Improving Performance

A Practical Guide to Police Performance Management

Guidance for Team Leaders
## Hallmarks of an effective performance management framework

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Preface

We are all committed to improving performance in the interests of improving service to the public. The common factor across all successful organisations is a structured approach to managing performance and a willingness to improve. In policing, performance management is not simply about pursuing numbers or targets: it is about taking a considered yet energetic approach to improving the way things are done.

Over the last few years, there has been significant progress in embedding excellence in performance management within the service. Drawing on expert input to update and strengthen material first published in 2004, this guidance – as part of a wider package of materials - provides insight for those looking to develop the way in which they manage performance – across all force functions, at all organisational levels, and when working with key partners.

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About this guidance

This guidance aims to support improved understanding and practice of performance management in all aspects of policing business. The material here has been drawn together from the experiences of forces and policing stakeholders over recent years and we hope it provides a useful resource. Guidance set out here is intended as food for thought, and is not intended to be ‘mandatory’ or required practice.

This document provides a short summary of more detailed material available in a comprehensive ‘resource’ guidance document. It is aimed primarily at ‘team leaders’, for example those managing a sector within a BCU, leading a neighbourhood team, or in charge of a thematic support unit, with the intention of highlighting key principles and activities for that audience, alongside information on what the more detailed guidance has to offer.

Related summary guides are also provided for the senior managers and the force executive. Separate guidance on performance management is also available for members of Police Authorities and for those involved in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships or Community Safety Partnerships.1

The guidance package is focused around the three ‘enablers’ and twelve ‘Hallmarks’ of effective police performance management that are outlined in the first section. Throughout this document, you will also find a number of symbols that identify specific elements of the material:

- **Hallmarks**: are introduced in yellow boxes
- **TIPS**: selected edited extracts from the main resource document that highlight lessons learned or useful tips that may offer solutions to common problems
- A purple box provides a summary of key activities appropriate for managers, and considerations for potential next steps to help improve the application of performance management principles in your area of the force.
- Lilac boxes outline what further or more detailed information you can find in the corresponding section of the main resource document, and an overview of key case studies accompanying the main guide that illustrate application of the principles of performance management.

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1. THE FUNDAMENTALS of effective police performance management

**Hallmark 1:** Everyone in the force understands and acts upon the basic principles of performance management as relevant for their role

1.1 What is performance management?

Performance management is the practice of:

- **Reviewing** current performance and the factors that might affect future performance; and
- **Taking decisions** in response to that information; so that
- **Appropriate actions** are taken in order to make future performance better than it might otherwise be.

Performance management is about having the energy to make things better, taking timely action to address problems and making best use of resources to address agreed priorities. Performance management is not about ‘chasing targets’, nor is it simply about reviewing performance and holding people to account.

Performance is a word often used but not always understood. ‘Performance’, in simplest terms, means how well something is done. The main reason why the term performance is sometimes misunderstood, is because ‘how well’ can be interpreted in a number of ways.

A common - but generally incorrect - assumption is that good performance just means ‘good numbers’. In terms of police performance, this might mean more offenders brought to justice, fewer victims of crime, and so on. However, good performance as defined by the recipients of a policing service is only truly achieved by a combination of doing the right things (‘priorities’), doing them well (‘quality’) and doing the right amount (‘quantity’). ‘Numbers’ provide insight into all of these things, but they are only a tool to help understand how well things are being done.

A proper understanding of what ‘performance’ really means is therefore very important for police officers and staff at all levels in a force to ensure that the right actions are taken to improve that performance.

An analogy: understanding performance

The ‘performance’ of sports people is often discussed by fans, commentators, and newspapers. Sometimes statistics are used to describe performance (e.g. number of points scored), sometimes examples are discussed (e.g. replays in the post-game analysis), sometimes ratings are created (e.g. marks out of ten in a newspaper).

So how did a sports person in a given game perform? If you watched the game, you might form your own view; if you didn’t watch the game, you can only form a view based on the information provided by the views of others and the statistics. If you just looked at the
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statistics, you might conclude that because a player scored a lot of points, they performed well; but a commentator might show that this result was a fluke and overall the player was below par in that match. Either way, different people will come to different conclusions as to ‘how well’ the sports person played, depending on the information they rely on and what they expected from the game. The same issues apply to understanding ‘performance’ in any context.

TIP: Aides mémoire for performance management

There is no single way to go about managing performance. However, it is helpful to see performance management as a cyclical process, which involves at the most basic level: reviewing information from the previous cycle of activity to decide what the plan for the future will be; taking action to deliver the plan; and then assessing how successful delivery has been in order to inform the plan for the future.

There are many ‘models’ that serve as aides mémoire for the process of managing performance and your force may use one or more of these depending on the circumstance. The most common model used by the police service is the problem solving ‘SARA’ model: Scan Analyse Respond Assess. **Scan/Analyse** emphasise understanding what your problems are and why they are happening; **Respond** emphasises taking action that is informed by analysis of the problem; and **Assess** emphasises understanding whether the action was effective and what can be learned for next time.

All of these models are common in their description of performance management though: think about what you need to do and how to do it, take action, and then check whether you have achieved what you set out to do (and if not, understand why for next time). Constantly referring to the simple principles of a model like SARA again and again can be a good way of reinforcing the principles of problem solving and performance management in your team.

1.2 Why is performance management important?

Performance management is just good management

It goes to the heart of how resources are used to deliver results.

Performance management is important because it goes to the heart of good management and supervision. Where resources (e.g. people, money, equipment) are limited and ‘things to do’ are not, choices must be made about what will be done. Following performance management principles will help get the most from available resources. Performance management is also about understanding the business to make it work better - to get the most out of the resources that you do have.
1.3 When is performance management relevant?

Following performance management principles is always relevant – from everyday situations to extraordinary ones. But the frequency with which performance is reviewed and new plans put in place should be appropriate to the activity in question and the level of the organisation – from the formal processes at the strategic level, through to the ongoing, day-to-day activity of teams and individuals.

The nature and frequency of specific performance management activity will vary, for example:

- At a strategic level, formal processes will drive performance management, from the force planning process to establish priorities for action and the way they will be addressed, to review processes to ensure that plans are being delivered and capture learning. At the highest levels, the formal cycle of performance management from planning to assessment may operate over a year or more.
- Delivery of the high level plans may be managed on a more frequent basis – with force, BCU and department performance regularly reviewed and actions adjusted on a quarterly, monthly or more frequent basis.
- Team performance is more likely to be managed on a daily or weekly basis, with regular monitoring of results and active management of resource deployment, briefings to highlight current priorities, and problem solving on an ongoing basis.
- Personal performance should be continuously monitored by the individual, keeping themselves aware of what is required from them, responding to emerging problems as they arise and alerting managers to performance issues requiring assistance or a wider response.

In all of these situations though, the basic cycle of ‘plan-deliver-assess’ underpins successful management of performance. You may think this is just common sense, and to a large extent it is. Many police officers and staff instinctively follow the principles of good performance management without realising they are doing so – both in their day to day activity and through the wider processes they create and work within. But some people do not naturally tackle problems by stopping to think about the best solution and taking the time to reflect on whether they took the right course of action. There is often benefit to bringing further rigour to the processes people work within, as well as opportunities to learn from good practice elsewhere, and that is what this guidance aims to support.

1.4 Who is responsible for police performance management?

Responsibility for effective performance management lies with all working in policing. For performance to be managed effectively, it requires everyone to understand their role and potential contribution – from the force executive and police authority, BCU commanders and heads of department, right through to team leaders, front line officers and support staff, whether performance management ‘specialists’ or not.
Performance management is not just the preserve of ‘specialists’ such as performance analysts, nor is it just the concern of the force executive or senior managers. It should form a golden thread that connects the strategic objectives set out by the police authority and chief officers on behalf of the public, to the work of support departments and BCUs, to the actions of teams and individuals. It relates directly to what any member of staff is required to do in the ordinary course of their role. Team leaders in particular have a key role to play in ensuring that their staff understand their role, and in ensuring that ‘performance management’ is seen and used as a useful tool to support day-to-day activity, and not as a constraint.

### 1.5 How can excellence in police performance management be achieved?

Organisational performance is complex both to understand and to manage. So performance management at the organisational level must be broken down into smaller tasks, processes and actions. It is dependent on:

- **Performance measurement** – the collection and analysis of data and information about performance to inform performance monitoring
- **Performance monitoring** – examining the output of performance measurement to make judgements about the level of performance being delivered, why it is that level, and what actions might improve it. Performance management builds on the output of performance measurement and monitoring: actions are taken in response to the description of performance provided by those activities.

Organisational performance management is difficult because performance measurement is an imprecise tool. The relationship between the decisions that are taken to improve performance and the feedback received through performance measurement is rarely clear – which means that decision-makers need all the help they can get to make sure they are making the right choices.

A performance management framework is a structured way of putting in place the building blocks that together enable effective management of performance from top to bottom of the organisation, across both operational and support departments. This guidance describes the building blocks of an effective force performance management framework. They fall under three broad ‘enablers’:

#### PEOPLE & RELATIONSHIPS

Performance management is about people – people who understand the business and are prepared to innovate to improve it; analysts influencing the decisions of leaders who in turn set out clear objectives for those they lead to ensure high productivity; and staff with the skills and knowledge to deliver what they are asked to do.

#### STRUCTURES & PROCESSES

Effective performance management depends on clarity over priorities, joined-up systems for monitoring progress against objectives, and mechanisms to ensure that poor performance is addressed and good performance is captured and embedded. Improving wider policing processes is also one of the most likely sources for overall performance improvement.
DATA & ANALYSIS

Successful performance management is dependent both on access to the right data and information at the right time, and analysis of that information to ensure that decisions are made on the basis of a proper interpretation of the information.

