

Performance Management Data Quality Strategy and Procedures



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STRATEGY

Why are we doing this?

Our Strategic Plan explains what the big issues are for us. This is reviewed and refreshed annually to make sure it remains relevant to the priorities facing Pendle.

This Strategy sets out the importance of the quality of our data and our approach to improving it across the Council. It also provides guidance on management arrangements for ensuring we collect quality data. The diagram detailed in Appendix A shows how this all fits together.

To do well we have to manage our performance effectively within our performance framework model. Data quality is an integral part of performance management in Pendle. Our service planning process tackles the issue of data quality through our approach to performance management.

As a local authority, we aim to provide the best possible services and environment for residents and service users.

Our Corporate Strategic Objectives are:

- I. Working with partners, the community and volunteers to provide services of good value
- II. Help to create strong, sustainable economic and housing growth
- III. Helping to create and sustain resilient communities
- IV. Maintaining a sustainable, resilient and efficient organisation which is Digital by Default

- V. Delivering our COVID19 response and recovery whilst working towards rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating our communities

In working towards these Strategic Objectives, it is essential that good quality data is available to support decision making. For example, good quality data is required to inform Service Reviews which, in turn, will feed into our Service Plans.

Good quality data helps to identify what policies and processes work and why. We must provide valid, reliable, accurate and timely information to manage services, drive effective and efficient delivery, and account for performance.

Inadequate attention to data quality produces inaccurate information and misleading results, particularly when using this information to compare Pendle with other councils.

Performance information is no longer focussed around external bodies such as Communities and Local Government [CLG], and the agenda has changed towards localism and transparency. This involves giving local people the powers, funding and information to deliver what they want most for their communities. Therefore, we need to ensure we continue to address this to ensure the community receive the relevant information they need.

There are a number of factors affecting our approach to managing data quality:

- Confidence in our partnership working arrangements
- Integrating our software based performance management system

- Delivery of Council priorities.

We already provide quality performance information within all Services of the Council. Our partners such as Liberata and Pendle Leisure Trust are expected to do the same.

What is Data Quality?

Data quality relates to the building blocks of information i.e. data items - until all the data is assembled and interpreted, this is not information.

Attention must also be focussed on the readily measurable aspects of data quality, namely the validity and completeness of data items. This may be harder to measure but is important within the context of overall information quality and can easily be neglected. Data quality is an important part of information quality but there are other components that influence just how useful the information is overall.

High quality information is vital for us which means 100% accuracy 100% of the time must be the goal (which is why we also have a system of central monitoring to spot weaknesses and ensure they are addressed). Information is increasingly used by us in new and different ways, in a range of settings.

For us to be confident that the data we use is of good quality, the following principles must be understood and followed:

- Accuracy - Data should be sufficiently accurate to present a fair picture of performance and enable informed decision-making at all suitable levels. The need for accuracy must be balanced with the costs and effort of collection. A prerequisite is that definitions for data should be specific and

unambiguous. The data must be at an appropriate level of detail to influence related management decisions, and must be within a reasonable margin of error.

- Validity - Data should represent clearly and appropriately the intended result. Where proxy data is used, bodies must consider the appropriateness of the proxy selected.
- Reliability - 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. Data should also be sufficiently robust to stand up to scrutiny.
- Timeliness - 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 more appropriate to accept a small degree of inaccuracy where timeliness is important.
- Relevance - 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.
- Completeness - 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 recording of certain data items.

Awareness – why is good data quality important?

It is essential that everyone recognises the need for good quality data and understands how he or she can, and do, contribute to this. Our commitment to producing and providing data of good quality is communicated throughout the Council.

Whose job is it?

Yours and mine! Data quality is the responsibility of every staff member entering, extracting or analysing data from any of the Council's information systems. Every Officer should be aware of their responsibilities.

We especially need to ensure we provide relevant information to local people, and make things more transparent so local people can get involved.

What is performance information?

Performance information is about measuring an organisation's progress towards its aims and objectives. Good performance information helps identify what policies and processes work and why. Making the best use of the available data and knowledge is critical to improving effective management, business planning and the performance of the Council overall.

