

COMPACT AT WORK



Norfolk: effective engagement with Health and Wellbeing Boards

Shortlisted for
Compact
Awards 2014

Norfolk's Voluntary Sector Engagement Project, funded by the Health and Wellbeing Board, continues the strategic integration of the voluntary sector started through the original Compact agreement.

What Happened

The Voluntary Sector Engagement Project in Norfolk means that Health and Wellbeing Board discussions benefit from voluntary and community sector (VCS) experience and expertise - two of the Board's three Priority Champions are VCS representatives.

It also means Board members have easy access to VCS expertise in and out of Board meetings through forums and networks with accountable structures. This adds up to better decisions being made, better relationships with commissioners, and means VCS organisations can contribute to integrated service planning without compromising their competitive position as service providers.

The Project enables the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) to deliver its aim of effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services.

Specifically it means that:

- Board meetings benefit from the contributions of three voluntary sector representatives, elected by the sector
- Board members and their commissioning teams have access to specialist knowledge through VCS provider forums as well as Board related task and finish working groups
- Multi-sector networks and forums

are facilitated to promote a dialogue with the sector

For voluntary and community sector organisations, the Project means they are:

- Better informed about the strategic context in which they operate, and the way their own services contribute to strategic priorities
- Better placed to contribute frontline knowledge to inform service planning and delivery
- Better equipped to build effective relationships with commissioners and help ensure that social, environmental and economic value is understood and recognised

More effective relationships mean that:

- There is better shared understanding of the role played by the VCS in delivering the outcomes of the HWB and associated partners
- There is strategic co-ordination of VCS input into key areas of health and wellbeing service development and activity

There are effective arrangements in place to draw on sector specialisms and perspectives at appropriate levels, for example from county/district-wide and strategic to local and operational.

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Health bodies, engaging with commissioning bodies

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Compact Principles

- 1: Partnership working
- 2: Designing policies and services
- 3: Promoting equality and fairness
- 4: Promoting equality and fairness
- 5: Promoting equality and fairness

Tags

Health

Commissioning

...Continued

Impact

The project has been especially influential in:



Supporting volunteers and voluntary organisations

1. Welfare reform

By spring 2013, VCS agencies had drawn the Voluntary Sector Engagement Project's attention to the cumulative and disproportionate impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 on vulnerable people. As a result, the Project worked with the Norfolk Community Advice Network and Public Health to deliver a seminar (June 2013) for Board members and service commissioners. The report from was discussed by the whole Board who subsequently agreed to:

- Recognise inequality (rather than poverty) as the most significant factor in achieving health and wellbeing
- Target interventions on vulnerable individuals rather than focusing only on geographic areas
- Establish a programme of local community-led projects in areas of deprivation to tackle health and wellbeing issues
- Adapt the presentation of Joint Strategic Needs Assessment data to reflect the impact of inequality

2. Mental health and learning disability issues

The project worked with private sector agencies and commissioners for both disabilities and mental health, to identify cross-cutting themes for all provider organisations. These included the cost implications of changes to service delivery (such as transport cost) and commissioners' ability to be flexible about these. The joint 'Moving Forward Together Action Plan' included embedding formal opportunities for the VCS to feed into commissioning boards and improving other opportunities for developing dialogue so that the voluntary sector is involved at the earliest opportunity.

3. Mental health gaps – joint work with commissioners

In July 2014 the Mental Health VCS Forum – which is supported by the project – was invited by the lead commissioner for mental health to work collaboratively to co-produce an event to determine Norfolk's 'take' on the government's initiative Closing the Gap – Priorities for essential change in mental health. A report from the event - well attended by both providers and commissioners - identified key gaps in Norfolk and is helping to inform commissioning plans for the county council and the five Clinical Commissioning Groups who work across Norfolk.

4. Understanding the Joint Strategic Needs Analysis (JSNA)

The Project works closely with Public Health, including the JSNA Team. The VCS can help shape the local health and wellbeing agenda by sharing front-line knowledge and expertise through the JSNA. Because the JSNA brings together data and evidence that commissioners use for planning services, including helping the HWB set its priorities, the project wanted to raise the profile of the JSNA with the VCS. At a recent sector workshop (pictured right), led by the JSNA Manager, participants could see how they could draw on the richness of data held to support their work - e.g. back-up for funding applications - as well as recognise how the information they hold can be included in the JSNA to build an understanding of the complex relationships between the needs, problems and service gaps experienced by service users.



Quote

Clive Rennie, Assistant Director for Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Integrated Commissioning:

“The Voluntary Sector Engagement Project has been instrumental in working with commissioning organisations to ensure that our partners are fully engaged in critical discussions about the context in which commissioning organisations are working, about the needs and the gaps that are identified and how we, as a system, can work together to maximise collaboration to meet the needs of individuals. The Voluntary Sector Engagement Project staff have been a core asset in delivering this agenda.”