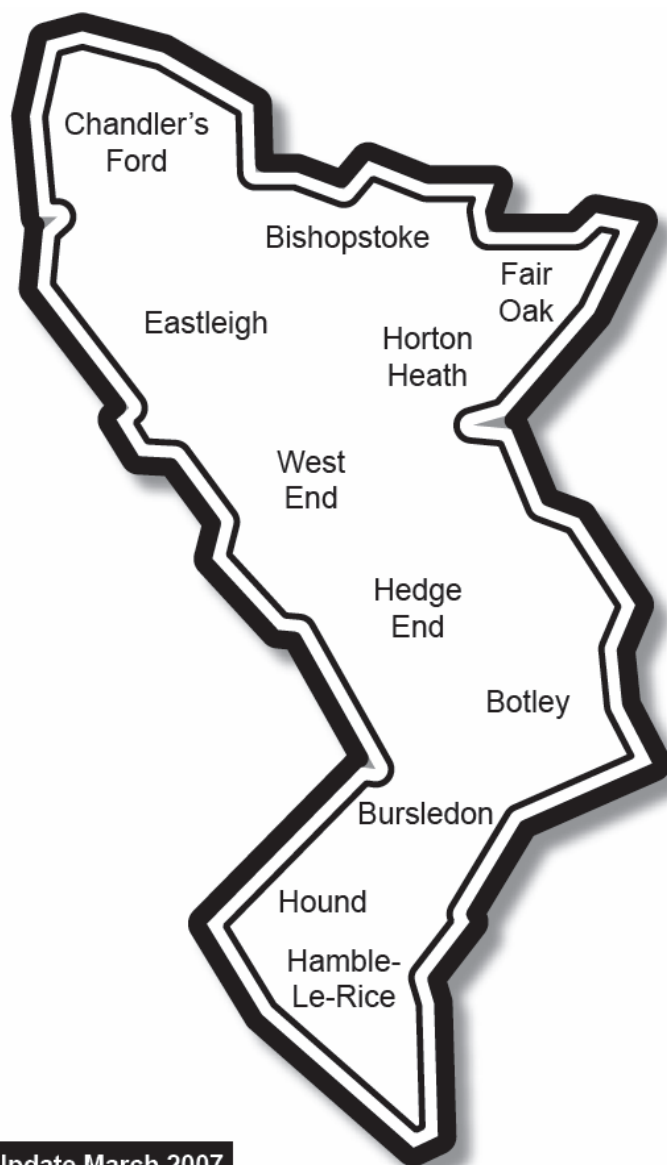


Combined Code of Good Practice for all Voluntary and Community Organisations



Update March 2007

A partnership between Eastleigh Borough Council,
One Community and the Voluntary and Community Sector

If you would like this document in a different format or language please contact:

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EASTLEIGH COMPACT

Combined Code of Good Practice for all Voluntary and Community Organisations

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out the guidance to develop the relationship between the voluntary and community sector and the public sector. It has been developed in accordance with the aim of establishing a code of good practice for all voluntary and community organisations as required by Section 6 Para 6.1 of the EASTLEIGH COMPACT launched in March 2004. The Eastleigh Compact sets out the general principles of the agreements between the Council and voluntary and community organisation. In this document they are together referred to as 'Organisations'

1.2 Each year Eastleigh Borough Council allocates about £300k of taxpayers' money to voluntary and community organisations working within the Borough. These organisations are supported because the Council recognises the benefits they bring to the community. So that misunderstandings and difficulties do not arise, it is important that both the Council and the organisations have a common understanding of the nature of voluntary support, and of current best practice where volunteers are used to provide services in the Borough Council area.

1.3 The lead in this work is the Community Development Manager at Eastleigh Borough Council as Chair of the Eastleigh Compact Steering Group, who will review and if necessary revise this 'combined code of good practice for all voluntary and community organisations' at least annually.

1.4 The Eastleigh Compact and the codes of good practice derived from it should apply to any organisation working within the Council area. Although not legally binding, organisations will be encouraged to sign their acceptance of the principles in the Compact and their commitment to working towards the good practice codes.

1.5 This paper states the principles and obligations by which Eastleigh Borough Council will provide support to organisations that use volunteers, and the principles and obligations which the volunteers themselves must adopt to receive support from Eastleigh Borough Council. Together this constitutes good practice.

2. What is The Eastleigh Compact?

2.1 The Eastleigh Compact is an agreement between public sector agencies and voluntary and community organisations in Eastleigh. It outlines how all parties will work together and provides a framework for working together in the future. While the compact establishes the framework the codes of good practice give further detail about specific issues. In addition to this code there is the volunteering code, funding code and the consultation code.

The compact and codes are not legally binding. They are a set of mutually agreed documents that have been jointly created and consulted upon.

3. What is the aim of the Code of Good Practice?

3.1 The combined code of good practice has been developed to enhance the relationship between the ethnic minority (EM) voluntary and community sector, the voluntary sector and the public sector. The code of good practice aims to highlight issues that are specifically relevant to all voluntary and community groups, in particular EM communities and community groups. It is expected that its content will directly impact on the other codes developed to form part of the Eastleigh compact.

3.2 This code has been devised in consultation with EM groups and community groups in Eastleigh. This code addresses the needs of all community groups, and identifies those needs that may be specific to EM groups. The code has been written in this way to reflect local need. To write separate codes for EM groups and other community groups would be differentiating those needs unnecessarily.

