Section 5
Compact Impact: Action planning, monitoring and evaluating
An action plan is essential for making local Compacts work. It shows clearly what is needed from partners to progress your local Compact, is a key tool for monitoring progress and is the basis for showcasing your successes.

“The picture I use to help explain the Compact is a house. The Compact is the foundation stone. The trouble is that foundation stones are buried in the ground. People want to know ‘what actually has the Compact done?’ but it is tricky to separate out the specific effect of the Compact from other initiatives. The fact that items on our action plan have happened is what matters most.”

Martin Howie, Director, Voluntary Action Lewisham

A Compact action plan can be something shared widely across the Compact partnership, or just for the reference of the Compact group. It can be useful for organisations or departments to develop their own action plan detailing how to embed Compact principles in day-to-day work and monitor implementation using internal processes. For more details, see the Calderdale example opposite.

Common headings for an action plan include: funding, long-term financial planning, full cost recovery, premises, information technology, identifying available non-financial support opportunities, reducing regulation and simplifying processes.

Ask each partner their biggest challenge and what they most want to achieve – link these with consideration of strategies and activities to address community engagement, partnerships and the role of the voluntary and community sector. These can then be combined into an action plan.

As the starting point, develop a short action plan with a few quick wins in the coming year and include agreeing a proper action plan. Consider having an ambitious 3 year rolling action plan and include what success will look like to ease subsequent evaluation.

Example: Calderdale’s approach to action planning

Soo Nevison, Chief Officer, Voluntary Action Calderdale

Calderdale wanted to get away from an action plan that mentioned specific partners, and instead create one which emphasised working together. Below is an example of the action plan for Calderdale’s Compact group.

For specific partners they produced an implementation toolkit, containing checklists. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Already doing this</th>
<th>Need to work on this by…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide a clear rationale for all funding decisions</td>
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<td>Well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of programmes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we agree with partners how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do we ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are we clear about what information is being asked for, and why and how it will be used?</td>
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</table>

Example: Excerpt from Calderdale’s Compact action plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action required</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
<th>Lead partner</th>
<th>Traffic Light</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Awareness – Raising the Compact’s profile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotion of the Calderdale Compact and Compact Toolkit</td>
<td>Publicity re: Compact</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Produce one article in Calderdale per quarter focussing on public/private/voluntary/national or local issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Compact presence at relevant partnership events</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Compact Week Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Resources and Responsibility – Who does what and how you will pay for it</td>
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<tr>
<td>Record and monitor resources from partners</td>
<td>Budget for 10/11 agreed and managed by CMBC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secure existing and/or additional resources</td>
<td>Member organisations and partners identify resources to support delivery of Compact</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other sources – private sector resources to support the Compact – e.g. promotion on business websites</td>
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</table>
Example: Camden Compact group’s delivery overview

Camden Compact group developed an overview guide to their local Compact, which lists different partners who are involved in working together, and how they deliver key aspects of better partnership working between the sectors.

### Delivery overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>Children, Schools &amp; Families</th>
<th>Housing &amp; Adult Social Care</th>
<th>Voluntary &amp; Community Sector (VCS)</th>
<th>Culture &amp; Environment</th>
<th>NHS Camden</th>
<th>Metropolitan Police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Themes</td>
<td>Resourcing of VCS network and children &amp; families development work</td>
<td>VCS involvement in commissioning groups, safeguarding board etc. Access to training for VCS</td>
<td>Supporting networks, fair selection processes for VCS partnership members. Range of development and capacity building initiatives for involvement &amp; joint working</td>
<td>Inclusion of VCS in Council’s Equality Impact Assessment framework, Strategic Liaison Group. Capacity building support</td>
<td>Staff involvement in VCS forums, Involvement of VCS in specific work areas and events. Work with the LIO</td>
<td>VCS representation on ward panels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Stronger partnerships & collaboration between sectors**
  - Consultation with VCS on strategic plans, commissioner & policy development
  - Joint commissioning, events & research with VCS, VCS inclusion on strategic & work groups
  - Meetings, seminars, outreach work increasing VCS knowledge & involvement. Research & providing evidence
  - Piloting new monitoring approaches. Partnership approach to developing outcomes
  - Annual joint event on commissioning & direction of travel. VCS involvement in consultation on plans & strategies

- **Consultation & influencing decision making**
  - Consultation with VCS on strategic plans, commissioner & policy development
  - Joint commissioning, events & research with VCS, VCS inclusion on strategic & work groups
  - Meetings, seminars, outreach work increasing VCS knowledge & involvement. Research & providing evidence
  - Piloting new monitoring approaches. Partnership approach to developing outcomes
  - Annual joint event on commissioning & direction of travel. VCS involvement in consultation on plans & strategies

- **Infrastructure**
  - Resourcing work for effective VCS involvement. Supporting range of strategic sub boards with VCS members
  - Providing training opportunities for VCS in key policy areas, VCS involvement in community safety work programme
  - Capacity building and development across Action Plan themes
  - Resourcing organisations to elevate economic hardship
  - Work to embed Compact principles in NHS strategy documents

- **Funding relationships & service delivery**
  - Grants used to allocate capital funding. Training for VCS to bid according to competitive criteria. 3 year contracts where able
  - Outcomes monitoring approaches. Case by case basis for grants or commissioning. Full cost recovery basis
  - Outcomes based commissioning development. Campaigning for mixed economy of funding
  - Review of relationship with VCS. 3.5 year contracts in place & 9 month extensions granted
  - NHS Camden Commercial Strategy with commitment to Compact. Briefings & procurement events attended by VCS

- **Volunteering**
  - Monitoring of providers using & supporting volunteers. Volunteering featured in some contracts
  - Promotion, coordination & management of range of volunteering opportunities. Training & mentoring for volunteers & managers
  - Support to volunteer led initiatives. Joint promotional events with VCS. Appointment of volunteer coordinator
  - Opportunities for VCS to develop skills for health related volunteering
  - Opportunities developed to be promoted through VCS
Evaluating your Compact

“Information gathering is crucial for the effective implementation of the Compact locally and nationally. While quantitative data is useful (for example, how many Champions, number of noncompliance issues recorded and resolved) it is the collection and sharing of experiences, perceptions and good and bad practice that adds most value. This qualitative information is the currency which enables a Compact to improve by allowing ideas to spread and trends to be identified.”

Adam Pickering, Engagement Officer

A local Compact does not – in and of itself – bring about positive change. It is the commitment and hard work of those who use and advocate for it that helps spread its message and embed continuous improvements in partnership working. It is essential to monitor the effectiveness of local Compacts in order to identify where gaps in relationships may affect the quality of services to communities, and how they can be improved.

Why evaluate your Compact?

The more you know about what is happening on the ground, what the barriers are to better Compact working and what issues are looming on the horizon, the more effective you will be in implementing your Compact.

Reasons to evaluate your Compact:
- To benchmark and learn where you are
- To learn what works and what doesn’t
- To find good practice and report it
- To give early warning of problems which are arising
- To find out what people really think – do perceptions match the facts? If not why do people think what they do?
- Because people act differently when they know their performance is being monitored – asking about performance can act as a wake-up call
- It will allow you to compare performance between organisations and areas and track progress from your previous results

What should you evaluate?

It is helpful for those involved with a Compact to focus on achievable outcomes that are measurable. There are a number of approaches to deciding this. You could simply ask overarching questions and then think about what measures would allow you to answer them. For example:

**Question:** Are partners satisfied with the Compact?
**Measure:** Partners rate satisfaction level from 1 – 5.

Or,

**Question:** What is the evidence that partners are effectively implementing our Compact?
**Measure:** Number of non-compliance cases, number of champions.

How to evaluate your Compact

Annual Local Compact Survey: Surveys can enable you to collect information quickly and easily, especially benchmarking information. As the following example shows there are additional benefits.

Example: Essex County Council Compact Survey

Simon Banks, Community Planning and Engagement Officer at Essex County Council found a number of advantages to undertaking a survey about the Essex Compact. The survey acted as a reminder for people to take action: for example, a question about whether the Compact was included in inductions and in contracts encouraged people to use it.

The survey also revealed new trends: “The main type of complaint was about corners being cut in procurement of services, rather than about grant cuts where Compact breaches seemed rarer”.

This information is crucial in understanding barriers to good relationships between the sectors – reading between the lines to locate the realities behind negative perceptions and suggest positive actions to be taken.

Compact Voice Annual Survey: Compact Voice undertakes a national survey of local Compacts. This allows you to compare your local Compact with others. For more information visit www.compactvoice.org.uk.

Overview and Scrutiny: Councillors are well placed as community leaders to be able to assess how well a Compact is being implemented within and without the council. Scrutiny reviews have led to the recognition of weaknesses and subsequent improvements in Compact working in Thurrock, Bristol and Hertfordshire. See also the publication Local Compacts at Work which can be found in the Resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk.

Involving people in the evaluation process

One of the best ways to measure the effectiveness of a Compact is to ask the people who use it (or who should be using it) what they think about it. There are lots of options to choose from when consulting an audience, from social networking tools to facilitated evaluation sessions (which Compact Voice can deliver – see the ‘support’ section of www.compactvoice.org.uk). However, there are some which are particularly useful. The following table provides a framework for assessing how well a local Compact is working:
How well does your partnership work?
Ways of evaluating your Compact

1 = not effective, 5 = very effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Compact Champions</th>
<th>None or few</th>
<th>Sufficient, recruited in sector &amp; public bodies</th>
<th>Local training resource providing training to all new Champions</th>
<th>Supported and active</th>
<th>Networked, regularly briefed and playing an increasingly effective role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(b) Partnership and engagement</td>
<td>Partners have little knowledge &amp; skills on how to engage</td>
<td>Training delivered &amp; issues addressed by partners</td>
<td>Opportunities for joint working are being seized. Sector well positioned, skilled, led &amp; supported to engage productively</td>
<td>Involvement in policy and processes boosted in quality and quantity</td>
<td>A wide range of local groups from both sectors, including community, BME and faith groups are increasingly engaging effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Creating and spreading good practice</td>
<td>Little exists or is being developed</td>
<td>Development of good practice. Effective promotional initiatives taken</td>
<td>Partners improving their compliance &amp; logging good practice</td>
<td>Compact proofing of decisions and policies; high compliance</td>
<td>Compact wins and outcomes are growing and well publicised locally and with other areas; case studies on Compact Voice website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Tools and processes</td>
<td>Little or no formalised processes for implementing the Compact</td>
<td>Implementation group is effective and infrastructure is able to coordinate cross sector collaboration</td>
<td>Established links to local partnerships across a range of issues</td>
<td>Effective dispute resolution processes agreed</td>
<td>Ongoing development with good use of tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Impact</td>
<td>Low awareness, knowledge and use of Compact &amp; working together</td>
<td>All partners recognise Compact’s value and support it being implemented at all levels</td>
<td>Compact Group delivering action plan that links with key strategies &amp; processes</td>
<td>Partners working successfully towards full potential of Compact</td>
<td>Compact making significant difference to policy development, equalities, resource allocation and outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How Compact Voice can help:

- Help you develop an action plan
- Share good practice about what’s working well elsewhere
- Facilitate evaluation sessions
- Help you develop an evaluation framework
- Provide resources to help you evaluate the impact of your local Compact