



a compact
between
the public sector
and the community,
voluntary and
faith sector
in Greenwich

A new way of working together

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Foreword

The underlying principle of the Compact is that community, voluntary and faith sector activity is fundamental to the development of a socially inclusive society. The Compact aims to strengthen the important role the community, voluntary and faith sector has in developing and delivering services in Greenwich. Its purpose is to consolidate a new approach to partnership working. This means building mutual trust through transparency, inclusiveness and equality, backed up by proper governance and systems, and based on shared values and respect.

We give our full backing to the Compact and would encourage other organisations to sign up to its principles. We look forward to working towards ensuring its success over the coming years and would like to thank all organisations that took part in the consultation process for their contributions and support in developing this Compact.



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Chair of Greenwich Partnership
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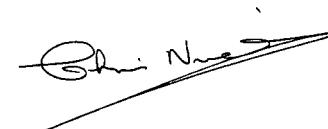
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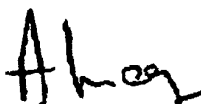
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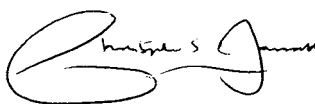
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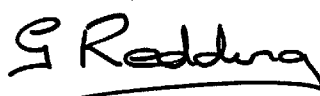
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I. Introduction

I.1 What is the Compact?

- The Compact is an agreement between the voluntary, community and faith sector, the Council, and other local public sector agencies in Greenwich.
- It sets out a new way of partnership working to improve the relationship between the sectors for mutual advantage.
- It contains commitments that all parties need to sign up to.
- It seeks to ensure that the voluntary, community and faith sector is actively encouraged and supported.
- It sets out the shared principles and undertakings which underpin the relationship between the voluntary, community and faith sector and the public sector in Greenwich.

This Compact is not a legally binding document but needs the voluntary agreement of statutory agencies and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations that sign up to it.

I.2 Background to the Compact

In 1998 a central Government initiative was launched with the publication of a National Compact with the voluntary, community and faith sectors. The National Compact is a vision document; a statement of shared principles and undertakings that underpins the relationship between central Government and the voluntary, community and faith sector. The document makes clear statements about funding; community involvement and policy development processes that impact upon the voluntary sector. Local Authorities were being encouraged to adopt this model at the local level and produce local Compacts. This is Greenwich's Compact.

I.3 Greenwich Compact

The purpose of this Compact is to improve working relationships by developing a framework for partnerships at the local level. Local Compacts offer a means of supporting the development and capacity building of the voluntary, community and faith sector. Independent and accountable voluntary, community and faith sector organisations can do more to meet both their own aims and those of their statutory partners, thereby enhancing their contribution to the community.

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This Compact outlines structures and mechanisms for consultation and communication between partner organisations. It forms the basis of a partnership agreement between public sector partners and the local voluntary, community and faith sector

The development of the Greenwich Compact started in September 2004. The Greenwich Partnership held three consultation events, to which all key voluntary, community and faith groups and public sector agencies were invited. Various other groups who were unable to attend the consultation meetings have contributed their opinions and expertise during the drafting process.

1.4 Greenwich Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)

Greenwich has had a difficult time in the last two years with the demise of the Greenwich Voluntary Action Council, Greenwich's Council for Voluntary Service. Although they were present at the start of the process, this Compact has been developed with partners in the voluntary, community and faith sectors despite this gap in voluntary sector provision. A new CVS is being developed for the Borough and it will be a key partner in the implementation of this Compact.

1.5 The role of elected councillors

Councillors play an important role as democratically elected representatives of the local community. As such they will adopt the principles for working together contained in this Compact, both as members of the community where, for example, the principles around consultation and communication are particularly important, and as elected members of one of the main public organisations signing up to the Compact, where they have responsibilities for ensuring proper use of public money.

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2. Greenwich at a glance

Greenwich is being rapidly regenerated as its maritime, industrial and military past gives way to a 21st century economy. Since 1993 the Borough has attracted over £2 billion in new investment. Over the next ten years, Greenwich will continue to benefit from exciting new regeneration initiatives such as the Greenwich Modernisation Programme, which will bring a further investment of over £750 million.

Greenwich is also currently undergoing the biggest transport improvement since the 1830s.

We now have new rail connections to Canary Wharf and central London, in the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) and Jubilee Line. The DLR is coming to Woolwich in 2008 and we also have the prospect of Crossrail.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will benefit the Borough as we will host a number of events at Woolwich Barracks, in Greenwich Park and at the O₂.

The Greenwich Peninsula, once home to the largest gas works in Europe is today home to one of London's most iconic buildings – the O₂ formally Millennium Dome – which is now being developed into Europe's largest indoor arena. Alongside the O₂, a thriving mixed community is growing, already boasting a state of the art primary school connected to a health centre that offers a wide range of care and electronic links to local hospitals.

Greenwich – its people, its resources and its location – is pivotal to the development of the Thames Gateway sub-region; an area recognised as an important new location for homes and businesses.

Elsewhere in the Borough, a major regeneration project in Kidbrooke will see the creation of 4,400 new homes by 2020, 43% of which will be affordable. £220 million is also being invested in Council housing to bring properties up to the Decent Homes standard by 2010.

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Over the next 5 years, we will see significant redevelopment of key sites in our three main town centres: Woolwich, Eltham and Greenwich. Three modern Service Centres will be built to make services more accessible to residents. These will be incorporated as part of mixed-use developments to include new leisure, library, health and education facilities.

Children's Centres have been built to provide integrated health and family support services for children under 5 and their families. A total of 21 new Children's Centres will provide 518 new childcare places by 2008. £270 million is being invested in rebuilding and refurbishing many of our schools.

The regeneration effects of the Olympics, Thames Gateway, Greenwich Modernisation Programme and transport improvements will continue to provide new opportunities for residents. Through major developments, 2,900 new jobs were created between 2001 and 2005.

The Compact forms an important part of shaping how the community, voluntary and faith sector will work in partnership with the public sector to develop and deliver services in a systematic, inclusive and coordinated way, to support the regeneration process.

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3. General Undertakings

The statutory sector, partner agencies and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations will:

- i. listen to each other and respond constructively;
- ii. work within an ethos of accountability, honesty, leadership, integrity, objectivity and transparency;
- iii. adopt the highest standards of probity;
- iv. engage in dialogue to develop effective working relationships;
- v. work together for the benefit of the people of Greenwich by aiming to improve the quality of services for the community;
- vi. recognise and utilise situations where there can be added value from working in partnership;
- vii. work towards equal partnership relations that recognise and understand the contribution, roles and constraints of the statutory and voluntary, community and faith sectors;
- viii. work together towards creating more opportunities for involving under-represented groups in partnerships, consultation and decision making;
- ix. work together to meet the needs of the people of Greenwich and implement the Community Strategy;

- x. develop a process to monitor, evaluate and review the implementation and effectiveness of the Compact and its guidelines, and to make changes as appropriate;
- xi. ensure that policies and practices in relation to the local authority, other partners and their users promote equality and social inclusion;
- xii. secure value for money in their operations;
- xiii. ensure that, where possible the needs of all equality groups are taken into account.

The statutory sector and partner agencies will:

- i. seek to make their structures, policies and procedures transparent;
- ii. identify and consider the possible implications for the voluntary, community and faith sector of any proposed policies, procedures and practices;
- iii. recognise the independence of voluntary, community and faith sector organisations;
- iv. recognise the role played by voluntary, community and faith sector organisations in representing and providing services;
- v. recognise the value of the contribution made by volunteers.

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The voluntary, community and faith sector will:

- i. meet reporting and accounting obligations to members, beneficiaries, funders and partners;
- ii. promote effective working relationships with statutory sector and partner agencies and across the voluntary, community and faith sector;
- iii. involve users, wherever possible, in the development and management of activities and services;
- iv. develop policies that promote best practice and equality of opportunity in activities, employment, involvement of volunteers and service provision;
- v. recognise and respect the responsibilities and constraints placed on the statutory sector and partner agencies through legislation or central Government directives and performance indicators.

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4. Working with volunteers

4.1 Facts about volunteering

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is freely undertaken and not for financial gain. Volunteering is open to all sections of the community and has no restrictions in terms of age, sex, employment status, ability, ethnicity or sexual preference.

- 22 million adults are involved in formal volunteering each year
- 90 million hours of formal voluntary work takes place each week in the UK
- Six out of ten volunteers say that volunteering gives them an opportunity to learn new skills
- Half of all volunteers get involved because they were asked to help
- The total public sector support for volunteering is estimated to be in the region of £400 million per year

Source: Greenwich Volunteering Strategy 2004-2006.

Volunteering does not replace the statutory obligations of local or national government, nor does it substitute the work of paid employees.

4.2 Benefits of volunteering

Being a volunteer may lead to enhanced opportunities for further training, education and paid employment. Young people, or those returning to the workforce due to

career breaks or periods of illness, may find that volunteering is a good way to update their skills and get practical experience.

