Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

RECORDS MANAGEMENT MANUAL

STANDARDS AND GUIDANCE

Records Service
Information Management Division

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1: Introduction

1.1 Everyone who is employed by the Welsh Assembly Government (permanent and casual members of staff, consultants and contractors) has a responsibility for records. You must:
- create records that document your official activities, and
- manage them in accordance with the policy, standards, guidance and procedures set out in this manual.

1.2 Some members of the Department also have more specialised records management responsibilities. These are set out in Chapter 3.

Records

1.3, 'Records' are information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business'.

1.4 Information in any of the following formats could be records:
- written documents
- audio and video tapes
- computer files
- e-mails
- photographs
- forms
- maps and plans
- microfiche and microfilm
- Welsh Assembly Government Publications
- Welsh Assembly Government website

1.5 As stated above, a record is information that relates to a particular business function or activity. To be of value as records the context of the information as well as its content and structure must be preserved.

Records Management

1.6 Records management is concerned with the systematic control of the Department's records to preserve and make available the content, structure and context of records for as long as they are required to meet the needs of all users.

1.7 Effective records management ensures that:
- members of the Department create appropriate records and capture them in their business context
- the integrity (i.e. the original state) of records is maintained
- records can be identified and retrieved when they are required
- records are kept in a usable format

- records are kept for as long as the Department needs them and to meet statutory requirements

1.8 We create and manage records for the following main reasons:
- to support the efficient achievement of the Department's aims and objectives by making information easily available to all staff when they require it in order to inform their actions and decisions
- to provide reliable evidence of our activities to allow us, when required, to explain and justify our decisions, actions and use of resources
- to allow us to make best use of our information resources and help minimise costs
- to minimise risks associated with non-availability of information
- to provide the corporate memory that will allow information to be shared now and in the future
- to allow us to comply fully with open government requirements (under the *National Assembly's Code of Practice on Public Access to Information*) Freedom of Information Act, Data Protection Act, and Environmental Information Regulations, with minimal interruption to the business of the Department
- to allow us to comply with other statutes and regulations relating to information or records
- to allow the business of government to continue in the event of disaster
- to ensure that a record of significant Government functions and activities is permanently preserved in The National Archive

1.9 All significant records that are created or received stored and maintained by the Welsh Assembly Government form part of the 'corporate memory' of the Department. This information should be available to support all aspects of the work of the Department, subject only to security or legal restrictions.

1.10 Any member of the Department should be able to:
- determine what records exist on any subject (subject to security or legal restrictions)
- locate and retrieve all information on a subject held in the Department

Life Cycle of Records

1.11 Records can be considered as going through a life cycle, from creation to final disposal. Records management is concerned with the effective management of records throughout their life cycle. Typical phases in the life cycle are set out in the following table:

Phase	Activity Level	Comments
1. Creation/Receipt	-	Records are created or received and (where appropriate) captured into a record-keeping system

2. Maintenance and Use	High	Records are being used for the business purpose for which they were created
3. Semi-Active and Inactive	Medium	Records are stored and maintained for reference purposes
4. Appraisal	High	Records Service appraise the value (business/legal/financial/ research/historical) of records
5. Disposal	Medium	Records destroyed or sent to The National Archives

Public Records

1.12 The Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967 apply to the department's records. The Acts require us to safeguard our records and to manage them in such a way that we can identify those worthy of permanent preservation in The National Archives and destroying the remainder as soon as possible and before they are 30 years old.

1.13 The Acts also place a duty on the Department to transfer selected records to The National Archive before they are 30 years old.

Data Protection

1.14 The provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 apply to records containing references to living individuals (personal data). Records containing personal data that have no more operational or administrative value to the Department can be retained for historical or research purposes, for example those selected for The National Archive, if:
- No decisions about the individuals concerned are taken on the basis of processing the data; and
- Substantial damage or substantial distress is not likely to be caused to the subject(s) of the data

Records Units and Registered Files

1.15 The record management system in the Welsh Assembly Government is based around Records Units. The Records Unit, operated by a Records Manager, opens, closes and manages the 'registered' files that are used to hold the records created or received by end users.

ERDMS

1.16 During 2006 - 2009 the Department is changing from a manual file management system to a computerised system. The latter is known as ERDMS (Electronic Records and Document Management System). Further details about ERDMS appear in Annex F and Chapter 8.

2: Aims & Policy

Aims of Records Management

2.1 The aims of records management are to ensure that the Welsh Assembly Government:

- has adequate records to meet its business and audit needs and the needs of its stakeholders

- has records management procedures and practices which conform to legislative requirements and best practice, and

- that responsibilities and accountability for records are clearly defined.

Records Management Policy

2.2 The Welsh Assembly Government's Records Management Policy is available at:

2.3 Records created and received in the course of Departmental business are the property of the Welsh Assembly Government and not of the employee, agent or contractor who created or received them. This is the case regardless of the physical location of the record, whether it be held in the Record Centre, in an individual's office or computer, or off the premises, including within a service provider's computer or other systems. Records management is primarily concerned with Welsh Assembly Government's *Business Records*

2.4 It is the policy of the Welsh Assembly Government to:

- follow effective, efficient and legally compliant procedures for the creation, safe-keeping, maintenance, retention and disposal of all its business records, including electronic records
- manage business records as a corporate resource to support efficient decision making, meet operational requirements and meet the accountability needs of the Welsh Assembly Government
- ensure that business records are organised to facilitate access by those who require it, subject to applicable legal and policy constraints
- identify and preserve records that serve to reconstruct the evolution of major policy decisions or that have other significant historical or research interest
- ensure that records rejected as not being required for permanent preservation are destroyed as soon as they are no longer required for the conduct of Welsh Assembly Government business or for statutory, regulatory, legal[*] or financial[**] reasons
- assign overall responsibility for the Department's records management programme to an appropriate officer who will perform the role of Departmental Record Officer

* A record has legal value if it documents a legal right or obligation. It loses value at the point in time when the legal right ceases, or ceases to be enforceable under current law.

** A record has financial value if it relates to the receipt, transfer or payment of funds, or if it is required for an audit.

3: Roles & Responsibilities

Introduction

3.1 There are 8 main user roles in respect of records management. Each member of the Department will have at least one of these roles:
- *Heads of Department / Division*
- *Head of Information and Knowledge Management Division.*
- *Departmental Record Officer.*
- *Records Manager.*
- *Records Supervisor*
- *Business Managers*
- *End Users*
- *Merlin*

Heads of Department / Division

3.2 Each Head of Department / Division has responsibility for ensuring that:
- the Assembly's records management policies, standards, guidance and procedures have been implemented throughout the Department / Division.
- formal responsibility for management of the business records of the Department / Division has been assigned
- electronic information and processing systems which support their business activities create appropriate records as part of supporting these activities

Head of Information and Knowledge Management Division

3.3   The Head of Information and Knowledge Management Division is responsible for developing and implementing policies and procedures which meet statutory obligations regarding public access to information, and for the development and implementation of good practice in the management of records;

Departmental Records Officer

3.4 The Head of the Record Service is the Departmental Records Officer (DRO). The DRO is responsible for supporting the efficiency and quality of Welsh Assembly Government business by:
- ensuring that all departmental records are appropriately managed throughout their life-cycle
- ensuring that the Department's obligations under the Public Records Acts are being met
- devising, promulgating, monitoring and reviewing records management policies, standards, guidance and procedures
- ensuring that, where functions are transferred to or from the Department, arrangements in respect of records relating to those functions are agreed with the DROs of other departments involved in the transfer

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- arranging for The National Archives to have complete oversight of the record-related work of the Department

3.5 In order to perform these functions, the Head of the Records Service must be aware of and have access to all records created and received in the Department whatever their format and wherever they are located. The DRO and representatives of the DRO have the right to examine any record or record-keeping system in the Department.

