Manchester City Council – Analysis of Social Care Staff

My fellowship experience at the MCC– what I did, what I learnt, and why I truly loved it

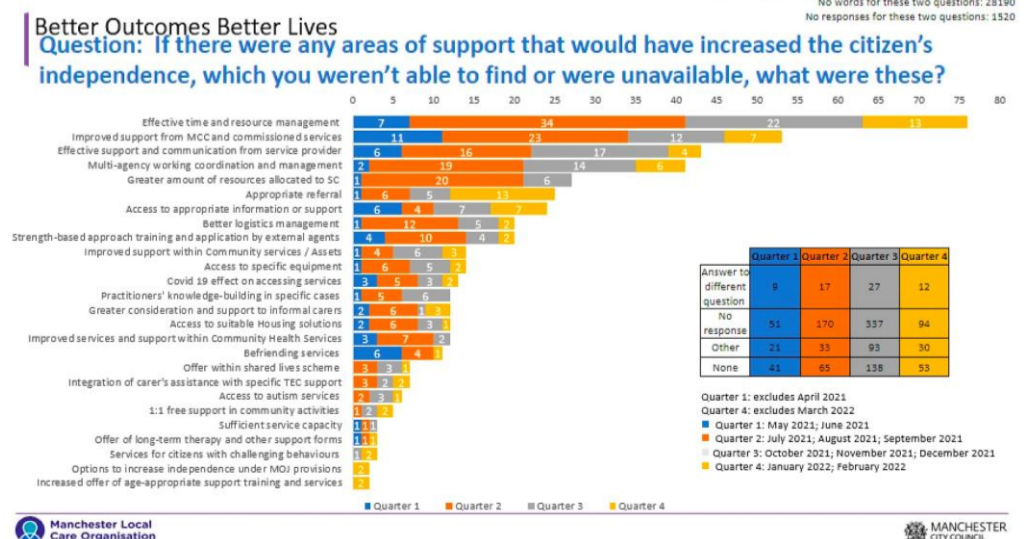Giorgia Ravera | **Politics and International Relations**

Example of coding grid for my Excel qualitative analysis

Overview of the Data Fellowship

Through my data fellowship I worked on improving the City Council services within the Better Outcomes Better Lives program. The aim of the program is to enhance the use of a Strength-Based Approach in Adult Social Care, so that citizens are empowered by practitioners to rely on their current abilities and strengths, rather than focusing on their limits and problems. My job consisted in finding the gaps in this system that prevented practitioners from adopting a Strength-Based Approach in their practices. To highlight these gaps I carried out a qualitative analysis of a practitioners' survey named Learning Logs. This survey was made up of six questions– for a total of more than 10,000 responses – asking respondents about what worked well and what did not in their work with the citizen, as well as about what form of support could have assisted them better in their application of a Strength-Based Approach, but wasn't available to them.

Data Analysis

To find strengths and weaknesses in the current approach, I used Excel to create a grid with all the responses and data details columned on the left-hand side of the spreadsheet. In the top row of the document I added all the response categories that I found among the answers during the coding process. In the interception cells between the columned responses and the categories row I put the number of times a category theme was found in each response (ranging 0-…). At the end I could do the sum of these cases for the overall total and for each month. This enabled me to create a summary graph for each question which showed which gaps the practitioners identified, as well as the number of times a gap/other theme was identified among practitioners across quartiles.

Findings

- Most of the practitioners identified time constraint as the major barrier to the delivery of a strength-based approach.
- Many respondents highlighted the importance of coordination among sectors for the delivery of services to citizens.
- One of the greatest drivers of successful action across practitioners in the delivery of the Strength-Based approach was taking part in communities of practice which shared knowledge around the method and how to incorporate it into their daily work. This was good news for the City Council, as it proved that their program was having a positive effect on Adult Social Care workers.
- Expanding the amount of services available did not come across as much as a priority as improving the quality of existing services across Greater Manchester.

Key Skills Learnt

Throughout this fellowship I could practice and expand my qualitative research and analysis skills. This was especially useful for me in subsequent research projects, as it added a lot to my primarily quantitative background. In particular, I learnt new methods of data visualisation, and new practical ways of approaching large-n qualitative data. I also learnt new formulas in Excel, which I now use daily in my current work.

As well as that, I have become more confident in delivering presentations and in engaging with professionals and stakeholders in a filed that is new to me. This data fellowship has also informed me a lot about policymaking in a local context. Before taking part in this experience I had no idea what working in a major city's local council was like, and to what extent its work could affect the life of millions of citizens.

PowerPoint slide example from my final presentation