

Information Management Assessment

The National Archives

August 2011

1	KEY FINDINGS	1
2	PART TWO: INTRODUCTION	8
3	PART THREE: THE ASSESSMENT TEAM	10
4	PART FOUR: HIGHLIGHTS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT	11
5	APPENDIX ONE: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS	32
6	APPENDIX TWO: GLOSSARY	35

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Key Findings of the Assessment

- 1.1 The National Archives is the official archive of the UK government. It supports government and the wider archive sector by providing expert advice on all aspects of creating, storing, using and managing information. It has positioned itself as an exemplar in records and information management across government. The organisation has set itself an ambitious and far reaching programme to achieve this aim. The programme includes an extensive programme of engagement with the business areas, revision of policies and investment in skilled staff.
- 1.2 This Information Management Assessment assesses The National Archives' performance against the high benchmark it has set itself. This report sets out where there is potential to extend good practice, and where further action must be taken.

Governance and Leadership

- 1.3 The Knowledge and Information Management strategy, agreed in October 2010, is having an impact across The National Archives. The actions implemented as part of the strategy include a review of the information held on shared drives and Heads of Departments being allocated the role of Information Asset Owners (IAOs).
- 1.4 The National Archives has a strong information governance structure. For instance, the Information Technology/Information Strategy (IT/IS) Oversight Board provides the strategic direction and oversight of The National Archives' technical and information architecture and has responsibility for planning departmental IT changes. Having KIM representation on the Board is **good practice**.
- 1.5 The review of information assurance has led to changes in the roles and responsibilities of Information Asset Owners (IAOs) and Information Asset Managers (IAMs). The introduction of these roles has been a success. To continue to be fully effective, the KIM team must provide ongoing updates on developments, support and guidance to the Executive Team.

- 1.6 There has not yet been a review of the impact and effectiveness of the recently introduced KIM initiatives.
- 1.7 Risk identification and governance is good, with information risk being recorded on the strategic risk register. Although KIM risk is recognised in its wider sense, mitigation of the risk at the strategic level is primarily focussed in favour of information assurance.
- 1.8 KIM metrics are being developed. Although compliance is reported externally, there are no internal Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to assess progress on information and security issues. Having such indicators will support transparency and accountability.
- 1.9 The National Archives has stringent information security and information assurance processes which safeguard the information flowing into and out of it. The controls lead some staff to bypass the online Government Secure Intranet in order to engage with external stakeholders or meet deadlines. The National Archives needs to consider how it balances risk versus control so that it maintains system integrity and work efficiency.

Information and Records Management

- 1.10 In November 2010 The National Archives completed a What To Keep (WTK) exercise.¹ This programme incorporates retention schedules, which is **good practice**. Individual departmental 'What to Keep' Schedules have been brought together to form The National Archives' Information Asset Profile.
- 1.11 The Information and Records Management policies assume that that most key business information is held digitally. However, records in other media are kept and in use. Issues relating to paper and other non-electronic formats should be flagged more prominently at the top level of the policies.

¹ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/rm-code-guide4.pdf>

1.12 Objective is the corporate Electronic Document Record Management System (EDRMS) and where appropriately used it supports both information sharing and collaborative working. However, a high percentage of information is created in personal areas, increasing the risk that information is not accessible or retained for the corporate record.

1.13 The National Archives has made real progress in managing digital continuity. The Information Asset Profile is practical and pragmatic and captures information about the information assets, including information relevant to the management of digital continuity. It has yet to be embedded as business as usual.

1.14 Recent reviews of email inboxes revealed a number of staff have inboxes in excess of The National Archives' standard limit. The KIM team are leading a review and developing solutions to meet the tailored business needs of the individual.

Access to information

1.15 Understanding of data protection within The National Archives is generally high, with clear policies and guidelines in place. Action is being taken to address the gaps in accessing general refresher training as it was found to be ad hoc or for specialist roles, such as Freedom of Information (FOI) caseworkers.

1.16 The National Archives freely publishes much information on its website. However, there is no structured method of assessing what re-users would find most useful.

Compliance

1.17 The core KIM team received positive feedback from all those interviewed. They, alongside the IAMs and IAOs, are pivotal in enabling the organisation to meet its overall KIM objectives.

1.18 Updated records and information management guidance is available on the intranet. To make it more effective it should be more closely aligned with WTK guidance so that information on what should be kept, as well as how and where it is to be kept, is coherent.

1.19 In spite of high levels of understanding on information assurance, use of the Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS) was inconsistent. For emails, classification is automatically set to 'unclassified' by default, with other options provided through a drop-down menu, creating instances where the appropriate classification is not selected.

Culture

1.20 The National Archives demonstrates a high level of knowledge, understanding and commitment to good information management, with a high regard for its records and for the value of information.






