

Design in the Public Sector

**An evaluation of a programme
of support for local authority
service transformation**





“

We showed that local government managers not only can but must redesign services from the perspective of the customer. Residents are at once public service users and taxpayers who finance these services. As taxpayers, residents want cheaper local government services; and as service users, residents want their services to be better and quicker. Design-led thinking and a user-centred approach are integral to transforming our public services into successful, sustainable services.”

– Barry Quirke, Chief Executive,
Lewisham Council in *Restarting Britain II*

Introduction

The Design Commission's *Restarting Britain II* opened with the statement: "Design is integral to the DNA of each and every public service." The report recognised that just *saying* public services should use design more is not enough, and that more needs to be done to ensure local authority officers, service commissioners and policymakers have the understanding, capacity, willingness and skills to design and develop cost-effective, user-led public services.

As a result of the report's recommendations, Design Council developed the Design in the Public Sector programme, which launched in January 2014.

Design in the Public Sector is an immersive training programme which seeks to increase the knowledge and capacity to apply strategic design skills to key challenges and better inform the commissioning process.

This paper outlines the key findings from an evaluation of the first 18 months of the programme. The paper draws on detailed desk research, 19 telephone interviews with programme participants and delivery staff from Design Council, and an online survey of 27 programme participants.

We believe the quality of information collected means lessons can be learned which are of use to others interested in transforming public services for the better.

The Design in the Public Sector programme has useful lessons for central government, local authorities and other agencies who are interested in how design improves public services:

- The Design in the Public Sector programme has had substantial impacts on the skills base and approach of individual staff, and given them the confidence to continue to apply what they have learned.
- Participants in the Design in the Public Sector programme not only improved their awareness and knowledge of design, but have successfully started to embed such thinking and practice into their organisation's work, including the commissioning process.
- Challenges and barriers to successfully sustaining and scaling these approaches include constraints on resources and capacity, and organisational cultures which are not automatically supportive of design-led approaches.

Our recommendations are:

- 1 Develop design skills in service commissioners**

Commissioning strategies should take account of design principles and expertise, particularly at the pre-commissioning stage. We propose working with the government to better link our programme to organisations awarded funding specifically charged with developing new services. This would enable commissioners charged with change to better reframe services around user insight during the early stages of development.
- 2 Stimulate local networks**

The UK leads the way in commercial user-experience and user-interface design skills, but service design expertise is hard for commissioners from the public sector to identify at local level. We propose working with local authorities to better engage the design sector and innovation mechanisms such as Service Jams to create richer innovation networks.
- 3 Invest in design advice and support**

Central government should invest in strategic design support for the public sector, comparable to the support it offers to the private sector through the Business Growth Service.
- 4 Inspire design leadership**

Senior engagement and endorsement of new approaches can dramatically enhance sustainability of outcomes from projects which have received support through our programme. Working with our current partners, LGA, we propose convening council leaders and chief executives to raise awareness of work undertaken in their regions through this report and other engagement activities.

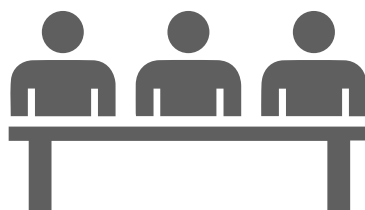
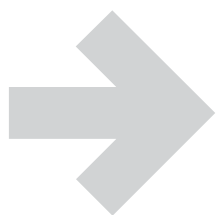
About the Design in the Public Sector programme

The Design in the Public Sector programme aims to help local authorities and partner agencies change the way they scope and plan changes to service delivery at the critical early stage of commissioning or transition. It does this through immersive coaching and training for cohorts of local authority teams in design methods and tools over a 90-day timeframe.

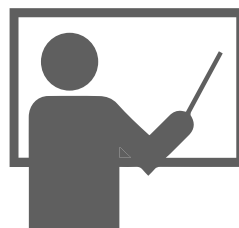
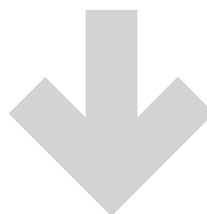
Each team in the cohort arrives with a project challenge which, over 90 days, is translated into a logic model incorporating insight from stakeholders, captured and tested through the application of core design methodologies such as ethnographic research and customer journey mapping. This supports staff to develop the additional skills and capacity to rapidly engage with and learn more about opportunities for change and improvement.

