Data driven insights enable better targeting of Citizen services

London Borough of Hounslow

The Challenge

- Move away from MS Excel spreadsheets and static reports to a dynamic and interactive approach to data management.

The Benefits

- Time savings
- Enhanced data integrity
- Democratisation of data
- Improved community services

London Borough of Hounslow has transformed the management of its data with Esri's InstantAtlas enabling Council staff, community groups and residents to access data about the borough all in one place. Data-rich insights presented in dynamic, interactive reports are being used to support the optimum targeting of services and address challenges such as the cost of the energy crisis and public health issues.

The Challenge

As with any local authority, London Borough of Hounslow is responsible for a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to help improve the health and wellbeing of its residents. A large suburban district interspersed with green space in West London, Hounslow is one of London's most diverse boroughs with almost 300,000 residents.

Up-to-date, accurate and timely internal and external data plays a vital role in helping Hounslow's information analysts understand the needs of the Borough's population. Until recently, bureaucracy and red tape were amongst many restrictions in sourcing accurate data. Data from multiple sources had to be managed and consolidated before it could be analysed and the findings were then presented in static PDF reports, not dynamic and, therefore, often out-of-date within a month of publication.

Having access to timely, reproducible and verified data would make a significant difference in how Hounslow could shape its services. What was needed was an innovative approach to data management, a dynamic platform that could bring together demographic, socio-economic, health, education and other community data to inform audiences about geographical patterns and comparisons on a diverse range of statistics and indicators.

The Solution

The **Hounslow Data Hub** enables residents, community groups and Council staff to easily access data about the borough, from a one-stop source. Fully hosted and managed by Esri UK through its InstantAtlas Data Observatory, it removes the burden of data management from the Hounslow team so they can focus on the Data Hub's analytical capabilities.

The Hub's main data resource is the National Data Service (NDS), an integral element within InstantAtlas, which brings together thousands of key statistical indicators from a range of providers including NOMIS, ONS, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

Council staff have the option to add their own data sets such as aggregations from internal Adult Social Care data and external data not already on the NDS such as data regarding some aspects of Childrens Social Care, to further enhance the analytical possibilities of the National Data Service data sets. Hounslow are also heavy users of the National Data Service within ArcGIS Online, using Report Builder for ArcGIS Online to build their own customised, in-house reports. Additional web pages and resources are easily added by the Hounslow team using the popular WordPress content management system and embedded Power BI dashboards.

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> "Having the latest, up-to-date data at our fingertips gives us the ability to quickly create reports to support our colleagues with their work. Identifying problems and looking at trends can help us to deliver the most appropriate, targeted and cost-effective services "
>
> Sukhjeet Gill, Programme Delivery Manager, London Borough of Hounslow
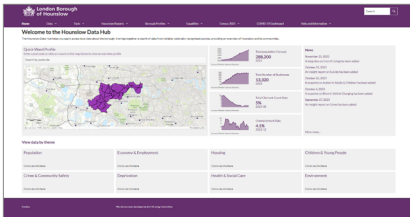
Hounslow Data Hub homepage

InstantAtlas Data explorer apps connect directly to an InstantAtlas Data Catalogue in ArcGIS Online giving users the ability to browse and download data and create graphics for documents and presentations. These simple to use apps enable the Council's Insight and Intelligence team to compose highly interactive reports and make presentations that combine statistics and maps, to deliver added insights and aid decision making for teams throughout the London Borough of Hounslow.

New service initiatives include 'warm spaces' for residents, along with wider winter planning. Regular Data Hub training sessions demonstrate how users can self-service, helping them to work more productively.

The Benefits

Improved community services
The use of various data sets such as Energy Performance and CACI income data, were combined to provide rich data insights to guide Hounslow's work to address the cost-of-energy crisis challenge within the Borough. Using this insight the Council has been able to respond with a network of over 30 warm spaces across the Borough, giving those who cannot afford to heat their homes somewhere safe to go.

Time savings
InstantAtlas removes the burden of managing and keeping Hounslow's data store up to date, freeing up a vast amount of expertise and labour. Analysts can focus on in-depth analysis and reports which produce more information. For example, producing new knowledge on the protected characteristics about its population such as sexual orientation and gender reassignment using data from its 2021 Census. This ensures that service areas are more fully aware of the different cohorts within the population with the primary outcome of improved targeting of services.

Enhanced data integrity
Data from credible sources available in one place gives a wide range of users' access to the same data. This one version of the truth is leading to smarter requests; from analysts previously being asked to identify trends, they are now looking at what could be behind trends they are seeing. With shrinking budgets in the public sector, decisions can be evidenced and also prioritisation of decisions can be evidenced if required.

Democratisation of data
A broad range of colleagues across the Council and externally now have access to the same data. People living in local communities can use it to access information about local services and challenge policies and hold elected Members to account. This transparency of consistently accurate data continues to support collective and collaborative decision-making.

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