

Devolution or Divergence? - Third Sector Policy across the UK since 2000

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Third Sector Research Centre

Theory – Challenging concepts
and discourses

Policy – Understanding
development and implementation

UK Devolution - Diversity

Practice – History, Culture,
Organisation

Policy – Organisation, Politics,
Policies

Increasing divergence???

UK Policy Context

Historical epochs

- Nineteenth century – Provider
 - Early Twentieth century –
Complementary (Parallel bars)
 - Late Twentieth century –
Supplementary (Extension
ladders)
 - Twenty-first century -
Partnership
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Post-war Policy Regimes

- Phase 1 – Incremental institution building
- Phase 2 – Wider incremental consolidation (Wolfenden)
- Phase 3 – Hyperactive mainstreaming (Deakin)

Policy Development

- Deakin Commission – New relationship between the sector and the state.
- Blair (1998) - “The work of voluntary and community organisations is central to the Government’s mission to make this the Giving Age.”
- Brown (2004) - “transformation of the third sector to rival the market and the state with a quiet revolution in how voluntary action and charitable work serves the community.”

England

Voluntary Services Unit 
Active Communities Unit 
Active Communities Directorate 

Office of the Third Sector

England - Relationships

Charities Act 2006

Compact (Concordat)

- Commission for Compact:
promote effective partnership
- Codes of Practice
- Commissioning and
Procurement

England – Support

FutureBuilders – Social

Investment Business

Change-Up – CapacityBuilders

CommunityBuilders

Recession Action Plan

??Social Investment Bank

Scotland

Separate umbrellas – SCVO,
ACOSVO, SSEC

Kemp Commission

Third Sector Division

Local authority funding role

Scotland

Charities and Trustees Investment
Act 2005

Office of the Scottish Charity
Regulator (OSCR)

Scottish Compact

Futurebuilders Scotland

Wales

Some separate agencies – WCVA
(but ACEVO E&W)

Charity Commission – E&W

Welsh Assembly Government –
reduced powers but duty to promote
voluntary organisations

Wales

Compact for Wales – Voluntary
Sector Scheme

Third Sector Unit

Third Sector Partnership Council

Delivery through service
departments

Northern Ireland

Separate agencies – NICVA, CO3,
SEN

EU Peace and Reconciliation
Funding

Voluntary and Community Unit –
1993

Social Economy Unit (DETI)

Northern Ireland

Direct Rule (2002-07)

N Ireland Compact – *Building Real
Partnership*

Charities Act 2008

Charity Commission for NI

Devolution and Divergence within Nations

Policies implemented locally – LAs
and PCTs (except in N Ireland)

Differential impact on organisations

- National networking
- Insiders and outsiders?

Conclusions - Devolution

Third Sector policy now devolved

- Separate Units
- Local legislation and regulation
- Distinct Programmes

Separate sector infrastructure

Conclusions – Divergence?

Policies and practices converge

- Similar Units
- Legislation and regulation converging
- Same goals for support and action plans

But – politics of devolution still