

Unit B23 Maintain and develop an information system

Unit Commentary

Summary

Information is a key component of the work of all staff in Democratic Services – Committee Administration, Member Support and Scrutiny. This information must be stored and maintained so that it is secure and can be easily retrieved when needed. This unit covers the responsibility of staff for maintaining and developing an information system – filing system, library or electronic equivalent.

It contains the following elements. Staff should:

- 1. Maintain an information system**
- 2. Develop an information system**

Each of these elements is described in greater detail on pages 130 –131. The member of staff must show relevant evidence for each of these if they are to be deemed competent in this unit. They must also show that they have the knowledge and understanding listed on page 132.

Target Group

This unit is appropriate to the work of more junior local government staff working, for example, in Committee Services, Member Support or Scrutiny.

Linked units

This unit links closely with Unit B22.

Element 1: Maintain an information system

Performance criteria

You must always make sure that:

1. you follow agreed procedures for the storage and indexing of materials in the **system**
2. you ensure that items have been stored according to agreed procedures
3. you identify and deal correctly with any problems with the system
4. you check storage equipment and areas, and the condition of items in the **system** and report anything that does not meet organisational requirements
5. you follow agreed procedures for disposing of, or archiving, items
6. you follow agreed procedures for the security and confidentiality of information in the **system**
7. you provide users with prompt and effective support when they have problems locating and storing information
8. you make sure that all records relating to the system are correctly completed

Range

- a) you must be able to use two of the following cataloguing **systems**
1. alphabetic
 2. numeric
 3. alphanumeric
 4. chronological
 5. geographical
 6. subject

You must, however, show that you could cover the full range shown above.

Element 2: Develop an information system

Performance criteria

You must always make sure that:

1. you regularly review the requirements for the system with **relevant people**
2. you identify **areas** of the system that need to be improved to take account of changing requirements
3. you identify ways of improving these **areas** in a way that is consistent with the overall system design
4. you check these suggested improvements with **relevant people**, taking account of their feedback
5. you implement and test the changes as agreed, keeping disruption to a minimum
6. you provide **relevant people** with clear and helpful information and guidance on the changes that you have made
7. you evaluate the changes with **relevant people** and make any further improvements as required

Range

- a) you must consult with both of the following **relevant people**
 1. system users
 2. line manager

- b) and improve two of the following **areas** of the system:
 1. cataloguing
 2. storage
 3. security
 4. disposal and archiving
 5. guidance and support
 6. record keeping

You must, however, show that you could cover the full range shown above.

Required Knowledge and Understanding

In order to achieve best practice in this unit, the member of staff will need to know and/or understand the following:

For the Whole Unit

- K1 the types of information stored and regularly used by members of your team and the importance of this information to their work
- K2 why it is important that this information is safely and securely stored in a way that allows users to locate it quickly and efficiently
- K3 all the relevant procedures for using and maintaining your information system

Maintaining an information system

- K4 why it is important to follow agreed procedures for the storage of materials and check that others are doing the same
- K5 why it is important to check storage conditions and the conditions of materials: what types of conditions you should report and who you should report to
- K6 why the disposal and archiving of materials is important and the procedures to follow
- K7 the importance of confidentiality and security and how to maintain these
- K8 problems that users are likely to encounter and how to deal with these effectively
- K9 the records relating to the system that need to be completed and why

Developing an information system

- K10 why it is important to review the requirements for the system and who you should do this with
- K11 how to compare user requirements with the existing system and find ways to improve it
- K12 the importance of making changes that are consistent with the overall system design
- K13 the importance of consulting with users and your line manager on proposed changes
- K14 how to implement and test changes to the areas listed.
- K15 why it is important to give your line manager and users clear information and guidance on the changes that you have made and how to do so
- K16 the importance of evaluation and how you should do this