

Guidance	Background to the Record Transfer Report
Appendix 1	How to complete the Records Transfer Report – example of a completed RTR
Appendix 2	Transition Timetable

1. Why are we carrying out the Records Transfer Report (RTR) survey?

1.1 It is The National Archives responsibility under the Public Records Act 1958 to monitor the performance of government departments on the processing of their public records within the prescribed statutory period. Departments must review their public records with a view to taking one of five disposal actions:

- selection of records for permanent preservation to be transferred to The National Archives or approved Place of Deposit (PoD);
- destruction of records with no further value;
- presentation of records to a suitable custodian as an alternative to their destruction;
- retention in a department of records beyond the statutory prescribed period (20 years) for administrative purposes; and
- retention in a department of historically valuable records beyond the statutory prescribed period (20 years) that retain above 'Official - Sensitive' security markings.

1.2 The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (CRGA) 2010 changed the requirement under the PRA 1958, s.3(4) for records to be disposed of when they reached 30 years of age to 20 years. A transitional timetable was introduced over a 10 year period (to 2022) to incrementally change from the 30 year to a 20 year records disposal rule (see Appendix 2). The National Archives is requesting this information as part of our mandate to provide coordination and supervision to the selection of historically valuable public records for permanent preservation under the Public Records Act.

2. What is the date range and scope of the records I need to report on?

2.1 Three identical questions are asked in the Record Transfer Report for three categories of records. The three categories of records are:

- 'Legacy' records – these are records that are in breach of the new timetable
- 'In-year' records – these are records to be processed in 2015
- 'Next-year records' – these are records to be processed in 2016

The statutory period for the disposal of records is referenced in the Public Records Act and is based upon the calendar year and not the financial yearly cycles. This means that public records will need to be disposed of by the 1 January of the twenty-first year of the record from 2023. In order to remain statutorily compliant in the interim period, government departments must dispose of their records aligned to the transitional records disposal timetable up to 2022.

2.2 Please provide your figures for the report in number of files. If your records include maps please count one map as one file. If you have other types of records and need advice as how to count these, or only have data in metres of records held, please consult your Information Management Consultant.

2.3 In addition to reporting compliance with the Public Records Act to The National Archives and being transparent about what records are still held in departments, the information requested in the Record Transfer Report could help departments plan for the transfer of their records.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/manage-information/planning/departamental-record-officer/role-departamental-record-officer/>

3. Why do we ask about records held under a Lord Chancellor's Instrument (LCI)?

3.1 Prior to 17 September 2015, departments may retain public records in their custody beyond the prescribed records disposal period by applying through the Advisory Council for National Records and Archives (ACNRA) to the Lord Chancellor for a instrument permitting public records retention under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act. Once covered by an LCI the records are considered to be compliant with the PRA. However, The National Archives is asking you to report on some categories of records you currently hold under LCIs in order to maintain government-wide standards of transparency and accountability to the public¹.

3.2 The Records Transfer Report asks questions about the number of public records retained under an LCI. Please respond to questions concerning the following records retained under a LCI:

- Those records which comprise part of a records review backlog; i.e. where the records are dated 1986 or older but where disposal action has not been agreed with The National Archives.
- Series of records that have been selected for transfer to The National Archives or place of deposit but are still required for administrative purposes in the department.

Please do not include details for the following types of public records retained under an LCI:

- Administrative records of no historical value held under a previously agreed blanket LCI covering specific categories of records; e.g. civil servants' personnel records.
- Records of international organisations for which there is not yet any agreement for release.

¹ On 17 September, the Prime Minister announced that The National Archives' sponsoring department would change from the Ministry of Justice to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. This means that retention applications will no longer be made to the Lord Chancellor but to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. Therefore, the Lord Chancellor's Instrument will be renamed accordingly and will be referred to as the Retention Instrument.

- Records that may have been retained in their government departments on security and other specified grounds.

3.3 If you are unsure whether to report on a collection of records held under an LCI please consult with your Information Management Consultant at The National Archives.

4. Public records to be used by Public Inquiries and associated proceedings.

4.1 If you have records that have not been selected for permanent preservation beyond the statutory prescribed period (20 years) that may be required for inquiries or associated proceedings you should seek retention under 3 (4) of the Public Records Act.

