

[Advicenow.org.uk](https://www.advicenow.org.uk) Evaluation

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Introduction and terms of reference

This evaluation was commissioned as an external evaluation, to be carried out by an independent evaluator, Daniel Taghioff, with the support of the evaluation project team, as follows:

Allison Charlton, Project Manager
Jackie May, Editorial Advice
Donal Savage, Information Systems Consultant
John Seargeant, Senior Evaluator

It was agreed at the initial meeting on the 19th October 2004, that the approach taken would be to evaluate the Self-Help section in relation to the site as a whole. Furthermore it was agreed that a focus group methodology would be used, and that the initial focus would be on the problems that users might wish to solve, as a way into understanding how they might access the site. It was agreed that the interview schedule and an outline of issues to be focussed on would be produced based on two initial unstructured one to one interviews (See Appendix 1.) This would provide a framework for the subsequent semi-structured group and individual interviews. Five such groups were convened (see Appendix 2 for the transcripts.) It was agreed amongst the project team, early on, after the initial exploratory interviews, that a paper-based case explanation and case study of the Tracker Tool should be used. This was to avoid the complications of signing people into the tool during an interview. It was also to allow the tool to be discussed in terms of the various ways it might be imagined or used, rather than as something already set in stone. The materials used to introduce the concept of the Tracker Tool are given in appendix 3.

An executive summary of the overall findings is given below. It is followed a more extended overview of the findings, and then by the main body of the report.

Executive Summary

The findings that emerge from the evaluation relate to the set of questions, and the set of issues that link these questions, which are shown below in figure 1:

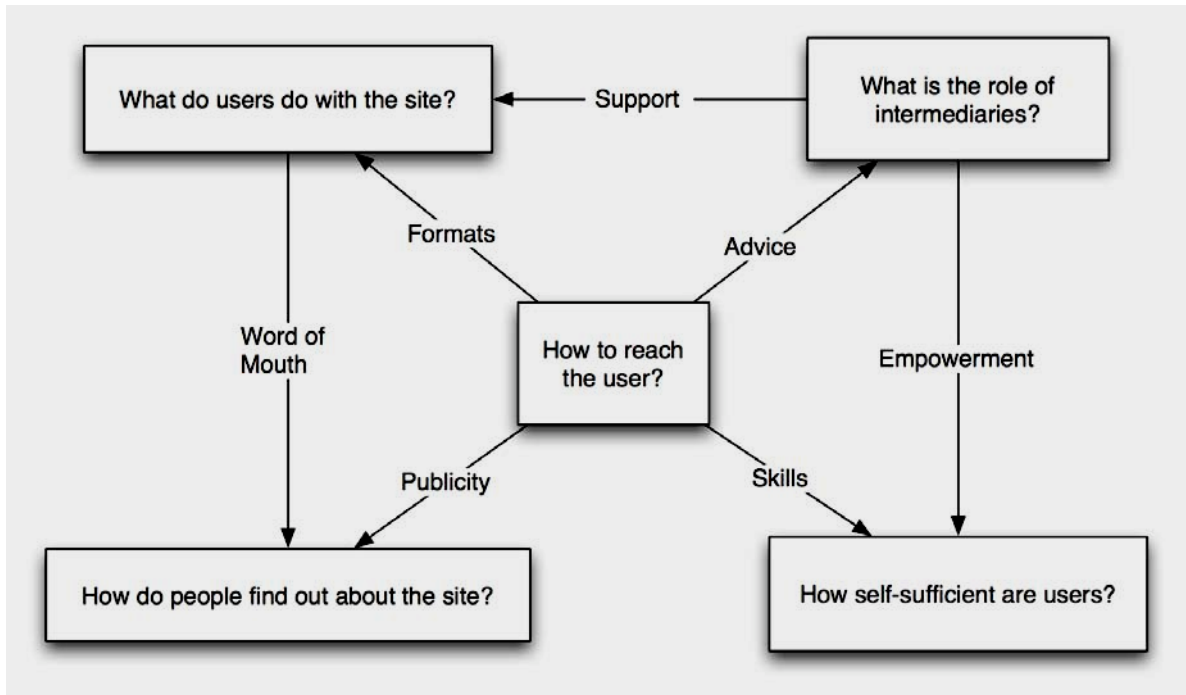


Figure 1: Questions and Issues in the evaluation.

Main findings

- Advicenow.org.uk is providing to ‘mainstream users’ in a clear, effective and relevant manner.
- Specific groups, often marginalised, need to be addressed more directly.
- The issues of skills, confidence, and publicity make intermediaries crucial in supporting and empowering users in accessing the site, and then actively claiming their rights.
- The site is potentially an excellent delivery platform for supporting intermediaries in doing this.
- It is important to produce materials that reflect what users and intermediaries actually *do*: PDF documents for printing, usable legal documents, training materials, discussion sheets, checklists etc.
- This implies that users and intermediaries need to be further involved in developing materials for the site.

Overview of the findings:

Advicenow.org.uk is providing to 'mainstream users' in a clear, effective and relevant manner.

Information web-sites, are obliged to make very general assumptions about their audiences, at least in their early life. It is hard to know in advance who will be using your site. For Advicenow, with a target audience of 'the general public', it was essential to test whether a range of publics would have a reasonable degree of success in finding relevant information and making sense of it, and then making it work for them.

The good news from the evaluation is that the Advicenow website users were impressed by the ease with which they accessed information, the comprehensiveness of what they found, and the relevance of the content. It is especially difficult for websites to get right the pathways to and balance of their content – how much information to include, how to structure access, how detailed or how simplified it should be, for different audiences. Happily, with the Advicenow website there was a very strong sense from users that in most cases Advicenow had got these things right.

From experience Advicenow is aware that user expectations of websites can be very low, and it was encouraging to see that users were both surprised and pleased by their ability to get to relevant information quickly and with ease. And because the Advicenow website is structured to help the user to explore and discover, as they make their specific searches, users were also enabled to 'learn' about new aspects of the enquiries they were making, as they went along.

Specific groups, often marginalised, need to be addressed more directly.

Despite Advicenow's considerable efforts to reach out to user groups and provide accessible and relevant information, there were some areas where users felt they would have liked more information. One particular area that came up was that of Immigration and Asylum. This is a complex and fast changing area of the law. It is also an area where there are grave implications for those involved in this type of legal process, making advice giving in this area particularly sensitive. However there is a clear perceived need for this type of information, with participants in three out of the five focus groups voicing concern around this. The focus groups contained a high proportion of non-residents, or residents with non-resident relatives, but nonetheless this still highlights an area where information is very much needed, and consistently requested by the users concerned.

The rapid changing nature and seriousness of this area of law, implies that the issue of integrating Advicenow's work with that of intermediaries, particularly Advice givers, is crucial. This is because Advice workers in this area will be particularly in need of up-to-date information, which Advicenow is uniquely well-placed to provide. Also, due to the seriousness of these issues, Advicenow could

operate as an initial overview of this area of the law, with contact details for advice intermediaries provided as a ‘What to do next?’

Other groups, who felt themselves often excluded from public discussion, would have been more encouraged to use the website, had they been addressed more directly by it. Both the younger group (group 1) and the domestic workers (group 2) found information on the site relevant to them, but felt they would have liked a section on the site that dealt with their issues as ‘young people’ or as ‘domestic workers.’ This could be an alternative way for Advicenow to organise their information, alongside the many options for access already available (the search box, A to Z index as well as a classification from general to specific legal areas.) There might also be a case of making Advicenow customisable for particular users, or user groups, as a portal like yahoo.com is.

The issues of skills, confidence, and publicity make intermediaries crucial in supporting and empowering users in accessing the site, and then actively claiming their rights.

There was an issue of people having the necessary skills and confidence to access the site. Skill areas that emerged were: familiarity with the internet, use of the English language, especially formal English, familiarity with legal process and problem solving, as well as familiarity with searching for information. This suggested that intermediaries might be required in supporting people in the acquiring the skills and confidence necessary in accessing the site. This was consistent with the aims of the [female] advice worker we interviewed (Group 2). She expressed these aims as follows:

‘The objective for me in having things like this is to encourage you ladies [sic] to be more self-sufficient to do things for yourself, I mean it’s great that you can come here and you can tell us your problems, and we can help solve them, but eventually, what we are trying to do is to encourage you to start doing things for yourself.’

Specific skill-related topics, not present on the site, that came up in the evaluation include: The withholding of passports by employers, sponsoring someone to enter the UK, how to fill out forms or write letters, looking for work, verbal versus written employment contracts, negotiating an employment contract, opening a bank account, proving residence status and again visa issues all came up. The range of skills implicated in this gives some clues to the range of intermediaries that might be approached, in empowering users to be able to access the site. Following the list of skills above, IT trainers in community centres, literacy and ESL (English as a Second Language) trainers, citizenship and basic law instructors, librarians, the refugee council, and of course advice workers, and also those that train advice workers.

There has been considerable dialogue with Advicenow, on the findings of the evaluation. This has revealed that the skills and knowledge for accessing the site are an ongoing concern for them. They see the need for more information on general problem solving, improving people's knowledge on their rights, and how to access them, knowing where and how to find out more, knowing how to approach the 'other side,' knowing how to keep a record of correspondence, knowing how to negotiate. This suggests that working with intermediaries is already, to an extent, a part of Advicenow's work, and that extending these types of skill-oriented activities, in relation to working with intermediaries, is a realistic way forward for the organisation.

The site is potentially an excellent delivery platform for supporting intermediaries in doing this.

The Advice worker (in group 2) expressed an interest in using Advicenow as a supporting tool in her work. This was to provide materials to base discussions and fact-sheets on, to check up on changes in the law, to double check her own understanding, as well as a tool for convincing her clients that what she was telling them was also out there 'in black and white.' She also saw that the site could act as a bridge between her, teaching the students directly, and them, accessing information themselves. A website is the obvious mode of delivery of this type of material, since the vast majority of Advice workers have the resources and skills to access the internet, and training their clients to use computers and to access the internet is so often a part of the support provided to clients.

However, in order to further facilitate marginalised groups accessing the site, certain editorial issues need to be addressed. One issue raised was that of the site clearly explaining to the user what to do within the page, and what would happen once they had done it. This might include each page explaining itself, and its layout, and the options it presents to users. It might also include explaining when users were going to leave the site, for external partner sites, and making it clearer how to get back *from* these sites. Whilst the language on the mains site was praised for its straightforwardness, partner sites were more prone to using legal jargon. This implies that some sort of glossary service might be a useful addition to Advicenow, in its aspect of being a 'portal' site. Finally the issue of 'what to do next,' needs to be addressed on each page. The most likely courses of action in relation to the material presented on the page needs to be thought through, and the options in terms of proceeding need to be presented in a clear 'what next' type of section, in order to give clear continuity and flow.

This also relates to the relationship between the site and intermediaries, especially advice workers. If the site had a more 'interactive problem solving' type format, based on and developed from the above principles, this would also allow a clear flagging up of when it is perhaps better for a user NOT to go it alone, and when to seek professional advice of various sorts. This might integrate the site within the advice sector more. To take an analogy from the health sector, it might operate as 'triage,' or in the same manner as NHS direct, helping to distinguish between problems that people can solve themselves, problems where they can be supported in being able to solve themselves, and problems where they really need legal

advice. The issues of a glossary, what to do next, getting back from partner sites, as well as using the Tracker Tool (see dedicated section in the main findings,) and also searching Advicenow whilst browsing other sites, might all be addressed through Advicenow browser toolbars, which intermediaries could install on their machines.

It is important to produce materials that reflect what users and intermediaries actually do: PDF documents for printing, usable legal documents, training materials, discussion sheets, checklists etc.

Advicenow has been moving towards providing materials in PDF format, to allow them to be downloaded and printed, thus allowing the user more flexibility in how they interact with the materials. This focus towards what would actually be done with the materials from the site could be extended. Many of the respondents were happy to see PDF files available for download, as they felt they could get more detailed information from a PDF, and that they could download it and later read it, and possibly print it out. Several times participants expressed the wish for ready-made forms, or contracts, that they could download and directly use. Use and format was also relevant when considering the relations between intermediaries and users. The advice worker interviewed expressed that the materials in the site might be useful for making fact sheets, and I observed that the materials on the site sparked off useful discussions, and question and answer sessions, between the advice worker and her clients. This suggests that producing materials suitable for basing training sessions and discussions on would be very useful for advice workers, and would draw them in, as a specific group to be addressed, to using the site. This would also imply them recommending it to their clients, and so word-of-mouth publicity. This might help to address concerns voiced by users that the site was somewhat under-publicised, considering what a useful resource they found it to be.

This implies that users and intermediaries need to be further involved in developing materials for the site.

The overall impression from the evaluation is of a useful and usable information resource, which is delivered on an appropriate platform, that needs to be extended and publicised further. The further development and publicising of the site should be carried out in relation to the activities of intermediaries, involving them more in the production of materials for the site. Advicenow has a set of writing, presentation and web-delivery skills that could greatly facilitate intermediaries, especially advice workers, in producing and disseminating useful materials. This would help Advicenow's work by further improving the relevance and usability of their materials, and by integrating their work, and making it better recognised and understood, amongst the full range of people who provide advice.

Procedure:

Methodology

The groups were organised as focussed interviews of sizes varying between 1 and 4 participants. The participants were focussed first on the types of legal problems they might need to deal with, and then on the Advicenow.org.uk website in general, and then on the Self-Help section, in the context of both the general website and their legal issues (See appendix 1, the interview schedule and a listing of the issues to be focussed on.) The interview schedule, and listing of issues to be focussed on, was not followed mechanically, but was used as an aid to memory to give a semi-structured interview format. These two supporting documents were produced through two initial informal one-to-one interviews, which were focused in a similar way to the relatively more formal interviews reported on here.

Ethics and Confidentiality

All the participants were 18 or over and gave informed consent about participating. The type of information given to them before the interview is outlined in the introductory section of the interview schedule (see appendix 1.) All of the respondents responded positively to having been introduced to the site. All of them were offered a nominal payment (£5) for their participation, although not all of them felt that they wished to take it. Confidentiality was guaranteed to all participants, and this was adhered to, whilst bearing in mind where respondents expressed that they didn't mind being identified. Thus it was possible to present fairly close to verbatim transcripts, and to say where interviews took place, whilst withholding the names of those participating. All participants were promised a copy of the final report, and would certainly be heeded if they had any objections to the content of it. Generally, respondents did not consider the information they discussed as being particularly sensitive, except in one situation (Group 2) where the situation was highly sensitive, but the problem was rather the lack of publicity about what was going on. Nonetheless the identity of participants has been protected. The community centre that hosted group 2 is not hard to identify from the transcripts, but we specifically checked this with them, and they were not concerned about this. The transcript also leaves some room for 'plausible deniability' for the group concerned, should they wish to exercise that.

Profile of the Participants

The participants are coded firstly according to which group they were in (1 to 5) and then by letter, one for each participant, e.g. group 2 consisted of participants: 2A, 2B, 2C and 2D. This is to maintain some level of confidentiality and anonymity for them. They are profiled at the beginning of each transcript (see appendix 2), and their profiles are also collated below:

Participant 1A:

He is 19-28 years old, and has lived in London for all of his life. He sees himself as a Pakistani Muslim, and he works as an assistant librarian, and as a retail assistant.

Participant 1B:

He is 13 -18 years old. He was born in the UK and has lived in London for all of his life. He sees himself as Indian. He works as a builder.

Participant 2A:

She is between 49 and 58 years old. She was born in Scotland and has lived in London for 36 years. She identifies herself as Scottish. She works as a support worker for the women at the centre.

Participant 2B

She is between 29 and 38 years old. She was born in the Phillipines. She has lived in London for 4 ½ Months. She is (East) Asian in Background. She works as a domestic worker.

Participant 2C

She is between 29 and 38 years old. She was born in the Philippines. She has lived in London for 4 months. She is Filipino. She works as a Nanny and Housekeeper.

Participant 2D

She is 39 – 48 years old. She was born in the Philippines. She has lived in London for 3 years. She is a Christian and a Filipino.

Participant 3A

She is 29-38 years old. She is from Lahore in Pakistan. She has lived in London for 21/2 Months. She sees herself as an Asian Muslim. She worked previously in Media and Communications and Advertising. She is currently studying for a Master's Degree in Global Media.

Participant 3B

She is 19-28 years old. She was born in Lancashire in the UK. She has lived in London for a long time. She sees herself as British-Asian-Indian-Gujurati. She works part-time with marketing, and is studying for a Master's in Global Media.

Participant 4A

She is 19 – 28 years old. She was born in Leicestershire. She has lived in London since August 2004. She is a British Christian, although not actively churchgoing. She works with booking tours for live bands

Participant 5A

She is 59-68 years old. She was born in Manchester in the UK. She has lived in Bristol for 18 years. She is a UK citizen. She works as a freelance writer and journalist.

Profile of the groups

Group 1 consisted of two young, male, British Asians. Their religious background did not seem as significant a difference between them in the interviews as did their differing occupations. 1A had experience of dealing with the public, and particularly experience of providing an information and advice service through his work as an assistant librarian. He seemed to evaluate the site in terms of this experience, alongside his experience as a young British Asian. 1B seemed to be more concerned with issues that affected his family as a whole (he is younger) and so was more concerned with issues related to the problems of those outside the mainstream of British society, particularly those with immigration, visa and language problems. The Group 1 interview was carried out in the informal setting of the home of a mutual friend (Donal.)

Group 2 consisted of 3 female Filipino domestic workers and their female advice worker, in the computer room of their community centre. Two of the participants had fairly similar experience (2B and 2C) having recently arrived in the country, and had difficulties with their employers. 2D had also had difficulties with her employer, but had been in England for a longer period (3 years.) 2A is the advice worker at the community centre. The group was very interesting in that the discussion brought out the complexities of how a resource like the Advicenow sight might be actually used in an advice giving setting.

Group 3 consisted of two female masters students at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). One of them was British Asian (3B), the other was English-speaking Pakistani (3A). 3A was more concerned with visa and passport issues, and was also concerned with the design of the site, as she had experience of working as a web designer. 3B was concerned with the issue of identification with the site. She had a strong sense of having negotiated her British-Asian identity, and felt that this complexity wasn't represented in the site, which she seemed to feel was rather Anglo Saxon. She had previously trained as an Anthropologist. The interview was carried out in the semi-formal setting of the post-graduate common room at SOAS.

Group 4 was a one-to-one focussed interview. It took place in the relatively informal setting of my home. The participant is a neighbour, and so the setting was relatively informal for her. She is young and British English, and so represented a slightly more mainstream perspective for the sample. She could definitely be said to be in touch with popular culture due to her work booking venues for bands. She was also previously an art student, and so had interesting comments to make about the presentation of the site.

Group 5 was also a one-to-one focussed interview. It took place in the relatively informal setting of my home. The respondent is a close relative, chosen in order

to give an ‘older’ perspective in the feedback. She has also worked as a journalist and writer, and so was also able to give interesting feedback on the format of the site, and did not feel inhibited to tell me what she thought, since the setting was informal for her.

Sampling Issues

Whilst we were not able to obtain a large sample (10 participants plus two participants in the initial exploratory interviews) this does not seem to be a crippling problem. Firstly the data being gathered is qualitative, and so does not need to establish itself in a statistical manner (i.e with a minimum sample size in the region of forty participants, and a rigorous sampling frame.) We are interested in qualitative data, because our focus is on the user of the site, and broadly speaking, the *perceived* user-friendliness and usefulness of the site. This means the emphasis is very much on the user’s experience of the site rather than on a statistical analysis of user-’behaviour’ as externally measured. This implies that the findings are to be taken as the basis for further exploration of the potential of the site, rather than as the final word on the ‘nature’ of the site. Secondly, the spread of the sample is relatively good, for a sample of this size.

The gender spread is the weak area, in as much as there were only two male and eight female respondents. The two initial exploratory interviews were both with males, and the feedback from those two initial interviews was broadly consistent with what is presented here. So this imbalance in the sample does not seem too significant.

In terms of ethnicity, the sample contains Fillipino, Pakistani, British Indian and British Muslim as well as English respondents. Whilst Africa, Europe and Latin America was not represented here, a range of positions in relation to the British mainstream were covered, in terms of senses of inclusion and exclusion.

In terms of age, there was a range of respondents, see table 1:

Age Range:	Number of participants:
13 – 18	1
19-28	3
29-38	3
39-48	1
49-58	1
59-68	1

Table 1: Age profile of participants.

