

THE CITY TOGETHER COMPACT CODES OF PRACTICE

Introduction

The City Together Compact is a voluntary agreement¹ between the statutory public sector organisations and the third sector, which sets out how we will work together, in partnership, for mutual benefit and the securing of better outcomes for communities.

The Codes of Practice contained within this document are practical guidelines to support out partnership working in five key areas:

- Commissioning
- Communication
- Consultation and engagement
- Inclusive City
- Volunteering

The Codes build on the vision and shared principles contained within the Compact Agreement and are furthered by an Annual Action Plan of key activities² that seek to build partnership working.

The City Together Compact is defined by the City of London local authority boundaries. It is relevant to the local government services provided by the City of London Corporation, to health services that are provided within the City by cross borough health trusts and to the City of London Police.

The Compact encompasses all community, faith and voluntary organisations and social enterprises that provide services to workers, residents and organisations within the City of London local authority boundaries.

¹ As a voluntary agreement, The City Together Compact is not legally binding.

² If you would like copies of The City Together Agreement or Action Plan please download copies from (insert website and details for paper copies or further information)

COMMISSIONING CODE OF PRACTICE

Commissioning is the process by which a service is purchased. It involves:

- The identification, description and prioritisation of needs based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment³ and including engagement with residents and other stakeholders. .
- Identification of an appropriate response within available resources.
- Drawing up a service specification, setting out the detail of the service required (including the activity, expected outputs, outcomes and anticipated cost of delivering that service).
- Undertaking a fair and open but competitive process to identify who is best placed to provide a service.
- Agreeing a contract with the chosen provider.
- Implementing monitoring and review processes to ensure the commissioned service meets the agreed standards.

This Commissioning Code of Practice specifically relates to the commissioning relationship between the public and third sectors. However, we recognise that this type of relationship may also exist between members of the third sector and between businesses and the third sector. We therefore encourage the application of this code to all commissioning relationships, where appropriate.

The public sector undertakes to:

- 1) Consult the third sector and service users as part of the development of commissioning strategies - this includes consultation as part of defining need, agreeing priorities for delivery and reviewing progress against objectives.
- 2) Be clear and consistent in the commissioning process by:
 - making the commissioning process as simple as possible, with clear expectations, standards and deadlines that reflect the amounts of money available
 - working with third sector capacity-building organisations⁴ to promote commissioning opportunities in accessible and inclusive ways, to provide support to interested organisations and to review the commissioning process
 - allocating resources against clear criteria, outputs and outcomes, ensuring value for money

³ The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, (JSNA), is the means by which partners in the City Together describe the needs of their population and the strategic direction of services to meet those needs. The JSNA requires the involvement of residents and other stakeholders in its design and the Corporation of London and City and Hackney Teaching Primary Care Trust will have a duty to deliver against it once agreed.

⁴ Capacity building organisations are third sector organisations that support the voluntary sector to function more effectively through training, information sharing, consultation and acting as a representative voice. Also known as umbrella, infrastructure or second-tier organisations.

- involving service users and residents in the process
 - developing transparent agreements and contracts.
- 3) Develop and improve co-operation and consistency between different departments within the City of London Corporation and work with other public sector organisations to develop co-ordinated commissioning arrangements.
 - 4) Confirm its commitment to the principle of Full Cost Recovery⁵ within a competitive commissioning process that delivers the best quality for the best price.
 - 5) Provide appropriate notice of decisions so that organisations are able effectively to start up or stop a service and provide reasons for lack of success.
 - 6) Provide payments on time and consider longer-term funding to aid planning by and sustainability of third sector organisations.
 - 7) Develop common and transparent monitoring arrangements that are proportionate to the amount of funding - this includes clear procedures to tackle poor performance and recognise excellent performance.

The third sector undertakes to:

- 1) Develop and maintain high standards of governance - this includes establishing and implementing appropriate policies, procedures and monitoring and reporting systems in order to meet accountability to commissioners, service users, other stakeholders and the law; and providing evidence of commitment to equality of opportunity.
- 2) Establish systems for ensuring value for money - this includes: clearly and openly explaining the costs of delivering a service and how these have been arrived at; and maintaining high standards of financial record keeping and accounting.
- 3) Work with capacity-building organisations to enable the submission of robust and realistic tenders.
- 4) Publicly acknowledge the contribution made by the public and private sector to their work.
- 5) Proactively work in partnership with service users and the public, third and business sectors to maximise the quality of services.

