

The Hertsmeire Compact



Partnerships..Communities..Together

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The Hertsmere Compact is an agreement between public bodies and voluntary and community organisations (VCOs). The agreement aims to ensure that public bodies in Hertsmere and the voluntary sector work effectively in partnership to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities and residents of Hertsmere.

Mission statement

The purpose of the compact is to reaffirm and strengthen the working relationship between Hertsmere Borough Council and Hertsmere Together Partners and the VCOs in order to improve partnership working in the community across the borough. This will enable us all to meet the challenges set out in the Community Strategy to create a thriving, healthier and safer community for all.

Compact principles

The Compact outlines the relationship between public bodies and VCOs allowing them to work together more effectively to strengthen communities and improve people's lives. In particular the public sector and VCOs share a common set of principles, which are at the heart of what they are trying to achieve. The shared principles are:

Respect: Public bodies and the VCOs are accountable in different ways, but both need to act with transparency and integrity. Effective partnerships are built on mutual understanding and an appreciation of the differences between partners of the Compact.

Honesty: It is only through open communication that strong partnerships can be built and maintained. Full and frank discussions should be the basis for resolving difficulties.

Independence: The independence of the VCOs is recognised and supported. This includes its right within the law to campaign, to comment on and to challenge policy (whatever funding or other relationship may exist with the public sector) and to determine and manage its own affairs.

Diversity: We all value a thriving society, which brings innovation and choice through a multitude of voices.

Equality: Fairness for everyone, regardless of their background, is a fundamental goal, and the public sector and the VCOs will work together to achieve this.

Citizen empowerment: By working together, the public sector and the VCOs can deliver change that is built around communities and people, meeting their needs and reflecting their choices.

Volunteering: The energy and commitment of people giving their time for the public good contributes to a vibrant society, and should be recognised and appreciated.

The public sector and the VCOs are committed to the above principles.

Compact outcomes

We believe that an effective partnership between the public sector and VCOs will help achieve the following outcomes:

1. A strong, diverse and independent civil society
2. Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
3. Responsive and high quality programmes and services
4. Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
5. An equal and fair society

In order to achieve these outcomes, there are a number of undertakings required from both the public and voluntary sectors as detailed in the following table.

Outcome	Public bodies commit to:	Voluntary sector organisations commit to:
<p>A strong, diverse and independent civil society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respecting the independence of the local voluntary sector organisations (VCOs). • Recognising that volunteering adds value to public services and brings about positive benefits to local people and service users. Encouraging volunteering to be undertaken by a high proportion of people across diverse backgrounds. • Ensuring greater transparency by making data and information more accessible, helping the voluntary sector to challenge existing provision of services, access new markets and hold the public agencies to account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided. • Ensuring independence is upheld, focusing on the cause represented, regardless of any relationship they have with the public sector, financial or otherwise. • Encouraging volunteering to be undertaken by a high proportion of people across diverse backgrounds and recognising the value and positive benefits to residents and service users.
<p>Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services in Hertsmere</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the social impact that may result from policy and programme development. • Working with the local VSO's from the earliest possible stage to design policies, programmes and services. • Giving early notice of forthcoming consultations, where possible. • Providing feedback on results of consultation where possible. • Assessing the implications for the sector of new policies, legislation and guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and responding to public sector consultations where appropriate. • Seeking the views of service users, members, volunteers and trustees where appropriate. • Focusing on evidence-based solutions, with clear proposals for positive outcomes where possible.
<p>Responsive and high-quality programmes and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the local VCOs have a greater role and more opportunities in delivering public services. • Considering a wide range of ways to fund or resource local VCOs organisations. • Ensuring transparency by providing a clear rationale for all funding decisions. • Committing to multi-year funding where possible. • Ensuring well managed and transparent application and commissioning processes. • Ensuring that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate. • Ensuring equal treatment across sectors, including reporting and monitoring arrangements, when tendering for contracts. • Ensuring delivery terms and risks are proportionate to the nature and value of the service. • Ensuring that the widest possible range of organisations are aware of funding opportunities. • Ensuring all bodies distributing funds on behalf of the public sector adhere to the commitments in this Charter. • Encouraging feedback on the effectiveness of the partnership between the public sector and VCOs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring eligibility for funding before applying and being explicit about how outcomes will be achieved. • Ensuring robust governance arrangements. • Being open and transparent about reporting. • Demonstrating the social, environmental or economic value of the services provided, where appropriate. • Helping facilitate feedback from users and communities to the public sector to help improve delivery of services. • Recognising the public sector's funding. • Seeking out opportunities to explore joint funding bids with the voluntary sector to maximise investment into the borough.
<p>Clear arrangements for managing changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That if a service being delivered by a local VCO is encountering problems, agreeing with the organisation a timetable of actions to improve. • Assessing the impact on service users and volunteers before taking a decision to reduce or end funding. • Discussing with local VCOs the potential implications of changes to future funding as early as possible, giving organisations the opportunity to respond, and considering the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision. • Giving a minimum of three months' notice in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, apart from in exceptional circumstances, and providing a clear rationale for why the decisions have been taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When necessary, planning for the end of funding to reduce any potential negative impact on service users and the organisation. • Contributing positively to reviews of services and funding practice. • Advising funders on the social, environmental or economic impact(s) of funding changes, particularly to minimise their effects on people in vulnerable situations. • Advising funders if voluntary sector organisations are facing funding difficulties.
<p>An equal and fair society</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with local VCOs that represent, support or provide services to people specifically protected by legislation and other under-represented and disadvantaged groups. • Acknowledging that organisations representing specific disadvantaged or under-represented groups can help promote social and community cohesion and should have equal access to funding opportunities. • Taking practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing how the value of the work can help the public sector deliver its duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination. • Taking practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build stronger communities.

