Section 3
Communicating the Compact to different partners
Section 3
Communicating the Compact to different partners

In this section:
- Publicity and awareness raising
- Key audiences
- Key Compact messages and how to communicate the benefits of Compact working to different audiences
- Tailored ways to embed the Compact

Clear communication is vital for motivating people to integrate Compact principles and commitments into their partnerships. Developing a communications strategy is recommended.

Three key ways to communicate the Compact are:
- Giving examples of how your Compact is used and what it has achieved
- Illustrating what the Compact could achieve, for example sharing what has worked in other areas
- Showing its relevance to different partners in a tailored way

Tips:
- Be a good listener – treat opposition as legitimate
- Log new questions and share with others involved in your local Compact and Compact Voice
- Use prepared answers

Publicity and awareness raising can take many forms:
- Leaflets and guides. Compact Voice can provide these, or they can be developed locally
- Newsletters
- Email groups
- Social networking
- Websites
- Phone calls
- One-to-one and group meetings about the Compact
- Integrating the Compact into the agenda of other meetings such as partnership and trustee boards, networks and forums (which develop understanding of how the Compact can link to other policies, especially area-wide or national policy)
- Referencing or specifying ‘following Compact principles’ in job descriptions and grants and commissioning criteria
- Integrating information about the Compact into induction processes and training
- Organising local Compact awards and other Compact events and training, or organising workshops or info sessions at other relevant events – refer also to the ‘Events’ section of this guide

Key audiences:
- Directors and assistant directors, middle managers and operational staff in statutory bodies
- Small volunteer-led community groups
- Voluntary and community sector staff, trustees and volunteers
- Elected members (Councillors)
Key Compact messages and how to communicate the benefits of Compact working to different audiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Points to communicate</th>
<th>Quotes and examples</th>
<th>Further resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Commissioning       | The Compact helps commissioners do their job better. It is not an extra hurdle. Following Compact principles helps make the commissioning process clear, reduce ambiguity and create shared expectations. The Compact helps you get what you want.  
  
  The Commissioning cycle is the process of assessing local need, working out how best to address this, sourcing or procuring services and monitoring and reviewing if the service meets agreed outcomes and needs. Community and voluntary sector organisations often have good solutions to designing and delivering local services, which should be explored, and they often have close contact with service users. They can do a lot to help make consultation and needs analysis more successful. | “Compacts are about much more than just a measure with which one sector can reprimand another if relationships break down. They are about setting out the foundations on which close and collaborative partnerships can be developed which put the community, not sectors, at the centre of service design and delivery.”  
  
  Daniel Fluskey, Compact Advocacy Officer                                                                 | See the NOVO Website: www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy                                                                                                                                  |
| Compliance          | The Compact has power and can be used to hold public sector bodies to account.  
  
  Compact commitments have to be met (or a very good reason needs to be formally given for not doing so). Councils are accountable to the Local Government Ombudsman.  
  
  The Compact is supported by public law. Following the Compact reduces the risk of a public law challenge.  
  
  The Local Government Ombudsman has the power to investigate reported local Compact breaches. | “The return on our investment has been value for money. Through the Compact budget we provided some funding for the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide advice for people threatened with mortgage repossession. That’s helped prevent people from losing their homes.”  
  
  Dave Webb - Head of Revenues and Housing, Stratford on Avon Council                                                                 | See the research report ‘Economic and Social Benefits of Applying Compact Commitments’, which can be downloaded from the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk                                                                 |
| Social value for investment | The Compact helps ensure you get the maximum social value for investment - there is a strong business case for working according to Compact principles.  
  
  A Compact way of working - being open about funding and strategy across sectors focused on shared outcomes - helps to maximise the social value which can be gained from limited resources. | “Another example is our social transport scheme - a multi-agency partnership. We use volunteer drivers, and voluntary sector staff take the bookings. It’s benefitting some of the most vulnerable residents – older and disabled people. The VCS are a key part of the success.”  
  
  Dave Webb - Head of Revenues and Housing, Stratford on Avon Council                                                                 | See the research report ‘How the Compact Applies to Participatory Budgeting: an Analysis’, which can be downloaded from the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk                                                                 |
Partnerships

Working together to assess need and plan services ensures that gaps are addressed and that best practice is followed. This can help deliver services and policies which benefit communities.