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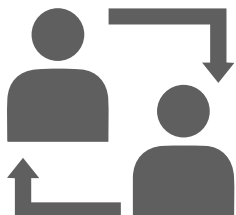
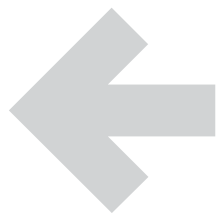
90 days training



Team work



Support



Immersive coaching



individuals

The programme seeks to work with officers within local authorities who are able to lead and influence such service development and redesign. This means that the programme involves participants from a mix of areas, such as centrally located 'Business Improvement Teams' as well as those leading specific areas of commissioning.

Within the first 18 months, four regional cohorts of local authorities completed the programme, representing a total of 47 individuals across 18 project teams. Teams have predominantly come from local authority organisations, but have frequently included voluntary and community sector organisations in their teams, working together on a shared challenge. Participants are sponsored to take part in the five-day programme, with funding for the three cohorts evaluated in this report provided by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC).



project teams

Examples of the challenges which have received support through the Design in the Public Sector programme include:

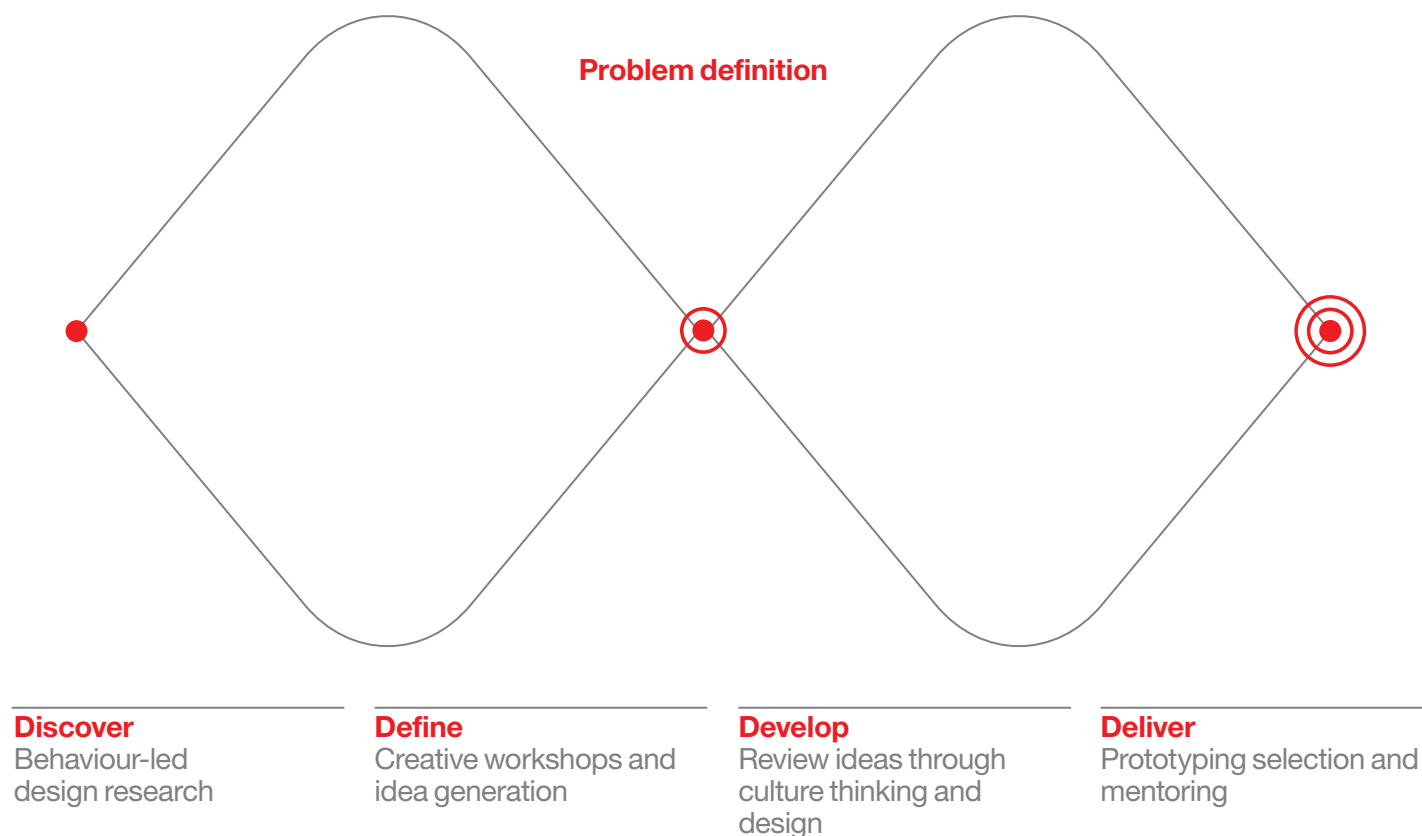
- a housing association becoming a more dementia-friendly organisation
- addressing the root causes of domestic abuse
- developing an improved parenting strategy
- digitalising planning services.

