

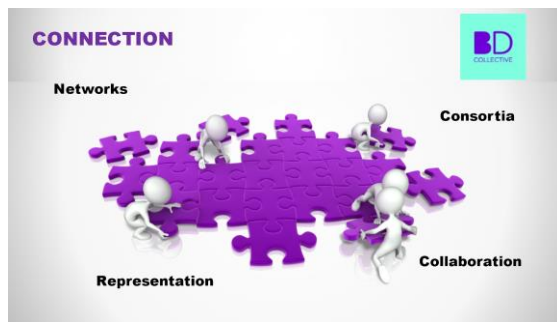
BD Collective Annual review 2022

Looking back, Looking forward Avril McIntyre

75 members of the BD_Collective gathered in October to review progress at the end of Year 3 and to explore how we move forward.

The last 3 years have been foundational in establishing this values driven movement. There has been a shift in the way we work across the social sector and with statutory partners. We are starting to see the move towards a 'systems approach' where organisations explore how they can work as one rather than siloed activity. It's a journey, but we've started.

Avril McIntyre, Chair of BD_Collective reviewed the application of the values as we move into Year 4.

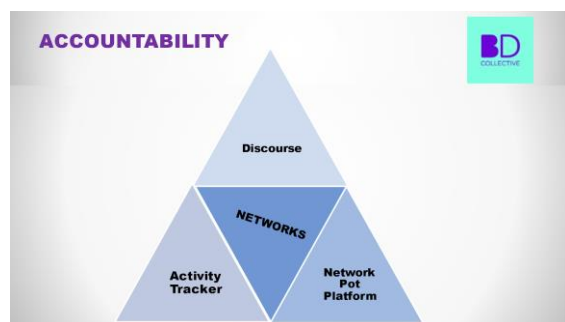


Connection has been demonstrated through; the focus on networks – everything is done through networks! This has led to increased collaboration, with one another in the sector and with our statutory partners including; approaches to social isolation, child immunisation, food distribution and mental health for older people.

Anyone in a seat of representation is accountable to the network they represent, and

consortia are starting to form around funding opportunities (more on this later). Another key aspect of collaboration has been the forming of the Infrastructure Group where BDGiving, Barking Enterprise Centre, BDCVS, Everyone Everyday and BD_Collective are working together for a vibrant social sector.

Trust. There has been a change in this, it's a process and one network lead talked about the change he has seen over the last couple of years with people being willing to be more vulnerable and open to share information. This is at an early stage and will increasingly be a core measure through the networks' interactions via WhatsApp.



Accountability. Everything that is done across BD_Collective is shared via our communication platform discourse. There are 4 key ways we make ourselves accountable to one another.

Networks – as already outlined above.

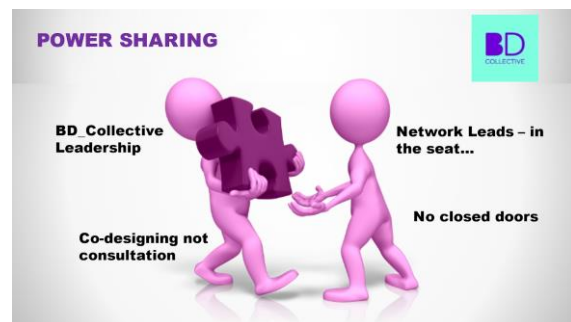
Discourse – if you are not already signed up, you can do so [here](#). Also look out for training sessions to be delivered soon.

Activity tracker – everyone has access to our activity tracker which details what is happening

in the networks, who is representing on what boards etc. You can access it [here](#) as well on discourse.

Network Pot platform – BD_Collective receives £100,000 per year from Barking & Dagenham Council. Over the last 3 years, we have averaged a 54% spend on the secretariat costs and the remaining amount on activity, either whole Collective events or via networks. Everything done within networks is transparent and decisions are devolved. Moving forward, we have set up the Network Pot on the Open Collective platform. Members of networks who undertake work on behalf of a network can now claim any costs via the [platform](#) and anyone can see how/what the money is spent. The criteria for the network pot was developed by the BD_Collective leadership and is signed off by members of the Design Team (see below for details on these teams).

