

Oxfordshire Compact
Draft Code of Good Practice on Equality & Diversity
January 2010

To be read in conjunction with the Oxfordshire Compact

1. Introduction

1.1 In 2004 a wide range of statutory agencies and voluntary, community and faith sector (VCF) organisations operating in Oxfordshire, signed a partnership agreement known as the 'Oxfordshire Compact' (see www.oxfordshire.gov.uk for further information).

1.2 The Compact commits all partners to work together to develop the Compact and in particular to produce specific protocols called Codes. Codes describe how the Compact will work in practice.

1.3 Oxfordshire Codes already written include:

- Funding Code
- Consultation and Policy Appraisal Code

It is planned that more Codes will be developed in time, including a Code on volunteering.

1.4 The Oxfordshire Compact code on Equality & Diversity uses a definition of equality based on the idea of equal life chances:

"An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be."

1.5 We recognise that issues of equality and diversity take many forms. This Code will help to make sure that the statutory agencies and voluntary community and faith sector (VCF):

- a) have a relationship built on respect, non discrimination, accessibility and equality.
- b) recognise the needs of the different communities of Oxfordshire and give relevant support.

1.6 The Code gives a source of good practice to address needs that people may have because of things like:

- Belonging to a Black, minority or ethnic community
- Being a Recent migrant
- Gender (including being transgender)

- Religion, faith and belief
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Age (older people and younger people)
- Rural isolation
- Social isolation
- Homelessness
- Lack of skills and qualifications
- Being Refugees and asylum seekers
- Being Gypsies and travellers
- Being carers

This list is not definitive and may be changed from time to time.

There are legally allowed exemptions from these equality needs. Some of which include, but are not exclusive examples:

- religious organisations can require that their staff personally hold and practice the relevant faith;
- an organisation for deaf people might legitimately employ a deaf person who uses British Sign Language to work as a counsellor to other deaf people whose first or preferred language is BSL;
- an employer can refuse employment to a person who will reach retirement age within 6 months of the application of employment;
- existence of and admission to, single sex schools;
- positive action is a way employers can help people have the same life chances;

1.7 The Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA) in its role as the Compact Steering Group for Oxfordshire will monitor the use of the Code amongst its signatories. OSCA will also where necessary recommend changes.

2. What is this Code?

2.1 This Equality & Diversity Code is the third of the Oxfordshire Compact protocols and aims to promote the inclusion of groups and organisations that have in the past been under-represented or excluded, for the benefit of the individuals who make up those groups, their communities, villages and neighbourhoods and Oxfordshire as a whole.

2.2 The Code aims to set out the principles within which the statutory sector and the voluntary, community and faith sector (VCF) agree to work on equality and diversity. It also seeks to make sure that both sectors recognise and value the diversity that exists in society generally and in particular in Oxfordshire.

2.3 This code was consulted on over a 12 week consultation period. Which included circulation by the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance Board to

statutory sector and voluntary, community and faith (VCF) organisations in Oxfordshire. Responses were incorporated in the final document along with comments and themes which emerged from the County Voluntary and Community Sector Forum in 2009.

2.4 The purpose of this code is in section 1.5, 2.1 and 2.2 of this document and the document as a whole will be updated periodically for content and use.

2.5 Along with the other languages and formats that can be made available if you ask for this document, it has been written using 'Plain English' wherever possible¹.

3. How We Will Work Together

3.1 It is important to recognise that when the statutory and voluntary community and faith sectors (VCF) work together, they should do so in a way that promotes fairness, avoids discrimination and is accessible for all involved.

3.2 All the partners using the Compact will achieve this by:

- treating each other with respect;
- communicating with one another in an accessible and inclusive way (for example, providing information in another format to any partner that needs/requests it);
- running events involving partners that meet their needs in terms of accessibility;
- having procurement policies and procedures that are fair and accessible for the voluntary community and faith sector (VCF);
- having a zero tolerance approach to any form of unlawful harassment;
- being mindful of any other barriers that may prevent a partner from taking part in the Compact and any associated projects or initiatives;
- OSCA will make sure that any future Compact codes developed for the Compact will acknowledge the commitments in this code;
- OSCA will make sure that any codes developed for the Compact partners will help to promote equality of access/inclusion and avoid unlawful discrimination.

