

Unlocking content design success on transactional services

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Hello!



Grace Cook

Content Designer



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Principal Content Designer

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Today's agenda

- Why content design matters
- Civil Money Claims
  - Principles
  - Processes
  - Documentation
- The citizen dashboard
- Q&A

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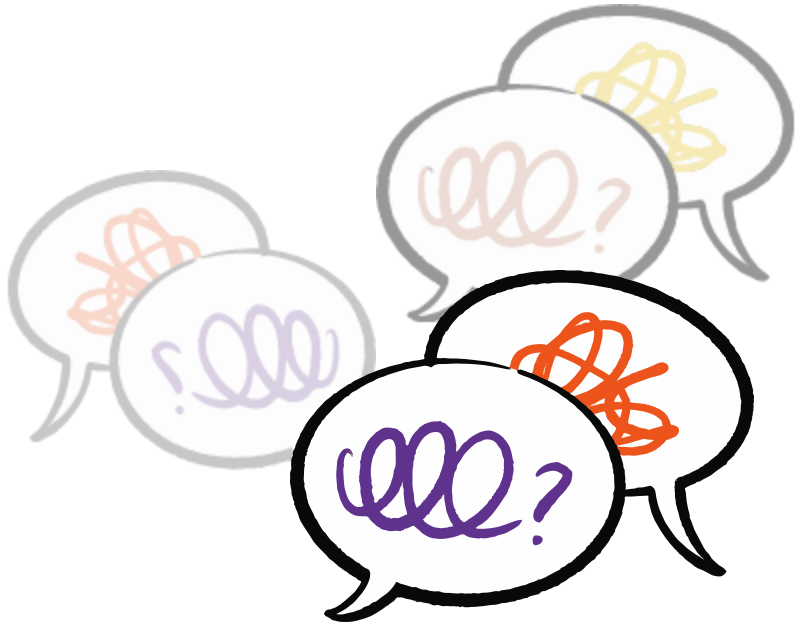
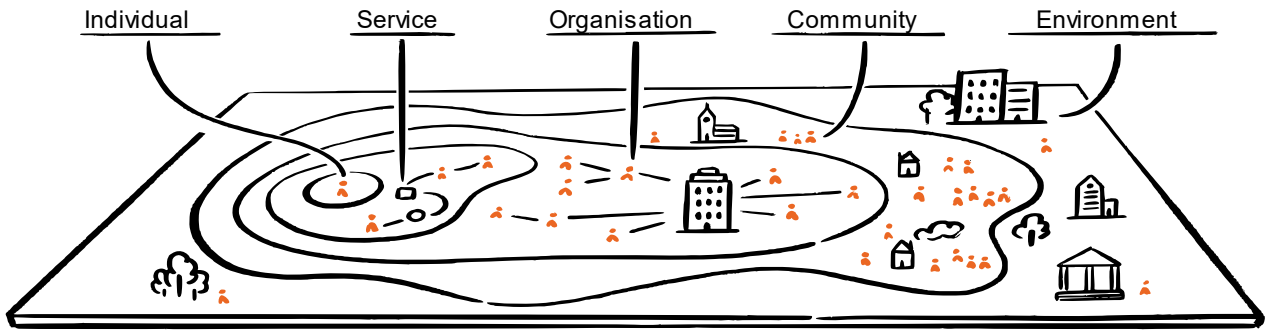
Content design is about using data and evidence to give the audience what they need, at the time they need it, and in a way that they expect it.

Sarah Winters

Shared challenges

- Complex policy areas
- Shifting landscapes and requirements
- Siloed working
- Difficult sign off processes with senior stakeholders
- Broad range of users with multiple needs





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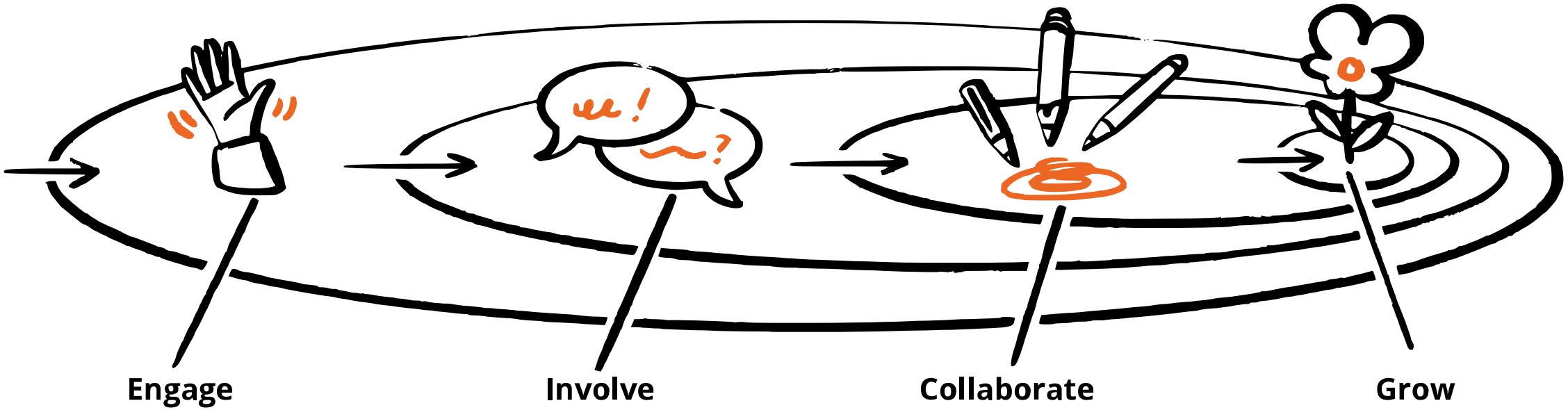
Shared success looks like



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Good content design



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Meets the user need



Accessible & inclusive



Relatable & accurate



Instructive & actionable

Why it matters

- Services people can **access**



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Why it matters



- Services people can **access**
- Information that people can **understand**

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Why it matters

- Services people can **access**
- Information that people can **understand**
- Instruction that people can **action**



