

Records Retention & Disposal Policy

Policy Statement

1. The Commissioner's office will ensure that information is not kept for longer than is necessary, and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its statutory functions. This policy supports the Commissioner's office Publication Scheme and its Plans and Strategies and is designed to provide clarity and consistency in records management.

Introduction

2. Retention periods are given in whole years and are from the end of the financial year to which the records relate. Records should be disposed of by arranging for collection of confidential waste for destruction or shredding, including all copies on whatever format.
3. Aside from the standard procedure, set out below, whenever there is a possibility of litigation or a request under the Freedom of Information Act the records that are likely to be affected should not be amended or disposed of until the threat of litigation has ended or the appeal processes under the Freedom of Information Act have been exhausted. In these circumstances the Monitoring Officer (the Chief Executive) should be consulted.
4. A record of disposals in accordance with this policy should be completed and maintained by the Authority on an electronic database.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

5. The Act introduced rights of access to information whereby the public has a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, subject to certain exceptions (providing the public interest in disclosure does not outweigh the public interest in maintaining exemption).
6. Information is exempt from the provisions of the Act if it is accessible by other means. If the information is already covered in the OPCC's Publication Scheme and is available via the website there will not be a requirement to provide that information in response to an individual request.

Aims and Objectives

7. It is recognised that information is a vital asset of the Commissioner's office, which depends on reliable, up-to-date information systems to support the work that it does and the services provided to the communities of Staffordshire. This policy and standards will help the Commissioner's office to:-
 - Ensure the retention and availability of the minimum amount of relevant information that is necessary for it to operate.

- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements, including the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations.
- Save employees' time and effort when retrieving information by reducing the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.
- Minimise the administrative overhead to the Commissioner's office and save money in terms of storage costs where hard copy information is taking up office space and electronic documents are using excessive storage capacity on computer equipment such as network servers.
- Ensure archival records that are of historical value are appropriately retained for the benefit of future generations.

Standard Procedure

8. This procedure applies to records which do not need to be retained. Information which is duplicated, unimportant or of short term use can be destroyed under this standard procedure, including:
 - compliment slips
 - catalogues and trade journals
 - telephone message slips
 - non-acceptance of invitations
 - messages or notes not related to Commissioner's office business
 - requests for standard information provided by the Authority
 - out of date distribution lists
 - working papers which lead to a final report (including Commissioner's office meeting papers)
 - duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, address books and reference copies of annual reports
 - e-copies of documents where a hard copy has been printed and filed
9. The attached Schedule set out the retention periods for particular records.

SCHEDULE

1. OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR STAFFORDSHIRE

Function	Records	Retention
Meeting	Agendas and reports Indices Rough/draft/audio minutes	6 years Destroy on completion of agreed document
PFCC Decision Log	Minutes Decision form	Permanent
Partnership, agency and external meetings	Minutes Agendas and reports	6 years
Working Groups/Steering Groups	Minutes Agenda and reports	6 years
Appointment of Chief Constable and OPCC Officers and Staff	Advertisements *Application forms Interview reports Personnel files	5 years (1 Year for unsuccessful applicants)
Termination of Chief Constable and OPCC Staff contracts.	Resignation, redundancy, dismissal, death, retirement	6 years after termination or, if pension paid, 6 years after last pension payment
Complaints against Chief Constable and OPCC Officers	Correspondence	3 years (after the conclusion of the investigation)
Independent Custody Visiting Scheme	Minutes, agendas, reports, Registers of visits, Custody Visitor details and Handbook	6 years 3 years after end of appointment Until superseded
Corporate planning and reporting	Policing plans Strategy plans Annual reports	Permanent
Statutory Inspections, reviews and external audit reports	HMI reports	Permanent
Casework	Records of Meetings Reports Outcome	6 years after last correspondence or interaction with individual.

2. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Function	Records	Retention
Registers of Members' Interests and Hospitality	Register of Interests Register of Hospitality	Permanent
Expenses Claims	Claim Forms and Receipts	3 years

3. MANAGEMENT

Function	Records	Retention
Policy development	Policies Standing Orders/Financial Regulations Instructions/Procedures Organisation Charts	Permanent until superseded
Information management	Filing indices Records of transfer to archives Summary of responses to enquiries Disposal Record Reports/correspondence on OPCC actions Routine responses to enquiries	Permanent 12 years 6 years 2 years
Media relations	Media releases	3 years
Marketing	Developing and promoting OPCC events Information about the OPCC	2 years When superseded
Diaries and calendars	Electronic and manual diaries/calendars	3 years