Ensuring effective practice in each of these three key areas is central to successful performance management. This guide identifies a number of key characteristics – or ‘Hallmarks’ – of effective practice in police performance management matched against each enabler. These Hallmarks are not ‘mandatory’ requirements for effective police performance management, but they are designed to be a useful tool for asking questions about your performance management framework. Together they summarise the key aspects of police performance management that are explored in this guide.

Key activities

• Ensure you and your team are familiar with and have a common understanding of the principles of performance management. Don’t assume that everyone understands ‘performance’ or ‘performance management’ in the same way, nor that understanding remains constant over time
• Emphasise the SARA model (or other tools your force uses) to help team members focus on problem solving

Possible next steps

• Consider whether the understanding and application of performance management within your team could be improved or not
• Use the material that complements this summary guide to support your team in developing their understanding

In the resource documents

• Case studies illustrating some forces’ methods of raising awareness of the principles of performance management, and examples of support provided to all staff to help its application

WHAT?

Performance management is the practice of reviewing current performance and the factors that might affect future performance; and taking decisions in response to that information; so that appropriate actions are taken in order to make future performance better than it might otherwise be.

WHEN?

Following performance management principles is always relevant. The frequency with which performance is reviewed and new plans put in place should be appropriate to the activity in question and the level of the organisation – from formal processes at the strategic level through to day-to-day individual activity.

WHY?

Performance management is just good management. It goes to the heart of how resources are used to deliver results.

Responsibility for effective performance management lies with all working in policing. Everyone must understand their role and potential contribution - the force executive and police authority, BCU commanders and heads of department, to team leaders, front line officers and support staff - whether performance management ‘specialists’ or not.

WHO?

A performance management framework should be built around three key enablers:

People & Relationships
Structures & Processes
Data & Analysis

Characterised by the 12 Hallmarks of effective police performance management.

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2. PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS

2.1 Active, visible leadership

Hallmark 2: Active, visible leadership and ownership of performance management helps to foster a culture of continuous improvement

Achieving a ‘culture of continuous improvement’ is all about creating the right environment and behaviours – from the most senior to the most junior of staff. As in so many areas of policing, effective leadership is critical.

As a team leader, the leadership you give your team is key to the good performance of your team. First and foremost, you must give your team confidence that you understand performance management. You need to help them see that performance management makes a positive difference as a tool to help do the right thing and do it well. It is important to avoid a ‘blame culture’ where performance management is perceived as a negative activity – the aim is to create a situation where team members actively seek out ways to improve the way that things are done.

As part of this, team leaders have a key role to play in making the force vision, set out by chief officers and the police authority, relevant for all staff.

TIP: Practical leadership in performance management

Managing performance is not about slavishly servicing a system of numbers and targets, but experience shows that it is easy for a culture to grow up where that is how it is perceived. Strong leadership at all levels is a crucial part of creating a culture where numbers and targets are used as a tool to ask questions, not make final judgements; as a tool to aid performance improvement and not as a rigid mechanism for holding people to account.

Proper use of discretion is an essential element of policing. There will be times when the ‘right thing to do’ will be in conflict with the ‘needs’ of a target. Officers and staff must understand the correct approach to adopt in such circumstances – and must understand that they will be supported and would be penalised for doing the wrong thing just to meet a target. Getting this right is dependent on managers at all levels asking the right questions when performance is reviewed, and praising the right behaviours. As a team leader, you should expect this from your managers, and ensure that you take the same approach with your team.

Accountability – literally the process of asking people to provide an account of (reasons for) their actions - is a key part of a performance management framework. By establishing a shared understanding of an issue, assurance can be given to those who set priorities that effective action is being taken.
As a team leader, you are likely to be held to account for the performance of your team, and be expected to hold your staff to account individually for their actions. The style in which people are held to account will have a big impact on the way performance management operates and is perceived. Where accountability follows a very robust style, the risk of creating a blame culture is increased and it may encourage the view that underperformance is primarily to do with the staff performance, rather than take a more rounded view that it is more likely to be associated with inefficient systems and processes that staff must work within.

Holding people to account for their performance should be a questioning and supporting process, because otherwise the defensive style adopted by those subject to robust scrutiny can act as a barrier to learning. You should expect this when you are held to account, and should adopt the same approach with your team (for example in the PDR process – see Section 3.4).

