

DSS - Record Keeping Project

# Design Journey

August 2026

Step 1.

## Audience needs at the centre

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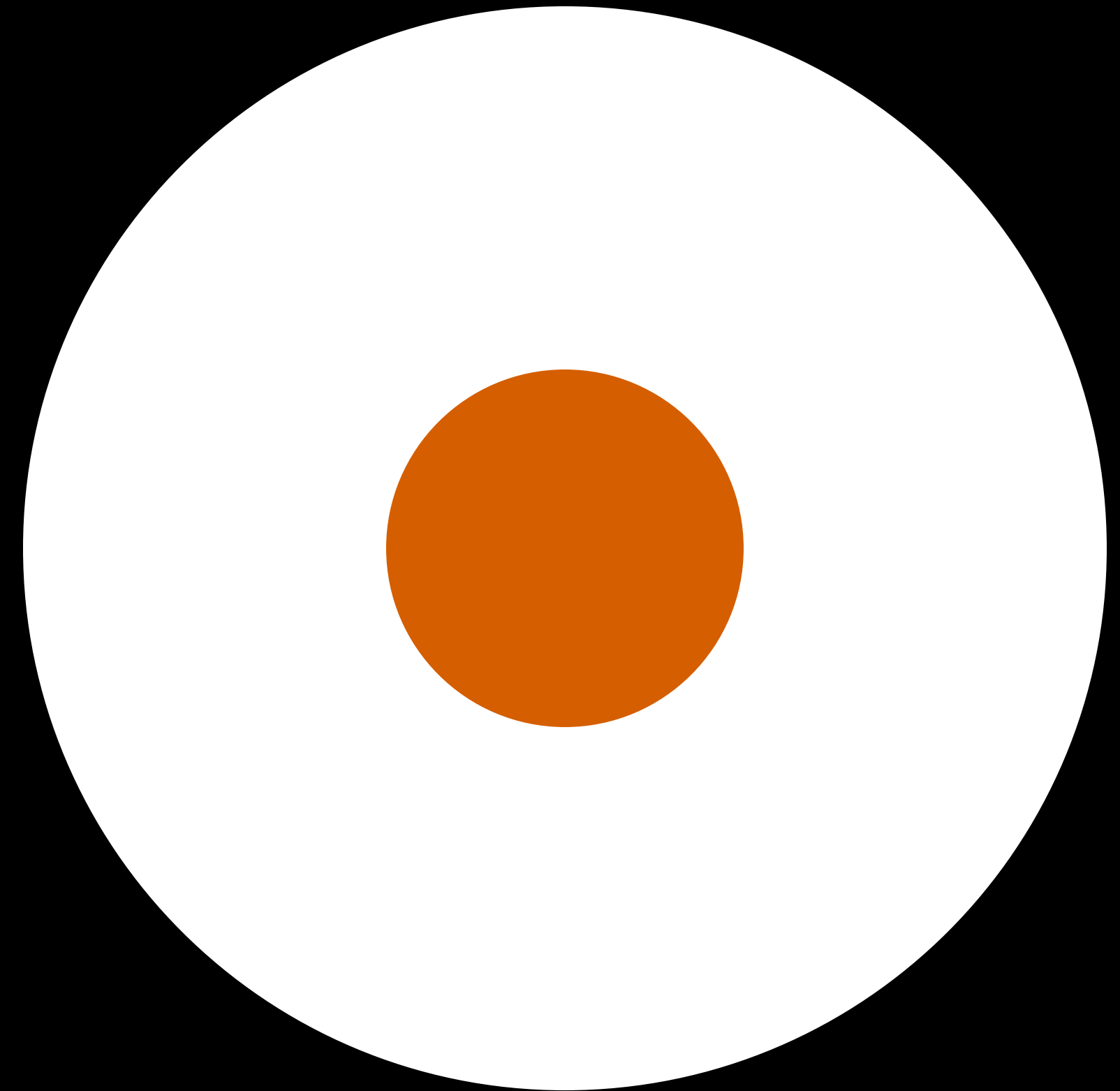
**We always want to put the audience at the centre of what we do - in this case, the people doing the record keeping, and the people whose lives are in the records.**

That means taking the work, and expressing it in ways that:

- Resonate
- Enable connection to why records matter
- Make things feel easy

To do this, the All is for All team first spent time reading and reviewing the entire DSS Record Keeping Guidance document to then consider how it showed up creatively, and to the audience that was our focus.

