

# Darlington Compact

Supporting Partnerships for Success

Compact Codes of Practice

**Compact**  
working together better together

**The preparation of this document has been led by eVOLution (Darlington CVS) with the involvement of:-**

Darlington Borough Council  
Co Durham & Darlington NHS  
Durham Constabulary  
Durham & Darlington Fire and Rescue Service  
HSE  
Highways Agency  
Sport England  
Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust  
700 Club

Age Concern Darlington  
Darlington LINK  
Darlington Housing Action  
Family Help  
First Stop Darlington  
Gay Advice Durham & Darlington  
Morrison Trust  
Tees Valley YMCA  
Tees Valley Rural Community Council

We would also like to thank all the organisations, too numerous to mention, who have participated in consultation during the preparation of the Compact, and their valuable contribution to this process.

### **Arabic**

إذا رغبتكم الحصول على هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى غير اللغة الإنجليزية نرجو  
الاتصال بنا على رقم الهاتف التالي 01325 266888 مع ذكر رقم الإشارة.

### **Bengali**

যদি আপনার ইংরেজী ছাড়া অন্য কোন ভাষায় এই প্রকাশনাটির দরকার থাকে, তাহলে 01325 266888  
নম্বরে ফোন করুন এবং সূত্র নম্বর উল্লেখ করুন।

### **Cantonese**

如果你需要其它語言的版本，請與以下電話聯係並報出參考號碼：01325 266888

### **Hindi**

यदि आप यह प्रकाशन अंग्रेजी के अलावा अन्य भाषा में चाहते हैं तो कृपया संदर्भ नम्बर (रेफरन्स नम्बर)  
बताकर निम्नलिखित 01325 266888 पर संपर्क करें।

### **Punjabi**

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਪਰਚਾ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ  
ਸਾਨੂੰ ਨੰਬਰ 01325 266888 ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਰੈਫਰੈਂਸ (ਹਵਾਲਾ) ਨੰਬਰ ਦੱਸੋ।

### **Urdu**

اگر آپ کو یہ کتابچہ انگریزی کے علاوہ کسی دوسری زبان میں درکار ہو تو براہ مہربانی ٹیلیفون نمبر 01325 266888 پر فون کر کے حوالہ  
نمبر بتائیں۔

### **Polish**

Jeśli chciał(a)by Pan(i) otrzymać polską wersję językową tego dokumentu, proszę zadzwonić  
pod numer 01325 266888 i podać numer identyfikacyjny dokumentu.

**This document is available in other formats. Please contact eVOLution on 01325 266888 or e-mail enquiries@evolutiondarlington.com for further information**

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The Compact Codes of Practice expand on the principles and commitments set out in the Darlington Compact to provide more detailed guidance on conducting specific aspects of the relationships between public and third sector organisations. The Darlington Compact Principles and Commitments are available from eVOLution Darlington in a separate document.

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# Equalities and Diversity Code

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## 1. The scope of this code

This code acknowledges that the pursuit of equalities and championing of diversity on many different fronts are at the heart of our partnership working in the Borough of Darlington, and sets out a framework to ensure that the Compact promotes ways of working that help to build equality and diversity.

The national compact focuses specifically on promoting the inclusion of the BME sector to ensure that the third sector is more representative of society in support of government efforts to promote cohesion and inclusion.

This focus is, of course, vitally important, but this code of practice is much broader in scope, reflecting the 'One Darlington' priority of the sustainable community strategy. 'One Darlington' seeks to address all forms of disadvantage, discrimination and deprivation. This includes reducing deprivation and narrowing the gaps in prosperity, attainment, opportunity and well-being between different neighbourhoods or groups of people; tackling all forms of discrimination and promoting inclusion; protecting vulnerable people; valuing the diverse backgrounds, interests, needs and aspirations of people in the borough-wide community; and enabling everyone to pursue their diverse aspirations. The Compact, and this code, seeks to reflect this broad scope.

'One Darlington' is concerned with delivery of outcomes, but the Compact approach must also establish principles that promote inclusion and equality in the ways that the public and third sectors work together. There must be equality between partners (the Partnerships Code of Practice addresses this) and all parts of the third sector should be able to contribute their particular skills and perspectives as appropriate.

## 2. Partners' equalities policies

As with the other codes of practice, this code recognises that partner organisations have their own policies and strategies for promoting inclusion, equalities and diversity, and will continue to develop their programmes and improvement action plans within these in-house frameworks. This code is designed to support rather than override such frameworks.

Darlington's Social Inclusion Strategy, 'All Together Now', established the broad approach to equalities and diversity outlined above even before 'One One Darlington : Perfectly Placed' was developed. All the sectors and agencies have worked to deliver 'All Together Now', which identifies 13 groups of people at risk of disadvantage, discrimination and deprivation. The implementation of the strategy is now largely complete, and a renewed approach is under consideration. Nevertheless, the comprehensive embrace of 'All Together Now' in promoting social inclusion continues to be relevant in the context of 'One Darlington', and is reflected in the Compact. This broad scope is now being given statutory force in the Equality Bill (2009).

### 3. Background to this code

The Equality Bill (2009) brings together previously separate legislation relating to race, gender and disability into a single equality duty for the public sector. The new duty covers all six equalities strands – race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief – and requires all public sector bodies to take action to consider and take action to address equalities issues in all their functions, across the six strands.

Significantly, and in line with the ‘One Darlington’ perspective on equalities, the new duty includes a requirement to address socio-economic issues that cause people to be treated unfairly, and require local government to remove barriers to services for people living in the Borough of Darlington. Darlington Borough Council is developing a Single Equalities Scheme (SES) in response to the new duty. The SES will incorporate and supersede the current race, gender and disability equalities schemes and equalities impact assessment frameworks. The SES will reflect and carry forward the analysis of equalities issues and needs that forms the basis of the Social Inclusion Strategy, ‘All Together Now’.

### 4. The Equalities and Diversity Framework

**The following should be upheld in all joint working within the Compact:**

- Champion and promote the Borough of Darlington’s diversity and the development of a cohesive and inclusive community that represents all its citizens in its partnerships and programmes, and ensure that local diversity is fully reflected in policy, programme and project development
- Ensure that the contribution of organisations and groups representing people and communities at risk of disadvantage, discrimination and deprivation (referred to below as equalities representative groups and organisations) is recognised and supported
- Recognise that lack of time and resources may limit the participation of such groups, and respond appropriately to ensure representation
- Ensure that, where representative groups do not exist, the interests and needs of particular groups of people are included and not overlooked
- Respect the autonomy of representative groups and organisations and their right to work as they choose within their own boundaries
- Recognise and respond to the ever-changing diversity of the Borough of Darlington and the emergence of new groups and organisations
- Whilst developing appropriate policies and programmes within individual organisations to respond to the new equalities duty, maintain and strengthen the harmonised approach developed through ‘All Together Now’ across the Borough of Darlington Partnerships
- Encourage and support volunteering across the Borough of Darlington’s diverse communities and groups
- Ensure that the Compact principles and the commitments of the other codes of practice are applied fairly and appropriately across all community and representative organisations and groups

## 5. Third sector partners' commitments

- Support and enable equalities representative organisations and groups to play a full and active part within the wider sector and across the Borough of Darlington Partnership to promote equalities and to tackle social exclusion
- Contribute to maintaining a responsive and accountable local structure for progressing work to achieve equality and promote diversity
- Encourage joint working by diverse groups across the equalities strands
- Represent the concerns and interests of equalities representative organisations and groups within the Borough of Darlington Partnership and within policy and programme development
- Support equalities representative organisations and groups to maintain proper governance and effective management if and when necessary
- Develop quality standards and best practice measures and offer effective training to staff and trustees
- Work to support equalities representative organisations and groups to be open, dynamic and effective

## 6. Public sector partners' commitments

- Recognise the independence of the representative organisations and groups across the six equalities strands and their right to challenge institutions, policy and practice as part of their goal of achieving equality and promoting diversity
- Consult with equalities representative organisations and groups as appropriate throughout policy development and implementation
- Establish equalities strategies, objectives and targets across the public sector, as appropriate to each organisation
- Facilitate and support fair and equal access for equalities representative organisations and groups to funding programmes, and ensure that the commitments in the Resources and Procurement code of practice are applied equally and fairly across all third sector organisations and groups
- Ensure that equalities representative organisations and groups are actively involved in local service planning and review and the development of strategies and programmes within local communities
- Require that all partnership bids to Government programmes demonstrate real consultation with and involvement of equalities representative organisations and groups.

