



North Harbour Consulting

North Harbour Consulting works with public sector and civil society organisations in three main areas of work: social research; strategic policy, commissioning and service development issues; and management consultancy. Founded by John Palmer and Salma Ahmed in 1996, we have completed more than 160 commissions (see appendix for summary of major projects). We have worked with organisations and partnerships that are starting up, managing change or developing services; we have been heavily involved with social landlords, with the Supporting People programme, with the development of structures for community engagement and the promotion of equality and diversity; and in developing voluntary sector infrastructure support services; and we have advised boards and public service commissioners in England and Northern Ireland on remedial action when organisations have got into difficulties.

SERVICES

Research

Both of the directors have extensive senior management experience, know the kinds of information and analysis that organisations need in order to support strategic decision-making, and have carried out research into the service development and business planning needs of public bodies and civil society providers.

Commissioning and managing public services and contracts

We are experienced in carrying out:

- needs assessment and mapping studies;
- diagnostic reviews at a strategic or operational level;
- service audits of contracted providers;
- development of governance and oversight systems in relation to services, programmes and projects;
- policy development, strategic and business planning, change programmes and associated learning with managers, staff and service users;
- support for cross-sector service-based partnerships.

Confidential investigations and enquiries

We have completed a number of confidential investigations and enquiries on behalf of service commissioners and provider organisations, with recovery plans and advice on service reconfiguration or organisational change.

Community engagement and inter-agency or cross-sector partnerships

We are experienced in advising clients on community engagement and customer involvement at departmental, corporate and inter-agency levels.

Equality and Diversity

North Harbour Consulting offers a range of equality and diversity services designed to help local authorities and their partners to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

OUR COMMITMENTS

We are committed to:

- high standards of service, and excellence in service delivery;
- high ethical standards that put peoples' needs first, following the codes of good practice that are appropriate in each of the fields in which we work;
- promoting equality and combating poverty, discrimination and social exclusion in all aspects of our work – in the advice we give, in the research we undertake, and in the way we run our organisation.

ACCREDITATION

North Harbour Consulting is an accredited consultant or preferred supplier for:

- **NCVO** (the National Council of Voluntary Organisations)
- **NAVCA** (the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action)
- **Volunteering England** (The organisation for Volunteer Centres and Volunteering)
- **NICVA** (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action)
- **LGA** (Local Government Association)

See our web site www.northharbourconsulting.co.uk for endorsements of our work.

COMPANY INFORMATION

North Harbour Consulting Limited was originally established as a partnership under the name 'John Palmer Associates' on 1 April 1996. It was registered under its present name as a Company in England and Wales in November 1998, company registration number 3662895. The directors and sole owners are: John A D Palmer BA, and Salma Ahmed BA. North Harbour Consulting Limited is covered by the following insurance: Public Liability Insurance: £1,000,000; Professional Indemnity Insurance: £1,000,000. North Harbour Consulting is registered as a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998, registered number Z786262X.

CONTACT DETAILS

To find out whether we can help your organisation, why not get in touch with us? **Contact:**

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APPENDIX

North Harbour Consulting – List of major projects

A complete list of our 160+ clients and commissions can be found on our web site:

www.northharbourconsulting.co.uk

Research

- A national study of the experiences of disabled people living in rural areas¹ and their strategies for coping with issues that arise in connection with their housing, employment, transport, education, shopping, recreation and use of IT, with an action list for public authorities under each heading, commissioned by the Housing Corporation.
- Use of the PFI for funding long-stay hospital reprovion and supported housing for people with learning disabilities², commissioned by NHS Estates Oxford Anglia Region & East Berkshire NHS Trust.
- Comparative review of Housing Need and Housing Market Assessment methodologies in England and Northern Ireland for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to inform an internal review of policy and methods.
- Changes in the capital funding regime for social housing - Stage 1: A study of the impact of the mixed public/private capital funding regime and the government's 'efficiency agenda' on housing association development programmes in England, with a commentary on the relevance to Northern Ireland to inform policy development for the Northern Ireland Housing Executive; Stage 2: a survey of SME housing associations in England to establish their strategies for coping with changes in the capital funding regime³.
- Survey of front-line services for street homeless people used as a basis for a successful bid to ODPM for funding under the Rough Sleepers Initiative by Brighton Council.

