



Professional *it*  
solutions

**AccessPlanit**

TURNING I THINK I KNOW INTO I KNOW I KNOW  
*EFFECTIVE COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA*

***TOPSS NATIONAL MINIMUM DATA SET SOCIAL CARE***



Professional *it*  
solutions

**AccessPlanit**

## ***“TURNING I THINK I KNOW INTO I KNOW I KNOW”***

### ***EFFECTIVE COLLECTION AND USE OF DATA***

#### **INTRODUCTION**

---

An informed decision based on facts will always be easier to make and is more likely to be the right one. Today statistical information on your business when you need it is an essential tool in making sure that your business is performing as you would wish, and with ever more legislation to meet, that information needs to be at your fingertips.

Traditional methods of collecting information or data require intervention by people at each step of the process, especially in the collation and representation of that information to make it useful in making those business decisions. Questionnaires and surveys typically only



result in up to a 30% return which does not fully represent the information you need and therefore why take the time required to prepare that information for analysis.

There is an alternative....using a computerised solution provides obvious benefits including the ability to produce on demand information, immediate updates to the raw data, and sophisticated reporting tools. Combine all this with the internet and you have a solution available for all to easily enter the information and the potential to produce those sophisticated reports wherever and whenever you need them.

***This is how we turn I think I know into I know I know.***

## TOPSS – NATIONAL MINIMUM DATA SET – SOCIAL CARE

---

The Topss England Workforce Intelligence Unit is currently spearheading the development of a 'National Minimum Dataset-Social Care', which will encompass all parts of the social care sector. The Dataset will help improve workforce planning whilst reducing the demand on employers and social services departments by systematically collecting data and making intelligence available about the workforce.

In the last quarter of 2004 Topss engaged the care community through a series of one day seminars on the proposed National Minimum Data Set for Social Care.

AccessPlanit's main customer base is in Health & Social Care and we have kept abreast of NMDS from its conception, culminating in our attendance at all the Topss NMDS Seminars.

### Why bother?

1. Currently we guess to often
2. SC will grow in the future
3. Growing elderly population is clearly forecast
4. New modes of care and support are required
5. It's hard to plan if you are not clear what your position is now!
6. Do this work or always be reactive-on the back foot!

*Source: NMDS conference 2004*

Responses from the Topss England Workforce Intelligence Seminars national minimum dataset for social services held in early 2005 included:

*"A truly excellent idea but the practicalities of collection, storage and access to information are complex and must not be allowed to let it down"*

*"Everyone is signed up to the need for NMDS, the concept is good, the devil will be in the detail!"*

*"The development of a national data set for social care is a key development toward any data collection and functional analysis. A NMDS is not a mathematical event. It (will be) agreed and decided by the stakeholders in the sector."*

### The incomplete picture

1. Making decisions based in incomplete knowledge
2. Out of focus or incomplete – Hard to see the overall picture
3. How we can change this
4. The central role of agreed data sets

*Source: NMDS conference 2004*

The task to collect information is immense the traditionally defined social care workforce in England is estimated to be 929,000 strong, but this excludes early years childcare, foster carers, and a range of NHS staff undertaking care roles. Including these would bring the total to 1.55 million, and adding education assistants in schools would bring the total to 1.82 million. There are estimated to be 76,300 qualified social workers and 20,400 qualified occupational therapists within these totals.



Due to the large numbers of people involved in social care the implications of getting it wrong are massive. For example a 10% underestimate of need on a workforce of 1.55 million equates to 150,000 people or entire population of the Isle of Wight or Blackpool. If this workforce data was to be used to project the cost of CRB checks to the sector then the projection would be £5 million out (@ £33 per person). Training costs would create an even greater void with NVQ level 2 being potentially under funded by £101,250,000 (assuming £675 per trainee) which is the same as the entire budget for one year in the Southport & South Formby Primary Health Care Trust. We need to get this right!

There is no time to lose. Demand for accurate data profiling starts now! Funding for Training via the TSI Grant is demanding NMDS information to support *this* years funding.

