

# **DSP Partnership Board**

## **19<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

### **Agenda item 6: The Compact for Devon**

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1. Reaffirms its support for the Compact for Devon and formally 'signs up' to it.**
- 2. Nominates 2 people to act as its representatives on the Compact Hub Group – one from the statutory sector and one from the voluntary and community sector.**
- 3. Requires its representatives to report periodically on progress of implementing the Compact**

#### **1. Summary**

This report recommends the DSP's endorsement and support for the Compact for Devon. It places the Compact in the context of the Local Area Agreement, the Devon Community Strategy and national policy drivers. The Compact and its codes of practice will strengthen and develop the relationship between statutory sector partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Devon. This report invites the DSP to sign up to the Compact and to nominate representatives to serve on the Compact Hub group

#### **2. Background**

The national Compact between central government and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) seeks to improve their relationship for mutual benefit, and for the benefit of the communities they both serve. It sets out a range of high level commitments and shared objectives which are underpinned by codes of practice. The codes of practice cover consultation, funding, volunteering, black and minority ethnic groups and community groups.

Local authorities, local NHS organisations and other public sector bodies are expected to develop and implement local Compacts, with the same overall objectives for implementation at local authority level.

In Devon, a previous Compact was published in 1999, with the title 'Working Together for Devon'. With the passage of time, this document needed to be reviewed and redrafted. This was been accomplished in 2005 by a group called the Devon Compact Hub and the Compact was published in July of that year. The membership of the Hub comprises statutory and VCS representatives nominated by each of the 9 Local Strategic Partnerships in Devon, together with representation from the County Council's Adult and Community Services Directorate and the County Council's Chief Executive's Directorate.

During the last year three codes of practice have been produced by the Compact Hub covering Volunteering, Equality, and Funding and Procurement. Three more are in the process of being developed: Community Groups, Partnership Working and Consultation & Involvement. These Codes of Practice give very practical guidance on implementing the Compact.

Copies of the Compact and all associated documents can be found at [www.dacvs.org.uk](http://www.dacvs.org.uk) . Paper copies will also be available at the Partnership Board meeting. At Appendix 1 there is the latest Devon Compact Update, together with a document – ‘10 things you need to know about the Compact’ – which can be adapted for use within any statutory sector organisation.

### **3. National and Local Policy Context**

In 2001 the Government held a cross cutting review of the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in service delivery. The Government has increasingly taken the view that a strong VCS can play an increasing role in service planning and provision, but that some reforms are necessary in enabling the sector to increase its effectiveness and capacity. The Compact is part of that process. Alongside other developments, the Home Office launched a funding programme in 2004 called ‘Change Up’, whose aim is to modernise the infrastructure support available to front line VCS organisations through Councils for Voluntary Service and similar bodies.

In Devon a consortium of VCS infrastructure bodies has been formed, which includes all Councils for Voluntary Service, the Community Council for Devon and other, specialist, umbrella organisations. This group has received funding from the Change Up initiative, initially for one year, to increase local capacity. This has been superseded by a new programme called ‘Capacitybuilders’. Activities include implementation of the Compact, work force development within the VCS, performance improvement, increasing volunteering, ICT development and work to improve support for BME organisations.

Devon’s current Local Area Agreement also picks up these issues which cut across all the LAA themes in that the voluntary and community sector are crucial partners in assisting with the delivery of a wide range of outcomes. Partners have committed themselves to supporting “A thriving and vibrant Voluntary and Community Sector in Devon”. The delivery plan includes supporting the Devon Consortium to build on its work through the Capacity builders programme and implementation of the spirit and practice which is enshrined in the Compact.

### **4. Action Required**

The DSP is invited to endorse and sign up to the Compact for Devon and to assist in promoting it across their organisations.

The DSP has never formally appointed representatives. With a restructured Partnership Board, there is now the opportunity to do so. The Hub is seeking one representative from the statutory sector and one from the voluntary and community sector. These individuals need not be current members of the Board but should be required to report back periodically. Until now, the officer within Devon County Council who is responsible for corporate liaison with the VCS has effectively been carrying out that role for the DSP as well as the Council. Sue Craythorne is willing to continue to carrying out that role if the Board wishes. As far as a VCS representative is concerned, the Partnership Board may wish to ask the Devon Consortium to nominate a representative.