We distilled the guidance into information that could be used to hand over to our creative designer in order to get an understanding of the project. This enabled the designer to work with more bite-sized, crucial bits of information that could be turned into workable content that captured the practicalities and the heart of record-keeping.



Step 2.

## How and where does this show up?

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Once we knew the key information to communicate, All is for All and Origin Studio our long-time creative partners, then workshopped the best outputs for this creative to be rolled out across.

This was about asking:

- What does the audience need to best support the outcome (improved practice and understanding of why improvement is important)
- What outputs hold the experiences of the community in the highest regard.

Having an understanding of the outputs (what we are making) allows the designer to have parameters to more clearly create concepts moving forward.

The content created had to honour 5 key themes from the information distilled in step 1. Where we landed was to create:

1. A set of information cards that could be used both physically and digitally. The content for these is based on the Quick Reference Guides.
2. A series of posters that could be displayed in workplaces, leaning on 5 key themes that we distilled.
3. A series of videos that could be used across social media and other digital channels.

## Five Key Themes

1. Records as Taonga (Treasures)
2. “With Me, Not About Me”  
(The Power of Voice and Authorship)
3. The Trauma created through Gaps & Redactions
4. Cultural Safety, Whakapapa, and Connection
5. Capturing the Whole (holistic) Journey

Step 3.

## Creative Territories

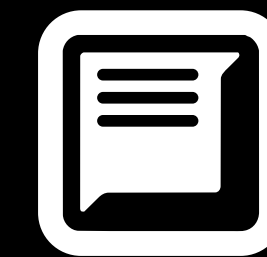
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We then moved onto creative concepting, where our partners, Origin Studio came up with two distinct visual and tone territories for the rollout of this information. For both concepts, a logo/visual identity was formed, and then example outputs were drafted.

Concept 1 takes a direct approach: rather than wrapping the campaign in an abstract brand name that requires interpretation, we call it exactly what it is: “Record Keeping Best Practice”.

Concept 2 leads with empathy. Rather than naming the campaign after the practice itself, we name it after the person the practice exists to serve: My Experiences Matter.

Concept 1



**Record Keeping  
Best Practice**

Concept 2

**My Experiences Matter**

Step 3.

# Creative Territories

## Concept 1: Creative Strategy Overview

For some organisations, a new record-keeping initiative risks being perceived as yet another compliance obligation. With that in mind, Concept 01 takes a direct approach to communicate ease and importance: rather than wrapping the campaign in an abstract brand name that requires interpretation, we call it exactly what it is: “Record Keeping Best Practice”

This removes a layer of complexity and ensures the campaign’s purpose is immediately understood by anyone who encounters it, regardless of their role or familiarity with the broader context.

The messaging across Concept 01 is structured around five key themes drawn from the guidance document:

- Records as Taonga – not just documents
- With Me, Not About Me – the power of voice
- The Trauma of the Gaps and Redactions
- Cultural Safety, Whakapapa, and Connection
- Capturing the Whole Journey

Each theme is assigned its own colour, giving the campaign visual variety and making individual pieces easy to identify and navigate. The copy across all touchpoints takes a strong, authoritative tone, but this is intentionally balanced with a warmer, more inviting visual treatment, ensuring the campaign feels engaging rather than prescriptive.



# Record Keeping Best Practice

Tip Number 1

**Records are Taonga (Treasures) not just documents.**

When records are cold, cluttered, or incomplete, the person they belong to may spend a lifetime trying to piece together their own story. Good record-keeping is one of the most human things you can do in this role.

