



# Creating a Future Service

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What is a 'GOOD' service??

Who will tell me??

**Why should I Listen??**



**Are we a service?  
Are we a business?**

**We are currently a  
politically sensitive  
business in the service  
industry!**



# Lets take Dacorum Borough Council as an example?

Population of Dacorum Borough is 144,847

The Borough had 1,243 deaths in 2013

4 Cemeteries totalling 37 Acres

A new cemetery at master planning stage 25 acres

Member of Cremation Board West Herts  
Crematorium

**Our customers are telling us that they are happy  
but we only carried out 309 full earth and  
cremated remains burials in 2013!**

**So what happened to the other  
900ish?**



# What do we offer

We looked at our four main areas of service delivery

- Burial
- Cremation
- Memorialisation
- Bereavement Care



# Who are our customers?

## Who are our service users

- Funeral Directors
- Memorial Masons
- The Bereaved
- Clergy

## What about

- Faith Groups
- Bereavement Care Organisations
- Hospitals
- Care Homes
- Other Authorities
- Private Sector
- Management Services
- Your local Community



## What have our customers said

- Service is good in general
- Compared well with some of our competitors
- Compared poorly with some of our competitors
- Increased access to service
- Communication not good
- Extend burial times
- Allow mounding of graves in Muslim section
- Allow larger memorials
- Provide lined graves
- Limited range of services
- Improve use of Chapels



# How do we know if our service is good?

- Engage with our customers
- What do we do with that feed back
- Identify the customers who are not using our services and ask why?
- Use that data to adapt and encourage them in
- Advertise our services
- Self monitor (Performance Management)
- Benchmark (think about national and industry standards)
- Report your findings as part of future planning





# Business Plan or Service Strategy

## Do we need a business plan or business strategy

- Business Plan

In its simplest form, a **business plan** is a guide—a roadmap for your **business** that outlines goals and details how you **plan** to achieve those goals.

Doesn't have to be a long, formal document, simple achievable goals with set milestones is often easier to embed.

- Service Strategy

I would prefer to call this a Customer Service Strategy.

*Fortune* magazine defines service strategy as “knowing exactly which customers you want to serve and figuring out what kind of service will loosen their purse strings.”



# How do we get from GOOD to GREAT?

- Review our administration process
- Review our business plan
- Review our customer service strategy
- Improve our offer
- Improve access for user groups
- Improve our communication processes
- Market our services
- Increase our range of services
- Increase our income
- Better use of chapels

This is a long term project which all the team must buy into for it to work



## Developing A High Performance Bereavement Service

Delivering change what are the challenges

- How do we implement these improvements?
- How can we fund the improvements?
- How could embed continual improvement into the organisation?
- What does the future of our service look like?





## What is the future for DBC Bereavement Services



- Develop areas for new burial.
- Develop more user friendly processes.
- Rebrand and market our new improved services.
- Distribute information to a wider group.
- Encourage the Cremated Remains customer back to Dacorum.
- Green Flag Awards.
- Develop Relationship with NHS Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group.
- Be active part of the national drive to continually improve burial and cremation services in the UK.



## Issues for the future

- Lack of Burial Space
- Poor digital management system
- Poor maps of cemeteries and grave
- Customer Relationship Management
- Behavioural Change
- Political resistance to development
- The 'weakest link' ??
- Investment options
- Funeral Poverty – Public Health Graves
- Trading and charging – can we increase our income
- Reuse of graves
- Projected increase in death rate
- Get away from our 'Always done it like that' culture



## What does GOOD look like in five years time?

**No one knows!!!!!!!!!!!!**

### What will DBC be doing?

- Continually develop our customer relationship
- Better accessibility and communication
- Develop our services to reflect the needs of the bereaved

### Things to keep and eye on

- Funeral Poverty
- Projected increase in death rate are you ready??
- Pet funerals
- Trading and charging
- Grave Re use
- Lack of Burial space



Can we transform our bereavement service from good to great?

We are committed to delivering a quality Bereavement Care Service.

We will look after our customers, before some else does it for us!



[www.dacorum.gov.uk](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk)





# A thinking point for the future

Funeral Poverty  
Should the state pay for funerals??

**I leave you with a simple calculation**

- There were 1243 deaths registered in DBC in 2013 (*ONS*)
- There are just over 50,000 households in DBC (*DBC*)
- The average cost of a funeral is £3,551.00 (*Royal London – Are we losing the plot*)
- Total cost to supply funerals just over £4.4 million
- The affect on the council tax to fund this would be,
- £88.28 per year
- £7.36 per month
- £0.24 per day





# Thank You

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