**TIP: Leading performance review**

A simple formula for leading performance review is to always focus on three key questions:

1. What is the cause of the problem?
2. What are you doing about it?
3. What can the rest of us do to help?

**Key activities**

- Understand the key role that leaders have in championing the right approach to performance management
- Exemplify the attitudes, qualities, and passion for outcomes that you would expect from others
- Establish and communicate goals and expectations and make them relevant to individuals’ job roles
- Take ownership of performance management activity, and ensure that it focuses on understanding and improvement (for example through ensuring that team meetings always discuss performance)
- Know what the performance of your team is and where you are trying to get to
- Understand the role and skills of team members, and encourage staff to work as a team and be supportive and co-operative
- Facilitate the work of staff by helping solve problems and implement improved processes
- Give staff the opportunity to take on challenging work while providing appropriate support to allow them to excel
- Recognise behaviours that contribute to high performance with rewards that recognise the needs and motivations of individuals and teams
- Ensure equality of opportunity and treatment of staff within the performance management framework

**Possible next steps**

- Explore the ‘culture’ that surrounds ‘performance’ in your team
- Take steps to create an environment where members of your team actively seek out ways to improve the way that things are done, for example through active leadership, clear communication, providing learning and development support, and through the appraisal process
- Make sure your team understand who you are accountable to and why

**In the resource documents**

- Tips on understanding ‘culture’, and leadership style
- Discussion of the importance of motivation, reward and recognition, and accountability
2.2 Clear performance management roles and responsibilities

**Hallmark 3:** Officers and staff at all levels, the police authority and key partners understand their roles, responsibilities and relationships within the force’s performance management framework

Excellence in police performance management comes, in part, from all in force recognising they have a significant contribution to make. Part of ensuring clarity over the processes in force for planning, delivery and performance review should be an understanding of who is responsible for specific activities within those processes. These responsibilities should be enshrined in individual PDR objectives. Your working relationship with your manager, and with your team, is also critical in communication of the force vision, and in making sure that any performance problems are addressed across and between teams.

As a team leader, you have a key role in making sure your team are clear on how the team needs to contribute, individually and collectively. For a team member with no supervisory responsibilities this is likely to include:

- Being clear on force, departmental and team priorities, and how individual activity can support their delivery
- Recognising the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively
- Understanding the importance of working with others
- Understanding how the processes they work within contribute to achievement of objectives, but also actively seeking out and suggesting improvements to the way things are done
- Understanding what the current level of performance is (personally, and of the team or unit)
- Learning lessons from what is done, and ensuring that good practice is identified and disseminated

**Key activities**
- Ensure you and your team are clear about individual performance management roles and responsibilities, and that you have an understanding of the roles of other parts of the force and external partners that have a part to play in delivering the objectives of your area of business

**Possible next steps**
- Make sure you understand your role and responsibilities within the performance management framework
- Make sure that those you lead are clear on their role, for example in their PDR objectives
- Take steps to clarify the expectations for key relationships, including with those providing performance analysis for your area

**In the resource documents**
- Links to more information on roles and responsibilities of key policing partners in performance management, and to the Integrated Competency Framework and National Occupational Standards
- Case studies illustrating the steps that some forces have taken to clarify roles and responsibilities
2.3 Creating the right environment - communicating priorities

**Hallmark 4:** Priorities are clearly communicated, understood, and acted upon by all officers and staff

Team leaders have a key role in ensuring that force, BCU or department priorities (see Section 3.1) are placed in context for their team and communicated to staff in a way that is relevant to them. The aim must be for your team to understand how their job contributes to achieving force objectives, understand what is expected of them - both in terms of what their priorities are and what their priorities are not - and receive feedback on an ongoing basis about what difference they are making.

The language used to discuss performance should avoid jargon so that messages are clearly understood, and where specific terms are used (such as ‘priority’, ‘objective’, ‘target’) these must be used consistently and correctly to avoid confusion (see page 23 for more on terminology). Using the right language can also actively support the development of a high performance culture – choosing words which encourage or highlight teamwork and support, rather than those which might be interpreted as a criticism. This choice of positive language makes a significant difference to the way that people feel and, as a result, they tend to perform better in their roles. Following the approach set out in the National Briefing Model can greatly assist here.\(^2\)

**Key activities**
- Understand the priorities for your BCU or department, how your team contributes to delivery of them, and what more specific or different priorities apply just to your area of business
- Maintain good communication with your manager to ensure that your are able to feedback progress against (or issues with) tackling your priorities, and that you are aware of any change in focus required
- Communicate priorities clearly and effectively to your team members, so that everyone understands their contribution
- Encourage your team to take up any opportunities that are provided to feedback their views on the performance management framework to strategic leaders in the force (e.g. staff surveys)

**Possible next steps**
- Check that the priorities for your team are well communicated in language that everyone understands, and are clear to all team members
- Ensure that key messages are not being lost or confused as they are communicated

**In the resource documents**
- Case studies highlighting how some forces have communicated their priorities throughout the organisation

\(^2\) See “Guidance on the National Briefing Model”, ACPO, 2006
2.4 Learning and development

Hallmark 5: Learning and development equips officers and staff to improve performance

For true performance improvement, you cannot just ‘tell people what to do’ – you need to be sure they have the skills and knowledge to maximise their contribution. Staff learning and professional development should therefore be a key part of the force performance management framework and, although this is not solely the responsibility of individual line managers, team leaders have a key role to play in ensuring that this is seen as a core part of the process of maximising performance.

Team leaders should be coaches - providing both encouragement and challenge - and should spend time with staff before and after training activity to understand how behaviour will change as a result of the learning intervention. Individuals should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own self-development, in order to create a culture of learning throughout the organisation.

