

KLP DESIGN SOLUTIONS

KIT POWELL · UX & BEHAVIOURAL PSYCHOLOGY CONSULTANT

DOCUMENT 2 OF 4 · USER EXPERIENCE

UX Audit Report

A usability, information architecture and user flow review of the Harbourly booking application, prepared for the product team.

CLIENT

Harbourly Ltd

PROJECT

Harbourly Mobile & Web Redesign

FLOWS REVIEWED

Six primary user flows

DATE OF ISSUE

14 August 2026

PREPARED BY

Kit Powell

VERSION

1.0 — Final

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This document is designed to be read on its own. Companion documents in this engagement: UI Audit Report, Behavioural Psychology Audit Report, Executive Summary.

Sample report. "Harbourly" is a fictional product created to illustrate the format, structure and depth of a KLP Design Solutions audit. All findings are invented and client screenshots are omitted.

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How findings are prioritised

Every finding in this report carries a priority label derived from a NASA-style criticality assessment. Two questions are asked of each issue: **how often will a user encounter it**, and **how badly does it affect them when they do**. The intersection of those two answers gives the label.

LABEL	MEANING	EXPECTED RESPONSE
● CRITICAL	Frequently encountered and severely damaging. Blocks a task, breaks accessibility law, or actively loses users.	Fix before launch or next release.
● HIGH PRIORITY	Either very frequent with moderate harm, or occasional with serious harm.	Fix within the current cycle.
● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Noticeable degradation of quality, but users still complete their task.	Schedule into the next two cycles.
● NICE TO HAVE	Refinement. Raises quality; no measurable harm if deferred.	Backlog.

READING THE TWO MATRICES

The NASA criticality matrix answers "how much does this matter to users?" — frequency against severity. **The severity vs effort matrix** answers "what should we do first?" — the same severity plotted against how hard the fix is.

01

Scope and method

This audit covers six primary user flows across the Harboursly iOS application (build 4.2.1) and responsive web application, reviewed between 28 July and 8 August 2026: search and discovery, property evaluation, booking and payment, account creation, booking management, and cancellation.

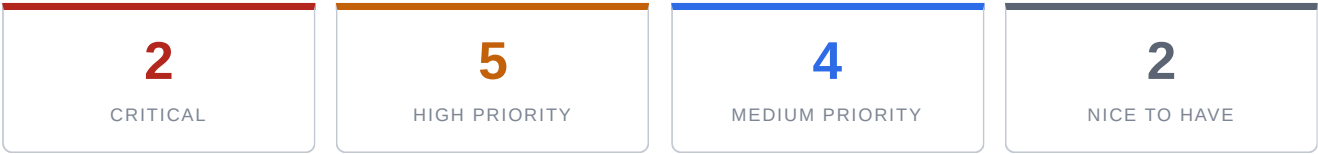
The review is expert-heuristic rather than empirical. Each flow was walked end to end in the role of a first-time user and again as a returning user, and evaluated against Nielsen's ten usability heuristics, established form and IA conventions, and platform interaction norms. Where a claim depends on real user behaviour rather than expert judgement, it is marked as a hypothesis to be validated.

OUT OF SCOPE

Host-side flows, customer support tooling, and any experience behind the enterprise administration login. Visual design issues are covered in the companion UI Audit Report. Motivational and trust mechanics are covered in the companion Behavioural Psychology Audit Report.

02

Findings at a glance



Search and evaluation are strong: filtering is fast, results are legible, and the property page answers most of the questions a guest actually has. The product's difficulty is concentrated at the point of commitment. The booking flow asks for account creation before it has given the user a reason to trust it, presents the full price only at the final step, and offers no way back to change dates without losing progress. Three of the four highest-priority findings sit inside a fifteen-second window of the journey — which is good news, because it means a small amount of focused work sits between the current experience and a materially better conversion rate.

