguarding

  • Competitive threat from potential partners

Section 3 - Process questions

— Knowledge of potential partners

— Ability to budget effectively for collaboration

— Practical support needed to work collaboratively

— View on the available support for collaboration

— Role of the private sector

The interview questionnaire provided a framework for discussion, but interviewees were encouraged to focus on the issues and opportunities that were most relevant to them. Questions were not asked if they clearly did not apply to an interviewee – typically relating to the groups operationally run by volunteers.

Author: Dr Linda Watts

Identifying interviewees

The B&NES Children and Young People's Network member database in early Jan-18 included some 180 groups and organisations and constituted the basis for the majority of contacts. Web based research to identify other groups, including some who were not network members, was done to extend the 'reach' of the interviews.

Interviewees were identified through two main routes:

a) Self-selection by groups and organisations submitting the online survey or in a few cases coming forward to request participation by being interviewed;

b) Contact by one of the two researchers to request their involvement. Contact was made after the researchers had examined the geographical spread and type of groups and organisations that should be interviewed, to maximise inclusivity. Factors such as the age range of children and young people served by groups were taken into account.

Interviewees were initially categorised as groups operationally run by paid staff or by volunteers (see glossary for definitions) by the researchers and steering group but were given the option to reclassify themselves if they felt they were in the wrong group.

There was an agreed target to interview 20-25 organisations. The number and type of organisations interviewed was limited by the time and availability of contacts within the project deadlines. The option of telephone interviews was offered to some organisations to maximise the level of response and this was taken up by seven groups and organisations.

Interviews were carried out separately by the two researchers between Jan-2018 and Apr-2018.

The researchers agreed a principle of not rejecting any positive response to an interview request. Among the organisations operationally run by paid staff there was generally a high response rate to interview requests. We note that there may be a response bias towards organisations that are more actively thinking about or engaged in collaboration – with associated implications (both positive and negative) on the resulting findings. This appeared to be less of an issue among groups operationally run by volunteers, which typically required more chasing to engage.

During steering group meetings in Feb-18 and Mar-18, it was agreed that researchers should prioritise interviews with national organisations and smaller groups outside of Bath.

As at Apr-18, 35 groups and organisations had been interviewed, 19 of these being organisations run by paid staff and 15 being organisations operationally run by volunteers.

The source interviews and write-ups were carried out independently by the two researchers. The researchers were responsible for the reported feedback from their portion of the interview programme and so accept no liability for reported statements and findings of the other researcher. All quotes used in this report were sent to the interviewees who were given an opportunity to remove or clarify any comments and sign off on any attributed statements. It was explained that the majority of feedback would be anonymous to encourage honest and frank feedback.

Case study research

Additional research was conducted to identify case studies for the different areas of collaboration. The objective of this research was to provide contacts, best practice and / or practical next steps for the opportunities highlighted in the interview process

Author: Dr Linda Watts

Role of the steering group and the network

A steering group, representing the network, oversaw the research and made overall decisions on the direction and focus of the research. It also provided signoff on research methodology prior to presentation to the wider network. The steering group consisted of:

— Caroline Haworth - Director, Bath Area Play Project

— Roz Lambert - Chief Executive, First Steps (Bath)

— Jamie Luck - Director, Mentoring Plus

— Phil Walters - Director, Off The Record Bath

— Jason Pegg - Development Manager, Black Families Education Support Group (from May-18)

— Roy Maguire - Senior Young Carers' Officer, B&NES Carers' Centre (to Dec-17).

Steering group meetings were held every 1-2 months to review progress and agree next steps. The research process and methodology were presented to and agreed by the wider network during the quarterly meeting in Dec-18.

Role of the two researchers

After interviewing applicants, the steering group decided to split the original scope between two researchers. The decision was made to incorporate the theme of collaboration into the research itself by allocating the scope to reflect the experience and expertise of the researchers.

