

Are you being served?

Benchmarking resident satisfaction data:
question set and guidance



Introduction

Understanding resident or customer views is a key element of assessing the effectiveness of an authority, alongside cost and performance information. Furthermore, understanding resident satisfaction and being able to make informed comparisons can strengthen local accountability and be a key part of the sector's approach to managing its own performance.

Resident perceptions of crime and cohesion have also been identified by members of London Councils and the London Councils Self Improvement Board as key areas where comparable data would be beneficial.

However, although there is demand for some comparative data, there is no appetite within the sector for a fully prescribed survey. This guidance therefore outlines a set of resident satisfaction, crime and cohesion questions that councils can choose to use in their local surveys, and guidance on the conditions that must be met to enable the results to be benchmarked against other authorities who follow the same approach.

This is a flexible approach, designed to suit local circumstances and minimise the cost to councils of collecting the data by allowing them to use only those questions that are of interest locally, and fit these questions in with existing survey plans, whilst also helping to maximise the benefit and insight that can be gained from this data by making it broadly comparable.

Purpose and scope of the guidance

This guidance is for councils who are carrying out general surveys using their whole population as the sampling frame, who would like to include questions on resident satisfaction, crime and cohesion. It outlines a set of questions and the criteria that would need to be met to ensure that these questions can be benchmarked against other councils who have also followed the guidance.

Following this guidance is completely voluntary. Those councils that do will be able to make reasonable, 'fit for purpose' comparisons of their results with those of others. Local Government Inform (LG Inform) will provide a mechanism by which councils can undertake these comparisons.¹

LG Inform is a free data service from the Local Government Association (LGA) to provide easy access for local authority staff and councillors and, eventually, the public, to key data about their council and its area, and to enable comparison with other councils. LG Inform allows comparisons on a national and regional basis, as well as by type of authority, and also allows creation of bespoke comparison groups. For more information and to register please see: <https://lginform.local.gov.uk/about-lg-inform>

¹ In addition councils within London will be able to share their results with London Councils for benchmarking purposes.

It is important to note that this is a guide to benchmarking and not a guide to conducting a resident survey. Councils should follow standard recognised good practice when carrying out surveys locally.

Before participating in the benchmarking, authorities should be aware that this is a new approach and it will take some time to build up a critical mass of participating authorities:

- We would encourage councils to liaise with other councils that they may want to compare themselves to, in order to commit to participating, to coordinate methodology and possibly even to achieve economies of scale through joint commissioning.
- We are aware of several existing performance and benchmarking groupings of councils. We will be working with these groups to encourage them to adopt the approach.
- There is a wiki within the LG Inform Knowledge Hub group where councils can log their intention to conduct a benchmarking survey using a given methodology, and in this way liaise with each other. The group can be accessed here: <https://khub.net/group/lginform>

Overview of the questions

Three core benchmarking questions are recommended as a priority for benchmarking. Authorities wishing to participate in the benchmarking through LG Inform will be required to include all of these questions. In summary, these are:

- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?
- Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way [name of council] runs things?
- To what extent do you agree or disagree that [name of council] provides value for money?

A set of **second tier questions** are worthy of inclusion. Participating authorities will be able to choose only those second tier questions that are of interest locally. The questions are:

- How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?
- How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?
- Overall, how well informed do you think [name of council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

A set of third tier questions might be of interest to some authorities which cover: advocacy, council responsiveness, trust, community cohesion and anti-social behaviour. Again, participating authorities will be able to choose only those third tier questions that are of interest locally.

The role of benchmarking

It is important that the results of these questions are not viewed as a simplistic 'league table'. Benchmarking of these results should be seen as part of a wider approach to understanding and responding to local communities. Benchmarking provides context but is only one element of this approach, and helps raise lines of enquiry rather than providing answers.

Councils should seek to include additional questions in their local surveys that might help diagnose what is driving these results locally. For example, questions on what needs improving in the area might be of limited use for benchmarking but could usefully be included locally to identify areas for improvement.

It is also worth noting that rather than just comparing absolute levels of satisfaction, councils may also be interested in identifying and learning from authorities that have improved resident satisfaction over time, even if absolute levels of satisfaction are lower in those authorities.