We use three levels of performance information: -

1. Single Data List

This was introduced to replace the collection of National Indicators. The Single Data List will provide in one place a single, clear list of the minimum data central Government needs from local authorities. The list will be open to regular review, scrutiny and challenge.

2. Former National Indicators (NIs) and Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs)

These indicators provided valuable, high quality performance information on the key services we deliver. They measured things that matter and which affect people's lives.

We have decided to keep the most useful ones for Pendle as local indicators.

3. Local Indicators (LPIs)

These are voluntary indicators that each Service has established to monitor how it is performing in terms of its own objectives and the needs of its customers.

Managers are expected to review their LPIs on an annual basis, when Service Plans are compiled. LPIs should be kept to a minimum and should be capable of being measured and validated by Pendle's Performance Management Team and Internal Audit.

Responsibilities for Data Quality

Although we all have collective responsibility for data quality, it is the responsibility of each manager to ensure that the performance information is complete and accurate.

All data (as with all performance data) must have a satisfactory audit trail, which is capable of being measured and validated in any internal audit.

Chief Executive and Director

The Chief Executive and Director are responsible for ensuring the performance information is of good quality. Performance information is reviewed quarterly and proposals made for service improvement where relevant.

Service Managers

Managers have overall responsibility for performance information. Every performance indicator (PI) must have a named officer responsible for collecting and collating the data. This ensures consistency in the application of definitions and use of systems for providing the data. Managers must have adequate cover/business continuity arrangements in place.

Managers must also delegate one member of staff to be the named Performance Champion for the whole Service. Details regarding the role of Performance Champion can be obtained from the Performance Management Team.

Performance Champion

This person will be the main contact for our Performance Management Team, and have the responsibility for the collation of all the performance indicator information relevant to the Service. It is up to this person to ensure that the information provided is complete, and supplied with relevant supporting commentary within the specified timescales. They must champion good quality data and ensure that all information relating to performance data (i.e. changes to guidance, changes

to policy and procedures, etc) is provided to all relevant staff members in the Service.

Data quality is reflected in job descriptions where post holders have specific performance management responsibilities. It is embedded within that and purposefully not referred to separately. It is covered in the Performance Management Interview and Review process. Managers are encouraged to ensure that suitable appraisal targets and inclusion in job descriptions are included, given the level of involvement staff have in the performance management process.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit may carry out a number of spot checks on performance indicators during the year to determine quality, accuracy and the correct application of guidance and definitions. These spot checks will be arranged in consultation with the Performance Management Team.

Performance Management Team

In general, it is the responsibility of the Team to co-ordinate our performance management processes. The officers will offer support and guidance to Services in the provision of performance data and report performance management information to senior management and councillors.

Partnership Arrangements

All services delivered on behalf of the Council via partnerships (e.g. Liberata, Pendle Leisure Trust) are subject to compliance with the responsibilities and requirements set out in this Strategy for the provision of good quality data in relation to performance information.

Our Client Team has a responsibility for overseeing and checking the quality and accuracy of the performance data provided by outsourced services. They also have responsibility for reviewing and agreeing appropriate performance indicators.

Third Party Data

All departments that rely on data from third party sources must ensure that they have mechanisms in place by which they are able to check the data for accuracy. This will ensure that reliance can be placed on the data being received, where it is applicable.

Definitions

It is important that all officers know how their day-to-day job contributes to the calculation of performance indicators and how lapses can either lead to errors or a delay in reporting, both of which limit the Council's ability to manage performance effectively. This means that all staff should have an understanding of any PIs affected by the data to which they contribute.

A definition and procedure form (available from the Performance Management Team), must be completed by Services for each of their PIs. This is an important process as because we are no longer directed by statutory guidance, these notes are essential in order to meet audit requirements. Particularly because these show the:

- definition – what we are measuring;
- rationale - why we are measuring it;
- collection and reporting protocols;
- how the data will be used.

Where indicators were previously statutory PIs (e.g. NIs or BVPIs), it is important that every aspect of the definition is continued to be applied. This ensures that data is recorded consistently, allowing for comparison over time, and national benchmarking.