⁵ Full Cost Recovery – Recognition of all costs involved in the delivery of a service.

- 6) Work positively with the public sector, identifying and rectifying concerns and providing three months notice if services are to be wound down.
- 7) Recognise that the public sector has a duty to balance policy, service and budgetary priorities and that this may have an impact on commissioning opportunities.
- 8) Recognise that central government funding may be tied to specific outputs and processes and that this may affect whether these resources can be used to commission services from the third sector.

The public and third sectors jointly undertake to:

- 1) Work together to increase the amount of external funding available for services within the City. This may include submitting joint funding applications, providing information on need and acting as referees where appropriate.

GRANT MAKING

Grant making is different from commissioning because those providing grant aid decide their priorities and then invite organisations to submit applications against those priorities. The applicant is required to explain the specific needs of their target group and why they and their response offer the best way to make an impact.

The City of London Corporation, as a local authority, does not currently deliver a grant programme for the sole benefit of voluntary organisations based in and providing services within the City of London. However it does provide financial support to the third sector through its administration of private investments. Its major contribution is made through the City Bridge Trust *, which makes grants in excess of £15 million a year to charitable projects benefiting the inhabitants of Greater London. In addition, the City of London Corporation's Finance Committee** awards a small number of grants to organisations that are able to demonstrate a strong connection with the City and for work that will benefit the City's residents or workers.

* For more information about City Bridge Trust please visit their website www.bridgehoustrust.org.uk/citybridgetrust/

** For more information on Finance Committee Grants, please visit their website www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/urban_regeneration/grants.

COMMUNICATION CODE OF PRACTICE

Effective communication is critical to the success of this Compact and to all partnership working. An open, two-way, respectful dialogue fosters understanding, informs joint work, improves outcomes and lessens the possibility of disagreement and duplication.

The public and third sector jointly undertake to:

- 1) Develop regular, respectful, responsive, consistent, open and solution-focused communication.
- 2) Develop appropriate ways to communicate with each other and with all communities, particularly working with capacity-building organisations in order to maximise success - this includes provision of communication support where the need has been identified, for example British Sign Language interpretation or advocacy.
- 3) Share best practice, innovative ideas and significant news in good time, whilst avoiding information overload.
- 4) Plan and participate in joint activities that build good communication and improve the effectiveness of partnership working - this includes producing joint publicity and information and participating in The City Together Compact activities.
- 5) Individually and jointly train and develop relevant staff so that they are better able to communicate and participate in joint work.
- 6) Raise, within their own sector, awareness of each other's knowledge, experience and work and promote the benefits arising from effective communication.
- 7) Raise concerns directly with the relevant organisation in a non-judgemental way and with the aim of achieving amicable resolution.
- 8) Consult with each other to ensure the accuracy of information that may be critical and ensure that this criticism is realistic, constructive and necessary.

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT CODE OF PRACTICE

Consultation is a two-way process: it fosters interaction and discussion, leading to a decision on service priorities, policy or strategy. Different levels of consultation are appropriate for different circumstances but they should always:

- include the provision of clear, accessible and relevant information,
- be open and transparent
- be well-timed
- seek to include all relevant communities
- have an impact, helping to influence and inform decisions.

Effective consultation and engagement is essential to developing the joint working embodied within the Compact. This Code of Practice recognises and builds on the successful consultation and engagement that is already undertaken with residents, workers and other stakeholders, for example the work embodied in the City of London Corporation's Consultation and Engagement Framework and the City of London Police Engagement Strategy.

The public sector undertakes to:

- 1) Consult and engage with the third sector on issues that are likely to affect the third sector, its service users, or an interest area that it represents.
- 2) Ensure time for consultation and user involvement is built into the planning cycle at an early stage; a best-practice period of 12 weeks for written consultation should be followed, with reasons provided when urgency or external guidance require a shorter timescale.
- 3) Be clear about the purpose of and process for consultation and work with third sector organisations to ensure accessibility for all residents and relevant stakeholders.
- 4) Consider commissioning the third sector to undertake consultation.
- 5) Use the City of London Corporation's Consultation and Engagement Framework⁶ as a best practice guide to maximise the effectiveness of consultation.

⁶ A summary of the City of London Consultation and Engagement Framework 2007/08 is available from www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/consultation. A full copy is available by e-mailing consultation@cityoflondon.gov.uk or calling 020 7332 1403.

