

WEST LOTHIAN COMPACT: PRINCIPLES

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West Lothian Compact: Principles

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1. WHAT IS THE WEST LOTHIAN COMPACT?

The Compact is a high level partnership between the Voluntary Sector and the Statutory Sector, i.e. public bodies, funded by government, with legal responsibilities, in West Lothian.

The purpose of the Compact is to advance working relationships between the Voluntary Sector, the Statutory Sector, Community Planning Partners and other appropriate stakeholders in West Lothian based on the following underpinning principles:

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Communication
- Equity
- Respect between partners.

The core and equal partners of the West Lothian Compact are:

- Voluntary Action West Lothian (VAWL)¹
- Voluntary Sector partners drawn from the Voluntary Sector Strategic Group (VSSG)
- West Lothian Community Health & Care Partnership (CHCP)
- West Lothian Council
- NHS Lothian.

These are the founding members of the Compact. In the longer-term development it is expected that invitation to membership will be extended to Community Planning Partners.

This Compact comprises two parts i.e. Principles and Implementation Plan. Principles are outlined in this document, while a 3-year Implementation Plan will be developed subsequently.

2. INTRODUCTION

The West Lothian Compact sets out shared principles, values and commitments, and outlines an agreement that statutory and voluntary bodies have developed together to define and manage their relationships. It is designed to clearly state what each party can expect from the other, which can be summarised as a shared commitment to build mutual trust and confidence and an appreciation of the roles and contributions of statutory and voluntary sector bodies towards the enhancement of West Lothian.

The Compact has been put together by representatives of statutory and voluntary bodies in West Lothian. Within community planning it will provide a platform for improved co-operation, understanding and respect, and encourage strategic engagement on issues concerning the overall relationship with key stakeholders.

¹ VAWL and the Volunteer Centre West Lothian are currently committed to the creation of a new infrastructural voluntary sector organisation. The new organisation has been given recognition by the Community Planning Partnership as the main conduit to and from the Third Sector.

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3. BACKGROUND

The development of the West Lothian Compact has taken place against a backdrop of national initiatives such as the Concordat² and Single Outcome Agreement between the Scottish Government and local authorities that will result in policy and legislative change. The development of the Compact for West Lothian will not occur in isolation and requires to be mindful of these developments and their potential impacts at local levels. The Compact in turn could play a significant role in the development and rollout of these agreed initiatives where and if deemed appropriate.

4. LOCAL CONTEXT

Community Planning

The West Lothian Community Planning Partnership has established itself as one of the most successful in Scotland. In the Single Outcome Agreement³ the Community Planning partners have identified twelve joint challenges faced by the area, which have been developed into priority outcomes (Appendix 1). These have been matched to the fifteen national outcomes set out in the Concordat between National and Local Government in 2007. The agreement sets out the outcomes for people and communities that the partnership wishes to deliver. It builds on the successful partnership working to date that has seen significant changes in service delivery and major milestones within the Community Plan being met. The principles in our Community Plan of sustainability, equality, community engagement and best value underpin the Outcome Agreement and are reflected in its cross cutting outcomes. West Lothian has experienced significant change since the first Community Plan 2000-2010⁴ was agreed. The partnership has begun to develop a new Community Plan to address the new challenges faced by the area. The new Plan will be in place by the Spring or early Summer 2009.

West Lothian's Voluntary & Community Sector

The Voluntary Sector makes a huge contribution to West Lothian's social economy. It consists of approximately 1800 voluntary organisations. West Lothian has a population of 168,000. In 2003⁵, 23% (28,477) of the adult population undertook some form of unpaid voluntary activity and over 455,632 hours were volunteered in West Lothian each month, contributing the equivalent of over £30 million annually to the local economy. Without this, much of the work with vulnerable and marginalised children and adults would be adversely affected.

The West Lothian voluntary and community sector embraces a diverse range of organisations. It includes small informal groups who meet to define themselves as having a common purpose, formally constituted community groups, service user groups, advocacy groups and service providers. The sector also includes the umbrella organisations Voluntary Action West Lothian and Volunteer Centre West Lothian that act as a resource to the sector. They assist in capacity building, advice or training for voluntary sector management, staff and volunteers, representing the interests of the sector, dissemination of information, coordinating the voice of specific

² Scottish Government 2007

³ West Lothian Council 2008

⁴ West Lothian Council 2000

⁵ Volunteer Development Scotland & Scottish Household Survey 2003

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interest groups, or signposting to services. It also includes larger local and national voluntary organisations that provide services to the people in West Lothian. The voluntary and community sector's features include:

- Energy and commitment of its volunteers
- Ability to clearly focus and articulate needs
- Ability to provide added value through volunteer work
- Ability to attract additional resources
- Responsiveness and flexibility
- Provision of innovative and complementary services
- Diversity in terms of addressing needs, range of organisations, nature of responses, staff profile (mix, skills and experience) and volunteers drawn from all community groups
- Ability to act as representatives for the community as a whole or for individual communities of interest
- Ability to act as a catalyst for community empowerment and engagement.

