

Appraisal and Archiving of Records

RECORDS MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK

GUIDANCE TITLE:	Appraisal and Archiving of Records
GUIDANCE PURPOSE:	Guidance for staff who are archiving records
AUTHOR:	Information Governance Lead
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QUESTION: What is 'Appraisal'?

ANSWER: Assessment of the value of records

Appraisal is the term used for the assessment of the value of records. An appraisal is usually a two-part decision making process. The first is deciding how long a record needs to be kept and the second is deciding whether a record can be disposed of or needs to be archived.

Records have two main types of value:

- A primary, or business value, and,
- A secondary, or value to the society.

It is usually the record's primary value which determines how long a record should be kept, unless the record also has a secondary value.

Appraisals should not be carried out at the level of the individual record, but at the level of record series or record group. This ensures consistency and also cuts down on the time and resources needed for appraisals.

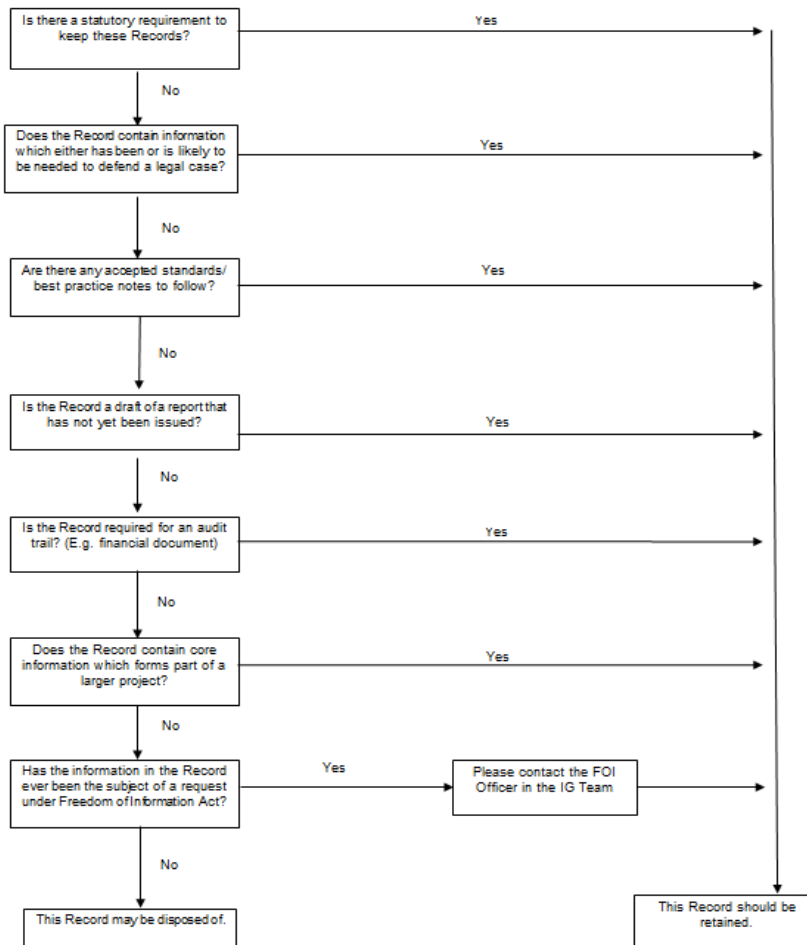
Electronic records should be appraised using the same criteria and methodologies as for paper records, but given that electronic records are more susceptible to duplication or partial duplication (e.g. different versions) than paper records, they may need to be appraised more frequently.

QUESTION: How do I do the 'appraisal'?

ANSWER: Ask a series of questions to assess the value of the records

There are a number of review steps the records will go through internally prior to being sent to our archive provider.

Typical 'thought tree'



'THOUGHT TREE'

- A typical thought tree that may be used during the appraisal process.
- However, each department may decide to consider further questions during the appraisal.

QUESTION: What is Historic Interest?
ANSWER: Records that may be of historical value

Records of historical interest should be transferred to the Deputy Foundation Secretary in Corporate Affairs who will arrange for archiving at Birmingham Archives and Heritage at Library of Birmingham, which has storage and public access facilities. Records which are typically held by Birmingham Archives include, but are not limited to creed registers, mortuary registers, admission and discharge records, high level committee minutes, complaints registers, press cuttings, visitor books, chapel records, estates maintenance and repair reports.

Government policy reduced the timescale for transfer of these records under the Public Records Act from 30 years to 20 years after the date at which they were first created (the '20-year rule'). The Retention Schedules further explain that all electronic records have to be kept forever. The Trust follows the [Department of Health Retention Schedule of the "NHS Code of Practice"](#).

Any records not transferred will either be returned/ retained by the Trust (retention to be considered), destroyed, or potentially given/ offered for sale to the public if they have no corporate value or confidentiality considerations, but may be of local interest. UHB has the final say on which records are archived; if we believe one should be archived and our provider does not we have the right to override them- although this will be a rare occurrence. This is because we, the Trust, are experts in the services we provide and may believe that the record is likely to be of historical interest as the topic is of local value.

QUESTION: How do I prepare records for transfer?
ANSWER: Remove anything that could cause deterioration to the records (paper)

The preparation of records prior to transfer is an extremely important part of the process. The purpose of the preparation is to prevent deterioration of the records and ensure their long term, future sustainability.

This guidance does not cover technical conservation advice, e.g. photos or large maps. If this is required it will be carried out by the archive provider.

...How to prepare records for transfer

- All ferrous materials- e.g. paper clips, staples, bulldog clips and other potentially damaging fasteners must be removed as they rust and may damage the record;
- Fasteners should be removed ensuring that minimal, if any, damage is caused to the record being prepared. Where possible staff should use suitable tools, e.g. staple un-pickers;
- Folded/ creased pages should be flattened where possible; without causing damage; should not protrude out of any jackets/ folders;
- Plastic and rubber materials- including rubber bands, document wallets etc...- should be removed as they degrade and can damage records;
- Unless sticky tape has lost its adhesiveness and is loose and easy to remove, never attempt to remove it as it will damage the record;
- If pages need to be removed, e.g. needed on-site for reference by law, the pages in the extract and the original record should be consecutively numbered so the extract can be easily added at a later date (a tracker should be added to the file to show what has been removed and why)
- If a file is so thick the jacket cannot close, it should be split, and numbered 1 and 2 or, A and B, for example. Each file should have the same information on the front and where possible list contents, e.g. the 'title'- 1900-1910;
- Files should be tidied so that papers do not protrude and can get damaged;
- Loose items need to be secured. This can be done by hole-punching and adding papers, or putting them in an envelope, referencing them and adding to the file.
- Put records in an archive box with a catalogue of what is included.

Contact Details/ Further Information

If you have any question regarding the creation/ receipt of files please contact:

Information Governance Lead (*Information Governance Team*)

- Email: InformationGovernance@uhb.nhs.uk