Records Managers

3.6 A Records Manager is the line manager of a records supervisor, and is responsible for:
- ensuring that the mandatory procedures set out in this manual are being followed in the Records Service and that the appropriate standards are being met;
- providing advice and support to the Records Supervisors;
- ensuring that Records Supervisors receive appropriate training;
- ensuring that document security procedures are complied with;
- approving new file series (prefixes) and assigning them to end users;
- closing prefixes
- approving new themes
- providing advice and guidance to Welsh Assembly Government staff in relation to the management of current records
- approving retention and disposal policies for Departmental records
- monitoring compliance with records management policies, standards and mandatory procedures

Records Supervisors

3.7 A Records Supervisor is responsible for carrying out the records management functions in a Records Service or Records Unit or Records Centre.

3.8 In a Records Unit the Supervisors responsibilities are:
- creating new files;
- creating new file parts;
- recording (and amending where appropriate) details of files and file parts in an approved record keeping system;
- processing requests for files;
- sending requests for the retrieval of files to the Records Centre;
- transferring files to the Records Centre;
- tracking the location of files;
- performing searches for lost or missing files;
- liaison with the Records Centre.

3.9 In the Records Centre the Supervisors are responsible for:
- the retrieval and long-term storage of all Assembly records together with
- Welsh Office records created prior to 1st July 1999.

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- The review of Assembly records according to retention and disposal criteria and schedules, and the selection of records for permanent preservation in The National Archives.

Business Managers

3.10 The records management responsibilities of all managers who are responsible for business activities and processes are:

- Ensuring that all business activities are properly documented and that accurate and reliable records are created and maintained.
- Determining how long records should be retained to meet operational and administrative needs in accordance with the Welsh Assembly Government's retention schedules.
- Liasing with the records management team when new activities, processes or working practices are planned which will affect the capture, handling or management of records.
- Ensuring that records management requirements are incorporated into business processes and consistently implemented by their staff.
- Ensuring their staff comply with the Records Management Policy.

End Users

3.11 The responsibilities of all staff who create, receive or use records in the course of their work are:

- Identifying which documents should be captured as corporate records.
- Creating, capturing and filing records in line with corporate policies and procedures.
- Using records responsibly with proper regard for audit trails and security mechanisms.
- Complying with the Records Management Policy.

Merlin

3.12 Merlin's[1] role is:

- To develop and maintain information systems in which electronic information, documents and records are generated, used and stored.
- To enable the Welsh Assembly Government to meet the requirement to create and manage its records electronically under the *Modernising Government* targets.
- To enable the Welsh Assembly Government to fulfil its obligation to transfer selected electronic records to the National Archives for permanent preservation.

Merlin's key responsibilities are:

- Developing and managing information systems to capture electronic records in line with established standards.

[1] Our outsourced IT provider

- Enabling the physical management of electronic records in accordance with corporate policies, including migration through system changes.
- Providing operational management of server operations and housekeeping, ie backups, restores (including the recovery of all data whether deleted in error or not), management of backup media and other consumables.
- Implementing technical records management controls on the exchange or sharing of information both internally and with third parties.
- Enabling the reliable and secure destruction of electronic records which are no longer required.
- Liaising with the Records Management team when new systems or enhancements to existing systems are planned, where these will affect the management of records.

Records Service

3.13 The following roles are performed within the Records Service in Information Management Division.

3.14 Records Service is operationally split into two distinct areas:
- Records Unit, and
- the Records Centre.

It also works closely with The National Archives in promoting policies for better improved management of all government records including its overview of the introduction of the ERDMS.

3.15 It is responsible for all corporate Welsh Assembly Government records from creation to destruction or transfer to The National Archives within the terms of the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967.

Records Unit

3.16 There are 2 Records Units in Cathays Park – on the ground floor, CP2 and HR Division, CP1, which serve the whole of the Welsh Assembly Government. These Units are responsible for the creation, location, storage, retrieval and safekeeping of all records which have a put away (PA) date of less than 12 months.

3.17 Records Unit responsibilities are:
- opening, registering and indexing new files, after agreeing the title with the Division;
- providing advice on, and authorisation for file classification systems;
- recording the movement of files;
- storing files and operating the "Put Away" (PA) systems;
- retrieving or locating registered files which are in Records Unit custody; and
- referring security classified files to Divisions for review of their classification;

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Records Centre

3.18 The Records Centre, at Neptune Point, Cardiff, is part of the Records Service and is responsible for the retrieval and long-term storage of all Welsh Assembly Government records. The Centre carries out periodic reviews of appropriate records and liases closely with The National Archives in considering which records should be destroyed or transferred to them for release into the public domain.

3.19 The Records Centre is responsible for:
- providing secure storage facilities for active and semi-active registered files and vital records
- providing a four-hour retrieval service for files stored at the Records Centre
- identifying registered files required for review
- approving (with the DRO) retention and disposal policies for Departmental records
- operating retention/disposal schedules by authorising the destruction of selected records
- selecting those records worthy of permanent preservation in The National Archives
- ensuring that records not selected are destroyed in accordance with the requirements of The National Archives
- identifying residual sensitivity in records selected for the The National Archives.

4: Records

INTRODUCTION

4.1 In the context of this manual, a 'record' is formally defined as:

'information created, received and maintained as evidence and information by an organisation or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business'.

4.2 More specifically this manual is concerned with 'public records' the definition of which excludes personal records (see Glossary – Annex A) and published information that has not been published by or on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government.

4.3 Public records can be divided into:
- those which have potential value (including administrative, legal, financial, accountability, research and historical value) because of the information they contain or the evidence they provide of Welsh Assembly Government activities
- those which have no potential value

4.4 The first of these are referred to in this manual as 'Welsh Assembly Government Business Records' (see Glossary – Annex A). The latter are referred to as 'ephemeral' records. For further guidance, see the flow chart at Annex B.

STANDARDS

4.5 The Standards that must be applied in respect of records are:
- all staff must make full and accurate records to document and facilitate all the business functions, activities and transactions of the Welsh Assembly Government
- records must provide adequate evidence of the conduct of business activity to be able to account for that conduct
- records must be authentic and capable of being proved to be authentic (i.e. it must be possible to prove that they are what they purport to be)
- records must be useable (i.e. identifiable, retrievable, accessible and available when needed by any person who has a business reason to access the information)
- records must, apart from the content, contain sufficient information to enable the record to be understood in the context of the business process in which the record was created and used
- records must be securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal
- arrangement for the control, retention and disposition of non-documentary Welsh Assembly Government records (e.g. videos) and record copies of

Welsh Assembly Government publications must be agreed with the DRO.

GUIDANCE

4.6 A record is any document conveying information by any means and in any medium. The following may all be records:
- paper documents
- electronic documents
- electronic messages (e-mail)
- photographs
- videos
- maps & plans
- microfilmed documents

Full and Accurate Records

4.7 Full and accurate records:
- facilitate actions by employees, at any level, and their successors
- make possible a proper scrutiny of the conduct of Welsh Assembly Government business by anyone authorised to undertake such scrutiny
- protect the financial, legal and other rights of the Department and any people affected by its actions and decisions

4.8 To be considered 'full and accurate' records must:
- be adequate for the purposes for which they are kept
- be meaningful
- accurately reflect the activities that they document
- be created for all business activities for which any kind of requirement for evidence exists
- contain information about their context (for example a file reference, authors and recipients details, date document created, sent or received)

4.9 In many instances, records will be created as part of a business process (for example, a draft Bill). In other cases a record will have to be specifically created (for example, to record the proceedings of a meeting or an oral decision). All principal functions, activities and tasks of a business unit must be documented.

