

SALFORD

**Community
Involvement,
Partnerships
and
Networks**

**Code of
Good
Practice**

COMPACT

**Community Involvement,
Partnerships and Networks
Code of Good Practice
April 2006
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This Code of Good Practice should be read in conjunction with the other codes of practice available: Funding and Procurement, Social Inclusion and Volunteering.

Community Involvement, Partnerships and Networks Code of Good Practice

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Aims

- To ensure that in developing their policies and service, Salford organisations are informed by a wide range of knowledge, experience and expertise
- To ensure that the views of Public Sector and Third Sector service users are regularly consulted, listened to and acted upon
- To ensure that members of partnerships and networks are representative and accountable to their representative constituencies

The Gold Standards in Community Involvement and Consultation

Partners IN Salford (Salford's Local Strategic Partnership) has developed Gold Standards in Community Involvement and Consultation to which all partners have signed up. They form part of this Code of Good Practice and are as follows:

- Check if anyone else has done consultation work with results that you can share.
- Ensure that consultation can affect change. It should be a dialogue that leads to decisions, so consult before decisions are made.
- Make sure you allow adequate time for your consultation project. You need to consider time for planning, conducting, collecting and responding to your activities.
- Try to use methods of consultation that will be the best use of your resources and give you the best results from your target audience.

(full version is available at www.partnersinsalford.org/communityinvolvement)

1. Consultation and Involvement

- Try to make your consultation as inclusive as possible but beware of over-consulting certain groups.
- Always give feedback to those who have participated in your consultation exercises.
- Turn your consultation into action. Don't leave consultation work "on the shelf".
- Share the results of your work with others.

In addition, partners will:

- ensure service development is informed by evidence based research into the needs of communities and individuals
- consult appropriate partners for feedback about consultations at the planning stage
- be honest and clear about what is open to discussion and at what point and to what extent decisions and proposals may be changed
- work to simple and non-bureaucratic systems developed to regularly monitor compliance with the Gold Standards - including service users and community groups in the monitoring process if possible

- accept that only a minority of groups and service users are able or willing to be regularly involved in consultations and agree ways to ensure as far as possible the views of others are sought to widen the base of consultations
- be realistic about the type and level of consultation expected /achievable with the resources available
- develop a shared system for feedback as part of the consultation process to ensure feedback on consultations is always given and is given on a timely and honest basis even when no change has been made as a result of consultation
- explore the potential for developing a shared multi-agency database of organisations and work towards creating an annual programme of consultation showing all planned consultations, the results of which will be shared between partners
- accept that Third Sector and Public Sector staff have valid views and opinions about policies and services which are legitimate to consider as well as those of service users and community groups

2. Partnerships and Networks

Partners will also:

- ensure that there is a consensus regarding the membership of partnerships and networks and that open and transparent processes are used to appoint members
- improve media coverage of issues covered by partnerships and networks

3. Public Sector Commitments

Salford Public Sector will:

- ensure as far as possible that adequate resources are made available for creative and inclusive consultation allowing for: the use of accessible formats, people with specific needs, appropriate venues, local people or volunteers being trained and, where necessary, paid to carry out consultations
- offer 'in kind' resources to reduce costs e.g. equipment, facilities etc
- consult the Third Sector and ensure mutual agreement to take action on issues which are likely to affect it
- build consultation with the Third Sector into plans for policy and service development and Best Value Reviews
- value, recognise and use the results of consultations with service users/ Third Sector organisations
- work in partnership with the Third Sector to develop and support Third Sector representatives at strategic partnership level
- attend networks involving Third Sector representatives on a regular basis to build understanding and trust
- develop a range of contacts with different organisations for potential involvement in partnership work

- ensure that effective communication methods are adopted which allow for Third Sector representatives to be kept informed with up to date information
- accept that, in order for the Third Sector to have the capacity to ensure their multi-agency partnership and network members are representative and accountable, there may be resource implications
- will aim to ensure that Third Sector organisations receive at least one month's notice regarding requests for involvement in consultations

In addition, the Public Sector is committed to:

- ensuring that the various socially excluded groups have representation at appropriate strategic and service delivery partnerships and networks
- ensuring support is available to enable community groups to participate in policy or service development in whichever way is appropriate and possible for them
- including socially excluded groups in Best Value Reviews, where possible
- being proactive in the recruitment of socially excluded groups in the engagement process
- ensuring that socially excluded groups have fair and equal access to public sector funding programmes

- recognising and minimising the potential for competition between voluntary and community organisations
- ensuring criteria for small grants are commensurate with the size of the grant so as not to further exclude socially excluded groups
- accepting that there may be higher risks in funding small community groups in socially excluded communities
- accepting that not all communities will wish to be consulted or 'engaged' with
- encouraging and supporting the development of consortium bids for delivering services which include community groups working in socially excluded communities
- supporting community groups to achieve Quality Standards

4. Third Sector Commitments

Salford Third Sector organisations will:

When involved in consultation on policy, service development and delivery:

- respect confidentiality
- declare any conflicts of interest as they arise
- focus on the needs of the end users or beneficiaries
- be clear whom they represent
- be clear how they come by their views
- develop an open and transparent selection process within the sector for identifying representatives to sit on multi-agency partnerships and networks
- work in partnership within and across sectors to develop clear roles, rights and responsibilities for sector representatives on multi-agency networks and partnerships so that Third Sector members are, and can be seen to be, representing and accountable to a particular community of interest or geographical community
- work in partnership across the sector to establish realistic ways for representatives to consult with and report to their communities
- respond quickly to requests for involvement in consultations

- accept that the community sector, including socially excluded groups, may have different needs and interests to those of voluntary organisations
- consult the community sector – including socially excluded groups – when asked to provide representation on partnership organisations and networks
- support the community sector's as well as the voluntary sector's interests on partnerships
- be aware of and acknowledge openly conflicts of interest when they arise

Key Contacts

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To formally sign up to the Compact or for more information
visit: www.salfordcvs.co.uk/salford-cvs/salford-compact

Copies of all the Codes of Practice are also available here.

Alternatively, email: office@salfordcvs.co.uk
or telephone 0161 787 7795.



Salford City Council

Salford **NHS**
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