

# ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Data Quality Strategy and Standards

Agreed & Signed off by :	Supporting Documents
Chris Kelly, Information Team Manager	<b>RMBC Data Quality Toolkit (Intranet):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Recording Bitesize</li> <li>• Presenting Information Bitesize</li> <li>• SMART Action Plans Bitesize</li> <li>• Target Setting Bitesize</li> <li>• Producing PI Data Bitesize</li> <li>• Data Quality – the Basics</li> <li>• Checklist for Managers</li> <li>• Performance Manager Checklist</li> <li>• Information Sharing Protocol</li> <li>• Use of Resources KLOE</li> <li>• Making the Numbers Count</li> <li>• In the Know – Using Information for Better Decision Making</li> </ul>
Implementation Date	
May 2009	
Review Date	
April 2010	
Supporting Training	RMBC Data Quality Briefing Data Quality for Members

Section	Area	Page	Section	Area	Page
1	Introduction	3	7.8.2	Verification & Validation	8
2	What is data?	3	7.8.3	Output	6
3	What is information?	3	8	Responsibility for data quality	9
4	What data is covered?	3	9	Service Standards	11
5	Why is data quality important?	4	10	Individual Standards	12
6	What makes good quality data?	4	11	The Data Quality Champion role	14
7	The Council's approach to data quality improvement	5	12	Use of Data	14
7.1	The Council's Commitment	5	13		
7.2	Data Quality Reviews			Data Presentation	15
7.3	DQ Spot Checks		14	Audit	16
7.4	Awareness		15	Standards for 3rd Party Data – Data Sharing	16
7.5	Objectives	6	16	Maintenance of systems	16
7.6	Data Quality Champion	6	17	Register of System	17
7.7	Definitions (Counting Rules)	6	18	Appendix 1 – Summary of the Standards	18
7.8	Processes & Procedures	7			
7.8.1	Collection & Input	7			

Contact the Data Quality Team at Telegraph House 01706 92 4396

<b>COUNT</b> Count Once Use Numerous Times	<b>One Version of the Truth</b>
<b>The person who does it, records it</b>	<b>Using fit-for-purpose information to support decision making</b>

ABBREVIATIONS	
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator
CAA	Comprehensive Area Assessment
DQ	Data Quality
IT	Information Technology
NI	National Indicator
PI	Performance Indicator
RMBC	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
VFM	Value for Money

# 1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline an approach to improving data quality across the Council. Consistent, high-quality, timely and comprehensive information is vital to:

- ➔ Ensure the authority is accountable for the money it spends
- ➔ manage services,
- ➔ support good decision-making,
- ➔ account for performance,
- ➔ protect vulnerable people,
- ➔ improve service outcomes,
- ➔ allocate resources
- ➔ reduce unnecessary work and
- ➔ help flag up risks and enable a prompt response.

Performance information is used by external bodies to assess performance, often as an alternative to inspection, and this trend is causing external bodies to place a bigger emphasis on data quality. In particular, the external audit approach of checking calculations and systems reports is evolving into a more challenging scrutiny of systems controls. This approach has been supported by the introduction of the National Indicator Set, the only performance indicators now being used by government to monitor Local Authority performance.

This strategy will assist the council in improving the quality & use of information held on a variety of systems. It also shows a central commitment to improving services for the people of Rochdale.

# 2. What is data?

Data are facts often in the form of figures obtained from processes undertaken by an organisation. They are used as a basis for making calculations, drawing conclusions about a particular subject & measuring effectiveness.

# 3. What is information?

Information is definite knowledge or facts (data) collected about a particular subject and communicated in such a way as to give it some meaning. It is produced following processing or manipulation of raw data and organising it in a way that answers questions.

# 4. What data is covered?

Sound information is needed to inform decision & policy making. Information is produced from data. If you do not understand fully the nature and features of a problem or situation you will not be able to respond effectively to it. If you did not know what a situation was like when you started acting on it, you will not be able to tell whether you have improved matters, or by how much.

# 5. Why is data quality important?

All Public Services need **reliable, accurate and timely information**

- *Service providers* make many, often complex decisions about priorities and the use of resources.
- *Service Users* and members of the public need accessible information to make informed decisions.
- *Regulators and government departments* require information to satisfy their responsibilities for making judgements about performance, governance & funding.

A great deal of **time and money** is spent on the activities and systems involved in collecting and analysing the data which underlies performance information & planning.

Increasing reliance is now placed on performance management & assessment information and the need for **confidence in the data** has become even more critical.