There is also growing evidence that volunteering, like paid employment, promotes better health. A recent survey for Community Survey Volunteers found that 71% of volunteers who offered professional skills and experience said it helped combat depression.

All partners should promote positive images of those volunteers who may be stigmatised due to mental illness or disability, and challenge discrimination based on age, sex, employment status, ability, ethnicity or sexual preference.

4.3 Use of volunteers

Voluntary, community and faith sector organisations involve millions of volunteers alongside paid staff in what is an increasingly complex legal, policy and funding environment.

Volunteers are an integral part of the sector and many small organisations would be unable to operate without them.

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Volunteers can provide strategic expertise for an organisation as a member of a board of trustees, management or executive committee. They can also be involved in day-to-day activities such as counselling, fund-raising and campaigning. Many organisations also make use of 'hidden volunteers' to carry out forms of public duty, for example school governors, trade union representatives and lay magistrates.

The use of volunteers can help to address issues of social exclusion as well as contribute to wider social and economic regeneration.

4.4 Volunteering within the voluntary, community and faith sector

As independent, not-for-profit organisations, voluntary, community and faith groups fulfil a role that is distinct from the state. They bring added value to society by acting as pathfinders to secure user involvement in the design and delivery of services. They are advocates for volunteering and are well placed to create volunteering opportunities, which promote the values of equality and diversity.

The voluntary, community and faith sector is well equipped to bring different sources of investment into the Borough. The sector is able to respond quickly to local demand and is flexible with its use of resources.

There are a large number of voluntary, community and faith sector organisations working in the community, whose main role is to recruit, train and support volunteers. Many of these organisations in Greenwich are also dependent on the large number of volunteers involved in the delivery of their services.

4.5 Volunteering within the public sector

The public sector can provide valuable opportunities for volunteers. Large organisations, which make up the public sector, offer a whole variety of volunteering positions for people of all levels of expertise, giving them the opportunity for skill and knowledge development. The operation and structure of complex public sector organisations, with specific reference to local authorities, can be difficult to understand even though they have a direct impact on both our home and working lives. Volunteering in an organisation such as a local authority can increase this understanding whilst contributing towards public good.

The public sector is a large employer and volunteering can add real value to the community in which public sector organisations work. Volunteering can enable employees to form stronger links with the community and thus develop a real understanding of their interests and needs.

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In addition, volunteering can provide an opportunity for employee development in skills such as team working, communication, problem-solving and project management. Volunteering arrangements made would be subject to the employment policies and practices of the organisations involved.

The Compact sets out a number of agreements around promoting volunteering and the treatment of volunteers within Greenwich. It aims to strengthen the role of volunteering within the Borough for the mutual benefit of all partner organisations and society as a whole.

Suggested undertakings

Promoting volunteering:

All sectors need to agree to promote the status and image of volunteering and community involvement. Ways in which this can be achieved include:

- i. promotion of volunteering events such as Volunteers Week and Make a Difference Day to secure greater media coverage, and a higher public profile for volunteering and community activity;
- ii. developing and promoting innovative programmes for enabling the contribution of volunteers across the sectors. This should include promoting opportunities for people who may have left the workforce due to periods of ill health;
- iii. developing partnerships between organisations that promote volunteering or deploy volunteers and media agencies. This will encourage greater media coverage in order to inspire, promote and encourage individual volunteers, community activities and special volunteering events;
- iv. increasing use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to communicate volunteering information via the Internet, while ensuring organisations and individuals without access to ICT are not excluded;
- v. promoting volunteering through public and private sector websites with links to the Volunteer Centre and to the national volunteering database;
- vi. encouraging and developing networking opportunities to increase awareness of volunteering opportunities;
- vii. developing the knowledge and experience of volunteering amongst children and young people as a way of enhancing career and further education potential.

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Treatment of volunteers

The statutory sector, partner agencies and the voluntary, community and faith sector will:

- i. produce and publish their policies for involving volunteers with measurable targets for extending involvement of volunteers;
- ii. identify the type of resources being put to supporting volunteering and community activity, and the level needed to achieve policy objectives;
- iii. recognise that as part of the reciprocal relationship, volunteers should be given thanks and recognition for their contribution at the very least. Where possible they should have access to training and support according to the resources of the organisation with which they are involved.

