

Evaluation Report

Description and Discussion of major issues identified and how they have been addressed:

During development we aimed to solve a variety of issues raised. While doing this we also ensured that the accessibility principles were followed and kept in mind at all times. Therefore when developing we always ensured the following

1. All photos and images on the site have been given alt-text so that this can be converted into other forms if required. (Following principle 1)
2. The back button has been changed and is never 'broken' on any page and will always take you to the last page you were on (Following principle 10+11)
3. Tools of development that have been used are all compatible with the major accessibility tools on the market (Following principle 12)

Dashboard

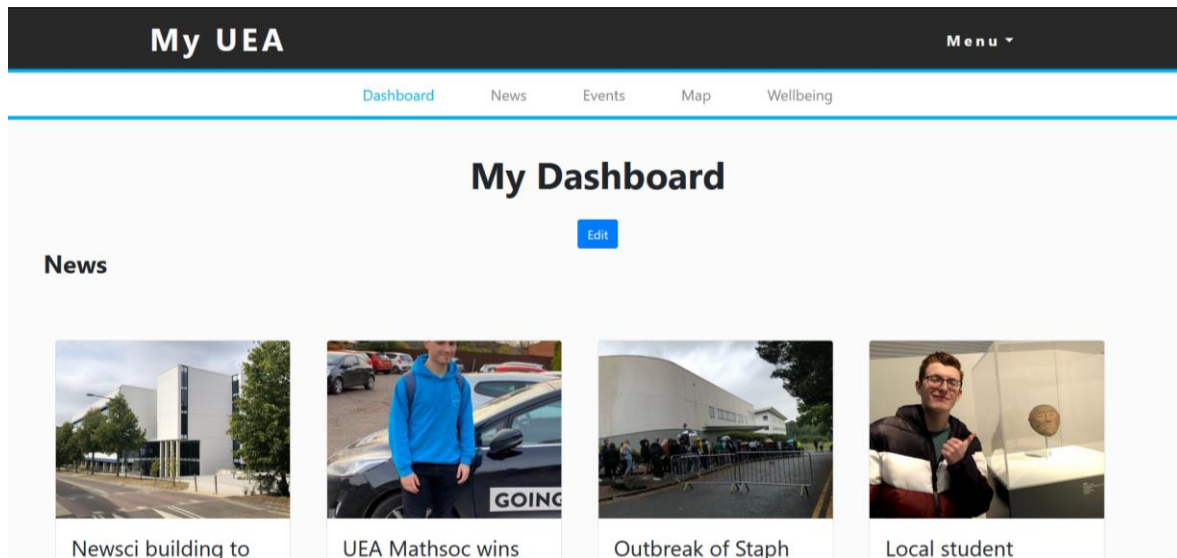


Fig. 1.1: Top of dashboard

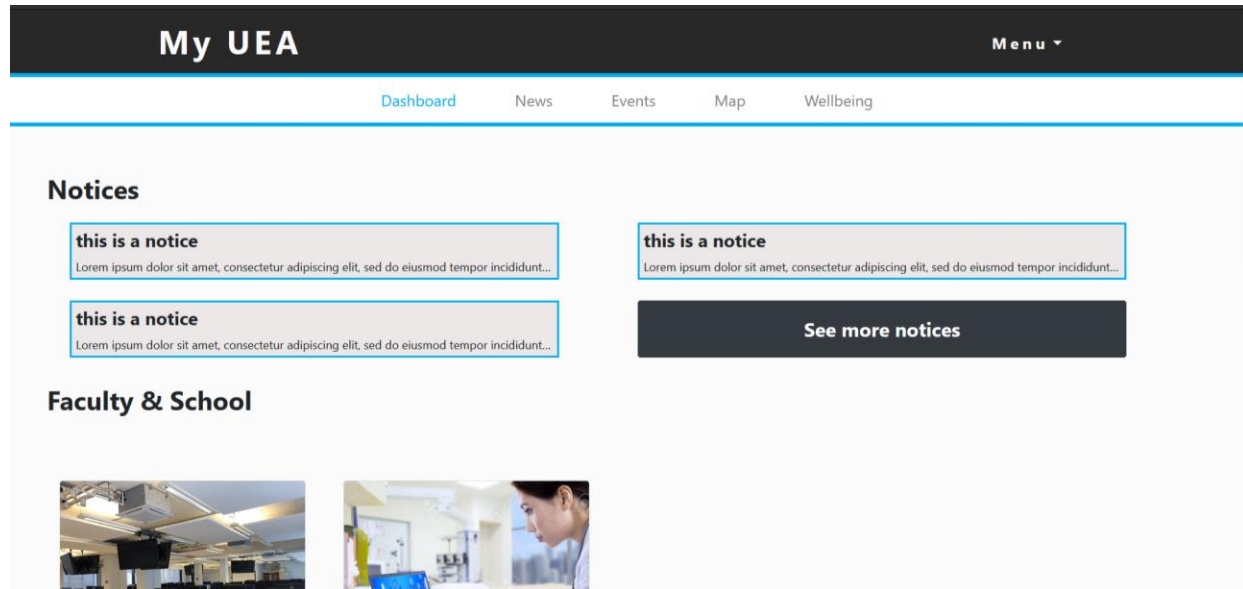


Fig. 1.2: New notices section of dashboard

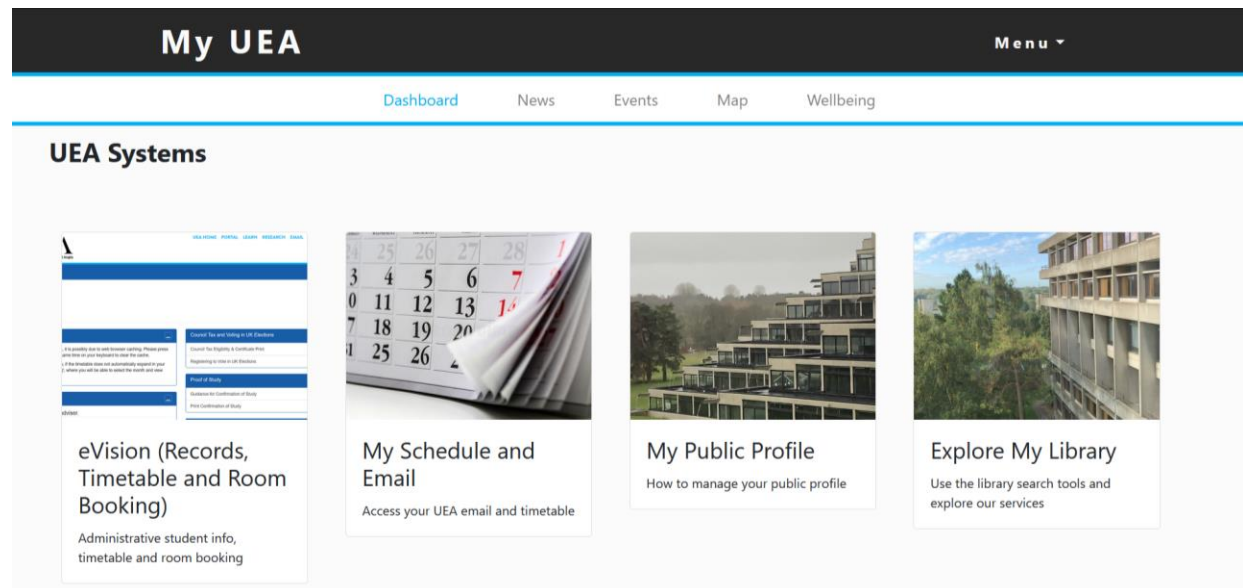


Fig. 1.3: Refined card system

What

The dashboard page is arguably the most important pages of the site and thus it has had a significant overhaul. The most striking change is the addition of a new central navigation bar. While this is the most significant change to the page in terms of improving navigation there has also been adjustments made to the card system that existed previously, namely the cards have been categorised to make searching them

easier. A new section has also been added to show three notices and include a link to the notices page.

This is also the first place where a new feature is introduced that is seen across the site: a sticky header which affixes the header and the new central menu to the top of the screen at all times.

Why

The central menu was added mainly to improve navigation around the site. The existing dropdown menu was very large and in the think aloud experiments and use cases alike a problem was highlighted in navigation around the site. The problem is that key pages like events and maps were too difficult to find. The central menu attempts to alleviate this by putting the pages most likely to be accessed at the forefront of the users field of view. It also allows more user control and freedom adhered to Jakob Nielsen's principle.

The implementation of the sticky header tackles the same problem; keeping the most important links at arms reach at all times. This change was in response to a suggestion from the post-development think-aloud experiment.

The addition of a notices section to the dashboard is part of our main vision behind the redesign; putting important elements out where the user can see them.