5. CORE PARTNERS

The core and equal partners of the West Lothian Compact are:

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- West Lothian Community Health & Care Partnership (CHCP)
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These are the founding members of the Compact. In the longer-term development it is expected that invitation to membership will be extended to Community Planning Partners.

6. VISION

The vision for the West Lothian Compact is:

To achieve a culture of mutual understanding, trust and confidence that enables voluntary and statutory sector partners across West Lothian to find effective ways of working co-operatively towards the achievement of outcomes that will improve the quality of life of local people and communities. From this vision, a set of underlying shared principles has been developed, which provide the foundation for the Compact.

Both the statutory and voluntary sectors make a significant but distinctive contribution to the quality of life in West Lothian. By working together they can add further value to West Lothian in a number of ways:

- More considered development of strategy and policy
- Better planned and delivered services
- More choice in service delivery
- Improved engagement
- Better results or impact from interventions.

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7. SHARED PRINCIPLES

Partnership

- By working together and with others we will achieve more for the people and communities of West Lothian
- Genuine partnerships require integrity, objectivity, understanding, accountability, openness, honesty and close working, with recognition of the equal value of everyone's contribution
- By working closely together the voluntary and statutory sectors can achieve their own aims and contribute towards achieving common aims and objectives
- Voluntary action and community involvement are vital components of a democratic society and promote social inclusion
- An independent and diverse voluntary sector is fundamental to the well being of the people and communities of West Lothian and it can make a unique contribution.

Consultation

- Clear, open and accessible consultation improves policy development, builds relationships and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes, and time and resources will be allocated to this.

Equal Opportunities

- We are committed to promoting and striving for equality of opportunity for everyone
- Our policies will promote best practice and equal rights in employment, involvement of volunteers, activities and service provision.

Resources

- We recognise that statutory bodies have statutory responsibilities to ensure the delivery of particular services
- We are committed to recognising the importance of stability, continuity and consistency in the planning and provision of services
- We believe that minimising the adverse environmental impact of service provision is important.

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Joint Undertakings

- We will be open, honest and truthful in all our dealings with each other
- We will foster the partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors so that we engage genuinely, meaningfully and democratically with the community of West Lothian
- We will keep each other informed of those matters that are important to meeting our common aims and objectives
- We will work together to meet the present and future needs of those who live and work in West Lothian
- We will work together to further develop an outcomes based approach
- We will agree ways to measure and review the impact of our work towards our common objectives and then share this information, including the lessons learned, as widely as possible
- We will recognise the important role and contribution of all voluntary groups including those that do not receive funding from the Statutory Sector and will ensure that there are opportunities for them to be included in the Compact
- We will work with the National Codes of Practice and seek to implement national best practice locally
- We will make sure that our staff and volunteers are equipped to do their tasks, working with other agencies where appropriate to achieve this. This includes recruiting the right people, providing them with training, and developing and managing them appropriately
- We will work together to promote and develop a social economy in West Lothian
- We respect our client groups, partners and stakeholders and their right to express diverse ideas, opinions and views.

8. COMMITMENTS

STATUTORY SECTOR COMMITMENTS

Consultation

- We will ensure the voluntary sector is given the opportunity to participate in the development of policy and strategic planning in relation to their areas of interest and responsibility
- We will make sure that the voluntary sector is appropriately represented on Statutory Sector and other Community Planning Partner bodies, working groups, and strategic planning structures in relation to their areas of interest and responsibility

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- We will engage in consultation in such a way that maximises involvement of voluntary sector groups
- We will allow reasonable time for consultation so that service users and other people who also benefit from services can be included. We will ensure that the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups are positively taken into account, including consultation with organisations representing those groups
- We aim for openness and transparency in our dealings with voluntary organisations recognising the need for clear language and avoidance of jargon.

Funding & Other Resources

- We will be consistent in the way we manage funding arrangements, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance, as far as possible within our respective legal and financial constraints
- We will provide non-financial support, which may include advice and opportunities for training to voluntary organisations where appropriate
- We will apply best practice in funding and in the administration of grants consistently, including notification of award and prompt payment of agreed funds
- We will follow best practice in monitoring publicly funded work, and apply Best Value processes in the ways, which secure equality of treatment for voluntary organisations
- We will target resources, including non-financial resources, effectively and in a way, which takes account of changing needs.

