

MAYOR OF LONDON

DELIVERING POST OCCUPANCY EVALUATION

PROCESS NOTE

GOOD GROWTH BY DESIGN



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INTRODUCTION

Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) obtains data about how homes are performing once they have been occupied. The process evaluates the performance of a building through surveys and interviews, assessing the ability of a building to meet residents' needs from the scale of the neighbourhood to individual homes, and building management. This data can help capture the performance gap of buildings to inform future design and management decisions. For the GLA, POE is essential to ensure that homes funded by the Mayor are fit for purpose, feeding back into the commissioning process and informing policy. This closes the feedback loop to ensure there is continual improvement in housing delivery. Indeed, this is the case for any local government allocating funding, as well as those responsible for delivering homes. For those carrying out POE on their buildings and developments, it provides an opportunity to centre resident voices and respond with a continual process of improvements.

POE can be conducted in a variety of ways. This Process Note describes a POE pilot run by the GLA between 2021-22. The project aimed to establish an effective methodology for understanding

whether homes funded by the GLA are meeting resident needs and achieving energy consumption targets. In the pilot, four housing delivery organisations of different types and scales collected data on energy performance and resident experience. Following the pilot the GLA have developed a best-practice set of processes and protocols for data collection and comparison.

At the core of the pilot project was the 'Building User Survey', a resident survey licensed from Arup and adapted in consultation with an expert advisory panel. In the first stage of the POE process, partners carried out the survey and gathered energy data based on the GLA's Be Seen requirements. The second stage consisted of in-depth home visits (participating residents opted-in) to complement and build on the survey findings of stage one. The home visits aimed to bring together designers, contractors, and operational managers of the building to stimulate shared learning. The third stage of the exercise was to summarise and report on the findings to produce insights about the performance of the home and its suitability for residents. The reporting stage also highlighted any issues that may warrant

addressing immediately, both to individual homes and more generally within completed and future schemes.

The Process Note shares learning from the pilot project in the form of a set of key principles and a case study. These principles can help organisations to conduct POE more effectively, with guidance and tips for each stage. The case study explores the Resident Survey, Home Visit and Summary Proforma templates in action. Taken together, the Process Note will support anyone with a contractual requirement to conduct POE, as well as those interested in developing their own best practice model.

Contact poe.housing@london.gov.uk for further information and access to templates.

PRINCIPLES

1. Understand the POE process

The POE process established by the GLA Pilot project consists of a series of core stages, accompanied by survey templates and proformas to support efficient data gathering. If your organisation is contractually required to conduct POE for the GLA you will need to follow this process. If your organisation sits outside these requirements, the following could be adapted to suit your own requirements:

I. Resident survey:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicate with residents your intention to carry out a survey.• Carry out face-to-face surveys using the Resident Survey template on a tablet.• Allow residents to fill out surveys on their own devices by producing a QR code.
II. Be-Seen requirements:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gather data on the actual energy performance of the building compared to its projected performance at design stage.
III. Home Visit:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask during resident survey whether resident would like to take part in a more detailed Home Visit.• Carry out series of home visits using the Home Visit template, ideally inviting the broader design and construction team and building managers.
IV. Reporting:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use the Summary Proforma template to compile findings from the resident survey, Be Seen data, and home visits.• Develop a short action plan detailing responses to issues identified through POE.

2. Establish a sustainable resourcing plan for running POE

A successful POE programme can be run entirely in-house, using existing staff members deployed to different parts of the process. Alternatively, consultants can be employed to either take on parts of the POE (for example data collection), or to manage the whole process on behalf of the organisation.

The initial stages of setting up the process and running it for the first time is inevitably more resource-heavy than future iterations, and this should be accounted for when planning resourcing. POE is a process which achieves good economies of scale once established and can also be dovetailed with existing surveying requirements, for example, organisations that are required to conduct Tenants Satisfaction Measures would already have a survey team established.