Develop records with me, not just about me. [QR CODE](#)

 Record Keeping Best Practice

Tip Number 2

**This is their story. Are they helping write it?**

When records are written about someone without them, their perspective disappears. Use their words, their communication tools, their voice. A record that includes the person is a record that tells the truth.

Develop records with me, not just about me. [QR CODE](#)

 Record Keeping Best Practice

Tip Number 3

**Gaps in records create gaps in identity.**

Redactions and missing records aren't just frustrating, they can be devastating. When access requests are handled with empathy, clear communication, and proper support, you turn a process that is often traumatic into one that restores dignity.

Develop records with me, not just about me. [QR CODE](#)

 Record Keeping Best Practice

Providing Access to Care Records

 Record Keeping Best Practice

**Respond to Requests Within Required Timeframes**

Creating Care Records

 Record Keeping Best Practice

**Understand The Value of The Record**

Managing Care Records

 Record Keeping Best Practice

**Know Your Legal Obligations**

Step 3.

# Creative Territories

## Concept 2: Creative Strategy Overview

Where Concept 01 leads with clarity and authority, Concept 02 leads with empathy. Rather than naming the campaign after the practice itself, we name it after the person the practice exists to serve: My Experiences Matter.

This shift in framing invites staff to see themselves not as compliance operators, but as guardians of someone’s life story.

The campaign doesn’t instruct; it draws people in, asking them to consider the real human impact of the work they do every day.

The most distinctive creative choice in Concept 02 is the use of first-person voice. Every headline speaks directly from the perspective of a disabled person, addressing the staff member as if in conversation with them.

This creates an immediate emotional connection that cuts through in a way that instructional language rarely can and ensures the person at the centre of every record is never far from mind.

The five key themes remain consistent across both concepts, as does the core messaging. What changes is the lens through which that messaging is delivered.



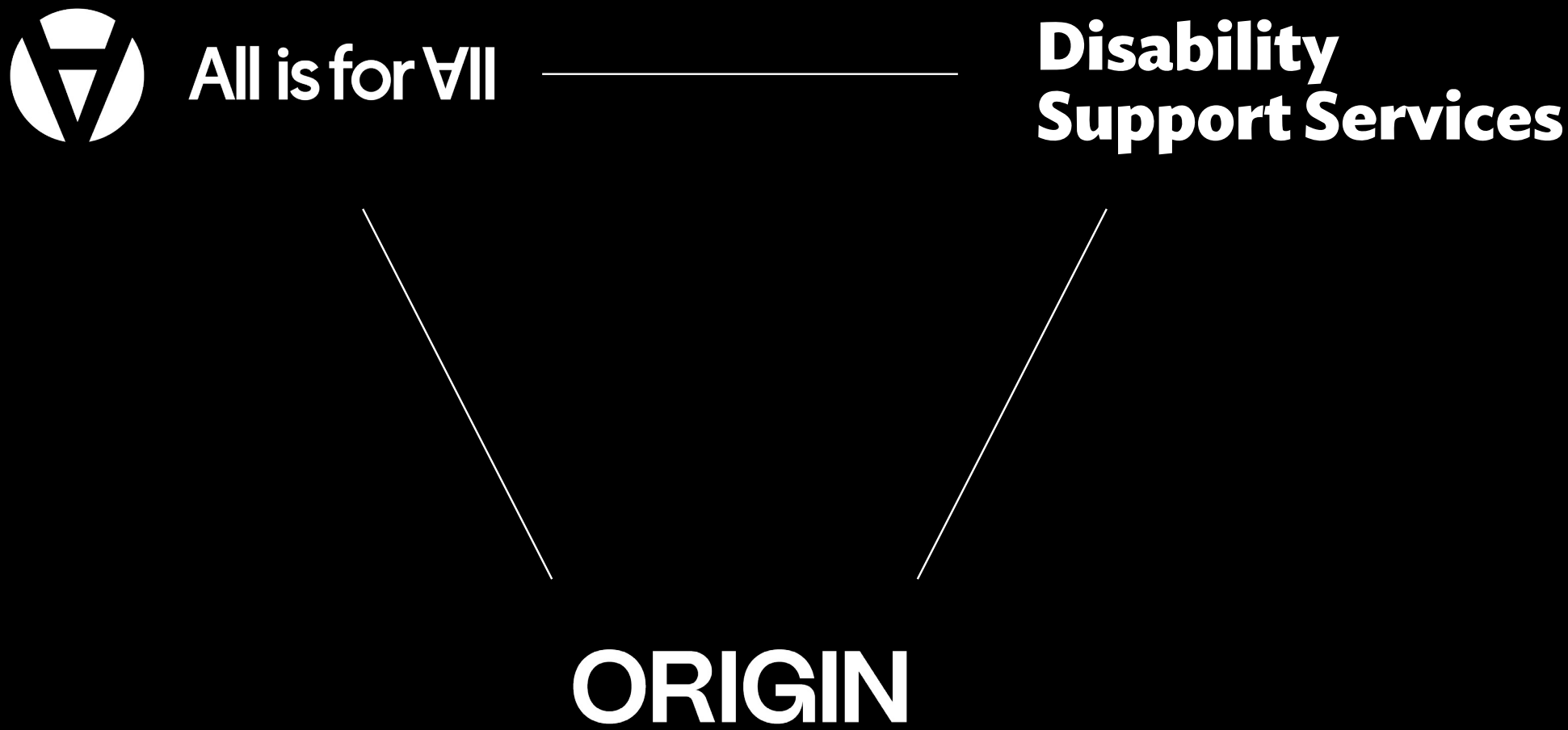
Step 4.

