Usability Testing Session Notes

Sainsbury's Handset Redesign - UX Case Study

Date: 2 June 2026

Duration: 16 minutes 46 seconds

Participant: Single participant - former Sainsbury's online shopping picker (no longer employed in role, but has direct domain experience using the current handset system).

Format: Video call with screen-shared Figma prototype; full session recording captured with participant consent.

Facilitator: Oskar Garlinski

Methodology

A single-participant validation session was conducted with a former picker to test the redesigned handset prototype. Four tasks were given, ordered to test discoverability (Tasks 1 and 2) before action (Tasks 3 and 4), preserving the participant's pre-interaction perception of the screen. The participant was instructed to think aloud throughout.

Acknowledged limitations

- Single participant (n=1); findings should be treated as directional rather than statistically representative.
- Participant is a former rather than current picker.
- The facilitator occasionally led the participant, particularly when explaining the hardware button concept during Task 3. Care has been taken in synthesis to weight unprompted comments more heavily than in-task agreement.
- The clickable prototype cannot simulate hardware button interaction, which is a core part of the Quantity Confirm redesign. Validation of that mapping would require deployment on actual hardware.

Task 1 - Next Pick (discoverability)

Question asked (4a): "Imagine you've just finished this pick and you're about to walk to the next one. What would you want to know before you set off?"

Participant response: Location, a picture, and the name of the item.

> *"Obviously where it's located probably. A little picture of it would be great, but it's the name."*

Question asked (4b): "Look at the screen. Where would you find that information?"

Participant response: Found it immediately at the bottom of the screen.

> *"It's at the bottom, right? That's where I'm seeing it. Makes sense. Straight at the bottom where you expect it... location times, little picture, exactly what I said."*

Observed behaviour: No hesitation. Located the Next Pick section immediately without scanning the rest of the screen first.

Interpretation: Strong validation of R7. The information shown (name, image, location, quantity) matched what the participant independently named as needed. Visual subordination at the bottom of the screen was both discoverable and aligned with where they expected to find secondary information. No iteration needed.

Task 2 - IPH Discoverability

Question asked: "How would you check how you're doing on IPH right now?"

Participant response (current system): Expressed clear frustration with the current system, where checking IPH requires navigating to stats.

> *"You have to go like out into your bloody stats or something like that, which took time. So you have to go in, basically waste your time, or you see at the end of the run, which is not helpful."*

On viewing the redesigned screen: Found the IPH indicator at the top immediately and articulated a specific operational benefit:

> *"I see it on the top of the screen, pretty obvious there. I guess it's easy to see. Easy to track as well, so going under, you see it, you haven't checked. You don't have to manually check, it's there."*

In closing remarks (unprompted), the participant returned to this:

> *"You don't have to go out your way to check your IPH, which also then takes away, you know, your IPH by you wasting time checking it."*

Observed behaviour: Immediate identification of the indicator. Spontaneous return to it in closing comments - sign of meaningful resonance.

Interpretation: Strong validation of R1. The participant independently identified a second-order benefit not explicitly designed for: that checking IPH currently costs IPH, and persistent display eliminates this cost. This is a significant insight to surface in the case study - design rationale validated and extended by user observation.

Task 3 - Quantity Pick

Question asked: "You're on a pick. You've just scanned an item and the system tells you the quantity is 3. Show me how you'd complete this pick."

Participant behaviour: Navigated to the confirm screen, adjusted quantity, completed the flow without difficulty. Briefly experimented with the −/+ controls.

Facilitator note: I explained the hardware button concept during the task rather than letting the participant discover it. This was a protocol break that weakens the in-task evidence; the participant's strongest validation of hardware buttons came later in unprompted closing remarks (see synthesis below).

Participant volunteered an alternative design idea:

> *"A good way just to scan it twice. Obviously, not going to scan 20,000 times by half thousand options as well. Like a single scan is plus one."*

Interpretation: The participant proposed a different solution to the same friction problem - using multiple scans of the same item to increment quantity, eliminating the confirm screen entirely. This is a user-generated design idea worth documenting as an alternative path for future iteration. It is a

more radical solution than the redesigned flow and would need separate validation, but represents a real picker-perspective input.

