Create a data collection plan

The five types of data framework can help you map out the data you intend to collect. This worksheet contains guidance on the five types of data followed by a template for your data collection plan.

## Guidance on the five types of data

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| **Type of data** | **Why should you collect this?** | **How often should you collect this?** | **How could you collect this?** |
| **User data**  Information on the characteristics of the people you are reaching. | To check whether your service is reaching the intended target group and tell you about the population you are currently serving. | Routinely. User data is best collected from all your service users during the sign-up stage or shortly afterwards. | It is likely that you will collect this from people when they first come to the service. You can get this information by asking your service users, or by getting it from your referral partners. |
| **Engagement data**  Information on how service users are using your service, and the extent to which they use it | To understand whether or not you effectively deliver the service to your intended users. E.g. How often people come? For how long? | Routinely. You should be trying to collect this data on an ongoing basis—as and when people use the service. | The main method will be to rely on staff or volunteers to collect the data. You will need to make data entry as easy as possible, encourage them to enter it routinely and ensure they are consistent in how they enter it. |
| **Feedback data**  Information on what people think about the service | To establish whether your service gets the reaction you want and whether it is beginning to work in the way intended. E.g. Do people enjoy the service? Do they find it useful? What aspects do they rate the best/least? | Routinely. Service users should always feel encouraged to share their views and have ways to do so. | Feedback can be approached informally whenever people use the project – e.g. suggestion boxes, online feedback, social media channels, and talking to people. You can also approach feedback formally by using surveys, or qualitative research. You can take a more occasional approach to formal feedback. |
| **Outcomes data**  Information on the short-term changes, benefits or assets people have got from the service | To understand how have people been influenced or helped by your service in the short-term. E.g. What is different now? Which aspects of the service have helped which types of service users in which circumstances? | Occasionally. Outcome data is best collected by staff or volunteers because they have the strongest relationships with people. But they should not spend all their time collecting this data, and you may not need to collect it from all of your users. | Surveys, interviews, focus groups and observation are all potential methods. |
| **Impact data**  Information on the long-term difference that has resulted from the service | To understand the long-term difference you make for the people you work with. | Exceptional circumstances. This is the hardest data to collect, and many services do not need to collect this data. | Using high-quality evaluation methods when enough time has passed and ideally using a comparison group. |

## Data collection plan

Use this template to map out your data collection activities. You do not need to complete every box

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| **Type of data** | **What data will you collect?**  *E.g. Number of users, do people enjoy the service* | **How?**  *E.g. When? How often? Which tools will you use? Who will be responsible?* | **What will this tell you?**  *What questions will this answer? Which parts of your “theory of change” does this relate to?* |
| **User data**  The characteristics of the people you are reaching |  |  |  |
| **Engagement data**  How service users are using your service, and the extent to which they use it |  |  |  |
| **Feedback data**  What people think about the service |  |  |  |
| **Outcomes data**  The short-term changes, benefits or assets people have got from the service |  |  |  |
| **Impact data**  The long-term difference that has resulted from the service |  |  |  |