

Sandwell Compact

Section 1 – Purpose/Aim of the Compact

The Compact is an agreement between Sandwell's voluntary and community sector (VCS) and their statutory sector counterparts, including the emerging clinical commissioning groups (formerly the GP consortia). By setting out the principles governing the relationship between the two sectors, the Compact aims to set the tone of their relationship, supporting them to work together to do good things for the people of Sandwell.

VCS organisations are a very diverse collection of non-governmental and value driven organisations that deliver significant public services and community benefits in Sandwell. A glossary of terms is set out in section 10.

Whilst the Compact is not a legally binding document it is a statement of intent and aspiration.

There are 5 outcomes of Sandwell Compact:-

1. Stronger partnerships between the VCS and statutory bodies
2. Better services in Sandwell that meet local needs
3. Making the best use of resources
4. Improved communication/dialogue between the VCS and statutory sector
5. Equality

Section 2 - Shared Vision

The Statutory Sector and VCS recognise their interdependence and reliance on each other to achieve the Sandwell 2020 vision as set in the Sandwell Plan:-

Sandwell: Great People, Great Place, Great Prospects

- Great People – active and well people
- Great Place – a safe and clean place to live
- Great Prospects – educated and skilled people in employment

Section 3 - Shared Values and Principles

All partners agree that the following values and principles will govern our relationships:-

- **Partnership working:** All partners have distinct but complementary roles in the development and delivery of public

- **Openness honesty and respect:** All partners will treat one another with generosity of spirit, respect, openness, honesty and transparency and will work to build trust between organisations.
- **Community cohesion:** All partners will promote collaboration and bridge building between different groups and communities.
- **Accessibility:** Services will be accessible to people who want to use them. All partners will endeavour to ensure that their services meet the needs of their current and future customers.
- **Equality:** All partners will treat their customers, employees and volunteers fairly to ensure that they do not receive less favourable treatment on any grounds, which cannot be shown to be justified.
- **Accountability:** All partners are open and accountable to each other, no hidden agendas.
- **Independence:** The formal independence of both the statutory sector and the VCS is recognised and encouraged as strength.
- **Interdependence:** The statutory and the voluntary and community sectors are interdependent - neither can fully function without the other.
- **Learning:** All partners aspire to be learning organisations in order to deliver better services to end users, learning from experience of what works and using skilled staff that have been properly trained.
- **Volunteering:** All partners recognise the value of volunteering as an important expression of citizenship and essential to civil renewal. Volunteering builds skills and experience, enhances employability and creates employment, promotes social inclusion and contributes to the building of community networks and participation; high levels of volunteering are therefore an indication of healthy and active communities.
- **Social Value:** All partners recognise the importance of social value as a way of maximising the impact of resources.

Section 4 –Undertakings

1. Stronger Partnerships between VCS and Statutory bodies

The VCS will:-

- operate through open and accountable organisations.
- work towards principles of good governance.

- ensure policy positions are derived from the real views of all stakeholders (users, members, the community etc).
- challenge, campaign and comment on policy regardless of any financial or other relationship which may exist.
- ensure they uphold their independence, and remain focused on their mission, irrespective of any relationship with the statutory sector.

The Statutory Sector will:-

- recognise the importance of the VCS and respect its independence.
- recognise the right of the VCS to challenge, campaign and comment on policy regardless of any financial or other relationship which may exist.

2. Better services in Sandwell that meet local needs

The VCS will:-

- ensure policy positions are derived from the real views of all stakeholders (users, members, the community etc).
- seek the views of service users, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees, where possible, when making representation to the statutory sector. Be clear on who is being represented, in what capacity and on what basis that representation is being made.
- help to identify need and ways of meeting that need.

The Statutory Sector will:-

- work with the VCS to plan policies, programmes and design services from the earliest stages of development, ensuring those likely to have a view are involved from the beginning.
- give early notice of forthcoming consultations, where possible, allowing enough time for the VCS to involve their service users, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees in preparing responses. Conduct 12 week formal written consultations, with an

- use open and transparent commissioning and procurement processes.
- involve the VCS in the identification of need.

3. Making the best use of resources

All partners will:

- recognise the importance of local shared partnership priorities.
- have a clear understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.
- have a clear understanding of each other's expectations in relation to funding, service specifications, payment arrangements, and monitoring and reporting requirements, from the start of a funding relationship.
- have a commitment to measure outcomes.
- have a willingness to take and share risks.
- have a continued dialogue and be flexible throughout the course of the funding relationship.
- have a willingness to share and resolve problems.
- to learn from experience and share good practice.
- have a commitment to develop a jointly agreed exit strategy.
- have a commitment to maximise resources coming into Sandwell.

The VCS will:-

- adhere to the principles contained within the Compact Funding Code of Practice.
- demonstrate value for money, quality, community impact and social value.

The Statutory Sector will:-

- adhere to the principles contained within the Compact Funding Code of Practice.
- use the most appropriate ways of funding or supporting VCS organisations. These methods should include grants, contracts, training, use of premises or other support.
- recognise the added value of the third sector's voluntary contributions (goodwill, time and money) to the positive quality of life in Sandwell.

4. Improved communication/dialogue between the VCS and statutory sector

The VCS will:-

- adhere to the principles contained within the Compact Communication and Consultation Code of Practice.

The Statutory Sector will:-

- adhere to the principles contained within the Compact Communication and Consultation Code of Practice

5. Equality

The VCS will:-

- consider where the value of their work can help the statutory sector deliver their public sector duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination.
- take practical action, such as through funding bids, to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build community links.

The Statutory Sector will:-

- work with the VCS that represent people protected by legislation and other under-represented groups to understand their specific needs and take these into consideration when designing and implementing policies, programmes and services.

- acknowledge that organisations that represent specific disadvantaged and under-represented groups can help promote social and community cohesion.
- take practical action to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and to provide a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups to ensure that communities are inclusive and fair for all.

Section 5 – Codes of Practice

Compact codes of practice have been produced to provide more detail in the following areas:-

Funding
 Communication, Information and Consultation
 Volunteering
 Capacity Building

Section 6 - Resolution of Disagreements

In exploring and learning new ways of working together it is inevitable that from time to time disagreements will arise. Disagreements are an opportunity for constructive challenge, improvements in behaviour and change to take place.

Wherever possible such disagreements should be settled by the immediate parties involved.

The procedure on the resolution of disagreements is for Compact issues only. It will not alter the complaints procedures of individual organisations.

The Compact principles of respect, openness and honesty will help disagreements to be resolved professionally and speedily. It is recommended that the following process is used:-

- **Stage 1: Talk to each other.** Involve a third party such as SCVO or the Council's Voluntary Sector policy officer if you wish. Keep a written record of discussions. If this does not resolve the issues please move to stage 2.
- **Stage 2: Submit a written enquiry or complaint.** Involve a third party such as SCVO or the Council's Voluntary Sector policy officer. Request a written response within 21 days. If this does not resolve the issue please move to Stage 3.

- Stage 3: SCVO and the Council's Voluntary Sector policy officer to receive details of the disagreement and call a meeting of relevant people to discuss the issues further. If this does not resolve the issue please move to Stage 4.
- Stage 4: Independent mediation from an appropriate source.

Ombudsman for Health – www.ombudsman.org.uk - free service
 Ombudsman for Local Government – www.lgo.org.uk - free service
 Compact Advocacy Programme - <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/compact-advocacy/how-we-can-help>

Section 7 - Compact Monitoring Review and Evaluation Process

The Compact Implementation Group made up of representatives from the VCS and statutory sector, will:

- Monitor, evaluate and oversee the operation of the Compact and the Codes of Practice.
- Monitor the agreed actions outlined in the Compact Action Plan.
- Take an overview about Compact disagreements.

Compact Refresh Date: July 2011 **Review Date:** October 2013

Section 8 – Signatories to the Compact

Jan Britton Chief Executive of Sandwell Council
 Mark Davis Chief Executive of SCVO
 Andy Williams Managing Director of Sandwell PCT
 Chief Superintendent M Robinson West Midlands Police
 Stewart Towe Black Country LEP
 Chris Martin Borough Commander Fire Service
 Dr Ian Walton Chair of PEC

Section 9 – Statement of Intent

A Compact for Sandwell - Statement of Intent

We have read and understood the principles of joint working between the voluntary and community sector and the statutory sector in Sandwell, as outlined in the document Sandwell Compact.

