



Port of Leith Housing Association

Ask a Researcher provides detailed insight and literature around placemaking to inform vital community services

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Background:

[Providing affordable homes and services](#)

Since 1975, Port of Leith Housing Association (POLHA) has provided housing and help to people in need throughout Leith and North Edinburgh. It has now invested over £210m in the area and over 4,000 people currently live in over 3,000 properties.

Challenge:

[Improving efficiency in access to funding streams](#)

The Placemaking team within POLHA seeks to collaborate with local communities on issues which they identify and bring forth voices which do not usually get heard. In order to maximise its efficiency in applying for funding streams and ensure the work remains relevant, it needs to monitor policy changes within national and local government. Policies can help inform the priorities for the team and for the wider organisation.

Solution:

[Streamlined information gathering for a holistic view of placemaking](#)

Staff made use of the Knowledge Exchange *Ask a Researcher* service, which allows users to submit bespoke research requests, to help them gather relevant research and literature which helps them develop a recent (ten years maximum) picture of UK and Scottish policies around 'placemaking'. This includes identifying relevant research papers, journal articles and grey literature around planning strategies, community development and community work.

The research team were able to identify relevant case study examples of projects that had involved communities in decision-making around designing services and infrastructure, offering examples of best practice which could be learned from. Policy papers and academic research articles were also included to give a breadth to the insight, drawing on the experiences and thoughts of stakeholders across multiple sectors. This allowed the research response to deliver a holistic view of placemaking and ensured that the response was thorough, relevant, and well matched to the requirements of the initial request.



Outcome:

Staying on top of the latest developments and best practice around placemaking

The returned research request helped staff to identify relevant and up-to-date research, grey literature and policy comment on the topic and was used to inform the work of the Placemaking team, helping staff to build an effective picture of the research landscape and the latest developments in policy and best practice around placemaking. It also helped them to identify themes and practices they could monitor for potential changes in the future.

An officer from the POL Placemaking Team comments, "I was introduced to the service by a colleague when doing my post graduate Diploma in Adult Guidance. As a mature student who attended University before the laptop and google era I found online research challenging and time consuming. Initially used as a shortcut, the *Ask a Researcher* service became my first port of call when preparing for assignments. Their reasoned, concise, and relevant responses saved me time and covered a wide range of academic sources, think tanks, all the British government's publications and commercials that I would not have had access to or in some instances known existed.

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The Knowledge Exchange:

We have a skilled team of researchers and information management specialists within our TKE team who are able to respond to bespoke search requests across a range of topics including housing, planning, transport and social services.

Access to our bespoke *Ask a Researcher* service is available to our full subscription members at no extra cost.

Call us now on 0333 011 1200 or email marketing@idoxgroup.com to find out more about the *Ask a Researcher* service and to arrange a demo for your team.

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