HAPPY PAWS

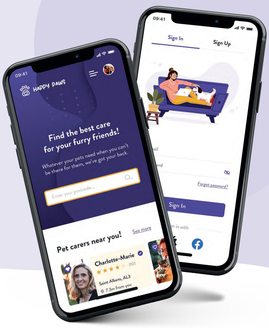
UI & UX Case Study

Happy Paws is a location-based responsive web application that helps pet owners find pet walkers/carers near them and their searched location.

Role

UX & UI Designer

Tools used



Problem Statement

The population of dogs in the UK was estimated at 12.5 million in 2020/21 and, since the start of the pandemic, a total of 3.2 million households in the UK have acquired a pet. For many workers, the cosy days of remote working are coming to an end and some may find that their new acquisition is more trouble to look after than they had anticipated and longer days away from home is not fair for the animal.

Solution

The aim is to create an on-demand dog walking and pet sitting service that will consist of simple ways for pet owners to search for a suitable dog walker/pet carer, book walks/sitters, manage payments and track dog walks. Professional dog walkers/carers will also be able to use the app to organise their client base, manage payments and plan walking routes.

The Design Process

01 Discovery & Research
- Competitive Analysis
- User Interviews

02 Gathering Requirements
- User Personas
- User Stories
- User Flow Diagram

03 Prototyping & Testing
- Sketching Wire-frames & Rapid Prototyping
- User Testing & Feedback

04 Design
- Mid-fidelity Wire-frames
- Style Guide
- Preference Testing
- Final Mockups

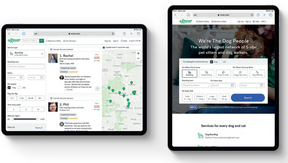
01. Discovery & Research

Competitive Analysis

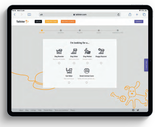
Research was undertaken to find 2 similar web responsive applications. 2 that I found were 'Rover' and 'Tailster'. Both were popular choices with pet owners and hold certain features tailored to their target audience.

Rover

- High ratings on App/Google store and Google search
- Users are covered by the Rover Guarantee
- Poor social media presence
- Poor user experience



Tailster



- Variety of care e.g. day care/daily visits/walking
- Tracking of dog walk/ sharing of information
- Bad reputation according to app store and Google reviews
- Bad user experience - out of date/bad feature

User Interviews

I interviewed a variety of participants between the ages of 20-60; each of who either had or had a pet. The questions I asked them were:

- How confident would you feel in using a dog walker / pet sitter / pet service you have found online? Please explain your reasoning.
- What would you expect / want from an app like this? What features would be beneficial to you or make you want to use it?
- Have you tried any digital product before to support your business / care of your pet? If so, what made you want to use them / stop using them?
- What information would be most important to you when trying to find a potential dog walker / sitter?
- How often do you plan the route that you will walk? If so, do you plan the route you will walk ahead of time? Do you walk a familiar route each time or do you look for varied routes?
- What is your favourite web app / mobile app to use? Why do you like using it e.g are there certain features that you like? Are there any websites that you don't like to use, please explain your reasoning.

My findings were...

Users would feel confident using a dog walker/carer having found them online as long as they have been vetted beforehand and can provide references to confirm who they are and their ability to look after pets.

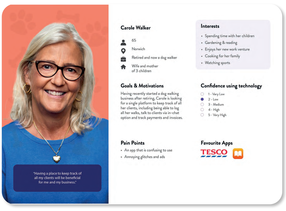
They need the app to be very user friendly and straight forward to use.

All participants said they would feel more comfortable leaving their pet with somebody if they had read positive reviews and references about them.

02.

Gathering Requirements

User Persona



User Stories

After going through the first stage of concepting and gathering requirements through interviewing targeted users, information was provided to give a scope of feature requirements based on the scenario jobs to be done.

When looking for a potential dog walker, **I want to** be able to read reviews and see star ratings, **so I can** see what other users have to say about them.

When looking for potential dog walkers, **I want to** be able to see their availability and pricing, **so I don't** waste time scrolling through profiles if they aren't suitable to my needs.

When searching for walking routes, **I want to** be able to search and filter by distance/location/times, **so I can** ensure an appropriate walk is done for my client.

When my dog is on a walk with its walker, **I want to** be able to track their whereabouts, **so I can** see they are being walked properly and know they are safe.

