

Insight

The One East Midlands Magazine

January 2009 Issue 1



INSIDE:

Welcome from One East Midlands' new CEO
For and against a regional Compact
Compact Voice: the national debate
One EM membership update

Welcome

My Vision for One East Midlands

At a time when clarity is the 'order of the day' what better timing to raise the debate surrounding Compact in this first edition of Insight magazine.

In my early days here at One East Midlands I am clear that the relationships both within our sector and between the sector and funders and policy makers are crucial to the successful delivery of our shared goals. The clarity of those relationships depends entirely on mutual understanding and respect; it cannot be forced or coerced but will grow and strengthen over time with the right prompts here and there.

Our goal at One is to ensure that the nudges and debates happen and an open door policy to the process exists so please get talking, get involved and give us your views.



Rachel Quinn,
CEO

Members' Services

Just as the Compact is about relationships, the One East Midlands' membership services scheme is about our relationship with the organisations we serve and our role in facilitating relationships between our members and with the key regional and national stakeholders who set the policies which affect all of us.

The report back item on p.13 gives a great overview of the opportunities offered through membership of One East Midlands and I hope that it encourages those of you who are not already members to join the scheme. This edition of Insight is just the start of our programme of policy and information updates for 2009, watch out for:

In Touch News Bulletin;
In Touch Training and Events Bulletin;
In Focus Policy Bulletin;
In Depth Policy Briefings.

Finally, I'd like to note that we have recently said goodbye to Nicola Wade, Holly Mills and Lynne Richardson. They have made a significant contribution to the organisation over the years and we wish them well in their new jobs.

Holly Swinckels,
Deputy CEO

In this issue

Insight

January 2009

Issue 1

1 Welcome from Rachel Quinn, CEO
My vision for One East Midlands

4 Regional Compact
The East Midlands' response

5 What makes a successful local Compact?
5 steps to success

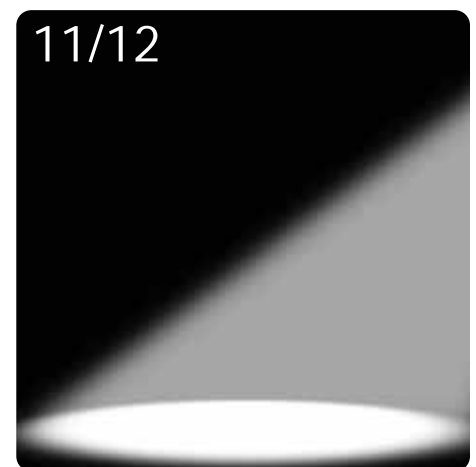
7 Interview with a Compact Advocate
Sean Roberts, NCVO

9 Compact Voice
The national consultation

11 Spotlight on a Member
Derby CVS

12 Spotlight on a Trustee
Shamsher Chohan

13 Report back
On our membership



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Compact Debate

The future of Compact

A national consultation has been taking place which has asked three key questions:

What sort of agreement should the Compact be in future?

How could the form and content of the Compact be enhanced to make it fit for the future?

How could the Commission for the Compact change to ensure better implementation of the Compact?

In the East Midlands, One EM and Voice organised a consultation event which included compact developers, members of local and regional government, social enterprises and the voluntary and community sector. These questions were asked to find out the views from the East Midlands.

Participants said that they were against statutory powers for the Compact because it is based on good will and is evolutionary. However, guidance should be produced on what constitutes a breach and ways for recourse and mediation. The role of the Commission was seen to guide this relationship and increase awareness for the Compact.

Another suggestion was to create a single national Compact for everyone to sign up to. It was agreed that there were some broad principles that would be relevant for all. Participants did point out, however, that the benefit of the Compact was in building relationships through the implementation process. Overall, it was agreed that there needs to be a comprehensive national document with broad principles and position statements where implementation plans were negotiated locally.

In terms of combining the five codes of good practice into the main Compact, it was suggested that there should be an aspiration towards a single document, however this could be seen as a threat to the interests of particular groups and should be merged only when those groups are confident their specific needs were being addressed in the main document.

The event also discussed how regional work can complement and enhance local Compacts. The groups suggested there was a regional role to raise awareness, sharing / highlighting best practice, and supporting local groups.

If you would like to learn more about our work on Compact or how you can feed in your views contact Clare Anoop, Policy Analyst, clareanoopa@one-em.org.uk.

For more information on the national consultation visit Commission for the Compact, www.thecompact.org.uk

To read the full response paper visit www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk.

A Regional Compact: the argument for and against

At a recent consultation event the need for a regional Compact was discussed. A regional Compact would cover those Voluntary and Community Sector groups working at a regional level and with all groups that work with regional level statutory organisations, such as emda, GOEM and the regional health authority. There was an energetic debate on the topic with arguments for and against creating a regional Compact. See below for some of the comments:

For

Important that regional VCS knows what to expect from regional partners.

Decisions made at regional level do affect both local and regional VCS organisations.

There needs to be confidence that regional bodies are working effectively with and for local VCS.

Against

Regional arrangements will dilute local Compacts.

Regional compact is not relevant to local groups.

National Compact is sufficient to guide regional relationships.

What is your view?

Do you think there should be a regional Compact?

If you would like to add your voice to the debate at regional level, please contact Clare Anoop, Policy Analyst, clareanoopa@one-em.org.uk.

What makes a successful Compact?

Jess Crocker, Compact Voice Manager // www.compactvoice.org.uk

In the ten years since the national Compact was written we have come a long way. Back in 1998, three-year funding, 12-week consultations and full-cost recovery were barely part of the vocabulary for voluntary organisations, now they are becoming the expected norm. During this time Local Compacts have also been produced in every area in England.

While we sometimes hear cynical talk about the Compact, looking around the country there are many areas where Local Compacts have worked well. East Sussex and Birmingham are two leading examples that feature in the article on the national Compact debate on page 9.

In the East Midlands, Derby Compact recently won the 'Local Compact of the Year Award', read more about the praise that Derby CVS and their partners received on page 11 in the Spotlight on a Member feature.

In this article, we will look at some tips to ensure that your experience with Compact is a positive one.

Before discussing how to make a Compact successful, let's look at two areas, both in the north of England, that highlight the differences that exist. In the first area there is a Local Compact, but it does little more than sit on a shelf. It is not mentioned in relevant documents and senior figures can be heard claiming that it does not work. Breaches are left unchallenged and there is no praise for getting it right so expectations are extremely low.

In the other area, the Local Compact is tied into all related initiatives and publications. They run training on how to use it and put it on every relevant agenda. It is treated as good practice so that partnerships embody a 'Compact way of working' rather than just focusing on compliance. This means that both sectors work together from the start and put things right together when they go wrong, as they inevitably do from time to time.

The Commission for the Compact recently commissioned research that studied areas with successful Local Compacts and found several common themes between them. On the right is an overview of the main points.

THE COMPACT

The Compact is an agreement that sets out the 'rules of engagement' for how government and the voluntary and community sector should work together for the benefit of the people they serve. But it is more than a document, it is also a way of working that recognises the benefits of working together better.

COMPACT VOICE

Compact Voice is the independent body representing the voluntary and community sector on taking forward the Compact and works closely with the Office of the Third Sector and Compact Commission. Compact Voice runs networks and online forums to support those working on their Local Compacts and has seen many examples of good and bad practice from around the country.

Local Compact: 5 Steps to Success

1. Don't forget the big picture

These areas kept their focus on the overall outcome they wanted to achieve rather than just the detail of the documents – they reminded each other that it was all about good partnership working and better results for local people.

2. Link the Compact into local structures

Local Compacts were often linked into other structures like the Local Strategic Partnership, overview and scrutiny committee, Local Area Agreement targets such as the 'Thriving third sector', and commissioning policies. This helped to ensure the Compact became an integral part of the way people work rather than just another document or policy.

3. Lead and promote the Compact

Successful areas had obtained buy-in from senior leadership in both sectors and often used 'Compact Champions' to help publicise and promote the agreement throughout the local area. They also ensured that engagement stretched to councillors, all departments within the council and out to other bodies like the PCT and police. It also helped to have effective structures for voluntary sector representation and to include smaller groups and others not typically involved.

4. Back up the Compact with resources

Effective Compact implementation was also helped by resources of either funding or time. Some areas had a dedicated 'Compact worker' while others felt it was useful to spread responsibility into different people's roles, but only if they were allocated time to do the work.

5. Begin with practical tools and quick wins

Finally, many successful areas made the Compact real and locally relevant by focusing on practical tools and quick wins that could be used to show people what the Compact had achieved.

The Compact works best when it is not seen as something extra that people are forced to do but rather when they recognise that it is the best way for them to achieve their aims, by working together better. Compact Voice provides networks and online forums to encourage groups to share their learning and experiences on how to make this happen. We recognise how hard it is to make partnerships work well and we are working to ensure that Local Compacts are as relevant and powerful as possible in areas around the country.

*Institute for Voluntary Action Research.
(2008) What Makes a Successful Local Compact:
A Project Report. (available at: www.thecompact.org.uk)*

Find out more

Visit www.compactvoice.org.uk
or call 020 7520 2453.

Join more than 500 other members by signing up to the Local Compact network and online forum, and for any other information or queries, email paul.barasi@compactvoice.org.uk.

INTERVIEW

Helping organisations with their relationship with Government:

An interview with NCVO's Local and Regional Compact Advocate



NCVO's Compact Advocacy Programme knows what it's like to have difficulties with government. In fact, that's exactly what the two advocacy officers spend their time working on, one focusing on a local and regional level and one at a national level. Any voluntary and community organisation can contact them to discuss possible breaches of the Compact and they use their expertise to give advice and guidance. If there has been a Compact breach, they work with the organisation to rectify the situation.

'We work with a huge variety of organisations,' begins Sean Roberts, Local and Regional Compact Advocacy Officer, 'from voluntary run groups to huge charities. And the wide variety is what makes our work so interesting.'

Do the cases tend to be similar?

'You get the same themes cropping up again and again - poor consultation, refusing full cost recovery for example, but each case has differing circumstances with people reacting in different ways. One common thread is that we always work very closely with the organisation that contacts us, ensuring we work towards the outcome they want and that they are happy with the tone and style of our communications.'

But what about those organisations that don't want to be seen to be upsetting the apple cart?

'That happens quite often,' Sean agrees, 'especially on a local level involving difficulties with a funder. In that situation, if possible, we intervene without mentioning the specific organisations. The last thing we want to do is go off on our own leaving the organisation disempowered.'

But without teeth what can the Compact actually achieve?

'A surprising amount. Firstly government at all levels have signed up to the Compact and most have signed up because they recognise the benefits. After all, the Compact is about working together for mutual benefit and there is good evidence that where the Compact works well it produces better outcomes for people and communities.'

'In some cases,' he continues, 'simply pointing out the Compact breach is all it takes - it's nothing more than an oversight.'

Surely that's not always the case?

'No,' Sean agrees 'of course we get many cases where it's not that simple. And in that case we can try a number of avenues. There may be someone higher up who buys in to the Compact. Almost all statutory bodies have a Third Sector champion, liaison officer or similar who understands the Compact and how it should work. We also use NCVO's influence sometimes. It all depends what works really.'

But what happens if a statutory body simply refuses to budge?

'That does happen occasionally. We can go to the media, but tend to do so as a last resort. We also work closely with the Public Law Project and if there has been a breach of public law then they can take the case on and push for judicial review. I can only think of a couple of occasions where we've had to give up without achieving anything, we're pretty persistent, and some cases we pursue for months!'



And I guess things might change with the current review of the Compact?

'Exactly. If the Commission does end up with legal powers then we can refer cases to them if needs be.'

If the Commission has legal powers is there any need for the Advocacy Programme at all?

'Definitely. Let's be clear, the Commission is an independent body sitting between government and the sector, we are from the sector advocating on behalf of the sector. Asking for some sort of investigation or arbitration is quite an antagonistic avenue to go down and as I mentioned, most organisations want to work with the statutory body to resolve issues in a productive manner. In fact, we calculate that 85% of our cases wouldn't be referred to a Commission with legal powers anyway, they are resolved between the parties themselves with help from us.'

Finally what would you say to a voluntary and community organisation having trouble with a statutory body?

'Stand up for yourself. Be friendly and outcomes focussed but also firm. Pull out the Compact at the earliest opportunity and get agreement that the relationship will, of course, be Compact compliant. And if you have trouble then pick up the phone and give us a call, we'll be glad to help.'



Sean Roberts is the Local and Regional Compact Advocacy Officer. He works in the Compact Advocacy Team at NCVO. To contact him visit www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy or telephone: 0207 520 2551

Compact
Awards2008

Compact Award for the Department of Health

The Department of Health's Third Sector Partnership team received an Award for Excellence at a National Level for their recently completed Funding and Investment Review project.

"I am immensely proud that we at the Department of Health should be recognised through these awards for the second year," says third sector programme manager Carolyn Heaney.

"Through the Funding and Investment Review we have achieved a step change in our understanding about our funding relationship with the third sector, and ultimately strengthened the Third Sector Investment Framework that underpins the new 'Strategic Partner Programme' and 'Innovation, Excellence and Service Development Fund'.

"This has come about through consultation and debate, in the spirit of partnership and Compact values, and should ultimately help to reinforce the third sector's integral role in the health and social care system, contributing to improved services for patients and users."



Photos: Edward Moss Photography

Compact

In August 2008, the government launched a debate on the future of the Compact. Compact Voice is one of the key bodies taking this work forward, as the independent body representing the voluntary and community sector on Compact issues. Compact Voice runs local and national support networks for voluntary organisations but also works closely with the Office of the Third Sector and the Commission for the Compact to negotiate and implement the Compact.

There are many places around the country where the Compact in its current form has worked well.

Here are some examples:

In East Sussex the Compact has made a difference because the local strategic partnership scrutinises its progress. A communications group works to disseminate relevant messages to those working on the frontline and tailored training gives practical examples of how to use it.

In Birmingham, the council developed its new commissioning strategy by involving the local voluntary sector from the beginning and this has resulted in a more strategic and successful approach that many other bodies are looking to replicate.

However there is still a long way to go in embedding a Compact way of working in the relationship between the sector and government, at all levels. With a debate on the future of the Compact underway, Compact Voice looked at the views of hundreds of voluntary and community organisations to see what they want to see changed. Here are some of our findings.

1. The Commissioner for the Compact should have powers to investigate Compact breaches

When the Compact debate was launched, many parts of the voluntary sector were calling for the Compact to be made 'law' in order to reduce non-compliance by government. However, over the course of the debate, it became clear that there was little appetite for the Compact itself to be placed in statute. Instead, a consensus has emerged around giving some powers to the Commission for the Compact, most likely to investigate cases of non-compliance. It is important that any powers respect local disputes procedures but can still be applied to local public bodies where necessary.

2. More support is needed for organisations

It is also essential that a full package of support is put in place for organisations beyond just giving powers to the Commission. When issues arise, most organisations wish to solve the issue constructively between the parties involved, rather than in an antagonistic manner. Compact Voice therefore believes that there should also be support for other less formal measures, such as advocacy, mediation and free legal advice.

Voice

national consultation

Jess Crocker
Compact Voice Manager

3. The Compact should be updated and made easier to read

The other focus of the Compact debate has been on the documents themselves and whether there is a need to update, change or shorten them. Compact Voice's survey on this issue found that people do feel that Compact should be updated to reflect changes in policy and the operating environment such as the move from grants to contracts and commissioning. It should also be clearer and written in a more accessible way. We also found a strong desire for more consistency between the national documents and Local Compacts.

4. Core commitments should run through National and Local Compacts

A revised National Compact should set an expectation that all Local Compacts would include a central set of 'key commitments' and the detail they refer to in the Funding, Consultation and Volunteering Codes. These key principles would summarise the core elements of the Compact agreement but would underpin, and not replace, the rest of the Compact. They would, however, help to ensure the core of the agreement is easy to communicate and memorable for all parties. Removing the need for local areas to draft a raft of codes which merely paraphrase the national documents would also enable a clearer focus on issues particular to the locality and free up resources and time for implementation.

5. Awareness raising and implementation are absolutely vital

Whatever changes are made to the Compact document or its legal status, however, there must also be a recognition that one of the biggest barriers to the Compact working has been low awareness and lack of implementation. It is therefore essential to provide a large-scale programme of training, advice and resources for implementation and awareness in both sectors. There should also be an analysis of how to embed the Compact in mechanisms such as the work of the Audit Commission, Local Strategic Partnerships, overview and scrutiny committees, and IDeA's Beacon Scheme for local authorities, for example. Finally, there must be an increased focus on marketing and communications around the importance of the revised Compact and how it can be used.

CONCLUSION

The Compact works best when it is recognised by both sectors as a way to help them achieve their aims by working together better. The areas around the country where a 'Compact way of working' is the norm are a testament to its ability to transform relationships for mutual gain. These recommendations should help to ensure it is as relevant and powerful as possible in every corner of England bringing benefits to citizens and communities.



SPOTLIGHT

Member: Derby CVS

1.

What does Derby CVS do?

Derby CVS is the umbrella organisation for the city's voluntary sector and the main provider of support for local voluntary and community groups.

2.

How many members do you have?

We are part of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) and have over 300 member organisations.

3.

What are your aims?

Derby CVS exists to create and enhance effective voluntary action aimed at improving the quality of life of people in Derby by:

- encouraging, supporting and developing individuals, groups and organisations involved in voluntary action;
- promoting new initiatives that tackle social exclusion and economic disadvantage; and
- establishing partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors.

4.

How do you support the Voluntary and Community Sector?

We support voluntary and community groups within Derby through capacity building. We offer information and support on all aspects of setting up and running an organisation, including:

- Management Development Service;
- Personnel Advisory Service;
- Funding Advice;
- Support to self help groups;
- Recruiting and placing volunteers;
- Training and development; and
- Promoting consultation and policy involvement.

5.

How many staff do you have?

We have around 33 employees and are supported by a very large team of volunteers in the office.

OEM spoke to Susannah Towne, Communications Manager at Derby CVS. For more information visit their website: www.derbycvs.co.uk

Derby Compact wins National Award

The Derby Compact has won the 'Local Compact of the Year Award' at a ceremony in London hosted by Sir Bert Massie CBE, Commissioner for the Compact.

The prestigious award recognised the excellent work undertaken by voluntary and statutory sector partners on strengthening the Derby Compact's links to Derby City Partnership and revitalizing the local Compact Agreement to include a new process for conflict resolution.



Left to right:
Matthew Allbones, Community Services Director, Derby CVS
The Mayor of Derby, Councillor Barbara Jackson
Susannah Towne, Communications Manager, Derby CVS

SPOTLIGHT

Trustee: Shamsher Chohan



1.

How did you get involved in One East Midlands?

I first got involved in the interim board of the East Midlands Single Platform and then joined the full board of One East Midlands through the Independent College.

2.

What role do you have within the Board?

I am a member of both the HR and Finance and Strategy Sub Committees and so am involved in working with other board members to develop the strategic direction of the organisation as well as considering the HR and finance implications of this. I am also One EM's Compact Champion.

3.

What does the champion for Compact do?

The role of the Compact Champion is to chair the appropriate policy forum meetings effectively, work with officer support to ensure that the policy forum is fit for purpose and delivers on clear goals, work with officer support to ensure that the work of each policy forum reflects the full diversity of the VCS and champion the policy area and the role of the VCS externally.

4.

What skills do you bring to this role?

I have been involved in Compact work for 10 years now working at local and National levels. I am a member of the National Compact Voice that is the VCS body that supports VCS input into Compact work. Prior to this I was the Vice Chair of the national BME Compact Sub Group. I have a good overview nationally about what is happening with Compact work and have been involved with the debate on the future of the Compact initiated by the Commission for the Compact.

5.

What do you see are the benefits of Compact and how can it support the VCS in the region?

The Compact makes explicit the expectations required of all partners in joint working and so assists in clarifying the role that all signatories play. And, it provides a standard for all to work towards that is mutually beneficial and ultimately benefits the wider community.

6.

How would you like to see One EM grow / change in the future?

I see One East Midlands as a high level support organisation for infrastructure bodies in the region. Key to this is the enabling of 'diverse voices' in affecting change in the region.

7.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

I am really excited about the recent consultations on the future of the Compact as it gives us all an opportunity to address some of the inherent weaknesses that have been a 'turn off' to many organisations. The process of developing a Compact is just as important as the final product and can have a positive influence in promoting better understanding and working to form better and more empowering relationships within all sectors.

Report ba

At our first Annual Conference, held at the end of November, we launched the Membership Services' Scheme.

Feedback from Members' Event

As part of our conference & AGM, a Membership event was held to encourage debate about how One East Midlands could work with its members more effectively:

- *How do we facilitate member's involvement in policy work?*
- *How should members interact with each other?*
- *How should One EM communicate with you?*

Members emphasised the need to actively engage people in choosing policy areas, and ensuring the policy work is relevant and making an impact. Members at the event thought that information on members should be freely available and that One EM should actively support joint working, and the sharing of information. Finally, participants suggested that One EM should minimise the amount of information circulated and use a range of communication channels and not just rely on electronic ones.

To get the complete report on membership and the wider conference visit our website, www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk.

Listening to Members

One East Midlands works to ensure that members' comments influence our services wherever possible. At our recent members events several comments have already impacted our delivery, including:

- *Making website amendments and adding a polling function;*
- *Consideration on the relevance of policy forums;*
- *Providing a range of appropriate communication methods.*

To get the complete report on membership and what steps we're taking visit, www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk.



One East Midlands' membership

Members' Services

Being a member of One East Midlands offers a range of services and ensures you are engaged in what happens at a regional level in the East Midlands.

Membership gives you access to up-to-date information on news, events and policy changes. It allows you access to the members only area of the website; allowing you to network with other organisations and access useful resources. You can get involved in influencing policy through our policy forums. Have a say at what services we're providing through our members' events. Attend all our events for free.

Full membership also entitles organisations to influence the management of One East Midlands by voting at the AGM and for Board Members.

For full details of our benefits, visit www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk.

Website – Members Only

One East Midlands has recently launched the 'members only' area of the website. This expands the portfolio of services we currently offer our members.

It offers a range of benefits to members, including:

- *Forums – members can add their own questions and discussions in the forums;*
- *Member Information – so that similar groups can network and share information;*
- *Library – a library of useful resources;*
- *Messaging – sending messages to other members;*
- *Advertise job vacancies;*
- *Advertise events.*

Please get involved and if you're not a member already, we hope you will apply for membership now.

Become a Member

Membership offers a number of benefits and is open to VCS Infrastructure organisations, Third Sector organisations working in the East Midlands and other agencies working in partnership with the Third Sector.

If you would like to become a member, please register online at www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk. Alternatively, contact the office for a membership pack.

One East Midlands is a registered charity, working with the voluntary and community and wider third sector.

One East Midlands brings together organisations that support voluntary and community groups across the region to influence and shape policy, improve services and provide a single point of contact at a regional level for all stakeholders.

One East Midlands is accountable to its members: voluntary and community organisations, frontline groups, public and private sector agencies. Through its membership, the sector is able to influence One East Midlands' work and ensure that the organisation does what it sets out to do.

For more information on our membership scheme visit the website: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk



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