

Records Management Policy

This is version 3.6 of the policy and was updated on 18 January 2017. This policy replaces: DWP Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide; Corporate Memory Guide; Electronic Storage Policy and Retention policy for Datasets (DWP Data Retention Policy for Analytical, Research, Business Management Data and Financial Records).

See also the Registered File and Corporate Record Box guidance.

Updates to the policy can be found on the Amendments page.

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1. Introduction

The Records Management Policy tells you which documents and data you need to keep, for how long and where to keep them. The Policy will be reviewed annually by the policy owner (Knowledge and Information Management Division) in consultation with stakeholders.

1.1 What documents and data are covered by this policy?

This policy sets retention periods for all documents, data and records created by DWP staff however they are created or stored.

This policy is format neutral, which means that it includes paper documents, electronic records, emails, social media posts, databases, websites and Intranet sites, etc.

DWP has two types of record:

- Corporate records – this includes all documents and data created by you in day-to-day business. **All** ‘significant’ corporate records created by or on behalf of DWP are **public records** and must be treated as such. These public records may eventually be viewed by members of the public at The National Archives
- Benefit records – this includes all claimant or customer-related documents and data. These are not public records.

1.2 Why does the Department have a Records Management Policy?

The Department is legally required to create and manage corporate and benefit records to provide an audit trail of the organisation’s decision-making process and activities.

This policy ensures that DWP complies with document retention requirements:

- The Data Protection Act states that data should be kept as long as there is a business need for it and for no longer than appropriate.
- The government’s Information Principles state that information should be effectively managed from creation to destruction.
- Corporate records are kept to comply with the Public Records Act.
- The Civil Service code says you must keep accurate official records and handle information as openly as possible within the legal framework

This policy is designed to ensure that DWP retains only those documents and data which support business objectives; saves money and space by reducing information storage costs; protects against allegations of selective document destruction; manages our information risks; and avoids destroying documents that need to be retained.

Failure to retain documents and data, and to destroy them at the right time, could result in serious consequences, including:

- Fines from the Information Commissioner
- Lack of evidence for court cases
- Benefits paid incorrectly
- Damage to DWP’s reputation
- Personal data not destroyed in line with Data Protection Act requirements
- DWP may be unable to answer Freedom of Information (FoI) requests or deal with complaints received if documents are destroyed at the wrong time

Each record (i.e. document, data or piece of Departmental information) must be evaluated to determine how it should be kept and for how long. You must only retain a record for as long as there is a valid business or legal requirement to keep it. Teams should regularly review the information they hold to ensure it remains appropriate, up-to-date and necessary for the effective management of the

business. See the Appendices for details of the legal and business requirements for document retention.

1.3 Legal admissibility

All documents, data and records kept by the Department must meet the Legal admissibility and evidential weight standards. Using BS10008 will ensure that electronic documents and scanned images can be used as evidence by the courts or other statutory bodies.

If a digital system involves creating records, you must consider whether the records may be used in legal proceedings, such as Appeals, Overpayment cases or Fraud. You must ensure that the data inputted cannot be changed or intercepted at any point in the data journey, otherwise the record may not be admissible in court.

2. Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

2.1 General principles

All staff have a responsibility to keep records of the decisions they make, the advice they give, anything they do in the course of their work if it is significant.

All 'significant' corporate records must be saved. Any electronic document, including emails, social media postings and Intranet documents, must be saved in a Registered File or Corporate Record Box as soon as it has been identified as a 'significant' record. This is to ensure that DWP meets its legal obligations under the Public Records Act (PRA). Currently, we do not have an Electronic Document and Record Management System (EDRMS) in place to meet PRA obligations.

See the Registered Filing Guidance for details of how to set up and manage electronic & paper Registered Files and Corporate Record Boxes.

There is an element of judgement in deciding what you consider 'significant'. See the Appendices for details of the legal and business requirements for document retention, there is an index to the Appendices in section 7.

The following gives a brief summary of the minimum requirements for significant corporate records:

SAVE in Registered Files: information relevant to Departmental business such as:

- Business plans
- Corporate policy and guidance documents (and related background, correspondence etc)
- Correspondence (if significant)
- Departmental board, ET & directorate meetings
- External communications & events
- Information assurance and security documentation
- Legal advice
- Legal compliance on records management requirements
- Legislation
- Major or significant projects
- Ministerial briefings
- Parliamentary documents
- Private Office meetings concerning substantive issues

- Procurement documents relating to contracts over £5000 – documents as listed in Procurement guidance.
- Publications, reports, research & datasets
- Submissions (internal and external)
- Substantive contributions to the development of national or international policy or legislation

Documents retained for business need – this includes:

- Finance documents
- Legal documents relating to litigation/prosecution
- Minor projects
- Procurement documents relating to contracts under £5000 – documents as listed in Procurement guidance.
- Records of measures taken to comply with legal obligations
- Other documents that have a business need to be retained

DELETE:

- Items with low / nil value information
- Items that are not business-related, e.g. videos & Images
- Items with short term retention with no current business need, e.g. PowerPoint presentations, notices, communications, etc.
- Duplicate documents
- Items that exceeded the retention periods, e.g. Finance documents that are over 7 years old. See Records Management Policy appendices for details of retention periods.
- Items kept 'just in case'
- Convenience or reference copies of policies, procedures, memos etc.
- Items downloaded from the internet
- Items created for temporary use and for one-off exercises, e.g. to do calculations, labels, signs, posters etc.
- Items collected for completed projects where you were not the lead officer or where specific issues have been resolved
- Items of a personal nature, e.g. photos, social events, jokes etc.

2.2 Where should corporate records be stored?

Documents must only be held electronically if they relate to current Departmental business or the activity of an individual member of staff.

Departmental file naming and version control conventions should be used.

See the Appendices for details of where documents should be stored.

Documents that are classed as significant records must be kept in:

- **Registered Files** – this is the formal paper-based system used by DWP to control and manage its significant corporate records, which include those considered significant in terms of public interest, spending or have a potential national impact. If there is a business need to keep the information for more than five years, store the documents in Registered File.
- **Corporate Record Boxes** – these are used for bulky records (e.g. finance, legal, estates and procurement documents) or records that don't need to be kept for 15 years.

Registered files must be sent to Heywood Stores when the file is closed, see Registered File Guidance for details.

