

Do it online

Communications Plan 2017-18

1. Introduction / Background

The 'Do it online' campaign has been selected as one of the Council's key campaigns for 2017/18 and aims to get residents to channel shift to use online council services.

Each year the customer services team receive circa 365,000 customer contacts, with 66% of these being telephone calls. A breakdown of communication type is noted below:

	Volumes by channel: April 16 - March 17				
	Calls	F2F	Email	Self Serve (online)	Total Contacts
Overall Total	243,939	90,075	24,344	6,591	364,949
% of Total	66%	25%	7%	2%	100%

Customer enquiries can range from information and advice, service requests; making applications for services, making payments, responding to consultations.

To facilitate this shift to digital transactions a number of key projects have been launched to support this including:

- Updates to the Council website, including a new top task feature on the homepage
- A comprehensive review and update of all online forms using a new 'Victoria' package
- Improvements to service specific request systems e.g. new bulky waste booking form
- Development of a new customer portal "My Stockton"

The transition to online services brings many benefits to residents and will allow them to request services 24/7 at a time convenient to them in a simple and efficient manner.

This will also allow the Council to offer great online service to its residents whilst making the process more efficient and cost effective. SOCITM benchmarking figures indicate that the average costs of dealing with customer interactions through different access channels are:

- Face to face £8.62
- Telephone £2.83
- Online 15p

2. Aims

The main aim of this campaign is to increase awareness of the range of Council services that are available online and to increase the amount of digital transactions compared to other methods, particularly telephone calls.

We will focus our work on high volume areas that will have a big impact in reducing requests by telephone and face to face, see appendix 1 for a full breakdown.

The Council also strive to offer the very best service for residents and will make sure online services are simpler and easier to navigate and the top requests need to be in a prominent location on the website. We will only promote online services that we are satisfied are fit for purpose and offer a good user experience.

Digital transactions are quick and efficient and the cost per transaction is significantly less compared to traditional methods so it is hoped this campaign will achieve cost savings.

The Council will promote digital services as standard and this will be the main call to action, where possible and appropriate.

It is also important for officers within the Council to champion and promote the use of digital services, particularly with the customer service staff who are often the first point of contact for residents. The campaign will aim to educate staff of the importance of the campaign and the cost savings that could be achieved.

We will also identify key partners that can support us with this campaign, including social /private landlords, SWAN and CAB.

3. Objectives

Communicate with customers to complete transactions digitally, focusing on the following key areas:

1. Increase requests for bulky waste collections online
2. Increase applications for single person council tax discount online
3. Increase the amount of change of address reporting online

The requests below are currently under systems development with new forms, these will be included during the campaign if they become available before March 2018, but it is likely they will be ready in the next financial year:

4. Increase fly tipping reporting online
5. Increase Council tax change of circumstances applications online

4. Target Audiences

Target Audience:

- Residents of the Borough
- Council Staff
- Council Members
- Stakeholders e.g. Housing providers, SWAN, CAB

5. Key Messages

Messages will be tailored according to the transaction and target audience, see overleaf.

	Primary messages
Objective 1 Requests for bulky waste collections	Bulky items collection service Pick your own slot now online ... www.stockton.gov.uk/bulkywaste
Objective 2 Applications for Single Person Council Tax Discount	Need to apply for single person council tax discount? Apply online now ... www.stockton.gov.uk/spdiscount
Objective 3 Reporting change of address	Have you moved? Let us know online, it's easy ... www.stockton.gov.uk/changeaddress

6. Key contacts

- Emma Chudley Marketing Officer
- Elaine Cook CRM Development & Integrations Manager
- Debbie McGough CFYA Business Support Manager
- Jane Edmonds Revenue & Benefits Service Manager

7. Communication methods

A combination of different methods will be used to achieve the objectives as identified in section 5 and will include media, digital media and direct marketing activities.

A full breakdown of communication activities can be found on the communications activity tracker in appendix 2.

8. Evaluation methods

Overall project measurements:

- Total amount of self-serve (online) transactions 2017-18 (Lagan data)
- % of self-serve transactions compared to all channels 2017-18 (Lagan data)
- Total bulky waste collection requests received online compared to all channels (Lagan data)
- Total single person council tax discount applications received online compared to all channels (Lagan data)
- Total notifications of change of address received online compared to all channels
- Increase in web hits by measuring for Google analytics for the 5 target requests
- Level of Social Media Engagement – Hootsuite Analytics
- Paid for online advertising web stats & Google Analytic Referrals