# DSS Input

The initial design drafts were reviewed by the All is for All team who provided feedback, and DSS also provided input too.

DSS feedback meant:

- Concept 1 should ideally follow more closely the visual treatment and colours used in the Record Keeping Guidance document in order to align visuals cohesively.
- Concept 2 needed the treatment of the cards to be more clearly categorised per quick reference guide (similar to how they are in Concept 1).



Step 5.

## Survivor Voice

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This process involved 1:1 interviews with 5 people - all were survivors of abuse in care, and had experience or connection to disability.

We asked people to focus on:

- Does this honour the origins this work comes from? (Royal Commission recommendations)
- Does this feel like something you believe could guide the future? (Especially because these participants are having records kept about them today)

While feedback was positive for both concepts, “My experiences matter” was 100% preferred.

Stakeholders overwhelmingly preferred concept 2:

- “It’s more warmer... it develops connections between the writer and the disabled person by having that kind of conversation, sharing their experience.”
- “Oh I really like this...this reflects Wanaketia way more.”

**“Oh I really like  
this...this reflects  
Wanaketia way more.”**

Feedback on concept 2

Step 5.

# Survivor Voice

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## Disabled survivors shared profound insights regarding this kaupapa.

Proper record-keeping was identified as absolutely vital to a survivor’s long-term wellbeing and healing. It directly impacts foundational human values, specifically dignity, personal wellbeing, and mana. Reflecting, that record keeping is not an administrative task, it is a human one; directly influencing how people understand someone, and how that person understands themselves. The creative concept, My experiences matter, best expresses this.

## Importance of Accuracy

Beyond cultural indicators like iwi and whānau details, structural accuracy must be strictly maintained across standard fields, including legal names, correct dates of birth, and comprehensive notes regarding all staff interactions, including logging allegations of abuse.

How we support people to maintain this, is key, as we move into production of the creative.

## Broader considerations from feedback

This feedback from the community provides specific strategic recommendations for operationalising and promoting the new guidance.

It also enables reflection on historical practices, and systemic critiques of historical practice, which still shape record-keeping today. (The behaviour we need to shift)

Feedback also reinforced the therapeutic necessity of the project.

## DSS leading the way

“Is this a pilot programme?”

This project sets a new high standard for record-keeping following the Royal Commission. Because of this, survivors strongly believe other government agencies should follow DSS’s lead and process.

Their feedback highlights systemic critiques of historical practices, the therapeutic necessity of the project, and specific strategic recommendations for operationalising and promoting the new guidance.

# Ngā mihi.



All is for VII