

## Self-assessment by Gwenno Edwards

SUBMITTED ON 11 SEP 2022



### A summary about me:

I'm a service designer specialising in participatory and co-productive design methods. I started my career as an ethnographic researcher and now specialise in creating spaces where people providing and receiving services can share power and work together to design solutions. I have been a service design consultant with Innovation Unit, Basis and Co-Production Lab Wales designing and transforming public services in the UK. I'm also a trainer and have recently trained hundreds of public sector staff in Wales on how to get started with user research. I now work freelance with organisations who address social and environmental inequalities.

### I currently work as a/at:

Self Employed

### My LinkedIn profile:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/gwennoedwards/>

### My social media channels:

<https://twitter.com/GwennoEdwards>

### My educational background:

I studied Geography (Bachelor of Arts) at the London School of Economics (2013) which was my introduction into qualitative and quantitative research and the importance of robust research to inform the design of spaces. This was an important part of my journey to understanding that all experiences (such as living in a neighbourhood) are designed, and that we can positively influence the design things my understanding the needs of different citizens.

I have also taken part in Year Here (2016) - a post graduate course in social innovation. This was my introduction to service design methodology and the experience that showed me how impactful good service design can be, especially when providing public and charitable services that people often don't have a choice but to use.

I have also taken part in the Innovation Unit Design Academy (2022) whilst I was employed there (<https://www.iuda.org.uk/>) This was a one-year, part-time programme to grow my design expertise alongside my full time work.

### The following theories are the key components of my approach to service design:

1. Working with users as co-designers can lead to better insights and ideas.

Oftentimes, especially when working on complex social and environmental problems, one-off user interviews are not always useful as a



standalone method of uncovering user needs. When problems are complex and we are trying to design for the future, it may take a series of conversations to begin to uncover insights about needs. Additionally, spending more time with users can help to challenge our implicit assumptions as designers. As well as gaining new ideas and perspectives through spending more time working alongside users, co-design can also help to change our existing ideas or views.

2. Services should work in a way that feels familiar to users.

When there is a common design pattern for a service, new services should adopt this so that users can more easily navigate their way through a service. For example, if booking an appointment on a website, users might expect an email or text to confirm their appointment. If walking into a community centre users might expect a timetable or information board as they walk in through the door.

3. Services should first be created as prototypes before they are fully developed.

Prototypes that users can interact with help designers gather feedback that is more robust and useful than just asking users to imagine a hypothetical service. Whilst it is not always possible to create prototypes that resemble all parts of the service, even low fidelity prototypes can help us gather more specific feedback that will help us refine or validate design quickly and cheaper than building the full service first.

4. The Design Council's Double Diamond Framework for Innovation

I use this as a tool for designing my own project methodologies as well as showing others who are new to service design the design theory that sits behind successful service innovation. As it clearly separates the problem space from the solution space, it helps to give legitimacy to the idea of not jumping straight to solutions.

**These are the most relevant resources I base my work on and I recommend them as a body of knowledge in service design:**

This is Service Design Doing - this book provides a range of tools that are easy to learn and use, and acts as a great library of ideas when you're trying to decide which activities to include in a workshop at various stages of a design process.

Good Services (Lou Downe) - There can be a tendency to want to design new principles for new services, but this book outlines all the necessary principles (including case studies) that are required to design good services. There is no need to "reinvent the wheel" each time, but instead use these principles as foundations for new ideas.

Beyond Sticky Notes: Doing Co-design for Real: Mindsets, methods and movements (Kelly Ann McKercher)

Whilst this book does not discuss service design exclusively, it also talks about programme and product design, it is my top resource in terms of learning about best practice for 'co-design' which is relevant for anyone who wants to use co-design in their service design process. It's packed full of tips, examples and frameworks for how to lead collaborative design work.

<https://designpatternsformentalhealth.org/patterns/>

This is a new resource I have recently come across but have started using it immediately on two of my projects. These are reusable evidence-based solutions to common design problems in the field of mental health.

Service Design Show (podcast)

A great way to hear stories and case studies from service design challenges across lots of different sectors.

