

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on the retention and disposal of documents (including “personal data” under the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 "GDPR", and the Data Protection Act 2018 (subject to royal assent, the “DPA”)) (together the "Data Protection Laws"). “Documents” in this context means all documents held or controlled by us in any format or media that are located in the UK.

As a matter of law, our documents (including books, records and financial reports) must accurately reflect the underlying transactions and represent the true state of the business. They are an essential part of doing business correctly, honestly and openly and protect us, our customers and those we work with. We must ensure that the record keeping of our documents is accurate, that we store them safely and for the time periods prescribed by the law and that we do not destroy or alter any information or data that must be kept for litigation, an investigation or other legal reasons. Equally, we must not retain documentation where the limitation period has expired and there is no legal justification for retention.

The retention schedule sets out the recommended retention periods for Accounting and Tax records. The retention schedule is intended to enable users of this document to simply refer to the relevant type of document that they are interested in and then determine the relevant retention period from that schedule. If a document is not covered by any retention schedule, reference can be made to the items listed in the General Guidance section within the Records Management Policy in determining an appropriate retention period.

SBU/functions should refer to these retention schedules and the general guidance below in reviewing their current existing document retention and disposal practices.

The DPO within the SBU/function has the responsibility for establishing and implementing effective practices and procedures across it to give effect to this document.

## Accounting and Tax Records

Record description	Retention period	Form in which to be kept	Reason and comments
Accounting records to comply with Companies Act 2006 requirements – being accounting records which: (i) are sufficient to show and explain the company’s transactions; (ii) disclose with reasonable accuracy, at any time, the financial position of the company at that time; and (iii) enable the directors to ensure that any accounts prepared under this Act comply with the requirements of that Act.	7 years from year end	In any form (including electronic)	Need to retain accounting records for a minimum of 7 years for tax purposes.

Record description	Retention period	Form in which to be kept	Reason and comments
Annual report and accounts	First copy – permanently. Second copy – six years.  Further copies - until next accounts are published.	First and Second copies will preferably be original, signed copies. Further copies in any form	Evidence/best practice.  First copy – this should be kept with other statutory books and records.  Second copy – this should be kept with the tax records for a minimum of 6 years.  Further copies should be kept to comply with requests from members to view reports/accounts.
Interim report and accounts	Permanently	Preferably original signed copy	Evidence/best practice.
Budgets, forecasts and periodic internal financial reports	6 years	Any	Best practice/internal control.
VAT records	6 years from tax year end	Any form for the purposes of Customs and Excise (who can view them when required) but original vouchers may be required for audit purposes	Statutory compliance <sup>1</sup> /best practice.
Corporation tax self-assessment records	7 years from year end	Records and vouchers kept for tax purposes may generally be kept in any form (subject to limited exceptions for certain specific types of documents). Original vouchers may be required for audit purposes	Statutory compliance <sup>2</sup> /best practice.
Payroll and wage records (including details on overtime, bonuses, expenses and benefits in kind)	7 years from the year end	Any	Tax.
Income tax records and NI returns	7 years from the year end	Any	Tax.
Record description	Retention period	Form in which to be kept	Reason and comments
PAYE records (post-April 2004) that are not required to be sent to HMRC	Not less than 3 years after the end of the tax year to which they relate	In any form	Statutory compliance <sup>3</sup> .
Insurance premium tax	6 years	Any	Statutory compliance <sup>4</sup> .

<sup>1</sup> Relevant provision is Value Added Tax Act 1994 Sch. 11, para. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Relevant provision is Finance Act 1998, Sch. 18, paras. 21-23.

<sup>3</sup> Relevant provision is Income Tax (PAYE) Regulations 2003, Reg. 97.

<sup>4</sup> Relevant provision is Finance Act 1994, Sch. 7, para. 1.

records			
Stamp duty land tax records	6 years following anniversary of transaction or if ongoing, the completion of any enquiry by HMRC	Any	Limitation/Statutory compliance <sup>5</sup> .
Climate change levy records	6 years	Any	Statutory compliance <sup>6</sup> .
Landfill tax records	6 years	Any	Statutory compliance <sup>7</sup> .
<b>Charitable donations</b>			
Documents regarding any sponsorship-type arrangements or partnerships with third party charities	6 years after last payment due but up to 12 years if any payments are still outstanding or there is any dispute regarding the deed.	Originals	Tax/limitation period.
Documents evidencing donations made to charitable organisations	Public companies: 6 years Private companies: 3 years	Preferable original	Tax <sup>8</sup> /evidence/best practice.
<b>Banking records</b>			
Cheques and other negotiable instruments	6 years	Preferable original	Limitation.
Paying-in counterfoil	6 years	Original	Limitation.
Bank statements and reconciliations	Public companies: 6 years Private companies: 3 years	Original if provided in hard-copy or otherwise if statements obtained via internet banking, on-line printouts	Limitation <sup>9</sup> .
Instructions to bank	6 years after ceasing to be effective	In any form	Evidence/ limitation.

### Circumstances in which tax records must be kept for longer than usual

- If there is any enquiry into the tax return that has not been completed by the date for which records normally have to be retained, the records for that period must be retained until that enquiry is completed.
- Where no enquiry has been started, but the statutory period for starting the enquiry has not been reached by the date for which records normally have to be retained (usually because the tax return has been sent back late). If this occurs, the records must be retained until the latest date for starting an enquiry has passed or the date such an enquiry is completed, if this is later.
- The date on which HMRC requests a tax return is after the date to which records normally have to be kept. If this occurs, the records in existence at the date of the request to complete the tax return

<sup>5</sup> Relevant provision is Finance Act 2003, Sch. 10, para. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Relevant provision is Finance Act 2000, Sch. 6, para. 125.

<sup>7</sup> Relevant provision is Finance Act 1996, Sch. 5, para. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Relevant provision is s.388(4) Companies Act 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Relevant provision is s.388(4) Companies Act 2006.

must be retained until the latest date for starting an enquiry has passed or the date such an enquiry is completed, if this is later.