3.3 As well as the shared commitments, the **statutory sector** will:

- make sure that any ongoing revision of policies, planning and procedures includes evidence, so that no voluntary, community or faith sector (VCF) organisation is treated unfairly by new or existing policies, practices or procedures;
- stress opportunities and sometimes requirements that exist in equality law to create and deliver community specific services.

¹ Plain English Campaign online text conversion
<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/DriveIDefenceText.html>

4. Shared Commitments to providing accessible and non discriminatory services to the local community

4.1 This Code recognises that it is vital to have a vibrant and diverse community to promote potential and new ideas. This benefits Oxfordshire socially and economically.

4.2 The partners using the Compact are committed to:

- recognising the importance of equality and diversity and human rights to a prosperous and cohesive society;
- developing effective methods so all groups can get involved;
- supporting disadvantaged and socially left out groups;
- recognising and celebrating the diversity in communities;
- tackling intersectional/multiple forms² of discrimination.

4.3 As a minimum means of realising these commitments:

- **the statutory sector** partners will deliver their services (including employment functions) in ways that meet with their statutory equality duties and other local priorities which include:
 - staff training;
 - developing and maintaining equality schemes and policies;
 - inclusive consultation and engagement;
 - equality impact assessments on services and policies/strategies;
 - service and employment monitoring;
 - fair and accessible contracts, procurement and grants.
- **the Voluntary, Community and Faith sector partners** will make sure that when they look at their new or existing policies, planning and procedures they ensure that no particular group is disadvantaged. They will also develop and adopt an equality and/or diversity policy or statement, as proportionate. Evidence will be considered and included where applicable.
- **the Voluntary Community and Faith sector Infrastructure organisation** will give advice to voluntary community and faith sector (VCF) wanting to better understand how to engage with under represented organisations, groups and individuals at risk of exclusion.

5. Policies and Legislation

5.1 This Code links to laws and ways of working and should be used with the National Association of Councils for Voluntary Action (NAVCA) 'Toolkit for

² Intersectional discrimination is where multiple forms of oppression interact with one another, e.g. young and disabled.

Developing and Implementing Equal Opportunities' and any other guidance available for the promotion of equality and diversity.

5.2 Partner organisations should be aware of their responsibilities under both domestic (United Kingdom) and European legislation on equalities issues. Each organisation will have its own policies and procedures on equalities that meet with the relevant legislation.

5.3 Further information about the Oxfordshire Compact can be found by logging on to www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk website or by contacting a member of OSCA. Details are below in Appendix 1:

Appendix 1

Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action

The Old Court House, Floyds Row, St Aldates, Oxford, OX1 1SS
01865 251946

Cherwell Community and Voluntary Service

27, Horse Fair, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 0AE
01869 338153

Cherwell District Council

Bodicote House, White Post Road, Bodicote, Banbury, OX15 4AA.

Churches Together in Oxfordshire

Cowley Road Methodist Church Centre, Jeune Street, Oxford, OX4 1BN
01865 723801

Co-operative Futures

City Works, Alfred Street, Gloucester, GL1 4DF
07879 415550

Health Improvement Principal (Oxon NHS/PCT)

Jubilee House, 5510 John Smith Drive, Oxford Business Park South, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2LH
01865 337287

Oxford Anglican Diocese

Arran House, 12 Sandy Lane, Yarnton, Kidlington, Oxon, OX5 1PB
01865 375541

Oxford City Council

Strategy & Review Unit, Town Hall, St Aldates, Oxford, OX1 1BX
01865 252509

Oxfordshire Children and Voluntary Youth Services

The Old Music Hall, 106/108 Cowley Rd, Oxford, OX4 1JE

01865 403303

Oxfordshire County Council

The Voluntary Sector Development Team, Corporate Core, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND
01865 323964

Oxfordshire Equality and Human Rights Council

The Old Court House, Floyds Row, Oxford, OX1 1SS
01865 723801

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council

Jericho Farm, Worton, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 4SZ
01865 883488

South Oxfordshire District Council

Corporate Projects Officer, with effect from 1 April 2010, it will be the Community Partnerships Manager.
Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford, Wallingford, OX10 8HQ
01491 823612

Thames Valley Police

Oxford Road, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 2NX
01865 841148

Vale of White Horse District Council

Community Strategy Manager, with effect from 1 April 2010, it will be the Community Partnerships Manager.
Abbey House, Abingdon, OX14 3JE
01235 547695

