

Leeds Code of Practice for Working Together

- A. This Code of Practice is derived from the Compact for Leeds 2017, which sets out an agreement to strengthen relationships between the public and the third sector in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for the people of Leeds.
- B. The Code is primarily concerned with the describing practices and behaviours that underpin productive, equitable, relationships between the city’s third sector and public sector organisations, but it could applied to any relationship between organisations working together for the benefit of the city. Its content should be equally applicable to both formal partnerships and informal relationships.
- C. The Code has been drawn up by representatives from the public and third sectors, working together through the Leeds Third Sector Partnership.

D. Actions to Work Together effectively

The table below presents actions for good commissioning under 5 headings:

- Forming relationships
- Sustaining relationships
- Inclusive relationships
- Effective relationships
- Resourcing relationships

Organisations that work together (or wish to work together) should refer to the Code to ensure that they achieve good practice in relationship building.

Forming relationships
All parties have discussed/reviewed the aims of the relationship
The form (<i>level of formality</i>) of the relationship is matched to its aims
Roles and responsibilities are negotiated, clear and agreed by all parties
Parties understand the impact the relationship might have on other organisations and have negotiated the best way of including them
There are a range of ways to contribute to the relationship that take account of different levels of impact (e.g. observer, reference group, readers/reviews, co-optee/advisor).
All parties have agreed groundrules (<i>for more formal relationships terms of reference or constitution</i>), for expected behaviours and for managing the business of the relationship

There are effective mechanisms for making decisions

There are effective mechanisms for sharing decisions

Sustaining relationships

Professional boundaries and integrity are maintained; each relationship is treated on its merits irrespective of other tensions between organisations

All parties understand the differentials in power and capacity between organisations in the relationship and have agreed ways to mitigate them

There are appropriate groundrules for making complaints

All parties take action to build less well resourced/well developed organisations' capacity to engage

All parties deliver agreed actions accurately and in good time

The relationship is structured to plan for, and manage, changes to key personnel

From time to time all parties review the aims, objectives and operation of the relationship

There is commitment to ceasing a relationship when it has served its purpose

Inclusive relationships

Wherever appropriate, the relationship ensures that its work is accessible (and cost effective) considering whether methods of discussion other than meetings will achieve the desired outcome.

Meeting times are as accessible as possible; bearing in mind diverse needs (*e.g. volunteers, faith communities, part-time staff*)

Venues are accessible, welcoming and close to public transport

Action is taken to welcome new partners (*e.g. speak to new attendees informally, make introductions to meetings, provide pre-briefings where applicable*)

Effective relationships

Each party is clear about their reasons for being in the relationship, and what they hope to achieve from it

All parties negotiate the aims for the relationship, seeking common ground and

motivations
There are notes of discussions and agreed actions with timescales attached where appropriate.
Where appropriate, relationships vary their methods of gathering views/shaping options (<i>e.g. by using facilitated small group discussion rather than 'round table' meetings</i>)
All partners commit appropriate time and energy to the relationship
Action is taken to minimise risks related to the relationship (<i>e.g. reputational risks to values or brand, a mismatch between organisational cultures, differing levels of commitment, competition within the relationship</i>)
There are mechanisms for capturing and retaining learning from relationships (<i>particularly where a relationship is ceasing</i>)

Resourcing relationships
An assessment has been made of the time, money and skills that a relationship will need
Where project funding is sought, resources for appropriate working together are built in
Action is taken to minimise the time commitment for supporting the relationship, while maintaining its effectiveness
All parties work to reduce the resources committed to meetings (<i>e.g. exploring shared hosting relationships</i>)
All parties give timely notice of apologies for meetings and/or slippage in delivering agreed actions
The relationship has assessed, and makes use, of all the resources and assets organisations can offer (<i>e.g. staff/volunteer time, meeting space, knowledge, money</i>)
All parties take action to mitigate differences in capacity between organisations (<i>e.g. undertaking joint project working that will collaboratively raise skills and knowledge</i>)