A SYSTEM VIEW OF DIGITAL ACCESS

- ADAM PARNABY – OPEN LAB, NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY
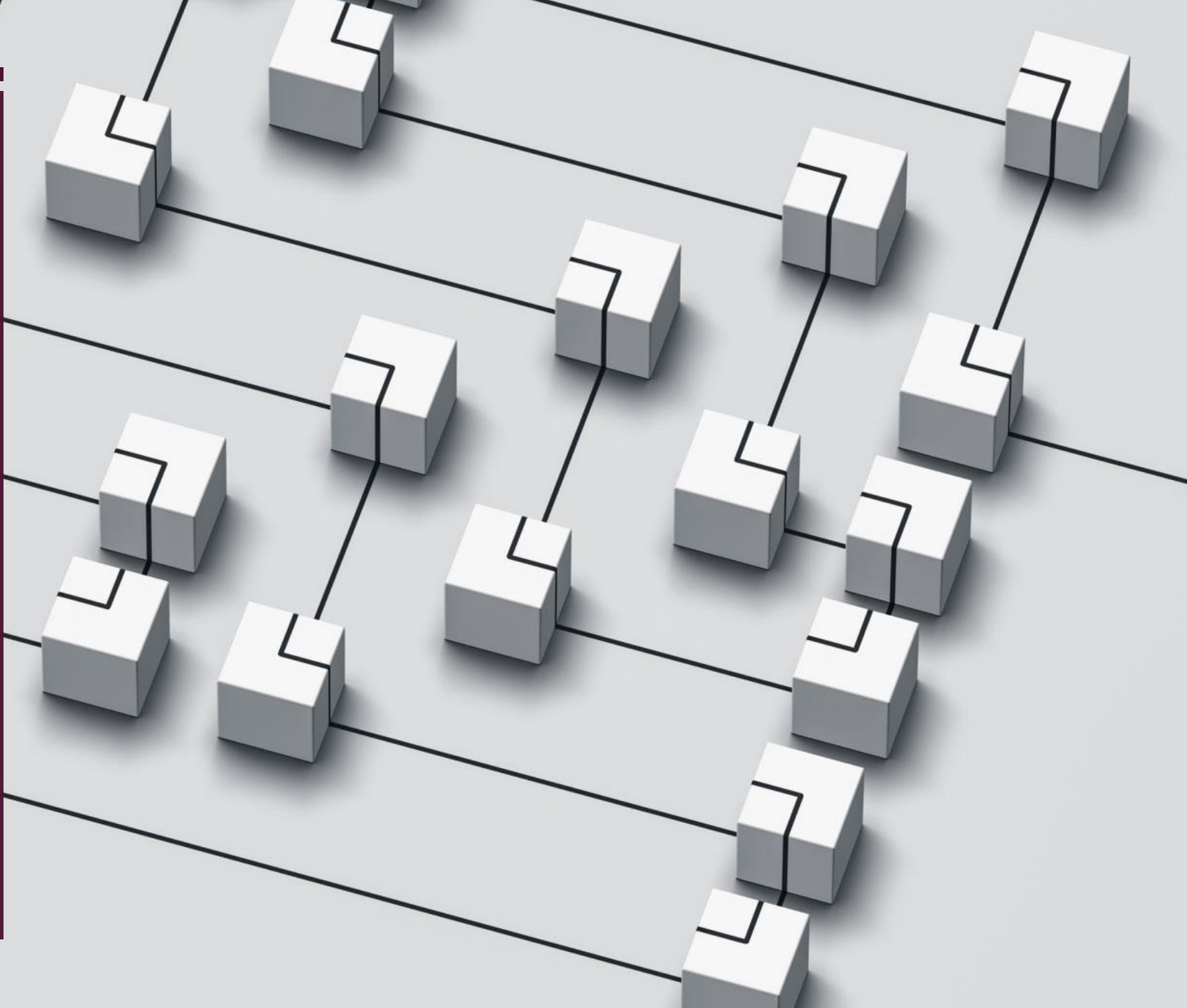
- A.W.PARNABY2@NEWCASTLE.AC.UK

A BIT ABOUT ME

- Doing a PhD at Open Lab, Newcastle University.