Data must be **fit for purpose**, representing in an **accurate and timely** manner the organisation's activity. At the same time a **balance** needs to be struck between the intended use of the information and the **cost** of collecting it.

This government have introduced a **set of standards** (Audit Commission Use of Resources KLOE 2.2) to define the arrangements public bodies can put in place to help them achieve this objective. These standards are set out at **Appendix 1 – Summary of the Standards**. These standards should drive improvements in the quality of data and build confidence in the data produced by those with whom we are working in partnership.

## 6. What makes good quality data?

There are six dimensions of good quality data that can be used to assess the quality of data and address potential weaknesses.

<b>6 Dimensions of Data Quality (Audit Commission)</b>	
<b>Accuracy</b>	Data should be sufficiently accurate to present a fair picture of performance and enable informed decision-making at all appropriate levels. The need for accuracy must be balanced with the costs and effort of collection. A prerequisite is that <i>definitions</i> for data should be <i>specific and unambiguous</i> . The data must be at an appropriate level of detail to influence related management decisions, and must be within a reasonable margin of error.
<b>Validity</b>	Data should represent clearly and appropriately the intended result. Where proxy data is used, bodies must consider how well this data measures the intended result.
<b>Reliability</b>	Data should reflect stable and consistent data collection processes and analysis methods across collection points and over time, whether using manual or computer based systems or a combination. Managers and stakeholders should be confident that progress toward performance targets reflects real changes rather than variations in data collection methods.
<b>Timeliness</b>	Data must be available for the intended use within a reasonable time period. Data must be available frequently enough to influence the appropriate level of management decisions: for example, it may be appropriate to accept a small degree of inaccuracy where timeliness is important.
<b>Relevance</b>	The data reported should comprise the specific items of interest only. Sometimes definitions for data need to be modified to reflect changing circumstances in services and practices, to ensure that only relevant data of value to users is collected, analysed and used.
<b>Completeness</b>	All the relevant data should be recorded. Monitoring missing or invalid fields in a database can provide an indication of data quality and can also point to problems in the recoding of certain data items.

### Good Quality data will:

- ➔ Enable staff to make more informed decisions
- ➔ Save time when trying to identify - who is or has been working with a service user, on a particular project or who is the 'expert' on that subject
- ➔ Reduce the number of duplicated tasks
- ➔ Help flag up risks & enable a prompt response
- ➔ Inform staff if what they are doing is having a positive impact
  - What are we doing? (assessing, planning, delivering)
  - What is happening in this area?
  - By measuring what we are doing & what is happening, staff are in a stronger position to make links between practice and better outcomes/efficiency.

There are already many areas of good practice with strong potential to improve further. To be lasting, Quality must become a habit and a habit is accustomed practice

In practice the different dimensions need to be balanced with the importance and intended use of the data. In some cases data may be considered fit for purpose in spite of some known limitations: for example, some degree of accuracy may be sacrificed in order to produce data more quickly where this is a priority.

The Audit Commission Use of Resources KLOE 2.2 set out in Appendix 1 has been developed to underpin consistent application of data quality and performance management principles over the longer term. Public bodies which adopt these standards could be considered to have arrangements which are above the basic minimum necessary to secure data quality.

Assurance about the quality of data can also be obtained by testing the data itself. Testing all data to obtain this assurance is impractical and prohibitively costly. Such assurance cannot be achieved by checking examples of data in isolation from the way in which the data itself is collected and managed; the results of such data testing can provide only a snapshot of the quality of a small amount of data at a specified point in time.

## 7. The Council's approach to data quality improvement

### 7.1 The Council's Commitment

The council recognises the importance of reliable information to the delivery of excellent services. Data quality is crucial and the availability of **complete, accurate and timely** data is important in:

- supporting customer care,
- corporate governance,
- demonstrating performance
- management
- service planning and
- accountability.

Producing data, which is fit for purpose, should not be an end in itself, but an integral part of operational, performance management, and governance arrangements. If data quality is placed at the heart of performance management systems this will lead to consistent Council wide improvements in a way which is proportionate to the cost of collection, and **turning that data into reliable information**.

The Council is committed to ensuring it maintains the highest standards of data quality and requires all council staff, partners and Members to adhere to the Data Quality Strategy and Standards. All Council Plans, Data Sharing Protocols & Service Level and Partnership agreements will make reference to the Data Quality Strategy and its requirements.

The Data Quality Strategy and Standards are approved by the Council's Performance Board and the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

### 7.2 Data Quality Reviews

As part of the RMBC commitment to improving data quality, all services will undergo an annual data quality review. The review process is undertaken by the DQ team, will involve an assessment of the strengths and weakness for data quality and will result in an agreed improvement action plan. Support is available to implement actions.

