

Always Events Supporting Materials

Sheet 2: Tips on questionnaire design

Carrying out a survey is one approach you might wish to use for measuring the impact of your Always Event on people's experiences of care.

For a survey to produce useful results the questions must be rooted in what patients say is important to them. Focus groups and patient complaint lines are a rich source of potential topics for survey questions.

The skill and effort required to design survey questions and put them together into a workable format is often underestimated so, where possible, we recommend you make use of questions used in existing surveys.

Existing questions

There are a number of questionnaires in the national patient survey programme co-ordinated by CQC that may be a useful source of questions which have been thoroughly tested. These questionnaires are available on the NHS Surveys website at: <http://www.nhssurveys.org/>

Other national patient experience surveys such as the National Cancer Patient Experience Survey (www.quality-health.co.uk/surveys/national-cancer-patient-experience-survey) and the GP Patient Survey (<https://gp-patient.co.uk>) may also be a useful source for questions.

In addition to examining the impact of your Always Event on patients' experiences, you may wish to measure staff experiences of implementing the Always Event. The NHS Staff Survey is a good questionnaire to look for question inspiration (www.nhsstaffsurveys.com)

At the end of this document we have provided two template staff surveys which you can use and adapt for your own purposes:

1. **Staff Survey for use at start up.** This can be used during this start-up phase to look at what staff think the priorities are and to find out about any concerns they have about Always Events. All the questions are open ended so the questionnaire could even be used as a conversation guide.
2. **Staff Survey for use during implementation.** This survey can be used during implementation to help you understand what difference the Always Events have had and any challenges staff have faced along the way.

Designing your own survey

If there are issues surrounding your Always Event that are not covered by existing questions, the box on the next page provides some tips on designing new questions. It is important to involve your patients and service users in designing any new questions

Importance of pre-testing

Before launching a new survey, or new questions in a survey, they should be discussed and tested face-to-face with a smaller group of patients first. This pre-testing is essential in order to:

- **Identify questions that are unclear or difficult to answer**

If respondents misunderstand or cannot answer questions, the data collection is fruitless. Pre-testing each question allows you to avoid wasting valuable resources collecting information that cannot be interpreted.

- **Discover parts of the questionnaire that place an unacceptable burden on the respondent**

By mixing types of questions (but not topics), you can avoid wearing respondents out. Asking too many questions about times and dates or other specific knowledge can cause a respondent to become frustrated and toss aside a questionnaire before completing it.

- **Discover parts of the questionnaire that do not work, or that work with one population but not with another**

Tips on designing your own questions

- **Topics should be specific enough to be relevant, but not so specific that the questions become tedious to answer**

The more specific the topic of a particular question, the easier it will be for those who use the data to act on the results. However, if questions cover processes in too much detail, respondents may lose interest before they complete the survey.

- **Avoid topics that are politically sensitive or might embarrass patients**

Sensitive topics can spur complaints about the survey and may lower response rates. These issues are better addressed in focus groups or face-to-face interviews.

- **Phrase questions in simple and straightforward language**

Long words, complex sentence structures and technical terms can confuse respondents and make interpretation of their responses very difficult.

- **Use single subject questions whenever possible**

Asking questions about two things at the same time ("double barreled" questions) can lead to confusion and problems with interpretation. For example, a question that asked, "Did a nurse give you advice about caring for yourself at home or obtaining follow-up medical care?" would be difficult to answer. Respondents could be confused about how they should answer if their experiences of the advice given to them about those two issues differed.

- **Avoid leading or biased questions**

Questions that focus too strongly on a positive or negative experience can lead a respondent towards a particular response. For example, a question such as, "Were you unhappy with the amount of time it took to be seen by a doctor or nurse?" might lead respondents toward negative responses, thereby overstating the problem.

- **Limit the number of "open-ended" questions**

"Open-ended" questions are difficult and expensive to input and analyse. They also add length to written surveys and can take respondents a long time to complete.

Always Events – staff survey for use at start-up

Always Events® are defined as “those aspects of the patient and family experience that should always occur when patients interact with healthcare professionals and the delivery system.”

INSERT DESCRIPTION OF ALWAYS EVENT

During this set-up phase we would like to understand what you think matters most to patients and what aspects of care we should be working to improve on. We would also like to hear what you think the benefits will be and concerns you have over implementing the Always Event. We would be grateful if you could answer the following questions, the information will help in the creation, implementation and evaluation of the Always Event pilot.

1. What are the key elements of care that matter most to our patient group?

2. What are the key elements of care that we could improve on?

3. How successful do you feel the Always Event will be for improving patient/service user experiences?

4. What do you think might be the main challenges, if any, to implementing Always Event activities?

5. What do you anticipate the impact to be on your role/workload?

6. What is required to ensure that the Always Event we develop can be sustained?

7. Do you have any other comments?

Always Events – staff survey for use during implementation

Always Events® are defined as “those aspects of the patient and family experience that should always occur when patients interact with healthcare professionals and the delivery system.”

INSERT DESCRIPTION OF ALWAYS EVENT

We would like to find out about your experiences of implementing the activities of our Always Event and would be grateful if you could answer the following questions. The information will help in the evaluation of the Always Event pilot and will be useful for understanding how we can best sustain and spread the programme.

1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Implementing the Always Event activities has...					
a. ...been straightforward and easy to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. ...helped me to deliver a better service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. ...increased my workload	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d....helped me to do my job more effectively	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do you feel the Always Event has made a positive difference to service users?

- 1 Yes, definitely
- 2 Yes, to some extent
- 3 No
- 4 Don't know

3. What difference, if any, has the Always Event made to service users?

4. What have been the main challenges, if any, to implementing the Always Event activities?

5. Do you think the Always Event activities can be sustained?

- 1 Yes, definitely
- 2 Yes, to some extent
- 3 No
- 4 Don't know

6. Why do you think the Always Event can or cannot be sustained?

7. Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for your help