

EFFECTIVE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS



A CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL PRACTITIONERS IN THE PUBLIC AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS



DID YOU KNOW...?

- ✓ **There were almost 153,000 general charities in the UK in 2001/02 – an increase of around 33,000 compared with 1994-95.**
- ✓ **There are around 10,000 Black and Minority Ethnic voluntary organisations in the UK.**
- ✓ **Third sector organisations are very diverse in both size and scope, from small, locally-based community groups, to social enterprises and large, national charities.**
- ✓ **Third sector organisations work in many areas, from health and social care, advocacy and campaigning, education and learning, housing, employment and welfare, to community support and safety.**
- ✓ **Gross income for general charities is in excess of £20 billion per year.**
- ✓ **Public sector funding accounts for 37% of the total income of the voluntary sector.**
- ✓ **Total public sector funding of the voluntary sector is in excess of £7 billion per year.**
- ✓ **General charities are eligible for tax relief with a total value in excess of £3 billion per year.**
- ✓ **The voluntary sector employs over 500,000 full or part-time staff.**
- ✓ **The voluntary sector has created over 85,000 new jobs over the last 5 years.**
- ✓ **The voluntary sector has a total asset base worth over £70 billion.**
- ✓ **The voluntary sector contributes over £5 billion to Gross Domestic Product.**

FOREWORD

The third sector – from voluntary and community organisations, social enterprise, to mutuals and co-operatives – are as vital to modern society as they were in their early years of the nineteenth century. Third sector organisations make valuable contributions to the delivery of equitable and efficient public services for local communities; in helping to build a strong civil society with inclusive, cohesive and active communities; and in working to build a strong, productive and enterprising economy with equality of opportunity for all. As such, third sector organisations are not only important in themselves, but can help the public sector meet its aspirations and deliver better services for local communities.


Progress has been made in laying the foundations to deepen understanding and strengthen the partnership between Government and the sector in achieving shared objectives. The Compact in 1998 and the Cross-Cutting Review in 2002 marked a new phase in the relationship between Government and the sector, and has been followed by further efforts – backed-up by significant resources, such as the £125 million *futurebuilders* fund and the ChangeUp programme of investment – to make this vision a reality.

To implement this vision will require a real step-change in partnership working from all who are involved in local partnerships with the third sector – the local practitioners, from those in strategic or decision making roles, to middle management, through to front-line workers. But there are challenges on both sides – the third sector too must continue to become more savvy in the way it relates, operates and engages with the public sector, recognising the scale of the challenge the public sector faces in delivering world class public services.

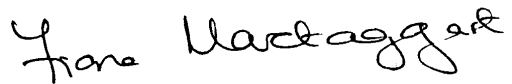
This is why we asked local practitioners from both third sector organisations and public sector bodies to consider what more needs to be done to strengthen and build upon existing good practice in local partnerships. We thank all those who contributed to developing this publication.

This leaflet sets-out a checklist for those engaged in partnership working at the local level – whether from the public or the third sector – to consider either in the development or enhancement of local compacts, or in specific partnership arrangements they may enter into. It is backed-up by specific actions and signposting to further guidance and support.

We commend this tool to all those in the third and public sectors – working together to help others.



Rt Hon Paul Boateng MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury



Fiona Mactaggart MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civil Renewal



Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP, Minister of State for Local Government



Nigel Griffiths MP, Social Enterprise Minister



Cllr Sir Sandy Bruce-Lockhart OBE, Chairman, Local Government Association

IMPROVING UNDERSTANDING...

WHAT IS THE AIM?

To develop better understanding within both local public sector bodies and third sector organisations of the needs and realities of the circumstances of each – based on the Compact and principles of mutual recognition, respect and partnership.

CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL PRACTITIONERS:

Do...

- ✓ Attempt to map and understand the local third sector and range of public sector bodies
- ✓ Build a mature, two-way relationship based on an living and working local Compact
- ✓ Respect *both* independence and challenge of the third sector *and* democratic mandate of the public sector
- ✓ Make and base decisions on clear evidence and impact
- ✓ Provide clear, concise and timely messages

Don't...

