

**The
Northamptonshire Joint Agencies
Voluntary and Community Sector
Compact**

Launched December 2002



Foreword

The development of the Northamptonshire Compact was through the Northamptonshire Connecting Communities Partnership. The Partnership is led by the voluntary and community sector with representatives from a range of statutory and public bodies as well as business from across the County. The partnership was built upon the recognition that a strong voluntary and community sector is fundamental for the local statutory and public service agencies to identify the needs of local communities and the means of providing solutions to poverty, disadvantage, poor education and social exclusion.

Working together allows each one of us to achieve something more than we each achieve in isolation.

The Northamptonshire Compact has been developed through listening to the needs as identified by the voluntary and community organisations that represent the diverse communities of interest and place across the county.

For further information about the Northamptonshire Compact, contact:

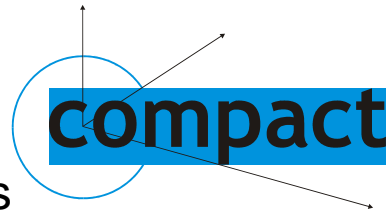
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Northamptonshire Joint Agencies Voluntary and Community Organisations Compact

1. What is the Joint Agencies Compact?

The Northamptonshire Compact on relations between public bodies (i.e. the local councils, health agencies, police and learning organisations) and the Voluntary & Community Sectors aims to improve their relationship for mutual advantage.

The Compact is a practical agreement on what the sectors can expect from each other and the ground rules for relationships. Transparency, equality and equity must be the cornerstone of our relationships.

By enhancing partnership working with the statutory sector and public service agencies, the voluntary and community sectors can more effectively tackle poverty, social exclusion and environmental matters.

The Compact seeks to:

- Help local statutory, public service voluntary and community agencies achieve their objectives
- Help local people contribute to public life
- Create opportunities for local communities to thrive
- Involve and empower people who use local public and voluntary services
- Tackle poverty and social exclusion
- Eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities and establish good race relations

Who is a Joint Agencies Compact for?

Voluntary organisations: These are groups which have a voluntary management structure (committee, board, trustees) whether it employs paid staff or not.

Community organisation: These are any group of people who come together for a common cause or interest.

Faith Communities: Churches, Mosques, Temples, Gudwaras and any other locally based faith community.

Public Bodies: the local county, borough and district councils, health trusts and authorities, primary care trusts, the local education authority, learning and skills council and other statutory services such as the police, and schools and colleges.

The Compact is for any organisation that works together with other organisations. This may mean groups that work informally meeting and working together with contracts or formal partnerships.

Why have a Joint Agencies Compact?

- To raise awareness of the complementary roles of public bodies, voluntary and community sectors in fulfilling our local commitments, objectives and initiatives.
- To create a better understanding by public bodies of the role and importance of the voluntary and community sectors.
- To create a better understanding and involvement by the voluntary and community sector of the direction being taken by public bodies.
- To increase voluntary and community sector involvement in community strategies, local strategic partnerships and Best Value reviews.
- To develop more effective resourcing of and support to the voluntary and community sectors.
- To improve communication and share good practice across and within all sectors.
- To support the development of a long term vision of the voluntary and community sectors and to ensure that the sector is able to sustain its work.

2. Underlying Values and Principles for a Compact

- Voluntary action is an essential component of a democratic society.
- An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is fundamental to the well being of society.
- In the development and delivery of public policy and services, the statutory sector, public service agencies and the voluntary and community sectors have distinct and separate roles.
- There is an added value in working together towards common aims and objectives. Meaningful consultation builds relationships, improves policy development and enhances the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- Public bodies, voluntary and community sectors have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders. However common to both is the need for humanity, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Public bodies, voluntary and community sectors acknowledge the need for appropriate standards where public funds are involved that reflect the diversity of voluntary and community activity.
- Voluntary and Community organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims.
- Public bodies, voluntary and community sectors recognise the need for the statutory sector and public service agencies to allocate resources to voluntary and community organisations. These resources include funding, advice and other support and they are important elements in the relationship between the sectors.
- Public bodies, voluntary and community sectors acknowledge the importance of actively promoting social inclusion.

