

Bolton

Together

Collaboration - Navigating Common Misconceptions

Misconception: *The Voluntary, community and social enterprise sector lack Professional level expertise.*

Reality: Voluntary, community and social enterprise Professionals are Highly Skilled.

Dispelling the misconception that VCSE organisations lack professional expertise is crucial. The VCSE sector bring diverse and valuable skills, hold various qualifications such as; Safeguarding, Paediatric First Aid, Solihull Approach, Start Well Training, Early years Qualifications, Mental health and wellbeing training, Infant feeding support training, project management and coordination skills, health and safety training including carrying out risk assessments and more. They hold a deep knowledge, some have lived experience, and a lifetime of expertise in specific areas. Acknowledging and appreciating these skills strengthens cross-sector partnerships.

To learn more about the importance of the VCSE Sector and it's contributions explore this 2022 Government report: [The role of Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise \(VCSE\) organisations in public procurement - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/111422/20220323-vcse-report.pdf) (www.gov.uk)

Misconception: *Peer Support is not essential*

Reality: Peer Support is a Powerful Tool

Numerous studies show that peer support is a powerful and transformative tool. Whether its parents supporting each other through similar challenges or professionals collaborating across sectors, peer support offers empathy, understanding, and shared learning.

For more on this read the National Voices Report here: [peer support - what is it and does it work.pdf\(pcdn.co\)](https://www.pcdn.co/peer-support-what-is-it-and-does-it-work.pdf)

Peer Support Case Study: Breastfeeding Together

Emma's Story - Baby Boy, 5 months old

'I can't thank Breastfeeding Together enough for the support they have offered me since giving birth in June'

'I was introduced to the charity on the hospital ward after giving birth. A peer supporter introduced herself, talked to me about breastfeeding and offered to observe a feed so that I could make the best possible start. She was friendly, helpful, non-judgemental and made me feel at ease. I was delighted to find out that there was a Facebook group where new mums like me could ask anything, get support from other new mums and the peer supporters. It made the whole experience of breastfeeding less daunting and meant I didn't feel alone throughout the process.

After a few weeks of feeding, I started to encounter pain. I received a home visit from a peer supporter who observed a feed and made a small suggestion for how to improve baby's latch. Although only a small suggestion, it made a huge impact on the feeds and meant I was no longer in pain and could carry on successfully breastfeeding. Now, 5 months on, I'm so happy I reached out to Breastfeeding Together. Without them, I may have ended up stopping breastfeeding as other support from the Infant Feeding Team, midwives and health visitor just did not get to the crux of the problem. Breastfeeding Together did!

The weekly support groups offered in the community and online are fantastic too and I thoroughly enjoy the weekly groups with some of the peer supporters and other mums.

Thank you Breastfeeding Together, the help you give is invaluable!

Misconception: Referrals Complicate the Process

Reality: Seamless Collaboration is Possible

Some professionals may believe that involving statutory agencies in referrals complicates the process. In truth, a well-designed collaboration framework ensures a seamless referral process, utilising the strengths of both VCSE and statutory sectors to provide comprehensive support for families.

Misconception: Collaboration is Time-Consuming

Reality: Efficient Collaboration Saves Time

The perception that collaboration is time-consuming is often based on outdated models. With clear communication channels, streamlined processes, and a shared vision, collaborative efforts can actually save time and resources, leading to more effective outcomes for families.

Misconception: Collaborative Efforts Don't Yield Tangible Results

Reality: Tangible Outcomes Result from Collaborative Work

Effective collaboration yields tangible results. From improved family outcomes to streamlined processes, the combined efforts of VCSE and statutory sectors have a measurable impact. Case studies and success stories can and do showcase these tangible outcomes.

To learn more about Multi agency working models and the efficacy of this way of collaborating explore *Multi-agency working and its implications for practice:*

A review of the literature [mad01.pdf \(nfer.ac.uk\)](#)