

Compact
working together | better together



**Black & Minority Ethnic (BME)
Voluntary and Community Sector
Organisations in Southend-on-Sea
A Code of Good Practice
'Success Through Partnership'**

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The Compact for Southend-on-Sea sets out the expectations between the voluntary and community sector and statutory organisations

1 Introduction

A Compact for Southend-on-Sea and The Codes of Good Practice

The Compact is a framework for partnership working between statutory organisations and the voluntary and community sector.

The Compact sets out:

- A shared vision.
- Undertakings from both sides.
- Commitment to respect the independence of the voluntary and community sector.
- Systems to help make sure that the agreement works.

The Compact will be supported by Codes of Good Practice in the areas of Funding, Consultation and policy appraisal, Volunteering, Community Groups, including those, which are Faith Based and Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) organisations.

This BME Code is the third of the Codes of Good Practice. It adds more detail to the principles laid out in The Compact document. The Code was written by a working group of representatives from the Voluntary and Community Sector and Statutory Bodies.

This Code describes how statutory organisations and BME voluntary and community organisations should work together in a positive way. It sets out their undertakings as part of a commitment to working in partnership for the benefit of all.

2. Key Principles:

- Statutory Agency support of the BME infrastructure is necessary to enable the BME sector to work effectively.
- The BME Sector's expertise must be used effectively to ensure that the wide range of views from the BME sector are heard and understood through effective consultation.
- Promote the inclusion of BME organisations in the implementation and further development of Compact.

3. Key Undertakings:

The Statutory Sector undertakes to:

- Recognise the independence of the BME sector;
- Consult appropriately with the BME sector throughout policy development and implementation;
- Give BME voluntary and community organisations fair and equal access to funding programmes and consider the possibility of dedicated funding to support capacity building.

The BME sector undertakes to:

- Play a full and active part within the wider voluntary and community sector and to work in partnership with the sector and statutory organisations to promote race equality and to tackle social exclusion;
- Encourage joint working by diverse groups within the BME sector;
- Present the BME sector's concerns;
- Ensure proper governance and effective management of BME organisations.

4. Scope and Application of the Code

The Code of Practice is not a legally binding document; it is an enabling one, to strengthen and bring into focus the relationship between statutory organisations and the voluntary and community sector.

As part of the process of making the Compact work, there will be an annual review by statutory organisations and the sector to assess the development and operation of the Compact, including this Code of Practice.

5. Aim of the Code

To make a positive impact on and strengthen the relationship between the statutory organisations and the black and minority ethnic communities within Southend's voluntary and community sector.

Key points for successful partnership working between the Statutory Organisations and the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) voluntary and community sector:

- It is vital that the Statutory Organisations and the BME sector engage in a positive relationship for mutual benefit.
- Recognition of the important role of the BME voluntary and community sector and the diverse communities it seeks to represent including faith groups and refugee and asylum seeker organisations.
- Commitment to taking forward Race Equality together.

- BME organisations must be an inherent part of the consultation and policy appraisal processes through involvement from a large pool of individuals and organisations.
- Investment must be made in the BME voluntary and community sector to help in the development of culturally appropriate services and community support.
- Support the development of capacity and infrastructure within the BME sector.
- Recognise the importance of local relationships and partnership involvement.
- Value and celebrate volunteering and involvement by BME people.
- Promotion of harmony and understanding in the whole community.



Effective consultation will enable a wide range of views from the BME sector to be heard

6. The BME Voluntary and Community Sector

A report by the Government's Social Exclusion Unit, "Bringing Britain Together - a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal, 1998" states that "ethnic minority disadvantage cuts across all aspects of deprivation. Taken as a whole, ethnic minority groups are more likely than the rest of the population to live in poor areas, be unemployed, have low incomes, live in poor housing, have poor health and be the victims of crime."

The BME voluntary and community sector works to tackle the disadvantage experienced by the communities from which it springs. It is therefore vital that BME voluntary and community organisations have equal opportunities to be directly involved in partnership, consultation and decision-making.

