

# The Cabinet

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# REPORT

## Cllr Cole-Morgan : Cabinet Member for Community & Housing

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### Wiltshire's Compact Code of Practice:

1. **Report Summary:**

To seek approval of the Wiltshire Compacts four supporting codes of practice that have been developed over the last 12 months. (Attached Appendix 1)

These are:

- Volunteering
- Communications and Consultation
- Funding
- Equalities and Diversity

2. **Background:**

The Wiltshire Compact Board has developed the Codes of Practice, which are a multi agency partnership made up of statutory and the key voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations.

The four District Councils, Wiltshire County Council, The Primary Care Trusts, the four Council's for Voluntary Services, Wiltshire Race Equality Council (WREC) Charities Information Bureau and Community First agreed and launched the Wiltshire Compact in December 2003

In addition to the original partners listed above the Wiltshire Compact has now been signed up to by:

- Mental Health Trust
- Ambulance Service
- Connexions
- Learning Skills Council
- Wiltshire Constabulary
- Salisbury NHS Trust
- Wiltshire Constabulary

The Compact is an agreement between independent voluntary and community groups and the District Council and other public bodies. It is considered vital for improving relationships for mutual advantage, it also:

- Helps partners understand and value roles, nature and contribution of different kinds of organisations
- Has undertakings on both sides and mechanisms to make sure it works;
- Sets standards of communication, consultation and support
- Provides a practical tool to help partners work together in formal partnerships and on the ground.

The codes of practice are there to make the Wiltshire Compact agreement operational, outlining how the sector and local public bodies can work together.

3. **Recommendations:**

That Cabinet approves and adopts all four Codes of Practice as supplementary detail to the Wiltshire Compact already adopted.

4. **Background Papers:**

Wiltshire Compact

5. **Implications:**

**Financial:**

£5,000 was allocated for the development and production of the Wiltshire Compact and Codes of Good practice. There is a need to continue to invest District Council staff time and resources into the project in terms of supporting the Compact board and ensuring mechanisms for compliance of codes within the council.

**Legal** : None

**Human Rights** : None

**Personnel** : None

**Community Safety** : None

**Environmental** : None

**Consultation:**

Consultation has taken place across the whole of the county. Within Salisbury District consultation has taken place with draft codes being circulated for comments both internally with service unit heads and two external consultation sessions with voluntary and community sector groups. The feedback from these sessions has been reflected within the codes where relevant and possible.

**Wards Affected** : All

# **THE WILTSHIRE COMPACT**

## **CODE OF PRACTICE ON VOLUNTEERING**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Wiltshire Compact is a set of principles within which the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sectors agree to work.

This Code is one of the four Codes that describe how the Compact will work in practice. It is based on the national Code that was developed by Central Government together with the Voluntary and Community sector.

This Code aims to enable more people to become involved in the varied forms of volunteering that are a vital part of active citizenship and to offer them the necessary support.

The Code is a shared vision of how the public sector in Wiltshire and the Voluntary and Community sector can support and promote voluntary action.

It aims to:

- raise the profile of volunteering and actively promote it as a community activity;
- value the vast contribution that volunteers make to the local community and beyond;
- acknowledge the variety of volunteering opportunities;
- enable and support more people to get involved in volunteering;
- recognise that Public and Voluntary organisations and Community sectors can provide excellent training, support and development for volunteers to go into work, either paid or unpaid;
- encourage better practice in the management of volunteers;
- remove the barriers to volunteering.

### **2. IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERING**

Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community. Volunteering takes many forms and is undertaken freely

and by choice, without financial gain and is underpinned by four key principles:

- **Choice** - Volunteering is a choice made freely by each individual;
- **Diversity** - Open to all, no matter what their background, age, race, sexual orientation, faith or ability;
- **Give and take** - Volunteers offer their contribution unwaged but should gain in other ways;
- **Recognition** - Clear recognition of the value of the contribution made by volunteers to an organisation, community or economy.

### 3. OUR COMMITMENT

The public and voluntary and community sectors are committed to work together to ensure they:

- expand the public perception of volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of volunteer activities;
- make visible the contributions volunteers make;
- ensure volunteers are brought into policy-making consultation processes;
- challenge barriers to volunteering, these may include barriers caused by institutions, geography or attitudes;
- acknowledge the distinctiveness of volunteering by promoting volunteer's equality of treatment;
- develop, support and maintain a modern and dynamic volunteering infrastructure.

