Digital, Data and Technology Strategy

Contents

Introduction

- Expectations are that dealings with PHSO will be seamless both on and off line. People and organisations want to easily find information on our website, share information electronically or to call us when they need to. This helps live our purpose of inspiring a better relationship with people and their public services.

- This is a time of great innovation and technological change. Our world has changed but we are behind the curve. PHSO needs to keep pace without losing sight of the people whose experiences form the basis of our work. This strategy enables us to move towards being a digital Ombudsman service, creating firm foundations for future years.

- The need for our service has increased. Equally significant is a rise in the number of people asking for information about their complaint, our work or the evidence we've considered demonstrating the evolving digital literacy and expectations of the public.

- At the heart of this strategy are the people and organisations we are here to help. We aim to make the best use of digital tools, data science, engineering and technologies leading to data-driven personalisation. This will help us and our partners maximise actionable insight from complaints, improve public services and help as many people as possible.

- We need to start collecting more data to enable us to understand our present and predict the future. This means starting at the point of contact and mining each interaction to create rich pictures about our complainants and organisations they are complaining about so that we can handle complaints better and have a greater impact on public services.

- This is a bold undertaking as we will need to transform how we work. But we won't just deliver one big bang, we will look to make our work easier and more efficient whenever we can, making incremental improvements that support our strategic intent to become a digital ombudsman.

Objectives

- To be a leading digital Ombudsman: We'll provide an easy to use digital service that supports and guides our target audiences through the complaints process from finding out about us to asking for the evidence we considered.

- We will be data driven: We will use data to deliver better complaint handling and make informed, timely decisions. We will use data science, AI and machine learning to exploit new and traditional datasets, to predict demand, identify systematic insight and share insight to improve public services. Ultimately, this creates efficiency, manage demand and provide value for money

- Technology will be efficient, secure and sustainable: Our technology will be sustainable, efficient and secure by default and design. We recognise the role that technology can play in reducing our carbon footprint. We secure our solutions, becoming a trusted steward of personal data.

- PHSO staff will be digitally confident: We will have a digitally confident workforce supported by motivated specialists. PHSO staff will have technology that is easy to use, simplifies delivery, and increases employee satisfaction and engagement.

Audiences

- **Complainants:** People can find us when they need us in 'moments that matter'. And then guided through the system as easily as possible. If they are too early to make a complaint, they are signposted to what to do next. We will make it easy to track progress of a complaint and provide information. People will have the choice to use digital solutions.

- **Members of Parliament**: PHSO's digital services help MPs and their staff find out about or make complaints as simply as possible. MPs and their staff can access information and insight into their portfolios and issues in their constituencies.

- **Organisations we investigate:** Our public sector partners can find out about us and how we investigate complaints and understand what's expected of them. Organisations we investigate can safely share information and evidence with us online. Complaint managers and public service stakeholders can browse information and insight into their organisation, sectors or areas.

- **PHSO colleagues:** Our casework process is digital from start to end, with records appropriately and accurately recorded, reducing the administration so they can focus on investigations. PHSO's leaders and managers harness an innovation mindset to make the best use of new technology and data to drive their business.

Insights

- The pandemic accelerated the move to digital services, with the Consumer Digital Index reporting 99% of the UK were online in 2022.

- 94% of households have internet access and 88% of adults had used a smartphone to access the internet in 2021. This includes organisations we investigate including the NHS (80% of UK online adults accessing NHS sites and apps in December 2021) and UK government online (71% September 2021).

- Take-up of PHSO's online form has increased by only 5% since 2018. Approximately 25% of complaints come in via the online form. The quality is variable leading intake caseworkers to contact the complainants to clarify or redo the form.

- More people are asking us for their personal information, freedom of information and data about organisations we investigate. That's why we are focussing on making information proactively available, so that the public, MPs and others can browse information about the services, sectors and places that are important to them.

- Over 70% of the people who contact us aren't ready to make a complaint. Helping them take the next step through digital signposting and guidance, we can retarget our skilled staff to work on progressing the complaints that we can look at.