— Dan Shreeve – Groups operationally run by paid staff (see glossary for definitions)

— Linda Watts – Groups operationally run by volunteers (see glossary for definitions)

The co-researchers developed the research methods together and conferred to review progress and reflect on issues throughout the research process.

	Online survey	Interview
DHI Project 28	✗	✓
Southside	✓	✓
Bath City Farm	✓	✓
Swallow	✓	✓
Bath City FC	✗	✓
Sporting Family Change	✓	✓
Bath and North East Somerset Carers Centre	✓	✓
Off the Record	✓	✓
Black Families Education Support Group	✓	✓
Bath Youth for Christ	✓	✓
Mentoring Plus	✓	✓
Jessie May	✓	✓
First Steps	✓	✓
Bath Area Play Project	✓	✓
B&NES Citizens Advice Bureau	✗	✓
Bath Mind	✓	✓
Cycling Projects	✓	✓
YMCA	✗	✓
Catch 22	✗	✓
Focus Counselling	✓	✗
seAp	✓	✗
Bath Children In Need	✓	✗
Trauma Recovery Centre	✓	✗
1st Paulton Guides	✓	✓
2nd Bath Boys Brigade	✓	✓
2nd Paulton Scouts	✓	✓
Bath Division Guides	✓	✓
Bath Dolphins	✓	✓
Garraway Youth Hub / Bath Judo Club	✓	✓
Bath Abbey Anchor Youth, Sparklers and All Stars	✓	✓
Bath Toy Library	✓	✓
Bath Welcomes Refugees	✓	✓
Community Bus	✓	✓
Frederick Chopin Integrated Saturday School	✓	✓
Keynsham MENCAP	✓	✓
Methodist Youth Clubs – North East Somerset	✓	✓
Toybox Toy Library	✓	✓
Widcombe Acorns Pre School	✓	✓

Author: Dr Linda Watts

While the perception of Bath & North East Somerset may be that it is a relatively advantaged area, there are marked differences in life expectancy across B&NES. As the Quartet Area Community Profile states:

— Overall B&NES is not a deprived area, but there are some pockets of persistent relative deprivation which are extreme when seen against the wealth of much of the area.

— The most deprived areas of B&NES are parts of south-west Bath, Radstock, and Keynsham. Although only 4.3% of people live in deprived areas, 13% of children live in poverty

— The most prevalent issue within the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is education and skills

— Access to facilities and services is a key problem in the rural parts of the area

Just over half the population of B&NES lives in predominantly rural areas in the central and southern areas of B&NES, characterised by a range of small towns (some of whom had a coal mining employment history) and villages. The Quartet Foundation Area Profile comments that "there are some areas - particularly those in the older industrial parts of the district - that are persistently more deprived than the average". The report identifies issues of poor transport links, access to employment and training opportunities and other services and the need for affordable housing.

Life expectancy, vs the B&NES average, is on average eight years lower for men and five years lower for women in the most disadvantaged areas. In the Bath city area, the most relatively disadvantaged areas are Twerton and Southdown. In North East Somerset the most relatively disadvantaged area is Radstock. In terms of deprivation overall, five areas within B&NES are amongst the 20% most deprived areas nationally – Twerton West, Whiteway, Twerton, Fox Hill North and Whiteway West. These areas are all within the city of Bath.

Approximately 12-13% of children in B&NES live in low income families. This figure increases to 19% when housing costs are taken into consideration. In 2015, 18% of secondary school pupils stated that they had been eligible for free school meals during the previous six years.

The 2017 monitoring of the B&NES Children and Young People's Plan showed that more than 20% of children at Reception age and Year 6 were an unhealthy weight – although this is not out of line with national trends, in absolute terms it is of serious concern especially as the percentage increases into adolescent age groups.

In 2015 9% of secondary school pupils in Year 8 and Year 10 identified that they had a long-term illness, disability or special need. The percentage of children with a diagnosed autistic spectrum disorder in B&NES is within the second highest national quartile (above the national average).

