Qualitative Insight Toolkit
Section 3 of 5:

BRINGING YOUR FINDINGS TOGETHER

This is the third of five sections of the Qualitative Insight Toolkit.

Qualitative insight is information gathered from people that describes their experiences, opinions, and motivations. This insight can be used to help us understand people's behavior and influence decision making to better suit the needs of people and communities.

This section provides a step-by-step guide on bringing your findings together.

Section 3: Bringing your findings together

Once you have gathered your qualitative insight, you can then start to bring your findings together. You can follow the stages below to organise, categorise and 'make sense' of the insight you have gathered.

1 **Read through the insight you have gathered**

It's important to get familiar with your insights first. At this stage, make some initial notes for yourself, which may include ideas, themes, or reflections. At this point, you're just thinking about the data you have.

2 **Identify common words or topics (also known as coding)**

There are two main ways to identify common words and topics in qualitative insight:

Inductively:

This approach is about identifying and labelling common words, phrases or topics as they appear to you in the text over time, as you read through your insight. A good approach to use when you're not sure what topics will be in your insight.

Deductively:

This approach is about identifying topics and themes that you want to look for in advance, then searching for instances of them in your insight. A good approach to use when you know the topics you're interested in and want to gather examples or quotes of experience.

Additional detailed guidance and examples of how to use inductive and deductive approaches to bring your insights together can be found in Appendix 7 in our *'Section 3 Templates: Bringing Your Findings Together'* document here:

https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/local-voice/qualitative-insight-toolkit/

There are many methods you can use to identify and label common words, phrases and themes in your insight, including:
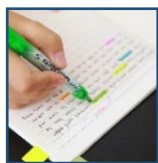
 Using **printed or digital copies** of your insight to make written notes and colour code different topics.

 Using **post-it notes** to write themes/quotes and arrange them across the table.

 Using **spider diagrams** to connect themes and subthemes.

 Creating a **frequency table** to count the frequency of specific words, phrases or topics to compare their prevalence in your insight.

 Creating a **theme table** to link common themes, related subthemes and quotes together.

 Using **qualitative analysis software** – better suited to large-scale data and individuals/teams with previous research experience.

You can choose a method that works best for you and your insight.

For further guidance and examples of how to use frequency tables and theme tables to bring your insight together, see our *'Section 3 Templates: Bringing Your Findings Together'* document here:

https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/local-voice/qualitative-insight-toolkit/

For frequency tables, see Appendix 8 for guidance and Appendix 9 for a template.

For theme tables, see Appendix 10 for guidance and Appendix 11 for a template.

3 Create categories (also known as themes)

Once you have identified your common words or topics, you can then start to organise these into categories or themes. For example, if participants shared information about their different health conditions, your categories or themes might look like this:

Example words or topics:

Anxiety; depression; heart condition; pain; broken leg.

Example categories or themes:

Health condition; physical health condition; mental health condition.

4 Identify patterns across your insight

This is where you focus less on the details and more on identifying relationships, patterns, or trends across your insight. You can identify overarching themes, provide definitions for them, and pull together examples of participant experience or quotes. This will help you build a story with your insights. The names and definitions of your themes may change a lot at this stage as you find more examples across your insight.

5 Review your themes

Take time to step away from your insights, so you can stop, process, and review your themes. When reviewing, ask yourself:

- Do the definitions of my themes reflect the quotes/examples I've gathered?
- Is there any duplication or overlapping of themes? Do I need to adjust these?
- Do my themes really reflect what my participants said?

Remember that your themes are you own interpretations, so they will be influenced by your personal experiences and your connections to the topics, venues, and participants. Asking for a fresh set of eyes on the insight can help you identify new perspectives.

6 Finalise the names and definitions of your themes

Once you're happy with your themes, their definitions, and the examples/quotes you have to evidence them, you're ready to start presenting your findings.

It is good practice to review what consent you have gathered from your participants to ensure that you do not share personal or identifying information about them in your work that they have not given you permission to use. For more guidance on this, see "Gathering Participant Consent" in our *'Section 2: Gathering Qualitative Insight'* guidance document here:
https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/local-voice/qualitative-insight-toolkit/

Looking for more information on the Qualitative Insight Toolkit?

This guidance is the third of five toolkit sections in the Qualitative Insight Toolkit. The five sections of the toolkit are:

1. Planning Your Approach
2. Gathering Qualitative Insight
3. Bringing Your Findings Together
4. Presenting and Sharing Your Findings
5. Reflecting on Your Work

To access the full toolkit guidance, toolkit templates that you can print and use, or guidance and templates for the specific sections above, see:

https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/local-voice/qualitative-insight-toolkit/

Contact

If you have questions or feedback about this resource, please email the Qualitative Insight Team at qualitativeinsightteam@wirral.gov.uk.

About us

Qualitative Insight is a type of research that listens to people to gather their thoughts, experiences, and ideas on particular subjects. The Qualitative Insight Team at Wirral Council work with residents to ensure that their voices are heard when informing council policy and decision making. The team supports the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing strategy, in which residents' voices are a key strand.

Acknowledgements

The Qualitative Insight Toolkit has been designed by the Qualitative Insight Team, Public Health, Wirral Borough Council.

https://www.wirralintelligenceservice.org/local-voice/qualitative-insight-toolkit/

Icon shown on cover page made by *DinosoftLabs* from www.flaticon.com.