

IFF Research

WH:SHF Wave 3: A3 Survey Respondent Engagement Workshop

Created by IFF Research

DESNZ's independent evaluation partners

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Welcome, context & objectives



What we'll cover today

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Why respondent engagement matters

Response rates effect how representative and useful A3 findings will be.

Resident engagement is not just about getting more completes.
It is also about:

- **Trust**
- **Accessibility**
- **Ethical practice**
- **Resident experience**

Poor engagement can create:

- **Low response rates**
- **Bias**
- **Complaints**
- **Avoidable operational issues**

Recap of A3 guidance

Minimum expectations in the guidance:



Response maximisation

- Grant Recipients should use **appropriate response maximisation techniques**



Ethical principles

- Resident participation must be **voluntary**
- **Opt-outs and do-not-contact** requests must be respected
- A clear **privacy notice** must be provided
- **Personal data** must be handled in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018



Inclusive access

- The survey approach should support **inclusive participation**
- Survey modes should be **accessible and inclusive**



Incentives

- Incentives are **optional** and must be **funded by the organisation**, not by Wave 3 funding
- Any incentive used must be **fair, transparent, and proportionate**



Fieldwork monitoring

- Data should be **monitored during fieldwork** to identify issues with understanding, engagement or survey set-up

What you need to decide



Survey logistics

- How residents will be **informed** about the survey and **invited** to take part
- What **reminder or follow-up** approach is appropriate
- Which survey **mode,** or combination of modes, to use



Inclusive access

- How to support residents **with language, accessibility or digital access needs**
- How to make the survey feel **legitimate, clear and easy to complete**



Incentives

- Whether an **incentive** is needed, and if so, what form it should take



Fieldwork monitoring

- How response and engagement will be **monitored** during fieldwork

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Communications to build trust & increase participation



Communications that build trust and encourage participation

Why should a resident believe this survey is worth their time?



Core principles of good survey communications:

What do we need to communicate?	How should we communicate this?
▪ Be explicit about **why the resident has been contacted** ▪ Be clear about **what the survey is for** ▪ Provide reassurances around **confidentiality and voluntary participation** ▪ Be honest about **how long** the survey will take	▪ **Clearly and concisely**, whether written or spoken ▪ From a **source that residents trust or recognise,** such as their landlord or council ▪ **Accessible** in format and language ▪ For telephone / in-person approaches, interviewers should **introduce** themselves clearly and be ready to answer **basic questions confidently and politely**

The resident contact journey



Advance notice

- Short message from the landlord / trusted stakeholder **explaining the survey is coming**

First contact

- **Clear invitation** with purpose, timing, how to take part, and privacy information
- For telephone interviewing, this will be the **interviewer introduction**

Reminder 1 / follow up call attempts

- **Gentle reminder** through same or alternative channel
- For call backs phoning at **different times of day** can improve contact rates

Reminder 2 / targeted follow-up

- **More tailored follow-up** for groups with lower response
- For example, alternate timing, mode options, language support

Closure / thank you

- **Thank residents** and close off the process

Exercise: What would you change?

Subject line: URGENT: We want your feedback! 😀

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are conducting a survey about your recent experience and would value your participation. Please take part by visiting the link below.

Bit.ly/3xX9nGLq76

Thank you,
The Council Team

See next slide for answers

Task: In pairs/small groups, identify:

What is missing?

What might put residents off?

What would you change?

Email invite exercise: Points to consider

What is missing?

- Information on confidentiality
- Privacy notice
- Purpose of the research
- Length of the survey
- Contact information for if the respondent has any questions

What might put residents off?

