



**Complying with the Records  
Management Code: Evaluation  
Workbook and Methodology**

**Module 8: Performance measurement**

## Module 8: Performance measurement

### General

- 10.1 Many of the questions in the earlier modules have identified a number of measures for assessing the effectiveness of an authority's records management system. This module deals with the establishment of performance measures to ensure the records management system established by the authority is being used and managed effectively by the end users. Note that the Records Management Code makes no mention of performance measurement.
- 10.2 In particular there is a need to ensure end users are capturing or filing relevant records, locating them within appropriate files or, in the case of electronic records, associating them with relevant folders in the business classification scheme. Appropriate performance measures based on these activities performed by end users are critical if the organisation is going to ensure that the record management system developed for the authority is actually working in accordance with the design criteria approved by senior management. A further crucial consideration is that accurate retrieval is actually possible in response to searches undertaken in response to requests for information contained in the records. The measures specified in the following table of questions are intended to elicit key information against the performance measures and they provide indicators of appropriate custom and practice. Organisations will also need to develop additional measures according to circumstance.
- 10.3 The relevant workbook questions which should be used to assess whether an organisation's performance measures for monitoring whether the record management system and processes complies with the Lord Chancellor's Code and supports best practice commence on page 8.

### Context

- 10.4 The Records Management Code states that:

*Any freedom of information legislation is only as good as the quality of the records to which it provides access. Such rights are of little use if reliable records are not created in the first place, if they cannot be found when needed or if the arrangements for their eventual archiving or destruction are inadequate. Consequently, all public authorities are strongly encouraged to pay heed to the guidance in the Code.....*

*.....Records created by the authority should be arranged in a record keeping system that will enable the authority to obtain the maximum benefit from the quick and easy retrieval of information.....*

*.....The record-keeping system, whether paper or electronic, should include a set of rules for referencing, titling, indexing and, if appropriate, security marking of records. These should be easily understood and should enable the efficient retrieval of information.....*

*..... Audit trails should be provided for all electronic information and documents. They should be kept securely and should be available for inspection by authorised personnel. The BSI document Principles of Good Practice for Information Management (PD0010) recommends audits at predetermined intervals for particular aspects of electronic records management.*

- 10.5 Performance measurement is therefore necessary to relate records activities to needs, to assess the efficiency or effectiveness of records activities, and to demonstrate value and accountability
- 10.6 Each public authority should ensure it has in place a scheme that will monitor the performance of its records management system. The model action plans which The National Archives has produced, or collaborated in the production of, to help different parts of the public sector achieve compliance with the Records Management Code note that the following performance indicators should be included:
- quantity of records created (for example, in linear metres or megabytes);
  - quantity of records inspected;
  - response times in providing information from the records or retrieving the records themselves;
  - quantity of records appraised, selected and destroyed or transferred to an archive;
  - user satisfaction.
- 10.7 However there are other significant benefits from sharing and re-using records corporately which can be assessed. These include:
- immediate access to documents as soon as they are filed;
  - reduction in filing delays and bottlenecks, which can make recently used documents hard to find;
  - ability to share documents easily with colleagues anywhere on the estate;
  - promoting knowledge-sharing;
  - sharing of information about files, their subjects and controllers across an organisation, again supporting better information sharing;
  - promotion of organisational learning and understanding;
  - swifter and more effective and comprehensive evidence-based decision making;

- availability of effective records to ensure that new staff can ‘hit the ground running’;
- improved retention of knowledge when staff retire, leave or move posts;
- being able to deal with emergencies, especially when colleagues are out in the field;
- senior managers able to access file material out-of-hours and when support staff are unavailable, helping them to respond more effectively to urgent business requirements;
- improved access to working information will help staff in all areas to extract better value from the infrastructure;
- the ease with which documents can be captured for the record should encourage staff to be diligent in their record keeping;
- will allow staff to search for an electronic document by keywords, or by author – a dramatic improvement in convenience for users of current records, and should make those records more and better used;
- improved staff productivity by enhancing the use of documents and records as a corporate information source;
- better management information on documents and records created, searched and retrieved, aiding the planning process;
- avoiding the ‘re-inventing of wheels’.

10.8 The general move within all organisations from an assumption that their paper documents and print-out are the true indicators of evidential records to an increasing dependence upon the creation and receipt of electronic records which continue to be held in a digital form presents an opportunity and a challenge.

