

Supplementary file A – Questionnaire

LOCAL AUTHORITY RESEARCH SYSTEMS QUESTIONNAIRE

(FOR THE PURPOSES OF ETHICS, PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS WILL BE AN ON-LINE JIS SURVEY, AND PARTICIPANTS WILL AUTOMATICALLY BE TAKEN TO THE NEXT QUESTION)

PLEASE READ THE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET BEFORE YOU START THE SURVEY.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO COMPLETE THE SURVEY, YOU ARE CONSENTING TO YOUR ANONYMOUS DATA BEING USED FOR STUDY PURPOSES

ALL ANSWERS YOU PROVIDE WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE.

SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU

Q1.1 How would you categorise your role?

Elected member please go to Q1.5

Officer Please go to Q1.2

Other (please specify) Please go to Q1.2

Q1.2. Which directorate do you work in?

Digital and customer services

Neighbourhoods

Education and skills

Adult Social Care

Partnerships, Insight and Prevention

Inclusive growth

Corporate Services

Other (please specify...)

Q1.3. Which of the following best describes your role?

Policy

Analyst

Service manager

Consultant

Service Lead

Head of Service

Business Support Officer/managers

Social worker

Other (please specify...)

Q1.4. What is your job grade?

Grade 1

Grade 2

Grade 3

Grade 4

Grade 5

Grade 6

Grade 7

JNC

Q1.5 What is your gender?

Male

Female

Other (please specify:

Q1.6 What is your age?

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 59

60 or over

Q1.7 What is your highest educational qualification?

Degree

Higher degree

Professional qualification

Other (please specify)

Q1.8 Have you had any formal research training?

Yes

No

Q1.9 Do you have practical research experience?

Yes

No

SECTION 2: USE OF RESEARCH EVIDENCE

The questions in this section all relate to your experience in searching, retrieving and interpreting of evidence to inform your practice. By evidence we mean any local, national or international research that creates new knowledge; this may include internally funded research, surveys and interviews/focus groups and the synthesis of research in systematic reviews.

Q 2.0 Does your current role ever involve the use or interpretation of research evidence findings (e.g. in reports, reviews)?

Yes, please go to Q 2.1

No, please go to Q 3.1

Please tick one box for each statement below, to indicate your level of agreement:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
2.1 I have good knowledge and skills to search for and retrieve academic papers and reports relevant to my work					
2.2 I have physical or on-line access to academic papers and reports					
2.3 I have the skills to interpret the findings from academic papers and reports and assess relevance to local context					
2.4 I have time to search for, retrieve and apply research evidence in my work					

2.5 There is an expectation from my line manager/team/BCC culture that I will use research evidence to inform my practice					
2.6 I always intend to interpret and use research evidence to inform my work					
2.7 Using evidence to support my work decisions and practice is an important part of my role					
2.8 Searching for and retrieving research evidence is a good use of my time					
2.9 I feel that in order to support local policy and practice and improve outcomes, local research findings/evidence are needed					
2.10 Evidence from national/international research or systematic reviews are needed to support innovations or changes in local policy and practice					
2.11 I feel that BCC places more emphasis on local research and evaluation findings than national or international research					
2.12 Local research takes too long to produce results for the findings to be useful in forming local policy or practice					

Q2.13 In your current role, do you have any training needs in relation to identifying and applying evidence in your work? (e.g. literature reviewing)

[FREETEXT]

SECTION 3: INITIATION OF, OR INVOLVEMENT IN RESEARCH

The questions in this section relate to your initiation of research studies internally or in collaboration with academic partners. By research we mean any activity that creates new knowledge and may include externally funded research, surveys and interviews/focus groups, alongside internally funded research, and non-funded research activity.

Q3.1. Are you currently involved in any internally-led research activity in BCC?

No, please go to Q3.3

Yes, can you describe the purpose of the study [freetext]

Q3.2. Were there any collaborators outside BCC?

No, please go to Q3.5

Yes, Please name the collaborating organisation/s

[freetext] please go to Q3.5

Q3.3 Have you been involved in any internally-led research activity in BCC within the last 5 years?

No, please go to Q3.8

Yes, can you describe the purpose of the study [freetext]

Q3.4 Please name any collaborating organisations outside BCC

[freetext]

Q3.5 Were there any barriers to doing the research?

