

Resident Experience Programme

Update

Resident Experience Programme Background & Scope

The Resident Experience Programme was reset in January 2023 and structured around three phases of work.

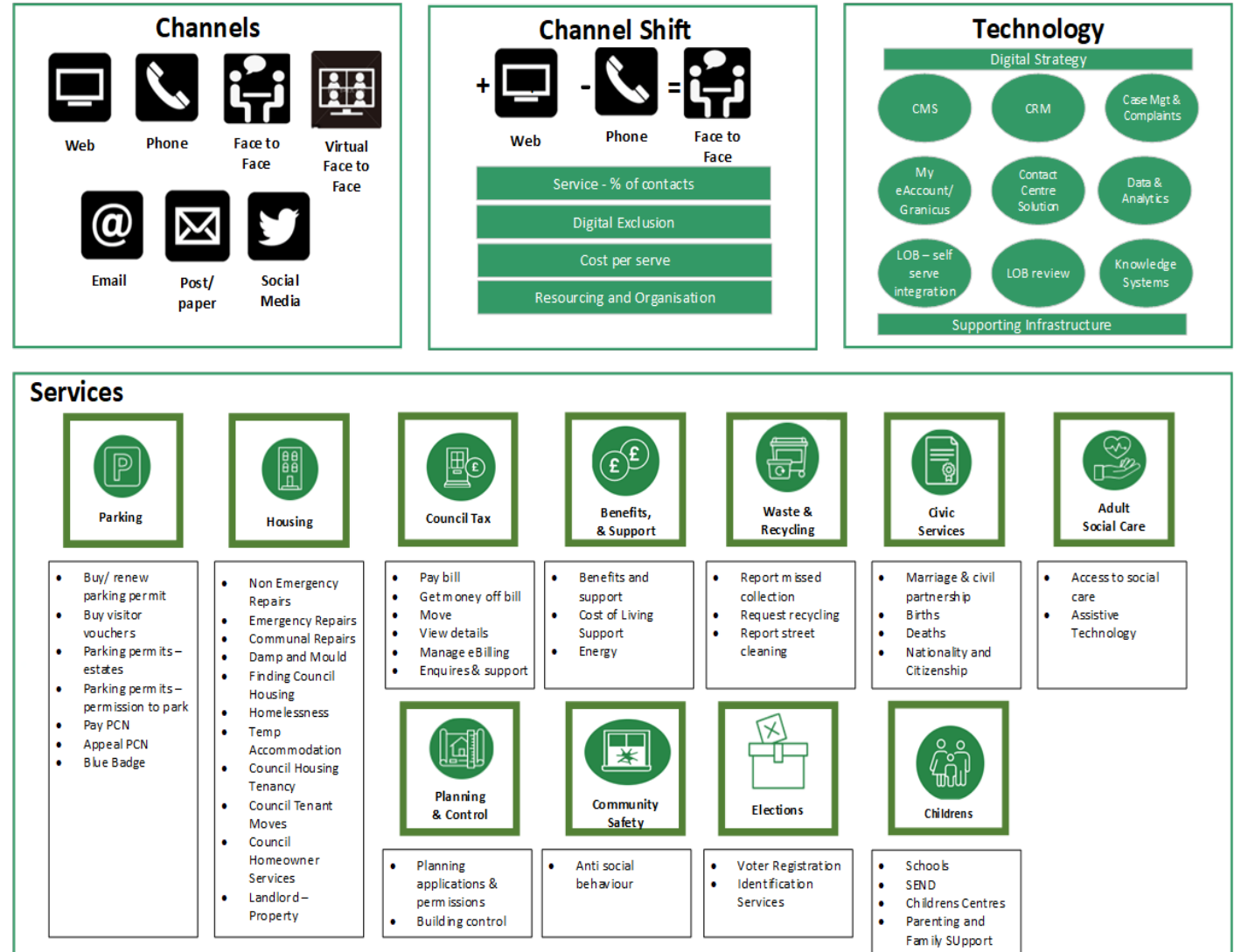
Phase 1: focus on improvements to the Council's telephone and face to face resident services and delivery of tactical changes to improve resident satisfaction by March 2024.

Phase 2: define our future resident experience offer and identify the business case, roadmap and funding required to implement the offer for Executive approval, currently scheduled by the end of March 2024.

