

A brief guide to transferring Records of Local Interest to Places of Deposit

OGL

Issued January 2015

© Crown copyright 2015

You may re-use this information (excluding logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence or email psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available for download at nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Introduction

This brief guide provides key information for anyone transferring paper public records (also known as records of local interest or ROLI) to places of deposit other than The National Archives.

If your organisation creates public records then you will need to transfer them to an approved place of deposit (often your local record office) following the standards set out by The National Archives. You may well already be transferring records to an approved place of deposit: in that case you will need to ensure you are adhering to the standards of preparation and transfer set out in this document.

If your records don't comply with the standards set out in this guidance then records may be refused or returned by your place of deposit.

How do I know if my organisation needs to transfer records to an approved place of deposit?

Records from the following organisations, specified in [secondary legislation under The Public Records Act](#), are required to transfer records to approved places of deposit:

- prisons, remand centres, secure training centres or young offenders institutions
- coroner's courts
- the Environment Agency, except board minutes or records which relate to the formulation or development of policy governing the work of the Environment Agency, which transfer directly to The National Archives
- Family Practitioner Committees for localities in England and Wales
- the Forestry Commission, except board minutes or records which relate to the formulation or development of policy governing the work of the Forestry Commission, which transfer directly to The National Archives
- health service hospitals within the meaning of the National Health Service Act 1977 in England
- health service hospitals within the meaning of the National Health Service Act 2006 in Wales
- Homes & Communities Agency for records that were formerly records of the Commission for New Towns or the Urban Regeneration Agency, except board minutes or records which relate to the formulation or development of policy governing the work of the Commission for New Towns or the Urban Regeneration Agency, which transfer directly to The National Archives
- Magistrates' courts
- Maritime and Coastguard Agency, where they are of local interest;
- National Health Authorities including Clinical Commissioning Groups, National Health Service trusts and NHS Foundations in England
- National Health Authorities for district or localities in Wales, or for areas in or consisting of Wales, including National Health Service trusts all of whose hospitals, establishments and facilities are situated in Wales
- Natural England, except board minutes or records which relate to the formulation or development of policy governing the work of Natural England, which transfer directly to The National Archives
- Rent Tribunals or Local Valuation Courts

The Public Records Act states that public bodies have the following responsibilities:

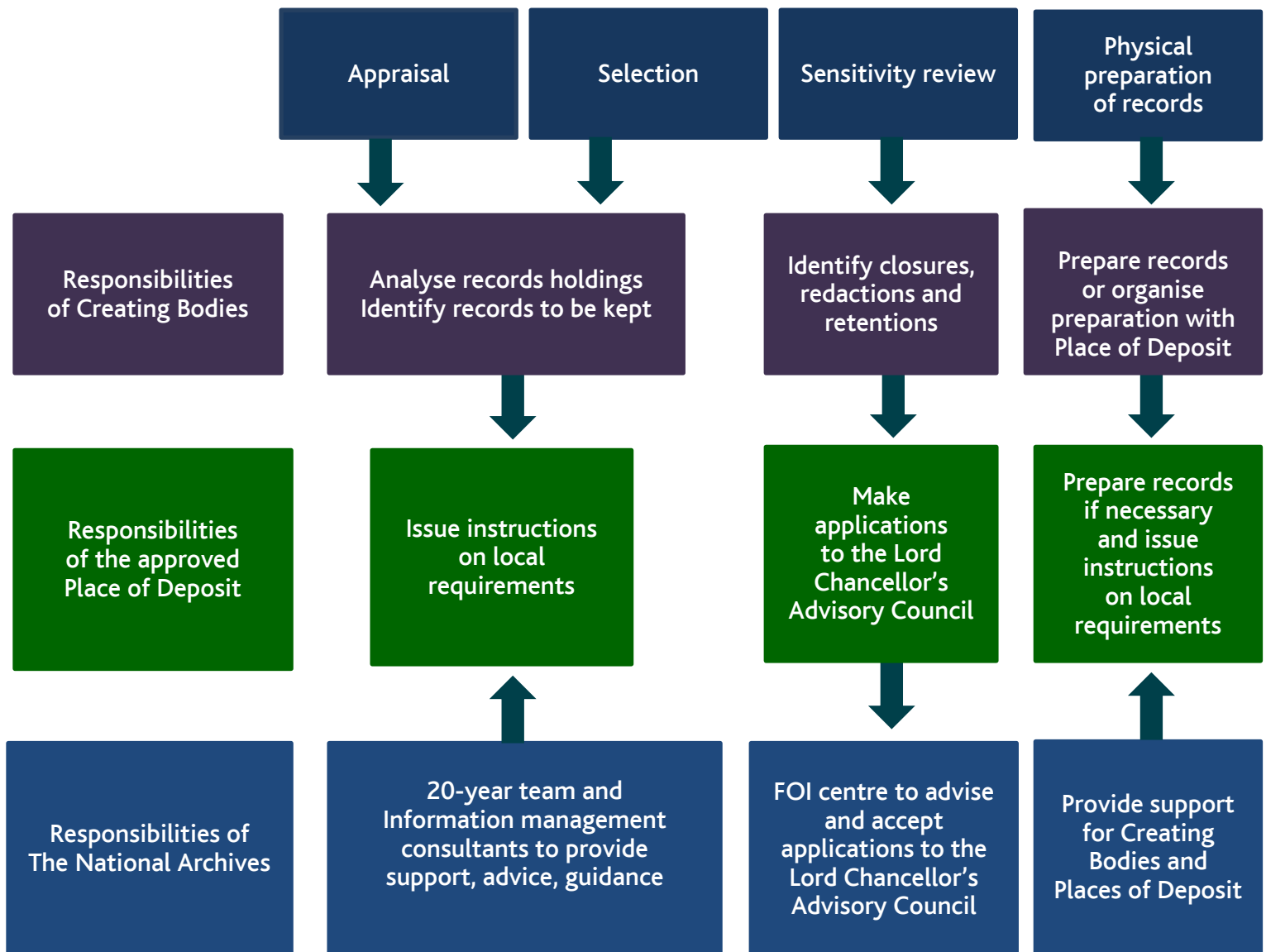
- to select records for permanent preservation under the guidance and supervision of the Keeper of Public Records
- the safe-keeping of those records
- to transfer those selected records to The National Archives or an approved place of deposit by the due date
- to securely dispose of records that are not selected for permanent preservation unless they have approval from the Lord Chancellor to retain them temporarily for current business or other reasons, or in certain situations to transfer them to another institution.

