

Local Compact Champions Pack:

For the voluntary sector

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Welcome

Who is this pack for?

People who have volunteered or been appointed to champion the Local Compact within their voluntary organisation. Whether new to the role or experienced, all Compact Champions should have an easy guide to the issues and hints on practical action to help their championing to be productive.

Compact Champions are committed to encouraging colleagues to know, use and follow their Compact. As a new or experienced Compact Champion in a local group, you will want your championing experience to be productive and enjoyable. You are looking for the necessary skills and confidence to sell your Compact's benefits to people, use it to ensure good practice in partnership work, and tackle bad practice.

What does successful championing look like? It is finding that the doors of public bodies open to your group so that you can work well together. But it is also your Compact being used to achieve your group's goals while building an independent thriving sector that improves lives and communities. Championing should also include what *you* get out of the role – it should be enjoyable, and give you a real sense of achievement through influencing people and securing tangible gains for your group.

This pack is designed to help you make that vision a reality, whatever support and structures exist in your area. However, every area does need a champions' network that can give you support and training and a Local Compact implementation group that ensures your Compact works effectively – if you're an unsupported champion then [let Compact Voice know](#).

How to use this pack

- ▶ Flick through these sheets to see what's there, and return to them as issues emerge or to expand the range of your championing
- ▶ Use the tips contained in this pack to help you decide what to do, how to do it and make the best use of the limited time you give to championing – getting your role right is the key to successful championing
- ▶ Scribble down your thoughts and record issues and progress in this pack – it's a working resource
- ▶ Use those templates you think will be most helpful – if you run out of space, download more from the Compact Voice website

Introduction to some key concepts

Who are Compact Workers?

Some local areas have a paid Compact Officer in a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation (such as a council for voluntary service) who works on implementing the Local Compact, including supporting, organising and co-ordinating Champions (which may include producing email briefings and running a champions' website).

Where such a post has not been funded, someone within the infrastructure organisation will have direct personal responsibility for champion support. More rarely, a council officer will be responsible for co-ordinating champions in both public bodies and local groups.

Who supports Champions so that they don't work alone?

In addition to internal management or peer support from a committee member, champions need local support from outside their organisation. The range of support is mentioned throughout this pack and two key areas are mentioned below.

What is a Local Compact Champions Network?

This is a forum in local areas where champions can meet to share issues and discuss their needs, such as training.

What is the Compact Implementation Group?

This may be called something else (maybe Compact steering group) and brings together partners signed up to their Local Compact to plan and oversee its implementation. Champions should keep the implementation group informed on key issues.

RESOURCES

Resources

Compact Voice is a charity representing the voluntary sector on Compact issues. We are also the leading recruiter of Compact Champions, and offer free Champions support including web-based information, an online champions discussion group hosted through our forum, a Champions hotline, events and materials.

Champions hotline - tel: 020 7520 2453
www.compactvoice.org.uk/champions

Publications (click to download)

General

[Your Local Compact](#), any associated codes, guides and disputes procedure
[The National Compact](#), plus guides as these are produced
[The Local Compact Implementation Workbook](#)
[The Local Compact Electronic Toolkit and Good Practice Logging Tool](#)
[What Makes A Successful Local Compact](#)

Championing

[They are the Champions: The Role and Impact of Local Compact Champions](#)

Good governance and independence

[Local Sector independence survey report /campaign pack](#)
[Dancing to our own tune](#)
[Independence Matters](#)

Plus you can download free publications from:

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/campaigning-resources
www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/governanceandleadership

Funding

[The Compact and Procurement Law](#)
[Commissioning Guidance](#) (nb primarily aimed at public bodies)

Disputes

[Empowering the voluntary sector: Using Compact Advocacy, public law and training to challenge unjust public body decisions](#)

Compact Advocacy Service (for help with disputes)

Tel: 020 7520 3161

Email: evsAdvice@ncvo-vol.org.uk

www.compactvoice.org.uk/compactadvocacy

To order publications, please contact:

Commission for the Compact

Tel. 0121 237 5900

email: publications@thecompact.org.uk

www.thecompact.org.uk/publications

Compact Voice

Tel. 0207 520 2451

Email: compact@compactvoice.org.uk

www.compactvoice.org.uk/resources

YOUR ROLE

Your Role

A unique role

The role of Local Compact implementation group members is related to – but different from – yours. They plan, monitor and evaluate Compact implementation across the whole local area. They will see the role of Champions as a key to successful implementation of your Compact. Remember that this is a by-product of your championing and not the main reason for doing it. Above all, it should be about enabling your group to be well positioned and to get the most out of your Compact.