- Focus on digital access, and particularly how organisations intervene to support it.
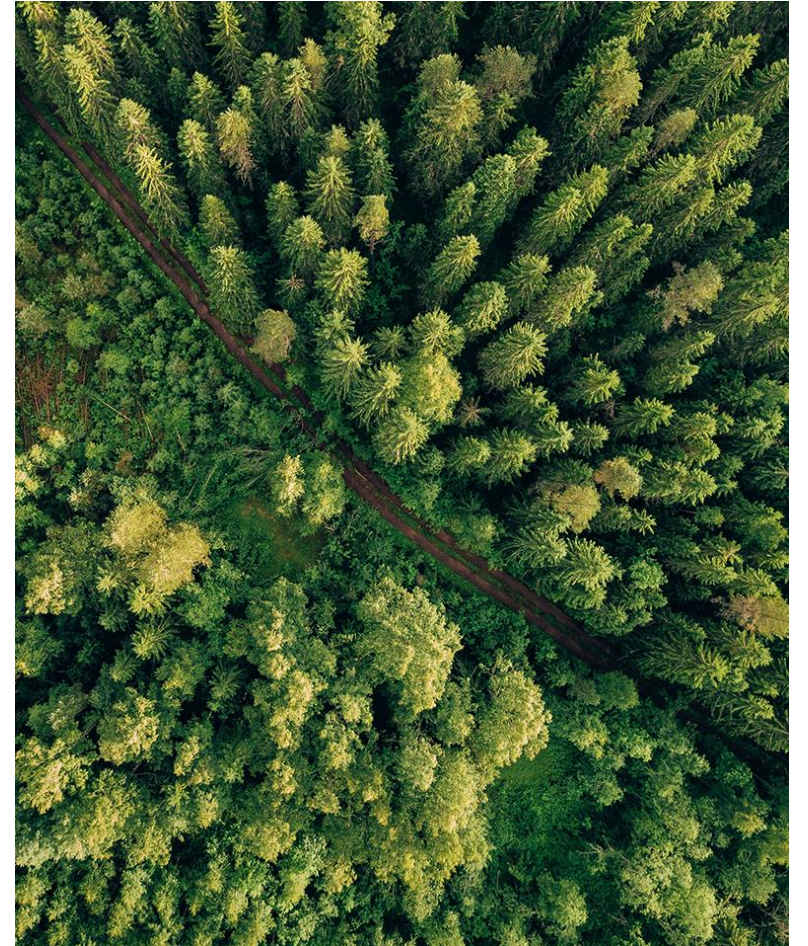
- Background in design.

IN THIS TALK:

- Why I say "Digital Access".

- Three barriers to effective digital access interventions.

- My attempts to address these barriers in my own work.

WHY DIGITAL ACCESS?

- Digital Divide.

- Digital Inclusion/Exclusion/Poverty.

- Digital Access

THE COMPLEXITY PROBLEM

Digital Access includes:

- Material Access – Appropriate devices, affordable and usable connectivity.

- Skill Access – Digital Skills, Support.

- Social Access – Safety, Cultural Representation, Self-Efficacy.

