



College of
Policing

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Digital Service Standards

Providing the principles of building a good digital service

Version 1.0

Effective Date: 1st April 2017

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Contents

Contents	2
About the Digital Standard	3
The Digital Standards	4
1. Understand user needs.....	5
2. Do ongoing user research.....	6
3. Have a multidisciplinary team	7
4. Use agile methods	8
5. Iterate and improve frequently	9
6. Evaluate tools and systems	10
7. Obtain system security and data privacy approval	11
8. Manage the ongoing service	12
9. Test the end-to-end service	13
10. Make a plan for being offline	14
11. Make sure users succeed first time	15
12. Encourage everyone to use the digital service	16
13. Collect performance data	17
14. Identify performance indicators	18
15. Test with the College executive.....	19

About the Digital Standard

The College of Policing Digital Strategy seeks to put the user first in the design and delivery of high-quality products and services that are digital by default.

We anticipate those who engage with the college to do so regularly via digital channels, and we, therefore, recognise the importance of providing an effective two-way digital exchange of knowledge and information.

To meet this requirement, the College follows the recommendations of the Government Digital Service (GDS) to ensure we are 'digital by default' in the design, development and delivery of our products and services.

The College of Policing Digital Service Standard is a set of 15 criteria to enable the effective creation and ongoing provision of a good digital service. The Digital Standard has been developed over time, directly influenced by the way GDS builds online services at GOV.UK, but also contextualised to follow the function and purpose of the College.

Each point in the Standard looks at different aspects of a digital service. These criteria are the building blocks for making a user-focused service that is safe and able to evolve over time, always based on user feedback.

It is important that College services meet this standard so that our members, stakeholders and the public can expect the same high quality and ease of use, no matter which service they are accessing.

The standard is also important in leading change within the College. The roles required to deliver a successful service may exist across the business, but the skills and capabilities need to be embedded into an integrated team. Therefore each team member needs to be accountable for their defined area of work.

All Digital Services must meet the standard outlined in this document and should be regularly assessed against the criteria within.

- *Mark Osborne, Chief Digital Officer*

The Digital Standards

The following criteria must be met to create and run a good digital service:

1. Understand user needs
2. Do ongoing user research
3. Have a multidisciplinary team
4. Use agile methods
5. Iterate & improve frequently
6. Evaluate tools and systems
7. Obtain system security and data privacy approval
8. Manage the ongoing service
9. Test the end-to-end service
10. Make A Plan for Being Offline
11. Make Sure Users Succeed First Time
12. Encourage Everyone to Use the Digital Service
13. Collect Performance Data
14. Identify Performance Indicators
15. Test with the College Executive

1. Understand user needs

Understand user needs. Research to develop a deep knowledge of who the service users are and what that means for the design of the service.

How does understanding user needs improve your service?

You need to understand the needs of your users so that you can build a service that:

- Helps users do the thing they want to do at the first attempt unaided
- Is built on your users' real needs, not your assumptions

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Explain who your users are and what you've done to understand their needs
- Give examples of user stories, personas or profiles for your service – i.e. identify people who need to use the service and what they use it for
- Show research that identifies parts of the task which users find difficult - you'll have to explain how you've changed the service to make these parts of the task easier for users and how you tested and researched to confirm this
- Talk about the research you did and how you'll use the results to continuously improve your service, ie who you did research with, how often, when and where - include users who need assisted digital support
- Provide evidence of user stories for your service - ie identify someone who needs to use the service and what they use it for - include assisted digital users
- Show the user needs you've found for your service, including for users who need assisted digital support
- Show how the design of the service has changed over time because of what you found in user research
- Explain any changes to user needs you've identified as a result of researching with users
- Explain how you used analytics and performance data in your research

2. Do ongoing user research

Put a plan in place for ongoing user research and usability testing to continuously seek feedback from users to improve the service.

How does ongoing user research improve your service?

Doing ongoing user research means you can:

- Check your service is helping users to do the tasks they need to do
- Keep improving the service based on users' needs

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- How often you'll carry out research and usability tests and how you'll use the results to improve the design of your service
- A user research plan for your private beta and a further plan for carrying out user research on the live service
- How you've done user research with people who have accessibility needs from the time you started designing the service
- How you're using analytics data in your user research plan for the service
- Any problems you've found through testing and how you solved them
- Any problems you haven't been able to solve and how you'll handle them during the live release

3. Have a multidisciplinary team

Put in place a sustainable multidisciplinary team that can design, build and operate the service, led by a suitably skilled and senior service manager with decision-making responsibility.

How does having a multidisciplinary team improve your service?

