



Working Together. Better Together.

Visit us: <http://wiltshirecompact.org.uk>

Email us: compact@wiltshirecompact.org.uk

The Wiltshire Compact

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The Wiltshire Compact

Introduction

Welcome to your Compact. We are delighted to be able to introduce the latest edition of our longstanding set of agreements between the public and voluntary and community sectors in Wiltshire, last published in December 2011. The launch of this refreshed version for 2015 and beyond comes as we jointly face the continuing harsh realities of resourcing in a challenging economic climate.

Wiltshire is in a unique position in facing the next few years so well prepared, with partnership working embedded across our services to the public. Some of those services evolved in the last two years with an elected Police and Crime Commissioner and then new health arrangements managed through the Clinical Commissioning Group.

We are delighted that both have agreed to adopt the Compact in their work. Budget efficiencies in all sectors have been, and will continue to be made whilst innovation, collaboration and co-operation must all be encouraged for the future. This Compact for 2015 and beyond continues to provide the much-needed assurance that we can do this together – talking, listening, planning and above all delivering for the people and places of Wiltshire.

The Wiltshire Assembly has agreed a vision for stronger and more resilient communities, set out in “People, Places and Promises -The Wiltshire Community Plan 2011-2026”. That vision can only be delivered if we all work together, and have the confidence to do so because we have already agreed what is important to us. We commend The Wiltshire Compact to you all.

Executive Summary

The Wiltshire Compact is a series of agreements reached between public sector and voluntary and community sector organisations across Wiltshire. The agreements are in the form of five publicly-stated promises and a number of additional undertakings given jointly by both sectors and separately by each where relevant.

The Promises and undertakings explain how organisations working as partners will support the development and delivery of services or activities for the benefit of the people of Wiltshire. The Compact has been designed to complement the shared vision set out in “People, Places and Promises – the Wiltshire Community Plan 2011-2026”

The Compact Promises are that:

1. We will work together to make the most efficient and effective use of our available funding resources to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Wiltshire;
2. We will work together as partners to build stronger and more resilient communities;
3. We will work together for, and with, the people of Wiltshire, listening to, talking with and involving as many as practicable in shaping and reviewing outcomes for our communities and service users;
4. We will promote, support and encourage the work of community groups and volunteering in Wiltshire;

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5. We will recognise and promote the importance of equality, diversity and human rights to ensure an inclusive approach in the creation of stronger, more resilient communities.

The Compact gives all partners confidence in approaching working relationships with each other, secure in the knowledge that there are agreed protocols for managing otherwise difficult situations such as consultation and the allocation of funding, as well as the monitoring of performance. There are also agreements on the support available for the promotion of volunteering, and expectations with regard to equalities and inclusion, for example.

The Compact has been drawn up by The Wiltshire Compact Board, consisting of senior officers and elected Members from the public sector and Chief Officer/Assistant Chief Executives of the infrastructure organisations supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector. The content has been widely publicised through public service management teams, the Wiltshire Public Service Board, Town and Parish Councils, the Resilient Communities Partnership, the Wiltshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly, and each of the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum Networks, as well as going through a period of formal consultation hosted on the Compact website.

The Board is led by 2 Chairs, one from the public sector and one from the VCSE sector, who are able to monitor the Compact arrangements and advise partners in managing their relationships whilst remaining Compact compliant, and intervening should a problem occur.

The Board will review its performance annually, and remains accountable to The Wiltshire Assembly, as the Local Strategic Partnership. For practical purposes the Chairs retain links with The Resilient Communities Partnership, and attends each of Wiltshire Council's internal Voluntary and Community Sector Corporate Working Group meetings (as the largest public funder), and each of the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum Network sessions to talk and listen to those organisations directly.

What is The Wiltshire Compact?

The Wiltshire Compact is an agreement between local public sector bodies and organisations of the voluntary and community sector to support and improve partnership working between the sectors.

It is also a model for relations between organisations in the same sector. We, the members and representatives of both sectors, have made **five promises** to underpin this Agreement, which cover the following areas:

- Funding and performance management
- Working with partners
- Consulting, engaging and involving
- Community groups and volunteering
- Equalities

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The Wiltshire Compact, and the Promises it makes, are therefore a series of joint undertakings for members of each sector. It also contains a series of specific undertakings, which taken together make a positive impact on both day-to-day partnership working in the county and support the delivery of [People, Places and Promises - The Wiltshire Community Plan 2011-2026](#).

