



Office for Disability

## Accessible Surveys

From time to time, organisations use questionnaires and surveys to gather data about their customers, members, clients or patients. The requirements of people with a disability to participate in a survey can be overlooked, which can result in under-representation or no representation at all in such data-gathering activities. This can create the perception that people with a disability are not interested in using the services or programs.

Designing a questionnaire or survey tool so it can be used by people with a disability will ensure that a large group within the population can contribute their views.

When preparing questionnaires and surveys it is therefore important to:

- make the survey tool accessible, and
- seek the participation of people with a disability in the survey.

### Survey data collection

A face-to-face interview, conducted by trained interviewers, is the most inclusive method of collecting data from people with a disability. Alternatives for survey data collection include:

- written, postal questionnaires
- telephone surveys
- online surveys

Making alternative methods available is also suitable. For example, if the primary collection method selected is an online survey distributed by email, it is good practice to also make available on request alternative collection methods to suit people with different requirements.

## Tips to increase access to surveys

- Keep survey questions simple and concise.
- Set questions out in a logical order.
- Clearly describe instructions for questions like 'Please select all options that apply to you'.
- Ensure rating scales are relevant to the question.
- Consider accessible formats; these include large print, audio versions and Easy English. Easy English will assist people with an intellectual disability or someone with complex communication needs.
- If an online survey is to be used, select accessible online survey software. This will increase keyboard navigability and screen readability. For example, accessible survey software will assist a person who is blind or has low vision, and who navigates the survey using a screen reader, or a person with a physical impairment who cannot use a mouse and solely navigates the survey with the keyboard.

## Facilitating open and honest feedback

To maximise the chances for open and honest feedback to surveys, as well as for consultation:

- Let the respondent know what the survey is about and what it is aiming to achieve, as well as be assured that their opinions are valued.
- Reassure the respondent that survey responses will be confidential and will not be able to be traced back to them – unless they choose to identify themselves. Current service users will find this particularly helpful.

Making sure that people are provided an opportunity to give feedback anonymously can guard against:

- People saying what they think the organisation wants to hear.
- Fears that negative consequences, such as the loss of current services, will follow from being critical or wanting something more.

## Other data collection

Consultation methods and surveys are not the only way to collect useful data. Membership forms, for example, can be adapted to include questions that will provide the organisation with information about their customer and member base to ensure that services and programs are targeted to users.

## Further information

See also: Office for Disability fact sheets: 'Why consult with people with a disability?' and 'Accessible formats' [www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au](http://www.officefordisability.vic.gov.au).

If you would like to receive this document in an accessible format, contact the Office for Disability:

**Telephone:** (03) 9208 3015

**Email:** [OFD@dpcd.vic.gov.au](mailto:OFD@dpcd.vic.gov.au)

**TTY:** (03) 9208 3631

**Fax:** (03) 9208 3633

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