

UK Residents' Views Of Local Councils

By DJS Research Ltd

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Your contacts

Alasdair Gleed, *Research Director & Localise Lead;*

Elliot Simmonds, *Senior Marketing Executive*

Phone: 01663 767857

Web: www.djsresearch.co.uk; <http://localiseprofiling.com>

E-mail: esimmonds@djsresearch.com; agleed@djsresearch.com

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The headlines

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Eight key insights emerge from the research:

- 1. There is a **positive attitude from residents towards local councils moving their communications to a more online approach** in order to realise savings which could be applied in other areas: **52% of respondents agree**, while only 12% disagree.*
- 2. Despite there being some variation by age and region in support of a more online approach, **about half of respondents aged 55-64 and 65+, and two fifths of respondents from Yorkshire and Humber, still actively support the idea**. In these groups of lowest support, disagreement is not much different to the overall average proportions.*
- 3. **Over two fifths of respondents do not believe that their local council targets services to them in the way that best suits them**. Age is a major factor behind the dissatisfaction in this aspect. Localise could aid local councils to target their services more effectively.*
- 4. **Two fifths of respondents feel that their local council does not focus its budget on things that matter to local people**. Fewer than one quarter agree. Localise could aid local councils in their budget focussing, by determining what matters most to people in particular areas.*
- 5. **There is a significant proportion of people who feel that their local council does not understand its residents very well (37%)**. Localise would be able to provide local councils with detailed information and therefore a greater understanding of their residents.*

The headlines

Eight key insights emerge from the research:

6. *The **youngest and oldest groups feel least satisfied with each aspect**. However, several comments reveal that people in between these age extremes feel that their council's services are already geared too much towards older and younger residents.*
7. *Though the base sizes are small, **there is generally a higher level of dissatisfaction in Northern Ireland and Wales across each aspect**. In England, the Midlands, North West and Yorkshire/Humber tend to be the least satisfied regions. Respondents from London and Scotland tend to agree with the statements more than those from other regions.*
8. ***Gender does not have a significant effect on agreement** with these statements about local councils. Males are perhaps slightly more likely to disagree with the statements, while more females gave neutral responses.*



Methodology

Research Methodology

Representative survey of UK residents carried out online

- Online panel survey carried out in May 2014, returning 1,034 responses.
 - Respondents representative at country level (England 84%, Scotland 8%, Wales 5% and Northern Ireland 3%). Respondents in England representative at regional level.
 - Respondents broadly representative in terms of age at overall level.
 - Respondents were representative in terms of gender at an overall level.
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- Panel survey carried out by Respondi AG.
 - Analysis and reporting carried out by the Localise team at DJS Research Ltd.



Research Methodology

Demographic data at an overall level provided below

Region

Region	Respondents	Percentage
North East	46	4%
North West	114	11%
Yorkshire and The Humber	85	8%
East Midlands	77	7%
West Midlands	91	9%
East	93	9%
London	131	13%
South East	148	14%
South West	85	8%
Wales	51	5%
Scotland	84	8%
Northern Ireland	29	3%
Total	1034	100%

Age & Gender

Age	Respondents	Percentage
15-19	73	7%
20-24	93	9%
25-34	167	16%
35-44	170	16%
45-54	168	16%
55-64	160	15%
65+	203	20%
Total	1034	100%

