

Planning research to understand user needs

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Intro slide for dxw digital



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In today's workshop, we'll take a look at how to create research questions and deciding research activities to help service teams meet point 1 of the standard - Understanding user needs

1. Understand user needs

Research to develop deep knowledge of who the service users are and what that means for the design of the service.



This is item number one in the Local Government Digital Standard:

<https://localgov.digital/service-standard>

Service: Something you provide that other people use to get something done

Users: People who use your service to get something done

Needs: The things users need from your service to get the right outcome for them

User research

Help teams to learn about their users
so they can make a better service



Different kinds of research activities within multidisciplinary teams to help them learn about their users
so they can make a better service

Planning user research



User research plans are done to get clear reliable answers for least time, effort and cost

What do we need to know?

Who should we do research with?

What research activities should we do?



These are the three key points to bear in mind when creating a user research plan

To get clear, useful, reliable answers
For the least time, effort and cost





[Home](#) > [Citizenship and living in the UK](#) > [Voting](#)

Register to vote

Use this service to apply to register to vote.

This service is also available [in Welsh \(Cymraeg\)](#).

You only need to register once - you do not need to register separately for every election.

You must register again if you've changed address, name or nationality.

You can also use this service to:

- change the way you vote - for example in person, by post or by proxy
- get on or off the [open register](#)

It usually takes about 5 minutes.

Related content

[The electoral register and the 'open register'](#)

[Ways of voting](#)

Explore the topic

[Voting](#)

Today's task is to understand what questions we need to be asking to understand the problems people have voting by proxy or by vote in UK elections

Exercise: Agree research questions



The outcome is to agree a complete list of research questions

We need to know ...

How will people provide their national insurance number?

How should we ask people about their address?



Some key things we need to know

Absent voting

Postal voting

Proxy voting (someone else votes for you)



Most people who aren't able to get to a polling station, end up not voting - so why is this?

Extra forms to apply

Extra form for postal or proxy vote
Must be signed and posted to local office



Often the forms end up after the vote has taken place, there's no confirmation that your vote has been cast - voters voting by proxy or post are much less likely to register to vote and less likely to vote.

Hard if you're overseas

People living or travelling outside UK

Armed forces and public servants

Unclear addresses, unreliable post



Some of the problems to bear in mind...

Most end up not voting

Letters arrive after deadlines

No confirmation of receipt

Much less likely to register

Much less likely to vote



Digital voting decades away

Many practical and theoretical problems

Physical constraints deter fraud

Wide distribution provides resilience



Although we may think that digital voting is easy (the X factor for example), in practice it's not that simple when it comes to elections.

Write research questions for overseas voting

1. Write individual research questions
2. Group, add, combine and refine questions
3. Identify highest priority questions

Groups of 3 or 4, 10 mins to create, 5 mins to share



To start with, write down some questions on your own of what questions you might want to ask. For example - how does a person prove their identity? Is the person wanting a recurring proxy vote? Then we'll get together in groups to see how these questions can be grouped together and identify the highest priority questions.

Can we answer any of the
questions now?
(Or with a little digging?)



Can any of these questions be answered with the cur

Thoughts and questions



Exercise: Identify user groups



Explore the variety of actual and likely users



Type or role (patient, carer, doctor, pharmacist)

