Send your fit note service
Lab testing
Prototype V6

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On Monday 19th March, the team conducted a day of lab testing at The Talking Shop in Salford.

We met both mobile and desktop users with some users currently claiming ESA and others having never heard of it.

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User 1

User 1 was a female aged 25 having vaguely heard of ESA but never claimed. She only accessed the internet from her mobile as she had no PC or laptop.

She uses the internet for online shopping, email, sometimes banking and told use she used it to look for a nearby car park to attend today's session. She is also a frequent user of social media and sometimes online shopping.

She has previously used gov online services when registering the birth of a child and had created a gov gateway ID to claim tax credits.

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User 2

User 2 was a female participant aged 46 currently claiming ESA.

She had been claiming ESA for a while.

She has difficulty remembering things so struggled with some questions.

She owns a printer/scanner but had never scanned anything before with it and wouldn't know how to save a scanned image to a computer.

Not very good with computer file management.

Didn't know that libraries offer help and use of PCs and scanners.

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User 3

User 3 was a male aged 50 currently claiming ESA. He does not have a lot of faith in DWP based on previous experience with the Jobcentre having been sanctioned in the past.

Having claimed ESA for a while, he was well versed in understanding and had previously encountered problems when submitting a fit note.

He uses the internet rarely and accesses at his local library. He was well aware of his local services through his library but aggrieved at local cuts.

He has also spent some time setting up a charity for homeless people.

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User 4

User 4 was a female aged 41 currently claiming ESA.

She had experienced problems sending her fit note in the post.

She uses her phone to browse the internet, for social media and to look 'things' up. She also uses the internet for research, emails and listening to music.

She hasn't used government services online before and tends to deal with most things through the post although she admits this isn't always reliable.

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User 5

User 5 was a female participant aged 26 currently claiming ESA.

She uses the internet for social media, email, paying utility bills and ordering prescriptions. She only goes online using her phone.

She has previously set up a government gateway ID but has not logged on since creating it as she has forgotten her ID/password. This was created to check her tax credits online.

Her local community centre has desktop PCs she can use. They also run IT awareness sessions but she hasn't used them.

How would they expect to find the service?

U1: Would search on Google 'ESA sending docs' or 'ESA new claim' and expect to find a link.

U3: Would look on GOV.UK for info on types of ESA and how to claim (misunderstood the research task)

U4: Said she would search 'How do I send my sick note?' on Google. She would also try asking 'Siri' but felt she needed idiot proof instructions.

U5: Said she would expect to find links to the service via the HMRC site
Or would Google something like 'upload evidence for ESA or DWP'

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What would they do once they have found the service?

All users selected 'Send your fit note' from Google search results page.

Users 1 and 2 said they would expect to see it higher in the search results page but would still choose the 'Send your fit note' option.

All users found the link and section called 'How to send your fit note' easily on the GOV.UK ESA pages.

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Confirmations contact preferences and response times

User 1 would expect an email confirmation option "… but not everyone checks emails everyday – so text is better."

She would expect:
- a fit note received confirmation – straight away
- a fit note processed confirmation – a few days later

She seemed unsure she'd actually finished sending her fit note on the final page and wasn't sure if she could close it.

She said she'd take a photo of the screen as proof she'd sent it.

In the event of her phone breaking, she'd expect a letter.

Confirmation contact preferences and response times (cont.)

U2: Would expect a 'received' text confirmation the same day.

U3: Would expect a 'received' text confirmation by the next day.

U4: Would expect a 'received' text confirmation within a few minutes.

U5: Would like to get texts to confirm:

- fit note received – within 48 hours
- a fit note processed – within 1 to 2 weeks

She had no confidence she'd get a text confirmation (due to previous experience with Tax Credits) so would also like a letter.

How and when would they chase up?

U1: Would call after a week if not heard anything (by searching for ESA contact number) if no option to email or use live chat.

U2: Would call the number in 'Get help' if didn't get a text confirmation within a day. Would expect contact info to be on GOV.UK. Would also look to see if 'live chat' option was available.

U3: Noted there was a 'Get help' number within the service so he would call that after 2 days.

U4: Would call after 30 minutes if no text confirmation received.

U5: Would call after 48 hours if not had confirmation fit note received. They'd look on their benefit letter for a phone number.

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Sick note/ Fit note

All of the users here referred to the document as a 'sick note' but none of them questioned the use of the name 'fit note' when browsing search results and navigating the service.

U1: Stated her Dr had informed her the 'sick note' was now called a 'fit note'.

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Where do they get support?

U5: Would ask family or friends, especially if they were too ill to get out of bed.

U3: Would get help from staff in a library and felt the service would be better when accessed via a smartphone. He also gets help from his son.

U2: Would get help from her kids but felt she could have done it. She was happy to hear that she could use the service in a local library. She could also rely on the help of her aunt or a friend.

U1: Would get help from her 8 year old. For anything to do with government she would ask her mum who works on computers.

Help taking a photo link….

During this round of testing we wanted to see whether users noticed the link and if they would click it. If they did, how would they react to it?

To do this we programmed the prototype to advise users that their image had not been accepted. Users saw the 'not accepted' error twice and on their third attempt the image would be accepted.

All users saw and clicked on the link, some before attempting their first photo, some once they had received the error message. The information presented to them within the link was understand and was found to be helpful.

*I am confident that the photo guidance link is now ready to be included within the 'live' service.

New content within prototype…..

In this version of the prototype we have included a new screen that advises users that their image has been accepted by the service.

We wanted to test whether users understood what this meant and also to see what they would do next. The service requires the user to add some information before submitting their fit note to DWP. Would they know that or would they think that they had done all they needed to do?

All users understood the message to be telling them that the fit note was readable. Some users also thought that the service had checked the information relevant to their ESA claim within the fit note.

All users went on to provide the required information and successfully reached the end of the service.

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Service usability

I thought it worthwhile to share a few notes collected on the usability of the service.

All users navigated the service with ease and those that read the guidance clearly demonstrated the prompts shown when trying to take the photo.

We had some feedback on not knowing how or where to save a scanned image to a desktop though this user stated she would be inclined to access on her iPad instead.

Service feedback

This user group gave some great feedback on the service, using words like 'that was easy' and 'this seems loads safer'.

One user felt that any new claimant would feel this was the way its always been done.

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Insights

We continue to hear that users who have previously had a negative experience with government do not trust that they will be contacted by the department. This could cause nugatory contact.

*Consider adding a time line message to the content advising users when to expect their text. KIV those living in rural areas/low mobile network coverage.
*Or are we content that those who would consider contacting the dept would receive a text before they could dial the number?

We continue to see that some users do not realise that they have come to the end of the service and are left confused about whether they have done everything that they needed to do.

Adding content advising that the fit note has been checked and accepted provides assurance to the user that they have done everything correctly and helps to alleviate anxiety. We need to be careful however that the user does not believe that the content within the fit note has been checked.

*Consider a slight change to content and re test with users.

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