

Case study



The organisation

London Councils is a policy and lobbying organisation that promotes the interests of London's 33 councils, working to help member councils deliver better services and to promote better cross-borough and pan-London working. Their Housing Service works with borough housing departments to increase resources and develop policy initiatives that address London's housing problems.

The challenge

London Councils wanted to carry out a review of their Housing Service to explore the scope, effectiveness, relevance and cost effectiveness of services provided, in the context of an imminent change in funding mechanism. Feedback on the quality and value of the services was needed from members and officers of London Boroughs and the City of London, from partner agencies and other stakeholders. Because of the scheduled change in funding, the timescale of the review was tight.

The solution

Square Systems won the contract in March 2007, in partnership with a specialist housing consultancy, North Harbour Consulting, brought in for their expertise in the housing context. Two Opinion-8 online surveys were devised, one for stakeholders within London boroughs, and the other for partner organisations with whom London Councils works, to explore awareness and perception of services provided. Focus groups were run with Housing Directors and Councillors, to explore which services currently provided might be discontinued. In-depth telephone interviews were held with members of the London Councils Executive, and benchmarking data were collected from relevant organisations. The results of these various streams of investigation were summarized both separately and jointly in first an interim and then a final report, covering perceived core functions, quality and usefulness of services, awareness of successes, effectiveness, priorities for the future, and funding options. Conclusions and recommendations from the findings were presented to elected councillors and officers at London Councils in May and early June 2007.

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The benefits

By finding a specialist housing consultancy partner for this project Square Systems started with a clear understanding of the context of the investigation, and was able to work in an informed way with stakeholders such as Housing Directors and Councillors from the London boroughs. The need for speed was recognised from the start, and Square Systems was able to respond quickly to requests for changes from London Councils regarding the project as it developed. Online survey responses were received from all but two London boroughs with a 40% response rate overall. Automatic collation & analysis of online survey responses in the Opinion-8 survey system allowed fast interpretation of results, and all elements of the review were completed to the timescales agreed.

About Square Systems & Opinion-8

Square Systems developed and hosts the IVR and online survey feedback tool Opinion-8 used by a range of private and public sector companies and organisations to gain customer, employee and stakeholder feedback in a variety of settings. For more information see www.opinion-8.co.uk