

Policy Title And ID number	<b>Records Management Policy GEN 6.18</b>		
Sponsoring Director:	<b>Director of Finance and Information &amp; Chief Operating Officer</b>		
Implementation Lead:	Information Governance Manager & Head of Health Records		
Impact:	(a) <i>To patients</i>	NO	
	(b) <i>To Staff</i>	YES	
	(c) <i>Financial</i>	YES	
	(d) <i>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)</i>	Completed: <b>No</b> <small>(delete as applicable)</small>	
	(e) <i>Other</i>		
Additional Costs:		<i>Budget Code</i>	<i>Revenue or Non Revenue</i>
	(a) <i>Training:</i>	£	
	(b) <i>Implementation:</i>	£	
	(c) <i>Capital:</i>	£	
	(d) <i>Other</i>	£	
Training implications:	<i>To be incorporated into induction:</i> <b>No</b> <small>(delete as applicable)</small>		<i>Other:</i>
Date of consultation at:	<i>Board of Directors</i>		17 December 2009
	<i>Executive Team</i>		8 October 2009
	<i>Divisional Medical Directors/Clinical Directors</i>		17 December 2009 (Board meeting)
	<i>Assistant Divisional Directors/Heads of Department</i>		
	<i>Board Committee</i>		Governance - 18 November 2009
	<i>Joint Partnership Forum</i>		
	<i>Local Negotiating Committee</i>		
	<i>Infection Control Committee:</i>		
	<i>Health &amp; Safety Committee</i>		
Alignment	<i>HR:</i>		
	<i>Strategic Direction:</i>		
	<i>Board Assurance:</i>		
	<i>Non- Clinical Governance &amp; Risk</i>		8 <sup>th</sup> December 2011
Date of Final Draft:		Issue Number:	1
Date of Final Approval:	17 <sup>th</sup> December 2009	Approved by:	Board of Directors
Implementation Date:	December 2009		
Date of last review:		Date of next review:	December 2013
Circulation Date:	December 2009		
Circulation:		Yes	Comment
	<i>Directors</i>	Yes	
	<i>Non Executive Directors</i>	Yes	
	<i>Divisional Medical Directors/Clinical Directors</i>	Yes	
	<i>Medical Staff Committee/SMSF</i>	Yes	
	<i>Assistant Divisional Directors</i>	Yes	
	<i>Assistant Nursing Directors</i>	Yes	
	<i>Heads of Department</i>	Yes	
	<i>H&amp;S Committee Members</i>	Yes	
	<i>Policy database/warehouse</i>	Yes	
<i>Others (to be listed):</i>			

# **Records Management Policy**

**ID: GEN 6.18**

**Sponsoring Director: Director of Finance and  
Information**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Records Management is the process by which an organisation manages all the aspects of records whether internally or externally generated and in any format or media type, from their creation, all the way through to their lifecycle to their eventual disposal.
- 1.2 The Records Management: NHS Code of Practice© has been published by the Department of Health as a guide to the required standards of practice in the management of records for those who work within or under contract to NHS organisations in England. It is based on current legal requirements and professional best practice.
- 1.3 The Trust's records are its corporate memory, providing evidence of actions and decisions and representing a vital asset to support daily functions and operations. Records support policy formation and managerial decision-making, protect the interests of the Trust and the rights of patients, staff and members of the public. They support consistency, continuity, efficiency and productivity and help deliver services in consistent and equitable ways.
- 1.4 The Trust Board has adopted this records management policy and is committed to ongoing improvement of its records management functions as it believes that it will gain a number of organisational benefits from so doing. These include:
  - better use of physical and server space;
  - better use of staff time;
  - improved control of valuable information resources;
  - compliance with legislation and standards; and
  - reduced costs.
- 1.5 The Trust also believes that its internal management processes will be improved by the greater availability of information that will accrue by the recognition of records management as a designated corporate function.
- 1.6 This document sets out a framework within which the staff responsible for managing the Trust's records can develop specific policies and procedures to ensure that records are managed and controlled effectively, and at best value, commensurate with legal, operational and information needs.
- 1.7 This policy should be read in conjunction with all relevant Information Governance Policies (which can be located on the Information Governance Intranet page).

## **2. Scope and Definitions**

- 2.1 This policy relates to all clinical and non-clinical operational records held in any format by the Trust. These include:
  - all administrative records (e.g. personnel, estates, financial and accounting records, notes associated with complaints); and

- all patient health records (for all specialties and including private patients, including x-ray and imaging reports, registers, etc.)

2.2 **Records Management** is a discipline which utilises an administrative system to direct and control the creation, version control, distribution, filing, retention, storage and disposal of records, in a way that is administratively and legally sound, whilst at the same time serving the operational needs of the Trust and preserving an appropriate historical record. The key components of records management are:

- record creation;
- record keeping;
- record maintenance (including tracking of record movements);
- access and disclosure;
- closure and transfer;
- appraisal;
- archiving; and
- disposal.

2.3 The term **Records Life Cycle** describes the life of a record from its creation/receipt through the period of its 'active' use, then into a period of 'inactive' retention (such as closed files which may still be referred to occasionally) and finally either confidential disposal or archival preservation.

2.4 In this policy, **Records** are defined as 'recorded information, in any form, created or received and maintained by the Trust in the transaction of its business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity'.