### 7.3 Data Quality Spot Checks

The Use of Resources KLOE 2.2 focuses on arrangements for using fit-for-purpose information and securing data quality. As part of this process, the Audit Commission undertake spot checks of indicators

on an annual basis to ensure that reported performance is accurate and the systems and processes used to collect and analyse data are robust.

From 2009/10 the Data Quality Team & Internal Audit will be undertaking a bi-annual joint risk assessment and allocating time to undertake Spot Checks on a variety of indicators that are or have raised concerns. Information contained in audit and inspection reports will be used in this assessment.

There will also be some time available for services who would like to have a high risk/priority indicator checked by an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party as part of their improvement processes.

A 'Do it Yourself' Data Quality Spot Check Guide will be available through the internet.

The council's approach to moving forward is to ensure that: -

## 7.4 Awareness

*Everyone is **aware** of their role. All staff, members & partners recognise the need for good data quality and how this contributes to service improvement & value for money;*

Data quality is the responsibility of every member of staff collecting, entering, extracting or analysing data from any of the Council's information systems. Every officer should be aware of his or her responsibilities with regard to data quality.

All officers should know how their day-to-day job contributes to the calculation of performance information and how lapses can affect performance management, service delivery (particularly to vulnerable people) & the allocation of funding to Rochdale.

Responsibility and competency for data quality should be reflected in all recruitment & staff management processes. Services should ensure that appraisal targets and DQ competencies in job descriptions reflect the level of involvement staff have in the data collection process.

## 7.5 Objectives

*Challenging **objectives** have been set for services & partners*

Challenging Data Quality objectives have been set for services & partners via the Data Quality Self Assessment & annual review processes. These are supported by detailed improvement action plans.

## 7.6 Data Quality Champion *(see Section 12)*

*A DQ **Champion** has been identified for all services*

All Services should have an identified Data Quality Champion who actively promotes data quality policies & procedures within the service. The DQ Champion should ensure that all staff understand the problems that can arise for RMBC and service users as a result of inaccurate, missing or poor quality data.

## 7.7 Definitions (Counting Rules)

*Everyone is aware of the need for clarity and application of the correct **definitions**;*

All performance/monitoring information should have written & easily accessible definitions & formula which indicate;

- What the performance indicator should achieve
- What should be included (& what shouldn't)
- How it is counted
- Who is responsible for it

The National Indicator Set (NIS) have set definitions. When developing local indicators, services should use [RMBC Target Setting Guidance 2009](#) to ensure local indicators are of an adequate standard and useful.

→ It is important that every detail of the definition is applied ←

This ensures that data is recorded consistently, allowing for comparison over time, and national benchmarking. A regular criticism of local authorities relates to inaccurate counting of performance indicators which is something that can be easily avoided by applying these rules.

→ There is no excuse for counting errors ←

The Councils 'Performance Manager' System can hold adequate detail of definitions, formula, responsible officers, 'how to' guides and reporting formats to satisfy the above requirements.

## 7.8 Processes & Procedures

*Processes & procedures are fit for purpose and staff have the input/output guidance & expertise to get the best out of them;*

### 7.8.1 – Collection & Input - wherever possible there are controls over **collection & input**;

There must be adequate controls over the collection & input of data. Figures are only as good as the data input into that system in the first place. The aim should be 100% accuracy, 100% of the time.

It is important that officers have clear guidelines and procedures & are adequately trained to ensure that information is being collected & entered consistently and correctly.

Controls should also be in place to avoid double counting or creating duplicate records for individuals. These should be designed according to the nature of the system, in particular where more than one person inputs data. A likely control will be an absolutely clear division of responsibility setting out who is responsible for what data entry or standard checks to ensure the data is not already present e.g. checking a service users name, date of birth & address as standard prior to creating a new record for them.

One of the key elements of good data quality is that information is recorded as close as possible to the 'event' being recorded. It is well known that data accuracy diminishes when information is passed from person to person before being recorded or is recorded days/weeks/months after the 'event'

### 7.8.2 – Verification and Validation

The simplest verification system might be a review of recent data against expectations, or a reconciliation of systems-produced data with manual input records. Depending on the complexity of the system, it might be necessary to undertake more thorough verification tasks, such as:

- data cleansing, (e.g. to remove duplicate records or to fill in missing information);
- sample checks to establish levels of accuracy for data (normally a 10% sample);
- sample checks to eliminate reoccurrence of a specific error, (e.g. checking one field of data that is pivotal to performance information against documentation, for a sample of cases);
- test run of report output, to check the integrity of the query being used to extract data; and spot checks, (e.g. on external contractor information).

