

## Case Study: Local Economic Development Research

**Client:** Horsham District Council  
**Project:** Home-based businesses

### Vital Statistics:

- 44% of small businesses in the South East are home-based
- 326,000 of them are in Sussex
- 98% of home-based businesses employ 1-10 people

*Home-based businesses are a vital part of the local economy helping provide local people with employment opportunities and consumer choice.*



### Project goals:

To find out how many home-based businesses there are in the Horsham district area, how much they contribute to the local economy and the nature of the support they need for growth leading to greater profitability and more employment.

### What we did:

Since we were investigating home-based businesses, we selected a representative sample of households to reflect the proportion in each postcode throughout the District Council area. Initial questions established whether one or more businesses was run from home and, if so, further information was obtained related to its nature, size and turnover, and the business owner's aspirations for the future. We did not include as businesses the people who were home workers, i.e. working for an external employer but from their own home. Those with home-based businesses were also asked about their purchasing (local or otherwise) and what support might encourage them to grow and employ additional staff.

### How the research helped:

We obtained reliable data on the number and nature of home-based businesses, their aspirations, sources of information, funding and advice, and provided guidelines on the role the Council could play in their development. The Council set up its very successful 'MicroBiz' programme to encourage new start-ups, facilitate networking in the local area, and provide opportunities for training and knowledge-sharing for home-based businesses and SMEs. Horsham is now regarded by other Councils and central government as a champion of home-based businesses and an authority on their contribution to the economy.