- x Use a 'scattergun' approach when dealing with the public or third sectors
- x Give or expect 'special' treatment, or use the compact as a 'rulebook'
- x Overstep the mark and descend into conflict and breakdown
- x Make or base decisions upon assertions or 'wild claims'
- x Take effective communication for granted

SUPPORTING ACTIONS:

- + Confirm a consistent message about working with the third sector to local delivery agents: **Government Departments.**
- + Develop a clearer rationale for working in partnership with the third sector: **DTI, Home Office, HM Treasury.**

CASE STUDY 1: DEVELOPING LOCAL COMPACTS

- ODPM has launched a debate on the future of Local Government in ten years' time - this will provide a context for policy including Local Area Agreements, Local Government National Procurement Strategy and Community Strategies. The Compact should define how the public and voluntary sector should work together to help achieve this vision. ODPM is keen to hear the views of local organisations over the coming months and will be hosting and participating in a range of meetings and seminars - details of these activities are available on the ODPM website www.odpm.gsi.gov.uk or email localvision@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Since 1997 a significant amount of material has been made available for local practitioners from either the public or third sectors entering into partnership arrangements:

- + The Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England (<http://www.thecomcompact.org.uk/>)
- + Exploring the role of the Third Sector in Public Service Delivery and Reform: A discussion document (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Spending_Review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_voluntary/spend_ccr_voluntary.cfm)
- + The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Service Delivery: A Cross-Cutting Review (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Spending_Review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_voluntary/spend_ccr_voluntary.cfm)
- + Social Enterprise: A Strategy for Success (<http://www.dti.gov.uk/socialenterprise/strategy.htm>)
- + Private Action, Public Benefit: A Review of Charities and the Wider Not-for-Profit Sector (<http://www.number-10.gov.uk/su/voluntary/report/pdf.htm>)
- + The South East Regional Voluntary Sector Network has produced practical guide to negotiating Compacts. (<http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/>)

JOINING-UP POLICY...

WHAT IS THE AIM?

To ensure joined-up policy-making, programme and service delivery – treating policy-relationships in a meaningful way that goes beyond cross-referencing.

CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL PRACTITIONERS:

Do...

- ✓ Engage on policy and programme design at the earliest possible stage, consulting on ideas
- ✓ Use the Compact to guide *how* to work together to join-up partnerships, policy and process
- ✓ Work through the Local Strategic Partnership representation to join-up locally
- ✓ Respect the duty of accountability to stakeholders, both democratically to the electorate or otherwise
- ✓ Allow sufficient time for meaningful response to ideas and proposals

Don't...

- x Consult as an afterthought or only consider consulting on final proposals
- x Use Compact as a tool to blame, or to demand the 'what' in the policy
- x Brush-off or bury concerns, or be tokenistic in listening to the views of others
- x Undermine the authority of partners by not respecting the duty of accountability to stakeholders
- x Attempt to pressure or rush through ideas or proposals without sufficient consultation

SUPPORTING ACTIONS:

- + Engage the third sector in development of Local Area Agreements - currently being piloted in 21 areas across England – to provide the basis for strengthened partnership working and greater co-ordination between central government, local authorities and their partners, working through the Local Strategic Partnership: **ODPM**.
- + Consider the scope for Local Public Service Agreements focusing on effective partnership working with the third sector: **Local Authorities**.

CASE STUDY 2: USING THE COMPACT TO JOIN-UP POLICY

Warwickshire Compact: continued progress is being made in Stratford where the Implementation Task Team developed an action plan, in consultation with the VCS and approved by the District Council. This has enhanced members' awareness of the work of the VCS and the role it plays. The Council agreed to consult with the voluntary sector when drawing up its access to services strategy as part of a Best Value Review of Equalities. As a result, some voluntary and community sector organisations have received 3 year rolling funding, and joint training and induction sessions. Another example of good progress is the establishment and working of the Warwickshire Mental Health Drugs and Alcohol Compact Meeting. It includes representatives from voluntary sector providers who are contracted with Social Services and Primary Care Trusts, and potential providers, as well as service user representatives. Detailed discussions have given the voluntary sector and service users the opportunity to influence contract specifications. This is leading to improved service provision for service users as well as better value for money.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Since 1997 a significant amount of material has been made available for local practitioners from either the public or third sectors entering into partnership arrangements:

- + The Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England (<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/>) and The Compact Code of Good Practice on Consultation and Policy Appraisal (<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/PDFs/consultation&policy.pdf>)
- + The Future of Local Government: Developing a 10 Year Vision (http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_about/documents/page/odpm_about_029994.hcsp?s=1)
- + Local Area Agreements: A Prospectus (http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_localgov_029989.hcsp)
- + Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities (http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_localgov/documents/page/odpm_localgov_605670-04.hcsp)

ORGANISING OURSELVES...

WHAT IS THE AIM?

To improve organisational co-ordination – both in terms of activity and also effective representation of both the public and third sectors – at different geographical levels.

CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL PRACTITIONERS:

Do...