- Our current service is time-limited as our contact centre is only open during the working day. This makes it harder for people who work, study or care to get in touch with us. We need to either manage expectations or build an always-open digital front door.

Design principles

1. Understand people and their needs
2. Solve a whole problem for people
3. Provide a joined up experience across all channels for the people we work for and with
4. Make PHSO's digital services accessible, simple to use and inclusive
5. Make sure everyone can use the service
6. Have a multidisciplinary team
7. Use agile ways of working
8. Iterate and improve frequently
9. Create a secure service which protects everyone's' privacy
10. Define what success looks like and publish performance data
11. Choose the right tools and technology, cloud first
12. Make new source code open
13. Use and contribute to open standards, common components and patterns
14. Operate a reliable service

Based on Service Standard - Service Manual - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Delivery overview

Get data right, understand our world, work smarter, have more impact

Digital front door capturing rich data at the point of contact	Expanded CMS data sets including demographics, age, NHS ID	Improved casework data quality and depth	Actionable insight and data available to all staff, OWIs, MPs and other stakeholders	Dynamic casework model forecasting quantity and type of complaints

Quick wins
- Unified search (DPP, web, FOI disclosure) telling us what people are looking for

Quick wins
- extend mandatory fields in CMS to capture demographic and personal data of complaint subject
- PDS look up to enable NHS ID and basic data to be autoppoluated
- MP database created and maintained
- OWI database created and maintained
- NHS clinical coding extracted from evidence and stored within CMS/data warehouse
- Automated precedent checks

Quick wins
- Geographic searches and insight
- NHS clinical coding enabling detailed views of types of complaints, reporting on trends/ themes enabling systemic complaint handling

Quick wins
- NHS clinical coding enabling detailed views of types of complaints, reporting on trends/ themes
- Publication of casework data (on website) to enable public/MPs/ OWI to filter on organisations, sector, constituency etc matched to external data sets e.g. OECD
- Additional rich data added to casework publication platform

Quick wins
- Refine existing model to maintain accuracy
- Single view of an employee

Work in parallel delivering on strategic objectives
- Front end design capturing data and enabling people to update their own information

Work in parallel delivering on strategic objectives
- Auto-population and reuse of CMS data, structuring data wherever possible to reduce re-keying and errors
- Automated lookups from external data sources

Work in parallel delivering on strategic objectives
- Systemic investigations prompted by machine learning spotting trends at the front door or in actual complaints
- OWI digital service providing intelligence on responsiveness, behaviour and compliance

Work in parallel delivering on strategic objectives
- Rich data on sectors, demographics, geography, etc. assuring confidence in our insight and reports
- Closing the loop for complainants, you said, we did

Work in parallel delivering on strategic objectives
- Incorporate rich data insight to provide detailed forecasting

Requires 24 months of rich data

Digital ombudsman service v0.1 Journey, benefits & building blocks

Complainants (and other service users)

