

Hartlepool Compact

October 2008



Foreword

In Hartlepool there is a strong tradition of the public, private and community and voluntary sectors working in partnership to improve the environment and economic and social well-being of the Borough.

This Compact sets out the agreed working practices between the voluntary, community and named public sector service providers and recognises the value of services provided by voluntary and community groups in Hartlepool.

This Compact aims to make a difference to our community by helping to deliver, directly and in partnership with others, high quality services which will improve the quality of life of our residents.

Mayor Stuart Drummond
Chair of the Hartlepool Partnership



Vision

The Hartlepool Compact aims to strengthen the relationship between the public sector and the voluntary and community sector, working towards shared objectives to improve the quality of people's lives within Hartlepool.



1. Purpose of the Compact

The Compact is an agreement between Hartlepool Borough Council, local service providers and commissioners of services and the voluntary and community sector.

The purpose of the Compact is to set out codes of practice and terms of engagement that organisations will agree to work to and more importantly sign up to. This will ensure that all partners are aware of and can be responsible for the level of engagement expected from them and what they expect from others when working in partnership. This mutual agreement between partners will improve their relationships and benefit the communities within Hartlepool.



Purpose of the Compact

2. Background

The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) is a key partner in the design and delivery of services that communities want.

In recognition of this, in 1998 a national compact was launched which set out an agreement between the Government and the VCS to improve their relationships for mutual advantage.

Such an approach was also encouraged at regional and local levels.

Early in 2003 a framework was developed that set out the shared values, principles and operational guidelines between Hartlepool Borough Council, community groups and voluntary organisations in Hartlepool. This was the Borough's first local Compact and it included a commitment to extend the approach to encompass other agencies' relationships with the Hartlepool community and voluntary sector.

In 2006 a regional compact was developed aiming to improve partnership working and relationships between regional organisations within the VCS and the public sector in the North East. It provides a basic framework setting out the main principles and commitments that these relationships can be built upon.

One of the recommendations of the Borough Council's Strengthening Communities Best Value Review in 2006 was that the local Compact needed to be strengthened and re-launched. Hartlepool Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership¹ (LSP)) considered these recommendations in February 2007. In addition, in line with the commitment in the first local Compact, and following the Regional Compact, which encompasses the whole of the public sector, this second local Compact has been developed to include other named partners, and therefore builds on the first Compact.

A full list of all the public sector partners is included in **Appendix 1**. A mechanism for identifying and signing up VCS partners is currently being worked up.

¹ The Hartlepool Partnership is the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). Working through a Board and a set of Theme Partnerships; it brings together a range of local organisations to give the Borough a strong, united voice.

3. Status of the Compact

This local Compact has been drawn up in partnership following consultation with the VCS, key public sector bodies and local organisations. It is a written agreement containing a series of codes designed to improve relationships between the VCS and other organisations in Hartlepool (and sets out guidelines on meaningful consultation with various sectors of the community).

It is not a:

- Service level agreement;
- Contract;
- Legally binding document;
- Funding guarantee;
- Replacement for existing partnership agreements.

It is hoped that the Compact will bring real change in culture and produce significant benefits to local communities by helping public agencies and local organisations, both voluntary and statutory, to work more effectively to provide better services.

Status Of The Compact

4. Implementation and Review

There is need for an ongoing process of review to ensure effective implementation of the Hartlepool Compact, ensuring that it is made to work in practice.

The following arrangements have been made to keep its operation under review:

It is proposed that the monitoring will be undertaken by the Community Network², discussed quarterly at their meetings. The Compact will be an open agenda item that people can attend the meetings to discuss. This arrangement will be kept under review to ensure that it is the most efficient way to monitor the Compact.

It is also proposed that the annual action plan needs to be tied into Hartlepool's Local Area Agreement³ Annual Performance Framework and it should be monitored through the Hartlepool Partnership / Community Network.

The Community Network has agreed to review case studies of disputes that may occur and feed them into the ongoing development of the Compact through the Action Plan. **Appendix 3** shows a diagram which should be followed if disputes occur.



