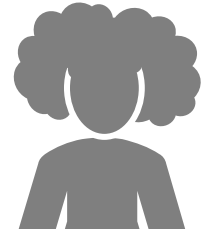# MY BEST LIFE

How tech could help young people

Zoe's story

Zoe is a single mother. She and her son Tyson are currently living with her cousin. She is not employed or in training or in education. She would really like to find a job, but she feels she can't even consider it, as she spends all her time trying to find a place where Tyson is comfortable and safe. She wants to find a place to live for her and her son that is closer to her friends and her grandparents.

Without tech

Zoe looks up information on how she can find a home of her own on the council website. She is directed towards information on the bidding process. It's quite technical, and she doesn't fully understand how the points system works.

Put off by the system, she delays her application, which puts real strain on her relationship with her cousin. After a lot of late nights she manages to complete the application.

Zoe attends a few viewings. There are a few things she is unsure about, like condensation on the windows, but she feels too embarrassed to ask anyone. She accepts the third property she sees. When winter comes it has a bad case of damp, which upsets her.

Zoe gets in touch with the council about the state of the property but they do not send anyone to make repairs. She keeps chasing up the council and trying to tackle the damp herself, but this means she has much less time to get to know her local community, leaving her feeling alone and stressed.

Zoe is struggling to access the *knowledge* she needs, as well as being up against *housing affordability* and a lack of *employment opportunities*. This is taking its toll on her *family relationships*.

The tool: Chat bot

Why it is needed: A lot of pre-existing information services fail to provide disadvantaged young people with the information they need in the right way. They can be hard to use and require absorbing a large amount of information at once. Young people are more interested in bite size chunks of information relevant to the problem at hand.

How it would work: Young people download a chat bot onto their phone. They can ask questions about simple day-to-day support, related to areas like benefits navigation or the housing system. The bot would then extract answers from reliable online sources. In cases where the questions are too complicated, or it doesn't understand, it could also signpost them to other services or information sources.

Key things to consider: For a chat bot to be most valuable to any young person, it needs to draw on good advice from as a wide a range of sources as possible. This either requires agreements between organisations to share their content, or a data standard to be developed across the advice sector that everyone uses to mark up their content.

With tech

Zoe looks up information on how she can find a home of her own on the council website. She is directed towards information on the bidding process, but the website also recommends the chatbox for support.
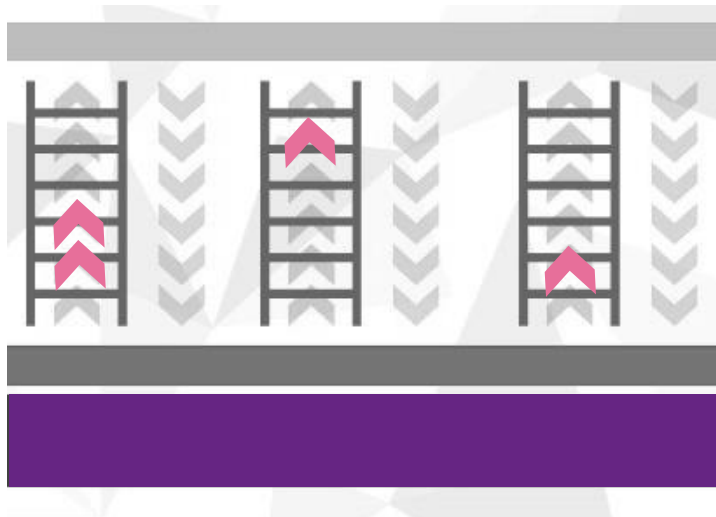
Zoe uses the chat bot which is able to navigate the bidding process. It also makes some general suggestions, like '*don't just take the first place you see—make sure you view a few properties*'.

Zoe attends a range of viewings, some of which have odd black marks on the walls. She asks the chat bot about it. After answering a few yes/no questions finds out it is probably damp and it could be a real pain to remove. It sign-posts her information on spotting risk of damp and reducing chances of getting it. She accepts the seventh property she sees.

It takes Zoe a few weeks to settle into her new place, but once she's sorted everything out and is feeling a lot less stressed. She has some time to join a local women's group and feels much more settled in the community. A friend in the group is able to point her towards another local charity, and they help her in the first steps towards finding work.

With the knowledge she needs, Zoe is able to progress to *independent living* and build her social *networks*. This takes the pressure off her *family relationships*, and enables her to get *progress into work*.

This persona is based on the experiences of people we spoke to during our *My best life* research. For the full report, more personas, and an interactive user experience map, visit thinkNPC.org/MyBestLife.