

TELLTALE

Human Insights Brought to Life

User Research Report on the Haringey Council Website

August 2022

telltaleresearch.com

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About the research

Background, Objectives, & Sample

Background

Haringey is moving to a new website platform/CMS in 2022, and needed to engage with the web/digital users to find out what is working and what is not.

Telltale Research was commissioned to carry out user research and consult the council based on the insights.

Objectives

1. Conduct user research to evaluate the usability of [Haringey's current website](#)
1. Deliver an insight report on:
 - a. IA (high level)
 - b. Design
 - c. Content
 - d. Navigation
 - e. General feedback
1. Deliver workshops with internal stakeholders.

Sample

In total, 10 residents in Haringey participated in the research.

These represented a spread of ages, ethnicities and incomes.

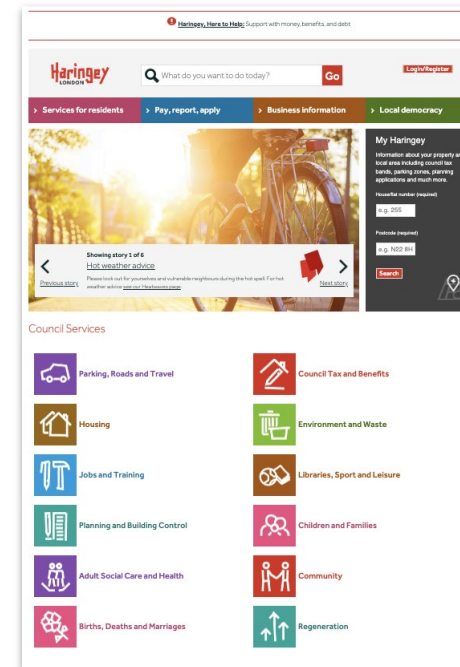
These were sourced from:

– A survey carried out by Haringey in March 2022

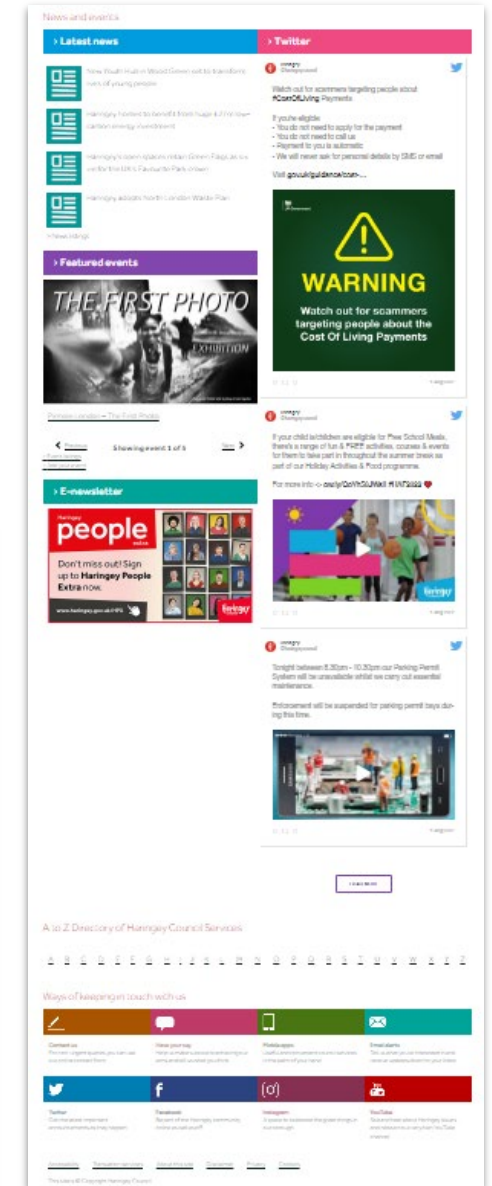
– Survey launched on Haringey's website, in June 2022

Pages reviewed

Home page



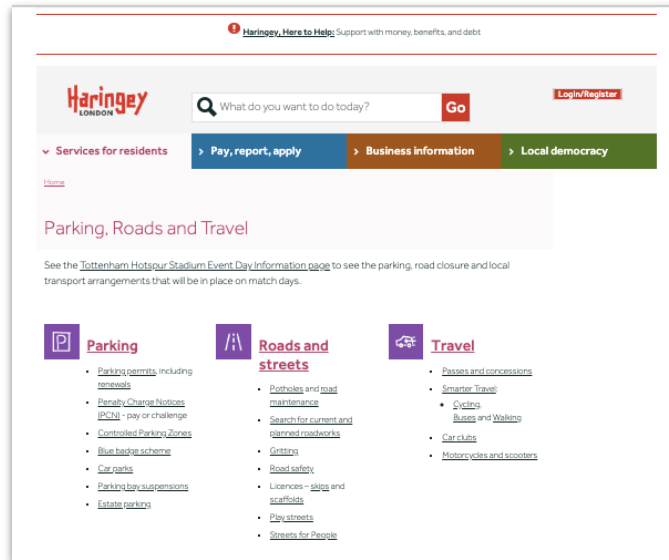
[Home page](#)



Pages reviewed

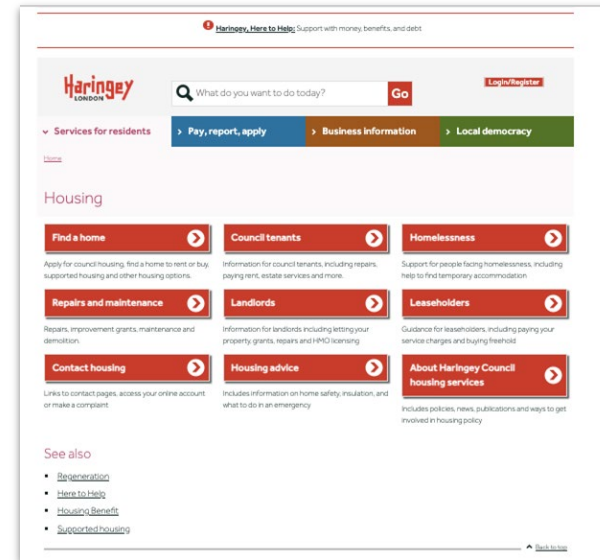
Menu pages

Parking



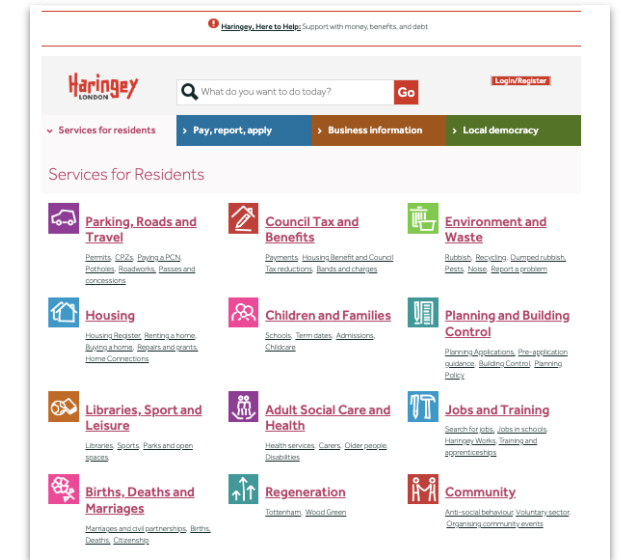
[Parking, Roads and Travel](#)

Housing



[Housing](#)

Services



[Services for Residents](#)

Pages reviewed

Blue Badge pages

The screenshot shows the Haringey Council website's 'Blue Badge Scheme' page. The page includes a search bar, navigation tabs for 'Pay, report, apply', 'Business information', and 'Local democracy'. The main content area is titled 'The Blue Badge Scheme' and contains sections for 'What is a Blue Badge?', 'Before applying', and 'What is a Blue Badge?'. The 'Before applying' section lists criteria for eligibility, including 'Eligible without further assessment - criteria' and 'Eligible subject to further assessment and non-visible/hidden disabilities - criteria'.

Blue Badge Scheme Pages

Criteria	Evidence required
Disability Living Allowance (DLA) / Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	<p>Provide one of the following proofs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">DLA - a full copy of current entitlement letter showing receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living AllowancePIP - a full copy of the entitlement letter showing you receive Personal Independence Payment because you can't walk more than 50 metres for a score of 8 points or more under the 'moving around' activity of the mobility componentPIP - a full copy of the entitlement letter showing you receive the mobility component of PIP and have obtained 10 points specifically for Descriptor E under the 'planning and following journeys' activity on the grounds that you are unable to undertake any journey because it would cause you overwhelming psychological distress
War pensioner's mobility supplement	<p>Provide one of the following proofs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a current copy of entitlement letter showing that you receive a War Pensioner's Mobility Supplementyou have received a lump sum benefit within tariff levels 1-8 of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces (Compensation) Scheme and have been certified as having a permanent and substantial disability that causes inability to walk or very considerable difficulty in walking
Registered blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a copy of Certificate of Visual Impairment (CVI) (showing severely sight impaired/blind (formally known as B1B2 certificate))

The screenshot shows the 'Proof of address and identity' page. It explains that users need to provide one proof of address and one proof of identity. It lists the following documents:

- Proof of address – one of the following:**
 - a current council tax bill or reference number so that this may be checked against the council record
 - a signed assured shorthold tenancy letter or a signed housing association or council tenancy agreement
 - a recently signed and dated letter from HM Revenues or Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)
 - a driving license photo identity card showing your current address
- Proof of identity – one of the following:**
 - a driving license photo identity card showing your current address
 - a scan or copy of the information page of your current passport
 - your birth or adoption certificate
 - a marriage or civil partnership certificate
 - a divorce or dissolution certificate

The page also includes sections for 'Blue Badge for organisations', 'How to apply', 'Apply online', and 'Apply by post'.

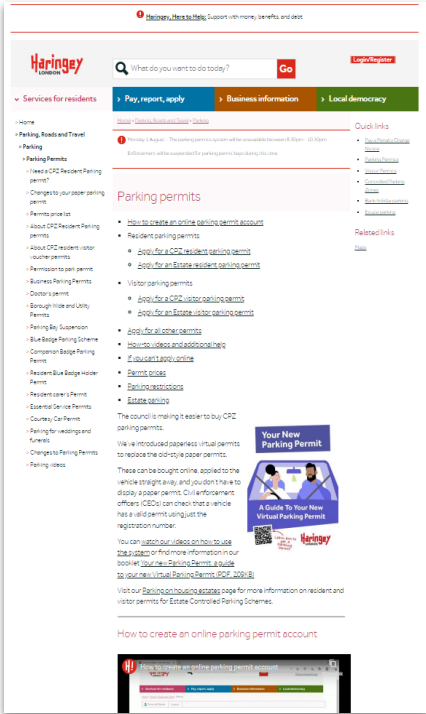
The screenshot shows the 'What happens next' page. It outlines the process after an application is received:

- We will assess completed applications and let you know the outcome within **30 working days** of receiving all parts of your application form.
- If we need more information about your health or disability, we may ask you to request this from a certified expert assessor.
- If your application is unsuccessful, we will write to you with the reasons for our decision and provide details about how you can appeal.
- We will consider appeals against unsuccessful applications within **20 working days**.

