



# Redundancy Payment Service. case study

## Situation

In June 2022, as part of the iLab's goal to build understanding of the value of using a Design approach across the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) we approached colleagues in Enterprise Shared Services (ESS) to offer our assistance in one of their projects. They suggested engaging with the Redundancy Payment Service (RPS) who were developing a digital system to deliver their service. The main function of RPS is to process claims from employees who have been made redundant and whose employers are unable or unwilling to make redundancy related payments.

The Design team met with the ESS and RPS teams to understand their work and explain how the Lab applies user-centred design and where that could help them. Together we agreed a plan of action which would provide insights to help RPS in the development of both customer and stakeholder facing aspects of the new digital service.

## Objectives

The objectives of the work on this project were:

- to help RPS and ESS better understand the service from the perspective of their users and stakeholders;
- to design a service that would result in reduced payment processing times; and
- to show the value of taking a user-centred approach through the application of Service Design techniques and tools.

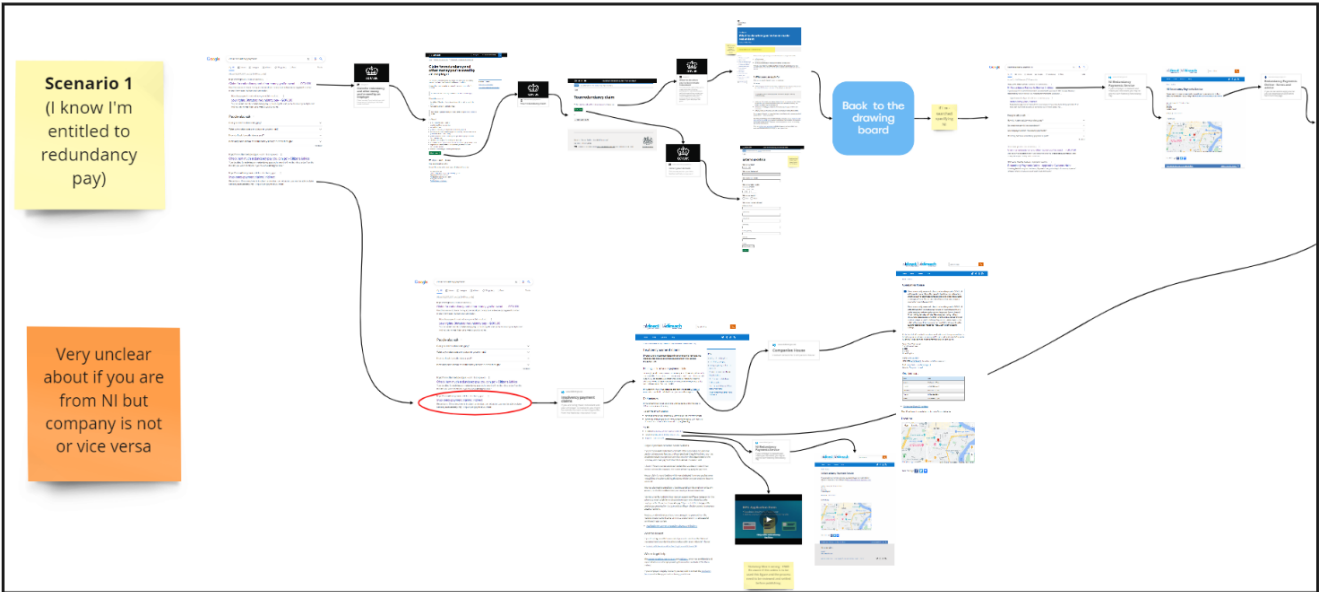
## What did we do...

To help us achieve our objectives we used a number of Service Design tools and methods.

## Literature review and Ethnography

At the outset of all our projects we conduct a literature review to try and learn as much as possible about the topic on which we are working and discover how others are delivering similar services. For this project this involved researching Redundancy Payment Services delivered by other regions across the British Isles. We also use 'ethnography' which is a type of user research that involves immersing yourself to understand users experiences, perspectives and everyday practices. In this project we did this by trying to make a claim for Redundancy ourselves.

Fig. 1 - Recorded screen shots collected as part of our ethnographic research.



## Business area interviews

To help us gain an in depth understanding of how RPS staff operate within the current service we held 1-1 interviews with them. In these interviews we asked them to talk us through their experiences of doing their job, talking in details about difficulties they face and discussing how an end to end application for redundancy is processed. By taking this approach we learned how the service operated, the language/acronyms/jargon used. We were also able to identify the other users we needed to talk to and have discussions with RPS staff about how we could gain access to these people.

