

# Confident in our Future – Framework for working with the the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector



**Helyn Clack**  
**Cabinet Member for  
Communities**

Surrey County Council's [Confident in our Future](#) – Corporate Strategy sets out our commitment to continue to improve services for residents within the resources we will have in the future. It also commits the Council to working more effectively with partners, including the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS), to improve outcomes for residents and deliver value for money. Our relationship with the VCFS is more important to us than ever. Only by working together with our VCFS partners can we tackle the enormous challenges Surrey faces over the coming years.

In 2010, we published our Framework for working with the VCFS to guide development of a commissioning approach, enshrining clear principles and practices at the heart of how we would work together. Since then, we have made significant progress in co-designing services, and improving our processes. We have now refreshed the Framework, to reflect our Corporate Strategy and ensure the principles are relevant and support continuous improvement.

The County Council spends around £20 million every year with our VCFS partners to support Surrey residents. We recognise that Surrey's VCFS is multi-faceted and works with us to provide a diverse range of services; so a "one size fits all" approach would not work. As part of the Framework we want to help build capacity within the VCFS to respond to changes in the future and ensure the sustainability of the sector. We are clear that a thriving and successful VCFS will play a key role in creating the strong and self-reliant communities Surrey needs.

The purpose of this refreshed Framework is to continue to provide a consistent approach across the Council to managing all aspects of our relationships with the VCFS. The principles below form the basis of the Framework and set out how we will continue to support and work with the VCFS to jointly contribute to Surrey's wellbeing.

## The Principles

### Principle 1: Residents

**We will continue to work with the VCFS to develop our understanding of residents' needs and priorities, and involve local organisations alongside residents in co-designing services.**

### Principle 2: Value

**We will continue to maintain our focus on value for money to provide services that are cost-effective, responsive to needs and valued by residents.**

### Principle 3: Partnerships

**We will continue to work with the VCFS in a fair, equitable and transparent way. This includes proactively sharing information about our priorities, funding and processes at the earliest possible stage.**

### Principle 4: Quality

**We will continue to work with the VCFS to encourage and support innovative ways of delivering high quality services.**

### Principle 5: People

**We will continue to improve officers' and Members' understanding of the Surrey Compact and the role of the VCFS to ensure high quality partnership working, including better coordination across the Council.**

### Principle 6: Stewardship

**We will continue to support the VCFS to manage change and develop sustainable services and structures for the future.**

## Working together: the Surrey Compact

The Surrey Compact is an agreement that helps to improve relationships between public sector bodies and the VCFS in Surrey. It seeks to improve how partners behave, engage and work together and promote understanding and co-operation between planners and providers of local services. The County Council is fully signed up to the Compact, and this Framework builds on and works to strengthen our commitment to the Compact principles. This commitment is demonstrated by the fact that even in the current difficult financial circumstances, we have agreed to contribute to the costs of administering the Compact until at least 2016.

We take our responsibilities as part of the Compact seriously. The case studies below are just two examples of how we have put the Compact into practice, working with residents and service users, VCFS organisations and local providers to understand needs and redesign better services around those needs.

[SURREY COMPACT](#)

## Working together: case study – Advocacy Services

Advocacy services help people say what they want, represent their interests and get the services they need. Until recently advocacy services in Surrey were commissioned through 11 different organisations and were delivered to specific groups of people, such as residents with learning disabilities. Over the years this had resulted in significant duplication in some areas, but big gaps in others. For example, older people were not being adequately supported.

In 2011, the Council began a process of co-designing how the service would be delivered in the future, with a wide range of local organisations, residents and staff involved in saying what they wanted to happen. More than 400 people were involved in this process and it was collectively agreed a countywide service was needed which would be a preventative, universal service for all. A panel of staff and service users assessed the bids, awarded the contract to a consortium of local VCFS organisations and will continue to monitor how the new advocacy services are working. Contact Norah Lewis for more information – [norah.lewis@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:norah.lewis@surreycc.gov.uk)

## Working together: case study – Short Breaks for Disabled Children

The Council is working with VCFS partners to deliver innovative models of support that provide short breaks for disabled children and young people. Previously, a lot of the services we funded were based on quite traditional models such as residential respite, but families told us that they wanted their children to access the kinds of play and leisure opportunities that a non-disabled child would have.

The Short Breaks team talked to the existing providers about the kinds of services families would like to see, to stimulate some ideas and involve them in the design process. These were built into new service specifications, and the providers responded to the changes and positively welcomed them. The kinds of opportunities available are now much more diverse including assisted cycling, drama groups, gardening and cookery. The Short Breaks team helped developed a Play and Leisure Consortium for providers to get together, share ideas and cooperate.

We now run a Young People's Forum so we can get feedback about the services directly from young people themselves. The group also road tests services for us and tells us how useful they are. Contact Sandy Thomas for more information – [sandy.thomas@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:sandy.thomas@surreycc.gov.uk)

## Is there anything you would like to discuss?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the Framework, you can contact:

[rachel.crossley@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.crossley@surreycc.gov.uk)

If you would like this information in large print, on tape, in Braille or in another language, please contact us on:

Tel: 03456 009 009 Minicom: 020 8541 9698 Fax: 020 8541 9575

Email: [contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk)