

PINS Customer Survey 2004

In-Depth Interview and Focus Group Guide

Introduction

This guide is intended to act as an aid-memoir for the researcher. It will act as a checklist that all questions have been covered, and it may not be necessary to ask all the questions listed below, as many of the topics are likely to arise during discussions.

The plan is to structure the interviews in two main parts:

- Part 1 – a general largely unprompted discussion to establish what the respondent/respondents feel should be the main priority areas for improvement in relation to PINS role and services.
- Part 2 – specific discussion and questioning in relation to areas identified in the PINS Customer Survey 2003-4 Action Plan.

A separate guide will be prepared for the Best Value interviews on complaint procedures with other organisations.

Beginning the Interview/Group

Introductions. Outline the main purpose of the group/interview is to inform our approach to the customer survey and PINS Action Plan.

Briefly introduce the interview/group as part of a three-year monitor of customer satisfaction. Will be a survey of 5,000 customers following interview, overall purpose is to inform PINS action plan.

Explain would like to begin with a general discussion about PINS before discussing specific topics PINS have identified for further exploration in their action plan.

Introduce any observers as colleagues.

Mention tape recorder and ensure respondent that interview is confidential and findings will be anonymously reported.

Part 1: General Discussion

What are PINS strengths/weaknesses?

Overall satisfaction with PINS and reasons

Views on the role/function of PINS and areas for improvement

Issues and suggested areas for improvement relating to procedures (only use prompts if required):

- Planning appeals
- Listed building appeals
- Enforcement appeals
- Advert appeals
- Other appeals
- Call-in cases
- Development plan inquiries
- Rights of Way Orders

Issues and areas for improvement relating to (only use prompts if required):

- Training and recruitment of Inspectors
- Information leaflets
- Planning portal
- Choice and use of written representations, inquiry and hearings
- Decision
- Complaints procedure

Priorities for improvement

Part 2: Action Plan

Speed up the process

Awareness of PINS timetables

Awareness of resource constraints eg: lack of inspectors

Awareness of procedural constraints eg: timings for submissions

What information have/do they access on the timetable, procedures

Effectiveness of the information

Improvements required

How can awareness be improved?

How can timetables realistically be improved?

Flexibility versus strict timetable? How can this be resolved?

Improve Recruitment and Training for Inspectors

Describe cases been involved in, particularly specialised cases?

How did Inspector perform?

Why do you say that? What should they have done instead?

Were certain specialist skills necessary for this case? Why? What were these skills?

Ability to deal with diversity and other issues

Provide More Information Electronically

Awareness of the Portal and information available electronically

How heard about and/or found the Portal

What use it for and views on effectiveness?

Information would like to see available?

Prioritise this information/information most needed and valuable?

How realistic to provide this? Perceptions of what can and cannot be realistically achieved using the portal.

Complete forms on-line?

How easy/difficult?

Do you need more/less opportunities to do this and why?

Awareness and use of the PINS website

Views on effectiveness and areas for improvement

What is the difference between the Portal and PINS website?

Provide More Clear and Up-to-Date Information

Sources used for information other than Portal

Views on their strengths and weaknesses

Areas where information are missing

Information structure – how effectively can links in the planning process be identified?

Where and how should up to date information be provided?

Role of sources/publications other than the Portal

Inspector's Decision

Satisfaction with timescale and areas for improvement

Satisfaction with format and content of letter and areas for improvement

How can they avoid decision getting any longer (short letter generally welcomed)

Improve Written Representations procedure

Views on effectiveness/ease of use/timescale/information/dialogue etc

At what point in the process is any dissatisfaction experienced?

How could this be addressed?

Test proposal to have a help point at PINS

What might be the implications of this approach? On other procedures, on resources etc

Complaints Procedure

Detail on individual complaints:

How soon complained after Inspector's decision

How did you find out how to complain?

How and where was information sourced?

How easily sourced and available was this?

Did information provide a clear picture of the procedure? If no what was wrong?

Did you take advice? If so from whom?

Quality of advice/information and areas for improvement

What contact was there with PINS at each stage?

Strengths and weaknesses with information, contact

What happened on submitting complaint?

How long before contacted?

What was the outcome?

How were you informed and by whom?

How satisfied were you with the way you were informed?

How might this be improved?

Did you contact PINS after this period?

Who did you contact and how?

What did you ask?

What was the exact response?

How satisfied were you with this?

How might this process have been improved?

Any further contacts with PINS (repeat above questioning)

Did you take the matter up with anyone else?

Who and what was the outcome?

Satisfaction with response

Improved Communication

Who are PINS stakeholders and customers?

Who is PINS target audience?

How far should PINS be influencing the work of stakeholders? Which ones, how and why?

What misconceptions do stakeholders/customers have about PINS?

What additional services (if any) should PINS be providing?

What issues should be PINS be considering (eg diversity) and how?

What messages should PINS be conveying to stakeholders/customers to help meet requirements identified above?

Repeat for each type of stakeholder/customer?

What is the best way to engage each target audience to convey messages?

Which methods would be most effective eg planning press, forums?

Advantages and disadvantages of each approach

THANK RESPONDENTS