SENA (Societal Early Needs App) | **Alpha**

User Research
Summary User Testing

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User Testing: June 2021
Version: 1.0

PLACECUBE | Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL

User Testing
Goals

The objective was to test our planned approach of digital engagement with residents to make sure we build something they would be happy to use.

1

2

3

Engage with users to conduct research on how we capture personal information and present a series of questions to understand their circumstances
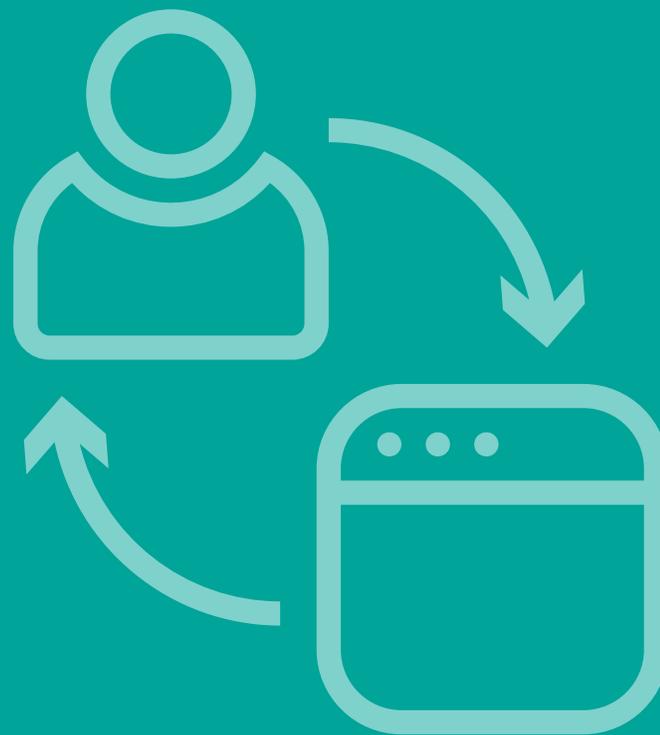
Understand how to present service recommendations to residents in a way that will maximise their uptake and engagement
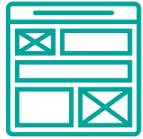
Understand how to present options to them around agreeing to be referred to service providers and managing consent for data sharing data between parties

User Testing

The Approach

What?

- We created a simple set of wireframes in Miro, that captured some of the functionality and features proposed for the new service

- The wireframes followed some aspects of the user journey developed for a resident seeking help with employment

How?

- The user testing was conducted via video call or via a phone call

- The sessions were thirty minutes and verbal consent was captured to take part

- A link was shared with residents to access the wireframes in Figma

## Who?

- The user testing was conducted with seven residents from the District

- Participants were recruited by the Community team and Call centre at HDC, including partners they work with

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User Testing
The Participants

1
- 52 years old
- Mainly uses Google online to search
- Receives some benefits from the council
- Carer for disabled son and suffers from mental health issues

2
- 60 years old
- Active online user (shopping & banking online)
- Retired
- Assisting 92-year-old mother to access support and benefits from HDC

3
- 70 years old
- Active online user (shopping & banking online), often assists Accent Homes with online surveys
- Retired

4
- 60 years old
- Accesses internet mainly for work emails
- Currently working, issues with receiving wages
- Struggling financially, supported mainly by friends & family. Receiving some help from Universal Credit and has had to use a Foodbank recently

5
- 28 years old
- Active online user
- Currently not working, stay at home parent with young children

6
- 74 years old
- Active online user (shopping & banking online)
- Retired

7
- 51 years old
- Active online user (shopping & banking online
- Working full-time

The participants were mainly active online and we should therefore assume they would be most likely to self-serve

