



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

www.gov.wales

Digital First



Digital First

Putting people at the heart of public service development and design in Wales

Foreword

The Welsh public sector provides a diverse and varied range of important services to the people and businesses of Wales, from healthcare and education to looking after our roads and helping entrepreneurs to start their own businesses.

The services we develop must keep pace with the changing needs of the people of Wales. As society evolves, people adopt and use new and emerging technologies. This influences the way in which we interact with each other and with our public services. Every part of the public sector in Wales has a responsibility to ensure that the services it delivers, and the ways, in which it offers those services, responds to this societal evolution and remains relevant.

Making the fullest possible use of the opportunities that technology offers will help us to deliver the services that users want to engage with. It also has the potential to make the delivery of those services more efficient and cost effective.

This document sets out our intention to provide leadership and action in all aspects of digital service development and design.

In delivering services, we need to remember that people are often unaware whether it is the Welsh Government, Local Government or indeed the UK Government which is

delivering the service. Delivery of this strategy will therefore require close collaboration with all of these stakeholders, to ensure consistency of experience for the user.

We recognise that there are many barriers to accessing online services particularly for those on low incomes, the disabled and older people. By improving the quality of the digital services available and by ensuring that help and assistance is at the forefront of our service design, we can encourage and enable more people to engage with the digital services we provide.

We are already investing through our Superfast Cymru programme in the infrastructure to support digital service delivery. We must use this investment to deliver world class public services. This investment will provide new connectivity options for public service organisations through the Public Sector Broadband Aggregation project and will allow those public sector organisations to focus on the services being delivered rather than gaps in the infrastructure.

This document outlines the first steps that the Welsh Government will take to create the environment necessary to enable and empower the public sector to provide excellent online services to the people and businesses of Wales.

Julie James, AM
Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology

Our Digital Vision

The Welsh Government's vision for Digital First is to enable responsive, consistent and excellent public services through transformed digital delivery

This is a vision that can only be achieved by addressing the fundamental barriers currently holding back the public sector, and through joined up working across all of its constituent parts

Our strategy

We will recognise and build on existing work to transform service delivery. We will identify and adopt best practice within Wales within the UK and across the world.

We will raise every digital service in Wales to the standard of the best, making use of common platforms and re-using existing investments.

We will adopt a digital by default approach to delivering Welsh Government services, with appropriate support for non-digital service users

We will seek to identify quick win projects that can deliver significant service improvement and unlock efficiency savings in order to demonstrate the potential and fund more challenging service transformation.

We will seek to develop the infrastructure required to support digital service delivery. The Public Sector Broadband Aggregation network service will be the default route for accessing wide area network services in Wales. The new .cymru and .wales domain names will be used

as default by the public sector in Wales.

We will provide the leadership required to drive transformation of service delivery across the Welsh Government and the wider public sector.

We will ensure that public sector organisations have the skills to engage with digital technologies and provide the people of Wales with the services they need. This will support a digital approach to the design and development of new services over time.

We will develop an organisation-wide awareness of the impact of digital on service delivery and develop policies and design services with this in mind.

We will provide access to bilingual tools in the workplace and promote the use of the Welsh language to support all aspect of service delivery, including digital services.

We will take a Digital First approach to the design and development of services, and a careful, measured approach to the evolution of existing service delivery in response to the evolving requirements of the users of those services.

We will adopt best practice emerging in Wales, the UK and beyond and implement this best practice both nationally and locally.

Through these actions we will build on successes achieved, learn lessons from failed projects, work across silos, join up service development, procure strategically, avoid duplication, develop/adopt common platforms, embed community benefits and look far and wide to seed our innovation and ambition.

Why go digital?

Digital transformation forms a central part of the Welsh Government's plans to make public services more meaningful to their users. First and foremost, we want to meet the needs of our customers.

Research shows¹ that 79% of adults (18 and over) in Wales use the internet. Of those who use the internet, 83% had accessed government or other public service websites within the past 12 months.