Vital Records

4.10 Vital records are those business records:
- without which the Department could not continue to operate or without which the Department could not re-establish its key functions following a disaster
- which establish and protect the rights and interests of the Department, its staff and its other stakeholders
- needed to operate and re-establish the Department's functions during and immediately after, a disaster

4.11 Vital records will include contracts and agreements and personnel and payroll records.

4.12 Each Division should identify and protect its vital records. Where vital records are irreplaceable or only replaceable at excessive cost, they should be given the highest level of protection.

4.13 If vital records can be duplicated, copies should be stored in a separate building from the original record.

Ephemeral Records

4.14 Ephemeral records are those records that have little or no business or evidential value to the Department, or any member of the Department, after a relatively short period of time (at most a few days).

4.15 The following can be considered as ephemeral records and as such do not need to be held on a registered file:
- invitations to company demonstrations, courses, seminars or social events
- personal and social messages
- simple queries, such as requests for copies of documents
- simple messages, about meetings etc.
- rough drafts
- **exact** copies of records retained on registered files
- records that do not relate to the functions of a Division or business unit

Missing Files

4.16 It is essential that staff should act promptly as soon as a file appears to be lost. All file losses should be treated as serious and reported to senior management without delay.

4.17 If a file cannot be found, the Division should make a thorough search of all its working areas. It is extremely rare for a 'lost' file not to be found in the Division reporting the loss. Colleagues should be asked to search their desks, cupboards, lockers and safes etc. Consideration should also be given to identifying areas outside the Division which may have been sent the file.

4.18 If a local search fails to find the file the Division should ask the Records Service for an official office search to be undertaken. Such searches are very time-consuming, resource intensive and costly. To avoid unnecessary disruption of the Records Unit's day-to-day operations and staff time, Divisional staff should co-operate fully in the search.

4.19 Requests for official searches should be made to the Records Logistics Manager, Records Centre, Neptune Point (tel: 029 2089 5961). Form RS17 (available on the Intranet) will need to be completed and signed by an officer of at least Band D (HEO) level. The officer requesting a search will be informed subsequently of the result of the search and where a missing file is found in the Section/Division the requesting officer will be formally asked to explain in writing the circumstances as to why the file was not located earlier. This will be followed by a full report to the relevant Head of Branch or Division.

Unregistered Papers

4.20 The operations and functions of the Welsh Assembly Government naturally create registered records. In the past documents too bulky to put on registered files have been placed in boxes and sent to the Records Centre, eg. accountancy documents (invoices), computer data printouts, statistics, journals, reference sets of minutes from non-departmental public bodies, tender documents. Much of this material has mistakenly been regarded as unregistered when in fact they are attachments and should be registered in accordance with procedures set out in Chapter 7.

Statutory and other Instruments and Orders

4.21 The DRO is responsible for the safekeeping of all documents issued either by the previous Welsh Office or from 1 July 1999 by the National Assembly or Welsh Assembly Government or jointly with other government departments, and other instruments and orders such as compulsory purchase orders, and traffic orders, and for maintaining an official record.

4.22 The original documents should be sent to the Records Centre as soon as possible after publication accompanied by form RS23, available from the Records Centre, or the Intranet.

4.23 At the Records Centre the document will be allocated a deposit number and the receipt deposit form will be returned to the sender for filing on the relevant registered file. The deposit number should also be separately recorded by the user. Any request for the loan of a document may be made either in writing or by telephone quoting the deposit number.

Assembly Deeds

4.24 These are deeds which relate to land acquisitions under compulsory purchase procedures for the building of roads or highways. The deeds are held at the Records Centre, Neptune Point and any request for deeds should be made to the Centre.

Selection and Disposal of Records

4.25 The Public Records Act 1967 requires that all public records must be destroyed within 30 years or referred to The National Archives for preservation. The DRO is therefore responsible for compiling, in conjunction with divisional officers, record retention/disposal schedules specifying for each file series whether and when they are to be destroyed, reviewed or retained for consideration in discussions with The National Archives for permanent preservation.

Reviewing

4.26 The object of reviewing is to identify those records which either fall to be considered for preservation and subsequent transfer to The National Archives or which have no administrative or long-term value and can therefore be destroyed. The criteria by which reviewing assessments are made are in accordance with the Department's retention/disposal policy. The normal period for reviewing is at 10 years, ie. 10 years from the Put Away (PA) date.

4.27 Whilst the criteria are specific in certain areas, they cannot and were not intended to be able to cater for all situations particularly given the numerous and varied responsibilities of the Welsh Assembly Government. Each schedule needs to be designed to meet the demands and operational requirements of the division it serves. It still nevertheless needs to maintain the broad principles of the criteria which seek to place the emphasis on destruction rather than retention.

Transfer of Records to The National Archives

4.28 Each government department is responsible through its DRO for transferring to The National Archives all records selected for preservation. The The National Archives is responsible for co-ordinating the arrangements for the transfer and for supervising the way in which it is carried out. In the main these records will consist of those which at first review stage were deemed worthy of consideration for transfer to The National Archives. Other records may automatically select themselves in that they clearly have a public, policy or historical interest.

4.29   Records which have been transferred to the custody of The National Archives may be borrowed at any time and in effect remain under the ownership of the Welsh Assembly Government. Items should only be requisitioned through the Records Centre and must be returned direct to that office as soon as they are no longer needed. **Documents must not be altered or defaced, and papers must not be added to or removed from transferred records.**

4.30   Items requested must be returned to The National Archives within 12 months. However, if a request for a file is made at The National Archives offices by a member of the public, then it must be returned immediately. For more information on requesting records from The National Archives contact the Records Centre.

5: Files & File Series

A. FILES

DEFINITION

5.1 A 'file' is an organised collection of documentary items, usually kept within a file cover, that relate to the same business activity or transaction and are kept together:
- for current use
- to facilitate retrieval of the information
- to provide the business context for individual documents.

5.2 A 'registered file' is a file that has undergone the registration process (see Chapter 7) in an officially approved record keeping system. A registered file has a unique file reference and may be made up of a number of file parts.

STANDARDS

5.3 The Standards that must be applied in respect of files are:
- each registered file must be used to contain records relating to a specific, time-limited task, series of related tasks, or transaction
- a copy of each Welsh Assembly Government business record must be placed on the appropriate registered file by the operational unit with responsibility for the function or activity documented by that record
- a registered file must form part of a file series (see 5.10 below)
- each registered file must be given a unique file reference
- a registered file will consist of one or more file parts
- for each registered file, only one part may be open at any given time
- a file should be given a title that accurately and concisely describes the contents of the file
- a file title must not be amended once the first file part has been closed
- registered files must use official Welsh Assembly Government printed file covers

GUIDANCE

5.4 Closely related records are held together on **files**. Each file is given a unique file reference. Welsh Assembly Government business records (see glossary – Annex A) should be held on 'registered files'.

5.5 A file performs a number of functions:
- to facilitate retrieval of the information it contains
- to preserve the context in which the documents were created
- to provide a degree of physical protection to the documents

File Parts

5.6 Sometimes a file needs to be sub-divided because it has become too large (see 'closing files'). Each sub-division is referred to as a file part. Even when a file consists of many parts, they are considered to form a single registered file.

Therefore each file part has the same reference number and title. They are distinguished by a part number (Part 1, Part 2 etc.). [See also Chapter 7.]

5.7 The fact that a file has a number of parts simply reflects the fact that a large number of documents have been produced in relation to the subject matter of the file and that they will therefore not fit inside one file cover. See also Chapter 8.

Scope of Files

5.8 Individual files should deal with a specific piece of work. They should not be used to contain all records that relate to a broad subject area. In effect they should tell one story. A file that is too general is also hard to use. An action officer has to sort through a mass of paper to find the relevant documents. In addition, a general file is likely to grow quickly and have new part files that will increase the problem. Although a function or responsibility may last for many years it is normally, in practice, made up of a number of activities over time. Each of these activities, rather than the broad function, should be the subject of the file.