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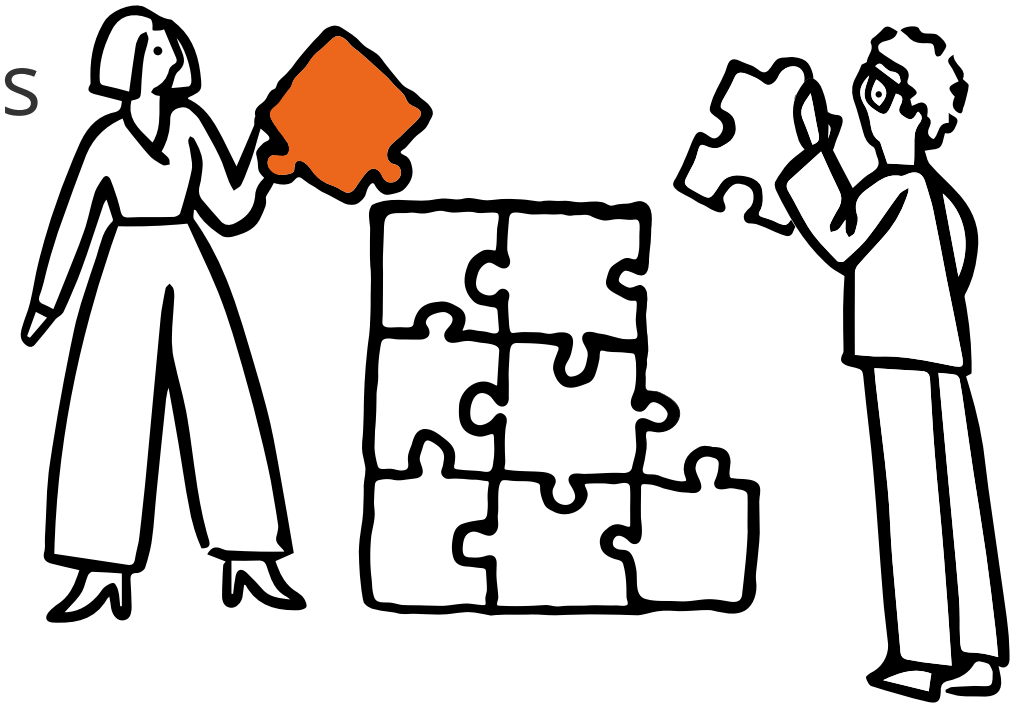
Consistency is key

- Purpose
- Processes and communications
- Patterns



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Case study

Civil Money Claims - an HMCTS service

- An intro to Civil
    - How we revisited design **principles**
    - How we agreed design **processes**
    - How we created design **documentation**
- Working on the citizen dashboard



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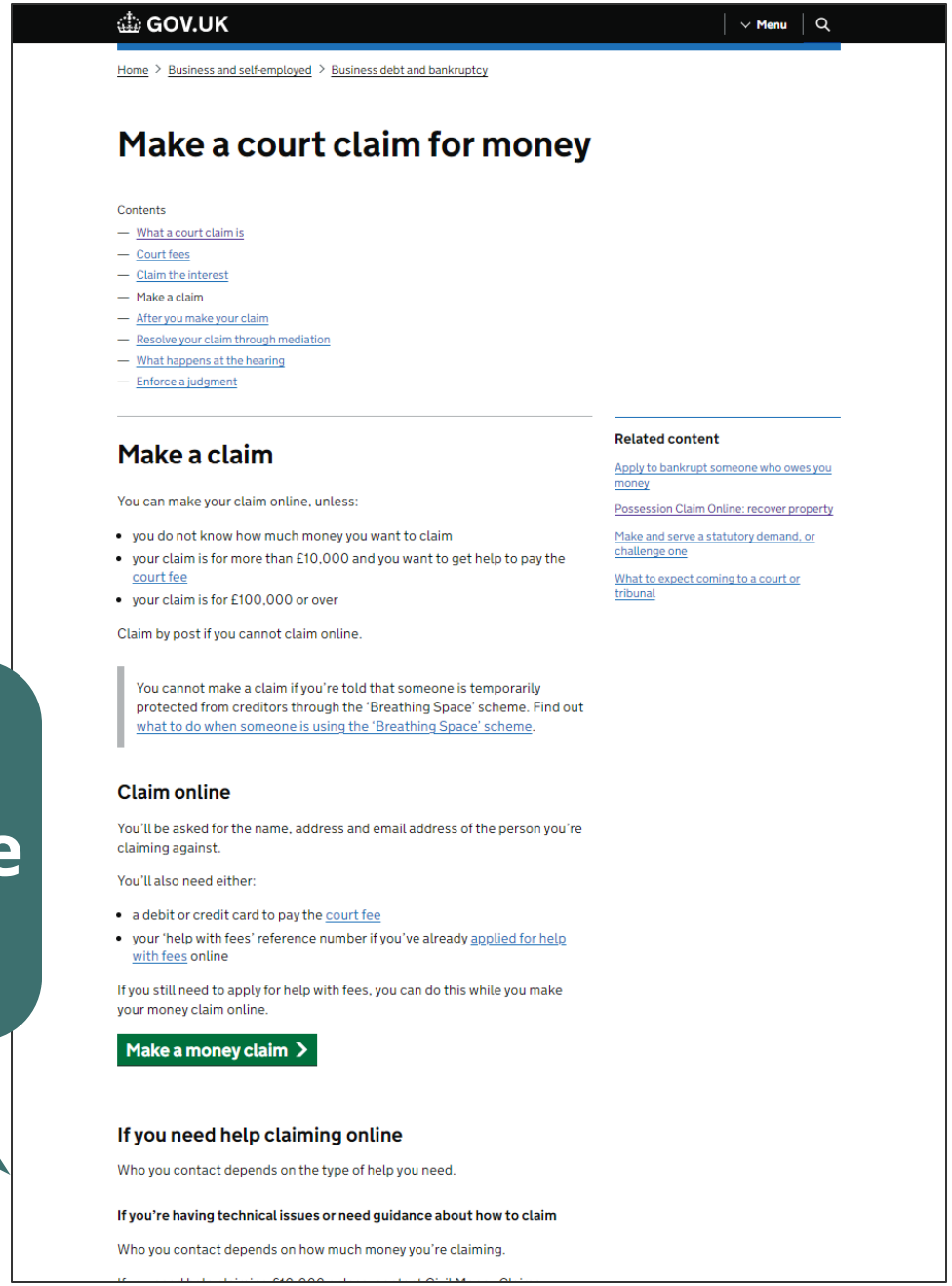
The service

- Civil Money Claims enables people and organisations to resolve financial disputes
- Has processed over 472,000 claims since 2018

"provide access to justice to those who need it"



