

The Buckinghamshire Compact 2013



The Compact aims to improve communication, understanding, collaboration, trust and respect between the public sector and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) for the benefit of the people of Buckinghamshire.

Developed jointly with voluntary sector organisations, the County Council and the four District Councils, the Buckinghamshire Compact sets out the framework for the future working relationship between those Councils and the VCS in Buckinghamshire.

The intention is to achieve a single shared Compact between the public sector and the VCS in Buckinghamshire. However, it is not intended that the Compact should be a legally binding document or should it any way be construed as a contract between any public sector and voluntary sector signatory. It replaces the Compact that was previously agreed in April 2004.

Signatories to the Compact

<i>Name of organisation</i>	<i>Name and role of signatory</i>	<i>Date of signing</i>
Aylesbury Vale District Council	Councillor Pam Pearce cabinet member for Communities with portfolio responsibility	7/3/13
Buckinghamshire Community Foundation	Richard Dickson, Chief Executive	9/9/13
Chiltern District Council	Councillor Peter Hudson, Cabinet Member For Community	14/9/11
Community Impact Bucks	Cora Carvey, Chief Executive	9/9/13
South Bucks District Council	Cllr Anita Cranmer, Cabinet Member for Community.	30/7/13
Wycombe District Council		

Buckinghamshire Compact

1 A strong, diverse and independent civil society

Undertakings for the Public Sector:

- 1.1 Respect and uphold the independence of VCOs to deliver their mission, including their right to campaign, regardless of any relationship, financial or otherwise, which may exist.
- 1.2 Ensure VCOs are supported and resourced in a reasonable and fair manner where they are helping the public sector fulfil its aims.
- 1.3 Ensure that the public sector collectively recognises the need to resource local support and development organisations in order to assist VCOs with their capacity and capability to deliver positive outcomes.
- 1.4 Ensure greater transparency by making data and information more accessible, helping VCOs to challenge existing provision of services, access new markets and hold the public sector to account.
- 1.5 Continue to develop a range of ways to support VCOs, such as enabling greater access to state owned premises and resources.

Undertakings for VCOs:

- 1.6 When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided, including information about the source and range of people and communities represented.
- 1.7 Ensure independence is upheld, focusing on the cause represented, regardless of any relationship they have with the public sector, financial or otherwise.

2 Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public service

Undertakings for the Public Sector:

- 2.1 Ensure that social, environmental and economic value¹ forms a standard part of designing, developing and delivering policies, programmes and services.
- 2.2 Consider the social impact that may result from policy and programme development, and in particular consider how these would impact local efforts to inspire and encourage social action and to empower communities.
- 2.3 Work with VCOs from the earliest possible stage to design policies, programmes and services. Ensure those likely to have a view are involved from the start and remove barriers that may prevent organisations contributing.
- 2.4 Give early notice of forthcoming consultations, where possible, allowing enough time for VCOs to involve their service users, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees in preparing responses. Where it is appropriate, and enables meaningful engagement, conduct 12-week formal written consultations, with clear explanations and rationale for shorter time-frames or a more informal approach.
- 2.5 Consider providing feedback (for example through an overall response) to explain how respondents have influenced the design and development of policies, programmes and public services, including where respondents' views have not been acted upon.
- 2.6 Assess the implications for the sector of new policies, legislation and guidance, aiming to reduce the bureaucratic burden, particularly on small organisations.

Undertakings for VCOs:

- 2.7 Promote and respond to public sector consultations where appropriate.
- 2.8 Seek the views of service users, clients, beneficiaries, members, volunteers, and trustees when making representation to the public sector. Be clear on who is being represented, in what capacity, and on what basis that representation is being made.
- 2.9 When putting forward ideas, focus on evidence-based solutions, with clear proposals for positive outcomes.

¹ Social value encompasses a broad concept of value by incorporating social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. This means that as well as taking into account the direct effects of interventions, the wider effects on other areas of the economy should also be considered.

