

Analysis and research bulletin

July 2010

Welcome to the Local Government Association analysis and research bulletin (LGAARB), the regular one stop publication that keeps you informed about key issues and developments in research impacting on local government. The bulletin brings together the work of the Local Government Group (Local Government Association, Local Government Improvement and Development, Local Government Regulation, Local Government Employers, Local Government Leadership and Local Partnerships), and features relevant publications from the wider research community. The information in LGAARB is grouped under themed areas and our aim is to provide, on behalf of the LG Group, high quality:

- horizon scanning
- analysis, and
- research.

Information about each of the members of the LG Group can be found along with website details overleaf. This publication is produced by LGA analysis and research which has been established to deliver a high quality and single research service to support the policy, lobbying and service delivery needs of the LG Group.

How to register

You can register to receive this bulletin by visiting: www.lga.gov.uk/research

Contents

Information about the LG group	2
New research and statistics	3
Employment, pay and workforce trends	3
Transport	5
Housing	6
Education and children's services	7
Environment	10
Health and social care	11
Economy/economic development	12
Communities and place shaping	13
Crime and disorder	14
Local government	15
European and international	15
Geographic information	16
Regular publications and events	17



Information about the LG Group

The LG Group is made up of six organisations:

The Local Government Association is the single voice for local government. As a voluntary membership body, funded almost entirely by the subscriptions of our 422 member authorities in England and Wales, we lobby and campaign for changes in policy and legislation on behalf of our member councils and the people and communities they serve. We work with and on behalf of our membership to deliver our shared vision of an independent and confident local government sector, where local priorities drive public service improvement in every city, town and village and every councillor acts as a champion for their ward and for the people they represent.

www.local.gov.uk/association

Local Government Improvement and Development supports improvement and innovation in local government, focusing on the issues that are important to councils and using tried and tested ways of working. We work with councils in developing good practice through our networks and on-line communities of practice and web resources, and through the support and challenge provided by councillor and officer peers. We also help develop councillors in key positions through our leadership programmes. Regional Associates work closely with councils in their areas, ensuring that we understand and respond to their priorities and challenges, and supporting the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs).

www.local.gov.uk/improvement

Local Government Employers works in partnership with local authorities, regional employers and other bodies to lead on and create solutions for pay, pensions and the employment contract. Local Government Employers offers advice on all employment issues, and represents local government employer interests to central government, government agencies, trades unions and European institutions. www.local.gov.uk/employers

Local Government Regulation promotes quality regulation in the areas of trading standards, environmental protection, licensing and gambling, food safety, hygiene and standards, civil registration, animal health and welfare and private sector housing. Local Government Regulation offers comprehensive advice and guidance to councils and their partners, disseminating good practice and providing up-to-date information on policies and initiatives that affect local people and local services. www.local.gov.uk/regulation

Local Government Leadership believes that it takes great leadership to create a thriving and prosperous community. Local Government Leadership works with leaders in councils and in local strategic partnerships to help develop their thinking on leadership, and develop their skills and qualities to be effective leaders and fundamentally transform their communities for the better.

www.local.gov.uk/leadership

Local Partnerships works to enhance the quality of people's lives by giving trusted, professional support to local public bodies to improve their ability to source and deliver high quality, cost-effective public services and infrastructure. www.localpartnerships.org.uk

New research and statistics

Employment pay and workforce trends

Jobcentre Plus customer satisfaction research - findings from quantitative and qualitative research

This Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) report presents the findings of the national 2009 Jobcentre Plus Customer Satisfaction Research, which included:

- a quantitative survey of Income Support, Incapacity Benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance customers
- qualitative follow-up research with Jobcentre Plus staff and customers and
- a small-scale qualitative study of satisfaction amongst claimants of Employment and Support Allowance.

