

# FAQs about the Common Measurement Framework (CMF) forms

## A guide for practitioners and delivery partners (except Kickstart projects)

### 1) What are the CMF forms?

CMF stands for Common Measurement Framework. This is the blue registration form and the red wellbeing form. There is also a yellow information booklet for participants which goes alongside these blue and red forms.

### 2) Why am I being asked to do them?

Bristol Ageing Better is one of fourteen Ageing Better areas in the UK funded by the Big Lottery Fund. A primary aim of this programme is to build an evidence base of what works to reduce and prevent isolation and loneliness (as there is currently a lack of knowledge and evidence about effective interventions in this area). This evidence base will then be used to inform future policy and commissioning so that future generations can grow older surrounded by services that are more effective and better planned.

The Big Lottery Fund requires all projects within all Ageing Better areas to use these CMF forms (that's more than 300 projects!). As such, it is a requirement of your funding from Bristol Ageing Better to use the CMF forms and is contained within your Service Level Agreement.

### 3) Why have these questions been chosen?

The CMF forms are designed to capture information about how a participant is feeling (for example relating to loneliness, isolation, wellbeing or ability to influence decisions affecting their local area). Although the questions might seem very direct, they have been tested and re-tested by researchers multiple times and are the best questions for gathering the information needed to create this evidence base.

Personal questions (for example about sexuality) are asked for two reasons. Firstly, to make sure BAB's projects are reaching participants from all backgrounds and, secondly, to make sure BAB's projects are having the same impact on all demographic groups.

Some of the questions might appear to be not directly relevant to the activities of your project. This is because the same questions are being asked by over 300 other projects around the UK, all of which are undertaking different activities with their participants. You are, however, still required to complete the CMFs. See question 10 for guidance about what to do if you feel some of the questions are not relevant for you.

It is important to remember that the CMF is only one part of a bigger evaluation picture. It captures certain information, but it is not designed to capture everything about your project. For example it is not able to capture the smaller (and yet still very significant) personal changes made by a participant - we appreciate that this can be very frustrating for practitioners! However these successes can be captured in other ways, for example via case studies.

#### 4) What CMF forms does my project need to complete and when?

This will depend on the nature of your work with participants. Your manager will be able to provide you with specific guidance however the table below acts as a general guide...

What type of support are you providing for the individual?	CMF form to use
One-off face-to-face interaction (e.g. a one-off talk at a library)	Blue registration form.
One-off telephone interaction (e.g. an enquiry about activities in the local area)	Blue registration form.
Ongoing activity or interaction (e.g. multiple visits, mindfulness course etc.)	<p><u>When you start working with the participant:</u> Blue registration form <b>and</b> red wellbeing form. These should be completed within the first two visits/sessions. Circle 'entry' as the time point on the first page of the red form.</p> <p><u>When you finish working with the participant:</u> Red wellbeing form again. This should be completed on the last or penultimate visit/session. Circle 'exit' as the time point on the first page of the red form.</p> <p><u>Six months after finishing work with the participant:</u> Red wellbeing form again. Circle 'follow up' as the time point on the first page on the red form. Please note this is six months after finishing work with that participant, not six months after your project as a whole has finished.</p>
Older volunteers within your project who, through volunteering, it is expected that there will be improvements in their social isolation and/or loneliness	<p><u>When they start volunteering:</u> Blue registration form <b>and</b> red wellbeing form. These should be completed within the first two volunteering sessions. Circle 'entry' as the time point on the first page of the red form.</p> <p><u>When they stop volunteering:</u> Red wellbeing form again. This should be completed on the last or penultimate volunteering session. Circle 'exit' as the time point on the first page of the red form.</p> <p><u>Six months after they stop volunteering:</u> Red wellbeing form again. Circle 'follow up' as the time point on the first page on the red form. Please note this is six months after the individual has finished volunteering for your project, not six months after your project as a whole has finished.</p>
Another type of support where you would expect to see a change in someone as a	<p><u>When you start working with the participant:</u> Blue registration form <b>and</b> red wellbeing form. These should be completed within the first two visits/sessions.</p>

<p>result of the session / intervention</p>	<p>Circle 'entry' as the time point on the first page of the red form.</p> <p><u>When you finish working with the participant:</u> Red wellbeing form again. This should be completed on the last or penultimate visit/session. Circle 'exit' as the time point on the first page of the red form.</p> <p><u>Six months after finishing work with the participant:</u> Red wellbeing form again. Circle 'follow up' as the time point on the first page on the red form. Please note this is six months after finishing work with that participant, not six months after your project as a whole has finished.</p>
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If it is easier, the red wellbeing form can be completed over the course of two visits/sessions. However it is important that this does not take longer than two sessions to complete as this will make the data gathered less meaningful.

Everyone completing a CMF form (either red or blue) should be given a copy of the yellow information leaflet and time to read and understand it. They should be encouraged to keep the information leaflet for reference.

## 5) How long will it take to complete the CMF forms?

This all depends on the support needs of the participant. Our learning from previous projects suggests the following timescales:

- Yellow information booklet: Approximately 10 minutes to inform participants about the purposes of the CMF forms and how their personal information will be used.
- Blue registration form: Approximately 15 minutes.
- Red wellbeing form: Approximately 45 minutes.

