SCDIP Discovery Phase – Camden Council

The My World Community Map provides easy to read and personalised maps. The solution will allow users to feel confident to travel and join new activities along their favourite routes.

Connected Communities: helping people get to where they want to go

The context

The Camden Adult Social Care 2018/19 survey found that 29% of respondents struggled to get to all the local places they wanted to go to. The team explored this with older people, people with learning disabilities and people with mental health conditions in the area.

The challenge

The initial aim of the project was "to explore how technology can be used to address issues that arise with travel assistance and independent travel to prevent social isolation and promote independence." Through stakeholder engagement, the team (led by a team within Camden Council, carers and voluntary organisations in Camden) narrowed their problem statement down to: "how do we support people to get where they want to go to?" As a part of this research, they explored how stakeholders defined their community as well as their use of digital solutions. This enabled the team to understand how they could best support those that already use technology and understand why some don't use technology and how to improve this.

What did the project involve?

The project started in April 2019 with desktop research and engagement sessions to understand the challenges people face getting where they need to go. Three recurring themes were identified and explored via focus groups: use of public transport, PlusBus/Taxicard and the perceived and assessed risk before and during travel. Five low fidelity protypes were created and tested in a co-design session using the double diamond design process (a design process with four phases: discover, define, develop and deliver). Based on feedback, three high fidelity prototypes were created (two digital and one non-digital), which were then tested and iterated further for a show and tell session with internal and external stakeholders. The prototypes were then tested in focus groups and one-to-one sessions with service user groups and the preferred prototype was selected.

Stakeholder engagement and user research

Stakeholder engagement was a crucial part of this project. Due to tight timescales, the team allocated a month to the engagement phase. As the solution is designed to cater to a wide group of stakeholders, the team visited as many different groups and services in Camden as possible and ensured that their engagement plan was iterative - often one group they engaged with would suggest another for consultation, and so on. This allowed for a wide range of inputs and viewpoints to be taken into consideration and they held a total of 12 engagement sessions. From this engagement, the team discovered that when service users spoke about travel, it was often in relation to not just the mode of transport itself but also the planning required or what happens when things go wrong. This insight encouraged the team to broaden the scope of their problem statement and reach the solution they have come to.

Benefits of the proposed solution

The council has identified the following benefits as having results from the discovery phase (note that most of the benefits at this stage have been non-financial/non-quantifiable):

- development of new skills within team (i.e. prototyping and testing)
- identification of solutions that could easily be implemented within the council already (i.e. providing more travel information in the Camden Companion).

In the implementation phase, the council proposes to achieve the following benefits:

For individuals:

- ability to build easy to use maps to help service users get around the local area and add new routes as they learn them
- the map can be personalised to include facilities such as publicly accessible toilets and rest points - this will enable them to feel confident to travel their chosen routes
- individuals can alert someone if there is a diversion on disruption
- the app can be used in Travel Training (a service which trains young people with Special Educational Needs travel to school/college independently).

For carers/families:

- less time spent planning travel for the person they care for meaning they may have more respite time
- peace of mind knowing they can easily be contacted if there is a diversion or disruption
- increased awareness of community events that the service user might want to attend along their preferred route.

For local services:

- services can use the map to plan an individual's route and send it to them
- increase in people attending community events.

Key strengths of the project

1. **A tailored solution:** The ability to tailor the solution to individual needs means that it can be used by a variety of individuals, including older people, people with learning disabilities and/or mental health concerns and support services.

2. **Awareness of strengths and weaknesses:** the team recognised their strengths and gaps in their skillset. They acknowledged that they did not have the resource or skills capacity to prototype and test their research synthesis in the timescales. As such, they used Snook (a design company) for this part of the project, whose input on the project was 'invaluable'.

3. **Engagement:** the project team ensured there was a high level of engagement from a wide range of stakeholders, ensuring that the solution was co-designed.

The potential impact

During the discovery phase, the council developed a logic model to guide the implementation phase and to help in quantifying the inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts which are likely to result from the delivery of this project. From this, a number of key outcomes and measures of impact have been identified as follows:

- improved health and wellbeing amongst service users, measured by questionnaires and focus groups
- reduced isolation amongst service users, measured by focus groups and web analytics (i.e. venues added to the map)
- reduced digital exclusion amongst service users, measured using the governments Digital Inclusion Scale and focus groups
- increased independence amongst service users, measured by questionnaires, focus groups and website/app analytics
- more sustainable adult social care, measured by case-by-case follow ups and spending on accessible transport and travel training within adult social care
- a raised profile in digital innovation for London Borough of Camden, measured by periodic desktop research to assess the reach of their work.

Baseline data will be collected:

- from this year and previous year's Camden's Adult Social Care Survey
- to assess Camden's digital maturity /inclusion, performance and sustainability with regards to uptake on related services.

Challenges to delivery and lessons learned

1. It is important to plan as early as possible in the process including ample time to evaluate.
2. Having an early engagement plan which is mapped out but still allows for some flexibility is vital.
3. Engagement events often take longer than anticipated. It is important to allow enough time to get the depth of research needed.
4. Keeping engagement groups updated as the project progresses is crucial to retain 'buy-in'.
5. The project team maintained an 'open door policy' so people could drop in anytime.
6. Feedback obtained from residents during the project shaped how the solution progressed.
7. It proved challenging to engage with people who were socially isolated to find their views. The team will take a different approach in future projects.
8. Focussing on travel made the team more aware of everyday risks in the local environment.
9. They will use the learning from this project to help develop and benefit other projects.

Next steps, including sustainability and spread

The team are planning to work on the scalability/replicability of this project if they are successful in their implementation phase application. The team plan to scale the project across other London boroughs during the implementation phase. They have already had tentative but positive conversations with two boroughs. Scaling up across London will be relatively straightforward as they use the same travel information (i.e. Transport for London) but there is also potential for the solution to spread more widely, provided councils have the appropriate links to local transport services and service directories. They have identified the following potential challenges/barriers to other local authorities:

- it is critical to have the appropriate technical expertise (e.g. online map building) either internally or procured externally to add to existing skills where available
- codesign and coproduction are essential. It is necessary to understand when to use them or not as certain technical elements are not suitable for codesign
- the solution will be different dependent on the area in which it is needed, there will be different agencies, directories and event guides that will need to be factored in.

Going forward, the team plan to hold a design sprint in which a Minimum Viable Product is codesigned and built. They then plan to test the MVP with two pilot groups, with a reference group for baseline, before trialling the solution with wider stakeholders.

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Link to relevant documents

Camden Council Discovery Phase review report:

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/Camden%20Discovery%20Phase%20Review.pdf