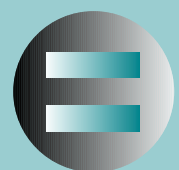


our compact



A commitment to working together
through Brent's voluntary, community,
public and private sectors



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FOR BRENT**



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Dear colleagues

During spring 2003, **Partners for Brent** started work on developing a local compact for Brent. We decided at the beginning that we wanted it to influence as many of Brent's organisations as possible and relate to more than voluntary organisations, community groups and the local authority. We wanted our compact to describe how we work together and provide clear guidance on what organisations can do to improve their relationships across the different sectors.

We set up a small multi-agency working group that developed our compact over a number of months based on a series of consultations with Brent's voluntary-, community-, public- and private-sector organisations.

Partners for Brent approved and adopted the compact in late 2003 and we have registered it with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations, who keep the official register of local compacts in England.

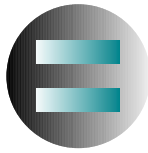
I am pleased to say that we now have a compact which describes and promotes how we respect and value our differences when working together to improve the lives of everyone who lives and works in Brent.

Councillor Ann John

Chair of Partners for Brent and Leader of Brent Council

Partners for Brent

This is the name of Brent's local strategic partnership. It is a single body which brings together the public, private, voluntary, community sectors and local communities so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together to improve the local borough.



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The compact working group

This is a subgroup of **Partners for Brent**. The group is made up of senior officers from the London Borough of Brent, Brent Association for Voluntary Action, Brent Community Network, Brent NHS Teaching Primary Care Trust, and the London Fire Brigade.

The group will publicise our compact, and monitor and evaluate how well it is working. The compact working group will regularly report to **Partners for Brent** on what difference our compact has made. The different partner agencies will distribute this information to Brent's voluntary-, community-, public- and private-sector agencies.

Our compact

What is the compact?

The Government published the national compact (agreement) on its relationship with the voluntary and community sectors in November 1998. It provides a framework to guide this relationship at all levels in the Government. Since the national compact was agreed, local authorities have increasingly developed and adopted their own compact that reflects their situation and shows their commitment to working with the voluntary and community sectors.

Our compact is a statement of commitment to working together between the voluntary, community, public and private sectors involved in planning and delivering local

services. It is a working document agreed by our local strategic partnership, **Partners for Brent**, and does not have a legal status.

The purpose of our compact is to support and promote the development of effective working relationships across all sectors. Our compact sets out how members of **Partners for Brent** work together and how different organisations in Brent should work together. Each member of **Partners for Brent** has agreed to develop and put into practice their own work programmes which show their ongoing commitment to our compact.





How we should work together

Partners for Brent recognise that every sector and organisation can contribute to local life in different ways. To work well together, we need to:

- have mutual respect and trust between the voluntary, community, public and private sectors;
- recognise and value the wide range of Brent's voluntary and community sectors;
- recognise the different roles, resources, power and influence that each organisation has;
- recognise and value the contribution that volunteers make towards developing a fair society where everyone has the same opportunities;
- recognise and value the contribution that local community groups, including black, ethnic-minority and faith communities, make to the quality of life of Brent's residents;
- acknowledge the importance of being responsible for our actions and recognise different organisations' structures for doing this (known as 'accountability structures');
- recognise the obligations of statutory organisations and their right to manage their services;
- understand that organisations may have to agree to differ and there are some things that different organisations and sectors are not able to do;
- accept that the voluntary- and community-sector organisations (while managing their business within the law to achieve their aims) have a right

to campaign on issues which may conflict with the policies and practice of public- and private-sector organisations;

- make sure there is honesty, and discuss issues openly;
- commit to being open and sharing information;
- acknowledge that in certain situations there may be issues on keeping information confidential; and
- be committed to taking forward the equalities and 'community cohesion' agendas at all levels (for example, tackling beliefs and actions, including criminal activities, which separate communities and create mistrust).

What our compact is aiming to achieve

The aims of our compact are to:

- improve the quality of life of local communities through delivering better co-ordinated services and contributing to partnership working;
- make sure that our work helps the many different people and communities living and working in Brent, and encourage shared outcomes (for example, services that focus on customers and do not discriminate, and a safer Brent for people to work and live in);
- make sure there is good communication between different organisations and sectors;
- develop a common understanding of the similarities and differences of organisations across sectors;
- define, acknowledge, share and reward good practice across sectors;
- make sure that all organisations and sectors have equal access to resources and recognise the needs of smaller organisations;
- make sure that conflicts across organisations and sectors are dealt with quickly and fairly;
- work towards agreed priorities for improving relationships between organisations and sectors; and
- constantly evaluate and improve the work of organisations across sectors.

What to do if you adopt our compact

We expect each organisation that signs up to this compact to be able to show **Partners for Brent** that they are working effectively with other organisations from different sectors.

Partners for Brent have agreed a list of actions that should provide a guide to organisations on what they need to do to work effectively with organisations from different sectors. The actions are under seven different areas.

- Promoting our compact across sectors
- Communicating across sectors
- Consulting across sectors
- Sharing information across sectors
- Sharing resources across sectors
- Dealing with conflicts across sectors
- Evaluating the effect of our compact across sectors

How we should promote our compact across sectors

Each organisation across the different sectors should:

- make sure that this compact is discussed, and recommend its approval by the appropriate management bodies and boards;



- refer to this compact in all appropriate strategies;
- have a designated person as the point of contact on matters that concern this compact;
- name a person in each department who will make sure that all staff are aware of this compact and are using it;
- make sure that all staff and volunteers are aware of this compact and are using it; and
- make sure that adequate resources are available within organisations so that this compact can work.