1.21 There is recognition by some managers that they could be more proactive, and do more to support, influence, engage with and practise good information management, for instance using the EDRMS. The National Archives needs its managers to lead by example, as they are central to its KIM ambitions.

1.22 In The National Archives, information tends to be shared on an informal and ad-hoc basis. Culturally, a lot of staff still work within distinct departmental functions. However, there are growing opportunities to work and collaborate in projects and across functions, which will aid more effective information sharing.






Risk Matrix

1.23 The Risk Matrix result is a culmination of the pre-assessment analysis, on-site interviews and evidence submitted.




Governance and Leadership

Strategic management		
Business objectives		
Management controls		
Resourcing		
Risk management		





Information and Records Management

Creation		
Storage		
Appraisal, disposal and transfer		
Sustainability of digital records		
Management		

Access to Information






FOI/Data Protection		
Re-Use		
Security		

Compliance

Staff responsibilities and delegations		
Policies and guidance		
Training		
Change management		

Culture

Commitment		
Staff understanding		
Knowledge Management		

Key to Colour Coding	
	Best Practice
	Good
	Satisfactory
	Development Needed
	Priority Attention Area

PART TWO: INTRODUCTION

Information Management Assessments

2.1 The Information Management Assessment (IMA) programme is the best-practice model for government departments wishing to demonstrate a high level of achievement in managing their information.²

Background

2.2 The National Archives is a non-ministerial department and an executive agency of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ). As the government's national archive for England, Wales and the United Kingdom, it preserves more than 1,000 years of public records from the Domesday Book to modern digital files and websites.

2.3 The department was founded in 2003 via the merger of the Public Records Office (PRO) and the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC). A further merger in 2006 bought in two more bodies: the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO). The Archives employs 614 staff, based primarily in Kew, with a small number working in Norwich. The National Archives describes itself as a centre of expertise in every aspect of creating, storing, using and managing official information. The National Archives' role is to:

- Preserve and protect the public record, and to make it accessible;
- Work with 250 government and public sector bodies, helping them to manage and use information more effectively;
- Promote the re-use of public sector information and regulate the information-trading activities of organisations that create and collect public sector information;

²<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/our-services/ima.htm>

- Manage Crown and Parliamentary copyright;
- Publish UK legislation;
- Provide leadership, support and guidance to the wider archive sector in England and Wales.

Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) in The National Archives

2.4 The management of The National Archives' own corporate information is the responsibility of the Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) Team. The organisation's Information Management Policy and KIM Strategy are available via the KIM team's intranet pages. The KIM Strategy was agreed by the Management Board in October 2010 and addresses the management of business information in corporate systems.

2.5 The KIM team is part of the Technology Directorate and is led by a Corporate Head of KIM, with two further members of staff.

PART THREE: THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

Methodology

3.1 The assessment was conducted by members of the Standards Department of The National Archives between 7 and 13 March 2011. To reinforce impartiality, colleagues from external government departments participated and were present throughout. Therefore the assessment team comprised:

- Standards and Assessment Manager
- Head of Standards
- Standards Adviser
- Information Management Consultant
- Members of the Digital Continuity Project
- Audit Manager, Information Commissioners' Office (ICO)
- Member from the Government Security Secretariat.

Assistance provided by The National Archives

3.2 The Assessment team are grateful for the cooperation and assistance of all staff of The National Archives who were interviewed, provided additional information or facilitated the assessment process.

PART FOUR: HIGHLIGHTS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Governance and Leadership

4.1 The National Archives is uniquely placed to understand the value of information management in government. The department's role is to supervise, support, manage and curate vast amounts of information in many different media, in order to preserve the history of government for the future. The National Archives plays a key role in helping others to manage their information. Given these responsibilities, the effective management of its own information is considered to be a core activity.

Strategic Management

4.2 The KIM Strategy was agreed by Management Board in October 2010 and is published on the intranet. The strategy outlines the KIM governance structure until 2012 and the Head of KIM is responsible for its implementation. KIM initiatives introduced should have a positive impact across The National Archives. These include the development of the Information Asset Profile, a review of the information stored on shared drives and the allocation of the Information Asset Owner (IAO) role at Head of Department level.

4.3 There has been real momentum behind the KIM strategy, with a wide variety of changes introduced over a relatively short period of time. Best practice in project and programme management requires regular reviews of the changes introduced. Senior management also need assurance on the impact of the changes.

Recommendation 1: The National Archives should conduct a review of the KIM programme by December 2011 to assess the impact and effectiveness in meeting its aims.

4.4 The ambition of the KIM programme is to be commended. The current KIM team has effected real change across a large section of The National Archives, with senior management support being integral to this success. However, at the time of assessment there was no formal mechanism for ensuring senior managers were kept apprised of the KIM programme other than exception reporting to

Executive Team and the Departmental Security Committee. The KIM team are currently developing internal metrics, which will incorporate the Information Assurance Health check, to define and measure progress. Potential KPIs under consideration include percentage of IAOs that report to the SIRO and the percentage of WTK schedules that are completed. Compliance reporting on information assurance and information security is reported and monitored through existing external measures, such as annual reporting to Buying Solutions and Communications Electronics Security Group (CESG).

