

Lincolnshire Police

Policy Document



Data quality and data cleansing policy PD 120

Policy document information

Reference number:	PD 120
Policy sponsor:	DCC – Chris Davison (SIRO)
Policy owner:	Information Management Unit Manager – Jen Johnson
Author:	Regional RRD & DQ Manager – Simon Mumford
Publication date:	November 2025
Review date:	November 2027

Version history

Version	Date	Reason for issue
10	November 2017	Annual Review
11	June 2018	GDPR Update
12	November 2019	Biennial Review
13	November 2021	Biennial Review
14	November 2023	Biennial Review
15	November 2025	Biennial Review

Code of Ethics

All staff involved in carrying out functions under this policy and associated procedures and appendices will do so in accordance with the principles of the Code of Ethics. The aim of the Code of Ethics is to support each member of the policing profession to deliver the highest professional standards in their service to the public.

Legislative compliance

This document has been drafted to comply with the principles of the Human Rights Act. Proportionality has been identified as the key to Human Rights compliance, this means striking a fair balance between the rights of the staff and those of the rest of the community. There must be a reasonable relationship between the aim to be achieved and the means used.

Equality and Diversity issues have also been considered to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and meet our legal obligation in relation to the equality duty. In addition, Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Health and Safety Issues have been considered. Adherence to this policy or procedure will therefore ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and internal policies.

Other legislation/law which this policy has been drafted to comply with:

- [Human Rights Act 1998 \(in particular A.14 – Prohibition of discrimination\)](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)
- [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [H&S legislation](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)
- [Freedom Of Information Act 2000](#)

Security classification

Policy to be published on Intranet: Yes

Policy to be published on Force Website: Yes

Authorised Professional Practice (APP)

This Policy has been checked against APP. Lincolnshire Police has adopted the APP provisions, with supplementary information contained herein, which reflects local practice and the needs of the communities served by Lincolnshire Police.

Those provisions are shown in the links below and can be accessed via the home page of the APP website:

[Management of police information](#)

1. Policy aims (Purpose)

- 1.1. To provide instruction and guidance to the force in matters regarding data quality and data cleansing so that we operate within the law and in accordance with national guidance.
- 1.2. The aim of the policy is to ensure that processes are in place across all designated Lincolnshire Police systems to ensure that our data is accurate, adequate, relevant and timely and of such a quality that enables enhanced decision making and reduction of risk to the public.

2. Policy statement (Key information)

2.1. Origin

- 2.1.1. The Bichard Enquiry into the tragic events in Soham resulted in Sir Michael Bichard stating, "Weaknesses in the recording, evaluation, reviewing, retention, disposal and sharing of information all contributed to a situation that allowed Huntley to commit his crimes." Recommendations 8 – 11 then specifically referred to expected principles, standards and procedures on how police forces should handle information coming into their possession in the future.

2.2. General Principles

- 2.2.1. The methodology underpinning this policy is that of information quality. This includes the calibre of the original information, that it is recorded accurately and in a format that enables it to be retrieved at the correct level to assist in achieving the law enforcement purposes.
- 2.2.2. The Data Quality principle employed and documented within this policy is that of Data Cleansing all Persons, Objects, Locations and Events (P.O.L.E.) stored within all designated Lincolnshire Police systems to ensure that the quality of our data is accurate, adequate, relevant and timely.
- 2.2.3. The overall aim of Data Cleansing/Data Quality is to instil an ethos of data input accuracy for each system. This will enable enhanced decision-making based on a better quality of information and for continuous assessment of systems, processes and individuals.
- 2.2.4. Our procedures will align with the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Management of Police Information (MoPI), ensuring that our information is fit for purpose irrespective of operational demand.
- 2.2.5. Of fundamental importance to the use of Police information is that the information itself is of an acceptable quality. Without this, there is a risk that critical decisions are based on unreliable and / or incomplete

information (due to the fact that it can't be retrieved) or that significant relationships between different items of information are not identified.

