Records Management Policy

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Records Management Policy v1.0

Contents

1 Aim

1.1   The aim of this policy is to ensure that North Tyneside Council (hereafter NTC) manage a record through its life cycle from creation or receipt, through maintenance and use to final disposal (for destruction, transfer or permanent retention).

1.2   As a public body NTC are required by law to manage records appropriately. The General Data Protection Regulation, Data Protection Act 2018, Freedom of Information Act 2000 and Environmental Information Regulations 2004 set out specific requirements in relation to the creation and management of records.

1.3   The policy aims to ensure that all NTC staff, elected Members, partners, suppliers and stakeholders are aware of what they must do to manage records in an effective and efficient way.

2 Introduction

2.1   Maintaining appropriate and effective records management practices will help NTC to deliver and meet our statutory duties.

2.2   By adopting this policy NTC aims to ensure that the record, in whatever form it takes, is accurate, reliable, ordered, complete, useful, up to date and accessible whenever it is needed.

2.3   By adhering to good record management principles NTC shall benefit from:

   a. Records being easily and efficiently located, accessed and retrieved

   b. Information being better protected and securely stored

   c. Records being disposed of safely and at the right time

   d. Reduced corporate risk through compliance with relevant legislation

3 Scope

3.1   This policy shall apply to the management of records in all technical or physical formats or media, created or received by NTC in the conduct of its business activities.

3.2   This policy applies to all NTC employees (both permanent and temporary), contractors, consultants, volunteers, secondees, elected members, partners, suppliers and stakeholders who have access to records, wherever these records may be located.

4 Definitions

4.1 **Record**: A record is recorded information, in any form, including data in systems, produced or received and then kept in order to support and/or give evidence of an activity. Since a record is recorded information, no record may be modified.

4.2 **Format**: A record can be in any format including (but not ILOited to): paper files, email, audio/visual, electronic documents, systems data, databases, digital images and photographs.

4.3 **Records management**: The control of records during their lifetime, from creation to storage and retention until eventual archival preservation or destruction.

4.4 **Records creator**: The person that produces and receives records and then keeps them in its record keeping system.

4.5 **Record management system (RMS)**: System or procedures by which the records are created, captured, secured, maintained and disposed of.

4.6 **Official copy**: The official copy of a record is the copy intended to give evidence of the activity supported by the record and therefore, if need be, is the one to be submitted to public authorities and other stakeholders and partners.

4.7 **Convenience copy**: A convenience copy of a record is a copy created for the convenience of the records creator or of someone working for the records creator e.g. to give him/her quicker access to the information contained in the record.

4.8 **Vital records**: Records without which an organisation would be unable to function, or to prove that a key activity has taken place.

4.9 **EDRMS (SharePoint)**: NTC's Electronic Documents and Records Management System. The EDRMS may be made up of one or more IT platforms.

5 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 NTC shall ensure that its records are well managed.

5.2 The Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) shall review and approve any corporate policy, procedure and guideline issued to support NTC records management.

5.3 The Information Governance Team shall be responsible for the development of records management procedures and practices.

5.4 The Information Governance Team shall be responsible for:

a. Raising staff awareness of records management;

b. Ensuring that the records management policy and standards are kept up to date and relevant

c. Providing advice and guidance to line managers and Information Link Officers (ILOs)

d. Auditing compliance with the records management policy and associated standards

e. Developing and maintaining the corporate file plan and retention and disposal schedules

6 Documenting Disposal

6.1 Heads of NTC Service Areas shall be responsible for identifying an ILO, to take the lead on records management issues in their department, and ensuring that procedures and guidance are in place to support the records management policy.

6.2 Information Link Officers shall be responsible for:

a. Acting as a communication point and supporting the implementation of the corporate records management programme in their respective organisational units

b. Monitoring that their respective organisational units manage records in accordance with this policy and associated policies, procedures, guidelines and standards

c. Coordinating retention and disposal activities in their respective organisational units and liaising with the corporate records manager and the Information Governance Team in order to ensure the correct execution of the activities

d. Providing advice and guidance to the staff members of their organizational units on records management procedures

e. Supporting the implementation and execution of an auditing activities programme as well as other occasional records management projects

f. Acting as a contact point in relation to security matters and carry out occasional spot checks in respect of security requirements, e.g. clear desk policy.

6.3 All staff that receives, create, maintain or delete records shall be responsible for ensuring that they do so in accordance with the NTC's records management policy, standards and procedures.

6.4 Contractors, consultants, volunteers, secondees, elected Members, partners, suppliers and stakeholders accessing or managing NTC's

records shall be responsible for ensuring they do so in accordance with NTC's records management policy, standards and procedures.