What is your core role?

- ▶ To provide a contact point in your group for Compact information and advice
- ▶ To focus on helping members, staff and volunteers to know, use and follow the Compact, including visibly fulfilling the sector's commitments

Defining the range of your role

Champions can play a range of roles:

Advocate	Explains “what’s in it for us?”
Promoter	Achieves better outcomes through promoting principles
Campaigner	Spreads good practice and increases expectations
Problem solver	Settles disputes so that everyone is better prepared in future
Diplomat	Transforms relations and exemplifies Compact working
Ambassador	Gets Compact onto external agendas and discussions

It's up to you to decide the extent of your role and how much time you spend on championing. If a Champions' role definition has been produced locally, this may be a comprehensive list of *some* of the things some champions do - *some* of the time.

- ▶ Decide which of the championing roles will deliver the most for your group but be open to carrying out some of the other roles if they are needed
- ▶ Identify and inform people in your group about tasks you will always lead on (for example, Compact-proofing documents and annual reports or advising on independence issues)

YOUR ROLE

List your priority roles, plus associated actions, here

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Playing your role

- ▶ Help the people in your group to use their Compact; build their confidence in doing so; and ensure they understand that you shouldn't be expected to be the only one who deals with Compact-related issues
- ▶ Encourage and facilitate the group's Compact compliance and guide practical action on embedding the Compact in the group's governance.
- ▶ Develop ways to make best use of the time you have for championing by integrating this with the rest of your work activities

What does your own group want from your Compact?

Your goals may be thematic (for instance, more impact on policy development, fairer funding, better relationships with public bodies) but also particular campaign objectives that meet people's needs. Use the table below to record these goals and keep track of your Compact wins.

What we want from the Compact and how we are going to achieve it	Outcome achieved and lessons learnt

- ▶ Align your championing with making the Compact work for your group.
- ▶ Review these Compact goals regularly – at least annually to keep your championing purposeful and grow what the Compact delivers for your group.
- ▶ At management committee or staff meetings agree specific outcomes (“wins”) that your group is seeking from your Compact.

Selling your Compact

How well do you need to know your Compact?

Champions don't have to be Compact experts. The more practical your contribution is the more valuable your championing will be. You should:

- ▶ Know the key Compact principles and what good practice looks like.
- ▶ Understand the content most relevant to your group so that you can spot where your Compact is relevant to what others are working on.
- ▶ Be ready to make the case for using your Compact and to help others learn how to use it, making good use of promotional materials (such as leaflets and posters - ask the Local Compact implementation group if these haven't been produced).

Explaining what the Compact is about

- ▶ It's vital to communicate that the Compact isn't just about compliance but a way of working together with public bodies from the start, and which puts Compact principles into practice.
- ▶ People also need to understand that the Compact is not just to the mutual advantage of partners, but ultimately improves outcomes that benefit individuals and communities.
- ▶ Show people what the Compact can do by drawing on your area's Local Compact wins list (or ask the implementation group to produce one) and having your own story prepared of what your Compact has done for your group or area.
- ▶ Share with the local champions network and Compact Voice your good selling tips and the explanations that work well.

Causes of opposition

Whether you are trying to sell your Compact in a one-to-one discussion or at a meeting, expect some people to question its value. People may be ignorant of it or might have had a bad experience of it. They may simply trot out what they have heard others say.

Tackling opposition

Criticism of your Compact opens up opportunities to sell the Compact – if you can counter the points made. See this as a test of how good your Compact actually is and how well it can be communicated.

- ▶ Be a good listener; whatever your suspicions, treat opposition as legitimate.
- ▶ If thrown by a new question you can come back with an answer later.
- ▶ Log new questions, share them with your local champions network, and ask other champions for answers.

Using prepared responses

You are quite likely to be asked: *What is the Compact?* or *What's in it for us?* – giving an answer covering both questions can best describe what it is for.