The statutory sector and partner agencies will:

- i. recognise the value of unpaid work done by volunteers within the voluntary, community and faith sector as of equal importance to paid work;
- ii. increase staff awareness of volunteer contributions;
- iii. where match funding is required, auditable records of volunteer time donated should be accepted as equal status to money;

- iv. recognise that volunteering infrastructure bodies should be independent voluntary sector organisations with voluntary management boards;
- v. support initiatives to provide accessible information about volunteering opportunities and how to get involved.

The voluntary, community and faith sector will:

- i. ensure that staff recruiting, inducting and managing volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job descriptions and work plans;
- ii. ensure proper records are kept of how funding supports volunteering and the value this produces.

Priorities for action

- Increase use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to communicate volunteering information via the Internet, while ensuring organisations and individuals without access to ICT are not excluded.
- Form partnerships with mental health and other health/social services to develop and promote volunteering.

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5. Funding and resourcing

5.1 Background

The Government's emphasis on partnership working at the local level has created the need for a much clearer relationship between the public sector, partner agencies and the community, voluntary and faith sector. The purpose of clarifying funding and resourcing issues is to secure the delivery of quality public services.

5.2 Resourcing

The term 'resourcing' refers to any support provided to the voluntary, community and faith sector. Support can be provided financially or 'in-kind' (such as use of premises). Different means of support include: financial grants, service level agreements, contracts, in-kind. Each mechanism serves a different purpose and is appropriate in relevant circumstances.

5.3 Funding

Statutory funders are increasingly required to meet narrowly defined objectives. They have their performance measured against an array of different targets and indicators. Voluntary sector providers are consequently drawn into relationships with statutory funders that have to be clearly linked to outcomes in support of the pre-determined overall objective.

Principles underpinning the funding relationship between partners should include:

- Highest standards of probity
- An agreed strategic purpose
- An acceptance of the need to achieve Best Value
- A commitment to the development of high standards
- Transparency
- Flexibility
- Opportunity for innovation
- Value for money

Longer term funding arrangements in place of annual grant renewal applications for strategic and/or core service activity has been proven to provide the much needed stability to service developments and enables funded organisations to secure additional funding to support new project activities.

Central Government is planning major changes to charity laws and the financial regulations for voluntary, community and faith groups.

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London Councils has introduced major changes to its grants programmes and is currently focusing on increasing funding for projects in outer London Boroughs.

Greenwich has historically been successful in securing funding and has received a good proportion of major trust funding such as Bridge House and Lottery Grants.

Greenwich Council will be introducing open-tendering and commissioning as part of its new funding framework for funding the sector. The aim of its commissioning approach will be to ensure that future funding is more closely aligned to the Council's strategic and service priorities, and to ensure its investment in the Sector is targeted and leads to specific measurable outcomes of benefit to Greenwich residents.

The proposed new funding framework will assist the Council to achieve best value by targeting resources where need is greatest, managing resources well by encouraging co-ordination and pooling where this improves service delivery and achieving maximum value for money from the Council's investment in the sector.

The Compact aims to strengthen partnership working to increase the level of funding and resources coming into the Borough. It identifies the need to set guidelines to ensure that funding and resourcing relationships are coordinated and professional.

Suggested undertakings

The statutory sector, partner agencies and the community, voluntary and faith sectors will all work together to:

- i. promote funding strategies which help to ensure that the social, economic and environmental well being of Greenwich's community is advanced;
- ii. seek to increase the funding and resources coming into the Borough from non-statutory sources;
- iii. ensure that beneficiaries of service delivery experience tangible and relevant benefits.

The statutory sector and partner agencies will:

- i. expect the highest standards of probity;
- ii. be proactive in working with the voluntary, community and faith sectors to identify new areas for funding;
- iii. ensure that the principles and processes for awarding grants are fully understood and secure value for money, while avoiding duplication;
- iv. recognise the importance of its funding in supporting the core costs of voluntary, community and faith organisations;

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- v. ensure the development of the sector through capacity building and support to newer communities whilst avoiding dependence on continuous funding;
 - vi. make details of funding programmes known by using a variety of means (e.g. press, internet, umbrella organisations, networks);
 - vii. provide a timetable for funding programmes and processes which is mutually realistic and provide clear information, written in plain English and available in minority languages, Braille, or on tape as appropriate;
 - viii. ensure that funding payments are made on time;
 - ix. negotiate service level agreements and contracts;
 - x. maintain a transparent approach to the allocation of funding.
- iii. ensure the highest standards of probity are observed in its operations, conduct and use of public money;
 - iv. network and share funding opportunities more effectively;
 - v. work with funders to ensure it meets funders' financial and monitoring regulations and complies with statutory legislation;
 - vi. seek to maximise its income by systematically fundraising;
 - vii. ensure transparency in the way it manages funds;
 - viii. ensure works contracted for are properly costed.