The card system categorisation was made in response to the design phase think-aloud experiment where users found it difficult to find things in the block of cards. It balances consistency and familiarity with the ability to recognise a card more easily rather than need to recall its location adhered to Jakob Nielsen's principle.

Portal

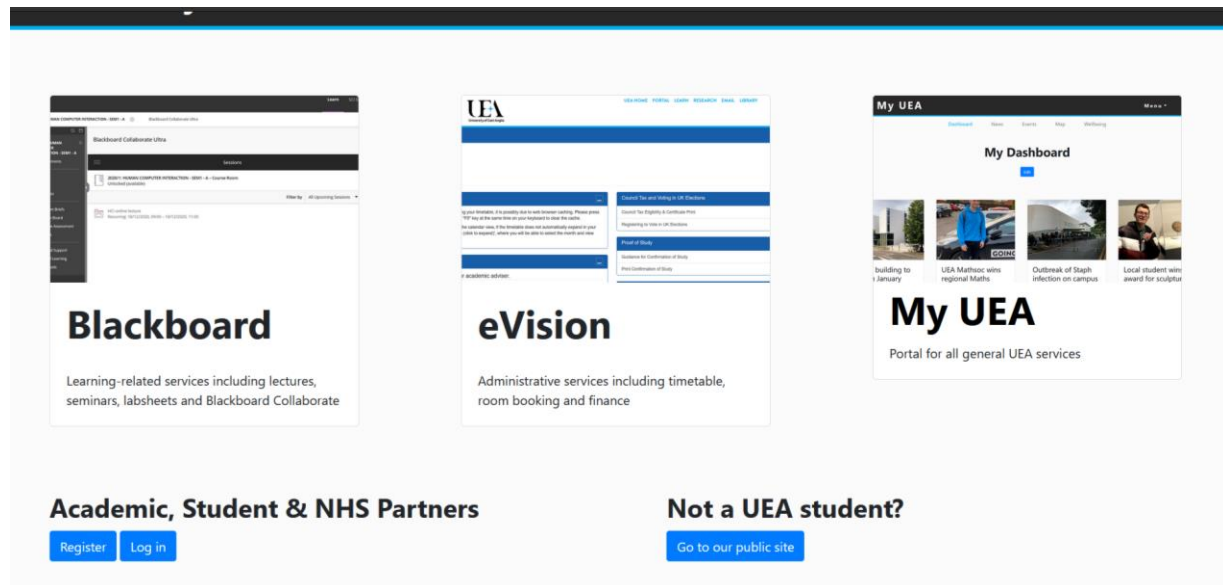


Fig. 2.1: Portal screen

What

A relatively simple page affords a relatively simple redesign. The main significant change here has been made to the size of the buttons. The Blackboard, eVision and My UEA buttons have been made significantly larger compared to the other buttons which are placed beneath.

Why

This change was made in consideration of the hierarchy of importance. As highlighted in the usability survey these buttons were by far the most used buttons on the page, meaning they deserve a stronger presence on the page. The addition of pictures and a description of the buttons aid accessibility for people with poor or no vision. The extra text also reduces the chance of the user pressing on the incorrect button saving them time. Helping users reduce the number of errors and recover from them is a key principle of usability.