### 4. THE SCOPE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR

- helping to provide a service as a volunteer within a voluntary organisation, community group, international development organisation, the public sector or not-for-profit sector;
- running an organisation or group as a trustee, board or committee member, serving as a non executive member of a public body or participating in civic governance
- helping to raise funds for an organisation;

- Improving the quality of life for people in a neighbourhood or community of interest, providing a community service or campaigning for a public cause;
- befriending and mentoring;
- encouraging employer-supported community involvement;
- helping to develop public policy through involvement in consultation processes and campaigning;
- sport and physical recreation;
- encouraging volunteering through faith congregations or communities.

This is not an exhaustive list and may be revised from time to time.

## **5. VALUING VOLUNTEERS**

The contribution made by volunteers can often go unacknowledged. Volunteers make significant contributions to life and making positive changes in Wiltshire. Together, the Public and the Voluntary and Community sectors will ensure that volunteer time is recognised as a significant contribution and of value. The contribution made by volunteers needs to be measured, recognised and celebrated.

This will be done by:

- recognising that volunteering builds skills and experience, enables people to give back to their community or interest, enhances employability and creates employment. It promotes social inclusion, and contributes to the building of community networks and participation. High levels of volunteering are therefore indicators of healthy and active communities;
- developing, promoting and celebrating volunteering as an expression of active citizenship;
- promoting visibly the value of volunteer contributions;
- ensuring volunteers are thanked for the contribution they make and are aware of the importance / benefit their contribution makes to the group or organisation;
- involving volunteers when developing new policies and ideas;

- assisting potential volunteers to find volunteering opportunities that fit their needs, interests and abilities and recognising these may change over time;
- encouraging the development of employer-supported volunteering schemes within public sector and private organisations, including employment practices that allow time off for volunteering;
- seeking to widen the opportunities for volunteering and develop a diverse volunteer base;
- actively promoting volunteering as an opportunity for all including transient groups.

## **6. BARRIERS**

There are many barriers to volunteering, particularly in a rural county like Wiltshire. The Public and the Voluntary and Community sectors will work together to:

- audit new policies, strategies, guidance and procedures for their impact on volunteers and volunteering and take appropriate action, and work to limit the barriers presented by existing policies and practices;
- work, where applicable, to reduce conflict and confusion between volunteering and training for employment, especially for young people;
- promote good practice in the recruitment and management of volunteers including recommendations to remove barriers due to attitudes;
- acknowledge the cost of running volunteer-based organisations;
- make clear when volunteers can be compensated for any out of pocket expenses;
- ensure that there is a clearly identified infrastructure hub offering high quality support;
- work to identify and dismantle barriers to volunteering and community involvement;
- increase staff awareness of volunteer contributions to organisational and social policy objectives;
- ensure volunteers are not exploited, expected to undertake tasks that are not appropriate or recruited to fill the place of paid staff.

## 7. THE VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

The relationship between volunteers and the group or organisation for which they work is different from paid employees. Public and Voluntary and Community sectors will develop policies that recognise these differences in the motivation of volunteers and the contribution they make so that it is reflected in the way they are managed. The volunteering experience and contribution is unique.

This will be done by:

- ensuring good practice in volunteer management;
- ensuring volunteers have the same entitlements as paid staff – clarity of role and responsibilities, induction, supervision, support, training and development opportunities etc;
- ensuring volunteers are included within volunteer-involving organisations and policies and procedures are in place;
- encouraging volunteer-involving organisations to ensure that both time and resources to support and train volunteers are in place which makes volunteering a valuable experience for the volunteer;
- ensuring an identified person is responsible for co-ordinating volunteer involvement and for monitoring and reporting on it;
- encouraging the development of employer-supported volunteering schemes within our organisations, including employment practices that allow time off for volunteering;
- All volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults **must** work within the law and organisations must acquire Criminal Record Bureau clearance.

## 8. VOLUNTEERING INFRASTRUCTURE

The volunteering infrastructure is the physical facilities, structures, systems, relationships, people, knowledge and skills that exist to support, develop, co-ordinate, represent and promote front line organisations to enable them to deliver their aims more effectively.

The volunteering infrastructure has a unique role in supporting the volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations, the wider voluntary and Community, Public and Private sectors as well as delivering volunteering initiatives and programmes.

