joy

Emma Parnell

User research
Service design
Brand development

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This portfolio represents work completed prior to establishing Joy.

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References available on request

Service design roles.

NHS Digital
Service Design Lead
July 2020 - September 2021

Working to deliver digital services through the NHS website (NHS.uk). I led the design of the COVID-19 vaccination booking service to enable people to book their vaccination at a large scale vaccination site or community pharmacy. Over 20 million appointments have now been booked and the service has a user satisfaction rate of over 70%.

WithYou
Service Design Lead (secondment)
July 2019 - June 2020

Leading service design within a drug and alcohol charity. I led a project to redesign how people started treatment including piloting digital appointment booking and researching, prototyping and testing new approaches to assessment. I led the design of an MVP for a new digital product for undertaking assessment in a more person-centred way.

Snook
Senior Service Designer
March 2015 – July 2019

Leading on day-to-day design direction while helping grow the London office from 1 - 21 people. I led complex service design projects for a range of clients such as Sodexo, Hackney Council and GDS. I led the Tesco account, growing the business over a two year period bringing in over £500,000 worth of work while making the case for service design at Tesco and developing their design playbook.

Brand development roles.

BRR (New Zealand)
Creative Strategist
Jun 2012 – Oct 2014

Strategic brand and proposition development for a range of clients including retail, real estate and government. I led customer insight work to ensure brand strategy was rooted in user needs. I led the redesign of one of New Zealand's leading garden brands, Tui, with a roll out across 50+ products.

Cowan Design (New Zealand)
Designer
Jul 2010 – Jun 2012

Strategic brand and packaging design for the food and drink sector including New Zealand's market leader in frozen foods. I redesigned the packaging for V, one of New Zealand's biggest selling energy drinks.

Bulletproof Design
Designer
Sep 2007 – Jul 2010

Strategic brand and packaging design for the food and drink sector including Cadbury, Coca-Cola and Sainsburys. I worked across creative concepts and pitches for limited edition Toblerone, Lea and Perrins redesign and Shock Absorber sports bras.

Education.

BA Hons Graphic Design
First Class

BTEC Art and Design Foundation Course
Distinction

Side projects.

Mega Mentor
Mentor to aspiring service designers through the mentoring platform, Mega Mentor.

Service Design Breakfasts
Co-host of a bi-monthly breakfast series that looks to provide support for service designers.

Interests.

Running
Runner with GoodGym, a charity that combines running with volunteering.

Writing
Writer for design publications and blogs. I write about my personal approach to leadership on my Medium account. I'd like to write a book one day.

Travel
Travelled around South America for four months after living in New Zealand. Cycled the world's most dangerous road, hiked to Machu Picchu and explored the Columbian rainforest. Next on the list is South Africa.

Knitting
I knit chunky scarves!

Skills.

I specialise in user research, service design and brand development.

I'm a skilled facilitator. I believe good design is collaborative and I pride myself in my ability to bring different perspectives together in a safe way.

I enjoy using my creativity to design collaborative workshop exercises that democratise participation.

I'm a doer. I believe design can only make things better for people if we actually get services delivered. I work hard to navigate the barriers that can stand in the way of this within organisations.

I champion the design and delivery of inclusive services and work to ensure equity of access for all.

I'm open, honest and will stand up for what I believe in.

NHS.
- via NHS Digital

**Designing a national booking
service for COVID-19 vaccinations**

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**

My role
**Lead service designer responsible
for delivering an end-to-end
service that worked for users.**

The NHS needed a national scale service that would allow citizens to book two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination. In around nine weeks we worked to design, test and build an end-to-end service for someone to book their vaccination appointments.

As of July 2021, over 20 million appointments had been booked with a user satisfaction rate of over 70%.

Quickly shaping a service with a design sprint
In August 2020 we had no approved vaccination for coronavirus (COVID-19). We knew it was coming but we didn't know which vaccine would land first, when, and what the clinical requirements around administration would be.

We were working with high levels of uncertainty under high pressure. We needed to quickly understand the shape of the service we were looking to build, so we ran a two week design sprint. We worked to design the service at pace, test an early prototype with users and develop a realistic delivery plan.

Designing a whole service
This service included a citizen-facing front-end web application, configuration of a booking engine and staff-facing interface as well as a check-in app for staff on-site to accept arrivals. The citizen-facing web application was also adapted for use as an assisted digital solution delivered via the 119-telephone service.
A big part of my work was ensuring these different digital products knitted together

effectively to ensure a seamless end-to-end experience for users, regardless of which channel they chose to use.