To have an impact on force performance, learning and development activity should be aligned to force, BCU, department or team priorities. Using the PDR process effectively (see Section 3.4) is likely to be a key part of this, as that provides a structure for line managers and staff to agree development needs.

As a team leader, you should also look to develop your own skills and knowledge around performance management, both in terms of managing your team, but also in terms of any specific knowledge required for measuring and monitoring performance and identifying opportunities for improvement.

Key activities

- Ensure you and your team get the training you need to undertake your job
- Facilitate and support both formal and informal learning and development for your team (e.g. mentoring, work shadowing, coaching, good practice sharing (for example through ‘action learning sets’), and both individual and team opportunities)
- Use the PDR process as a tool to help consider development needs

Possible next steps

- Consider whether the understanding of performance management within your team could be improved, and use the material that complements this guide or other materials available in-force to brief your team members and improve skills and knowledge if required
- Review what relevant training your team has received, and what additional training or other development opportunities would help

In the resource documents

- Case studies highlighting how some forces have incorporated learning and development as an explicit part of their performance management frameworks
3. STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

3.1 Planning

**Hallmark 6:** A clear, integrated planning framework links force, police authority and wider stakeholder priorities with the NIM, corporate planning, budgeting, risk and resource management

Planning is central to performance management – being clear on what you are aiming to achieve and how you are going to do it. The nature and frequency of planning activity will vary – from annually or less frequently through to monthly, weekly, daily and continuously – depending on the issue, level of the organisation (i.e. strategic through to operational), risk involved, and availability of data to inform the process.

As a team leader, you need to distinguish between your role in the force or BCU/department planning process, and planning for your team (which may be on a more ongoing basis). The two should be linked, and the basic steps are the same, but there is a distinction. The team leader has a contributory role in the former, and a leadership role in the latter. You need to be prepared to adopt these distinct roles, making sure that the plans you develop for (and with) your team fit appropriately with those for the force and your department or BCU. For many team leaders, this may involve working through National Intelligence Model processes to ensure that performance against priorities is reflected in decisions about resource deployment.

The planning process – in whatever context - consists of three sequential steps:

1. **Review** progress against previous plans and consider that alongside any new or emerging issues. This ties in with the process for assessing performance (Sections 3.3 and 3.4), and requires a clear understanding of the outcomes from earlier activities, which things that were not priorities before are potential concerns going forward, and any new expectations. Team leaders need to contribute to this review process for the strategic planning cycle where appropriate, and lead review within the context of team planning.

2. **Set Priorities.** If everything is a priority then nothing is a priority, so priorities must be limited in number and scope. Making choices about what to prioritise can be difficult, but if the potential resource implications of tackling each issue are taken into account, the extent of what can be prioritised can be put in better perspective, resources can be shifted away from lower priority areas, and plans can be made to deliver more efficiently in other areas. **Objectives** are specific aims that address priorities and state what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved and are the link between priorities and the approach to tackling them. As a team leader, you need to understand the priorities that have been set for the force, for your BCU or department, and for your team. This should clarify where you and your team should focus your efforts – meaning you are better able to take decisions supportive of your priorities in your day-to-day activity.

3. **Determine Approach.** This includes both identifying **how to deliver** agreed objectives** and how to measure progress** (see Section 4). As a team leader, you have a key role in encouraging a problem solving approach to deliver against objectives, and should ensure that you understand how to use available performance information to monitor progress.
The objectives and actions set out in the force policing plan should link through BCU and department plans, to team plans where relevant, to objectives set for individuals. An effective PDR process supports this (see Section 3.4).

**TIP: Use of targets: ‘Don’t hit the target but miss the point’**

It is often possible to quantify objectives in terms of specific targets. The force executive and police authority may agree targets for the force at the strategic level (via the annual policing plan), but targets can be used as an operational tool at any level.

Targets can provide a focus for managing performance at both the strategic and operational level, and can make it clear to both staff and external stakeholders what is expected. **However, experience has shown that great care must be taken when setting targets and using them in management of performance.** If there are too many targets, it is difficult to focus on the activities that matter most; targets do not always motivate positively and, if targets are too stretching, then it can be de-motivating; and inappropriate practices may result from efforts to achieve particular targets, particularly when people are held to account against targets in a rigid rather than constructive fashion and the principles of effective performance management are forgotten.

A common issue with the use of targets is that people lose sight of the objective (or were never sighted on it in the first place) and begin to manage performance against the target alone. In order to mitigate this risk it is often necessary to take into account additional information when determining whether an objective has been achieved.

Strategic targets cascaded mechanically to the delivery level without reference to the capacity and/or capability to achieve them are more likely to drive perverse behaviour. As a team leader, you should expect your manager to take steps to mitigate the risks of using targets as the focus of performance management, but also help develop and promote ownership of appropriate targets within your team if necessary, as a reference for where to focus effort. (See also Section 2.1.)

