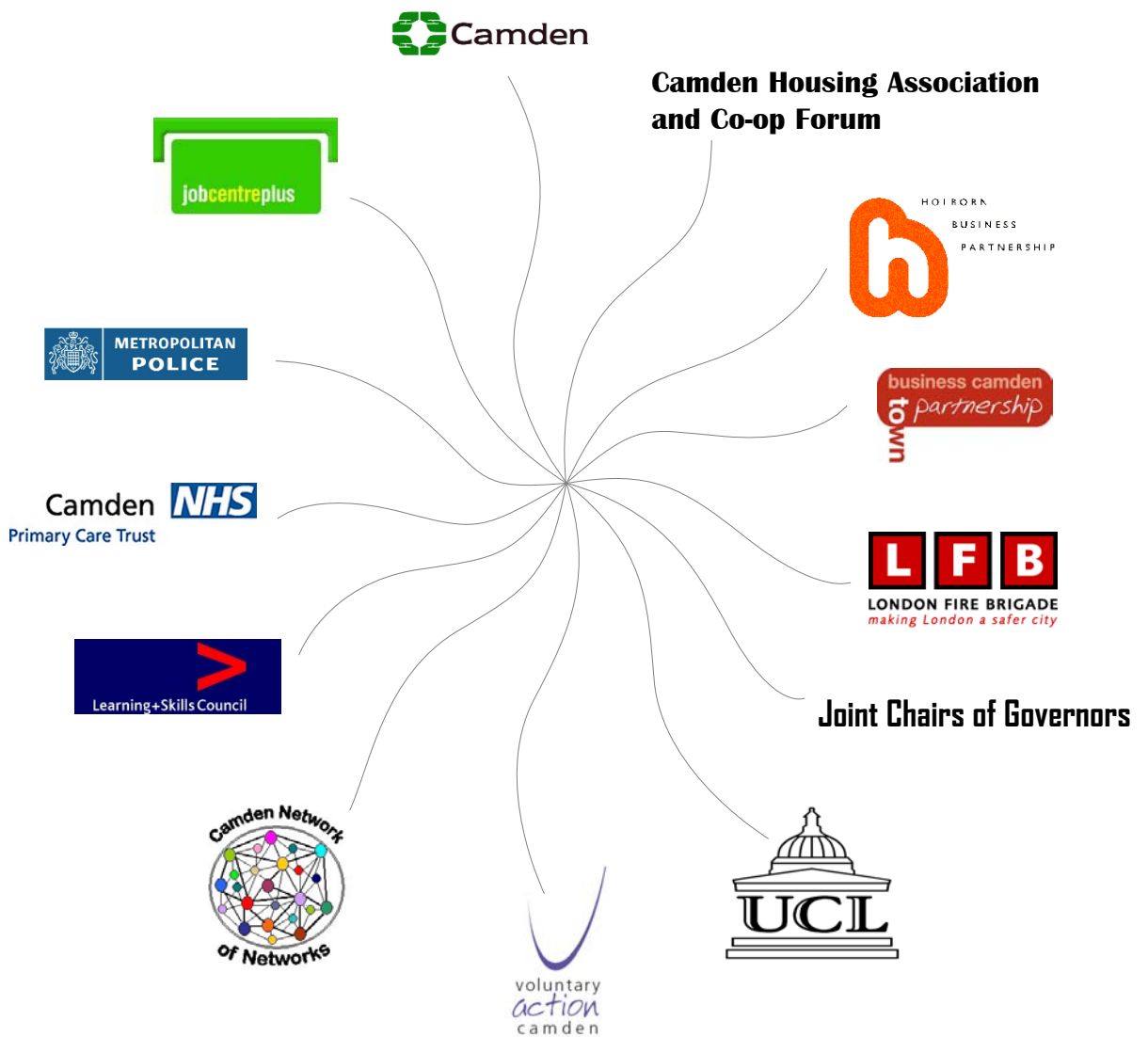


A Compact for Camden

Framework agreement between the Voluntary and Community Sector and Public Sector partners





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1. Introduction - Why have a Compact?

There are many voluntary and community groups in Camden and their activities are inevitably interwoven with those of public bodies in the Borough. The basic objectives of these groups are normally very similar, although their scope varies hugely. Typically, all wish for needs to be better met, for this to be done cost-effectively and in line with broader legislative requirements. These groups can and do interact in various ways - through collaboration, in arguing different sides of an issue, as contractor and purchaser, as funder and provider and as members of informal networks. All of these are valid, but in common with most other parts of the UK, there is a need for working relationships to become more co-operative, so allowing opportunities for fruitful collaboration to grow.

