

Practical guide to engaging with local enterprise partnerships



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Executive summary

Local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) are business led, local partnerships which have a remit to encourage the promotion of business, greater and more sustainable employment and economic growth in their area. The first LEPs were established in April 2011, and as their role has developed, it has become increasingly important that voluntary and community sector organisations are able to engage with them.

The first part of this guide is aimed at those who are less familiar with LEPs and EU funding and gives an overview of how LEPs work. The second part of the guide sets out some practical tips to help you engage with LEPs.

LEPs are non-statutory bodies, and so there is a wide variation in what they look like and how they work in practice. This guide does not attempt to address all the possible permutations, but gives examples of the various options available and the questions that you might want to ask.

Good relationships rely on both parties understanding each other: explaining the value of the sector is much easier if you can put yourself in the LEP's shoes and it's important to do your research first so you know how to build sustainable relationships.

Introduction

LEPs are non-statutory partnerships formed by local civic and business leaders with the aim of shifting power away from central government and quangos to the localities. They have a number of functions, but are important partners for the VCS (which we use as shorthand to cover the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector) in relation to European funding. This briefing provides a refresher on the purpose and role of LEPs, and draws on our expertise of partnership working to set out steps for VCS organisations looking to influence them.

This briefing is part of a Compact Voice series for the VCS on engaging with the new local bodies: have a look at the rest of [our series](#) which covers **health and wellbeing boards**, **clinical commissioning groups** and **police and crime commissioners**.

Compact Voice has also produced a short guide [Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships: A guide for voluntary organisations](#). NCVO runs the [European Funding Network](#) which promotes the sector's interests, contributes to the development of EU funding programs and promotes engagement with LEPs.

About local enterprise partnerships

What is the role of LEPs?

LEPs are partnerships between local authorities and businesses which promote economic growth in their local area. Prior to LEPs, Regional Development Agencies (public sector led organisations) were responsible for regeneration, regional competitiveness, and the

development of skills. The government's intention was that LEPs would promote a business led and more locally responsive agenda. The first LEPs were established in April 2011, and the RDAs abolished in March 2012. There are 39 LEPs in England.

At first, LEPs were given a broad remit but limited resources. Their role and funding has evolved considerably in the intervening years, in large part due to [Michael Heseltine's, "No stone unturned in the pursuit of public growth" report](#), published in October 2012. LEPs produce a strategy for enterprise growth in their area, identify barriers and solutions to growth and work with local partners to improve the local business environment. They also have responsibility for bidding for central government funding and influencing local funding streams and ensuring that these deliver against the locally agreed priorities. The next section contains further details on the specific functions of LEPs.

Who is on a LEP and how are they structured?

It is important to remember that LEPs are non-statutory bodies. This means LEPs can look and operate very differently from each other, in terms of size, capacity and governance. As LEPs take on different responsibilities, it is likely that their structure will continue to evolve.

Ways in which LEPs differ from each other

1. **Legal status:** LEPs are free to choose the most appropriate legal status. Some are unincorporated partnerships, others are incorporated or part of broader strategic governance arrangements.
2. **Structure:** LEPs are free to design their own structure. Some are based on pre-existing local partnerships - for instance under the last government's multi-area agreement partnership approach - and others were created from scratch. Each LEP will have a different combination of standing sub-groups, task and finish groups, business membership body support arrangements, special interest advisory groups or advisory panels.
3. **Board membership:** LEPs must be chaired by a business person and at least half of the members must come from the private sector: beyond that LEPs can choose their members. [Some LEPs have a voluntary sector representative on their board.](#)

The variation in structure and membership also has an impact on how effective each LEP is in practice. Some are genuinely leading economic development for their area, whereas others have a more advisory role. For instance, the LEPs in areas where Combined Authorities have been set up may have a more limited role in local economic development.

One thing that all LEPs have in common is a European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Committee, which were set up in response to the European Commission's concerns on governance. These oversee the development of the EU ESIF programme in the area, and feed into the national ESIF Growth Programme Board. ESIF Committees are made up from key partner groups in the LEP area, including from the voluntary sector, rural, environment and equality sectors.

What areas do LEPs cover?

There are 39 LEPs in England, which are often but not necessarily coterminous with first tier local authority areas. The size, economic make-up and rural/urban split of each of these areas vary considerably.