4. Definitions and Roles

4.1 Public Sector/ Statutory Sector

Public funded agencies that make up the public sector are created by central government. They exist by right of statute (an article of law) and for this reason the public sector is also sometimes known as the statutory sector. The public sector agencies in Eastleigh include Eastleigh Borough Council, Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts (PCT's), Police and the Fire service.

4.2 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)

The voluntary and community sector is often described as the third sector, as distinct from the public and private sectors. It is the sector comprising independent not-for-profit organisations, which includes voluntary and community organisations.

4.3 Community Groups

These are groups that operate at a local level, ranging from small informal community groups to multi-purpose community organisations. A diversity of groups make up the community sector including neighbourhood based groups, those built on a common interest or experience, faith, ethnic origin, refugee or asylum seeker status, disability or ill health.

4.4 EM Community Groups

These are groups that operate at a local level and whose main aim is to identify and represent the interests of Ethnic Minority people. This would include all people of minority ethnic origin, faith communities and gypsy and traveller communities.

4.5 Voluntary Organisations

These are organisations which have certain characteristics: they are set up for charitable, educational, philanthropic, religious, political or similar purpose. They are not part of any government department, local health authority or any other statutory body. They are an independent charitable organisation, which may or may not have registered charitable status.

5. A particular focus on EM Voluntary and Community groups in Eastleigh

5.1 The EM sector represents a diverse range of communities. This Code provides a framework for joint working towards race equality that gives the EM sector an increased voice, and more effective support and resources.

5.2 The Ethnic Minority (EM) sector works to tackle social disadvantage experienced by EM communities, and so it is important that the EM voluntary and community organisations are represented in the traditional structures of the voluntary and community sector. By doing this they will:

- a. Improve the lives of communities in Eastleigh.
- b. Encourage EM communities to contribute to the local community and have a say.
- c. Tackle racism and social exclusion to create an environment in which diverse communities and social groups can be made aware of their potential, therefore enabling greater community cohesion.
- d. Share good practice and promote equal opportunities and diversity.

5.3 Eastleigh's EM groups undertake to:

- a. Play an active part within the wider voluntary and community sector in carrying out the significant undertakings in the Compact, this code of good practice and the other compact codes of good practice.
- b. Work in partnership with the local public sector agencies in Eastleigh, other voluntary and community organisations in order to tackle social exclusion, promote race equality and civil society.
- c. Aim to establish an effective network of local groups, which will provide an opportunity for communication and consultation with the groups, in order to gain EM perspectives on key local, regional and national issues.
- d. Inform and present the concerns of the community to the public sector agencies and other voluntary and community sector groups in Eastleigh.
- e. Make use of appropriate training opportunities, particularly support and training for those with leadership and management responsibilities, including trustees and staff.
- f. Ensure their groups are accessible to all members of the community, and provide opportunities for voluntary and community action by a diverse range of individuals.

6. All Voluntary and Community Organisations in Eastleigh

6.1 Voluntary and community organisations in Eastleigh come in a multitude of forms to meet an extensive variety of needs. It is therefore important that the voluntary and community organisations have a voice and contribute where possible to decisions that affect the local community. By doing this, they will:

- a. Improve the lives of communities in Eastleigh.
- b. Tackle social exclusion to create an environment in which all communities and social groups can be made aware of their potential and contribute fully to a cohesive Eastleigh
- c. Share good practice.

6.2 Eastleigh's voluntary and community sector undertakes to:

- a. Ensure that all projects that have received a grant from a public sector agency are reasonably monitored and evaluated in a timely manner.
- b. Acknowledge the work of public sector agencies and feedback the way in which policies of the public sector agencies affect their communities.
- c. Engage in consultations and partnership work with the public sector where appropriate, to ensure their views are represented.
- d. Provide information about the work of their group and activities to other voluntary sector groups and the public sector where appropriate. This information must always be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- e. Offer specialist advice and support in relation to the work they do. This may include consultations, acting as reference groups for the Eastleigh Strategic Partnership or as peer support for other groups.
- f. Accept that the voluntary and community sector is diverse and that the interests and views of the various groups and organisation within the sector, are often different.

7. The Public Sector in Eastleigh

7.1 The public sector will undertake the following:

- a. All public sector agencies will meet their obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.
- b. All public sector agencies will ensure that in communications and consultations the needs of EM groups are taken into account. This may include use of other languages, sensitivity to cultural identities and showing awareness of EM concerns.
- c. All public sector agencies will accept that the interests of community groups and voluntary organisations are not always the same and clarify this when the sector is being discussed and represented.
- d. All public sector agencies will consult with a range of community groups regarding issues that concern them or impact on their work.
- e. Eastleigh Borough Council will operate and monitor the Racial Harassment Forum and ensure that the forum is publicised to all EM groups in Eastleigh.
- f. Eastleigh Borough Council will offer a consistent standard and equality of service to all community and voluntary organisations, particularly with regard to funding, representation, consultation and communication.

- g. Eastleigh Borough Council will offer advice on issues regarding community development and acknowledge the value of volunteers.
- h. Eastleigh Borough Council will review the support given to the voluntary and community sector on a regular basis.

8. How to use this code

8.1 This document is intended to safeguard relationships and actions of both the voluntary and community, and public sectors in Eastleigh. It is a good practice document and if there are disagreements we will undertake to find a mutually agreed resolution. If no such resolution can be agreed, the matter will be taken to an independent mediator.

8.2 The Eastleigh compact working group will promote this code throughout Eastleigh. It will review how it is used and will encourage local groups to participate in Compact events.

8.3 All of the Compact documents will be reviewed by the compact working group. This is an open group and if you would like to come to compact working group meetings please contact Nikki or Helen at the addresses below.

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