It should be remembered that controls over data extend to data provided by external sources. When entering into contracts with service providers it is essential that there is a requirement to provide timely and accurate performance information. The contractor (3<sup>rd</sup> party) must be clear about their responsibilities for data quality and how it will be checked.

### 7.8.3 – Output - **output** information is extracted regularly and communicated quickly;

Best use can be made of performance data if it is produced, communicated & actioned on a timetable. Performance information needs to be scrutinised prior to being published and/or reported for management action. All PIs that fall out of expected ranges (exceptions) will be highlighted & sent through to the Performance Board and for scrutiny and challenge by members on the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Performance information needs to be evidenced so that stakeholders have confidence in the

information that is presented by the Council.

## 8. Responsibility for data quality

The responsibility for ensuring the quality of data rests with the bodies (& individuals) that collect and use the data. The risk in not identifying and addressing weakness in data quality or data collection and reporting activities, is that

- Decision-making may be flawed
- Poor services will not be improved
- Resources may be wasted
- Policy may be ill founded
- Good performance may not be recognised, rewarded and reported.
- Opportunities to improve services may not be identified

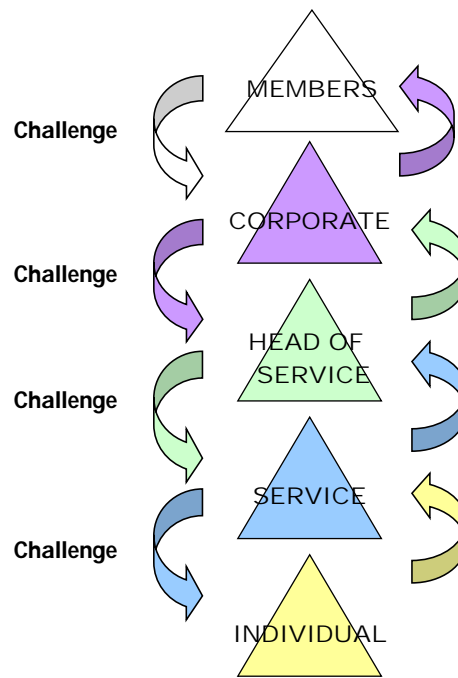
There are many audiences for data collected by public services. Once data is produced, it can be used for a variety of purposes. It is therefore essential that that data is reliable & is clearly explained to anyone else likely to use it. Staff that collect & report on data need to understand the importance of accuracy & timeliness in this process. Data collected for a specific local purpose may ultimately be used or reported in ways not envisaged or intended by its originators.

Stakeholder	Information uses
<b>Service users and the public</b>	Understanding the service standards to expect, and holding the organisation to account.
<b>Managers</b>	Monitoring and managing service delivery, benchmarking performance against others.
<b>Staff</b>	Operating services on a day-to-day basis and making decisions about individuals.
<b>Local councillors</b>	Monitoring strategic objectives, targets, and use of resources.
<b>Partners</b>	Monitoring the achievement of partnership targets, and the use of resources.
<b>Central government</b>	Monitoring progress of new initiatives, and the achievement of national targets, publishing local performance information at national level, identifying poorly performing organisations, rewarding good performance with autonomy and resources.
<b>Regulators</b>	Monitoring performance and use of resources of local bodies, publishing comparative performance information and national studies. Planning work programmes proportionate to risk.

### **Audit Commission**

The weight attached to published performance indicators as the basis for reducing the burden of regulation and awarding freedoms and flexibilities has significantly increased the importance of the quality of underlying data. To be confident they are focusing on the key areas for improvement, regulators and government departments need to be assured that reported information reflects actual performance.





All stakeholders in the DQ Hierarchy need to be aware of the effects their actions/decisions may have on other stakeholders in the chain.






## 9. Service Standards

Responsibility for maintaining a robust control environment for databases & information systems lies within the Service. Each information system (the process, people & tools used) will have a named officer responsible for data quality issues (Data Quality Champion). The responsible officer would be required to ensure that the following elements are available either within the service or from another service area & that staff are aware of resources available to them.




### SYSTEM USERS/INPUT

-  Users are adequately trained & training is adapted to respond to changing needs
-  a set of written procedures/user guide exists for the purpose of collecting & inputting information
-  information management and support is available to users
-  feedback from users is acted upon


### ACCESS, MAINTENANCE & SECURITY

-  passwords & access to systems is denied until appropriate training is completed
-  the system is upgraded where necessary
-  a business continuity plan for the system exists to protect vital records and data.

