

## Enhancing mentoring services to businesses



### Background

As part of a Government project to enhance mentoring services to businesses, leading public policy consultancy ICF GHK were commissioned to research the business mentoring market.

The Government's Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) required an estimate of the number of business mentors operating in England and the services they provided in order to gain a greater understanding of the mentoring market.

In addition, BIS required research to assess awareness and perceptions amongst the mentoring sector of a newly launched internet service to businesses called mentorsme.

ICF GHK called in Swift Research to use its specialist skills and experience to identify and interview business mentor organisations, including many self-employed mentors.

In particular, Swift was required to conduct quantitative interviews with mentoring providers.

The key challenges for the project were the limited number of mentor contacts available to target, competing definitions for mentoring and the difficulty in contacting mentors due to their working patterns.

### Swift Research Solution

Swift worked in close partnership with ICF GHK to develop an effective strategy. Our Research

managers also took a joint approach with ICF GHK to design a questionnaire to precisely meet their needs.

Swift piloted a survey and gave feedback on any recommended changes to ensure the questions were fully understood. A system was put in place to enable ICF GHK to listen to individual telephone interviews carried out by Swift's team.

In order to maximise the number of interviews achieved from the database it was necessary to set appointments at times convenient to potential respondents.

Swift's experience and flexibility in dealing with business professionals proved valuable and 209 interviews were conducted from a database of 469 contacts achieving a 44 per cent response rate.

Swift provided ICF GHK with a full set of data, including all verbatim comments.

### Benefits

ICF GHK were able to provide BIS with a comprehensive report on the mentoring market which formed the basis for a Ministerial Statement.

Valuable intelligence was also gained on the mentorsme site providing a platform for BIS to enhance and adjust their awareness campaign about the site's benefits to the mentoring sector.