Central government:
Meeting citizen demands
for connected experiences

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Modernising digital technology in central government

In the wake of the pandemic, government and public services organisations have been forced to rethink how they operate and utilise digital tools to communicate. Increasingly tech-savvy citizens are demanding swift and seamless digital services – akin to those they experience in the private sector – from central government.

But, left with policy decisions of the past, legacy systems and outdated processes, making the step to more agile technologies has been a challenge.

To do more with less and meet the changing expectations of citizens and employees, in turn raising the profile of central government. Now is the time to rethink how digital tools are used to:

- Put **citizens**, **employees** and their experiences first

- Be more **agile** and **efficient** to increase effectiveness

- Remain **responsible, inclusive** and **resilient**

40%
Just two-fifths of respondents are satisfied with the level of interaction received from government departments.

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Meeting citizen demands for digital expectations

Out of necessity, the pandemic drove more of the population online – to bank, shop and even for virtual healthcare appointments. These new digital behaviours have made citizens more comfortable with technology. And as a result, they're demanding digital public services that match how they use technology in their daily lives.

In this new digital world, slow response times, issues around finding information online and a disjointed approach, can all have a negative impact on the citizen experience and opinion of central government.

Through digital transformation, government bodies have a lot to gain. It can enable transparent, personalised citizen experiences through faster, omnichannel services. In a time where interactions with citizens feel increasingly impersonal, technology is offering a viable way forward for the UK Government. It enables quick and efficient tailored communications and addresses the public desire for the 24/7 convenience they've grown accustomed to via apps, portals and human-centric services.

Avanade's 311 solution enables government bodies to leverage the full Microsoft ecosystem to deliver end-to-end citizen services that are connected across channels. This helps to improve agent productivity, enabling customer self-service and tailored customer experiences.

62%
of citizens expect the public sector service experience to be the same as using online banking, social media or a ridesharing app.

67%
of citizens identify ease of interaction as being the most important factor when accessing government services online.

Empowering and retaining employees to support citizen need

The employee experience (EX) and citizen experience (CX) are often inextricably linked. Empowering public-sector staff with the digital tools and data to be productive, and efficiently streamline processes, helps deliver value to the communities they support.

But outdated policies and legacy systems often hold back progress. Certain public sector tasks – such as processing permit requests or inputting data – still need to be done manually. The monotony of these highly repetitive, manual tasks can leave employees feeling dissatisfied and frustrated, and prevent them adding value to their roles.

Digitisation of routine processes would allow them to be securely automated, giving central government the opportunity to upskill and reskill today's civil servants. This could be crucial in retaining valuable talent in the long run. In research by Accenture, 57% of UK public sector workers agree that the automation of routine tasks has freed up time to focus on more important work.
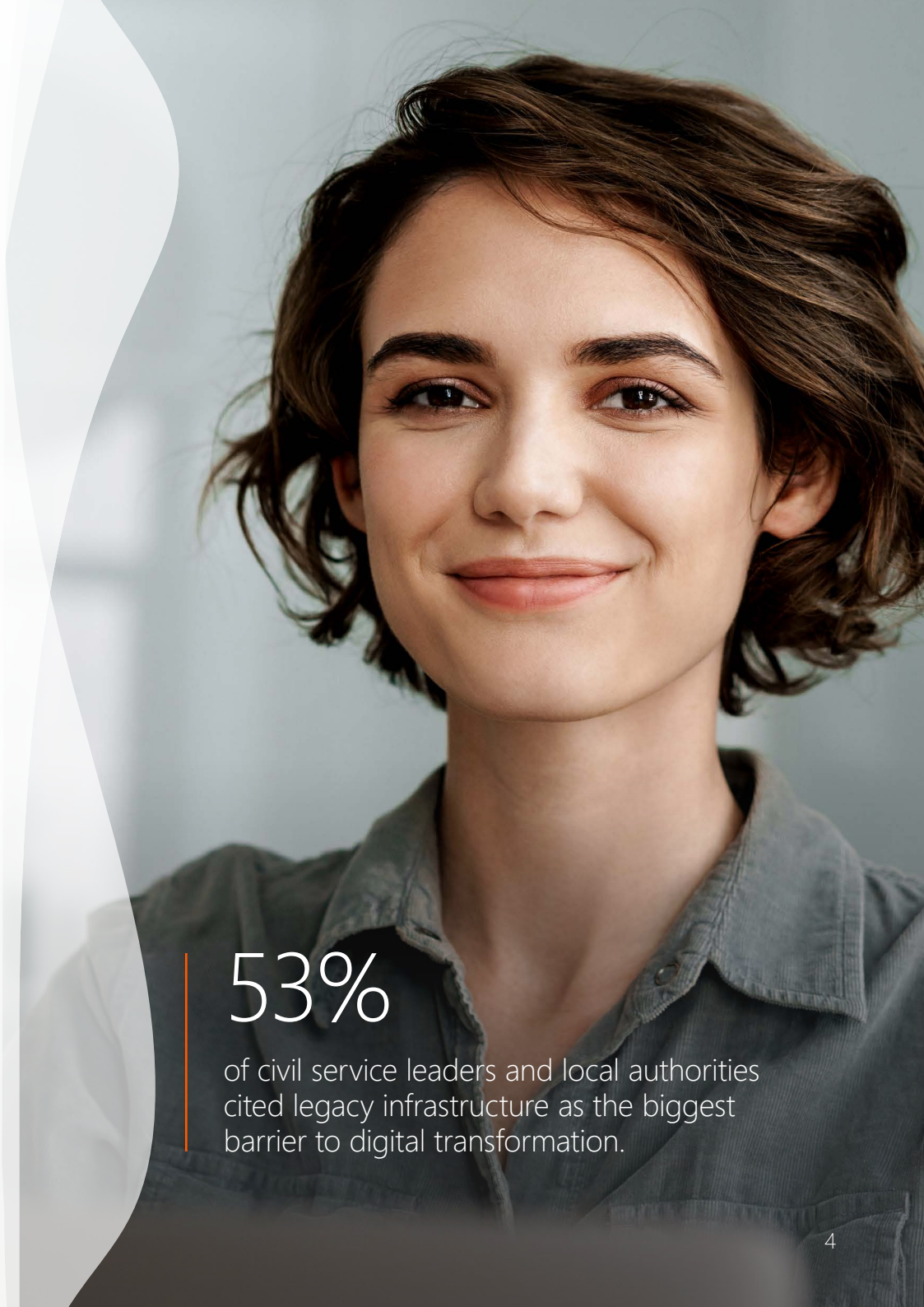
53%

