

DORSET COUNTY COUNCIL

Case study



1. The story so far

The RIFT system (Risk, Information, Focus, Themes)

- Dorset County Council's quality improvement team are responsible for monitoring the quality of social care, health provision and support-related services commissioned by Dorset County Council.
- The team work collaboratively with providers to drive service improvement.
- Currently the team are responsible for monitoring over 320 providers across Dorset although this number can fluctuate during any calendar year.
- The team have developed an excel spreadsheet system designed to allow the collation and analysis of information and intelligence on provider performance. Data collected includes:
 - quality monitoring outcomes
 - safeguarding alerts and enquiry outcomes
 - below safeguarding threshold/low level intelligence
 - Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection outcomes.

2. Developments

The quality improvement team have developed an Excel spreadsheet-based system called RIFT (Risk, Information, Focus, and Themes) which collates data about providers from a wide range of sources including council monitoring visits, complaints, feedback from care management teams, safeguarding issues and CQC reports.

- **Risk** – allows identification of providers of most concern, localities where there are most issues and any cross- market issues.
- **Information** – stores information relating to individual care providers – current case management system doesn't allow this – so part of the function is to allow us to keep notes against the provider record.
- **Focus** – in a time of reducing resources, we've needed to work smarter; RIFT allows us to focus resources on those providers with the highest risk scores and prioritise these for visits; it also helps us to focus on those areas of a service where we've had the most issues.
- **Themes** – identifying any wider market themes to see if any additional support/information/ interventions are necessary eg around mental capacity when we could speak to our MCA Team about providing more information or training for care providers.

2. Developments

- The spreadsheet was originally developed to support quality monitoring visits but is beginning to evolve as the potential to do more with the data is recognised and colleagues in the wider council see other ways in which it could be useful; one example of this is a planned development of the database to produce information for the Dorset Adult Safeguarding Board; it could also be made available to operational staff to consult prior to a review with a service user in a particular setting so that they can see in real time if any concerns have been raised about the provider.
- Data is entered onto the individual provider record in Excel then is scored and matched to one or more service specification standards – current standards can be seen [here](#).
- The RIFT system helps prioritise which providers to visit and what aspects of service provision officers need to focus on during the visit.
- RIFT can identify patterns market-wide, service wide, in individual settings or over specific time periods and is used to inform quarterly stakeholder meetings to share concerns with partners including CQC, the police, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group, Bournemouth Borough Council and Poole Borough Council.
- A pro-active approach to supporting service provider improvement through provider improvement forums – terms of reference [here](#).

3. Benefits of Dorset's approach

- The RIFT approach means the council are open and transparent in how they assess service quality and also supports the development of positive relationships with providers.
- It helps the council identify risks and makes best use of time on visits to provider settings.
- It provides information to support and inform commissioning decisions.

4. Challenges and positive impacts

- It is relatively early days and we need more time to decide what data collections will be most useful to us over time.
- The team were not IT experts and had to develop this system alongside their day jobs which has been a steep learning curve.
- Enabling closer collaborative working with providers.
- Identifying visits to providers which need to be prioritised so that early intervention or support can be offered before the service deteriorates.
- Information about providers is collected and held in one central place.
- Enabling the identification of cross-market themes which commissioners can raise for discussion in provider forums.
- Identifying gaps in provider training/knowledge/skills which can then be addressed.

5. Future developments

- Dorset County Council's intention is to develop a tool which is more intuitive and provides instant access to data with a dashboard on SharePoint so that locality teams and commissioners can look up data as required in real time.
- The directorate management and IT teams are looking at how to make the data more widely available on a stable and secure platform (in its current form there are risks data will become corrupted).
- There are plans to use it as a commissioning tool by developing the user interface and to make it available to adult safeguarding teams so they can enter information when a safeguarding alert relates to a care provider.
- Sharing with commissioners to support future commissioning decisions.

6. Top tips

- Build a resilient tool from the outset.
- Have monitoring meetings with CQC to share low level concerns trends, themes, or closures coming up to help develop a picture of the local market and any early signs of problems.
- Support staff to have the necessary but difficult conversations with providers by providing them with the intelligence, evidence and data they need to confidently challenge practice which does not meet quality standards.
- Remain mindful of commercial sensitivities when sharing information about provider performance.



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