

Retention Schedule

Version 3.4 | October 2025

Purpose

The PHSO Retention Schedule identifies the main classifications of corporate records held by the PHSO and provides appropriate retention rules for each. It should be read in conjunction with the [PHSO Information Management Policy](#). This retention schedule sets out how long PHSO keeps or retains the business or organisational information, generally referred to as records, it has created and stored as part of carrying out its functions. This includes information that constitutes personal data as defined by data protection law. It is intended to provide a transparent guide to what we hold and why we hold it for the public, the people we work with and for and other interested parties.

Scope

This retention schedule applies to all records (information artefacts) created or acquired by PHSO including evidence obtained during the course of our investigations.

Core principles

1. This retention schedule expressly allows for the secure deletion of duplicates under the oversight of the Data Protection Officer (DPO) and their deputies.
2. The most common standard retention period for PHSO is either two or six years from the date of last active use e.g., modification or saving. Viewing a record does not constitute active use.
3. A minimum two-year retention period also applies to any record not expressly identified in this retention schedule where there is no legal, statutory or other business justified requirement to retain for longer.

The latest version of the Retention Schedule is always published in PHSO's publication scheme on www.ombudsman.org.uk

Version 3.4 | Retention Schedule | October 2025

4. Any request to 'hold' a record outside of the retention schedule, for example to extend how long we keep tender evaluation scoresheets for in event of a legal challenge to our procurement, or to add a new record type to the schedule must be made to the Data Protection Officer via HelpHub (internal PHSO staff) or dpo@ombudsman.org.uk (external).
5. Email messages held in Outlook or Teams chat messages are not categories of information; any emails that record a final decision or are evidence of a critical business process should be saved separately. Emails within Outlook are held for three months and then archived for two years. Teams instant messages sent via the Chat feature, or within Channels are held for three months and then deleted. Exceptions to this rule may be made for specific senior staff e.g. CEO.

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Contents

1. [Payroll and pensions](#)
2. [Accounting and financial records](#)
3. [Procurement, tendering and contract management](#)
4. [Buildings and facilities](#)
5. [Health and safety](#)
6. [Health and safety risk assessments](#)
7. [Sites and safety](#)
8. [Legal and Regulatory](#)
9. [Data, Security, Privacy and Technology](#)
10. [Casework](#)
11. [Clinical advice](#)
12. [People](#)
13. [Governance and Strategy](#)

[Version control](#)

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

1 Payroll and pensions

Record Type	Retention period	Owner	Requirement Source
Payroll Records relating to season ticket expenses or other salary sacrifice loans	6 years minimum from end of the year they relate	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Payroll Records relating to employee payroll history Including: record of pay, allowances, pay enhancements, other taxable allowances, payment for untaken leave, reduced pay, no pay, maternity/paternity leave	Until employee aged 100	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory - Cabinet Office recommendations
Pension related records Including: opt-in and opt-out notices, auto enrolment information, date of active membership, National Insurance number, pensionable pay at leaving, reckonable service for pension purposes, reason for leaving and new employer's name (where known), amount and destination of any transfer value paid, amount of any refund of CSPA contributions.	Until employee aged 100	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory- Cabinet Office recommendations
Added years/ Additional Voluntary Contributions	Until employee aged 100	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory- Cabinet Office recommendations

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

2 Accounting and financial records

Record Type	Retention period	Owner	Requirement Source
Accounting records	6 years from financial year end	Assistant Director Finance	Tax purposes
Signed copies for Parliament	6 years from financial year end	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Budgets and periodic internal financial reports	6 years from year end	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Bank statements	2 years	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Credit card statements	2 years	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Asset registers	6 years after asset or	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Depreciation registers	6 years after asset or	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Financial statements	6 years	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory

3 Procurement, tendering and contract management

Record Type	Retention period	Owner	Requirement Source
Contract management (including minutes of meetings, supply chain security questionnaires, performance reports)	6 years from end of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Limitation Act 1980
Tendering process documents (including Procurement Initiation Document, business cases. Tender specification evaluation criteria, matrix, information notices)	6 years from end of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Limitation Act 1980

