



PROGRESS REPORT JOINT COMPACT ACTION PLAN 2008-09

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**Produced by the Commission for the Compact for the
Ninth Annual Meeting of the Compact on relations between
Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector**

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Introduction

2008 has seen significant progress made in embedding Compact principles in new legislation, policy and statutory guidance. The work undertaken to date also reflects the agreement, made at the Annual Compact Meeting 2007, for the Commission for the Compact to lead a review of the Compact and the Codes of Practice to bring them in line with policy development and public service reform and to examine the legal status of the Compact.

Compiled by the Commission for the Compact, this report records the progress in implementing the Joint Compact Action Plan to December 2008. The work to date has been delivered in partnership with the Office of the Third Sector on behalf of central government, Compact Voice on behalf of the third sector and the Local Government Association on behalf of local government.

The Joint Compact Action Plan, agreed at the Annual Meeting in 2007, contained five outcome-focused targets and thirty four actions required to achieve those targets. The five targets for the work in 2008-09 are:

- Stronger relationships and partnerships at national level, to deliver the national Compact
- Stronger relationships and partnerships at local level, supported by Local and Regional Compacts and Compact Action Plans
- Increase understanding of the role of the Compact in promoting equality and community cohesion
- Strengthen the independence, voice and campaigning work of the third sector
- Ensure the continued relevance of the Compact in a changing legislative and policy environment.

The successful delivery of this ambitious and challenging programme arises out of the partners' commitment to a shared vision of the value of partnership working. Moving forward, Compact Voice, the Office of the Third Sector and the Commission for the Compact will continue to work together to:

- Increase awareness and understanding of the Compact
- Promote greater use of the Compact by the Government and the third sector
- Provide evidence of the benefits of following Compact principles in order to achieve better outcomes for individuals and local communities
- Keep the Compact relevant and up to date with the changes in the way public services are commissioned, paid for and delivered
- Preserve the freedom of third sector organisations to act and speak out independently.

Progress on Target 1

Stronger relationships and partnerships at national level, to deliver the national Compact

This year, the Commission for the Compact has developed their strategic relationships and partnerships at a national level, working across Government and public bodies, bringing together third sector organisations and engaging with government inspectors and regulators.

Responding to calls to make the Compact documentation more accessible, the Commission for the Compact has produced the Concise Compact Guide. The guide is for all public sector and third sector organisations, and aims to help them understand when the Compact applies, and how to meet their undertakings. This has proved popular within government, with the third sector champions sub-group on the Compact agreeing to promote it in order to improve officials' understanding of their Compact undertakings and when they apply.

Conducting a number of thematic reviews, such as European funding administration and the relationships between charitable hospices and Primary Care Trusts, has provided a valuable opportunity for the Commission to explore and propose solutions for reported problems in Compact implementation at a national level.

The next six months will see a continuation of the Commission's work to build a robust evidence base of awareness, understanding and relevance of the Compact at national level. The results will be used to identify implementation issues and to work systematically with government departments to address specific issues.

Case study: Palliative care and the Compact

In its work with third sector organisations, the Commission for the Compact identified the funding of palliative care as a potential problem area in Compact implementation. In partnership with the third sector umbrella group Help the Hospices, the Commission for the Compact commissioned a research study to look at the vital relationship between charitable hospices and NHS Primary Care Trusts, and the role the Compact is playing in them.

The report *Positive Engagement, Future Practice: Learning for End of Life Care*, uses interviews and real life examples from a series of ten anonymous case studies to explore how well the two sectors work together and draw out learning points. A key finding is that effective personal relationships are important for successful relationships between hospices and Primary Care Trusts, but that the Compact and its principles underpin good relationships and could be used as a useful tool in improving and developing them. The report concludes with a series of learning points designed to be useful for both charitable hospices and Primary Care Trusts, and it is hoped that the Commission's continued work in promoting them will help to implement Compact principles more effectively in this important service area.

Progress on Target 2

Stronger relationships and partnerships at local level, supported by Local and Regional Compacts and Compact Action Plans

At a local level, the Commission for the Compact has been successful in supporting and influencing organisations to recognise the importance of the Compact as the basis for effective partnership working. Developing positive working relationships with partners has been crucial. The challenge for Compact partners next year is to sustain this momentum and continue to provide those involved with Compact delivery the tools to increase implementation and effectiveness.

This year, the Commission for the Compact has worked closely with the Audit Commission to shape the development of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) process. Early versions of the methodology for CAA did not articulate how the quality of partnership would be assessed and measured, although partnership working is at the very heart of the area assessment approach. The Commission has lobbied strongly, through consultation responses, membership of the CAA third sector task group and direct meetings with senior Audit Commission officials, to ensure that Compact principles form part of the methodology.