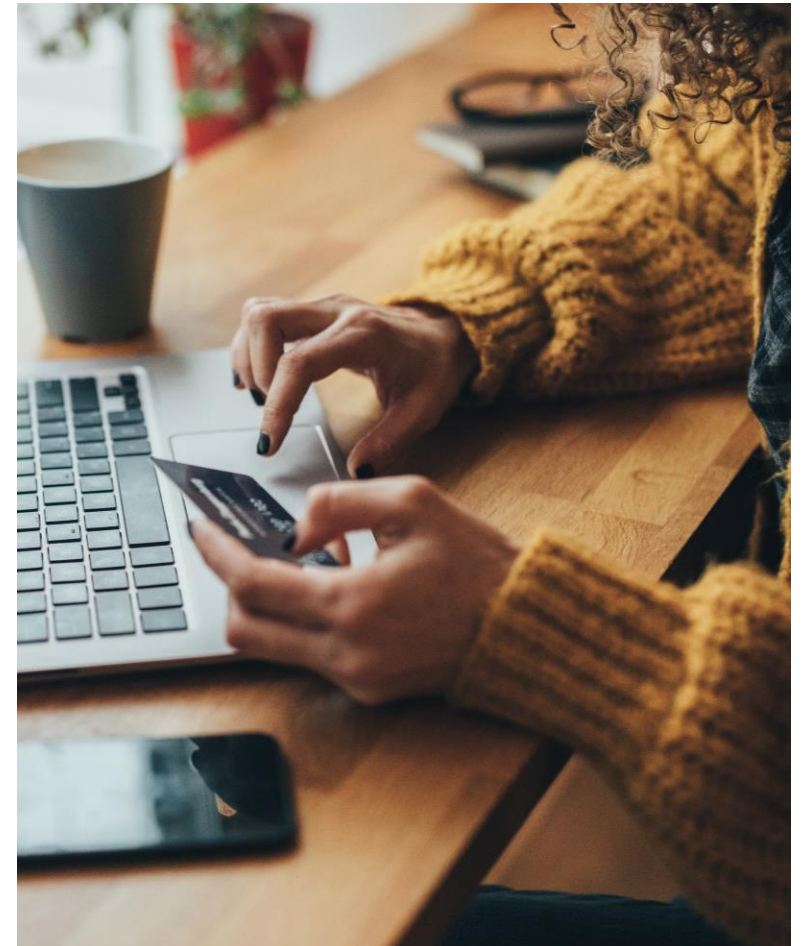And all these things are context-dependent! No one organisation can be all things to all people.

THE COST PROBLEM

Digital Access is not an unalloyed good.

- Startup Costs – Equipment, Time spent learning.

- Maintenance Costs - Obsolescence, Connectivity, Practice

- Affective Costs - Exposure to misinformation, Loss of privacy

Access work needs to account for what costs are worth it, and who should pay them.

THE SCALABILITY PROBLEM

Because of Complexity and Cost:

- The people best placed to support individuals and communities are the ones closest to them.

- The further from front line delivery an intervention aimed at individuals is, the less effective and equitable it tends to be.

- There is no one "best practice".

- Traditional ROI modelling breaks down.

So how do we approach change at scale?

INITIAL MAPPING WORK

- Engaging with VCSE sector practitioners.

- Determining what assets enhance their work and what barriers inhibit it.

Tackling Digital Poverty in the North-East of England: Lessons learned from the Regions VCSE Sector

OUTCOMES IN BRIEF

Complexity:

Policymakers and funders should recognize the complexity of doing digital inclusion work 'on the ground', and that addressing digital poverty in a sustainable and effective manner requires a long-term view of funding and commissioning.
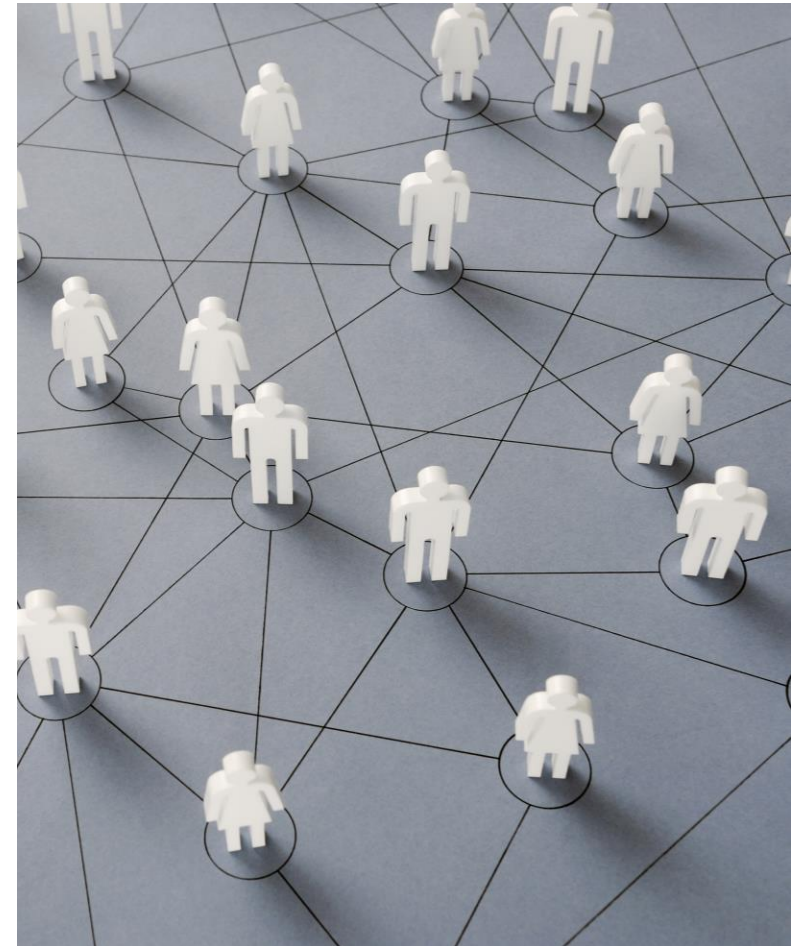
Collaboration:

