



National Health Service in Scotland  
Management Executive

St. Andrew's House  
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Dear Colleague

**PREPARATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL  
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY  
(IM&T) STRATEGIES**

**Summary**

1. This letter seeks from all addressees, copies of their local IM&T strategies or, if appropriate, strategy overviews and prioritised plans.

**Action**

2. All Boards and NHS Trusts are required to submit copies of their full strategies or strategy overviews and prioritised plans etc, to the Directorate by 30 September 1994. In each case 3 copies are required and they should be sent to Allan Wilson, Assistant Director (Strategy), Directorate of Information Services, HSD, Keith House, 2 Redheughs Rigg, South Gyle, Edinburgh EH12 9DQ.

3. This circular supersedes NHS MEL(1993)110 dated 26 August 1993, which is now cancelled.

**Background**

4. All Health Boards, NHS Trusts and other NHS bodies are required to prepare and submit their local IM&T Strategies to the Directorate. In most cases, HSD has either responded in writing to these documents or discussed them direct with the organisations concerned. In the case of some of the more recently created Trusts, their local strategies are still awaited.

5. Local strategies should identify the organisation's information requirements which will need to be met to achieve the agreed local business objectives. They should set out a framework which will allow the development of IM&T from the present situation to that required in the longer term. All local strategies are expected to be in line with the national strategy and should adopt any nationally set standards, whether data, technical or other.

24 June 1994

NHS MEL(1993)110 dated 26 August 1993 is now cancelled.

**Addressees:**

For Action:

General Managers,  
Health Boards

General Manager,  
Common Services Agency

General Manager,  
State Hospital

Chief Executives,  
NHS Trusts

For information:

Unit General Managers,  
General Managers,  
Health Education  
Board for Scotland

**Enquiries to:**

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Strategy Development  
Officer  
HSD  
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<b>COMMON SERVICES AGENCY</b>	
<b>RECEIVED:</b>	
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REFERRED TO	ACTION TAKEN

6. To take account of the developments in the service, a revised model content for an IM&T strategy has been prepared and is attached at Annex A. If your existing strategy does not adequately cover the areas outlined in it or does not meet your current IM&T requirements, then you should consider the extent to which it may require further development.

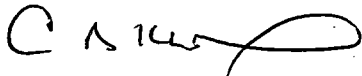
7. In cases where there is no existing strategy or where a full review of the strategy is required, HSD provided guidance on the methodology for producing a strategy - "A Framework for the Development of Information Strategies" (see MEL(1992)61). However you should note that Annex A (attached) should now replace Appendix 7 of that "Framework".

8. In cases where the original strategy was suitably extensive and the strategy itself has not changed dramatically then there is no need to revise the full document at this time. In such cases it will be sufficient for Boards/Trusts to submit a Strategy Revision Overview. The overview should outline progress from the previous year and the minor changes to the strategy itself. More detailed guidance is contained in the HSD "Guidelines on the Revision of IM&T Strategies" at Annex B.

9. All strategies, or overviews, should be accompanied by a statement of current priorities for implementing IM&T making clear its specific objectives for the year (ie 1994-95).

10. HSD will review all these documents as submitted and will respond directly to individual Boards and Trusts etc as necessary.

Yours sincerely



C B KNOX  
Director of Information Services

SUGGESTED CONTENTS FOR AN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY (IM&T) STRATEGY

1. **Introduction**

1.1 Background

Background and purpose of strategy, terms of reference, approach followed, status of document.

1.2 Executive Summary

An overview of the strategy.

2. **Objectives and Plans**

2.1 Introduction

Organisation's main functions and activities.

2.2 Business Objectives and Plans

High level descriptions of business objectives, staff perspectives and existing information-handling facilities, together with an analysis of the key components of the information needs of the Organisation.

3. **Management**

3.1 Policy

List of key policies for information-handling.

3.2 Managerial Responsibilities

Overall responsibilities for information strategy, information service provision, policies, standards, funding and authorising and monitoring projects.

4. **Information Systems**

4.1 Information Requirements

High level explanation of the information needed to support the organisation's activities.

4.2 Overviews of Existing Systems

Overviews of the systems currently in place. These might include:-

(a) **General Management Information Systems**

MIS, personnel, payroll, stores, SMR returns, quality, casemix, contract management etc.

(b) **Operational Information Systems**

PAS, laboratories, radiology, pharmacy, A&E, theatres etc.

(c) **Marketing Information Systems**

Complaints and compliments registers, customer surveys, comparative performance monitoring etc.

(d) **Clinical Information and Audit Systems**

Surgery, medicine, nursing, paramedical services etc.

(e) **Office Systems**

Electronic mail, viewdata systems, diary management, word processing, fax and answerphone facilities etc.

(f) **Library Facilities**

4.3 Information Gaps

Shortfall between information needs and information available.

4.4 Priorities and Plans for Action

Statement of priorities and actions planned.

5. **Telecommunications**

5.1 Introduction

Outline of the communications strategy, (voice and data) existing facilities and planned extensions.

5.2 Management

Responsibilities for communications management.

5.3 Local Networks

Existing uses and plans and standards for future uses.

6. **Technical Standards**

6.1 General

Relationship to national standards, mechanisms for adoption and review.

6.2 Hardware Standards

For platforms, operating systems, terminals, peripherals etc.

6.3 Software Standards

For databases, enquiry languages, man-machine interfaces (GUIs) etc.

7. **IS/IT Management and Staffing**

7.1 Introduction

Arrangements for the management of information within the organisation.

