



Introducing the EMR HACCC Alliance Consumer feedback toolkit

Why is consumer feedback important?

Collecting and using consumer feedback is an integral part of service delivery. It is embedded in the *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* and the legislation, policy, quality standards and frameworks that guide practice across the health and community service sectors.

Learning from consumers' experiences of healthcare can deliver real benefits for staff, service providers and the broader service system.

- Being involved in effective consumer feedback systems can, in itself, improve people's experience of services and their health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Effective consumer feedback systems allow service providers to understand what is important to the people who use services, what's working well and how to prioritise, design and deliver services that are capable of meeting their consumer's needs.

Collecting feedback is only valuable if it is used to make improvements.

What do effective consumer feedback systems look like?

There are lots of ways that consumers can provide feedback, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages. There is no one strategy or approach that is relevant or effective for everyone.

- Consumer feedback systems are most effective when they are developed and implemented as part of a broader consumer engagement framework. This creates an environment where the consumer's voice is valued, engagement strategies are prioritised and consumer feedback is actioned.
- Working with consumers to plan and develop consumer feedback tools is the most effective way to ensure that they are relevant and appropriate.

Consumers should be provided with a range of opportunities and encouraged to provide feedback in whatever way is appropriate and meaningful for them.





What's happening now?

- Many consumers experience barriers that make it difficult for them to provide feedback. Some people are reluctant to provide feedback, others are fatigued by the number of requests to provide feedback or disillusioned when previous feedback hasn't acted upon.
- Service providers are committed to collecting feedback from their consumers but often have difficulty collecting feedback that is meaningful and useful.
- Agencies are keen to enhance their systems, tools and skills to strengthen their consumer feedback systems.

Consumers, staff and service providers have a number of things in common:

- **They're all busy.** Time is precious and they need to be sure that the time and effort that is spent providing or collecting consumer feedback is valued and makes a difference. Systems need to be streamlined, efficient and integrated.
- **They're all different.** There is no one size fits all approach that will work for consumers or staff.
- **They're all committed to getting the best possible outcomes.**

The EMR Consumer feedback project

The Consumer feedback project was designed to support Home and Community Care (HACC) agencies in Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR), develop and implement effective and efficient consumer feedback systems. The project was supported by the EMR HACC Alliance¹ and funded by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments under the HACC program.

This *Consumer feedback toolkit* is the culmination of that project. It contains practical advice tools and strategies to assist staff to design, plan and implement consumer feedback strategies that are effective, efficient and appropriate for a diverse range of clients.



1. The EMR HACC Alliance brings together staff working in Home and Community Care (HACC) agencies across Melbourne's Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR). The Alliance supports staff to share knowledge and resources and supports a range of regional projects and initiatives that address common challenges and priorities. Additional information about the EMR HACC Alliance can be accessed via the Alliance pages on the local Inner and Outer Eastern PCP websites. Please refer to <http://www.oehcsa.org.au/special-project> for more information.



How to use the toolkit

The toolkit is set up to guide you through each step of the process. It has been designed as a set of discrete resources so you can ‘dip in’ and use different sections that are relevant to you. It is not designed to be read cover to cover.

While the information is tried, tested and supported by evidence, the toolkit focuses on practical aspects of collecting and using consumer feedback. Links to relevant resources are included within each section though, so you can access more comprehensive information as you need to.

Consumer feedback toolkit: Introduction and background

Sets the scene, providing an overview of the context and rationale for the EMR HACC Alliance Consumer feedback project and this toolkit.

Step 1

Identify the best way to collect feedback from your consumers and plan your approach.

Step 2

Set yourself up to collect the feedback you need in a way that is meaningful and appropriate for your consumers.

Step 3

Access practical tools and templates to plan, implement and evaluate your consumer feedback strategy.

Collecting and using consumer feedback effectively: Designing your approach

Planning is the key to success!

