

Records Retention Schedule

General Retention Schedule (GRS) 4 Contractual Records



Information Governance Unit
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Staffordshire
County Council

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What is a Retention Schedule ?

- A retention schedule is a list of records which need to be retained by the County Council for a designated period of time. The Retention Schedule shows the title of each record, a time period for which records are to be retained, and identified the reason (legislative, regulatory and / or operational) on which retention is based.
- The existence of this Retention Schedule is a requirement of Staffordshire County Council's Corporate Records Management Policy. It has been developed by the Information Governance Unit in collaboration with Business Unit / Section Managers, and in partnership with Legal Services.
- The Retention Schedule provides consistent instructions for all staff who deal with records, and a formal policy for records retention and disposal. It is not, however, immutable and divergences from the schedule may be appropriate in certain circumstances, so long as liaison is made with the Director Law & Governance.
- Official guidelines on the retention of records used by the majority of SCC Units (including Health & Safety, Personnel, and Financial Records) can be found in the Staffordshire County Council *General Retention Schedules*, available on the Corporate Intranet Site. The Information Governance Unit is currently working with individual Business Units to produce Retention Schedules which list records specific to each unit.

"Each department will require its respective business units to:

- *Ensure the capture of records (both paper and electronic) that provide evidence of its functional activities.*
- *Establish retention schedules for all areas of work."*

SCC Corporate Records Management Policy

"A records management service should include the drawing up of retention schedules for all classes of the authority's records and the systematic disposal of those no longer of administrative use...."

**Guidance on Section 224, Local Govt Act 1972
Issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2000**

Retention Schedules and the Freedom of Information Act 2000

- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public authorities by providing people with rights of access to records held by Staffordshire County Council.
- From 1 January 2005, the County Council must comply with requests for the information that it holds unless an exemption from disclosure applies. The Authority will normally have a maximum of twenty working days to respond to the request, however there are circumstances when this time limit can be extended.
- The Lord Chancellor has also issued a Code of Practice under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act, setting out his views on desirable practice for the keeping, management and disposal of public authority records. The Code of Practice includes a requirement to develop and apply Records Retention Schedules.
- Any freedom of information legislation is only as good as the quality of the records to which it provides access. Such rights are of little use if reliable records are not created in the first place, if they cannot be found when needed or if the arrangements for their disposal are inadequate.

“An appraisal documentation system will ensure consistency in records appraisal and disposal. It should show what records are designated for destruction, the authority under which they are to be destroyed and when they are to be destroyed.

It should also provide background information on the records, such as legislative provisions, functional context and physical arrangement.

Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records, issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

“As from January 2005 , anyone will have a new legal right to request access to any information held by any public body.....My message to all public bodies is: Get your Act together. Prepare now. Don't panic later.”

Richard Thomas, Information Commissioner,
May 2003

Understanding the Retention Schedule

- Retention Schedules are updated annually by the Information Governance Unit in collaboration with officers from each Section.
- The Information Governance Unit produces Records Retention Schedules for every Business Unit in Staffordshire County Council, and they all follow a similar format. The graphic below demonstrates how to interpret the schedule:

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Directorate Activity: Research				
Research & Analysis				
Strategic Corporate Issues	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Economic Research & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Demographic Research & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Traffic Data Collection & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	After survey completion	Limitation Act 1980

Types of Record

Action(s) once record has exceeded its retention period

Amount of time for which record should

Event that triggers the start of the retention period

Legal / Regulatory / Business need guiding retention

Description of process

Using the Retention Schedule

This Retention Schedule has been developed to be used in the following ways:



When new records are created

The Retention Schedule should be used as a point of reference in the day-to-day management of records. The most effective point in the life-cycle of any record at which to decide how long it should be retained, and for what reason, is when that record is created.

When opening a new file, creating an electronic record, or typing a letter, this Retention Schedule will act as a guide to the conditions under which that Record should be managed, stored and ultimately disposed of.



