How we do user research

This guidance explains how we do user research in Customer Services, Digital, and Data. It can apply to anyone doing user research at Hackney Council.

It builds on advice from the [GOV.UK Service Manual](#) and other sources, such as the [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)](#).

Prepare for user research

Guidance

[Write a user research plan](#)
[Write an interview discussion guide](#)
[Find residents for user research](#)
[Use incentives](#)
[Understand someone's digital skills](#)

Templates

[Interview discussion guide](#)
[Usability testing discussion guide](#)
[Usability testing checklist](#)
[Observational research discussion guide](#)
[Sign up to take part in research form](#)

Carry out user research

Guidance

[Observe user research and take notes](#)
[Do remote user research](#)
[Do ethical user research](#)

Templates

[Get informed consent](#)
[Usability testing notes spreadsheet](#)

Analyse and share user research

Guidance

[Add research to the user research library](#)
[Manage user research data](#)

Templates

[Research findings slides](#)

Tools

[Tools for user research](#)

Research library

[User Research Library](#)

About us

Hackney User Researchers

Customer Services, Digital and Data

Sam Whitlock - Lead User Researcher
Jonny Line - User Researcher
Bakkiam Ganapathi - User Researcher
Andi Tarver - User Researcher

Corporate Transformation

Kes Eka - User Researcher

What user researchers do

[Introduction to user research](#)

We aim to:
- help teams understand people - who they are, what they feel, and what they need
- work with others to make decisions on what happens next based on research evidence
- help teams to make services as accessible and inclusive as possible

We help teams understand people so that they:
- save time
- save money
- do the right thing

Our values

Our user research values are based on our experience and how we can do our best work. Each one represents a [Hackney value](#).

1. **We craft accurate research (Proud)**

We compel teams to make people-centred, evidence-based decisions that impact residents' lives.

2. **We present our work far and wide (Ambitious)**

We seek opportunities to develop ourselves and support others in our sector to be the best we can be.

3. **We always evolve our research practice (Pioneering)**

We're not afraid to try new things. While being experts on using the right research method at the right time to get a fair, accurate picture.

4. **We share what we learn and how we got there (Open)**

We impact decisions across the wider community, whilst improving our work.

5. **We push for ways research can improve council services (Proactive)**

We embed [Research Operations](#) within our team so we can do our best work.

6. **We represent the diversity of the people we serve (Inclusive)**

We portray the lived experiences of those who are underrepresented. Always treat participants and their data with the respect they deserve.

How we prioritise

We prioritise work that meets our user research values.

This means our work:
- delivers measurable benefits to residents
- fits within our team and wider council objectives
- has the potential to have a significant, demonstrable impact
- helps to develop our skills

We consider the cost of our time and potential benefits, including savings and service improvements.

How we support teams without a user researcher

We support teams to understand people. Sometimes we'll support teams to undertake basic research activities themselves.

These are normally projects which:
- might not fit within our priority areas
- are of lower risk
- have council staff as their users

We can help plan, conduct, and analyse research activities. But only if colleagues are available to take part. We want to build capability within teams to conduct basic research themselves. So we work with teams in that spirit. If we cannot offer support, we help by giving advice and signposting to guidance.

Contact us

Get in touch by emailing user.research@hackney.gov.uk.