soda

SODA IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Soda is a labour of love and lived experience which began in 2022. We found a gap and we're committed to addressing it.

People living with disabilities, chronic illnesses, neurodivergence and facing health inequalities (over 20% of the population) must be involved in the design of the world around us. Lack of participation of these groups results in less accessible and less inclusive solutions.

By enabling better participation of disabled people in design, our mission is to foster an environment where systems, services, and products take account of the vast spectrum of human needs - from the outset.

We are proud to be a founding team made up of 75% disabled, chronically ill and neurodivergent people, with over 75% of our mentors and advisers who we have engaged as the same.

As founders of a social impact organisation, we're big on collecting impact data. It’s our roadmap, showing us what's working and what's not. When we openly share our wins, it builds trust with everyone involved – our backers, our clients, our community, and the people we are doing our work with and for. Having this data lets us adapt and tweak our strategy as we go, so we can have an even bigger impact as we develop and grow.

This report brings together our impact over the past year. It is an invitation for you to see what we have been working on, and the impact it has had on the communities we’ve engaged with. This is our first impact report and we are excited to share it with you!

*This report covers the period from January 2022 - December 2023.



OUR MISSION

Soda's mission is to help organisations engage people with lived-experience of disability, chronic illness, neurodivergence, and those facing the most significant health inequalities in design processes, as experts.

We work with impact driven organisations who want to centre accessibility and inclusion in everything they do.

When people with lived-experience lead the way in creating and innovating solutions, the impact is more inclusive and more equitable products and services for all.



24%

OF THE UK POPULATION
HAVE A DISABILITY

UK disability statistics: Prevalence and life experiences, House of Commons 2023

OUR VALUES

FOSTER BELONGING

We make sure that people feel included.

Through opportunities for long-term involvement in Soda's work and community, we ensure people we work with feel they belong to a collective that is wider than one single design process. We take a trauma-informed approach which acknowledges that people bring different histories with them which can impact their sense of belonging in the present.

CENTRE ACCESSIBILITY

We ensure people can participate in ways that take account of their needs.

Accessibility is woven into how we work; we ensure that access needs are always considered across cognitive, physical, sensory, mental, non-visible, undiagnosed disabilities and neurodiversity. We recognise that access benefits all, not just people who live with disability. We are committed to going beyond compliance to accessibility standards and always learning to adapt through new approaches.

DESIGN JUSTICE

We are committed to fighting oppression and prejudice.

We are committed to fighting oppression and prejudice. We strive to follow design justice which centres decolonisation and the perspectives of intersectional identities, including QTBIPOC people. We are committed to an anti-racist way of working and actively look for opportunities to bring a more equitable approach to design processes.

REFLECT AND LEARN

We believe that opportunities to learn are everywhere.

Inclusion and resisting prejudice is a journey; there are always new ideas and approaches to iterate and improve from. We recognise that we don't always get it right. We are curious and committed to learn and adapt our own practice from every design process, and are always open to change.

OUR APPROACH

The way we do the work we do matters to us. We use a range of trauma-informed and justice led methodologies which are enabled by sensitive facilitation.

Centring lived experience

We support the participation of people with lived experience of disability, chronic illness, and neurodivergence, and those facing health inequalities, placing this at the centre of the design process.

Participation

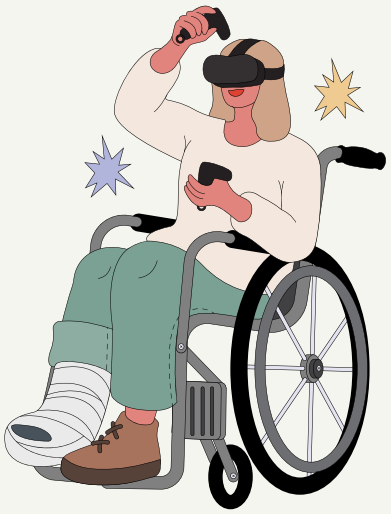
From creative co-design sessions to large-scale, co-produced health projects, we're all about finding and implementing the right engagement strategy for projects.

Inclusive design learning

We create learning programmes, workshops and events delivered by disabled experts to shift mindsets and transform how organisations work.

Research and insights

We connect organisations with a tailored community of disabled, chronically ill and neurodivergent innovators to provide insights to barriers, and find solutions to new and existing problems.



IMPACT
CENTRING LIVED EXPERIENCE

We centre the participation of people with lived experience of disability, chronic illness, and neurodivergence, and those facing health inequalities, in our design processes. We value their expertise and view them as key agents for making real change happen. Everyone we bring on board through Soda gets paid for their time, and we make sure our partners recruiting participants do the same. Collaborating with diverse communities across the UK is a real highlight of our work.