When configuring an electronic records management system

Any Electronic Document & Records Management System should manage not only paper records, but ensure that all legal and business requirements are met in terms of the retention, security and disposal of all electronic records (including e-mail, electronic forms, web site content and images).

The integration of electronic records management into existing business systems must include proper consideration of Retention Schedules to provide a set consistent legal and operational requirements.



When designing or implementing new paper filing systems.

Any new office system intended to improve the efficiency of paper filing should be designed with a clear understanding of the legal and business requirement for record keeping, when records should be transferred to the Staffordshire County Council records centre, and when they should eventually be destroyed.



When transferring files to off-site storage

Office space is at a premium and it is rarely possible to retain files on-site for the length of time for which they have to be retained.

The Retention Schedule should always be consulted when transferring files to the Staffordshire County Council Records Centre at Friars Terrace.



When destroying files

In order to protect itself and minimise risk, all businesses should not maintain records longer than they need to; nor should they destroy records sooner than is required

The Retention Schedule provides consistent guidelines on the retention period of all this Unit's records.

Responsibility for Implementation

When a record has reached the end of its specified retention period, a designated person needs to be responsible as the signatory for the destruction process where destruction is the specified action.

In implementing retention policy reference should be made to both generic schedules, for records used by several directorates (which covering corporate, financial, health & safety and personnel records*) and the specific schedules, pertaining to only one particular Department/Service.

The schedules should be regularly updated to account for any changes to business practice and must be reviewed annually as a matter of course.

The responsible authority for this schedule is:

Director (Law & Governance)

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Contractual Records Retention Schedule

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Activity: Supplier Approval				
Supplier Evaluation Criteria	Destroy	6 Y	Date registered	SCC Financial Regulations
Evaluation of successful applications for approval from prospective suppliers and notification of outcome	Destroy	*	*Termination of approval	SCC Financial Regulations
Evaluation of unsuccessful applications for approval from prospective suppliers and notification of outcome	Destroy	1Y	Rejection	SCC Financial Regulations
Suppliers list or database	Destroy	While current	n/a	SCC Financial Regulations

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Activity: Initial Proposal				
End user requirement	Destroy	6Y	Date created	Limitations Act 1980
Statements of interest	Destroy	6Y	Date closed	Limitations Act 1980
Draft specification	Destroy	*	*When agreed	Limitations Act 1980
Agreed specification	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Evaluation criteria	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Invitation to tender	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Activity: Tendering				
Interview panel - report of notes of proceedings	Destroy	1Y	End of contract	SCC Financial Regulations
Commissioning letter	Destroy	1Y	End of contract	SCC Financial Regulations

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Tender Acceptance Letter	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Public Services Contract Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contract Regulations 1995
Signed contract (under hand)	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Public Services Contract Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contract Regulations 1995
Signed contract (under seal)	Destroy	12Y	End of contract	Public Services Contract Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contract Regulations 1995
Evaluation of tenders, negotiations and notification of results of tender evaluation process: successful tender	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980, Public Services Contract Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contract Regulations 1995
Evaluation of tenders, negotiations and notification of results of tender evaluation process: unsuccessful tender	Destroy	1Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980, Public Services Contract Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contract Regulations 1995

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Activity: Contract operation and monitoring				
Interim progress reports from contractors	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	SCC Financial Regulations
Schedules of works	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	SCC Financial Regulations
Record of complaints	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Disputes over payment	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Final accounts	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	SCC Financial Regulations
Minutes and papers of meetings	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Provision of legal support representing SCC in claims against the authority.	Destroy	6Y	Settlement of claim OR withdrawal of claim	Limitations Act 1980
Variations to contract	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Contract management				
Legal support for negotiation, establishment and review of contracts under seal	Destroy	12Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Legal support for negotiation, establishment and review of contracts and agreements not under seal	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Statistical reports to HM Treasury on contracts awarded	Destroy	3Y	Date created	
Monitoring of supplier performance and action taken regarding under-performance	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Default Notice	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Amendments to contracts				
Changes to requirements	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Forms of variation	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980
Extensions to contract	Destroy	6Y	End of contract	Limitations Act 1980