User Testing
Wireframes
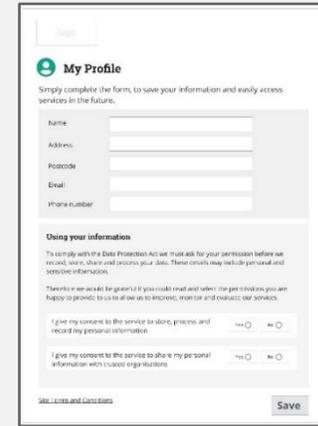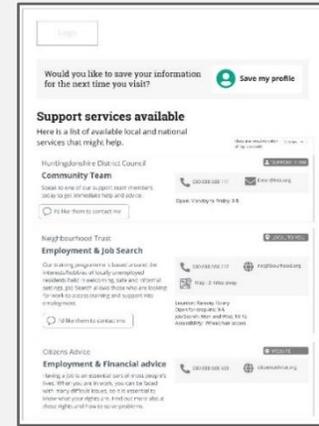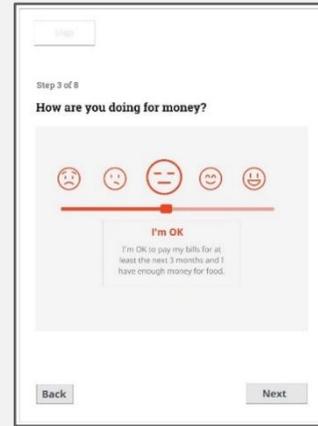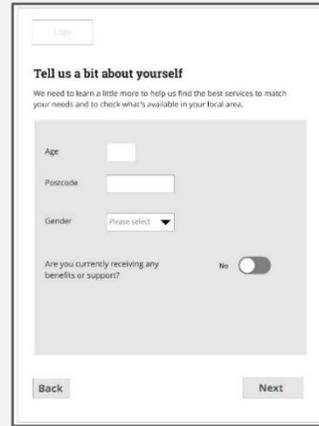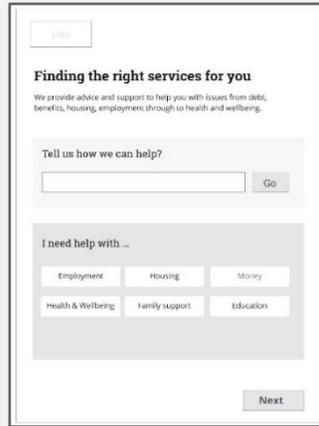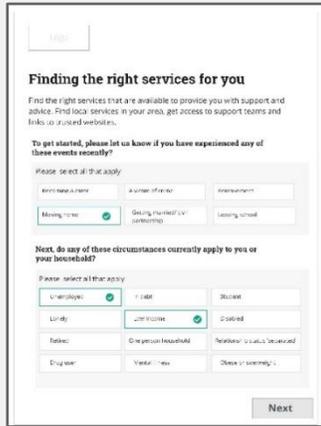
Screen 1
Landing Page (option 1)

What we tested

- Selecting life events and circumstances on entry to find recommended services and support

Screen 2
Landing Page (option 2)

What we tested

- Typing or selecting a help category on entry to find recommended services and support
- Preference for option 1 or option 2 landing page

Screen 3
About You

What we tested

- Would they be happy to provide some personal information early in the process
- Did they understand why we might be asking for this information
- Benefits was used as a leading question to dig deeper and ask if they would disclose benefits or earnings

Screen 4
Financial Status

What we tested

- Would they be happy to provide their financial status
- Response to the format and style of the question
- What they thought about the language and tone used
- The number of steps they would happily complete to access recommended services

Screen 5
Service Recommendations

What we tested

- Views on the the three different types of services and the level of details provided
- Preference to contact a service, either directly or the preference for a call back
- Would they create a profile at this stage and did they understand the benefits of registering

Screen 6
Profile & Consent

What we tested

- Consent to save their personal information, including circumstance details completed online
- Consent to share their information with trusted organisations
- Consent for a partner to share the outcomes back with the service

Summary
User Testing

User Testing
What we learnt

1 The site branding and a clear explanation are both important components for users to trust the service. A clear explanation of the process, information they may need to provide and what they might expect back in terms of help or information would be helpful for engagement.

2 Asking users to select circumstances is worth exploring further, more work is needed to link these to life events. The terms used need to be in a more approachable language.

3 Users were more likely to answer questions if they understood why they were being asking for this information. Users who did not see the relevancy of providing financial details for benefits, in contrast were happy to engage with the more interactive financial status question as it appeared more friendly.

4 Users liked the approach of having less busy screens with fewer questions at once. They accepted there would be numerous steps involved. Providing an indication of where they are in the process for completing a form is helpful to be keep them engaged.

5 Users expressed their frustration with other services where they had seeked help, only to find they were not eligible. Access to the information should be supported by a well-focussed search for services based upon a person's eligibility, circumstances and location.

