

WORKING TOWARDS A COMMON AGENDA

THE LAMBETH “COMPACT”

Background & Summary

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Including

- ◆ **National & local perspectives**
 - ◆ **History of the Compact**
 - ◆ **What the Compact is**
 - ◆ **What it says**
 - ◆ **In practice**

The Compact

The Compact is an agreement between the Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector made in November 1998 to improve their relationship for mutual advantage. The Compact aims to build the partnership relationship between government and the sector. The principles outlined in this national Compact have now been given more detail in a set of codes of practice as well as leading to the development of local Compacts.

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With some material from NCVO

The History of the Compact

The Compact was an idea that the current government adopted even before it was elected in 1997. They saw that the voluntary and community sector had a lot to contribute both in delivering services in partnership but also in trying to overcome the perceived “democratic deficit” and declining participation in public life. To recognise the need for partnership working the idea of a “Compact” was born – a written agreement of mutual respect and understanding, with specific commitments and ways of working from both the government and voluntary & community sector.

July 1996	Deakin Commission on Future of Voluntary Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calls for Government/Sector formal agreement
February 1997	Labour Party publishes report on Voluntary Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Building the Future Together"
July 1997	Conference of leading Sector Umbrella Bodies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backs NCVO's proposal for Compact • Working Group on Government Relations set up now renamed Compact Working Group
October 1997	Consultation on draft Compact starts
November 1998	Compact agreed
July 1999	Compact Working Group Secretariat established
May 2000	First Compact Annual Meeting with Ministers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Annual Report to Parliament • Funding and Consultation codes published
July 2000	Local Compact Guidelines published
February 2001	BME Code published
April 2001	<i>Lambeth Compact</i>
October 2001	Volunteering Code Published Second Compact Annual Meeting With Ministers
April 2002	Carrington Report on challenge of implementation Third Annual Meeting
September 2002	Second term of funding approved for Compact project with an expanded Secretariat

Local Compacts

The compact was initially covered the voluntary sector and its relationship with central government both as a funder and in policy development. However it was always expected that the national model would be adapted and local compacts developed to reflect local issues. Initially local authorities or health authorities could choose whether or not to develop a Compact. Now however the government sees the Compact as a key part of the local government and health agenda – for example for a Local Strategic Partnership to be accredited a Compact must be in place or being negotiated. The list of authorities signed up to the compact is now sizeable.

The List of Registered Local Compacts

Barnet (2002) - including 5 codes
Blackburn with Darwen (2001)
Bolton (2001)
Bournemouth (2000)
Brighton and Hove (2002)
Camden (2001)
Copeland (2002)
Cotswold (2000)
Cumbria (2001)
Derby (2002)
Devon (2000)
Dorset (1999)
Durham County (2001)
East Staffordshire (2002)
Enfield (2002)
Gateshead (2002)
Hampshire (2001)
Harrogate (2002)
Hartlepool (2001)
Hastings (2002)
Hertfordshire (2001)
Hounslow (2000)
Ipswich (2001)
Kensington & Chelsea (2001)
Kingston (2000)

Lambeth (2001)

Lewisham (2001)
Liverpool (2002)
Medway (2001)
Middlesbrough (2002)
Newcastle (2001)
Norfolk (2001)
North Tyneside (2000)
North Yorkshire & York Health (2001)
Nottinghamshire (2001)
Poole (2002)
Reading (2000)
Ribble Valley (2002)
Richmond (2001)
Runnymede (2002)
Sandwell (1999)
Sheffield (2000)
Stockton-on-Tees (2001)
Suffolk (2001)
Sunderland (2000)
Tameside (2002)
Vale Royal (2001)
Warwickshire - including 5 districts (2002)
Watford (2002)
Wealden (2002)
West Sussex (2002)
York - including 4 codes (2002)

Removal from the Register

However agreeing and signing the document is only the start, not the end of the process. The compact has to be a working evolving document. Calderdale was removed from the Register in March 2002. An excellent Compact document was produced in 1999 but the local council has not agreed to sign it.

Compact Undertakings

Origin of the Undertakings

Wide consultation on the draft Compact and codes gave a mandate to the Working Group on Government Relations to finalise these documents. Similarly for the Lambeth Compact there were lots of consultation events to produce a local version. Both national and local Compacts contain undertakings on both sides.

There are undertakings from both the statutory sector and voluntary & community sector. In some cases there are joint undertakings on certain issues. For example the Lambeth Compact contains undertakings both from the statutory sector and voluntary sector to support and promote the black and minority ethnic community. The National Code of Practice on Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary & Community Organisations highlights the Lambeth Compact as a model of good practice in this area.