How we should communicate across sectors

Each organisation across the different sectors should:

- create a stakeholder communication strategy that sets out how they communicate with the community, voluntary, public and private sectors including groups which are often excluded (for example, children, young people and black and ethnic minorities); and
- improve communications with the general public (for example, by developing communication procedures when dealing with the public, including using plain English, translations, sign language and interpreting facilities).

How we should consult across sectors

Each organisation across the different sectors should:

- carry out appropriate consultations to make sure that services are sensitive to and reflect the different backgrounds of the people who live and work in Brent (including black, ethnic-minority and faith communities);
- create and put into practice a consultation framework, including community involvement and partnership working;
- follow good practice when consulting the community and involve all relevant stakeholders from the beginning by using the widest possible consultation (for example, voluntary-sector forums and networks, multi-agency forums, and residents' and tenants' groups);
- develop and review consultation guidelines and make sure they provide adequate time for community and voluntary sectors to get involved at the beginning in major policies, changes in practice and strategies that will have a significant effect on them and their users;
- where necessary, support community and voluntary organisations to consult socially excluded groups (for example, by providing resources, notice of any meetings and related papers, accessible



venues, British Sign Language signers and language interpreters); and

- be flexible when unexpected circumstances mean that organisations have to review priorities.

How we should share information across sectors

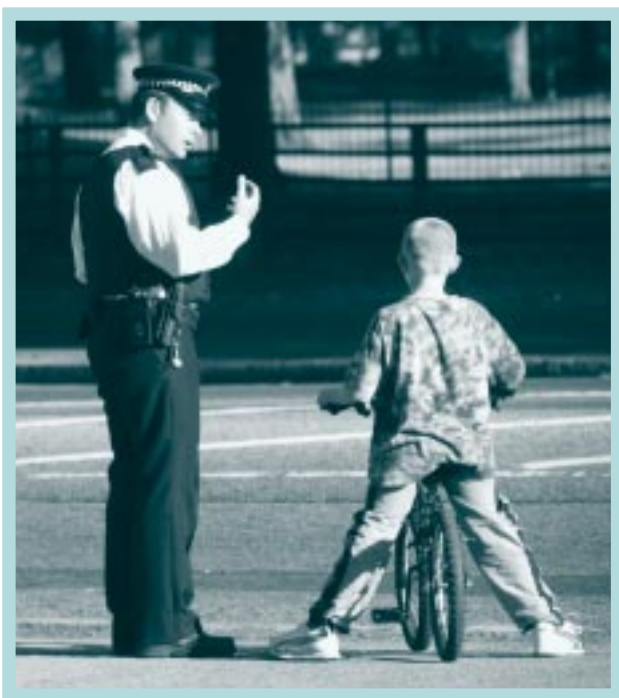
Each organisation across the different sectors should:

- work together to set clear procedures for sharing information that meets data protection requirements;
- share information on policies and plans;
- make sure that information is easily accessible and shared across relevant organisations, and with lead people with related responsibilities (for example, on funding and training); and
- share and celebrate examples of good practice from different sectors (for example, by sharing information at voluntary-, public- and private-sector events).

How we should share resources across sectors

Each organisation across the different sectors should:

- where possible, make sure that resources are shared (for example, meeting rooms and photocopying facilities);
- make sure that resources are shared out fairly to the voluntary and community sectors, in line with clear procedures, helping them improve their effectiveness and efficiency and succeed over the long term;
- where possible, share learning resources to include joint training courses, staff with training expertise and venues;
- take steps towards making joint training a part of Human Resources policies; and
- work together to provide 'capacity-building' support (for example, training staff and volunteers on performance management, policy development, finance and fundraising).



How we should deal with conflicts across sectors

Each organisation across the different sectors should:

- be open and honest;
- deal with conflicts as soon as they are recognised;
- develop and put into practice shared policies and procedures for dealing with conflicts between organisations across sectors, in line with this compact; and
- use external agencies to mediate (act as unbiased referees) if necessary.

How we should evaluate the effect of our compact

Each organisation across the different sectors should:

- monitor and evaluate how effective our compact is;
- fill in the compact working group's evaluation reports;
- make suggestions to the compact working group on what improvements could be made to our compact; and
- amend internal work programmes to improve partnership working based on **Partners for Brent** evaluations of our compact.

More information

If you would like more information on our compact, please contact your organisation's or department's designated person. If you do not know who they are (or do not have one) or want advice on how to sign up to our compact, please contact any of the following;

Brent Association for Voluntary Action

25 High Street, Harlesden, London NW10 4NE
PHONE **020 8838 1350**

Brent Community Network

25 High Street, Harlesden, London NW10 4NE
PHONE **020 8453 9774**

Corporate Policy Team

London Borough of Brent, Brent Town Hall
Forty Lane, Wembley, Middlesex HA9 9HD
PHONE **020 8937 1030**

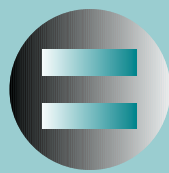
User and Community Involvement Team

Brent NHS Teaching Primary Care Trust
Wembley Centre for Health and Care
116 Chaplin Road, Wembley, Middlesex HA0 4UZ
PHONE **020 8795 6741**

Voluntary Sector Support Team

London Borough of Brent, Bridge Park Complex, 1st
Floor, Brentfield, Harrow Road, London NW10 ORG
PHONE **020 8937 3670**





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**If you would like this leaflet in large print please call the
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