- 2.2.6. Lincolnshire Police will utilise a computer application to manage its information processes, with this system being known as GENIE. The GENIE application is used not only to undertake the Review, Retention and Disposal (RRD) of information and the search engine of choice across Force systems but is also used as a tool for identifying data quality issues in the Niche RMS system.
- 2.2.7. Utilising the Genie Data Quality process, the Regional Data Quality team will de-duplicate any potential Niche records that have been created in error as well as identify and resolve in a priority order all data quality issues that are identified.
- 2.2.8. The data held will have been cleansed prior to import to ensure that the quality of the data is as accurate as possible.
- 2.2.9. In order to improve our ability to comply with the linking requirements of the APP our information systems have been grouped using the following criteria.
- National Systems
 - Designated Systems
 - Non-Designated Systems
 - Non-Policing Purpose Systems

2.3. Designated Systems (Policing Purpose)

- 2.3.1. These systems will hold all information that is currently held, or that comes into Lincolnshire Police on a daily basis for a law enforcement purpose. These systems will be connected to GENIE for the purposes of RRD and search. The information contained within the designated systems will be subject to data cleansing and assessment using an automated process, called Clearcore.

2.3.2. Data Cleansing / Quality will be effectively managed in line with the APP and will ensure that the information / data contained on Lincolnshire Police computerised systems is:

- Recorded within acceptable timescales.
- Accurate and complete.
- Linked to other information where relevant.
- Reviewed and where appropriate, updated or removed within MoPI timescales.
- Recorded consistently, on authorised and prescribed systems.
- Subject to correct intelligence grading criteria and / or other authorised categorisation principles.

2.4. Components of Data Cleansing

2.4.1. Data Cleansing involves comparing or matching two or more sets of personal data for the purpose of updating one or more of the sets and can improve the quality of existing or new data. The computer system for Data Cleansing matches input records with misspellings, unexpected abbreviations, or other irregularities or non-conformant data with clean records and detects similarities between incoming records to find what appear to be duplicated. Dependent on the weightings allocated to specific criteria the system will either automatically match sets of data or place them in a possible list to be manually checked.

2.4.2. If missing information is highlighted and where it can be identified in other Police systems with appropriate provenance, the Regional Data Quality team will amend and update the records accordingly.

2.5. Components of Data Quality

2.5.1. Within Lincolnshire Police, Data Quality as applied to Police information, means adherence to the principles relating to the following criteria:

2.5.1.1. Appropriateness

The collection and recording of information must fulfil a legitimate law enforcement purpose (as identified within the APP) and must be relevant to the purpose of the system on which it appears.

Where officers or staff obtain or become aware of information that is relevant to record, this must be submitted via the authorised process to the authorised system.

2.5.1.2. Timeliness

Information must be put onto relevant systems within the prescribed timescales.

2.5.1.3. Accuracy

Every effort must be made to ensure that all elements of the information are correct. This includes as a matter of critical importance spellings (e.g., names), factual details (e.g., addresses) and numerical data (e.g., dates of birth). Where uncertainty exists regarding the accuracy of any details of submitted information then, where possible, this should be immediately checked or where this is not possible, then the possibility of inaccuracy must itself be clearly identified.

2.5.1.4. Completeness

All relevant elements of information should be collated and submitted. All pertinent details should be submitted by completing all relevant 'fields' in the electronic or paper systems. These should include forename, surname, date of birth (including any known aliases), address, telephone number(s), and unique identifying numbers such as PNCID, National Insurance No, and System URN etc. Full accurate details related to modus operandi are particularly important.

Every effort should be made to ascertain the relevant information to allow accurate identification of the person for both creation and linking purposes.

Where this is not possible minimum entry standards for each system should be complied with.

2.5.1.5. Cross-reference or Data-linkage

It is crucial that known relationships between separate items of information are identified and recorded to ensure the APP principles regarding the 'principal nominal' are followed. Information can be contained in many formats, and it is important to remember that unless information assets are clearly and accurately labelled this can seriously affect subsequent data transfer and quality.

