

Customer Experience Strategy

Putting You First

North Yorkshire Council | 2025 - 2030

Building exceptional experiences for our communities



Introduction

We place you, our customers, at the heart of everything we do. This isn't just our goal - it's important for every member of our council team. This customer-focused approach is essential for achieving the priorities in our Council Plan and allowing us to work in a more efficient and cost-effective way.

Whether we talk to you every day in customer-facing roles, or support you behind the scenes, everyone at the council contributes to shaping your experience. We offer a diverse range of services that have evolved over time, and sometimes this means you have an inconsistent experience with us.

Moving forward, we will focus on your experience in all our service delivery, use new digital tools to meet your evolving needs, and redesign services where necessary. We're developing new ways to do the things that matter most to you, and understanding your needs and priorities is critical to this effort. With the right tools, training, and access to comprehensive customer data and feedback, our teams are ready to transform to make your experience with North Yorkshire Council better.

We want to make sure you have a consistently good experience every time you interact with us. We know that we currently don't always get this right, but this strategy sets out our goals, and how we will achieve them, and the difference it will make to you.

We place you, our customers, at the heart of everything we do. This isn't just our goal - it's important for every member of our council team.



Purpose

We made this document for you, our valued customers. It explains how our council teams will work together to give you great experiences, whether you're a resident, business owner, student, elected member, or tourist. This plan shows our commitment to putting you first and explains the steps we're taking to improve your experience.

Our approach is based on our **CARE** Commitment. This means we want our services to be:

- **Consistent:** Always reliable.
- **Accessible:** Available to everyone.
- **Responsive:** With quick and helpful solutions.
- **Easy:** Simple and clear to use, whilst keeping you informed and respected throughout.



Our Role

We provide essential services to over 600,000 diverse and growing residents, and more than 25,000 businesses across the county.

North Yorkshire is one of the largest counties in England, covering 3,103 square miles of beautiful countryside, vibrant towns, and coastal communities - each with unique needs and characteristics.

Council Plan

North Yorkshire Council's vision is clear and ambitious: "We want to harness the power of North Yorkshire's natural capital, unique communities and businesses, continuously improving our services to enable a good quality of life for all."

We have four main goals that guide all our work:

- Support thriving places and empowered communities that live, work, visit, and do business in North Yorkshire.
- Develop more sustainable and connected places across North Yorkshire.
- Ensure the people of North Yorkshire are safe, healthy, and living well.
- Maximise the potential of North Yorkshire's people and communities.
- A strong focus on our customers is essential if we are to achieve these goals.

Values and Behaviours

Our People Strategy sets out how we are committed to developing our workforce to meet our future challenges. This is underpinned by our Values and Behaviours, which describe what we expect of all our staff.



Our customers

You are our customer if you live, work, or visit North Yorkshire and interact with us in any way. Our customers include residents, business owners, tourists, students, children, partners, and even our own staff, Elected Members, and contractors.

Your community

North Yorkshire is the largest county in England and Wales, spanning over 8,000 square kilometres. We have a population of about 620,000, which is similar to big cities like Leeds and Sheffield, but we are spread out differently.

With just 77 people per square kilometre (compared to the national average of 432), we're primarily rural. Only Harrogate and Scarborough have populations over 50,000, making our community a unique blend of small towns and countryside.

Your community includes 615,490 residents

16.1%

of your community are under 16 (England average is 18.6%)

58.9%

of your community are aged between 16-64 (England average is 63%)

25%

of your community is aged 65+ (England average is 18.4%)

18.7%

of residents privately rent

Average Household Income

£51,217

(England average is £52,216)

Average House Price

£278,447

(England Average is £308,781)

Our community is

2.85%

larger compared to 2011

The households average

2.24

persons down from 2.33 in 2011

More than

108,000

residents live with health limitations or disabilities

What is Customer Experience?

When you use our services, we know that each of you comes with different expectations. Many things can shape whether you have a good or bad experience with us.

Customer experience is about all the ways we put our customers first. It's much more than just 'customer service' - it's about

your entire journey with us. This starts from the moment you realise you need to get in touch with us, right through to how you feel we've addressed your needs.

