Good practice in identifying and using relevant evidence - hints and tips

Questions to ask…

What's the purpose of the evidence, how is it linked to the compliance story for the area, who uses it and how is it used - if at all?

Is it valid?

Is it authentic?

Is it accessable?

Evidence can be many different things, not just policy and procedures.

Also think about any relevant:

- Terms of reference, agendas and minutes of meetings
- Job and person specifications, CVs, biographies, CPD logs
- Handbooks, manual, checklists
- What's on the website/in publications
- Systems maps and notes
- Training manuals, training day summaries, attendance logs
- Contracts, due diligence reports, selection criteria
- Plans, project updates, reports
- Organisational, control and other diagrams.

Is it valid?

- Do you really use it, or is it a policy or something that is just padding?
- Is the terminology correct and consistent?
- Does it include correct references?
- Is it fit for the purpose intended?
- When was it last reviewed?
- Is it clear which version of the document applies?

Is it authentic?

- Does it fit/link with other AO documentation or information where relevant/required?
- Does the document footer/file reference confirm the AO/owner, or has the document been borrowed?

Where things can fall down:

- When documentation is hastily put together, or borrowed from an external source without review or checking it really fits with, or links to other AO documentation and information. For example it might include inconsistent terminology or wrong referencing; or the document style is inconsistent.
- Where you would expect to see this policy/document referred to in another place – and it's not. For example third party agreements would be expected to refer to the policy/document, and they don't!
- There is no document owner or date, or last review date is unknown.

Is it accessable?

- Is it in a personal computer drive rather than shared?
- Is it easy to find within the file hierachy/catalogue?
- Is the document title and file title the same?

Where things can fall down:

- There is no file sharing or document folder/catalogue so the source of some documentation cannot be found by others. Or you have no idea who wrote or owns the document.
- File names are not clear so it makes finding the right document and right version challenging.
- Individual documents are housed as one single file that makes it hard to find what you are after.

If you found this helpful

Review and audit exercises including self-evaluations are good ways of checking whether the AO meets the requirements for Ofqual compliance. Would you like some support for such an exercise, or help to get the AO 'audit-ready'?

You can be confident of a professional job, to help you identify your compliance position and support any development work that may be needed.

Heather has relevant expertise and experience, working with a range of small and large AOs and having supported organisations in the Ofqual Spring 2015 series of Validity Audits, also having been a full time Responsible Officer.

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