

Public authorities as providers of digital support



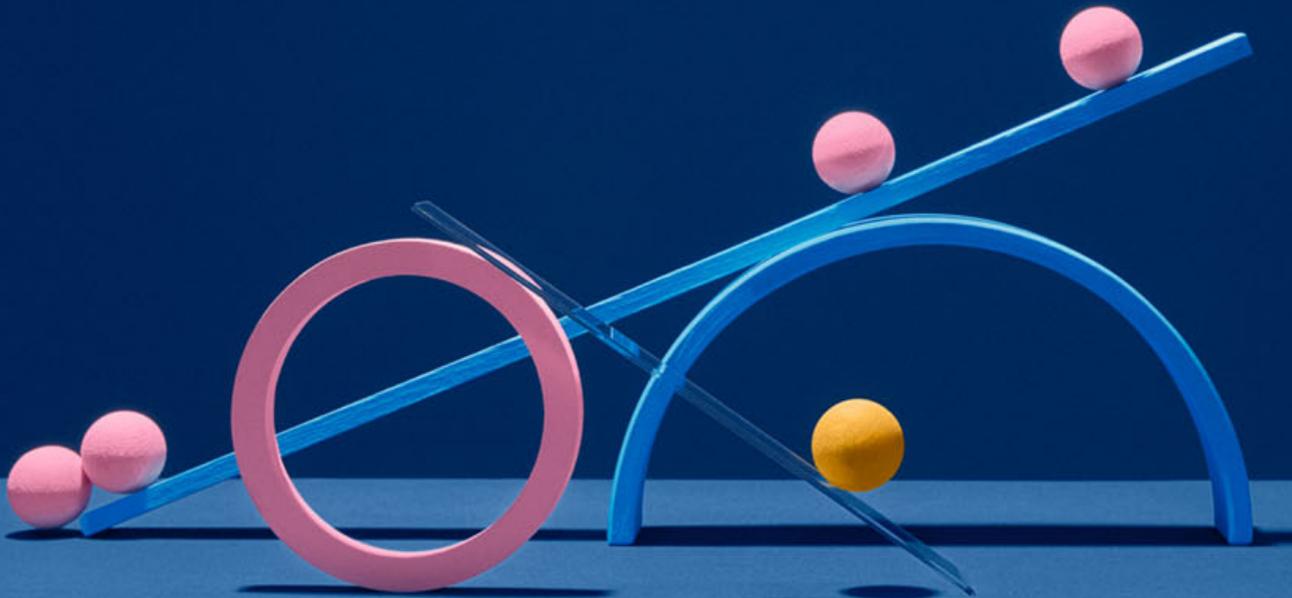
This material is intended for public authorities, i.e. employees of municipalities, wellbeing services counties, agencies and joint service points. The material can be supplemented with organisation-specific instructions.

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What is digital support?

Digital support is support for the use of electronic services and devices. Its purpose is to help and support customers to use devices and services independently. Digital support is not a repair service for devices or a service for handling matters on behalf of the customer.



Why do we provide digital support?

Finland boasts a high level of digital competence. Today, digital skills are an essential for using services and are thus included in civic skills. As long as they are motivated and guidance is provided, most people want to and are capable of learning digital skills.

Alongside digital skills, a stressful life event or language skills are among what create difficulties in using digital services and devices. All age groups may need digital support, but its content and format vary by user group.

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Digital support in a service situation

Under the Administrative Procedure Act and the Digital Services Act, public authorities have an obligation to provide guidance on the use of their digital services. It is the aim of digital support to enable customers of different user groups to handle their matter independently and securely, according to their life situation.

Appropriate digital support also aims to reduce the customers' need to visit service points by helping them to manage their affairs as independently as possible.

The digital support that we can provide during a customer visit is intended for everyone who needs and wants help with the public authorities' digital services. Assess the need for and scope of the support on a case-by-case basis.

A requirement for receiving digital support is that the customer has both sufficient competence and access to the necessary devices to use digital services, whether own or shared. Digital support providers helps customers use digital services and devices so that they can use them independently later on.

ALL PUBLIC AUTHORITIES ARE REQUIRED TO PROVIDE DIGITAL SUPPORT

Digital support providers are employees who help customers with digital services, either alongside other counselling or with a focus on digital support. Digital support providers encourage customers to use the service themselves in the guidance situation. If the customer does not have a true opportunity to manage their affairs digitally, they must be directed to a more suitable service channel.

All public authorities must be able to provide digital support to customers regarding their services and, if necessary, direct the customers to the competent authorities. If the public authority's service point has a self-service device for customers, the personnel must also be able to provide instructions for its use.