Lambeth Compact

In Lambeth the process began in 1999 and continued for over a year with consultation, review and dialogue. A final version was produced in April 2001 – “Working Towards a Common Agenda – the Lambeth Compact”. A copy was sent to every LVAC member.

There is an introductory section setting out why and how the Compact has been produced. There are then 5 sections each with complementary undertakings and action points from the statutory sector and the voluntary & community sector:

1. **Key Principles for Joint Work** –some key agreements and joint undertakings which influence the following undertakings. *Action: Annual reviews.*
2. **Consultation & Involvement** – the approaches to be taken both in the statutory sector conducting and the voluntary sector responding to consultation. Recognising dual roles for voluntary groups both as providers and campaigners. *Action point - a Funding Code for Lambeth*
3. **Partnership working** –building practical partnerships to deliver services
4. **Resources** – chiefly funding but covers all resource issues including premises. *A key action point is the development of a Premises Strategy*
5. **Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Issues** – adopts the Stephen Lawrence enquiry definition of Institutional racism and sets a definition for BME group. *Action point – infrastructure and development support.*

Particular Undertakings

Both sides need to know, understand and carry out their undertakings.

Overleaf is a sample of the type of undertakings in the Lambeth Compact.

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- ◆ “Consult the voluntary and community sector at an early stage on all issues which might be relevant to the sector or explain why they are not able to do so.”
- ◆ “Look at proposed new policies and procedures and identify implications for the sector”
- ◆ “Ensure within resources (the voluntary and community sector has) that service users, carers, workers, volunteers members and supporters are involved in consultation as appropriate.”
- ◆ “Maintain an independent and critical perspective to provide feedback on service and planning processes...”
- ◆ “When funding voluntary and community groups ensure that proper consideration is given to the provision of reasonable core costs to support the funded service.”
- ◆ “Voluntary organisations should] apply the principles of Best Value to their services and benchmark performance against other organizations providing similar services.”

Getting the Compact known and used

Knowing about the Compact isn't enough. The Compact and codes exist to be used. This might mean looking at what the Compact says about consultation before a policy change, a Best Value Review or a new service is developed. In monitoring performance look at whether the way you work is in line with the Compact. If you work with voluntary and community groups are your expectations of them linked to the undertakings from the voluntary and community sector in the Lambeth Compact? However much of the Lambeth Compact has fairly general commitments requiring interpretation. A way to clarify things is to develop and adopt local codes of practice which reflect the national codes.

The Codes of Practice

The national Compact has a series of codes of Practice attached to it. These codes not only give more detail to the undertakings in the Compact but also give best practice examples. Implementation of the Lambeth Compact may include developing equivalent local codes for Lambeth.

Consultation & Policy Appraisal Code

- ◆ 12 weeks is the standard period for formal consultation – though 8 weeks is acceptable for less complex issues
- ◆ Involvement should be early and ongoing
- ◆ Voluntary and community groups are expected to involve their members and users in responding
- ◆ Different methods should be adopted to ensure all sections of the community can participate.
- ◆ Feedback after the consultation

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- ◆ Resource implications of taking part in policy development to be recognised; co-ordinate consultations to avoid overload

Funding Code

- ◆ Transparent criteria and accessible application processes - ideally shared or common application forms or processes
- ◆ Funders have a duty to use public money appropriately and the right to determine priorities
- ◆ Involve voluntary and community groups and users in developing funding programmes
- ◆ Consider the impact on BME communities of how funding programmes operate
- ◆ Project funded work should have organisation core costs included appropriately
- ◆ For all government grant aided organisations: 3 months advance notice of funding or ceasing funding)
- ◆ Long term funding agreements , on contractual basis where appropriate
- ◆ Regular payments, ideally in advance

Black & Minority Ethnic Community Code

- ◆ The Lambeth Compact given as a good practice example for its clear definition and commitment.
- ◆ Recognise and tackle institutional racism and use Compact to promote equality
- ◆ Examine funding decisions and consultation practices to ensure BME communities have equal access
- ◆ Both statutory and voluntary sector to contribute to development of BME voluntary and community sectors

Volunteering Code.

- ◆ Recognise the value of volunteering
- ◆ Remove barriers to volunteering
- ◆ Properly support volunteers
- ◆ Recognise freedom of choice

Community Groups Code - Draft

- ◆ Attempts to define difference between Community groups and wider voluntary sector – generally more “grass roots”
- ◆ Recognise rights and responsibilities of community groups role in representing local communities
- ◆ Both government and wider voluntary sector to contribute to development of Community sector

More information –

Contact Stephen Blann Compact Development Officer, **020 7737 9471**
Compact @lambethvac.org.uk. A wide range of Compact material can be downloaded at: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/main/gateway/compact.html

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