Note: Any files identified as 'Top Secret', 'Secret' or that your team has identified as 'sensitive' must be sent to the Knowledge, Information and Records Management (KIRM) team at Heywood Stores where they will be stored securely. Before sending files marked SECRET & TOP SECRET please refer to the use of government security classifications in DWP. These files should be sent direct to the KIRM team.

Documents that are not classed as significant may be stored in the team's Shared Drive, personal storage (My Documents) or Outlook (including Enterprise Vault). Personal storage must only be used for your personal documents and information relating to a member(s) of staff that you manage.

2.3 Destruction of corporate records

Records, documents and data should be destroyed according to the business/legal requirements as detailed in Appendices of this document.

Registered files must **not be** destroyed locally. They must be sent to Heywood Stores where they will be reviewed by the KIRM team and a decision will be made as to whether the file can be destroyed.

A data destruction certificate must be completed and sent to the Departmental Records Officer (DRO) when corporate records are destroyed, including data held on the Department's databases.

For further information: see related guidance on the use of government security classifications in DWP.

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see Further information

3. Retention principles of benefit records (documents and data)

3.1 General principles

The retention periods for benefit records (and customer/claimant records) are based on the business need to keep that information, i.e. maximum late claim and appeal time limits (13 months and 14 days) as specified in legislation. Having retention rules meets the requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA). Retention periods apply to all benefit documents and data whether the claim is successful and not.

3.1.1 Classification of documents

You must examine **all** documents and data relating to a case as you action them, then classify them under one of the following categories **Supporting** documents/data, or **Ephemeral** documents/data:

- **Supporting** documents/data are those which support an outcome decision and contain information on which a decision has been based, e.g. claim and review forms, and/or determine the amount of payment, e.g. copies of current wage slips. Documents/data required for security and accuracy checks are also classified as supporting.
- Any documents/data that do not fulfill the criteria for supporting are classified as **ephemeral**, and should be destroyed after 4 weeks, unless marked or identified as exceptions. Ephemeral documents used for checks should be reclassified as supporting.

Documents and data that **support** the benefit decision are retained for 14 months after the point that DWP no longer has a live interest in the case, unless an alternative retention period is given in the retention periods for benefit records section.

Retention periods of supporting documents/data only begin once entitlement ends AND all action has been completed. If payment or entitlement continues, the case remains LIVE and documents or data must not be weeded/destroyed. The retention period of ephemeral documents begins at date received.

The **Document Repository System** (DRS) has two additional classifications for electronic images:

- **Untraceable** which allows missing information for example NINO, to be added to the electronic image so it can be linked to an individual claim/case. Document classification is then changed to supporting/ephemeral as appropriate. If the electronic image is not traced it is deleted after 6 weeks.
- **Expunge Immediately** which is for items that have been scanned in error, these images are deleted within 72 hours. See DRS guidance for details.

3.1.2 Exceptions to retention periods of benefit records

There are **exceptions** to these retention periods, e.g. if there is fraud, overpayment, appeal or a complaint – see Appendix A for the full list of exceptions.

When an exception applies, documents and data will not be destroyed until all exceptions have been lifted/cleared, the normal retention periods will then apply.

3.1.3 Benefit records in other formats

Benefit records are also kept in other formats; these must follow the current document and data retention policy, including legal admissibility, have additional retention periods for exception cases and be classified as either 'supporting' or 'ephemeral'.

a) When benefit records are **scanned**, the original documents must be destroyed 4 weeks following scanning, unless identified as a 'valuable'.

b) **X-rays** should be saved in DRS or equivalent. They **should not** be kept on CD/DVDs or sent to Heywood Stores for storage. Businesses must store them correctly to ensure that the x-rays are readable for the whole retention period. Prior to X-rays being held on CD/DVD they were held on X-ray plates, these can be retained in Heywood Stores in a Card X-ray pouch.

c) **Recorded telephone conversations** follow the same retention periods as paper documents. A record of a telephone conversation must be destroyed if a customer signs and returns a claim form as the claim form then becomes the supporting evidence.

- **Note:** With **Customer Account Management** (CAM), the telephone conversation is recorded as a replacement for signed documentation. The recorded telephone conversation must not be destroyed until the retention period for all the benefits the call refers to have elapsed. CAM telephone calls are retrieved from the Verint telephony system.

3.2 Where should benefit records be stored?

Hardcopy (paper) benefit records should be stored as follows:

- Supporting records must be sent to remote stores. All benefit records must be sent to Remote Stores following the Records Storage Guidance.
- Ephemeral records must be stored locally
- Clerical cases must be retained locally

Electronic benefit records are stored on DRS, Verint, CAMLite etc. Data is stored on legacy benefit systems (e.g. JSAPS, WFPS, PSCS etc.) They are stored for the same retention periods as the hardcopy (paper) supporting and ephemeral documents.

Benefit records should be retained for the retention periods given in Appendix A. These retention periods apply to paper and electronic documents/data.

Digital media, such as CDs/DVDs, and encrypted memory sticks are only allowed for storage of personal data in agreed instances, e.g. x-rays or fraud evidence. Businesses that store data on CD/DVD must ensure that it is stored correctly and that the data is readable throughout the retention period, which may require migrating the data to new formats to maintain data integrity/readability, as well as when IT changes. This digital media **must not** be sent to remote stores; it should be stored and destroyed locally following security guidelines. Please contact the KIRM Team for advice.

3.3 Destruction of benefit records

Benefit records must be destroyed as follows are:

- Supporting records **must not be** destroyed locally. Once a case is closed, records storage IT system must be updated following the Records Storage Guidance.. This will trigger document destruction at the correct time for benefit records held in remote stores.
- Ephemeral records should be destroyed locally.

Benefit records should be destroyed according to the business/legal requirements as detailed in Appendix A of this policy.

When destroying benefit documents/data we are applying DWP Records Management Policy (RMP) and **not** the DPA. The DPA does not specify retention periods.

Standard responses should be used when members of the public make enquiries about the destruction of records:

- Where documents/data **have been destroyed in line with the RMP**, use Letter 1.
- Where documents/data **have not been destroyed in line with the RMP** and may have been destroyed in error (either partially or fully) use Letter 2.

Data Protection Officers should also refer to the Subject Access Request (SAR) Guide – a definition of when a benefit record is ‘held’ for SAR requests is given in section 4.1.