**Key activities**

- Understand how the force planning framework operates, and how that relates to your team’s planning process
- Ensure that the resource allocation within your team matches its priorities

**Possible next steps**

- Review what your team’s priorities are, and their fit with priorities for your BCU or department
- If relevant, consider how targets are used, perceived, and drive activity within your team, and take steps to ensure that they are used constructively

**In the resource documents**

- Detailed discussion of the things to consider and links to make in review, prioritisation, objective setting, determining the approach to delivery and how to measure progress
- Case studies illustrating the principles of effective planning
3.2 Delivering - Improving your processes to improve productivity

**Hallmark 7:** The force pursues improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of business processes that support delivery against priorities

A business process is, in simple terms, a set of activities that must occur in an organisation in order to transform resources into results. Changing or improving force processes can be a key tool in achieving organisational objectives through improving productivity. The more efficient and effective key business processes are, the better the performance. Improvements to key business processes can also deliver a better working environment. For many staff, it can be frustrating to work inefficiently.

You and your team will often be the people best placed to identify what causes problems in existing processes, to support the design of solutions for those problems and to take forward implementation of these solutions. You should aim to create and sustain an environment in which it is expected that your team will challenge existing ways of working, and work with your manager and colleagues elsewhere in the force as appropriate to enable improvements to be made where possible.

Process improvement work may also be initiated as part of a strategic programme focused on improving processes in areas of priority. Generally this will involve:

- Defining clearly an objective to be addressed, and the scope of activities or organisational parts that contribute most directly to achieving that objective
- Assembling a core team to act on behalf of their colleagues in analysing and understanding the detail of the nuts-and-bolts of those activities
- This team drawing upon their colleagues’ knowledge and experience, external knowledge and experience, and baseline data about the process, to design solutions to each obstruction in the process from end-to-end
- Testing those solutions out with staff and their managers
- The team, with their colleagues, implementing the solutions they have designed. New or existing performance indicators are used to track improvements

Process improvement should be approached with caution though, because maximising one part of the process at the expense of wider performance can be a risk – the overall aim is to optimise the whole.

**Key activities**

- Monitor, measure and manage your processes to drive out improvements
- Involve your team in analysing, understanding, designing and implementing measurable improvements to your processes

**Possible next steps**

- Consider, with your team, how your processes might be improved
- Discuss with your manager what areas offer potential for process improvement

**In the resource documents**

- Detailed discussion of the steps for identifying key processes and improving them
- Case studies highlighting successful process improvement projects
3.3 Performance Review Processes

**Hallmark 8:** Performance review structures serve all operational and support departments, linking with police authority and partners, and integrating with the NIM

The core of the performance management process is the performance review structure: the meetings and associated activities where results are considered, people are held to account for their actions, solutions are derived for problems, good practice is captured and lessons from delivery can be fed into the plan for the future.

As a team leader you need to distinguish between your role in your department or BCU review process, and review for individuals within your team. The two should be linked, and the basic steps are the same – but there is a distinction. Team leaders will generally be representing and accounting for the activity of their team in the former, and have a leadership role in the latter.

Whilst there are many variations in approach, performance review meetings must take place at all management levels to ensure that performance management is not a top-down exercise divorced from everyday operations. Frequency and attendance are determined by need and by risk but, given that emphasis should be on achieving improvement in those areas of performance identified as priorities, a review frequency of less than monthly is unlikely to drive team or unit activity appropriately.

At team level you must be seen to be taking a central role, leading team meetings and identifying the key issues that need to be addressed. For many team leaders the structures that serve the National Intelligence Model (NIM) process such as Tactical Tasking & Coordination meetings, Daily Management Meetings and Neighbourhood Coordination Meetings may be the only formal opportunity to discuss performance, hold people to account and decide on follow-up action. These processes could therefore be considered as part of (or strongly related to) the performance management framework as they have an important role in the process of setting operational priorities, tasking resources and monitoring delivery through results analysis. As a team leader you may want to consider how to make best use of NIM processes with this in mind.

**Key activities**
- Oversee a performance review process appropriate to the needs of your team that links with review structures elsewhere in your BCU or department and links with the NIM if relevant/appropriate

**Possible next steps**
- Review, with your team, the performance review structure your team follows to make sure that it is proportionate, efficient and clearly understood

**In the resource documents**
- Discussion of how performance review structures can be aligned/integrated with NIM processes
- Case studies outlining performance review processes for BCUs and support departments
3.4 Review of performance

**Hallmark 9:** Regular review of performance holds people to account against objectives, recognises good performance, and drives problem-solving and relentless follow-up

Performance review provides the link between delivery and planning, and provides a focus for problem solving and ‘managing’ performance. You and members of your team may be involved in performance review meetings in which you are expected to represent and account for the performance in your area of business. The key elements of an effective performance review meeting are discussed in more detail in the main resource document that accompanies this guide. (See also Section 2.1.)