So a range of ages was covered, with a concentration in the 19-38 age range. There is a question as to if the concerns of older, perhaps less computer literate groups were covered. A group interview with such a sample was planned, but was cancelled due to objections that it might be an uncomfortable experience for the participants. There was a discussion in relation to an Advice Worker for a slightly less computer literate group (Group 2) which touched on the issues of the need for

intermediaries to facilitate groups marginalised from online information services (something which is often termed ‘The Digital Divide.’)

Transcription

In the initial meeting where the approach to the evaluation was agreed upon, a consensus was reached that the transcription could proceed in a paraphrased fashion with key comments picked out where appropriate. However as the evaluation proceeded it became clear that verbatim transcription was preferable, due to the complexity of the issues that were emerging. Thus Group 1 is transcribed in a paraphrased fashion, and groups 2, 4 and 5 are transcribed verbatim. Group 3 would also have been transcribed verbatim, had not failure of the recording equipment required that it be transcribed from memory directly after the interview.

Whilst bearing these limitations in mind, it is important to note that thematic analysis of the transcriptions as a whole revealed that many of the key issues stretched across many, if not all, of the interviews. It is also important to note that all the transcriptions remain relatively close to what was said by the participants, and is attributed to them as individuals in the transcriptions, using the numbering system given to introduce the participants, and further explained below. Comments are made in the transcription as an initial commentary on what was said, these are given in [square brackets.] as are comments on what respondents were doing as they spoke, where it seemed to be required.

Thematic analysis

The transcript data is approached as a whole via an analysis of the themes that emerged in the feedback. These themes are addressed to the concerns negotiated with Advicenow, via the documents ‘Interview Schedule’ and ‘Issues to be addressed.’ Where comments in the various transcripts are addressed to the same theme, they are collated together in the analysis. Sometimes the transcript is directly quoted, but where a reference needs to be given, it will be given systematically to a specific contribution (or utterance.) The contributions are numbered within the transcript for each group, and the participant is indicated, which includes as the first element which group they are from. So a reference to (1A, 22) is referring to the 22nd contribution in the group 1 transcript, from participant 1A. Since the contributions are numbered within the transcripts (in appendix 2) this should be easy to find.

Findings:

Layout and Language in the site: Editorial Policy

People were generally impressed with the layout of the site. It was seen as ‘easy on the eye’ (1A, 5) with good fonts (1A, 15) with a good clear layout with good bullet points (3A+3B, 3), user friendly and comprehensive yet accessible (2A, 53) professionally laid out and easy to use (4A, 8) clear and easily navigated, (5A, 6.) The simple and clear use of language on the site was praised (1A, 16; 1B, 41; 1A, 89;) as was the lack of legal ‘Gobbledigook.’ (5A, 39.) The pastel colour scheme got varied feedback some seeing it as friendly (4A, 107) whilst others saw it as ‘wishy-washy’ (5A, 6.) It was suggested that colour coding could be used in order to differentiate between different topics of materials (3A, 10, see also section of ‘Topics’) I also felt that different formats of materials, aimed at different modes of usage, could form the basis of a colour coding (see also section on ‘Formats.’)

The structure of the main page was also generally praised. The index was appreciated (1A, 54) as were the headings (4A, 8) and the search function (1A, 8 & 12,) all of which are seen as giving fairly comprehensive results for general enquiries. For more specific enquiries, it became more difficult to locate the information required. This was seen as an issue of language (e.g. 1B, 23) for instance where 1B wished to find out about sponsoring someone from overseas to get a visa, and he didn’t know the correct term at first. 1A prompted him to isolate the term he was looking for (acting as a facilitator) and 1B eventually found a term.

This raises issues about the role of intermediaries in helping service users frame their enquiries in terms that the site might recognise, this is taken up in a later section. It also raises the issue of the site recognising synonyms for key terms in the subject headings that it has. Finally it raised the issue of the site being addressed towards specific groups, which is dealt with later on the report. It is worth noting that sections like this would imply using language that the groups involved would recognise in order to organise subject headings within that section.

On external sites, the issue of language was inconsistently addressed. Terms like ‘claimant’ and ‘defendant’ used on an external site caused problems, and 1A saw this as difficult for the general public, from his experience of working in a library (1A, 89.) This was echoed by a concern about ‘legalese’ in general (5A, 39.) Whilst Advicenow keeps jargon under control on it’s own site, it cannot guarantee the same on partner sites. It was suggested that Advicenow might add value through some sort of glossary function (1A, 84 & 86,) perhaps something that is available to use when browsing partner sites. Perhaps an Advicenow toolbar might be in order.

For more specific searches, the search engine did not produce as satisfactory results for combined terms. An example given was ‘mortgage disputes.’ (4A, 17) It is difficult to anticipate what people will search for in terms of combined terms,

but perhaps there is a case for logging the most common combinations of terms entered into the engine, and working to find out what people were after when they entered those most common combinations, and then providing results listings specifically for those combinations. This is one way of making the site more responsive to user demand.

The newness of the features on the main page was appreciated by both participants that worked with Advice giving (1A, 92; 2A, 47) and it was seen as useful for keeping up to date with changes in the Law (2A, 47.) However it emerged that it was not clear how often information was updated on the site, and that perhaps a general statement of this or specific 'last updated' or 'last checked' statements for each item would increase the sense of the site being up-to-date.

1A noted that the site seemed a little impersonal and that pictures of the staff might be appropriate (1A, 101) perhaps in 'About Us.' 4A and 5A (5A, 8) noted that the site did not really announce itself on the main page. It was noted that 'Advicenow' could be counselling, and was not necessarily legal advice (5A, 4) and that the strap-line 'making sense of law and your rights,' whilst clarifying what Advicenow does somewhat, did not really say who Advicenow is (4A, 157.) There was a sense of Advicenow not really projecting a clear image of who they were, (4A & Me, 147 -153 and 5A, 8) and that some of this information should be present on the main page. There was also a sense of their being insecurity in Advicenow presenting itself as a pilot project, and seeking so much feedback (1A, 92) which might not inspire confidence in it as a source of advice.

These issues were seen as linked to general editorial issues. The placing of the Search Box at the top left of most pages was seen as disrupting the flow of the site, since that is where the eye goes to first, (4A, 132.) It was felt that it would be useful to have a consistent approach, where the page is introduced, and what to do next is at the top left of every page. What to do next could also be to consistently choose options from the Menu on the right, with these options explained in this introductory paragraph (4A, 130.) This fits with the wider editorial issue of having a clear thread of what to do next in the site, which warrants its own section. Suffice to say it is logical from the above discussion to put a 'what next' section in the bottom right of the page (where people would read last,) including a list of possible contacts directly relevant to the problems addressed on the page. This is especially relevant in the Self Help section, and will be taken up in the sections devoted more specifically to the Self-Help content.

The use of pictures to break up the text and provide humour was praised (1A, 40) (5A, 50) although 5A felt the pictures were sometimes a bit too banal. This made me think of how the '...for dummies' series uses 'far side' cartoons: The humour element might be developed a little. It was felt that hyperlinks should be made more obvious, and should be formatted in a consistent way (e.g. 5A, 43.) The site was seen by one participant, who had worked as a web-designer, as rather static and non-interactive (3A,4) Others responded positively to the presence of quizzes and tests (1A, 17-18; 5A, 26) although the quizzes were seen as perhaps being too short (1A, 19.) This will be taken up further in the section about formats.

There was a sense of editorial inconsistency expressed about the site (4A, 132; 3A & 3B, 18; 1A, 54) especially in relation to the Self Help section. Whilst the specifics of that will be taken up later, more general comments need to be addressed here. It seems that Advicenow has an editorial policy, but that it is not consistently adhered to, and that it doesn't necessarily address the specific evolving issues of the self-help section. The preceding comments amount to editorial advice. What also emerged is that some participants were impressed with the way partner sites were organised (e.g. see 1B, 95; 4A, 91; 4A, 97; 4A, 101.) One specific piece of feedback was approval of a site where the contents of the page were listed at the top of the page, with headings that linked to the relevant sections, which had a link to return to the top of the page at the bottom of each section (4A, 101.) Since Advicenow has so many partner sites fulfilling similar functions, it seems logical to benchmark these sites. This could feed into some sort of regular editorial meeting where the editorial policy is reviewed in relation to benchmarks, and where the consistency of new and existing material for the site is checked against editorial standards. Making this a *meeting* might help to keep the editorial policy live and consistently applied across the organisation.

Formats

A key editorial issue raised was that of interactivity, and the formats in which information was presented. As mentioned before the quizzes and tests were seen as positive in this respect. This seems to raise the issue of what *use* the materials on the site would be put to. The need for directly practical information was often stressed (e.g. 2A, 84-86, 2D 80 and 2A, 123,) and praised on the partner sites referred to (2A, 142-146; 4A, 32.)

For complex topics PDF files were approved of, because they allowed download and later reading or printing out (1A, 30; 1B, 95; 4A, 35; 5A, 39) although downloading a PDF can cause a warning message about possible viruses which might discourage inexperienced users from accepting the download (2B & 2C, 20-21.) There was a wish for actual sample legal documents, like employment contracts, which could be downloaded and used as a guide (2A, 2B & 2C, 84-86.) This might include a variety of specific types of employment contract (2A, 123) although an outline of what should be in an employment contract, found on a partner site, was seen as the next best thing by the advice worker (2A, 147.)

During the interview with the advice worker and service users (group 2) it came out that very often the site worked as an effective springboard for group discussions (e.g. 2B, 2C & 2D, 181-189) and question and answer between the advice worker and clients (2C & 2A, 197-199). This suggests that the site might provide training and discussion materials, that might be useful for advice workers, community centres (2A, 55) English as a Second Language (ESOL/ESL) training (see 1B, 75) citizenship teachers, library assistants (1A, 23-24) unions (2A, 66) etc... Thus the issue of formats used on the site and interactivity has implications for the role of intermediaries in relation to the site (see following section.) There are also issues relating to the format and interactivity of the Self-Help section, which will be taken up later.

The Role of Intermediaries

It was clear that people with little experience of the internet (1A, 23-24) or with limited English language skills (2D, 261) that accessing Advice from the site unassisted would be a major problem. This implies the issue of translated materials (2A, 131) and also the issue of addressing material directly towards excluded groups (see section on inclusion later,) but it also highlights the role of intermediaries in helping people to access the site.

The point was raised that the site was a good resource that was under-publicised (5A, 32.) It was definitely seen as relevant to a wide range of people. Particularly the advice worker thought it would be relevant to many in a similar position to herself (2A, 96 & 99) and that she would therefore spread word about the site to these people when she met them in committees (2A, 53.) This suggests that promoting the site should be a priority, and that word of mouth, and demonstration of the site to intermediaries would be an effective way to do this (2A & me, 96 – 100.) The list in the previous section suggests how diverse these intermediaries might be.

The advice worker stated that one of her key roles was in ‘helping people be self-sufficient,’ (2A, 193) or empowering them to use professional jargon. In this context the idea of an integrated resource makes sense: If the site could be used as a training resource, with fact sheets and discussion exercises for instance (2A, 259), then it would be possible for clients to refer back to the site later on, and thus carry on from where the supported use of the site and the advice work had left off. So having a resource where support for intermediaries and materials for ‘general public’ usage are integrated has potential benefits in terms of empowerment (see 2A, 193.) In addition Advice workers would feel more supported if they could check their facts on such a site (2A, 201) which underlines the need for info that *is perceived* as up-to-date, and also advice workers might find it easier to persuade their clients of their rights if they could show them written ‘in black and white.’ (2A, 263.) The site was also seen as an information source that might be used to gather information for friends (3A, 2.)

Inclusion

Whilst the advice worker at the community centre (2A) said that she thought the site would be useful and relevant to all the other ethnic minority community centres that she had contact with (2A, 55) there was an issue that the domestic workers in the group often felt left out of discussions (2B, 67) and that there was no specific topic for domestic workers on the site. The advice worker questioned if Advicenow could have material specifically just for domestic workers (2A, 93), and I pointed out that if they were a large marginalised group, as suggested by the 2A’s comments about other ethnic minority groups also being domestic workers (2A, 55) then this should be possible. Part of the issue is to find out who these large, yet publicly invisible, and as yet unaddressed groups are. This in turn implies working with intermediaries in the preparation of materials for the site, as

during the evaluation it became clear that this was a good way of finding out about such groups.

Whilst the existence of relevant topics on the site went some way to reduce this sense of exclusion (2C, 73) it still seems important to address such groups directly. In the case of domestic workers, these issues might have wider relevance, for example in terms of the problems unions have in informing workers in non-mainstream workplaces about their employee rights (2A, 66.) The issue of speaking to specific groups came up in relation to people concerned with visa applications (3A, 1; 1B, 22) with a sense that the site was catering mainly to UK residents (2A, 219) especially in the self-help section. Non-residents are a group likely to need support and outreach in terms of UK law, and their advice workers will also most likely need support with often very technical and fast-changing areas such as immigration and visas. Another group, which did not feel spoken to directly, was young people. 1A only found himself addressed in the index as a 'juvenile,' hardly a term a young person would use about themselves! (1A, 54.) It would seem that sections aimed at specific groups, which gave access to the site via subject headings relevant to that group, and in language that they themselves would use or recognise, would be a good way of drawing excluded groups into what *might* otherwise seem to be oriented towards white, middle class, middle-aged perspectives. The considerable outreach potential of the inter-net, supporting and supported by advice workers, makes such an effort seem potentially very worthwhile. This also again highlights the issue of the availability of translated materials (2A, 131.)

Topics for materials

Stemming from this discussion is the issue of the need for topics that are relevant, for marginalised groups, to be included on the site. Whilst the site was generally praised for being comprehensive (e.g. 1A, 11; 4A, 8 & 14) there were topics that were relevant to more marginal groups that were left out. The withholding of passports by employers (2A, 263), sponsoring someone to enter the UK (1B, 22) how to fill out forms (1B, 25 -26) or write letters (1B, 75) looking for work (2B, 11) verbal versus written employment contracts (2A 45), negotiating an employment contract (2D, 115 & me 116) opening a bank account (2B, 221) proving residence status (2A, 229) and again visa issues (3A, 1) all came up.

This raises a more general issue about how the topics for materials are generated. As outlined before, in 'the role of intermediaries,' it would be beneficial for the site to publicise itself, via networks of intermediaries. It would also be worthwhile for the site to generate new topics for materials, especially in relation to excluded groups, through discussions including intermediaries and their service users, possibly similar to that carried out with Group 2. This would be a way to build on the site's strength in terms of provision of legal advice to the mainstream general public, and extend it more towards marginalised groups, especially in relation to the self-help section.

The issue of referring people to partner sites

The mechanism of referring users on to partner sites clearly underpins the comprehensiveness of the site. However it brings a range of problems with it. The site was perceived as a sort of ‘search engine’ (3A, 7.) This accompanied concerns that the site, whilst being a good ‘portal,’ might pass you on with insufficient support (3A, 5). Also there was a concern that the site was just a ‘middleman’ and that it would take a lot of clicks to get to the required information (1A, 13.) It was pointed out that some indication of having left the main site was required (2A & me, 124-130.) This is especially pressing since service users might become confused when leaving the main site (1A, 13) as indeed they did in the focus groups (5A, 52-53, 2A & me 124-130.) This is particularly relevant to marginalised groups that may not be inter-net literate.

Perhaps some sort of pop-up or frame to indicate that you are leaving the site and how to get back might be appropriate (see 1A & 1B 63 – 69; 2A, 124-130.) For some being taken to another site took them completely by surprise (4A, 14) so perhaps this needs to be explained on the opening page. Sometimes the external site comes up in an external window, making the back button useless, but sometimes it doesn’t, making closing the window you are in cause you to lose your place! (5A, 52-53.) So there are issues here both of explaining what is going on, and of editorial consistency. Perhaps this explanatory function for external sites could be combined with some sort of glossary function, as discussed earlier in the section on language.

What to do next?

In the earlier section about editorial policy it was noted that pages should perhaps proceed from an introduction of the page, and an explanation of how to use the page in the top left, to a set of recommendations about further action, or what to do next, in the bottom right, a movement consistent with the way that a page is read in English. There were many instances in the interviews where participants felt they wanted more information about what to do next. Sometimes there was praise, especially of being able to postcode search for solicitors and CAB's (e.g. 1A, 10) although this listing was criticised as not being comprehensive, (5A, 24.) Whilst this listing was on an external site, this was not always clear (1A, 65-69).

There was concern about what one should do if the advice given did not work, which is an issue that stands in tension with Advicenow's efforts to give a generally optimistic, upbeat and motivating tone to the site (see 1A, 59, and later in this report on 'solving a problem.'). Also there is the issue of the links for *what to do next* being on the same page as where the piece of advice is given (1A, 82-83) especially since people tend to skim websites rather than read them thoroughly. The site was seen as a place to make an initial survey before consulting further, by two of the participants (3B, 2; 5A, 20) so the issue of always including further contacts *with* the particular advice seems key. It was seen as good practice to include further contacts at the end of materials (4A, 35.) These points are particularly relevant to the editorial policy for content produced for viewing within the main site, especially the self-help section, which was seen as especially in need of threads running through it, in order to make it a step-by-step problem solving experience (3B, 18.)

The Meaning of 'Self-Help.'

Having the section entitled 'self-help' was not seen as self-explanatory. There were many senses given of what that might mean, and not all of them were positive. It ranged from 'everything you might need' (1A, 37) to 'possible future reference' (1B, 38-39) mirroring the tension between immediate problem solving and longer-term educational use that the section seemed to be caught in. It was also seen as meaning 'you are going to be by your-self,' which evidently wasn't a positive thing for someone already feeling marginalised (2D, 157.) It should be noted that 'self' is not necessarily always a positive word, especially in many parts of Asia. Others expected they would get 'step-by-step advice' (2B, 160) or 'access yourself or do it yourself information' (2C, 161.) Another saw it as a resource that could be used to deal with 'small and petty problems': i.e. the types of problems where outside help would not be needed (1A, 37.)

I am left wondering, from these definitions, how the self-help section is perceived as being distinct from the rest of the site. Surely Advicenow is mainly conceived of as a 'Self Help' site. It does not yet seem to be catering strongly to supporting Advice workers in supporting clients. 'Self Help' was seen as not necessarily associated with legal issues (4A, 38), and the confusion as to its content, relative to the rest of the site, might have discouraged at least one participant from visiting it (4A, 38.)

On visiting the section, impressions were varied. Some felt it was a step-by-step system for solving your own problems, and praised the way it helped you to organise to solve your own problems (i.e. the Tracker Tool, 4A, 44.) Indeed the idea was praised by the advice worker in terms of 'helping people become 'self-sufficient' (2A, 193) suggesting that this usage of the term 'self-help' (i.e. meaning empowerment) might be somewhat internal to the advice giving and community development world. It also suggests that it is a section that might be best understood and supported by advice workers, with their aims for empowerment, which slightly contradicts the 'self' in 'self-help,' at least to begin with. Indeed another issue that contradicts the notion of 'self' was a call for online discussion forums around the topics in the section (3A, 20.)

There was a generally quite a strong response to this idea of 'self help' once the purpose of the section became clearer. One group became quite animated in outlining how the self-help section could be made more editorially consistent by remodelling it as a set of interactive troubleshooting scenarios, with problems worked through in relation to case studies, with links to the rest of the site, and appropriate guidance and sample documents provided, in relation to the specific options chosen as people work their way through the scenario (3A & 3B, 17) There was a web-designer involved in this discussion (3A,) who stressed the issue of the interactivity of the site. Another participant liked the use of question and answer formats in the self-help section (1A, 42.)

This seems to be indicating the self-help section might move towards being some sort of 'expert system,' also with an educational aspect. Indeed 3A imagined the 'self-help' section as a sort of search engine to help you find solutions to problems, presumably from within the site (3A, 7). 3B saw it as a set of tools for solving problems and dealing with legal issues (3B, 8.) However when they went into the section, they were both disappointed to find it was overwhelmingly about financial issues (3A&3B, 10.) There was also a wish for a more consistent style in the section as a whole (3A, 20): It was seen as less well laid out than the rest of the site (1A, 54; 4A, 76-78.) I will now give details on each of the parts of the self-help section in turn:

The Main Page

The self-help main page was seen as having too many headings and different fonts and bits to click into. It therefore was seen as not making a clear enough impact, and not explaining itself (4A, 70.) This relates directly to the more general comments about editorial policy, where a page should explain itself in the top left, and then explain how to use the links on the right hand side. It is also noted that the tracker tool is prominent on this and every other page (4A, 88), and that this disrupts the flow of the section (1A, 54.) The tracker tool information is seen as needing to be off to the side (1A, 63.)