Hardware button validation (from closing remarks, unprompted):

> *"I like the idea of the using buttons like up and down volume just because they were useless anyway in the first place. And so that is more helpful, as if you had gloves as it's usually cold."*

The participant independently articulated the exact rationale used in the redesign: that volume buttons were previously unused, and that touchscreen-only interaction is problematic when wearing gloves in cold sections. R8 rationale validated.

Task 4 - Substitution

Question asked: "Your current item isn't on the shelf. You need a substitute. Show me what you'd do."

Participant behaviour: First reaction was to look at the red flag icon on the product card, interpreting it as a "no sub / not here" indicator:

> *"Oh, I see that little red flag, you know. I assume that's what I would click in emergency. That's the there's no item there, no sub."*

After realising the flag wasn't the right path, navigated to the hamburger menu and found "Item not available." Proceeded into the sub flow successfully.

On the sub flow itself: Noticed and engaged with the Top Sub badge.

> *"Substitutes. Top sub. Interesting."*

On the << >> navigation arrows between suggestions: Did not initially understand them as suggestion navigation cues.

> *"The arrows were not clear if it's like you're moving between suggested options. I thought that was just like a skip kind of, or just like a go arrow. But once I see I clicked it, was a bit more obvious because of the second arrow there."*

Interpretation: Three findings from this task.

- **Flag icon misinterpretation (high priority):** Confirmed across the session - participant interpreted the flag as a substitution / item-unavailable indicator rather than an image-mismatch report. Mentioned at least three separate times across the session. The mental model mismatch is significant and the icon needs iteration.
- **Navigation arrows not self-evident (medium priority):** The participant figured them out, but only after engagement. They are not glanceable as "between suggestions" cues. Iteration possible.
- **Top Sub badge noticed and registered (validation):** "Interesting" is a mild reaction but the badge was noticed and not ignored - a positive signal for a small UI element.

Spontaneous Observations

On destructive action placement (unprompted, in closing)

> *"Maybe call supervisor, I would pull that at the bottom so it's not accidentally clicked... if you're using a touch, you can fast finger that."*

The participant pointed out that destructive or significant actions (like “call supervisor”) should be positioned away from primary touch flow to prevent accidental mis-taps. While the specific element referenced was a placeholder, the underlying principle is a real finding for production consideration.

Overall reaction (unprompted, in closing)

> *“It’s very similar to the system already… it’s not like it’s a whole brand new thing, so it’s pretty simple… a general improvement to the old system.”*

Direct validation of the design philosophy chosen: refinement over revolution. The participant explicitly praised the redesign for not being a radical departure from the existing system, which respects training cost and institutional inertia.

Synthesis

Validated design decisions

- **R1 (IPH placement) -** strongly validated, with user-articulated second-order benefit (eliminates the cost of checking).
- **R7 (Next Pick redesign) -** strongly validated, information needs matched exactly.
- **R8 (Hardware button mapping) -** validated via unprompted closing remarks.
- **Top Sub badge (R12) -** noticed and registered.
- **Overall design philosophy -** refinement approach validated; participant praised the redesign for not being radical.

Findings requiring iteration

- **Flag icon (R6, R13) -** misinterpreted as substitution indicator; needs visual rework.
- **Sub flow navigation arrows -** not self-evident as “between suggestions” cues; needs reinforcement.

User-generated design ideas to document

- Scan-multiple-times for quantity input as an alternative to the confirm screen.
- Move destructive actions (call supervisor, etc.) away from primary touch flow to prevent mis-tap.

Items not specifically tested

- Hardware button interaction itself (prototype limitation).
- First-use tooltips for new features.
- Image mismatch reporting in the action itself (was not triggered in the session).
- Whether colour-coding on IPH was understood (participant noticed indicator but did not comment on colour).

Iterations to Apply Before Submission

Based on findings, two design iterations will be applied:

- **Replace flag icon with a more specific symbol** for image-mismatch reporting (likely camera or annotated indicator, with a text label or first-use tooltip to reinforce purpose).
- **Reinforce sub flow navigation arrows** - likely by adding text labels (e.g. “Prev / Next”) or making the pagination indicator more prominent so the << >> mechanism is unambiguous.

Both iterations will be added to the Figma file as a “v2” iteration alongside the tested version, demonstrating the test → finding → iteration loop within the case study artefact itself.