

# Our Compact

## The Community Group

### Code of Good Practice

#### Introduction

The Community Groups Code is one of five Codes of Practice developed as part of "Our Compact" for Doncaster. "Our Compact" is being led by the Local Strategic Partnership (DtS) in order to achieve the maximum benefit for the diverse communities within Doncaster. This agreement is between the members of the LSP family, which includes public bodies, the Third Sector, private sector and social enterprises and aims to improve their relationships for mutual advantage.

#### The Compact

The Compact sets out the principles that underpin the relationships whilst the Codes of Practice set out detailed recommendations for best working practice. Together they aim to increase understanding, clarify expectations and strengthen collaborative working across the partnership.

The Compact and its codes have been developed by representatives of public bodies and the Third Sector, with the intention that organisations across sectors will be able to adopt them as a shared and common way of working.

#### The Community Groups Code

The community sector is diverse, ranging from small, informal community groups to large multi-purpose community organisations, which include geographical communities, communities of interest and experience. It contributes greatly to civil society and to social inclusion and cohesion. The Community Groups Code outlines ways of ensuring that the skills and experience of community groups add value to policy and service delivery, particularly at local level.

Community groups are member-led and have a less formal structure than Third Sector organisations. They often have a lower or no income and provide informal and independent services. Strong and sustainable communities will include a range of community groups and organisations which for members of that community, help to create a strong sense of belonging.

Providing services is an important part of the work of community groups in a number of situations where:

- a statutory organisation cannot provide a service economically because of geography, culture or limited scale
- a service supports existing statutory services and benefits from community involvement and management
- a community organisation grows larger and is able to deliver statutory services under contract
- a quick response is necessary for an identified need

All Compact partners need to have a clear understanding that community groups can play a range of different roles including:

- providing a voice for residents and users to service providers
- building relationships and networks in neighbourhoods and communities - providing self-help and mutual support to build stronger communities and community cohesion
- delivering services, often locally and informally, based on their assessment and response to community needs

Faith groups need to be recognised as community groups because the many faiths form an important part of society. While practicing their faith is a central activity for most faith based groups, many are also involved in running community services, promoting community development and representing community interests.

## Joint Undertakings

All Partners undertake to:

- Develop a better understanding of how each other works and opportunities to increase this understanding
- Develop successful partnerships that are able to effectively respond to both short and long term needs
- Endeavour to identify a single point of contact for community groups

## Public Sector and Third Sector Undertakings

Public sector and Third Sector partners undertake to:

- Provide clear guidelines when commissioning services or awarding grants as to the length of contract and agreed outcomes
- Where possible agree the bureaucratic requirements, monitoring arrangements and timescales at the earliest opportunity
- Recognise that small grants schemes should offer a quick response and a monitoring regime proportionate to the small size of the grant
- Recognise and value the contribution that community groups make in delivering services and within strategic decision-making processes

## Community Sector Undertakings

The Community sector undertakes to:

- Ensure they are able to meet the monitoring requirements of funding providers
- Clearly identify the community being represented
- Be accountable to the community group it represents

## Third Sector Undertakings

The Third sector undertakes to:

- Play an enabling role that supports the community sector in its diversity
- Consult the community sector and consider its different interests alongside those of the Third Sector before responding to invitations for representation on partnership organisations and other local structures