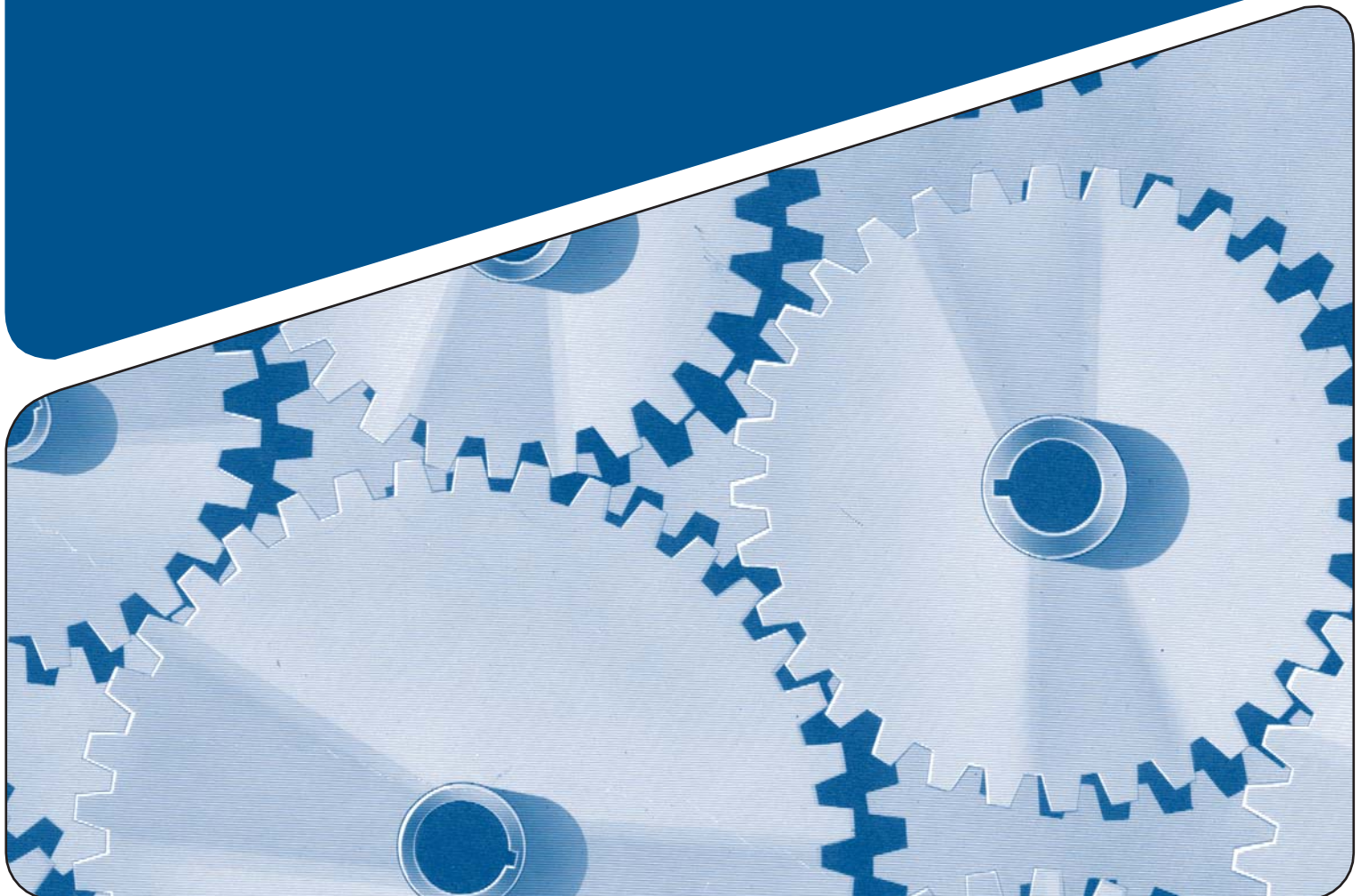


# HOUNSLOW VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT



## Foreword



Councillor Peter Thompson  
Leader of the London Borough of Hounslow and Chair of Hounslow Local Strategic Partnership

As Chair of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), it gives my great pleasure to welcome you to the Hounslow Voluntary Sector Compact.