### SYSTEM USERS/OUTPUT

-  a set of written procedures exists for the purpose of extracting & presenting information
-  periodic tests of the integrity of data are undertaken;
-  the system meets managers' information needs;

### SYSTEM & PROCESS VALIDATION

-  the system can produce adequate audit trails (e.g. from the information reported back to the source of information)

There should also be a documented substitute officer who can deputise in the data quality lead's absence by (at least) maintaining the day-to-day functionality of the system. Given the increasingly demanding timescale for performance reporting, the Council cannot afford to have systems lying dormant during unplanned absences. It is, therefore, also essential that written procedures are designed so that another officer can carry out the procedures essential to providing performance information if the officer who normally performs these duties is absent.

## 10. Individual Standards

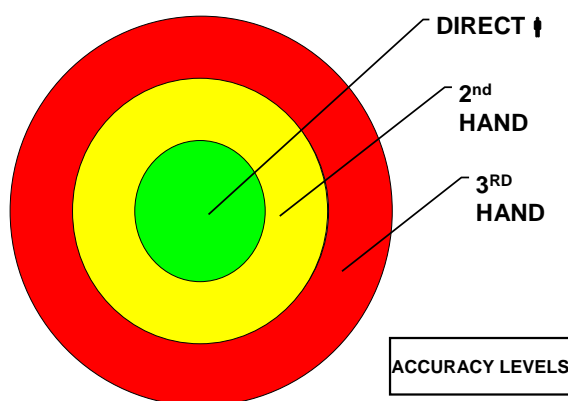
Consistent, high-quality, timely and comprehensive information is vital to support good decision-making, protect vulnerable people, improve outcomes for users & services and reduce unnecessary work. Data quality is the responsibility of every member of staff collecting, recording, entering, extracting or analysing data from any of the Council's manual or computerised information systems. Every officer should be aware of their responsibilities with regard to data quality:

### Right First Time, Every Time

Data quality measures promote the principle of 'getting it right the first time', rather than relying on verification to identify and address errors or gaps. RMBC are committed to identifying and promoting good practice. Quality assurance (including data quality) is an integrated cycle of assessment, planning, implementation and review.

All staff obtain, analyse & share appropriate information from service users, partner agencies & other resources in order to manage the assessment & planning process. Problems can arise as a result of inaccurate or missing information at any point in the case management process. It is imperative that staff working with service users check that personal details are up to date at each contact.

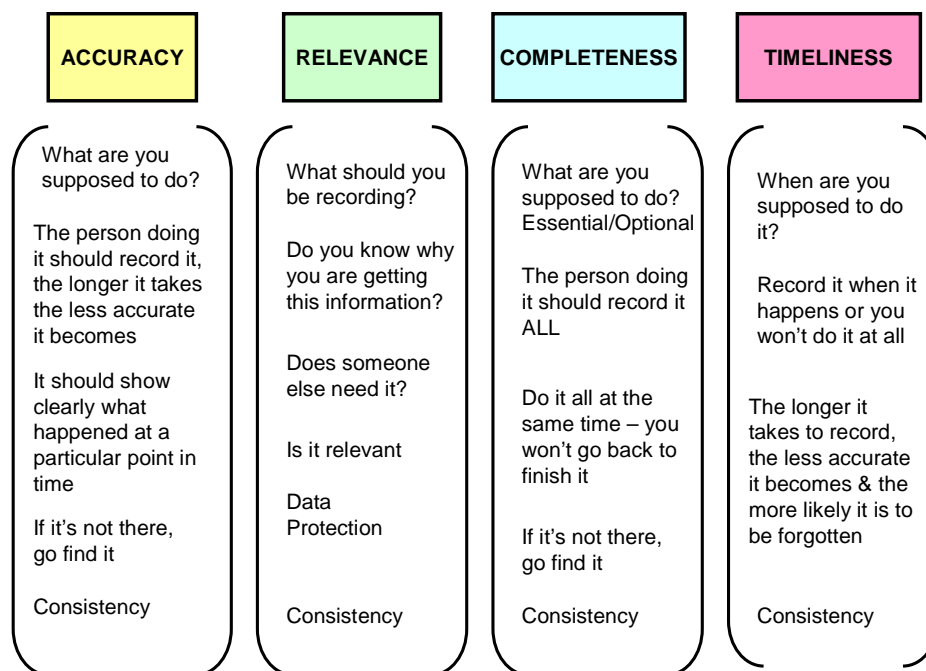
If a staff member acts, or fails to act, based on inaccurate or missing information they will not provide the right service at the right time. In some cases the consequences might be minor but in others they could have a major impact on a service user's life or affect the amount of funding received by the council or an external agency.