Some public authorities have decided to expand the digital support they provide to cover services provided by other authorities at their discretion. For example, there may be situations in which services provided by many different authorities must be used.

Provision of digital support is required at least in the following situations:

- completion of online applications
- finding and attaching documents to applications
- finding information in an authority's web service
- use of devices intended for customers.

SERVICE CHANNELS FOR DIGITAL SUPPORT IN SERVICE SITUATIONS

Digital support is provided in all service channels where services are provided. Service channels include the telephone service and service points. Digital support must be provided without undue delay to successfully make use of the authority's service.

The public authority's employee provides guidance to customers regarding safe and secure identification and use of the services. If the service activity requires strong identification, the customer must have a token for strong identification and possibly a mandate to handle the matter.

Digital support over the telephone also requires that the customer has their own device with network access. Service points can provide digital support with either the customer or the service point's devices in the lobby or a service room, with consideration for data protection. The public authority may also provide its customers with separate service rooms, where the customer can use a self-service workstation under guidance.

In addition, public authorities can, depending on the location, provide digital support at shared service points, remotely, joint service points, or events attended by the authority's service expert.

General digital support

General digital support is digital support that is provided separately from service situations. Some authorities also provide general digital support at their discretion or under special legislation.

General digital support refers to a situation that aims to develop general digital competence or where the customer has difficulties using the services or devices that can be resolved without support for a specific service. General digital support includes support for using personal devices and how to use a general digital service that everyone knows (e.g. Yle Areena).

A significant part of general digital support is providing customers with guidance in using their personal devices. Public authorities usually provide general digital support through service points and libraries in some municipalities. Their guidance is based on supporting a customer's use of a service or device with the help of publicly available instructions.

IF NECESSARY, THE CUSTOMER IS TOLD WHERE TO SEEK HELP

As a rule, providers of general digital support do not provide in-depth guidance on the services of other authorities or the use thereof without a separate agreement between the authorities. If such an agreement is not in place, the customer can only be given high-level

support using the instructions available in the service. In questions related to the contents of the service, customers must be directed to the competent authority.

If the customer has zero idea on how to use devices and the authority in question does not provide assistance in their use, the customer is directed to other digital guidance providers or, for example, to a suitable course.

Local providers can be found, for example, through the following links:

- [Digital support providers in the Suomi.fi service](#)
- [Digital support providers on the Suomi.fi map](#)
- [Map of guidance locations at Seniorsurf.fi](#)
- [Helsinki Metropolitan Region Service Map](#)

If necessary, you must submit a notification of concern to your well-being services county if you are concerned about a customer's well-being, health or safety. Such a concern may arise from, for example, an elderly person's ability to live at home or the life management issues of an adult that lives alone. As a rule, we only submit notifications of concern with the customer.

Case examples



CASE EXAMPLE 1: COMPLETING AN APPLICATION TO AN AUTHORITY ON A CUSTOMER COMPUTER AT A JOINT SERVICE POINT

A foreign-language customer comes to a joint service point for several authorities.

They want to submit a digital application to a specific authority on a customer computer. The customer computer is located in the joint service point's self-service area. The facility is public, and customers of many different authorities use it.

The customer has their information stored on their phone, but they do not understand what information to record in which field. There are also language barrier issues, both in Finnish and in their language.

SOLUTION: A public authority that provides support helps all customers using the shared service point's customer computers. A general service adviser helps the customer to the best of their ability by using clear language and, if necessary, the available interpreter service. In the case of general advice or discussion only, the customer's translation application can also be used, if it is suitable for the situation.

The general service adviser only provides general assistance in

using the digital service, making use of the instructions available in the authority's web service. If the customer needs more detailed guidance regarding the use of the service, the adviser will direct them to visit the authority in question. The general service adviser can explain how to acquire services from the authority in question: such as, by taking a shift number if the authority provides services on that day, or by coming back to the joint service point either by booking an appointment in advance or by queueing up.

CASE EXAMPLE 2: VIEWING HEALTH EXAMINATION RESULTS IN A WEB SERVICE

A close one of a customer of the wellbeing services county has helped the customer book a laboratory appointment. The customer arrives for the laboratory appointment and, during the sampling, complains that they do not really understand how to view the results online.

They do not want to ask their close person for help because the matter is personal. However, they do need help with using the web service, as booking an appointment was only possible with the close person operating the computer while the customer stood by and watched.

