

Data Quality Induction Information

What is Data Quality?

Most of us deal with data in some form in our everyday working lives. Data is defined as numbers, words or images that have been, or will be, organised or analysed to answer a specific question or facilitate a decision.

Good quality data is:

- Accurate
- Valid (complies with relevant requirements and rules)
- Reliable
- Timely
- Relevant
- Complete

Why is it important?

Corporate Board have signalled that Data Quality is a key priority for the council. We need accurate and timely information in order to manage services and performance effectively. Information is used to make decisions about resources and priorities as well as judgements on how our services are performing against targets. If the data we use is inaccurate this will impact on our ability to make well-informed decisions. Good data quality underpins everything we do.

The following example illustrates the potential impact of getting data quality wrong:

- Performance has been shown to be poor against a performance indicator target and the decision is taken to invest extra resources into improving this indicator. However on further investigation it becomes clear that the data has been wrong and performance is much better than previously thought which means that the additional resources invested in improving the indicator outcome could have been used elsewhere and objectives were shown as not having been met when, in fact, they were being met. This could result in bad publicity for the council as well as being a potential waste of resources.

What is your role?

Everyone has a role to play in helping ensure we have accurate and timely data that is fit for purpose. You may be responsible for entering information into systems, recording details of service users, making decisions based on performance information, or providing information to internal or external customers.

Specific roles and responsibilities are set out in our data quality policy, which can be found on the intranet at <http://pm/perf/pm/ig>. The document is in adobe pdf format and can be downloaded or printed.

Further information

For further information on data quality please email the Performance Team (performance@swindon.gov.uk)