Local enterprise partnerships and EU funding

Funding from Europe brings further resources to LEP areas and also broadens the LEP's remit in terms of both the focus of their work and in terms of engagement with partners; it is this element of their role which has the most immediate relevance to voluntary sector organisations.

A who's who of ESIF funding

EU funding is administratively complicated. It therefore helps to start with an explanation of who the main bodies are.



The European Structural and Investments Funds Growth Programme

Over the next seven year cycle (2014-2020) the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) is worth approximately €7.3billion for England. The ESIF money is sub-divided into a number of funds for particular purposes. In England, the ESIF Growth Programme consists of the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Organisations from all sectors are able to bid for the funding.

European structural funding must be matched by national funding. Working with the Managing Authorities, LEPs are responsible for strategy on how the money is to be spent, finding projects and match funding, and ensuring that the projects deliver the objectives. They do not deliver the projects themselves.

LEPs were required to set out their strategic priorities in their ESIF strategies, links to which are available on [NCVO's Funding Network website](#).

The government has also published a useful handbook explaining the ESIF Growth programme in more detail while the [European Commission has produced a comprehensive guide for beneficiaries of ESIF and related EU instruments](#).

European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) is the main funding stream supporting the creation of jobs, helping people into better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for EU citizens. ESF comes with around €3.5billion which needs to be matched by domestic sources. It is managed by the Department of Work and Pensions in England. The ESF has three thematic objectives:

- **Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility:** focus on employment for jobseekers and economically inactive people and the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market. Areas with high youth unemployment are also supported with extra funds from the Youth Employment Initiative.
- **Combating social exclusion, poverty and discrimination:** active inclusion of disadvantaged people furthest from the labour market, removing barriers in a holistic and integrated way, including through supporting early action, outreach activities and access to locally provided services, and promoting equality between women and men and equal opportunities for all.
- **Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning:** focus on improving access to lifelong learning, upgrading the skills and competences of the workforce and increasing the labour market relevance of education and training systems.

For the majority of the ESF, LEPs can opt-in to a service offer from a national organisation by committing some of its European funds. In return, the LEP accesses match funding and administrative support. Most but not all LEPs have agreed to work with the opt-in organisations. The opt-in organisations are:

- **DWP** will be match funding for support for employment.
- **The Skills Funding Agency** will be commissioning a wide range of ESF activity; as well as adult skills provision, which among other things will include support for young people not in employment, education or training and in-work progression.
- [Big Lottery Fund is match funding £260m lottery money for social inclusion activities.](#)

In addition, the National Offender Management Services (NOMS) will be a co-financing organisation, operating the nationally managed ESF strand of activity supporting the reintegration of prisoners back into the workforce.

The ESF creates real opportunities for voluntary sector organisations.

Opportunities created by the ESF for voluntary sector organisations

1. **Aligns with sector aims:** many of the ESF priorities correspond to what the sector is already trying to achieve in tackling inequalities in employment and skills.
2. **Social inclusion:** 20% of the ESF is ring-fenced for promoting social inclusion, an area in which many VCS organisations have considerable expertise.
3. **The Big Lottery:** the participation of the Big Lottery as an opt-in organisation makes the funding more accessible for voluntary organisations.
4. **Community Grants:** small grants for voluntary sector projects that engage excluded people on a pathway to employment, and which make use of softer targets, may be available in some areas.
5. [Community Led Local Development \(CLLD\)](#): an investment priority under the social inclusion theme, CLLD is a model of development which mobilises all the key players in a local area in a collaborative partnership to increase employment and overcome disadvantage. Many voluntary sector organisations are already involved in partnerships which could be adapted to this model, although it is not yet clear in what areas CLLD will be available.

European Regional Development Fund

The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is worth around €3.6 billion and is aimed at enterprises (including social enterprises) and infrastructure investment. The majority of funding is focused on growing and making small and medium enterprises more competitive, innovation and research and low carbon activities, with some more limited funding for ICT and the protection of the environment.

The Managing Authority for the ERDF is the Department of Communities and Local Government. The ERDF in England does not fund organisations directly but rather organisations that can provide support (for instance, technical or financial) for other

organisations. Organisations that wish to bid for ERDF money must find their own match funding.

European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

The part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) which is invested through the European Growth programme is worth €221 million, and is aimed at improving rural economic growth. This is done through building knowledge and skills, supporting new and developing micro and small rural businesses, investing in small scale renewable and broadband investments and supporting tourism. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is the Managing Authority.

Where we are now with the European Structural and Investments Funds Growth Programme

Although the funding cycle was meant to start in 2014, there have been significant delays in agreeing how the money will be spent. The government now hopes to launch in mid-March 2015 on the basis of an informal agreement with the European Commission, with funds becoming available later in 2015.

LEPs – other responsibilities

It is useful to be aware of the responsibilities of LEPs outside of the EU funding. Although some may not seem to be immediately relevant to the voluntary sector, some, such as the Local Growth Deal can impact on areas such as public services delivery. Even where this is not the case, building a relationship with a LEP requires being able to put yourself in the shoes of board members and recognise they have other priorities which they might be juggling.

Local Growth Deals

Local Growth Deals are agreed between LEPs and government for the investment of at least £12 billion in local economies. The types of projects vary, but could include improving infrastructure, investing in innovative and new technologies and funding broadband. LEPs bid for the money by developing multi-year strategic economic plans which then determines the level of funding that they will be allocated and what projects it must be spent on.

The [first wave of Growth Deals were agreed in July 2014](#), and amounted to £6 billion worth of funding for local projects. [Research from the Centre for Cities shows that](#) most LEPs tended to focus their plans on transport, housing and skills, emphasising capital investment (e.g. building new teaching facilities). However, there are signs that some LEPs are starting to see their role in terms of broader social and economic impacts.

Case Study: Greater Manchester Growth and Reform Plan

As well as areas such as transport, housing and skills, the Greater Manchester Growth and Reform Plan also included priorities around the reform of public services. These consisted of scaling up work with troubled families and a major reform of health and social care provision. The proposed health and social care delivery model has been agreed with NHS partners and local authorities, and will include central resource centres providing a single point of contact for patients and promoting voluntary and community sector provision.

[See Greater Manchester's Growth and Reform Plan for further details.](#)

It is the government's intention that LEPs should have influence and control over skills provision in the Local Growth Deal. For instance, the government will require colleges and training organisations to explain to LEPs the details of their training provision and how this aligns with economic development priorities. [For more information see the SFA guidance, LEPs: increasing their influence on skills budgets.](#) The Growth Deal was expanded with a further £1 billion of investment in January 2015.

Growing Places Fund

In 2011, the government established the [£730m Growing Places Fund](#) to enable the development of local funds to address infrastructure constraints, promoting economic growth and the delivery of jobs and houses. LEPs are responsible for deciding which projects to support locally and for securing funding from other sources in order to maximise returns.

Enterprise Zones

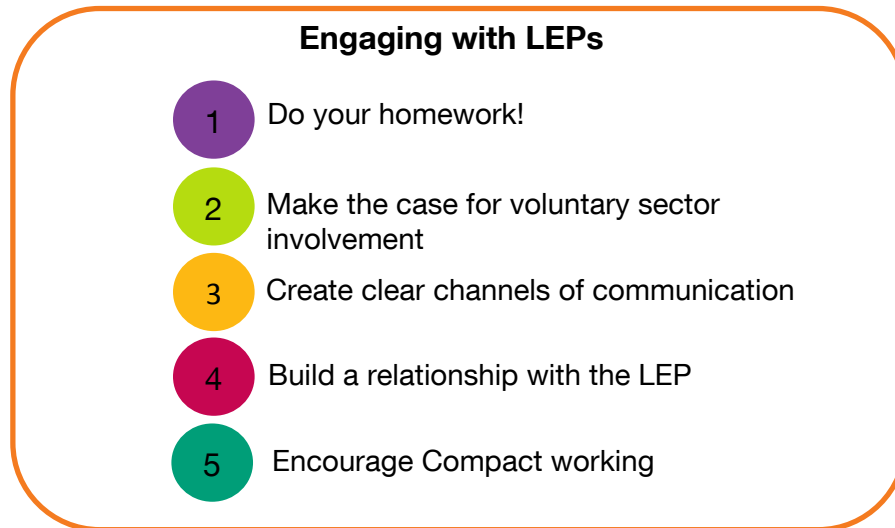
[Enterprise Zones](#) are specific geographic areas which offer tax, planning and other incentives for businesses to start up or expand. Enterprise Zones are hosted by LEPs, while the relevant LEP and local authority is entitled to keep all business rates growth generated within the Enterprise Zone. There are currently 24 Enterprise Zones in England.

