

COMPACT AT WORK



Making the Compact work for you

East Sussex: Measuring success

By setting objectives and reviewing performance annually, the East Sussex Compact Steering Group has brought about a culture of continuous development within the East Sussex Compact.

Impact

A common problem faced by local Compacts is proving that they cause improvements in local cross sector relationships, rather than being a positive side effect of those improvements. However, in East Sussex a system is in place for measuring the impact of their Compact which puts an end to this “chicken and egg” debate by proving that the East Sussex Compact is delivering tangible improvements.

By looking back at good and bad practice examples from the past year, an annual review acts to demonstrate the value of the Compact. But while looking backwards is worthwhile - many other Compacts produce an annual review - it does not guarantee that lessons will be learned or that improvements will be made going forward. The key to improvement is agreeing challenging but achievable targets that are time limited and measurable.

By taking the evaluation of their local Compact seriously, the East Sussex

Compact Steering Group (CSG) has ensured that the value of their Compact is understood locally. Indeed, the fact that the East Sussex Strategic Partnership convenes once a year to provide external scrutiny of the Compact’s progress against its action plan demonstrates that when a robust process of performance management underpins a Compact, it can achieve a central position in the governance framework of local partnership.

The impact of this approach is not only evidenced in achievements against targets but also in the increasing occurrence and reporting of good practice which is usefully brought together in the annual report. In addition, by evaluating the barriers to achieving targets East Sussex has been able to find innovative solutions. For instance, champions are trained to be experts in the Compact codes that are most relevant to their organisation or department allowing them to have a greater, and more targeted impact.

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East Sussex

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Compact Principles

1: Partnership working

Tags

Evaluation

Implementation

Champions

Local Compacts

Summary

The East Sussex CSG has undertaken an annual review of the East Sussex Compact since 2006. In 2007 it was decided that the East Sussex Compact would benefit from a more strategic approach. After creating a 5 year plan for the Compact measures were agreed to track progress against the 5 year plan which was reported back to the CSG at the end of the year.

In their first meeting of the New Year the CSG, seeing the usefulness of setting targets and measuring success, began to look at barriers and goals for progress in the coming year. A set of targets were developed that struck a balance between being both challenging and achievable. Importantly, the CSG set targets that were measurable and easy to understand. This helped to ensure that champions are able to articulate goals easily and spread momentum.

The provision of officer support from the East Sussex Council (Paul Rideout) has been an important factor in establishing a performance evaluation framework for Compact in East Sussex. In many areas the Compact lead is not only the person who coordinates Compact activity but also the person who drives the agenda. However, East Sussex benefits from a highly engaged CSG who are capable of identifying and pursuing strategic objectives. This leaves Paul to focus on facilitating the process and concentrate on putting what has been agreed into action.



Quote

“The positive progress we have made in Compact working across East Sussex in the last 5 years is down to the commitment and energy of the steering group, champions, and signatories. Everyone involved in Compact working has contributed to the development of a learning environment that creates space for mature and meaningful conversations on how to strengthen partnership working.”

Mr Paul Rideout
Third Sector Policy Manager
East Sussex County Council

Relevant Compact Principles

1: A strong, diverse and independent civil society

Related links

East Sussex Compact: <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/partnerships/downloadcompact.htm>