Public Health England has estimated that over 8% of children aged 5-16 years old in B&NES in 2013 had a mental health illness. In the previous two years, rates of mental health outpatients attendances by B&NES children and adolescents were higher than the national average.
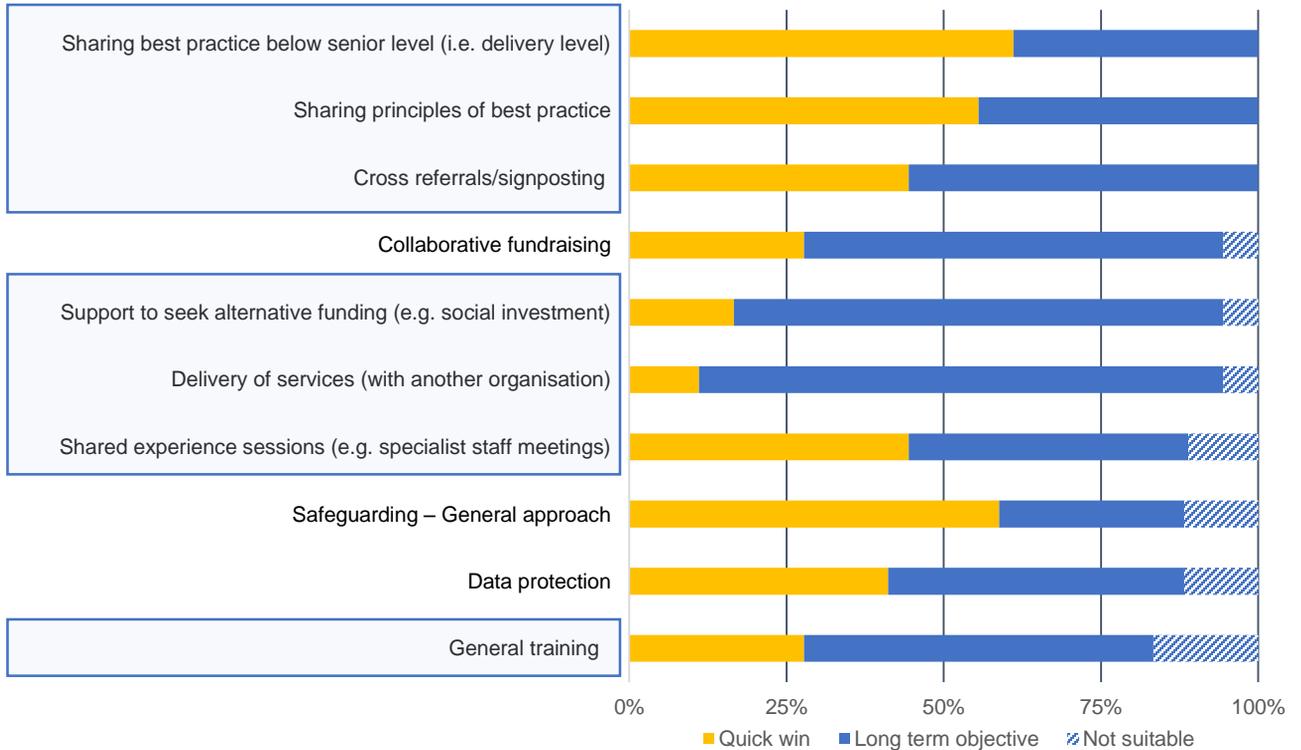
In 2015 6% of secondary school pupils identified themselves as being young carers.
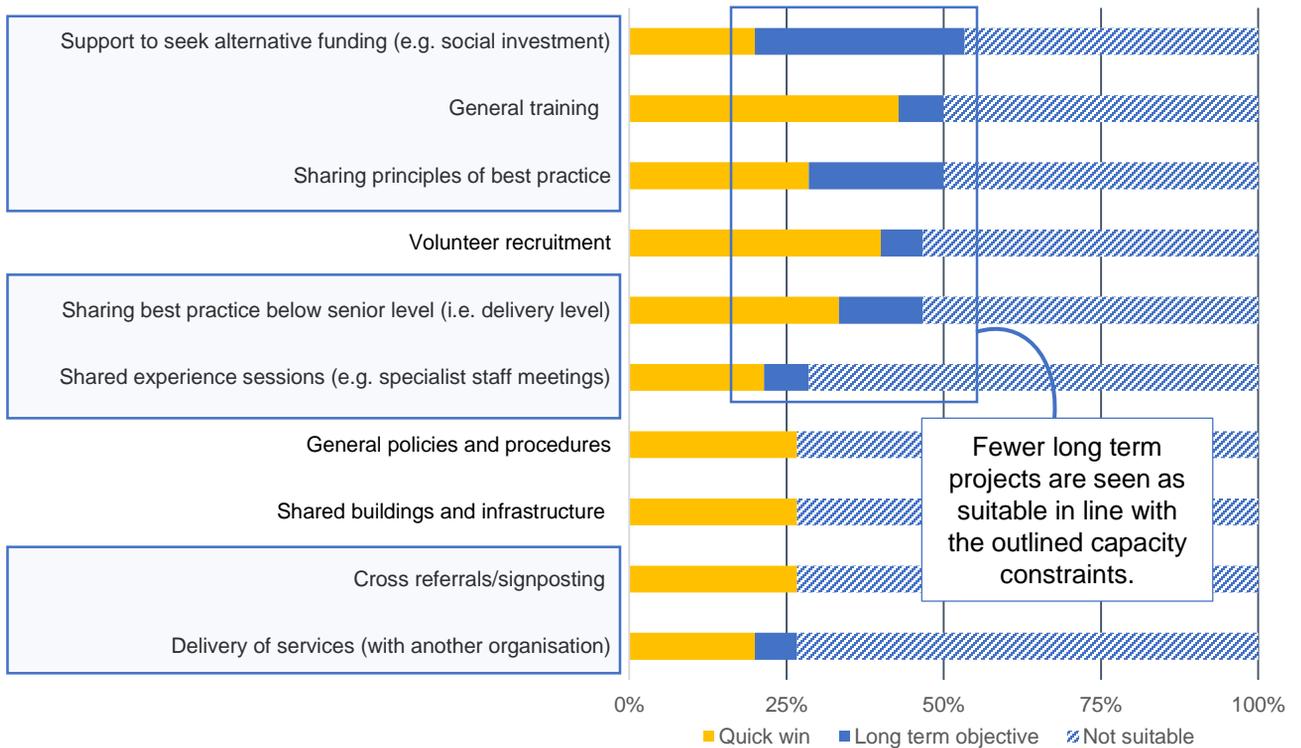
Author: Dan Shreeve