## 6) Which CMF forms should be completed if my participant is involved in more than one BAB-funded project?

If this happens, please contact BAB for specific advice as it depends on the individual circumstances and the nature of their involvement with each project.

## 7) What are some common mistakes to avoid when completing the CMF forms?

The most common mistake is forgetting to complete the delivery partner and project name at the beginning of both blue and red forms. If this is incomplete we will unfortunately be unable to use the data provided.

Similarly, sometimes participants overlook the consent page of the blue form (the first page). If they have not given us their consent then we will not be able to use the data provided.

## **8) How much assistance should I provide when participants are completing the forms?**

The forms are designed for self-completion and therefore you should aim to provide as little assistance as possible. Of course this depends on the needs of the individual and so you should use your professional judgement on a case-by-case basis. As a general guide...

- If possible, it is best for the participant to complete the form themselves without any assistance. This includes reading the questions themselves and completing the answers.
- If they need assistance to read the form (for example because of eyesight or literacy needs), then you should read this word-for-word without putting the questions in your own words or offering any interpretation/examples. The participant should still complete the answers themselves once you have read them each answer option.
- If they need assistance completing the answers (for example because of physical needs), then they should read the questions and tell you which answer they would like you to write down.
- If they are unsure what a question means, it is important that you do not offer your own interpretation or opinion (for example about what is meant by a 'general sense of emptiness'). Instead, tell them that it all depends what it means for them – whatever they think it means is right.

If a participant writes down an answer you believe to be 'wrong' (for example about their gender, disability, level of social contact etc.), it is important not to 'correct' them. The forms are for participants to complete however they wish without any influence or prompting from the practitioner.

Remember that if you are assisting someone to complete the form, please try to do this in a private place as many questions are personal in nature.

## **9) If I am reading out the questions to a participant, can I read them in any order?**

Yes, if the participant has support needs which require you to read the questions out to them, then you can choose which order the questions are read. For example, you may wish to start with some of the less personal questions to 'warm them up' first. However it is important that you read them every question on the form, even if you think they are not directly relevant to your project.

## **10) What should I do if I feel some of the questions are not relevant to my project?**

Although you may feel that some of the questions are not relevant to the activities of your project, you should not influence participants by telling them which questions you think this applies to. Instead, when explaining the purpose of the CMF to a participant, you could tell them there's a chance some questions might not be relevant in which case it is fine if they skip these questions. The participant can then decide for themselves if they would like to skip anything.

### **11) A participant has dementia – do they still need to complete the CMF?**

It depends whether they are able to give informed consent, as each individual with dementia is different. Many of those with dementia will not be able to give informed consent, however those in the very early stages are likely to be able to understand the purpose of the forms and give their consent. When working with older people with dementia, please contact your BAB contract manager for advice about the CMFs.

### **12) What should I do if a participant refuses to complete the CMF?**

That is fine – their participation is entirely voluntary. They do not have to complete any of the CMF forms if they do not want to. They can also choose to skip certain questions if they prefer.

### **13) A participant is annoyed about being asked to do the CMF forms and wants to make a complaint, what do I do?**

Acknowledge their feelings and provide them with information about how they can make a complaint. Depending on the nature of their complaint, they may wish to make this complaint to your own organisation or directly to Bristol Ageing Better. For information about your own complaints procedures, contact your manager. For information about the complaints procedure for Bristol Ageing Better, contact the BAB Programme Manager.

### **14) What should I do if a participant needs the CMF in a different format?**

The CMF is currently available in sixteen languages – Arabic, Bengali, English, Farsi, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Simplified Chinese, Somali, Spanish, Traditional Chinese, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese.

It is also available in large print (in English). If a participant needs the CMF in one of these formats, please request these from [bab@ageukbristol.org.uk](mailto:bab@ageukbristol.org.uk)

Unfortunately it is not available in Easy Read format. This is because the Big Lottery Fund have tested the specific wording of each question and believe the value of the question will be lost if the wording is changed. For this reason, the Big Lottery Fund will not be providing the CMF in Easy Read format.

### **15) What should I do with the completed forms?**

As a practitioner, you should return completed forms to your manager. Your manager will then arrange for these to be returned to Bristol Ageing Better for data entry. Managers can return these forms in a way that is most suitable for your project (e.g. by post or in person).

### **16) Will Bristol Ageing Better send me a reminder when the six-month follow up forms need to be completed?**

It is the project's responsibility to record when follow-up forms need to be completed and to remember to undertake these. Participants will start and finish their support at different points in time; it would not be possible for BAB to know when each person within all of our projects is due a follow-up CMF.

When arranging for participants to complete the follow-up forms, please remember that this occurs six months after that individual has finished being supported by the project (not six months after the project as a whole has finished).

**17) Can I access the anonymised CMF data for my project?**

Yes you can – this can be requested from [bab@ageukbristol.org.uk](mailto:bab@ageukbristol.org.uk) (please allow time for the data to be entered first).