

Standards Board for England

Records Management Policy

1. Introduction

The Standards Board for England recognises that its corporate records are an important public asset, and are a key resource to effective operation and to accountability. The Board also has responsibility for holding case records and each head of department or ethical standards officer has responsibility for their case records and any other records they hold temporarily.

Like any asset, both types of record require careful management and this policy sets out the Board's responsibilities and activities in regard to the management of its records. It provides the framework for specific departmental guidance and detailed operating procedures.

2 Principles underpinning the Policy

- a. *The Records Management Policy applies equally to paper and electronic records.*
- b. *Data Protection Principle 5 (DP5) applies to all records. This states that: "Personal Data processed for any purpose or purposes shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes".*
- c. *The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice (2009) under FOIA applies to all records. This states at 12.2: 'Records should only be retained for as long as they are needed by the organisation, for reference or accountability purposes, to comply with regulatory requirements or to protect legal and other rights and interests'.*
- d. *No record is to be maintained unless there is a legitimate and identifiable reason for doing so.*

From the date that the regulatory activities of SfE cease:

- e. *No record is to be retained only to enable Standards for England, the Department for Communities and Local Government or their nominee to respond to Data Protection Act (DPA) and Freedom of Information Act (FOI) requests unless there is a good business reason for this to be retained.*

3. Scope

This policy aims to ensure that records are managed effectively throughout the organisation, in accordance with professional principles and specified legislation and guidelines. It applies to all the records of the Board. A record is any recorded information regardless of medium (including paper, electronic, audio-visual and record copies of publications), which is created, collected, processed, used, stored and/or disposed of by, employees, as well as those acting as its agents in the course of a Board activity.

It applies to all employees of The Standards Board for England.

4. Policy Statement

The aim of the policy is to define a framework for managing the Standards Board for England's records to ensure that the Board:

- Creates and captures authentic and reliable records to demonstrate evidence, accountability and information about its decisions and activities
- Facilitates auditing and protects our legal and other rights
 - Maintains records securely and preserves access to them
 - Disposes appropriately of records that are no longer required
 - Protects vital records, which it needs to order to function effectively
 - Maintains records to meet the Board's business needs
 - Addresses the needs of the Board's stakeholders, including the public and
 - Conforms to any legal and statutory requirements relating to record-keeping
 - Complies with government directives.

5. Identification of roles and responsibilities

- The Senior Management Team is responsible for approving a framework for managing and overseeing its duties in relation to records management as set out in this policy.
- *The Head of Strategic Relations* will coordinate requests made and information provided or refused under Data Protection and Freedom of Information, and records management practices. Where appropriate, it will co-ordinate activities, such as maintaining the Corporate Retention Schedule and publication schemes.
- Senior Managers are responsible for the management of their records, in accordance with this policy, and ensuring that all staff are aware of record keeping issues.
- *The Head of Strategic Relations* will advise departments and individuals on the retention and management of their records,
- All Standards Board for England employees will be responsible for creating and maintaining records in relation to their work that are authentic and reliable.
- Staff with specific responsibilities for records management will have these clearly defined in their job descriptions.

6 Training and Awareness

Since all Standards Board for England employees are involved in creating, maintaining and using records, it is vital that everyone understands their record management responsibilities as set out in this policy. Senior Managers will ensure that staff responsible for managing records are appropriately trained or experienced and that all staff understand the need for records management.

A training programme will be established to ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations around Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Records Management.

7. Records Creation and Record Keeping

Each department must have in place a record keeping system (paper or electronic) that documents its activities and provides for quick and easy retrieval of information. It must also take into account the legal and regulatory environment specific to their area of work. This system will include:

- Records arranged and indexed in such a way that they can be retrieved quickly and efficiently.

- Records are linked with the Board's Freedom of Information Scheme.
- Procedures and guidelines for referencing, titling, indexing and version control and security marking.
- Procedures for keeping the system updated.
- The ability to cross reference electronic and paper records.
- Documentation of this system and guidelines on how to use it.
- Clarity about ownership of records and procedures for handling documents

8. Record Maintenance

The record keeping system must be maintained so that the records are properly stored and protected, and can easily be located and retrieved. This will include:

- Ensuring that adequate storage accommodation is provided for the records.
- Monitoring the movement and location of records so that they can be easily retrieved and provide an audit trail.
- Controlling access to the information.
- Identifying vital records and applying the appropriate protection, including a business recovery plan.
- Ensuring non-current records are transferred in a controlled manner to a designated records centre rather than stored in offices.

9. Record Retention and Disposal

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, departments must have in place clearly defined arrangements for the appraisal and selection of records for disposal, and for documenting this work.

The system should ensure that:

- The appropriate records are reviewed and disposed of /transferred to archive storage each year in accordance with specific department requirements and SBE procedures for destroying confidential material and magnetic media.
- Documentation of the disposal/transfer of records is completed and retained.
- Records selected for permanent preservation are transferred to archive, as soon as possible.
- An intended disposal/review date must be captured when creating electronic records.
- Records subject to a Freedom of Information request are not destroyed.

10. Access

The Standards Board for England needs to ensure that decisions regarding access to the records are documented so that they are consistent, and can be explained and referred to. Senior Managers must ensure that:

- All staff are aware of the arrangements for allowing access to certain types of information.
- Procedures are in place to document decisions concerning access.

11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually and then in accordance with the publication scheme review.

Documentation Legislation and Standards

- Local Government Act 1974
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- *Freedom of Information Act 2000*
- *Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice, under section 46 Freedom of Information Act 2000*

ICO Model Publication Scheme 2008 under Freedom of Information Act 2000,

- British Standards (BSI)

BS 4783	Storage, transportation and maintenance of media for use in data processing and information storage
BS 7799	Code of practice for information security management
BS ISO 15489	Information and Documentation - Records Management