



# Assessment Submission Form

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I declare that all material in this assessment is my own work except where there is clear acknowledgement and appropriate reference to the work of others.

Signed.....

Representing members of Group 20

Date ..... 07/12/2023

# **Building Legal Understanding: A User Centered Approach to Accessible Legal Aid In Ireland**

**By Group 20**

## Group 20 Members

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# Research & Requirement Gathering

# Overview

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The amalgamation of technology and user-centred design offers remarkable opportunities to address challenges such as accessibility issues and information gaps faced by individuals seeking legal assistance in the ever-changing realm of legal services. This project aims to develop an app for both international visitors and residents in Ireland so they can be aware and be ensured a thorough understanding of their civil and constitutional rights and facilitate access to affordable legal aid.

The solution offered here is also a way to address goal 16 of the 17 sustainable development goals drafted by the United Nations, which is to foster Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. This goal entails promoting the provision of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development while providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.).

## Background

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Navigating a foreign country's legal complexity can be a difficult and daunting task, especially for international civilians residing or visiting Ireland. And this is because concepts in different legal systems do not always map perfectly to each other whether it is in the structure of the judicial system or in the language (Allison, 2023). Access to legal aid is hampered by the complexities of civil and constitutional rights, as well as unfamiliarity with the Irish legal system. But apart from that people in general, frequently struggle to understand legal jargon. Non-lawyers find it difficult to understand legal language because it is perceived as specialised, technical, and elevated (Hahn, 2023). The excessive detail, complicated sentence structures and the use of specific legal terminology are part of any legal language which further complicates one's ability to comprehend and get familiar with what the law entails. And this is experienced by both nationals and non-nationals in any country.

Another issue that emerges from accessing legal assistance is the affordability of these services. For those with limited financial means, the cost of legal services becomes an enormous challenge and hindrance to accessing assistance and exercising their rights. Legal services in Ireland are prohibitively expensive, including consultations, representation, and court fees. Charges can be anywhere between 200 to 400 euros an hour and this makes access to justice a privilege rather than a right ("Few Practise Law for Fun, Fame or Philanthropy": Ireland's Legal Costs Problem," n.d.).

This affordability issue is felt strongly by a diverse range of people, including immigrants, low-income families, and marginalised communities, who may require legal assistance but are unable to bear the associated costs. This challenge has far-reaching consequences, affecting individuals' ability to defend their rights, seek justice, or navigate legal complexities in critical areas such as immigration, family law, and housing.

While there are state-funded services such as Legal Aid that exist to offer as the name suggests aid to those in need; the selection process is strict and these agencies are also overburdened with the amount of cases they need to deal with. (Vicious Cycle of Low Pay and Overwork Undermines Legal Aid, n.d.)

One such test - the means test which is used to determine eligibility for legal aid frequently focuses on income and assets, including other financial resources such as investments to assess if one really needs financial aid or can pay for their own representation. However, the eligibility only focuses on offering this service to those experiencing a serious charge. This traps those who do not qualify, experiencing what is deemed as not-so-serious charges while in uncertain financial situations. As a result, people experiencing complex legal issues may be forced to navigate the legal system without proper representation, risking unjust outcomes and perpetuating a cycle of legal disenfranchisement. (Citizensinformation.Ie, n.d.-b)

Addressing the affordability of legal services is critical to creating a more just and equitable legal system. Initiatives that seek to broaden the reach of legal aid, streamline the means test process, and raise awareness about available resources are critical steps towards removing barriers that prevent all people from having equal access to justice. While these are initiatives that must be addressed from a policy perspective by policymakers and Judiciaries, what can facilitate is improving access to information and resources, building knowledge, and increasing affordability through not-for-profit initiatives that reduce individual dependence on publicly funded resources at the initial level.

It is bearing this information and context in mind that this project recognises the need for an all-inclusive solution that bridges this knowledge gap while also facilitating affordable access to legal services.

## Project Scope

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The primary goal of this project is to create a user-centric app that serves as a comprehensive legal companion for people unfamiliar with the Irish legal system. The app aims to achieve four primary goals:

To provide clear and accessible information on civil and constitutional rights

Affordable legal aid options

Guidance through the legal system's complexities and nuances

Connecting with legal service providers

The app is designed with the specific needs of international visitors and residents in mind. Still, the non-discriminatory nature of the laws and bureaucracy itself ([citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie), n.d.) allows for this app to be employed as a valuable resource for everyone.

## Design Process and HCI Considerations

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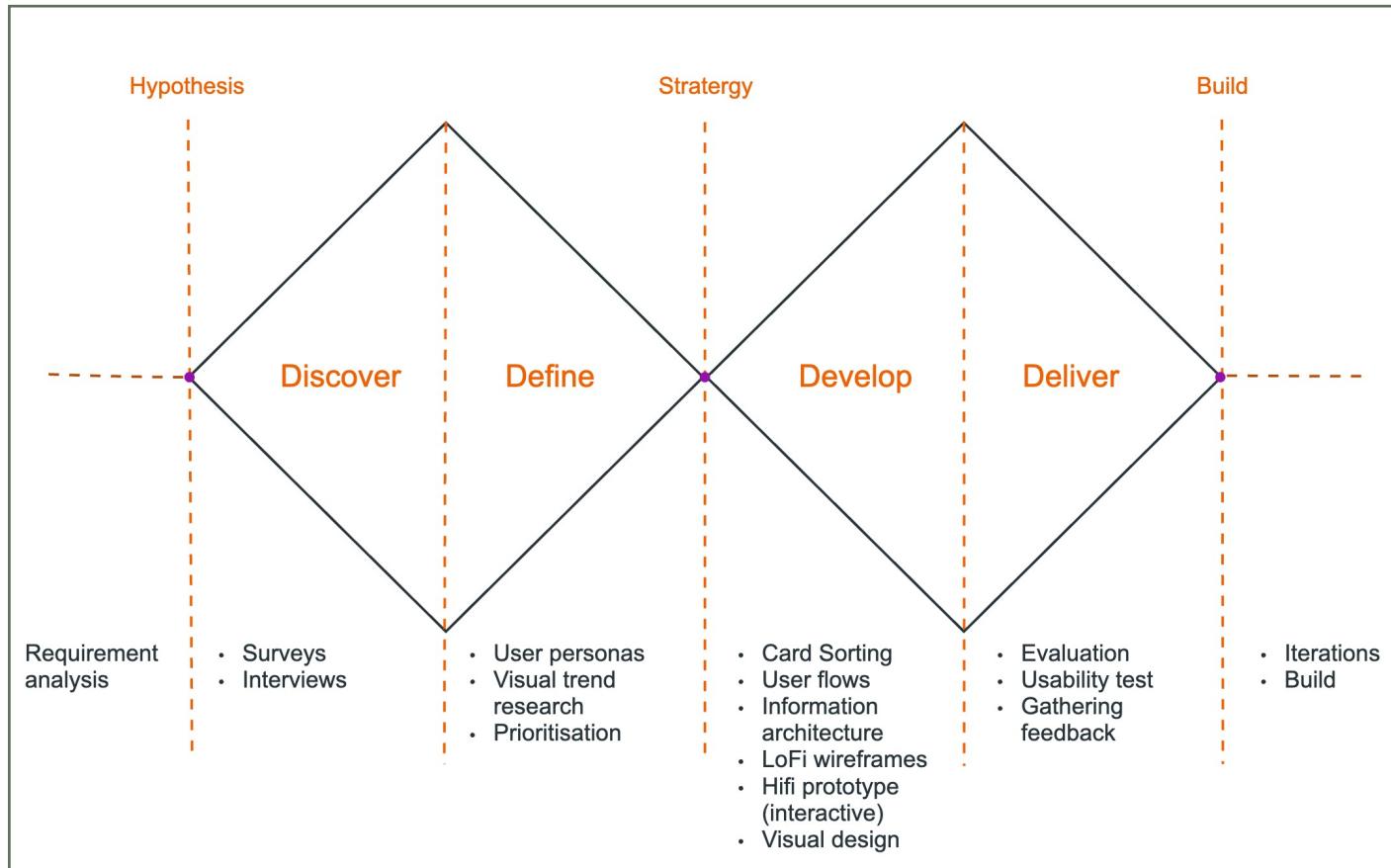
Since this project deals with very personal and human issues, it was important for us to employ an approach that prioritises the needs of our users and their experience. It is recommended that there is continuous user involvement in any software development life cycle (SDLC) for a successful system implementation. (Majid et al., 2009) It calls for not just considering functionality in design but also non-functional elements such as personal pains, culture, inhibitions etc. And with an issue such as the legal rights of an individual, it is impossible to ignore such empathetic criteria.

It is with this criterion in mind that we decide to use the Design Thinking framework to direct our process with the development of this app. It is our understanding from past learning and research that design thinking can be an essential methodology for creating an inclusive design that is iterative and uses a methodology that keeps the user at the core of the development. (“What Is Design Thinking?”), (Murauer, 2018).

Another aspect that guided us through our design process was the chapter on designing applications for mobile devices by Lupanda, I. S., & Janse van Rensburg, J. T. (2021). This chapter highlights popular HCI principles and design principles for mobile applications considering that the application we designed is meant for mobile use, the guidelines outlined here became the governing factor of our design methodology.

Through both these methodologies we utilised the following tools and aspects of HCI to define our process of creating a holistic user-centered app:

- Usability and accessibility
- User-centred design
- Information Architecture
- User flow
- Card Sorting
- Prototyping
- User feedback and Iterative design



*Fig 1 Double diamond illustration of our design process, (made by the team)*

## Discover

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In this phase, we aimed to understand our target users as well as explore the affordances and limitations of the Legal Aid Board that aims to offer legal assistance in civil cases under the Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 (Office of the Attorney General, n.d.). To do so we created a survey and conducted interviews & conversations with both a target audience and with a member of the Legal Aid Board.

The survey covered:

Aspects of their background - age, geographical origin and state, and language familiarity. The results were as follows:

- Age: 18- 45
- Geography Origin: China, India, Europe
- English Language Familiarity: Fluent and Fluent but not proficient (fig 2.1)
- Occupation: Students, Tech professionals & Finance professionals (fig 2.2, 2.3)

