

Dacorum Compact

A compact for Dacorum Communities



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Foreword

The Dacorum Compact: *Working Together* is a written agreement built on shared values, understanding and mutual respect between the statutory sector and the voluntary and community sector (VCS), for the benefit of Dacorum communities.

Working Together aims to develop partnership working and sets the framework for the relationship between the statutory sector and the VCS. It outlines key principles based on the National Compact to improve working relationships and lead to better outcomes for people in Dacorum.

Although Dacorum has had a Compact for many years, this refresh intends to capture the long history of partnership working in Dacorum across the two sectors and to reflect the current context. For example changes to the relationship due to the commissioning environment.

It is hoped that by having clear responsibilities for both sectors, *Working Together* will encourage a Compact way of working which will continue to develop and evolve, and that Dacorum communities will flourish.



Andrew Williams

Leader of Dacorum Borough Council



What is this Compact?

Working Together follows the principles of the national compact but also reflects local circumstances. It sets a structure for both the VCS and statutory sectors to engage with each other and highlights good examples of compact working in Dacorum. By refreshing the Dacorum Compact in this way, we hope to inspire new partners to sign up and that there will be greater support for *Working Together*.

The Dacorum Compact is a way of working which will support those using it to carry out their roles. Moreover, it is a platform which the two sectors can build on to form a powerful relationship which goes far beyond one document.

By making clear statements about the commitments of both sectors and expected standards for organisations to work to, *Working Together* is designed to improve the relationship for mutual advantage, underpinning principles that we already share.

By refreshing the Dacorum Compact we intend to:

- Raise mutual awareness, respect and honesty between the sectors
- Build trusting relationships and foster a spirit of collaboration
- Show that the aims and ambitions we have in common are greater than the perceived differences that might have caused barriers in the past
- Create transformation and success
- Work together to improve local communities by making them stronger and more resilient

Dacorum Compact Commitments

Working Together commits both the statutory sector and the VCS to achieving the following five principles:

- A strong, diverse and independent civil society
- Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services
- Responsive and high-quality programmes and services
- Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services
- An equal and fair society

What a Compact is not

- Legally binding
- A Service Level Agreement
- A guarantee of funding
- A contract
- A replacement for existing partnership working agreement
- Committing your voluntary organisation to extra work by signing up

What it could mean for you

- Clearer roles and responsibilities of the different sectors
- Shared definitions
- Recognising shared goals
- Easier communication and getting to know people in different sectors
- Finding out more about how other sectors work

Benefits of refreshing the Dacorum Compact

- Shared understanding
- Build trusting relationships
- Changing perceptions
- Transformation and success
- Improved local communities

Compact Commitments

The following commitments, which are grouped under headlines taken from the National Compact, show how compact principles can be put into practice through the daily operations of both the statutory organisations and the VCS.

1. A strong, diverse and independent civil society

The Dacorum Compact is about recognising the strength and diversity across all sectors and identifying the unique and independent nature of the VCS which enables it to work closely with, and respond to, the needs of local communities.

Statutory organisations aim to...	VCS organisations aim to...
Recognise that volunteers make an important contribution to Dacorum both socially and economically.	Raise awareness of the impact that volunteers and voluntary action have on individuals, the VCS and local communities.
Recognise, promote and uphold good volunteer management.	Promote and maintain good volunteer management including measurement of volunteer activity.
Consider a range of ways to resource the VCS, including grants, contracts, loan finance and use of premises.	Explore new ways of working and diversify funding streams.
Be clear with residents about funding given to the VCS and who it aims to help.	Ensure the needs of the community are met by providing services to targeted groups with funding that has been made available.
Be skilful in allocating resources and support to enable the VCS to be strong. Use evidenced based decision making for making informed funding decisions.	Share information to develop evidence bases and use this information to target services.
Use consultation to improve transparency regarding decisions that affect funding.	Support statutory sector with working towards achieving their priorities.
Respect the independence of the VCS.	Ensure independence of the VCS is upheld.

Shared aims:

- Promote volunteer opportunities publically.
- Be transparent - use plain English in publications.
- Share information and data, policies and best practice.
- Agree not to speak badly of one another in public and be clear on what type of campaigning is acceptable.
- Understand on both sides that cuts affect everyone; try to protect services where possible.
- Use resources effectively and explore collaboration of premises, facilities and leases.

2. Effective and transparent design and development of policies, programmes and public services

Working Together on policy development is mutually beneficial for both the statutory sector and the VCS. Statutory organisations recognise that the VCS has expertise in many areas because they often work directly with people and groups, enabling policies, programmes and services to be developed that better meet the needs of local people.

Statutory organisations aim to...	VCS organisations aim to...
Use a range of consultation methods to be as accessible as possible to smaller and harder to reach groups.	Engage in consultation and provide feedback to statutory partners when collecting the views of local residents.
Allow a reasonable time for consultation (usually between 8 - 12 weeks) and be responsive to community voices.	Share expertise, knowledge and skills gained from being able to engage closely with service users. Help to identify need in the community.
Recognise that the VCS have a role to play in developing and shaping services and policy through co-production.	Be active in developing and shaping service and ensuring service users are involved in the co-production process.
Be considerate of the social value also gained when developing services.	Measure social value and feedback to statutory sector.
Aim to exercise proportionality when setting expectations for service specifications and reporting.	Ensure that the organisations embed processes for collecting and reporting information.
Monitoring and evaluation expectations will be proportionate to the amount of funding on offer. All indicators for measuring performance will be agreed in advance.	Ensure the organisation is able to monitor and evaluate the indicators agreed. Be up to date on the easiest way to evidence outcomes and share best practice in monitoring.
Representative role - Councillors championing local initiatives and wider organisational goals.	