A full breakdown of participating projects is included in Appendix 1.

The programme is delivered using Design Council's Double Diamond Model as a framework, with activities focusing around the associated design principles. The programme takes participants formally through the 'discover' and 'define' stages.

Each day of the programme provides participants with structured training workshops on design methods and how to apply them to develop further insights to inform their logic models. Teams are given coaching to support them as they address practical and strategic barriers to progress. Signposting to additional resources, local design networks and peer learning are also important elements of the programme.

Figure 1 – The Design Council Double Diamond





Key findings

- 01** The programme supports the fundamental reframing of services around user-centred principles
- 02** The programme helps improve awareness of design thinking in public services
- 03** The programme helps improve knowledge of design approaches
- 04** Design thinking can occupy a key place in the public service toolkit
- 05** The programme helps transform staff within public services



01 The programme supports the fundamental reframing of services around user-centred principles

Our experience and evidence from the Design in the Public Sector programme highlights how design enables teams to refocus outcomes around the user and develop more efficient systems and services. The programme supported participating teams working towards a fundamental reframing of the challenge they were trying to address, in the light of specific design methods. This is unsurprising given that the focus within the programme is on supporting organisations to reframe their challenges using the first half of the Double Diamond.

Participants refocused their challenge around the user and, as a result of the programme, were more likely to be developing more user appropriate systems and services. There are positive signs that this user-centric message can permeate more widely through local authorities and other agencies.

“

We stopped assuming what we had planned to do was right – we spent far more time talking to end users and as a result made quite a few changes.”

– Participant (Cohort 3)

Case study

Hanover Housing Association – ‘Dementia Connect’ project

What was the challenge?

Hanover Housing Association manage homes for older people in more than 175 local authorities. With an increasing number of dementia patients, they were keen to use Design Council’s programme as an opportunity to improve their services. They came to the programme with a wide and ambiguous brief, but the Design in the Public Sector programme helped them develop a focus in two areas – raising awareness and staff training.

“It became apparent after day one of the programme that we were trying to boil the ocean! ... So what we needed to do was to refine the challenge down to something that was more specific ... so we defined it right down to how we can maintain or increase the wellbeing of residents who have dementia and then through our work, through research, it became clear actually what we really need to focus on is awareness and the training of our own staff.”

– Project Team Leader, Hanover Housing Association

Hanover undertook detailed background research with over 200 staff, which revealed that staff had limited awareness of dementia and that residents had little empathy or patience with dementia sufferers.

This insight enabled them to develop a range of solutions to improve their services for dementia patients, including awareness campaigns, training for 132 staff, 89 residents and 291 external helpers in the ‘Dementia Friends’ scheme, and targeted support to improve links between estates and existing local support networks. This allowed them to pinpoint those estates with the highest levels of dementia and ensure that these in particular were effectively linked with other estates with lower levels of dementia so that a greater range of services could be offered to those residents. This has resulted in improvement in services such as a bus service where there is extra help for those with dementia, and special provision by local libraries, where dementia sufferers are not charged for late returns.

For the Hanover team, the Design in the Public Sector programme provided a strong focus and impetus to the Dementia Connect project.



“

It's probably been the most enjoyable project any of us have worked on and we'll wait and see what the impact is, but at this point probably one of the most effective as well.”

– Project Team Leader, Hanover Housing Association

Hanover is strongly committed to continuing its work on this theme and this project has been a great success for the organisation. They now wish to fill the post of a permanent Dementia Coordinator and have identified other related challenges they wish to address, for example the need to improve the physical environment for dementia sufferers, particularly signage and community living spaces. In addition, they want to update their model for assessing the severity of a resident's condition from its outdated, box-ticking form to a more empathetic model, by creating 'one-page profiles' for diagnosed residents so staff and fellow residents know how to respond towards particular residents.

“You can pretty much mention Dementia Connect ... to anyone in the organisation and they'll know what you mean which in itself is quite an achievement.”

– Project Team Leader, Hanover Housing Association

02 The programme helps improve awareness of design thinking in public services

Of course, given the ambition of these projects and scale of the change required, long-term transformation of services will take more time to manifest than in the timeline covered by this evaluation. The key focus of the programme is not about immediately transforming public services, but empowering staff and developing the skills required to help transform public services first.

A key outcome of the programme has been helping staff in public services reframe the challenge they are trying to address, and formulating new solutions for their challenges using design thinking techniques. Interviews with programme participants strongly underlined for many the role that the Design in the Public Sector programme had played in their reframing of their challenge. Given that a key focus of the programme is in teaching techniques and an ethos that demonstrate the importance of a user approach, this is a key impact.

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The project we ran was far better than it would have been without the Design in the Public Sector programme in that we were able to construct methods of engagement that were ... appropriate for individuals ... and therefore more effective. We found that we could gather insight that made the project much richer and added weight to the hypothesis we generated.”

– Participant (Cohort 3)

03 The programme helps improve knowledge of design approaches

Learning from the programme is deep and extensive on an individual level. Most participants (78%) had 'low' levels of knowledge about design at the start of the programme. There was a subsequent increase in the percentage of participants rating their knowledge of design as 'high' as a result of the programme, rising from zero at the beginning to 63% of respondents rating their knowledge of design as 'high' or 'very high' after their participation.

Similarly, there was an increased acknowledgement of design's relevance to public services, and while 70% considered the relevance of design thinking to the public sector as 'low' or 'very low' before the programme, after the programme 85% considered its relevance 'high' or 'very high'. These increases are statistically significant. This individual engagement is an essential first step in embedding design thinking in organisational approaches and practice.



70%

considered the relevance of design thinking to the public sector as 'low' or 'very low' before the programme

85%

considered the relevance of design thinking to the public sector as 'high' or 'very high' after the programme

04 Design thinking can occupy a key place in the public service toolkit

The design-led approaches offered by the Design in the Public Sector programme have been transferred by participants to colleagues as most have been involved to some extent in knowledge transfer. All survey respondents had made at least a 'little' effort to influence their colleagues, and 59% had made a 'fair amount' or 'a lot' of effort. 41% had shared a 'fair amount' or 'a lot' of information about design with other teams in their own organisation and 41% had shared the approaches 'a lot' or a 'fair amount' with other organisations.

Interviews with programme participants highlighted that design-led techniques were being applied and shared to different degrees, and that the design approach is fundamental to addressing the challenges that they have been working on. In the majority of cases formal training had not been undertaken across organisations. However, upon interview, three organisations mentioned undertaking semi-formal training sessions for people in their own organisation and a further three organisations talked about intentions to undertake future training sessions, with one of these considering employing an external supplier. The Design in the Public Sector programme can therefore be seen as creating cadres of 'design aware' staff and teams who act to disseminate design thinking in local authorities and associated bodies.

Dissemination alone is not enough if design thinking is to effect real change in public services however, and the evaluation surveyed programme participants on the extent to which design thinking has become embedded by the local authorities and other bodies. While 70% reported that their organisations are now more aware of design thinking, 37% consider that it has become a permanent feature of their work and 15% saw an influence on the commissioning process.