*"A workforce development plan that uses Topss England National Minimum Data Set will also be required in December 2005"*

*Source: Topss regional revised guidance notes – TSI funding 2005-2006*

Without accurate data it is impossible to make logical demands for increased resources to be made available. Everyone who has a "hands-on" insight into Social Care knows that without significant investment in the sector projected demands will not be met. If hard data is not gathered the demands are rhetorical and based on anecdotal and belief. This will not attract the resources needed.

Accurate workforce profiling demands a high return of survey information. Previous returns of questionnaires within the Social Care sector, have been notoriously low, some areas reporting a 20% return rate. Extrapolations based on low response surveys are doomed to produce flawed projections. A more 'user friendly' method has to be found to

encourage people to submit information. *Longer surveys look very daunting when presented on paper to respondents. (source DSS Research)* Frequently information given on large paper based forms are guesstimates. Who in the average care provider SME has time to search through staff files to calculate, for example the percentage of 'leavers' who have left the care sector? Statistics Canada argues that *"... high response rate is the key to legitimizing a survey's results.*



*When a survey elicits responses from a large percentage of its target population, the findings are seen as more accurate. Low response rates, on the other hand, can damage the credibility of a survey's results, because the sample is less likely to represent the overall target population."*

The authors of this document firmly believe, that the only way to collect a high volume of accurate high quality data is to:

- capture 'real time' data. Information that is in daily use within organisations, information that must be maintained for operational reasons.
- make the complication and transmission of the data 'easy'.
- inform the data 'donor' of the value (to them) of submitting their data
- give incentives. Incentives need not be of the 'gift' of variety but could include an on-going benefit. Examples could include access to a data collector software application which also allowed the collection and reporting of information within the organisation e.g. CSCI pre inspection documentation

AccessPlanIt offers a solution that meets the above criteria as, to a limited extent, do other internet based applications. However, when

sourcing a solution an integrated access to existing data and the ability to verify data down to an individual's unique ID is vital.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EFFECTIVE USE OF DATA**

---

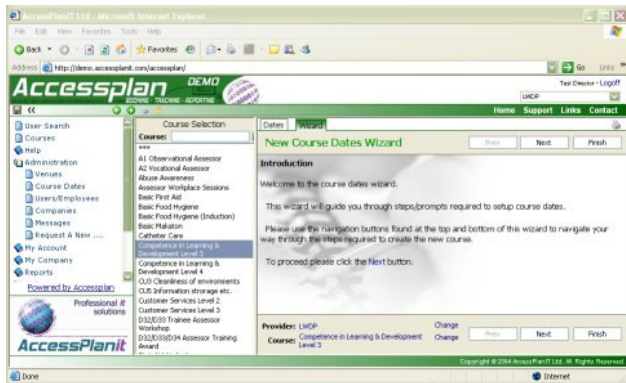
Workforce development is about giving employees training and development opportunities while at the same time improving the business's bottom line.

- *Improve productivity* - Developing employees' skills and knowledge and recognising their achievements affects the way they work. Motivated staff with the right skills work more effectively and more efficiently. In turn this increases productivity, improves customer satisfaction and helps to drive business forward.
- *Retain staff and encourage flexibility* - Developing employees and equipping them with new skills will give individuals and teams greater commitment to the business and greater flexibility. This enables employees to respond more quickly to changes in the business.
- *Reduce costs* - Skills shortages and absenteeism all mean extra costs to the business. Motivating staff reduces absenteeism rates and improves retention, quality and efficiency – skilled and motivated staff are more likely to continually examine their work.
- *Increase performance* - There is a clear link between investing in employees, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction and therefore business performance.

