



Compact on relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector

JOINT COMPACT ACTION PLAN 2008-9

This Action Plan has been prepared for the Compact Annual Meeting on 13th December 2007. The purpose of the meeting is to review progress in the last year on the implementation of the Compact, and to discuss and agree this revised plan of action for the coming year.

The Plan sets out the priorities for progressing the partnership between government and the voluntary and community sector (and parts of the wider third sector) through the Compact.

Both government (central Government Departments, Government Offices for the Regions, executive agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies) and the voluntary and community sector signed up to the Compact in 1998; subsequently, at local level, public bodies and the sector have committed to Local Compacts. There have also been efforts to involve non-governmental partners from the wider "third sector", for example social enterprises.

The plan is owned by the parties to the national Compact or their Local Compact who regard it as binding in principle. Each partner has responsibility for delivering its commitments. The Plan will be laid before Parliament.

It is vital that all parties play a role in the delivery of this Action Plan. Once the plan has been agreed, a detailed implementation plan will be developed, setting out the precise actions which need to be taken. This will be developed during Spring 2008, with the implementation plan being published in April. This will also feed into the business planning processes of the individual members of the "Compact Family" – Commission for the Compact, Compact Voice and the Cabinet Office (Office for the Third Sector).

JOINT COMPACT ACTION PLAN 2008- 09

The eighth annual review meeting is asked to agree this Joint Compact Action Plan. The Commission for the Compact, Compact Voice and the Office of the Third Sector will work with the Local Government Association (LGA), Communities and Local Government (CLG) and other stakeholders from January to March 2008 to produce a more detailed implementation plan. The implementation plan will include specific tasks, indicators and measures.

OUTCOME-FOCUSED TARGET	ACTION REQUIRED AND LEAD BODY
1. Stronger relationships and partnerships at national level, to deliver the national Compact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion implementation of Compact principles across Government, its agencies and public bodies • Prepare and publish thematic reviews and reports on particular areas of implementation in conjunction with representative bodies and Third Sector Liaison Officers <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the Compact with Departments across government so that it becomes part of the “ground rules” for their partnerships with the third sector, as part of activity to deliver the national “Thriving Third Sector” PSA target. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lead – Office of the Third Sector</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme of development work within third sector, feeding back third sector perspectives on the Compact to Government via Compact Voice and discussions with relevant government representatives. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue an annual voluntary sector report outlining the experience and key messages from the sector about its relationship with government <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lead – Compact Voice</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the Baseline Study of the implementation of the Compact by government to date and its impact on relationships between government and the third sector and follow up on its recommendations. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake further assessment, following on from Baseline Study, of the extent to which third sector organisations are observing their commitments under the Compact <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with inspectors and regulators to influence and inform inspection and regulation regimes to be consistent with Compact principles. <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i></p>

OUTCOME-FOCUSED TARGET	ACTION REQUIRED AND LEAD BODY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further research as necessary on the use and impact of the Compact at national level. <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
<p>2. Stronger relationships and partnerships at local level, supported by Local and Regional Compacts and Compact Action Plans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research the impact of the inclusion of the “Thriving Third Sector” and “Increased formal volunteering” indicators in Local Area Agreements Ongoing work to ensure that Compact principles are at the heart of new Local Area Agreements and the partnerships which underpin them <i>Joint lead – Commission for the Compact / Office for the Third Sector</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand work of Local Compact Voice with frontline organisations, building on links with Local Government Association and Third Sector Liaison Officers in Communities and Local Government and other stakeholder departments to ensure that better national policy and guidance leads to better local delivery. <i>Lead – Compact Voice</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the distinctive impact of Regional Compacts and the development of Multi Area Agreements. <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the development of Comprehensive Area Assessment and ensure that the Compact is reflected in the assessment guidance <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Parliamentary and Health Service and Local Government Ombudsmen to consider the relevance of the Compact in cases of alleged maladministration. Develop joint guidance on the role of the Compact in this process. <i>Joint lead – Commission for the Compact / Compact Voice</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a benchmark of good practice, through further work with representative organisations and Third Sector Liaison Officers, in relation to funding, commissioning and procurement approaches, which also clarifies the role of grants and the application of the Compact in competitively neutral funding processes <i>Joint lead – Commission for the Compact / Office for the Third Sector</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support government Departments, Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and local public bodies in implementing the Compact. Monitor the extent to which good practice principles are followed when central government funding is devolved to Non-Departmental Public Bodies, local agencies and consortia. <i>Joint Lead – Commission for the Compact / Office of the Third Sector</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake thematic reviews. <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>

OUTCOME-FOCUSED TARGET	ACTION REQUIRED AND LEAD BODY
Stronger local relationships and partnerships cont'd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop arrangements for recording issues raised by third sector organisations and central and local government to arrive at evidence based solutions through dialogue and engagement. <i>Lead – Compact Voice</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce more sophisticated guidance on implementing the Government's commitments to full-cost recovery. <i>Lead – Office of the Third Sector</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress on the implementation of move towards three year grant funding . <i>Lead – Office of the Third Sector</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather evidence of how the new public sector commissioning environment relates to the Compact and the impact of this on third sector organisations <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
3. Increase understanding of the role of the Compact in promoting equality and community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake specific campaigns to promote use of the Compact, and raise awareness of how to use it, in particular within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black and Minority Ethnic third sector organisations; Community groups; and Volunteer-involving organisations <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the Black and Minority Ethnic Organisations' Code for consistency with wider race relations and equalities legislation <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
4. Strengthen the independence, voice and campaigning work of the third sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the extent to which government Departments, Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies and local public bodies are observing their commitment to respect the right of third sector organisations to campaign Undertake a programme of learning and development to address issues identified from this monitoring activity <i>Joint lead – Compact Voice / Commission for the Compact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain the Compact's relevance and campaign to increase the sector's use of the Compact in situations where independence is challenged. <i>Lead – Compact Voice</i>

OUTCOME-FOCUSED TARGET	ACTION REQUIRED AND LEAD BODY
5. Ensure the continued relevance of the Compact in a changing legislative and policy environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarify the legal status and scope of the Compact <i>Joint Lead – Commission for the Compact / Compact Voice</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the Codes for consistency and relevance in light of recent legislation and government policy guidance. <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop “how to use” guidance on the Compact for the third sector once legal status and scope have been clarified <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine the potential for greater use of the Compact Mediation Service and other forms of alternative dispute resolution <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the codes of the national Compact for a potential update in 2009. <i>Lead – Commission for the Compact</i>