of civil service leaders and local authorities cited legacy infrastructure as the biggest barrier to digital transformation.

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Reassuring citizens by rethinking data

Timely, accurate insights are vital in transforming government services and providing public reassurance. Joining up disparate data can deliver significant benefits, allowing it to be harnessed to promote citizen wellbeing, understand societal trends and enhance services.

Yet siloes have left central government unable to capture the opportunities data presents. Fraud departments, for example, are being held back by a lack of joined-up data and an absence of the right technology. A report by Sir Craig Mackey, ex-Met Policy Deputy Commissioner, shows that just 2% of fraudulent crimes are detected and that lack of investment and inadequate technology are hampering efforts to tackle the problem.

Similarly, disconnect between government departments and the sharing of data can also leave citizens feeling disenchanted with public services. For example, it can be hard for the public to understand why they need to inform the UK Health Security Agency of their vaccination status, when this data is already held by the health service.

A more joined up approach – while considering data ethics – will help create both time and cost savings, as well as new opportunities, within central government.

56%

of citizens report their trust in government would increase if there was better communication about how specific innovations improve individuals' lives.

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Building resilience with the right digital tools

Microsoft solutions – and Avanade's expertise in implementing them – mean simple and cost-effective technology integrations are possible. These can empower employees to put the citizen first and overcome the challenges faced by today's central government, providing the tools to adapt when needed and enabling future resilience.

The next pages show us what is possible with application modernisation through Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Power Platform.

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Application modernisation through Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Power Platform enables:

Centralisation of citizen needs, so they're at the heart of every experience

Microsoft Dataverse is a scalable low-code data platform that conforms to Common Data Platform standards. It identifies and resolves duplicate and conflicting data and makes your data work smarter by providing more accurate insights and adding AI tools to process automation.

Using these insights, you can identify and begin to predict citizen needs and create relevant omnichannel touchpoints that ensure their interactions with central government are frictionless, personalised and convenient.

Microsoft Power Virtual Agents allow you to create no-code intelligent conversational bots at scale. These can be used to respond to queries or guide citizens through routine tasks, like the completion of an online form or payment of a bill, resolving many common citizens needs quickly and at a lower cost.

Additionally, **Dynamics 365** supports self-service appointment booking, including reminders, rescheduling and cancellation functions.

Centralisation of employee experience needs

Power Automate (Microsoft's Intelligent Automation tool) fuelled by data and AI, can help to automate routine tasks, such as triggering the sending of a renewals form using expiry data.

