How to manage your records

You're responsible for keeping accurate records and managing them appropriately. You also have certain responsibilities when you stop keeping ('dispose of') them.

Before you start keeping records, you should have:

- clear rules for keeping, managing and disposing of them
- a records management policy and a disposal statement
- a named person in your organisation who oversees records management

Keeping and managing records

You should have rules that cover your day-to-day records management. For example:

- which records to keep
- who should keep them
- how to keep them, covering the formats and media you use
- when to [dispose of records](#) - this is usually covered in a disposal statement

The rules for your organisation can be as detailed as you need them to be.

These rules can be a part of your records management policy or maintained separately.

Records management policy

You should have a regularly updated records management policy.

The policy should include:

- a commitment to managing records, including what's covered and why
- the policy's objectives (for example, to help you meet standards or legal requirements)
- how the records management policy relates to your organisation's other policies, such as data security or fraud policies
- the job roles in your organisation and what their management responsibilities are
- specific plans for records that are particularly important or sensitive

It should be easy for anyone in your organisation to find and use. This will help everyone understand why it's important to follow the management rules and keep records correctly.

The records management policy should have been agreed at a senior level. It will usually be part of your wider information management strategy.

You should [choose a named person](#) to check it's being followed and regularly review it.

Your other responsibilities

You should also:

- have guidance on common issues that the rules do not cover, such as naming conventions
- know how (and how often) you're going to check that your records are being managed according to your policy
- make sure that access to records is controlled and monitored

Disposing of records

Your organisation should have clear rules on how long to keep records. When it's time to stop managing them, you must dispose of them in an appropriate way.

Before you decide whether to keep or dispose of a record, you might want to consider:

- how often you'll need to check it in the future
- legal requirements, including GDPR requirements
- performance analysis, including for the **trust framework** reporting
- fraud analysis
- audits or other investigations

To dispose of records, you can transfer them (for example, to an archive) or destroy them. The right course of action will be different for each type of record.

Disposal statement

Your organisation should have a formal written disposal statement. It should include the types of record you handle and:

- how long you keep each type
- how you dispose of each type
- your processes for archiving and destroying records

What people in your organisation need to do

Anyone who handles records should follow the records management policy. This includes temporary staff and contractors.

Everyone who works for your organisation should know:

- which information needs to be added to the record-keeping system
- what your records management policy is
- what they must do to follow the GDPR, Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act

Appointing a records manager

You should choose a named person to oversee your records management. They will be ultimately responsible for making your records accurate, accessible and secure.

They will need to:

- check your records are being managed according to the records management policy and disposal statement
- make sure you meet your legal and regulatory requirements
- set up or maintain your record-keeping systems
- identify important or sensitive records that need specific management plans
- set up a way to document who has accessed, added or changed a record
- act as a single point of contact for records management issues