Local Compacts often include commitments on assessing implications of proposals for the community sector and typically commit partners to working together on identifying gaps, avoiding duplication, using resources effectively and providing better services.

The Compact is about working in partnership to improve services for local communities. The voluntary and community sector can help get opinions of different communities, get messages to the right audience and feed back service users’ experience.

Compact principles and commitments provide a ready-made, straightforward, and easy to follow framework for cross-sector partnerships.

Involvement

Being involved in Compact related events and meetings is a way of connecting with other sectors – or other parts of your own sector. It’s a way in to what goes on locally to information, insight, resources, local communities and networks.

Involvement with the Compact can help forge links with others who want to work with the same members of the public.

Winning or organising Compact awards makes organisations and partnerships look good as well as promoting actions and activities.

Cuts

Good relations with the voluntary and community sector can bring tangible benefits to the statutory sector. A Compact way of working when times are tough can leave a legacy that continues to pay dividends long after testing economic conditions pass.

Ensuring that any cuts are made in a Compact compliant way (for example giving three months’ notice) makes the process straightforward and protects against challenge.

Working with community groups to assess the potential impact of cuts can significantly help lessen the impact on the public.

Infrastructure organisations

The Compact was developed specifically to support community groups and infrastructure organisations.

Tip: Point out exactly where your Compact mentions community groups / infrastructure.

Tip: Use examples of how it relates to each role’s work.

Quotes and examples

“Engaging and involving the voluntary and community sector in designing services from the earliest possible point recognises that such groups often have significant understanding and connection with communities.”

Adam Pickering - Engagement Officer, Compact Voice

“Using the Compact prevented unlawful reductions to VCS organisations last year – in particular funding to approximately 13 BME day centres has been protected. The issue certainly engaged a section of the VCS that previously were not active under our local Compact. Hopefully bringing the results of our impact assessment to the eyes of elected members will increase recognition of the vital role played by these organisations.”

Paul Tolley - Chief Executive, Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action

Further resources

See the publication ‘Local Compacts at Work’ available from the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk

See the research report ‘Working Better Together: Implementation guide for community groups and local public bodies’, available in the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk

For information tailored to Black and Minority Ethnic organisations, see Voice4Change England’s website, which has a page called ‘The Compact and You’: www.voice4change-england.co.uk

See the publication ‘Local Compacts at Work’ available from the resources section of www.compactvoice.org.uk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Points to communicate</th>
<th>Quotes and examples</th>
<th>Further resources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary and community groups</td>
<td>The national Compact emphasises the importance of grants and help in kind. “3.2: Consider a wide range of ways to fund or resource Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including grants, contracts, loan finance, use of premises and so on. Work to remove barriers that may prevent CSOs accessing government funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.”</td>
<td>“We’ve used our Compact to develop new grants schemes, and it was successfully invoked to obtain a contract extension and a budget line for a community based project.” Sarah Prior – Compact Officer, Compact for Devon</td>
<td>See the report ‘Working Better Together: Implementation guide for community groups and local public bodies’, available in the resources section of <a href="http://www.compactvoice.org.uk">www.compactvoice.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Groups</td>
<td>The Compact is a “way in” for more constructive dealings with the Council, police, NHS or other services. If community groups feel they get sidelined or only asked for opinions on particular issues, the Compact could be a way of becoming more of a partner. Compact events and meetings are a good opportunity to meet and network with people from other sectors.</td>
<td>“In terms of police, fire and NHS, I think they probably already know that the local community is very important to their activities so the Compact is a way of connecting with them, ‘selling’ their services, making friends, getting to know the community they serve and want to be on the right side of.” Ingela Andersson – Compact Advocacy, NCVO</td>
<td>See the report ‘Working Better Together: Implementation guide for community groups and local public bodies’, available in the resources section of <a href="http://www.compactvoice.org.uk">www.compactvoice.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CVS’ Statutory Bodies, especially those involved in conducting consultations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council and councillors</td>
<td>The Compact is non-party political. The three major political parties have expressed their support for the Compact, and many consider one of its strengths to be its non-political nature.</td>
<td>‘Elected members fit in three categories. They are active citizens, they are community focussed like small groups are, and they are also statutory sector.’ Saffi Price – Compact Development Worker, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council and councillors</td>
<td>The Compact can help provide greater accountability for what is happening within the community by strengthening the links between the voluntary sector and elected members. Better dialogue between elected members and representatives from the voluntary and community sector not only helps to positively influence local policies, but should also be seen as a democratic necessity. <strong>Tip:</strong> Make sure you keep elected members informed. They can also help spread the message to community groups during visits and publicity work. <strong>Tip:</strong> Councillors should be involved in Compact development, kept regularly briefed (especially newly elected members) and each main party group should be offered a seat on the Compact Group. Avoid your Compact being too closely aligned with any one political party or personality.</td>
<td>Having member support and high level senior management support in the county has been helpful. The leader is very supportive of the Compact and we co-plan with the voluntary sector a lot. There is also a cabinet member with responsibility for the voluntary sector.’ Monica Wambu, Surrey County Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Health services