5. Who to approach for advice

5.1 Column D of the table in Appendix 2 indicates the records which need to be processed by government departments under the revised records disposal timetable. If you need advice and guidance on completing the Records Transfer Report survey please contact your Information Management Consultant.

Appendix 1

SAMPLE – Worked example

Text in black = part of Records Transfer Report

Text in red = explanatory comments on how to fill out the form

Text in blue = sample answers

Legacy

The number of records up to and including 1986 that are overdue for review, transfer or disposal

A. Records still to be reviewed for permanent preservation or disposal*

This excludes records already selected or awaiting disposal.

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have not yet been reviewed.

200

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have not yet been reviewed but are covered by an LCI. For example records collections where the Advisory Council has agreed more time is needed to complete the review.

650

B. Records selected for transfer*

This is the number of records already selected (at the time of reporting) for transfer to The National Archives.

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have been selected for permanent preservation (in agreement with The National Archives). The records have yet to be transferred and are still in the custody of the department.

50

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have been selected for permanent preservation (in agreement with The National Archives) but are covered by an LCI to allow the department to retain custody of them for the period specified in the LCI. For example records which have been selected but are still required for ongoing administrative use.

20

C. Records awaiting disposal*

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have been reviewed and not selected for permanent preservation. These records will be disposed of (either through destruction

35

or presentation) but this has not happened yet, the records are still in the custody of the department. Records of a purely administrative nature on a records retention schedule do not need to be included in these figures.

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have been reviewed and not selected for permanent preservation. These records will be disposed of (either through destruction or presentation) but are covered by an LCI to allow the department to retain custody of them for the period specified in the LCI. For example records which have no historical value but are still required for ongoing administrative use by the department.

200

D. Total Records held for this period*

(A+B+C =D)

The total number of records is the sum of the figures entered so far. The figures for both parts of each question should be included so $A1+A2+B1+B2+C1+C2 = D$

1155

Records planned for transfer *

70

This is the number of records planned for transfer to The National Archives by 31 December 2015, as agreed with The National Archives.

These are the records of up to and including 1986 that you have agreed with The National Archives will be transferred by 31 December 2015. This figure will be a proportion of the figure in Section D - Total Records held

Explanatory comments - legacy

If you do not wish to add any, enter 'n/a'

Please enter any information that provides context to explain the figures you have entered above. In particular please provide more detail about records held under an LCI and how you are planning on addressing legacy records. If you have more detailed information or a transfer plan on your website please include the link here.

The department holds 850 legacy records which we have not yet reviewed; we are working with The National Archives to review and dispose of these records. Of these 650 are [description of records] which we have agreed with the Advisory Council will be reviewed and if appropriate transferred by [date] We have LCIs to cover 20 [description of records] records which are still required for business use, and 600 [description of records] which are not of any ongoing historical value but are required for business use.

SAMPLE – Worked example

In-year (2015)

The number of records of 1987 and 1988 due for review, transfer or disposal in 2015

A. Records still to be reviewed for permanent preservation or disposal*

This excludes records already selected or awaiting disposal.

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have not yet been reviewed.

550

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have not yet been reviewed but are covered by an LCI should go here. For example records collections where the Advisory Council has agreed more time is needed to complete the review.

100

B. Records selected for transfer*

This is the number of records already selected (at the time of reporting) for transfer to The National Archives.

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have been selected for permanent preservation (in agreement with The National Archives). The records have yet to be transferred and are still in the custody of the department.

400

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have been selected for permanent preservation (in agreement with The National Archives) but are covered by an LCI to allow the department to retain custody of them for the period specified in the LCI. For example records which have been selected but are still required for ongoing administrative use.

0

C. Records awaiting disposal*

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have been reviewed and not selected for permanent preservation. These records will be disposed of (either through destruction or presentation) but this has not happened yet, the records are still in the custody of the department. Records of a purely administrative nature on a records retention schedule do not need to be included in these figures.

250

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have been reviewed and not selected for permanent preservation. These records will be disposed of (either through destruction or presentation) but are covered by an LCI to allow the department to retain custody of them for the period specified in the LCI. For example records which have no historical value but are still required for ongoing administrative use by the department.

