

# Information Management Guidelines:

## **Revenue and Benefits**

Central Information Team  
Version 2.2 Draft



North Tyneside Council

## DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

**Document Title:** Information Management Guidelines: Revenue and Benefits

### Revision History

Issue Number	Date	Reason for issue
1.0	Dec 2006	New guidelines replacing '2004 Retention Policy'
2.0	June 2011	Updated guidelines replacing 2006 North Tyneside Council: Retention Guidelines.
2.1	November 2014	Clarification of the retention period for ERDF grants records
2.2	January 2016	Updated rules following consultation with audit teams and revenue and benefit teams across the region

### Document Authorisation

Issue Number	Date	Group
1.0	Dec 2006	Rob Worrall, Head of Policy and Performance
2.0	June 2011	Fiona Rooney, Strategic Director: Finance and Resources
2.1	November 2014	Janice Gillespie Strategic Manager Finance
2.2	January 2016	Janice Gillespie Head of Finance

### DISTRIBUTION LIST

Issue No:	Issued to
1.0	All staff via intranet
2.0	All staff via intranet
2.1	All staff via intranet
2.2	All staff via intranet

## Information Management Guidelines

Class / Activity	Scope Notes	Retention action	Rationale
<b>23 Revenue and Benefits</b>			
23.1 Benefits and subsidies	Activities involved in the administration of benefits payments.	Destroy 7 years after last action (case closed)	RGLA (2003) 7.22, which states common practice.
23.2 Business rates	Business rates information (other than property valuation).	Destroy 7 years after last action	RGLA (2003) 7.22, which states common practice.
23.3 Property valuation	Information relating to rateable property and valuations such as Register of Rateable Properties or Valuation lists.	Permanent - offer to archivist	LGCS (2007) refers back to RGLA (2003) 7.20 and 7.21, which states common practice.
23.4 Taxation records	Activities involved in managing the payment of taxes by the authority.	Destroy 7 years after the end of the financial year in which the records were created.	LGCS (2007) refers to Limitations Act 1980, VAT Act 1994, Taxes Management Act 1970, Audit Commission Act 1998.

# Information Management Guidelines

## 1. Introduction

This document covers revenue and benefits records and information no matter which service holds or uses them.

This retention & disposal schedule has been produced in consultation with departments primarily responsible for the business activities and key stakeholders in the processes to establish the legal and regulatory requirements, and business needs on which record retention and disposal policies are based.

This document is part of framework of policies, procedures and guidelines that aim to ensure the Council manages information and records appropriately.

## 2. Retention periods

A key part of managing information and records is ensuring that they are retained for as long as necessary. Necessary relates to not only the local use by staff but also relates to: -

- use by other parts of the Council. For example internal audit, insurance and legal activities
- compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and responsibilities placed on the Council as a whole
- accounting for decisions made which affect the public or relate to spending public money

The following tables provide recommended retention periods for document types based on the functions/activities they relate to. They should be read in conjunction with the procedure for reviewing and appraising records.

There are some types of information that do not constitute a record and do not need to be kept at all. For example information that is duplicated, unimportant or only of short-term facilitative value.

This may include:

- 'with compliments' slips
- catalogues and trade journals
- telephone message slips
- non-acceptance of invitations
- trivial electronic mail messages or notes that are not related to official business
- requests for stock information such as maps, plans or advertising material
- out-of-date distribution lists
- working papers which lead to a final report

## 3. Explanation of headings and terms

### **Class:**

Records relating to an activity or function and their position within the classification scheme.

### **ICO Employment Practices DP code:**

Employment Practices Data Protection Code Part 1: Recruitment & Selection (March 2002)

<http://www.ico.gov.uk>

### **LGCS (2007):**

2007 Local Government Classification Scheme 2.03, which incorporates retention periods.

### **Scope Notes:**

An explanation of what types of records should fit within the class.

### **Records:**

Records are defined as: -

information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations, or in the transaction of business.

### **Retention Action:**

This entry provides a retention period specifying how long the records should be kept prior to destruction (or transfer to permanent archive), as well as the activity/transaction/event to which the retention period should be tied to (e.g. "destroy 3 years after last action")

### **Rationale:**

This section provides reasons for the retention period.

### **RGLA (2003):**

2003 Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities; A guide produced by the Local Government Group of the Records Management Society.

### **TNA RDG (guidance number):**

The National Archives - Retention and Disposal Guidance

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/retention-disposal-schedules.htm>

### 4. Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

On Thursday 12 March 2015 the Home Secretary established a statutory inquiry under the 2005 Inquiries Act with the aim of conducting an overarching national review of the extent to which institutions in England and Wales have discharged their duty of care to protect children against sexual abuse.

The Inquiry is independent of government. The Chair is Professor Alexis Jay OBE, who is supported by a Panel, Victims and Survivors Consultative Panel, and other expert advisers. The Inquiry will cover England and Wales. A wide range of public institutions will be investigated including local authorities, the police, the armed forces, schools, hospitals, children's homes, churches, and charities.

On 2nd July 2015 the Inquiry wrote to every Chief Executive of a Local Authority in England and Wales, requesting that the organisation :

*'retain any and all documents; correspondence; notes; emails and all other information – however held – which contain or may contain content pertaining directly or indirectly to the sexual abuse of children or to child protection and care. For the purposes of this appendix, the word "children" relates to any person under the age of 18.'*

We must not destroy, and must make available for inspection, all reports; reviews; briefings; minutes; notes and correspondence in relation to:

- allegations (substantiated or not) of individuals, organisations
- institutions, public bodies or otherwise who may have been involved in, or have knowledge of, child sexual abuse, or child sexual exploitation
- allegations (substantiated or not) of individuals having engaged in sexual activity with, or having a sexual interest in, children
- institutional failures to protect children from sexual abuse or other exploitation
- statutory responsibilities for the care of children in public or private care
- the development of policy on child protection
- the development of legislation on child protection
- the determination of the award of Honours to persons who are now demonstrated to have had a sexual interest in children or are suspected of having had such an interest.

All of these document types – in whatever format – must be “retained pending further requests from the Inquiry”

The instructions received by the Inquiry constitute a legal hold as defined by section 12.3 of the code of practice issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act. As such all records that fall within the above categories are retained, and not destroyed, until we are directed otherwise.