The research outlines levels of customer satisfaction with Jobcentre Plus services and identifies the key drivers of satisfaction. For more information visit:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep657.pdf>

Review of international pension reform

This DWP review draws together evidence, potential learning points and areas of distinction between pension reform in the UK and pension systems in comparator countries. The review focuses mainly on the introduction and implementation of workplace pension reforms that aimed to encourage private pension saving among individuals of working age. It centers on eight case study countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Sweden and Uruguay) all but one of which had instituted pension reforms that were similar in some respect to the proposed reforms in the UK. For more information visit:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep663.pdf>

LGA analysis and research employment digest

This monthly publication keeps you informed on the labour market, pay issues and trends and the economy in general. Core data include: inflation, unemployment, pay settlements and average earnings. For the latest edition visit:

<http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=1094987>

Exploratory qualitative research on the 'single working age benefit'

This research undertaken by the University of York for the DWP provides information on the views and attitudes of social security claimants and people who advise claimants on benefits and employment issues, about an idea for the radical reform of the benefit system. The 'single working age benefit' idea, proposes to replace the full range of working age benefits with a single benefit. Customers' and advisers' views on the current benefit system are explored along with views on what an ideal benefit system would look like and finally views on a single work age model. For more information visit:

Research summary: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/summ2009-2010/659summ.pdf>

Main report: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep659.pdf>

Understanding the needs of people with mental health conditions and/or learning disabilities and the implications for the pension, disability and carers service

This literature review was commissioned by DWP to understand the needs, preferences and experiences of people with mental health conditions and learning disabilities when accessing benefits, specifically Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA). For more information visit: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep654.pdf>

Postcode selection? Employers' use of area and address-based information shortcuts in recruitment decisions

This DWP research was commissioned to investigate whether area-based discrimination exists and is part of the explanation for worklessness in deprived areas. For more information visit: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep664.pdf>

European social fund cohort study: wave 1

This DWP report evaluates the longer term outcomes of the training and advice provided through the European Social Fund (ESF) programme. For more information visit: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep647.pdf>

The impact of Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance: findings from exploratory qualitative research

This report conducted by the University of York for the DWP investigates the use of these benefits and the impact they have on people's lives. For more information visit:

Research summary: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/summ2009-2010/649summ.pdf>

Main report: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep649.pdf>

An exploratory comparison of the interactions between advisers and younger and older clients during work focused interviews

This report from University of York was undertaken for the DWP. It presents findings from an exploratory comparison of interactions between personal advisers and older and younger clients during Work Focused Interviews (WFIs). The study used the method of Conversation Analysis to explore a set of video and audio recordings of WFIs taking place in Jobcentre Plus offices. The study compared the structure and content of WFIs conducted with older clients and younger clients, for a range of WFI types. It also considered the ways in which clients and advisers raise and address age-related barriers to work during WFIs. For more information visit:

Research summary: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/summ2009-2010/634summ.pdf>

Main report: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep634.pdf>

A study of language and communication between advisers and claimants in Work Focused Interviews

This study from the University of York identifies those techniques and styles used by advisers during WFIs that were most effective in moving people closer to work. It makes recommendations concerning effective practice in WFIs and the findings highlight the importance of an interview style that is collaborative, directive, pro-active, positive and challenging. For more information visit:

Report summary: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/summ2009-2010/633summ.pdf>

Main report: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep633.pdf>

Transport

Congestion on inter-urban roads: monthly provisional estimates: May 2010

These Department for Transport (DfT) statistics provide information on congestion on inter-urban roads in England and include final data for March 2010. The inter-urban network consists of all motorways and trunk 'A' roads managed by the Highways Agency, as well as the M6 Toll (this is also known as the Strategic Road Network (SRN)). For more information visit: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/roadstraffic/speedscongestion/congestiononthestrategicroad5359>

Vehicle registration and licensing statistics – May 2010

This DfT release updates key statistics on licensed vehicle stock and new registrations in Great Britain. For more information visit:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/vehicles/>

International sea passengers: provisional estimates May 2010

These DfT statistics cover annual international and domestic passenger and passenger vehicle traffic at UK ports. For more information visit:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/statistics/datatablespublications/maritime/passengers/>

Road use survey

This survey was conducted by Ipsos MORI for the RAC Foundation. It shows that 71 per cent of the population would not currently support a Pay as You Go system on all the nation's roads. For more information visit:

http://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/road%20use%20survey%20-%20rac%20foundation%20-%20june%202010.pdf

Housing

New house building and social housing sales in Wales, October-December 2009 and January-March 2010

These statistics from the Welsh Assembly Government provide information on both the number of new dwellings, started and completed, and the number of social housing sales in Wales for the period October to December 2009 and January to March 2010. For more information visit:

<http://wales.gov.uk/docs/statistics/2010/100708sdr1032010en.pdf>

Decent homes need decent spaces: an action plan to improve open spaces in social housing areas

This action plan is about how social landlords can provide more opportunities for residents of all ages to enjoy the space on their doorsteps, whether they want to grow vegetables, compete in sport or simply chat with their neighbours in a safe and pleasant environment.

The practical 10 point plan is prepared by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the National Housing Federation in partnership with Neighbourhoods Green, which includes 30 social housing providers.

For more information visit: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/decent-homes-need-decent-spaces.pdf>

Modelling and forecasting UK mortgage arrears and possessions (NHPAU) report

NHPAU commissioned Professor John Muellbauer, assisted by Dr. Janine Aron, to develop a model aimed at improving understanding of the drivers of mortgage arrears and possessions. This can be used to predict how arrears and possessions (sometimes termed 'repossessions') may move over the next few years in different economic scenarios. For more information visit: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/pdf/1643676.pdf>

Education and children's services

Families with children in Britain: findings from the 2008 families and children study (FACS)

This DWP report is the tenth in a series of annual surveys, which investigate the circumstances of British families with dependent children. The report presents descriptive findings, and is divided into a number of chapters, each of which looks at distinct features of family life. For more information visit: <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep656.pdf>

Against the odds: re-engaging young people in education, employment or training

This study by the Audit Commission looks at the financial, personal and social cost of teenagers who are so-called NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Since 1990, a yearly Government survey has indicated that between 9 and 10 per cent of 16 to 18 year olds are without wages, schooling or training. The Audit Commission's study has found that the problem may be worse than the annual 'snapshot' survey shows, but that a new approach can make scarce resources work harder for those at greatest risk. For more information visit:

Report summary: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Downloads/20100707-againsttheoddssummary.pdf>

Full report: <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Downloads/20100707-againsttheoddsfull.pdf>

In Loco Parentis

This Demos report commissioned by Barnardo's, examines what the care system would look like if it were reconfigured to avoid the delay, instability and abrupt transitions that many young people still experience.

Through an in-depth review of existing data and research studies, In Loco Parentis shows that there are a number of factors that influence outcomes among children in care, not least their pre-care experiences, and that looked-after children, far from being a homogeneous group, enter care for a variety of reasons and have very different needs.

For more information visit: <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/inlocoparentis>

Implementing outcomes based accountability in children's services: an overview of the process and impact

Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) is an approach that local authorities can use to assist with planning services and assessing their performance. The OBA approach focuses on identifying outcomes and monitoring and evidencing progress towards those desired outcomes. The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) was commissioned by Local Government Association Analysis and Research (LGAAR), on behalf of Local Government Improvement and Development, to identify the impact of the OBA approach on LA practice in Children's Services through nine case studies (18 interviews with strategic and operational staff). The main findings are presented in a thematic report and further details are reported through nine case studies. For more information visit: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=12516112>

Local authority approaches to the school admissions process one year on

Recent legislation has emphasised the important role of local authorities in promoting equity and fair access within the school admissions process. Schools need to maintain a balanced and representative intake that reflects the local community and parents have a right to be heard and to contribute to shaping school policies. LGA commissioned this research from the NFER to provide an up-to-date overview of the benefits and challenges of different approaches to dealing with school admissions. For more information visit: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=12466374>

National pupil projections: future trends in pupil numbers

These Department for Education (DfE) statistics provide national projections for the number of pupils in schools by type of school and age group. Findings presented here update those published in March 2010 (OSR 08/2010) and are based on mid-2008 population projections from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) with trends in pupil numbers derived from data collected via the School Census (January 2010).

ONS population projections are based on assumptions about future levels of migration. Included in this report is an impact assessment of varying these migration assumptions on projected pupil numbers. For more information visit: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/STR/d000940/OSR152010.pdf>

Schools research news

The DfE publish a monthly newsletter reviewing the latest research findings on school standards and related issues. It is intended to help keep policy and field staff, practitioners, teacher educators and others with an interest in education up to date with recently published research and opportunities to get involved in research. For more information contact: <http://www.gtce.org.uk/network/196279/srn0710.pdf>

Barriers to participation in education and training

This DfE report was conducted by the NFER and explores the barriers and constraints young people currently face when deciding what to do at the end of their compulsory schooling in Year 11. The study included a survey of 2029 young people who completed Year 11 in either 2008 or 2009 conducted between August and October 2009. For more information visit:

