

PRESS RELEASE
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Compact Voice welcomes the NAO report into Central Government's Implementation of the National Compact

Today the National Audit Office (NAO) has published the findings from their inquiry into how government departments are implementing the Compact in their work.

The inquiry - announced as part of the accountability and transparency measures which accompanied the renewed Compact in 2010 - highlights some key issues and makes a number of recommendations to improve departmental activities.

Simon Blake OBE, chair of Compact Voice, said:

“We are delighted that the Compact is supported by government departments and that the NAO have found good examples of it being applied. However the report also identifies gaps that must be addressed. We expect the Government to implement the recommendations in full and we will be pressing the Minister on this.

In particular the report highlights that there needs to be more visible leadership on the Compact both in OCS and across Whitehall. This echoes the findings of our 2011 annual survey and remains the most important issue.

We will also expect government departments to undertake work to identify the degree of their Compact compliance, as it is important that government departments know whether they are successfully implementing the Compact.”

The report's findings also include:

- The Compact is supported by government departments and there are good examples of it being applied
- There is little evidence that the implementation of the Compact in central government is fundamentally flawed
- Leadership is not always visible in government departments, with recommendations that more needs to be done to increase “visible promotion and oversight ... by senior department officials”.
- 40% of consultations issued since the renewed Compact was launched had shorter than 12 week time periods.
- There are concerns with the lack of clarity about the Office for Civil Society's role regarding the Compact, with the lack of a full time staff member dedicated to it.

The report sets out a number of recommendations to address concerns. The report will be available from the NAO's website (<http://www.nao.org.uk/publications.aspx>) from Monday 9 January 2012.

Note to Editors:

- Compact Voice aims to provide support, advice, training and information about better partnership working to both sectors both nationally and locally, representing the voluntary and community sector's interests and views to government, and championing the Compact.
- Compact Voice represents the voluntary and community sector on the Compact. We are co-signatories on the national Compact, and negotiated its content on behalf of the sector, based on its views. We have a membership of 2500 and our board contains all the main infrastructure organisations in the voluntary and community sector as well as others. Our board is comprised of representatives from: Acevo, Action for Children, Black Training and Enterprise Group, British Red Cross, Brook, Equality and Diversity Forum, NCVO, Navca, Voice4Change England and Volunteering England.
- The Compact is the agreement between government and the voluntary and community sector (referred to collectively within the text of the Compact as civil society organisations) which sets out key principles and establishes a way of working that improves their relationship for mutual advantage.
- As well as the national Compact, most areas in England also have a local Compact, which interprets the principles set out in the Compact to reflect local need. As well as Local Authorities, many other public bodies have signed up to their local Compacts including police, fire and health organisations.

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