Volunteer Link Up

10 Wesley Walk, High St, Witney, OX28 6ZJ
01993 776277

West Oxfordshire District Council

Woodgreen, Witney, OX28 1NB
01933 861481

Oxfordshire Community Foundation

3 Woodin's Way, Oxford, OX1 1HD
01865 798 666

Appendix 2

Resources for the Statutory Sector;

Commission for the Compact

- <http://www.thecompact.org.uk/information/100023/publications/>

Diversity Calendar

- <http://www.diversiton.com/OxfordshireCountyCouncil.asp>

Equality Bill 2009

- http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Oxford City Council

- http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/Equality,_Diversity_and_Inclusion_occw.htm

Equality and Diversity at Cherwell District Council

- <http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=1413>

Equality and Diversity at South Oxfordshire District Council

- <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/>

Equality and Diversity at West Oxfordshire District Council

- <http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/council/Equality.cfm>

Equality and Diversity at Vale of White Horse District Council

- http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/community_support_and_advice/equalities_and_diversity/default.asp

Equality and Human Rights Commission- Public Sector Duties

- <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-duties/>

Equality and Social Inclusion in Oxfordshire

- <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/equality>

NHS Oxfordshire Equality and Diversity

- <http://www.oxfordshirepct.nhs.uk/patient-matters/equality-and-diversity/default.aspx>

Safraproject Report of Initial Findings 2002 -'Identifying the difficulties experienced by Muslim lesbian, bisexual and transgender women in accessing social and legal services'

- http://www.safraproject.org/Reports/Safraproject-Initial_findings-2002.pdf

Resources for the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector;

Commission for the Compact

- <http://www.thecompact.org.uk/information/100023/publications/>

Compact Voice- is the voice of the voluntary sector in England, in matters relating to the Compact between the government and voluntary sector to ensure better working.

- <http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/>

NAVCA Equalities Resource Pack

- <http://www.navca.org.uk/localvs/equalities/>

Volunteering England's Good Practice guides- include working with ex-offenders, people with learning disabilities and refugees.

- <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/Resources/publications/freeguides.htm>

Voice for Change- Voice4Change England is a national policy body dedicated to strengthening the BME Third Sector as a positive force for change. It provides a co-ordinated policy voice for BME groups and organisations and supports them to thrive.

- <http://www.voice4change-england.co.uk/>

RAISE Equality toolkit 2008

- <http://www.raise-networks.org.uk/inform/docDisplay.cfm?iDocID=849>

Appendix 3

Case Studies of the National Compact codes in Action on Equality & Diversity

Orthodox Jewish Group (London)

- <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compact-case-studies#sail>

The Problem: SAIL is an Orthodox Jewish group that provides summer programmes for inner city boys from socially deprived areas. The group applied to a funder but their bid was rejected. The reason for rejection was that they claimed the project promoted religion. Interlink, an umbrella body for Orthodox Jewish groups, heard about SAIL's case and also believed that a disproportionate number of funding bids by Orthodox Jewish organisations were being rejected because grants officers did not appear to understand the need for targeted funding for this community.

The Compact issue: National Compact BME code 6.8 - recognise the potential of faith organisations to contribute to social inclusion, which is distinct from the promotion of religion.

The Action: We wrote to the funder explaining how they had misunderstood the bid and breached the BME Compact Code in doing so. We then met with the funder and Interlink to discuss the case.

The Outcome: The funder admitted that they had misunderstood SAIL's bid, apologised and agreed to reassess the application. Valuable funding of just under £60,000 was eventually awarded to the group. The funder also stated that it has improved the training provided to grants officers about funding for faith organisations.

BME sexual health organisation and local PCT (London)

- <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compact-case-studies#bme>

The Problem: This award-winning BME organisation working on HIV and sexual health issues had received funding from the same London PCT for 10 years in a row. The organisation was waiting for clarity on the next year's funding arrangement and chased for confirmation from the PCT. Despite these efforts they were not told until June that their funding had been terminated in April that same year. They requested reasons why this had occurred and clarity on what notice was being given but received no response.

The Compact issue: National Compact Funding Compact code 7.6 - give enough notice at the end of grants and National Compact BME code 6.7 - undertake joint review when funding is withdrawn

The Action: We wrote to the PCT raising the concerns about poor communication and the Compact breaches and requesting that the PCT agree to fund the appropriate 3-month notice period.

