



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



MANCHESTER
CITY COUNCIL



**SOCIAL
FINANCE**

FAMILY CONTEXT – SHOW & TELL

PROJECT CONTEXT

PROJECT OVERVIEW

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Objective: Provide social workers with key information on what services are engaged with the child's family in a way that works across councils

Partners: Stockport, Leeds, Manchester, Social Finance and MHCLG's Local Digital Collaboration Unit

Funding: MHCLG's Local Digital Fund and the Christie Foundation – both funders are focused on supporting local authorities to create common solutions to shared problems



The number of children taken into care in England has reached a **25-year high**

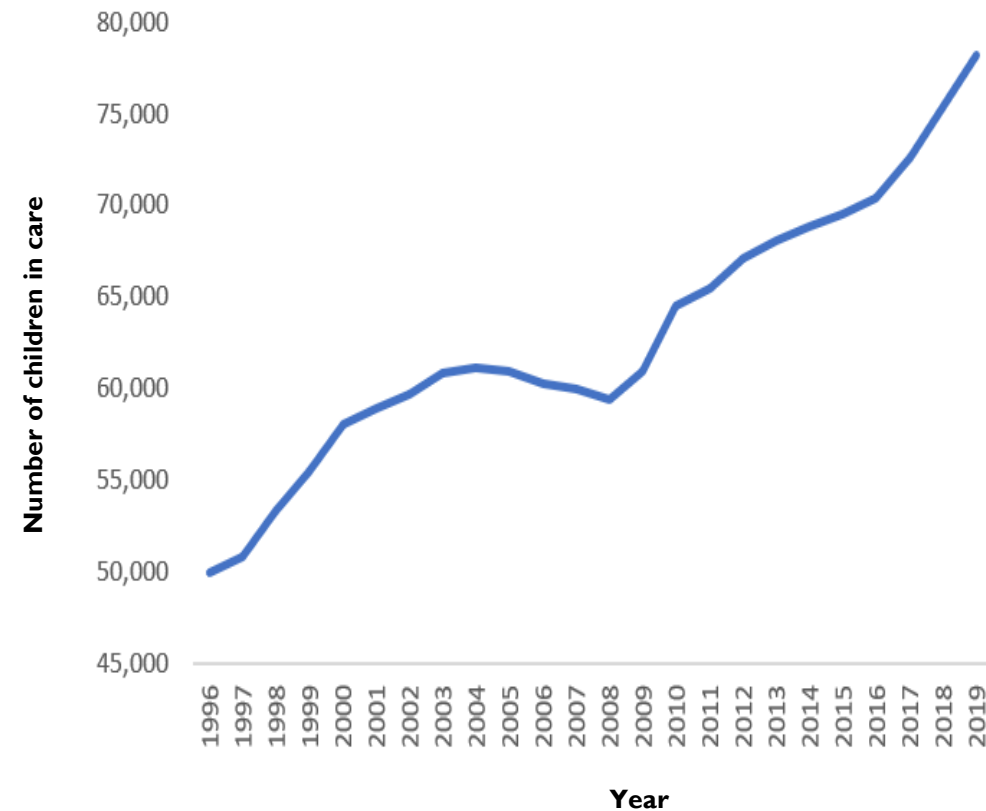
Children who experience the care system are some of the most disadvantaged in the country, with significantly lower outcomes in comparison to their peers. They are:

4x more likely to be involved in the Youth Justice system than their peers

5x more likely to face exclusion from school than their peers

40x more likely to become homeless than their peers

The increase in numbers of children in care



THE PROBLEM

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When social workers first interact with a family, they do not have easy access to key information. This includes the services that family members engage with. The consequences of this are:

- Social workers sometimes have **incomplete information** which can change decisions and outcomes.
- Social workers **waste time** chasing information, which they would prefer to spend with the family.



***“One piece of information can change the decision
for a family”***

- Chief Social Worker

We want to ensure that social workers always have the information they need so that:

- ✓ More young people are well looked after by their families and fewer end up in care
- ✓ Children are protected from harm even when no single service perceives significant risk
- ✓ Social workers are viewed by all families as people who really understand their circumstances and can support them

FAMILY CONTEXT THE SOLUTION

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Family Context is a digital tool that allows social workers to easily access service involvement information on relevant individuals to a child. It facilitates conversations with lead practitioners from other services, so that social workers can better **support families** and **safeguard children**.