The development of this Compact is a learning process for all participants and the intention is for it to develop over time. At present the Compact provides a framework to enhance collaboration and also to govern working relationships between sectors and contributes to Camden's Community Strategy. It builds on other compacts, particularly on the UK Government's Compact with the voluntary and community sector in England, *Getting It Right Together*. The Compact will also seek to inform and complement other initiatives in terms of policy and practice, for example, *Local Agenda 21*, *Best Value*, *Modernising Local Government*, and the *Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy*.

2. Status of this Compact

2.1 Current status

This Compact has been developed jointly by representatives of local government, health trusts and voluntary and community groups in Camden. Once complete, it will not be legally binding. However, it is the intention of those who have produced it that it should have authoritative status in promoting good quality working

relationships between public bodies and local community and other voluntary groups in the Borough.

2.2 Development and Adoption of the Compact

It is recognised that the diversity and number of the bodies covered by this Compact means it would be difficult to achieve consensus from all potential members during the drafting process.

The bodies that have drafted the Compact wish to invite all interested bodies, whether they have been able to participate in discussions to date or not, to offer feedback on how the Compact is being put into practice.

2.3 Use of the Compact by signatories

Bodies that adopt the Compact will use it to inform their dealings with other bodies within the scope of the Compact, whether or not those bodies have adopted it themselves.

3. Purpose of the Compact

3.1 Wider context

The parties to the Compact share a common wish to meet the needs of Camden's communities by providing and promoting a better quality of life, quality services and facilities, protecting and enhancing the environment and by working together to deliver the goals of the Community Strategy. The effectiveness of the Compact must ultimately be assessed against this broader objective.

3.2 Primary purpose of the Compact

Whilst acknowledging the independent status of participants, the Compact's primary purpose is to:

- Provide a framework to enhance collaboration and to govern working relationships between voluntary, community and statutory agencies.
- Promote a culture of empowerment and continually improving working relations between the sectors in Camden. The working assumption for partner organisations is that it is normally better to collaborate than not to collaborate.

This does not mean that full collaboration will be the only way of working. It does mean that the health of the whole system in Camden is seen as a mutual responsibility and that organisations that have adopted the Compact will not harm the effectiveness of the whole system and, wherever possible, enhance it.

Also, whilst acknowledging that statutory bodies and some voluntary and community organisations have a funding relationship, the Compact is not intended to address funding issues specifically. The Compact sets out a framework for all working relationships between participating bodies.

3.3 Other aims of the Compact

To achieve the primary purpose, the Compact aims to:

- Widen the community's access to decision-making processes.
- Develop the relationship between and across sectors at all levels.
- Improve communication and information flow between organisations and with the general public.
- Develop the network between public bodies and voluntary and community organisations.

There is general recognition that to address the primary purpose requires a change of culture. The Compact will support this process.

3.4 Success Criteria

Success will be judged primarily against the purposes above. Indicators of success, which must be measurable and open to assessment, will include:

- Projects and partnerships undertaken that could not previously have been undertaken
- Fewer implementation problems on projects and partnerships.
- Greater effectiveness on the part of participating organisations - better results with less wasted effort.
- General agreement that the Compact has been helpful to organisations and to the people of Camden, i.e. as indicated by improved working relationships and a greater awareness and understanding of respective roles and responsibilities.
- Greater effectiveness in delivering the goals of the Community Strategy

4. Different types of activity covered by this Compact

4.1 Different roles of participating organisations

Although member organisations share the overarching purpose of the Compact there are, nevertheless, major differences between them in their resources and ways of operating in addressing this. For instance, public sector groups are statutory bodies ultimately responsible to the general public. They generally have a wide remit and statutory obligations and have access to very significant financial resources. They have relatively large numbers of paid staff.

In contrast, voluntary and community organisations often operate to a very specific remit, typically have few financial resources and fewer assets, are answerable to trustees, donors and charity law,

and often have few paid staff. Many rely hugely on the passion and energy of volunteers and must respect and nurture that.

However, both groups do deliver services to users of one type or another and both accept the importance of empowering users by, for instance, seeking to involve them in the governance of activities and services and representing their views fairly.

4.2 Different ways of operating

The organisations that have adopted this Compact, along with others, will work in a number of ways. For instance they may act separately, or they may act together on a project of common interest. They may have a funder/provider relationship or they may work in informal networks. Sometimes they may act in apparent opposition, for instance when a pressure group mounts a campaign against the policies of one of the public bodies. The Compact is aimed at addressing its primary purpose, whichever way of working is appropriate, rather than promoting one way of working to the exclusion of others.