**Verification & Validation** - there are **verification & validation** procedures in place as close to the point of activity possible;

Whilst observing the principle of 'getting it right first time', rather than relying on verification to identify and address errors, a thorough verification procedure should still exist and be used regularly. A verification procedure should exist close to the point of data input. The frequency of verification checks will need to be aligned with the frequency of data reporting – make sure adequate time is allowed between the verification check & reporting deadline for corrections to be made to data.

## Four Key Elements of Good Data Quality



The council needs to be assured that the information it uses to demonstrate performance, plan services & allocate budgets is accurate and timely. Producing data, which is fit for purpose, should not be an end in itself, but an integral part of the work of all staff.

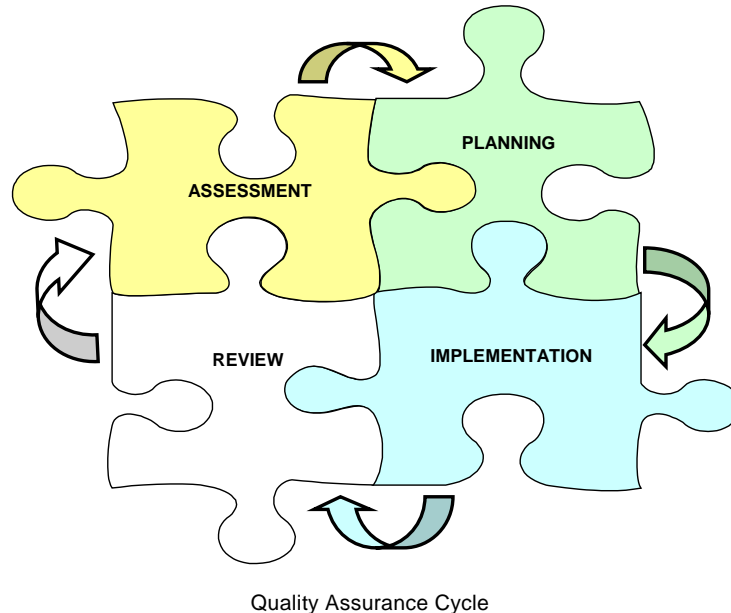
### 11. The Data Quality Champion role

The Data Quality Champion is required to ensure that:

- Users are adequately trained, where appropriate, by having a formal training programme which is periodically evaluated and adapted to respond to changing needs.
- There is security of access and the ability to amend data.
- Information management and support is available to users.
- The system meets managers' information needs.
- The system can produce adequate audit trails (e.g. from the information reported back to the source of information).
- A set of written procedures (user guide) exists for the purpose of extracting performance information.
- There is a named substitute officer who can deputise in the DQ Champions absence by maintaining the day-to-day functionality of the system.
- Passwords and access to systems are denied until appropriate induction and training is completed.
- Periodic tests of the integrity of data are undertaken.
- System upgrades are made where necessary (including to accommodate amendments to performance information definitions).
- Feedback from users is acted upon.
- Actions recommended by system reviews (e.g. by internal and external auditors) are implemented.
- A business continuity plan for the system exists to protect vital records and data.

## 12. Use of Data – *good quality and reliable data is used to inform decision making, service improvement and resource allocation.*

The ability to have access to and be able to rely on good quality data is crucial to the Corporate Performance Management Framework, self assessments, service improvement and decision making processes.



All public services are required to collect data for use in a variety of tasks. This helps them to:

- ➔ Understand needs and opportunities
- ➔ Target services
- ➔ Improve service delivery
- ➔ Inform performance management

The main tasks for which you are likely to need to gather data are:

- ➔ Identifying needs and profiling the area and its population
- ➔ Selecting, developing and designing projects
- ➔ Managing performance and assessing impact - measuring change against the baseline; performance against benchmarks; monitoring the delivery of agreed targets and priorities.
- ➔ Monitoring and evaluating projects
- ➔ Monitoring variances against targets (+/-)
- ➔ Managing risks
- ➔ Bidding for funding
- ➔ Promotion and publicity, communications, and other reporting
- ➔ Planning – e.g. preparing strategic and action plans

The quality of **financial information** is generally higher than that of performance information, because the underlying data is collected according to professional accounting rules, and is subjected to strong internal controls and a formal audit regime. The quality of **non-financial performance information** tends to be more variable, because internal guidance & controls for the collection, recording and preparation of the underlying data are often less developed. There is often also less ownership of performance information by those charged with governance. It is planned to ensure that both financial and performance data meet the same high standards.

