Support for performance management in local government

Introduction

During 2021/22, the Local Government Association (LGA) is developing a workstream, as part of the Data and Transparency Programme, to support local government in undertaking effective performance management. This work is being funded by grant from central government.

The LGA's offer for councils is built around:

- guides, case studies and good practice examples to help councillors and officers
- advice and signposting on monitoring performance, including pointers to useful data, data sources and dashboards, and free access to LG Inform and its benchmarking clubs
- 'Performance Management Panel' events, where performance officers can come together to share, learn, review their existing strategies, achievements and challenges.

The following sections provide more detail.

Performance management guides

Two guides on performance management will shortly be available, one for officers and one for councillors. They are being developed in partnership with external consultants and will involve consultation with elected members and officers within the sector.

Case studies/good practice materials

Examples of good practice in performance management will be identified, documented and shared with the sector, along with any other guides, tools or other resources which might be useful.

LG Inform

LG Inform offers a range of benchmarked data for authorities that the LGA keeps up to date. For authorities short on resources for performance management, this is a good way of making them go further. If a council invests time in building a report, or series of reports, for its local priorities, thereafter the LGA ensures the data is updated: so, performance officers can concentrate on understanding the data rather than on finding the data.

A series of ready-made reports of up-to-date benchmarked data is already available: and this includes a 'headline' report of traditional performance indicators (select the authority of interest at the top of the report and press 'apply').

We also provide LG Inform online courses. Details of up-and-coming LG Inform courses are here.

Benchmarking clubs

The LGA currently runs two benchmarking clubs, which are free for councils to join, one general one and one for workforce metrics. They are free, and an opportunity for councils to share a small number of metrics with each other which are not collected centrally by any other organisation. The clubs are run on a quarterly basis and are published as quickly as possible so that councils can act on them immediately if necessary.

The LGA also runs regular, national polling on residents' satisfaction with councils, against which authorities can benchmark their own residents survey results if they use our 'Are You Being Served?' guidance.

Data sources and dashboards

Aside from LG Inform, there are other tools and dashboards and a wealth of data collected nationally about local government that can contribute to a council's assessment of its own performance. We will document these tools and suggest data sources that might be helpful to a council's key performance indicators.

Knowledge Hub 'Improvement and Performance' group

The 'Improvement and Performance' group, on the LGA part of Knowledge Hub, brings together authorities interested in performance and improvement and already boasts over 900 members. We will be posting about the LGA's support and resources for performance management, and any other useful information we come across.

Performance Management Panels

We are setting up a series of online panels bringing together performance leads from around five councils at a time who are looking for peer feedback and support in the form of a sounding board. This will allow the officers to describe, discuss and challenge each other's approach to performance management; and allow them to bring their early thinking along for others to consider and give them the benefit of their own experience; as well as being a forum where they might bring challenges, to get similar feedback.

Data maturity tool

Finally, for authorities thinking about the use of data within their authority more widely, as well as for performance management, the LGA has a self-assessment data maturity tool. This was developed in partnership with Nesta and allows officers and councillors across the organisation to answer honestly about how effectively they think data is used in the council. This can then act as a starting point to think about an authorities' data use more generally and identify key areas for improvements.