Research Brief: <http://www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DFE-RB009.pdf>

Main report: <http://www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DFE-RR009.pdf>

Financial efficiency in schools

This DfE report was conducted to develop a greater understanding of schools' current approach to financial management; their use of information and support; differences in approach between financially efficient schools and those that are less efficient; and what would motivate schools that need help to seek out and access the support available. For more information visit: <http://www.education.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DFE-RR007.pdf>

The characteristics of bullying victims in schools

This DfE study represents the first in-depth investigation of pupil and school characteristics in relation to bullying of secondary school pupils aged 14 to 16 in England. For more information: <http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-RBX-09-14>

Special Educational Needs (SEN) in England: January 2010

These DfE statistics bring together the information available on Special Educational Needs (SEN) and related information about special schools in England. It provides analyses on the characteristics of pupils by their provision of SEN together with the assessment and placement of pupils with statements of SEN. They update and supplement information published in the May release 'Schools, Pupils and their Characteristics, January 2010 (Provisional)'. For more information visit: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000939/SFR19-2010.pdf>

Safeguarding young people: responding to young people 11 to 17 who are maltreated

The purpose of this research from The Children's Society is to explore access to, and initial responses of, services for young people with potential maltreatment issues. Research in other countries has highlighted the importance of acknowledging the different maltreatment experiences and needs of young people, as compared with younger children. For more information visit:

Executive summary: http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/resources/documents/Research/21487_full.pdf

Main report:: http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/resources/documents/Research/21485_full.pdf

Environment

State of the countryside 2010

This Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) report provides a comprehensive description of social, economic and environmental conditions and changes across rural England, highlighting the main challenges and future trends for Government and other organisations. For more information visit: <http://ruralcommunities.gov.uk/files/sotc/sotc2010.pdf>

A clean bill of health: how councils' environmental protection work improves health and well-being

Pollution is a significant factor in ill health, it reduces life expectancy and it perpetuates health inequalities. It should be considered alongside other important health issues such as reducing smoking, healthy eating and exercise. Councils and their partners play a crucial role in reducing pollution, but further progress is needed to protect our communities. This report from Local Government Regulation, summarises for elected members, and other local decision makers, the health effects of pollution and what councils and their partners can do to improve the health of their communities. For more information visit:

<http://www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/ContentDetails.aspx?id=23824&authCode>

Local and regional climate change research report

This DfT report identifies good practice initiatives across a range of different authorities to reduce transport emissions and adapt to climate change. It addresses the challenges, drivers and barriers to taking action, especially in relation to the delivery of transport services, and includes a comprehensive review of the tools, methodologies and approaches different authorities are using to monitor and model future transport emissions. For more information visit: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/policy/climatechange/pdf/report100715.pdf>

The UK's Flood Research Strategy

The economic and social costs of flooding are expected to continue to rise in the UK in the light of the increasing risk posed by climate change.

Many institutions are currently engaged in flooding research, with 500 relevant flood research projects active last year. However, a number of the largest consortia are close to ending or due to be reviewed. It is now recognised that there is an urgent need to consider the research, observations, policy evidence and skills needed to mitigate the risks from flooding and coastal erosion in the light of targeting future UK investment.

To help address this, the Natural Environment Research Council, via its science theme in Natural Hazards, is leading a project over the coming year (2010-2011) to develop a flooding strategy for the UK.

The Environment Agency, Defra, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Scottish Government, Natural Environment Research Council, Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, and Economic and Social Research Council are all contributing to this initiative.

How to get involved: The project aims to hold a workshop in September 2010. If you wish to register your interest in attending this event and/or contributing in any way to this initiative or simply being kept informed of progress, please use this link:

<http://www.lwec.org.uk/uk-flood-research-strategy>

NERC Local Authority contacts: Dr. Louisa Watts lw@nerc.ac.uk,
Dr Faith Culshaw facu@nerc.ac.uk, NERC Knowledge Exchange team.

Health and social care

Ethnicity and alcohol: a review of the UK literature

This Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) publication provides a review of evidence on drinking patterns among minority ethnic groups in the UK over the last 15 years and on service provision for this group.

