

THE RHONDDA CYNON TAF COMPACT

A PARTNERSHIP

Between

**Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Cwm Taf Health Board
and the
Third Sector in Rhondda Cynon Taf**



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A Code of Practice for Participation, Engagement and Consultation will be produced by April 2012

1 FOREWORD

Our overall vision, as documented within the 2010 – 2020 Community Strategy, is that Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) will be a County Borough of Opportunity. Our streets will be free from the fear of crime, our children will be well educated and given the best possible start in life, our population will be healthy, our economy will be vibrant and our environment will be clean and green.

No single organisation can hope to make these wide reaching improvements to the County Borough on its own. We can only achieve our aims if all of the organisations and communities that have a commitment to the County Borough's future work together.

A 'Compact' between the Welsh Government and the third sector in Wales, the Voluntary Sector Scheme, was first introduced in 1998. The Scheme is supported by a Third Sector Partnership Council.

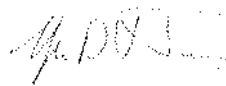
We are delighted to present the Rhondda Cynon Taf Compact which seeks to build on existing working relationships and ultimately improve partnership delivery for the benefit of our communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

This Compact has been jointly produced by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Cwm Taf Health Board, and the third sector, represented by Interlink RCT, the County Voluntary Council for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

All partners are encouraged to support the Compact's principles and practices and to be involved in the development of the associated Codes of Practice.

Signed:

Dr Chris Jones, Chair
Cwm Taf Health Board



Cllr Russell Roberts, Leader
Rhondda Cynon Taf County
Borough Council



Mrs Jean Harrington, Chair
Interlink RCT, on behalf of the
third sector



2 WHAT IS THE RHONDDA CYNON TAF COMPACT?

- The Compact is a partnership agreement between the third sector¹ in RCT, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board.
- The Rhondda Cynon Taf Compact underpins the relationship between the local statutory sector and third sector and embraces the concept of developing a “public service ethos” rather than a “public sector ethos” to best meet the needs of local people and communities. It provides a framework within which the development of shared aims and objectives will lead to respect, shared understanding and equality between the public sector and the third sector.
- The Compact is intended to guide the process of working in partnership to deliver public services. It covers the way plans and decisions are made rather than their content.
- It covers the whole spectrum of partnership working from initial consultation and community involvement, through representation on partnerships and planning groups, to funding, procurement and commissioning.
- Codes of practice are, or will be, established covering areas such as funding and procurement, partnership working, volunteering, participation, engagement, consultation and mediation.

3 WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE COMPACT

The Compact aims to develop the partnership between the public sector and the third sector in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf by helping us to improve collaboration through:

- Communicating effectively with each other
- Understanding and respecting each other’s views
- Working together more effectively to support the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop services collaboratively

¹ See Appendix 1: Third Sector Definitions, based on guidance from the Welsh Government

4 WHAT ARE THE COMPACT'S VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Our shared aim is to provide quality services to the people of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We recognise that there is added value in working in partnership towards shared aims and objectives.

The following principles will underpin this Partnership:

- Community involvement is an essential part of an inclusive and democratic society and adds value to the quality of life in Rhondda Cynon Taf. It is recognised that all partners makes a valuable contribution to the economic, environmental and social development of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- The differences between, and the diversity of, the public sector and the third sector will be respected and valued.
- In the development and delivery of services, the public sector and the third sector have distinct and complementary roles.
- Each partner has its own set of responsibilities and constraints.
- The independence of the third sector will be respected.
- Recognising and valuing the important strategic role the public sector plays in developing public policy and services as well as the legal and financial framework in which it operates.
- To maximise the effectiveness of the third sector, appropriate investment in its infrastructure is essential.
- The relationship between partners should be open and respectful and demonstrate trust.
- Each partner will embrace the principles of sustainability in the delivery of public services.
- Any organisation has a right to contribute to processes and challenge decisions that affect it.

5 TOGETHER, THE COMPACT WILL

- Help to foster a thriving, diverse and independent third sector in Rhondda Cynon Taf, with funding and commissioning arrangements that:
 - are clear and understandable
 - are fair and consistent
 - provide a range of funding arrangements for core, project and small grant funding
 - carry an administrative burden proportionate to the level of funding
 - enable and encourage effective forward planning and funding arrangements
 - deliver improved services

- Help to ensure that all partners work collaboratively to have a real influence on the planning and development of local services and public initiatives.

- Help to ensure a wider and more sustained recognition of the added value of volunteering and its contribution to public service delivery.

- Promote the effective governance and management of both the public sector and the third sector. It will underpin a shared commitment to building the capacity of all partners in order to benefit people and communities in RCT.

- Utilise the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group² as the liaison mechanism, which is integrated with the public sector's decision making processes and the wider joint planning arena. The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group has representation from both public and third sector partners.

- Provide a meaningful and effective procedure for resolving disagreements in a constructive and open way. Responsibility for setting out and managing this framework will lie with the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.

