WITH THIS LEVEL OF EXPERTISE, COLLABORATION AND COMMITMENT, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

Without the means to prove your identity, do you exist in modern society? For those of us able to verify who we are using a thumbprint, we can access our salary, home, banking, travel or even family photographs on a smartphone in seconds.

If you've spent years sleeping rough, you may not have a digital footprint and no means to access the basic necessities required to function in daily life. Overcoming this fundamental barrier to independence was the starting point for the hackathon collaboration, which has brought 20 different organisations together to progress the 'virtual locker' concept designed at Housing 2019.

Since I wrote my last article, things have moved on significantly. Following careful collaboration and co-design with our participants, staff, partnership and statutory services, we now have a potential database, app and photographic ID card that can be printed and used as required. Statutory bodies have reviewed their policies to ensure anything we design would be accepted, and collaboration with Lloyds and Nationwide has meant there is potential for individuals to open bank accounts with the card, in preparation for a return to employment.

It has not been easy. GDPR, multiple legislative and organisational processes have all impacted on the utopian concept of a single ID card to serve everyone. There were questions such as who holds the database, who can verify someone's identity, who will print the cards and what happens if they are lost.

However, thanks to a casual conversation on a wet Mancunian afternoon we identified that another concept was also simultaneously in development for a 'universal pass'. This pass would allow an individual to get free travel, credit for emergency food parcels and understand, which services were being accessed in an authority. It was to sit with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and already had appropriate security in place to meet GDPR requirements which meant we could pilot the combined prototype with the support of "Action Together" in Oldham, enabling testing location.

A collaboration of the two concepts allowed us to create a single ID Card with a chip to access travel, food, support services, and the means to terminate should it be lost, mitigating the risk for those with a transient lifestyle.

> We had years of experience between us around the table. We were all from different backgrounds, all lived life differently and respond to things differently... I really enjoyed working with different people. It has been fascinating.

Peter Harrison
Senior best practice officer
Crisis

> I walked in this morning, found a space and just sat down... my team were lovely, you get a real mix of people. Some were from housing associations, one was a software consultant. It made for a really interesting and lively discussion.

Jennie Ellis
Community investment manager
Wates Residential

Hosting the database at the GMCA enabled verification by approved public bodies already working with the individuals anticipated to use the cards, overcoming another risk to sustainability of the concept.

The ideas of one of our participants (Ian) formed the design of the app and means for a 'virtual locker', where personal documents could be stored and accessed through phones of an individual or a trusted professional with a two-stage security pin process. This meant that access would only be possible with their consent.

We had cracked it! Now the hard work really starts. Our participant and IT expert will be crafting the database and app and we will mobilise to test viability, just as I am departing GM Homes Partnership for new opportunities. However, thanks to this collaboration and integration into incredible partnership organisations, the concept can be progressed and thanks to his pivotal role in developing the concept, Ian may be able to commence an apprenticeship with Live and Now.

With this level of expertise, collaboration and commitment, anything is possible.

Sarah Cooke
Project manager
GM Homes Partnership

TAKING THE HOMELESSNESS HACKATHON AT HOUSING 2019 FORWARD

Action Together member organisations have seen the need around homelessness rise exponentially. Yet we have numerous examples of rough sleepers deciding to get help to move off the streets, but experiencing blockages that hinder their access to essential services.

We have seen the barriers relating to ID verification first-hand and the subsequent barriers this creates – preventing the individual from accessing healthcare, food, benefits and transport. GMCA, Live and Now, Action Together and Homeless Friendly want to build on the hackathon and create a 'universal pass' and pilot in Oldham.

Once a person has been verified as a rough sleeper, the universal pass will enable access to foodbanks, health services, transport, bank accounts and benefit applications. The ID will be temporary until the individual has longer-term support in place.

There are lots of things we need to work through to make this happen:

- Securing 'buy in' from key services to accept the pass as 'formal ID' for homelessness assessment, a bank/credit union account and to apply for benefits
- Initial cost of creating the card and readers
- Fast-track access to foodbanks and GP appointments without the need to explain their situation
- Weekly bus passes for a maximum of three weeks, and funding for this

We have a tricky few months ahead of us making this work but we can't wait to be part of this exciting pilot, leading the collaboration in the test area to improve the lives of the individuals we are working with.

CLIMATE CHANGE HACKATHON AT HOUSING 2020

"We face irreversible damage to the natural world and the collapse of our societies, but there is still hope if dramatic action to limit the effects takes place over the next decade." – David Attenborough

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) households are responsible for about a quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, making us the biggest single source.

It is our responsibility to come together and act on this now.

If you wish to be involved in the 2020 hackathon please contact sarah.payling@oceanmedia.co.uk to find out how you can support this project.

For more details, please visit **www.cihhousing.com/hackathon**

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