

# Communication Is Key: Designing Digital Services To Meet Citizen Expectations

Bekki Leaver





**20**  
**YEARS**  
**POWERING**  
**DEMOCRACY**

The logo features a large black '2' followed by a '0' composed of eight colored dots (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, and light blue) arranged in a circular pattern. Below this, the words 'YEARS', 'POWERING', and 'DEMOCRACY' are stacked in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

mySociety

The word 'mySociety' is written in a dark grey, sans-serif font. The 'S' is capitalized. The 'o' in 'Society' is replaced by the same eight-colored dot pattern seen in the '20' of the logo above.

# What to expect

From this session

- Some ways you can remove barriers from local authority-citizen communications
- Dealing with the unintended consequences of better communication
- Some examples of brilliantly communicative services

# Communication - the giving and receiving of information

# Signs of bad communication

- Fails to understand the need
- Doesn't get meaning across
- Doesn't provide useful or valuable information

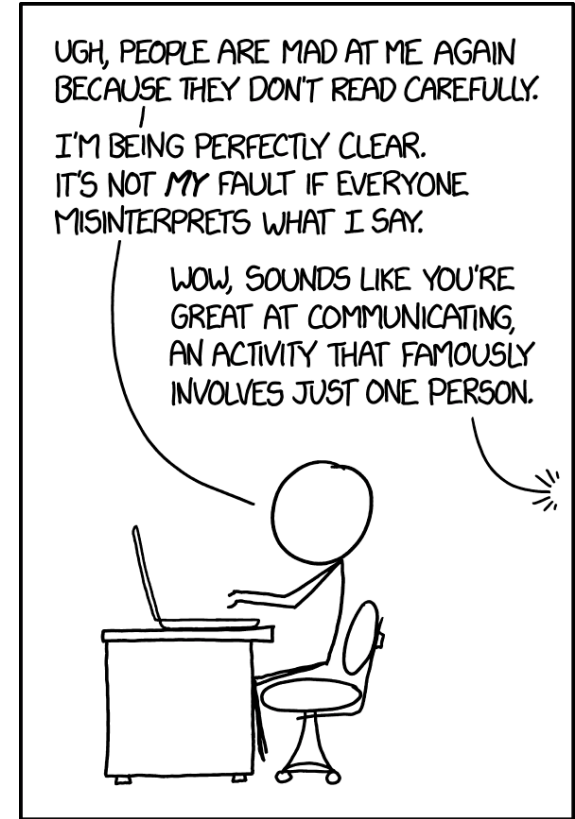


Image by [XKCD](#) from [XKCD](#)

# Signs of good communication

- Understanding the need
- Ensures comprehension
- Considers context
- Sets up for onward journey

# Removing barriers for better communication



# Build understanding in direct communication

- Listen attentively
- Summarise what you've been told
- Ask clarifying questions
- Confirm they've received all the information they need



Image by [Rémy Médard](#) from [The Noun Project](#)

# Improve understanding in one-sided comms

- Research the need
- Use citizen-centric language
- Set expectations
- Avoid information overload

