

COMPACT FOR HILLINGDON

Amended Version November 2010

What is The Compact?

The compact aims to provide a framework for the relationship between the Voluntary and Community sector, the London Borough of Hillingdon and Hillingdon Primary Care Trust. It follows the publication of the Government's Compact on the Relations Between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England in November 1998.

The Compact recognises that Government and the Sector fulfil complementary roles in the development and delivery of public policy and services, and that the Government, including Local Government, has a role in promoting voluntary and community activity in all areas of our national life.

The Compact, both locally and nationally, is aimed at creating a new approach to partnership. It should provide a framework to enable relations to be carried out differently and better than before. The Compact is intended as a starting point for developing partnerships, based on shared values and mutual respect.

Nationally, the Compact sets out a range of shared principles as follows:

- Voluntary action is an essential component of democratic society.
- An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the well being of society.
- In the development and delivery of public policy and services, the Government and the sector have distinct but complementary roles.
- There is added value in working in partnership towards common aims and objectives. Meaningful consultation builds relationships, improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- The Government and the sector have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders. Common to both is the need for integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Voluntary organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims
- The Government plays a significant role, among other things, as a funder of the sector. Funding can be an important element in the relationship between them.
- Both acknowledge the importance of promoting equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

Since the inception of the compact Codes of practice have been prepared in a number of key areas. These currently include : funding,

consultation, volunteering, community groups, and Black and Minority Ethnic organisations.

The Government has actively encouraged the extension of the Compact to Local Government and to other public bodies including Health bodies. There is some indication that a local Compact will become a requirement for those aspects of Central Government funding which require local partnerships to be developed.

A COMPACT FOR HILLINGDON

It is now recognised that all those concerned would welcome a Compact for Hillingdon. It is anticipated that, in the first instance, the signatories will be the Hillingdon Local Strategic Partnership organisations, and voluntary and community organisations working in partnership with, or receiving funding from them. It is hoped that the compact will influence the actions of other bodies and organisations even where they are not initial signatories.

AIMS

The aims of the Compact for Hillingdon are:

- To improve communication, understanding, trust and collaboration between the voluntary and statutory sectors
- To agree a framework for effective consultation, and to set out the principles for developing working relationships between local statutory organisations and Voluntary and Community sector partners
- To influence effective joint working and partnerships both within sectors and across them
- To ensure that the work of the Voluntary and Community sector is valued within the Local Strategic Partnership, and contributes to the Community Plan

In addition there is an aspiration to provide a practical guide to working together, bearing in mind a shared objective to improve the lives of the whole community.

SHARED PRINCIPLES

All Partners recognise and respect that:

- The overall objective of the voluntary and statutory sectors in Hillingdon is to support and improve the lives of local people
- Partners have differing constitutions, and methods of accountability
- All partners have distinct but complementary roles and that there is strength to be found in working in partnership
- All partners need to maintain integrity, objectivity, openness and honesty in their dealings with each other and the local community
- The statutory sectors role as a significant funder of voluntary and community groups is an important aspect of the partnership
- The Voluntary and Community sector also has a contribution in attracting external funding for activities in the borough which meet partnership aims and objectives

EQUALITIES STATEMENT

All partners to this compact are committed to ensuring that no individual, group or community is disadvantaged or excluded from playing an active part in society in Hillingdon because of their race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexuality, religion, age, class.

There are 6 Key Themes in this Compact:

1. PARTNERSHIP
2. CONSULTATION
3. FUNDING
4. VOLUNTEERING
5. COMMUNITY GROUPS
6. ENCOURAGING DIVERSITY

1. PARTNERSHIP

Effective partnership is needed if everyone is going to achieve their goals. When done properly partnership can lead to better use of resources and more effective working relationships.

In Hillingdon, some of this work has only just begun although there are examples where it has been working effectively for a longer period of time.

The principles underlining good partnership working should be:

- Mutual respect · Transparency, honesty and openness
- A commitment to understanding, respecting and educating each other, and an acceptance that no one partner has all the answers/expertise
- An understanding of the roles, resources and reporting mechanisms of each partner
- Mutual responsibility for the success or failures of all partnerships
- Ways of working which allow smaller organisations to contribute, and can accept differing points of view
- All partners will respect issues of confidentiality where these are made clear, and where the reasons for such confidentiality are given.

