

A guide to

Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)



What to consider when developing effective and user friendly questionnaires

This guide will help you develop an effective and user friendly questionnaires. You can apply these steps either with an online or paper based questionnaire. Before you start the process of developing your questionnaire, you may want to have some thinking time and consider if the questionnaire will be qualitative or quantitative questions or both? A key to any questionnaire is keep it simple, clear and well worded so that the responders understand what is being asked and can answer appropriately. Your questionnaire should help build a rapport and get the person fully involved.

Step 1: Deciding on the information required:

The first step is to decide what do you want to know?

Step 2: Define your audience:

Who is the questionnaire been aimed at? Take into consideration the age, social and economic background, etc. of the responders completing your questionnaire?

Step 3: Choose your method:

What methods will you use when reaching out with your questionnaire? For example:

- Personal interview
- Group questionnaire
- Mailed or email questionnaire
- Online questionnaire

Top Tip:

A general rule is that the more sensitive or personal the questionnaire, the more personal the form of data collection should be.

Step 4: The context & Content:

At the start of the questionnaire insert a brief paragraph outlining what the questionnaire is trying to achieve. The next thing you need to clarify is this question needed and will it really help you understand the views and opinions of the responders. Basically, only ask a question if it is really needed. There is always a temptation to ask too much and expect too much when developing an effective questionnaire.

KEY

Planning

Doing

Reviewing

<http://engage.hscni.net>



PPI - Involving you, improving care



Step 5: Develop the questionnaire wording:

Questionnaires usually fall under 3 main areas:

- Closed
- Open ended
- Open response options questions

Questionnaire Types:	Advantages:	Disadvantages:
Closed Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It helps the responder to identify an answer.• These questions can be “Yes-No”.• The responder does not need to rely on memory.• It is easy to analyse these type of responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They do not allow the respondent the opportunity to give a different response.• They ‘suggest’ answers that respondents may not have considered before.
Open Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They allow the responder to answer in their own words.• They often reveal the issues which are most important to the responder.• May reveal findings which were not originally anticipated when the questionnaire was initiated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some responders may find it difficult to ‘articulate’ their responses.• May forget to mention important points.• Time consuming for analysis.
Open response option questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tend to eliminate a lot of the disadvantages listed above.• Provide the responder with an open question and a number of response options to select, (Please see example below) What part of the event did you like most? The location. The room layout. The different speakers. Meeting other service users/carers. All of the above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You will need good prior knowledge of the subject in order to generate realistic/likely response options before printing the questionnaire.

Top tip:

Your questionnaire may have a mix of 3 styles. Before we move to the next step, you should constantly be asking yourself and reflecting back on a number of key questions.

- Is this question sufficient to generate the required information I need?
- Could a responder answer the question correctly?
- Are my suggested questions creating a bias response?

KEY

Planning

Doing

Reviewing

<http://engage.hscni.net>



PPI - Involving you, improving care



- Are my suggested questions leading or loaded?
- Can I make my questions clearer and simpler?
- Do any of my questions have vague words, i.e. “do you regularly attend this service? To some people regular could mean once a week to others twice a year. Other vague questions may include, i.e. do you like the accessibility and effectiveness of this service? Some responders may like the ease of accessing the service but not the effectiveness.
- Are my questions relying too much on the responders memory?

Step 6: Putting questions into meaningful order

Opening Question:

The first question is crucial because it sets the tone for the questionnaire. If they find the first question difficult to understand, beyond their knowledge and experience, or embarrassing in some way, they are likely to break off immediately. If, on the other hand, they find the opening question easy and pleasant to answer, they are encouraged to continue. Ample space should be provided to allow responders to record their responses.

Question Flow:

Each question should have a natural flow; all questions that relate to the same subject should be placed together. Keep important questions to the middle of the survey to promote uptake.

Question Variety:

Keep the number of questions to a minimum, less is more. Try to break up the questions in terms of open, closed and response option based. You may want to consider using visual graphics or images to support individuals responding to the questionnaire. When using closed questions i.e. Yes/No responses, allow a suitable space for responders to explain why they have selected Yes/No.

Step 7: Physical appearance of the questionnaire:

Avoid confusing layouts, have adequate space between question and response options. Label questions numerically, use the same font size and style throughout your questionnaire. Try and keep your questionnaire to one or two pages max, avoid using staple pages as these can be lost easily. The best questionnaires are usually short and concise.

Step 8: Pilot your questionnaire:

It is impossible to know that the questionnaire will deliver on the required outcome you want. We suggest you consider piloting the draft questionnaire with a small number of responders first and make any tweaks or changes where required following their feedback. You may want to ask them such questions as;

- Was the layout of the survey easy to follow?
- Were the questions worded clearly enough?
- Does the questionnaire flow?
- Are we missing any questions that need to be included?

Step 9: You're done:

A well designed questionnaire provides you with complete and accurate information; it is easy experience for both you and the responder. For equality and monitoring purposes, it is important you provide responders an opportunity to complete a Section 75 form.

For more information on Involvement, Co-Production and Partnership Working please visit the Engage website.

<http://engage.hscni.net>

KEY

Planning

Doing

Reviewing



PPI - Involving you, improving care

