

Local Compact Miniguide for everyone, everywhere in England



Your Local Compact is ...

The agreement between local public bodies and voluntary groups to improve their relationship for mutual advantage. It helps join everything up and do things together that make a difference. It makes commitments on both sides, clarifies what partners can expect from each other and how to work together.

But it's more than a document

A reference

To be cited and followed but also used to hold each other to account, ensuring through compliance mechanisms that we stick to what we signed up to do.

A way of working

Recognising the Compact as a living document for building relations that change how partners behave, engage and work together at an individual, organisational and partnership level.

By building on success, the deal can be improved so that everyone wins – especially the community that public bodies and local groups exist to serve.

Who is it for?



It is not just for larger voluntary organisations funded to deliver services but crucially small community groups, black and minority ethnic groups and faith groups.

It should be used top to bottom in every public service and department.

What's in it for us?

<p style="text-align: center;">Public Bodies</p> <p>Boosting service quality, inspection ratings, relationships, partnership effectiveness, involvement in achieving top priorities, and external resources.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Voluntary Groups</p> <p>Having enabling and supportive local public bodies that value the difference you make in the area, recognise your expertise and understand how you work.</p>
---	--

Although the government says every area should have a Local or Countywide Compact, public bodies and local groups themselves have welcomed having one.

What should we expect?

- ▶ Public bodies and groups to work together easier, quicker and better.
- ▶ Continuous significant relationship improvement.
- ▶ The Local Compact to be relevant to all levels of engagement with all staff.
- ▶ Our Compact to deliver wins.

Know what your Local Compact says

- ▶ On the undertakings, including good governance in local groups.
- ▶ On the commitment to supporting the independence of local groups.
- ▶ On the mechanisms to make it work.

Your Compact may include codes on Funding, Consultation, Partnership Working, Community Groups, Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, and Volunteering.

Key issues are:

Fair and effective funding	Grants and contracts: covering the full cost, payment in advance and multi-year funding. Publishing who gets what funding. Support in kind: 100% rate relief, premises, etc. Joint work on procurement strategy.
-----------------------------------	--

Meaningful consultation	Enough time to have a say (e.g. 12 weeks), being heard and having your issue or locality taken seriously. Improving communication.
--------------------------------	--

Working together – why?

Boosting involvement as partners in service planning, design, delivery, review and improvement means:	
Public Bodies Draw on knowledge from groups.	Voluntary Groups Gain more influence.
Gaps identified, duplication avoided, resources better used, red tape cut in grants processes: <i>better services for the community.</i>	

Working together – on what?

Overview and Scrutiny, Best Value, Community Planning and the Local Area Agreement – if groups don't know what these are, how to get involved, what support they would get and what they would get out of it then councils need to explain it all. There should be working together on:

- ▶ Commissioning and procurement strategies.
- ▶ Funding priorities and processes.

Your Local Compact covers all aspects of relations across the whole range of voluntary and community groups. A key Compact principle is that service delivery and voluntary and community activity are equally important. Therefore, contracts and grants (and other support) should be kept in balance.

A Compact way of working together in partnership

Your Compact helps you get it right together rather than wrong alone. It means when a local public body is developing an idea, project, policy or consultation proposal:



A Compact way of working *is* agreed partnership values happening

Most people in local public bodies and voluntary groups agree on what makes partnership work when engaging one-to-one and within partnership boards:

Trust and confidence
Mutual understanding and respect
Openness and transparency
Accountability and integrity
Leadership and common purpose
Listening and good communication

Your Compact should be making these the hallmarks of how the business is done so all enjoy partnership working at its best. It is also a partnership good governance tool for ensuring rules are jointly set, partners treated equally and that the breadth and diversity of groups is properly represented.

- ▶ Use the scorecard from the Local Compact Implementation Workbook on *How well does your partnership work?*



Your LSP should ensure:

- ▶ A Compact way of working across all partnerships.
- ▶ The Local Compact is being used in key policy processes.
- ▶ The capacity and infrastructure support for groups enables them to engage in the LAA, partnerships and processes.
- ▶ The LAA statement of community involvement is resourced.

How are Local Compacts resourced?

The Government has agreed a resourcing formula in the national Compact Funding and Procurement Code:

The Local Strategic Partnership To ensure that the Local Compact resourcing formula happens		
Local Public Bodies To share the cost of Local Compact development and partnership building.	Partnership Boards To include contributions in spending plans and government funding programme bids.	The Sector To provide a package of support in kind, e.g. time, expertise, use of networks and community links.

Using your Local Compact

Be involved in your Compact even if you don't sit on your Local Compact Group, especially during Compact Week – first week in November.

Finding new ways of using your Compact stretches what it can do. Training, experience of using it before and publicising successes can build knowledge on how to use it. Your Compact can be used to:

- ▶ Make upcoming work more successful by doing it together.
- ▶ Share best practice, learning and innovation.
- ▶ Benchmark how well partnerships work.
- ▶ Strengthen community engagement.
- ▶ Sort out conflicts between local groups and public bodies.
- ▶ Open up new opportunities which wouldn't have been possible before.

Does anyone ask: why aren't we using our Compact to do this?

Scrutiny Councillors

- ▶ Check cabinet reports are Compact-proofed (including showing impact of proposals on voluntary groups).
- ▶ Get groups involved in the scrutiny process and policy reviews.
- ▶ Contribute to Compact evaluation and review.

Voluntary groups

- ▶ Have a Compact champion who ensures trustees and staff know and use it.
- ▶ Fulfil your commitments under the Local Compact.
- ▶ Use it to guide engagement with public bodies.

What makes our Local Compact work?

- ▶ A Compact Group that meets regularly to drive implementation.
- ▶ Compact Champions in public bodies, partnerships and local groups.
- ▶ Processes for action planning, monitoring, dispute resolution and review.

How can I tell how well it is working?

- I am kept briefed on the progress the Local Compact is making.
 - Others know, use and mention the Local Compact.
 - Public bodies link the Compact with their top priorities.
 - People believe relationships, partnership and engagement are improving.
-
- ▶ The Local Compact Implementation Workbook includes a relationship poll form, implementation checklist and 50 performance indicators to pick from.

What happens when things go wrong?

- ▶ Have a positive attitude on resolving disputes and expect this of everyone.
- ▶ Your Compact should have a local disputes procedure for both sides to use.
- ▶ The Local or Health Ombudsman may also take Compact breach cases.
- ▶ NCVO's Compact Advocacy Programme can advise and support local groups (telephone 020 7520 2460).

This miniguide is produced by **Compact Voice** (formally, the national Compact Working Group), which represents the voluntary and community sector on the Compact.

Compact Voice is based at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, which printed and published this miniguide.

Free copies of the *Local Compact Implementation Workbook* for Local Compact Group members and Champions are available from:

Compact Voice, c/o NCVO, Regent's Wharf, 8 All Saints Street, London N1 9RL or from paul.barasi@ncvo-vol.org.uk or telephone 020 7520 2453.

The Compact website at www.thecompact.org.uk includes more information on Local Compacts.