Shared aims:

- Find ways to consult with vulnerable groups.
- Sharing information between sectors about support offered to improve signposting.
- Set realistic consultation timeframes.

3. Responsive and high quality programmes and services

Working Together encourages statutory organisations and the VCS to deliver policies and programmes that are built around communities and individuals.

Statutory organisations aim to...	VCS organisations aim to...
Encourage feedback through multiple channels on the effectiveness of the service or activity in delivering objectives.	Facilitate feedback from clients and beneficiaries to help improve service delivery.
Representative and responsive Councillors who can negotiate a speedy response.	Representation on panel to oversee decisions and feedback on results.
Commission on a level playing field and consider what is most beneficial to the community. Use evidence based decision making to target resources.	Proactively engage in the commissioning process providing information and advice about communities and individuals.
Commit to funding of three years or more where possible and consider whether shorter contracts are fair to the funding being allocated.	Diversify funding streams to allow for flexibility in payments of contracts.
Recognise different types of quality standards.	Work towards achieving appropriate quality standards.
Upskill staff and Councillors on the role of the VCS.	Provide appropriate training for Trustees.

Shared aims:

- Strong governance practice.

4. Clear arrangements for managing changes to programmes and services

By *Working Together* statutory organisations and the VCS are able to be more flexible to changes that may need to be made to programmes and services.

Statutory organisations aim to...	VCS organisations aim to...
Carry out community impact assessments to manage changes for programmes, services and funding.	Highlight the impact on the community of potential changes to programmes, services and funding.
Give VCS early notice of changes and agree a minimum notice period for ending funding arrangements. Have an open door policy to talk about funding concerns.	Give early notice of changes in service delivery e.g. financially transparent communication and prepare for changes in funding e.g. exit plans.
Provide support to overcome problems, and resource or support with efficiency and smart working.	Look at efficiencies and smart working where possible. Sharing resources where appropriate.

Shared aims:

- Share information to jointly identify trends affecting the community.
- Design a resilience policy and undertake scenario planning.

5. An equal and fair society

Equality and fairness are core values for both statutory organisations and the VCS. Statutory organisations recognise that the VCS work closely with specific groups who may be under represented or marginalised in society. *Working Together* means that the needs of these groups can be better met by both sectors.

Statutory organisations aim to...	VCS organisations aim to...
Work with the VCS to take practical steps towards eliminating discrimination.	Share information with the statutory sector about how their work promotes equality and tackles discrimination.
Understand demographics and be able to engage with different groups.	Diversifying services to meet the needs of people from different demographics.
Provide opportunities for community involvement.	Provide opportunities for outreach activities.
Carry out community impact assessments.	Provide information about the diversity of community groups.
Promote equality and ensure vulnerable and under-represented groups are recognised.	Support vulnerable and under-represented groups.

Shared aims:

- Be skilful and share learning when working with vulnerable groups.
- Be aware of different approaches and be adaptable.
- Ensure policies and procedures reflect the needs of the community.
- Break down barriers.
- Work towards becoming an 'Investor in diversity'.

How the Dacorum Compact will come alive

- Launch the refreshed Dacorum Compact at the Dacorum Strategic Network partnership event in early 2016.
- Take part in Compact Week - an annual event run by Compact Voice.
- Encourage nominations for The Compact Awards which celebrate and showcase outstanding cross-sector partnership working across England.
- Review the Compact regularly.

The Dacorum Compact is working for us

Some examples of the success of *Working Together*:

- Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) Volunteer Management group set up, and training provided to staff on effective volunteer management.
- DBC taking part in the National Commissioning Academy.
- DBC Commissioning - involving the VCS in the process - consultation, workshops, embedding social value.
- Prompt payment of VCS grants by DBC.
- DBC Community Grants now more up to date and transparent with an online application system.
- DBC involved in the *Synergy Dacorum* project, a partnership of 20 local VCS advice and support organisations working together to provide integrated services for local people.
- VCS involved in training new members.
- VCS invited to be part of the evidence-based decision-making sub-group at DBC.
- The Forum development, a shared service hub involving DBC, Police, Library and VCS organisations is underway.
- DBC's participation in the *Synergy Dacorum* project, a partnership of 20 local VCS advice and support organisations working together to provide integrated services for local people.

Who to contact if things go wrong?

The Dacorum Compact offers clear guidelines around funding, consultation and partnership working and if there are instances where it is not being complied with a diplomatic approach is recommended. For example challenging bad practice by asking whether a decision or process is compact compliant can lead to a resolution. If further assistance is needed to help find a way forward with an issue, Community Action Dacorum can be contacted.

This document will next be reviewed by January 2019



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