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Pre-qualification stage documents (including supplier questionnaires, decision notification, correspondence, PQQ evaluations)	1 year after award of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995, NAO advice
Tender stage documents for successful bidder(including ITT, supplier response, evaluation summary, acceptance letter)	6 years after end of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Limitation Act 1980, Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995
Tender stage documents for unsuccessful bids	1 year after end of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Limitation Act 1980, Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993, Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995
Award stage documents (including contract award report, award notice)	6 years after end of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Limitation Act 1980

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

4 Buildings and Facilities

Record Type	Retention Period	Owner	Requirement Source
Drawings - plans and buildings	Lifetime of the building	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Leases - the grant of leases, licences and other rights over property	Period of the lease plus 12 years	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Maintenance contracts with suppliers	7 years from end of contract	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Plans - building (as built)	Lifetime of building	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Agreements with contractors and consultants	Review 16 years after date of final paper	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Drainage services	Review 15 years after issue	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Building condition surveys	Review 25 years after issue	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Fire precautions and services	Review 10 years after issue	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Maintenance schedules	Review 16 years after superseded	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Maintenance diaries or logs	Destroy 16 years after final entry	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Installation surveys (plant and services)	Review 16 years after date of survey	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Maintenance contracts and related correspondence	Review 12 years after end of contract	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Meetings with contractors a) agenda, minutes (record set) b) agenda, minutes (other copies) c) drafts, domestic arrangements	a) Review five years after date of meeting b) Destroy six years after date of meeting c) Destroy three years after date of meeting	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Leases (signed copies)	Destroy 16 years after expiry	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Subletting agreements	Destroy 12 years after termination	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Landlords' consents	Destroy 16 years after surrender, expiry or termination of lease or memoranda of terms	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Fire certificates	Destroy 12 years after expiry or superseded	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Planning consents and correspondence a) alterations to buildings b) new buildings	a) Review 25 years after issue b) Review 25 years after issue	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

5 Health and Safety

Record Type	Retention Period	Owner	Requirement Source
Accident Reports - adults	3 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	RIDDOR 1995, Social Security (claims and payments) regulations 1979
RIDDOR reportable incident	3 years	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Investigation of Accidents	40 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Limitation Act 1980
Witness Statements	12 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Limitations Act 1980
Accident Book	3 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	RIDDOR 1995
Record of health and safety training for employees	6 years after employment ends	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Development and establishment of H&S policy	50 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Audit and review of H&S provision	10 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Formation of a safety committee under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.	50 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Data and analysis of performance against H&S policy	1 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Proceedings and decisions of a safety committee formed under the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.	50 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977
Election of representatives of employee safety under the Health & Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996	1 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

6 Health and safety risk assessments

Record Type	Retention Period	Owner	Requirement Source
Manual Handling Assessments	6 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Non Statutory
DSE Assessments: Screen test records	6 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
DSE Assessments: Risk assessment	6 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
DSE Assessments: Corrective Appliance Voucher records	6 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992
Risk Assessments and recommended actions	At least until a further assessment has taken place	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

7 Sites and safety

Record Type	Retention Period	Owner	Requirement Source
Fire certificate	3 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Fire Precautions Act 1971
RIDDOR notification to HSE	12 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Specifications for first aid facilities and equipment	5 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981
Assessment of requirements for first aid facilities and equipment	5 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Health and Safety (First Aid) regulations 1981
Assessment of requirements for fire-fighting systems and equipment	5 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Fire Precautions (Workplace) regulations 1997
Site & Safety Inspections	5 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
Arrangements with external emergency service organisations	5 Years	Assistant Director of Finance	Fire Precautions (Workplace) regulations 1997, Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

