



Putting users first

We want to create great online experiences for users, while supporting TfL's business aims. That's why we follow a user-centred design approach – which means putting our customers at the heart of the design process:

We also use personas, or fictitious characters based on customer research and website analysis, to help us understand the goals, behaviours and motivations of our key customer groups.

Audience

- User Experience (UX) designers
- Content editors
- Content owners
- Project managers

Requirements

1. Personas

1.1 When planning, designing or developing digital content or functionality for TfL, you **must** refer to our key [Personas](#) throughout the planning, design and development stages to ensure you:

- Understand (and keep in mind) our key customers' goals, behaviours and motivations. Get to know them and always develop with them in mind
 - Determine what features, functionality and content will be genuinely helpful to them
 - Don't create anything that users don't really need or want – Always ask yourself which of our personas, if any, you are developing for
 - Help anyone involved in your project to focus on customer needs.
- Remember, personas can communicate the results of user research in a quick, meaningful and influential way

- Consider accessibility requirements (eg visual, auditory, cognitive and mobile) for a range of users in a range of real-world situations, both when using our website and our transport network
- 1.2 If you require a bespoke set of personas for a specific project, you **must** seek the approval of TfL Online's UX Lead before developing these

2. User centred design (UCD)

- 2.1 When designing for tfl.gov.uk, you **must** adopt a user-centred design approach. Thinking about users and testing ideas with them means designs are validated and continually improved. This is an iterative process – the design changes over time to reflect the knowledge gained from research.

When creating new web content, it's important to ask:

- Who are the users?
- What do they want to do?
- What information and functionality do they need?
- When, where and how will they use it?

The process we follow to help us answer these questions includes:

Research

The beginning of a project is the time to really get to know the users you are designing for, as well as the goals and requirements of the business.

Research tools such as interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and usability testing can help you learn what users expect, want and need. It's also helpful to look at other sites and evaluate similar designs.

Design... and test

All this research will inspire ideas and help with design decisions. Personas, customer journeys, sketches and wireframes can help you explore concepts and test solutions with team members, real users, clients and stakeholders.

Build... and test again

Once a solution has been agreed and built, it's worth testing it to learn whether users can find what they're looking for, think the design is attractive, or are able to complete transactions.

Sometimes the outcome of a usability test is something as simple as changing the wording on a button. Other times, a drastic re-think is needed. Testing early can save a lot of time, money and heartache. It also means your designs have been validated by real people.

Launch and review

Once launched, it's important to identify lessons learnt, and any areas for improvement or future development. Feedback at this stage - from users, team members or stakeholders - should be welcomed.

Why we do this

Using personas helps us focus on our users' goals and needs. If we don't design with our customers in mind, it's unlikely we'll create something they find genuinely useful. And if they don't like or use what we build, not only are they unhappy but the project is also unlikely to meet its business objectives.

UCD is another approach that helps us focus on our users' goals and needs. If we don't consider our customers and get their feedback on designs, we risk creating something they don't understand, can't use or actively dislike. And if that happens, the project is unlikely to be successful.

Further reading

- [Design principles](#)
- [Personas](#)
- [Web accessibility](#)

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Version History

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	06/11/2013	First issue

Review History

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