# The Involvement and Influence Code

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## 1. Scope of this Code

This code acknowledges the need for the third sector to be involved in decision making within the Borough of Darlington, and to be able to contribute to both strategic and delivery based decisions. This need is fundamental to the ethos of the Compact and to the principle of achieving added value in the delivery of 'One Darlington : Perfectly Placed'.

Influence is the capacity or power of persons to be a compelling force on or produce effects on the actions, behaviour, opinions, etc., of others. In order for this to happen there often needs to be a relationship between the individuals or organisations concerned that is deeper than that normally generated by simple information sharing. This code sets out the ways that these relationships can be developed to enable all parties to gain from the experience and skills of the other.

## 2. Partners' Engagement Strategies

This code focuses on the management of relationships between partners involved in policy making. In-house strategies may already be in place in certain organisations and this code will sit alongside these strategies initially. These strategies may cover a whole range of activity from information sharing, and consultation through engagement to strategic influence.

## 3. Background to this Code

Government have acknowledged the role of the third sector in giving a voice to the community and supporting improvements in the delivery of public services. This essential role is reflected in statutory guidance to public sector organisations and the "Principles of Representation" set out for local strategic partnerships.

## 4. The Involvement and Influence Framework

This framework sets out the principles for ensuring that the voluntary and community sectors are able to influence decision making within the Borough of Darlington and are involved in the development of decisions from the evidence gathering stage right through to service commissioning and review processes.

The framework aims to remove any barriers to engagement with the sector and an acknowledgement that there are issues relating to the roles of representatives that require certain principles to be adhered to if they are to work effectively.

- There needs to be a clear reason for involvement with benefits for each partner
- People should feel empowered to be part of decision making
- Involvement should include feedback on how things have changed because of involvement of partners
- Information should be in accessible formats and venues used for meetings should also be accessible
- Information should be presented in a way that is understandable and avoids the use of jargon
- Involvement should be planned in advance where possible so that representatives have time to discuss issues within their organisations
- Ensure policy development and service planning includes a diverse group of people

## 5. Third Sector Commitments

- Play a full and active role in activities and forums as capacity allows and through the most appropriate means;
- Make it clear when they are acting as representatives of organisations, communities or partnerships;
- Ensure reporting back is undertaken in a fair and unbiased way;
- Consider implications for partners when developing and reviewing policies;
- Adhere to ground rules set together at the beginning of meetings and to remember to keep information confidential when asked to do so;
- Involve the partners in discussions about key changes within their organisations when agreed by trustee boards.
- Follow agreed channels of communication

## 6. Public Sector Commitments

- Involve partners at the development stage of relevant policy, strategy and service development to identify implications for partners and volunteers;
- Involve partners where appropriate when reviewing policies strategies and devices;
- Be aware of additional resource implications for other partners when disseminating consultations;
- Make it clear when seeking representative views direct from service users or organisations in direct contact with them;
- Make it clear when seeking views that are representative of the sector or parts of the sector and allow time for this representation to be agreed and views to be sought;
- Be sensitive to the resource implications for organisations if they are expected to consult with members;
- Be alert to any potential conflict of interest that could arise from involving partners in policy and service development, particularly where partners represent potential policy/service beneficiaries or are involved in service delivery
- Be aware of any potential conflict of interest arising from the involvement in development of policy and those for whom the policy is being developed or those organisations who will have responsibility for delivery;
- Ensure that the views obtained through involvement of the sector are taken into account when making decisions;
- Feedback to those involved what changes have been made because of their involvement and why changes have not been made if it was not appropriate.



# Partnerships Code

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## 1. Scope of this code

This code acknowledges the role of partnerships in pursuing the strategic vision for the Borough of Darlington and in the delivery of services to residents, and it establishes principles to strengthen and support partnership working in the Borough of Darlington.

Partnerships come in a variety of forms and settings from formal partnerships such as Darlington Partnership, to collaborative working, joint funding partnerships and informal networks for information sharing. In all of these, different resources and skills are brought together to generate added value for individuals and the community.

## 2. Partnership Strategies

This code focuses on the management of relationships between partners and sets out principles for effective partnership working. Organisations may develop specific partnership agreements and governance arrangements but the principles set out here should support their delivery.

Protocols, terms of reference and governance documents can be useful in a partnership. They help all those involved to understand their shared objectives and have agreed ways of working. These documents clarify roles and responsibilities and help with the conduct of meetings. These need to be developed for each individual partnership and are not therefore part of this code.

## 3. Background to this Code

**Partnerships come in a range of types including:**

- Informal networks ;
- Funding partnerships brought together for bidding purposes;
- Commissioning groups and other formal partnerships with legal standing;
- Partnerships that are strategic and may commission services but are not legal entities and are underpinned by an 'accountable body' – usually the local authority.

The Government is increasingly looking at partnerships as a means of delivering strategic planning and joined up service delivery that meets the needs of local communities. From 2009 onwards, comprehensive area assessment (CAA) will place a spotlight on the effectiveness of partnership working in individual localities. This will be a feature of the area-based assessment within CAA. The performance of Local Strategic Partnerships and their thematic groups in delivering the short-term targets of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) will also remain a concern of Regional Government Offices exercised through the annual review and refresh of the LAA. In this regard key partnerships include the Children's Trust and the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, as well as Darlington Partnership.

Bringing different agencies and bodies round a table and labelling it a partnership does not, in itself, achieve collaboration and shared aims. Organisations and individuals may agree to join a partnership to safeguard their own interests, or protect their own 'patch', as much as to work together to some common goals. Partnership behaviours can prove complex and difficult to analyse and predict but the benefits of bringing organisations together to solve problems means that solutions to both symptoms and underlying causes can be developed.

## 4. The Partnership Framework

Successful characteristics of partnerships will vary based upon the purpose of the partnership and the individual and organisational relations of participants in the partnership. For partnerships to be successful representation and equality are very important.

### **Here are the key principles for successful partnership working:**

- All partners can bring anything to the table within the agreed agenda;
- Everyone can contribute to debate;
- Everyone can have an influence on policy;
- The partnership reflects the community it serves;
- The partnership includes the right organisations and people to achieve its aims

There are a wide range of benefits in working in partnership although it must always be remembered that it takes time to be build trust and understanding. Relationships take time to develop and are not static, and require ongoing attention to ensure they continue to be effective.

### **Partnerships:**

- Bring together partners with different interests, skills, resources and experiences;
- Develop new ways of working and drive local innovation
- Share ideas and resources;
- Share skills and experiences;
- Draw together the knowledge and talents of everyone involved;
- Develop an understanding of how different partner organisations work;
- Take actions more likely to meet local community needs not simply single organisations;

The key principle in successful partnership working is that of being equal partners across the sectors. For this reason the commitments set out below would apply to all partners. This does not mean that the roles and responsibilities are the same for each partner, and this should be set out clearly from the beginning.

## 5. Partner Commitments

### All partners will:

- Be committed to understanding what makes a partnership effective;
- Be committed to enabling full participation of all sectors;
- Be committed to open decision-making processes;
- Identify common goals and once agreed work together to deliver against these;
- Recognise and value the skills and knowledge of all partners;
- Provide an induction for new partners to ensure they understand the roles and responsibilities within the partnership;
- Ensure each partner is clear about their role and commitment within the partnership;
- Identify and support training within the partnership and agree administrative and secretarial arrangements as required;
- Agree clear communication and reporting mechanisms;
- Adopt performance and risk management processes that are understood and agreed by all partners;
- Ensure meetings are accessible to all irrespective of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith and religion.;
- Accept ownership for all decisions made by the partnership;
- Recognise that organisations may have a strategic role as well as a delivery role;
- Ensure that representatives consult and represent the wider networks;
- Understand and respect the statutory requirements of partners and the impact this may have on the partnership;
- Provide an induction for new partners to ensure they understand the roles and responsibilities of partnership working in Borough of Darlington.

# The Resources and Procurement Code

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## 1. Scope of this code

**Resources and procurement may include the following kinds of transactions or exchanges:**

- Procurement – a public sector body contracting for the provision of services by a third sector partner following a commissioning and tendering process in which the third sector partner demonstrated the best combination of quality and price
- Grant aid – a public sector body provides a time limited sum of money to a third sector organisation to support its projects, services and/or facilities
- Investment – a public sector body may wish to invest in a third sector organisation through loans or other forms of funding to secure projects, services or facilities that support the public body's objectives
- Non-financial support – both the public and third sectors may provide support to their partners in the form of advice, expertise or access to non-financial resources, without a financial exchange

## 2. Partners' Procurement Strategies and Processes

This code sets out a framework for the management of relationships between partners involved in resource transactions and does not replace or over-ride the procurement policies, strategies and processes of partner organisations. These 'in-house' strategies and procedures must be adhered to in establishing how to progress commissioning and procurement exercises.

The Compact ethos, however, points to the need to simplify and move as far as possible towards a unified approach to commissioning across the public sector in the Borough of Darlington. The long-term ideal would be a single commissioning and procurement strategy adopted across the Borough of Darlington Partnership, but the feasibility of progressing towards this needs further investigation outside the Compact project.

## 3. Background to this code

The Government recognises that the voluntary and community sector can make a significant contribution to achieving the vision of a fair society based on strong communities and opportunity for everyone. Many voluntary and community organisations enter into a financial relationship with national and local government organisations to deliver outcomes on their behalf. It is important that the financial relationship is constructed in such a way that allows outcomes to be maximised. The national Compact Code of Good Practice on Funding and Procurement aims to influence behaviour in both the voluntary and community and public sectors. This local code for the Borough of Darlington pursues similar aims by setting out a framework for those aspects of any relationship between the sectors focused on resources and procurement; and setting out commitments for both sides, based on what each side can expect from the other.

## 4. The Resources and Procurement Framework

The following should apply at all stages of the resources and procurement relationship:

- Focus on outcomes – the achievement of outcomes should be used as a key indicator of the success of funding.
- Simplicity and proportionality – processes are as simple as possible and in proportion to the amount of money involved.
- Consistency and co-ordination – funders and purchasers should endeavour to join-up or standardise parts of the funding or procurement chain to minimise burdens on organisations and ensure a focus on delivery.
- Timeliness – allowing time for planning, decision making and action so they have real effect.
- Transparency and accountability - allowing informed decisions about spending priorities to be made and for both the public body and the third sector organisation to learn from previous work.
- Discussion and dialogue – this helps build trust and can identify and overcome problems before they impact on the delivery of outcomes.
- Empathy – understanding each other’s needs and requirements should help avoid problems and help achieve outcomes.

## 5. Third sector partners’ commitments:

- Respect confidentiality and be clear about whom they represent and how they came to those views when consulted on programme design.
- Make sure that they are eligible when applying for grants.
- Have clear lines of accountability, especially with joint bids.
- Agree terms of delivery at the outset and be aware of the risks for which they are responsible.
- Have good systems in place to manage finances and funded projects and account for them.
- Be honest and transparent in reporting.
- Plan in good time for different situations to reduce any potential negative impact on both beneficiaries and the organisation if funding ends.

## 6. Public sector partners’ commitments

- Provide whenever possible an opportunity for the voluntary and community sector to contribute to programme design.
- Ask for information on application forms which is relevant to deciding who will receive funding or be awarded the contract.
- Discuss risks up-front and place responsibility with the public sector body or voluntary and community organisation best able to manage them.
- Respect the independence of the sector.
- Recognise it is legitimate for voluntary and community organisations to include the relevant overhead & development costs in their estimates for providing a particular service, to support long-term financial sustainability.
- Make payments in advance of expenditure (wherever possible) in order to achieve better value for money.
- Implement longer term funding arrangements when these represent good value for money.
- Be proportionate in monitoring requirements and to focus on outcomes.
- Consider joining-up or standardising monitoring requirements.
- Give enough notice of the end of grants or contracts and support the development of exit strategies or transitional agreements as appropriate.

# Volunteering Code

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**The Darlington Compact is a commitment to improve relationships between public sector organisations and the voluntary & community sector. This document sets out to make a positive impact on volunteering.**

'Volunteering in the Borough of Darlington is currently below the national average. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) target for the 2010 survey is an increase of 3.5% in line with Government Office's requirement.' National Indicator 006 - Participation in regular volunteering LAA stretch target 2008

## 1. Introduction

This Volunteering Code of Good Practice builds upon and underpins the principles of the Darlington Compact and should be read in conjunction with that document. The Compact recognises the significant contribution made by volunteers and the role of voluntary and community organisations in supporting them.

The Volunteering Code sets out a series of undertakings on good practice in volunteering for the voluntary/community and statutory sectors in the Borough of Darlington though intends to be a framework rather than a comprehensive guide. The aim is to increase the number of volunteers and ensure they are valued and supported by improving the quality of the volunteering experience.

