

# **Information Management Assessment Action Plan Review**

**The National Archives**

**October 2012**

## **Background**

The Information Management Assessment (IMA) programme is the best-practice model for government bodies wishing to demonstrate commitment to the principles of good information management.

An IMA of The National Archives was conducted at the department's offices in Kew in March 2011. A report was agreed in August 2011 and published on The National Archives' website. The recommendations in that report formed the basis of an action plan. Progress was reviewed in October 2012 and is summarised below. Work required to address outstanding recommendations is detailed at the end of this document under 'Next Steps'.

## **Key findings of the 2011 IMA**

The IMA report rated The National Archives as 'Good' against ten out of 20 headings on the performance framework risk matrix and identified two areas of best practice. The remaining eight headings were rated as 'Acceptable'.

The IMA report highlighted agreement by the Management Board of a knowledge and information (KIM) strategy in October 2010. The IMA report recognised the momentum behind the strategy and its potential to effect positive change. However, the report also noted that a number of new initiatives were not yet fully established including development of 'What to Keep' schedules and a re-focussed information asset management approach. Thirty recommendations were made to help The National Archives reach the demanding targets it had set itself. The following risks and issues were raised:

- Progress against information and records management goals was not reported to the departmental board and no review of the programme's effectiveness was scheduled.
- The newly created Information Asset Profile provided a framework for information asset governance by combining departmental 'What to Keep' schedules. However, the template was not completed consistently and a number of gaps were evident. It did not allow Information Asset Owners (IAOs) to document directly, or link to, usage

requirements or technical dependencies as recommended in The National Archives' Digital Continuity guidance.

- The IAO role had been reinvigorated and a supporting information asset manager (IAM) role had been launched. However, responsibilities were not yet fully understood.
- The KIM team did not have oversight of information stored in the department's shared drives. Ownership of digital information within the Tape Archive was also identified as a concern.
- Despite progress in developing 'What to Keep' schedules, staff were not always clear what should be stored corporately and how they should go about doing this.
- Across the department, cultural and technological barriers to information sharing were identified together with a lack of clarity around knowledge capture.

### **Progress against recommendations**

The National Archives has implemented a number of quick wins since the IMA, including publishing monthly 'Top Tips' guidance on the department's intranet. There has also been a review and rationalisation of permissions groups on the EDRMS, Objective, to enable better audit of access.

Highlights include a review of the KIM programme conducted in December 2011. This clearly maps KIM core tasks to the department's 2011–15 business plan and includes a balanced scorecard that identifies key performance indicators of progress achieved to date.

The National Archives has worked to increase understanding of IAO and IAM responsibilities, both among role-holders and staff in general. Briefings and presentations supplied to the assessment team show that key requirements are being communicated. The department's information management policy establishes a clear governance structure that includes both roles. Background on these roles is provided as a component of induction.

The following developments since the IMA are also highlighted:

- Information risk was documented on the strategic risk register at the time of the IMA. KIM actions have now been recognised as mitigating factors.
- By trialling approaches for sensitivity review of digital records, The National Archives is addressing a key gap in its future records transfer process. A draft schedule will be used as a control.
- The Head of KIM sits on the IT strategy panel and leads on user engagement and information management themes. KIM team membership of the Technical Governance Board has the potential to influence the development of new IT projects. It allows the opportunity for KIM concerns to be raised so that they can be addressed and factored into system and application design.
- What to Keep schedules documented in the Information Asset Profile aid oversight of unstructured digital information.
- IAOs and IAMs have collaborated on two information asset assurance cycles. IAO guidance indicates that the role is being actively targeted towards a range of information management concerns and priorities.
- Sample reporting summaries indicate that IAOs are required to provide assurance on a range of issues including application of retention. The model adopted is department specific, building on and exceeding Cabinet Office minimum requirements.
- As well as raising risks, IAOs are being asked to report on any steps they have taken to support transparency and detail efforts to increase the sharing potential of information assets.
- There is now clear governance of the Tape Archive with the appointment of its own IAO.
- A project is underway to refresh the intranet, which is intended to enable better knowledge management including integration with Objective. A knowledge centre is to be developed as a component of this review.

### **Next steps**

The National Archives has successfully addressed a number of recommendations made in the IMA report. However, some key concerns

remain and the department must continue to focus on driving and embedding good practice.

The following points are underlined:

- Inclusion of KIM outputs as a mitigating factor on the strategic risk register means that the KIM programme's impact can now be understood in risk management terms. However, progress against goals has not yet been reported to the departmental board. The National Archives should ensure that the programme's impact can be demonstrated to senior stakeholders to ensure ongoing support. In the interim, criteria for escalation need to be defined.
- The Information Asset Profile features 'Key Asset', 'Risk Profile' and 'Technical Characteristics' columns. The KIM team should ensure that the requirements of these headings are established in line with best-practice digital continuity guidance and the Information Principles for the UK Public Sector and clearly understood.
- The National Archives must continue its efforts to consistently resource and develop IAO and IAM roles and provide training. Fostering the growth of recognised and supported network communities, and developing the relationship between them, will help ensure business requirements and priorities can be consistently communicated.

The National Archives retains three amber "acceptable" ratings under records management for creation, storage and management. Focus on the following areas will help The National Archives improve its performance:

- The National Archives should continue its work to gain oversight and control of information stored outside Objective. Particular emphasis should be given to collaboration with IAOs and ICT colleagues on the department's shared drives.











- Although capacity concerns have eased since the 2011 IMA, the KIM team must also ensure that the need to manage email volumes and store emails within Objective continues to be emphasised. This is particularly important as the overall volume of emails held in Outlook appears to be rising. Evidential emails must be held corporately even where alternatives may be understood to exist such as the CRM system. The department must ensure that this message is understood.
- The National Archives should continue its work to develop metrics and a reporting framework. This will help the department understand how information is being managed and handled in practice and demonstrate the impact of policy. The department needs to use this to target key areas of concern and to identify good practice that can be shared. In addition to measurement of the quantity of information stored, The National Archives should establish and measure quality characteristics for structured and unstructured information assets, in line with What to Keep policy.





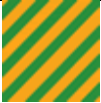
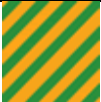

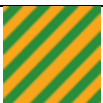


The National Archives also retains an amber “acceptable” rating for Knowledge Management. To further improve its performance:

- The National Archives should continue to develop an approach for discovering and promoting information for internal and external reuse. It should ensure that the value of information assets can be easily understood and that opportunities for reuse are identified.
- The National Archives should continue to define requirements for knowledge capture. In addition to embedding principles for leavers, the department should consider how the principle of routine information and knowledge capture can be embedded within day-to-day working. Approaches trialled by other government departments such as MOJ include the introduction of project close down documents.

The assessment team will continue to working closely with The National Archives to ensure the department receives ongoing support. To enable this, The National Archives will be subject to further progress review meetings before the formal closure of the Action Plan. Outstanding recommendations will be taken forward via standard IMC meetings and will be reviewed at the time of the next formal IMA in 2015.

**Risk Matrix**

<b>Governance and Leadership</b>	IMA 2010	July 2012
Strategic management		
Business objectives		
Management controls		
Resourcing		
Risk management		
<b>Records Management</b>		
Creation		
Storage		
Appraisal, disposal and transfer		
Sustainability of digital records		
Management		
<b>Access to Information</b>		

FOI/Data Protection		
Re-Use		
Security		
<b>Compliance</b>		
Staff responsibilities and delegations		
Policies and guidance		
Training		
Change management		
<b>Culture</b>		
Commitment		
Staff Understanding		
Knowledge Management		