

## Use of the LGBF

# Embedding LGBF at the heart of decision making

## West Dunbartonshire Council

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### Background

West Dunbartonshire Council has an established approach to using LGBF data within service planning, alongside local performance indicators. This has supported regular review of performance against the Council's own results, as well as Scottish and family group averages, and helped identify where improvement action may be needed. However, while this use of data was embedded, the LGBF was not routinely considered at a thematic level across the full suite of indicators. As a result, opportunities to identify wider trends and patterns across service areas were not consistently captured.

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### Key activities

#### Integrating LGBF into service planning

LGBF indicators are used within annual discussions with services, alongside local performance data, satisfaction measures and contextual information. This gives services a shared evidence base to identify priorities, agree actions and focus improvement efforts.

#### Using comparisons to provide context

Performance is reviewed over time and against the Scottish average and family group. This helps services understand whether changes in performance reflect local issues or wider trends, supporting more informed interpretation of results.

#### Using indicators to prompt action

LGBF data is used to highlight areas of strong or weaker performance and trigger discussion with services. This helps move from simply reporting performance to identifying where follow-up action or deeper analysis is needed.

#### Producing structured performance reporting

The Council produces an annual report with a full LGBF section, including all indicators, quartile positions and thematic summaries. This provides a clear and consistent view of performance, making it easier for senior leaders and members to understand how services are performing overall.

#### Supporting scrutiny and decision making

LGBF data is shared with elected members and senior management, supported by analysis and context. This enables more focused questioning, helps highlight areas of interest, and supports more informed scrutiny and oversight.

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## Using LGBF data in engagement

LGBF information is used in budget consultations and focus groups to explain performance and spending. This helps provide context for public discussions and supports clearer conversations about priorities and trade-offs.

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## Benefits and impact

### Stronger link between performance data and decision making

Using LGBF data as part of regular reporting and engagement activity has strengthened how performance information informs decision making. In particular, bringing performance data into budget discussions allows decision makers to consider service performance alongside financial pressures. This creates a clearer link between evidence, priorities and resource allocation, rather than treating these as separate conversations.

### More structured and meaningful performance discussions

Using LGBF data to prompt discussion has led to more consistent and purposeful conversations about performance. Rather than focusing solely on headline figures, services are encouraged to explore what sits behind the data, including trends over time, comparative performance and local context. This supports a more analytical approach, where data is used to test assumptions and identify areas for further investigation.

### Greater focus on context when interpreting performance

Combining LGBF indicators with local performance information, such as satisfaction data and complaints, supports a more balanced understanding of performance. This helps ensure that results are interpreted in light of local priorities, demand and service design. As a result, performance discussions are less likely to rely on simple comparisons and instead focus on what the data means in practice.

### Clearer use of benchmarking as a diagnostic tool

LGBF data is used to highlight areas of interest and prompt further analysis, rather than providing definitive answers. This supports a more thoughtful use of benchmarking, where indicators are used as a starting point for discussion. It helps services identify where deeper analysis is needed and supports more targeted improvement activity.

### Improved integration of performance data within engagement activity

Including LGBF data in consultation and engagement processes helps provide context for discussions with citizens. This supports clearer communication about how services are performing and how resources are being used. It also helps connect performance information with public priorities, allowing for more informed dialogue about trade-offs and decision making.

### Stronger connection between performance, prioritisation and improvement

Using LGBF data alongside service-level discussions supports a clearer link between performance information and improvement activity. Data is used to reinforce existing priorities, highlight potential areas for action and inform decisions about where to focus effort. This creates a more direct link between performance data and what services choose to prioritise.

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## **Better quality of conversations across the organisation**

The approach has improved how performance is discussed across services and at senior level. Bringing together benchmarking data, local intelligence and contextual information supports a shared understanding of performance. This helps create more constructive conversations, where data is used to support challenge, rather than being seen as a reporting requirement.

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## **Learning and reflections**

### **Using data as a starting point**

The Council's experience shows that LGBF data works best when used as a starting point for discussion. It highlights areas of interest and supports further exploration but is most effective when combined with local knowledge and detailed analysis.

This reflects the principle of using data as can-openers rather than treating indicators as definitive answers.

### **Importance of local context**

Benchmarking provides valuable insight, but the Council recognises that context is essential. Differences in priorities, demand and service design mean that results need to be interpreted carefully. Using LGBF data alongside local performance information helps provide a more complete and accurate picture.

### **Value of combining data sources**

Bringing together LGBF indicators, satisfaction data and other local information strengthens understanding of performance. This supports a more holistic picture of improvement and helps ensure decisions are based on a range of evidence.

This approach reflects the principle of supplementing LGBF data with other information.

### **Supporting ongoing learning and collaboration**

The Council benefits from sharing learning with other authorities through informal networks and events. These connections support the exchange of ideas, practical insights and approaches to improvement. This reflects the principle of learning from others and supporting relationships across the sector.

## **Contact for enquiries**

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