You may wish to use the examples on the next page to help you explain your Compact. Select from the many examples a few you particularly like or the ones that best fit with the perspectives of those you are talking with.

SELLING YOUR COMPACT
Explaining what your Compact is and can deliver

- It is both an agreed document and a way of working together with public bodies for mutual advantage
- It achieves better outcomes for people and communities
- It establishes clear rules of engagement
- It provides standards for fair funding and meaningful consultation
- It guides how resources should be allocated
- It advances equality and gives our diverse sector a stronger voice
- It aids embedding and developing good practice
- It is an agreement that guides and improves relationships
- It is a framework for better partnership working
- It is a commitment to work more closely together so that groups are properly involved in policy development with public bodies

Please jot down here any additional definitions that you use:



SELLING YOUR COMPACT
Responding to opposition

<i>"It's just words - it has no teeth."</i>	Even the worst public bodies change their ways when their Compact is cited.
<i>"Why should I do what it says - when public bodies don't?"</i>	It's good practice that we've signed up to. By acting on it we motivate public bodies.
<i>"It's too wishy-washy."</i>	The commitments are quite robust and we can build on it as a starting point.
<i>"I'm too busy to deal with it."</i>	The Compact should save you time by getting things right first time.
<i>"It doesn't work."</i>	It works when most people expect it to work. Compacts improve relationships with public bodies and deliver wins.
<i>"It won't make any difference."</i>	Give examples from your area or elsewhere.
<i>"It's irrelevant - nothing in it for us."</i>	It's relevant to all who are concerned about local issues and the community.
<i>"It's only for larger funded groups."</i>	The Compact opens doors for small groups to influence policy and services.
<i>"It doesn't tackle power imbalance."</i>	There's more chance of being treated fairly with the Compact than without it.
<i>"It's just another government initiative that has had its day."</i>	The national Compact was refreshed in 2009 and Local Compacts are thriving.

Please jot down here additional questions and answers

Championing Compact Working

The Compact is about partnership. If it's working together it's Compact, and if it's Compact it's working together. The question is how well it's done, which often depends on how individuals engage and behave. Uses for Local Compacts are increasing all the time but all involve engaging with public bodies: one-to-one, in partnerships or policy processes.

Exemplifying, promoting and fostering a Compact way of working

Champions should be exemplars, setting an example of good practice in joint working and putting Compact principles and values into practice.

- ▶ Praise Compact compliance (e.g., say “thanks for giving us 12 weeks for the consultation, as this really helps us make an informed response”).
- ▶ Challenge public bodies diplomatically if their practice does not follow a Compact way of working.

Involvement in policy processes by your informed choice

Your Compact has relevance to many policy processes, including Sustainable Community strategies, best value, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (with the primary care trust) and other mechanisms designed to determine local needs. Involvement should mean helping to shape policy and services, representing your members and your own goals. Participating in these should secure influence, impact and reputation.

- ▶ If not already available, ask the council for accessible and simple guides to policy processes, showing how to get involved and what support is offered
- ▶ Check that your group is involved in the right policy processes and review involvement where you are not really benefiting or contributing

Partnerships

- ▶ Help anyone from your group on partnership boards to use their Compact to assess and improve governance, Compact-proof decisions and put community outcomes at the heart of policy.
- ▶ Get your Compact as a standing agenda item on partnership boards and networks and encourage these to appoint their own Champion too.
- ▶ Help your group's relations with public bodies to run smoothly by encouraging good practice in working together, including talking through the partnership experiences of other people in your group.

Promoting a thriving voluntary sector

Help promote a vision for and action towards a thriving sector.

- ▶ Champion the notion of a thriving Compact, Sector and Community.
- ▶ Know what contribution your group may be making to local performance indicator targets, and promote the voluntary sector getting a fair share of reward money.

Complete the following tables on the next two pages to assess the level of involvement in your Local Compact.

CHAMPIONING COMPACT WORKING

Current involvement

Name of policy process/partnership	Name of our representative	How well is it delivering for us? Should we stay in?

Potential involvement

Name of policy process/partnership	Do we know all about this?	What could involvement do for us? Should we get involved?

CHAMPIONING COMPACT WORKING

Direct involvement with public bodies

Name of public body/department	Issue	Are we achieving our aim? If not, what would make it go better?