Uploading the data to LG Inform

This document contains a series of check boxes to help councils ensure that they have met the necessary criteria for uploading their results to LG Inform to be used for benchmarking purposes. When uploading their results to LG Inform, councils will be asked to confirm that each of the relevant criteria has been met. **If the criteria have not been met, councils will not be able to upload their data.**

Please note that in order to meet the criteria, councils must use the specified preambles and additional text and they must follow the two tier guidelines where appropriate. It will not be enough just to follow the guidelines on the main question text and quality criteria.

The criteria are based on the findings of the review by Ipsos MORI, which identified a set of conditions that would need to be met to ensure that any comparisons being made are robust, fair and valid, and that each council's data is of a good quality that will stand up to scrutiny. The full detail of the review is outlined in *Are you being served? Benchmarking residents' perceptions of local government – Technical review of perception measures*.² The criteria were then refined on the basis of an extensive consultation with local authorities.

Councils should visit www.local.gov.uk/lginform to upload their data. They will be asked to complete a web form which will ask them to confirm that each of the relevant criteria has been met. The web form will ask councils to submit the (weighted) number of respondents that selected each answer option for each question. Authorities will not be required to submit any raw data. Authorities will also be asked to submit information about seasonality (see the 'seasonality' section below) and will be permitted to also provide brief further information if they wish (for example whether reminders were used, sample size). The web form is in development in conjunction with the new version of LG Inform and will be available to start uploading data in early 2013.

² <https://www.local.gov.uk/are-you-being-served-consultation-benchmarking-residents-perceptions-local-government>

At this point, some basic data checks will be in place, for example, that data is being uploaded for the correct year and in the correct format, as well as flagging up outlier values.

It will be important to refer to this document right at the outset of planning any local survey activity, as some of the requirements will influence early decisions about issues such as sampling and data collection method.

Data quality criteria

Data collection methods

Telephone, face to face, postal and online methods of data collection can be used.

However the mode of data collection can have a marked impact on results, meaning that intra-mode comparisons are not desirable. Therefore, data included for comparison in LG Inform will be displayed grouped into common methods to ensure that only like-for-like data is compared across councils.

However one form of intra-mode comparison that is valid is online and postal, as long as the respondent experience is the same for both. This is discussed further below, but it is for this reason that postal and online methods will be grouped together in LG Inform.

Was one of the following methods of data collection used?

- Telephone
- Face to face
- Postal and/or online

When uploading your results to LG Inform, you will be asked to specify which method of data collection was used.

Postal and online data

One form of intra-mode comparison that is valid is online and postal, as long as the respondent experience is the same for both.

In theory, if a council had evidence that the vast majority of their residents had email addresses and had email addresses for the vast majority of these residents then this guidance would permit using these records to draw a sample for an online survey.³

However we are not aware that there are any councils in this situation, therefore in practice it is likely that the only time online surveys would be permitted is if they were used in conjunction with a postal survey (i.e. a postal survey is sent to all respondents, and these respondents are given the opportunity to complete either the paper copy or an online version). It is important that in this situation the online link is only available

³ In this case councils would also need to ensure that they had considered all data protection issues – i.e. that they had the permission to use these email addresses in a survey.

to respondents who were sent the paper survey.

In terms of ensuring the same respondent experience for both online and postal respondents, online surveys should not include any graphics, routing or methods for answering that would not be available in a postal survey. This means the online version could include routing but only if the same routing was also used in the postal form (this is likely to exclude the use of complex routing).

Are respondents to online surveys allowed to choose not to answer the questions if they wish (in the same way as they could leave a postal survey question blank)?

Are the online questions presented in the same way as the postal survey – in terms of graphics, routing or methods for answering?

Is the online link only available to respondents who received a postal questionnaire?

Sampling

Only surveys that use all residents as the sample frame are valid (i.e. general population surveys). Service, topic or area specific surveys that only draw a sample from a subset of the general population will not be appropriate for benchmarking.

Two types of sampling are permitted, in addition to a census approach:

- Random sampling (whereby all population members/households have a random one in 'n' chance of being selected) is favoured for all methods of data collection.
- In addition, a census approach, where every member of the local authority population is contacted, would also be permitted.
- For self completion methods (postal or online) a random sampling or census approach must be used.
- For telephone and face to face surveys, quota sampling is also permitted.

When uploading data to LG Inform you will be asked to specify which sampling approach was used.

Authorities that have obtained satisfaction data through residents' panels will not be able to upload this for benchmarking purposes. This is because there is strong evidence to suggest a considerable response bias among panel members, which makes it inadvisable to compare data collected via this method with general population data.

