OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE FOR MANUAL AND ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM

April 2011

Review date: April 2013
1. Introduction

This policy replaces NIPEC/03/14, and has been revised and updated following an audit of the manual and electronic filing systems and amendments to the operation and structure of these as agreed by NIPEC’s Records Management Group (RMG) in consultation with relevant staff.

The aim of the policy is to advise staff on the operation of the manual and electronic filing systems and their roles and responsibilities in ensuring these systems operates efficiently and effectively and reflect good practice in terms of records management.

The basic principal in establishing and maintaining the electronic and manual filing systems remains – ie. that each should be a mirror image of each other in relation to their structure. However, it is recognized that there may be some minor differences such as where only electronic formats are held, eg. digital photographs, and no manual folder is kept. In those cases, this will be noted on the coding list.

The manual files will continue to be stored in Central Registry. Files which are required on a daily basis, eg. during the course of a project, may be kept within the offices of the SPO or secretary, providing the tracer card has been completed and appropriately stored in Central Registry.

The electronic filing system will continue to be placed on the NIPEC data server, and accessed by staff via My Computer / Network Drives on their computers.

2. Maintenance and management responsibilities

The RMG will oversee the maintenance and management of both systems and undertake an audit of both on an annual basis.

On a day to day basis, the systems will be managed by the Corporate Services Manager (CSM) and the IT/Information Officer with the assistance of the Corporate Information Officer (CIO) and the Clerical Officer/ Receptionist.

3. Operational guidelines

Requests for new files / folders to be opened should be forwarded by email to the Clerical Officer/Receptionist and IT/Information Officer, and copied to the CSM and CIO.

Requests for the structure of the systems to be amended or folders/files to be moved, should also be forwarded by email to the above group.

A filing code list will be maintained and updated by the CIO and stored on the server under ADM/Central Registry/Coding List, which will be available to all staff on a ‘read only’ basis.

The tracer card found on the front of each manual file should be completed when removing the file from Central Registry, and placed within the red filing box provided. The tracer card should be replaced on the front of the file when returning this to Central Registry.

Filing within the manual files will be carried out by the Admin and Clerical Team on behalf of senior officers. Any queries regarding the correct coding and filing of papers should be forwarded to the senior officer concerned.

Filing of documents within the electronic filing system should be undertaken by the member of staff who is responsible for developing the document. For example, letters typed by secretaries...
on behalf of the SPO should be filed by the Secretary once these have been signed and forwarded to recipient.

Manual and electronic filing of documents within folders with restricted access will be carried out by relevant senior officers, with the assistance of members of the admin and clerical team where required.

3. Filing Structures

The majority of sections within both filing systems are open to all staff. However, for confidentiality reasons, there are a number of ‘closed’ sections which can only be accessed and used by agreed named staff.

The following is a list of sections ‘open’ to all staff, and for ease of reference, the manual files for these sections are colour coded:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Abbreviated Title</th>
<th>Colour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>COM</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Framework</td>
<td>DF</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Education</td>
<td>DoE</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Practice</td>
<td>D of P</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Enquiries</td>
<td>EE</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Groups</td>
<td>ExGp</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>ORG</td>
<td>Pink</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>PRO</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each section can be broken down into agreed sub-folders and further sub-folders as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Sub-folder</th>
<th>Sub-folder Sub-folder Sub-folders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADM</td>
<td>10 - Contracts</td>
<td>01 - Service Level Agreement 01 - CSA 01 - Finance 02 - HR 03 - Legal 04 - Supplies 05 - Equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Using the above example, the reference number on documents relating to Contracts/Service Level Agreement/CSA/Supplies would be ADM/10/01/01/04.
Once a sub-folder(s) is opened, the contents of the main folder should be removed and filed into the sub-folder(s). The main folder’s code should also be removed from the coding list. For example, again using the above example, ADM/10 would no longer exist once ADM/10/01 is opened and ADM/10/01 would no longer exist once ADM/10/01/01 is opened.

The electronic system is located on NIPEC’s data server and all documents created by NIPEC and its staff should be saved into the relevant folder/file. The main folders and sub-folders will be numbered to mirror the numbers within the manual files.

On the data server the major sections that represent the main areas of NIPEC’s work are listed as shown below:

As in the manual system, these are sub-divided into sub-folders and given the appropriate code from the manual system, eg. 01 Finance, so they appear in the same order as the filing code list. For example, see below for sub-folders opened under ADM:
4. **Naming and saving documents**

All documents should follow the agreed standardized formats, and include:

**Type of Document:** eg. agenda, letter, labels, memo, minutes, reports, presentations etc.

**Description:** eg. what the document is about, ie. accommodation issues, contracts, steering group meeting.

**Name (Surname & Initial):** eg. surname and initial of the person the letter etc is going to.

**Date:** eg. date of the letter/memo or presentation or meeting.

For example, if sending a letter to Mr J Bloggs at the Business Services Organisation in relation to Supplies under the Services Level Agreement, the letter should be saved as ‘let SLA BSO Supplies BloggsJ 2Apr03’. Using the filing code list, this letter should be filed under ADM/10/01/01/04. The letter should be placed on the data server under Administration/Contracts/Service Level Agreements/Business Services Organisation/Supplies, as shown below:

![Diagram showing file and folder structure](image-url)
Draft documents should be retained on an individual’s hard-drive until this has been finalized and approved. However, if several members of staff require access to the document during its development (eg. consultation response), or on an ongoing basis (eg. matrix of work areas), these should be saved onto the server using the date of last amendment and initials of member of staff making those amendments within its title, eg. ‘Bamford CAMHS Project Report 23Feb11 CMcC’.

Once a document has been finalized, it should be renamed with the word FINAL, eg. ‘Bamford CAMHS Project Report 31Mar11 FINAL’ and all previous drafts archived in the appropriate section on the server.

5. Archiving documents / folders / files

A major section, named ‘Archived File’ has been opened within the electronic filing system to accommodate electronic folders/files relating to projects which have concluded, organisations no longer in existence, and others relating to previous / ‘closed’ work areas.

6. Retention and disposal of files

NIPEC’s Retention and Disposal Schedule is currently under review by the RMG and will reflect guidance issued by the DHSSPS in their document ‘Good Management, Good Records’, published in December 2004.

The CIO will undertake regular ‘spot checks’ of the code list and both systems with the assistance of the Clerical Officer/Receptionist. In addition, a more detailed audit of NIPEC’s manual and electronic filing systems will be undertaken on an annual basis to ensure these are working correctly and that relevant files and papers are retained/archived or disposed of in accordance with the Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Requests for the retention/archiving of files and documents outside of times listed within the attached Disposal Schedule should be made to the Records Management Group.

April 2011