
Key points

- A CCG could as easily commission Public Health as a service as it could any other provider, but culturally there are barriers, which make no sense to those outside the system.
- Trusted outside partners, such as the VCSE, have a broader and more holistic view of health and can challenge assumptions and ask questions that lead to creative health solutions.
- When a partner like the VCSE holds a flexible amount of money to contribute to a health agenda, it brings people together to talk about different strands of work on a similar theme, and supports collaboration and sharing of resources.

“Without BHP taking place, developing partnerships with the VCSE would have happened more slowly, and in a less coordinated manner than we now have the knowledge to do. The BHP has improved us. I have learned a great deal.” Steve Davies, Bristol CCG

ABOUT BUILDING HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS

The building health partnerships programme aims to improve health outcomes through supporting the development of effective and productive partnerships between Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), local authorities and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. Supported by NHS England, the programme is delivered by Social Enterprise UK in partnership with the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR). It takes a facilitative approach, working with a cross-sector group. The core sessions included the following:

partnership working and develop an area-based action plan to address the key challenges

- a diagnostic session to create a shared understanding of the national and local health policy context
- a partnership development session to cement partnership working and develop an area-based action plan to address the key challenges
- an expert seminar to tackle specific local needs and build local knowledge
- a partnership development session to embed learning and review delivery of action plans
- additional bespoke support and facilitation from a dedicated facilitator.

➔ Find out more: www.socialenterprise.org.uk/buildinghealthpartnerships

Background

In Bristol people from BME communities are statistically more at risk of developing type 2 diabetes, and post-diagnosis they have poor levels of engagement in treatment programmes designed to help them manage their condition.

At the first BHP diagnostic session, this issue was identified as one of three main health issues in Bristol that the cross-sector group wanted to focus on.

Our approach

Not knowing much about how Public Health and Primary Care operate enabled us to look at things differently and ask questions.

Early on at a meeting a nurse shared their frustration about seeing the innovative work Public Health took to engage people at risk of type 2 diabetes, but he was unable to refer his patients to them: "They're not on my system, the work they do is not NICE accredited, but I know it is absolutely what my patients need."

Voscur, the local VCSE umbrella organisation and other VCSE organisations were able to challenge existing processes for referrals and start developing a pilot, where GP practices can refer to Public Health services.

What we did

The BHP group led by Voscur gained permission to run the pilot with two local GP practices, targeting mainly Somali and Asian people diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, who were not attending the health education courses provided and struggling to adjust their lifestyle.

These patients are referred by their GP to the Public Health Improvement Teams who support them to make healthy lifestyle changes, and whose staff and volunteers all come from BME backgrounds.

A local VCSE organisation also collaborated with Public Health to offer 'kitchen on prescription' – a series of cooking events aimed at improving diet for those diagnosed or at risk from diabetes.

The BHP bursary was vital for this work, as it covers the additional staff cost of Public Health taking in 'NHS patients', funds the monitoring and evaluation of the work, and covers the cost of administration and collection of patient experiences.

What was the impact?

So far, the programme has been piloted in two GP surgeries, facilitating referrals from GPs to VCSE public health services.

A local VCSE organisation are collecting patient experiences for the CCG. The monitoring and evaluation of the work will be used to:

- better understand the barriers to accessing health services faced by Somali and Asian communities in Bristol
- demonstrate the value of 'non-traditional' methods of diet and healthy lifestyle education that focus on cultural and local needs
- understand the cultural issues of the groups that can then be used for other services for long term conditions
- highlight good practice in local integrated services between GP practices and Public Health, and evidence the benefit of using VCSE as providers

HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

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Social Enterprise UK

We are the national body for social enterprise. We are a membership organisation. We offer business support, do research, develop policy, campaign, build networks, share knowledge and understanding, and raise awareness of social enterprise and what it can achieve. We also provide training and consultancy for clients of all kinds.

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Institute for Voluntary Action Research

We work to understand, support and strengthen voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisation and management using action research. We work collaboratively; concentrate on problem-solving; and want our work to be relevant and practically useful.

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