Maintaining a whole-service map that documented the user journeys and technical architecture across the different products and channels allowed me to always have a view of the service as a whole when things were changing fast.

Iterating through user research
Over the nine week delivery time frame, we ran five rounds of user research. We tested the end-to-end booking journey with user groups like the over 80's, health and social care workers and those classed as clinically extremely vulnerable.

These insights helped us refine the design of the service and ensured we were meeting the needs of users when we launched in early January.

Taking an inclusive approach
Despite working at pace, it was important we also delivered an inclusive service. Two weeks before going live we discovered we would be required to ask users of the service for their gender.

As detailed in my blog 'Let's talk about sex', I worked hard to ensure the question was asked in such a way that everyone would feel comfortable to answer regardless of how they identified.

Since the launch of the booking service, I worked to make the case for prioritising the work required to remove 'gender' from the API and consequently remove the question from the service itself. This ensured trans and non-binary people could book their vaccination without facing a barrier.
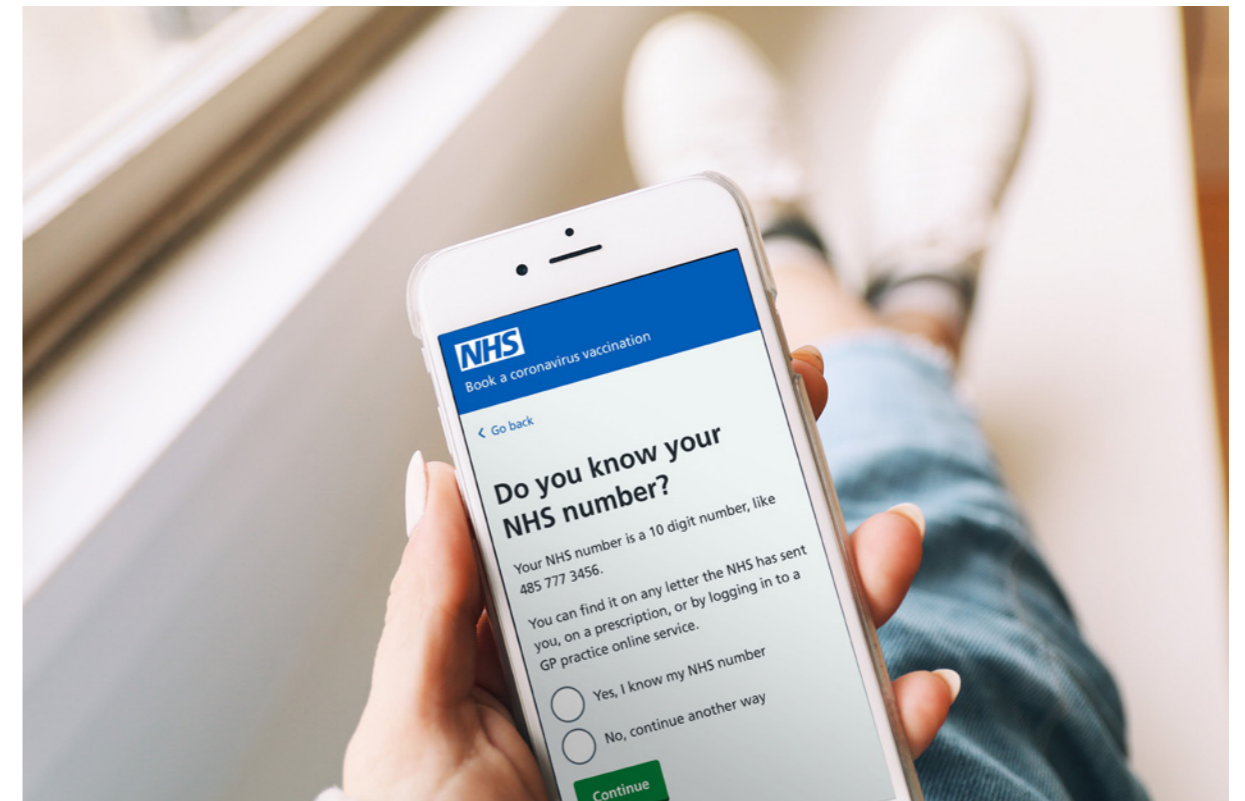
Musgrave.
- via Snook

Designing a new in-home catering service.