The Government's alcohol strategy, 'Safe. Sensible. Social.', recommends assessing and developing provision for black and minority ethnic groups. This review explores differences in drinking patterns by ethnicity and the cultural and social contexts around alcohol use. For more information visit:

Summary report: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/ethnicity-alcohol-literature-review-summary.pdf>

Main report: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/ethnicity-alcohol-literature-review-full.pdf>

A national study of people over 50 living with HIV

This study by Terrence Higgins Trust and Age UK investigated the needs and concerns of older adults living with HIV.

The over-50s are the fastest-growing group of people with HIV in the UK, yet until recently, older adults living with HIV have received little attention within social research and HIV services. The main report, is to be published later this summer, and looks at how improved treatments are allowing people with HIV in the UK to live longer into later life, revealing that there are high levels of uncertainty about future health and care. For more information visit: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/living-with-HIV-summary.pdf>

Community green: using local spaces to tackle inequality and improve health

This report from The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) examines the impact of the quality of local green spaces on the health and wellbeing of people in six deprived and ethnically diverse areas. It shows that providing good quality local green space is an effective way to tackle inequality.

The report will be of interest to policymakers and those working in local government, social housing and the voluntary and community sector.

For more information visit:

Report summary: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/community-green.pdf>

Main report: <http://www.cabe.org.uk/files/community-green-full-report.pdf>

Economy/economic development

Public expenditure statistical analysis

The public expenditure statistical analyses from HM Treasury brings together recent outturn data, estimates for the latest year plus spending plans for the rest of the current spending review period. For more information visit:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/pesa_2010_complete.pdf

Credit and debt in low-income families

This JRF report focusses on the experiences of credit and debt for families on low incomes over a 12 month period. Against the backdrop of the global 'credit crunch', with recession, increasing unemployment and rising household costs, this study looks at types of debt, triggers for debt and how people coped, over a period from May 2008 to June 2009. For more information visit:

Report summary: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/credit-debt-low-incomes-summary.pdf>

Main report: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/credit-debt-low-incomes-full.pdf>

A minimum income standard for the UK in 2010

This JRF publication is based on what members of the public think people need to achieve a socially acceptable standard of living.

Over time, changes in prices alter the cost of a minimum standard of living, and changes in social norms will change the 'minimum' that is required. This study considers both of these elements, and updates the budgets to April 2010. For more information visit:

Summary report: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/MIS-2010-findings.pdf>

Main report: http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/MIS-2010-report_0.pdf

What does the distribution of wealth tell us about future retirement resources?

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) was commissioned by the DWP to provide background analysis and context to aid interpretation of data on the distribution of wealth in Great Britain available from the first wave of the Wealth and Assets Survey (WAS). It illustrates what the distribution of private pension and other forms of wealth can tell us about the level of, and uncertainty about, future retirement resources. For more information visit:

<http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2009-2010/rrep665.pdf>

Communities and place shaping

Community and mutual ownership: a historical review

This JRF report provides information about the history of 'community and mutual ownership' and the implications for policy and practice in this area. It charts the historical development of ownership of land, resources, businesses and services. It identifies models of community and mutual ownership and draws out implications for addressing social problems and meeting new needs. For more information visit:

Report summary: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/community-mutual-ownership-summary.pdf>

Main report: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/community-mutual-ownership-full.pdf>

The future is local: empowering communities to improve their neighbourhoods

This report from the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) provides suggestions on how to empower communities to lead local improvement works as the best way to tackle climate change and improve quality of life. The report includes a series of case studies. For more information visit:

Executive summary: http://www.sdcommission.org.uk/publications/downloads/TFiL_Summary%20Booklet_Final%201%20July.pdf

Main report: <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications/downloads/The%20Future%20Is%20Local%20FINAL.pdf>

Crime and disorder

Positivity in practice: approaches to improving perceptions of young people and their involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour

New research from the NFER once again opens up the mismatch between the perceptions of the extent to which young people are involved in crime and anti-social behaviour, and the reality.

Despite statistical evidence showing that fewer young people are now involved in offending, public perception has yet to change, with a majority of British adults overestimating the number of young people involved in crime. This leaves young people facing the challenge of growing up in a culture that has widespread negative perceptions of youth.

