

THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMPACT

What is it and how does it affect my organisation?

What is it?

It's a statement of the 'terms of engagement' between the statutory organisations, Councils and NHS, and the voluntary and community, or third, sector. It includes joint and separate undertakings. It has been adopted by most Councils as policy and most recently as an Local Area Agreement priority. 'A Compact Way of Working' is helping to ensure the establishment and development of stronger linkages between the voluntary sector and local authority and NHS.

Where did the COMPACT come from?

There is a national Compact agreement between central government and larger third sector organisations. Government also required local authorities to develop Compacts at a local level. As a result, in February 2007 the CAMBRIDGESHIRE COMPACT was agreed. Since then 27 local organisations from both sectors have signed the Compact, showing their commitment to Compact and its principles.

What is in the Cambridgeshire COMPACT?

The headline commitments include:

- Providing up to 12 weeks where possible for consultations involving the sector
- Working towards 3 year funding terms for voluntary sector grants and contracts
- Giving a minimum of 12 weeks notice of changes
- Consulting the voluntary sector on commissioning policies

The Compact is underpinned by a set of five Codes of Good Practice. In Cambridgeshire this set of Codes is currently being developed. Each Code contains undertakings that support and encourage good practice, positive relationships and effective service delivery and cover Funding and Commissioning, Volunteering, Community Groups, Equality and Diversity and Consultation.

What does it mean for both sectors?

Statutory and third sector representatives have worked together to draw up the overarching Compact agreement and now the set of Codes, in particular the undertakings which commit each sector to meeting certain standards.

What does it mean for Councils and the NHS?

Compact, its development and delivery, is now part of the way in which local authorities are inspected. In particular central government is keen to increase co-operative working and optimise the public sector investment going to voluntary groups. The undertakings work towards these improvements, for example, the Funding & Commissioning Codes requires statutory funders to provide three year funding wherever possible and to work towards joint funding arrangements.

Compact is now also part of the new National Indicator set, with NI7, requiring all authorities to work to create an 'environment for a thriving third sector', having been chosen by Cambridgeshire Together, the Local Area Agreement Board, as a priority.

What does it mean for the third sector/VCS?

Compact improves partnership and communications, as well providing more opportunities for the sector's voice to be heard and to contribute to the development of good practice in a range of ways, for example, through developing the Codes. Third Sector undertakings include committing the sector to achieving quality standards and to recognise the limits on the public purse.

You can find and sign up to the **Cambridgeshire Compact** and a wide range of further information on the County Council website via keyword search COMPACT or at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/depts/ecsoffice/learning/compact/>