



RMBC PRESENTING INFORMATION BITESIZE

This guide aims to assist staff when presenting statistical information to a variety of audiences. The objective is to convey performance information, comparisons, and trends as clearly & quickly as possible to a particular target audience. It helps if it is as focussed & short as possible to avoid overloading the reader with unnecessary or confusing information.

One of the key elements of Data Quality is to ensure **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
- ➔ understood by the target audience
- ➔ include a commentary to ensure there is 'one version of the truth' & that information is not misinterpreted
- ➔ supported by appropriate back up documents

The purpose of analysing & presenting data is to obtain useful information. The analysis should:

- describe and summarise the data
- identify relationships between variables
- compare variables
- identify the difference between variables
- forecast outcomes.

Making information easy to understand depends on the content, how it is presented on the page & which presentation style is used. A useful tool for those producing & presenting data is 'Making the Numbers Work' on the Audit Commission website – [Making the Numbers Work](#)

<i>In order to achieve these objectives it may be necessary to consider the following :</i>	
1	Don't presume the person receiving the information will understand it fully without some guidance/explanation.
2	Don't use Abbreviations unless you have explained them.
3	Keep the content varied. Use a variety of charts and tables, inter-space charts with explanatory text. Keep it interesting. Statistics can be very dull.
4	Charts are particularly useful when you are reporting a lot of data as they will show peaks & troughs in the data which may be difficult to see when using a table. They will show relationships between one set of figures and another.
5	The title of the chart/table should tell you what it is about
6	Make sure you include the period of time covered.
7	For charts & tables, label the rows, columns & axis to say what they represent

8	Say where the data/information has come from – Source
9	What do you want the reader to remember – make sure it stands out . It is generally accepted that when undertaking a formal presentation, your audience will only remember 3 things. Make sure they remember the right three.
10	Put information you are comparing side by side (not one thing after another). It is easier to read & take in.
11	Use a standard font & size throughout the document. Ariel 12 is generally accepted to be the easiest text to read (particularly for those with visual impairment).
12	When including RAG (Red, Amber, Green) make sure you indicate letters on the colours. Not everyone has a colour printer & this format will be clear in black & white. 
13	Include contextual information. Information shown only by percentage will not give the reader a clear idea of the target or the amount of work involved in meeting it. A 70% achievement when 100% would have been 10 means you have completed 7 instances of something. A 70% achievement when 100% would have been 250 means you have completed 175 instances of something. This type of information gives clarity on the pressures being faced in a service.
14	Show what the data is saying – use commentaries, footnotes & simple explanations of the target.
15	People find percentages & simple frequencies easier to understand – 50%, two out of 5.
16	For particularly confusing targets, use more than one method of presentation e.g. table, chart & commentary
17	Use a diagram when the message being conveyed is immediately apparent.
18	Make use of summaries (with additional information attached as an Appendix)
19	For performance information that is regularly reported, use trend information that charts progress from one period to another.
20	When comparing performance information, a more accurate result is achieved when comparing the same time periods in different years e.g. Oct – Dec 2007 with Oct – Dec 2008. This shows seasonal variations & can be useful when planning resources & time.
21	When producing information on a large number of targets in the same document, consider basic reporting for all of them & in depth reporting for a selected number. This will facilitate explanation of all targets & avoid focussing just on the targets that perform poorly.
<i>If the content is weak or inaccurate, no amount of jazzy presentation will alter this</i>	