

Plymouth Compact

**Improving
partnership
working between
the public and
third sectors**



1. What is the Plymouth Compact?

The Plymouth Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and the Third sector to support and improve partnership working between the sectors. It is underpinned by Codes of Practice, based on the national Codes, which cover the following areas:

- Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
- Consultation
- Funding and Procurement

The Plymouth Compact and its Codes contain specific undertakings for each sector, as well as a series of joint undertakings, which aim to make a positive impact on partnership working in the city. In this context, the term “undertaking” commits partners to work towards the principle or action in question.

2. What is the Plymouth Compact for?

The Compact sets out a framework to help us develop positive, effective, working relationships by:

- Recognising and building on those things we already do well together
- Setting standards and making clear commitments about the ways the sectors will work with each other
- Creating an environment of mutual trust and respect which allows us to take full advantage of new opportunities for partnership working.

The principles set out in the Plymouth Compact will underpin the relationship between the sectors in all areas and, in particular, will provide the Local Strategic Partnership in Plymouth with the foundations for mutually beneficial relationships

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3. Where are we now?

There is much that is already good about the way the two sectors work together. A great deal of Third Sector activity within the city is funded by the public sector and there is a strong record of partnership working between the sectors. However, some obstacles exist:

- 3.1** Existing funding processes do not always allow voluntary and community groups to plan ahead.
- 3.2** Some voluntary and community groups find it difficult to influence policy development.
- 3.3** The value of the contribution made by volunteers is not always recognised.
- 3.4** Some parts of the Third Sector find it more difficult to access the support that they need.
- 3.5** Organisations do not always do all they could to avoid duplication and to work together.
- 3.6** Standards of governance and accountability within the third sector are not always as high as they should be.
- 3.7** Public sector bodies are not always as clear as they could be about funding priorities.
- 3.8** The two sectors do not always communicate with each other as much or as well as they could.

4. What difference will the Plymouth Compact make?

The Compact aims to make improvements to the way the two sectors work together. We will begin this process by making clear, explicit commitments about the expectations that partners can have when dealing with each other. In time, this will enable us to tackle the obstacles identified above and will work towards the following:

- 4.1** Less unnecessary bureaucracy for Third Sector organisations in applying for and managing funding.
- 4.2** A more level playing field for all partners.
- 4.3** Clearer and more meaningful consultation processes which allow all sections of the community to influence priorities.
- 4.4** Greater transparency and accountability in all areas of public life.
- 4.5** More co-operation and less duplication across all statutory and Third Sector organisations.
- 4.6** More informed decision-making resulting in better and more appropriate services for the people of Plymouth.

5. What principles do the Compact partners share?

The Compact is underpinned by a number of common beliefs or principles:

- 5.1** Voluntary action plays an essential part in Plymouth. It enables local people to play a full and active part in community life and promotes representation for disadvantaged groups and communities.
- 5.2** An independent and diverse Third Sector is vital to the well-being of communities in Plymouth.
- 5.3** The public sector and the Third Sector have differing and complementary roles. They may have different lines of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders, but both are committed to integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership in the development and delivery of public policy and services.
- 5.4** The Third Sector is ideally placed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people and empower them to develop their own solutions to meeting their needs.
- 5.5** Local people and groups have a right to be involved in shaping the decisions that affect their lives including policy development and the design and delivery of services and programmes.
- 5.6** Third Sector organisations are entitled to campaign within the law in order to advance their aims.

5.7 Both sectors affirm each other's complementary and distinct roles in identifying and meeting the needs of local people, and recognise the value of working in partnership towards common aims and objectives.

6. Joint Undertakings

All partners to the Plymouth Compact are committed to working together to continually improve the effectiveness of the relationship between the public sector and the Third Sector, and undertake to:

- 6.1** Promote and develop effective working relationships, consistency of approach and good practice between different public sector bodies and the Third Sector, particularly where issues involve more than one agency.
- 6.2** Foster a greater understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the sectors.
- 6.3** Build the capacity of the Third Sector and enable it to fulfil its strategic role.
- 6.4** Fully implement and champion the Plymouth Compact at all levels within our agencies or organisations, and ensure that staff have the necessary competencies to do so.
- 6.5** Promote the adoption of the Compact to other local public bodies and voluntary and community organisations that are not yet signed up to the Plymouth Compact.
- 6.6** Respect protocols in the sharing of confidential information.
- 6.7** Review the operation of the Plymouth Compact annually.
- 6.8** Nominate a Compact champion in each organisation to ensure that the Compact is fully implemented.