It's about how you experience our interactions, the impression you're left with afterwards, and what you might tell others about how we did.

Improving Your Experience with Council Services

We understand that navigating Council services can sometimes be frustrating. Whilst many services are now available through our Customer Hub, Contact Centre, and website, not all are fully integrated. This can lead to delays, repeated contacts, and confusion - especially when you're passed between teams for simple requests.

We're committed to changing that.

Our goal is to make your experience consistent, accessible, responsive and easy. To do this, we're focusing on several key improvements:

Joined-Up Customer Service: We're working to ensure that simple transactions - like updating your details or making a payment - can be handled quickly and easily, without needing to speak to multiple teams.

Specialist staff will focus on complex cases where expert advice is needed, allowing us to provide better support where it matters most.

Consistent Standards Across Services:

We know that different services currently offer different contact options and response times. We're introducing consistent operational standards so that no matter which service you use, you can expect the same high level of support.

Smarter Processes: Many of our processes are still manual or designed in isolation. We're redesigning them with your journey in mind - reducing handoffs between teams, cutting down on delays, and making it easier to get things done online.

Better Use of Technology: We're investing in better technology at the contact centre which will allow us to introduce a self-service system, but we know it's not where it needs to be yet. There are still too many separate portals, and it's not always user-friendly. We're working to improve our systems so you can manage your services in one place, with fewer logins and less hassle.

We're also exploring new technologies

like Artificial Intelligence and Robotic Process Automation to help route requests more efficiently, reduce errors, and free up staff time to focus on helping you.

Utilising Data to Improve Services: The Council holds a lot of information across different services. Right now, this data is stored in separate systems, making it hard to get a full picture of your needs.

By bringing this data together, we'll be able to:

- Understand what matters most to you.
- Help target support where it's needed.
- Improve services based on real insights.
- Save time and resources across the organisation.

We're excited about the changes ahead and committed to making your experience with us more joined-up, and focused on what really matters to you.



Our goal is to make your experience consistent, accessible, responsive and easy.

Our Strategy

We want to put you at the heart of everything we do. Our mission is to continuously improve your experience with us, making it more positive, more often.

Excellence in customer service means creating experiences that not only meet but exceed your expectations. We'll know we're doing well when we see higher satisfaction ratings, fewer complaints, and positive feedback in community surveys.

When we've achieved excellence, you'll notice the difference in every interaction. Information will flow seamlessly between our departments, so you won't need to repeat yourself. Our staff will be empowered to resolve your issues promptly, and digital services will make things easier, not harder. Most importantly, you'll feel valued and heard. Your insights will shape how we design and deliver services, creating a continuous cycle of improvement that puts your needs first.

Our CX Vision:

We're committed to putting you, our customer, at the heart of everything we do. We're focused on continuously improving your experience with us.

Our Customer CARE Commitment to You

C: Consistent service every time

You deserve the same high-quality experience every time you interact with us. We're building this consistency so you can trust us and know exactly what to expect whenever you need our help.

A: Accessible to everyone

No matter your abilities or circumstances, you should have access to all our services and support. There are multiple ways to get in touch with us you can reach us through - phone, email, or face to face - and we're making sure our digital platforms are user-friendly and meet accessibility standards for everyone.

R: Responsive to what you need

When you contact us, we'll respond promptly to your enquiries, issues, and feedback. We're committed to timely responses that meet our operational service standards and keep you informed of next steps, because we value and respect your time.

E: Easy to deal with

We're making it simpler for you to navigate and complete tasks with us. We're cutting down unnecessary steps, making our systems easier to use, and ensuring you can get what you need quickly and without hassle.

Our five-focused areas achieve our vision and commitments to you

We want to make your experience with us better through five key areas that guide how we deliver our services to you.

These five focused areas help us embed a customer-focused mindset across our organisation.

By putting you first, actively listening to your feedback, remembering what you've shared with us, and using your data responsibly, we can adapt our services to better meet your needs.

The more we improve in each area, the better your experience with us will be.

Your voices and experiences are invaluable - they directly inform our staff on how to deliver the exceptional service you deserve.



Putting You First

We prioritise your needs in every decision we make, ensuring your experience is at the centre of our approach.