The Design in the Public Sector programme has clearly succeeded in raising awareness of the potential of design-led approaches in the majority of organisations. The evaluation indicates that these changes are more likely to become embedded when the teams involved demonstrate a strong commitment to using design in their work and the environment in which they operate is conducive to such (eg, having senior-level buy-in and support). As such, design thinking can occupy a key place in the public service toolkit, though requires practice over time in order to influence and change culture.

05 The programme helps transform staff within public services

Key to the success of any initiative such as the Design in the Public Sector programme is building confidence among staff to continue to apply what they have learned. The programme has had substantial impacts on the skill base and approach of individuals. The techniques learned tend to be fully embraced and almost all respondents commented that they still try to use the individual techniques. Most participants were new to the techniques, while a handful of participants had some familiarity with the thinking behind a user-led approach.

The programme gave all participants the confidence to approach their projects differently. Most participants valued the opportunity to consider the user perspective and respond by looking to develop services that better meet user needs.

“I’m more positive and confident in how to commission ... and use new tools and techniques for redesigning services.”

– Participant (Cohort 1)



Key challenges and barriers

The evaluation demonstrates that there are significant barriers to embedding design approaches in local authorities. These barriers were particularly overt when we came to consider the issues with project activity and are summarised below:

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- 1 Resources and capacity**

The largest barrier by some margin, preventing those taking their specific project and learning forward, relates strongly to current pressures on the public sector. In several cases, teams disengaged with the Design in the Public Sector programme due to organisational change, funding cuts or senior support being withdrawn, making it difficult for them to take their specific project activity forward.
 - 2 Organisational culture**

It is apparent that the general operating culture in the public sector is not automatically supportive of design-led approaches. It seems that there is often not the 'permission' to allow projects time to deliver, that there is frequently an urgency around delivering a solution quickly, and that the idea of stepping back to consider the real problem at hand, and the user perspective, is particularly novel. Programme participants frequently spoke about needing to step back from a prescribed solution, and that this is the dominant way that the sector works, prescribing a solution long before it understands the nature of the problem or issue.
 - 3 Buy-in from senior management**

Individuals in organisations can be either barriers or enablers to new approaches – some project teams had the full backing of senior people within their organisations, while others found it very difficult to persuade them of the value in taking new and different approaches forward.
 - 4 Buy-in from colleagues**

Gaining acceptance of new approaches was also considered difficult when at the same time you are learning how to use them. A small number of participants reflected that it was only with additional learning they undertook themselves that they were better equipped to gain support for applying design-led approaches and 'sell' these approaches internally. Given this, it may be worth considering developing particular resources within the programme that can support and enable ways to get internal buy-in.

Lessons learned

At Design Council we live by our values, and are continually testing and improving our programmes based on our own learning and feedback from users of our services. As the result of the evaluation of Design in the Public Sector, we will be making the following changes and adaptations to the programme.

While all those who participated in the programme were positive about the programme and what they learned, interviews suggested that there were some participants who were more committed to using the techniques and more tenacious around delivering their projects. This underlines that careful consideration should be given to assess participants themselves for some element of 'programme readiness' as well as the organisations that they are part of.

As a result, we will continue to work with local authorities and other agencies at the highest level to encourage buy-in to resulting new approaches, ensuring participants have the relevant permission, time and budget to get the most out of the projects.

We will offer additional mentoring and coaching support in between and beyond the 90-day workshop period to help ingrain individual learning, support embedding design thinking in the wider organisation and bring project work to fruition. This would include ways to build and develop internal buy-in from colleagues for project activity.

Recommendations and next steps

Transformation does not happen easily. In the context of current challenges, new approaches are needed if we are to increase the scale and pace of change. Design offers different ways to develop services around people's needs, to work openly and collaboratively and to reduce risk through continual testing and improvement.



Based on our experience and that of Design in Public Services participants, we believe the following lessons and actions should be noted by central government, local authorities and other agencies, if we are to create a public service infrastructure for the 21st century.

Embed user-centred design principles into core strategy

Design enables services to refocus their work around the user, and to develop more human-centred systems and services. Applying design methods and principles can remedy failing or underperforming services, but they are most effective when they are embedded into organisational process and culture from the outset, and championed at the highest level. Design Council will engage with senior teams across the public sector in order to engage them in a programme of learning.