Events

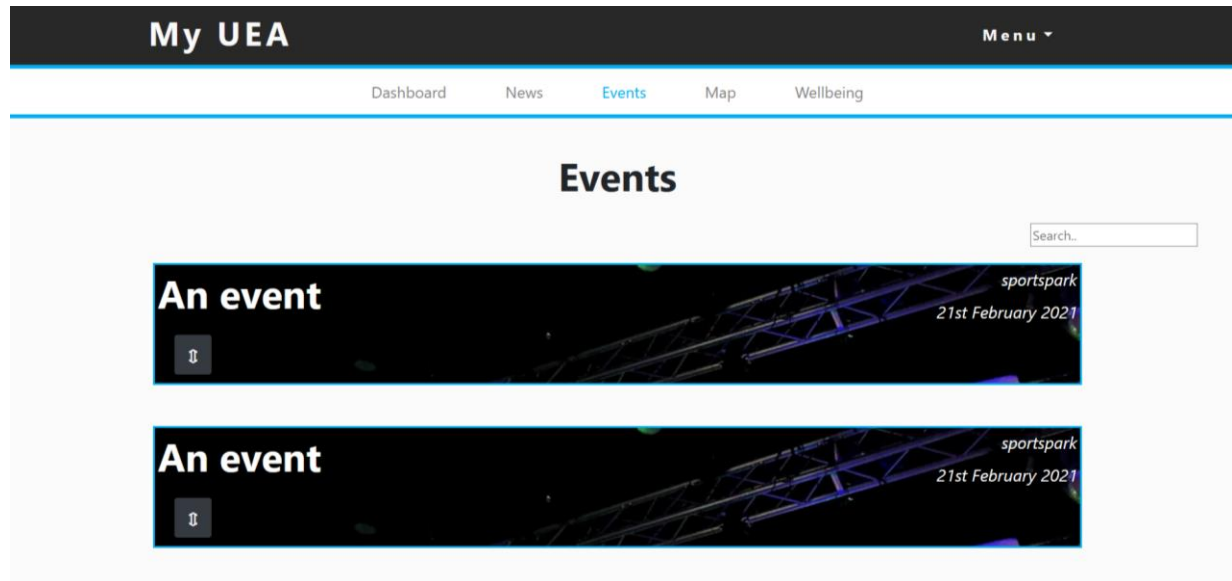


Fig. 3.1: Events page

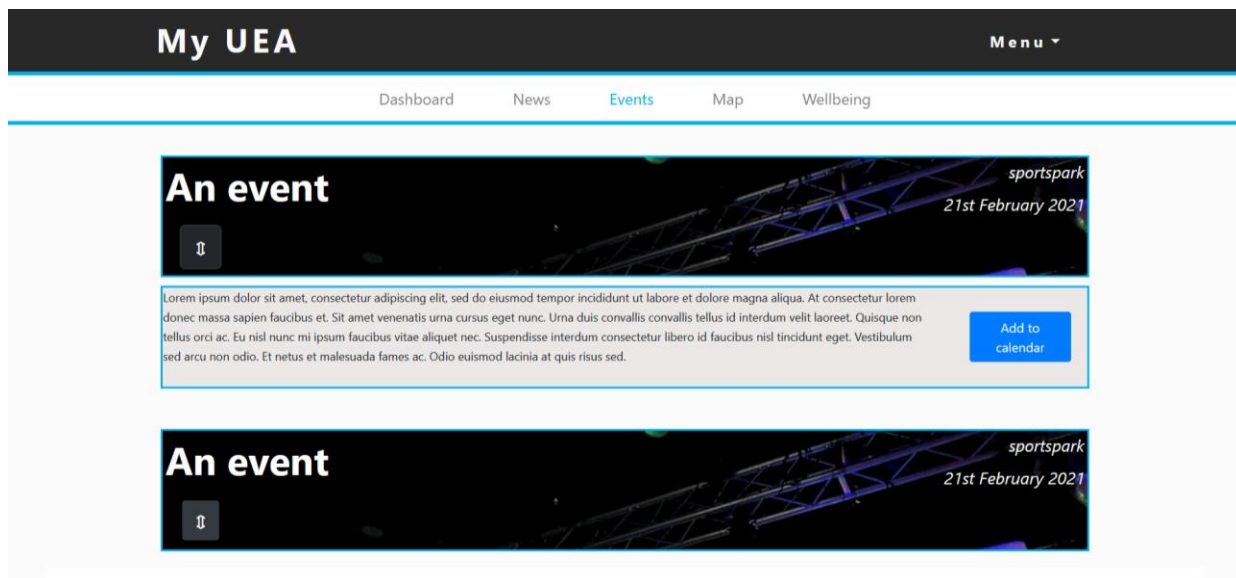


Fig. 3.2: Expanded event

What

The events page has had a significant overhaul. The entire layout of the page has been redone. Where there once was a large search bar section above the traditional card system there is now no large search bar at the top, instead the page is composed of a series of horizontal event panes that can be expanded out to show more information instead of having to click on the card.

A key new feature has been added in the new 'add to calendar' button which adds an event to the users Outlook calendar. Related to this change is the calendar at the bottom of the screen has also been completely removed.

Why

The layout overhaul was mainly motivated by the overwhelmingly bad reaction in the design phase think-aloud experiment to the page, with users citing confusion over why the cards had no images as well as an unnecessary focus on the large search bar which is far too large on the page. The redesign places a greater focus on the events themselves and removes the confusion over the unloaded images. The new event panes are small on the page yet are attention-grabbing and contain all the information needed to decide if the user wants to see more info about it.