When a supporting benefit record is destroyed, details must be kept of when it was destroyed. This record is held on the remote stores IT system.

If benefit records are held by an external organisation, a data destruction certificate must be completed and sent to the Departmental Records Officer when the records are destroyed.

See also section on: exceptions and retention of benefit records.

If you need more information on retention of benefit records, see Further

4. When is a document ‘held’ or ‘not held’?

Documents and information are classed as ‘held’ or ‘not held’ if they meet the following criteria:

4.1 Held

- Registered files, Corporate Record Boxes and benefit records (for SAR requests) are classed as **held** until the files are marked as ‘destroyed’ on the remote stores IT system (RS Web).
- Paper or hard copy documents are classed as **held** until the document is physically transferred to waste recycling or confidential waste bin.
- Electronic documents are classed as **held** if they:
 - are on the current version of Shared Drives or can be retrieved from the ‘recycle bin’;
 - can be retrieved from the ‘recycle bin’ for MyDocuments (personal storage); or
 - can be retrieved from the Deleted Items folder or using the ‘recover deleted items’ facility in Outlook.
 - are stored within Enterprise Vault.
- Electronic datasets are classed as **held** until the data is deleted from the database and recycle bin.

4.2 Not held

- Documents held solely on backup tape/drives are classed as **not held**.

For further information: the Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) website for lines to take on deletion of electronic information [web](#) and ICO guide on destruction of requested information [web](#) or contact the KIRM Team.

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

5. Assurance / compliance

The DWP Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) owns the Department’s information risk policy and risk assessment process. They are responsible for information risk, influencing the board in managing these risk properly, fostering a culture that values, protects and uses the Department’s information and knowledge resource for the public good, and maintains a system of control which safeguards the security of information assets and data systems.

DWP has introduced a network of Deputy SIROs to support the DWP SIRO in discharging their accountabilities by taking the lead on their business’s strategic approach to managing information risks, Nominated contacts and Registry contacts are also in place although these are not Cabinet Office mandated roles:

5.1 DWP Senior Information Risk Owner

The DWP SIRO is a member of the Department's Executive Team (ET) and provides assurance to the Accounting Officer that the Department's information risks are understood and managed or mitigated effectively. He is supported by a network of Deputy SIROs.

5.2 Deputy Senior Information Risk Owners (D-SIRO)

Deputy SIROs are in place across the main areas of the Department and are aligned with subdivisions of the business that make sense to an outside observer i.e. the management of the assets looks like the management of the business owning the assets. Deputy SIROs are responsible for taking the lead on their business's strategic approach to managing information risks, including leading and fostering a culture that values, uses and protect information for the public good, and supporting the achievement of DWP's information management, security and assurance objectives.

Deputy SIROs are expected to have a good understanding what information is held in their areas and take the lead in the effective management of information risks through the maintenance of a business specific information risk register and Information Asset Inventory.

5.3 Information Asset Co-ordinators (IACs)

Information Asset Co-ordinators (IACs) provide appropriate support activities to enable the Deputy SIRO to effectively discharge their responsibilities.

The IACs proactively engage with Deputy SIROs and the SROs to support them in identifying the information risks to their individual assets, exploring if these are being effectively managed and mitigated and providing effective challenge.

5.4 Senior Responsible Owners

In a project/programme environment a SRO has overall accountability for delivery, including management of project and delivery risks. They are responsible for ensuring control mechanisms are designed that safeguard the information assets created by, or used, once the change has been delivered. They will be assisted by the programme/project staff in the management of the information assets.

In the live environment the SRO is the owner of a system or service. They are ultimately responsible, within the first line of defense (directorate and line management level), for ensuring that the system, service and its processes maintain adequate levels of information security, that internal controls exists, mandatory controls are complied with and that they operate effectively. In a live environment, the SRO will be assisted by the IAM and other advisors.

5.5 Information Asset Managers

The main purpose of the IAM is to support the Senior Responsible Owner in meeting their accountabilities for ensuring risks have been identified and mitigated with appropriate and effective controls. The IAM role is a 'doing' role.

5.6 Nominated contacts

Each Deputy Director has a nominated contact. Their responsibility is to:

- Ensure the Knowledge Information & Records Management (KIRM) team has a record of the nominated contact.
- Ensure that benefit and corporate records are being kept and managed within their division (as applicable to business area).
- Provide assurance that Registered Files are set up and maintained.
- Ensure benefit record final action is completed.
- Ensure their business unit is adhering to all information management policies.
- Ensure policy colleagues contribute to decisions to open a file when The National Archives has received a FoI request for access to a closed file (if applicable to business area).
- Arrange training sessions or inductions on records management and Registered Files for their division. If required, the training will be provided by the KIRM team.
- Answer questions from within their division regarding business and corporate records - these queries can be forwarded to the KIRM Team if required.
- Be a stakeholder for Records Management Policy changes.
- To circulate communications issued by the KIRM team to their division.

5.7 Registry contact

The Registry contact has overall responsibility for the management of their Registered Files and/or Corporate Record Boxes. This includes:

- Notifying the Knowledge Information & Records Management (KIRM) team of any changes within their team, such as type of work undertaken by the team, start or end of projects, change of contact etc.;
- Produce and maintain an excel spreadsheet containing the details of the registered files created within their area. This must be sent to the KIRM team annually or when requested.

5.8 All staff

All staff have a responsibility to keep records of the decisions they make, the advice they give, anything they do in the course of their work if it is significant.

5.9 Compliance

Compliance with the policy is the responsibility of all staff.

Where non-compliance is identified, line managers should be informed and it should be reported to the relevant Deputy SIRO. Consistent non-compliance should be reported to the DWP SIRO and the KIRM Team. It is the responsibility of the Deputy SIRO and line manager to ensure that corrective action is taken.

There is an annual information audit carried out by the KIRM team that looks at what records are maintained in each business area. Assurances around the effective management of information assets and their subsequent risks are also obtained as part of the Deputy SIRO through year reporting process overseen by the DWP Information Security & Assurance Team.

See also section on: Registered Filing Guidance.

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see [For further information](#)

6. Further information

The KIRM team has developed a number of products to simplify document and data retention.

- Knowledge, Information and Document Management– has information and toolkits on file naming, version control, structuring shared drives and capturing knowledge
- Retention of corporate records – has information, guidance and training on what to keep and how to manage Registered Files.
- Retention of benefit-claim records – has information and guidance on sending documents to stores; and legal admissibility of electronic records.

