

# Understanding the EAST SUSSEX COMPACT



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# A Snappy Guide to the East Sussex Compact

## The National Compact ([www.thecompact.org.uk](http://www.thecompact.org.uk))

- The Government published the National Compact in November 1998. It is a written understanding between the Government and the Community & Voluntary Sector which states a number of 'undertakings' about how the two sectors would work with and behave towards each other.

## The East Sussex Compact

- The East Sussex Compact was launched in October 2003 and was revised in July 2005.
- The aims of the East Sussex Compact are to:
  - agree principles and an effective framework for partnership working;
  - improve working relationships in order to provide more effective and co-ordinated services to communities;
  - improve consultation, communication, collaboration, trust and respect;
  - assist partner agencies in meeting common strategic aims.
- The principles are:
  - Recognising Diversity and Promoting Equality
  - Effective Community Engagement
  - Mutual Respect and Respecting Independence
  - Investment and Public Accountability
- The continued development of the East Sussex Compact is overseen by a cross sector Steering Group. The purpose of the Steering group is to:
  - set the framework for the implementation and embedding process of the Compact;
  - consult on the content of the framework for the implementation and embedding process with the voluntary, community and statutory sectors;
  - facilitate the implementation and embedding process of the Compact for East Sussex with all signed up partners; and
  - lead on the annual monitoring and review of the framework for the implementation and embedding of the Compact.
- The East Sussex Compact also relies on Compact Champions. A Compact Champion is a person with responsibility for promoting and assisting in the implementation of the East Sussex Compact within their own organisation/agency or network of organisations.
- The scrutiny of the East Sussex Compact is undertaken by the East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP). Compact Scrutiny is the process for ensuring that the East Sussex Compact Implementation Strategy 2007 - 2012 and annual action plan are being achieved.

## Where can I find the Compact and the Codes?

Please note that this is a summary! The East Sussex Compact & Codes of Practice can be downloaded from:

[www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/partnerships/downloadcompact.htm](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/community/partnerships/downloadcompact.htm)

To discuss further, call Paul Rideout at East Sussex County Council on 01273 482911/ email [paul.rideout@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:paul.rideout@eastsussex.gov.uk); or County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes BN7 1SW.

## Codes of Practice

The Codes of Practice are the '**teeth**' of the Compact. These are the guidelines that govern specific areas and make specific key commitments:

### Funding and Procurement

- Promote and develop best practice in the funding relationship between the Statutory and Voluntary and Community sectors. Key principles are:
  - Focus on Outputs and Outcomes
  - Simplicity, Accessibility and Proportionality
  - Consistency and Co-ordination
  - Equality and Diversity
  - Transparency and Accountability
  - Discussion and Dialogue
  - Full Cost Recovery

### Consultation and Community Engagement

- Clearly identify the objectives of the consultation and involve people at the earliest possibility, ensuring equality of participation.
- Allow **twelve weeks** for responses, unless this is prevented by legislative or other restrictions.
- Use appropriate techniques and observe confidentiality.
- Use existing consultation mechanisms and networks and co-ordinate wherever possible.
- Recognise & act on the results of consultation and give feedback.

### Partnerships

- Promote awareness and build knowledge and understanding between sectors about working in partnership.
- Establish a framework for partners to work together more effectively to achieve common goals, to develop and deliver services and to build strong, cohesive and self-determining communities.

### Volunteering

- Share, develop and implement good practice in volunteering.
- Work to tackle barriers to volunteering.
- Recognise the value of volunteering.
- Give volunteers the support, training and management that they need.

### Community Groups

- Recognise the importance of community groups and their networks
- Recognise the specific support needs of community groups and faith groups.

### Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Groups

- Make a positive impact on the relationship between public bodies, the mainstream voluntary sector, and BME voluntary and community groups.
- Emphasise the important role of the BME sector in bringing a distinctive value to society, enabling BME individuals to contribute to public life and in supporting the creation of a more cohesive and inclusive society.

# East Sussex Compact Steering Group

## Terms of Reference

### Purpose

The East Sussex Steering Groups purpose is to

- set the framework for the implementation and embedding process of the Compact.
- consult on the content of the framework for the implementation and embedding process with the voluntary, community and statutory sectors.
- facilitate the implementation and embedding process of the Compact for East Sussex with all signed up partners.
- lead on the annual monitoring and review of the framework for the implementation and embedding of the Compact.

