Measuring benefits

Demonstrating a change project's return on investment.

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Measurement is robust

Change projects intended to improve productivity should be able to demonstrate a return on investment. This requires measuring the amount of return (or saving) compared to the investment required to implement the change. This allows chief constables, police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and mayors to make decisions about which change projects to invest in.

Efficiency or productivity benefits with monetisable benefits (cash-releasing or non-cash-releasing, such as hours saved) should be accompanied by evidence. This should show how the released time, money or capacity has been used.

If it is possible to demonstrate how that reinvestment of time or money has led to a performance improvement, this should be captured. This type of information will allow policing to develop an improved reputation for comprehensive assessment as a sector.

However, applying costs to many public sector change projects can be difficult, because of how intangible some outcomes are. **Economic analysis** and appraisal can be used to forecast or estimate the financial costs and benefits of any change (for more information, go to the **resources section**). Options can include:

- cost feasibility
- cost-effectiveness analysis
- cost-benefit analysis

Projections of likely benefits at the planning stage should be based on evidence rather than assumption. Measures to demonstrate benefits achieved, and processes for tracking them, should be in place early to maintain confidence in any anticipated return on investment.

Efficiency performance benefits: Proportion vs volume

When measuring improved efficiency of outputs, it can be more beneficial to track the volume of outputs than proportions. The volume could be, for example, the number of incidents answered, attended or charge files completed. The outputs could be the percentage answered, attended or charged.

External demand (such as calls for service and crime rates) often change because of factors outside of the police force’s control. Tracking proportions can therefore prevent accurate measurement of whether the change has resulted in any improvement of productivity in terms of outputs. For example, if robbery levels fall, but a force continues to charge the same volume of suspects, their charge proportion will increase, but their productivity has remained static.

Examples of appropriate measurable outputs include:

- volume of contacts managed (for example, calls answered)
- time between contact and a contact being managed (for example, time to answer a call)
- time between crime and investigative outcome (for example, investigation closed, outcome applied or submission of a decision to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS))
- volumes of police-administered criminal justice outcomes (for example, police charge, cautions and out-of-court resolutions)
- volume of case files submitted to the CPS for a decision
- time between decision to charge and charge being administered
- volume of officer and staff hours lost to sickness absence

Success requires flexibility

Benefits management is an iterative process. Benefits should be continually reviewed throughout the life of the project or programme and should be adapted to changing contexts. Additional benefits that were not part of the original plans often emerge, and these should be identified and tracked.

Conversely, disbenefits may be identified or may emerge. These should similarly be identified and tracked. Identifying disbenefits during delivery allows for mitigations to be applied.

Measurement activities should be proportionate to the expected value of the benefit. Significant benefits may justify comprehensive baselining, analysis, and ongoing monitoring. Smaller benefits can often be evidenced through lighter-touch measures and management judgement.

Tags

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