² Hartlepool Community Network is the town's Community Empowerment Network and is the means by which the community is brought together to influence the work of the Hartlepool Partnership. The aim is to bring the views of the VCS into the development of the decision making process and to encourage wider resident participation in neighbourhood renewal.

³ Local Area Agreements (LAAs) are based on local Community Strategies that set out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government (represented by the Regional Government Office) and a local area (represented by the local authority and other key partners through the LSP).

Compact Advocacy

The Compact Advocacy Programme is run by the voluntary and community sector, for the sector. It is based at the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO). Since 2002 it has been working towards ensuring compliance with Compact principles. This has been done at a national level through advocacy, campaigning and lobbying government departments on behalf of the voluntary and community sector.

The Compact Advocacy Programme also works at a local level. It is recognised that there is little awareness of the Compact at a local level and there are still many instances of non-compliance. The Compact Advocacy Programme will work on behalf of the voluntary and community sector working closely with organisations where the Compact and the associated codes have been breached. They do this by making a campaign plan to make representations on behalf of the organisation to relevant government or local departments, through lobbying, advocacy, wider campaigning and negotiation.



Compact Advocacy

5. The Hartlepool Compact Codes

The Hartlepool Compact puts forward a series of Codes which provide the ground rules for good practice. The Codes are for all parties to strive to achieve. They cover the following areas:

- a. Funding Code;
- b. Consultation and Policy Code;
- c. Inclusion Code (Minority and Small Community Groups Code);
- d. Code of Practice on Representation;
- e. Volunteering Code.



a) Funding Code

- i) All partners will adopt processes that are non-discriminatory to small voluntary and community groups.
- ii) All partners will recognise the importance of funding core costs (whilst acknowledging the trend of funders moving away from funding core costs to encouraging VCS groups to apply for funding on the basis of full cost recovery rates), repeat funding and inflation rises.
- iii) All partners will recognise the benefits of offering multi-year and roll forward funding, preferably on a 3 year basis where possible, to allow for long-term planning.
- iv) All partners will give early notification on agreements for future years funding and if this is not possible identify contingencies e.g. extend existing contracts by a couple of months until decisions are made.
- v) All partners will adopt an open, transparent and timely (clearly set out) funding process and ensure that voluntary, community and local organisations realise the principles of accountability and transparency in all areas of their activities.
- vi) All partners will adopt an open, transparent and timely (clearly set out) tendering process ensuring that the same processes / time scales / information will apply to all VCS groups and organisations.
- vii) All partners will adopt the practice of written agreements which set out the objectives of funding, the payment arrangements and the monitoring requirements.
- viii) All partners will seek to allocate resources against clear and consistent criteria, including value for money.
- ix) All partners will seek to maintain high standards of governance and conduct and meet reporting and accountability obligations to funders and users.
- x) All partners will respect and be accountable to the law and in the case of charities, observe the appropriate guidance from the Charity Commission.
- xi) All partners will seek to assist local groups to be able to compete for work which is being commissioned or contracted, where appropriate. Work that is to be commissioned or contracted shall be promoted so that appropriate VCS groups are also able to bid using the same processes as that for inviting other potential tenders for such work (including using the same notification processes and time scale).
- xii) All partners will seek to ensure that funding will be paid on time and where possible make payments in advance to 'kick start' projects.
- xiii) All partners will adopt the practice of providing detailed application guidance for voluntary, community and local organisations, including examples where possible, clarifying the information required and detailing eligible costs.

Best Practice Example - Community Pool 2007/2008 - Hartlepool Citizens Advice Bureau

Hartlepool Borough Council's Community Pool provides financial assistance to support those aspects of the activities of the voluntary / community / not for profit sector that clearly reflect the aspirations of the Council's Community Strategy. The main objective of the Community Pool is to support the strategies aim of "strengthening communities". Grant aid from the Community Pool is provided as a contribution towards the core costs of an organisation.

Hartlepool Citizens Advice Bureau is a free, confidential and independent advice, information and advocacy service for the local community.

In 2007/2008 Hartlepool Citizens Advice Bureau was awarded a grant of £74,801 from the Community Pool as a contribution towards the groups core costs, including the salary costs of key members of staff.

