Kirsten Hardern
Interaction Designer

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I am a T-shaped Interaction Designer working at scale on a service impacting 43 million users across the UK. I am passionate about uniting deep expertise in UX design, user research, and stakeholder collaboration to deliver inclusive, accessible, user-centered solutions. I bring a strong blend of creative design thinking and analytical rigour, using evidence from data and successive rounds of design and user research to inform design decisions. Skilled in rapid prototyping (HTML, CSS, Javascript) and systems thinking; I collaborate strategically with cross-disciplinary teams to identify constraints, risks and opportunities, and adapt designs to accommodate changes in requirements. I guide delivery, champion UCD, support the team and collaborate with leadership to improve outcomes for the user and the service.

Skills

Interaction design, user-centered design, user experience design, heuristic evaluation, ideation, wireframing, low-fidelity prototyping, high-fidelity prototyping, HTML5, CSS3, Javascript, Nunjucks, Sass/ SCSS, GDS Service Standard, Accessibility (a11y), WCAG 2.2 AA, WAI-ARIA, semantic HTML, inclusive design, Figma, Jira, Confluence, Agile, Scrum, Github, Miro, Mural, Lean UX, Design Thinking, stakeholder management, workshop facilitation, prioritisation, developer handoff, GDPR awareness, user research, usability testing, user interviews, data analysis, scientific research, screen reader testing (JAWS, NVDA, VoiceOver), Discovery/Alpha/Beta/Live phases, roadmap collaboration - ***All professional proficiency or above***.

Experience

Hippo | Intermediate Interaction Designer | *Contracting for NHS England*   *Apr 2022 - Present*
- Delivered a self-serve account recovery journey with engineering, product, clinical, security and ops, cutting account-related tickets by 50% and clearing a 4-month backlog (100k+ accounts recovered in 4 months).
- Designed a settings entry path for partner-direct traffic (homepage bypass). I created a general, non-partner-specific pattern, highlighted risks, facilitated stakeholder discussions to align approaches, and ensured reuse across services.
- Led Welsh-language discovery: defined a single-codebase string-swap and context-aware toggle, set clinical and legal review workflow, and aided in developing a proposal to secure funding for POC.
- Championed a discovery to streamline help and support by auditing journeys and content across platforms, simplifying flows, identifying user needs and framing expectations for these journeys to reduce drop-offs and support demand.
- Built production-like HTML/ CSS/ JS prototypes; partnered with developers and QA to triage bugs and improve release quality, and supported other designers in the creation of complex prototype flows.
- Translated business needs into prioritized backlogs & acceptance criteria; maintained design history, decision logs and dependencies for auditability; championed WCAG 2.2 AA across delivery.

Phox | Front-End UX Engineer (Freelance)   *Mar 2020 - Apr 2022*
- Led discovery and pilot of facial recognition for patient onboarding, establishing consent, opt-out, and fallback ID paths, running vendor due-diligence with licenses and privacy checks, setting monitoring to cut duplicate registrations (18% of registrations) and ID near-misses (3%) while improving onboarding completion (raise higher than 74%).
- Delivered end-to-end web solutions in a cross-functional team of developers and designers, owning stakeholder management and coordination with leadership, product, and external contractors to ensure on-time delivery.
- Translated business requirements into technical plans, prioritised backlogs, and communicated progress, risks, and trade-offs to senior stakeholders.
- Championed usability and accessibility standards across the build lifecycle.

TecEx | Research Analyst (Compliance Lead)   *Apr 2019 - Oct 2021*
- Led a six-person team to expand and improve an internal compliance database used by client-facing and internal stakeholders.
- Identified and resolved system bottlenecks, improving data quality, findability, and workflow efficiency.
- Managed stakeholder communications and client accounts; created documentation and delivered training to drive adoption.

For further experience details (2016 - 2019), please refer to my [LinkedIn profile.](#)

Education

University of the People | Associates Degree in Computer Science   *2025 - Present*
Ongoing
Awards: President's List (awarded twice)

UX Design Institute | Professional Diploma, UX Design   *2021 - 2023*
Grade: Distinction

University of the Witwatersrand | BSc Honours, Microbiology and Biotechnology   *2016 - 2017*
Grade: Distinction
Awards: Teaching Assistant Award

University of the Witwatersrand | BSc Cellular and Molecular Biology   *2014 - 2016*
Grade: Distinction
Awards: Certificate of First Class Pass (ILS), Certificate of First Class Pass (CLS), Certificate of First Class Pass (Ancillary Maths and Statistics), Certificate of Merit (MCB II C - Scientific Practice), Certificate of First Class Pass (MCB II C - Applications), Certificate of First Class Pass (MCB II - Concepts), Deans List, Microbiology and Biotechnology III Book Prize, Van Schalk Book Prize, SA Breweries Prize, Inqaba Biotec Prize, Genetics and Developmental Biology Book Prize, Certificate of Merit (Microbiology), Certificate of Merit (Genetics)

For other certifications (2019 - Present), please refer to my [LinkedIn profile.](#)