



# Local government

The modernisation of local government has required local authorities to engage with their local residents and other stakeholders. From Best Value Reviews through to consultation on policy issues, research is widely used by local authorities to understand their residents' views.

We have worked for more than 20 London boroughs over the last five years and so are very familiar with the issues of conducting research among socially and ethnically diverse populations.

The work we have undertaken for local authorities in London has meant that we are experienced in conducting research amongst excluded/hard to reach communities.

**Recent examples of projects include:**

## London Councils

Each year we conduct surveys among London residents for around 14 local authorities as part of the London Councils' public satisfaction tracking studies (since 1997). Typically, each survey involves interviewing 1,000 residents face-to-face. We interview members of the public about the quality of public services in their local area and how they perceive their local Council. Since 2005/6 we have included a module interviewing young people aged 11-17 in those households where we interviewed an adult.

The survey also provides information on what residents see as their main concerns in terms of crime, health and other social issues. Each Council has the facility to ask extra questions of their own choice. Topics we have covered include a range of issues from crime through to use of ICT. The information is used by Members and officers to inform corporate planning and communication.

## Southwark Customer Satisfaction Research

A current survey of users of the Southwark Council One Stop Shop and Customer Service Centre which handle face-to-face and telephone queries respectively. Each quarter we conduct face to face exit surveys at One Stop Shops and also conduct telephone interviews with a sample of customers who have telephoned the Customer Service Centre. This project has been running since May 2006.



## LGA Third Sector

This research into local authorities' perceptions of their relationships with the third sector involved a snap-shot survey of third sector interactions, a qualitative case study of best practice, and a representative telephone survey of 163 local authorities. The aim of the research was to identify how local authorities interact with the third sector, provide evidence of current interactions between local authorities and the third sector, and to develop a local authority-wide baseline of perceptions of relationships and interactions between local authorities and the third sector. The questionnaire covered commissioning and funding, social capital building, and community empowerment.

## Work for LGA

We have carried out several projects for the LGA involving interviews with key stakeholders including local authority officers and Chief Executives, elected members, PCTs and police authorities, in a range of subject areas including regulatory services, licensing laws, and perceptions audits.

## Agenda for Public Services in the New Parliament

Aiming to contribute to the debate about the future of public services, this research involved telephone interviews with senior managers in local authorities, health authorities, police authorities, unions, the voluntary sector and business, together with a national survey of the general public.

The research shows significant differences between the opinion of public sector managers and the general public about past performance and future prospects for the public sector. This study was jointly commissioned by the LGA and a number of trades unions.

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