Dan Cork

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Frontend engineering and design consultant specialising in React and design systems. 15+ years building production applications, with deep expertise in UI architecture, performance optimisation, and bridging engineering and design.

SKILLS

Frontend: React (since 2014), React Native (since 2017), TypeScript, JavaScript, Next.js, HTML5, CSS

State: Redux, Jotai, Zustand, Context API

Styling: Tailwind CSS, styled-components, CSS-in-JS

Testing: Vitest, Jest, Playwright, Cypress, React Testing Library

Architecture: Micro-frontends, Monorepos, Web Components, Design Systems

Build: Vite, Webpack, nx, Turbo, Storybook

Backend: Node.js, Nest.js, Express, Fastify, Ruby, Python

DevOps: AWS, Azure, GCP, CI/CD, Git

Design: Figma, UX/UI Design, Accessibility, Design Tokens

Process: API Design, REST APIs, Performance Optimization, Agile/Scrum, Mentoring

EXPERIENCE

Foundational, UK — *Frontend Engineering and Design Consultant*

AUG 2025 - DEC 2025, REMOTE, CONTRACT

Brought in to accelerate feature delivery and improve codebase quality ahead of a launch for the company's primary client Sport England.

- Designed and shipped over 12 features in the back-office and client-facing applications
- Refactored the React codebases to use best practices and reduce technical debt, improving delivery time of some features by 5x
- Established testing infrastructure (Vitest + Playwright) achieving stability for critical paths

Birdie, UK — *Frontend Engineering Consultant*

FEB 2025 - AUG 2025, REMOTE, CONTRACT

Brought in to diagnose and fix critical performance issues in client-facing applications, then extended to support feature development and establish testing practices.

- Built Playwright performance testing suite monitoring web vitals across core workflows, identifying bottlenecks causing slower load and interaction times
- Refactored application screens and architecture within frontend monorepo, resolving critical performance bottlenecks in core user journeys
- Delivered multiple features under tight deadline for v2 refactor of Birdie's rostering and finance modules
- Established end-to-end testing infrastructure using Playwright

- Created architecture and execution plan for implementing a scalable solution for Birdie's React applications.
- Mentored multiple engineers on frontend and testing best practices

Orri, UK — *Lead Frontend Engineer & UX Designer*

JAN 2024 - OCT 2024, REMOTE

Brought in to design and build greenfield applications for eating disorder treatment clinics, replacing legacy systems used by clinical and administrative staff.

- Designed frontend architecture using React, TypeScript, and RadixUI for staff portal and client-facing applications
- Built TypeScript SDK generator from Swagger documentation, ensuring type-safe frontend/backend contracts during rapid MVP development
- Built design system foundations in Figma and code, establishing component library and design tokens
- Conducted user research with clinical and administrative teams to understand workflow pain points and accessibility requirements for neurodivergent client base
- Created interactive prototypes in Figma to validate designs before development
- Supported backend engineers with API design (Ruby on Rails) and database schema decisions for event scheduling and treatment plans.

Unit4, UK — *Design System Manager*

JUN 2022 - DEC 2023, REMOTE, REDUNDANCY

Hired to create Unit4's design system (Ripple) from scratch, establishing strategy, team, and technical foundations.

- Architected monorepo codebase using nx with CI/CD pipelines in Azure, publishing to private npm registry and deploying Storybook documentation
- Built accessible web components and React components with full test coverage using Jest and React Testing Library
- Created multi-layered component architecture (web components + React wrappers) enabling adoption across legacy and greenfield products
- Established Figma component library, supporting UX designers with research and implementation patterns
- Wrote technical documentation including migration guides for engineering teams adopting the design system
- Managed cross-functional team of 3 designers and 5 engineers, coaching on design systems thinking and technical implementation
- Developed design system strategy and roadmap aligned with organisation's modernisation of legacy applications
- Design system adopted by 3 teams across 4 products within 6 months of launch

Birdie, London — *Staff Frontend Engineer*

JAN 2021 - JUN 2022, REMOTE

- Architected and built company-wide design system using React, React Native and styled-components for web and mobile platforms
- Supported engineering teams migrating to micro-frontend architecture and adopting the design system
- Mentored engineers across all levels on React and CSS best practices

Portchain, Copenhagen — Tech Lead

SEP 2019 - DEC 2020, REMOTE, CONTRACT

- Led team of software engineers delivering performance optimisations and architectural improvements
- Built Python service wrapper enabling data scientists to implement and deploy key data models

- Planned and implemented large-scale architectural changes improving application performance
- Established foundations of design system working with UX designer
- Set up and facilitated agile processes including backlog review, planning and retrospectives

NearForm, Waterford— Tech Lead

OCT 2017 - SEP 2019, REMOTE, CONTRACT

- Led team of software engineers and UX designer delivering client projects
- Managed client relationships, gathering and actioning feedback throughout delivery
- Set up and facilitated agile processes including backlog management, planning, retrospectives and demonstrations

RECOMMENDATIONS

Chris McEwan, CPTO at Foundational

We hired Dan to work on an early product that was still in the discovery phase with customers. This can be a difficult stage of development because use-cases are still emerging and patterns are not well established. Dan proved to be very adaptable: from prototyping broad feature proof of concepts for user feedback, to fine detailed work on component accessibility and interactivity, to internal tooling and developer experience.

We found him to be diligent with a quality finish to his work. He was able to contribute and articulate technical recommendations and was pragmatic about trading off engineering practices against business needs. Although not part of his role with us I got the impression that he would be a good mentor to junior engineers. I would certainly recommend him for a team investing in their UI/UX practices.

Edward Taylor, CTO at Birdie

Dan took a high level mission statement (in our case - 'make our complex FE performant') and quickly built, led and executed on an end-to-end plan to make it happen quickly, working across multiple teams and services. He felt like a true owner from day one, demonstrating startup-level urgency and a genuine care for the product and impact being delivered.

I cannot recommend him highly enough as an extremely capable, personable and flexible Frontend leader / architect / developer.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

School of Code, Birmingham— *Bootcamp Mentor*

OCT 2021 - JAN 2025

- Mentored aspiring software engineers through 16-week bootcamp programme
- Provided weekly technical and career guidance supporting students into industry roles

What The DS?! — *Podcast Co-host*

JAN 2023 - PRESENT

- Co-host design systems podcast exploring guest journeys, careers and real-world implementation insight

Public Speaking & Writing

- Delivered conference talks in New York, San Francisco, London, Paris and Sofia on CSS, React, UX and Design Systems
- Led workshops on React and JavaScript
- Published articles in net magazine and web developer mag on frontend development topics
- Cover feature in net magazine (2016) on the future of CSS

Open University

Certificate of Higher Education in Arts and Humanities

JAN 2018 - NOV 2021