How to solve a problem

The step-by-step question and answer approach was praised here (2B, 177.) I was a bit shocked that shopping was seen as the main problem people have, although

my domestic workers pointed out to me that they *also* go shopping (2D, 214.) That also was very loaded however, since they had many other problems that were very pressing. Interestingly they managed to apply the ‘step-by-step guide’ to their employment problems, and found it useful (2C, 195.) However this clearly is a case of the section being oriented very much to the mainstream (e.g. UK residents, see 2A, 219;) with its strong financial emphasis (3A & 3B, 10.)

The case study in how to solve a problem was praised for being real-life oriented and a motivating success story. However it was not clear how the case study related to using the site, nor was it totally clear what to do if things did not go as was outlined in the case study (1A, 59, also see the earlier section on ‘What to do Next?’) This also suggests that ‘solving a problem’ needs to be integrated with the rest of the self-help section in terms of following on, and that the self help section in turn needs integrating with, as well as finding some clear criteria for defining it from, the rest of the site.

Getting your deposit back

This was a popular section, being seen as relevant, especially to young people (1A, 40) and being seen as well laid out, clear and simple (1B, 41.) However non-British English speakers were confused by what a ‘deposit’ is. One participant thought it might mean generally putting money into a bank (3A, 11) The advice worker was not sure what it meant at first (2A, 231) and even having opened the page, it was confusing for the domestic workers, swinging between renting a house and making payment to a bank (2C, 240) although one had experience of renting a flat in the UK, and so knew what it meant on reflection (2B, 243 & 245.) Interestingly many of the issues relating to getting a deposit back related to what went on when you moved *into* the accommodation, like making sure there is an inventory, (2A, 254.) This raises a number of issues. If this section is to anticipate these problems, it might need to be entitled something along the lines of, ‘how to avoid problems when renting a place to live,’ and be educational in focus, and be integrated with other advice on the site about rented accommodation, tenancy agreements etc... This in turn raises the issue that it might be a topic suitable for intermediaries, with training materials produced to help spread the word in advance about these sorts of issues (see the earlier sections on ‘the role of intermediaries’ and ‘formats.’)

The step-by-step guide was not seen as being very step-by-step (3A & 3B, 13). It was also seen as ‘non-interactive’ (3A, 14) and as not joined up to the menu on the right, with no explanation of how to use the page. The step-by-step guide was mainly seen as a case study (3A & 3B, 12) and one which was not clear in its specific relevance (3A & 3B, 15) partly due to the lack of a problem solving, question-answer type structure. It was also perhaps perceived as something that a non-British person might not identify with (3B, 12.) The whole section was seen as confused, since ‘writing a letter to you landlord’ was, in a strange reversal, seen as less of a case study and more of a step-by-step guide (3A & 3B, 18.)

The layout on the letters page was seen as being good, although the links to the letters themselves were seen as not obvious enough (1B, 72.) The letters in this

section were seen as being a bit too basic, and addressed towards too early on in the process (1A, 74.) It was pointed out that for marginalised groups, even a basic model for a letter might be useful (1B, 75.) This implies perhaps that more explanation of how the letters are constructed might be appropriate, as might some sort of reference to learning English, and basic skills and literacy training. Also the question of what to do if the letters don't work came up. The link to further action should be as near to the issues raised as is possible, since, as mentioned earlier in the 'what to do next?' section, people tend to skim sites. In this case, letter three threatens the landlord with court proceedings, but there is no link on the page about how to follow this up (1A, 82.) There *is* a link on a previous page, but that might have been skimmed over.

Dealing With Debt

This section was seen as well structured, particularly in the way that the page was introduced, and how to use the page was explained (4A, 84.) The picture on the page was appreciated as breaking up the text with something humorous. Although the picture was seen as being a bit bland (5A, 50 see also the earlier section on 'Editorial policy.')

The older participant felt that being addressed directly by the site might be seen as patronising, especially when dealing with a sensitive subject like debt (5A, 50.) This was offset somewhat by the Question-Answer format, which was seen as straightforward and less patronising (5A, 50.) The story by the BBC was seen as interesting and real life, although I felt that perhaps a story about a £53,000 pound credit card backlog might make people feel complacent about their own debts! The National Debt line website was seen as very informative and well structured (4A, 91,) particularly with its drop-down menus (4A, 97.)

Tax Credits

The tax credits section was seen as informative, allowing an overview of what tax credits are about, relatively quickly (4A, 70.) The page was not seen as being very well laid out, however (4A, 74 & 76) and this was articulated as being in line with the general problem of the self help section not having a clear and consistent layout that gave a clear sense of what to do next (see 'the meaning of self help' and 'what to do next?' earlier.)

The Tracker Tool

The Tracker Tool section was evaluated in two versions. The group 1 interview evaluated the older version, and subsequent interviews were of the updated version, current as of the 17th of January, 2005. The main issues with the old version was a need for bulleted points on the page (1A, 44,) and the fact that the link to sign up for the Tracker Tool was almost impossible to find (1A, 52.) The other issue was that the Tracker Tool was everywhere in the self-help section (1A, 54,) an issue that is still current (e.g. 4A, 88) as discussed earlier in 'the meaning of self-help' section. The tracker tool page was evaluated directly, but as explained in the 'Methodology' section, the tool itself was evaluated via case-study documents, included in appendix 3.

The newer version of the Tracker Tool (TT) page is seen as being more user-friendly, clear and well laid out (3A & 3B, 19) although one person was confused as to if they were on the Tracker Tool page (5A, 39) perhaps due to it being everywhere within the self-help section. Approval was expressed for the downloadable user guide in PDF format (5A, 39,) although some felt that the guide was too short and too basic to warrant a PDF document (3A & 3B, 21.) Some felt that they would not use the tracker tool unless there was some sort of interactivity to it (3A, 19.) An example might be advice workers arranging meetings on their behalf. Otherwise they felt it might be easier to use Outlook, or to use paper based diaries (3A & 3B, 19.) Others felt that using paper might be easier than using the TT, (5A, 39) or that they already kept records of their own, (2B, 332; 2C, 284.) Finally one felt that they would not use the TT unless it was a very serious problem, (4A, 65) perhaps because of the work involved. It was pointed out that paper records would be needed to compliment the TT firstly to note things down as they occurred, (2A, 286) or to take copies of paper documents (2C, 284 & 285,) since it is not easy to access a scanner, or upload scans to a website. Nonetheless the idea was seen as being useful for a number of reasons.

It was seen as very important to keep records in relation to legal matters (4A, 61) for example for a tribunal (2A, 283) The Tracker Tool (TT) is seen as a good example of how to keep records, even by someone already doing so (2C, 284) This might be motivating for people to keep records, due to the format being provided (4A, 63.) It was agreed by the Advice Worker that the TT was useful in training people to keep records (me & 2A, 287-288.) It was also seen as possibly helpful for advice workers keeping records (2A, 290.) This however brought up a whole raft of problems. The first was the issue of how advice workers might access the information on the TT. This implied issues about security from hacking (2A, 298) and also how to deal with issues under the data-protection act (2A, 296.) It also, to my mind, brought up issues of how the data might form a database, and what form it might be downloaded. But this was evocative, since it pointed to a clear advantage over individualised paper-based records. It would need to actually reduce, or at least be neutral towards, the workload of already over-worked advice workers though. Another is that if the TT recorded the date and time when data was entered, it might constitute stronger proof than something just written down, which provides no proof of when it was written (4A, 65.) Also the TT might help keep documents secure, especially where users don't have secure private space of their own (2C, 330.)

However using the Tracker Tool, and signing up where an email address is required, seems quite demanding, especially where people are new to the internet (1A, 42) or if they have difficulties with English. This suggests that for marginalised groups the Tracker Tool would mainly be useful with the support of an Advice Worker, mainly as a training device (see 'the role of intermediaries' earlier.) Indeed one participant saw it as helpful in showing her how to draw up timetables (2C, 322) and this allowed the advice worker to discuss this further (2A, 324.) So there are probably many unexpected training applications of this kind of documentation model. One possibility to make the Tracker tool more

usable would be to integrate it into some sort of Advicenow browser toolbar, possibly including legal glossary and search Advicenow topics functions. It is possible to manage a sign-in in a simple way from a Browser Toolbar.

Appendix 1: Interview Schedule and Issues Addressed.

Interview Schedule

Before the interview: Set up access to the tracker tool on a separate browser window. DO NOT take them through signing up and logging in.

Go round, get names and introduce yourself:

‘I am an *independent* researcher, working with ‘Advicenow’ to try and evaluate how helpful their website is to the public. They provide a free legal advice service over the inter-net. This is a pilot project to see if providing legal advice over the inter-net is worth developing further.

I would like you to discuss what sorts of things you might take legal advice for, and then to look at the ‘Advicenow’ website and comment on how useful and how useable it is.

I will record your comments as we work, on tape. I will keep the comments confidential – no comments will be linked to your name. The aim is to find out the sorts of issues people generally have with the site.’

Offer them some refreshments.

1. Prompt them to talk in general about the types of legal problems they might encounter, or what they might seek advice about. Prompt them towards being slightly more specific if they seem willing, in order to build up some sort of context for inquiry.
2. Ask them what they think ‘Advicenow’ means. Have they heard of it? What would they expect from a website with that name?
3. Take them to the first page. Ask them what they see. What is their opinion of it? Where would they like to look further? Why?
4. Ask them about a specific issue they have raised? How would they find information about that issue on this site?

5. Once they have made an attempt to find information, prompt them for information about the usability of the site, based on the 'Issues Addressed' document. Accept if they wish to take the discussion in another direction.
6. Ask them what they think 'Self-Help' means.
7. Direct them to the 'Self Help' section. Ask them what they see. Prompt them for their opinion of it. Where would they like to look further? Why?
8. Explore one section in more detail. Ask them what they see. Ask them their opinion. Ask them where they would like to explore further, and why?
9. As they reach the limits of a section, prompt them for opinion about the usability of the section and the relevance of the information. See the 'Issues Addressed' document.
10. Direct them to one other section of self-help. If previous groups have avoided a section, try and direct them to that section. Ask them what they see. Ask them their opinion. Ask them where they would like to explore further, and why?
11. If you dare, take them through the tracker tool, using the case study provided (see appendix 3.) Focus on finding out what they understand about it from the site. Ask them what they think it might be useful for / what it is. See if they can find out!
12. Ask them to fill out identity profiles. Remind them that this is anonymous research, and that we just want contact details, so we can follow up if we need to, and some information for statistical purposes, which won't be attached to names.
13. Thank them and **offer them more refreshments.**
14. Offer them payment.

Issues Addressed

There is a considerable focussing of criteria called for by the two initial exploratory user interviews I have carried out.

General Issues

- 1) The first issue that emerges is that of the specific relevance of the information on the site. Does the site give 'Advicenow'?

This has a number of aspects:

- a. Is the information practical and specific:
 - i. Does it allow you to do something you couldn't do before?
 - ii. Does it relate directly to legal rights?

- b. Is it something you couldn't get easily elsewhere?
 - i) Is it more than common-sense advice available from e.g. a friend.
 - ii) Is it information of a general type that might be available from information leaflets from institutions etc..
 - iii) Is it information you might pick up easily from the media?

- 2) The second set of issues is about usability and readability.

- a. Is the site easy to use?
 - i. Is the structure self-explanatory? (e.g. do the section titles give the user guidance. Are the links clearly marked out?)
 - ii. Are the subdivisions of the site relevant to user needs and expectations?
 - iii. Does the structure get you where you want simply and within two or three clicks (to relevant information, see above.)
- b. Is the content easy to read and skim?
 - i. Is the text succinct?
 - ii. Does it answer the questions of the user immediately (those set up by the labelling of the sections and structure of the site for instance.)
 - iii. Is all the terminology defined early on and clearly? (Definition links every time a term is used?)
 - iv. Is there a consistent format? E.g. Are questions always picked out, is paragraph size standardised, do case studies have a specific format. Does presentation aid understanding in a consistent way?
 - v. Does every paragraph or section have a clear title, Is it clear what every paragraph is doing? Where a structural scheme

- e.g. a list of handy hints, is given, is this linked directly to relevant content.
- vi. Does each page announce immediately what it's content is? Where it does so, does the content within the page precisely reflect this. Users seem very rapidly put off if they are not getting what they expect.
- 3) All these issues add up to considering if one can skim the site rapidly to locate relevant information, which seemed to be an overriding concern. This is a general issue for the site, which can be evaluated specifically through the self-help section as a case study. The problem is that users responses to the site do not tend to map specifically to the self-help section. To force this point in the interviews would lead to very contrived responses. However it is possible to follow through these general issues in depth, in relation to the self-help sections.

Self Help Section

- 4) Issues that are specific to the self help section:
- a. I personally am finding it hard to use the tracker tool. I am being paid to find out, and have experience of heavy IT use. This is clearly not user friendly.
 - i. It is hard to find the link to the tracker tool signup page.
 - ii. The lack of confirmation of email address and password on the signup form can lead to errors, which will kill any further interest in the tool in most cases. I am very pessimistic that we will get a good response on this from users. It already seems clear that this is the sort of thing that needs training attached to it to get it to work.
 - iii. Neither of my interviewees, both of whom have technical IT backgrounds, could be bothered to deal with the tracker tool.
 - iv. This part of the evaluation will kill any focus group stone dead. I would reserve it to doing it with pre set-up accounts, at the very end of any group, if at all. The only value in this is working on the basis that the tracker tool needs serious rethinking, and we are trying to get more specific information about the problems with it.
 - b. It is not clear if the self-help section is for problem solving, or if it is of a more general educational character.
 - i. For problem solving, the issue of relevant information is paramount.
 - ii. For educational purposes, the issue of case studies, exercises and worked through examples becomes more pressing.
 - c. For either case, it is already clear that more content is needed to make it more worthwhile for a user to visit it.

- i. So this implies the need to find out what sort of information *would* have been useful to solve a problem for the person.
 - d. The information within this section is not consistently presented.
 - i. The issue of editorial standards is pressing in the self-help section.
 - ii. This also has implications as to if external links should be used, or if material should be rewritten into a consistent format.
 - e. Does the information in this section relate to the concerns of minority groups? E.g. The relationship between Muslim or Hindu common law and English civil or common law etc... Issues for asylum seekers, sexual discrimination, disability law, help with language issues etc... Whilst these are general concerns for the site, they are clearly issues in the self-help section.
 - i. Are the types of problem those of likely users? Do they reflect the range of concerns of users?
 - ii. Is the language used (e.g. deposit, credit, buggy) self-explanatory to all users? Deposit might be banking or housing. Credit implies a loan to most people rather than money received. Buggy is colloquial.
 - iii. Are the examples, names and case studies representative?
 - f. Which formats work well? This implies exploring, in a more directive way e.g.:
 - i. Case studies
 - ii. Sample documents
 - iii. 'Handy hints' i.e. bulleted lists
 - iv. Quizzes
 - v. And asking for suggestions as to which formats might be useful.

Appendix 2: Transcripts

Group 1 Transcript.

This was a group interview with two participants:

Participant 1A:

He is 19-28 years old, and has lived in London for all of his life. He sees himself as a Pakistani Muslim, and he works as an assistant librarian, and as a retail assistant.

Participant 1B:

He is 13 -18 years old. He was born in the UK and has lived in London for all of his life. He sees himself as Indian. He works as a builder.

The transcription is given in semi-summary or para-phrase form.

- 1) 1A: Police laid fine on friends for no apparent reason. Interested in appeal routes. Friend has aunty that is a Lawyer. But not sure otherwise. Can't approach the police about it. Aunt is very busy, hard to get hold of. Didn't bring up citizen's advice bureau at the time. He works in library, people come in asking for CAB. One on the Broadway was closed down years ago. Doesn't know where nearest one is.
- 2) Me: Any other problems?
- 3) 1A: I used to study law. Different stages of help you get, entitlements in terms of legal advice etc...
- 4) 1A: Initial impression:
- 5) Its easy on the eye, it all seems clear, different headings and stuff.
- 6) 1A : Clicking on top tabs, seeing what it come up with. Right hand side has recent events: It's up to date, real life, stuff that I've heard about. If I wasn't comfortable with law, I'd feel more comfortable with that, dealing with real-life situations that I've heard about.
- 7) 1A: Is 'making a will' an outside advertisement. It's there but is that supposed to want to make a will. It's not telling me much, not how many people voted etc...
- 8) 1A: Going to type in Police in search bit. That's what I was talking about earlier about the police complaints thing: Gives me four different routes I can take.

- 9) 1A: I wasn't aware there were so many organisations that would be willing to listen, so it's good that that's coming up.
- 10) We were talking about citizen's advice bureaux. We can type in postcode and find nearest. Typed in postcode, can find church end and Graham park, it's good.
- 11) 1A: It's positive at the moment: whatever I'm looking for it's showing at the moment.
- 12) 1A: Pick a subject at random from the left-hand column: What's relevant? At the moment in my life, seeing that I live with my parents, no mortgage, not claiming anything, I am employed, actually, I'll click on employment. I would be interested in question and answer, like what is a minimum wage for my age group, there's a section here on employees rights, click on that. When you want a piece of information it transfers you to other places, rather than giving you info. It's more like a search engine than a source of information. Gives you a description, but it's a matter of looking at every single site that is there.
- 13) 1A: I think I was talking like it was a search engine: I've had a bit of experience with the inter-net: People with less experience might find this confusing. I work in a library with public access to computers, that might not know that it's going to open up a new window, which might be confusing: they get lost, that is basically another website: It's got a similar layout to the Advicenow site, so it could be confusing.
- 14) 1A: It's dealing with things like divorce and things like that.
- 15) 1A: Data protection act comes into use at work. It's come up with a cartoon there, which is always good. It's user friendly, it's showing a funny site: If you got something like that with captions. The layout is all good, it's cool the way it is: Good use of font, good size, links to other things it's not narrow, it's biased towards anything. It doesn't have advertisements coming at you all the time. Which is good.
- 16) 1A: Reading through first paragraph, you don't need to be a scientist to understand this, it goes through in a way that anyone could understand it. I like the way it is giving you examples.
- 17) 1A: It's got an option of a quiz here: There's a bit here asking for feedback from the user. This is a way of the site telling the user: Tell us what you think of us: Users want to be able to give a bit of feedback: It shows they actually care what they think.
- 18) 1A: I've opened up the link to the quiz thing: Brand new

kettle broken, hoping that once you fill this in that you get some answers back, going to randomly fill in some options. It's basically a test your knowledge, dealing with things that are everyday, if you bought something from a shop, you could go back. A lot of people don't have any experience of that. We deal with a lot of elderly people in the library, so you've got to be polite. It's a bit short as quiz. The quiz could be related to frequently asked questions. It could be longer, 15 – 20 would be too long, 10 to 12 would be good.

19) 1A: I thought the police hadn't treated me satisfactorily, It's directing me to one two three options, directing me to other sites. The sites basically an in between thing, a middleman, passing you on elsewhere. I could easily do that, read this and know what I'm doing, it's a separate window, I got lost now.

20) [1B arrives]

21) Explain anonymity again.

22) 1B: Does this site give me information for people from India or overseas. If someone wants to come form overseas, I want to help them come over for whatever reason. Look at the index, adoption A, got something here for immigration and Nationality. What do you reckon that would come

under? Immigration maybe. Asylum seeker:

23) 1A: What is your enquiry in the first place? You want to what's the word?

24) [Acting as an intermediary here, he is a library assistant. People with information searching experience will know to try and track down the right sort of terminology, others might not be familiar with this technique.]

25) 1B: Sponsor them: If I'm a first time sponsorer I want to know how to fill out the forms, if this website had that that would be great.

26) [How to fill out forms as a topic. General tips on reading forms through, reading the instructions. Doing a rough copy and asking for help etc...]

27) 1B: Appealing against decisions, this gives you four results to four different sites. This is the one, if you want to bring them over from overseas,

28) Me: Do you find it confusing when it opens another site?

29) 1B: No, it is going through internally, which is good. I don't think this is what I want: Refuse a person entry for a family visit.

