

Compact Champions

PUBLIC SECTOR SUPPORT PACK

November 2010

What is the Compact?

The Compact is a voluntary agreement between the government and the voluntary sector in England. It recognises shared values, principles and commitments and sets out guidelines for how both parties should work together to ensure that better outcomes are delivered for local people. Central government signed up to the Compact collectively so it applies to all central government bodies.

From 1998, local authorities were encouraged by the Government to agree Local Compacts for partnership working with voluntary sector organisations in their areas. All top-tier authorities now have Local Compacts. These reflect the principles of the national Compact but vary from area to area, to reflect local issues and partnership arrangements.

For more information, please visit:
www.thecompact.org.uk



Wolverhampton Compact Partners and Champions are very pleased to have been involved in the research and writing of the Public Sector Support Pack for Compact Champions. Wolverhampton has a long history of strong partnership working which is underpinned by their successful Compact principles. They hope that sharing their experiences will help to inspire other local Compacts and Champions to work in partnership to deliver better outcomes for their communities.

Commission
for the **Compact**

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section one: **INTRODUCTION**

Public sector Compact Champions play an important role in making Local Compacts work. They help promote, raise awareness and build understanding of the Compact within their organisations. This helps increase implementation of Local Compacts, improve partnership working between public bodies and voluntary sector organisations and improve the lives of local people and communities.

Effective championing is pivotal to improving Local Compact performance and the objectives of your organisation. Previous research undertaken by the Commission for the Compact and Compact Voice¹ identified that many public sector Compact Champions felt their impact could be increased if they received further support and guidance on how to champion effectively.

This support pack has been developed in response to this demand. It has been designed to help guide and support public sector Compact Champions to further promote, raise awareness and increase implementation of their Local Compact. It is relevant to all public sector Compact Champions, whether they have been recently appointed or recruited or have been a Champion for some time.

Wolverhampton Compact and its public and voluntary and community sector Champions have played a leading role in developing the content of this support pack. It is therefore based on real life experiences of Local Compact Champions and the approaches and methods they have used. Thanks go to all those involved for their time, thoughts and effort.

This support pack is a starting point; it offers ideas on how to champion more effectively. We want you to use this document and build on it, make it relevant for your Compact Champions or organisation, and include your own best practice and ways of working. It should be a living document that acts as a reference for all your organisation's Champions, and develops to reflect learning and best practice.

¹ http://www.thecomcompact.org.uk/files/139883/FileName/cc_research_FINALwebversion.pdf

section two:

WHAT IS THE COMPACT AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES?

The national Compact is the agreement between the Government/ public sector and the voluntary sector in England. It outlines a set of actions called commitments that improve the way in which both sectors work together for the benefit of local people and communities.

The majority of relationships between public and voluntary sector organisations exist at the local level. In response to this, Local Compacts have been developed by local public and voluntary sector partners to improve and manage their partnership working. All top tier local authorities now have a Local Compact for their area. They include commitments and principles contained in the national Compact but are tailored to reflect each area's distinctive environment.

Local public and voluntary sector organisations "sign up" to a Local Compact. Public sector Local Compact signatories usually include local authorities of all configurations, health bodies, police and fire and rescue. Local Strategic Partnerships are also in many cases Local Compact signatories.

Becoming a signatory to a Local Compact means an organisation declares that it will operate in accordance with the commitments contained in it. This means that all parts of that signatory organisation and its staff are automatically committed to use their Local Compact when they interact with voluntary sector organisations. Where Local Strategic Partnerships are a signatory, the partnership itself and its member organisations must act in accordance with the commitments contained in it.

section three: **WHY THE COMPACT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU**

Public and voluntary sector organisations share a common aim: to achieve better outcomes for local people and communities. No one sector can meet the needs of local communities on its own – organisations have to work together to achieve this and can achieve better outcomes when they do.

