

# Records Management Competency Framework

July 2016

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 places an obligation on named authorities in Scotland to produce a records management plan which sets out their arrangements for the effective management of all public records. National Records of Scotland (NRS) is a named authority as defined in the act. The identification of a records management competency framework is a key element of the plan, and is necessary in order to identify the vital knowledge and skills that are required by the records manager and any other staff with records management responsibilities, in order to manage the organisation's records effectively.
- 1.2 It is necessary to clearly define the core competencies and key knowledge and skills required by all records management staff so as to ensure that colleagues understand their roles and responsibilities, can offer expert advice and guidance, and can remain proactive in their management of recordkeeping issues and procedures. With core competencies defined, the organisation can identify training needs, assess and monitor performance, and use them as a basis from which to build future job descriptions.
- 1.3 The purpose of this framework is to outline the key knowledge and skills required by NRS's records manager as well as any staff within the organisation who have records management responsibilities.

## **2. Records Management Roles and Responsibilities in NRS**

- 2.1 All staff have a responsibility to manage records effectively, through the documentation of all decisions and actions made; the effective maintenance of records throughout their lifecycle, including access, tracking and storage of records; the timely review of records and their ultimate disposal, whether this be transfer to archive for permanent preservation, confidential destruction or recycling.
- 2.2 The lead responsible officer for records management is the Head of Portfolio and Corporate Services. With the support of the Records Manager, they have responsibility for ensuring compliance with records management policies and procedures throughout NRS.
- 2.3 All heads of business areas and heads of teams are responsible for approving a corporate approach to the management of records as defined within this policy, promoting a culture of excellent recordkeeping principles and practices in order to improve business efficiency, supporting records management through commitment and the provision of resources and recognising the importance of preserving NRS's corporate memory.
- 2.4 All branch representatives for records management are responsible for offering advice and guidance regarding records management to all staff within their branch, highlighting any records management issues or concerns to the records manager and transferring all records of historical value to archive for permanent preservation.

- 2.5 The records manager is responsible for ensuring that records management practices and procedures are established in line with all legal obligations and professional standards, issuing advice and guidance to all staff, establishing and liaising with branch representatives and meeting the aims and objectives of the records management strategy.

### **3. Records Manager Competencies**

- 3.1 The key knowledge and skills required by the records manager have been identified in line with the Model Action Plan for Developing Records Management Arrangements Compliant with the Code of Practice on Records Management under Section 61 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002<sup>1</sup>. The scope and level of the competencies is based on three assumptions which reflect best practice:

3.1.1 The records manager will be professionally qualified in information / records management or working towards such a professional qualification.

3.1.2 The records manager will be appointed at middle-management level or higher and will have sufficient authority to act effectively.

3.1.3 The records manager's primary role will be to develop and implement records management policies, procedure and guidance, and to provide advice on recordkeeping issues.

3.2 It is recommended that the records manager has the following professional skills and competencies:

- a sound knowledge of records management theory and practice, including standards and best practice;
- an ability to apply and adapt records management standards and best practice effectively in the organisation's context;
- an understanding and ability to establish various records management tools and techniques;
- a good knowledge of records management software applications and their use;
- experience or knowledge of other organisations' records management systems, obtained through regular liaison with peers and observation of other organisation's experiences;
- an ability to interpret best practice standards, apply locally and provide accurate and effective advice and guidance to colleagues.

3.3 The records manager should also have the following business/management skills and competencies:

- an understanding of the legislative environment within which the organisation operates; as well as the recordkeeping implications of such legislation;

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<sup>1</sup> Please see <http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//about-us/model-action-plan.pdf> for further details.

