

Film Richmond Survey

September 2009



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Introduction

Richmond Council operates a Film Office which provides a service to location managers. The office is run on a day to day basis by Film Officers Sue Lewis and Sarah Hillman. A survey was carried out amongst location managers who use this service for them to give feedback into how they find the services, area and council.

The results of the online survey are based on 33 questionnaires completed by location managers between 7th August -30th September 2009. Sixty-one location managers were invited; therefore there is a response rate of 54%.

In the appendices full findings are listed. If results do not add up to 100% this may be due to more than one response being given, or figures being rounded up or down. If an asterisk “*” is used this means that a result of less than 1%, but more than zero, has been given. The results are based on all respondents giving an answer, unless it is stated otherwise.

Summary

The overall feedback from the survey was on the whole very positive. The quality of services provided by the Film Richmond office and the response time was on the whole excellent and praise was given to the highly efficient staff. Below is the summary of results and the verbatim comments are found in the appendices.

Sixty-seven per cent of the location managers said that they have filmed in Richmond in the past year.

Three quarters (76%) of location managers found the overall service and advice given by Richmond Council as excellent. A quarter counted the service and advice as good. In terms of response time, the film office was rated as excellent by three quarters of location managers (73%) and sixty-seven per cent of location managers rated the quality of advice/ information provided as excellent.

The service for arranging parking bay suspensions and dispensations generally was rated as excellent by two thirds (64%) of location managers. In terms of costs, three quarters (67%) of location managers said that parking charges were in line with other boroughs, whereas fifteen per cent said it was cheaper than other boroughs.

Seventy-six per cent of location managers found the lead time for parking generally in line with other boroughs. One in five (18%) said it required a shorter lead time than other boroughs.

Three quarters (70%) used the filmrichmond website sometimes. This is compared to the twelve per cent who use it regularly. Half (48%) rate the filmrichmond website as good. One in five (21%) rate it as average. The website is one area where the services have not matched the overall services provided and could be a possible area on which the team could focus on.

Four in five (85%) are aware of filmrichmond's online photo library. Of those location managers that are aware of it, their opinions are split into two. Thirty-nine per cent rate the photo library as good and thirty-nine per cent rate it as average. Fourteen per cent rate it as excellent.

Half (52%) of location managers feel that Richmond's position as an outer London borough has a moderate effect on their decision to film here. A quarter (24%) say it has a little effect. Fifteen per cent feel that it has a large effect. When asked if the effect is negative or positive, nine in ten (87%) say that Richmond upon Thames position as an outer London borough has a positive effect.

When asked what location managers felt was the greatest disadvantage to filming in the borough, 85% said the flight path. Of this 85%, 21% said plane noise played a large part in the decision as to whether or not to film here and 21% said it played a moderate part.

Location managers were then asked what they felt was the greatest advantage to filming in Richmond. Most, if not all, spoke of the film office team (consisting of Sue Lewis and Sarah Hillman) as being key. Their friendly nature and efficient manner combined with their knowledge of the borough has helped to keep location managers returning time and time again. Credit must be given to the team for constantly striving to achieve the highest of standards in assisting and managing new projects and for providing a service which is then recalled by over half of the location managers who took part.

"Friendly service from the film office"

"Its very film friendly and good people to work with"

"Large properties and a proactive film office who help where ever possible"

"The film officer's knowledge of their borough and their general solution based outlook regarding filming requests and requirements"

"Film officers, their local knowledge and contacts and the ability to make things happen"

"Sue Lewis and Sarah Hillman"

"Sue and Sarah"

"Richmond Film Office is incredibly helpful to deal with and really try to help a production as much as possible to achieve their goals"

"Film friendly borough, so most requests (if sensible) are approved, so you know it is a safe place to scout. Helpful film office"

Topline findings

1. How would you rate the overall service and advice provided by Richmond Council

	Count	Percent %
Excellent	25	76%
Good	8	24%
Average	0	0%
Poor	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%

Total responses to this question: 33

2. How would you rate the Film Office?

Item	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Don't Know	Total
In terms of their response time	73%	24%	3%	0%	0%	33
In terms of the quality of advice given or information provided	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	33

Total responses to this question: 33

3. Arranging parking bay suspension and dispensations is an important part of the service they provide. How would you rate this service generally?

