

Bradford District Assembly Conference 2018 - Stronger Together

The annual Bradford District Assembly Conference took place on 13 March 2018 at Carlisle Business Centre. The title for this year's conference was Stronger Together which intended to highlight the theme of collaboration and co-design between the voluntary and community sector and statutory partners such as Bradford Council and the local NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Kim Shutler-Jones (CEO, Cellar Trust) and Grainne Eloi, (Bradford District Care Foundation Trust) gave a presentation about the Haven, an excellent example of successfully working collaboratively to provide a much needed service for people experiencing poor mental health.

Hugh Rolo from Locality then presented a short film showing inspirational examples of collaborative working and how it can bring about positive change. This was followed by a presentation from Louise Keighley and Ben Cross (Bradford District VCS Alliance Programme Manager) about the development of the Accountable Care System and how the VCS can become involved.

The workshops were designed to explore what "collaboration" meant to the VCS as well as to the sector as a whole and how VCS organisations could engage in effective collaboration and partnership work in any setting. Colleagues from key statutory partners were invited to sit at each workshop table to reflect conversations from the view point of external partners. Each table also had a facilitator with a clear brief (see appendix 1) and key points were noted (see appendix 2).

Feedback was given from each table at the end of the session. Members of the Assembly Steering Group were tasked with collating the workshop feedback and developing it into a collective "collaboration statement".

Collaborative Statement – Soo Nevison and Sam Keighley

Results

From the conversations recorded at the event it was clear that for true collaboration to be taking place VCS organisations need to see/feel the following themes are taking place:

1. Trust/Honesty
2. Time
3. Appropriate relationships
4. Shared values
5. Flexibility
6. Resourced

The first three can be expanded to aid clarity as follows:

Trust/Honesty: areas where trust and honesty are important/can be built:

- Budgets and resources
- Relationships
- Sharing of challenges, problems, solutions, intentions

Time: Collaboration doesn't happen overnight; time is required to:

- To build relationships
- To develop the collaboration
- To learn and adapt

Appropriate relationships: It is important that the relationships within a collaborative partnership are:

- Equal (in term of 'power')
- Adult relationships
- Involve Community Voice

Conclusion

The results did not uncover any extraordinary themes but the process of giving time and space to discuss and propose them has been positive. The event has enabled the VCS to feel involved in how they will be represented during conversations going forward and VCS reps will be equipped to ensure collaborative activities/discussions in the future align to the VCS's views produced through this work.

This does not mean that every activity that is collaboratively designed or discussed will provide the outcome(s) that the VCS may agree with; this was not the purpose of this event and working in a collaboration manner/process itself does not mean that the final outcomes will suit everyone.

Next steps

We acknowledge as a VCS Assembly that we are only one part of the collaboration and we will now take the findings of this report to our partners and discuss them further. Opportunities to do this include working groups on the Prevention and Early Help workstreams, the Integration and Change Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Cross-sector networking events.

We will also recommend that we re-convene the Big Think where this work began to see how work agreed at the original event has progressed and where this work fits in that larger picture.

Appendix One – Facilitators brief

Background

There is a growing push for collaboration and ‘co-design’; it is a new buzz word, a new toy people want to play with and throw around but, do we all know what it means, do we all have the same understanding and are we all comfortable with it? As a sector we have not yet had the time or space to come together to discuss our own and joint views on what this means for us.

Are we comfortable with others leading that conversation on our behalf, or indeed getting involved ourselves if we don’t have shared understanding?

Purpose

To explore and agree the key elements that are important to individual organisations and the sector when collaborative work is being discussed IN ANY SETTING.

Format

The facilitator needs to encourage organisations to discuss their fears and what would help them feel confident in colleagues acting on their behalf. Please ensure everyone has a chance to speak if they so wish.

What is really important to us?

What would we want to be the non-negotiables?

What would we make allowances on?

Are these different if the co-design is with other VCS? The public sector? The private/independent sector?

We have invited a non-VCS colleague to join each table to hold a mirror up to use and help us to really illicit what we want and mean by non-negotiables; the role of the guest is not to provide input or answer individual questions but to help us really define what we want to put on our ‘lists’.

Please develop two lists; non-negotiables and things you would be prepared to make allowances on.

After the table discussions there will be a period of feedback to the main room; for this part please have up to three points from your list(s) you can feed in. Facilitators will do the feedback and it needs to be concise.

All lists will be collected and collated. The Assembly Steering Group will then produce a statement that sector can sign up to and this statement will then be shared with our public partners so that when any conversations take place about co-design/collaborative working they can be brought into to ensure the voice of the wider sector is heard and respected.

