

# Barrister GDPR Data Retention and Disposal Policy

## 1. Introduction

In the course of carrying out various functions, Catherine Doran creates and holds a wide range of recorded personal information. Records will be properly retained to enable Catherine Doran to meet her business needs, legal requirements, to evidence events or agreements in the event of allegations or disputes and to ensure that any records of historic value are preserved.

The untimely destruction of records by Catherine Doran could affect:

- the conduct of business;
- the ability to defend or instigate legal actions;
- the ability to comply with statutory obligations;
- her reputation.

Conversely, the permanent retention of records is undesirable and disposal is necessary to free up storage space, reduce administrative burden and to ensure that Catherine Doran does not unlawfully retain records for longer than necessary (particularly those containing personal information).

This policy supports Catherine Doran in demonstrating accountability through the proper retention of records and by demonstrating that disposal decisions are taken with proper authority and in accordance with due process.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and to set out the length of time that Catherine Doran's records should be retained and the processes to review the records as to any further retention or for disposing of records at the end of the retention period. The policy helps to ensure that Catherine Doran operates in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and any other legislative or regulatory retention obligations.

## 3. Scope

The policy covers records irrespective of the media on which they are created or held including:

- paper;
- electronic files (including database, Word documents, power point presentations, spreadsheets, webpages and e-mails);
- photographs, scanned images, CD-ROMs and video tapes.

And includes all types of records which Catherine Doran creates or holds. The records may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- client files;

- minutes of meetings;
- submissions from external parties;
- contracts and invoices;
- registers;
- legal advice;
- file notes;
- financial accounts;
- employee information;
- Catherine Doran's publications.

## 4. Application

The policy applies equally to full time and part time employees on a substantive or fixed term contract and to associated persons who work for Catherine Doran and/or her Chambers.

## 5. Minimum Retention Period

Where information about a particular individual is held only in hardcopy, Catherine Doran's minimum retention period is three weeks. Catherine Doran's minimum retention period for information held electronically is 3 months.

## 6. Maximum Retention Period

Catherine Doran's maximum retention period is 10 years. However, in cases of particular sensitivity, or where the papers may be needed by Catherine Doran to defend a claim, the maximum retention period is 15 years.

The record may be retained for a further period if it has on-going business value or if there is specific legislation which requires it to be held for a further period.

## 7. Disposal

### 7.1 What is Disposal

The barrister is responsible for ensuring that the data is periodically reviewed (at least annually) to determine whether any retention periods have expired. Once the retention period has expired, the record must be reviewed and a 'disposal action' agreed upon.

A 'disposal action' is:

- the destruction of the record; or
- the retention of the record for a further period within the barrister practice; or,
- alternative disposal of the record e.g. returned to the instructing solicitor.

### 7.2 Making and Recording the Disposal Decision

Where paper records are disposed off, a record of the disposal will be kept by Chamber's clerks. Where Catherine Doran personally deletes electronic data a note will be kept of that fact.

The disposal decision must be reached having regard to:

- on-going business and accountability needs (including audit);
- current applicable legislation;
- whether the record has any long-term historical or research value;
- best practice in the legal industry
- costs associated with continued storage versus costs of destruction;
- the legal, political and reputational risks associated with keeping, destroying or losing control over the record.

Decisions must not be made with the intent of denying access or destroying evidence.

## 8. Destruction

No destruction of a record should take place without assurance that:

- the record is no longer required by any person in Chambers;
- no work is outstanding by any part of Chambers
- no litigation or investigation is current or pending which affects the record;
- there are no current or pending FOIA or GDPR subject access requests which affect the record.

### 8.1 Destruction of Paper Records

Confidential paper records should be placed in confidential waste sacks and these sacks should be made available for collection in order that they can be destroyed. It is essential that any documents that are to be thrown away and contain confidential or personal information must be disposed of in this way, in order to avoid breaches of confidence or of the GDPR.

Disposal of documents other than those containing confidential or personal information may be disposed of by binning or recycling.

### 8.2 Destruction of Electronic Records

In the event IT equipment holding electronic records needs to be disposed of, confidential information must be destroyed or wiped using a recognised method to put the data beyond recovery. For mobile phones, smart phones and tablets these should be reset to factory settings. For laptops, PC's Macs merely deleting the files, single-pass overwriting, or reformatting the disk is insufficient. The steps taken to delete data must be recorded, together with the date on which the steps were taken.

## 9. Further Information

This policy should be read in conjunction with the General Data Protection Policy.