Core funding from the Community Pool enabled Hartlepool Citizens Advice Bureau to employ key staff to manage / supervise the staff who work to deliver the various services / projects that the CAB provide for the benefit of local residents including Debt Advice Service, Community Care Advocacy Service, Legal Help Franchise, Welfare Benefits Advice Service, Housing Advice and Tenancy Support Service, Consumer Advice Service.



b) Consultation and Policy Code

- i) All partners will ensure inclusiveness with partners, and share strategy documents and consultation exercises.
- ii) All our documents will use simple, clear language and will be available in formats, including different languages if requested, to meet the needs of residents.
- iii) All partners will build early consultation into plans for statutory policy and strategy development, allowing 8 weeks for consultation, where practicable.
- iv) All partners recognise the constraints upon, and resource implications for voluntary and community organisations, and will use a variety of consultation methods (innovative where possible) and levels, in order to be as inclusive as possible.
- v) All partners will make clear the purpose and scope of each consultation and will provide background information and contact details for additional information.
- vi) For each consultation, information will include details of the time scale, any decisions already made, arrangements for expressing views and clarification on what influence those views will have on any other contributory factors to the final decision making process.
- vii) All partners will ensure there will be clear and constructive feedback setting out reasons for decisions made or the adoption of a specific approach.
- viii) To avoid duplication and consultation fatigue, and to ensure the best use of resources, we will use existing networks and forums to publicise and organise consultation as well as ensuring closer co-ordination between departments of large organisations and between public sector agencies.
- ix) All partners to encourage the use of area based networks to ensure that information reaches the smallest / more isolated groups to maximise resources.
- x) All partners will seek to ensure respect and confidentiality in relation to the privileged information that may be exchanged, within the constraints of the law and the proper performance of public duties.
- xi) All partners will support the 7 visions of the 'Participation Strategy' to increase the effective involvement and participation of children and young people in shaping the Borough wide services available to them across the statutory and non-statutory sectors (see **Appendix 2** further details on Participation Strategy).

Best Practice Example- Hartlepool Young Voices Team

The challenge of the Hartlepool Participation Strategy has been to involve children and young people to create it themselves. To meet this challenge a team of young people, Hartlepool Young Voices (HYV), have devised and written the Participation Strategy for the town. HYV are a group of young people, from a range of backgrounds, including looked after children, nominated by members of the Hartlepool Participation Network. They are all linked to and representative of a number of other groups across the town.

This Vision Statement consists of seven statements that describe how young people should be involved in every aspect of an organisation's operation. It is supported by a set of standards and training materials, also devised by the young people, called 'Branching Out', to enable organisations to provide evidence that they are responding to the seven statements of the Vision.

To begin with they had 25 statements, related to the 'Every Child Matters' outcomes, which were all relevant to both organisations and children and young people. Once they had decided on the most important ones they were sent out to various organisations that work with children and young people for consultation / feedback, before the final copy of the Vision Statement was agreed.

The activities and exercises the team have devised is definitely their unique trademark for working together to deliver the Participation Strategy and getting people to talk to each other whatever their age.



Young Voices Team

c) Inclusion Code

(Minority and Small Community Groups' Code - known Nationally as Black and Minority Ethnic Voluntary and Community Organisations Code)

- i) All partners will include in this category other groups that may experience marginalisation, isolation, disadvantage, exclusion or discrimination.
- ii) All partners will actively support the development of voluntary and community groups and related infrastructure organisations, recognising their local knowledge, expertise and perspective.
- iii) All partners will share policy documents and best practice, and ensure that diverse community groups⁴ are properly represented in their preparation.
- iv) All partners will ensure that we do not discriminate against any voluntary or community group on the basis of faith, race, disability, age or sexual orientation (lesbian, gay and bisexual) and gender (transgender), and will respect the voluntary nature of their work.
- v) All partners will work to promote and monitor policies and services that eradicate discriminatory practice, implementing equality and diversity policies, and setting objectives and targets as appropriate.
- vi) All partners will work with advocates and existing support mechanisms to maximise contributions. Named contacts will be identified within the Voluntary Sector and key organisations to deal with issues raised by minority groups, and act as a conduit to access relevant officers and services.
- vii) All partners will seek to ensure that staff and contacts receive training and awareness as to specific needs and responses to particular sectors of Hartlepool's diverse community.
- viii) All partners will support existing diverse community groups and will develop others so that people from diverse communities can raise concerns.
- ix) All partners will encourage involvement and networking between the VCS, diverse people, and small community groups thereby increasing skills and knowledge.