Item	Count	Percent %
Excellent	21	64%
Good	9	27%
Average	3	9%
Poor	0	0%
Don't know	0	0%

Total responses to this question: 33

4. In terms of cost, would you say Richmond' parking charges are:

Item	Count	Percent %
In line with other boroughs	22	67%
More expensive than other boroughs	3	9%
Cheaper than other boroughs	5	15%
Don't know	3	9%

Total responses to this question: 33

5. In terms of the lead in time for parking, would you say Richmond was:

Item	Count	Percent %
In line with other boroughs	25	76%
Required a shorter lead in time than other boroughs	6	18%
Required a longer lead in time than other boroughs	0	0%
Don't know	2	6%

Total responses to this question: 33

6. Do you use filmrichmond's website?

Item	Count	Percent %
Regularly	4	12%
Often	3	9%
Sometimes	23	70%
Never	3	9%
Don't know	0	0%

Total responses to this question: 33

7. If you are aware of the website in general, how would you rate it?

Item	Count	Percent %
Excellent	4	12%
Good	16	48%
Average	7	21%
Poor	1	3%
Don't know	5	15%

Total responses to this question: 33

8. Are you aware of filmrichmond' online photo library?

Item	Count	Percent %
Yes	28	85%
No	5	15%

Total responses to this question: 33

9. How would you rate it?

Item	Count	Percent %
Excellent	4	14%
Good	11	39%
Average	11	39%
Poor	0	0%
Don't know	2	7%

Total responses to this question: 28

10. To what degree does Richmond upon Thames's position as an outer London borough influence your decision to film here?

Item	Count	Percent %
Has a large effect	5	15%
Has a moderate effect	17	52%
Has little effect	8	24%
Has no effect	2	6%
Don't know	1	3%

Total responses to this question: 33

11. Is this effect negative or positive?

Item	Count	Percent %
Positive	26	87%
Negative	4	13%

Total responses to this question: 30

12. Much of the borough is under the Heathrow flight path - to what degree does this influence your decision to look for locations here?

Item	Count	Percent %
Has a large effect	7	21%
Has a moderate effect	21	64%
Has little effect	4	12%
Has no effect	1	3%
Don't know	0	0%

Total responses to this question: 33

13. Have you filmed in Richmond in the past year?

Item	Count	Percent %
Yes	22	67%
No	11	33%

Total responses to this question: 33

Appendices

Do you think the parking service offered by the Film Office could be improved and if so, in what way?

Could always be available quicker, (i.e. with little or no notice) but realise this is difficult
I would include Unit Bases to be included with Parking services. This is a "shifting sand" area in location management but so important in the "final push" for a production to function smoothly.
No comment. No experience with this
When we did NT2 parking was expensive but in the end it fulfilled our requirements
Really good for us. Shorter lead in times for parking is always useful.
Other than being there 24 hours, needing no notice for parking suspensions and all being free....No. 10/10 all round really.
At the moment I think it is one of the better boroughs in terms of parking, so little if any improvement required
No, parking services are quick and decisive.
Its fine - one of the best in London
Old Deer car park access time restriction needs to be addressed to allow film vehicle access to park shot during morning rush hour.
Shorter lead times will always be preferable!
Works perfectly
No - it's fine.
Permits to park for short notice or small shoots - say at 24 hours notice
It is some time since I used the service so cannot honestly answer
Parking is the one element that restricts commercial filming which tends to be last minute. Given a choice I will always try to shoot in a borough (or area of a borough) with no or few parking restrictions so that this is not an issue. Failing this a system like Southwark has in place is incredibly useful.
Parking service is fine
Parking waivers which could be issued on the same day as the request (or the next day) as per what Southwark Council Film office offer.
Subsidized fees for parking film unit vehicles would always be welcome and would provide a positive motivation to film in any borough. Parking charges for large units often exceed location fees these days and thereby prohibit the use of some locations / boroughs.
From memory it is generally fine
Other than free parking, I don't think they could reasonably be expected to better their service.
No, much better than some boroughs!
An online application and payment option would be great
It is all good
Already one of the easiest to access and most efficient systems in place.
Southwark have a great scheme with parking and all boroughs might follow this example

More speed and flexibility would be great, see Southwark's policy. Permits that allow yellow and meter bays.
It is always difficult to obtain relevant registration numbers far enough in advance. Some councils offer a permit to park system available at very short notice where deadline for any suspension might have passed which works well in such circumstances
Yes. Southwark has a great system whereby the film office can issue single yellow line multiple street waivers at very short notice. This is a godsend for location managers, as you know we never have enough lead time. This one service alone often steers me towards scouting in Southwark.
Let the film office arrange it, rather than going through the Parking Shop who don't understand filming needs

In your opinion, why is this?

Purely due to positive, proactive responses from Sarah & Sue
In my opinion it has little effect. But remains positive!
It depends whether we are required to find what we need in the area or not...
To be honest can't say either...if anything it would be negative but it's not a major problem
Richmond has a certain look and class about it that I feel is unique to London Boroughs, however exteriors are obviously always script dependent!!
Lower off camera costs.
People are less stressed and more film friendly
Less congested
Ease of access from M25/M3/M4. Less traffic during working day
Quality of service higher than other boroughs
The film office is good, the area is visually interesting with a good range of locations
Easier parking, more residential, not so busy in general
It has a good mix of properties and facilities, has a friendly film office and is on the right side of London
Sarah and Sue are very professional, knowledgeable, and easy to deal with. I have never had a bad experience whilst filming in the borough thanks to them.
I live in the area and know the borough well.
Filming out of central London where possible is generally going to be a cheaper option.
It's always more cost effective to be outside of central London
Much quicker and more pro-active response to filming requests than I tend to experience from more central boroughs.
Travel time from some production bases, e.g. Kudos TV is based in Bermondsey.
Cheaper unit bases
No congestion charge
It often has very little to do with a Borough as opposed to where the director or producer live, a lot live in North London so they're loathed to drive all the way to Richmond
We do not like Central London because of costs

Richmond has a diverse range of filming options, residential, office, great open spaces, churches, and the theatre. This enables any project great flexibility without the need to enter many inner London boroughs with similar options available.

Always trying to avoid central boroughs

Geography is important, unless the location is unique (like Richmond Park), so it is better to be more central if possible. However, parking and turnaround are becoming more and more important, so if you can reduce your processing times that would be a major draw.

Easier-more space, less congested

The film office is always relaxed and seems to have good communication with the various departments within the borough. This is not always the case in the inner city boroughs, as they seem to be under more pressure.

Should be easier to park.
A lot of green space.

This only applies when I am working on productions based in South East London which I have been doing for the last 2 years, we obviously prefer to be in this area. However if I was working SW, I would use Richmond more, the only negative then is plane noise! (now just seen next question!)

Is there anything Richmond Council could do to make filming in the borough easier or more attractive?

Possibly but I can't think of anything.

Keep up the good work

Shut down Heathrow.

Not that I'm aware of

They could adopt the same approach to parking as Southwark, where 1 dispensation allows you to park in up to 4 streets in one day.

Cheaper, faster parking or permits.

Richmond is currently one of the most helpful film offices in greater London

Apart from getting rid of the planes....

I'm sure there is but can't think of anything right now

Other than instantly turning around parking! then no I find the service very useful, friendly and helpful.

Get rid of Heathrow

Subsidize parking fees

Update and renew locations library and photo resource

Move the flight path!

No I think they're doing a consistently good job

No it is all fine

Probably not too much.

I think they offer a very good service , better than most

Better parking availability and faster turnarounds.

Carry on as they are

Aside from the parking that I have already mentioned, no. I think you are doing a great job.
Take control of the parking for film vehicles.
If it has access to more empty properties perhaps, always a shortage now in all areas of London.

What would you say is the greatest advantage to filming in Richmond?

Positive response
Friendly service from the film office.
It is quite pleasant
Its very film friendly and good people to work with
Beautiful borough.
An efficient film office
The good relationship between the film office, Police & highways, and location knowledge.
Large properties and a proactive film office who help where ever possible.
An active knowledgeable film office / good transport links / ease of access from Pinewood / Shepperton
The film officers knowledge of their borough and their general solution based outlook regarding filming requests and requirements
Quality of locations in general and helpfulness of film office in particular
Good range of locations. Relatively quiet
Beautiful buildings, and an excellent FO
Film officers Local knowledge and contacts, ability to make things happen
A positive can do attitude displayed by both the film office and police.
The Richmond Film Office
A varied selection of properties, good period architecture and park land
It's location in West London
Sue & Sarah
Sue Lewis and Sarah Hillman.
Helpful, friendly, professional team and good locations
Film friendly borough and helpful film officers
Diversity of location
The welcoming can do attitude and the range of locations.
Not to be in central London
Great locations, based in an area of London accessible to most, including those projects based at the large studios to the west of London.
Easy access

Film friendly borough, so most requests (if sensible) are approved, so you know it is a safe place to scout. Helpful film office.
Attitude of Film office plays a significant part
Residents generally relaxed and a good and varied choice of locations.
It is near where I live and it is easy to get to.
Richmond Film Office is incredibly helpful to deal with and really try to help a production as much as possible to achieve their goals.

What would you say is the greatest disadvantage to filming in Richmond?