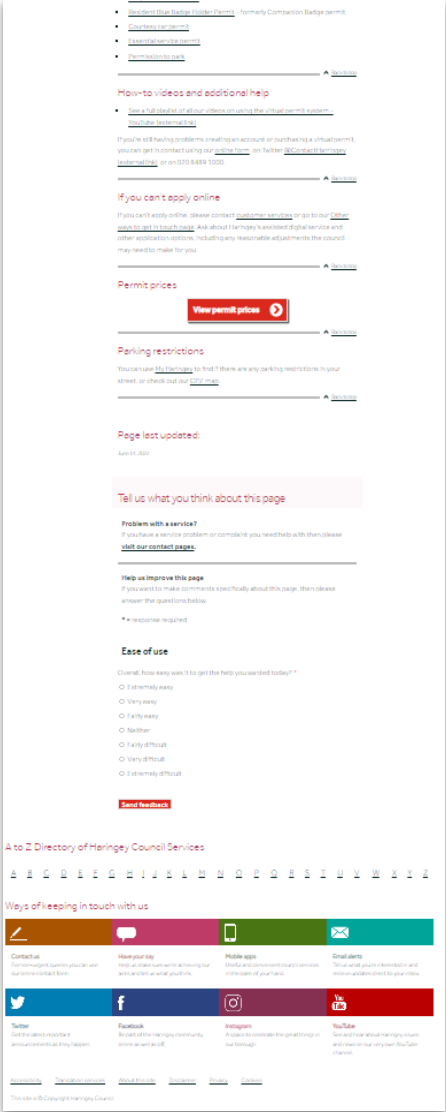
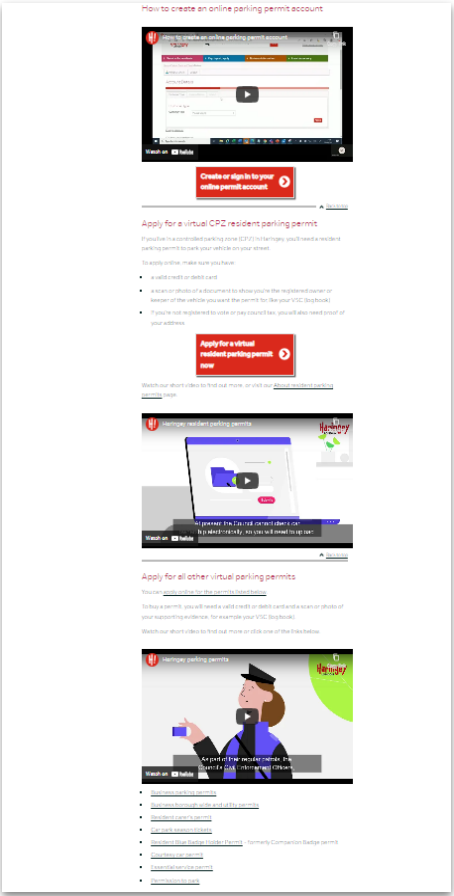
The page also includes sections for 'Replace your Blue Badge', 'Replace a lost Blue Badge', 'Replace a stolen Blue Badge', and 'Replace a damaged Blue Badge'.

Pages reviewed

Parking Permit Pages



Parking Permits



3 User Journeys tested



Environment and Waste

1. Waste Collection Enquiry

'My bin has not been collected for a few weeks. I would like to notify the council'



Housing

2. Application For Housing

'I've lost my job and won't be able to afford private housing soon and want to apply for social housing'



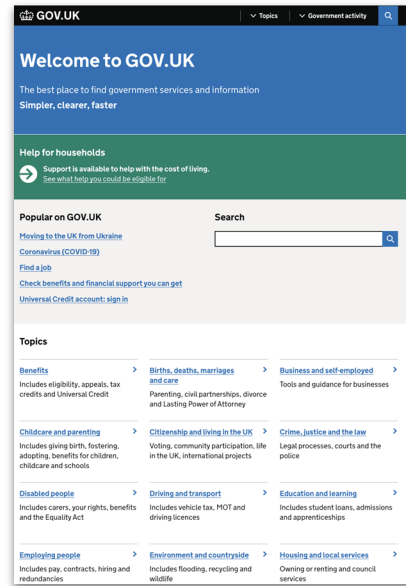
Council Tax and Benefits

3. Council Tax Payment

'I would like to make a council tax payment online'

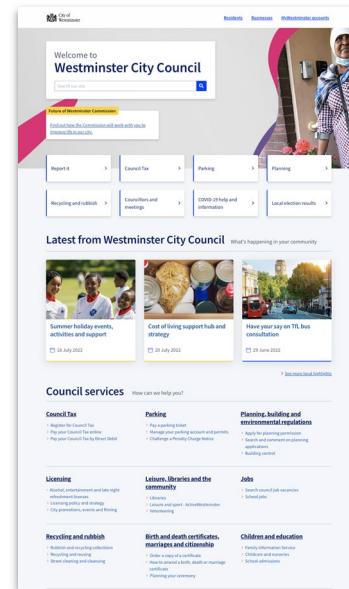
Other government & local council websites viewed

Gov.uk



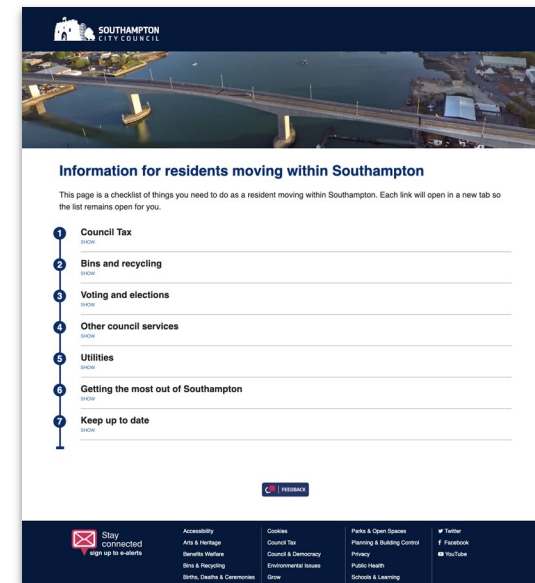
www.gov.uk/

Westminster Council



www.westminster.gov.uk

Southampton Council (step-by-step)



www.southampton.gov.uk/life -
events/moving -within -southampton/

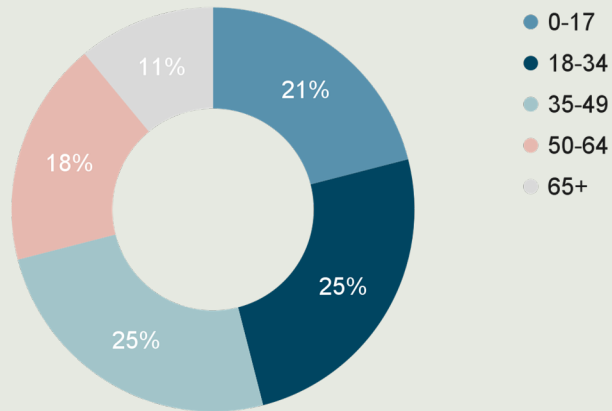
Part 1: Residents in Haringey

Who lives in Haringey?

Key demographics stats



1 in 4 either can't speak English at all or not well



38% are from BAME groups

Key lifestyle stats



It is the 4th most deprived council in London



Haringey has the **second highest** unemployment rate across London Boroughs

22%

Live in accommodation provided by the LA



Wages are lower than average, and there are a larger number of JSA and ESA claimants than the London average

Does the website currently reflect the types of users who live in Haringey?

What needs might these different residents have?

How can the website do better to meet the needs of residents?

Typical users who live in Haringey?



Ahmed

Age: 18-26
Education: Studying for BA
Life situation: Living at home
Work: Works PT in cafe
First Language: English
Computer Literacy: High
Device: Mobile and laptop
Preferred way to contact the council : Online chat, email



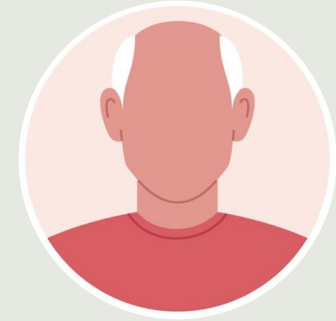
Lisa

Age: 26-35
Education: GCSEs
Life situation : Struggling with mental health and homelessness
First Language : English
Computer Literacy : Medium
Device : Only Mobile
Preferred way to contact the council: Call CS



Fatma

Age: 36-50
Education : High school
Life situation : Unemployed, mother of 4
First Language : Turkish
Computer Literacy : Low
Device: Tablet and mobile
Preferred way to contact the council: email



Richard

Age: 65+
Education: University
Life situation: Well off, home owner
First Language: English
Computer Literacy: Low
Device: Laptop
Preferred way to contact the council: Call CS

Why do people come to Haringey's website?

Primary reasons

People primarily come to the website for practical reasons, wanting to access services:

- 45%** Parking
- 11%** Council Tax
- 9%** Housing
- 6%** Rubbish and recycling

"You would only go to the council website for very specific reasons, like paying for your council tax"

- Male, 32, Haringey

Secondary reasons

Very few people come to the website for social reasons:

- 2%** Libraries
- 1%** News and events
- 1%** Leisure activities

Although secondary reasons to visit, they are still relevant.

Other topics include:

- Community groups
- How to apply for an allotment

"I would like to find some information about community groups, where to meet."

- Male, 32, Haringey

To what extent does the website currently reflect people's primary reasons to visit?

How can the site help users get where they want quickly and easily?

What have their experiences of using the website been like?

“It feels really disjointed. It feels like every page has been designed by someone different”

- Female, 32, Muswell Hill

“It looks like they don’t know what they’re doing. It appears like it’s being done by separate people and then joined together”

- Female, Retired, Haringey

“I think it’s really crowded. There’s loads of stuff on there and loads of stuff you don’t really need.”

