

**RESPONSE TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
ASSESSMENT (AUGUST 2007)**

BRITISH COUNCIL ACTION PLAN

Introduction

This action plan has been prepared in response to the Information Management Assessment of the British Council completed by The National Archives in August 2007. The assessment was conducted against the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A [summary of findings](#) from the assessment is available on the British Council website.

The action plan addresses the challenges and risks highlighted in the findings, with a particular focus on the following three key areas:

- The BC records system (British Council's bespoke Electronic Records Management System)
- The culture of information management at the British Council
- Resources for information management at the British Council

1. BC records system

Challenge: The BC Records system has not been fully exploited by staff because it is difficult to use and is not integrated into workflow. Users must remember to save finalised records retroactively. Staff have the possibility to save corporate records in other repositories and systems which has led to fragmented information storage, causing difficulties in retrieving and safeguarding information.

Action: An evaluation of British Council requirements for an ERMS will be conducted during 2008/2009. This will include a further examination of the functionality of BC records, an analysis of user feedback, an information audit and a cost benefit analysis of ERMS system options.

Responsible staff: Records Manager

2. Culture of information management at the British Council

Challenge: British Council staff lack training and guidance on records and information management and awareness levels are low. Considerable time is spent looking for information and users are not clear on what constitutes a record.

Action: Improving the information management culture will require a sustained effort and a long term strategy, which is currently being established. The development and promotion of training programmes will begin in 2008. The initial phase will focus on raising awareness of FOI and DPA, to be followed by a more comprehensive records management training package from 2009 to coincide with the approval of policies, completion of tool development and EDRMS launch.

Responsible staff: Records Manager

3. Resources for information management

Challenge: The assessment described staffing levels and expertise in information management as insufficient, which had led to a lack of strategic development in this area. It also recommended that resources for records and information management should be re-evaluated.

Action: Action has already been taken to improve staffing levels with the appointment of a Head of Information and Knowledge Management in February 2008 and a Records Manager in April 2008.

A short term workplan (until the end of 2008) has been established to address the most urgent needs of the British council with respect to information management. In addition, a long term strategy and vision is under development for the period 2009-2014. This will include an analysis of the resource implications for the programme.

Responsible staff: Head of Information and Knowledge Management