For enquiries on how to keep Registered Files and Corporate Record Boxes or for any other queries, please contact the Knowledge Information & Records Management (KIRM) team.

7. Where should different documents and data be stored and for how long?

Index for the Appendices

Documents and data have different business and legal requirements for their retention depending on the type of document/data.

The appendices provide the retention periods for the following documents and data which are used within DWP; they also give details of where documents should be stored and by whom:

| | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--|
| A | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual reports • Accounts • Agendas – Team or Division; or Departmental board, ET, Directorate meetings | L | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ledger records • Legal advice (i.e. to support policy making) • Legislation • Legislation-related correspondence • Letters • Liaison with external organisations • Litigation (including Judicial Reviews) • Lync – instant messaging |
| B | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank account records / statements • Benefit fraud documents • Benefit records • Briefings • Budgets (team / divisional and departmental) • Business planning | | |
| C | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child maintenance records • Collaborate – social media posts • Communications documents (newsletters, notices etc.) • Complaints document (non-delivery areas) • Conference documents • Consent forms • Consultation papers • Contracts • Corporate Policy | M | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical Advice (Medical Services Advice Submissions) • Meeting correspondence – Team or Division; or Departmental board, ET, Directorate meetings • Ministerial correspondence • Minutes – Team or Division; or Departmental board, ET, Directorate meetings |

| | | | |
|----------|--|----------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Correspondence | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mission statement |
| | | N | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Newsletter or Internal communication/publicity |
| | | O | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Organisation chart |
| D | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Data setsData sets – background informationDebt ManagementDecision Making and Appeals (DMA)Departmental reports and accountsDiaries & calendars (Ministerial)Diaries & calendars (Non Ministerial)DWP Corporate Archive | P | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Parliamentary documentsParliamentary QuestionsPolicy documentsPolicy–related correspondencePresentationsPress releasePrivate office documentsProactive communicationsProceedingsProcurement - involving DeedsProcurement - over £5000Procurement - short term retentionProcurement - under £5000Programmes (conferences etc.)Project document - major projectProject document - minor projectPromotional materials (external)ProsecutionsPublic noticePublications - external (including leaflets, research and forms)Purchases |
| E | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Emails – internal, external or claimant/customer relatedEnvironmental Impact Regulations (correspondence)European Social Fund (ESF)Event documentsExpenditure recordsExpensesExternal correspondence | | |
| F | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Finance documentsFOI recordsBenefit forms (blank)Guidance & leaflets (external) | | |
| G | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Guidance (internal)Health and Safety documents | | |
| H | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Horizon scanningHuman resources documents | | |
| I | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Information assurance & security documentsInformation from working with Ministers and other senior officials (see: Submissions & Briefings)Instant messaging - LyncInternal correspondenceInternal form (templates)Internet pagesIntranet textInvoicesIT formsKnowledge & Information | Q | <ul style="list-style-type: none">QuestionnairesReceipts & revenue recordsRecords management, including inventoriesReportsRisk management documents |
| | | R | |
| | | S | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Salary recordsService level agreement (SLA)Social Media posts (including Drupal) – internal, external. |

| | | | |
|----------|----------------------|----------|--|
| K | management documents | T | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speeches • Subject Access Requests • Submissions • Terms of reference |
|----------|----------------------|----------|--|

Appendix A: Retention of benefit records

All benefit records are retained for 14 months after case closure if they are supporting documents or 4 weeks from date received if ephemeral; unless a non-standard retention period is given in the table below. All benefit records must be sent to Remote Stores following the Remote Storage Guidance. Note: Clerical cases must be retained locally.

The retention periods apply to all claim documents and data whether the claim is successful or not. **They also apply to the benefit processing IT systems.**

Retention periods start from date the case is closed/end of interest.

There are exceptions to the retention period for benefit records, e.g. fraud, overpayments, appeals or complaints. Files are not destroyed while the exception is in place, once the exception is cleared normal retention periods apply. Identify claims/cases which are exceptions and note them as '**Not for destruction until exception(s) cleared**'.

Temporary embargoes are sometimes placed on the destruction of some benefit records. Note: ALL embargoes MUST be discussed and agreed with KIRM Team before implementation.

Table showing standard retention periods

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| Benefit records | All documents and data, including emails | Standard retention periods for Supporting documents are 14 months after the case ends and exceptions are cleared. | DWP guidance Emailing customers policy | Data is stored on DWP legacy benefit systems (e.g. JSAPS, DRS, Verint etc.). |
| Child maintenance records | | | | |
| Debt Management records (including Compensation Recovery Unit & Fraud and ApPen Overpayment documents) | | See below for non-standard retention periods. Ephemeral documents are retained for 4 weeks from date received. | Legal requirements: Retention is based on the appeal and late claim regulations under benefit legislation. | Paper documents are stored at Remote Stores |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) | Mandatory reconsideration & appeals process documents and data | | | |
| Medical Advice (Medical Services Advice Submissions) | All documents and data, including emails | | | |
| Benefit fraud documents | All documents as listed in Retention of evidence files in England and Wales | 14 calendar months from the date an evidence file is marked put away (PA) and exceptions under Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 are cleared | DWP guidance: Fraud retention of documents guidance. Fraud tapes and digital discs Fraud retention of documents guidance (FRAIMS) | Hard copy of original forms retained at Remote Stores |
| | Tapes and digital discs (including Audio/video tapes and compact / digital versatile discs (CDs / DVDs) | Retain as per other Fraud documents. Surveillance tapes / discs that must be kept for 3 years | Legal requirements: Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act (CPIA) 1996 Code of Practice (COP) 5.9 Home Office Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) 2000 Code of | Tapes and digital discs are retained locally |
| | All documents as listed in the Fraud retention of documents guidance (FRAIMS) | 5 years | | FRAIMS |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--|---------------|
| | | | Practice | |
| Subject Access Request (SAR) | | 3 months | DWP guidance: SAR guide | Shared Drive |

Table showing non-standard retention periods

Note: the standard retention periods apply if the benefit is not listed in this table, see details above.

