

# Shropshire Compact

## The Compact

The Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups and organisations. The Compact sets out agreed values, principles and commitments. By setting out 'rules of engagement', organisations are better able to work together to serve local people and Shropshire's communities. The Compact is more than a document, it is a way of working.

The Compact includes statements of commitment/agreed behaviours. "We will" is used to highlight the commitments all Compact signatories have agreed to. For more information concerning current and future signatories see: <http://vcsvoice.org/the-compact/signatories/>

The Shropshire Compact has been produced to reflect and embed the national Compact 2010, which sets out the Government's commitment to building positive relationships between the VCS and public sector. Find out more at: <http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/about-compact>

## Working in Partnership

The Shropshire Compact recognises that partnership working is essential in the commissioning and delivery of local services. It has been developed in partnership, following robust engagement within and across sectors. A Compact Review Group was established to ensure the Shropshire Compact 2013 has been developed in partnership and involved those who will play leading roles in its implementation. To find out more about the development of the Compact visit: <http://vcsvoice.org/the-compact/compact-review-and-development-2013/>

## Aim

To embed good practice in partnership working.

## Values

The Shropshire Compact is based on a number of shared values, to:

- Recognise the value and diversity of the voluntary and community sector
- Be open and transparent in our actions and expectations in working together
- Recognise the constraints within which we work
- Treat each other equally, fairly and with respect
- To work together to best serve local people and our communities

## Compact Outcomes

Work will take place to ensure the following outcomes are achieved:

- Increase understanding of the Compact and its value, among VCS groups and organisations and public sector colleagues.
- Increase use of Compact tools and resources among VCS groups and organisations and public sector colleagues.
- Increase promotion of the Compact through use of engagement and communication mechanisms.
- Increase levels of satisfaction among those who have received support to work to resolve Compact issues and concerns.
- Implement measures to monitor the effectiveness of the Compact.

Progress against these outcomes will be monitored and the results posted on the VCS Assembly's Compact webpages.

## Compact Themes

The following themes have been developed to best highlight Shropshire Compact commitments.

1. Stronger and Effective Partnerships
2. Effective Engagement
3. Sharing Information
4. Allocating Resources
5. Enabling Change
6. Delivering Outcomes and Social Value
7. Quality in Delivery

# Compact Commitments

## 1. Stronger and Effective Partnerships

We will all:

- Work together recognising that all partnership activity is for the benefit of Shropshire's communities.
- Work with others to deliver a strong, collective voice for Shropshire.
- Work for mutual benefit.
- Communicate clearly, openly and widely.
- Work in partnership based on openness, respect, accountability and integrity.
- Work in appropriate partnership arrangements throughout the design and delivery of policies, programmes and services.
- Support collaborations across and within sectors.
- Recognise diversity within the VCS and use and promote partnership structures.
- Use representatives (via mechanisms such as the VCS Assembly).
- Encourage and support fair representation and challenge where necessary.
- Promote equality and tackle discrimination.
- Acknowledge that misunderstandings occur and work together to resolve them.

Commissioners will:

- Recognise the different strengths and experiences of partners and service providers. Share skills and offer guidance where needed.
- Respect the independence of VCS groups and organisations, including the right to campaign, regardless of any financial relationships with Shropshire's Public Sector bodies.



## 2. Effective Engagement

We will all:

- Follow good practice in representation.
- Use clear, concise and plain language.
- Work together to remove barriers to engagement and involvement.
- Work with target audiences to design engagement opportunities.
- Provide clear feedback to explain how respondents have influenced the design and development of policies, programmes and services.
- We will include explanations where respondents' views are not acted on.
- Actively seek the views of service users to assess impact before making decisions
- Work to promote understanding of the specific needs and issues of the under-represented, vulnerable or disadvantaged.
- Consider the social impact of policies, programmes and services to ensure change does not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable.

Commissioners will:

- Assess the impact of new policies and legislation on the VCS, and reduce bureaucratic burdens on organisations.
- Utilise the relationships the VCS has in communities and use them to make engagement more effective.
- Work with VCS groups and organisations from the earliest stage of commissioning to design policies, programmes and services.
- Conduct 12 week formal consultations, where appropriate. When this is not possible, clear explanations and rationale for shorter time frames or a more informal approach will be provided.

The VCS and public sector service providers will:

- Respond to consultations making it clear who is represented and in what capacity.
- Be flexible where possible, recognising that the public sector cannot always provide longer timescales for consultation.
- Deliver feedback mechanisms for service users to ensure improvement in delivery.