Recommendation 2: The National Archives should reassess the format and frequency by which KIM and IA/IS progress is reported to the Board to ensure organisational commitment and visibility of the programme.

4.5 The Head of Technology has responsibility for IT infrastructure, KIM and information assurance and security. The combined role facilitates close working and communications among the various functions. A number of separate boards, including the IT/Information Strategy Oversight Board, exist to advise and steer developments. These also provide the opportunity for transparency, external scrutiny and visibility. However, The National Archives might benefit from a wider input from across the whole business on Information assurance.

Recommendation 3: The National Archives to review the benefits of wider input from across the whole business on assurance for information security and management.

Business Objectives

4.6 The creation of the IT/Information Strategy Oversight Board was designed to ensure that the organisation's IT infrastructure is developed in-line with its business objectives, ensuring the alignment of the technical architecture with the information architecture.

4.7 The Technical Governance Board sits under the IT/Information Strategy Oversight Board, with responsibility for ensuring that IT changes are planned in advance. A KIM representative has recently been appointed to this board. **This is good practice.**

4.8 The inclusion of a KIM team member on the Technical Governance Board is welcomed as a means of promoting dialogue between KIM and IT. Timely consideration of KIM is integral to key IT/IS decisions. It further ensures that the provision and management of technology retains its focus on The National Archives' need to work with its digital information.³ The boards should be interlinked to support greater information sharing and communication.

Recommendation 4: The National Archives should consider how and when information management is represented at the Information Strategy Oversight Board.

Resourcing

4.9 There are a number of specific KIM roles within The National Archives. The KIM team comprises the Head of KIM and two other members of staff. Feedback from across The National Archives indicated the team was viewed as proactive, helpful and approachable. The IAOs are responsible for all current and legacy information held in all formats within their departments, which must be recorded on the relevant section of the Information Asset Profile. The Information Asset Managers (IAMs), previously known as Departmental Records Managers (DRMs), support the IAOs and their teams to manage information effectively in their areas. They also have regular liaison meetings with the KIM team.

4.10 Some IAOs, IAMs and other staff were unsure about the responsibilities of the IAO and IAM posts. This may be partly explained by the recent changes to these roles. Consideration should be given to providing clarity. To maximise value, the IAOs and IAMs need to be appropriately supported and trained. The Assessment Team is aware that a combined training programme for IAOs and IAMs is scheduled by the KIM team and it is anticipated that this will alleviate some of these concerns. Keeping all IAMs, IAOs and their managers informed of the value of the roles and key updates or changes has to be maintained.

³ Find, open, use, understand, trust. See nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/projects-and-work/digital-continuity-stage-2.htm

Recommendation 5: The KIM team should ensure that ongoing communication is maintained to raise and sustain awareness of the KIM specific roles, responsibilities and the programme to all staff.

Risk Management

- 4.11 In 2010 the department's Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) commissioned a review of The National Archives' security, data protection and risk structures. Many of the changes recommended, such as the change in IAO role, have been implemented. Updates on progress are reported to the Data Security Committee, which has oversight of assurance and security. **This is good practice.** The visibility of information assurance and security should be maintained; developing metrics will enable this.
- 4.12 At the time of assessment, a significant number of information assets had been recorded and described on the Information Asset Profile. However, some information had not yet been entered. The Assessment Team recognise that the Information Asset Profile is a work in progress. Until it becomes business as usual, there is a risk that key information is not identified, available, searchable or sufficiently protected.
- 4.13 Overall, The National Archives' risk identification and governance is good. The SIRO role is established and information risk is recorded on the strategic risk register. **This is good practice.** However, whilst information management risk is recognised, mitigation of the risk at the strategic level is primarily focussed in favour of information assurance. A reporting mechanism for the revised IAOs and their Information Asset Profile responsibilities will start with the first report in September 2011. To ensure a robust process that matches The National Archives ambitions, key KIM impacts and mitigations such as the IAO role and the Information Asset Profile need to be included.

Recommendation 6: The National Archives should revise its corporate and departmental risk registers to include appropriate KIM impacts such as the Information Asset Profile and revised responsibilities for IAOs.

Information and Records Management

What to Keep/Creation

5.1 The National Archives' What To Keep (WTK) exercise was completed in November 2010. The resulting information was placed under different information types. Where a WTK schedule and Information Asset Profile entry has been completed, it forms the basis for the retention schedule applied to the file plan. **This is good practice.** However, outside the KIM team there was limited understanding of how the schedule would be used. A WTK schedule change process has been built into the overall WTK process and IAMs have been given the responsibility of keeping schedules up to date, with IAOs held accountable. Nevertheless, the role WTK plays in continuously managing information and the fact that it is not a one-off exercise needs to continue to be made clear to staff. In times of conflicting priorities, being able to maintain, update and embed all of the schedules will be a challenge. An assessment of the effectiveness of WTK should be included in any future review of information management.