The Office of the Third Sector and the Commission for the Compact have established a cross government department funding practitioners group. This has provided the opportunity to promote the use of Compact principles to government departments in funding relationships with the third sector. A challenge in taking this group forward will be increasing the understanding and practical application of Compact principles to commissioning. The Commission for the Compact is in the process of working with a number of non-departmental public bodies to assess how they incorporate Compact principles in relationships with the voluntary and community sector.

The Commission for the Compact will publish commissioning implementation guidance in January 2009. This guidance will help commissioners identify where and how Compact principles can be applied to commissioning. To further support this work, the Commission for the Compact will develop an online commissioning best practice database.

Work on the role and impact of Regional Compacts is continuing, with the Commission for the Compact playing an active role in development processes in the East Midlands, the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber in particular.

The Commission for the Compact, in partnership with Compact Voice, has commissioned research to assess the role and impact of Compact Champions. The report will highlight skills, resources and approaches required by Compact Champions to increase Compact implementation. This work provides an excellent opportunity to support Compact champions across the country.

Case Study: What makes a successful Local Compact?

Every top tier local authority area has a Local Compact. Whilst there is quantity and coverage, there is a view that many are not meaningfully implemented, outdated or do not reflect changing local policy environment.

The Commission for the Compact, in recognising that the number of partnerships can only be a partial measure of success, commissioned research to identify those factors that contribute to successful Local Compacts. The research was undertaken to increase partnership working at the local level through the effective implementation of Local Compacts. It also provided valuable evidence and best practice on Compact implementation for the Commission.

The research focused on one Local Compact in each Government Office area. Published in October 2008, the final report is not a traditional piece of research and is designed to be an accessible guide to increasing Local Compact implementation. The report highlights a number of approaches, tools and ways of working that were used in the case study areas. The research also clearly highlights that better local partnership working and better outcomes for individual and communities results from Compact principles being applied on a day to day basis.

To disseminate the findings of the research and to engage with a range of organisations, the Commission for the Compact held a series of regional workshops in the autumn of 2008. These events were attended by nearly 200 people, from both the public and voluntary and community sectors.

Delivering this work has highlighted a continuing challenge for Compact partners to raise awareness of the Compact and its value in providing an effective framework for local partnership working. Over the next year, Compact partners will continue to work with key local partners to increase implementation.

Progress on Target 3

Increase understanding of the role of the Compact in promoting equality and community cohesion

Karon Monaghan QC from Matrix Law was engaged by the Commission for the Compact to conduct a legal review of the Compact BME Code, examining its compliance with current race relations and anti-discrimination law, and with the Government's stated intentions on equalities law. A similar process will now be undertaken for the remaining Codes of Good Practice. The Commission publicised the results of this review through a series of seminars across the country in autumn 2008 to discuss the future of the BME Code of Good Practice.

The Commission has also made contact with BASSAC and the Community Sector Coalition with a view to undertaking more detailed discussions on the way in which the aptitudes, support needs and aspirations of the community sector can be reflected in the Compact in future.

The Commission for the Compact has recently appointed CSV Consulting to conduct a major research study on the costs and benefits of volunteering by groups currently under-represented in the volunteer "workforce". This will build on the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Volunteering, which identified a number of groups under-represented in volunteering: single parents; asylum seekers and refugees; and disabled people. Accordingly, these will be the initial target groups for the research. The project will include two phases of large-scale qualitative and quantitative research, culminating, in 2009, in the production of a "full-cost recovery tool". The tool will be designed to help volunteer-supporting organisations and commissioners to have a clearer idea of the ancillary costs of such volunteering.

Case study: Reviewing the Code of Good Practice on Relations with BME Voluntary and Community Organisations ("the BME Code")

The Commission wants to ensure that the Compact keeps pace with changes in the legal environment of discrimination and equality law. It is also vital that any revised Compact documentation retains commitments to anti-racism, equality, fair funding and capacity-building for groups representing minorities, volunteering by under-represented groups, appropriate consultation methods and involvement in partnership structures.

Work to develop and strengthen the BME Code has been a major element of the Commission's work this year. Karon Monaghan's review of the Code made some specific recommendations on the legal compliance of the Code and also on redrafting the Code to better reflect the changing legal and policy framework. These were published on the Commission's website on a specific BME Review sub-site, along with an online survey and discussion forum.