Both Public and the Voluntary and Community sectors agree that funding should be invested to create and maintain a modern dynamic volunteering infrastructure.

A 'Volunteering Hub' will be created in Wiltshire to develop the functions that will assist public and umbrella organisations to ensure local support.

It will cover six core elements:

- **brokerage** – information on volunteering opportunities, advice and support to potential volunteers which match their motivations to specific opportunities;
- **marketing volunteering** – stimulate and encourage interest in volunteer activity;
- **good practice development** – promoting good practice in working with volunteers and all volunteer-involving organisations. Growing through good practice will develop and deliver training, which can accredit volunteers, enable volunteers in their roles, enable volunteer managers and support the work of umbrella organisations;
- **develop volunteer opportunities** – working in close partnership with statutory, voluntary, community, private and faith groups to develop imaginative opportunities (both formal and informal) for potential volunteers;
- **policy response and campaigning** – devising and leading on volunteer policy development that encourages social policy to be volunteer friendly and volunteer-literate.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

- Every CVS in Wiltshire can provide volunteer support or can signpost to support, advice and information services. All CVS have a Vbase, which provides access to volunteer opportunities on-line. All CVS have books and information that can be loaned relating to good volunteer practice and training courses can be provided.

Contact nos are:

North Wilts CVS – 01249 654089  
Salisbury and District CVS - 01722 421747  
Voluntary Action Kennet – 01672 564104  
Voluntary Action West Wilts – 01225 767993



- Volunteer Good Practice resources can be purchased from Volunteering England their web site is [www.volunteeringengland.org.uk](http://www.volunteeringengland.org.uk) then go into managing volunteers.
- 'Promoting Partnerships' protocol held on Wiltshire County Council website [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Extensive communication toolkits and case studies available at [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk)
- Advice on compact agreements: [www.thecompact.org.uk/](http://www.thecompact.org.uk/)
- Freedom of Information Act ...  
<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm>....
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Funding and Procurement
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Communication and Consultation

6 April 2005

# **THE WILTSHIRE COMPACT**

## **CODE OF PRACTICE ON COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Wiltshire Compact is a set of principles within which the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sectors agree to work.

This Code is one of the four Codes that describe how the Compact will work in practice. It is based on the national Code that was developed by Central Government together with the voluntary and community sector.

How we communicate and how we consult with one another be it Public, Private or Voluntary and Community sector organisations is a vital part to how we work effectively together.

Good communication and consultation will lead to better partnership working which helps to ensure the delivery of high quality services and improved planning that meets the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

The Public sector consults with officers to ensure that in developing its policies it is informed by a wide range of experience and takes into account the impact of its proposals on different sectors of society;

For voluntary and community organisations, consultation presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on Government policy on behalf of the people and causes they work for.

This Code sets out the commitments from those Public and Voluntary and Community sector bodies that have signed up to The Wiltshire Compact. It has set out those commitments in two sections. The first section describes the benefit of good Communication and Consultation and the second section sets out our Commitments.

### **2. THE BENEFITS OF GOOD COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

#### **2.1 Effective Communication:**

- strengthens relationships between organisations so that they understand the roles and responsibilities of each other;

- recognises that a two-way process means receiving as well as giving messages, listening as well as talking;
- means sharing significant changes or progress so that partner agencies are not taken by surprise;
- is the sharing of information in a language and formats that are accessible to all;
- enables partners to have reasonable expectations of each other;
- allows you to understand roles and boundaries to reduce duplication and make better use of resources;
- reduces the potential for misunderstandings, disagreements and disputes;
- prevents a problem from turning into a crisis;
- provides a means of sharing best practice, innovative ideas and experience in specialist fields;
- enables you to develop a shared vision where everyone has clear targets towards a common goal.

## **2.2 Effective Consultation:**

- enables others to contribute to the policy making process;
- values the input from participants;
- enables others to contribute to the policy making process;
- values the input from participants;
- leads to more realistic and robust policy that better reflects people's needs and wishes;
- helps to plan, prioritise and deliver better services;
- can create a working partnership and mutual understanding with those consulted;
- identifies problems quickly, enabling matters to be put right early on;

- helps to avoid incorrect assumptions and misunderstanding at later stages;
- helps to keep organisations involved in and informed about policy developments and avoids unnecessary surprises.