Leveraging other funding

As private sector led bodies, LEPs are of course meant to be at the forefront of attracting private sector investment to their area. They are also responsible for identifying other sources of investment that can be harnessed for economic development, including match funding from other local partners, such as Housing Associations, universities and colleges, or unlocking surplus and redundant Public Sector Assets.

Engaging with local enterprise partnerships

In this section, we draw on research on how LEPs are operating in practice and examples of good partnership working.



1. Do your homework!

It is important to have a clear idea of what LEPs do and how the LEP in your area works. This information will give you a clearer idea of how the LEP actually operates, where the influence lies and who is already engaging with the LEP. Although the board will be responsible for the key decisions of the LEP, it is very likely that important discussions will also be held elsewhere, for instance in a sub-committee. The box below sets out some pieces of information about your LEP that you may want to collect.

The government has published a [full list and map](#) of local enterprise partnerships and enterprise zones as well as a [spreadsheet](#) showing local authority areas covered by local enterprise partnerships. Defra has also published [maps](#) showing the simple rural and urban areas of each LEP.

The LEP Network website is also useful, as it contains a [map with brief summaries](#), newsletter links and key contacts for each LEP. Each LEP will also have its own website. The government has collated links for the Local Growth Deals announced in [July 2014](#) and in [January 2015](#). Big Lottery has a [map of LEP areas](#) that are planning on working with it, while the government released in 2014 the [ERDF and ESF allocations for each LEP](#).

You can keep up to date on the latest LEP news by signing up for the [European Funding Network newsletter](#).

What do I need to know about my local LEP and funding available to it?

- ✓ The area which the LEP covers, and the local authorities and major cities within the area
- ✓ The size, economic make-up and rural/urban split of the LEP area
- ✓ The background of the people on its board and the identify of its chair
- ✓ The extent of voluntary sector involvement: whether there a voluntary sector representative on the board?
- ✓ Whether there are any sub-committees or advisory groups that are relevant to your work
- ✓ The number of staff working for the LEP and the individual most likely to be responsible for voluntary sector engagement
- ✓ The priorities set out in the LEPs ESIF strategy
- ✓ The identity of the voluntary sector representative on the ESIF Committee
- ✓ How much ESIF money the LEP has been notionally allocated and how much of this is ESF money
- ✓ Who the opt-in organisations in your area are, and in particular, whether the Big Lottery is acting as an opt-in organisation
- ✓ Whether Community Led Local Development is available in your area
- ✓ Whether Community Grants are available in your area
- ✓ The priorities set out in the LEPs Strategic Economic Plan
- ✓ The Local Growth Deal agreed between the LEP and government
- ✓ Other sources of funding the LEP has managed to secure or is bidding for
- ✓ Whether there are any Enterprise Zones in the LEP area
- ✓ Whether your local LEP works with neighbouring LEPs on any issues, and what these issues are

2. Make the case for voluntary sector involvement

[Research from the Centre for Local Economic Strategies](#) shows that LEPs tend to focus on economic issues (such as business start-ups), rather than wider factors such as labour market skills, social capital and community empowerment. In addition, the evolving nature of the LEPs' role has meant that it has not always been clear what relationships LEPs should have with civil society.

It is therefore not always obvious to LEPs why the voluntary sector is relevant. NAVCA's [2014 Chief Officers Survey](#) found that only a quarter of respondents felt that they were able to influence LEPs; compared to 73% for local authorities.

LEPs are in fact under an obligation to engage with the VCS under the terms of the ESIF Growth Programme. The [European Code of Conduct on Partnerships](#) and [BIS guidance on ESIF strategies](#) also reinforce the message that building meaningful strategic relationships with civil society organisation adds significant value. However, it is also important to be able to make a positive case for why the LEP should engage with the voluntary sector.