Volunteering is good for us. It brings us together; it makes us healthier; it raises our self-esteem and sense of purpose; it improves our chances of employment; gets us out-and-about and makes for stronger communities.

Although the Borough of Darlington as a whole has formal volunteering rates below the national average, that average figure hides a wide range of activity that is not accounted for. What is undeniable is that volunteering contributes hugely to our wellbeing, our culture and our economy. It is the essence of social capital.

This code of Good Practice sets out principles and undertakings for both the public sector and voluntary & community sector (VCS) in the Borough of Darlington on how to work together to support and promote volunteering and voluntary action.

### **Aim:**

- to foster a good understanding of volunteering issues
- identify mechanisms which can take forward volunteering policy and practice issues
- to offer a practical guide which provides information to both the VCS and public sectors on:
  - points of contact for volunteering
  - highlights public sector organisations which make provision for their employees to volunteer

## 2. The Importance of Volunteering

Volunteering is a freely given commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community.

It is an important expression of citizenship and democracy and is a good demonstration of an active community.

Volunteering can be viewed as either formal or informal.

People volunteer for many different reasons.

### 3. Principles of Volunteering

There are four principles fundamental to volunteering: Choice, Diversity, Reciprocity and Recognition.

- **Choice:** volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. Any encouragement to become involved in volunteering should not take the form of coercion or compulsion. For example, it should not be a requirement, the refusal of which would affect an individual's right to benefits.
- **Diversity:** volunteering should be open and actively promoted to all, regardless of background, age, race, sexual orientation etc. Equal opportunities principles are fundamental to supporting diversity.
- **Reciprocity:** volunteers offer their time and skills for no financial gains, but should benefit in other ways in return. Potential benefits include a sense of worthwhile achievement, useful skills, experience, contacts, sociability, fun and inclusion in the life of the organisation.
- **Recognition:** explicit recognition of the value which volunteers contribute to the organisation, the community, the social economy and to wider social objectives, is fundamental to a fair relationship between volunteers, organisations and public policy and practice.

### 4. eVOLution Volunteer Centre

Within the borough of Darlington it is recognised that eVOLution Volunteer Centre operates as the local volunteering development agency. It has the following strategic objectives, which are common to volunteer centres throughout the borough:

- **Brokerage**

The primary function of Volunteer Centres is to match both individuals and groups interested in volunteering with appropriate opportunities in the local community. All the Volunteer Centres hold information on a comprehensive range of opportunities on the national volunteering database [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk). They offer potential volunteers support and advice matching their motivation to volunteer with appropriate volunteering opportunities.

- **Marketing volunteering**

Volunteer Centres stimulate and encourage local interest in volunteering and community activity. This may include promoting and marketing volunteering through local, regional and national events and campaigns.

- **Good practice development**

The Volunteer Centre in Darlington promotes good practice in working with volunteers to all volunteer involving organisations. The Volunteer Centre and their partner organisations deliver training and accreditation for potential volunteers, volunteers, volunteer managers and the volunteering infrastructure and have localised good practice training DVD's and up to date case studies.

- **Develop volunteering opportunities**

Volunteer Centres work in close partnership with statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies, community groups and faith groups to develop local volunteering opportunities. Volunteer Centres understand the potential offered by the local communities and work with them to realise this potential. Volunteer Centres will target specific groups which face barriers to volunteering.

- **Policy response and campaigning**

Volunteer Centres identify proposals or legislation that may impact on volunteering. Volunteer Centres proactively campaign for a more volunteer-literate and volunteer-friendly climate.

- **Strategic development of volunteering**

As the local experts on volunteering, Volunteer Centres inform strategic thinking and planning at a regional and national level such as the development of this Compact Code.

## 5. Statutory Sector Undertakings

**In supporting this code the statutory sector undertakes to:**

- Recognise the significant contribution made by volunteers and the role of voluntary and community organisations supporting them.
- Seek to ensure that all relevant legislation, guidance and practice are checked for impact on volunteer and community activity.
- Work towards limiting the barriers to volunteering and community action presented by existing policies and practices; Ensure that there is staff awareness of the valuable role of volunteering and working towards employer supported volunteering policies and monitoring.
- Acknowledge the professionalism of volunteers within their own areas of expertise.
- Recognise and support the independence of volunteering infrastructure bodies.
- Support the voluntary and community sectors in reviewing strengths and weaknesses of local volunteering information and infrastructures.
- Recognise the importance of volunteering infrastructure and the need for sustainable funding.
- Where the public sector directly manages volunteers, it will act on relevant undertakings and advice from the voluntary and community sector; and work towards reimbursing expenses in line with Inland Revenue rates.
- Ensure that volunteers are informed to the aims and principles of the organisation.

