

## 1. Introduction and Purpose

This strategic Records Management Policy details the commitment of the NICS to achieving the highest possible standards in records management. Each NICS Department will support this policy through the delivery of subordinate policies, guidance and procedures, which are detailed below.

The NICS handles a vast amount of information. This information relates to specific topics and policies as well as records of decisions, action taken and the rationale behind these decisions made by individual Departments and the Executive as a whole. The NICS appreciates that its records are a vital public asset and are required to ensure the effective operation, openness and accountability of each Department. Like any asset, records require careful management and this policy sets out the NICS's responsibilities and activities in respect of this.

Effective records management goes a long way to ensuring that we have the right information at the right time to make the best-informed decisions we can. It also provides evidence of what we do and why, therefore protecting the interests of the NICS, our members of staff and all who interact with the NICS. We aim to balance our commitment to openness and transparency with our responsibility as an effective information controller and processor.

We continually create records and will work to ensure that we manage them efficiently, make them accessible to all where possible, and retain them securely throughout their lifecycle. All records created will ultimately fall to a single department to manage, as the controller, and the information should be managed by them in line with this NICS and departmental policy, or in line with what has been specified within agreed MOU or SLA standards as required.

By adopting this policy, the NICS aims to make sure that the record, whatever form it takes, is accurate, reliable, ordered, complete, useful, and accessible whenever it is needed.

## 2. Scope and Objectives

This policy applies to the management of all documents and records, in all formats or media, created or received by NICS Departments in the conduct of their business activities. It also applies to all staff, contractors, consultants and third parties who may be given access to our documents and records and information processing facilities. A systematic approach to the management of the records we hold is essential to protect and preserve the evidence of our actions and decision-making. A small percentage of the records held across the NICS will be selected for permanent preservation by the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) to form part of Northern Ireland's archival heritage.

In order to achieve this systematic approach the NICS will:

- ✓ Create and capture accurate, authentic and reliable records;