It is impossible to overstate the fantastic work carried out by many voluntary groups across the borough and this compact will play a key part in how all members of the LSP can support this effectively. This is the first time that the LSP has agreed the adoption of a local compact, and will bring many positive benefits to all partners on the LSP, and those voluntary organisations that work with them.

The Hounslow Voluntary Sector Compact provides a clear action plan for the implementation of principles that will improve relations between sectors, including-

- A framework for developing positive working relationships between LSP partners, when they are working in partnership with the voluntary sector.
- A commitment to the implementation of best practice funding principles, including a commitment to the implementation of 3 year funding for voluntary organisations and the continuation of grant funding where appropriate.
- A commitment to set in place clear processes for consulting and involving the voluntary and community sector, this commitment puts emphasis on both voluntary and statutory organisations to out in place processes that make best use of the resources available.

However the real strength of the Compact lies in the partnerships that will strengthen through the implementation phase. The closer working that will develop and the benefits from this will provide a legacy of positive working that will bring positive results for organisations and residents in Hounslow.

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## **Compact Outcomes**

The purpose of this Compact is to achieve the following outcomes-

- Maintain high standards of governance, conduct and openness
- Effectively and accurately engage in consultation and involvement
- Implement best practice funding principles
- Develop a mutual understanding and respect of the constraints placed on each sector
- Promote sustainability and increasing independence

In working to fulfil these outcomes Hounslow will be promoting the adoption of key principles from The Compact.

## **Key Compact Principles**

The following principles are taken from The National Compact, Hounslow is committed to fulfilling these principles through delivering on our compact outcomes.

1. Voluntary action is an essential component of a democratic society.
2. An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the well-being of society.
3. In the development and delivery of public policy and services, the public sector and the voluntary and community sector have distinct but complementary roles.
4. 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.
5. The public sector and the VCS have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders, but common to both is the need for integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
6. VCS organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims.
7. The public sector plays a significant role, among other things, as a funder of some VCS organisations. Funding can be an important element of the relationship between the Public sector and the VCS.
8. Both public sector and VCS acknowledge the importance of promoting equality of opportunity for all people regardless of race, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation or religion and or belief.

## **Who are the Compact Partners**

This Compact represents a mutual working agreement between all three sectors – i.e. the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. Any group, organisation, company or individual who wishes to work with the voluntary sector (regardless of whether there is a financial relationship) on a one off project, a longer term development, or a partnership, can be aided by Compact principles.

### **Voluntary and Community Sector**

In this document when referring to the voluntary sector we mean this in the widest possible sense, including voluntary organisations, charities, community groups, social enterprises and other not for profit organisations. The term Third Sector is often used in this circumstance, throughout this document these terms should be considered interchangeable.

### **CVS Hounslow**

The Council for Voluntary Service in Hounslow (CVSH) is the independent umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector in Hounslow. CVSH is the lead organisation for the Hounslow Capacity Builders' Consortium of infrastructure support organisations in the borough.

In order to strengthen relationships between the voluntary sector and all other stakeholders CVSH undertakes to work with the London Borough of Hounslow to:

- Communicate the principals of this Compact to all the stakeholders
- Help stakeholders to implement the principals of this Compact

### **Public Sector**

When referring to the public or statutory sector through this document, it refers not only to the council and other public services, such as the PCT, Police, Fire Brigade but their service delivery partners including and private sector bodies delivering public services.

## Achieving Change Through the Hounslow Compact

Maintain high standards of governance, conduct and openness
National Compact Principles 4 and 5
To do this the VCS will- <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Establish and maintain adequate quality assurance systems</li><li>2. Meet all reporting and monitoring requirements</li><li>3. Implement quality standards appropriate to the organisation</li><li>4. Remain accountable for any services delivered</li></ol>
To do this the Local Authority and Partners will- <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Encourage the adoption of suitable quality assurance measures</li><li>2. Establish and maintain clear monitoring and reporting requirements</li></ol>
Steps to Achievement- <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. All funded groups to have appropriate quality assurance systems introduced</li><li>2. 100% of funding agreements to have clear monitoring and reporting guidance</li></ol>
Risks to Achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Inadequate support for maintaining standards and accredited systems</li><li>▪ Inadequate funding for adoption of Quality Assurance Systems</li></ul>