New opportunities for involvement with public bodies

Name of public body/department	Issue	What do we think we could achieve by working together on this?

Working together as Champions

The Compact is about working together, and so is championing.

Team work

Being a Champion in and for your group should be more effective if you are able to call for help, advice and support from other champions.

- ▶ Ask for a contacts list of Compact Champions in other local groups and in public bodies to be produced or updated if this hasn't been done.
- ▶ Consider pairing with a Champion either in another group or a public body, or suggest that pairing is arranged through your local championing network.
- ▶ Share your championing learning and knowledge with other Champions including through the local Champions network meetings.

Recognition and celebration makes championing visible

Don't be shy about raising how to recognise and celebrate the contribution you make. For individual staff, this can include coverage in appraisals, staff reports to management committee, annual reports or newsletters. Similarly, Champions who are volunteers and trustees should also be recognised.

- ▶ Ask about opportunities for recognising and celebrating the contribution of champions (for example, Mayor's annual reception, annual awards etc.).

Sharing on critical issues

If critical issues arise between your group and public bodies then these may be affecting the voluntary and community sector as a whole. Raising these issues within the champions' network can help get them tackled, such as:

- ▶ Finding it a struggle to represent users and be heard.
- ▶ Fearing that campaigning will affect your future funding.
- ▶ Grants unilaterally and inappropriately being converted to contracts.
- ▶ Over-prescriptive funding conditions or disproportionate monitoring imposed.
- ▶ Unwarranted interference in internal affairs, including having council appointees on your trustee board or selecting partnership representatives.

Keeping the Local Compact Implementation Group informed

You will be capturing valuable information on Compact usage, wins and gaps.

- ▶ Add to Compact effectiveness across your local area by keeping your Compact implementation group informed.

The implementation group should find many uses for your information (e.g. in Compact monitoring, evaluation, and briefing the local strategic partnership, etc). The benefits for your group include helping to shape the implementation agenda, showcasing your successes and highlighting issues that you want resolved.

The following table is a useful tool for reporting information at implementation group meetings.

WORKING TOGETHER AS CHAMPIONS

Reporting template for implementation group meetings

1. What was a Compact way of working in partnerships and other engagement?	2. What wasn't a Compact way of working in partnerships and other engagement?
3. Compact wins achieved	4. Compact non-compliance
5. Good practice established?	

When things go wrong

Bad practice is a breach of your Compact. If you notice something isn't Compact-compliant, avoid a dispute by getting it corrected before things go wrong. When things do go wrong, be committed to putting them right together with public bodies. Ideally, this will be done easily, fairly and amicably. If you can do it without advancing through your Compact's disputes procedure, tell the Compact Implementation Group about the case and outcome.

Challenging bad practice

- ▶ Benefits your group and members, the whole sector and all Compact partners. Not challenging lets everyone down.
- ▶ Shows your Compact works by reinforcing or developing good practice.
- ▶ Provides useful learning from identifying why things went wrong (e.g. ignorance or a mistake). Compact non-compliance is rarely deliberate.

Referencing the Compact in disputes

- ▶ Check your Compact to refer to a breach of a commitment or principle.
- ▶ The National Compact can also be used as Government good practice.
- ▶ You can also mention conformity with the spirit of the Compact.
- ▶ Be positive: suggest a practical solution and share why this would be good for the public body too.

Handling disputes yourself

- ▶ Take responsibility for sorting out a dispute between your group and a public body – at least in the first instance. This should help build your skills in using the Compact to challenge bad practice and may prevent the dispute escalating.
- ▶ Seek to deal with a dispute informally by talking face-to-face with the person directly involved or with a Champion from that public body.
- ▶ Be diplomatic and pursue amicable relations, but also be ready to refute claims that the Compact does not apply to the dispute or to them.
- ▶ Expect resolving a dispute to lead to better relations with the public body.

Getting external support

- ▶ If a dispute is taking too long, consuming too much of your time, you feel out of your depth or several groups are affected, your local infrastructure organisation should offer casework support.
- ▶ Email the Compact Advocacy Programme for advice on running your own case or to take up it up on your behalf. Email: evsAdvice@ncvo-vol.org.uk
- ▶ Keeping a record of any dispute can be useful whether or not you hand over a case.