Power sharing. There have been significant changes in the BD_Collective leadership since the original 9 Steering Group members who set it up. Avril acknowledged the significance of the original group noting that none of their organisations had gained anything financially from their involvement and time. The original aim was to become ‘door openers’ so that others, particularly smaller groups could have influence in how things were shaped locally.



This has started and the new leadership team are made up of people from a range of types of organisations. There are 2 parts of the leadership team [the Steering Group](#), made up of network leads and [the Design Team](#) who are responsible to ensure the Collective remains true to its vision.

Additionally, we are seeing change in the power balance with statutory partners with an increased willingness to co-design new strategy and initiatives. Examples include; social isolation, community approach to debt, locality model, neighbourhood networks, population health approaches and child immunisation. It's all a work in progress but in each of these we are seeing new levels of collaboration and influence with the social sector.

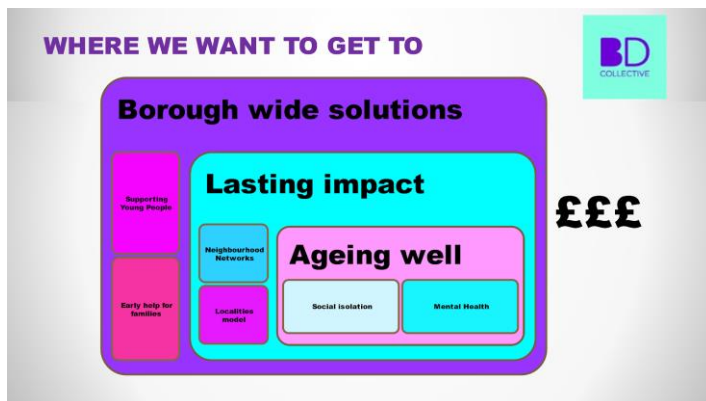
BD_Collective is a network of networks, supported by a secretariat which now has a team of 5 people part-time people (the equivalent of just under 2 full-time posts). Over the last 2 years, we have seen a shift from 'secretariat' driven activity to a devolved network driven movement. The Collective's work is done through networks and the teams who lead the networks are genuinely in the seat to drive initiatives forward. The team are there to facilitate and support, rather than lead. Sarah Tizzard and Ruth Robertson who are Connectors, Jenny Fribbins, Networks Coordinator, and Sarah Haler, Communications and Technical Officer.

Where we've got to?

Avril talked through the funding that has been secured via BD_Collective. Currently, totalling £1,380,000+ secured via the networks and led by different organisations.

Additionally, we are working with statutory partners to develop an Ageing Well strategy and Early Help for families both of which have funding for delivery.

Conclusion – a borough wide strategy



Avril challenged the room in the conclusion to her presentation. BD_Collective has one of the best opportunities to build a strong and robust social sector in Barking & Dagenham, offering capacity building support within all we do and through local infrastructure partners; However, there is also a challenge as we have to decide if we want to hold our own organisation's solution as the answer or if we are willing to

add our expertise into the mix so that we build borough-wide solutions. This will mean a significant step change in our practice. Are we ready? Are we willing?



Group exercise

Feedback:

