

SOUTHAMPTON COMPACT
Between the Public Sector and the Voluntary and Community Sector

COMMUNITY GROUPS CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE

AIM

As part of the Southampton Compact and Southampton's Community Strategy, this Community Groups Code of Good Practice aims to strengthen relationships between Community Groups, Statutory, and Voluntary Organisations. Working together to deliver the Southampton Compact, this code demonstrates how all citizens can actively contribute to and benefit from a city of opportunity, responsibility, equality and success.

DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY GROUPS IN SOUTHAMPTON

Community Groups come in a multitude of forms to meet an extensive variety of needs across all of Southampton's five Neighbourhoods Partnership areas. Each Partnership area is home to a range of community associations, social / political / environmental movements, cultural groups, residents and tenants associations, faith groups, black and ethnic minority associations, and community groups involved in different local projects.

----- Range -----	
<i>Community Groups</i>	<i>Voluntary Organisations</i>
Member-led (the community controls direction and purpose)	Trustees, Staff led
Neighbourhood and or, community of interest	Wider area
Less formal structure	More formal structure
Lower or no income	Higher income
Membership based	Client based
Self help and mutual support	Support and development
Informal and independent services	Specialist and contracted services
Representing the interests of residents and community members	Supporting client groups

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community Groups provide a valuable service to the citizens of Southampton in a variety of ways by;

- Helping to promote a sense of citizenship and identity.
- Creating a 'community spirit' in their Neighbourhood Partnership.
- Promoting inclusion and equality.
- Working towards common goals and issues.
- Listening to and serving the community by taking action on their behalf.
- Raising awareness of specific community issues, such as health, housing, crime, social injustice and combating poverty.
- Fundraising and co-ordinating different projects to improve quality of life.
- Supporting socially isolated / disadvantaged groups across the City in communities of interest.

WHY ARE NEEDS F COMMUNITY GROUPS IN SOUTHAMPTON SOMETIMES DIFFERENT FROM VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS?

- They are solely reliant on the good will and voluntary commitments of a smaller group of individuals.
- Need more time and help to respond to consultations.
- Requirements are sometimes variable and different according to culture, faith and locality.
- Restricted to what they can achieve due to a lack of regular fixed income / funding and available support.
- There is often a lack of available training and information on certain areas and issues that impact upon their activities (for example, fundraising, legal requirements and policies).
- An activity may arise at the last minute, so grant applications need to be made quickly with minimum paperwork.
- Community groups are often less able to comply with complex monitoring and evaluation requirements.

JOINT UNDERTAKINGS

The Statutory, Voluntary and Community Sector agree to undertake to Promote community development based on the following definition and monitor and revise the code annually::

“The key purpose of community development work is to collectively bring about social change and justice, by working with communities to; identify their needs, rights and responsibilities; plan, organise and take action; evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the action all in ways which challenge oppression, tackle inequalities and promote community well-being.”

STATUTORY SECTOR UNDERTAKINGS

Southampton Statutory Sector Organisations undertake to:

- Help Community Groups get organised; assist with seeking funds; encourage new members to join; moral support – boost them up when groups are feeling despondent; encourage them so they can raise aspirations and help change the area they live.
- Support the individual needs of groups so they can flourish independently.
- Recognise the specific needs of Black and minority ethnic community groups.
- Appreciate and respect the hard work volunteers do for their community.
- Cooperate and work together towards a common goal.
- Provide training / information to community groups in a format they can enjoy / relate to.
- Widen their knowledge of other successful projects and community groups and the influence these projects have had on their communities.
- Help identify grants to enable community groups to visit other exemplar projects in the country.
- Offer networking opportunities.
- Consult with a range of community groups, so as not to overburden their workload.
- Involve relevant community groups on local issues / policies, as early as appropriate.
- Hold meetings at times convenient to community representatives and offer expenses.
- Identify named posts within their agencies to support community involvement.
- Advocate for groups when appropriate.
- Second personnel to assist in the development of specified time-limited projects, or to help strengthen the community and voluntary sector's infrastructure and capacity.
- Support the contribution community groups make to Neighbourhood Partnership priorities.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS' UNDERTAKINGS

Southampton's Voluntary Organisations undertake to:

- Include and involve community groups in all their work wherever possible.
- Offer training and information on issues regarding volunteering.
- Recognise 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.
- Review the support they are giving to community groups on a regular basis and make sure that some are not being left out or marginalised (for example, Black and minority ethnic groups).
- Respect the contribution community groups make in Southampton.

- Consult with a broad range of community groups.
- Advocate for groups when appropriate.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS' UNDERTAKINGS

Southampton Community Groups undertake to:

- Ensure financially supported project's are reasonably monitored and evaluated.
- Acknowledge and value the work of Statutory and Voluntary organisations.
- Help to promote equality and a sense of citizenship.
- Encourage partnership working with Statutory, Voluntary organisations, and local people.
- Help raise aspirations within their neighbourhoods.
- Allocate time for Voluntary and Statutory sector consultation and advice.
- Provide information about the work of community groups.
- Offer specialist advice and support on the groups they represent.

USING THE CODE

The Southampton Compact will promote this code throughout Southampton, will review how it is used and will encourage local community groups to participate in an annual Compact meeting and or conference.

FURTHER INFORMATION

'Southampton's Community Strategy' (Southampton Partnership)
www.southampton-partnership.com/commstrat.htm

'Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy 2002' (Southampton Partnership)
www.southampton-partnership.com