*Notes (to be deleted as required):*

1. *See our Guidance on carrying out an FOI self-assessment for more information about gathering and recording evidence:* [*www.itspublicknowledge.info/toolkit*](https://www.itspublicknowledge.info/toolkit)
2. *Boxes will expand as you type*
3. ***NB this document is A3 but it should print as A4 if you send it to an A4 printer***

**Authority** [authority name]

**Lead Officer** [name]

**Date completed** [date evidence gathering completed]

|  | **Questions** | **Evidence gathered** | **Strengths identified** | **Weaknesses identified / Areas for improvement** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Accountability and escalation** |  |  |  |
|  | Does a senior manager have strategic / overall responsibility for FOI practices and procedures? Does that responsibility extend to ensuring the authority has policies and guidance for searching for, locating and retrieving information? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent does the senior manager oversee and ensure there is assurance of the effectiveness of FOI practices and procedures? |  |  |  |
|  | Does a senior manager have strategic / overall responsibility for records and information management compliance? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent does this senior manager oversee and ensure there is assurance of the effectiveness of records and information management compliance? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent is the strategic link between FOI and records management understood and articulated at a *senior level*? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent are staff and business areas held responsible for searching for, locating and retrieving information for requests to a required standard and within specified timescales? |  |  |  |
|  | How are these responsibilities communicated, assessed and monitored? |  |  |  |
|  | Are the risks and benefits of the impact of poor searches understood and articulated by the authority? |  |  |  |
|  | **Record keeping** |  |  |  |
|  | How explicit is the link between the FOI and records management functions *within the authority*? |  |  |  |
|  | How regular is the liaison between staff and business managers responsible for FOI and records management? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent do the authority’s records management arrangements support searching for, locating and retrieving information for FOI requests and vice versa? |  |  |  |
|  | How do FOI and records management staff keep each other updated? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent are the authority’s records management plans and rules used to identify, find and retrieve requested information? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent does the authority use its experience of FOI to improve its records management? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent has the learning from FOI been translated into actual improvements in records management? |  |  |  |
|  | How effective are the authority’s arrangements for maintaining and adding to the content of the authority’s Guide to Information (under the Model Publication Scheme)? Are staff kept updated about what information is published? |  |  |  |
|  | **Procedures and systems** |  |  |  |
|  | How effective are the authority’s FOI procedures in ensuring searches for information are consistently complete and proportionate? |  |  |  |
|  | Are the instructions to staff about searching, locating and retrieving information both clear and unambiguous? |  |  |  |
|  | How effectively does the authority communicate those instructions and ensure staff both understand and follow them? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent can records of searches be relied upon for a) reviews by the authority and b) responses to an investigation by the Commissioner? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent do policies and procedures for searching, locating and retrieving information meet the requirements of the Section 60 Code of Practice? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent do policies and procedures for records management meet the requirements of the Section 61 Code of Practice? |  |  |  |
|  | What evidence is there that the authority is providing advice and assistance to requesters about the type of information it is likely to hold on a particular subject? |  |  |  |
|  | Is there help for the public to frame requests to access the information they want to see and how effective is that help? |  |  |  |
|  | What action is taken when searches, location and retrieval of information has not been of the required standard or quality? How effective is that action in delivering improvement? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent do responses to FOI requests explain why information is not held? |  |  |  |
|  | **Guidance and training** |  |  |  |
|  | How does the authority identify any training needs around searching for, locating and retrieving information, at both an individual and corporate level? |  |  |  |
|  | How effective are the authority’s training and briefings for staff in respect of searching for, locating and retrieving information? |  |  |  |
|  | How does the authority ensure that training and guidance are support relevant and appropriate to identified staff needs? |  |  |  |
|  | Does staff training make clear the link between FOI and the authority’s information and records management policies and procedures? |  |  |  |
|  | Do staff know where to go for help with searching, locating and retrieving information for requests? Do they use that help? If so, how effective is the support? |  |  |  |
|  | **Staff resources** |  |  |  |
|  | How effectively do business areas search for, locate and retrieve information for requests? |  |  |  |
|  | Do managers across the authority ensure that adequate staff resources are allocated to searching, locating and retrieving information, including cover for absence? |  |  |  |
|  | What is the cost to the organisation of carrying out searches and how is the cost managed? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent do managers emphasise the importance of complying with information requests? |  |  |  |
|  | **Monitoring, reporting and reviewing** |  |  |  |
|  | How does the organisation ensure its practices in searching for, locating and retrieving information are effective, efficient and proportionate? |  |  |  |
|  | To what extent does the authority learn from experience and make continuous improvement? |  |  |  |
|  | Who is responsible for setting, monitoring and reporting against performance in searching for, locating and retrieving information? |  |  |  |
|  | How frequently is performance monitored and reported? |  |  |  |
|  | What action is taken as a result of monitoring and reporting? |  |  |  |

**Document control sheet**

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| **Summary of changes to document** | | | | |  |
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