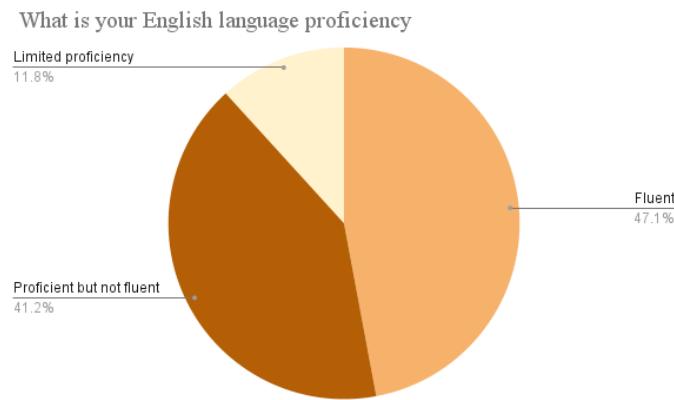


Fig 2.1 Survey graph: Language Proficiency

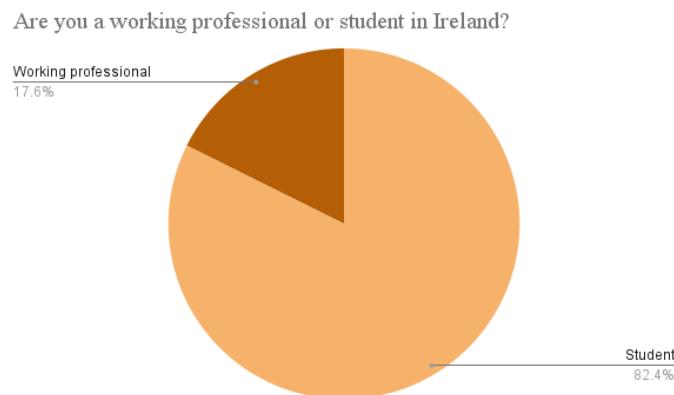


Fig 2.2 Survey graph: Occupation

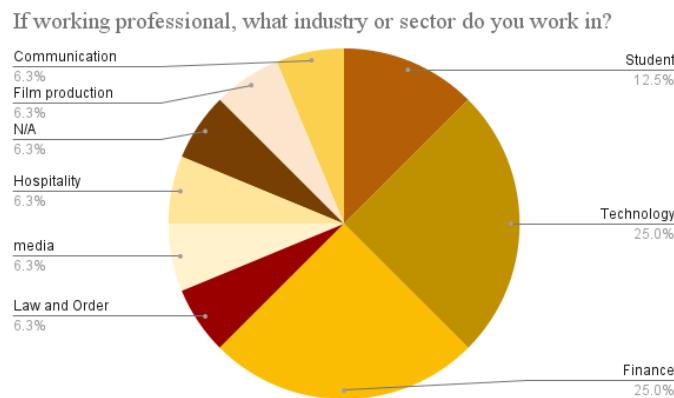
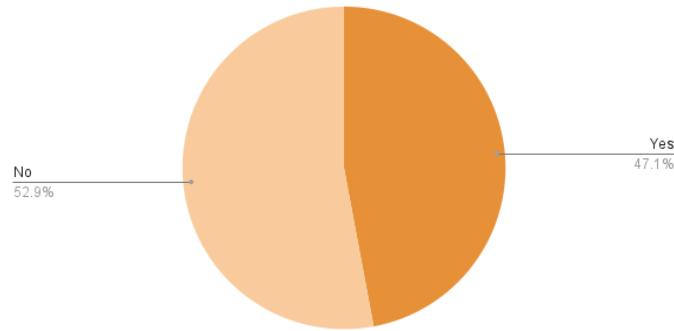


Fig 2.3 Survey graph: Occupation Sector

In the next set of questions we aimed to understand the necessity of an app that makes legal aid and knowledge more accessible and we found that:

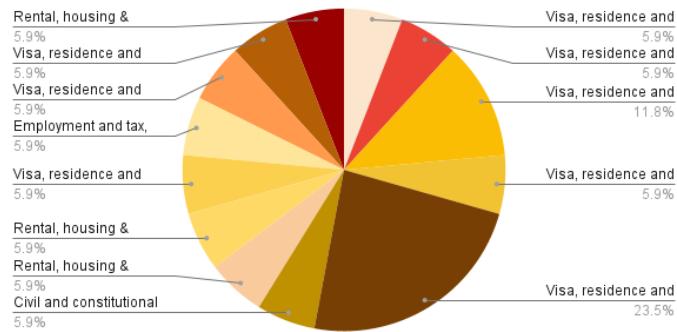
- 43.8% of responders needed some form of assistance. (Fig 3.1)
- Most of the areas where assistance was primarily needed were issues related to Visa and migration, Employment and Tax, and Housing and rental agreements among others. (Fig 3.2)

Have you ever needed legal advice or assistance while living in Ireland?



*Fig 2.4 Survey graph: App Necessity*

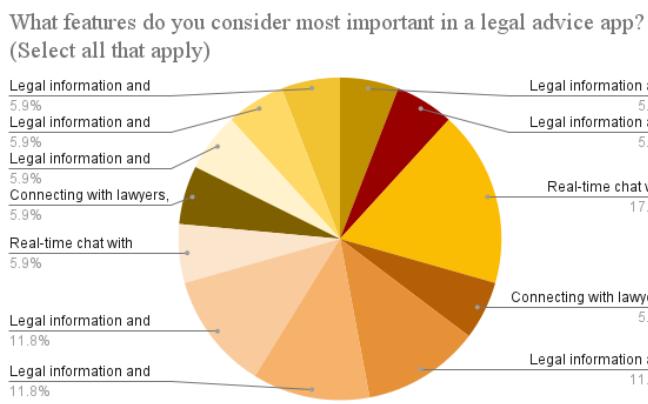
What legal issues or concerns do you typically need assistance with as an international civilian in Ireland? (Select all that apply)



*Fig 2.5 Survey graph: Legal Concerns*

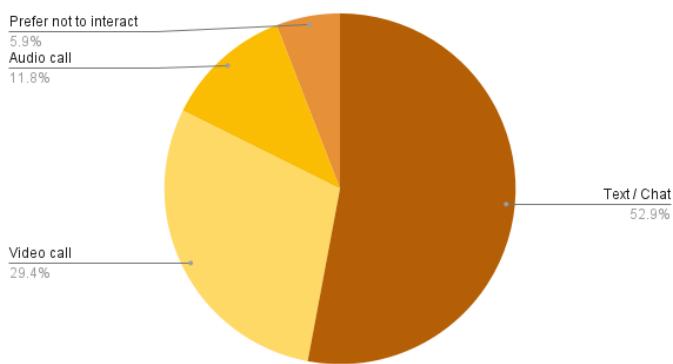
In the next set of questions, we tried to identify the features and design aspects that our users may want which gave us the base ground of features that we would have included in its interface. The key takeaways were:

- Information and resources (fig 4.1, 4.2)
- Language Translation
- Anonymous contacting for privacy issue
- Finding Lawyers
- Connecting with lawyers
  - Virtually via text, call, and video



*Fig 2.6 Survey graph: App Necessity*

How do you prefer to communicate with a lawyer through the app?



*Fig 2.7 Survey graph: Legal Concerns*

## Target Audience Interview Takeaway

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Following the survey we conducted an interview with a willing participant to understand issues they faced with respect to their housing contract. Our participant is post postgraduate student who had moved to Ireland from China.

They detailed pain points from their experience in finding adequate housing but especially pain points related to the legal implications of contracts or the lack thereof. Upon insistence from their landlord, our participant moved into the house without signing a contract even though requesting for one. This is because they were denied and even pressured into accepting the offer due to the implication of offer withdrawal if they insisted on having a legally binding contract. Considering that the accommodation came from the assurance of the reliable nature of the accommodation listing agency and referral, they felt okay with proceeding with the accommodation.

But the lack of a contract caused them many issues, including biased treatment, invasion of privacy, insufficient access to amenities such as heating which was promised during the initial conversations and the most serious of all untimely notice to evict when there was a dispute of the tenants staying in the house during the winter holiday festivities.

Based on these experiences the participant offered the following insights:

- Need for clarity in housing and contract rules
- More control and restraint on the actions of landlords will prevent such unethical practices
- Making contracts a requisite in any tenancy.
- Simplified presentation of information on legal implications of housing agreements such as language, infographics and video explanations for ease of understanding
- The presence of a community feature should there be technology or applications developed to address legal parameters such as housing contracts.

Our participant's experience further cemented the need for an app that considered non-functionality elements such as background, culture, and fear all of which had contributed to their decision-making.

## Legal Aid Board Interview Takeaway:

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Our conversion and further resources provided by a member of the research function from the Legal Aid Board gave us an understanding of the available assistance that can be found through the organisation. They are as follows:

The Legal Aid Board's activities are governed by legislation Civil Legal Aid Act 1995 and associated regulations. These legal frameworks outline the scope, eligibility criteria, and other aspects of legal aid provision.

The Legal Aid Board covers civil legal aid (divorce, child care, damages, contract breach, employment matters) and three of the four criminal legal aid schemes. These are non-statutory Criminal Legal Aid Schemes, namely: The Garda Station Legal Advice Revised Scheme. The Legal Aid – Custody Issues Scheme. The Criminal Assets Bureau Ad-hoc Legal Aid Scheme. (Criminal Legal Aid & Ad-hoc Schemes - Further Information, n.d.)

IP (internationally protected) clients approach the Legal Aid Board through various sources, including the International Protection Office, NGOs, and the Garda Síochána. Legislation guides the entitlement of IP clients to access the Board.

Accommodation to language restraints is addressed through leaflets in multiple languages available on the Legal Aid Board's website. The "Common Legal Problems" page outlines the main areas of work in an easily understood manner.

However, the legal aid board does not deal with small claims.

Services of the legal aid board are only offered to those who pass the eligibility check and have merits to their case.

We found the need to have such a conversation just so we could understand the current availability and limitations of publicly funded resources so we could better tailor the app to the needs of our target.

## Define User Personas

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Based on our interviews and survey findings we were able to create our user personas.



# Maya Iyer

Marketing Specialist

Age: 35 years	Nationality: Indian
Sex: Female	Education: Graduate
Marital status: Married	Occupation: Graphic Designer

## BIOGRAPHY

Maya moved to Dublin with her husband, who is working in the tech industry, about two years ago. She moved here as a student of Visual Design at a graduate level. While they are both comfortable in new places, they find themselves in a new country, navigating various aspects of life, including understanding legal systems with respect to employment housing, and ensuring their visas are in order.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Maya is keen on understanding the legal systems in Ireland, particularly in areas related to visas and employment laws, to ensure compliance and make informed decisions.
- Maya is in the process of searching for a permanent residence. She wants to understand Irish housing laws, rental agreements, and tenant rights to secure stable housing for her and her husband.

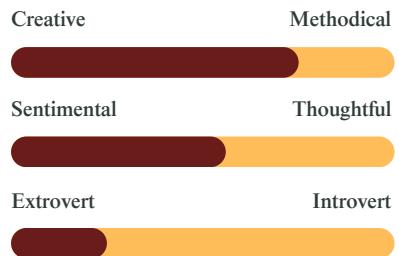
## CHALLENGES

- Cultural Unfamiliarity: Maya is adjusting to the cultural landscape and nuances of Ireland, and owing to her introvertedness is underconfident in navigating visa and employment law issues.
- Her unfamiliarity with the judicial system and jargon also makes her research with online sources difficult to navigate.

## TASTES AND HOBBIES



## PERSONALITY



## TECHNOLOGY FAMILIARITY

Maya is tech-savvy and relies on her smartphone for most daily tasks. She prefers apps that are user-friendly, visually appealing, and provide clear information.

## MOTIVATIONS

Maya is motivated by the desire for stability, both in terms of her legal status in Ireland and her housing situation. She is driven to build a successful career while ensuring a comfortable life for herself and her husband in their new home.

## EXPECTATIONS FROM THE SOLUTION

She values resources that simplify legal information, offer guidance on housing matters, and provide insights into career advancement opportunities. An app that addresses her specific concerns, is user-friendly, and respects her time constraints would greatly support her in her journey of settling down in Ireland.



# Ivan Polunin

Pharmacist

Age: 30 years

Nationality: Ukrainian

Sex: Male

Education: Graduate

Marital status: Single

Occupation: Pharmacist

## BIOGRAPHY

Ivan is a Ukrainian refugee who sought asylum in Ireland due to the ongoing war in his home country. He arrived in Dublin six months ago and is currently navigating the challenges of establishing a new life in a foreign land. Having worked as a pharmacist in Ukraine Ivan is determined to rebuild his life and contribute to his new community.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Ivan's primary goal is to secure legal stability in Ireland. Understanding his rights, obligations, and the asylum process is crucial to him.
- is eager to find employment in Ireland. Understanding his rights in the Irish job market and understanding how he can find employment under his visa status

## CHALLENGES

- Ivan is proficient in Ukrainian and English, but he is not fluent and the legal and bureaucratic language in Ireland can be challenging. Simplified and translated information would greatly assist him.
- As a refugee, Ivan faces financial constraints, making it challenging to afford legal representation or support services.

