

Understanding digital needs persona

WHAT IS THE TOOL AND WHAT DOES IT AIM TO DO?

The persona tool is designed to help you capture the digital inclusion needs of people accessing health and social care services. Personas help to people designing services empathise with people accessing your service and understand where improvements can be made to make experiences better.

A persona is usually one page profile of information. It provides a representation of a person's life, experiences and attitudes based on research, data or a composite collection of real experiences. It can never replace doing individual user research with people but it can help in building an understanding of the needs of the people who access your service(s).

WHAT YOU'LL NEED TO BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THE TOOL / PREPARATION REQUIRED

Best practice for the creation of the personas is to engage with people with lived experience of accessing health and social care services and develop the personas based on the lived experience insights. If this is not possible, you can bring people with lived experience and stakeholders with experience of supporting people to access services together in a group session and create a set of personas based on their experiences as a group.

If it is not possible to bring people together as a group to create the personas, a persona bank is available from the LOTI project. Read through the [LOTI persona bank](#) to see if there are any personas that feel relatable to the people accessing your service. If they feel accurate enough to use in future activities as your "users" then you can save/print out these personas to use in the session (A3 size minimum for printing).

If the personas from the LOTI bank aren't quite right, then gather as much information as possible around the people who access your service and make sure you talk to staff who might be able to complete the details in a blank user persona template based on their experience of working in your organisation/service.

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HOW TO USE THE TOOL

Based on the information you have gathered, decide how many user personas would be helpful. The different personas could have varying ages, life experiences or attitudes towards digital support. Three to five personas are a good amount to aim for to capture the diversity of needs of people accessing your service/organisation.

Outline the different user personas, giving them a name and basic information like age, family/living situation and relationship with digital. Using the persona template, start to create a narrative for different parts of the person's life and attitudes. You can change the headings of the persona template to suit your service or based on your engagements with people with lived experience.

Try not to make any assumptions about the needs of the people you support. Seek out the insights and evidence from other user research if you are not able to directly involve people with lived experience.

TIPS FOR USING THE TOOL

Completing the personas as a group activity could involve people with lived experience and a mixed group of staff who work closely with the people accessing your service and those who have less first-hand understanding.

Use the completed personas as part of stage 5 of the co-design process when designing the digital inclusion support to ensure that the support will meet the needs of the personas you have created.

FURTHER READING

[LOTI persona bank](#)