- The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group will review the objectives of the Compact and produce an annual progress report to the Local Service Board, for distribution to all partners and to include any recommendations for improvement.

² See Appendix 2: RCT Strategic Partnership Framework Operational Steering Group

6 UNDERTAKINGS OF PARTNERS

All partners will support the development, implementation and monitoring of the Compact in line with the agreed vision and principles.

This support will include:

- ensuring that key staff are able to take part in this work
- contributing to detailed codes of practice to cover key issues
- reviewing their own procedures and timetables in the light of those codes of practice
- supporting procedures for resolving disagreements
- collaboratively reviewing the implementation of the Compact annually

7 CODES OF PRACTICE

The following Codes of Practice will help bring the Compact principles into work practice and will provide a framework.

- Commission Accomplished: Funding, Procurement and Commissioning [Appendix 3]
- Partnership Working [Appendix 4]
- Volunteering [Appendix 5]
- Mediation and Disputes Resolution [Appendix 6]
- Participation, Engagement and Consultation - to be developed by April 2012

Organisations from both sectors will be invited to adopt the Codes of Practice and are encouraged to be involved in their ongoing development.

Third Sector

The document uses the term “the third sector”. It recognises that not all organisations will agree, and individual organisations have the absolute right to describe themselves in any way that they choose – third sector, charity, voluntary organisation, community group, self-help group, NGO, social enterprise, community business, *etc.*

However, what all of these have in common is that:

- They are established voluntarily by citizens who choose to organise
- They provide some form of community or public benefit
- Their surpluses, where these are generated, are re-invested in the organisation or for community or public benefit, and are not distributed for private gain

These common characteristics are far stronger than any differences that may exist between different types of organisation, and for this reason it is helpful to adopt a term that can cover all organisations that share these common characteristics - “third sector” achieves this.

Adoption of the term “third sector” by statutory organisations will still require it to maintain more precise current definitions for the purpose of eligibility for grant aid or other benefits.

Definition of a “third sector organisation”

- 1 The Welsh Government in the “Voluntary Sector Scheme” lists the criteria that encompass most types of third sector organisation as:
 - independence:
an organisation must be constitutionally independent and not directly controlled by a for-profit organisation or the State. An organisation is recognised as being independent of the State where there is a majority of non-statutory bodies, appointees or representatives on its ‘board of trustees’ and a majority of non-statutory members

- self governing:
an organisation must have its own internal decision making process
- non profit distributing:
an organisation must make no payments (other than for reasonable out of pocket expenses or other payments allowed by the governing document e.g. for occasional professional services) to members, trustees or directors.
- voluntary:
an organisation must benefit from a meaningful degree of voluntary contribution e.g. gifts in kind or of time, including volunteers and non-paid trustees. Any organisation that has at least three trustees or two directors who give their time voluntarily is considered to benefit to a meaningful level.
- public benefit:
a third sector organisation would be expected to be able to demonstrate that its objects and activities benefit the wider public and/or that it makes its benefits available to as wide a group of people as possible within the constituency defined by its objects and/or that it operates in ways which are open and inclusive rather than elitist and exclusive. Where a governing document exists, it should have a clause ensuring that on dissolution, the remaining assets are redistributed to (a) similar third sector organisation(s)

2 These criteria specifically include:

- social or community enterprises - third sector organisations that trade in one way or another, are not profit distributing and trade to fulfil a social purpose
- the third sector housing movement
- non membership charitable trusts
- self help / mutual aid groups
- community and local organisations, community associations, village halls etc
- environmental groups
- training charities
- intermediary bodies
- women's aid groups
- arts organisations
- agricultural groups with wider social benefit
- charitable, industrial and provident societies
- sports groups with community / social benefit
- religious organisations with social benefit

4 They specifically exclude:

- political parties
- universities
- further education institutes
- charitable independent and grant maintained schools
- trade unions
- sports clubs and societies for non public benefit
- business associations and local enterprise agencies
- the vast majority of professional associations
- many major museums
- quangos and government sponsored public bodies (ASPBs)
- religious organisations with no wider social benefit

5 There are approximately 500 third sector groups in membership of Interlink, the County Voluntary Council in Rhondda Cynon Taf, ranging from small specialist self help groups run by service users through to national charities.

- They can operate on a national, county, or neighbourhood level, each tending to align themselves to areas of specific specialist concern.
- Some third sector organisations provide direct services (e.g. playgroups, special needs housing), while others provide advice, information, counselling and support, and some will also provide valuable advocacy services.
- They exist because people perceive a need and work together to bring about change, or a service, for the benefit of the community.
- All will have a governing or managing body of some kind. This group will be referred to in a variety of ways, e.g. a management or executive committee, a council, board of trustees.
- While many third sector organisations are self financing and have no regular contact with the statutory sector, raising all they need directly from the public via fundraising events, donations, and public appeals, others do seek funding and support from a mixture of sources including the public, private and charitable sectors.

