



Commission for Victims and Survivors

Records Management Policy

Version	2
Date Approved by Board	8 March 2016
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Date of next Review	February 2018

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[File Retention and Disposals Policy](#)

1. Scope

1.1. This policy provides for;

- (i) The requirements that must be met for the records of the Commission for Victims and Survivors to be considered as a proper record of the activity of the Commission.
- (ii) The requirements for systems and processes that deal with records.
- (iii) The quality and reliability which must be maintained to provide a valuable information and knowledge resource for the Commission.
- (iv) Review of the policy and checking the quality of implementation.
- (v) An overall statement of records management policy which is supplemented by detailed procedures.

1.2. It covers records in all formats, created in the course of Commission business, including non-conventional records.

2. Statement

2.1. Information is a corporate asset and the records of the Commission are important sources information in addition to administrative, fiscal, legal, evidential and historical information. They are vital to the Commission in its current and future work, for the purposes of accountability, and for an awareness and understanding of its history. They are the corporate memory of the Commission.

2.2. In consultation with organisations that may be concerned with the management of its records, the Commission will create, use manage and destroy or preserve its records in accordance with all statutory requirements.

2.3. Systematic records management is fundamental to organisational efficiency. It ensures that the correct information is;

- (i) Captured, stored, retrieved and destroyed or preserved according to need
- (ii) Fully utilised to meet current and future needs, and to support change
- (iii) Accessible to those who need to make use of it
- (iv) Supported by the appropriate technical, organisational and human resource elements to make this possible

3. The Records Management System

3.1. The system aims to ensure that;

- (i) The record is present - The Commission has the information that is needed to form a reconstruction of activities or transactions that have taken place.
- (ii) The record can be accessed - It is possible to locate and access the information and display it in a way consistent with initial use.
- (iii) The record can be interpreted - It is possible to establish the context of the record: who created the document, during which business process, and how the record is related to other records.
- (iv) The record can be trusted - The record reliably represents the information that was actually used in or created by the business process, and its integrity and authenticity can be demonstrated.
- (v) The record can be maintained through time - The qualities of accessibility, interpretation and trustworthiness can be maintained for as long as the record is needed, perhaps permanently, despite changes of format.

3.2. All staff of the Commission who create, use, manage or dispose of records have a duty to protect them and to ensure that any information that they add to the record is necessary, accurate and complete. The confidentiality of individuals and key stakeholders records must always be of primary concern to Commission staff. All staff involved in managing records will receive the necessary training with regard to Commission records.

4. The Records Management Policy

4.1. This is a specific part of the Commission's overall corporate programme and should be managed in accordance with relevant standards for records management such as ISO 15489, which provides an overall guide to best practice in records management.

5. The Commission's Electronic Records Strategy

5.1. Electronic records will provide for business use, corporate knowledge management and evidence-based policymaking, evidence for quality and accountability, and historical use.

6. Data Protection

6.1. Records need to be managed in accordance with procedures under the Data Protection Act 1998.

7. Freedom of Information

7.1. Records need to be managed in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and its related Codes of Practice.

8. Audit policy

8.1. Records have to meet audit requirements.

9. Records Registration

9.1. Records registration ensures a link between the record and its administrative roots. The registration of records will follow best practice in records management and allow for the users of the records to identify and track particular records and record collections. The registration system includes;

- (i) Classifying of the records into series that have meaningful titles and a consistent reference code
- (ii) Setting responsibility on individuals creating records to allocate them to an appropriate work area in the policy or case file series
- (iii) Having sequences of reference numbers that can facilitate paper and electronic (where appropriate) records
- (iv) Checking that the correct records have been allocated to the sequence and that meaningful titles are used
- (v) Auditing lists of the references used so that the registration system makes sense and records can be found in appropriate search sequences

10. Accountability

10.1. The Secretary to the Commission has a duty to ensure that the Commission complies with the requirements of legislation affecting management of the records and with supporting regulations and codes.

10.2. The Secretary to the Commission will work closely with the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland to ensure that there is consistency in the management of records and that advice and guidance on good records management practice is provided throughout the Commission.

- 10.3. The Secretary to the Commission has delegated the Head of Corporate Services to be responsible for ensuring that records and information systems conform to this policy and to the requirements of legislation.
- 10.4. All members of staff are responsible for documenting their actions and decisions in the records and for maintaining the records in accordance with good records management practice and professional guidelines.

11. Monitoring Compliance

- 11.1. The Commission will follow this records management policy within all relevant procedures and guidance used for operational activities. Interpretation of the policy will be monitored and this will be inspected by Internal Audit to assess how the policy is being put into practice. These inspections will seek to;
- (i) Identify areas of good practice which can be used throughout the Commission
 - (ii) Highlight where non-conformance to the procedures is occurring
 - (iii) If appropriate, recommend a tightening of controls and make recommendations as to how compliance can be achieved.