7.2 Production of IM&T Strategy

Arrangements for the production, review and maintenance of the strategy and its relationship to other initiatives (eg resource management and organisational development etc).

7.3 IS/IT Organisation

Structure, functions and responsibilities of information department and sub-contracted services.

8. **Hardware**

8.1 Hardware

Existing and planned platforms and peripherals.

8.2 Provision of Service

In-house operations, service level agreements, facilities management arrangements etc.

9. **System Development**

Plans and standards.

10. **Procurement**

Policies and plans.

11. **Data Standards**

11.1 Introduction

Policies, responsibilities and organisational arrangements.

11.2 Data Handling

Responsibilities, flows, timeliness, quality and audit.

11.3 Data Standards

Implementation of national standards. Defining and controlling local standards.

**12. IS/IT Security and Confidentiality**

**12.1 Introduction**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation (including security review procedures).

**12.2 Access to Data**

Data ownership, usage and control.

**12.3 Communications Security**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation.

**12.4 Disaster Planning**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation.

**12.5 Data Protection Act**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation.

**12.6 Physical Security**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation.

**12.7 Software Licensing**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation.

**13. IM&T Training and Development**

**13.1 Introduction**

Responsibilities and organisation.

**13.2 Awareness Training**

Responsibilities and organisation for developing the awareness of managers and staff.

**13.3 Systems Training**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation for the training of users of systems.

**13.4 Technical Training**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation for the training of IM&T staff.

**14. Strategy Audit and Review**

Policies, responsibilities and organisation for the audit and review of existing facilities and projects under way and for the audit of security arrangements. Also arrangement for Strategy Review.

24 June 1994

## GUIDELINES ON THE REVISION OF IM&T STRATEGIES

### Purpose of a Revision

1. Several Organisations have developed a satisfactory information strategy based on guidance which was issued under cover of NHS MEL(1992)61: "A Framework for the Development of Information Strategies". However, the implementation of an information strategy normally extends over a number of years depending on priorities and resources and therefore the basis and aims of strategies are likely to change as implementation proceeds.

2. As a matter of good practice, the information strategy should be reviewed on a regular basis to take account of the following:

- changes in the Organisation's objectives;
- changes in the Organisation itself, its policies and procedures;
- changes arising from external factors such as those contained within contracts, reporting requirements or statutory requirements;
- other changes in information requirements;
- the outcome of the annual information services operational plan; and
- the outcome of systematic system audit.

### The Review Process

3. The existing information strategy should be reviewed to ensure that it adequately covers the areas set out in the model content as detailed in Annex A. Where it does not do so, then the extent to which the strategy may require further development should be considered. Changes to the Organisation's objectives, policies and procedures will have information requirements which have been examined as an integral part of the adoption or development of the changes. The information strategy must show the effect of any changes to the logical and physical information system configurations. There may be a need for a migration strategy to move from the present to the proposed position.

4. The Organisation's operational plan for information services will set out a programme of work to be carried out during the year to implement the strategy. Some of this work will relate to the routine processing and exploitation of information. While most deficiencies in this service are dealt with by the normal management of the process, others may give rise to a changed information requirement which requires a change to the strategy. Other work will relate to the implementation of new or changed systems within the longer term strategic information objectives. Hence the original strategy has moved forward and the starting point of the next version will be different from the previous version. The revised strategy must address the future strategic direction for these systems and reflect the changes including recording that the new or changed system is operational and updating the inventory.



## Annex B (Cont'd)

5. Some information requirements are specified by new perceived needs or changes within the Organisation and these must be evaluated using appropriate techniques. Some information requirements are imposed from outside the Organisation and these have to be considered to see how they can be satisfied. In addition, the strategy should be amended to reflect any external policies which the Organisation is required to adopt.

6. There must be a routine regular audit of information systems and from time to time special reviews of particular systems should be carried out to ensure that such systems continue to meet requirements in a cost effective way. The regular audit may be carried out by means of an analysis of operational information about the system including help-desk enquiries, logs, security reports and audit trails. Some organisations may use internal auditors to collate this information. Deeper reviews of systems are required to assess the effectiveness of systems and these need to be carried out in a systematic way relating the business needs of the organisation and the information produced by the system to meet the requirements of the business needs. Such reviews will require a multi-disciplinary approach involving users, senior managers, information staff, internal audit, data administration and security. Finally, the unchanged and the new strategic objectives have to be examined to establish new priorities.

### Preparation of a Strategy Revision Overview

7. In cases where the original strategy is suitably extensive and the changes arising from the review are small, these should be submitted as an update to the original strategy document in the form of a Strategy Revision Overview which should make specific reference to the strategy document it supplements. It should set out changes as follows:

- if there are changes to the Organisation and its objectives, these should be set out as the first item;
- the work implemented since the issue of the previous information strategy or strategy revision overview should be defined;
- the alterations to the strategy required by the review process should be detailed as replacement or additional paragraphs adhering to the order in which they appeared in the original strategy document or in the order in which they are specified in the model context (Annex A);
- priorities for implementation in the next year should be specified and an indication of priorities over the following years provided; and
- the status of the document within the Organisation should be specified.

8. The revision document should be submitted in accordance with the timetable specified for submission of full strategy documents and should be supplemented by a 3 year investment plan in support of the priorities at the appropriate time.

**Annex B (Cont'd)**

9. Where there are major changes in any of the factors noted above or at intervals of 3-4 years, a full revised strategy should be prepared and submitted by applying the principles of the document "A Framework for the Development of Information Strategies".

24 June 1994