The voluntary, community and faith sectors will:

- i. recognise that the resources available to the local authority and other statutory funders for funding purposes are limited;
- ii. recognise that the receipt of public funding carries responsibilities and implement proper financial management and accounting systems and the attainment of value for money;

Priorities for action

- Develop guidelines on service level agreements and funding allocations.
- Identify mechanisms to cover gaps in training, funding and bidding support.
- Eliminate duplication.

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6. Working With Black and Minority Ethnic Organisations

6.1 BME communities in Greenwich

Greenwich is one of the most diverse and densely populated areas in London, with contrasts of affluence and deprivation. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities represented 25% of the population of Greenwich in 2003. This is expected to increase.

The potential contribution of BME communities to society is yet to be fully recognised and utilised. Existing cultural and language barriers continue to exclude large sections of BME communities from accessing and influencing services across sectors. This leads to BME communities being deprived of opportunities to develop and contribute, particularly in areas where BME groups are potentially best suited to manage, supply and deliver services to those they seek to represent.

6.2 Profile of Greenwich BME population

The largest ethnic group in Greenwich is African, or of African Origin. The profile of the Greenwich BME school pupil population has changed noticeably since 1999, and the number of children of African heritage has risen from 7.5% in 1999 to

12.3% currently. Growth has also been seen in refugee populations from Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East. Other significant BME groups, such as Black Caribbean, Indian, Chinese and Vietnamese have remained stable since 1999.

- 11.1% of the Greenwich population is African, or of African origin.
- 42% of pupils attending Greenwich schools are from BME backgrounds, reflecting the young age profile of the Greenwich BME population.
- 23% of children in Greenwich speak English as an additional language (up from 19% in 1999).
- The most widely spoken community languages amongst the school pupil population are Yoruba (3%); Punjabi (2.1%); Somali (1.7%); Turkish (1.5%); Vietnamese (1.3%); Cantonese (1.1%).
- Greenwich schools are also home to handfuls of children from very small communities including: 37 Farsi speakers; 34 Hausa speakers; 28 Tigrinya speakers; and 21 Croatian speakers.
- In total, there are 67 known languages spoken in the Borough's schools.

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6.3 BME voluntary, community and faith groups in Greenwich

BME voluntary, community and faith groups and refugee and asylum seeker organisations play a vital part in improving the quality of life of their communities. Many BME groups have developed as a direct response to an identified need either by individuals in the community or by statutory sector investigations. They bring added value to society because they are firmly rooted within the communities they represent. Their particular skills need to be further enhanced through capacity building to ensure their sustainability.

Given the diversity of the population of Greenwich, it is essential that all parts of the BME voluntary, community and faith sector are properly encouraged and supported.

This will allow groups to develop a stronger voice to influence policy decisions that directly affect them. This supports statutory and voluntary sector organisations to deliver and develop effective services to meet the needs of the whole community.

The statutory and mainstream voluntary sectors in Greenwich both have a role in supporting the BME sector to fully engage and participate in the development and implementation of local strategies, and effective service delivery. BME groups need to be supported, developed, consulted with and included whenever possible. As BME organisations still feel excluded from mainstream partnerships and initiatives, attention must be paid to ensure that BME groups and other socially excluded groups are not excluded from decision making partnerships.

The Compact sets out a number of suggested undertakings to support the development, involvement and integration of BME groups across both sectors. It aims to support a better understanding and awareness of the needs of BME communities.

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Suggested undertakings

The statutory sector, partner agencies and community, voluntary and faith sectors will:

- i. set up systems for monitoring the ethnicity of those using their services;
- ii. recognise that there is confusion about definitions and terminology with regards to BME groups;
- iii. recognise that BME voluntary, community and faith sector organisations, and other socially excluded groups:
 - have built up experience over the years from which the statutory and wider voluntary sector has much to learn;
 - are sometimes treated less favourably than larger, more mainstream organisations in consultation processes and grant making;
 - have differences of ethnicity and culture, experience and struggles against racism, patterns of settlement, gender, age, outlook and religion.
- iv. adopt the following definition of what constitutes a Black and Ethnic Minority organisation:
 - ‘An organisation whose main aim is to put the interest of Black and Ethnic Minority people on top of its agenda, i.e. the whole ethos of the organisation is geared towards the empowerment of Black and Minority Ethnic people’.
- v. adopt the National Census ethnic monitoring classification to ensure consistency throughout all documents produced by all sectors;
- vi. adopt the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definitions of what constitutes institutional racism and a racist incident and share with the each other information on the levels of incidents;
- vii. develop an infrastructure for BME voluntary, community and faith groups to enable them to integrate into the mainstream voluntary, community and faith sector agencies more easily;
- viii. increase the opportunities for groups facing discrimination to access training and employment and to develop new skills;
- ix. promote volunteering opportunities to disadvantaged groups and individuals;
- x. respond to the needs of groups for whom English is not the first language.

