

# Merciless measurement in policing

## Definition

The demands on policing have changed significantly over the past 10 years. Overall crimes and incidents have decreased, whilst new crimes are emerging. Many of these crimes are associated with vulnerability, public protection and safeguarding and require more policing resources, being generally more complex to investigate. All this in a landscape of financial uncertainty and where police officer numbers continue to fall.

## Why is measurement important?

Measuring the right things is crucial to delivering a responsive and flexible service. The quality and quantity of data collected and how it is used will strongly influence efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of service delivery as well as informing the need for future change. Common issues include:

- Organisations are often data rich but business intelligence poor
- A view that mandated measurements are strategically important
- Limited understanding of productivity and capacity
- Lack of focus on process measures to understand backlogs, rework or failure demand
- Frequency of data collection is not sufficient enough to manage day to day operations
- Performance is focused on arbitrary targets, which drive the wrong behaviours

## Measuring what matters

Successful measurement means deciding what data to collect and clearly understanding the 'purpose' for collecting it. Measures need to be focused at the right level - strategic measures focusing on outcomes and the effectiveness of service tend to be based upon monthly, quarterly and annual performance. Whereas staff that deliver services need to measure what is happening today, this week. A balance of leading and lagging measures are needed to support proactive management of performance and it's essential that any framework of measurement incorporates:

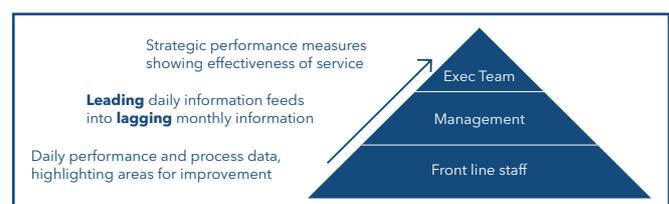
- **Inputs:** Volume, quality, availability, resources and skill levels
- **Process:** Time spent on activities, costs, handovers, decision points and productivity

- **Demand and Capacity:** Variations in demand across teams, staff time and availability
- **Problems:** Backlogs, errors, correction & rework activity, missing/incorrect data at handover
- **Outputs:** Volume, quality, time to complete, success rates and total touch time

## Getting your approach to measurement right

Getting the approach right is crucially important. Start with a clear vision and once strategic objectives have been agreed, define outcomes and outputs and create good, solid measures from those objectives. Things to consider:

- Using visual management to give staff accountability for performance and help teams to improve communications and solve problems
- Developing a culture where staff take responsibility for performance and raising issues
- Having a game plan to avoid unnecessary data collection
- Having mechanisms in place to track, monitor and problem solve problems
- Considering the frequency of measurement - a blend of leading and lagging measures
- Identifying tools required to gather data and agreeing responsibility for collection and analysis
- Measuring emerging crime trends to understand service impact and improve ability to respond



## Say hello

Get in touch by emailing [hello@ad-esse.com](mailto:hello@ad-esse.com)  
or call **01164 788 258**