

Initial outline of proposed digital by default (transactional) service standard

The Melton digital by default standard will define what is considered high quality for a new or redesigned digital transactional service. It will be used across the Council to ensure that all digital services are of a consistently high standard.

The guidance and tools supporting the standard will help service owners to design trusted, cost-effective services that are embraced by users and meet their needs first time. Melton BC Digital Service will ensure there is a common understanding across the Council of what outcomes are required to meet the standard. This understanding must be shared by everyone involved in the development and life of a new or redesigned digital services.

The standard will be accompanied by:

- a programme of guidance and toolkits that help service teams to achieve outcomes which meet the standard throughout the development and life of the service. This guidance will build and expand upon previous Government Digital Service best practice, including:
 - Government Digital Service Design Principles
 - Performance Framework
 - visual and interaction design toolkits
 - content style guides
- a reporting tool that makes it simple to demonstrate the performance of new and redesigned services against the standard, and provides service owners with an easy-to-use dashboard to monitor the progress of a service's redesign against the capabilities required to pass the standard
- a governance structure detailing what level of assessment against the performance outcomes is required at different stages of a redesign project and who will conduct that assessment, according to the size and/or impact of the service being redesigned
- a programme of communications that explains the standard, provides training and support and encourages effective knowledge sharing between departments

The following description of the standard represents an early draft of what it may contain. Any numbers contained within it are indicative and subject to change. This will be improved over the next few months as Government Digital Service adds more detailed definition and supporting evidence behind the standard's requirements in terms of performance outcomes and capabilities. Government Digital Service will consult with departments on the details of the standard.

The standard

Judgements about the quality of a redesigned service should ultimately be made by its users. The digital standard will set out metrics for monitoring and evaluating how well user needs are being met by redesigned services, and a capability checklist to guide service owners and designers in building the transactions to meet those needs. All new and redesigned services must perform well across a range of areas to meet this standard.

Government Digital Service will consult with departments on the details of the digital standard over the next 6 months.

Service uptake

- redesigned transactional services must follow a trajectory of digital channel uptake, set at a speed according to the service's expected user demographics and in line with service-specific user research and feedback. This will be used for forecasting and setting targets; whilst these will vary service by service, general best practice suggests that an outcome of around 80% of transactions completed digitally without assistance within 5 years of launch could be achievable
- progress against the uptake trajectory will be monitored by service owners continuously, and by Government Digital Service at intervals set according to the size and/or impact of the service

Cost per transaction

- redesigned transactional services must demonstrate they are following a downward trajectory for the average cost per completed transaction. This will be defined in line with the Quarterly Data Summary (QDS) guidance, ie by dividing the total number of transactions by the full cost of the transactional service
- performance will be monitored against achieving a fixed baseline cost per transaction (which Government Digital Service will determine) within 5 years of launch. Government Digital Service will analyse QDS data returns for Q3 and Q4 2012/13 to set the baseline cost and trajectory
- progress against the cost per transaction trajectory will be monitored at least quarterly, in line with the QDS reporting cycle

Transaction success rate

- redesigned transactional services must achieve at least a baseline level of transaction success, defined as users successfully fulfilling their needs by using the service
- Government Digital Service will work with web analytics experts to develop a detailed definition of service success to be included in the standard, and set the baseline level of performance according to industry-recognised best practice

User satisfaction

- redesigned transactional services must be designed to meet identified user needs, and consistently achieve a satisfaction rate of at least 70%. This score will be based on a common survey sampling methodology and set of questions
- Government Digital Service will work with user testing experts and departments to build an established methodology for redesigned transactions, ensuring that all services have customer satisfaction data which is automatically collected and easily comparable between different services and over time

Operational capability

Redesigned transactional services should be:

- managed by a suitably skilled and empowered Service Manager
- designed to work seamlessly through digital and non-digital stages of a process
- measuring and monitoring performance against key indicators from the point of launch
- improved at least monthly based on qualitative feedback from users and quantitative measures from analytics

Design

Redesigned transactional services will be:

- simple and intuitive enough for users to succeed first time, unaided
- designed for inclusion, so all who could use it do use it
- make use of common design and user experience tools, so once people have done something once, they will be able to do it elsewhere
- redesigned using feedback received from a private or public alpha phase, and a public beta phase

Development and technology

Redesigned transactional services should be:

- developed using agile, iterative, user-centric digital development methodologies, using open source code by default
- make use of common cross-government technology platforms
- make use of and meet open standards
- offer high-quality APIs, enabling reliable reuse by third parties and integration with other government services
- capable of working on all common browsers and a wide range of web-enabled devices, including mobile phones
- impartially, robustly and regularly tested throughout the design and lifetime of the service

Legality, security and resilience

Transactional services will be redesigned to:

- be robustly protective of the security of sensitive user information
- maintain the privacy and security of all personal information
- be resilient, to ensure continuity of service to users and departments

The guidance

Government Digital Service will actively support transactional service owners in helping them to commission, design, build and iteratively improve services that meet and maintain the digital by default standard.

Government Digital Service has already produced a number of best practice guidance documents to support departments looking to improve the quality of their transactional service and digital offering, including the Design Principles and Performance Framework. Building on and incorporating these products, Government Digital Service will develop a 'handbook' to

support the digital by default standard, with practical steps and best practice examples to bring the steps redesigned services will take to life. This will include information to cover all core capability requirements set out in the standard.

Government Digital Service will work closely with departments on the development of the guidance and ensure it remains a working document. It will seek to iteratively improve this as further examples of good practice come to light, and encourage service owners to inform future versions.

To accompany the written guidance, Government Digital Service will set up a series of training and tutorial opportunities for service owners. These will be based around a core curriculum that covers the capabilities as set out in the standard, and focused on areas which the service owners themselves raise as being particularly valuable in terms of targeted support and expert advice.

Government Digital Service will bring in government and external experts from areas such as web analytics, data visualisation and user testing to support this curriculum, and give service owners the networks, opportunities and forums to share knowledge between themselves.

Where departments have nominated specific large transactional services for redesign, Government Digital Service will seek to provide targeted project support. The terms and level of involvement will be decided on a case-by-case basis, according to the level and type of transformation in scope.

How services will be assessed

For all new and redesigned services, progress should be continually measured against performance outcomes by service owners, using the reporting tool built by Government Digital Service. Government Digital Service will monitor at intervals according to the size of the service.

All services will undergo a formal review ahead of launch. After launch, they will continue to be continually monitored by service owners and by Government Digital Service at regular intervals to ensure that the standard is being maintained and services are iteratively improved.