

The Worcestershire Compact Equalities and Diversity Code of Practice

1. Introduction

The Worcestershire Compact is a set of principles within which the statutory, voluntary and community sectors agree to work and seeks to recognise and value the diversity that exists in society generally and in Worcestershire.

It aims specifically to promote the inclusion of groups and individuals that have in the past been under-represented or excluded, for the benefit of both individuals who make up those groups and the communities, villages and neighbourhoods.

The partners using the Worcestershire Compact are committed to:

- Recognising that everyone is different in terms of their race, age, sex, disability, sexuality, age or religion
- Recognising the importance of equality and diversity and human rights to a prosperous and cohesive society
- Developing effective methods so all groups can get involved
- Supporting marginal groups
- Celebrating people's differences in our communities

This Code is one of five Codes developed to date, that describe how the Worcestershire Compact will work in practice:

- Funding and Procurement
- Volunteering
- Community Groups
- Consultation and Involvement
- Equalities and Diversity

2. Equalities and Diversity

Worcestershire has a diverse range of communities with many unmet needs within them. Commitment to applying the principles of equality of opportunity is a central part of a fair and democratic society, partners using the Compact recognise:

- That everyone is different in terms of their race, age, gender, disability, sexuality, age or religion
- The importance of equality and diversity and of human rights to a prosperous and cohesive society
- The necessity to develop effective methods of engagement so all groups can participate in civic society to the greatest possible degree

We recognise that issues of equality and diversity take many forms. This Code will help to ensure that the different communities of Worcestershire can get involved. The Code provides a source of good practice to support and engage with marginalised groups including, but not limited to the following:

- Migrant workers
- People living in rural isolation
- Service users and their carers
- Lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgender people
- People of a minority religion, faith or belief
- People with a disability
- Young people
- Older people
- People from black and minority ethnic groups
- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Gypsies and travellers

Please note this list is not a definitive list

3. In Supporting This Code

3.1 Both sectors undertake to:

- Include equality and diversity as a key requirement in new policy development evidenced by:

Access to and active promotion of, services

A requirement for training

Proactive encouragement to think in terms of needs by supporting participation by disadvantaged groups in service development

- Monitor the usage of services by all groups/agencies
- Introduce specific conditions in funding agreements and appropriate monitoring measures in line with legislative requirements
- Analyse and develop action points, as necessary, to increase equality of access to services
- Promote fair employment practices in recruitment, selection, retention, training and development, support, supervision and appraisal and introduce employment monitoring mechanisms which can measure these
- Comply with up to date legislation to ensure reasonable provision of services on an equality and diversity basis

Both sectors aim to:

- Specifically and actively promote and encourage ongoing partnership links
- Promote equality and diversity in all day to day activities
- Give full attention to the needs of individual groups that are protected from discrimination through legislation
- Support local action, dialogue and understanding between different organisations and communities
- Actively support inclusive communities
- Share training resources/expertise where appropriate on equality and diversity
- Celebrate equality and diversity

3.2 The statutory sector will also undertake to:

- Ensure that any ongoing review of policies, planning and procedures includes evidence, such as application of an impact assessment, to

ensure that no particular group is disadvantaged by existing policies

- Review the organisation's published Equality and Diversity Policy as required

3.3 The voluntary and community sector will also undertake to:

- Ensure that any ongoing review of policies, planning and procedures includes evidence to ensure that no particular group is disadvantaged by existing policies
- Develop and adopt an Equality and Diversity Policy or statement, as appropriate
- Maximise communication in an effective manner, as appropriate to the size of the organisation

4 Policies and Legislation

This Code links to existing laws and ways of working and should be used in conjunction with the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) 'Toolkit for Developing and Implementing Equal Opportunities Policies' and any other guidance available for the promotion of equality and diversity.

Partner organisations should be aware of their responsibilities under both domestic (United Kingdom) and European legislation on equalities issues. Each organisation will have its own policies and procedures regarding equalities that comply with the relevant legislation, this code is intended to complement rather than supersede any existing policies.

Contacts

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Useful Information

Advice on Compact Agreements:

www.thecompact.org.uk

Freedom of Information Act

www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm

Equal Opportunities Commission

www.eoc.org.uk

Disability Discrimination Act

www.disability.gov.uk

Disability Rights Commission

www.drc-gb.org.uk

National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)

www.navca.org.uk/localvs/