⁴ Diverse community groups refer to Black and Minority Ethnic groups and other minority groups.

Best Practice Example - A Diverse Community

Hartlepool is made up of many different and diverse communities, each of which has a right to have its voice heard. One way in which this happens is when a group of individuals come together to form a voluntary or community group. Within the black, minority ethnic (BME) community this has involved the development of the Salaam Centre and groups such as Hartlepool Pinoy (Filipino), Hartlepool Asian Association, Muslim Welfare Association, Bangladeshi Cultural Association, Asian Ladies Sewing Club and the Association of British Poles.

Work with other communities of interest has included the development of Hartlepool Access Groups' All Ability Forum and Hart Gables (a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Group (LGBT)). The All Ability Forum has provided an independent 'voice' for people with disabilities and Hart Gables has recently researched the views of the LGBT community.



A Diverse Community

d) Code of Practice on Representation

A Protocol between the Hartlepool Partnership and the Hartlepool Community Network was agreed by the Hartlepool Partnership Board on 21 October 2005 (reviewed every 3 years).

A copy of this full Protocol can be found on the Hartlepool Partnership Website at www.hartlepoolpartnership.co.uk and it includes principles for community and voluntary sector representation on the Hartlepool Partnership.

A basic principle of this Protocol is; where there is a requirement for representation from the VCS, representatives will be selected or elected through an open and transparent recruitment process and representatives will be accountable to the VCS.

The Compact adopts this basic principle on representation.

Best Practice Example - Protocol

The Hartlepool Partnership and the Hartlepool Community Network have agreed a Protocol that sets out how the Community and Voluntary Sector will be represented on the Hartlepool Partnership.

The Protocol aims to strengthen working relationships by setting out:

- Opportunities for Community Network representatives on the Hartlepool Partnership Board and Theme Partnerships;
- Election processes for Community Network representatives;
- Roles and Responsibilities of Community Network representatives;
- How the Hartlepool Partnership will carry out consultation activity;
- How conflict will be managed;
- How progress will be measured.

A member of the Hartlepool Partnership Support Team explains;

“When the Protocol was first developed in 2005 there was real concern amongst members of the VCS that they wouldn’t have a voice within the LSP. The development of the Protocol helped me understand those concerns and make sure our Terms of Reference were inclusive”.

A spokesman for Hartlepool Community Network commented;

“The Protocol was a real step forward in determining how members from the VCS could have a real input to the Partnership’s work. Importantly, the Protocol set out the support that representatives would receive alongside their roles and responsibilities”.

hartlepoolpartnership



Protocol

e) Volunteering Code

The National Compact includes a Volunteering Code of Good Practice. The Code of Good Practice sets out principles and undertakings for both Government and the VCS in England on how to work together to support and promote volunteering and voluntary action. This Code includes the principles on volunteering have been adopted into this local Compact.

Key Principles

- Volunteering must be the result of a free choice by the volunteer
- Volunteering must be open to everyone
- Volunteers must receive some benefits to make their contribution worthwhile
- Volunteers must be publicly recognised

Best Practice Example - Volunteering At Epilepsy Outlook

A positive volunteering experience requires a properly structured and supported placement involving induction, clearly defined roles and lines of accountability. Over the years Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency (HVDA) has facilitated this through formal training and one to one good practice support to groups such as Epilepsy Outlook.

Epilepsy Outlook is a user led group which operates a drop

in and gives advice to about 300 people a year including around 100 carers. The group has its own charity shop and furniture collection scheme.



The group operates a unique volunteer programme whereby at any one time half of the 30 or so volunteers have epilepsy or a specific medical condition, mental health problem or disability. The programme provides support and training to all volunteers within the organisation. Volunteer job roles include advice workers, trainers, tutors, shop assistants, van drivers, warehouse workers, furniture repairers, craft makers and administration workers.

