

4/4

First opportunity to act

The commission from the NHS

Our challenge is to support two groups of people up in Norfolk:

the young service users and the experienced deliverers of that service.

Our task is to support these groups to self-determine where they want to go.

The Hiedeggerian position is that. . .

we are the systems we wish to change

and the systems we wish to change are inseparable from us.

Zaid Hassan
in his book *The Social Labs Revolution*

How to be a designer at the start of things

- Camberwell College of Arts
- Chelsea College of Art and Design
- Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design
- London College of Communication
- London College of Fashion
- Wimbledon College of Art

An early-lab run by Nick Bell
and Fabiane Lee-Perrella

2015

Interested students can
email Nick or Fabiane.

**Goal: How to
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designer
at the
start of
things**

An early-lab

We are calling this initiative
an 'early-lab'

because design for social
impact can only be effective

if designers begin their work
much, much earlier in the
process:

at the start of things.

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**The first early-lab, for
2015, a summary**

A trans-disciplinary team of
students from across the
UAL will work with

a group of young mental
health service users

to help scope out a new
vision

for the design of their local
mental health service.

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**The first early-lab, for
2015, a summary**

UAL has been
commissioned by

the Norfolk & Suffolk NHS
Foundation Trust's (NSFT)

mental health service for
children and young people

in partnership with their
Youth Council.

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**The first early-lab, for
2015, a summary**

After preparatory workshop sessions, students will embark on a week-long field trip to Norwich

to engage directly with young mental health service users and frontline service personnel.

Students will experience firsthand the context in which services are received.

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**The first early-lab, for
2015, a summary**

On return to London,
students will develop the
outputs from the field trip
into a Design Brief

that defines the aims and
objectives of a new youth
mental health service that is
fit for purpose.

The Design Brief's vision will
be shared publicly through
the design of a pilot or
exhibition.

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Its frightening but its worth it

The things worth writing about,
and the things worth reading about,
are the things that feel almost beyond
description at the start
and are, because of that, frightening.

Douglas Coupland
Writer

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1/12 What participation in the lab offers students

This research lab, the so-called 'early-lab'

will provide UAL students with a yearly opportunity

for cross-university, trans-disciplinary collaboration.

It will deliver an introduction to community engagement methodologies

that are tested on a field trip where students will engage directly with a community group.

The findings from this will be shared publicly through a speculative vehicle

such as an exhibition, pilot or other event curated and designed by students

and given exposure at a high-profile design industry event

like the London Design Festival in September 2015.

Introduction and sign-up

December 2014

Announce early-lab and the first commission from NSFT

January 2015

UAL college talks to students to introduce the early-lab and frame NSFT challenge.

Interested students apply through their Course Leaders or Programme Directors.

Preparation and selection

February

Preparatory workshops introduce students to:

- engagement methodologies
- trans-disciplinary collaboration
- curatorial content development
- the exhibition as a vehicle for speculation

Late February

Students selected for early-lab team after workshops.

March

Final early-lab team field trip preparation sessions.

Engage and launch

28 March – 4 April

A week-long community engagement field trip with NSFT service users and providers in Norwich.

April

Develop and curate field trip findings/research material.

Early May

Design and build either:
– an exhibition, or
– a pilot

Late May

Launch exhibition or pilot.

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3/12 What NSFT needs

NSFT are interested in commissioning the design of youth mental health services differently.

They already have a vision.

A vision already implemented (patchily and deficiently) by others elsewhere

that they can learn from.

The situation is very urgent, there is pressure to act

but they cannot afford to implement something not fit for purpose.

NSFT want to create a service that does not stigmatise.

They want to involve service users in it's process of conception.

They want physical environments young people seeking help want to be in

online media that young people will use to connect.

A service experience that young people, not seeking the help they need, will feel comfortable with.

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Why our attention is on public services

All the cabalist dark arts of PR have been used
against the concept of the public

and to disassociate the notion of the public

with anything desirable...

We need a new concept of the public...

[one that competes] on the libidinal terrain of
modernity.

Mark Fisher

Cultural theorist, author of Capitalist Realism

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**And why our attention is on governance of
public services**

Ultimately, the term “strategic planning” has proved to be an oxymoron.

. . . what we have are strategies created in advance

of the objective conditions they purport to be responding to.

And compounding this. . .

Decision-making power and the control of resources

rests with a narrow class of technocrats occupying business-as-usual spaces

characterised by *habitus*.

Zaid Hassan

The Social Labs Revolution

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4/12 Who we are and what we do

We have asked NSFT to think of us as

a creative team of young people (UAL design students)

designing with young people (users of mental health services)

supported by an experienced team of designers (Nick and Fabiane).

Our methods are participative.

We engage groups of people (treating them as experts of their own context)

in a scaffolded but informal process of thinking through making (design, art).

Enabling them to:

reflect on their circumstances,
express dreams, visions,

and make positive proposals.

Often, people sense they are defined merely as recipients (of services).

We reverse this

and help people feel they have something to offer – currency.

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5/12 Engagement participants

We also propose to invite those at the front line to participate

doctors, nurses, care providers – the experts.

However, this kind of participation happens best on equal terms.

Therefore, all experts, including us, must be skilled

at suppressing the aura of expertise,

masking the whiff of the institution.

Having other younger voices,

familiar with the local context users inhabit,

in this case, members of the Youth Council,

will help enormously!

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6/12 Engagement process and methods

Together with these local contributors, our creative team can breathe the same air and first, build familiarity and earn trust.

Then, we can begin softly by

sensing the conditions,

getting the conversation going,

raising tentative questions,

mapping needs and desires,

uncovering behaviours, values, identities,

and through dialogue, develop the intelligence of the group.

Using workshops we work out the best ways,

often through a process of thinking through making,

of encouraging people to find ways to tap personal capacities

and express their vision of how things could be better.

Our process teases out the essential ingredients of what better is.

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7/12 Stage 1 – the field trip

Through engagement with mental health service users and service providers during the field trip

our student led UAL lab team will help them:

- express what is positive, negative and missing from the service
- frame a number of the key issues likely to influence service design
- mock-up service scenarios to test out new ideas and approaches

This might turn out to be ambitious to achieve in one week

but let this be the first draft of our intentions for now.

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Why we like field trips

This notion of being in the place
designing and making in the place,
it exists in all sorts of cultures but has been
lost from the design world
but we are now coming back to that.

John Thackara

Writer on design and sustainability

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8/12 Stage 2 – after the field trip

Our UAL lab team will take the outputs of Stage 1 away

and use their creative skills to develop them to a level appropriate

for presentation to senior mental health service commissioners.

An appropriate communication vehicle for these developed outputs could be

a physical exhibition or pilot.

Such an event could be attended by mental health service users and frontline staff who contributed to it –

giving them a chance to signal their contributions and share advocacy.

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9/12 Stage 2 – the Design Brief

The output of Stage 2 is a Design Brief.

The Design Brief is the culmination of direct engagement at the root of the issue

and completes the crucial, foundational first steps that mark the very beginning of the process.

The Design Brief, taking written, visual and physical form (pilot, prototype or exhibition) sets out the aims and objectives that will need to be satisfied in the design of a 'one-stop-shop'* service that is fit for purpose.

This is how the student led lab team can help – it can help NSFT devise the correct Design Brief that taps into the vision and capacities the early-lab helps NSFT and it's partners to unlock. A vision that is deeply informed by service users and also frontline service providers.

*

'One-stop-shop' is NSFT's working title for their current vision of providing their services differently.

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10/12 Beyond Stage 2 – response to the Design Brief

The process of producing the Design Brief

is an experiment with a tangible and very useful outcome.

The early-lab's participation in the design process

towards a new mental health service for young people

could end here, at the end of Stage 2, if NSFT so decided.

However, I'm sure the early-lab team will be very happy to have the opportunity to respond to the Design Brief

through the design and proposal of a prototype service at a local scale.

For example, the design of a single 'one-stop-shop', as NSFT calls it, (in the first instance)

that is ultimately an iteration that could be scalable (if successful later on).

Each iteration of a 'one-stop-shop' will likely benefit from

an engaging online presence,

convivial consulting spaces/places,

the structure and animation of a rigorous service plan,

and be packaged using a distinctive brand identity.

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10/12 Beyond Stage 2 – procurement of a response

Alternatively,

NSFT senior health
commissioners would be
free

to invite other design
companies

to respond to the Design
Brief.

Either way,

the commission is likely
to be conducted

through a two stage
tender process

commensurate with
project budget and NHS
procurement regulations.

Procurement routes can
be discussed later.

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Why we love to be at the start of things

To work at the front end, to be involved early,
is to get a chance to get to grips with things
fundamentally at the root.

Yet most of us find ourselves at the back end
of the process,

a position that limits us to tinkering with
symptoms.

For designers to have any chance to
participate in effecting the kind of change

likely to help deliver a resilient future,

enough of us must accept that currently we
are in the wrong place to do it.

Nick Bell and Fabiane Lee-Perrella
Designers

Thank you!

Camberwell College of Arts

Chelsea College of Art and Design

Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design

London College of Communication

London College of Fashion

Wimbledon College of Art

Time for questions

Interested students can email Nick Bell or Fabiane Lee-Perrella directly.

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Early-lab
2015