The Outcome: The PCT replied, agreeing to fund the full, Compact-compliant notice period from April to August. The PCT also gave further details on the assessment process used when funding was terminated and entered into dialogue with the organisation about how they could work together in future.

The Ark and Bracknell Day Service (Bracknell)

- <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/Channels/Fundraising/login/619918/>

The Project: The Ark is a small charity in Bracknell Forest that uses the arts to work with people who have disabilities. Last year its chief executive, Andrea McCombie-Parker, decided to try to launch an arts festival with the aim of showing people with disabilities how much they could achieve.

The Action: The Ark knew it could not launch the festival alone, so it spoke to Linda Webdell, a Compact implementation officer based at Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (BFVA). Webdell is the first to hold the post since the Bracknell Forest Compact was written in 2002.

The Ark approached Webdell because she was the person to pull together other Compact signatories to make the arts festival viable. She agreed to help form a partnership between The Ark and Bracknell Day Services, which is run by the borough to provide support for people with mental and physical disabilities.

"Without the Compact, these two organisations wouldn't have been able to come together - but because they were both already aware of the Compact's aims, they were immediately singing from the same hymn sheet."

Had the Compact not been in place, Webdell's role wouldn't have existed and there wouldn't have been a framework under which The Ark could form an equal partnership with a much larger statutory body.

The Outcome: The festival, ArtsPulse, ran for a week in July. About 200 people attended each day, taking part in arts projects and social events. The festival provided paid work for people with disabilities, with funding from sources including local business sponsorships. It has also led to the creation of a full-time post at The Ark for a community arts and disability development officer.

"Getting the festival off the ground fitted in with the aims of the Compact," says Webdell. "It was about expanding opportunities, opening up new doors, getting more contacts and finding more funding streams."

Southall Black Sisters August 2008 (London)

- <http://www.thecomcompact.org.uk/files/118662/FileName/InsightNewsletterSpring2009.pdf>

The Public Law Project (PLP) represented Southall Black Sisters, a group that provides a range of services to women including specialist services for BME women who have been victims of domestic violence. They approached PLP over the lack of an impact assessment by Ealing Council on proposed changes to their service.

The PLP advised that this might be unlawful and could be challenged using judicial review proceedings if it indicated that the council were not meeting their general duties to promote race and gender equality. PLP did challenge the council, and got legal aid for the service users in case the court case went ahead. In response, the council agreed to withdraw their decisions about the new services and to do the impact assessments including a full consultation process.

اشكال بديلة لهذا المنشور موجودة حسب الطلب. هذه تشمل لغات مختلفة و الطبعة البارزة وطريقة بريل و اشرطة كاست و اقراص الحاسوب او البريد الالكتروني.

Arabic

আপনি যদি অনুরোধ করেন তাহলে এই পুস্তিকাটি বিকল্প ছাঁদে, যেমন, অন্য কোনও ভাষায়, বড় হরফে, ব্রেইলে, অডিও-ক্যাসেটে, কমপিউটারের ডিস্কে বা ইমেলের মাধ্যমে পেতে পারেন।

Bengali

“本刊物備有其他的格式可供索取。這些包括有其他語言版，大字版，盲人用版，錄音帶版，電腦磁碟版或電子郵件版。”

Chinese

प्रार्थना करने पर यह प्रकाशन दूसरे रूपों में प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। जिस में सम्मिलित है, दूसरी भाषाओं में, बड़े छापे में, ब्रेअल, सुनने की टेप पर, कम्प्यूटर की डिस्क पर या ई-मेल द्वारा।

Hindi

“ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਛਾਪੇ ਤੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਵਿਚ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ ਤੇ, ਕੰਪਿਊਟਰ ਡਿਸਕ ਜਾਂ ਈ ਮੇਲ ਤੇ।”

Punjabi

”اس اشاعت کو متبادل اشکال میں درخواست کرنے پر حاصل کیا جاسکتا ہے۔ اس میں دوسری زبانیں، براہرٹ، بریل (جسے اندھے چھو کر پڑھ سکیں)، آڈیو کیسٹ، کمپیوٹر ڈسک یا ای میل شامل ہیں۔“

Urdu

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Polish

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