This study focuses on the range of approaches that local authorities and their partner organisations are undertaking to improve these negative perceptions, and highlights the need for a more co-ordinated and strategic approach. For more information visit:

<http://www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer/publications/PYC01/PYC01.pdf>

Crime in England and Wales 2009/10: findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime

This Home Office bulletin provides information based on findings from the British Crime Survey and police recorded crime in England and Wales between 2009-10. Areas covered include crime trends, property crime, violent crime, international crime trends, homicide, sexual offences and gun and knife crime. For more information visit:

<http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb1210.pdf>

Police service strength, England and Wales, 31 March 2010

This Home Office statistical release shows that there were 143,734 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in the 43 police forces of England and Wales as at 31 March 2010. This is a decrease of 35 officers compared to a year earlier. For more information visit:

<http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs10/hosb1410.pdf>

Local government

Integrating local public services: the workforce issues

LG Improvement and Development and LG Employers, working with councils and partner bodies, have launched this new web resource.

Today's economic context urges the public sector to find radical new ways to deliver more efficient services better tailored to local needs. Many councils and their public sector partners are aiming to achieve this by integrating services. This LG Group web resource considers the workforce issues in this complex and rapidly developing area. The resource will be updated with more guidance and good practice as it emerges. For more information visit:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=19823160>

Local government financial statistics England No.20 2010

This compendium publication from Communities and Local Government (CLG) provides information from current and capital expenditure to council tax and local authority pensions. It brings together data from a wide range of sources to paint a comprehensive overview of local government finance in England.

This latest edition contains outturn figures for the years up to 2008-09 and estimates for 2009-10. This is an essential guide to local authority financial systems, both past and present and contains detailed commentary, tables, time series, full colour charts and maps. For more information visit: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/1622439.pdf>

European and international

International development and your council

The UK Local Government Alliance for International Development has published a study of UK councils, outlining the range of council activities supporting the global fight against poverty. Activities include fair trade procurement, supporting schools, community and business links, as well as direct cooperation with councils overseas aiming to enhance service delivery, environmental management, and municipal administration. Despite the current economic climate, a majority of respondents (86 per cent), including politicians and officers, indicated that they see a 'small' to 'substantial' role for councils in this field. For more information visit:

<http://www.lg-alliance.org>

Science and technology report

This survey from the European Commission was conducted to assess European citizens' general attitudes towards science and technology, to review if this perception has changed significantly from a previous poll in 2005 and to see if it mirrors the effects of the Lisbon Strategy. The following points are analysed:

- European citizens' interest and level of information
- image and knowledge of science and technology
- attitudes towards science and technology
- responsibilities of scientists and policy-makers
- scientific studies and the role of women and young people
- effectiveness of European scientific research.

For more information visit: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_340_en.pdf

Geographic information

Share to save: the value of geospatial information in local public service delivery in England and Wales

Research commissioned by the LG Group has found that the use of geospatial information and technology increased local governments' productivity by £230m in 2009. This would go a long way towards the 20% additional efficiency savings that local government has to make.

At the recent launch event for the research, over 100 delegates from the local government community heard how access to and more intelligent use of location data in service delivery, such as customer Insight, service profiling and performance assessments, has the opportunity to provide big savings. The sector needs to make more of location information and data more generally in order to properly realize this financial savings potential.

For more information visit: <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelId=12079357>

Presentation from the launch event can be found on

<http://www.agi.org.uk/past-events/2010/7/7/lpssig-event-presentations.html>

For further information contact: gesche.schmid@local.gov.uk

Regular publications and events

Place Based Budgeting: Making Efficiency Savings with OAC in an Age of Austerity OAC Event: September 6th, 2010

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) Output Area Classification (OAC) is an open and free geodemographic classification. It aims to segment the UK population evident in the 2001 census into a fine grain classification that indicates the character of local areas.

For more information about the event visit: <http://areaclassification.org.uk/>

Tickets for the event are available via: <http://oac.eventbrite.com>

Living with Environmental Change newsletter

Living With Environmental Change (LWEC) represents an unprecedented partnership of organisations funding, undertaking and using environmental research, including the Research Councils, government departments, devolved administrations and delivery agencies. The ten-year programme will connect world-leading natural, engineering, economic, social, medical, cultural, arts, and humanities researchers with policy-makers, business, the public, and other key stakeholders.

The latest LWEC newsletter highlights developments and activities since April 2010, including the merger with the Environment Research Funders' Forum. For more information visit: <http://www.lwec.org.uk/newsletters/2010/07>

Local Government Group

Local Government House
Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk



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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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