Phase 3: focus on the more complex work required to make significant improvements to our digital offer to residents and operating model.

The programme aims to deliver real transformation to the Council's resident services, following years of under-investment and growing complexity of resident needs.

The programme scope was set to ensure that the resident experience is considered from end to end and includes; contact channels, the way the council is organised, staff, leadership, processes and data.



Resident Experience Programme Phase 1 Progress

Face to Face

- Redesign and launch of Access Islington Central Hub in 222 Upper Street in July 2023 & South Hub in September 2023.
- North Hub scheduled for launch Spring 2024.
- Since their launch – we have continued to support **digitally excluded residents** and **over 600 Connection Sessions have taken place to support residents with complex needs.**

Telephone

- Simplification of call routing and rationalisation of phone numbers to help residents get to the right service area first time – leading to an immediate **16% reduction in call volume.**
- Implementation of Omnichannel solution and roll out of telephony channel from September 2023.
- Residents are provided with clear, consistent messaging, details of queue position and the opportunity to request call backs – leading to **14% reduction in queue abandonment.**
- Daily [monitoring](#) allows real time management of queues – with a **reduction in average wait time from 6 mins to 3.5 mins** in Access Islington.
- Data and analytics is also being used to support improvements in agent call handing and identifying training requirements – **reducing average handing time by 1.15 mins** in Access Islington.

Digital Channels

- **Launch of new digital portal** in January 2024.
- **Redesigned website home page and upgrade to search functionality** launched in November 2023 – making it easier for residents to find the information they need.
- **Full review of council website's content in progress** – ensuring content is simpler, more accessible, up to date and measurable.

Upskilling our Contact Centre Staff

- **Programme of customer service skills training designed and rolled out to over 120 staff** in all 3 contact centres.
- **33 Bespoke service training courses** designed and rolled out to staff in Access Islington to support cross skilling and additional resilience for the contact centre, supporting reductions in average handling time and failure demand.

Resident Experience Complaints Management

Action

- **Redesign of end-to-end complaints management process**
- Introduction of **enhanced governance and reporting arrangements** – supported by a **new Complaints Improvement Board**.
- **Recruitment of additional staff** to address historical under resourcing
- **Implementation of new Govmetric complaint management system** in January 2024 – replacing outdated technology and improving the ability to analyse and respond to resident feedback and identify opportunities for learning and service improvement
- **Consolidation of the two housing complaint teams into a single unit** – recruiting additional staff to meet current and ongoing demand
- Development of Housing Improvement Plan – responding to the Housing Ombudsman P49 report, **incorporating changes and improvements across the whole service**.
- **Website content rewritten and refreshed** – in line with Ombudsman requirements.
- **Complaints policy and Compensation guidelines rewritten and refreshed** – in line with Ombudsman guidance.
- **New complaints network established** – Complaints Leads across the council with a focus on lessons learnt, quality, consistency and shared expertise

Resident Experience Complaints Management

Impact

- **Stage 2 backlog cleared on 16 May 2023** – with all subsequent complaints complying with agreed timescales
- **The LGSCO wrote to the Council reporting satisfaction with our response** to their investigation and the actions taken to improve the resident experience – their investigation was subsequently closed in June 2023
- **Housing backlog cleared in August 2023** – complaints are now being investigated more quickly at stage 1 of the complaints process.
- **All complaints staff across the Council now using the Complaints Case Tracker system** – providing greater visibility and management assurance at all stages

Next Steps

- **Implementation of Housing Improvement Plan**
- **Development of Phase 2 of Complaint Management Solution** – further enhancing insight from complaints and other resident feedback.
- **Establishment of a programme of customer journey mapping** – identifying opportunities to reduce failure demand, improve the resident experience and ensure resident feedback informs learning, staff development and service design and delivery
- **Development of new mandatory complaint investigation skills training and letter writing** programmes for all staff – ensuring robust investigations and empathetic responses to resident concerns
- **Complaint working groups with residents** – to assist with further improvements across all stages of the process and to co-design a new Customer Charter to elevate the resident experience across the organisation.
- **Exploration of use of AI** to capture themes and issues, as well as to assist with responses.

Resident Experience – Service Review

Service reviews have been carried out and signed off for:

- Adults Social Care – Front Door
- Parking
- Housing Needs and
- Housing Repairs

Completed **service reviews have to date identified 226 opportunities** categorised as either Quick Wins, or Medium / Long-Term opportunities that will be captured in business cases.