30) 1A: This is nothing to do with Advicenow: Advicenow is a good website, giving me links to websites that I can

- look at. It's quite hard to pin down exactly the right advice for you. More detailed descriptions, PDF that you can download would be good. Generally, how would you put in to this website?
- 31) 1B: You've put in Sponsor someone overseas in search engine, no matches, it's got nothing to do with 'sponsor' either there must be information about this somewhere on the site, but I don't know how to get it.
- 32) 1A: – What about two hour's free advice, on here? It's not giving you information about what you might be entitled to: I want to know as a UK citizen what my rights are. Here we go access information: It gives you four options for everything. Seems like a, again, opens up another page: it all looks similar, a similar layout: Simple plain, smart format. Got tabs up top, subject down the right.
- 33) Me: Is this giving you the information you want?
- 34) 1A: If I was involved in a case, legal obligations of public authorities. That's something different from what I want.
- 35) [Moving on to the self-help section.]
- 36) Me: What does self-help mean to you?
- 37) 1A: If you are involved in a situation requiring exterior help, it should give you everything you would need. If it's something small and petty I might go to this section.
- 38) 1B: This section has got five sections, which you might click on if they related to you. Let's say you had debt it might help you, you can look down see who you can phone. Even if you haven't got any problems you might look through it: For future use
- 39) [So 1B is seeing this as potentially an educational as well as a problem solving material.]
- 40) 1A: I have a lot of friends who are students, they have problems with landlords, council tax and getting their deposits back. So I'm goona click: What do you think of the beige: Picture that breaks up the text which is good.
- 41) 1B: - Again the language is easy to read, nothing there that's hard. Basic layout is easy, simple, main points in bold.
- 42) 1A: Remember the question and answer thing, there's a question there, which is probably a commonly asked question, when someone goes on here they will probably think, if I was a student looking to get his deposit, what security do you have to get your deposit back: That

- would be on my mind. Got this thing come up about a tracker tool, give that a little click: It's telling me it's some sort of tool you can register with. Asking for an email might be difficult if you were new to the inter-net: It's telling you to note down everything you do. It's got this rating thing at the end of everything.
- 43) [People new to the inter-net might well not have an email, and so would not be able to sign up for the Tracker Tool.]
- 44) 1A: Once you've registered you can report on telephones and stuff. That would be good in bullet points: What you can do. There in bullet points. If that was in bullet points it would catch attention: Italics, underline it. It is important, it says what it can do, that's the main feature of it.
- 45) Me: What would you do next?
- 46) 1A: It says at the bottom, terms and conditions: How many people do that. Would you read that? That 's not as long as I thought it would be. What if there's something in here that you don't understand:
- 47) 1B: I would email the website, to tell them I don't understand this.
- 48) 1A: Do you think having an email address would be useful: Contact us, that would give you an email address or something. This is not telling you how to use the tool.
- 49) [This was the old version of the Tracker Tool page, before it was revised with more instructions.]
- 50) 1A: Obviously you've got to register first.
- 51) Me: I'd like you to try.
- 52) 1A: OK how do you register with this? There's nothing here to say that you can register. Actually could put tracker tool Download, or link beside it etc.. It looks like a heading. Say I'm a first time user I'd never use that.
- 53) [Commenting on how the link to Tracker Tool sign-up was effectively invisible before the updating of the page.]
- 54) 1A: It's a bit repetitious, it's quite bland. It's the text, same font, same size, paragraph, when you are reading a really boring textbook. If it had bullet points, clarified main points of this tool. We can look through the other section of the self-help, this site seems much more oriented towards adults and not towards young people. Go to J, Juvenile, if I was 15 and I'd just committed a crime, I wouldn't be aware of the Juvenile term, this section should be slightly clearer. Something about the new

Cannabis laws, cannabis moved from a class B to a Class C, links to a newsletter or something, giving you suggested reading and stuff. Back in the self-help section: What about this? That was the right place, this area is again showing us about the tracker tool, which doesn't help us. If they had that at a lower part of the section that would help.

55) [Commenting on the way that the 'Tracker Tool' banner dominates the layout of the pages in the self-help section.]

56) 1B: We don't know how that thing works, it might not be really useful. If I am reading through this website: Look on the right there are headings, but you won't look to the right till you have read through. If they had 'how to solve the problem' in block capitals.

57) 1A: Everything I say there is something for it, but here there is young people information, but ... Things like Childline, stuff like that that's cool. Young people as a section: Like divorce, should have a like a little list, like young people's advice and so on, for different user-groups.

58) [There is not an obvious section for young people, for older people, for ethnic minorities, for people with insecure visa status, various groups are not addressed directly. This makes the site

seem not focussed on them, and thus makes it less likely they will take the time to access it.]

59) 1A: Real life story thing, this is dealing with real life. Is this something that someone's used this site to help them? It says there Mr and Mrs A Engle. Because the information's here they must have gone through this, they have sorted it out, but there's nothing about this site in it. She basically knew what to do, she called the inter-net company: To show how simple it was what she did, how she dealt with it. It's positive feedback for a normal person to see that it's possible to take on a big company, yeah – What do you do if this doesn't work, what do you do next? If this information doesn't help you what next: link to here, call these people, or email us: Some sort of 'what to do next' next step kind of structure attached to the advice.

60) [1A is commenting on the case study in solving a problem. He likes the real-life focus of it but expected it to be about someone using this site successfully. He thought it was a positive and motivating account, but wasn't happy with it not being linked to other content: i.e. what to do if you have a problem like this? What would you do if this didn't work etc...]

- 61) 1A: Feedback page: That rating thing they have at the bottom of the page: I thought there was no point to that, but you can email them once you've rated it, although there's no indication of if they will reply. How they reply: They should say something about what they will do.
- 62) [Another comment about documenting what will happen next on the page.]
- 63) 1A: First of all would you like your details handed out to other people? With the inter-net, there is always the thing of details being handed out to other people. It's telling you here it's a pilot project, then that doesn't inspire confidence. With advice you want tried and tested. They also have the tracker tool everywhere. There's not much information on each page, but tracker tool is there on every page. You'd want the options to follow on directly, and to have the tracker tool off to the side. The tracker tool in bold is where your eye goes to. You are kind of saying that that's distracting from the thing. You just have this cleared out the way on the side. Just have tracker like another one of these. This is dealing with debts, it's nothing to do with this tool.
- 64) [Again, the placing of the Tracker Tool disrupts the flow of the site.]
- 65) 1A: This page is fine. Post-code tool: If you go to Auto-trader it gives you a radius, this postcode feature is not helping. It's not clear where it is. What do you need: A map, click on Church end road. It is here, but it's not so obvious.
- 66) Me: AN can't manage this, it's an external site.
- 67) 1A: If you're not used to the net, you will just look and think 'that's it.' There's a lot of links, it could be there on one page .
- 68) Donal: - Do you know who 'legal service direct is , is it the same people as Advicenow?
- 69) [They weren't clear they were on an external site, nor what sort of organisation legal services direct is. Perhaps details like 'this will link you to an external site from 'legal services direct' with a little intro to what the organisation is in a small popup, linked to the name perhaps, or a link to their 'about us' section. Also guidance to simply close the browser window to return to AN's main site.]
- 70) 1A: Let's look at the documents now. Lets go in to getting your deposit back, if we could look at the

- documents, if you could go through these options. Sections of this in bold. [Describing getting your deposit back main page.]
- 71) [Click through to section on writing to your landlord,
- 72) 1B: I think the little black headings help a lot. The link should be in bullet point, or bold rather than just a link.
- 73) [Click through to 'letter one']
- 74) 1A: OK letter one, what do you think? It seems basic. What do you think they should have on this? Recommended by Advicenow: Telling me what's there, doesn't tell me who the letter should be addressed to. It is to landlord, but not clear. Whole point of the site is that you're not getting your deposit back, you've probably written to him at this stage.
- 75) 1B: What if you are not very good at writing letters, from abroad, don't know what to do, this could help them.
- 76) [Due perhaps to 1B's issues with sponsoring and visas, he seems much more aware of issues for people marginal to the British mainstream, in this case those with difficulty writing a letter. Perhaps the example letters could include commentary on why they are constructed the way they are, what each section does etc...]
- 77) [Click through to Letter number 2:]
- 78) 1A: It's quite a basic letter: If I received a letter like that I'd ignore it. Advicenow, if they had like a group of lawyers as part of their team, clicked on this site and they sent a letter on your behalf. I think people would only click on this option once the landlord had already said no a few times.
- 79) [So this an issue either of where people will be when they look for help, which would imply dealing with later on in a dispute where a landlord is already saying 'no,' if this section is to have a problem solving focus. If this section is aimed at being more educational, looking forward to a time where people might need to write a letter. Then this would imply more exercises and explanation. Perhaps both things could be present.]
- 80) Needs people to act on your behalf.
- 81) [Click through to letter 3]
- 82) 1A: Letter three: He's deducted £20 for the mirror. Could have a commentary on what's been done in the letter, bullet points to pick out what is significant about the latter. If I was to read 'court action' landlord would say 'go on then' do you reckon that there should be a threat there, you're trying to

- get your deposit back, he's not listening? If landlord say's bring it on, what you are going to do- Go for it – On this site – that's not clarified – If there is something in a letter saying taking legal action, there should be a link on the page. Going back there is a link on the previous page, but it should be on the same page as the action suggested.
- 83) [Because people tend to skim sites, there should be a link to action that is suggested by a material on the same page. People might not have read everything on previous pages, and so not be aware that this option was outline previously.]
- 84) 1A: Money claim online? Are you the claimant or the defendant? Claimant is the one, this is not clear: claimant some people might not know what this is. I would click on it and read it.
- 85) [The participant 1A is calling for an explanation of terms, some sort of 'glossary.']
- 86) 1A: We didn't check on the main website if there is (problem because we are of the main site – maybe there should be a glossary for all the sites that they link to?
- 87) [Perhaps some sort of Java applet, that can remain open in a small window whilst exploring partner sites, to provide clarification of difficult terms. This would be a clear example of value-added by Advicenow.]
- 88) Donal: How was your experience of the use of language on the main site?
- 89) 1A: Good, not using long words etc...
- 90) Donal: If you wanted to find advice on the web straight away, how would you do it?
- 91) 1A: You'd ask a friend to help if you had little experience.
- 92) 1A: [Giving some concluding comments] I would like to see different uses of fonts, also most visited links on the side, young people's advice under the XYZ, or headings for different user groups. Types of advice you'd like to see, latest news on Law changes, another feature they could have is a news letter; latest news on this that etc. Pie chart doesn't say very much. In a way the feedback thing is a bit negative: Don't they have any confidence?
- 93) [A lot of feedback here. There is an issue of the site projecting confidence, and a clear profile. Ideas like most visited features, and headings for different user groups, along with updates on the latest changes in the Law all seem to potentially contribute to the attractiveness of the site.]
- 94) [Click through to Advice Services Alliance]

- 95) 1B: Advice services alliance.
This website's got what's new. It's got a contents page there: I like the format of a downloadable document. You like this sort of document format, you like something that you can download, this is something that you can print up and take away from you if you have limited time, and it has references you can follow up.
- 96) [1B is taking the ASA site as a benchmark. He likes the use of PDFs, as you can download them and print them out, or red them later.]
- 97) 1A: You think that's a useful format the download. That's not good, thinking that that's the same thing (ADR and ASA) should be separate rectangle. Same company, different departments.
- 98) 1A: The links it's coming up with are very good. A lot of research has gone into this, must be a lot of contacts. What I'm thinking is, are the links they are giving up to date: Say details are from 1999 and haven't been updated: Needs to indicated when things are updated or checked.
- 99) [This is an important editorial point about indicating when things were last updated or checked.]
- 100) 1A: If they announced that they checked the stuff it would be good. People want up to date information. If you like your Law, you'd like to know the stuff is up to date.
- 101) 1A: On some sites when you have about us, you have pictures of people, no faces here. When you go into law it's just texts, need to personalise it a bit more.
- 102) 1B: Features: Quizzes are a good idea.
- 103) [Click to the living together feature.]
- 104) Donal: Do you know what rights you have if you are living together with a partner you are not married to?
- 105) 1B : Nope
- 106) Me: Shall we try and find out from the site?
- 107) 1A: Where do you find the information, it's not clear that you have no rights to each other's stuff.

Group 2 Transcript

Group 2 was a group interview at a community centre, with an Advice Worker and three of her service users. The participants are profiled below:

Participant 2A:

She is between 49 and 58 years old. She was born in Scotland and has lived in London for 36 years. She identifies herself as Scottish. She works as a support worker for the women at the centre.

Participant 2B

She is between 29 and 38 years old. She was born in the Phillipines. She has lived in London for 4 ½ Months. She is (East) Asian in Background. She works as a domestic worker.

Participant 2C

She is between 29 and 38 years old. She was born in the Philippines. She has lived in London for 4 months. She is Filipino. She works as a Nanny and Housekeeper.

Participant 2D

She is 39 – 48 years old. She was born in the Philippines. She has lived in London for 3 years. She is a Christian and a Filipino.

Their comments were transcribed verbatim.

Transcription:

- 1) 2D: ‘I work in Singapore and in Hong Kong, in terms of the entitlements the employee does not need to say to the employer, I am entitled to this to such and such, the employer will immediately use what they are supposed to provide their employee, whereas here in London I can say that I can here a lot of stories of employers, they

know about the law, but they pretend... they try to, I dunno, some sort of denying it... For me in my own experience, I was seeking for labour advice, for me in the past, we didn't really have holiday, holiday pay and the fact that my employer was a judge, and now I even lost my job just because I claimed my entitlement. I lost the job because I claimed my rights.’

- 2) 2C: ‘Actually my employer took me here to the UK in order to work for them. She promised to pay me, I dunno, I don’t know how laws are here in the UK, I came from Hong Kong, I was living for, like 11 years, I was just thinking I can come here and look for a better job. Probably, um all the things she promised me was, I had to set myself, she promised to pay me a big amount of money, to provide accommodation, to pay my tax. By the time we arrive here, it’s like I was working there for three months, but I know she was not giving me the right amount. She gave me £400 a month less. She’s not even paying my tax. I even asked from the Citizen Advice Bureau, which is the right way to do, I don’t like to be illegal here in the UK, because I was in Hong Kong for many years, I don’t want my name would be, you know it’s a big country here, I don’t know what is the law here. So I was just thinking, in fact we discussed with my employer, that I suppose I need to look for a better job, you not paying my tax, or raise a bit my salary. She was upset of course, complaining that I brought you here, blah, blah...’
- 3) 2B: ‘When I arrived here in London I realised that the living standard here was totally different from Hong Kong. Not really possible to survive, living with that amount, only £430 a month. And aside from that, I’ve been working very long hours, sixteen hours a day, six days a week. I tried to settle the problem by talking to them, what they agreed they would pay me £700 a month, but then they won’t pay the national insurance or the tax. I thought that was not fair, so I decided to leave my job. Another thing I think is, we are not really aware of employment law here, when I arrived here that was the first thing I looked for.’
- 4) 2C: ‘In Hong Kong, you can’t enter into employment without an employment contract, you know where you stand so you know you from A to Z, from 1 to 10, the dos and don’ts. In London you can go into employment without an employment contract. Even a judge himself can pretend, no it’s not like that, it should be after two years, you are not entitled, it’s because you as an employee, you don’t have a certain contract, you know, that you can sit down there, you can study, you know where you stand, as I said.’
- 5) Me - ‘Are they the main places that you looked?’
- 6) 2C: ‘The citizens advice, it is not easy, not easy, but here you just give them a ring, they are very helpful.’
- 7) 2B: ‘Another thing, is having something for looking for

- another Job, in London, for the future, looking for another job, with another employer. You don't really have the right to choose, when you go to an employer they say you have to work from 8 o'clock to 9 in the evening, so I think that is really the minimum wage, and then the minimum or really the maximum time, we don't really get that, and the days off, is it one day or two days a week? The minimum time is one and a half days, is that they right, I don't know.'
- 8) [I refer them to the Advicenow site and suggest they look for that kind of information.]
- 9) Me: 'What do you think? What does it say to you? When you see this website what do you think?'
- 10) 2D 'It is the same thing when I was having a question, because I wanted to gather really concrete, based on what I had gathered from other people, so I went to Waterstone's, I went downstairs, I saw employment law, that excitement that I had, it's right in front of your eyes: The same thing, it is right in front of you: It is giving you more information.'
- 11) Me: 'If you need help I'll help you, but I'd like you to do it yourself, to see what you can and can't do: It's good if you solve it together: The more you talk about the site and what you can do with it between you the better for me.'
- 12) [Clicking on category of employment:]
- 13) 2B ' I think they all are important from what I can see. Age discrimination, charities... Actually I am currently in an organisation also, we are actually doing this, and I think I will let them know about this website. My friends will want to know about this [constructive dismissal] '
- 14) [Click into 'constructive dismissal']
- 15) Me: 'What do we see here?'
- 16) 2B 'How to go constructive and unfair dismissal when you are forced to resign when your employer has acted so badly. Lets go there.'
- 17) [Warning dialogue pops up;]
- 18) 2B 'What does it say?'
- 19) Me: ' It says some file may harm your computer.'
- 20) 2B 'Shall we open it?'
- 21) 2C 'No.'
- 22) [I persuade them to open it anyway.]
- 23) [They indicated that the warning might have stopped them from looking at the information.]

- 24) [Long Pause as they look at detailed page: Long PDF document.]
- 25) Me: 'What do you think this is about so far? Is it useful?'
- 26) 2B 'If we think about this before we do our action then it might be useful, but there might be a second time and we can be more aware.'
- 27) [Interesting point about them needing to be familiar with the situation before they know which information to look for. Thus information may come too late for them, and be useful if the situation is repeated. This places an onus on the site to include anticipation of possible problems that might come up for people, following on from the advice/information that they seek.]
- 28) Me: 'How do you mean more aware?'
- 29) 2B: 'More aware then, I tell you what I did was, I give my termination letter, but I did talk to them, but it didn't help, and secondly demonstrates, they don't feel that way. They feel that they are the one to spend money to bring us here. So we asked to have appreciation because of that, and have to accept their terms and conditions because of that.'
- 30) [They understood terms like employ and employee etc... They seemed aware of employment law from Hong Kong.]
- 31) 2B 'British Embassy, before we come we have to sign a contract, an agreement between the employee and employer. But they will tell you right away that Ok this is only a piece of paper, we were not really doing this, this is just to show the embassy so we can bring you here.'
- 32) [They all agreed that this happened, and 2A interjected that this was not uncommon for Phillipino Workers.]
- 33) 2A: 'It's a breach of contract, but because it's taken place outside the UK, although it's so common you would not believe, 99% face this. So most of our women come here with employers, mostly from the Middle East, and they flee from the employers, because they work them very long hours for very little pay, and it doesn't gel with the contract, which they have to sign at the embassy before they come in, so I don't know what we can do. It's very difficult because the employers are then going back to their country, they'll be here short term the employers and then they'll leave... The employers will do it to get the visa, because the employment laws here are different.... They also keep the passports, they have to go and pay to have them renewed... We try and retrieve passports, but 9 times

out of 10 they will have gone back to the country of origin, with the passport.'

34) 2A continues with explanation of legal background to how Filipinos are often employed. The Filipinos go to an agency in the Philippines, and sign a contract with employers in the Middle East or Hong Kong, and move to those countries. Then when they come to England, the Embassy requires that they sign another contract of employment. 2A pointed out that this was often not read by the workers, but just signed.

35) 2A ' These people were living in Hong Kong, it depends on the country. But as soon as they arrive in the country or Hong Kong, the employers take the passport.'

36) 2B 'They don't have the right to take the passports.'

37) 2A 'They don't, but outside this country there's nothing we can do about it, not until you actually get to this country, because I have gone to employers and retrieved passports with the police.'

38) 2C 'My case is that my employer in Hong Kong, she has been keeping my passport there, for the reason that usually in Hong Kong you use the passport for loan in a Bank and they are worried that I will do that... Another way is that maybe they are

thinking you'll steal, so they keep the passport so you cannot run away. Of course you cannot say no because in exchange of that they might terminate you... If they terminate you, you have to go back to the Philippines, we spend so much money to work in Hong Kong and then that will happen, so we are very worried, so we just keep quiet about that, we know that it's wrong, of course we know that, but there's nothing we can do about that, because they are threatening us to terminate the contract.'

39) 2B 'I think there is also law in Hong Kong that, if an employer terminates the contract, there should be one month notice. So if the employer ask you like 'I want you out of my house, right at this moment, don't want to see your face,' they will pay one month.

40) Me: 'Would you except that in England as well?'

41) 2B 'No, no, no.'

42) Me: 'We should look into what sort of things we can find out from the site in relation to this. This information, does this relate to your situation? You have all finished employment recently.'

43) 2A 'I actually do training courses on this here.'

