Digital First Service Standard

Discovery Stage Assessment Prompts and Evidence

Service to be assessed:

Date/Time/Location:

Assessor name:

Assessor role:

Introduction

This prompts and evidence document has been designed to aid assessors and service teams through a Digital First Service Standard assessment. It will provide you with a detailed understanding of what is required to meet each of the Digital First Service Standard criteria.

For the purposes of the assessment the service standard has been re-ordered. This running order clusters the criteria around the themes of user, technology and business capability so as to provide an easier flow throughout the assessment.

Should you have any further questions, please contact the Digital First Team at [OCIOAssurance@gov.scot](mailto:OCIOAssurance@gov.scot).

General

High-level questions to get you thinking about your service as a whole and your plans for it. These are the types of questions which assessors will use to gain an initial picture of your service.

* What is your service?
* What is the purpose of your service?
* What is the existing service landscape?
* What is your estimated timeline for getting the service to Live?
* What is the impact of not creating the service?
* What are the potential savings available from this service?
* What is the certainty of these savings and will they change over time?
* How are you building Digital First into your sprint planning?
* Which are the riskiest aspects of creating the service

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|  | Discovery |
| Point 1 | User Centred - 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. |
| Additional Guidance | In the discovery phase, the main objective is to establish whether the team has a good understanding of user needs that has come from observing and engaging with end users, that they understand what users are trying to do when they engage with the current service (the user context, whether currently digital or not) and they understand the user needs - not just functional requirements - that the service will have to achieve in order to be successful. Responses should cover both the digital and assisted digital support.  The assessors are less interested in the quantity of user research that has been undertaken, but rather in the quality and coverage - was it with the right people, was it the right kind of user research done in the right way/place, has it effectively created a user-centred, empathetic view of the project for the team.  The assessors will be interested in how the team has used mixed methods / sources of data to corroborate key findings (e.g. mixing analytics data with qualitative research findings). When doing user research for assisted digital, ensure that research is done specifically with (potential) users of this particular service who have the lowest level of digital skills. Recruitment and research with this audience will need to be done using offline methods. |
| Prompts | * Do you know who your users are? * Have you spoken with a representative sample of your users? * Do you know the needs of your users, and have those needs been prioritised? * If user needs have been prioritised, what criteria was used to prioritise the needs? * Have you captured those needs in user stories, personas, profiles or user journeys? * Do you know what problem your service will solve for the users? * Have you spoken with users who may need assisted digital support? * Has the user research influenced the policy formation? |