Recommendation 7: The KIM team should ensure that the WTK schedules are updated and maintained.

Storage

5.2 Objective is the corporate Electronic Document Record Management System (EDRMS) and has a defined corporate file plan. Where used, this supports information sharing and collaborative working. Available KIM team metrics for January and February 2011 show that around 50 percent of emails were put at least initially into the personal "Home" area of Objective during this period and around 40 percent of all documents were being created in the same Home area. The statistics do not show what proportion of documents is subsequently moved to the file plan, but this pattern increases the risk that key information is stored but not accessible. At the time of assessment a total of 1,876,660 documents had been stored in Objective since the creation of the new file plan in 2008, of

which 68.2 percent were in the file plan.⁴

5.3 Despite generally positive feedback, staff were unsure about key Objective functions, such as making full use of the EDRMS's search capabilities and the appropriate application of "corporate value" to documents.⁵ Methods of maximising the full use of Objective should be explored. Communicating the ability to highlight short cuts or key tips would be beneficial. Implementing a resource for users, such as web based tools and shared workspaces that allow users to share tips and "know how" informally, would also be helpful.

Recommendation 8: The National Archives to clarify appropriate use of "corporate value" as well as identify and introduce a method, such as web based tools and shared workplaces, to publicise short cuts and corporate system key tips.

5.4 Despite the work carried out on WTK, there was still inconsistency over when and what is filed in Objective. Some staff saved everything and others only the final version. Guidance is available to help staff but some felt unsure whether they had the definitive version or record. The system can provide an audit trail on access and document updates

5.5 Failure to file information appropriately within corporate systems can cause significant problems when staff leave. The Assessment Team were informed that in some cases requests had been made to the KIM team to preserve email inboxes or allow access to staff members' inboxes and home areas after their departure. Defining how and when documents are added to Objective within the WTK guidance would address these issues.

Recommendation 9: The KIM team should set out how and when documents should be added to Objective as part of the WTK guidance.

5.6 Various teams, for example Advice and Record Knowledge (ARK), have access

⁴ Statistics provided by The National Archives' KIM team for 1 March 2011.

⁵ Applying corporate value to a document defines it as essential to The National Archives' business and prevents its deletion.

to shared drives for databases and special document formats that cannot be held in Objective. These drives contain both current and legacy information. Some IAMs' knowledge of their contents was found to be inconsistent. Some teams have undertaken work to identify what is stored, and to remove obsolete material, but others have not. Interviewees also indicated they needed greater clarity as to who was responsible for information held in shared drives, particularly legacy information.

5.7 Proactive management of the shared drives is required by the KIM team and IT to ensure that information held on the shared drives can be understood and monitored. This will also ensure that risks can be identified and managed and that orphan material can be identified and assigned to the most relevant owner. Consideration should be given to the future resource requirements of this task. This needs to be within a structured, time-bound plan that enables corporate information to be quickly identified, disposal schedules to be assigned and information safeguarded to ensure continuing availability.

Recommendation 10: The National Archives should adopt a clear project with a set deadline to identify those documents that do not have an owner or responsible department and ensure that such documents are recorded within the Information Asset Profile.

File Plan

5.8 The file plan reflects The National Archives' organisational structure. The KIM team has enforced a policy of limiting files and folders to five levels. IAMs are able to create and manage folders at a local level in addition to having responsibility for setting permissions and access rights.

5.9 A corporate decision not to impose a mandatory naming convention was made during the creation of the file plan. There is general "dos and don'ts" guidance on the intranet, Narnia. There are a variety of document naming styles in use. Although culturally it is proved that strict conventions are often too onerous to ensure compliance, file names are part of the metadata that is used in a search. Thus, poorly defined file names lead to a poor search result. Good spelling, meaningful titles and standard date fields are important. A practical solution to ensuring that documents are retrievable and that naming processes are flexible

enough to reflect local needs and ensure compliance is needed. Using the local IAM to monitor and control file and folder names and promote best practice will provide the consistency and compliance that is required. Longer term, The National Archives should explore the use of improved technology that supports extensive and effective searching capabilities.

Recommendation 11: The National Archives should assess the business case for improved search technology for use across the department.

Recommendation 12: The KIM team to ensure that the IAMs are able to monitor and control the naming of folders and files locally to promote best practice.

Paper files

5.10 The Information Management and Records Management policies assume that most key business information for The National Archives is digital. There was clear evidence that a substantial volume of paper records had to be managed either back to the file store or destroyed during a recent office move. This demonstrates that paper is still an important component of the information The National Archives holds. There was anecdotal evidence that referenced paper files had been stored unchecked in a cupboard for several years. Records in all formats, regardless of volume, should be referenced within the policy.