Nielsen's ten heuristics scorecard

A high-level usability health check before the detailed findings. Each heuristic is scored out of five, where 5 is fully satisfied and 1 is substantially violated.

#	HEURISTIC	SCORE	ASSESSMENT
1	Visibility of system status	3/5	Search feedback is good; payment processing gives no progress indication for up to eight seconds.
2	Match between system and the real world	4/5	Language is largely natural. "Provisional hold" is internal jargon guests do not use.
3	User control and freedom	2/5	No way to amend dates mid-checkout without restarting. No undo on removing a saved property.
4	Consistency and standards	3/5	Three primary button styles and two type scales; back behaviour differs between flows.
5	Error prevention	2/5	Date fields accept invalid ranges and only reject them after submission.
6	Recognition rather than recall	3/5	Selected filters are not shown on the results screen; the user must remember what they set.
7	Flexibility and efficiency of use	3/5	No saved searches or recent-search shortcuts for returning users.
8	Aesthetic and minimalist design	4/5	Clean and uncluttered throughout. The property page carries slightly too many competing badges.
9	Help users recognise, diagnose and recover from errors	2/5	Payment errors return a code, not an explanation or a next step.
10	Help and documentation	3/5	A help centre exists but is not reachable from inside the booking flow.

OVERALL USABILITY HEALTH: 29 / 50

The product scores well on clarity and presentation and poorly on control, error prevention and recovery. That is a recognisable pattern: a product designed carefully for the path where everything goes right, and less carefully for the moments where it does not. The three lowest-scoring heuristics — user control, error prevention, and error recovery — all cluster around the booking and payment step, which is also where the commercial cost of failure is highest.

Information architecture review

Screen organisation, navigation structure, grouping, naming consistency, menu organisation and discoverability.

ASPECT	ASSESSMENT	OBSERVATION
Top-level navigation	GOOD	Four tabs, clearly labelled, matching user mental models.
Naming consistency	FRICTION	"Saved", "Favourites" and "Wishlist" all refer to the same collection in different places.
Grouping and hierarchy	GOOD	Property information is grouped as guests actually evaluate it.
Discoverability of key features	PROBLEM	Cancellation is buried three levels inside account settings.
Search and filtering	GOOD	Filter taxonomy matches the domain well.
Back and exit behaviour	PROBLEM	Back inside checkout exits the flow entirely and discards entered data.
Menu depth	FRICTION	Account section reaches four levels; two would cover everything present.

UX-01

One concept, three names — "Saved", "Favourites" and "Wishlist"

MEDIUM PRIORITY

Severity: Medium Effort: Low Frequency: Common Section: Information architecture

ISSUE

The heart icon says "Add to favourites", the tab is labelled "Saved", and the confirmation toast reads "Added to your wishlist". These are the same collection.

Principle — consistency and standards (Nielsen heuristic 4). Users should never have to wonder whether different words mean the same thing. Every synonym is a moment of doubt that costs attention.

EVIDENCE

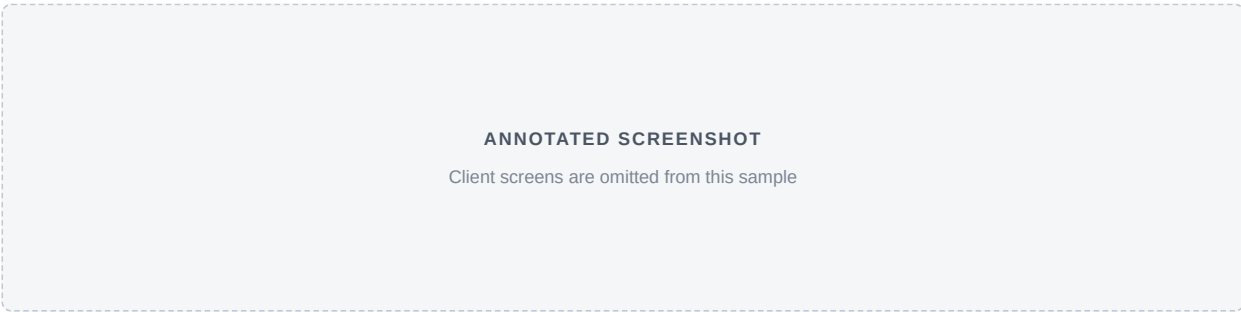


Figure UX-01. The same feature named three ways across icon, tab and toast.

WHY IT MATTERS

Individually trivial. Cumulatively this is the kind of inconsistency that makes a product feel like it was assembled by separate teams, and it is the single cheapest class of fix in any audit.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Choose one term — "Saved" is shortest and most neutral — and apply it in the icon label, the tab, the toast, the empty state and all supporting copy. Add it to a terminology list in the design system so it does not drift again.

UX-02

Cancellation is hidden three levels deep in account settings

● HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: High

Effort: Low

Frequency: Occasional but high stakes

Section: Information architecture

ISSUE

Cancelling a booking requires Account → Bookings → select booking → Manage → Cancel. There is no cancellation entry point on the booking confirmation screen or in the confirmation email.

EVIDENCE

ANNOTATED SCREENSHOT

Client screens are omitted from this sample

Figure UX-02. The full path from home to cancellation.

WHY IT MATTERS

Hard-to-find cancellation reliably converts a self-service action into a support call, which costs more than the cancellation itself. It also reads as deliberate obstruction whether or not it is, and that perception damages trust at precisely the moment a guest is deciding whether to book with you again. This overlaps with the trust findings in the companion Behavioural Psychology Audit Report.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Surface "Manage or cancel this booking" directly on the confirmation screen and in the confirmation email. Keeping the action visible does not increase cancellations meaningfully; it does reduce support contacts and increase repeat booking.

05

Flow completion risk map

Every primary user flow, with a traffic light showing which work well, which carry friction, and which have serious problems.

FLOW	STATUS	STEPS	PRINCIPAL RISK
Search & discovery	WORKING	3	Filters not persisted on results screen — recall burden only.
Property evaluation	WORKING	2	Badge density competes for attention; no task risk.
Booking & payment	SERIOUS	7	Forced account creation, late price reveal, no route back to amend dates.
Account creation	FRICTION	4	Eleven fields requested; four are needed to complete a booking.
Booking management	FRICTION	4	Amendments require contacting support; no self-service change.
Cancellation	SERIOUS	5	Buried entry point; refund terms not restated at the point of decision.

WHERE EACH FLOW BREAKS DOWN

FLOW	WEAKEST STEP	WHAT HAPPENS THERE
Booking & payment	Step 3 of 7	Account wall appears after date and guest selection but before any price commitment. Highest predicted abandonment point in the product.
Booking & payment	Step 6 of 7	Cleaning and service fees appear for the first time, raising the total by roughly 18%.
Cancellation	Step 1 of 5	Users cannot locate the entry point and contact support instead.
Account creation	Step 2 of 4	Field count causes visible hesitation; no indication which fields are optional.

06

User flow analysis

Each primary flow reviewed step by step for friction, confusion and drop-off risk.

