

# HANDY GUIDES: SURVEYS

## Hearing from our community

What to know about surveys, hotlines and questionnaires

### Why surveys could work for you

- Surveys can be very flexible, and used by phone, online, post or in person
- You can create your own
- Or you can engage professional researchers
- Results can be easily reported and you can compare them with previous findings
- You can reach large numbers of people
- You can target people who do not usually participate



### Polls and referendums

Sometimes, elections and voting systems provide decisions for action. It is good for giving everyone a say on an issue that has not been considered on its own and is not dependent on other issues. Be mindful of the cost and administration associated, however.



### 10 things to consider for surveying opinion

- 1 Service users or members of the public can be recruited and trained to conduct surveys
- 2 Software such as Citizens Space, SPSS and SurveyMonkey can be used to collate and analyse survey data
- 3 Survey sampling can be complex and the types of questions can either constrain or discourage responses, so sometimes professional researchers are best
- 4 To explore future issues, facilitating 'visioning' (shaping a vision) at conferences can be useful for planning and strategic work
- 5 For informal events, try café consultations – visit [www.theworldcafe.com](http://www.theworldcafe.com) for more information
- 6 Consider public meetings to inform and involve the local community
- 7 Techniques like 'Samoan circles' – where 5 chairs are placed in an inner circle, and people can only talk when they move to the centre – are great ways to manage discussions with larger groups
- 8 Desk research can be effective in refining questions, finding information from other surveys and data
- 9 Where technology and access permits, internet and online consultation through surveys can be inexpensive and convenient
- 10 Be creative: ask our community to share views with diaries, videos, photos, case studies and more, as this is a fun and engaging way to understand views

The NHCP communications and engagement team help with all aspects of your engagement activity. Email the team at [nhcp.communications@nhs.net](mailto:nhcp.communications@nhs.net)

## How it works for us

“We run events throughout the year and we usually try to plan and deliver these in collaboration with the service users.”

HMP Swinfell

“We ran a major feedback exercise around how to access a new service through completion of a questionnaire online and in printed form (accompanied by a full booklet explaining the issues). We’ve used a Freepost address to encourage responses.”

Corby CCG

“We conduct surveys online using SurveyMonkey and face to face in surgeries with patient and public support.”

CCG Corby

“...really important for me to speak to someone about my services and for them to listen to what I think.”

Attendee at NCC Budget Consultation 2018/19

## Other methods to try

### Interactive voting

Take advantage of technology and try either an App or handsets that enable live surveying. Our community can remain anonymous, so it encourages everyone to have a voice. You get an immediate response and there is no need for data input – plus you can display it real time in the room. Be mindful of the cost and consider the visually impaired or those who have low literacy.

### Mystery shopping

Have a ‘mystery shopper’ use or find out about a service in person, over the phone or online. When they experience it first-hand, you will understand what it is like for real service users. A similar understanding can come through observation of services too – cameras and direct observation will reveal what you want to know about behaviour, instead of just what people say they do.