Listening and Learning

We actively collect and value your feedback, using your insights to understand your journey and improve our services.

Changing Our Services

We continuously adapt and redesign our services based on your input, ensuring they evolve to meet your changing needs.

Harnessing Digital Technology

We use new technology to make our services more accessible, efficient, and responsive to your requirements.

Continuously Improving

We measure our progress, share our results transparently, and always look for new ways to make your experience better.

How We'll Support You

We understand your needs are always changing in today's fast-paced world. That's why we're transforming how we serve you. By using new digital solutions, we're making our services more accessible and easier to use. We've created our support model just for you so you can get the right help at the right time.

Our delivery approach

Self-Service

Handle your enquiries and transactions quickly and easily online.

Use our simple web forms and streamlined services at your convenience, saving time with automated processes.

Get quick answers through our user-friendly voice response system or chat with our automated support 24/7 - we're always here for you.

Supported General Enquiries

Our friendly customer service team is ready to assist with your day-to-day general questions. Connect with us through telephone, or at our customer-facing buildings - whatever works best for you.

We'll help you complete transactions, update your information, and solve basic issues with quick solutions backed by our trained staff.

Intermediate Support

For those more complex situations, you can speak directly with our experienced staff who have advanced training. Get dedicated support for challenging issues. Receive specialised assistance with housing concerns, homelessness enquiries, or children's and adult services.

Advanced Support

For your most complicated or technical situations, we'll connect you with our subject matter experts who'll understand your specific needs. Get personalised support from specialists with extensive experience in your situation.

Putting you first

We're building a culture that puts you at the centre of everything we do, building our service model around your needs through a comprehensive multi-layered approach. We're transforming how we think, act, and deliver services by focusing on what matters most to you. Our teams are learning new skills to put your needs first at every step of your journey with us.

To make this happen, we're investing in training that gives our staff the knowledge, tools, and authority to solve your problems quickly. We're also creating systems to listen to your feedback and preferences and use them to keep improving our service.

Our team members are here to listen and act, ensuring your concerns are taken care of quickly. By fostering a culture of support and recognition, we empower our team to provide exceptional support to you.



Our team members are here to listen and act, ensuring your concerns are taken care of quickly.

Our Customer-Focused Approach

Programme Priority 1

- We will ensure that **your experience** shapes our strategy and planning at every level.
 - We will implement the **Customer Experience (CX) Strategy** and **Customer Commitments** to build awareness and alignment across our organisation.
 - We will develop and deliver a **Customer Programme** with clear milestones, so you can see how we're improving.
 - We will create a **communication plan** to embed our CX Strategy both internally and externally - so you know what to expect.
 - We will deliver **Customer Experience Masterclasses** to help our senior managers understand and meet your needs.
 - We will develop and deliver **new customer experience training** for all staff - making great service a standard.
 - We will add customer experience responsibilities to **all job descriptions** and staff inductions.
- This means that all staff are expected to:
 - Take responsibility for delivering services and resolving issues.
 - Be open, honest, and transparent in all communications.
 - Treat every customer with respect, fairness, and professionalism.
 - Be friendly, helpful, and clear in every interaction.
 - Set realistic expectations and deliver on what's promised. Enable and encourage customer feedback.
 - Apologise when things go wrong and learn from mistakes.
 - We will capture, share, and celebrate **examples of best practice** so you benefit from what has worked well.
 - We will establish **operational service standards with timeframes** for all services, so you know when to expect a response.

How We Will Measure Improvement

To ensure accountability and demonstrate progress, we will track and report on the following key metrics and indicators:

- **Customer Satisfaction Scores (CSAT):** Measuring your overall happiness with our services.
 - **Service Response Times:** Monitoring the speed at which we acknowledge and address your inquiries and requests, in line with our operational service standards.
 - **Complaint Resolution Rates:** Tracking the percentage of complaints resolved to your satisfaction within established timeframes.
 - **Staff CX Training Completion:** Measuring the adoption and effectiveness of our customer experience training programmes across all teams.
- **Faster and Clearer Responses:** Our commitment to develop operational service standards and training will result in quicker resolutions of your queries and complaints.
 - **Enhanced Transparency:** Clear communication of our operational service standards and progress will empower you with knowledge and build greater trust.
 - **Empowered and Knowledgeable Staff:** Our investment in our people means every team member is better equipped to serve your needs effectively.
 - **A Culture of Continuous Improvement:** By embedding CX and tracking metrics, we will foster an environment where your feedback directly drives ongoing enhancements to our services.

