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The West Sussex Compact

Revised July 2012(version 12.10.12)

THE WEST SUSSEX COMPACT

Compact Aim

The West Sussex Compact is an agreement between local government, local health services, other public bodies and the voluntary and community sector. It aims to improve our relationships for mutual advantage and for the ultimate benefit of people in West Sussex.

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Introduction

The first West Sussex Compact was developed and adopted in 2001. Since then, it has been through a number of revisions, most recently in 2007, reflecting national changes and also the progress that has been made locally. Monitoring and revision of the Compact has been undertaken by a cross-sector partnership, originally the 'Compact Revision Steering Group', now called 'Building Stronger Partnerships – Compact in Action'.

Building Stronger Partnerships recognise that the current pressure on public spending, combined with radical changes in the nature of local government and how services are delivered to people, mean that it is essential that we have a strong local Compact able to support us to work better together in this challenging environment. The West Sussex Compact has therefore been refreshed and updated to make it simple to use.

This refreshed Compact reiterates the core principles upon which the relationship between sectors is based, as well as setting out codes of practice which give more detailed guidance on how these relationships should be acted out. We hope that this Compact continues to support all partners to manage change and will strengthen our ability to work together to get the best possible outcomes for people in West Sussex.

Building Stronger Partnerships – Compact in Action – May 2012

Key Objectives of the Compact

The West Sussex Compact will be used by Partners:

- □to support improved communication, common understanding, collaboration, trust and respect
- as a framework for effective consultation, representation and partnership working including agreeing definitions, shared values and joint and distinct undertakings
- as a reference document and for developing, monitoring and evaluating the quality of relationships and partnership working at all levels
- to support continuous improvement of efficiency and effectiveness in dealings between Partners
- to guide widespread awareness of and commitment to the 'Compact Way of Working'.

Partners

For the purposes of this document a Partner is any organisation signed up to and actively working within the values and principles of the West Sussex Compact.

Shared Values and Principles

All Partners respect the following principles in working relationships with each other:

Respect: It is recognised that partners have different accountabilities, and partners agree to accept and develop a mutual understanding of these differences, and that they will act with transparency and integrity in all of their dealings.

Honesty: All partners to engage in open communication, and that they will enter into open, full and frank discussion of issues of mutual interest, concern or misunderstanding and difficulty.

Independence: Partners recognise the right of all other partners to campaign, comment and challenge actions or intentions of other partners.

Diversity of the Sector: All partners value and foster a thriving voluntary and community sector, encouraging innovation and choice through a multitude of voices.

Representation: Partners agree to recognise the need for the widest possible representation in their joint partnership working arrangements and to strive for this, reflecting the needs and choices of the people and communities they serve.

Equality: All partners value the need for fairness for all, regardless of background and will actively promote equality and fairness for all through their activities.

Volunteering: The energy and commitment of people freely giving time for the public good should be recognised and valued by all partners.

Dispute Resolution: Work with an ethos that encourages mediation at the earliest stage as the best course of resolution where there is conflict or breakdown in relationships.

Code of Good Practice on Volunteering

This Code of Good Practice establishes the principles and undertakings regarding good practice for volunteering. For the purpose of this code, volunteering is defined as 'an activity which involves spending time, unpaid, by performing an activity which aims to benefit individuals, groups or the natural and built environment'.

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and an essential ingredient of active community life throughout West Sussex. Volunteering allows people, including those who are socially excluded, to expand their personal development and acquire new skills whilst contributing to the well-being of others. It is undertaken freely, without concern for financial gain, and can take many forms. Volunteering is a collective experience, working alongside others and for the benefit of many, yet it is also an individualised experience, attracting people from a diverse range of backgrounds and all stages of life. Volunteers are of all ages: they can be in full-time education, unemployed, working part-time, retired or full-time employees volunteering in their spare time. These factors should be taken into account before a volunteer is engaged and accommodated throughout their period of service as much as is practicable. Volunteering must be open to all regardless of gender, background, age, disability, race, sexual orientation or faith, and barriers to volunteering should be challenged via appropriate policies and practice. The giving of time must be recognised as establishing a reciprocal relationship between volunteers, organisations and users of their services.

