

Check up: How's your facility performing?

A high-quality facility enables great leisure experiences.

Providers of recreation, places and spaces, are careful to meet industry standards. But, how do we measure the quality of what we offer?

Beyond meeting required standards, there is value in looking at how the facility performs in relation to others, how the facility is performing over time, and what customers think of the facility and services.

Why measure quality?

Legislative requirement [The Local Government Act Section 17a](#) requires local authorities “to review cost-effectiveness for meeting the needs of communities ...for good quality local infrastructure, local public services...”. [Note also section 5, where services delivered by others; performance measures and how performance will be measured].

Contribution to wellbeing. TLA's are committed to [improving the wellbeing](#) of their ratepayer base. Quality provision, measured against what others are providing, means a greater likelihood of meeting those needs

Industry standards provide a benchmark for minimum performance, outlining legal requirements for facilities, programmes and services. [eg [Aquatic Facility Guidelines](#)]

Strategic Planning: measuring how your facility performs can [for example] assist with planning and identifying priority areas for improvement, provide comparisons locally and nationally against other similar facilities and inform service delivery reviews.

Image: Auckland City Council East Coast Bays Leisure Centre



Facility Quality

- performance of facility
- operational measures
- levels of service
- efficiency metrics
- ratio of patronage to cost
- patronage numbers vs programme numbers.

Use information to identify centre usage, costs, revenue, staff resource and pay rates, service delivery and asset management best practice.

Spaces and Places Quality

- accessible, appealing spaces
- fit for purpose
- environmentally sustainable
- well developed and maintained

Collects and analyses information about provision, development, expenditure, quality control systems, planning, biodiversity, asset management processes, user expectations and user satisfaction to identify a best practice outcomes for parks and trails.

Programme and Service Quality

- meeting leisure needs
- co-designed with community
- flexible and accessible
- creative responses to demands

Collect and analyse information about activity and volunteer programming, funding, health initiatives, community engagement, user expectations and user satisfaction.

How are your services performing?

What is 'quality provision'?

What's the difference between an OK facility - and a great one? What might we consider in terms of 'delivering quality'?

How do we measure quality?

Working out what to measure and how you will measure are vital elements in assessing quality. It also provides a foundation for identifying any changes needed to improve performance. [Selecting appropriate indicators](#) is the key to getting the data you can use.

Two main approaches to measuring quality are:

- **Monitoring** – review while it is happening
- **Evaluation** – reviewing that has happened.

Quantitative measures e.g. water quality, numbers attending a programme/event, facility efficiency, financial level of service, level of provision

Qualitative indicators e.g. were customer expectations met (by facility or programme); curb appeal of a park, user comments on what they most enjoy about a park or facility.

Things to consider

Well-designed surveys can provide great information in short time periods. Sometimes it's as simple as collecting the same data over time and doing an analysis of the trends.

- A clearly articulated **purpose**
- Valid methods that can be replicated
- Relevant to the organisation with the right data collected
- Consistent, **regular** and accurate data collection
- **Appropriate** data that fits with your audience/resource base
- Useful information that feeds into evaluation, reporting and future planning.

Case Study

Gore District Council uses Yardstick to benchmark their multisport facility against others, so as to deliver a better product and glean useful information from others nationwide. The benefits of comparing against other national providers include: *'knowing we are delivering a better product with a higher degree of knowledge [about what others are doing]'*

It's also important that their facility is competitive within the national industry – *"People are getting 'bang for their buck.'"*

Analysis included: resourcing and financial information; efficiency; ration of patronage to cost; cost per swim; and patronage numbers vs programme numbers.

Insights to Action

Monitoring	How are you tracking your performance over time? Are things improving or staying the same?
Evaluation	Point in time assessment is valuable. What do your customers think?
Which indicators?	Qualitative or quantitative? What reflects quality?
What does it tell you?	What do you need to stop, start, change or continue?
Communication	Who else should know?

Other reading

[Sport NZ et al. \(2015\) Facility Management Manual; Chapter 9: Monitoring](#)
[Sport NZ \(2016\) Sport Facilities Guide, Stage 6: Improve](#)

Tools

[Green Flag award](#) recognises well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard

[Peer reviews](#) provide a high level, independent and economical quality assurance model for facility development projects.

[Quality Pools](#) is an independent assessment of pools to ensure safety of operations and facilities.

[Yardstick](#) is a suite of benchmarking tools that inform decision making and improve service delivery. Compares and measures performance over time and against others.

[Te Whetū Rehua](#) is a framework to help play, active recreation and sport providers consider how they might design or adapt activities to be culturally responsive to Māori.