### **3. COMMUNICATION**

#### **3.1 Our Commitments on Communication**

The Public, Voluntary and Community sectors commit to:

- making clear the purpose of the communication;
- informing each other of significant developments that may affect the relationship between them, and consulting on them where appropriate;
- listening as well as talking;
- sending the right information to the right person, at the right time in a clear, concise and accessible format;
- creating and maintaining a database of key contacts to whom information should be sent;
- informing partners of changes within their own organisation which necessitate a change to the database;
- identifying resources who can act as effective channels for onward distribution of information;
- avoiding information overload by cutting out duplication and making sure communications are clear, concise and relevant;
- checking format and language to improve accessibility;
- marking every piece of information with “for information” or “for action” – with a clear response date if appropriate;
- making it clear whether or not information is confidential. (However the code recognises that information requested under the Freedom of Information Act will be made available within that framework);
- recognising the different requirements of one to one communication e.g. letter, email, phone, face to face etc compared with ‘high volume’ communication e.g. leaflets, websites, media relations;

- adopting professional approaches, wherever possible, when using volume communication, including the use of a communication strategy, clearly defined objectives, audience assessments, action plans, budgets and evaluation;
- using the right mix of communication methods to reach the right people in the right way e.g. printed literature, websites, media relations, events, branding etc;
- take account of religious, faith, cultural and rural needs when organising meetings and consultation initiatives.

## **4. CONSULTATION**

### **4.1 Our Commitments on Consultation**

The Public sector undertakes to:

- build consultation into its regular planning cycle and be clear about the purpose of consultations;
- ensure that any consultation should be announced in advance to maximise opportunities for responding; and sufficient time allowed for responses;
- consult the sector on issues that are likely to affect the Voluntary sector at a sufficiently early stage of policy development;
- give consultees enough time to respond – a standard period of 12 weeks and a minimum of 8 weeks in normal circumstances. Shorter periods may be required by statute or in emergency situations but, wherever possible, these will be kept to an absolute minimum;
- ensure that where the standard consultation period cannot be met, all documents should specify why a shorter time has been set;
- explore with relevant partnerships e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships, the establishment and maintenance of a central consultation database/calendar, enabling organisations to register their interest in forthcoming consultations, showing actual or anticipated start and closing dates and contacts points for further information. This database will allow organisations to register their interest in particular policy areas and help them plan and prioritise their consultation work;
- explain where decisions have already been made – make clear what can and cannot be changed as a result of the consultation;

- be sensitive to resource implications e.g. in keeping databases of contacts which meet the Data Protection Act 1998, for the sector in disseminating consultations and seek their views on the best way to carry out the consultation;
- consider carefully the right mix of consultation methods in order to get the best spread of views from those most likely to be affected. The methods used will take into account the aim of the consultation and the nature of those being consulted. Consideration will be given to undertaking consultations in partnership with voluntary sector where appropriate;
- take a positive account of the specific needs, interests and contributions of those parts of the sector which represent the diversity of users;
- prepare consultation documents that are concise, clearly laid out and written in simple language that will be understood by the intended audience. Make consultation materials available in accessible formats, when requested – e.g. Braille, large print or audio;
- encourage those consulted to give honest views by assuring confidentiality to individuals and respecting the confidentiality of information provided by the sector;
- analyse carefully the results of the consultation and report back on the views that are received and feedback on what has been done as a result;
- evaluate consultations with a view to developing and spreading best practice and achieving better policy outcomes.

#### **4.2 Community and Voluntary Sector Commitments on Consultation**

In responding to Public sector consultations, the Voluntary and Community sectors undertake to:

- pursue recognised good practice in its representational work;
- use their infrastructure to encourage participation in public sector consultations (commensurate with available resources), including co-operating with each other through intermediary bodies and local networks to streamline the consultation process;
- define and demonstrate how they represent their stated constituency, by stating who they are, what groups or causes in society they represent and how they involved those interests in forming their policies and positions, and in responding to the consultation itself;

- consult with their constituency directly, including service users, volunteers, members and supporters wherever possible. Where this is not practicable, or appropriate, to indicate that they are responding on the basis of their accumulated knowledge and experience of working with the groups concerned;
- take account positively of the specific needs, interests, contributions and diversity of users;
- ensure that the information they present is accurate and that any research has been conducted in an objective and unbiased manner;
- respect the confidentiality of information supplied in association with the consultation, when given access to it on that basis;
- give their constituency feedback on the outcome of consultation;
- when representing their constituents have regard to the regulatory framework that governs their organisation when representing their constituents;
- promote good practice among their members (in the case of intermediary bodies) by issuing guidance on effective representation for Voluntary and Community organisations, and include consultation performance in quality systems and self-evaluation reports;
- recognise that as representatives of organisations they are not always able to respond and, as a result, decisions may well be made that do not reflect their views.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

