



Understanding patient experiences of out-of-hours primary care: Staff Interviews

TOPIC GUIDE: STAFF INTERVIEWS

Preparation before the interview

4. Discuss carefully the place and time of the interview with the study participant. Weigh the options of interviewing at the participant's workplace against choosing a neutral venue near their office (or other as preferred). Some prefer more formal and public venues than others. Whatever the preferred location of interview, safety principles for researchers should apply (in accordance with the University of Exeter Lone Working policy). Where the interview is taking place in the public settings, background noise and other distractions need to be minimised.
5. Check the researcher's copy of all ethics documentation: double copies of consent forms. It is advisable to have the spare copies of participant information sheets with you in case the participants have lost theirs.
6. Check the equipment is in working order, bring spare batteries if needed.

THE FEEDBACK INTERVIEW

Introduction

(To be said to all participants): *'I am <NAME>, a researcher from the University of Exeter Medical School, conducting research about patients' experiences of out-of-hours GP primary medical care services.*

In this research we have been looking at the ways in which patient experience can be improved, and we have interviewed and surveyed patients who have recently used the out-of-hours service. In this final study we are going to speak to providers about their views on patient feedback and on the use of patient surveys in understanding the current state of play in the out-of-hours care. Can I check whether you are aware of the GPPS results for your out-of-hours service and have received the feedback report from us?

Before we begin I need to make sure that you received all the information that we provided for the participants in this interview. Are there any questions about the study that you would like to ask?'

Explaining what will happen in the interview and afterwards

'This is your opportunity to share your perspectives on patient feedback from the national surveys and your thoughts on the design of out-of-hours services. The interview should not take longer than an hour.

I will be recording the interview on a digital recorder, to ensure that we have an accurate and detailed record of your views. The digital recordings will be saved on a password-locked computer

and only those immediately involved in the research will listen to them. The recording will be transcribed word for word, and any names or anything that could identify you will be removed so that the information is anonymous. Once we have checked this process for accuracy, we will destroy the digital recording, retaining only the anonymised written summary. After we have collected the ideas of all service representatives within your organisation, and across the other services who are part of this study, we will write a report which will be published to inform service improvements.

You are free to stop the discussion and/or the recording at any point. If there are questions that you would prefer not to answer, please let me know and we can move on to the next question.

Are you happy to carry on now and for me to record the discussion? Please, could you sign two copies of the consent forms: you keep one copy and I will take the other for our records? (The consent forms must be already signed by the researcher)'.

Turn on the digital recorder.

During the interview

The semi-structured interviews will be conducted using the topic guide below. The researcher will also employ several in-depth interviewing techniques including mapping the emergent themes, probing and prompting. During the interview, the researcher will take brief written notes which will assist in identifying important issues to explore in greater depth. These will also help in creating memos and registering non-verbal behaviour.

Closing the interview

'Thank you very much for your answers. Do you have any questions you would like to ask about the interview or any other matters?'

Thank you for your participation.'

Turn the recorder off. Arrange for reimbursement of travel expenses (if required).

INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

The list of questions that follows is provisional. The researcher may include questions that are relevant to the role of individual participants (staff members), and the themes that they bring about in the interviews using the Depth interviewing techniques (NatCen, London).

The interview questions are structured in two parts. The first part is generic to all staff recruited from service providers who participated in the Stage 1 and Stage 2. The second part of the interview contains questions that relate exclusively to the six providers recruited during Stage 1.

Part 1. GPPS and patient surveys of out-of-hours primary medical care.

- 1. From the 1st April 2012 out-of-hours service providers were required to register with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and provide evidence that they are meeting essential standards of quality and safety. Some service providers design their own surveys and in-house questionnaires to explore patient experience and satisfaction:**

Please describe briefly how your organisation routinely surveys patient experience for the purposes of satisfying National Quality requirements.

What mechanisms for change are in place in your organisation to channel and act upon this feedback?

In your opinion, what is the role of the surveys of patient experience in this movement towards standardisation of OOH?

Could you tell me, in what ways your organisation has responded to the results of these surveys: have any changes been made and how difficult was it to achieve them? Are some short-term goals while others are longer-term?

What needs to be done to make better use of surveys and to achieve improvements at the level of local decision-makers?

What needs to be done to make better use of surveys and to achieve improvements at the level of national decision-makers?

In your opinion, are there any other ways (other than surveys) to receive patient feedback that is needed for improvements?

How do service users know they have been listened to, and their suggestions have been implemented?

- 2. Every year, twice annually, a sample of adult patients registered with every general practice in England is surveyed about their experience of primary care service. This survey is called the General Practice Patient Survey:**

What do you know about the GPPS in general? Does your service use information from it?

Do you see any advantages or disadvantages of a national survey such as the GPPS?

Notes: The researcher will have a copy of the GPPS questionnaire ready to discuss its design and specific questionnaire items if needed.

- 3. Several questions in the GPPS are meant to identify patients' experience of out-of-hours primary medical care services. These were included in the feedback report that we sent you:**

How well, in your view, do these questions reflect the patient experiences of out-of-hours primary medical care?

Did you find them useful? In what respect (e.g. was comparative data with other providers useful)?

Is the level of information captured suitable for use in your National Quality Standards reporting? If not, what is missing?

Based on your GPPS results, did you make or propose any changes to your service to improve patient experience?

Thank you.