Groups operationally run by paid staff

	Quick win	Long term objective	Not suitable
Sharing best practice below senior level (i.e. delivery level)			
Sharing principles of best practice			
Cross referrals/signposting			
Collaborative fundraising			
Support to seek alternative funding (e.g. social investment)			
Delivery of services (with another organisation)			
Shared experience sessions (e.g. specialist staff meetings)			
Safeguarding – General approach			
Data protection			
General training			

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

■ Quick win   ■ Long term objective   ▨ Not suitable

Groups operationally run by volunteers

	Quick win	Long term objective	Not suitable
Support to seek alternative funding (e.g. social investment)			
General training			
Sharing principles of best practice			
Volunteer recruitment			
Sharing best practice below senior level (i.e. delivery level)			
Shared experience sessions (e.g. specialist staff meetings)			
General policies and procedures			
Shared buildings and infrastructure			
Cross referrals/signposting			
Delivery of services (with another organisation)			

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

■ Quick win   ■ Long term objective   ▨ Not suitable

Fewer long term projects are seen as suitable in line with the outlined capacity constraints.

Areas in common between groups

Author: Dan Shreeve

Help to develop partnerships

Organisational expertise	*Anonymous*	*"GDPR - a live policy that all of us as charities are scratching our heads about. Imagine if we had a single expert helping us to create those policies."*
Partnership frameworks		*"There are questions like 'is this legal?' – for example, I wrote partnership agreements, but I don't have any legal training."*
		"Stakeholder engagement and more information for trustees, staff and volunteers, about the benefits of collaborative working would help."
Time to set up collaborations		*"The funder could then make a small investment to enable the charities to come together to create the proposal."*
Funder engagement	*southside*	*St John's lead the way in round table events but we would like to see even broader representation to include service users with lived experience. A key challenge is to involve and hear those smaller voices"*
Pre-delivery investment		*"A period of time for the partners to gel, sort out any issues or sort out the objectives before they start delivering."*
One-off events	*SWALLOW*	*"Short-term collaboration is good, for example on events or single days. It's always a good way to assess the other organisation's team."*
Shared impact measurement	*Mind Bath*	*"It is about having robust outcome measures and impact assessments. Is anybody looking at the impact assessment across the 3rd sector?"*

Increasing capacity for collaboration

Central resource	*off the record*	*"An independent mediator, someone who can enable the dialogue, and facilitate the organisations to identify the opportunities for collaboration."*
Secondments	*Carers' Centre*	*"We did consultation with our staff and they were asking if they would be able to set up secondments, but we have no idea how to set it up."*
Upskilling for smaller groups	*Jessie May*	*"I'm also interested in leadership for smaller organisations. Many people coming to the senior roles in charities with a limited business background…and it is essentially like running a business."*

Increasing awareness of opportunities

Info about other organisations	*Anonymous*	*"It would help to have someone who was aware of all the fledgling projects and ideas that are being hatched."*
Sharing learnings & challenges		*"We are all writing the same policies and then rewriting and reviewing them with changes in legislation. That just seems to be a waste."*

Specific initiatives

Reciprocal training	*Mind Bath*	*"It needs more of a structured process with somebody administering that. There needs to be a central function."*
Shared location	*cycling projects*	*"I can see a lot of sense in having organisations under one roof where they have a similar client base."*
Shared procurement	*southside*	*"The key back office opportunity is around human resources because it's expensive to buy in."*
Single strategic network voice	*Anonymous*	*"You could look at political priorities, such as coming up with a strategy for ensuring youth hubs are not sold for commercial gain."*

- Barriers - Capacity to organise

"It is really down to the organisations to thrash that out. And organisations don't really have the time, energy, knowledge to actually do it. It is a lot easier to go back, get the bid out, write it yourself."

"Resource, in particular, time, is the key barrier. It takes time on both sides and people are up against it. Often we don't have the time to respond to an email or call."

"Sometimes timescales can be a real driver. You don't necessarily have a huge amount of time from when they advertise to when we need to pull it all together."

"I don't think we have actually bitten the bullet and said – let's formalise this [collaboration]."

"We're all too busy fighting the fire at front line. We're all too busy to tell the bigger story that will help continue our contracts, with our funding."

"We don't always prioritise collaboration when there is an opportunity to develop something innovative and different."

"It is vital that they're able to make a referral and being part of the CYPN is vital, so people know how to contact us."

"The core day-to-day operations is obviously a priority as we need to keep the BAU going."

"Collaboration is not fundamental for us, but it is helpful. It opens opportunities and doors that we couldn't do otherwise."

"To keep meeting for the sake of it, and extending the partnership, isn't very useful. You have to keep the framework quite tight, so you don't feel like you are wasting time…what ends up happening is the time gets eaten up and the project doesn't happen as they planned."

- Barriers - Human factor

"I think one of the barriers is the idea that the practitioner can solve everything."

"I found that one barrier is ego."

"it's a shame because the powerful story of the person who's changed their life always holds sway over a bunch of data that tells you that outcomes for children are better…but actually, the preventative approach is so much less damaging - it doesn't have an exciting story that you can shake the tin for."

"It is a real challenge to human nature to accept the consistency of change."