## 6. Voluntary sector guidelines

Voluntary and community organisations carry out a number of roles in relation to volunteering.

- Community organisations are those entirely or almost entirely made up of volunteers
- Voluntary organisations may involve and manage volunteers, and may provide infrastructure support or funding to volunteers and voluntary groups
- Both can develop, promote and celebrate volunteering and community activity

Source: Government guidance from the Home Office Active Community Unit - COMPACT getting it right together - Volunteering: A Code of Good Practice.

In supporting this code, the sector undertakes to:

- Recognise the importance of high standards of effective management of volunteers, and that fulfilling this responsibility requires allocation of organisational resources. Staff who recruit, induct and manage volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job description or work plans, and receive appropriate training and support.
- Allocate responsibility for volunteer involvement and management. To work towards adopting recognised quality standards for volunteering involving organisations. Ensure adequate broad volunteer representation at board level.



- Ensure monitoring records are kept of volunteers and how funding supports volunteering and the value this produces.
- Acknowledge that volunteers should be given thanks and recognition for their contribution and be given fair treatment, appropriate training and support.
- Assist in providing volunteering opportunities to fit needs, interests and abilities whilst recognising the importance of risk assessment and line responsibilities.

## 7. Working in partnership

**Both the public sector and voluntary sector recognise the importance of the role played by volunteers in cross-sector partnerships and agree to:**

- Seek to identify the types of resources needed in supporting volunteering and community activity within the partnership.
- Define the volunteer's role and seek to ensure it is not a replacement for a paid position.
- Work towards a set of consistent principles on reimbursement of expenses where it is agreed volunteers will be involved.
- To promote access to and the use of the National Volunteering Database [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk)
- To promote access to volunteering information.

## 8. Contact information

There are a number of VCS organisations across the Borough of Darlington who support volunteering. Contact eVOLution Volunteer Centre as an initial point for information or signposting.

**Contact Details:**

eVOLution, Church Row, Darlington, DL1 5QD

**Telephone:** 01325 266888

**e-mail:** [www.evolutiondarlington.com](http://www.evolutiondarlington.com)

Volunteering opportunities in the Borough of Darlington can be found online at [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk).  
v-involved Team, YMCA Darlington, Middleton Court, Middleton Street, Darlington, DL1 1SL,  
Tel: 01325 462452

## 9. Useful definitions & information

### Volunteering is defined as:

'Volunteering is an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, and close relatives.'

(Volunteering Compact Code of Good Practice, Home Office 2005)

**Informal volunteering** is defined as giving unpaid help as an individual to someone who is not a relative." e.g. helping a neighbour.

**Formal volunteering** is defined as unpaid help given to groups, clubs or organisations to benefit others or the environment, e.g:

- helping develop public policy through involvement in campaigning and consultation processes
- serving as trustee board or committee members of voluntary and community organisations

### Some typical features of Community groups and Voluntary Organisation

The following list has been included to assist those who are unfamiliar with the Voluntary & Community Sector, and assume voluntary organisations do not employ anyone.

While there are no single characteristics for the community sector, many of the features on the left hand side of the table will be shared by most community groups and organisations. At the same time, individual organisations continue to change and some may move in either direction over time.<sup>1</sup>

#### Community groups

Member-led (where the community controls direction and purpose)

Neighbourhood, village or community of interest

Less formal structure

Lower or no income

Membership-based

Self-help and mutual support

Providing informal and autonomous (independent) services

Representing community interests,

#### Voluntary organisations

Staff-led

Wider area

More formal structure

Higher income

Client-based

Support and development

Providing specialist or contracted services

Supporting client groups residents and community members

<sup>1</sup> National Compact Code of Good Practice on Community Groups May 2008

# Notes

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# Darlington Compact

**Supporting Partnerships for Success**

Compact Codes of Practice

**Compact**  
working together better together