

Police Service of Northern Ireland

HQ Ref:

PD 04/08

POLICY DIRECTIVE

TRIM MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC ADMINISTRATIVE DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

1. POLICY IDENTIFICATION

POLICY TITLE: TRIM (Tower Records & Information Management) Management of Electronic Administrative Documents and Records

POLICY OWNERSHIP:

**DEPARTMENT
BRANCH**

Operational Support
Corporate Development
(Records Management)

AUTHOR

Corporate Development (Project Lexicon Team)

POLICY APPROVED BY:

Chief Constable's Forum

**CCF REF/OTHER
DATE OF APPROVAL**

ACC Toner
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2. POLICY STATEMENT

(1) Policy Statement

- (a) TRIM Electronic Document & Records Management System (EDRMS) is the central repository of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) for the filing, storage, management, retrieval and disposal of **administrative** documents and records.
- (b) All staff who create, receive and manage information of an administrative nature and who have traditionally saved it on personal, shared network drives or the Microsoft Outlook email system **MUST** use TRIM as a replacement for storage of this type of information.
- (c) Staff must consider the security classification of administrative information with which they are dealing and only save it in TRIM where protective marking and sensitivity permits it. Documents with a security classification higher than 'Confidential' must **NOT** be stored in TRIM. Staff should refer to the [PSNI Manual of Protective Security](#) for guidance on how to store and account for documents marked secret and top secret.
- (d) Staff in the District/Department within which the documents and records are maintained must take responsibility for their storage and ensure that appropriate staff in the wider organisation have access to them in order to fulfil their duties.
- (e) Staff must store all newly created administrative information of business value in the TRIM Corporate File Plan at the earliest opportunity and decide on the most appropriate location using the Scope Notes as guidance.
- (f) Staff must scan paper documents that form a record of business area activities and store them in TRIM where it is deemed cost-effective, physically practical and within the constraints of copyright legislation.
- (g) Staff must make administrative information as widely accessible as its content, protective marking and sensitivity permits. All information stored in TRIM must reflect security and access control guidance.
- (h) Staff must adhere to naming conventions guidance in order to ensure that information can be uniquely identified and in turn retrieved more easily via the search mechanism.
- (i) Staff must preserve documents as records by 'finalising' them in TRIM at an appropriate point (while retaining all previous revisions).
- (j) All information stored within TRIM must be managed in accordance with the PSNI Retention and Disposal Schedules.
- (k) Staff must comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to Records Management (RM) as laid out in Appendix 'A'.
- (l) This Policy does **NOT** cover case related electronic records, non-evidential or otherwise, which should be stored in other appropriate PSNI operational systems. For further guidance please refer to Section 7.
- (m) Documents and records created during the course of the day-to-day business of the PSNI are owned by the PSNI and not by an individual. Therefore all administrative electronic documents and records **MUST** be managed in accordance with this Policy Directive.

(2) Definitions

(a) Document

A document can be defined as structured units of recorded information in electronic format such as Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, PowerPoint files, emails or scanned images.

(b) **Record**

A record provides evidence of a transaction, decision or action that is deemed worthy of preservation. A document only becomes a record once the drafting stage is complete and staff make the decision to 'finalise' it at an appropriate point.

(c) **PSNI Staff**

PSNI staff is defined as anyone working on PSNI premises in any capacity responsible for creating and managing administrative records and identified as a TRIM user.

(d) **Administrative**

Administrative refers to the type of information created in the course of managing the organisation and distinct from case related operational information.

3. INTRODUCTION

This Policy and associated procedures sets out the policies, guidelines and procedures that are required to support the use of TRIM, providing a consistent and clear approach to the creation, use, management, disposal and preservation of records created within the Service.

(1) **Background**

- (a) Given the substantial volume of administrative information produced within PSNI on a daily basis, and the need to ensure fast and accurate retrieval of information, an effective document and RM system is essential.
- (b) Almost every function within the PSNI necessitates the creation and management of administrative records. Traditional record keeping disciplines based on the management of physical files has been seriously eroded. The move towards electronic methods of creating and storing information has largely occurred without the supportive measures necessary to ensure that administrative records are managed effectively.
- (c) The Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 place additional obligations on the PSNI with regards to the creation and management of records. Compliance with this legislation is dependent on an understanding of the type of information created, how it is managed and where it is located. Document and RM therefore, plays an essential role in ensuring that the PSNI is able to meet its commitment to being open, accountable and transparent.

(2) **Aims**

The aims of the Policy are to:

- (a) Ensure that PSNI staff manage administrative documents and records as a corporate asset within a single repository, TRIM.
- (b) Improve the quality and reliability of administrative documents and records produced within the organisation therefore providing more accurate information to serve the business needs of PSNI.
- (c) Ensure that administrative information is readily accessible to staff who require it to fulfil their duties by providing flexibility in terms of access, searching and retrieval.
- (d) Share information effectively and contribute to the flow of knowledge both within PSNI and to external organisations.
- (e) Ensure that key business activities and decisions are recorded in a consistent manner.

- (f) Facilitate effective retention of long-term corporate memory by ensuring that records can be retained, destroyed or preserved in accordance with Public Records Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) requirements, archival value and operational needs.
- (g) Enable the Service to meet its legal and regulatory obligations with respect to managing its administrative documents and records and support the commitment to being open, accountable and transparent.
- (h) Define roles and responsibilities with regards to document and RM in TRIM.
- (i) Promote best practice in the management of administrative documents and records within PSNI.

(3) **Legislative Requirements and Best Practice Standards**

The following are the legislative drivers and best practice standards that apply to the management of documents and records within the Service:

(i) **UK Legislation**

- (aa) Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923;
- (bb) Data Protection Act 1998;
- (cc) Freedom of Information Act 2000;
- (dd) Environmental Information Regulations 2004;
- (ee) Human Rights Act 1998.

(ii) **Relevant Standards Documents**

- (aa) ISO 15489 Records Management Standard;
- (bb) BS 7799 Information Security Management System;
- (cc) BSI DISC PD0008 Legal admissibility and evidential weight of information stored electronically.

4. IMPLICATIONS OF THE POLICY

(1) **Efficiency**

- (a) This Policy is designed to standardise the creation and management of electronic administrative documents and records across the PSNI.
- (b) In order to obtain maximum benefit from the EDRM system, Districts and Departments must review their current business processes in relation to administrative documents and records.

(2) **Training**

Each District/Department in conjunction with the Police College has a responsibility to ensure that all appropriate staff receive the necessary training in all aspects of document and RM in order to ensure compliance with this Policy.

(3) **Consultation**

This Policy has been distributed for consultation with:

- (a) ACCs/Heads of Departments;
- (b) Legal Adviser;
- (c) Head of Professional Standards Department;
- (d) Corporate Diversity Manager;
- (e) Human Rights Legal Adviser;
- (f) CPOSA/Superintendants' Association/PFNI/NIPSA;
- (g) District Commanders;
- (h) Information Security Officer; and
- (i) Head of Training.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS/EQUALITY/INTEGRITY/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

- (1) This Policy is deemed to be Human Rights compliant. It has been screened for Section 75 considerations and meets integrity standards.
- (2) The Policy is suitable for public disclosure in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as part of the Police Service's Publication Scheme.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

- (1) The responsibility for monitoring compliance with this Policy rests with RMU.
- (2) The owner of the Policy will review this document 6 months from the date of implementation.
- (3) Interim reviews may also be prompted by feedback, challenge or change in legislation.
- (4) Feedback or queries relating to this Policy should be addressed to RMU.