Is this a general population survey, using all of the population as the sample frame?

If the method of data collection is postal or online, has either:

- a random sample been used?
- a census approach been used?

If the method of data collection is telephone or face to face, has either:

- a random sample been used?
- a quota sample approach been used?
- a census approach been used?

Please confirm the data has not been collected via a residents' panel

Weighting

Where a random sampling or census approach has been used, data should then be weighted to the known profile of the local population. Variables that are typically used for weighting in residents' surveys include age, gender and social grade (or work status as a proxy for social grade). If a sample is drawn from household lists it is sensible to weight by household size.

This guidance does not specify exactly which variables the data should be weighted on. The purpose of weighting is to make a sample representative if it is not already. What is appropriate will depend very much on the way the survey was sampled and on local circumstances. Whilst weighting on different variables may have a small impact on comparability, this is much less than other factors such as question ordering. The flexibility on this issue means that there will be some small impact on comparability but this is a level we consider acceptable as part of the flexible approach of the overall exercise.

Similarly, this guidance does not suggest a maximum level for capping, as the appropriate level will vary for different areas. However we would offer the following advice: if a council finds that they have extreme weights and are therefore considering capping, we would suggest that the council look again at its weighting strategy. It may well be, and is usually the case, that a simpler weighting strategy would be more effective.

The impact of weighting is to reduce the effective sample size. In order to ensure that comparisons are meaningful, only data with an achieved effective sample of 500 or greater can be uploaded to LG Inform for comparison. As a guide, authorities might want to ensure they have at least 550 interviews completed to ensure an effective sample of 500 is achieved, and we recommend consulting a statistician when calculating the effective sample size.

Has randomly sampled or census data been weighted to the profile of the local population?

Is the effective sample achieved 500 or greater?

Seasonality

We do not require you to conduct the survey at any particular time of year. However when uploading your results please give a brief explanation of the time of year that the survey was conducted. If there was a significant national or local event (such as bad snowfall or the riots) close to the period of fieldwork which may have impacted on results, you can record this in the same place.

Results will be displayed in LG Inform in financial years. Authorities will be able to upload one set of results per method per year.

Has any contextual information about the time of year the survey was conducted been uploaded to LG Inform?

Has any relevant information concerning potentially influential local or national events or circumstance been uploaded to LG Inform?

Don't know and refuse to answer

It is important that the 'don't know' and 'refuse to answer' options for each question are dealt with consistently within each data collection method. The requirements below reflect the most common approach to dealing with these answer options for each of the different methods.

Telephone

Do not include an explicit reference to 'don't know' or 'refuse to answer' in the answer option list.

The interviewer can however code these answers if they are given spontaneously.

Face to face

Show cards should be used. These should not include an explicit reference to 'don't know' or 'refuse to answer'.

The interviewer can however code these answers if they are given spontaneously.

Postal and online

'Don't know' should be included as an explicit option in the answer list.

In postal surveys, respondents will have the option to refuse to answer by simply not filling in the question. In order to remain consistent, respondents should be allowed to leave the question blank when completing online.

Have the 'don't know' and 'refuse to answer' options been treated correctly, as outlined above?

Reporting percentages

In order to ensure that comparisons are valid, there must be consistency in the inclusion of people that answered 'don't know' and people that did not answer each question in the reporting of percentage results.

'Don't know' is a valid answer and an informative finding – for example it can indicate that a council needs to address communications issues. However many councils are keen to continue the Place Survey approach of excluding those who answered 'don't know' from the calculated results.

Therefore, LG Inform will display two versions of each result. Councils will then be able to use the set of results that best meets their needs locally:

1. Without 'don't know': respondents that answered 'don't know' will be excluded in the numerator and denominator for the calculated percentages. Respondents that did

not answer will also be excluded from the calculated percentages.

2. Including ‘don’t know’: respondents that answered ‘don’t know’ will be included in the numerator and denominator for the calculated percentages, and the proportion that answered ‘don’t know’ will be reported. Respondents that did not answer will be excluded from the calculated percentages.

Authorities will be asked to submit the (weighted) number of respondents giving each answer option, and LG Inform will undertake the necessary calculations to display these percentage results.

The core questions

The three questions outlined below have been identified as being of strategic and practical importance in terms of helping councils understand the extent to which their residents are satisfied with their performance.