Invest in design skills

In order to deliver meaningful, sustainable change, the government must ensure design skills are high among public sector workers, at both a central and local level. The private sector hires the best service designers to create the best experiences for their customers. The public sector must follow this approach, and ensure they have the right skills to do so. Design Council will use its network of design experts to train up public sector professionals in user-experience and user-interface design skills.

Invest in design advice and support

Achieving great design begins with great designers. A refocusing of public sector skills is the long-term solution, but public bodies must invest in design advice and support to plug the gap. Design Council can advise central government on how best to invest in strategic design support for the public sector.

Include service design as a consideration in commissioning/outsourcing decisions

The move towards increasingly outsourced public services was premised on the assumption that the private sector was able to deliver better quality services. This will only be the case if commissioning strategies take account of service design principles and expertise. These considerations should be included at scoping and pre-commissioning stages.

Create a culture amiable to new approaches

Public bodies are historically risk-adverse, but good design relies upon being able to take risks, prototype and iterate in order to quickly spot failures and problems. Design Council can actively instruct councils on how to manage long-term risks, moving from cure to prevention.

Appendix 1:

Full table of cohorts and participating organisations

Information	Organisations and participants
Cohort No: 1 Sponsor: AHRC Region: North-west Date: Feb 2014 – June 2014	Lead organisation involved: 6 East Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group Lancashire County Council Liverpool City Council Salford City Council Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council No of participants involved: 16
Cohort No: 2 Sponsor: AHRC Region: Yorkshire and the Humber Date: July 2014 – Nov 2014	Lead organisation involved: 7 Leeds City Council North East Lincolnshire Council North Yorkshire County Council Selby District Council Sheffield City Council Wakefield Council West Yorkshire Police No of participants involved: 18
Cohort No: 3 Sponsor: AHRC Region: South-east Date: Jan 2015 – April 2015	Lead organisation involved: 5 Brighton and Hove City Council East Sussex Council Hanover Housing Association West Sussex County Council Hart District Council No of participants involved: 14
Cohort No: 4 Sponsor: Capita Region: Edinburgh Date: Dec 2014 – Mar 2015	Lead organisation involved: 4 Dumfries and Galloway Council City of Edinburgh Council Education Scotland Falkirk Council No of participants involved: 11

Cohort 1 – North-west

Lead organisation and challenge

Lead organisation:
East Lancashire Clinical
Commissioning Group

Challenge:
Developing an improved
Parenting Strategy.

Summary of what was undertaken

This project was seeking to improve and develop community assets as it seeks to integrate services around primary care services.

Stage project at Aug 2015:
No interview

Lead organisation:
Lancashire County Council
Collaborating with East Lancashire
Clinical Commissioning Group

Challenge:
Embedding a community
asset approach.

The team undertook some initial research around user experience of services, but when it was clear that the local authority organisation was changing and restructuring this stopped. Of the three people who attended the Design in the Public Sector programme, one took voluntary redundancy, the other left and the third was offered a different role. The change process caused a lot of upheaval. Through the change process, the individual who remained in post did try to encourage the use of a design approach and the associated techniques, and a set of design principles was developed. There is some work going on in the organisation now in relation to community assets, but the lead contact now has a different role and is not sure what stage this is at currently. The individual involved has sought to apply design learning and techniques in their new role.

Stage project at Aug 2015:
Project team disbanded and area of work picked up by others

Lead organisation:
Liverpool City Council
Collaborating with Barnardo's

Challenge:
Developing an improved
parenting strategy.

The team was seeking to develop a parenting strategy for Liverpool City Council using a co-production approach. Following the 90 days, they undertook a detailed programme of 30 focus groups across the city, ethnographic research and workshops. In particular they worked with 20 families who were hard to reach and involved them in design activities. They are currently working on putting together the new parenting strategy, which they hope will be complete in September 2015. (Predicted reductions in government funding for Children's Centres at one point reduced the speed that the project was moving at, as it may have impacted the resulting strategy. However, the proposed changes eventually did not go ahead and the team have been able to progress the project but this is why progress has been slower than the team would have liked.)