- Female, 30, Wood Green

Part 2: Usability Research Findings



Design

Summary: design

- ★ With the use of many colours and basic icons, the design is described as 'fun', childish and 'in your face' - a more serious local authority website look and feel is desired

An overload of information on most pages increases visual noise and makes it harder to navigate

The layout is inconsistent and a structured grid, visual hierarchy is lacking

When attention is divided across numerous elements, users become confused and disorientated. Redesign of several elements should be considered with usability as a priority

“You can see that it was made 10 years ago...its a bit 90ies”

- Male, 32, Haringey

“It’s mediocre...icons don’t look great”

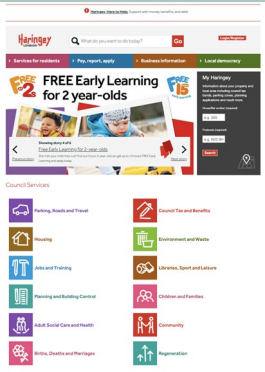
- Male, 42, Palmers Green

“[Formatting of table] This layout is appalling. It’s difficult read because its squashed. This kind of table is like a 90s database”

- Female, 30, Wood Green

Branding

Fun, colourful, childish.
Loud/noisy/ "in your face"

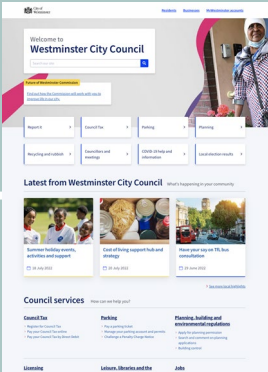


HARINGEY

"(Overall) a bit childish, a bit noisy, which doesn't instil professional confidence. A lot going on on the page"

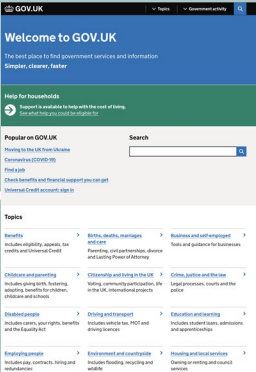
- Female, Retired, Haringey (Marissa)

Described as clean and easy to find your way around



WESTMINSTER

Clear, clean, spaced out, and more functional, but a bit 'boring'



GOV.UK

"Nothing funky, but it is clear - what I was referring to earlier - a sense of something being clean, and equally spaced out"

- Male, 32, Haringey (Konrad)

Action Points

- We recommend a more functional and authoritative design Looking to Westminster for a branded yet functional design, similar to the gov.uk website

Use of Colour

Colours can help focus users attention, allow them to find patterns and help them along their journey to complete tasks. Users like some colour but they're left feeling overwhelmed.

Too many colours

The chosen colours do not always feel appropriate for a local authority website. Though most users do feel that the gov.uk is "too plain"

Lack of consistency

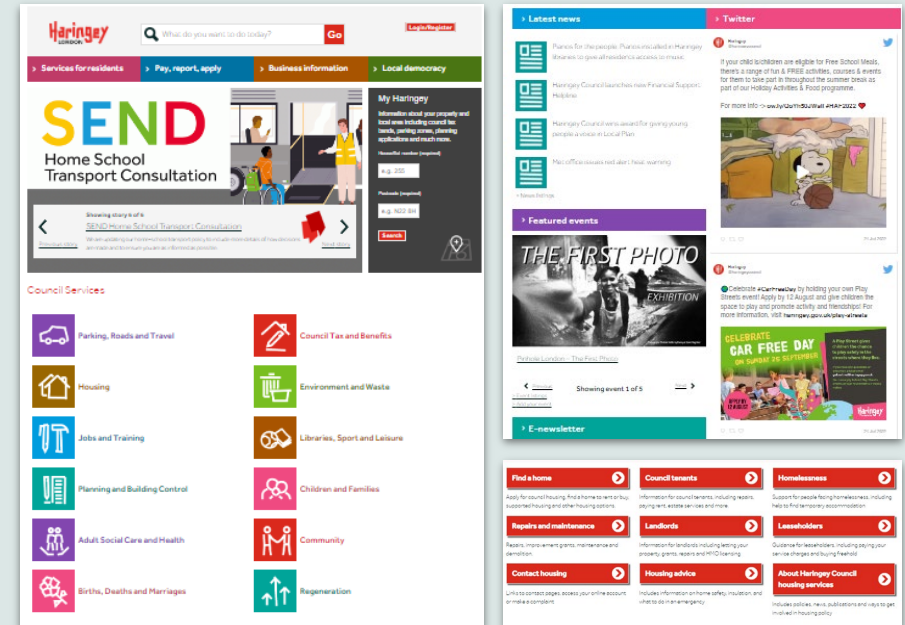
Colours are repeated within the icons /menu bar but with no coherent association between them

Call to Action (CTA) buttons

The red colours are strenuous to look at and associated with "alerts". And on occasion there are too many on the page

Action Points

- Simplify and reduce colour palette
- Use colour with intention to highlight and signpost
- Limit the number of CTA buttons on one page to focus attention
- Reconsider the use of bright red CTA buttons



"It's as if they are trying too hard. You can make something just as eye grabbing without so much over stimulation. You can have your haringey sign with a picture - that can be your standout point. Information needs to be your priority"

- Female, 32, Muswell Hill

Legibility #1

Users should be able to read the content without effort and make good use of the information that is conveyed. Users identified a number of things that made reading on the website difficult:

Font size is too small

The body font size and notifications texts is small and may be difficult to read for people with visibility issues (e.g. older users)

Too much variation in typeface

This can be visually chaotic and disorientating. With a flat visual hierarchy, users find it difficult to know what is important to read and what to skim

Colour combinations hard to read

White on red (and vice versa) is strenuous on the eyes. Colour and font style of main sections are lower in visual hierarchy, so gets lost in the content

Action Points

- Increase font size for comfortable reading (see Southampton Council's website)
- Font style /size variation should be limited
- Ensure text is legible (size and colour) and that it reflects the visual hierarchy e.g. header = bold or large vs. smaller body text

The screenshot shows a webpage for Blue Badge applications. Red dashed boxes and arrows highlight several areas of concern:

- Blue Badge for organisations:** A red dashed box highlights the heading, and a red arrow points to the text below it, which is small and difficult to read.
- How to apply:** A red dashed box highlights the heading, and a red arrow points to the text below it, which is small and difficult to read.
- Apply online:** A red dashed box highlights the heading, and a red arrow points to the text below it, which is small and difficult to read.
- Apply by post:** A red dashed box highlights the heading, and a red arrow points to the text below it, which is small and difficult to read.
- Send completed forms to:** A red dashed box highlights the heading, and a red arrow points to the text below it, which is small and difficult to read.

The right side of the screenshot shows a sidebar with sections like 'What happens next', 'Replace your Blue Badge', 'Replace a lost Blue Badge', 'Replace a stolen Blue Badge', and 'Replace a damaged Blue Badge'. These sections contain text and lists of actions, but the text is small and the layout is cluttered.

Low visual hierarchy - Headers do not stand out due weight, size and font.

Legibility #2

Bullet points

Tend to be overused as they try to visualise a variety of different elements (list, an interactive list, anchor links as well as part of the body text)

Underlined text to link to content

Overused, and when it's over used in one sentence or one paragraph, it makes the text harder to read

Action Points

- Reduce the amount of bullet pointed lists and underlined words within text
Replace these with accordions and drop down menus (where applicable)
Avoid using anchor links (as recommended by GDS)

Overpayments

- [If you get a letter from us](#)
- [When you must repay the money](#)
- [How to make repayments](#)

You need to tell us straightaway if you've been paid too much Housing Benefit.

Contact us if:

- you think you've been overpaid
- you get a letter from us saying you've been overpaid
- [your circumstances change](#) and this is likely to affect your Housing Benefit

It's your responsibility to tell us if:

- [your circumstances change](#)
- you think you're being overpaid

If you don't tell us of any change in your circumstances, we may prosecute you for benefit fraud.

[Contact the Benefits team](#)

Anchor links as a bullet point list - some links are anchor links, other are links to other pages - no visual differentiation



[Show all](#)

- 1 Check if you're eligible**
[Show](#)
- 2 Create an account and make a claim**
[Show](#)

and Find out how your claim is assessed
[Hide](#)

You'll need to have an interview with Jobcentre Plus. You'll be told how to arrange this after you submit your claim. It will be within 10 working days.

Accordion design from GDS - follows a logical order and designed to hide /show sections

Iconography

Icons and colours can help users quickly find what they are looking for. To bring value, however, they must be identifiable and used consistently for pattern learning. When prompted, users do not find these icons helpful:

Not inspiring

Looks basic and not up to today's standards in design or imagery

Not resonating

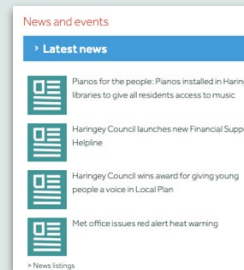
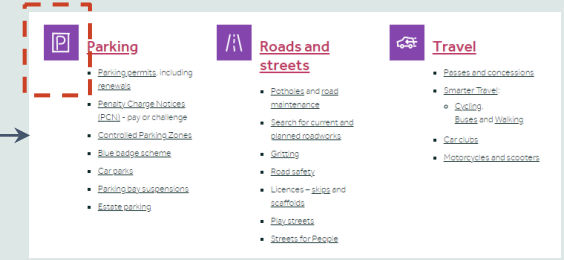
Users mention some of the icons don't represent the service well and that it's not useful in navigating the different services

Lacks consistency

e.g. For news, icons are all the same, but for services, they are different. Some icons on the homepage are repeated on the service pages, others are not.

Photos preferred over icons, in particular in the news section

Use of icons are different across services pages - some are consistent, others differ in colour, sometimes the icons do not appear on the next service page.



Latest news
Icons do not inspire and some find symbol to be unclear

"I wouldn't necessarily click on that as they all look the same. They look boring"
- Female, Retired, Haringey

Action Points

- Remove or redesign icons for a more up to date design
- Ensure that imagery is used consistently e.g. if an icon or colour is used to present X it is the same next time it is presented
- Replace icons with photos in news section

Layout

The layout of sections and how different elements fit inside them, are essential to reduce visual fatigue. Consistency across the pages helps users to mentally choose what is relevant for their particular visit.

Some users noticed misaligned objects or inadequate spacing and felt it negatively affected how they viewed the content.

Misaligned elements

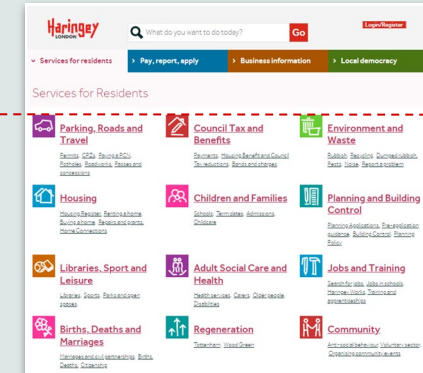
Users report discomfort and difficulty viewing the services and menu due to elements not being presented in way that is easy to read

News and Events poor sectioning

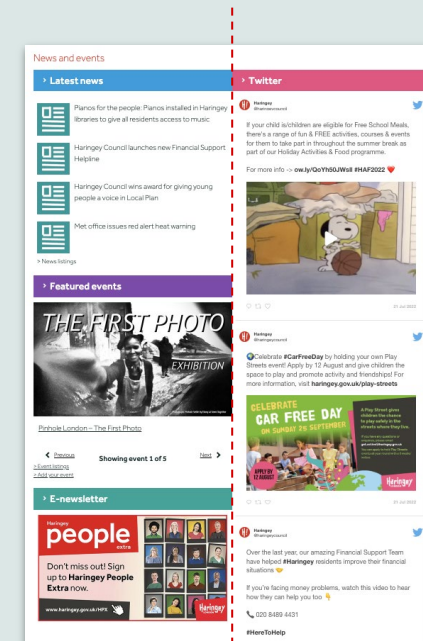
The various streams of news on the interface which makes it difficult to read due to the lack of spacing and differing sizes of grids

Action Points

- Ensure that a design grid is being used to align different sections and to allow for appropriate spacing between elements
- Ensure that headers and text are aligned and spaced in a way that allows comfortable reading



Icons and page headers
Not aligned and the number of lines varying for each service makes for an uncomfortable viewing experience



Column spacing
The lack of space between columns (in some places and not others), and the use of two columns makes this section feel cramped and too busy

Visual Hierarchy

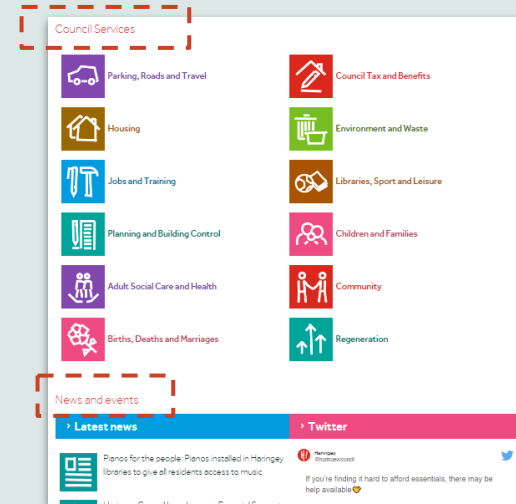
Visual hierarchy controls the delivery of information from the page to the end user — it lets users know where to focus their attention. Users prefer navigating pages where it's clear what they should be looking at.