- 44) Me: 'Maybe you want to have a quick look at this material.'
- 45) 2A 'When employers phone here they must give them a job description or an employment contract within two months. They will pay tax and insurance and holiday pay, so on and so forth. It's very difficult to prove a verbal agreement, which is why I insist.'
- 46) Me: 'Would this be the sort of thing that you might want to refer to, in terms of working?'
- 47) 2A 'It would for me, it would be great, yeah, 'cos I mean things are changing all the time, and I might be giving out old information that might not be relevant anymore, I do try to update it.'
- 48) Me: 'Up to date information is an issue for you.'
- 49) 2A 'Mmm.' (Nodding)
- 50) [Interesting point here about Advicenow as a potential channel for keeping Advice workers abreast with changes in the law.]
- 51) 2A 'We don't go through grievance procedure because I'm not entirely sure, whether grievance procedures would apply in a private home.'
- 52) Me: 'What I'm going to try and do is go back to the main site, they went to the employment section, and there was a whole kind of list of stuff just here. What is your impression of the site?'
- 53) 2A 'It's nice, it's clear, it looks like I can actually get into what I want to get into without having to go through a whole load of junk, so for example I'd be interested in finding out about age discrimination and when that policy is going to come into play, then again, oh that's something I could get some more information on, employees rights, and tribunals. Pensions again that's interesting. I'm part of the steering group of the *****, this happens with all ethnic groups, it's not exclusive to Filipinos.... This is great, wow look at the choice I have to get into, and it covers every single issue. And it's easy. It's very user friendly. I can't think of anything you have missed under the employment law.'
- 54) Me: 'Passports is an interesting issue, what do you think?'
- 55) 2A ' I think that, because that will cover a lot of ethnic minority groups, whatever happens with the Filipino ladies, and I don't know if you're aware of this ladies, is happening with other groups, women from Africa who are being employed from in the Middle East and Hong Kong as well.'

- 56) Me: ‘ I’d like you guys to take the lead again and decide where in the site you’d like to go. Where would you like to go? Maybe if one of you takes over for a little while and then we can pause and discuss. What do you think?’
- 57) 2B ‘Employee participation.’
- 58) 2A ‘ I have been in contact with Trade Unions, but it’s not so good because you’re paying your dues and nothings getting done. For the nurses it’s great because they’re working in a big institution, it’s very difficult in a situation where you need to enter someone’s private home and deal with issues, health and safety for instance.’
- 59) Me: ‘What would you guys think about unions, when you see unions. When you saw employee participation, why was this interesting?’
- 60) 2B ‘ I think it’s interesting in union there is a lawyer there to protect you, and union is more a unity of the group, you have more courage to fight for your right, to express what you’re feeling.’
- 61) 2A ‘I was at the TUC conference last week and then a meeting 2 days after that, to find out what the benefits would be for the domestic workers, the benefits for big companies are pretty good, but for individuals they are not that great, although they do represent you in court and things like that... I basically said what benefits will my domestic workers get from joining the union? Response I got was, well long term, it would probably be beneficial, because they would build up, but the response that I got was very vague. The Filipinos don’t have much spare money. We give them legal advice and represent them at Tribunal, The Trade Unionist turned around and said you already are a union... If it was brought to the public what ethnic minority groups go through in order to get where they are today, then people might be more sympathetic. People I talk to on the phone are very sympathetic, and the majority of women who flee their employers and are placed here in the UK are treated well, 90 % are happy, you still get the odd one...’
- 62) [This brings forward issues of groups marginalised from mainstream workplaces, and how they source legal support. Does Advicenow address these as a user group?]
- 63) Me: ‘ The site seems to spark off quite a useful discussion. What other things should we follow up?’
- 64) 2B ‘Employment tribunals.’
- 65) Me: ‘ Dealing with grievances, dismissal and disciplinary action at work.’

- 66) 2A ‘See the problem with domestic workers is that they don’t get support like in mainstream workplaces, they don’t get a pack with health and safety, so they don’t know anything about it, and whether that can be applied to a private household, I don’t know.’
- 67) 2B ‘I always explained this, whenever I go to, in a group, I always feel left out, because there’s no topic about domestic workers.’
- 68) Me: ‘Shall we see if we can check domestic workers on the site? What do you think? See if you exist.’
- 69) 2C Enters ‘domestic workers’ in the search box.
- 70) Me: ‘Domestic violence, employment, disability discrimination, air travel, work permits, sorry, I shouldn’t be leading, what do you think?’
- 71) 2A ‘Work permits and visas, its two different things.’
- 72) Me: ‘What do you think when you see that, do you feel included?’
- 73) 2C: ‘ Absolutely, this domestic violence, it is very common that, you need to have the mark before you could complain.’
- 74) [Interestingly the topics made them feel included where they were relevant, even though they were not named as a group in the site.]
- 75) 2C ‘ It is always that it happen that way, if you just say oh, she hit, me and there’s no mark, no-one will believe you.’
- 76) 2A ‘I have to say, violence is not recorded, now when I say violence, it could be pulling your hair, pulling your arm, that is violence, but either you’re not putting that in your forms, because you don’t consider that to be violence, I don’t know. The mental abuse, the shouting, the name calling, you’ve been told day in day out, you’re ugly, you’re a donkey, you’re stupid.’
- 77) Me: ‘Is this a legal issue?’
- 78) 2A ‘obviously if it happened here, we would take that case up.’
- 79) Me: ‘Shall we go back to the main site and investigate one more issue? What other issues would you want to look at?’
- 80) 2D ‘Is there really an employment contract here?’
- 81) Me: ‘Shall we have a look at the site?’
- 82) 2C types in ‘employment contract’
- 83) Me: ‘Here we go: Contract and conditions of employment, results for, we’ve got contract, employment relations act

- 1999, parental rights at work, changes to employment contracts, contracts, basic rights at work, what do you think of all this?’
- 84) 2A ‘Did you want something that shows you a sample of a contract, is that what you wanted to say?’
- 85) 2D ‘Yes, for a domestic worker. But I think this one is in general.’
- 86) Me: ‘Well lets check, I think I’d like to see you try and get specific information from the site, so I mean our goal is to try and find an employment contract that would be relevant for a domestic worker. Lets see if we can do that. So what do you think?’
- 87) 2B ‘Is this self-employment? Are we self-employed? How do you explain what that is.’
- 88) 2A ‘When domestic workers come into the UK, they are sponsored by the employers, now obviously, because you’re not going to stay with the employer, that transfers to the family who are going to employ you. They have to pay your tax and insurance, and you’re not allowed to be self-employed, which means you can’t start your own business or anything like that until you ve leave to remain in the UK. Once you’ve been here four years and have leave to remain, then you can do more or less what you want. Until that time your employer is responsible for your health, your welfare, and ‘
- 89) [The site is operating well here as a Springboard for questions and discussion with the advice worker. Perhaps the site should look at developing itself as a training resource for advice workers. Worksheets, exercises, discussion pieces, introductions to areas of law etc...]
- 90) Me: ‘My impression here is that you encounter the site and find a lot of usefu information, but because of the terminology, because of the words used, and the way the site is structured, you are not really sure about how to find specific information, you can’t see specific information that relates to that. My assumption is that then you would talk to someone like Linda to help get information form the site, so could we change to that situation where you are asking Linda to try and get information from the site, and Linda is trying to get information for you? I’m surprised by how much you know about law already, obviously you are interested in the law (they agree) but the website, it’s not that easy to get directly to what you want in terms of domestic worker rights.’
- 91) 2A ‘Daniel, would it not be difficult for you to have something very specific for domestic workers?’

- 92) Me: 'Difficult, well it depends, if it's a large group.'
- 93) 2A 'Can you have something on the site just for domestic workers?'
- 94) Me: 'I think so, I don't know, that's up to the site, but I think it's something worth considering, you're a large group and these issues of, they were given money for social inclusion purposes, put it that way.'
- 95) [My intervention here arises out of earlier concerns about earlier concerns from 2B about Domestic workers feeling invisible and left out of groups and discussions. Also the issue of domestic workers not being unionised, as they are split up into many 'ethnic minorities' and since they work within the home. Finally that they therefore do not necessarily identify themselves as a group, despite their being a great commonality of problems across differing 'ethnic minority' groups employed in domestic labour, and that being a sizable group overall. Finally this relates closely to the problem of these users trying to find information that relates directly to the problems they face. They need to be able to identify their problems within some sort of type. They are not so familiar with legal terminology, so classifying their problems in terms of naming social groups in a way that they might recognise themselves seems to a good way of easing access to this type of information, especially for marginalized groups lacking other forms of support service.]
- 96) 2A 'Well, again, as I said before, its not just the Filipino community that would need it. If this is as good as I think that it is going to be, then I would then pass this information on to other ethnic groups in other areas, so if you can send that to me, I can pass it on and send that to them.'
- 97) Me: 'So we can do two things at once, we can evaluate the site, and we can see if we can sell it to you, in using it.'
- 98) [This was phrased as a joke, but there is a serious point here. 2A, the advice worker at the centre, has discovered that the site is useful, by using it. She is then saying she is likely to recommend it to others, who work in similar positions, by word of mouth. This suggests two things, that many who might use the site have never heard of it, and that demonstrating the site to people, by supporting them to actively use it to solve their problems is a sound strategy for promoting the site, due to the power of word of mouth recommendations. This particularly applies to advice workers, who are already situated in relevant networks.]

- 99) 2A 'Because I'm part of a steering group, I'm mixing with all the other ethnic groups in the borough, and outside the borough, they need this as much as the Filipinos. A lot of them are domestic workers, or in a similar position, which means that they will be working under a visa.'
- 100) Me: 'What I'm hearing is that Advicenow should maybe be going and demonstrating the site to people like yourself, because then you'll pass it on by word of mouth. I think in this immediate situation, you can actually test-drive the site, and if you're convinced, you're convinced, and that's the best advertising. We've had the issue of employment contracts, do you want Linda to try and sort out some employment contracts for you? (They laugh) Sorry Linda, if that's OK if you don't mind.'
- 101) 2A 'Not at all, what do you want me to do girls? Shall we see if we can get a sample of a contract?'
- 102) 2D 'Yes please.'
- 103) 2A 'Can I get it there?'
- 104) Me: 'What do you think?'
- 105) 2D: 'Employment contracts'
- 106) Me: 'This is the explorer search bar.'
- 107) 2D: 'I'm not that computer literate.'
- 108) Me: 'That's OK, that's OK.'
- 109) 2D 'So I click on that?'
- 110) Me: 'What would you do?'
- 111) 2D 'I've no idea, I'm following you.'
- 112) Me: 'OK, you need to go back to the top of the page, this is a confusion, the search bar is actually external to the site.'
- 113) 2D: 'Aah right I'm with you.'
- 114) Me 'Employment contract, you're typing in the search box.'
- 115) 2D: 'I mean I do have a sample of an employment contract, which is pretty general, which I use.'
- 116) [This part of the evaluation not focussed on the 'self help' section itself. However it does suggest a possible topic 'negotiating your employment contract. It also seems to underline that it is strange that the self-help material is not integrated with the rest of the material on the site. What is the rationale for the distinction, and how is

- this rationale made clear to the users of the site? Advicenow seems to be a 'self help' site overall, so what is special about the 'self-help section?' Perhaps this relates to the issue of the site being an education and training aide, for self-study and for supported work, in schools, or with advice workers. I imagine people teaching asylum seekers English as a Second Language (ESOL) would find the site interesting, and it would be helpful for Asylum Seekers, the Refugee council etc... Also people doing 'citizenship' courses etc. Perhaps it should be a 'Learning more about your rights' section, or presented as a set of 'tutorials' on 'claiming your rights.' .]
- 117) Me: 'Results from 'employment contract' here. Aha is it not clear that, O.K. yes it's not entirely clear that the results have come up here, is it?'
- 118) 2A 'Yeah, results for and contracts for employment. Right, changes to contracts, OK ladies which of these would you like me to go on to. I'm looking to see, what is a contract of employment?'
- 119) Me: 'Shall we check?'
- 120) 2A clicks into 'What is a contract of employment?'
- 121) 2A 'OK. Are you an employee or self-employed? We'd be looking for employee. If I press that, will it just take me back to... [we are on an external site now]'
- 122) Me: 'Give it a go, what do you think?'
- 123) 2A 'I don't know, (laughs) this is what I would be doing. This gives you information on, but this for me, I haven't got time for all these little details. For me I would like to go on to employment contract, sample, and then I know that I have different kinds, then if you have 3 or 4 different kinds of contract, and then go on to a specific one for my domestic workers, and use that as a guideline.'
- 124) Me: 'So you want a specific model actually.'
- 125) 2A 'yeah.'
- 126) [This is interesting in that it points to the need to think about what people will specifically do with the information or documents we give them, and what they will approach the site actually wanting to do. Model documents are an example, as are training materials, bullet points of rights etc...]
- 127) 2A 'And I don't know where I would get that now.'
- 128) Me: 'The problem is you're on an external site, you've been linked to an

- external site. Was it clear that you'd gone to a different website?
- 129) 2A: 'No it wasn't to me.'
- 130) [Whilst the use of frames is discouraged nowadays, it would be useful to have some way of indicating that you are away from Advicenow's site, and give an easy means to return to where you had come from.]
- 131) 2A: 'Lots of languages, have you got Tagalog? They've got Arabic, Urdu, Punjabi, etc...'
- 132) Me: 'Translated materials would be great.'
- 133) 2A: 'I'm not sure you girls would want to go through all of this...'
- 134) 2B 'I think what she has been looking for is the sample contract content.'
- 135) 2A 'So it's a model, it is a model that we want.'
- 136) Me: 'So you want the actual contract. We're back on the main site now. (Back to search results for 'employment contract') Can you tell where you'd find exactly that thing from this list?'
- 137) [Do we need separate sections or colour-coding for 1)Direct explanations of rights and entitlements? 2)
- Usable legal documents / Letters, and other models/examples? As distinct from, and in order to compliment, explanations and overviews?]
- 138) 2A 'Possibly, here explains what a contract is why it's important and what you should look out for. Parental rights contracts of employment, employment relations, no, I'd go for this one, which is another site, so we're coming out again, right, right, this is better, this is what it should be,'
- 139) Me: 'What's better about it?'
- 140) 2A 'Because I can see immediately, this is a guideline to what should be in a contract. '
- 141) Me: 'And that's the sort of thing you want.'
- 142) 2A 'That's the kind of thing. Holiday entitlement, pension schemes, which you're not going to get in a private house, grievance procedure, which I'd really like to look into more, to see how that could be implemented in a private household.'
- 143) Me: 'So this feels much more promising.'
- 144) 2A: 'Absolutely, absolutely.'

- 145) Me: 'There's no example contract there, is there?'
- 146) 2A 'But the guidelines are there. That would be enough for me to make a fact sheet and I could include all of that 'This is what should be in your contract,' and all that.'
- 147) Me: 'That would really feel useful to have all that sort of information, OK. There's a specific section of this site, I understand you guys are getting tired, this is very tiring.'
- 148) 2A 'Can I go back that way?'
- 149) Me: 'Part of the problem is it opens new windows sometimes, which is confusing in itself.'
- 150) 2A 'Want do you want me to do?'
- 151) Me: 'If you click there, we'll go back to the top, that's fine, now, we've got a section here called 'self-help.' What do you think 'self-help' means?'
- 152) 2D 'Self-help is when you go to that, it think it means you are going to be by yourself!'
- 153) Me: 'No-one else is going to help you!' (We laugh.)
- 154) [Self-Help is not a self-explanatory term.]
- 155) 2B 'I think it means you get step-by-step.'
- 156) 2C 'I think you access your-self, you know, you do it yourself.'
- 157) Me: 'Would you chose to go to a self-help section?'
- 158) 2A 'Would you feel confident enough to go straight to a self-help section?'
- 159) 2B 'But I would try it.'
- 160) 2A 'Can I just ask, are any of you on the computer course?'
- 161) 2C indicates she is.
- 162) Me: 'So it makes a difference, it makes you more confident to use them?'
- 163) (They indicate yes.)
- 164) 2A ' So you want me to go into self help then?'
- 165) Me: 'Why not, lets do that. So there's a lot of thing sot find out, what do you think of it?'
- 166) 2A 'Dealing with debt.'
- 167) 2C 'I think you want to know, you can use this one to find out what you want.'
- 168) 2D 'It seems like the same sort of information.'

- 169) Me: 'Where would you go to find out more of this type of self-help information. (I indicate towards the screen.) What would you do next?'
- 170) 2B 'What do you want to find out?'
- 171) Me: 'That's a good question.'
- 172) 2D 'How to solve a problem.'
- 173) Me: 'How to solve a problem, alright. OK tell me what you see and what you think.'
- 174) 2C 'You've got the introduction there, you have to know what is your problem. If you know your problem there is a solution, step-by-step guide, that's very good.'
- 175) Me: 'Shall we go into that? OK, what do you see, what do you think?'
- 176) 2D 'You can find out what your rights are,'
- 177) 2B 'They are asking a question and you get the answer,'
- 178) 2C 'Give you choices, leading you into a decision, to make some decision, giving you hints advice'
- 179) 2A: 'This isn't just really to your employment,'
- 180) Me: 'OK'
- 181) 2A 'The service industry in this country is abominable, I am having a particular problem with British Gas at the moment, and I am going to complain, it could affect you in a way, I assume, if you go to a shop and you buy something, and you take it home, and you take it back, and they won't give you the money back. Would you complain, would you know what to do? Because we are so busy concentrating on your employment side of things, that, you know, there are a million other things going on that you need to know, that you can do things about. Would you complain?'
- 182) 2D 'Yes I would.'
- 183) 2A 'Would you take it back? To be honest, I think the majority of Filipinos wouldn't. In general they don't complain enough.'
- 184) 2B 'You saying we don't complain, we keep quiet, it's because we don't have the courage to do anything. Or maybe they can't express themselves. They're afraid that they may not be understood. So they can't express themselves, or maybe they try, they have a negative, why should I waste my time complaining if I don't get the answers.'
- 185) 2A ' They have all sorts of experiences of coming form other countries

- where your confidence has been completely wiped out of you. And that takes time to build up again. And that's where I am constantly working with people, that's another issue.'
- 186) 2B 'My observations are, in terms of people, there are so many problems with salary not being paid properly, or passport being kept, and they want to express themselves, and English is very important, if you can't speak English properly, you can't express yourself. So you can't relate properly, so that's what stops other people.'
- 187) [Another argument for a glossary with explanation of terms.]
- 188) 2C 'I would probably disagree with that, because we Filipinos are actually English speaking people, but then, I think, the main reason why we keep quiet is because we face termination.'
- 189) 2D 'In some countries they are facing racism, this Filipino centre here, if you are facing problems then you can get help.'
- 190) Me: 'In terms of solving your problems, in terms of this website, is this going to help you? Maybe we should look through this material.'
- 191) [Again the website acted as a springboard for an interesting discussion.]
- 192) Me: 'You'd be solving a problem with [2A] you've indicated this might be helpful.'
- 193) 2A 'The objective for me in having things like this is to encourage you ladies to be more self-sufficient to do things for yourself, I mean it's great that you can come here and you can tell us your problems, and we can help solve them, but eventually, what we are trying to do is to encourage you to start doing things for yourself.'
- 194) Me: 'Could we get you supporting [2C] in using this material then?'
- 195) 2C 'Find out in rights, I think this is the first thing I'd look for when I arrive here. So far I haven't got the answer for that. Decide what outcome you want, OK, I did the first step, I want new employment. I think the main difference between Hong Kong and UK is that in Hong Kong if you face termination, you go back, but in UK that's aspect you can directly transfer to another employment. I call the telephone and I be like this, like that, like that, my question is can I change my employer and the answer is yes, so I step out of the house and look for another job. 'Find out who to complain to.' I think who to complain

- 206) 2A: 'I would obviously click in on what your rights were.'
- 207) Me: 'What happens when you click that.'
- 208) 2A: 'Can't click. OK so, [pause] so why can't we click, maybe further down. This is against a shop, mind you I know what I'm doing against them anyway.'
- 209) [Here it is suggested that there might be other focuses to 'solving a problem' than just shopping. A list might include employers, landlords, banks, the government, schools, the council etc... This implies integrating the materiel with other sections (such as getting your deposit back, employment etc...) in order to increase the user's ability to follow on from the problem solving exercise, and to avoid repetition in the site.]
- 210) Me: 'What's interesting is that this is all about getting money back from a shop, but the framework is actually completely relevant to your problem.'
- 211) 2A ' It's the same principle.'
- 212) Me: 'Would you consider shops to be a major source of problems for you? 'How to solve a problem', it's about shops, how does that make you feel?'
- 213) 2A 'Is it relevant to you, or do you feel you need this.'
- 214) 2D 'I think it is relevant to us because we also shop. We do the shopping as part of our work also, that is part of the work.'
- 215) Me: 'OK that's interesting.'
- 216) [So shopping is *also* important to them, implying that it is a valid topic, but not the only one of interest in terms of solving problems.]
- 217) 2A: 'Also if you are flat sharing, you could have issues with the gas and the electric, would you know, of course you could come here, we'd do that, we'd give you that advice.'
- 218) Me: ' Shall we go for another topic. Shall we go back to the main section. Self- Help menu, these are our options: Dealing with debt, getting your deposit back, tax credits.'
- 219) 2A ' A lot of these things become relevant if you get leave to remain in the UK.'
- 220) Me: 'Lets start with 'dealing with debt' what do you think that is going to be about?'
- 221) 2B 'Aahm, only I don't know because, I ask for the bank account, they refuse

- an account for me, for the reason they are not paying my tax, and people might see how much they are paying me, they might get into trouble, that is the reason they are not opening the account for me.'
- 222) 2A 'You're employer you have now, is not paying you tax?'
- 223) 2B 'Yes.'
- 224) Me: 'Opening an account, is clearly an issue for you, a bank account,'
- 225) 2A 'They have to rely on a letter or a bill from their employer as proof of address.'
- 226) Me: 'It's hard for you to prove your address?' [2B nods.]
- 227) 2C 'It's very important, I can't do anything, I've been here for four months, now I don't have an account.'
- 228) 2B ' I tried to apply for an account here with HSBC, because my account in Hong Kong was with HSBC, so I went to HSBC and I have been denied, just because I'm not here for six months, so what my employer advised that I went to the mobile company, which is T mobile, so I just showed them my HSBC visa, so I was able to get line rental mobile from T Mobile. The banks reason is that you must have lived here for six months before you can open an account.'
- 229) 2A ' You have to prove that you habitually stay here, along the lines of the housing act. Otherwise, you have to prove that this is your place of abode. Banks have to very careful now about fraud and money laundering,'
- 230) Me: 'What about getting your deposit back, what do you think that means?'
- 231) 2A ' I don't know even.'
- 232) Me: 'Well lets try and find out.'
- 233) 2D 'Introduction, getting a deposit back, step-by-step guide,'
- 234) Me: 'Some of you read this information [indicating left hand side of screen] and some of you look at this [indicating side-bar on the right] what do you think these two bits of information are? You started looking at the text, you started looking at the menus, so there's obviously two ways of reading this out.'
- 235) [Long pause]
- 236) Me: 'Landlord, do you know what a landlord is?'
- 237) 2B 'Yes.'

