



# Isle of Wight Compact

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A partnership between Isle of Wight Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector

## Sue Dovey

Chief Executive  
Rural Community Council



I am pleased to endorse this document on behalf of the Voluntary and Community Sector on the Isle of Wight.

With the emphasis very much on 'joined up working' this Compact should signify a new phase of partnership working, where each partner is equal and where each sector shows mutual respect for the other.

The Compact is a hugely important document and a blueprint for statutory and voluntary/community sectors to follow in working together. As time goes by we expect the Compact to become more widely understood and appreciated: the potential benefits to both sectors are great, and with the will and dedication of the Compact Development Group, and the wider support of the sectors, the Isle of Wight Compact will gain a reputation as being a meaningful working document.

Although there have been many who have contributed to the Compact, special thanks are due to Sue Chilton, Policy Unit, IWC, Marian Prowse, CVS Officer at the RCC, Felicite Booker, Director of Age Concern and, last but not least, to Cllr Ian Stephens for being the 'Compact Champion'.

## Shirley Smart

Leader  
Isle of Wight Council



On behalf of the Isle of Wight Council I welcome the Isle of Wight Voluntary Sector Compact.

We, the Council, have enjoyed a proud and productive record of working in partnership, over many years, with the Voluntary and Community Sector. This Compact will bring renewed strength and confidence to those partnership arrangements throughout the Island.

It is a symbol of our commitment to each other, to work together in harmony for the benefit of the Island Community and in particular, for those less fortunate than ourselves. I am sure that the Compact will continue to develop and improve and will be a "living" document and one which we will all be proud to be involved with.

The Island is so fortunate to have the commitment and dedication of so many voluntary and community organisations, working in partnership with the Council, and with a united aim - to improve Island life.

As Leader of the Isle of Wight Council, I look forward to playing a part in this new phase of our relationship with the voluntary and community sector and building on the strong foundation that is already in place.

# 1 - Background

The Government has launched a Compact defining the relationship between itself and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The Government's view is that voluntary groups bring distinctive value to society and engage the skills, interests, beliefs and values of individuals and groups. The Isle of Wight Council agrees with this view and has consequently drawn up this Local Compact relative to the Council and the Voluntary Sector on the Island.

The Isle of Wight has a population of 132,719 and is predominantly a rural area with the principal town of Newport at its centre, and a number of towns each playing a role in the economy of the Island. Approximately 50% of the Island is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The total length of coastline is 65 miles - 28 miles are lengths of Heritage Coast. In 2000, fifteen of the forty-eight wards were in the worst 20% nationally. Two of them were in the most deprived 10%.

The Isle of Wight Council is the single Unitary Authority for the Island, comprising 48 elected Members. It delivers a full range of local authority statutory and other services to the community and, by its nature, is a democratically elected body with political affiliations. The services delivered by the Council are disparate and the organisation encompasses five Directorates, each with its own service groupings.

The Voluntary and Community Sector is diverse, both in the nature of the organisations which it includes and in terms of their aims and objectives. Groups and organisations may be very local or part of a broad national network. They may involve only voluntary effort or may have paid staff and extensive annual budgets. Locally we have:

- Self help or mutual support groups responding to particular conditions (e.g. medical, unemployment, poverty, disability)
- Organisations which focus upon a particular interest (e.g. ecological, environmental, religious, social, cultural)
- Groups which work in the community in different ways, either concentrating on particular issues or age groups or localities/neighbourhoods
- The Rural Community Council (RCC) which is the Island's Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and the main link between the VCS and the Isle of Wight Council (IWC)
- A Voluntary Sector Forum, which is a representative network, open to all groups and individuals from the

VCS. A representative Voluntary Sector Cabinet is elected annually by the Forum and deals with matters of concern to the sector on their behalf

- Providers of services to those in need or socially excluded

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## A local Isle of Wight Compact

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A Compact is about developing better non-political working relationships between the Isle of Wight Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector on the Island. A Compact should be a starting point for developing and improving our partnerships based on shared values and mutual respect.