No, please go to Q3.7

Yes, please go to Q3.6

Q3.6 Please tick all the barriers that you faced:

Obtaining resources

Finding external partners

Internal permissions to do the research

External permissions to do the research

Information governance issues

Finding methodological support (e.g. statistics, analysis, qualitative methodology)

Having the right data/information

Having sufficient time to deliver the study

Having the necessary skills to deliver the research

Different time frames of academic partners

Getting the findings published / disseminated

Others – please specify

Q3.7 Did anything facilitate your delivery of the research?

Knowledge of procedures

Personal research skills

Confidence that you could deliver

Support from line manager/other

Support from academic colleagues in universities?

Planning of the research in advance of starting the activity

Others (please specify)

Q3.8 Are you currently involved in any externally-led research activity in BCC?

No, please continue with Q3.9

Yes, please continue with Q3.10

Q3.9 Have you been involved in any externally-led research activity in BCC within the last 5 years?

No, please go to Q3.16

Q3.10 Please name the collaborating organisation/s

[freetext]

Q3.11 What is/was your role? Please tick all that are relevant:

Providing local knowledge and context

Assistance with recruitment

Facilitating access to routinely collected data

Pathway to implementing the findings

Funding the intervention

Facilitating permissions within BCC

Other, please specify [FREE TEXT box]

Q3.12 Have there been any barriers to doing the research?

No, please go to Q3.14

Yes, please go to Q3.13

Q3.13 Please tick all the barriers that you have faced:

Internal permissions to do the research

External permissions to do the research

Information governance issues

Having sufficient time to deliver the study

Having the necessary skills to deliver the research

Having the right data/information

Different time frames of academic partners

Others – please specify

Q3.14 Did anything facilitate your delivery of the research?

Knowledge of procedures

Personal research skills

Confidence that you could deliver

Support from line manager/other

Planning of the research in advance of starting the activity

Others, please specify

PLEASE GO TO Q3.19

Q3.15 Have you received any training in research methods?

Yes, prior to working at/with BCC

Yes, whilst working at/with BCC

No

Q3.16 Do you feel that you need additional research training to deliver your current role?

No, please go to Q 3.18

Yes, please go to Q 3.17

Q3.17 Is there any specific training that you require in relation to undertaking research?

FREE TEXT BOX

Q3.18 Have you ever discussed your training needs with your line manager / other?

No

Yes

Not Applicable

Please tick one box for each statement below, to indicate your level of agreement

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	N/A
3.19 I know how to formulate a research question						

3.20 I know how to design and write a research plan/methodology to answer a research question						
3.21 I know how to put a research plan into practice (recruiting participants, collecting data)						
3.22 I know how to analyse and write up research findings						
3.23 I am sufficiently confident of my research abilities to be able to initiate and lead a research study						
3.24 I know where to go to get external support for initiating research within BCC						
3.25 I know where to get internal support for initiating research within BCC						
3.26 I know what permissions I would need to obtain in order to undertake research in BCC (e.g. ethics, governance, GDPR, information security), or where I could go to find out this information						
3.27 Having insufficient time in my current role would be a barrier to initiating or contributing to a research study						
3.28 I would be able to access training to enable me to acquire research skills						
3.29 I am able to access sufficient resources to undertake research to address an important question						
3.30 I would be able to obtain public / lay involvement to support BCC initiated research						
3.31 In BCC we often collect local data / undertake research to address an evidence gap to inform local policy or practice						
3.32 I am able to access support with research methods when collecting, analysing or interpreting local research						
3.33 I feel that BCC has a culture that values research involvement						
3.34 Taking part in research will enhance my career						

Q3.35 For local research initiated or undertaken in the council, BCC has the following systems in place:

	Yes	No	Don't know
Ethical approval process			

Research governance system			
Systems to ensure compliance with GDPR			

Q3.36 There are organisations available to support research nationally. We are interested in your awareness of some of these. Please tick one response only for each of the following organisations.