UX-03

Account creation is forced before the user has any reason to commit

● CRITICAL

Severity: High

Effort: High

Frequency: Every new customer

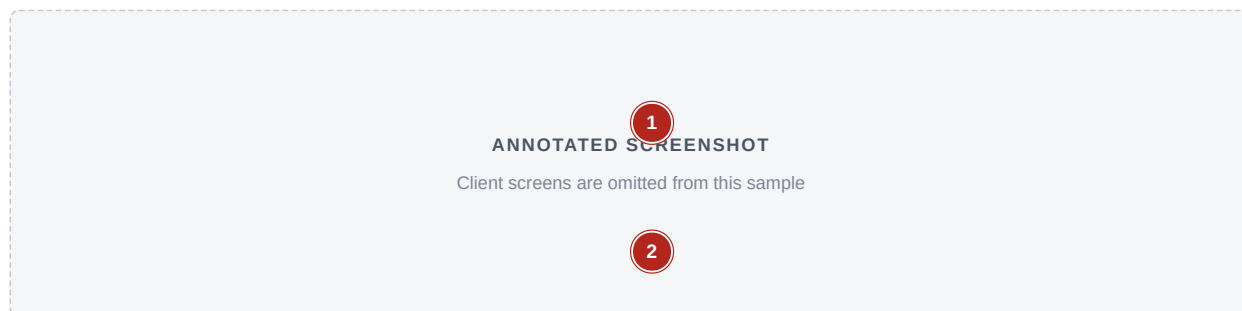
Section: User flows

ISSUE

At step 3 of 7, before any price total is shown and before the property is held, the user is required to create an account. The screen offers no explanation of why an account is needed and no guest checkout alternative.

Principle — the commitment gradient. Asking for effort or personal data should follow, not precede, the delivery of value. A request made before the user has received anything is evaluated against nothing, so it reads as pure cost.

EVIDENCE



- 1 No explanation of why an account is required.
- 2 No guest checkout option and no visible price to weigh the request against.

Figure UX-03. Booking flow, step 3 of 7.

WHY IT MATTERS

Forced registration before checkout is one of the most consistently documented causes of cart abandonment in e-commerce, and its cost is greatest for exactly the users you most want: first-time customers with no existing relationship. Placing it before the total price compounds the problem, because the user is being asked to pay a cost without yet knowing the benefit.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Move account creation to after payment confirmation and offer it as an optional convenience ("Save these details for next time — one tap"). If a pre-payment identity is technically required, collect an email address only and create the account silently. At minimum, add guest checkout and state plainly why an account helps the user, not the business.

BEFORE / AFTER

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
CURRENT STEP 3 Screenshot omitted from sample - Hard account wall, no rationale - Price not yet revealed	PROPOSED STEP 3 Screenshot omitted from sample - Guest checkout offered first - Account offered after confirmation as a saving of effort

UX-04

Full price is revealed only at the final step

● CRITICAL

Severity: High Effort: Medium Frequency: Every booking Section: User flows

ISSUE

Cleaning and service fees are not shown in search results, on the property page, or at any step before payment. They add roughly 18% and first appear at step 6 of 7.

EVIDENCE

ANNOTATED SCREENSHOT

Client screens are omitted from this sample

Figure UX-04. Advertised nightly rate against the price finally charged.

WHY IT MATTERS

Beyond the abandonment cost, late fee disclosure is now a regulated matter: the UK Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Act requires mandatory fees to be included in the headline price shown to consumers. This is therefore both a usability finding and a compliance exposure, and it should be treated as the latter.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Show the all-in nightly equivalent in search results, with the breakdown available on tap. Products that have made this change generally see slightly lower click-through with materially higher completion — the users lost were never going to convert at the true price.

UX-05

No route back to amend dates without losing all progress

● HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: High

Effort: Medium

Frequency: Common

Section: User flows

ISSUE

Using the system back control at any point after step 3 exits the booking flow and discards all entered data, with no warning and no recovery.

Principle — user control and freedom (Nielsen heuristic 3). Users frequently choose functions by mistake and need a clearly marked emergency exit that does not punish them for using it.

WHY IT MATTERS

Re-checking dates is a normal part of booking a holiday, not an edge case — people go back to confirm they picked the right week. Punishing that behaviour with total data loss turns a routine check into an abandonment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Persist flow state for the session. Make the date summary at the top of each step tappable, returning the user to date selection with everything else preserved. If a destructive exit is unavoidable, warn before discarding.

Forms review

Length, simplicity, labelling, input types, error messages, validation, keyboard behaviour, dropdowns, date pickers and friction points.