Key questions to address around capacity and resource include:

- Can existing resource established to carry out other resident-facing surveys be dovetailed to support POE? For example, can staff members already involved in resident-facing roles be deployed to carry out POE data collection?
- Do staff in technical roles and/or development teams have the expertise to gather energy-related data, or can staff be trained to do this? Will this require a consultant?
- Does your organisation have a large enough requirement for POE to make the case for a dedicated POE officer to carry out data collection and analysis?
- How can existing staff feedback POE findings into the organisation? Do you need a POE champion to do this and monitor improvements?

The pilot project consisted of a range of different types and size of housing delivery organisations, each of which resourced their POE programmes in different ways. The following information may guide your own resourcing plan:

Scale	Resource summary
Large housing association	Employed a consultant team to carry out all data collection, managed by an internal working group consisting of Senior Design & Technical Manager, Assistant Development Manager and a Coordinator. The Senior Design & Technical Manager and the Assistant Development Manager attended the home visits with the consultant.
Medium housing association	A technical manager led the process, carrying out most of the work, with some input from the community housing team to undertake resident surveys.
Small housing association	A core team of three officers, including the CEO, were involved in the project. Eight additional engagement officers supported with the data collection. A consultant was appointed to collect and report the 'Be Seen' data; this was expertise they did not have in-house.
Local authority	One core officer managed the process, two community engagement officers supported with data collection.

3. Communicate with residents to raise awareness of your intention to carry out POE

Informing residents that you intend to carry out a resident survey as part of an exercise to evaluate their homes is an important first step which improves survey response and engagement rates. This communication should: briefly explain what POE is, why it is being done, and what will happen to the data provided - in a clear and easy to understand way. As residents are diverse with different working patterns and languages spoken, residents should be engaged in a variety of ways to improve survey response rates. Use your in-house knowledge including communications and resident-facing teams to develop an effective strategy. A range of methods such as newsletters, posters and communicating through tenant's associations can be used. Pilot partners found that providing incentives for residents to complete the survey was an effective method to maximise engagement (this took the form of monetary incentives or vouchers).

Key considerations when planning these communications:

- Are there existing communication channels that you can use to communicate with residents, for example: resident email newsletters, bulletin boards or text messaging? If you have officers who are regularly in contact with residents, it is most effective to get your messaging out through them.
- Using more than one mode of communication is advisable, for example an email, printed flyers, and phone calls.
- Can your organisation provide incentives for residents? A Local Authority pilot partner found they could not provide incentives due to limits on funding near elections and constrained budgets.
- Can the communication be staggered? Consider following up with targeted communications to different accommodation types to ensure an even mix across the survey.

4. Familiarise yourself with the resident survey, or design your own

The Resident Survey developed as part of the GLA POE Pilot project, which has been revised and updated following feedback from the pilot users, is the core part of the evaluation exercise. The survey has been uploaded to licensed software (Alchemer) by the GLA and is only accessible upon request. All GLA partners contractually required to conduct POE will be sent a customised link to the survey. The customised link includes building-specific information in order to identify the building after data collection.

The person carrying out the resident surveys should familiarise themselves with the software prior to meeting residents. It can be accessed on a tablet during face-to-face meetings with residents via a link and consists of four sections. All questions need to be completed before being able to move to the next section, with most questions multiple choice (rating on a scale), and some free-text box questions. One pilot organisation whose schemes include hostels and supported housing noted the requirement to adapt some of the questions and wording to suit their residents, e.g. not asking a previously homeless resident about their last home. These small adaptations should be anticipated and made in advance to ensure the appropriateness and suitability of questions.

5. Ensure GDPR requirements are clearly set-out and meet your internal requirements

It is important that all participants in the POE study sign an adequate GDPR agreement prior to collecting data from them. The GLA in-house Information Governance team supported the pilot to produce a GDPR agreement to be signed between GLA and the pilot partners. It set out the roles and responsibilities in relation to data management for the process.

It is based on the principle that the GLA holds the data and sets out the limits and requirements for data collection and retention. If your organisation wants to do anything else with the data you will need to layer your own GDPR requirements onto any information provided to participating residents.