<p>What have you heard that you liked?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The focus on trust, which is increasing• The emphasis on solution-based, forward-thinking rather than on what isn't working• Listening to those who have lived through issues and found a way• A Network of Networks <u>not</u> an organisation and <u>we</u> rather than I• The power of working together collaboratively and sharing information and resources - allowing better use of resources, challenges to be more easily overcome and leading to greater outcomes and achievements• Involving residents in decision-making and supporting the community• Taking personal responsibility and ownership, being accountable• Some networks are working really well and are a good example of how a network could operate• The amount of funding that is available• The efforts to engage with young people• The freedom and flexibility in shaping the process, recognising that one size does not fit all• Understanding the consequences of the austerity era on the social sector• Signposting across the borough	<p>What didn't you hear that you expected to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stats/Money/Performance/KPIs• Other measures of success than money• Unexpected candour and vision• What support is there that will allow organisations to step -up?• Reinforcement of core values• Learnings from community consultations• Information on youth involvement• How residents interact with the various organisations that make up the Collective.• Discussion on the efficacy of Discourse and accessibility - how do we reach the digitally excluded?• Discussion about young men and Men's mental health• How to access the funding that's available• Information on place-based learning (the borough is large and diverse)• That it's community-sector-led rather than council-led
<p>Thoughts, Comments, Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Barking & Dagenham is well-connected and open to collaboration.• There seems to be more trust and acceptance.• 5,000 organisations in the borough - who are they?• Need to become familiar with calling one another (and ensure we complement rather than duplicate one another's activities) and perhaps have a contact list on Discourse (so we can contact one another more easily)• Need a simple sector manifesto• Need to emphasise the Collective among the younger generation so they can carry forward and build on the networks and the Collective as a whole• Need to improve the visibility of the Collective in the borough so residents are more aware of the services, support and information available• There is still room for improvement - why are there not more people/organisations and groups involved in networks? Why is it so hard to learn from/connect with others?• How do we reach organisations that are led by non-English speaking people? We need to reach all ethnic groups.• How can we help families relocated to isolated areas with no means of support?	

- How can we manage contracts with the flexibility to make actual change?
- Cost of living crisis: as we face difficult times over the next few years, we need to be ready to support groups with advice *i.e.*, *cash flow, accounting, contracts, notice if council pull contracts, backup plans and exit strategies*
- Some individuals (particularly those representing smaller organisations and those volunteering) struggled to attend the meeting as it took place during working hours - would it be better to hold evening or Saturday morning meetings in the future?

Setting up Networks

Jenny Fribbons gave a presentation on setting up networks. Over three years, we've been learning what works and what doesn't and now plan to go wider (more networks) and deeper (doing more together). With the aim of bringing organisations together to find solutions to issues, we are introducing a new type of network that is easier to set up, more focused and less centralised. These small, agile, and highly responsive networks are member-led, and power is shared, allowing everyone to have a voice. To set one up is simple:



Once you have got the network off the ground, you will then receive a “big box” with further information, more goodies and £500 which the network decides how to spend to improve Barking & Dagenham.

[A New Type of Network video.](#)

Secretariat - a possible year 5?

The BD_Collective was commissioned in 2019 for a 3 year + 1 contract (i.e., if we delivered successfully for 3 years then we would have 1 additional year bonus). Community Resources was the lead organisation (secretariat) for this contract.

When the original contract was commissioned, the Steering Group established the principle that at the end of the contracting period, the secretariat *HAD* to move to a different organisation to ensure power was shared.

Karen West-Whyllie, a member of the Design Team and founding member of BD_Collective informed participants at the event that the Council were offering to extend the contract to one final year (a fifth year) in recognition of the restrictions on the social sector with COVID etc.

Karen laid out that it was important that BD_Collective members were part of the decision. The Leadership Team have agreed that there would be benefit in accepting the extension and that Community Resources should remain the secretariat. Karen invited people to consider and let her know if there were any objections/concerns about this decision and to let her know by 16th November. She can be contacted via email karen.west-whyllie@barkingenterprisecentre.co.uk

Getting ready

Matt Scott

[Slides here.](#)

There is significant opportunity for BD_Collective especially with funders getting interested in our model. Matt led a challenge session which asked important questions. We have summarised the table conversation, but this only just gets us started. Matt invited people to join him in this exploration over the next 6 months. It will involve monthly workshops to work out what is needed for the sector to 'be ready' for consortia and other funding opportunities that are likely to come up. More information will be available via Discourse shortly.

Getting ready

Proposal: We need deeper, difficult conversations, learning and trust

Request: Speak up, step up, speak your truth

How would we know we are ready?

Where are we going and what resources do we need to help us get there?

How much risk are funders willing to take? Will they be flexible regarding reporting/impact expectations?

How collaborative are we now & how can we measure this?

Who will benefit from what we do, and how will we know they're benefitting?

How much funding do we need for collaboration rather than delivery (hidden costs)?

Issues, Solutions and Actions: getting ready for collective funding and delivery (group exercise)

Issues	Solutions	Actions
Money getting stuck or being ring-fenced if part of a bigger, national organisation and there can be competition between groups for funds - how do we ensure funding is allocated fairly?	Need to have fluid systems that allocate funds in a timely manner. Make sure all funding opportunities are shared widely.	Formalise the process. Financial literacy workshops. Post on Discourse.

<p>Timelines from making bids to receiving funding need to change.</p>		
<p>Lack of resources (including premises). Smaller groups in particular lack resources and often don't have bank accounts, constitutions etc, which can be barriers to accessing funding. Help may be needed with charity governance, admin and accounting, there can be hidden costs (e.g., unexpected administrative bills, staff costs), and volunteers working with youth groups need training, safeguarding training, and DBS checks. Support is also needed around IT, data security and data sharing/non-disclosure agreements.</p>	<p>Training and capacity building/development and better mapping. We need to ensure organisations in the network have in place all necessary policies and governance documents required to run an organisation. Share/pool resources and support one another. Use open resources. Employ someone to put together resources for us. Use time-banking (skills exchange) or "economy of hours" (a social currency that helps you learn new skills and talents, based on fairness, equality and reciprocity).</p>	<p>Hold money for groups who can't get a bank account Explore a Collective insurance policy. Larger groups to support smaller ones. Help these organisations to develop policies and obtain accounts. Put a percentage of our time/year towards sharing of resources. Create an advisory group of professionals (legal accountancy, and HR) who can support the delivery of a large pot of money. Connect with voluntary service providers who provide skills and training. Get in touch with ELBA/similar organisations that can provide professional volunteers. Produce an FAQ section on Discourse with "How tos" (e.g., how to set up policies, how to become a safeguarding lead, being a project facilitator). Organisations could offer help via Discourse. Funding for capacity building/networking (£280 per organisation). Recruit local freelancers who can provide training and guidance on policies and procedures (e.g., HR, H&S, customer service).</p>
<p>People with lived experience need to be understood. Barriers include language difficulties, accessibility issues, poverty, a lack of understanding and an unwillingness to ask for help.</p>	<p>Be more inclusive, diverse, and representative of the community we serve. Encourage organisations to adopt the London Living Wage.</p>	<p>Funding for ESOL and other access support.</p>

<p>5,000 organisations in the borough - how do we identify them all (especially the smaller ones), so none are overlooked, and we know which organisations are best-placed to tackle certain issues? How do we identify community members going under the radar who are doing a lot for the community?</p>	<p>Decision-makers to seek out community. Thorough scoping to ensure funding reaches all organisations. Larger groups to acknowledge their power and ensure smaller organisations have a voice. Bring smaller organisations together as they are more powerful in numbers.</p>	<p>Conversation between larger and smaller organisations. Create an advert to reach community members who do kind acts but are not supported.</p>
<p>How can we ensure that residents' voices are being heard that their needs are being met, and that they know where to turn for help?</p>	<p>Foster a clearer understanding of how to connect. More networks would give more opportunities to connect. Equip residents/local groups with skills and knowledge. Signpost.</p>	<p>Expand networks/create more networks.</p>
<p>Have we built up sufficient trust yet? Do residents trust the organisations they're working with?</p>	<p>Better listening, being open to challenge, those organisations with experience to share their knowledge. Build trust within consortia, in networks, and with residents. Groups need to get to know one another and be able to talk about their strengths and weaknesses.</p>	<p>Set aside funding to help with trust-building. Continue nurturing the relationships we are building and encourage open conversation. Networking. Have an event where we use storytelling to show how relationships have developed using a real-life example/network.</p>
<p>Communication and knowing what's available.</p>	<p>Get the word out about projects. Share information.</p>	<p>Post on Discourse.</p>
<p>Are funders willing to work with smaller organisations on their terms?</p>	<p>Funders need to understand that communities come in different forms.</p>	<p>Conversations with funders. Set up a working group to increase visibility to decision-makers.</p>
<p>Lack of consensus or conflict amongst groups in a consortium due to a lack of alignment in values and objectives, and differences in vision. Who has accountability? What are the roles of each organisation?</p>	<p>Open collaborative discussion.</p>	<p>Agree on SMART goals.</p>