

Working in Partnership with the Local Authority

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Voluntary Sector Liaison Group / Compact

What are they?

Compacts are strategic statements setting out the relationship between individual local authorities and the Voluntary Sector. They are the key reciprocal document that expresses their shared interests and recognizes their respective roles and differences.

Compacts are drawn up and agreed by Joint Liaison Committees and monitored by the Wales Assembly Government Voluntary Sector Partnership Council.

In order that Compacts result in practical action leading to constructive change and improvement, Joint Liaison Groups are expected to agree, implement and regularly review action plans. These action plans should include measurable targets and an agreed timescale for delivery of the targets.

The Compact in Pembrokeshire

In 2003 the Compact between the Voluntary Sector and Pembrokeshire County Council was revised and at the same time the Voluntary Sector Liaison Group that oversees the Compact was also reviewed and strengthened.

The Compact aims:

- To encourage the development of a range of mechanisms for effective and transparent communication on issues of shared interest
- To encourage good practice in participation, consultation and decision-making
- To encourage voluntary action and volunteering initiatives that demonstrate a potential to add value to existing services and meet unmet needs
- To maximize the role of the County Voluntary Council [PAVS] in maintaining and developing the interface between the voluntary sector and the County Council
- To encourage the development of appropriate mechanisms for reviewing statutory and voluntary services together with opportunities to become involved in review programmes in line with Wales Programme for Improvement

The Compact is reviewed regularly by the Voluntary Sector Liaison Group and the aims are turned into a practical reality through implementation of an agreed action plan.

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The Voluntary Sector Liaison Group in Pembrokeshire

Membership of the VSLG comprises:

Voluntary Sector	Pembrokeshire County Council
Di Horley Chair of Trustees, PAVS [PPA] Beryl Thomas-Cleaver, PAVS Trustee [Haverfordwest CAB] Jane Slade, PAVS Trustee [Age Concern]	Peter Stock, Cabinet Member Community and Voluntary Sectors Sian James, Cabinet Member Health and Well-being Jamie Adam, Deputy Cabinet Member Sports, Leisure, Tourism and Cultural Services David Wildman [Observer], Cabinet Member Elderly and Infirm
Anne Moazzen, Director PAVS Fiona Walder, Partnership Support Officer PAVS	Mark Lewis, Director Finance and Leisure Dan Shaw, Corporate Planning Manager

The VSLG meets quarterly. The venue alternates between PAVS and the County Council offices. The chair also rotates with the venue; the Chair of PAVS Trustees taking the Chair for meetings in PAVS and the Cabinet Member for the Voluntary and Community Sectors taking the Chair in the council offices. The Secretariat is provided by the County Council.

VSLG Action Plan

The initial action plan for the VSLG concentrated on the revision of both the Compact and the group and marketing both to

- Elected members and officers
- The voluntary sector
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Once these initial aims were largely achieved a fresh action plan for 2004 / 5 was developed to enable the VSLG to work towards the principles of partnership detailed in *A Future Together; a guide to local government and the voluntary and community sector working together*, guidance jointly produced in 2003 by Wales Assembly Government / Wales Council for Voluntary Action / Welsh Local Government Association.

A Future Together examines the changes that have taken place in local government since the Local Government Act of 2001 and sets out the standards of partnership working which the Voluntary Sector and local government are expected to achieve.

Action Plan and Progress to 31.1.05

See table overleaf

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Action Plan Target	Progress as at 31.1.05
1. A Compact which is effective and understood by both the Voluntary Sector and local authority members and officers	The Compact has been widely circulated to the Voluntary Sector and used as the basis of the Open Consultation event held at Stackpole in April 2004. The Compact has been circulated to local authority Heads of Service and made available to staff and members via the County Council intranet. A seminar was held in October for all elected members, at which the Compact was promoted. Discussions are being held with the Local Health Board about the possibility of extending the Compact to encompass the LHB.
2. An effective VSLG which reviews the Compact and delivers its goals	A seminar providing useful background information was delivered to PAVS Trustees in May. New Cabinet members have been offered induction to the Voluntary Sector. A seminar is planned for May to explore extending the Compact to include the LHB and NHS Trust. The VSLG agreed an action plan based on the principles of joint working detailed in a <i>Future Together</i> . This action plan is reported on at every meeting. A progress report detailing progress against Compact aims was presented to the November meeting and minutes of all meetings are reported to PCC Cabinet and PAVS Trustees. PAVS is developing systems, linked to a new database and website developments for improving 2-way communications with the Voluntary and Community Sector.
3. The Voluntary Sector makes an effective contribution to the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees	PAVS staff have observed meetings of all 4 Overview and Scrutiny Committees and made a presentation to O&S Economy as part of an analysis of labour market issues. Successful meetings have been held with Chairs, Vice Chairs and Lead Directors of the 4 O&S Committees to explore the nature of the Voluntary Sector contribution. A draft protocol between the County Council and the Voluntary Sector is currently with the local authority.
4. A Funding Code of Practice which enables adequate and transparent funding of the Voluntary Sector	Research has been undertaken by PCC into the scale and nature of Voluntary Sector funding. A draft Code of Practice has been developed in line with WAG requirements and identified best practice. As soon as this document has been approved by PCC management it will be released for consultation with the Voluntary Sector
5. The Voluntary Sector effectively contributes to Community Planning	The Community Planning and Leadership Partnership has been restructured and has identified a need to clarify its vision for Pembrokeshire. A Task Group has been established to take forward this work and to map the changes expected to result from major investments over the next few years. The Voluntary Sector is represented on the CPLP and the 5 Priority Sub Groups. The Sub Groups are still finding their feet, with only 2 meeting regularly. Some indicators have already been exceeded, others are proving difficult to measure. An interim review of the Community Plan will take place this summer.
6. The Voluntary Sector effectively contributes to Wales Programme for Improvement reviews	The Corporate Planning Manager has briefed VSLG and PAVS Trustees on WPI. Practical constraints do exist but the WPI reviews likely to be of most interest to the Voluntary Sector have been identified. PAVS Senior Training Officer participated in the WPI review of Learning Pembrokeshire and the Partnership Support Officer has been invited to join the review of Partnership Working.
7. The Voluntary Sector effectively contributes to Policy Agreements	VSLG involvement came too late for the Voluntary Sector to influence this round of Policy Agreements. However, opportunities are available for the Voluntary Sector to contribute to the monitoring and delivery of targets. The targets likely to be of most interest to the Voluntary Sector have been identified.
8. The Voluntary Sector effectively contributes to Strategic Partnerships	The Voluntary Sector is represented on many strategic partnerships, including Obj 1, Young Peoples Partnership, Children's Partnership, Health/Social Care planning structures. PAVS is in the process of auditing this representation and reviewing the effectiveness of contributions. Mechanisms are being put in place to increase direct representation by the sector, to increase the support provided by PAVS to representatives and to enhance communication channels between representatives and constituencies of interest.

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Consultation with and involvement of the Voluntary Sector

Members of the Voluntary Sector who wish to bring matters to the attention of the VSLG should approach one of the Voluntary Sector representatives at least 2 weeks prior to any meeting. NB only matters of strategy or principle will be discussed, although these may be illustrated by anonymous case studies. Issues relating to specific problems experienced by individual Voluntary Sector groups will be dealt with by the most appropriate means and research undertaken to see if they are indicative of a trend or an isolated difficulty.

2 Open Consultation events will be held with the sector per annum - April and October. These will also provide an opportunity for the Voluntary Sector to influence

- PAVS strategic plan
- The work of Overview and Scrutiny, the Community Planning Partnership
- Other strategic partnerships

Further opportunities to comment on VSLG will be provided at PAVS AGM in November.

Regular updates about VSLG meetings will be provided in the PAVS newsletter and on the PAVS website, through other partnership activities and other targeted communications / events throughout the year.

Want to know more?

Copies of the Compact may be obtained from PAVS, viewed in the PAVS Centre for Voluntary Action or downloaded from PAVS website www.pavs.org.uk.

If you wish to know more or have issues which you would like to raise with VSLG or through any of the partnership activities listed, please contact the Partnership Support Officer at PAVS.

Other Fact Sheets in this series give more detailed information on many of the topics listed above. A full index may be viewed on the website or obtained from the PAVS Centre for Voluntary Action.

Related Fact Sheets include

O&S
WPI
Policy Agreements
Community Planning