9 APPENDIX 2 - STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OPERATIONAL STEERING GROUP

Purpose:

The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group supports the Local Service Board in the effective operation of the Strategic Partnership framework. In particular, to sharpen the focus on the delivery of shared priorities, to strengthen the planning and management of collaborative programmes and to ensure that all available resources are used efficiently and effectively to improve outcomes for local people.

Membership:

Senior Officers drawn from:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
- Cwm Taf Health Board
- South Wales Police
- Interlink RCT (County Voluntary Council for Rhondda Cynon Taf)

Specific Responsibilities:

- To ensure the effective integration of all statutory strategic plans, to minimise duplication, eliminate waste and secure the best possible outcomes from limited resources.
- To work with the Local Service Board, Strategic Partnership Chairs and key Service Managers, to agree and deliver a priority work programme that will give visible effect to the vision and objectives in the Community Strategy and Local Delivery Agreement over the next 3 – 5 years.
- To ensure a strong and clear emphasis on delivery, rather than strategy development.
- To collaboratively challenge the status quo, drive change in existing mainstream services and reduce the dependence on external funds, to ensure the development of sustainable longer term improvements in public services.
- To map existing budgets and identify opportunities to share or pool resources to tackle common objectives, taking full account of emerging

budget pressures and risks in each organisation and opportunities afforded by existing partnership budgets.

- To ensure management accountability across all organisations and clarity of understanding of roles, responsibilities and commitment to delivering shared priority outcomes.
- To work with Partnership Chairs to agree Partnership Board agendas and the level of onward reporting to the Local Service Board, to ensure transparent accountability across all sectors.
- To utilise existing mainstream support services, to enable a co-ordinated, efficient approach across the whole partnership landscape to:
 - Governance & accountability
 - Strategic planning
 - Partnership administration
 - Financial management
 - Needs analysis
 - Citizen and community engagement
 - Performance management / outcome based accountability
 - Personal information sharing
 - Scrutiny
 - Public relations, communications and marketing
- To monitor the performance of the Partnerships against the Community Strategy ambitions, focusing on the delivery of agreed work programme priorities and advising on improvement action as appropriate.
- To be responsible for managing and acting on requirements set out by the Compact agreement between the Local Authority, Health Board and the third sector.
- To provide assurance to the Local Service Board that all relevant Strategic Partnership policy agendas are being efficiently and effectively tackled. In particular to ensure that any minimum statutory requirements are being met.
- To proactively continue to improve relationships, understanding and communication between the Local Service Board and the Strategic Partnership Boards and wider membership.

10 APPENDIX 3 - CODE OF PRACTICE: FUNDING PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING

See '*Commission Accomplished*' - *click on document below*



Also see the Commission Accomplished website:

www.commissionaccomplished.co.uk

11 APPENDIX 4 - CODE OF PRACTICE: PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Partnership Working is:

“A joint working formal arrangement where partners meet in order to agree and achieve a common goal, by making decisions, sharing information and often pooling resources, risks and rewards, which are monitored and evaluated.” (Partnership Rationalisation Advice Note - Welsh Assembly Government 2007)

The Welsh Government set out a strategy and action plan for working in partnership with the third sector, in Wales, in 'The Third Dimension' (January 2008). 'Designed to Add Value' (November 2008) set a strategic direction for the third sector working in health and social care and endorsed the principle of stronger partnership and collaborative working in planning, delivering and monitoring services.

The third sector in Rhondda Cynon Taf is involved in partnership working with statutory partners through a number of partnerships and joint working groups that include:

- Statutory / Strategic Partnerships
- Strategic Planning or Commissioning Groups
- Sub Groups/ Task and Finish Groups which undertake detailed work and feed into thematic or strategic partnerships
- Joint projects and ventures
- Forums and networks
- Consultative bodies

Aims of the Partnership Working Code of Practice:

- To support partnership working for the benefit of Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- To achieve consistency and transparency of process across a range of areas where there is joint working.
- To develop greater understanding and respect for each other's roles.

The Role of the Third Sector in Partnerships and Joint Working Groups:

The third sector is ideally placed to identify the needs of citizens and communities and communicate them to partners based on:

Experience - of addressing gaps in provision, of meeting needs that are not met by statutory services, of drawing on individual and community resources, of service delivery and innovation.

Experience and knowledge of **Engagement** through - strong links to citizens, service users and communities, a tradition of innovation in engaging with service users and communities, focusing on developing the confidence of people and communities to take part in local decision making.

Independence – which allows it to be an advocate for citizens and service users and to challenge service design and delivery in a constructive manner.