203

People from local communities were involved as co-producers and insight gatherers in Soda's projects

62

Disabled, chronically ill & neurodivergent people were recruited, and paid for their input and time

80

Innovators joined Soda's built community representing disabilities across the full spectrum of disability

"Thank you for providing what felt like a safe place where our needs are respected and our input is valued."

Participant in Soda community workshop



Photo taken at a Soda co-production session

www.wearesoda.org

IMPACT
INCLUSIVE DESIGN LEARNING

In 2023, Soda developed an Inclusive Design training and learning programme in partnership with Remarkable. This programme guided ventures through a 6-week programme to create products that directly addressed three challenges in Disability Tech: Employability (Future of Work), Pain Communication, and Inclusive AI. Soda's online training enabled idea and solution generation developed by founding teams to centre disabled user involvement and innovation from the outset.

"We have now shaped our solutions considering a broad cross section of human perspectives, abilities, and backgrounds enabling us to create products where everyone is included."

Remarkable design-athon participant



39

Prototypes were developed using Soda's Inclusive Design training

9/10

Participant rating was received on average across Soda's training modules

14

Pitches were delivered involving disabled users in solution development

IMPACT
PARTICIPATION

Case study, co-produced community health funds for the NHS:
For North East London Health and Care Partnership we worked with the NHS across seven Local Authorities, and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) groups to co-produce and deliver a series of community health funds. We supported these groups to determine health priorities in the region and undergo a participatory grant-making process to allocate funds to local community groups. The grants were aimed at supporting local social prescribing activities for underserved population groups.

21

Cross-stakeholder sessions with groups from the NHS, Local Authorities, VCSEs and residents

50

Community/ residents participated across all co-production sessions from design through to delivery

82

Community health solutions funded. Over 50% deliver services for disability & mental health community needs



Photo taken at a Soda co-production session in Barking and Dagenham

NHS North East London

Transformation Partners in Health and Care

IMPACT
RESEARCH AND INSIGHTS

Case study, Accessibility of Sport and Fitness in the UK:
Through our partnership with The Disability Policy Centre we are exploring 'The Power of Sport' to identify barriers, opportunities and solutions to improve participation, inclusion and accessibility to sport. We've involved our community as researchers to explore how accessible fitness tech, physical participation, and spectatorship are. The findings of the research will be launched in 2024.

25

Video insights gathered, supporting the development of recommendations for change

3

Expert interviews with key figures across the disability and sport sector in the UK

10

Community researchers supported the co-design of Soda's research and participated as experts



Photo: Oli Clayton and Alex Eisenberg facilitating a community workshop in Croydon

IMPACT

POLICY INFLUENCE AND PUBLIC SPACES

Soda's work has been selected and featured in:

- UK Government Department for Health and Social Care's October 2023 policy paper - as a case study for priorities for innovation and scaling in adult social care (in relation to our work with the NHS in London).
- Croydon Council's Public Health Report - where Soda's recommendations on how to strengthen local capacity in the wake of the pandemic were included.
- The Good Side's list of 5 organisations amplifying disabled voices and experiences, alongside Scope and RNIB



Photo: Charli Skinner presenting at Crowdbacker pitch at NatWest HQ, London

4

Blogs authored - three guest posts covering topics from patient advocacy, disability and financial resilience, and Founder advice series

3

Podcast features on health and disability tech, access needs and independence, and personal experience with TBI and chronic illness

2

Keynote speeches including for an audience of 500+ NHS workforce and 100+ health/disability tech start ups, investors and corporates

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the wonderful team at Year Here, particularly Diarra Smith, Anna Markland, Zoe Stanton and Jack Graham; to Unltd for funding and supporting us; to all the kind people who offered their time and advice as mentors including Yasmin Keats, Robbie Bates, Angel Perez; to our partners the Disability Policy Centre and Chloe Schendel-Wilson; to partner and advisor Gita Malhotra; and to our 80-strong Soda disabled, chronically ill, and neurodivergent community members, particularly those who were involved in our very first Soda co-design sessions to help form Soda to what it is today. We can't wait to continue to grow and involve you, implementing our ideas and creating even more impact in the process.

Thank you to George Miller and the team at Remarkable Tech; Mark Scott, Jagan John and Lauren Moy at NEL NHS; Lianna Martin and Bylan Shah at TPHC; and Gina Zelent at Croydon Council.

Team Soda, x



Photo: Soda Co-Founders - Alex Eisenberg, Charli Skinner and Oli Clayton

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WE THANK YOU

FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT