

Research and Analytics

VfM indicators

Benchmarking clubs

It is essential that organisations continue to make efficiencies and improve their performance of the back office to contribute to those savings and to maintain services.

CIPFA VfM Indicators are aimed at all public sector organisations and are crucial when assessing your corporate services, so you can deliver savings and transform your back office functions. Our expert help is cost effective and we guarantee to deliver reports to you within just 15 working days.

How will they benefit you?

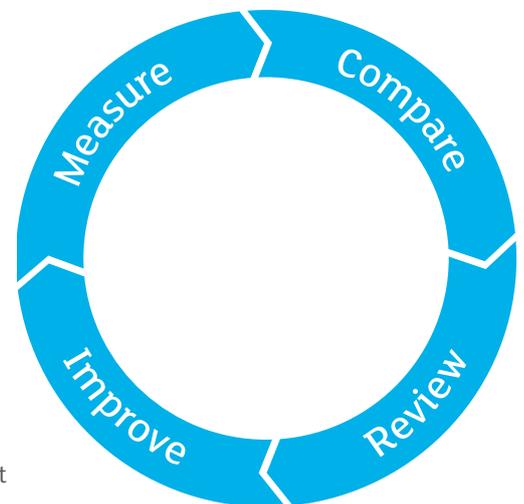
When it comes to making savings you need to know what your services cost and understand if that is offering you value for money. Our indicators enable you to:

- self-assess your performance using robust and relevant indicators
- pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses in your organisation
- identify areas of efficiency and improve your use of resources
- compare your financial performance with your peers
- demonstrate to the 'board' your commitment to improving efficiency
- compare your user satisfaction with your peers.

Get the results you need

You can now get your report anytime, giving you access to information and data that you need to help you improve and plan your work programmes.

Simply return the questionnaires when best suits your timetable and we will deliver your comparisons against your sector and from across the whole public sector using our extensive database. We will get the reports back out to you within 15 working days (first reports available from September).



‘The CIPFA VfM Indicators benchmarking exercise has helped the Council to confirm areas for potential efficiency savings. Through our member-led Review of Support Services we have identified actions to manage our corporate communications more efficiently, and we are reviewing our procurement and commissioning procedures to achieve more cost-effective delivery Council wide. The benchmarking exercise is also informing ongoing work to drive savings in ICT, Legal Services, Human Resources and Estates Management.’

Jason Lowther, Director of Strategy, Birmingham City Council



What do we cover?

CIPFA VfM Indicators cover a wide range of back office services giving you the opportunity to benchmark up to seven key areas of your organisation:

- Communications
- Estates management
- Finance
- Human resources
- ICT
- Legal
- Procurement

Participation enables you to compare your organisation to a wide range of members across the public sector.

Communications

These indicators look to answer the following key questions:

- Is the communications function cost-effective?
- Is the communications function being delivered by an effective level of professionally trained staff?
- How is the communications function spending their time across key communications disciplines?
- Does the communications function have a clearly defined strategy that is linked to business objectives?
- Are internal customers satisfied with the services provided by the communications function?

The full scope of this benchmarking service is provided in the notes of guidance accompanying the questionnaire and includes areas such as press office activity, public affairs, internal and corporate communications, branding, events and conferences, direct marketing and advertising.

Finance

These indicators look to answer the following key questions:

- Is the finance function cost-effective?
- Has the finance function achieved an appropriate balance in deploying staff resources between 1) processing financial transactions, 2) achieving compliance and 3) providing interpretation and advice regarding the financial results?

- Is the finance function proactively supporting the needs of decision makers across the organisation?
- Are transactional financial processes operated efficiently and effectively?
- Is appropriate use made of technology to support the finance function in achieving efficient and effective delivery?
- Does the finance function provide relevant, accurate and timely management information to support robust financial planning and management?
- Are internal customers satisfied with the services provided by finance?

The full scope of the club is provided in the notes of guidance accompanying the questionnaire and covers the key areas of business decision support, reporting and control and transaction processing, including creditors, debtors and payroll.

Estates management

These indicators look to answer the following key questions:

- Is the organisation's estates management function efficient and cost-effective?
- Does the estates management function help to ensure the organisation has buildings that are fit for purpose and comply with statutory requirements?
- Does the estates management function help to ensure the organisation makes best use of the estate?
- Does the estates management function effectively support the organisation in minimising the impact of the estate on the environment?
- Does the estates management function manage maintenance and capital programmes effectively?
- Are internal customers satisfied with the service provided by the estates management function and the functional suitability of the estate?

The full scope of the club is provided in the notes of guidance accompanying the questionnaire and covers the costs and performance involved in managing and maintaining the administrative and operational buildings used by the organisation.

Human resources

These indicators look to answer the following key questions:

- Is the HR function cost-effective?
- Are HR processes operated in an efficient and timely manner?
- Is the HR function effectively supporting the organisation in ensuring it has the right people, in the right place, at the right time?
- Is the HR function proactively planning for future resources needs and taking appropriate action to address gaps?
- Does HR ensure there is appropriate investment in terms of capacity building within the organisation, including leadership development?
- Is the HR function helping to effectively promote and manage the health, safety and wellbeing of staff?
- Is the HR function helping the organisation to effectively manage individual employee performance and recognises and rewards employees?
- Does the HR function help to ensure a diverse workforce?
- Are internal customers satisfied with the services provided by HR?

The full scope of the club is provided in the notes of guidance accompanying the questionnaire and includes areas such as HR strategy and development, employee relations, resourcing, learning and development and individual performance management.

Information and communications technology

These indicators look to answer the following key questions:

- Is the ICT function cost-effective?
- Is the ICT function ensuring that users are trained to a minimum level of competence in using software?
- Has the ICT function provided a service to users within an acceptable timeframe?
- How do the average costs of ICT equipment across the organisation compare to others?
- Does the ICT function support services in undertaking transactional based activities via e-enabled channels?
- What is the effectiveness of the organisation's project management of ICT?
- Are internal customers satisfied with the services provided by the ICT function?

The full scope of the club is provided in the notes of guidance accompanying the questionnaire and covers all aspects of infrastructure, systems, processes and disciplines required to support the effective delivery of business objectives and users of technology across the organisations.

Legal services

These indicators look to answer the following key questions:

- Is the legal function cost-effective?
- Is the legal function effectively supporting the organisation in ensuring it is providing the best possible legal advice?
- Has the legal function achieved an appropriate balance between legal services provided in-house and externally sourced?
- Does the legal function provide consistent, concise, clear and constructive advice?
- Are internal customers satisfied with the services provided by the legal function?

The full scope of the club is provided in the notes of guidance accompanying the questionnaire and covers the use of both in-house legal departments and external lawyers. This includes the key areas of advisory work, property transactions litigations, disputes, prosecuting for offenders and law-making.

Procurement

These indicators look to answer key questions, including:

- Is the procurement function/model used by the organisation cost effective and appropriate?
- Does the procurement effectively support the delivery of the organisation's strategic objectives?
- Are procurement processes operated in an efficient, timely and effective manner?
- Does procurement effectively understand the requirements of the demand and business requirements for goods and services?
- Does procurement have a good understanding of markets and effectively manage suppliers?
- Is appropriate use made of technology to support the organisation's procurement activity to achieve efficient and effective delivery?
- Is procurement effectively supporting the organisation in achieving cost reduction?
- Is corporate social responsibility a serious consideration in the procurement of goods and services including sustainability and ethical procurement?
- Are internal customers/end users satisfied with the services provided by procurement?

The full scope of the club is provided in the notes of guidance accompanying the questionnaire and covers the key activities performed by the procurement function across the procure-to-pay process, including sourcing, contractual arrangements, strategy and sustainability.

For more information

Visit our website to see example questionnaires and reports at: www.cipfa.org/services/benchmarking/vfm-indicators

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we also provide..

Corporate Services Benchmarking Clubs

Clubs are grouped into the following themes:

- Finance
- Audit and risk
- Revenues and benefits
- Staff
- Legal and democratic
- Supplies

For more information visit:

www.cipfa.org/corporateservices

Social Care Benchmarking Clubs

We offer clubs in:

- Children's Care
- Adult Care
- Public Health

For more information visit:

www.cipfa.org/services/benchmarking/social-care



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