However, it is not enough for us just to provide our services digitally. They need to work well together and deliver a high quality experience that makes it easier for people to deal with the public sector. Performance and other information in digital form can be used and combined to improve delivery and impact more rapidly and intelligently than otherwise possible.

Digital technology has the potential to benefit society. It can also lead to significant savings achieved by streamlining business processes and reducing overheads. The Cabinet Office Digital Efficiency Report suggests that online transactions are 20 times cheaper than by phone, 30 times cheaper than by post and as much as 50 times cheaper than face to face.

The UK Government is rapidly moving national services online with the aim of going 'digital by default'. The objective is to standardise the design of online services and make them so easy to find and use that customers will not want to use any other channel. The evidence from new services such as the DVLA's online car tax service

demonstrates this is how customers want public services – available any time and any where.

The Welsh Government is firmly of the view that the driving force for digital transformation is the pursuit of excellence in service delivery which benefits people and society. The risk inherent in pursuing an agenda for change based on a desire to achieve revenue savings alone is that the purpose of the service and the needs of the users of that service will get marginalised and forgotten in the pursuit of savings.

Digital tools and techniques can help improve the ways we engage with and listen to our customers and stakeholders too. By increasing the use of digital tools we can improve the skills and efficiency of our staff and open up policy making and the design and delivery of our services. We will create a culture and way of working where, whatever we do, we are always thinking digital.

Ultimately, harnessing digital should be about using technology to make things easier and more convenient – for our customers (businesses and citizens), for our stakeholders, our staff, our delivery partners and our suppliers.

In nearly all areas of public service delivery, there is a growing customer expectation that services should be available online at any time, through the medium of Welsh and English, and accessible through any device.

¹ National Survey for Wales, 2013-14, Internet use

Building on success

The public sector in Wales is continuously developing and adapting to meet the needs of the people and businesses it serves. Digital technologies are forming an increasing part of that delivery. This work has underlined the need to focus on the needs of the user rather than on the technology underpinning that service.

Health – My Health Online is a secure NHS Wales web-based service which enables patients to book appointments and order repeat prescriptions online. It is currently installed in 89% of GP practices in Wales. Users have a key role in shaping the delivery of a service such as this. Planned developments include enabling access through mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets and adding e mail & SMS functionality in response to feedback that users prefer to access the service wherever they may be. .

Social care - The Community Care Information System (CCIS) is a single, integrated information solution which will soon be available to all health and social care organisations across Wales.

CCIS will enable organisations to ensure services and support are effectively planned, co-ordinated and delivered to individuals, families and communities across organisational boundaries.

Farming - Rural Payments Wales (RPW Online) is an online service developed in close collaboration with stakeholders including farmers, farming agents and farming unions to make sure it met customer needs. The 2014 Single Application Form (SAF) was the first application to be available online. Almost a third of

applications, over 5,000, were submitted online.

A digital assistance programme was piloted during the Glastir Organic and Glastir Advanced application period in October 2014 to support those who required additional help or who were unable to access online services. The digital assistance included one-to-one support available at some Welsh Government offices. Digital Assistance ensured digital take-up of almost 100% (1,614 out of a total 1,618 submissions) for the Glastir applications. A similar Digital Assistance programme will be available for the Single Application Form 2015, as well as all new schemes delivered for Glastir, as part of the next Rural Development Programme.

Environment - the Welsh Government was a partner in the January 2014 launch of 'edoc', a new online system designed to help transform the recording of what happens to the waste produced or handled by businesses or organisations. It does away with outdated paper waste transfer notes, saving businesses and organisations time, effort and money in fulfilling their legal duty of care for waste.

Elsewhere, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has introduced an online system for lower tier registrations. An independent survey of customer response to the new system brought positive results. NRW will continue to work with customers to improve the service and other online registration facilities.

Communities – Our work on digital inclusion has involved working in partnership with public service deliverers, where appropriate, to help

individuals gain the basic digital skills required to access vital digital public services. This often provides an opportunity to help individuals further develop their basic digital skills by introducing additional benefits of the internet. A successor programme to the six year Communities 2.0 initiative will be in place from 1 April 2015. This will help co-ordinate digital inclusion activities to ensure everyone is given the opportunity to benefit from the digital world.

