

COMPACT AT WORK



Making the Compact work for you

Surrey: Honesty is the best policy

The discourse between the Surrey Compact and Surrey County Council shows that all news, even bad news, is worth sharing.

Impact

By last August, it became clear that in some cases the voluntary and sector organisations that receive funding from Surrey County Council were not going to get the three months notice about changes to funding as agreed in the Compact.

This was primarily due to sudden changes from central government funding which were imposed and affected funding going out to VCS service providers. Thankfully, Surrey benefits from a Compact which is strong enough to address even the most challenging of situations.

The Surrey Compact has over 370 champions (individuals who have signed up to champion the Compact message) and is taken very seriously by Surrey County Council (SCC). So when the Surrey Compact Implementation Group (SCIG) invited SCC to attend a joint meeting, Chief Executive David McNulty and his department heads agreed to attend.

The resulting meetings helped to build trust within the sector with 90% rating them as “good” or “excellent”. By sharing SCCs position in an honest and transparent manner, it

was clear that voluntary and community organisations react well to receiving all the available information, even if it is bad news. As a result of this process, the Surrey Compact and SCC are able to share information openly and as early as possible safe in the knowledge that partners will act responsibly and work together to manage impacts as best as possible.

The Surrey Compact has decided to run another meeting for the next financial year on the 10th November during Compact Week. This time they have invited representatives of NHS Surrey and the borough and district councils to widen the conversation and information flow.

Summary

When it became clear that the short timescale of the Comprehensive Spending Review would mean that some VCS organisations may not get three months notice of changes to funding, the SCIG agreed to call for a joint Surrey Compact SCC meeting to discuss the unforeseen effects of the cuts.

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Surrey Compact

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Compact Principles

- 1: Partnership working

Tags

- Champions
- Commissioning
- Engagement
- Local Compacts
- Working groups

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The SCIG approached SCC Chief Executive David McNulty and the cabinet member lead for the voluntary and community sector, Denise Saliagopoulos to arrange a joint seminar. The Chief Executive and the lead cabinet member agreed and gave an overview followed by service specific discussions which were facilitated by key commissioning managers.

There have been two meetings so far, one in November 2010 and the second in March 2011. The workshops discussed the direction of travel, potential changes in funding, the effect on services and how the voluntary and community sector could work together to ease the situation. The meeting was successful and the need to continue the conversation and keep information flowing was expressed.

Over seventy voluntary and community organisations were represented at both meetings.

Quote

“In difficult times it has been really encouraging to see that both sectors were willing and able to come together and talk things through. The Surrey Compact has been a big part of building this culture of openness and trust.”

- Barbara Musgrave, Surrey Compact



Relevant Compact Principles

1: A strong, diverse and independent civil society

Related links

Surrey Compact website: www.surreycompact.org