Designing and using registration forms

Your registration form is one of the most important data collection tools of your evaluation. It collects essential information about your participants and can also be used to collect baseline outcomes data.

1. Before you start

Check that a registration form is the best way to collect this information from your target audience. If it is, then before you design it, think about:

- **Who you need to collect data from** – do your participants have accessibility needs for example English as a second language, or are they children and young people? Questions may need to be tailored to suit your participants' needs. Sport England have developed a set of standard questions to be used with children and young people.

- **Who will be completing the form** – in some cases you may need to think about designing different forms for different audiences (e.g. a registration form for under 16 year olds and a different adult registration form). Or you may need to ask someone to complete the form on behalf of your participants, for example if you want to collect data from children then you may need to ask the parent to complete the form instead of the child. Click here for an example of a basic registration form for parents to complete on behalf of their children.

- **What you need to collect and why** – for example who is your target audience and what are the outcomes for your project? Collect data that will help you see how successful your project has been in reaching this audience and achieving these outcomes.

- **When and how to collect data** – ideally the data will be collected before participants start involvement in your project. This could mean sending out an online registration form in advance of their first session/engagement with the project or asking them to complete either an on-line or paper registration form at the start of their first session/engagement. How you decide to administer the registration form will impact how you ultimately design the registration form.

2. What to include

Consider your target audience, reporting requirements, outcome indicators, learning priorities and process evaluation. Depending on space you may need to prioritise what you *need* over what is merely useful.

Title	Make your title welcoming and clear. 'Back to Netball new starter form' is better than 'Participant monitoring form'!

Purpose	Explain what the form is, why you want to collect the information and how you plan to use the information. Create buy-in, so that people empathise with your need to collect it and are more willing to help.
Participant details	What information do you need about your participants? This might include: • Name • Contact details e.g. postal address, telephone number, email address • Joining date • Post code (can be useful for mapping participants and project reach, and analysing socio-economic groups being attracted to the project) • Demographic data – e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, disability (see our Adult and Child Question Banks for the standard questions) • Other characteristics relevant to your target audience, such as education level, NEET status, sexual identity or BMI. These can be sensitive, so be cautious and seek guidance if you need to • Relevant medical details • Emergency contact details
Baseline outcomes data	Registration forms can double up as baseline surveys, so include any relevant outcome measures e.g. physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development and social and community development
Follow-up outcome data	Always remember to plan ahead for your follow-ups – do you have the right contact information (and consent – see below) to contact them again?
Project delivery information	What information could help you deliver your project? For example, how participants found out about the activities (or their referral route), their motivations for joining, or how easy they found it to join.
Data Protection	Add a statement telling people why you're collecting the data and how you'll use it. Tell them how you'll store it, whether it's confidential and/or anonymous, who has access, and whether you'll share it with anyone else. Ensure this complies with all relevant GDPR legislation. Click here for guidance on implementing GDPR.
Consent	If you want to contact participants again, e.g. to add them to a mailing list or for follow-up evaluation, you will need their consent. The type of consent you need may vary, so check first. Click here for guidance on obtaining consent. If you are planning on obtaining information from children and young people you may need to obtain consent from their parent or responsible adult first.
Thank you	Say thank you!

3. Designing your registration form

Branding and appearance	A registration form will be seen by the public – so remember to design it well and add your logo and branding, the same as you would for any other external publication.
Accessibility	Think about who will be completing the form and whether they will have any accessibility needs – large font, clear colours, different languages etc.
Language	Tailor the language to the audience and keep it clear and concise (which also saves on space).
Length, duration, complexity, flow, layout	The length of the registration form will be dependent upon what you need to find out but keep the form as short, simple and concise as possible. Think about the order of questions. Put the most essential information at the start of the form (often demographic information). Then start with your most important outcome (e.g. physical activity levels).
Types of questions	Think carefully about the types of questions you use. Using closed questions (providing a set of responses from which the participant has to choose) will make it quicker for the participant to answer and make it easier to analyse the data. However, you may still need to use open questions (where the participant writes their own response).
Pilot	Pilot it. Take the survey yourself and ask some colleagues to do the same. Think about clarity, readability, flow, understanding, duration.

For further advice on designing forms and questionnaires see our guide to maximising your response rates.