

# NAAN - Asserting Their Independence



Making the Compact work for you

## The Problem

The National Appropriate Adult Network (NAAN) has received a grant from the Home Office for a number of years. It advertised and recruited for a new member of staff, funded out of its unrestricted reserves, which was completely separate from the grant that it received. The Home Office was asking for a large amount of information and details concerning the recruitment process including details of discussions with individuals and the board. As part of the grant funding NAAN provides details and minutes of board meetings and other documents, and in the interests of good governance was prepared to pass the Home Office information such as the job description, person specification and numbers of applicants. However, it felt that having to supply further information as requested on board discussions over a post that was not funded by their grant was disproportionate.

## The Compact Issue

9.1 – To recognise and support the independence of the sector...and to determine and manage its own affairs. Funding and Procurement Code of Good Practice: 6.6 – Government undertakes to be proportionate in monitoring requirements and to focus on outcomes.

## The Action

NAAN was concerned about the requests for information and contacted the Compact Advocacy team to get advice on the situation. We advised them that from our perspective these requests were not consistent with the above Compact principles. NAAN responded to the Home Office making this case, but its requests persisted. The Compact Advocacy team then contacted the Home Office highlighting its concerns over the request for information and its consistency with the Compact. We pointed to NAAN's willingness to share other documents and provide some information on the recruitment process in the interests of good partnership working and emphasised the points around independence of voluntary and community organisations.

## The Outcome

After Compact Advocacy's intervention the Home Office amended the requests it was making of NAAN, which now did not include the more detailed information over the application and recruitment process that had been asked for previously. From NAAN's point of view the fact that the Compact Advocacy team became involved as a third party organisation that was advocating on consistency with the Compact was key to the problem being resolved: *"I am sure your intervention broke what appeared to be a deadlock"* – Lis Pritchard", Chief Executive, NAAN. Also important was the manner in which NAAN had gone about trying to find a solution. This is a good model for organisations to follow when engaging local and national government. By finding out its position with regards to the Compact first, engaging the Home Office in constructive dialogue maintaining its desire to continue to work together in partnership, and then knowing where to go to find further help and support when needed can be a successful way to challenge decisions.