Whilst participation is entirely voluntary, if councils wish to participate in the benchmarking through LG Inform, they will be required to include all three core questions in their survey. This will provide a consistent and robust set of benchmarking data for the benefit of the whole sector.

Full question text

This section outlines the full text and answer options of the core questions, as well as guidance on the modifications needed in two tier areas. This is followed by guidance on question ordering.

Definition of local area

Many of the questions in this set ask respondents about their ‘local area’. Please include the following text at the start of your survey to ensure that this is being interpreted consistently:

“Throughout this survey we ask you to think about ‘your local area’. When answering, please consider your local area to be the area within 15 – 20 minutes walking distance from your home.”

Has the definition of local area been included at the start of the survey?

Question A: Satisfaction with the local area

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

Response codes:

Very satisfied

Fairly satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Fairly dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don’t know

Introducing the local authority

The following preamble should be inserted before the first question that asks specifically about a named local authority. This preamble should be included by all authorities – both single tier and two tier.

A slightly adjusted preamble will be used depending on which scenario your survey fits:

- In the case of a questionnaire designed to understand perceptions of a single tier authority.

“Your local area receives services from [name of council]. [Name of council] is responsible for a range of services such as refuse collection, street cleaning, planning, education, social care services and road maintenance.”

- In the case of a questionnaire in a two tier area, designed to understand perceptions of a district only, or a county only.

*“Your local area receives services from two councils, [name of district council] and [name of county council]. **EITHER** This survey asks about [name of district council], which is responsible for services such as refuse collection, street cleaning and planning **OR** This survey asks about [name of county council] which is responsible for services such as education, social care services and road maintenance.”*

- In the case of a questionnaire designed to understand perceptions of both the district and county.

“Your local area receives services from two councils, [name of district council] and [name of county council]. [Name of district council] is responsible for services such as refuse collection, street cleaning and planning. [Name of county council] is responsible for services such as education, social care services and road maintenance.”

Has the appropriate preamble been placed before the ‘satisfaction with the local authority’ question?

Question B: Satisfaction with the local authority

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way [name of council] runs things?

Response codes:

Very satisfied

Fairly satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Fairly dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Don't know

Two tier areas: If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county.

For postal and online surveys, space saving answer grids are permitted - councils may want to embolden or underline the two different council names to ensure respondents are clear about which council they are answering about. See Annex A for an example.

If a district or county is conducting a survey only about their council, there is no requirement to repeat the question.

If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, has the question been asked for both?

Question C: Value for money

In considering the next question, please think about the range of services [name of council] provides to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services [name of council] provides to the community. We would like your general opinion.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that [name of council] provides value for money?

Response codes:

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Two tier areas: If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, please use this slightly different introductory text:

In considering the following two questions, please think about the range of services that both [name of district council] and [name of county council] provide to the community as a whole, as well as the services your household uses. It does not matter if you do not know all of the services [name of district council] and [name of county council] provide to the community. We would like your general opinion.

Then ask 'To what extent do you agree or disagree that [name of council] provides value for money?' twice. Ask first for the district and then the county. For postal and online surveys, space saving answer grids are permitted.⁴

If a district or county is conducting a survey only about their council, there is no requirement to repeat the question.

If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, has the question been asked for both?

⁴ In this case, adjust the introductory text to read "question" instead of "two questions". See Annex A for an example.

Question ordering

Testing has identified that respondents' answers to the questions in this section may be influenced by questions asked earlier in a survey (this is known as 'context' and 'position' effects). For example, if a question about general satisfaction with an area is asked after a series of questions about crime, this is likely to elicit a more negative response than for a different authority that preceded this with questions about parks and leisure.

The core satisfaction questions must therefore be placed as the first questions at the beginning of the survey and in the order specified to ensure that any position or context effect is the same for each council. This will help ensure that any comparisons between councils are robust and fair.

Have all three core questions been placed at the start of the survey?

Have all three questions been asked?

Have the questions been asked in the required order?

The second tier questions

The second tier questions outlined below have also been identified as being of strategic and practical importance in terms of understanding council performance and resident satisfaction.

However, we recognise that the issues covered are not priorities for all councils. Therefore, we would encourage all councils who think this data would be useful to them to include some or all of these questions in their local surveys, in order to provide a consistent and robust set of benchmarking data for the good of the sector. Please note that, unlike the core questions, there is no requirement to include all of the second tier questions – councils are free to use only those that they would wish to benchmark on.

