

GLOSSARY

of words used in Bedfordshire and Luton Compact and Codes of Good Practice

Accountability – Being held properly responsible for a project/provision of a service and having a responsibility to explain the actions taken to funders, users and any relevant regulatory bodies.

Accreditation – Obtaining official recognition/validation that the services and/or training being undertaken by an organisation meet required standards.

Advocacy – Speaking or acting in support of, or on behalf of, another person(s) in accordance with their wishes. It helps people speak out for what they want or need, and encourages them to tell others about how they feel and what is important to them.

Audit – Examining new policies, strategies, guidance and procedures introduced by an agency or organisation to assess their impact upon others and the community at large.

Best Practice – A superior method or innovative practice that contributes to the improved performance of an organisation, usually recognised as “best” by other peer organisations.

Best Value – A statutory responsibility for local authorities to achieve continuous improvement in services through combinations of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. All of an authority’s services must be reviewed by challenging how and why they are provided, comparing them with the performance of other authorities, consulting with stakeholders, and testing their competitiveness against external providers.

Campaign – To try to influence decision-makers to introduce specific policies and programmes or to try to change existing ones.

Community Organisations – Informal local community and self-help groups, which are often made up entirely of volunteers. Any paid staff are likely to be part-time. They are independent, often without regular income or funding.

Community Strategies or Plans – Strategies or plans that local authorities must prepare to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas. Their preparation requires close partnership working and continual community involvement.

Compact – A framework, which will help guide and develop relationships between the voluntary and community sector and statutory agencies. It recognises that statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector have similar roles in developing and delivering policy and services, and that statutory agencies have a complementary role in promoting voluntary and community activity in all areas of life.

Compact Development Group – The group, comprised of representatives of both the voluntary and community sector and the statutory agencies, responsible for monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the effect and contents of the Compact and its Codes of Good Practice.

Consultation – The process of seeking and listening to views on a particular subject. This includes asking for information/advice on future proposals and testing the impact of decisions already taken.

Core Costs – The costs involved in maintaining the essential operations of an organisation, such as running its office base and its central management functions.

Diversity – The varieties and differences within voluntary organisations, community groups and local communities, for example, people from different ethnic, social and economic backgrounds.

Equal Opportunities – Promoting available opportunities to all individuals; from whichever gender, race, religion or other minority grouping; and enabling them to play an active part in society, and in the activities conducted by organisations/agencies.

Local Voluntary and Community Sector Infrastructure Organisations – These are sometimes known as **Local Development Agencies**, umbrella or intermediary organisations and include Councils for Voluntary Service, Rural Community Councils and Volunteer Development Agencies. They provide a range of infrastructure functions and services, including information, advice and guidance, development support, co-ordination, representation and promotion to local voluntary organisations and community groups.

Local Strategic Partnerships – Local partnership bodies set up around the country at the initiative of Government. They seek to involve local people and agencies in setting out a vision for local neighbourhood renewal helping to improve the delivery of local services through better planning. They include representatives from public, private, business, voluntary and community sectors. They oversee the development and implementation of a Community Strategy or Plan.

Mediation – A process of intermediaries helping two parties to a disagreement/dispute to achieve a resolution of their differences and a consensus on a mutually-agreed way forward.

Monitoring and Evaluation – A process, involving both formal/informal procedures, to regularly take stock of (and report on) trends and activity within a project or service, to review progress, identify outcomes and assess the value of a project or service. This process helps an organisation decide whether it is achieving what it wants to and if it needs to do anything differently in the future.

Partnership – When organisations work together to achieve a shared and clear set of objectives. There is a clear understanding of the contribution of each organisation, which takes into account their differences, and there is equal respect for the role and experience of all partners. A successful partnership depends on sharing information and decision-making.

Performance Indicators – Measures that have been identified to assess the manner or quality of an organisation's work in performing an agreed project/programme of activities.

PQASSO – Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations – a self-assessment **Quality Standards** tool for achieving, and being able to demonstrate, certain defined standards.

Social Inclusion – An approach designed to embrace all members of the community, including disadvantaged groups.

Stakeholders – People and organisations that have an interest in, or are affected by, the delivery of a service or services.

Statutory Agencies – Organisations created through Acts of Parliament whose functions are set by the law. Local authorities, including parish and town councils, are democratically elected and must answer to the voters and central government. They have legal responsibilities for the social well-being, economic development, environment and health of the people they serve. Health, police, and fire and rescue authorities are not directly elected and answer to a Secretary of State.

Sustainability – The ability to keep delivering services. This requires secure funding in order to allow effective management and planning.

Trustees – The group of people responsible for the control and management of a charity, which includes members of a charitable association's management committee and directors of charitable companies. Trustees have specific statutory duties, set out in the Charities Act 1993.

Undertaking – An agreement, commitment or promise by either a voluntary and community organisation or a statutory agency to act in a specified manner.

Users – The people who benefit from or use a service. They may also be called customers, clients, consumers, beneficiaries or recipients.

Voluntary Organisations – These are formally-structured, independent, not-for-profit organisations managed by voluntary management committees or boards of trustees. They may have paid employees, volunteers and be registered charities and/or charitable companies. They may undertake activities, provide services, offer support and/or campaign for change.

Volunteering – The commitment of time and energy by individuals for the benefit of society, the community or the environment. Volunteering is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain; yet it is also a reciprocal relationship in which the volunteer also benefits (for example, a sense of worthwhile achievement, gaining or using skills, experience, contacts, meeting other people and friends, and involvement in the organisation).

Volunteer Development Agency – A specialist voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisation (or function) that promotes volunteering and local volunteering opportunities. The agency recruits and supports volunteers, and helps to build the capacity of other volunteer-involving organisations to recruit and manage volunteers.