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The statutory sector and partner agencies will:

- i. ensure that BME, other socially excluded groups, voluntary, community and faith organisations have an equal opportunity to participate in multi-agency partnerships;
- ii. ensure that BME organisations and other socially excluded groups have equal opportunity to access available resources, especially those that have a significant impact on these communities;
- iii. ensure that through policy objectives and commissioning strategies, BME voluntary and community organisations and other socially excluded groups are resourced to provide culturally sensitive services to meet the needs of their community, wherever possible.
- iv. recognise that the receipt of public funding carries responsibilities and implement proper financial management and accounting systems and the attainment of value for money;
- v. ensure the highest standards of probity are observed in their operations, conduct and use of public money;
- vi. network and share funding opportunities more effectively;
- vii. work with funders to ensure they meet funders' financial and monitoring regulations and comply with statutory legislation;
- viii. seek to maximise its income by systematically fundraising;
- ix. ensure transparency in the way they manage funds;
- x. ensure works contracted for are properly costed.

The community, voluntary and faith sector will:

- i. establish a BME forum to share information and good practice and funding opportunities;
- ii. provide monitoring information to the agreed classification when required;
- iii. recognise that the resources available to the local authority and other statutory funders for grant purposes are limited;

Priorities for action

- Establish a BME forum.
- Develop a strategy for providing infrastructure and developmental support to BME voluntary, community and faith groups.
- Review policies and practices to ensure that the compact undertakings around monitoring and agreed definition are adhered to.

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7. Consultation and communication

7.1 The role of consultation and communication

Consultation is the process by which opinions, feedback and ideas can be gathered to inform decision-making. It is an important part of the communication relationship between organisations and can be used to build trust, understanding and cross-sector networks.

Information and insight gained through consultation can be used to inform service delivery, service provision, policy and other decision-making priorities. All organisations that undertake consultation have a responsibility to ensure that groups who are not a part of mainstream networks are included, and that clear mechanisms for consulting equalities groups, including those with disabilities, are developed.

7.2 Consultation at the local level

Voluntary, community and faith sector organisations in Greenwich often consult their users to make sure that services are meeting their needs. Umbrella groups also consult their members to ensure they are representing members' views. Democratically elected Councillors also have a responsibility to consult and communicate with their communities.

For public sector bodies, the most common method of consultation used is to send out documents for comment, generally to an umbrella organisation. Voluntary, community and faith organisations can then consult their networks and feedback comments.

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Consultation at the local level can be impaired by deadlines set by central Government or other external bodies.

These constraints can affect the ability of the voluntary, community and faith sector to adequately respond within the timeframe allocated. Successful consultation allocates all necessary organisations enough time and information to meaningfully engage.

The Compact sets out measures to improve consultation and communication to strengthen partnership working between sectors. Except when deadlines don't allow it, the Compact recommends a minimum 12-week consultation period to allow the voluntary, community and faith sector to respond, particularly in relation to policy matters. It also recommends the use of a range of methods for consultation and communication.

Suggested undertakings

All sectors work together to:

- i. ensure consultation is effective and inclusive;
- ii. aim to make processes clear, open and accessible;
- iii. acknowledge the constraints of time and resources and the effect this may have on an organisations' ability to undertake or respond to consultation.

The statutory sector and partner agencies will:

- i. be clear about who is being consulted and why;
- ii. value the contribution of the voluntary, community and faith sector;
- iii. recognise that ongoing dialogue is the preferred method for consultation and use that where possible;
- iv. when using other methods ensure they are fit for purpose, accessible and appropriate to that specific process of consultation;
- v. seek to identify ways in which the costs to voluntary, community and faith organisations participating in consultation exercises can be kept to a minimum, such as coordinated consultation;

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- vi. take into account specific needs, interests and contributions of those parts of the sector that represent socially excluded groups, including those with disabilities;
 - vii. make sure any documents sent out are written in clear plain English and are available in minority languages, Braille, or on tape as appropriate;
 - viii. except when deadlines don't allow it, aim to give the voluntary, community and faith sector the recommended minimum of 12 weeks to respond, particularly in relation to policy matters;
 - ix. be clear in all consultation processes what can be influenced and what is non-negotiable and the reasons why;
 - x. feedback results of consultation and the actions that will follow.

