

Retention Policy



Type of records/data

Please see Table 1 at the end of the document for the various types of records that the London District may hold. Personal data may be among the individual records and therefore it is advised that individuals be aware of this retention policy. Please see the District's policy on Data Protection and our District Data Map for information on why we hold specific data (both are available on our website or in hard copy via the District Office).

Safeguarding records

The District complies with The Methodist Churches recommendations on the retention of Safeguarding records. The District will:

- Keep accurate records of any concerns, disclosures and allegations relating to children and vulnerable adults. These records will be disposed of once the matter has been resolved in line with data protection regulations.
- The District will ensure that the following is kept securely:
 - DBS certificate dates and reference numbers on the central records system for all London Ministers;
 - Dates for when the London Ministers must renew the DBS
 - Record all London Ministers' safeguarding training;
 - Any communication to or from third parties e.g. reports made under criminal legislation, about complainants on any matter, correspondence with the police or Social Services and any factual records. Including a signed and dated timeline of the actions taken;
 - Legal documents;
 - All confidential information and information of a sensitive, privileged, or private nature (to include commercially sensitive information);
- Where copies of minutes, etc. are to be circulated to members of council/committees, any confidential or sensitive minute of the discussion should be omitted from the circulated version.
- Any confidential contract or 'Covenant of Care' agreement (re. The Church and Sex Offenders policy) must be retained by the Chair of District for the District for 75 years.
- When disposing of information or files, nothing should be destroyed that pertains to allegations or information about harm or risk of harm to anyone.
- Requirements relating to the retention of files, relating to complaints, record keeping, confidentiality and related matters, are set out in Standing Order SO 1104 and 1121 (7) or procedures under SO111 (2A).

Storage

Confidential or sensitive records are stored securely within the District Offices, held in lockable cabinets/drawers. The District archives are maintained in a locked room close to the District Office.

Any confidential or sensitive records stored electronically are only accessible through password protected devices (e.g. server, laptops etc), and encrypted where necessary.

Any information transferred to temporary devices such as USB, is encrypted

Standing Order 015 Archives

- (1) All minute books, account books, and baptismal, burial and marriage and burial registers, and any other records relating to district, circuit or local church affairs which are deemed worthy of permanent preservation by the district archivist and recipient archivists, when no longer needed for current reference in the conduct of business, shall be deposited on permanent loan with a public authority having the appropriate repository facilities, and the connexional archives liaison officer shall be informed.
- (2) The responsibility for supervising and arranging the deposit of church records shall rest with the responsible supervisor.
 - a. For the purposes of this Standing order 'the responsible supervisor' ...in relation to district records means the Chair...

Destroying records

When appropriate to destroy records, as in accordance with the suggested retention noted in Table 1, all documents will be destroyed in the following ways:

- Hard copies will be shredded on site of the District Office by staff or volunteers, with the exception of sensitive data;
- Sensitive data will be professionally shredded by a reputable company and certification issued as appropriate;
- Electronic copies are deleted (although server back-ups may continue to store the information for up to a year).

Table 1Retention suggestions for Districts

CLASS	TYPE	RETAIN FOR USE	REASON	ACTION
Meetings	Synod	Current connexional year + 5	CPD SO 415 (states until no longer required for current reference)	To Archive: permanent (NB one copy in Methodist archives, one in local repository)
	District Committees	Current connexional year + 3	Good practice	To Archive: permanent
Employment	Employee tax and insurance records	Current tax year + 6	Statutory	Destroy
	Insurance records: employer's liability	Current tax year + 4	Statutory	Destroy
	Pension contribution records	Current tax year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	Destroy
	Contracts of employment	Current tax year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	Destroy
	Annual tax return	Current tax year + 6	Statutory	Destroy
	Expenses claims	Current tax year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	Destroy
	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training records	As training is undertaken	Refer any data collected to relevant Connexional Team	Destroy once data has been sent
Finance	Annual accounts	Current connexional year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	To Archive: permanent
	Cash books	Current connexional year + 6	Good practice	Destroy