All partners agree to:

- develop the positive public perception of volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of volunteer activity
- promote the value of volunteer contributions and recognise the role volunteers play in the provision of funded services
- recognise that volunteering is freely given, but is not cost free and to ensure appropriate resources including financial are made available for the support, promotion and development of volunteers
- adopt clear policies regarding the reimbursement of volunteers for out of pocket expenses for voluntary activity, including encouraging volunteers to claim such expenses
- adopt clear policies regarding volunteer recruitment including roles descriptions, interview, Criminal Bureau Checks (where appropriate) and selection processes
- challenge the barriers to volunteering and ensure equality and fair treatment for all volunteers
- provide the support, management and other resources required by volunteers to ensure their effective involvement including training as appropriate to role

- provide opportunities for volunteers to acquire or develop skills to gain accreditation towards recognised qualifications
- ensure that appropriate insurance is in place for volunteers and their activities
- ensure volunteers understand and follow health and safety requirements
- ensure that diverse and engaging volunteering opportunities are made available to match the skills, knowledge and available commitment of individual volunteers
- ensure contributions made by volunteers add quality and value to service provision
- understand the legal responsibilities and liabilities of volunteers acting as trustees on management boards
- identify both a named person within an organisation responsible for volunteer involvement and monitoring and a board level champion for volunteering

Code of Good Practice for Community Groups

Community groups operate at grass roots level. They may be a:

- a) community of interest with a common purpose, or
- b) neighbourhood group aspiring to improve the quality of life of residents, or
- c) group representing, publicising or campaigning about an unmet need

Community groups are often small, may be 'short-life', and may be either inward or outward facing.

Community groups often pioneer new developments, support others who would otherwise have no voice and fill gaps identified by all sectors.

Community groups may become 'models of best practice,' promoters of quality and evidence based evaluation, and they may excel in areas where statutory services are least effective or acceptable.

Typically they differ from voluntary groups as follows:

Community Group	Voluntary Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ usually volunteers only ○ usually member-led ○ usually local ○ less formal structure ○ little or no income ○ self-help and mutual support ○ provide informal, autonomous services ○ usually represent community interests, residents and members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ often paid staff ○ trustee managed ○ wider area ○ more formal structure ○ higher income ○ client based ○ support and development ○ providing specialist or (independent) services

The characteristics above can be both a strength and a weakness but explain how best to engage with these groups. Community groups often have intimate knowledge of local people and services and can add value to local service planning and evaluation.

Recognising the distinctive nature of community organisations and the contribution they make to local areas,

Statutory sector organisations agree to:

- value the work, knowledge and expertise of the community sector
- simplify small grants programmes for community groups
- ensure that monitoring requirements for small grants are realistic, outcome focused and proportional in the time they take to complete
- consider supporting community groups by payment 'in kind' to include facilities, information, training, advice etc.

- place a proper value on 'volunteer time', as being equivalent to 'match funding'
- use community infrastructure organisations to access hard-to-reach community groups include them in work with the statutory sector
- engage community groups in strategic development and other statutory work within communities
- actively seek out appropriate community groups when developing new and ongoing initiatives
- recognise the particular challenge of partnership working with organisations which have no paid staff or funds, but appreciate the 'value for money' which they represent.

In return, community groups and organisations agree to:

- recognise that statutory sector funders have limited resources and must decide between competing priorities
- accept that when they receive funding, there is a need for proportionate outcome focused monitoring and evaluating
- be prepared to accept payment 'in kind' (to include facilities, information, training and advice, etc.)
- be open and transparent about resources or funding they receive from all sources
- encourage partnership working and community involvement.

Code of Good Practice on Equalities

Voluntary and community groups which represent particular characteristics - including race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability and gender re-assignment - play a vital role in improving the quality of life for their communities. The histories and issues facing people who share these characteristics are complex and sometimes unique. Their presence in the community helps to ensure that social inclusion and race equality issues are kept at the forefront of service planning and delivery. They have a clear understanding of the needs of their community and often respond to these needs in innovative and flexible ways. This diversity should be understood and respected.

Although these groups experience many of the same constraints as mainstream voluntary and community groups, in addition, they may also face disadvantage and discrimination and may be excluded from some existing funding processes or traditional methods of consultation and participation.

All partners will:

- Work towards eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity
- Develop strategies to achieve these aims
- Work to understand specific needs and develop meaningful dialogue and a sense of trust

The Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- Develop a unified approach, to work together and share skills to establish community unity and a sustained and consistent dialogue with the statutory sector.
- Encourage and facilitate partnership working among diverse groups within the sector and share professional leadership expertise and other practical skills.
- Engage in training opportunities which will build capacity, ensure good governance, skilled staff and well supported volunteers.
- Work towards appropriate quality standards and ensure the working practices of the management and the service is clear and transparent.

Statutory sector partners will:

- Acknowledge specialist knowledge and expertise that exist and ensure meaningful consultation is carried out, so that a positive impact is made on service delivery.

- Ensure that groups representing diverse interests have equal access to available resources.
- Make a genuine commitment to train staff to increase understanding of diversity based on religious and cultural practices in West Sussex, enabling them to respond more effectively to the community.
- Ensure that special interest groups have access to the decision making process and enable them to actively contribute in multi-agency partnerships.
- Effectively respond to the needs of groups for whom English is not a first language.
- Operate effective and transparent equal opportunity monitoring and evaluation systems, which demonstrate that special interest groups are treated fairly.

Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Development

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) has expertise in many areas and works directly with people and communities. This gives the sector valuable insight in needs at local level. The VCS can help provide innovative solutions and approaches to issues and problems facing people and communities in West Sussex

Statutory Partners agree to:

- To involve and engage with the VCS at the earliest possible stage of policy development, on relevant issues likely to affect both the sector and those they work with.
- To recognise that engagement with the VCS can help to develop policy and practice that helps to meet community needs
- To inform the VCS of progress in policy development and identify the implications for the VCS and affected communities of the impact of new policy, legislation and guidance at the earliest appropriate stage
- To give notice of forthcoming consultations where possible and to allow adequate time for replies – 12 weeks should be the minimum for written consultations, recognising the time of year and the impact this may have on securing reliable results.
- To employ a range of approaches in consultation, from formal to informal engagement, to ensure that the voices of the VCS and local communities are heard on issues of concern to them.
- To take care when analysing consultation responses that the views of smaller organisations are taken into account as well as those of the larger organisations.
- To give clear feedback to the VCS, providing full information on decisions made.

Voluntary and Community Sector Partners agree to:

- Seek to involve users, beneficiaries, members, trustees and volunteers in consultation and engagement to review statutory sector programmes or services where relevant
- Give clear feedback to statutory Partners on the outcomes of consultation or engagement
- State clearly who the VCS are representing, in which capacity and on what basis

- Communicate to all relevant communities, users, beneficiaries, members, trustees and volunteers any proposed new policy developments and their likely impact
- Reflect back to Statutory Sector Partners any concerns and issues raised by users, beneficiaries, members, trustees and volunteers of the proposed new policy developments

All Partners agree to:

- Identify and tackle barriers to contributing towards policy development
- Encourage and facilitate responses from local communities as part of policy development
- Support the development of good representational processes to enable involvement from the communities of West Sussex.
- Identify relevant areas of policy development for representation, allowing sufficient time for the involvement of users, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees
- Encourage and facilitate the widest possible engagement of the people and communities of West Sussex, reflecting their needs and choices
- Communicate the means by which the people and communities of West Sussex can engage with relevant policy development
- Publicise consultation and engagement exercises well in advance, allowing time for Partners to plan ahead, and ensure that consultation is accessible to the people and communities of West Sussex
- Give clear indications about which matters are open to change and which are not within the consultation
- Give feedback showing how responses to consultations have influenced policy and where responses have not been acted upon
- Ensure that research with users, beneficiaries, members, trustees and volunteers for consultation and engagement purposes for policy development is accurate and credible
- Accept that in some instances, consultation will take place within less than ideal timescales
- Recognise the consulting organisation's obligations under the Freedom Of Information Act 2000 and respect the confidentiality of information supplied

Code of Good Practice on Funding

The voluntary and community sector and the statutory sector recognise the value of working together in the planning and commissioning of programmes in order to identify needs, potential benefits, risks and barriers to delivery and the optimum size of grants or contracts.

The statutory sector and the voluntary and community sectors support the principle of a mixed economy of funding which includes grant funding as well as commissioning and recognises the value of each approach to funding.

All partners recognise that the funding option should be chosen with regard to what is proportionate, relevant and appropriate to the service required and size of the fund. Options include grants, loans, service level agreements and contracts.

Furthermore, the application processes for each of the funding regimes and the reporting and performance management systems should also be proportionate to the size and scale of the funds, the nature of the service and the size of the fund.

All partners acknowledge that contributions “in-kind” should be valued during commissioning and monitoring processes.