As well as review of performance at organisational or team level, the performance appraisal process for individuals is important in encouraging the behaviours required to create a culture where performance management is part of everyday life. Skills for Justice’s guidance on the Performance and Development Review (PDR) process includes key points for line managers in carrying out their responsibilities, including:

- Remember that PDR is an integral part of line management responsibilities and an ongoing process, albeit one that does not replace day-to-day informal contact with staff. Evidence gathered to support PDR should be sufficient, no more.
- Ensure that you have a clear understanding of the force’s expectations for your team, these are communicated with the team and used to set objectives for individuals, with an understanding of the role profiles of team members.
- Discuss any concerns over objectives (which are Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-bound), establish how they might be achieved and if any learning and development is required.
- Ensure that in addition to ongoing informal contact, you conduct regular review meetings with staff to assess progress, provide feedback and amend objectives.
- Raise performance issues and areas for development with individuals as they arise, and assess evidence of competence during the year.
- Give the individual sufficient notice of review meetings, arrange for the meeting to be held in a private environment, and prepare for the meeting in advance.
- Ensure that during review meetings there is scope for reflection and analysis, performance is analysed, not personality, achievements are recognised, and agreed actions are set out and outcomes recorded.

**Key activities**
- Ensure that you and members of your team engage constructively in performance review meetings where relevant.
- Make full use of the PDR system to set individual objectives linked to team priorities, help develop your staff, recognise good performance and address poor performance.

**Possible next steps**
- Ensure that you are familiar with your force’s appraisal process and the support that your HR department can provide.
- Consider whether or not personal appraisals are really linked to team priorities and performance.

**In the resource documents**
- More information on review of performance for teams and effective performance review meetings.
- Case studies outlining effective performance review processes.

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3.5 Identifying and capturing good practice and lessons learned

**Hallmark 10:** Good practice and lessons learned are quickly identified, shared and acted upon

Central to both effective performance management and operation of the NIM is the need to evaluate what has been done and take on board learning for the future: to capture and share effective practice. It is not just an activity to be completed at the ‘end’ of the performance management cycle – it is a key part of determining the appropriate response in the first place. Unfortunately, it is all too easy to overlook the need for evaluation – it’s not always seen in policing as part of the core job.

Officers and staff need therefore to be able to understand how their work contributes to team, as department/BCU and force priorities, so that they can then review how their actions contribute to those priorities and evaluate that contribution. If they realise their actions could be revised to contribute more effectively, they can provide that feedback and ensure that appropriate changes are made for the future.

People will exchange good practice if they meet to discuss how things are going – this might be through the formal channels of the performance review process (including NIM processes), but might also be through additional more informal activity that allows sharing of effective practice outside of a forum where performance is being scrutinised.

Sometimes, individuals may feel nervous about sharing good practice, as they’re not certain how good an idea it might be. It is therefore important for team leaders to foster a culture that encourages those with ideas to come forward, with no fear of criticism, so that they can be considered and – if appropriate – implemented more widely.

**Key activities**
- Ensure that opportunities exist within your team to share good practice and lessons learned
- Actively recognise and reward those who highlight lessons that can be learned
- Engage, with your team, in sharing good practice with other parts of the force when opportunities are made available

**Possible next steps**
- Check to see that lessons learned - both positive and negative - are being reviewed regularly within your team

**In the resource documents**
- Links to sources of good practice including published research; the National Policing Improvement Agency; the Home Office Police website; HMIC or the Audit Commission; and the Crime Reduction Website
- Information on what ‘evaluation’ looks like and how to plan for it
- Case studies showcasing what some forces have done to promote sharing of good practice
4. DATA AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Capturing performance data

**Hallmark 11**: Timely, accurate and relevant performance data is easily captured and shared, meeting legal requirements and user needs

A crucial part of the process of arriving at the plan for achieving objectives is describing what evidence will be used to assess progress towards them. This usually means establishing one or more **performance indicators**. A performance indicator is a measurement of the desired outcome that gives evidence for how well an objective is being achieved - although this may be indirect or incomplete evidence.

Performance indicators come in two broad types: outcome indicators which show progress towards specific objectives; and process indicators which help you identify and measure processes that contribute towards outcomes. Process – or 'lead' - indicators can give an early signal of future performance against outcome objectives, and interventions can be made on the basis of that information to improve outcomes.

As a team leader you have a role to play in checking that any data provided to you (especially about the performance of your team) is robust and fit for purpose, and you should work with your manager and other colleagues in force to ensure that any data you need access to in order to manage performance effectively is readily available.

You also have a key responsibility to make sure that you and your team understand why performance data is collected, and see that it is collected accurately (e.g. in line with any policies or procedures in place) to ensure that decisions can be made on the basis of robust data. Correspondingly, you should expect performance indicators that you have to collect data for to be established with reference to ‘acceptance criteria’ (see the main resource guidance), which helps ensure that indicators are required, fit for purpose, relatively easy to collect, and clarifies the limitations or risks associated with using any indicator that is not perfect.