- 'Promoting Partnerships' protocol held on Wiltshire County Council's website [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Extensive communication toolkits and case studies available at [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk)
- Advice on compact agreements: [www.thecompact.org.uk/](http://www.thecompact.org.uk/)
- Freedom of Information Act ...  
<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm>....
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Volunteering
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Funding and Procurement
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity

6 April 2005

# THE WILTSHIRE COMPACT

## CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON FUNDING AND PROCUREMENT

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Wiltshire Compact is a set of principles within which the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sectors agree to work.

This Code is one of the four Codes that describe how the Compact will work in practice. It is based on the national Code that was developed by Central Government together with the Voluntary and Community sector.

The aim of the Funding and Procurement Code of Practice is to improve the funding relationship that exists between the statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector in Wiltshire. The Code will help to develop and sustain effective procedures that result in sound funding decisions to support well-delivered quality services.

The Code's long-term aim is for the voluntary and community sectors' full role to be adequately resourced by recognising overhead costs, as well as project costs, across the range of funding arrangements.

The Code covers all types of funding relationships whether services have been purchased from voluntary or community organisations through grants or procurement.

A Guide is being developed by the County and four District Councils to assist local Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary and Community Organisations in doing business with local authorities within Wiltshire. The Guide aims to explain the processes that local authorities must operate when undertaking a procurement exercise.

Glossary of terms is attached at Appendix 1.

### 2. DEFINITION OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

- **Voluntary Organisation** – An organisation whose management function is voluntary, but which is likely to deliver services through paid staff and volunteers and has a formal legal status.



- **Community Group** – A group whose management function and delivery of services is undertaken by volunteers. These are generally non-incorporated bodies and may not actually deliver services under a service agreement or contract.
- **Group 'in the community'** – An un-incorporated group of volunteers which meets for, or is driven by, a common interest or activity/activities.
- **Infrastructure Organisation** – An umbrella voluntary organisation that plays a supporting, co-ordinating or developing role within the sector to voluntary and community groups.

### **3. KEY FUNDING PRINCIPLES**

#### **3.1 Accountability**

Funders will follow procedures that are consistent with the principles of good regulation and the need to provide effective protection of, and proper accountability for, public money.

#### **3.2 Stability**

Recognise the need for greater financial stability where possible and/or appropriate. Funders will ascertain the existing and future stability of organisations that they are looking to fund.

#### **3.3 Efficiency**

Funders will work towards processes that have adequate timescales, are easy to use, are appropriate to the size and capacity of funded organisations, minimise the administrative burden for all parties and promote best value for money.

#### **3.4 Transparency, consistency and fairness:**

Funders will commit to ensuring that all funding streams are transparent, consistent and fair. When commissioning services they will work to ensure that the true cost of delivery is funded in full. Voluntary and Community organisations will undertake to calculate the true cost of services when submitting bids.

### 3.5 **Independence**

Funders will respect the Voluntary and Community sectors' independence and its lawful right to campaign on behalf of its members and service users, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist.

## 4. **USING A MIX OF FUNDING**

Getting the type of funding right is crucial for Funders and applicants as this impacts on their funding relationship.

### 4.1 **Funders will:**

- recognise that longer term funding improves sustainability and longer term planning and is generally preferable to annually renewable funding. Continuous funding over a period of years should be considered where appropriate;
- seek to ensure that tendering and contracting processes do not hamper the involvement of Voluntary and Community organisations in delivering public services;
- apply the same ethos, principles and values to whatever type of funding is awarded.

### 4.2 **Voluntary and community organisations will:**

- seek to create a mix of funding sources to avoid over reliance on one source and to add value to the service provided;
- develop funding strategies and supporting business plans to ensure the longer-term sustainability of the organisation and its services where applicable;
- recognise that grant funding is discretionary.

## 5. **POLICY AND PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

### 5.1 **All parties** undertake to:

- develop, engage in, evaluate and review funding programmes through extensive, well-timed consultation of adequate duration;
- Identify funding and arrangements needed for Voluntary and Community sector involvement in new programmes from the outset, including time needed for preparatory work and partnership building;

- explore scope for rationalising and integrating funding initiatives;
- work together to develop a training programme to develop skills and best practice in procurement and contracting (including tendering, negotiation, risk and management) and to look for opportunities to attract additional resources.