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| Evidence | The Service Manager should be able to show:-  - the user needs found for the service in discovery and how those needs were found, including any needs for assisted digital users  - how they've been writing user stories for the service - including for users who need assisted digital support  - any problems that were found in research which will have to be overcome to design the service  - how the user needs can influence policy  - how the user researcher will ensure compliance with ethics requirements throughout the service team | |
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|  | Discovery | |
| Point 2 | Usable and accessible - Create a service that is simple and intuitive enough that users succeed first time. | |
| Prompts | * Can you explain the proposal for what your service will provide in a simple and accessible manner? * Are you thinking about how you will assess the success rate of users? * Do you have a plan to support this with assisted digital needs? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain the service and what it will provide in a simple and accessible manner  - explain how the team will use research, testing and analytics to make iterations to the service, including the assisted digital support model  - explain all end-to-end user journeys, including assisted digital journeys  - explain the design options that are being considered for assisted digital support  - explain how the assisted digital support model has been designed to meet user needs and how it is being provided - if it's not by telephone, face-to-face, talk through and on-behalf-of, explain why  - explain how assisted digital support will be sustainably funded and free to users | |
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| Point 3 | Channel shift - Identify and, wherever possible, remove impediments that prevent citizens from using the digital service, clearly establishing it as the primary channel. Plan to provide appropriate assisted digital support if necessary. | |
| Prompts | * Do you know what channels the service is currently delivered through? * If yes, do you know what volume of transactions go through each channel? * Have you spoken with the organisations or groups which currently help your users through the service? * Are you thinking about how you will increase digital take up? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain their plan for increasing digital take up.  - explain what other channels the service is delivered through.  - explain what data they collect on their other channels.  - explain how they collect analytical data on service usage for each channel.  - explain which organisations/groups help your user with the existing digital or non-digital services.  - show user insight from: research with real users, user demographics, attitudes, behaviours and channel preferences, and user journey maps.  - explain how each channel meets different users’ needs. | |
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| Point 4 | Consistent user experience - Build a service consistent with the user experience of the rest of mygov.scot or GDS Service Design Manual, including using the design patterns and style guide. | |
| Prompts | * If your service is to be hosted on mygov.scot, have you discussed the creation of your service with the mygov.scot team? * Are you planning to use mygov.scot design patterns, tool kit and style guide? * If not, are you planning to use the GDS Service Design Manual Style Guide? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain how the service will use the mygov.scot design patterns, front-end tool kit and mygov.scot style guide during alpha.  - explain what design, content design and front-end developer support will be available to the team during alpha. | |
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| Point 5 | Continuous feedback - Put a plan in place for on-going user research and usability testing to continuously seek feedback and input from users to improve the service. | |
| Additional Guidance | The main objective is to ensure that you have someone on the team who is dedicated to doing the user research, that there are plans to continue doing user research, and that there is evidence that outcomes from the user research will be fed into the on-going development/design of the service. Responses should cover both digital and assisted digital support. When doing user research for assisted digital, ensure that research is done specifically with (potential) users of this particular service who have the lowest level of digital skills. Recruitment and research with this audience will need to be done using offline methods. Accessibility testing with people who have particular access needs should be done throughout the service design process and not outsourced as a separate activity at the end of the design process. | |
| Prompts | * Do you have a plan for engaging with users in Alpha? * Do you have a plan for engaging with users who need assisted digital support in Alpha? * Do you have the resources in place for continuous user research and usability testing? | |
| Evidence | User Researcher and/or Service manager able to show:  - how the team will pay for user research, service design and usability tests throughout the design of the service and after it’s built  - how often research and usability tests will be carried out and how the results will be used to improve the design of the service  - a user research plan for alpha | |
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| Point 6 | Data driven - 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. | |
| Prompts | * Have you sought data during discovery (e.g. website analytics, management information) and has this been used to provide insight into alpha? * Do you know what data you will capture from your service? * Do you know how you'll capture and analyse that data? * Do you have resource in the team for identifying actionabale data insights during alpha, including in terms of assisted digital support? * Have you discussed the collection of analytics with your information security officer to ensure you are meeting data protection requirements | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain how they decided the data they needed to capture, where it needs to be captured from and how they will capture it based on the projected size and shape of the service.  - show they have an on-going roadmap for performance analysis and someone in the team responsible for identifying actionable data insights during alpha, including assisted digital support.  - show they've used qualitative and quantitative data to help improve their understanding of user needs and identify areas for improvement.  - explain how suitable data analysis tools were chosen.  - show how information security and privacy issues have been addressed appropriately.  - explain how they have mapped user journeys through the service and tracked them to identify completions and areas of poor performance.  - show how assisted digital support is being measured.  - explain the next performance analysis user story.  - show they have discussed a start page and an end page with mygov.scot.  - show how feedback from users will be collected, during and after their user journey. | |
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| Point 7 | Cross-functional 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. | |
| Prompts | * Is your team well-resourced for Alpha? * Note: Service Teams should consider having the following (or access to them), dependent on scale of service: Service Manager, Product Manager, Delivery Manager, Tech Architect/Lead, Assisted Digital Support/Lead, Designer, User Researcher, Developers, Content Designer, Web Ops and Performance Analyst. * Are there any gaps you need to fill in alpha? * Do you have a Service Manager on a permanent basis? * Will you have a Product Manager working an appropriate number of hours a week on a permanent basis during alpha? * Will you have a Delivery Manager working an appropriate number of hours a week on a permanent basis during alpha? * Will you have a User Researcher working an appropriate number of hours a week on a permanent basis during alpha? * Are you relying on contractors rather than permanent staff? * If you are reliant on contract staff, are you thinking about how you'll ensure appropriate knowledge transfer to permanent staff? * Does the team have the experience and skills required for the project? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - clearly explain the structure of the team (the following should be either in the team or available to the team depending on the scale of the service - service manager, product manager, delivery manager, tech architect and lead, assisted digital lead, designer, user researcher, developers, content designer, web ops, performance analyst).  - show how they (as Service Manager) have the knowledge and power to make day-to-day decisions to improve the service  - explain where they have gaps in the team and explain how they will address them.  - show that there's a person on your team who's responsible for user research and usability tests.  - there is at least one user researcher working an appropriate number of hours per week.  - show that there is a separation of key roles (i.e. the same person is not performing multiple roles within the service).  - explain plan to transfer knowledge and skills from contractors to permanent staff. | |
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| Point 8 | Sustainability - 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. | |
| Prompts | * Do you know what you're planning to build in alpha? * Will the alpha meet the user needs you have identified and prioritised in Discovery? * Do you know the risks (if any) associated with the technology chosen for the build? * Do you have a plan for how you'll solve any technical problems? * Have you identified the approach and tolls for iterating the service beyond alpha or planned to assess this during alpha? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - describe the lifecycle of a user story from research to production.  - show they understand how the service is being built to meet user needs.  - explain process for identifying and prioritising insights from user research.  - show there’s minimal risk associated with the technology chosen.  - show analysis of user research and that this is being used to improve the service.  - show how the team are solving any technical problems. | |
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| Point 9 | Continuous improvement - Build the service incrementally, releasing early and often, using the iterative and user-centred methods set out in the GDS service manual. | |
| Prompts | * Have you identified the approach and tools for alpha? * Are you planning to build your service incrementally, releasing early and often? * Are you using a project management methodology? * If yes, does your chosen project management methodology allow you to pivot to meet new challenges? * Are you reviewing and iterating on the ways you work to fix problems? * Do you have a risk register? * What is your team communication plan? * In terms of governance, do you have clear and measurable goals to assess your performance moving forward? * Do you have the capability to make changes and manage risk in real time rather than at defined points? * Has your research identified any problems which you'll have to plan to solve the design and build of the service? * If yes, do you know how you are planning to solve them? * Have you identified a project management methodology that you will use? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - clearly explain how the service is working - either in agile, waterfall or a hybrid of both and what tools and techniques are being used.  - explain how the team has reviewed and iterated the ways it works to fix problems.  - explain what tools and techniques the team are using to communicate, including the team’s communication plan.  - give an example of how the service has responded to user research and usability testing.  - show that governance is: proportional, not imposed, is based on clear and measurable goals, “go and see” rather than “wait and hear”, a clear focus on managing change and risk in real time rather than at arbitrary points, human centred not process centred.  - show how the design of the service has changed over time because of what was found in user research.  - explain the design options being considered for assisted digital support.  - describe any problems that were found in research which will have to be solved in the design of the service and how the team plans to solve them. | |
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| Point 10 | Business continuity - Define, document and regularly test a plan to handle disasters and other incidents that may cause the digital service to be taken temporarily offline. | |
| Prompts | * Have you considered existing Business Continuity Planning, including disaster planning? * Are you thinking about what the impact will be on your users of the proposed service being unavailable for any length of time? * Have you considered how you will assess and priorities different disaster/incident scenarios? * Have you identified the impact of business continuity on non-functional requirements? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain the impact upon the user of the proposed service being unavailable for any length of time. | |
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| Point 11 | Technology appraisal - Evaluate what technology, tools and systems will be used to build, host, operate and measure the service, and how to procure them. | |
| Prompts | * Have you identified the building blocks that are required for alpha and beyond? * Have you identified the approach that you will take to deconstruct the service into building blocks? * Have you considered different technical choices for alpha? * Have you considered the criteria by which you will evaluate the technology and tools? * Have you considered how you will ensure the value for money when buying tools? * Have you considered the technology, architecture risks and approaches you will be exploring during alpha? * Have you identified the procurement strategies you are planning to use for the building blocks comprising the service? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain the appraisal method that has been used including options identification, appraisal criteria, etc  - describe the frameworks, and other technical choices they’ve made in discovery, and how this will affect the decisions they make in alpha.  - describe the set of programming tools they would like to select for alpha and why.  - explain how they will get value for money when buying in tools. | |
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| Point 12 | Information governance - 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 (consulting with experts where appropriate). | |
| Prompts | * Have you identified what user data and information will be collected and stored during alpha and beyond? * Have you identified which information privacy and security legislation, policy and guidance is applicable to the service? * Do you have a plan to identify threats to the service? Both internal and external. | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain how they have identified threats to the service, including potential vulnerabilities, and tested ways of reducing them.  - explain how they plan to keep up to date about threats to the service and how to deal with them.  - explain what fraud vectors exist and what controls they will be prototyping during alpha. | |
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| Point 13 | Open data - Make all non-personal, non-commercially sensitive data from the service available for re-use by others under an appropriate licence. | |
| Prompts | * What data will the service store and process * Does the service hold “master data” that is consumed by other services * Does the service consume data from other systems, registers or through third party sources, if so what are the licensing terms for data sourced this way? * What license are you planning to use to publish data? * Where will the data be stored so that it si readily available? * Are open standards being used for the data that is published and are these formats at least “3 star” open data formats? * Will the data depend on third party vocabularies / taxonomies? If so what are the impications of this? * If any data is not to be published, why not? * Will second order data such as MI or reporting data also be published? * Are you planning to make your data open and available for re-use? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - show consideration of how data is to be made open and available for re-use  - explain how data can support delivery of better public services and improved governance.  - explain plans to encourage and empower others to make use of data for various purpose (including commercial, non-commercial and education). | |
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| Point 14 | Ecosystem - Identify how your service aligns with Scotland’s digital ecosystem. | |
| Prompts | * Have you considered how your service can interact with Scotland's digital ecosystem? * Do you know your service pattern? * Have you considered where common capabilities could fit in your service provision? * Have you done value chain mapping? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - show awareness of the principles of Scotland’s digital ecosystem approach.  - demonstrate and explain the service pattern.  - demonstrate understanding of where common capabilities could fit with service provision.  - demonstrate understanding of how the service could contribute to/consume from development of the ecosystem and shared learning across organisations.  - explain value chain mapping undertaken for the service.  - show that discussions with Digital Ecosystem Unit on how the service can contribute to or consume from the ecosystem have been considered. | |
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| Point 15 | Open source - Make all new source code open and reusable, and publish it under appropriate licences (or provide a convincing explanation as to why this cannot be done for specific subsets of the source code). | |
| Prompts | * Are you planning to make your new source code, open and reusable? * What license will be used? * Where will the code be published? * Is there anything that can’t be published? Why? * Have team members been given suitable training? * Has the senior management team been made aware? * Is appropriate governance / procedure in place? * Have third party contributions been considered? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain their plan for making appropriate new source code open and reusable.  - confirm that you own the intellectual property  - explain how someone else can reuse your code | |
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| Point 16 | Open standards - Use open standards and common government platforms where available. | |
| Prompts | * Describe the research you have undertaken to identify relevant open standards? * Where relevant open standards don’t exist how do you plain to address this? * Are you planning to use open standards? E.g. non-proprietary file formats * Have you considered what common platforms your service could use?   Note: Examples might include Rubric Publishing Platform, mygov.scot portal or common capabilities from the Digital Ecosystem.   * Have you found needs that are common to other government services? * If yes to the above, are you planning to address those needs consistently with other services? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - explain how they are avoiding locking themselves into any proprietary solutions by using open standards and common platforms.  - describe what common platforms they have identified that their intended system could use.  - describe any needs they have identified which are common to other services and how they are going to address them in a consistent manner with the rest of government. | |
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| Point 17 | Green ICT - Deliver a digital service whose impact on the environment, over its whole lifecycle, is understood. Plan to reduce the environmental impact of the service over time. | |
| Prompts | * Do you have a plan to assess what the environmental impact of the service will be? * Will you deliver the service in an energy efficient manner? * Have you completed a baseline maturity assessment against SG's Green ICT maturity model? * Are you thinking about how you can improve the procurement process in terms of Green ICT and environmental well-being?   Note: Examples include procuring services not assets, high weighting of green credentials in awarding contracts and comparing repair, refurbishment and recycling of existing systems against replacement.   * Have you considered how you will plan for the disposal of your equipment (before its acquired)?   Note: Examples include donating, selling, re-using and recycling. | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:-  - explain plans to deliver service and infrastructure in energy efficient manner  - demonstrate relationships with other organisations to aggregate demand for services/re-use existing services  - show they have completed a baseline maturity assessment against the Scottish Government’s Green ICT maturity model and established a plan to increase Green ICT maturity  - demonstrate improvements they have made in conducting the procurement process in terms of Green ICT and environmental well-being e.g.  - procurement of services not assets;  - high weight green credentials in awarding of contracts; and  - compare repair, refurbishment and recycling of existing systems against replacement of a system.  - show they have reviewed the operation of online services to increase efficiency/reduce consumption  - explain plans to dispose of equipment before it is acquired including:  - reviewing the WEEE regulations and Scotland’s Zero Waste Plan;  - considering opportunities to sell or donate equipment; and  - having a re-use and recycling policy in place.  - demonstrate appropriate training has been provided to ensure that staff consider environmental implications in their day-to-day work. | |
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| Point 18 | Data hosting and data centres - Adopt cloud computing or virtualisation as the preferred approaches to the delivery of data hosting for the service. | |
| Prompts | * What are the existing data centre and hosting arrangements, and what are its costs? * During alpha, are you planning to host in public, private or hybrid cloud? * If yes, which? * If the answer is no, can you explain why the cloud is not appropriate and have you considered co-locating in existing data centres? * Have you considered how you will select the most appropriate approach for beta and live? Bearing in mind the preference for cloud/virtualisation. e.g. Getting to cloud based services. | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to  - explain current ICT data centre and hosting arrangements, if applicable  - confirm that total cost of running data centres and hosting is known, if applicable  - demonstrate consideration of cloud computing when assessing current arrangements and future investment plans  - explain reasoning for shift to/not shifting to cloud  - demonstration consideration of co-location in existing data centres where cloud options not considered appropriate  - where cloud or co-location options not taken, explain reasoning for any building of new data centres  - explain plans to measure and improve on data centre’s power usage effectiveness. | |
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| Point 19 | Performance management - Identify performance indicators for the service, including the 4 mandatory key performance indicators (KPIs) defined in the GDS service manual. Establish a benchmark for each metric and make a plan to enable improvements. | |
| Prompts | * What are the latest measures for each of the 4 KPIs from the existing service? * If these do not exist, how will you set a performance baseline for the existing services? * Have you investigated a means by which to improve on the KPIs? * Do you have other metrics you would like to measure? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - demonstrate how they have set a performance baseline for the old service, if there was one.  - show that they have considered a plan to lower cost per transaction (or equivalent\*).  - show that they have considered a plan to improve user satisfaction.  - show that they have considered a plan to increase completion rate (or equivalent\*).  - show that they have considered a plan to increase digital take-up and reduce reliance on assisted digital.  - show how they have assessed the potential for channel shift and the level of assisted digital the service needs.  - explain other metrics that will be measured, when this will start and how they'll be used to improve the service.  - explain where data for metrics is coming from.  - explain how the analytics package to collect user journey data will be set up.  - explain how they have made sure all stakeholders will be actively involved in promoting or supporting digital delivery of the new service.  \* for non-transactional user journeys | |
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| Point 20 | Transparent - Report performance data on the Performance Platform. | |
| Prompts | * Have you spoken with the Performance Platform Team (mygov.scot)? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - demonstrate spoken with the Performance Platform Team  - have checked the Performance Platform can support the metrics they want to present on their service dashboard. | |
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| Point 21 | Operational acceptance - Regularly 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. | |
| Prompts | * Do you have a plan for testing your Alpha?   Note: You should consider the environments needed, how often you’ll test and how to ensure you’re testing with the devices and browsers used by your users.   * Have you identified how you will perform automated testing? * Have you identified what non-functional requirements you are planning to test during Alpha? * What arrangements have been made to ensure a “like live” environment is available during alpha? * How long will it take to create a test environment from scratch? * How will you manage test data for test environments? * What system quality attributes will be tested and do you have quantifiable requirements for each attribute? * How often will testing be undertaken? Is the testing automated? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - show they are planning to design and test the service  - show they are planning to test the service in an environment that’s as similar to live as possible  - show that they have considered how the service can keep working when the number of expected users try to use it, including for users who need assisted digital support  - explain the systems needed and the testing environments for non-digital parts of the service  - explain how they plan to test the service frequently and how they decided how often to test | |
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| Point 22 | Sponsor acceptance - Test the service from beginning to end with the minister responsible for it. | |
| Prompts | * Will the Minister and/or Senior Sponsor responsible for the service test it before it goes live? | |
| Evidence | Service Manager able to:  - confirm the Minister and/or Senior Sponsor responsible for the service will test it before the service moves into live. | |
| Met /  Not Met |  |  |