2. CONSULTATION, PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT

All partners to the Compact recognise the importance of consultation, participation and involvement in planning and delivering high quality services that meet the needs of the people of Hillingdon. The partners accept the definitions of Community Development outlined in the strategy developed for the Local Strategic Partnership and support the continued development of such a strategy. The following principles are agreed:

- The Voluntary and Community sector can often bring an understanding of the needs of vulnerable groups and an expertise in encouraging meaningful participation
- Consultation with organisations is in addition to, not instead of, consultation with those people who use services locally
- All partners recognise that timescales may be imposed from external sources, and are not under the control of those carrying out the consultation, however it is accepted that longer consultation can lead to more meaningful outcomes
- Consultation periods will begin at the earliest practicable date to allow the maximum period for consultation possible
- An adequate period is given for written responses, 12 weeks is the ideal. If a lesser period is unavoidable, reasons for this should be given
- Consultation documents will be written in plain English, and with sufficient explanatory notes to make them understandable
- Where necessary appropriate arrangements will be made to enable those with special language and accessibility needs to take part in the consultation.
- Where time allows organisations will consult services users and volunteers in deciding their response
- A written analysis of any consultations should be shared with those that have contributed to it.
- Feedback on decisions made as a result of consultation is an important contribution to encouraging participation in the future; this should include why preferred options have not been thought to be viable.

3. FUNDING

It is recognised that the funding relationship between voluntary and community organisations and the statutory sector is an important one. In providing funding statutory funders are encouraging the distinct role of voluntary and community organisations in meeting common objectives and aspirations for improving the quality of life for the local community.

This Compact aims to set a framework for good funding relationships. The partners accept that funding priorities will differ between statutory organisations, and that each funder will probably need a separate funding strategy. In addition some statutory partners may be governed by external requirements on contracting and tendering.

However, as guiding principles, funders agree:

- To ensure that funding criteria are clear, decision- making is transparent and effective feedback is offered if required
- Funding arrangements for amounts above £5000 should have negotiated Service Level Agreements, where appropriate, which clearly set out respective responsibilities, and include length of commitment and monitoring requirements. *However, it should be noted that due to current financial constraints, the Council is unable to offer multi-year*

SLA's for corporate grants in 11-12. Funding awards are for 1 year only

- Such SLA s should also indicate the reasons for which funding might be withdrawn e.g. poor performance against set goals, and indicate ways in which problems could be resolved. Ideally they will also include provision for inflation increases over the life of the SLA.
- That funded organisations are independent and that funding should recognise this, and should not seek to exercise control or restrict the right of the organisation to lobby where appropriate or to act as 'critical friend'.
- The funding of core costs enables organisations to achieve external funding and to manage this appropriately. Core funding is essential to support sustainability and to contribute effectively to partnerships.
- That monitoring and evaluation processes should be developed to take account of the individual circumstances of each organisation.

Decommissioning/Reducing or Ending Funding

- The Council will give a minimum of three months notice when reducing or ending funding to a group
- The Council will notify groups as early as possible where there are resource constraints and where possible endeavour to give more than three months notice
- Groups will be informed if their funding is part of a review and the Council will undertake assessments of affected groups including Equalities Impact Assessments where relevant

Voluntary and Community Organisations agree:

- To meet the reporting and monitoring requirements of funders when these have been agreed within an SLA.
- That they have a responsibility to use public money wisely and to deliver services as agreed, or to discuss problems with funders as soon as they are aware of them.
- To demonstrate their commitment to diversity and equality of opportunity in providing services.
- To work towards setting and maintaining high quality standards.
- To involve service users, volunteers and other stakeholders in the planning, development, delivery and monitoring of activities.
- To work in partnership with funders, and also with voluntary and community colleagues to use opportunities to access funding from external sources.
- To ensure that financial and other procedures meet all relevant regulations and are consistent with good public accountability

4. VOLUNTEERING

All partners recognise that volunteering offers an ideal opportunity for individuals to contribute to their local community. Volunteering is not a substitute for paid staff, and should not be used to replace them.

Volunteering is a way of adding value to community action, and is still the basis for most community activities.

Recent research nationally, and across West London, shows the economic worth of Volunteering. All partners would wish to see this contribution recognised, respected and encouraged.

All partners:

- Recognise that volunteering takes many forms, including acting as Charity Trustees
- Will actively encourage volunteering amongst their own staff
- Support good practice in the management and use of volunteers who are required to provide services within their organisations
- Will promote diversity and equal opportunities in volunteering
- Ensure proper training and support for volunteers
- Ensure appropriate steps are taken to safeguard both volunteers, and vulnerable people for whom they are asked to provide services
- Recognise the contribution of volunteers in annual reports, publicity etc.

5. COMMUNITY GROUPS

- All partners recognise that the majority of community activity takes place in small community groups with no paid staff
- These groups contribute to the vibrancy of community life in Hillingdon, and might include smaller BME and faith groups.
- Any funding available to these groups is likely to be on a smaller scale i.e. less than £5000 and application and monitoring processes should recognise this
- Umbrella organisations have a responsibility to support community groups and to ensure their interests are properly represented

6. ENCOURAGING DIVERSITY

All partners recognise and welcome the diversity of tradition, culture and belief within the communities we serve and collectively aim to provide appropriate and responsive services to all parts of the community.

All partners seek to ensure that they reflect diversity through their governance and staffing (paid and voluntary); this commitment should be reflected in meaningful equal opportunities policies, which are monitored where appropriate.

7. PROBLEM SOLVING

A process will be developed through which apparent failures by partners to meet the requirements of the Compact can be resolved quickly and as fairly and informally as possible.