The voluntary, community and faith sector will:

- i. define who they represent and demonstrate how they represent;
- ii. work together to develop a mechanism for representative dialogue;
- iii. be accountable and feedback to the wider voluntary and community sector when elected to local partnerships;
- iv. ensure regular attendance by representatives at partnership meetings (including where necessary the use of deputies);
- v. respond to consultation exercises within the deadline specified where possible.

Priorities for action

- As far as possible, coordinate consultation exercises to minimise duplication.

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8. Premises

8.1 The use of premises in Greenwich

A wide variety of voluntary, community and faith groups occupy or use premises in Greenwich; both public sector premises and premises within the sector.

There is a desperate need for more space for new and emerging voluntary, community and faith organisations.

The development of the Compact creates an opportunity to resolve a number of issues in relation to the accessibility and sustainability of premises. Substantial work is needed to identify, appropriately address and resolve on-going issues by agreement between the partner agencies.

The Compact aims to support a process that should ultimately enable the achievement of the following:

- The development of a Borough wide strategy by the public and the community, voluntary and faith sectors in relation to premises use and sustainability.

Suggested Undertakings.

The statutory sector, partner agencies and voluntary, community and faith sectors will:

- i. work towards a better understanding of the different perspectives, needs and constraints of both sectors in relation to premises
- ii. create a more structured, fair and transparent approach to the processes and procedures (legal and financial).

The statutory sector and partner agencies should ensure that it builds on the above commitments by carrying out the following:

- i. explore current arrangements and identify main problems/issues;
- ii. compile and keep an up-to-date database of premises;
- iii. work with the voluntary, community and faith sector to develop and implement a comprehensive policy in relation to premises; leases, rents, rates, repairs etc;
- iv. provide information, training and support on related issues such as planning permission, funding opportunities, lease negotiation;

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- v. provide technical information, training and support to the voluntary, community and faith sectors to enable the effective management, development and sustainability of premises e.g. Health and Safety, risk assessment and disabled access;
 - vi. liaise, consult and negotiate with the voluntary, community and faith sectors on the specific details of a premises strategy.

The voluntary, community and faith sector will ensure that:

- i. they carry out a mapping exercise and compile a database of properties currently occupied by voluntary, community and faith organisations;
- ii. organisations explore and develop a combination and variety of funding options for community premises;
- iii. they take responsibility for managing and running community buildings within the constraints of lease and other arrangements;
- iv. work with the Council to provide infrastructure support, information and resources as appropriate;
- v. have sufficient financial and legal information to undertake any property commitments.

Priorities for action

- Develop a community buildings strategy.
- Develop a grading system for accessibility of buildings.

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9. Working with community groups

9.1 The voluntary sector in Greenwich

Greenwich has an active, diverse and well-established voluntary, community and faith sector. Voluntary organisations within the Borough help to develop a community base and use many volunteers. They make a contribution to the development of the social, cultural, economic and political life of Greenwich as a whole.

The voluntary and community sector also makes an important direct economic contribution to the Borough's economy by bringing funding from outside, creating additional jobs and enabling major improvements to be made to the local environment.

The Compact reinforces the commitment of Greenwich's voluntary, community and faith sector and its statutory partners to work together as a catalyst for change in the Borough. The principles and undertakings in the Compact should apply across the voluntary, community and faith sector. Increasingly though, distinctions are being made between the voluntary, community and faith sectors so particular consideration needs to be given to the needs, interests and contributions of community groups.

9.2 Community groups in Greenwich

Community Groups bring much to partnerships, programmes and processes by informing project development from “ground level” experience.

Community groups can also provide opportunities for people to build confidence and other personal development, or learning specific skills.

Some small community groups may evolve into larger voluntary organisations but many do not, preferring to stay small with their purpose and nature uncompromised.

Community groups can:

- give a voice to communities;
- foster a balance between self-interest and citizenship;
- fill service gaps through mutual aid or self-help;
- provide support for hard to reach people and areas.

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9.3 Consulting community groups

Consulting with community groups is important, particularly those groups who do not have the information and networking structures that come from being linked to large umbrella organisations. Input from community groups who are in touch with current local opinion or strength of feeling can provide invaluable information to all sectors.

When consulted, community groups need the most time to respond but often get the least because they are frequently at the end of the communication chain. This is why the 12-week consultation period set out in the Compact is particularly important for community groups.

The Compact aims to help support small community groups to become better informed and consulted, by encouraging organisations to understand and provide for the needs of community groups.

Suggested undertakings

The statutory sector, partner agencies and community, voluntary and faith sectors recognise that the community sector makes a substantial contribution to social cohesion and is one of the building blocks for transformation leading to the improved engagement of local communities and neighbourhoods.

All partners must work together to ensure they deliver fair treatment for all community groups and therefore:

- i. recognise the value of the contributions of volunteer time to projects as equivalent to match funding;
- ii. recognise that inadequate resourcing is a barrier to effective partnerships, identify and provide adequate resources as far as possible;
- iii. work in a coordinated way when consulting communities and community groups.

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The statutory sector and partner agencies will:

- i. ensure that policies for communities recognise the importance of communities of interest or issue as well as communities of place;
- ii. unify and simplify small grants funding programmes for community groups;
- iii. be sensitive to the needs of community groups and offer guidance relating to community strategies, local strategic partnerships and Best Value;

The community, voluntary and faith sector will:

- i. seek to work towards developing appropriate mechanisms for active community sector involvement in all its undertakings;
- ii. recognise that the resources available to the local authority and other statutory funders for grant purposes are limited;
- iii. recognise that the receipt of public funding carries responsibilities and implement proper financial management and accounting systems and the attainment of value for money;
- iv. ensure the highest standards of probity are observed in their operations, conduct and use of public money;

- v. network and share funding opportunities more effectively;
- vi. work with funders to ensure they meet funders' financial and monitoring regulations and comply with statutory legislation;
- vii. seek to maximise its income by systematically fundraising;
- viii. ensure transparency in the way they manage funds;
- ix. ensure works contracted for are properly costed.

Priorities for action

- Develop a mechanism for ensuring that community consultation is coordinated.

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10. Priorities for action

Working with volunteers

- Increase use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to communicate volunteering information via the Internet, while ensuring organisations and individuals without access to ICT are not excluded.
- Form partnerships with mental health and other health/social services to develop and promote volunteering.

Funding

- Develop guidelines on service level agreements and funding allocations to ensure value for money.
- Identify mechanisms to cover gaps in training, funding and bidding support.
- Eliminate duplication.

Working with Black and Minority Ethnic minority groups

- Establish a BME forum.
- Develop a strategy for providing infrastructure and developmental support to BME voluntary, community and faith groups.
- Review policies and practices to ensure that the Compact undertakings around monitoring and agreed definition are adhered to.

Consultation and communication:

- As far as possible, coordinate consultation exercises to minimise duplication.

Premises

- Develop a community buildings strategy.
- Develop a grading system for accessibility of buildings.

Working with community groups:

- Develop a mechanism for ensuring that community consultation is coordinated.

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11. Acknowledgements

Oxleas NHS Trust

Greenwich Voluntary Action Council

Greenwich Community Networks

Greenwich Association of Disabled People

Greenwich Council for Race Equality

Greenwich Community College

Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust

Greenwich Refugee Network

The Forum @ Greenwich

Greenwich Council

Ahead

Volunteers Centre Greenwich

The Metro Centre

Lend Lease

Greenwich, Bexley and Lewisham Chamber
of Commerce

The Environment Agency

Irish in Greenwich

Charlton Over Fifties Association

Mama Afrika Family

Greenwich Community Law Centre

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Declaration of support

Name of organisation:.....
will endeavour to uphold the principles of the Greenwich Compact and gives it full support to
developing a new way of working together.

Date:.....
Compact launched November 2006

Lead advocate within organisation:.....

Contact person:.....

Address:.....

.....

Telephone number:.....

..

Email:.....

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12. Useful Information

The Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary Sector in England

Author: Compact Working Group and Home Office

Publication Date: 2004

Link: www.thecompact.gov.uk

Getting Better Delivery: Guidance for Effective Working with Frontline Providers

Author: Department for Education and Skills

Publication Date: 2003

Link: www.dfes.gov.uk

Good Grant Making

Author: Association of Charitable Foundations

Publication Date: 1997

Link: www.acf.org.uk/public_print/trusts_guidelines.htm

Strengthening Partnerships: next steps for compact

Author: Active Communities Unit

Publication Date: 2005

Link: www.activecommunities.homeoffice.gov.uk

Better Policy Making

Author: Centre for Management and Policy Studies, Cabinet Office

Publication Date: 2001

All Central Government Compact Codes are available from

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