The straightforward guidance and ‘ground rules’ of the Compact will help Commissioning boards engage with community groups in a meaningful and structured way that is likely to improve health outcomes because commissioning is based on need.

A Compact way of working results in better policies and engagement with patients and stakeholders. The Compact can help Health Services to be flexible, responsive, and based around the patient. Community groups can address health inequalities by sharing their knowledge of the communities they represent and are trusted by, and can work with you to improve techniques for getting health messages across. Working with Community groups can help make efficiency savings.

The Compact can help the relationship with the wider organisations that help a hospital run, especially services run by volunteers. If you treat them well you can engage them and get a better hospital.

Local Compact partnership meetings and events provide a forum that can help develop practical ways of working together, such as health groups having sessions at surgeries or neighbourhood groups giving key messages to their community, such as keeping hospital appointments.

**Tip:** Two parts of the NHS have particular relevance to the Compact: service provision and commissioning. Each will have a different relationship with the community and voluntary sector and will use different elements of the Compact at different times.

---

### Police

Police already work closely with charities such as Neighbourhood Watch and Victim Support, but may not be aware of the benefits of working with small local community groups.

Working with community groups helps police identify their concerns and the priorities of local communities and to solve the problems that matter to them. It can also help police to gain insight into how to address negative perceptions of the police. The Compact is the structure that supports these relationships.

The National Policing Improvement Agency (NPA) Citizen Focus and Neighbourhood Policing Programme Team aim to increase engagement with the public and provide guidance on how police can do this in partnership with community groups. They advocate the use of the Compact, calling it an ‘informal but legitimate tool’.

**Tip:** Police may be pro-partnership but not necessarily relate it to a good Compact. Show how Compact partnerships have addressed police priorities such as anti-social behaviour, and preventing domestic violence and hate crime.
Community groups have a strong role to play in the prevention of fires and accidents, for example by helping with home fire safety checks for people with little or no English.

In Haringey, for example, a local community group took the ‘middle ground’ between the fire service and the Somali community. They helped give the community a better understanding of what they can do in their homes to keep them safe from fire.

Housing associations

Housing associations are usually keen to support Tenants and Residents Associations (TRAs) who advocate for their local neighbourhood, and work to make improvements. Using Compact principles around community involvement can help develop TRAs and neighbourhood-based initiatives by training TRA members or housing officers on how to run a properly constituted TRA, how to raise funds or even how to put on community events. The local CVS will often run training like this.

Tip: Housing associations may also be interested in how Compact partnerships have addressed anti-social behaviour, see the ‘Working together to tackle shared issues’ example at the end of this section, and the Islington example in the events section.

Tip: Housing providers often have documents called ‘tenant participation Compacts.’ Make it clear that these are not what you mean by your Local Compact.

Tip: Larger housing associations are considered statutory because unlike private landlords they manage large amounts of public money.

Private sector

Local private sector businesses are in many ways indistinguishable from charities and community groups in providing employment, training and advice and other local benefits. They may also have a strong sense of corporate social responsibility and want to develop partnerships with charities.

