

Tower Hamlets compact

Working together

An agreement of shared principles to support effective relationships between statutory and third sector organisations





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What is this compact about?

Our compact is called ‘Working together’

This compact sets out how organisations in Tower Hamlets want to work together. The aim is to achieve more for local people. Its value comes from the commitment of organisations that sign up to it and the clear procedure for solving disagreements.

The compact is a statement of principles that organisations agree to. Any organisation that does not meet these commitments can be held responsible for their actions.

There is a national compact between the Government and the third sector. This compact recognises that good working relations are vital if local people are to have the highest quality services and representation.

The third sector

In this document, the term ‘third sector’ means independent voluntary or community groups which are often registered charities. It includes religious organisations that are involved in community work. Organisations that only make profits to support growth, such as social enterprises and co-operatives, may also be considered part of the third sector.

Third-sector organisations generally have a clear purpose that is relevant to local people and includes a community development role.

The statutory sector

This generally means organisations created through acts of parliament. The law sets out what they do. The first statutory-sector organisations to adopt the compact in Tower Hamlets are the council, health and police services.

These will encourage other organisations in Tower Hamlets to adopt the compact.

Tower Hamlets Partnership

Tower Hamlets Partnership (THP) brings together a range of key stakeholders from the private, statutory and third sector. There are three strands to our partnership – local area partnerships, community plan action groups and a partnership management group. THP develops and agrees a joint strategy and priorities that are published every year in the community plan.

At the heart of the community plan – and this compact – is a commitment to provide excellent services. The compact recognises that working together helps to improve people’s quality of life. Tower Hamlets has high levels of economic and social deprivation. Our partnership aims to make sure that all services respond to, and meet the needs of, the different communities that live and work in our borough.

Shared vision

The shared vision for Tower Hamlets comes from our community plan.

‘To improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the borough.’

This compact recognises the distinct, but often shared roles of third-sector and statutory organisations in delivering this vision.



Shared principles

These are the shared principles we have agreed.

Mutual respect

The commitment and contribution of volunteers is a vital part of Tower Hamlets communities.

Our partners have a duty to promote equality, prevent discrimination and promote good relations between communities.

Each sector has its own set of responsibilities and duties. Each organisation is different and all our partners must respect and value this.

Quality services

Organisations have different but often complementary roles. All our partners want to provide the highest-quality services for their users.

Developing and improving services together builds stronger relationships, cross-border learning and services that are more likely to meet people’s needs.

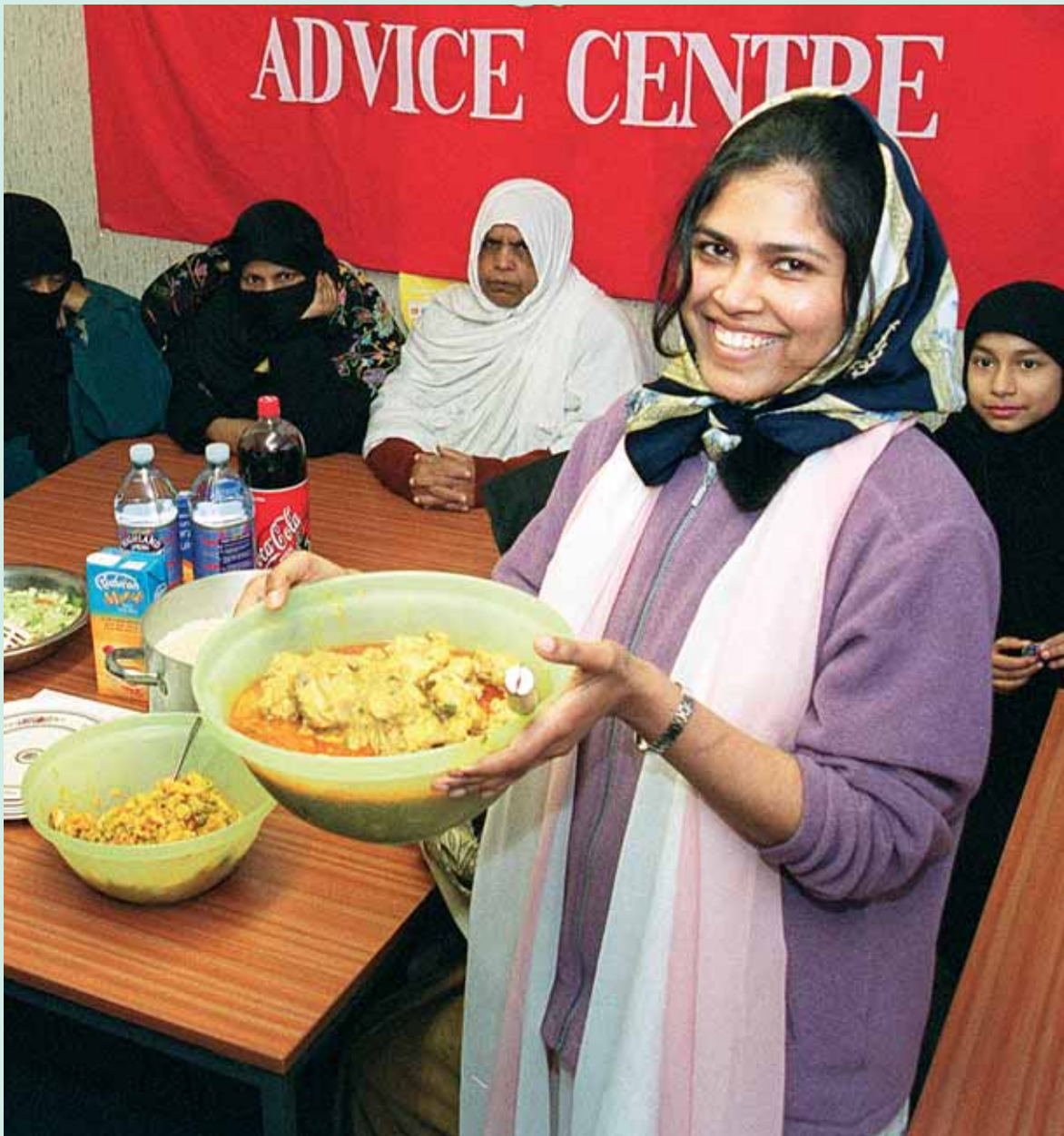
Our partners will promote effective working relationships within the Tower Hamlets Partnership.

Independence

An independent and varied third sector is essential to the wellbeing of communities in Tower Hamlets.

Strong and lasting relationships are built on honesty, openness and trust.

One of the third sector’s main roles is to campaign and challenge policy – within the law and using the appropriate methods.



Responsibility

Organisations are responsible for their actions and the services they provide to different stakeholders.

This compact will be independently assessed.

The statutory sector funds some third-sector organisations and has a duty to make sure that public money is spent appropriately.

Each organisation will have a complaints procedure that is easy to understand and effective.

Joint working

Organisations can achieve more for local people by working together.

Organisations should train and develop workers so they can work together.

Any opportunity for joint training sessions should be explored.

When an organisation cannot do something that is set out in this compact, they will explain why.

Our partners will acknowledge each organisation's contribution.

Organisations will apply risk-management principles to joint working arrangements.

Statutory sector

Statutory-sector organisations agree to the following.

Independence

- 1 To recognise the right of third-sector organisations to make their own decisions.
- 2 To respect the campaigning role of third-sector organisations.

Funding

- 3 To be clear and consistent, and give fair access to funding opportunities.
- 4 To consider the financial and other risks that can be significant within formal agreements.
- 5 To make each funding process as simple as possible. To publish clear standards, procedures, timescales and reasons for any decisions taken.
- 6 To use clear and consistent monitoring arrangements. These monitoring arrangements should be appropriate, relevant and easy to use.

- 7 To move to more stable and longer-term funding relationships, where appropriate, to help local organisations with their planning.
- 8 To consult in good time on any significant changes to funding arrangements.
- 9 To pay funding on time.
- 10 To make sure that the costs of providing a service, under a contract or service agreement, reflect an understanding of the full cost of delivery, including any relevant part of the overhead costs.
- 11 To provide strategic funding that supports the skills, knowledge, structures and resources of the third sector.
- 12 To confirm funding amounts three months before the start of projects, if possible.