Recommendation 13: The KIM team should review the Information and Records Management policies to ensure they reference records irrespective of medium and reflects current practice.

Emails

5.11 The National Archives undertook a review of the volume of email held in Outlook accounts. Within the department most individual and group accounts, have a standard limit. Other IMA programme departments have either a standard email limit or no limits. The National Archives' review highlighted where limits had been exceeded; with reasons cited for breaches, included staff moves, mergers and business requirements. Some staff had been able to contact IT informally and have their limit increased. Not effectively monitoring and managing inbox requirements, limits the incentives to both delete non-essential

emails and to store significant emails within corporate systems. It also increases the risk that key business information will be inaccessible to others or become lost.

5.12 The KIM team recognise that this needs to be balanced against flexible and useable working practices and are exploring long-term solutions, including a review of individual business requirements, systematic reduction of inbox sizes, general audits of inbox sizes and the emails stored in Objective. Consideration should also be given to how to ensure emails are not merely “dumped” wholesale into Objective to achieve the reduction.

Recommendation 14: The National Archives should consider how it can monitor or be alerted to large-scale movement of emails into Objective.

5.13 Monthly statistics of all staff are available to all managers to monitor the inbox sizes for their staff. **This is good practice.**

5.14 Several service areas and teams do not use the email or other corporate systems, despite having access. For example, whilst there may not be a need to have contact with external customers via email, much internal information relevant to all staff is communicated electronically. Also, not using corporate electronic systems creates the potential for corporate information not to be accessible to those that need it.

Recommendation 15: Managers should ensure that staff use corporate systems as appropriate and that core business information is stored and accessible.

Appraisal and disposal

5.15 At the time of the assessment, the KIM team had started closing folders in the file plan to implement the disposal periods identified in WTK schedules. The current file plan was applied in 2008; the first batch of electronic files is due for review in 2012. There is a risk that the task of ensuring the right information is disposed of may become problematic if the file plan is not used consistently. Taking time to assess the effectiveness of the folder structure now will reap benefits in the future.

Digital Continuity

5.16 In October 2010 the Digital Continuity Project released a Risk and Opportunities Assessment (ROA) report on The National Archives. In response, The National Archives has taken action and made real progress in managing digital continuity.

5.17 The KIM team is active in introducing new processes and tools to improve the management of digital continuity. Actions taken to date demonstrate an understanding of the issues preventing good KIM practice; however, these are in the early stages of implementation and are yet to be embedded as business as usual. For example, training and tasking on digital continuity is still to be embedded in the training and monitoring for the IAOs and IAMs.

5.18 The Information Asset Profile is a practical and pragmatic management tool, with the ability to capture sufficient information about information assets to manage digital continuity. It is also notable that information assets themselves are now defined at information level rather than system level. **This is good practice.** However, the Information Asset Profile does not yet include technical information about assets, as is recommended within the Digital Continuity Guidance.⁶ Uptake and usage should be regularly reviewed, revising the template and process to ensure that information recorded supports the management of digital continuity requirements over change. It is imperative that these early positive initiatives are properly supported, resourced and sustained to realise benefits and achieve buy-in from staff in key roles.

Recommendation 16: The KIM team to provide an explicit statement that they are owners of Digital Continuity for The National Archives.

Recommendation 17: The National Archives to use the Digital Continuity guidance to ensure its Information Asset Profile follows best practice and includes technical information.

⁶ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/projects-and-work/dc-guidance.htm>

5.19 The National Archives manages its storage capacity through the investment planning process. However, the recommended development of an IT strategy creates further opportunities that should be exploited. Through the inclusion of capacity management within an IT strategy, the organisation should aim to reduce its costs by planning to use storage in the most cost effective way.

Recommendation 18: Capacity management and planning should form a significant part of the IT Strategy recommended by this assessment report.

5.20 A process for inserting data into the Tape Archive exists and is managed by the Technical Governance Board.⁷ Whilst processes are in place to govern this information, these do not appear to be followed consistently. For example, there was no clear process for determining ownership of the received material until it is placed within the Tape Archive. A wider consideration of the Tape Archive was outside the scope of this assessment.

Recommendation 19: The National Archives should ensure that there is a clear process to cover receipt of digital information until placed within the archive.

Recommendation 20: The National Archives to ensure responsibility for material within the Tape Archive is defined, assigned and publicised within the relevant teams.

5.21 The National Archives has a well-established history of operational management of technical change, and assessing the risk and impact of technical change. The inclusion of a KIM member on the Technical Governance Board and the creation of the IT/Information Strategy Oversight Board are positive steps in this regard and should be commended. The creation of the role of IT Service Delivery Manager is important in ensuring that business information is aligned with the technical infrastructure supporting it and developing service orientated enterprise architecture. The development of an IT strategy which recognises the KIM programme would further ensure the alignment of technology with the needs of the business, and therefore, good information

⁷ The definition of a Tape Archive (Dark Archive) in this instance is 'an archive with no real-time, online access to the content by anyone except repository staff.'

management principles. With the adoption of the recommendations within this report, the department will be in a strong position to manage digital continuity.

Recommendation 21: The National Archives should ensure KIM staff and appropriate information management specialists are included in risk and impact assessments when assessing changes.

Access to Information

Data Protection Act (DPA)

6.1 Understanding of the Data Protection Act (DPA) is generally high, with clear policies and guidelines in place. A review of information security and assurance, including data protection, took place in 2010; the majority of recommendations were implemented. Staff have data protection training as part of their induction. Of those interviewed, however, many had forgotten or were vague on their DPA training. Access to refresher training was ad hoc or role specific, for instance, for Freedom of Information caseworkers.

6.2 The Assessment team has since been advised that The KIM team are developing an online GSI and data protection including refresher training.

Recommendation 22: The National Archives should consider the provision of data protection refresher training.

6.3 When staff leave there is no guidance on who can access their emails, Home area in Objective, personal correspondence and other information, or when these can be accessed and for how long. Without such policies in place there is a risk that The National Archives will not meet its obligations under the DPA. Clear policy and guidance should be available and communicated to staff.

Recommendation 23: The National Archives should provide clear policy and guidance on access to information in the personal areas of corporate systems for leavers.

Freedom of Information (FOI)

6.4 FOI requests are well managed. The National Archives received 2,516 requests in 2009–10, with 96 percent responded to within the target timescale. The National Archives receives the second highest number of FOI requests out of more than 40 monitored government bodies.⁸ Its handling of FOI requests is an

⁸ As of March 2011.

example of **good practice**.

Re-Use

6.5 The National Archives has embraced the Transparency agenda, with the proactive publication of material on the website. Information is regularly added, and there is a project looking at making more information available. **This is good practice**. Images are also available for re-use subject to a licence agreement. However, there has been no assessment of the usefulness or validity of the published material. Consulting relevant stakeholders on what information would be useful should form the basis for clear prioritisation, and will ensure that released information is of value. Current user forums could be consulted.

Recommendation 24: The National Archives to consult available stakeholder groups to assess the validity and relevance of the information available for re-use, to better inform future releases.

Data Sharing

6.6 The National Archives manages data transfers and data exchanges in accordance with government guidelines. It does not manage wholesale datasets to and from external departments. Work is currently being undertaken on tools and processes to receive digital information from external government departments for deposit in The National Archives. Such arrangements fall outside the scope of this assessment.

Security

6.7 The stringent information security and information assurance processes safeguard the flow of information into and out of The National Archives. However, many staff work with external customers not on the Government Secure Intranet (GSI) network and many staff also often work away from the office. Evidence was obtained of staff developing workarounds, including printing to hard copy and posting items to bypass the online GSI network. This may be appropriate in some cases, but this action increases the risks to that information. The National Archives needs assurance that the systems in place safeguard the

integrity of its information whilst enabling staff to execute their duties effectively and flexibly.

6.8 The creation of access profiles to ICT systems, including shared drives and Objective is inconsistent across The National Archives. Examples identified included staff retaining permissions to view, edit or delete files after a change in roles or teams, a senior manager requesting an IAM to grant full access to another team's file area for their staff without the knowledge of the appropriate team and of IAMs being bypassed altogether. A periodic review of access permissions will provide the evidence to reinforce policies and ensure that they are adhered to.

6.9 The KIM team encourages "open to all" as the default position for access permissions unless there is a need to restrict who can see and use specific documents and areas of the file plan. To ensure openness, transparency and consistency, both IT and the KIM teams need to know who has access, when this is granted and that there is a defined audit trail. Without a clear audit trail, information that should be protected internally may not be, and this could pose a reputational risk to The National Archives.

Recommendation 25: The National Archives to develop an audit process for monitoring access to corporate systems.

Compliance

Staff responsibilities and delegations

- 7.1 Staff understanding of information assurance and security is high. Achieving the same level of understanding for KIM is a goal for The National Archives. The core roles of the IAOs and IAMs have been refocused to ensure they make a valid contribution to good KIM practice within The National Archives. Once the roles and responsibilities of IAOs and IAMs are established, they will be pivotal in enabling The National Archives to meet its KIM objectives. The support of the KIM team is integral to the success of these roles.
- 7.2 The National Archives has ambitious plans to embed KIM and demonstrate good practice. Its KIM team is well placed to deliver these plans. Further evidence of the senior management commitment to KIM is demonstrated in data published in 2009/10: The National Archives spent 1.1% of its budget on KIM costs. This places it in mid table in comparison with other government departments' spend on KIM.⁹

Policies and Guidance

- 7.3 The KIM team has prioritised the updating of records and information management guidance on the intranet, Narnia. These were generally found to be useful by interviewees. However, policies assume records are held digitally without specifying exceptions and the way they should be handled. The recent issues around paper records highlight this need.
- 7.4 Guidance on the usage of Objective is useful; however, it is focused on practical use of the system and problem solving. Further value could be obtained by aligning it closely with the WTK guidance, so that users have access to information about what should be kept and where, as well as how to save it.