The removal of the calendar was made because the tool is very large and complex and would realistically never be used. The calendar is far too complex and triggers such a negative visceral reaction that even if it was useful the user would be put off it immediately. It has been replaced with the 'add to calendar' button which takes up a smaller presence on the screen and is far more inviting to the average user. All it takes is one click of the button and the event is in the users calendar without any need to learn how to use the calendar which doesn't even tie to the users own calendar. As said in Jakob Nielsen's principles "Interfaces should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed." therefore the calendar was cut as in the usability studies no use was found for its presence.

Notices

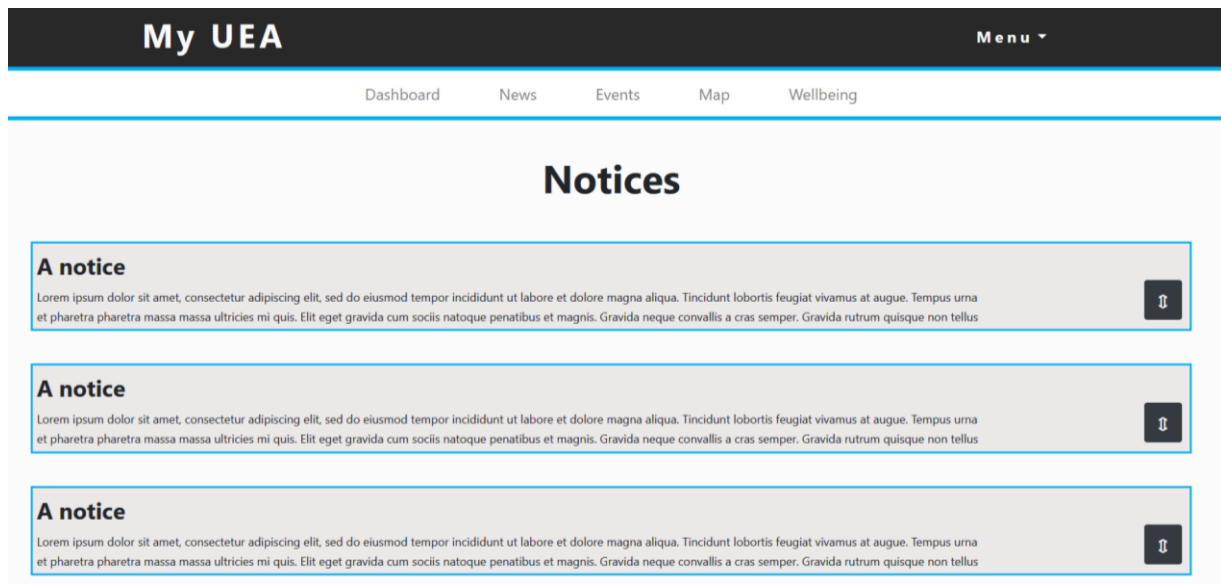


Fig. 4.1: Notices page

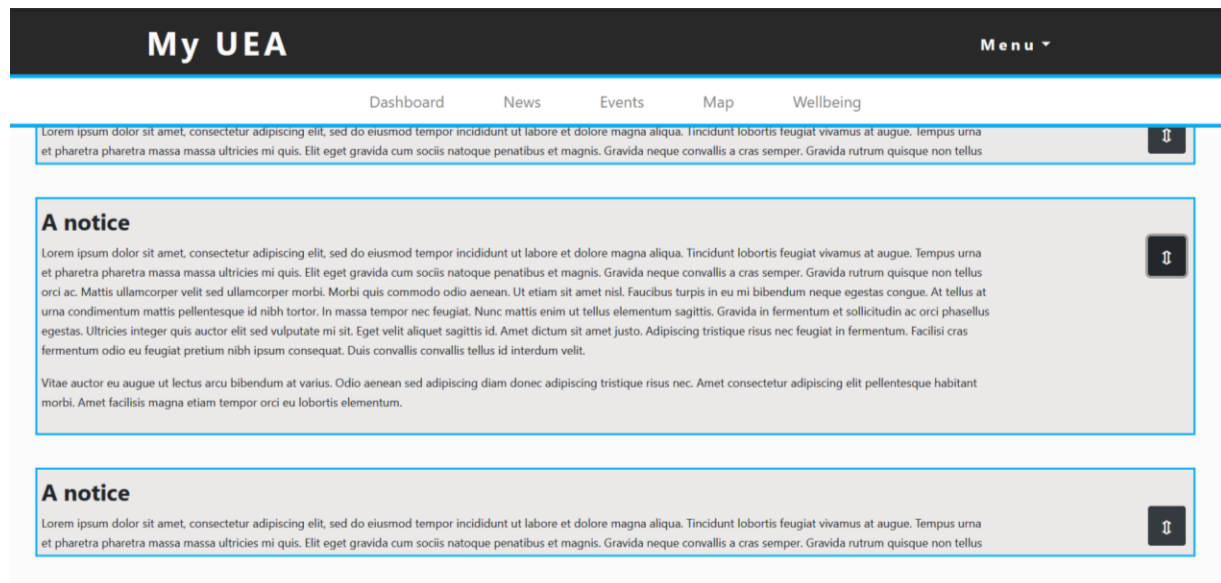


Fig. 4.2: Expanded notice

What

This page has also had a complete layout overhaul. The two-column layout before with one half of the screen empty and the other with some tiny notices has been scrapped in favour of a new notice pane similar to the events pane. Notices simply contain a large heading to grab attention and a textual description like before with a button to expand the notice to read more.

Why

The layout overhaul was primarily made to make the page much easier to read and make each notice stand out more, especially to visually impaired users such as the persona Shay or dyslexic users who may struggle to read the small, similar-looking text from the previous design. According to the user demographic represented by our other persona Eleanor our users want to find what is relevant to them as quickly as possible and be able to immediately distinguish it from less relevant information and this achieves that.

The design of the notice was made similar to the event pane intentionally to preserve consistency. The two are both elements about a certain topic containing mainly textual information and this format conveys the textual information in a way that is readable and concise.