All partners will work towards establishing a consistent approach to tendering, commissioning and procurement.

Statutory partners agree to:

In relation to the application and bidding process

- Ensure that the application process is widely publicised and allows enough time for organisations of all sizes to apply, as well as consortia and partnerships
- Make clear what information is required and why and how it will be used
- Provide enough detail to allow for informed decision-making and ensure that this information is consistent and clear
- Ensure that scoring mechanisms used for assessing applications are clear, consistent and transparent, and the rationale behind them is explained
- Base decisions on overall value for money, taking into account the wider community benefit (Social value)
- Recognise that organisations need to take account of all relevant overheads
- Generally commit to funding for a minimum of 3 years or, if less than 3 years, an appropriate duration for the period of the project or time the service is

required (indicating why a shorter funding period is appropriate).

- Inform the applicant organisations of their decision at least 3 months in advance of the start of the programme
- Provide detailed and constructive feedback to unsuccessful organisations
- Ensure that monitoring and reporting arrangements are consistent and clear and agree outcomes (and how they are measured) before financial agreements are signed
- Identify and discuss risks and delivery terms including monitoring and performance management processes before financial agreements are signed

In relation to the delivery of services

- Where need is clear, agreed and constitutes value for money, make payments in advance
- Make payments promptly and where possible within 10 days of receipt of invoices
- Ensure that monitoring and reporting information focuses on evidence which is meaningful to all parties to the agreement, including the beneficiaries
- Where a funded service is in difficulties discuss actions to improve performance and agree timescales of actions before making decision to terminate funding
- Assess the impact of termination of funding on beneficiaries, service users and the service provider before a decision is made to end funding
- Give the VCS organisation an opportunity to consider the implications of reduction or termination of funding and to discuss these before ending funding
- Discuss the implications of future resource allocations as early as possible with voluntary and community sector organisations
- Give a minimum of three months' notice in writing when reducing or ending funding or other support, with a clear rationale for the decision
- Review programmes, services, and projects appropriately to inform future practice

Voluntary and Community Sector Partners agree to:

In relation to the application and bidding process

- Be clear about the reasons for bidding to deliver programmes or services, and of the benefits to the organisation and service users
- Apply for funding and use such funding only for the purposes agreed
- Ensure that they have a clear understanding of the overheads, relevant costs and associated risks applying for funding
- When working with others in partnerships or consortia, be clear about accountability and how responsibilities and risks will be apportioned between partner organisations
- Ensure eligibility when applying for funding including meeting the aims of the programme and understanding the requirements
- Ensure that appropriate governance structures are in place and appropriate systems to manage and account for finances
- Accept that it is legitimate for funders to ask for public acknowledgement
- Be clear about all terms and conditions before agreements are signed with funders
- Work with funders to develop a flexible, proportional and transparent monitoring system and establish a common requirement for quality standards.

In relation to the delivery of services

- Put in place suitable systems to manage, monitor and report on performance and to meet the requirements of funders
- Establish suitable systems to manage finances and account for them
- Ensure that financial and management procedures are consistent with relevant regulations (including Charity Commission) and good practice
- Demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities in service delivery and employment.
- Be proactive in involving service users, carers, beneficiaries, volunteers and other stakeholders in the planning development, and delivery of services
- Support the wider interests of the voluntary and community sector through opportunities provided by local network and umbrella organisations
- Explore diverse funding streams in order to ensure sustainability of the organisation

- Consider at an early stage how services may continue to be delivered, if or when a financial arrangement ends
- Give early notice to funders of significant changes in management, finances or other risks to service delivery
- Contribute positively to review processes to inform future practice

Code of Good Practice on Commissioning.

The statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector support the principle of a mixed economy of funding which includes grant funding as well as commissioning and recognise the value of each approach to funding according to what is proportionate, relevant and appropriate.

The voluntary and community sector and the statutory sector believe it is important to consider the levels at which grant supported rather than commissioned services are set in order to ensure that the widest range of voluntary and community groups are able to deliver services, and that the best possible funding and delivery solution is achieved.

The principles set out in the Code of Good Practice on Funding relating to the application and bidding process and in relation to the delivery of services apply to commissioning. The following points relate directly to commissioning and supplement those stated in the Code of Good Practice on Funding.