5.9 On the other hand if the scope of a file is too narrow it may only tell part of the story. It is the responsibility of staff in discussion with their records manager, to achieve the necessary balance.

File Titles (see Chapter 6)

B. FILE SERIES (PREFIXES)

STANDARDS

5.10 The Standards that must be applied in respect of file series are:
- a 'file series' must be used to group together registered files relating to the same business function or sub-function
- file series may be created only with the written approval of a Records Manager
- each file series must use the approved file numbering system (main theme / sub-theme / file title) throughout its life

GUIDANCE

5.11 Files relating to the same function, sub-function or activity are grouped together in a **file series**. A unique code or prefix consisting of between one and six upper case letters (for example ABC') distinguishes each file series. In the past these were sometimes abbreviations or mnemonics for the function or work group.

5.12 The terms 'file series' and 'prefixes' are sometimes used inter-changeably in the Department. File series is the preferred term and will be used in this Manual.

5.13 A file series should be derived from the functions, or sub-functions, of a Division and not the organisational structure. Organisational structures change over time; functions tend to be constant. If a file series is established at an appropriate level it should accommodate:
- wholesale movements of file series following machinery of government changes
- internal transfer of functions following any reorganisation

5.14 The are two broad types of file series within a Division:
- *Operational* file series. These are used to hold records of business functions relating to the key purpose of the Division;
- An *administrative* file series. This is used to hold records related to the running of the Division. These administrative activities will be common across the Department.

Numbering Systems for Files
5.15 Registered files are given a unique identifier when they are captured into a record-keeping system. This identifier, the file reference, consists of the file series prefix and a sequential number.

5.16 In any series using themes the sequential numbering starts from '1' for each theme. (see Annex C for examples).

Themes
5.17 A file series groups together documents relating to the same business function. In a themed file series, a 'theme' is used to further sub-divide the documents into more closely related groups of records. Each theme normally represents one of the main types of activity carried out as part of the business function. In effect the themes act like a 'pigeonhole' system; related documents are put into the same pigeonhole.

5.18 For example, a Division responsible for the human resources function would be given a file series for records relating to that function. The different activities carried out as part of that function would include:
- recruitment
- probation
- induction
- training

A theme would be used for each of these activities.

5.19 In appropriate circumstances, the Records Manager might authorise a different basis for themes than business activities. For example, themes may be based on countries or business sectors. Whichever basis is agreed, it must be used consistently throughout the life of that file series. For example, if a file series uses country themes then themes based on activities or sectors must not be added subsequently.

5.20 A number is used to represent each theme. Once a number has been assigned to a theme within a file series it must not be re-used.

Creating New File Series

5.21 New file series can only be created with the written approval of the Records Manager. New file series will normally only be approved in the following circumstances:
- creation of a new function or activity (not a change of name for an existing function)
- transfer of a function from outside the Welsh Assembly Government
- the original function has evolved to an extent where the existing file series does not support the function
- existing series is incompatible with records management policies and standards
- part of a function is transferred to another unit (if a whole function is transferred, the file series is transferred)

File Series History Files (Zero Files or 'Prefix Bible')

5.22 One file in each file series is specifically assigned to contain information on the format and structure, subject matter, creators and users, and disposal details of the file series. This is commonly called the 'Zero File' because it is usually given the figure zero in the file numbering system and list all the prefixes in use. Where records in the file series have been selected for permanent preservation, the zero file will also be selected for permanent preservation when the series is closed.

Closing File Series

5.23 File series will be closed when either:
- the function or activity covered by the series is no longer the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government
- the function has been discontinued
- the file series is 'illegal' (it does not comply with Welsh Assembly Government policy and standards)

5.24 In the above circumstances, Divisional staff must inform the Records Supervisors or Records Manager who will oversee the closure of the file series.

6: Opening Files

STANDARDS

Note: A 'file' may consist of one or more 'file parts' which share the same file reference and title and are distinguished by Part Numbers.

6.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of file opening are:
- A new file should be opened when a document that requires filing on a registered file is created or received and:

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- no file exists relating to the subject matter of the document; or
- a file exists but has been closed; or
- a file exists but is 5 or more years old and must be closed;
- A new file part (see 6.3 - 6.6 should be opened when:
    - the action on a file is continuing **and** the first part was opened less than five years previously;
- A file part must not be physically created until the previous file part has been closed;
- Files must not be opened before any documents have been created or received.

GUIDANCE

Introduction

6.2 In summary:
- Welsh Assembly Government business records relating to the same activity or transaction are held on a *registered file*
- each registered file has a unique *file reference*
- a registered file may consist of one or more *file parts* each with the same file reference and title and distinguished by a 'Part No' (which **must** be numeric, e.g. 'Part 2')
- registered files relating to the same function are held in a *file series*
- file series must be approved by a Records Manager in the Records Service;
- each file series is identified by a unique code or *prefix*, which consists of between one and six alphabetical characters;
- the activities covered by files in a file series may be classified by *themes*, which consist of up to three numeric characters.

When to open a new file

6.3 When a new record is created or received that relates to the functions or activities of that unit, Divisional staff must decide whether an appropriate open file exists. If necessary this should be done in consultation with a Records Manager. If no appropriate file exists, it will be necessary to create a new file and give it a title and reference number.

6.4 If an existing file is five years old and action is continuing, the file should be closed and a new file opened (referred to as a **continuation file**). The continuation file should be cross-referenced to the previous file.

6.5 A file should deal with a single topic or transaction. A file that covers too many topics is difficult to use. Divisional staff will have to search through large amounts of paper to find relevant documents. On the other hand a file with too narrow a scope will only tell part of a story. An appropriate balance must be struck.

6.6 When a file grows very quickly, and file parts are opened in quick succession, it may be an indication that the subject covered by the file is too broad.

Selecting a File Title

6.7 The functions of a file title are to:
- describe the contents of the file to aid subsequent identification and retrieval of the information it contains
- limit the scope of the material placed on the file

6.8 A title should identify the subject of the file accurately, concisely and, wherever possible, uniquely. Titles should therefore provide accurate information about the actual (and likely) contents of the file. The title ought to trigger in the user's mind what will be found on that file. At the same time it ought to be sufficiently restrictive to discourage users from using the file to cover developments of the original topic. Titles should be capable of allowing later users of the files, who will be unfamiliar with the file's contents, to retrieve information quickly without wasting time. For example:

- *'Electronic Business Steering Group'* may be too general if large volumes of paperwork are produced over a long period of time. It would be better practice to open files such as *'Electronic Business Steering Group: Meeting Agendas and Minutes 1999'*

- *'Nursing Correspondence '* is too general an area. The file could stay open indefinitely. It would be better practice to open a series of issue-based, time-limited files such as *'Assembly Questions for Nursing Division 2005 – 2006'.*
- *'Accommodation and Maintenance'* is too general. A title such as *'Re-wiring of conference room at Cathays Park 2'* is more specific.

6.9 A title will not carry out the functions described above if it is too general or vague. The words 'General' or 'Miscellaneous' should not be used nor be implicit in the title. A very short title implies that the contents are general.

6.10 If a file title relates to a topic that is of relevance to several different parts of the Department the aspects that are the responsibility of each unit should be made clear in the title. For example, instead of there being several files entitled 'Devolution'. Titles such as 'Devolution of Powers to Welsh Assembly Government: implications for export policy' should be used.

6.11 The key information that makes the file unique should normally appear near the beginning of the title to make searching easier on a computer list of titles.

6.12 Do not use abbreviations or acronyms unless they are very widely known and unlikely to become obsolete, for example 'UN'. Enter the full title adding the abbreviation or acronym in brackets. Acronyms for Departmental IT projects (for example, ERDMS) do not need to be spelt out.