The screenshot displays the 'Family Context' web application interface. At the top, the Leeds City Council logo and 'Family Context' title are visible, along with an 'End session' button. A blue banner indicates a beta service with a feedback link. The main content area is titled 'Details of individual' and includes a 'Back' link and a 'New search' button. The individual's details are listed in a table-like format: First name (Lisa), Family name (Williams), Date of Birth (29/08/1986), Age (33 years), Gender (Female), and Address (36 Fairfield Terrace, Bramley, Leeds, LS13 3DQ). Below this, the 'Details of service involvements' section is shown, with an 'Open all' link. It lists three categories: 'Adult Social Care' (Records Available, last updated 26/02/2020, covers 01/01/2010-20/02/2020), 'Housing' (Records Available, last updated 26/02/2020, covers 01/01/2010-20/02/2020), and 'Police' (Records Available, last updated 26/02/2020, covers 01/01/2010-20/02/2020). Each category has a plus sign icon to its right.

THE SERVICES INCLUDED IN FAMILY CONTEXT

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The 4 services included in the first release of the tool are:



Police data - This can help area social workers to quickly assess risk.



Housing data - This can identify important risks around a family and help support with other needs.



Adult Social Care data - This enables better coordination and joint working with a family.

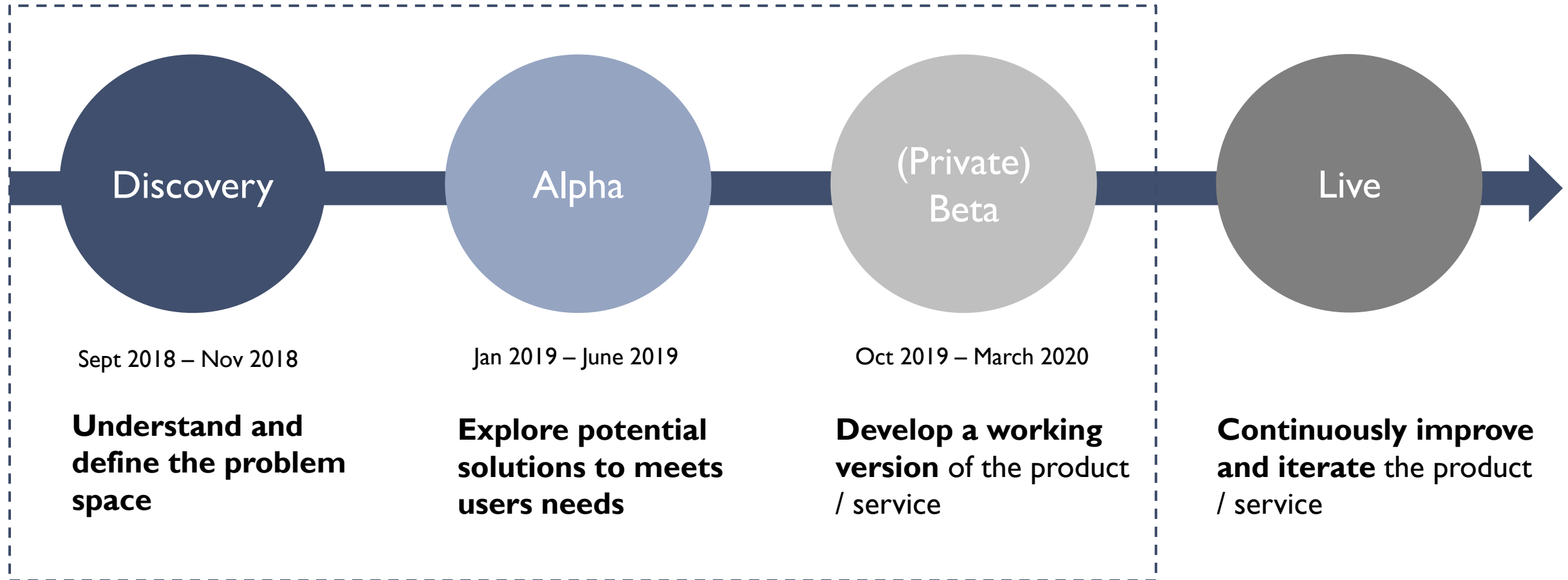


School data - This is considered the 'first port of call' by area social workers as Schools hold lots of relevant information in one place.