The third sector undertakes to:

- 1) Encourage and support their users to become more involved and participate in consultation on and engagement in service planning and development.
- 2) Work with service users, residents and other voluntary organisations to submit joint responses, where appropriate.
- 3) Promote best practice in consultation by developing guidance on effective representation and engagement of residents and service users.
- 4) Be clear how and who they are representing in consultation responses and ensure that their organisation regularly evaluates its representative role.
- 5) Ensure accuracy and objectivity in the preparation of consultation responses including meeting consultation deadlines.

The public and third sectors jointly undertake to:

- 1) Circulate, within an agreed timescale, feedback on the results and impact of consultation.
- 2) Respect the confidentiality of information provided through consultation, where appropriate and agreed.
- 3) Organise joint consultations or utilise each other's consultation and engagement methods in order to save costs and avoid duplication.
- 4) Consult with each other when evaluating and developing the effectiveness of consultation and engagement.

INCLUSIVE CITY CODE OF PRACTICE

An Inclusive City can be best defined as one where all our communities share a sense of belonging, similar life opportunities and physical access to the environment. It is a cohesive City where people work together to improve understanding, build strong relationships and share equality of opportunity ambitions.

The City of London provides a distinct contribution to facilitating international cohesiveness - the peace and reconciliation work undertaken by St Ethelburgas is an impressive example. Joint working between all sectors is critical to building on success and achieving an inclusive and cohesive City.

The public and third sectors jointly undertake to:

- 1) Provide clear commitment to building an inclusive and cohesive City by developing appropriate policy, procedure and practice in all their functions and by evidencing non-discriminatory service delivery through robust monitoring arrangements.
- 2) Ensure that their staff understand and fulfil their responsibility for furthering an inclusive and cohesive city.
- 3) Recognise and build upon the distinct value, skills and expertise that each sector brings to the achievement of an inclusive and cohesive City.
- 4) Work together to ensure an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the City's communities and how they can best be met.
- 5) Ensure that information provided and venues used for the delivery of services are fully accessible to all communities.
- 6) Work proactively to ensure that all people are treated fairly and target support towards those facing unfair disadvantage.
- 7) Support and create opportunities to celebrate the City's diversity and its commitment to inclusion and to promoting community cohesion.
- 8) Regularly report on progress in building an inclusive and cohesive City.

VOLUNTEERING CODE OF PRACTICE

Volunteering is the freely-given commitment of time and energy to benefit individuals, groups, the environment or wider society. It is an important part of building a cohesive and fully-engaged community within the City and at its fringes. The City of London Corporation has achieved remarkable success in securing business volunteers through its Corporate Responsibility⁷ work with City businesses through its City Action and Heart of the City programmes. The City is also able to harness volunteers from across London through initiatives such as Thames 21. Other partners to this Compact, including Barts and the London NHS Trust and the City of London Police, continue to successfully recruit volunteers to provide added value to their services, and volunteering remains at the heart of the third sector's success.

The public and third sectors jointly undertake to:

- 1) Recognise and celebrate the contribution of volunteers to the life and vitality of the City and its distinct success in securing the contribution of business volunteers.
- 2) Provide appropriate volunteering opportunities within their organisations - ensuring that they are accessible to all - and promote volunteering as a positive activity for their staff.
- 3) Ensure that their support for volunteering provides a range of tailored benefits for the volunteer - this includes: a sense of worthwhile achievement; development of useful skills and experience; participation in social networks; tailored support for disabled volunteers; and the reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, as agreed with the host organisation.
- 4) Ensure that volunteering is appropriate to the host organisation by providing volunteer opportunities that contribute to its work, aims and ethos and by developing clear policies regarding volunteer recruitment, development and retention.
- 5) Encourage the involvement of volunteers in consultation, decision-making and internal communications and ensure that there is a key contact for volunteers within their organisation.
- 6) Recognise the cost of and added value provided by volunteering, when considering budgets.
- 7) Monitor the impact of volunteering on the individual and their organisation - this may require the commissioning of research on the contribution of volunteers to the City and its fringes.

⁷ Corporate Responsibility – where businesses consider the interests of society by taking responsibility for the impact of their activities on the community, economy and environment.

- 8) Build on success by continuing to encourage and support volunteering from City businesses as another means of providing resources and support to third sector organisations - this includes building the capacity of City-based, third sector organisations to benefit from City volunteers.
- 9) Consider the development of a third sector, generalist volunteer bureau within the City of London.