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**
✓ **Brand development**

My role
Design director and key client contact. Led workshops and directed day-to-day design work.

A trusted Irish supermarket brand, saw the opportunity to be first to market with an end-to-end in-home catering service with digital ordering.

The service launched successfully on a trial basis in three stores with a plan to scale to 20 stores over the next financial year.

Developing a strategic proposition from user research insight
Starting with a blank sheet of paper allowed us to be user-led right from the start.

Research with potential customers, alongside competitor analysis, informed the early strategic direction of the service. We spent time with people to understand what they needed from the experience as a whole, from ordering through to what they'd like to see on the menu.
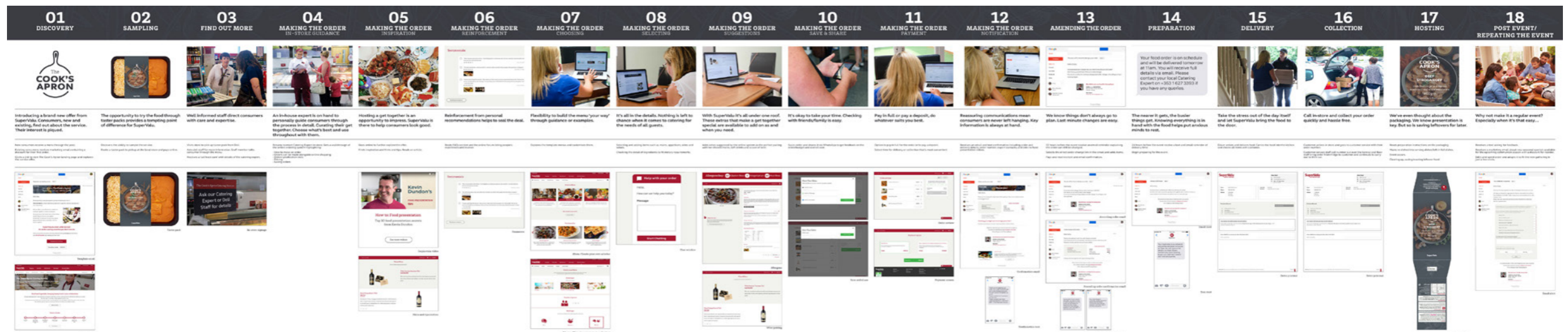
This user research insight informed the development of how we looked to position the offer in the market, which customer groups we targeted and what the core food offering would be.

Prototyping an end-to-end service
As this service was new to market, it was important to test and learn as we developed all aspects of the end-to-end service. Through prototyping, we were able to test end-to-end experiences with real customers by mocking up key interactions.

We built a clickable prototype of the digital ordering system, mocking up scenarios where people would order both from their own home and in-store with a staff member. We tested signage and merchandise in the store to see if people could find their way to the ordering point. We mocked up packaging and sourced samples of the real dishes then delivered them to the customers doors.

This end-to-end testing showed us what was working well and what needed to be changed, and why, before moving to a trial with a small number of stores.

WithYou.

Redesigning drug and alcohol assessments.

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**

My role
Lead service designer partnering with a multi-disciplinary digital team.

WithYou, a national drug and alcohol charity, were experiencing high drop-out rates from services in the first four weeks.

By redesigning the initial assessment process, and the software used to facilitate this, we looked to increase the number of people who came back after that first session.

Understanding people's lived experience through ethnographic research
When people first reach out to a drug and alcohol service it's a hugely vulnerable time for them. Everybody's story is different. But to understand why drop-out rates were high, we needed to spend time observing those early interactions people had with services.

After spending time with three services around the country, we started to understand what happens when people walk through door.

Emotion was the thread that ran through everything we saw and heard. This is not surprising, because these services are deeply relationship and people based.

Designing for trust
When people currently enter drug and alcohol services, one of the first things they have to do is answer a long list of questions — this is known as an assessment. We had a hunch going into this work that we might want to rethink this assessment process. Our research showed that what matters is less about making this a

seamless process and more about trust and relationships.

We saw and heard how deeply people connected with recovery workers — something we learned is easier to establish when 'professional barriers' like paper or badges are not there. We heard very few people calling WithYou by its name — rather they referred to the organisation by the name of their worker.

When we dug into the nature of these relationships and looked at the wider context of building social connections, we saw that it's the ability to give a bit of yourself to the person in front of you that's important for building trust, whether that is through sharing lived experience or connecting over interests.

