



wandsworth voluntary sector development agency
enabling voluntary action

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Wandsworth Compact Refresh

Meeting Report and Consultation Draft March 2010



Wandsworth Compact Refresh



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Introduction

On 26 February 2010, 20 representatives from the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and local public bodies Wandsworth Council and NHS Wandsworth met to discuss and update the Wandsworth Compact. The local Compact was drafted by a similar group of organisations in 2003-2004 and WVSDA initiated the 'refresh process' for two reasons.

First, our research shows that the wider VCS is largely unaware of the Compact's existence and that - with minor exceptions - the Compact has to date not been used by either the VCS or local public bodies.

Second, the National Compact (i.e. the document that applies to relationships between Central Government and the VCS) has recently undergone a 'refresh' process in connection with its ten-year anniversary which has resulted in a much more streamlined and up-to date document.

As a voluntary agreement between local public bodies and the voluntary and community sector, the Compact has the potential to help partnership working by spelling out roles and responsibilities in areas where the two sectors interact. However, to be useful to organisations, the Compact needs to be

clear and practical. Furthermore, it cannot do anything on a stand-alone basis and depends entirely on whether the organisations and individuals that could make use of it choose to do so.

Why didn't the Compact work?

With hindsight, it is easy to see why the first Wandsworth Compact did not have much impact on relations between the VCS and local public bodies – it was never really used! But why was this the case? Participants at the meeting suggested the following reasons:

- There was a lack of clarity about what the Compact is really intended to do and how to use it;
- The document did not feel practical and applicable to VCS organisations and their relationships with the public sector;
- The principles in the Compact needed to be translated into practice;
- As a partnership tool, it had no 'teeth';
- Nobody took ownership of promoting the Compact or monitoring compliance.

What is different today?

Despite the lack of an effective Compact, participants noted that Wandsworth had become a very different place in terms of interaction between the public sector and the VCS as compared to six years ago when the Compact was drafted. For a range of reasons, there is now more involvement and more interaction taking place between the sectors than before.

For example, VCS organisations are partners in service delivery with the NHS and Wandsworth Council. Many organisations also sit on partnership board and reference groups hosted by these organisations. It was also noted that because of an increased emphasis on equality (in connection with funding, health outcomes and more) smaller equality groups

Responses to WVSDA State of the Sector Survey (November 2009)

Wandsworth Compact is a document that lays out how local statutory bodies and the voluntary and community sector can work more effectively together. Have you heard of, and/or made use of the compact?

Yes, aware of it and found it useful	0.0%
Yes, aware of it but not used it	35.7%
No, not heard about the Compact	48.2%
Unsure	14.3%
Other (please specify)	0.5%

were becoming more important as potential partners for public bodies. The seminar series organised in 2009 by NHS Wandsworth to increase awareness of its commissioning practices and priorities was seen as a step in this direction.

Participants further noted that major changes on the national level were influencing partnership working between the sectors. The shift away from grants to contracts, the transformation of adult social care and the current economic climate with impending public sector funding cuts were recognised as major drivers that influence relationships between the sectors.

What needs to be done to make the Compact more relevant?

More than anything, the Compact needs to be made more practical and everyone who could make use of it, should be made aware of its existence. Several participants noted that the Compact needs to spell out roles and responsibilities rather than just abstract principles.

This need was particularly highlighted for the areas of funding (grants, contracts, commissioning) and participation (consultations, needs assessments and access to decision making processes) with a cross-cutting emphasis on making all processes accessible. Participants also stressed the continued importance



Compact refresh meeting at the Bridge, Balham, on 26 Feb 2010

of advancing equality, particularly through the work of small community groups and those that are specialised on BME groups and the wider equalities categories (race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability and gender identity).

How do we raise awareness and achieve sign-up to the Compact?

The participants suggested that the refreshed Compact should be presented to the members of the Wandsworth Local Strategic Partnership with an invitation to sign up. This would give the document more credibility and it would also enable LSP members to cascade Compact awareness within their respective organisations.

In order to reach as many organisations in Wandsworth as possible, we should:

- Create an attractive and practical Compact, print it and distribute copies among the VCS and within public bodies.
- Produce translated copies to overcome any language barriers.
- Reach out to organisations to enable them to comment on the draft Compact during the consultation phase.