Wellbeing

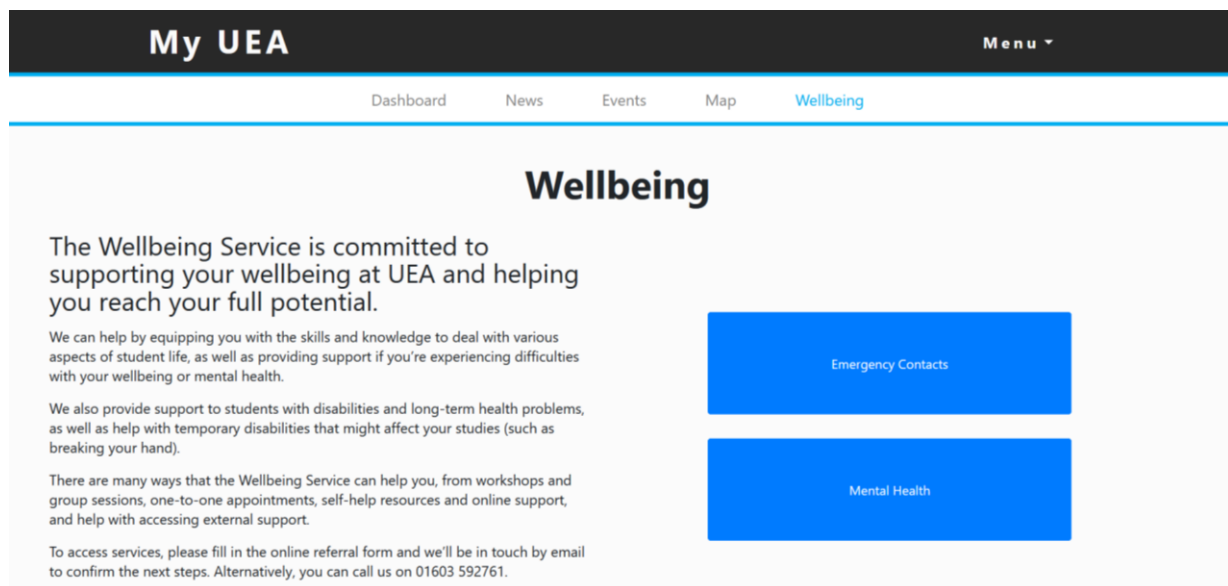


Fig. 5.1: Wellbeing page

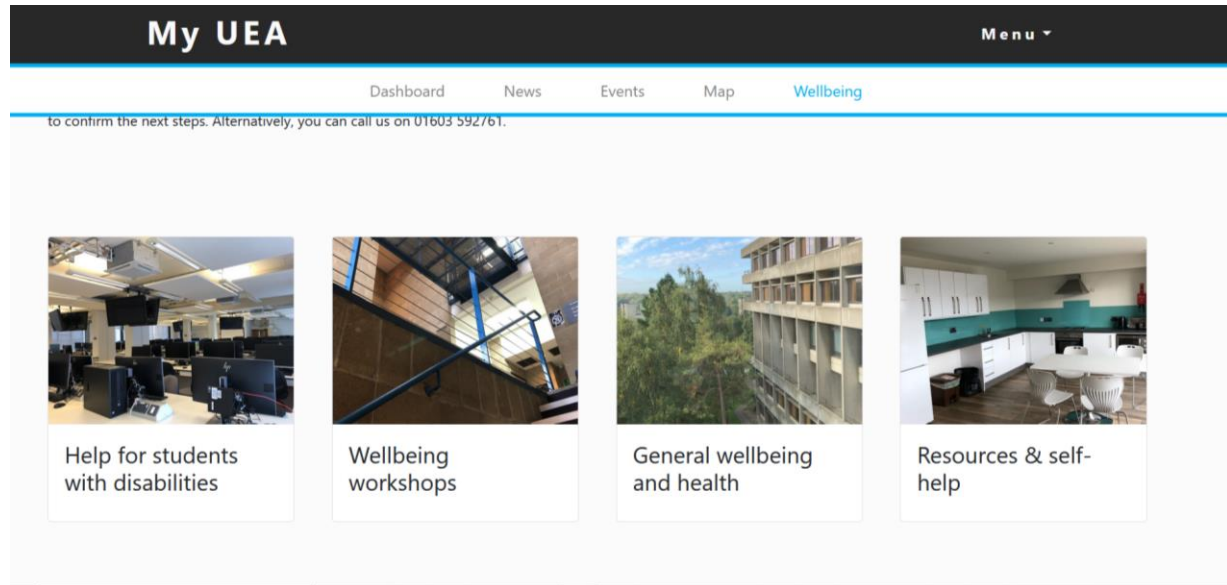


Fig. 5.2: Wellbeing cards

What

The wellbeing page has had among the more subtle design changes. The page has had a simple change in layout in that two of the more important cards have been moved above the cards section and converted into buttons which go alongside the paragraph of text as opposed to underneath it.

The 'crisis support' card has also been remapped to be called 'emergency contacts'.

Why

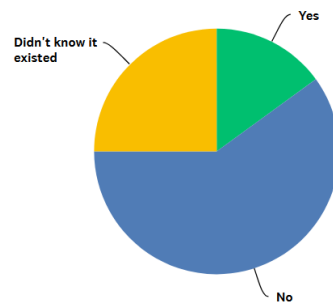
The change in layout for this page was made due to the context of the page itself, namely being a page visited in case of emergency. The existing page was not suitable

for this as seen in the survey where only a shocking 15% of users knew where to find the emergency contacts.

Fig. 5.3: Pie chart of survey results

Do you know where you would look to find a list of emergency contacts on the My UEA website?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0



The new layout places the important features like this at the top of the screen in a large button, more in accordance with the hierarchy of importance. The remapping will also make it more clear where users need to look in case of an emergency.

Evaluation Think-Aloud Experiment on our re-Design:

