

# Our Compact

## Consultation and Policy Appraisal 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 Consultation and Policy Appraisal Code of Practice

This code seeks to ensure that policy formulation and service delivery are informed and shaped by a wide range of experiences, views and perceptions.

Consultation is defined in this Code as ‘an ongoing process of dialogue that leads to a decision’. Dialogue is two or more parties listening to and taking account of each others’ views where this is closely related to a decision. Consultation is therefore not simply awareness raising or information giving, although these activities can form part of a consultation process.

The Government and Doncaster’s Public Sector recognise that the Third Sector is a partner in bringing about effective social change. This code is based upon commitments set out by Government in the National Code, and undertakings agreed locally.

### Working with Partner organisations on your consultation

We seek to ensure that all partners work towards a culture of information sharing, transparency and shared responsibility. All partners aim to share information around consultation work and subsequent findings where appropriate.

### Mechanisms for Consultation:

The Doncaster Community Empowerment Network (CEN) is a key mechanism and an independent network within the Community, Faith and Third Sector. It supports and encourages groups to influence decision making through consultation and representation within the DtS structure.

The Local Involvement Network (LINK) is the mechanism by which individuals and organisations influence the commissioning and provision of all health and social care services at a local level. Service providers and commissioners have a statutory duty to consult with the LINK and to formally respond to the views and recommendations of the LINK and its wider membership.

## Why Consult?

All partners need to deliver services that are designed around the needs of the people using them. When organisations make decisions about services or policy, they need to take into account actual and potential impact of those decisions on individuals and communities.

## Joint Undertakings

All partners undertake to:

- Provide accurate, appropriate, accessible information about the services they provide to people in Doncaster
- Recognise that all groups have differing needs and seek to work inclusively to reflect this diversity
- Define who needs to be involved, why and whom they are representing
- Ensure that all views are respected and that no one is disadvantaged by participating
- Involve people with a first hand experience of the issues on which they are being consulted
- Consult early and where possible give a 3 month time period for consultation or as a minimum 1 month. Anything outside of these timescales would require an explanation
- Regularly update best practice for consultation
- Use available partner networks to encourage participation in consultations
- Clarify how, by whom and when, decisions will be made and what feedback mechanisms will be used
- Ensure that research is carried out objectively, and that findings are reported accurately

## Public Sector Undertakings

Public Sector Partners undertake to:

- Recognise that health and social care commissioners and service providers will have a statutory duty to consult with the LINK and its wider membership
- Consider the impact on the Third Sector when developing new or changing existing policy
- Factor in consultation with the Third Sector into plans for policy appraisal

## Third Sector Undertakings

Third Sector Partners undertake to:

- Consult with their own membership about policies which have an impact on their organisations and the services they provide
- Consider the impact on other organisations when developing new or changing existing policy

## DtS Board Undertakes to:

- Consider the results of strategic consultation and use the information in the strategic planning process