

Records Retention Schedule

Social Care & Health Directorate
Children and Families Services



Information Governance Unit
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County Council

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What is a Retention Schedule ?

- A retention schedule is a list of records which need to be retained by the County Council for a designated period of time. The Retention Schedule shows the title of each record, a time period for which records are to be retained, and identifies the reason (legislative, regulatory and / or operational) on which retention is based.
- The existence of this Retention Schedule is a requirement of Staffordshire County Council's Corporate Records Management Policy. It has been developed by the Information Governance Unit in collaboration with Business Unit / Section Managers, and in partnership with Legal Services.
- The Retention Schedule provides consistent instructions for all staff who deal with records, and a formal policy for records retention and disposal. It is not, however, immutable and divergences from the schedule may be appropriate in certain circumstances, so long as liaison is made with the Director of Law & Governance.
- Official guidelines on the retention of records used by the majority of SCC Units (including Health & Safety, Personnel, and Financial Records) can be found in the Staffordshire County Council *General Retention Schedules*, available on the Corporate Intranet Site. The Information Governance Unit is currently working with individual Business Units to produce Retention Schedules which list records specific to each unit.

"A records management service should include the drawing up of retention schedules for all classes of the authority's records and the systematic disposal of those no longer of administrative use..."

Guidance on Section 224, Local Govt Act 1972
Issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2000

"Each department will require its respective business units to:

- *Ensure the capture of records (both paper and electronic) that provide evidence of its functional activities.*
- *Establish retention schedules for all areas of work."*

SCC Corporate Records Management Policy

Retention Schedules and the Freedom of Information Act 2000

- The Freedom of Information Act 2000 is intended to promote a culture of openness and accountability amongst public authorities by providing people with rights of access to records held by Staffordshire County Council.
- From 1 January 2005, the County Council must comply with requests for the information that it holds unless an exemption from disclosure applies. The Authority will normally have a maximum of twenty working days to respond to the request, however there are circumstances when this time limit can be extended.
- The Lord Chancellor has also issued a Code of Practice under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act, setting out his views on desirable practice for the keeping, management and disposal of public authority records. The Code of Practice includes a requirement to develop and apply Records Retention Schedules.
- Any freedom of information legislation is only as good as the quality of the records to which it provides access. Such rights are of little use if reliable records are not created in the first place, if they cannot be found when needed or if the arrangements for their disposal are inadequate.

“An appraisal documentation system will ensure consistency in records appraisal and disposal. It should show what records are designated for destruction, the authority under which they are to be destroyed and when they are to be destroyed.

It should also provide background information on the records, such as legislative provisions, functional context and physical arrangement.

Lord Chancellor’s Code of Practice on the Management of Records, issued under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

“As from January 2005 , anyone will have a new legal right to request access to any information held by any public body.....My message to all public bodies is: Get your Act together. Prepare now. Don't panic later.”

Richard Thomas, Information Commissioner,
May 2003

Understanding the Retention Schedule

- The Information Governance Unit produces Records Retention Schedules for every Business Unit in Staffordshire County Council, and they all follow a similar format. The graphic below demonstrates how to interpret the schedule:

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Directorate Activity: Research				
Research & Analysis				
Strategic Corporate Issues	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Economic Research & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Demographic Research & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	Date Created	SCC Business Need
Traffic Data Collection & Analysis	Destroy	6 Years	After survey completion	Limitation Act 1980

Types of Record

Action(s) once record has exceeded its retention period

Amount of time for which record should

Event that triggers the start of the retention period

Legal / Regulatory / Business need guiding retention

Description of process

Using the Retention Schedule

This Retention Schedule has been developed to be used in the following ways:



When new records are created

The Retention Schedule should be used as a point of reference in the day-to-day management of records. The most effective point to decide how long a record should be retained, and for what reason, is when that record is created.

When opening a new file, creating an electronic record, or typing a letter, this Retention Schedule will act as a guide to the conditions under which that Record should be managed, stored and ultimately disposed of.



