



Strategic Communications Plan 2011-12

Draft Version 2

The Worcestershire Compact

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The Worcestershire Compact

1. Introduction

The Worcestershire Compact was created in response to national requirements and also a clear local need to improve the relationship between the statutory sector and the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS). Since it was adopted by the Worcestershire Partnership, we have already seen improvements in both the relationship and the ultimate outcomes.

However, there is still a long way to go before the Worcestershire Compact can be said to have been 'embedded' into the working cultures of all relevant organisations. Awareness of the Worcestershire Compact is best described as 'patchy', while information about it is often inconsistent and complicated.

This plan seeks to identify a number of communications actions that could help the 'embedding' process.

There are three main categories of actions:

- **Consistency:** Steps that can be taken to ensure that the Worcestershire Compact is presented to many different organisations and audiences in the same way, irrespective of organisational differences.
- **Awareness:** Steps that can be taken to improve the level of awareness of the Worcestershire Compact within partner organisations and beyond.
- **Clarity:** Steps that can be taken to ensure that a clear message is delivered whenever partner organisations communicate about the Worcestershire Compact.

This plan is by no means exhaustive and should serve as a starting point for improving communications about the Worcestershire Compact. It does not repeat background information or work done so far – other sources are available should a more comprehensive overview be required.

1.1 Assumptions

This plan assumes that the leading body for all Worcestershire Compact work is the Worcestershire Compact Steering Group (WCSG), but it is recognised that the steering group will delegate actions to key partners to fulfil.

This plan assumes that each partner organisation has a 'lead employee' for the Worcestershire Compact – this would be the person with whom the WCSG liaises about Worcestershire Compact matters.

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2. Consistency

In order to ensure that the meaning of the Worcestershire Compact is understood by all partners in the same way, and therefore applied in the same way, it is essential that all related information and materials are consistent. Key steps to encourage this include:

2.1 Standardised and centralised web pages

Rather than expecting all partners to prepare and host their own internet or intranet pages containing Worcestershire Compact information and documents, a single 'stand-alone' website will be created. All partners will then be able to link to the same web page, which will ensure consistency.

A descriptive URL will be used, allowing its publication on all Worcestershire Compact materials; the most likely URL is www.worcestershirecompact.com

Standard 'linking text' will be provided to all partners, which can be used on internet and intranet pages as a signpost to the Worcestershire Compact website. This will include the agreed key messages (see 4.1).

Web-ready relevant images will also be provided for any partner who has the capacity to include images on internet or intranet pages.

2.2 Correct documents

The WCSG will be responsible for making sure that all documents available to partners through the web pages are the latest and most up-to-date versions. These include the Worcestershire Compact itself, its Codes of Practice and any associated materials.

When documents are updated or replaced, the WCSG will inform all partners and provide a link to the new version (or send a copy as appropriate).

2.3 Branding

The Worcestershire Compact has its own logo and general style. All partners will adhere to the following ground rules for branding of Worcestershire Compact materials:

- The Worcestershire Compact logo must be present and clearly visible
- The relevant partner's logo may also appear, but no other logos should be present without prior agreement (eg. NHS Worcestershire's work to promote the Worcestershire Compact would include the NHS Worcestershire logo *and* the Worcestershire Compact logo, while the Worcestershire Partnership's work to promote the Worcestershire Compact would include the Worcestershire Partnership logo *and* the Worcestershire Compact logo – but with no others)
- Should any variation from this be required by any partner, they must first agree this with the WCSG
- These branding ground rules apply to all printed materials, electronic materials, displays, presentations, web pages, clothing, signage and any other appropriate resources.

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The WCSG will ensure that all partners have access to the Worcestershire Compact logo in suitable formats for all pieces of work.

2.4 Sharing successes

In order to take full advantage of successful initiatives and best practice, all partners should inform the WCSG of their actions to promote and embed the Worcestershire Compact on an ongoing basis.

The WCSG may then share the methods and outcomes with other partners, as appropriate, and advise on further actions. For example, if one partner conducts a successful seminar for staff, that partner should identify the elements of the seminar that contributed to its success and inform the WCSG. This information can then be shared with all partners.

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3. Awareness

Raising awareness of the Worcestershire Compact is a key objective of this plan. The critical audience is internal and this plan's priority is to support the embedding of the Worcestershire Compact into all partner organisations' working cultures. Partners' methods of doing so may vary considerably from one organisation to another, but there are a number of steps that all partners can take to boost the profile of the Worcestershire Compact among their own staff (and members as appropriate):

3.1 Standardised and centralised web pages (see 2.1)

As described earlier, the creation of a stand-alone website with a descriptive URL will allow easier promotion and signposting. All partners should take every opportunity to mention the website's URL in their communications and link to the website from all relevant pages of their internet and/or intranet sites.

3.2 Compact Network

Seeking to establish an informal Compact Network to further broaden our engagement across the county and promote Compact ways of working. The group will be fluid and updated bi-annually to tie in with the Worcestershire Forum.

3.3 Compact Week events

Compact Week is an annual national awareness-raising initiative, conventionally promoted during the first week of November (or thereabouts). It is a prime opportunity to communicate with both internal and external audiences about the Worcestershire Compact.

The Worcestershire Steering Group will look to hold its Annual Compact Awards Ceremony during National Compact Week.

3.4 Annual reports

In order to raise the profile of the Worcestershire Compact a brief annual review of progress made will be produced each calendar year.

A named person from the Worcestershire Compact Steering Group will take responsibility for submitting this report and be responsible for making sure it is widely disseminated throughout the county.

3.5 Displays

The WCSG will ensure that suitable display materials are available for use as required. These materials will include:

- Pop-up and/or pull-up displays
- Relevant published literature (eg. Compact Summary, Codes of Practices etc)
- A leaflet rack or equivalent to hold literature.

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WCSG materials will be branded as the Worcestershire Compact and may – if felt to be appropriate – also carry the Worcestershire Partnership logo to indicate overall ownership.

The WCSG will be responsible for arranging the storage of the materials and arranging loans as required; however, the organisation in receipt of the materials will be responsible for transportation.

All partners are encouraged to display Worcestershire Compact information in their main buildings at least once per year.

The display materials may also be used at third-party events and key meetings.

3.6 Identifying a more specific audience

In order for any of the actions and approaches outlined in this plan to be effective, it is important that the most relevant audience is identified and targeted. These are the people who need to know about and adhere to the Worcestershire Compact.

3.7 External communications

Public awareness of the Worcestershire Compact can reinforce internal awareness and occasionally reach internal audiences through an alternative channel. It is therefore essential that a minimum amount of external communication also takes place, comprising:

- At least one media release per annum promoting the successes of the Worcestershire Compact, to be issued by the WCSG Where partner organisations produce a publication for an external audience, at least one article per publication per year focusing on the Worcestershire Compact.

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4. Clarity

The success of any communications about the Worcestershire Compact relies on clear messages. While this plan does not seek to constrain each partner's interpretation of the Worcestershire Compact, it is good practice to standardise and repeat the main messages in order to communicate effectively. This can be achieved by:

4.1 A standard explanatory statement

The name 'Worcestershire Compact' does not communicate the meaning of the document. Therefore, all communications should include a standard explanatory statement that provides more information to unfamiliar audiences. This statement should be:

"Your guide to modern working with the Voluntary & Community Sector."

'Your' is used to address the audience directly, 'guide' is a non-threatening reference to the fact that the document contains rules, 'modern' implies a higher standard of work and that the rules may have changed since the audience last worked with the VCS, 'working' makes it clear that it refers to a businesslike relationship, and including the full phrase 'Voluntary & Community Sector' leaves no room for misunderstanding.

This statement should be used in publications, on internet and intranet pages, in media releases and in any other relevant communications, both externally and internally.

4.2 Simple key messages

All communications, wherever possible, should include the following key messages:

REVIEW ABOVE

These messages should be used in publications, on internet and intranet pages, in media releases and in any other relevant communications, both externally and internally.

4.3 'Crib sheet' and FAQs

The WCSG have developed a brief 'crib sheet' of key Worcestershire Compact facts and an accompanying list of Frequently Asked Questions (with answers).

These documents should also be made available alongside, or sent out with, any funding application packs for VCS organisations. Whenever a Worcestershire Partnership organisation offers funding, this is an opportunity to engage with VCS groups and share information about the Worcestershire Compact with them. Using standardised information ensures consistency and clarity of message, and will also demonstrate to VCS groups that they can expect the same standards from all organisations in the Worcestershire Partnership.

5. Evaluation

Accurate evaluation of the success of the actions identified within this plan would rely on clear baseline data against which progress could be measured. To help establish a base line a comprehensive audit survey will be carried out in 2011.

Therefore, this plan will be considered to have been effective if any or all of the following outcomes are met by March 2012:

- Establish a base-line of awareness and understanding
- Clear knowledge of which teams and departments are working with the VCS in each partner organisation
- Consistency of information is improved
- Clear messages are communicated
- Activities to support Compact Week

It is encouraged that any data about Worcestershire Compact awareness levels are gathered during the life of this plan to allow more objective evaluation in the future.

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6. Summary of key actions

Note: Actions attributed to the Worcestershire Compact Steering Group (WCSG) are expected to be delegated to key partners, at the WCSG's discretion.

When	What	Who	Notes
August 2011	Appoint a Compact Contact in each organisation throughout the county – Compact Network		Sub Group to meet during August 2011
Aug/Sept 2011	Review and refresh Worcestershire Compact web pages with descriptive URL	Suzy James	Sub-group to meet during August 2011 to draft as needed for Partnership Board – send them draft during consultation period
2011	Review 'crib sheet' and FAQs – provide to all partners	Suzy James	WCC currently doing review of all directorate websites – when complete incorporate into base-line assessment
Calendar Year	Annual Review produced each calendar year	Carol Walmsley	
March/April 2012	Submit annual report to board/Cabinet/equivalent for sign off and information using existing template	Carol Walmsley	
Ongoing	Issue media release about Worcestershire Compact successes as appropriate	Suzy James	Vicky Reading from Compact Voice writing up case-studies re. award nominations which can be used
Each Year	Worcestershire Compact Awards Ceremony – annually in November	Chair	
Sept/Oct 2011	Undertake county wide survey in order to establish the base line for Compact awareness and understanding	Suzy James	
January 2012	. Review explanatory statement and key messages to go into Compact communications	Chair	

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Ongoing	Promote use of display materials	WCSG/Network	
Ongoing	Hold displays in all WCSG organisations	All partners	Lots of leaflets to be used up prior to refresh
Ongoing	Include one article about the Worcestershire Compact per year – e.g. BARN, Voice, WCVYS, Newslite	All partners that produce publications	

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7. Contacts

Suzy James

VCS Unit Coordinator

Worcestershire County Council

01905 728650

sjames2@worcestershire.gov.uk

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