All parties will:

- Contribute to creating a positive environment which develops and maintains mutual respect and encourages and supports the involvement of the third sector in partnership working.
- Make explicit mention of this code in appropriate documents (including individual partnership terms of reference, policy, press releases and publications) and agree to adhere to it.
- Engage communities, including the most disadvantaged, in partnership working.
- Support joint training of staff and secondment opportunities to promote greater mutual understanding.
- Recognise the need to have third sector representatives who are accountable to wider interests at all levels of partnerships and joint working groups.
- Review the effectiveness and quality of partnerships.
- Respond positively to any problems or issues arising from partnership working.
- Tackle all forms of discrimination, no matter from where they arise.
- Adopt and implement transparent procedures.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board will:

- Recognise the full contribution that the third sector makes to partnership planning and policy development.
- Ensure that third sector organisations are involved in partnerships and joint working groups from the outset.
- Liaise with Interlink to establish the nature of third sector involvement in partnerships and joint working groups and use agreed recruitment processes.
- Recognise the role of third sector networks and forums as the main route to involving third sector organisations in partnerships and joint working groups.
- Recognise the role and responsibilities of third sector representatives, as outlined in the Third Sector Representatives' Code of Conduct and

Agreement and take responsibility for engaging with the appropriate representative as required.

- Liaise with Interlink if there is a problem relating to third sector involvement in partnerships and joint working groups.
- Recognise that the third sector needs resources to support its strategic engagement in partnership working.

On behalf of the Third Sector, Interlink will:

- Encourage and develop representation that is accountable to wider third sector interests.
- Run third sector networks and forums that are representative of a range of third sector interests in the area.
- Strive to identify representatives in partnerships or joint working groups who work at an appropriate level and have the relevant skills and expertise.
- Channel information from partnerships and joint working groups to the wider third sector.
- Offer induction, training and support to third sector representatives on partnerships and joint working groups.
- Make links to third sector members of partnerships and joint working groups who are 'representative of' the third sector rather than representing the third sector e.g. the third sector member of the Health Board.

Third Sector organisations will:

- Play a full, active and responsible role on all partnerships and joint working groups.
- Channel information from the wider third sector to partnerships and joint working groups via networks and forums.
- Be aware of, and deal appropriately with, possible conflicts of interest.

Implementation and Monitoring

This Code of Practice will be circulated to all partnerships in Rhondda Cynon Taf and referenced by them as appropriate e.g. in any partnership terms of reference. The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group and the Local Service Board will promote the Code and make reference to it as appropriate. Its implementation will be monitored and reviewed by the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group. Any issues arising from the Code that are considered through the Compact Mediation and Disputes Resolution Process will also be monitored by the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.

The Protocol for Third Sector Involvement in Partnerships and Joint Working Groups

Introduction

In order to ensure appropriate third sector involvement and participation Interlink, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board have agreed the following processes under the Rhondda Cynon Taf Compact:

- The process for achieving third sector representation
- The process for achieving third sector membership

As the County Voluntary Council for Rhondda Cynon Taff, Interlink has the role of representing the views and interests of the third sector in partnerships and joint working groups.

Process for Achieving Third Sector Representation on Partnerships and Joint Working Groups:

It is recommended that where Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council, Cwm Taf Health Board and Interlink agree there is a need for third sector representation, Interlink will be the appropriate organisation to facilitate the selection process.

This process will ensure:

- Consistency and transparency of process across the range of areas where there is joint working and where third sector representation is required.
- That those with the relevant skills and experience are appointed.
- That appointed representatives are accountable to the third sector by reporting back to the sector through appropriate channels, such as networks and forums.
- That representatives act on behalf of the third sector rather than the organisations to which they belong.
- That Interlink is able to offer appropriate support to third sector representatives.
- There is clarity about the role and expectations of third sector members on partnerships and joint working groups.

The agreed process:

- Interlink, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board will agree the selection of third sector representatives for a specified partnership or joint working group within an appropriate timescale.
- Interlink will canvass the third sector, either through appropriate networks and forums or through its wider membership, for nominations.
- Interlink will facilitate an election/selection process via the appropriate constituency.
- Interlink will inform Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board of the name and contact details of the representative.
- Interlink will provide induction, training and support for the representatives.

Support for Third Sector Representatives

Interlink's support to third sector representatives will include:

Induction for third sector representatives - an explanation of their roles and responsibilities and the value of their input, background information on the relevant partnership/joint planning group, identifying training and support needs and any potential conflict of interest. Each representative will receive an induction pack.

Information - facilitating or supporting representatives to feedback to the sector and collating issues from the sector for representatives to take to partnerships or joint working groups.

Process for Achieving Third Sector Membership of Joint Working Groups:

On some occasions, Interlink and its partners will agree there is a need for input from third sector organisations or individuals without necessarily requiring them to be representative of the third sector e.g. this may be the case where a specialist perspective is required, the involvement required is for a time limited arrangement or third sector membership is via a public appointments process, as is the case with the third sector member on the Health Board.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board will request assistance from Interlink in finding third sector members, where appropriate. In circumstances where there are existing agreements or direct links between statutory partners and third sector organisations or forums it

is agreed that; Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and Cwm Taf Health Board will inform Interlink of the third sector membership of the partnership or joint working group.

Interlink will establish and maintain links with the third sector members and invite them to meetings and events as appropriate.

The role of Interlink in Partnerships and Joint Working Groups:

There are certain partnership arrangements that require the Interlink Chief Executive Officer to attend in order to represent the interests and views of the third sector, for example:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Service Board
- The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group
- Other strategic partnerships e.g. Fframwaith, Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Partnership Board.

