DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL AND NAMING CONVENTION GUIDANCE

CORPORATE RECORDS MANAGEMENT

GP/R4 NHS FIFE Policy for the Management, Retention, Storage and Destruction of all Business and Administrative Information and Records – _Appendix A_

Version: 3.0

DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Key Information

Title	Document Version Control and Naming Convention Guidance
Prepared By	Corporate Records Manager
Approved By	Information Governance and Security Manager / Data Protection Manager
Date Effective From	29/07/2021
Version Number	3.0
Review Frequency	Every 3 years (in conjunction with GP/R4 NHS FIFE Policy for the Management, Retention, Storage and Destruction of all Business and Administrative Information and Records)
Next Review Date	29/07/2024
Contact	Craig McKinnon, Corporate Records Manager

Revision History:

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Initials	Changes Marked
1.0	June 2013	Final Document	AA	No
2.0	May 2016	Final Document	AA	No
3.0	July 2021	Final Document	CM	Change to RM contact details

Approvals: This document requires the following signed approvals.

Name/Title	Date	Version
Head of Corporate Services	May 2016	2.0
General Policies Group	July 2016	2.0
General Policies Group	July 2021	3.0

Distribution: This document has been distributed to

Name:	Title/Division:	Date of Issue:	Version:
All NHS Fife staff	Via 'Dispatch'	July 2016	2.0
	Published on NHS Fife Internet and Stafflink	July 2021	3.0

Linked Documentation:
(Documents that you have linked or referenced to in the text of this document)

Document Title:	Document File Path:
GP/R4 NHS FIFE Policy for the Management, Retention, Storage and Destruction of all Business and Administrative Information and Records	Document will be linked once approved

Table of Contents

1   Introduction and Purpose

This guidance is a best practice guide for all NHS Fife staff. It provides advice and guidance on both the naming of electronic documents and folders in a networked environment and the management of documents with multiple versions.

2   Version Control

2.1   What is Document Version Control?

All documents within NHS Fife, whether electronic or hard copy, need to be uniquely identifiable. In many instances, it is necessary to track the changes that occur to a document and record its distribution throughout the document's development and subsequent revision(s). Version Control is the management of multiple revisions of documents via the use of a Document Control Sheet and Version Numbering incorporated into each document name.

2.2   Why is Version Control Important?

Version control helps to preserve the authenticity of a document/record. One version can easily be distinguished from any subsequent copies. Policy, procedure and guidelines within NHS Fife go through various iterations before being endorsed and approved for distribution, and once published will often be amended and re-released a number of times. By ensuring that version control is used on all documents, it will assist in providing an audit trail for future tracking of document development.

Knowing which version of a document you are looking at is important if you are trying to find out which version of a policy is currently in force, or which version of a policy was in use at a particular time. Version control is also important if you are working on a collaborative document with a number of contributors and/or frequent revisions, for example a policy document.

2.3   How to Version Control your Document

There are two techniques used within NHS Fife to ensure appropriate version control management of your documents.

- Document Control Sheet
- Version Numbering

2.4   Document Control Sheet

The Document Control Sheet is vital for documents that undergo a lot of revision and redrafting and is particularly important for electronic documents because they can easily be changed by a number of different users, and those changes may not be immediately apparent.   It will allow you to keep track of what changes were made to a document, when and by whom.

The Document Control Sheet should be updated each time a change is made to the document, with answers to the following questions:

- What is the new version number?
- What was the purpose of the change, or what was the change?
- Who made the change?
- When was the change made?

Example: DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Key Information

Title	*Title of document*
Prepared By	*Title of the author of the document*
Approved By	*Title of who should approve the document*
Date Effective From	*DD/MM/YYYY. Date that document is effective from – especially important for policy and guidance documents*
Version Number	*Essential to identify correct version*
Review Frequency	*Frequency is dependent on the document type*
Next Review Date	*DD/MM/YYYY. Date the Review is to be carried out by.*
Contact	*Name of who should be contacted for further information*

Revision History:

Version:	Date:	Summary of Changes:	Name:	Changes Marked:
0.1	*DD/MM/YYYY*	*Description of the changes made to the document*	*Initials*	*Y/N*

Approvals: This document requires the following signed approvals.

Name/Title	Date	Version
	DD/MM/YYYY	*Version*

Distribution: This document has been distributed to

Name:	Title/Division:	Date of Issue:	Version:

Linked Documentation:
(Documents that you have linked or referenced to in the text of this document)

Document Title:	Document File Path:

2.5   Version Numbering

The Version numbering system to be used within NHS Fife is the system that is based on the use of version numbers with points to reflect major and minor changes to a document.

The version number of a document in a draft format will start at 0.1 reflecting its draft status and then progress through revision by incrementing the number to the right of the point. The version number will convert to 01.0 upon the document/record receiving all required approvals, and deemed ready for publishing.

For example a document with the version number 0.1 is in draft format. When the document has been approved and authorised ready for publishing the version number will start at 01.0, and the number will only be modified after the first minor amendment to become 01.1. Each major revision to the document will result in the number to the left of the point incrementing by one and the number to the right of the dot point will return to zero e.g. 02.0.

The benefit of version control number is at a glance the document will provide a great deal of information. If the version number of the document is 01.0 then you know that there have been no changes since the document was authorised and published. A version number on a document of 03.5 would reflect that there had been two major changes and five minor revisions to the document since it was last reviewed. Therefore, indicating that the document has been kept current and reviewed on a regular basis. The version number should always be displayed clearly on the front cover of the document.

An example of version control information in a structured title is:

Document name<space>version number<space>(Draft/Final/Review).extension

3   Naming Conventions

3.1   What are Naming Conventions?

The principle of naming conventions is to use standard rules that are applied to all documents, and to electronic folders that contain these documents, in order to enforce consistency in the form of name and in the words used. By implementing structured names to documents, it can support the following objectives:

- Facilitate better access to and retrieval of electronic documents,
- Allow sorting of documents in logical sequence (e.g. version number, date),
- Help users identify the documents they are looking for easily and also support the ability to recognise the content of a document from a file list,
- Help keep track of multiple versions of the document.

The rules for the naming of documents and electronic folders should be kept as simple and clear as possible. Without standard approaches to naming folders the context of the records held within the folder becomes meaningless to anyone other than the creator. It is preferable to compromise on a broader approach that can be clearly understood and remembered by users, rather than a more detailed and sophisticated structure that is less likely to be used in actual practice.

3.2 Why use Naming Conventions?

Naming records consistently, logically and in a predictable way will help to distinguish similar records from one another at a glance, and by doing so will facilitate the storage and retrieval of records, which will enable users to browse file names more effectively and efficiently. Naming records according to agreed conventions should also make file naming easier for colleagues because they will not have to're-think' the process each time.

3.3 Naming Convention Rules[1]

Rule 1:   Keep file names short but meaningful

Folders and file names should be kept as short as possible while also being meaningful. The use of long file names can increase the likelihood of error, and also are often more difficult to remember and recognise. Although it must be remembered that the best practice is to avoid using abbreviations and codes that are not commonly understood.

Make the name of a folder or document descriptive of its content or purpose, always ensuring that the title contains enough information for anyone else to identify it. A title, taken together with the folder path, should act as a summary of the document's contents.

File name:	✓	✗
	Sausage Mash Cttee Remit.doc	The_sausage_and_mash_committee _remit.doc
Explanation:	Some words add length to a file name but do not contribute towards the meaning, for example words like "the", "a" and "and". Where the remaining file name is still meaningful within the context of the file directory these elements can be removed. Sometimes words have standard abbreviations, e.g. "cttee" is a standard abbreviation for "committee"; where this is the case the standard abbreviation can be used.	

Rule 2: Avoid unnecessary repetition in file names

If possible avoid repetition in file names, as this increases the length of the file name and file path, which is incompatible with rule 1.

Do not include the format of a document in the title. For example, don't name it "Word document", or "Excel spreadsheet" because this information can be seen from the file extension or suffix.

File name:	✓	✗
	/…/Business Group/2021-10-30 Minutes.doc	/…/Business Group/2004-10-30 Business Group Minutes.doc
	/…/Procedures/Appeals.doc	/…/Procedures/Appeals Procedures.doc
Explanation:	In the first example the folder is called "Business Group" so it is not necessary to include the term "Business Group" in the file name because all the records in that folder should be Business Group records. In the second example the folder is called "Procedures" so it is not necessary to include the word "Procedures" in the file name because all the records in that folder are procedure records.	

Rule 3: Leave spaces between words – don't run them together or use Underscores

Using plain English with spaces between words makes the titles of documents easier to read and search for. Document titles in a network environment no longer require a file title of eight characters or less with no spaces.

File name:	✔ Risk Management.doc	✘ Riskmgmt.doc Risk_management.doc
Explanation:	Using spaces between words makes the file name more readily recognisable. Documents for web-publication must follow the NHS standards.	

Rule 4: When including a number in a file name always give it as a two-digit number, unless it is a year or another number with more than two digits.

The file directory displays file names in alphanumeric order. To maintain the numeric order when file names include numbers it is important to include zero for number 0-9. This helps to retrieve the latest record number.

File name:	✔ Office Procedures V01 Office Procedures V02 Office Procedures V03 Office Procedures V04 Office Procedures V05 Office Procedures V06 Office Procedures V07 Office Procedures V08 Office Procedures V09 Office Procedures V10 Office Procedures V11 (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in a directory list)	✘ Office Procedures V1 Office Procedures V10 Office Procedures V11 Office Procedures V2 Office Procedures V3 Office Procedures V4 Office Procedures V5 Office Procedures V6 Office Procedures V7 Office Procedures V8 Office Procedures V9 (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in a directory list)
Explanation:	This example shows the successive versions of an office procedures document. If two-digit numbers are used the latest version will always be at the bottom of the list when ranked in ascending order.	

Rule 5: If using a date in the file name always state the date 'back to front', and use four digit years, two digit months and two digit days: YYYY-MM-DD.

Dates should always be presented 'back to front', that is the year first (always given as a four digit number), followed by the month (always given as a two digit number), and the day (always given as a two digit number). Giving the dates back to front means that the chronological order of the records is maintained when the file names are listed in the file directory. This helps when trying to retrieve the latest dated record. It also complies with the International Standard for recognising dates, ISO8601.

File name:	✓	✗
	2021-03-24 Agenda.doc 2021-03-24 Minutes.doc 2021-03-24 Paper A.doc 2021-02-01 Agenda.doc 2021-02-01 Minutes.doc (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)	1 Feb 2021 Agenda.doc 1 Feb 2021 Minutes.doc 24 March 2021 Agenda.doc 24 March 2021 Minutes.doc 24 March 2021 Paper A.doc (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)
Explanation:	This example shows the minutes and papers of a committee. By stating the year 'back to front' the minutes and papers from the most recent meeting appear at the bottom of the directory list.	

Rule 6: Avoid using common words such as 'draft' or 'letter' at the start of the file names.

Avoid using common words such as 'draft' or 'letter' at the start of file names, or all of those records will appear together in the file directory, making it more difficult to retrieve the records that you are looking for.

File name:	✓	✗
	/…/Publicity/ Advertising V01 (Final).doc Advertising V05 (Final).doc Budget Report 2020-2021 V20 (Final).doc Budget Report 2020-2021 V15 (Final).doc Grant S 2021-03-12.doc Office Procedures V10 (Final).doc Thomas A 2021-12-05.doc (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)	/…/Publicity/ Final Advertising.doc Draft Budget Report 2020-2021.doc Final Office Procedures.doc Final Advertising.doc Final Budget Report 2020-2021.doc Letter A Thomas.doc Letter S Grant.doc (Ordered alphanumerically as the files would be in the directory list)
Explanation:	The file directory will list files in alphanumeric order. This means that all records with file names starting "Draft" will be listed together. When retrieving files it will be more useful to find the draft budget report next to the previous year's budget, rather than next to an unrelated draft record.	

Rule 7: The version number of a record should be indicated in its file name by the inclusion of 'v' followed by the version number and, where applicable, 'Draft', 'Final' or 'Review'.

Some records go through a number of versions, for example they start out as working drafts, become consultation drafts and finish with a final draft, which may then be reviewed and updated at a later date. It is important to be able to differentiate between these various drafts. The version number

should always appear in the file name of the record so that the most recent version can be easily identified and retrieved.

File name:	✔	✘
	Office Procedures 2020-2021 V03.1 (Review).htm Office Procedures 2020-2021 V04 (Final).htm Organisation Hierarchy 2021 V02.xls Organisation Hierarchy 2021 V03.xls Organisation Hierarchy 2021 V04.xls	Office Procedures 0304_draftv3.htm Office Procedures 0304_finalv4.htm Org_Hier_2021_v2.xls Org_Hier_2021_v3.xls Org_Hier_2021_v4.xls
Explanation:	The first example shows two versions of the workforce model for 2003-2004, version 03.1 is a draft version and version 04 is the final version. The covering years are given in four-digit format. The version number is given with two digits so that the versions will appear in numeric order. The second example shows a number of versions of the organisation hierarchy for 2021. In this case none of the versions are marked as draft or final because the nature of the record means that 'draft' and 'final' are not applicable.	

4   Where to find further Guidance

If you require further advice regarding these guidelines or any other Corporate Records Management issue, please contact:

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