

Data Quality Policy

Department of Markets and Consumer Protection

This departmental policy sets out the responsibilities of all members of staff in terms of assuring data quality. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Corporate [Data Quality Policy](#) which details the City of London's approach to managing data. The Corporate policy includes a Data Quality Protocol which sets out the basic rules for all City Corporation data.

This policy defines the processes in place with Markets and Consumer Protection to ensure that the department complies with the Corporate Data Quality Policy. It also details the responsibilities of members of staff at all levels.

Why is data quality important?

Consistent, high quality, timely and comprehensive information is vital to support good decision making. Each area of the department should have effective systems and procedures in place that produce relevant and reliable information to support management decision-making and to manage performance.

Who is responsible?

Responsibility for ensuring data quality lies with individual staff members who collect and produce the data but this responsibility extends through the line of management via Team Managers, Superintendents/ Assistant Directors, and ultimately to the Chief Officer.

How is departmental compliance with the Data Quality Policy monitored?

Markets' Data

- Data is collected by relevant members of staff and includes statistics on operational areas such as maintenance, security, waste management, health and safety, staff sickness absence and occupation of market stands and offices. Other than the health and safety information, which includes a substantial amount of qualitative data, the majority of the other data is quantitative.
- Checks are carried out by members of staff at each Market who are responsible for collating the data and forwarding relevant datasets to the Directorate Team (Head Office).
- All data received by the Directorate Team is scrutinised by team members who query any anomalies/apparent errors. The majority of the data is stored in Excel spreadsheets which are only accessible by members of the Directorate Team.
- This data is then used by the Chief Officer and his Senior Management Team to inform decision making; and some is also reported to Committee in, usually, public reports.
- Data which is reported to Committee is further verified by the relevant Superintendent and is ultimately approved by the Chief Officer.

PH&PP Data

- The majority of data collected relates to the regulatory functions carried out by enforcement officers. Much of the data is gathered during inspections of and visits to businesses and sites in the City; it is then entered onto a central database (Northgate M3) which holds both qualitative and quantitative data.
- The responsibility for ensuring that this data is correct lies with the individual who collects and inputs it. As the individual enters new information about a City business/site they confirm that both the new and existing data held is accurate.
- The database includes a range of reporting functions, the administration of which is carried out by the PH&PP Operational Support Team. The Team produces reports to feed data into external and internal reporting processes. Members of staff in that team carry out initial checks on the quality of the data output and these are then verified by Team Managers and Assistant Directors before being submitted to the relevant external or internal recipient.
- Data produced is often used by the Chief Officer and his Senior Management Team to inform decision making; and some is also reported to Committee in, usually, public reports.
- Data which is reported to Committee is further verified by the relevant Team Manager, Assistant Director, the Port Health & Public Protection Director, and is ultimately approved by the Chief Officer.

Responsibilities

Data quality is the responsibility of every employee. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that all data held is relevant, timely, accurate and comparable at all stages, e.g. when entering, processing, maintaining, calculating, analysing, extracting, and reporting on data from any information system.

Specific areas of responsibility are set out below:

All staff

- Get it right the **first time**
- Check **accuracy** of data entry
- **Query** anything that doesn't look 'right'
- Ensure that databases, spreadsheets etc have sufficient levels of **protection** to prevent unintended amendments being made
- **Check** calculations when supplying information based upon data sources
- **Update** data sources as soon as possible when new data becomes available
- Make sure those who need to **access** the data know how to do so
- Maintain a reliable, clear and searchable **evidence trail** to show where the data came from and how it has been manipulated/processed
- Ensure that data you produce or report is **supported** by underlying working papers/records and that these are retained as appropriate in accordance with audit requirements
- Any data supplied to external bodies must be **approved** by a senior officer (e.g. Team Manager, Assistant Director, Superintendent, Service Director or Chief Officer, as appropriate)
- Undertake appropriate **training** as required or directed

Owners of databases or spreadsheets should ask themselves:

- What does the data mean?
- Why do we need to record it?
- How long do we need to keep it for?
- What is the purpose of the data (why are we collecting it? Is it necessary?)
- How is it calculated?
- What is the unit of measure?
- How often is the source data available?
- Where is the data sourced from?
- What are the key management controls to ensure quality?

Senior Managers

- Ensure that the Data Quality Policy is communicated, understood, implemented and complied with
- Assess skills capability to ensure that staff have the skills required to deliver high quality data
- Ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to deliver high quality data from internal and external sources
- Ensure contingency arrangements and appropriate controls are in place

Chief Officers

- Have overall responsibility for ensuring arrangements are in place to assure the quality of data (in particular that which is business critical) and that improvement action is taken where necessary.
- Ensure that a statement of data quality compliance is made annually as part of existing Committee reporting arrangements