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Merger Roundtable

23rd September 2026

Developing and Managing Charity Group Structures

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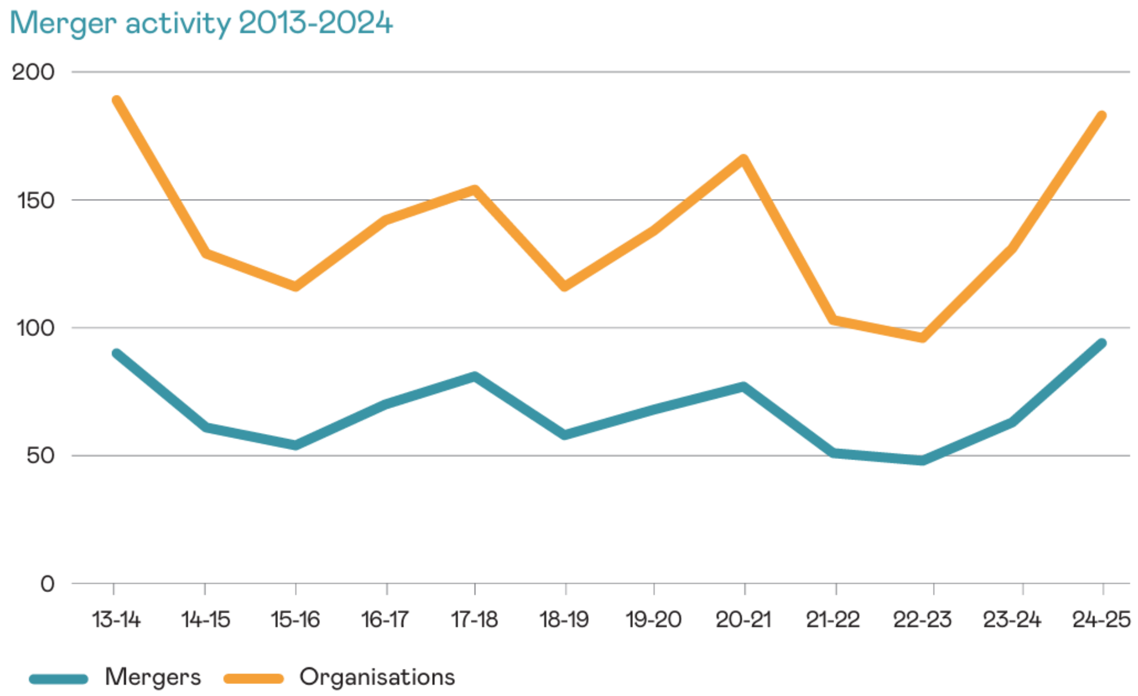
Merger themes

- Growing strategic pressure on charities
- Different motivations driving different structures
- Structure should follow strategy, not the other way around
- Interest in partnership, merger and group structures continues to grow
- More organisations are approaching these conversations proactively rather than in crisis
- Significant increase in attendance at our merger events
- Currently running 5 mergers searches, small, medium and large charities
- Divestment of Retail
- Significant increase in enquiries in last few weeks
- Lots of charities who have already found a partner

Significant increase in merger activity

- 94 mergers involving 183 organisations
- Highest number of mergers since we began our Good Merger Index, 12 years ago
- 49% increase from 2023-24 and 96% compared to 2022-23
- This marks a return to levels of activity we haven’t seen in the sector since 2013-14
- Any year is mainly the result of conditions and decisions in the year before.



The current reasons for strategic partnerships and merger

- Charities in need of a home
- Charities looking for greater financial stability
- Greater profile and voice for campaigns
- Funding diversity
- Economies of scale and back-office savings
- Creation of a continuum of services
- Quality improvements for service users
- Geographical or scale reach
- Service innovation

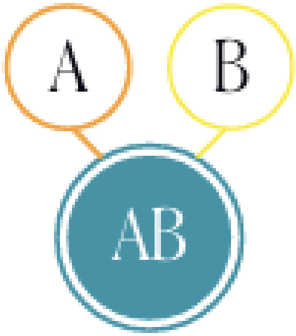
Consider the Challenges

- Resourcing and cost
- Loss of identity and mission
- Lack of knowledge
- Finding partners
- Trust and individual role

Types of merger

1. MERGER

Two or more organisations join to form a new organisation



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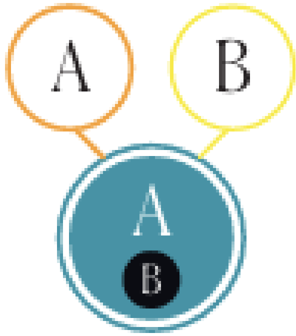
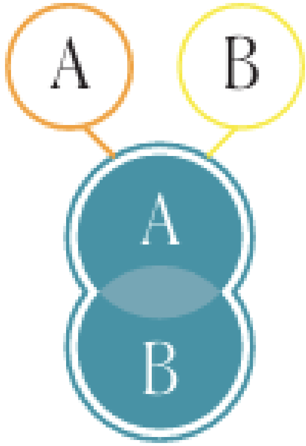
2. TAKEOVER

One organisation transfers its assets and activities to become part of another



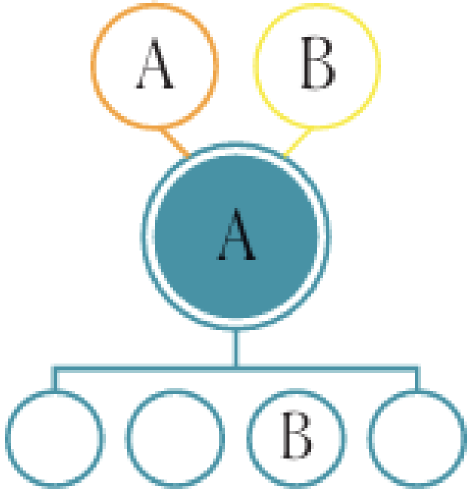
3. SUBSIDIARY MODEL

One organisation becomes a 'wholly owned' subsidiary of another



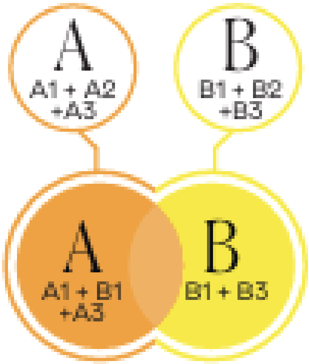
4. GROUP STRUCTURE

Two or more organisations transfer activities and assets to become part of a group



5. SWAPPING SERVICES OR ASSETS

Transfer or swapping of services, and in some cases assets



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Merger resources

01

Charity Merger Guide

Seven practical articles covering the merger journey, from rationale and partner search through to due diligence and integration.

Open the guide →

02

Good Merger Index 2024/25

Eastside People's latest review of merger activity, trends and case studies across the charity sector in England and Wales.

Read the latest Index →

04

Charity Merger Knowledge Base

All Eastside People's resources on mergers & partnerships including blogs, case studies, research reports, how-to guides, tips, news and client testimonials.

Visit the Knowledge Base →

05

IVAR: Thinking about merger

Experience-led guidance for voluntary organisations considering whether merger is the right option.

Read IVAR's guide →

03

NCVO: About mergers

An accessible overview of merger types, reasons for merging and the stages organisations should consider.

Explore NCVO guidance →

Any questions or for a confidential conversation: cara@eastsidepeople.org