



Multisector collaboration to improve community wellbeing: a framework for action



The Wales Centre for Public Policy (WCPP) and the Resourceful Communities Partnership (RCP) have been working together on research to better understand the role of multisector collaboration in improving community action and wellbeing. This first involved a review of evidence from practice-based case studies, academic and grey literature, and second an interactive workshop where participants from diverse policy and practice contexts engaged with and added to the review findings. We focused on identifying specific actions that can be taken by partners to support multisector collaboration that enhances community action and wellbeing (see [Figure 6](#) in the main report, [Multisector collaboration to improve community wellbeing](#)).

This resource summarises those actions, and their potential relevance to different contexts (e.g., collaboration maturity, resources, timescales). We call it a ‘framework for action’. The actions are grouped into three different categories: activities for developing shared purpose; governance arrangements; and financial mechanisms. These correspond with the ‘actions’ described in the **Key Findings: Actions for effective multisectoral collaboration section** of our [report](#), which explains them more fully and provides case studies. The second column provides examples of these actions detailed in the report, and the third column outlines what was highlighted as key to these actions effectively supporting multisector collaboration. The remaining columns indicate who these actions might involve, how much resource they might require (capacity and monetary), how much time, and the maturity of collaboration they are best suited to (early, mid or mature). These are broad indications based on our research findings and could be complemented by using other resources (e.g., existing collaboration maturity matrices to help determine what stage your collaboration is at). This is not a comprehensive list of possible actions, nor the only way of categorising and contextualising them, but it aims to offer a starting point for thinking not just about what good collaboration looks like, but how to get there in practice.

Activities for developing shared purpose

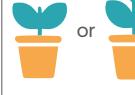
Activities supporting multisector collaboration by developing shared aims / understanding

Actions	Examples	Key to success	Who is involved	Resource required	Time required	Collaboration maturity
 Information gathering To better understand assets, issues and ambitions within a system or local area	Community research, listening exercises, engagement events	Not 'doing to' communities. Listening and removing barriers to participation.	Cross sector (a few facilitators) Community groups and citizens (as many as possible)			
 Systems thinking and mapping To more fully understand an issue and identify shared, long-term goals responding to root causes.	Mapping systems, issues, contributing factors and actors involved (rather than 'assets')	Collaborative process with a breadth of stakeholders. Mapping with a purpose.	Cross sector (10-30 key stakeholders)			
 Long term planning and macro-goals To commit to paper shared goals (e.g., those identified through systems thinking) and steps towards achieving them.	Theory of change, objective trees, shared visioning, horizon and scenario planning	Flexible not fixed plans, frequently returned to ('living documents'). Time to develop and revisit regularly.	Cross sector (5-10 key stakeholders)			
 Training/ mutual learning To share expertise / understanding across sectors	Events, conferences, communities of practice, webinars, 'lunch and learns', training, resources	Mutual, respectful approaches. Learning as equal partners. Shared, physical spaces.	Cross sector (2-200 participants)			Any
 Pooling and sharing information To make relevant, up-to-date information available about services and assets	Online platforms, lists/directories, databases, asset mapping.	Live and regularly updated resources. Easy to access. Co-produced to avoid replication/ overlap	Local government, public services, third sector (Across organisations)			Any
 Defining outcomes and how to measure them Agreeing how shared goals might translate into outcomes or impacts and how to measure these.	Defining measurable collaboration outcomes (e.g., better service coordination) and wellbeing outcomes (e.g., increased access to greenspace)	Measure quality as well as quantity outcomes. Create or use existing tools to support measurement.	Cross-sector (Key stakeholders in a collaboration)			Any
 Shared oversight to coordinate services Multisector mechanisms to coordinate service provision, which develop shared understanding of community priorities	Strategic oversight or planning boards. Multiagency meetings/ platforms to manage residents' requests for support. Liaison roles and referral pathways (see below).	Facilitate cross-sector discussion. Develop shared language. Focus on identifying priority areas.	Local government and public services (teams or individual roles)			

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Governance arrangements

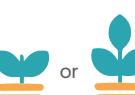
Roles, responsibilities, processes and structures developed to support multisector collaboration