Education – Numerous digital services are being developed to support learning and skills development. My Local School is a digital service designed to provide access to schools' data for parents and anyone else with an interest in their local school. The service provides a single point of contact for a wealth of data, ranging from performance data to staffing and finance information, in an easily-accessible format.

Hwb is the National Digital Content Repository which hosts a collection of digital resources and tools to support learning and teaching for learners aged 3-19 in Wales. The Hwb service provides schools with access to the latest technology to assist in transforming classroom practices. Hwb+ integrates tools and content from third-party providers and provides every school in Wales with a public-facing website to further underpin the transformation of classroom practices.

Learning Wales is a digital service designed to meet the needs of educators and practitioners in Wales. Student Finance Wales has established a digital service for students of further and higher education to understand what financial support is available. Careers Wales is a digital service which provides a

single point of contact for information on careers, jobs and training. Individuals and businesses can access a range of information and practical advice to support individuals pursuing careers and training opportunities, while offering interactive tools and activities to support the preparation and application of training and jobs.

Tourism - The EU funded Digital Tourism Business Framework Programme (has been recognised for its innovative use of technologies to improve the competitiveness of tourism. It has supported an ambitious and extensive digital technology interpretation project at Llanelly House - a historic town centre visitor attraction. The project brings to life the story of the house in order to provide an experience that is in line with the rising expectations of visitors.

The Welsh Government's historic environment service, Cadw, has applied digital technology to improve the visitors experience at the Roman Fortress Baths, Caerleon, by using digital projections to recreate water and swimmers in the baths. The technology enables atmospheric interpretation without impacting on the historic fabric of the monuments. It enables engaging interpretation to be delivered to a broad audience. The Furnace experience at Blaenavon Ironworks mixes digital projection, LED lighting, smoke machines and audio to create a vision of iron-making in the 19th century.

These examples are developing through the efforts of multiple organisations across the public sector in Wales and we must now build on this success and increase the momentum.

Recognising the need for a step change

In 2010, the Welsh Government published a long-term strategy (Digital Wales) aimed at making Wales a truly digital nation. It set out five key objectives: to tackle the digital divide; to improve digital skills; to grow our digital economy; to deliver faster broadband across Wales and to provide better online public services. Delivery of Digital Wales is a high level commitment of the current Programme for Government.

Progress across the first four objectives has been substantial, yet progress against the fifth objective (better online public services) varies greatly, by organisation and by service. A commitment to change this as set out in the Digital First strategy would therefore be seen by most stakeholders and the wider public as the missing piece of the Digital Wales programme.

Whilst many public sector organisations in Wales embrace digital service delivery, the evidence suggests that for Wales to truly lead the way in the delivery of online services, a range of complex issues need to be addressed. These include the need for clear direction, better access to high-end digital skills, a commitment to collaborate, using common standards across organisations and procuring strategically.

The Commission on Public Sector Governance and Delivery identified that the use of information and technology in public services is not good enough to meet either expectations of the public or the needs of the organisations concerned.

It recommended that the Welsh Government lead the development of a coherent, cross-public sector national strategy and programme to plan, prioritise, and deliver joined up, digitally transformed services which deliver better outcomes and more efficient services across the public sector for citizens in Wales.

Digital First is not a technical strategy. It is written for public sector leaders and for anyone involved in the delivery of public services in Wales.

The Commission on Public Sector Governance conservatively estimates that there are some 935 public sector bodies in Wales. The bulk of these are town and community councils (total 736). It also includes 22 unitary authorities, 30 education institutions and 7 health boards. No matter how the landscape changes over time, the principles and actions contained in this strategy will still apply.

Our public services impact every day on every part of society from the youngest to the oldest, from individuals to families, from local business to multi-national corporations. Our customers include citizens, business and industry, the third sector and the international community. Their needs will be different depending on the help they require, the information they want, and the types of customer they are.