The Compact will also support the Thematic Plans that are designed to deliver those objectives. It also provides a foundation for meeting obligations set out in guidance issued to Best Value Authorities by Government, which has [statutory force](#) and for those required to comply with the [Social Value Act, 2012](#)

In this context, the term “undertaking” commits us to use our best endeavours, having assessed the available resources, in working towards the principle or action in question.

What is The Wiltshire Compact for?

The Compact sets out a framework within which positive, effective, working relationships can be developed by:

- Recognising and building on those things we already do well together;
- Setting standards and making clear commitments about the ways we will work with each other;
- Creating an environment of mutual trust and respect which allows us to take full advantage of new opportunities for partnership working.

The principles set out in The Wiltshire Compact underpin the relationship between us in all areas. In particular the Promises will further develop the ‘Wiltshire way of working’ across the family of partnerships.

Where are we now?

[People, Places and Promises](#) sets out the vision for Wiltshire, which is to build stronger and more resilient communities, with greater localism lying at their heart. We want to encourage and support communities to take the initiative to strengthen their ability to deal with local challenges and issues in creative ways which are tailored to their unique circumstances.

Our communities give us a sense of well-being and belonging. Strong communities can cope with changing and challenging circumstances and they will often find their own solutions to many of the problems they face. These communities require less intervention from public services, which is not only good for people, but reduces the pressure on increasingly scarce public resources. This is particularly important given government’s overriding priority to make substantial savings and reduce the national deficit.

Greater localism means decision making being devolved, and the design and delivery of services together being influenced by what local people need and want in their local place. To achieve this, public and voluntary and community sector agencies work together to design, commission, resource and deliver those services.

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There is much that is already good about the way the two sectors work together, and within themselves, across a diverse range of issues facing change in our civil society. A great deal of voluntary and community sector activity within the county is funded by the public sector, which is further testament to the strong record of partnership working between the sectors. However, some obstacles and imbalances still exist:

- Existing funding processes do not always allow voluntary and community groups to plan ahead;
- An emerging trend for 'payment by results' could restrict the ability of some voluntary and community groups to participate in the delivery of some commissioned services;
- Some voluntary and community groups find it difficult to influence policy development;
- The value of the contribution made by volunteers is not always recognised;
- Some parts of the voluntary and community sector find it more difficult to access the support that they need;
- Organisations do not always do all they can to avoid duplication and to work together;
- Standards of governance and accountability within parts of the voluntary and community sector need support for improvement and consistency to be achieved ;
- Public sector bodies are not always as clear as they could be about funding priorities; The two sectors do not always communicate with each other as much or as well as they could.

What difference will The Wiltshire Compact make?

The Compact aims to make improvements to the way the two sectors work together, and within themselves. We will begin this process by making clear, explicit commitments about the expectations that partners can have when dealing with each other.

In time, this will enable us to tackle the obstacles identified above and work towards:

- Simpler funding processes;
- Continuous improvements to commissioning and de-commissioning;
- Meaningful and inclusive consultation processes;
- Wider involvement in more areas of public life;
- Co-operation and less duplication across all statutory and voluntary and community organisations;
- Informed decision-making that recognises social value, resulting in better and more appropriate services for the people of Wiltshire;
- Support, encouragement and promotion of volunteering.

Our shared vision and principles

[People, Places and Promises](#) provides the vision for building stronger and more resilient communities. The partners to The Wiltshire Compact acknowledge the Plan's statement that the essential ingredients in fostering stronger communities are:

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People who:

- Participate in volunteering and are active in their community;
- Feel valued and able to achieve their potential;
- Are not disadvantaged;
- Actively manage their health, including eating sensibly, keeping their weight at an optimal level, and participating in physical activity;
- Have a high confidence and trust in public services;
- Are motivated to adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Places:

- With access to resources in the widest sense – people with skills, community facilities, and finance;
- Where the balance between housing, employment and services is optimal;
- Where businesses can recruit, expand and be competitive;
- That work to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Agencies, that:

- Work together with communities and encourage local decision making through devolved powers;
- Focus on providing support, rather than creating dependency.

