

Castle Point Compact

Code of Practice for:

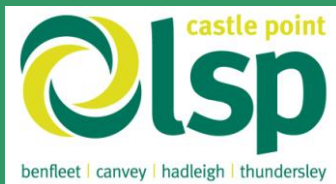
Volunteering

Community Groups

Funding

Voluntary and Community Groups Facing Marginalisation

Public Engagement



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Code of Compact on Volunteering

Aim

To enable more people to become involved in the various forms of voluntary activity that are a vital part of active citizenship and offer them the necessary support.

Shared Values

All partners recognise the value of:

- The importance of volunteering as an expression of citizenship and contributing to the community which is essential to democracy and is undertaken as a result of an individual's choice.
- An effective infrastructure and framework for supporting volunteer activity and promoting good activity.
- Agree to recognize the need to train, support and value the work of volunteers who work for the benefit of the community.
- Greater publicity for the achievements of volunteers and the need to expand the public perception of volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of volunteer activity.
- Have a policy in place that supports volunteers including the payment of out of pocket expenses and allocate resources accordingly whenever possible.

The Voluntary and Community Sector agree to:

- Recognise the importance of high standards and effective management of volunteers and that fulfilling this responsibility requires allocation of organisational resources.
- Ensure volunteers are recruited and effectively supported and managed with clear task descriptions and have access to appropriate training giving equal access to all.
- Ensure organisations working with volunteers are fit for purpose in working with volunteers.

Statutory Sector agree to:

- Recognise that volunteering is a positive experience of citizenship.
- Work to limit the barriers to volunteering and community action, for example, not requiring inappropriate blanket checks, consideration of times and venues of meetings/events.
- Recognise the independence of volunteering infrastructure bodies and to seek to work with those already in existence rather than setting up new structures.
- Uphold the undertakings as set out in the National Code of Good Practice for Volunteering.

Code of Practice on Community Groups

Aim

This code of good practice aims to promote a better understanding of community groups, how they operate within the wider voluntary sector and the particular problems they may face in order to help create and maintain the conditions and support that will help them succeed.

Shared Values

- All partners recognise and value the contribution made by all community groups to the wider voluntary and community sector.
- All Partners recognise that healthy, sustainable communities will include a range of community groups which help to create a strong sense of involvement and belonging at local or neighbourhood level.
- All Partners recognise and respect the right of the Voluntary and Community sector to be represented at Community Partnerships at all levels.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Agree to:

- Engage with and advocate for as many small community groups as possible to ensure inclusion in the wider voluntary and community sector.
- Recognise the different needs of community groups and encourage involvement at a level that suits them.

The Statutory sector agree to:

- Recognise that some community groups wish to remain small and exclusively volunteer based.
- Recognise that many community groups do not wish to become registered charities and this should not be a barrier for them to access funding.
- Encourage community activity and recognise that a large social contribution is made through the effort of the volunteers working with community groups.
- Recognise the diversity of community groups and seek to include them in policy development and consultative processes, adapting communication appropriately to ensure inclusivity.

Code of Practice on Funding

Aim

To improve communication, understanding, transparency and trust between partners covering all aspects of funding relationships.

Shared Values

All partners recognise the linking of funding to statutory sector and government priorities and the constraints placed on statutory sector funding.

All partners recognise the value of funding the community and voluntary sector in order to:

- Foster community based activity and promote social inclusion.
- Identify new needs and innovative ways of meeting existing needs.
- Provide services that are additional and complementary to statutory sector services, which the State has a responsibility or duty to provide.
- Promote sustainable development and long term investment by funding core costs and agreed long term investment.
- Ensure any reporting required is proportionate and reasonable in relation to the value of the grant or contract.

The Voluntary and Community Sector agree to:

- Meet reporting and accounting obligations to users and funding bodies.
- Work to recognised quality standards in all areas of operational, governance and financial management to ensure accountability to stakeholders.
- Make the best use of opportunities provided by local umbrella and infrastructure organisations in order to access information, support and training on fundraising.

The Statutory sector agree to:

- Develop funding policies that take into account the objectives of the voluntary and community organisations to enable them to operate efficiently and effectively.
- Adopt a process whereby all voluntary and community organisations within Castle Point are aware of and have access to the various sources of statutory funding with adequate lead in time, ideally a minimum of 3 months notice.
- Explain the aims and purpose of each funding programme – its links to their organizational policy and priorities, a timetable of processes and procedures and provide a contact point for information and advice.
- To recognise that some programmes will need longer term funding to ensure sustainability.
- Have an agreed process in place whereby grants can be paid to voluntary and community organisations regularly and on time.
- Give as much warning as possible usually six months clear notice about any changes to the level of funding in contractual arrangements.
- Use plain English, aspiring to the Plain English Crystal Mark standard, ensuring processes are streamlined – transparent and accessible.
- Provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants, and refer/signpost to other opportunities, appropriate funding sources or the local CVS for help.
- Encourage and support the development of applications from organizations working with communities that particularly experience discrimination and disadvantage.
- Demonstrate respect for the community and voluntary sector's independence by recognising the applicant organisation's aims, as well as government policy objectives.
- Where possible, co-ordinate information between funding bodies and seek to align guidelines and criteria regarding the application process and decision making and delivery processes.
- Provide service level agreements and contracts that include: clear information on the purpose of funding, accountability of all parties involved, payment timetables, monitoring and evaluation requirements and negotiation arrangements should changes occur for either party.

Code of Practice for Voluntary and Community Groups facing Marginalisation

Who is the Code of Practice for?

- Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Sector Groups (including traveller, refugee/asylum seeker, migrant worker and minority ethnic faith groups)
- Disability Voluntary and Community Sector Groups
- Socially excluded groups
- Specific age groups
- Faith Groups
- Organisations supporting these groups
- Public Sector Bodies active in Essex

What is the aim of this Code of Practice?

This Code of Practice focuses on the needs of marginalized communities in Castle Point. It recognises that the above groups still experience social exclusion, discrimination, marginalisation and disadvantage, and aims to set up a framework for promoting:

- A joint commitment to taking forward equality issues for the groups mentioned in paragraph 1, including sharing best practice and promoting good relationships.
- Improved quality and quantity of consultation and participation with groups mentioned in paragraph 1.
- Recognise the specific needs of these groups.
- Better access to resources and support for all marginalised groups.

Joint Undertakings

The Voluntary and Community Sector and Statutory Agencies will:

- Develop a partnership approach to responding to policy issues and strategies for achieving equality for marginalised groups, including the promotion of diversity.
- Work in partnership with other agencies on initiatives to improve services for the marginalised groups, social inclusion, & cohesion.
- Encourage and support volunteering by and within marginalised groups in line with this Compact's Code on Volunteering.
- Consult marginalised groups on policy documents to ensure that they address the needs of their specific communities.
- Constantly challenge institutional racism and discrimination against marginalised groups.
- Detect and take action on processes, attitudes, and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and stereotyping which disadvantage marginalised groups.

The Statutory Agencies will:

- Encourage the development and integration of marginalised groups that represent the diverse communities in Castle Point.
- Seek and value the contribution the marginalised communities can make in helping them achieve their objectives.
- Recognise and support the independence and uniqueness of marginalised groups and their diversity.
- Operate effective and transparent diversity policies with monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that marginalised groups are treated fairly and with respect in all their interactions with statutory agencies.

Public Engagement Code of Practice

What do we mean by public engagement?

The term “Public Engagement” covers a wide spectrum of processes that enable differing intensity of public involvement in decision-making. Engagement can take the form of written or verbal consultation, and may be conducted face-to-face, by telecommunication or by post. The aim of any Public Engagement exercise is to gather opinions of potentially affected individuals or groups prior to any decision being taken. Public Engagement can be carried out at any stage of developing a project or policy, but ideally at the beginning, and more than one period and/or type of Public Engagement can be applied to any one proposed activity, if it is deemed to be beneficial. It should be acknowledged that Public Engagement can be undertaken by Statutory *and* Voluntary Organisations, and for this reason some of the commitments are based on the involved parties being consulter or consultee, rather than being of a particular sector.

Why have a Castle Point public engagement compact?

Our Aims

- To provide a standard good quality experience for the public across Castle Point.
- To maximise the value of public engagement activities for statutory and voluntary organizations.

Our Shared Values

Public engagement in Castle Point should be:

Relevant – so that responses are useful and unnecessary consultation is avoided.

Accessible – in terms of language, method, time and place.

Accountable – all views are recorded, reported on, given due consideration, and feedback is made available.

Inclusive – so that communication, method and opportunities offered do not disadvantage any particular group of people.

Informed – so that maximum benefit is gained from the process.

Timely – to allow adequate time for responses to be compiled from individuals and groups, and for the information gathered to be included in the decision making process.

Balanced – information provided should not be designed influence the response.

Transparent – so that people understand the context and process.

Honest – that all information provided by both parties is based on all known facts.

Our Shared Commitments

To respect confidentiality.

To put in place protection measures when working with potentially vulnerable people and groups.

Commitments by partners responding to consultation/s

- Advise statutory partners of appropriate groups to be consulted, and highlight opportunities for joined-up consultation with similar groups.
- Advise statutory partners regarding methods, timing and accessibility requirements of the VCS.
- To comply with published deadlines.
- To ensure that responses are accurate and relevant and fairly reflect the views of participants.
- Inform and involve volunteers, members, trustees and employees in the activity, and share any outcomes.
- To consult directly with service users and other involved individuals where appropriate.
- To recognise the importance of consultation and the value of providing accurate and comprehensive information.
- To provide feedback on engagement processes to assist with future improvements.

Commitments by partners undertaking consultation/s

- To ensure that activities are planned to allow maximum time and opportunity for individuals and groups to make a considered and comprehensive response, recognising that 12 weeks is the recommended time to be allowed.
- To provide adequate resources so that engagement is appropriate and effective.
- To plan in public engagement from the beginning of any decision-making process so that it is a genuine dialogue carried out with integrity.

- To ensure that people have the information, skills and opportunities to empower them to be able to shape decisions.
- To provide information about the engagement process.
- To provide adequate and accurate contextual information to enable people to form a considered view.
- To enable the participation of a wide range of individuals and groups and to recognise the need for different approaches and appropriate resources to achieve this.
- To make the process rewarding and enjoyable.
- To value the input of participants, and to demonstrate this by recording, reporting and taking into account their views, and be willing to change policies and plans as a result of this.
- To publish consultation results and final outcomes, including reasons and justification.
- To list the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations that were contacted and those who responded.
- To ensure engagement is co-ordinated and appropriate so that individuals and groups are not over-consulted.
- To monitor and evaluate engagement processes with participants to identify areas which can be improved.
- Respect and value the campaigning role of the VCS, while acknowledging this may conflict with statutory agencies policies, plans and decisions.

This booklet is issued by Castle Point Local Strategic Partnership.

You can contact us in the following ways:

By Post:

Castle Point Borough Council, Kiln Road, Thundersley, SS7 1TF

By telephone:

01268 882200

By fax:

01268 882455

The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or be made available in alternative formats, on request.

Published March 2009