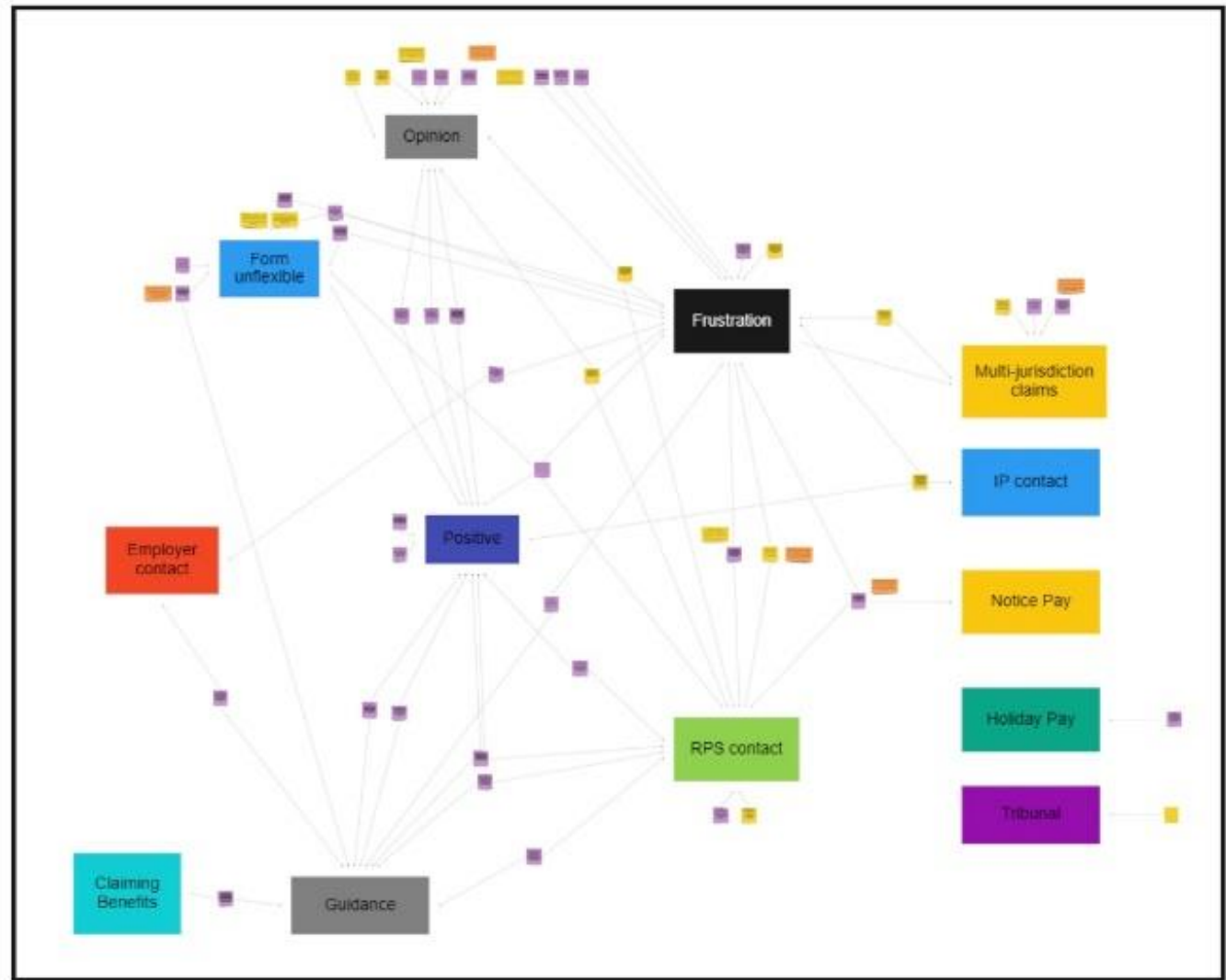
## Claimant and stakeholder interviews

Having gained access to a number of claimants and stakeholders we wrote to them to request interviews. These interviews were conducted and recorded virtually with interviewee permission. We prepared for these interviews by developing questions that would give us the best chance of gaining a full understanding of the user experiences when interacting with RPS and their service.

## Analysis and affinity mapping

After gathering all of our research material from the methods outlined above we analysed it to identify, insights, pain points, opportunities, barriers and questions that we believed needed further consideration. We then used an 'affinity mapping' approach to identify common themes about the service, coming from all the experiences we heard about in our interviews.

Fig. 2 – Screenshot of affinity mapping & theming process.



The next stage of our approach was to use the themes from our affinity mapping exercise to assist us in producing a number of user journeys (1 for each user group). We then developed current and future state service blueprints from the perspective of a claimant which shows the front stage and back stage interactions involved in claiming and receiving payments from the Redundancy Payment Service. To try and help RPS focus on what we believed would help them design an improved service providing a better user experience we collated 47 'Thoughts and Observations' (can be viewed as recommendations) for them to consider and gave them a number of 'how might we....' statements to prompt them to debate and generate ideas as a team.