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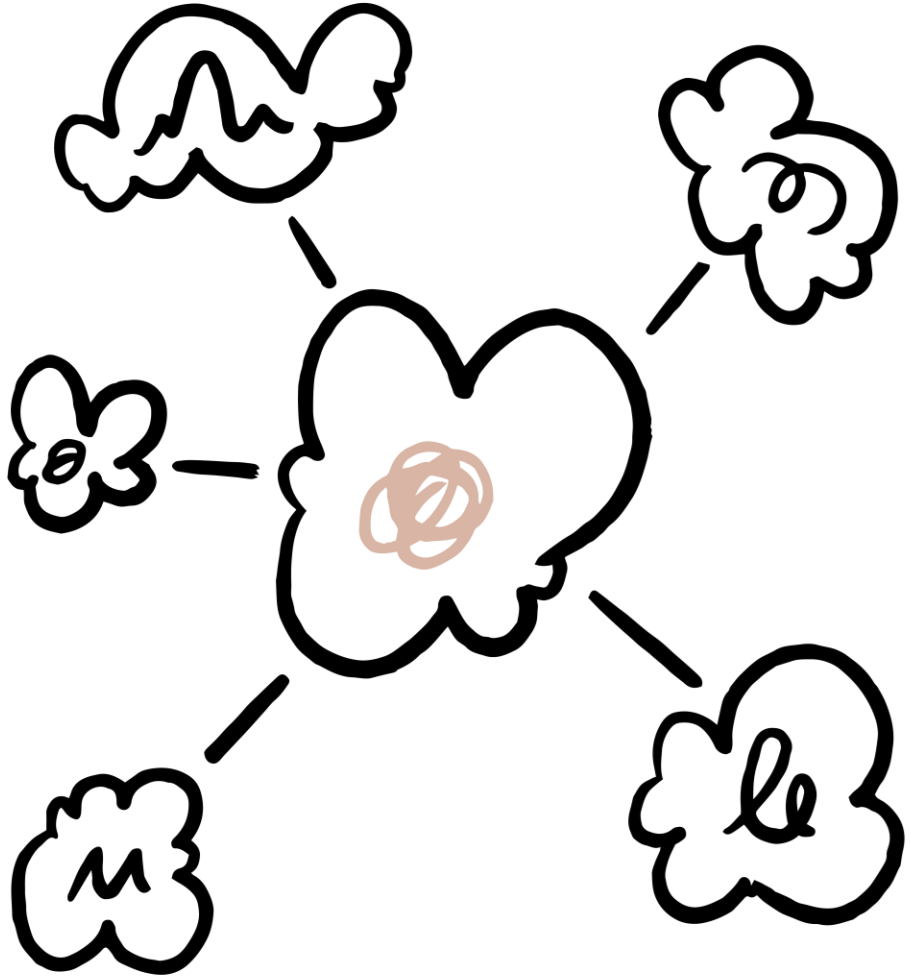
Shared challenges at Civil

- Massive service
- Multiple feature teams
- Regular team turnover
- Siloed working
- Tricky sign off



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Back to basics: **Revisiting our design principles**

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Government design principles

- Start with user needs
- Do less
- Design with data
- Do the hard work to make it simple
- Iterate. Then iterate again
- This is for everyone
- Understand context
- Building digital services, not websites
- Be consistent, not uniform
- Make things open: it makes things better



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A community of practice workshop

- Assess ourselves against the government design principles
- Create a safe space
- Share ideas and get inspiration
- Spot opportunities for improvement
- Create an action plan



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Back to basics: **Agreeing our design processes**

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A process checklist that worked for us

- Useful for new joiners
- Specific to Civil ways of working
- Helped us feel confident, covering all our bases when content was ready for sign off
- More opportunity for consistency in engagement with stakeholders



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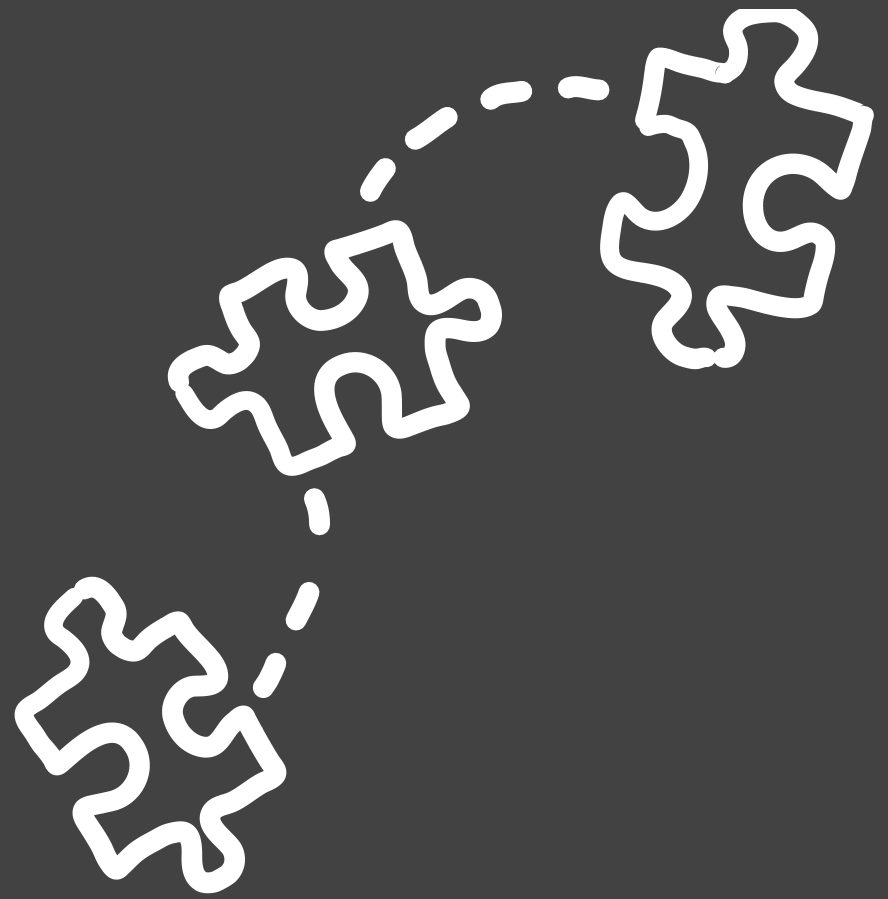
Supporting each other through the content creation process

- Mutual and objective peer review
- Open and transparent discussions
- Using visible communication tools
- Breaking down feature silos
- More opportunity for content consistency



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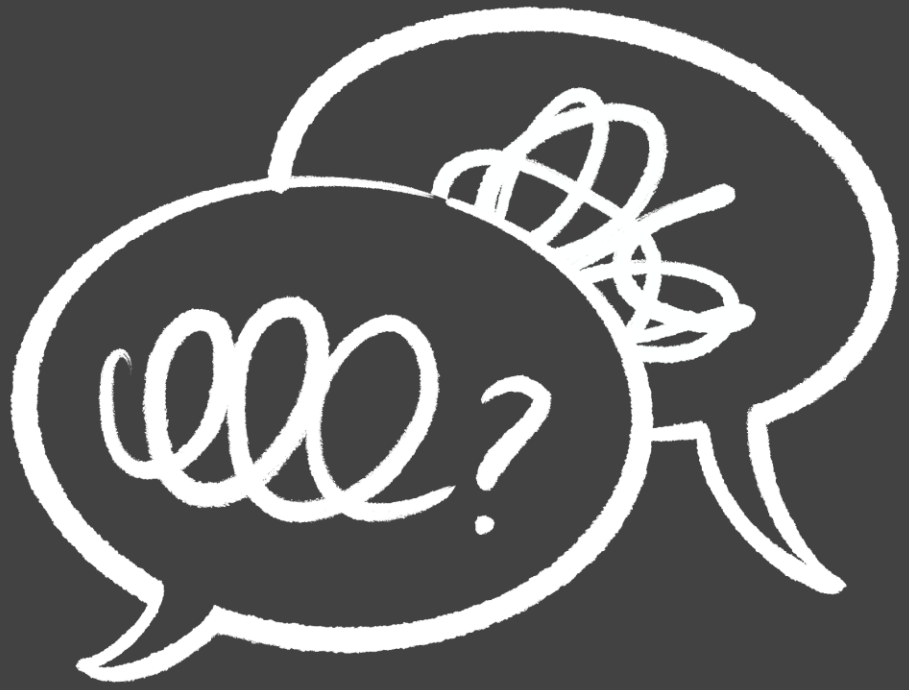
Co-creating our own Civil style guide

The challenge:

- Legal and technical jargon
- Conflicting views
- GDS style guide 'grey areas'



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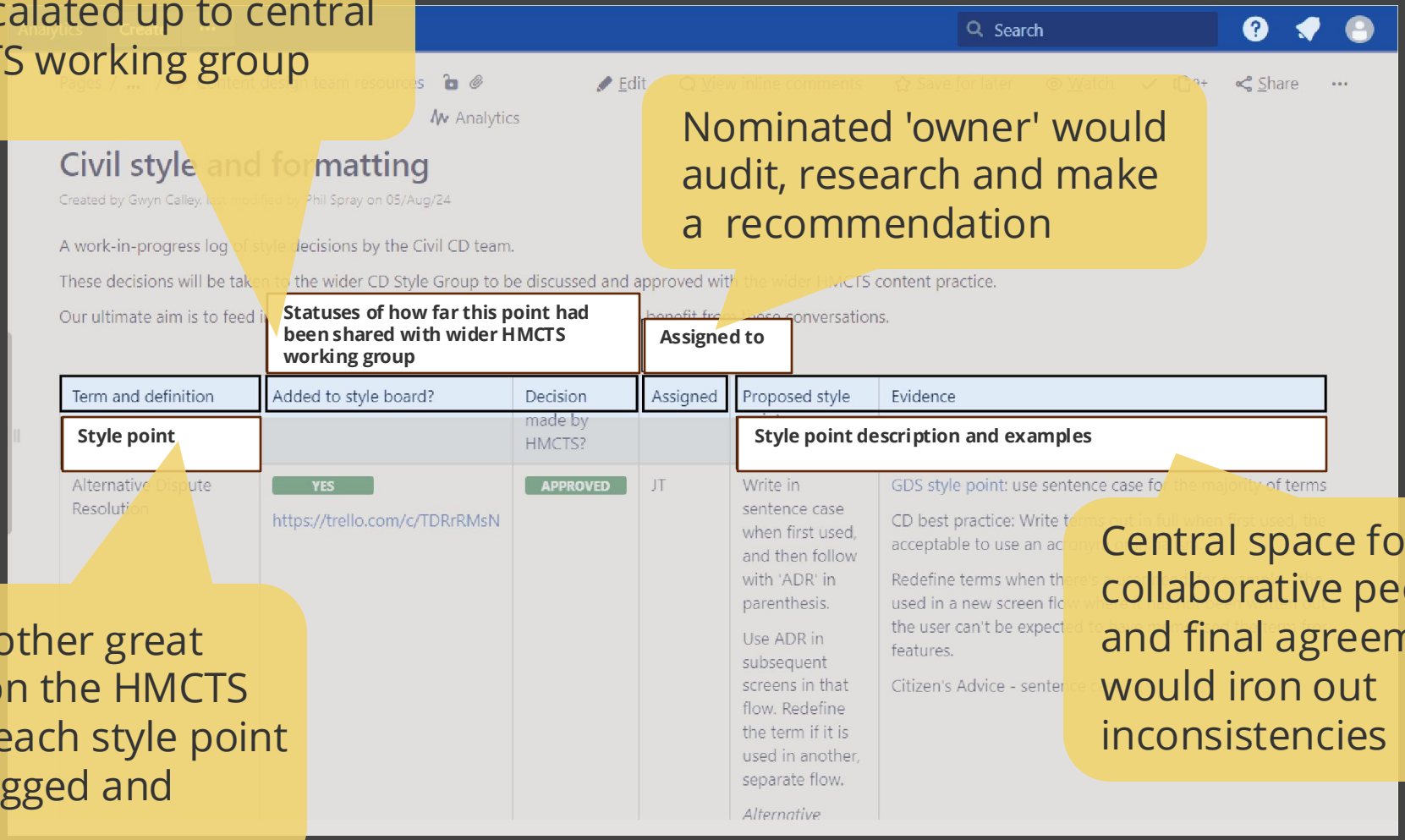
If needed, the point would be escalated up to central HMCTS working group

Nominated 'owner' would audit, research and make a recommendation



Building on other great work done on the HMCTS style guide, each style point would be flagged and discussed

Central space for collaborative peer review and final agreement would iron out inconsistencies

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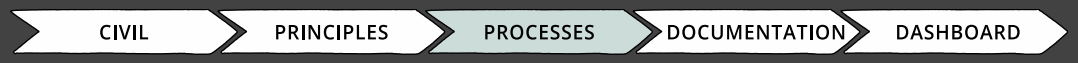
Style points with impact

Coming together to agree style points:

- Content audit to flag inconsistencies
- Documentation in a central and transparent space
- Individual research on each point
- Collaborative peer review for mutual agreement
- Fed back up to central HMCTS working group

Establishing consistent content patterns:

- Built on existing credibility with judges
- Standardised process to resolve ambiguity
- Explained design rationale to create a resource any future teams



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Back to basics: **Creating shareable documentation**

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Making the most of Confluence

The challenge:

- Too much or too little documentation
- Rationale and versions could get lost
- Inconsistent ways of working

The opportunity:

- Central and transparent space
- Single source of truth
- Content design for internal peer audiences



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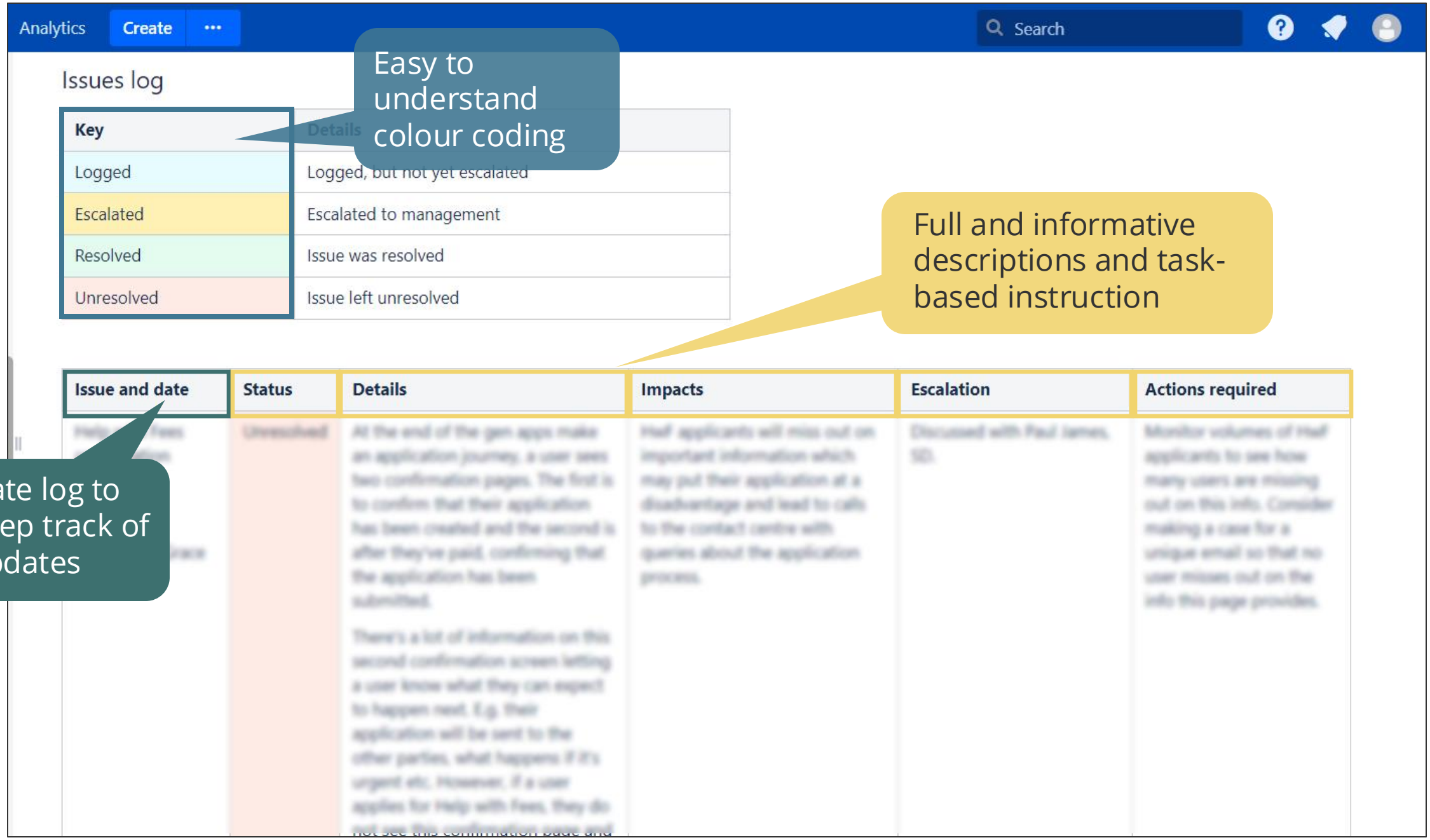
Analytics
Create
Search
Issues log
Easy to understand colour coding
Key
Details
Logged
Logged, but not yet escalated
Escalated
Escalated to management
Resolved
Issue was resolved
Unresolved
Issue left unresolved
Full and informative descriptions and task-based instruction
Issue and date
Status
Details
Impacts
Escalation
Actions required
Date log to keep track of updates

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Principles, processes and documentation

- Better team working
- Able to articulate design rationale
- Gaining stakeholder trust
- Smoother sign off
- Benefits scalable across teams
- Consistency for a better user experience

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The citizen dashboard

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Helping real people to manage their claim

- Don't have legal representation
- Under stress
- Working under time or financial pressure
- Low digital literacy
- English as a second language



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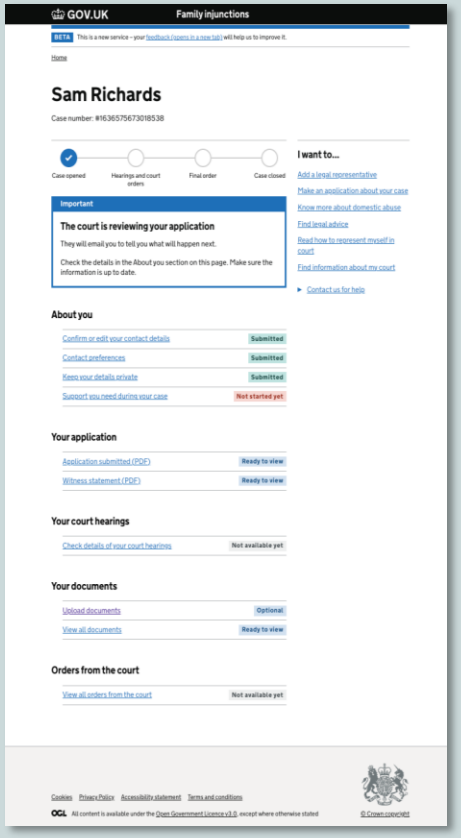
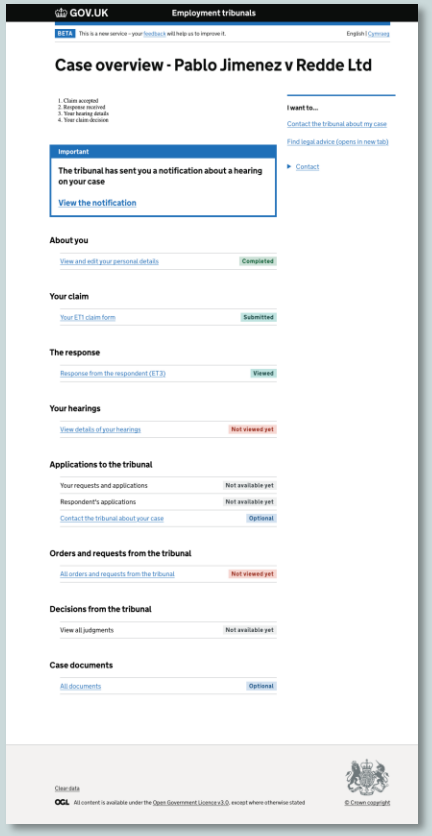
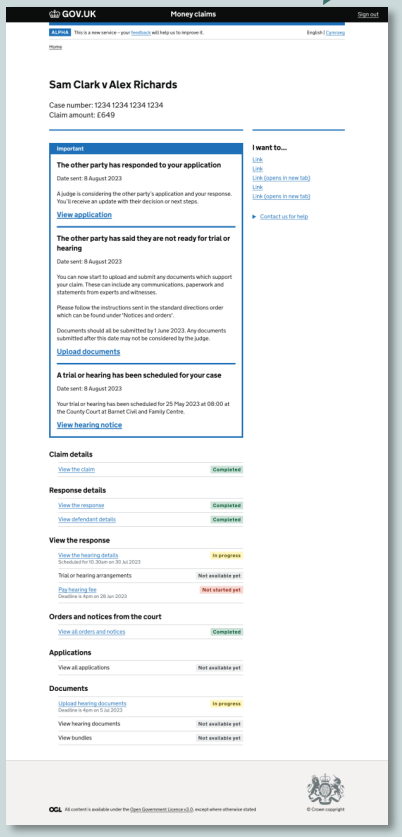
Other services had used this pattern to great effect



Child Arrangements

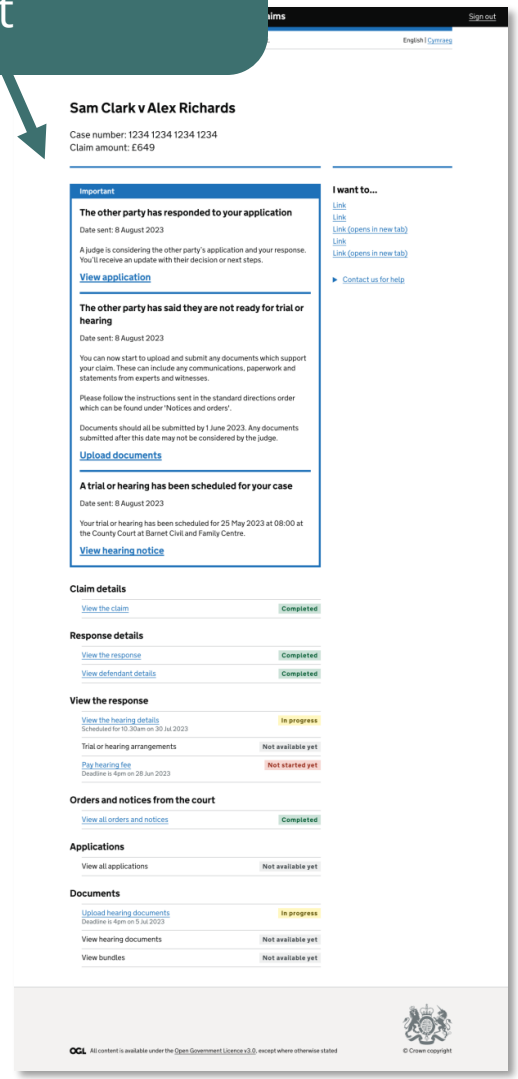


Employment Tribunals



Civil

But the Civil notification was a real user pain point



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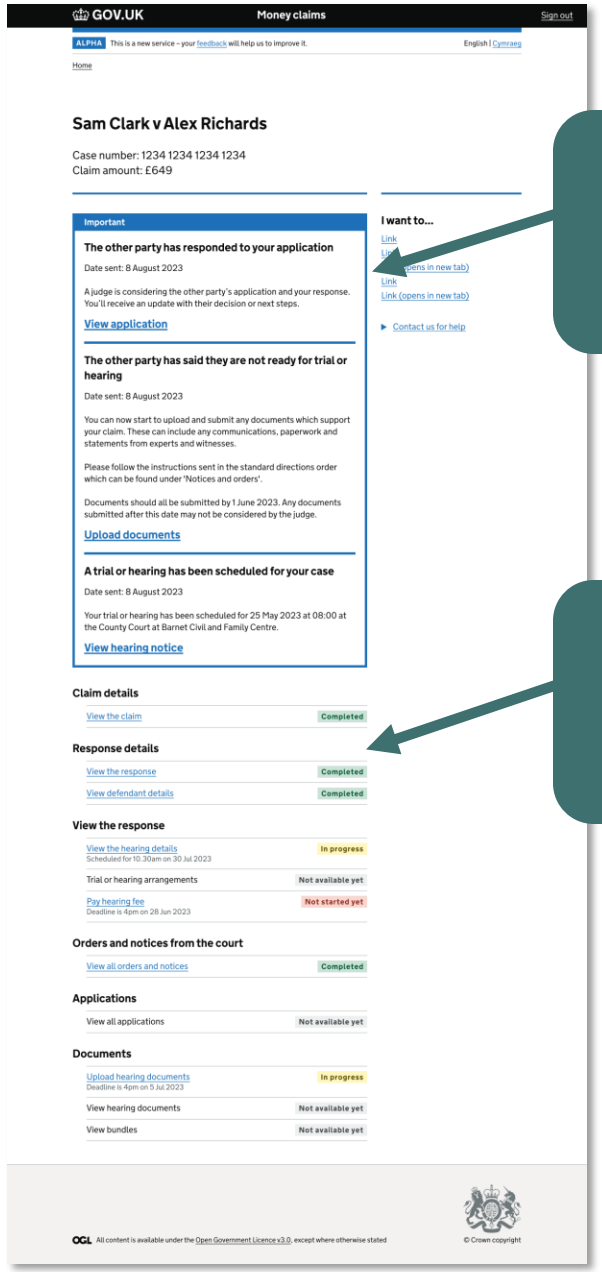
The challenge