6 Most users were happy to register, some users expressed this was due to trust around this being a service from the council. More user testing would be beneficial to understand at what point in the journey registration would have the greatest uptake. Users were happier to register once they understood this was necessary for a call back.

7 Consent to pass their information to trusted partners had a mixed response, many would like to know exactly who they are sharing with and to have the option to only send basic contact details versus full circumstances they completed on the site.

8 Having the services feedback on the outcomes was difficult to explain and it may need further investigation with different copy examples. It would be beneficial to explore if this consent could be captured by the referral agency to make this less complex.

9 Most users found the language approachable, easy to understand and in plain English. Some felt certain terms could be more formal e.g., finance vs money to appeal to different users.

Finding the right services for you

Find the right services that are available to provide you with support and advice. Find local services in your area, get access to support teams and links to trusted websites.

To get started, please let us know if you have experienced any of these events recently?

Please select all that apply

| Becoming a carer | A victim of crime | Bereavement |
| Moving home ✓ | Getting married/ civil partnership | Leaving school |

Next, do any of these circumstances currently apply to you or your household?

Please select all that apply

Unemployed ✓	In debt	Student
Lonely	Low income ✓	Disabled
Retired	One person household	Relationship status 'separated'
Drug user	Mental illness	Obese or overweight

Next

Summary

| 4 out of 7 users preferred selecting circumstances. An information icon would be helpful to explain the terms. | There was some confusion regarding the difference between life events and circumstances. | The site needs to consider a journey for users who do not see relevant option they can select. |

Q: What do you think about the options on the screen?

"I like the options. I would be able to select lonely, disabled & mental health, you don't normally get as many options as that. Becoming a carer, it is nice to see there is support, I am a carer for my son, you just get left" **1**

"This might be a first step for any people with these circumstances, but not sure if none of these were for you, what you would do next." **2**

"The life events are going to dependant on your age. Would people admit their circumstances? It needs more explanation. Low income depends on where you are in the bracket in society. " **3**

"The first lot of questions aren't relevant to me; I wouldn't select any of these. I am employed but I'm not currently getting paid, but not sure if would use low income necessarily, I'm unsure." **4**

"It looks clear but the options on the second part are a bit bizarre. I'm not sure if it's the way it's written e.g., relationship status. Would I want to share I have drug abuse problem with the council, no I wouldn't? Some of the options are not very positive." **5**

"Its' ok, but what happens if you can't tick any of the options? Having seen the second screen, the first screen was better it dealt with more things. There is a bit more guidance on what you could do, I feel happier with the first page." **6**

"It's clear what you have to do, but why is it laid out like this? Should it ask about your relationship and then give you options for married, getting married, divorced, separated? Not sure on the titles, victim of crime, might include domestic abuse, people may not see themselves as a victim of crime possibly look at different option for this. However, this screen is clearer than the second option. I would not expect HDC to give information on all these options, such as getting married. This page gives a clearer indication of what I might find." **7**

Q: What would you expect from a service like this?

"I would like to see not too much detail, in layman's terms what to do next, where to go next and how long the process takes and when would you get an answer" **1**

"I was only unemployed once, when I went to the job centre, because I'd never been in the system it was terrible. I didn't know the process, if there had been more information, I wouldn't have had the problems. You need to know what you are eligible for and what evidence you need to get the help. " **3**

"I'd expect to be taken to something that dealt with problems arising with unemployed, what help can I obtain. I would expect they need to know my age, marital statis, number of children etc." **6**

Q: Usability & language

"If any of those potential events were happening to you none of those things would be confusing" **2**

"The terminology in perhaps a little insensitive, when dealing with the council, if it was not branded by the council, it would only change opinion slightly." **5**

"It's plain English, that's good. Nice and simple no business jargon." **6**

"It looks straight forward to use." **1**

Screen 2
Landing page (option 2)

Logo

Finding the right services for you

We provide advice and support to help you with issues from debt, benefits, housing, employment through to health and wellbeing.

Tell us how we can help?

[ ] **Go**

I need help with ...

| Employment | Housing | Money |
| Health & Wellbeing | Family support | Education |

Next

Summary

| Typing in the open-text field had a mixed response. This was mainly due to bad experiences with help chatbots. | Selecting a category was preferred, but the options were considered much broader compared to the circumstances. | The language overall was approachable and easy to understand in plain English. |

Q: What do you think about the options on the screen?

