Discussion Paper on Records Management & Systems Overview and Outline Plan

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Introduction

The following paper outlines a preliminary approach and is shared with SMT members to initiate discussion and gather input.

- Our records management practices and the IT systems we use to support them are closely intertwined each influencing the effectiveness of the other.
- The way we structure, store, access, and retain information depends not only on our policies and procedures but also on the capabilities and limitations of the systems we use.
- For this reason, it is essential to consider both practices and systems side by side when reviewing or implementing changes.
- Improving records management is a key priority for OSIC and forms part of the strategic and operational planning.
- However, due to the potential scale of the task, a structured and agreed approach is essential by the SMT.
- This paper outlines a proposed framework for strengthening records management across the organisation by considering both current and potential systems for storing the various types of information we hold. This proposal is broken down into four key areas, each forming a separate project.
- The goal from this proposal is to implement cloud based systems that are fit for purpose and capable of storing and retrieving information in a safe, compliant, and organised way, significantly improving records management practices by ensuring greater accessibility, consistency, and long term security of our data and information.

Current IT Systems & Challenges

- Our current IT infrastructure [redacted] commonly found in other organisations which would be useful to address as part of any improvements.

Records Management Plan

- Our most recent Records Management Plan (RMP) was approved by the Keeper in July 2023. In line with standard procedure, the Keeper will only review an agreed

RMP after five years from the date of approval. Therefore, our next full submission is expected in July 2028. In the meantime, we should continue to review the plan regularly and ensure ongoing compliance.

Future Record Management and Systems

- Introducing distinct and appropriate systems for holding records will greatly improve the overall effectiveness of our records management. By using systems designed specifically for different types of records, we can ensure that information is accurately classified, securely stored, and easily retrievable. This will reduce the risk of data loss or mismanagement, support audit readiness, and streamlines record keeping processes and will bring operational efficiency across the organisation.
- Additionally, while staff currently use work mobile phones primarily for calls and authentication, upcoming unlimited data contracts will enable more flexible and mobile use, aligning with the increasing trend of mobile friendly software e.g. Breathe.

Future IT Systems

- As part of reviewing OSIC's records management proposal for a Cloud Based 4 System Information Management Model will modernise OSIC's approach to storing, accessing, and managing information, outlined is a proposal for implementing a cloud-based 4 system information management model. This approach would organise all organisational data across four dedicated systems, each designed for a specific function.

System	What it stores	Example records
HR System (e.g. Breathe)	A single source for all HR related information separated by individual employee files.	All employee related records: leave, training, payroll inputs, recruitment, etc.
Case Management System (e.g. Workpro)	Holds records directly linked to the delivery of services of core FOI business.	This system would be structured around case IDs, with full audit trails, permissions, and reporting capabilities. All service delivery records including case files, decisions, interventions, statutory requests and complaints handling.
Financial System (e.g. Sage)	Financial transaction documentation:	Invoices, bills, receipts, payroll records, tax returns and reports
Document management system	A space for general business operations, governance documentation, collaborative working space, and internal staff information in the form of an intranet	Policies, procedures, project documents, governance, general collaboration materials

Proposed (high level) Sequence of Work

1) Review and update retention schedule to confirm accuracy which will then ensure all subsequent steps align with compliance requirements.
2) Identify and securely dispose of outdated paper files based on the updated retention schedule.
3) Identify key documents that will need to be considered and revised as part of this process.
4) Upgrade the current HR system to include the necessary modules or add-ons for securely hosting and managing relevant people related records. This will require a product demo, procurement process, and updated budget planning based on cost. A revised Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will also be needed as part of the implementation.
5) Extract all HR related files from VC and import into the updated HR system.
6) Arrange staff training on updated HR system.
7) Move the accounting/finance system away from Sage to a modern, dynamic platform. This will require a product demo, procurement process, and updated budget planning based on cost. A revised Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) will also be needed as part of the implementation.
8) Apply Retention schedule and migrate remaining financial data and files from VC into new accounting system.
   Transfer all relevant transactional data into new system. Following this, destroy any remaining financial data that falls outside the retention schedule.
9) Staff training on updated system
10) Design SharePoint (or equivalent) Folder Structure (get external help)
    Plan a logical and scalable folder structure for the new site to support efficient file storage and access.
11) Build new system and Intranet (get external help e.g. consultant)
    Develop the new system including the setup of an internal intranet for staff information. DPIA and EIA required.
12) Apply retentional schedule to remaining documentation in VC and migrate remaining documentation over.
13) Staff Training on use of new systems

Anticipated Benefits

These changes closely align with the aims of the digital strategy, and this project will modernise the organisation's infrastructure by:

- [redacted]
- Migrating all systems data to cloud-based platforms enabling secure, remote access.
- Moving to cloud-based software will strengthen our resilience planning for disaster recovery and business continuity.
- Developing a more intuitive and efficient information folder structure will improve how staff locate documents and information they need, which will enhance efficiency and ease of use for everyone in the organisation.
- Introducing a mobile accessible centralised HR system will provide a single point of access for all employee related files, but which is user friendly for staff.

- Streamlining workflows across HR, finance, and general operations will support efficiencies in an already stretched BST. Removal of duplication and manual entry in many processes and also reduce risk.
- HR system can also host workflows such as recruitment bringing added efficiencies, and also a learning platform to host training and record training, further strengthening digital capabilities and moving away from a manual way of approaching this.

Budget Considerations

Should this proposal go ahead, there will be several ongoing project related expenditures to support the implementation, enhancement, and maintenance of core systems and staff capabilities for which budget estimates can be obtained:

Breathe HR System Enhancements - add-ons and feature extensions to support expanded HR functions, along with recurring licensing and support fees.
Alternative Accounting System e.g. Xero: Costs associated with license fee for the new financial management platform.
[redacted]
External Consultant: Engagement of a specialist consultant for the design and build of a customised document management solution.
Microsys IT Support: Potential additional costs for ongoing technical support services provided by Microsys that may be over and above their standard support.
Staff Training and Development: Costs related to staff training initiatives to ensure effective adoption and use of newly implemented systems and processes.

Recommendations

This paper presents an initial outline proposal for a potentially manageable plan for approaching records management and system changes and improvements, aligning with the organisation's strategic and operational plans and digital strategy aspirations. As this is a starting point for discussion. As a starting point for discussion, SMT can explore this further during the upcoming SMT away day. Key areas for consideration include:

- Arrange demonstrations to assess the functionality, user-friendliness, and overall suitability of the proposed platforms.
- Obtain accurate pricing for new systems and identify appropriate procurement routes to determine financial feasibility within the current budget.
- Assess how each platform ensures data protection and complies with relevant data handling regulations.
- Define the sequence of work to ensure a structured and efficient implementation process.
- Assess the staffing and capacity required to support delivery and ongoing management.
- Explore other options for managing our records and systems, to ensure the chosen approach is the most effective and sustainable.

Once this information has been gathered, the options can be brought back to SMT for further discussion and to agree on the most practical and cost effective way forward.