2.5.1.6. Review and Retention Standards

Any information may be accurate, complete, and relevant when it is first recorded, however this can change over time. Effective review is an essential component of data quality. This is dependent on the correct application of review dates and of complete and accurate reviews being completed on those dates. In order to ensure a corporate standard all reviews will be conducted as per the APP guidelines with the National Retention Assessment Criteria being completed on every review.

2.5.1.7. Data cleansing

The GENIE system Review, Retention and Disposal process, Data Quality process and force audit regime will ensure that any data quality issues from inputting errors are identified and reported accordingly.

2.5.1.8. Information Categorisation

Many of our systems use categories or codification elements, the purpose of which includes:

- The extent that an item of information is believed to be reliable (e.g., on the Niche 5x5x5 intelligence submissions system since superseded by the 3x6x2 intelligence system)

- Management and national recording reporting indicators (e.g., National Standards for Incident Reporting)
- Information handling requirements (Government Security Classification (GSC)).

2.6. It is essential that Lincolnshire Police and Partnership Staff and supervisors/ managers preserve the integrity of such categories to prevent an over-reliance being placed upon questionable information. This could lead to management decisions being based on incorrect assumptions and sensitive information being provided to unauthorised persons.

2.7. The Required Approach

2.7.1. A wide range of factors will determine the quality of police information. These include:

- Strategic and tactical leadership (or not) on the issue of data quality.
- Whether an effective and consistent corporate approach is taken to data recording and review.
- The professional knowledge of individuals who submit and input information onto our systems in order that it is relevant, to the required format and with the correct classification or categorisation applied.
- The care, with which the information is collected, recorded, submitted and inputted on systems.
- The commitment of the organisation to provide, identify and deliver relevant training in order that police information is collected, recorded, evaluated, shared, retained or disposed of as per the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Management of Police Information (MoPI). The commitment of the organisation to ensure that only authorised systems are utilised for information usage.
- The presence or absence of effective technical and process measures to ensure data quality or rectification measures.

2.7.2. In order to address the organisational issue of data quality it would be fair to state that no one single measure will provide a totally compliant approach. It will be necessary to deploy an integrated range of measures such as:

- An agreed organisational approach to the collection, recording, evaluation, sharing and retention of police information (see Information Management Strategy and Policy).
- Clearly worded strategies and policies, processes and guidance, which together address Management of Police Information using data quality as a key enabler.
- Training strategies and delivery programmes, which deliver appropriate levels of training throughout the organisation in order that Lincolnshire Police and Partnership Staff have the required knowledge and skills.
- Accountability, at all levels, for the effective submission, inputting and review of police information.
- Effective measures to ensure that review, retention and disposal procedures / processes are adhered to as per the APP.
- The effective use of authorised IT solutions to enforce data inputting rules and conventions and which assist in identifying and quantifying data quality issues.
- The setting of clear base-line standards across the organisation.

2.8. Scrutiny

2.8.1. In order that performance and standards can be improved and maintained, it is important that the following criteria are subject to continuous and auditable scrutiny:

- Systems with particularly high levels of data quality errors.
- Groups of and individuals responsible for high levels of data quality errors.
- The types of data quality errors likely to create significant and high-risk problems.

- The types of data quality errors that most commonly occur.
- Training standards.

2.8.2. The Regional Data Quality team utilise an ongoing series of search scripts using the Genie data quality system to identify data quality errors. Errors are resolved in a priority order, based on risk, and feedback is given to individual members of staff to educate and prevent their reoccurrence where appropriate.

2.8.3. In all cases the relevant principles contained in the APP must be complied with. This will mean that the organisation will be committed to a much higher level of relevant and targeted audit particularly in the areas of Police Information Management, (See Audit Policy (PD136)).