- No bespoke email functionality
- Inconsistent length and wording
- Users overwhelmed on seeing the page



Long, inconsistent notifications

Users missing critical task list instruction

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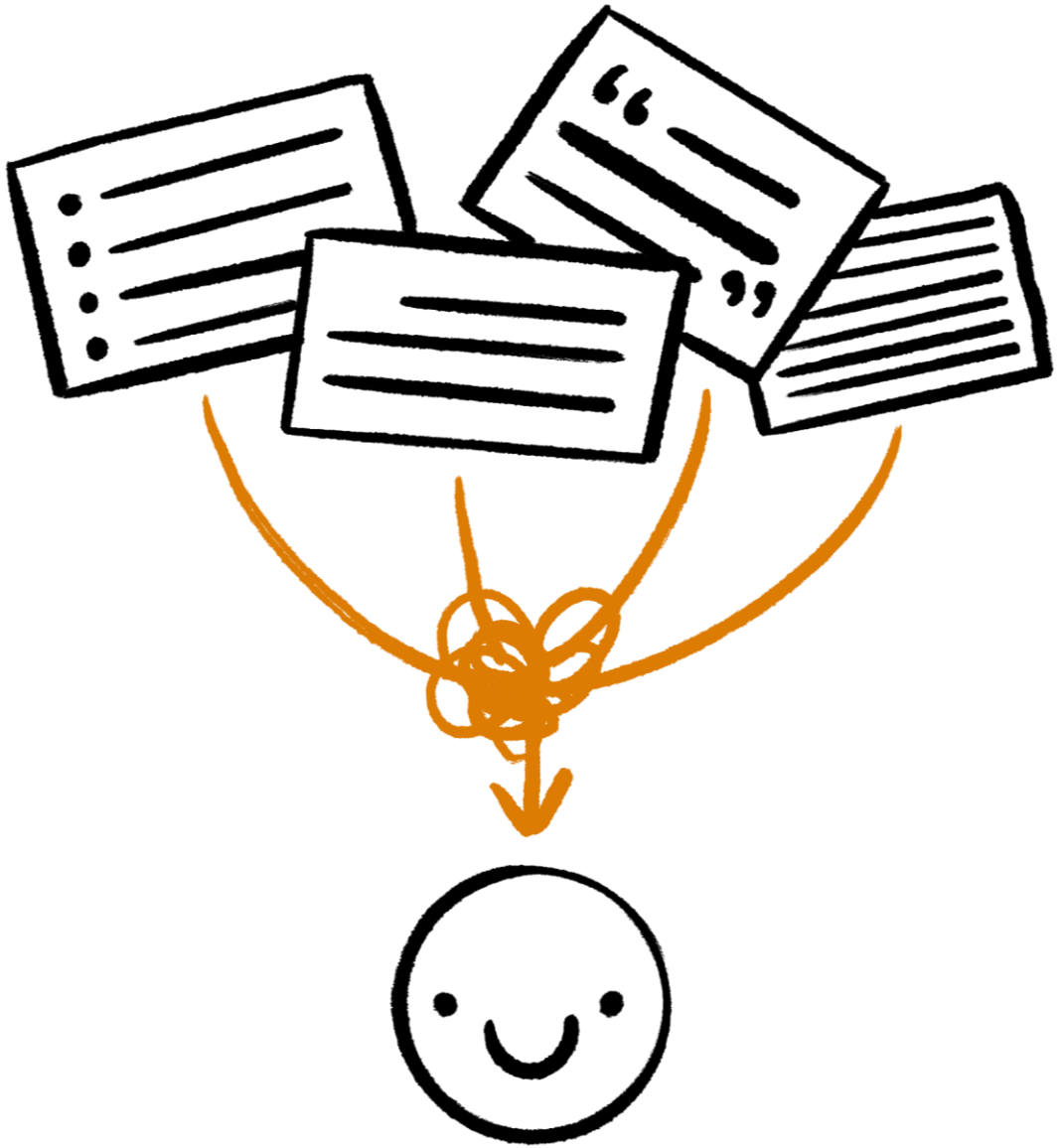
The opportunity

- Lower people's stress
- Simple and timely instruction
- Self-manage claims easily
- Reduce calls to support centres



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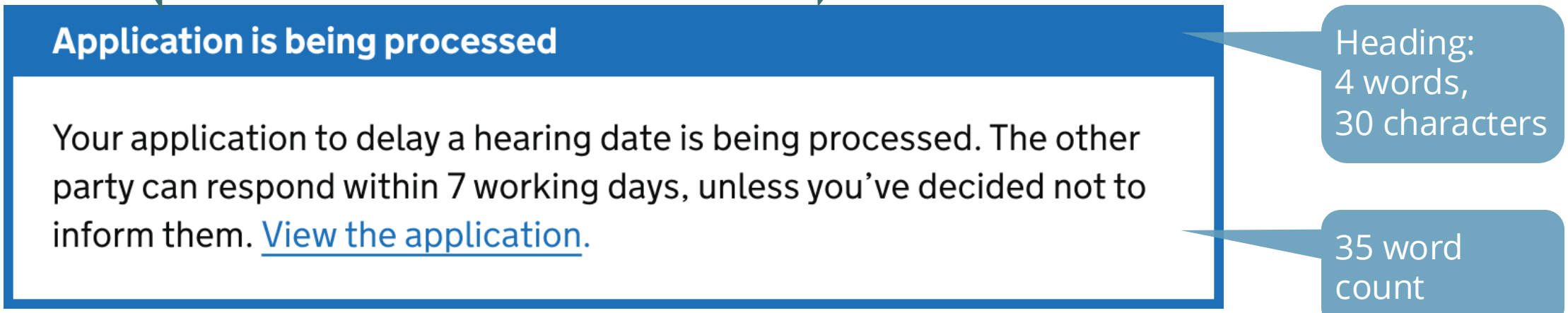
Revised notification made optimal use of screen space

