



## STRENGTHS

Cost reduction  
User-centred approach  
Improved staff morale

## PROJECT TITLE

Lewisham's Housing Service

## CLIENT

Lewisham Borough, London, UK

## DESIGN SUPPLIERS

Sean Miller, Design Associate,  
thinkpublic and Cartoonists Cognitive  
Media

## LAUNCH DATE

Varying, unknown

## USEFUL LINKS

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/resources/case-study/lewisham-council>

## TITLE: Cost Reduction of Lewisham's Housing Service

### SUMMARY

Design Council's Design Associate Sean Miller, worked with Lewisham's Housing Service over the course of a year to help them improve their service through design. The changes implemented within Lewisham's Housing Options Centre were aimed at improving services and reducing costs.

### INSIGHT

Lewisham Council were concerned that users of housing services couldn't always find out whether they were entitled to support quickly or easily enough, causing stress and frustration amongst users and staff. In addition, the Council recognised they needed to become more efficient to cope with the increasing number of service users, incorporating the growing demand for personalisation and delivering both of these objectives against a reduced budget.

### APPROACH

Sean Miller ran a series of workshops with staff to identify the types of people who used the service before introducing the team to a range of design techniques including brainstorming, visualisation, prototyping and ethnography. Over 100 ideas were generated, Miller then helped refine the option to four priorities: improvement of first interaction customers have to ensure that the staff asks the right questions to provide the right information, information design prototypes to help explain to customers what happens after their first interview, fact sheets: giving accurate details about housing options available and storyboards to show customers what to expect while they wait to see an advisor. Cartoonists Cognitive Media were appointed to further develop the storyboards that covered the service areas, such as the rent incentive scheme and mortgage rescue.

### OUTCOME

A year after implementation staff morale had improved and staff absenteeism reduced. End users were more engaged, enjoying a more efficient and appealing housing service in Lewisham. Crucially, the Council predicts that the changes made will deliver a saving of £386,000 per year.