

Northumberland Dispute Resolution Procedure

The Northumberland Positive Dispute Resolution Procedure is complementary to the Northumberland Compact. It sets a framework for the positive resolution of disputes if things go wrong. Disagreements are a natural part of any healthy working relationship. Having this procedure in place, and using it, demonstrates the importance of the VCS Compact to partners in Northumberland.

This Code is the result of work carried out by the Compact Reference group. The group is made up of public sector and voluntary & community sector organisations. The VCS members are nominated by the Northumberland VCS Consortium.

The Dispute Resolution Process

Stage 1 Issue is identified

Both parties try to resolve the issue between themselves.

The Compact Reference Group encourages partners to try and sort out their problems in a positive and mutually respectful way.

Stage 2 Initial query

If the parties concerned are not able to resolve the issue themselves then they can lodge a query or disagreement with either of two nominated representatives.

The representatives will acknowledge the query within three working days, and will let the applicant know within another 7 working days if this dispute resolution procedure is the appropriate way forward.

Stage 3 Investigation

If there is a valid case, then a Compact Dispute Resolution (CDR) Investigation Group will be set up by the two representatives. This group will be made up of relevant members of the NSP Board and the VCS Consortium. The CDR Investigation Group will look at the issue and make recommendations to resolve the dispute. We would normally expect the CDR Investigation Group will to report back within 30 working days.

Stage 4 National mediation

If stage 3 does not resolve the dispute then the CDR Investigation Group may suggest that the applicant takes its case to another appropriate mediation scheme. These could include:

- National Compact Mediation Scheme
- Ombudsmen – Local Government/Parliamentary and Health Service
- NCVO – Compact Advocacy Project