Principles we share

In drawing up this Compact to work together toward Wiltshire's vision of strong and resilient communities, we agree there are a number of shared Principles, or common beliefs:

- The public and voluntary and community sectors affirm each other's complementary and distinct roles in identifying and meeting the diverse needs of local people, and recognise the value and efficiency of working in partnership towards common aims and objectives;
- Voluntary and community action plays an essential part in Wiltshire. It enables local people to play a full and active part in vibrant community life, promoting inclusion and representation for disadvantaged groups and communities;
- An independent and diverse voluntary and community sector is vital to the well-being and resilience of communities in Wiltshire;
- Voluntary and community groups are entitled to campaign within the law, using robust evidence, in order to advance their aims;
- In the joint development and delivery of public policy and services, the public sector and the voluntary and community sector have distinct lines of responsibility and accountability;

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- The voluntary and community sector is ideally placed to harness the knowledge and energy of local people and empower them to develop their own solutions to meeting their needs;
- Local people and groups have a right to be involved in shaping the decisions that affect their lives. Meaningful and inclusive consultation builds relationships and empowerment in a thriving civil society, improving the services we deliver;
- Whilst the public sector and the voluntary and community sector have different forms of accountability and are answerable to a different range of stakeholders, both are committed to integrity, respect, openness, fairness and objectivity in their work together.

“For Wiltshire to continue to be an excellent place in which to live, work and visit, we must work together. This will be the true test of our resilience.”

The Wiltshire Community Plan 2011-2026

Compact Promises

To fulfil these principles this Compact is underpinned by **five promises**:

1. We will work together to make the most efficient and effective use of our available funding resources to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Wiltshire;
2. We will work together as partners to build stronger and more resilient communities;
3. We will work together for, and with, the people of Wiltshire, listening to, talking with and involving as many as practicable in shaping and reviewing outcomes for our communities and service users;
4. We will promote, support and encourage the work of community groups and volunteering in Wiltshire;
5. We will recognise and promote the importance of equality, diversity and human rights to ensure an inclusive approach in the creation of stronger, more resilient communities.

We all jointly undertake to:

- Promote and develop effective working relationships, consistency of approach and good practice between different public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sector particularly where issues involve more than one agency;
- Foster a greater understanding and empathy for the respective roles and responsibilities of the sectors and the organisations within them;
- Support the building of capacity and sustainability in the voluntary and community sector, enabling it to fulfil its strategic role and challenging imbalances of power;
- Implement and champion The Wiltshire Compact at all levels within our agencies or organisations;

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- Appoint and train a Compact champion in each organisation, or within departments of larger organisations, to ensure that The Compact is implemented and monitored;
- Promote the adoption of The Compact to other local public bodies and voluntary and community organisations that are not yet signed up to The Wiltshire Compact;
- Make arrangements for sharing relevant data and respect protocols in the sharing of confidential information;
- Whilst seeking at all times to avoid an escalation of disagreements, partners will co-operate in a process of mediation to resolve compliance disputes that may arise from time to time;
- Assist the annual review of the operation of The Wiltshire Compact.

VCSE sector partners undertake to:

- Maintain and promote high standards of governance, compliance and accountability to meet their obligations to funders, service users, staff and volunteers;
- Recognise the desirability for sustainable business practice to be reflected in funding bids;
- Develop and implement quality standards and performance management processes appropriate and proportional to the organisation, respecting the need for monitoring when in receipt of funding from public sector organisations;
- Seek to ensure that service users, members, volunteers and supporters are informed and consulted as widely as possible before presenting a case, or responding to consultations, and to represent their views objectively and accurately;
- Where appropriate, seek to actively involve service users, staff and volunteers in the development and management of activities and services.

Public sector partners undertake to:

- Recognise the right of the voluntary and community sector, and organisations within it, to determine and manage their own affairs;
- Recognise and respect the independence of the voluntary and community sector, including its right within the law to campaign, to lobby and to comment on public policy (whatever its funding or other relationship with the public sector and based upon robust evidence);
- Promote the need for sustainable business practice when managing funding bids;
- Work towards greater transparency, equity and consistency in all funding allocated to the voluntary and community sector;
- Support and encourage the voluntary and community sector in taking full advantage of other appropriate external funding opportunities;
- Consult the voluntary and community sector on issues that are likely to affect it, in a timely and appropriate way taking account of the specific needs of, and impact upon, those parts of the sector that represent groups who are at risk of being excluded;
- Adhere to the principles of open government (which seeks to ensure that wherever possible decisions and findings are made public and explained).

