

Storage of physical records

1 Introduction

Information and records are at the core of business and are a key strategic asset. This document sets out what physical records include, how to keep and maintain physical records, and using a storage plan.

Section 17 of the *Public Records Act 2005* (the Act) states that:

- a public office must maintain all public records that it controls
- a local authority must maintain all protected records that it controls.

2 What physical records include

Physical records include:

- paper files and documents
- volumes and registers
- maps, plans, charts and drawings
- photographic media such as photographic prints and negatives, film, microforms, and x-rays
- magnetic media such as digital tape, video and audio cassettes
- optical media such as CDs and DVDs.

3 Keeping physical records in an accessible format

All records must be kept in an accessible format so that they can be accessed in the future. Records must be kept until the Act authorises their disposal or the provisions in another Act override the Act.

As records are important business assets, they must be managed carefully. Their storage is a key element in how organisations manage their information and records.

To meet their legal obligations for their physical records, an organisation must make decisions and take action to ensure that the storage of records protects them from unauthorised or illegal access, alteration, loss, deletion and destruction.

4 Using a storage plan to set out the process for storing physical records

To manage the storage of their records, an organisation should develop a storage plan that covers all types of records and where those records are located. Ensure the storage and records are secure and accessible, and can be maintained. Storage plans should take into account the following:

- identification and control
- location and buildings
- environmental controls
- shelving and packaging
- ongoing maintenance
- security
- business continuity.

5 Instructions on how to store public and local authority archives

For further information on storing public archives, the Chief Archivist has issued two instructions under the Act. These instruct local authorities to protect and preserve protected records, and approved repositories on how to maintain public archives.

- *Protection and preservation of protected records – Instruction to local authorities (16/Sp3)*
- *Maintenance of public archives – Instruction to approved repositories (16/Sp2).*