

# COMPACT SPOTLIGHT



## South Gloucestershire Compact

The Compact is working well in South Gloucestershire, thanks to the commitment of a wide range of partner agencies to work together. An active Compact group ensures that the Compact is integrated with key issues such as commissioning and Localism and that there is open and honest dialogue between partners.

### Impact

As a result of positive relationships developed through the solid implementation of the South Gloucestershire local Compact, disproportionate cuts to the voluntary and community sector (VCS) were avoided.

This means that, in line with the government's Best Value guidance, the local authority has not cut funding to the VCS by more than the reduction in their own settlement from central government.

Compact principles are applied to VCS funding. For example, the CVS South Gloucestershire and its partners have negotiated a 3 year tapering funding agreement with the Council. Although this means that VCS infrastructure organisations face considerable funding pressures, they also have an opportunity to plan for the future.

### Area profile

South Gloucestershire is a unitary authority made up of the urban fringes of Bristol, small market towns and rural areas, and includes some hotspots of deprivation that South Gloucestershire Council has designated as 'Priority Neighbourhoods'.

South Gloucestershire has a well-established and diverse VCS, working with a wide range of people to provide an even wider variety of services. The 2011 VCS survey found that over 30% of organisations focus their work on a specific neighbourhood, and the VCS is well represented in 'Priority Neighbourhoods' Programme. South Gloucestershire Council has worked in partnership to develop the Localism agenda and began the process with a comprehensive consultation programme that included the VCS and Town and Parish Councils.

### Compact profile

South Gloucestershire updated their local Compact in 2010 and are planning to review it again this year to ensure that it can inform VCS commissioning.

The South Gloucestershire Compact Implementation Group is active and meets regularly. The group is chaired by Avon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and is supported by CVS South Gloucestershire. All the statutory sector agencies in the area are represented and there are three VCS reps who also sit on the VCS Leaders Board.

**Published:**  
July 2012

**Contact:**  
Martin Gregg  
Development  
Officer –  
Policy and  
Information  
CVS South  
Gloucestershire  
Tel:  
01454 868726  
Email:  
[Martin.Gregg@cvs-sg.org.uk](mailto:Martin.Gregg@cvs-sg.org.uk)

### Compact Principles

1: Partnership  
working

### Tags

Local Compacts  
Champions  
Engagement

*Continued...*

Members of the group act as Compact champions (although they are not formally called champions).

There have been about half a dozen Compact disputes in the past year, indicating that organisations are willing to challenge using the Compact. These disputes were all resolved and the learning was shared with commissioners.

The Compact group takes a strategic approach, ensuring that the local Compact is integrated with new policy developments such as Localism and VCS commissioning. It sets priorities each year to ensure the Compact remains relevant.



## Key success factors

- A well supported and strategic Compact group
- Compact priorities are agreed annually
- The Compact is integrated with relevant policy developments

## Challenges

The VCS annual survey indicates that communication with the sector is a major issue. Martin Gregg, Development Officer at CVS South Gloucestershire said “making sure that people know about the Compact is crucial. We have an improving web presence and this year we’re going to focus on raising the profile of the Compact in both sectors.”

Commitment to the Compact is high but the capacity of partner agencies to engage, particularly in the statutory sector, is a challenge. Martin said “It’s been difficult maintain momentum because of the pressure faced by officers in the Council and other statutory partners. There are fewer officers who have much wider briefs and this can make it hard to develop our priorities.”

## Next steps

The South Gloucestershire Compact is going to be reviewed this year, and will be updated to include inform the development of commissioning processes in the light of Compact principals and processes. This exercise will involve consultation with both sectors.

To date there has been little engagement by elected members in with the local Compact and this is an area for future development.

---

## Relevant Compact Principles

1: Partnership Working

## Related links

- [CVS South Gloucestershire](#)
- [South Gloucestershire Compact](#)