Building software that facilitates good relationships
This insight was the foundation for the development of a new digital tool for recovery workers to use during the first assessment with service users.

We continued to work directly with our three service locations and facilitated ideation sessions with services users and staff. Finding ways to ensure we were still collecting the data required by law while shifting the process to be more relational was the key challenge. We worked through this by iteratively developing prototypes and testing them with staff and users.

The new digital tool is designed to ensure the recovery worker can collect data more flexibly and be led by what their client wants to discuss rather than following the order of a form.

As of July 2021 the software was due to go live with three services after a successful pilot phase.

Partnering with a small charity to build design capability while redesigning their service.

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**
✓ **Brand development**

My role
Led the training and follow-up mentoring.

Reach Volunteering wanted to build the capability of their internal team around user research and service design.

We ran a hands-on training programme for a team of six to work together on taking a design-led approach to service improvement.

Mapping the end-to-end service
Reach pair skilled volunteers with charities. A few years previous they had moved their service onto a digital platform.

Training the team in core user research methods we worked together to gather insight into how Reach's users experience their service - from end-to-end.

Taking these insights, we worked with the team to map out the end-to-end service including the offline interactions that made up the whole service.

This allowed us to identify the pain points for users then select some key interactions and features of the digital service to redesign.

Idea generation based on solving problems
Framing problems to solve allowed us to be driven by meeting the needs of users and not tied to particular solutions. The team learnt idea generation techniques and worked together to generate ideas for how to improve key touchpoints of their service for both charities and volunteers.

Building capability across a small team
Reach are a small charity and it was important to them to build the capability of their staff in design and research.

Because Reach don't have a lot of direct contact with their users, we were creative in how we helped the staff build research activities into the day-to-day running of the charity. For example, helping staff that answered the phone to record insight from trouble shooting calls as user research findings.

After the training programme was complete I also continued to work with Reach on a mentoring basis. I'd provide two hours of support a month at pre-agreed dates to help them continue their design and research work.

Hackney Council.
- via Snook

Designing a new service
for householder planning
applications.

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**

My role
Lead service designer and key
client contact. Directed day-to-
day design and research work.

76% of Hackney Council's householder planning applications were invalid when submitted.

By introducing a new digital submission service we aimed to reduce invalidations and save officer time while demonstrating a data led approach to planning.

Building a new digital service
Following the GDS agile delivery approach, we worked to deliver a discovery, alpha and public beta for a new digital service while demonstrating what was possible to other local authorities.

Through discovery we undertook user research with both architects and homeowners to better understand their experience of submitting planning applications. We worked with planning officers to understand the planning application process and carried out data analysis to build a picture of how we could improve the validation rate.

Through alpha we prioritised a number of key features for inclusion in an MVP. We worked through paper, clickable and code based prototypes to test and refine the service with users. This involved close collaboration with planning policy colleagues to ensure we were crafting questions in such a way that we were saving users time while ensuring officers still got the information they needed to make a decision.

Features that addressed user problems
One of the biggest reasons for invalidation was missing documents. By building in a feature that allowed users to check their planning

considerations as part of the application process, we were able to provide clearer guidance around which documents were required.

We also found users were answering questions they didn't need to, like whether they were providing parking spaces when they were only replacing windows or doors. This insight led to the creation of a dynamic form engine that ensured users were only asked questions relevant to their proposed development.

We also worked to ensure that where the council held data, like the location plan, this could be confirmed by a user rather than resubmitted.