"I feel like [different working styles] might be too much of a battle. The question is whether you try to fix these barriers, or only work with those organisations where those barriers don't exist."

"Collaboration can challenge your working practices."

"If both organisations have mutual goals but different working styles, it can be an exciting challenge and a great way to learn."

"From a volunteer point of view, it is probably that they see different ways of working as being not as valid as their own. You do see a resistance to changing their way of working internally."

"Change can be quite difficult in an established culture."

- Barriers - Protecting territory

"Is it worth employing more hours to bring in extra [collaborative] funding, when we really need to be focused on sustaining what we have?"

"[I am] responsible for keeping us solvent and reducing costs and increasing income."

"Fear of losing what you have…that's real."

"Organisations have a fear of losing their territory."

"We are all really nervous about the ability for our own services to survive. Is it collaboration or is it competition? It is a massive issue and I think it is the elephant in the room."

"The temptation is to go into competition mode with the other charities. But I think we have to really resist that."

"Are smaller organisations in the position to be as competitive as larger ones? If not then I am nervous."

"The big organisations have come in and taken over but they don't have the relationships that we have."

"Do [the large nationals] then have the trust and the knowledge of the area? Quite often the staff get TUPE'd over so it comes with it."

"[Larger organisations] keep things behind walls sometimes and it requires a step change to work together more collaboratively."

"We have to be open to [mergers] because we don't know what's coming down the line."

"[Mergers are] a really tricky one to deal with, as a community of 3rd sector providers, who are we to play God?"

- Barriers - Reputational risk

"I don't actually think there are many funders or commissioners that would object to honest conversations. I think there is a fear that they would - then we would step back into self-preservation mode."

"If that partnership breaks down and you are funded separately by the same funder then that can influence the relationship going forward."

"In reality, most of the sector providers have a number of income streams and we are juggling them over time."

"Our team know they can't smoke outside but if another organisation was to come here and smoke outside then it reflects on us. We don't make our staff wear lanyards so it's not always obvious that it isn't our team."

"We have a specific expertise, so we can certainly add value to a bigger bid and be part of that."

"It seems to be easier to work with charities of a similar size."

"The Local Authority felt that [previous third sector networks were] a bit like a union…people didn't always feel comfortable with that."

- Barriers - Ongoing administrative burden

"I'm never entirely convinced that collaboration reduces costs because the time you put into it costs money, but it is worth it for better outcomes."

"[Collaboration] requires a lot of maintenance. In my experience, entering into collaboration for a short term financial gain rather than a strategic outcome or impact causes problems."

"Collaboration has been like a full-time job."

"If we got the costs wrong in a project it wouldn't put us off collaborative working. I think we would try to learn and do better next time as long as it wasn't a massive loss."

"We have a full cost recovery formula but you never get that. We tend to put a lot more time into doing work that no one is getting paid for."

"There is no way that this [collaboration] really washes its face. If you consider the time invested in going to meetings. For us, it's more of a strategic partnership."

"For us [collaboration] automatically pays even though there's no money that changes hands. What we are less interested in is when the outcomes are more vague and unclear."

"The bigger we have got, the less worried we are about each individual project as it has a smaller impact overall. You can take a hit on one project and it can support another project if that's what is needed temporarily."

"There is a passive aggressive assertiveness from some partners to try and get the costs down in a collaboration."

"It's always interesting to see what other charities charge because you know that they generally aren't creaming off profits. If it's more expensive then it's often for a justified reason."

- Barriers - Expertise required

"My background is not in organisational change or capacity building - all I know about collaboration is the practical ones we have done."

"With regards to people [collaboration], this does require more advanced partnership."

"It is a bit piece meal in many ways. 3SG is the closest to an overarching network."

"Support is patchy and it's hard to know where to go for a specific issue."

"It is a hard thing to navigate if you are a teacher or youth worker - what [support] is actually out there."

"We have also done some work with the university. It's quite a complicated partnership."

"I am so aware that at the end of May, the current university volunteers will be gone."