Quick Wins

Parking

- **Blue badge webpages reviewed and updated** to include a step-by-step guide.
- **Blue badge renewal letters sent out earlier** – significantly reducing last minute applications and phone calls.
- **Back-office staff availability aligned with contact centre opening hours** – leading to reduced volume of repeat calls.
- **Changes to the parking permit refund process** - leading to **80% reduction** in refund timescales.
- **Process changes introduced in permit applications** – eliminating the risk of customers receiving a PCN while an application is being completed.

Adult Social Care

- **Amendments to safeguarding form** – supporting accurate completion and faster resolution.
- **Updates to automatic response emails** – providing clear information regarding next steps to reduce chase up calls.

Service reviews in progress or to be commenced:

- Council Tax and Business Rates
- Highways
- Housing Tenancy
- Waste and Recycling
- Children's Services
- Planning

Housing Repairs

- Details of timescales have been included as part of online repairs reporting to help set resident expectations and help prevent repeat calls.
- Process for reviewing completed repairs has been updated, to help ensure repairs meet certain standards. This is helping build resident confidence and improve satisfaction.
- New standards for handling no-access and rescheduling scenarios have been introduced which should lead to a 15% reduction in failure demand.

Registrars

- Change in website content to ensure certificate timescales are clear which has reduced contact volumes.
- Clarity provided on failed online Citizenship bookings to explain Home Office timescales has significantly reduced contact centre contacts.

Phase 2 Resident Research and Benchmarking – Resident Engagement

To support the creation of a future target operating model and business case for phase 3, we are undertaking resident research and benchmarking with other LA's. The themes below are based on feedback from residents visiting Access Islington alongside insights derived from mystery shopping, call listening and wider data analysis:

Communication

- **Residents valued the face to face and human contact at Access Islington** versus "someone behind a keyboard" on the phone.
- Residents felt they received **mixed messages across the multiple Islington contact channels** and spoke about their frustrations of being passed between multiple people within the council and **having to re-tell their story multiple times**.
- **Residents wanted more clarity about the next steps** once they had raised an issue.

Clear signposting

- **Residents were often unclear who to contact** to get the right support for their issue.
- **Residents didn't understand why or who they were being transferred or referred to** - building frustration.
- **Challenges with navigating the website or lack of clarity when speaking to someone** on the phone meant some **residents felt it was better to visit Access Islington** to have a conversation enabling clear direction and support for their issue.

Wrap around support

- **Those visiting the Access Islington hubs often had more than one issue** they needed support with and **highlighted the benefit of having an in-person conversation, where they feel listened to and are supported by patient and understanding Islington staff**.
- **The importance of building a relationship with a single professional who can provide a singular point of contact** to help coordinate their needs across many different council services was highlighted on multiple occasions.
- **Some of the residents had heard about support via VCS partners and other agencies**.

Digital service

- **There are a range of digital self-serve options on the website, but system issues prevented residents from completing some tasks** without assistance e.g., residents were unable to renew their parking permit online due to issues with the Taranto system.
- **Website is home to a lot of information, but it is difficult to navigate**, as echoed in the web survey.
- **Residents were very positive about the digital support they could receive f2f in the Access Islington hub**; however, a number queried why there couldn't be additional support over the phone and felt agents had limited knowledge of the information on the website.

Resident trust in council

- **Residents repeatedly reported that it took multiple attempts across a variety of channels to get a response from the council** on their request or follow-up on actions previously agreed to.
- **Residents reported that they didn't trust the council to resolve their issue over the phone or digitally** and they manually kept a record of their contacts, reference numbers and who they were speaking with to evidence their contacts and prior agreements for inevitable follow-up.
- **Residents reported that they didn't see the point in leaving feedback or making a complaint** as it would have no impact.

Accessibility & inclusivity

- **Residents felt the support provided in the hubs enabled them to access services when they were unable to do so digitally** or over the phone.
- **Additional language options and support online** would be welcome for those learning English who struggled to interpret correspondence.
- **Navigating the website and accessing and completing forms on smartphones or tablets is challenging**.

Phase 3 Business Case Timelines

- Timeline below shows the proposed timeline for the phase 3 business case approval.

