

Friends and Family Test Overview

From 1 April 2020, dental practices providing treatment commissioned by NHS England will be required to implement some changes to the Friends and Family Test (FFT). Responsibilities for implementing the test remain largely unchanged, however, practices will be required to change the wording of the FFT currently available to their patients.

The key changes include:

- A new standard mandatory question and preceding text which replaces the existing wording of the FFT question
- A requirement that the FFT question to be the same for all patients. However, supplementary text and graphics can be used on the questionnaire to help children and those who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss to better understand the question
- New recommended free text questions

Practices must **still**:

- Provide an opportunity for people who use the practice to give anonymous feedback through the FFT
- Use the standard wording of the FFT question and the responses exactly, as set out below. Follow NHS England advice on collecting feedback from people who are unable to answer the FFT question on their own
- Include at least one follow up question, which allows the opportunity to provide free text
- Submit data to NHS England each month
- Publish or display results locally

You can collect the feedback in any way you like so long as it comes from your full spectrum of patients and in sufficient numbers to produce a meaningful analysis. The guidance does say that you should gain feedback from as many patients as possible, but there are no actual targets. The FFT is aimed at patients that receive NHS funded care or treatment and all patients that attend an out of hours or emergency care provider. Patients who attend but do not wait to be seen by a clinician should be able to provide feedback if they wish. NHS England will publish the results every month.

FFT Mandatory Question

The FFT Mandatory Question is comprised of four parts:

- 1) Introductory wording
- 2) Question
- 3) Response scale
- 4) Free text question

Introductory statement

The mandatory question must be framed with some introductory wording that explains which service the feedback is about. Practices can choose the most appropriate of the following options to help ensure the feedback collected is related to the right service.

"Thinking about your recent appointment..."

Or

"Thinking about your dental practice..."

Or

"Thinking about your recent visit to P R Jones Dental Practice..."

Or

"Thinking about the service we provide..."

Practices may use a suitable alternative of their own for the introductory wording, however, the statement must begin with the phrase: *"Thinking about..."*.

"Overall, how was your experience of our service?"

Mandatory response scale

Very good	Good	Neither good nor poor	Poor	Very poor	Don't know
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Practices are required to include at least one free-text question alongside the FFT question. The wording of this question is at the discretion of individual practices. NHS England have recommended two free-text questions which, taken together, have been found to encourage good quality feedback. These questions are:

"Please can you tell us why you gave your answer?"

"Please tell us about anything that we could have done better"

Supplementary text and graphics may be used to make it as easy as possible for your patients to understand what they are being asked about. NHS England will be publishing new templates for easy read feedback cards and children's feedback cards which will include additional text and graphics before 1 April—these will be made available on the NHS England [website](#). Practices may also decide that they wish to add their own additional text and/or graphics to make their feedback cards as accessible as possible.

You can add your own questions to the FFT so long as the feedback stays short and simple. CODE recommends no more than 3 questions. See the FFT question template in (M 295A).

iComply members can use the Patient Satisfaction Survey (G 115A) for regular comprehensive surveys and Friends and Family Questionnaire (M 295A) for an on-going FTT survey for all NHS patients.

Consider asking demographic questions to collect equality and diversity information to help you compare experiences of different patient groups. It does not have to be reported to NHS England but it will help you understand patient requirements better and comply with Equality Act 2010. See (M 295A) for an example of the minimum recommended demographic questions.

Making the FFT inclusive

No patient should experience disadvantage through the way in which they are given the opportunity to provide feedback through the FFT as it is important to hear from all patients, including those who are vulnerable. Some of the people you may need to make special arrangements for are:

This means that you may have to present the FFT in other ways – such as large print, easy read, language translations and so on – to provide an opportunity for everyone. This includes considering accessibility for:

- People with physical health conditions that might make it difficult for them to access feedback opportunities in the same way as others, such as those with sight or hearing disabilities;
- People with a learning disability
- People with autism or similar conditions
- Those with other conditions that affect their understanding, memory or communication, such as people who have had a stroke or have dementia
- People who can't read, or who read poorly
- People whose first language is not English
- Children and young people

Families and carers can offer valuable insights, and consideration should be given to capturing their views with the FFT. See the Friends and Family Test NHS guidelines below for further information about inclusivity.

When to ask the FFT question

Consider asking patients to answer the question after a course of treatment has finished. However, the FFT must be made available for patients and people who use service to give feedback at any time via the FFT if they wish.

Data submission

Practices must submit monthly to NHS England:

- The number of responses in each category
- The number of responses collected by each collection method

See the template spreadsheet (FFT Data.xls) for a data recording method.

Patients who do not have any NHS-funded care or treatment can be asked the FFT question, but they should not be included in the reporting to NHS England.

The free text responses, and any additional information collected via the FFT, should not be submitted to NHS England. It's also possible that for some time after the new question is in place you will receive responses to the old question. Data collected using the old question can still be used locally but should not be submitted to NHS England from 1 April 2020.

Practices must also publish their results locally, but there is flexibility in how this is done. It is useful for patients to know how their feedback was used to improve services for example by implementing a "you said, we did" noticeboard. NHS England offer a [poster template](#) which can be used by Practices to display this information.

By what date must the changes be made?

The new question must be available to patients from Wednesday 1 April 2020. The first data using the new question should be submitted in May for publication in June 2020.

If it is not practical for an individual practice to switch from the old question to the new question overnight on the day before transition, preparations should be made to change to the new question a few days earlier so the new question is available to patients by 1 April 2020.

Data Protection

If a practice is not using personal data to contact people to ask for their feedback, then no further action is required. If a practice is using personal data to contact people to ask for their feedback your Privacy Notice (M 217T) and Information Governance Procedures (M 217C) will outline the lawful bases for processing.

Further information

[The Friends and Family Test \(NHS Guidance 2019\)](#)

[Guidance on the submission of NHS dental service FFT data](#)

[Friends and Family Test FAQs](#)

[FFT Posters and communications resources](#)

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