**Before you begin**

This guide has several examples of discussion guides for different methods of research.

Discuss the aims and objectives of your research with a small team.

Keep these in mind when developing your questions – it’s always good to do this with others.

Test out your questions on colleagues are they answering how you would expect? If not adjust your questions.

If you have any questions, please contact [research@essex.gov.uk](mailto:research@essex.gov.uk)

 **DISCUSSION GUIDE EXAMPLES**

**Why would I use a discussion guide?**

It helps to:

* Provide informal but consistent questions for research.
* Cover all the questions you need to, so you don’t miss anything.
* Provides space for you to capture your answers.

**How do I know what method to choose?**

Please refer to our My Learning ‘Choosing the right research module’ module for more information.

**How do I deliver different research methods?**

Please refer to our My Learning modules on different research modules for more information.

**Is there anything important I should know?**

Yes

* Make sure you have completed a research governance application in time for you to act on comments before you intend on starting the research. Guidance can be found on the intranet: [Research\_governance\_process\_overview.pdf (essex.gov.uk)](https://intranet.essex.gov.uk/Documents/Research_governance_process_overview.pdf)
* Sometimes it’s helpful to print discussion guides out, and use the spaces for notes

 **DISCUSSION GUIDE EXAMPLES**

**Example 1 – FOCUS GROUP GUIDE**

**Objectives of focus group:** To explore satisfaction with local area and with ECC, and views around communication with ECC.

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| **Introductions and icebreaker** |
| **Moderator to give brief overview of background to the project and purpose of the session.**   * Cover that it is voluntary/confidentiality/anonymity and safeguarding * Explain there are no right/wrong answers, people can speak honestly, and there is no obligation to answer questions if they don’t want to * Cover any ground rules – e.g. be respectful of other people during the discussion * Cover housekeeping (e.g. toilets, fire alarms)   **Group to introduce themselves:** names, favourite place to visit in Essex and why. |
| **Word trigger activity – satisfaction with local area and ECC** |
| **Aim of activity: to explore satisfaction with local area and ECC.**   * Give participants activity sheet (Figure 1, right). * Participants to write down initial reactions – a word, phrase or short sentence to “my local areas as a place to live” and “services provided by Essex County Council”. * Group to share responses and discuss why they chose these words. * Moderator to probe around what is driving how participants feel. |

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| **Card sort activity – perceptions about ECC** |
| **Aim of activity: to explore perceptions about ECC in more detail.**  Give participants activity sheet (Figure 2, right).  Participants to complete allocation exercise – place the following statements into boxes depending on whether the statement represents something they either associate or do not associate with Essex Country Council.  Statements to sort:   * Provides value for money * Is efficient and well run * Would act on my concerns * Is trustworthy * Provides good customer service * Treats people fairly and with respect   Group to share responses and discuss why they placed the statements in the boxes they did.  Moderator to prompt discussions and explore in more depth why participants do/do not associate the statements with ECC.  **Question to participants:**   * Looking at the items in the red box, what would ECC have to do before you would feel comfortable putting it in the green box? * (Probe responses to understand further). |

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| **Listening, engagement and communication** |
| **Aim: to understand communication preferences when engaging with ECC.**  **Key questions for discussion:**   * How do you prefer to contact and engage with ECC? Which communication channels are best and why? * Are you interested in engaging with ECC on social media? If so, how? * Are you interested in being involved in activities in your local community? In what ways would you like to be involved? (Moderator to probe to better understand responses). |
| **Wrap up** |
| * Ask whether participants have any other comments they wish to make on the topics being discussed. * Gather final comments and wrap up. * Thank participants for their time and let them know what will happen next. |

 **DISCUSSION GUIDE EXAMPLES**

 **DISCUSSION GUIDE EXAMPLES**

**Example 2 – IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**TITLE; Lived Experience: Interview discussion guide**

Essex County Council (ECC) and partners want to understand what people’s experiences [WHAT YOU WANT TO EXPLORE WITH THE RESEARCH]. What you tell us will help inform our work across [BUSINESS AREA AND WHAT IT WILL INFORM].  Your individual support or services you access won't be directly affected by this. The responses you share will however help us understand what is important to you and to inform work we do across [BUSINESS AREA] in future.

**We would like to better understand:**

* [LIST A COUPLE OF OBJECTIVES]

**Essex County Council would like to hear from people who:**

* [WHO YOU ARE SPECIFICALLY SEEKING VIEWS FROM]

**[Please take them through the permissions / consent form].** This **must** cover that its voluntary to talk to us, they can stop at any time and its confidential. We won’t include things about them that makes them identifiable in a final report.Also, we must contact someone if they tell us something that we feel they are at risk of harm or someone else is. **[**You should have obtained a bit of information about the person you are interviewing before you meet so that you do not ask inappropriate questions where possible.**]**

It would be great if they are happy to share photos or pictures about [SUBJECT], it could be about something they like or find challenging and if it contains other people, we would need their consent too. [CONSENT FOR RECORDING AND PICTURES SHOULD HAVE BEEN OBTAINED BEFORE THE INTERVIEW]