	I have used this organisation to support my research activity	I am aware of this organisation and how it can facilitate research, but have not used it	I have heard of this organisation, but not aware of what it does	I was not aware of this organisation
Research Design Service				
Local clinical research network				
INVOLVE / Centre for engagement and Dissemination				

3.37 Do you have any further comments about using and undertaking research in a local authority context?

FREE TEXT BOX

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

Would you be willing to take part in an interview to explore the topics included in this questionnaire in more detail?

Yes (please provide contact details below)

No

Name

Email address

Telephone number

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

This is the starting topic guide. The overarching objectives will remain the same, but questions and prompts will be developed as interviews are undertaken to incorporate any important themes emerging from the interviews.

Interviews will be tailored towards the position of the participant. For example, an interview with a council cabinet member might focus more on the commissioning and interpretation of research and its timeliness to be able to contribute to decision making. An interview with a director might focus more on the research skills within the staff in their directorate, influences on their ability to undertake research, competing priorities and relationships with external partners.

Before the interview begins

- Ensure the participant has read the information leaflet
- Ensure the participant has had the opportunity to ask any questions about the research including issues about confidentiality, the findings of the research and where the research will be disseminated before being asked to agree to each item on the consent form.
- Start audio-recording
- Go through each item on the consent form and record their verbal consent. Explain that you will send/email a copy of the consent form for their records.
- Explain that they don't have to answer all the questions just because they have consented to the interview, and that they can take a break or stop the interview at any time.
- Explain that you are there to understand more about their experiences and that they will have some time at the end of the interview to talk about any other issues that are important to them that may not have been covered by the questions.
- Check that they are happy to continue to be audio-recorded.
- Begin the interview.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN THE INTERVIEW

Could you tell me a bit about your role within BCC?

Probe for current job role e.g. elected member, officer, grade, directorate.

How long worked for been member of BCC?

How long have you held your current role?

What previous roles (if any) have you held at BCC?.

I would like to start by asking about your use of research in your role.

What would you regard as research evidence?

Do you use research evidence within your role?

Explore what research evidence they have used, and how, probe for examples.

Probe for barriers: lack of access, skills or confidence in searching and interpretation, lack of relevance of national evidence in local context, beliefs about whether evidence is considered important at an institutional level

Do you think evidence is important in your role? (if no, omit the next prompt)

What might facilitate the increased use of evidence for you personally?

What do you think might facilitate the increased use of evidence more widely in the BCC?

I would now like to talk about the new primary research within BCC either with BCC as the lead or a partner.

What do you understand by the concept of research in the local authority context?

Probe for quantitative, qualitative, formal research grants, research leading to publications, evidence synthesis, routine or novel data? Does it always have to involve HEIs?

Understanding of difference between primary and secondary research.

How important do you think it is for local authorities to be involved in research?

Probe as to why is might be important (addressing inequalities, importance of local context in effectiveness of interventions,.....

What do you think are the challenges faced by local authorities initiating research?

Probe for barriers of time, timeliness, resources required, regulations, skills, capacity, culture, usefulness of outputs, difficulty in finding collaborators....

Can you tell me about current or recent examples of research you have been involved in?

If you were approached by someone wanting to carry out research, would you know the process to follow, or where to direct them to?

If no research currently, have you previously been involved in any research activity?

Probe for:

Who initiated the research?

What went well?

Were there any challenges? E.g barriers of time, timeliness, resources required, regulations, skills, capacity, culture, usefulness of outputs, difficulty in finding collaborators, obtaining ethical approval?

Was there sufficient methodological research capability within BCC?

What was the experience of working with the research partner?

Have you used the findings to inform policy or practice? Have you shared the findings with other local authorities or partners?

Do you get many approaches from academic institutions to collaborate on research?

Probe about experience of this: capacity to respond to these requests, relevance of the question to BCC, genuine partnership and co-production or just a research site, degree of influence on the research design, potential for research findings to benefit BCC – timeliness and relevance;

Do you have any thoughts about what BCC needs to do to embed research across its directorates and activities to address complex public health problems?

Probe for infrastructure need, information governance, training needs, resource, cultural change...

Do you have any thoughts about what infrastructure the NIHR could provide to enable BCC to become an active research system?

