

### 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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## The National Archives Records Management Guides

### 3. Human Resources in Records Management

#### Introduction

This Records Management Guide has been produced by The National Archives as part of a series of brief explanatory guides which have been developed to help public authorities achieve compliance with the Code of Practice, issued by the Lord Chancellor, under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Code provides guidance on good practice in records management to all authorities subject to either the Freedom of Information Act, or the Public Records Act 1958 or the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923. For the convenience of the reader this Code is hereafter referred to as the Records Management Code.

This guide covers the following:

- Assignment of authority for records management for the three key groups of staff: management; records management staff; and record creators and users
- Staffing options
- The roles and responsibilities of each of the three groups of staff identified above
- Training requirements for the different staff groups
- The need for training evaluation and review
- Further guidance and information.

Although records management is not generally a difficult or complicated function, it is important that all staff understand their responsibilities and the rationale behind the authority's records management system. They will need training tailored to their recordkeeping responsibilities in order to effectively use, maintain and, in the case of records management staff, manage the recordkeeping system.

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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### Authority for Records Management

Authority for records management should be enshrined in the records management policy (see Guide no 2). Authority to carry out records management tasks and to support and facilitate others with recordkeeping responsibilities is crucial to the success of the records management programme: where there is a requirement to create and capture records, it should be clear who is responsible for doing it. Authorities will need to consider several levels of authority, depending on its size, remit and the records management responsibilities of the staff concerned. Broadly, they will fall into one of the following categories:

- **Management:** the organisation should designate and authorise a senior manager to take overall responsibility for records management policy, strategy and implementation throughout the organisation.
- **Records Management Specialist:** the records manager, or employee who has overall responsibility for records management, needs to be authorised to develop and implement the records management programme and to command the support and resources necessary for its management.
- **Staff:** all staff will have some responsibility for creating and managing records effectively in line with the records management policy and procedures. Staff need to be allowed the time required to carry out recordkeeping tasks. Ideally, this should be written into all job descriptions.

### Staffing Options

The provision and allocation of adequate and appropriate authorities for the records management programme are closely related to the provision of adequate resources. Whilst there are other resources, staffing resources are the most vital to successful records management. Resource provision should be part of the senior manager's responsibilities for records management, and s/he should have an adequate budget, particularly for recruiting and retaining staff.

Senior Management and Human Resources management must be aware of the need for and rationale behind the recruitment, ongoing development and retention of good quality records management staff. In addition to specialist staff with responsibility for developing and running the records management programme, other staff in the organisation have responsibilities for records and need to be trained in or made aware of

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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them, given appropriate authorisation and assign priority to recordkeeping tasks. There are generally seven main categories of staff with differing roles and responsibilities for records management:

- The senior manager with responsibility for records management
- Managers and executives with staff supervision responsibilities
- Records managers (sometimes called records management officers) with designated responsibility for records management, whether or not it is the main focus of their job description
- Records management support staff
- In large or dispersed organisations, local records managers or records management officers
- Other staff with key recordkeeping roles that are crucial for good records management, such as information security, information systems and risk management
- All staff who create, receive and use records but who have no specific responsibility for records management

Where the organisation uses contractors, they form another group of potential users and creators of the organisational record. The contract must cover the creation and maintenance of records that document their work and which they hand over at the end of the contract.

Organisations have several different options for providing themselves with specialist records management skills. For example:

- Appoint a records manager with relevant qualifications, for example in records or information management
- Appoint an experienced records management specialist
- Give an existing staff member responsibility for running the records management programme and providing them with appropriate training. This new responsibility may be in addition to other duties in smaller organisations
- Contract a consultant to develop and implement the records management programme and to retain their services as required
- Appoint local records managers for each business area, under the central direction of a senior records manager (usually this happens if records management authority is distributed or delegated across an organisation)

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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Each organisation must decide for itself which option would be most suitable, depending on its size, the state of its records management and the resources available.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Different Types of Staff

Records management responsibilities must be clearly defined and assigned through the records management policy and individual job descriptions. They must also be made known throughout the organisation.

#### Senior Manager with Records Management Responsibility

*"A designated member of staff of appropriate seniority should have lead responsibility for records management within the authority. This lead role should be formally acknowledged and made known throughout the authority."* (from the Records Management Code)

The senior manager's role is to allocate resources to records management, promote compliance with procedures and champion both the records manager and the records management function. In particular, the senior manager responsible for records management must:

- Establish a dedicated team to carry out the record management roles and duties identified in the records management policy
- Assess the need for and allocate resources to implement and maintain the records management programme
- Be familiar with the organisation's obligations under FoI and the requirements of the Records Management Code as well as other laws and regulations affecting records management practices

#### Managers

All managers have an important role to play in ensuring the success of the records management programme. They are responsible for ensuring that their staff and contractors create and keep records as an integral part of their work and in accordance with established policies, procedures and standards. They also provide the resources necessary for the management of records and liaise with records management professionals.

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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### Records Managers

*“Staff responsible for records management should have the appropriate skills and knowledge needed to achieve the aims of the records management programme. Responsibility for all aspects of record keeping should be specifically defined and incorporated in the role descriptions or similar documents.” (from the Records Management Code)*

The records manager needs to be competent to interpret and put in place policies and procedures to meet the organisation’s obligations with respect to freedom of information, data protection and other legislation affecting records management. In particular, the records manager should be able to set up and/or maintain a records management programme compliant with the Records Management Code and other relevant Standards and good practice guidance such as that promoted by The National Archives. He/she should have an understanding of IT systems in so far as they impact on records management. The ability to assess and analyse the organisation’s business, objectives and processes is also required.

The records manager is responsible for undertaking specialist records management tasks such as:

- Developing and issuing the organisation’s overall records management policy, procedures and standards
- Implementing records management activities and processes
- Collaborating with IT and other staff on the specification and implementation of new computer systems where they generate or store records
- Acting as a consultant for operational units in reviewing and/or establishing paper and electronic filing systems and procedures
- Advising on the use of metadata and other search strategies to facilitate the retrieval of current records
- Undertaking the review, development and implementation of disposal policies and retention schedules
- Managing the transfer, storage and retrieval of inactive records, either in person or by contracting a trusted custodian
- Identifying vital records and establishing procedures to protect and manage them

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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- Assessing staffing resources required to implement and manage the records management programme
- Identifying the skills and knowledge required by records management staff and establishing a formal appraisal, training and development framework
- Supervising records management support staff
- Establishing standards, providing guidance and communicating with local records managers (where they are appointed)
- Training staff who create and use records to follow records management procedures
- Carrying out regular review of all aspects of the records management programme

### Records Management Support Staff

In large organisations there may be a need for records management support staff (sometimes called record assistants or records officers) to assist the records manager. They should demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles underpinning good records management and/or have experience working in records management.

Records Management Support staff are responsible for:

- Supporting the records manager in the full range of activities that make up the records management programme
- Carrying out routine records management operations such as:
  - Records transfer
  - Record retrieval
  - Vital record protection
  - Inventory
  - Data entry and metadata application
- Liaising with departments/operational units

### Local Records Managers

In a large organisation where responsibilities are devolved or distributed, each business unit may be required to manage its own records. Local records managers will be responsible for the same range of specialist records management tasks indicated in the section above covering the records manager's responsibilities. Consistency is important so someone

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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should be made responsible for controlling and coordinating records management across the organisation.