The resident survey link for each organisation will include a custom Privacy Statement. This appears as the first page of the survey and should be digitally signed by each participating resident prior to completing the survey. If you are designing your own survey and not using the GLA Resident survey, you will need to take legal advice on issues relating to privacy and data collection.

6. Conduct the resident survey

Gathering data via the resident survey should be planned to ensure you reach a broad sample of different types and tenure of residents across a scheme. The pilot organisations tested various approaches to carrying out the survey, with all partners agreeing that the most effective method to generate responses was to conduct surveys face-to-face, on the doorstep (or in people's homes), using a tablet/laptop with a live connection to the unique online survey in Alchemer (with a unique URL per scheme).

Since the pilot, the GLA survey has been adapted to include a mobile-device version which can be accessed via a printed QR code. This may help improve reach compared to a face-to-face survey but may increase the potential for incomplete surveys.

Key considerations when planning and carrying out the survey include:

- Will your resident communications specify a time and date and/or make appointments with residents, or just provide a broad time-period during which you will visit? Which approach will work best with your resident profile?
- Consider which times of the day and days of the week are likely to result in the highest number of residents being at home to participate. Pilot organisations often found Fridays were less successful, while others found certain types of tenure were more likely to be at home during working hours than others.
- Respondents typically spend 20-60 minutes with interviewers, this should be considered when planning resourcing for data collection.
- A continuous internet connection is required for doorstep data collection via Alchemer, this should be planned for in advance.
- Consider providing internal training to staff carrying out the survey to provide additional knowledge around POE and the key areas of questioning, this can help to provide better data beyond a simple box ticking exercise.
- Have a strategy in place to respond to residents wanting to raise other issues or discuss problems outside the scope of POE.

7. Conduct a series of home visits

Following the resident survey, a smaller number of more detailed visits should be arranged to gather more in-depth data and interrogate the results of the resident survey. Residents who complete the survey should be asked whether they would agree to a home visit and an appointment then made to follow-up. Ideally, POE home visits bring together designers, contractors and operational managers of the building to stimulate shared learning, though this can be a difficult aspiration to fulfil. The Home Visit template can be used to guide the conversation and record the findings.

During the pilot, home visits provided a more nuanced understanding of how people lived in their homes, the vulnerabilities associated with personal circumstances, and how these relate to challenges experienced by residents relating to specific design features or shortcomings of homes once built. These findings complemented the resident survey results.

Issues raised in the home visits provided tangible issues that officers could subsequently use to further engage colleagues in different teams and functions, from customer services and repairs reporting teams, through to building developers, management agents and external contractors. This helps to ensure that residents taking part in the survey can see tangible results following their engagement. Officers also reported an appreciation that individuals' needs vary significantly within a scheme – for instance, residents with limited mobility experience their home differently to others, affecting whether a home can truly meet their needs. Similarly, residents with children who have individual needs may respond differently to other families of a similar make-up.

Key considerations related to the home visits include:

- Having access to floor plans for the home being visited can aid the discussion and helps when analysing insights.
- It can be useful to have technical expertise and building managers in attendance in order to acknowledge, address and potentially resolve issues in real time.
- While the Home Visit template can be used as a guide, officers should be empowered to use their own knowledge of a scheme and the resident experience to inquire about a wider range of issues and record these.
- The home visits can also be used more strategically to develop understanding in areas of interest to the broader organisation, for example around the move-in process, reporting of repairs, performance of key buildings systems such as mechanical ventilation, or interrogation of design and procurement specification for appliances and fixtures in kitchens and bathrooms. Therefore, planning ahead to bring technical experts, design leads and building managers together can make best use of the home visits.

8. Produce a report / consider the most effective way to report on the data gathered

Gathering all the data produced through the stages of the POE study and summarising it in a clear format is a critical final stage which will ensure the data and resident feedback can lead to meaningful improvements.

The template Summary Proforma produced by the GLA is designed to encourage officers involved in the POE exercise to play a role in using the data gathered to form insights about the performance of the home, suitability for residents, and issues that may warrant addressing – specific to individual homes, and more generally within completed and pipeline schemes.

The summary proforma covers the following items:

- 1. Scope – information about the building and its context.
- 2. Summary of three key findings – extracted from the resident survey, home visits, and the 'Be Seen' data. Example findings:

Finding	Action
Electricity consumption higher than expected	Feedback to design and engineering team
Management handover has gap	Streamline management processes on site and improve management handover process
Fire doors not closing	Conduct full survey of all fire doors in building and fix ones that fail

The above is for illustrative purposes.

- 3. Action plan – this invites officers to set out further action or next steps that they are taking, or considering, in response to the three key findings outlined earlier.

When filling out the summary proforma, officers conducting POE are encouraged to think about:

- SMART actions: e.g., checking that a ventilation system is working to specification.
- Identify a range of issues: e.g., factors relating to the design of the building (which can inform future development), the performance of building, and building management (or something that could be improved for current residents). This will ensure the POE exercise has both long-term and short-term impacts, providing residents with some immediate gains from having participated in the process.

9. Ensure findings are fed back to the wider organisation

Once the POE exercise is complete, the final reporting should be disseminated across the organisation in ways that create feedback loops and develop closer working relationships between teams – including building operations managers, resident-focused officers and support workers, and technical leads within development programmes.

Providing development commissioning and design teams with in-use insights is an important output for POE that can begin to shape future design briefs, ranging from the building envelope or the layout on future schemes, to specifications of components on future phases of existing schemes. There may also be actions indicated to improve housing management protocols, including handovers between building completion and teams supporting resident move-in .

PRACTICE

Case Study 001 - GLA Post Occupancy Evaluation Pilot LandAid House, LB Islington

Key facts:

- Who: YMCA London City and North
- Project: LandAid House, is YMCA London City and North's flagship building for young people experiencing homelessness, opened in May 2021. It is the first purpose built accommodation to open in London for over a decade and provides a safe space for 146 young people to transition away from homelessness. It offers 118 ensuite bedrooms in flats for six people; 12 two-bed flats and four one-bed flats. There are a total of 16 fully accessible rooms located across the property.
- Homes in scheme: 36
- Responses achieved: 26 (50% sample)

Actions:

- A core team of three officers, including the CEO, led on the POE Pilot. This involved taking meetings, delivering training and overseeing data collection. Eight additional engagement officers supported the data collection. A consultant was appointed to collect and report the 'Be Seen' data; this was expertise the housing association did not have in-house.
- Information about the POE Pilot including what it was for and why was put into an existing resident newsletter and communicated through conversation with the existing housing officers allocated to each resident. An additional incentive of a voucher was offered to improve the response rate. Once some residents had signed up to participate others were targeted to attain a full cross-section of the unit types.
- The questions on the GLA's resident survey were slightly adapted to reflect the resident profile, in particular questions around their previous home.
- A training session was delivered to all staff carrying out the survey by the senior team – this ensured staff understood the information

they were looking for.

- The resident survey data was collected over three weeks and was delivered through the support workers already in place on the scheme. This meant surveys were conducted in close partnership with residents, generating detailed answers.

Outcomes:

- There were particular data gathered around how hot/cool the building was, which supported existing complaints the housing association already had. The additional data enabled them to go back to the contractor for modifications to be made, since the building was still in the defect period.
- POE data was also used to examine the energy efficiency of the building and how this was impacting utility costs and usage.
- Since the scheme was the first of its kind, learnings were taken from the way residents were using the spaces into the planning and design phases of future building projects.



LANDAID HOUSE YOUTH HUB BY YMCA LONDON CITY AND NORTH - IMAGE CREDIT YMCA LCN



LANDAID HOUSE YOUTH HUB BY YMCA LONDON CITY AND NORTH - IMAGE CREDIT YMCA LCN

RESOURCES

RIBA Post Occupancy Evaluation Primer

The Primer proposes a structure for undertaking an evaluation and a schedule of POE/BPE services. It also points out useful technical guides from across the construction industry.