⁹ <http://data.gov.uk/dataset/oep-benchmarking-data-2009-10>

Government Protective Marking Scheme (GPMS)

The National Archives has introduced a system that allows staff to easily classify emails. **This is good practice** as it helps ensure correct classification and staff compliance. Emails have “unclassified” automatically applied requiring staff to apply higher level of marking as needed. Documents can also be given a protective marking on the EDRMs with one click. The National Archives correctly emphasises transparency in its communications and filing, and has clear guidance and training to ensure that staff are aware when to restrict material.

The Intranet

7.5 Interviewees expressed mixed views of the intranet, Narnia. Strengths included the wealth of team data available, and the access it provides to information on the organisation’s wider news stories and the Chief Executive’s blog. Weaknesses included broken links and out-of-date information including organisation charts, team information and staff directory. The search facility was seen by many interviewees as inaccurate, with original search requests having little bearing on how the results are grouped.

7.6 Responsibility for amending or reviewing information is not clearly defined. There is no single team with oversight of the content and the frequency with which information is reviewed and revised is often down to the diligence of individual teams and team members. The KIM team has plans to tackle some of these issues. This may include assigning responsibility for Narnia team areas to IAOs and their IAMs.

Recommendation 26: The KIM team should assess how the IAOs and IAMs could take responsibility for team areas on Narnia.

Recommendation 27: The KIM team to coordinate a project to review Narnia long-term.

Training

7.7 Induction training in The National Archives is programmed, and includes

sessions on DPA and FOI. Most staff interviewed had this training. New starters are not given access to corporate systems, such as Objective, until they have completed GSI training. **This is good practice.**

7.8 As indicated elsewhere in this report, consideration should be given to access to follow-up or regular refresher training. It became clear over the course of the assessment that the functionality of Objective was not being fully exploited, for example, in the case of use of access restrictions and search capabilities. Investing in a team of expert users of Objective, such as IAMs would support and champion the wider information management objective and maximise use of an available resource.

7.9 The training programme to support holders of the revised IAO and IAM roles is underway. This needs to be prioritised to address the confusion and concerns of the staff within those roles so they can become advocates for the KIM programme.

Recommendation 28: The National Archives should prioritise IAM and IAO training to enable the post holders to fulfil their responsibilities and act as advocates to support the KIM programme.

Culture

8.1 The National Archives is viewed by staff as a small and dynamic department. It has a culture that is reliant on personal interactions, relationships and informal and formal networks. Senior management are committed to an “open door” policy. This openness could be capitalised on to support information sharing within The National Archives at all levels.

Commitment

8.2 There is a high level of understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of good information management. In addition there is a deep respect for The National Archives’ historical records and for the value of information itself. The recently introduced WTK schedules will ensure that core business information is saved.

8.3 There is general support from senior management for KIM and an understanding of how good KIM supports business objectives. However, some managers recognise that they could be more proactive, particularly to influence good practice amongst their staff. Leading by example, for instance by using Objective and other corporate systems, is central to maximising internal KIM ambitions.

8.4 Networks to support the KIM strategy are in development. The refocused IAO and IAM roles need time to be embedded and work on raising the profile of KIM needs to be continued. Currently, opportunities to broadcast good news stories or share KIM experiences are limited to the IAM meetings.

Recommendation 29: KIM communications should be developed with the internal communications team, utilising the available communication and information channels, such as Narnia news stories and the digital Talk magazine.

Information Sharing

8.5 The use of informal networks has been beneficial to The National Archives, enabling the sharing of information on a small scale. The sharing of information

across more formal networks on a wider scale has yet to become really proactive. Evidence showed that barriers existed where information has to be shared more widely. Culturally many staff work within distinct departmental silos, specialisms and functions, with marked differences in how messages and information is communicated. There was also a perception among interviewees of a reluctance to share information internally outside of personal or informal networks. The development of project-based opportunities to work across functions is relatively recent within the department.

8.6 As well as this, staff can meet technical barriers to sharing, for instance limitations of technology and not having all the knowledge and tools to use corporate systems effectively. Security considerations also place limits on how functional the technology is in enabling and supporting information sharing. A department that is mature in information management terms must have staff that are willing and able to share information and who understand the importance of doing so. The challenge now for The National Archives is to ensure that all parts of the organisation are committed to achieving this.