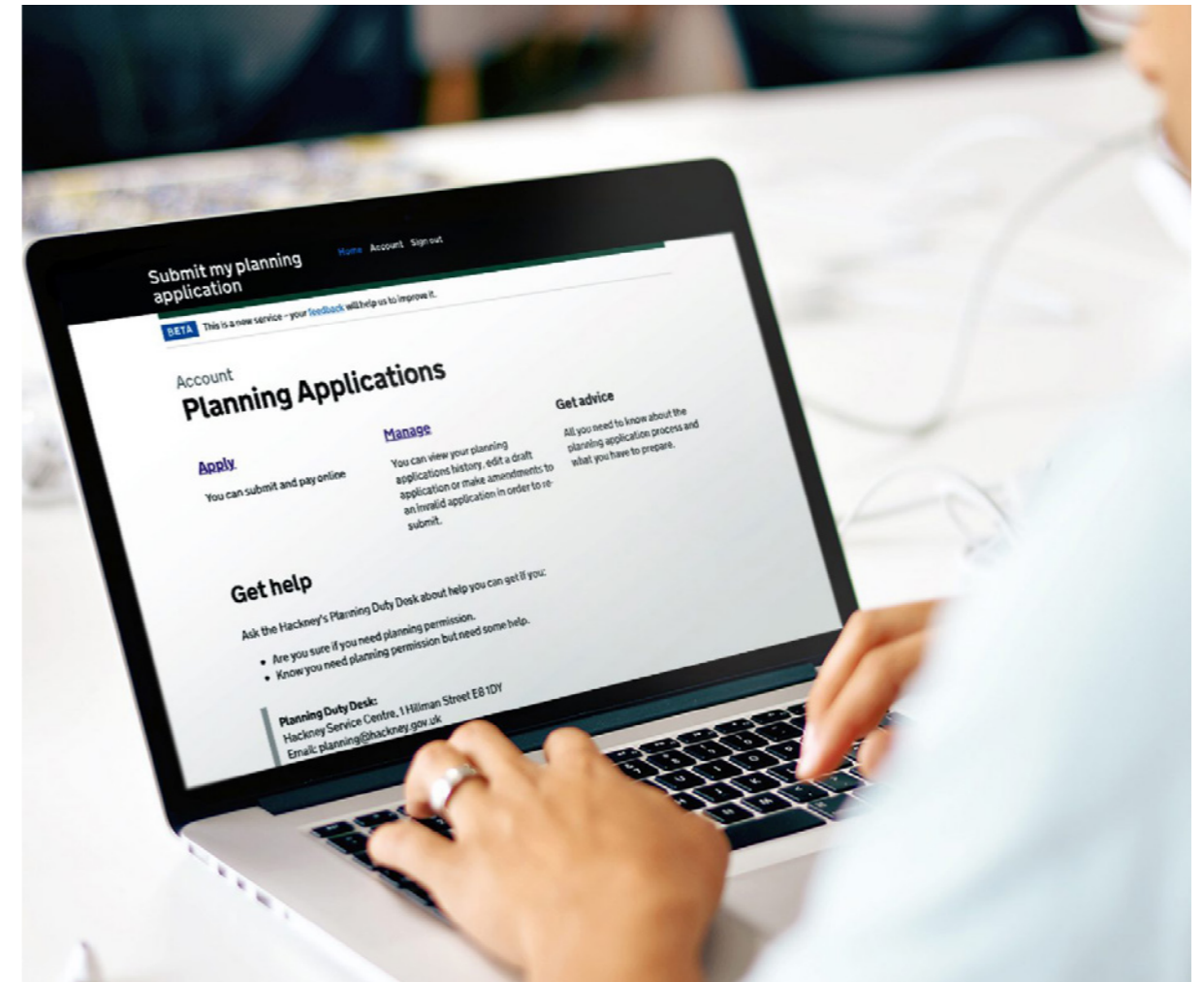**Pushing towards a data-led approach to planning**
Current approaches to planning involve huge swathes of data being locked away in PDFs. For the system to work more effectively, new approaches need to be introduced that flow data into the planning system.

Planning applications are a point of data entry. Current digital solutions stipulate the upload of documents meaning that critical information is not input in a machine readable format.

This project provided a prototype for an approach that would allow critical information to be flowed into the planning system at the point of application.

Redesigning a popular garden products brand to attract a younger customer base.

✓ Brand development

My role
Graphic designer working within a team of designers and strategists.

Tui is a proud New Zealand owned and operated company. They were looking for a design system that would appeal to a younger audience, reflect their 'kiwi' origins and be flexible enough to work across a wide range of products.

Modernising the brand mark
We modernised the brand mark to bring the Tui, a bird native to New Zealand, to the forefront. Housing the mark in a circular device reflected the fact that Tui's are known for singing at night, especially during the full moon.

The moon became a flexible device we could use across a wide range of packaging types to give the brand mark and product name prominence while allowing the illustration style to bring to life the product in the background.

Creating a flexible design system
Tui had a wide range of products including range extensions into homeware and BBQ. They needed a flexible design system that could work across different shapes and sizes of packaging, from large compost bags through to small weed-killer 'shots'.

A simple, contemporary illustration style was developed that used shape and bold colours to bring to life each product.

While the illustration modernised the brand, it was flexible enough to ensure key information was communicated clearly and new products could easily be added regardless of their shape or size.