8 Legal and Regulatory

Record Type	Minimum Retention	Owner	Requirement Source
Contracts executed as a deed	12 years after performance	Assistant Director of Finance	Tax / Limitation
Signed contracts (including contract extensions, schedules of work, technical specifications)	6 years from end of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Limitation
Confidentiality agreements	10 years from end of contract	Assistant Director Finance	Non-statutory
Contracts relating to building, building maintenance, repairs etc.	15 years after performance	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Insurance policies, proposal forms, renewal notices and certificates	6 years or until all claims are settled	Assistant Director of Finance	Non-statutory
Legal advice	6 years	Deputy Director of Legal	Non-statutory
Legal and jurisdictional advice	6 years	Deputy Director of Legal	Non-statutory
Casework litigation	6 years from close of	Deputy Director of Legal	Non-statutory
General legal administration	6 years from close of case	Deputy Director of Legal	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

9 Digital Services

Record Type	Minimum Retention	Owner	Requirement Source
Information rights requests including Data Protection, FOIA, internal review cases and Material Evidence requests	2 years from case closure	Data Protection Officer	Good practice
Data breaches and incidents	6 years from date of incident	DPO	Data Protection Legislation
Policies	6 years from superseded	DPO/Assistant Director of Digital	Non-statutory
Correspondence with the ICO	6 years from last active usage	Data Protection Officer	Good Practice
Data Protection Impact Assessments	Should be kept from life of the activity to which it relates + 6 years; if relating to a one-off activity then 6 years from completion activity	Data Protection Officer	Data Protection Legislation
Record of processing activity	Until register is superseded	Data Protection Officer	Data Protection Legislation
Data retained outside of source systems and applications for reporting purposes. (Data : Exports / Extracts / Dumps / Snapshots / Views etc.)	6 years from creation	Assistant Director of Digital	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Technical documentation and architecture	6 years from date of accreditation	Assistant Director of Digital	Non-statutory
Accreditation certificates and evidence	6 years from date of accreditation	Assistant Director of Digital	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

10 Casework

Record Type	Minimum Retention	Owner	Requirement Source
Complaint files	Maximum of 6 years*	Deputy Director of Operations	Non-statutory
Investigation reports	Permanently	Deputy Director of Operations	Non-statutory
Material evidence (secondary data)	Maximum of 6 years*	Deputy Director of Operations	Non-statutory
Case Stubs	Maximum of 6 years*	Deputy Director of Operations	Non-statutory
Intake telephone recordings and transcripts linked to a PHSO complaint case	Maximum of 6 years*	Deputy Director of Operations	Non-statutory
Intake telephone recordings not linked to a PHSO complaint case	30 days from the date of call	Deputy Director of Operations	Non-statutory
Intake telephone call transcripts not linked to a PHSO complaint case	2 years from the date of the date of the call	Deputy Director of Operations	Non-statutory
Published decisions (de-identified)	Removed from website after 10 years	Assistant Director of Communications	Non-statutory

* Currently under review unless subject to legal or other statutory requirements

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

11 Clinical Advice

Record Type	Minimum Retention	Owner	Requirement Source
Clinical advisor recruitment agreements	Deleted three months after agreement discontinued	Senior Clinical Lead	Non-statutory
Clinical Advice	Deleted along with associated case	Senior Clinical Lead	Non-statutory

11 People

Record Type	Minimum Retention	Owner	Requirement
Senior executives' records (that is, those on a senior management team or their equivalents)	Permanently for historical purposes	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (Non-Statutory requirement)
Personnel file information including annual leave, welfare records, statutory sick pay forms	6 years after employment has terminated	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (Non Statutory requirement - recommended)
Records relating to maternity/paternity leave, unpaid leave	Until employee aged 100	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Cabinet Office recommendations

