

Working Well Together




Herefordshire
Compact



Index

Foreword	3
How will we work together?	4
Working together	5
How can we tell we are working well together?	6
Funding and procurement	7 - 8
Volunteering	9 - 10
Working together to solve difficulties	11
Compact Reference Group Membership	12



If you would like help to understand this document or would like it in another format or language, please contact HVOSS or Herefordshire Council's Sustainable Communities Team.

enquiries@herefordshire.compact.org.uk

Foreword

The Herefordshire Compact is the essential guide for good working practice between sectors in the county. It is not a set of rules, but is built on the shared understanding that we need to work together in a spirit of mutual trust and respect. Implicit in this is the public sector's belief in the value of the third sector in Herefordshire and the recognition from the third sector of the value of this relationship.

Working together is the way to make things work better. It's not just about co-ordination or knowing the guidelines, but it's about developing strategies collaboratively, discussing challenges and needs before services are commissioned and working together to produce the best outcomes for the people of Herefordshire.

Compact is overseen by a group of representatives of all sectors and we need to ensure the principles embodied in the Compact are understood and followed by everyone, regardless of the sector they are involved in. The 'what does success look like' section helps us to understand what we can achieve when we work well together.

It is important that organisations can express their concerns when things don't work well, without feeling this may penalise them. To support this, Compact has a process which gives organisations the ability to speak up when they need to, confident that their concerns will be heard and dealt with sympathetically and in a positive way that will both preserve and strengthen relationships.

The economic climate and the national emphasis on communities and volunteering present all of us with big challenges and opportunities. By following the guidelines set out in Compact and by working well together, we can make the most of the changes we all face.

Working better together through Compact will provide what every citizen in our county deserves - the best service, experience and opportunities we can give them.

Herefordshire Compact Reference Group

There has been a national Compact since 1998 and every area of the country now has its own local version.

This revised 2012 Herefordshire Compact reflected developments in local and national Compacts. This 2014 document is based on the 2012 version but is responsive to changes locally and nationally to keep up-to-date. For more information visit: www.compactvoice.org.uk.

How will we work together?

Organisations which sign up to Compact are agreeing to:

- Work together to find useful and meaningful ways of finding out what the people of Herefordshire need and how we can provide it
- Support and promote fair and equal treatment for all individuals and organisations in the county
- Work together in a spirit of respect for each other's independence, responsibilities and constraints
- Improve communication and consultation between the sectors and ensure we share useful information
- Improve co-ordination and collaboration of the services we provide, working together to design and produce new services and sustain ongoing successes
- Support and follow the guidance in this agreement, promoting it as widely as we can through our contacts and acting as ambassadors for this positive way of working
- Be fair, clear and sensible in our contractual arrangements
- Take practical steps through funding and training to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build stronger communities

Three sectors working together

There is much that the public, third and private sectors can learn from each other and by working together more closely and having more of an understanding of the challenges we face, the sectors can support, advise and strengthen each other for the benefit of Herefordshire's communities. The public sector, especially local authorities, faced with substantial reductions in funding, is redefining and remodelling its services which in turn is having an impact on its partners in all sectors.

The public sector includes the council, NHS and agencies such as the police and fire and rescue service, as well as local town and parish councils across the county. This is an ever changing and increasingly complex landscape, especially in the health arena. Recent years have seen the arrival of statutory Health and Well-being Boards (HWB) as well as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). The public sector's increasing involvement with the third sector as well as the private sector, means Compact is even more relevant to the way they work and will be a helpful tool in the future.

The third sector includes all organisations such as charities, mutuals, co-operatives, social enterprises, voluntary managed organisations and community groups, regardless of their size.

An increasing number of private sector organisations work in partnership with the third and public sectors to deliver services and provide other support. Whilst there are no specific responsibilities for the private sector within Compact, there is an expectation that those private sector organisations that wish to work with public agencies and third sector organisations will support the Compact principles.

How can organisations sign up?

Our consultation period informed us that many organisations want to be able to show they are following Compact and that they believe in its principles.

Anyone who wants to sign up to Compact should contact enquiries@herefordshirecompact.org.uk and they will be added to a published list on relevant websites.