Records that have been selected for permanent preservation should be transferred to The National Archives or an approved place of deposit when the record is no older than 20 years unless permission has been granted from the Lord Chancellor for the record to be retained. Records may be transferred earlier by prior arrangement with your place of deposit.

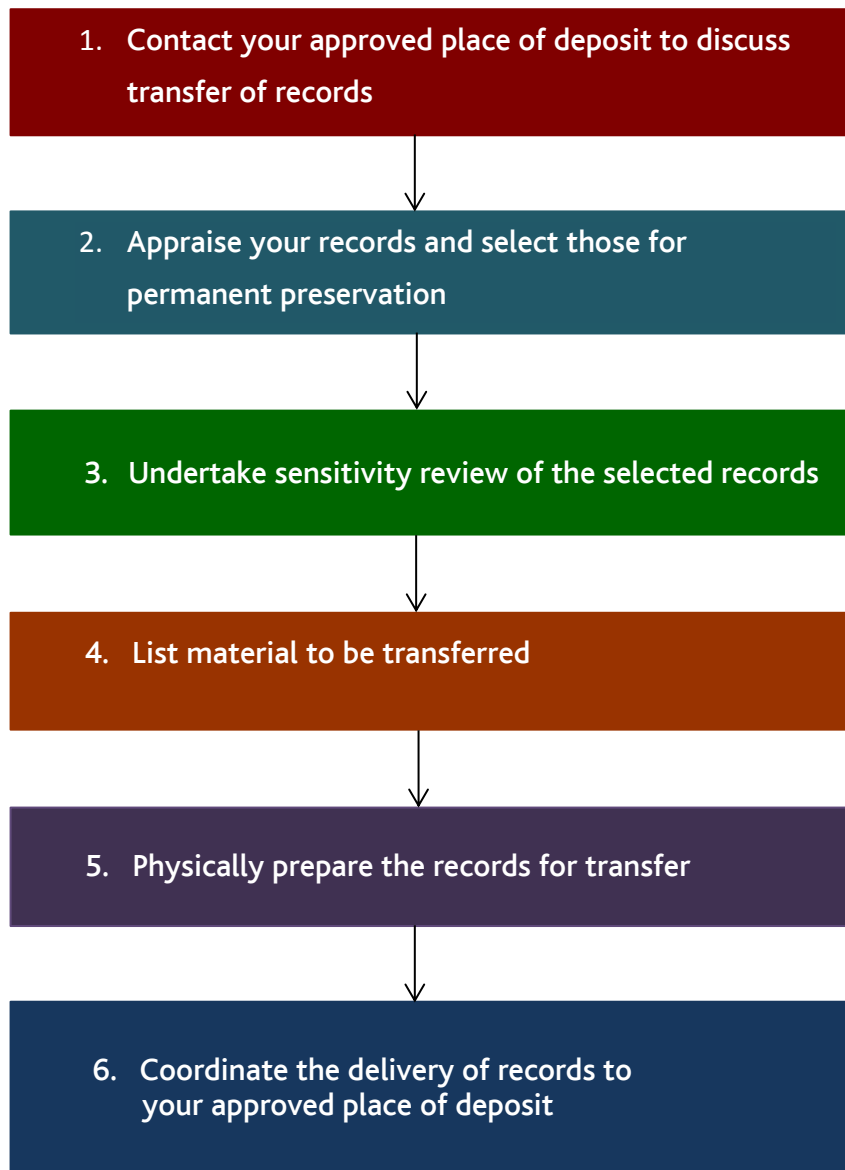
How do I know where my organisation's approved place of deposit is?