Gender	Respondents	Percentage
Male	494	48%
Female	540	52%
Total	1034	100%

*Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding

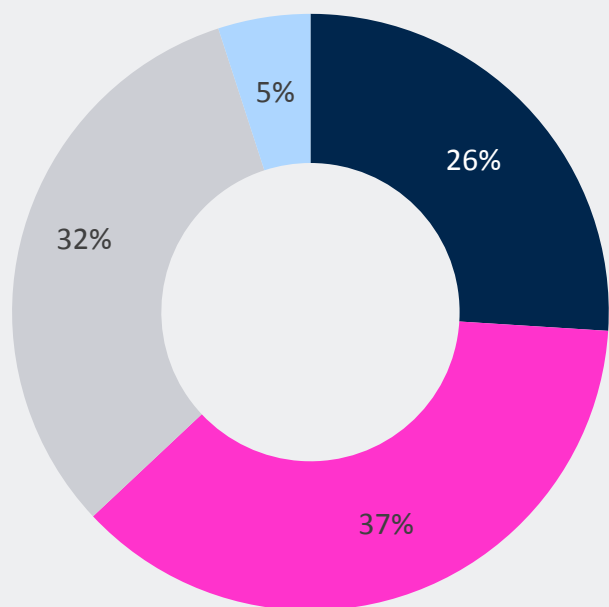


Local Councils' understanding of residents

My local council has a good understanding of its residents

Almost two fifths of respondents disagree that their local council has a good understanding of its residents.

Council understands residents



- Net agree
- Net disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't Know

- This is the statement with most agreement and least disagreement.
- Only one quarter agree that their local council has a good understanding of its residents.

"Most members of my local council are people who have moved here later in life and do not understand the problems and difficulties which face ordinary working people in this area of very low wages and very high house prices."

"They are detached and have no understanding of local needs."

"The council understands enough to cherry pick where it puts its efforts - to where the leader thinks votes will be garnered rather than where real need exists."

My local council has a good understanding of its residents

Agreement with the statement varies by age and region of the UK.

Age

- Agreement drops to less than a quarter (23%) for respondents aged 55-64, and 24% for those aged 65+. Meanwhile, only about one fifth of those aged 15-19 and 20-24 agree with this statement.
- Active disagreement with this statement is highest amongst 15-19 year olds and those aged 55-64 (40% and 42% respectively).

"I am sure there are some very caring councillors out there, but not in my area."

Region

- On a regional level, agreement that local councils understand their residents also varies.
- In England, the regions with least agreement are the East Midlands (22%), North West (22%) and the West Midlands (23%).
- Nearly half of all respondents from Wales and Northern Ireland actively disagree with the statement. Only 7% of those from Northern Ireland and 16% from Wales agree. London has the highest proportion of respondents who agree with the statement (37%).

"They disregard what local people want and move services to another part of the borough."

"I don't think the council are focused enough and need to listen to the public."

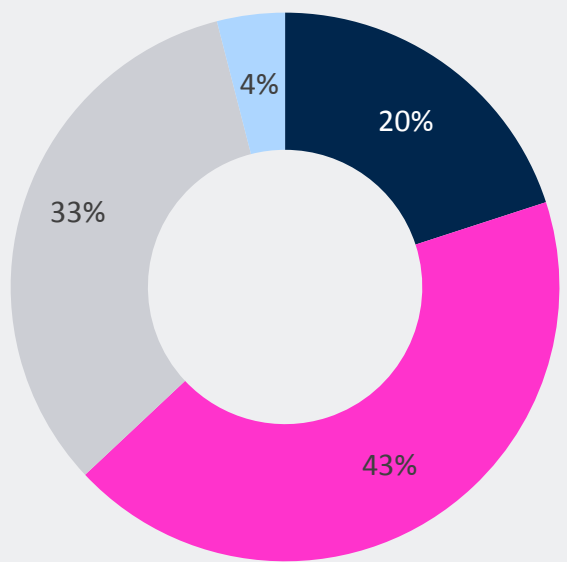


Local Councils' targeting of services

My local council targets services to me in the way that best suits me

Just one fifth of respondents agree that their local council targets services to them in the way that best suits them. This question prompted the most overall disagreement out of the three (43%).

Council targets services in the way that best suits me



- Net agree
- Net disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't Know

“I have a daughter that uses health and social care services. She is not a round peg that fits into a square hole... I appreciate they have a limited budget, it could still be tailored more efficiently to suit.”

Region

- Regional variation is quite pronounced for this statement.
- About three fifths of respondents from Wales (63%) and Northern Ireland (59%) disagree with the statement.
- The North West is the most dissatisfied region in England, as over half the respondents disagree with the statement.
- Scotland has the greatest proportion of respondents who agree that councils target their services in the best suited way (30%).

My local council targets services to me in the way that best suits me

Just one fifth of respondents agree that their local council targets services to them in the way that best suits them. This question prompted the most overall disagreement out of the three (43%)

Age

- Again, age appears to have a significant effect on the responses, with the younger and older respondents tending to disagree more.
- About half of those aged 15-24 actively disagree with the statement, while only about 1 in 10 agree.
- Agreement is also low for those aged 55-64 and 65+ (17% and 18% respectively).

"As not enough is done for the youth."

"The council is more for older residents and young children not a lot is done for people like me."

"Area being regenerated but no one is thinking about the facilities needed to cope with all the extra housing e.g. shops, play areas for younger children, plus something for the 11 + age group."

"On the estate I live on there are a lot of ageing population and their needs need to be considered when making changes. They are not doing so even when a consultation takes place, feels like a paper exercise."

"I don't really know what my council does but I have not incurred much in my everyday life that is targeted at my age group in my area."

"I've only recently hit the age that I can be affected by the council."

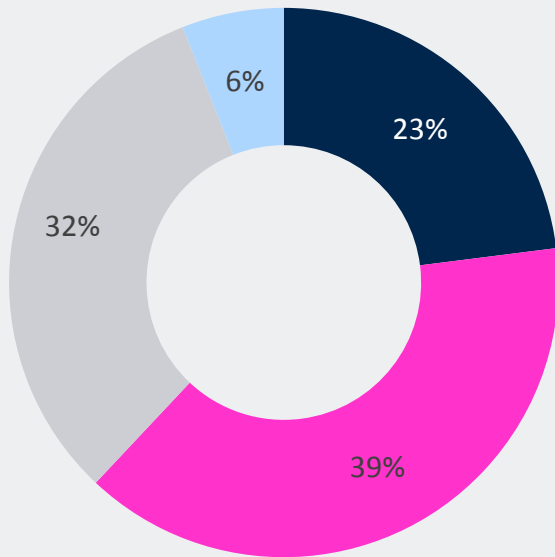


Local Councils' budget focus

My local council focuses its budget on the services that matter most to local people

Just 23% of respondents agree that their council focuses the budget on the most important services.

Council focuses budget on services that matter



- Net agree
- Net disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't Know

- The focus of local councils' budgets is also an area of high dissatisfaction, with many complaining that services they need or previously used frequently have been cut, while other services are not needed, or only benefit a small number of people.

"I have noticed in the last year services that people use are getting taken away. Budget cuts everywhere."

"They often waste money on projects that reward only a few people, or overspend on projects not needed."

"The finances are a mess and the councillors do not know how much money is being spent. They are spending money on things that do not matter, like giving councillors iPads."

"Budget cuts have impacted to such a degree that they are unable to focus resources where I would like them (e.g. bus subsidy)."

"Imprecise focus on the things that matter to the local population."

My local council focuses its budget on the services that matter most to local people

Just 23% of respondents agree that their council focuses the budget on the most important services.

"Very little spent on services for our age group."

"Have not seen much evidence of the council spending funds on things that would actually be useful for people in my age group."

"Main focus is on services for the young with detrimental effects on services and benefits for the elderly, accepting very limited finances."

Age

- The lowest agreement is by those aged 20-24 (14%).
- Highest disagreement is by those aged 55-64 (44%).

"Money spent in my local council area could be better spent in other areas."

"They make cuts in areas where they should actually be spending more money."

"Funding based in town areas countryside forgotten."

Region

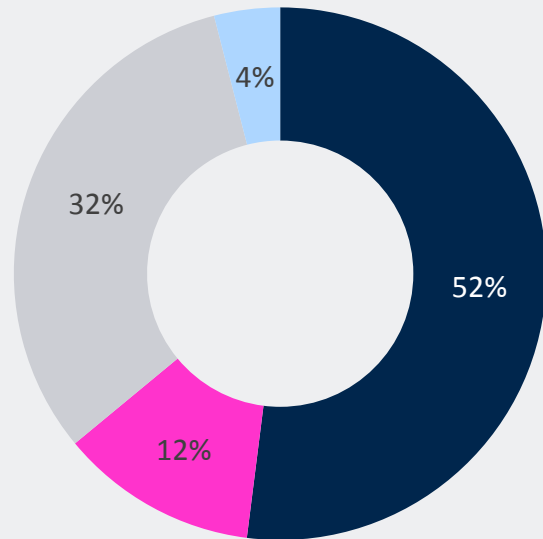
- Yet again, Wales and Northern Ireland are the regions with least agreement (just 12% and 10%).
- Yorkshire and Humber, East Midlands and West Midlands are the regions of England with lowest agreement about focus of council budgets (18%, 19% and 17% respectively).



**Desire for communications
channel shifting**

I would support my local council if it chose to move its communications channels to a more online approach in order to realise savings which could be applied in other areas

I would support my local council if it chose to move its communications to a more online approach



- Net agree
- Net disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Don't Know

- Over half of respondents would support their local council if it moved its communications channels to a more online approach.
- Only 12% would not support this change.
- A similar proportion (32%) to the other statements are neutral to the idea.

Age

- There is some variation by age; generally the younger respondents are more likely to support this statement than the older respondents.
- However, around half of people aged 55-64 (52%) and 65+ (48%) would still support a change to a more online approach.
- Respondents aged 20-24 were mostly likely to agree with the statement (61%).

I would support my local council if it chose to move its communications channels to a more online approach in order to realise savings which could be applied in other areas

Region

- Yorkshire and Humber is least likely to desire a more online approach (40% agree).
 - The South West and Scotland were most likely to agree (63% and 62% agree), while the North East was least likely to disagree (4%).
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- Some residents complain that there is a lack of information provided by the council about its plans, decisions and other factors that will effect its residents.
 - It is also questioned whether the local councils have adequate information about its residents.
 - These are areas in which moving local council communications channels to an online approach could help with, while Localise would be able to provide the councils with the required information.

"Because they don't follow their policies of what they want to do/have planned to do according to their research of what needs to be done, there is never a full survey from everyone in the area so how can they be even close to covering all the needs of local people?."

"Lack of information from council."

"I don't receive an awful lot of information on things the council are doing."

"There is not much information that comes out from the council."

"No information about what the council decides."



About Localise



Localise is a regional and sub-regional consumer profiling and mapping tool designed by DJS Research which applies local census data (and other data in the public domain) at a local level. Localise's unique local level analysis provides robust data on the population as it actually exists, rather than an approximation using national data (as is the case with other consumer classification products).

How can Localise be applied to your research?

Localise enables clients to truly understand a target audience in a local or regional area, identifying who they are and where they live, to levels of detail as precise as a single street.

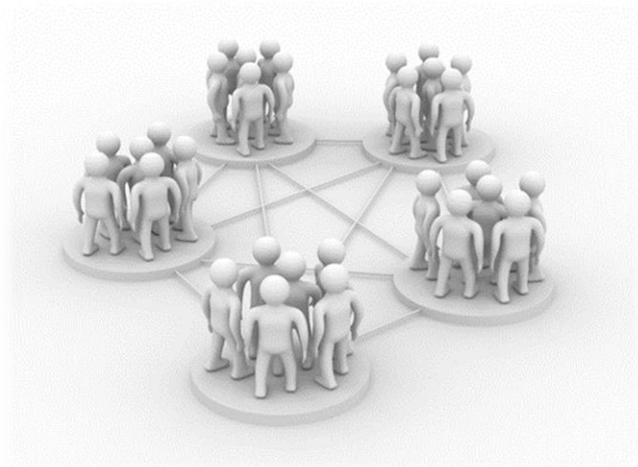
- Age
- Gender
- Marital and family status
- Employment status
- Income
- Qualifications/education
- Ethnicity
- Health information
- Housing tenure
- Car ownership

In addition, we can also use transactional or survey data to include service use or attitudinal data which can be mapped alongside other datasets, as long as it is linked to a postcode.





DJS developed the Localise proposition to conduct the statistical analysis required to create meaningful segments for further analysis.



The analysis process

Gather the relevant **census data** for the locations of interest.

Standardise the variables.

CTT (Classic Test Theory) applied to eliminate the variables which are not useful and identify those which have the largest variation/greatest differentiation within areas.

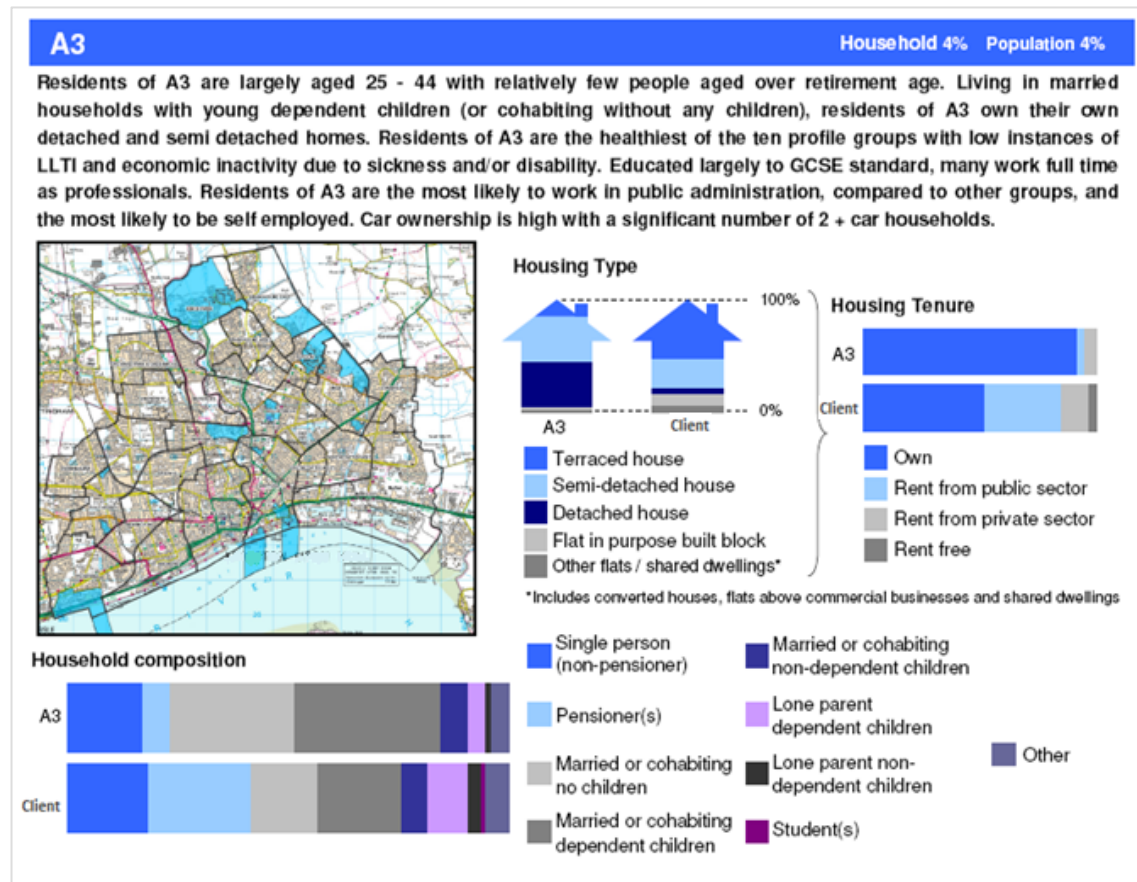
Carry out **cluster analysis** in order to segment the areas into 'super group' areas e.g. Rural, Urban Wealthy, Urban Poor.

Super groups are then **broken down further** within the groups.

Each segment is a group of relatively homogenous respondents that share common characteristics. They are also dissimilar to those outside the segment, particularly those in other segments.

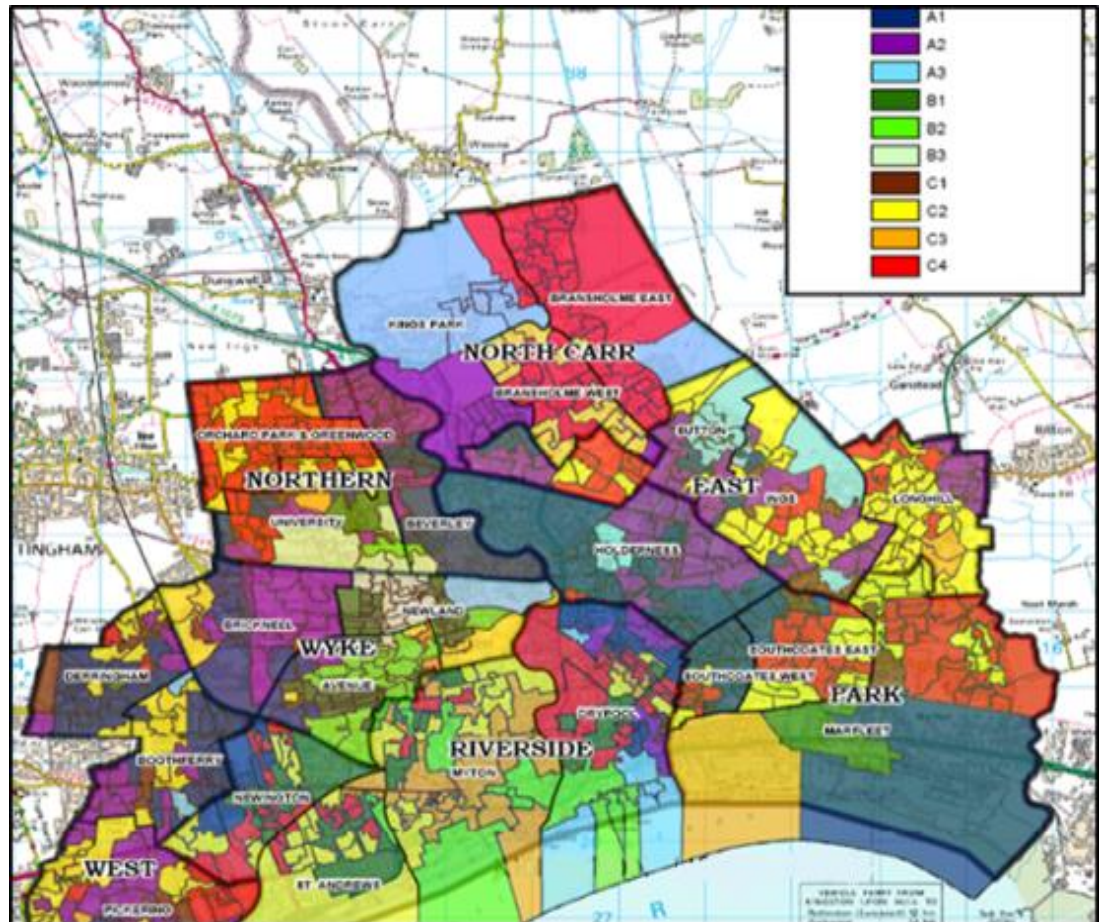
For each segment we provide a detailed summary of the profiles of those consumers – the output varies by project but for councils might include: income levels, family status, housing type etc. We share the segments emerging from the analysis with clients to discuss, before finalising the segment reports.

Illustrative output from Localise – segment A3:



As our profiling data includes postcodes we can produce a map showing where the different segments live to a highly granular level – literally on a street-by-street basis. This can be invaluable for understanding where certain types of consumers live. We can add locations of client sites (such as libraries, leisure centres, job centres etc.) on to the maps.