Working Together

Working together across the third, public and private sectors is at the heart of the Herefordshire Compact.

Working together means:

- Valuing every community and the contribution they can bring to a cohesive county
- Jointly developing plans and strategies before they are put into operation
- Sharing significant information in good time and making it readily accessible
- Being clear in our language as well as our written agreements
- Avoiding unrealistic or unfair expectations of those we work with
- Acknowledging the experience and expertise in other sectors
- Giving all people the opportunity to come together
- Taking the time to talk things through
- Keeping people up to date as things progress
- Sharing the responsibility and risk

Shared responsibility.....All partners will:

- Work together from the earliest possible stage to develop and design future policies and services
- Inform, consult and involve each other on issues that are likely to affect us and those we represent
- Involve partners actively in all consultations affecting them
- Empower communities, including minority groups, to ensure their views are taken fully into consideration when consulting
- Allow 12 weeks for consultation responses, unless legal or other restrictions make this impossible, in which case this should be made clear from the beginning
- Provide feedback showing how responses from consultations have helped to shape decisions and influence the design and development of policies and services
- Work in a co-ordinated way to ensure there is adequate time for documents to be fully considered before they become legal and binding
- Keep up the dialogue as policies and services develop and are delivered so any challenges can be dealt with jointly and in a timely way
- Challenge each other where necessary and welcome constructive criticism as well as celebrating what we do well
- Understand when confidentiality means we cannot give as much information as we might like, but not withhold information that is useful if we can give it
- Accept that financial and other constraints affect us all
- Work together to find creative solutions to support each other
- Support the independence of other partners to determine and manage their own interests and respect their differing roles

How can we tell we're working well together?

There are many examples of successful cross sector working in Herefordshire and this has led to a number of excellent projects being delivered across the county. The spirit behind these activities shows exactly how our county has benefited from the three sectors working together.

Compact helps us to build further on these successes and prepare us for any challenges that working together may bring.

We will be able to judge the success of the Compact way of working, through monitoring various aspects of cross sector relationships. These include:

- The number of challenges successfully dealt with through the resolution procedure
- The number of consultations adhering to the principle of running for 12 weeks
- The number of contracts which adhere to the three month notice principle and offer organisations the chance to redesign services where appropriate
- The number of new collaborative projects that work with people in our communities and make the most of what each sector can offer

MYLO - Mobile Youth Led Opportunities

This project was brought about by Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (HCVYS) to respond to young peoples issues, such as a lack of local youth provision and anti-social behaviour and is now led by HVOSS.

Working with all local agencies involved in the area, including West Mercia Police Community Support Officers, housing associations and local councils, MYLO takes equipment such as sumo suits, space hoppers, BMX bikes and ramps out to local communities to encourage team building activities and people to take part in new positive activities.

The idea is for adults within the communities to get involved and carry on developing these activities and opportunities together with the young people themselves, who can also access leadership training to improve their skills.

New friendships are forged and groups developed, bringing communities together as well as the organisations that support them.

So far it has been hugely successful and funding from Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police, housing associations and parish councils has continued to support the excellent collaborative work.



Funding and procurement

This section of Compact looks at how the sectors should work together within financial relationships.

This does not override the range of legal guidance and frameworks which govern funding and procurement but shows how a good financial relationship can be fostered for everyone's benefit.

Compact doesn't replace business arrangements within contracts or service level agreements but it does set out the best way of developing those agreements by working together and ensuring they run smoothly.

Shared responsibility.....Together we will:

- Where possible utilise the Herefordshire's External Funding Strategy
- Ensure contract monitoring and evaluation processes are jointly agreed, outcomes based and have clear and proportionate monitoring requirements and performance measures
- Explore the sustainability of any contracted service as part of initial negotiations
- Ensure a risk assessment is in place for any funding agreement and ensure all risks are actively managed and fairly apportioned
- Agree how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic values, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made
- Assess the impact on beneficiaries, service users and volunteers before deciding to reduce or end funding or service delivery
- Discuss any restrictions or changes to future resources, to explore the potential implications as early as possible, respecting each other's expertise before a final decision is made
- Ensure funding opportunities are clear, timely and widely publicised through relevant networks

