

FAQs - Collaborative Working

Q. Everybody talks about Collaborative working but what does it really mean? Is it just about delivering public services?

Collaborative working means much more than working with other organisations to deliver public services.

The [Charity Commission](#) describe the process as 'joint working by two or more charities in order to fulfil their purposes, whilst remaining as separate organisations'. Collaboration can last for a fixed length of time or can be more permanent.

Examples of informal collaborative working include:

- Networking or creating alliances
- Information sharing
- Shared membership of associations, groups or federation.

Examples of formal collaborative working include:

- Providing finance, administrative support and payroll services;
- Offering training services;
- Shared transport and other resources;
- Formal partnerships where resources are pooled to secure staff or services;
- Joint projects or ventures that assist service delivery, e.g. consortia working or mergers.

SCVO provides further information regarding *Collaborative Working Models*.

Q. What should my trustees consider before entering into a collaborative working arrangement?

A. Both the [Charity Commission](#) and [BASSAC](#) offer advice and guidance on trustee considerations for collaborative working. [CC34 Collaborative Working and Mergers: An Introduction \(B2\)](#) provides a comprehensive overview of good practice guidance for trustees.

Q. We are considering collaborating with another organisation; do we need a joint working agreement?

A. If you wish to protect the interests of your organisation then a Joint working agreement is essential but you must seek legal advice regarding any agreement. A joint working agreement can take a variety of shapes and different names: partnership agreement or protocol; memorandum of understanding; service level agreement; contract; joint venture agreement. [NCVO Collaborative Working Unit](#) produces information on 'joint working agreements' with helpful definitions and tips on how to create an agreement.

Q. Our charity is working on a project with another charity. Do we have to inform the Charity Commission?

A. It's not necessary to inform the Charity Commission when you work collaboratively with another organisation. Any collaborative working arrangements are likely to fall within the trustees' existing powers, but just in make sure your powers include collaborative working.

Q. Our charity is working on a project with another charity, but one or both organisations are unincorporated (constituted but not a company). How should we work with the Charity Commission?

A. If you are an unincorporated charity and your constitution does not give you the power to collaborate, the Commission can make a 'Scheme' that can change any aspect of your organisations purposes. If you are a Church Hall charity you might find this option particularly helpful, especially if you wish to use premises for non-religious purposes.

Got more questions? Check out the Collaboration area of the SCVO website, or contact [Martin Drayton](#), Project Officer on 0121 525 1127.

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