**Key activities**
- Ensure that you are clear on how progress towards each of your team’s objectives will be measured, including through a balanced selection of performance indicators if relevant
- Emphasise to your team the importance of high quality data in managing performance
- Ensure that your team has access to the data it needs to manage day-to-day performance and activity

**Possible next steps**
- Work with others in force to improve data quality and efficiency of data collection and processing if necessary
- Review how well information provision meets the needs of your performance management activity

**In the resource documents**
- More detail on defining performance indicators (including suggested ‘acceptance criteria’)
- References to statutory requirements for managing information (MoPI)
- Case studies illustrating how some forces measure performance in particular areas of business
4.2 Using performance information effectively

**Hallmark 12:** Insightful analysis, that is clearly communicated, supports intelligence-led decision making that directs day-to-day activity

Performance data is not collected primarily to *tell* us how things are going. It is collected so that we can *influence* how things are going, and you should make sure that your team has access to the data that it needs for this. When looking at performance data the key question that will need to be asked is ‘what do we need to do in response to this?’ It can be very difficult to answer this question correctly, as it can be very easy to misinterpret performance information, even when it looks fairly straightforward.

Performance indicators are a representation of an area of performance that is of interest. Indicators only tell us about *apparent* performance – interpretation must be applied in order to get close to the picture of *actual* performance. Performance indicators can rarely be taken at face value because there are always likely to be a number of possible interpretations for any pattern of information they provide.

Considering possible competing interpretations of statistics in the light of additional evidence to support or dismiss those interpretations is the key step in understanding actual performance and should be a key function of analysts in the performance management process. As a team leader, you may or may not have routine access to dedicated analytical resources to help you understand performance and make the right decisions to improve it. If you do, you should work with them to ensure that the analysis provided to you for managing performance is *insightful* (e.g. are changes real, have they happened because of something you have or have not done, or some external influence?) and *forward looking* (e.g. what can you learn from what has gone before that can inform future actions to improve performance or sustain what has been achieved?).

Analysis is not just for analysts, however: it is just about taking a structured approach to understanding problems, and it is not necessary for specialist analytical resources to analyse every problem. All officers and staff should be able to follow the basic analytical steps of using information to highlight what appears to be happening, considering all of the possible causes of any issue, and then drawing conclusions about why issues are happening in order to inform the right course of action. As a team leader, you may need a basic understanding of any statistical analysis of performance indicators made available to your team to facilitate this process.

### Key activities

- Make sure that your team has access to and understands the information about performance that it needs, and that information is clear, concise, timely, and reliable
- If you have access to it, make the most of analytical support in understanding your problems and possible solutions to them

### Possible next steps

- Ensure that your team understands how to carry out basic analysis of problems, and that evidence and analysis is used to solve problems
- Ensure that you understand the basics and value of any statistics that are made available to you, and use them to support problem solving

### In the resource documents

- Further exploration of the concepts of ‘apparent’ and ‘actual’ performance
- Discussion of what good analysis looks like, and who should do it
- An introduction to key statistical concepts
TIP: Performance management terminology

To help provide structure around performance management, a number of particular terms are used. People tend to use some of these words interchangeably, and this can lead to confusion!

**Inputs and outputs:** actions or activities controlled by the organisation can be described as inputs, or the resources put in such as labour or equipment – e.g. the number of officers available to go on patrol, and outputs: something that is ‘produced’ in order to achieve an outcome – e.g. the number of patrols in areas where under-16 robberies are common.

**Outcomes:** are related to the objectives (see definition below). This is what will happen if objectives have been achieved, the real-world consequences of the outputs – e.g. less age-related crime. Outcomes can include things like reduced fear of crime or increased public satisfaction, but many outcomes, of which these are examples, are strongly influenced by other factors outside the direct control of the police. In these cases assessments of performance may need to include a consideration of the related outputs as well as these factors.

**Priority:** an area of focus for a force, department or team: an aspect of business, sometimes referred to as a theme - e.g. ‘youth victimisation’. Priorities are the issues that are considered the most important to pursue, often through the commitment of resources.

**Objective:** a specific aim that addresses a priority and states what is to be achieved/how it is to be achieved - e.g. ‘reduce the number of robberies where an under-16-year-old is the victim’. More than one objective may be associated with a priority.

**Performance indicator:** a measurement of an outcome, output or input that gives evidence for (‘indicates’) how well an objective is being achieved (although this may be indirect or incomplete evidence) - e.g. ‘number of robberies recorded by the police where the victim is under 16’.

**Target:** a performance indicator showing progress towards an objective can have an associated target. In other words the target suggests how the indicator would be expected to change if the objective had been achieved – the ‘desired level’ of the indicator - e.g. ‘reduce number of robberies where an under-16-year-old is the victim by 5% compared to previous year’s performance.’ The term ‘target’ is usually associated with a desire to improve performance, whereas the term ‘standard’ is sometimes used to describe a form of target associated with maintaining an expected level of performance for a given activity (perhaps over a longer timeframe).