### 3. Sharing Information

We will all:

- Seek and consider the views and needs of those who are under-represented, vulnerable or disadvantaged.
- Provide transparency in data provision and make information accessible.
- Be clear how information will be used and how it may be shared.
- Be clear when information is confidential and respect confidentiality rights.
- Ensure both qualitative and quantitative information is available to share and is equally valued.
- Share information in a timely and open way.

### 4. Allocating Resources

We will all:

- Discuss the potential implications of changes in resources as early as possible.
- Make use of consortia, and other partnership service delivery models as appropriate.
- Follow good practice in working to support local service providers as far as possible.
- Work together to make the best use of public sector owned premises and resources for the benefit of Shropshire's communities.

Commissioners will:

- Provide clear and timely information concerning funding and contract opportunities.
- Deliver well managed tendering processes.
- Provide clear rationale for funding and commissioning decisions.
- Provide clear eligibility as part of procurement processes, and at an early stage.
- Use the most appropriate funding mechanism for the agreement, including phased payments.
- Recognise the need for prompt payment.

### 5. Enabling Change

We will all:

- Communicate commissioning and service delivery opportunities widely and openly: ensuring communication is carried out within agreed timescales.
- Recognise diversity in supply and ensure opportunities are fair and open to all.
- Minimise any negative impacts on service users, patients and communities through engagement, decision making and planning.
- Respect partners' rights to intellectual property and will not use others ideas for the delivery or programmes or services without prior agreement.
- Work together to have a clear distinction between commissioning and service delivery.
- Standardise and simplify procurement and commissioning systems to reduce burdens on both commissioner and service provider.
- Work to understand the impact on stakeholders and the wider community, and how change may be best managed before changes are agreed.
- Undertake reviews of performance on outcomes, using the information gathered to support future decision making.
- Work together creatively to encourage innovation and explore new opportunities.
- Ensure time frames for funding and contracts reflect the time it will take to deliver the agreed outcomes.
- Understand risk within service design, ensuring that delivery terms and risks will be proportionate to the nature and value of the outcome.
- Work to strengthen the role of VCS groups and organisations in the delivery of public services.
- Where applicable/appropriate we will enable communities to make use of the Community Right to Bid and the Community Right to Challenge.

Commissioners will:

- Provide 6 months notice when funding or contracts are subject to change and provide a clear rationale for why decisions have been made. (Where contracts are defined by Shropshire Council and the CCG)





## 6. Delivering Outcomes and Social Value

Where we have local influence we will all:

- Agree how outcomes will be measured and monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made.
- Develop funding and contract opportunities at an appropriate size and scale to maximise the delivery of social value.
- We will work together to make the best use of public money to deliver quality services for local people.
- Work to integrate the principles of social value into policies and commissioning and procurement practice.
- Ensure strategic outcomes are clear and incorporated in the design of services and outcomes.
- Recognise the added value brought by volunteers to the quality of programmes and services delivered within Shropshire.

## 7. Quality in Delivery

We will all:

- Make the best use of public money.
- Ensure the Compact applies to all contractors.
- Adopt robust governance arrangements.
- Meet established timescales.
- Provide early notice of significant changes in circumstances.
- Work in partnership when problems are encountered, to agree how these may be overcome.
- Work jointly to plan and undertake monitoring and evaluation.
- Recognise that volunteering is not free.



Commissioners will:

- Engage with VCS organisations when lobbying for improved services on behalf of their service users.
- Ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and scale of the programme or service. Be clear what information is being asked for and how it will be used.

The VCS and other public sector services providers will:

- Demonstrate the delivery of quality services, making appropriate use of quality standards.

### Compact Issues

The signatories to the Shropshire Compact are committed to working to resolve issues and complaints as early as possible. When good practice has not been followed issues should be raised in order that problems can be resolved. All partners require constructive feedback in order to improve. A Compact complaints procedure will accompany this document. Visit the website:

<http://vcsvoice.org/the-compact/compact-issues/>

### Compact Working

Working within the VCS or public sector, we all share a responsibility to implement the Compact, whatever the size of our team, group or organisation. If you require help of advice with Compact implementation contact the VCS Assembly using the following details:

Email: [VCSAssembly@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:VCSAssembly@shropshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01743252740

Website: <http://vcsvoice.org/>

Tweet us: @VCSVoice