



The National Archives

*The National Archives
Information Management Assessment
Strategy*

The National Archives'
Information Management Assessment (IMA) Strategy

1. Goal

- 1.1 To deliver measurable improvements in knowledge and information management capability by providing robust, independent validation of the standards and integrity of the information management processes within core government departments.

2. Links to The National Archives' Vision Statement

- 2.1 The Information Management Assessment programme will play a fundamental part in The National Archives' vision to lead and transform information management, to help government to manage their services, manage their knowledge and manage their information risks.
- 2.2 Central Government recognises the value of better knowledge and information management in order to deliver effective services, to strengthen accountability and to release the potential of their information assets.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This Information Management Strategy is the framework for identifying, prioritising and setting the expectations for conducting Information Management Assessments (IMAs), including the Section 46 assessments under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on behalf of the Information Commissioner (ICO).

4. Business Objectives

- 4.1 A key objective of The National Archives is that;

“We will set standards for information management across the public sector by providing robust and respected advisory services, underpinned by assessment, regulation, mediation and complaints handling.”

- 4.2 The delivery of the IMA Strategy and programme will contribute to this business objective by providing the framework to deliver improvements. This will be achieved through an assessment programme that incorporates reviewing the application of external

standards and assessing information management in core government departments.

5. Aims

- 5.1 Working in partnership with appropriate bodies, to improve information management standards across central government.
- 5.2 To support and encourage organisations to review their own capability in relation to records management practice and information management processes.
- 5.3 To ensure that The National Archives continues to promote exemplary information and records management and is a conduit for continuous learning and good practice as an outcome of the IMA, through publication of reports, findings and recommendations.
- 5.4 To ensure that the IMAs are high level, focused and risk-based assessments.

6. Objectives

- 6.1 To provide a clear vision for the future direction of the IMA programme of The National Archives, delivering a clear outcome for the assessed departments, to a planned assessment schedule.
- 6.2 To provide robust independent validation of the standards and integrity of the information management processes within public sector organisations.
- 6.3 To work in partnership with others to promote, highlight and disseminate good practice across the sector.
- 6.4 To inform future policy and standards guidance for government via the outcomes of the assessments and to inform the work of the Knowledge Council.

7. Links to Other Government Initiatives

- 7.1 The National Archives' IMA programme is an integral part of the Knowledge Council's agenda of instilling a culture of professionalism and raising the skill set of Information Managers across the public sector. The Knowledge Council's vision for the Government Knowledge and Information Management (GKIM) is to recognise that Knowledge and Information Management is a core function to underpin the work of the Civil Service.

- 7.2 The IMA programme contributes to the objectives of the Knowledge Council, through the independent assessment of records and information management processes, utilising established standards and guidelines and recognising best practice.
- 7.3 One element of the Knowledge Council's strategic vision going forward is:
- "To build a culture of knowledge management and sharing in government and to do so supported by robust and secure processes."*
- 7.4 This replicates a key objective of The National Archives IMA strategy and programme. Together there is real scope to effect change in government to ensure that the transformational management agenda is delivered in a robust and systematic way.
- 7.5 The IMAs will act as a catalyst to the review of the implementation of record and information management policies, as the IMA results and subsequent reports will test how policies and guidance are working in government departments.
- 7.6 This information will be fed into the relevant Knowledge Council work on "building a culture of knowledge management and knowledge sharing and doing so through robust and secure processes."

8. Business Outcomes for Departments

- 8.1 IMAs ensure that Government departments are ready to meet the standards for effective collection, storage, access, use and disposal of information in addition to developing their knowledge and information management systems.
- 8.2 To enhance the capability of departments to meet their future obligations on service delivery priorities including information management.
- 8.3 IMAs assure the accounting officer that departments are equipped to deliver their information management responsibilities.
- 8.4 IMAs identify areas for development and make recommendations based on these areas. The National Archives IMA team will then monitor departmental actions plans and review progress at regular intervals.
- 8.5 The IMA will provide a department with a "first look" or preview of how they are meeting their statutory obligations under anticipated new or amended legislation.

9. Commitment

- 9.1 All departments or organisations subject to an IMA must declare their commitment to the programme. In order to demonstrate this commitment and to promote best practice and provide consistency, The Permanent Secretary, Director General or Executive Board member will, on entry to the programme, publish their personal statement of commitment to the IMA process on their website.
- 9.2 This commitment will form the basis of the Terms of Reference for the IMA; it will also include an agreement to publish the IMA report.