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Training records (including caseworker accreditation certificates)	6 years after employment has terminated	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (Non Statutory requirement - recommended)
Caseworker accreditation individual portfolio records	2 years after accreditation (2 years after conclusion of appeals/investigation where	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Non Statutory
Written particulars of employment, contracts of employment, and changes to terms and conditions	Until employee aged 100	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Non Statutory
Record of resignation, dismissal and/or retirement letters	Until employee aged 100	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Non Statutory
Job advertisements	1 year	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Non Statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Recruitment records (unsuccessful)	1 year	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Successful job applicants documents will be transferred to the personnel file in any event.
Job Descriptions	3 years after post has been filled	Assistant Director of People & Talent	No protection needed as published
Redundancy details, calculations of payments, refunds, notification to the Secretary of State	Until employee aged 100	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators
Statutory Maternity Pay records, calculations, certificates (Mat B1s) or other medical evidence	3 years after the end of the tax year in which the maternity period ends	Assistant Director of People & Talent	The Statutory Maternity Pay (General) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986/1960) as amended
Statutory Sick Pay records, calculations, certificates, self-certificates	3 years after the end of the tax year to which they relate	Assistant Director of People & Talent	The Statutory Sick Pay (General) Regulations 1982 (SI 1982/894) as amended
Equal opportunities information	10 years	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Non Statutory
Trade Union agreements	10 years	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (Non Statutory requirement - recommended)
Notes of formal meetings with trade unions	10 years	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Non Statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Line Manager Team records 1:1 records, absence, sickness, performance reviews	2 years	Assistant Director of People & Talent	Non Statutory
---	---------	---------------------------------------	---------------

12 Governance and Strategy

Record Type	Minimum Retention	Owner	Source
Register of Corporate risks	10 years	Assistant Director of Transformation	Non-statutory
Committees & Board meetings Agendas and minutes of board meetings, committees, sub-committees, departmental (master copies, including associated papers)	7 years	Chief of Staff	Non-statutory
Policies and Procedures	6 years after superseded	Pertinent Assistant Director	Non-statutory
Receipts for registered and recorded mail	3 years unless complaint pending	Assistant Director of Digital	Non-statutory
Visitor Logs	1 year after the calendar year to which they refer	Assistant Director of Digital	Non-statutory
Freedom to speak up records (both informal concerns and formal cases)	1 year after case closure	Freedom to Speak Up Guardian	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Internal & External communications Internal communications and announcements for PHSO staff	6 years	Assistant Director of Insight and Public Affairs	Non-statutory
Public affairs, stakeholder relations, insight and analysis	6 years	Assistant Director of Insight and Public Affairs	Non-statutory
Media relations, press announcements, work with the media	6 years	Assistant Director of Communications	Non-statutory
Surveys and Performance Reports Operational performance reports	2 years from end of financial year	Assistant Director of Quality and Improvement	Non-statutory
Insight surveys - internal, employees, complainants	2 years from end of financial year	Assistant Director of Quality and Improvement	Non-statutory
Performance information - caseworker quality performance reports (individual)	2 years	Assistant Director of Quality and Improvement	Non-statutory
Review and feedback reports (individual)	2 years	Assistant Director of Quality and Improvement	Non-statutory
Performance and review reporting (corporate)	6 years	Assistant Director of Quality and Improvement	Non-statutory

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

Projects & planning Project Documentation - risk logs, business cases, financial tracking, project plans.	3 years from closedown	Pertinent Assistant Director	Non-statutory
Programme Documentation - risk logs, business cases, financial tracking, project plans.	3 years from closedown	Pertinent Assistant Director	Non-statutory
Strategy Documents	5 years after superseded	Pertinent Assistant Director	Non-statutory

General principles for records not specifically mentioned are deleted after 2 years from last updated or modified

Appendix A | PHSO Retention Schedule

13 Version control

Date	Version	Content/changes made	Owner of changes
10/09/2018	1.0	Initial draft version	SR
17/12/2018	2.0	Approved by SIRO	SR
16/06/2021	2.1	Reformat and refresh of schedule	JS
31/08/2021	2.2	Updated following comments	JS
31/3/2023	3.0	Changes pre wider review	AJ/AD
28/07/2023	3.1	Published version	AD
28/06/2024	3.2	Amendments and updates	AD
30/03/2025	3.3	Updates for call recording and procurement, tendering and contract management	AD
29/10/2025	3.4	Updates to casework retention	AD