#	Journey stage	Benefits	Building blocks

1	People can find us when they need to	Improved presence in search results
		
		Higher number of unique visitors
		
		Improved transparency
		
		Improved understanding of how complaints count
			Search engine optimisation
			
			Social media
			
			// comms strategy
			
			// outreach and engagement

2	When they find us they can make a complaint	Increased access to complaining at any time Reduced volume of calls received Reduced contact costs Improved data accuracy	Redesigned website based around complainant journey Unified search Integrated data warehouse serving information to the new website Generative AI driven choice architecture
3	People too early to make a complaint, are actively directed to what to do next	Reduced number of premature or unsuitable complaints Reduced admin costs for MPs and their offices, OWI Richer complaint data on how many resolved before PHSO	Managed OWI database including contacts for complaints Generative AI associate general enquiries with OWI e.g. driving license to DVLA Template enquiry to send initial complaint to OWI
4	We make it simple to contact their MP	Increased number of parliamentary complaints through templates and postcode look-up Improved quality of parliamentary complaints Improved data on efficiency of MP filter	Template enquiry form that people can complete to send a complaint request to their MP Constituency / postcode look up Managed Parliamentary database including MP's offices
5	People can create their own, secure account	Improved data accuracy as people can update own information Reduced volume of calls checking that PHSO has received communication Reduced cost of identity checks	ID verification Secure authentication Identity management solution (external ID linked to internal systems) Account UX Integration model (Web/CMS)
6	People can complete FOI requests online and through their account	Reduced cost of admin for FOI requests Reduced overall volume of FOI request (as checks will be done as part of digital FOI service) Improved transparency data	UX-led FOI service (prototype design completed and tested) Integration of digital FOI service and HoTH UX redesign of disclosure log (integrated into web search)
7	People can manage their privacy, communications and GDPR requests online and through their account	Reduced cost of GDPR compliance Increased personal agency of data subjects Reduced cost of identity verification Reduced data breaches due to misaddressing	UX privacy and communication settings Integrated privacy and communications processes with back office systems (complainant survey, CMS, HoTH) Secure document exchange
8	People can request and receive their material evidence online and through their account	Increased transparency of decision making Reduced lag in receiving comments on draft reports Reduced post and admin costs	// Proactive material evidence marking in casework
9	People can track the status of their complaint and information requests online	Reduced volume of calls Improved access for working people, people with disabilities Improved trust in PHSO	// Defined casework event schema (e.g. received, assigned, in progress) Integration with self service account Joined up, personalised data services using single ID across systems
10	People can share evidence, update their complaint and information or talk to a caseworker through their account	Reduced friction and lag in complaint process Reduced calls and contact Increased protection of caseworker identities	Seamless integration between account and CMS Document upload facility

11	People can give feedback about our service easily	Improved customer service through single account (real time feedback)
		
		Improved understanding of complaint interactions and experience
			// defined OAT processes
			
			// defined Exec office processes
			
			Feedback mechanism
			
			// CWP user engagement workstream

Key

//dependency

Digital ombudsman service v0.1 Journey, benefits & building blocks

MPs and their staff

Journey steps:

1. MPs and their staff can find us when they need to
2. When MPs find us they understand how to refer a complaint
3. MPs and their staff can easily access information about PHSO to support constituents
4. We make it simple for MPs to make a complaint
5. We make it simple for constituents to contact their MP through directed assistance
6. MPs can create their own, secure account
7. MPs can manage their privacy, communications and GDPR requests online and through their account
8. MPs can track the status of their complaints and information requests online
9. MPs can view information about their portfolios, constituencies or interests
10. MPs can share evidence, update their complaint and information or talk to a caseworker through their account
11. MPs can make online review requests or complain

Benefits

1.
- Improved presence in search results
- Higher number of unique visitors
- Improved transparency
- Improved understanding of how complaints count

2.
- Increased access to information about their role in complaints
- Improved responsiveness to constituents
- Reduced contact costs

3.
- Greater understanding of PHSO and its role
- Reduced volume of parliamentary complaints where MPS misunderstand what we can and can't look at

4.
- Reduced number of premature or unsuitable complaints
- Reduced admin costs for MPs and their offices, OWI
- Richer complaint data on how many resolved before PHSO

5.
- Increased number of parliamentary complaints through templates and postcode look-up
- Improved quality of parliamentary complaints
- Improved data on efficiency of MP filter

6.
- Improved data accuracy as MPs can update own information
- Reduced volume of calls checking that PHSO has received communication
- Reduced cost of identity checks

7.
- Reduced cost of GDPR compliance
- Increased personal agency of data subjects
- Reduced cost of identity verification
- Reduced data breaches due to misaddressing

8.
- Reduced volume of calls
- Improved access for working people, people with disabilities
- Improved trust in PHSO
- Improved parliamentary relationships

9.
- Improved access to information about complaints and compliance on a constituency level
- Improved access to thematic, systemic information
- Increased impact of complaining

10.
- Reduced friction and lag in complaint process
- Reduced calls and contact
- Increased protection of caseworker identities

11.
- Improved customer service through single account
- Improved understanding of complainant interactions and experience

