Discovery service self-assessment and panel assessment template

Context

Service assessments form part of our governance processes. They act as an assurance, rather than a gateway.

We are not specifically assessing against the Government Service Standard as it is not designed for projects in a Discovery phase.

Discovery figures out if and why we should build a product.

We're looking for a team to have found out:

- Is there a problem?
- Is it valuable to solve?
- Is it possible to solve?
- is it urgent?
- Is it pervasive?
- Can users solve it themselves?
- Has someone solved it already?

We're looking to see the team has tested their riskiest assumptions about the problems through research.

Assessment process

We are utilising a combination of team self-assessment and panel assessment.

Self-assessment

The team will self-assess against six criteria and present this to the panel.

The team should take some time to consider the questions within each section and provide their own score and written assessment.

Keep your assessment to no more than 50 words per section.

Please complete this prior to the service assessment and send it to the panel beforehand.

Panel assessment

The panel's role is to probe and offer feedback on the work completed so far and recommendations arising. Like the self-assessment, the panel will frame their observations around the following:

- Something the team did well
  - An activity that really brought to life the challenge facing users or an output that enabled the business to properly understand the problem space - that "lightbulb" moment
- Possible gaps
  - With the benefit of hindsight, something that may need more understanding or you would have looked at in further depth.
- Reflections/recommendations
  - The key thing you've found and what should (or indeed, shouldn't) happen next

Assessors may wish to lead on the specific criteria. For example:

- Framing initial problem
- Engaging stakeholders
- Identify types of user
- Identify key service challenges
- Identify key recommendations and proposals
- Working in an agile way

Discovery name:

Discovery Team:

Names and roles:

- Layo Aromalayan (User Researcher)
- Lana Videnova (Technical Analyst)
- Lloyd Homer (Delivery Manager)

Assessment panel:

Name and roles:

Date of assessment:

Assessment panel outcome:

Assessment panel recommendations:

Assessment panel observations:

Please provide links to any Service Blueprints and Customer journey maps:

Service blueprint: https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_kuvn9dc=/

What was the initial problem you were asked to look into?

Context

The Corporate Service Unit (CSU) run a Helpline and Customer Contact Center for the FSA for both internal and external customers. The service does not current have a tool to support their phone calls and email correspondence and ways of working.

Size of problem

"The FSA does not centrally record all incoming and outgoing correspondence and contact with members of the public, therefore, the volúmes provided are indicative but not comprehensive and there is some data that is not available for inclusion.

On average, the Helpline team in England handle circa. 1,000 telephone calls per month / 11k per annum.

During 2018, the FSA's general enquiries helpline handled 2,592 emails and 10,234 phone calls from members of the public. Additionally, FSA Private Office officials managed 252 items of correspondence, including items sent by members of the public to Ministers, the FSA Chair, FSA Chief Executive or other, replying to 86.7% within target."

In 2019, the number of phone calls received into the Helpline team was 10,866 and to date 2,155.

Discovery question/hypothesis

We will conduct a Discovery for this service to determine whether there is evidence for introducing a tool (such as a CRM) to add significant enhancements to the customers of the service.

Team observations

Was the initial question/hypothesis correct?

Notbinary were engaged in order to determine whether the introduction of new, modern technology would provide enhancements to the way the Helpline service is delivered and came about as a result of the initial findings / feedback on the initiatives already being looked at by FSA. Our observations support the hypothesis that was out forward.

Possible gaps/alternatives

One possible approach, but not one we recommend, could be to replace the Avaya telephony system and continue using K2, extending usage to other specialist support teams at FSA through the development of additional case screens and user permissions.

This approach would provide the core telephony capabilities not provided by the current Avaya telephony system, however, it would require time and financial investment to develop K2. For the following reasons this is viewed as a short term solution at best;

- Lack of unified user interface for the Helpline team. Helpline team will continue to straddle multiple systems and enquiry management lifecycle is disjointed
- Manual effort is required to ensure enquiry information is recorded and enquiries resolved successfully
- Collaboration between Helpline and specialist support teams is sub-optimum
- There is duplication of effort relating to the logging of enquiry information (the same information exists in Outlook, K2 and Wisdom)
- Service channels are disparate (i.e. there is no multi-channel blending)
- MI and reporting will continue to be limited in terms of the data available and the ability for FSA to use this to proactively manage the Helpline service

Reflections/recommendations

Customers have always wanted a friendly, efficient and reliable service but as technology advances, their expectations are continually raised. Convenience and efficiency are more important than ever and they don’t just want friendly; they want to feel like the service has been personalised for them.

Customers are more willing than ever before to self serve but when they need to speak to somebody, customers want to contact organisations on any device, on a channel of their choosing and expect that to receive information or have their issues resolved quickly. These ever changing expectations should be considered as part of any Helpline transformation.

Align stakeholders around the definition of the problem and recommendations

Demonstrate the team were able to engage the key stakeholders (internal and external, if appropriate) about the nature of the problem being explored and resulting recommendations at the end of the Discovery.

Team score: Met/Partially met/Did not meet

Team observations

Something the team did well

The team carried out weekly show and tell sessions to engage stakeholders from the teams directly or indirectly involved by virtue of the information laid out in the scope of work. This included Helpline team (England), Approvals team, FCT, NFCU, Transactions team, WATOK, Private Office, Communications team as well as BST Northern Ireland & BST Wales. This provided us with the opportunity to understand not only the core Helpline team and their processes but also a good proportion of those teams who interact with the Helpline team in order to investigate and resolve queries, as well understanding from their perspective what is working well / not so well, creating a detailed view of the end to end process.

Possible gaps

The problem statement is focussed primarily on the Helpline team England, however, workshops were set up with a number of supporting teams (already mentioned) to provide a broader perspective and context. Any future changes should also take into account the requirements, views and constraints of other specialist support teams such as the Policy teams, to ensure that any potential solutions applied to the core helpline team can be extended to all requisite teams within that ecosystem.

Reflections/recommendations

As mentioned, the agreed scope saw the team focus on the Helpline team England, however, we were asked to consider in our analysis the possible extension of potential solutions to specialist support teams as well as Helpline teams in Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland. There are many teams within FSA who are handling enquiries from members of the public, Local Authorities, and consumers each with some common challenges, therefore, any future solutions should seek strategic alignment across these teams in order to achieve a coherent contact strategy, provide consistency in ways of working, centralise data and

Identify all of the service users and their experience of the current service (where one exists).

The team should have a good understanding of user needs, understand what users are trying to do when they engage with the current service.

Team score: Met/Partially met/Did not meet

Team observations

Something the team did well

The broad range of teams engaged during this Discovery has helped build a rich picture of the user needs for those providing the Helpline service across all elements of the agreed scope. In addition, we have been able to identify pain points and opportunities specific to the Helpline team including business processes, technology and data.

Possible gaps

The team consulted with stakeholders on who the service users were and how best to engage them. The team engaged with 6 specialist teams, the Helpline team, Transactions team based in York and also consulted with FSA Wales and FSA NI to consider the impact that this Discovery might have on them. The primary focus was on FSA England only.

The aim was to also have an in-person call listen-in session with the Helpline team in order to understand how customers were making their enquiries as this was the most cost efficient way to hear the voice of the customer. Due to COVID-19 this session did not take place. In the future, the Helpline may benefit from engaging this user group in order to understand the impact that internal communication delays are having on them.

Something the team has learnt

Having engaged 6 specialist teams, both the wins and the pain points they experienced with the Helpline team were reasonably similar.

Specialist teams are responding when they can but this is not always within a suitable time frame that works for the Helpline or the customer

Specialist teams have highlighted that the Helpline would benefit from giving the enquiry more thought as it is felt that they do not always need to refer it

Some members of the Helpline team are more digitally reluctant to change or learn new technologies and this needs to be considered when rolling out any new tools or features

All teams have the technology to work from home while the Helpline team must be office based due to the current telephony system being used which requires them to be office based

The Helpline team are used to using different tools to get an enquiry resolved. An enquiry may come in via phone and then the Helpline would need to send emails, they may need to check the How-To guide in order to resolve an enquiry or a handwritten note with details on how to respond.

Reflections/recommendations

For each team a select few participants were engaged so many points of feedback were anecdotal and metrics provided during interviews were a rough guide from memory and experience. Where possible, proper statistics from databases have been incorporated. Based on the anecdotal evidence, this Discovery could benefit from further qualitative validation by engaging a greater number of participants.

Identify the key service challenges and opportunities for better meeting user needs

For example: what are the principle elements that need solving, what could improve the user experience, efficiencies, customer satisfaction improvements, cost-benefit to change

Team score: Met/Partially met/Did not meet

Team observations

Something the team did well

During interviews and workshops the team developed an understanding of the ways in which various teams interact with the Helpline and all specialist support teams we spoke with were engaged, open and forthcoming on the challenges and wins within their area as well as those relating to their interactions with the Helpline team.

At present, specialist support teams are doing their best to respond to enquiries when they arrive and many expressed that they spend very little time dealing with Helpline enquiries as volumes received directly are quite low (with the exception of NFCU who stated that most of their enquiries are for other teams). The Helpline are also working hard to resolve enquiries as they come in and when they struggle to address an enquiry, some make note of the resolution and make sure they can handle another similar enquiry should it come in.

Additionally, the Helpline are very keen on improving their performance and enhancing the customer experience for those who get in touch via phone or email. The Helpline team are aware that there is more robust technology that would help them and they are open to new technologies and practices that would see them create a better service offering.