The Compact is therefore important because it frames the relationship where a public body engages with partners who are from the voluntary sector. Using your Local Compact as the basis for your relationship or using it to establish the ‘rules of engagement’ is important as it can enable you or your organisation to:

- Develop and maintain effective partnership working arrangements
- Identify and work towards shared values, principles and commitments
- Work together in a productive and supportive environment where differences can be discussed and resolved
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Demonstrate that there is a fully engaged voluntary sector
- Develop joint processes which may include and lead to efficiency savings in the following areas:
 - » Contracts, monitoring, evaluation, funding, training and support, volunteering

- Ensure that all communications reflect Compact principles
- Identify opportunities to pool resources, people and their expertise and funding. This can help to:
 - » Plan for, identify and resolve local issues together
 - » Cushion the impact of reduced funding to a service area/organisation
 - » Create opportunities to be innovative
 - » Respond quicker to emerging priorities
 - » Develop new and existing initiatives
 - » Plan better for future priorities
 - » Support staff at all levels in their areas of work
 - » Engage local community members in public sector processes
 - » Create a better understanding of how different organisations work – and help to remove some of the barriers that prevent this being more effective.
- Improve how public services are delivered by working with voluntary sector organisations to better understand service users' needs
- Ensure that commissioning does not unintentionally prevent voluntary sector organisations from bidding to deliver services.

section four: **UNDERSTANDING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR**

The voluntary sector is a term that is often used within public sector bodies. However, not all staff within public sector bodies understand what the voluntary sector is or its value. It is important that all staff have some understanding when looking to implement the Compact.

The voluntary sector is generally seen as the wider not-for-profit sector, including the voluntary, community and faith sectors, co-operatives and housing associations. It also includes social enterprises which may make a profit, but invest any profit back into the community and not into shareholder dividends or private gain by directors.

The voluntary sector is also increasingly a key partner in the design and delivery of public services. However, perhaps one of the most important roles that the sector has to play is that of an independent and 'critical' friend to the public sector. The sector also brings the collective voice of communities that are often distanced from public sector bodies and service users in influencing the decisions that affect them.

The sector works from a particular value base which:

- Delivers services
- Advocates on behalf of marginalised groups
- Advocates on behalf of the whole sector
- Meets the needs of communities
- Provides the glue that holds society together
- Promotes community cohesion and social inclusion

- Works to increase social justice
- Works in partnership with the public sector to achieve strategic aims
- Adds value to an area by bringing in further resources which the public sector cannot access
- Supports people to be active in influencing decisions
- Supports people in volunteering activity
- Is the glue which binds civil society – social capital
- It supports a level of societal self-reliance
- Campaigns for change
- Involves service users in the design, commissioning and procurement of services
- Provides focused and sensitive delivery of services to meet specific needs
- Provides a complimentary role to the public sector
- Listens to communities to relay common concerns.

section five:

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE COMPACT RELATES TO YOUR SERVICE AREA

Whether your service area is children and young people, adults, health or community centres it is important to understand how the Compact relates to your service area and how it can help you deliver your service area or organisation's objectives.

By understanding and being able to demonstrate this, your service area and organisation will enjoy the benefits of a working in accordance with the Compact. Voluntary sector partners will also recognise that your service works in an open and transparent way.

Public bodies, in particular, can achieve efficiency and performance improvements by effectively applying the Compact in relationships with voluntary sector organisations. An overview of these benefits can be found in the section 6. Therefore, making the Compact effective in your service area and organisation is important.

The following ideas will help you understand if your service area is linked into your Compact and if not, how it can be achieved:

Where to start – what you need to know and what you might need to find out

Local Compact structure – how does your service area fit in?

- Understand which group leads on the Compact. Is this the Local Strategic Partnership or a group within your organisation? [It may be called a Compact Steering Group, Compact Implementation Group or Compact Monitoring Group.] If no current group oversees the Compact then is there an existing group that could take up this role? (This is most effective if the group operates at a strategic level and has representation from across the sectors – for example, the Local Strategic Partnership.)

