



Information and Records Management Policy

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) is committed to the principles of equality and diversity. No member of the public, member of staff, volunteer or job applicant shall be discriminated against on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; or sexual orientation.

Introduction

1. The policy covers the management of all records and information, regardless of medium or format, including electronic records and it is applicable to all employees of the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, volunteers, consultants and partner organisations.
2. Records shared with other organisations or held on behalf of the PCC by other organisations should be managed in accordance with this policy.
3. The Commissioner recognises that having accurate and relevant information is essential to effective decision making and quality customer service. As an important public asset, records require careful management.
4. Good records management is essential to ensure that the PCC can comply with his legislative responsibilities and can act as a driver for business efficiency. Effective management of records and information brings the following benefits.
5. We keep records for as long as required to:
 - Comply with relevant legislation such as the Public Records Act, Data Protection Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 200 and the Code of Compliance on Records Management
 - conduct business in an orderly, efficient and accountable manner
 - deliver core functions in a consistent and equitable manner
 - support and document policy formulation and managerial decision-making
 - provide consistency, continuity and productivity in management and administration
 - provide continuity in the event of disaster
 - meet legislative and regulatory requirements
 - provide protection and support in litigation, and in the management of risks
 - protect the interests of the organisation and the rights of employees, students, clients and present and future stakeholders
 - support and document current and future research and development activities developments and achievements, as well as historical research
 - provide evidence of business, personal and cultural identity, and
 - maintain corporate, personal or collective memory

6. Our records management principles:

- Records and information are owned by the Commissioner, not by the individual or team
- keeping records is an integral part of all business activities
- a complete record of all activities must be securely stored in a shared location, easily identified and accessible to those who need to see it
- ensuring that adequate storage accommodation is provided for the records
- tracking and monitoring the movement and location of records so that they can be easily retrieved
- the complete record may be in any format, but preferably electronic – significant emails are held alongside other information and must not be stored solely in personal mailboxes or hard drives
- information will be held only as long as required, and disposed of in accordance with the record retention schedule
- information should be available to all unless there is a valid reason to restrict access, and the Commissioner will make relevant information openly and easily accessible to those who need it. A large amount of the information held is placed on the website and available for public inspection
- records of historical and administrative importance should be identified as archives and transferred to Birmingham City Council's Archives & Heritage section for permanent retention

7. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 provide members of the public with the right to request information held by public authorities. The Commissioner is fully committed to the provisions of these Acts, and supports the underlying principles of openness and transparency. Further information can be found in the Freedom of Information Policy and the Data Protection Policy, both available on the Police and Crime Commissioner's website.

8. The Commissioner complies with the Data Protection Principles set out in the Data Protection Act, and is committed to retain data for only as long as is necessary, and to respond properly to any request for personal data made under the Act. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office as a data controller. The registration number is ZA002898.

9. With increasing public access to our records, it is important that disposal of records happens as part of a managed process and is adequately documented. Therefore we have a document retention schedule which sets out guidelines on how long we will retain documents. The retention schedule is published alongside this policy. The retention schedule may be updated when the need arises, to reflect the types of documents held by the OPCC, and also to reflect current best practice. The Disposal will take place in a secure manner to ensure that confidentiality and security is maintained.

10. Partnership working – Where records are created as a result of partnership working there needs to be clearly defined responsibilities between the Commissioner and the partner organisation for the creation and management of records. Where the Commissioner is the lead partner the Commissioner's Information and Records Management policy will be applicable, and the Commissioner will be responsible for the custody and ownership of the records.

Where another organisation is the lead partner:

- the records management policy and procedures of the lead organisation are applicable;
- the lead partner organisation will be responsible for custody and ownership of records;
- the Commissioner should identify and retain records relating to its role in partnership required for its own business purposes. They should be retained in line with the Commissioner's records management policy.

Where there is no identified lead partner the Commissioner should ensure that provisions are made for one of the partners to assume responsibility for the management of the records.

11. Commissioned services and suppliers - The Commissioner will comply with the requirements of the Specified Information Order regarding publicising details of contracts.

There has been an increase in the commissioning of services from external suppliers. It is important to ensure contracts place clear obligations on suppliers to manage records, created or held by external agencies, on behalf of the Commissioner.

12. Project records - Where records, such as project records, are created as a result of an activity of a temporary nature the senior manager with responsibility for the activity is responsible for:

- ensuring appropriate records are created and managed in accordance with this policy;
- ensuring there are appropriate resources assigned to fulfil the responsibility for managing records;
- ensuring ownership for the records transfer(s) to the Commissioner once the activity has ended.

13. Individuals - The Commissioner and Deputy PCC, employees, contractors, consultants and volunteers employed to undertake PCC business, have a responsibility to document actions and decisions by creating and filing appropriate records and subsequently to maintain and dispose of those records in accordance with the principles set out in this policy.