The Interlink Chief Executive Officer's role notwithstanding, Interlink's role in relation to joint working is primarily concerned with developing an effective infrastructure for third sector involvement. Given the complexity and breadth of joint working across the county, it would not be feasible for the Interlink Chief Executive Officer to represent the sector on each partnership. Therefore, capacity allowing, it may be appropriate to involve other Interlink staff, where:

- The CVC perspective is required and, in some cases, stipulated or recommended by government policy or guidance.
- As impartial a viewpoint as possible is required, e.g. in commissioning groups, where third sector service providers may have a conflict of interest.
- There has been no previous third sector representation and Interlink wishes to assess the skills, knowledge and experience required.
- Interlink staff sit on the partnership in order to support the third sector representatives.
- Interlink can contribute specialist knowledge and information.

The role of Interlink staff on all partnerships would be to represent the interests and views of the third sector.

Regional Arrangements

Where a partnership or joint working group covers more than one county or is coterminous with a regional statutory body such as the Health Board, Interlink will consult with the CVCs in the other counties to agree CVC and/or third sector representation.

Third Sector Representatives Code of Conduct and Agreement:

This Code of Conduct outlines the role of a third sector representative on partnerships and joint working groups or scrutiny committees on behalf of the third sector in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

The Third Sector Representative will:

- Fulfil the role for an agreed term as stipulated within the role description.
- Be able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and experience required, as outlined in the role specification, to fulfil the role effectively.
- Have a mandate from the appropriate Interlink Forum/network, from which they can canvass views.
- Actively participate in the partnership and support good communication between the partnership and the third sector.
- Act as a voice for the third sector within the partnership and provide feedback information from the partnership, to the wider sector, via appropriate Interlink networks and forums.
- Liaise with his/her deputy representative, where applicable, and vice versa to ensure continuity of representation.
- Make arrangements for any conflict of interest between their representative role and the remit of their organisation or group to be dealt with in an open way.
- Contribute to meetings and events convened by Interlink which are designed to support the third sector representatives in carrying out their role in the partnership arena.

12 APPENDIX 5 - CODE OF PRACTICE: VOLUNTEERING

This Code of Practice aims to raise the profile of volunteering and the value of volunteers in the delivery of service provision across the County Borough. It provides a practical guide for public and third sector organisations that wish to recruit, train, manage and support their volunteers effectively. It sets out principles of good practice and undertakings for both sectors on how to work together to promote volunteering and support voluntary action by removing unnecessary barriers to volunteering, involving more volunteers in their activities and encouraging people, including employees, to volunteer.

Definition of Volunteering:

Volunteers commit time and energy for the benefit of others in the community and for themselves through personal choice and without financial reward. A volunteer can be defined as a person who is freely engaged in any activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travelling and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit a third party other than, or in addition to, a close relative. The role of the volunteer is complementary to that of paid staff.

Volunteering may be viewed as either formal or informal:

- **Formal Volunteering** refers to activities undertaken through an organisation, be it a small community group consisting partly or entirely of volunteers or through major organisations such as Health Boards/national organisations e.g. fundraising, befriending, administrative work.
- **Informal Volunteering** may be defined as a wide range of different kinds of mutual help and co-operation between individuals within communities, for example babysitting for a friend or checking on an elderly neighbour.

The best practice guidelines proposed in this Code apply only to formal volunteering.

Principles of Good Practice - Recruiting and Managing Volunteers

Volunteers are not paid but neither are they cost-free. Staff/management time needs to be dedicated to recruiting, training and supporting volunteers. Any organisation involving volunteers should ensure it, or its individual services, has in place:

- A written volunteer policy stating why volunteers are involved, the roles they play and how these differ from those of paid staff; how volunteers will be recruited, supported and protected and a reference to the policies and procedures relevant to volunteers e.g. health & safety, complaints, equal opportunities, confidentiality, insurance arrangements and settling differences - to ensure that volunteers are managed as effectively as paid staff.
- A volunteer agreement to ensure a common understanding about the volunteer role and to formalise the relationship with the volunteer.
- An awareness of the roles and work situations deemed inappropriate for volunteers.
- A selection process that considers the needs of the organisation, the potential volunteer and their suitability for the role. Interviews should normally be held to allow both parties to find out about each other. A start date should be agreed, without unnecessary delay.
- A safeguarding process; when volunteers work with vulnerable groups the organisation should request references and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks - if appropriate. It should be noted that these checks alone do not guarantee a suitable candidate and should be viewed as only part of the assessment and risk management process.
- An induction or a trial period to provide information about the organisation and the volunteer role, introduction to other volunteers, staff and clients/service users, appropriate training, followed by an (informal) review meeting.
- Confidential treatment of personal information, whilst ensuring that important and relevant information about volunteers is maintained (e.g. medication, health issues) in accordance with data protection legislation.

