Records Management Exercise

Here is a fictional department's shared / network drive.

A) Name 5 examples of bad records management practice demonstrated here.

B) What problems could be caused to the Trust or to staff if the department continues in this way?

C) How should records be filed instead?

□ 📁 **Department X**

    📁 **Budget**
        📄 Budget Report 4th Quarter 2005-06.doc
        ✉ Approval of expenditure by Director 1 Dec 2005.msg

    📁 **Misc**
        📄 Doc2.doc
        📄 Mr Blogg's test results.doc

    📁 **Spreadsheets**
        📊 Department X budget 2006-07.xls
        📊 Staff leave rota 2006-07.xls

    📁 **Staff**
        📄 Reference for tracy begum.doc
        📄 Sick leave form – David.doc
        📄 Report on staffing figures.doc

    📁 **Susan's folder**
        📄 Copy of ToR v1.doc
        📄 Job application to XYZ Primary Care Trust.doc
        📄 Report on Staffing figures.doc
        ✉ ssmith.pst

    📁 **TGJC**
        📄 agenda.doc
        📄 agenda jul.doc
        📄 ToR v1.doc
        📄 mins tgjc october.doc
        📄 Report on staffing figures 2005-06.doc
        📄 Report to Trust Board.doc
        📄 TGJC Minutes Sept (draft).doc
        📄 Minutes July.doc

A) Bad Practice	B) Problems / Results	C) Best Practice
Poor naming of documents and folders e.g. doc2.doc, "misc"	No way to identify what this is without opening it. Is it a draft document or an important document that needs to be kept?	Names should be descriptive and logical.

Trainer's Notes

Purpose of exercise

To emphasise the following principles of records management:
- Records can be in any format – most people think of paper so this helps to stress that they are electronic too, and can include emails, Word documents, spreadsheets etc
- Records undertaken as part of work belong to the Trust they are not owned by individuals
- Bad filing can reduce chance of finding information
- Reduction in duplication; one master copy should be kept
- Version control of documents
- Proper naming
- Thinking about the long term retrieval of information
- Confidentiality / security issues

Clues / Hints
Duplication
Version control
Confidentiality
Retrieval
Full set of records
Personal documents

Answers / discussion points

Example	Bad practice	Problems	Good practice
Misc Doc2.doc	Poor naming of folders and documents	No way of identifying contents – likely to hang around because no-one knows whether it can be deleted	Always give descriptive names to documents
Mr Blogg's test results	Patient information accessible to others	Breach of patient confidentiality	Ensure folders which must contain patient information have correct levels of security / check permissions and update ICT if someone leaves the Trust
Spreadsheets	Documents stored by type rather than content	Not logical – difficult to locate relevant information together	Information relating to the same issue should be stored together, i.e. Department X budget in Budget folder, and Staff leave rota in Staff folder
Reference	Personal	Breach of staff	Line manager should

Sick leave form	information of staff accessible to others	confidentiality	keep staff records on H: drive or in secure folder
Susan's folder	Personal names used in folders / personal filing structure being used	Person could leave the Trust / Difficult for others to understand filing system or locate important information	Structure folders around work activities, teams, or job titles
ToR TJGC	Use of abbreviations	Means something now but meetings and teams change names very quickly – meaning is forgotten over time	Expand abbreviations in the overall folder name
Job application to XYZ Primary Care Trust	Personal use of Trust systems	Unprofessional / Against Trust Policy	Personal documents should be stored on H: drives. Personal documents are those that are not part of your work for the Trust
Report on staffing figures (x3)	Duplication of information	Unnecessary storage costs on server Not clear which is the master version	Only one master version should be filed by the person responsible for the document
ssmith.pst	.pst file	Difficult to find emails in a .pst file; needs ICT to provide permission to open it. Once in the .pst file how long will it take to find the email you are looking for?	Important emails should be printed out and stored with the relevant paper file or saved directly onto the shared drive with a useful description.
TJGC folder	Poor organisation of minutes	Not clear which papers relate to which meeting / Difficult to locate information / No indication of whether full set of minutes exist / not clear which version of minutes is the approved on	Give clear descriptions to meeting papers and store in a logical way. Should be consistent in naming records and include dates in the title, i.e. Agenda 05.01.06

Scenarios to consider
Susan left the Trust 18 months ago and you are now doing her job.
- An FOI Request comes in for the meeting papers of the TJG Committee between May – December.

- Tracy Begum doesn't get the job and thinks her manager's reference may have something to do with it. She starts searching the shared drive…
- The Director asks for the final report on staffing figures to be on her desk within the next 15 minutes for an important meeting.
- A new colleague is asked to do a report on the budget. He looks in the budget folder and only uses this information to compile the report.
- A colleague organises a get well card for David and news of his embarrassing illness spreads thought the department.
- The Director wants to know who approved the staffing figures report. Your colleagues think Susan approved it by email in the first half of 2004.