3 Responsive and high-quality programmes and services

Undertakings for the Public Sector:

- 3.1 Ensure transparency by providing a clear rationale for all funding decisions.
- 3.2 Commit to multi-year funding where appropriate and where it adds value for money. The funding term should reflect the time it will take to deliver the outcome. If multi-year funding is not considered to be the best way of delivering the objective, explain the reasons for the decision.
- 3.3 Ensure well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of programmes.
- 3.4 Agree with VCOs how outcomes, including the social, environmental or economic value, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made. Ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity. Be clear about what information is being asked for, and why and how it will be used.
- 3.5 Ensure equal treatment across sectors, including reporting and monitoring arrangements, when tendering for contracts.
- 3.6 Ensure that VCOs delivering statutory public services are fully funded to do so, under the principles of full cost recovery².
- 3.7 Recognise that when VCOs apply for funding they can include appropriate and relevant overheads, including the costs associated with training and volunteer involvement (in line with the principles of Full Cost Recovery).
- 3.8 Discuss and allocate risks to the organisation(s) best equipped to manage them. Where prime contractors are used, ensure they adhere to the principles of this Compact in allocating risk. Ensure delivery terms and risks are proportionate to the nature and value of the opportunity.
- 3.9 Ensure that the widest possible range of organisations can be involved in the provision of services through appropriate funding and financing models, for example outcome based payments and payment in advance of expenditure.

Commit to payment (or part-payment) in advance of expenditure where appropriate and where it does not compromise value for money.
- 3.10 Ensure all bodies distributing funds on the public sector's behalf adhere to the commitments in this Compact. This includes the relationship between prime contractors and their supply chains. Demonstrate how funding arrangements and financial support can allow smaller and specialist providers to play a greater part.
- 3.11 Encourage feedback from a range of sources on the effectiveness of the public sector's partnership with VCOs and how successful it has been in delivering their objectives. Place this feedback in the public domain whenever possible.

² Funded bodies must provide robust and evidence-based calculations of the costs of funded activities or services (including irrecoverable VAT costs) in funding submissions.

3.12 Seek to join up and / or standardise funding arrangements as far as possible to minimise the burdens on organisations and ensure a focus on delivery.

Undertakings for VCOs:

- 3.13 Ensure eligibility for funding before applying and be explicit about how outcomes will be achieved.
- 3.14 Ensure robust governance arrangements so that organisations can best manage any risk associated with service delivery and financing models, including giving funders early notice of significant changes in circumstances.
- 3.15 Be open and transparent about reporting, recognising that monitoring, whether internal or external, is an aspect of good management practice.
- 3.16 Demonstrate the social, environmental or economic value of the programmes and services provided, where appropriate.
- 3.17 Help facilitate feedback from users and communities to the public sector to help improve delivery of programmes and services.
- 3.18 Recognise that the public sector can legitimately expect VCOs to give public recognition of its funding.
- 3.19 Ensure that VCOs have a greater role and more opportunities in delivering public services by opening up new markets in accordance with wider public service reform measures and reforming the commissioning environment in existing markets
- 3.20 Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource VCOs, including grants, contracts, loan finance, use of premises and so on. Work to remove barriers that may prevent VCOs accessing public sector funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.

4 Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services

Undertakings for the Public Sector:

- 4.1 If a programme or service is encountering problems, agree with the VCO a timetable of actions to improve performance before making a decision to end a financial relationship.
- 4.2 Assess the impact on beneficiaries, service users and volunteers before deciding to reduce or end funding. Assess the need to re-allocate funds to another organisation serving the same group.
- 4.3 Where there are restrictions or changes to future resources, discuss with VCOs the potential implications as early as possible, give organisations the opportunity to respond, and consider the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision.
- 4.4 Give a minimum of three months notice in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, apart from in exceptional circumstances, and provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken.

Undertakings for VCOs:

- 4.5 Plan for the end of funding to reduce any potential negative impact on beneficiaries and the organisation.
- 4.6 Contribute positively to reviews of programmes and funding practice.
- 4.7 Advise the public sector on the social, environmental or economic impact of funding changes, and on ways to minimise their effects on people in vulnerable situations.

