

ARE YOU BEING SERVED? RAPID REVIEW (2011-2012)

Background and objectives

With the recent move away from central targets and the discontinuation of the prescribed BVPI and Place Surveys for local government, some authorities now consider there to be a gap in evidence, with little robust, analogous, perceptions-based information about their residents, and an inability to benchmark reliably across the sector

With this in mind, the Local Government Association (LGA) and the London Councils Self Improvement Board commissioned Ipsos MORI to carry out a rapid review exercise to guide the sector on how to achieve a national benchmark on residents' perceptions of council performance.

LGA chairman Peter Fleming said: *"Being able to compare resident satisfaction rates against similar local authorities is good for local people, councillors and council workers. It will help boost transparency and strengthen accountability".*

Solutions

Ipsos MORI looked at the range of questions and methods for measuring residents' perceptions that councils were already using. This review also consisted of:

- a rapid literature review of key technical issues;
- interviews with senior stakeholders to gain insight to the needs of the sector; and
- a review of questions that could form core benchmarking data which included cognitive testing of existing questions.

This was supplemented by an informal consultation whereby local authorities were invited to submit their viewpoints, along with information about their current research methods and benchmarking practices for satisfaction data.

Ipsos MORI alerted interested parties to the consultation and received feedback using various channels including the LGA website; LGA research bulletin; Local Authorities Research and Intelligence Association website; and a Local Government Chronicle magazine article.

Benefits

Based on Ipsos MORI's recommendations, the LGA drafted a checklist for councils to use in their own local surveys to collect general resident satisfaction data. The checklist also outlines the quality criteria that will be required for authorities to upload and compare data in LG Inform, to ensure that all comparisons being made are valid and robust.

An LGA spokesperson said the guidance document should be of particular interest to social researchers that work with local government *“as councils will increasingly be expecting companies to help them design resident satisfaction surveys that contain the recommended questions and meet all of the quality criteria”*.

How to get in contact

If you would like help or advice:

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