| Retention of... | Specific documents (if applicable) | Retention period | Business justification for retention period |
|---|---|--|--|
| Debt Management | Electronically held customer correspondence (Primary E-Post) | Retain at a customer level, not an individual level, i.e. 14 months after the zero balance has been reached. | Destruction is at customer level, as correspondence includes reference to all outstanding debts. |
| European Social Fund (ESF) Note: for ESF research & evaluation see guidance for research reports. | Documents as listed in the ESF guidance. (ESF 2014-2020) | Retained until 31st December 2026 | European Commission (EC) audit and regulatory requirements |
| | For Wales only: Parents, Childcare and Employment (PaCE), see Annex A of the PaCE Retention Guidance Communities for Work (CfW), see Annex A of the CfW Retention Guidance. | Retained until 31st December 2025 | |
| Employment and Support Allowance | ESA55 referral files for live claims | 72 months from date of decision | This is to ensure that the last two Work Capability Assessments are |

| Retention of... | Specific documents (if applicable) | Retention period | Business justification for retention period |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | retained |
| European Refugee Fund Claims (for JSA, ESA & IS claims) | Clerical Claim forms along with relevant evidence supporting claims made by Gateway Protection Programme refugees. | 5 years following the closure of the claim/PA. | This is a UKBA (Home Office) requirement to meet EU audit requirements. |
| Flexible Support Fund | For advisor-related payments | 18 months following the financial year in which the application was made or any overpayment was fully recovered/ written off, whichever is the later. RM retention periods apply to FSF payments, see appendix F for details. | Treasury/National Audit Office requirement. |
| | For FSF Grant funding awards to organisations. | Minimum of 10 years, from date of last payment. | EU regulation requires FSF “to keep records of all de minimis aid paid for ten years from the last payment.” Page 12 of BIS State Aid Guide |
| Incapacity Benefit | IB55 referral files for live claims | 120 months from date of decision | This is to ensure that the last two Personal Capability Assessments on form IB85 are retained |
| Independent Case Examiner (ICE) cases | For data recorded on Respond. | 3 years after ICE case closure. | Retaining electronic data for 3 years allows sufficient time for a complainant to |

| Retention of... | Specific documents (if applicable) | Retention period | Business justification for retention period |
|---|---|--|--|
| | | | consider the outcome of ICE examination of their complaint and exercise their right to approach the relevant Parliamentary Ombudsman. |
| Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefit (Except Industrial Death Benefit (IDB)) | Embargo on IIDB miners' files - see the IIDB guidance for further details. | <p>For non-miner claims/cases: 14 months after the date of death or the date of the last decision (PA) whichever is the later.</p> <p>Do not destroy Miners' IIDB files</p> | There is an embargo on the destruction of Miners' IIDB files until the coal miners' litigation against the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (DBEIS), as inheritor of the liabilities of the former British Coal Corporation, is complete. |
| Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) | Labour Market Units (LMU) | <p>Retain on site for 1 month after the last date of the claim.</p> <p>LMUs are to be retained for 14 months after the last date of the claim if they contain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> documents supporting a decision to disallow entitlement or apply a sanction. Or a fraud, appeal or overpayment marker; or selected by | LMUs are classed as ephemeral from end of claim. |

| Retention of... | Specific documents (if applicable) | Retention period | Business justification for retention period |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | <p>Performance Management for checks.</p> <p>See the LMU guidance for details of how to process these documents</p> | |
| | JSA claimant commitment | Paper copies should be stored in the LMU and follow LMU retention period above. | |
| | SL2s | <p>Where there is European Social Fund (ESF) and Match funded provision – Retain until 31/12/2022.</p> <p>Where there is no ESF and Match funded provision, retain for 18 months from referral.</p> | <p>ESF retention guidance.</p> <p>The longest period for contracted provision was 12 months. Also must leave extra 6 months to administer any claims from providers and potential audit.</p> |
| MAPPA J forms | | <p>Should be retained locally for the period that the restrictions apply.</p> <p>When the restrictions no</p> | Required to identify which offenders are MAPPA eligible and the related risk management. See MAPPA guidance for further details. |

| Retention of... | Specific documents (if applicable) | Retention period | Business justification for retention period |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | | longer apply the MAPPA forms should be destroyed immediately, in the same way as any other sensitive information. | |
| New Enterprise Allowance | All documents relating to NEA financial support | Retain for 18 months after final NEA payment or date of last NEA engagement. | Agreed DWP finance retention period as given in Finance Managers Guide - retention of documents deskaid |
| | All papers relating to completed CPS LP payments | Retain for 18 months following the final payment, or the date any overpayment was fully recovered / written off, whichever is the later | Agreed DWP finance retention period as given in Finance Managers Guide - retention of documents deskaid |
| | EU de minimis statement | Must be retained by Jobcentre Plus for a period of 10 years | EU audit requirement |
| NINO Allocation | Successful NINO applications - form CA5400. Note: see the Secure NINO Allocation Process (SNAP) Guide | 3 years from the date of creation. | 3 years is required prevent Fraud or identity theft, and to prevent re-applications and to allow cross reference. |
| PIP | All supporting documents | 24 months from claim closure (PA). | PIP linking rules |
| RVU type B cases | All supporting documents | 5 years from date of decision | These are complex cases that likely to be appealed. It would be costly or not possible for the department or |

| Retention of... | Specific documents (if applicable) | Retention period | Business justification for retention period |
|---|--|--|--|
| | | | claimant to collect this information again. |
| Special Payments | All documents relating to Special Payments | Payments: Follow the retention periods for payment documents as given in appendix F Payment refusals – retain as per the Special Payments Guide. | DWP Financial Redress for Maladministration |
| State Pension Deferred Lump Sum Payments | The completed DL66 & DL67 and any evidence to support subsequent changes to this decision. | 72 months (6 years) after the financial year the payment is made | HMRC, The National Archives (TNA) and National Audit Office (NAO) requirements |
| Suicide and self-harm documents | All documents relating to suicide and self-harm. | Retain for 6 years following the date on which the incident occurred or the declaration of intention was made. | Health and Safety document retention schedule and customer's suicide and self-harm policy guidance |

Exceptions to the retention period of benefit records

The most common exception cases are shown below – once the exception has been cleared normal retention periods will apply:

Type of exception:

- **Fraud**
- **Overpayments** including: civil proceedings & Recovery from Estates
- **Debt Management** including: Compensation Recovery
- **Appeals** including: Mandatory Reconsiderations
- **Customer feedback or complaints** including: Independent Case Examiner (ICE) cases & Parliamentary Health and Service Ombudsman (PHSO) Cases
- Criminal Cases Review Commission cases
- Cases subject to a **Performance Measurement** check
- **Maxwell Cases** and other pension scheme cessation cases.

