

Working in partnership



The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 encourages us to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It requires organisations in Wales to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

We're keen to encourage organisations to think about not just the community in which they live and work, but also how their work aligns with and complements the services and activities of other groups and organisations both voluntary and statutory. We'd like you to think about how your organisation can work together with others to add value, working in partnership rather than in competition.

What is a partnership?

Partnership or a partnership is a relationship, where two or more organisations work together. The organisations may have shared values or are looking to achieve a common goal. Each partner can achieve more by working with others than it can in isolation, by creating a climate of trust, respect and understanding to benefit the needs of others.

What makes a good partnership?

There isn't a single approach to working effectively with others. Partnerships can be formal and bound by a contract of some kind. Or can be informal, such as in kind support, sharing of resources, referrals, sign posting etc. Partnerships involve different organisations, varying in size, by type and in culture. Partnerships, whether formal or informal should consider the following elements of good practise:

- Trust is essential. It enables dialogue, establishing strong communication between partners from set up, to continuation and even to the end of a relationship. This helps to manage expectations and maintains good relationships throughout.
- Effective partnerships require flexibility, give and take from all sides. An understanding of each others strengths, priorities and opinions and how your organisations 'fit' together rather than challenge or duplicate, will help to reduce the friction between organisations working together.
- Co-operation between partners is important - to be able to influence and to understand how the relationship will work in practice as well as your responsibility towards others. This helps to reduce tensions, to improve timely responses and to address power dynamics.
- Remember to review regularly, reflect and amend accordingly whilst recognising the strengths and also the limitations of all partners. Recognise when a partnership is not working as you'd hoped and be prepared to walk away if needed, without damaging the relationship.

Are you ready to work in partnership?

Things to think about:

- Is this the right partner?
- Do you share the same/similar values or vision?
- Do you understand each other's limitations e.g. Resource, time, skills etc?
- Do you know what to expect from the partnership?
- Should you establish a formal service level agreement?
- Do you need to establish clear goals?
- How will the partnership benefit your clients/stakeholders/organisation?
- Have you consulted your team? (Staff/trustees etc.).
- Are there any legal/contractual considerations needed?
- What are the risks?

Good partnership working resources

- [WCVA](#)
- [WCVA Training](#).
- [NICVA \(Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action\)](#).
- [National Co-ordinating Centre for Public Engagement](#).



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