5.2 **Funders** should:

- strive to ease potential barriers to Voluntary and Community sector participation to create a level playing field for the sector to compete with the Private sector.

5.3 The **Voluntary and Community sector** undertake to:

- strive to show where it can realistically deliver best value for money;
- endeavour to stay abreast of trends and changes in the wider environment that will affect their services;
- deliver services that they are funded to deliver and ensure that funding is used for the purpose for which it was given.

## 6. **MAKING FUNDING BIDS**

6.1 In making arrangements for inviting grant applications or contract bids, **Funders** will:

- ensure that applicants have access to all the relevant background information against which to make their application, especially the Funder's strategic policies and priorities, type of funding available and eligibility criteria;
- There should be a mutually realistic timetable for all funding bids of a period of not less than 3 months;
- make clear what new money is available so that new and currently unfunded organisations are encouraged to apply (if no new money is available then this will also be made clear);
- seek to provide effective arrangements for co-operation between their internal departments over funding bids for activities that do not really fit within one department's responsibilities;

- work towards establishing joint procedures where a number of Funders have an interest in supporting an organisation, in order to streamline procedures and reduce duplication;
- aim to produce clear and unambiguous standard application forms and criteria in plain English;
- endeavour to offer electronic completion of application forms and, on request, provide information in appropriate formats (see Code on Communication);
- encourage joint bids to boost access to funding for: partnership working, value for money, project viability or service user benefit;
- ensure consistency and co-ordination within their organisation;
- give organisations enough time to complete applications or tender bids.

6.2 In applying for grants or bidding for contracts, **Voluntary and Community organisations** will:

- ensure that their organisation meets the eligibility criteria of the particular funding process and talk to the Funder to seek clarity where appropriate;
- have sought and secured all necessary permissions from the relevant statutory agencies where possible, prior to submitting the application (e.g. planning permission);
- seek relevant support for completing the application as necessary;
- ensure applications and all requested documents are presented within specified deadlines;
- ensure any bid meets the Funder's relevant strategic policies or priorities;
- comply with the conditions attached to agreed funding;
- ensure that they are aware of the implications of any service agreement contract that they are entering into by seeking appropriate professional advice.

## **7. ASSESSING FUNDING BIDS**

### **7.1 Funders** will work to ensure that:

- there are clear assessment processes and procedures so that all applicants are aware of the process and the criteria by which their applications will be assessed;
- initial scrutiny is given to the application form to ensure that the funding bid can be processed, carrying out an initial assessment to check that the application is complete and requesting any missing documents and information, unless as part of a sealed tender process;
- they aim for a process of recognising an organisation's eligibility for funding based on an agreed set of standards (for example for larger organisations, Investors in People (IIP), Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO), standards set down by a national umbrella organisation;
- the amount of funding allocated is adequate and fit for purpose by checking that all resource implications have been covered;
- contract pricing is on a competitive best value basis;
- when assessing contract bids, care must be taken to compare like with like and not discriminate against organisations providing additional, specialist or tailored services for which there is an established need;
- recognition must be included of the rural nature of Wiltshire and the impact on unit cost of reaching these groups - (see Code of Practice on Equality & Diversity);
- they will tell organisations why the funding bid has been unsuccessful;
- they recognise the consequences of withdrawing/reducing funding and having a realistic exit strategy including working together with the voluntary organisation to explore solutions.

### **7.2 Voluntary and Community organisations** will work to ensure that:

- realistic costing of services to be provided are submitted, including start up costs where applicable;
- they are able to demonstrate that all resource implications have been considered and included as appropriate;

- they look at sustainability/long term plans of projects and recognise that some funding and some projects will be time-limited;
- they make clear any added value that they provide including a recognition of a monetary value to volunteering.