## TASTES AND HOBBIES



HIKING



MUSIC



SOCIALISATION



READING



ACTIVISM

## PERSONALITY

Creative



Sentimental



Extrovert



## TECHNOLOGY FAMILIARITY

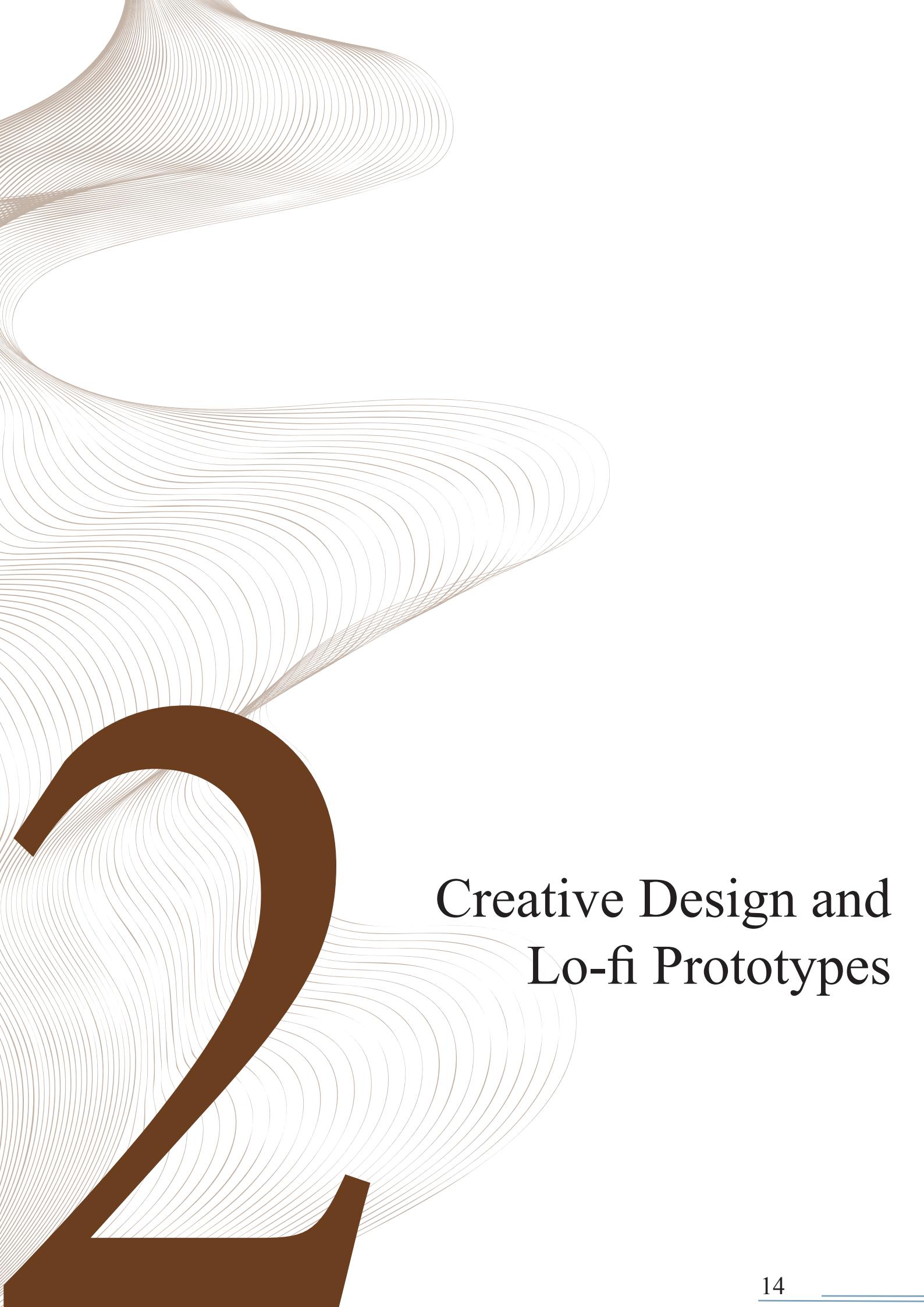
Ivan has a smartphone that he uses for communication and accessing essential information. An app that is user-friendly and provides valuable legal information in his native language would be highly beneficial.

## MOTIVATIONS

Ivan is motivated by the desire to rebuild his life in Ireland. He seeks stability, both legally and personally, and is eager to contribute to his new community through employment and community engagement.

## EXPECTATIONS FROM THE SOLUTION

Ivan is a resilient and determined individual navigating the complexities of starting afresh in a foreign country. He values resources that simplify legal information, provide guidance, visa and employment and foster a sense of community. An app that addresses his specific concerns, respects cultural differences, and offers a supportive network would greatly assist him.

The background features a large, abstract graphic element on the left side. It consists of numerous thin, light brown wavy lines that curve from the bottom left towards the top right. Superimposed on this graphic is a large, bold, dark brown number '2'. The '2' is oriented vertically, with its top curve pointing upwards and its bottom curve pointing downwards.

## Creative Design and Lo-fi Prototypes

# Develop: Card Sorting

Having secured our data from the survey results and visualised our user audience. We took to identifying all the features and elements we wanted in our app so as to better understand how to sketch our Lo-fi prototype. So for this, we decided to conduct a card sorting exercise amongst ourselves. Card sorting can be a really useful methodology to inform the development of information architecture, determine hierarchy in applications, and organize displays and controls on interfaces. (Baxter, 2015) As we aimed to create a navigation structure that would be most natural for our users and to make their experience using the app better, we felt this exercise would be insightful to us.

We chose the closed card sorting method because we already had our main categories from section 3 of our survey. We identified the following features necessary and that we wanted to include in the interface of our app.



Fig 3 Card Sorting Activity (made by the team)

# User Flow

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We decided to map a user flow as it is the path that a user takes while navigating through a website or application is referred to as user flow. It describes the steps and interactions that a user takes to complete a specific task or goal. (Goel et al., 2022) This would help us visualise the potential way in which our users interact and navigate the app.

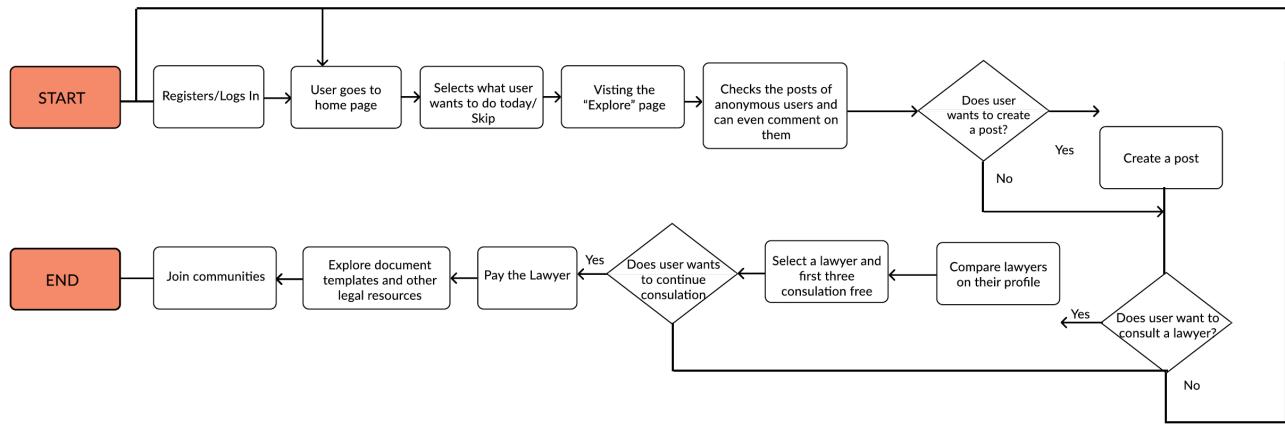


Fig 4 User Flow Chart (made by the team)

# Information Architecture

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Information architecture in design is essentially the organization and structure of information within a system or application. It involves the arrangement and labelling of content, navigation, and interaction design to ensure that users can easily find and understand the information they need. (Hannah, 2023)

We are designing the information architecture so we can create a seamless experience for our users navigating through the app.