"It is not always easy to put it into words. When you go onto some websites, if you do not put in the right wording, you get nowhere near what you expect it can get frustrating. An open question, when you are stressed and in that state of mind, you wouldn't be able to read that sentence let alone type in what you want. The options more direct and easier to select." **1**

"I just need somebody to talk to, rather than go through a form. It is not me I just need somebody to talk and try and help me out. I do know that I need some help, I need help with money." **4**

"Are they the only options you get? I would prefer to select one of the options at the bottom than type something in." **5**

"Typing in depends how good the search engine is, it could be like customer service chat, you go through some frustration with those questions. The categories are broad, and the options feel very generic, it gives the impression it will take you to some generic links to support, that are not relevant to my situation at all. The first page felt more tailored, it looks like it will be much more useful." **7**

"I'd possibly want to type something in, because I do get the idea the ones below are main topics." **2**

"Typing something, I would say this is better, different people have a different mind set. I feel questions are often loaded for example in surveys what if you don't agree with the options you can select from? You might think the site only covers what's in the boxes below. There might be something you need help with, but its not covered in the 6 boxes so its not clear that you can ask something else. It should say, tell us what you need help whether its displayed or not." **3**

"You would get all sorts of comments, people say more if they got something to complain about. You need a brief a question to get the next one. I need help with covers it. I prefer to tick the box as it is more likely to led to a specific area. If you've not typed in clearly enough or you are too vague its no good. I've had problems with chat, you find you are speaking to a robot and then it can go nowhere." **6**

Q: What would you expect from a service like this?

"I would have a browse what would be the next stage? Do I need to go doctors first, then psychiatrist to know what the steps are, I would like to browse the options" **1**

"The idea is if you need help in any direction, the council would be able to recommend somewhere." **2**

"If this was help for employment, depending on skills, to see different pathways or organisations that could help you with your particular profession." **3**

"It needs a paragraph at the top to explain more about what the site does." **5**

Q: Usability & language

"Like (categories) they are short and to the point" **1**

"The language used is approachable, its fairly precise and well-phrased its not patronising or complex its good plain English" **7**

"Perhaps this more friendly than the first screen, looks more welcoming." **5**

"If you were genuinely seeking help or making an enquiry, you'd be happy to use this site" **2**

"The logo is important as there are so many scammers you need reassurance you are talking to a genuine people, that you want to talk to." **6**

Tell us a bit about yourself

We need to learn a little more to help us find the best services to match your needs and to check what's available in your local area.

Logo

Age

Postcode

Gender — Please select ▼

Are you currently receiving any benefits or support? — No ⬤

Back   Next

Summary

Users were open to providing their age and postcode and understood this may help to tailor the recommended service.	Clear instructions should be provided to explain why they are being asking for personal information.	More personal questions are likely to be answered if they are considered necessary for the type of help required.

Q: Would you be happy to fill in this information?

"Happy to complete this information." **1**

"I appreciate certain things need to be known and if you were approaching for help you would expect to be asked certain questions." **2**

"Lots of people have different ideas, some people don't want to give information. It wouldn't make any different to me if its not used inappropriately." **3**

"I'd be happy to give these details and what benefits I receive." **4**

"I would only be happy to enter postcode." **5**

"If it was a trusted organisation, I would be happy to provide this information. We need to learn a little more about you, would be clearer. You might get into trouble with selecting a gender, you are opening a wasp's nest. Is gender important, if we are all to be treated equally does it matter?" **6**

"It's quite straight in there, I would need to know more about why you need this information. I would only want to put in the first 4 digits, why do you need my full postcode?" **7**

Q: Do you understand why we ask for this information?

"I understand that you don't want an oldie like me put into same category as somebody in their 19- 20's your life is in two different era's." **1**

"I understand services need to be age appropriate." **3**

"I don't understand why age is relevant, it needs to tell you why they are asking this. I also don't see why gender would be relevant, I don't see any provision of services based on gender." **5**

"Depending on your age, you have different priorities. The postcode would help to understand what environment I'm in." **6**

"The way things are moving you have to question whether gender relevant, unless there is a very tailored advice behind it, you'd need to explain it." **7**

Q: Delving deeper into personal information, capture benefits or earnings

"That is a large part of it, I'm on benefits and when you have a problem and need to find out where else to go you need this information" **1**