FORM	FIELDS	NECESSARY	STATUS	PRINCIPAL ISSUE
Account creation	11	4	SERIOUS	Seven avoidable fields; none marked optional.
Guest details	6	5	FRICTION	Label association ambiguous; no autofill attributes.
Payment	5	5	FRICTION	Card number field uses a text keyboard on iOS.
Date selection	2	2	SERIOUS	Accepts invalid ranges; rejects only after submit.
Search filters	8	8	WORKING	Well grouped and clearly labelled.

DETAILED OBSERVATIONS

CRITERION	ASSESSMENT	NOTE
Field count vs necessity	PROBLEM	Account creation asks for date of birth, marketing preferences and a second address line, none of which is used before booking.
Labels	FRICTION	Two fields use placeholder text as the only label; the label disappears once typing begins.
Keyboard type	PROBLEM	Numeric fields present the alphabetic keyboard on iOS.
Autofill	PROBLEM	No autocomplete attributes; password managers and platform autofill do not engage.
Inline validation	FRICTION	Validation runs only on submit; three errors surface at once.
Error message quality	PROBLEM	"Invalid input" used for six distinct failure causes.
Date picker	PROBLEM	Not keyboard operable; targets below minimum size (see UI-05).
Progress indication	GOOD	"Step 3 of 7" is shown clearly throughout.

UX-06

Account creation requests eleven fields where four are needed

HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: High Effort: Low Frequency: Every new customer Section: Forms

ISSUE

Eleven fields are presented, all appearing mandatory. Only name, email, password and phone number are required to complete and service a booking.

EVIDENCE

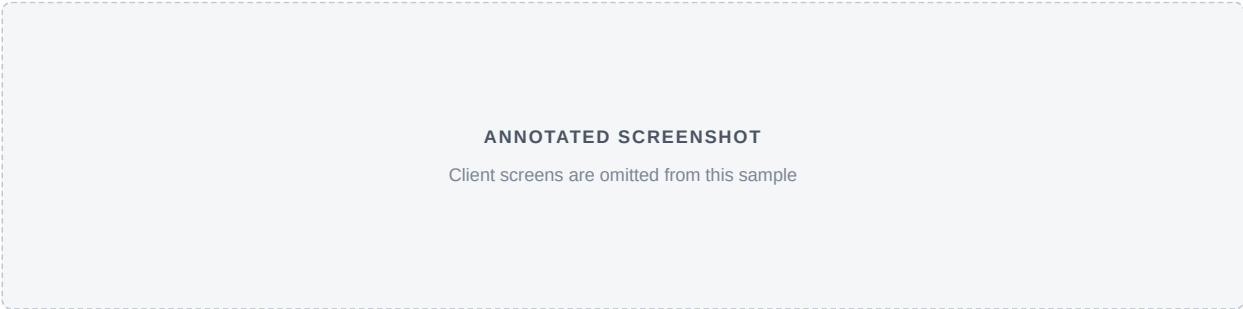


Figure UX-06. Account creation, showing all eleven fields.

WHY IT MATTERS

Each additional field costs completions, and the effect is multiplicative rather than additive because a long form signals that the process ahead will also be long. The cost is highest here because this form already sits at the product's weakest step.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Reduce to four fields. Collect date of birth only where age verification is legally required, and at the point it is required. Move marketing preferences to a single post-confirmation opt-in. Add correct autoComplete attributes and input types so platform autofill completes most of the form in one tap.

BEFORE / AFTER

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
CURRENT FORM Screenshot omitted from sample 11 fields, all appear required - No autofill support	PROPOSED FORM Screenshot omitted from sample 4 fields, autofill enabled - Optional data deferred to after confirmation

Copy and microcopy review

Clarity, brevity, tone, button labels, empty states, error messages, success messages, instructions and calls to action.