Seminar events were held in Leicester, Manchester and London, in collaboration with Voice4Change England, the national BME third sector network, to promote discussion of the review's conclusions. These events attracted nearly 100 participants in all. Commission staff have also attended a variety of other meetings to inform representatives of the BME third sector and organisations promoting equality of the progress of the review, including meetings organised by Voice4Change England and the Equality and Diversity Forum.

The results of this consultation will feed into the broader review of the Compact documentation, which the Commission will be conducting during the course of 2009-10.

Progress on Target 4

Strengthen the independence, voice and campaigning work of the third sector

The Commission for the Compact's work on independence, voice and campaigning has been research-focused. A significant success in this area was conducting parallel research projects examining independence from different perspectives.

In June 2008, Compact Voice ran a series of focus groups with national third sector organisations, to explore their perceptions of the issue of third sector independence. At the same time, the Commission for the Compact commissioned a research study exploring the understanding and commitment of eight government departments to the Compact principles relating to campaigning and independence.

Particularly valuable was the capturing of information around good practice within departments, which was shared and publicised. Collecting robust monitoring data on the extent to which Compact commitments in this area are being met was more challenging however, and resource constraints meant it was not possible to extend the research to look at non-departmental public bodies and local authorities as planned. Nevertheless, the evidence gathered this year provides an excellent base for focusing on more practical activities next year, as well as further research. Future plans include developing and publicising a piece of guidance to help both sectors find out about practical ways in which they can strengthen the independence and voice of the third sector.

Case study: Independence Day

Following complementary research projects by Compact Voice and the Commission for the Compact, the two partners worked together to hold an 'Independence Day' event on Friday 4 July 2008. The event aimed to recognise, support and strengthen the independence of voluntary and community organisations and encourage them to exercise their independence.

Well attended by participants from both the statutory and third sectors, the event was an opportunity to compare the findings from both research studies and highlight any gaps between the perceptions of those working in central government and those in the sector. Attendees had the chance to participate in workshops to share experiences of the ways in which the Compact is being used to strengthen independence and identify what can be learnt from them. The information gathered from the workshops will be used to inform future work on independence and campaigning, including the production of a guidance pack.

Progress on Target 5

Ensure the continued relevance of the Compact in a changing legislative and policy environment

Much of the Commission for the Compact's work in assessing Compact Codes against current legislation and guidance has been embedded in the previous outcome-focussed targets. For example, work has been completed on a legal review of the BME code and work is in progress looking at the Compact and European Union funding.

The Commission for the Compact is continuing to develop approaches to assess the Volunteering and Community Groups Codes against recent legislation. This work will help to clarify the role of the Compact within the current legislative framework, and ensure the Compact and its principles remain relevant.

In response to a request by the Minister for the Third Sector in July 2008, the Commissioner for the Compact initiated a debate on the future of the Compact and the role of the Commission for the Compact.



This took place between July and early November 2008 and activity undertaken to stimulate the debate included one-to-one meetings, promotion through existing events, a dedicated email address for responses and a sub-site on the Compact website, advertising and holding an interactive event at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on Tuesday 9 September 2008, which involved 180 delegates from across government and the voluntary and community sector.

Case study: Taking the Compact forward

In July 2008, the Commission for the Compact held a working group entitled *Taking the Compact forward*. The group contained key representatives from all Compact partners, Local Compact Voice, key third sector umbrella organisations, the Public Law Project and Bates, Wells and Braithwaites.

The group was set up by the Commission for the Compact to consider whether there was a shared view on: the current challenges to the Compact; what is meant when people call for the Compact to have “teeth”; and why placing the Compact in law or giving the Commission for the Compact statutory powers would be the most appropriate solution to improve Compact implementation.

The group then considered a number of potential models that were used to illustrate the possible future form of the Compact and Commission for the Compact.

The robust and informative discussion provided an invaluable opportunity for partners share their views on the future direction of the Compact. It also afforded the opportunity for those involved to begin considering, discussing and formulating views on the implications of changing the current status of the Compact and the Commission for the Compact.

Compact Awards 2008

A summary of this year's results

The Compact Awards are awarded every year to demonstrate the Compact in action and celebrate and recognise excellent partnership working at a local, regional and national level. Previously known as the Compact Commendations for Excellence, since they were introduced in 2003 over 100 Commendations and Compact Excellence Awards have been awarded to recognise excellent partnership working.

Organised by the Commission for the Compact in partnership with Compact Voice and the Office of the Third Sector, the five award categories include Compact Champion of the Year, Local Compact of the Year, the Regional and National Excellence Awards, and a Commissioner's Award, given in recognition of exceptional achievement.