SOLUTION: The public authority directs the customer to the wellbeing services county's customer service to ask for laboratory results or to seek help with viewing them in the web service. If the customer seems interested in learning to use a larger variety of digital services, they can be told about local providers of general digital support. If it seems like that the most suitable option for the customer might be having someone act on their behalf, they can be directed to seek more information about acting on behalf of another person from the wellbeing services county's customer service.

CASE EXAMPLE 3: DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFICATION

A customer calls the authority's customer service, asking for help with using the authority's service.

The customer is trying to book an appointment for an authority's service in the online service. However, the customer is unsure of how to book the appointment. It becomes apparent that the customer does not know how to use strong identification. However, based on the call, it seems that the person has a token for strong identification.

SOLUTION: The public authority may ask how the customer has normally identified themselves and provide concrete advice on how to proceed if possible. If providing advice over the phone

proves to be impossible, the customer is directed to visit a customer service point or the operator whose identification token they are using. In addition, the customer can be referred to general digital support and possibly also to apply for a mandate for a close one or for them to act on the customer's behalf, for example, if they have larger difficulties in using services (other than digital ones).

CASE EXAMPLE 4: SUSPECTED COMPUTER VIRUS INFECTION

A customer visits the authority's customer service, asking for help with using its service.

The customer is trying to submit an application online, but there is a problem. The customer thinks that there is a virus on their tablet computer, because there is no website that will open. They are afraid to tap on anything.

If the authority's customer service point has self-service computers, the application can be submitted on one of them or the application can be submitted to the authority on paper.

SOLUTION: If the authority also provides general digital support at the service point in question, it is also possible to investigate the possible virus issue with the tablet to determine the customer's need for further guidance.

This may also be a situation where the tablet's Wi-Fi has accidentally been turned off or a pop-up notification has been displayed on the tablet that the customer thinks is a virus. If it seems like that it is actually a virus, the customer is referred to, for example, their mobile operator or the store where the device or account was purchased.

CASE EXAMPLE 5: TEXT MESSAGE SCAM

The customer visits the authority because they have received a text message asking them to log in to their service with a link.

The customer has clicked on the link and, which directed them to a page where they must provide their online banking IDs. The customer did not proceed further.

SOLUTION: The public authority can inform the customer about the methods of strong identification and options for bank identification. The public authority should emphasise that there is no authority that would request a customer's online banking codes through a text message or by telephone.

If the customer had identified, they should be told to contact their bank's customer service and, if necessary, report an offence to the police.

CASE EXAMPLE 6: ASSISTANCE WITH COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

A customer visits the authority's joint service point, asking for help with using its service.

The customer is trying to submit an application online, which requires a variety of attachments.

The customer asks for someone make sure that the attachments are correct.

The customer logs in using their own strong identification token but wants the customer service representative to keep a close eye on their device to make sure everything is done correctly.

SOLUTION: The public authority can advise the customer with submitting the application and help them, for example, to scan and send the documents to their email for attachment to the application. Consider the privacy of the customer when handling the attachments. The authority can rely on instructions to indicate what kind of attachments are required with the application. It is the customer's responsibility to make sure that the attachments are correct. If the customer is uncertain about the attachments or completing the correct content on the application, they must be referred to the competent authority.

When the customer uses strong identification, the authority must politely inform the customer that they will look away, as a matter of protecting their privacy. In addition, they must state that they cannot identify on behalf of the client for the service.

No comments should be made on a decision; they may only state that it is the responsibility of the person making the decision. If the customer needs more extensive support to complete the application, they are referred to the competent authority.

CASE EXAMPLE 7: MISSING DECISION

A customer calls the general customer service of the authority, as they have not received a decision or invoice that they should have received already. The customer asks what is taking so long. The customer is sure that the decision has already been made.

SOLUTION: The general customer service representative should ask whether the client has used the public authorities' services digitally or activated the Suomi.fi service. If the customer answers yes, they should be told to check if the decision has arrived in the Suomi.fi service. If necessary, the customer can be given instructions for identifying in the service.

If the authority does not send decisions to Suomi.fi Messages or the document cannot be found in the Suomi.fi service, the client

is referred to a party in your organisation with view access in the systems to see where the decision is, what is the content of the decision and when it may have been sent. The customer can also be referred to visit the service point of the correct authority.

If the customer's decision is found in the Suomi.fi service and the customer has more extensive technical difficulties in using the service, or the customer wishes to deactivate the service, they are directed to contact the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

CASE EXAMPLE 8: USE OF A MOBILE DEVICE

A customer arrives at the library, as they have recently received a new smartphone that they are having difficulty using.

SOLUTION: With basic smartphone use, the customer can be guided within the limits of the instructor's competence, device instructions and the time available.



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