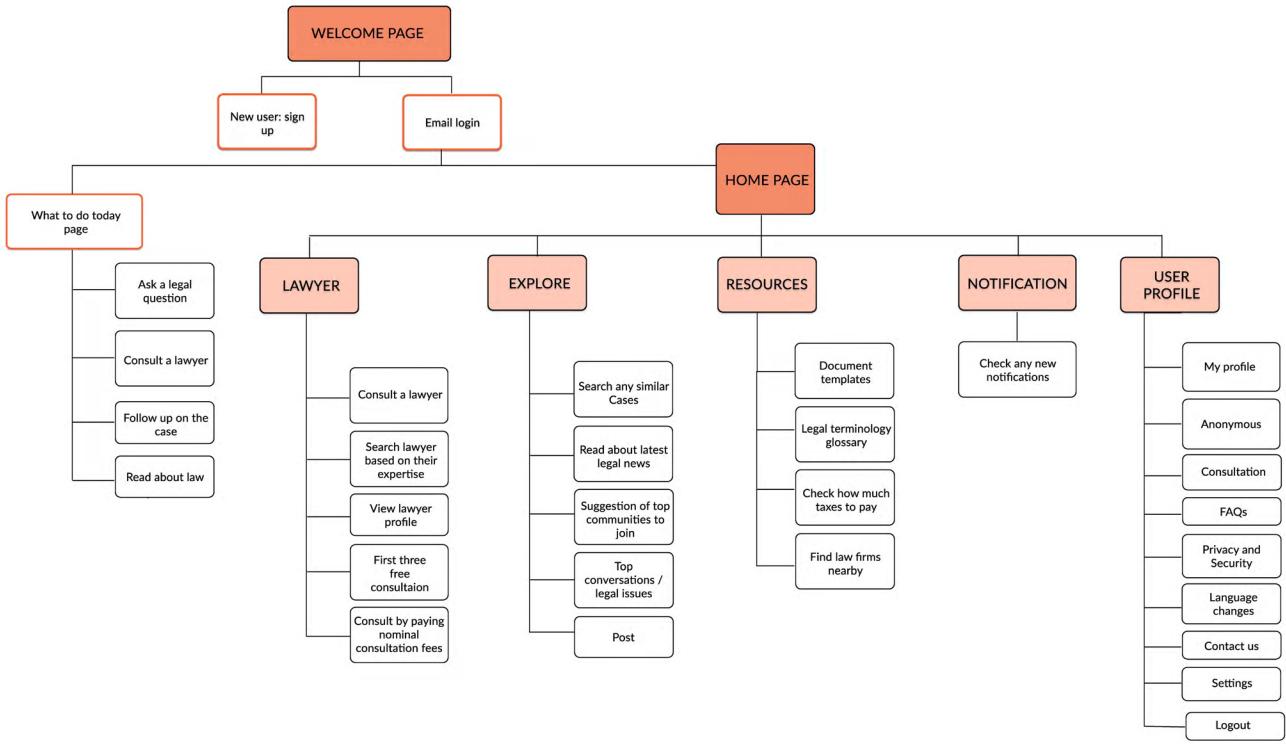


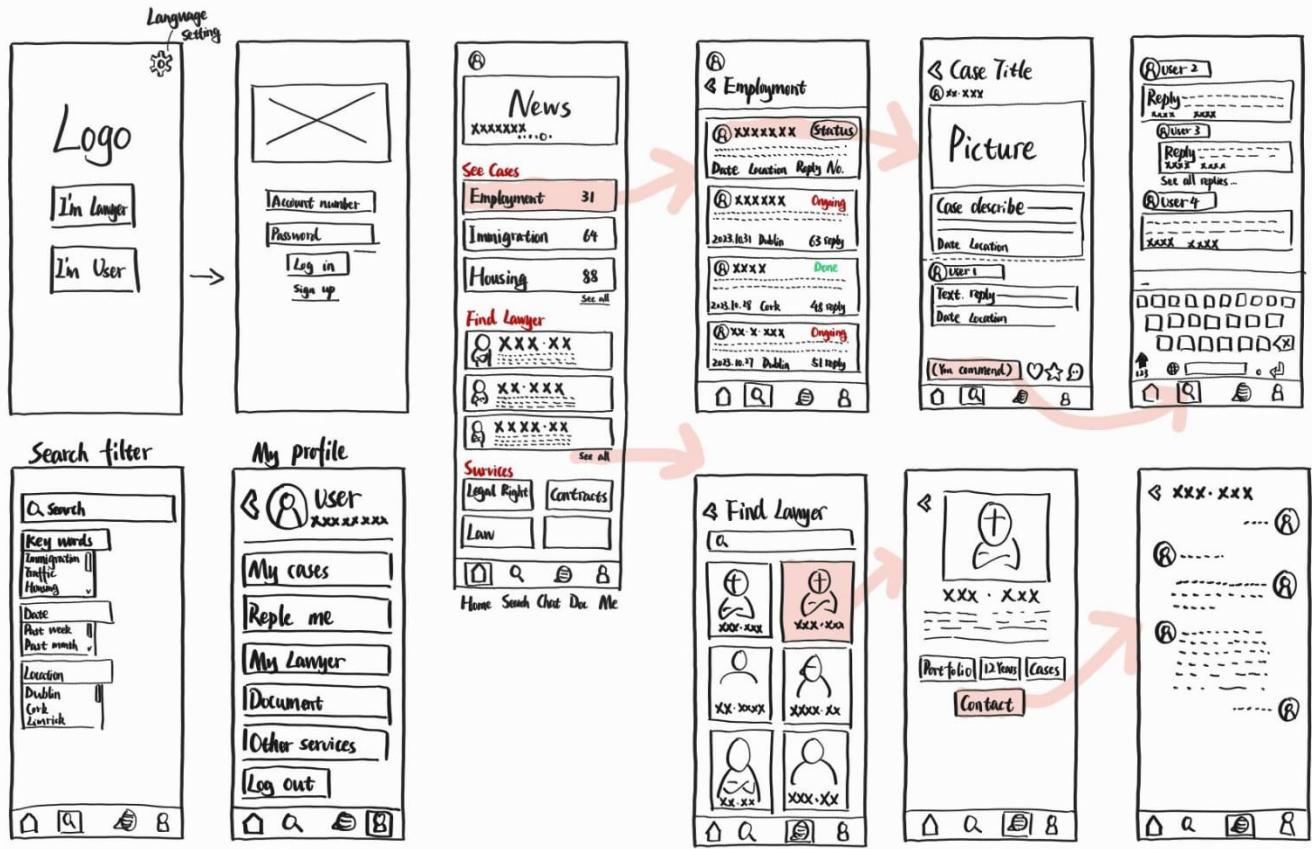
Fig 5 Information Architecture (made by the team)

## Prototyping

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Based on what we identified during the Card-Sorting process, User Flow and Information Architecture, we began designing our Lo-fi prototypes. To do so we split ourselves into two groups to come up with two versions of the Lo-fi prototypes that stemmed from our interpretations of the requirements.

# Lo-fi Prototype 1



This was our first Lo-fi prototype. And the team working on this was inspired by the community and support segment of our card-sorting activity. With this, we envisioned a community-driven post-comment system within the app where users can share their legal concerns, seek advice, and receive insights from others who may have experienced similar situations.

We tried to have a forum-like system where community members can articulate their concerns, and get insights, resources and advice from fellow community members. This would also allow them to get an informed perspective on their situation or one similar to theirs by other legal professionals lending their voice to the discussion.

The idea behind the community space was also to offer a preliminary space for information gathering. The community-driven approach would allow for different perspectives and make legal insights more accessible, particularly for those who may be hesitant to immediately contact a lawyer.

Apart from this, prototype 1 also has features such as:

- Sign-up page
- Finding a lawyer
- Navigating through lawyer profiles that would highlight their expertise, experience, and availability using a streamlined interface.
- A chat feature with said lawyer who can give you advice on your situation.
- Searching for precedences with filters such as case subject (employment, housing etc.)
- Current news in the field
- Legal Resources such as document templates, law terms etc.
- Language setting/translation

# User Story

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## Maya:

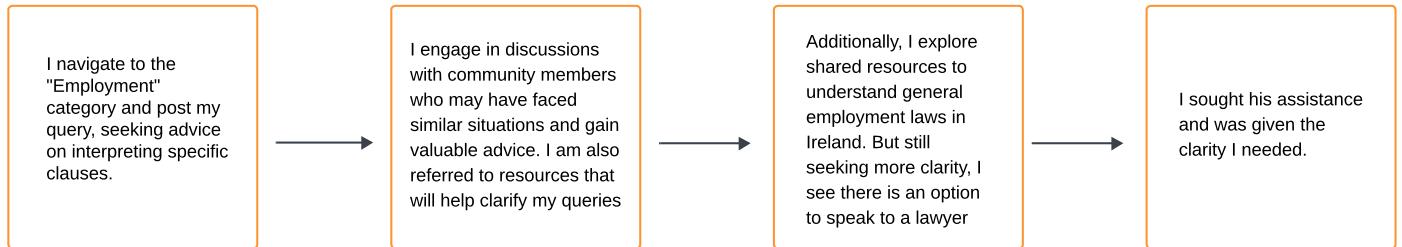
I want to post my housing-related legal concerns on the app's community forum feature.



By engaging with the community and accessing shared resources, I aim to make informed decisions regarding my housing situation.

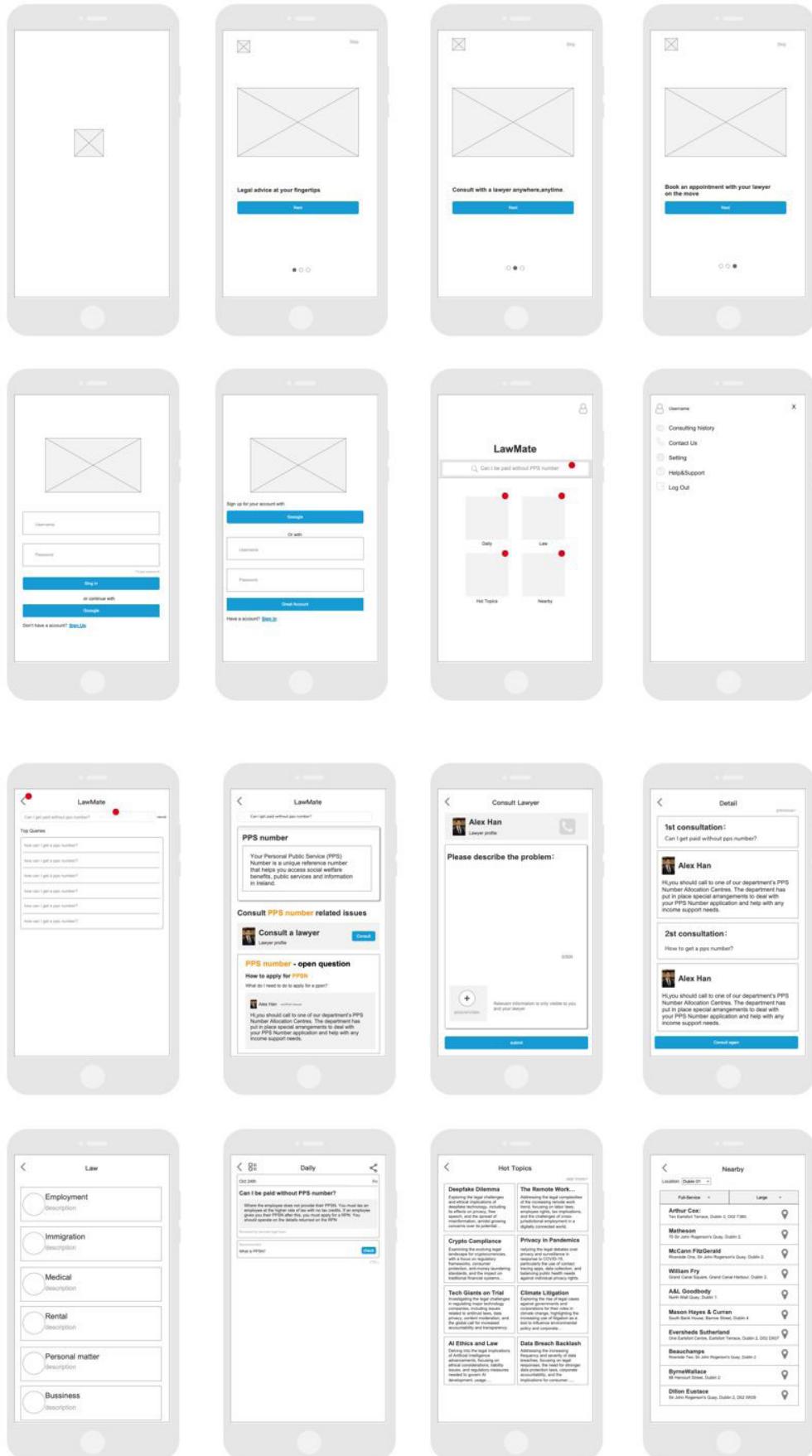
## Ivan:

I want to utilize the app's community forum feature to gain insights into employment contract terms in Ireland especially due to my visa status as an asylum seeker.



Through this process, I aim to make informed decisions about the job offer and navigate employment-related legalities with confidence.

# Lo-fi Prototype 2



The team working on Lo-fi prototype 2 was inspired by the connecting with lawyers segment of the card sorting process and aimed to develop a communication mechanism that needs to be established between the user and legal service provider.

The design is centred on facilitating effective communication between legal professionals and users seeking assistance.

We envisioned a service where users could connect with lawyers or consultants based on their concerns. The app would suggest lawyers who had relevant experience in the legal field of the user's problem and Users could easily navigate through these suggested profiles and establish contact with their lawyer of choice. This would allow for a higher rate of success in establishing a better fit and seamless connection between those in need of legal advice and professionals who can provide it.

The feature was further extended to monetize consultation at a subsidised rate to the market fee of a lawyer where as opposed to a no-limits chat feature, a person seeking advice would be allowed three free interactions to understand the lawyer/consultant's approach to helping them with their issue. This would allow users to weigh their options and make an informed decision about whose service they'd like to employ in working through their issue.

Apart from this, prototype 2 also has features such as:

- Marketing slides that summarised the core functioning of the app
- Sign-up page
- Hot topics, or frequently asked assistance on specific subject matter
- Current news in the field
- Legal knowledge glossary
- Finding a legal service based on location
- Search feature

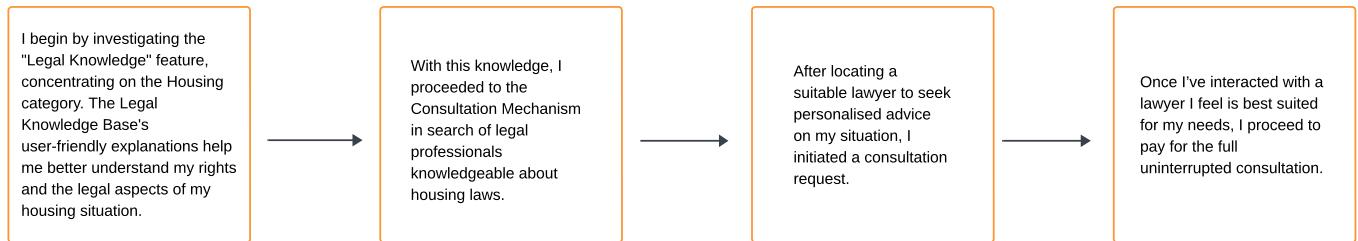
## User Story

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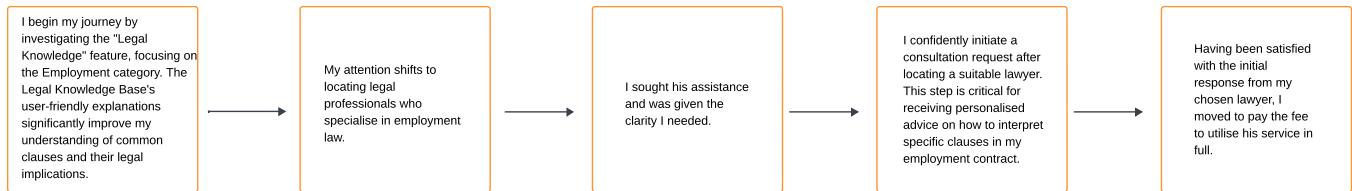
### Maya:

I want to sublet an apartment in Dublin but I need to familiarize myself as the process is different to my home country. So I aim to use the app to learn more about my housing-related legal concerns.