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## Common principles

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- Both the Isle of Wight Council and the voluntary and community sector share a common objective: to work for the benefit of the communities of the Island and to ensure high quality, accessible services, thereby promoting equality of opportunity and social inclusion.
- There is recognition that both fulfil complementary roles. The Isle of Wight Council supports and recognises the importance of the role of the voluntary and community sector, which contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the Council's activity and enables both sides to achieve more together than separately.
- It is recognised that a partnership is where all partners are equally important. This means mutual appreciation of each other's roles and objectives as well as mutual acknowledgement of the constraints facing both the statutory and the voluntary and community sector.
- The Isle of Wight Council acknowledges the independence and diversity of the voluntary and community sector and the sector's right to challenge, comment or campaign on policy and practice.
- The voluntary and community sector acknowledges the Council's statutory responsibilities, particularly in relation to Best Value, and the constraints placed on it by central Government directives and performance indicators.
- The voluntary and community sector also recognises the decision-making role of elected members and their democratic responsibility to balance the needs of everyone on the Isle of Wight and work within the resources available

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## Communication

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- The Isle of Wight Council and all organisations within the voluntary and community sector, especially the Rural Community Council combining its role as Council for Voluntary Services, recognise their responsibility to be channels of communication.
- The Compact Group will be responsible for reviewing communication methods, ensuring that the best use is made of all mediums of communication including face-to-face contact, meetings, newsletters and websites and that information is disseminated in a way that is most beneficial.
- The Isle of Wight Council will identify named contacts in departments to help facilitate access to information. The Compact Group will be responsible for publishing details of a network of contacts within both sectors and for ensuring that the details are updated.
- For enquiries relating to the Compact, the Compact Group will be the first point of contact.
- Both sectors will respect the confidentiality of information, when given to it on that basis.

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## Resourcing and accountability

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**Funding** (includes - service level agreements, contracts or grants)

The Isle of Wight Council will:

- Allocate resources to the voluntary and community sector on the Island against clear and consistent criteria, taking account of the priorities identified within The Community Strategy, the I.W.C Corporate Plan Etc., Best Value and value for money, and principles of equality, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and accountability
- Inform the voluntary and community sector about its funding priorities and criteria
- Support the infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector, as far as it is able to. Every effort will be made to help voluntary and community organisations develop the capacity to respond to the needs and priorities of service users.
- Allow access to Funding Officer for advice and information.
- Aim, wherever possible and appropriate, to foster sustainability through the life of the individual Service Level Agreements in place.
- Give as much warning as possible, usually six months

clear notice (timescales may vary), about any changes to the level of funding in contractual arrangements.

- Use plain English, streamlined, transparent and accessible processes and provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.
- Give consideration to payment of expenses when VCS staff, paid or unpaid are asked to participate in joint planning and consultation exercises.
- Identify an appropriate Isle of Wight Council member of the Executive for the reporting process (to be named in the Appendix).

The voluntary and community sector will:

- Recognise and respect the need for accountability and the principles of Best Value and value for money
- Acknowledge the constraints the IWC works under and its dependency on Government funding and direction on spending priorities
- Develop quality standards for service delivery that are appropriate to each organisation, without undermining the contribution and involvement of volunteers
- Make the best use of opportunities provided by local umbrella and infrastructure organisations in order to access information, support and training on fundraising
- Provide agreed, measurable outputs as specified in the individual Service Level Agreements. (SMART targets – see glossary)
- Adopt the same commitment to delivering equality, eliminating unlawful discrimination and respecting human rights: as those adopted by the Isle of Wight Council.

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## Advice and expertise

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The Compact will help make the most of the wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience available in both sectors, by developing mutual advice and support networks.

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## Joint training

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The Compact Group will consider ways of developing sharing and spreading learning across the Council and other public bodies and the voluntary and community sector on the Island.

- A Training Strategy will be devised for future working.

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## Premises and buildings

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The IWC's policy on Council Tax discounts for voluntary organisations will be applied as appropriate. The Isle of Wight Council will hold meetings in accessible venues so disabled participants can attend.

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## Policy Development and Consultation

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If new roles and responsibilities for the sector are proposed, such consultation should be timely and allow reasonable timescales for response, taking into account the need of organisations to consult their users, beneficiaries and stakeholders.

## 2 - Compact benefits

The co-operative and collaborative climate created by the Compact will encourage and strengthen the following activities enabling their more effective and efficient delivery by co-ordinating and improving support and liaison between the authority and the voluntary sector. This requires active communication between the parties to secure the greatest benefits from new opportunities and existing services.