Sections starting and finishing

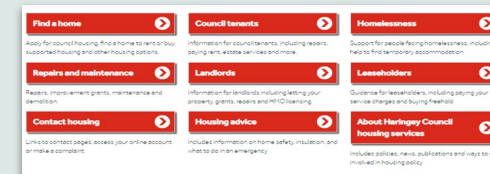
The low visibility of the headers make it difficult to know what section they are currently looking at or notice when a new section starts and ends.

Too many options on menu pages

Users report a preference for pages to be clearly defined in comparison to pages where there are a clusters of links as it feels more actionable



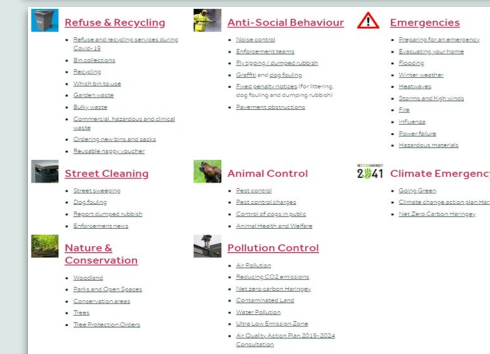
Section Headers
Lost in the visual hierarchy



Service Pages
Users prefer the buttons with less links (top) in comparison to services pages with numerous links listed under (bottom)

Action Points

- Make clear indicators of where one section ends and another begins
- Simplifying the page helps to emphasise visual hierarchy making it more actionable and easier to understand what it is they are looking at



Content

Summary: Content

- ★ Overall, the amount of content on each page was found to be overwhelming, which made it harder to find what users were looking for.

Remember: Less is more!

Consider the personas who are using the website!

“It’s a bit of a mess. It is just not clear.”

- Male, 26, West Green

“Needs more information on certain terms: DLA, PIP, doesn’t provide links to those things.”

- Male, 42, Palmers Green

“It’s a bit of a mess. It is just not clear.”

- Male, 26, West Green

The Copy

Good copy provides users with decision -making clarity when interacting with the website. Generally, users on Haringey's website are seen to be doing a lot of skimming trying to find the information that is relevant to them

Too much content fatigues

Pages with larger volumes of text fatigues users and they either miss what they are looking for or stop reading and try to find the information elsewhere

Too wordy and technical in places

The copy was found to be technical and long-winded for some, this can leave users with more questions than answers

Action Points

- Make use of more step-by-step process to condense information and provide an overview
 - Only show essential information
 - Sentences need to be short
 - Remove jargon and use plain English

[GOV.UK provides a guide here](#)

What is a Blue Badge?

A Blue Badge is a permit that helps people with enduring and substantial mobility problems and/or non-visible (hidden) disabilities to access goods and services, by allowing them to park close to their destination. The Blue Badge scheme is open to eligible people with disabilities, whether they're travelling as a driver or passenger.

Example of poor wording on Blue Badge Page

“What is substantial? What does that mean? They're hinting at conditions, but with really vague language”

- Male, 69, West Green

“Maybe have more pages with less information on them?”

- Male, 32, Haringey

News & Events

Most users are generally positive about community events and activities but are quite overwhelmed when it comes to making sense of the all the content on Haringey Council's site

An excessive amount

Currently there are 4 streams of news - each section presented in different ways (picture, text, some just a header etc.) with no big differentiation between them

Secondary purpose

No users came to the website for news specifically and some found that it was 'pushed upon them', which can distract users from their initial task at hand

Action Points

- Streamline / reduce the news & events section
- Show a snapshot on the front page and allow users to choose if they want to know more
- A suggestion of an event calendar was made to compile all of the different news

News and events

> Latest news

- Pianos for the people: Pianos installed in Haringey libraries to give all residents access to music.
- Haringey Council launches new Financial Support Helpline
- Haringey Council wins award for giving young people a voice in Local Plan
- Met office issues red alert heat warning

> News listings

> Twitter

Haringey @haringeycouncil

If your child is/children are eligible for Free School Meals, there's a range of fun & FREE activities, courses & events for them to take part in throughout the summer break as part of our Holiday Activities & Food programme.

For more info -> ow.ly/GoYh50JWsl1 #HAF2022

Haringey @haringeycouncil

Celebrate #CarFreeDay by holding your own Play Streets event! Apply by 12 August and give children the space to play and promote activity and friendships! For more information, visit haringey.gov.uk/play-streets

CELEBRATE CAR FREE DAY ON SUNDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

A Play Street gives children the chance to play safely in their streets without cars.

Apply by 12 August

Haringey

Haringey @haringeycouncil

Over the last year, our amazing Financial Support Team have helped #Haringey residents improve their financial situations

If you're facing money problems, watch this video to hear how they can help you too

020 8489 4431

#HereToHelp

youtu.be/SFhcgOSihhw

LOAD MORE

> E-newsletter

Haringey people extra

Don't miss out! Sign up to Haringey People Extra now.

www.haringey.gov.uk/HPEX

UX

Summary: User Experience

★ We know from previous research, top reasons for dissatisfaction are related to:

Ease of finding specific information (51%)

Ease of getting around the site (43%)

Those findings were reflected in our research: users had difficulty with navigating leaving them feeling stressed and frustrated

They found it particularly difficult to:

Apply for a parking permit

Apply for social housing

Contact the council

User journeys need more careful and intentional consideration in the the design to improve the user experience

“My gripe with Haringey’s site is that it takes you round and round in circles. It takes you down a rabbit hole of nothingness. You’re none the wiser and an hour has gone. It’s not logical to use. It just doesn’t take you to where you want to go”

- Female, Retired, Haringey

“When they introduced the virtual parking permits. Everyone over the age of 50 was like help! The 68 year old down the road found it so difficult he didn’t do it by the day his expired. It’s very stressful. That’s not right”

- Female, Retired, Haringey

User Journey #1

How did they do?

- Overall all users found a solution
Users chose a variety of entry points from the homepage

Pain points

Smaller screen sizes seem to perform worse since the first options are clicked as and when they see it
The number of ways to report the same problem - 5 in total (Online as guest, My Account, Our Haringey, telephone and email)



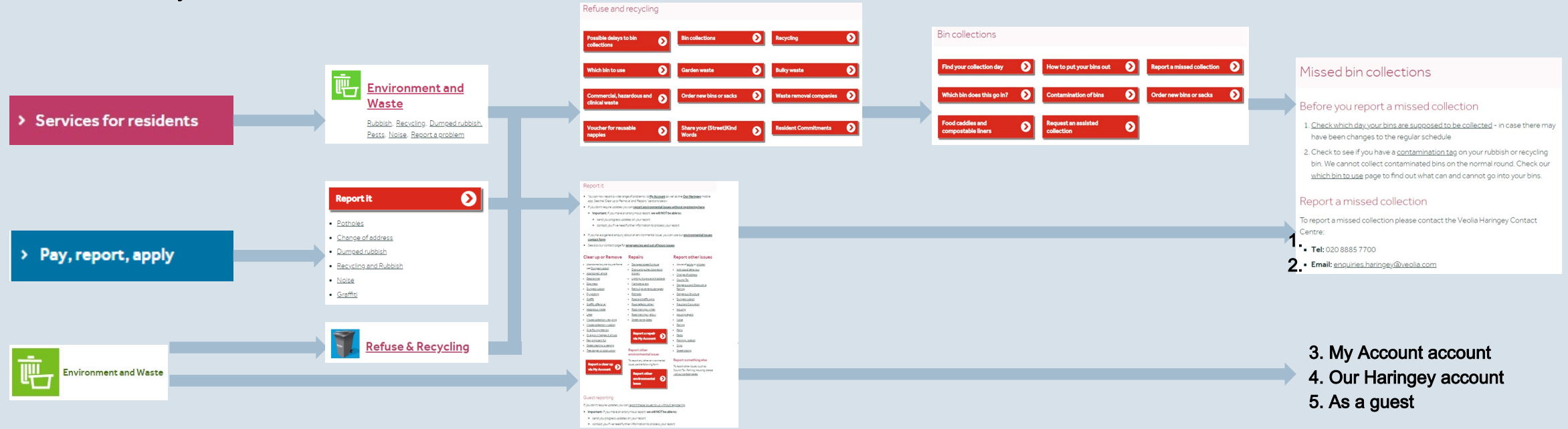
Environment and Waste

1. Waste Collection Enquiry

'My bin has not been collected for a few weeks. I would like to notify the council'

User Journey #1

'My bin has not been collected for a few weeks, I would like to notify the council'



Multiple entry points to reporting problems gives a chance for users to find the “report” function in different parts of the website

The “report a problem” should look consistent across all pages so it’s easily identified

The mobile view of “Report it” is full of text explaining the different options - it’s not clear that this is an actionable page

Make the mobile experience more responsive - most important actions should be right at the top of the page

There are 5 ways in which this problem could be reported. Users tend not to have to decide /work out what is best.

Streamline/organise the reporting system so that users understand quickly what their choices are

User Journey #2

“I’ve lost my job and won’t be able to afford private housing soon. I want to apply for social housing”

How did they do?

Overall, many found this user journey very frustrating and long -winded

Pain points

- The poor content organisation and amount of irrelevant information leads to frustration and stress
Links, page labels, and explanations of this process are not signposted well so expectations are not being fulfilled at numerous points in the journey

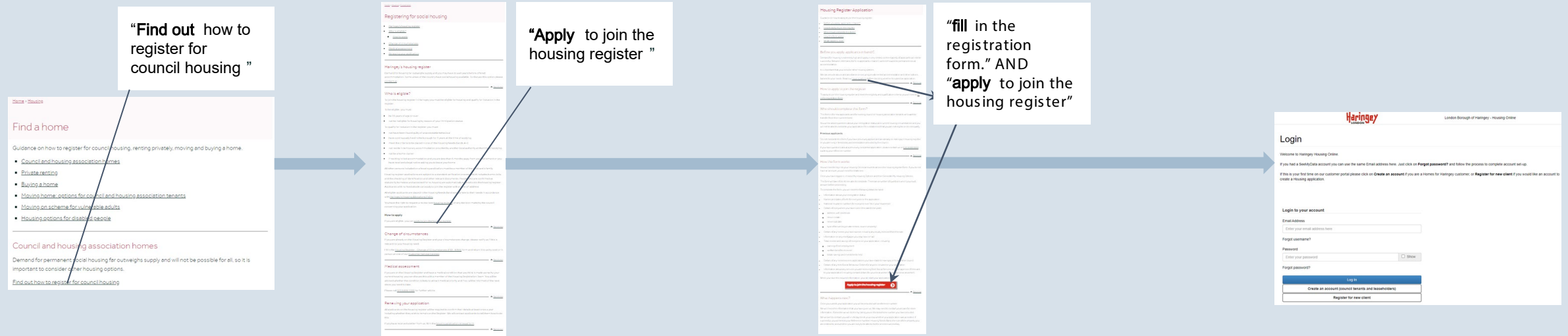


2. Application For Housing

'I've lost my job and won't be able to afford private housing soon and want to apply for social housing'

User Journey #2

“I’ve lost my job and won’t be able to afford private housing soon and want to apply for social housing”



Users click “Find out how to register for council housing”, expecting to be guided to the registration process

Despite the header “Registering for social housing” the content is mostly about eligibility with no visually clear CTA. Last three sections are irrelevant.

● Next page starts with eligibility again not actually registering
Information around technical qualifications (band C) is confusing and not explained
Info on what happens **after** they register - not placed at the right time in the user flow

Users are presented with some confusion options around creating an account of registering “as a client”?.

Ensure that links describe correctly and concisely what a user can expect next

Present applications like these in a logical and easy to complete manner. E.g. A simple step-by-step process to 1st check eligibility and 2nd to register would help users understand the process better.
Information needs to be presented in the right place at the right time of consideration.

Use wording/terms users are familiar with

User Journey #3

“I would like to make a council tax payment online”

How did they do?

Most users were able to find the page to the council tax payment pages but say that it's more complicated than it should be

Pain points

- A lot of searching and reading irrelevant information on way to reaching the destination
Again, the site allows users to find this through different pathways but this may start getting confusing when users retrace their steps
Lack of consistency with labelling CTA buttons



Council Tax and Benefits

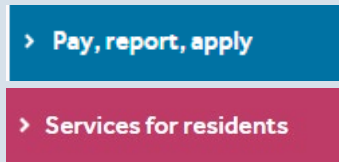
3. Council Tax Payment

'I would like to make a council tax payment online'

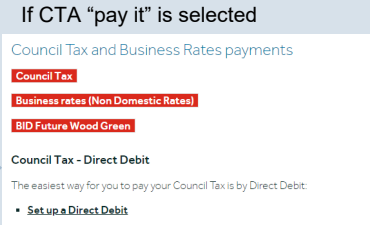
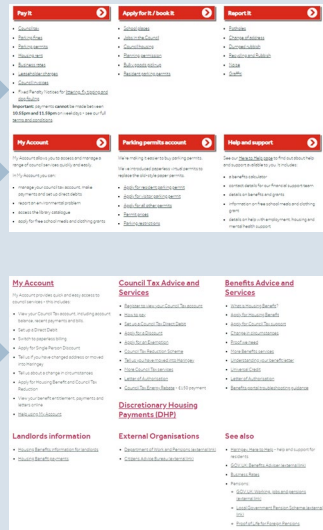
01:16:50 - 01:17:19

User Journey #3

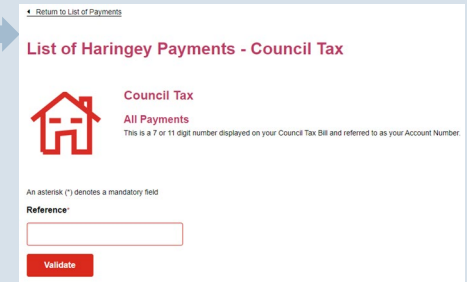
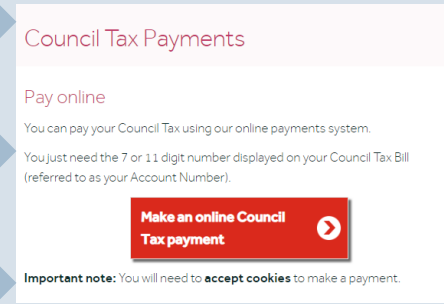
“I would like to make a council tax payment online”



Login/Register



If CTA "Council Tax" is selected



The council tax page has often been criticised for being very busy and with lots of redundant information - the mobile view is especially congested

These CTA buttons look different to the others. Sometimes they are not clear whether they're buttons, sometimes they have too many words

Even if a user is logged in, they are required to fill in the information in these query boxes

Condense menu pages with less options so users can make easier and quicker decisions

Wording, look & feel of buttons should be consistent and communicate an action

Consideration around what a "logged in" user flow should look like

Parking Permits

This process was reported to be particularly difficult by users and many have struggled to find the answers they were looking for in this section of the website. Simplifying the process would be the first port of call.

Example: User journey 'applying for a parking permit':



Users land on a page full of text. A large portion of the top of the page is the index. A lot to take in!

Main instructions are not on the site to read. Options are a video or an external PDF. The video is long with several steps.

The 8 page PDF with instructions appears complicated with many steps. Not all users can access the pdf while also looking at their screen.

With multiple CTA buttons, users are given two options but it is not entirely clear what the difference is.

Reduce the information and provide concise instructions

Instruction videos should be taken down and core information accessible online.

Create step by steps processes informing users as they go through the steps so they don't need a separate guide

Limit CTA buttons on one page to funnel through users more productively

Consideration of the user journey

Considering what the user is thinking and feeling at each point of their journey can inform the overall design of the website. Despite the amount of content on Haringey's site, users are reporting that they often aren't able to find what they're looking for.

Information not shown in right place / time

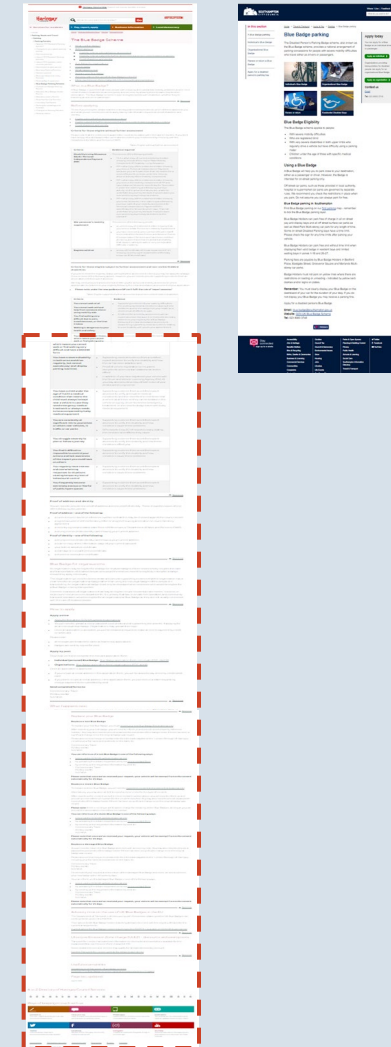
Users are often required to read through a lot of information - this can lead to missing key information

Users report that a lot of the content is irrelevant to what they need - which tends to be instructional and practical

Many are seen going back and forth on pages, and being redirected to pages they've seen before leaving users feeling frustrated

Action Points

- Remove information that is not directly relevant to the user at that current step of the journey
- Conduct more user research to plan out the most common user journeys and understand the step by step thinking process



A comparison of the content that a user lands on for information on the "blue badge".

Haringey (left) and Southampton (right)

Haringey's is almost triple the content

Showing the current status

Breadcrumbs offer users the ability to find their way back to the home page or quickly reach other levels of the website. With the breadcrumb navigation, you can see which pages have been visited before.

Breadcrumbs needs work

Breadcrumbs fail to show the page that users are on, as is convention, and sometimes the path does not reflect the path they took, due to the numerous pathways possible.

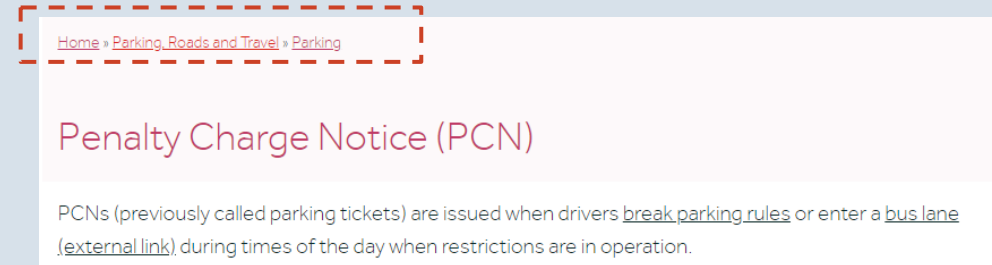
Navigation is difficult

Due to the lack of clarity of where they users are within the website, they often get lost in the volume of content and IA

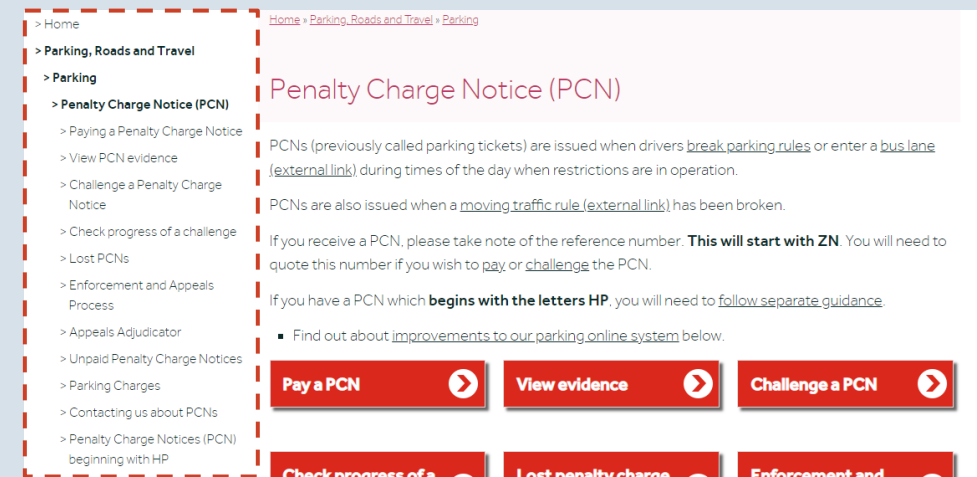
The left sidebar being present throughout the journey can be helpful, but adds to the busyness and amount to take in

Action Points

- Show the user where they are and what they can expect next
- Fix breadcrumbs to match convention
- Clear and simple side menus or step-by-steps can help users to keep track of where they are when completing applications /transactions



Breadcrumbs usually also display the name of the page they are on



Left side bar is busy and difficult to read

Multiple logins

Users often see a website as one functioning body and often do not perceive the boundary between the main host and third party companies. As expected, having to log in to different parts of the website was frustrating for users due to the difficulty of keeping track of numerous passwords/usernames etc.

