



**RECORD RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (“the OPCC”) for Lincolnshire is committed to operating in an open and transparent manner.
- 1.2 In order to comply with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000 the OPCC must ensure that its records are in a sufficient state of readiness to meet the standards necessary to deal effectively with FOIA requests.
- 1.3 This policy is designed to support the OPCC’s corporate governance framework and complies with the standards required by the Information Commissioner, taking into account the various legislative requirements and developments following the implementation of the Bichard recommendations.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
  - prevent the premature destruction of records;
  - provide consistency of preservation/destruction;
  - improve records management.

## **3. Retention Schedule**

- 3.1 All records held by the OPCC should be retained for the periods shown in the attached schedules. The Chief Executive through his/her Corporate Administration Officer will be responsible for ensuring that all records held by the OPCC are kept for the appropriate length of time and are destroyed according to the time specified in the retention schedules.
- 3.2 All retention periods are given in whole years and are from the end of the financial year to which the records relate (unless otherwise stated).
- 3.3 The retention periods do not mean that documents/or information should without exception be destroyed after the set dates. The retention period specifies the latest date to re-evaluate the information. At the end of a retention period the main user, in conjunction with the Corporate Administration Officer will:
  - evaluate the business value of the document/information; and,
  - either destroy the document/information or if applicable, set a further retention period.
- 3.4 Where appropriate, information can be retained by other means, such as, micro-fiche, magnetic tape, computer disk or off-site storage. It is not necessary to make information stored in this way ‘instantly’ retrievable. It will be sufficient to ensure that information is accessible through the OPCC’s systems.

Note: Whenever there is a possibility of litigation or a request under the FOIA, 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 FOIA have been exhausted.

#### **4. Disposal of Records**

4.1 Records maintained by the OPCC should be disposed of by shredding / arranging for collection as confidential waste for destruction. This should also include all backup copies on alternative media.

4.2 The FOIA requires the OPCC to maintain a list of records which have been destroyed and who authorised their destruction. Members of staff should record at least:

- file reference (or other unique identifier);
- file title (or brief description);
- number of files;
- name of the authorising officer;
- date of destruction.

This may be kept in an Excel spreadsheet or other database format.

#### **5. Standard Operating Procedure**

5.1 This applies to records which do not need to be retained. Information which is duplicated, unimportant or of short term use can be destroyed, including:

- compliment slips
- catalogues and trade journals
- telephone message slips
- non-acceptance of invitations
- trivial e-messages or notes not related to OPCC business
- requests for stock information such as maps, plans or marketing material
- out of date distribution lists
- working papers which lead to a final report (including committee 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

5.2 All these records can be destroyed, except where these may be used as evidence to prove that something occurred.