**Really Useful Day**

**Model User Journey**

**Complain about your council**

**LGSL / IL = 353/0**

Really Useful Days are **free, practical training days for local authorities**, aimed at helping councils improve their digital services.

They involve a mixture of workshops, inspiring talks (often from other councils who talk about their experiences) and the chance for councils to network with each other

They are run regularly across the UK (see a list of future events at [www.localdirect.gov.uk/events/calendar/](http://www.localdirect.gov.uk/events/calendar/)) on different themes, including “Social Media for councils” and “Improving user journeys”.

At the “Improving user journeys” event, local authorities work together in groups, looking at different user journeys. They critique 3 examples of the journey and come up with their own ‘model’ version.

**This is a collection of all the praise, criticism and model journeys**

**groups have come up with for the user journey: “Complain about your council”.**

**Council pages looked at =**

Caerphilly, Chesterfield, Cumbria, Gosport, Islington, Lancashire, Mole Valley, Newport, Norfolk, North Devon, North Yorkshire, Reading, Wrexham

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **London on 2 March 2012**

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

* Choice of how to be contacted
* Friendly and brief intro text
* Acknowledge that a complaint is just the first step in putting things right
* User details are optional
* Single large text area

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

* Very long process – some sites had 9 steps and took 40 minutes
* Off-putting in complexity
* Choice of compliment or complaint
* Unhelpful and inappropriate imagery
* Lots of equal opps monitoring, which is optional (good) but up front (bad)
* Abandons you in an admin area

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

Review & submit

About you

**Your complaint**

Tell us your complaint:

Who are you complaining to?

Council Elected councillor

Do you know which service?

▼

Not sure

How do you want us to contact you?

▼

No response needed

Email

Phone

Letter

**Complain about your council**

**Your complaint**

* Your reference for this complaint is xxxxxx.
* We will contact you within the next xx days to update you on our progress with your complaint.

This model journey was worked on in **Leeds on 28 September 2012**

(Groups looked at Lancashire, North Yorks and Wrexham websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Lancashire county council**

* Actual complaints screen is good – “how can we resolve it?” text box is good.

**North Yorks**

* Steps are quite clear
* All info in one place
* Succinct text layout
* Contacts info at the bottom

**Wrexham**

* Actual form itself is good

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Lancashire county council**

* A million options - too much
* Poor terminology, lack of clarity, jargon titles

**North Yorks**

* Too much text
* Step 1 of complaints procedure – confusing title, no separator between wording and action to actually submit complaint
* Too many steps and screens
* Too many redundant screens
* Language very formal + legislative

**Wrexham**

* Not clear on how to actually get to the complaints page.
* Doesn’t have a mandatory preferred contact method
* Option to talk to the officer = bizarre

**General**

* DON’T WANT: Not particularly easy to complain
* WANT: Find form straight away – ideally straight from google
* WANT: If complaint is not answered – have contact details available.
* WANT OPTION: Should be an option to ‘Be kept updated’
* DON’T WANT: Not clear on how to actually get to complaint page

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

Contact details, preferred contact method, add picture

Complaint

……........................................................

…………………………………………

…………………………………………



Submit

**Related content**

Procedures

FAQS

Contact details

Complaint

Action

**Notes**No hoops

Simple language

Clear form

Easy to complain

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **Crewe on 26 October 2012**

(Groups looked at Caerphilly, Newport and Wrexham websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Caerphilly**

* Straight to complaints form
* What happen next and complaints box = nice and simple

**Newport**

* Call to action button is prominent
* Form tells you it has a maximum of 5 pages.
* Friendly
* Summary, thanks and ref number at the end.

**Wrexham**

* Short introduction to confirm you’re in the right place, and set expectations
* There’s a separate way available if you want to make enquiries / give feedback.
* Large boxes
* Nice short form
* After you submit form, you get confirmation and tracking, and service level agreement

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Caerphilly**

* Might be better to have a bit of explanatory text
* 6 pages long – quite a long form
* Should pre-populate form as a complaint – you shouldn’t have to explain again (alter header?).
* Might be good to slightly restructure form and have a “get it off your chest” box.
* Mandatory fields – are they necessary?
* Validation on form – do I need all that information?

**Newport**

* Explanatory text is a good idea, but maybe not so much
* Should send you straight to a complaint form if that’s what you searched for, not a compliment or complaint form
* Mandatory fields for lots of the questions - do you need this?
* There’s a file size limit.

**Wrexham**

* Page 1 of the journey has too much jargon and too many options

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

**Make a complaint**

**What is your complaint?**

**How do you want to be contacted?**

Phone

Email

Name

Email

Phone

**Summary**

Opportunity to edit form

**Submit**

**Email response**

* Acknowledgement of complaint
* Will reply in 5 days
* Reference number

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **Bury St Edmunds on 9 May 2013**

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Chesterfield**

* Not text heavy
* Alternative contact details
* Simple form
* If it went to the right page from GOV.UK, it would be a good journey

**Gosport**

* Link from GOV.UK works – get to right place quickly
* A to Z is useful
* It’s not cluttered

**Islington**

* Goes straight to complaints form
* Option of complimenting as well
* At the beginning, it’s a short, easy journey
* Submission is summarised before you submit it
* You’re told what will happen next

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Chesterfield**

* Pictures not relevant
* Link on GOV.UK takes you to the wrong page
* Search didn’t work
* No use of the keyword ‘complaint’
* Top sites / links not relevant
* Heading ‘Report it’ doesn’t invite complaint

**Gosport**

* Only offers telephone number – no digital option
* Text heavy
* Menu too long (scroll fatigue)
* Form is called ‘Formal complaints form’ – too official / not inviting
* Form is too long
* Contact is not generic

**Islington**

* Data monitoring part of form is too long – the fact that it’s optional is not clear. Why have it?
* The fact you have to write to the council to chase a previously submitted complaint is bad – it’s not digital, and the list of addresses to write to is confusing

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

Google search / GOV.UK

Compliments, comments, complaints form

Name / address

Details of complaint and uploads

Monitoring needs to be optional and needs to show why it is required

What happens next

**Complain about your council**

Confirmation email

This model journey was worked on in **Exeter on 10 June 2013**

(Groups looked at Chesterfield, Gosport and Islington websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

* Clear identity
* Good, clear use of headings and sub headings
* An online form
* A summary with option to edit
* ‘What next’ information
* Option to save a copy
* A response to your complaint

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

* Mandating email
* Using “click here”, instead of meaningful link text
* Shift from form to text
* Taking you to the wrong landing page from GOV.UK
* No obvious use of the word “complain”, to signpost people
* Poor design
* Too many words
* “Read a leaflet” / official procedure
* “Phone first”
* No clear navigation and links are buried
* Too many clicks
* Too council-focussed
* “Equality information” too long
* No “cancel” button
* No summary
* Not integrated into wider “contact us” box

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

**1**

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Make a complaint**

Friendly, short, active introduction (eg, we value feedback)

**Form (well-designed)**

* Contact details
* Preferred method of communication (email, receive a copy)
* Details of complaint

Submit

Preview

Cancel

**2**

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you**

You just submitted complaint reference 123456

**What happens now?**

To page 4 (below)

* Stages
* If complained about a councillor

Save this page

Print this page

**3**

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Preview of your complaint**

**Completed form**

-----------------------------------------------------------------------

-----------------------------------------------------------------------

Edit

Submit

Cancel

**4**

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Track progress**

Reference 123456 (link to preview of form)

☹ 😐 ☺

Received In progress Completed

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **Llandrindod Wells on 30 July 2013**

(Groups looked at Chesterfield, Gosport and Islington websites)

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

**1**

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Make a complaint**

Intro text (keep it short)

1. Your name

**Additional info**

Procedure

Etc

2. Your address

3. Telephone

4. Email

5. Preferred contact method

Email Post Phone

6. Which service?

If social services, flag up phone number for at risk complaints

7. Your enquiry

8. Previous contact

**2**

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Save

Print

**Thank you**

Your ref number is xxxxx

**What happens next?**

* We will respond within x working days
* Your complaint is important
* For more info…complaints procedure

**3**

Email with ref number, timescales and contact for further enquiries

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **Nottingham on 20 September 2013**

(Groups looked at Chesterfield, Gosport and Islington websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Chesterfield - Worst**

* Short form – not too many clicks

**Islington - Better**

* Findable!

**Gosport - Best**

* Findable
* Short
* Focussed on complaints

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Chesterfield - Worst**

* There is an “Anything else” page
* Difficult to find the page – have to click on “anything else”
* FOI link??

**Islington - Better**

* “Click here” = not good
* Very long
* No progress bar
* Poor confirmation

**Gosport - Best**

* Long intro
* Link hidden / buried below the fold
* Forced through procedure / policy

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

**How we got there**

* A to Z
* Home page link
* Search promoted

**Complaints page**

**Form**

* Relevant questions
* Short/ concise
* Confirmation / auto acknowledgment
* What happens next (we’ll answer within x days
* Reference number and how to chase it up

Short, relevant introduction

**Complaints form**

Complaints procedure

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **Newbury on 1 October 2013**

(Groups looked at Chesterfield, Gosport and Islington websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Gosport**

* States that it doesn’t need to be an official complaint

**Mole Valley**

* Goes straight to complaints policy

**North Devon**

* Direct from GOV.UK to correct page
* Form is first on list but is just called ‘online form’ (doesn’t state what for!)
* Form is clear but could be condensed

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Gosport**

* Difficult to find the right form – link hidden in text at bottom of page
* When you click on complaints form link, it doesn’t take you to a form – you go to another page of text
* Telling users all the different stages of complaint is unnecessary and too complicated
* Too many questions on the form – would put off all but very serious complainants

**Mole Valley**

* Takes you to a copy of the complaints policy, with a complaints form sandwiched in the middle
* Has to be printed off to complete
* User has to read through the policy to find which correct Head of Dept they need to send form to
* No option to email

**North Devon**

* Form is first on list but is just called ‘online form’ (doesn’t state what for!)
* Form is clear but could be condensed
* Lots of text to read re complaining
* Has to be a named response – can’t be anonymous

**A mock up of a good customer journey:**

Council’s address / phone / email

**Complain / comment / compliment**

Timescales……. Link to policy

Your details

Complaint / comment / compliment

What would you like us to do?