## **8. NOTIFICATION OF FUNDING DECISIONS**

### **8.1 Funders will undertake to:**

- notify applicants of the funding decision at least 3 months before the new funding term starts, with applicants being informed within 2 weeks of any departure from the published timetable;
- inform currently funded applicants at least 3 months before the end of the current funding whether funding is to continue and any changes to be introduced;
- inform successful applicants of the amount, duration and purpose of funding approved, standard terms and conditions, jointly agreed performance standards and targets (including a process for seeking revision of work plans), jointly agreed monitoring and evaluation and payment methods;
- recognise the particular needs of organisations with paid members of staff (e.g. requirements to re-locate, where applicable, if funding is not continued);
- indicate success or failure of application for annual grant at least 3 months prior to the beginning of the financial year (i.e. 1 April), subject to ratification by the Funder's management body;
- where an application is rejected, advise the applicant of the reasons for rejection and the process for feedback;
- where funding is to be withdrawn, then a minimum of 3 months' notice to be given.

## **9. FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

### **9.1 Funders will undertake to:**

- treat the overheads of Voluntary and Community organisations as they do for those in the private sector;

- provide clear information on arrangements for payment. No payments shall be made until a signed Agreement is in place. Recognise that there is a responsibility to ensure an Agreement is in place at the start of the funding period;
- make prompt and regular payments at the intervals determined by any agreement;
- recognise the need for Voluntary and Community organisations to hold reserves at an agreed appropriate level that address the liabilities of that organisation;
- finalise a contract, service agreement or grant before requiring provision to be set up;
- sanction retention of underspend if appropriate after discussion.

**9.2 Voluntary and Community Organisations will:**

- have in place effective and proportionate financial systems for the management, control, accountability, propriety and audit of finances;
- develop and implement appropriate plans for what will happen once the particular funding ends in consultation with Funder;
- acknowledge the Funder's support in promotional material and publications unless inappropriate;
- accept that, over a financial limit, payments may be made twice yearly or quarterly as appropriate (dependant on Financial Regulations);
- notify the Funder as soon as possible where an underspend is anticipated, ideally 3 months prior to the end of the funding period;
- have a reserves policy.

## **10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

**10.1 Funders will:**

- establish a joint approach to monitoring and evaluation;
- take account of best practice in monitoring procedures and to work with other organisations to reduce duplication of these processes where possible;

- accept nationally and locally agreed quality standard/quality assurance systems as a benchmark;
- reduce the amount of monitoring information required during an agreed timescale for organisations that meet the standard;
- regulate financial reporting in a way that is proportionate and reasonable. Funders should not require more stringent accounting and auditing requirements of charities than required by the Charities Acts currently in force, nor of charitable companies than that required by the Companies Acts currently in force;
- ensure that the level of information required will be relevant and proportionate to the size and nature of funding provided;
- recognise the cost to the voluntary organisation of monitoring and encourage applicants to include this in the funding bid.

#### 10.2 **Voluntary and Community Organisations** will:

- have in place systems for monitoring and evaluating activities against agreed objectives;
- design and introduce self evaluation forms to be completed by people using the services using a variety of methods appropriate to the size of the organisation;
- work towards anticipating funding and/or operational problems in order to alert Funders at the earliest possible opportunity in order to jointly explore options for resolving problems;
- work towards identifying unit costs of services where appropriate.

## 11. **TAKING THE CODE FORWARD**

It is intended that all parties will develop joint application forms, standardised service agreements, joint monitoring and evaluation procedures and monitor and evaluate the process to inform and develop the Code.



## USEFUL INFORMATION

- 'Promoting Partnerships' protocol held on Wiltshire County Council's website [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Extensive communication toolkits and case studies available at [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk)
- Advice on compact agreements: [www.thecompact.org.uk/](http://www.thecompact.org.uk/)
- Freedom of Information Act ...  
<http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000036.htm...>
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Volunteering
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity
- The Wiltshire Compact Code of Practice on Communication and Consultation

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### GLOSSARY

- **Grant** – A grant is where the Funder funds the organisation to support a particular activity. Grants can also be unrestricted for the general fulfilment of the organisation’s charitable purpose as defined in its constitution.
- **Procurement** – Defined as “the acquisition of goods or services from third party suppliers under legally binding contractual terms where all the conditions necessary to form a legally binding contract have been met”. Procurement is the process that public Funders use to obtain goods or services that they need. It usually involves a competitive bidding process and any organisation has the right to bid on equal terms.
- **Service Agreement** – Written contract under which a service is provided and funded, usually for a minimum of three years period.
- **Tender** – A competitive procedure by which a bid is made to provide services at a certain price, volume and service standard.
- **Contract** – the document awarded at completion of a tendering process recording the agreement between the parties.
- **Gift in kind** – Non-financial support to organisations provided without cost (e.g. staff time, use of facilities and services, donated goods).
- **Contract Regulations** - These are the rules that statutory agencies have to follow when contracting for goods, services or works.
- **Full cost recovery** – All organisations, including those in the voluntary and community sector, have indirect overhead as well as direct costs associated with the delivery of goods and services. To operate efficiently and effectively, voluntary and community organisations must be able to understand all their costs including indirect and support costs. Full cost recovery would mean that voluntary and community organisations would include appropriate overhead costs when costing activities or services.