This frees up employee resource to undertake high-value activities that positively impact the citizen experience. Giving employees the freedom to add-value to their roles and grow their skill sets improves EX, aiding retention and attracting new talent to central government.

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Application modernisation through Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Power Platform enables:

The delivery of services with agility

Leveraging **Microsoft Experience** platforms and **Dynamics 365 solutions** to collect and analyse citizen data across different sources, allows central government to become predictive instead of reactive. These insights help to anticipate citizen needs and provide support before a problem occurs.

Low code, no code development platforms – like **Microsoft Power Apps** – allow for the rapid and cost-effective development of requirement-specific applications. **Microsoft's Dataverse** then enables the creation of a centralised data store to replace siloed data streams with individual applications.

Connected Field Service, **IoT** and **AI** can help with identifying possible problems and proactively servicing city equipment and infrastructure before those problems happen.

Supply chain visibility and transparency

Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Management supports government ability to meet the demands of citizens and be transparent around how funds are used to procure goods.

Social listening and response, enabled through a combination of third-party solutions and first party applications such as D365 Marketing, can enable the identification of local trends to inform public safety or crime prevention advice.

Avanade's Grant management solution increases the speed of payments and the accuracy of expense reporting through Dynamics 365 and Power App Portals. We follow a change manage approach to introduce the Grants management solution, ensuring agents are involved every step of the way to encourage long-term change.

Sustainable cost reductions

Microsoft's solutions provide a cost-effective means of improving workflows and the citizen experience on tight budgets. They can be a vital support for overstretched government departments that are being asked to meet citizen and employee demands for more innovative offerings and services, despite declining revenues. For example, **visual interactive voice response** can deflect citizens away from costly contact centre channels to citizen portals, where they can raise requests or submit incidents. As an added benefit, cloud-based technologies can help the public sector on its journey to sustainability too.

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Case study: Modernising a legacy claims system for a public sector federation

Challenge

The client needed to update its 20-plus-year-old legacy database with a new system that would help better manage member claims for assistance and legal representation across its 43 branches. Reliance on disparate communications channels, standalone systems and manual data input and ad hoc process tracking, had to be reduced due to delays and errors.

The new system needed to support the processing of claims at branch and headquarter level, while improving efficiency and accuracy for employees and members. Plus, data security and privacy needed upgrading across its entire IT estate.

Solution

Avanade delivered a full claims system, in conjunction with Accenture, replacing its legacy multi-instance systems with a single Microsoft Dynamics 365 implementation across all branches. It was customised to support branch-specific requirements and migration of siloed legacy claims management databases.

As roll out was due to be completed, COVID-19 hit. Avanade and Accenture completed all digital migrations remotely, with deployment and training completed online to minimise service disruption for the client.

Results

Through the new claims system, the client serves its members with:

- Greater system resilience, with Microsoft security against cyber threats and other vulnerabilities

- Improved organisational flexibility with the power of the Microsoft Azure cloud

- Branch-specific functionality

- An attorney billing interface as part of finance system integration

- End-to-end case monitoring for administration and legal representatives

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Why Avanade?

In times of continual change, having the tools to keep central government agile and delivering more for less, is critical in meeting the expectations of citizens and retaining valuable employees. Avanade has the end-to-end expertise and organisational change to maximise value from investments in Microsoft ecosystem technologies, while our security expertise help protect hybrid ways of working and citizen data from current and emerging threats.

We can help enable:

Proactive, data-led citizen services

Avanade's Intelligent Automation Platform fuses AI, intelligent automation and workflow integration to empower employees, anticipate citizen needs, and make access to services more seamless and engaging for citizens.

Efficient processes

Our deep digital expertise helps clients optimise ROI from Microsoft technologies, intelligently automate case management systems and build operational resilience through a more predictive, agile supply chain.

Effective intra-\inter-departmental collaboration

Avanade's workplace experience capabilities help create intelligent, predictive workflows for employees, and enable secure, remote service capabilities for citizens, including virtual court proceedings and visits.

Culture of transparency, integrity and trust

Avanade's organisational change management, digital ethics and fraud prevention and security services help drive transparency, integrity and trust through continual change.

Contact us to find out how we can empower your organisation and citizens you serve.

Register for our Citizen Services 311 Accelerator workshop and discover the benefits Avanade can deliver.

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About Avanade

Avanade is the leading provider of innovative digital, cloud and advisory services, industry solutions and design-led experiences across the Microsoft ecosystem. Every day, our 56,000 professionals in 26 countries make a genuine human impact for our clients, their employees and their customers. Avanade was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation. Learn more at **www.avanade.com**

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