Radical Help - Hilary Cottam

This is a great book for showing how service design as an approach is very relevant to the civic sector. It includes case studies that demystify the application of design methods with real life projects and people in communities in the UK.

**I have X years of working experience in service design:**

4

**My working experience in service design includes involvement in:**



- Service design projects
- Service design consultancy
- Service design training

I have particular experience in the following service sectors:

Health care, homelessness, mental health, youth services.

I have conducted X service design projects that aim at creating improvements or innovations within organisations:

5

These are the service design projects I have successfully delivered:

- May 2019 - December 2020

- Innovation Unit for Healthy London Partnership
- Designing better support (health and job seeking) for people with musculoskeletal issues and mental ill health
- New collaboration between statutory and non-statutory services to deliver joint referral, signposting and activities.
- Some reduction in MSK pain and/or new social connections for individuals taking part in the pilot services.

- January 2020 - July 2020

- Innovation Unit for Salford City Council
- Designing a recurrent care service for a group of local authorities in Greater Manchester
- A blueprint for a scalable service that can be personalised for delivery in local context and with each family that has been agreed by multiple local authorities. Slight changes to existing service based on learning from elsewhere during the design process.
- No direct impact on service users yet as the process for applying for funding was postponed due to Covid. Bringing staff from different local government authorities throughout this process has helped them share best practice and learning, and staff have implemented evidenced-based solutions to their practice.
- Service handbook that was updated to include learning from the process of creating a scaleable service  
<https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/media/1359/strengthening-families-handbook.pdf>

- May 2021 - December 2021

- Innovation Unit for St John Ambulance England
- A new bite-size introduction to physical and mental health with and for young people who face disadvantage
- Final deliverables included design research report, customer journeys, prototyping plan, service blueprint, service specification, pilot specification, and pilot plan. 'Young Responders' has now been launched
- Young people who have taken part in the pilot have reported gaining new life saving skills, improved confidence and self esteem  
<https://www.sja.org.uk/get-involved/young-people/young-responders-home/how-it-works/>  
<https://www.pioneerspost.com/business-school/20220613/three-tips-on-engaging-hard-reach-audience-through-co-design>

- January 2022 - August 2022

- CoProduction Lab for Wales for GISDA
- Co-designing a service model for a new hub to support young people who are homeless to access support that helps them thrive
- Final deliverables included proposition, service principles, customer journeys, service blueprint and pilot plan
- In early stages of impact as the physical space where the service will be run has not yet been finished. Staff and young people have reported feeling more empowered in relation to the new project, and young people made new connections/friends after taking part in the design process.

- June 2022 - September 2022

- Law Centres Network
- Co-designing a service model for a new family law service to be delivered across law centres in England and Wales
- Final deliverables included proposition, service principles, customer journeys, service model and brief for further work on service design development



- In early stages of impact as the prototyping activities will be delivered by the client and members of law centres so no direct impact on service users yet. Client and individual law centres have gained clarity around which elements of the service (mostly backstage) can be delivered centrally, and which are delivered locally (mostly front stage) and bespoke to the local context.

**I have provided service design training sessions and/or other educational experiences for X years:**

2

**My philosophy as a trainer is:**

I believe that training sessions and learning experiences should involve at least some elements of experiential learning. When there is plenty of time (e.g. multiple days) this might involve guiding learners through a design process so that they develop an idea and have an opportunity to use tools and methods taught to them. Even when there is a shorter amount of time (e.g. a couple of hours) I believe that there should still be time for learners to have a go at trying something themselves, and then have space to reflect on their experience, critically analyse what they did and how it went.

I also believe that learning experiences should include time for learners to consider the application of their learning - the "now what?" This means having time to think about how they would apply what they learned in the experience (however short or long) to a similar or different situation in the future. It is hoped that this helps learners to feel a sense of ownership over what they've learned and what they do with what they've learned.