The National Archives has developed an [application](#) which is designed to help map where NHS organisations, magistrates' courts, coroners' courts and prisons should be depositing their records. In most cases the relevant place of deposit will be your local county or district record office. Approved places of deposit are those that have been approved by The National Archives as a suitable place for the safekeeping of public records. If you are unsure where your place of deposit is then please contact the [Archives Sector Development](#) department at The National Archives.

Overview of the selection and transfer process



Simple steps to a successful transfer of records to an approved place of deposit





Step one: contacting your place of deposit

Many organisations have longstanding arrangements with their approved place of deposit but if you have not transferred records before then we recommend that you contact your approved place of deposit as soon as possible to discuss the processing and transfer of records.

We also recommend that you keep in regular contact with your approved place of deposit in order to maintain a regular schedule of transferring records.

Your approved place of deposit should provide public access to the records transferred, unless it has been agreed that temporary access restrictions apply. If you have any significant issues concerning access that cannot be resolved, you should contact the [Archives Sector Development](#) department at The National Archives.

Arrangements for the delivery of records must be made with your place of deposit before records are transferred. Please ensure that you have agreed:

- whether records will be listed in advance of delivery or whether the place of deposit will list records at a charge to the creating body;
- whether records will be prepared in advance of delivery to the standards of the place of deposit or whether the place of deposit will prepare records at a charge to the creating body.

Once both parties have agreed on the terms on which records are being received by the place of deposit, then a delivery date can be agreed.



Step two: appraising and selecting your records

We recommend that creating bodies undertake appraisal and selection, in conjunction with their approved place of deposit.

It is possible, by prior arrangement, for creating bodies to transfer records that have not been appraised to their place of deposit, and for their place of deposit to appraise the records. However this service will be subject to a charge.

Please see the following guidance that relates to your organisation:

[Magistrates Courts](#) (please note this guidance is under revision)

[OSP 6: Records created by and relating to coroners 1970-2000](#)

[Prison Service](#) (please note this guidance is under revision)

[Records Management: NHS Code of Practice](#) (please note this guidance is under revision)

[NHS Wales Welsh Health Circular 2000 \(71\)](#)

Other organisations such as arm's length bodies should consult their home department and should confer with their Departmental Records Officer (DRO) or relevant Information Management Consultant at The National Archives.



Step three: sensitivity review

Records must undergo a sensitivity review before they can be transferred to a place of deposit. When sensitivity reviewing you should consult the guidance issued by your home department as well as the [guidance on The National Archives' website](#).

Reviewing records for sensitivity ensures that records are made available to the public as soon as possible, subject to any exemptions permitted by the Freedom of Information Act.

Some records may be transferred as temporarily closed to public access if an exemption under the Freedom of Information Act applies, subject to consultation with your place of deposit. Records may be retained by the creating body for reasons including ongoing significant business use, but only if the permission of the Lord Chancellor has been granted. [Further guidance can be found on the National Archives' website](#).

Creating bodies will need to identify and provide information to their approved place of deposit on any Freedom of Information or Environmental Information Regulation exemptions that should be applied and which would restrict access.