Service users are often unaware whether it is the Welsh Government, Local Government or indeed the UK Government which is delivering the service. It is important that we all work together to ensure that those engaging with public services receive a consistent, quality experience and do not get exposed to the challenges of providing the service seamlessly

across multiple organisations, agencies and geography.

Outcomes

Success in using technology to transform and improve online public services will ultimately depend on many factors, trends and decisions. Not all are under the control of the Welsh Government. Digital First nevertheless seeks to make a substantial impact on several long term outcomes. These include:

- **Better online services**

Ofcom research indicates just 9% of adults in Wales prefer online public services to traditional ones. We want to see a major increase in this number as a result of more people wanting to engage with the services available digitally. The key to achieving it is to make online services far more compelling, straightforward and convenient than they currently are.

- **More online services**

The Welsh public sector provides more than 700 transactional services. Many don't offer an online option. We need to address this by ensuring that we prioritise the right services for online delivery - i.e. services that customers want and that can be delivered more efficiently online.

- **Increase take up of online public services**

A Digital Wales Advisory Network's (DWAN) report on online public services in Wales highlighted that many existing online services have very low take up levels. It indicated that overall take up in Wales could be as low as 18%. To stimulate demand and a return on investment we must significantly increased these levels.

- **Better support for the digitally excluded**

The 2013-14 National Survey for Wales shows that some 21% of people rarely or never use the internet. These people are often our most vulnerable and they rely most heavily on public services. As more public services move online, we need to ensure that the help they need to access services is available, joined up across the public sector and delivered effectively. This strategy does not seek to set digital delivery versus non-digital delivery; it seeks to recognise the need for relevant, secure and accessible service delivery. That involves a blend of the digital and non-digital defined by and designed around the preferences and needs of its users.

- **Unlock savings**

In July 2012, the Society of IT Management (SocITM) prepared figures for the Cabinet Office Government Digital Services (GDS) that estimated conservatively that across the UK up to £334m could be taken permanently out of local authority costs just by shifting initial customer contacts from phone and face-to-face channels to digital channels. Such savings are clearly compelling; however, the focus must remain on the service being delivered and the needs of the users. Pursuing savings alone risks damaging the quality of the service and undermining the trust of the users.

Savings can be achieved when whole services are re-designed for digital delivery, so that processing, recording and delivery associated with a customer enquiry can be handled 'end-to-end', with high value human intervention taking place only when it is actually needed or where users of the service identify that it adds value to their experience.

Achieving the Vision

Whilst we fully recognise the benefits to both citizens and organisations of delivering public services digitally, it is important that the needs of those that might struggle to use digital services are considered alongside our efforts to transform and evolve our services. All services identified for digital transformation need to include assisted digital solutions to support the users of digital public services (whether citizens or businesses) who would otherwise have difficulty accessing them.

Alongside assisted digital, our focus on digital inclusion will continue. We will support the use of digital public services by helping people overcome the motivation, skills, affordability and accessibility barriers which prevent people accessing online services. The successor programme to Communities 2.0 will continue to develop close links with public service deliverers to pass on experience and expertise of the best ways to engage with digitally excluded people. In turn, more individuals are likely to use the online services we develop.

Work is already underway within the Welsh Government to develop a consistent approach to digital service delivery within the umbrella of the Public Services Reform agenda. The Minister for Public Services and Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology have jointly established a Digital Public Services working group, which will direct the delivery and strategic co-ordination of digital public services across Welsh Government portfolios.

We have also announced the creation of a Digital Innovation Fund, of £250k

in 2015-16, to fund specific digital improvements linked to the public service reform programme. It is envisaged that the Fund will support the wider transformation work being planned for local government and broader public services. As part of that, it will provide the opportunity to stimulate and enable innovative ideas and initiatives which support the aims of the Digital Public Services working group.

Demonstrating value

There are a number of projects emerging which embody our desired approach to public service transformation. We will seek to use such projects as exemplars.

For example, EID Cymru is an electronic movement reporting system for farmers, livestock markets and abattoirs to report sheep moves. It represents a significant investment by the Welsh Government to ease the task of reporting sheep movements. It will be operational from November 2015. EIDCymru will provide the opportunity for farmers and processors to use the increased level of traceability to develop their businesses, to potentially improve their profitability and also to benefit the industry as a whole. EIDCymru will include support for those unable to use the electronic system.

The data gathered and created from a project such as this will have uses beyond the scope of the project itself. We will seek to explore how this data can be applied, shared, mapped and reused to innovate, improve and add value.

Where will we focus our effort?

The task of transforming our approach to public service delivery and ensuring that we use the tools available effectively to meet the needs of our citizens involves significant cultural and organisational change. This is recognised in work going on across the UK and beyond. In order to make progress we must focus our efforts in six areas.

1. Leadership, governance and capability

Organisations that have been at the forefront of delivering digital transformation have repeatedly indicated the importance of strong leadership and governance. It is therefore important that Wales ensures suitably skilled and empowered digital leadership is in place at both the national and local level.

The Welsh Government will appoint a Chief Digital Officer to champion and oversee the Government's digital service transformation and help drive transformational change across the Welsh public sector.

The role will support the Digital Public Services Working Group jointly chaired by the Minister for Public Services and the Deputy Minister for Technology and Skills and will be a Welsh Government focal point for private, academic and third sector engagement to support the public sector in the achievement of its digital vision of better, joined-up, more accessible and efficient services.

Whilst leadership to drive digital transformation is important, we also need to ensure we have the right skills and capabilities available across the civil service and Welsh public sector if

we are to truly exploit the potential of technology to transform services.

We will work with stakeholders such as employers, unions and learning providers to develop a national digital workforce learning framework that will build on ongoing efforts to share resources and include clear guidance and objectives, measures to promote and share good content and resources and, most importantly, encourage organisations to prioritise digital skills in local training programmes.

2. Services designed for users

If we want more people to use our digital services, we need to make sure that our digital services are compelling to the user, perhaps easier to access or more convenient than alternative provision. This means selecting the right services and designing them around customer needs.

We must also recognise that some people cannot or do not wish to engage digitally. We must maintain our commitment to digital by default but ensure we do so in a way which provides support to those who need it and by developing such a compelling digital offering that makes the digital approach the preferred approach.

We will work with stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors to develop a high quality, cross public sector assisted digital plan. This will help develop a consistent approach to providing services for people who have rarely or never been online across the Welsh public sector. It will also ensure that each service prioritised for digital transformation has a parallel plan to ensure that the assisted digital alternative is equally robust and appropriate.

We will develop a national service design standard based on customer needs and feedback and designed to work well on a range of web-enabled devices, including mobile phones.

3. Value for Money

A clear advantage to service providers in transitioning towards digital delivery is the ability to generate savings and deliver value for money. As stated previously, this cannot be considered the sole driving factor, however, it is important to recognise that efficiencies can be realised and these efficiencies can be reinvested in additional services.

We will encourage all public service organisations to consider their existing and planned service provision to determine which services should be delivered online. The Welsh Government will provide advice and guidance in order to introduce consistency and interoperability across the public sector in Wales.

The Welsh public sector is estimated to spend around £400million per annum on ICT. The National Procurement Service (NPS) for Wales is currently developing a plan to procure ICT more effectively for example by “buying it once” for the public sector and by exploiting cloud computing. It is also helping to develop local supply chains to maximise the opportunities for Welsh businesses to benefit from public sector spend.

There are many areas of ICT-related spend across the public sector ranging from data centres and mapping to wi-fi and websites where the NPS might be able help realise significant savings.

4. Sharing and Collaborating

Shared services for finance, HR and other back-office processes have the

potential to realise significant savings. This is equally true of online public services, which can and should be delivered consistently across organisations. At a time of severe budget pressures it makes sense to share solutions and approaches to content and applications, as well as the means of delivery.

Standardising (and sharing) service delivery mechanisms should start with standardising the service itself. This is a key recommendation of the 2012 Welsh Audit Office report on the ‘Use of technology to support improvement and efficiency in local government’.