Good idea for one account

Many reacted positively to the idea of a personalised account to access services and personal records in one interface, for:

- Council tax payments
- Parking permits
- Period of residency
- Job applications

A hassle for several accounts - Some users prefer not needing and others don't experience the benefit.

Action Points

- Consider consolidating users' data into one account
Only ask users to login if strictly necessary and there is a clear benefit to doing this

Login to, or register for, a Haringey account

Which of the following services do you need?

My Account



Parking account



Housing online



Login to My Account for:

- Council Tax
- Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction
- Reporting environmental problems
- Free school meals and clothing grants
- e-Newsletters

Login to your parking online account for:

- Resident permits
 - Visitor permits (note you'll need to confirm your address before buying)
 - Other parking permits
- More about [parking in Haringey](#).

For council housing tenants and leaseholders to:

- View housing accounts
- Pay rent and service charges
- Report repairs
- Report issues and more

Any other Haringey accounts will be available via the relevant sections of the website.

The [Log-in page](#) on Haringey Council's website

"It would be better if only one is needed, but I might not use it that often anyway."

- Male, 32, Haringey

Call-to-Action buttons

CTA buttons signpost to users that there is an action to be carried out - like starting an application or saving their information.

Lacks consistency in function

CTA buttons are not always actions, and lead to different things: information pages, service menus pages, registration interfaces, etc.

Lack consistency in look & feel

Often differ in colour, font size, size - this can lead to some confusion as user try to form mental patterns of how things work

Too many on one page

When there are numerous CTA buttons in a small area, it can disorient a user as they compete for attention

Long winded labeling

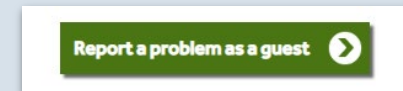
Clear and concise wording can also help user identify their actions quickly. And further guidance can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Action Points

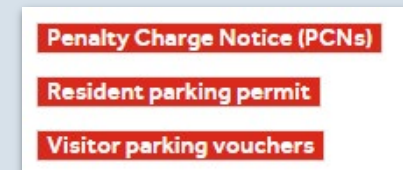
- Reduce use of CTA buttons where not leading to direct action (form to be filled, a payment to be made, something to be selected)
Labels should be short, simple action words



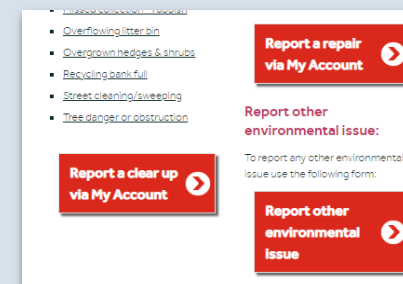
→ Very wordy and mixed of font sizes



→ Different colour "report"



→ No specific action indicated



→ Numerous CTA buttons that all report

'My Haringey'

The idea of personalisation is liked by users but the information has to be integrated into their user journey for it to be useful. "My Haringey" was often missed on desktop screens as well as smaller screen sizes.

Not in the right place

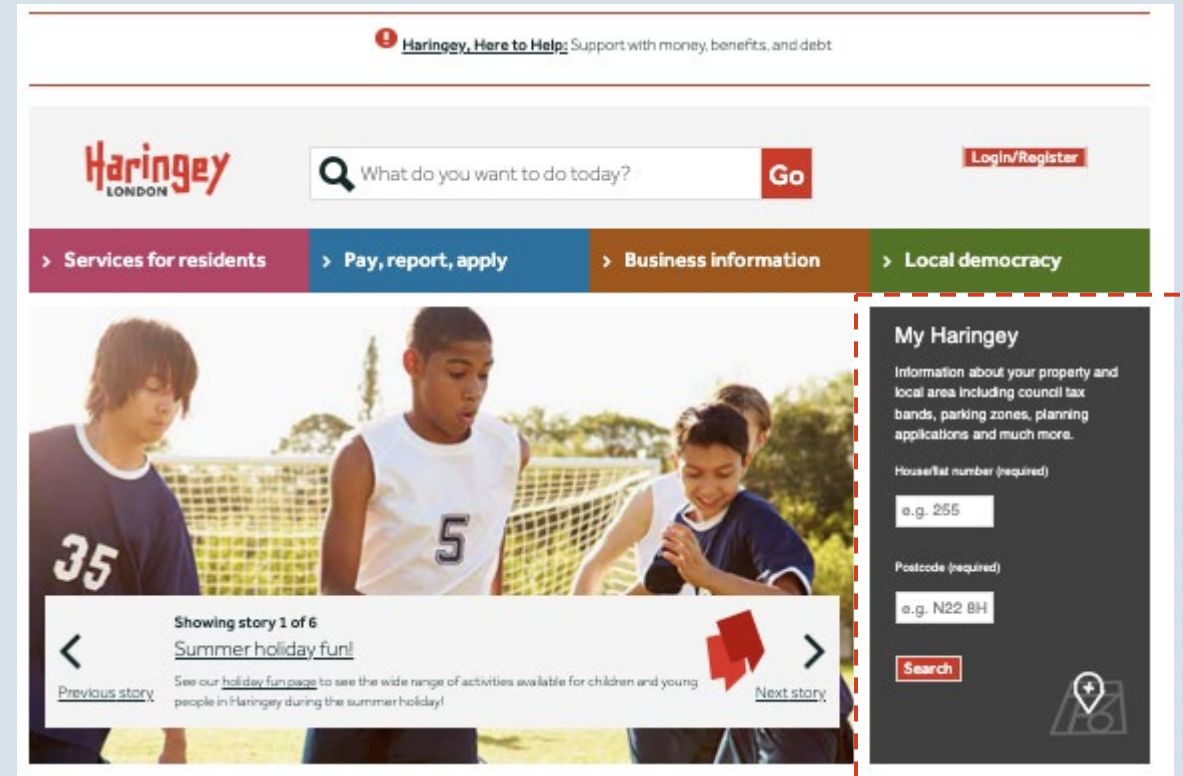
Users come to complete a task and tend not to browse to discover additional tools

The proposition lacks clarity

It's not clear what users can expect to see if they were to fill in their details in the open text fields

Action Points

- Integrate 'My Haringey' into relevant parts of the user journey e.g., when paying for council tax or when residents should be putting their bins out



Contact

Being able to contact someone is part of building trust and satisfaction with a service. Users expect to be able to talk to someone when they can't find answered directly on the website. However, this section presents misleading information, which causes users high levels of stress and frustration.

Misleading

"Contact Us" suggests: an email/ a number / form, however, many user flows do not lead to any contact details, rather redirected to content. There is also no option for 'urgent enquiries'.

Confusing user journeys

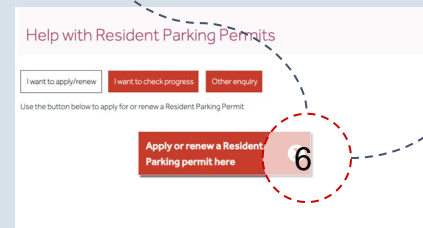
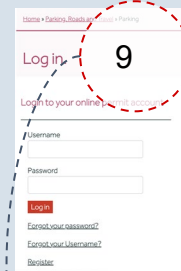
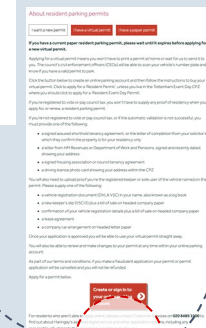
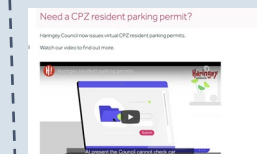
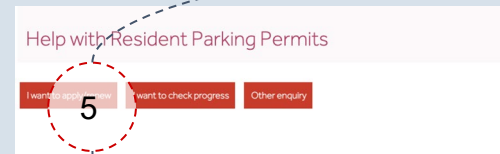
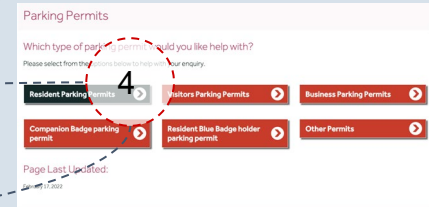
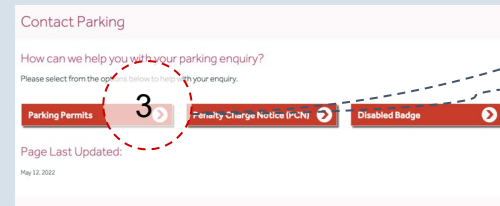
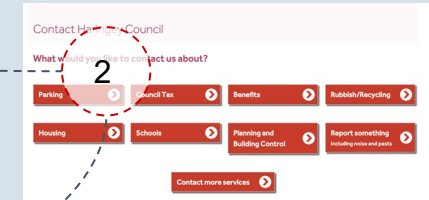
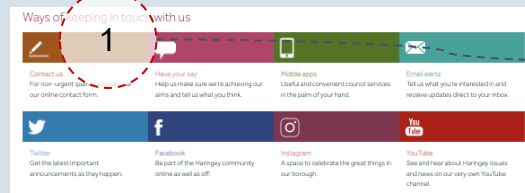
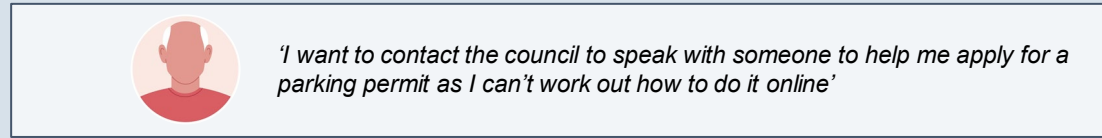
Being unexpectedly directed multiple times to different parts of the website = expectations are not met = frustration, "the council does not care about me"

Contact information wrong and hidden

Unethical to hide numbers - many prefer phoning in, especially the elderly and digitally excluded. There were also some reports of dead lines and non existent email addresses.

