

Data Retention Policy

1. Introduction

Bridgend County Borough Council holds a large amount of information. This information may relate to specific topics or individuals as well as records of decisions made and actions taken by the Council. The Council recognises that its records are an important public asset, and are a key resource to effective operation, policy-making and accountability. Like any asset, records require careful management and this policy sets out the Council's responsibilities and activities in respect to this with an emphasis on the introduction of a data retention document agreed by all service areas. The retention schedule (appendix 1) prescribes the period for which different types of records should be retained by the Council, and is based on the Local Government Classification Scheme developed by the Records Management Society of Great Britain.

2. Scope

All employees and Elected Members of Bridgend County Borough Council have a responsibility to effectively manage Council records in accordance with legislation and guidelines.

Schools are responsible for developing their own policies on data management but as good practice should follow the attached retention schedule.

3. Definitions

A record is defined as any information held by the Council regardless of medium (including paper, microfilm, electronic, audio-visual and record copies of publications), which is created, collected, processed, used, stored and/or disposed of by Bridgend County Borough Council organisations, employees, as well as those acting as its agents in the course of a Council activity.

Information that is duplicated or has short-term facilitative value such as compliment slips, catalogues and trade journals, telephone message slips, non-acceptance of invitations, requests for stock information such as maps, plans or advertising material, out-of-date distribution lists and duplicate copies are outside the scope. As are duplicated and superseded material such as stationery, manuals, drafts, forms, address books and reference copies of annual reports. Electronic copies of documents where a copy has been filed into the electronic document records management system are also included as duplicated.

4 Objectives

The aim of this policy is to define a framework for managing the Council's records, with an emphasis on data retention, to ensure that the Council:

- Creates and captures accurate, authentic and reliable records.
- Maintains records to meet the Authority's business needs.
- Disposes of records that are no longer required in an appropriate manner.
- Protects vital records.
- Shares information in accordance with guidelines and legislation.
- Conforms to any legal and statutory requirements relating to record-keeping.

- Complies with government directives.

The policy will be supported by a Corporate Electronic Document & Records Management (EDRM) solution. The system currently in use is Northgate's Information@Work and the ICT Department will ensure continued availability and business continuity of all data. This approach will help deliver services in a consistent, equitable and efficient manner. It additionally;

- Protects the rights of the Council, its employees, and its customers.
- Provides continuity in the event of a disaster.
- Protects records from inappropriate and unauthorised access.
- Meets statutory and regulatory requirements including archival, audit, and oversight activities.

5. Records Creation and Record Keeping

Each service area should 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 the area of work. This system will include:

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

6. 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.
- Tracking and monitoring the movement and location of records so that they can be easily retrieved (This provides 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, Glamorgan Archives rather than stored in offices.

7. 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. The records keeping system should be set up to deal with the routine destruction of records. The retention schedule (appendix 1) has been agreed by Heads of Service and will act as a trigger for the appropriate decision by that Head of Service or delegated officer. In respect of any records not specifically referred to in the retention schedule a decision about disposal will need to be taken by the Head of Service or delegated officer

ensuring that personal data is not retained for longer than it is required and taking account of any legal and regulatory requirements.

- The appropriate records are reviewed and disposed of or transferred in accordance with the local retention schedule based on the Local Government Classification Scheme and the Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities 2003:1 from the Records Management Society of Great Britain (
- Bridgend County Borough Council procedures for destroying confidential material and magnetic media are followed
- Documentation of the disposal or transfer of records is completed and retained.
- Records selected for permanent preservation are marked as permanent (whether paper or stored under EDRM) and transferred to a Records Centre, Glamorgan Archives, where possible
- An intended disposal/review date must be captured when creating records (paper or electronic)

8. Review of Policy

This policy and the retention schedule will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Council's Information Governance Board and also updated as a result of legislative changes.

9. Training and Awareness

Since all Bridgend County Borough Council 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.

Under the General Data Protection Regulation the Council's Data Protection Officer is able to undertake a Council wide data protection audit to ensure compliance.

Appendix 1: Linked Documents

- [Bridgend County Borough Council Retention Schedule](#)