5 An equal and fair society

Undertakings for the Public Sector:

- 5.1 Work with VCOs that represent, support or provide services to people specifically protected by legislation and other under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Understand the specific needs of these groups by actively seeking the views of service users and clients. Take these views into account, including assessing impact, when designing and implementing policies, programmes and services.
- 5.2 Acknowledge that organisations representing specific disadvantaged or under-represented group(s) can help promote social and community cohesion and should have equal access to state funding.
- 5.3 Take practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

Undertakings for VCOs:

- 5.4 If receiving funding from a public sector body, show how the value of the work can help that body deliver its public sector duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination.
- 5.5 Take practical action, such as through funding bids, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build stronger communities

6 Volunteering

- 6.1 The Public and Voluntary & Community Sectors agree to work within the Volunteers' Charter as set out below:

The Volunteers' Charter

1 Volunteers' Rights

- 1.1 To be given a clear idea of their duties and responsibilities within the organisation and the skills etc that they need to fulfil them i.e. a task description and person specification;
- 1.2 To be given copies of all relevant policies and procedures;
- 1.3 To be given the name of the person in the organisation who will look after their interests and who will offer them support and supervision on a regular basis;
- 1.4 To be given appropriate induction;
- 1.5 To be assured that any information given in confidence to the organisation is kept confidential;
- 1.6 To volunteer in a safe working environment where they will be treated with dignity and respect;
- 1.7 To be given the same protection under health and safety regulations and public liability as paid employees;
- 1.8 To be given appropriate opportunities for training and skills development;
- 1.9 Volunteers should not:
 - 1.9.1 Be used to replace paid workers on a like for like basis or undercut their pay and conditions of service
 - 1.9.2 Be used to undertake the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
 - 1.9.3 Have unfair demands made on their time
 - 1.9.4 Be asked to do something which is against their principles or beliefs
- 1.10 To be given the chance to play a part in decision making within the organisation;
- 1.11 To be respected and listened to;
- 1.12 To be assigned to projects that meet their interests and needs;
- 1.13 To do meaningful and satisfying activities;

- 1.14 To not be out of pocket through doing voluntary work. Each organisation should make it clear what expenses they are to cover and how they are to be claimed;
- 1.15 To be given information on situations arising that may adversely affect their position as a volunteer;
- 1.16 To be able to take a break from or cease to volunteer;
- 1.17 To be given recognition and thanked for their volunteering contribution.

2 Volunteers' Responsibilities

- 2.1 To accept the organisation's agreements, policies and procedures;
- 2.2 To do what is reasonably required of them, to the best of their ability;
- 2.3 To treat confidential information obtained while volunteering in a confidential manner (except where there is a statutory duty to pass on such information);
- 2.4 To recognise the right of the organisation and service user to expect quality of service;
- 2.5 To recognise that they represent the organisation and therefore need to act in an appropriate manner at all times, in accordance with policies and procedures;
- 2.6 To ensure the environment they volunteer in is kept safe and that they treat other volunteers, paid staff and members of the public with dignity and respect;
- 2.7 To honour any commitment made and to give as much notice as possible if a commitment can not be met;
- 2.8 To undertake appropriate training (including Health & Safety issues);
- 2.9 As far as possible, to give notice of holidays and other commitments;
- 2.10 To share suggestions for changes in working practices;
- 2.11 To comply with organisations policies and procedures on safeguarding and safer recruitment, including advising the organisation of any pre-existing or subsequent convictions and cautions that might impact upon the organisations activities;
- 2.12 To be open and honest about issues affecting their volunteering, and advise the organisation of any other relevant matter(s) which might impact on their volunteering role;
- 2.13 To recognise that their volunteering role may need to be reviewed and modified.

3 Organisations' Responsibilities

- 3.1 To have a recognised process for the resolution of any problems between organisations and volunteers or between paid staff and volunteers;
- 3.2 To ensure that those members of staff with responsibility for supervising volunteers have the necessary skills and training to do so;
- 3.3 To allocate the resources needed to appropriately manage and support volunteers.