10. Selection for Assessment

- 10.1 We will target the core government departments over the next three years. Those selected will go through the prioritisation process, which incorporates a risk assessment, as well as a core criteria checklist including; size, location, service priorities, vulnerability, external environmental factors etc. This list is not exhaustive but will provide the means for an open and transparent selection process.

11. Risk Assessment

- 11.1 All departments in the IMA programme will be subject to a risk assessment of their knowledge and information management capabilities. This will inform both the assessment itself and also subsequent selections for assessment. This will enable The National Archives to form a judgement in agreement with the nominated departments in the 2008-13 programme.
- 11.2 The priorities and areas will be subject to annual review to allow for changes in circumstances, machinery of government developments and revised corporate priorities both within and external to The National Archives.

12. Looking Ahead

- 12.1 The IMA programme and Strategy will continue to evolve to reflect changing priorities and developments in information management.
- 12.2 Particular issues may arise outside the scheduled IMA programme. The National Archives may consider the use of a spot audit, or informal assessment, to investigate an area of concern. Spot audits may also be used to tackle issues in a department's agencies.

- 12.3 The aim of these spot audits will be to conduct an informal internal assessment of a team, or teams, at the request of a relevant Senior Officer to either investigate an area of concern or localised issue.
- 12.4 The reporting of any findings resulting from a spot audit only, will be subject to agreement on an individual basis.
- 12.5 Once accredited into the IMA programme, departments will be reviewed every six months until completion of their published action plan or other appropriate deadline. Thereafter, departments will be incorporated into the ongoing IMA programme and be re-assessed every three to five years.

13. Scope of the IMA

- 13.1 Departments have a statutory obligation to comply with Section 46 of the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The IMA will be conducted with reference to this code, but will also have a wider scope to cover elements of knowledge and information management.
- 13.2 The development of a modular style will ensure that core areas of the IMA will be standard. These are:-

- Governance,
- Culture,
- Records Management,
- Access,
- Compliance.

This will include elements of: -

- Risk Management,
- Data Sharing,
- Quality of Information,
- Staff use of Blogs & Wikis,
- Freedom of Information,
- Data Protection,
- Training and Resources.

- 13.3 The final scope of the IMA will be dependent on the level of risk identified in the preliminary investigations.

14. Standards and Guidance

- 14.1 The IMAs are conducted and scoped within current legislation and relevant government guidance, as appropriate.
- 14.2 The Government Knowledge and Information Management Network (GKIM) compile a list of current Information Management Legislation, Standards and Guidance. This will be an invaluable reference tool in ensuring that the IMAs continue to evolve to meet new challenges and standards in information management.
- 14.3 The IMA programme uses the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as the standard benchmark for records management.

15. Outcomes

- 15.1 An ongoing published programme of IMAs across the core government departments.
- 15.2 A clear set of service standards for the IMAs, including timetables for both the receipt and publication of information.
- 15.3 A published policy, guidance and templates for conducting and delivering the IMA programme.

16. Success Factors

- 16.1 An enhanced awareness of IMAs and Section 46 assessments instigated by the re-focus of the 2008/9 IMA programme.
- 16.2 Willing participation in the programme from core government departments.
- 16.3 Greater knowledge and information sharing, between assessors and assessed departments and organisations.
- 16.4 A risk based approach to prioritising future IMAs and Section 46 Assessment requests from the Information Commissioner.

17. Resources

- 17.1 Taking the strategy forward will be a key activity for The National Archives in 2008 – 2013. This commitment will be resourced by a dedicated Standards and Assessment Manager and support team. Expertise from within Information Policy and Standards will be utilised

as and when required, drawing on resources and support in the form of specialist skills and knowledge of The National Archives Information Management Consultants, and Information Management Advisors. The use of specialists from other departments, including the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the Cabinet Office and the Ministry of Justice will be called on to support the implementation of the strategy as required.

18. Publication

- 18.1 The final report and action plan of each individual IMA will be published and made available on The National Archives' website and the websites of the assessed organisations.

19. Timescale

- 19.1 This document covers the period 2008-2013, but is subject to annual review of progress against targets and priorities. A detailed action plan, with milestones and targets, will be drawn up to supplement the strategy implementation and delivery programme.