Combining the information collected through the dataset with proper workforce planning allows:

- Employers to know their workforce in context
- Regional and local analysis
- Cross sectional reporting
- Planning with greater accuracy
- Comprehensive data gathered over a period of time and analysed to show trends/models/issues
- An ability to anticipate recruitment needs

## THE ACCESSPLANIT SOLUTION



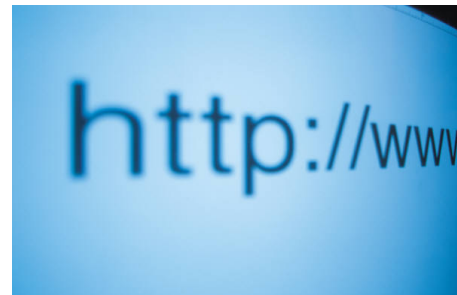
AccessPlanit's Data Collector solution creates a single data portal accessible anywhere and by everyone to whom security permissions are granted. AccessPlan Data Collector interfaces with other industry standard software packages to help

make the collection of workforce data less time consuming, ending the chore or rewriting data generated elsewhere.

AccessPlan Data Collector can be the 'data warehouse' and/or the data source allowing data to flow in either aggregated or detailed format. Existing users of Accessplan Training Co-ordinator will find that the NMDS data collection process entails a 'click' of the mouse to generate and submit the self populating NMDS form.

In addition, because the internet is not constrained by space or time, you can enter or access information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

So why use Internet data collection? Two significant benefits over other methods are cost and speed. For example, SGA (Comley, 1996) directly compared the efficiency of conducting a survey by email and post. The email version cost a fraction of the postal one to send out, and the data was collected in an average of 4 days versus 11 days by post.



Results of Internet Opinion Polls conducted prior to UK General Election showed exactly the same trends on conventional polls during the election period, and they also more accurately predicted the final outcome. The results clearly support the likelihood that the Internet will become an established method of data collection of the future. Using an online data collection system such as AccessPlan will save time and money.

*"For many organisations it will take time to complete the first time, but if the data collection system is "right", in subsequent years it will only be a matter of updating - must aim for this" – feedback during the Topss Workforce Intelligence Seminar*

The AccessPlan system stores the Data Set information in a secure SQL database accessible, via the internet, whenever and wherever you need it. In using an online system such as AccessPlan means that updates to the data stored can be made at your convenience and will immediately update the overall statistics. Information will flow in from real-time genuine data rather than the guesstimates we all use when completing paper forms.

As an all round training co-ordinator, Accessplan offers many other benefits. We believe that it is the only system that brings all the stakeholders in the training process together, from training provider to care worker, from funding body to multi-national managing director.

For list of additional features for care provider organisations :

<http://www.accessplanit.com/downloads/careprovider-whyaccessplan.pdf>

For list of additional features for partnerships / alliances / funding disseminators, etc :

<http://www.accessplanit.com/downloads/partnerships-whyaccessplan.pdf>

## ABOUT ACCESSPLANIT LIMITED

---



Professional *it*  
solutions

**AccessPlanit**

**AccessPlanit** Limited, based in Lancashire, is a software development and consultancy company specialising in the creation of web based applications. At the core of our

products is AccessPlan, the global training co-ordinator, a complete training management solution developed using Microsoft .NET framework, and the powerful SQL Server system used by the majority of the world's top 1000 companies. AccessPlan has over 30,000 users across National care provider organisations, Local Authorities and Partnerships e.g. Lancashire County Council, Workforce Development Partnership, Carewatch Caring Services and the Care Sector Alliance

Web based technology is the answer to many of the communication problems that face organisations today. It can serve to be a time and cost saving solution that can operate seamlessly with your existing systems.

**AccessPlanit** products keep people connected, informed and empowered wherever they are.

Our solutions allow information across your organisation to be managed and accessible on a single, easy to use, secure web based system.

For more information please contact us:

AccessPlanit Limited t: +44 (0)1524 389841  
The Storey Institute f: +44 (0)1524 389551  
Meeting House Lane e: enquiries@accessplanit.com  
Lancaster  
Lancashire  
LA1 1TF

**w w w . a c c e s s p l a n i t . c o m**

© 2005 AccessPlanit Limited. All rights reserved.  
This document is for informational purposes only. AccessPlanit Limited MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY.  
AccessPlan, the AccessPlan logo, are either registered trademarks or trademarks of AccessPlanit Limited in the United Kingdom and/or other countries. The names of actual companies and products mentioned herein may be the trademarks of their respective owners