# **THE WILTSHIRE COMPACT**

## **CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Wiltshire Compact is a set of principles within which the Statutory, Voluntary and Community sectors agree to work and seeks to recognise and value the diversity that exists in society generally and in Wiltshire.

It aims specifically to promote the inclusion of groups and individuals that have in the past been under-represented or excluded, for the benefit of both individuals who make up those groups and the communities, villages and neighbourhoods.

This Code is one of the four Codes that describe how the Compact will work in practice. It is based on the national Code that was developed by Central Government together with the voluntary and community sector.

The partners using the Compact are committed to:

- recognising that everyone is different in terms of their race, age, sex, disability, sexuality, age or religion;
- recognising the importance of equality and diversity and human rights to a prosperous and cohesive society;
- developing effective methods so all groups can get involved;
- supporting marginal groups;
- celebrating people's differences in our communities.

### **2. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

Wiltshire has a diverse range of communities with many unmet needs within them. Commitment to applying the principles of equality of opportunity is a central part of a fair and democratic society.

We recognise that issues of equality and diversity take many forms. This Code will help to ensure that the different communities of Wiltshire can get involved. The Code provides a source of good practice to address issues such as:

- Rural and social isolation
- The needs of service users and carers
- Disability
- Gender and sexuality
- Religion, faith and belief
- Young people
- Older people
- Black and minority ethnic needs
- Asylum seekers & refugees
- Gypsies and travellers

Please note this list is not definitive and may be revised from time to time.

### **3. IN SUPPORTING THIS CODE**

#### **3.1 Both sectors undertake to:**

- include equality and diversity as a key requirement in new policy development evidenced by:
  - i) access to, and active promotion of, services
  - ii) a requirement for training
  - iii) proactive encouragement to think in terms of needs by supporting participation by disadvantaged groups in service development
- monitor the usage of services by all groups/agencies;
- introduce specific conditions in funding agreements and appropriate monitoring measures in line with legislative requirements;
- analyse and develop action points, as necessary, to increase equality of access to services;
- promote fair employment practices in recruitment, selection, retention, training and development, support, supervision and

appraisal and introduce employment monitoring mechanisms which can measure these;

- comply with up-to-date legislation to ensure reasonable provision of services on an equality and diversity basis;
- specifically and actively promote and encourage ongoing partnership links;
- promote equality and diversity in all day-to-day activities;
- give full attention to the needs of individual groups that are protected from discrimination through legislation;
- support local action, dialogue and understanding between different organisations and communities;
- actively support inclusive communities;
- share training resources/expertise where appropriate on equality and diversity;
- celebrate equality and diversity.

### **3.2 The Statutory sector will also undertake to:**

- ensure that any ongoing review of policies, planning and procedures includes evidence, such as application of an impact assessment, to ensure that no particular group is disadvantaged by existing policies;
- review the organisation's published Equality and Diversity Policy as required;

### **3.3 The Voluntary and Community sector will also undertake to:**

- ensure that any ongoing review of policies, planning and procedures includes evidence to ensure that no particular group is disadvantaged by existing policies;
- develop and adopt an Equality and Diversity Policy or statement, as appropriate;
- maximise communication in an effective manner, as appropriate to the size of the organisation.

## 4. POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

This Code links to existing laws and ways of working and should be used in conjunction with the National Association of Councils of Voluntary Service (NACVS) – ‘Toolkit for Developing and Implementing Equal Opportunities Policies’ and any other guidance available for the promotion of equality and diversity.

Partner organisations should be aware of their responsibilities under both domestic (United Kingdom) and European legislation on equalities issues. Each organisation will have its own policies and procedures regarding equalities that complies with the relevant legislation.

### USEFUL INFORMATION

- ‘Promoting Partnerships’ protocol held on Wiltshire County Council’s website [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Extensive communication toolkits and case studies available at [www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk](http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk)
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