The following table is a useful tool for recording disputes.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Disputes record

1. Public body the dispute is with: _____

2 What do we want to challenge?

3. Local Compact (or national Compact) reference if any:

4. What outcome do we want?

5. Log of communications with the public body concerned

Date	Communication (email, letter, phone or meeting)	Contact	Summary

6. Outcome achieved

7. Any learning and good practice confirmed or developed

Skills you need, support and training to expect

If there is no Compact Officer in your area then you need to be supported by someone acting as the local Compact champions co-ordinator.

- ▶ Make your needs known by responding when asked and telling those responsible for meeting them if not asked.
- ▶ Keep a list of your training issues, including skill and knowledge gaps.
- ▶ Ask for time to discuss support at Champions training events.
- ▶ If no annual meeting of Local Compact Champions takes place then ask for one to be convened.
- ▶ Participate in the local Champions network and the Compact Voice online forum's [Champions discussion group](#)
- ▶ Create opportunities for mutual support and problem solving by pairing with another Champion (maybe from a local public body)
- ▶ Make arrangements with a manager or trustee in your group to give you support on your Championing work

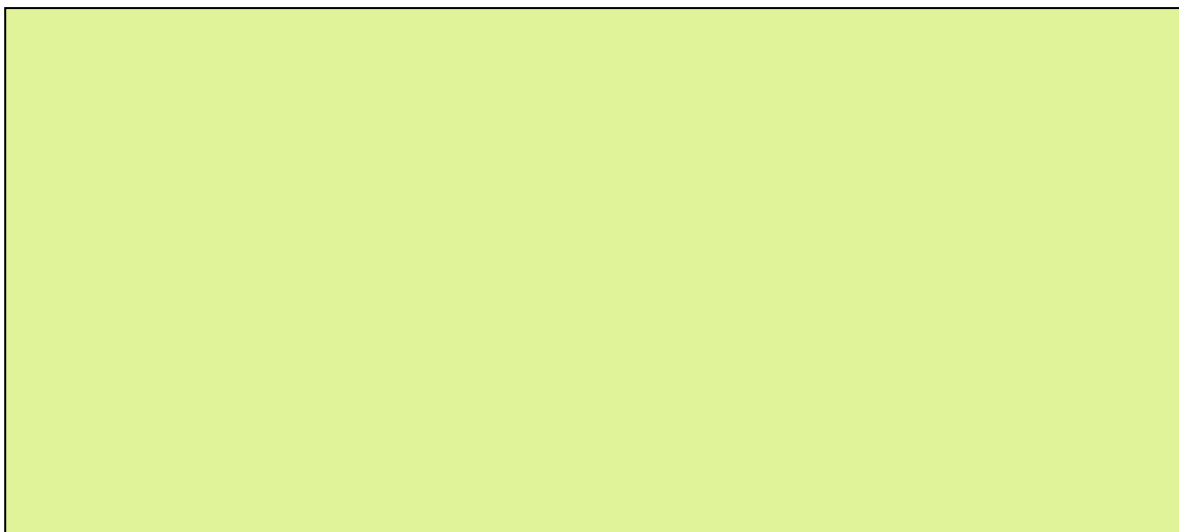
Using your personal qualities

Investing your energy, enthusiasm and commitment not only enables you to succeed but also motivates others. Determination and diplomacy too are important keys to successful championing.

Developing championing skills

Raw talent needs regular training supplements. It is crucial that this starts with basic induction training covering themes in this pack (selling and using your Compact, engaging and disputes). Whilst you can look out for relevant courses not directly Compact-linked (such as marketing, negotiating or communications skills), specific training alongside other Compact champions is invaluable.

Whenever you identify a training need, list it here and then let your champions' co-ordinator know.



SKILLS, SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Self-assessing your Championing

This should help you know how you are doing and assist progress reporting.

Role: How clear and confident are you and your group on what you should do as a Champion and the difference they expect your Compact to make?



Effectiveness: What successes has your championing achieved this year?



Selling your Compact: how well do people in your group know, use and follow your Compact?



SKILLS, SUPPORT AND TRAINING

Working together with public bodies: What progress has your group made in being involved in the right policy processes?



Working together as Champions: How well are you working with other champions and feeding information into the implementation group?



Training, support and resources: How have you benefited from any participation in local champions events and the use of external resources?