6.13 When adding new papers to a file, care must be taken to ensure the file title continues to reflect the contents accurately. It is unwise to change the title of a file unless absolutely necessary. Users become familiar with file titles, and changing them is almost bound to lead to confusion. It is usually better to create new files and, if necessary cross-reference them to earlier, related, papers.

6.14 A file title cannot normally be changed once the first part has been closed.

How to select the correct File Series

6.15 Each Division is allocated one or more file series for its registered files (see Chapter 7). The file series should be related to the functions carried out by the Division . For example, Human Resources (People) Division might have the following series:

Personnel Planning: records relating to current or projected staffing requirements, personnel resource requirements, forecasts and estimates etc.
Pay Administration: records relating to the administration of employee pay.
Recruitment: records relating to the methods used to recruit candidates for vacant posts.
Etc.

6.16 The definition of the file series should make it clear to users if it is the appropriate series for a new document that requires filing

6.17 The definition of each file series can be obtained from a Records Manager. If the definition has been mislaid, a Records Manager must be consulted.

Keywords (Subject Headings)

6.18 Wherever possible, keywords should be used to help index a file. A keyword is a word, or group of words, taken from the title or subject matter of a file that describes its content and will facilitate its retrieval.

7: Registration (Recording the existence of files)

STANDARDS

7.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of file registration are:
- Welsh Assembly Government business records must be captured into officially approved record-keeping systems
- Officially approved record-keeping systems are Recfind / Knowledge 1 (computerised system) and docket books (manual system)
- The record-keeping system must operate so that the records derived from it are credible and authoritative. It should be possible to show that the record-keeping system was operating normally at the time the file details were captured.

GUIDANCE

7.2 The purposes of registration are to:
- provide evidence that a file or document has been created and captured into a record keeping system
- assist subsequent retrieval of files and documents

8: Using Files

STANDARDS

8.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of using registered files are:
- records documenting business functions should be placed without delay on appropriate registered files;
- documents must be securely attached to the file cover in reverse date order (newest on top);
- documents must be marked, by the officer who created or received them, with the file reference and, ideally, they should be sequentially numbered as they are added to the file
- once a document has been added to a file it must not be removed;
- damage to a file cover must be repaired without delay.

GUIDANCE

8.2 A Division is responsible for keeping a full and accurate record of its own functions. Records created and received in the Division that relate to its functions should be placed on an appropriate registered file in a file series that has been assigned to that function or functions.

8.3 The following should **not** be placed on a Divisions's files:
- records relating to the functions of another Division that have been sent for information and/or comment and do not lead to other action;
- published records that are being held for information (unless they are referred to in detail in a document properly held on a registered file and need to be placed on file.

Filing documents

8.4 Letters, minutes and other documents should be filed chronologically inside the file cover on the right-hand side. The most recent document should be on top.

8.5 The officer who creates or receives a document that needs to be filed is responsible for marking them with the appropriate file reference on the front page.

8.6 Ideally, all documents on a file should be numbered sequentially. The number should be written in the top right-hand corner of the document (on the first page of a multi-page document). If a document has an attachment this should be given the same number as the covering document together with an alphabetic suffix.

For example:
      12 - the 12th enclosure on a file
      12A - the first attachment to document 12
      12B - the second attachment to enclosure 12

8.7 When a new file part is opened, the enclosure numbering must start again at '1'.

8.8 With the exceptions given in the following paragraph, documents should be attached to the file by punching a hole approximately 2.5 centimetres from the top of the document and from the left-hand margin ensuring that no information is destroyed when the hole is punched. The document should then be attached to the file using a treasury tag.

8.9 Holes should not be punched in:
- documents likely to be returned to the sender
- bulky items such as reports or maps

These should be placed in an enclosure envelope. The file reference, enclosure number and details of the document should be written on the envelope. The envelope itself should then be hole-punched, as described above, and tagged into the file.

8.10 Particularly large documents may either be:
- placed in a folder and tagged to the outside of the file
- placed in a box

The file reference must be written on the folder or box.

8.11 Documents must be added to the appropriate file at the earliest opportunity after creation or receipt. Files must contain up to date information on the status of matters being handled in the Department.

File Repairs

8.12 Any torn or damaged file covers must be repaired without delay. Sellotape™ or similar material is not suitable for this purpose. In most cases, a new file cover should be created and the old cover attached by treasury tag to the inside left-hand side of the new cover.

9: Controlling Files

STANDARDS

9.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of controlling registered files are:
- Records Officers, to ensure that each file can be located without delay when it is required, should document the physical movement and current location of files;
- Records Officers must keep a record of files that have been received from other government departments and track their location;
- Loss of protectively marked files must be reported to the Head of Security without delay;
- temporary file covers (to hold papers that should be placed on a file that has been lost) can only be used with the approval of a Records Supervisor.

GUIDANCE

Tracking Files

9.2 To retrieve a file promptly when it is required, Records Officers must be aware of its physical location at all times.

9.3 The systems for keeping a record of the location of files are:
- Recfind / Knowledge 1 records management system.

9.4 As a minimum, the tracking system will record:
- file reference;
- location (name and or room number of end user);
- date file sent to that location.

9.5   The tracking system will be supplemented by regular (at least quarterly) 'censuses' performed by the Records Supervisors during which files that have been issued to staff are physically located and, where appropriate, location details are updated.

Files borrowed from other government departments

9.6 The receipt of files from other government departments ('foreign files'), and their movements within the Welsh Assembly Government, must be recorded in a 'Foreign Files' book. A standard notebook can be used for this purpose.

Files sent outside Welsh Assembly Government

9.7 Current files may only sent outside the Department with the approval of the DRO. Their movement must be recorded and the return sought at the earliest opportunity. Files retrieved from The National Archives must not be sent out of the Department.

Security

9.8 Protectively marked files are files containing documents with any of the protective markings namely, Restricted, Confidential, Secret and Top Secret.

9.9 A protective marking is an indicator of the damage that would be caused if a file, or other asset, were used to cause harm. As a result the marking indicates the level of protection that must be given to the asset. The level of harm may change over time and documents can be downgraded to a lower protective marking or declassified by removing all markings.

9.10 The Department's rules applying to protectively marked material are set out in the Manual of Protective Material (MPS) 2005 – 2006. Key points of relevance to records are set out below:

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- the appropriate protective marking must be clearly marked at the top and bottom of each page of the document (in red – or bold with larger font size than the text)
- the file must be clearly marked, in red, at the top and bottom, front and back, of the file cover with the HIGHEST protective marking of any of the contents
- if a document with a higher marking is added to a file the original marking on the file cover must be deleted, initialled and dated and the new marking recorded on the cover
- wherever possible authorisation to downgrade or declassify a record should be marked on the document or file when it is created or filed
- consideration should be given to downgrading or declassifying a file at any stage and particularly when a file is sent to the Records Centre or closed (N.B. documents may only be downgraded/declassified by the originator or their successor)
- Documents and files must be protected according to the Departments rules (this includes files and documents awaiting destruction)
- Each page of a SECRET or TOP SECRET document must be numbered
- Each TOP SECRET document must have a copy number

10: Closing Files

STANDARDS

Note: A 'file' may consist of one or more 'file parts' which share the same reference or title and are distinguished by Part Numbers.

10.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of closing registered files are:
- A file must be closed if either:
- action on the subject of the file is completed, or
- five years have passed since the date of the first document on the file (i.e. on the first file part if there is more than one file part)
- A file part must be closed if it grows too thick (2.5 cm)

GUIDANCE

10.2 To ensure that files do not reach an unmanageable size and to allow the Department to comply with the Public Records Acts the papers or other recorded information in a file should not cover a period of more than five years. Files should therefore normally be closed, at the latest, five years after the date of the earliest document.