A number of barriers exclude BME voluntary and community organisations from effective involvement in consultation processes. Implementation of the Compact Codes of Practice will go some way to addressing these. Particular attention should be given to the most appropriate means of engaging smaller under-resourced groups (these constitute the majority of the BME voluntary and community sector).



Compact recognises the special contribution and needs of the BME sector

This Code of Practice seeks to address the exclusion experienced by the BME voluntary and community sector and to increase social cohesion so that positive policy and implementation outcomes can be improved for BME communities. A number of key issues need to be addressed, these include:

- A joint commitment to take forward the race and other equality issues as well as recognition of the significant role to be played by the BME voluntary and community sector in partnership with Statutory Organisations and others towards achieving race equality;
- An improvement in the quality, quantity and effectiveness of consultation and participation by the BME voluntary and community sector in policy development, implementation and evaluation, and issues affecting the BME community;
- Better support and resources to the BME voluntary and community sector which reflect its role in providing access to services, facilities and measures to allow the BME sector to operate, develop and contribute on an equal footing with other partners, particularly statutory organisations and the mainstream voluntary and community sector;
- Recognition of the specific contribution and needs of the BME sector, and how this impacts on funding, capacity and sustainability.

7. Tackling Racism, Inequality and Inclusion and Promoting Harmony

The need to tackle racism effectively has long been recognised. This is demonstrated through commitment to an inclusive society, determination to address social exclusion and promote race equality and justice.

The independent inquiry into the death of Stephen Lawrence, the amendment of the Race Relations legislation, and the Government's agenda for action in Race Equality In Public Services (2000) are some of the key actions taken to push forward race equality.

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) noted that: "Institutional racism consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people".

The Compact and this Code of Practice provide a framework through which the BME voluntary and community sector can develop partnerships and contribute to addressing the post Lawrence Inquiry challenges.

A successful BME voluntary and community sector is an important partner in helping the statutory organisations make their commitment to race equality a reality. The negative outcomes of social exclusion are disproportionately represented within BME communities. Tackling social exclusion effectively should include initiatives that target BME communities. Through partnership with the BME voluntary and community sector, which draws on the experience and knowledge of the sector, such targeted interventions will be more effective as an important aspect of

equality, the promotion of harmony and understanding in the whole community is essential, so that the BME community can coexist happily and equally with the host community, reducing tensions and eliminating prejudice, at all times.

8. Consultation, Participation and Representation

The activities and knowledge of the BME voluntary and community sector can provide experience and skills of vital importance in the effective development and delivery of policy to BME communities. Consultation with the sector should be all-inclusive, recognising the broad spectrum of interests

Guidance for the development of Local Area Agreements (LAA's) states that 'LAA's will not achieve **better outcomes for all** unless they reflect the priorities and imperatives of those groups who can often be unintentionally excluded from consultations.

Funding and support

The BME Sector requires long term funding stability to:

- establish a level playing field with the mainstream voluntary and community sector;
- build sustainable infrastructure at national, regional and local level;
- represent and support BME communities;
- fill the gaps in services to BME communities;
- deliver services;
- play a meaningful role in building a fair and just society.

To this end:

- Statutory organisations recognise that extra resources may need to be allocated to provide adequate support for BME organisations;
- Statutory organisations will review funding criteria to see that they do not disadvantage BME groups;
- Statutory organisations will actively invite funding applications from BME groups and offer help and advice in submitting them;
- Statutory organisations will ensure that funding policies and procedures for BME groups, are in proportion to the scale of funding and the ability of the groups concerned to respond to the needs of the community.



It is crucial that BME groups are involved and included in Compact

9. Monitoring and Review

To check that the funding process does not unfairly disadvantage BME groups, statutory organisations will publish regular information on funding applications, allocations and the minority ethnic share, identifying year-on-year trends. Information will include comparisons with the mainstream voluntary sector of access and approval rates, and the level of funding granted. Policies and service areas in which BME communities and organisations are absent from the funding process will be reviewed. Funding criteria and processes will be regularly reviewed to make sure BME groups are not disadvantaged or excluded.

