



RMBC DATA RECORDING BITESIZE

This guide aims to assist staff with gathering & recording of data about people, processes, local circumstances, needs and problems. Recent audits in Rochdale have found weaknesses in processes & management arrangements for collecting & recording data. It is important that these issues are addressed.

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.

RMBC have some overarching expectations of all staff:

- Data quality is the responsibility of every member of staff
- Whoever does it records it
- Information should be recorded on an on-going basis & be accessible to other people who need it – a maximum of 72hrs after the 'event'.

Good collection & recording of information & data ensures the delivery of high quality services in a variety of RMBC areas.

“A record is a specific piece of information produced or received in the initiation or completion of an institutional or individual activity. It comprises sufficient content &, structure to provide evidence of the activity. (Public Records Office, 1998).

This means that recording of data needs to be of sufficient quality to ensure that it can be correctly interpreted by other people.

To gather accurate & meaningful data/information you need to go through a series of steps:

- Understand why the information is needed – why is it being collected & for whom?
- Decide what information you need to complete the process – what is the purpose?
- Identify what information already exists and where it can be collected from (the sources).
- Know what will you produce with the information
 - a record of an action
 - a record of an event
 - an assessment
 - a record of a person
- Different tasks & different audiences need different types of data.

How would someone else interpret the information you have recorded?

Different internal & external bodies access and look at information recorded by staff in Rochdale. They do not need permission to do so. There are also a number of partner agencies who provide data used by RMBC. [Key Q's](#)

- Is it easy to understand?
- Is it accurate?
- Is it unbiased?
- Is it up to date?
- Is it a full & fair representation of events

<p>Have you recorded an adequate amount of information? Too little doesn't tell you anything / too much confuses the main point (the War & Peace effect).</p>
<p>Have you used abbreviations that someone else may not understand?</p> <p>Whilst abbreviations can be useful, they can also lead to confusion or misinterpretation of information. An MOT can refer to an assessment of a car or a moment of truth (although the moment of truth usually follows the assessment of the car – when you find out what is wrong with it).</p>
<p>Have you factored in rights of access to personal data?</p> <p>Individuals have the right of access to certain information held about themselves under the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. In addition there is an access right to corporate information under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Some of this information can be highly sensitive area e.g. relating to traumatic childhood events. Information that is recorded and held needs to be handled with the highest professional standards. Key Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Only professional opinion is to be recorded. ○ Only facts are to be recorded ○ The information recorded must be accurate (inaccuracies must be able to be rectified easily - have you noted the information source?) ○ The information recorded is to be held for a specific purpose ○ The information recorded is to be held for a specific time period and not held indefinitely without justification for the retention (most services have data retention standards). ○ The information is only to be disclosed to those that are authorised to receive it
<p>Garbage In, Garbage Out</p> <p>Systems & processes cannot function properly if the inputs are inaccurate or faulty. They will either not be able to process the data at all, or will output data which is inaccurate or useless. That's why the term GIGO is sometimes used to stand for "Garbage In, Garbage Out".</p> <p>Input and outputs EITHER, gather up and collect data and instructions, OR display, present or show the outputs of processing.</p>
<p>Summary</p> <p>Be clear why you are collecting the information, and for whom. What is the purpose, and what are you going to produce?</p> <p>Take care that the data you collect is of a good quality and reliable. Avoid bias in the way you collect data.</p> <p>Where receiving data from a third party, ensure that you share an understanding about key matters such confidentiality, how the data will be used, etc. Develop a Data Sharing Protocol if appropriate.</p> <p>Record the data accurately, including noting its source where appropriate.</p>

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.