Performance Management

The Council has a robust performance management process. This makes sure that our plans and strategies have the desired effect and are delivering effective outcomes.

We want Pendle Borough Council to be rated as one of the best. We regularly review our services and high level improvement plans and use other information that helps us to do this on an annual basis. It is part of our Strategic Plan.

PROCEDURES

Corporate Quarterly/Annual Data Collection Requirements

The current monitoring framework requires that the performance management software system Pentana is updated on a regular basis.

The performance reporting timetable for the forthcoming financial year is compiled by the Performance Management Team in consultation with Committee Section and Management Team. It is then circulated to all Managers and Performance Champions and posted on the log-in page of Pentana.

Notifications are also sent (via email and Outlook Appointment) to Managers and the named Performance Champion for each Service approximately two weeks prior to the quarter end. This notification will specify the deadlines for updating the Pentana system with the figures and supporting commentary.

Further reminders are issued as required.

If, in order to meet reporting deadlines, estimated figures are reported this should be clearly indicated with a clear statement detailing when final figures will be available.

Performance Indicator Reporting Procedures

Following the collation of the data and supporting commentary received from each Service, the Performance Management Team analyses the information. This analysis may lead to queries/questions being raised. For example, these may be in

relation to any areas of concern about under- or over-performance, which have not been explained within the commentary; the expected outcome contradicting the commentary provided; figures provided in the commentary which do not correspond to data input; etc.

The Performance Management Team must then compile this information and analysis to enable it to be presented to the following groups (membership of these groups is available from Committee Services):

- Chief Executive & Corporate Director
- Service Managers
- Management Team
- Policy & Resources Committee

Quarterly and Annual Performance Indicator Reports are made available on Pentana. The reports are available as part of the Policy and Resources Committee agendas on our website which can be accessed [here](#).

The Policy & Resources Committee specifically examines the performance information relating to a basket of 29 key performance Indicators (KPIs). The basket was devised to provide Members with a gauge of performance representing a range of services delivered by and on behalf of the Council.

It is expected that further queries/questions will be raised via these groups, and the Performance Management Team may then have to contact the Managers and Performance Champions for further information/clarification on some issues. The resulting responses and/or actions taken will then be reported back to Members as required.

Due to the tight reporting schedules, it is essential that deadlines are strictly met and sufficient commentary is provided to support the performance of the Service during the specified time period. If the deadline cannot be met for any reason, the Performance Management Team must be informed as a matter of urgency and an alternative agreed.

Verification of Performance Information

The verification of performance information is a very important element of maintaining and improving data quality. It is imperative that all members of staff involved with the provision of performance data at every level maintain accurate and comprehensive records which will withstand scrutiny from Internal Audit.

Whilst the responsibility for data quality (including verification of data) lies with the individual Services of the Council, Internal Audit and the Performance Management Officer will carry out sample spot checks on performance information throughout the year as deemed necessary.

The Performance Management Team and Internal Audit can offer advice and guidance on verification procedures. Please find details of examples of those currently used:

- Data cleansing, e.g. to remove duplicate records or to fill in missing information.
- Checks to eliminate recurrence of a specific error, e.g. checking one field of data that is pivotal to a PI against documentation, for a sample of cases.

- Test run of report output, to check the integrity of the query being used to extract data.
- Spot checks, e.g. on external contractor information.
- Questioning unexpected and/or significant differences in performance.
- Support in identifying and learning from best practice examples.