The file should be destroyed 14-months (or non-standard retention period as given above) after removing all the exception markers, unless the case remains live.

See also section on: Retention principles of benefit records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix B: Retention of internal communications documents

This section gives retention details for internal communications documents, for external documents see Appendix E.

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created

| Retention of... | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|--|--|---------------|------------------|
| Newsletter / magazines - internal publicity | 12 months | | Shared Drives | Document creator |
| Questionnaires | | | | |
| Intranet text | Until uploaded onto Intranet Note. Original policy/ guidance documents must be kept in a Registered File | | Shared drive | Document owner |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see [For further information](#)

Appendix C: Retention of correspondence

This covers all correspondence received/sent within the Department; correspondence relating to benefit records should follow guidance for benefit records.

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|------------------|
| Briefings & Submissions | Briefings (Internal) | 12 months | | Shared Drive | Policy team |
| | Director General briefings for visits, staff meetings and events | 12 months | | | |
| | Ministerial Briefing / factsheets - including background | 20 years | The National Archives (TNA) & legal requirements: TNA Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers Public Records Act | Registered File | Policy team |
| | Submissions (external & internal) | 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Policy team |
| Complaints document | All papers relating to the complaint | 14 months If Registered File required – | | Shared Drive or Registered File if required. | Letter recipient |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------------|
| | | retention period is 20 years | | | |
| Legislation-related correspondence | Environmental Impact Regulations (EIR) | 2 years after last action on the case | The National Archives (TNA) requirements: TNA Retention Scheduling 9: Information Management Record | Shared Drive | EIR responder |
| | Freedom of Information (Fol) – ICO cases | 2 years | DWP guidance: Fol records retention guidance | Shared Drive | Fol responder |
| | Fol - routine response | 1 year | | | |
| | Fol – database | 5 years | TNA requirements: TNA Retention Scheduling 9: Information Management Record | Fol VTR | Central Fol team |
| | Legal Advice | 20 years | TNA & legal requirements: TNA Operational Selection Policy Osp42 - Records Of Departmental Legal Branches Public Records Act | Registered File or Corporate Record Box. | Policy team |
| Ministerial correspondence | | 12 months | | COMET | Ministerial Correspondence |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|-------------------------|---|------------------|---|-----------------|---|
| | | | | | Team |
| Internal correspondence | Emails – personal, trivial or ephemeral | 4 weeks | | Outlook | First recipient if incoming or sending if outgoing emails |
| | Emails – discussing team or non-significant DWP business including internal enquiries | 1 year | | Shared drive | Sender or recipient as applicable |
| | Emails reflecting decisions on DWP policy - including email attachment | 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Sender or recipient as applicable |
| | Social media/ Instant messaging (internal) including Collaboration & Lync | Not retained | | Lync | DWP Technology |
| | Nb. Do not use social media/ instant messaging for sharing significant information. | 4 weeks | | Collaborate | |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| | Internal memos | 1 year | | Shared drive | Sender |
| External correspondence including liaison with external organisations | External letters/emails: Received & Replies | 12 months | | Stored locally | Letter recipient |
| | | If significant, save in a Registered File and retain for 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | |
| | Social media posts* (external) e.g. DWP Facebook & Twitter sites | 4 weeks | | Within the DWP I.T. estate. | DWP Technology |
| | | If significant, save in a Registered File and retain for 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Information owner |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

*Social media posts cannot be retained on the social media hosting platform. The posts must be extracted and retained within the DWP I.T. estate.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix D: Retention of statistics & data collections

A data set is a collection of similar data which can be manipulated or analysed as a whole by a computer.

Note: See external publications for surveys undertaken as part of research.

Retention periods start from the date when the dataset is created.

| Retention of... | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|--|---|--|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Client Statistics | 20 years from the date the dataset is created. If there is a business justification to keep the dataset longer than 20 years, contact the KIRM team. | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Shared Drive or Data Warehouse | Data owner |
| Datasets for specific research project | 20 years after completion of the research project – unless the organisation funding the research has a different retention period. SARA guidance | | | |
| Horizon scanning | 5 years | | Shared Drive | Document creator |
| <p>Note: Some anonymised data sets are already archived as public records, e.g. datasets published on the gov.uk Internet sites or datasets that are uploaded and accessed via the UK Data Archive.</p> <p>Note: all personal details must be anonymised prior to transfer to The National Archives.</p> | | | | |

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix E: Retention of external publications (including promotional material & Legislation)

The Registered Files must contain the research, background to the publication, sign off/approval, stakeholder comments, draft copies etc. The final copy of the publication

does not need to be added to the Registered File, however including the final publication is useful if you recall the file in future.

Please see the publishing guidance which outlines the actions required for final published documents. Some of the items held below are held in the DWP Corporate Archive.

See Appendix B for retention details for internal communications documents.

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|--------------------|------------------------------|--|--|----------------|
| Departmental Report and Accounts | | 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Policy team |
| Consultation papers | | | | | Policy team |
| Datasets - background information | | | | | Analyst team |
| Benefit forms (blank) | | | | | Forms team |
| Policy, guidance & leaflets (external) | | | | | Forms team |
| Internet pages | | Until uploaded onto Internet | DWP guidance: Internet Archiving Policy Contact the Digital Publishing Team for full details. | The National Archives (TNA) digital continuity plan captures all Internet pages. | Document owner |
| Parliamentary documents | Command paper | 20 years | The National Archives (TNA) & legal requirements: TNA Operational Selection | Registered File | Policy team |
| | Committee report | | | | |
| | Directive | | | | |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|-------------------------------|------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| | Green paper | | Policy Ops42 - Records Of Departmental Legal Branches | | |
| | House of Commons paper | | | | |
| | White paper | | | | |
| | Parliamentary Questions (PQs) | 5 years | TNA records management retention scheduling – 12: parliamentary papers in departments and agencies | Shared Drive | PQ Responder |
| Legislation | Act of Parliament | 20 years | Public Records Act | Registered File | Policy team. |
| | Statutory instrument (SI) | | | | Note: original signed SIs are kept by legislation team. |
| Press releases | | 20 years | TNA requirements: TNA Retention Scheduling 8. Press and public relations records | Registered File | Press Office |
| Promotional materials (external) | | | | | Document creator |
| Proactive communications | | | | | |
| Public notices | | | | | |
| Reports | Other Departmental reports | 20 years | TNA & legal requirements: TNA Records and Retention Scheduling 10. Central Expenditure Records Section 386-389 of the Companies | Registered File | Publication team |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|--|---|--|---|-----------------|------------------|
| | | | Acts 2006 Public Records Act | | |
| | Research Reports - including reports, research, findings and statistics | | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | | |
| Research documentation – including Consent forms and SARA framework | | As per funding body requirements or, if significant, save in a Registered File and retain for 20 years. Note: keep respondent data for 3 years after publication | DWP guidance: SARA guidance Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Document creator |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix F: Retention of financial documents and data

The section deals with the retention of documentation relating to financial transactions. See Appendix L for procurement retention details.

Retention periods start from the end of the financial year to which the records relate, unless otherwise stated.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period from Financial Year End | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|--|--|---|---|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Accounts | Asset Register Including IT and non-IT. | 6 years after asset disposed of | DWP guidance: Finance documents - retention of documents deskaid Special Payments Guide | RM | RM |
| | Finance Reports | 18 months after completion of annual financial report | Government Procurement Card (GPC) guidance | | RM and Central Payment System (CPS) |
| | Financial Audits | 6 years after completed | | | Internal audit |
| | Accounts - Governance Statement | 6 years | | | Governance team |
| | PAYE | 3 years | TNA & legal requirements: TNA Records and Retention Scheduling 10. Central Expenditure Records | Stored locally | SSCL |
| | Payment documents & controls (as listed in the Finance Managers Guide) | 6 years | TNA Records Management Retentions Scheduling 3: Accounting records HMRC record keeping | Corporate Record box | Finance team |
| | Tax documents (VAT) | | | | Accounting services at SSCL |
| | Benefit Payments | | | CPS | CPS |
| DWP bank account records / statements | | | | RM & CPS | RM & CPS |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period from Financial Year End | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Budgets (Team / Divisional and Departmental) | | | guidance | | | |
| | | | Limitation Act 1980 | | | |
| Expenditure records | | | Income Tax (PAYE) Regulation 2003 | | | |
| Invoices | Invoices (received) | | Section 386-389 of the Companies Acts 2006 | | Scanned by SSCL into RM | SSCL |
| | Invoices (sent) | | | | Corporate Record box | Finance team |
| Ledger records | | | | | Shared Drive | Finance team |
| Purchases | Purchase order & requisition records | | | | RM | Procurement team / GPC card holder |
| | GPC receipt records | all paper documents for 18 months and all electronic documents for 7 years | | | Stored locally / Shared drives | |
| Receipts & revenue records | | 6 years | Corporate Record Box | | | |
| Salary records | | 3 years | | Payroll | | |
| Expenses (RM) | Copies of receipts | | | Stored locally | Member of staff | |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix G: Retention of Human Resources (HR) documents and data

Please note: there are different retention periods for *specific* HR documents – the **maximum retention period is given for the *group* of documents**. See DWP HR Document Retention Schedule and DWP Health and Safety Document Retention Schedule for further details.

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created, unless otherwise stated.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix H: Retention of legal documents

Note: See also sections on legislation-related correspondence and external publications.

Note: Civil litigation is now handled by litigators at the Government Legal Department and prosecutions by the CPS. Documents will now be retained by Government Legal Department or CPS and will follow their retention policies.

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Litigation | Appeals | 10 years | The National Archives (TNA) & legal requirements: Limitation Act | Corporate Record box | DWP policy and operational leads are responsible |
| | Civil litigation | | | | |
| | Costs | | | | |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------|---|---------------|---|
| | Counsel | | 1980 | | e for retaining legal advice. DWP lawyers do not keep separate registered files |
| | Employment litigation | | TNA | | |
| | Judicial Reviews | | Operational Selection Policy Osp42 - Records Of Departmental Legal Branches | | |
| Prosecutions | | 6 years | | | |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix I: Retention of meeting and conference documents

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created, unless an alternative retention start date is given.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|---------------|------------------|
| Team or Division meetings | Minutes, Agenda, Presentations & handouts | 1 year after meeting | | Shared Drive | Document creator |
| | Meeting correspondence (including joining | 4 weeks (save in inbox/sent items) | | Outlook | Email creator |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|--|--|--|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | instructions, refreshments , travel arrangement etc.) | | | | |
| Departmental board, ET, Directorate meetings | Minutes, Papers & Agenda Note: Not for publication, unsanitised or draft minutes should also be kept. | 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Document creator |
| | Meeting correspondence (including joining instructions, refreshments , travel arrangement etc.) | 1 year after meeting (save in inbox/sent items) | | Shared drive | Document creator |
| Conference / Event documents (including proceedings, programmes & speeches etc.) | | 1 year If Registered File required – retention period is 20 years | | Shared Drive or Registered File | Document creator |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see [For further information](#)