Impact on You

- These priorities and commitments will lead to great benefits for you, our valued customer:
- **Improved Service Experience:** You will receive more consistent, accessible, responsive, and easier service interactions across all customer touchpoints.

We will capture, share, and celebrate examples of best practice so you benefit from what has worked well.





Listening and Understanding

We want to get better at what matters most to you, and that starts with really listening to what you need.

Our team is learning how to better understand your situation and improve your experience every time you contact us.

We are also making it simpler to handle your information - whether it is your contact details or notes from our conversations. By building one customer platform, we can collect your information just once when you first reach out to us, making things easier for you going forward.

Programme Priority 2

- We are building a robust **Customer Voice Programme** to ensure your feedback is captured and acted upon.
- We will review our **customer engagement, consultation, surveys and feedback processes** to ensure a corporate approach to customer feedback and analysis, bringing everything together in one place and using resources to work together to get a clear picture of our customer needs.
- We will introduce **mystery shoppers** to review all the ways of getting in touch with us and how our services process requests.

We want to get better at what matters most to you, and that starts with really listening to what you need.

- We will establish clear **operational service standards with defined timescales**, so you know exactly when to expect a response.
- We are reviewing our **service classification** to ensure we accurately capture your data to understand your needs.
- We will develop a **CX Finance model** to calculate and track the cost per transaction for each way of contacting us.

How We Will Measure Improvement

To ensure our commitment to listening is effective, we will track and report on the following key metrics:

- **Customer Feedback Response Rates:** Measuring how quickly and effectively we acknowledge and respond to you.
- **Customer Platform Statistics:** Monitoring the efficiency and adoption of our unified customer platform.
- **Consultation Participation Rates:** Tracking the level of engagement in our consultation processes to ensure broad representation of customer voices.

Impact on You

These priorities will lead to significant improvements in how we interact with and understand your needs, resulting in these benefits for you:

- **No More Repeating Information:** Our unified platform means your history and preferences are always at our fingertips.

- **Faster Issue Resolution:** With clearer service standards and better data, your concerns will be addressed more efficiently.
- **More Personalised Service:** Every conversation will feel more personal and informed, tailored to your specific needs.
- **Better Understanding of Your Needs:** Our enhanced active listening skills mean we will understand the impact of our services on your life.
- **More Effective Consultations:** Your input will be actively sought and genuinely integrated into our decision-making processes.



Services to meet your needs

To deliver meaningful improvements, we are committed to designing our services using your feedback. We will establish flexible processes and systems that adapt to respond effectively to your changing needs and preferences.

This approach includes ensuring you have multiple ways to contact us, whether digital, phone-based, or in-person, depending on your situation and comfort level.

We will make these improvements through our comprehensive operational delivery model, which matches the right level of help and skill to the complexity of the service. This way, we ensure efficient and satisfying interactions.

Programme Priority 3

- **Looking ahead**, we're exploring exciting new ways to connect with you through chatbots, live chat, and social media, so you can get help quickly and easily, wherever you are.
- **Enhanced Online Services:** We're expanding our website so you can book, pay, report, apply, check, and register for services whenever it suits you - making digital access simple and convenient.
- **Welcoming Face-to-Face Support:** Our physical spaces will be welcoming and well-equipped, giving you the choice to self-serve or have meaningful conversations with our staff when you need extra support.
- **Clear and Accessible for Everyone:** We're making sure all our information and services are easy to find and use, with new technology that provides you with a personalised customer account and clear guidance.

- **Designed Around You:** We're embedding user-centred design across the council, equipping our teams with tools to involve you in shaping the services you use.
- **Better Use of Your Insights:** We're improving how we collect and use your feedback and experiences to inform our decisions - ensuring everything we do is grounded in real-world insight from you.
- **Priority Service Redesign:** We're launching a programme to redesign key services from your perspective, focusing on improving your experience whilst delivering better value.