Ivan:

My goal is to use the app to gain insight into the employment contract terms, especially concerning my visa status for my new job opportunity.



## Lo-fi 1 vs Lo-fi 2

We had two users test the prototypes and access its features, which allowed us to determine the pros and cons of the application

### Lo-fi 1

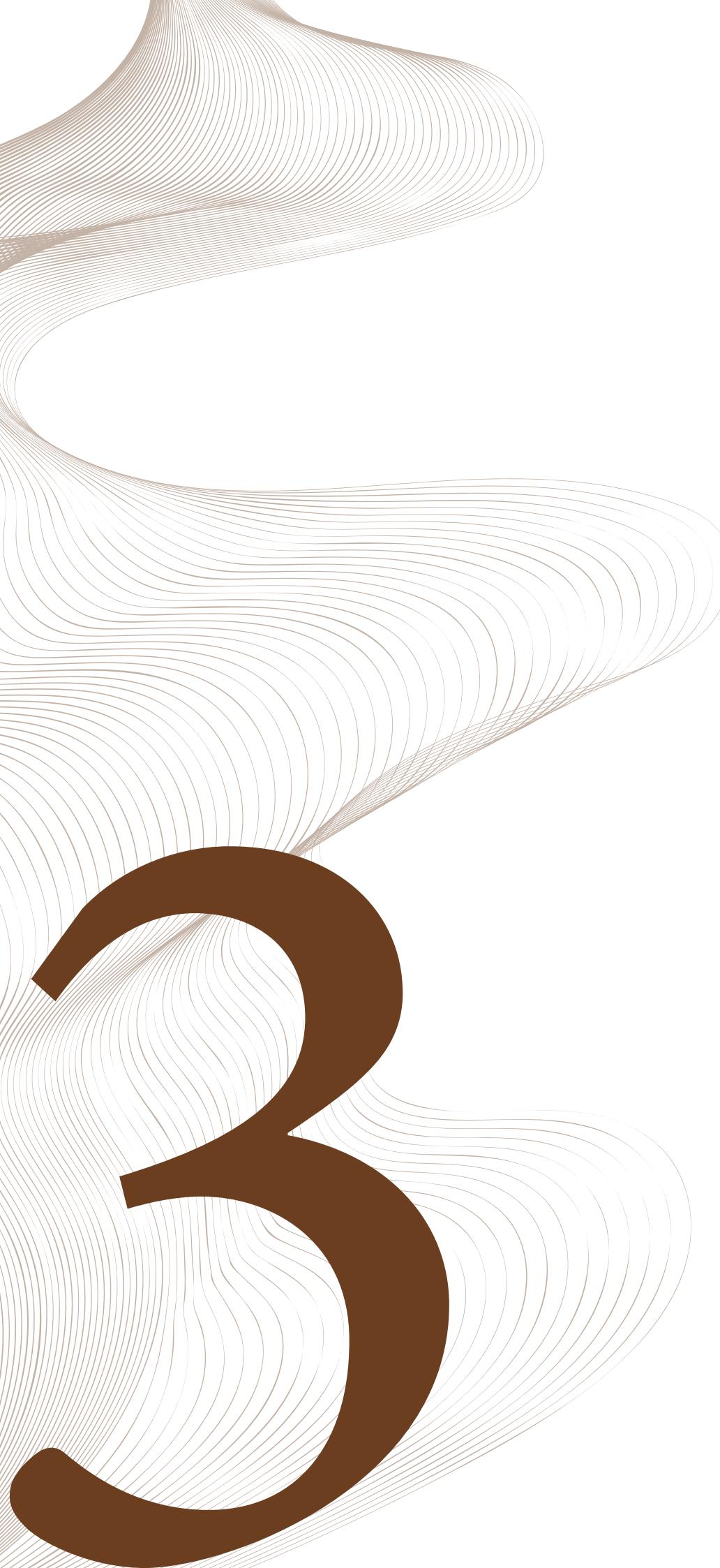
Advantages	Disadvantages
Community engagement through the forum	Concerns with harassment from other posters
Lawyer or consultant profile that allows for a better understanding of their expertise	Exploitation of lawyers' time without clear intentions from the user's side
Language setting/translation allows for increased accessibility and inclusivity	Concerns with privacy on posting issues publicly
More comprehensive legal resource library	Misleading advice from ignorant community members
Search filters for specific results	

Table 1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Lo-fi 1 (made by the team)

## Lo-fi 2

Advantages	Disadvantages
Marketing hook to reassure potential users	Lack of accessibility accommodation such as translation
Cleaner design aesthetic	Concerns with privacy on posting issues publicly
The communication mechanism (3 free consultations/month) protects both the user and the lawyer.- Allows the user to make a better judgement of their lawyer. Protects the lawyers' time.	
Case-specific Legal glossary	
Hot topics that immediately allow for information and inspiration for solutions to commonly faced issues	
Legal fees, even if small incentivise lawyer performance	
Finding a legal service based on location	

*Table 1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Lo-fi 2 (made by the team)*



Hi-fi  
Prototype

# Hi-fi Prototype

---

The designs of both Lo-fi prototypes 1 and 2 imagined the app as more than just an information hub but rather a collaborative ecosystem where legal insights and support from both users and legal communities converged. And this essentially becomes the ethos of the app.

While the features from Lo-fi prototype 1 addressed many issues and had the potential to address many aspects of the spectrum of legal issues one can face, Lo-fi prototype 2 had some unique features that made the app holistic and protected both lawyers and users.

So for our Hi-fi prototype, we decided to combine features of both the Lo-fi prototypes and make a third Lo-fi rendition of our ideas. We also noticed that the key issue of privacy was not addressed in either of the two prototypes so that was added in this one.

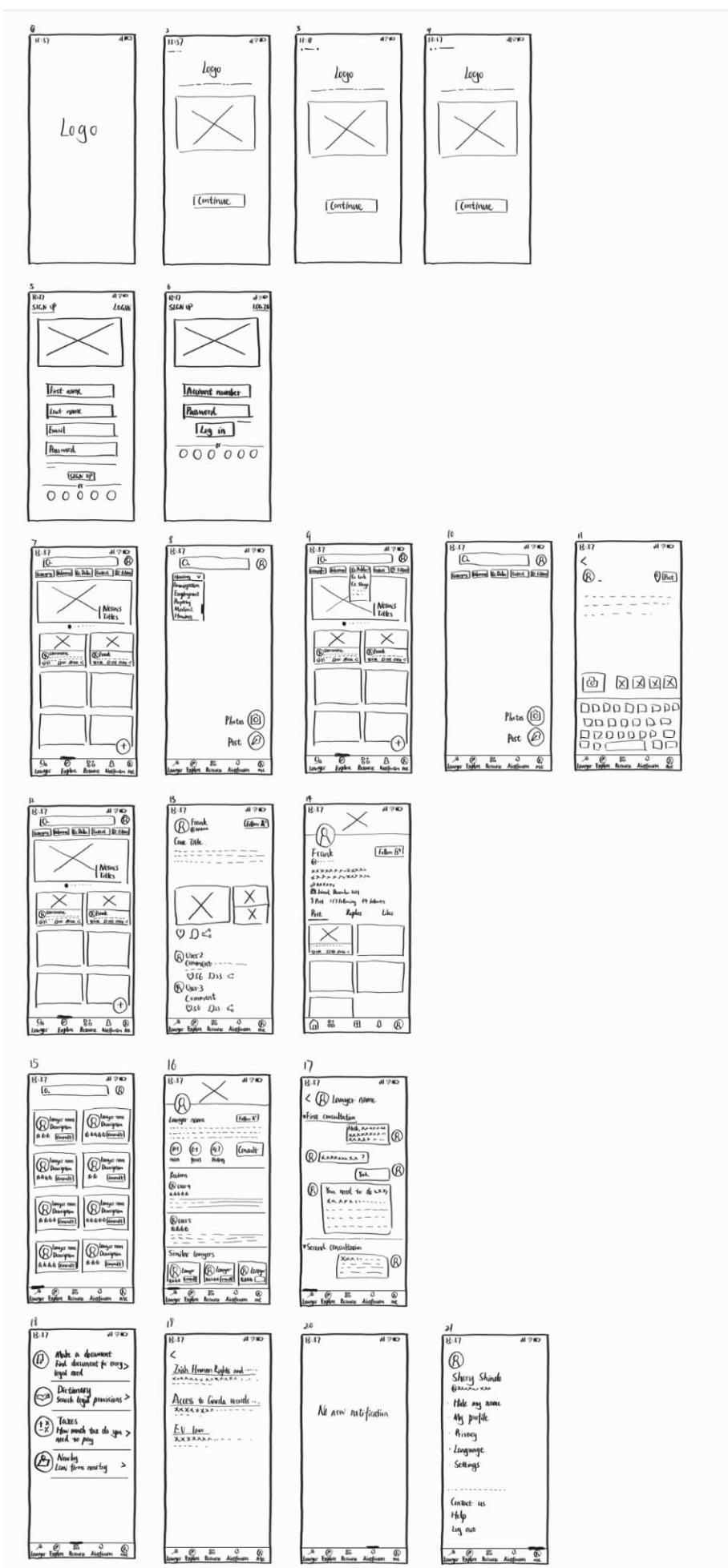
Considering this the final prototype had the following features:

- Marketing slides summarising app services
- Sign up or Login page
- Search bar
- Search filters: Location, topic, relevance, date
- Write/ post your question or case
- Community forum- post-comment system
- User profile- Anonymous posting and identity
- Lawyer profile
- Chat feature with end-to-end encryption to protect privacy
- 3 times free and then the paid consultation scheme
- Resources section- Document templates, Legal glossary, Find a legal service near me
- Personal settings page- Logout, profile, anonymity settings, app display settings, language settings, privacy consent,
- App developers details- Contact details, help

We have attached below the images of our Hi-fi prototype. But you may access the interactive prototype [here](#) or at this link:

<https://www.figma.com/proto/XSs140Z5r68NE9I2dRzxQv/Lawmate-Final-App?-type=design&node-id=0-21&t=ibivNRj7rpvdpc4O-1&scaling=min-zoom&page-id=0%3A1&starting-point-node-id=0%3A21&mode=design>

# Lo-fi Wireframe of Hi-fi Prototype



13: 37



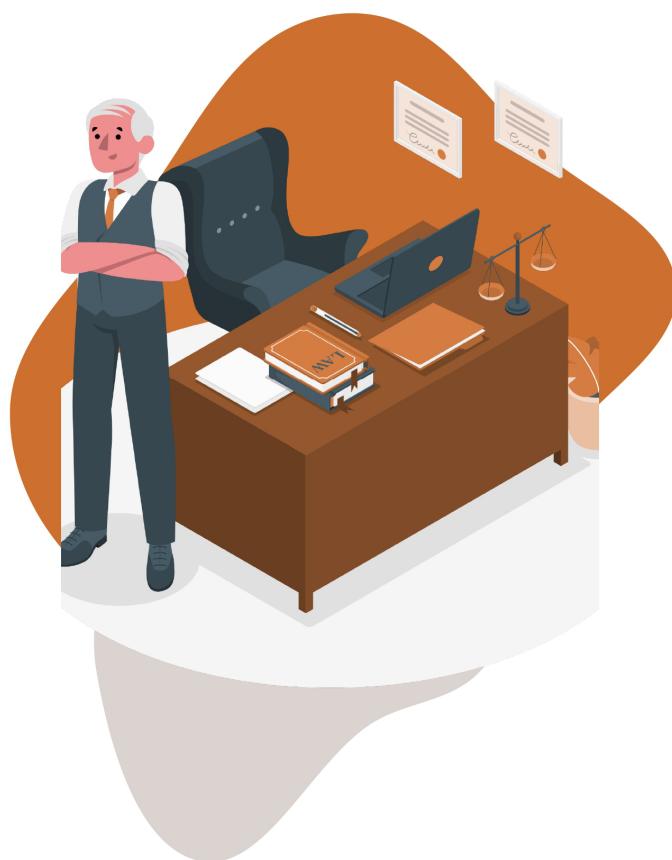
13: 37



Skip >



## Ask Legal Questions



Continue



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Skip >



Consult a lawyer  
anytime and anywhere



Continue

• • •

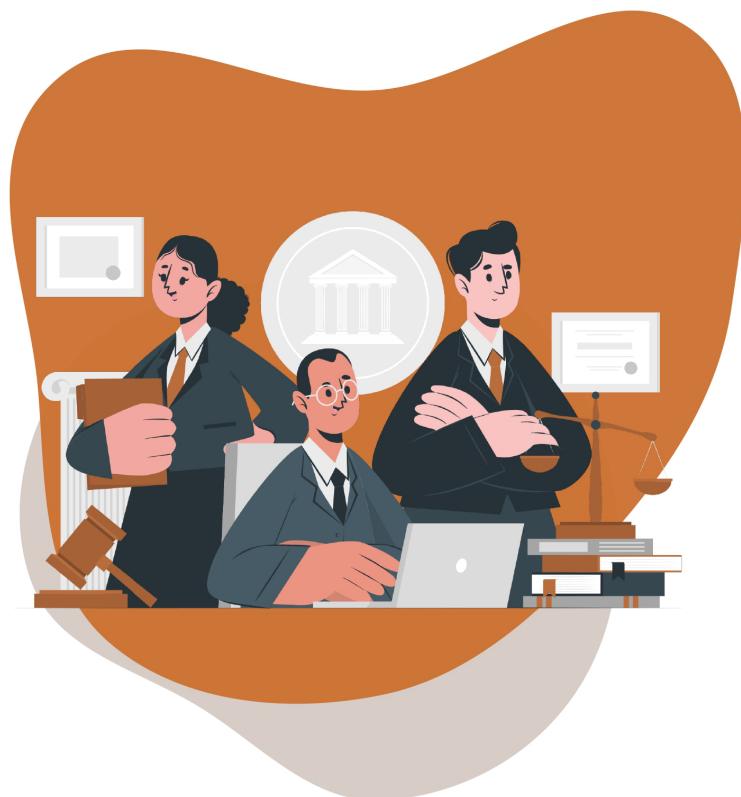
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Skip >



Book an appointment with the  
lawyer on the move



Sign up

Login





## Create Account

To get started

First name

Last name

Email

Password

Must be 8 or more characters and contain 1 number and 1 special character

**SIGN UP**

Already a member? [Login now](#)

Conversations on Lawmate are anonymous and encrypted



13: 37



## Welcome back

Enter your credentials to login

Email

Password

[Forgot Password?](#)

**LOGIN**

Don't have an account? [Sign up now](#)

Conversations on Lawmate are anonymous and encrypted





## What do you want to do today?

Ask a legal question >

Consult a lawyer >

Follow up on your case >

Read about a law >

SKIP

Remember: Your anonymity is our priority



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Housing ▾

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### Top Conversations



Namaphyte

Dear Lawmates, i've been looking for a house in the Cork region. Finally found one but the lawyer is saying that I must share the apartment with a roommate. I earn well, and I can afford to pay for the entire apartment myself. Has anyone come across such issue before?  
#HousingRights #HousinginCork

♡ 2857

O 241

👁 2.1K



3hrs ago



Couserty

<https://www.irishlegal.com/articles/views-sought-on-making-asbos-easier-to-obtain-in-northern-ireland>



♡ 23

O 2

👁 400



13 Oct 23



Fishfingers

Somebody needs to address the workplace discrimination in this country. Watch the news at the moment and it says women still make up 1% of engineers in the country. Who knows what laws are in place for recruitment processes?

♡ 857

O 141

👁 1.1K



Oct 23



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## ← Conversations

**Namaphyte**

@namaphyte7

[Follow](#)

Dear Lawmates, i've been looking for a house in the Cork region. Finally found one but the lawyer is saying that I must share the apartment with a roommate. I earn well, and I can afford to pay for the entire apartment myself. Has anyone come across such issue before?  
#HousingRights #HousinginCork



13 Oct 23 | 1:46pm



2.1K views



2857 likes



241 comments



Liked by botyfd, dayl\_78, grandy6



iCharly @icharlosb9n

Discrimination has no place in housing! @namaphyte7's story is a reminder of why we need to fight for fair housing...

56 23 Reply



Jams Bread @jamswh4e

We need better support systems. It's appalling that one needs to fight for basic needs.

16 12 Reply



Zeallllly @zeallllly

Discrimination has no place in housing! This happened to me the other time. I had to get a letter from a lawyer threatening to sue before I was allowed to rent the house by myself.

56 23 Reply



Why Oh @whyohwhhy

This is funny but not funny

16 12 Reply



Funny Cat @funnycat

Dear @namaphyte7, I'm so sorry this is happening to you. Is there a way you can look for another house. Try and speak to the landlord after some time and see if he will change his mind

56 23 Reply



Why Oh @whyohwhhy

This is funny but not funny

16 12 Reply

Add a comment...



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Find cases similar to yours



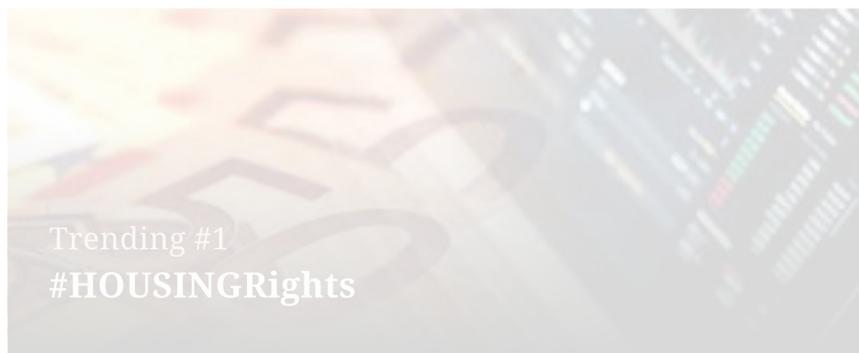
Trending

Housing

Dublin 09

Latest

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## Top Communities

Housing in Ireland \*11k members

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## Top Conversations



Namaphyte

Dear Lawmates, I've been looking for a house in the Cork region. Finally found one but the lawyer is saying that I must share the apartment with a roommate. I earn well, and I can afford to pay for the entire apartment myself. Has anyone come across such issue before? #HousingRights #HousinginCork

2857

241

2.1K

0

3hrs ago



Couserty

<https://www.irishlegal.com/articles/views-sought-on-making-asbos-easier-to-obtain-in-northern-ireland>



23

2

400

0

13 Oct 23

Photos



Fishfingers

Somebody needs to address the workplace discrimination in this country. We saw it in the news at the moment and it says women still make up 1% of engineers in this country. Who knows what laws are in place for recruitment processes?

857

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1.1K

0

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Post



What's on your mind?

0/1500 words



Or speak to a lawyer

q w e r t y u i o p

a s d f g h j k l



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m



123



space

return



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## Consult a Lawyer



Get professional help  
3 free consultations per month  
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Get representation

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The lawyer was really awesome and affordable. He responded promptly and followed my case to the end.

This app is the real deal!

@shim\_cat

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Search specializations



Sam Maxwell

Housing, Property and rental  
Experience: 6 years

2718 users

Consult



Oliver Sterling

Criminal Defense Lawyer  
Experience: 9+ years

3882 users

Consult



Caen Blue

Civil Rights Lawyer  
Experience: 6 years

818 users

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Laura Glen

Housing, Property and rental  
Experience: 7 years

567 users

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Clara Samuel

Divorce Lawyer  
Experience: 9+ years

2314 users

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Tom Hammer

Intellectual Property  
Experience: 4 years

5667 users

Consult



Mitchel Sam

Housing, Property and rental  
Experience: 3 years

673 users

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Sam Glen

Immigration Law, Visas  
Experience: 6 years

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Jane Glowen

Labour Law, Civil Defence  
Experience: 6 years

Lawyer



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Me



## Oliver K. Sterling

Oliver K. Sterling is a seasoned property lawyer with over 15 years of experience in real estate law. His expertise lies in navigating the intricate legal landscape of property transactions and ensuring that his clients' interests are protected.

21  
Cases won

6+  
Years of experience

4.7  
User Rating

Chat with the lawyer

Followed by James Whelan, Laura Steves, Thomas Anderson and 21 others

Follow

Oliver obtained his Juris Doctor (JD) from a prestigious law school and has been a licensed attorney since [year]. He began his career in a renowned real estate law firm, where he honed his skills in property transactions, land use planning, and zoning regulations. His passion for real estate law led him to establish his private practice, Sterling & Associates, where he continues to deliver exceptional legal services.

### Client Approach

Known for his client-centric approach, Oliver prides himself on building strong relationships with his clients. He takes the time to understand their specific needs and concerns, providing personalized legal solutions tailored to each situation. His transparent communication style ensures that clients feel confident and well-informed at every stage of their legal journey.

### Reviews

botalyyien

★★★★★

Oliver Sterling was instrumental in helping me navigate the complexities of a commercial real estate transaction. His attention to detail and vast knowledge of zoning regulations made the process seamless. Oliver's personalized approach and commitment to his clients truly set him apart. I highly recommend Sterling & Associates for anyone in need of a top-notch property lawyer.

Swith\_tmyi

★★★★★

As a first-time homebuyer, I was fortunate to have Oliver K. Sterling as my property lawyer. He patiently explained every step of the process, ensuring I understood the legal implications of the transaction. Oliver's professionalism, responsiveness, and dedication to his clients make him the go-to choice for real estate legal matters. I'm grateful for his expertise and highly recommend his services.

catcapt

★★★★★

I recently faced a complicated property dispute, and Oliver Sterling handled it with unparalleled skill and determination. His strategic approach and negotiation prowess resolved the issue efficiently, saving me time and stress. Oliver's commitment to protecting his clients' rights is commendable. If you need a property lawyer who genuinely cares about your interests, look no further than Oliver K. Sterling.

### Check Similar Lawyers



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← Sam Glen  
Online

[Click to remain anonymous](#)

Your first three free consultation begins

Time remaining:

Hello Yinka, I'm Sam Glen, an immigration and visa laws lawyer. I'm here to help. I understand that dealing with visas can be challenging. Could you please provide me with some details about the specific situation?

8:23am

Hi Mr. Oliver. My name is Yinka, and I need legal advise concerning my visa. My masters programme finishes next month and my student visa expires the month after. What are the next steps?

8:22am

Hi Yinka, are you there?