- an ability to contribute to the development and implementation of the organisation's response to changes in legislation and regulations where they have records management implications;
- an understanding of the organisation's role, mission, aims and objectives, as well as functions and activities;
- an expert knowledge of the nature of the organisation's relationships with its stakeholders;
- an understanding of how records management contributes to the achievement of the organisation's business aims and objectives;
- an understanding of the decision making process within the organisation and its sector;
- a good knowledge of standard Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems, in particular those in use within the organisation;
- an ability to develop sound business plans;
- an understanding and ability to apply a range of project management techniques;
- an ability to plan and manage complex or multiple projects to be completed within time, cost and quality targets;
- an understanding of the specific impact of data protection and freedom of information legislation on records produced by the organisation;
- an ability to critically assess current procedures and provide workable solutions for continual improvement, as well as performance measurement frameworks.

3.4 The records manager is also expected to have the following personal skills and competencies:

- clear, confident and effective communication skills, both verbally and in writing;
- an ability to communicate and get on well with colleagues at all levels;
- enthusiasm and is pro-active;
- a positive "can-do" attitude;
- completes tasks through to their conclusion;
- works effectively in a team environment, including in a leadership role;
- flexibility and an adaptable outlook, including the ability to respond to changing needs and different situations;
- effective advisory and influencing skills;
- can deliver effective presentations and training to an audience;
- shares knowledge and experience;
- good analytical skills;
- marketing and promotional awareness, skills and abilities;
- personal and professional integrity;
- ability to develop and maintain a wide network of professional contacts;
- keeps up to date with professional developments and actively participates within the professional community.

## **4. Records Management Staff Competencies**

4.1 The key knowledge and skills required by staff with records management responsibilities are identified at section 4.2 below. The scope and level of the competencies is based on three assumptions:

4.1.1 The staff have been provided with training in current records and information management issues and best practice.

4.1.2 The staff are aware that they have particular responsibilities in relation to records management and are performance managed in line with these.

4.1.3 The staff are supported by the records manager as well as the senior responsible officer for records management within the organisation.

4.2 The following knowledge and skills are required by staff with recordkeeping responsibilities:

- a good understanding of records management issues and best practice and how they relate to the organisation;
- an ability to adapt to and support others in the development and introduction of new recordkeeping practices and procedures;
- an ability to assess current recordkeeping systems and provide feedback to the records manager on their strengths and areas for improvement;
- an ability to communicate effectively at all levels of the organisation;
- an ability to recognise potential issues in relation to records management and communicate these to the relevant staff;
- enthusiasm and a proactive approach to improving recordkeeping practices;
- a good understanding of the legislative environment within which they operate;
- an ability to contribute to the development and implementation of new records management systems and solutions;
- an understanding of how good records management can lead to improved business efficiency and working practices, as well as other organisational benefits;
- flexible and adaptable to change;
- an ability to apply records management principles and practices to own work role and work of others;
- an ability to monitor and feedback compliance with policies/procedures;
- an understanding of different types of risk, in relation to recordkeeping;
- an ability to work under pressure and to deadlines;
- accuracy and attention to detail;
- problem-solving skills;
- an awareness of information, advice and guidance sources within NRS.

4.3 As outlined in section 2, all staff within NRS have a level of responsibility in relation to recordkeeping. It is the responsibility of the records manager and senior responsible officer for records management to ensure that all staff have been

provided with an introduction to records management best practice and are aware of the importance of recordkeeping within the organisation.

## **5. Training Programme**

- 5.1 Records management is identified as a distinct stream within the organisation's training portfolio. All staff receive education on information management principles and records management responsibilities. Guidance is provided to all staff on induction and is available on the intranet.
- 5.2 Corporate Development ensure that staff with specific records management responsibilities receive relevant training to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to assume recordkeeping roles.
- 5.2 All staff receive training on how to use the Scottish Government's eRDM system. Additional training is provided to those staff who take on the Information Management Support Officer (IMSO) role and act as localised points of contact for records management and as gatekeepers of eRDM.
- 5.3 Training presentations on records management have been developed which explain both why records management is important and also the arrangements for records management operated in NRS. Training is also delivered to meet particular staff needs which have been identified by team leads in business areas.