

Shetland Partnership

Methods and Techniques



User Panels

A User Panel is a group that regularly meets to provide feedback on a service or product, helping to identify problems and suggest improvements.

It allows organisations to hear directly from users and consider their needs and preferences.

Suitable for:

A User Panel is useful when you want to hear from underrepresented voices create a two-way dialogue between service providers and users, test new ideas, and identify problems early. This helps organisations understand the needs and preferences of their users and make improvement based on their feedback.



Type of engagement:



Consult | Involve

How to do it:

- Identify your Panel. User Panels are usually workshops with both service users and service providers.
- Recruit participants by using various methods such as social media, email invitations, or partnering with relevant organisations. Ensure participants fit the criteria.
- It is important that service providers are committed; if not, a different method should be looked at.
- Make sure participants know the time commitment and purpose of each meeting.
- Clearly state the group's goals when recruiting participants.
- Schedule regular meetings and explain their purpose.
- Keep participants engaged by offering incentives and making the process enjoyable.
- User Panels should not be the only way to get feedback, as they might not represent everyone and their results are not statistical.
- Collect feedback, listen to their ideas and use them to improve.
- Changing the Panel members over time can keep things fresh and prevent stagnation.

★ Advantages

- Getting direct feedback from people who have firsthand experience with the topic
- User Panels can quickly show what is working and what is not
- If done right, they allow for open communication and teamwork
- They are a fast and cheap way to gather feedback and work well with other methods.

⚠ Challenges

- To ensure diversity and represent everyone's experiences, a wide range of people need to be recruited
- Since the Panel is made up of current service users, it does not include those who haven't used the service yet
- Some Panel members might have health issues that make it hard for them to participate regularly
- Organisers should be flexible and offer different ways to contribute, such as through email and social media
- User panels should not be the only way to get feedback. Other methods should be used too.

Further information:

More information on carrying out User Panels will be available via a search engine which may be useful to look at.