

7 July 2010

Dear Chief Executive,

I am writing to you as Chair of Compact Voice, which represents Civil Society organisations on the Compact. The Compact is the long-standing agreement about how public bodies and the sector will work in partnership together to ensure better outcomes for communities and citizens. The Prime Minister recently stated his commitment to it in his speech which launched the 'Big Society' agenda.

It is widely acknowledged that the impending public sector spending cuts will have a significant impact on services, projects and community initiatives. We understand the need for such cuts and that difficult decisions need to be made. This is why we held an urgent meeting with representatives at the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) to highlight the need for - and benefit of - approaching cuts to the sector in a Compact-compliant way. CLG recognised the difficult decisions that local authorities will need to make on their spending priorities, and the potential for this to place a strain on relationships with voluntary sector partners.

The Compact sets out a number of commitments for public bodies and the voluntary and community sector on how they will work together. In addition to the national Compact, there are also regional and local Compacts which set out agreements on better partnership working between local public bodies and voluntary and community organisations. Local Compacts are unique to the areas they serve and have been developed to recognise the distinct make-up and needs in an area. Local Authorities have signed up to their Local Compacts, creating a legitimate expectation that they will follow the commitments within them.

It has been shown repeatedly that these commitments are vital to the beneficiaries of services. By following them it reduces the negative impact on communities and citizens and ensures that difficult choices are made in the best way possible – indeed, this is why

government signed up to them and both the Prime Minister and Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society, endorse them.

During our meeting, CLG confirmed that they remain committed to the Compact, and have pledged to work with us, the Office for Civil Society and the LGA to facilitate discussion and share good practice between local authorities to support the continued application of its principles through these difficult times. I would encourage you and your staff to do the same. Proper engagement on these commitments, with the government and civil society working together in partnership, can go a long way to minimising potentially negative consequences in your community.

Compact Voice has set up a website containing useful information and advice about the vital relevance of the Compact during these spending cuts. It is available online at [www.compactvoice.org.uk/cuts](http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/cuts). We are also happy to advise or meet with you or your officials to discuss these or other matters further.

Kind regards,

Simon Blake

Chair, Compact Voice



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