Equality of Opportunity

The Compact should play an essential part in ensuring equality of opportunity for all voluntary & community sector agencies and the people who use the services of, public bodies, voluntary and community agencies. It is essential that all agencies have in place measures to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities. These measures should ensure that people and groups are not unfairly discriminated against on the basis of their age, disability, employment status, ethnic or national origins, race or colour, HIV status, marital status, religious or political beliefs, caring responsibilities, gender, sexuality, trade union activities or unrelated criminal convictions.

3. Public Bodies Undertakings

Public Bodies would like to see:

- A voluntary and community sector that has its own identity and vision.
- A strong and well-developed voluntary and community sector in the county.
- A relationship that builds and maintains the strategic capacity of the voluntary and community sector as an equal partner.
- Local services that meet the needs of all local people and that in doing so strive to eliminate discrimination, promote equal opportunities and progress good race relations.
- Constant dialogue with the voluntary and community sectors to influence statutory sector objectives and have a genuine stake in decision-making.
- A diverse funding base which ensures sustainable voluntary and community sectors
- Acknowledgement of the in-kind support provided by public bodies.
- Support for quality funding advice given to groups.
- Clear agreements about what is to be achieved by the voluntary and community sector when funded by public money allocated to them.
- A reduction in unnecessary bureaucracy imposed upon the voluntary and community sector. This would achieve better use of public money and benefit the public sector.
- A voluntary and community sector that values training and shares good practice across the sectors.
- An active voluntary and community sector that is involved in promoting opportunities.

4. Voluntary and Community Sector Undertakings

Voluntary and Community Sectors would like to see:

- Recognition of the independence of the sector and its significant role in campaigning for positive change.
- Recognition of the unique capacity of the voluntary sector to identify and respond to local needs.
- A proper understanding of the voluntary and community sectors:
 - Contribution to society
 - Value of the services currently offered, and
 - A recognition of the skills and expertise that exist within the sector.
- Consistent and transparent action from public bodies:
 - Accountable processes for funding, clearly aligned to strategic plans of partner organisations
 - Ways of consulting that include everyone, and
 - Making clear the role of officers within the statutory sector and offering clear lines of accountability.
- That working with the voluntary and community sectors is not only about service delivery where public bodies have identified gaps, but equally about involvement and representation to ensure inclusive and therefore appropriate planning of services based on community needs.
- Consultation with un-funded and funded groups as equally important to planning services.
- Work towards consistent high quality funding arrangements that are open, transparent and encourage developing and increasingly sustainable voluntary and community sectors.
- Public bodies recognising the benefits of learning and training with the voluntary and community sector.
- Strong support offered to local development agencies that support and inform from within the voluntary and community sectors.
- Local development agencies, which are open in their processes and clearly accountable to frontline voluntary and community agencies.

5. Joint Undertakings

We are all committed to developing best practice in our relationships and so agree to:

- Strive to develop a committed, respectful, honest, supportive relationship through promotion, sharing good practice and celebrating success.
- Work together to genuinely improve the lives of people in local communities.
- Encourage, develop and support best practice volunteering in local communities.
- Promote the Compact in all appropriate public bodies, voluntary and community sector partnership work and publications.
- Implement the Compact in a way that eliminates discrimination, achieves equality of opportunity for all, establishes good race relations and actively promotes social inclusion.
- Participate in the monitoring, evaluation and review mechanisms of the compact process.

Voluntary and Community Undertakings	Public Bodies Undertakings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledging the need for prioritisation of public sector resources. • Keeping high standards of governance and conduct. • Making effective employment and management arrangements. • Developing quality standards, best practice and equality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing the work the knowledge, independence, diversity and expertise of the sectors. • To have clear objectives as agencies. • To provide mechanisms for the voluntary and community sectors to influence those objectives and the plans that emerge out of them. • To have a named contact in each agency with responsibility for relationships with the voluntary and community sectors.

6. Monitoring and Evaluation

Agreeing the Action Plan

The Compact will be monitored through an Action Plan. The Action Plan will be agreed at a conference convened by Northamptonshire Connecting Communities Partnership.

The Conference will:

- Consider best practice in cross sector working, and define methods of disseminating this across public bodies and the voluntary and community sector in Northamptonshire.
- Agree the action plan to implement the Compact for the following year.

The First Year of Implementation

In subsequent years the Conference, which shall be held annually, will:

- Report on the implementation of the Compact and make recommendations for any changes. An element of this review will be an assessment of the effectiveness of any Compact codes of practice that have been developed.
- Make any revisions to the action plan to implement the Compact for the following year.

Following the first year of implementation the responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken on a localities basis where possible. These local reviews will be fed through to the annual countywide conference arranged by Northamptonshire Connecting Communities Partnership.

7. Implementing the Compact in your Organisation

The Action Plan will be based on national guidance shown in the box below.

The progress of implementing the Compact will reflect the nature of local relationships and be discussed at the annual conference. It is recognised that the development of the document is a starting point which will result in improved relationships over time.

Staff induction and Training

- ❖ Compact information included in recruitment packs and induction programmes
- ❖ Process in place for filtering down Compact information to all staff
- ❖ Opportunities taken to cover Compact in existing training courses
- ❖ Joint training introduced on Compact and partnership working

Knowing and using the Compact

- ❖ Ways found and used for getting Compact messages to voluntary and community organisations
- ❖ Briefing notes for trustees/management committee members, staff and volunteers developed and distributed
- ❖ Ways found and used for getting Compact messages to Black and Minority Ethnic and small community organisations
- ❖ Compact and explanatory information included on the websites of signatories
- ❖ Compact updates regularly included in newsletters
- ❖ Reference to and display of the Compact at local events and conferences
- ❖ Promotion of the Compact in National Volunteers week events
- ❖ Agreeing a protocol for involving the voluntary and community sectors in Best Value

Planning and Review

- ❖ Annual Action Plan drawn up
- ❖ Annual Conference hosted by the Northamptonshire Connecting Communities Partnership
- ❖ Annual Report published and distributed by the Northamptonshire Connecting Communities Partnership

8. Developing Codes of Practice for the Compact

The detail of specific issues relating to Black and Minority Ethnic communities, community groups, consultation & policy appraisal, funding and volunteering are encompassed in Compact Codes which will be developed over the course of 2002 and 2003. However this document has also tried to acknowledge some of these specific issues in respect to relationships between the voluntary, community, and public bodies.

9. Dealing with Disputes

It is recognised that there will be disputes in implementing the Compact. Disputes are rarely caused by the unreasonable behaviour of one or other party. Normally they are symptoms of wider issues. The objective of settling disputes is not simply resolution, but the identification of any wider issues that may be contributing to the problem, so that these may be addressed in a non-confrontational way. We believe that the airing of concerns and the resolving of these difficulties is positive because it helps us improve the way we work and improves the quality of what we do.

Disputes should be highlighted and resolved by following staged process:

1. In the first instance, organisations that believe others are not respecting the spirit of this agreement should seek to resolve the issue between them. Partners must agree to honour each other's right to raise concerns, to give them time to hear them, and to respond positively to them.
2. Any agency or individual wishing to raise specific incidents where the Compact undertakings have been breached should be encouraged to use the relevant agencies complaints procedure.

During each annual conference consideration will be given as to whether there is a need for a more formal resolutions process. This review will draw on the experiences of disagreements and processes for resolving issues in the previous year of operation.

Glossary

BME: Black and minority ethnic communities. This term includes visible and not so visible minority communities.

Capacity Building: Empowering and supporting organisations and communities through officer time, training, buildings, financial support in order that they can play an effective role in their community.

Community Organisation: These are any group of people who come together for a common cause or interest.

Faith Communities: Churches, Mosques, Temples, Gudwaras and any other locally based faith community.

Secondment: The transfer of staff temporarily to another employer or position.

Public Bodies: the local county, borough and district councils, health trust and authorities, primary care trusts, learning skills council and other statutory services such as the police and the local colleges.

Voluntary Organisations: These are groups which have a voluntary management structure (committee, board, trustees) whether it employs paid staff or not.