Overcoming Barriers to Volunteering:

- Be flexible, supportive, understanding, considerate and willing to adapt.
- Be proactive in promoting volunteering; talking to people will reveal barriers and possible solutions.
- Offer a sympathetic recruitment process; talk and listen to identify strengths and difficulties without making assumptions.
- Ensure that adequate and individual support is available; train and raise awareness amongst staff of the different needs of volunteers.
- Ensure that opportunities to volunteer are available and open to everyone regardless of race, age, language, material wealth, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion; be flexible enough to take a specific approach to a specific need.
- Be prepared to offer support and recognise the unexpected benefits of working with a diverse range of people.

- Be prepared to do things differently; for example, investigate alternative ways of volunteering - adapted roles, home volunteering, out of hours volunteering.
- Carry out risk assessments of volunteer placements and, when appropriate, of volunteer circumstances for a good match.
- Be flexible regarding practical considerations such as the amount of time the volunteer has available, transport links and accessibility.
- Be prepared and informed to highlight an alternative opportunity within or outside the organisation if this is more beneficial to the volunteer, using Interlink's Volunteer Centre for support when required.
- Acknowledge the limitations of the organisation in the number of volunteers it can properly manage.

Valuing the Role of the Volunteer - Support and Recognition:

Acknowledge, include, inform, involve, protect, support and thank:

- Set time aside for staff to manage the volunteering role and offer individual support, mentoring or supervision.
- Consult with volunteers on decision-making and organisational changes which may impact on their contribution.
- Be prepared to do things differently; review opportunities and adapt to individuals' needs.
- Involve longer term volunteers by using them in peer support, training and Induction.
- Support volunteers through social events, meetings or telephone calls.
- Make volunteering distinct – it should never be a substitute for paid work – and reassure paid staff who may feel threatened in their own roles.
- Set clear boundaries.
- Be aware of legal responsibilities.
- Carry out CRB checks (as appropriate), follow up references, undertake risk assessments.
- Provide references, offer training and support to progress and move on.
- Provide reimbursement of appropriate out-of-pocket expenses e.g. travel, car parking, food allowance if volunteering for more than 4 hours at a time.
- Thank short term and one-off volunteers by recognising their input and appreciating their efforts.
- Tell volunteers how their contribution has benefited the organisation, group or individual for whom they are volunteering.
- Recognise and appreciate; formally, by publicly acknowledging the value of volunteering e.g. Volunteering Awards, certificate

presentations, recognition schemes etc and informally e.g. telephone calls, cards, getting volunteers together socially, just saying “thank you”.

- Celebrate volunteering by supporting national events e.g. Volunteers’ Week

Joint Undertakings

The partners in the Rhondda Cynon Taf Compact make a commitment to support the Principles of Good Practice set out in this Code.

All partners will:

- Ensure that appropriate policies and conditions are in place to underpin and support volunteering in their organisation.
- Recognise that recruiting and managing volunteers effectively is an important role which requires appropriate resources and support.
- Identify and train a named staff member with authority to liaise across the organisation to champion volunteering and to manage and support volunteers.
- Budget for and allocate sufficient resources in order that volunteers are properly trained, managed and supported in accordance with the Code of Practice such as training, CRB checks, payment of expenses.
- Take positive steps to identify perceived barriers to volunteering and, wherever practicable, put in place measures to tackle those barriers.
- Ensure that, wherever possible, volunteers reflect the wider community of Rhondda Cynon Taf, by working together to attract volunteers from groups who may be under-represented.
- Work together to promote volunteering in Rhondda Cynon Taf, using internal and external communication channels (such as websites, intranet, annual reports, other publications) to recognise the extent and value of volunteers’ contributions and to make information about volunteering easily accessible.
- Review periodically the volunteer opportunities available within their organisation and seek to increase and promote those opportunities.
- Give full consideration to the use of volunteers in the design and commissioning of services.
- Encourage and enable employees to volunteer through recognition and support.
- Develop partnerships with other organisations to share resources, such as volunteer training, jointly-run recruitment campaigns/events and to raise the local profile of volunteering e.g. to secure greater media coverage during Volunteers’ Week.
- Ensure that the principles and the undertakings set out in the Code are reflected in all service provision agreements between the partners

such as contracts, protocols and service level agreements where volunteering is an integral part of the agreement.

- Ensure that volunteers receive recognition and are valued, receive expenses in a timely fashion and are offered opportunities to enhance their skills.

Implementation and Monitoring

This Code of Practice will be circulated to all relevant partnerships in Rhondda Cynon Taf and referenced by them as appropriate e.g. in any partnership terms of reference. The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group and the Local Service Board will promote the Code and make reference to it as appropriate. Its implementation will be monitored and reviewed by the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group. Any issues arising from the Code that are considered through the Compact Mediation and Disputes Resolution Process will also be monitored by the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.

Further Information:

Interlink's Volunteer Centre is available for information and support; with advice on involving volunteers, putting together policies and procedures or for employees thinking of volunteering. Their role is to promote volunteering, to work with groups and organisations to increase the number of volunteering opportunities available and to work in partnership to overcome barriers, to ensure that those people who are willing and able to volunteer, can do so.