10.3 Although the Department's functions and areas of interest may continue indefinitely, each file should deal with a discrete, time-bound, activity that forms a part of the Division's business functions. The file should be closed when that activity is complete.

10.4 If files have very broad, general, titles they will be used to hold documents covering a large number of discrete activities and it may never be clear when the file should be closed. This is not good practice.

10.5 Exceptionally, a file relating to a single activity may cover a period longer than five years. For example, files relating to a company investigation or a legal case. The written permission of the DRO must be obtained to keep a file open for longer than five years.

The effect of closing files and file parts

10.6 The effect of closing a file is that:
- no new papers may be added
- no papers may be removed
- the reference number must not be used on any other file or file part

10.7 The effect of closing a file part is that:
- no papers may be added to previous parts of the same file
- no papers may be removed from previous file parts

10.8 When a file or file part has been closed it may still be used for reference purposes.

11: Storage of Files

STANDARDS

11.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of file storage are:
- official records must be securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, destruction, alteration or removal
- registered files that are not required on a regular daily basis should be stored at the Records Centre
- registered files must never be stored in desk drawers
- files containing protectively marked documents must be stored in accordance with the standards laid down for the document with the highest marking on the file (see 9.8 – 9.10)

GUIDANCE

11.2 Records should be kept using facilities, materials and methods which promote their survival undamaged for as long as they need to be retained. Records, including registered files, should be protected from tampering, unauthorised or accidental alteration, or destruction/deletion.

11.3 When retained in office space, files and other records should be stored in a locked container appropriate to their sensitivity or protective marking. Registered files must not be stored in desk drawers where they are not generally available to users.

11.4 A minimum number of records should be kept in office space. If records are not regularly required for current use they should be sent to the Records Unit.

12: Retention and Disposal of Records

STANDARDS

12.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of file retention are:
- records should be retained for as long as they are needed to meet business needs, the requirements of accountability and statutory requirements
- the disposal of records should only take place in accordance with relevant legislation including the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967.
- The Records Service is responsible for setting retention periods and selecting records worthy of permanent preservation in The National Archives
- Retention and Disposal policies and schedules must be approved by the DRO
- With the exception of those records described in Annex G, Departmental Records can only be destroyed by, or under the supervision of, the Records Service
- Records described in Annex G may be destroyed by any officer

GUIDANCE

12.2 Under the Public Records Acts the Department must dispose of its records in one of three ways:
- transfer those worthy of permanent preservation to The National Archives following a review process and before they are 30 years old;

- retain records more than 30 years old if they have continuing administrative value and if the Lord Chancellor approves;
- destroy other records as soon as administrative needs permit and in any event before they are 30 years old.

12.3 To comply with the Act, and to ensure that records are retained for as long as necessary to meet business, legal, audit and accounting needs, records are put into one of four categories by the Records Service:

- records automatically selected for permanent preservation in The National Archives;
- records subject to review by the Records Service;
- records which can be destroyed after a fixed period;
- updated records (such as directories or loose-leaf manuals).

Updated Records

12.4 Certain records such as manuals and directories will be maintained indefinitely with users holding the current version. Where a Division is responsible for editing and issue of the record, a master set, including all amendments to the content must be held on registered files or in a manner agreed in writing by the DRO.

13: Electronic Records

STANDARDS

13.1 The Standards that must be applied in respect of electronic records are:
- the Department's electronic documents (including 'e-mails') are potentially business records and as such are subject to this manual
- a record copy of all electronic documents that meet the relevant criteria should be printed out and filed in the appropriate registered file
- the following information (metadata) about the record must be contained within each record:
  - registered file reference;
  - date of creation;
  - name of owner/author of document;
  - Division / Branch of owner/author;
  - document name/title;
  - protective marking (if any);
  - addressee(s);
  - reference number used by addressee (if applicable)
- structured sets of electronic records may be retained in electronic format if:
  - the written approval of the Departmental Record Officer is given
  - the system contains appropriate functionality to allow the records to be managed
- electronic records must be managed in compliance with the British Standards Institute Code of Practice on *Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information Stored Electronically*. (PD 0008:1999)
- the Departmental Record Officer must be informed by the Head of the appropriate Division of the existence of any structured databases and other electronic record-keeping systems at the planning stage. Such

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systems must have record keeping functionality including registration, indexing and retention control.

- all databases that the DRO has agreed may be retained in electronic format must have a retention period associated with the data and assigned at the time of creation. This retention period must be agreed with the DRO.
- electronic records should not be destroyed without consideration being given to whether or not the records are Welsh Assembly Government business records
- all ephemeral electronic records and documents no longer required for current business should be deleted. Each workgroup must put procedures in place to ensure that records are deleted in a timely manner

GUIDANCE

13.2 An electronic record is any information (including data, text, image or sound) that is created, stored and retrieved electronically.

13.3 Typically, electronic records will have been created using a computer application, such as word-processing, spreadsheet or database software or captured using a scanner.

13.4 Any recorded information has three properties:
- content
- context
- structure

13.5 These three elements are all clear on a paper record. For example, on a travel claim form they appear as:
- content (the printed and written text relating to the claim)
- context (some of this is provided on the document and some by the file – the details on the file cover and the other contents of the file and their physical position in relation to the document in question)
- structure (the travel claim form itself)

13.6 With an electronic version of a claim form no similar document is stored anywhere on the computer. The operating system and application software creates a virtual document when you enter an instruction to retrieve it. If the software is upgraded the relationships between the elements of the electronic document may change.

E-Mail

13.7 E-mails are important as records of the Department's activities. Where they relate directly to the functions and activities of a Division a copy should be

printed out and filed on the appropriate registered file. Full envelope details and attachments should also be printed out and filed in order to provide the e-mail record with structure and context as well as the content.

13.8 Guidance on managing e-mails as records is given in the flow charts in Annex D.

Databases/Datasets

13.9 Structured assemblies or collections of electronic records, such as databases and surveys, may be retained in electronic format rather than printed out and held in a registered file, if:
- the written approval of the Departmental Record Officer is given;
- the system contains appropriate functionality to allow the records to be managed.

13.10 The DRO must be contacted early in the planning stage for any such system by means of the form attached at Annex E.

ANNEXES

ANNEX A

GLOSSARY

Appraisal: the process of evaluating records to determine how long they should be retained and whether they should be permanently preserved in The National Archives

Business activity: umbrella term covering all the functions, processes, activities and transactions of the Welsh Assembly Government and its employees and agents.

Business Records (Welsh Assembly Government): a record created or received by any individual employed or contracted by the Welsh Assembly Government that:

- relates to Welsh Assembly Government business (i.e. is used to initiate, support, carry out or account for Welsh Assembly Government business and activities)
- is in any medium or physical form (including electronic documents and e-mail)
- has potential value (including administrative, legal, financial accountability, research and historical value)

(see also *Personal Records, Ephemeral Records*)

Capture A deliberate action that results in the registration of a record into a record keeping system. Documents are captured when they are placed on a registered file. Files are captured when their details are recorded on an officially approved record keeping system.

Active Records: those records that are regularly and frequently used for the conduct of current business activities of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Disposal Schedule: a formal document that defines the retention periods and consequent disposal actions authorised for those file series or record types that are listed in it. Disposal schedules must be approved by the Departmental Records Officer and The National Archives.

ERDMS – Electronic Records and Document Management System.

Electronic records: records created, sent or received, and maintained by means of electronic equipment.

Ephemeral Records: records of little lasting value (beyond a few hours or days) to the Department; exact copies of official records kept elsewhere on a registered file that act as convenience or reference copies.