Perception that streets are narrow/ parking is difficult
Don't know.
The neighbours do not really want us there
I don't film there enough to comment
Far from my house!
Not sure, haven't had a bad experience yet!
Travel time from Central London.
Other than the occasional nimby there is no great disadvantage over any other outlying borough
Flight path for exteriors
A bit tight for space in some places
Planes, planes and more planes
Aircraft noise, it rules the Borough out of so many jobs
Parking!
Heathrow
The flight path / cost of parking.
Planes and parking and servicing
Proximity of flight path.
Flight path.
Flight path - ext filming is a nightmare.
The one way system and perhaps the flight path
The flight path
Flight path
Perhaps the only downside is those areas directly under the flight path.
Maybe the Planes
Not many disadvantages, perhaps the geography, but you can't more can you!
Noise from aircraft a factor when shooting synch sound exteriors

Flight path when recording sound
Noise
It would be plane noise and travel time if based on the opposite side of town

Will you continue to use and look for locations in the borough? If so, why?

Yes as perceive response will be positive/ helpful
Of course!
Yes always. Depends on the location i am looking for though...
Yes, all boroughs
Yes - for the above reasons.
Yes, because the area has locations that will meet briefs.
Always - its a good place to film
Yes. I have always had a good experience filming and the film office is helpful which enables me the more easily to do my job. The setting is very picturesque with a wide range of options for suburban and parkland backdrops outside of busy central London is key to searching in Richmond
Yes, as above
Yes - it's a "can do" borough
When planes are not so much of a problem to my script yes I will as there is a great range of locations
Yes, I like you!
Yes. Very film friendly, beautiful and varied locations.
Yes, because it is a very film friendly borough
Yes as per answer to question 16.
Yes. Never rule it out.
Wide variety of locations with fabulous service from Film Office and Local Police.
Yes absolutely, because of the reasons listed above.
For international locations , yes
No, I'm leaving the industry.
Yes where applicable
Yes, it is easy to film there
Absolutely. The service provided by the Film Office is second to none.
A very film friendly borough , which makes an enormous difference
Yes, for the reasons above.
Absolutely -it is always a pleasant experience
Yes, You make my life easy.

Yes. It is very green and pretty with great properties.

Yes I will dependant on where I'm based. Because Richmond FO are quick, proactive and are supportive of filming which is very appealing

Are there any particular types of location that you have had difficulty finding in the borough?

There always is regardless of the borough concerned.

Skyscrapers

Don't know. Less posh big houses are always hard

Probably but can't think of them

Not yet.

If I may say so this is a silly question, there are no 12th century castles or mountains in Richmond for example.

Urban city

Of course - certain locations just don't exist in Richmond

No - apart from large grand institutional buildings that I would not expect to find there

I'm sure there are but you go to where the required Locations are. If they are in another Borough so be it

Gritty locations that don't really exist there anyway

Anything run down or disused.

Tricky question to answer as location briefs are so varied and are often dictated by other variables.

Not really - it all varies

Inner city locations.

The grotty ones, council flats etc.

Urban deprivation

Council estates.

None.

It is a residential, leafy borough on the whole, with a good deal of historical property, I think it is quite like Greenwich. Therefore I wouldn't try to find much more than that there.

The grittier side of life possibly

Yes buy that's true of all boroughs

Gritty Council Estate

Large empty industrial locations

Can you tell us why?

Just haven't had the brief to get me there. Its not Richmond just that the job is a lottery any you never know where you will end up

I've been working in rural locations

Been working outside of London for the last year or so

Been filming in Yorkshire, Surrey and north Wales, that's where the job took me

Just didn't come up

Have been filming outside of London

No requirement for locations in the borough

It's been a very quiet year

Been on period dramas outside the M25

Been working in South East London

Do you have any other comments about the service that Richmond Council offers?

How's The Green these days?

Keep up the good work.

You guys are great!

Very good service with friendly, helpful staff.

Thanks for all your help and I'll see you on the next one

Hope to come back soon

Very, very happy with the excellent service provided

None to think of.

Service is consistently efficient, professional and friendly. Always a pleasure to shoot in the borough.

Sue & Sarah are lovely efficient, professional people and are a pleasure to deal with!

Thanks for the great service.

No, a lovely borough to film in, the only negative is the flight path if filming exteriors but other than that all great.

Both Film officers have always been very helpful, professional and it is always an easy pleasure to sort out locations in Richmond

Hopefully, Sarah and Sue will be present for many years to come!!!

Not really but will reiterate that they do a very good job

No. Just keep up the good work, and thank you.

The Richmond Film Office are a delight to deal with

Contact Details

The authors have sought to ensure that this report is an accurate reflection of the research and consultation that has taken place. It is therefore important that the findings continue to be accurately reflected in any future internal or external publication. If you wish to reference the findings from this report please contact the authors to ensure that your interpretation is correct.

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