2.9. Training

2.9.1. Training will form a pivotal role in ensuring that all staff involved in the collection, recording, evaluation, sharing and retention of police information have the required knowledge and skills. Training will be based on recognised national standards and packages will be flexible enough to incorporate any force specific requirements.

2.9.2. All training delivery methodologies will be considered in order to meet individual and organisational need. As an overall principle, training will wherever possible be delivered locally by the Learning and Development team.

2.9.3. Knowledge assets will be developed, made available across the organisation and used. This will include the use of e-learning opportunities (e.g. College Learn site), individual business level web sites and the MoPI/IMU intranet site. Business leads will ensure that relevant staff have access to such knowledge assets in order to effectively carry out their duties.

2.9.4. In all training it will be recognised that data quality is a pivotal enabler in the delivery of the Management of Police Information Standards.

2.10. Ownership, Accountability and Responsibilities

- 2.10.1. By ensuring that individuals are made aware of their own responsibilities regarding adherence to data quality standards the aim is to make individuals personally accountable for meeting these responsibilities AND for them to take ownership of the quality of the information they submit or record. The changing nature of technology means that each individual must take personal responsibility of their information quality, as it will affect the national intelligence resource. Individual strengths or weaknesses should be addressed within Personal Development Review processes reinforcing the importance at all levels of the organisation with regard to data quality as an enabler of good information management. It is critical that high standards are considered a baseline measurement of acceptability, and that poor adherence is effectively addressed.

2.11. Lincolnshire Police and Partnership Managers/Supervisors

- 2.11.1. These roles are critical in defining and ensuring standards are maintained and improved in all areas where data is collected, recorded, evaluated, shared or retained. In order to ensure standards are being maintained this will require such roles to identify and deliver their own scrutiny of data quality within their area of responsibility. They should be able to satisfy themselves that information is being submitted where relevant, conforms to the required standards of quality and is being transferred to appropriate force systems. Lincolnshire Police and Partnership Manager / Supervisors should ensure that they are aware of the requirements of the APP.
- 2.11.2. When a member of staff continues to create data quality errors after having direct feedback from the Regional Data Quality team, further feedback is provided to their line manager and operational lead.

2.12. Specialist Roles

- 2.12.1. A number of specialist roles within the organisation are focused on the management and handling of police information. Data Quality responsibilities associated with these roles as prescribed in the APP range

from the development of information management strategies, to conducting data quality audits.

2.13. Lincolnshire Police and Partnership Senior Managers

- 2.13.1. It is essential that Lincolnshire Police and Partnership Senior Managers openly recognise and reinforce the importance of data quality within the context of the Management of Police Information. They must display a commitment within their areas of responsibility to the appropriate use of authorised systems and to prescribed standards of data quality.

2.14. IT Solutions

- 2.14.1. IT Solutions have a part to play in the ongoing improvement of Data Quality within Lincolnshire Police. Future systems will recognise the requirements of the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) Management of Police Information (MoPI) in order that Data Quality is improved wherever possible. Such systems are expected not only to improve and complement our processes of Management of Police Information but also:

- Assist with administrative aspects of increased auditing regimes.
- Assist in identifying patterns of weakness in our information.
- Assist in analysis regarding the causes of weakness allowing appropriate solutions to be implemented.

2.16. Future Standards

- 2.16.1. Whilst it would be unrealistic to expect this policy to ensure data quality standards of 100% across all force systems. In the short term, it is part of a suite of measures, which together will improve standards within a managed process, aligned with the requirements of the APP. Generally, it would be fair to expect that the very highest standards must be achieved in the highest risk areas, however a change in culture throughout the organisation needs to ensure data quality sits at the heart of effective Management of Police Information.

3. Other related documents and appendices

3.1. Nil

4. Monitoring and review

4.1 Review to be completed on a biennial basis by the Regional RRD & Data Quality Manager.

5. Who to contact about this policy

5.1. This policy is owned by the Information Management Unit Manager, IMU.

Any enquires about this policy should be directed to the Regional RRD & Data Quality Manager, Information Management Unit, Police Headquarters.