### Membership

1. Membership of the Steering Group will be open to:
  - a) Any organisation or partnership with an umbrella role for the voluntary and community sector in East Sussex;
  - b) Officers from the County Council and the five District and Borough councils;
  - c) Officers from statutory organisations other than local authorities, e.g. Police, Probation, Fire Service, Primary Care Trusts, NHS Trusts, etc.;
  - d) Other members as from time to time are agreed by the Steering Group.
2. The Steering Group will have no more than 12 members, with an equal number from each sector at all times.
3. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Steering Group will be from the County Council and Voluntary and Community Sector.
4. The Steering Group may invite other individuals or organisations to engage in discussion about the compact.
5. Members should be senior and/or still active and influential within their respective sectors.
6. Members should have some authority delegated to them to take decisions and/or commitment at group meetings.
7. All participants should have an understanding that some action/reading/related follow-up will be required of them.

### Operation & Proceedings

1. The Steering Group will meet quarterly with meeting dates agreed amongst members annually.
2. Agenda items will be determined by:
  - Members of the Steering Group
  - Issues generated at local Fora and other meetings
  - Responses to questionnaires and other surveys
  - The National Compact framework

3. The Chair will prepare the agenda for each meeting, based on item 2 and circulate it to all members at least one week before the meeting date. Administrative support for the Steering Group will be provided by the Community Partnership Team of East Sussex County Council (until stated otherwise).
4. Agendas and Minutes of the Steering Group meetings will be available on request and the progress of the group will be reported in Local Authority and Voluntary and Community Sector publications (including e-publications) and through other communication methods agreed by the Steering Group.
5. The Steering Group will not make any major decisions or sign off documents unless there is a quorum present. A quorum shall consist of two members from the voluntary sector and two from the statutory sector, including at least one from East Sussex County Council. Either the Chair or Deputy Chair shall also be present (to be included in the numbers above).
6. The Steering Group will agree an annual framework for implementing and embedding the Compact.
7. The Steering Group will establish sub-groups as necessary to undertake specific pieces of work, particularly those related to the framework for the implementation and embedding process.
8. The Steering Group will continue to publicise the Local Compact ensuring it is kept firmly on the local agenda.
9. The Steering Group will produce an annual monitoring survey on the implementation of the Compact, and consider the findings of the monitoring survey and recommend any changes or areas that require action for the following year to the COMPACT Steering Group.
9. The Steering Group will review any case studies referred to group in order to learn lessons and inform ongoing developments of the COMPACT. (Please refer to Compact Procedure for Resolution of Disagreements page 7 of A Compact for East Sussex).
10. The Steering Group will have an Annual Review meeting (as part of the quarterly meeting cycle) to consider the annual monitoring survey of the framework for the implementation and embedding of the Compact and consider any recommendations.

Agreed 10<sup>th</sup> February 2007

# East Sussex Compact Champion

What is a Compact Champion?

A Compact Champion is a person with responsibility for promoting and assisting in the implementation of the East Sussex Compact within their own organisation/agency or network of organisations.

What are the role and responsibilities of Compact Champions?

1. To promote the East Sussex Compact, assist in the implementation and review progress within their own organisation/agency or network of organisations by:

- ensuring they are familiar with the content of the East Sussex Compact and its Codes of Practice;
- being able to identify the implications and impact of the Compact for their organisation/agency or network of organisations;
- effectively promoting the Compact within their own organisation/agency or network of organisations (including staff, councillors, volunteers, trustees and other stakeholders where applicable);
- co-ordinating their organisation/agency sign up to the Compact; and
- being the initial point of contact for advice and support regarding Compact implementation for their organisation/agency or network of organisations.

2. To contribute to the work of the East Sussex Compact Steering Group by:

- taking part in discussions and modelling good partnership working;
- reporting on good practice and identifying problem areas which can guide the work of the Steering group; and
- seeking the views of the organisation/agency they represent, in order to make those views known to the East Sussex Compact Steering Group.

# East Sussex Compact Scrutiny

*Compact Scrutiny is the process for ensuring that the East Sussex Compact Implementation Strategy 2007 - 2012 and annual action plan are being achieved.*

## **Who is involved?**

Members of the East Sussex Compact Steering Group, Compact Champions and signatories to the East Sussex Compact.

## **Who does it?**

East Sussex Strategic Partnership Executive Board.

## **How does it work?**

The Compact Steering Group presents an Annual Review of the Compact to the East Sussex Strategic Partnership Executive Board for comment and will consider any recommendations made by the Board to improve the implementation and embedding of the Compact.

## **Why is it done?**

To ensure that both the Statutory and Third Sectors are up-to-date and aware of how the Compact is being implemented and how they can inform future developments and activities.

## **What has it covered?**

All activities listed in the East Sussex Compact Implementation Strategy 2007 - 2012 and annual action plan. During 2007/2008 the Compact Steering Group has focused on raising awareness of how the Compact principles can be implemented and what Compact Principles look like in everyday working environment.

## **What outcomes has it achieved?**

Awareness raising among both Statutory and Third Sector members of the East Sussex Strategic Partnership Executive Board on existing Compact working and how it will be developed over the coming years. In particular how the Compact relates to delivering the Integrated Community Strategy "Pride of Place" and the new Local Area Agreement.

## **Why it better positions the County Council and District Councils?**

With the Scrutiny role sitting with the East Sussex Strategic Partnership Executive Board (which includes Borough, District and County Councils), it enables all local authorities to work collectively in ensuring that the Compact is understood, developed, and implemented across the entire county. The overall result being that policies and activities can be developed to include Compact principles, which leads to improved relationships between local authorities and the Third sector.

## **How do Members and Officers feel about this approach?**

Generally across all local authorities the Compact has been well received by members and officers. However a great deal of work still needs to be done to develop a working understanding of the Compact principles (this is reflected in both the Implementation Strategy and the Annual Action Plans).

# How to sign up to the East Sussex Compact

Now that you understand the Compact, the Codes of Practice and the principles that organisations should follow to improve working relationships. It's time to sign up.

## Step 1

Put the Compact on the agenda of your next management committee/trustee meeting.

## Step 2

Provide all management committee members/trustees with a copy of the Compact (and the address to the East Sussex Compact web pages) at least two weeks before the meeting. For hard copies contact Paul Rideout – 01273482911.

## Step 3

Have the management committee members/trustees discuss the Compact at their meeting, and agree to become signatories to the Compact. The meeting should also agree a Compact Champion<sup>1</sup> for the organisation. This decision should be minuted.

## Step 4

Send a copy of the minutes, or an extract from the minutes, along with the name and contact details of your Compact Champion to the East Sussex Compact Steering Group c/o Paul Rideout.

## **Congratulations your organisation is now a signatory to the East Sussex Compact!**

As a signatory to the Compact your organisation will need to be committed to the principles of the Compact which are:

- Recognising Diversity and Promoting Equality;
- Effective Community Engagement;
- Mutual Respect and Respecting Independence; and
- Investment and Public Accountability.

<sup>1</sup>The Compact Champion will:

- Act as the channel for promoting involvement, ensuring compliance and implementation; and
- Receive updates and information from the East Sussex Compact Steering Group.

If you have any questions on becoming a signatory or require any assistance please contact Paul Rideout on 01273 482911, or [paul.rideout@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:paul.rideout@eastsussex.gov.uk).

# Understanding the Resolution of Disagreements Process

The Compact Steering Group has developed this short guidance note to assist signatories in fully understanding the process for the resolution of disagreements.

The aim of this guidance is to provide reassurance and assistance to signatories on how the process should operate.

## **Section 6 (Resolution of Disagreements) of the East Sussex Compact states:**

As far as possible, partner organisations that believe other partners are not respecting the spirit of this agreement should seek to resolve the issue between themselves.

Partners must agree to honour each other's right to raise concerns, to give time to each other to hear them, and to respond positively to them.

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Regardless of the success of any cross sector and intra-sector relationship, concerns and disagreements will at times arise that we need to try to resolve.

Concerns and disagreements can help identify important issues, and by approaching them in a positive and non-confrontational way, they can help to improve the way we work together.

Unresolved concerns and disagreements can damage working relationships.

Therefore the purpose of this resolution of disagreements process is to:

- Encourage good practice
- Promote positive relationships
- Resolve any concerns as quickly and fairly as possible
- Learn from concerns and disagreements
- Improve the effectiveness of the East Sussex Compact

Ideally, outcomes from following the procedure will result in a review of, or change in, the issue concern or disagreement.

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## **Who are the Partner organisations?**

Organisations that are developing, undertaking or participating in an activity, service or project, that involves the Public and Voluntary & Community sectors.

Concerns and disagreements are rarely deliberate and can occur for various reasons, such as:

- Organisations and individuals not being aware of the Compact principles;
- Lack of communication between organisations;
- The concern or disagreement being unavoidable through a crisis or external causes overriding Compact compliance (but this should be explained); or
- A symptom of wider issues.

Raising, and talking through, an issue with the other organisation involved can settle many concerns and disagreements.

Any organisations raising concerns with another organisation or partnership who is a signatory to the Compact should feel confident that discussions will not be used against an organisation or negatively influence future relationships\* between organisations.

\* Future relationships refers to dealings organisations or partnerships may have regarding consultations on services, grant funding arrangements, the tendering of services, and representation on partnerships or collaborative working including boards and committees.