The Compact may help small businesses to develop local contracts and give insight into the statutory sector. The national Compact advocates equal treatment across sectors when tendering for contracts.

Tip: Invite businesses to events, and focus some workshops on business issues rather than simply community and voluntary sector issues.

Tip: The local chamber of commerce can advise on the different ways of relating to businesses, such as communicating successfully.

Tip: Point out the benefits but emphasise that the Compact is not a legal requirement.

Larger private sector businesses, however, may need to be reminded in writing that if they are receiving public money / distributing funds on the government’s behalf they must adhere to commitments in the national Compact and apply the Compact when distributing European Union funding. Regarding subcontracting – Compact principles are written into the contracts of some government departments.
Tailored ways to embed the Compact

Example: Haringey CVS (HAVCO)’s Compact Implementation Toolkit

“A lot of issues with the Compact are to do with communications. Sometimes the problem with the Compact is accessibility. It’s a framework, but understanding how you implement the framework is a different story.”
Darren Thomas, Compact Project Officer
HAVCO

HAVCO felt that community groups may not fully understand the Compact even though they might be working in Compact compliant ways. In response they developed a Compact toolkit for the voluntary and community sector. The toolkit:

- Provides a clear method for implementing Compact principles
- Brings the Compact alive by showing practical examples of what each of the principles means
- Allows organisations to internally assess and improve their ways of working

The toolkit sits alongside a statutory sector toolkit that was used to improve council policies. Developing the toolkit took a couple of months.

Feedback was provided by the Compact Implementation Group, which included a wide range of local advocates and representatives.

Darren Thomas, Compact Officer, said the Compact is part of an approach which helps to modernise public services:

‘The toolkit helps to not only improve partnership working but also voluntary and community organisations ability to deliver public services in partnership. Ultimately local citizens are the ones to benefit. Working together in this way can enhance lives, reduce inequality, and improve chances. It’s basically about meeting local need and providing value for money.’

Example: Solihull Compact communications strategy

Sixteen months after launching their refreshed Compact, a clear trend had emerged amongst Solihull organisations: those who were involved in developing the Compact had stayed interested and seen the benefits. But small organisations that were farthest away from the Compact design process had remained unaware and largely uninvolved.

Faisal Hussain, Head of Community and Voluntary Relations at Solihull Council, sees Compact awareness as akin to ‘ripples emanating from the centre. In other words, the Compact message gets weaker as it is passed along and if people don’t know about something, or how it applies to them, then they can’t or won’t use it. Showing what it can achieve for each organisation is key to getting the core messages of the Compact across to a wide audience.’

Attempts to promote the Compact were being made but only at an organisational level. Rather than every organisation developing a separate strategy the implementation group created a unified strategy with objectives for each organisation to report against every quarter. The Communications Strategy was launched and greater awareness of Compact followed.
Some young people in the Streetley area of Walsall were engaging in antisocial behaviour, damaging property in the local park and pavilion. This behaviour included spraying graffiti, displaying hostility towards local residents and engaging in under-age drinking. The Local Policing Unit, Community Cohesion Department and West Midlands Neighbourhood Watch County Association (a registered charity) used their local Compact to take a unified approach to the problem, agreeing to pool their resources and work more closely together. They talked with the young people and provided them with alternative activities, got local fire and rescue and youth services involved, and also the NHS, who were working towards tackling obesity and teenage pregnancy.

This proactive approach resulted in young people becoming involved in different projects, particularly participating in barbecues and games in the park, and allowed young and older people to talk about the problems they had encountered in the park, which made the teenagers aware of how they were being antisocial. Sergeant Chris Sprague from Walsall Local Policing Unit stated that Anti-Social Behaviour reports had been slashed by 50 percent since the introduction of the ‘barbecue in the park’ initiative.

The good work continues in the area where the partnerships are setting up a gym for young people. PC Gary Hall from the Community Cohesion Team said: “This is a fantastic way of showing that partnerships working together can be extremely beneficial to the community and it was a pleasure for me to bring the partners together to succeed in this venture.”

How Compact Voice can help:

We can
- Provide examples and case studies relevant to different audiences
- Provide information for newsletters and press releases
- Provide leaflets and other resources
- Attend key meetings in your area.