What is the compact?

The compact is a written agreement between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector, which sets out key principles and establishes a way of working that improves their relationship for mutual advantage.

It considers areas such as involvement in policy design and consultation, funding arrangements (including grants and contracts), promoting equality, ensuring better involvement in delivering services, and strengthening independence.

There is both a national compact between central government and the voluntary and community sector, and compacts at local authority level developed to meet the aspirations and circumstances at borough level.

The national compact is accompanied by an accountability and transparency guide, which outlines steps to take at national and local level if these principles are not followed, including dispute resolution, internal complaints procedures and ombudsmen functions. A copy of the national compact can be found at: www.compactvoice.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_compact.pdf

The national organisation Compact Voice also have a collection of case studies on their website exploring funding between the statutory and voluntary sector – including managing cuts effectively, improving commissioning and procurement. Visit www.compactvoice.org.uk for more information.

Local compact

Kensington and Chelsea was one of the first local authority areas in the country to develop a compact, and at a time when some areas no longer adopt or implement one, the Royal Borough continues to work alongside the voluntary and community sector to ensure the local agreement remains relevant and is used for effective partnership working.

Why does the Royal Borough have a compact?

The compact lays the foundation for a positive experience when working in partnership across sectors. It is not a legally binding document and does not replace existing legislative requirements or procurement law. It is built on mutual trust and respect.

How does it work?

A Compact Implementation Group (CIG) exists locally bringing together representatives from the local public sector and voluntary and community organisations. The group meets quarterly
and leads the work to implement the compact, monitor the awareness of it and investigate potential ‘breaches’. The meetings are chaired jointly by the Council’s Head of Community Engagement and Chief Executive Officer at the Kensington and Chelsea Social Council, the borough’s council for voluntary service.

Working alongside the CIG is a network of compact champions who help promote the local agreement across sectors and in different teams. The Cabinet Member for Voluntary Organisations and Resident Engagement is one of the Council’s many champions.

In 2011/12, the CIG undertook an exercise to amend and update the local compact. Following consultation across sectors a new compact was launched and is available to view at: www.rbkc.gov.uk/compact

Compact commitments
Contained within the compact are the commitments expected from the public, voluntary and community sectors in order to ensure positive working relationships:

• Working in partnership
  The compact recognises that effective partnership working between sectors will lead to greater understanding of the needs of the community and better services for all.

• Well managed programmes and services
  The compact recognises that openness, transparency and value for money are vital to delivering effective services to the community.

• An equal and fair society
  The compact recognises the importance of working together across the sectors to address inequality and disadvantage and to demonstrate a commitment to building an equal and fair society.

How can I get started?

The compact can be used in many different ways and should be consulted as a tool for partnership working with the voluntary sector. You should familiarise yourself with the compact so that you can use it as a guide for maintaining good relationships with voluntary organisations in the borough.

The ability to challenge bad practice can often lead to a better relationship, so if you think an organisation has not followed compact principles in the way it conducts its business, it is worth bringing this up with them, along with constructive suggestions for how they can improve.