### Other Staff with Key Records Management Roles

There will be a number of staff in the organisation who have roles and responsibilities which are crucial to effective records management. This includes:

- Staff responsible for security, especially information security
- Systems administrators and IT staff, especially those responsible for designing, implementing and managing systems which create and manage records
- Staff responsible for compliance with legislation and regulation
- Risk management staff

### All Staff

In the modern government and business environment all staff will be creating and managing records to a greater or lesser extent, especially when IT systems are used, and the quality and success of the records management programme will depend on them. All employees are therefore responsible for creating accurate and complete records, which adequately document their business activities and meet the organisation's legal, regulatory and accountability requirements. Simple guidance, supported by training and awareness sessions, should set out their responsibilities to:

- Create accurate and complete records of their work in accordance with records management procedures to ensure records are reliable and authentic
- File and/or save records together with other records relating to the activity or transaction to ensure the record is complete and remains in the context of the activity or function it supports
- Document and track all records removed from the system in support of their work
- Destroy or transfer records only in accordance with relevant retention schedules and records management procedures
- Liaise with records management staff in the design of current filing systems, development of vital records programmes, retention schedules and transfer of records to non-current storage

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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### Training Requirements for Different Types of Staff

Regardless of the organisation's records management staffing structure, there will be an on-going requirement for training and awareness raising throughout the organisation. The records manager needs to work with in-house training and development staff as well as with the human resources department to develop and establish a training plan.

The first step is to establish competencies for records management staff at all levels. The competencies can then be used to develop job descriptions which list the duties and skills required for records management work. A good example to either follow or benchmark against is the National Archives Best Practice Guidance: Human Resources which gives a records management competence framework in Annex A. Once the competencies have been established they can be used as the basis for establishing a formal appraisal, training and development framework. The framework should be extended to cover training of non-specialist staff in their records management responsibilities. In particular job descriptions for all personnel should include the task of creating and filing adequate and reliable records. The competencies, training plan and personnel selection criteria must be regularly reviewed to ensure currency and compliance with best practice.

The training will need to be tailored to different categories of staff and whilst some of the required training should be within the capability of the records manager, some may need to be outsourced. Some possible training methods are:

- Inclusion of records management in the organisation's employee induction programme
- Formal technical training for employees new to particular system responsibilities or at times of system change
- Either formal or informal in-service training and coaching
- Briefing and awareness-raising sessions on records management issues and initiatives
- Manuals, leaflets, booklets and/or webpages providing guidance on records management policy and procedures
- Training courses provided by external training providers either as part of their general syllabus or customised to meet the organisation's requirements

The selection of training methodology will depend on the role and responsibilities of the staff concerned and the organisation's approach to



## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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training and development. Details of some training providers are given at the end of this guide.

### **Senior Manager with Records Management Responsibility and all Other Managers**

Managers with overall responsibility for records management will need to be familiar with the aims, benefits and organisational requirements of records management. Essentially they need to know enough to champion the policy and procedures and to assess and provide adequate resources for the programme. They are likely to either pick up this knowledge in the process of specifying records management policy and staffing needs or by discussion with and reporting by the records manager. The records manager will need to be able to summarise information and provide executive briefings to ensure that managers are adequately informed whilst recognising that they have limited time to spend on records management.

### **Senior and Local Records Managers**

Records managers in larger organisations may already have a formal qualification in records management. If that is not the case, they should be supported in study to acquire such a qualification by distance learning. In smaller organisations this may not be practicable but whoever is made responsible for records management must be given an opportunity to attend relevant training courses to obtain the skills and knowledge needed to carry out their new duties effectively. If their other duties include freedom of information and data protection, the LLM in Information Rights offered by the University of Northumbria, with its module on records management, may be suitable.

Even if the records manager is already qualified and experienced s/he should keep abreast of current developments in records management and attend training courses and conferences as well as taking advantage of any other suitable opportunities for professional development. Training courses might include:

- Technical and IT based training
- Existing and new legislation and regulation
- Standards and best practice
- Practical techniques and case studies

Records managers may also be members of the relevant professional associations and bodies, such as the Records Management Society of Great Britain or the Society of Archivists.

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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### Records Management Support Staff

Records management support staff will not necessarily have any formal records management qualifications or training. Some universities offer a course leading to a certificate in records management, which may be appropriate for some staff. Support staff may also attend short training courses offered by the various training providers listed at the end of this guidance. The records manager should develop a training programme for support staff.

