

SHEFFIELD HEALTH COMPACT PROTOCOL ON PARTNERSHIP

1. What is the Health Compact?

- 1.1 The Health Compact is a set of principles based on consultation and participation, partnership and funding within which the NHS trusts, Voluntary, Community and Faith sector (VC&F) agree to work.

2. Why have a protocol?

- 2.1 The aim of the three protocols is to make a positive impact on the relationship that exists between the statutory agencies and the VC&F Sector in Sheffield. The protocol will help to develop and sustain effective procedures that result in a more effective relationship between NHS trusts and the VC&F sector.
- 2.2 The protocol's long-term aim is for the sector's full role to be adequately supported by acknowledging the role of the sector in the great contribution it makes to providing services to those who are of greatest need.

Aims of the Partnership protocol

- A partnership can be seen as when two or more organisations work together for a common goal. Partnership working is essential in nearly all areas of work within local communities. Equality is key - it enables power sharing, representation and equal influence. Each organisation should be valued and respected for its contribution.
- Partners from all sectors - public, voluntary, community and private bring together a variety of interests, skills, resources and experience to joint working.
- Genuine equal partnership needs to represent the communities it is working within. If this happens, the partnership will be able to make decisions appropriate to all sections of the community. This brings benefits in improved policymaking and appropriate service delivery, as well as community cohesion.

Main principles

To achieve genuine partnership working the Health and VCF sector need to demonstrate how they can work co-operatively and on equal terms:

- All partners have the opportunity to shape and set agendas
- Everyone is able to contribute to debate and discussion
- Everyone has an influence on policy and decision making
- The partnership is representative of the community it serves

- The partnership includes the right organisations and people that can contribute to its aims

Benefits of working in partnership

- Working towards common aims that are understood by all involved
- Sharing ideas and resources
- Sharing of skills and experiences
- Harnessing the talents of everyone involved
- Support for each other
- Ability to secure funding
- Opportunity to reach wider audiences
- Developing an understanding how different partner organisations work
- Actions more likely to meet local community needs
- Promotes and contributes to community cohesion
- Avoids duplication
- Increases coordination of service delivery within communities

Barriers and Challenges to a successful partnership

<i>Lack of trust and a suspicion of others</i>	Organisations don't want to let go of own identity
<i>Inequalities of power and control</i>	Organisations with the resources control the agenda and debate
<i>Failure to recognise different personalities and communication styles</i>	Lack of respect for each others experiences and backgrounds
<i>No time to develop relationships and realistic plans</i>	It takes time to get to know each other and to agree the way forward
<i>Lack of clarity about purpose, roles, responsibility and leadership</i>	Why are you working together, who is doing what and how can people participate?
<i>A lack of appropriate representation</i>	This can be a source of tension and disengagement and can mean that the intended community benefits are not fully realised

How to build a successful partnership

To ensure a balance of inclusiveness and effectiveness, time and effort needs to be put into building partnerships and making sure that they work. Things to consider include:

Define a clear role and purpose	What is the partnership supposed to be doing? Agree a shared, clear reason for joint working
Agree membership	Who should be on the partnership and how are they selected? Are the right partners involved that can contribute to the agenda?
Be representative	Is the membership representative of the community?
Define responsibilities and roles for the partners	Why are they there and who are they accountable to?
Establish protocols	Have open and active decision-making. What structures and procedures support partnership working? What resources does each partner have available to the partnership?
Behave professionally and build relationships	Set standards to build trust and respect. Create opportunities for partners to get to know each other. Agree how to disagree.
Share power and engage minority interests	Make sure that the agenda is not dominated by one or two organisations
Build capacity	Support skill development across organisations and amongst partners. Encourage community leadership and support minorities to have the confidence to come forward and take part.
Communicate clearly	Use a variety of communication methods that allows everyone to get involved. Always be clear and honest. Consider internal as well as external communications.
Be accountable	Are there effective procedures in place that set out the accountability of the Partnership and the actions of the individual partners?
Monitor what you are doing	Design a work programme, define clear tasks which have real outcomes
Review how effective your partnership is	Review your strengths and weaknesses and agree what to do next together

Checklist for Partnership Working

	Key things to consider	✓
1.	Your organisation is signed up to the COMPACT and this code of conduct	
2.	The purpose for the Partnership working is clearly understood by both parties	
3.	You will negotiate and agree protocols for joint working	
4.	You will identify key contacts and communication links	
5.	You will identify support and resource needs for partnership working	
6.	COMPACT Partnership breach: in a situation of conflict either partner can seek advice from the COMPACT steering group and then national COMPACT	
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A Health Warning

Partnerships are not the only way to work. Sometimes letting organisations get on with what they do best, might be the best thing to do.