Action Points

- Clearly provide contact details to relevant departments
- Reduce the amount of clicks needed to get to the correct online form/number/email



'Oh no, I am back where I started! I must have done something wrong'

A - Z Directory & search bar

Apart from the menu and icons, the website allows the user other ways to locate information with the search bar and A - Z directory. Users however are not using the directory:

A-Z directory not used

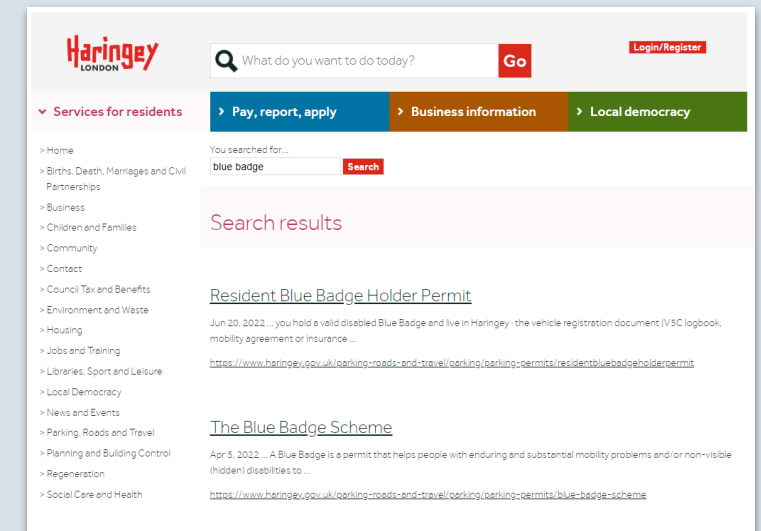
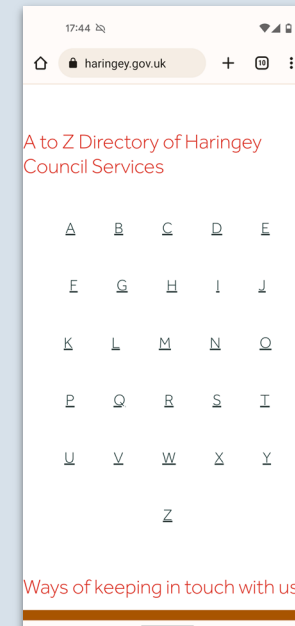
Since this is also put at the bottom of the page it was not used, not sought after, and not seen.

A-Z directory is outdated

The A-Z directory is not longer a commonly used element as newer tools replace them. Many don't recognise what the purpose of it is or expect to find what they are looking for in this way

Search bar works well!

Seen to be used often, especially when users can't find something through the icons or top menu bar and it produces great results.



Action Points

- Remove A-Z Directory
- Maintain good search function

Mobile specific challenges

Although, some still prefer to do certain tasks such as paying for things on the laptop, the overall usage is shifting to mobile. The most important information is usually found 'above the fold'. This is the first screen that users see before scrolling.

Waste of "prime real estate"

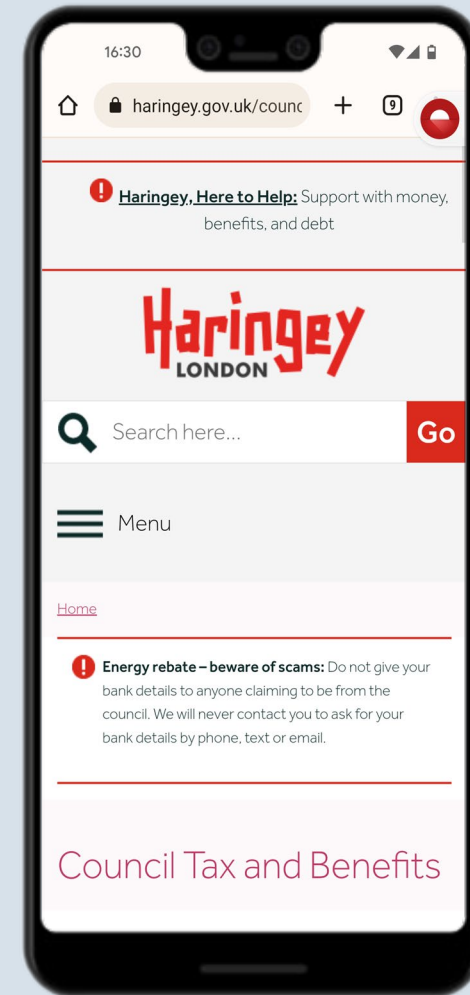
On mobile the notifications, logo, search bar and hamburger menu take up majority of the screen. The user has to scroll every time, just to see if they are on the right page.

Having to keep scrolling past irrelevant elements and content frustrates users

It also interrupts the viewing experience - slowing down the overall experience

Action Points

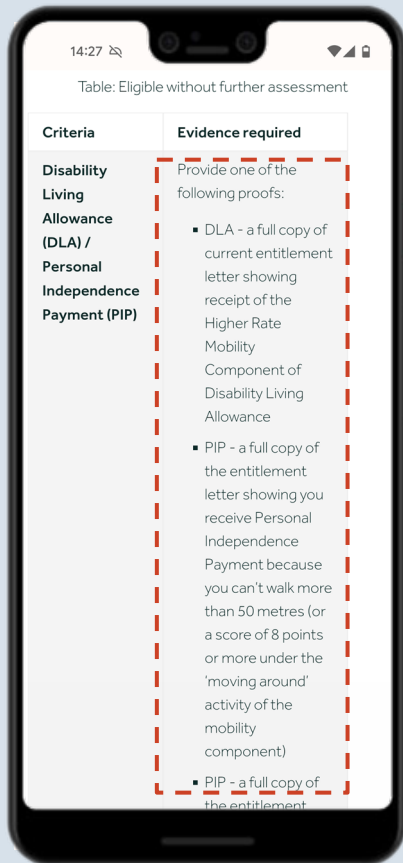
- More joined-up thinking across devices is needed - design should be "mobile first"
- Minimise the space taken up by things like the icon, search bar, menu and notifications



Majority of the page is not useful

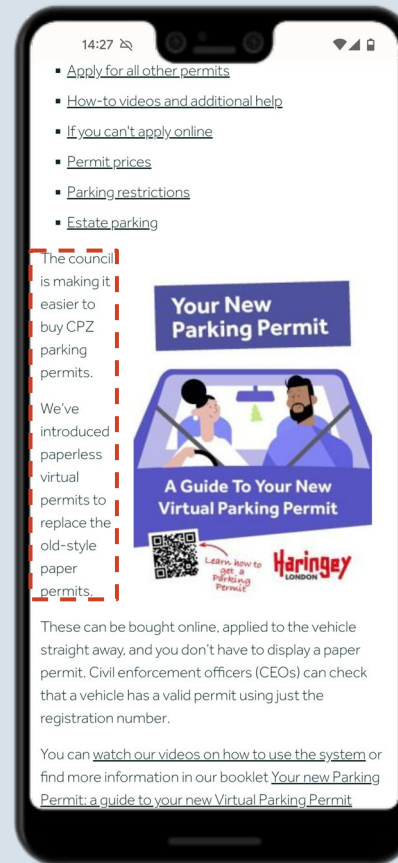
Mobile specific challenges

The other challenges found when viewing the content on smaller screen sizes generally fall under the design not being responsive. This will affect not only mobile but also tablets and smaller browser windows etc.

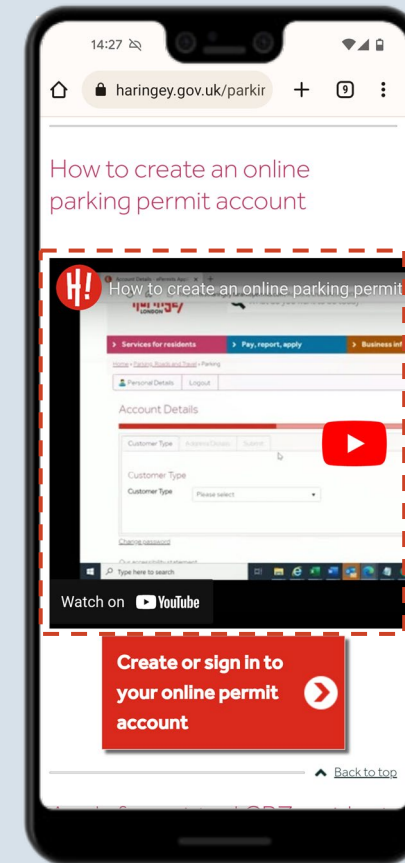


Grids tend not to work well on mobile and should be avoided when explaining information

GOV.UK gives guidance on tables [here](#)



Sentences become hard to read when they are wrapped in this way with images



Videos frames are not responsive to mobile screen sizes

Part 3: Best practice guidelines

Usability heuristics

What is it?

Jakob Nielsen developed 10 general principles for interaction design published in 1994. They are called "heuristics" because they are broad rules of thumb and not specific usability guidelines. The evaluation helps to provide a quick overview of usability issues found on digital platforms.

"Heuristic evaluation is done by looking at an interface and trying to come up with an opinion about what is good and bad about the interface" (Nielsen, 1993, 155)

Further detail on Jakob Nielsen's 10 principles can be found on this website: [Ten Usability Heuristics](#)

Tailored to this project

We have adapted the heuristics for a local council website, with reference to:

The design principles found on the gov.uk website:

[Government Design Principles](#)
[Design System Elements and Patterns](#)

Our own research from previous public sector websites:

[Digital Inclusion Toolkit](#)
[Cumbria County Council User Research](#)

And best use cases:

[Southampton Council Website](#)
[Westminster Council Website](#)

7 best practices tailored to this project

1.

Establish a style guide

– *'What is this website about?'*

2.

Use semiotics to communicate meaning

– *'How do I use it intuitively?'*

3.

Adapt the webdesign to your users

– *'Who is this for?'*

4.

Convey information concisely

– *'How do I get the information quickly?'*

5.

Organise content around the user journey

– *'What am I meant to do next?'*

6.

Show the current status

– *'Where am I within the website?'*

7.

Give the user control and freedom

– *'Do I have a choice?'*

1.

Establish a style guide

Definition

A style guide is a holistic set of design standards ensuring consistency across different pages, which users use to identify patterns, functions and actions. Good design helps users understand the hierarchy of information, helping them decide what to do and what to pay attention to.

Suggestion

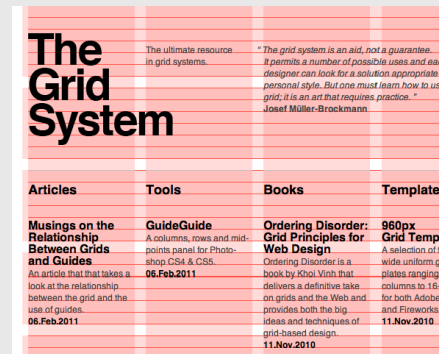
Use a design guide for a user friendly layout with a clear visual hierarchy

- Align items within sections

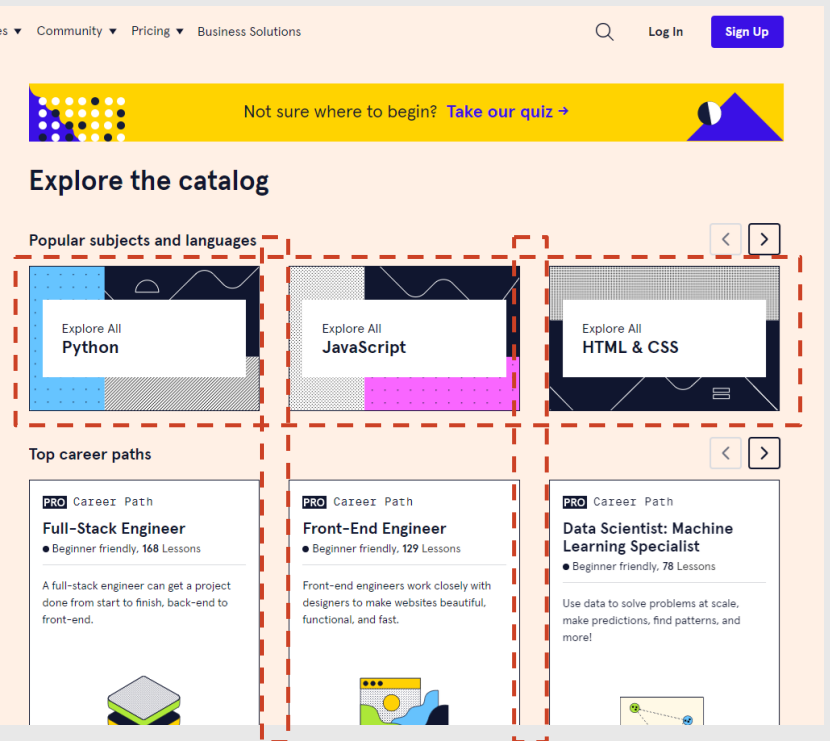
- Allow for spacing and margins between sections and elements on a page

Use consistent formatting of text, boxes, buttons

Use consistent content distribution on pages



- Ruby
- C++
- R
- C#
- PHP
- Go
- Swift
- Kotlin
- C
- Subjects ^
- Web Development
- Data Science



Example : a website that a user liked for its “neatness” and compact nature
Source: [Code Academy](https://www.codecademy.com/)

2.