- 238) [Pause]
- 239) 2B 'Staying in a house or something?'
- 240) 2C 'Is this like you are renting a house and you need to pay your bank, or something like that.'
- 241) Me: 'So deposit is something to do with making a payment.'
- 242) 2A 'Think about renting a flat, what do you do? What did you do to rent initially.'
- 243) 2B 'They ask for two weeks deposit.'
- 244) Me: 'What does that mean?'
- 245) 2B. 'It says there, in order for the landlord to have security in case you've got damage. For instance I broke the television, and you get the compensation from the deposit. So you can't just say goodbye. It's like my employment, when I started she kept one week's salary, so that I cannot just go bye, at least I would still stay with her as I am thinking about my, it's the same thing with the landlord.'
- 246) Me: 'So people holding money as security. So is this relevant, if you are renting a room, is this relevant?'
- 247) 2C: 'Not really.'
- 248) 2A: 'I think people don't really find out how difficult it is to get a deposit back until they're actually moving.'
- 249) Me: 'Right.'
- 250) 2A: 'Then it becomes an issue.'
- 251) Me: 'Then you approach information like this once you already have a problem.'
- 252) 2A: 'That's when you find out how honest they are!'
- 253) 2B ' I had an experience in, I move and she got, say, two weeks deposit. I had my own television, and I never use her television, and it happens that she found her television, so when I moved my television packed, she turned on her television and found it is broken, and she wanted to use our deposit, and I said it is only a matter of £25, but it is the character, how can you? I wouldn't mind paying that if I knew I broke it, but I did not, I did not use it.'
- 254) 2A 'At the end of the day it is your responsibility when you move in to check that everything is OK, write it down and report it straight away.'
- 255) [This is related to the issue of what to do in relation to moving in to rented accommodation in general.]

Many of the issues in ‘getting a deposit back’, need to be dealt with when moving in. If left to the end, as the title suggests, it might well be too late. It is connected to other issues like inventories, renting contracts, notice times etc....]

256) Me: ‘An English person, especially in London, would assume it’s going to be hard to get the money back.’

257) 2A: ‘From a legal point of view, you need to do an inventory yourself. They’ll desperately try not to give that deposit back. A lot of this will begin to affect you when you have leave to remain.’

258) Me: ‘Would this be something you would want them to look at to prepare for the future?’

259) 2A ‘Definitely, from my point of view it’s going to be a real asset, uuhm what do you think? If you come to me for some kind of about advice on housing, or maybe employment, because that’s what you deal with, would you feel, ‘let’s go onto the computer and see what we can find’ are you happy with that or would you like me to prepare it all in advance, fact-sheets, everything all ready, done for you? The thing about doing fact sheets is relating to specific areas, and you might come in and it might be completely different.’

260) [This suggests that providing these types of material for advisors to use., like fact printable fact sheets as PDFs , would be helpful. Of course there would need to be a build-up of a considerable number of fact sheets, to cover a range of issues, and this would need to be well publicised, or demonstrated, to advice workers. One of the best ways would be to involve advice workers in the process of putting together such sheets by consulting with them about the ongoing development of the site.]

261) 2D ‘For someone that isn’t computer literate it would be very difficult, they would need someone to do that for them. I am not really that good, so I would need, someone, maybe some English would not be clear to me. I have some friends who would need this, so I will go home and tell them this website.’

262) Me: ‘Linda, you are indicating fact sheets and materials would be good.’

263) 2A: ‘The only thing that is missing from our point of view is the information on Passports, employers keeping passports. It’s a difficult area because you are dealing with people that are not resident in the UK. We know it’s illegal for employers to keep passports, but maybe having something in black in white

- ‘Your passport is your property, it does not belong to anyone else, employers should not take it,’ then I can say ‘look,’ cos it’s easy for me to say, but they don’t necessarily believe me, so if it’s in black and white I can say, ‘look, this is the law’ so it would be easier for me to pass that information on.’
- 264) Me: ‘So that issue of credibility is important.’
- 265) [Here, the ‘official’ character of the site is seen as a way of helping the Advice Worker persuading people that they really do have rights, and to act on them. Again this relates to the issue of fact-sheets, possibly with web-references on them so they can be double checked as being ‘official.’]
- 266) 2A ‘You’re dealing with very vulnerable people, and you know, when you first come to the UK, there is a mistrust there. Other Filipinos have told me this and that.’
- 267) Me: ‘Lets ask them now, when you come to this country, how do you feel about this country, do you distrust English people? What’s your feeling.’
- 268) 2C ‘About keeping the passports, I experienced that, where’s your passport, my employer keep it, as I said, we face termination if we take the passport, they also give the reason that they are keeping our passport because we might lose it. My employer, she keep the passport in a safe,’
- 269) 2A: ‘That’s treating you like a child,’
- 270) 2A: ‘But I think the question Daniel was asking was, when you first came to the UK, when you first came to the centre, how did you feel about the people around you?’
- 271) 2C shakes head.
- 272) Me ‘You didn’t like it?’
- 273) 2A ‘Is that because you come from the Philippines and the majority of the people in the Philippines are Filipino, and you come into a city where there is a multitude of minority groups, and you’re hearing every language under the sun being spoken.’
- 274) Me: ‘How did you hear about the community centre? How did that change the way you saw being in England. What was it like to be able to come here and get advice? Did it change the way you saw England when you found the centre?’
- 275) 2B: ‘Oh yes, OK. The first thing was that I looked for my own Filipino people. Actually my first impression of [2A] is that she is a Filipino. When she answered

- the door I was kind of surprised.'
- 276) 15 minutes' BREAK
- 277) We go on to evaluate the Tracker Tool via the case study and 'What is the Tracker Tool' documents.
- 278) Me: 'I think this is similar to your action plan, but the idea really being that it is on the website. The idea would be that you'd sign in on the website with a password and a user name. The problem is so far that it is very hard to use initially, it takes quite a long time. They're changing the idea, maybe to use it in relation to an advisor and keeping records. Really the idea is that you have one place on the inter-net, where you can keep track of all your information. Then you can have access to that wherever you are. Someone like Linda might set it up and train you to use it and set it up, but then wherever you are, if you have access to the inter-net then you can put information onto this thing. You can follow an issue through, it could be an employer, it could be a case, you don't have to keep written records, it might be something that Linda might be able to access, to keep track of what's going on. [Reading from the document]'The tracker tool encourages you to record who you spoke to, when you spoke to them, what was agreed.] Which in terms of your employers is quite important it terms of people saying one thing at one time, and another ting at another. If you have some sort of record, especially something in writing. 'This information can help someone keep track of their problem, and will be invaluable if they need to take further legal action.'
- 279) 2A: 'i.e. a tribunal, for evidence.'
- 280) Me: ' ... 'it can also be used to set up reminders, send reminders by email to you, for instance if you have to go to a meeting. It can be customised to send reminders to your mobile phone.'
- 281) 2A: 'My dentist does that, when I've got an appointment, I get a mobile message the night before.'
- 282) Me: 'This is a case record, so this is the sort of thing that is actually supposed to be on the tracker tool. One question I want you to think about is 'would you put the time in to use this? Would it be useful for you to record this information?' The problem here is 'getting your deposit back' and this is what you'd write... [Read out from document]... Now an example would be, I signed an employment contract with someone in Hong Kong, they promised this and this, but when I came to England they offered this and this, I

informed them I could not live on that amount in England, asked for my passport back, they refused, employers name etc...
Action: what are you going to do at that point, so you can look back and see if you managed to do what you wanted, the idea is that you are following the problem through, you can keep phone numbers there, obviously this is something you might want to do with support, because it is not obvious.'

283) 2A: ' We do cases like this as well. In your case, as far as employment goes, by recording all this information, because there times where I might not see you for a while, we might not keep full records, by doing this and keeping the dates and everything, when you go to a tribunal it's all there and the judge will look at it and you've done everything that you should have done. The employers won't have, they don't take it seriously enough to actually detail everything, which is to your advantage when it comes to a tribunal. Because they really do think, because you are working in their house, they can get away with anything.'

284) 2C: 'Actually I am doing this, but not as good as this. There was an incident where she gave me bag, a handbag, but later on I found out that she took it back without my permission, I was afraid that she might say that

I stole the bag, so what I did was that before I left, I wrote a letter saying about that back, 'why you took that bag, what you think of me and so on,' and I put the bag there on top, and I made a copy of that as my record, notice of my termination I did a photocopy of that. I think I will do this kind of thing.'

285) Me: 'Would it be useful to do that on a computer, obviously if you wanted to take a copy of that, you would need to scan it in onto a computer.'

286) 2A: 'Or if you are in your place of work, and obviously you don't have access to that, you can't just pop onto a computer, keep a diary, keep a pocket diary in your pocket, as an incident happens, note down the date, look at the clock, note down the time, and write exactly what's going on, and then that can be downloaded or whatever.'

287) Me: 'Would this be useful in training people to keep records?'

288) 2A: 'It's a good idea, it's certainly a road I'd like to lead our ladies down. There are so many issues in this country with this that and the other, service industry, housing, it's good to be aware if there is one, you know what to do.'

289) Me: 'This is another idea with this tracker tool is

- to put a load of training materials with it, to treat it as an educational device, you might not necessarily use the tracker tool, you might if you had a big case, just use it as a means of getting used to keeping records, do you think that's a good idea?'
- 290) 2A: 'Another good idea about it is that when you leave an employer, like this one that we have just been discussing, I would have all those details, if I go through it, if she phones, that name sounds familiar, I can go back, and be 'oh god no she's a no-no' so she would not then get another Filipino, not through us anyway.'
- 291) Me: 'So cross referencing is important to pick out everybody who had the same problem with an employer.'
- 292) 2A 'So we can point out who the bad employers are, I do have a pretty good memory, so I Kind of remember a lot of employers from last year, but it's a good way for me to define who is bad employer or good employer.'
- 293) Me: 'How would you do that?'
- 294) 2A: 'In this format I would put, [2C] started blah, blah, blah, and then called on such and such a date, or whether this is a no-win case where the employer is taking
- the Michael, so I'd put a note, do not use this employer.'
- 295) Me: 'So would you use this tool then, in relation to that? And it would be easiest if you didn't have to sign into a website and go through any complicated procedure to do that.'
- 296) 2A: 'I'm thinking of two ways, I'm thinking if all our service users could access this, I think this would be a problem in terms of the Data Protection Act, this would be a big issue, because we have our internal system here. Once it's something that can be accessed from other groups, '
- 297) Me: 'I don't think it's something that can be accessed by other groups, I think it would stay password protected, to either be accessed individually, or there would be some sort of contract with you guys to be able to access it collectively, '
- 298) 2A: 'You do get hackers nowadays Daniel, I'm not saying they're going to hack in for this, you they, hackers go for big businesses and things like that, it's only because ours is internal and we know it's secure, there is a fear that if it is outside our control, that we can't control as much as we would like. I take your point that it would be very hard for somebody else to do it, if it was a case where the service users could do it, they would each have

their own passwords, because it would be pointless just me having it, as I've got too much work to do as it is. And I'm up to here with my action plans, so for me to keep this on a daily basis, it would be better if you could do it, but I don't know how ***** [Centre Manager] would feel about it.'

299) Me: 'I think there are a number of issue here, one is that I think the aim of the tool is for it to be a training tool, to help these guys to be able to keep track of their own stuff.'

300) 2A 'You could come in here on your days off, or you could go into an inter-net café if that's more convenient.'

301) Me: 'The second issue is security, if Advicenow could reassure you that it is secure, the third issue is if they also make it a service that you could use here internally.'

302) 2A: 'And also the final, cost, because you know we are looking for funding all over the place.'

303) Me: 'This is a free service, what stands at the moment is a free service is where you as an individual go and get a password, sign in and get a password. Which is OK except it's quite an involved process individually, but it sidesteps the data-protection issues

because they have a direct agreement with Advicenow. It's something you could help them with, but the problem is that it is difficult to sign in and use the tool. So then that means involving advisors in the training. The simplest way is obviously that you guys gave a user name and password to ***** [2A], but then that means her signing in and signing out, then the other issue is if we could export all the data to her in one batch, so there are a whole lot of issues there, and the problem is we are not really sure about how it should be done. The training issue is, I think, the main direction they are going to be going in, the most important thing is that you guys get into keeping records to have a strong legal basis for what you are doing.'

304) 2D: 'Would you give training for that?'

305) 2A: 'I think it would be more training for the advisors, give training to us, and we would then pass that on to you.'

306) Me: 'I think that would be the model.'

307) 2A 'You would not have the resources to come and train all the service users that access the centre.'

308) Me: 'It's not sustainable because you guys are going to come and go, if we train ***** [2A], if she

- stays she can train other service users. It's difficult for Advicenow to get funding as well. What sort of uses could you see for something like that?'
- 309) 2A 'From your point of view, what would be useful for you?'
- 310) 2C 'It is not really easy to just state, you need a proof.'
- 311) Me: 'It helps you put things on paper.'
- 312) 2A 'Any other way it might be useful?'
- 313) 2C 'I am doing my expenses, I have my expenses, I sent this amount, I buy this think, oh I better be more thrifty next time.'
- 314) 2A: 'I would advise you, if you start with a new employer, and your not to sure about them, I can't guarantee every employer, always an idea when you first start is to keep a little book in a pocket and write things down.'
- 315) 2B: 'It was my birthday last year in Hong Kong, and she gave me a 14 inch TV, and I thought it was a gift, by the time we come herein the UK, she told me to bring the TV with me, when I leave the employment, I took the TV with me and left it in my flat in Cumbria, and my employer said, tell Trudy, she even got my TV.'
- 316) 2A: 'It is very difficult to prove what is a gift and what isn't.'
- 317) 2B: 'And I was thinking, I phone my friend and tell her to give it the lady and let her sign and say she took the TV, but she didn't want to do that for me.'
- 318) 2A: 'Don't worry, I don't think she is going to take you to court over a small portable TV.'
- 319) 2B: 'If she was going to pick that TV up and then say 'No I didn't get a TV,''
- 320) Me: 'So you want to keep a copy of the letter and stuff, keeping copies of documents seems to be important.'
- 321) 2B 'It's so annoying, it was a gift for me, she gave it to me, and now she is saying I stole her TV!'
- 322) 2C 'In my work we have so many things to do, I need to remember what I am going to do today, what to clean, and everything, what time I would be cooking.'
- 323) Me: 'So this is something you could use to help you learn to construct timetables, but it would not be useful for you to actually do it with, because it would take too much time. It could be training environment to build up timetables.'

- 324) 2A 'Another thing is that I would actually get the employer to sign the timetable at the end of each day. I would actually get the employer to sign and date them at the end of the day. Once she does that she can't say you didn't do the work.'
- 325) 2B 'They accuse you of stealing as a kind of vengeance.'
- 326) 2C 'I tell you what I did when I found that bag, I pack all the things she gave to me, and left them, I didn't take them, even my mobile.'
- 327) 2A 'That's why I can't get hold of you!'
- 328) 2A 'I would say even to my British colleagues having trouble in their place of work, to document what is going on.'
- 329) Me: ' Even a session discussing the tracker tool, ***** [2A] is training you about keeping records, you are comparing experiences, about documenting things, is this what you would be interested in?.'
- 330) 2C 'Yes another thing is if you take copies, they might get into your room and find your copies, if you have that in a computer it will be more safer, I think it that is more.'
- 331) 2A 'That's a very good point Marrison, you're on the ball, for a Friday afternoon, you're on the ball!'
- 332) 2B 'In Hong Kong I had my own laptop, and I had a hard copy and a soft copy, so if they go in my room, they couldn't ...'
- 333) Me: 'So the security of information is an issue for you. OK I've taken lots of your time, thank you.'

Group 3 Transcript

This is a group interview with two participants, which took place at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

There were two participants in this group, who are profiled below:

3A

She is 29-38 years old. She is from Lahore in Pakistan. She has lived in London for 21/2 Months. She sees herself as an Asian Muslim. She worked previously in Media and Communications and Advertising. She is currently studying for a Master's Degree in Global Media.

3B

She is 19-28 years old. She was born in Lancashire in the UK. She has lived in London for a long time. She sees herself as British-Asian-Indian-Gujurati. She works part-time with marketing, and is studying for a Master's in Global Media.

Due to failure of the recording equipment, the interview was written down from memory just after the interview. Thus verbatim transcription was not possible.