300

D. Total Records held for this period*

(A+B+C =D)

The total number of records is the sum of the figures entered so far.
The figures for both parts of each question should be included so
 $A1+A2+B1+B2+C1+C2 = D$

1600

Records planned for transfer *

This is the number of records planned for transfer to The National Archives by 31 December 2015, as agreed with The National Archives.

These are the records from 1987 and 1988 that you have agreed with The National Archives will be transferred by 31 December 2015. This figure will be a proportion of the figure in Section D - Total Records held

300

Explanatory comments – In-year (2015)

If you do not wish to add any, enter 'n/a'

Please enter any information that provides context to explain the figures you have entered above. In particular please provide more detail about records held under an LCI and how you are planning on addressing legacy records. If you have more detailed information or a transfer plan on your website please include the link here.

Explanatory comments – see Legacy section for example

SAMPLE – Worked example

Next-year (2016)

The number of records 1989 and 1990 that are due for review, transfer or disposal in 2016

A. Records still to be reviewed for permanent preservation or disposal*

This excludes records already selected or awaiting disposal.

1. Records not covered by an LCI

These records have not yet been reviewed by the department

2500

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

These records have not yet been reviewed by the department but are covered by an LCI. It may have recognised that it will need some extra time to review certain categories of records and agreed this with the Advisory Council.

0

B. Records selected for transfer*

This is the number of records already selected (at the time of reporting) for transfer to The National Archives.

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have been selected for permanent preservation (in agreement with The National Archives). The records have yet to be transferred and are still in the custody of the department.

200

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have been selected for permanent preservation (in agreement with The National Archives) but are covered by an LCI to allow the department to retain custody of them for the period specified in the LCI. For example records which have been selected but are still required for ongoing administrative use.

0

C. Records awaiting disposal*

1. Records not covered by an LCI

Records which have been reviewed and not selected for permanent preservation. These records will be disposed of (either through destruction or presentation) but this has not happened yet, the records are still in the custody of the department. Records of a purely administrative nature on a records retention schedule do not need to be included in these figures.

100

2. Records retained by means of an LCI

Records which have been reviewed and not selected for permanent preservation. These records will be disposed of (either through destruction or presentation) but are covered by an LCI to allow the department to retain custody of them for the period specified in the LCI. For example records which have no historical value but are still required for ongoing

0

administrative use by the department.

D. Total Records held for this period*

(A+B+C =D)

The total number of records is the sum of the figures entered so far.

The figures for both parts of each question should be included so

$A1+A2+B1+B2+C1+C2 = D$

2800

Records planned for transfer *

25

This is the number of records planned for transfer to The National Archives by 31 December 2015, as agreed with The National Archives.

These are the records from 1989 and 1990 that you have agreed with The National Archives will be transferred by 31 December 2015. This figure will be a proportion of the figure in Section D - Total Records held

Explanatory comments - Next-year (2016)

If you do not wish to add any, enter 'n/a'

Please enter any information that provides context to explain the figures you have entered above. In particular please provide more detail about records held under an LCI. If you have more detailed information or a transfer plan on your website please include the link here.

Explanatory comments – see Legacy section for example

Appendix 2

A. Year to work on your public records	B. Formerly you transferred these records under 30 year rule from ...	C. Transitional transfer timetable (years from 30 to 20)	D. New timetable for records to be disposed of from 2012 under the Public Records Act	E. Transfer records to be preserved at The National Archives by:
2012	1982	30	1982	01/01/2013
2013	1983	29	1983 and 1984	01/01/2014
2014	1984	28	1985 and 1986	01/01/2015
2015	1985	27	1987 and 1988	01/01/2016
2016	1986	26	1989 and 1990	01/01/2017
2017	1987	25	1991 and 1992	01/01/2018
2018	1988	24	1993 and 1994	01/01/2019
2019	1989	23	1995 and 1996	01/01/2020
2020	1990	22	1997 and 1998	01/01/2021
2021	1991	21	1999 and 2000	01/01/2022
2022	1992	20	2001 and 2002	01/01/2023
2023	1993	20	2003	01/01/2024