Building blocks

1.
- Search engine optimisation
- Social media
- // comms strategy

2.
- Redesigned website providing MP specific information
- Constituency views
- Integrated data warehouse serving information to the new website
- Generative AI driven choice architecture

3.
- // complaints standards
- Redesigned website providing MP specific information

4.
- Managed OWI database including contacts for complaints
- Generative AI associate general enquiries with OWI e.g. driving license to DVLA
- Digital parliamentary complaint service

5.
- Directed assistance - template enquiry form that people can complete to send a complaint request to their MP
- Constituency / postcode look up
- Managed Parliamentary database including MP's offices

6.
- ID verification reusing Parliamentary authentication
- //parliamentary IDs
- Delegated authority for MP office staff
- User management (MP's office can locally set users)
- Account UX

7.
- UX privacy and communication settings
- Integrated privacy and communications processes with back office systems (complainant survey, CMS, HoTH)
- Secure document exchange

8.
- // Defined casework event schema (e.g. received, assigned, in progress)
- Integration with self service account
- Joined up, personalised data services using single ID across systems

9.
- Geo-tagged constituency data source

10.
- Seamless integration between account and CMS
- Document upload facility

11.
- // defined OAT processes
- // defined Exec office processes

Key
//dependency

Digital ombudsman service v0.1 Journey, benefits & building blocks

Organisations we investigate

Journey steps:

1. People can find us when they need to
2. People too early to make a complaint, are assisted to contact OWI
3. We make it simple to contact their MP
4. We let OWI's know when a complaint is made about them
5. OWIs can access a secure, corporate account
6. We let OWI's know when a complaint status changes or is closed
7. OWIs can submit evidence online and through their account
8. OWIs can see complaints made about them and their sector/ area
9. OWIs can see and update compliance actions attributed to them
10. OWIs can access best practice in complaint handling

Benefits

1.
- Improved understanding of how to complaint about OWI
- Reduced avoidable contact for OWI
- Improved transparency for OWI

2.
- Improved customer feedback for OWIs
- Improved service satisfaction reporting for OWI
- Reduced cost of complaint handling

3.
- Reduced number of premature or unsuitable complaints
- Richer complaint data on how many resolved before PHSO
- Improved insight for OWI on how many complaints progress to MP referral

4.
- Improved service data
- Reduced friction in responding to complaints
- Clear line of sight on future investigations

5.
- Reduced costs of administering complaints
- Improved data for internal reporting and statutory annual reports

6.
- Reduced overheads in responding to complaints that may already have been stopped by PHSO (process continues in OWI if not notified)

7.
- Improved timeliness of evidence requests
- Reduced lag in receiving comments on draft reports
- Reduced post and admin costs
- Reduced training costs for OWI

8.
- Better insight into emerging trends and themes
- Improved public services

9.
- Improved timeliness of compliance
- Improved corporate governance
- More objective demonstration that things have been put right
- Reduced cost of compliance

10.
- Increased signup to complaint standard training

Building blocks

1.
- Standard text and content template provided to OWI by PHSO
- Guidance content for OWI
- // comms strategy
- // complaints standards

2.
- Managed OWI database (contacts for complaints)
- Generative AI associate general enquiries with OWI e.g. driving license to DVLA
- Template enquiry to send initial complaint to OWI
- OWI metadata collection

3.
- MP/OWI metadata reporting
- Template enquiry (complaint request) for MPs
- Constituency / postcode look up
- Managed Parliamentary database including MP's offices

4.
- Notification service
- OWI contact database
- OWI authentication utilising own accredited authentication teams (.gov.uk, nhsmail)

5.
- Secure authentication
- Identity management solution (external ID linked to internal systems)
- Account UX
- Integration model (Web/CMS)

6.
- Integration of OWI solution with PHSO CMS
- // Defined casework event schema (e.g. received, assigned, in progress)

7.
- Secure document exchange

8.
- //publishing geographical / sector casework data
- Geo/sector database(linked to unified websearch)

9.
- Compliance recorded in structured data source
- //compliance schema
- API/integration

