

# **WORCESTERSHIRE PROTOCOL**

**A framework for the voluntary sector in Worcestershire and  
Worcestershire County Council Social Services  
Department to work together.**

**Worcestershire  
County Council  
Social Services**

**Worcestershire  
Association of  
Voluntary  
Organisations  
In Community Care**

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## **Purpose of the Protocol**

- 1.1 The Worcestershire Protocol has been developed to take forward the issues and understandings which were identified at a workshop held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2002 between representatives of Worcestershire County Council Social Services Department (“the SSD”) and Voluntary Sector Organisations in Worcestershire undertaking work in the fields of health and social care (“the voluntary sector”).
- 1.2 The Protocol sets out a framework for building good and productive relationships between the SSD and the voluntary sector based on shared vision and principles.
- 1.3 The Protocol provides a new starting point for how the SSD and the voluntary sector will work together and establishes a solid foundation for partnership working in the future and a model for partnership working between other agencies.

## **2. Shared vision**

- 2.1 The parties to the Protocol share a common wish to plan, develop and promote social and community care services and support to improve the wellbeing of communities in Worcestershire.

## **3. Shared principles**

- 3.1 An independent and diverse voluntary sector enhances statutory social and community care services.
- 3.2 A fundamental right of the voluntary sector is the right within the law to campaign, lobby and manage its own affairs as well as to comment on and challenge Council policy (irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist).
- 3.3 In the planning, development and promotion of social and community care services and support, the SSD and the voluntary sector have distinct but complementary roles.
- 3.4 Effective consultation and involvement are key elements of Good Partnership Working. It is vital to distinguish between these terms, which are defined as follows:-:
  - Consultation is defined as seeing, discussing and receiving.
  - Involvement is defined as including, comprising, embracing and encompassing.

## **4. Undertakings by the SSD**

### **4.1 Involvement and consultation in policy development;**

4.1.1 The SSD will develop jointly with the voluntary sector a code of good practice with regard to consultation and involvement on issues likely to affect it. The code will be developed in line with the content of the Worcestershire Compact.

4.1.2 The code will include:

- i) when consultation and involvement should take place
- ii) the types and levels at which consultation and/or involvement which can take place
- iii) how consultation and involvement should take place
- iv) how consultation and involvement will be used in developing policy
- v) details of teams/groups and officers with involvement in policy development and how to contact them

4.1.3 When consultation and involvement is undertaken the SSD will clearly set out in a written statement the purpose and arrangements, the timetable and the contact points. The timetable will take into account the extent of the consultation and involvement and will be wide enough to cover all relevant sections of the voluntary sector.

4.1.4 When the SSD requests formal consultation and involvement from the voluntary sector it will take account of any resource implications for the sector and explore jointly the implications for the sector and how these could be addressed.

4.1.5 In developing new policies and procedures the SSD will always assess the implications for the voluntary sector and ensure that appropriate discussions are held.

4.1.6 The SSD will ensure that all its staff are aware of, and work in accordance with, the code.

### **4.2 Funding**

The SSD will develop, in consultation with the voluntary sector a code of good practice with regard to funding. The code will be developed in line with the content of the Worcestershire Compact.

4.2.3 The code will include:

- i) how SSD funding is allocated
- ii) the principle of providing core funding in addition to funding which supports specific policy development.
- iii) the timetable and process for applying for funding and the allocation criteria
- iv) how the outcome of funding requests will be notified, including feedback when applications have been unsuccessful
- v) contracting arrangements between the statutory sector and voluntary sector

4.2.4 Funding relationships will normally be for 2 or 3 years and will specify the notice to be given (minimum 3 months) if the arrangement is not to be renewed.

4.2.5 Contracting arrangements will be kept as simple as possible and will clearly set out any agreed outcomes and monitoring arrangements.

4.2.6 In assessing whether funding relationships should be renewed the SSD will apply Best Value criteria to ensure fair access and value for money.

4.2.7 . Where bids are sought from the voluntary sector, outline bids only will be requested initially where possible to minimise work for the sector

## **5. Undertakings by the voluntary sector**

5.1 Policy development

5.1.1 The voluntary sector will:

- i) ensure that those involved in consultation and involvement understand their role, and are given the support they need to carry it out.
- ii) ensure that they are informed and consulted, where appropriate, before presenting a case to the SSD or responding to SSD consultations, and will report accurately on their views.
- iii) respect the confidentiality of SSD information when it has been offered on a confidential basis.

5.2 Funding

5.2.1 The voluntary sector will:

- i) maintain high standards of governance and conduct in meeting its obligations to funders and users with regard to

reporting and accountability. Where applicable, it will observe the accounting framework for charities.

- ii) respect and be accountable to the law and in the case of charities, observe guidance from the Charity Commission.
- iii) develop quality standards appropriate to the organisation.

## **6. Joint undertakings**

- 6.1 The parties will continue to explore other areas where they can add value by working with each other.
- 6.2 Initial priorities are:
  - 6.2.1 Use of the SSD's intranet site
  - 6.2.2 Extension of this Protocol to include other Council Services and other partner bodies e.g. Health; Education.
  - 6.2.3 Development of clear channels for communication between the SSD and the voluntary sector. Assessment of the capacity of Worcestershire Association of Voluntary Organisations in Community Care to undertake this role.

## **7. Business meetings**

- 7.1 Quarterly business meetings will be held between the parties to ensure that the undertakings, vision and principles set out in this Protocol are actively taken forward and further developed.
- 7.2 The meetings will be arranged and serviced by the SSD's Head of Strategy and Commissioning and will be chaired by the parties alternately.
- 7.3 At each meeting one party will "present" a topic for discussion. Additionally the SSD will update the voluntary sector on relevant policy development and funding issues including those relating to the full Council.

## **8. Review of this Protocol**

- 8.1 This Protocol will be reviewed jointly by the parties in July 2003, 12 months after the commencement of the agreement on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2002.

## **9. Statement of intent**

We confirm our commitment to the Worcestershire Protocol and commit ourselves to work in accordance with its content and in the spirit of its purpose and vision.

For Worcestershire County Council  
Social Services Department

For Worcestershire Association of  
Voluntary Organisations in Community  
Care

Signed: .....

Signed: .....

Title: .....

Title: .....

Date: .....

Date: .....