Appendix Two - Bradford Assembly Conference 2018 – Raw data

Table 1

What would good collaboration look like (people or ORGS?)

- Trust
- Working to help each other
- Agreed common aim
- Openness / all parties
- Recognition of failure / allowing honest feedback
- Shared values
- Flexibility
- Recognising skills (superiority can get in the way) – “Leave your ego in the bin”.
- Remove intimidation / grassroots important
- Reality of resources / honestly of sharing
- Letting go of self interest
- Diminishing budgets
- Seeing “whole budget” net what is seemingly on the table
- Wider understanding of what organisations can “in reality offer” who/which is ‘best placed’ to do that
- Commissioners truly on board big culture change
- Competition – 2 donkeys
- Trust
- Honesty
- Time to build
- Community voice – unpaid, no interest
- Fairness
- Recognising sharing / franchise model
- Leaving egos in the bin!
- Honesty over budgets
- Adult conversations

Table 2

If we had good collaborative working what does it look like?

- Adult conversations (from ALL sides)
- Accommodating changes in direction for the best delivery of the project
- Ensured community voice at the table (inclusive) set up as accessible/ group support – equality
- Less prescriptive view of results/ accountability in a different way
- Trusted delivery/ outcomes
- Fairness in dynamics
- Recognising experiences/ sharing to build bigger provision – people (franchise model) “competition” compromising.
- We’ve sorted collaboration / completion
- Provides listening
- Pooled budgets how/when

Who would be involved?

- Everyone! But difficult communities involved/ voices less heard e.g. expert patients
- Putting people first
- Funders/ strategic partners/ community VCS
- Community connectors
- Key values covered under what would look like //
- Getting past competition
- People who don’t have self/organisation involvement or bias

High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loving boost 	
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inertia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cosy club 	
Low			
	Low	Support	High

Table 3

• BEFORE	• DURING	• AFTER
• Equal respect	• Depend on what we are doing	• Evaluate
• Understanding	• Seek what/ who is 'missing'	• Close the loop
• Value	• (Step back too)	• Check – what else, what next... DID WE DO 'X'
• Shared knowledge	• Support (incl. training)	• Share learning
• Shared vision (taking hits)	• Service users (lived experience)	• Celebrate
• Why are we doing this?	• Leader is the right person (not hierarchy) – keep an eye on it	•
•	• Leader keeps us on task	•

Enduring - do differently doesn't need to be 'clearer'

Commitment, respect, stickability, work through conflict, courage, "thinking environment", solution focussed, take the right amount of time, needs resourcing (across the collab), listen selflessness, ambition and accountability.

- Co-leads – drivers/ conviction
- Selflessness
- Right thing – may not result in money for you
- Critical friend/ scrutiny – inviting it in
- Customer journey
- Solution focus throughout
- Recognise what you know/ blindspots
- Too cosy? Reality check
- Roles and responsibilities
- Motivations
- Innovations
- Co-evaluate
- Compromise – win/lose, I'm ok/ You're ok
- Consensus
- Risk/ change
- Accountably communication
- Constantly checking if we have the right people – step out when you know you are the wrong reason
- Connectivity

Table 4

What would good collaboration look like?

- Developing further from test pilots
- Learning from other areas in the country – innovation partnerships
- How can things be made sustainable?
- Build on local anchor organisations
- Local organisations know small groups – maybe voluntary led
- What is the difference between anchor and infrastructure
- Whole system approach is needed but complex – how do we focus on the cause up stream
- The sector should be paid for their time/ contribution
- Wary of followship – need to have the autonomy and flexibility
- The VCS can't and shouldn't run for free
- Missing gap between employers and unemployed – gap in communication / identification etc.

What are our key values?

- VCS let people think we can do things for free!!
- Quality provision
- We can add value and do it for free
- LA/ Partners should collaborate not compete
- Politics play a part
- Equality of service value
- Evidence of impact and outcomes – supporting organisations to achieve this
- Huge change over the last 5 years = ½ the organisations / capacity
- Missing the youth opportunities and prevention etc – how do we keep the voluntary sector active?
- Support from anchor organisations
- Ask to support small organisations/ voluntary groups
- Value flexibility and mobilisation speed
- Value 'local'
- Value 'social value'
- The complexity

Table 5

Collaborative Working – what does it look like?