I also design learning experiences with opportunities for collaboration. By working together, different learners can support the development of each other's skills. I sometimes deliver training and learning experiences to people working in the charity or public services sector and have found it very helpful to create time for them to pool ideas as they share many challenges and frustrations, even if they don't work in the same organisation. It's important to make sure that everyone feels psychologically safe to collaborate and as a facilitator and trainer I have to pay attention to group dynamics and make sure that people feel that they can voice their opinion within a particular group.

**These are the service design training sessions and/or other educational experiences I've facilitated within the last year:**

August 2021

1 week introduction to service design and service design sprint

St John Ambulance Young Designers Learning Week (Design Camp)

Client: St John Ambulance (sessions delivered to St John Ambulance staff and current and future programme participants age 16-25)

24 participants

No link - tweet from client <https://twitter.com/rachyp/status/1430494989839179785>

January 2022

1 hour learning session

What is co-design?

Client: RSPB Cymru and partner organisations

12 participants

March - May 2022

3 hour training

Introduction to User Research (delivered x7 times)

Client: Centre for Digital Public Services Wales. Training delivered for: NHS Wales staff and public sector staff in Wales

Average of 15 participants in each training

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-user-research-for-nhs-wales-3-hour-course-registration-321241852027?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

May - June 2022



3x 2.5 hour training sessions

User Research for Practitioners

Client: Centre for Digital Public Services Wales. Training delivered for: NHS Wales staff and public sector staff in Wales

12 participants

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/user-research-for-practitioners-3x-25-hour-programme-tickets-274185264507?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

July 25th 2022

1.5 hour session

What does it mean to co-design programmes and services with local communities?

Client: internal session for Nature and Us (Natural Resources Wales) and Project Seagrass

20 participants

No link - closed internal staff session

August 17th

3 hours

User Research for Service Design

Client: Basis Ltd for Newham Council (England)

10 participants

No links - internal session

**I mostly provide my training offerings in the following language(s):**

Welsh, English

**I mostly provide my training offerings in the following countries/cities:**

United Kingdom

**I cover the following topics during my training offerings:**

- Definition of service design
- Differentiation of service design to other approaches like design thinking, service marketing and service branding
- Relationship of service design to agile, scrum and lean
- User research/deep customer insights
- Designing and conducting co-creation workshops
- Creativity and ideation processes
- Facilitation skills for service design
- Prototyping of services
- Implementation of service design concepts

**My training participants typically have the following level of experience:**

- Novice (new to service design)
- Fundamental (basic knowledge)

**These are my favourite cases I use to inform participants about the impact and value of service design:**

1. Living Well Mental Health Systems (UK) <https://www.livingwellsystems.uk/service-offer> - good example of showing the value of intentional service design, particularly around embedding service principles and organisational policies and procedures that people with mental ill health to live well. It is also a good example of using a service design approach and principles to unite several different organisations and partners around shared outcomes.

2. Doc Ready: New Tool Empowers Young Adults Experiencing Mental Health Issues

<https://www.service-design-network.org/case-studies/doc-ready-helping-young-people-make-the-most-of-their-mental-health-care> - good



example to show that impact and improvements to the user journey can happen very early in the journey, even before the official first touchpoint of the service journey.

3. VoiceAbility | Development of Daybook, a digital diary for people with learning disabilities

<https://www.designhumanly.com/daybook> - good example of using relatively low cost prototyping for a digital platform

## These are the service design methods and tools that I use during my sessions:

### Research

I offer training and tools on conducting research at various stages of the design process. My skillset and knowledge mainly lies in qualitative research and I have taught others about ethnography, user interviews, participant observation and focus groups. The need to understand user needs, impact of the service, service experiences and the impact any changes to the service will have on the operations of the organisation is key to service design. For people who are new to service design, research is often a familiar and more accessible entry point to starting to work in a more user centred way.

### Mapping journeys and systems

Showing others how to map existing and ideal future journeys and systems is one of my favourite methods to use in learning experiences. As well as learning a useful skill it is often an interesting way to show the importance of visualising a service, and shows how different members of staff have different assumptions and ideas about what a journey or system looks like or should look like. It's a useful tool to start discussions about why things are a certain way, and what would need to change for it to be different.

