

DOCUMENT RETENTION PROCEDURE

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide the minimum periods of retention of records in a format that does not including having to read lengthy circulars and provide clarification on the storage, disposal and destruction of records.

1. Retention Periods

Retention periods are generally specific to the type of record. There are minimum lengths of time that each record should be kept (see below). The period of time should be calculated from the end of the calendar or accounting year following the last entry in the records whether held in paper form or electronically. For clinical records it is the time since the last entry.

At the end of the documented retention period, records should be assessed to determine whether they need to be retained for longer as they are still in use, if they are worthy of archival preservation, or whether they should be destroyed. A record of the outcome of this appraisal exercise should be documented with either the paper record or electronically any reasons for keeping records beyond the recommended retention period highlighted in records retention procedures.

There are a number of situations in which records may need to be retained following appraisal and examples of these are included below:

- The record has reached or passed its retention date but there is a continued business need for this. If so, this reason should be clearly documented
- Record is needed for an ongoing public inquiry
- It is needed to respond to an ongoing access request

2. Purchase Invoices and Supplier

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Contracts – non sealed (property) on termination	6	The Limitation Act 1980
Contracts – non sealed (other) on termination	6	The Limitation Act 1980
Contracts – sealed	Minimum of 15 years	
Contracts – financial approval files	Minimum of 15 years	
Day files	6 months	
Deeds of title	Permanent	
Delivery notes	1.5	
Products – liability	11	Consumer Protection Act 1987
Requisitions	1.5	
Stock control reports	1.5	
Stores records – major (stores ledgers etc)	6	
Stores records – minor (requisitions, issue notes, goods received books etc)	1.5	
Supplies records – minor (ITTs, routine papers etc)	1.5	
Tenders (unsuccessful)	6	The Limitation Act 1980
Tenders (successful)	6	After end of the contract

Payment cash book or record of cheque payments	6	
Purchase ledger	6	
Invoice – revenue	6	
Invoice – capital item	10	
Successful quotation for capital expenditure	Permanent	
Petty cash records	6	
Payroll	6	
Pensions	10	NHS RM Code of Practice
Purchase orders excluding medical devices and medical equipment	6	
Purchase orders for medical devices and equipment	11	

3. Income/Monies Received

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Bank paying in counterfoils	6	
Bank statements	6	
Receipts cash books	10	
Sales ledger	10	
Remittance advices	6	
Bank reconciliations	6	
Deeds of covenant	12	
Correspondence re donations	3	
Gift aid signatures	Permanent	

4. Other Documents

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Employer's Liability Certificates	40	
Investment certificates	Permanent	
Investment ledger	Permanent	
Fixed assets register	Permanent	
Agreements With suppliers, leases, rental and HP, Licensing, Indemnities and guarantees, loan agreements, other contracts and agreements	Under seal – 12 years after expiry Other – 6 years after expiry	
Lottery returns and associated information	3	
Legacies	6 years after the estate has been wound up	
Annual Accounts	30	
Documents relating to money or valuables deposited for safe keeping	3	
Pandemic Records	Not to be destroyed until after any Public Enquiry	

5. Facilities

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Maintenance of premises	3	
Maintenance of equipment	3	
Medical gas, safety, storage and transport	6	
Permits	5	
Water safety	5	
Water Risk Assessment/Management Plan	2	
Electrical testing	3	
Fire safety including policy, risk assessments and signing in/out sheets	3	
Waste Transfer notes	2	
Temporary Records: Fridge Freezer	6 months	

6. Staff

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Job advertisements	1	
Application forms for unsuccessful candidates	12 months	Recommend retention period (CIPD, 2007)
Assessments under H&S Regulations	Permanent	Recommend retention period (CIPD, 2007)
Senior Executive Records	Permanent	For historical purposes. By Senior means all members of HMT. Recommend retention period (CIPD, 2007)
CVs for non-executive directors (successful)	15	Insurance requirement
CVs for non-executive directors (unsuccessful applicants)	2	2 years after the recruitment process
HR files and training records (including disciplinary records and WTR)	15 for non-clinical staff 30 for clinical staff	After subject leaves service or until his/her 75 th birthday – whichever is later. Only a summary needs to be kept to age 70 Insurance requirement
HR Files relating to attendance, annual leave, timesheets etc.	2	Records also stored within Payroll
Redundancy details, calculations of payments, refunds, notification to the secretary of state	6	From the date of redundancy. Recommend retention period (CIPD, 2007)
Leavers dossiers (provided summary retained)	15 for non-clinical staff, 30 for clinical staff	Insurance Requirement
Sickness Records	3	From the end of each tax year for Statutory Sick Pay purposes
Organisation charts	Permanent	
Email accounts and work documents	3 months after the person leaves	Person encouraged to tidy documents and pass on any relevant information before leaving and line manager given 3 months maximum access to the information after they leave to extract any relevant documents.