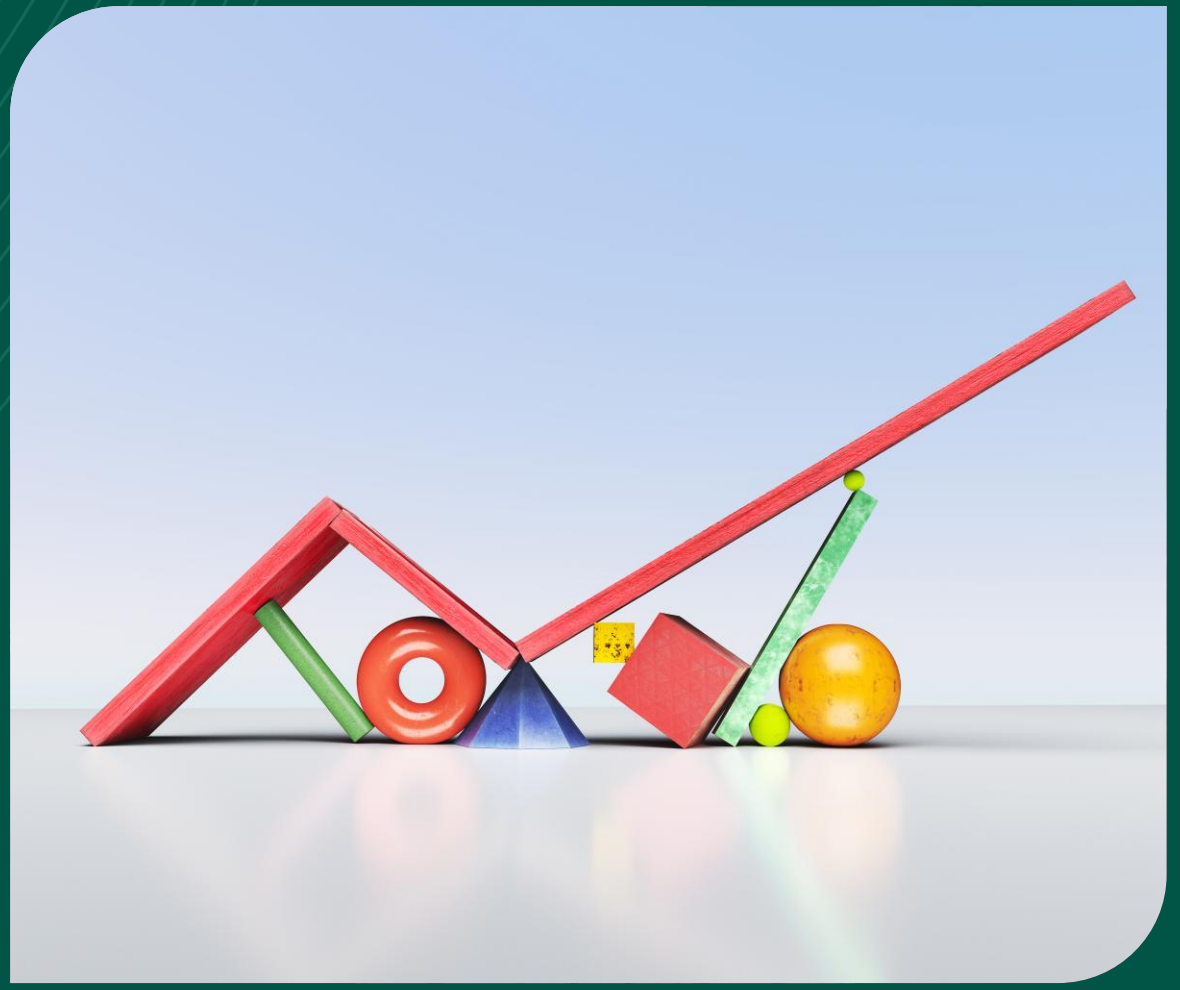
- No named recipient- it's generically addressed 'dear resident'- people may think it's a scam or not specifically meant for them
- Subject line looks like marketing
- Very generic and no official letterhead/logos
- No named contact, just 'the council team'
- Link does not look official

What would you change?

- Address the letter to a named contact if possible
- Include information on: what the research is and why it matters, confidentiality, length of survey, privacy notice
- Change the link so it does not look like spam
- Add in named contact that residents can get in touch with if needed.

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Response maximisation in practice



How to maximise response rates in practice

Response maximisation is about **reducing barriers to participation**, not just increasing contact attempts

Practical techniques

The **right mode** or combination of modes

Provision in **other languages** where needed

Reminders through appropriate channels

Keeping the survey as **short** as possible

Clear reassurance on **confidentiality**

Techniques specific for…

Online / paper surveys

- Clear and personalised **invitation**
- **Accessible** formatting



Face to face / telephone surveys

- Clear and confident interviewer **introductions**
- **Approachable, well briefed** and **engaging** interviewers
- Flexibility in **call timings** and timings for **interviewer-led follow-up**



Which mode(s) will work best for your residents?