7. Public Sector Undertakings

The Plymouth Compact public sector partners undertake to:

- 7.1** Recognise and respect the independence of the Third Sector, including its right within the law to campaign, to lobby and to comment on public policy.
- 7.2** Recognise and address the need for funding to include an appropriate proportion of the overhead and management costs in order to ensure the Third Sector is able to fulfil its role most effectively.
- 7.3** Recognise the right of the Third Sector to determine and manage its own affairs.
- 7.4** Work towards greater transparency, equity and consistency in all funding allocated to the Third Sector.
- 7.5** Support and encourage the Third Sector in taking full advantage of appropriate external and local funding opportunities to meet city wide priorities.
- 7.6** Consult the Third Sector on issues that are likely to affect it in a timely and appropriate way, taking account of the specific needs of those parts of the sector that represent groups who are at risk of being excluded.
- 7.7** Adhere to the principles of open government (which seeks to ensure that wherever possible decisions and findings are made public and explained).
- 7.8** Rationalise wherever possible the appointment of public sector representatives on management committees and make sure that those fulfilling such roles are appropriately trained.

8. Third Sector Undertakings

The Plymouth Compact Third Sector partners undertake to:

- 8.1** Maintain and promote high standards of governance, accountability and conduct to meet its obligations to its funders, beneficiaries, staff and volunteers.
- 8.2** Recognise and address the need for an appropriate proportion of overhead and management costs to be reflected in funding bids.
- 8.3** Respect and be accountable to the law.

- 8.4** Develop quality standards appropriate to the organisation, over time, in order to ensure best practice and equality of opportunity in activities, employment, involvement of volunteers and service provision.
- 8.5** Seek to ensure that beneficiaries, members, volunteers and supporters are informed and consulted as widely as possible before presenting a case to the public sector, or responding to consultations, and to represent their views accurately.
- 8.6** Where appropriate, seek to actively involve and value the contribution of beneficiaries, staff and volunteers in the development and management of activities and services.

9. Reviewing the operation of the Plymouth Compact annually

The Plymouth Compact provides a framework to help us work together more effectively. As such, it needs to evolve to take account of improvements in the relationship between the sectors and the changing partnership environment. There will be an annual review involving representatives of all Plymouth Compact partners to:

- a) Review the operation of the Plymouth Compact and its Codes of Practice.
- b) Ensure all partners are complying with Compact undertakings.
- c) Agree an annual action plan, which sets milestones for the further development of the Compact and its implementation.
- d) Evaluate the difference that the Compact is making in Plymouth.

The Third Sector comprises an extremely broad and diverse range of groups and organisations, from national and international charities employing large numbers of staff to small neighbourhood-based groups run entirely by volunteers. The sector represents the voices of many different sections of society, including service users, and is an important partner in both strategic planning and service provision.

The Public Sector is made up of local statutory agencies, and includes Local Authorities (councils), the Police, Fire Service, NHS, Learning and Skills Councils and Job Centre Plus.

What if things go wrong?

In exploring and learning new ways of working together we should expect that disagreements or disputes would arise as part of this learning experience.

If an organisation is concerned that another organisation has breached the Compact they should seek to resolve the difference directly with the organisation clearly stating the Compact commitment that has not been adhered to.

However, if you are unable to resolve the issues between yourselves there is a dispute resolution procedure in place.

For further information about the dispute resolution procedure and the Plymouth Compact please contact:

- Plymouth 2020, Local Strategic Partnership, First Floor, Civic Centre, Armada Way, Plymouth PL1 2AA Tel: 01752 304026
Email: lsp@plymouth.gov.uk www.plymouth2020.co.uk