7. Volunteers

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Volunteer files	15	Insurance requirement

8. Administration

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Litigation Dossiers (complaints including accident reports)	10	Where legal action has been commenced, keep as advised by legal representatives
Meeting papers – committees, sub-committees (master copies)	Permanent	Including works Boards and consultations on H&S
Minutes of Board or major committees and sub-committees – signed	Permanent	
Minutes – reference copies	1	
Press cuttings	1	
Record of custody and transfer of keys	1.5	
Software licences	Lifetime	
Accident reports	3	After settlement
Operational policies and procedures – current and previous version	Permanent	
Adverse Events Records	3	
Risk Assessments – current and previous one (retain latest one until new one replaces it)	3	
Duty Rosters – clinical and catering	4	

9. Clinical Records

Record Type	Retention Period (Years)	Notes
Patient who was under the age of 17 at the date on which the treatment to which the records refer was concluded.	Until patient's 25 th birthday	
Patient who was aged 17 at the date on which the treatment to which the records refer was concluded.	Until patient's 26 th birthday	
Patient who died before attaining the age of 18.	8 years from the date of patient's death	
Patient who was treated for mental disorder during the period to which the records refer	20 years from the date of the last entry in the record	
Patient who was treated for mental disorder during the period to which the records refer and who died whilst receiving that treatment	8 years from the date of patient's death	
Patient who records relate to treatment by a general practitioner	10 years from the date of the last entry,	
Patient who has received an organ transplant	11 years from the date of the patient's death or discharge whichever is the earlier.	
All other cases	8 years from the date of the last entry on record.	

Documentation relating to the use of physical restraints, where held separately to the clinical record	7	Insurance Requirement
Completed Controlled Drugs Record Books	7 years from the date of the last entry	Insurance requirement
Drug Stock Order Books	2 years from the date of the last entry	
Death Certificate Stubs	7	Insurance Requirement

10. STORAGE OF RECORDS

- 10.1 Records should be stored in a secure location when not being used, e.g. lockable filing cabinets, cupboards, rooms (locked and/or alarmed outside of normal working hours).
- 10.2 The accommodation should comply with health and safety requirements and have proper environmental controls and adequate protection against fire, flood and theft.
- 10.3 [A](#) Data Map entry should be completed for all Document Retention Procedures.

11. DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

- 11.1 Disposal is wider than just destruction (see below), it can also refer to the transfer of records from one media to another, e.g. paper records to CD Rom, or the transfer of records from one organisation to another, e.g. authorised archive office.
- 11.2 When using another organisation to archive records, it is essential an agreement/contract is in place detailing how the records will be archived and who will be allowed access to them and that due diligence is carried out on this third party to ensure they have appropriate security and confidentiality practices in place.
- 11.3 When an archived record is accessed, a note must be made of:
- The date access occurred;
 - The details of the person gaining access; and
 - The reason access was required.
- 11.4 When a record is removed from the archive, a note must be made of:
- The taker of the record;
 - The taker's signature or a receipt from them;
 - The expected date of return; and
 - The date the record is returned.

12. DESTRUCTION OF RECORDS

- 12.1 The destruction of records is an irreversible act. Many records contain sensitive and/or confidential information and their destruction must be undertaken in secure locations and proof of secure destruction may be required. Destruction of all records, regardless of the media, should be conducted in a secure manner to ensure there are safeguards against accidental loss or disclosure.
- 12.2 The destruction of records is normally undertaken on site or by an approved contractor. There should be a formal contract between the contractor/supplier and St Oswald's Hospice Ltd and St Oswald's Hospice Promotions Ltd to detail the security and confidentiality requirements associated with transportation and destruction of confidential information. Proof of destruction should be provided in the form of a certificate. A register of destruction should be kept by St Oswald's Hospice Ltd and St Oswald's Hospice Promotions Ltd as an audit trail.

12.3 For the secure destruction of computer media this will be undertaken by the IT department.