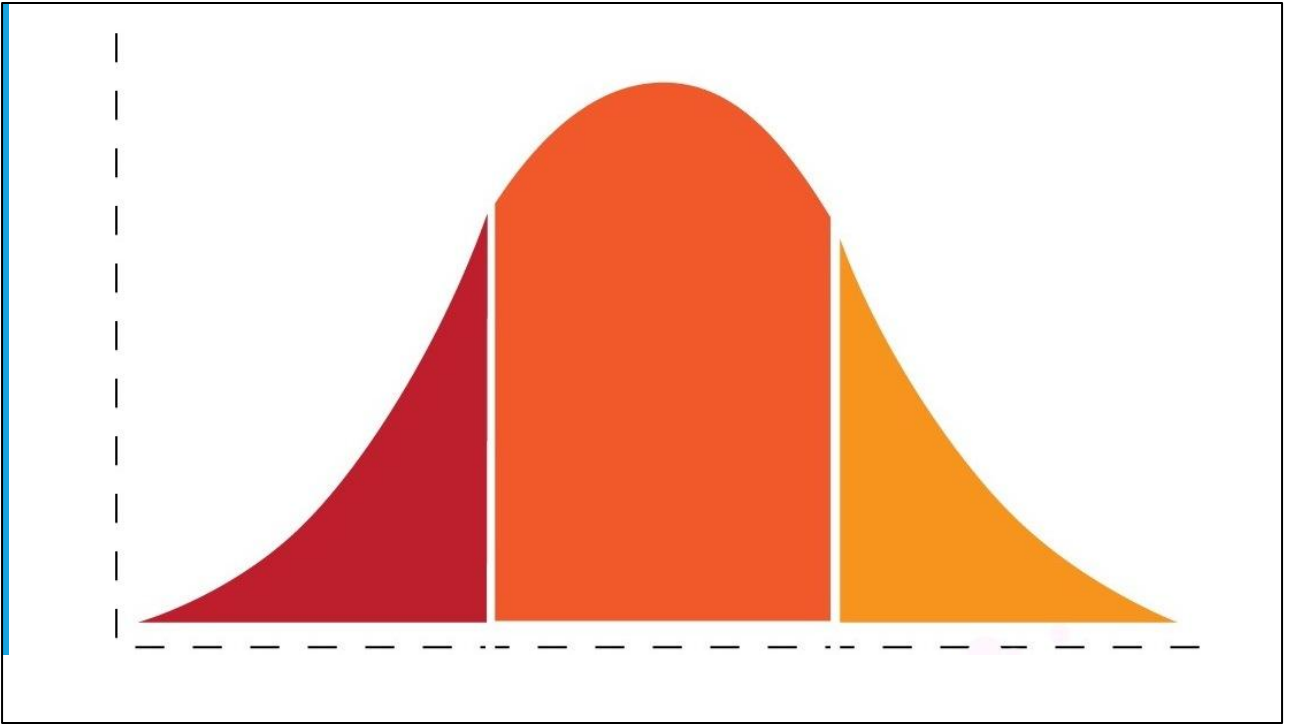
Different circumstances (new parent, changed name)

Different behaviour (pay bills by direct debit)

People who have a disability (hearing, memory)

People who may need support (skill, confidence, access)





Identify user groups for overseas voting

1. Identify broad groups to research with
2. Identify sub-groups of specific interest

Same groups, 5 minutes to create



Thoughts and questions



Exercise: Choose research activities





Research activities are really important when planning user research. We need to look at what the problem is needing to be solved and chose the best type of research.

Learning
People

Testing
Service



Interviews
Observation

Card sorting
Concept tests

Usability tests
Performance data



These are some of the types of research that can be done.

What? How?
Why?

How many?
How long?



Description
Qualitative

Numbers
Quantitative



What? How?
Why?

How many?
How long?



Interviews
Usability tests

Performance data
Surveys



What? How? Why? People Interviews Observation	What? How? Why? Service Usability tests Support logs
How many? How long? People Gov, industry stats Surveys	How many? How long? Service Performance measures Data analysis



Some of the research may already exist - e.g. there will be stats to show how long postal services take in specific countries. In the instance of people who have registered but never voted, we need to speak to these people to understand the obstacles.

Exercise:

Research activities for overseas voting

1. Pick and pair research questions and user groups
2. Place in quadrants (What? How? Why? vs How many? and People vs Service)

Same groups, 5 minutes to pair and arrange



Thoughts and questions





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User research

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Plan user research for your service

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- [Decide your objectives and approach](#)
- [Map out rounds of research](#)
- [Involve your team](#)
- [Share your findings](#)
- [Examples and case studies](#)
- [Related guides](#)

You should plan user research at the start of each development phase, and regularly update your plan as you learn more about your users.

Agreeing your objectives and the approach you want to take will help you build a service that meets the needs of your users.

Decide your objectives and approach

Work with your team to define your research objectives and decide how you'll approach the research.

www.gov.uk/service-manual/user-research/plan-user-research-for-your-service



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User research

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Capturing research questions

Published by: [User research community](#)
Last updated: 12 months ago

Page contents:

- [When to capture research questions](#)
- [Steps to follow](#)
- [Examples and case studies](#)
- [Related guides](#)

You can use research questions to help you plan and prioritise user research.

When to capture research questions

The best time to capture research questions is at the start of a new development phase, especially discovery, alpha and beta.

www.gov.uk/service-manual/user-research/capturing-research-questions

Beware of unknown unknowns



Thanks!

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