



Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action

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Working in Partnership

What is partnership working?

Partnership working within the voluntary and community sector includes a number of ways that two or more organisations can work together. Partnership agreements can range from informal networks through to a full merger, creating a new organisation. Working in this way can last for a fixed period of time or can form a permanent arrangement.

Is Partnership Working right for you?

Some questions to ask your organisation before embarking on a collaborative project:

- What are you hoping to achieve by collaborating with another organisation?
- Are you sure that collaborative working is the best way to achieve this aim?
- Do your trustees and Chief Executive support the idea?
- Does it fit within your organisation's charitable objects as stated in your governing document?
- Do your plans for collaborative working fit your strategic vision, values and current priorities?
- Collaborative working can involve risk. Allow yourself enough time to make an informed decision for your organisation. It is better to identify obstacles early on and decide not to proceed rather than call a halt once you have already invested time and effort in a new partnership venture.

Potential benefits and risks of collaborative work

Some of the benefits include:

- Improved or wider range of services for beneficiaries
- Knowledge and information sharing

- Sharing the risk in new projects
- Stronger, united voice

Some of the risks include:

- Outcomes do not justify the time and resources invested
- Cultural mismatch between organisations
- Damage to organisations if collaboration is unsuccessful

These are just some of the things that need to be included in the planning of collaboration work. For further information regarding partnership working and helpful advice on drawing up agreements the NCVO website has an extremely useful section to assist organisations through this process. NCVO offers information and advice to help voluntary and community organisations make decisions about whether and how to work collaboratively.

Website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/collaborate