**Figure 1: User Journey for an Employee**

The user journey map is structured as follows:

- Columns (Stages):** Onboarding, First day, First week, First month, First quarter, First year, Ongoing work.
- Rows (Experience):**
  - Onboarding:** Focuses on initial setup, including account creation, system access, and initial training.
  - First day:** Focuses on the employee's first day experience, including orientation, meeting the team, and understanding the company culture.
  - First week:** Focuses on the employee's first week experience, including completing initial tasks, understanding the team's workflow, and receiving feedback.
  - First month:** Focuses on the employee's first month experience, including completing initial projects, understanding the team's workflow, and receiving feedback.
  - First quarter:** Focuses on the employee's first quarter experience, including completing initial projects, understanding the team's workflow, and receiving feedback.
  - First year:** Focuses on the employee's first year experience, including completing initial projects, understanding the team's workflow, and receiving feedback.
  - Ongoing work:** Focuses on the employee's ongoing work experience, including completing projects, understanding the team's workflow, and receiving feedback.
- Content:** Each cell in the map contains a detailed description of the employee's experience, tasks, and outcomes at that stage. The content is organized into three main sections: 'Onboarding', 'First day', and 'First week'. Each section contains a list of tasks and outcomes, along with a timeline of the employee's experience.

**Assumptions:**  
 Driven by supply of employee information from IP or Official Receiver;  
 Online portals accessed via MyDirect for both IP and Employee;  
 My Direct has a secure two or three employee, RPS and IP way messaging function;  
 All communications, both written and online, have been reviewed making them clearer, easy to find and shared with stakeholders;  
 Employee made aware that there will be 2 parts to their application and to expect a 2nd form to complete after their initial payment to assess notice pay claim.

**Risks:**  
 Reliance on automated systems;  
 Timeframe for receipt of information is too long (from Official Receiver)

**Future state for Employee**

**Initial state**

**Transition state**

**Stable state**

**End state**

**Support Processes**

**Key points**

How might we (from IP Research)



*Fig. 6 – First iteration of RPS citizen portal developed by iLab service designers.*

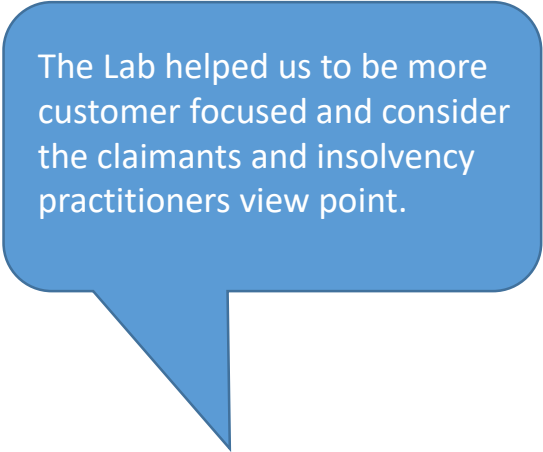


## Results

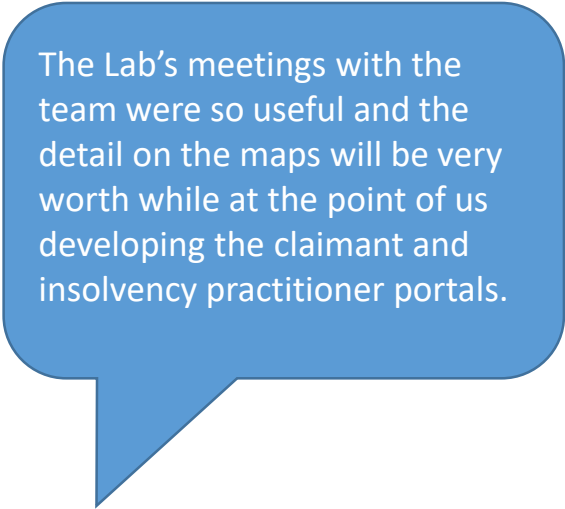
At the time of writing this project is still ongoing, however at this stage we can report the following results:

- RPS have accepted our main 'thoughts and observations' on how the service should operate and are continuing to iterate upon the prototypes we presented.
- Further to the above point, both ESS and RPS have asked for iLab collaboration in future digital discovery workshops to keep the voice of the user involved in the project.

We have also received the following feedback from RPS:



The Lab helped us to be more customer focused and consider the claimants and insolvency practitioners view point.



The Lab's meetings with the team were so useful and the detail on the maps will be very worth while at the point of us developing the claimant and insolvency practitioner portals.

## Want to find out more?

If anyone is interested in hearing more detail about the work we have undertaken or about how we use our methods and tools please feel free to contact us for a chat.

Tony, James and Martin.  
iLab Service Designers