

# Hartlepool Jobs and Skills Service



# Document Retention Policy

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## **1. PURPOSE**

The Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service is wholly committed to adhering to the regulatory and funding body requirements in relation to retaining documentation. This Policy sets out the expectations in relation to Document Retention for use across the whole Service.

## **2. RETENTION OF DOCUMENTS**

The Hartlepool Jobs & Skills Service will ensure that all paper and electronic documentation relating to the delivery of all its provisions and that of partners, such as Adult Skills Fund, Multiply and UK Shared Prosperity Fund, will be stored in accordance with each funder's requirements.

Document retention is important as provision can be subject to an audit visit even after the activity has been completed, and it is, therefore, a requirement that core documents are retained and made available for inspection over the entire period. This means documents relating to all aspects of the provision, including learner files, financial evidence and quality documentation.

## **3. DOCUMENT THAT SHOULD BE RETAINED**

The type of documentation that must be retained will be informed within each contractual agreement from funders such as Department for Work & Pensions, Tees Valley Combined Authority and Education & Skills Funding Agency. Therefore, each Project Lead is accountable for understanding funders' requirements.

Contractual agreements from the funder will clearly outline the document retention requirements, which is why each Project Lead must adhere to funders' contractual expectations. However, examples are shown below of core documentation that should be retained across projects and initiatives, including:

- All individual programme-related documentation, including work carried out during the development, pre-application, application and during and after the project
- The Contractual Agreement, including any revised versions supported by appropriate correspondence from the funder of the approval of changes to the agreement;
- Correspondence to and from the funder and the Service, including performance and financial claim evidence
- The audit trail for all procurement undertaken for the project and the State Aid approved scheme used where relevant.

- Evidence of all project expenditures. This must include invoices and bank statements or equivalent to show the payments were made;
- If indirect overheads costs and salaries have been apportioned to the project, records must show the agreed methodology for calculating these costs;
- Records of eligible beneficiaries/learners/participants and any supporting evidence to confirm their eligibility for each project;
- Evidence of open and fair procurement of goods and services, including proof of advertising, contract notices, quotations or tenders received and the scoring methodology used for selecting the successful candidate;
- Where applicable, evidence of auditable, accountable match funding, including copies of match acceptance letters and bank statements showing receipt of match funding;
- Compliance with publicity requirements, including copies of all publicity materials, including press releases and marketing, must be retained to demonstrate the correct use of the funders' logos and required text.
- Compliance with equal opportunities and environmental sustainability requirements;
- Documentary evidence substantiating the outputs and results declared in claims and on completion of projects and;
- Where applicable, a record of the identity and location of all bodies holding the supporting project documentation and make available on request.

#### **4. ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF DOCUMENTATION**

Electronic document storage systems are acceptable, as some documents are electronically generated and have no paper original. These will need to be made available through the electronic data exchange system. They are acceptable as audit evidence, provided that they are subject at all times to an adequate system of control over their completeness and validity.

Documents can be held either as originals or certified true copies of the originals or on commonly accepted data carriers. Commonly accepted data carriers include electronic versions of original documents on optical data carriers and in electronic versions only.

All project Leads and their Delivery Partners must ensure that information kept on commonly accepted data carriers is kept secure and can be relied upon for audit purposes. As most documents exist in electronic versions only, the underlying computer system on which the electronic versions are held must meet accepted security standards which ensure that the documents held meet national legal

requirements and can be relied upon for audit purposes. All electronic documents must also retain the equipment/software and ensure they align with each funder's requirements.

For some projects, any copies of original documents must be certified as a true copy of the original document, as this will satisfy this funding condition. This minimum certification procedure places the onus on the Delivery Partner to ensure the authenticity of the electronic copy. In instances where the grant recipient organisation is using an electronic Document Management System which involves scanning invoices and other documentation at the point of receipt, it is acceptable for the processes outlined above to be undertaken at the initial point of scanning. All electronic documents must be kept for the same duration as required for paper copies.