LOCATION	CURRENT COPY	ISSUE AND RECOMMENDATION
Checkout CTA	"Continue"	Says nothing about what happens next or whether money moves. Use "Review your booking" at step 6 and "Pay £482.00" at step 7 — naming the amount on the button reduces payment anxiety.
Payment error	"Error 4021. Please try again."	A code the user cannot act on. Use "Your card was declined by your bank. Try a different card, or contact your bank — no payment has been taken."
Empty saved list	"No items."	Dead end. Use "Nothing saved yet. Tap the heart on any property to keep it here while you decide." plus a button back to search.
Date validation	"Invalid input"	Does not say what is wrong. Use "Check-out must be after check-in."
Booking confirmation	"Transaction complete."	Transactional and cold at the emotional peak of the journey. Use "You're booked. Your stay at Seaview Cottage is confirmed for 12–16 September."
Provisional hold	"Provisional hold applied"	Internal terminology. Use "We're holding this property for you for 15 minutes."
Cancellation confirm	"Are you sure?"	Does not state the consequence. Use "Cancel this booking? You'll be refunded £482.00 within 5 working days."

THE PATTERN ACROSS THE COPY

Copy is written from the system's point of view rather than the user's. It describes what the software did ("transaction complete", "provisional hold applied") instead of what the person now has ("you're booked", "we're holding this for you"). This is the least expensive category of improvement in the entire audit — no engineering beyond a string change — and it is disproportionately visible to users.

Accessibility

Contrast, font sizes, touch target sizes, colour dependence, readability and general best practice, viewed from a usability rather than a purely compliance standpoint.

AREA	ASSESSMENT	OBSERVATION
Text contrast	● PROBLEM	Secondary text below AA in both themes. Detail in UI-01.
Font sizes	● FRICTION	13px captions carry material information such as refund terms.
Touch target sizes	● PROBLEM	Calendar cells at 32pt. Detail in UI-05.
Colour dependence	● PROBLEM	Availability shown by colour alone. Detail in UI-09.
Keyboard operability	● PROBLEM	Date picker cannot be operated without a pointer.
Screen reader labelling	● FRICTION	Icon buttons announce as "button" with no name.
Reading level	● GOOD	Plain English throughout; no unnecessary complexity.
Motion and animation	● GOOD	prefers-reduced-motion is respected.
Time limits	● FRICTION	15-minute hold cannot be extended, which disadvantages slower users.

UX-07

The 15-minute booking hold cannot be extended

● HIGH PRIORITY

Severity: Medium

Effort: Medium

Frequency: Every booking

Section: Accessibility

ISSUE

A fifteen-minute timer runs during checkout. When it expires the flow resets with no warning and no option to extend.