10.9 In theory access and retrieval of electronic information should be far easier and the system access controls for sensitive information can be very robust. Against this can be set a wide perception that much information is “personal” and is therefore held in private locations on networks (e.g. e-mail held in personal mailboxes or documents held on personal drives) where the “owner” can delete at will and where they are invisible to other authorised users who may need to access them in the conduct of business. Managers have to grasp the information management challenge to educate and motivate personnel to identify what records and communications are pertinent to the business and to locate them into the record management systems established by the authority. There is some evidence that many end users in most organisations are unclear on this point especially where e-mail communications are involved and high level strategic guidance does not usually provide the detailed guidance the end users need.

10.10 The following is therefore recommended especially where organisations are implementing electronic record management solutions (ERMS):

- Users in each business unit need clear unambiguous guidance of what information is critical to that business activity and this should extend to the type and nature of communication that should be captured or filed;
- The file-plan or business classification system for each business activity needs to be usable and easily understood by the personnel who are to store and retrieve records located within that portion of the file-plan. The design has to serve the business activity as well as wider corporate needs;
- Where something new or unusual needs to be captured guidance has to be provided for end users on whom to approach to advice or resolve the matter;
- When filing electronic records it is critical that the descriptive title actually reflects the subject so it is readily apparent to other users what that record represents (N/B e-mail is especially problematic as the original subject lines are often ambiguous if not meaningless);
- Each business unit should establish clearly understood rules where it is important to limit access to certain records or cases on grounds of privacy or sensitivity. An access model needs to be defined to prevent unauthorised access but simplify the initial capture.

## Relevant guidance

10.11 Each sector may have its own sector specific rules, regulations and guidance and readers of this workbook should use such guidance when establishing a record keeping or management system. Additional guidance on this subject has been provided by The National Archives (TNA) and is available on the TNA web-site. Although some of the earlier publications were written initially for a central government audience they are broadly relevant to any public authority requiring to manage its records in conformance with the *Records Management Code* The following publication should be referenced:

*Guidelines on the Realisation of benefits from Electronic Records Management*

[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/benefits\\_realisation.pdf](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/advice/pdf/benefits_realisation.pdf)

Additional guidance is provided by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) in the following publication:

*Electronic Document and Records Management System Implementation Toolkit*

Stage 9 *Measuring the Results* is relevant here and can be accessed on the JISC InfoNet at the location given below:

<http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/edrm/stage-9/index.html>

10.12 Some examples of measurements which might be used for an electronic record management system (ERMS) are suggested here:

- number of individuals trained and given access to the system; i.e. a KPI of how widespread is the availability of ERMS facilities;
- percentage of users/teams capturing records into the system (70% of users has sometimes been used as an initial target, although clearly the ultimate target is 100%);
- percentage of users capturing records at: roughly the rate expected; far fewer than expected; far more than expected;
- total volumes of electronic filing in the ERMS and in network drives;
- percentage of records in the system which are viewable by anyone in the organisation (as opposed to being confidential to certain teams/roles);
- a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) of how much information is capable of being shared;
- percentage of users regularly accessing records from the system (however this is also affected by the volume of records captured if insufficient records relating to an activity are captured this will have an adverse impact on this metric);
- percentage of users regularly carrying out searches in the system;
- percentage of known records found by searches.

The last bullet point above relating to the percentage of known records found by searches actually can be used to elicit three further metrics. These are:

- The effectiveness of the search engine itself;
- How well the records are titled and filed
- How effective users are at composing potentially complex searches

The ability of users to retrieve records easily is almost certainly in inverse proportion to their ability to create complex search criteria. Many users are reluctant to use advanced search screens and this can have an impact on their perception of the usability and viability of the system.

## **Evaluation questionnaire**

10.13 The model action plans published by The National Archives to help different parts of the public sector achieve compliance with the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records provide the following key objective:

*To identify whether information is being managed effectively through monitoring of compliance with records management policies and procedures*

10.14 To assess whether this element is adequately addressed see the questions in the table on the following page, numbered 1 to 17 in this workbook. These questions are intended to be used by all organisations including those which have yet to establish a record keeping system but which are developing the knowledge required for one and those public authorities who have already made that transition to full records management including establishing an ERMS. Guidance on how to analyse the responses to these questions is provided in the chapter entitled *Risk evaluation and development of mitigation strategies*.

1. Do end users have easy access to the guidance provided in each business unit explaining the type and nature of the communications created or received which should routinely be captured or filed into the record management system? Yes  No  N/A

*(Note: it is assumed here that guidance has been developed as per earlier questions in other modules. The point here is to confirm the guidance both exists and is readily available to all users. If the guidance is prominently available on-line it is not unreasonable to assume that users can access it provided its existence is drawn to their attention periodically. If the guidance is held in a manual in a cupboard it is unlikely it is ever referenced).*

Reference

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2. Where guidance has been provided as per the question above have the business manager's evidence that this is brought to the attention of all personnel in their business unit periodically? Yes  No  N/A

Reference

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3. Are spot checks undertaken within each business unit to confirm if recently filed records are an adequate reflection of what has been created or received and are sufficient for business purposes? Yes  No  N/A

*(Note: what is being established here relates to the overall quality of the corporate record. If an organisation has stipulated that certain types of information transactions should be captured there needs to be periodic assessment that the volume of material captured accords with what would be expected to exist given the nature and tempo of the business and the requirement of the organisation to capture certain forms of communication)*

Reference

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4. Are statistics generated regularly to allow managers to identify if certain users are not using the system appropriately? Yes  No  N/A

*(Note: the issue here is to identify if any user is evading using the system for creation of folders or filing records. Low usage statistics will help identify non-compliant users and focus supplementary training efforts. High usage statistics can also identify if a user is capturing large volumes of data not required by the organisation. Another aspect is filing patterns. In some instances a user might only file into their personal area as opposed to the corporate file plan or only into one or two folders. This might imply a lack of confidence or knowledge of the file-plan, which can be addressed by further training.)*

Reference

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5. Where evidence of non-compliance is identified is the guidance and training offered to end users adequate to ensure appropriate records are filed? Yes  No  N/A

*(Note it may be necessary to survey the users to ascertain the effectiveness and relevance of the training provided for this purpose)*

Reference

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6. *Has the organisation's business classification scheme or file-plan for each business activity been validated by end users within that activity?* Yes  No  N/A

*(Note users may need to be surveyed to clarify this. If users are holding material on other drives outside of the system or storing the records on personal spaces or in general folders because there are no appropriate locations for storing some of the records this could be an indication that file-plan requires further development. Similarly if areas of the file-plan are unused that may indicate these areas are redundant and should be closed but again such assumptions have to be validated).*

Reference

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7. *Is there a mechanism for end users and managers to lodge suggestions for improvement to the file-plan?* Yes  No  N/A

Reference

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8. *Where suggestions for improvement or change to the file-plan are made are these acted upon to a known timetable or where it is not appropriate are these issues communicated to the relevant users?* Yes  No  N/A

*(Note: ideally there should be a mechanism or process to undertake reviews of this type formally and any review has to assess the impact of the proposed change on the whole organisation and following a modification a further assessment should be made after an agreed interval to confirm the positive effects outweigh the negative ones).*

Reference

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9. *Are the end users made aware of the authority's disposal policies and why it is important that certain records are stored in the locations designated for them?* Yes  No  N/A

Reference

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10. *When filing electronic records is there guidance on what needs to be incorporated into the title description (i.e. the record name) to ensure accurate retrieval by third parties within the organisation?* Yes  No  N/A

Reference

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11. *When filing e-mail records is there guidance on how to determine the appropriate title (i.e. the record name) when more than one instance of an ongoing communication is to be filed?* Yes  No  N/A

*Reference*

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12. *Is there formal training to enable personnel to adopt the required record titling or naming conventions?* Yes  No  N/A

*Reference*

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13. *Are spot checks undertaken to ascertain the quality of the record titling or naming?* Yes  No  N/A

*(Note: spot checks should form part of an ongoing process which should follow an agreed timescale unless there is evidence of malfunction which require additional ad hoc checks. Fundamentally these systems are only as good as the information fed into them and if names or titles are unhelpful this will compromise the value of the system for all users).*

*Reference*

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14. *Has guidance has been provided for end users to indicate which party in an e-mail exchange is responsible for filing that exchange?* Yes  No  N/A

*(Note: this can be particularly important where there is a need to capture internal communications. For example if an e-mail is generated which contains an explicit authorisation or a formal instruction who should file it - the creator, the recipient or both? The issue to avoid is where neither party files it as responsibility is unclear and no record is therefore maintained)*

Reference

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15. *Has the organisation established metrics for retrieval of records in response to searches?* Yes  No  N/A

*(Note: the credibility of ERM systems for end users lies in their ability to generate a search enquiry which has a positive result. There is not an absolutely correct response to this question as a response will be in part subjective. Success is partially dependent upon the quality of the naming conventions and the adherence to them but also the ability of users to use the advanced search functionality with confidence when a simple search will not suffice. This latter quality is dependent upon the training given both initially and subsequently. To ascertain this measure a user survey combined with independent check searches may be required)*

Reference

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16. *Where scheduled disposal is due have the records been assessed and appropriately disposed in a timely manner?* Yes  No  N/A

Reference

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17. *Are there mechanisms in place to validate disposal schedules to ensure they are apposite and that material required for business purposes has not been lost?* Yes  No  N/A

Reference

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