Full question text

This section outlines the full text and answer options of the second tier questions. This is followed by guidance on question ordering.

Question D: Community identity

How strongly do you feel you belong to your local area?

Response codes

Very strongly

Fairly strongly

Not very strongly

Not at all strongly

Don't know

Question E: Community safety

How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

Response codes:

Very safe

Fairly safe

Neither safe nor unsafe

Fairly unsafe

Very unsafe

Don't know

How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area during the day?

Response codes:

Very safe

Fairly safe

Neither safe nor unsafe

Fairly unsafe

Very unsafe

Don't know

If authorities wish to add additional questions such as 'how safe or unsafe do you feel in your own home' after the 'during the day' question, this is acceptable.

Question F: Informed about the council

Overall, how well informed do you think [name of council] keeps residents about the services and benefits it provides?

Response codes:

Very well informed

Fairly well informed

Not very well informed

Not well informed at all

Don't know

Two tier areas: If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county. For postal and online surveys, space saving answer grids are permitted.

If a district or county is conducting a survey only about their council, there is no requirement to repeat the question.

If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, has the question been asked for both?

Question ordering

Questions D and E are less impacted by position effects; therefore their positioning within a questionnaire is not as critical as for the core set of questions. As a result they can be placed in the most convenient place for each questionnaire, subject to Question D preceding any other questions about sense of community and Question E preceding any other questions about community safety.

If a council wishes to place these questions after some of the third tier questions or other local questions, this would be acceptable, provided this doesn't impact on the question ordering requirements for any individual questions.

Question F should precede any other questions about council communications. Additionally, Question F should be placed as early as possible in the survey. Ideally, it would be placed as soon as possible after the core questions (note however that if the third tier questions G and H are being used the ordering requirements for these take precedence, so this question should be placed after them).

If there are any other questions about a sense of community or belonging in the survey, does Question D precede these?

If there are any other questions about community safety in the survey, does Question E precede these?

If there are any other questions about communications in the survey, does Question F precede these?

Has Question F been placed as early as possible within the questionnaire?

The third tier questions

The final set of third tier questions are of particular interest to many, but not all councils. We would encourage those councils that do want to collect information on these topics to follow the wording and guidance outlined in this document, as this will enable those councils to benchmark against others who are facing the same issues.

Please note that, unlike the core questions, there is no requirement to include all of the third tier questions – councils are free to use only those that they would wish to benchmark on.

Full question text

This section outlines the full text and answer options of the third tier questions. This is followed by guidance on question ordering.

Question G: Advocacy

On balance, which of the following statements comes closest to how you feel about [name of council]?

Response codes:

I speak positively of the council without being asked

I speak positively of the council if I am asked about it

I have no views one way or another

I speak negatively about the council if I am asked about it

I speak negatively about the council without being asked

Don't know

Two tier areas: If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county. For postal and online surveys, space saving answer grids are permitted.

If a district or county is conducting a survey only about their council, there is no requirement to repeat the question.

If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, has the question been asked for both?

Question H: Council responsiveness

The purpose of including this question is to provide a complete picture of the extent to which residents feel empowered to influence decisions in their local area. The evidence suggests that the most effective way to gauge this is to look at three factors: the extent to which residents feel informed (question F), overall satisfaction with the local authority (question B) and the extent to which it is felt the local authority acts on local residents' views (this question).

To what extent do you think [name of council] acts on the concerns of local residents?

Response codes:

A great deal

A fair amount

Not very much

Not at all

Don't know

Two tier areas: If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county. For postal and online surveys, space saving answer grids are permitted.

If a district or county is conducting a survey only about their council, there is no requirement to repeat the question.

If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, has the question been asked for both?

Question I: Trust in the local authority

How much do you trust [name of council]?

Response codes:

A great deal

A fair amount

Not very much

Not at all

Don't know

Two tier areas: If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, repeat the question. Ask first for the district and then the county. For postal and online surveys, space saving answer grids are permitted.

If a district or county is conducting a survey only about their council, there is no requirement to repeat the question.

If this questionnaire is being conducted by a district and county in partnership, has the question been asked for both?

Question J: Community cohesion (ethnicity)

To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different ethnic backgrounds get on well together?

By getting on well together, we mean treating each other with respect.