Features from jobs to be done (JTBD)

- Create a profile / Sign In
- Search for nearby pet carers/dog walkers
- Track your dogs walk
- Read reviews and star ratings
- Filter search results
- See pricing and calendar of availability

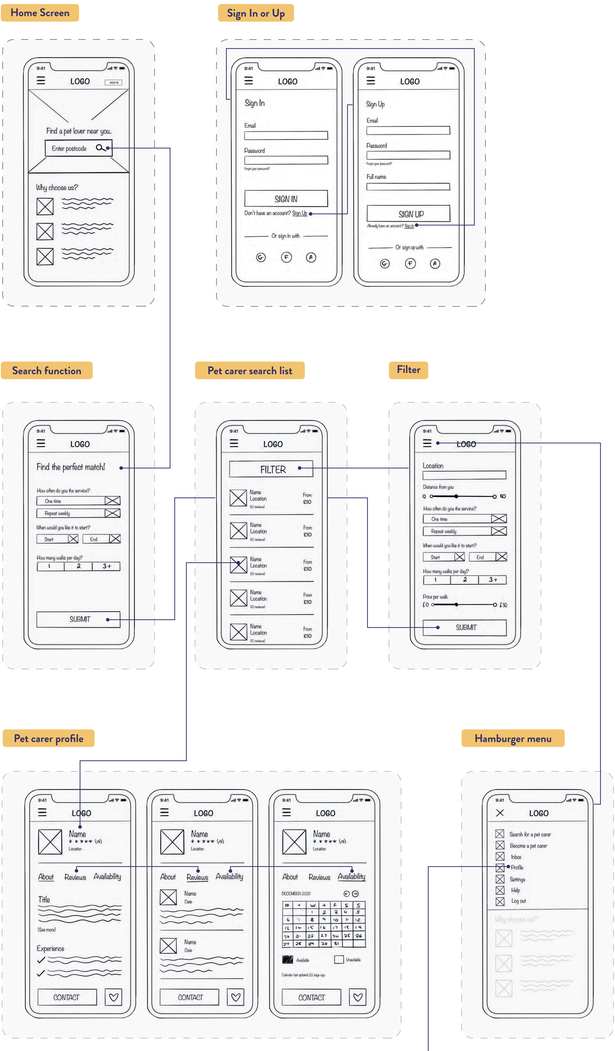
User Flow Diagram

03.

Prototyping & Testing

Sketching wire-frames & Rapid Prototyping

After I had created my user flow diagram, I went to pen and paper and used the 'Crazy 8' design sprint method to quickly map out some initial ideas I had. I focussed on creating 2-3 different designs for each screen and then digitized my low fidelity wire-frames so they were cleaner and easier to understand for my users who were taking part in some user testing research. I used an rapid prototype app called 'Marvel' which allowed me to connect my screens together.



Usability Testing & Feedback

Overall the testing went very well. I gained plenty of valuable feedback which allowed me to make any adjustments before creating my mid-fidelity wire-frames. Below you can see some of the comments I received back from the participants.

General Consensus

- Search option is very easy to see as it is the first feature on the homepage.
- Users liked that you could see the amount of reviews a walker/carer had before clicking on their profile.
- Users liked that they were able to sign in using their Facebook, Google, Apple accounts as they feel this speeds up the sign in/up process.

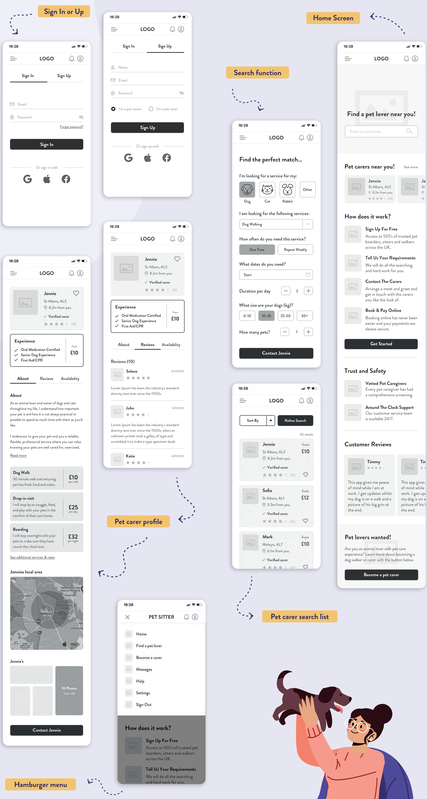
Points to be improved on

- Users would like to see some more options on the filter page such as duration of dog walk, experience of walker and size of animal.
- Some users weren't sure about the wording 'pet parent' and found this to be slightly misleading and could confuse the user.
- Some users were confused about the sign in/up icons (Google, Facebook, Apple). They didn't understand what 'A' stood for.
- Users would like to see a section about the dog walkers experience and why they are suitable to look after their pet.

04.

Design

Mid-Fidelity Wire-frames



Style Guide

Primary Colours

#5340BE
R: 83 G: 64 B: 142

#FIIBB47
R: 241 G: 187 B: 71

Secondary Colours

#EC634A
R: 239 G: 99 B: 74

Typography

Brandon Grotesque

Aa 50px · Aa 30px · Aa 22px · Aa 20px · Aa 18px · Aa 16px · Aa 14px · Aa 12px

Icons

Components

Dropdown Menu

Empty

Dropdown

Selected

Dog Walking
Boarding
House Sitting
Drop-in visit
Doggy day care

Selected

Dog Walking

Input Fields

Empty

Email

Password

Forgot password?

Completed

Jennie@gmail.com

Password

Forgot password?

Active

Jenn

Password

Forgot password?

