

Scottish Communities for Health & Wellbeing Consortium Model

What is Scottish Communities for Health & Wellbeing (SCHW)

SCHW is a partnership organisation which aim to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland. SCHW wants to improve the health of Scotland's disadvantaged communities by embedding community-led approaches to health improvement in communities and reducing health inequalities. SCHW has 74 community-led partner organisations operating in Scotland, they employ over 500 staff, involve 3000 active volunteers and engage over 300,000 beneficiaries in health enhancing activities and events each year.

Our consortia approach?

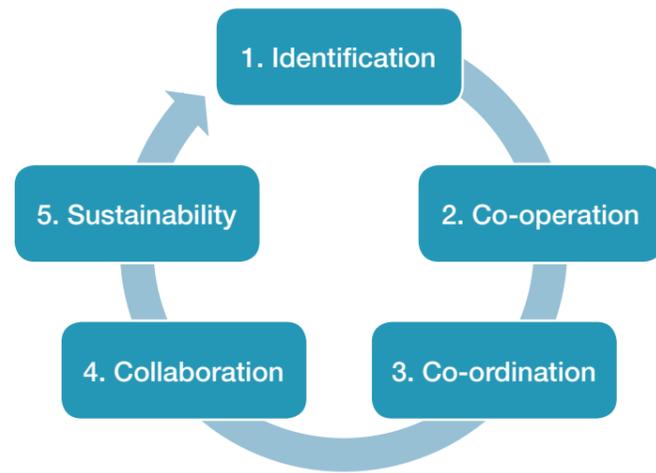
Our consortium approach ensures that our partner organisations are empowered to be involved in larger national contracts. It is a way of moving beyond local funding opportunities and to do specific pieces of work that may not be funded at a local level. The consortium approach offers organisations the opportunity to secure contracts or funding which would not otherwise be available. The consortium model also gives the opportunity for partners to extend their service provision into new fields, to gain new expertise in a field of work or to extend their activities in to new geographies or other community groups.



WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE REDUCTIONS IN HEALTH INEQUALITIES

The Consortium Model

The model has the following stages:



1. Identification - When a funding opportunity arises all SCHW Partners are invited to be part of a group to explore the opportunity and submit a bid as part of a consortium. The funding opportunity is usually a national funding stream that local organisations may not have access to.

2. Co-operation - Partners come together to co-design the funding application, this takes place over 3 meetings. At this stage Partners must commit time (usually a senior manager's time) and resources to attending the meetings and contributing to the discussion. This process helps Partners to plan their approach based on their different strengths and previous experience. During these discussions the outcomes are developed, beneficiaries are identified, the project is fully costed, and the detail of the approach is captured in the application process.

3. Co-ordination - When the consortia bid is successful the delivery team/managers and SCHW meet up again to plan the actual delivery including timescales, staffing, training needs and partnership working processes for the programme. At this stage Partners will sign a formal Partnership Agreement which details the contribution and expectations of

the consortium for the contract. In the event of an unsuccessful application other funding opportunities are sought for the co-designed project by SCHW Directors.

4. Collaboration - During the delivery phase of a project the Partners will agree a local reporting system (which may vary between partners who have existing systems) and update their progress using Online LEAP tool¹ on a monthly basis. Partnership meetings are held on a regular bi monthly basis and involve the delivery team and managers from each of the participating Partners. This is an opportunity for Partners to update progress, identify training opportunities, share good practice and network. SCHW coordinates and manages these meetings.

5. Sustainability - SCHW monitors progress using monthly LEAP reports and bi-monthly meetings, this information is collated into a funders report as required. This information is also used to plan for sustainability. Planning for sustainability starts at the co-ordination phase (stage 3) and involves Partners collecting evidence of impact, lessons from practice and identifying funding opportunities at local and national level.

What do commissioners get?

Commissioners get a single point of contact with clear lines of responsibility through SCHW for the delivery organisations. They get certainty about the quality of delivery throughout the chain of partners. They get greater impact for their investment in different communities. They achieve economies of scale by having one point of contact which ensures that funding is directed to delivery rather than spent on bureaucracy. SCHW deliver on outcomes rather than prescriptive services, this means that the consortium will use the appropriate methods to ensure successful delivery. As a result, service users will often progress to activities within the

Partner organisation or be signposted to new support or learning opportunities following the delivery of the contract.

Over the last four years SCHW has been successful in working in consortia to bid for, manage and deliver local programmes. Over this time the organisation has attracted over £300,000 in funding for specific community-led health programmes. The consortium model has evolved over this time. In some instances, SCHW will manage a number of consortia contracts with multiple partners. This approach is illustrated below:



The Model in Practice – Applying for funding

SCHW identified a funding opportunity through the Health and Social Care Alliance (The Alliance) for programmes working with people with long-term conditions. SCHW Directors issued a call for expressions of interest to its 74 Partner organisations. The expressions of interest were considered and a working group of 5 organisations were selected to form a consortium to prepare a bid for The Alliance. The organisations in the consortium had an interest in, and experience of, working with individuals who had become isolated and disconnected from family, friends and their communities often as a result of long-term conditions. The 5 organisations, from all over Scotland, came together to form a Partners

Group made up of managers and development workers from the consortium organisations. Over 3 days, across a few weeks, the Partners Group met to design the 'Out and About' project and produce the bid for funding. SCHW then applied to the Alliance for 3 years funding. The Alliance granted a reduced sum (based on huge demand for the fund). Following negotiations the Alliance determined that the full programme would be run over 2 years. This allowed for a lead in to the start of the programme which enabled Partners to market the approach to local partners and to employ Community Health Navigators for each area. For more information about 'Out & About' please go to.....

1. Online LEAP is a planning tool which supports joint working, planning, monitoring and evaluation. For more info go to: www.planandevaluate.com

What are the benefits of consortia working which are more than just financial?

There are a number of advantages to working as a consortium:

- The approach enables organisations to share skill, experience and expertise during the tendering process and later in relation to the programme delivery. A greater understanding of what works and shared experience leads to more effective programme.
- Outcomes for beneficiaries are increased greatly as the capacity of the consortia will produce materials and learning which will help workers spend more time with beneficiaries.
- Knowledge and skills are gained through the application process where less experienced partners can learn from others about what makes a good application.
- The consortia approach allows for the pooling of resources for training, monitoring and evaluation, materials development, marketing, beneficiary evaluation and development of learning materials for the advantage of the 3rd sector.
- Risk and liability is spread across the delivery partners
- Increased scope for partnership working between partners is more likely within the consortia because it relies more on the people and personalities of those involved rather than simply the working agreement or contracts between partners.

Making the consortium approach work

- It is important to be aware of the amount of time needed to work in this way. Working together is time consuming from the point of developing the bid through to managing the contract in a collective way.
- Partners must understand that they are responsible for the reputation of the consortium and that a failure of delivery or a breach of contract by a member of the consortium may have adverse impact on the overall reputation of the partnership. This challenge can be overcome with strong working agreements and good consistent communication and reporting throughout the process.
- SCHW's effective management, careful Partner selection and positive approach ensures that differing values and cultures within the consortium do not cause friction.
- Communication within the consortium (lead bidder) and amongst the members is vital to maintain a positive working environment.



**Scottish
Communities
for Health
& Wellbeing**

An alliance of community-led
health improvement organisations

www.schw.co.uk

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