

**Gloucestershire Compact**  
**Advancing Equalities**  
**Code of Practice**

**1. Who is this Code of Practice for?**

- Voluntary and Community Sector Groups
- Public Sector Bodies

**2. What is the Gloucestershire Compact?**

The Gloucestershire Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sector to support and improve partnership working between the sectors. It is underpinned by Codes of Practice, based on the national Codes, which cover the following areas:

- Advancing Equality
- Commissioning
- Community Groups
- Consultation
- Mediation
- Multi-sector Partnerships
- Volunteering

The Gloucestershire Compact and its Codes contain specific undertakings for each sector, as well as a series of joint undertakings, which aim to make a positive impact on partnership working in the county. In this context, the term “undertaking” commits partners to work towards the principle or action in question.

**3. What is the Aim of the Code?**

As both society itself and equality legislation continue to evolve, it is crucial that the public and voluntary and community sectors work well together to achieve equality and fairness for everyone.

This Code of Practice of the Compact recognises the vital role that both sectors play in helping to create a more equal society and sets out commitments that will help both sectors work together to achieve their equality and diversity goals and reflect their belief that diversity should be understood, respected and celebrated.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment,

marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion & belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation. The duties within this act are:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not and
- To promote equality of opportunity for all.

A good working relationship between the voluntary and community sector and the public sector will help to meet the needs of the people they serve or represent and to reduce inequality. The Compact plays a key role in helping this relationship to work, through the commitments within it.

#### **4. Joint undertakings**

All partners to the Gloucestershire Compact have a shared goal of promoting equality and diversity and challenging and eliminating discrimination and undertake to:

- 4.1 Where appropriate, work with groups that involve people with a particular protected characteristic, to understand their specific needs and to design appropriate services.
- 4.2 Work to identify and remove any barriers that prevent volunteering by people with protected characteristics.
- 4.3 Recognise that support and development organisations\* have a role to play in enabling people with protected characteristics to participate in policy development, consultation and other activities.
- 4.4 Recognise that groups which involve people with protected characteristics at community, level may be small or informal, and engage with these groups in a way that suits their working methods.

\* Support and development organisations (for example, GAVCA), are also sometimes known as local infrastructure organisations and provide practical support to local voluntary organisations and a strategic voice for the voluntary and community sector. See <http://www.navca.org.uk/about/whatisanlio.htm>;

#### **5. Public Sector Undertakings**

The Gloucestershire Compact public sector partners undertake to:

- 5.1 Work with the voluntary and community sector towards eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality and diversity of opportunity in line with public sector equality duties.
- 5.2 Ensure that all voluntary and community sector organisations, including those that serve people with protected characteristics, have opportunities to influence the allocation of resources and access public sector support. This includes access to funds to build capacity, and to prepare and deliver projects.
- 5.3 Be clear about any actions on equality and diversity that voluntary and community sector organisations will be expected to undertake if they are funded to deliver programmes.

- 5.4 Where services, support or funding is changed, an analysis will be made of the impact that this will have on groups serving people with protected characteristics.
- 5.5 Acknowledge that organisations that focus on one protected characteristic can promote cohesion.

## **6. Voluntary and Community Sector Undertakings**

The Gloucestershire Compact VCS partners undertake to:

- 6.1 Take practical action in partnership with public bodies to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build community links.
- 6.2 Show committed leadership to promote equality and diversity and, where necessary, put strategies in place to achieve it.
- 6.3 Be clear on who is being represented and how their views have been gathered.
- 6.4 When selecting representatives from organisations and communities, be clear who they represent and with what legitimacy.
- 6.5 Identify groups that are in danger of being marginalised, excluded, or are currently under-represented in voluntary activity, and put in place measures to promote their involvement.

*Produced in March 2011 on behalf of the Gloucestershire Compact Group  
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Further information about the Compact can be found on the Gloucestershire  
Voluntary and Community Sector website [www.gloshub.org.uk](http://www.gloshub.org.uk)*

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