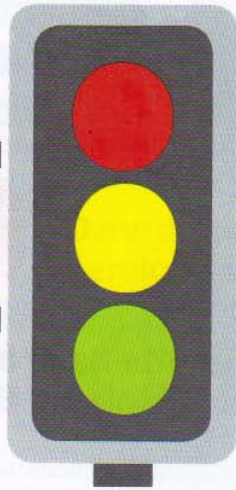


# UNLOCKING INFORMATION PERFORMANCE



The operational systems used by councils contain the raw data needed to calculate performance indicators which can really drive improvement. *Insight* investigates how Dumfries and Galloway Council have unlocked this information

**D**umfries and Galloway have been working with Destin Solutions over the last three years to create a data warehouse which provides all their staff access to comprehensive performance information.

The data warehouse automatically extracts data from the service's operational systems and transforms it into performance indicators on the 'dashboards' customised for each employee. However, it is important to create performance indicators which help staff drive improvement rather than just monitor performance.

#### MANAGING WORKLOAD

Nigel McAvoy, Destin's Managing Director, continues the theme, "It is vital a service knows what work is outstanding so they can manage their workload. As Dumfries and Galloway have a workflow management system, they were using the number of items in the work trays as an indicator of their workload.

However, some work items require more effort to complete than others, and work in different trays will be completed at different speeds, depending on the productivity of the assessors who have access to the trays. So this indicator makes it difficult to compare and manage work across different trays.

**“A traffic light system alerts supervisors to where a backlog of work is building up”**

Therefore we devised a new indicator which showed the number of days required to complete outstanding work in each tray. The new system carries out the calculations behind the scenes without any additional input from staff, and delivers the results to management through their dashboards“.

On a day to day basis, a traffic light system alerts supervisors to where a backlog of work is building up. Supervisors can then modify the number of assessors assigned to the trays, or manually move work items around in order to prevent work building up in individual trays.

The level of manual intervention from supervisors can be minimised by looking at the trend of this indicator for different trays, and using this information to fine-tune how the workflow management system allocates work.

Catherine Black, Principal Officer Business Review and Development, explains, "Our supervisors used to be involved in the distribution and sequencing of work, but those tasks are now automated by the software."

#### MAKING BEST USE OF WHAT YOU HAVE

The key thing is making best use of the data collected by existing systems. Catherine notes, "Instead of limiting our existing systems to simply processing work we have made them an integral part of our approach to managing staff performance and improving our processes“.

Nigel highlights the inclusive aspect of the Dumfries and Galloway approach to performance management. "At the end of the day, performance is the responsibility of everyone in the service, but performance data which has to be entered manually is only going to work at a service level, as anything else will be too much of an overhead.

A better approach is to use the data created as a by-product of normal processing as a basis for calculating indicators, which helps staff improve performance for the areas of the service they are responsible for." ❖