The voluntary and community sector and the statutory sector recognise the value of working together in the planning and commissioning of programmes in order to identify needs, potential benefits, risks and barriers to delivery and the optimum size of contracts.

All statutory sector and voluntary and community sector partners agree to work together to consolidate good practice around commissioning and to develop a consistent approach across organisations.

Statutory Partners agree to:

- Work to establish a corporate overview of procurement and commissioning within their own organisation so that consistent processes and standards are applied by all parts of the organisation
- Work to develop a consistent approach to commissioning by all commissioning bodies
- Maintain an up to date knowledge and understanding of the Voluntary and Community Sector in West Sussex, particularly where corporate memory is lost through staff changes
- Involve the Voluntary and Community Sector at the earliest stage of the relevant commissioning process: i.e. at the needs assessment and planning stages
- Recognise that the language used in relation to tendering, commissioning and procurement can be complex and unfamiliar to voluntary and community organisations, and ensure that explanations are given of terms and expressions which could be poorly understood

- Recognise that some Voluntary and Community Sector organisations which may be best placed to deliver services will find the commissioning process challenging and may require additional support and information from commissioners
- Work to establish an accessible understanding, shared by all parties in the commissioning process, of standing orders and the rules around procurement and commissioning, together with the constraints and opportunities which they provide
- Ensure that the scoring mechanism used to assess quality standards is clear, consistent and transparent, and the rationale behind it is explained
- Ensure that where “added value” is given weight in the tender process it is clear what information is required and how it will be used

Voluntary and Community Sector Partners agree to:

- Ensure that they understand the requirements of the commissioning process and seek clarification as necessary
- Maintain an up to date knowledge and understanding of the Statutory Sector and seek further information as necessary
- Engage at the earliest opportunity within the commissioning process: i.e. at the needs assessment and planning stages
- Share information and understanding of the commissioning process among Voluntary and Community Sector organisations
- Within the constraints of their organisation ensure that they are “commission-ready”, i.e. have the necessary policies and procedures in place in order to participate in the commissioning process
- Seek advice and support from statutory or voluntary sector agencies where commissioning processes appear too complex or demanding

Code of Good Practice on Asset Transfer and Joint Bidding

(i) Asset Transfer

For the purposes of this paper, assets are defined as Public Sector* owned:

- Buildings
- Vehicles
- Publicly owned space (car parks, playing fields, sports facilities etc.)
- IT
- Equipment (desks, chairs, fixtures, fittings)

The statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector recognise the value of publicly owned assets in the delivery of services. There will be times when assets no longer fulfil their purpose and disposal can then achieve investment in new priorities, or be an opportunity to identify how they can be used differently. The statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector recognise that assets may have a value to local communities, and acknowledge the importance of working together to ensure that local communities have a say in the future of the assets, and an opportunity to secure their continuing use for the community.

The nature of asset disposals or opportunities for asset transfer will often be unique, and the approach taken should therefore be considered on an individual basis.

Statutory Partners agree to:

- Ensure that any public assets which are identified as suitable for asset transfer are appropriately publicised
- Provide enough detail about the asset and any associated costs (maintenance, liabilities etc); to allow for informed decision-making by interested parties
- Ensure that the application process is appropriately publicised and allows an adequate amount of time for suitable organisations to apply, as well as consortia and partnerships
- Be clear and transparent about the terms and conditions offered for the asset transfer
- Support the voluntary and community sector to build the capacity to manage, either solely or in partnership, any assets to be transferred
- Ensure that any asset transfer preserves public ownership in perpetuity

Voluntary and Community Sector Partners agree to:

- Consider using new powers acquired through recent government legislation, such as the Community Right to Challenge (as a mechanism to identify better use of public assets) or the Community Right to Buy (to identify local assets that the community would wish to acquire)
- Be clear about the reasons for taking on a public sector asset and of the benefits to the organisation and the service users
- Ensure that they have a clear understanding of the responsibilities, overheads, relevant costs, and associated risks of taking on a public sector asset
- Ensure that service users, trustees, staff and volunteers are involved in the decision-making process and in planning and reviewing the use of the asset
- Take any steps necessary to clarify the terms and conditions before agreements for asset transfer are signed
- Seek the involvement and participation of other groups and organisations. Determine the accountability framework and how responsibilities and risks will be apportioned between partners organisations
- Ensure that appropriate governance structures are in place and appropriate systems to manage and account for the operation and finances of the transferred asset
- Ensure that legal, financial and management procedures are consistent with relevant regulations (including Charity Commission) and good practice
- If appropriate, explore diverse funding streams in order to ensure the viability of the asset
- Demonstrate a commitment to diversity and equal opportunities in delivering services and employment in use of the transferred asset

* There may be instances where the asset is owned by a community sector organisation, where the commitments highlighted above to the Statutory Sector alone would apply to that organisation.