- Telephone
- In person
- Paper
- Online

Discussion prompts:

1. Which residents are easiest to reach through each mode?
2. Which groups may be excluded?
3. Where would a multimode approach add most value?
4. What are the resource implications?
5. Any other implications?

There is rarely a single “best” mode - the right choice depends on your resident profile, capacity and inclusivity goals.

Exercise: build a response plan

For your scenario, decide…

- ☑ Survey mode(s)
- ☑ Invitation channel
- ☑ Support for harder to reach residents
- ☑ Advance communication approach
- ☑ Reminder strategy
- ☑ How to monitor engagement

See next slide for possible approaches



Scenario A

- Older residents
- Low internet access



Scenario B

- Diverse urban area
- Several commonly spoken languages



Scenario C

- Large consortium
- Varying local landlord relationships

Response plan exercise

There are no ‘right answers’. These are some potential approaches:



Scenario A

- Face to face contact
- Avoidance of online communications
- Contact through a recognised person



Scenario B

- Prioritisation of written or online communications that can be more easily translated
- Look out for high levels of ‘don’t’ know’ rates that suggest translation or comprehension issues



Scenario C

- Use of multiple modes
- Contact through local landlords who residents will recognise, rather than the consortium itself

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Incentives: when & how to use them



Using incentives appropriately

Key points to consider:

- Incentives are **optional and** must be funded by the Grant Recipient / organisation.
- They should be **proportionate and transparent**
- They shouldn't feel **coercive**
- Any conditions must be communicated **clearly in advance**

Use with care. Incentives can improve response rates, but may also create **low effort responding**

Prize draws can be a practical and low-cost option

Questions to ask before deciding

- Are there non-incentive improvements we should make first?
- What are the costs and admin implications?
- How will we explain the incentive clearly and fairly?

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Monitoring engagement during fieldwork



Monitoring respondent engagement during fieldwork

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Check early fieldwork data to assess whether residents appear to be **understanding and engaging** with the survey properly

Look out for…

- ☒ High levels of “Don’t know” on particular questions
- ☒ “Don’t know” / “Prefer not to say” on most questions
- ☒ Straight-lining
- ☒ Very short completion times.

These patterns may suggest…

- Unclear wording
- Survey fatigue
- Concern about consequences of answering honestly
- Rushed completion, including where incentives are offered

If you see these issues, you can consider…

- ☑ Strengthening **reassurance and confidentiality** messaging
- ☑ **Clarifying or shortening** any additional GR-added questions
- ☑ Reviewing whether **incentives** are affecting engagement
- ☑ Deciding whether some responses should be **excluded** from the final dataset

Reminder

Please do not change the order or wording of the core A3 questions!

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Ethics, privacy & resident trust



Getting engagement right ethically

	Key risks	Good practice
Consent and privacy	▪ Contacting residents who have **opted out** ▪ Unclear **privacy wording** or weak handling of questions about confidentiality	▪ Clear **privacy notice** ▪ Easy **opt-out / withdrawal** route
Voluntary participation	▪ Residents thinking their responses may **affect tenancy or services** ▪ Incentives that feel like **pressure**	▪ Clear **reassurance** that participation is voluntary
Accessibility	▪ **Inaccessible** materials	▪ Support for residents with **language or accessibility needs**
Respectful contact	▪ Over-contacting or appearing **intrusive** ▪ Interviewers sounding **unclear or insufficiently informed**	▪ **Respectful and proportionate contact**; clear call protocols and limits on call attempts ▪ **Escalation routes** if residents raise concerns or complaints
Data handling	▪ **Non-compliant and weak handling** of personal data	▪ **Secure handling** of personal data

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Action planning & next steps



What will you do next?