Policy development and consultation

- 13 To involve the third sector, at an early stage, in designing and planning services.





- 14 To take account of the compact in planning, performance review and independent inspection arrangements.
 - 15 To keep to the standards in the code of practice for consultation and involvement, including making clear the purpose of each consultation, giving reasonable timescales for responses and providing feedback on the outcomes.
 - 16 To respect the confidentiality of information provided by the third sector, within the law and the proper performance of public duties.
 - 17 To develop an approach for assessing new policies and procedures to identify possible effects on the third sector.
- Communication**
- 18 To listen, respond and keep channels of communication, such as outreach work, open. This should include communicating with smaller groups who support excluded communities.
 - 19 To promote good working relations, a consistent approach and good practice, particularly where this relates to cross-agency work with the third sector.
 - 20 To contribute to the yearly review of the compact.
 - 21 To encourage other statutory organisations in Tower Hamlets to adopt the compact.
 - 22 To promote and raise awareness of the compact within Tower Hamlets Partnership.
 - 23 To share and explain targets set locally and by the Government that influence the service priorities for the statutory sector.
 - 24 To nominate a third-sector compact 'champion' in each statutory-sector organisation. The champion will act as the point of contact for third-sector organisations.
 - 25 To provide appropriate feedback on the performance of third-sector organisations.

Third sector

Third-sector organisations agree to the following.

Governance

- 1 To maintain high standards of governance.
- 2 To meet responsibilities to funders and services users.
- 3 To maintain high standards of financial management, including following the accounting frameworks for charities and limited companies.

Representation

- 4 To be clear and open about which part of the community each organisation is asked to represent.
- 5 To make arrangements to consult effectively with service users or the communities that the group represents.
- 6 To respect the confidentiality of statutory-sector information, within the law.

Service delivery

- 7 To deliver excellent services for local people that are designed to meet their individual needs.
- 8 To put into practice relevant performance and quality-assurance standards.
- 9 To record outputs and outcomes effectively and openly.

Communication

- 10 To provide feedback from service users to statutory-sector organisations.
- 11 To involve local users, wherever possible, in developing and managing activities and services.
- 12 To contribute to the yearly review of the compact.
- 13 To go to forums and networks to contribute to the operation and development of the sector as a whole.
- 14 To raise statutory-sector awareness of the work of the third sector, the knowledge and expertise within it, and the third sector's knowledge of the local community.



Solving disagreements

Even in the best relationships, partners will disagree from time to time. Developing solutions acceptable to both parties can improve understanding and help build stronger relations. It is important that there is an effective way to solve disagreements about using this compact.

This compact helps to improve relationships between organisations. By committing to this compact, organisations agree to firstly try and solve disagreements using the relevant complaints procedure. Every organisation that signs up to this compact will appoint a compact 'champion' who will act as a first point of contact and help you use the relevant complaints procedure.

If a disagreement cannot be sorted out, we will use a mediator or mediation service. Any mediator will be recognised by the compact board and trained to an appropriate standard. We may ask third-sector umbrella bodies to help solve the disagreement before considering formal mediation.

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has produced a Compact Advocacy Toolkit. This is designed for third-sector organisations that have a complaint about the way local or national government has treated their organisation. The toolkit is available at

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/CompactToolkit

We will review all disagreements confidentially, every year, to identify learning opportunities and further action. We will also review the complaints process every year.

Working together in the future

This is our first third-sector compact for Tower Hamlets and a starting point rather than a finished exercise. Tower Hamlets Partnership aims to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the borough. This includes a commitment to develop the compact and make it more effective.

Our compact sets out general principles. We will cover more specific issues in detailed codes of good practice. We will develop these as part of Tower Hamlets Partnership's ongoing commitment to the third-sector strategy.

So far, the consultation process has told us that local third-sector organisations want to see specific codes of practice being developed to cover the following subjects.

