



# Local Government Analysis and Research Programme

Autumn 2010



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# Local Government Analysis and Research programme

The research team provides the research and analytic services both for councils and for the LG Group which includes:

- Local Government Association
- Local Government Improvement and Development
- Local Government Employers
- Local Government Regulation
- Local Government Leadership
- Local Partnerships

We work to build a stronger, more accessible and more relevant research and development capacity for local government as a contribution to sector improvement, and to ensure that local government policy is informed by the best possible evidence on sector needs.

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# Current research

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We currently have over 70 'live' projects covering a very wide spectrum. A selection of these projects and other recently completed work is summarised below.

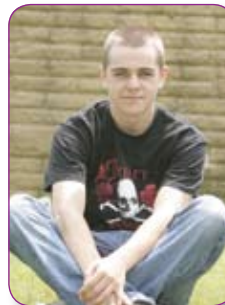
## Projects for and with local councils



### **Integrated working in children's services**

Funded by a consortium of LGA, Local Government Improvement and Development and the Local Authorities Research Council Initiative, this

project is working with three local authorities to look in depth what enables or hinders practitioners children's services departments through action style research with Prof Anne Edwards (Oxford University) and Prof Harry Daniels (Bath University) working closely with children's services staff. The project is due for completion in December 2010 and a final outcomes paper will be available in spring 2011. For more information contact: [david.pye@local.gov.uk](mailto:david.pye@local.gov.uk)



### **Aspirations of rural young people**

We are working with Suffolk County Council and National Foundation for Educational Research on a project investigating apparently low aspirations

in young people in rural communities within the county. The project will look at Suffolk and other rural authorities to provide insights into the linkages between aspirations, employment and the local economy.

For more information contact: [david.pye@local.gov.uk](mailto:david.pye@local.gov.uk)



### **The Technology Strategy Board**

After initial meetings between member councils and the Board, we are

exploring the potential for partnership (and possible funding opportunities for the sector) with the Board and the business sector to stimulate technological innovation, initially looking at areas such as housing, transport, the environment and social care. For more information contact: [jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk](mailto:jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk)



**West and East Midlands research capacity: in partnership with the two regions**

Led by Councillor

David Smith, we brought together councillors from the East and West Midlands to discuss ways in which research, business and local authorities in the regions could join together productively. For more information, contact [jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk](mailto:jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk)



**Developing demographic analysis**

We have helped a large metropolitan authority to interpret conflicting statistics about its demographic profile, triggered by a shortfall in

school places, and have helped the council establish how to strengthen demographic and analytic capacity. For more information about this service contact:

[peter.norris@local.gov.uk](mailto:peter.norris@local.gov.uk)



**Welsh Marches mapping project**

We are currently working with three of local authorities on the Welsh Border to

explore cross border flows of pupils with the help of geographic information systems. This work is to help the councils understand the impacts and implications for service provision of cross boundary flows of people. For more information contact: [peter.norris@local.gov.uk](mailto:peter.norris@local.gov.uk)



**Interactive web-based research database**

Following work with member councils chaired by Councillor

Kemp, we are developing a web based service to provide an easily accessible and plain English routing to research of relevance to councils from across the research councils, universities and other research organisations. The service will go live in September. For more information contact [jonathan.evans@local.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.evans@local.gov.uk)



**Helping a district council fight an unreasonable claim for benefit repayment**

We helped a member

district council faced with a very unreasonable demand from central government to return monies in respect of alleged past overpayments of benefits. We critiqued Audit Commission and DWP methods, and provided specialist advice directly and through quality assurance from a leading academic statistician. Currently the demand from central government has been reduced by more than 90 per cent. For further information contact: [stephen.richards@local.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.richards@local.gov.uk)

## Current or recently completed projects for the Local Government Group include:



### **Chief executives/leaders survey**

The first of this new quarterly omnibus survey is planned to go to all local authority chief executives and leaders in England in September to provide key intelligence on matters of importance to the sector and to the Local Government Group. For more information contact: [juliet.whitworth@local.gov.uk](mailto:juliet.whitworth@local.gov.uk)



### **Making the most of the older population**

This project is looking at the longer-term challenges and opportunities for councils arising from an ageing population. The focus of this work is the impact of an ageing society on older people themselves, their communities and public services. For more information contact: [jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk](mailto:jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk). To keep informed about the programme and to let us know what your interests are, join our community of practice at: <http://www.communities.idea.gov.uk/comm/landing-home.do?id=3159018>



### **Economic monitoring indicators database**

Since April 2008, we have been collating key economic indicators at a local authority level to highlight the impact of the current economic climate

on local areas. Topics covered include economy, labour market, population and housing. For more information contact:

[peter.norris@local.gov.uk](mailto:peter.norris@local.gov.uk) and see: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelD=1974773>



### **The local government earnings survey 2010/11**

The Local Government Earnings Survey, provides paybill, average pay rate and demographic information for all local government employees

(excluding teachers). The survey provides definitive and detailed data and the results are extensively used by councils for benchmarking. The survey is currently in the field. For more information contact: [ben.hickman@local.gov.uk](mailto:ben.hickman@local.gov.uk) or see <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelD=1956007>