"I feel safe when I work with my friends at Epilepsy Outlook because everyone knows what to do if I have a seizure and don't make me feel different."

Volunteer
Epilepsy Outlook

Volunteering Code

Volunteer Opportunities in Hartlepool

People who wish to volunteer can contact HVDA, which provides information, advice and guidance which will match their skills and interests with available opportunities. There is a specific service for young people, those aged under 25. This work is branded under the name **vInvolved** which is part of the National Youth Volunteering Programme. If you wish to volunteer please get in touch with HVDA's Volunteer Centre if aged over 25 or the **vInvolved** team if aged under 25 (see page 20 for contact details).

Volunteer Opportunities

6. Further Information

Visit www.thecompact.org.uk for further information on the National Compact, guidance for the codes of practice, copies of other local Compacts and the latest Compact news. The website also links to the Compact Advocacy Programme.

www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/compactadvocacy is the website for the Compact Advocacy Programme.

For a copy of the Protocol and further information on the Hartlepool Partnership including the Local Area Agreement visit www.hartlepoolpartnership.co.uk.

The Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency (HVDA) website is www.hvda.co.uk. The site provides details of the services that HVDA also has to offer including further information on volunteer opportunities that are available for adults and young people in Hartlepool. HVDA also has a directory of VCS groups in Hartlepool. For more information on this please call 01429 262641.

For more information on the Community Network contact HVDA.

More information on the Community Pool can be found under Community Resources on Hartlepool Borough Council's website, www.hartlepool.gov.uk, alternatively contact 01429 523474.

Further Information

The Partners



Sean White
Assistant Chief Constable, Territorial
Operations, **Cleveland Police Authority**



Cath Purdy
Chief Executive, **Housing Hartlepool**



Steve Wallace
Chair, **Hartlepool Primary Care Trust**



Malcolm Walker
Programme Director, **Hartlepool New
Deal for Communities**



Judith Rasmussen
Regional Director, **Sport England**



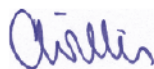
Louise Hurst
Deputy Manager, **Hartlepool
Youth Offending Services**



Julie Brooker
North East Area Planning & Corporate
Services Manager, **Environment Agency**



Lesley Monaghan
Partnership Director (Hartlepool),
Learning and Skills Council



Chris Willis
Chief Executive, **Hartlepool Primary
Care Trust**



Mike Lakinski
Business Development Manager,
Business & Enterprise North East Ltd



Alan Foster
Chief Executive, **North Tees and
Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust**



Dr Chris Fisher
Medical Director, **Tees, Esk and Wear
Valleys NHS Foundation Trust**



Stuart Drummond
Mayor, **Hartlepool Borough Council**



Sue Elliott
Acting District Manager, **Jobcentre Plus**



Elaine Lumley
Chief Executive, **National Probation
Service - Teesside**



Councillor Porley
Chairman, **Cleveland Fire Authority**

VCS Signatures



Keith Bayley
HVDA Manager, **on behalf of the
Voluntary & Community Sector**

All VCS Groups that have signed up to
the Compact will be listed on the
Compact database available through
HVDA.

Children and Young People's Code

In response to the national 'Every Child Matters' agenda Hartlepool Borough Council is developing a Participation Strategy aimed at increasing the effective involvement and participation of children and young people in shaping the Borough wide services available to them, across the statutory and non-statutory sectors.

The first stage of the Strategy includes seven visions for Young People's Participation in Hartlepool, and the Compact adopts these, as follows:

