Records Management Policy

Approval date – June 2020
Review date – June 2023

This policy applies to

☑ Link Group   ☑ Link Housing   ☑ Link Living   ☑ Link Property

☑ Horizon   ☑ Larkfield   ☑ West Highland   ☑ Lintel Trust

Policy Summary

The purpose of this policy is to set out Link's approach to records management.

Equalities

This policy fully complies with Link's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

Privacy

This policy fully complies with Link's Data Protection Policy and data protection legislation.

Policy Owner	Review Manager	Approved By
Director of Human Resources and Business Support	Information Management Co-ordinator	Senior Management Group

Revision History		
Date	Version Number	Comments
March 2020	1	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Link group handles a large amount of information. This information relates to specific topics and individuals as well as records of decisions taken by Link and the rationale behind these decisions.

1.2 Link recognises that information is an asset which aids in the effective and efficient operation of the business and influences how decisions are made.

1.3 Robust records management processes are important to ensure that Link complies with the six data protection principles:

      (i)   Lawfulness, fairness and transparency
      (ii)   Purpose limitation
      (iii)   Data minimisation
      (iv)   Accuracy
      (v)   Storage limitation
      (vi)   Integrity and confidentiality

1.4 Specifically, Link will focus on (iii) data minimisation and (v) storage limitation which will ensure that we do not retain information for longer than necessary.

2. PRINCIPLES

The following principles govern the operation of this policy:

- Be clear and understood by all employees
- Reflect the needs of our diverse organisation
- Reflect legislative requirements and best practice
- Be flexible and adaptable to changing needs

3. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this policy is to provide a framework for managing Link's records to ensure that we:

- Create and capture accurate, authentic and reliable records
- Maintain records to meet Link's business needs
- Ensure a standard approach to records management is implemented across the group
- Dispose of records that are no longer required in an appropriate manner
- Protect vital records
- Conform to any regulatory and statutory requirements relating to record keeping
- Meet the requirements of data protection, environmental information and freedom of information legislation

4. APPROACH AND METHOD

The Senior Management Group [SMG] in its formal approval of the policy acknowledges that it accepts full responsibility for its implementation. Day-to-day responsibility for the operation of this policy lies with the appropriate directors and managers of the Link group of companies. All relevant employees have a responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied as instructed.

The policy will be implemented using the following approaches:

4.1 Responsibility

4.1.1   Overall responsibility for compliance with this policy sits with the Chief Executive.

4.1.2   The Director of Human Resources and Business Support is the Senior Information Risk Owner [SIRO] and has strategic responsibility for records management across the Link group.

4.1.3   Each Director is responsible for ensuring that their business areas are working in compliance with this policy.

4.1.4   Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff are aware of this policy and the records management processes and procedures in their individual business areas. They must ensure that their staff are aware of:

- How to create records
- How and where to store records appropriately
- The retention period of the records they manage
- How to dispose of records at the end of their lifecycle

4.1.5   Managers are also responsible for ensuring that any staff leaving, or moving roles within, Link have appropriately filed or deleted any documents or emails they stored in any personal drives and their email box.

4.1.6   The Information Management Co-ordinator is responsible for promoting compliance with this policy through regular communication campaigns and the production of guidance.

4.1.7   All permanent and temporary employees of the Link group of companies, contractors, consultants, secondees, volunteers and work experience placement students must ensure that the follow the appropriate records management procedures.

4.2 Document Lifecycle

4.2.1   All records have a lifecycle, this ensures that records are maintained for as long as they hold a value to the organisation. The stages of the document lifecycle are:

- Create
- Store
- Use
- Share
- Archive
- Destroy

4.3 Legislative Framework

4.3.1   The following non-exhaustive list of pieces of legislation must be considered by Link when managing our records:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Value Added Tax Act 1994
- The Income Tax (Pay As You Earn) Regulations 2003
- Pension Act 2008
- Prescription and Limitations (Scotland) Act 1973
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995
- Equalities Act 2010
- Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

4.4 Storage of Link records

4.4.1   Link records must be appropriately secured and stored to prevent unauthorised access.

4.4.2   Electronic records must be stored on Link's network in a structure that conforms to each business area's file plan or in an approved electronic document management system.

4.4.3   Link records, whether in electronic or hard copy format, must be retrievable for business, performance, audit and public right of access purposes until they are destroyed in accordance with the agreed retention schedule.

4.5 Naming of Link records

4.5.1   Link records must be titled and referenced in a consistent manner and relevant to the business activity to ensure they can be easily retrieved, managed and understood.

4.5.2 Each business area will be responsible for ensuring they have appropriate naming conventions in place. Appendix 1 of this policy provides details of good practice in naming documents.

4.6 Managing vital records

4.6.1 Vital records are defined as those who enable Link to carry out its essential core functions. Vital records take many forms, including:

Category of vital records	Example
Financial	Decisions on how and when money is spent by the organisation
Commercial	Contracts Leases Service level agreements
Business Continuity	Business Continuity Plan Disaster Recovery Plan
Governance	List of Link property assets Board and Senior Management Group minutes

4.7 Document retention

4.7.1 Each business area will maintain a document retention schedule to ensure documents which reach the end of their lifecycle are securely deleted or destroyed.

4.7.2 This ensures Link meets its obligations under the third and fifth data protection principle where the documents contain personal data.

4.7.3 Compliance with document retention periods will be the subject of internal audit.

4.8 Managing hard copy records

4.8.1 Hard copy documentation should be retained in that format in limited situations with the expectation that in most cases, hard copy information is scanned and stored electronically.

4.8.2 Hard copy documents must be stored in a lockable storage cabinet.

4.8.3 Hard copy records should not, unless under exceptional circumstances, be removed from offices.

4.8.4 Under no circumstances will any hard copy data be left unattended in a vehicle (including in the boot).

5. MONITORING OF THE POLICY

Any matter which demonstrates a serious failure of internal controls should be reported immediately to the Chief Executive.

6. POLICY REVIEW

Link undertake to review this policy regularly, at least every three years, with regard to:

- Applicable legislation, rules, regulations and guidance
- Changes in the organisation
- Continued best practice

Privacy Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Carrying out a Privacy Impact Assessment [PIA] will be useful to any project – large or small – that:

- Involves personal or sensitive data about individuals
- May affect our customers' reasonable expectations relating to privacy
- Involves information that may be used to identify or target individuals

Please tick the applicable statement(s) below. Will your project involve:

1. A substantial change to an existing policy, process or system that involves personal information	☐ Yes	☑ No
2. A new collection of personal information	☐ Yes	☑ No
3. A new way of collecting personal information (for example collecting it online)	☐ Yes	☑ No
4. A change in the way personal information is stored or secured	☐ Yes	☑ No
5. A change to how sensitive information is managed	☐ Yes	☑ No
6. Transferring personal information outside the EEA or using a third-party contractor	☐ Yes	☑ No
7. A decision to keep personal information for longer than you have previously	☐ Yes	☑ No
8. A new use or disclosure of personal information you already hold	☐ Yes	☑ No
9. A change of policy that results in people having less access to information you hold about them	☐ Yes	☑ No
10. Surveillance, tracking or monitoring of movements, behaviour or communications	☐ Yes	☑ No
11. Changes to your premises involving private spaces where clients or customers may disclose their personal information (reception areas, for example)	☐ Yes	☑ No

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Privacy Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing a Privacy Impact Assessment.

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Questions

Will the implementation of this policy have an impact on any of the following protected characteristics?

1.	Age	☐ Yes	☑ No
2.	Disability	☐ Yes	☑ No
3.	Gender reassignment	☐ Yes	☑ No
4.	Marriage and Civil Partnership	☐ Yes	☑ No
5.	Pregnancy and Maternity	☐ Yes	☑ No
6.	Race	☐ Yes	☑ No
7.	Religion or belief	☐ Yes	☑ No
8.	Sex	☐ Yes	☑ No
9.	Sexual orientation	☐ Yes	☑ No

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these points, please complete a full Equality Impact Assessment. If you have answered 'No', you need take no further action in completing an Equality Impact Assessment.