Possible gaps

One of the key challenges faced is the lack of a centralised view of enquiries. At present, Helpline staff are answering phone calls and emails interchangeably and are manually copying enquiry information from MS Outlook into K2. Collaboration with specialist support teams is not optimised with the Helpline team emailing the requisite team separately - sometimes the wrong team - before waiting and/or chasing for a response before replying to the customer. Different channels are being used with no holistic view of an enquiry's status or whether it has gone to the correct specialist team. This has led to the Helpline chasing up on responses that have already been solved or teams forwarding on enquiries that are not for them, while at other times, teams are simply not responding to an enquiry as quickly as they might. These all contribute to extended response times. The Helpline team expressed that the 20 day SLA is not always adhered to, however, with limitations of systems and MI, it is not possible to quantify this.

The use of Power BI has improved some elements of reporting, such as high level enquiry types, but the team would benefit from more comprehensive MI & reporting capabilities. Some examples of common reporting metrics not currently available include:

- Abandonment rates
- Average speed of answer
- IVR options selected by customers
- Call time duration (for both the team and individual team members)
- Individual performance of team members

There are also limitations with the current Avaya telephony platform with key capabilities not provided. These include;

- Inability to work remotely
- Lack of business continuity / disaster recovery
- Inability to configure all elements of the telephony system remotely

Reflections/recommendations

Our recommendations fall into three key areas.

<u>Replacement of Avaya Telephony platform</u>
A new platform will provide key capabilities not provided by the current Avaya telephony system, namely;

- Enable remote working for the Helpline team

- Provide business continuity / disaster recovery capabilities
- Enable remote configuration of all elements of the platform

Introduction of a tool to manage Helpline enquiries

Having a single tool that can be used by both the Helpline and specialist support teams to provide a unified user interface and allow much more effective collaboration (e.g. assigning enquiries to different teams, when updating the status of an enquiry and providing responses).

Underlying service data & improved MI (real time and historical)

This starts with the definition of the data required to deliver the Helpline service. Broadly speaking, this falls into three categories; contact information, enquiry information and operational information.

Richer underlying data, held in a single application, will facilitate much richer and more meaningful MI and performance reporting, in turn allowing FSA to become more proactive in the management of the service.

The Helpline team would also benefit from a real time view of Helpline activity & performance, something that is available on the current Avaya telephony platform at additional cost and, as we understand, was decided against. This way the Helpline would be able to delve into the reasons for any potential shortcomings in their service offering and improve the service for customers making contact.

Identify key areas of focus for the next phase of work

For example: a part of the service that could cause particular pain or be difficult, or needs delving into in more depth to adequately understand. Indeed, whether further work is actually needed.

Team score: Met/Partially met/Did not meet

Team observations

Something the team did well

The team has identified three key areas that will provide significant improvement to the Helpline team England, as well as specialist support teams. We recognise there is a strong desire to make improvements to the Helpline service and also that some work has already been undertaken in this respect (e.g. revamped IVR, introduction of basic MI)

Possible gaps

The scope of work does not include an investigation into which telephony or enquiry management applications should be considered. In addition, no cost-benefit analysis has been carried out and the lack of available data relating to the existing Helpline service should be taken into account in future decision making.

Reflections/recommendations

The three core recommendations should sit at the heart of any future transformation of the Helpline service, as well as specialist support teams. The existing Helpline requirements should be expanded to reflect this before speaking with software providers and should not only take into account current requirements but those relating to future iterations of the service. Examples include the potential inclusion of digital service channels and proactive management of the service, such as resource planning or service improvements.

Demonstrate how the team has worked together using agile methods and the learning from this

How did you work together, in particular, how you engaged the business and stakeholders. How have you adapted as you learned more.

Team score: Met/Partially met/Did not meet

Team observations

Something the team did well

The team made good use of daily standups, weekly show and tells, retrospectives and sprint planning sessions. These were regularly joined by the core delivery team (Product Owners, DDaT representative and Nb team members) so there was frequent communication across all interested parties and any blockers were quickly raised and removed. Adhering to the Agile methods ensured a high level of transparency throughout the Discovery and each task was documented and assigned using Trello. Stakeholders took well to the Trello tool and everybody kept their tasks up to date and completed within good time. Show and tells were well attended despite being remote and participants were open, vocal and engaged during the process.

Possible gaps

The Discovery may have benefitted from more face time with key stakeholders. It was well understood from the beginning that stakeholders were spread across different areas of England and the original plan was for the Nb team to spread their time between Clive House (London) and Foss House (York). The working restrictions resulting from COVID-19 containment measures resulted in a joint decision by the project team to run all workshops / interviews remotely, along with all agile ceremonies.

Reflections/recommendations

Sprint 0 was essential in order to complete all preparation ahead of commencing workshops / interviews, which in turn saw focussed and productive workshops / interviews delivered. Sprint retrospectives provided a formal environment for the core team to provide feedback on how successful remote working was and also allowed us to change our approach in order to ensure the team were on track to meet all deliverables.