Stage project at Aug 2015:
Project still underway

Lead organisation and challenge

Lead organisation:
Salford City Council

Challenge:
Improving delivery of Adult social care.

Summary of what was undertaken

The team looked at how the different range of agencies, who provide adult social care services work across a network, particularly considering how citizens can fall between organisations / circulate around them. They developed some initial user research. For internal reasons this project is not being rolled out currently. The individual interviewed sits within a Business Improvement Team and has tried to apply learnings where possible for example in relation to the Care Act Information Strategy.

Stage project at Aug 2015:
Project team disbanded and activity stopped.

Lead organisation:
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

Challenge:
Developing services for perpetrators of domestic abuse.

The team undertook background research and completed service user involvement exercises, engaging with perpetrators of domestic abuse in a number of innovative ways. They also successfully collaborated with other organisations across the Greater Manchester area and received additional funding of £30k from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to test out a Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme. In August 2015, they completely recommissioned their domestic abuse support services including a service for perpetrators. A baseline study will be conducted alongside these new services that will seek to evidence the impact of services for perpetrators, hopefully by August 2016.

Stage project at Aug 2015:
Project still underway.

Lead organisation:
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Challenge:
Developing community capacity.

This project sought to work with community groups to understand how they would like to better engage and communicate with the council to enable them to build local capacity around key issues such as worklessness.

Stage project at Aug 2015:
No interview

Cohort 2 – Yorkshire and Humberside

Lead organisation and challenge	Summary of what was undertaken
<p>Lead organisation: Leeds City Council Collaborating with Voluntary Action Leeds</p> <p>Challenge: Community engagement – How might local people get more involved in local decision-making?</p>	<p>This project is currently paused due to changing organisational issues but may be taken forward at some point in the future.</p> <p>The team had undertaken user research work with communities and were ready to start prototyping activities in a number of areas when the project was paused by the council.</p> <p>The individual involved continues to try to apply design techniques to their work.</p> <p>Stage project is now at: Project on hold</p>
<p>Lead organisation: North East Lincolnshire Council Collaborating with North Lincolnshire Council</p> <p>Challenge: Developing online services in relation to council revenue and benefits services.</p>	<p>This project is ongoing with the aim of a new delivery model being in place in April 2016. The Design in the Public Sector programme helped the team to step back from preconceived areas of solution to undertake customer insight and prototyping work. One area of change has been implemented – the ability to notify changes of circumstances online. More information has been requested on the value of savings made but as yet no information has been supplied.</p> <p>The individual contacted for interview is moving off the project team and into a commissioning role, and intends to use the tools and techniques in their new role.</p> <p>Stage project is now at: Project ongoing</p>
<p>Lead organisation: North Yorkshire County Council</p> <p>Challenge: Improving the youth justice system.</p>	<p>This project looked at improving the youth justice system and engaged with a number of young people who had been through the system – and looked to develop ideas for change and improvement. However, when the ideas were presented internally it was decided not to take the project further.</p> <p>The individual interviewed is still seeking to use design-led techniques.</p> <p>Stage project is now at: Project team disbanded and activity stopped</p>

Lead organisation and challenge

Lead organisation:
Selby District Council

Challenge:
Creating Community Hubs.

Summary of what was undertaken

This project has been paused for some time, as they have been waiting for a consultation on the future of libraries to complete, but they have recently picked the project up again. The project team had conducted user research work with the community and undertaken a number of site visits to see some 'community hubs' in action. Some of this activity is likely to be repeated.

Stage project is now at:
Project ongoing

Lead organisation:
Sheffield City Council

Challenge:
How citizens can be involved with public services.

The team had some confusion on trying to put a project together initially, and stuck with working on this chosen theme but it had limited relevance to their day-to-day working. The team met a few times after the 90 days but the project activity petered out – and the contact that we managed to speak to moved to another role. One of the other individuals involved has also since left the council. Individual has sought to apply learning and techniques in new areas.

Stage project is now at:
Project team disbanded and activity stopped

Lead organisation:
Wakefield Council

Challenge:
Improving customer access to council services.

All three participants in the programme have now left the council – we managed to interview one of the team in their new organisation.