Actions	Examples	Key to success	Who?	Resource required	Time required	Maturity
 Liaison/coordination roles and referral pathways To help navigate complex referral pathways and communicate across sectors	Community engagement roles in councils/ 3rd sector organisations. Social prescribing or community navigator roles	Flexibility to be case-specific/person-centred. Regular, direct communications across sectors.. Developing relationships across services over time.	Local government and public services (teams or individual roles) Third sector and community groups (sometimes)			
 Responsibilities and boundaries To determine the scope and limits of different partners' roles and responsibilities within a collaboration	Protocol for referral between community/voluntary and public sector services. Internal policies for outlining roles/accountabilities within a collaboration	Mutually agreeing how different responsibilities relate and what to expect of each other. Direct contacts and clear expectations on response times.	Cross-sector			
 Leadership and shared decision-making To ensure those influenced by decisions are involved in making them	Citizens assemblies, stakeholder groups, leadership boards, community-led governance and action partnerships or networks.	Evolving not fixed structures. Values-based decision-making. Diverse/ inclusive representation without tokenism.	Local authorities (usually convenors) Cross-sector (representatives)			
 Policies and procedures To formalise or legislate collaborative processes	Formalised processes/ requirements for collaboration at organisational or wider levels.	Assign time and resource for collaboration. Provide/coproduce frameworks/processes not just requirements.	Cross-sectors (within or between organisations)			
 Regional/ national bodies or infrastructures To coordinate, convene and inform local collaborations.	Public bodies, voluntary councils, umbrella organisations, membership bodies.	Provide relevant, sector-specific information, connections, infrastructures.	Public services and third sector organisations			Any
 Focused collaboration sub-groups To enable members to focus on and develop their areas of expertise and interest	Teams or groups within or across collaborations focused on specific themes (e.g., delivery, research)	Ensure communication between sub-groups. Avoid creating extra governance layers.	Cross sector (practice/delivery-oriented roles)			
 Supporting workforce capacity and consistency To allow time to develop collaborative work and relationships	Living wage requirements for grant funders/commissioners and grantees	Seek longer term funding that supports core costs (i.e., staffing)	Cross sector (leaders, funders/commissioners)			

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Financial mechanisms

Approaches to funding work/ initiatives in ways that support multisector collaboration

Actions	Examples	Key to success	Who?	Resource required	Time required	Maturity
 Grant funding To increase communities' access to and control over funding through specific grant structures and requirements.	Flexible, rolling grants created during the pandemic. Proportional grants (with administrative requirements proportional to grant size)	Ensuring that flexibility and proportionality do not compromise access to longer-term, larger grants. Participatory (involving grantees in determining nature of funding)	Public and third sector, local and national government (funders)			 or 
 Commissioning and contracting To focus on preventative, system-level goals, outcomes not outputs, and collaboratively determine these	Collaborative/ joint / strategic/ place -based / outcomes-based commissioning	Focus on outcomes not outputs, and macro/ system-level goals. Collaboratively determine these.	Public services local and national government (strategic/ commissioning roles)			
 Community wealth building To develop supply chains that retain wealth locally	(for social purpose) Community investment/ wealth funds.	Adapt existing spending or investments to support local organisations and social or environmental assets.	Local government			
 Infrastructure and estates To increase community ownership and management of buildings or land	Community asset transfers, land trusts, estate rationalisation	Ongoing support not handing over responsibility. Not transferring risky or burdensome assets. Involving those with prior experience.	Local government and community groups			 or 
 Fundraising To get something 'off the ground' or fund informal work	Crowdfunding, Local Giving, private donations.	Building on community connections and things people believe in/ care about.	Local government, community organisations and citizens			
 Convening resources To avoid fragmenting or duplicating efforts and more effectively work towards shared goals	Pooling budgets or capacity. In kind (non-monetary) support. Skills/knowledge exchange.	Seeking skills, resources and experience already in 'the system' (i.e. building on and utilising what exists, not 'reinventing the wheel').	Cross sector (leadership)			
 Reporting impact To understand 'what works' and secure more sustainable funding	Case studies and stories. Standardised reporting tools/ approaches. Working with researchers.	Capturing and communicating 'invisible impacts' Ongoing, iterative learning and reporting/sharing. Co-defining 'success' measures in advance.	Cross sector (practice/delivery-oriented roles)			Any

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