Partnership working between the statutory and voluntary sectors will allow all parties to optimise and attract money from certain funders.

## 3 - Equal opportunities and equality

Equality and Equal Opportunities are key values of both the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector. It is felt appropriate therefore to set clear and strict conditions under which all those associated with the Compact will act.

Neither party to the Compact shall treat one group of people less favourably than others because of their colour, race, gender, disability, age, sexuality, nationality or minority group origin, in relation to decisions to recruit, train or promote staff or volunteers, or providing services to others.

All parties to the Compact will have regard to the need to

promote good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds and eliminate unlawful discrimination.

The following legislation and Codes of Practice must be adhered to:

- Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for Employment
- Race Relations Act 1976
- The Equal Opportunities Commission's Code of Practice on employment, discrimination and equal pay
- The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Health & Safety Act 1974
- Crime and Disorder Act
- Any subsequent amendments or relevant new legislation

## 4 - Mediation and Arbitration

If any dispute or difference should arise between the Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector in connection with, or arising from the Compact, it shall be referred in the first instance to first contacts:

- Isle of Wight Council, Community Partnerships Manager, Sue Chilton
- Council Voluntary Services Officer, Marian Prowse
- Volunteer Bureau, Gina Armfield

If the matter cannot be resolved informally at the first stage, then the dispute is brought before the Compact Development Group (comprising of representatives from the Isle of Wight Council and the Voluntary Sector) who will reach a decision on a way forward. It will aim to reach a consensus of opinion. This process may involve liaison with:

- Departmental contacts
- Heads of Directorates
- Chief Officers of Voluntary Sector Umbrella Bodies

It is, however, recognised that where services are purchased by the council from the voluntary sector through a contractual or service level agreement process, the contract or agreement will often have its own defined procedure to be followed in the event of default or dispute. The mediation process outlined in the above paragraph will not therefore apply to any disagreements, which are governed by such contractual procedures.

## 5 - Monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Compact

The IWC and the Voluntary Sector are jointly committed to monitoring and reviewing the Compact annually in order to assess its continuing effectiveness and impact. In the first year the working of the document will be reviewed after 6 months.

The Compact Group will meet at regular intervals to:

- Set out an agreed action plan with SMART (see glossary) targets and outputs
- Monitor progress against agreed measurable action points and provide regular feedback to the responsible Heads/Committees of each partner
- Determine criteria for evaluating success on an annual basis
- Develop more detailed codes of good practice on the various sections in the Compact, as the need for them becomes apparent. These will need to be adopted as appendices to the Compact
- Identify any new tasks that need to be undertaken and review existing. The results of which will form the basis of the Compact Review.
- Review the composition of the Compact Group and consider setting up any necessary sub-groups
- Identify contact officers within each Council department

The Compact Group will consider and set up appropriate mechanisms for resolving conflicts and complaints.

Both sectors will undertake:

- To report to their members and constituents on an annual basis (A process to be defined in the implementation plan)
- Demonstrate commitment to, and share responsibility for, implementing and reviewing the Compact
- Distribute the Compact widely and provide induction and training within their organisations to raise awareness of how the agreement affects joint working

## 6 - Members of the Compact Group

- Representative of Local Strategic Partnership
- Portfolio holder Social Services
- Chairman Social Services Select Committee
- Director with responsibility for Social Inclusion
- Director with responsibility for Equality and Diversity
- Policy Unit rep. with responsibility for Partnerships
- CVS Officer – Rural Community Council
- Director of Age Concern, Isle of Wight
- Chief Executive of Osel Enterprises Limited
- Chairman or Secretary of Vectis Monitoring Project
- Rep. of Women's Refuge
- Rep. of Island Volunteers
- + Head of Policy Performance & Resources, Social Services acting in an advisory capacity.

Groups nominating/providing members will indemnify those members for any activity undertaken in relation to the group.

Whilst it is acknowledged by both sectors that this Compact is not a legal document, both will endeavour to work within the spirit of the Compact and make it meaningful.

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### Aspirations

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- Developing a Training Strategy which includes the involvement of the voluntary sector alongside the private sector in attracting funding and offering shared training opportunities and that enables the VCS to access any share of funding to which it is entitled. This strategy should be SMART.
- Giving consideration to the development of a Timebank reward system to volunteers, using vouchers for IWC outlets. This should be regarded as being of benefit to all partners: the IWC gains extra business, the volunteers are acknowledged, and organisations gain a tool to help recruit and retain volunteers.
- Investigate regional peer group reviews.