I'd like to know whether you are aware of any of the following:

- NIHR Applied Research Collaboration,
- NIHR School for Public Health Research's Public Health Practice Evaluation Scheme, PHIRST
- Clinical Research Network

If yes to any, explore what they know, whether they have approached them

Do you have any additional comments about the use of research findings or delivery of research in Birmingham City Council?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR COLLABORATORS WITH BCC

This is the starting topic guide. The overarching objectives will remain the same, but questions and prompts will be developed as interviews are undertaken to incorporate any important themes emerging from the interviews.

Before the interview begins

- Ensure the participant has read the information leaflet
- Ensure the participant has had the opportunity to ask any questions about the research including issues about confidentiality, the findings of the research and where the research will be disseminated before being asked to agree to each item on the consent form.
- Start audio-recording
- Go through each item on the consent form and record their verbal consent. Explain that you will send/email a copy of the consent form for their records.
- Explain that they don't have to answer all the questions just because they have consented to the interview, and that they can take a break or stop the interview at any time.
- Explain that you are there to understand more about their experiences and that they will have some time at the end of the interview to talk about any other issues that are important to them that may not have been covered by the questions.
- Check that they are happy to continue to be audio-recorded.
- Begin the interview.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN THE INTERVIEW

Could you briefly describe your role and organisation.

How important do you think it is for local authorities to be involved in research?

Probe as to why is might be important (addressing inequalities, importance of local context in effectiveness of interventions,.....

What do you think are the challenges faced by local authorities initiating research?

Probe for barriers of time, timeliness, resources required, regulations, skills, capacity, culture, usefulness of outputs, difficulty in finding collaborators....

Could you tell me a bit about any collaborations you have had with BCC either with BCC as the lead or a partner.

I would now like to talk about a recent example of research where you have been involved doing new primary research with BCC

Probe for:

Who initiated the research?

What went well?

Were there any challenges? E.g barriers of time, timeliness, resources required, regulations, skills, capacity, culture, usefulness of outputs, difficulty in finding collaborators, obtaining ethical approval, willingness to publish the findings?

Was there sufficient methodological research capability within BCC?

What was the experience of working with BCC?

Did BCC use the findings to inform policy or practice? Did they share the findings with other local authorities or partners?

(If relevant) Thinking of other collaborative research you have done with BCC, were there any additional barriers or things that went well?

Have you approached BCC to collaborate and been turned down? Can you tell me about that?

Probe for why they think BCC didn't agree to collaborate? Any changes in willingness to collaborate over time?

Do you have any thoughts about what BCC needs to do to embed research across its directorates and activities to address complex public health problems?

Probe for infrastructure need, information governance, training needs, resource, cultural change...

Do you have any additional comments about the use of research findings or delivery of research in Birmingham City Council?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NIHR INFRASTRUCTURE

This is the starting topic guide. The overarching objectives will remain the same, but questions and prompts will be developed as interviews are undertaken to incorporate any important themes emerging from the interviews.

Before the interview begins

- Ensure the participant has read the information leaflet
- Ensure the participant has had the opportunity to ask any questions about the research including issues about confidentiality, the findings of the research and where the research will be disseminated before being asked to agree to each item on the consent form.
- Start audio-recording
- Go through each item on the consent form and record their verbal consent. Explain that you will send/email a copy of the consent form for their records.
- Explain that they don't have to answer all the questions just because they have consented to the interview, and that they can take a break or stop the interview at any time.
- Explain that you are there to understand more about their experiences and that they will have some time at the end of the interview to talk about any other issues that are important to them that may not have been covered by the questions.
- Check that they are happy to continue to be audio-recorded.
- Begin the interview.

TOPICS TO BE COVERED IN THE INTERVIEW

What is your current job role?

How long have you been in your role?

Are you aware of any direct approaches from Birmingham City Council for support for research from *[your organisation]*?

If yes, can you tell me what sort of research this related to?

What was the experience of supporting them in the research/proposal?

Did they have any specific needs?

Are you aware of any requests for support in which Birmingham City Council is a research partner or research site?

If yes, can you tell me what sort of research this related to?

What was the experience of supporting them in the research/proposal?

Did they have any specific needs?

Have you made any direct approaches to BCC or other local authorities to encourage them to initiate research or to make them aware of the support that can be offered?

If yes, what was your experience? Did any research/proposals come from the activity?

If no, probe for why no approaches have been made? What they might consider offering? Any challenges or benefits they might envisage?