

Design in Social Care Programme

Buckinghamshire County Council Project Summary

Helping people in their 50s and 60s to access information to support their health and wellbeing

Context

Local authorities receive 5,100 new requests for adult social care assistance every day. In 2018/19 these requests were from 1.3 million people across England. At the same time, evidence suggests that people are often confused about what social care is and who provides it with IPSOS MORI indicating that almost half of the population think social care is available free at the point of need.

Buckinghamshire County Council put forward a bid to join the Design in Social Care Programme to explore ways in which they could target the right care and support information to people before a crisis point is reached and to deliver it in a more personalised way.

The challenge

There are over 120 calls each day into customer services for adult social care and around 1000 hits on the website from individuals looking for information relating to care and support. The majority of these are through direct enquiries made by carers, friends and relatives and many are made at a time of crisis.

The team wanted to understand the motivations and reasons for people accessing information, advice and guidance (IAG) so that this can be provided earlier, be more personalised and support prevention activity.

The 50 – 60 age range was selected as they represented Bucks' most immediate future demand on social care services. The council had also recently completed the LGA's Prevention at Scale Programme. The research from this indicated that behaviours of this cohort were understood the least and as such, the team wanted to build upon the research that had been compiled as part of this work.

What they did

The Buckinghamshire Team set out to speak to people in the community who fit the target age range. They undertook in-depth discussions – on a 1-2-1 and group basis – with 25 people. This included local market traders, regular pub goers and those who attended local sports and social clubs. The team also visited a local gym to find out about their classes and what encouraged them to attend.

As well as engaging in discussions with members of the community, the team was also able to observe how people looked for or accessed information and use this to inform any future approach (whether this be on mobile devices, beer mats, posters).

The qualitative research approach was supplemented by an online and paper survey to reach a wider audience – which had over 400 responses in total!

What they found

The team learned a lot about people's differing views around prevention and developed a scale of attitudinal personas to inform future activity in this area.



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Key findings – Personas – Scale of attitudes to prevention

Attitudes to Prevention Personas

There appears to be a “prevention attitude” scale which could be used to inform targeted marketing strategies for our IAG offer. We've created benchmark personas based upon our research to influence our design outcomes.

1. **DORIS** - actively disengaged in healthy behaviours and are complacent about planning for their future health needs *“I live in the moment, que sera sera”.....“it won't happen to me”*
2. **SELIMA** – have an understanding and appreciation for the risks/benefits and has attempted to engage in healthy behaviours in the past but can't sustain it long term *“aware but don't care, there's always a but”....“it probably won't happen to me”*
3. **BEN** – engage in healthy behaviours only when they become an issue, self aware and consider themselves fit enough for their current lifestyle *“I know my body and I'm ok right now”... “it could happen to me”*
4. **BERNARD** - have an understanding and appreciation of the risk/benefits and actively engage in healthy behaviours but not consistently. Time and social factors influence me *“I don't want it to happen to me”*
5. **GREG** - actively plan and engage in healthy behaviours and have an appreciation for the positive impact it can have on their long term health and wellbeing *“use it or lose it”...“I might look old, but I don't feel it!...”“I won't let it happen to me”*

A number of recurrent themes emerged through the discussions with people about how they access and act on information provision. For example, the team learned that social influence is key – people are motivated by and trust their social networks where information is relayed more effectively by ‘word of mouth’. Any future design of IAG would therefore benefit from being conveyed in a conversational and informal way.

From the research the team developed a number of IAG principles to inform the future IAG approach.

Key findings – Principles for IAG (with quotes)

Make it actionable

- *“I don't have time for an hour's Zumba session on a Wednesday, I need a short bitesize session that I can do in my tea break”.*
- *“I need to set small goals I believe I can achieve”*

Make it age-agnostic

- *“I don't want to be patronised”*
- *“I might look old but I don't feel it”*

Make it informal

- *“Talk to me as you would a friend, not a patient”*
- *“I do what my mates say, I trust them”*

Make it diverse

- *“Watching YouTube videos multiple times helps me to understand things better”*
- *“If it's in front of me, I will read it... Like on telly or on this beermat.”*

Catch my eye

- *“If it's in front of me, I will read it... Like on telly or on this beermat”.*

Service design training

LGA

Prototyping solutions and next steps

Since joining the Programme, the council took the decision to commission a larger and more formal piece of work to re-design the front door taking a design approach. Working with

FutureGov the council is prototyping a new IAG website which is being informed by the findings above.

The team supported the prototyping of the new website with users which has informed its development stages. For example, they learned that mobile design is more successful with users, there is a preference for drop downs and sort functions to help prioritise information and that inclusion of the Buckinghamshire County Council logo reassures users of the security and legitimacy of the information.

The website is due to launch in beta stage during September.

The Design in Social Care Team is working closely with FutureGov and continuing to practice the design tools and techniques learned as part of the Programme.

The team has also been doing regular show and tells and writing blogs to share their work with the rest of the council.