

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

The information held by the Police and Crime Commissioner may relate to specific topics or individuals as well as records of decisions made by the Commissioner, actions taken and the rationale behind these decisions. The Commissioner recognises that 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 Commissioner's responsibilities and activities in respect to this.

2. Scope

All employees of The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire have a responsibility to effectively manage their records in accordance with specified legislation and guidelines

A record is defined as any information held by the Commissioner 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 The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire's employees, as well as those acting as its partners in the course of Commissioner activity.

3. Objectives

The aim of this policy is to define a framework for managing the Commissioner's records to ensure that the Commissioner:

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

4. Identification of roles and responsibilities

The Chief Executive will be responsible for compliance with [Freedom of Information](#) legislation, records management practices, Data Protection, the [publication scheme](#) and legal advice relating to any of the above. The Chief Executive will ensure that the Commissioner's staff are aware of record keeping issues.

All Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire employees will be responsible for creating and maintaining records in relation to their work that are authentic and reliable. A Business Support Officer within the Commissioner's staffing structure has specific responsibilities in relation to records management.

5. Training and Awareness

Since all the Commissioner's 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. Managers will ensure that staff responsible for managing records are appropriately trained or experienced and that all staff understand the need for records management. Where necessary training will be provided to ensure that all staff are aware of their obligations regarding Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Records Management.

6. Records Creation and Record Keeping

The Commissioner's Office has in place record keeping systems that document its activities and provides for quick and easy retrieval of information. It also takes into account the legal and regulatory environment specific to the area of work. These systems include:

- Records arranged and indexed in such a way that they can be retrieved quickly and efficiently.
- Documentation of the systems and guidelines on how to use them.

7. Record Maintenance

The record keeping systems will 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 continuity plan.
- Ensuring non-current records are transferred in a controlled manner to a designated records centre rather than stored in offices.

8. Record Retention and Disposal

With increasing public access to records, it is important that disposal of records happens as part of a managed process and is adequately documented. Therefore, the Commissioner's Office will follow Hertfordshire Constabulary's arrangements for the assessment and selection of records for disposal, and for documenting this work.

9. Access

This policy is based on the principle of openness and transparency and as such the Commissioner will publish and allow public access to as much information as possible. However there will always remain some information that must remain confidential, where for example disclosure would;

- be against the interest of national security
- jeopardise the safety of someone
- prejudice the prevention of detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders or administration of justice
- be prohibited by law

Decisions regarding access to records will be documented.

10. Performance Measurement

The Deputy Chief Executive will monitor performance with regard to the storage, retention and retrieval of records.

11. Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed in conjunction with the Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme on an annual basis.

12. Relevant Legislation

The following legislation has been considered when setting out this policy;

- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- Limitation Act 1980
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011