

# Northumberland Consultation Code

The Northumberland Consultation Code builds upon the key principles contained within the Northumberland Compact. This Code is the result of work carried out by the Compact Reference group. The group is made up of public sector and voluntary & community sector organisations (VCS). The VCS members are nominated by the Northumberland VCS Consortium.

## **Both sectors will...**

- Ensure that consultation processes are inclusive
- Recognise the constraints that each sector has to work within
- Take account of the specific needs, interests and contributions of minority groups and those serving socially excluded people
- Build on the existing networks, partnerships and forums
- Use clear and simple language in all consultation information
- Give consideration to timescales

## **Public Sector undertakes to...**

- Build early consultation into plans and timetables for policy and strategy developments
- Be willing to change proposals as a result of consultation feedback
- Consider how to deal with the VCS costs in the consultation processes
- Produce consultation documents that are in plain English and accessible
- Wherever possible allow 12 weeks for responding to written consultations and a minimum of 8 weeks. Where this is not possible, organisations will need to explain why
- Analyse responses carefully and provide accurate feedback to consultees and stakeholders

## **The Voluntary & Community Sector undertakes to...**

- Provide information about, and encourage participation in, consultation exercises
- Be clear about who they represent and/or whose interests they serve
- Provide objective feedback on service and planning processes
- Ensure that service users, carers, volunteers, members and supporters are informed and involved, and where possible, consulted directly, as appropriate
- Respect the confidentiality of information obtained or held

*Although these undertakings are identified as Public Sector/VCS, depending who is doing the consulting, these undertakings may be reversed.*

This Consultation Code can be downloaded at:  
[www.northumberlandvcs.org.uk](http://www.northumberlandvcs.org.uk)