Knowledge Management/Transfer

8.7 The National Archives has a formal process for capturing the tacit knowledge of “key” staff when they leave, known as “The Top 5, Top 5”, as outlined in the KIM strategy. **This is good practice.** As with other initiatives knowledge and use of it was not yet found to be consistent. Where it had been used the outcomes of the knowledge capture had not necessarily been used or made available.

8.8 Business areas such as Advice and Records Knowledge (ARK) and Information Management and Practice (IMP) recognise that they have a number of staff with significant and specialist knowledge that needs to be captured. Some business areas were found to have developed their own solutions and some were found to be proactive in ensuring that when a colleague left as much information as possible was retained.

8.9 Clarity and coherence of process is necessary to maximise the effectiveness of knowledge capture and ensure that specialist skills and knowledge are not lost.

Recommendation 30: The KIM team should review how knowledge transfer has developed within The National Archives and provide access to good practice examples within the department so it can be shared.

APPENDIX ONE: SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

9.1 This is a summary of the recommended actions to:

- remedy the weaknesses identified; and,
- strengthen the commitment to the Information Management Assessment Programme.

These recommendations, when agreed, will form an Action Plan that will be monitored.

Business Area	Ref	Recommendation
High Priority	1	The National Archives should conduct a review of the KIM programme by December 2011 to assess the impact and effectiveness in meeting its aims.
	2	The National Archives should reassess the format and frequency by which KIM and IA/IS progress is reported to the Board to ensure organisational commitment and visibility of the programme.
	4	The National Archives should consider how and when information management is represented at the Information Strategy Oversight Board.
	8	The National Archives to clarify appropriate use of “corporate value” as well as identify and introduce a method, such as web based tools and shared workplaces, to publicise short cuts and corporate system key tips.
	10	The National Archives should adopt a clear project with a set deadline to identify those documents that do not have an owner or responsible department and ensure that such documents are recorded within the Information Asset Profile.
	18	Capacity management and planning should form a significant part of the IT Strategy recommended by this assessment report.
	23	The National Archives should provide clear policy and guidance on access to information in the personal areas of corporate systems for leavers.

Medium to Low Priority

3	The National Archives to review the benefits of wider input from across the whole business on assurance for information security and management.
5	The KIM team should ensure that ongoing communication is maintained to raise and sustain awareness of the KIM specific roles, responsibilities and the programme to all staff.
6	The National Archives should revise its corporate and departmental risk registers to include appropriate KIM impacts such as the Information Asset Profile and revised responsibilities for IAOs.
7	The KIM team should ensure that the WTK schedules are updated and maintained.
9	The KIM team should set out how and when documents should be added to Objective as part of the WTK guidance.
11	The National Archives should assess the business case for improved search technology for use across the department.
12	The KIM team to ensure that the IAMs are able to monitor and control the naming of folders and files locally to promote best practice.
13	The KIM team should review the Information and Records Management policies to ensure they reference records irrespective of medium and reflects current practice.
14	The National Archives should consider how it can monitor or be alerted to large-scale movement of emails into Objective.
15	Managers should ensure that staff use corporate systems as appropriate and that core business information is stored and accessible.
16	The KIM team to provide an explicit statement that they are owners of Digital Continuity for The National Archives.
17	The National Archives to use the Digital Continuity guidance to ensure its Information Asset Profile follows best practice and includes technical information.
19	The National Archives should ensure that there is a clear process to cover receipt of digital information until placed within the archive.
20	The National Archives to ensure responsibility for material within the Tape Archive is defined, assigned and publicised within the relevant teams.

21	The National Archives should ensure KIM staff and appropriate information management specialists are included in risk and impact assessments when assessing changes.
22	The National Archives should consider the provision of data protection refresher training.
24	The National Archives to consult available stakeholder groups to assess the validity and relevance of the information available for re-use, to better inform future releases.
25	The National Archives to develop an audit process for monitoring access to corporate systems.
26	The KIM team should assess how the IAOs and IAMs could take responsibility for team areas on Narnia.
27	The KIM team to coordinate a project to review Narnia long-term.
28	The National Archives should prioritise IAM and IAO training to enable the post holders to fulfil their responsibilities and act as advocates to support the KIM programme.
29	KIM communications should be developed with the internal communications team, utilising the available communication and information channels, such as Narnia news stories and the digital Talk magazine.
30	The KIM team should review how knowledge transfer has developed within The National Archives and provide access to good practice examples within the department so it can be shared.

APPENDIX TWO: GLOSSARY

DPA	Data Protection Act
EDRMS	Electronic Document Records Management System
FOI	Freedom of Information
IAM	Information Asset Manager
GPMS	Government Protective Marking Scheme
GSI	Government Secure Intranet
IAO	Information Asset Owner
IMA	Information Management Assessment
IT	Information Technology
KIM	Knowledge and Information Management
MB	Megabyte
SIRO	Senior Information Risk Officer
WTK	What to Keep