

Customer Services and Digital Strategy

2026/2029

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City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Making Council Services Easier

Our Vision

We want council services to be:

- Easier to use
- Faster to access
- Available when you need them
- Simple to understand
- Supportive and inclusive

We want residents, businesses and communities to benefit from smarter, faster and more connected services. Most importantly, we want it to be easier to get the help you need.

Residents and tenants have helped shape this plan. They told us services need to be easier to find, simpler to use, clearer to understand and still available by phone or face-to-face when needed.

What This Means For You

Starting now to 2029, you should be able to:

- ✓ Access more services online, any time of day
- ✓ Get updates about your request more easily
- ✓ Spend less time waiting
- ✓ Avoid repeating information
- ✓ Get quicker answers to simple questions
- ✓ Continue to receive support by phone or in person when needed

Our Promise

Digital first, but never digital only

Online services will become easier and faster, but we will continue to support people who need help by phone, face-to-face, in libraries, Family Hubs and community venues.

Some issues are more complex and need a conversation with a person. We will keep support in place for people who need trusted, personal help.

We will design services to be simple, accessible and easy to use, with clear plain English information and extra help for people who need it.



How You Will Access Services

More choice. Better support.

No two residents are the same, so we will offer different ways to access council services.



Online

- Report issues
- Make payments
- Request services
- Track progress
- Find advice and information
- Available 24 hours a day



In Your Community

- Speak to council staff in local places
- Get help closer to where you live
- Use libraries, Local Centres and community venues
- Get support with more complex issues
- Receive support through a more local, neighbourhood approach

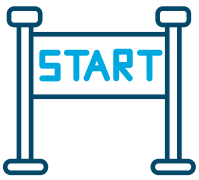


By Phone

- Speak to an adviser
- Get help with more complex issues
- Request a callback if you do not want to wait

What We Want To Change

Today, some residents have to contact more than one service to resolve a single issue.In future, we want:



One clear place to start

Whether you contact us online, by phone or in the community, we want it to be clear where to go first.



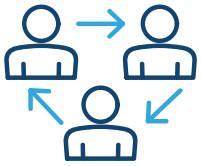
Better communication

We will give clearer updates so you know what is happening and what to expect next.



Faster resolution

We will improve how requests are handled so more issues are resolved sooner.



Less repetition

We will join information up better so you do not have to keep telling us the same thing.



More joined-up support

We will make it easier for teams to work together so you get the right help first time.

Everyday Things You Can Report

Simple ways to tell us about local issues.

What will get easier?

It will be easier to tell us about problems online or over the phone.

You will be able to report things like:

- Potholes
- Road and pavement problems
- Parking issues
- Fly-tipping
- Missed bins
- Housing repairs



We will make our forms easier to fill in. We will also give better updates, so you know what is happening.

In the future, you may be able to send us photos and videos to show us a problem. This could help us understand issues more quickly and get the right help in place first time.

For simple phone requests, a voice assistant may be able to take the details and send the request for you. If your problem is more complicated, or you need extra help, you will still be able to speak to a member of staff.

We will make these improvements step by step over the next few years.

The Main Things We Will Improve

Making services easier, clearer and more joined up.

1. Easier Access

- We will make services easier to find, easier to use and easier to complete.
- We will make things easier to find on the website and show the most common requests more clearly on the homepage.

2. Stronger Communities

- We will bring more support into neighbourhoods and help people access services where they live.
- We will make it easier to speak to council staff locally and get support in familiar community places

3. Better Online Services

- We will improve the website and offer more services online.
- We will make more online forms simpler, clearer and quicker to complete.

4. Better Technology

- We will connect systems together so services work better behind the scenes.
- This will help reduce delays, duplication and the need for residents to repeat information.

5. Better Skills

- We will help residents and staff develop the skills and confidence to use digital tools.
- We will provide practical support so people can learn at their own pace and get help when they need it.

6. Better Information

- We will use data safely and responsibly to improve services and make better decisions.
- We will use data and new technology, including AI, carefully and responsibly. People will still be able to speak to council staff when they need to.

Together, these priorities will help create a more joined-up council that is easier to deal with and better able to meet residents' needs.

Supporting Our Communities

Helping more people get online.

Not everyone finds technology easy to use. Some people lack:

- Digital skills
- Confidence
- Devices
- Internet access

We are committed to helping people build the skills and confidence they need to benefit from digital services.

If You Need Help Getting Digital

If you need help using digital services, support is already available in local places and online.

- ✓ **Libraries/Local Centres:**
  use computers and free Wi-Fi, get help from library staff, and book one-to-one digital support.
- ✓ **Community Lounges:**
  get local advice and support, including help from Digital Champions in community spaces.
- ✓ **Family Hubs:**
  families can get information, guidance and support in person, with digital advice also available through the Digital Family Hub.
- ✓ **Community organisations:**
  work with trusted local partners who can help people build skills, confidence and access to support.
- ✓ **Digital inclusion programmes:**
  programmes such as DigitALL help residents gain confidence with digital tools, online services, learning and work.

We will keep working with partners so people can get help in a way that feels local, practical and easy to access.

What Will Improve?

Better services and a better experience.



Faster services



Easier online access



Better telephone support



More local support



Clearer updates



More joined-up services

Better Services

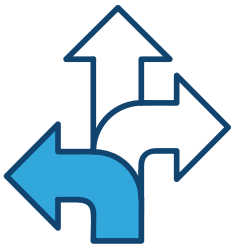
We will:

- ✓ Improve the council website
- ✓ Make forms easier to complete
- ✓ Make it easier to tell us when something has gone wrong, put things right sooner and learn from what happened
- ✓ Make better use of technology
- ✓ Reduce unnecessary paperwork
- ✓ Give staff better tools and information

This means council staff can spend more time helping residents and less time dealing with administration.

Looking Ahead

What success looks like.



By 2029 we want residents to say:

- ✓ Council services are easier to use
- ✓ I can get help when I need it
- ✓ I can choose how I contact the council
- ✓ I get updates about my request
- ✓ Problems are resolved more quickly
- ✓ The council listens and learns





Success means creating a council that is:

- **Easier to contact**
- **Simpler to navigate**
- **Faster to respond**
- **Better connected**
- **More responsive to residents' needs**







Our Commitment

We will continue improving services now while preparing for the future of local government in North Staffordshire.

Over the next two years, we will improve the website, make more forms easier to use, improve housing repairs reporting, introduce better telephone support, develop local support in communities and help more people build digital confidence.

We will also use better digital infrastructure and data to support cleaner, safer and better-connected places across the city.

Everything we do will be guided by one simple goal:
To make council services easier, faster and better for everyone.



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