"Again, if you were seeking advice you would expect to be asked certain things, to gauge your qualification for help. So yes, I think you would be prepared to give information." **2**

"I'd never been on benefits in my life, when I needed help, I used Age UK, and Entitled. It's anonymous, you put in what your outgoings and savings and at the end it tells you what you are entitled to. If found it useful, when I contacted the council, I knew what council tax help I was going to get before walked through the door. People without computers must find it really difficult." **3**

"I would expect that information should already be known by the council." **5**

"Somebody might be able to pick up I'm not getting benefits I'm entitled to. Happy to give benefit details if it helps." **6**

"Benefits and support should be an optional type of question. It would depend what you need help with, as not everybody would do it." **7**

Step 3 of 8

How are you doing for money?

I'm OK
I'm OK to pay my bills for at least the next 3 months and I have enough money for food.

Back

Next

Summary

A more visual interactive style of question was well received and engaging.

Users who did not previously disclose benefits or earnings, were happy to share their financial circumstances in this format.

Users were prepared and expected to complete several steps; the preference was for less questions on a screen at once.

Q: Would you be happy to provide this information?

"I'd be happy to share financial status." 1

"You might have enough money for food but not for rent, the word rent, or mortgage needs to be in there." 3

"I like how its presented, the explanation below is good and the timeframe. In general, you find loss income is usually unexpected." 6

"This question is a little bit intrusive; initially do not know whether I would want to answer that. But then I suppose its factual, if you were in difficulty, I suppose you would declare your personal situation." 2

"I'm happy to answer this." 4

"I'm happy to share my current circumstances like this." 5

"I would be happier to answer this style and type of question." 7

Q: How do you find the style and language?

"I find the style of it quite appealing, especially the emojis. My son would find it hard to use as he cannot understand emotion, but 99% of people can." 1

"I am happy with this style and the language used is a lot more friendly." 5

"Emoticons are clear, they are like a second language. I'm happy with style." 7

"It's a straightforward question." 3

"I'm happy with the language used." 4

"When things are written they should be more slightly more formal e.g., when it says this site uses cookies and then is says 'got it' the terminology is always assuming someone is in their 20's and they are used to this sort of language. I'm not sure I like the informality I would say 'What is your financial situation?' or 'What is your day-to-day financial situation?'" 2

Q: How many steps or questions would you happily to complete?

"I would expect that many steps, the reason why is because any form you fill out is long. But with this on every screen you don't have to put to much information, they are quite short and to the point, you can go through them quickly and easily." 1

"The number of questions has to be short; it shouldn't take that long from what I've seen so far." 3

"Eight steps is fine, if they are as easy as what you've shown." 4

"3 to 8 steps would be fine, but not 20, I would get bored. If there are more questions on a page you just tick random things, to get through to the end. So maybe it's less accurate the more questions there are on a page." 5

"Further steps wouldn't bother me, unless there were 20. . It can be off putting if they are in double figures, then you start to think do I have time? " 6
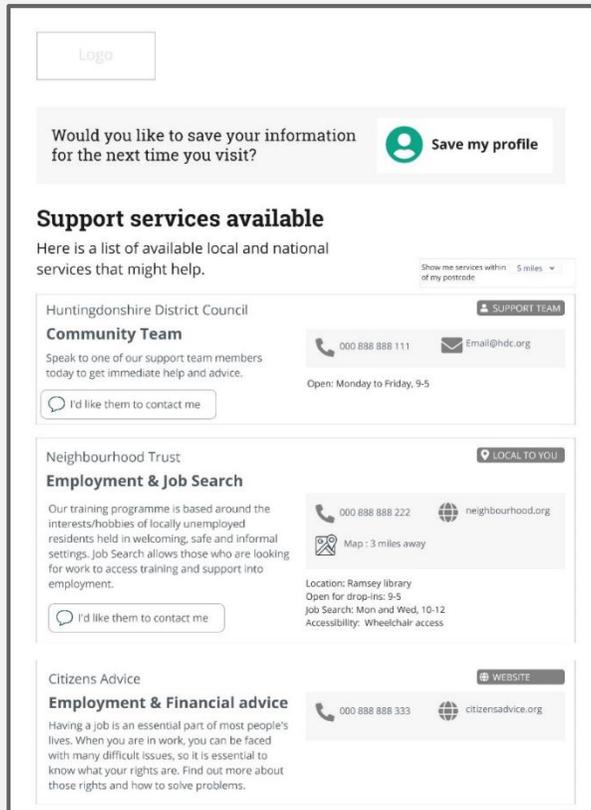
"I like knowing where I am, that I won't be here forever. Completing online forms is ok if they don't go on to long, surveys are often too long." 7

Support services available
Here is a list of available local and national services that might help.

