

# BOLTON COMPACT

## what is it ...

It is a document that describes a partnership agreement between Voluntary and Community Groups and local statutory organisations such as the Local Authority.

## what does it do ...

The Compact aims to regulate and improve the way Voluntary and Community Groups and statutory organisations relate to each other and work together.

## what is in it ...

This document details:

- How The Compact came about*
- Exactly what we hope to achieve*
- What benefits it should bring*
- How it will be implemented*
- How it will be monitored*

## why is it important ...

- It will have a positive impact on the relationships between Voluntary and Community Groups and statutory organisations.

- It should lead to greater understanding, openness and accountability.

- It is an ongoing process that will encourage communication between Voluntary and Community Groups and statutory organisations.

- It has clear agreed targets to achieve and a committed group behind it working to see that it actually happens.

## how will it work ...

Following as full a consultation as possible we will be asking Voluntary and Community Groups and the statutory organisations to formally sign up to The Compact.

We will then start work on Codes of Practice. These will provide guidance on specific areas where Voluntary Groups and statutory organisations interact. This will include: Funding, Consultation, Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, Community Groups and Volunteering. These will be negotiated guidelines that will have a definite impact on the way Voluntary Groups and statutory organisations work together.

## who will make sure that it works ...

A Working Group will be set up made up of representatives of the organisations and groups that have signed up to The Compact. It will be responsible for checking that The Compact and in particular, the Codes of Practice are being adhered to. It will also be responsible for developing further Codes of Practice where needed.

# BOLTON COMPACT

## what is it ...

This is a statement of partnership between the local statutory sector and Voluntary and Community sectors. It is a commitment to work together more closely and to respect each other's rights and responsibilities. It offers a new approach to partnership and a framework to develop more detailed agreements in specific areas in the future.

By the statutory sector we mean the Local Authority, the Health Authority, Police and other official Local Government organisations. The Voluntary and Community sector includes Charities, Community Groups and organisations, Housing organisations, Campaigning organisations, Religious (faith based) organisations, Sports Groups, Art Groups and Environmental Groups. For the rest of the document the sectors will be referred to collectively as "the partners".

## aim of the compact ...

The aim is to provide a framework for enhancing the relationship between the local statutory organisations and the Voluntary and Community sector. This will lead to better co-ordinated services and improved quality of life for the people of Bolton. It is based on the recognition that local statutory organisations and the Voluntary and Community sector share many complementary functions and values.

## objectives ...

- To develop a mechanism that ensures that local Voluntary and Community Groups are able to influence and be involved in making decisions that affect the communities in which they work.
- To ensure that Voluntary and Community Groups are consulted on decisions that may impact on them or the communities they serve.
- To work towards greater equality, recognition and respect between the sectors when working in partnership.
- To develop Codes of Practice to cover particular issues/areas of working.
- To develop networks between the Local Authority and Health Authority, other public bodies and Voluntary and Community organisations.
- Improve communication and information flow between the statutory and Voluntary and Community sectors.
- To review and develop the relationship between the statutory and Voluntary and Community sectors.

## status of the compact ...

All the partners that sign up to The Compact are committed to seeing that it is implemented following full consultation. It is a negotiated, working document, and as such, does not require legal status. Its impact will however, be monitored and evaluated by The Compact Working Group to ensure that it is properly implemented.

## what is the voluntary/community sector ...

The Voluntary and Community sector is an important partner in meeting the needs of individuals and communities in Bolton. Voluntary and Community organisations in Bolton are diverse in terms of structure, size, history and culture as well as in the range of activities in which they engage. They range from large organisations with many paid staff to small informal groups run by volunteers. Some are national or regional in scope, others cover the whole Borough or are based in local communities. Voluntary and Community Groups are independent, defining their own aims and objectives and choosing methods by which they achieve them. They often have a small group of people known as a management committee who take responsibility for the running of the group. The groups often have a constitution or set of rules which guides activities and future work.

## shared principles ...

The Partners value and recognise the contribution Voluntary and Community activity can make to Bolton.

The Partners recognise that they each have distinct but complementary roles in the development and delivery of public policy and local services.

The Partners also acknowledge the importance of accountability.

Partnership working adds value and helps to create shared aims and objectives.

In particular, there is a joint commitment to take forward the equality agenda at all levels.

## how will the compact benefit/affect voluntary and community groups ...

There will be an improvement in the way Voluntary and Community Groups are consulted and involved.

A commitment to quality services.

Public recognition of the value Voluntary and Community Groups make to society.

There will be a clearer role and a stronger voice for the Voluntary and Community Groups in shaping policy/strategy.

An opportunity to participate in and influence policy on funding and other relevant processes.

## how will this benefit/affect statutory organisations ...

Clarity in funding e.g. the Local Authority will be clear about what it is getting from the voluntary sector for money invested.

Stronger partnerships on an agreed basis with the voluntary sector.

A strong basis for developing agreements on a range of issues such as funding, standards and monitoring.

They will be more able to identify need and therefore provide more targeted services. Partnerships will develop ways to target 'hard-to-reach' groups and promote social inclusion.

## plan of action ...

**We will create a Compact Working Group** which will steer the development and monitor the implementation of The Compact.

**We will consult** at all stages of the development of The Compact and its subsequent Codes of Practice to ensure that as wide a range of people's views as possible are taken into account.

**All partners will be asked to sign up to The Compact.** By doing this they will show commitment to:

- Implementing The Compact.
- Nominating an appropriate representative to The Compact Working Group.
- Developing and implementing Codes of Practice to cover particular issues/areas of working.
- Regularly monitoring and reviewing The Compact.

**We will formalise the Compact Working Group.** The Compact Working Group will be made up of representatives of all the partners. These representatives will have authority within their own organisations to develop The Compact and to implement any recommendations made in The Compact or in the Codes of Practice.

The Working Group will be responsible for:

- Arranging consultation on The Compact and the Codes of Practice.
- Setting the timetable for the development of Codes of Practice.
- Overseeing and supporting the development of Codes of Practice.
- Monitoring the implementation of The Compact and the Codes of Practice.
- Dealing with any conflicts or disagreements arising from the development and implementation of The Compact and the Codes of Practice.
- Publicising and promoting The Compact.
- Evaluating the impact of The Compact.

**Development of Codes of Practice** (these will be influenced by the national policy documents and will include examples of good practice that already exist in Bolton)

The initial priorities are:

- Development of a Code of Practice around **Funding**.
- Development of a Code of Practice around **Black and Ethnic Minority Groups**.

This will be followed by Codes of Practice on Consultation, Community Groups and Volunteering.