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Our promise: Funding and performance management

"We will work together to make the most efficient and effective use of our available funding resources to deliver the best outcomes for the people of Wiltshire."

This Promise requires policy and procedures that drive sound funding decisions to support quality services. It will also encourage and promote high standards of governance, compliance and accountability to meet partners' obligations to service users, funders, staff and volunteers and should avoid the need for 'financial surprises'.

The key to effective use of funding resources, whether making/receiving small grants or investing in support capacity, or commissioning major services, is the management of good relationships, with effort required by all sides.

In making this promise, we acknowledge that the key principles are:

- That funders and commissioners are accountable for public funds and must work within public policy, central government direction, financial and procurement regulations;
- That voluntary and community sector organisations can act as advocates for communities with needs, which can assist the public sector design of a commissioning process;
- That processes to access funding are proportionate, taking into account the value of the money to be awarded;
- That funding is awarded via consistently applied processes which are clear, open and equitable and which clearly explain the outcomes to be delivered;
- That commissioners take account, where required, of the [social value](#) of their intended actions; that after review, the de-commissioning of services, or reductions in funding, services or activities, may be necessary from time to time and that these situations will be managed within the spirit and principles of The Compact;
- That strategic decisions to alter levels of funding to the voluntary and community sector can have a de-stabilising effect, and must be carefully managed and communicated;
- A respect for the voluntary and community sector's independence and its lawful right to speak out on behalf of its members and service users, on the basis of robust evidence, irrespective of any funding relationships which may exist;
- Clear monitoring and evaluation to evidence the difference that received funding has made to the people of Wiltshire.

VCSE sector partners undertake to:

- Seek to create a mix of funding sources, and use good risk management principles that include a financial reserves policy;

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- Where proportionate to do so, develop business plans to ensure the sustainability of their organisation and its services which may include collaboration or consortia arrangements with other organisations;
- Recognise and prepare for some funding and some projects that will be time-limited;
- Provide clear monitoring and evaluation information which shows the return on a public sector agency's investment in an agreed format proportional in scope to the investment made;
- Establish the added value that they provide including recognition of an equivalent monetary value to volunteering.

Public sector partners undertake to:

- Work to a published funding or commissioning framework that is corporately agreed across their organisation when working with voluntary and community sector organisations;
- Provide timely information to the voluntary and community sector about changing public policy, development of new service outcomes, and related funding opportunities allowing sufficient time for bids or tenders to be prepared;
- Consider 'social value' and maximise the opportunities for small voluntary and/or community groups to engage in delivery of public services, whilst acting within procurement law;
- Acknowledge that voluntary organisations have the right to use the full cost recovery process, but may choose not to do so;
- Provide, wherever possible, at least three- year funding agreements, recognising that this improves confidence, stability and sustainability;
- Commence a 12 week period of consultation (or less by mutual consent at the outset, and clearly state why this is appropriate) if funding is to be reduced, that will at the point of launch, publish the criteria and revised outcomes upon which a decision will be made. During the consultation period, an Impact Assessment, including that on Equalities, will be jointly undertaken with voluntary and community sector representation detailing the effects on affected communities or service users;
- Review consultation feedback before deciding to proceed;
- Follow the consultation review, if proceeding, with a three month period of formal notice with continuing dialogue that gives sufficient financial information to the affected organisation upon which to base management action (such as 'risk of redundancy notice' to staff, or re-direction of services or resources);
- Ensure payment of grants and contract fees within agreed timescales and where possible and appropriate pay grants in advance rather than in arrears;
- Consider the financial stability of organisations being paid by results, recognising core costs;
- Only request monitoring information that is proportionate and that will evidence not only outcomes but experiences of the whole commissioning cycle.

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Our promise: Working with partners

"We will work together as partners to build stronger and more resilient communities."

This Promise should make a positive impact on the relationship between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector and their joint commitment to establishing effective partnership working where appropriate. It aims to set a framework for:

- Understanding how to be effective when working with partners;
- Encouraging good practice in managing relationships with partners;
- Enabling inclusion and full participation.

