



Staffordshire Compact Resolution Procedure

This mediation procedure is intended as a framework to use when working towards resolution of a disagreement that has resulted between two parties who are:

- In disagreement over issues covered by the Staffordshire Compact

The Staffordshire Compact is not a legal contract but a mutual agreement between the signatories to agree a set of principles and working practices.

1. Who is this Mediation Procedure for?

- a. Voluntary and Community Sector Groups
- b. Public Sector Bodies

2. What is the Staffordshire Compact?

The Staffordshire Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to support and improve joint working between the sectors. It is underpinned by five Codes of Practice:

- Equality and Diversity
- Capacity Building
- Consultation and Policy
- Funding, Commissioning and procurement
- Volunteering

The Staffordshire Compact and its Codes of Practice contain specific undertakings for each sector, as well as a series of joint undertakings, which aim to have a positive impact on joint working in the county.

3. What is the aim of this Mediation Procedure?

The Compact process is one of learning, development and dialogue, within which it is recognised that from time to time, differences and disagreements may arise which need to be resolved. This procedure relates specifically to:

- Disagreements occurring between organisations who are party to the Staffordshire Compact.
- Disagreements arising out of commitments and undertakings contained within it and its Codes.

It is intended to provide a framework for facilitating dialogue between each of the parties involved, and aims to move them towards a mutually acceptable resolution. The process is

about developing a deeper understanding and awareness between the two sectors. In turn this will have a positive impact on future joint working.

The Mediation Procedure follows a staged approach. The Staffordshire NI 7 Steering Group will oversee this process.

4. What is the Staffordshire NI 7 Steering Group?

This is a multi agency group set up under the auspices of the LAA to take responsibility for the delivery of NI 7 'Creating an environment for a Thriving Third Sector'. One of the key projects within this indicator is the re-launch and embedding of compact principles into partner's processes and procedures.

The group is supported by an NI 7 working group made up of members from Staffordshire County Council and SCIO the third sector infrastructure consortium which supports the third sector across Staffordshire.

5. What is the Mediation Process?

Stage 1 (Organisations working together to resolve disagreement)

- 1.1 If organisation A is concerned that organisation B has breached the Compact, they should seek to resolve that difference directly with organisation B.
- 1.2 Organisation A should contact organisation B and explain to them the nature of their concern, clearly stating which Compact commitment they believe has been breached.
- 1.3 Organisation B should then follow its internal procedures for dealing with complaints.
- 1.4 If the disagreement is resolved at this stage, then organisation A should inform the NI 7 working group* of the process, actions and outcomes for monitoring purposes. The organisation will then complete a Compact Resolution Enquiry Form which can be used to evaluate the process.
- 1.5 Should these actions fail to provide an outcome satisfactory to both parties, either can then refer the issue on to stage 2, by completing a Compact Resolution Enquiry Form and forwarding to the NI 7 working group. The Resolution Enquiry Form can be downloaded from www.staffordshirepartnership.org.uk.
- 1.6 Organisations can also use this part of the process to inform the NI 7 working group of examples of best practice and also issues that they may not wish to raise as a disagreement with the other party, but where they feel the processes used do not meet Compact principles. The NI 7 working group will collate this data to see if the concern is more widespread and whether it warrants further investigation

Stage 2 (Compact Mediation Group (CMG) mediation)

- 2.1 On receiving the Compact Resolution Enquiry Form, the NI 7 working group will endeavour to convene the CMG within 2 – 4 weeks. The CMG will consist of two members from each sector (selected from the membership of the NI 7 steering group and other co-opted members from the Compact Champions Network), and will appoint its own chair from amongst those members. The chair will hold the casting vote in the

event of a tied vote between the members of the group. Chairmanship of the CMG should alternate between the Statutory and Third Sector. The CMG should not include anyone directly connected with either organisation or directorate involved in the disagreement.

- 2.2 The CMG will determine whether the disagreement does relate to commitments and undertakings held within the Staffordshire Compact. If it does, the CMG will set a date to hear from both parties involved in the disagreement. This should be no later than 8 weeks from the date when details of the disagreement were received by the NI 7 working group. The CMG will invite both parties to nominate up to two representatives each to attend the meeting. One of these may be someone from another organisation who is brought in to support the organisation concerned.
- 2.3 The CMG will seek to mediate between the parties in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution. If the matter cannot be resolved at the first sitting, further meetings may be arranged if this will help reach a resolution. Progress will be reported to the NI 7 steering group by the CMG.

Stage 3 (Referral elsewhere for specialist mediation)

- 3.1 If it is not possible to resolve the dispute at Stage 2, the CMG will seek to provide the parties with information on any further resources available which might assist them in resolving the conflict. Such resources may include the national Compact Advocacy Programme and the national Compact Mediation Scheme.

6. How will this Procedure be monitored and evaluated?

For purposes of monitoring and evaluating, all organisations should notify the NI 7 working group of any differences arising from the Compact, even where these are resolved within the organisation's own procedures.

Documentation will be kept of all cases referred to the Ni7 working group.

The Chair of the CMG will keep the NI 7 working group informed of any action being taken by the CMG and the issues arising from the cases dealt with. A summary report of the issues will be formally presented to the NI 7 steering group on an annual basis, and will form part of the annual review of the Staffordshire Compact.

The Mediation Process will be reviewed by the NI 7 steering group on a 6 monthly basis to check on its effectiveness.

*** The NI 7 Working Group can be accessed via any of the following:**

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Staffordshire Compact

Process for Mediating Disagreements Arising from the Compact

Purpose: To improve the effectiveness of the Staffordshire Compact and to provide a framework for mediating disagreements by helping parties to identify and agree a mutually acceptable outcome.