Use semiotics to communicate meaning

Definition

The design can communicate who the website is intended for and what the product is about. Good design aligns users expectations from the real world into the digital world, such by use of branding and semiotics.

Suggestion

Align users expectations of what a LA is and does, with the webdesign

Many are becoming familiar with the GOV.UK website as a government authority website

Consider the symbolism or semiotics in the use of colour (e.g. red = emergency or error)

Minimise the use of colours to focus users' attention on the main message or task

Minimise the number of CTA (call to action) buttons per page

In this section

- Blue Badge parking
- Individual's Blue Badge
- Organisational Blue Badge
- Renew or return a Blue Badge
- Apply for a disabled person's parking bay

Home > Travel & Transport > Apply & Pay > Parking > Blue Badge parking

Blue Badge parking

The Disabled Person's Parking Badge scheme, also known as the Blue Badge scheme, provides a national arrangement of parking concessions for people with severe mobility difficulties who travel either as drivers or passengers.

Apply as individual

Organisations providing transportation for disabled people can apply for an organisational Blue Badge.

Apply as organisation

Contact us

[Email](#)

Tel: 023 8083 3748

Individual's Blue Badge

Organisational Blue Badge

Renew or return

Residential Disabled Bays

Example : Southampton's first Blue Badge page with two simple green CTA buttons. Source: [Southampton Council Website](#)

3.

Adapt the webdesign to your users

Definition

The design, imagery and language used should be accommodated to the needs of the specific target audience and be representative of them, i.e. residents in Haringey.

Suggestion

Ensure that everyone can access the site incl.

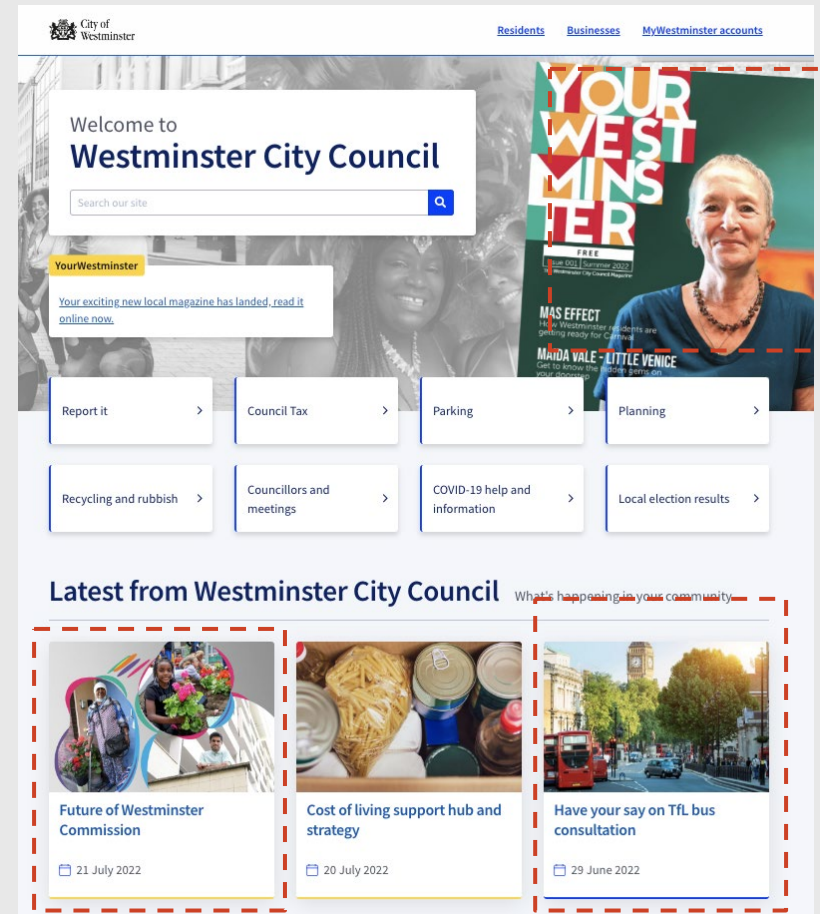
Disabilities, ages, educational background, device accessibility

Translate pages if a high percentage of residents speak another language as their first

Reflect the diversity of the community represented

Avoid use of jargon or technical language

Use text and photo rather than icons for clarity



Example : Older and ethnically diverse residents from Westminster represented, as well as text with localised photos

Source: [Westminster City Council](https://www.westminster.gov.uk/)

4. Convey information concisely

Definition

Language should be short & concise as users are usually skimming for the information that's important & relevant to them. The quicker you get to the point, the greater the chance users will see the information you want them to.

Suggestion

Minimise the amount of information used to convey a point:

- Use short sentences

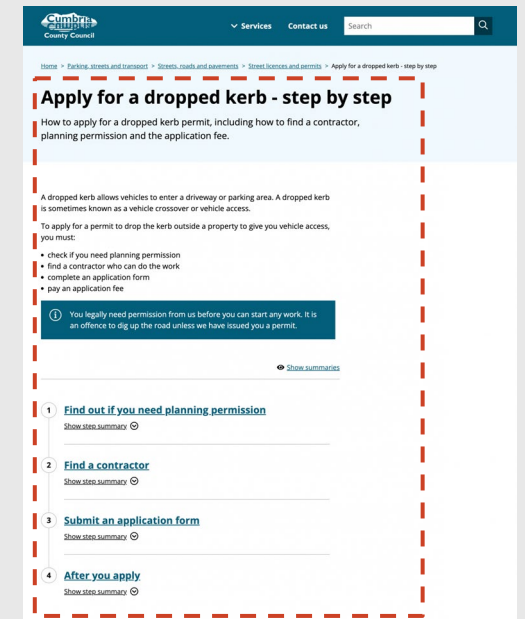
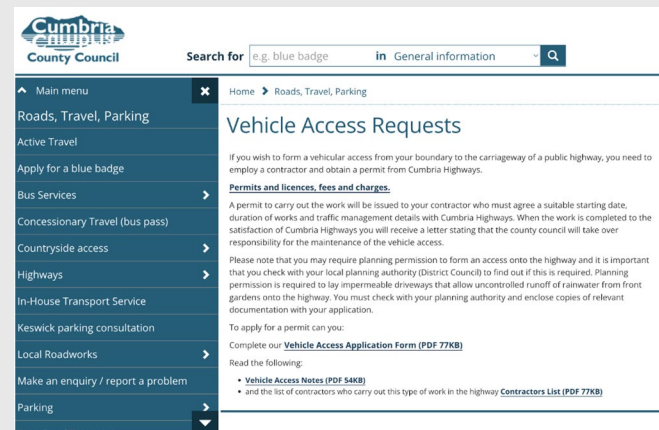
- Use simple vocabulary / no jargon

- Replace long paragraphs with concise bullet points

- Use sub-headed and collapsible sections

- A great content writing guide by GOV.UK

- can be found on their [content design page](#)



Example : Before and after - User Research carried out for Cumbria County Council

Source: [User Research for Cumbria County Council \(blog post\)](#)

5.

Organise content around the user journey

Definition

The content should be designed in a way that makes it easy for the user to follow processes and instructions. Content should be shown at the right time/ place so they're not overwhelmed.

Suggestion

Consider the user journey in how information is organised and presented - work out the most common reasons to visit and make them easily accessible

Use step-by-step guides for applications

Reduce content and only show information when it's relevant at that specific step



Example: Hackney Council -key reasons for visiting highlighted for ease
Source: [Hackney Council](https://www.hackney.gov.uk)

6.

Show the current status

Definition

The website should always keep user informed about what is going on and where they find themselves within the IA (information architecture)/ structure of the website.

Suggestion

Use breadcrumbs and stepper menus (see example to the right)

Provide visual confirmation of payments, form submissions, logged in/out status, and any other actions to reassure users that an action has been executed

The screenshot shows the Digital Inclusion Toolkit website. At the top, there is a blue header with the logo and navigation links for 'Search the Toolkit', 'Toolkit', and 'Blog'. Below the header, a breadcrumb trail is highlighted with a red dashed box: 'Home > Starting a digital inclusion programme > How to start a digital inclusion programme'. The main content area features the title 'How to start a digital inclusion programme' and a sub-section 'Starting a digital inclusion programme – step by step'. Below this, two case study links are shown: 'How 100% Digital Leeds started a digital inclusion programme – case study' and 'How to start a digital inclusion programme'. On the right side, a stepper sidebar is highlighted with a red dashed box, titled 'The 3 steps to digital inclusion:'. It contains three steps: 1. 'Starting a digital inclusion programme' (with a 'Show less' link and a highlighted link to the current page), 2. 'Delivering a digital inclusion programme' (with a 'Show more' link), and 3. 'Evaluation and case studies' (with a 'Show more' link).

Example : Digital Inclusion Toolkit shows where users are within the sight by help of bread crumbs and within the content by use of a stepper sidebar.

Source: [Digital Inclusion Toolkit](#) - Telltale Research case study

7.

Give the user control and freedom

Definition

Moving services from paper to online continues to present challenges to users. Allowing users to choose what works best for them (within certain parameters) allows them to feel empowered and able to complete tasks more confidently.

Suggestion

Allow users to choose how they access their services

Create clear offerings for users to access service: in person, phone, email etc.

Allow for customisation of alerts / notifications / newsletter on specific themes or topics

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How to pay your council tax

You can pay your council tax by Direct Debit, by phone, by post, online or in person.

Set up council tax for the first time

Please follow the instructions on our [change of address page](#).

Set up or change a Direct Debit

Council tax is usually calculated for a full year, starting in April and ending in March. When you pay by Direct Debit it is split into monthly payments.

You can choose:

- to split it into 10 monthly payments (April to January) or 12 monthly payments (April to March)
- to make your payments on the 10th, 20th or last day of each month

Use our online form to choose your payment preferences and add or change your bank details.

Related pages

- [Help to pay your council tax](#)
- [Manage your council tax online](#)
- [Your bill](#)

Example : Leeds Council website that straight away offers ways to pay - other good examples include Westminster Council.

Source: [Leeds Council website](#)

Thank You!