

G-Cloud: Cloud Support

Service Definition

Support, Enhancement and Transformation of .NET, PHP and JavaScript Cloud Services



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1. Service Definition

1.1 Overview

STCS provides this support service to ensure that your cloud-based digital services continue to meet your business needs effectively and efficiently. The service is flexible and can be adapted over time to reflect changing requirements. Support activities range from investigating system behaviour and performance issues through to system migration, enhancement, and evolution in line with business objectives.

As specialists in cloud software development and support, STCS has a proven track record of delivering services to Government departments, education providers, and commercial organisations. This experience ensures not only strong technical capability and capacity, but also confidence that the service is delivered in line with recognised good practice.

1.2 About Us

With over 35 years' experience in software development—including more than 25 years working with Government departments and education providers—STCS is well positioned to support both current and legacy applications developed using a wide range of technologies and methodologies.

Our team of skilled professionals bring experience of GDS standards and all aspects of service delivery, including business analysis, solution architecture, and user experience (UX) design.

We support customers across the private, public, education and health sectors and have extensive experience of high-volume transactional systems. Case studies and examples of our work are available at www.stcs.co.uk.

1.3 Service Description

STCS follows a structured and transparent approach to cloud-based software support to ensure clients are fully aware of each stage of the process.

1.3.1 Preliminary Discussion

Initial discussions are held to understand the assignment, the software to be supported, the technologies involved, and the proposed start date. This early engagement allows both the client and STCS to assess alignment between requirements, capability, and capacity.

1.3.2 Defining Scope

STCS conducts a high-level investigation of requirements, including discussions with business and system managers to understand support needs, reporting requirements, and management information expectations.

We typically review user-facing functionality for all digital services within scope and inspect any available system documentation, application code, databases, and external system interfaces. STCS is fully experienced in taking responsibility for legacy systems with limited or no documentation.

The outcome of this investigation is a support proposal defining scope, resourcing, and governance arrangements. An experienced Account Manager is assigned to lead on each engagement.

The proposal typically includes two priced elements:

- Ongoing support services, detailing resources and charges
- Any additional familiarisation required, covering activities such as deeper investigation, creating/updating documentation, testing, or the setup of test environments. Where sufficient information is available to scope the familiarisation phase, it may be offered at a fixed price and agreed prior to contract award.

1.3.3 Additional Familiarisation

If the initial Scoping phase confirms that deeper familiarisation is needed, STCS undertakes the agreed investigations, reviews, testing, and configuration activities. This may include application code reviews, discussions with key users or in-house support teams, database and platform reviews, and deployment analysis.

The outcome is a report outlining findings and recommendations to improve system performance or address identified issues. Where requested, STCS will also produce or update technical and functional documentation for client review.

1.3.4 Support and Enhancements

During the support phase, agreed resources are available to address issues as they arise. Support requests may be submitted via email or dedicated telephone contact and are logged and tracked to ensure service levels are met. Issues can be recorded in the client's preferred tool or in a repository provided and managed by STCS. Progress, time spent, and actions taken are fully recorded, and regular updates are provided to clients.

For system enhancements, STCS adopts Agile delivery for both short- and long-term initiatives. Our scalable resource pool provides access to analysis, design, and full .NET, PHP, JavaScript and LCS Manager development expertise.

Testing is integrated throughout delivery, accommodating client preferences for testing tools (commonly using Microsoft TFS and HP Quality Centre).

We welcome active stakeholder involvement through Product Owners, Change Owners, or testers and recognise the benefits of iterative delivery and early feedback. This approach ensures performance requirements are fully understood and validated through interim releases and real-world load and stress testing. Full impact analysis is provided for all proposed changes.

Testing activities include unit testing, system testing (including cross-browser and mobile), integration testing, UAT, and load and stress testing. STCS also provides expert-level in-house database support to optimise performance.

1.3.5 Review and Reporting

Monthly performance reports assess service delivery against agreed service levels and highlight any issues encountered.

At agreed intervals, STCS conducts formal service reviews, summarising support activity and recommending potential system improvements. Support pricing may also be reviewed and adjusted based on actual usage. Further details are provided in Section 5.

1.3.6 Technical Environments Supported

STCS supports cloud systems in a wide range of technologies, including:

- C#, ASP.NET Core and MVC, Entity Framework, Web API, Windows Forms

- LCS Manager Software
- Java and J2EE
- PHP, Zend Framework
- NodeJS
- Scripting: AngularJS, ReactJS, JQuery, OpenLayers
- Databases: SQL and PL/SQL - Oracle, SQL Server, MySQL, MariaDB
- Authentication and authorisation integration: Active Directory and Microsoft 365, bespoke single and multi-factor authentication
- Cloud platform procurement, configuration and management: Azure, AWS, Cloudflare
- Reporting and Querying: Business Objects, GraphQL, bespoke reporting tools
- Document management and transfer solutions: SharePoint

2. Information Assurance

STCS employs experienced professionals with a strong understanding of secure application support, data integrity, and control frameworks. Our extensive work with Government agencies and the NHS ensures a thorough understanding of information assurance challenges and best practice solutions.

3. Backup, Restore, and Disaster Recovery

Existing backup, restoration, and disaster recovery arrangements are reviewed, and possibly tested, during familiarisation. We can then report on their effectiveness, highlighting any risk/potential improvements through a Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan, if required. This approach ensures we are fully familiar with the environments to be supported and is an opportunity for you to confirm you are satisfied with the existing/proposed solution.

We use standard and bespoke cloud monitoring tools to continuously track system performance and resolve issues quickly. In the event of data restoration, STCS works alongside you to manage the process.

4. On-boarding and Off-boarding

STCS follows a structured on-boarding process, starting with a free investigation of need and progressing to familiarisation as described in Section 1.3.3.

We frequently create or enhance documentation to support knowledge transfer at contract end and participate in handover sessions. Ongoing ad-hoc consultancy can also be provided to assist with new supplier on-boarding if required.

5. Pricing

Pricing is provided separately for ongoing support and any initial familiarisation activities. Significant system changes or enhancements are priced independently.

5.1 Familiarisation Phase

The initial Scope Definition activities allow us to identify and quote a fixed price for any further familiarisation. Familiarisation and development effort estimates are costed using the STCS SFIA Rate Card.

5.2 Ongoing Support

Our flexible support quote may offer a monthly rate, or a time-used model. The available options depend on the scope of the support required:

- **Time-used billing:** Invoiced in arrears where support demand is uncertain and issues are unlikely to be mission-critical.
- **Monthly support rate:** Based on an agreed base level of effort, allowing resources to be allocated for mission-critical systems. Additional support is billed as required and reviewed periodically to ensure appropriate resourcing.

Support contracts are typically established for a minimum of two years.

6. Service Management

Each contract is assigned an STCS Support Manager responsible for resource allocation, escalation, performance monitoring, reporting, and periodic reviews.

7. Service Constraints

Standard support hours are 8:00–18:00, Monday to Friday. Extended hours can be agreed if required.

8. Service Levels

STCS defines three priority levels for incidents, with response times aligned to business impact. Target response and resolution times are agreed and monitored during service delivery.

Priority	Criteria
1	The system is not operational or is operational but with critical functionality not available or not working correctly and there is no workaround to the problem.
2	The system is operational and critical functionality is unavailable or not working correctly but there is a workaround to the problem.
3	The system is operational and there are faults but the critical functionality is working correctly.

The responses that STCS would normally provide are as follows:

Priority	Initial Response (max time in working hours)	Action following initial response and target response times
1	1	Allocate a support person to investigate the fault and to work continuously, in working time, until the fault has been identified and fixed.

		We will keep the client informed about progress at regular intervals.
2	2	Allocate a support person to investigate the fault and to work continuously in working time until the problem has been diagnosed. We will keep the client informed about progress at regular intervals and will implement a fix within two working days.
3	4	Will investigate the problem within two working days and discuss the fix with the client representative. Will either implement the fix within 5 working days or agree to implement any change with the next planned release of the system.

9. Training

STCS provides flexible training for end users and technical teams, including on-site workshops, remote sessions, web-based walkthroughs, and mentoring to support knowledge transfer. All training is completely flexible and delivered in line with your business needs

10. Ordering and Invoicing

Clients issue purchase orders, and STCS invoices at agreed milestones. Standard payment terms are 14 days from invoice date.

11. Termination

Support contracts typically run for two years with a notice period, normally six months. Contracts are governed by G-Cloud Call-Off Terms and STCS terms and conditions.

12. Data Restoration and Service Migration

Resilience, restoration, and migration strategies are defined during familiarisation. In the event of catastrophic failure, STCS implements the agreed recovery and migration approach.

13. Client Responsibilities

Clients must provide timely and accurate incident information and be available to review and approve proposed actions. We pride ourselves on working closely with in-house teams where appropriate, and welcome a collaborative approach to ensure you remain fully aware of system developments and performance

14. Technical Requirements

Where new infrastructure or capacity is required, STCS works with any client technical teams to define solutions based on data volumes, performance, and processing needs.

15. Trial Service and Added Value

STCS aims to deliver added value wherever possible, including free investigations of need to help clients assess scope and feasibility before incurring costs. These services are discussed during tendering and tailored to client requirements.