

Records Management Policy

Purpose

Records and information are critical to the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner. They provide public voices of policing and crime concerns and the basis on which the Commissioner develops policy, takes decisions and provides services. This policy provides the framework for the management of records in all areas of activity of the Office of the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner.

Aim

The Records Management Policy is informed by the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17. This sets out a vision, “**To make South Yorkshire the safest place to live, learn, work and run businesses.**” The policy is derived from the Code of Corporate Governance for the Police and Crime and Commissioner and Chief Constable. This Code consists of six good governance principles for how the Commissioner will perform his statutory role in South Yorkshire.

Scope

Records management is a corporate function. This function covers records in all formats throughout their lifecycle, from creation, use, reference and disposal.

‘Records’ are defined as ‘information created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business’.

This policy is based on the Lord Chancellor’s Code of Practice on the management of records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It supports compliance with legislation which requires records and information to be kept, controlled and accessible, such as the Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, Audit Commission Act 1998, employment and health and safety legislation.

This policy applies to all staff, temporary staff, contractors and consultants in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Principles

The effective management of records and other information by the OPCC is based on the following principles.

1. The OPCC will ensure it keeps the records needed for business, regulatory, legal and accountability purposes.

2. The OPCC will keep under review procedures stating what records should be kept and by whom. This will include the point in the process when this should be done (e.g., when drafts of a document should be frozen and kept as a record); Where and how the records should be stored and what controls are necessary to ensure the evidential value of records by showing them to:
 - Be authentic, that is, they are what they say they are;
 - Be reliable, that is, they can be trusted as a full and accurate record;
 - Have integrity, that is, they have not been altered since they were created or filed;
 - Be usable, that is, they can be retrieved, read and used.
3. To facilitate retrieval, guidance will be issued to staff creating records to give records names that reflect their content, date and version. Staff will also be guided to use a corporate file plan to reduce multiple copies of documents and increase access.
4. Use of metadata, information about the context within which records were created, their structure and how they have been managed over time, will be developed and increased over time.
5. A disposal schedule in Appendix 1 sets out the records of the organisation, the basis for keeping them, their retention period and the method of disposal. Ephemeral material such as print-outs of electronic documents printed out for meetings or trivial emails will be disposed of routinely.
6. The Office of the PCC organisation will operate electronically, e.g., using email and word processing software; dedicated electronic document and records management systems; and internet; acquiring such records systems as it requires within budget.
7. Security measures will be applied to records such as limiting access to individual job roles and by requiring passwords for digital systems. Paper records will be held in locked and controlled areas, and the temporary withdrawal of records from them will be logged, if appropriate.
8. Particular care will be taken with information bearing a protective marking.
9. Records created and used off-site must be done with due attention to their security.
10. Records management controls will be applied to information being shared with or passed to other bodies with particular protection given to confidential or personal information, with reference to the Information Commissioner's Data sharing code of practice.
11. Information and records are a corporate asset and their loss could cause disruption to business. Records and information management are included in the corporate risk management framework.

12. The Business Continuity Plan will set out vital records of the OPCC and the records required for restarting its critical functions.
13. A service level agreement for IT services will include regular back-ups of the electronic records of the organisation.
14. Induction and other training ensure that all staff are aware of the organisation's records management policies, standards, procedures and guidelines and understand their personal responsibilities.

Governance

The lead responsibility for records and information management rests with the Interim Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer and operational responsibility rests with the Interim Assistant Chief Executives, who are members of the PCC Management Team. All staff are responsible for ensuring that adequate records are kept of the activities for which they are accountable. The Information Manager supports staff at these three levels in their respective roles.

Related policies

This policy is one of a number of information related policies including:

Data Protection Policy

Freedom of Information Policy

Information Security Policy and related codes of practice

Business Continuity Plan

Email usage policy

Internet Access Policy

Monitoring

The organisation will monitor compliance with the Lord Chancellor's Code and assess the overall effectiveness of the records management programme.

Qualitative indicators, for example whether guidance is being followed, will be measured by spot checks and interviews.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in April 2014.

References

BS ISO 15489-1:2001 Information and documentation – Records management – Part 1: General.

Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the management of records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

Managing Digital Records without an electronic management system. The National Archives.

Appendix 1

The OPCC follows standard retention periods for its records based on the Local Government Classification Scheme and Retention Schedule and the Retention Schedules published by The National Archives.

The principal classes of records will be disposed of as follows:

Human Resources	Six years after the end of a contract of employment (2 years in the case of members of the public who serve on the Audit Committee, Efficiency Panel and Independent Advisory Groups) Complaints will be disposed of six years after conclusion of findings. Police Appeals Tribunals will be disposed of seven years after the last action.
Financial Management	Six years after the end of the financial year to which they relate.
Statutory Returns to Central Government	Seven years
Corporate Governance, Corporate Planning and Strategy; and Principal Committees	Agendas will be kept permanently for historical purposes, along with Decisions, Registers, Oath.
Policy formulation	Four years after final drafts, where these are not incorporated in agendas. Three years in relation to Consultations.
Legal and contracts	Six years after expiry of contract (12 if under seal); Seven years after last action for Litigation.
Correspondence from the public	Two years after the final response to an enquiry or comment.
Custody Visiting	Two years
Media releases	Permanent

Disposal will be by way of confidential waste where there is personal information; otherwise by recycling if the information is not protected or identifiable. Records for permanent preservation will transfer to Sheffield Archives.

October 2013.