Funders and commissioners should wherever possible foster a collaborative ecosystem of digital inclusion practitioners. Work should be undertaken to cultivate an environment in which many organisations can collaborate closely to address different aspects of digital poverty in a particular locality.

Training:

VCSE sector practitioners and technologists should be supported to engage with one another to develop guidance around the development of technology which is as accessible as possible to those experiencing digital poverty.

THINKING SYSTEMIC

- Support local, front-line organisations to do what they do best:

  - Signposting and Referral Networks.

  - Funding beyond skills course models.

  - Digital access as care work.

- Aim large-scale interventions at system-wide actors:

  - Government Policy.

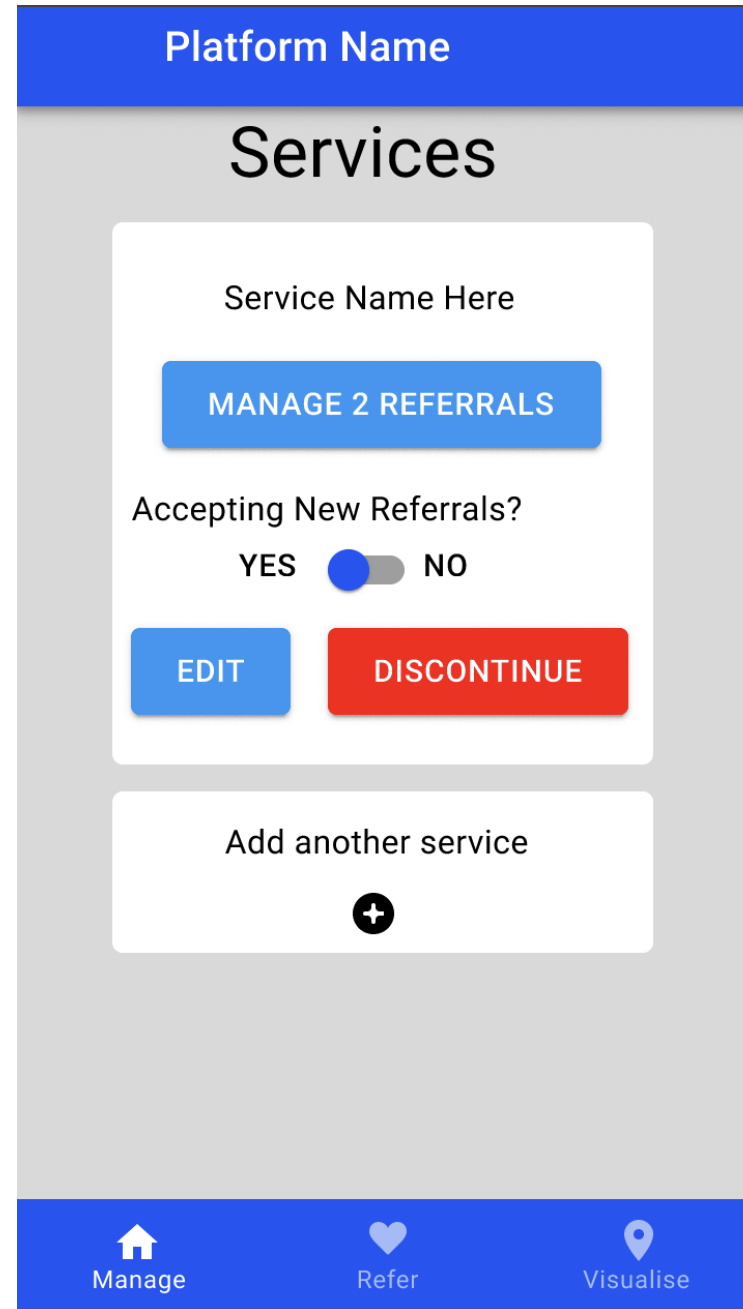 - Tech Sector Practices.

