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ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES DIGITAL FRONT DOOR

The ASC Front Door Discovery Team, Digital Policy Unit, DHSC / NHS Transformation

"As you've heard, the term [Digital Front Door] has been stumping us along the way. LAs consider the 'front door' to be a different thing across the board! Our analogy grows and grows: door, porches, garden gates"

A local authority in the East of England

"I suppose the thing that's lacking for me is "what do we mean by the front door?"

15th August 2025,
Minor revisions 28th October

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Introduction

- The slides are from those to help Local Authorities in the East of England see what others are doing and to enable contact to explore ideas and practice
- The points given are from interviews with Richard Potter and do not represent any official position of any council
- Given the speed of change and complexity of the digital front door they are indicative

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Thanks to those who have given time

Cambridgeshire County Council	NHS Adult Social Care
Central Bedfordshire	Norfolk County Council
Channel Three Consulting	North Yorkshire
Essex County Council	Peterborough
Derby City	Suffolk County Council
Local Government Association	Wigan
Medway	Thurrock
Milton Keynes	

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Structure

From East of England	Outside East of England
Website	Outside the East - Derby City
ChatBots	Outside the East - Wigan
Triage	Outside the East - other LAs
Directories	National references
Self Assessment	
Assessments	
Professionals	
Applications	
Testing / Piloting	
Partnerships	
Prevention	

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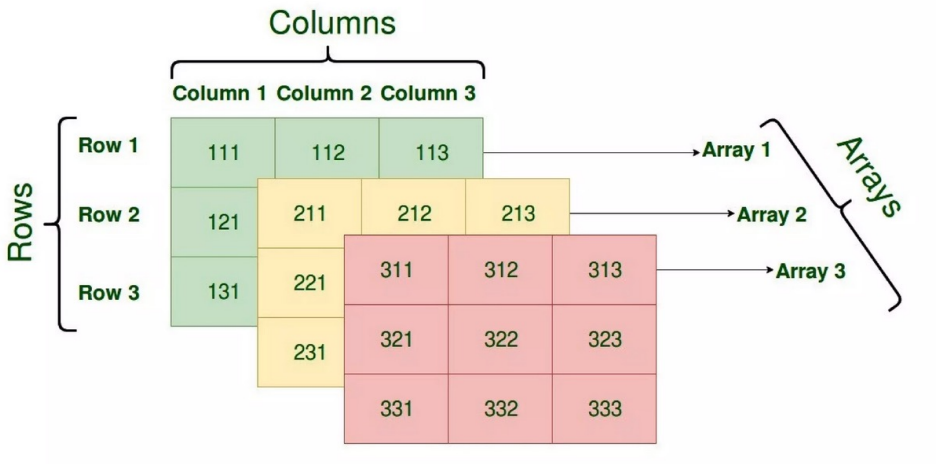
On the complexity of digital front doors

- Three Dimensional Array



Ring the bells that can still ring
Forget your perfect offering
There's a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

Leonard Cohen

"Every council's door must lead somewhere. Behind it is a lobby, with first response functions like initial assessments, equipment prescriptions, and reablement pathways. Beyond the lobby, there are corridors for assessments, safeguarding, longer-term care, and reviews" Adult Social Care Front Door Discovery Team

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Themes from interviews

People	146
Care	118
Social	100
Work	92
Digital	86
We're	83
Information	71
Door	68
Things	61
Need	59

AI 14th most used, referenced 51 times

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Within East of England

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Websites

- Traditional web & directory provision - some basic housework to make sure everything is accurate up-to-date and points to the right places
- Pages being updated. Next stage is co-producing with people who use the website: “how does it feel intuitively” e.g. asking for a social care assessment. At present, making sure website is up to date, accurate
- Work we're doing with the website and the number of people that have engaged in that conversation, asking people to help us think about the customer journey through the website, for people to be able to engage and understand what it is that they need and want, and what is there for them
- Piece of research to understand to look at data surrounding calls coming in through call centre [that type of front door]. Also looking at analytics on use of our website, to understand the portal use. We're now moving forward from recommendations

ChatBots

- ChatBots, tried it, but not worked so far. It wasn't intuitive, it asked strange questions. Didn't work with safeguarding. Transcribe was the big issue. Being tested e.g. waste services
- ChatBots – trialled with libraries, less risky. ASC also looking at a ChatBot, in development at the moment. Two phases:
  - a chatbot to support internal staff, and
  - perhaps launch on a public facing platform, once tested
- Such as "this is my problem" and we might have a piece of equipment that will support somebody. We're looking at a ChatBot to support that particular aspect

