Valuing Feedback

How to understand people's experiences of Adult Social Care.

November 2022

During October and November 2022, Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living held a short consultation to discuss how people would like to give feedback after using Wiltshire Council services. This piece of work was commissioned by Occupational Therapy Services at Wiltshire Council, to help inform how they gather customer feedback in the future.

We held 3 knowledge cafes over a period of 3 weeks. 2 were held in Devizes and 1 in Warminster. Those who attended had a mixture of physical disabilities, learning disabilities, Autism and mental health conditions.

The knowledge cafes were asked to discuss how Wiltshire Council could gather feedback after people have engaged with Adult Social Care. They were asked to consider the following 2 methods; a text-based survey which would be sent to the individual's phone shortly after their interaction and an App-based survey which would be completed by the individual on the Wiltshire Council worker's phone at the end of a meeting.

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Text-based vs App-based

People were asked which format of giving feedback they would prefer; either a text message survey sent out after their visit, or to complete a survey on an app on a worker's phone.

Of the two options, the text survey was the preferred option, with over 90% of people favouring it.

The main concerns of using the app-based system were that people did not feel comfortable giving honest feedback with the worker present, especially if they had not had a positive experience.

It was also raised that sometimes people would not be able to give feedback straight away. If the Occupational Therapist had provided someone with a new aid or adaptation, people may need time to try it out before they can confidently say whether it has helped them or not.

It was noted that the text-based survey would allow people to complete the survey in their own time and when they are ready. It would also allow them to complete it with support from another person if they chose.

"I would prefer to text as I can be honest with my answers."

"It's (text survey) alright if you know technology, but for me it's not the best way."

Although the text-survey was the preferred option, people agreed unanimously that this wouldn't necessarily be accessible for everyone. In order to be more accessible, it was suggested that a range of formats should be available including; voice notes, video/phone calls and email.

Ideally, people should be given choice and control over how they give feedback. The worker should ask which method of feedback they would like to use; either via the app with the worker, a text response or an email or phone-call. This would ensure the feedback survey is accessible to as many people as possible.

"I think we should be given a choice."

Text Message Survey

01. Introduction

Everybody agreed that it would be helpful to **name both the team and the individual professional** that the survey is seeking feedback on. This is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, for those who are engaging with multiple professionals across many departments, it would provide clarity which experience they are being asked about. Likewise if people were struggling to recall the experience they had, providing the name of the worker may act as a memory prompt. People also expressed that naming the individual was important to reassure them that it was not a scam, and is a legitimate survey. If the introduction was un-named, some people said they would not reply in case it wasn't real.

"Naming the professional would help because when you see lots of different people, it is difficult to know who you saw."

"I won't answer back if I don't know who it is as it might be a scam."

02. Emojis vs Yes/No

We asked whether people would prefer to reply to a text-based survey using emojis or text. Some people liked the idea of emojis, but the majority opted for text responses. People raised concerns that they would be unsure which emojis to send, and worried about sending the wrong ones. It was also raised that emojis may have different meanings or connotations across different ages and cultures. People who do not have smartphones are also unable to send emojis. Therefore to avoid potential confusion and miscommunication, **most people would rather respond to questions using 'Yes/No' text.**

03. Timings

Most people agreed that the text-message should be **sent out within a day of the interaction**. Some people expressed that they would reply to this message quickly, whilst their experience was still fresh in their mind. Whereas others said they would prefer to wait a few days before replying so that they had time to reflect on their experience. Therefore whilst the text should be sent out in a timely manner, there should be no time-limit in replying. This would give people the opportunity to reflect as well as to seek additional support in answering the questions if needed.

Text Message Survey

? 04. Questions

As part of this consultation, Adult Social Care at Wiltshire Council suggested 3 possible questions to be used in the survey. The groups discussed each question and gave their thoughts and ideas.

Question 1 - Do you feel they helped you?
This was generally considered to be a clear question. Some people expressed that it would be helpful to have this explained within the context of the support they received eg. "Do you feel they helped you to use your kitchen safely?"

Question 2 - Did you feel we understood what was important to you? OR Do you feel they listened to you?
This was considered to be an important question, but several people found it to be a confusing question on it's own. Instead it was suggested that the questions should be combined to ask "**Did they listen to what was important to you?**"

Question 3 - Would you recommend our service to others?
Whilst a simple question, many people raised that this wasn't necessarily the right question to be asking. Those we spoke to said that they did not consider Adult Social Care to be something that you can recommend to other people.

"It's an odd question because it isn't really a service you get a choice over, there aren't any alternative places you can go. So it isn't something you can recommend, instead it is something you have to use if you need it."

An alternative question suggested by each group was "**Would you be happy to use this service again?**"

GOOD BYE! 05. Finishing Message

Everyone agreed that the closing message of "Thank you for completing our survey." was fine.

"This is a nice polite round up, so I do like that finish."

We used multiple visual prompts, including these cut out phone messages to help aid our discussions.

Text Message Survey

06. Free-Text

Within each discussion, it was strongly agreed that 'Yes/No' questions alone did not give people enough opportunity to give adequate feedback. Everyone agreed that there should be an space for free-text, either at the end of the survey or after each question. Many people also raised the question as to what would happen if someone replied 'No' to one of the questions. Would there be any sort of follow-up and what format would this take? Furthermore, people noted that in the present format, there was no space to share any positive experiences they had had. Free-text would allow people to further explain their good feedback too.

"It depends on why they want this feedback. If it is to simply generate statistics then Yes/No questions are fine. But if they genuinely want to improve the service and make differences then they need to put greater effort it. At the very least there should be a space for people to give additional feedback beyond the questions asked."

"[This survey] feels like cutting corners all the time, trying to speed things up.

In order to address this, people suggested including the question: **"Is there any other feedback you would like to give?"** followed by the ability to write a free-text response. Including this into the survey was considered to be the most important change in our discussions.

Conclusion & Recommendations

- **The preferred feedback method is the text-based survey.**
- **People should be given the choice as to how to give their feedback.**
- **It is important to provide an opportunity for free-text feedback to be given.**
- **A text response of Yes/No is preferred over responding with emojis.**
- **Text surveys should be sent out soon after an interaction, and people should be given plenty of time to complete the survey.**
- **The introductory message should include the name of the relevant team and/or professional.**
- **The recommended questions to ask are:**
    - Do you feel they helped you? (Yes/No)
    - Did they listen to what was important to you? (Yes/No)
    - Would you be happy to use this service again? (Yes/No)
    - Is there any other feedback you would like to give? (Free-text)