Section 4
Events and training
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Events and training help people understand the Compact, what it offers them, how it integrates into their work, and how they can contribute to partnership working in their day-to-day activities.

“Some agencies such as the police and hospitals don’t fund the sector so the benefits of being involved in the Compact are not immediately obvious. Our local Compact awards scheme brought them into the fold.”
Rob Allison, Director of Policy and Partnership, Voluntary Action Coventry

Compact Voice’s events and training programme

Compact Voice organises events which showcase examples of good practice. We can also support local events and deliver training.

We offer the following free services:

• Talks developed to cover the most popular subjects requested by our members. We are more than happy to discuss developing bespoke talks and presentations too
• Training modules and targeted programmes of support, for example ‘Selling the Compact,’ or ‘Renewing your Compact’

Talks and training can be booked for free using our speaker request form at www.compactvoice.org.uk/supportmenu.

Many areas plan local or regional Compact events, such as a small training session, an awards ceremony, an annual review event, or a scoping event to inform a Compact update. Award events are often a chance to showcase achievements to a wide audience. Compact Week takes place during the first full week in November. Many local events (including local Compact awards) focus on the Compact and raise its profile.

It can be useful to:

• Train people to be able to pass the Compact message on
• Have an event/training for specific sectors, or for particular groups such as BME groups
• Bring together representatives from different sectors and levels of employment. This provides a valuable chance for people to meet and learn from others they might not have the opportunity to meet in their day-to-day work
• Integrate a Compact session with wider events, for example, a workshop on how the Compact can contribute to equality at an event about the Equality Act

Local Compact events can typically include:

• Guest speakers for people to learn from (and to challenge)
• Discussion groups to share insight on particular local issues or how to implement policy
• Informal opportunities to network (ideally over refreshments)

Compact Voice provides a menu of information and opportunities, showing some of the training programmes we provide. This offers useful tips about running similarly themed events. This is available online at www.compactvoice.org.uk/supportmenu.
Tips for organising a successful Compact event

1. Define your audience.
   **DO** make sure you’re clear on who you want to attend your event, and what the benefit to them is. Some events may require different levels of Compact knowledge or relate to a specific area of interest or expertise. Those who can’t engage meaningfully may feel disenfranchised and bringing them up to speed could limit the usefulness of the event to others.
   **DON’T** limit the remit of all Compact events by targeting only a generic audience. While it is important to bring everyone together from time-to-time there can be advantages in targeting specific audiences.

2. Mix up the sectors.
   **DO** invite representatives from the statutory and voluntary sectors, and any relevant private sector representatives in your area: this will provide an opportunity for them to network and build working relationships.
   **DON’T** fall into the trap of thinking that it is easier to speak to different sectors separately. A core function of Compact events should be to help the different sectors see things from each others point of view.

3. Outline why you are having events.
   **DO** think about what you’d like your outcome to be. Having a clear sense of what you want to get out of the event and why you are hosting it in the first place can help you ensure that you and your participants benefit as much as possible.
   **DON’T** simply hold Compact events for the sake of it. If you are not clear about what everyone is getting out of an event then the likelihood is that they will be getting very little – this can damage perceptions about your local Compact.

4. Make it topical.
   **DO** frame your events in response to issues affecting partnership working in your area. Identify themes for events by asking yourself questions like: what has been achieved locally over the past year? What are the current myths, challenges and opportunities for cross sector partnerships?
   **DON’T** feel as though you have to talk about the Compact in isolation. Linking the Compact in with issues people are interested in can be a great way to demonstrate how relevant the Compact is.

5. Get the word out.
   **DO** brief your team on any events so that they can tell external audiences when they engage with them during the course of their work. If you are attending other people’s events, mention your event there and ask if you could insert something in their delegate pack about your event. Other examples of spreading the word are: organisations’ e-newsletters, individual mailing lists (make sure you paste the list into the BCC section of an email), or personal emails (good for elected members), and council and NHS newsletters. Find out who the communications officers are and ask them when their deadlines are.
   **DON’T** simply pitch the event to the “usual suspects” who always attend.

6. Go to the audience.
   **DO** think tactically about finding your audience. If you find that people don’t respond well to events about the Compact but that they are interested in commissioning events, general voluntary and community sector conferences or training sessions, then either re-brand your event accordingly linking it to the Compact, or organise presentations highlighting links with the Compact at other events.

For more ideas, see Section 3: ‘Communicating the Compact to different audiences.’
Example: Islington Compact Awards

Islington developed local awards to recognise outstanding examples of partnership work happening in the area.

The awards were judged by the Chair of the local NHS, the Assistant Director of Strategic Planning and Regeneration from Islington Council, and the CEO of the local CVS, Voluntary Action Islington.

The awards ceremony, held in the Town Hall, attracted 70 people and the presentations were made by the leader of the Council and the mayor.

A press release, which was drafted in partnership by the CVS and a council communications officer, helped local papers pick up on award winners. A summary of the winners work and photographs were sent to all participants, attendees and everyone in the local CVS newsgroup.

The awards ceremony was an enjoyable way for community groups and the statutory sector to learn about each other and provided a rare opportunity to honour very important partnership work. Winners remarked that they had not realised what positive impact the recognition of their partnership would have – especially on funding applications.

How Compact Voice can help:

We can
● Run training sessions for you
● Provide materials such as case studies and presentations for your events
● Help plan your events
● Provide speakers for your local events.