Digital Experts Programme
MyStaffsApp – case study update

Background to the project

Residents and businesses in two-tier areas need to interact with both county and district councils to carry out their business – but customers often neither care nor need to know which organisation provides what service.

The partners involved in this project also recognised that consumer behaviour is changing – with residents transitioning rapidly to using tablets and smartphones rather than desktop computers. Furthermore, encouraging greater self-service allows councils to manage demand, reduce the cost of contact and free up resources to help those in greater need of support.

To make it easier for residents to access services and more cost effective for the councils to serve them, Staffordshire County Council worked in partnership with the district councils across the county[1] to develop a 'MyStaffsApp', a smartphone App, offering access to a range of services provided by both county and district councils.

The project funding from the LGA focused on supporting the collaborative development of the App functionality between the partners and suppliers – involving design workshops, training and developing the 'profiles' for each council.

The position in Spring 2016

The App went live for a core group of councils during the summer of 2015, following a series of design workshops and profile-building sessions and work to integrate the App with the National Land & Property Gazetteer.

During early 2016, the project team developed profile pages for the remaining district councils, so that by the time of initial case study residents in Staffordshire were able to access a range of services from both the county and the eight districts in the area via the App.

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[1] Tamworth BC, Lichfield DC, Cannock Chase, South Staffordshire DC, Stafford BC, Newcastle-under-Lyme BC, Staffordshire Moorlands BC and East Staffordshire DC

By the end of March 2016 the App had over 5,000 active users and has been downloaded onto over 9,000 devices. There have been over 39,891 user sessions (each session comprising multiple clicks) since the first launch, generating over 250,000 hits.

Staffordshire County Council made a conservative estimate that even if only 20 per cent of these sessions helped to avoid a telephone call to the council (at a standard cost of £2.83), then the savings on avoidable contact already amounted to just over £22,500 across the partnership.

Our original case study and vox pops can be found at
http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/productivity/-/journal_content/56/10180/6357119/ARTICLE

The position in Autumn 2016

Activity on the App has continued to increase, potentially helping the partners avoid significant contact costs.

The table below illustrates the trends in take-up and use since February 2016.

	Feb 2016	Sept 2016	Oct 2016
Total Users	4,883	7,897	8913
Total Devices	8,778	13,964	14,982
Total Sessions	32,852	58,158	62,077
Total Hits	262,434	471,517	501,766

By applying the same conservative financial assumptions as in the original case study, by the end of October 2016 the App had generated estimated savings on avoidable contact of over £35,000 across the partnership.

However, given the increasing propensity of the UK's adult population to go online (87.9 per cent of adults or 45.9 million having used the internet in the last three months according to the Office for National Statistics[2]) as well as the continued growth in digital take-up of government services reported by Government Digital Services (reaching almost 74 per cent by the end of 2013[3]), a more realistic view of the percentage of contact avoided would be significantly higher

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[2] ONS internet users in the UK 2016;
https://www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2016
[3] https://gds.blog.gov.uk/2014/04/02/digital-marches-on-rising-take-up-falling-costs/

at 50 per cent. As a result, the partners will have benefited from a projected saving of approaching £88,000.

Some of the increased traffic on the App is a result of an active marketing campaign undertaken during the summer of 2016 which promoted the App via social media, on bus tickets and via a pop-up on the county website. The partners are continuing to promote usage by:

- Improving the App's presence on the website
- Advertising in local magazines
- Advertising on highways maintenance vehicles
- Targeted web advertising
- Promotion through social media channels.

The increasing functionality of the App has also helped to drive user sessions. By early October 2016, for instance, free school meals, adoption and fostering, and libraries were all live on the App.

A new tile also allowed user to link straight through to police services, further increasing the range of public services available via the MyStaffs App.

The matrices in the Appendix detail the functionality available in each district in mid-2016. Future developments include:

- Superfast broadband alerts
- Further services from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council
- Bus real-time information
- Booking an appointment to register a birth or death
- My Wedding (new functionality and restyle)
- New profiles for Stoke and Staffordshire Moorlands
- Styling changes for web Apps currently linked to MyStaffs (Report it and Order a copy certificate).

In conclusion, the partners have made significant progress in developing and promoting the App, as well as in realising the value of the initial Digital Experts support, and will continue to bring in new features in the future to enhance its usage and value.

Contact for further information

For further information on this project, please contact:

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Appendix – Functionality available on App by district council (mid-2016)

	Staffs Moorlands	Newcastle	Stafford	East Staffs	Cannock	Lichfield	Tamworth	South Staffs
Council Tax								
Pay online			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Council Tax Bands			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Check your balance				✓			✓	✓
Check reduction entitlement						✓	✓	
Car Parking								
Car Parks and Charges		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Blue Badges								✓
Pay for a parking permit						✓		
Payments								
Pay an on street car park fine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pay an off street parking fine			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pay a bus-lane fine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pay your business rates						✓		
Pay a bid levy						✓		
Transport								
South Staffs Connect								✓
Bus Passes								✓
Public Route Planner								✓
Voluntary Car Scheme								✓
Housing								
Available Properties								✓
Applying for Housing								✓
Homelessness								✓
Housing Benefit						✓	✓	
Pay your housing rent							✓	
Pay your garage rent							✓	
Housing Benefits Overpayments							✓	

	Staffs Moorlands	Newcastle	Stafford	East Staffs	Cannock	Lichfield	Tamworth	South Staffs
Customer Feedback/Complaints							✓	✓
Job Vacancies								✓
Planning Information								✓
Development Management								
Building Control								✓
Locations								✓
Childrens Centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Libraries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recycling Centres	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registrars	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Schools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wedding Venues	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leisure Centres/Sports		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What's On		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Things to do							✓	
Waste and Recycling								
Check your bin collection day		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Report a missed collection		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Request a new bin		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
Request Assisted Collection								✓
Request an additional bin								✓
Arrange a bulky waste collection		✓	✓		✓			✓
IAG on what you can put in your bin and recycling						✓	✓	✓
Recycling Centres		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Pay for an additional brown bin						✓		

	Staffs Moorlands	Newcastle	Stafford	East Staffs	Cannock	Lichfield	Tamworth	South Staffs
Schools and Under 5's								
Term Dates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Under 5's	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Childcare	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Find local services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Looking after your under 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Help and Support for my Family	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
School Meals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Highways								
Report it	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Roadworks								✓
Registrations								
Book an appointment to Register a birth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IAG on reporting a death and book an appointment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IAG on Weddings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pay your ceremony balance online	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Order certificates online	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Your marriage choices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
IAG on Nationality Checking Service	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Locations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reminders	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Council Tax			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Business Rates			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Monthly Reminder			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Annual Reminder			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	