The awards ceremony formed part of Compact Week, which took place this year from 1 to 8 November 2008. The Compact Awards ceremony was held on Wednesday 5 November 2008 at 195 Piccadilly in London. Later that day, finalists and winners from the awards joined senior figures involved in the national Compact at an early evening reception at No. 11 Downing Street. This reception was held to celebrate ten years of the Compact and was hosted by Kevin Brennan MP, Minister for the Third Sector.



The list of winners in full

Local Compact of the Year 2008 Winner - Derby Compact

Derby Compact won the prestigious Local Compact of the Year Award for its work on strengthening the links between the Derby Compact and the Local Strategic Partnership, Derby City Partnership.

This year, it has revised its Compact to include a new process for conflict resolution and developed a publicity plan to raise awareness of the Derby Compact and promote its work.

In addition, it has established a strategic city-wide volunteer co-ordinators forum, and developed a joint commissioning framework on the processes to be adopted to ensure effective third sector involvement in the planning, commissioning and delivery of health and social care services.



Left to right: Being presented with their award by Sir Bert Massie CBE, Commissioner for the Compact, are Katy Wing, Vivene McCalla and Hazel Simpson.

Finalists in this category who were awarded **Compact Excellence Awards:**

- Calderdale Compact
- East Sussex Compact
- Gloucestershire Compact Group
- Haringey Compact 'Working BETTER Together'
- Wolverhampton Compact

Other entries in this category who were awarded **Highly Commended Certificates:**

- Rotherham Partnership Compact
- Sunderland Compact
- Surrey Compact
- Compact for Devon
- Thanet Compact
- Community Development Company (DOC) and Hull City Council
- Compact between Newcastle-upon-Tyne's voluntary and community sector and Newcastle City Council

The Commissioner's Award **Winner - Haringey Compact for its work on** **their Compact Proofing Toolkit**

Haringey Compact's Compact Proofing Toolkit was developed to be used across sectors in order to: assess Compact Compliance; support providers to develop and put in place Compact Compliant processes which add value; identify gaps in partnership working; and share learning and inform best practice in partnership working.

The toolkit is divided into two parts. Part 1 is a Compact impact assessment and Part 2 contains Compact proofing performance checklists, in order to assess the Compact specifically against principles contained within the Compact.

The toolkit has been piloted by the Haringey Strategic Partnership (HSP) in its review of Area Based Grants (ABG) of approximately £22million. It is also being used to develop its new commissioning framework.



Left to right: Stephanie Rowland, Andrew Law and Pamela Pemberton being presented with their award by Sir Bert.

Compact Champion of the Year 2008 **Winner - Laura Hack (Compact in Suffolk)**



Laura is the Partnership Manager at Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO).

Laura won this award for her personal commitment and enthusiasm. She has acted as the catalyst bringing local organisations together to agree on their reviewed Compact, organising a steering group made up of representatives from country and local third sector groups, public and local authorities.

Finalists in this category who were awarded **Compact Excellence Awards**

- Diana Billingham (Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust)
- Janice Rose (Northumberland Strategic Partnership)
- Andrew Wates (Surrey Compact)

Compact Award for Excellence at a Regional Level Winner - South West Regional Compact Partners

The South West Regional Compact was launched in September 2004. It meets bi-monthly and its shared set of values and principles aids the input made to the region's strategies and policies.

As well as drawing up the Compact, the group has agreed plans to promote, implement and review it and there are many examples of good practice encompassing review mechanisms, policy planning, campaigning and communications. Absolutely fundamental is their commitment to sharing Compact values and principles, and having a robust and open framework for discussing, promoting, and resolving and respecting differences.



Left to right: Nigel Williams, David Curtis, Andy Youl and Roger Haworth being presented with their award by Sir Bert.

Compact Award for Excellence at a National Level Winner - Department of Health Third Sector Funding and Investment Review Project



Left to right: Olivia Butterworth, Carolyn Heaney, Stephen Woollett and Robert Meadowcroft being presented with their award by Sir Bert.

This work was undertaken by the Department of Health to consider the entire Department's funding of the third sector, including its primary funding streams as well as contracts resulting from procurement, and grants across a range of the Department's programmes.

The Department conducted the review guided by Compact principles for involving and consulting the sector. Over 700 organisations participated in consultation workshops; 195 organisations submitted a response either online or through a paper-based questionnaire and 53 organisations submitted a written response outside the questionnaire format.

Outcomes include the creation of a 'Third Sector Investment Programme', a 'Strategic Partner Programme' and an 'Innovation, Excellence and Service Development Fund'. This will result in a more coherent approach to funding of the sector by the Department, stronger governance of their funding relationship and the opportunity to further mainstream the principles of the Compact and its Funding Code of Practice across the range of DH policy and delivery programmes.