

Gloucestershire Compact

Compact Mediation Procedure

1. Who is this Compact Mediation Procedure for?

- Voluntary and Community Sector Groups
- Public Sector Bodies

2. What is the Gloucestershire Compact?

The Gloucestershire Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sector to support and improve partnership working between the sectors. It is underpinned by Codes of Practice, based on the national Codes, which cover the following areas:

- Advancing Equality
- Commissioning
- Community Groups
- Consultation
- Mediation
- Multi-sector Partnerships
- Volunteering

The Gloucestershire Compact and its Codes contain specific undertakings for each sector, as well as a series of joint undertakings, which aim to make a positive impact on partnership working in the county. In this context, the term “undertaking” commits partners to work towards the principle or action in question.

3. What is the aim of this Compact Mediation Procedure?

The Compact process is one of learning, development and dialogue, within which it is recognised that from time to time, differences may arise which need to be resolved. This procedure relates specifically to differences occurring between organisations (VCS and public sector) who are party to the Gloucestershire Compact arising from commitments and undertakings contained within it and its Codes.

It is intended to provide a framework for facilitating discussions between the parties involved and aims to move them towards a mutually acceptable outcome. The process is about developing understanding and awareness between the two sectors.

The Compact Mediation Procedure follows a staged approach. Only when one stage of the process is completed should the process proceed to the next stage. The VCS Assembly Team will oversee this.

4. What is the Gloucestershire Compact Mediation Group (GCMG)?

The GCMG will act as a neutral third party, guiding and regulating a structured discussion to facilitate the reaching of consensus on the Compact difference.

The role of the group will be to facilitate this discussion to reach a consensus and they will distinguish this role from their role as Compact Champions which is to promote and act as advocates for the Gloucestershire Compact at all times.

The GCMG will consist of Compact Group members. Membership of the GCMG will be agreed annually. GCMG shall consist of at least 6 members: 3 from the voluntary and community sector and 3 from the public sector, who will have received training in Compact Mediation.

5. What is the Compact Mediation Process?

Stage 1

- 1.1 If organisation A is concerned that organisation B has breached the Compact, they should seek to resolve that difference directly with organisation B.
- 1.2 Organisation A should contact organisation B and explain to them the nature of their concern, clearly stating which Compact commitment they believe has been breached.
- 1.3 Organisations A and B should try to resolve the issue without resorting to the following formal Compact mediation procedure.
- 1.4 Should these actions fail to provide an outcome satisfactory to both parties and it is agreed by both parties that third party intervention would be useful, they can jointly refer the issue on to stage 2, by writing to the Chair of the Gloucestershire Compact Group:

*c/o The VCS Assembly Team,
GAVCA, 75-81 Eastgate Street, Gloucester GL1 1PN*

- 1.5 The letter should identify the organisations concerned, the Compact commitment(s) over which the issue has arisen, the nature of that issue and what has already been done to try to resolve the matter.

Stage 2

- 2.1 On receiving the letter, the VCS Assembly Team will endeavour to convene a panel from the GCMG within 2 weeks. This panel will consist of 1 member from each sector, and will appoint its own chair from amongst them. The panel should not include anyone directly connected with either organisation involved in the issue.
- 2.2 This panel will determine whether the issue does relate to commitments and undertakings held within the Gloucestershire Compact. If so, the panel will set a mutually agreeable date to hear from both parties involved. Ideally this should be as soon as possible and certainly no later than 6 weeks from the date when the letter was received by VCS Assembly Team subject to availability of parties concerned. The panel will invite both parties to nominate up to 2 representatives each to attend the meeting. One of these may be someone from another organisation who is brought in to support the organisation concerned as an advocate.

2.3 The panel will work with the two parties in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution. If the matter cannot be resolved at the first sitting, further meetings may be arranged if this will help reach a resolution.

Stage 3

3.1 If it is not possible to resolve the issue at stage 2, the GCMG will signpost parties to further resources available which might assist them in resolving the situation. These may include the national Compact Advocacy Programme, the national Compact Mediation Scheme and the organisation's internal complaints procedure.

6. How will this Procedure be monitored and evaluated?

For purposes of monitoring and evaluating the Gloucestershire Compact, all organisations are encouraged to notify the Gloucestershire Compact Group of any situations that arise relating to Compact issues, where these are resolved within stage 1 of this procedure.

A record will be kept of all cases referred to the GCMG by the VCS Assembly Team but the details of those cases will remain confidential to the GCMG.

The panel will keep the Gloucestershire Compact Group informed of progress and outcome of any cases referred to them. They will also report anything arising from any cases that are indicative of wider Compact issues.

A summary report of use of the mediation procedure will be presented annually to the Gloucestershire Conference.

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Process for Resolving Issues Arising from the Compact

Aim: *To improve the effectiveness of the Gloucestershire Compact and provide a framework for resolving issues by helping parties to identify and agree a mutually acceptable outcome*