10.
- Templates and guidance for OWI

Key
// dependency

Digital ombudsman service v0.1 Journey, benefits & building blocks

Our people

#	Journey	Benefits	Building blocks
1	Everyone looking for a job can find out about working at PHSO	Improved presence in search results / Higher number of applicants / Improved transparency / Improved diversity at the application stages	Search engine optimisation / Social media / // comms strategy / // people and talent strategy
2	When they find us they can apply	Increased access to recruitment portal / Increased volume of applicants / Improved accessibility	Redesigned website prompts to come and work for us / Capability to speak to a human built in
3	If they are successful, we make it easy to complete onboarding	Faster onboarding reducing spend on interims / Improved handovers between outgoing/incoming staff / Better first impression of PHSO	End to end employee journey / New employee portal / Digital forms with electronic signatures / Evidence / ID scanning and upload
4	When they start, they have everything they need to do their job	Reduced induction friction / Reduced training overheads / Reduced new starter stress / More accurate impression of how we want to work at PHSO	Single version of the truth employee directory / Role based access / Seamless single sign-on across all corporate applications / Intranet review / Personal work account
5	Its easy for our staff to manage their working lives and tasks	Better employee satisfaction / Improved timeliness of tasks e.g. expenses, holiday booking	Data integration across corporate applications / Agreed employee data schema / Migration from documents to digital forms / //defined PaT process and policies / Data retention
6	Our staff have access to their personal information, role and can update their contact information	Reduced cost of GDPR compliance / Improved data accuracy and timeliness / Reduced data breaches	// Midland HR development and APIs / // HR policies
7	Managers can easily update who's working where, absent or leaving	Improved performance reporting / Improved cyber security / Reduced administration of joiners, movers and leavers / Fewer challenges to access information	// Manager training and awareness re staff management / //defined PaT process and policies / Asynchrous data integration between CMS and data warehouse
8	Our people can learn, develop and manage their careers at whatever level of digital competence they need	Increased DDaT professional certification / Increased policy compliance / Increased digital literacy / Reduced turnover of qualified staff	// Apprenticeship and early career offer (PaT) / // DDaT career pathways and job families
9	Our people and talent professionals have access to the information they need to manage our workforce	Increased visibility of workforce trends / Reduced cost of producing performance or establishment reporting / Increased compliance and reduced cost of statutory publications	PaT dynamic dashboards and data visualisations / Publication scheme (people and organogram) process
10	Our digital environments works for everyone	Increased responsiveness to reasonable adjustments at work / Increased retention of neurodivergent staff or those with disabilities / Reduced administration overheads	UX by design approach for core applications / Accessibility and usability standards / Internal user panel / Procurement standards
11	When our people move on, we make it easy to manage pensions, apply for references and obtain personal data	Reduced administration of requests / Improved experience of PHSO	Authentication of ex-employees / //PaT pension and payroll policies

Key
dependency

Delivery overview

We start by getting the front end right to capture the data that will allow us to deploy joined up digital services and produce actionable, impactful insight.

Year 1	building capabilities	Year 2/3	joined up digital services	Year 4/5	data driven
• Call recording/transcript capability • Improvement to public facing casework decision portal • *'Capturing people's stories'* Data quality, literacy and ownership • Define and design multi-channel casework process to enable digital services • Right-size collaborative, resourced and skilled DDaT function • Increase data capability • Enable colleagues to be digitally confident • Establish and embed AI • Identity management – a single view of a person and their information (staff and public) • Systems maintenance and infrastructure refresh	• UX driven website refresh with unified search (including signposting) • Implement multi-channel casework process to enable digital services • Implementation of AI driven technologies • Implement digital self-service (information requests and account through digital channels) • Automated publication by default • Dashboards and insight • Case management system review • Integrated service desk • Corporate application management • Systems maintenance and infrastructure refresh • Thematic data discovery and detailed demand modelling	• End to end digital service using AI driven personalisation *See annex for detail* • Forecasting and performance models • Systems maintenance and infrastructure refresh • Benchmarking and review DDaT service