Government Digital Service.
- via Snook

Understanding what respondents and creators need from an online consultation platform.

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**

My role
Senior service designer partnering with a user researcher and key client contact.

GDS delivered an online consultation platform for government but needed to understand if it was meeting the needs of its users.

Partnering with the Demographic Society, we delivered user research to document user needs alongside strategic recommendations to encourage more innovative approaches to consultation.

Mapping the end-to-end service
To ensure the government was providing a service that met the needs of its users, they needed to understand both sides of consultation - people who respond and people who create.

Through user research interviews with both user groups, we mapped the end-to-end process of undertaking the most common form of Q&A format consultation.

This involved understanding the original motivation for consultation, how the questions were decided and written, right through to the respondent's interaction and receipt of an output after the consultation has closed.

Going beyond iterating the existing platform
The recommendations to GDS, based on our user research, followed a tiered format. We provided short-term recommendations centered around small changes to the platform based on the user needs we'd identified. For example, segregating open and closed consultations and

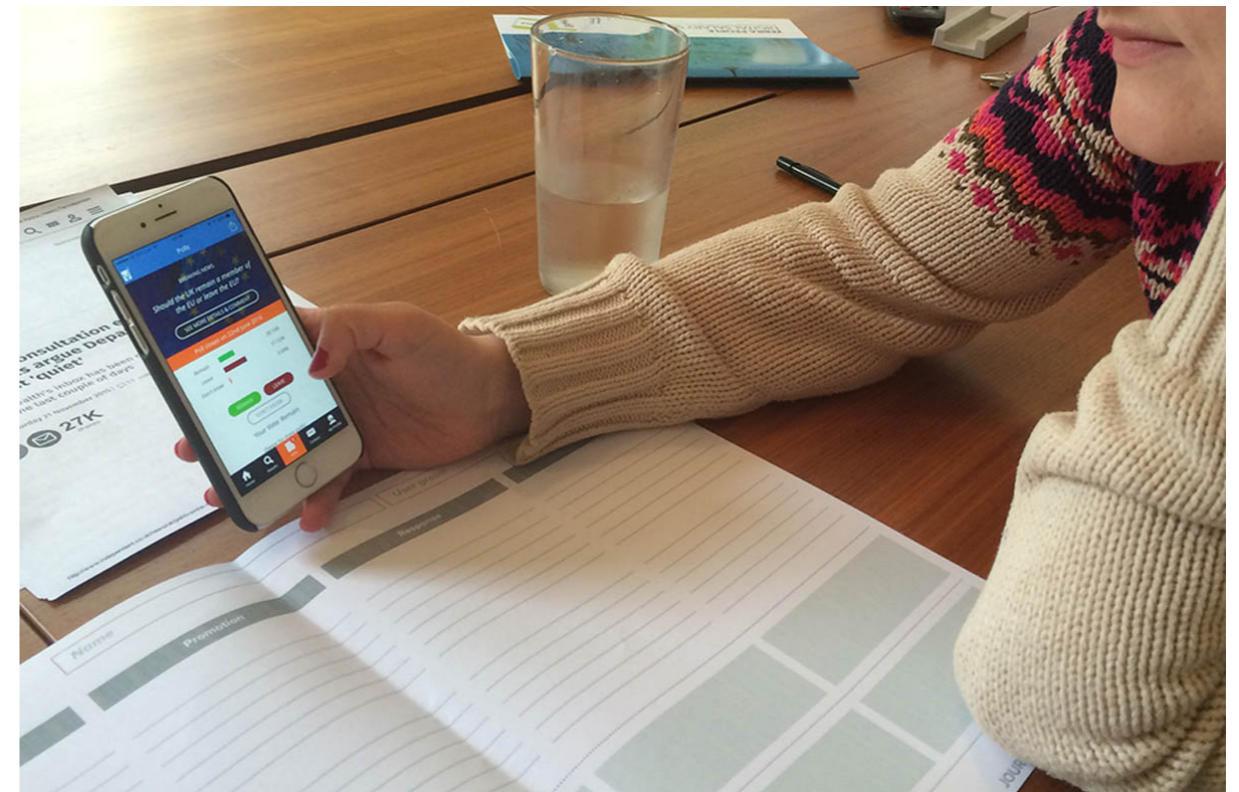listing the full name of a department rather than the abbreviation.