It is recognised that the capacity of voluntary and community organisations to engage in consultation and other collaborative activity may be limited by virtue of the level and range of resources available to them. There will therefore be a need for the Compact to be used to help develop the voice of the voluntary and community sector as a whole in various ways, if its primary purpose is to be addressed.

5. Principles underpinning the Compact

5.1 Scope of the principles

The following principles apply to the operation of the Compact itself. No assumption is made that all organisations have adopted every one of them for their internal affairs.

5.2 Principles to be observed in enacting the Compact

- Mutual responsibility for the success of the Compact.
- Value diversity.
- Respect for all participating organisations and for all points of view.
- Open channels of dialogue.
- Transparency of processes.
- Openness of approach and equal access to information.
- Honesty and integrity between parties.
- Inclusiveness.
- Improvement supported by regular review processes.
- Respecting government policy on the inclusion of the voluntary and community sector alongside the statutory sector in developing policy.
- Commitment to the resolution of conflict.
- Agreement to follow best practice on consultation.
- Equality of access and equality of opportunity.
- Acknowledgement of the different roles, resources and access to power and influence of the various partners to the Compact.

6. Undertakings by organisations which have adopted the Compact

6.1 Undertakings made by all organisations

All participating organisations agree to observe the principles underpinning the Compact and:

- To work together to meet the needs of the people of Camden.

- To respect the principles, ground-rules and all other aspects of the Compact.
- If they are dissatisfied with the progress or form of the Compact, to make a commitment to improve the Compact rather than leave it prematurely, by raising the matter within their organisation/group or department as appropriate. If the matter remains unresolved after following this course of action, to raise the issue formally with the Compact Group.
- To participate in reviews of the Compact or its operation.
- To participate as equals in building the capacity of the Compact, recognising that the input from some parties may be different from other parties.
- To use the mechanisms established as part of the Compact as a way of letting other organisations and groups know about any plans that might affect them. This includes creating opportunities for involving others in joint projects.
- To have a commitment to openness and the sharing of information.
- To give prior thought to the identification of individuals and groups that need to be involved in a piece of work/project and to facilitate the involvement of others throughout the process.
- To err on the side of telling too much rather than too little - to allow other organisations to decide whether they are affected rather than make that decision for them. To say clearly where this is not possible for any reason - perhaps because of confidentiality, or where organisations are pursuing different objectives. Even in such cases however, organisations will seek to err on the side of disclosure rather than secrecy when in doubt.
- To consider and decide, jointly with other partners, how existing partnerships can implement the Compact and to report their findings to the Compact Group.
- To ensure that policies and practices in relation to the voluntary and community sector promote equality and social

inclusion and to recognise the breadth of obligations of public bodies.

- To use the principles and mechanisms of the Compact to help assess new policies and plans for their impact on other partners and their users.
- To ensure that policies and practices in relation to other partners and their users, promote equality and social inclusion.

6.2 Undertakings by public bodies

- To recognise the right of the voluntary and community sector bodies to manage their own affairs within the law and to pursue their aims independently, including a right to campaign on issues, which may be against the policies and practice of public bodies.
- To allocate resources to the voluntary and community sector in Camden fairly, in line with clearly stated objectives and priorities and to principles of quality, efficiency, effectiveness, best value, equity, sustainability and accountability.
- To ensure that the Compact is adopted at all levels and to designate a named person as the point of contact on matters that concern the Compact. For the local authority this will mean each department designating one or more named person. For other bodies, an appropriate person will be appointed in consultation with the Compact Group. The appropriate person will be dependent on the size and make up of the organisation.
- To promote a strong and effective infrastructure for the voluntary and community sector in Camden as one of the strategic objectives of the public sector in Camden.
- To use the principles and mechanisms of the Compact to help assess new policies and plans for their impact on the voluntary and community sector and their users.
- To involve the voluntary and community sector appropriately in the process of developing and monitoring public policies,

strategies and priorities and to ensure that consultation processes with the sector are timely, transparent and inclusive.

- To ensure that a plan to implement the Compact is in place within six months of it being adopted.
- To ensure that six monthly evaluation reports on progress are made to the Compact group.

6.3 Undertakings by Voluntary and Community Groups

- To recognise the breadth of obligations of public bodies and their right to manage their own affairs.
- To represent the views of users and other stakeholders to public bodies.
- To use the principles and mechanisms of the Compact to help assess new policies and plans for their impact on other partners and their users.
- To ensure that policies and practices in relation to other partners and their users promote equality and social inclusion.
- To ensure that the Compact is discussed and endorsed by the appropriate management bodies.
- To ensure that the principles of the Compact underpin working relationships with other partners.
- To designate a named person as the point of contact on matters that concern the Compact.