- 1) 3B said that employment and financial issues current for them. 3A pointed out that visa issues were significant for her.
- 2) They both said that they would use a website because it was a confidential way to find information. 3B said she would use it to make an initial survey of the issues, and then would expect to need to take advice if they needed to take matters further, or in any detail, 3A agreed. The connections to other advice services on the site were appreciated by both of them. 3A said she would use a site to gather information for friends who needed legal advice also.
- 3) The initial impression of the site was good. They both felt that it was well laid out. The format was seen as clear with good bullet points.
- 4) 3A had experience with web design and said, based on having reviewed the site before the session, that she felt it was a bit static and non-interactive. She would have preferred a more responsive site, with a chance to ask advice or get responses of some sort.
- 5) 3A said from her previous survey of the site that the site was a good portal, passing you on to other good sites. She was concerned that the site might pass you on to other sites without giving you information or support, and

- thus might be a bit disjointed. She thought an overview of the issues involved might be appropriate on the site.
- 6) When asked about what 'self help' meant,
 - 7) 3A thought it would be some sort of search engine. Some sort of way of searching the site in order to solve problems yourself.
 - 8) 3B thought it would be a set of tools for solving problems or dealing with legal issues, indexed advice, or quizzes or some sort of trouble-shooting system, or an interactive guide of some sort.
 - 9) [The difference in there responses seems to indicate that 'self-help' is not a term as instantly understood in Pakistan for instance, as it is in the UK and America.]
 - 10) When they went into the section they both felt it was overwhelmingly about financial issues. There was a discussion about the themes of the advice on the site, and a suggestion from 3A [the web-designer] that the different themes on the site be colour coded to give some link between presentation and content.
 - 11) They selected the section 'getting your deposit back.' The idea of a deposit being money left with a landlord was seen as specific to British English. For 3A it was more likely to generally mean money put into something, like to a bank etc...
 - 12) In the 'step by step guide to getting your deposit back' the case study of Joanne was seen as off-putting. 3B did not at all feel that she identified with 'Joanne' (a very British/English example) and wanted slightly more generalised examples, like: 'Imagine you had lived in a flat for a year, and were trying to get your deposit back and your landlord refused.'
 - 13) The step-by-step guide was seen as not being step-by-step by either of them.
 - 14) It was also seen as non-interactive by 3A, and as not linking through to the set of links presented on the right hand side in the menu. It was seen as not very 'joined up.'
 - 15) It was not immediately clear what situations it was relevant to, and it was not clear what you should do next based on the information presented. They (in a group discussion) suggested a set of problems, or stages in problems being laid out in step by step fashion, with links to case studies, alongside links of a 'what next' type.
 - 16) We then went to 'how to write a letter to your landlord.' The links to the letters were seen as unclear, especially by 3A. The letters themselves were seen as too

- basic, as being somewhat patronising, especially by 3B. There was no explanation of the links from the letters to further action. The letters were also seen as too specific, despite being quite basic.
- 17) They suggested some sort of interactive scenario, where the type of problem was worked through in a case study, with options to choose, where the appropriate types of letter were arrived out through the options chosen in response to the situation, and questions. That way more specific templates could be offered (Group discussion.)
- 18) The section as a whole was seen as slightly repetitive (3B) or confused (3A). The writing a letter to your landlord was seen as a step-by-step guide, and the step-by-step guide as a set of case studies. It was felt these things could be integrated in a way more geared towards interactive problem solving (especially by 3B.) They wanted a more consistent style in the self-help section. An obvious and consistent thread through the sections was how 3A put it.
- 19) We looked at the Tracker tool introductory page. This was seen by both as clear and well laid out. However there were major questions raised in relation to the case study material 'Joanne Bloggs' I presented to them on paper (3B). 3A felt that they would not use the tracker tool unless there was some interactivity in it. 3B felt that if someone like an advice worker had access to it, and would set things up on your behalf it might be useful (like arrange meetings and have the Tracker tool send reminders.) They both said that otherwise they would use their diaries, or use Microsoft Outlook instead (they are both computer literate and have both worked with Outlook.)
- 20) 3A felt that some sort of online discussion forum might be useful in relation to the tracker tool, but was not sure how a sense of community might be built around the discussion, or around the tracker tool.
- 21) They reviewed the PDF instructions for the Tracker tool. 3B saw them as a bit too basic and too long. They both felt that it was not enough content to justify using a PDF file.

Group 4 Transcript

This was an individual, focussed interview. The participant is profiled below:

Participant 4A

She is 19 – 28 years old. She was born in Leicestershire. She has lived in London since August 2004. She is a British Christian, although not actively churchgoing. She works with booking tours for live bands

- 1) Me: ‘What sort of legal issues would you deal with?’
- 2) 4A: ‘Once in the past, a boyfriend at the time, his car was broken into, and my leather jacket, which was brand new, was stolen, along with a lot of his tapes, he claimed from his insurance company hundreds of pounds for all these tapes and only gave me £50 for my jacket, which was worth £120, so I sought legal advice and was actually on the way to a small claims court, but I didn’t go through with it.’
- 3) Me: ‘Where did you look for advice?’
- 4) 4A: ‘I think I looked in the yellow pages for local solicitors, I was only sixteen, so I didn’t know very much about that sort of thing, went to see this guy and, that was basically just finding him in the yellow pages.’
- 5) Me: ‘And did you get any advice?’
- 6) 4A: ‘Yeah, he told me about the small claims court, that I could put in a claim and it cost £10, it was all very simple, he made it sound very simple, but at the time I thought ‘ is it worth it for arguments sake, but the advice he gave me was very good.’
- 7) Me: ‘I guess you probably wouldn’t have thought of using the inter-net then because it didn’t exist, but this is the site, tell me what you think.’
- 8) 4A: ‘ First impressions it looks uuhm professional, it looks very professionally laid out, and it looks from these headings as if there’s a lot in there, so it looks comprehensive. It looks like it’s easy to use because of the way that the tabs are laid out at the top, I like the look of it because it looks very professional, it doesn’t look like some sort of Mickey Mouse thing, it looks like its got the right sort of approach.’
- 9) Me: ‘If you were approaching a site like this, what would you do?’
- 10) 4A: ‘OK actually can I give you another example as well, I’ve got a friend at the moment, she put her daughter’s name, along with hers, on the mortgage, now the daughter is saying that the mother owes her half the house. She doesn’t even want to go into it, but she’s worried that her daughter might be right, so I’d like to look into that on behalf of my friend.’

- 11) Me: 'OK...'
- 12) 4A: ' So, uuhm lets see, well first of all I'd look at these headings here, because they just seem to jump out of the page. It'll be something to do with 'housing,' [clicks on that heading, scrolling through the list] it could be in home ownership.'
- 13) Me: 'What's your impression of the list?'
- 14) 4A: 'It's very comprehensive, mortgages, there we go. I'll go into that. Goodness me so now that's redirecting me to other websites, that's about repossession, that's about endowment shortfalls, I'm going to keep scrolling down this list then see what I can see, a lot of these seem to be about payment problems, I wouldn't know where to look in there. I would say the problem I have is more specific. Maybe I could try entering something. Maybe 'disputes' or something like that, what's the word.'
- 15) Me: 'What kind of dispute?'
- 16) 4A: 'Equity disputes, mortgage disputes,'
- 17) Me: 'Mortgage disputes. Lets try looking in here, [Looks in item 'mortgages' in search results for 'mortgage disputes.'] I don't think it's going to be in here, because this is the same list again. So this is directing you to other websites now. I think if you had a problem with an endowment or payment there's lots of advice here, but because what I am asking for is quite specific. I think I will try going in to one of those sites and have a look. OK this isn't working, let's go back.'
- 18) Me: 'OK give it another go:'
- 19) 4A: 'Shall we try going into another one?'
- 20) Me: ' Mortgages again.'
- 21) 4A: 'OK I'm just going to go into this one, see what happens. Ok that one looks pretty good. I'm going to go back and see.'
- 22) Me: 'We are getting a PDF file.'
- 23) 4A: ' This looks really good. [Guide to getting a mortgage] Say in a few years time I am going to be looking for a mortgage, this would be really useful to explain what all the different mortgages are. You know this is explaining exactly how much you pay. If I was in the position of looking for a mortgage, this would be incredibly useful. See my Mum, she had an endowment policy and found that it wasn't going to pay out, and she cashed it in for a repayment mortgage.'
- 24) Me: 'Oops, I think you can sue them now. '

- 25) 4A: 'Can you?' work-flow in relation to producing this document.]
- 26) Me: 'Well there'd be advice about it on this site.'
- 27) [People don't initially think of their legal problems, but once they start using the site it reminds them of issues.]
- 28) 4A ' I think when she cashed hers in, probably about a year ago, there wasn't much talk about people suing.'
- 29) Me: ' I think there is something about if people feel they were miss-sold the mortgage, there is a thing with financial services with people knowing what they are buying. '
- 30) 4A 'Well she was quite pleased in the end, she only lost like a thousand pounds, and she wanted to be done with it. But this is very comprehensive.'
- 31) Me: ' And this is the type of information you'd be looking for, a PDF file with comprehensive information.'
- 32) 4A: 'Yeah, because it's well laid out, all the terms are explained.'
- 33) Me: 'This is the guide to mortgages from the FSA.'
- 34) [This document could be taken as a benchmark editorially. We could even approach the FSA and find out their editorial policy and
- 35) 4A: 'I mean it's 26 pages long, so obviously it would be a good starting point when looking for a mortgage. And it would give you more contacts, directing you to people who could help you.'
- 36) [This is a form of 'what to do next' information, an important part of an editorial policy.]
- 37) Me: 'OK, now there's one particular part I'd like you to look at, the self-help section. When you see 'self-help' in this context, what does it make you think? What do you imagine will be there?'
- 38) 4A: 'I don't know because I think the term 'self-help' is not normally associated with legal issues, so I think about self help tapes and self-help books. That's perhaps not the term I'd use to describe it. I'm not really sure what would be in there, '
- 39) Me: ' So you wouldn't really go in there?'
- 40) 4A: 'Perhaps not, I think I'd stick to either the index, I think, but shall I have a look?'
- 41) Me: 'Yeah, go on. OK, what's your impression?'
- 42) 4A: 'OK, let me see what it's actually all about. OK, OK, so it's kind of like a step-by-step system to help you solve

- your own problems. It looks quite interesting actually, so lets go down. So these are actually common problems. How to get your deposit back from your landlord, how to deal with debt, this tracker tool looks interesting, I'm going to have a look at this.' [Clicks to Tracker Tool page.]
- 43) Me: 'So what's your impression here?'
- 44) 4A: 'I think it's really good, it's a way of helping to organise yourself when you are dealing with a problem. Let's have a look.' [Clicks on user guide.]
- 45) 4A 'Oh is that just the user guide, not the actual thing.'
- 46) [Again it is important to be very clear in labelling links.]
- 47) 4A: 'Aah, OK, so that's telling me how to use it, OK. Tell you what I'm going to do, I am going to go back to the website, and I am going to actually look for the real thing.'
- 48) Me: 'So where is the real thing?'
- 49) 4A: 'So where is the real thing, I don't know. It would help if I actually read it. Oh OK so you have to actually sign-up, I get it.'
- 50) [4A is evidently computer-literate, but she is still a little thrown by the tracker tool, even in the revised format.]
- 51) 4A: 'Shall I sign up, or is that too lengthy?'
- 52) Me: 'Aaah, you can have a look. You can decide if it's too lengthy or not, it's an interesting thing to see.'
- 53) [Clicks through.]
- 54) 4A: 'OK, so yeah.'
- 55) Me: 'It does start to get lengthy.'
- 56) 4A: 'But I would do that, definitely.'
- 57) Me: 'We can actually discuss the tracker tool as a model, as an idea, and that can be part of the evaluation. '
- 58) 4A: 'OK.'
- 59) Me: 'I've got it, here it is. So, what is the Tracker Tool? Have a quick look at it.'
- 60) [Pause to read.]
- 61) 4A: 'I think my impression is that it's a really good idea, because often, when you are dealing with a legal problem, collecting evidence is the most important thing isn't it. Like here it says nuisance neighbours, keeping a diary, you need to have evidence, OK this is not hard evidence, but if a case is going to be taken to court, if you could provide a diary of what steps you've taken to sort out your problem, that's going to support your case.'

- 62) Me: 'Yes indeed.'
- 63) 4A: 'My impression is that this is a good idea, I mean OK, people could just write this down on a piece of paper, the fact that it's actually there, and the format is there for you to fill in, it means that people are more likely to do it.'
- 64) Me: 'Indeed, indeed, this is part of the point, I mean one of the questions with the Tracker Tool, is whether it would be something people would actually use themselves, that they'd be taught by an advice worker how to use it, is it something that you'd use yourself?'
- 65) 4A: 'I think that if I was dealing with quite a serious problem then yeah I would. Because that is something that I do in my life generally, in the last flat I had trouble getting the deposit back from the letting agency, because letting agencies are slow generally, and I do keep copies, I mean I generally do keep records, yeah and if I was dealing with something that was more serious, I mean any body could write stuff down and say that on this day I did this, whereas the website would actually record the time and the date when you entered the information, and so it would make it more official.'
- 66) [This logging of when information was entered, and when any changes are made should be part of the features of the Tracker tool, and should be part of any printout, and explained in the intro to the tool perhaps?]
- 67) Me: 'That's an interesting point. OK, shall we have a look at other sections of the self-help section. Part of my problem is that there are other sections that people never go to, and I need to get your comments on that, so sorry, you don't get to do 'getting you're deposit back,' whilst it's interesting, what I am going to ask you to look at is either 'Tax Credits' or 'Dealing with debt,' your choice.'
- 68) 4A: 'I haven't got any experience whatever of Tax Credits, so I am going to have a look at that. So obviously, since this section exists, it means a lot of people in the country are having trouble with their tax credits, that it has warranted it's own section on the website, so that's quite worrying. Obviously that's a point about the government. So if you've been overpaid, let's have a look at this. OK, so this obviously a lot of people being overpaid, so how is this happening, and how are they finding out that they have overpaid people? What are their rights, OK. So it seems quite laborious, so presumably it is similar to putting in a claim for overpayment of tax, so how are they recovered, it seems like an administrative

- nightmare that they are doing this, top-up payments, and then it's links to other websites, the inland revenue, citizen's advice.'
- 69) Me 'What do you understand from this?'
- 70) 4A 'That tax credits are an issue for people on low incomes, with children, that basically it's a thing for families, and a lot of the time people are being overpaid, because their circumstances have changed from year to year, and the way that they would get the money back, to recover it, is by deducting it from next year's money, and that it is a bit of an administrative nightmare. Yep, so that was really informative.'
- 71) Me: 'You feel like you got an overview of the issue'
- 72) 4A 'Yeah, absolutely.'
- 73) Me: 'Uuhm , OK, what shall we do next. And the layout and stuff.'
- 74) 4A: 'I'm not sure the layout of this page is as good as all the others. If you go down a little bit, the page that we were just in , not really this one.'
- 75) Me: 'This header page for the Tax credits section.'
- 76) 4A: 'I don't know, it's necessarily as well laid out as some of the other pages, I'm not really sure, this section here, I don't know, '
- 77) Me: 'You're pointing at the Advicenow Tracker Tool section.'
- 78) 4A: 'But this page in general, as soon as we came into this self-help section, '
- 79) Me: 'It didn't feel as well laid out?'
- 80) 4A: 'No. Lets go back to the front page. This bit here I think.'
- 81) Me: 'The self Help Section [Main Page] the ISB sign.'
- 82) 4A: 'I think from a design point of view, you've got all these different headings, sizes of fonts and you know, different bits you can click into, and it's not, it doesn't hit you in the face enough, if you are looking for something, it's not really, the self help thing is it just four issue that are contained in it or are there more? It's not clear if these are just shortcuts to help you go to common issues, or if that's the only thing that is in there. It's not really clear whether or not there's more, and if you scroll down, you're still not really clear, is there anything else on there, not really sure how they could solve that though. '
- 83) Me: 'That's a fair point.'

- 84) 4A: 'Just whilst we're here, shall I have a look in the debt section?'
- 85) Me: 'Yah, please. OK what's your impression of this?'
- 86) 4A: 'Yeah I like this page, it's good, 'use the menu on the right to find advice tools and guides to help you manage your debt problems.'
- 87) Me: 'Ok So it explains the menu to the right.'
- 88) 4A: 'So you can immediately see that you are looking at this menu, it's telling you where to go. And the 'tracker tool' is just there because it's on pretty well every page.'
- 89) Me: 'Yeah. That's an interesting point, it doesn't do that in every section.'
- 90) [This indicates the need for an editorial policy where what the user is expected to do next is stated on every page i.e. 'use the menu on the right to find advice tools etc...'. This should be a standard in the website, as it would improve usability generally, and give a strong sense of consistent approach.]
- 91) 4A: 'So what's this actual website that it has taken us to? National Debt Line dot co dot UK. So this looks good, so there's a list of Frequently Asked questions, that's looks good, there's loads of things, fact sheets [clicks] oh blimey there's loads of things in there, that's very good.'
- 92) [National Debt Line.co.uk is another possible editorial benchmark. Perhaps there needs to be some sort of monthly editorial meeting where content is reviewed in relation to editorial policy, and editorial policy is reviewed in relation to good examples that have been come across. This might help to make the look and feel of the site more consistent and thorough. This makes sense especially since Advicenow has so many partner sites to Benchmark with.]
- 93) 4A: 'Because it's very easy to find, you have the sections up here, laid out at the top, and within each section, it's kind of quick hits, quick fixes, there's the list there, OK if you don't see what you want, lets carry on down, again,
- 94) Me: 'There's a drop down box which you can scroll through,'
- 95) 4A: 'Exactly. '
- 96) Me: 'You find that usable?'
- 97) 4A: 'Yeah definitely. Because also it makes the page look quite tidy, because you have lots of information, but it's not on the screen all at one time. I mean it's a bit boring, the colours are a bit dull, but,'
- 98) Me: ' The structure is really good.'

- 99) 4A: 'The structure is really good. That's really good, it'd be useful for loads of people. Shall I go back? Lets go into something different. Help with Debt, there you go. Oh hang on. So this is the Citizen's Advice Bureau website, I didn't even realise they had one, so that's interesting.'
- 100) [Publicity?]
- 101) 4A: 'All the headings at the top explain what's below. So let's see if they jump you to a section, that's really good it does.'
- 102) Me: 'You like that linking between headings and sections?'
- 103) 4A: 'Uuhm, this looks really good, I like the bullet points as well in the bigger font, makes them stand out. And there's also a nice easy link back to the top of the page.'
- 104) Me: 'So that section was very usable, do you have any other comments about the site?'
- 105) 4A: 'Yeah, I think this is a site I would use, and I think a lot of other people would use it too. Because at some point in your life, when I first started talking I didn't think I had any legal issues, but when you start to think about it, everybody has been through at least one of the things on this website at some stage in their life. So say when you were a student you had debt, every body has experiences getting money back from landlords and things like that, so I think it is a site many people would use. Overall I think the design is really good, it just needs tweaking in one or two places, I think it looks really professional, I think sometime sit just needs more bringing out important bits, and not having too much unimportant bits.'
- 106) Me: 'You mean not having too many lists of stuff that is not immediately relevant.'
- 107) 4A: 'Exactly, the actual look of the site is quite friendly, it's blue, pastel colours, like its there to help you, its not red. Lets have a look in here, that's good, there's an A to Z index as well. Lets have a look at Landlords, OK it's not in that, let's look for, there you go, loads of things in there, there's pretty well everything in there, 'mobile phones,' 'medical' '
- 108) Me: 'Would you browse something like this?'
- 109) 4A: 'Yeah, definitely. That's really good actually, because often on websites you've either got a search box or an A to Z index, I think it's useful you have both. I'm going to have a look in this.'

