

## Report to Compact Partners' Group and Compact Champions

**From:** Mark Hubbard, Compact Liaison Officer  
**Period:** 2015/16 Quarters 1 and 2 (April – September 2015)

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This summary report is for the first two quarters of the 2015/16 Compact Liaison Work Programme and progress is reported against the programme outcomes:

- 1) Improved partnership working between public and VCS sector**
- 2) Awareness of Compact is high amongst public sector and VCS partners**
- 3) Improved VCS engagement with commissioning through support and advocacy**
- 4) Compact principles promoted and integrated into commissioning practice**

### **Highlights from this period**

- Great progress on Social Value
- Compact principles embedded in VCS Grants Prospectus
- Compact Voice invitation to work across West of England

### **1) Improved partnership working between public and VCS sector**

#### **1.1 Commissioning/procurement**

Partnership works continues on commissioning/procurement in several areas. The draft Commissioning Action Plan has been updated with links to the Social Value policy and will be discussed at BCC's Strategic Leadership Team.

A 'Bid Candy'<sup>1</sup> workshop was held at Voscur's VCS Assembly (July) and was facilitated by officers from BCC's Partnership, Procurement and Commissioning team. The workshop led to recommendations:

- that bid candy experiences are fed back formally to the specific commissioning/procurement body
- that VCS organisations consider building consultancy fee into your Memorandum of Understanding.

A subsequent article in Voscur's Thrive magazine (Oct-Dec 2015) included a commitment to tackle bid candy:

"BCC will, through this procurement process and contractual arrangements, champion and drive positive behaviours to ensure fair treatment of partners and sub-contractors by prime contractors. It will ensure that, where appropriate as part of the bidding process, it fully understands the nature and basis of the relationships within the supply chain to satisfy itself as to the robustness of these relationships when assessing capability to delivery requirements."

#### **1.2 Social Value Policy**

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as 'a small respected organisation (such as a charity's) reputation is referenced for the purpose of enhancing a bid, that the lead bidder then reneges on an agreement'

A very successful Social Value Scrutiny Enquiry Day was held in April. I worked with the Chair of the Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission to support planning for the event and to ensure a VCS perspective was included. I coordinated two papers ('Voluntary and Community Sector experiences of commissioning – issues, priorities and potential solutions' and 'Procurement: Regulatory framework and potential for Bristol innovation') for inclusion in the information pack; and gave a presentation alongside three of Voscur's VCS Advocates.

Recommendations are being implemented by a Social Value Working Group, of which I am an active member. That group has produced the new draft Social Value Policy and Toolkit, which are out to consultation (12 Oct to 8 Jan).

As part of the consultation, I organised a VCS consultation event in partnership with Voscur, which was attended by 60+ VCS organisations. A collective VCS response to the consultation will be submitted.

Consultation documents can be seen here: <https://bristol.citizenspace.com/business-change/creating-social-value>

### **1.3 Voluntary Sector Grants Prospectus**

This is an important development and I am actively involved in a working group that is developing documents for full consultation. The application process is part of the consultation (which runs 16 Nov – 15 Feb) and I am pleased to report its inclusion of 16 Bristol Compact principles. This process is impressive in its co-development (by a cross-sector working group), its proportionality (different requirements for small, medium and large grants), its commitment to joined up working, and its commitment to grants. I will continue to be involved in developing the tools for implementing the prospectus in the run up to March 2017.

### **1.4 Other**

I was approached by New Local Government Network to participate, alongside Paul Hassan (Voscur's Voice and Influence Manager), in a study of the relationship between local government, the VCS and the community. This could lead to a toolkit for commissioners to support dialogue and collaborative problem-solving.

Based on the profile created by last year's Compact Award for Leadership, I was invited to speak at Essex Compact Forum (May). Unfortunately, I was unable to attend as it clashed with Voscur's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday event with councillors and policy makers.

## **2) Awareness of Compact is high amongst public sector and VCS partners**

### **2.1 Compact Week and Awards**

Our Compact Week event was intended to be about Social Value, however, due to speakers' availabilities, we held that event on 21 Oct instead.

I contributed to Compact Voice's promotion of the awards with a blog/comment piece about the significance of winning last year. <http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/blogs/compact-voice/2015/07/28/awards-are-good-you-guest-blog-mark-hubbard-compact-liaison-officer-v>

A small group of Compact Partners discussed potential nominations to this year's awards. Partners took forward the following nominations:

- Advancing Equality – Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group’s Deaf Charter
- Impact – Golden Key

The quality and scope of nominations was again very high and, unfortunately, Bristol nominations were not successful.

## **2.2 Compact Voice and the West of England**

Voscur was approached by Compact Voice to become one of three regional partners in its new delivery programme. Voscur is working with the West of England Civil Society Partnership to provide new initiatives, including:

- Briefing sessions with ‘new commissioners’ and VCS
- Commissioning Network
- Advice and support to other Compact groups

This work complements the Bristol Compact work programme and, where possible, will be combined for greater effect.

## **3) Improved VCS engagement with commissioning through support and advocacy**

### **3.1 Compact Partners’ Group**

After several discussions about the group’s purpose and focus, I worked with Compact Voice to organise a facilitated discussion in September. The group decided that its quarterly meetings would focus on specific, topical issues and that experts would be invited to inform discussions and help the group to form policy positions. The first test of this new approach will be later in the year and will focus on Social Value.

### **3.3 Advocacy**

In the period, I’ve been involved in three cases:

- Prevent duty – the rapid implementation of it into contracts presented some challenges to VSC organisations that were not prepared or supported in responding.
- Relationship between a VCS organisation and the Office of the Avon & Somerset Police Crime Commissioner – a brokered meeting helped to resolve matters, improve understanding and achieved some commitment for changes to future commissioning processes.
- Advised a VCS organisation in advocating for better communication and fairness.

## **4) Compact principles promoted and integrated into commissioning practice**

Also in this period, I’ve advised Community Support Services commissioners and Energy Advice commissioners.

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