- Need to overcome perception: ‘if we work together, we lose our jobs.’
- Fairness and transparency – available, provision and funding transparency
- Different specialisms coming together
- Relationships – come and see, interact and engage, see in action – find the right people
- Identify: strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats SWOT
- OUR IDENTITY
- Different approaches to different scenarios
- General principles as a base to start from
- Boundaries being clear, understanding limitations up front.
- Stat: confidence in delivery for those with statutory responsibility
- Where do the ‘teeth’ come from?
- Who should be involved? Don’t forget the smaller, grassroots organisations who deliver and are all volunteers
- Don’t take advantage of volunteers and their time = use wisely and with respect
- Influencing decision makers – importance of relationships. Gate keepers.
- Trust – humility and recognition of “even better ifs...” and strengths. Honesty about own organisation.
- How well are the larger statutory organisations working together – modelling and leading.
- Unequal perceptions of “power” – money, influence, position. Authority, relationships, democratic mandate. Offer, identity, social capital.
- Sharing challenges and solutions.

- Gatekeepers to communities – need to connect and make the effort
- Recognise the value (financial and social) of what we deliver
- Centres on values/principles – personal, organisations, system wide – available, offer, time (demonstrates what we care about), thinking outside the box, excellence and quality, ‘community’ focussed, people and place.
- Bringing everyone together including funders and facilitators
- Inter-agency collaboration – “decision-makers” – communication
- Change of culture required
- Role and influence of GPs and “future leaders”
- Do we want to engage? We need to choose to engage.
- Choice to connect and work together.

COLLECTIVE
COLLABORATION
IN
COMMUNITIES

DEPT

Public Health

Community

VCS

HS

LA

Table 6

Key values

- Accessible
- Equitable
- Build on strengths
- Neighbourhoods = resource
- Problem: STAT bodies take lead – collective, leadership – collaborative leadership
- Agree a common approach and vision = ALL
- 3/5 year funding for initiatives to be successful/ sustainable
- Fellowship
- Take the lead – person/people – client, customer, service user, expert patient, experienced person.
- Simple – info graphic

What would be happening?

- Money may not be going to the ‘usual’ organisations and sharing responsibility and funds/resources – Pooling
- Community is key resource
- Utilising community centres
- Plymouth good example of true collaboration in Bradford: self-care and prevention programme
- Rockwell centre
- Relationships/ cross sector

Who should be involved?

- GP/ Community/ People
- Agree a common approach and vision
- Open involvement and participation enablers facilitators
- Existing relationships can cause barriers
- Pro-active rather than reactive
- Build confidence of community

Good collaborative working – ideal situation

- Equal relationship
- Openness, honesty, commitment and persistence
- Balanced numbers – not tokenistic
- Breaking down the silo walls
- Recognise latest buzz words
- Open-mindedness and humility (not assuming that they are correct)
- Change in their (interested parties)
- Demand a structural change
- VCS not just the answer, but part of the solution
- Public sector partners need to talk/listen to each other
- Not ‘usual suspects’ round tables.

Table 7

Collaboration and VCS

Values

- Openness – difficulty with political overview
- Trust
- Equality of power – all voices
- Parity
- Person/ client centred
- Ongoing conversation
- Common vision
- Shared outcomes
- Honesty

Challenges

- Political power and misunderstanding
- Capacity in current VCS – financial
- Letting what works flourish
- Political structures and boundaries
- Targeted commissioning could skew finance from the limited resources we need
- Making things happen
- Interdepartmental conflict – mainly affect people!
- Time needed to make the change
- Conflicting priorities
- Need good leadership – do we have it?

Table 8

- Trust – know each other
- Identifying gaps – how do we include everyone
- Do we need different models
- Levels of collaboration?
- Equal respect across sectors
- Commitment
- Shared level of responsibility
- Person – focused – who best placed to do it.
- Recognition of true cost of any service
- Flexibility in services – adapt to changes
- Voice and influence
- Shared language
- Due diligence – building/ staff/ finances/ track record/ IG.
- Skills – gaps/ do we have or need others
- Community activators
- Open and honest lines of communications
- Responsibility and issues of council
- Value for money
- Need to know outcomes/ long term
- What else is working
- Asset based approach
- Agreed decision making process
- Inclusive – communication
- Joined up meeting
- Number of needs
- Brave, radical and creative
- So much duplication
- Journey – see Plymouth
- Decision makers in the room
 1. Honest – everyone in the room
 2. Open mind
 3. People focused – check organisation focus
 4. Outcome focused – TRUST/RESPECT
 5. Full cost – infra-structure
 6. Partnership/ collaboration – work together at the same table, mixed economy decision makers in the same room
 7. Procurement
 8. Challenges + challenging
 9. ID. Barriers - put things into place to help overcome these
 10. Willing to take a risk and learn from mistakes / willing lead and follow