(i) Joint Bidding

Statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector, (and also the private sector) may form partnerships or consortia to bid for funding. These partnerships or consortia come together to bid for and work together on projects which are funded by external sources. These sources could be funding pots held by central government, lottery or other grant funding bodies.

The statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector recognise the value of submitting joint bids for funding for projects of benefit to local people, and for then delivering those projects collaboratively.

The Partners agree to work together to develop a joint strategic approach to external funding opportunities.

The Partners agree to work together to devise a register of statutory and voluntary sector organisations interested in joint bidding opportunities.

The Partners agree to identify priorities for externally funded opportunities across the county.

Statutory Partners and Voluntary and Community Sector Partners agree to identify sources of funding which meet jointly identified priorities and to work together to develop a bid for this funding and to deliver the subsequent project.

Appendix A— West Sussex Compact 2012 Signatories

<p> Adur District Council Adur Voluntary Action Age Concern Hassocks Age UK West Sussex Aldingbourne Trust Arun Neighbourhood Watch BME Community Services Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals Carers Support Service North & Mid Sussex Central and South Citizens Advice Bureau Cherchefelle Housing Association Chichester Community Development Trust Chichester District Council Chichester Information Shop for Young People Crawley Borough Council Crawley Community Transport Crawley Community Voluntary Services Crawley Community Youth Services Crawley Ethnic Minority Partnership [CEMP] Crawley Senior Muslims Forum Crawley Town Access Group (TAG) Disability Awareness UK East Grinstead CVS Eastern Stream Folly Pogs Fibromyalgia 4SIGHT (West Sussex Association for the Blind) Help & Care Home Start – Crawley, Horsham & Mid Sussex Horsham Area CVS Horsham District Council ICIS : information for life Life Charity Littlehampton Shopmobility Mid Sussex District Council Mid Sussex South CVS Relate North & South West Sussex. Richmond Fellowship RISE Sammy Community Transport Ltd. Southdown Housing Association Springboard Project Stonepillow </p>	<p> St Wilfred's Hospice Sussex Association for SpinaBifida & Hydrocephalus Sussex Oakleaf The Yews (Hayward's Heath) Community Partnership's Tuppenny Barn Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester West Sussex & Surrey Angling Academy West Sussex County Council West Sussex Humanists Work this Way Worthing and Arun Mind Worthing Borough Council Worthing CVS </p>
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Appendix B - Conflict Resolution Statement

The West Sussex Compact is an agreement between a range of public sector organisations and the local voluntary and community sector. The ethos of the Compact is that, by developing a better understanding of each other's needs, both sectors can work together to find better ways of doing things in the future.

The Compact process is one of learning, development and dialogue, within which it is recognised that, from time to time, differences may arise which need to be resolved.

This statement relates specifically to differences occurring between organisations which are party to the West Sussex Compact arising from commitments and undertakings contained within it.

The statement is intended to provide a simple, initial procedure for facilitating discussion between each of the parties involved and to move them towards a mutually acceptable outcome.

The Compact Implementation/Action plan will address, as necessary, proposed developments to the Conflict Resolution process. Any further development aims to facilitate understanding and awareness between the two sectors.

Stage One - Local Resolution – informal stage

Voluntary Sector Organisations attempt to resolve the issue (s), which exist, between themselves, or between themselves and a statutory body, by a frank exchange of written evidence and points of view, ideally led by individuals not directly involved in the dispute. Almost all concerns should be resolved in this way.

Stage Two - Independent Investigation – formal stage

Organisations agree to a process involving independent investigation. A third party is identified, who will examine the evidence, and speak to those concerned, as required. The outcome will be a recommendation that the complaint is upheld or not upheld, or upheld in part.

Stage Three – Review

If the aggrieved party remains dissatisfied, the West Sussex Compact Group will identify a Panel of three people to:

1. review the independent investigation recommendation(s)
2. uphold or not, the independent investigation recommendation(s)
3. record any changes to the Compact etc., required as a consequence of their finding(s)