In making this Promise, we acknowledge that:

Being 'Better Together' to make a difference means the VCSE sector and the public sector working together in a way that adds value to and improves the effectiveness of service delivery. In particular, when considering a partnership, we agree there should be:

- Active agreement that one is necessary;
- A shared, clear and defined purpose;
- Confidence in the commitments, capacity and actions of different partners;
- Commitment and the capacity to achieving the best outcomes for end users;
- Leadership by respected individuals;
- A clear and open decision-making process;
- Development of a shared vision of what might be achieved;
- Time to build the partnership;
- Shared or overlapping agendas;
- Good communication between partners;
- Effective partnership management.

We all jointly undertake to:

- Identify common needs, goals and shared priorities which will be effectively addressed through working together as partners;
- Develop and be part of partnerships where they can add value to existing work arrangements;
- Review the effectiveness of partnerships on a regular basis and if necessary agree a way forward to improve effectiveness or end the partnership;
- Develop open and representative processes and structures;

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- Understand what available resources are needed for a partnership to achieve planned outcomes;
- Promote inclusion and ensure that the needs and views of as many and as diverse a range of people as possible are considered by partners together;
- Recognise the value of specific skills and expertise in all sectors;
- Be clear about organisational interests and recognise the limits and boundaries of participating partners or their representatives;
- Provide for induction of new partners and representatives including awareness and the implications of The Wiltshire Compact and its Promises;
- Ensure each partner is clear about their role and the commitments involved;
- Ensure that the role of staff members and volunteers in representing organisations working together as partners, or in partnerships, is fully recognised within their job roles and supported by their employing or sponsoring organisation (including identified training and development);
- Be clear whose responsibility it is to ensure sound organisation, management and appropriate resourcing of a partnership including:
 - Clear Terms of Reference for a partnership including clarity on where it is positioned within a wider partnership structure;
 - Clear and agreed administrative and secretariat function;
 - Strategic Plan with outcomes;
 - Communication and Involvement Strategy;
 - Action planning;
 - Performance management and reporting;
 - Accessible meetings;
 - Costs of participation and representation.
- Identify clearly the role of the Chairs, and ensure this person is able to encourage the involvement and participation of all involved;
- Accept ownership for decisions made by the partnership and their promotion;
- Use the representative structures and processes of the voluntary and community sector to identify and encourage sector involvement in policy development and delivery design at the earliest practicable stage.

VCSE partners undertake to:

- Ensure voluntary and community sector representatives consult and represent the wider views of the sector in an inclusive and accessible way;
- Respect and work to support the statutory frameworks (including monitoring) within which the public sector operates;
- Ensure that issues concerning voluntary and community sector funding are raised only when directly relevant to the partnership's current business to hand.

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Public sector partners undertake to:

- Recognise and value the skills, knowledge and expertise that voluntary and community sector organisations bring as partners;
- Recognise that voluntary and community sector organisations have a strategic as well as a service delivery role;
- Where relevant, identify an accountable body for performance and/or the acceptance of risk if not to be equally shared amongst partners;
- Be clear whether it is a voluntary and community sector advisor, representative or organisation in their own right that is being requested to participate as a partner.

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Our Promise: Consulting, engaging and involving

We will work together for, and with, the people of Wiltshire, listening to, talking with and involving as many as practicable in shaping and reviewing outcomes for our communities and service users.

In making this Promise, we acknowledge:

- The expertise of the voluntary and community sector in harnessing the knowledge and energy of local people and how, by working together, we can bring about better results for all;
- That by engaging people in a timely manner and giving them ownership of a process, both sectors can maximise effectiveness in shaping services, whilst enhancing trust, working relationships and healthy partnerships.

How we communicate and how we consult with one another is a vital part of how we work effectively together. This Promise is an agreement between us about how we will work to consult, involve and engage with each other and our communities.

For the voluntary and community sector, consultation presents an opportunity to bring its knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on policy and services on behalf of the people and causes it works for. The sector will be able to influence the design and delivery of services to people and communities in Wiltshire confident in a framework that facilitates inclusive representation and consultation.

The public sector will engage with the voluntary and community sector in a range of appropriate partnership areas such as: involvement, representation and voice; developing policy and putting it into practice; strategy and forward planning; funding; charges and fees; service development and changes; new services; performance monitoring and evaluation of services.

