

Summary Report

b:Friending App

b:Friend

Healthwatch Doncaster

Engage, inform, influence

March 2017 – Decem

1 Introduction

1.1 Details of activity

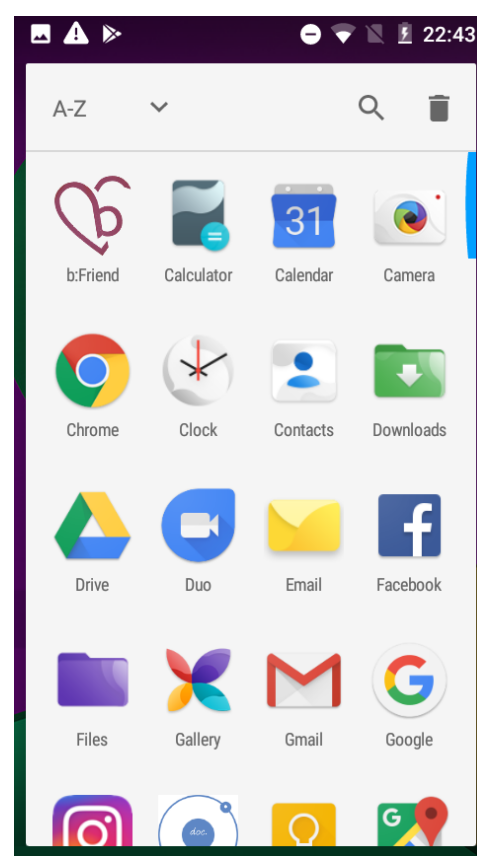
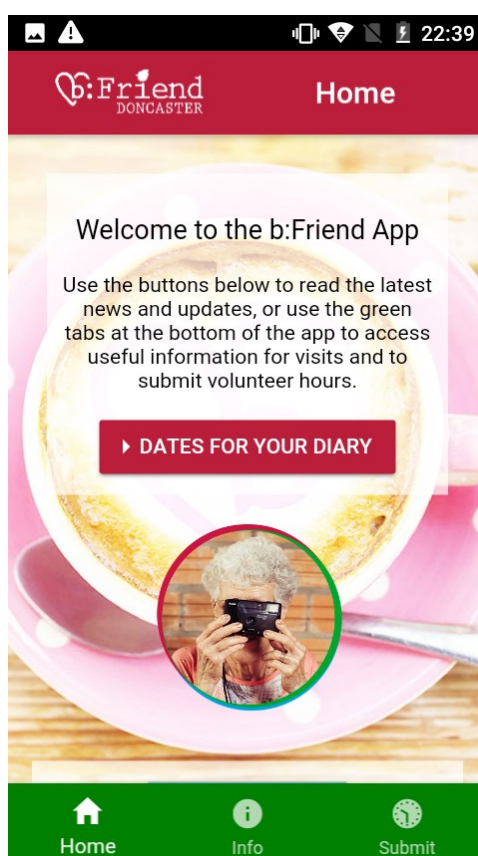
b:Friend created an interactive mobile application to be used by befriending volunteers across Doncaster offering reference material, check-in functionality and media gathering tool.

1.2 Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the developers for their hours of pro bono support, security assessments and design.

We'd also like to acknowledge our partners, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue service, for providing material to include in the App.

Of course, we'd like thank Healthwatch Doncaster for the Microgrant which allowed us to pursue this project.



2 What was the purpose of the activity/session?

2.1 Purpose

This grant was to allow b:Friend to create a mobile App to inform, engage and influence older residents across Doncaster as well as volunteers working with on the project. This innovative method of communicating with local people will allow the volunteer to obtain information from their older neighbour, increasing the number of conversations taking place locally regarding health and social care services.

The App works in two parts: in one respect it provides reference information to volunteers on a range of topics that we, as a charity, can encourage them to share with their older neighbour. The second attribute of the App is an input mechanism, monitoring the visits taking place but also allowing volunteers to collect information on a topic of our choosing. This rolls on a monthly basis (for example, in January we could ask volunteers to collect information on their experiences of prescriptions services during the month and in February they could be asked to collect experiences of hospital care). As this is all accessible on mobile, the volunteer can gather photos, videos and audio recordings.

2.2 What did you do?

b:Friend partnered with a mobile App development company based in Cheltenham to produce the mobile application to be accessed on iOS and Android mobile devices.

Offering many hours of pro bono support, the development company produced an App to be rolled out to all 1:1 befrienders in the programme. Working closely with the developers we looked at the various categories available for us to include, the data protection requirements of the App and login details.

As much of this work was taking place pro bono and not taking priority over paid projects (for reference, mobile App development usually costs in the region of £5,000 with less functionality that we have). Testing has taken place over recent months which delayed the project launch as we wrestled with a few glitches and security issues.

2.3 Results of the activity/session(s)

The mobile App is currently in the final stages of testing with a fully trained IT security professional. Beta incarnations of the App have been trialled by

volunteers out in the community and this feedback has fed into the developments.

At this stage there are no results that we're ready to share, as they were all in the development stage of the App, but these will be forwarded on as soon as the App is in full use by all volunteers.

Feedback from people who took part

Older neighbours taking part in the trial did not fully understand the reasoning behind the questioning but believe the check-in functionality is a clever way to do things.

Feedback from staff/volunteers who took part

Volunteers that trialled the beta version of the site emphasised the value it will bring to new befrienders, especially with regards 'topics of conversation' and 'health and safety' checks.

The check-in functionality was tested but required further adaptations before being ready for wider roll-out. Volunteers did express that this method would be preferable as the current check-in process, involving a text or email, is sometimes easy to forget.

2.4 Conclusion

B:Friend sees this as a long-term project, something that will benefit the organisation, volunteers and older neighbours for the foreseeable future. Now this App is built we see this as being used, and developed on, on an ongoing basis to strengthen the communication with volunteers and active engagement with older neighbours.

We aim to report back to stakeholders, including Healthwatch, with relevant insight on a regular basis and collaborate with partners to understand key topics.

While we had hoped to have the App fully-functioning by this stage, complications regarding IT security and pro bono hours, has delayed the process but, as you'll see from the screenshots, we're almost ready to expand across the befriending programme.