The Volunteer Centre

Interlink RCT

6 Melin Corrwg

Cardiff Road

Upper Boat

PONTYPRIDD

CF37 5BE

Tel: 01443 846200

Website: www.interlinkrct.org.uk

Volunteering Wales website: www.volunteering-wales.net

13 APPENDIX 6 - MEDIATION AND DISPUTES RESOLUTION PROCESS

Disagreements are a natural part of any working relationship and can be useful in identifying and addressing important issues.

This Process aims to:

- Prevent disputes by raising awareness and understanding of Compact principles.
- Provide a framework for managing and resolving disputes in a positive and mutually respectful way.
- Develop deeper understanding between the sectors.
- Avoid the damage and costs that stem from unresolved disputes.
- Support the incorporation of Compact principles into organisations' ways of working.

Scope and Principles of the Compact Mediation and Disputes Process

The Compact Mediation and Disputes Process will:

- Only deal with disputes arising from Compact themes and principles and the associated Codes of Practice.
- Take a mediation approach i.e. where possible make use of an impartial third party to assist people who are in dispute to find common ground and a mutually acceptable resolution.
- Make recommendations, which may include reconsideration of a decision made.
- Expect that Compact breaches are followed up and measures put in place to prevent them from reoccurring.
- Establish agreement (from Stage 2) on the elements of the dispute that must be kept confidential while the dispute resolution process is underway.
- Make it clear to the parties that they retain any rights to other forms of redress such as to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales, in which case the Compact Mediation and Disputes Process will cease.
- Be governed by the strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.
- Be reviewed annually to assess its effectiveness.

The Compact Mediation and Disputes Process WILL NOT:

- Deal with direct complaints from the public.
- Deal with disputes that derive from complaints about the behaviour of

a member of staff and where there is no evidence of a Compact breach having taken place. These may need to be subject to a disciplinary investigation.

- Deal with disputes that clearly derive from complaints about the behaviour of an individual councillor and where there is no evidence of a Compact breach having taken place. These should be referred to the Public Ombudsman for Wales.
- Deal with disputes that have already been subject to independent mediation or the subject of a formal complaint, or referred for investigation to the Funding and Compliance Committee of the Voluntary Sector Scheme or to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales, no matter what the outcome (see Other Ways of Seeking Resolution).
- Impose action or sanctions.
- Seek to allocate blame.
- Consider appeals relating to its recommendations.

Disputes Resolution Process

Stage 1: Parties attempt to resolve the issues

- When you think that a Compact principle has been breached, you should raise it with the organisation(s) concerned, stating which part(s) of the Compact you think has been breached and how. Through early dialogue and with reference to the Compact principles and Codes of Conduct, it is hoped that most disputes can be resolved without involving a third party.
- If either party is unhappy with the outcome, they can go on to make use of Stage 2.

Stage 2: Partners formalise the issue and have it resolved with the support of Interlink

- You should write a letter to Interlink's Chief Executive Officer in order to formalise the issue.
- If Interlink is one of the parties alleged to be in breach of the Compact themes and principles then the approach should be made to one or more of the agencies listed below in 'Other Ways of Seeking Resolution'. Your request should include the following details:
 - A summary of the issue/dispute.
 - The Compact principle or guideline which you believe has been breached.
 - The names and roles of those involved.
 - Copies of any relevant correspondence.

- The action taken so far, including informal and formal steps taken to try and deal with the matter.
- Interlink will contact both parties to seek clarification if necessary and offer to meet with them both together or singly in order to attempt to facilitate agreement or a solution.
- If mutually agreeable, parties could also consider making use of an independent third party at this stage. However, this would be at their own cost (see Other Ways of Seeking Resolution).
- Interlink will report the issue to the next Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.
- If either party is not happy with the outcome, they can go on to make use of Stage 3.

Stage 3: Referral to the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group

- If you are still unable to resolve the dispute with the support of Interlink or a third party and wish the Compact Mediation and Disputes Resolution Panel to consider your issue, Interlink will refer it to the next meeting of the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.
- The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group will assess the issue against an agreed set of criteria in order to establish whether a Compact breach has taken place. If this is the case, it will set up a Mediation and Disputes Resolution Panel, a working group of the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.
- The Panel will comprise three people, who can be impartial in relation to the dispute, from amongst the following, as appropriate:
 - Members of the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.
 - Individuals nominated by members of the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.
- Wherever possible there will be a panel member from each of the sectors. Interlink will provide the secretariat for the Disputes Panel in order to ensure consistency across different disputes.
- The Panel, with the assistance of the secretariat, will:
 - Arrange to meet **within three weeks** of the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group.
 - Write to both parties **within a week** of the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group meeting to explain that the Group is considering the issue.
 - Invite the second party to submit any written information that it thinks is relevant to the dispute, **within a week**.
 - Consider information from both sides and if necessary, arrange a meeting with those involved to discuss the problem.
 - Make its decision (based on the majority view) within six weeks of its first meeting and recommend any action in writing to both

- parties. If the Panel cannot reach a decision in this time, it will agree another timescale and inform both parties accordingly.
- Check whether the follow up actions recommended by the Panel have been taken in time for the next Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group meeting.
 - If necessary, recommend to the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group that it considers an issue that has broad interest for the Compact and that it can learn from.
 - If you are unhappy with the outcome, you can go on to consider making use of other ways of seeking resolution.