**Details about person to fill in: [TO BE AMENDED DEPENDING ON PROJECT]**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Service user or Carer? | Age:  Gender: | Older person, Mental Health, Carer, Physical impairment, Sensory Impairment, Learning disability, Autism, Other (delete as applicable) |
| District | Social Care Quadrant | Accommodation: |

**Sections to prioritise\*\***

Please add notes to the relevant sections / questions

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Key discussion points and probes** | **MATERIALS** | **NOTES** |
| **About you \*\*** (all) |  |  |
| Tell me a little bit about yourself (**Where do you live & who do you live with? (i.e. own home/ supported living/residential home), How long have you lived there? Do you mind telling me how old you are?)**  Would you be able to tell us a little bit about any health conditions that you have? **How does this/these effect you?** | Body map – where pain is / limbs affected |  |
| **Care and support\*\*** (all) |  |  |
| Thinking about the care and support you or the person you care for receives  What is your experience of care and support now? Who supports them (formal and informal)  What was worked well? What has been challenging for you? How have you overcome any challenges?   * **Your contact and quality of relationship with care staff** * **Your day opportunities / opportunities for going out and or meeting others** * **Contact with social care (calls, virtual appointments)**   What else would make your life better? Why? What help do you need to achieve this?  What would good care look like?  **If appropriate**, thinking about the care and support you or the person you care for might want to receive in the future (as you get older or your/their condition progresses).   * What do you want your future care to be like? Prompt: e.g. about type of care, rather than just care staff, home care to residential care. * What support might you need to achieve this? | Journey map to fill in  Take Photos – are there any particular equipment / rooms in the home that work well don’t work well  **Person centred diagram Write short description for each point** |  |
| **Wellbeing** \*\* (all) |  |  |
| If you feel a bit down, what helps you to feel better? For example, would you maybe talk to friends or do some exercise?   * What are you doing to keep yourself well and healthy and maintain your health now? Talking to friends & family, exercising, relaxation exercises, community support * Thinking about your wellbeing in the future, is there anything different that you would do to keep well? Why would this help you? |  |  |
| **About Employment and finance (if relevant) \*\*** |  |  |
| Thinking about your employment now and in the future  What do you do unpaid / paid for work? Is this wff, in an office etc   * Do you feel you have enough money to pay bills, go out, go on holiday etc? * What would you like to achieve work wise in the future? What could help you to achieve this? (what can they do themselves)   If people have indicated a change to their finances (got worse / better) - what finances have got worse and how are they managing | **Phone number for CAB** |  |
| **Thinking about your future\*\*** |  |  |
| * What are your goals and aspirations for the future?   + What are you able to do yourself to achieve what you want?   + What help or support might you need to achieve these goals? |  |  |
| **Wrapping up** |  |  |
| Check if you have covered all the questions  Ending: What are you most proud of?  Any photos or images / pictures they would be happy to share?  Please thank the person for taking part ….. would they like to participate in co-production / future research etc [about this project]? If yes please take details  Ask if they have any questions?  **Explain what happens next. Thank them again for their time.** |  |  |

**The example below is a based-on an on-street research for park and ride.**

 **DISCUSSION GUIDE EXAMPLES**

We are seeking to find information relating to thoughts and behaviours towards Colchester Park and Ride. We want information to feed into new opportunities for passenger experience and potentially shape commercial activity in the near future.

If you have a few minutes, please tell us your thoughts and feelings about Park and Ride by answering these questions below!

**Knowledge of Colchester Park and Ride**

• Did you know about Colchester Park and Ride?

• Have you used Colchester Park and Ride?

• How do you usually get into Colchester?

• Whereabouts do you live?

**If yes (they have used the Colchester Park and Ride)**

• What do/did you use it for?

• What do you like about it?

• What could be improved?

**If not (they haven’t used the Colchester Park & Ride)**

• Why is this?

• What would encourage you use it?

• What improvements, if any, could be made?

**Section 3 – Demographic information example**

The questions below are common examples for illustration only. Consider what’s appropriate to ask and how you will use the information. For example, if you have low numbers of people with a disability you may wish to seek more views from this group.

**About you (Demographic Form)**

To ensure the continued development of our Diversity and Equality practices, everyone that we talk with is asked to complete the information below. You do not have to answer any of the questions. If you choose not to answer questions, it will not affect your participation. The information you supply below is confidential and will be used solely for monitoring purposes.

Age: Gender:

Status:

 Married  Single

 Widowed  Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ethnicity:

 White British

 White Irish

 White Other

 Gypsy / Roma

 Traveller of Irish Heritage

 Black or Black British African

 Black or Black British Caribbean

 Mixed White/Black African

 Mixed White/Black Caribbean

 Black Other

 Asian or Asian British Pakistani

 Asian or Asian British Indian

 Asian or Asian British Other

 Mixed White/Asian

 Asian Other

 Chinese

 Mixed Other

**** Not Known

Where you live (district):

 Basildon

 Braintree

 Brentwood

 Chelmsford

 Colchester

 Epping Forest

 Harlow

 Maldon

 Rochford

 Tendring

 Uttlesford

 Other (please state) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

 No

 Yes

Details: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself to have an impairment?

 No

 Yes

Details \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Prefer not to say