Triage

- AI might be used to generate a first pass of what the individual might benefit from in terms of information and guidance. Either AI or a Bot to do the first triage, to put work into the right work stack, the right flow? E.g. if an individual clearly is at a very high risk, then we need a social worker to be see that person at home. If somebody has a set of circumstances, perhaps advise and information, perhaps reablement, perhaps equipment might benefit them then we need a team to have a more curious and in-depth conversation before we plan anything. So the Bot would triage people into the right workstack

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Directories

- Start to look at single platform to put all (Council directory) info into and signpost residents. Want to look at role of ChatBots
- People Information Network (information and advice) has been successful, but it's on old clunky tech, looking to replace it. There's a health driven directory run by a mental health trust
  - ⇢ It has a lot of the stuff ours has - duplication
  - ⇢ It doesn't have CQC registrations, which are on ours
  - ⇢ Has community activities, then finance advice, financial advisors, etc.
- Basic housework on web and directory provision to make sure everything is accurate, up-to-date and points to the right places. How we signpost people. Through something more tailored to people we're working with. We know AI is working well for sort of natural language search for books of internal use cases
- By end of year: a digital Directory of Services on front / landing page of where you would go if you are a resident asking for adult social care support in Essex, searchable

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Self Assessment

- Piloting an online self assessment tool for individuals called Better Care Support, used in Kent. It takes you through questions about your needs under the Care Act, using a series of animations and questions about your need
- A couple of workshops on self-assessment, people were very wary of it, for example having seen online videos which told you to go to the toilet. So didn't want to get "all singing / all dancing" self-assessment that no one then used
- Package from Imosphere. Where can we signpost people to? If they're not getting what they need they can make a referral. It asks detailed questions, depending on what they have said their needs are. That takes them through to send in a form, which generates a personal budget. Still has to be looked at by practitioner and assessed. They have the information in front of them, already. They are still going to have a conversation, but don't have to go through the whole fact finding
- We have portal provision up and running for people to be able to interact with us. What we are currently testing is the approach using verified accounts to give people more access to their own information, to divert them from needing to reach out to the contact centre. We have the self-assessment up and running for adults and carers

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Assessments (1/2)

- Magic Notes has been more when are visiting adults and doing assessments and reviews. They put it on in the background and it records and transcribes everything that's been discussed
- Trials in locality teams. A significant amount of time being saved by using AI to summarise those conversations. The more profound benefit is that you record a conversation and this means you can actively listen and engage with the person; so hear and understand what they're talking about without worrying about writing notes - which can sometimes distract from the conversation

Assessments (2/2)

- Piloting both Magic Notes and a new system C product Form Flow. Same principles as Magic Notes, but rather than summarising in assessment, which the social worker then needs to fit into the system forms, Flow will do that population for them. It will break up the assessment and get it into the relevant fields in Liquid Logic
- One possible route of access is the National system "Apply for a needs assessment by social services"

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Professionals

- What has worked recently is that we split out professional referrals and citizen referrals. There's a whole pile of information that you can ask from a professional that you can't really ask of a resident. I would say that's been a real success
- Of the 70% of professional demand, 19% is from our providers. What delegated authority could we give to them to make decisions? Could we use technology to enable them to be able to do that themselves?
- Sharing care records, where professionals who are joined up in the partnership can view with adult social care and whether there any needs and vice versa

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Applications in use, piloted, or considered by Adult Social Care

	LA1	LA2	LA3	LA4	LA5	LA6	LA7	LA8	LA9
Bridget	X				X				
ChatBot		X			X				
Co-Pilot		X	X		X	X		X	
Imosphere						X	X		
Liquid Logic	X			X	X			X	X
Magic Notes	X	X	X		X		X	X	
Mosaic	X		X		X				

Each referred by one LA: **Access Evo**, **Amazon CRM**, **Beam**, **Better Care Support**, **Joy App**, **NoveScript**, **System C** AI Offering, **Teams**, **Wavenet**

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Testing / Piloting

- It takes time to test use of a new system v. cost. Corporate digital colleagues supportive in understanding that you've got to have the tool right for the job. But .. ££
- Is there re Care Director and self-assessment – middleware software to link the two together?
  - ⇢ piloting 3 – 5 self-assessments
- Have diverse population and tool didn't understand what people were saying. Quickly re-configured to work with commonest accents. Now testing Bridget with top five languages
- If a new system is put in place and the number of calls / emails falls. Does the new system work, or do people simply get frustrated and leave without anything?

