Morecambe Bay

Primary Care Collaborative

Records Management Policy

Document Reference	POL011
Purpose	The Organisation 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
Author	Mikey Maxwell, IT Consultant and Support
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CONTENTS

Key Personnel	
Chief Executive Officer	Andrew Giles
Records Manager	Graeme Redshaw
Information Governance Lead	Andrew Giles
Caldicott Guardian	Steve McQuillan

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary

Records Management or "Information Lifecycle 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.

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.

The Organisation'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 Organisation 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.

1.2 Purpose

The Organisation 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.

The organisation 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 function.

This document sets out a framework within which the staff responsible for managing the organisation'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.

1.3 Scope

This policy relates to all clinical and non-clinical operational records held in any format by the Organisation.

These include all administrative records (e.g. personnel, estates, financial and accounting records, notes associated with complaints).

Records not included are - health or other records held by independent contractors and copies of documents created by other organisations such as the Department of Health, which are kept for reference and information only.

The policy will be recommended to independent contractors as good practice.

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 Organisation 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

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.

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

Information is a corporate asset. The organisation's records are important sources of administrative, evidential and historical information. They are vital to the Organisation 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.

2. PROCEDURE

2.1 Aims of MBPCC Records Management System

The aims of our Records Management System are to ensure that

- **records are available when needed** - from which the organisation 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;
- **duplication of health records** - it is vital that duplicate records are not created as this poses a risk to the patient/client. There are some instances where false names and addresses may be given and these may be difficult to detect, it is therefore essential that all patient/clients are asked at the first point of contact whether they have ever received treatment within services (it is important to be specific and name the areas to avoid confusion). If the patient/client has received treatment, it is important to check existing records to ensure duplication does not happen;
- **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;
- **staff are trained** - so that all staff are made aware of their responsibilities for record-keeping and record management; and
- **storage** – records are stored in line with the Records Retention Schedule and Records Archiving Procedures.

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities

It is important that all individuals in the organisation appreciate the need for responsibility and accountability in the creation, amendment, management, storage and disposal of, and access to, all Organisation records. To have a clear chain of managerial responsibility and accountability for all records created by the organisation is a prerequisite for effective records management.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for records management in the organisation. As the 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.

Board

The Organisation 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

The Organisation'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.

Records Manager

The Records Manager is responsible for the overall development and maintenance of records management practices throughout the Organisation ensuring practical guidance and advice on records management/document control, retention and disposal of records is available.

All Directors & Managers

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 Organisation 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 Organisation's records management policies.

All Staff

All organisation 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 organisation and manage those records in keeping with this policy and with any guidance subsequently produced. Staff should ensure they comply with the records management framework of their professional body.

2.3 Legal and Professional Obligations

All NHS records are Public Records under the Public Records Acts. The Organisation 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.

It needs to be clearly understood across all areas of the organisation that under the Public Records Act 1958, all employees, including Non-Executive Directors, have a degree of responsibility for any record they create or use and may be subject to both legal and professional obligations.

2.4 Retention and Disposal Schedules

It is a fundamental requirement that all of the organisation'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 organisation's business functions.

The organisation has adopted the retention periods set out in the Records Management: NHS Code of Practice (detailed in the Organisation's Retention Schedules for Health and Non-Health Records). It is vital that all departments within Directorates establish and maintain a register (inventory) of the records they have archived in order to retrieve records if required or to make arrangements for safe disposal when appropriate.

2.5 Record Destruction Log

A complete description should be kept of everything that has been disposed of, when, how, by who and under what authority.   Record Destruction Logs must be maintained for the life of the organisation and any predecessor organisations.

2.6 Records Management Systems Audit

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

The audit will:

- Identify areas of operation that are covered by the Organisation's policies and identify which procedures and/or guidance should comply with 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
- High-light where non-conformance to the procedures is occurring and suggests a tightening of controls and adjustment to related procedures.

The results of audits will be reported to the Board through governance arrangements.

2.7 Training

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

3. DEFINITIONS/GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviation or Term	Definition

MBPCC	Morecambe Bay Primary Care Collaborative

4. CONSULTATION WITH STAFF, PRACTICES AND PATIENTS

Name	Job Title	Date Consulted

5. DISSEMINATION/TRAINING PLAN

Action by	Action Required	Implementation Date
Jo Knight/Boyana Konar	Upload policy to MBPCC website	30/09/2020
Jo Knight	Delete out of date copies and host current copy on Federation G Drive (supporting induction process), updating Policy tracker	30/09/2020
Liz Stedman	Upload to TeamNet	Jan 2021

6. Appendix 1 - MBPCC Retention Schedule for Health and Non-Health Records

6.1 Purpose

This schedule provides an overview of the recommended retention periods for health and non-health records. However, retention requirements may vary based on jurisdiction and the type of data. Always consult with legal counsel to verify compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

6.2 Health Records

Patient Medical Records: Medical records in Primary Care are held continually during the life of a patient, data we hold is linked to the main patient record at their registered practice, who will update the system on the death of a patient. Following the 10 year retention period, notes can be destroyed.

https://digital.nhs.uk/media/1158/Records-Management-Code-of-Practice-for-Health-and-Social-Care-2016/pdf/Records-management-COP-HSC-2016

6.3 Non-Health Records

Administrative Records
- Policy and Procedures Manuals: Retain current version and previous version.
- Meeting Minutes: Permanent.

- Annual Reports: Permanent.
- Legal Documents: Retain for a minimum of 7 years after the end of the legal retention period.

Financial Records

- Audit Reports: Permanent.
- Bank Statements, Checks (non-payroll), and Deposit Slips: Retain for 7 years.
- Invoices and Receipts: Retain for 7 years.
- Human Resources Records
- Employee Files: Retain for 7 years after termination.
- Payroll Records: Retain for 7 years.

Operational Records

- Facility Maintenance and Inspection Records: Retain for 10 years.
- Equipment Logs and Maintenance Records: Retain for 7 years after disposal of the equipment.

7. AMENDMENT HISTORY

Version No.	Date of Issue	Section/Page changed	Description of change	Review Date
V1.0	27/08/2020	All	New policy	27/08/2023
V1.1	22/09/2020	All	New format	27/08/2023
V1.2	20/06/2023	2, 7/8	Key Personnel added. Appendix 1 added – Retention schedule.	
V2.0	31/07/2023		Approved by the Board	31/07/2026