As a think-aloud experiment was conducted to diagnose the usability of the original site it is only fair that the same experiment is conducted on our new site to gauge if our redesign has improved the site. The questions were kept mostly the same but were posed to a different audience. Questions were changed very slightly but this is only because our prototype is not a complete recreation of the UEA portal. There is no actual login system but in this case the users will be asked to log in to My UEA instead by clicking on the My UEA link. Also the details about events and notices and only placeholder values so I will instead just be asking the user to view any more details about any notice or event rather than the most recent one or relevant one.

1 - Can you log in to My UEA?

Think-aloud User 1:

“Ok sure” (briefly pauses and then clicks on My UEA link) “Is that done?”

Think-aloud User 2:

“Alright. Log in to My UEA? I’d assume its under My UEA” (Clicks the link)

Think-aloud User 3:

“Ok then” (clicks on My UEA link)

2 - Can you find an event and see more details about it? (from dashboard)

Think-aloud User 1:

“Ok events...” (clicks on events link from central menu after brief pause) “ and here are some events. How do I view more information? This looks like a button” (clicks on dropdown) “there it is”

Think-aloud User 2:

“Events...” (scrolls down to check below) “where is it...” (scrolls back up) “oh there it is at the top” (clicks on events link) “That’d be useful if that header came down with me when I scroll. There are the events... There’s a button there” (clicks dropdown)

Think-aloud User 3:

“So... Events” (clicks on events link from central menu) “And I’m looking at events right now... This font is quite ugly” (clicks on dropdown) “here’s more text”