- Funding
- Black and ethnic-minority organisations
- Excluded communities
- Community groups
- Religious groups
- Voluntary groups

Also, local organisations have suggested that we consider:

- women's groups;
- promoting user-centred services;
- marketing support; and
- providing advice.

As part of the process of developing the compact, the compact board will meet every year. The compact board will review the compact and the effectiveness of the complaint process. We will publish the report and action plan from that meeting.

Compact glossary

Capacity building – This means making sure that individuals, groups and communities have access to the knowledge, skills and resources they need to take action or work efficiently and effectively.

Community group – This is an informal group or it can be a more formal organisation of people. Community groups are formed to pursue a common interest, meet a shared need or campaign for a common cause. Most are run entirely by volunteers, and will be run by their members or a committee elected from members.

Community plan – The community plan for Tower Hamlets is monitored by Tower Hamlets Partnership Management Group and was launched in May 2001. It sets out a vision for the future of Tower Hamlets to 2010. We report on our progress towards that vision every year, with a list of immediate priorities to be tackled in each following year.

Governance – This describes the way an organisation is managed, including its powers, responsibilities and decision-making processes. This is often set out in an organisation's constitution or legal identity.

Infrastructure bodies – These are organisations that provide capacity-building support to voluntary and community organisations. They represent the sector when making policies. They also encourage joint working across sectors.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) – Our LSP is the Tower Hamlets Partnership. It brings together a range of key local stakeholders from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to develop a joint strategy and priorities.

Mediation – This is a way of solving disagreements where an unbiased third party (the mediator) helps people who disagree to find an acceptable solution.

Quality assurance (QA) – These are steps taken to make sure that an organisation's activities are of a high quality.

Service agreement – This is a formal negotiated agreement setting out the essential parts of the services to be provided and related payments.

Social enterprises – These are organisations with objectives that benefit the community (for example, recycling). They reinvest any surplus to achieve these objectives, or invest it in the community rather than distribute it as profit to shareholders and owners.

Stakeholders – These are people who have an interest in an organisation, its activities and its achievements.

Umbrella body – This is an organisation that supports other organisations working in a particular area or field.

Voluntary organisation – This is a formal non-profit-distributing and non-statutory organisation, usually set up as a charity, which aims to provide a service or meet a need that will benefit the public. Voluntary organisations often have paid employees.

Useful contacts

Community Organisations Forum

Council for Voluntary Service Tower
Hamlets
Norvin House
45 – 55 Commercial Street
London
E1 6BD
www.towerhamlets.org.uk
Jez Reeve
jez@towerhamlets.org.uk

Community Empowerment Network

Community Organisations Forum (COF) is the Responsible Body for the Community Empowerment Network (CEN). You can contact the CEN c/o COF at the above address.

Tower Hamlets Council

Town Hall
Mulberry Place
5 Clove Crescent
London
E14 2BG
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk
Damian Roberts
damian.roberts@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust

Trust Offices
Mile End Hospital
Bancroft Road
London
E1 4DG
www.thpct.nhs.uk
Jeremy Gardner
jeremy.gardner@thpct.nhs.uk

Metropolitan Police

Tower Hamlets Borough Liaison Office
Bethnal Green Police Station
12 Victoria Park Square
London
E2 9NZ
Marc Lyall
marcandrew.lyall@met.pnn.police.uk



National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

Regent's Wharf
8 All Saints Street
London
N1 9RL
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Compact Working Group

carole.osbourne@ncvo-vol.org.uk
Compact Working Group Secretariat
C/o NCVO at the address above
www.thecompact.org.uk

Active Community Unit

3rd Floor,
Allington Towers
19 Allington Street
London
SW1E 5EB
www.homeoffice.gov.uk

www.ourpartnership.org.uk

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations, the Centre for Management and Policy Studies and the Cabinet Office support this website.

Third-sector database

This database lists organisations providing services to individuals or groups in Tower Hamlets
www.towerhamlets.org.uk/3rdsectordb/3s_index.asp

Monday - Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm



THWT/04/4

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