We agree to work within these shared values and principles and will work to strengthen the relationships between the sectors. We hereby commit ourselves to the Sandwell Compact by signing below, and becoming an equal partner in this agreement. We agree to renew our commitment every three years.

Our Name Is

.....

We are a (please tick)

- Registered Charity
- Community Group
- Voluntary Organisation
- GP Consortium
- Statutory Organisation
- Other (please specify)

Address

Post Code

.....

Telephone

.....

Fax.....

Email.....

Signed

Position

.....

Date

.....

Please complete this form and return to:
Chief Executive
Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations
1st Floor, Landchard House
Victoria Street, West Bromwich B70 8ER

Section 10 - Glossary of Terms

Commissioning

Is the whole process of deciding what public services are needed, and how best to use the resources available to get the best for local people. Commissioning is not only about public agencies buying and funding new services using contracts and grants: it is also about exploring new ways for commissioners and providers to collaborate to achieve better outcomes.

Community Cohesion

All partners will work in an environment that constantly promotes joint work and collaboration with different groups and organisations. Community cohesion will be achieved by breaking down barriers between communities, promoting similarities between different groups, building bridges and creating opportunities for communities from different backgrounds to meet and interact. This key principle will apply to employment of staff, management committee membership and services, as these need to be available not only to the organisations own ethnic group, but to other communities in the local area.

Community Impact

Voluntary and community organisations are also small businesses and are an important part of the local economy. Community impact can include a range of outcomes indirectly linked to the activities of an organisation or a project including:

- jobs for local people
- purchasing power impacting on local shops, suppliers etc
- facilities that can be used by local people
- levels of community cohesion
- opportunities for local people to volunteer

An example of this might be an organisation that provides specialised services for adults with a learning disability that also runs a community café and provides space for a self employed hairdresser to run a small scale service for local people. Both service users and the local community benefit from the interaction. Local volunteers are involved in service delivery. The organisation has also improved the land around their premises.

Governance

The systems and processes concerned with ensuring the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of an organisation.

Outcomes/Outcome focussed

Outcomes are changes that occur within clients or service users that indicate whether an organisation's interventions are making a difference. Outcomes provide a valuable tool to ensure clarity and agreement over what a programme or project is aiming to achieve.

Being outcome focussed puts clients at the centre of an organisation's thinking when planning and delivering services and measuring the effectiveness of their performance.

Procurement

Procurement focuses on:-

- the process of buying of services from initial advertising through to appropriate contract arrangements.
- The purchase of goods and/or services by publicly funded bodies at the best possible total price, in the right quantity and quality, at the right time generally via a contract.

Social Value

Social value is the additional benefit to the community from a commissioning / procurement process over and above the direct purchasing of goods, services and outcomes. It is designed to maximise the value of the money spent during commissioning through considering the wider benefits of spending, for the customer, community and general public.

Statutory Sector

Public bodies, funded by government, with legal responsibilities, for example, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Police, Fire Service, Sandwell Primary Care Trust and GP Consortia.

Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

Sandwell Council has adopted a tiered definition which is increasingly targeted and specific.

In the context of Sandwell Compact the Voluntary and Community Sector is defined as follows:

- Voluntary organisations - A formal organisation run by a management body made up of volunteers who are engaged in that activity for environmental, economic or social good.

- Community groups - A community organisation is a less formally organised body run by a management body made up of volunteers who are engaged in that activity for environmental, economic or social good.
- Tenants and residents groups
- Faith groups
- Housing Associations
- Co-operatives and social enterprises
- Sports organisations
- Grant making trusts
- Charities

based in or delivering services in Sandwell, non-governmental, value driven, for the social good and non party political, principally reinvesting any financial surpluses to further social, environmental or cultural objectives that bring a significant community benefit to Sandwell. The organisation must reinvest at least 50% of their financial surpluses for community benefit in Sandwell. Regional and national organisations will need to reinvest at least 50% of their financial surpluses that arise from their work in Sandwell for community benefit in the borough.

Volunteering

An activity which is undertaken freely and by choice and involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups within the community. The principle of non payment of volunteers is key to this.

Value for Money

Value for Money is high when there are relatively low costs, high productivity and successful outcomes. It has been defined as the relationship between the economy, efficiency and effectiveness as illustrated in the following diagram:-

