

Compact for Liverpool

***A COMPACT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE
VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR AND
LIVERPOOL PARTNERSHIP GROUP PARTNER
AGENCIES***

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The Compact: The basics

Background:

Liverpool has a long history of voluntary activity, with a large, dynamic and diverse voluntary, community and faith sector, with a wide range of relationships with public agencies. In 1998 the Government published a national Compact or agreement with the voluntary and community sectors, recognising the value of the sectors and the importance of joint working. The Compact sets out a number of principle and guidelines as a framework for good relations between the voluntary, community and faith sectors and the Liverpool Partnership Group (LPG).

The local Compact:

There are extensive national guidelines about Compacts which have informed this document alongside examples of Compacts already in place elsewhere. Liverpool has developed this local Compact to improve working relations between the Liverpool Partnership Group (LPG) and the voluntary, community and faith sectors. The LPG's membership includes senior representatives of key public agencies and organisations from other sectors. The LPG's terms of reference include developing and co-ordinating urban policies for the regeneration of Liverpool, maximising the effectiveness of public agencies and ensuring that they act in a co-ordinated manner.

How was it developed?

The Compact for Liverpool has been produced by a small working group of voluntary organisations arising from an initial consultation by the Liverpool Partnership Group (LPG) about improving the sector's involvement in its work. The first draft was sent out for consultation in November 2001 and the resulting feedback has been fed into the development of this second draft.

What does Liverpool Compact cover?

The Compact recognises the vital role that voluntary, community and faith groups make and the importance of their continued independence. It covers shared values, funding, consultation, strategic co-operation and Black and other racial minority organisations outlining the commitments from all partners.

The Compact Vision:

The Liverpool Compact recognises that voluntary, community and faith groups play a crucial role in the development of society and to the social, cultural, economic and political life of the city. The Compact recognises that by working in partnership with the voluntary, community and faith sectors, the LPG and partner agencies can play a positive role in supporting these groups.

Implementation and Review:

The Compact is an overarching document of general principles, values and guidelines to act as a framework for partnership with LPG Partner agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sectors. However, as part of the implementation of the Compact, separate 'Sub-Compacts' are to be drawn up to cover specific agreements around individual issues.

The following action points are designed to ensure that the Compact is effective in guiding partnership working between LPG partner agencies and the VCF:

- Draw up an action plan and a timetable for implementation of the Compact including adoption of the Compact by individual organisations and adoption into the Standing Orders of the City Council
- Develop joint processes and procedures, which reflect the diversity of the voluntary and community sectors, for reviewing the implementation of the Compact annually.

SECTION 1

Statement of Shared Principles and Values

The underlying philosophy of the Liverpool Compact is that an independent and diverse voluntary, community and faith sector brings immense value to Liverpool and that the sector's activity is fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society. The shared principles that underpin the Compact are set out below.

The voluntary, community and faith sectors (VCF), together with other agencies in Liverpool Partnership Group (LPG) agree the following principle and values:

- Voluntary, community and faith groups, as independent, not-for-profit organisations, fulfil a role that is distinct from both the state and the market.
 - Diversity of funding sources, partnership working and strategic planning can be one of the best guarantees of continued independence of the VCF.
 - The importance of promoting equality of opportunity for all, regardless of race, faith, age, disability, culture, gender or sexual orientation.
 - Special efforts should be made to include groups who have previously been excluded from decision-making structures (such as geographically remote, self help or black and racial minority groups).
 - All partners should strive for integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness and honesty.
 - There is value in working together towards these shared principles and there is a need for the VCF to have support to play a full role in partnerships.
 - Successful partnership is on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities, mutual respect, recognition of difference as well as similarity of purpose.
 - The independence of the VCF includes its right, within the law, to campaign and challenge policies and to determine and manage its own affairs.
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SECTION 2

Funding, Resources and Support

Liverpool Partnership Group (LPG) recognises the importance of the role that partner-agencies have as funders and providers of resources to the voluntary, community and faith sectors (VCF), some of whom provide stability to the core resourcing of the sector. This, in turn, can enable groups to generate additional funding and resources. The VCF values both financial and non-financial support provided by LPG partner-agencies.

LPG partner-agencies that provide funding to the VCF sectors agree to:

- Implement a funding framework that invests in the capacity of the VCF infrastructure.
- Promote funding policies that take account of the objectives of VCF organisations and their need to operate efficiently and independently.
- Respect the sector's independence and its right to campaign, irrespective of any existing funding relationship.
- Promote the allocation of resources against clear, consistent and transparent criteria.
- Ensure that information about new and existing sources of funding, eligibility, conditions of funding, grant size and application procedures is made widely available in accessible formats.
- Wherever possible, documentation for application forms, service level agreements, leases etc should be standardised at appropriate levels and user friendly.
- Ensure common and transparent arrangements for agreeing and evaluating objectives, performance indicators and associated targets.
- Ensure that funding conditions for the VCF should be no less favourable than for other sectors.
- Ensure prompt payment of agreed funding.
- Consult the VCF upon changes to the funding strategy during the planning stages.
- Give reasonable notice to individual organisations about changes in the funding position.
- Recognise that significant changes to the funding programme and strategic planning affect the viability of the VCF.

- Fund the proportion of an organisations core cost allocated to the management of any particular project.
- Assist voluntary and community groups to access additional streams of funding.
- Recognise that many smaller community groups may not wish to have ongoing finding from public bodies, but may still need access to one-off, fast track grants.