"I guess [collaboration] makes [impact tracking] more complicated, but I don't think we would have the funding to put together a database to reflect the data without a partner."

"It is tough because you have your own responsibilities, your own systems for data and policies for sharing that data (due to confidentiality)."

"Families say they don't like seeing too many organisations with different assessments - having to tell their story over and over again can be quite painful. We are working on streamlining that process."

"The regulations are quite clear around consent and confidentiality, but people feel wary. Generally, we see it from the child or parent's POV - why wouldn't you share? If they have agreed to the sharing, then it should be done as people have a better understanding of the picture of the family."

Author: Dan Shreeve

- Barriers - Shared vision and values

"I see the barriers as being shared language, a shared vision."

"There is a concern about the compatibility of values in relation to youth work aims and style."

"A key barrier is the different cultures and values."

"At first glance they may appear to be similar, but you realise that there could be some big differences in terms of ethos and staff attitudes."

"I think it's a combination of overcoming those intangible barriers but probably avoiding those organisations that have fundamentally different objectives."

"Where we would struggle is where the value base is so different that there's almost an ethical issue."

"It's also important to understand the agendas of the people involved."

"We all know what we do in practice but not our values or our ethos."

- Barriers - Sufficient information

"We don't always get information about all the service user's needs. It's only when they are here that the issues emerge."

"Sometimes you come into contact with an organisation which is not known to your team, or they are not aware of you, so might not be as willing to share information."

"I don't think other members of the CYPN would be aware of our collaborations because it's a bit too compartmentalised."

"I think [information] is a limitation but not because the information isn't there. It's just that there's so much noise that we're not always looking at it or listening."

"I often meet people who tell me about [my organisation], but they're telling me about the organisation as it was 10-15 years ago."

"It wasn't the strategy for us to be specialised - that wasn't how we started off."

"In becoming more specialised, we are now in a position to collaborate more with others."

"There is something about the network by its nature, that reminds us that improving delivery is why we are all here."

"[Network meetings] give me time to step away from the day-to-day and innovate."

"We all turn up to a meeting every quarter and then we all head back to our offices and get on with it and then don't speak that much in between."

"Sometimes it's great to [build relationships through] a multi-agency meeting but if one organisation doesn't attend then suddenly you don't have any contact with them."

"The CYPN is the one that for some reason gets cut if I'm busy. I don't know why that's the meeting that gets cut, because when I do attend it, and it is so informative and useful."

- Barriers - Logistics

"The challenges are being a small team, there's only seven of us, having quite a heavy caseload and logistically having to travel to different locations."

"You need to think through how it is going to work, the practicalities, legalities – who's responsible for delivering the project. If there is a project worker, who employs that worker? Who is responsible for the work which that person does? Risk assessment of health and safety decisions? These can be a barrier."

"Collaboration raised too many issues and complications. That is why big organisations don't really contact smaller ones to ask if they want to be part of a bid."

"I feel [collaboration] is most relevant for the more open access and lower risk work. That is where it feels frustrating that there is less communication."

"We have a policy department. I think we would naturally collaborate with our national affiliates on best practice and advice."

"We have some shared infrastructure with [our national affiliate] because it is a cost saving, an economy of scale. Insurance is a good example of that. It is something that maybe that B&NES 3rd sector groups could look at and learn from."

"We can easily work with policy templates [from our central national team], but it is about tweaking them to a local context and sharing best practice with other local 3rd sector providers."

"I think you could set a network up in such a way that those national organisations can just step back and say it is not for me on specific areas."

- Barriers - Narrow specification of tenders

"It is very much about recognising what can be done within the specifications. The specifications are pre-determined, so you need to identify partners that can deliver aspects that you can't or would work better with by doing it together…unless the certification changes, there wouldn't be a reason to change the partnership."

"We are working within a tight framework of financial accountability and contract culture. It is really hard to go off-piste."

"A relationship with the commissioners needs to be very close. I think accountability is important and it makes me feel safer as an organisation."

"The funders understand the need for this getting-to-know-you phase. However, when I experienced a merger of charities, we didn't spend long enough getting to know each other and that created friction."

Drivers of Collaboration

- Improving delivery and outcomes

"Training is very important; however, we feel that we need more than the basic training that is sometimes on offer. Ideally, we are looking for locally accessible training at a deeper level. This will allow more experienced practitioners to deepen their level of understanding of various subjects, including children's development, particularly how the brain develops and how trauma can affect a child's learning."

"We are focussed on providing a particular service that families value but to widen our provision, we have introduced sessions on healthy eating and other ideas that could lead to more joint working with other groups."

"We are focussed on providing a particular service that families value but to widen our provision, we have introduced sessions on healthy eating and other ideas that could lead to more joint working with other groups."

"We are in contact with children who may not be taken on any outing at all out of school. We want to take them on trips but must have access to affordable transport."

- Organisational Sustainability

"We have informal partnerships with other (swimming) service providers in the Bath area for swimmer pathway/development and is intending to formalise these in the next twelve months."

- Reducing costs

"We want to talk to another group about joint bidding for a grant. Heritage Lottery funding is coming to an end later this year after six years. We won't be able to cover staff costs without that funding. A joint bid could bring back a play 'offer' in the area (North East Somerset) that has been lost."

- Making use of existing asset

"Our grants were withdrawn ten years ago so we are reliant on our hall being fully used – it is underused in the afternoons at the moment. We have martial arts activities but with say judo, it is run on a shoestring. We could do with help with advertising our facilities more widely. Fortunately, the building is in trust to the National Association of Youth Clubs so that is a supportive arrangement."

Barriers to Collaboration

- Capacity to organise

"We really want to take children on activity trips – canoeing, sailing etc but need to 'hook up' with another organisation to help us to have enough organising and practical capacity. Children in this area may not be taken out anywhere for visits or activities unless we organise trips for them. Any opportunities that can be taken to widen the Cubs' knowledge and experience can only benefit all."

"Our website should be developed and we should have proper toy cataloguing. - IT development would need to be provided free or at very low cost through joint working or through a skilled volunteer."

"The closing of the Volunteer Centre will create a gap and new joint working with another agency or arrangement may be needed so that we can recruit the volunteers that we need."

Review of published studies

BOND and YoungMinds (2013) 'Working Together for Sustainability': 5 Creative Models for Voluntary and Community Sector organisations delivering early intervention mental health services for children and young people explored.

Cabinet Office (2017). 'Stronger Charities for a Stronger Society.' Report of the Select Committee on Charities HL Paper 133.

Charity Commission 'Collaborative Bids and Partnership Working' Factsheet.

CLINKS Centre For Justice Innovation (2017). 'Why We Collaborate: Voluntary Organisations Talk About How They Collaborate, What Makes It Work and Why It Sometimes Fails', in Social Care Online.

Community Links (2013) Report for Locality on Collaboration in London.

Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI) (2016) 'Small Charity Collaborations'.

Guardian newspaper (23 Jan 2013) 'Why Collaboration is Important for Charities'

IVAR (Institute for Voluntary Action Research). Website pages headed Collaboration and Partnerships.

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IVAR (Institute for Voluntary Action Research) (2016) 'Evaluation of Collaboration NI Phase 2 Findings and Reflections 2016.'

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) summaries 'Collaboration', 'Benefits and Risks of Collaboration' and 'Should You Collaborate'.

University of Birmingham (2010) Third Sector Research Centre, Working Paper 20 'The Third Sector Delivering Public Services: An Evidence Review, by Dr Rob Macmillan.

West of England Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (2018): 'State of the Sector in Bath and North East Somerset 2017-18.'

B&NES social profile

B&NES CYPP 2014-17 Year 3 Review

B&NES Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) Children's Health and Well Being Survey 2015

Public Health England Bath and North East Somerset Health Profile 2016

Quartet Community Foundation Area Profile

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