### **National census of councillors 2010**

This survey, completed for Local Government Improvement and

Development and LGA provides councillors and local authorities with a comprehensive and timely overview of the facts and experiences of local politicians, for example, political party, length of service, educational background and demographic factors. As a long standing census, it also looks at changes over time. The survey will be re-run this month. For more information contact: [stephen.richards@local.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.richards@local.gov.uk) or see: [www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/national-census-councillors/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research/projects/national-census-councillors/)



### **Future public sector pension costs**

On behalf of Local Government Employers, we are conducting research

on the Local Government Pension Scheme to provide objective evidence about the affordability of the scheme, its role in the relative remuneration of local government workers and to provide comparisons with other sectors. For further information contact: [peter.norris@local.gov.uk](mailto:peter.norris@local.gov.uk)



### **Geographic information and productivity**

Working with Local Government Improvement and

Development, we are looking at the potential for productivity improvements from better use of, and innovation in, geographic information. For more information contact: [gesche.schmid@local.gov.uk](mailto:gesche.schmid@local.gov.uk) or see: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=1095241>



### **Putting people first**

Working with Local Government Improvement and Development, we are completing a set

of case studies looking at emerging practice across Putting People First (PPF) milestone areas, as well as other key themes such as workforce development. The purpose of the case studies is to share this good practice with the sector. For more information contact: [kate.hills@local.gov.uk](mailto:kate.hills@local.gov.uk)



### **Children and Young People Research programme**

On behalf of the sector and the Local Government Group, we manage the Education and Children's Services funded research

programme delivered by the National Foundation for Educational Research. We currently have around 15 projects underway including work on children's safeguarding, the economic benefits of early intervention, governance models in schools and a review of the literature concerning the resettlement of offenders. For more information contact: [david.pye@local.gov.uk](mailto:david.pye@local.gov.uk) or see <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=1094981>



### **Research capacity in local authorities**

This survey, in partnership with the Local Authority Research and

Intelligence Association (LARIA) will provide baseline information on current levels and trends in research and analytic capacity in councils to identify sector needs and inform how we ensure the sector can access what it needs. For more information contact:

[elizabeth.spratt@local.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.spratt@local.gov.uk)



### **Early lessons from changes to legal advice provision and funding - the local authority experience**

This research explores the options available to councils following recent

changes in the way the Legal Services Commission (LSC) funds legal advice through Community Legal Advice Centres (CLACs) and Community Legal Advice Networks (CLANs). For more information contact: [peter.norris@local.gov.uk](mailto:peter.norris@local.gov.uk) or see: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=8805789>



### **Sickness absence and causes survey 2009**

Completed for Local Government Employers, this

survey provides data on local government sickness absence levels for 2009. For more information contact: [elizabeth.spratt@local.gov.uk](mailto:elizabeth.spratt@local.gov.uk) or see: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=9851777>

## **Other current work in the field or recently completed projects include:**

- supporting local authorities in public involvement in community safety
- the cost to local authorities of public health funerals
- local authorities approaches to climate change mitigation and adaptation
- cost modelling of bus subsidy
- overview of tobacco control activity at a local authority level
- support and guidance on the local economic assessment
- an annual survey of local government workforce numbers
- activity around data including transparency and digital access issues: includes membership of the Local Public Sector Data Panel.

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# Regular publications or sources of help

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We provide the sector with a range of regular one-stop publications to keep readers informed about key issues impacting on local government. These include:



**LGAARB** This monthly bulletin brings together the work of the LG Group and relevant publications from the

wider research community. Information is grouped within themed areas and it provides links to high quality research in one place.

For more information contact:

[michelle.pickford@local.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.pickford@local.gov.uk) or see: [www.lga.gov.uk/lgaarbulletin](http://www.lga.gov.uk/lgaarbulletin)



**Digest** This monthly publication keeps you informed on labour market, pay issues and trends and the economy

more widely. For more information contact:

[roopal.shah@local.gov.uk](mailto:roopal.shah@local.gov.uk) or see: [www.lga.gov.uk/lgaarDigest](http://www.lga.gov.uk/lgaarDigest)



## **Futures toolkit**

This toolkit for local authorities, provides an outline of steps that can be taken to complete a futures

exercise. For more information contact: [jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk](mailto:jill.mortimer@local.gov.uk) or see <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=1095229>



## **Worker Registration Scheme (WRS) data**

Updated quarterly, WRS data enables local authorities to discover more

about their changing local populations. New migrant employment patterns can be viewed, including seasonal working. This data was previously unavailable to the sector. After successful negotiations with the Home Office, it can now be accessed on the LGA website. This information is only available to those with a gov.uk email address. For more information contact [jonathan.evans@local.gov.uk](mailto:jonathan.evans@local.gov.uk). or see: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=1095225>

To find out more about our work please, contact Tim Allen, Programme Director: [tim.allen@local.gov.uk](mailto:tim.allen@local.gov.uk) or visit: [www.lga.gov.uk/research](http://www.lga.gov.uk/research)



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The Local Government Group is made up of six organisations which support, promote and improve local government.



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For a copy in Braille, Welsh, larger print or audio, please contact us on 020 7664 3000.

We consider requests on an individual basis.