Other Ways of Seeking Resolution:

Independent Mediation

If the dispute is not resolved, you may decide to seek independent mediation from a specialist organisation. Contact Mediation Wales to find out more at:

Email: enquiries@mediationwales.org.uk
Tel: 029 2078 5685
Web: www.mediationwales.co.uk

Mediation is likely to involve a cost to the party(ies) involved.

Funding and Compliance Committee of the Third Sector Scheme

If the dispute is not resolved, you may decide to refer it to the Welsh Government Funding and Compliance Committee of the Third Sector Scheme, which sets out government commitments that are binding on Welsh Government and the National Health Service. The Third Sector Scheme also states that it expects local government to observe its principles. To refer a dispute to the Funding and Compliance Committee, contact:

Welsh Government at:

Email: thirdsectorqueries@wales.gsi.gov.uk
Tel: 01685 729271 or 0845 0103300

or

Wales Council for Voluntary Action at:

Email: help@wcva.org.uk
Tel: 0800 2888 329
To find out more, see: www.wcva.org.uk

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

If you remain dissatisfied after having tried to resolve a grievance through the Mediation and Disputes Resolution process, it may be possible for you to take the complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman can look into complaints of unfair treatment or bad service through some failure on the part of the public body providing it. In order for the Ombudsman to be able to investigate a complaint there needs to be evidence of a 'personal injustice'. To find out more information about making a complaint to the Ombudsman, the contact details are:

Email: ask@ombudsman-wales.org.uk
Tel: 01656 641150
Fax: 01656 641199
Address: Public Services Ombudsman for Wales
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae
Pencoed
CF35 5LJ.

To find out more, see www.ombudsman-wales.org.uk

Implementation and Monitoring

- All disputes raised through the Compact Mediation and Disputes Panel will be reported to the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group. Particular emphasis will be given to any lessons learned.
- The Compact Mediation and Disputes Process and its implementation will be reviewed annually by the Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group to assess its effectiveness and make any recommendations for improvement.
- This Resolution Process will be circulated to all partnerships in Rhondda Cynon Taf and referenced by them as appropriate e.g. in any partnership terms of reference.
- The Strategic Partnership Operational Steering Group and the Local Service Board will promote the Resolution Process and make reference to it as appropriate.

14 APPENDIX 7 - GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This glossary aims to explain some of the words, phrases and acronyms used in the different codes and core text of the Rhondda Cynon Taf Compact.

Accountability - often used with concepts such as responsibility, answerability, liability, and other terms associated with the expectation of account-giving.

Commissioning - process of specifying, securing and monitoring services to meet the people's needs at a strategic level. This applies to all services, whether they are provided by the Local Authority, NHS, other public agencies or by private or third sector services.

Coterminous - having a common boundary.

CVC - County Voluntary Council; the umbrella or infra structure organisation for the local third sector. There is one in each Local Authority in Wales.

Interlink is the County Voluntary Council for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

CRB Check - 'Criminal Records Bureau' check, a procedure to check what, if any, criminal convictions a person has.

Designed to Add Value - Welsh Government's recognition of the third sector's contribution to health and social care, it helps to inform future directions guiding planners and providers of health and social care.

Grant Funding - financial support for a third sector organisation from a statutory organisation based on the belief that the third sector organisation's work contributes to the statutory organisation's aims.

Local Service Board (LSB) - a partnership of local organisations, where the leaders of local public and third sector organisations come together to take collective action to ensure public services are effective and citizen focused.

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation, a legally constituted organisation that operates independently from any government. The term is normally used to refer to organisations that do not form part of the government and are not conventional for-profit business.

Procurement - buying goods and services. Covers the whole process from initial understanding of the need and advertising through to finalising a contract.

Public Engagement - seeking to get the public, or some part of it, involved in influencing public decisions. This can be through consultation and also through panels, interested organisations or user groups in shaping policy from the earliest stages.

Public sector - the portion of the economy run by various levels of government.

Social Enterprise - social mission driven organisation that aims to accomplish targets that are social and or environmental as well as financial.

Statutory Sector - public bodies such as the Local Authority, the Health Board and the Police.

The Third Dimension - the Welsh Government's strategy and action plan for supporting and working with the third sector.

Third Sector - see Third Sector Definitions appendix 1.

Voluntary Sector Scheme - made under Section 114 of the Government of Wales Act 1998 which requires the National Assembly to make a scheme setting out how it proposes to promote the interests of relevant third sector organisations.