WHY IT MATTERS

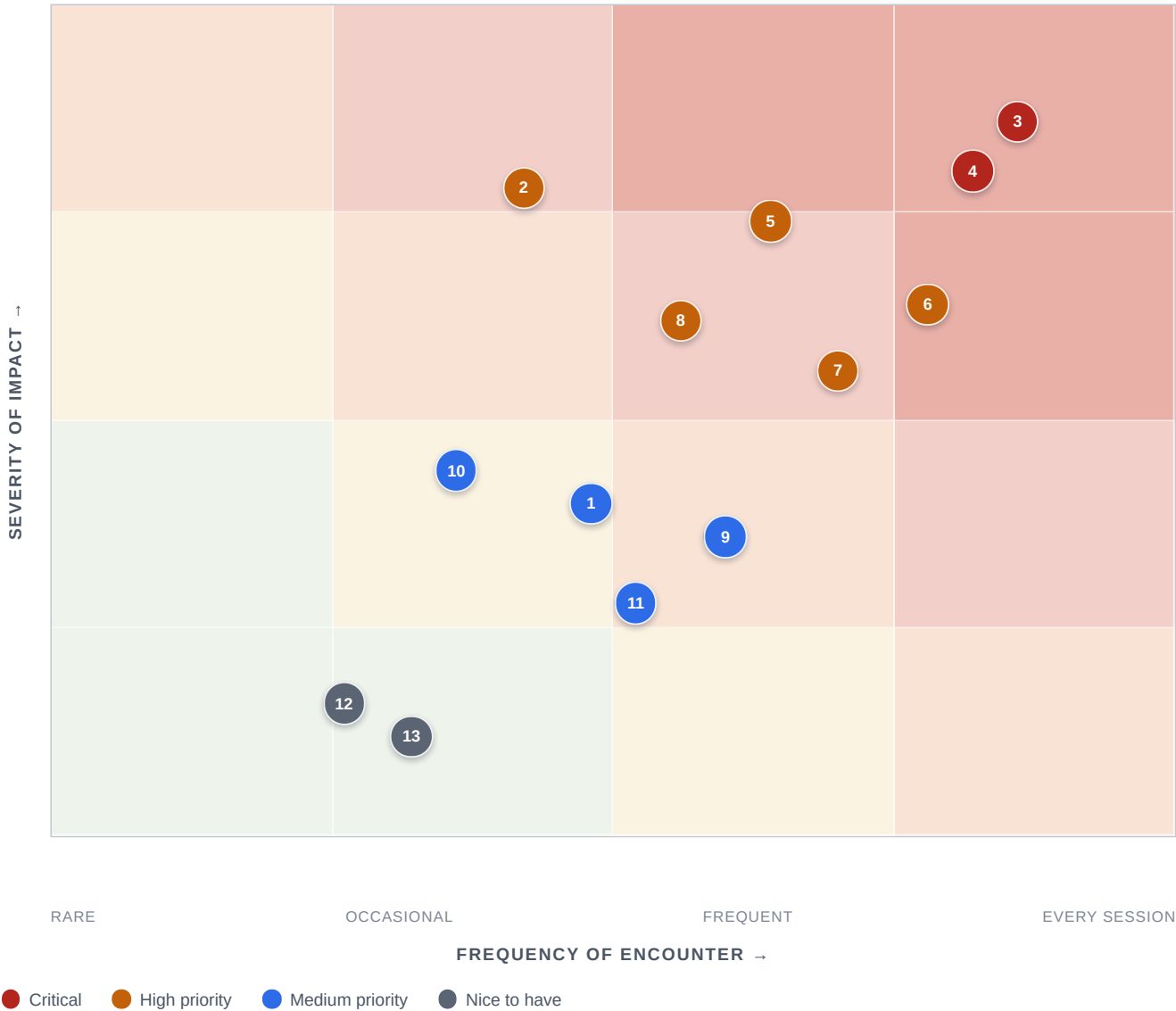
WCAG 2.2.1 requires that users can turn off, adjust or extend a time limit. Beyond compliance, the users most likely to exceed fifteen minutes are those using assistive technology, those with cognitive disabilities, and anyone booking for a group who has to check with other people — a very common case in holiday rental.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Warn at two minutes remaining and offer a single-tap extension of a further fifteen minutes. Preserve entered data on expiry regardless, so the user resumes rather than restarts.

NASA criticality matrix

Every UX finding plotted by how often a user encounters it against how severely it affects them.



PLOT KEY

- UX-01** One concept, three names

UX-02 Cancellation buried three levels deep

UX-03 Forced account creation before value

UX-04 Full price revealed only at final step

UX-05 No route back to amend dates

UX-06 Eleven fields where four are needed

UX-07 Hold timer cannot be extended
- UX-08** Payment errors give codes, not causes

UX-09 Validation only on submit

UX-10 Filters not persisted on results

UX-11 System-voice copy throughout

UX-12 No saved searches for returning users

UX-13 Badge density on property page

Severity vs effort matrix

The same findings plotted against how hard each is to fix — the sequencing view for the product team.



WHAT THIS SAYS ABOUT SEQUENCING

The two Critical findings both sit in "plan properly" — they touch the checkout architecture and cannot be done in an afternoon. That makes the "do now" quadrant more important than usual: reducing the account form, surfacing cancellation and rewriting payment errors are all achievable immediately and all reduce the pressure on the checkout while the larger work is scheduled.