7 Mechanisms

7.1 Compact Group

Membership

The operation of the Compact will be overseen by a Compact Group comprised of employees or volunteers from the voluntary,

community and statutory sectors. The Compact Group will be a task group charged with the responsibility of monitoring the implementation and success of the Compact on behalf of Compact participants. The Compact Group's approach will primarily be to encourage and develop best practice. Members of the Compact Group will be representatives of the participating bodies appointed through a transparent process. Membership will give equal weight to both the voluntary and community sector and to public bodies and will make provision for the differences in size and type of organisation within these categories.

Operation

- A Chair and Vice Chair will be appointed and these will normally rotate between the two sectors.
- Membership of the Group will be for an initial period of three years, with an option for a further three years.
- Expenses will be paid to participants from the voluntary and community sectors consistent with that for other voluntary commitment such as school governors.
- The Group will meet at least quarterly.

Responsibilities

- To monitor, evaluate and oversee the development and implementation of the Compact at its quarterly meetings.
- To consider how far existing policies, strategies and arrangements need to adapt and develop to meet the requirements of the Compact.
- To produce an annual monitoring report on the implementation of the Compact and to recommend any changes to a special meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership, to which all interested parties will be invited. The purpose of this meeting will be to:
 - Consider the Compact Group's annual monitoring report on the implementation of the Compact and to make recommendations for any changes. An element of this

review will be an assessment of the capacity of the voluntary and community sector and identification of plans to develop the capacity of the sector.

- Share concerns about current provision of services and identify areas of joint action for the coming year.
 - Provide an opportunity for the voluntary and community sector to raise issues with other partners.
 - Consider areas of best practice and how to disseminate this across public bodies and the voluntary and community sector in Camden.
- To develop a process to consider the findings of the monitoring report, review performance and plan for the next year, in conjunction with the Local Strategic Partnership.

7.2 Sharing of learning

In addition to the above, the Compact will operate a variety of mechanisms to spread learning (both operational and policy learning) across public bodies and the voluntary and community sector in Camden. The diversity of member groups gives particularly strong possibilities for enhancing strategic learning. For instance, action learning groups may be established on common issues and co-operative inquiries may be established into areas of common concern. The Compact Group will be responsible for harnessing and sharing the learning from these activities. Again, public sector bodies are expected to provide locations and facilitators for such sessions wherever possible; sessions will be organised so as best to permit the participation of people from the different types of organisation.

A primary purpose of the Compact includes the commitment to continuous improvement of ways of working together. To achieve this, at the end of each joint project or significant process of the Compact, participants will be invited to consider as a minimum (a) What went well, (b) What was difficult, (c) What would be different next time, and (d) What, if any, broader strategic issues were uncovered.

Appendix 1 - Compact Action Plan

Action Point	Lead Responsibility	Completion Date	Review Date
Section 6.1 Undertakings made by all organisations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To establish a Compact Steering Group to oversee the development and implementation of the Compact. • To review the implementation and progress of the Compact on an annual basis. • To develop and maintain a communications and access strategy to promote partnership working between sectors, identifying information that needs to be made available, effective methods of providing information and mechanisms for review. • To build relationships across sectors by participating in an ongoing programme of open days and events, focusing on specific issues, information exchange, how partners work and how to access key services. • To take the Compact into consideration before drawing up any new policies/plans and reviewing existing policies/plans. Mention of the Compact and how the policy/plan relates should be made in all relevant policies/plans. 	<p>VAC & LBC Voluntary Sector Unit</p> <p>Camden Network of Networks, VAC and LBC Voluntary Sector Unit All participating organisations</p> <p>All participating organisations</p> <p>All participating organisations</p>		
Section 6.2 Undertakings by Public Bodies			
<p>Funding</p> <p>Each public body that funds the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to produce:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A statement on how and why they fund the sector, with clear criteria and priorities. • Funding procedures that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are consistent with the principles of good regulation and the need to provide effective protection of, and proper accountability for, public money. 	<p>All public bodies</p>		