Technical solutions that are developed in the open and that are published openly for re-use are critical. The Welsh public sector already has an appetite to work in this way and to build on this we will develop a common and open standards framework as a foundational step for the transformation of Welsh public services. The framework will cover:

- standards: identification of a suite of standards for Wales including agile and responsive design, architecture, data and interoperability
- procurement: how are open solutions assessed in purchasing decisions?
- implementation: how can open solutions be safely implemented on secure networks?
- sharing: a repository of Welsh open solutions, ready for re-use;

5. Using data

The public service sector in Wales does not make best use of the enormous volume of data it generates. It has a duty to use data to support performance accountability, to keep personal data secure and to share this data safely between agencies where

appropriate to support vulnerable people, improve services and ensure transparency and accountability, to enable others to use apply that data in innovative ways and to generate economic growth.

Estimates of the potential benefits to the UK economy associated with open data activities range from £1.8 billion to £25 billion. The fundamental basis for these lie in converting the inexorably increasing mountain of data produced by society's activities into a useful asset for increased productivity, greater efficiency and enhanced profitability.

A simple conversion on the basis of Welsh GVA, suggests potential annual benefits to Wales in the range of £63 million to £875 million, with 2,000 new jobs created by 2017.

We Predict Ltd, a Swansea-based Welsh SME is harnessing public sector information assets (including Open Data) to improve and develop systems to assist law enforcement agencies in crime prevention, including business crime.

Using the same technical capabilities they are also working with Welsh NHS datasets to develop tools, methods and approaches to assist in the planning and evaluation of health services, and to drive service improvement.

There is now a need to create a single coherent Welsh Public Sector Open Data Framework. This will complement existing and ongoing work and set some common ground rules and expectations for public services in Wales. It will also provide clarity on the nature and extent of our information assets, the ways in which we making these available and the opportunities

to add economic value to both Welsh public sector organisations and those who can beneficially exploit our information

6. Communication and promotion

We want those who are able to use our digital services to do so. The evidence suggests that some 86% of internet users in Wales go online to buy products and yet these same people are reluctant to use online public services.

We need to make people aware of the services that are available online and the benefits of using them. For example, by simply rewording the payment information on parking tickets to promote online payment, Newport City Council increased online payment from 10% to 60% literally overnight.

However there is little promotional activity carried out across organisational or geographic boundaries. We will therefore identify opportunities to join up marketing campaigns, promote nationally and make better use of social media.

Many online transactions require users to prove who they are. These processes can be cumbersome and bureaucratic, discouraging people from accessing services online. At the same time, many people have genuine concerns about identity theft and prefer to engage with public services via traditional methods.

The UK Government is developing a new national approach to proving identity online. It will simplify the process of proving identity and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy by re-using existing proofs of identity. It will also conform to international standards for online security and give customers

complete confidence that their personal data and services are secure and their privacy protected.

The move to the single UK Government website (gov.uk) not only ensures a consistent style and approach to digital services but it has also been the catalyst for a major rationalisation in the number of government websites – and therefore a significant reduction in costs. The gov.uk platform receives some 10 million visits per week from customers.

The success of gov.uk is a strong reason for Wales to consider the merits of a creating its own single publishing platform. We will therefore carry out an audit of all public sector digital customer access points and conduct a feasibility study to consider the costs and benefits of a single publishing platform for the Welsh public sector services potentially using a cloud based solution. We will focus our approach around the new .cymru and .wales domain names.

We will therefore work with the UK Government to ensure the new system can be used by all Welsh services as soon as possible.

Through these actions we want Wales to be the first part of the UK to achieve a single public service approach which transcends organisational and geographic boundaries. A service may involve several organisations working together on various components. People will always move about and will expect to access services from different parts of the country. We want to harness digital technologies to help introduce a single citizen-centric approach to local online services. The focus must be on the service being delivered, rather than on the technologies or the organisations

underpinning that service. The service must respond to the needs of the citizen, and must cater for all users of that service, whenever, wherever and however they choose to access that service.