Their main focus was to reduce the number of contact lines available for citizens to access council services – they were seeking to rationalise 140 contact numbers. Before the team member left in June 2015, they had managed to save in the region of £58k. Savings were made, for example, from software savings, just by stopping some lines. (Project was aiming to save £550K.) The individual is applying learning in their new role.

Stage project is now at:
Project team disbanded and area of work picked up by others

Lead organisation:
West Yorkshire Police
Collaborating with VAL, Volition,
South Yorkshire NHS

Challenge:
Mental health in policing specifically looking at people in mental health crisis being placed into police custody.

The project team undertook some detailed video and interview work looking at the experience of being in police custody. The project was presented to the senior team and they agreed that they would seek to take it forward in some way, due to the complexity of working with multiple agencies. At the moment nothing is happening with regard to taking this work forward.

The individual involved is seeking to apply the learning in their role.

Stage project is now at:
Project team disbanded and activity stopped

Cohort 3 – South-east

Lead organisation and challenge

Lead organisation:
Brighton and Hove City Council

Challenge:
Digitalising Planning Services.

Summary of what was undertaken

This project was looking at developing mobile technology services across service areas. They looked at delivering mobile technology in a number of areas by undertaking more user research than they would have ordinarily. They have progressed to agreeing the funding for the pilot mobile technology and are looking at piloting it in a number of possible areas: Building Control, bailiffs, with councillors or children's services. It is hoped that this work and the user-led approach will be adopted as the council seeks to deliver a larger mobile platform, but this further work is not yet agreed.

Stage project at Aug 2015:
Project ongoing

Lead organisation:
East Sussex Council
Collaborating with five other District
Borough Councils, Brighton and Hove
City Council,

Challenge:
Streamlining customer contact.

This project is focusing on streamlining customer contact and is seeking to improve how queries are dealt with across a range of council services. They have completed initial insight work and have decided to focus on gathering staff views around the customer experience. Currently, they are testing and prototyping different elements and plan to engage customers as part of stage two. They have brought a number of partners on board with their project (who were not involved initially) and have spent time agreeing a joint vision. Their project team meet every four to six weeks and are seeking to roll out a range of activities, with associated measurement available by Autumn 2016.

Stage project at Aug 2015:
Project ongoing

Lead organisation and challenge

Lead organisation:

Hanover Housing Association

Challenge:

Becoming a more dementia-friendly organisation.

Summary of what was undertaken

Hanover wanted to work on two key problem areas - how to increase awareness and understanding of dementia in their organisation and what to do to support employees to meet the needs of people with dementia. They undertook extensive qualitative and quantitative research within their organisation and as a result developed an awareness campaign and have undertaken a lot of activity with staff, including a 'dementia discover day' in April. One aspect of their activity was to raise awareness of dementia among stakeholders and through one of their prototypes / pilots increased the number of dementia friends from 90 to more than 400. The team is now in the process of developing an overall service blueprint, drawing on everything that they have learned from the programme. (One team member has since left the organisation.)

Stage project at Aug 2015:

Project ongoing

Lead organisation:

West Sussex County Council

Challenge:

Improving services for those families with children with disabilities.

This project was seeking to work on piloting a collaborative commissioning process in relation to improving services for those families with children with disabilities.

Stage project at Aug 2015:

No interview conducted

Lead organisation:

Hart District Council

Challenge:

Digitalising parking services with a view to adopting these principles more widely in relation to other projects.

Undertook user research and considered options for change. Currently seeking to procure a new IT provider to bring the new online parking service online which should be operational by October 2015. Seeking to feed the learning into a larger three to five-year project, which will look at moving other more complex services online. Individual seeking to continually apply the learnings from this pilot.

Stage project at Aug 2015:

Project ongoing

Design Council has worked extensively on service and policy challenges in government and public bodies. Our aim is to build design capabilities in the public sector by introducing new tools into policy development and creating more effective, people-centred services.

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About Design Council

Design Council is an enterprising charity which improves people's lives through the use of design. Our work places design at the heart of stimulating business growth, helps to transform our public services and enhances places and cities to ensure a sustainable future for everyone. We advance new design thinking, encourage debate and inform government policy.

Registered charity number 272099