In order to meet the responsibility as recipients of funding, the voluntary, community and faith sectors agree to:

- Pursue good practice in the use and administration of public funds.
 - Ensure effective systems for the management and accountability of finances.
 - Develop clear systems for planning and implementing work programmes and for evaluating activities against agreed objectives.
 - Ensure equality of opportunity in both employment policy and in service provision
 - Submit applications that include details of core costs based on a fair and proportionate allocation.
 - Develop clear and transparent procedures for the use of public funds and inform funders when the organisation faces management or resource difficulties.
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SECTION 3

Information exchange, communications and consultation



The LPG partner agencies agree to:

- Use a variety of mechanisms to ensure the flow of information between LPG partner agencies and the VCF.
- Consult on all issues that may affect the VCF.
- Ensure that consultation takes place at the developmental stage so that possible implications for the sector can be identified.
- Enable the VCF to raise concerns at an early stage and have a role in shaping the agenda as well as responding to the agenda of others.
- Provide the VCF with regular and clear information about the functions of their departments, and the named contact people.
- Take account of the diverse needs and perspectives of the VCF, including:
 - Providing jargon-free, concise and well laid out information
 - Where appropriate provide information in a variety of formats including translations, Braille and recorded tape
 - Holding meetings in accessible buildings and at appropriate times
- Allow a reasonable time for the VCF to respond to consultation.
- Ensure that all communications are standardised at appropriate levels and user-friendly.
- Analyse and evaluate the results of consultation exercises and provide feedback of the results and their outcomes to the VCF.
- Consultation needs resourcing within LPG partner agencies and the VCF. The resource implications of consultations by VCF groups and umbrella bodies should be recognised.

The voluntary, community and faith sectors agree to:

- Pursue good practice in achieving inclusive representation when responding to and feeding into consultation exercises.

- Achieve inclusive representation by co-operating with each other through intermediary bodies and regional or sub-regional networks.
 - Take account of the specific needs, interests and contributions of minority groups and the socially excluded.
 - Ensure that feedback from consultation is disseminated widely within their particular organisation, network or community of interest.
 - Identify the relevant networks and umbrella bodies for communication between the VCF and LPG partner agencies.
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SECTION 4

Strategic Co-operation

Effective partnership working is based both on a shared vision and objectives, and on a mutual understanding of how partners behave towards each other. It is important, therefore, that all parties are able to participate as full and equal partners in strategic co-operation.

LPG partner agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sectors are committed to:

- Seeking to co-operate on matters such as planning, policy development, service delivery and other issues relevant to all parties.
 - Recognising that consultation needs resourcing within LPG partner agencies and the VCF. The time, resource and capacity implications of partnership working should be recognised by all partner agencies and appropriate resources made available.
 - Making use of appropriate training and development opportunities, recognising the role of trustees or senior staff.
 - Ensuring that all parties are enabled to contribute as equal partners in partnership structures.
 - Developing processes and procedures for reviewing the Compact on a regular basis.
 - Developing procedures to deal with disputes between VCF organisations and the LPG & partner agencies in relation to the implementation of the Compact.
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SECTION 5

Issues Relating to Community Groups and Black and Other Racial Minority Organisations

This document applies across the voluntary, community and faith sector, but particular consideration needs to be given to the needs and interests of black and other racial minority (BRM) groups and small community organisations:

LPG partner agencies agree to:

- Work in partnership with the BRM sector to draw up mechanisms for selecting BRM representation to engage in LPG strategic processes.
- Make information available in a variety of formats (e.g. translations/interpretation) to ensure that small community and BRM groups are included in decision-making processes.
- Identify and work to measurable indicators to ensure that the needs of BRM and small community groups are met.
- Identify the share of funding received by the BRM sector and regularly review which BRM communities are particularly excluded.
- Encourage and support BRM applications for funding; implementing transparent and robust procedures designed to ensure fair treatment.
- Take forward the race equality agenda and recognise the key role that all organisations have in achieving this aim.
- Evaluate policies and services to ensure that they are inclusive and not racist or oppressive.
- Acknowledge that the needs and concerns of faith groups and organisations for refugee/asylum seekers are important and play a vital role in policy development.

The BRM voluntary, community and faith sectors agree to:

- Work together in partnerships to develop inclusive networking and representation arrangements to maximise BRM involvement in the LPG.
- Work in partnership with the LPG, partner agencies and other VCF organisations to promote race equality and tackle social exclusion in local communities.

Glossary of Terms

BRM	Black and other Racial Minority
LPG	Liverpool Partnership Group
VCF	Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors

Consultation

To seek advice, opinion or information before decisions are made and to take account of any new information gained as a result of the consultation exercise.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the systematic collection of information to judge the effectiveness of activities and outcomes of an organisation, a service or a piece of work. This information is used to reflect on the how far it is achieving its aim and to inform decisions about future work.

Partnership

Successful partnership will be on the basis of equal rights and responsibilities, mutual respect, and recognition of difference as well as similarity of purpose.

Participation

Participation is a process whereby individuals or organisations are enabled to play an active role in decision-making processes or activities that are led by another agency.

Voluntary and Community Sectors

The term 'voluntary sector' has traditionally been used to describe a whole range of non-profit-making organisations. However, it has been felt necessary to distinguish community groups as a separate sector with their own specific needs. In the absence of a precise definition, it can be taken that 'community sector' refers to small groups who may not receive regular core funding and are often neighbourhood based. Examples of these may include parent & toddler groups or resident's associations.

The term 'voluntary, community and faith sectors' (VCF) is used throughout this document to refer to all voluntary organisations whether they are national, regional or small neighbourhood or interest groups.