

# Have you got what it takes?

Working with the voluntary community and social  
enterprise sector (VCSE)

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### Important facts

The introduction of PCCs is an example of the shift of power from central government to the local level which will give new powers to local authorities, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.

Due to their connections to communities, the VCSE are well placed to develop and deliver approaches meeting local need and to encourage local people to tackle crime. They have a crucial role in supporting aims related to crime and community safety.

Safer Future Communities, which we are funding until March 2013, has developed VCSE networks in each police force area in England and Wales. Networks will support frontline VCSE organisations to build effective working relationships with community safety partnerships, PCCs and other agencies that have an effect on crime and community safety. They will also make sure that local policing plans recognise the sector's knowledge of what communities need.

The Compact is the agreement between the Government and the VCSE outlining a way of working that improves their relationship so it creates an advantage for both. 97% of local authorities in England have signed up to a local Compact based on what is right for their local area and which promotes better partnerships.

### Background

The VCSE includes local community and voluntary groups, registered charities, foundations, trusts, social enterprises, and co-operatives (who apply business principles to make the most profit possible for their cause). They may also be referred to as 'third sector' or 'civil society' organisations.

The sector provides a range of services to different groups of service users. VCSE organisations share characteristics in the aims they pursue and they are independent of the Government. They also reinvest any profit they make to continue to support their aims.

### VCSE partners support delivering aims related to crime and community safety

VCSE organisations play an essential role in supporting aims related to tackling crime and community safety as providers of services and advocates for vulnerable groups such as offenders and victims. They are also increasingly involved in assessing local need to help develop services.

Many VCSE organisations are already involved in local community safety partnership (CSP) arrangements. They mainly support a specific aim or, through a local VCSE umbrella organisation (whose role it is to support, represent and promote the interests of local VCSE organisations), co-ordinate the views of the whole sector in the area. A recent survey revealed that 48% of VCSE organisations are already working with their CSPs.

### Support for the sector to prepare for PCCs

The Safer Future Communities project is supporting VCSE organisations to prepare for the arrival of PCCs. The project is managed by a partnership led by Clinks (a national organisation supporting VCSE groups working with offenders).

A local VCSE umbrella organisation has been appointed in each police force area to set up a Safer Future Communities local network. These networks have been working with PCC transition boards to help develop a clear commissioning (contracting) process for services and highlight examples of successful approaches to meet local priorities.

## More information

### How might the VCSE support the PCC?

There are VCSE organisations which cover the full range of crime issues including antisocial behaviour, re-offending, substance misuse, violence against women and girls, youth crime, and crime in local neighbourhoods. They are in a position to give a unique view on what communities need and provide services to meet these.

### Should the PCC sign up to local Compact arrangements?

That is up to each PCC. The Compact outlines a way of working between the Government and the VCSE that improves their relationship so it creates an advantage for both. It can be used as a partnership tool and to improve funding relationships.

### What role might the Safer Future Communities local networks play in future partnership arrangements?

That is up to each PCC. However, the network leads will be able to provide one voice for the sector covering all crime and community safety priorities. Our funding for the Safer Future Communities project ends in March 2013, so it will be up to local areas to decide whether they want to contribute to keeping them going if they feel that the networks have a vital role to play.

### How might the PCC find out about what new approaches are being used?

Partnerships will be providing evidence (including outcomes) of current approaches which are operating in their area and Safer Future Communities local networks will also be using examples of successful approaches involving the sector. This may include projects funded by the Community Action Against Crime: Innovation Fund which has awarded grants worth £10 million until March 2013. These projects are designed to show the potential of the sector in playing its part in fighting crime alongside the police and other partners.

The VCSE provides a range of different services to meet specific needs including support for victims, rehabilitation of offenders, early intervention for young people at risk of offending, and giving local communities the power to tackle crime. As representatives of VCSE organisations are often members of the communities they serve, they can offer excellent insight at the most local of levels. They are in an ideal position to provide the voice of experience and help set local community safety priorities.

By developing the Safer Future Communities local networks, the sector will be well prepared to respond to any opportunities to provide services and develop partnerships that may arise in the future.

### Useful links

#### Safer Future Communities

<http://www.clinks.org/services/sfc>

This includes details of the local network leads for each police force area.

#### Community Action Against Crime: Innovation Fund

[www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/partnerships/innovation-fund/](http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/partnerships/innovation-fund/)

This provides a list of projects funded.

#### Compact

<http://www.compactvoice.org.uk/about-compact>

This gives details of the Compact and how it can be used by partners.