

Staffordshire County Council

Records Retention and Disposal
Policy



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Contents

1. Records retention and disposal policy
 - 1.1. Paper records
 - 1.2. Electronic records
 - 1.3. Electronic document and records management system
2. Responsibilities for Records Retention and Disposal

1. Records Retention and Disposal Policy

Staffordshire County Council is required by the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Management of Records issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to have and to implement a records management policy.

This **Records Retention and Disposal Policy** sets out requirements and responsibilities for managing records retention and disposal. The Policy applies to all documents defined as records. Reference material, information and working documents that are not considered to be records should be disposed of as soon as they are no longer required. The Policy applies to the all County Council records irrespective of their media, format, the system in which they are held, or storage location.

Records should contain sufficient metadata and be arranged in a way that reflects retention requirements and enables implementation of records retention and disposal policies i.e. should enable identification of closed records, identification of records due for disposal, review of documents due for disposal, and disposal of records in line with the relevant retention policy.

Specific requirements for keeping and disposing of records are contained within Staffordshire County Council's records retention schedules. All records must be disposed of in line with SCC records retention policies contained in the schedules. Any divergence from records retention and disposal policy must be for legitimate reasons and be authorised by the Head of Information Governance.

Procedures should be developed to ensure records due for disposal are identified, are reviewed to confirm disposal, or establish whether or not there is a genuine requirement for further retention, disposal is approved by someone with authority to do so, and records are securely disposed of. Procedures should be implemented and considered part of the normal business process.

Records should be securely disposed of using the method recommended in accordance with Protective Marking Scheme classification relating to the sensitivity of the content and should be appropriate to their storage media and format.

1.1 Paper records

Paper records should be "Closed" in line with the relevant retention trigger defined in the retention and disposal policy| contained within the retention schedule(s). If records no longer need to be frequently accessed they should be transferred to off-site storage at the SCC Records Centre where they will be stored until the end of the required retention period, following which they will be securely destroyed.

If a decision is made not to send records to the SCC Records Centre| storage must comply with SCC standards of storage|. Departments must ensure that paper records not sent to the SCC Records Centre are retained, reviewed and securely disposed of in line with the records retention and disposal policy and disposal guidance.

1.2 Electronic records

Electronic records not stored in the corporate Electronic Document and Records Management System (EDRMS) e.g. in shared filing, in line of business systems, or personal systems such as folders or email accounts are all subject to records retention and disposal policy and should be disposed of in line with relevant SCC policies, standards and guidance. As for paper records, they should be managed in a way that enables retention and disposal policies to be implemented.

1.3 Electronic Document and Records Management System

The corporate EDRMS (TRIM) contains the retention policy for each business activity. These rules are inherited by the documents assigned to the business classification.

The start of the retention period is either triggered automatically when a document is saved (if the trigger is based on date created), or by manually marking records as closed when the trigger event occurs. Marking documents as closed should be considered to be a normal part of the business process. Departments are responsible for ensuring records are manually closed in line with the trigger described in the relevant retention policy.

Records due for disposal are identified by running a pending events search in the EDRMS. Records identified as due for disposal must then need to be reviewed, deletion authorised, or a retention hold requested and authorised. Records can be deleted from the system once authorised. Evidence of the disposal review and authorisation process should be kept. The EDRM creates evidence of the disposal action (deletion, date and who by) in its activity logs

2.0 Responsibilities for Records Retention and Disposal

The Head of Information Governance is responsible for:

- Formally approving the Staffordshire County Council Retention and Disposal Policy
- The development and maintenance of retention and disposal schedules detailing specific records retention and disposal policies.
- Authorising divergence from records retention and disposal policy contained in the retention schedules for legitimate reasons.

Designated officers and senior managers are responsible for:

- Assigning responsibilities for records management, retention and disposal.
- Establishing procedures for the management, retention and disposal of records in all media and formats and the system(s) in which records are held.

- Ensuring ICT equipment and storage media are disposed of securely ensuring all records, data and information are removed in such a way that it is not recoverable.

Business unit managers and team leaders are responsible for ensuring:

- Record retention policies are implemented in their unit/team.
- Recordkeeping systems and arrangement of records enable identification of records due for disposal.
- Written procedures are in place for records management, retention and disposal.
- Records due for disposal are routinely identified and reviewed to ensure they are no longer required.
- Divergence from Records Retention and Disposal Policy is authorised.
- The Information Governance Unit is notified of changes affecting records retention and disposal.
- Staff are aware of policies to retain and dispose of records.
- Staff dispose of records only in accordance with policies set out in Staffordshire County Council's retention schedules
- Records are disposed of appropriately considering their sensitivity, security classification and the media and format(s) in which they are held in line.
- ICT Equipment and storage media are disposed of securely ensuring all records, data and information are removed in such a way that it is not recoverable.
- Records of potential historic interest or research value are identified and transferred with agreement to Staffordshire County Council Archive Service.
- Evidence of the disposal process is kept.

All staff are responsible for:

- Following procedures and guidance for managing, retaining and disposing of records.
- Only disposing of records in accordance with records retention and disposal policies contained in Staffordshire County Council's retention schedules (if authorised to do so).
- Ensuring that any proposed divergence from records retention and disposal policies is authorised