

Friends and Family Test

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Organisation: Cabinet Office

Country: United Kingdom

Level of government: Central government

Sector: General public services, Health

Type: Communication, Digital, Public Service

Launched in:

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Description

The Friends and Family Test (FFT) is a user insight tool which asks users of public services: “Would you recommend this service to your friends and family?” FFT scores are published transparently and displayed by each provider. The score provides a vivid, actionable and customer-focused performance measure, and open text feedback is used by providers to improve user experience, as an example of the UK’s programme of creating Open Public Services. For example, one hospital trust (University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust) has used feedback to introduce a designated dining area where elderly patients can now eat together and enjoy music.

The test has been introduced within parts of the healthcare system – particularly, in Accident and Emergency wards, inpatient departments and, most recently, in maternity services. Within the first four months of rollout, it has collected views from over half a million patients. The test will be rolled out throughout health services during 2014 and also into employment support, further education and the National Citizen Service youth programme.

UK public services have been using a range of accountability and insight measures for some time, but FFT marks a change. The test generates a single measure (and free text feedback) of which each professional in public services – from frontline to boardroom – can feel ownership. Importantly, the measure is focused singularly on what users and citizens feel and experience, offering a boost for performance, accountability and user choice in public services.

Why the innovation was developed

The innovation was developed to provide a single measure of public service performance which is meaningful simultaneously to users, frontline professionals and managers of public services. In many areas, the test’s introduction has led to a change of tack culturally to refocus ambition squarely on user needs.

Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Enhance public trust, Improve service quality, Improve user satisfaction, Increase citizen engagement

- Inject greater drive for continuous improvement.
- Extend accountability.
- Provide meaningful information for choice in public services.

Main beneficiaries

General population, Government bodies, Government staff

The Friends and Family Test will benefit all users of the services into which it is introduced – through fuelling a drive for performance improvement within providers, through amplifying user voices and strengthening accountability, and through supporting more informed user choice.

Existing similar practices

Net Promoter Score methodology

In the private sector, civil society or elsewhere

A large number of private sector organisations, including Apple and HP.

Other organisations use the same test and principles.

<http://www.netpromotersystem.com/about/measuring-your-net-promoter-score.aspx>

Results

Results not available yet

It is too early (six months into national roll out) to assess the results of the Friends and Family Test, but there are cases of positive change being brought about by the test.

One example is Walsall Manor Hospital, where feedback from FFT has led a number of changes - from TV remote controls to warmer rooms. Over the last year, C.Diff infections are down 80% and falls down 20%.

Development

Design

The origin of the Friends and Family Test – and the underlying Net Promoter Score (NPS) methodology – lies in the private sector, where the consultancy Bain first devised it. There was some evidence showing correlation between company growth and the relative score from a company's Net Promoter Score (NPS). Subsequently, a range of firms – including Apple, Procter & Gamble and HP – have used NPS.

In British public services context, the test was piloted and developed further by policy staff at NHS (National Health Service) England. It was introduced nationally in health early in 2013. Within four months, over half a million patients have answered the Friends and Family question. Lessons from this are now being used to shape the planned extension of the test to other parts of the NHS and beyond.

Testing

The Friends and Family Test was piloted in a particular region (East Midlands), and introduced at first only to Accidents and Emergency wards and inpatient departments in hospitals. This incremental approach has allowed lessons to be learnt at each step of the introduction of the test, with successive iterations improving and building on those lessons.

Implementation

Tools used:

Implementation of the test has been delegated to local providers – it is up to service providers to decide how to deploy the test in their area.

Resources used:

Varies by area.

Partnerships

Private sector experts

Private sector

They were involved in developing the test and refining its use in the health setting. Third party 'infomediary' providers (organisations providing information to inform user choice) like 'Which?' and 'Patient Opinion' have been involved in re-presenting the information to users.

Lessons Learned

Conditions for success

The central condition necessary for successful implementation of FFT is desire and drive from professionals within the public service – from leadership to frontline delivery professionals – to implement the test as part of a culture of learning and providing continually improving services to citizens.

Besides this, there are methodological conditions which can help make the test a success. Consistency of collection method, timing and explanation of the test allow for comparative assessment. Transparent publication, support for intermediaries (third party information aggregation services like *iwantgreatcare*) and prominent display aid the accountability and choice benefits of the test. 'Closing the loop', by ensuring that feedback (both scores and open text) are valued and used to change things for the better, is at the heart of making the test stand out as a credible set-up, one which users feel confident feeding sincerely into.

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