**Submit**

Acknowledgement

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **East Devon in the morning of 23 October 2013**

(Groups looked at Chesterfield, Gosport and Islington websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Islington**

* Good colour
* Uncluttered
* Simple options
* Simple language
* 1 click and you’re there
* Saves a copy
* Sets out timescale and tells customer what happens next

**Chesterfield**

* Most popular links on left
* Report it, request it, pay it buttons

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Islington**

* Too much monitoring information required

**Chesterfield**

* Wrong link
* Search didn’t work
* No need for picture - clutter
* No need for departmental tabs on top
* 4 clicks in, still not at required page
* ‘Anything else’ button
* 6 clicks in, still not there
* Enquiry area not for customer to determine

**Gosport**

* Very busy page
* Complaints procedure too far down
* Too many forms

**A mock up of a good customer journey**

(Green boxes represent internal concerns / considerations, pink boxes represent user concerns / questions)

**Page 1**

**East Devon council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On current EDDC page:

* The right link is too far down the page.
* Too wordy – could be a list

**Compliment, comment, complaint**

**Your details**

* Name
* Email address
* Address

Compulsory fields

Service…

Type…

Response…

Details of complaint

(unlimited space)

Previous contact (limit 900 words)

**Page 2**

Could use a bit of guidance such as what information has already been submitted

**Your council**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It is mainly for our benefit that the complaint is sorted into department

Possible multiple complaints – how does that fit into the system?

We want to know details of who complainant has contacted and when

Could have drop down for departments

If I click on a link before pressing submit, will I lose all my info?

We may be dealing with it but have not informed complainant

**Page 3**

Summary and option to edit and print

**Page 4**

Case number is enormous!! Can’t it be shorter?

What happens next?

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **East Devon in the morning of 23 October 2013**

(Groups looked at Chesterfield, Gosport and Islington websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Islington**

* Straight to the complaints form
* Only some fields are compulsory
* Drop down menu helps you find right department
* Sets expectations – eg tells you when they will contact you
* Option to skip monitoring information form
* Summary, so you can check for mistakes
* Print function

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Chesterfield**

* Link takes you to wrong page
* Couldn’t find right page using search – link wasn’t on the homepage either (except under ‘anything else’!)
* You need to go through 6 pages before you reach the complaints form

**Gosport**

* Unclear where you should go
* Bad English
* Pg 2 is too wordy and the link should be at the top.
* Pg 3 some fields should be compulsory. And only really needs one field in which to write a complaint.

**A mock up of a good customer journey**

(Green boxes represent internal concerns / considerations, pink boxes represent user concerns / questions)

We don’t progressively update the customer

Who owns the case? It’s split between 3 complaint reps – Planning, Environmental Health, Private Sector Housing Building Control

One link on left hand side of home page

Simple clear form with drop down menu

Once submitted, set expectations

Email response to include text they sent

We don’t manage customers’ expectations

Should we collect equalities data?

**Complain about your council**

This model journey was worked on in **Manchester on 20 November 2013**

(Groups looked at Chesterfield, Gosport and Islington websites)

**The Good – what local authority sites should be trying to include**

**Chesterfield**

* Internal search easy to find
* Indicates what’s mandatory
* Some categorisation of the feedback type
* Does offer some feedback if an email is left

**Islington**

* Straight to the form
* Tries to stop people using the form who should be using a different form
* Good that the form lets you review and change your details
* Apart from equal opps monitoring, good easy-to-use form
* What happens next section is good

**Gosport**

* Straight to the right page
* Reasonably short customer journey

**The Bad – the pitfalls local authority sites should try to avoid**

**Chesterfield**

* Landed on wrong page
* Link from GOV.UK is wrong +internal search doesn’t work
* No explicit complaints link on home page – best guess
* Still not using language people expect – doesn’t say “complain” – says “contact us, online enquiry”
* Form title wrong
* Doesn’t close loop – doesn’t tell the person what happens next

**Islington**

* No option to skip the monitoring – wrong order in form
* Previous complaints section is confusing – asking for info the council should know
* No online option

**Gosport**

* Too much text
* Call to action at bottom of page
* Not a strong link - just text. Not accessible either
* Not making it easy
* Shouldn’t be putting key content into PDFs
* Form – too long & complicated and raises expectations too high
* Asks for info that council should already know
* Too many forms – potentially for going to the wrong one
* Should push the online version rather than other channels – more expensive

**A mock up of a good customer journey**

**Make a complaint, comment or compliment**

One paragraph to say what the form should be used for – link to high volume issues (eg missed bin)

Make a complaint…button

Link to online form

Link to process

Other ways to make a complaint, comment …

* Form should be short and in plain English
* Reassure about confidentiality
* Opportunity to review & then submit
* Opportunity to add an email to get a copy sent to you
* What happens next info
* Trackable ref no.