Illustrative output from Localise – 10 segments mapped onto the city of Hull:

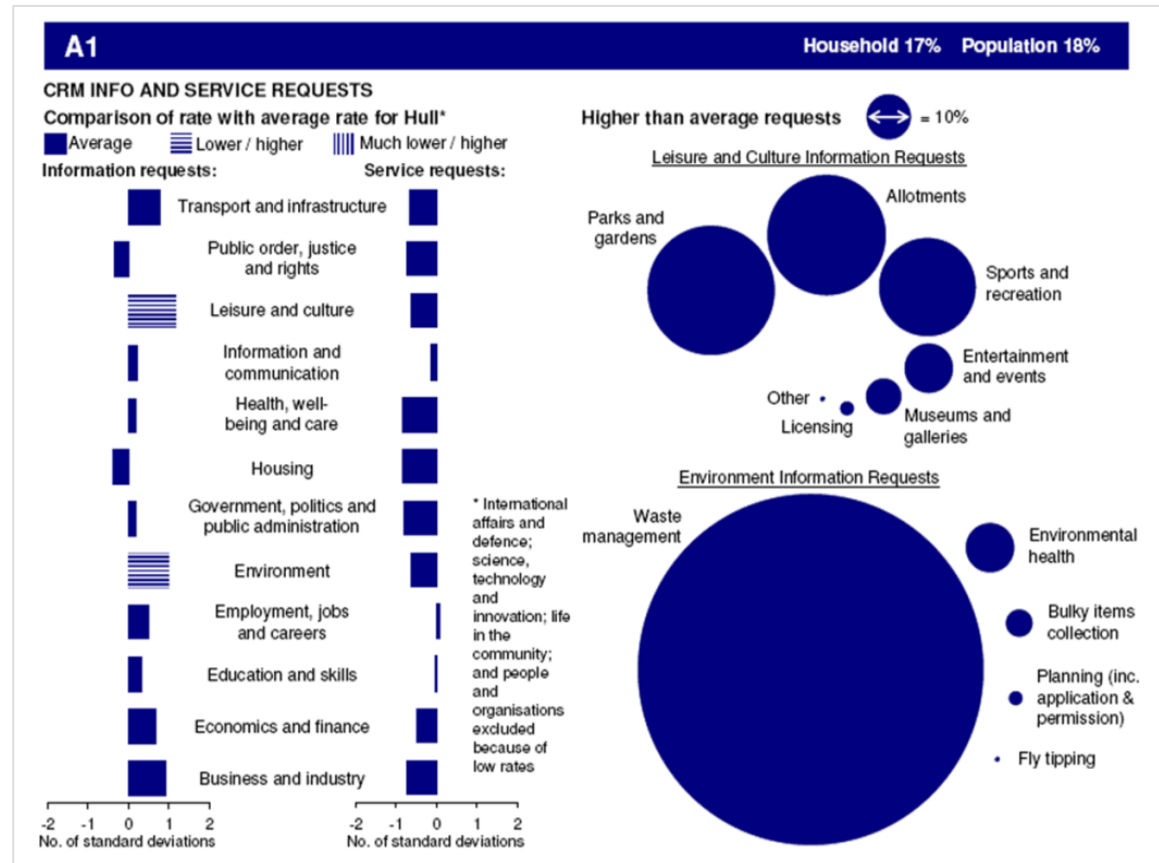




If the client is able to provide transactional data (e.g. from a CRM, library records etc.), this data can be integrated into Localise so profiles could include information on what services or products each segment uses or requests information on most often.

We can also utilise attitudinal or lifestyle data collected from surveys – in short, any data with a post code.

Data integration (additional bolt on option):



Get in touch +44 (0) 1663 767 857
or email: localise@djsresearch.com

For more information, visit our UK corporate or Localise websites:

www.djsresearch.co.uk
<http://localiseprofiling.com>