Before / after comparison panels

Current state against recommended improvement for the changes with the largest effect on completion.

UX-03 · Removing the account wall

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
SCREENSHOT – CURRENT Screenshot omitted from sample - Account required at step 3 of 7 - No rationale, no guest option	MOCKUP – RECOMMENDED Screenshot omitted from sample - Guest checkout leads - Account offered after payment as a convenience

UX-04 · All-in pricing in search results

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
SCREENSHOT – CURRENT Screenshot omitted from sample - Nightly rate only; fees hidden until step 6 - Total rises ~18% at the last moment	MOCKUP – RECOMMENDED Screenshot omitted from sample - All-in nightly equivalent, breakdown on tap - Price shown is the price charged

UX-08 · Payment error messages

CURRENT	RECOMMENDED
SCREENSHOT – CURRENT Screenshot omitted from sample "Error 4021. Please try again." - No cause, no next step, no reassurance	MOCKUP – RECOMMENDED Screenshot omitted from sample - Names the cause and the next action - States plainly that no money has been taken

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Prioritised findings list

Every finding in this report, ordered by priority.

ID	FINDING	PRIORITY	EFFORT	SECTION
UX-03	Forced account creation before any value delivered	● CRITICAL	High	User flows
UX-04	Full price revealed only at the final step	● CRITICAL	Medium	User flows
UX-05	No route back to amend dates without data loss	● HIGH PRIORITY	Medium	User flows
UX-06	Eleven account fields where four are needed	● HIGH PRIORITY	Low	Forms
UX-02	Cancellation buried three levels deep	● HIGH PRIORITY	Low	Information architecture
UX-07	Booking hold timer cannot be extended	● HIGH PRIORITY	Medium	Accessibility
UX-08	Payment errors give codes rather than causes	● HIGH PRIORITY	Low	Copy & microcopy
UX-01	One concept named three different ways	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Low	Information architecture
UX-09	Validation runs only on submit	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Medium	Forms
UX-10	Selected filters not shown on results screen	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Low	Information architecture
UX-11	Copy written in the system's voice, not the user's	● MEDIUM PRIORITY	Low	Copy & microcopy
UX-12	No saved or recent searches for returning users	● NICE TO HAVE	High	User flows
UX-13	Badge density competes for attention on property page	● NICE TO HAVE	Low	Information architecture

14

Quick wins

Highest impact for least effort. These can be delivered while the larger checkout work is being scoped.

- | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|
| 01 | Cut account creation to four fields — UX-06 | ~half day
High |
| <p>Removes seven fields from the product's weakest step. No architectural change required; add autofill attributes at the same time.</p> | | |
| 02 | Rewrite payment and validation error messages — UX-08 | ~half day
High |
| <p>String changes only. Turns dead ends into recoverable moments at the point where abandonment is most expensive.</p> | | |
| 03 | Surface cancellation on the confirmation screen and email — UX-02 | ~2 hours
High |
| <p>One link in two places. Reduces support contacts and removes a visible trust problem.</p> | | |
| 04 | Settle on one name for saved properties — UX-01 | ~1 hour
Medium |
| <p>Copy change across five locations, plus a terminology entry in the design system to stop it recurring.</p> | | |
| 05 | Show active filters on the results screen — UX-10 | ~1 day
Medium |
| <p>A single chip row removes the recall burden and makes refinement obvious.</p> | | |

SUGGESTED SEQUENCING

Deliver the five items above in the current cycle — together they are around three days of work. In parallel, scope UX-03 and UX-04 properly, as both touch checkout architecture and pricing display and deserve a proper design and engineering conversation rather than a patch.

Prepared by Kit Powell · KLP Design Solutions · kitpowell.com

Companion documents in this engagement: UI Audit Report, Behavioural Psychology Audit Report, Executive Summary.