Following global horizon scanning from the Democratic Society, the key longer term recommendation was to create an open and extensible core infrastructure into which consultation tools, from in-house or external developers, can be input – consequently stimulating the market in this space.

This infrastructure should focus on functions common to all consultations such as continuity of communication with respondents, and creating and growing an audience for engagement. It should be designed so that tools for interaction – be that a survey or a space for deliberative discussion – can be embedded easily, allowing for a smoother and more consistent consultation experience.

You can view the report here.

Local Government Association.
- via Snook

Building the service design capabilities of local councils through live adult social care projects

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**

My role
Training designer and facilitator within a client and agency team of four.

The Local Government Association (LGA) needed a training partner to deliver a hands-on service design programme to ten councils.

The councils each delivered a design-led adult social care transformation project. 99% of participants felt the training met it's objectives.

Hands-on service design training
The LGA is the national voice of local government. It works with councils across England and Wales to support, promote and improve public services. One of the areas it was looking to promote was building the capability of councils to use design-led approaches to their service delivery.

During the project, we provided ten councils around the country with over 40 hours of structured practical training alongside one-to-one on-site mentoring. We built multidisciplinary teams to support projects facross the country, and looked at a broad range of challenges across adult social care.

Teams attended four off-site interactive and practical training workshops which covered the design process from user research and synthesis to prototyping and testing.

During these sessions participants were exposed to design principles and methods, then supported in putting these approaches into practice through their own transformation project.

In between sessions, we delivered one-to-one mentoring back at the council sites to support ongoing project delivery through show-and-tells, director engagement sessions and general project planning.

Innovative approaches to adult social care
As a result of the training, the councils came away with design training that they are using to improve the services they deliver. Across the whole programme, 82% of participants rated the sessions helpful and 99% of participants felt that the workshops met their stated objectives.

Most importantly, because of the project, new effective design-led approaches to adult social care are being tested across the country.

The outputs are exciting and innovative. A particular highlight has been designed by Lewisham Council. They created a 'living room' for the hospital that will provide support and vital information around discharge, re-enablement packages and financial care costs. It responded to the need for support beyond the hospital doors, enabling people to transition into normal everyday life with ease.

Retail client.
(Project under NDA)
- via Snook

Redesigning a much loved
in-store initiative for young
families.

✓ **User research**
✓ **Service design**

My role
Senior service designer
partnering with a user researcher
and key client contact.

Customers loved the in-store initiative to give out free fruit to kids while their parents shopped; however it was a business risk due to increased 'slips and trips' in store.

Through the introduction of bins, new signage and a change to the fruit provided we saved the initiative.

A differentiating experience
Putting a focus on customer experience in the fast moving world of retail can be challenging. With the high street suffering and customer shopping behaviour shifting, the stakes are high when it comes to attracting and retaining customers.

While the price war might always be front of mind for retailers, companies increasingly look to customer experience as a differentiator and a way to encourage loyalty. This is especially true when it comes to families with young children. These shoppers tend to have the highest average spend, with the weekly 'big shops' being augmented with regular 'top-up shops'.

This retailer took this to heart and, in 2016, were the first to market a new initiative offering free fruit to children in their large format stores. While the offer was aimed at championing healthy eating, it also had the added benefit of making it easier for parents to shop, by keeping children occupied with a tasty treat.

Insights you only get from observational research
The project started with a combination of research and data analysis. We wanted to observe customers interacting with the service as they moved through the store. We chose stores that showed us both ends of the spectrum; those with high and low numbers of incidents.

We also worked to build a picture of incidents across the country. By looking at the data that was captured through the incident reporting system we identified the 'where, when and why' of the problem.

Originally we thought that fruit peel was the main culprit, however by spending time with families we discovered that it was only part of the problem. Parents were peeling the fruit at the stand, then children were accidentally dropping bits of fruit onto the floor – a floor that happened to be the same colour as the inside of a banana. Something we would only have found out through user research.

In-store prototyping
Through a process of research and analysis, we quickly built up a picture of different areas of opportunity. We prototyped new approaches to the problem, including new signage, bins around store, and a change in the fruit on offer.

We mocked up signage for the bins to test which signs would draw the customers attention and tested the customers response to the change in fruit by swapping bananas out in specific stores for a day and interviewing customers.

As a result, the initiative was saved – though sadly we said goodbye to the banana – and 'slips and trips' across all trial stores were greatly reduced.

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Thank you.

Get in touch for a chat.

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