RIBA Building Knowledge: Pathways to Post Occupancy Evaluation

This report, from the RIBA and the University of Reading, stresses the importance of architects revisiting and learning from their buildings in use through Post Occupancy Evaluation and shows that it can be a simple and straightforward process. It fits into a wider RIBA agenda of supporting the development of the research culture within architecture to encourage continuous learning and improvement in building design and performance, but crucially, also, to enable architects to evidence the value of their work.

RIBA POE Report

Highlighting the value of regular Post Occupancy Evaluations for public sector projects, this report outlines steps Ministers can take to roll this approach out across Government Departments. This can help maximise building performance and user-friendliness, ensure best practice in successive projects, and demonstrate how effectively architects, builders and other partners are spending public money.

Housing Fit for Purpose: Performance, Feedback and Learning, Fionn Stevenson, 2019

Housing Fit for Purpose sets out a research-focused approach to looking at the challenges facing the built environment in approaching the design, construction and management of housing.

BS 40101:2022 Building performance evaluation of occupied and operational buildings (using data gathered from tests, measurements, observation and user experience)

BS 40101 is concerned with the evaluation of the performance of buildings at any point during the operational stage of their lives. BS 40101 provides a tailored and graduated approach enabling the specification to be used across all building types and uses and for a wide range of project or study objectives. BS 40101 covers the planning of BPE studies, including timing for new buildings or those subject to major refurbishment or retrofit and content based on the purpose of the evaluation and the use and complexity of the buildings.

Chobham Manor Phase 1 Post Occupancy Evaluation Study, LLDC, Buro happold, Hawkins\Brown, Soap Retrofit

LLDC wants to learn from the completed neighbourhoods on the Park so that we can understand what has worked and what could be improved to benefit future homes. We have undertaken an innovative Post Occupancy Evaluation (POE) study on the first phase of Chobham Manor with a multi-disciplinary consultant team.

The Home-Grown Homes Project Building Performance Evaluation Guide, Wood Knowledge Wales

This guide explains how to carry out successful and effective building performance evaluation of new homes to provide essential feedback for design validation and improvement. It provides much needed support for policymakers, housing developers, clients, contractors and design teams alike to help them navigate through the various methods needed to build up a true picture of housing performance – one that takes account of people and processes as well as buildings.

ABOUT GOOD GROWTH BY DESIGN

The Mayor's Good Growth by Design programme seeks to enhance the design of the built environment to create a city that works for all Londoners. This means development and growth should benefit everyone who lives here. As such, it should be sensitive to the local context, environmentally sustainable and physically accessible.

The programme calls on all involved in London's growing architectural, design and built environment professions to help realise the Mayor's vision.

Good Growth by Design uses the skills of both the Mayor's Design Advocates and the wider sector. This includes teams here at City Hall, the London Boroughs and other public bodies.

The programme covers six pillars of activity:

SETTING STANDARDS & INFORMING DELIVERY

Undertaking design research and identifying best practice in architecture, urban design and place-shaping, to support the development of clear policies and standards, and improve the quality of London's built environment.

ENSURING QUALITY

Ensuring effective design review across London, including through the London Review Panel.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Enhancing the GLA Group's and borough's ability to shape new development that will deliver good growth.

SUPPORTING DIVERSITY

Working towards a more representative sector and striving for best practice while designing for diversity.

COMMISSIONING QUALITY

Ensuring excellence in how the Mayor and other public sector clients appoint and manage architects and other built environment professionals.

CHAMPIONING & LEARNING

Advocating for the sector and for best practice and evaluating the programme's impact.

THE MAYOR'S DESIGN ADVOCATES

The Mayor's Design Advocates are 42 built environment professionals. They were chosen for their skill and experience to help the Mayor support London's growth through the Good Growth by Design programme. They are independent and impartial, and provide support, advice, critique and expertise on London's built environment. The group includes practitioners, academics, policy makers and those from community-led schemes.

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Greater London Authority February 2024

Published by
Greater London Authority,
City Hall,
Kamal Chunchie Way,
London

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