

Document Retention Policy

January 2008

CONTENTS

1.	REVISION HISTORY	3
2.	FOREWORD	3
3.	CURRENT PROCEDURES – PRIME DOCUMENTS	4
4.	PROPOSED PROCEDURES – PRIME DOCUMENTS.....	4
5.	CURRENT PROCEDURES – COMPUTER OUTPUT (REPORTS)	5
6.	REVISED PROCEDURES – COMPUTER OUTPUT (REPORTS)	5
7.	CURRENT PROCEDURES – EDMS RECORDS	5
8.	REVISED PROCEDURES – EDMS RECORDS	5
9.	EQUALITY	5
10.	DATA PROTECTION	6
11.	CRIME & DISORDER ACT	6

1. REVISION HISTORY

Issue	Description	Date	Author(s)
1.0	Draft	Jan 2008	Rod Urquhart

2. Foreword

This document presents the Document Retention Policy for the Anglia Revenues Partnership (ARP) for 2008 -2009. The ARP has continued to progress and improve during 2007 -2008 and this policy forms part of the ongoing platform to continue to provide excellent services & value for money to the Councils that form the partnership.

Since the creation of the ARP service efficiencies, excellence and customer service levels have all increased dramatically. This has been recognised at both National & International levels via awards, visits from other authorities and central government. The ARP was the first 'True Partnership' and still continues to be the benchmark of all other Revenues & Benefits Partnerships.

Much of the success of the ARP is due to the team members, other officers and external organisations who deliver the services to each Partner's citizens, whether through assessing a benefit claim or setting up a payment agreement each team member has a direct impact on the ARP's customer base.

In bringing together this Document Retention Policy we have taken ideas, suggestions & legislative changes from team members, other Local Authority Officers and external organisations.

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3. Current Procedures – Prime Documents

The partnership receives prime documents such as Benefit Claim forms, Changes of circumstances, single person discounts, exemptions, arrangements, occupation forms, statement of means, charitable relief applications and letters. These documents are scanned & indexed within the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), which is maintained by Civica.

Once the documents are scanned and indexed the paper copies are then bagged and tagged and put into storage. These documents will then stay in storage until the time limits (as shown in appendix A) are reached and then destroyed (via confidential shredding).

This process was essential for the partnership as only Breckland Council used and EDMS System, which whilst acting as a document store, was largely ineffectual.

4. Proposed Procedures – Prime Documents

The partnership receives prime documents such as Benefit Claim forms, Changes of circumstances, single person discounts, exemptions, arrangements, occupation forms, statement of means, charitable relief applications and letters. These documents are scanned & indexed within the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), which is maintained by Civica.

- The paper records are to be destroyed, via confidential shredding after a period of 6 months after scanning & indexing onto the Civica EDMS System.
- Should the need arise to reprint any documents; these can be easily achieved via the EDMS System.

5. Current Procedures – Computer Output (Reports)

The Partnerships' IT Systems generates a huge amount of batch control reports. These documents either printed & filed or copied and stored on the main network drives. The current policy is to destroy these reports after 3 years (Benefits) and after 2 years (Council Tax). Currently these documents are not scanned into the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), which is maintained by Civica.

6. Revised Procedures – Computer Output (Reports)

The Partnership accepts the need to retain these batch control reports for the suggested audit guidelines. It is proposed that these documents are scanned, indexed & stored in the Electronic Document Management System (EDMS), which is maintained by Civica.

7. Current Procedures – EDMS Records

At present all documents are scanned, indexed & stored within the Civica EDMS System. However there is no procedure for the destruction of records held within this system.

8. Revised Procedures – EDMS Records

It is proposed that these records are destroyed via our IT Supplier, after reaching the expiry dates as shown in Appendix A. It is also proposed that items, which are to be kept indefinitely, are copied to back up discs after a period of 2 – 3 years. This will keep the Civica system as streamlined as possible, maximising its performance.

9. Equality

ARP is committed to equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in both the provision of services and in its role as a major employer. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to the elimination of unfair and unlawful discrimination in all our policies, procedures and practises. We are determined to ensure that no member of the public, employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of their age, child care or other caring responsibilities, disability, gender, HIV status, language, marital status, race, religion, sexuality, membership or non-membership of a trade union, or by any requirement which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

10. Data Protection

This policy is compatible with Data Protection requirements as the Policy relates to the legal requirement to recover overpayments in accordance with the relevant legislation – as set out above.

11. Crime & Disorder Act

This policy is compatible with Section 17 of the above act. All staff are aware of their responsibilities and duty under this, and are mindful of its relevance. It is part of the induction process and training programme.