



Enabling Effective Research

The Challenge

Newcastle City Council (NCC) is responsible for developing and delivering a wide range of services to over a quarter of a million people every year. A fit for purpose Council underpins its strategy for implementing ambitious programmes of change to meet financial targets. At the same time the organisation has high aspirations including delivering the vision of a vibrant, inclusive, safe, sustainable and modern city. Research plays an important role in the jobs of many staff members at NCC, who need to ensure that everything the Council does has the right impact on the people who live in Newcastle. As public sector austerity continues, the importance of informed, research-led decision making becomes even more critical to successfully taking on the challenges of the future.

Solution

NCC partnered with Northumbria University to offer staff a Postgraduate Certificate in Social Research and Analysis for Organisations as part of its commitment to Continual Professional Development. The programme aims to ensure that students have the wide range of skills necessary to meet the research needs of the public, commercial and third sectors. On successful completion of the programme, students have the option to progress their qualification to a Masters. In addition, following a request from NCC, Northumbria has developed a new Understanding Homelessness module, available from September 2018. The course covers theory and current practice issues, arising both from central government policy and the measures that are put in place to prevent and tackle homelessness at a local level.

Impact

NCC staff have developed research skills that can be used in the workplace. Participants consider the contribution of research to understanding relevant issues and the different stages of a research project using practical exercises. NCC is committed to having an engaged workforce; this project has helped ensure that employees can get involved and shape the future of their services and how they deliver them. As a result the organisation has grown in confidence and the ability to galvanise and lead the whole city. NCC is leading the way in showing how council services can be transformed.

Organisation Overview

Newcastle City Council

Newcastle City Council is a local authority for the metropolitan borough of Newcastle upon Tyne in North East England. It provides services to over 250,000 people and 7,500 businesses.



"I loved this course and came away with much better understanding of the methodology, theory and policy relating to social research, and a healthy appreciation of the complexity and difficulties implicit in research in this field. I've learnt which questions to ask when considering how to use the data available to me wisely and effectively, and where to search for the answers."

Jennifer Wood,
Performance Analyst,
Newcastle City Council.

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