

Gloucestershire Compact
Multi-sector Partnership Code of Practice
Code of Practice

1. Who is this Code of Practice for?

- Voluntary and Community Sector Groups
- Public Sector Bodies

2. What is the Gloucestershire Compact?

The Gloucestershire Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and the voluntary and community 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 Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Community Groups
- Consultation
- Funding and Procurement
- Multi-sector Partnerships
- Volunteering

The Gloucestershire 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 county. In this context, the term “undertaking” commits partners to work towards the principle or action in question.

3. What is the aim of this Code of Practice?

This Code of Practice, which has been locally developed, aims to make a positive impact on the relationship between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and their joint commitment to establishing effective multi-sector partnerships where appropriate. It aims to set a framework for:

- Understanding what makes a partnership effective
- Encouraging good practice in managing and servicing partnerships
- Enabling the full participation of both sectors

4. What are Multi-sector Partnerships?

Multi-sector partnerships can involve the voluntary and community sector and the public sector working together in one of the following ways:

- Creating *a new and separate organisation* with its own resources, identity and strategy
- A *virtual organisation*. No formal legal identity. One partner acts as the managing agent or accountable body

- An *alliance or joint venture*. A steering group is formed to co-ordinate the work of different agencies
- A *strategic partnership*. Partners meet to develop plans, share information and work at the bigger picture issues

Common success factors for such partnerships include:

- Active agreement that a partnership is necessary
- Shared, clear and defined purpose
- Confidence in the commitments and actions of different partners
- Commitment to achieving the best outcomes for end users
- Leadership by respected individuals
- A clear and open decision-making process
- The development of a shared vision of what might be achieved
- Time to build the partnership
- Shared or overlapping agendas
- Good communication between partners
- Effective partnership management

5. Joint Undertakings

All partners to the Gloucestershire Compact are committed to ensuring multi-sector partnerships are made effective in the ways outlined above and undertake to:

- 5.1 Identify common goals and shared priorities which could be effectively addressed through multi-sector partnerships.
- 5.2 Develop and be part of multi-sector partnerships where they can add value to existing work arrangements.
- 5.3 Develop open and representative partnership processes and structures.
- 5.4 Ensure that the needs of hard-to-reach groups are heard and considered by the partnership.
- 5.5 Recognise the value, specific skills and expertise of all sectors.
- 5.6 Clarify organisational interests and recognise the limits and boundaries of participating organisations and sectors.
- 5.7 Support the participation and involvement of participating organisations/sectors.
- 5.8 Provide for induction of new partners and representatives including use of this Code and understanding of other sectors.
- 5.9 Ensure each agency is clear about their role and the commitments involved.
- 5.10 Ensure the role of staff members and volunteers in representing organisations in partnerships is fully recognised within their job roles and supported by their employing or sponsoring organisation.
- 5.11 Identify and support the training and development needs of partnership members, including induction and mentoring.

- 5.12 Accept joint responsibility for sound organisation and management and appropriate resourcing of the partnership including:
- Clear Terms of Reference for partnership
 - Clear and agreed administrative and secretariat function
 - Strategic Plan
 - Communication Strategy
 - Reporting mechanisms
 - Performance management
 - Accessible meetings
 - Costs of participation
- 5.13 Identify clearly the role of the Chair, and ensure this person is able to encourage the involvement and participation of all players.
- 5.14 Accept ownership for decisions made by the partnership and its promotion.
- 5.15 Promote the Gloucestershire Compact and comply with the undertakings outlined in this code.
- 5.16 Use representative structures and processes available within the VCS to identify and support VCS involvement in partnerships at the earliest practicable stage.

6. Public Sector Undertakings

The Gloucestershire Compact public sector partners undertake to:

- 6.1 Where relevant, communicate their legal and financial duties and requirements in relation to developing new partnerships.
- 6.2 Recognise and value the skills that VCS organisations bring to partnerships.
- 6.3 Recognise that VCS organisations have a strategic as well as a service delivery role.
- 6.4 Reference and use the representative structures and processes within the VCS when seeking to identify VCS players.

7. Voluntary and Community Sector Undertakings

The Gloucestershire Compact voluntary and community sector partners undertake to:

- 7.1 Ensure VCS representatives consult and represent the wider views of the sector wherever possible including hard-to-reach groups.
- 7.2 Seek to understand and respect the statutory requirements and frameworks (including monitoring) within which the public sector operates.
- 7.3 Ensure that issues concerning VCS funding are raised only when directly relevant to partnership and that more appropriate routes of redress are sought when necessary.

*Produced in May 2006 on behalf of the Gloucestershire Compact Group
by the Partnership & Participation Project*

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Further information about the Compact can be found on the Gloucestershire

Voluntary and Community Sector website www.gloshub.org.uk

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