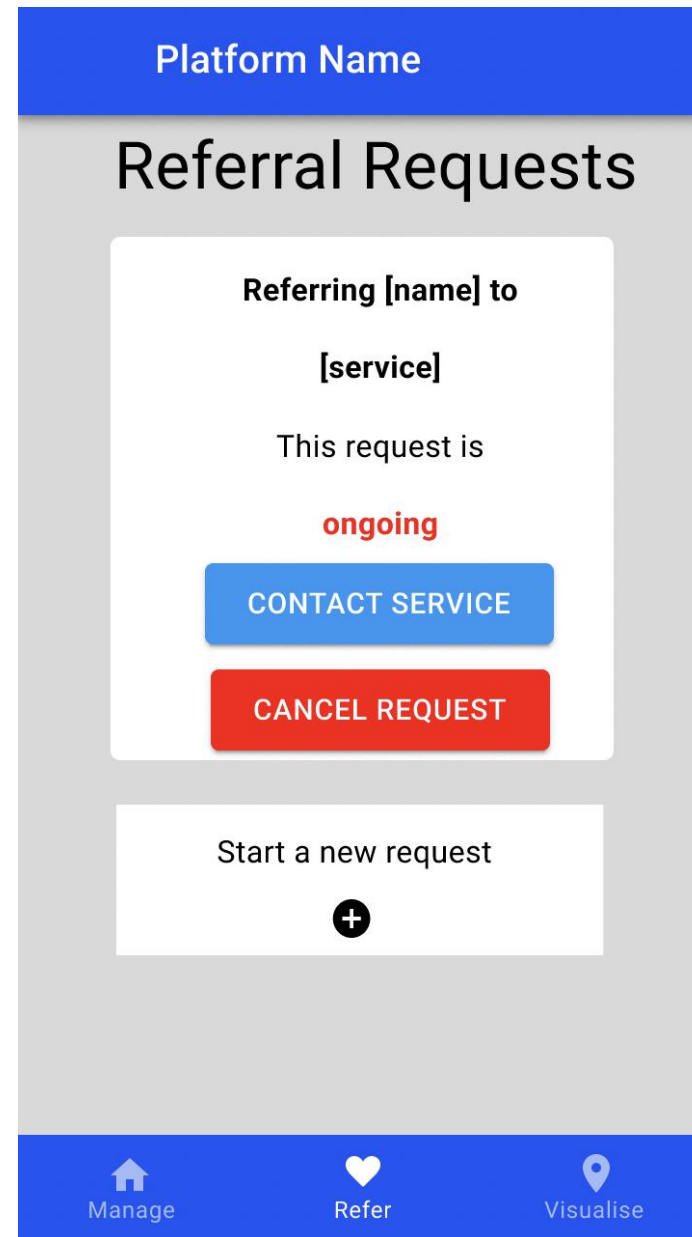 - Awareness Raising.