Written in plain English, with brief and authoritative instruction



Heading:
4 words,
30 characters

35 word count

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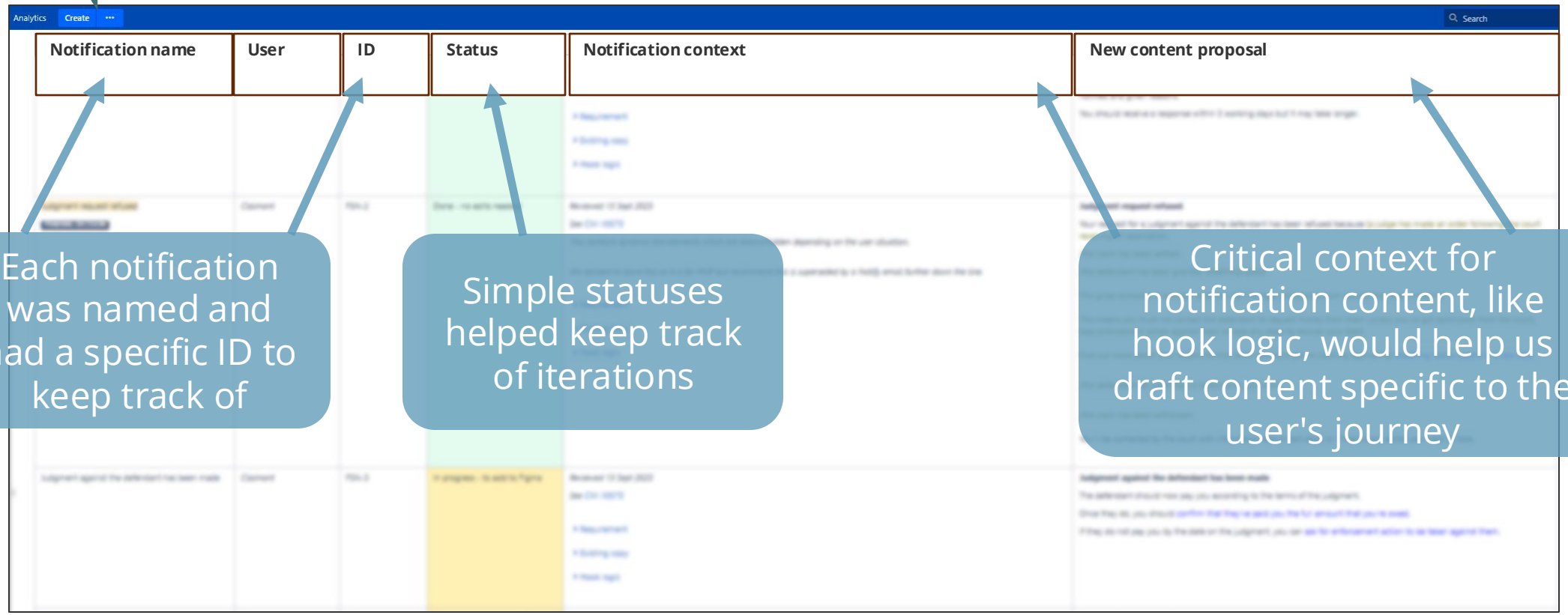
All the information we needed to review

Central source of truth in a simple table



Each notification was named and had a specific ID to keep track of

Simple statuses helped keep track of iterations

Critical context for notification content, like hook logic, would help us draft content specific to the user's journey

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Old notification took up lots of space

Important

Application is being processed

Date sent: 8 August 2023

Your application to delay a hearing date that you made on 19 July 2023 is now being processed.

The other party will be given the opportunity to respond to the application within 7 working days, unless you've chosen not to inform them.

If your application is urgent, it'll go straight to a judge for their consideration but the other party will still have the opportunity to respond.

View application

New notification, short and sweet!

Application is being processed

Your application to delay a hearing date is being processed. The other party can respond within 7 working days, unless you've decided not to inform them. View the application.

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Empower **teams**
to empower **users**
to take **action**

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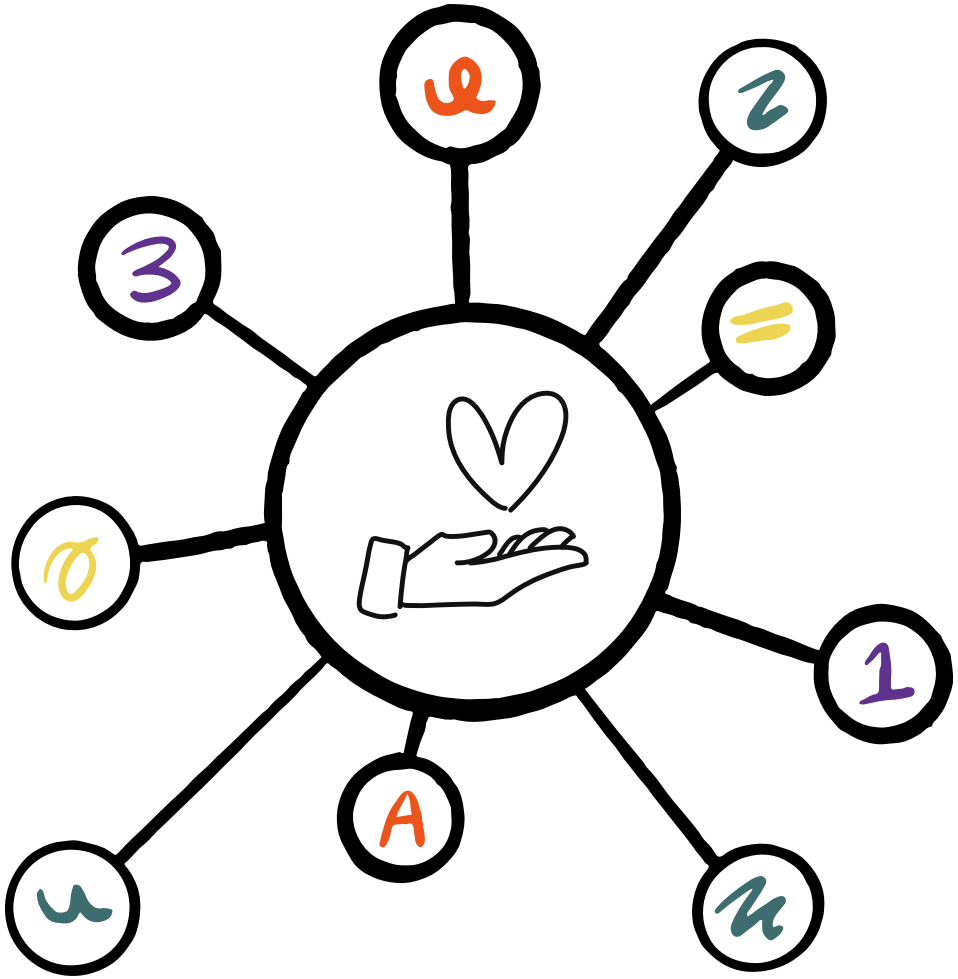
So, pause… check in with your team, and come back to basics on the…

1. principles you base your work in
2. processes which enable your teams
3. assets that empower future decision makers



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Get in touch!



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