

Report to:	QSMTM
Report by:	Sarah Hutchison
Meeting Date:	05 February 2019
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	CR: Self-assessment toolkit performance report 2019 (VC112947)
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	None

Purpose of report

1. This report provides assurance on the use and effectiveness of the self-assessment tools for the period 01/04/18 to 31/12/19.

Recommendation and actions

2. It is recommended that:
 - (i) the QSMTM notes the contents of this report.
 - (ii) this report is published in full.

Executive summary

3. This paper provides summary data about the use and effectiveness of the self-assessment toolkit. It provides evidence of a sustained level of interest in the self-assessment toolkit.

Background

4. To date, the Commissioner has published four modules of the self-assessment toolkit:

	Publication Date
Module 1: Responding on time	16 October 2014
Module 2: Searching for, locating and retrieving information	21 January 2015
Module 3: Advice and assistance	4 June 2015
Module 4: Publishing information	1 June 2017

5. Two further modules were proposed for production in 2018-19.
 - (i) Module 5 (Reviews) has been completed. Publication of the new module is dependent on the procurement of a new emailing service.
 - (ii) The production of Module 6 (Measuring and monitoring performance) has been delayed, due to other work pressures (see Resources impact section). The module will be a carried forward objective for inclusion in the Operational Plan 2019-20.
6. The target audience for the toolkit is FOI practitioners in public authorities and in a limited number of larger publicly owned companies.

Use of the self-assessment tools

7. We do not collect or hold information about the number of authorities using the toolkit materials. The following data from Google Analytics provides an indication of authorities' interest in the materials.

Google Analytics data for the Commissioner's website

8. The modules are published on the Commissioner's website. We *can* track visitor numbers to website pages, but we *cannot* track downloads of documents from the website. For this reason, we provide individual modules within separate pages linked to the [introductory page](#).
9. The following table provides the number of unique page views of the self-assessment toolkit pages in 2017/18 (as a whole year) and for the period of this report (three quarters):

	01/04/16 – 31/03/17 (full year)		01/04/17 – 31/03/18 (full year)		01/04/18 – 31/12/19 (three quarters)	
Page name	Unique page views	Bounce rate	Unique page views	Bounce rate	Unique page views	Bounce rate
Self-assessment toolkit introduction	546*	25%	758	69%	483	59%
Module 1: Responding on time	103	51%	159	47%	117	47%
Module 2: Searching for, locating and retrieving information	76	51%	129	84%	52	70%
Module 3: Advice and assistance	40	34%	43	0%	34	0%
Module 4: Publishing information			83	100%	63	67%
Totals	1030		1172		830	

* Restated (error in 2018 report)

10. The following table provides total visits to each module since April 2016:

	Unique page views
Module 1: Responding on time	379
Module 2: Searching for, locating and retrieving information	257
Module 3: Advice and assistance	117
Module 4: Publishing information	146

11. Previous performance reports have sought to identify the reasons for fluctuations in visitor numbers to the self-assessment toolkit website pages:
- (i) In 2016-17 it was noted that the launch of each new module, accompanied by a promotional campaign, affected visitor numbers positively. Visitor activity in the periods between promotional campaigns was low.
 - (ii) In 2017-18 a significant increase in the number of visits to the modules was attributed to:
 - (a) Promotion of modules via Decisions Round-up
 - (b) Our intervention activity

12. The data for the first three quarters of 2018-19 indicates a small decline (on average 20 visitors per quarter) compared to the previous year. This is surprising, particularly as our intervention work received so much public attention in the same period and we could have expected this to drive an increase in visitor volumes. The decline is due to lower than usual levels of promotion:
- (i) No new modules were launched
 - (ii) Our emailing service (promotional materials and Decisions Round-up) was suspended at the end of April 2018, pending procurement of an alternative supplier.

Effectiveness of the self-assessment tools

13. We have very little evidence of the effectiveness of the toolkit. Past anecdotal evidence from interventions indicates that authorities have found modules “helpful”. In the current year several authorities have used the modules as part of the compliance with our interventions. The Scottish Funding Council provided a presentation to a Holyrood Conference Masterclass in December 2018, explaining how modules had been used to improve the authority’s compliance with timescales.
14. Colleagues may wish to note that from late 2016/17, we invited users of the toolkit to complete a feedback survey. No responses have ever been received and the survey was removed in May 2018.

Risk impact

15. The toolkit, as a means of driving improvements in authority practice, is an important control measure for several identified risks in the current Operational Risk Register. No new risks arise from this report.

Equalities impact

16. No specific equalities impact has been identified in the self-assessment toolkit project. Equalities issues are addressed in individual modules as appropriate, for example, Module 3 includes a focus on providing advice and assistance to people who need additional support.

Privacy impact

17. No privacy implications arise from the self-assessment toolkit. The resources on our website contain no personal data.

Resources impact

18. Resources required for the self-assessment toolkit project are planned within existing resources. Unfortunately in 2018-19 a number of contingencies have delayed the production programme, particularly the increased intervention workload and post-legislative scrutiny. The delay in procurement of a suitable emailing service is due to development of our approach to data impact assessment under the GDPR.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

19. The toolkit is a current operational plan objective. Delivery of the project is an important contribution to achievement of the current Strategic Plan, particularly improving authority performance and value-adding work.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

20. No records management impacts arise from this report.

Consultation and Communication

21. No consultation or communication actions arise from this report.

Publication

22. I recommend that this committee report (and attached papers – see table at the start of this report) are published in full.