

Bev Taylor, Operations Director, National Academy for Social Prescribing

BEV TAYLOR is Operations Director at the NASP and is seconded from NHS England, where she used to lead SP. She has spent her working life supporting local community groups to lead. Bev will reflect on some key ingredients that make cross-sector partnerships work and explain how the cross-sector [Thriving Communities](#) programme is nurturing local cross-sector partnerships across England.

‘Communities in the lead through cross-sector partnerships.’

I want to reflect on what makes really good sustainable cross sector partnerships. It is fab to build on what Claire and Gareth have already said. The obvious question is why. Why do we need cross sector partnerships? People have already said that it is all about health and inequalities. If we are going to have any chance at addressing health inequalities, we absolutely need to work together. Alex started this discussion by saying that it is all about collaboration, and I totally agree. I also think it is totally about having people have more control and be more connected. It is about putting communities in the lead, starting with their strengths. What do they bring to the table?

Recognising that small local community groups have huge assets, and they might need some development support and some connections, they might need help to work with other sectors, but what we need to do, is ensure that they are in the lead, and not done to. We could all express frustration about partnerships in the past where agencies do things in areas, and the money runs out. The programmes go and communities are still there picking up the pieces. We have absolutely got to put everything around community leadership.

I am going to tell you a little bit about NASP, and I am going to focus mainly on our Thriving Communities programme. We’ve only been around since last August, but we’ve created some SP ambassadors, there are podcasts on prescription available, we’re starting a Global Alliance - which Gareth spoke to earlier. We are building clinical champions, particularly around medical student and clinical student groups. We are trying to shape the evidence base around SP and make the evidence more available, and we are scoping out the innovation development.

The main thing I want to talk to you about is Thriving Communities, which is our attempt to hard wire cross sector partnerships into the fabric of our work. We have bought together a variety of partners. We have bought together seven regional teams, all supported by Arts

Council England, NHS England, Natural England, Money and Pensions Service, NHS Charities Together, Historic England, National Lottery Community Fund, Sport England, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and NASP. We are all working together as a team, to think about, and work on, how we can help cross sectors partnerships at all levels. Particularly at local level. Our Thriving Communities network has over 1000 members already. Please get involved. Let's build it together. We've got an ideas hub; we want to particularly share and celebrate the work of local community groups and partnerships through that ideas hub. If you have got stuff which is worth sharing, we want to hear about it. We are also developing some regional Learning Together programmes, we've got over 400 people involved in those across the regions in England.

Finally, the Thriving Communities fund has enabled us to fund 37 cross sector partnerships at a local level, where voluntary and community organisations are in the lead. John McMahon was speaking about this earlier, this is reinforcement. Collectively, we have spent £1.75 million nationally, but we have also levered in additional funding from local partners. There are over 200 partners, 10,000 participants, 1,700 activities, of which 18 are community and voluntary services or SP led. 25 programmes directly address diversity/engage specific ethnicities, 12 led by arts and culture organisations, with engagement from three libraries and one museum. We have been surprised with that fund, how creative people have been in bringing together SPLW in primary care with arts groups, nature groups, with those around physical support, all for people who have been most impacted by COVID19. We have been blown away by the creativity and the support that is being generated – and by the organisations and partnerships who did not get funding, but who have created a great partnership and carried on. A huge applause and admiration for those organisations who have carried on.

What have we learned? What are the key ingredients for cross sector partnerships? This is only a little bit of reflection, you will have your own, but here are mine. One is that we create something much bigger with shared vision, we need to be absolutely clear about what our purpose is, why we're doing it, and what we want to achieve. What the outcomes will be. What will be different as a result of our work together? All that time in thinking through what will be different, what will we do, by when, how, and being very specific and writing that down, and checking with each other that we have a consensus that we all have the same vision and values, is time really well spent. When I think about our work together on national and regional levels, that is exactly what we spent a lot of time and energy on.

The other thing for me is generosity of spirit goes a long way, and when partners are prepared to step away from their presenter roles, and become part of a team across organisations, and share their learning

and their thinking and their resources, that powers cross sector partnerships. There are always difficulties, bringing about any kind of changes involved inevitable difficulty. We cope with that change a lot better when we walk in each other's shoes. When we try and put ourselves in each other's perspectives, and think, hang on, how is it for them? What do they really need from this? What are their motivations? What are they struggling with? How can we move forward together? That has helped us keep going when we have struggled with our cross-sector partnerships, it is a delight to be part of that and engaged in that. Finally, everybody needs quick wins, in any partnerships there has got to be a way to prove you can work together well. This is what we can do quickly to show evidence of impact. Any partnerships need to think about that. Let us keep this conversation going.

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