- ✓ Ensure proper reflection of public and third sector organisations on Local Strategic Partnerships
- ✓ Support and build local third sector capacity and infrastructure development
- ✓ Retain flexibility for different circumstances
- ✓ Ensure clear lines of communication and responsibilities exist between local, sub-regional, regional and national organisations

Don't...

- x Rely on one organisation to fully represent or reflect the views of a large and very diverse sector
- x Rely on national government to fully fund and support local infrastructure
- x Have a 'one size fits all' approach
- x Pass the buck to a different tier, or pursue separate agendas

SUPPORTING ACTIONS:

- + Local Strategic Partnerships to consider using this checklist as a basis for an annual 'health-check' of partnership arrangements with the third sector: **Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Authorities and ODPM.**
- + Develop local infrastructure development plans, and investment in infrastructure modernisation through the ChangeUp programme: **Local Authorities, Home Office and Government Offices.**
- + Consider on a case by case basis the development of local protocols for organisation and representation of the third sector on appropriate forums: **Local Councils for Voluntary Service, supported by NACVS.**

CASE STUDY 3: DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH THE COMPACT

Sheffield City Council responded immediately to the 1998 launch of the Compact. Consultation was held with a range of agencies and the voluntary and community sector in 1999, which culminated in a city-wide event. The voluntary and community sector – with the BME sector (through the **Black Community Forum**) – took the leading role, and were given the opportunity to write the Best Value Review of council services. This enabled the BME sector to be mainstreamed into many aspects of policy-making. The Compact provided an important framework to strengthen the links with the **Local Strategic Partnership (Sheffield First)**, following revision of the Compact groups.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Since 1997 a significant amount of material has been made available for local practitioners from either the public or third sectors entering into partnership arrangements:

- + Local Strategic Partnerships (<http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/lsp.asp>)
- + ChangeUp: Capacity Building and Infrastructure Framework for the Voluntary and Community Sector (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/developing/index.html>)
- + Compact Code of Good Practice on BME Voluntary and Community Organisations (<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/PDFs/BMEcode.pdf>)
- + Compact Code of Good Practice on Community Groups (<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/PDFs/Community%20Groups%20Code.pdf>)
- + Compact miniguide for partnerships (www.thecompact.org.uk)

SHARING GOOD PRACTICE...

WHAT IS THE AIM?

That sharing good practice on effective partnership arrangements between the public and third sectors should be common practice within and across local areas.

CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL PRACTITIONERS:

Do...

- ✓ Draw-out key lessons and experiences from partnership working, both good and bad
- ✓ Learn from others with experience, developing networks of 'those in the know'
- ✓ Collect and signpost useful material to use and inform successful partnerships
- ✓ Recognise that learning from experience is valuable and may present local resource implications

Don't...

- x Write long-winded guidance specifying the minutiae of the process rather than the outcomes
- x Assume partnership working is easy and anyone can do it without experience
- x Lose corporate knowledge and waste time reinventing the wheel
- x Assume partnership working and learning from experience is a cost-free exercise

SUPPORTING ACTIONS:

- ✚ Continue to develop the Local Ideals project at www.local-ideals.org.uk to create an online resource and one-stop-shop for local practitioners to share and learn from good practice: **NCVO, NACVS, IDeA.**
- ✚ Ensure central government guidance continues to be freely and easily available and not hidden away on many separate websites: **Government Departments and Offices.**

CASE STUDY 4: LEARNING FROM OTHERS

Ourpartnership.org.uk promotes best practice for people working in partnerships between the voluntary and public sectors. The website provides news, articles on particular issues, useful guidance, and details of forthcoming events for those interested in, or engaged in partnership working in *both* the third and public sectors. The site also contains a discussion board which users – once registered – can access as a useful resource and point of contact to others with experience of partnership working locally. Ourpartnership.org.uk is a project of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, and is supported by the Home Office's Active Communities Directorate.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Since 1997 a significant amount of material has been made available for local practitioners from either the public or third sectors entering into partnership arrangements:

- ✚ Our Partnership website – to promote best practice for people working in partnerships between the voluntary and public sectors (<http://www.ourpartnership.org.uk/>)
- ✚ Social Enterprise webpage at the Small Business Service (<http://www.sbs.gov.uk/default.php?page=/socialenterprise/default.php>)
- ✚ Voluntary and community sector webpage at HM Treasury (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_voluntary/spend_ccr_voluntary.cfm)
- ✚ Website of the Active Communities Directorate in Home Office (<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/active/index.asp>)

FUNDING IT BETTER...

WHAT IS THE AIM?

To move to a more stable and effective funding relationship between third and public sector partners, based on the key principles of simplicity and proportionality, and commonality and co-ordination.

CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL PRACTITIONERS:

Do...

- ✓ Consider longer-term and clearer funding agreements to promote stability and reduce uncertainty
- ✓ Streamline and reduce bureaucracy, only asking for standard material that will actually be used
- ✓ Manage risk effectively and ensure regular dialogue between funders and funded organisations to ensure that barriers and difficulties are understood and can be addressed jointly, to incentivise performance, promote innovation, and reduce uncertainty
- ✓ Respect the funder's right to choose and decide
- ✓ Aim for payments in advance where it represents better value for money from better security
- ✓ Ensure procurement processes are fully open to the third sector market as well as the private sector
- ✓ Recognise the legitimacy of funding relevant overhead costs

Don't...

- x Distract delivery with over-short grants that may lead to diversion of resources onto continual bidding
- x Ask for disproportionately large amounts of information for the amount of money
- x Be risk averse or load all risk onto partner, creating uncertainty and reducing value for money
- x Unfairly criticise decisions that might not go your way
- x Pay in arrears if it might risk delivery by exposing an organisation to unnecessary financial risk
- x Focus on private sector providers and not advertising tender opportunities in the right places
- x Issue a blanket refusal to meet relevant overheads

SUPPORTING ACTIONS:

- + Explore the development of a standard toolkit of 'off-the-shelf' funding materials: **IDeA**.
- + Publish a second edition of "Guidance to Funders", including guidelines for those issuing public funds on handling full cost recovery: **HM Treasury**.

CASE STUDY 5: EFFECTIVE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

In Suffolk, the County Council and Primary Care Trust (PCT) have involved the voluntary and community sector in setting up a single gateway for grants. This initiative, inspired by the Compact theme of working together, better together, distributes £2 million a year through joint decisions based on shared criteria and is achieving better outcomes through improved co-ordination. Building on this success, plans are being developed for a joint procurement process between all public bodies signed up to the County Compact with a potential pot of at least £35 million.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Since 1997 a significant amount of material has been made available for local practitioners from either the public or third sectors entering into partnership arrangements:

- + Guidance to Funders: Improving Funding Relationships for Voluntary and Community Organisations (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_ccr/spend_ccr_guidance.cfm)
- + Think Smart... Think Voluntary Sector! Good Practice Guidance on Procurement of Services from the Voluntary and Community Sector (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/thinksmart_040608.pdf)
- + Compact Code of Good Practice on Funding and Procurement (<http://www.thecompact.org.uk/PDFs/funding.pdf>)
- + Government Funding Website (<http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk/Default.aspx>)
- + Full Cost Recovery: a guide and toolkit on cost allocation (http://www.philanthropycapital.org/html/full_cost_recovery.php)
- + Public Procurement: A Toolkit for Social Enterprise (<http://www.dti.gov.uk/socialenterprise/news-toolkit.htm>)
- + Government Offices (<http://www.rcu.gov.uk>) and the IDeA Knowledge site (<http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/>)

THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TASKFORCE

ABOUT THE LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS TASKFORCE:

The Voluntary and Community Sector Review 2004 was established by Government to:

“engaging the voluntary and community sector – to assess the progress made by departments in encouraging the involvement of the voluntary and community sector in local service delivery and the potential for going further.”

To support this review, a Local Partnerships Taskforce was established with the remit to *“explore what more should be done to support and build effective partnerships between public and third sector bodies at the local level, building on experience of what works”*. The taskforce included representatives of both local public sector bodies and the third sector – those involved are listed below.

The Taskforce highlighted five key areas for action, as set out in this leaflet:

- 📄 Improving understanding...
- 📄 Joining-up Policy...
- 📄 Organising ourselves...
- 📄 Sharing good practice...
- 📄 Funding it better...

The taskforce chose to produce this leaflet to bring together much of what is already underway, and to provide a checklist for local practitioners entering into partnership working arrangements between the public and third sectors. The checklist is supported by a few key actions at the national level or suggestions for actions at the local level. Finally, the leaflet provides examples of what has worked on each of the five areas, and includes links to important information and guidance that those working at the local level might find useful.

ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN DRAWING-UP THIS CHECKLIST:

HM Treasury	Home Office
Local Government Association	Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)
Compact Working Group (CWG)	National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)
North Cornwall District Council	Kirklees Primary Care Trust
Ealing Community Transport	Birmingham Voluntary Service Council
East of England Learning and Skills Council	Voluntary Sector North West
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	South Yorkshire Strategic Health Authority
Audit Commission	MENTER
Essex County Council	Government Office East Midlands
National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)	Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO)