

Working Together – Collaboration, Partnerships & Merger



**Dorset
Community
Action**



Working together

Over recent years, the interest in organisations working together has been growing, driven by the sector's drive for effectiveness and efficiency, government policy and public opinion.

However, it is also driven by times of crisis such as the financial impact Covid 19. Many organisations may now be considering the options available to sustain services to beneficiaries and therefore working together or collaboration may need to be explored.

Working together should be for mutual advantage and ultimately benefit service users (beneficiaries). Working together can be for a fixed length of time or a more permanent arrangement.

There are a variety of ways that two or more organisations can work together from informal networks and alliances, through joint delivery of projects to full merger. All provide their own opportunities and challenges and require careful consideration.



What are your concerns about working with another organisation?



Working together

Benefits

- Increase Presence / Awareness
- Extend Reach
- Improve Services / prevent closure
- Skills & Knowledge Transfer
- Share Risks
- Improve income opportunities / reduce / share costs
- Improve management / governance
- Improve outcomes for beneficiaries

Concerns

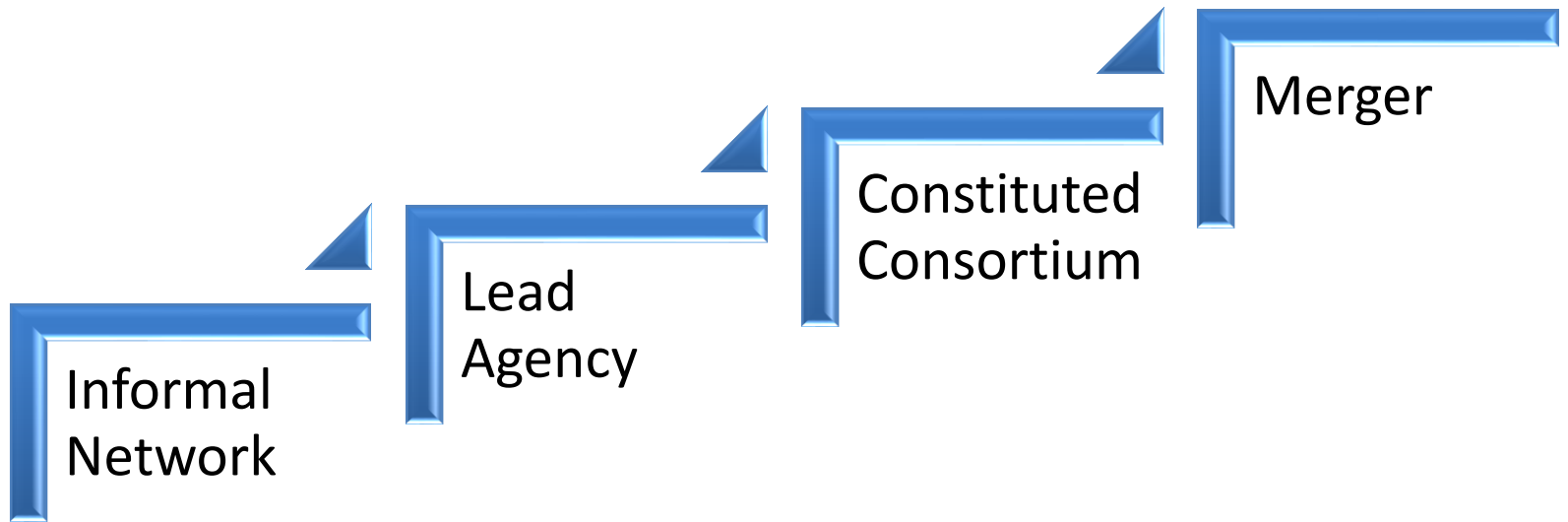
- Loss of identity
- Preserving culture / values
- Name / branding
- Impact on staff /volunteers
- Risk, time & costs



Whatever the driver for considering working together, collaborating or merging, the decision to, should be focussed on achieving your organisation's purpose and outcomes and made in the best interests of your beneficiaries.



Collaboration Spectrum



Informal Network

Loose network of organisations agreeing to collaborate

Pros

- Maintain independence
- Different leads on different activities / tasks – spread risk
- Informal, quick to set up
- Flexible

Cons

- No legal entity for funders / commissioners to contract with
- Based on goodwill of members

Simple Terms of Reference or simple MOU may help the workings of the group.



Lead Agency

A partnership with a nominated organisation taking the lead for contracting purposes

Pros

- Bid for contracts / funding
- Lead partner has proven track record
- Lead partner has policies and procedures in place

Cons

- Lead partner bears the risk and any additional costs
- Risk that the lead partner could bring services in-house



Constituted Consortium / Joint Venture

A new legal entity is set up, with a membership structure ensuring that its members control it

Pros

- Own and managed by members
- Protects members from risk
- Single point of access for commissioners and other stakeholders
- Collective bargaining power (Commissioning)

Cons

- No proven track record in early stages
- Added administration, reporting and cost of separate legal entity
- Time and funds required to set up & establish



Merger

Organisations merge to become a single entity

Pros

- Provides continuity of service if organisation becomes unsustainable or insolvent
- Prevents duplication
- Creates efficiencies
- Potential for larger contracts / funding
- Potential for greater presence and reach

Cons

- Can be an unpleasant experience for staff, volunteers – redundancies
- Can be time consuming and costly

If managed well, can be beneficial for all. Planned mergers that take time and consideration can end up being more positive than those as a result of crisis.



Top Tips

- Be clear of the purpose – your organisations purpose and the purpose for joint working
- Consider and be clear about
 - long term impact
 - Added value
 - Wider social value
- Take time, consult & involve
- Listen & communicate
- Develop clear, fair and transparent systems
- Invest time & energy



Further Support

- [Decision making in a crisis: Collaboration and merger](#) Webinar – NCVO, Bates, Wells & Cass Business School
- [Collaboration](#) NCVO advice and guidance
- [How to Merge or Link Charities](#) - Charity Commission Guidance
- [Choosing to Collaborate – Helping you succeed](#) – Charity Commission Guidance
- [Making Mergers Work – Helping you succeed](#) – Charity Commission Guidance
- [Checklist for Mergers](#) – 20 Questions Trustees need to ask.



Funding Update

- **[DORSET COUNCIL COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND \(CORONAVIRUS SUPPORT\) ROUND 5.](#)** Up to £5,000 (for constituted groups) and up to £1,000 (for new / emerging groups) to support local communities and disadvantaged groups. **Deadline midnight on Sunday 20th September 2020.**
- **[DISABLED PEOPLES'S ORGANISATIONS COVID 19 EMERGENCY FUND](#)** - Grants available for grassroots Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) to respond to the coronavirus/COVID-19 needs of local disabled people. Grants of up to £25,000 are available. **Deadline 5th October 2020.** Two webinars to help:
 - Tuesday 22 September (11am – 1pm) - Filling out the online application form
 - Monday 28 September (2pm – 4pm) - Surgery/interactive FAQs
- **[LGBTQ+ COVID 19 FUND.](#)** Grants of up to £15,000 are available for grassroots, local groups and organisations who can support LGBTQ+ communities through the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. **Deadlines for Micro and small grants is 22 September 2020 (5pm) and Medium and large grants is 30 September 2020 (5pm).**



- [**SCOTTISH POWER FOUNDATION**](#) - The Foundation supports registered charities based and working in the UK for projects that enhance the quality of life in local communities and address themes set out by the Foundation; education, environmental protection, arts, culture, heritage, science, poverty and disability relief, citizenship and community development. Grants of between £35,000 and £200,000 are available. **Deadline is 1pm on 24th September 2020.**
- [**THE COOKS CHARITY**](#) The Charity aims to provide funding that will benefit people of all ages and backgrounds in the context of food, cookery and catering. The vast majority of grants are awarded for educational projects.
- [**THE BAILY THOMAS CHARITABLE FUND**](#) – . The Fund provides Small Grants up to £10,000 and General Grants over £10,000 for projects that assist the care and relief of people affected by a severe learning difficulty, together with autism. Funding is available for projects benefiting children or adults. **Deadline is 1st December 2020.**



- **[THE KFC FOUNDATION COMMUNITY GRANTS](#)** - Grants between £200 and £2,000 for UK grassroots organisations providing safe social spaces, mentoring, work, or social skills for young people aged 11 to 25 in locations where KFC outlets are located. **Deadline: Friday 25 September 2020 for Expressions of Interest.**
- **THE LADY COBHAM FOUNDATION** A discretionary grant-making charity that makes a limited number of awards annually for a wide range of charitable causes, mainly in Dorset and Hampshire. Grant awards are generally for between £500 and £5,000. The Foundation does not maintain a website, To enquire about applying for a grant, contact the Foundation at:

The Lady Cobham Foundation
Charles Russell LLP
5 Fleet Place
London
EC4M 7RD
Tel: 020 7203 5000

