University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust

RECORD CREATION/ CAPTURE

RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

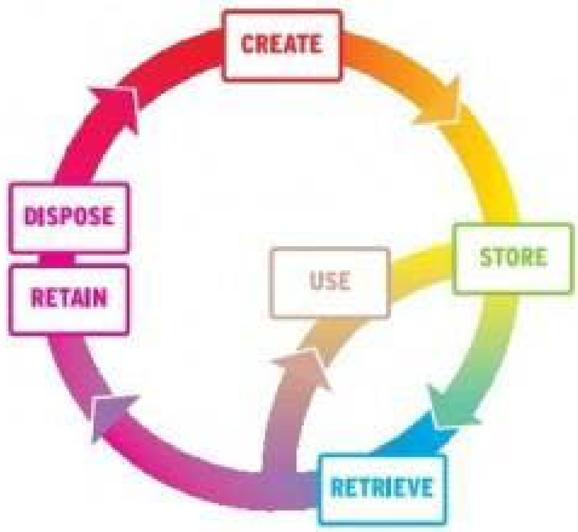
GUIDANCE TITLE:	**01: File Creation/ Capture**
GUIDANCE PURPOSE:	**Provide guidance on how to create a record/ file so all staff are following the same rules.**
AUTHOR:	**Information Governance Lead**
VERSION:	**1_01: June 2019**

Question: **When does a records life start/ begin?**
Answer: **The creation or receipt of the record**

The first stage in a records 'life' is its creation or receipt- it's 'birth'. We must manage this information from the moment it is created/ received, through to its ultimate disposal/ preservation- it's 'death'.

File creation results directly, from the transaction of Trust business (doing our jobs), and provides us with evidence of an activity/ piece of work.

This 'birth' to 'death' is known as the ***'record lifecycle.'***



Question: **Why is record/ file creation important?**
Answer: **To ensure the record is available and accessible throughout its life**

Consistency in record creation is needed for:

- Compliance with various legislation;
- Better control of records and quicker access to information;
- Better use of office/ storage space.

A new file is needed when a record cannot be filed in an existing file as:

- It starts a new activity or sequence of transactions;
- A new aspect or phase of an activity or project has emerged;
- The file has grown too large for convenient handling.

There are a few basic steps that should be taken when starting a new file:

- Classify the file;
- Title the File (including versioning if appropriate);
- Register the file (if applicable);
- Allocate a reference number to the file (if applicable).

Question: **What is the 'classification' of a record?**
Answer: **Deciding what the file relates to/ is about**

Classification brings together records which relate to the same area of work- same function, activity and transaction. It is important records are kept together that relate to the same subject. This classification makes it easier to locate records; both for the creator and staff.

When deciding how to classify, where to put a file, the key points to remember are:

- Think carefully about what information the file contains;
- Think carefully about your department's needs; and
- Use terms that will help others find the file.

Question: **How do I title a record or file?**
Answer: **In line with naming conventions for a record, and file titles should be easy to understand and recognisable**

New records or files need to be titled; this acts as a summary of what information is in the file and should be as clear and concise as possible. Individual records/ documents should follow the separate *'naming conventions'* guidance

Each file should have a clear and precise title. The following should be considered when titling:

- Ensure the title contains enough information to enable staff to identify the relevance of the content;
- Do not include nonsense terms, for example "correspondence";
- Use natural language and spell words in full;
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms wherever possible;
- Where possible, use role title rather than the person's name. For example, "Comments on .... by Head of IT";
- If names must be used use full names rather than initials.
    - Initials can be forgotten or confused.

Question: **What about registering a record/ file?**
Answer: **Is it needed? If yes, follow the principles below**

Registration is a system that allocates a unique identifier to a record, and then records that in a `register'. The principles of registration are: -

- References must be unique;
- File titles must be unique;
- References and titles must be relevant and easily understood;
- The reference should have no more than four elements, e.g. RT02/1104; and,
- Each element relates to a different level of the file title, e.g. team, month, year. Upper levels should relate to broad areas and lower levels to the individual records.

Not all records need to be registered; it depends on the service areas need to maintain accountable records, information needs, number of records, and any legal obligations.

<u>Question:</u> **What do I do once I have created a file?**
<u>Answer:</u> **Add it to the inventory (if applicable)**

Once a file has been created, classified, titled and if applicable registered, it may need to be entered on a records inventory and metadata attached (information about the information) - this is especially relevant for paper records. At a minimum the inventory should contain:

- Title of Document;
- Reference number;
- Date opened;
- Date closed; and
- Location (classification).

Further information on creating a records inventory and the types of metadata that can be recorded is available in the guidance- *'Records Inventories.'*

<u>Question:</u> **What do I do once I've added everything to the inventory?**
<u>Answer:</u> **Add it to the filing system**

The last stage in the creation/ receipt of a record/ file is to place it within the filing system, in the classification you decided upon earlier. See guidance on *'filing schemes'* for further information.

Paper:
In most departments cardboard fold over files, are the easiest way to store paper records. For information used on a daily basis or for reference, it may be better to use lever arch files. Regardless of the mechanism, there should be sufficient space on file for the reference number, dates the record is opened and closed and for a full title.

Electronic:
The same rules as above apply but in the electronic world.

<u>Contact Details/ Further Information</u>

If you have any question regarding the creation/ receipt of files please contact:

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