Check Boxes

Empty

Hover

Selected

Slider

Empty

Hover

Selected

Tab

About | Reviews | Availability

Pagination

Adjustment

Empty

Text

Hover

Text

Selected

Text

Preference Testing

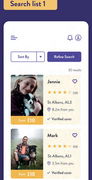
After my the style for my app was decided on, I mocked up two versions of the pet carer search list in order to undergo some prefence testing to asses how users react to my designs.

Search List 1 performed better, but the difference was not statistically significant.

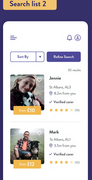
Here is what users had to say about search list 1:

- I feel the format is easier to read
- It's clean and I really like the composition
- It looks more balanced and I like the yellow background behind the writing.
- Star rating was at the top of the list which makes it easier to find. It also is clearer as to which profile you are selecting

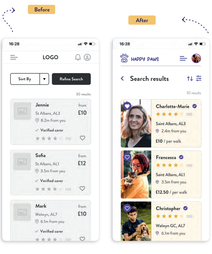
Search list 1



Search list 2



Refining the design

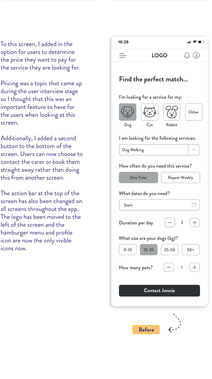


After some user testing, I made tweaks to various screens to improve the user experience.

The 'verified' text was changed to a small icon that would sit beside the profile name. This provided me with a little more space to play around with the other elements.

I took localisation into account and used longer names for the profiles to ensure that there was enough space for longer text if this was needed when translated to other languages.

I changed the format and wording of the profile to make it clearer for the users. The new pricing now states the exact price per walk and not an estimate.



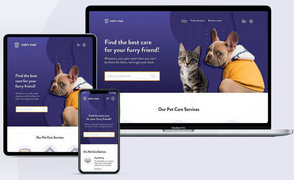
To this screen, I added in the option for users to determine the price they want to pay for the service they are looking for.

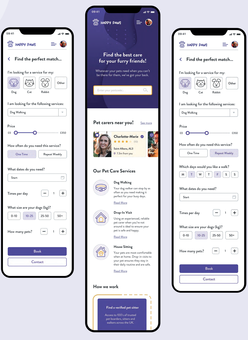
Pricing was a topic that came up during the user interview stage so I thought that this was an important feature to have for the users when looking at this screen.

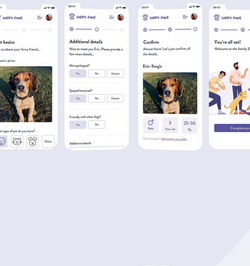
Additionally, I added a second button to the bottom of the screen. Users can now choose to contact the carer or book them straight away rather than doing this from another screen.

The action bar at the top of the screen has also been changed on all screens throughout the app. The logo has been moved to the left of the screen and the hamburger menu and profile icon are now the only visible icons now.

Final Mockup Screens







Retrospective

How did you interpret the project brief?

The project brief was to design a location-based responsive web application. As my own version of this, I chose to design a dog walking and pet care app that helps pet owners find pet walkers/carers near them and their searched location.

How have you met the project objective?

I have met the project objective by creating a web-responsive web application that meets the needs of its users and solves the problems they are facing with existing apps. I have created an app that allows pet owners to search for suitable dog walkers/pet carers, book walks/sitters, manage payments and track dog walks.

What was your role in this project?

The sole UX, UI and visual designer.

How did you decide on your MVP features and functionality?

Conducting competitive analysis and user research allowed me to gain an insight into user pain points and what features they find valuable in current apps they use.

What roadblocks did you encounter as you worked on each deliverable? How did you overcome these roadblocks?

One of the biggest roadblocks for this project was time management. I spent a lot of time trying to really fine tune my low fidelity wire-frames when I should have realised that my designs were most likely going to change and adapt throughout the project and conversations with my mentor. I started this project thinking I could create two sides to this app. From the pet owner perspective and also the dog walking/pet carer perspective. From a few tasks in, I just knew that with the time I had, this wasn't going to be possible. To overcome this, I focussed on my MVP and created the screens that were most needed in order for the app to work.

What insights from your research and testing had the biggest impact on your final design?

The results that I got from doing the user testing, research and preference testing definitely helped to shape the features and designs of my screens. The most important thing that users felt they wanted was a very easy and straight forward app to use and I feel I have delivered this.

Did you have to change direction at all? If so, why?

As mentioned above, my idea for this project was to create two sides to the app that allowed pet owners and professionals to use. Due to time constraints, this was not possible so I focussed solely on my MVP points which allowed me to create the minimum amount of screens that would be needed for this app to work. I also worked in a very agile manner during this project so my layouts and designs were constantly changing as I progressed through the different tasks.

If you could, what would you do differently?

I think I could have benefited from doing more user testing & research throughout. I found the user interviews and preference testing tasks to be very useful so this is something that I think I will do more of during future projects. Another thing that could have helped me decide on my layouts quicker was doing some more rapid sketching, this was a useful exercise and helped to visually see what would work and what wouldn't before creating them digitally.