Five reasons why LEPs should work with the voluntary sector

- 1. Economic contribution:** The voluntary sector's GVA is estimated at £11.8 billion nationally for 2011/12, it employs around 800,000 people (2.7% of the overall UK workforce), while the value of voluntary activity is estimated at £23.9 billion ([NCVO Civil Society Almanac](#) and the Office of National Statistics).
- 2. Expertise:** by working with geographic or thematic communities voluntary organisations have existing working relationships with partners that LEPs may be interested in, and proven technical expertise in community led local development, community grants and social inclusion.
- 3. Innovation:** voluntary sector organisations can often identify problems and start experimenting with solutions more rapidly than the statutory or private sector.
- 4. Preventative services:** the sector excels in early intervention and holistic services that help people before they get too far away from the labour market.
- 5. Contact with underrepresented groups:** voluntary sector organisations reach people who are less likely to be heard by government, ensuring that policies take into account and address the needs of all sections of society. They also can help access the Big Lottery social inclusion match funding.

NCVO's European Funding Network has also developed a more detailed [business case for LEPs to engage with the voluntary sector](#) and a paper setting out the [role of civil society in the development of LEP Structural Funds Investment Plans](#)

It can be a useful exercise to draw up a local case for engagement based on data and evidence specific to your area – your local or regional infrastructure body is usually a good first port of call for such information. It can also be useful to show what the sector is not already doing, but could do if funded appropriately.

A related conversation is why the sector works best when it is provided with a mix of funding, which means grants as well as contracts. For business led organisations such as LEPs, the value of grants may not always be obvious. The box below sets out some of the advantages for the LEP of using grants.

Case study: Bristol BME Voice

Bristol BME voice works across public agencies to promote the inclusion of black and minority ethnic (BME) people and communities in Bristol's public agencies. One of its activities has been to support the establishment of the [BME Diversity project group](#) by the West of England LEP. The group has encouraged the LEP to demonstrate a greater commitment to promoting equalities in its Strategic Plan and to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment on its strategy. It is also supporting the LEP to run equalities training for its staff and partners.

[Bristol BME Voice was shortlisted in the Advancing Equality category in the 2014 Compact Awards.](#)

Why use grants?

- 1. Solutions orientated:** Grants give voluntary organisations to pursue the solutions which work best rather than being derailed by meeting targets.
- 2. Build capacity:** Grants can support the development and capacity of the local infrastructure organisations, allowing the sector to co-ordinate in engaging with the LEP.
- 3. Promote small charities:** Smaller charities make things happen for local people but often do not have the resources or expertise to negotiate complicated contracts – small grants allow them to thrive.
- 4. Proportionate funding:** While contracts can be a useful tool in providing incentives and measuring impact, the costs of bidding, negotiating and administering can be disproportionate to the value of what is actually provided – meaning less waste for the LEP.

Case Study: New Anglia LEP's Community Challenge Fund

New Anglia LEP set up a £160,000 Community Challenge Fund to support projects targeting the most disadvantaged people in Norfolk and Suffolk. The eight projects, which each received £20,000 of funding, were selected by New Anglia LEP working in partnership with Norfolk Community Foundation and Suffolk Community Foundation. The long-term unemployed and those suffering from mental ill health, disabilities or homelessness are the focus of the projects, which range from bike mechanic workshops and forest schools to stage shows, sports coaching and gardening.

[You can read more about the Community Challenge Fund on the New Anglia LEP website.](#)

3. Build a relationship with the LEP

[NCVO and Regional Voices research](#) published in March 2014 showed that 26% of the 39 LEPs are engaging very well with the sector, 53% have some level of engagement and 21% have very limited or no engagement at all. The first part of engaging with the LEP is building a profile with them. The box below sets out some questions you might want to consider as part of this process.

How do I build my profile with the LEP?

- ✓ What are your objectives in engaging with the LEP?
- ✓ LEPs are interested in the local economy and jobs market – what unique local knowledge can you bring to feed into the agenda?
- ✓ Who do you already know who feeds into the work of the LEP?
- ✓ Are there any members whose background indicates that they might be sympathetic to your cause?
- ✓ Who has the discussions and makes the decisions that you care about?
Remember that the important meetings might be on a sub-committee rather than on the board itself?
- ✓ What grants are available that you could bid for?
- ✓ What LEP events could you attend?
- ✓ Can you provide opportunities for LEP members to speak about their priorities or things that matter to them?
- ✓ Are you able to be reactionary and make the most of relevant news events as they come up?