2.5 **Information** is a corporate asset. The Trust's records are important sources of administrative, evidential and historical information. They are vital to the Trust to support its current and future operations (including meeting the requirements of Freedom of Information legislation), for the purpose of accountability, and for an awareness and understanding of its history and procedures.

### 3. **Aims of our Records Management System**

3.1 The aims of our Records Management System are to ensure that:

- **records are available when needed** - from which the Trust is able to form a reconstruction of activities or events that have taken place;
- **records can be accessed** - records and the information within them can be located and displayed in a way consistent with its initial use, and that the current version is identified where multiple versions exist;
- **records can be interpreted** - the context of the record can be interpreted: who created or added to the record and when, during which business process, and how the record is related to other records;
- **records 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;

- **records can be maintained through time** – the qualities of availability, accessibility, interpretation and trustworthiness can be maintained for as long as the record is needed, perhaps permanently, despite changes of format;
- **records are secure** - from unauthorised or inadvertent alteration or erasure, that access and disclosure are properly controlled and audit trails will track all use and changes. To ensure that records are held in a robust format which remains readable for as long as records are required;
- **records are retained and disposed of appropriately** - using consistent and documented retention and disposal procedures, which include provision for appraisal and the permanent preservation of records with archival value; and
- **staff are trained** - so that all staff are made aware of their responsibilities for record-keeping and record management.

#### 4. **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **Chief Executive**

- 4.1 The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for records management in the Trust. As accountable officer he/she is responsible for the management of the organisation and for ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to support service delivery and continuity. Records management is key to this as it will ensure appropriate, accurate information is available as required.

The Trust has a particular responsibility for ensuring that it corporately meets its legal responsibilities, and for the adoption of internal and external governance requirements.

##### **Caldicott Guardian**

- 4.2 The Trust's Caldicott Guardian has a particular responsibility for reflecting patients' interests regarding the use of patient identifiable information. They are responsible for ensuring patient identifiable information is shared in an appropriate and secure manner.

##### **Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO)**

- 4.3 The SIRO provides an essential role within the Trust to ensure that information security risks are identified, followed up correctly and that any incidents are managed effectively. The SIRO is also responsible for ensuring that the Trust Board and Accountable Officer are kept up to date on all information risk issues.

##### **Records Management Group**

- 4.4 The Trust's Records Management Group is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented, and that the records management system and processes are developed, co-ordinated and monitored.

##### **Health Records Manager**

- 4.5 The Health Records Manager is responsible for the overall development and maintenance of health records management

practices throughout the Trust, in particular for drawing up guidance for good records management practice and promoting compliance with this policy in such a way as to ensure the easy, appropriate and timely retrieval of patient information.

**Local record managers**

- 4.6 The responsibility for local records management is devolved to the relevant directors, directorate managers and department managers. Heads of Departments, other units and business functions within the Trust have overall responsibility for the management of records generated by their activities, ie for ensuring that records controlled within their unit are managed in a way which meets the aims of the Trust's records management policies.

**Corporate Records Guardians**

- 4.7 The corporate record guardians provide an essential role with responsibility to cascade all relevant information/updates derived from the Records Management Group. They will act as the first point of contact for corporate record queries for staff within their work area and champion the implementation of this policy along with relevant procedures.

**All Staff**

- 4.8 All Trust staff, whether clinical or administrative, who create, receive and use records have records management responsibilities. In particular all staff must ensure that they keep appropriate records of their work in the Trust and manage those records in keeping with this policy and with any guidance subsequently produced.

**5. Legal and Professional Obligations**

- 5.1 All NHS records are Public Records under the Public Records Acts. The Trust will take actions as necessary to comply with the legal and professional obligations set out in the Records Management: NHS Code of Practice, in particular:

- The Public Records Act 1958;
- The Data Protection Act 1998;
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality; and
- The NHS Confidentiality Code of Practice.

and any new legislation affecting records management as it arises.

**6. Registration of Record Collections**

- 6.1 The Trust will establish and maintain mechanisms through which departments and other units can register the records they are maintaining. The inventory of record collections will facilitate:

- the classification of records into series; and
- the recording of the responsibility of individuals creating records.

6.2 The register will be reviewed annually.

## **7. Retention and Disposal Schedules**

7.1 It is a fundamental requirement that all of the Trust's records are retained for a minimum period of time for legal, operational, research and safety reasons. The length of time for retaining records will depend on the type of record and its importance to the Trust's business functions.

7.2 The Trust has adopted the retention periods set out in the Records Management: NHS Code of Practice Part 2 found at this link [http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH\\_4131747](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4131747).

## **8. Records Management Systems Audit**

8.1 The Trust will regularly audit its records management practices for compliance with this framework.

8.2 The audit will:

- Identify areas of operation that are covered by the Trust's policies and identify which procedures and/or guidance should comply to the policy;
- Follow a mechanism for adapting the policy to cover missing areas if these are critical to the creation and use of records, and use a subsidiary development plan if there are major changes to be made;
- Set and maintain standards by implementing new procedures, including obtaining feedback where the procedures do not match the desired levels of performance; and
- Highlight where non-conformance to the procedures is occurring and suggest a tightening of controls and adjustment to related procedures.

8.3 The results of audits will be reported to the Trust Board.

## **9. Training**

9.1 All Trust staff will be made aware of their responsibilities for record-keeping and record management through generic and specific training programmes and guidance.

## **10. Review**

10.1 This policy will be reviewed every two years (or sooner if new legislation, codes of practice or national standards are to be introduced).