7 Official Copies of Records

7.1 There shall be only one official copy of each corporate record.

7.2 If two records identical to each other need to be kept by NTC in order to give evidence of two different corporate processes they shall be considered as two different records

8 Modifying Records

8.1 Records shall not be modified.

8.2 A new record shall be produced if the information contained in a record is to be corrected, amended or added.

8.3 The former record is to be kept in compliance with the relevant retention and disposal schedule.

9 Accessing Records

9.1 Records shall only be accessed by Staff for a business purpose and in line with NTC Information Governance Policy.

10 Storing records

10.1 Records shall be kept in a condition so as to ensure continuing authenticity, accessibility, retrievability, intelligibility and usability throughout their whole life-cycle

11 Retention and Disposal

11.1 Records shall be associated with its relevant retention and disposal schedule.

11.2 NTC's retention and disposal schedules shall comply with all relevant UK statutory provisions currently in force and must be modified as appropriate.

11.3 NTC's retention and disposal schedules shall identify the type of record held; the length of time each record is retained; and the way each record is to be disposed of (In some cases records are to be retained permanently.)

11.4 The retention and disposal schedules shall be associated with the NTC corporate file plan in order to better identify the series, groups and types of records which each retention and disposal schedule applies to.

11.5 A Head of the Service, who has primary responsibility over the record, shall be required to authorise a change to the retention or disposal schedule following the expiration of a record if it is in contrast with the original schedule.

11.6 Legal provisions shall take precedence over proposed modifications.

11.7 NTC shall ensure that Retention and Disposal Schedules are available to all Staff and those accessing or managing NTC records.

12 Destruction of Records

12.1 If provided by the relevant retention and disposition schedules, corporate records are to be destroyed when their retention periods expire.

12.2 Before destroying any record, it is necessary to verify that there are no specific circumstances that may prevent the destruction, such as legal holds (issued by a Court) or new business needs e.g. the record might be useful to support either legal defence or another corporate activity.

12.3 Destruction of corporate records shall be authorised in writing by the relevant manager, or authorised deputy, of the service area which has primary responsibility over them.

12.4 The service area which has primary responsibility over the records shall ensure all existing copies of the records are destroyed, regardless of format and location.

12.5 Destruction of records shall be recorded on RMS.

12.6 Paper records are to be destroyed by using the corporately provided lockable confidential disposal bins or confidential waste bags or by shredding the record using a cross cut shredder.

12.7 Confidential waste bags and lockable bins must be kept in a location not accessible to the public. Confidential waste bags are to be held and secured at all times to prevent unauthorised access.

12.8 Microforms, microfiches, microfilms and non-digital photos must be kept separate from paper records and placed in confidential waste bags reserved just for them.

12.9 Electronic records kept in a corporate application shall be deleted using the functionality within the application.

12.10 Sanitisation procedures for ICT storage media holding electronic records which include optical, magnetic and solid state storage media vary with the media type, but typical methods include overwriting, degaussing and physical destruction. Advice shall be sought from the Information Governance Team when considering the destruction of such media.

12.11 In all instances where ICT storage media is destroyed a certificate of destruction shall be provided and held as a permanent record by the relevant service area.

13 Convenience Copies of Records

13.1 Corporate retention and disposal schedules do not apply to convenience copies, which are to be destroyed as soon as they are no longer needed to facilitate the work of the person who has produced them.

14 Corporate Record Management System (RMS)

14.1 There shall be an adequate and appropriate allocation of resources by NTC to maintain its corporate records.

14.2 NTC's shall ensure that corporate records are arranged and identified through the use of a corporate file plan, which also associates them with the relevant retention and disposal schedules.

14.3 NTC shall ensure records kept are protected from damaging elements such as water, light, temperature, humidity, fire, infestation, digital viruses, power failures, information leakages and security breaches.

14.4 Any NTC off-site storage system shall be considered to be part of the global corporate RMS. Records kept in off-site storage systems shall be managed in compliance with the provisions of this policy.

14.5 The inclusion of a document or a dataset inside the RMS shall amount to declaring it as a record.

14.6 It shall be used to store, manage and keep NTC's digital records. If the EDRMS consists of more than one IT platform relationships between groups of records shall be highlighted and described through appropriate elements of information.

14.7 It shall be used as the reference point for NTC's corporate analogue records by indicating in the EDRMS any other record or aggregation of records existing in analogue format.

14.8 It shall be used as a reference point for any other digital record not kept in the EDRMS by indicating in the EDRMS any other digital record or aggregation of records existing outside the EDRMS.

15 Data Protection

15.1 NTC shall ensure all records which contain personal data are processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018.

15.2 NTC shall ensure a Data Protection Policy is available to all staff.

16 Freedom of Information

16.1 NTC shall ensure that it complies with its obligations under the Freedom of Information Act.

16.2 NTC shall ensure a Freedom of Information Policy is available to all staff.

16.3 NTC shall ensure that it maintains a framework for the administration of requests under the Act and subsequent responses.

17 Information Security

17.1 NTC shall ensure appropriate security controls are applied to records.

17.2 NTC shall ensure an Information Security Framework Policy is available to all staff.

18 Review

18.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

19 Further Information

19.1 For further information or guidance please email the Information Governance Team.