This means creating bodies must be able to:

- specify which exemption number applies, to which record, and on what grounds the exemption should be applied
- state a date to review this decision.

Applications for retention are made through your place of deposit and The National Archives and will be reviewed and decided by the Lord Chancellor's Advisory Council.

It may be possible for approved places of deposit to undertake some aspects of sensitivity reviews for creating bodies. This would need to be arranged in advance with your place of deposit and this service will be subject to a charge.

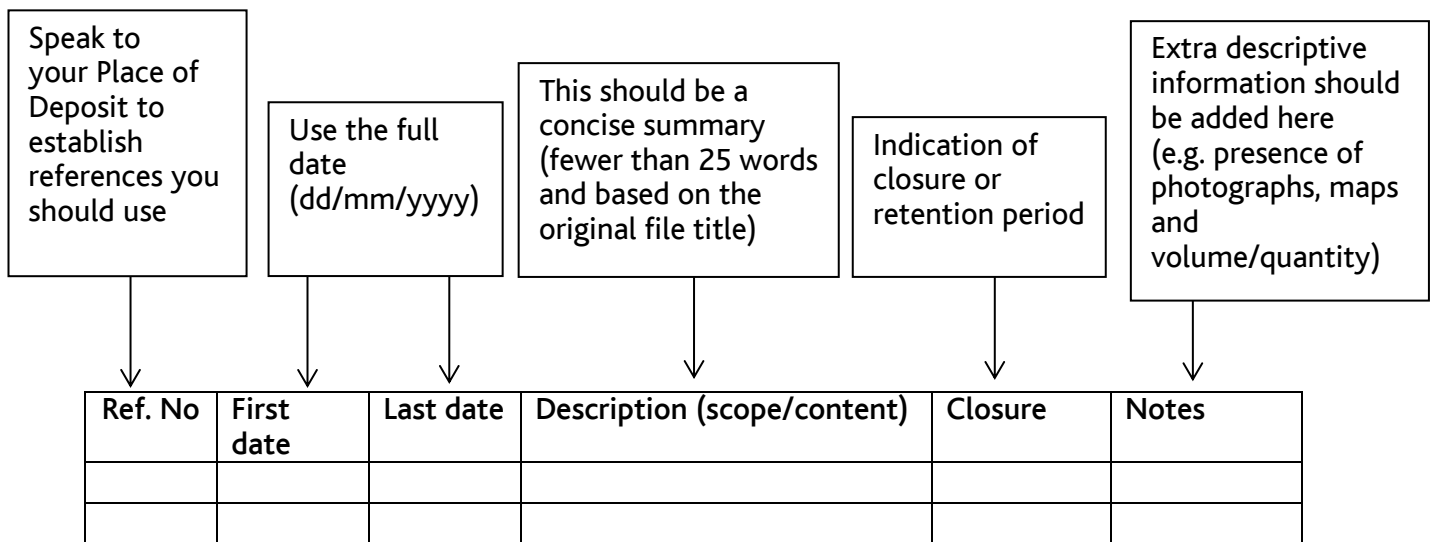


Step four: listing your records

Records must be listed in advance of transfer and will not be accepted by your place of deposit without accompanying lists or inventories. Creating bodies should consult their place of deposit for their specific standards and requirements for lists.

It may be possible to arrange for staff from your place of deposit to list records on your behalf, but this must be agreed in advance with your place of deposit and will be subject to a charge.

Lists should be compiled in accordance with any guidance from your place of deposit but should normally include the following:



When listing your records ensure that:

- acronyms and abbreviations should be written out in full unless they are official organisations, names, awards, titles or qualifications e.g. MoJ
- if place names are obscure or ambiguous also add the UK county
- capitalisation is used sparingly according to normal English language usage
- ensure all official names and titles are correctly cited.

Checklist for listing your records:

- ✓ reference number approved by place of deposit
- ✓ first date
- ✓ last date
- ✓ description (scope/content)
- ✓ closure retention period cited (where applicable)
- ✓ spelling and grammar has been checked.

Step five: physically preparing your records

All records must be prepared properly in order to be permanently preserved. Preparing records may be undertaken by the creating body in agreement with your place of deposit or after transfer at a cost to the creating body.

Please consult your place of deposit for any specific preparation guidelines and requirements. The following should otherwise apply.

General principles of preparation:

- the securing of loose materials so nothing is lost
- the protection of the record (e.g. by new covers/boxes)
- the removal of certain potential harmful materials from the record (e.g. metal and plastic)
- the isolation of certain vulnerable materials (e.g. photographs).