File: an organised collection of documentary items, usually kept within a file cover, which relate to the same functional activity or transaction and are kept together for current use and to facilitate retrieval. (see Registered File)

File Part: collections of documents in a file jacket that forms part of a larger file. Each file part has the same file reference and title. 'Part numbers' distinguishes file parts. (see paragraph 5.6)

File Reference: the combination of prefix code, theme number (if used), year (if used) and sequential file number which together forms a unique identifier for each individual file

File Series – a group of similar or closely related files (see also *Prefix*)

Fiscal – relating to financial matters

Keywords – (in ERDMS) prescribed words and phrases that represent activities or sub functions within a business area and are used for retrieving information.

Metadata – data about data and data systems. In relation to electronic records this is data that must be captured with the electronic record to enable them to be understood in their business context

Inactive records: records which are no longer (or are unlikely to be) needed to conduct current business and can therefore be destroyed or transferred to The National Archives

Personal records: records accumulated by a Minister or official before assuming office; records relating to private, personal matters; diaries or journals not prepared for transacting government business.

Prefix: a group of between two and four letters that represent a file series and form part of the unique reference for all files in that series.

TNA: The National Archives. The National Archives for England and Wales.

Public Records: administrative and departmental records of, or held in a government department (not just paper records but records in any medium). Public records are subject to the provisions of the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967.

Record: recorded information, in any form, which is created or received and maintained by the Welsh Assembly Government in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity. (see also Business Record, Personal Record, Public Records, Ephemeral Record and Annex B)

Record Manager: the person responsible for ensuring that the procedures in the manual are followed and standards are being met.

Records Supervisor the person responsible for carrying out records management functions in a Records Unit or Records Centre.

Record-keeping Systems: information systems that are used to capture and maintain details of registered files and facilitate retrieval of those files over time.

Records Management: the systematic control of records to preserve and make available the content, structure and context of records for as long as they are required to meet the needs of all users.

Registered File: a file that has undergone the registration process in an officially approved record keeping system. A registered file has a unique reference number and may be made up of a number of part-files. (See part files)

Registration: the act of giving a file or document a unique identity in a record-keeping system

Retention Period: the length of time, usually based upon an estimate of the frequency of use for current and future business needs, before destruction or transfer to The National Archives

Semi-Active Records: those records required occasionally for the conduct of current business.

Storage: the function of storing records for future retrieval and use.

Theme: a classification of subjects within a themed file series. The file series should represent a function or programme of work within a Division. A theme should represent one of the activities within that function. A number in the file reference represents the theme.

Tracking: capturing and maintaining information about the movement and, sometimes use, of records.

Vital records: those business records without which the Department could not continue to operate or without which the department could not re-establish its functional activities in the event of a disaster which destroys all other records.

Annex B

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                                                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                                                    │        Personal Papers              │
                                                    │                                     │
                                                    │ - Diaries or journal not prepared   │
                                                    │ for or concerning government business│
                                                    │                                     │
                                                    │ - papers accumulated by an individual│
                                                    │ before assuming office              │
                                                    │                                     │
                                                    │ - Records related to private matters│
                                                    └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                                                                   ▲
        ( What is a Record? )                                    Yes
                 │
                 ▼                                         ◇ Does the
        ◇ Was the material                                 material consist of non-
          created or received in          No               official or private
          the conduct of WAG  ──────────────────────────►  information relating
          business?                                        solely to personal
                 │                                          business and not relating
                Yes                                         to or having an influence
                 │                                          upon the conduct of
                 ▼                                          WAG business?
        ◇ Does it have                                             │
          potential value?  ──── No ────────────────►             No
                 │                                                 │
                Yes                                                ▼
                 │                                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                 ▼                                    │      Ephemeral and Published        │
        ◇ Is your Division        ◇ Did you          │ - materials do no contribute to     │
          responsible for   No     comment or take   │ understanding of business           │
          subject of the   ──────► action on the ─No─│ operations or decision making       │
          record?                  record?            │ processes                           │
                 │                      │             │                                     │
                Yes                    Yes            │ - Exact copies of official record   │
                 │                      │             │ retained elsewhere                  │
                 │                      ▼             │                                     │
                 │            ◇ Is retention of this  │ + convenience copies kept solely    │
                 │              version of the        │ for ease of access and reference    │
                 │              record necessary to ──│ +information/reference copies       │
                 │              support the trail of  │ +technical reference documents      │
                 │              your comment or ?  No │ needed for general information, but │
                 │                      │             │ not part of the official record     │
                 ▼                     Yes            └─────────────────────────────────────┘
┌─────────────────────────────┐        │
│     WAG Business Record      │◄───────┘
│                              │
│ - any final product related  │
│ to functions and activities  │
│ - supporting materials       │
│ sufficient to document and/or │
│ explain the audit decision   │
│ marking process              │
│                              │
│ *May be originals or copies* │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```

Annex C

EXAMPLES OF FILE SERIES NUMBERING SYSTEMS

The WAG business classification system (ie Fileplan or File Series) is a hierarchical fileplan consisting of 3 levels. The levels comprise:

- **main theme**, which describes a function, for example: Administration, Finance;

- **sub-theme**, is an activity within that function, for example: Accommodation, Staff, Training;

- **file title**, which is a transaction within the activity, for example: Relocation of Records Centre from Curran Road to Neptune Point.

These 3 levels are assigned a prefix which denotes a high level business area, such as Information Management. The full classification scheme therefore consists of:

Prefix / Main Theme / Sub-Theme / File Title

For example:

Assembly / Information Management / Administration / Accommodation / Relocation of Records Centre from Curran Road to Neptune Point

This classification is represented in the records management database (and on the file label) by alpha – numeric characters ie
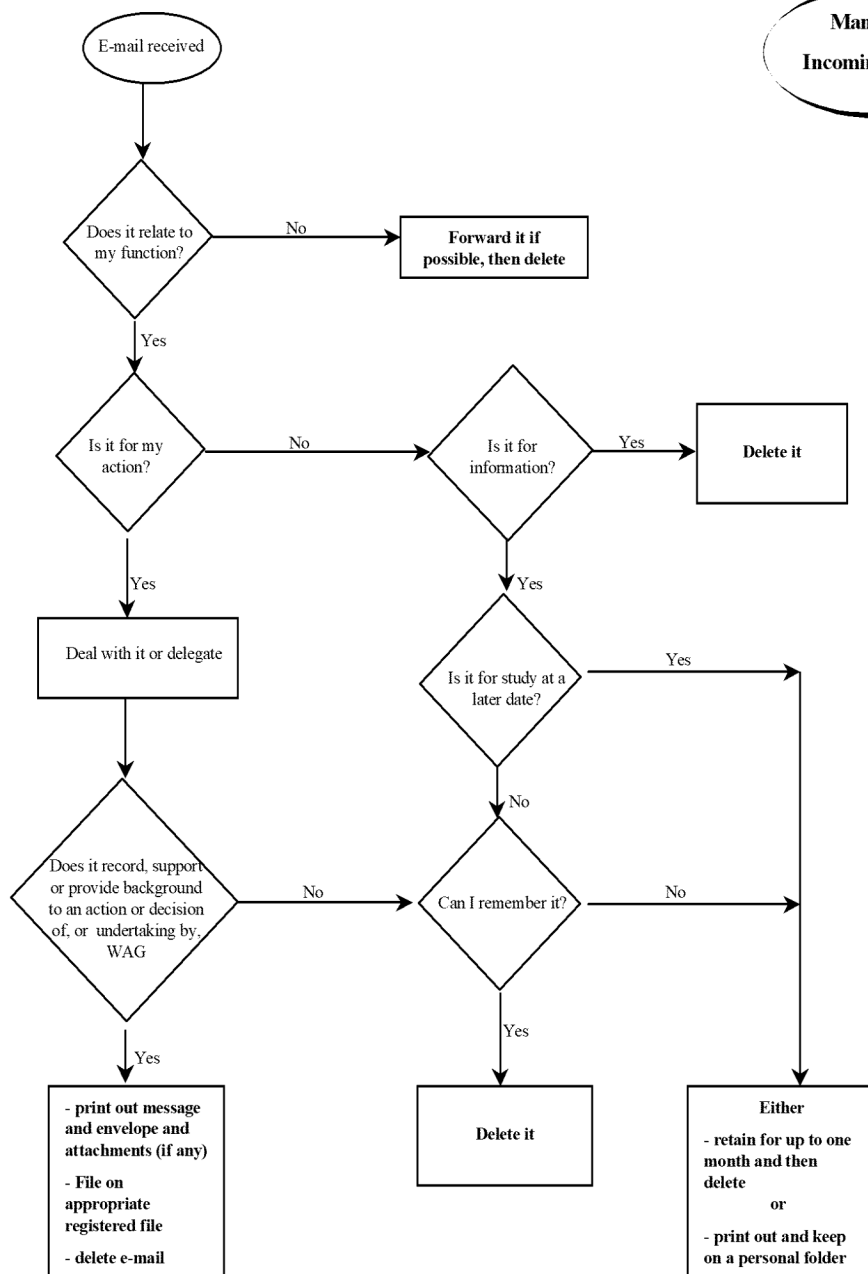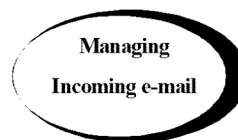
A- -IM015 – 22 - 001