Would you like to save your information for the next time you visit? — Save my profile

Show me services within 5 miles of my postcode

Huntingdonshire District Council
Community Team — SUPPORT TEAM
Speak to one of our support team members today to get immediate help and advice.
📞 000 888 888 111   ✉ Email@hdc.org
Open: Monday to Friday, 9-5
💬 I'd like them to contact me

Neighbourhood Trust
Employment & Job Search — LOCAL TO YOU
Our training programme is based around the interests/hobbies of locally unemployed residents held in welcoming, safe and informal settings. Job Search allows those who are looking for work to access training and support into employment.
📞 000 888 888 222   🌐 neighbourhood.org
🗺 Map : 3 miles away
Location: Ramsey library
Open for drop-ins: 9-5
Job Search: Mon and Wed, 10-12
Accessibility: Wheelchair access
💬 I'd like them to contact me

Citizens Advice
Employment & Financial advice — WEBSITE
Having a job is an essential part of most people's lives. When you are in work, you can be faced with many difficult issues, so it is essential to know what your rights are. Find out more about those rights and how to solve problems.
📞 000 888 888 333   🌐 citizensadvice.org

Summary

Users overall were happy to create a profile, the site needs to clearly state the benefits of registering.

There was a general preference for a call back from the service. This was also considered a good reason to save a profile.

Option 2 provided clear details on the service and the right level of information e.g., distance, opening times etc.

Q: How do you find the information?

"I like the distance, in Ramsey we are out in the sticks, one bus in and one bus out. That is why save your profile and request a call back would be an advantage, there are a lot of people in Ramsey who do not drive. There is enough information. If you are wanting to see somebody then you will get on a bus, or get someone to take you there, you have to take some." `1`

"Most likely, from these I only want the council to contact me." `4`

"For the first service, I would like more detail on type of advice or support they will provide. Transport might be an issue if you don't know what buses run to get there you if you don't have car. But the map and distance are fine." `7`

"I like that it shows its local. You would look for something that relates as closely as it does to yourself." `2`

"It's easy to understand there are three types of services. I'm not sure on the Community Team option, it doesn't say what help and advice they are going to give on what topic. The other 2 are direct, you understand what they are, there is enough information." `3`

"Services presented read ok, I like the paragraphs to explain what they do." `5`

"That is what I want I need to get to the right place. This is telling me where to go and find the information, so that's good." `6`

Q: What would be your preference to contact a service?

"At the end you need a human interaction, once you have completed it to your best advantage. I prefer for them to contact me, because I have plugged in all the information, it can now be routed to a team." `1`

"I prefer to make call or send email straight away. The problem with a call back is they call you at the most inconvenient time. You have no idea when they will call you." `5`

"I would look at a website, it would give me a guide of what I can get or point me in direction of what I do want." `6`

"You leave a message for someone, you allow a reasonable time like 48 hours for them to react, then after that it is not good enough." `2`

"I like to send emails I like a record of what I sent. People especially in difficulty, need a free phone number. If you were in a mess and terrible things are happening the last thing you need to do is spend £8 on a call trying to get help." `3`

"I prefer to be contacted rather than calling them myself." `4`

"I prefer a call back if it saves waiting on hold. But I'd like to know when they are going to call back, what is the timeframe?" `7`

Q: Would you create a profile?

"I like the bit at the top, create my profile, yes you would need to register so that the person can be called back, but it cannot be complicated. If you have saved the information, you are not explaining it to several different people, several different times." `1`

"If you were seeking these services, you would need to give a contact point." `2`

"My profile is fine. If someone wishes to use the service in the future, they might not do it the first time but maybe if they go back." `3`

"I think registration would be ok, if you knew for sure they can help you." `4`

"I already have the information and who I can contact. I would just take a screenshot and not worry about it. I would not register to create a profile what is the point?" `5`

"I would be happy to register." `6`

"I might register, because if you do have to come back then you don't have to go through all the questions again, so it's a good idea actually" `7`

Screen 6
Registration and consent

Logo

👤 My Profile

Simply complete the form, to save your information and easily access services in the future.

Name
Address
Postcode
Email
Phone number

Using your information

To comply with the Data Protection Act we must ask for your permission before we record, store, share and process your data. These details may include personal and sensitive information.

Therefore we would be grateful if you could read and select the permissions you are happy to provide to us to allow us to improve, monitor and evaluate our services.

I give my consent to the service to store, process and record my personal information — Yes ○ No ○

I give my consent to the service to share my personal information with trusted organisations — Yes ○ No ○

Site Terms and Conditions — **Save**

Summary

Users were generally happy to register and save information for future visits. The term My Profile vs My Account requires further testing.	Consent to share information with trusted organisations was well received once they understood this may be required for a call back.	Consent for services to share back outcomes was less favourable and difficult to explain.

Q: What would you be happy to give consent to save your information?

"I would be happy to register and save my information." [1]

"I think the registration is straight-forward." [4]

"I'm struggling to see why I would need a profile. Without the explanation of why you need to register its not clear why you need to." [5]

"Yes, that looks fine and its what you would expect, I suppose if you wanted to use it again." [7]

"I want to be told in briefest and simplest way possible how they will use your data, e.g., on ITVHub I had to give consent, otherwise you're not able to use the service. If you click on terms, there is reams of information. You end up thinking if I want to use the service then you must click yes. Its not healthy but what can you do." [2]

"If it told me to register to get the information that I wanted then I would do that ." [6]

Q: Usability & language

"The form is simple and not confusing. For people, the older generation probably be better with My Account, going by my parents in the 80's they wouldn't understand My Profile." [1]

"Profile covers it. My Profile would be the right word to use, I would follow it." [6]

"I don't think profile is the right word, profile makes it sound like its something different to what it is." [5]

"My Profile, I like it." [7]

Q: What would you be happy to give consent to share your information with trusted organisations?

"Personally, I prefer to share name, telephone and age, to give the call centre person minimum information. Maybe I would give full consent, if I was asking for a call back, then maybe you'd expect to share all your information and I would be happy for the information discussed to be shared back." [1]

"More likely to get people to agree to sharing if they know you are going to share with. If there is only 2 or 3 services, could you list who they are? When I read the small print, I'm not interested when you get too many people contacting you. I share my information with the NHS, because it is beneficial" [3]

"I am happy to give consent to share data, just broad details not everything you've completed, so just this person, this postcode, needs support with, without sharing full circumstances. I'd prefer that the organisation contact me and then see if I want to share directly with them. I would be happier to feedback myself if they were useful or if made contact with me. Maybe it would be ok for them share back basic feedback , but not for them to share my information back with you." [7]

"We are in a world where information is shared. I don't always understand when they talk about your information is anonymous. I personally want it to remain with the organisation I was dealing with, only the people I was dealing with directly." [2]

"Happy to share information if they can help." [4]

"I would probably just tick yes if I wanted them to contact me and not think about it." [5]

"In this case yes, but I'm not keen sharing information if its people who sell you something. Passing on full details of circumstances it might help them to prepare what they want to talk to me about. Yes, it would be fine for the organisation to share information back with." [6]

Would you use this service based on what you have seen today?

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"I'm on the ball, but for somebody who is not this would be helpful"

3

"It's impossible to know if you are eligible and what evidence they need when you ask for help. Using the existing online form, I thought I had the information, but it was a worthless quest. Speaking to a human being stopped me from searching for stuff that wasn't there. Today, I thought I might be lost but I have not been."

2

"I would use this service, what you have shown is short, simple and to the point. I think not only the older generation, but some of my generation don't always understand the internet but this is self-explanatory, it shows you where to go and what to do. I think you would get a good response to that."

1

"If I can easily get to the information page of where to go then I'd browse but not register, because I can get the information I need.

If the profile thing was at the beginning, I probably would do it to get the information, because its at the end I probably wouldn't. I would not download an app, but a website is ok."

5

"I think it's a good idea for people like myself online. It's a good tool, it's a good idea you are doing it ."

6

"This is the sort of thing I need - I need help.

I rely on friends and family for help with money and food to get by. I have used the Foodbank; it was quite nice to receive the help."

4

"My initial impression was what it is a good idea, especially the first page as it showed different options. I would not have thought I would contact the council for all of those things, so it looks useful."

7