Checklist for preparation

- ✓ remove metal items including paperclips, bulldog clips, staples which prevent a user from opening the pages and viewing information (normal staples may be retained)
- ✓ remove any rubber and plastic items, such as elastic bands, plastic wallets, plastic bindings and covers
- ✓ do not use any form of self-adhesive tape or self-adhesive tag hole reinforcers
- ✓ do not try to repair records yourself, speak to your place of deposit concerning badly damaged records
- ✓ ensure tags are loose enough for the file to be fully opened at any point.

Badly damaged and fragile file covers - place files with badly damaged and fragile file covers in new 4-flap folders. It is only necessary to tag the file through the back of the 4-flap folder and only write the reference on the cover of the folder. Retain the original file cover.

Splitting thick files - evenly split files that are thicker than 5cm (1.5-2inches) at a sensible point between documents. Insert each part of the file into a new 4-flap folder, keeping the original file cover with the first part of the file. Ensure both parts of the file are referenced.

Booklets - write the file reference on the back of any loose untagged booklets in HB pencil. Insert the booklet into an acid-free envelope and mark this with a brief note of its contents, e.g. 'One booklet enclosed'. Booklets that are already tagged into a file may remain as they are, providing they are secure and can be read without removing the tag.

Post-it notes - discard any post-it notes which are blank, have been added during the review/transfer process or contain only unimportant administrative or 'housekeeping' information (e.g. copy this/put this on file). Place any post-it notes containing important information in polyester enclosures and tag them into the file next to the relevant page.

Loose and fragile pages - loose pages can often be tagged in place in their file without being put into polyester enclosures. The new tag holes should secure the pages but not damage the text. Badly torn pages should be referenced on the back in HB pencil and then inserted into polyester enclosures.

Photographs - insert photographs into polyester enclosures and write the reference on the back in HB pencil. Use a separate polyester enclosure for each photograph.

Newspaper cuttings - write the file reference on the back of newspaper cuttings in HB pencil, insert into acid-free envelopes or polyester enclosures, and tag back into the original place in the file. The acid-free envelope should be marked with a brief note of its contents (e.g. '4 newspaper cuttings').

Thermal and fax paper - thermal paper can be identified by its shiny smooth surface which often shows grey/silver marks where the paper has been creased. Thermal paper must be photocopied and the photocopy tagged in front of the original document in the file. Keep the original thermal paper in the file. Not all fax paper is thermal paper; shiny smooth fax copies with a cactus logo on the back do not need to be photocopied. If in doubt it is best to photocopy the paper as a precaution.

Lever-arch files and ring binders - Place the contents of lever-arch files and ring binders into 4-flap folders, preparing, tagging and referencing in the normal way. Discard the lever-arch or ring binder unless there is any significant writing on it that is not written elsewhere. If this is the case, the binder should be preserved and tagged on top of the contents.

Maps and plans - maps should be transferred in the format in which they have been stored previously. Do not flatten rolled maps and do not roll or fold maps that have been stored flat. Please contact your place of deposit to discuss any specific preparation requirements for maps.

Boxing and labelling - please discuss with your place of deposit their box specifications and requirements. Generally boxes should be slightly overfilled to ensure the contents do not move around or slump down when the box is on a shelf. Alternate the orientation of the files to make the documents lie more evenly in the box.



Step six: delivering the records

When you are ready to arrange delivery of records to your place of deposit, contact them to arrange receipt and to complete relevant paperwork.

Transport can be organised and provided by the creating body or by the place of deposit at a cost to the creating body. This must be agreed in advance of delivery and any changes to the date of delivery or delivery arrangements must be agreed with the place of deposit.

On arrival at the place of deposit, the records will be checked against the agreed terms of deposit. Failure to adhere to agreements may result in records being turned away.

Places of Deposit are able to refuse the transfer of records under the 20-year rule if the correct and proper procedure has not been adhered to by a creating body, as outlined in this transfer guide. The creating body is unable to dispose of these records, but will have to resubmit them for transfer once the correct processes have been undertaken.

Any proposal to transfer records early (before the 20 year-transfer point) must be negotiated with the relevant Place of Deposit. It is important to allow sufficient time for these negotiations and to be aware that Places of Deposit can charge for the early transfer and storage of these documents.

If you need any further advice or guidance on these steps please speak to your place of deposit. Guidance on how to report transfer should be obtained from your parent Whitehall department.