Effectively and accurately engage in consultation and involvement
National Compact Principles 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6
<p>To do this the VCS will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consult service users, carers, volunteers and members</li> <li>2. Use evidence collected from listening to users to improve services</li> <li>3. Accurately present evidence collected from service users or members during the course of any consultation.</li> <li>4. Support user involvement and consultation work where relevant to the work of the organisation</li> </ol> <p>To do this the Local Authority and Partners will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognise and value the independence of the voluntary and community sector as one of its greatest strengths</li> <li>2. Develop a regular dialogue with the voluntary sector on issues likely to affect it.</li> <li>3. Actively encourage the participation of VCS organisations in the development of policies and strategies.</li> <li>4. Ensure best use of existing forums for the VCS to be heard, i.e seats on the LSP.</li> </ol>
<p>Steps to Achievement -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. VCS to develop a clear strategy (possibly through Capacity Builders) for the development of the sector.</li> <li>2. VCS to develop clear systems for providing the Voice of the sector</li> <li>3. Standards on consultation being developed through the Hounslow Consultation Network to have standards on VCS engagement</li> </ol>
<p>Risks to Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capacity issues reduce involvement of groups in “the voice of the sector”</li> <li>▪ Capacity issues reduce the ability of the VCS to engage in consultation</li> </ul>

Implement best practice funding principles to ensure that all funding opportunities and procedures are Open, Fair, Transparent and Proportional
National Compact Principles 4 and 7
<p>To do this the VCS will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with funders to ensure this outcome is implemented</li> </ol> <p>To do this the Local Authority and Partners will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that all funding opportunities, procedures and decisions are Open, Fair, Transparent</li> <li>2. Implement best practice funding principles as set out in the Compact Code of Good Practice on Funding and Procurement into Hounslow's Tenders and Contract Regulations.</li> <li>3. Develop a policy that is clear about circumstances when grants, service level agreements or contracts are most appropriate.</li> <li>4. Ensure that processes associated with funding (application, qualification, monitoring and reporting) are in proportion with the amount of funding.</li> <li>5. Establish a more co-ordinated approach to funding and monitoring the voluntary sector within the London Borough of Hounslow, whilst recognising legal requirements for individual funders</li> </ol>
<p>Steps to Achievement-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowledge management system for VCS funding is established</li> <li>2. Common practices and procedures are implemented across funders</li> <li>3. Implement Compact Code of Good Practice on funding and procurement into ways of working across Hounslow.</li> </ol>
<p>Risks to Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not seen as a priority so not delivered</li> <li>▪ Knowledge management system not resourced and implemented effectively</li> </ul>

Promote sustainability and increasing independence
National Compact Principles 1, 2, 4 and 7
<p>To do this the VCS will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where possible, not be reliant on one source of funding for the delivery of services to Hounslow</li> <li>2. Work towards developing and delivering sustainable services</li> <li>3. Follow best practice in business planning for organisations</li> </ol> <p>To do this the Local Authority and Partners will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Where appropriate keep funding and services local</li> <li>2. Work with the VCS on capacity building</li> <li>3. Encourage organisations, where appropriate, though social enterprise or other earned income to develop sustainable funding sources</li> <li>4. Work with the VCS to bring in external funding to the borough</li> </ol>
<p>Steps to Achievement -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A VCS able to work in equal partnership with statutory partners</li> <li>2. A strong, independent and effective VCS</li> <li>3. VCS effective in drawing in funding into the borough</li> <li>4. Where appropriate services delivered by VCS organisations in Hounslow</li> </ol>
<p>Risks to Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Limited capacity building support at the highest level</li> <li>▪ Organisations chasing funding losing the independence or specialism that adds value</li> </ul>