How We Will Measure Improvement

To ensure our commitment to providing services that meet your needs is effective, we will track and report on the following key metrics:

- **Contact Channel Usage Statistics:** Monitoring the frequency and volume of interactions across all our communication channels.
- **Customer Satisfaction by Channel:** Measuring your satisfaction levels with each specific communication channel.
- **Resource Efficiency Measures:** Assessing how effectively our resources are utilised across different services.

Impact On You

These priorities will lead to significant improvements in how we design and deliver services, resulting in these benefits for you:

- **Better Customer Contact Channel Options:** You will have more suitable and accessible ways to get in contact with us.
- **More Efficient Service Delivery:** Services will be streamlined and delivered more effectively, reducing delays and friction.
- **Reduced Pain Points:** Frustrations and challenges in your interactions will be proactively identified and resolved.
- **Improved Resource Allocation:** Our resources will be better aligned to meet your needs, enhancing service quality.
- **Seamless Multi-channel Experience:** You will experience a consistent and integrated service, regardless of how you choose to interact with us.

To deliver meaningful improvements, we are committed to designing our services using your feedback.

Digital and Technology

We are making it easier for you to connect with us through digital innovation. Our digital transformation allows you to access our services in ways that suit you best.

Multiple Contact Options:

You have a choice of contact methods, including quick phone calls, convenient contact forms, text updates, in-person assistance, traditional mail, and our online self-service portal.

Simplified Experience:

Our digital tools are designed to deliver on our customer promise, investing in technology to simplify your experience whilst ensuring no one is left behind. We improve our digital options whilst maintaining traditional methods.

Seamless & Responsive Service:

Whichever way you choose to reach us, our commitment remains the same: to provide you with a seamless, responsive service that meets your needs, whenever and wherever you want it.

Multi-channel Support

Programme Priority 4

- Implement a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, acting as a unified customer platform.
- Review and implementing an upgraded telephone system for improved call handling and efficiency.
- Make online contact routes convenient and easy to use so that customers choose this as their preferred method of contact with us.
- Redesign online forms to allow our systems to work together automatically.

- Use new technology, such as artificial intelligence, to deliver services.
- Develop and increase the use of instant messaging, such as webchat, and increase use of social media.
- Ensure systems talk to one another to make dealing with us easier for you.
- Use voice recognition to help customers find services more quickly.

How We Will Measure Improvement

To ensure our commitment to providing services that meet your needs is effective, we will track and report on the following key metrics:

- **CRM System Adoption Rates:** Monitoring the percentage of staff and customer interactions which use the new CRM platform.
- **Customer Self-Service Usage Statistics:** Tracking the frequency and success rate of self-service option usage.
- **Telephony System Performance Metrics:** Assessing first point of contact resolution, call wait times, and overall call quality.
- **Digital Channel Satisfaction Scores:** Measuring your satisfaction with our online and digital communication methods.
- **Multi-channel Integration Effectiveness:** Analysing how seamlessly interactions transition between our different contact methods.

Impact On You

These priorities will lead to significant improvements in how we design and deliver services, resulting in these benefits for you:

- **Seamless Digital Experience:** Enjoy smoother, more intuitive online interactions with our services.
- **Better Self-Service Options:** Access convenient tools that allow you to manage your needs independently and efficiently.
- **Improved Call Handling:** Experience quicker, more effective support when you contact us by phone.
- **Integrated Customer Data:** Benefit from a more personalised service as our teams have a complete view of your previous interactions with us.
- **More Efficient Service Delivery:** Services will be streamlined and delivered more effectively, reducing delays and friction.
- **Enhanced Accessibility Across All Channels:** Connect with us easily, however you prefer, with consistent service quality.

Our digital transformation allows you to access our services in ways that suit you best.

Continuously Improving

We want to serve you well, so we will be open about how we're doing. We will share information regularly to show how we're meeting your needs and where we're making improvements. Using this information helps us keep improving in the right direction.

Programme Priority 5

- Establishing a robust framework for the ongoing evaluation and refinement of our services.
- Gathering and analysing performance data to identify areas for growth and success.
- Conducting regular, comprehensive service reviews to ensure alignment with your expectations and our high standards.
- Implementing agile continuous improvement processes that allow us to adapt and enhance services swiftly.
- Sharing transparent performance metrics with you, providing clear insights into our progress.
- Actively creating and utilising feedback loops to drive meaningful service enhancements based on your input.

How We Will Measure Improvement

To ensure our commitment to providing truly effective, responsive services, we will track and report on the following key metrics:

- **Performance Data Collection Frequency:** Monitoring how regularly we collect and analyse critical service data.
- **Service Review Completion Rates:** Tracking the successful completion of our scheduled service evaluations.
- **Improvement Implementation Success Rates:** Measuring the effectiveness and positive impact of changes we introduce.
- **Customer Satisfaction Trend Analysis:** Regularly analysing your satisfaction scores to identify positive trends and areas for focus.

Impact On You

Our focus on continuous improvement will lead to significant advancements in how we design and deliver services, resulting in tangible and positive benefits for you:

- **Transparent Service Performance:** You will gain clear visibility into our service quality and ongoing improvements.
- **Faster Issue Resolution:** Proactive analysis will enable quicker identification and resolution of potential issues.
- **Proactive Service Enhancements:** We will be able to anticipate issues and implement improvements before they become widespread needs.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** Our strategic choices will be consistently informed by reliable data, ensuring optimal outcomes for you.
- **Increased Trust Through Transparency:** Open communication about our performance will build greater confidence in our services.
- **Continuous Service Evolution:** You will benefit from services that constantly adapt and improve to meet your changing requirements.



Measure our success:

Customer satisfaction

Measures the sentiment and emotion of customer interactions. We will undertake customer surveys and record real-time customer satisfaction. We will also measure our complaints and compliments, which will set a baseline to monitor continuous improvement.

Ease

Measures how easy it was for customers to use our services.

Success

Measures service delivery and outcomes, including time and quality.

Cost to serve

Measures the cost of our services and channels, to be included once we have the necessary technology and ways of collecting.

Tracking and evaluating our performance on these measures, and analysing the underlying data, will help us better understand what drives customer satisfaction and how easily they can use our services.

These insights will guide our continuous improvement efforts across the Council, which are essential for our success in a resource - limited environment.

Progress Monitoring

This will be managed through our customer transformation board. We will regularly update the organisation and the community on our progress. Additionally, we will conduct a midpoint review of the roadmap to ensure that the actions we have identified are still aligned with the goals of the strategy.



CX Overview

CX Vision

We're committed to putting you, our customer, at the heart of everything we do. We're focused on continuously improving your experience with us.

CX Commitments (CARE)

Customers will find NYC to be:

- Consistent
- Accessible
- Responsive
- Easy

Focus Areas

To deliver on our vision and commitments, we will focus on these areas:

- Putting you first
- Listening and understanding
- Service design
- Digital and technology
- Continuous improvement

Delivery Model

Our operational model for delivering the CX strategy includes:

- Self-service
- Supported general enquiries
- Intermediate support
- Advanced support

Measuring Success

We will know we've improved by measuring:

- NPS Score
- Customer Satisfaction
- Customer Effort
- Customer Complaints

Next Steps

A detailed implementation plan will now be drafted to support the CX Strategy.

Immediate Action Plan

The customer transformation steering group will focus on an immediate action plan to support the uplift of the council's customer service channel.

Establish Governance & Roadmap

The customer transformation steering group will work with the Project Management Office to establish strong governance and structure for the CX roadmap. This will build a customer-focused culture by:

- Ensuring leaders and teams across the organisation understand clear, defined ownership and responsibilities.
- Establishing a process for every change initiative to assess its impact on CX, encouraging collaboration between services.

Develop Change & Communication Plan

A comprehensive plan will be created to ensure the CX strategy is effectively embedded throughout the organisation.

Measure & Report Progress

CX metrics will be used for ongoing evidence and understanding of our tracking, with regular reports informing Councillors and staff, and providing methods for continuous feedback.



Contact us

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