Words such as General and Miscellaneous are not used in the business classification scheme as they are not specific and are used as a 'dumping ground' for large amounts of unrelated documents.

For more detailed guidance on the compilation of file series contact the Records Service.

Annex D

WAG Records Service

Managing

Incoming e-mail

E-mail received

Does it relate to my function? — No → **Forward it if possible, then delete**

Yes

Is it for my action? — No → Is it for information? — Yes → **Delete it**

Yes

Deal with it or delegate

Does it record, support or provide background to an action or decision of, or undertaking by, WAG — No → Can I remember it? — No →

Yes (information) → Is it for study at a later date? — Yes →

No

Yes

- print out message and envelope and attachments (if any)
- File on appropriate registered file
- delete e-mail

Delete it

Either
- retain for up to one month and then delete

or

- print out and keep on a personal folder

Annex E

Electronic Database Notification Form	
1. Title:	
2. Creator:	
3. Subject:	
Date started:	
4. Description:	
Access Restrictions:	**Highest Protective marking:** None/Restricted/Confidential/Secret/Top Secret **
Relation to other resources:	
Operating Environment (e.g. on Merlin, Stand-alone system):	
Software (name and version):	**Operating System:** **Storage System:**
Registered file references (e.g. Project Files concerning setting up the system):	
Contact name:	**Telephone:**
Group:	**Department / Division:**
Date form completed:	

** Delete as appropriate

Annex F

**Electronic Records and Document Management System (ERDMS)
– E-Records Project**

The E-Records Project will introduce a single electronic repository in which Assembly Government records and documents will be securely stored and managed. The chosen ERDMS system will meet these requirements and enable the organisation to comply with the Public Records Act and international standards governing records management and evidential documents. This is a major project which will result in fundamental changes for everyone in the organisation and the ways in which they manage information holdings (including documents, publications, emails, spreadsheets, databases, web content and specialist sources). It will establish common structures and standards for the storage, retention and disposal of material and will support bilingual usage.

It is estimated that the project will take a minimum of three years to roll out to all parts of the organisation. The project will address training requirements and organisational support.

All new material created electronically will be created within the ERDMS. There will be full version control of electronic material. There will be a continuing need for a paper-based filing system: the ERDMS will be used to manage the paper system but only a very small number of new paper files will be opened once the ERDMS has been introduced (eg. for confidential material or documents, such as large maps, which cannot be readily viewed electronically). The system will be used to manage the existing legacy of paper files until their transfer to The National Archives. Document scanning will also be encompassed by the ERDMS.

There will be standard high level folder structures (file-plans). Lower level file-plans will be drawn up in conjunction with business areas and will be based on standard classification and terminology. File-plans will be based on functions and subjects rather than organisational structures. This will maximise the scope for staff to locate relevant information irrespective of their work group. Security levels will control access to documents so that changes may be made only by those with permission to do so. Restricted documents will only be accessible to those users who have a legitimate requirement to see them. The access controls will enable certain files to be personal to individual users.

The system is expected to incorporate workflow management facilities to enable common business processes (eg. Ministerial Correspondence, AQs, staff appraisal, requests for information) to be handled according to efficient procedures which pre-define the interactions required at specific stages. Some of these will be defined corporately. Others may be defined for local requirements.

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As well as creating a central repository for public records purposes, the ERDMS will provide a key component of the basic information infrastructure for the organisation, enabling the use of standard tools and supporting corporate developments such as web content management. It will:

- significantly reduce the amount of time spent searching for information,
- ensure that users have access to the latest information,
- improve the accuracy of information (eg. by eliminating errors arising from the use of different versions of documents),
- provide the basis managing information about customers and partners,
- reduce the need for large quantities of paper to be transferred around and stored across the organisation.

Annex G

DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

Records that are held on registered files are destroyed by, or under the supervision of staff in the Records Service. Divisional staff should destroy most other records unless they should have been placed on registered files. The following table sets out details of records that may be destroyed by Divisional staff.

Protectively marked documents, or those whose contents merit a protective marking, must be destroyed inaccordance with the standards set out in the Security Manual.

(1) Record Description	(2) Can be destroyed unless…….
Drafts	…. they contain significant information that is not in the final version or are referred to and quoted from in other documents on the file.
Working Documents *Documents used to prepare or complete other documents*	…. they contain significant information that is not in the final version or are referred to and quoted from in other documents on the file. ….. they were never filed but are the substantive record of a project or other piece of work for which no file copies exist. …. they are held I a 'personal' or unofficial filing system (paper or electronic) and no copy has been held on a registered file.
Copy Documents *Photocopies or other duplicates*	…. they contain significant annotations. …. copies of documents originating from outside the Department that should be properly placed on a WAG file.
Routine Messages *Email; Post-It notes;*	…. they contain significant information that is not in the final version or are referred to and quoted from in other documents on the file.
Instructions *Routine instructions to staff*	…. they contain significant information that is not in the final version or are referred to and quoted from in other documents on the file.
Advertising Material	…. A copy is needed for a procurement file to provide context to other records

Annex H

Managing Records: A Brief Guide for Staff

What are my responsibilities?

Everyone in the Welsh Assembly Government has responsibility for:
- creating full and accurate records that adequately document their official functions, activities and transactions
- ensuring that the business records they create or receive, in relation to their particular business functions, are placed on an appropriate registered file and captured into an officially-approved record-keeping system
- requesting new registered files to be opened
- requesting registered files to be closed
- requesting file parts to be closed and, where appropriate new parts to be opened
- managing records and registered files in accordance with the policies, standards, guidance and procedures set out in this manual

What is a record?
Recorded information, in any form, created or received and maintained by the Welsh Assembly Government in the transaction of business or the conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity.

Is e-mail a record?
Yes, potentially. E-mails are increasingly important as records of the Department's activities. Where they relate directly to the functions and activities of a Division a copy should be printed out and filed on the appropriate registered file. Full envelope details and attachments should also be printed out and filed in order to provide the e-mail record with structure and context as well as the content.

Do I need to keep all documents I create or receive?
No. If a document provides evidence of or information about the work that you are responsible for and it has more than passing value it should be kept as a record.

Why keep and manage records?
For the following main reasons:
- to support the efficient achievement of the Department's aims and objectives by making information easily available to all staff when they require it in order to inform their actions and decisions
- to provide reliable evidence of our activities to allow us, when required, to explain and justify our decisions, actions and use of resources