### Ideation (including crafting and using How might we...? questions)

Many of the participants that I work with work on complex and hard challenges in the public sector. Some are doubtful of the relevance of creative confidence, ideation and brainstorming methods to their day to day work. Through a series of tools and activities, introducing people to the importance of play and creativity can be an eye opening experience, and helpful to form stronger connections across a learning group.

### Low-fidelity prototyping

Showing and experiencing how to use low cost prototyping methods is very important when working with participants who work at underfunded and under-resourced public and charity organisations.

## After successfully attending my training sessions, participants will typically be able to:

### User research / design research training:

- Set good research goals and questions
- Choose the right research methods
- Recruit participants
- Conduct research sessions (user interviews, participant observation)
- Run research sessions remotely
- Follow privacy and ethical best practices
- Analyse and communicate findings

### General design/co-design training:

- Use different online and offline ideation activities and tools
- Explain the value of creativity in the process of designing services
- Create a customer journey
- Create a system map
- Create a stakeholder map
- Frame problems in a way that is conducive to ideation
- Create 'how might we' questions
- Plan and conduct low fidelity prototyping activities

I apply the following evaluation tools to make sure the participants have understood the content of my sessions and



### **gained the expected competencies and skills:**

During online training, I use Zoom polls to do a recap of the key learning points and test knowledge and confidence of each of those points.

During in person sessions I create reflection worksheets so that participants can write about their learning in relation to the key methods and tools that they have been introduced to, rate their knowledge and confidence levels and set goals for applying their learning.

I do not apply tests or portfolio evaluations to my sessions at the moment. I am often working with participants who are very new to service design.

### **I systematically evaluate and improve my offerings based on feedback. These are examples of feedback that have led to improvements:**

- I was recently given feedback from a group that had more mixed levels of knowledge and confidence than I was expecting. Some members of the group told me that there was too much content and that the pace was too fast, and others told me that there was too little content and the pace was too slow. In the next session I designed two different versions of each activity so that people could choose how much they wanted to stretch themselves and the pace at which they wanted to work on.

- As part of a recent introduction to user research training I included an introduction to the 'double diamond' when giving background to when/how user research is relevant to the design process. Participants who were unfamiliar with this found it very helpful as a tool to better understand design in a less abstract way, but I was given feedback that I covered the double diamond too quickly and didn't give enough time for clarifying questions. Since it wasn't possible to create more time for this in the training, I decided to share an article about the double diamond in the email to participants before attending the training, to make sure that they all had a basic understanding of service design and the double diamond before attending.

### **I actively support the local or national service design community through:**

- Attending and participating in the bilingual service design community of practice in Wales
- Attending Service Lab London events
- Volunteering at a Design Jam (2020)
- Attending GovCamp Cymru in summer 2022 - an event for people who want to reimagine public services in Wales. Many of the open spaces and discussions were around service design.

I will be moving to a new area soon and will join my local service design meet up community and hope to take an active part in supporting the community

### **I have participated as a speaker in the following events:**

March 2017 2022

CDPS bilingual services community of practice

User research for bilingual design

Live tweeting from the event (in Welsh) [https://twitter.com/cdps\\_cymru/status/1504413785381122051](https://twitter.com/cdps_cymru/status/1504413785381122051)

September 9th 2022

Year Here Venture Lab Bootcamp

My journey to being a freelance service designer

No link to talk, but link to Venture Lab bootcamp information here <https://yearhere.org/programme/#>

April 2022

Kings College London Women Entrepreneurs Retreat

Prototyping your design: Why everyone lies when you ask for feedback about your idea, and what you can do about it.

### **I have published the following books/articles on service design and related fields:**



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Report: "Summit to Sea: Reflecting on the co-design phase"

Report commissioned by RSPB Cymru and Woodland Trust, supported by the Endangered Landscapes Trust

<http://www.summit2sea.wales/learning-from-the-co-design/>

### Contact details:

Gwenno Edwards

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[gwenno.edwards@gmail.com](mailto:gwenno.edwards@gmail.com)