### Other Staff with Key Recordkeeping Roles

For those staff with crucial roles for recordkeeping, such as those with IT, compliance and risk management roles, the training requirement is likely to be limited to awareness-raising.

### All Staff

Where records management is either a new initiative in the organisation or is undergoing review and redevelopment, there will be an initial one-off need to train all staff in new procedures and requirements. This training should be supported by relevant and appropriate procedure manuals.

Once the records management programme is bedded down, there will be a requirement to include records management awareness in the induction programme which may need to be followed up by one-on-one training for new staff as they begin to carry out records management tasks. Records management support staff should be able to deliver this on request, for example when staff need to make a record transfer for the first time.

When the organisation procures and implements new systems or introduces training in new initiatives or legislative or regulatory requirements that have an impact on recordkeeping, the records manager should ensure that such training includes the necessary records management component.

### Training Evaluation and Review

It is good practice to evaluate and review all training. The Human Resources department may have a review process that the records management programme can use. Evaluation and review should cover:

- Whether specific training has met the learning goals of the trainee/s
- Whether specific training has achieved its own learning outcomes

## **3. Human Resources in Records Management**

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- Whether the overall training plan has resulted in improved or extended performance by the trainee/s
- Trainee satisfaction
- Whether the overall training plan is meeting the training and development needs of the records management programme

Evaluation and review should be followed up by identification of areas that need changing or improving and result in the necessary adjustments. If necessary those staff who have already undergone the training should be updated.

Margaret Crockett  
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July 2006

### 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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#### Further Guidance and Information

##### Standards

- *ISO 15489-1:2001 Information and documentation – Records Management (Part 1 General)*
- *PD ISO/TR 15489-2:2001 Information and documentation – Records Management (Part 2: Guidelines)*

##### Guidance

- The National Archives Best Practice Guidance: *Human Resources*  
[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/pdf/best\\_human\\_resources.pdf](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice/pdf/best_human_resources.pdf)
- *Complying with the Records Management Code: Evaluation Workbook and Methodology Consultation Draft*  
[http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/record\\_management\\_compliance.pdf](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/record_management_compliance.pdf)

##### Training Providers

- Society of Archivists training programme  
<http://www.archives.org.uk/events.asp?c=3>
- Records Management Society training programme  
<http://www.rms-gb.org.uk/training>
- TFPL  
[http://www.tfpl.com/skills\\_development/training\\_learning.cfm](http://www.tfpl.com/skills_development/training_learning.cfm)
- The Archive-Skills Consultancy training programme  
<http://www.archive-skills.com/training/index.php>
- University College London School of Library Archive and information Studies  
<http://www.slais.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-ARM>
- Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies  
<http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/courses.htm>

## 3. Human Resources in Records Management

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- University of Northumbria  
<http://northumbria.ac.uk/?view=CourseDetail&code=DTDRCM6>
- University of Dundee  
<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/prospectus/graduate/profiles/armms.htm>
- Glasgow University  
<http://www.hatii.arts.gla.ac.uk/imp/index.htm>
- University of Wales at Aberystwyth  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/postgrad/courses/archive-records.php>

### Training Resources

- The Information Commissioner's website  
<http://www.ico.gov.uk/eventual.aspx?id=41>
- The Archivists' Association of British Columbia: the Archivist's Toolkit  
<http://aabc.bc.ca/aabc/toolkit.html>
- JISC: Records Management Info-kit  
<http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/records-management/>
- John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library: Understanding Society through its Records  
<http://john.curtin.edu.au/society/index.html>
- ARMA International: RIM Fundamentals  
<http://www.arma.org/rim/fundamentals/index.cfm>
- The Archive-Skills Consultancy: Info-bytes  
<http://www.archive-skills.com/infobytes/index.php>
- UK Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research: Archival Awareness  
<http://www.liv.ac.uk/lucas/archaware/intro.htm>
- International Records Management Trust: Managing Public Sector Records Study Programme  
<http://www.irmt.org/downloadlist/education.html>