Outlines the key steps to designing a consumer feedback strategy that is tailored to your needs, appropriate for your consumers and feasible within the time and resources available.

Developing consumer surveys

Provides guidelines about how to plan and develop effective consumer surveys using a range of approaches.

Consumer survey tools and templates

Includes the *Survey design guide* and a *Survey checklist* to design and evaluate consumer surveys.

Conducting focus groups with consumers

Contains practical advice about when focus groups are most effective and strategies to plan, set up and conduct the focus groups with consumers.

Consumer focus group tools and templates

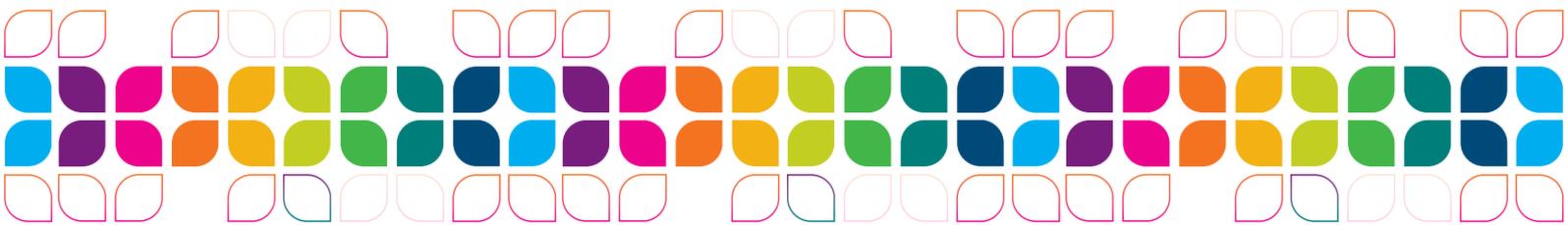
Includes a set of templates that can be used to create a *Facilitator's guide* to plan and deliver focus groups effectively.

Conducting in-depth interviews with consumers

Outlines strategies to set up for success when conducting face to face or phone based interviews.

Consumer interview tools and templates

Includes a set of *Interview protocol templates* that can be used to plan and deliver in-depth interviews with consumers.



Resources:

The EMR HACC Alliance Consumer Feedback Toolkit is also available online from the following websites:

- <http://www.oehcsa.org.au/special-project>
- <http://www.iepcp.org.au/eastern-metropolitan-region-home-and-community-care-alliance/eastern-metropolitan-region-home-and-co>
- <http://kpassoc.com.au/>

Microsoft word versions of some tools have also been created so they can be used electronically.

Health and Community service staff are already experts at engaging with consumers. They observe, listen and learn from clients and carers constantly and adapt their practice to meet each person's needs. These skills are the foundation of effective consumer feedback systems. We hope that this toolkit will provide staff with new ideas about how to apply those skills to collecting and using feedback from consumers.

We encourage you to think about ways to capture feedback opportunistically and where relevant, integrate feedback mechanisms into other activities to save time and reduce the burden on consumers and staff.

Limitations of the toolkit

There is no 'one size fits all' approach when it comes to collecting consumer feedback.

Not every tool or approach included in this toolkit will be relevant for every consumer. Staff need to use their professional judgement to determine what is appropriate.

This project focused exclusively on collecting and using feedback from consumers to improve the quality of service delivered. Broader program evaluation and consumer participation models were therefore beyond the scope of this project and are not included in this toolkit.

These resources do not negate the need for training. To support good practice, we recommend that the tools included in this toolkit are used in conjunction with practical, skills based training. Organisations should also consider reviewing relevant policies, procedures and systems to ensure that strategies are in place to maximise the value, efficiency and effectiveness of their consumer feedback systems.



This resource was developed by Kate Pascale and Associates Pty. Ltd on behalf of the EMR HACC Alliance, as part of the EMR HACC Consumer Feedback Project.

The project was supported by the Commonwealth and Victorian governments under the HACC program.



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