Herefordshire Council

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Date approved
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Category   **Records Management**
Owner   **Information Governance Team**
Target audience   **All Council staff**

FILE NAMING PROCEDURE

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1. Purpose of this procedure

The purpose of a file naming procedure is to provide an easily understood framework for all electronic document names, to enable easier access and control of documents. Standardised naming allows the content of documents to be identified quickly throughout the council.

When records are given inconsistent names there are risks that they will be inadvertently lost or destroyed and therefore not available for audit or legislative requirements, such as Freedom of Information Act requests. Adoption of this procedure enables compliance with the *Records Management Policy* by allowing consistent access and control of records.

Providing a framework for document naming ensures reliable access to documents over time by limiting the use of personal names or short-lived acronyms. Master records and latest versions can be identified and duplicate working copies deleted with confidence, thereby reducing shared drive storage.

This procedure should be used alongside the *Version Control Procedure*, in order that records can be managed throughout their lifecycle. It is for use with documents stored within the EDRMS (electronic document records management system), Sharepoint, and shared drives.

2. Who does this procedure apply to?

This procedure applies to all employees of Herefordshire Council who create electronic documents. It also applies to those acting as its agents in the course of a council activity, who will be depositing records of their work with or for the organisation. Equally, it applies to Members relating to their work on Council business.

3. Process for file naming

Every electronic document saved during the course of council work should be given a meaningful name that gives all users an indication of the file contents and that is understandable both now and in the future.

Document names should not be excessively long. To reduce the name length, the required elements may not need to be repeated if they are already present in the folder names above. Whether elements are repeated will depend on whether the document will be referred to out of context, for example uploaded to the intranet where it would need a fuller title.

The ordering of elements, including the choice of element to go first, should be decided in advance by each team depending on how records

are usually accessed and so need to be arranged within folders – alphabetically, numerically or chronologically.

After a short period of use, the framework will soon become second nature and will save time spent thinking 'what should I call this?'

3.1 Elements

1. **Date – YYYYMMDD**

   E.g. 20121026

   - o Putting the date first in this format will ensure that documents are listed in date order. This makes it easier to dispose of records in line with the relevant retention schedule.
   - o The date should refer to the date of creation of the document, or date of receipt if externally created. For folder names, the date may be taken from the date the last document is added or some other means of closing the file, so that the disposal date can be easily determined (for example, 6 years after last document added).

2. **Subject**

   E.g. sickness absence, budget

   - o The subject should describe the main topic of the document and could be, for instance, an action, project, organisation or place name.
   - o It is a useful 'at a glance' description of the contents.
   - o If a document has been externally received, the source should be included.

3. **Focus or activity**

   E.g. monitoring, correspondence

   - o This should give context to the subject, describing the main purpose of the document.

4. **Type of document**

   E.g. report, procedure, minutes

   - o This should be the style or format of the document.

5. **Version control**

   E.g. v0_01 draft, v0_02, v1_0

   - o All versions should have the same title, only the last digits should be changed to indicate the status of an updated document.

3.2 Format

1. Use only Aa-Zz, 0-9.

2. Use underscores to separate words. Any character that is not a letter, number, dash or underscore should not be included in a filename. This is particularly important if the document is being uploaded to the web

3. Do not use abbreviations, acronyms, or internal jargon.

4. Do not use personal names or include any confidential information.

5. Use lower case for all words.

4. Examples

Date YYYYMMDD	Subject 1-2 words	Focus 1-2 words	Type 1-2 words	Version vX.XX
20121029_	**file_naming_**		**procedure_**	**v0_01**
201210_file_naming_procedure_v0_01.doc				
20130326_	**FromHealth_**	**medication_**	**routine**	
Letter from client's GP regarding medication				
20130214_	**assessment_**	**Initial_**		
20090626_assessment_intial.doc				

5. Monitoring arrangements

The Information Governance Team will monitor compliance with these procedures during information security audits. The council should consider creating capacity for regular record surveys to be carried out by qualified records managers.

6. Training and awareness requirements

Once approved, all officers and members will be made aware of the existence of this procedure through the standard organisational

communications. Training on records management will also be offered as part of the council's corporate information management training.

Document Classification

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File Name	20121101_File_naming_procedure
Format	Microsoft Word / 2003
FOI/EIR Disclosure	Yes
Geographic Coverage	Herefordshire
Group Access	Public
Language	Eng
Master Location	<Intranet Info Library>
Publisher	Herefordshire Council
Rights Copyright	Copyright of Herefordshire Council
Security Classification	Public
Status	Draft
Subject	Records Management
Title	File naming procedure
Type	Procedure

Consultation Log

Date sent for consultation	January 2016
Consultees	Herefordshire Council

Version Log

Version	Status	Date	Description of Change	Reason For Change	Pages affected
0.01	Draft	201211			-
1.0	Final	201212			-
1.1	Draft	201811	Review		All