A multidisciplinary team helps you to:

- Build your service
- Keep improving it based on user needs
- Make decisions quickly

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Setup your delivery team - depending on the service you will need to have the following roles in place: service manager, product owner, business owner, delivery manager, technical architect or infrastructure lead, designer, user researcher, developer, content designer, performance analyst, front-end developer, supplier manager, security manager, test manager and database administrator.
- Show that your product owner is empowered to make decisions working with the business owner and stakeholders
- Show you have a service manager with the knowledge and power to make day-to-day decisions to improve the service
- Explain how the separation of key roles in the team means that nobody is performing multiple roles
- Explain your plan to transfer knowledge and skills from contractors to permanent staff
- Show that there's a person on your team who's responsible for user research and usability tests
- Show you have a team that can keep improving the service after it goes live
- Show the team fully understands the service after it has gone live

4. Use agile methods

Build your service using the agile, iterative and user-centred methods.

How does using agile methods improve your service?

Using agile methods helps you to build services that:

- Meet the needs of your users
- Are easy and convenient for people to use
- You can change easily, e.g. if government policy or technology policy changes
- You can keep improving, eg based on user feedback
- Cost less and are more accountable

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Explain how you're working in an agile way, using agile tools and techniques, and how you'll continue to do so when the service is live
- Explain how you and your team have reviewed and iterated the ways you work to fix problems
- Explain how your team is using agile tools and techniques to communicate with each other
- Give an example of how the team has responded to user research and usability testing
- Show that your governance is agile, based on clear and measurable goals, and has a clear focus on managing change and risk in real time
- The design options you explored for your prototype and the reasons you discarded some
- How the design of the service has changed over time because of what you found in user research
- The design options you're considering for your assisted digital support
- Any problems that you found in research which you'll have to solve in design, and how you plan to solve them

5. Iterate and improve frequently

Build a service that can be iterated and improved on a frequent basis and make sure that you have the capacity, resources and technical flexibility to do so.

How does iteration improve your service?

You need to build a service which you can iterate and keep improving so that you can:

- Easily respond to changes and issues which affect the service
- Make sure your service keeps meeting user needs

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Explain what you've built in that phase and why you built it
- Describe the lifecycle of a user story from user research to production
- Show you understand how your service is built to meet user needs
- Explain your process for identifying and prioritising insights from user research
- Show you can move user stories quickly and smoothly between user research and production
- Show there's minimal risk associated with the technology you chose
- Prove you have the ability to deploy software frequently with minimal disruption to users
- Show you're analysing user research and using it to improve your service
- Show you're solving any technical problems you've found
- How you're practising zero downtime deployments in a way that doesn't stop users using the service

6. Evaluate tools and systems

Evaluate what tools and systems will be used to build, host, operate and measure the service, and how to procure them.

How does evaluating tools and systems improve your service?

Evaluating the tools and systems you use to build your service helps you to:

- Check any risks or constraints associated with them
- Avoid contracts that lock you in and stop you improving your service
- Build a sustainable system which you can easily manage after your service goes live

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Demonstrate how you'll monitor the status of your service
- The support arrangements you have in place, in normal hours and out of hours
- Explain how you're continuing to get value for money from the systems you chose and bought
- Explain or demonstrate how you'll check if the service is healthy
- Explain the support arrangements that you've set up for live
- Explain any decisions you've outsourced and why you chose to do this
- Minimise the total cost of ownership, including reducing the chance of getting locked in to long contracts for specific tools and providers
- Keep up to date with the latest technology developments so you can choose the best tools for your service

7. Obtain system security and data privacy approval

Evaluate what user data and information the digital service will be providing or storing and address the security level, legal responsibilities, privacy issues and risks associated with the service.

How does obtaining security accreditation improve your service?

Users won't use your service unless you can guarantee:

- It's secure
- They can access their information in the service when they need to

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Describe your team's approach to security and risk management
- Describe your ongoing interactions with the business and information risk teams, eg SIRO, IAO and National Accreditor
- Describe any outstanding legal concerns, eg data protection or data sharing
- Explain how you're keeping your understanding of the threats to your service up to date, and explain how the threats have changed service design
- Explain how you're keeping up with changes in PSNP accreditation, Home Office Risk Team and GDS, and explain how impact is measured against the live service
- Explain how security accreditation is maintained and managed, e.g conducting ITHC and remediation, attending regular security meetings and ongoing risk management

8. Manage the ongoing service

Provide high-quality services today and in the future to meet service expectations and deliver a good customer service.

How does managing the ongoing service meet expectations?

Service Management best practice helps you build services that:

- Deliver a good customer service
- Manage triage and diagnosis of issues and defects
- Reduce the impact of incidents and problems
- Meet performance demands of the user
- Deal with the ability to improve service delivery
- Achieve increased availability

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Describe your teams approach to service management core areas (incident, problem, change and release)
- Explain and demonstrate ITIL best practice in action
- Describe the plan to reduce non-digital support
- Explain approach dealing with poor performance and availability
- Key staff have completed formal training in service management to effectively run the process

9. Test the end-to-end service

Be able to test the end-to-end service in an environment identical to that of the live version, including on all common browsers and devices, and using dummy accounts and a representative sample of users.