Appendix J: Retention of organisational & planning documents

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created, unless otherwise stated.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|-----------------------------|---|--|--|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Business planning | Asset Register Including IT and non-IT. | 6 years after asset disposed of | | Stored locally | Asset owner |
| | Business Plans including evaluation & monitoring (department) | 20 years | | Registered file | Document creator |
| | Business Plans including evaluation & monitoring (team and divisional) | 3 years or until superseded | | Shared Drive | Document creator |
| | Risk management documents, including risk registers | 3 years or until superseded or 20 years if significant | | Shared drive or Registered File | Document creator |
| | Information assurance & security (HMG Security Policy Framework documentati | | | 20 years | Registered File |
| Business continuity officer | | | | | |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|--|---|------------------|---|---|---|
| on) | | | | | |
| Legal compliance (Internal Audit and Assurance) | Data Protection Act compliance | 5 years | | Shared Drive or Corporate Record Box | Fol, DPA, H&S team or Document creator as appropriate |
| | Environmental Impact Regulations compliance | | | | |
| | Freedom of Information compliance | | | | |
| | Health and Safety at Work Act compliance | | | | |
| | Records management , including inventories | 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Document creator |
| Private Office business documentation Note: Private Office should keep unique papers only. Policy groups and others to keep everything else. | Substantive contributions to the development of policy or legislation including factual evidence and interpretative material relating to accepted and rejected options. | 20 years | DWP guidance: Private Office filing guidance TNA & legal requirements: TNA Guidance on the Management of Private Office Papers Public Records Act | Registered File in KIRM storage at Heywood stores | Departmental Records Office (DRO) |
| | Notebooks: Permanent Secretary | 5 years | | | |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|-----------------|--|------------------|--|---|--|
| | Notebooks: Ministers | 5 years | | | |
| | Notebooks: Private Secretaries | 2 years | | Stored locally | Private Office |
| | Correspondence not registered on COMET | 5 years | | Stored locally | Private Office/DR O as appropriate |
| | Invitations not registered on COMET | 2 years | | Stored locally | Private Office |
| | Records of meetings concerning substantive issues | 20 years | | Registered File in KIRM storage at Heywood stores | Hard copies to be printed off and sent to DRO periodically |
| | Records of discussions using non-fixed information exchange methods - telephone calls (official business), live web feeds, instant messaging, web chats with Minister etc. | 3 years | | Stored locally | Private Office |
| | Entertainment costs, travel costs, gifts | 6 years | | Stored locally | Private Office/ DRO as appropriate |
| | Ministers' official | 15 years | | KIRM storage at | Hard copies to |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|--|----------------|---|
| | diaries | | | Heywood stores | be printed off and sent to DRO periodically |
| Operational business documentation | Estate management documentation | 3 years or until superseded | | Shared Drive | Document creator |
| | Knowledge & Information management documents | | | | |
| | Mission statement | | | | |
| | Service level agreement (SLA) | | | | |
| | Terms of reference | | | | |
| | Organisation chart | | | | |
| | Governance/ Letters of Assurance | | | | |
| | Risk Profiles | | | | Risk owner |
| | Risk Register | | | | |
| | Security documents | | | | Document creator |
| | IT Forms | 18 months after access withdrawn | DWP guidance: Secure print operators guide | Shared drive | Document creator |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|--|---------------------------------|---|---|-----------------------------|
| Diaries or calendar (Ministerial) | See section on Private Office business documentation | | | | |
| Diaries or calendar (Non-Ministerial) | | 1 year | | Outlook or stored locally (paper diaries) | Document creator |
| Internal forms (templates) | | 3 years or until superseded | | Shared drive | Document creator |
| Internal investigations (including data breaches) | | 6 years | Internal Investigations: Document and Data Retention Schedule | Shared drive | Internal Investigation team |
| DWP Corporate Archive of historical DWP publications | | Archive holdings date from 1911 | DWP guidance: Archive collection and acquisition policy | DWP Archive & electronic copies via the Library Catalogue | DWP Archivist |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix K: Retention of policy & procedure documents

Note: See sections on external publications (for external policy formation) & correspondence (for briefings and submissions)

The Registered Files must contain the research, correspondence background to the policy or guidance, sign off/approval, stakeholder comments, draft copies and the final copy of the policy or guidance. It should also contain any communications to staff about the policy or guidance.

Retention periods start from the date when the document is created.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|--|---|------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| Corporate Policy | This includes departmental policies, finance & HR policies etc. | 20 years | Legal requirements: Public Records Act | Registered File | Policy team or guidance owners |
| Guidance or instructions (including staff training) | Finance procedures | | | | |
| | HR procedures | | | | |
| | Notices / Alerts | | | | |
| | Operational procedures | | | | |
| | Other procedures | | | | |
| | Procurement procedures | | | | |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix L: Retention of procurement documents

Note: The procurement documents are classified as per the contract value which determines the contract length.

Retention periods start when the contract ends or the last payment is made.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|---|-------------------------------|--|--|------------------|
| Procurement - short term retention | Tender documentation | 1 year | | ePS | Procurement team |
| | Expressions of Interest and/or Pre-Qualification Questionnaires | | | | |
| Procurement - over £5000 & involving Deeds | Business case | 20 years | DWP guidance: Procurement guidance has further details of what documents to keep and where. The National Archives (TNA) & legal requirements: TNA retention scheduling 5. Contractual records | Registered File (see Procurement guidance for details of what to keep and where) | |
| | Procurement/commercial strategy | | | | |
| | Parent company guarantees or Deeds of bond | | | | |
| | Tender board reports | | | | |
| | Contract documents | | | | |
| | Records of decisions made during the procurement process | | | | |
| | Variation orders | | | | |
| | All other documents | 6 years or 12 years if Deeds. | | ePS | |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|----------------------------------|--|------------------|--|---------------|--------------|
| Procurement - under £5000 | Including RTPI Catalogue forms - One Detail Request Form | 2 years | | | |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information

Appendix M: Retention of programme and project documents

This section gives retention details for documents relating to any programmes/projects undertaken with the Department.

Major projects are defined as those which:

- require spending over and above departmental expenditure limits
- require primary legislation
- are innovative or contentious

Project documents may also include finance or staff guidance documents, if so these documents must follow the retention periods for finance and staff guidance.

Retention periods start when the project/programme is completed.

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|---|--------------------|------------------|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Project document - major project | | 20 years | DWP guidance: Configuration Management | Registered File | Project manager |

| Retention of... | Specific documents | Retention period | Business or legal requirements for retention | Where stored? | Who retains? |
|--|--------------------|--|--|----------------------|--------------|
| | | | Plan | | |
| Project document - minor project | | 10 years | The National Archives (TNA) & legal requirements: TNA Records management retention scheduling 6: project records | Corporate record box | |
| | | If it is significant – the project documentation should be saved in a registered file. | Public Records Act | Registered File | |
| Note: The Configuration Management Plan lists all the documents that should be kept in your Registered File or Corporate Record Box. | | | | | |
| Note: Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA), Data Handling Protocol self service frameworks (DHP) and Data Migration Templates (DMT) must be saved with the project documents if applicable. | | | | | |

Note:

- The fact that a document doesn't **need** to be placed on a Registered File does not mean that it is not important. You may still place documents in a Registered File or a Corporate Record Box, if you decide it is significant. See the what to keep guide for details of what types of document must be kept in a Registered File.

See also section on: Retention principles of corporate records (documents and data)

If you need more information on retention of corporate records, see For further information