Involvement covers lots of different activities. The degree of involvement will be proportionate and take into account the breadth and depth of impact on both sectors and our communities.

We all jointly undertake to:

- Promote effective sharing of relevant data whilst respecting the confidentiality of some information, observing relevant confidentiality and data protection policies, agreements and legislation;
- Ensure any involvement activities are inclusive, taking account of the needs and interests of all communities, in line with our Equalities Promise;
- Prepare consultation documents that are appropriate to the audience and which seek to support and enable individuals and organisations who wish to be engaged irrespective of experience and knowledge;
- Support the development of mechanisms to enable inclusion;

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- Establish a way of reviewing and evaluating involvement activities;
- Recognise that communication is a two-way process and means listening as well as talking;
- Share significant changes or progress so that partner agencies are not taken by surprise.

VCSE partners undertake to:

- Pursue recognised good practise amongst its members in its representational work, ensuring representation and voice is effective;
- Include members, service users and stakeholders in any involvement activities, such as sharing information or consulting with them;
- Ensure communication structures for liaison and representation are fully utilised;
- Recognise the limits of its own influence;
- Differentiate between the voluntary and community sector organisation's role in representing an interest group and its role as a service provider. To identify issues for the organisation as a service provider separately from issues affecting members or users;
- Report the views represented fairly and accurately;

Public sector partners undertake to:

- Consult and involve the voluntary and community sector in a timely and planned way on issues, whether national, regional, or local, that are likely to affect it at the earliest stage of policy development;
- Involve the voluntary and community sector in planning, delivering and reviewing their services;
- Choose a method of involvement with the voluntary and community sector that is relevant and appropriate to the issues and that enables a meaningful response;
- Take account of financial constraints on the voluntary and community sector in being involved;
- Give consultees enough information and time to respond – a standard period of 12 weeks. Shorter periods may be required but these instances will be kept to an absolute minimum; Ensure that where the standard consultation period cannot be met, all documents will specify why a shorter time has been set;
- Provide timely feedback following involvement, and be willing to change proposals as a result of what has been learned;
- Be clear about the remit and scope of involvement, the process involved, and the method required to influence the outcomes;
- Involve all relevant voluntary and community groups through representation structures using infrastructure support groups to reach the widest range of individuals and community groups.

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Our promise: Community groups and volunteering

"We will promote, support and encourage the work of community groups and volunteering in Wiltshire."

In making this Promise, we acknowledge that:

- Community groups and volunteers in Wiltshire enjoy providing a diverse variety of services and activities for local people, that can improve quality of life and life chances in local neighbourhoods;
- In addition to community groups, volunteers can be found in larger voluntary organisations and in the public sector;
- Community groups are generally well placed to understand the needs of local people;
- Community groups can play a range of different roles including:
 - Providing a voice and advocacy for residents and local service users;
 - Building relationships, networks and participation in local communities;
 - Providing self-help and mutual support to build stronger and more resilient communities;
 - Delivering services, often locally and informally, based on their assessment of community need;
- Developing the capacity of community groups and encouraging/enabling volunteering is beneficial for everyone;
- Community groups and volunteers can provide real value for money;
- Community groups are independent and respond to local needs. This means they do not necessarily need or want to have relationships with the public sector;
- Community groups and volunteers in Wiltshire operate in a county where rurality presents specific issues and challenges;
- Volunteering builds skills and experience, enabling people to give back to their community of interest, enhances employability and so creates employment. It promotes social inclusion and contributes to the building of community networks and participation. High levels of volunteering are therefore indicators of healthy and active communities;
- Anyone can volunteer; they may already be employees coming forward from any sector who are willing to give their time, skills and experience to their communities.

We all jointly undertake to:

- Work together to develop a modern and dynamic support structure to promote volunteering and support good practice, recognising the benefits of effective working relationships and consistency of approach;
- Take account of needs when recruiting volunteers or designing and delivering our services;
- Widen the public and commercial interest in volunteering by improving the profile, status and range of volunteer activities; celebrate the contributions volunteers make;

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- Ensure volunteers are brought into policy-making consultation processes;
- Recognise and overcome barriers to volunteering;
- Recognise that volunteering opportunities complement rather than replace the role of paid staff and ensure that organisations' policies and working practices reflect this.