CLASS	TYPE	RETAIN FOR USE	REASON	ACTION
	Cheque book/paying in slips	Current connexional year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	Destroy
	Financial statements	Current connexional year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	Destroy
	Accounts of reporting organisations	Current connexional year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	To Archive, if not already included in District accounts: permanent
	Accounts of Youth organisations	Current connexional year + 6	Limitations Act 1980	To Archive, if not already included in District accounts: permanent
	Standard form of Accounts	Current connexional year + 6	Statutory Instrument	Destroy
Membership	Synod Directory, including databases, mailing and contact lists	Review annually	Data Protection Act 2018	Superseded copy to Archive
Property	Insurance policies	40 years	Commercial practice	Destroy
	Title Deeds including title registration, deeds of covenants, deeds of release, memorandum of overage, deeds of easements etc.	Permanent		Retain until building is sold, and for 12 years thereafter
	Claims correspondence	3 years after last action	Commercial practice	Destroy
	Listed buildings or buildings in a Conservation Area correspondence	Permanent	Statute	Archive
	Property agreements and leases	6 years after end of agreement	Commercial practice	Archive

CLASS	TYPE	RETAIN FOR USE	REASON	ACTION
	Sales and purchase	15 years after completion		Archive after weeding
	Quinquennial inspection reports	For as long as required for current business		Archive: permanent / destroy if property no longer owned by the Church
	Records of church closure and sale or premises	Current connexional year + 6	Limitation Act 1980	Archive after weeding
Health & Safety	Accident reports – for adults	Date of incident + 3	SI 1995/3163	Destroy
	Accident report – for children	Date when the child attains the age of 21 + 3	SI 1995/3163	Destroy
Safeguarding	Clear Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate	During recruitment and notify when renewal is due		Destroy
	Risk Assessment recommendations and a management plan in the event of an unclear or blemished DBS disclosure	+ 75yrs after appointment / employment ceases		Destroy
	Records of other safeguarding adult or child protection concerns either within the church, church related activity, or within a family by an individual where the church was the reporting body or involved in care or monitoring plans that is any sex offender	+ 75yrs after conclusion of the matter	Standing Order 010	Destroy

CLASS	TYPE	RETAIN FOR USE	REASON	ACTION
	risk assessments and monitoring agreements			
	Records of any children's activities, Sunday School, Junior Church/youth club registers and related general safety risk assessments. Any communication from parents or other parties in relation to the above	+ 75yrs after the conclusion of the matter		Destroy
	Personnel records of individuals with contact with children and vulnerable adults including all documentation concerning any allegations and investigations regardless of the findings	+ 75yrs after the conclusion of the matter		Destroy
	Records of complaints made through the Discrimination and Abuse Response Service	+ 6yrs after the conclusion of the complaint		Destroy
Ministers	Minister records (where there are no complaints)	Until death of Minister		Destroy
	Probationer records	Until death of probationer (now Minister)		Destroy
	Supervision records	To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on		To be held, retained and or destroyed as per the Policy and Guidance note on handling Supervisory files

CLASS	TYPE	RETAIN FOR USE	REASON	ACTION
		handling Supervisory files		
General	General correspondence	Conclusion of matter + 1	Good practice	Destroy
	District newsletters and publications	Date of issue + 2	Good practice	Archive: permanent
	Local Ecumenical Partnership agreements	Duration of agreement		Archive: permanent
	Copies of replies to Connexional questionnaires and circulars	Last action + 5	Good practice	Case by case
	Data Protection records in relation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Subject Access Requests (SARs) • Right to Rectify data • Right to delete/be forgotten • Right to Restrict processing 	+ 7yrs after the last contact with the individual		Destroy
	Data Protection Consent Record	End of Connexional Year + 2	Good practice	Destroy
	Data Processor Record	End of Connexional year after it has been updated	Good practice	Destroy
Electronic	Website	Take a snapshot each year, and before any major changes	Good practice	Consult Liaison Officer for Methodist Archives

CLASS	TYPE	RETAIN FOR USE	REASON	ACTION
	Emails	Retain as appropriately related to the above materials	Good practices or legal requirements	Action as appropriately related to the relevant materials

Last updated June 2024