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*Explaining Underperformance and Turnaround: Evidence From  
Longitudinal Research  
in Local Authorities*

How do we explain performance failure of public organisations? Is it to do with governance and management weaknesses or a lack of institutional fit with the normative environment? Is performance failure the exception or part of a normal life-cycle process? And what determines the conditions under which organisations are able to turnaround unaided or require external intervention? This seminar presents findings from the mid-point of a longitudinal real-time study of poorly performing English local authorities, and draws implications for management practice, policy and research.