Appendix 1

Organisations committed to the Northamptonshire Joint Agencies Compact

Public Agencies

Borough of Wellingborough
Corby Borough Council
Daventry and South Northants
PCT
Kettering Borough Council
Kettering General Hospital
Learning and Skills Council
Northamptonshire Healthcare
NHS Trust

Northampton Borough Council
Northamptonshire County Council
Heartlands PCT
Northampton PCT
Northamptonshire Police
Northampton College
South Northants District Council

Voluntary Organisations

Ability Northants
Adoption UK
Age Concern Northampton &
County
BTCV Northamptonshire
Care & Repair (Northampton) Ltd
Caring & Sharing Trust
Children's Aid Team
Clubs for Young People
Corby & District Welfare Rights
Corby Citizens Advice Bureau
Corby Community Arts
Corby Volunteer Bureau
CSV
Daventry & District Citizens Advice
Bureau
Daventry Volunteer Centre
Daylight Centre
Diocesan Office (Peterborough)
Dostiyo Asian Women's & Girl's
Organisation
East Northants Headway
East Northants Welfare &
Housing Rights Advisory Service
Enterprise Training Project
FAIR
Green Door Youth Counselling
Info Service

Haemophilia Society Northampton
Group
Home-Start Kettering
Huntington's Disease Association
Kettering Citizens Advice Bureau
Kettering Volunteer Centre
Kettering, Corby & District
Alzheimer's Society
Mayday Trust
NAYC
NCH Wellingborough Family
Centre
Northampton & District Citizens
Advice Bureau
Northampton & District MIND
Northampton Volunteer Bureau
Northamptonshire ACRE
Northamptonshire Carers
Northamptonshire Children's
Resource Centre
Northamptonshire Lesbian, Gay
and Bi-sexual Alliance
Northamptonshire Society for
Autism
Northamptonshire Victim Support
Scheme
Northants Network Art
Parents in Partnership
(Northamptonshire)

Voluntary Organisations

Physical Disability Resource Team
Relate Northamptonshire
Rethink
Rockingham Forest Trust
Royal Mandate Ministries
RUKBA
Ryder-Cheshire Volunteers
SERVE
Service Six
South Northants Branch of
Alzheimer's Society
South Northants Volunteer Bureau
Spencer Contact
SSAFA – Forces Help

St John Ambulance
St Peter & St Andrews Church
Corby
Stress at Work
Sunflower Centre
Teamwork Trust (Corby)
Teamwork Trust (Wellingborough)
The Manna House
The Volunteer Centre (Thrapston)
Time2Talk
Volunteer Action Oundle
Wellingborough & East
Northamptonshire Women's
Network
Wellingborough Volunteer Bureau

Appendix 2

Joint Agencies Voluntary and Community Sector Compact Steering Group (November 2001 – December 2002)

Bellinge Community House	Andrea McAuliffe
Borough of Wellingborough Council	Emma Whittlesea
Borough of Wellingborough Council	Janet Doran
British Red Cross	Simeon Byrne
Corby Borough Council	Lynne Aisbett
Corby Borough Council	Peter Floody
CVS Northamptonshire	Mary Hopkins
Daventry and South Northants Primary Care Trust	Carol Delghani
Daventry District Council	Sally Halson
East Northamptonshire District Council	Katie Sheldrick
East Northamptonshire District Council	Claire Keck
Kettering Borough Council	Lynne Mackness
Kettering Borough Council	Lyn Chapman
Learning and Skills Council	Janet Swainger
Learning and Skills Council	Pauline Taylor
Northampton Borough Council	Pat Mattock
Northampton College	Ray Starkey
Northampton Osteoporosis Support	Marion Scott
Northampton Primary Care Trust	Mary Burrows
Northamptonshire Connecting Communities Partnership	Tina Matthew
Northamptonshire Connecting Communities Partnership	Kathryn White
Northamptonshire County Council	Cllr James Ashton
Northamptonshire County Council	Kevin Fagan
Northamptonshire County Council	Vince Ritters
Northamptonshire County Council – Partnerships & Regeneration	Andrew Cawley
Northamptonshire County Council – Partnerships & Regeneration	Pratima Dattani
Northamptonshire County Council – Partnerships & Regeneration	Anjona Roy
Northamptonshire County Council – Social Care & Health	David Lewis
Northamptonshire County Council – Social Care & Health	Penny Prior
Northamptonshire Health Authority	Bridget Peet
Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Trust	Anne McWatt
Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust	Chris Boyce
Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust	Jane Jones
Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust	Jane Little
Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust	Joanna Kiely
Northamptonshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust	Sharon Benford
Northamptonshire Police	Andy Frost
Northamptonshire Police	Sgt Leon Owens
Parkinson's Disease Support	Moya McVicar
Relate	Wendy Lovell
South Northamptonshire District Council	Caroline Neale
South Northamptonshire District Council	Ian Lindley