10. Joint Undertakings:

Statutory Organisations and the BME voluntary and community sector in Southend-on-Sea are committed to establishing and maintaining best practice in their relationship, and therefore undertake to:

- develop a partnership approach to taking forward the Government's strategy for achieving race equality, including promoting and sharing best practice and celebrating success;
- work together in partnership with other agencies to promote joint working initiatives, which improve the policy and implementation outcomes for BME communities (particularly those programmes aimed at community regeneration and a more inclusive society);
- encourage, develop and support volunteering by and within BME communities in line with the Compact Code of Good Practice on Volunteering and the Code of Good Practice for Community Groups;
- make suitable mention of this Code of Practice in all appropriate documentation and publications.

11. The Statutory Sector will:

- value the work knowledge and expertise of the BME voluntary and community sector, including its important role in helping statutory organisations the Council to achieve its objectives;
- recognise and support the independence of the BME sector and its right within law to challenge institutions, policies and practice, irrespective of any funding relationship that might exist, and to determine and manage its own affairs;
- operate effective and transparent equal opportunities monitoring and evaluation systems that ensure BME voluntary and community organisations are treated fairly and with respect in all their interactions;
- build, as appropriate, consultation with the BME voluntary and community sector into plans for policy development from the pre-consultation stage through to implementation, with the aim that implications for BME communities are examined and considered;
- establish race equality strategies within corporate planning processes, with clearly expressed objectives and targets;
- ensure that BME voluntary and community organisations have fair and equal access to funding programmes, particularly those that impact significantly on BME communities;
- consider the case for setting aside additional funds for BME organisations to build capacity, prepare and deliver projects;
- consider the views and encourage the active engagement of the BME voluntary and community organisations (along with other voluntary and community organisations), in the community strategy and in the development of the local strategic partnership;

- ensure that grants from Statutory organisations are appropriately administered and allocated to BME groups with the capacity to deliver agreed outputs to agreed and predetermined standards;
- endeavour to include consultation, partnership and funding of the BME voluntary and community sector within guidance on the statutory duty of public authorities to promote race equality;
- include within the Best Value framework for Local Authorities specific and robust requirements to ensure equality of access to quality public services and that BME groups are actively involved in service planning, performance target setting and scrutiny processes;
- require all partnership bids to demonstrate genuine consultation and involvement with BME communities, inclusive of partnership boards, programme plans, outputs and outcomes.

12. The BME Voluntary and Community Sector will:

- play a full and active part within the wider voluntary and community sector in fulfilling the significant undertakings in the Compact, this Code of Good Practice and the other Compact Codes of Good Practice;
- work in partnership with statutory organisations and other voluntary and community organisations in promoting race equality, tackling social exclusion and promoting civil society;
- aim to establish a responsive local structure that is accountable to local groups and which will enable communication;

- consult in order to provide BME perspectives on key local issues;
- facilitate consortium and partnership working among diverse ethnic and religious groups within the sector, sharing professional leadership expertise and other practical skills;
- inform and present community concerns based on accountable partnerships with local communities;
- ensure proper governance, placing clear responsibility on trustees and chief officers (or equivalent) to use public funds appropriately and inform funders when organisations face significant management and resource challenges, including financial difficulties;
- make use of appropriate training opportunities;
- develop open and dynamic organisations providing opportunities for voluntary and community activity by a diverse range of individuals demonstrating a commitment to wider equality issues in addition to race equality.



The BME Code provides a framework for promotion of harmony and understanding in the community

This document can be provided in other formats and translation of this document is also available.

A glossary of terms relating to Compacts can be accessed through the Compact web-site at: www.thecompact.org.uk

Further information on the Local Compact and a list of signatories to the Compact can be found on agencies web-sites including: www.southend.gov.uk

For further information, or to learn more about A Compact for Southend-on-Sea and The Codes of Good Practice please contact:

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