- Is your organisation or service area represented on the group and at what level - is it at Chief Executive level, middle management or operational level?
- If not, why not and how can this be rectified?
- How can your service area feed into this group?
- Who is responsible for leading on the Compact in your service area and how can you get support and pass on/discuss Compact issues?
- Is there a Compact action plan that has specific outcomes that your service area is tasked/helps to achieve?
- What are the key drivers for your service area and is the voluntary sector able and encouraged to:
 - » Access, influence, assist with planning and delivery?
- Are there any overarching themes or outcomes that are shared with other services areas, departments, organisations or the voluntary sector where the Compact can help you to work better together on?

section six:

DEMONSTRATING THE DIFFERENCE: THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF A COMPACT WAY OF WORKING

The Commission for the Compact has published research that demonstrates efficiency and performance improvements for public bodies, in particular, local authorities when they use the Compact as a basis for relationships with voluntary organisations. The research was carried out by Grant Thornton UK LLP in response to a number of local authorities citing a lack of business case for implementing the Compact. The research identified the following social and economic benefits for local authorities when they work in accordance with the Compact. These benefits can be used to help you sell the value of the Compact and increase implementation. The benefits are:

- Improved relationships with voluntary organisations
- More effective consultation including: increased reach and increase in respondents, increases citizen involvement in decision-making and reductions in the cost of gathering views and evidence
- More efficient monitoring including: reduced internal costs, removal of duplication and “freeing up” officer time
- Improved commissioning including: improved understanding of the needs of service users, improved service design, “downstream” service savings and staff time savings
- Gains from longer-term funding including: stability and sustainability in delivery partnerships, administrative savings, increased staff retention and improvements in institutional memory
- Advancing equality including: increased understanding of the community as a whole, improvements in Equality Impact Assessments.

An electronic toolkit is also available to allow individual local authorities to assess Compact performance and identify potential efficiencies and performance improvements. Included in the research report are 20 good practice case studies that demonstrate the benefits of Compact working across a broad range of service areas and Compact commitment themes. They highlight how local authorities applied Compact commitments and the social and economic advantages that resulted in doing so.

To access the research, toolkit and case studies, please visit:
www.thecompact.org.uk/benefits

section seven:

WHAT IS A COMPACT WAY OF WORKING?

What is a Compact way of working and how can it be achieved? A Compact way of working for your organisation occurs where Local Compact principles and commitments are consistently applied when engaging with voluntary sector organisations. This can be achieved by looking at the way your organisation or service area currently works, making a commitment to improve and then embed Local Compact commitments in your organisation. Often this requires a change in working culture.

Foremost, it is not additional work – it's a more efficient way of working. From the outside, the structure of public sector organisations can appear complex and impenetrable to others, particularly small community groups. Conversely, there may be members of staff within a service area that have no knowledge of staff in another service area who may be working with the same voluntary sector organisation.

In order to work towards and achieve a Compact way of working within your organisation you need to implement and embed the Compact by focusing on and evaluating the four Ps – Performance, Practice, Process and Policies.

Performance

How do you know if you are working in accordance with your Local Compact? The following can help you better understand and manage your situation:

- **How well are you doing?** You need to know where you are starting from. Where is there awareness, understanding and implementation of the Compact in your organisation? Where are there gaps? Some Local Compact areas have set up a network of Champions, and/or monitoring/steering groups to assess Compact performance.

- **How to start going forward** – understanding your performance helps you understand what you need to do and will help you identify how you are going to get there. It is important to know, who is going to do what (whether its an organisation, a group or an individual).
- **Develop an action plan** – being clear about what it is that you want to achieve can be made easier by developing an outcomes focused action plan.
 - » If one does not exist, talk to partners preferably in a workshop setting or meeting to decide what the outcomes will be, the target dates and how they will be monitored and measured.
 - » If one already exists for Compact partners, this can be shared across service areas and adapted to meet individual service needs.

Practice

In order to change the way you work and ensure you are working in accordance with your Compact's commitments, all staff including members and volunteers need to be aware of this objective.

A Compact way of working can be achieved by ensuring that staff are:

- Aware of the Compact
- Embrace the Compact and be willing/committed to working to its principles
- Receive regular updates and information about the Compact locally, nationally and regionally – particularly about local successes which will help reinforce the purpose of the Compact, and provide lessons to learn from to avoid pitfalls.