- 110) Me: 'The living together section, it's an interesting section.'
- 111) 4A: 'That looks like it would be quite useful, and also again it was immediately obvious where to find the information. What was in the features section, did we go there?'
- 112) Me: 'One of the issues with the living together section is that you basically don't have rights unless you're married. That's what the campaign is about, and they didn't actually state that. If you are living together for a while, you inevitably start forming financial arrangements, at which point you have to be very careful, if someone dies or something it's not funny at all.'
- 113) 4A: 'I think of heard of issue like that before.'
- 114) Me: 'And this section was set up especially, and it's a very high level section [indicating the site] but unfortunately, in terms of what about people living together but not married, what are there rights, it doesn't actually answer the question. The answer is not a lot, but they don't want to say something, sort of imprecise like that, but they should give people a sense of what the overall problem is, which is you don't have a lot of rights.'
- 115) 4A: 'It doesn't really strongly state, perhaps they should strongly state at the top, this is something that people are not aware of and that's why it will affect. I mean it does say that but it should probably say 'you don't have any rights''
- 116) Me: 'This is a problem, you probably have a lot less rights than you'd assume. Yeah, no it doesn't state the problem. You're actually in that situation, and English law will let you down quite badly if you don't take care of the paperwork yourself.'
- 117) 4A: 'It's an interesting issue actually that I'd not thought about. It looks as if it could be, it doesn't explain when you get into this page, why it warrants a section all of it's own.'
- 118) Me: 'It's actually much more interesting than it appears at first, they could lay it out in a way that would make people go: ooh bloody hell, '
- 119) 4A: 'I mean calling that an 'introduction' it's kind of a pointless term, obviously it's an introduction, what they could do there is like put a question "Do you know your rights," or something like that, which would perhaps grab your attention a little bit more than "introduction"'

- 120) Me: ‘And then “In England where there are approximately 2 million couples living together unmarried, but what are their rights?” Uuhm, which is not direct, i.e. like you said “Do you know your rights?” “are you living together?”’
- 121) 4A: ‘What might be useful then before they talk about a campaign, put bullet points to say, people don’t; realise that, and put strong points and then put the campaign.’
- 122) Me: ‘Most people think that, but dah, dah ,dah, dah dah.’ [Beethoven’s fifth!]
- 123) 4A: ‘Exactly, it would grab your attention much more. And this section, ‘living together agreements’ although obviously that’s important, really, that could go further down the page, and I would bring the menu to the top. Perhaps under the living together logo there, but what’s that all about to someone who doesn’t know? Perhaps there could be just a one sentence explanation, something like working to make people aware of their rights, or a campaign to, you know, just a little explanation of what it actually is,’
- 124) Me: ‘Yeah because they do that here ‘Advicenow, making sense of the law and your rights.’ But they don’t do that here, which is strange.’
- 125) [Here the issue of each section of the site explaining itself is brought up. Also the issue of a consistent ‘way in’ to each page, see below.]
- 126) 4A: ‘You don’t really realise that it’s a ‘campaign’ till you get to this word here, but really, ‘
- 127) Me: ‘It’s the third paragraph of the introduction ‘the living together campaign.’’
- 128) 4A ‘And I’d move that bit down [Indicates section for extra information in a special box] and bring the menu up, they’re taking you somewhere where you might not want to go.’
- 129) Me: ‘And it’s not consistent with the other pages, where the menu might be at the top.’
- 130) 4A: ‘Exactly, it’s like the other section we were looking at where it explained the menu, ‘have a look over there for’ and yet some pages don’t, so it’s inconsistent throughout the site. Perhaps that’s something they should think about doing on every single page.’
- 131) Me: ‘Yeah, I agree, I’ve started to form opinions because I’ve looked at this damned site so much, and I totally agree, because you come to each page, and you have to think again, ‘oh how does this page work?’ People

- get upset and they get confused, and very often they come to a page and they don't know what it's about. Every single page should explain exactly what the page is about, it's the first thing it should do. This page is to do 'this this and this.'
- 132) 4A: 'They should use that space [At the beginning] to inform, that word introduction doesn't tell you anything. Perhaps even the search box, should be over the other side of the page, and the living together heading should be on the left. Is that where the eyes always go?'
- 133) Me: 'Yes, the first place you go to is there, and the search box is always there, yeah. Well, where do you start reading?'
- 134) 4A: 'Well there, exactly, so I would put that over there and perhaps, you know, make that slightly smaller box and put it over that side of the page.'
- 135) Me: 'So generally there should be something at the top left of the page to announce what the page is about.'
- 136) 4A: 'Absolutely.'
- 137) Me: 'That's good feedback.'
- 138) [Whilst I was involved in this discussion, I felt it was fruitful, and that I was getting good feedback from 4A by working this way. We came to the conclusion above together about the editorial issue of how a page should be laid out. There should be a thought through standard for this that is adhered to, and a review process, as mentioned earlier, to make sure this is so and to continuously refine content, in relation to editorial aims.]
- 139) 4A: 'I'm going to take a look in 'about us' I don't really understand why that's there, that should be at the bottom really.'
- 140) Me: "'For genuine media enquiries, please contact Amazon pr at ...'"
- 141) 4A: 'Why is that even there, it doesn't make any sense at all.'
- 142) Me: 'Yeah, maybe stuff that is to do with 'what to do next' should be in the bottom right, because that's where you finish reading'
- 143) 4A: 'Or some thing saying press/media, click here, and the details are there, why are all those detail there, because that's just not relevant for the average Joe.'
- 144) Me: 'So it's like a level too high, it needs something like a summary, like if you are press then go here etc...'

- 145) 4A: 'Let me have a look at the homepage, now I look at it again, perhaps there should be an explanation here [Points to top banner] I really like that bit, it's really good [points to list of categories on front page]'
- 146) Me: 'And the search box is really useful, but it doesn't explain what it's about'
- 147) 4A: 'If that's the first page when I've come to the website, I don't really know 'who are these people' who are the organisation? Are they some independent body? Is it a government body, I don't really know. '
- 148) Me: 'So you need some little introduction of what they are.'
- 149) 4A: 'I mean, I can understand why they have these cases here, '
- 150) Me: 'Well presumably, you work in presentation, don't you?'
- 151) 4A: 'Not really, I did do art at college.'
- 152) Me: 'No I agree, it doesn't really announce itself. The whole service is like that, it's much better than it comes across. Whenever people go to this site, they're like 'oh my god I had no idea that this was on here' It should be advertised.'
- 153) 4A: 'I really think that some of this information [In the about us] should be on the homepage, '
- 154) Me: 'Perhaps much more condensed or in bullet points'
- 155) 4A: 'Or perhaps, even just a maybe even something just saying who are we, and maybe that could be a link into that section.'
- 156) Me: 'Making sense of law and your rights is not really explanatory enough.'
- 157) 4A: 'It doesn't tell you who they are, it tells you what they aim to do, but not who they are. '
- 158) Me: 'Anything else.'
- 159) 4A: ' I think the idea of the search box is really good, it could be tweaked a bit more to be more informative. It's a bit of a big box for a start, it could be made smaller, for a start, and the way that they've used the heading, perhaps that should be underneath, above should be a heading, perhaps just search, and underneath should be like you know, the explanation should be underneath. That's not really the heading, is it? It could be made to look a bit smaller, and a bit sexier in a way, not that a site like this is sexy.'
- 160) Me: 'I know what you mean, it needs to draw people

in. Thank you that's been

very helpful.'

Group 5 Transcript

Group 5 includes only one participant, so it is a focussed interview. The participant will be referred to as 5A:

Participant 5A

She is 59-68 years old. She was born in Manchester in the UK. She has lived in Bristol for 18 years. She is a UK citizen. She works as a freelance writer and journalist.

- 1) Me: 'What sort of legal issues you would have, or might have, and where you might look for advice.'
- 2) 5A: 'The most obvious thing would be family issues and particularly things about child custody, which might be the most common thing that people use lawyers for. Compensation for injury, stuff like that, making wills, family would also include divorce and all that stuff, of yes of course conveyancing, house sale and purchase, if one has to swear an affidavit, in my case intellectual copyright has been an issue.'
- 3) Me: 'You work with journalism of course, well the sites called Advicenow, what do you think of when you hear the phrase Advicenow?'
- 4) 5A: 'oh I think mostly of counselling or Citizen's Advice Bureau, I don't think it sounds like particularly suggests that it's legal.'
- 5) Me: 'Here's the main page of the site, what do you think?'
- 6) 5A: 'I think it's wishy-washy. It looks very clear, and easy to navigate, and I think the salient points are there, self help, living together, about us, features, [clicking repeatedly.] Seems pretty comprehensive, but I think the graphics are weak, and the colours are wishy washy, '
- 7) Me: 'You mean to pastel-ly?'
- 8) 5A: 'I would go for something stronger personally. But I think it is actually very clearly laid out, it's simple. I mean what one really doesn't want in a website of this nature is fancy graphics, and things that you have to figure out how they work, a plain straightforward presentation like that, I think that possibly a description of the site rather than that bang straight in thing, this is what we are this is what we do, on the homepage, would be better than going straight into that.'

- 9) Me: 'Uuhm thinking about the sorts of issues that we discussed before, how would you go about approaching this site?'
- 10) 5A: 'Well I would navigate through these various headlines.'
- 11) Me: 'Do, do as...'
- 12) 5A: 'OK, I'll do this hypothetically.'
- 13) Me: 'Well, you can do it as really as you wish...'
- 14) 5A: 'Lets go to family, wills and trusts.'
- 15) Me: 'OK we clicked on Family from below the search box.'
- 16) 5A: 'Aaah here we are, child custody.'
- 17) Me: 'So it wasn't clear that you needed to scroll down?'
- 18) 5A: 'No, but once you get the headlines in your head, I am using this for the first time, its easy actually. 'Gingerbread' oh I see it's a referral service.'
- 19) Me 'Right, what do you think about that?'
- 20) 5A: 'Oh no, I'd actually want it to tell me something, I wouldn't want to keep on being referred to other organisations. I want it to tell me something straight away, lets see how this goes. I want actual advice, I don't want a referral service. [Clicks through to other site] Here, lets see where that takes us, do we actually get some information here. 'Generally encourage fathers to maintain contact with their children,' yeah it seems reasonable. Yes, no, I think that's good, that actually tells you. Yes that seems fine, I think this is extremely useful , as a first port of call. It's not something you could use to action anything, but it certainly tells you what your rights are, how do you go back?'
- 21) Me: 'We've run into trouble here, because you are trying to press the back button, on the browser, what do you think you need to do?'
- 22) 5A: 'I think I need to go out, no that would close it, I don't know, I don't know Firefox.'
- 23) Me: 'No you're right, that would close it, but yes, it opens an external window.'
- 24) 5A: 'Or course it does. Silly me. Yeah and you've got a find thing which is useful. Advice Services, find a solicitor, your post code, lets see what it tells me, [Enters Postcode] Doesn't tell me any of the other two which are literally just round the corner, there are two closer than the one they mentioned, just round the corner. I do think that's a very wishy washy, you need to make the buttons on the top stand out more.'

- 25) Me: 'Features:'
- 26) 5A: 'This is good, test your negotiation skills.'
- 27) Me: 'OK, you're scanning through the tabs at the top. OK this is actually the section I was wanting to look at specifically.'
- 28) 5A: 'Self- Help.'
- 29) Me: 'Yeah, what does 'self-help' say to you? '
- 30) 5A: 'It tells you that, uuhm, that it is actually possible to bypass, if you use certain, uuhm , facilities like this intelligently, the time you might spend talking to a solicitor and paying for it. '
- 31) Me: 'OK, it's a way of avoiding going to a solicitor.'
- 32) 5A: 'Well solicitors are extremely expensive. One does usually, with local firms in high streets, get half an hours free consultation, uuhm, even so , that's not really enough o get a picture of what you need to do. If you want to go any further, then it starts to cost a great deal of money, most people are not eligible for legal aid now. Uuhm , so uuhm, I think that uuhm, something like this definitely fills a gap, although you would have to be fairly computer literate and online to use it, and a lot of people are not, but then if you did a serious sort of information campaign, you could send people to their local internet café, to do this for example, you don't actually have to have a home computer. But people would need to be told about it, it needs to be publicised.'
- 33) [Pause in proceedings]
- 34) Me: ' So, I mean looking at this page [Self Help section front page] What do you see, what are your feelings?'
- 35) 5A; 'I see again a personal taste that I am not madly keen on, graphics, uuhm.'
- 36) Me: 'Could you be more specific about the graphics?'
- 37) 5A: 'I think it's just wishy-washy and boring, it could be more focussed, I think that you could, highlighting certain aspects, that's in black, the rest of it's in blue, yes, the Tracker Tool looks useful, [Clicks through] How it works, OK. '
- 38) Me: 'What do you think of the presentation here?'
- 39) 5A: 'Looks good, I think the presentations good, the language is good, lay language, there's no legal gobbledegook on this site at all and that's something I think is a significant advance, because lawyers have a very difficult time translating their discipline into language that other people can understand. In fact most people who have to have occasional dealings with lawyers, it's like with doctors, you develop a sense

- of how to talk legalese. This really does eliminate that problem, I think the Gobbledigook factor is nearly zero, which is a big plus point. I mean a lot of thought has gone into how this is presented and the language that they have used, I think that looks very useful. Personally, I don't think I would use a tracker tool because I tend to jot things down on paper. Not very electronically minded in that respect. Oh we're on it, [The Tracker Tool Page. Not clear what the page is.] Oh I see you have to log on to use it, oh that's fine, and it's got a guide with it, PDF file that you can download and print up if you want to, yeah, that looks good.'
- 40) Me: 'Looks useful.'
- 41) 5A: 'Yeah. Yes I think it would be useful to a lot of people.'
- 42) Me: 'Lets go back to the Self-Help section. Where do you think the next steps are on this page.'
- 43) 5A 'It's obvious when you are scrolling through that certain things are hyperlinks, [She demonstrates moving the mouse arrow above text on the screen, which changes to underlined to indicate a link.] I think you need to make the hyperlinks more obvious, they quite obvious here because they are another colour, you can tell, anybody with any experience with the inter-net would now these are hyperlinks, but not here.'
- 44) Me: 'Down on the right hand side of,'
- 45) 5A: 'Yes, on the right hand side of the self help menu, I think that could be more obvious.'
- 46) Me: 'So it's only when it underlines it that you know.'
- 47) 5A: 'Yes, you could easily miss that.'
- 48) [Click through to 'dealing with debt.']
- 49) Me: 'What do you think?'
- 50) 5A: 'well I think that these little drawings are a bit, I suppose it needs a touch of humour here and there, to lighten it up, but that one doesn't say a lot to me, someone tipping their piggy bank upside down, it's a bit banal, I think it could be a bit more sophisticated. Well this thing about debt is actually very important indeed. I'm not sure it's a legal issue, although it could become one, I suppose this is a way of avoiding that. I do think there is a certain amount of built in propaganda in this advice, because it's trying to tell you 'the pitfalls of life' isn't it to a certain extent, but I don't think that that is particularly a bad thing, and its not patronising. It doesn't preach to you: It asks you some fairly straightforward questions, which you can

answer for yourself. 'To help you deal with your debt problems' well I would question the syntax there. Sample letters to use when dealing with creditors. I would actually de-personalise it, that is like talking *TO* somebody through the site, and I really tend to avoid that, I find that a bit patronising, myself, but I'm picky about that. The tone of that paragraph, is not as good as in other places. Some people might feel they are being talked down to, one is very touchy when talking about things like debt, it's raw. Lots information and links listed from the hyperlinks. Even something from the BBC. Dear me, what a silly girl. £53, 000 pounds is pretty hefty. Make me fairly tame.'

51) Me: 'Maybe it's not the right message 'I'm only 3 grand in debt, what's the problem.'

52) [She closes the window and is left with no window at all.]

53) 5A: 'Whoops! Ooh.'

54) Me: 'That's difficult, it's not consistent with it opens an external window or not. People don't know whether to close the window, or use the back button.'

55) [These kind of editorial inconsistencies really reduce the usability of the site! It also does not seem very professional, which is essential for an Advice Provider.]

56) 5A: 'Well that's about as much as I can say on that.'

57) Me: 'OK. What about pick another section of the Self-Help section, last one.'

58) 5A: 'No it's not relevant to me.'

59) Me: 'OK, thank you, thank you very much.'

Appendix 3: Materials Used to discuss the Tracker Tool

What is the Tracker Tool?

The Tracker Tool is an innovative online system for self-recording and tracking problems. It can be used by someone on their own, or together with an adviser, the important thing is that it is the client who manages it - not the adviser or solicitor.

What does it do?

Experienced advisers routinely keep records when dealing with a case. The Tracker Tool incorporates their expertise and encourages you to record:

- Who you spoke to
- When you spoke to them
- What was agreed

This information can help someone keep track of their problem and will be invaluable if they need to take further legal action.

It can also be used to set up and reminders, and send reminders by email to you. With further funding, it could be customised to send reminders to a client's mobile phone.

What problems can it help with?

It can be used for a wide variety of problems. Examples:

- Housing – Getting a deposit back. This is a widespread problem, the process of negotiating or taking action to get your money back is routine, and you should be able to resolve it yourself. The tracker tool can be used to keep notes of conversations with a landlord, dates letters were sent, and you can set reminders for follow up action.
- Young people - An adviser develops an action plan with young person, and helps them to set up a log of meetings, calls to make etc. using the tracker tool. The tracker tool automatically emails or (with funding) the young person telling them time and place of appointment, or time and tel number of contact etc.
- Nuisance neighbours – you can use the tracker tool to keep a diary of nuisance events and dates/times, that may be useful when making a complaint.

Tracker Tool Case study

Case Record:

Joanne Bloggs

MY PROBLEM: Getting my deposit back

I paid my landlord a month's rent in advance and one month's rent as a deposit when I moved in to my flat. Before I left, I gave my landlord one month's notice in writing and asked him to return my deposit. He still hasn't. I want it back.

DATE	NOTES
8 March 2004	<p>Wrote to my landlord giving him 1 month's notice to quit, and asking him to return my deposit of £500 before I leave. (All my rent is up to date and the flat's in good condition, so there's no reason not to pay).</p> <p>My landlord is Mr Scrooge Telephone: 0123 456789 Address: Hard Times, Any Which Way, This Town</p> <p>Action: None yet. I expect my landlord to return the deposit by the end of the tenancy. If not I will get in touch with him.</p>
8 April 2004	<p>Left the tenancy. No response yet from my landlord about the deposit. I phoned him today and gave him my new address so he could send me a cheque there. I asked him when he would send it. He couldn't say for sure. I asked if he would send it within one week of today, he said that he thought he should be able to do that.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wait for landlord to send the cheque. 2. If I haven't been sent it within 1 week, to phone the landlord again.
15 April 2004	<p>Still no cheque. Phoned landlord – not in – left message. I said I still haven't had the cheque and asked him to phone me to let me know when he would send it. I said I would be grateful if he would phone me back within the next 2 days to let me know.</p>
22 April 2004	<p>Still no response from my landlord. I need to get help to sort this out.</p> <p>Action: I phoned the CLS Helpline 0845 345 4345 and spoke to Jane. She told me that a housing adviser might be able to help me with this, and advised me to get help rather than deal with it on my own because I might need to go to Court. She gave me the telephone number for a local housing advice centre. She didn't think I could</p>

	<p>get legal aid to deal with this problem, but said that the housing advice centre could give free advice and it had a Quality Mark in housing advice, so I would get good quality help.</p> <p>I phoned the Housing Advice Centre and spoke to Martin. We agreed to meet on 6 May 2004 at 10am to see what I could do about it.</p>
<p>6 May 2004</p>	<p>Still no response from my landlord. Attended the interview with Martin. I told him what I have already done. He assured me that I do have the right to get my deposit back, and that if the landlord doesn't agree, I can take him to Court. We discussed the following options:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Legal action and 2. Negotiating with my landlord <p>Because the deposit is less than £5000, I can use the Small Claims proceedings at the County Court. If the landlord doesn't respond to my action, the Court can make an order that he owes me the money without needing a court hearing. But I need to put my request to the landlord in writing first, as a 'pre action letter'. Martin agreed to help me write the letter.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Martin wrote a letter in my name asking for my deposit back in the next 14 days, and warning the landlord that if it wasn't returned, I would take legal action against him for the deposit, costs and interest. I signed this. Martin gave me the original to send to the landlord, gave me a copy and kept a copy for his records. 2. If there's no response by 24 May 2004, I should come back to see Martin. We booked an appointment in case for 10.00am on 24 May 2004. He asked me to bring a copy of my tenancy agreement with me and receipts for rent payments (he said my bank statements would be good evidence of rent paid) 3. I should contact Martin as soon as possible if I get any contact from my landlord, or if he returns the deposit.
<p>24 May 2004</p>	<p>Surprise surprise! Still no deposit. I saw Martin again. We agreed that I would apply to Court through the small claims procedure. Martin advised that I may have to pay an application fee at the Court, and if I lose the case, I may have to pay the other side's costs, although it was unlikely I wouldn't get any of my deposit back. I agreed that I still wanted to do this. He said I could fill in a form at Court so I didn't have to pay the Court fee, because I was on a low income. He explained how the Court would deal with my claim, and asked me to get back in touch with him if I needed to go</p>

	<p>to a hearing, or if the landlord paid me my deposit back.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We filled in the application. 2. Martin helped me write the Witness Statement, explaining what I had done and what I wanted. 3. Martin took copies of my bank statements for the time I was at the tenancy, to show that I had paid all my rent, but he said I don't need to send those unless the Court asks me to attend a hearing. 4. Martin kept a copy, I kept a copy and I took the original form with me to Court. I filled in the fee remission form, and the Court staff agreed I didn't have to pay anything. I spoke to Janet at the Court, she took my form and said she would send it to my landlord. If the landlord didn't respond in 14 days, the judge would make a decision about the case and let me and the landlord know. 5. I will contact Martin if I hear anything from the Court or from my landlord.
21 June 2004	<p>Still nothing from my landlord!</p> <p>But the Court sent me a copy of the Court Order the judge made. He ordered that my landlord should pay me back £500 for the deposit and interest on top.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>I phoned Martin, he said that the landlord must now pay, or we can apply to Court to enforce the judgment against him. It will cost money, so he said give it a couple of weeks and if it hasn't come through, we'll take it further. We booked an appointment for 5 June 2004 at 10am in case I still don't have my money back.</p>
1 July 2004	<p>Finally I got a cheque from my landlord!</p> <p>There was a little note with it saying he didn't want to hear from me again, and if I ever needed somewhere to stay I shouldn't bother with him.</p> <p>I phoned Martin to let him know, he said it was good news but for me to put the money in my bank. If the cheque bounced we would have to take further action. He asked me to let him know when the cheque cleared.</p> <p>Action:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I will deposit the cheque today in my bank, see if it's cleared in 3 days, and phone Martin then.
4 July 2004	<p>The cheque is in my bank account!</p> <p>The money's paid.</p> <p>I phoned Martin, and he said there's nothing else to do. I don't need to contact him again about this problem.</p> <p>Sorted!</p>

- Health – you could use the tracker tool to make a note of your conversations with your GP, or doctor. You can set reminders to attend appointments, or take action.