When configuring an electronic records management system

Any Electronic Document & Records Management System should manage not only paper records, but ensure that all legal and business requirements are met in terms of the retention, security and disposal of all electronic records (including e-mail, electronic forms, web site content and images).

The integration of electronic records management into existing business systems must include proper consideration of Retention Schedules to provide a set consistent legal and operational requirements.



When designing or implementing new paper filing systems.

Any new office system intended to improve the efficiency of paper filing should be designed with a clear understanding of the legal and business requirement for record keeping and when they should eventually be destroyed.



When transferring files to off-site storage

Office space is at a premium and it is rarely possible to retain files on-site for the length of time for which they have to be retained.

The Retention Schedule should always be consulted when transferring files to the Staffordshire County Council Records Centre at Friars Terrace.



When destroying files

In order to protect itself and minimise risk, all businesses should not maintain records longer than they need to; nor should they destroy records sooner than is required

The Retention Schedule provides consistent guidelines on the retention period of all Children & Families Service's records.

Responsibility for Implementation

When a record has reached the end of its specified retention period, a designated person needs to be responsible as the signatory for the destruction process where destruction is the specified action.

In implementing retention policy reference should be made to both generic schedules, for records used by several directorates (which cover corporate, financial, health & safety and personnel records*) and the specific schedules, pertaining to only one particular Department/Service.

The schedules should be regularly updated to account for any changes to business practice and must be reviewed annually as a matter of course.

The responsible authority for this schedule is:

Director (Law & Governance)

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Children and Families Services Retention Schedule

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Directorate Activity: Support, Care & Protection of Children & Families				
Referral				
Information Enquiry (Immediate no further action)	Destroy	1 Year	Date Created	Business Need
Referral	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980
Assessment				
Initial Assessment	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980
Core Assessment	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980
Risk Assessment	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Assessment by Third Party	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980
Case Management				
Case Summary Information	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980
Children in Need				
Service Plan Development	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Social Work Support	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Child Development Support	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Preventative & Support Assistance	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Support of Pregnant Children	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Day Care	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Disability Services	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Residential Care	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Family Support	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989
Support for Young Carers	Review	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Children Act 1989

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Child Protection				
Investigation of Allegations	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Children Act 1989
Planning Conference & Review	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Children Act 1989
Order Applications	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Children Act 1989
Child Protection Registration	Destroy	75 years	Date Closed	Children Act 1989
Temporary / Cross Border Child Protection Registration	Destroy	75 years	Date Closed	Children Act 1989
Children Displaying Sexually Abusive Behaviour	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Children Act 1989
Location of Missing Child / Family	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Children Act 1989
Visits by Children to Special Hospitals	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Local Authority Circular (99) 23 Local Authority Social Services Act

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				1970
Independent Case Conference Chair Administration	Destroy	75 years	Date created	LSU Guidance
Accommodation Provision	Destroy	75 years	Date created	LSU Guidance
Accommodation panel Administration	Destroy	75 years	Date created	LSU Guidance Children Act 1989
Looked After Children (LAC)				
Care Order Process	Destroy	75y	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991 Children Act 1989

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Registration of Looked After Children	Destroy	75y	Date Closed	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991 Children Act 1989
Planning & Documentation	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991
Death of Child in Care	Destroy	75 years	Date Closed	LSU Guidance Boarding Out of

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991
Permanency Planning	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991
Support of Looked After Children	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991
Review	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991
Contact with Looked After Children	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Children Act 1989 Foster Placement Regulations 1991 Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Education	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
Health	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Homes Regulations 2001 Arrangements for Placement of Children (General) Regulations 1991
Foster Panel Administration	Destroy	75 years	Date Created	LSU Guidance