Develop a mutual understanding and respect of the constraints placed on each sector
National Compact Principles 3 and 8
<p>To do this the VCS will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote mutual support and effective partnership working within and between the voluntary, public and private sectors</li> <li>2. Not place unrealistic burdens or expectations on partner organisations</li> </ol> <p>To do this the Local Authority and Partners will-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promote mutual support and effective partnership working within and between the voluntary, public and private sectors</li> <li>2. Recognise that voluntary sector organisations often operate with limited and constrained resources</li> <li>3. Not place unrealistic burdens or expectations on partner organisations</li> </ol>
<p>Steps to Achievement -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Structures for effective partnership are established</li> <li>2. Work in partnership fairly share risk.</li> </ol>
<p>Risks to Achievement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Constraints on available funding damage working relationships</li> </ul>

## **Review and Monitoring Processes**

The Compact will be implemented and monitored in the following way

### **Compact Working Group**

A group of representatives from across the Council, statutory sector partners and Voluntary Sector Organisations will meet quarterly to review progress towards meeting Compact Commitments.

### **Annual Review**

Each year the compact will undergo a review of the outcomes and the progress towards these, this will be published each year at Hounslow's Voluntary Sector Consultation event.

### **3 year Fundamental Review**

In 2010 the compact will undergo a fundamental review and full re-write to ensure that the Compact is fit for purpose and achieving its goals.

## **Resolving Issues with the Compact**

The Hounslow Compact 2007 provides a framework for the development of effective working partnerships, this framework sets out aspirations and targets for best practice in our working relationships. However it is almost inevitable that high standards are sometimes missed when delivering in the real world, the compact can be used as a tool to manage these situations.

When you first suspect the principles of the compact have been broken or not implemented fairly you should raise it with the organisation(s) concerned, stating which parts of the compact they have broken and how. Through early dialogue with the appropriate stakeholders it is hoped that most disputes could be resolved.

In cases where this fails to resolve a situation partners may wish to explore the following alternatives-

**Compact Advocacy Programme** is run by NCVO; it is a scheme that provides practical support and wider campaigning to the sector in cases where Government has breached the Compact.

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/thecompact.asp>

**Compact Mediation Scheme** applies to disputes relating to the Compact. Its scope includes central Government departments, their executive agencies, Government Offices for the Regions and all voluntary and community sector organisations.

[http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third\\_sector/compact/mediation/](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/compact/mediation/)

## **Appendix 1- Why a voluntary sector compact for Hounslow?**

A Voluntary Sector Compact is a document describing working relations between voluntary and community sector organisations, and the public and private sectors. It aims to create a new approach to partnership working between sectors and provide a framework to enable relations to be carried out differently, and better than before.

The original Compact was a national agreement made in November 1998 (with cross-party support) between the Government and the voluntary and community sector, in order to improve their relationship for mutual advantage. The principles outlined in this national Compact were then gradually turned into 5 specific codes of practice: Funding; Consultation; Black and Minority Ethnic Organisations; Volunteering; and, Community Groups.

Local Compacts aim to improve relationships in their own area between the voluntary sector, local authority, and other local public and private bodies. After the National Compact was agreed, Paul Boateng, Home Office Minister responsible for the Voluntary Sector, made a call for Local Compacts to be implemented across England, and commented that "we intend to encourage other public bodies and local government to adopt or adapt the Compact to enhance their relationship with the sector".

A Compact is needed for Hounslow as an agreed Code of Practice to develop effective and agreed principles for joint working across the sectors, which ultimately is for the benefit of all local residents. A Compact provides a starting point, based on shared values and mutual respect, on how different groups, organisations, companies and individuals will work with the voluntary sector. This will help establish a solid foundation for partnership working in the future.

Local Compacts can help produce many benefits, including:

- Improvement of partnership relationships, including a framework of understanding on how the sectors' will work together
- More effective partnership working (especially given a climate of regular local government change), including better involvement of local groups in best value, community planning and a Local Strategic Partnership
- A better mutual understanding of each sectors' needs, aims, and objectives

The Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper sets out a new role as 'place shaper' for local authorities and sets out a framework for improving partnership work with local voluntary and community organisations. Hounslow's Compact will manage and highlight a successful partnership between voluntary and community sector organisations and the statutory and public sector.

## **Appendix 2 – Contact Details**

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