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5 key actions to build a specific and realistic roadmap for A3 success

1. **Strengthen communications**
   Identify one key area to improve



2. **Improve response rates**
   Define one concrete action to boost participation



3. **Incentives**
   Decide whether you will use incentives and justify why



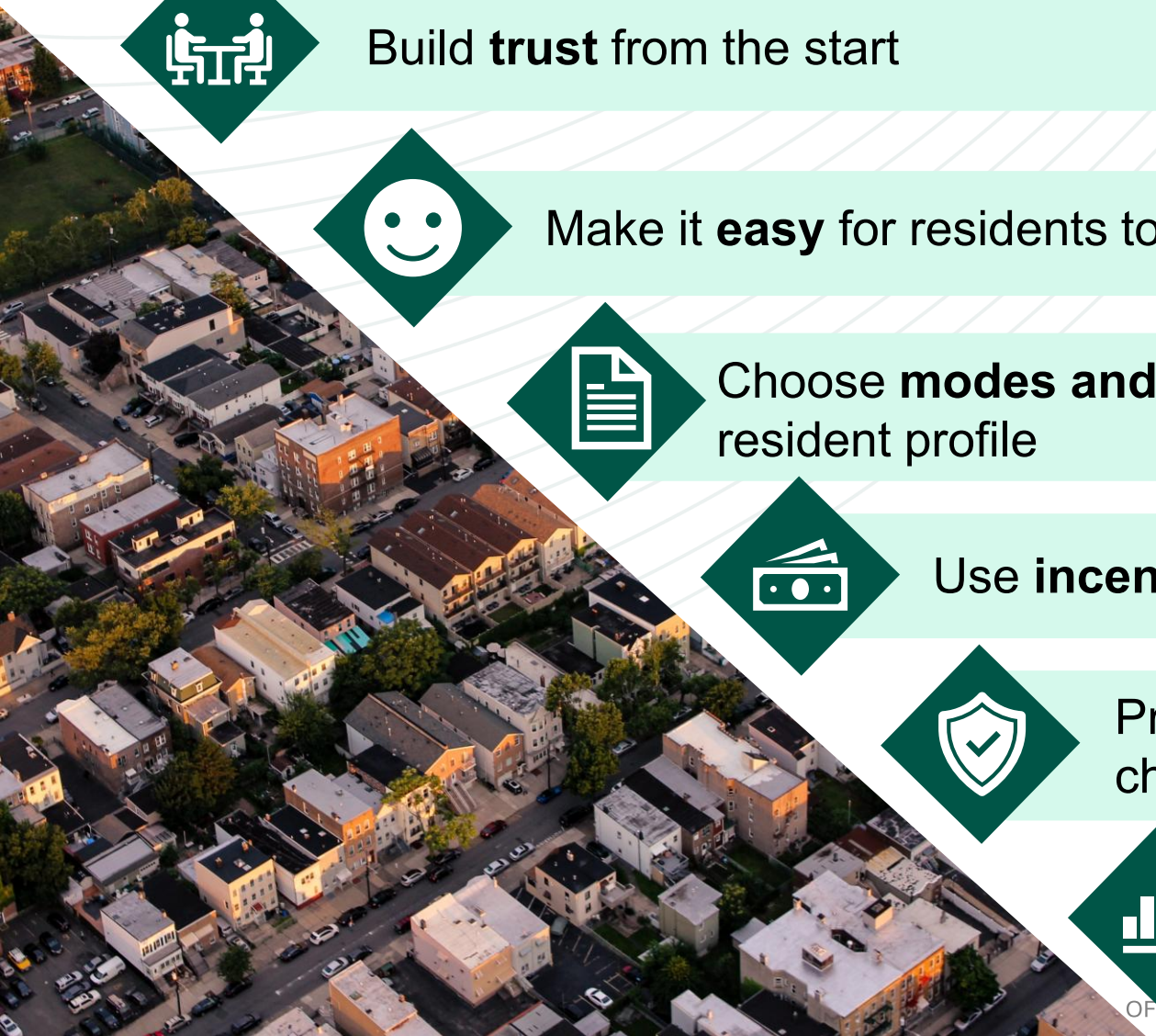
4. **Ethical / governance issues**
   Identify one issue to review and resolve



5. **Local engagement plan**
   Produce your first draft of this plan



Final takeaways



- Build **trust** from the start
- Make it **easy** for residents to take part
- Choose **modes and reminders** that fit your resident profile
- Use **incentives** carefully and transparently
- Protect **privacy** and respect residents' choices
- **Monitor** response and engagement during fieldwork

Thank you! Any questions?

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