

User research toolkit from GDS #VerifyLocal pilots

About this resource

This toolkit was developed to support the councils taking part in the Government Digital Service's #VerifyLocal pilots and is being published here to support those councils and for others who hope to learn from that approach. It is a practical set of tools designed for busy service teams that are new to user research. It can be used alongside the [GDS service manual](#).

The toolkit is divided into the following sections:

- Discovery user research: learning about user's needs
- Alpha user research: testing prototypes with users

Discovery user research: learning about user's needs

The goal for user research during this phase of the project, as outlined in the [service manual](#), was to find out:

- who our users are
- our users' needs and how we're meeting them
- needs we're not meeting

These materials were developed to help local authorities interview existing service users, map their experience of services and record these experiences and the associated needs they highlight:

- [Training presentation](#) on conducting user research in the discovery phase
- [Interview prompts](#) for user researchers facilitating journey mapping interviews
- [Consent forms](#) to record participant's consent to take part in your interview
- A useful [template for mapping user journeys during interviews](#), that includes prompts for the interviewer.
- [Guidance on documenting your findings](#), prioritising them and feeding them back to the service
- [User journey template](#) to help you document what you learn
- A [research tips poster](#), to help inexperienced observers provide valuable insight
- [Moderation hints and tips](#) to support researchers in moderating tests and not being constrained by their discussion guides

Alpha user research: testing prototypes with users

The goals for user research during this phase of the project, as outlined in the [service manual](#), are:

- improve the team's understanding of your users and their needs
- test different design ideas and service prototypes with likely users
- learn how to build or improve your service so that it helps users achieve their goal

These materials were developed to help local authorities test an end-to-end prototype of their service, to identify issues and improve the design. This cycle is repeated until you're confident that your design solution meets the needs of users.

- [Training presentation](#) on conducting user research in the alpha phase
- In research we provide users with [personal details to use during sessions](#). This avoids the issues of recording a session where a user is entering sensitive personal data into the prototype. This is an editable version of the documents, so you can change the details to something relevant for your local authority.
- [Interview prompts](#) for user researchers facilitating journey mapping interviews
- [Consent forms](#) to record participant's consent to take part in your interview
- A [research tips poster](#), to help inexperienced observers provide valuable insight.
- [Moderation hints and tips](#) to support researchers in moderating tests and not being constrained by their discussion guides

We welcome feedback on these resources. If you have specific questions or feedback you can contact pete.gale@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk or verifylocal@digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk.