



LOCAL AUTHORITY CASE STUDY

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES AND LONDON BOROUGH OF WANDSWORTH

Acorn data insight supports
Green Homes funding, reducing
food waste and support for
digitally excluded residents



Highlights

- Household Acorn and Wellbeing Acorn data at postcode level
- Detailed, current insight into household preferences and characteristics
- Quick to deliver results after efficient virtual training and skills transfer
- Profiler tool for in-house analysis
- Local Authority sector knowledge blended with data and technology expertise

About Richmond and Wandsworth Borough Councils

Wandsworth Council is a London borough in the southwest of the capital. It includes a diverse population across the settlements of Battersea, Putney, Tooting and Wandsworth Town. The council looks after the needs of around 330,000 residents.

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is Wandsworth's neighbour to the west. It's the only London borough that straddles the river Thames and includes the settlements of Barnes, East Sheen, Hampton, Kingston, Richmond, Teddington and Twickenham. The council serves a population of around 200,000.

The two Boroughs have created a unique shared staffing model to deliver more innovative, flexible, effective and efficient public services across their joint catchments. The Insight and Analytics team provides data insight for all council functions in the combined areas.



The challenge

Understanding residents' needs for services and communication

The councils' Insight and Analytics team was keen to serve its diverse population better by understanding more about different households and how council services and initiatives could best support them.

Like all councils, Richmond and Wandsworth's remit spans many public services, campaigns and activities. Insight and Analytics Manager Salman Klar and Intelligence Analyst Emily Heades saw the vast potential in CACI's Acorn dataset to better inform decision-making and communicating in the boroughs. Emily says: "We had a free trial access to the data over the summer, which CACI was offering to help councils with Covid-related challenges. We started using Acorn, Household Acorn and Wellbeing Acorn.

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We could see great potential to help us improve service delivery and communications, with better insight into residents' needs and lifestyles. We were impressed with the granularity of the data. Most open data doesn't go down to household level – we were able to access this for the first time. The different indicators in the data were really useful, like internet access and financial situation by household.

Emily Heades, Intelligence Analyst
Richmond and Wandsworth councils



The approach

Getting the most from data for all council departments

Salman, Emily and the team were immediately able to make use of the data. Salman explains: "We first used it for our digital exclusion work in May. Because of the pandemic, all our council services and messaging needed to go digital. So it was really important for us to know who would have digital access, laptops and connectivity – for remote schooling and access to essential services and information.

"We serve over half a million residents: to communicate with them all effectively, we needed to know who would respond to an email and who could only be reached by a letter or leaflet through the door."

This use case demonstrated the value of the data to Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. The team confirmed an annual subscription to the datasets and the Acorn Profiler analysis tool. CACI ran virtual training sessions for council users to build awareness about the scope and potential uses of the data as well as to transfer specific skills for using the Profiler tool.





The results

Improving digital access, securing funding and reducing waste

The report compiled by Emily in the spring about Digital Exclusion used CACI Household Acorn data to reveal groups of residents who were potentially disadvantaged, because they couldn't connect to online services, information and support.. Immediately, the councils were able to share these insights with organisations via the community engagement team, who used it as evidence in funding bids for officers to help residents connect digitally.

Emily and the team have also used Acorn postcode data to help identify homes in the boroughs that might be eligible for the Government's Green Homes Grant, based on income indicators. They were able to estimate how many homes might qualify. The methodology and evidence helped secure over £500K of central government funding for each borough. This is being distributed to the least energy-efficient households through a local grant scheme covering up to £10,000 of carbon emission reduction works per home.

The councils used Acorn data to understand characteristics that influence residents' propensity to generate food waste. Emily says, "A survey was commissioned into what households in the borough are throwing away. The specialist firm that provided it had broken the findings down by Acorn type. Now that we have the dataset too, we've been able to explore more deeply to help us build a communications strategy to reduce food waste, targeting households that generate the most with relevant and useful guidance and encouragement."





About the datasets

Richmond and Wandsworth have licensed three Acorn datasets for use by the entire organisation. Acorn segments UK postcodes and neighbourhoods into six categories, 17 groups and 59 types with Household Acorn segmenting UK households into a similar number of types. Wellbeing Acorn segments the population into four categories and 25 groups that describe the health and wellbeing attributes for each postcode across Britain.

By analysing the data, the intelligence team can help functions and projects in every area of the councils to understand detailed and specific needs in each catchment and neighbourhood.

The benefits

A wealth of data to enhance council services and targeting

The objective, trusted evidence that Acorn insights provide gives the councils better insights into the needs of residents. Salman adds, "We have had so many requests for the data to help our teams adapt their communications and services during the pandemic. We're continually finding more ways to use it to serve residents better by understanding their needs and lifestyles."

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Salman Klar, Insight and Analytics Manager
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