Producing data that is fit for purpose is not an end in itself, but an **integral part** of an organisation's **operational, performance management and governance** arrangements.

### 13. Data Presentation – information is **presented**, with conclusive evidence, in such a way that it gives an easily understood and accurate picture of performance to external inspectorates, members and the public.

Regular reporting of accurate information leads to good decision-making, improved performance & better outcomes for service users.

Performance information needs to be:

- produced in a timely manner.
- available for the intended purpose.
- tailored to meet the needs of the audience
- understood by the audience.
- include a commentary to ensure there is ‘one version of the truth’ & that information is not misinterpreted.
- supported by appropriate back up documents.
- developed over time as a result of consultation with decision makers

### 14. Audit

Services are audited for a variety of reasons by both internal & external auditors. During audits, there must be more than one person in the service who can confidently present & discuss performance, data & finance. This is a requirement for all audits from both data quality & business continuity perspectives. A second (independent) officer must review audit working papers to confirm that the definition has been followed, the calculations are correct and the indicator is supported by a full audit trail. This is an important control to ensure that audit work proceeds smoothly.

An Audit Checklist accompanied by a full audit trail, must be compiled for any performance information presented for external audit. This needs to include:

- a calculation, cross-referenced both backwards (to the Checklist) and forwards (to supporting information);
- system notes;
- explanation of any variance from the previous year;
- documentation supporting any estimates, sampling, or any apportionments made;
- supporting information (e.g. spreadsheet, database, screen dumps), or at least a full description of where the supporting information is kept.

All national & local indicators should be subject to the same processes to ensure that they are reported fairly.

An annual audit checklist is available through Performance & Development Service.

→ Failure to provide evidence leads to audit actions – **more work** ←

### 15. Standards for 3rd Party Data – Data Sharing *there are **standards** for data produced or shared with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties*

Partner agencies supplying services to people resident or accessing services, within RMBC process a large amount of data/information. More than one organisation could become involved with an individual but be unaware of each others involvement. These organisations may be gathering the same basic information, undertaking similar assessments and producing/implementing plans of action. Consequently, there is often a need to share information across services & agencies. The sharing of relevant and appropriate information between organisations and their practitioners, when it is needed, with a degree of confidence and trust is vital in ensuring that service users receive the ‘seamless’, high quality, support they expect. The application of consistent Data Quality standards across partnerships

is crucial to achieving this.

## 16. Maintenance of systems

The Council has a rolling programme of systematic Service Reviews & Value for Money Assessments in place. Gap analysis and business process reviews are undertaken on all key processes and systems to ensure robust and consistent transaction processing including IT capabilities. Responsibilities for maintaining a robust control environment for management information systems lies within the Service but additional resources are available to improve this through Performance and Development. Resources are allocated on a considered programme basis that will be risk sensitive.

## 17. Register of Systems

The Performance and Development Service are responsible for maintaining a record of all systems. This will be reviewed annually and links into the RMBC IT Strategy. The register will include details of:

- The IT System
- The DQ Lead, Performance Management Co coordinator & deputy
- A summary of data quality and verification actions undertaken

There may be systems where work has to be undertaken to rectify gaps in the control environment. The Performance and Development Service and Internal Audit will work together supporting services via systematic review of systems.

There are a number of conditions that might lead to a system being considered high-risk, and every system needs to be considered against these factors. The risks assessed will help services identify areas of focus for time allocated to their service by the Audit team and VFM Business Unit. 'High risk' conditions will include:

A high volume of data/transactions;	Problems identified in previous years;
Technically complex performance information	Inexperienced staff involved in data processing/performance information production;
High levels of manual intervention or transposing of information.	A system being used to produce new performance information; and
Known gaps in the control environment.	

The purpose of undertaking a risk assessment is to target limited resources at the areas that require most attention. Service Business Units will carry out an initial system risk assessment **at the point of the annual DQSA review** and implement a co-ordinated programme of improvement to manage high-risk systems. Support will be available from Performance and Development Service, Internal Audit and VFM Unit. Where high-risk systems have been identified for attention, the following steps will need to be taken:

- analysis of the control environment;
- identification of gaps;
- design of additional controls and procedures to address gaps;
- preparation of an action plan; and
- monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

It is important that the necessary improvement measures are formulated in an action plan, and that progress against the plan is systematically monitored. Officers carrying out the analysis work described above will be required to communicate the resulting action plan to Performance and Development Service, who maintain a register of these systems.