PROCESS

PROJECT ROADMAP

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- **Understanding needs** - conducted user research with 62 people from 5 different user groups
- **Testing and prioritisation** - identified the use case was strongest for social workers based on their needs, impact and feasibility
- **Assessing options for a solution** - created 3 mockups of tools and tested them with social workers

- **Refining understanding** - conducted user research with 23 social workers
- **Testing and iterating design concepts** - developed 4 prototypes ranging from low to high fidelity and tested them using synthetic and real cases
- **Assessing options for data** - evaluated the impact of providing data from 13 different services

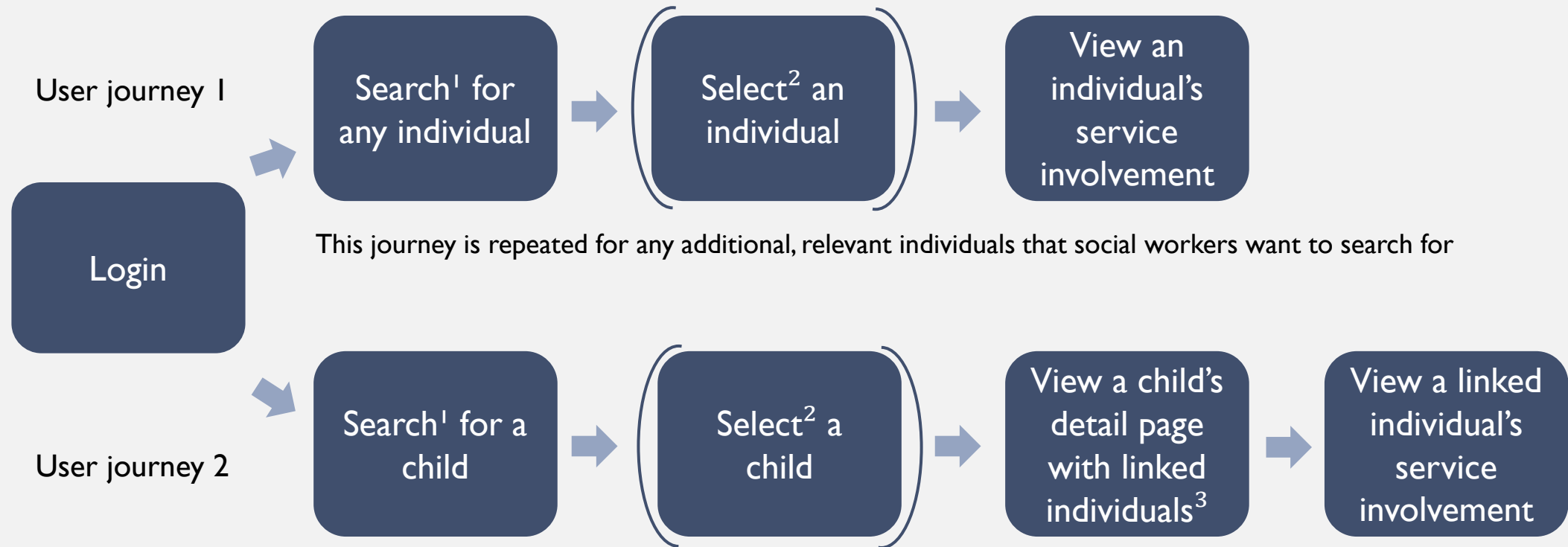
- **Identifying preferred user journey** - tested the 2 simplest potential user journeys to deliver service involvement information
- **Testing the usability** - assessed social workers' experiences with the prototype for the preferred user journey in their local authority
- **Accessing data sources** - received data from 4 different data sources
- **Developing the tool** - built a reference API and reference user interface

DEMONSTRATION

THE USER JOURNEYS

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For the MVP, we explored the 2 simplest potential user journeys, which delivered the service involvement information.



¹In each option, searching can be done by: (i) name; (ii) Case Management System ID; or (iii) a combination of the two.


²Selection does not take place when a search is made using a Case Management System ID because this causes a direct match.

³The list of suggested individuals in user journey 2 mirror those individuals that have been linked to the child in the Case Management System.

The two user journeys lend themselves to Family Context being a tool that could be scaled across multiple local authorities. They respect that there may be differences in terms of:

- **Children's Social Care practice** (e.g. the practice model and how social workers engage with families)
- **Technical infrastructure** (e.g. the technologies used, including the Case Management system)
- **Availability of data** (e.g. the information social workers record)

The decision on which user journey to implement would be left to each local authority, to leverage their knowledge about what would be most suited to their environment.



It was clear that a 'one size fits all' user journey would inhibit scaling; whereas, offering alternatives would allow for the potential of the Family Context tool to be adopted more widely.