You then need to think about how to develop the relationship in order to create more sustainable and permanent forms of engagement. All ESIF Committees will have voluntary sector representatives, but there will also probably be other relationships that you should be aware of. Mapping these forms of engagement is a useful exercise, as it helps you decide where the open doors are what new routes of engagement you might want to consider. Some of these forms of engagement are set out in the diagram below.

If the LEP is to understand the diversity and strengths of the sector, the sector needs to be able to present a unified and credible front. It is particularly important that any voluntary sector representative has the attributes that make them appropriate for the job – in particular, serious thought should go into how they are selected and the methods they use to communicate with the rest of the sector. A transparent selection, or better yet, election process, and clear lines of communication minimises the potential for conflict later on.



Case study: Marches Social Inclusion Mini Group

A number of voluntary sector support organisations came together to form the Marches Social Inclusion Mini Group and secure voluntary sector engagement with the Marches LEP.

Prompted by a need to feed into the ESIF Strategy, the group designed and delivered a series of engagement events and research projects to cover the LEP's area (three local authority areas). The group brought together organisations that had never worked together due to administrative boundaries and distance, developed a productive relationship with the LEP and helped ensure that the ESIF strategy was based on local need.

[The Marches Social Inclusion Mini Group was shortlisted in the Engagement category for the 2014 Compact Awards.](#)

Case study: VCSE representation on D2N2 board

The D2N2 LEP Board worked with the regional infrastructure body One East Midlands to support recruitment for the VCSE board member, including producing a role description and organising an open and transparent recruitment process. Following interviews of shortlisted candidates, One East Midlands and a panel of VCSE representatives made recommendation to D2N2 about the best suited candidates. D2N2 then selected Rob Crowder from Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire to be the VCSE board member. Rob has a remit to input VCSE views/feedback and provide VCSE intelligence to feed into the ESIF Plan and Strategic Economic Plan. He also has an additional remit to look at rural issues.

[You can find out more about VCSE representation on the D2N2 Board here.](#)

4. Show impact and build capacity

The important point is to show that you are solving a problem that the LEP cares about. The box below provides some questions to consider when making your case.

Impact and solutions

- ✓ What is your “hard” business case and what are the wider social and economic factors which impact on your work?
- ✓ How does the issue you care about fit in with the priorities and strategy already identified in the ESIF plan and Strategic Economic Plan?
- ✓ Who are the groups of people that you could help connect the LEP with?
- ✓ Have you got evidence or could you collect evidence which feed into the LEP’s decision making process?
- ✓ Could you found or contribute to a special interest group which addresses a particular relationship?
- ✓ Have you in place robust evaluation processes which demonstrate that you are delivering real social value and value for money?

Case study: Heart of the South West LEP social inclusion planning

The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership commissioned South West Forum to produce a report about social inclusion. South West Forum held consultation events in Somerset, Exeter and Plymouth and used the social inclusion template developed by One East Midlands and Regional Voices to aid discussions about social inclusion priorities and collect local sector intelligence. The report concluded that there is commitment among the sector to identify potential collaboration models.

Find out more about the [Heart of the South West LEP's social inclusion planning](#).

The 2014-2020 EU funding is designed to be more accessible for voluntary organisations than previous rounds of funding, which is particularly the case with the Big Lottery's participation as an opt-in organisation. In addition, there are a number of examples of LEPs recognising the value of the sector by providing smaller grants.

However, EU funding is not immune from the government enthusiasm for larger contracts, and voluntary sector organisations can expect that even the Big Lottery match funded social inclusion projects will be large blocks of money. The Big Lottery is funding programme development in each LEP area where it is acting as an opt-in organisation and has [published a list](#) of grant holders, along with how much they have been awarded and the LEPs in which they are working. The programme development will fund support for voluntary organisations looking to access European funding and is well worth looking into.

5. Encourage Compact working

The national Compact and local Compacts

[The Compact](#) is the agreement between government and the voluntary sector in England. It sets out key principles which establish a way of working that improves their relationship, in order to achieve common goals for the benefit of communities and citizens in England. The latest version of the Compact was produced in 2010, and all central government departments have signed up to it.

The national presence of the Compact means that it has a strong identity and widespread buy-in. This is combined with the flexibility of local Compacts which are often based on the national Compact but which are tailored to reflect the needs of each community. [Compact Voice's map of local Compacts](#) will help you find your local Compact, and who its main point of contact is.