Response options:

Definitely agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Definitely disagree

Don't know

Too few people in local area (This should be treated the same as 'don't know' both when asking the question and when reporting results)

All the same ethnic background (Also treated the same as 'don't know')

Question K: Community cohesion

To what extent would you agree or disagree that people in this local area pull together to improve the local area?

Response options:

Definitely agree

Tend to agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Tend to disagree

Definitely disagree

Nothing needs improving (This should be treated the same as 'don't know')

Don't know

Question L: Anti-social behaviour

Thinking about this local area, how much of a problem do you think each of the following are....

- a) Noisy neighbours or loud parties
- b) Rubbish or litter lying around
- c) Vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles
- d) People using or dealing drugs
- e) People being drunk or rowdy in public places
- f) Groups hanging around the streets⁵

⁵ Inclusion of the 'groups hanging around the streets' category is optional.

Response codes:

A very big problem

A fairly big problem

Not a very big problem

Not a problem at all

Don't know/No opinion

If authorities wish to add their own local issues to the end of the list of behaviours, then this is acceptable.

However, some people may skim the whole list of behaviours and then answer. This means that any additional anti-social behaviour **should be of a similar level of seriousness to those already on the list**. If they are not, they risk making the existing behaviours seem comparatively less severe and influencing respondent's answers.

Question ordering

Question G – advocacy – should be subject to as little bias as possible. Therefore, when an authority decides to include this question, it should be placed as the fourth question in the questionnaire, immediately after the three core questions.

Question H – council responsiveness – this question should also be subject to as little bias as possible. Therefore, when an authority decides to include this question, it should be placed as the fifth question in the questionnaire, immediately after the three core questions and advocacy (or fourth if advocacy is not going to be included).

The remaining questions are less impacted by position effects; therefore their positioning within a questionnaire is not as critical as for the core set of questions. As a result they can be placed in the most convenient place for each questionnaire, subject to the following conditions:

Question I – trust in the local authority – this should precede any more detailed questions about trust in the local authority.

Questions J and K – cohesion – the only requirement of these is that they are not asked before general satisfaction questions; however as the general satisfaction questions are part of the core set that must be asked first, this will automatically be the case.

Question L – anti-social behaviour – the issues raised in this question could impact on respondents' general perceptions about the area. The question therefore should not precede more general questions about attitudes to the area, satisfaction with local organisations, or community safety.

Has Question G been placed fourth, immediately after the three core questions?

Has Question H been placed fifth, immediately after the advocacy question (or fourth if the advocacy question is not being used)?

If there are any other questions about trust in the survey, does Question I precede these?

If there are any other questions about attitudes to the area, satisfaction with local organisations, or community safety in the survey, does Question L come after these?

Demographic questions

It is beyond the scope of this guidance to specify which demographic monitoring questions should be used. However, any such questions should be **included at the end of the survey** rather than at the beginning. The only exception to this is where a quota approach is being used; in this case those questions that are specifically needed to establish the quotas can be included at the start.

Example questionnaire

An example of how a questionnaire that includes all of the questions and follows the guidance outlined in this document would look can be found in the accompanying document: *Annex A – example questionnaires*.⁶

The purpose of the example questionnaire is to demonstrate how the preambles and explanatory text should be used and how the questionnaire differs in two tier areas. It will be up to individual councils to decide which questions to use and what order to put them in (subject to question ordering requirements), and the layout of individual questionnaires will also be a matter for local discretion.

Further information and support

If you have a query on any aspect of this guidance, please email research@local.gov.uk

Please first check the LG Inform Knowledge Hub group wiki, which includes a record of questions that other councils have asked and our response to them. Click here to register and access the group: <https://khub.net/group/lginform>

The LGA does not have the capacity to approve individual surveys. The purpose of this exercise is to help councils drive improvements locally and we trust councils to submit data fairly and in accordance with the guidelines. We encourage councils to support each other using mechanisms such as the LG Inform Knowledge Hub group to discuss technical and other issues.

In addition, authorities might also want to get involved with their regional Local Area Research and Intelligence Association (LARIA) group, to provide mutual support and discuss the technical issues associated with conducting resident satisfaction surveys: <https://laria.org.uk/>. LARIA also has a Knowledge Hub group: <https://khub.net/group/lariagroup>

⁶ <https://www.local.gov.uk/are-you-being-served-consultation-benchmarking-residents-perceptions-local-government>



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