

## What is this document for?

This document contains information about what to do if you think that a partner organisation has broken the commitments made in the Wiltshire Compact, or if you think an organisation is not meeting the requirements of the Compact Code of Practice.



## What to do if things go wrong:



### **Be reasonable.**

This is particularly true if an organisation has only recently signed up to the Wiltshire Compact. It takes time for all partners to adapt the way they work to make sure they meet the Compact requirements. The organisation might already be addressing the problem.



### **Be realistic.**

As well as identifying where your Compact partner might have gone wrong, also think about how you are expecting them to put it right. Is this a realistic expectation? Are there any other ways of resolving the issue which are more achievable?



### **Be understanding.**

There may be good reasons why your Compact partner is not able to adhere to the Compact, including legal or regulatory guidelines preventing them from doing so in the way you expect. Try to find out whether there are any specific barriers to resolving the issue.

## Dispute resolution process.

The dispute resolution process is designed to help facilitate a **mutually beneficial resolution** to issues that arise between Compact partners. Please use the steps outlined on pages 2-3 to guide you through the process.

You can also find a visual guide to the dispute resolution process on page 4.

### Step one.

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Your first step should be to attempt to resolve the issue. Advise the partner organisation that you believe they have acted in a way which does not comply with the principles of the Compact. Both parties should attempt to resolve the issues at as early stage as possible.

If you are unable to resolve the matter at this stage you should record (in writing) the actions taken, dates and details of who you spoke with. The Compact Board will ask to see copies of these records before mediating on your behalf.

### Step two.

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If you are unable to resolve the issue in step one, you can ask the Compact Board to get involved. You can do this by writing to the Compact Secretariat who will log the dispute and inform the Board. A Dispute Resolution Panel (DRP), Consisting of the Joint Chairs (VCSE and Public Sector) and 3 other representatives from the Board from different sectors, will be arranged **no later than one month** following receipt of the written dispute. The Board will need to see copies of the written records you have kept from step one, These records should be sent to the secretariat at the time the complaint is raised.

The DRP will decide on whether or not the dispute is a Compact issue. The panel will write to both parties within **two weeks** of their decision. If the panel conclude it is not a Compact issue, the Compact's involvement will end at this point.

**Please note; You are free to utilise the other organisation's official complaints procedure at any point during the dispute process.**

### Step three.

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If the Dispute Resolution Panel concludes that the dispute is a Compact issue, the Board will encourage both parties to work together to try and resolve the issue. The Board will offer advice and guidance in line with Compact principles as a means to achieving a mutually beneficial resolution for **both parties**.

The Board will produce a written statement detailing progress made towards resolutions and include recommendations for future action. All parties will be informed both verbally and in writing **within six weeks** of the decision taken by the panel regarding next steps.

## Step four.

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If the dispute cannot be resolved with guidance from the Compact Steering Group, external mediation may be required. Contact will be made with Compact Voice or another appropriate organisation. At this stage if a resolution had not been reached, the complainant would be encouraged to access the formal complaints system of the organisation they are dealing with.

## Important note.

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It is important to bear in mind that the Compact Board has no power to bring sanctions against any organisation involved in a dispute, but all organisations signed up to the Compact are committed to work together to improve and develop partnership working between sectors.

## Scrutiny of the dispute process.

In order to ensure the dispute resolution process is completed as quickly as possible, representatives from the Board will report on the progress of any outstanding disputes each Wiltshire Compact board meeting. The Compact Board will then be able to comment and give advice on future direction.

## Conflict of interest.

Any individuals from the Compact Board involved in or party to your dispute would be required to declare a conflict of interest and would not be involved in mediating your dispute. A substitute member of the Board would be appointed to the panel instead to ensure the dispute process is fair.

## Dispute resolution flow chart

1.

- Compact principles not being met
- Complainant to notify the other organisation of the matter in dispute and make initial attempts to resolve
- Compact partner with the complaint to keep written records



2.

- The complainant should write to the Compact Secretariat (see page 5 for contact details). Include details of the dispute and action taken to date
- Compact decides whether issue is a Compact issue



3.

- Board panel investigates. Offers advice and guidance to reach a mutually beneficial agreement for both parties
- Panel to write to both organisations within six weeks to advise on next steps.



4.

- If unresolved at this stage, external mediation may be required. Compact Board to contact Compact Voice or other appropriate organisation
- Parties informed of alternative processes available to them.

## Write to the Compact Secretariat.



Wiltshire Compact Secretariat  
C/O DEVELOP  
3-4 New Road  
Chippenham  
SN15 1EJ  
United Kingdom

Remember to include written records of your dispute



## Email the Compact Secretariat.

[compact@wiltshirecompact.org.uk](mailto:compact@wiltshirecompact.org.uk)

Remember to attach written records of your dispute

## Information and resources.



Compact Voice  
[www.compactvoice.org.uk](http://www.compactvoice.org.uk)

Wiltshire Compact  
[www.wiltshirecompact.org.uk](http://www.wiltshirecompact.org.uk)

DEVELOP  
[www.developecs.org.uk](http://www.developecs.org.uk)