How do we keep the Compact on the agenda?

Once a more practical, refreshed Compact has been agreed, organisations need to take ownership of the document and consider what they can do to make use of it and how it is relevant to their work.

- Within VCS organisations – ensure staff and volunteers know about the Compact and how to use it or where to get more information or help.
- Within public sector bodies – ensure staff know about it and what the implications are for key processes that they run.
- Create awareness material e.g. posters and put them up on the wall in all departments stating

that the organisation has signed up to the Compact and what that means.

There also needs to be coordination and ownership on a larger scale, with resources and information available to provide guidance. Within the voluntary sector, it was suggested that the CVS should take the lead in promoting the Compact, raise awareness and help monitor how it is used.

Monitoring suggestions

WVSDA proposed that to begin with, it could regularly check and report on Compact awareness and use through for example a 'Compact Update'.

The issue of establishing a monitoring group was raised and will be revisited with the Compact group again to explore if any organisations are interested in being part of such a group, how it would work and what it would monitor.

Several specific action areas were suggested by participants that could be used to keep the Compact on the agenda, monitor use and move partnership working forward:

1. Contracts and funding

All information about different funding pots needs to be available to the VCS (in one place/ from one source).

Possible action: NHS Wandsworth and Wandsworth Council could begin to identify who is in charge of different contracts and grants that would be suitable for VCS organisations and communicate this information to the VCS via WVSDA.

2. Consultations

Information about what consultations are coming up and what consultations have been undertaken recently should be published in one place. Possible action: same as above with regard to consultations instead of grants/contracts.

3. Equality

How many VCS groups have successfully won contracts and/or received grant funding? How many of them belong to one or more equality

strand? Similar questions could be posed with regard to participation in consultations and needs assessments.

The way forward

Following the meeting, a draft refreshed Compact has been put together that summarises and structures the feedback from the session. The draft is attached to this report and the group will have the opportunity to feed into the first draft to ensure that their contributions are accurately reflected. Thereafter, the amended draft goes out to public consultation (April – June 2010). The Compact group will then meet once more to agree the final version.



Liliias Gillies, WOPF and Graham Harris, LGBT Forum

Appendix I List of attendees

Donatus Anyanwu
Wandsworth Citizens Advice Bureaux

Yohannes Asmelash
South London Refugee Association

Ian Beever (Facilitator)

Chris Blyth
Economic Development Office, WBC

Mike Brook
Economic Development Office, WBC

Manuel Button
Wandsworth Community Transport

Jane Carey-Harris
NHS Wandsworth

Tina Champion
WVSDA

Emma Clark
Roehampton University

Mac Downes
Doddington and Rollo Community Association

Lilias Gillies
Wandsworth Older People's Forum

Graham Harris
Wandsworth LGBT Forum

Emma Haselden
Adult Social Services, WBC

Jo Lofgren
WVSDA

Mike Marks
Children's Services, WBC

Sarah Rackham
Katherine Low Settlement

Ibrahim Sharif
Somali Community Advancement Organisation

Mo Smith
Regenerate-RISE

Eglionna Treanor
Wandsworth Carers Centre

Fadumo Warsame
Somali Community Advancement Organisation



Yohannes Asmelash, SLRA and Fadumo Warsame, SCAO



Yohannes Asmelash, SLRA, Mike Marks, Children's Services (WBC) and Sarah Rackham, Katherine Low Settlement



Back: Emma Haselden, Adult Social Services (WBC), Emma Clark, Roehampton University. Front: Graham Harris, LGBT Forum, Ibrahim Sharif, SCAO

Appendix 2 A brief History of the Wandsworth Compact

In January 2004, a local Compact steering group made up of local actors from the voluntary and statutory sectors commissioned the Social Research Centre at Roehampton University to carry out a consultation with local organisations and to draft a compact that would take the process of compact development forward. The consultation lasted four months. Voluntary and community organisations, as well as officers, managers, elected members and nonexecutive directors from Wandsworth Council and NHS Wandsworth expressed their views on the relationship between the public and voluntary sectors. Strong opinions were voiced. But in spite of differences of view, all sides agreed on the need to:

- Improve how organisations communicated with one another
- Encourage participation in consultation
- Make funding mechanisms more open and policy-driven
- Build the organisational capacity of under-represented organisations
- Support volunteering

Underpinning these points were concerns about the need to build mutual respect and recognition; and to value diversity and fairness. The Wandsworth Compact should be meaningful to those living and working in the borough. It must reflect their needs. The process of establishing the local compact was the beginning of a process of establishing confidence and trust between the statutory and voluntary sectors.