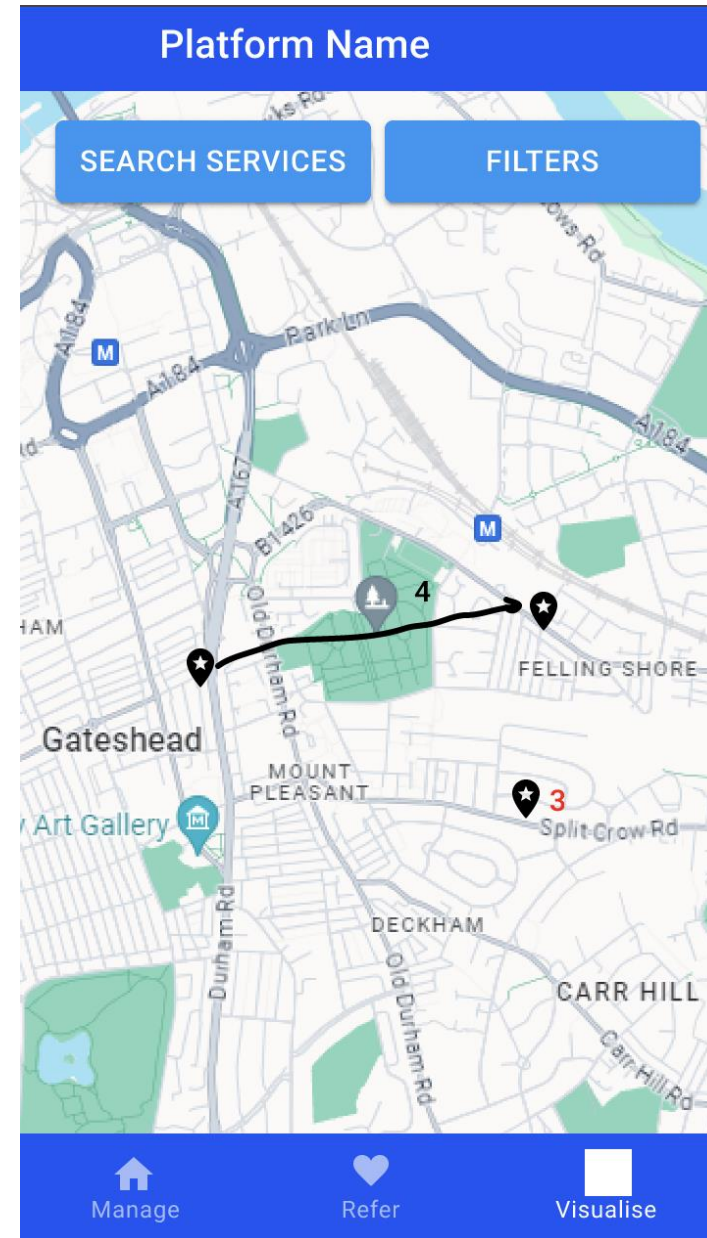# INCLUSIVE UX FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ALTITUDE FOUNDATION

TOWARDS A REFERRAL TOOL FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION SERVICES

TOWARDS A REFERRAL TOOL FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION SERVICES

Platform Name

Referral Requests

Referring [name] to

[service]

This request is

ongoing

CONTACT SERVICE

CANCEL REQUEST

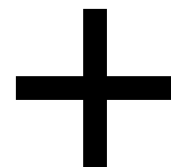Start a new request

➕

Manage   Refer   Visualise

TOWARDS A REFERRAL TOOL FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION SERVICES

SUMMARY

- There's a lot to be gained by framing digital access as a systems problem, not just an individual capacity problem.

- Change at scale means thinking about barriers to entry and how we lower them.

- There are already lots of skilled practitioners out there supporting people to access digital services, think about how you can make their work easier and more effective.

NORTHERN HEALTH FUTURES

And many more (including HI NENC)

A Health Hub aiming to:
- Establish a world-leading research centre for digital health and health-tech.
- Enhance digital skills training for stakeholders.
- Fund regionally-responsive scoping research in digital health.

Join the mailing list at northfutures.org

GET IN TOUCH!

I'm about to pause data collection to do some writing!

I still have capacity to chat to a few more people about the referral tool next week. This would involve a **30-minute recorded meeting**.

If you want to talk to me in detail, get in touch!

- Research: a.w.parnaby2@newcastle.ac.uk

- Speaking, Consulting, Training: contact@adamparnaby.com