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Prevention

- The need to prevent people needing social care
- Supporting the prevention agenda
  - Data sharing agreement combines information across health and social care, through a common warehouse with PowerBI
  - Establishing ability to look at long-term impact of interventions across health and social care conditions
- Doing predictive analytics around falls, and potentially some predictive analytics to try and find unknown carers
- Falls prevention has had pilot, about to go into in second phase
  - Technology element is an AI predictive tool. Working with partner, combining data together, using AI predictive technology. To say that (these) people are at high risk of falls
- March 2025, NHS "Nationwide roll out of artificial intelligence tool that predicts falls and viruses"

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Partnership

- Workshops with partners in health and care to look at the digital front door
- With GPs through two local integrated neighbourhood managers
- Part of My Care Record partnership project to improve care by joining up health and care information
- Commissioned information advice through some of the voluntary sector partners e.g. Age UK, the local Deaf Association, and other carer organisations as well. How do we support them in terms of that digital expansion?
- County family carers are working with us around the delivery of our accelerating reform fund transformation, which is very focussed on IAG (Information Advice & Guidance) for carers. They have been a key stakeholder from the start and have been involved in shaping the digital inclusion work

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Outside East of England

Outside the East - Derby City

- Led by Councillor and Chief Executive
- The two + hour webinar is available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3I-gVSFQfpQ
- The extract on AI phone for Adult Social Care is here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yM6g7AeIWj4
  - Answers for son phoning about mother with mobility issues due to Parkinsons, looking for help getting her out and about & around the home, getting bins out,
  - The answer for support groups refers to the directory at https://mycare.derby.gov.uk/
- Include demonstration of DARCIE AI in answering questions
  - Also shown in Polish (10 languages supported)

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Outside the East – Wigan (1/2)

- Starting in Social Care, Smart Gen AI ChatBot. Uses the power of Gen AI to ask intuitive questions based on the conversation flow
- Adult social care contact centre, receives 30,000-40,000 calls a year. 60% could have been answered, more quickly
  - E.g. on finance, paying for care. Do I have to pay for care? How much does care cost? What's a financial assessment?
- The power of the ChatBot isn't just to search and respond. It can ask questions around: are you having difficulties with your finances? Are there wider financial issues that you need a bit of support with?
- Working on:
  - For part of the tool to ask the right kind of questions around "what precisely is it your Mum was struggling with?", "what have you considered or tried?"
  - ChatBot to search approved sites

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Outside the East – Wigan (2/2)

- Own version of Magic Notes
  - ⇢ As a social worker you go out with a phone, record the conversation with the client. Uses same Gen AI formatting, rules to creates the content of the assessment. It captures action, it captures a brief summary of it
- Case audit tool. Creates suggestions on one thing that could have been done bigger and better, that's pertinent to the case
- Starting to work with a local Integrated Care Board around AI predictive analysis of data around falls prevention
- In 2017 launched the tech bungalow. Now new version, with updated kit in and around various rooms
- Cambridgeshire County Council also have "new 'Technology Enabled Care' flat showcases ways technology can enable independence at home"

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Outside the East – others

- **North Yorkshire** - community directory North Yorkshire Connect
  - A platform of community for the community services, encouraged people to register, which saves the cost of updating directories
  - Built on open-source technology. You could approach North Yorkshire and get their version ..
- **Medway**
  - There should be a procedures and guidance for people so to make sure it is used ethically and within legal boundaries, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
  - Developed a virtual house
  - Working on a new early health and prevention service
- **Channel3consulting**
  - Advice and Guidance (IAG) and your VCSE catalogue and management are the first port of call to get right, because then you can start to direct people towards them through whatever digital means you need. And your ChatBot can send them to relevant information

National

National References (1/3)

- **Academic**
  - 2025 Association Between Digital Front Doors and Social Care Use for Community-Dwelling Adults in England: Cross-Sectional Study Less than 20% of local authorities provided an integrated digital easy-read format as part of their digital front door system with about 25% adopting digital self-assessment within their system
- **Care Quality Commission**
  - The push towards AI for two LAs has come from CQC reviews indicating improvement needing
  - “aren't doing any specific work on digital front doors for adult social care services and there is no specific guidance I am aware of in this area”
  - There is “Digital record systems: achieving good outcomes for people using adult social care services”

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National References (2/3)

- **Local Government Association**. How can AI and smart tech tools help implement a digital front door to council's information and services?", with Artificial intelligence case study bank
- Relevant examples
  - Kingston Council: Using AI in Adult Social Care administration
  - Peterborough City Council: Hey Geraldine, a personalised AI assistant
  - Wigan: QuickAction in adult social care

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National References (3/3)

- DHSC and NHS England partnership "**Front Door Discovery project**" Adult Front Door Discovery
- Themes included:
  - who is looking for care, where they look, what they know, what they find, and how it impacts them
  - the relationship between information, its quality (e.g. consistency), and impacts of making information better
  - how the quality of content impacts the services provided by LAs

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