Using Compact principles

The national Compact is made up of five key principles.

Compact principles

- 1 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 change
- 5 A fair and equal society

Each principle is sub-divided into a number of undertakings made by government and / or the voluntary sector. These undertakings are more than abstract concepts – they are concrete steps which can help ensure that the voluntary sector is not an optional extra, but a co-producer and provider. Using the national Compact as an example, the table below shows how undertakings within Compacts can be used by the voluntary sector to push for real change.

	Undertaking	Application to LEP
1.4	Ensure greater transparency by making data and information more accessible	Encourage the LEP to hold more of their work in public, to tweet and to live stream meetings
2.2	Consider the social impact that may result from policy and programme development	Encourage the LEP to look beyond its core economic functions and consider the interplay of economic and social factors
3.2	Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource civil society organisations	Work with the LEP to design a grant funding programme for small voluntary organisations and social enterprises
5.3	Take practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups	Work with the LEP to assess the equalities implications of its policies and programmes

Embedding partnership working

Many LEPs will not have heard of the Compact, while many voluntary organisations will not necessarily consider the Compact when engaging with the LEPs. Around 8% of respondents to the [2014 Compact Survey](#) said their LEP was signed up to their local Compact so there is still work to do! However, it is worth bearing in mind that in some places, local bodies will have entered into a partnership agreement which won't be called a Compact. This is completely valid - the most important thing is that partners can find language and a system which works for them.

How can I embed the principles of good partnership working?

- Encourage explicit reference to the Compact principles in your agreements and LEP documents.
- Establish routes of communication between the LEP and the local Compact / voluntary sector partnership group.
- Encourage the LEP to sign up to the local Compact if they are not already

[Talk to Compact Voice!](#) We provide local support to help build and maintain sustainable relationships.

Case study: Memorandum of Understanding in Hampshire / Surrey area

The Enterprise M3 LEP area stretches from the hinterland of London to the New Forest covering mid to north Hampshire and South West Surrey. The LEP entered into a memorandum of understanding with Community Action Hampshire and Surrey Community Action. The aim of the MoU is to recognise the economic contribution of the not for profit sector, ensure that the business needs to social enterprises and social entrepreneurs are taken into consideration, improve access for the not for profit sector to government opportunities and facilitate partnership working.

[Find out more on Enterprise M3's website.](#)

Finally, good partnership working between voluntary organisations can be as crucial as good partnership working between the voluntary sector and the public sector. While competition between voluntary sector organisations can make this more difficult, the sector can have more influence when it presents a co-ordinated front.

About Compact Voice

Compact Voice works to promote the Compact and ensure that strong, effective partnerships are at the heart of all relationships between the voluntary sector and government locally and nationally. We provide training, support, advice and information

about better partnership working to both sectors, represent the interests of the voluntary sector to government, and champion the principles of the Compact.

About NCVO

Established in 1919, NCVO represents over 11,000 organisations, from large ‘household name’ charities to small voluntary and community groups involved in the local level. NCVO champions voluntary action and has a vision of a society where we can all make a difference to the causes that we believe in. A vibrant voluntary and community sector deserves a strong voice and the best support. NCVO works to provide that support and voice.

Selected further resources

- This paper is one of a [series of briefings](#) on engaging with ‘new’ commissioners, including Health and Well-being Boards, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).
- Compact Voice has also produced a short guide [Working with Local Enterprise Partnerships: A guide for voluntary organisations](#).
- [NCVO’s European Funding Network](#) are experts on EU funding and support civil society organisations to access EU funds, and provide newsletters covering the latest news and funding opportunities. See in particular the [Final Evaluation Report on LEP engagement with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector](#) which gives a good snapshot of where engagement is and what needs to be done going forward.
- The government has published a guide to the [UK plans for the European Social Fund 2014 to 2020](#).
- LEPs were required to set out their strategic priorities in their ESIF strategies, links to which are available on [NCVO’s Funding Network website](#).
- The European Commission has produced a [comprehensive guide](#) for beneficiaries of ESIF and related EU instruments.
- The [NCVO Civil Society Almanac](#) has lots of useful stats and information on the voluntary sector in the UK.
- The [Compact Voice website](#) has a wide range of useful information on partnership working in England including case studies, briefings and the results of the [2014 Compact Survey](#).