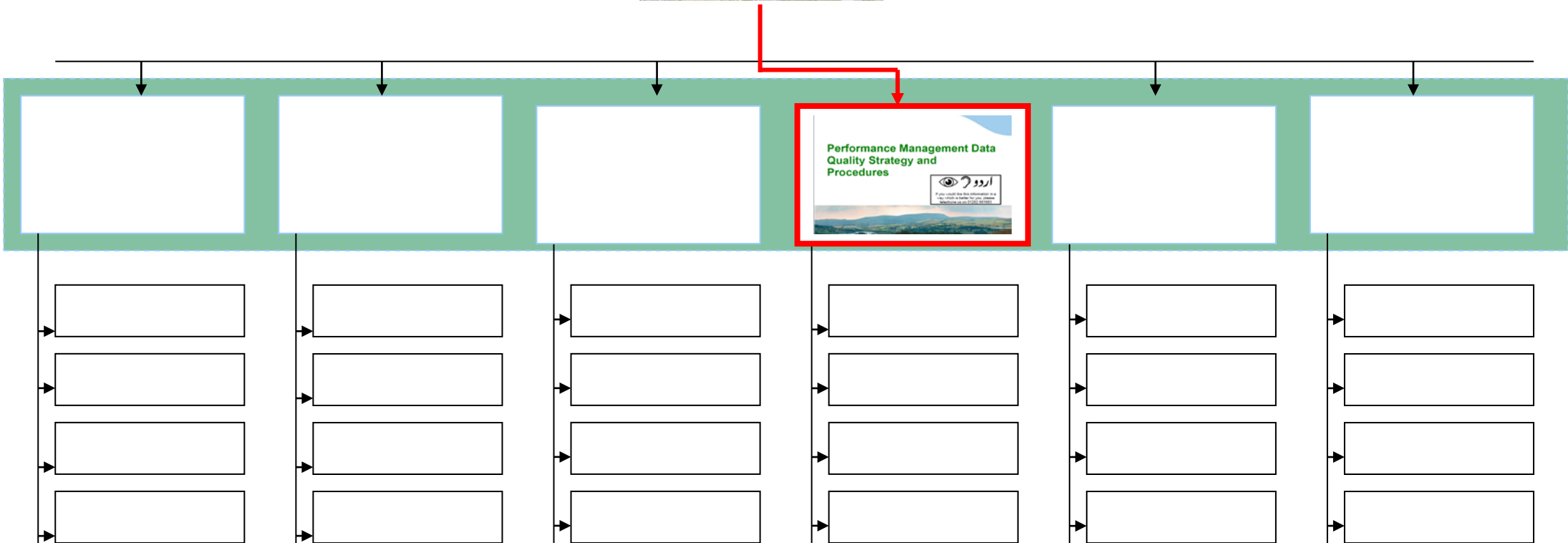
Responsibility for data verification lies within the department receiving the information, via service level agreements, data sharing protocols and statements. Internal Audit provides advice and guidance if needed.

A one page summary detailing the principles of the Data Quality Strategy is available as a quick reference guide. This is attached as Appendix B.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Diagram of how our Data Quality Strategy fits into helping us to deliver our strategic objectives

Appendix B - Summary of the Data Quality Strategy



DATA QUALITY STRATEGY- SUMMARY

OUR COMMITMENT

Pendle Borough Council is committed to six principles in order to ensure that the data it produces is of the HIGHEST QUALITY. All staff should be aware of their role in applying these principles:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Complete | All data should give the whole picture. |
| Accurate | All data should provide an honest reflection of performance. |
| Valid | All data should conform to definition. |
| Reliable | All data must be trusted and collected consistently. |
| Relevant | All data should apply to the situation in which it will be used. |
| Timely | All data must be available for intended use within a reasonable time period. |

REQUIREMENTS ON OUR DATA

All data produced by Pendle Borough Council must possess the following:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| A clear and current definition | Data owners must fully understand and apply these. |
| A clear audit trail | Data owners must keep full supporting evidence for all data. |
| A current owner | All information should always have a responsible owner. |
| A single location | All data items have a single definitive master record. |
| Proof of compliance | All legislation on information must be adhered to. |
| Controls enabled | Effective internal controls are in place to ensure that the five points above are delivered. |

A CLEAR CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY

ALL STAFF HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THESE PRINCIPLES ARE UNIVERSALLY APPLIED. However, the following groups have specific responsibilities:

Chief Executive, Director and Service Managers must ensure that all data is always owned and that policies and procedures are followed rigorously.

PI Owners and Performance Champions must understand the definitions of their PIs and ensure information is recorded according to the six principles.

Information and Communication Services must ensure data integrity, and is responsible for effective guidance and policies on security and legality.

The Performance Management Team and Internal Audit Team must support and challenge all staff in measuring, recording, reporting and interpreting performance data and ensure that all PIs are accurately recorded and reported.