# Designing out barriers to great communication

- Digital competency
- Web accessibility
- Language and comprehension

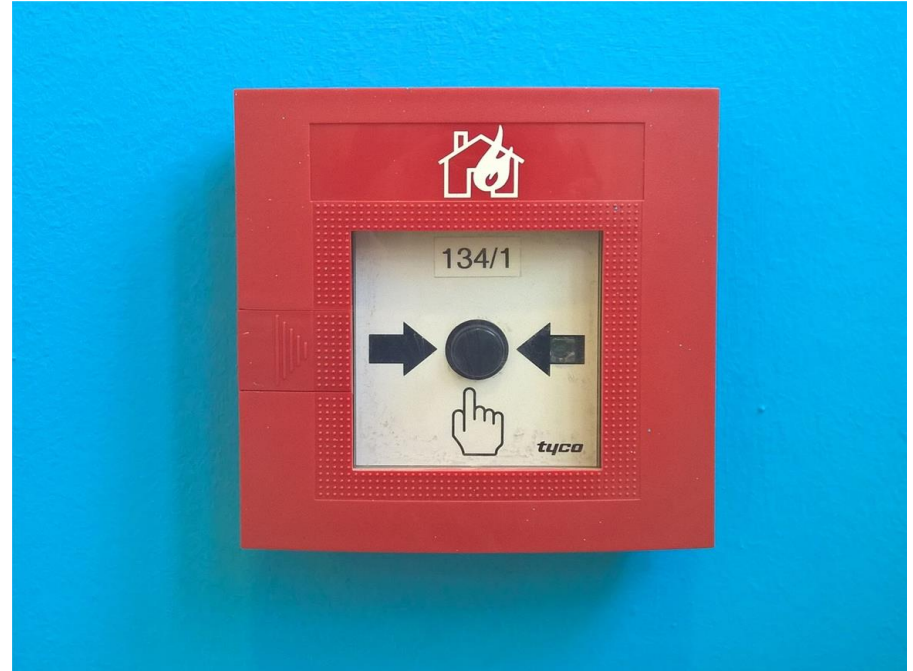
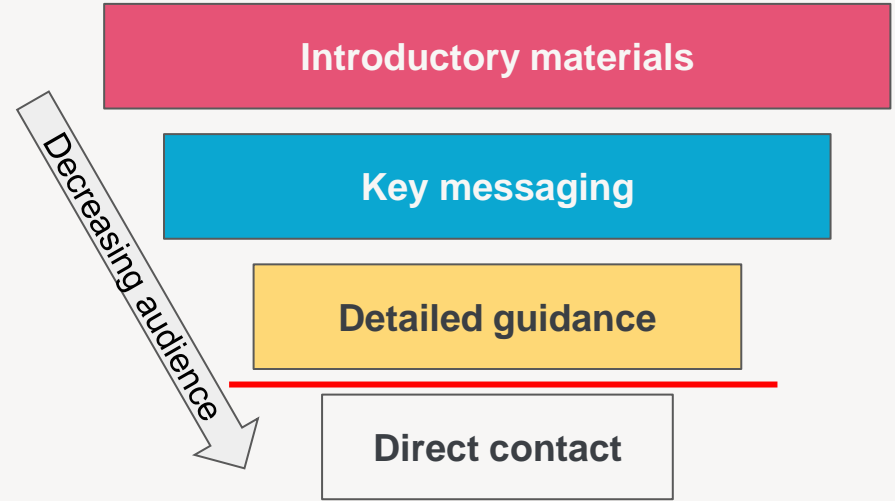


Image by [Christoph Meinersmann](#) from [Pixabay](#)

# Funneling citizens

The right information  
at the right time



# **Dealing with the unintended consequences of better communication**

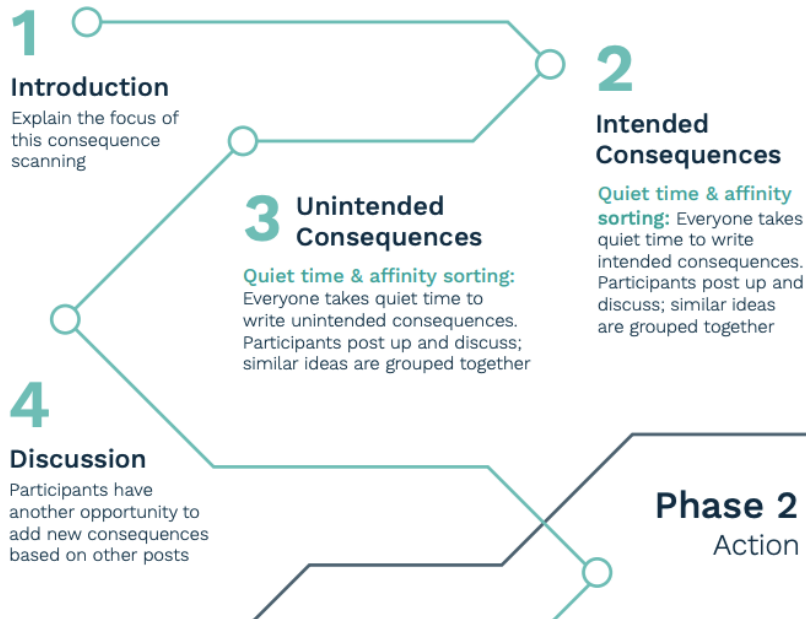
# **Making unintended consequences just consequences**

# Consequence scanning

A very useful activity

## Phase 1 Ideation

## Consequence Scanning Recommended Structure



[Consequence scanning](#) by [doteveryone](#)

# Tips to run a consequence scanning workshop

- Include a cross-service group
- Let everyone think and speak
- List positive and negative
- Determine the likelihood of the scenarios and plan accordingly



# Great examples of communicative, citizen-centred services

## What to do when someone dies: step by step

Check what to do after a death - how to register the death, notify government departments and deal with the estate.

This step by step is also available as a [Welsh \(Cymraeg\) guide](#).

[Show all steps](#)

### 1 Register the death

[Show](#)

### 2 Arrange the funeral

[Show](#)

Part of

[What to do when someone dies: step by step](#)

## Tell Us Once

Tell Us Once is a service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go.

This guide is also available in [Easy Read format](#).

The Tell Us Once service is not available in Northern Ireland. Find out [who to tell about a death in Northern Ireland](#).

### How to use Tell Us Once

A registrar will explain the Tell Us Once service when you [register the death](#). They will either:

- complete the Tell Us Once service with you
- give you a unique reference number so you can use the service yourself

Part of

[What to do when someone dies: step by step](#)

Show all steps

#### 1 Register the death

Show

#### 2 Arrange the funeral

Show

#### 3 Tell government about the death

[Back to all reports](#)

# Grass verge between hidden cottage and copper beeches churned up by gas workers.

Reported via desktop in the Grass cutting category anonymously at 17:08, Tuesday 31 January 2023

Sent to Hughenden Parish Council less than a minute later.  
FixMyStreet ref: 4190411.

Gas works carried out in the area, grass verge has been churned up vehicles parked along.



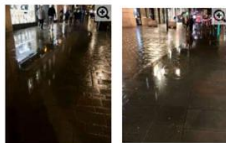


[Back to all reports](#)

In progress

## Flooded Pavement outside McDonalds Southgate

Reported via desktop in the Flooding of a road or pavement category anonymously at 14:15, Tuesday 9 May 2023  
Sent to Bath and North East Somerset Council less than a minute later. Council ref: 4532249.



I guess poor drain maintenance is allowing water to pool across a significant stretch of the pavement outside McDonalds Southgate Bath Please ensure this issue is promptly resolved

### UPDATES

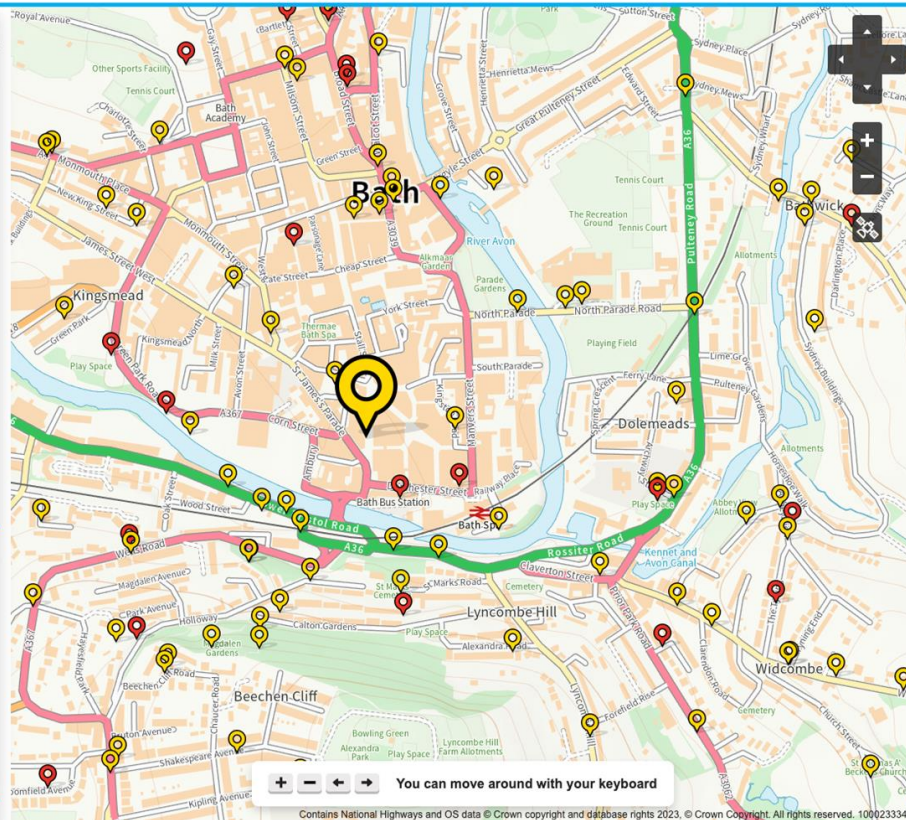
Thank you for this report. We will review the details and carry out an inspection of the site if required.

4 out of 5 Road or Pavement Flooding reports are updated within 7 working days once we decide what action to take. To find out what we do and why it might take longer, please visit <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/fmsroads09>

If you have more information about the issue you can add an update to this report.

State changed to: In progress

Posted by Systems Team at 14:15, Tuesday 9 May 2023

[Report abuse](#)[Get updates](#)[Problems nearby](#)

# In summary...

- Build understanding
- Speak citizen language
- Consider different perspectives

# Thank you for listening

Any questions?