VCSE partners undertake to:

- Recognise the importance of excellent management of volunteers, which will require allocation of resources. Those who recruit, induct and manage volunteers should have this work recognised as part of their job descriptions or work plans and receive appropriate training and support;
- Ensure that volunteers are treated fairly, with training and support, and have their appropriate expenses paid in advance;
- Support and enable qualification in, or accreditation of, skills acquired through volunteering;
- Assist potential volunteers from all parts of society to find volunteering opportunities that fit their needs, interests and abilities.
- Encourage community groups to
 - Be clear and open about what a group stands for, the community they speak for, and the difference the group can make;
 - Actively involve the community and other organisations in their work;
 - Work in an open and transparent way, giving consideration to how people can join in their work and come to meetings;
 - Promote local decision making;
 - Consider need when recruiting volunteers or designing and delivering their services;
 - Take advantage of appropriate training and development opportunities.

Public sector partners undertake to:

- Support community groups, encouraging them to flourish and thrive;
- Listen and respond to the advocacy that community groups provide;
- Recognise the value and benefits that volunteers bring to communities;
- Celebrate volunteering achievements; Encourage their staff to recognise the benefits of including the voluntary and community sector in the design of policy and services;
- Encourage their staff to recognise the benefits of participating in volunteering themselves; Work with the voluntary and community sector and private sector to consistently promote, support and develop volunteering across the county;

Community Groups

In every neighbourhood, people come together to form groups. Whether they want to clean up their local street, provide support for local people with health problems, set up a football team, or celebrate a community festival, these groups are at the heart of our communities. As

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there are so many types of community group involved in countless different activities, it is difficult to classify or label them. So we don't attempt to be too prescriptive about exactly what community groups are. Instead below is a list of some of the characteristics of community groups, which can help you to identify them and understand how they are different from other types of voluntary organisation:

Community groups tend to:

- Have come together because of a shared interest or aspiration;
- Have little or no financial income;
- Have an informal structure;
- Be led by members and volunteers;
- Be based in a neighbourhood or community rather than a wider area;
- Provide informal services to communities.

Some examples of types of community group are:

- Self-help groups, networks and forums that bring together people who have something in common, and offer advice and support to each other;
- Residents' associations and other groups of people who come together to improve their street or neighbourhood;
- Faith groups that organise religious activities and community and social events;
- Sports clubs and music groups;
- Committees that organise local community events and festivals;
- Groups of people who meet regularly to socialise and enjoy shared activities, such as youth and retirement clubs, lunch clubs and mother and toddler groups;
- Groups that form for a short period to campaign on a local issue like traffic problems.

There are far more community groups in existence than other types of voluntary organisations.

Volunteering

Volunteering has been described as an important expression of citizenship and essential to democracy. Volunteers commit their time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community. It is a substantial social investment that creates social capital and is a vital part of active citizenship, making a major contribution to raising the quality of life. Volunteering can take many forms; is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain; and is underpinned by five key principles:

- **Choice** – Volunteering is a choice made freely by each individual. Whilst volunteering is not a contractual agreement, it does involve rights and responsibilities.
- **Diversity** – Volunteering should be open to all. Implementing equalities policies and schemes, and a welcoming approach are fundamental to support diversity.

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- **Mutual Benefit** – Volunteers offer their contribution unwaged but should gain in other ways in return for their contribution to the community.
- **Recognition** – There is explicit recognition of the value of the contribution made by volunteers to an organisation, community, the economy and to society and wider social objectives.
- **Support** – Good support, management and training of volunteers are an essential part of volunteering.

Volunteering managers may wish to explore the opportunities for accrediting their work through the [Investing in Volunteering award](#) or seek recognition through [Wiltshire's Valuing Volunteering Promise](#) a great way to show your current and potential volunteers that you are a great organisation to be part of.

Further information and resources:

- [DEVELOP](#), the infrastructure support organisation for Wiltshire
- [The Volunteer Centre Wiltshire](#)
- [Wessex Community Action](#)
- [Community First](#)
- [Do-it](#)
- [Volunteering England](#)
- [The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action](#)
- [The National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#)

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Our promise: Equalities:

"We will recognise and promote the importance of equality, diversity and human rights to ensure an inclusive approach in the creation of stronger, more resilient communities."