Commissioning and managing public services and contracts

- (With Square Systems Limited) A review of the services provided to the London Boroughs and City of London by the London Councils Housing Service, involving interviews and workshops with elected members, senior managers and specialist operational staff across London Boroughs, with recommendations for a revised portfolio of services.
- Comprehensive review of Chichester District Council's homelessness and temporary accommodation services, development of updated policies and procedures, with options for the future of Council-owned temporary accommodation and advice on the development of a homelessness prevention strategy and housing options service.
- Cross-sector performance review of temporary supported accommodation services for vulnerable homeless households across Northern Ireland with recommendations for allocation and funding policies, and performance monitoring systems, with presentations to senior NIHE managers and voluntary sector providers, funded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Supporting People Team.

¹ Published as Living with Physical and Sensory Impairments in Rural Areas: Challenges and Responses

² Published as Hospital Reprovision and the PFI – The Procurement of Supported Housing for People with Learning Disabilities

³ Published as Stick, Twist or Bust - The impact of falling grant rates and the efficiency agenda on the ability of small and medium-sized housing associations in England to deliver new social housing

- Property strategy for residential care services for people with Learning Disabilities following a long-stay hospital closure, commissioned by Portsmouth Healthcare NHS Trust; followed by inter-agency project management of a competitive tender process to dispose of 72 residential properties to housing organisations with residents *in situ*, for Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust to which the properties had been transferred under NHS reorganisation.

Confidential investigations and enquiries

- Diagnostic health checks of five civil society organisations, each with multi-million pound turnover, with serious management problems and/or on the edge of insolvency, providing housing, care, support or day care services for vulnerable and/or homeless people, development of recovery plans with recommendations for reprovision or recommissioning of services where necessary (commissioned variously by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive Supporting People Team or by the organisation's board on the advice of service commissioners).
- Three confidential and highly sensitive investigations into the reasons for breakdown in the relationship between managers, staff and service users in supported housing or day care settings, and related commissioning, governance and management issues, with recommendations for action.
- A confidential investigation into an allegation of racial discrimination and mismanagement in a local authority hostel for vulnerable young BME women commissioned by a London Borough.

Community engagement and partnerships with the voluntary and community sector

- Research on methods of community engagement adopted by public and voluntary sector agencies on the Isle of Wight, review of good practice elsewhere in the UK, and development of a shared community engagement strategy and toolkit for Island Strategic Partnership members.
- Mapping study of the VCS and a strategy for sector development for Bath and North East Somerset Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum.
- Economic and social audit of the voluntary and community sector in Brighton and Hove, for Dialogue 50:50, a public / voluntary sector partnership body.
- Mapping studies of the voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire, Surrey and the Isle of Wight, and development of strategies and business plans for improved infrastructure support services for generic, specialised and BME voluntary and community groups, carried out for consortia of county and district level authorities, NHS and voluntary sector agencies in each area as part of the Home Office ChangeUp programme.

Equality and Diversity

- A confidential review of needs-based resource allocation across the range of Northern Ireland Housing Executive landlord and regional housing authority functions to validate methods of ensuring that services are delivered on the basis of need and meet the requirements of the post-Good Friday Agreement 'Targeting Social Need (TSN) framework, with recommendations for policy, organisational and systems changes.
- Review of Kent County Council's methods of engagement with minority communities, and development of a strategy and structures for community engagement in the County Council's equality and diversity work, with advice on the involvement of external partners in the equality impact assessment process.

- Equality briefing for members and senior managers of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, review of the Council’s Equality Impact Assessment process and programme, and a strategy for moving to level 3 of the Equality Standard.
- Advice for Hampshire Learning (a department of Hampshire County Council) on the implementation of corporate and departmental equality and diversity policy requirements in respect of work with external partner agencies delivering adult learning, and a review of the Equality Impact Assessment process, with training for managers, staff and external partners.

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