Rethinking Council Tax Registration

Andy Marsh – Service Redesign and Improvement Lead Officer
Why does Council Tax registration matter?

- High volume
- First contact
- Income stream
• First contact
• Change point
• High volume
• Income stream
Simplifying the process
Searches for Dacorum ‘moving in’

We direct to ‘I am moving website’

‘I am moving’ tell Dacorum (usually)

We post out a Council Tax ‘enquiry’ form

Customer completes and posts back form

We request follow up information

Single occupiers sent another form

Council Tax bill sent out

Before…
Searches for Dacorum ‘moving in’

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We post out a Council Tax ‘enquiry’ form

Customer completes and posts back form

We request follow up information

Single occupiers sent another form

Council Tax bill sent out

Changes…
Searches for Dacorum ‘moving in’ → Customer completes form → Council Tax bill sent out
Prototyping approach

- Testing before back office integration
Understanding our users
Our users

Adam
New owner-occupier

Becky
New (Council) tenant

Charlie
Landlord or agent telling us about changes

Denise
Registering an empty property
Making sense of our forms

47%
46%
3%
5%

Registration form
Owner occupiers

If you own your property and live in it.

Register for Council Tax - owner occupier

Tenants

If you rent your property from a private landlord, a housing association, or the council.

Register for Council Tax - tenant

Empty properties

If you own the property but nobody currently lives in it.

Register for Council Tax - empty property
Clarifying the language

- Assume no prior knowledge!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of liable parties: (new occupiers)</td>
<td>DD MM YY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single occupier? If so when from:</td>
<td>DD MM YY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New address:</td>
<td>DD MM YY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date moved into the property:</td>
<td>DD MM YY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date when you became liable:</td>
<td>DD MM YY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continual improvement

- Monitoring and fine tuning
- Better data collection
- Supporting digital future contact
Takeaway

• It might be necessary to design a system that captures useful information first
• ‘Non-expertise’ in-house is a really useful asset for understanding customer journeys
• It might not be right first time, so monitoring and adapting is a crucial part of the process
The wider customer journey
Our users

Adam
Just moved into the area

Becky
New Council tenant

• Easy to complete
• Quick response
• Settle into the area

• Correct information
• Efficient process
• Connect into community (build resilience)
Wider context...

- Change in life circumstances
- Finding a new place to live
- Move house
- Arrange new utilities, tax, benefits, etc.
- Establish new life patterns
- Opportunity to nudge behaviour
Initial offer
Thank you for registering. You will receive your Council Tax bill in the post within 14 days, or we will contact you if we have any further questions. Once you receive your bill and have your account number, you can visit our website again to set up payments by Direct Debit.

Just moved home?

Please fill in the form below if you would like to receive regular email updates about what's happening in your area.

You can also choose to receive a *free introductory gym or swim pass* from Sportspace for everyone who has just moved into the property (terms, conditions and eligibility checks apply, and you will be emailed details of the offer).

We have pulled together some of the key information about what you need to do now that you've moved. You will be automatically redirected if you fill in the form below, or you can go straight to the [Welcome to Dacorum page](#).

**First name(s)**

**Surname**
## Gym, swim and information

### Offer | Takeup since going live
--- | ---
Subscription to Council newsletter – May 2016 | 36% (590)
Free one-day sports pass at local sports trust – June 2016 | 29% (452)

- Cost to Dacorum £0
Leisure pass signups by IMD decile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User decile %</th>
<th>Dacorum decile %</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Female | Male | Unknown

0% 51% 49%
Welcome to Dacorum

Application form → Gym, swim and newsletter → Welcome information
Welcome to Dacorum

If you’ve just moved home, we know that this is a busy time, but there are a few things that you need to do now. To get you off to a good start, we’ve pulled together some of the key information and links for moving in.

If you’ve moved into a newly built property you may have to wait until some services have been updated to recognise the address.

You may find it useful to bookmark this page until you have finished signing up for all services. Alternatively, you can always access it via www.dacorum.gov.uk/welcome.
Parish, Town, and County Council services

- Register for schools, bus passes, libraries, blue badges, and any social services support with Hertfordshire County Council
- Discover your parish or town council and what they have to offer (outside Hemel Hempstead)

Useful local information

- Find out what activities, facilities and more are on offer in the area
- Discover local transport options
- Find out who represents you in Dacorum, in Hertfordshire, and the UK Parliament
Other services to update or register for

- Find local health services and register for a GP and dentist
- Change the address on your driving licence and update your vehicle log book (V5C)
- Tell central government about your address change
- Set up a Royal Mail redirect from your old address (there is a charge for this service)
- You can sign up to use the I am moving website to update your information for several organisations at the same time
- You also need to tell your bank(s), insurance provider(s), utility company/companies, and any other company that you have an existing account or contract with
- Arrange your gas, electricity, water, phone line and Internet provider. You can easily find these on price comparison websites, although these may not always offer the best price.
- Update your TV licence so that you are covered at your new address
- Sign up for local neighbourhood watch information
What we hope to gain

• Better established residents
• Good first impression
• Making our website the first choice for residents
The other 8%
Our users

• Easy to complete
• Quick response

Charlie
Landlord or agent telling us about changes

Denise
Registering an empty property

• Correct information
• Efficient process
• Build connection to ‘Help to Rent scheme’
Wider context...

- New property bought for renovation
- Fill in empty property form
- Begin works
- Tenant moves out/new property bought
- Fill in empty property form
- Search for new tenant
- Tenant replaced
- Fill in landlord/agent notification form
• Nine landlord enquiries about our help to rent scheme (1/3 of enquiries since the new system went live)

Council Tax form completed

Thank you for registering. You, or the person responsible for paying Council Tax, should receive a bill in the post in the next 14 days, or we will be in contact if we have any questions.

Once you (or the person responsible) receive your bill and have your account number, you can visit our website again to set up payments by Direct Debit.

Private landlord?

We can help you to find tenants for your property. Find out more about our Help to Rent scheme.
Ctax registration
home page

Owner occupier form

Tenant form

Empty property form

Landlord notification form

Owner occupier/tenant completion page including new resident form for newsletter and sports pass

Empty/landlord completion page and link to Help to Rent scheme

‘Welcome to Dacorum’ information page

Newsletter subscription

Introductory sports pass

Help to Rent enquiry
What’s next

• Principle of change points
• Improving the information about what’s available
• Going direct to residents through business cards
Who wants what?!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Council Tax Registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt</td>
<td>Moving home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider cause/situation</td>
<td>Change in life/family circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who wants what?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>User</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider situation</td>
<td>Adjust to new situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Settle into new area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suitable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stable transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>through positive behaviours and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appropriate housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connection to preventative services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Connection to community activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promotion of commercial services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Exercise – Who wants what?!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>User</th>
<th>You</th>
<th>Partners</th>
</tr>
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<td>Prompt</td>
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What we learnt
Lessons

- Create systems that capture useful information
- Don’t overcomplicate things
- Understand the wider picture from the customer’s perspective, fit their schedule if possible
- Find connections between services
Wider applications

• What are the gateways to your organisation?
• Where are the change points that you could influence users?
• Looking at the wider customer journey, how can you connect your own and partner services better? What would a holistic approach to the customer journey be?
Any questions?