Rachel De Souza

UX Designer | User Research | Service Design | Prototyping | Stakeholder Engagement
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PROFILE

UX Designer experienced in investigating user needs, evaluating design solutions and translating research findings into practical, meaningful outcomes. My experience spans qualitative research, public service improvement and community-led initiatives, including conducting diary studies, usability testing and facilitating workshops. I bring a considered, people-centred approach to design, with the ability to critically assess solutions, identify areas for improvement and communicate clear, constructive feedback to support better design outcomes.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Research-Led UX Design
Delivered privacy-conscious reflection prototypes, refined through three rounds of usability testing and research with six participants.

Service Research Impact
Informed service improvement discussions by presenting claimant and work coach research findings to senior stakeholders.

Community Engagement
Engaged 25+ participants through peer-learning workshops and reflection resources supporting personal development.

Concurrent Project Delivery
Completed 3–5 concurrent client projects from brief to final artwork while maintaining brand consistency.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Visual Designer, Freelance
Mismatch Studios | London | Oct 2024 – April 2025

- Created visual assets and virtual fashion show videos using CLO3D garments, bringing digital designs to life for an innovate UK-funded fashion technology project.
- Researched visual references and built mood boards to set the creative direction.
- Developed digital experiences and visual assets while working with designers and project stakeholders.
- Managed multiple creative deliverables and adapted designs in response to feedback and project requirements.

Graphic Designer
Sapphire Graphics (Don-Bur) | Stoke-on-Trent | Feb 2022 – Sep 2024

- Designed commercial vehicle graphics in-house for Don-Bur and for external clients, managing 3-5 branding, digital and print projects simultaneously, from client brief to final artwork.
- Made changes to artwork at short notice when client's requirements changed, often to tight deadlines.
- Used Photoshop for artwork preparation, retouching, editing and composition, producing client-ready files for large-format print and digital use.
- Conducted pre-production and pre-press checks to prevent errors, reprints and production delays.
- Worked with clients and production teams to resolve design and production challenges.
- Kept client materials consistent while working within established brand requirements.

Content & Design Lead | Co-founder
The Evoke Project | Manchester | 2023 – 2024

- Co-founded a community initiative supporting young women through connection, reflection and personal development.
- Designed reflection worksheets for workshops including Reflect and Redirect, helping participants consider their goals, achievements and challenges.
- Helped facilitate peer-learning workshops in a judgement-free environment; supported follow-up sessions and Zoom calls to help participants progress towards their goals. Engaged 25+ participants across two events.

EDUCATION

MA User Experience Design
University of the Arts London, Distinction | 2024 – 2025

BA (Hons) Fashion Design & Textiles
University of Huddersfield, 2:1 | 2017 – 2021

SKILLS

- **Research & Analysis:** Thematic analysis, affinity mapping, survey design, qualitative research, insight synthesis, GDPR, informed consent and data confidentiality.
- **User-Centred Design:** Prototyping, concept iteration, user flows, usability, accessibility and privacy-conscious design.
- **Communication & Collaboration:** Stakeholder engagement, workshop facilitation, research presentations and community engagement.
- **Design & Research Tools:** Figma, Miro, Google Forms, Adobe Creative Suite, Blender and Lovable.
- **AI & Emerging Technologies:** ChatGPT, Claude and AI-assisted research workflows, ideation, content development and rapid prototyping.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Spaces: Reflection Toolkit and Digital Platform

MA Final Major Project, In partnership with TAG agency | 2025

- Planned and conducted a two-week diary study with six participants, followed by semi structured interviews exploring solitude, loneliness and the environments young adults spend time in.
- Used thematic analysis to identify patterns in participants' surroundings, moods and everyday activities.
- Facilitated participatory design activities to explore potential solutions informed by research findings.
- Conducted three rounds of usability testing across reflection prompts, privacy settings, digital map interactions, and the connection between the physical toolkit and mobile experience.
- Developed high-fidelity Figma prototypes, using research and testing to refine the experience and make reflections private by default, with sharing optional.
- Applied GDPR principles when handling sensitive participant information, obtaining informed consent, anonymising research data and restricting access to participant records.
- Refined the project through feedback and iteration, balancing user needs, privacy considerations and practical constraints within a fixed deadline.

Jobcentre Plus – Claimant & Work Coach Experience Research

Research project | 2026

- Designed and conducted surveys with claimants and work coaches to investigate service experiences, uncover pain points and identify opportunities to improve service delivery.
- Explored operational challenges affecting work coaches' ability to deliver effective support, alongside barriers and frustrations experienced by claimants when accessing services.
- Synthesised findings across both groups to identify recurring themes and contrasting perspectives. Highlighted the importance younger claimants placed on having a consistent work coach to build trust and feel comfortable sharing personal experiences.
- Presented research findings and key insights to senior managers and stakeholders, supporting evidence-led discussions around service improvements and decision-making.