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Business Need
Management of LA Fostering Services	Destroy	75 years	Date Created	LSU Guidance Limitation Act 1980 Fostering Service Regulations 2002
Foster Carers Records re Children	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	LSU Guidance Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children's Home Regulations 1991
Appointment of Independent Visitors for Looked After Children	Destroy	75 years	Termination of Contract	LSU Guidance Children Act 1989 The Definition of Independent Visitors (Children) Regulations 1991
Reports by Visitors	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	LSU Guidance Boarding Out of

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Children Regulations 1991
Private Fostering	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	The Children (Private Arrangements for Fostering) Regulations 1991
Placement of Children with Parents	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	The Placement of Children with Parents etc Regulations 1991
Recruitment of Foster Carers / Adoptive Parents				
Recruit Foster Carer / Adoptive Parent	Destroy	10 years	Termination of approval/last placement	Fostering Service Regulations 2002 Adoption Act 1976
Assessment of Potential Carers (carers not approved)	Destroy	3 years	Date Closed	Fostering Service Regulations 2002

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Adoption Act 1976
Assessment of Potential Carers (approved carers)	Destroy	10 years	Termination of approval/last placement	Fostering Service Regulations 2002 Adoption Act 1976
Training of Approved Applicants	Destroy	10 years	Termination of approval/last placement	Fostering Service Regulations 2002 Adoption Act 1976
Management of Foster Carers	Destroy	10 years	Termination of approval/last placement	Fostering Service Regulations 2002
Management of Foster Care Service Provision	Destroy	15 years	Date Closed	Fostering Service Regulations 2002
Adoption				
Agency Adoption	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	Adoption Agency Regulations 1983 Adoption & Children Act 2005 Disclosure of Adoption

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Information (Post Commencement Adoption) Regulations 2005
Non-agency Adoption	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	Adoption Agency Regulations 1983 Adoption & Children Act 2005 Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post Commencement Adoption) Regulations 2005
Adoption Applications by Staff	Review		Awaiting further advice	Adoption Agency Regulations 1983
Inter-county Adoption	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	Adoption Agency Regulations 1983 Adoption & Children Act 2005 Disclosure of

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Adoption Information (Post Commencement Adoption) Regulations 2005
Inter-country adoption	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	Adoption & Children Act 2005 Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post Commencement Adoption) Regulations 2005 Inter-Country Adoption (Hague Convention) Regulations 2003
Planned pre-birth Adoption	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	Adoption Agency Regulations 1983 Adoption Agency Regulations 1983 Adoption & Children

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Act 2005 Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post Commencement Adoption) Regulations 2005
Adoption following Concealed pregnancy	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	Adoption Agency Regulations 1983 Adoption & Children Act 2005 Disclosure of Adoption Information (Post Commencement Adoption) Regulations 2005
Section 51 Counselling of Adoptees	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	LSU Guidance Adoption & Children Act 2005 Disclosure of Adoption

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Information (Post Commencement Adoption) Regulations 2005 Adoption Agency Regulations 1997
Adoption Panel Administration	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	LSU Guidance Limitation Act 1980 Adoption Agency Regulations 1983
Post Placement Counselling & Support of Parent(s)	Review	100 years	Date of Adoption Order	LSU Guidance
Planning and Support of Children Leaving Care				
Leaving Care Plan Development	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
Leaving Care Support	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
				Children Regulations 1991 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
After Care Support	Destroy	75 years	Date of Birth	Boarding Out of Children Regulations 1991 Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
Support and Protection of Young Offenders				
Support & Protection of Young Offenders	Destroy	25 years	Date of Birth	Limitation Act 1980 Police & Criminal Evidence Act 1984

Records	Action	Retention Period	Trigger (event that prompts start of Retention Period)	Authority guiding record creation & retention
Residential Care				
Secure Accommodation		75 years	Date Closed	LSU Guidance Children (Secure Accommodation) Regulations 1991 Children Act 1989
Children's Residential Care Administration (Schedule 4)	Destroy	75 years	Date Closed	LSU Guidance Children's Home Regulations 1991