Third sector

We will follow best practice in our dealings with other sectors by:

- Having good corporate governance with clear, relevant policies, procedures and management arrangements or an action plan to achieve them as soon as we can
- Recognising the responsibilities involved in receiving public money such as transparency and value for money and the need to deliver outcomes which will be agreed with funders
- Realistically costing projects
- Maintaining an open relationship with funders so any necessary changes to the agreed contract are discussed as early as possible
- Ensuring Compact compliance is followed when sub-contracting to another organisation
- Ensuring that feedback from users and communities gets to the funder, to help improve service delivery

Public sector

We will follow best practice in all our funding relationships with third sector organisations by:

- Ensuring criteria for awarding funding and contracts is clear, fair and ensures organisations who can deliver excellent outcomes and value for money are able to compete, whatever their size
- Appreciating the need to support a vibrant local third sector
- Including sufficient lead in time for agreements so organisations are able to increase their ability to deliver contracts
- Ensuring that the widest possible range of organisations can be involved in the provision of services through appropriate funding and financial models
- Considering a range of ways to fund or resource the third sector, including grants, contracts, loan finance and in kind support such as the use of premises or having the expertise of public sector staff
- Publishing clear timetables for contracting, tendering and procurement
- Continually improving the quality and timeliness of tender documentation and ensuring equal treatment across sectors, including reporting and monitoring arrangements
- Helping smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are well placed to do so
- Recognising the need for contracts to be in place for three years or longer, wherever possible to allow for planning. If this is not possible, clear reasons will be given.
- Remaining accountable for all funding decisions and providing feedback to unsuccessful organisations
- Giving at least three months notice in writing when ending a financial relationship, outlining reasons in full
- Ensuring that, if a contracted service needs to change to meet new outcomes, the organisation is given the fullest opportunity to redevelop their services, to meet the new outcomes
- Ensuring people with contracts are, wherever possible, notified about decisions to renew them at least three months before the renewal date (if this is not possible a clear explanation will be provided)
- Recognising the principle of full cost recovery
- Making payments promptly and being open to paying in advance, where appropriate and possible
- Being as clear as we can and avoiding bureaucracy
- Respecting the role of the third sector in lobbying and recognising that this may include campaigning against the public sector itself. However, this should never have a negative impact on funding relationships
- Ensuring Equality Impact Assessments are carried out before any negotiations are held over reductions in funding or when considering ending a financial relationship. These need to ensure that any negative impact the decisions may have on communities is both understood and mitigated wherever possible

Volunteering

In Herefordshire we define volunteering as:

“An activity that involves spending time, without payment, doing something that aims to benefit individuals (other than close relatives), groups or the environment”.

Volunteering is vital to the wellbeing of Herefordshire, both economically and socially and it actively broadens the experiences of individuals, whilst also bringing communities together. It can also be a powerful tool for change, for those who volunteer and the wider community.

There are five fundamental principles to volunteering to which all Compact signatories agree:

Choice

The choice to volunteer must be freely made without pressure being brought to bear and can be a long term or short term commitment according to what the volunteer wants and has the time to offer.

Shared responsibility.....All partners will:

- Increase the range of people who can volunteer by offering and developing a wide range of volunteering opportunities within organisations across all sectors
- Make information about volunteering opportunities accessible to all
- Ensure volunteers are supported to access a variety of volunteering activities over time if that is what they wish to do

Equality

Everyone should feel able to volunteer for appropriate activities regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, income or geographic location. Volunteers should be respected as individuals and for the skills they bring.

Shared responsibility.....All partners will:

- Remove barriers to volunteering, wherever possible
- Develop a diverse volunteer base by encouraging individuals from currently under represented groups or communities to take part
- Strive to support volunteers who have additional needs such as a disability, different language or mental health issues so that they can fully take part
- Recognise and understand that different localities may have different needs for volunteers

Mutual benefit

A donation of time should be a positive relationship, benefiting both the organisation and the volunteer. It should be personally fulfilling and provide opportunities for gaining new skills and improving self esteem.

Shared responsibility.....All partners will:

- Encourage and enable accreditation of skills developed through volunteering
- Recognise that although volunteering is given freely, it is not cost free and should be budgeted for
- Promote volunteering across all sectors as being a valuable activity which contributes to the aims of organisations as well as providing a social benefit
- Encourage and enable organisations to explore the benefits of employers supporting volunteering as a way of allowing more people to support their community

Recognition

The contribution made by volunteers to a community, service or interest should be celebrated to emphasise the value they bring both in Herefordshire and on a national level.

Shared responsibility.....All partners will:

- Value the contributions made by volunteers
- Involve volunteers in making decisions within the organisation
- Raise the profile of volunteering by promoting the positive benefits
- Understand the different ways people can volunteer, both formally and informally and recognise the strengths of both approaches
- Make sure that volunteers complement the roles of paid staff but do not replace them
- Learn from best practice examples that already exist within the third sector and other areas of the country, as well as responding to new methods as they arise

Support

Volunteers require effective support to enable them to fulfil their role within an organisation. They will be managed well, know how their role contributes to an organisation's causes or aims and receive training when needed as well as remuneration, if costs are incurred.

Shared responsibility.....All partners will:

- Ensure volunteers receive ongoing support, training, personal development and supervision
- Actively communicate training opportunities for volunteers through all available channels
- Provide, maintain and resource services which support volunteers and volunteering
- Have a named person in an organisation who is responsible for volunteers
- Provide access to appropriate training for staff who work with volunteers
- Take all possible action to ensure that volunteers work in a safe environment
- Promote the need for volunteers to understand their roles and responsibilities
- Reimburse volunteers for all reasonable out of pocket expenses
- Ensure that disclosures for volunteers are carried out according to current guidelines

The aim of this section is to make a positive impact on the relationship between the sectors and their commitment to volunteering. It can be used by those who volunteer, people who co-ordinate volunteering and organisations involving volunteers.

Working together to solve difficulties

The Compact Resolution Procedure is distinct from any arrangements within contracts and has no relevance to contract breaches, as these will have their own process. This procedure is more to do with times when Compact working has failed in some way. This could be a consultation which was not thorough enough or a contract which has been ended without discussion or negotiation.

Many such disputes can be settled by simply raising the issue with the other party and this should always be the first step.

This Resolution Procedure gives a framework for settling disputes which are more complex and may need mediation or an objective view. It also provides a way for lessons to be learnt together and aims to ensure similar disputes can be avoided in the future as well as helping to make sure positive working relationships can be maintained.

It is not intended to decide a winner or a loser, but instead to find a positive way forward which improves the working relationship. While we encourage disputes to be resolved through this process, it's also important to recognise that other options, including legal redress, are always an option to either party.

Any complaints regarding Compact compliance are monitored and recorded, so we know if this resolution process and our contribution has been useful. Although we can use this information to help us review our effectiveness, **we will ensure all personal details remain confidential.**

Stage One.....Informal

If an organisation has any difficulty in its relationship with another, it should first try to resolve this through discussion. There is always support available for such discussions through Herefordshire Compact or the third sector.

Stage Two.....Formal

If an organisation can't find a solution informally, they can contact Herefordshire Compact at enquiries@herefordshirecompact.org.uk for further support. The issue will be logged and a panel drawn up from within the Compact Reference Group, making sure this panel is made up of members who are objective, cross sector and have no links with either organisation. They will discuss the problem with both sides and work to find a solution. This should happen within six weeks of initial contact being made.

Stage Three.....Additional

If the formal process hasn't found a solution, the panel will support both organisations in seeking further mediation through alternative means. Organisations are free to follow other procedures and find support from elsewhere at any stage of the process, but Herefordshire Compact is always available to help and can use examples of non-compliance to lobby for better practice in the future.

Herefordshire Compact Reference Group Membership 2014

Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service (HVOSS) - (current Chair, 2014)

Herefordshire Third Sector Board

Sustainable Communities, Herefordshire Council

Children's Well-Being, Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Association for Local Councils (HALC)

West Mercia Police

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce

Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group