### **6. Equality Considerations**

The Compact makes direct reference to the importance of both statutory and VCS organisations being committed to valuing diversity and seeking to engage people and groups who are

potentially socially excluded by virtue of their race, age, disability or other factors. Many VCS organisations in Devon are dedicated to meeting the needs of such people. Improved engagement with the VCS will assist statutory partners to ensure that their own diversity and social inclusion objectives are met.

## **7. Sustainability Considerations**

Many VCS organisations struggle to remain viable due to difficulties in obtaining funding. These include many of our larger, countywide organisations. The Compact for Devon, through a code of practice on funding, together with a partnership approach to funding key organisations by the statutory sector via the Local Area Agreement, should help to ensure that key organisations have improved access to sustainable core funding.

The LAA gives us the opportunity to work with partners to bring more consistency and stability to funding arrangements for the VCS infrastructure organisations. This work will continue. It is hoped to be able to do further work with the Devon PCT and District Councils to support a longer term partnership approach.

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**31<sup>st</sup> August 2007**

**Compact for Devon Update August / September 2007**

**The Compact : Working Together, Better Together**

The Compact for Devon in its current form is now 2 years old and firmly on the local map. Thanks to those voluntary, community and statutory sector partners who have all signed up to the Compact for Devon since the last Compact Update – welcome on board! Your commitment to the principles behind the Compact - to improve and develop the relationship between sectors for the benefit of each other and the communities they serve – helps to further strengthen partnership working and collaboration in Devon.

The Compact for Devon and the 3 existing Codes of Practice (Volunteering, Equality and Funding and Procurement) can be viewed on the DACVS (Devon Association of CVS) website – [www.dacvs.org.uk](http://www.dacvs.org.uk)

Work is now well underway to develop the remaining 3 Codes of practice:

- Community Groups
- Partnership Working
- Consultation & Involvement

Small Stakeholder Groups met in July to discuss the contents of the first draft for each Code, and during August the first drafts were committed to paper! This is just the beginning of the process, and your input and involvement will help to strengthen the Codes and make them more meaningful locally. The Stakeholder Groups meet again in September to consider the first drafts of the Codes. If you would like details of these meetings please contact the Hub Administrator, Alice Hulajko at [compact.hub@exetercvs.org.uk](mailto:compact.hub@exetercvs.org.uk) or 01392 202055. From November the draft Codes will be out for wider consultation for three months, so you could also get involved at that stage.

If you have any questions or comments about the Compact for Devon or the Codes of Practice, contact Sara Bennett, Compact Development Worker, at : [compact@dacvs.org.uk](mailto:compact@dacvs.org.uk) or on 01392 202057.

If you have any Compact stories to tell - examples where you have used the Compact or made reference to any of the Codes of Practice – please share these stories with Sara.

Signing up to the Compact for Devon is free!! Download a signatory form for your organisation at [www.dacvs.org.uk](http://www.dacvs.org.uk) or contact Sara Bennett for a hard copy. A full list of signatories is available, also at [www.dacvs.org.uk](http://www.dacvs.org.uk) - it already includes 5 District Councils, the County Council, Devon PCT and more than 200 Voluntary Sector organisations. Now is the time to get your organisation on the Compact map!

## **Compact For Devon**

**Do you have regular contact with voluntary and  
community groups?**

**Do you manage contracts with the voluntary sector?**

**Do you provide financial support to voluntary or  
community groups?**

**If so.....you need to read this**

## **10 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE COMPACT FOR DEVON**

(This was produced by DCC for its employees – it could be adapted for use by any organisation)

1. Devon County Council has signed up to the Compact and all relevant staff are expected to understand its principles and to comply with it.
2. The Compact and its codes of practice set out good practice for working together and for dealing with disagreements.
3. It sets out a framework within which the public sector and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) can work constructively together to meet local needs.
4. When developing or changing services DCC will, wherever possible, involve service users and carers and the organisations which represent them in designing those services.
5. DCC's contracting and investments with the VCS will be guided by the funding code of practice.
6. When consulting with the VCS, DCC will do its best to allow sufficient time for responses so that good quality, well canvassed submissions can be made.
7. DCC recognises and values the independence of the VCS.
8. DCC believes that the VCS can provide high quality services in a flexible and responsive manner.
9. DCC is working towards ensuring that sustainable funding is available to VCS organisations, through the use of service level agreements, contracts and longer term investment.
10. Full Compact documentation can be seen at [www.dacvs.org.uk](http://www.dacvs.org.uk)

For more information or a face to face briefing contact Sue Craythorne  
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