Where should records management sit in an organisation’s structure?

Group feedback

Group Chaired by Amanda Wright

NOTES OF DISCUSSION

Group consisted of two private sector representatives, one from a drink company and the other an off-site storage provider. The others were from the Care Commission, Fife Police, Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency, Royal College of Physicians, University of Glasgow, and Scottish Water.

1. Where does RM currently sit within your organisation and where should it sit?

Department you sit within e.g. Corporate, ITC or Legal

Most of the group members sit within corporate business support departments and have no responsibilities for data protection or freedom of information. Only the Care Commission and the police managed other legislative matters. All were happy with where they currently sit apart from the Royal College of Physicians. They are in the membership services, which is confusing.

Report to? – Senior Management

Although most of the group were not senior managers themselves there structures are flat so most reported directly to a senior manager part from Scottish Water who said there Line Manager were not senior.

Staff numbers & roles

- Care Commission – three staff plus access to other members of staff allocated to support information governance
- Scottish Water – five staff dealing with records management and archiving
- Fife Police – one member of staff dealing with records management
- Royal College of Physicians – one member of staff dealing with records management
- Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency – one member of staff dealing with records management
• University of Glasgow – three members of staff dealing with records management

• Drinks Company – one member of staff co-ordinating and records management champion at each site.

**Corporate or decentralised?**

The majority of organisations have a corporate approach to records management.

**What functional areas does RM cover? e.g. archiving, retention, knowledge management…..**

Apart from the Care Commission all other representatives cover both records management and archiving. Knowledge and information management was seen as a corporate led responsibility that they did not contribute to at present.

The Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency is clear how they fit into the bigger picture and are clear of the organisations information management aims and objectives.

**Budget/Funding**

Didn’t really discuss this in any detail. Other than that records management was seen as an overhead and there generally isn’t any funding available for initiatives unless they are led by IT.

2. **What is your organisation’s perception of RM?**

**Relative positioning of RM and Archiving within your organisation?**

At lot of discussion took place around how the organisation perceived records management. The main thrust of the conversation was that staff whether it’s the public or private sector are confused about records management and archiving and didn’t always understand the need for best practice. Scottish Water is trying to change some of the terminology to make it easier to understand when information is archived as opposed to being deposited into a central filing structure. This is similar in the Royal College for Physicians and other organisations. At lot of effort is also being put into training and raising awareness of both records management and archiving policies and practices.

From a senior management perspective each organisation said that freedom of information has raised the profile of how important robust records management practice is.

**Relative positioning of RM and Information Management with your organisation**
Most of the group are not involved with information management and the two are seen as separate.

The Care Commission is the only organisation that has centralised all functions. They have freedom of information, data protection, records management, information management, data quality and improvement under one umbrella.

As stated above the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency is clear how they fit into the overall Information Management Strategy.

**Relative positioning of RM and Knowledge Management**

As above some mention has been made of knowledge management within the organisation but none of the records managers have been involved.

The Care Commission has set up a new Policy & Knowledge Management Function, which incorporate records management.

**Do you have the “ear” of senior management?**

All of the group members said that they have the “ear” of senior management if required.

**How do you “market” your services to staff**

In summary all group members said they carried out face-to-face training, have information on intranet sites and use other methods such as attending meetings or displaying posters.

3. **What changes are currently happening to the role of RM within your organisation?**

Most of the discussion on this topic focused on how freedom of information had changed the way organisations viewed the need for good records management policies and practices. In light of this the profile of records management has been raised significantly.