

Compact
working together | better together

**THE
NORTH
YORKSHIRE
COMPACT**

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“Government and voluntary and community organisations share many aspirations, the pursuit of inclusiveness, dedication to public life and support for the development of healthy communities. The Compact is a starting point for developing our partnership based on shared values and mutual respect”

Jack Straw MP

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The North Yorkshire Compact (hereafter referred to as “the Compact”) will provide a positive framework for developing closer partnership relations between North Yorkshire’s voluntary and community and statutory sectors. It will assist in achieving the aims of the seven district Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP) to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the county. Local Strategic Partnerships (which cover district areas) and the NYSP (which covers the county) bring together public, private, voluntary and community sector representatives to provide a single over-arching local co-ordination framework to respond to community expressed aspirations and need. Through encouraging new and innovative ways of working together to achieve these aspirations strategic partnerships should facilitate improvements in the quality of life people of the area enjoy and more efficient, effective partnership working.
- 1.2 As a result of the rural nature of North Yorkshire, voluntary and community organisations hold special significance for the well-being of our communities, whether they be communities bound by geography, interest or circumstance. The statutory sector recognises the important contribution voluntary and community organisations make throughout the county and are aware of the necessity of working in new ways to meet the needs of all communities through quality joined up service provision.
- 1.3 The Compact will provide a more secure foundation on which to continue this work and build stronger relations which are less susceptible to shifting priorities and funding sources and driven more predominantly by the needs of communities themselves.
- 1.4 The Compact is not a legally binding document. It echoes the sentiment of the National Compact in seeking to improve and clarify relations between both the statutory and voluntary and community sectors, but its validity and authority comes from those organisations who support, implement and uphold its aims, visions and principles.
- 1.5 Complaints and disputes will be dealt with in good faith by organisations signed up to the Compact using their own internal complaints and/or mediation services. These efforts will be supported by the Compact Steering Group which will meet annually with senior representatives from each signatory organisation to discuss disputes and complaints that have arisen over the year and hear comment and

debate on potential issues of concern from across all representatives. The National Compact Mediation Service will also be available to all signatories to the North Yorkshire Compact in incidents where local arrangements are not deemed to have sufficed.

- 1.6 By signing up to the North Yorkshire Compact statutory agencies obligate all departments within their organisations to uphold the principles contained within it.
- 1.7 The voluntary and community sector as referred to in this document is meant as an inclusive term, embracing all those organisations and groups who would wish to support the Compact. This includes, amongst others, charities (whether registered or not), faith groups and other 'not-for-profit' organisations. It also includes local infrastructure organisations working on behalf of voluntary and community organisations such as the North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations (NYFVO) and the Local Development Agencies based in each District.
- 1.8 Signatories to the North Yorkshire Compact recognise the need of agencies and organisations to respond to national as well as local priorities and the constraints that following and achieving national priorities may place upon local working practices.
- 1.9 Details of all signatories to the Compact can be found at Appendix 1 together with the date of adoption of the Compact and organisational contact details for Compact enquiries.
- 1.10 All signatories agree to develop and publish an implementation plan in respect of the Compact and to update it periodically as required.

2.0 Shared Vision and Priorities

- 2.1 The Compact is a general framework to help statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector improve and strengthen their relationships with each other, a tool through which to support, celebrate and encourage community and voluntary activity and ultimately to contribute to improved quality of life across North Yorkshire. It will work to;
 - a) Improve communication, common understanding, collaboration, trust and respect between the voluntary and community and statutory sectors;
 - b) Set a framework for effective consultation, representation and partnership working including agreeing definitions, shared values and discrete undertakings;
 - c) Clarify ways in which all sectors can together influence policy and planning where appropriate.
- 2.2 Partners and signatories to this Compact acknowledge;
 - a) The underlying philosophy that voluntary and community activity is

fundamental to the development of a democratic, socially inclusive society;

- b) The significant contribution made by volunteers and the role of voluntary and community organisations in supporting them;
- c) The benefits of developing and upholding common objectives for the benefit of communities across North Yorkshire in providing high quality accessible services;
- d) The contribution of the voluntary and community sector to the economy of North Yorkshire as well as the enormous benefit to the social economy and social capital of rural areas;
- e) The role of statutory agencies in delivering services;
- f) The independence of voluntary and community organisations and the distinct but complementary role they and statutory agencies play within communities;
- g) The diversity (in terms of size, resources, membership, focus and working practices) of voluntary and community organisations within North Yorkshire and the strength that such diversity brings;
- h) The power of genuine, well executed and timely consultation where feedback is respected and treated as independent – not jeopardising current or future funding arrangements and relationships;
- i) That notwithstanding any funding arrangements voluntary and community organisations are entitled to campaign within the law to achieve their aims;

3.0 Shared Principles

All partners agree;

- a) To listen to each other and engage in constructive dialogue;
- b) To champion community involvement, participation and activity;
- c) To identify, develop and promote good practice;
- d) To provide induction, learning and training opportunities (in a variety of formats) to underpin and develop effective partnership working;
- e) To work together with accountability, openness, honesty, leadership, integrity, objectivity and transparency;
- f) To share information, knowledge and experience as widely as possible and in a timely manner, respecting confidentiality where necessary;
- g) To respect discord and differences of opinion that will inevitably arise as a result of the statutory and voluntary and community sectors seeking to work

more harmoniously and closely together and to resolve any disagreements or conflicts in a speedy and constructive manner;

- h) To promote and work for equality and diversity in all areas of work;
- i) To promote the Compact and encourage other agencies to abide by its terms;

4.0 Statutory Sector Undertakings

4.1 The Statutory Sector agrees;

- a) To recognise and support the independence of voluntary and community organisations;
- b) To acknowledge the different stakeholders to which the voluntary and community organisations are accountable and recognise the voluntary and community organisations' ability to manage their own affairs in the best interests of their members, service users, beneficiaries and volunteers;
- c) To recognise the power and importance of advocacy and recognise the right of the voluntary and community organisations to comment on and where relevant to challenge policy developments notwithstanding any funding relationships that may be in place;
- d) To recognise and support the breadth of experience, knowledge and ideas within the community and voluntary organisations and to value and utilise these resources when developing policy, strategy or reviewing service delivery;
- e) To implement;
 - i. Strategic multi-year funding where appropriate to help long term planning and stability;
 - ii. The allocation of resources against clear and consistent criteria;
 - iii. Funding policies which take account of the objectives of voluntary and community organisations and their need to work independently, efficiently and effectively;
 - iv. Open arrangements for agreeing and evaluating objectives, performance indicators and their associated targets;
 - v. Prompt payment, consulting on changes to the funding position and letting voluntary and community organisations know about future funding as early as possible before the end of any grant periods or contract end dates;
 - vi. To examine the effect on the voluntary and community sector of new policies and strategies whilst still in development.
- f) To establish consultation mechanisms across all departments which are timely and allow a reasonable time for response;
- g) To fully include the voluntary and community sector in strategic groups –

particularly the NYSP and the district based LSPs and to ensure as far as possible that voluntary and community organisations are involved in the development and implementation of Community Strategies.

5.0 Voluntary and Community Sector Undertakings

5.1 The voluntary and community sector agrees;

- a) To recognise the constraints that statutory agencies are under regarding funding priorities and that there is a limit to the amount of money available to pay for essential and desirable services;
- b) To acknowledge and respect the responsibilities and constraints placed upon statutory agencies through legislation or Central Government directives with regard to spending and monitoring;
- c) To work to recognised quality standards covering a wide range of activities including campaigning, planning and delivery of services, governance and accountability within the sector;
- d) To promote effective working relations between the range of statutory and other agencies and voluntary and community organisations with the aim of achieving complimentary service provision across the county – avoiding duplication;
- e) To inform and consult as widely as possible with colleagues across the voluntary and community sectors when fulfilling a representative role.

6.0 Implementation and Review

6.1 All partners agree;

- a) To demonstrate a commitment to, and share responsibility for, developing, adopting, implementing, promoting and reviewing the Compact and Codes of Practice;
- b) To identify a named individual within the signatory organisation to be the main point of contact or champion for the Compact;
- c) To distribute the Compact and Codes of Practice and provide induction and training within their organisations to raise awareness of how the agreement affects joint working;
- d) To work together to regularly review the Compact and Codes of Practice including producing annual workplans and targets;
- e) To establish procedures by which organisations and individuals dissatisfied with the Compact, its content, procedures, processes and implementation can express their views and have their concerns addressed through organisation's existing complaints and mediation procedures;

- f) To engage in the ongoing work of the North Yorkshire Compact Working Group which will meet at least twice a year to evaluate progress, develop the Compact and its associated Codes and share good practice;
- g) To engage in an annual meeting of Compact signatories designed to endorse the work of the Steering Group, discuss disputes and complaints that have arisen over the year and hear comment on potential issues of concern from across all representatives.

This document can be made available in alternative formats (such as large type or audio) and other languages – please contact North Yorkshire County Council on 0845 872 73 74

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