8:28am

[Click to pause this consultation](#)

[Click to end consultation](#)

Your first free consultation has ended

Continue this conversation as your second free consultation

OR

[Consult another lawyer](#)



Lawyer



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Sam Glen  
Online

ANONYMOUS MODE 

Your first three free consultation begins

Time remaining:  20mins

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Hi Yinka, are you there? 8:28am

Click to pause this consultation

Click to end consultation 

Your first free consultation has ended

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OR  
Consult another lawyer

 Lawyer  Explore  Resource  Notifications  Me

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Oliver K. Sterling

Online



## Your second free consultation begins

Time remaining:

9mins

Hello, I hope I'm reaching the right person. My name is John, and I'm currently facing some issues with my housing rental situation. I was hoping to get some legal advice on how to proceed.

Hello John, I'm Oliver Sterling, a property lawyer. I'm here to help. I understand that dealing with housing rental issues can be challenging. Could you please provide me with some details about the specific problem you're facing?

Certainly, Oliver. So, I've been renting an apartment for the past year, and recently, there have been some maintenance issues that the landlord hasn't addressed. It's affecting my living conditions, and despite several requests, nothing has been fixed. I'm not sure what my rights are in this situation. I have emails and text messages documenting my requests, and I do have a copy of the lease agreement. The lease outlines the landlord's responsibilities for maintenance, but it seems like they're not fulfilling their obligations.

Thank you for providing that information, John. It's good that you've documented the communication. Based on the lease agreement, your landlord does have a legal obligation to address maintenance issues promptly. I recommend sending a formal written notice outlining the problems and stating a reasonable deadline for the repairs.

I see. And if that doesn't work, what are my options? Can I withhold rent until the issues are resolved, or should I consider breaking the lease?

Withholding rent is a serious step and generally should only be done under specific circumstances. Breaking the lease might also have legal implications. Before taking such actions, I suggest consulting the local landlord-tenant laws in your area. It's crucial to understand your rights and obligations fully. We can discuss potential legal actions if necessary, but let's explore less drastic options first.

Thank you so much!

Click to end consultation



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Oliver K. Sterling

Online



## Your last free consultation begins

Time remaining:



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Thank you so much!

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## Your last free consultation has ended



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**Pay & Consult**



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Oliver K. Sterling

Online

Your ~~X~~st free consultation begins

Time remaining: 0 min

## Pay & Consult

Hello John, I'm Oliver Sterling, a property lawyer. I'm here to help. I understand that dealing with housing rental issues can be challenging. Could you please provide me with some details about the specific problem you're facing?

**EUR10/hour**

Due 13th Oct. 2023



To (lawyer): **Oliver K. Sterling**  
From: **Shery Shindo**  
Description: **1 hour consultation**

Thank you for your message. We have agreed to meet at the earliest convenience to discuss your concerns. Please let us know if there is a specific date or time you would like to book.

[View invoice details >](#)

### Select a payment method

**Card**

**Bank Transfer**

**Others**

#### Card information

1234 1234 1234 1234



MM/YY

CVC



**Pay €10.00**

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**Housing in Ireland** \*30k members

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**Housing in Ireland** \*4k+ members

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**Housing in Ireland** \*3k members

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**Housing in Ireland** \*400 members

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**Driving Laws & Regulations** \*20 members

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\*100k members

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\*50k members

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Housing in Ireland

\*30k members

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Driving Laws & Regulations

\*20k+ members

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\*20k+ members

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\*19k members

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\*15k+ members

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\*6k members

Join

Housing in Ireland

\*4k+ members

Join

Driving Laws & Regulations

\*4k members

Join

Driving Laws & Regulations

\*3900 members

Join

Housing in Ireland

\*3k members

Join

Driving Laws & Regulations

\*2k+ members

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Housing in Ireland

\*1401 members

Join

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\*724 members

Join

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\*400 members

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## Legal Terminology Glossary



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## Taxes



Find out how much taxes you need to pay



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## [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#)

The Commission promotes and protects human rights and equality. In some cases, it can assist you to further human rights issues by assisting with legal proceedings

### [Access to Garda records](#)

Under data protection legislation you have the right to access personal information which the Gardaí hold on you, except in certain circumstances. Find out how to access your information.

### [EU law](#)

EU law comes from the treaties agreed between member states. But some EU institutions have the power to make laws also. Read how EU laws are made, and how they have affected life in Ireland.

### [Fundamental rights under the Irish Constitution](#)

The Irish Constitution recognises and declares that you have certain fundamental personal rights. These are confirmed and protected by the Constitution.

### [Reporting a breach of your EU rights](#)

An outline of organisations you can contact if you think your EU rights have been impeded.

### [Judicial review of public decisions](#)

Administrative decisions may be judicially reviewed by the High Court to determine whether they are illegal. Find out how to initiate judicial review proceedings.

## [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#)

The Commission promotes and protects human rights and equality. In some cases, it can assist you to further human rights issues by assisting with legal proceedings

### [Legal Aid Board](#)

The Legal Aid Board provides legal aid and advice in civil cases to people in Ireland who meet certain requirements (mainly, their means must be below a certain limit and there must be merit in the case).

### [Civil legal aid and legal advice](#)

An explanation of civil legal aid and legal advice and the eligibility criteria to be able to avail of it.

### [Civil legal aid and cross border disputes](#)

If you have a legal dispute in another EU country you may be able to avail of legal aid in that country by applying to the Legal Aid Board.

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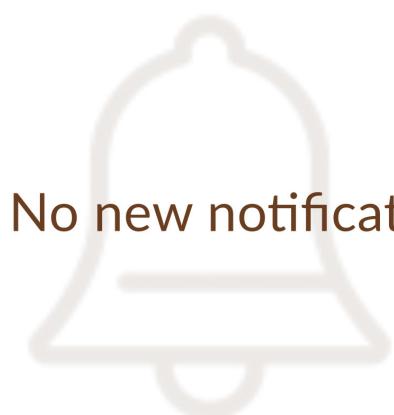


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Search re...

**Shery Shindo**

Only you can see your real name

@switzfire

263 Followers    318 Following

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# Evaluation

# Evaluation

In 1990, Jakob Nielsen and Rolf Molich introduced ten guidelines aimed at UI development. Drawing from years of work experience and observations, they formulated these heuristics to assist in user interface design (Aela, 2022). Utilising Nielsen's heuristics, our assessment focused on the UI and UX aspects experienced by our users. The evaluation was carried out by observing two different users. The users were asked to openly note their pain points without fear of judgement. Subsequently, participants were queried about their encounter, and both individuals chose to revisit to address specific inquiries raised by the evaluator. At the end of both sessions, the users highlighted commendable design elements as well as identified areas necessitating enhancements. This report aims to delineate these improvement areas in no particular order.

S.no	Heuristic	Implication	App Evaluation
1	Visibility of system status	The interface must provide users with updates on the system's connection status and the level of security protection.	Users did not routinely experience instances that demanded system feedback on specific pages. Nevertheless, the app designers addressed some of these concerns by integrating loading icons and symbols into certain pages.
2	Match between the system and the real world	The system should utilise language familiar to users and refrain from using technical terms, aligning with everyday language conventions.	The app makes use of simple vocabulary and icons that match their real-world conversations and interactions.
3	User control and freedom	Users should be given the freedom to customise the interface, especially security features, and be provided with a clear option to reset settings to default. This promotes transparency in security rather than relying on hidden measure	Users expressed appreciation for the functionality of the "exit" and "back" buttons featured on the app's pages. Nevertheless, they reported issues with the navigation buttons, citing unresponsiveness or sluggishness, which forced them to resort to alternative clicking pathways.
4	Consistency and standards	Avoid causing ambiguity among users regarding the consistency of meanings, terms, or actions across various situations. Adhere to standardised conventions consistently across different platforms.	At no point did users raise concerns about not understanding a symbol or tool

S.no	Heuristic	Implication	App Evaluation
5	Error prevention	Furnish users with comprehensive security error notifications devoid of specific codes, followed by facilitating straightforward recovery methods.	Users were not required to interact with specific error messages due to the app's abridged functionality.
6	Recognition rather than recall	Offer users guidance on utilising the service functionalities and security measures.	Right from the start page, instructional guidelines for app usage were prominently displayed and readily accessible.
7	Flexibility and efficiency of use	The system needs to strike a balance by offering adequate information for beginners without overwhelming experienced users. Emphasising the ease of learning and remembering security actions is crucial, underscoring the system's imperative need for user-friendliness and accessibility to all levels of users.	Both participants, despite being first-time users, did not report encountering any difficulties while navigating the app. It is worth noting, however, that the individuals had attained Bachelor's and Master's degrees, respectively, as their highest completed educational levels.
8	Aesthetic and minimalist design	The interface and dialogue should exclusively present pertinent system and security details, devoid of any unsuitable advertising content.	Participants praised the app's simplicity and directness in design. Nonetheless, they expressed apprehensions regarding the size of certain text elements. One user remarked that the colours were "too cool" for her taste, suggesting a preference for a more vibrant or engaging visual palette.
9	Recognition, diagnosis, and recovery from errors	Your designs should aid users in recognizing and resolving potential issues and errors effectively. Use straightforward, jargon-free error messages that elucidate the problem and propose potential solutions.	Once more, users did not encounter specific error messages owing to the app's limited functionality. However, one user expressed appreciation for the "or speak to a lawyer" button on the post page which prompted her to consider whether she preferred to publicly (though anonymously) disclose her legal issue or seek advice from a lawyer in private.
10	Help and documentation	Provide clear documentation to aid users in task completion. While other heuristics aim to prevent errors and ensure independent navigation, ongoing assistance remains crucial for users at all times.	The app contained options for help on the user profile page.

While affirming our commitment to user privacy, users suggested incorporating a passcode or fingerprint lock at the application's entry point would make them feel more secure. This additional security feature empowers users to maintain control over their privacy, particularly when their devices are unattended.

Furthermore, users highlighted the default font size as petite. While we acknowledge the potential for font adjustment within the "settings" section, we recognize how the default font size can affect users- especially first-time users and recommend a magnification.

Additionally, within certain frames, the coexistence of the "me" button below and the profile avatar at the screen's top section has the potential to cause confusion. Merging these buttons into a singular function could optimise space utilisation, potentially accommodating other designated sections like "communities" or "menu" on the navigation bar.

The user feedback also raised concerns regarding the responsiveness of button clicks. Acknowledging this issue, we recognize the constraints of our team's reliance on available free resources. It's apparent that enhancing this aspect would necessitate access to more comprehensive resources and advance team skill sets for possible improvement. Lastly, while acknowledging the minimalist design approach, there exists scope for enhancing the app's aesthetic appeal.

## Limitations of this Evaluation

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The assessment of the Lawmate app encountered several limitations that must be acknowledged.

- Absence of a Specialized Evaluation Team: Ideally, a specialised evaluation team, unconnected to the app's design process, would have provided an unbiased analysis.
- Constrained Audience Sampling: Time and accessibility constraints confined the evaluation to two randomly selected users thereby recognizing the potential for unidentified issues as the app reaches a broader and more diverse user base.
- Scope of App Design: The hi-fi evaluated in this study has limited coverage, with certain pages underdeveloped. The app was designed solely for study purposes to provide an overview of its design and flow. To achieve functional usability, extensive design, testing, and evaluation of multiple subpages are necessary.

Overall, the application was well received by the users. They commended the wealth of information, the app structure for anonymity and the affordability of consultation. With additional research and testing substantial enhancements, more indicators can be identified to increase the application's overall performance.

## Conclusion

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In summary, the development of the Lawmate application has been a significant stride towards democratising legal access in Ireland. This user-centred approach, aiming to deliver affordable legal aid, has revealed crucial insights into user experiences, preferences, and concerns. Through an iterative design process, incorporating user feedback and interface adjustments, the application's usability, accessibility, and functionality have been optimised. However, acknowledging the multifaceted nature of legal aid and the diverse user base, ongoing enhancements and user-centred updates remain imperative. The collaborative effort between developers, legal experts, and users has set a precedent for user-centric innovation in the realm of legal assistance, ensuring that the app continually aligns with the evolving needs of its users while striving for accessibility and affordability in legal understanding.

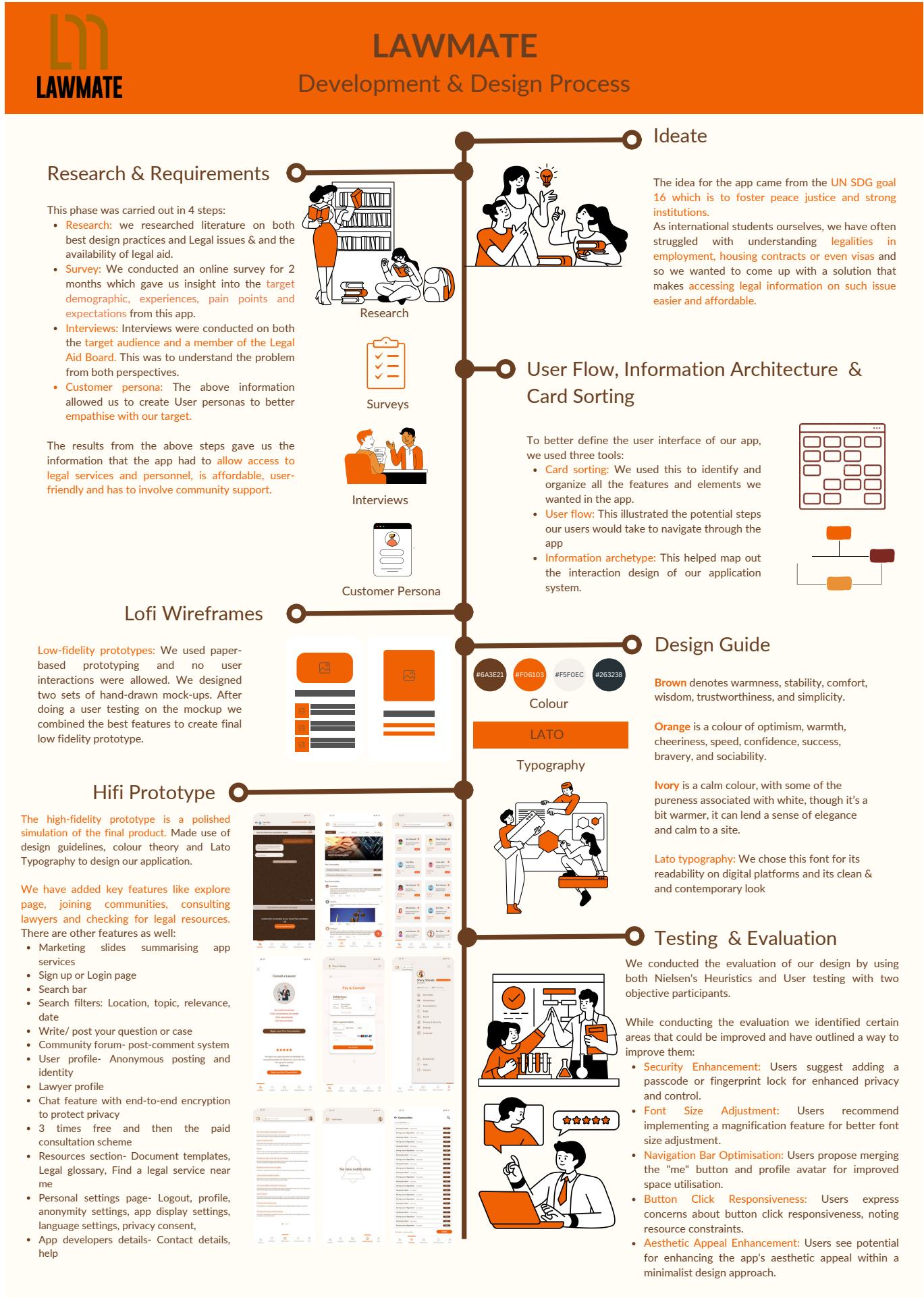
## References

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# Appendix A- Summary Poster



## **Appendix A- Survey Questions**

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1) What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 and over

2) What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say

3) What is your Nationality?

4) What is your English language proficiency?

- Fluent in English
- Proficient but not fluent in English
- Limited English proficiency
- Other (please specify)

5) Are you a working professional or a student in Ireland?

I am a Student

I am a Working Professional

6) If Student, what is your Level of study?

Undergraduate

Postgraduate

Phd

Other (please specify)

7) If working professional, what industry or sector do you work in?

Healthcare

Technology

Education

Finance

Manufacturing

Retail

Government

Law and Order

Other (please specify):

8) Have you ever needed legal advice or assistance while living in Ireland?

- Yes
- No

9) If yes, What were the main challenges you faced when seeking legal advice in Ireland?

10) Have you ever interacted with a lawyer in Ireland?

- Yes
- No

11) What legal issues or concerns do you typically need assistance with as an international civilian in Ireland? (Select all that apply)

- Visa and residence, immigration
- Rental, Housing & tenancy
- Employment and tax
- Health insurance and medical
- Civil and Constitutional rights
- Contract and legally binding documents
- Union rights
- Traffic and Road laws

12) What features do you consider most important in a legal advice app? (Select all that apply)

- Legal information and resources
- Connecting with pro bono lawyers
- Real-time chat with lawyers
- Language support and translation
- User support and guidance
- Easy navigation and search
- Other (please specify)

13) How do you prefer to communicate with a lawyer through the app?

- Text chat
- Audio call
- Video call
- Prefer not to interact directly

14) Would you consider paying for additional and advanced services such as consultation?

- Yes
- No

15) If yes, how much would you pay? (scalable question)

16) How important is it for you that the app is accessible to individuals with disabilities?

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not important at all

17) How concerned are you about the security of your personal information and legal interactions within the app?

- Very concerned
- Somewhat concerned
- Not very concerned
- Not concerned at all

18) How would you rate the necessity of an app that offers legal aid?

19) Do you have any additional comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding an app that offers legal advice and support for international civilians in Ireland?

20) If you would like to be involved in user testing or stay updated on the app's development, please provide your email address:

## **Appendix C- Target Interview Questions**

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1. To start, could you please share a bit about your background and experience in Ireland?
2. In terms of housing, have you faced any difficulties or uncertainties regarding Irish housing laws or rental agreements?
3. How confident do you feel in your understanding of your rights and obligations outlined in your housing contract?
4. Have you sought legal advice or assistance to clarify aspects of your housing contract?
5. Have you ever been involved in a dispute related to your housing contract? If so, how was it resolved?
6. Were there instances where you felt your rights outlined in the contract were not adequately protected?
7. What resources, such as online platforms, legal guides, or community support, have you used to navigate housing contract issues?
8. Do you feel there is sufficient information available to tenants about their rights and responsibilities?
9. Based on your experiences, what advice would you give to someone navigating housing contracts in Ireland?
10. If you could change one thing about the process of dealing with housing contract issues, what would it be?
11. How do you think information on visas, housing, and employment laws could be made more accessible and understandable for immigrants like yourself?
12. If we have an app or a resource to assist immigrants like yourself with such legal matters, what features or information do you think would be most beneficial?

## **Appendix D- Legal Aid Interview Questions**

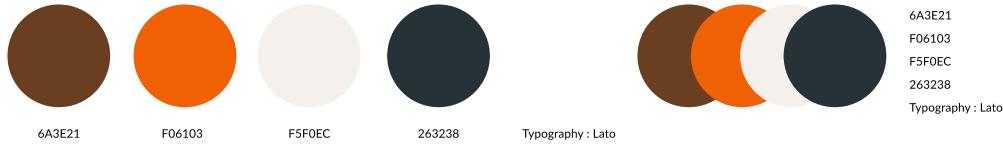
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1. Could you tell me briefly about your organization?
2. I want to understand the kind of services that are offered by the Legal Aid Board. Could you explain it to me?
3. Who qualifies for Legal aid? And how is it measured?
4. What are kinds of cases you usually deal with?
5. How can one access the services of the Legal Aid Board?
6. In your experience, what are some common challenges faced by immigrants and asylum seekers in accessing legal aid, and how does the Legal Aid Board address these challenges?
7. Are there any innovative approaches or solutions that the Legal Aid Board has implemented to better serve the immigrant and asylum-seeking community?
8. How does the Legal Aid Board engage in community outreach to ensure that immigrants and asylum seekers are aware of available legal aid services?
9. In your opinion, what impact does legal aid have on the lives of immigrants and asylum seekers?
10. Can you share insights into the capacity of the Legal Aid Board to handle an increasing number of cases, especially those related to immigration?
11. What resources, including personnel and technology, are currently allocated to addressing cases involving immigrants and asylum seekers?
12. Are there specific challenges related to resource allocation, and what strategies are in place to optimize the efficiency of case handling?
13. Are there specific criteria or methods for prioritizing cases, especially when dealing with a high volume of requests?
14. Are there measures in place to ensure that individuals in urgent situations receive timely legal assistance?
15. Are there partnerships or collaborations with community organizations that enhance the reach and effectiveness of the Legal Aid Board's services?
16. Are there technologies or innovations being explored to streamline processes and reduce the administrative burden associated with a large number of cases? And is there a future scope for employing the same?

# Appendix E- Colour Theory and Typography

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The choice of colors in design, including for our app, involves a combination of aesthetic preferences, psychological associations, and considerations for usability. Here are some reasons why these colors were considered suitable for our law app:

1. Professionalism and Sophistication:
  - The color combination of orange shade -brown creme convey a sense of professionalism and sophistication. In the context of a law app, where trust and credibility are crucial, a sophisticated color palette can help establish a serious and reliable image.
2. Warmth and Approachability:
  - Brown and creme tones often evoke warmth and approachability. In the field of law, where users may be seeking assistance or information in potentially stressful situations, a warm and inviting color scheme can contribute to a more user-friendly experience.
3. Connection to Traditional Elements:
  - Browns, especially darker shades, can be associated with tradition and stability. For a law app, this can create a link to the traditional and established nature of legal practices, fostering a sense of reliability.
4. Gender-Neutral and Inclusive:
  - The combination of orange-brown creme is generally gender-neutral, which can contribute to inclusivity. In the legal field, where diverse audiences may engage with the app, using colors that are appealing to a broad spectrum of users is beneficial.
5. Readability and Accessibility:
  - Creme colors, when used in appropriate contrast, can enhance text readability. In a law app where users are likely to engage with a lot of textual content, a color scheme that supports easy reading is essential.
6. Brand Differentiation:
  - Using an orange-brown creme color scheme can help the law app stand out from competitors. Choosing a unique color palette can contribute to brand differentiation and make the app more memorable.
7. Psychological Associations:
  - Colors can evoke specific psychological associations. For example, orange is often associated with warmth and energy, while brown is associated with stability and reliability. Combining these with creme can create a balanced and harmonious feel.

Choosing a font for app design is a crucial decision that can impact the overall user experience and visual identity of the app. "Lato" is a popular typeface.

"Lato" is known for its excellent readability, both in print and on screens. Its clean and simple design makes it easy for users to read content without straining their eyes. This is especially important in apps where users consume a significant amount of text.

The design of "Lato" gives it a modern and contemporary aesthetic. Its rounded letterforms and open spacing contribute to a clean and fresh look, which can be appealing in modern app design.

"Lato" is optimized for both web and mobile applications. Its design takes into consideration the requirements of digital displays, ensuring clarity and legibility across various screen sizes and resolutions.