Action Point	Lead Responsibility	Completion Date	Review Date
<p>Funding continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognise the distinctive and diverse nature of the voluntary and community sector which works with local neighbourhoods, communities of interest and on a Borough wide basis and spans activity ranging from small unfunded self help groups, through to medium sized community based activities and larger voluntary sector providers of services to specific groups. - Recognise the need for core costs to be included in the price of contracts. - Offer fair access to strategic, project and contract funding. - Actively consider longer term funding. - Have clear funding conditions and offer a joint approach to monitoring and evaluation, to include joint agreement on outcomes and outputs (including service user input) and conduct joint assessments against these outcomes and outputs. - Ensure investment in working with socially excluded communities and individuals. 	<p>All public bodies</p>		
<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each public body to actively use their existing guidelines or develop guidelines for consultation with the VCS. These should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting organisations in various ways - this must include talking with groups, especially those traditionally excluded such as black and minority ethnic, other minority groups, people with disabilities - to find the best ways of reaching their communities. - Allowing enough time for organisations to be involved. - Being clear as to the purpose and nature of the consultation. - Giving clear information. • Recognition of the role of infrastructure organisations in co-ordinating the views of the VCS. • Appropriate processes for VCS involvement in developing and monitoring policies, strategies, and priorities. • Ensure that organisations of socially excluded communities are an inherent part of consultation and policy processes through involvement from a large pool of individuals and organisations. 	<p>All public bodies</p>		

Action Point	Lead Responsibility	Completion Date	Review Date
<p>Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public bodies to coordinate their support to the local VCS infrastructure including the BME sector infrastructure. • Public bodies to develop strategies to support capacity building initiatives, for VC groups to ensure that they are able to fulfil their roles in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinating a voice for residents and users to public authorities and service providers. - Building social capital and community cohesion. - Delivering services, often locally and informally, based on their assessment of community needs. 	All public bodies		
<p>Social Inclusion</p> <p>Public bodies to develop mechanisms for working jointly with VCS groups to tackle issues of social exclusion.</p>	All public bodies		
<p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Compact is adopted at all levels and to designate a named person as the point of contact on matters that concern the Compact. • To develop mechanisms to assess new policies and plans for their impact on the VCS and their users. • To ensure that a plan to implement the Compact is in place within six months of it being adopted. • To ensure that six monthly evaluation reports on progress are made to the Compact Group. 	All public bodies		
<p>Volunteering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All signatories to the Compact should commit themselves to maintaining the best practice in the promotion, development and celebration of volunteering, recognising that volunteering is a substantial social investment that contributes to the development of social capital. • Partners who are employers should consider employment practices that allow time off for volunteering. • Partners should acknowledge the nature and extent of volunteering in their annual and project reports. • Partners should examine how volunteers can be brought into their policy making processes. 	All partners		

Action Point	Lead Responsibility	Completion Date	Review Date
<p>Section 6.3 Undertakings by Voluntary and Community Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review current methods of appointing and supporting VCS members of cross sector partnerships and ensuring accountability. • Continue to explore methods of engaging small and emerging groups and setting up a programme of support to facilitate this. • Map existing partnerships and their role and to post map on relevant web sites. • Develop methods of monitoring VCS involvement in partnerships and to evaluate effectiveness. • Each organisation should discuss whether they sign up to the Compact at management committee level. All organisations signing up to the Compact to receive a certificate which the Chair of the organisation will sign on behalf of the organisation. • To designate a named person as the point of contact on matters that concern the Compact. • To include information in monitoring reports for statutory funders on how the work has related to the Compact. 	<p>Camden Network of Networks, VAC Camden Network of Networks, VAC Camden Network of Networks, VAC Camden Network of Networks, VAC Available to all organisations Available to all groups All groups signing up to the Compact</p>		
<p>Section 7.1 Compact Goup</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each public sector partner to nominate at least one member to the Compact Group, depending on the size and make up of the organisation. • Partners jointly to identify funds to cover expenses of VCS participants. • Partners to contribute to the production of annual monitoring reports and mechanisms to spread learning. • Compact Group to produce an annual programme of meetings/activities and annual monitoring report to the LSP. 	<p>All public bodies All partners All partners</p>		

Notes

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Albanian

Nese ju keto informata ju nevojiten ne gjuhen tuaj, me germa te medha apo ne audio kasete ju lutem na tregoni.

Bengali

যদি আপনি এই তথ্যগুলো আপনার মাতৃভাষায়, বড় ছাপার অক্ষরে, অথবা কানে শোনার টেপে পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে জানান।

French

Si vous voulez ces renseignements dans votre langue, en gros caractères ou sur cassette, vous êtes priés de nous le faire savoir.

Spanish

Si usted necesita esta información en su idioma, en letras grandes o en un cassette, por favor avísenos.

Somali

Haddii aad u baahantahay macluumaadkan oo ku qoran luqaddaada oo ku daabacan far waawayn, ama ku duuban cajelad fadlan na soo ogaysii