Independence & Campaigning

- We recognise that voluntary organisations are independent and have the right to manage their own affairs
- We recognise and respect the independence of the voluntary sector and their lawful campaigning and challenging role irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist
- We aim to monitor and feedback on policy developments for implications for the voluntary sector
- We will respond flexibly and sensitively towards each other and respect confidentiality.

Other Obligations

- We will comply with recognised codes of practice when involving volunteers within our services

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- We will work closely with the voluntary sector to enhance the delivery of our statutory obligations and other services where appropriate
- We will meet our legal, reporting and accounting obligations as funders, planners and service providers.

COMMITMENTS BY THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Consultation

- We will represent the views of local people and our national bodies where appropriate, at planning, management, monitoring and evaluating groups
- We will gather the views of local people about services and any issues that they have in meeting their needs, and pass these views on to service providers
- We will support consultation by the statutory sector and, resources allowing, we will make sure that consultation reaches all the people that need to be included
- We will make sure that the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged people and groups are positively taken into account and provided for.

Funding & Other Resources

- We recognise that public resources are limited and that public funding is provided on the basis of value for money and its contribution to policy priorities
- We will maintain agreed monitoring, performance evaluation and report back systems to secure effectiveness in the use of resources
- We will strive to secure best value for its declared objectives from the resources it uses, and apply and promote best value processes
- We will champion the importance of good management, financial and non-financial resources and promote good management practice, including fulfilling conditions of funding.

Accountability & Transparency

- We will maintain high standards of governance, conduct, accountability and openness
- We will meet our legal, reporting and accounting obligations to funders and to service users.

Equal Opportunities

- We will involve service users and other stakeholders in the development and management of services

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- We will avoid using jargon and encourage the public sector to use plain English.

Independence & Campaigning

- The voluntary sector comprises numerous individual organisations each with their own aims and objectives that they will wish to promote. As such no one body can speak for all, however voluntary organisations agree to work for the common good of their client group
- We will respond flexibly and sensitively towards each other and respect confidentiality.

9. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A 3-year Implementation Plan will be developed as an integral part of these Compact Principles. This will include a review date for the Compact.

10. PROCESSES & PROCEDURES

As part of the Implementation Plan, a range of processes and procedures will be developed, which will include:

- Accountability
- Arbitration
- Dispute resolution
- Reporting mechanisms (including links to the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership Board).

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REFERENCES

Scottish Government, November 2007,
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/923/0054147.pdf>

Volunteer Development Scotland & Scottish Household Survey 2003

West Lothian Community Planning Partnership, June 2008,
<http://webwest1/promotions/OutcomeAgreementJune2008.pdf>

West Lothian Council, 2000, <http://webwest1/corpol/cplann/shaping.pdf>

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Appendix 1

Alignment of Community Planning Themes, Joint Challenges and Outcomes			
Community Plan Theme	Forum	Challenge	Outcome
Changing	Economic	Development Challenge	A. All people in West Lothian live in balanced, well-designed, sustainable communities where they can access the high quality amenities and services they need
	Health and Wellbeing	Homelessness	B. Fewer people are homeless, but people who become homeless are accommodated safely and supported as soon as possible
Learning	Economic	Educational Attainment & Achievement	C. Everyone's life chances are maximised by improving their educational attainment and achievement
	Economic	Young People needing More Choices and More Chances	D. All young people have the knowledge and skills to proceed to adult working life
Prosperous	Economic	Growing and Strengthening our Economy	E. Our economy is strengthened through an improved range and quality of businesses and increased economic participation.
Healthy	Health and Wellbeing	Health Improvement	F. People in West Lothian live longer, healthier lives G. The gap between the most and least healthy is reduced
	Health and Wellbeing	Substance Misuse	H. Harmful substance misuse impacting on individuals, families and communities in West Lothian is reduced
	Health and Wellbeing	Delayed Discharge	I. Older people are healthier and more active
Caring	Health and Wellbeing	Looked after Children	J. Looked after children reach their full potential
	Health and Wellbeing	Supporting People at home	K. People stay independently in their own homes for as long as possible where it meets their needs, is based on choice and is safe for them and their carers
Safer	Community Safety	Public Protection	L. All children and vulnerable adults have safe lives
	Community Safety	Community Safety	M The number of people (victims and offenders) affected by anti-social behaviour and domestic violence is reduced