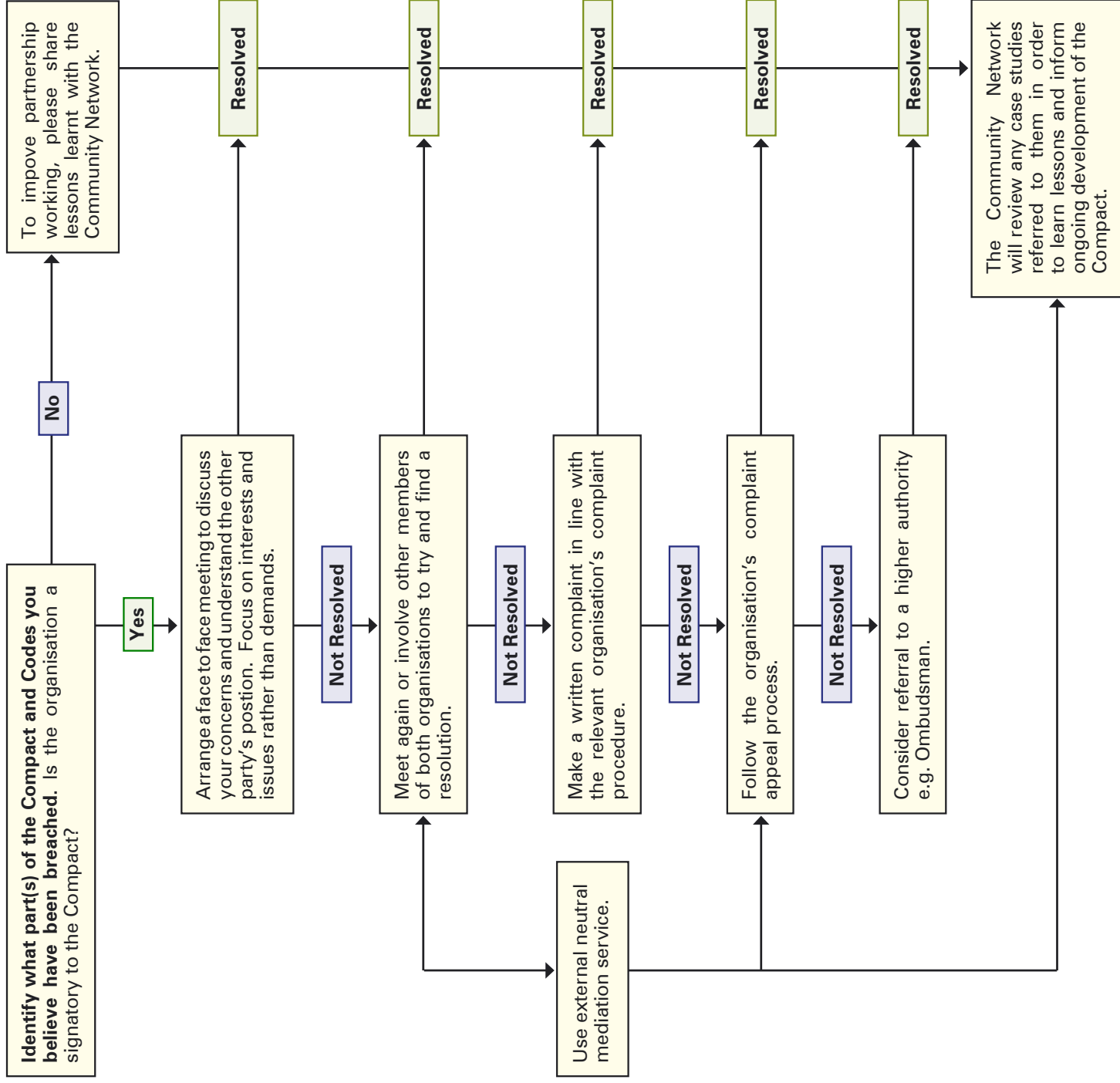
- i) All partners will ensure our staff and the children and young people that we work with receive training and support on how they can take part to make things better;
- ii) All partners will ensure that we inform and involve children and young people in the working of the organisation, including volunteering and work opportunities where appropriate;
- iii) All partners will share evidence, knowledge and skills on how we involve, support and praise children and young people;
- iv) All partners will identify what money, time and resources there is to support what we do;

- v) All partners will make sure there are different ways for our staff, and the children and young people who we work with, to be involved in participation;
- vi) All partners will take young people's views seriously about what all children and young people think is important;
- vii) All partners will explain and respect the rights and responsibilities of children and young people.

The 7 visions were developed and written by the Hartlepool Young Voices, they have endorsed the use of these within the Hartlepool Compact.



Compact & Codes of Practice - What to do when things go wrong



www.hartlepoolpartnership.co.uk

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