We recognise that everyone is different. The Compact seeks to recognise and appreciate the value of diversity that exists in Wiltshire and in our society generally, aiming specifically to promote the inclusion of groups and individuals within our communities that are under-represented, disadvantaged or excluded.

The organisations signed up to the Wiltshire Compact work together to address issues such as rural and social isolation and socio-economic disadvantage. This Promise supports opportunities for as many people as possible within Wiltshire to be involved in the work of our organisations and in their communities. It includes signposts to other resources which provide advice or guidance on meeting the needs of people, including those with protected characteristics according to the Equality Act 2010.

These are:

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Gender reassignment / transgender
- Marriage or civil partnership status
- Religion or belief

We all jointly undertake to:

- Work to foster good relations within and between communities and people;
- Include equality and diversity as a key requirement in all new policy development. We will demonstrate that we have done this by providing evidence of:
 - Accessible services and activities;
 - Trained staff and volunteers;
 - Involvement of disadvantaged groups in planning at the earliest opportunity;
- Talk to as many and as diverse a range of people as possible;
- Ensure that equality and diversity is taken into consideration when funding agreements are developed;
- Conduct equality impact assessments - and then take action in any areas which are shown to need further development - to continually improve access to services and activities;
- Support under-represented, disadvantaged or excluded groups or individuals;
- Promote fair employment practices in recruitment, selection, retention, management, training and development and introduce employment monitoring mechanisms which can measure these;

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- Ensure compliance with up-to-date legislation, and to promote good practice that goes beyond minimum legal requirements (taking account of limited resources where necessary);
- Specifically and actively promote and encourage ongoing partnership links in order to share training/resources/expertise where appropriate;
- Promote community cohesion by celebrating equality and diversity.

Policies and Legislation

This Promise links to existing laws and ways of working and should be used in conjunction with any other guidance available for the promotion of equality and diversity.

Partner organisations should be aware of their responsibilities under both United Kingdom and European legislation on equalities and human rights issues. Each organisation will have its own policies and procedures regarding equalities that comply with the relevant legislation. In addition, from April 2011 the public sector has to comply with the new public sector equality duty.

Further information and resources:

- [The Equalities Framework for Local Government](#)
- [The Equalities Framework for the NHS](#)
- [The Equality Standard for police services](#)
- [Government policy on equality](#)

The Wiltshire Compact

Reviewing the operation of The Compact annually

The Wiltshire Compact provides a framework to help us, and the wider family of partnerships, work together more effectively. As our work continues and evolves, it follows that The Compact itself will need to evolve, taking account of improvements in our relationships and the changing partnership environment in which we all operate.

Each year The Wiltshire Compact Board will initiate its own review of The Compact, assessing monitoring, compliance and outcomes over the term, and looking ahead to new issues that will inevitably face all our partners. Fulfilling its accountability to The Wiltshire Assembly, as the Local Strategic Partnership, the review will:

- Examine the operation of The Wiltshire Compact and the Promises made;
- Assess whether all partners are complying with Compact undertakings;
- Agree an annual action plan which sets milestones for the further development of The Compact, the technical content of the Promises and undertakings, and their implementation;
- Evaluate the difference that The Compact is making in Wiltshire;
- Publish a report on its findings.

The Wiltshire Compact 2015 and beyond

The Wiltshire Compact and Promises have been developed by the multi-sector Wiltshire Compact Board involving all the public sector agencies and infrastructure support organisations, with an Independent Chair.

The VCSE sector comprises an extremely broad and diverse range of groups and organisations, from national and international charities employing large numbers of staff to small neighbourhood-based groups run entirely by volunteers. The voluntary and community sector represents the voices of many different sections of society, including service users, and is an important partner in both strategic planning and service provision. It is thought there may be as many as 7800 such organisations in Wiltshire, including over 2675 registered charities.

The Public Sector is made up of local statutory agencies: Wiltshire Council, Town & Parish Councils, Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, The Police and Crime Commissioner & Wiltshire Police, Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service and Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire Community Rehabilitation Company.

This document can also be made available in different formats or languages by request.

Please contact us for more information:

Visit us: <http://wiltshirecompact.org.uk>

Email us: compact@wiltshirecompact.org.uk