3 - Can you find a notice and see more details about it (from dashboard)

Think-aloud User 1:

“Notices...” (looks at the screen for a few seconds) “I can’t immediately see it...” (scrolls down slowly) “Ah there they are. Is that all?” (prompted that they are not finished yet) “I guess I’ll see more notices then” (clicks on link) “There’s a load of notices. And another one of those buttons” (clicks on button) “Oh it’s expanded”

Think-aloud User 2:

“Notices...” (scrolls down) “Here are some notices.” (clicks on button to see more notices) “And here are more notices. I guess this button does the same thing” (clicks button) “Yep here you go”

Think-aloud User 3:

“Ok...” (pauses for a few seconds) “It’s not on the middle menu... Maybe its in the other menu” (clicks on menu button in header) “There’s notices, that’s not as easy as the others” (clicks notices) “And then it drops down” (clicks dropdown)

4 - What does MY UEA recommend you do if you have an issue with your wellbeing? (from dashboard)

Think-aloud User 1:

“Well then wellbeing is there I saw that earlier” (clicks wellbeing button from central menu) “And here...” (reads the text) “Gives us a phone number to call”

Think-aloud User 2:

“Alright I’m going to click on wellbeing at the top” (clicks on wellbeing button) “Here’s the wellbeing stuff”

Think-aloud User 3:

“Wellbeing...” (pauses to read to page) “... Is there” (clicks on wellbeing button) “And here it is. Emergency contacts and mental health”

Analysis

As you can see from these results the users had significantly less trouble this time than the first time around. The interactions were quick and snappy and the new central menu at the top of the dashboard helped these interactions a lot. When the page in question was on this menu it was spotted almost instantly and when it wasn’t (as in the case of the notices question) the users had slightly more difficulty finding it. User 3 had the most difficulty with this because they used the old menu from the existing site rather than scrolling down, which they stated themselves was a lot harder to find. This speaks volumes about how some of our changes have improved usability, especially the middle menu.

The wellbeing task was handled extremely well and while this is in part due to being the last task which means the users were already somewhat familiar with the system it also speaks to the simplicity of the task which has been improved tremendously. In fact, the users had significantly less difficulty finding the notices section, which was a major improvement from before.

There were three small issues that needed to be dealt with: first of all a minor issue that all users took a second to see the dropdown button on the events and notices page. This is a minor issue but all users took a moment to see the button at first which means the buttons may just be too small. A simple resize could fix this, especially since there is no other content that is preventing them from being slightly bigger.

The second issue was that user 3 thought that the font was “ugly”. This opinion must be taken on board but the decision has been made to keep the font the way it is. The font has been chosen to both enable it to display properly on all machines but also to make the site accessible to visually impaired users such as the persona of Shay or for people with disabilities such as dyslexia. The font is easy to read for these kinds of users and changing the font does not guarantee the site will remain just as easy to interpret. This change is purely aesthetic and thus will not be used in the final product.

The final change and arguably the most useful piece of feedback is the feedback from user 2 about the header. A few times in the experiment the users scrolled down looking for something on the dashboard only to find the link they were looking for was at the top. Not all users are the same and some people scroll more often than others. Having the header fixed at the top makes it so that the crucially important menu and header can be seen from anywhere on the page, improving ease of navigation on the site.

After this experiment the header has been fixed to the top of the page and the buttons have been slightly enlarged.

Open issues that still impact the user.

Despite our redesign efforts some aspects of the site are still not perfect. The two main factors that still affect usability and accessibility are discussed below:

1. Images and photo used on the website

Due to the box style design consistently used throughout the website pictures are used on most pages. This is to help usability and consistency, as well as for recognition and ease of use for some users as it is easier to identify a picture rather than read text for those with certain disabilities.

However, we were not able to take many photos of others doing tasks that best equated to what the page link always was. Meaning that some photos don't best represent the link they relate to. We did not have the copyright to use images off the internet for this project so we had to make do with what photos of UEA we had available and the rights too. To best fit the needs of the user these images would be replaced with professional photos. This would aid disability usability as it would make the site easier to use for those who would struggle to read text, such as our persona Shay. It would also increase recognition and aid the meeting of usability principles.

2. Menu of other areas of the site is still too large and hard to navigate

Due to the scope of this project it was not possible to fix every aspect of the myUEA site or reduce down its content. Therefore the menu at the top still features a large amount of excess information. This does not fit with the usability or accessibility principles our site strives to meet.