

Extracting data from the e-KSF for use in other systems

ENGLAND

Introduction

As the central contract for provision of the e-KSF to English NHS organisations ends in March 2012, we recognise that local organisations which have used e-KSF in the past will need to make plans for the storage and access to data that is currently stored in the e-KSF. Unless the local organisation enters into a separate locally funded agreement to keep using the e-KSF, then the current suppliers have no commercial or legal basis on which to store the data currently entered into the e-KSF. This short document outlines how we will support the process of extracting data, for organisations that do not wish to enter into local contracting arrangements to continue use of the e-KSF.

Why are we doing this?

The current suppliers of the e-KSF have an obligation under the Data Protection Act to operate as Data Processors, and local NHS organisations act as Data Controllers. As Data Controllers, these local organisations own the data that their staff have added to the e-KSF. We expect those organisations which are not continuing with the e-KSF beyond March 2012 to want to have their data returned to them in a useful format, so that this data can be used in other systems to support the KSF process.

The data extraction process

The automated data extraction process is now being constructed by Radcliffe Solutions (the team managing the technical side of e-KSF), and we will be testing the approach with a small number of organisations prior to launch. We now expect it to be available in November 2011. If organisations need their data before this date, they can contact the e-KSF support team for a manual data export. The automated data extraction process will follow these six steps:

1. The central administrator user in a local organisation will receive a new link on their e-KSF homepage (after securely logging in to the system) titled "begin data extraction process".
2. On clicking this link, the Regional e-KSF Account Manager will be automatically informed. The Account Manager will make contact with the local organisation, to explain the process and make sure that the implications are understood. The Account Manager will ask a representative in the local organisation to sign and return an agreement asking for the process to be initiated.
3. On receipt of this agreement, a second new link will appear on the e-KSF, for the central administrator, entitled "start extraction". On clicking this link, 2 things will happen:
 - a. All user accounts in the organisation will be locked, meaning that no new data can be added to the e-KSF.
 - b. A third link will appear for the central administrator, titled "download data pack".
4. The central administrator user can click this "download data pack" link to download a set of files which will include:
 - a. All of the data added to e-KSF within this organisation, in the form of a series of sheets in an Excel workbook.
 - b. An Entity Relationship Diagram, which is a "map" for a local database expert to use, to understand how the data in each of the sheets is related, along with some additional explanatory technical notes. (Please see below "key points" section for more about this).
 - c. Folders containing all of the previously uploaded files against KSF reviews, PDPs, objectives and Post Outlines.



5. Once the “download data pack” link is clicked, the e-KSF Regional Account Manager will be automatically informed and will be in contact within 7 days to check that the data has downloaded completely. At this point, the organisation will be asked to complete a second document instructing the suppliers to permanently delete data from the e-KSF.
6. All data will then be deleted, the local organisation will be informed and the process will be deemed to be complete. No backup copies will be stored by the supplier.

How can you use this extracted data?

You may decide to use the data in the following ways:

1. Upload it to an alternative IT system to allow historical reporting on, and ongoing management of, KSF data.
2. Use the information provided to recreate the e-KSF data set locally, for example in an Access or SQL database, for historical reporting.
3. Store the data set as-is, as Excel spreadsheets, in case it is needed in the future. We recommend that you check your HR and informatics policies about data retention before deciding to dispose of any data.

Key points

1. The main data pack will be in the form of a large number of - potentially very large - Excel data tables. These tables represent the raw data that is stored within the e-KSF (for example, the data stored about Personal Development Plans may be across approximately 8 tables i.e. 8 sheets in the Excel document). We will provide full technical details about how the data is structured, and local organisations will need access to expertise in database administration/architecture, as well as a working knowledge of the functionality of the e-KSF, to interpret the data. The current contract does not include scope for the current suppliers to assist in this process, Think Associates Ltd are willing to provide support under local funding arrangements.
2. The data pack will be in a format suitable for storage in, and interrogation by, a central HR or IT department. Individual employees will not have any access to their data, so we recommend that you communicate with all manager, reviewer and reviewee users of the system asking them to log in and save their own data (and possibly the data of staff they manage) using the existing e-KSF “create PDF” functions.
3. The data pack will not give you access to Post Outline data in a format that you can use in HR processes. i.e. you will have access to the raw data, but it will not be easy to reconstruct a Post Outline document from this data, unless you have another system to import it into. Therefore we recommend that before the data extraction process completes, you log in to the e-KSF to create PDFs of all of your Post Outlines. You will then need an alternative system for the creation of, and change control of, Post Outline data, unless you decide to keep using e-KSF under a local contract
4. The current contract does not include scope for the suppliers to assist with uploading data into an alternative system, though you may be able to engage and fund the suppliers locally to help with this if you so wish.
5. If you plan to import your e-KSF data into an alternative system, we encourage you to check with the suppliers of this system that (a) sufficient data fields exist, in the correct format and with the right data relationships, to store the data you plan to import and (b) that an import from Excel spreadsheet is feasible and cost-effective. Regional e-KSF Account Managers will be able to provide a sample data extract pack for you to use in these discussions.
6. Organisations wishing to contract locally for continuing provision of the e-KSF do not need to go through this data extraction process, because their use of the e-KSF, and access to data stored in the e-KSF, will be ongoing.



Think...what you could do

What happens next?

NHS Employers, and the Regional e-KSF Account Managers, will make regular efforts to contact KSF leads and senior HR representatives in local organisations throughout 2011. If we fail to make contact, then there is a risk that data stored on the e-KSF will have to be deleted to allow the suppliers to comply with their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act, so please get in touch with your Regional e-KSF Account Manager, direct or via info@think-associates.co.uk, to start these discussions as soon as you are able.

Tim Newham, Think Associates, September 2011

For further information about the e-KSF, please contact your Regional e-KSF Account Manager. If you're not sure who your Account Manager is, please contact info@think-associates.co.uk


Think...what you could do