How does end-to-end testing improve your service?

Testing the end-to-end service allows you to find problems and check that the service will work for the number of people who want to use it. It means you're more likely to build something that works for your users.

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Have an effective deployment environment for testing
- Know the test data that exists in your pre-production environments
- Know that service outcomes are met through functional and UAT testing
- Are designing and testing your service to work with the devices and browsers your users use
- Are testing your service in an environment that's as similar to live as possible
- Know that your service can keep working when the number of expected users try to use it
- Understand the systems you need and the testing environments for non-digital parts of the service
- Involve end users as part of your beta testing

10. Make a plan for being offline

Make a plan for the event of the digital service being taken temporarily offline.

How does planning for 'being offline' improve your service?

Users may expect that an online service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

You need to have a plan for what to do if your service goes offline so that you know how users will be affected and how to get it back online.

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- How users would be affected if your service was unavailable for any length of time and how that's changed since launch
- How you're making sure the technology and platforms you've selected still meet your availability requirements
- Your data recovery strategy and how often you're testing it
- The most likely ways the service could go offline and how you plan to stop them
- Your strategy for dealing with outages, including who's responsible and the decisions they can make

11. Make sure users succeed first time

Create a service which is simple to use and intuitive enough that users succeed the first time.

How does first-time success improve your service?

All users should be able to complete the task your service provides the first time they try unaided, as quickly and easily as possible, this includes users who need assisted digital support.

If users find it difficult to complete the task the first time, they may avoid using your service or contact the College to get help.

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Show your service is accessible
- Show how most people can get through the service end-to-end without assistance
- Where applicable, explain how you've tested your assisted digital support model (the way you plan to help people who lack the skills, confidence or internet access to complete the service on their own)
- Explain how you tested whether the name of your service makes sense to your users
- Show you've used analytics and user research to reduce dropout rates for your digital service
- Explain how you made design and content decisions based on user research, usability testing and analytics

12. Encourage everyone to use the digital service

Encourage all users to use the digital service (with assisted digital support if required) alongside an appropriate plan to phase out non-digital channels and services.

How does encouraging everyone to use the digital offering improve your service?

Encouraging people to use your digital service allows you to:

- Save money by reducing the number of people using non-digital channels, e.g. customer contact centre
- Help your users to develop their digital skills through self-service support
- Give better assisted digital support to those who can't use digital services on their own

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Explain how you're planning to promote digital take-up
- How you've designed the digital service in a way that gives it clear advantages over other channels
- Your plan for moving users to the digital service including yearly targets for increasing digital take-up
- Your plan to phase out non-digital channels as digital take-up increases

13. Collect performance data

Use tools for analysis that collect performance data. Use this data to analyse the success of the service and to translate this into features and tasks for the next phase of development.

How does the collection of performance data improve your service?

Collecting performance data means you can continuously improve your service by:

- Learning its strengths and weaknesses
- Using the data to support improvements you make

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Explain how you decided the data you need to capture, where you need to capture it from and how you'll capture it based on the projected size and shape of the service
- Show you have an ongoing roadmap for performance analysis and someone in the team responsible for identifying actionable data insights
- Show you've used qualitative and quantitative data to help improve your understanding of user needs and identify areas for improvement
- Explain how you've chosen suitable data analysis tools
- Show you've addressed information security and privacy issues appropriately
- Explain how you've mapped user journeys through the service and tracked them to identify completions and areas of poor performance

14. Identify performance indicators

Identify performance indicators for the service and establish a benchmark for each metric and make a plan to enable improvements.

How does the identification of performance indicators improve your service?

Setting performance indicators allow you to improve your service continuously by:

- Learning its strengths and weaknesses
- Using data to support improvements you make

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- Metrics that you'll measure when you start, and how you'll use them to improve your service
- Where you're getting the data for your metrics
- How you've set up your analytics package to collect user journey data
- How you've made sure all stakeholders are actively involved in promoting or supporting digital delivery of the new service
- Your plan to lower cost per transaction or equivalent, for non-transactional user journeys
- Your plan to improve user satisfaction
- Your plan to increase digital take-up and reduce reliance on assisted digital

15. Test with the College executive

Test the service from beginning to end with the SRO responsible for it.

How does the service become authorised as fit for purpose?

A senior responsible owner or member of the College Executive is accountable for everything produced by their departments, so you need to show them your service before it goes live.

How can this be assessed and evidenced?

- To pass the live assessment, you need to show evidence that the person responsible for the service has tested the full service from beginning to end, including any legacy or offline parts.