

## INFORMATION ASSET REGISTER

### What is an Information Asset Register?

An **Information Asset** is a piece of information that is important to the running of a social enterprise or support organisation. This could include contact lists, policy or operation documents, plans, evaluations, templates, or contracts. Because organisations often have hundreds of information assets, it is important to organise them, making them easier to access, use and maintain.

An **Information Asset Register** is a tool which helps to do this – the Register categorises individual pieces of information, grouping them together, and providing the first step to identifying the specific piece of information needed.

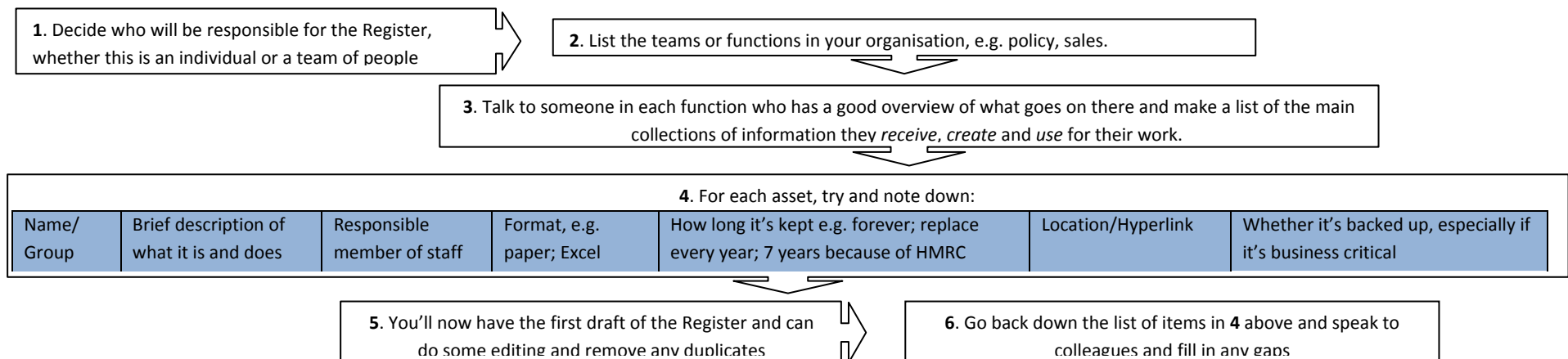
An Information Asset Register is **not** a detailed catalogue of every piece of information in your organisation, but provides an overview of what information is owned, available, and maintained. For example, instead of listing every policy paper and report, a “policy documents” heading can signpost staff to where to find what they need.

### Why create an Information Asset Register?

- It is an excellent tool to make sure your colleagues and new staff are aware of the information that exists in your enterprise.
- It can act as a useful management tool for ensuring that assets are properly managed and refreshed over time, secure and backed up when needed, and ensures that someone is nominated to act as steward or gatekeeper to the information.
- It serves as a useful reminder about any obligations to retain information for certain periods, to give access to data, to dispose of data you no longer need.
- To keep a record of Intellectual Property – information that has been created/is owned specifically by the organisation, and to prevent its misuse by others.
- It categorises information together under specific projects and programmes, making it easy to group information together and analyse, and ensures this information is updated and accessible for reporting to funders and managing contracts.

### When and how would you set up and use an Information Asset Register?

Given the quantity of information that every social enterprise has to deal with, the sooner you start the better! The process is not complex if you follow these steps:



For example:

Name	Description	Responsibility	Format	Timescale	Location	Backed up
Policy documents	Thinkpieces, research findings, reports	Lydia – Policy Team	Word docs (e-copies)	Permanent	C: drive/Policy/docs	Yes – hardcopy filed
Funding	Applications for all funding programmes	Chris –Business	Word docs, paper files	Permanent – use as reference for new applications	C:drive/Business/appns, Filing cabinet	Yes – hardcopy filed

In the first instance, use a simple table or spreadsheet to record the data. Where the number of information assets groupings becomes very large, you may need to consider a database.

**What to do after the Information Asset Register has been completed?**

Don't just file it away! Make sure everyone has access to a copy. Nominate someone to look after the register and update it with any new information assets. Use it, for example, when new colleagues join you. A quick read through will tell someone quite a lot about what information is available in your organisation.