

# Life in a viewing facility outside London

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Life In?A Viewing Facility Outside London. How Client Needs Are Well Served Outside The M25. Written By Julie Fuller, Aspect Viewing Facilities Ltd

The M25, the outer ring road of the inner sanctum for viewing facilities in England. How far does this inner sanctum go to deserve this title? Are there places beyond the M25 that have come on to the scene that are challenging for the title? For many years London has undoubtedly and probably rightly been the centre of the universe for all aspects of the Market Research business. However, how many times have you heard the comment, "London is so over recruited." It seems that maybe there are better places to recruit than in London.

Historically, Northern respondents are perceived to be more honest and forthcoming adding to the quality of the research. With this new breed of respondent it seems only logical that there is a new breed of viewing facility. Ones that easily rival if not surpass London standards for client satisfaction and environment conducive to excellent research. Or maybe it is the age-old scenario of chicken and egg. Once clients have seen the quality of some of the viewing facilities "up north" then they may be more inclined to recruit "up north" and see the difference it can make.

The North South Divide: "Ay up chuck, pie chips and mushy peas for tea?" A typical example of northern speech. I don't think so. You may be saying to yourself, of course I don't think northerners speak like that, and maybe you don't, but we have frequently been asked if clients will be able to understand respondents in our facility! However, it is difficult to deny that there is an underlying current of north south divide. The north of England, there is no denying has mainly sprung from the industrial revolution. That does not however mean, that in 2004 we are all C2, D's in cloth caps and clogs north of Watford gap! Granted that house prices are higher and there are many affluent areas in the south of England, but areas in the North West could rival many of these. The off licence in Alderley Edge, Cheshire boasts the highest sale of vintage champagne in England, in spite of the Beckhams having moved to Spain. The geography of the Northwest is too little known. Alderley Edge is Cheshire but is also greater Manchester. In practical terms this means that it is easy to access from London and means a huge scope for different types of respondents.

Respondents up North: Going back to the point about London being over recruited and Manchester being able to offer all sorts of respondents, it really does seem an ideal place to branch out to. I know much research is carried out in different places around the country to get different perspectives and you may be thinking that Manchester is on your map and not overlooked. However, I have met clients from London who have been in the business over 25yrs and tell me that they haven't been to Manchester for years. We on occasion have group discussions at viewing facilities with no clients because they viewed the same thing in London the night before. This would suggest that Manchester and other places are being overlooked slightly. Respondents in Manchester, I feel, can really add something to a project that London ones maybe can not.

People up north have a tendency to offer their opinions more readily and maybe more honest about how they feel. There is less pressure to conform to social peers in the group situation, or at least various moderators have commented this on. It may be a bit of a cliché but people up North tend to be more willing to attend group discussions even the upper end of the market whom the incentive will mean little too. However, it seems to me that this is taken advantage of on occasion by indeed lowering the incentive between the north and the south. It has been suggested that this is for the extra travel costs incurred in London. Well, if people have to travel that far, are they reliably going to attend the group?? Field mangers express surprise that we are not markedly cheaper than the London facilities but you must compare like with like. I firmly believe that if you are getting good quality viewing facilities and reliable respondents then it is only fair to level the playing field.

Viewing up North: If you take my argument that it is worth the train fair to the wilds of the north, what are you going to do when you get here? I am not denying the fact that in the past there has been a lack of decent viewing facilities incapable of impressing clients, especially the more discerning American ones! This, I can say with my hand on my heart, is no longer the case. Aspect is a viewing facility that has broken the mould, giving the researcher and client the best those London facilities can offer with the benefits of our Northern charm. Aspect is definitely the premiere viewing facility in the north. Some quotes from satisfied clients.

"Excellent facility rivals any in the US or the UK" Mike Bainbridge Stirling Brand New York.

"Your facilities are among the most professional and welcoming that I have ever come across" Simon Black Design Bridge.

Client satisfaction is our top priority. The whole building is superbly decorated in a modern fashion. The client suites are spacious, fitting up to 15 people comfortably and completely self-contained. Within these suites there is an office separate from the main body where work can be caught up on or phone calls made. There is also a separate bathroom for client use only. The client service is second to none. There are always two hostesses to hand for any client needs. The food at Aspect is varied and creative. There is always a complimentary fruit platter for clients as we realise that moderators and clients travelling a lot rarely get a healthy option. Of course there is also complimentary chocolate for those who do not want to eat healthily! The menus are extensive and freshly prepared. If you have a specific requirement we can always provide this for you.

The Studio's themselves are totally conducive to successful group discussions. They are large with high ceilings and feel spacious. They are luxuriously appointed, with either individual leather armchairs, or corporate two seater settees and individual chairs. Of course they have air conditioning to suit. They all have stimulus rails along the walls for any artwork that may need displaying (we spent many months conducting our own research to see what was important to the

moderators) This has the benefit that clients can view the respondents through the mirror whilst simultaneously viewing the stimulus via the monitor specially set up for this purpose. There are three studios so this obviously increases availability but this also means that three separate discussions can go on simultaneously while clients are able to switch via the monitors between the three studios. Two studios have Focus Vision TM, which let you view research activities online from anywhere in the world. This literally means you can observe events in our studio from any distant location with Internet access, eliminating unnecessary travelling time and costs.

In conclusion, it definitely seems the way forward to branch out of London and travel further north. The perceived restrictions that have meant that London has been the central hub are now very definitely waning. The quality of respondents and the quality of the viewing have never been higher and are worth checking out.

Our motto? "Quality is not an act, it's a habit" Aristotle.

For more information visit our website <http://www.aspect-online.co.uk/>

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