

The Newham Compact

Introduction

A Compact is an agreement between the Council and other public sector bodies such as the NHS and police with the third sector (independent voluntary organisations, charities, community groups, etc.). It outlines a way of working to help improve outcomes and benefits for the users of local services.

Newham's Compact is currently being refreshed in order to make it more concise and provide clarity on the roles and responsibilities of partners, as well as to reflect the Partnership's new Resilience Framework and an increasing emphasis on commissioning services to deliver specific outcomes for local residents.

The Compact includes clarity on commissioning processes, clear expectations on consultation and engagement and an overall approach to effective partnership working and problem resolution. The Compact helps lay the foundation for what a stable and successful partnership will look like in order to deliver better outcomes for local residents.

The renewed Compact is shorter and more tightly focused on outcomes and practical commitments, so that it becomes a more meaningful document that fosters better partnership working.

The Newham Partnership has set out its vision for the borough - 'that Newham will become a major business location where people choose to live, work and stay'. We will achieve this vision through building Resilience¹ in Newham.

The resilience framework sets out how together Newham Partnership, including those organisations in the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors (VCFS) we will work to build the community, personal and economic resilience of individuals and the community.

Delivering our resilience vision requires a significant change in our approach to delivering services. Firstly, the Council and other public sector organisations are increasingly focused on delivering services through a strategic commissioning approach for all the activity that they fund and which contributes to the delivery of the resilience outcomes for residents in Newham.

This renewed Newham Compact will play a vital role in helping to define the relationship between the council and the VCFS over the coming years and

¹ <http://www.newham.gov.uk/YourCouncil/Buildingstrongcommunity.htm>

ensure that we work effectively in partnership to deliver our shared outcomes for the communities in Newham.

An effective partnership between the statutory sector and VCFS will help achieve the following outcomes:

1. A strong and diverse VCFS which is able to contribute to delivering the Partnerships' shared aspirations.
2. Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
3. Responsive and high-quality programmes and services
4. Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes
5. An equal and fair society

Commitments for the Council and VCFSs:

1. A strong, diverse and independent civil society

Undertakings for the Statutory Sector / Council:

- 1.1 Respect and uphold the independence of VCFSs to deliver their mission, including their right to campaign, regardless of any relationship, financial or otherwise, which may exist.
- 1.2 Ensure VCFSs are supported in a reasonable and fair manner where they are helping the statutory sector fulfil its aims.
- 1.3 Ensure greater transparency by making data and information more accessible (including information on voluntary and community groups in Newham) helping VCFSs to contribute to the development and reviewing of existing provision of service and enabling them to access new markets.

Undertakings for VCFSs:

- 1.7 When campaigning or advocating, ensure that robust evidence is provided, including information about the source and range of people and communities represented.
- 1.8 Ensure independence is upheld, focusing on the cause represented, regardless of any relationship they have with the Council, financial or otherwise.

2. Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services

Undertakings for the Statutory Sector / Council:

- 2.1 Consider the community impact that may result from local policies and programmes, and in particular consider how these would impact local efforts to inspire and encourage community engagement and community resilience.
- 2.2 Give early notice of forthcoming consultations, where possible, allowing enough time for VCFSs to involve their service users, beneficiaries, members, volunteers and trustees in preparing responses. Where it is appropriate, and enables meaningful engagement, conduct formal written consultations, with clear explanations and rationale for time-frames for responding or a more informal approach.
- 2.3 Consider providing feedback to explain how respondents have influenced the design and development of policies, programmes and public services, including where respondents' views have not been acted upon.

2.4 Assess the implications for the sector of new policies, legislation and guidance, aiming to reduce the bureaucratic burden, particularly on small organisations.

Undertakings for VCFSs:

2.5 Promote and respond to council consultations where appropriate.

2.6 Seek the views of service users, clients, beneficiaries, members, volunteers, and trustees when making representation to government. Be clear on who is being represented, in what capacity, and on what basis that representation is being made.

2.7 When putting forward ideas, focus on evidence-based solutions, with clear proposals for positive outcomes.

3. Responsive and high-quality programmes and services

Undertakings for the Statutory Sector / Council:

3.1 Ensure a consistent commissioning process with an emphasis on delivering outcomes for residents and service users, providing value for money and using innovation and best practice to improve services.

3.2 Ensure that VCFSs have a greater role and more opportunities in delivering public services by ensuring the commissioning process is open and transparent and which supports the sector to bid for contracts.

3.3 Consider a wide range of ways to support VCFSs, including small grants, realistic commissioning opportunities, use of council premises and so on.

3.4 Work to remove barriers that may prevent VCFSs accessing government funding, thereby enabling smaller organisations to become involved in delivering services where they are best placed to achieve the desired outcomes.

3.5 Ensure transparency by providing a clear rationale for all commissioning, funding and procurement decisions.

3.6 Ensure well managed and transparent application and tendering processes, which are proportionate to the desired objectives and outcomes of programmes.

3.7 Agree with VCFSs how resilience outcomes, will be monitored before a contract or funding agreement is made. Ensure that monitoring and reporting is relevant and proportionate to the nature and size of the opportunity. Be clear about what information is being asked for, and why and how it will be used.

- 3.6 Ensure equal treatment across sectors, including reporting and monitoring arrangements, when tendering for contracts.
- 3.7 Recognise that when VCFSs apply for a grant they can include appropriate and relevant overheads (Full cost recovery), including the costs associated with training and volunteer involvement.
- 3.8 Discuss and allocate risks to the organisation(s) best equipped to manage them. Where prime contractors are used, ensure they adhere to the principles of this Compact in allocating risk. Ensure delivery terms and risks are proportionate to the nature and value of the opportunity.
- 3.9 Ensure that commissioners across the council adhere to the commitments in this Compact. This includes the relationship between prime contractors and their supply chains.
- 3.10 Demonstrate how funding arrangements and financial support can allow smaller and specialist providers to play a greater part.

Undertakings for VCFSs:

- 3.10 Ensure eligibility for commissioning opportunities before applying and be explicit about how resilience outcomes will be achieved.
- 3.11 Ensure robust governance arrangements so that organisations can best manage any risk associated with service delivery and financing models, including giving funders early notice of significant changes in circumstances.
- 3.12 Be open and transparent about reporting, recognising that monitoring, whether internal or external, is an aspect of good management practice.
- 3.13 Help facilitate feedback from users and communities to the Council to help improve delivery of programmes and services.
- 3.14 Recognise that the Council can legitimately expect VCFSs to give public recognition of its funding.

4. Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services

Undertakings for the Statutory Sector / Council:

- 4.1 If a programme or service is encountering problems, agree with the VCFS a timetable of actions to improve performance before making a decision to end a financial relationship.

4.2 Assess the impact on beneficiaries, service users and volunteers before deciding to reduce or end funding. Assess the need to re-allocate funds to another organisation serving the same group.

4.3 Where there are restrictions or changes to future resources, discuss with VCFSs the potential implications as early as possible, give organisations the opportunity to respond, and consider the response fully, respecting sector expertise, before making a final decision.

4.4 Give a minimum of three months notice in writing when changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, apart from in exceptional circumstances, and provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken.

Undertakings for VCFSs:

4.5 Plan for the end of funding to reduce any potential negative impact on beneficiaries and the organisation.

4.6 Contribute positively to reviews of commissioning, policy, programmes and funding practice.

4.7 Advise the Council on the social, environmental or economic impact of funding changes, and on ways to minimise their effects on people in vulnerable situations.

5. An equal and fair society

Undertakings for the Statutory Sector / Council:

5.1 Work with VCFSs that represent, support or provide services to people specifically protected by legislation and other under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Understand the specific needs of these groups by actively seeking the views of service users and clients. Take these views into account, including assessing impact, when designing and implementing commissioning plans, policies, programmes and services.

5.2 Acknowledge that organisations representing specific disadvantaged or under-represented group(s) can help promote social and community cohesion and should have equal access to state funding.

5.3 Take practical action to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and to ensure a voice for under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

Undertakings for VCFSs:

5.4 If receiving funding from the council, show how the value of the work can help that body deliver its public sector duties on promoting equality and tackling discrimination.

5.5 Take practical action, such as through funding bids, to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build stronger communities.

5.6 Place an emphasis on supporting an approach to cohesion which recognises the value of providing integrated services, which are accessible to all and which recognise the needs of specific groups.