## Glossary

**Best Value** is a statutory responsibility for local authorities to achieve continuous improvement in services by a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. All services must be reviewed by challenging how and why they are provided, and comparing them with the performance of others. Stakeholders must be consulted and competitiveness must be tested against external providers.

**Consultation** is the process of seeking and listening to views within defined parameters. This includes seeking information and advice about future decisions, and testing the impact of decisions which have already been taken.

**Contracts** record the agreement between the commissioner of a service and the provider of the service. It specifies the service to be delivered and the arrangements for delivering and paying for it. Arrangements for monitoring and ending the contract are included. Contracts are legally binding.

**CVS** Council for **V**oluntary **S**ervices

**Diversity** means the variety and difference within voluntary and community groups and the local community.

**Evaluation** is the assessment of the value of a project, piece of work, or service. Its purpose is to help an organisation decide whether it is achieving what it wants to and if it needs to do anything differently.

**Monitoring** is the routine collection and recording of information, sometimes against statutory performance indicators, on the activities of an organisation. It provides information on what an organisation is doing, but makes no judgement about the value of the outcome or results of those activities.

**Partnership** is when one or more organisations work together to achieve a shared and clear set of objectives. There is a clear understanding of the contribution of each organisation, which takes into account their differences, and there is equal respect for the role and experience of all partners. A successful partnership depends on the sharing of information and decision-making.

**Service level agreements** are written contracts which set out how two organisations will work together over an agreed period. They are not as onerous as a typical contract and usually contain less legalistic language but may be legally enforced.

**SMART** Specific: **M**easurable: **A**chievable: **R**ealistic: **T**ime-specific.

**Statutory sector** is the name given to organisations created through Acts of Parliament whose functions are

determined by the law. Local authorities, including parish and town councils, are democratically elected and are accountable to the voters and central government. They have legal responsibilities for the social well-being, economic development, environment and health of the people they serve. Other statutory agencies, such as health authorities and the probation, police, fire & rescue and ambulance services, are not directly elected and are accountable to the appropriate Secretary of State.

**VCS** **V**oluntary and **C**ommunity **S**ector

**Voluntary organisations** are: formally structured; not-for-profit (although they may make surpluses); independent and not part of government; managed by unpaid, voluntary management committees or boards of trustees; have paid employees and volunteers; may be registered charities and/or companies limited by guarantee

**Community organisations** are: local community and self-help groups; more informal; often made up entirely of volunteers; any staff are likely to be part-time; independent; without regular income or funding

**Trustees** are the group of people responsible for the control and management of a charity, which includes members of a charitable association's management committee and directors of charitable companies. Certain specific statutory duties arise from being a trustee.

**Umbrella organisations** – also sometimes referred to as intermediary organisations – are an important force in the voluntary sector, fulfilling four main functions: development, services to other organisations, liaison and representation. However, it is acknowledged that not all umbrella organisations perform all of these functions. (Deakin Commission 1996)

**Users** are the people who benefit from or use a service. They are also called customers, clients, consumers, beneficiaries, recipients.

**Volunteering** is an activity that a person – volunteer – chooses to undertake, whereby they do something to benefit either an individual or a group (not relatives) or to benefit the environment, for which they receive no payment.



## Isle of Wight Compact

A partnership between Isle of Wight Council  
and the Voluntary and Community Sector

### Compact Development Group Members

Gina Armfield - Island Volunteers

Felicite Booker - Age Concern, Isle of Wight

Sue Chilton - Policy Unit, IW Council

Richard Hards - Director with Responsibility for Equality & Diversity, IW Council

Cllr Gordon Kendall - Portfolio holder, Social Services, IW Council

Joyce Milford - Vectis Monitoring Project

David Pettitt - Director with Responsibility for Social Inclusion, IW Council

Marian Prowse - Council for Voluntary Services Development Officer

Cllr Shirley Smart - Local Strategic Partnership

Paul Smith - Osel Enterprises

Cllr Ian Stephens - Chairman, Social Services Select Committee

Representative from Women's Refuge