The action plan should identify monitoring arrangements and key improvements will be followed up by the Audit Team to check that proposed measures have been implemented. Progress on data quality action plans will be reported regularly to the Performance Board.

**18. App 1 - Summary of the Standards – UOR KLOE 2.2 (2009)**: These standards define a framework that bodies need to put in place to ensure the quality of the data they use to manage and report on their activities. Full details of the 2009 KLOEs can be found on the intranet

**1. Produces relevant and reliable data and works with partners to secure data quality**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ The council ensures it secures good quality data (that is, it is: accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant and complete) and clearly defines the approach to recording and reporting data (for example, in its own guidance such as a set of policies or procedures).</li> <li>➔ Staff understand the reasons for collecting data and have the knowledge and competencies appropriate to their role in securing data quality.</li> <li>➔ The council recognises the valuable contribution staff can make to improving systems and processes for securing data quality. This includes identifying problem areas, obstacles and risks to securing data quality (and therefore producing fit-for-purpose information).</li> <li>➔ The council considers risks to securing data quality as part of its risk management arrangements and takes appropriate action to manage any risks identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ The council has a good track record of producing and using accurate, relevant and reliable data, including partnership data and works closely with partners to ensure data shared are reliable and fit-for-purpose.</li> <li>➔ There are sound governance arrangements, based on risk, covering data quality for partnerships. For example, data sharing protocols, statements, or service level agreements.</li> <li>➔ There is an assumption that data are shared with or made available to partners and the public unless legal restrictions prevent this.</li> <li>➔ Those charged with governance provide robust scrutiny and this includes formal reporting on the accuracy of data supporting performance measures as well as the appropriateness of the procedures in place.</li> </ul>
--	--

**2. Provides information which supports the decision making process**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ Members and officers receive fit-for-purpose information to support their decision making that is <b>(a)</b> relevant to the decision and clear <b>(b)</b> of sufficient quality for the decision to hand <b>(c)</b> presented in a way decision makers understand.</li> <li>➔ Presentation takes account of the decision maker's preferences, skills and available time and information is presented in a way that aids interpretation by decision makers and is based on good quality data.</li> <li>➔ The information provided draws on a full range of relevant information and does not rely solely on performance or financial information (where appropriate)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➔ The council holds information on diversity and equality issues, for example spend across geographic areas and profiles of service users (for example, age, race, gender, sexual orientation and disability) <b>and uses this to inform decisions.</b></li> <li>➔ Where appropriate, information has a comparative element, demonstrating approaches, outcomes or performance in other organisations.</li> <li>➔ An effective feedback loop exists between those providing information and decision makers.</li> <li>➔ The council recognises different types of information may require different means of presentation.</li> </ul>
--	--

### 3. Ensures data security and compliance with statutory requirements

<p>→ The council manages data on systems with controlled and secure access.</p> <p>→ There are up-to-date data security policies and guidance in place covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ key business areas;</li><li>○ key data recording and reporting arrangements including compliance with statutory requirements and other national data security requirements; and</li><li>○ arrangements for validating information from third parties.</li></ul>	<p>→ The council has a business continuity plan which covers business critical information systems and regularly reviews and tests its plans.</p> <p>→ Policies and procedures meet the requirements of national standards, rules, definitions and guidance (for example the Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act).</p> <p>→ The council complies with the requirements set out in any relevant codes of connection for services it has in place, for example the Government Secure Intranet / Government Connect.</p>
--	--

### 4. Monitors performance against priorities

<p>→ There are corporate targets for managing performance, including partnerships, which are aligned with strategic objectives and priorities.</p>	<p>→ It uses information to manage underperformance across all areas of the organisation to help ensure issues of concern do not turn into issues of priority due to neglect.</p>
<p>→ Action plans are integral to performance management and there is a hierarchy of reporting throughout the organisation against national and local targets which is used to inform decision making.</p>	<p>→ Performance, including outcomes and indicators, is benchmarked against other relevant organisations.</p>
<p>→ Fit-for-purpose information underpins performance management. The decision making process is supported by a variety of information, not just performance information.</p>	<p>→ The council is self-aware and has an approach to learning from activities such as the experiences of people who use services.</p>
<p>→ The council either improves or removes performance measures which are not fit-for-purpose, in terms of data quality or usefulness.</p>	<p>→ A strong culture of using information to support performance improvement is in place.</p>
<p>→ The council uses information to keep areas of underperformance under review and can demonstrate it is taking appropriate action to achieve improvements.</p>	<p>→ Members and officers have the information to understand reasons for underperformance and use this information appropriately.</p>