- Identify where it may be beneficial to appoint Compact Champions. Compact Champions will need to:
 - » Be offered initial induction training, have opportunities to share any successes and challenges and updates on the Compact both locally and nationally.
 - » Meet frequently and be invited to guide the overall direction and development of the Compact through events and meetings. They should be able to feed into the Compact Steering Group.
 - » Be identified at different levels. In some areas, Steering Group Members are automatically Compact Champions and, as part of this group, will undertake the more detailed work on Compact development.

Process

Achieving a Compact way of working requires acknowledgement and acceptance that the way your organisation works may need to change. By changing your processes and reviewing them regularly in line with the Compact this can create opportunities to work more effectively, efficiently and innovatively. Changing your processes can help to:

- Create efficiencies for your organisation and your partners
- Ensure your work is more open, accountable, accessible and transparent to others
- Ensure that there is better support for staff
- Improve the way services are designed and delivered

- Keep the organisation current and up to date with social, economic and environmental factors that may impact on service delivery and service users
- Build mutual respect between all parties and equity in relationships

Policy

In order to bring about 'real' change within your organisation and develop a culture of Compact working, it is crucial that senior managers, chief executives and elected members are committed to the Compact. They should look to demonstrate the organisation's commitment to the Compact by ensuring that policies, reports and recommendations are developed and written in the spirit of and follow the principles of the Compact.

By doing this, officers will feel they are being supported in their efforts to work in accordance with the Compact and also that they can discuss matters, which may represent a challenge to implementation, for decisions and actions to be made at the appropriate level. This will encourage learning about the Compact at all levels and officers will become more able to identify potential non-compliance before it creates an issue for the organisation.

section eight:

THE ROLE OF CHAMPIONS AND THEIR BROAD FUNCTIONS

The role of a Compact Champion does not have to involve extra work, although it does sometimes involve extra reading and attending events. It is primarily about a way of working that helps to make your work more effective, save time and resources, add value and helps your service area and organisation achieve its objectives.

The role of a Compact Champion is to promote the value of partnership working between your organisation and voluntary sector organisations, within your service area or organisation. Whilst every Local Compact is different, Compact Champions may find the following useful as a broad role overview:

Promoting Compact use within your service area

- Check that documentation produced by your service area is developed in accordance with your Compact and where appropriate ensure it is “Compact-proofed” – this can save time and prevents adverse criticism at the end of a process
- Lead on sharing information about the Compact regularly in team meetings
- Get to know the right people to make contact with for Compact information both locally and nationally. This involves making contact with Compact Champions in local voluntary sector organisations.

Modelling a Compact way of working

- Understand that working in accordance with the Compact is likely to get the best outcome for you, your organisation and most importantly for local people and communities.
- Understand the context and values that voluntary sector organisations work to and within
- Authentic communication is a good start – this means being open, honest and transparent, even when it is not comfortable.

Be prepared to champion the voluntary sector

- Understand and recognise there is a power imbalance between public sector bodies and voluntary sector organisations.
- Understand the voluntary sector and its value in helping to deliver better outcomes for local people and communities.
- The public sector can be difficult to penetrate for small community groups. Being aware of this can help your organisation work in accordance with the Compact. A Compact Champion could help to ensure that there is effective community engagement and good communication
- Look for ways to improve your service area's openness to influence from voluntary sector organisations
- Support 'cultural change' where equitable partnership working happens in practice.

Being a contact for Compact information and attending Compact events

- Be a two-way conduit for information feeding into Compact development and cascading information to the service area/team
- Be a point of contact for other staff around various issues
- Understand the process for disputes in relation to Compact implementation, how to resolve them and who to contact for support
- Know the key points from your Local Compact document. You don't need to know every point that is contained in your Local Compact – just those ways of working that relate to your service area
- Keep up to date with the national Compact agenda.

section nine: **TEMPLATE JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

Every public body is different and so is every Local Compact. Many public sector organisations have already developed a set of common and consistent actions for their Champions to undertake in order to improve Compact implementation. Other organisations will not have done this. This section provides a road map for those organisations looking for a steer on what their Champions can and should be doing.

The main role of Champions as a group and as individuals within their own organisations and more widely will be to:

- Have a good understanding of the Compact
- Promote public and voluntary sector partnership working underpinned by Compact principles and good practice
- Facilitate communication between public and voluntary sector organisations
- Identify, share, support and encourage the development of good practice
- Ensure that the Compact is integrated into policy documents, practice and mechanisms such as scrutiny and inspection
- Be the focal point for Compact working and to raise awareness within their organisations
- Help to make the Compact relevant to the range of organisations or agencies that they work with
- Keep organisations up to date with the Compact development and provide information to promote it
- Feed into the Annual Compact Report
- Link with the Compact Monitoring and Implementation Group

- Be the initial point of contact for advice, complaints and mediation on issues relating to the Compact
- Attend training, events and network meetings
- Understand the importance of equality and diversity
- Communicate, share and celebrate Compact successes.

section ten:

CABINET MEMBERS OR LOCAL COUNCILLORS AS COMPACT CHAMPIONS

As an elected representative of the community, Members (Councillors) are likely to be in contact on average with more people than anyone else working in the public sector. A Member's role requires them to balance the needs and interests of the people in their area (ward), the city and their political party. They are essential in deciding what is in the public interest amidst what can sometimes be a range of conflicting issues and views.

Members are a powerful vehicle to promote the Compact and play a critical role embedding a Compact way of working throughout a range of organisations, forums and partnerships. This section has been written to support the role of Members but can be adapted to fit the role of Parish/Town, District, and County Councillors.

A Member's role as a Compact Champion can be broken down into three main functions or responsibilities:

Promotion

Members can play a key role advocating the Compact and its benefits to:

- Local people
- Groups
- The council
- Partnerships
- Organisations within the city.

Policy

Members can promote and increase Compact implementation by:

- Ensuring the Compact is adhered to in the scrutiny and decision-making process
- Ensuring the Compact is incorporated into policies, reports and guidelines
- Encouraging partnerships and other public, private and voluntary sector organisations to adopt a Compact way of working
- Challenging officers, colleagues, service areas, partnerships or organisations when the Compact has not been applied.

Community leadership

Members can help promote and increase implementation of the Compact and help assist in delivering their community leadership role by:

- Campaigning on local issues in the best interests of the community taking steps to ensure Compact principles are adhered to
- Encouraging community involvement in the decision-making process and to work towards equality
- Advocating and lobby on behalf of local people where the Compact isn't being adhered to.

section eleven: **WHAT TO DO WITH SUCCESS STORIES?**

It is important to celebrate and share success stories that come about through using your Compact.

One of the main issues for people using the Compact is that they find it hard to relate the policy to practice.

Sharing case studies, successes and good news stories helps people to understand how to use the Compact and why it is important. Promoting success also helps create momentum and drive that can be used to increase implementation.

Ideas for gathering and sharing information, and why Compact Champions have an important role:

- Champions are important in this role because they can help to gather stories to be shared
- It helps if there is someone who is responsible for receiving information and turning it into a communications plan
- Every time the Compact is used, it can help someone else use the Compact more effectively.

Stories can be used in the following ways:

- If you have an e-bulletin, share one good news story every time you send it out
- If you have a larger or longer success story, turn it into a case study that can be easily picked up and used to support others in their Compact usage
- Turn some successes into a few pages of 'sharing the Compact approach' news

- Use successes with commissioning processes in a newsletter to commissioners – and of course other specific service area successes can be used as good news stories in these areas
- Following on from the point above – service area specific news could go into service specific news letters or bulletins
- The Compact is a policy document as well as a practical tool, however, it is not always easy to attribute success to the Compact, but using the Compact can help towards building up the picture of improved practice.

Ways of gathering the stories:

- Create a template for Compact Champions and others to complete
- Champions can bring along any news on Compact implementation to meetings
- Ask people to contact you with stories in your e-bulletin
- Run annual research asking Champions and others how they have used the Compact and then publicise the stories in various communications with both sectors.

Further information

This publication is available on the Compact website at:
www.thecompact.org.uk/publications

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