Members of the 2004 Compact steering group:

Fitzroy Beckford, Wandsworth Care Alliance
Chris Blyth, Economic Development Office, Wandsworth Council
Brian Colman, Social Services, Wandsworth Council
Stephen Driver, Roehampton University
Sean Farran, Wandsworth Primary Care Trust
Margaret Adjaye, Wandsworth Primary Care Trust
Maurice Heaster, Deputy Leader Wandsworth Council
Clare Kakembo, Wandsworth Access Association of Disabled People
Alex King (Vice Chair), Wandsworth African Caribbean Association
Stefan Kuchar (Chair), Wandsworth Volunteer Bureau
Diane Rooney, St Georges Hospital
Judith Roscoe, Economic Development Office, Wandsworth Council
Razia Shariff, Wandsworth Community Empowerment Fund Network
Alan Sharp, Tooting Churches Together
Eglionna Treanor, Wandsworth Carer's Centre
Sally Warren, Generate
Henrietta Wells, Wandsworth Primary Care Trust

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Introduction

The Wandsworth Compact is a document that can help local public bodies and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to develop their approach to partnership working with each other. Deciding to work in a Compact friendly way is about choosing to deal with each other in a way that makes the other party trust that the process is transparent, fair and inclusive.

The compact must recognise the diversity of organisations in Wandsworth; the diversity of the population that these organisations serve; the different views and interests that organisations may have (including campaigning and advocacy roles); and the different constraints organisations work under.

In Wandsworth, and elsewhere in the country, relationships between the public sector and the VCS are sometimes strained because of a sense of inequality and unfairness, in particular regarding funding and policy decisions. It is necessary to recognise that partnership working between the public sector and the VCS does not take place on a level playing field; although the two sectors work to improve the lives of local communities, they operate on very different premises and are not equal players in terms of local influence over outcomes.

Wandsworth Council and NHS Wandsworth are bound by statutory obligations and responsibilities for public funds and Wandsworth Council is subject to local democratic politics. VCS groups exist for a myriad of purposes brought together by the desire to bring about change and improve the way local people's needs and issues are heard and dealt with.

These differences must be recognised for the purpose of highlighting the disproportionate level of responsibility on the part of local public bodies to take the lead in terms of making their processes Compact friendly.

At the same time, it is equally important that the VCS plays its part in terms of ensuring that its contributions to service delivery, needs assessments, consultations and influencing change encourage stronger, transparent and reliable partnerships.

Within this framework, the Wandsworth Compact is an attempt at promoting fairness in relations between public sector and VCS organisations and to give both sectors a guide that they may use to work better together.



Principles



Any framework built to last needs a set of principles that organisations share. This does not mean that NHS Wandsworth, Wandsworth Council and the great diversity of voluntary and community organisations across the borough should always agree with one another. But it should mean that there is a framework that allows them to agree to disagree – and to keep working together in support of the local community. The remainder of the Compact attempts to be as practical as possible in terms of linking principles to roles and responsibilities.

The statutory, voluntary and community sectors in Wandsworth

Acknowledge the diversity of organisations across the borough; respect the contribution and independence of other organisations; and will work to build mutual respect and understanding among those organisations.

Agree to build relationships with one another that are fair; which display honesty and openness; and which acknowledge the sharing of responsibilities between the public sector and the VCS.

Agree to work together to support and represent the people of Wandsworth and to deliver services that meet their needs.

Agree with the principles in the national Compact:

Respect

Honesty

Independence

Diversity

Equality

Citizen empowerment

Volunteering

Inclusiveness*

*Additional principle proposed by participants.

Equality

The Wandsworth Compact should serve all organisations, including black and minority ethnic (BME) groups and organisations representing people who are protected under equality law on the basis of **race, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, religion/belief or disability**.

Diversity is not the same thing as equality. The histories and situations of the individuals protected by equality law are complex and unique and the goal of achieving equality is a shared one that transcends sector boundaries. The Compact should also acknowledge that to be involved on an equal basis, some groups require additional, tailored support.

Voluntary and Community Organisations

Show leadership in achieving equality and encourage public bodies and other VCS organisations to do the same.

Reach out to organisations that represent marginalised communities and that campaign for the rights of equalities groups. Help raise their voices and ensure their representation.

Be transparent about whom you represent, how you represent them and where your legitimacy comes from.

Take steps to understand the equality frameworks that funders work within and if you are going to deliver a contract, what you are required to do.

If you work with a single community, highlight to the public sector both how the work that you do contributes to equality and how it contributes to cohesion.

Public Sector

Allocate seats and membership slots for equalities groups on decision making and consultative bodies and support them to engage.

Recognise that a majority of equality groups are small and often informal and that engaging with them will require additional resources and 'outside the box' methods. Work with local groups and infrastructure organisations to identify methods and good practice for engagement. Allocate funding for capacity building, advice and outreach to enable BME and equality groups to participate fully.

Recognise that groups who represent people with one specific characteristic can contribute to a more equal society by overcoming discrimination and enabling a host of beneficial outcomes, including community cohesion.

Contact equality groups in connection with Equality Impact Assessments, needs assessments, policy consultations and in connection with service design to understand their specific situations. Make these processes meaningful by working with groups to consider all relevant aspects of equality. Provide the necessary support and resources to enable equality groups to contribute.

When you need to work with specific groups to achieve targets, ensure that you do so in a way that goes beyond meeting your immediate objective; the value of small equality groups and the communities that they represent need to be matched with longer term commitment to participation and resources.

Work with the voluntary and community sector to enable individuals that are part of any of the equalities strands to engage in volunteering.

Involvement

Getting processes of consultation, community involvement and participation right is vital for good communication and for building effective partnerships in Wandsworth. Channels of communication need to be simple, transparent and accessible. Meaningful involvement in local decision making, needs assessments, consultations, and service design and delivery requires cooperation between the sectors to ensure that the right people and organisations participate and that the right outcomes are achieved.

Working with communities should include, but not be limited to, the targets and assessment tools associated with Sustainable Community Strategy and other local strategies. The work carried out by small community organisations should also be valued in the pursuit of making Wandsworth a better place to live.

Voluntary and Community Organisations

When policies, needs or services that relate to your work are reviewed, let decision makers know how you think the situation could improve.

Involve as many relevant people from your organisation as possible when responding to consultations or assessments.

Be clear about who is being represented and how you gathered the information you are using to communicate needs or propose changes to services or policy.

Ask for feedback and longer term involvement.

Let everyone involved know what the outcome is.

Ask infrastructure bodies and networks for information and advice about opportunities for involvement.

Understand that public sector bodies sometimes do not receive enough notice to run consultations according to the 12 week Compact time frame.

Public Sector

When major changes are planned, ensure that communication and VCS involvement is clear and inclusive from the outset and that implications are clearly explained.

Involve the VCS from the outset when decisions can be influenced.

Communicate upcoming opportunities for involvement in good time via voluntary sector infrastructure organisations and networks – consider using a ‘hub’ approach to enable the VCS to access this information in one place rather than chasing up each department.

Consider the Compact implications when introducing new policies, funding or services (alongside e.g. equality impact assessments).

Allocate resources for capacity building, advice and support to enable groups to adapt to major changes such as commissioning and Personalisation.

Identify the most appropriate methods to reach the right people and organisations. Work with voluntary sector partners to discuss methods and to reach out.

Special consideration should be given to reaching those organisations, communities and users not normally part of the policy-making process (underrepresented communities and equalities groups).

Adequately resource all forms of involvement. Identify where there are costs to organisations or other barriers that require solutions.

Follow up with everyone involved to let them know what happened to their feedback and how the process is moving forward.

Adhere to the HM Government Code of Practice on Consultation

If consultations or assessments for good reason have to be conducted in less than 12 weeks, explain why this is the case and note that this may prevent some organisations from participating.

Funding

Funding decisions by statutory bodies for particular services or areas, as well as to particular organisations, will always be a source of controversy. Resources are limited and views will differ about what should be funded. The public sector and the VCS have different objectives and capacities, but both sectors strive to operate efficiently, effectively and strategically in response to local need. The purpose of the Compact is to provide a framework that promotes greater openness and transparency in the allocation, management and monitoring of resources that flow from the public sector to the VCS.

Voluntary and Community Organisations

Encourage public bodies to use a range of funding and support methods to achieve outcomes.

Ask to be included in needs assessments and service design.

Be clear about who you represent and how you gathered the information you are using to communicate needs or propose changes.

When applying for funds, find out if other organisations in the borough exist for similar purposes to enable cooperation and to avoid duplication.

Consider how funding from a public body will impact on your funding mix and overall mission.

Recognise that funding from public bodies is part of a wider agenda aimed at achieving the outcomes in various local strategies and plans.

Before signing a contract, ensure that you have all the necessary governance and financial controls in place and that you are able to deliver and report on outcomes.

Public Sector

Publicise information about all types of funding and resources widely. Consider using a 'hub' approach to enable the VCS to access this information in one place

Consider a range of funding mechanisms and choose the one that is most appropriate to achieve a particular outcome. Explain choices.

Consider the Compact implications when introducing or changing funding arrangements or services. Support the sector to adapt or respond to major changes.

Involve the VCS from the outset when designing services by contacting networks and key organisations, including organisations that do not receive public funding.

Be clear about how funding bids will be assessed and give feedback after failed bids.

Allow enough lead in time for organisations to apply for funding (including time for consortium development if applicable) and ensure all documents are accessible.

When tendering, use short pre-tender questionnaires that enable organisations to quickly make decisions about whether to apply.

Recognise that voluntary organisations need to include relevant overhead costs in their bids, but also that they bring added value in terms of community benefits, social impact and volunteer contributions.

As far as possible, work towards using similar contractual and monitoring frameworks across public bodies.

As far as possible use three-year contracts to assist with long term planning and stability. Where this is not possible, explain why and how outcomes are better served by shorter term funding.



Agree financial arrangements, delivery terms, monitoring and evaluation in advance.

If working in a consortium, ensure that there is an accountable lead organisation and that each partner knows its role and is able to carry out its commitments.

Be open and transparent in reporting.

Plan for the end of a funding arrangement to minimise impact on the people involved.

Spell out expectations and agree delivery terms for contracts in advance – outcomes, financial arrangements, monitoring and evaluation.

Ensure that monitoring and evaluation requirements are proportionate to the sum of money allocated and be clear about what information will be requested, why and when.

Agree payment terms that suit the size of the project and knowing that small organisations may not have reserves to cover delays in payment or to be reimbursed upon completion. Discuss risks and make a plan for responding to changing circumstances.

If a funding stream is ending or changing, give a minimum of three months' notice and assess impact on service users or beneficiaries. Have an open dialogue with organisations about changes.



Help and Advice

Compact Advocacy

The Compact Advocacy Programme (based at NCVO) helps mediate and support better outcomes for VCS groups in their dealings with public bodies. If local disputes or disagreements over the interpretation of the Compact occur, please contact Compact Advocacy. Tel: 020 7520 3161. Web: www.compactvoice.org.uk/compactadvocacy

Wandsworth Voluntary Sector Development Agency

Your Council for Voluntary Service can guide you to information and resources and provide training, give advice and help on a range of issues related to governance, financial management, funding, monitoring and evaluation, consultations and more. We can also provide further resources and guidance on practical ways of using the Compact.

Tel: 020-8875 2846 Web: www.wvsda.org.uk

Wandsworth Borough Council's complaints procedure/contact

Mike Brook – to be specified.

NHS Wandsworth's complaints procedure/contact

Jane Carey-Harris – to be specified.



Sign up to the Compact

Organisation.....

Our organisation is (please circle): Public Sector Voluntary or Community based

Charity number (if applicable).....

Telephone or Email.....

Compact contact person.....

We sign up to the Compact and undertake to use it to improve partnership working between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector.

Signature.....

We would like to be part of Compact updates: Yes No

We would like information about how to use the Compact: Yes No

When your organisation signs up, you will receive a printed copy of the Compact and a certificate stating that you have agreed to apply the Compact in your partnership work. If requested, you will also receive further information about how to apply the Compact. If you are a voluntary or community organisation, WVSDA may contact you from time to time to enquire about your progress.

Sign up online at: www.wvsda.org.uk

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