



Home Office

# Document storage, retention and destruction

Version 12.0

Guidance for His Majesty's Passport Office staff about document storage, retention (in storage, long term store, and archives) and destruction

# Contents

Contents.....	2
About: Document storage, retention, and destruction .....	4
Contacts .....	4
Publication .....	4
Changes from last version of this guidance .....	5
Storage and destruction of documents.....	6
How we deal with stored documents .....	7
If we no longer have a customer's documents.....	7
Document Handling Units: document storage .....	8
DHU document storage: Scanning, Validation and Storage operators.....	9
SVS operators: dealing with documents stored for a year .....	9
SVS operators: return documents to the issuing authority .....	9
SVS operators: destroy documents.....	9
SVS operators: dealing with a request for documents.....	10
DHU document storage: Item retention expired task.....	11
Item retention expired task .....	11
Item retention expired task: Retain all items .....	11
DHU document storage: dealing with customer requests for documents .....	12
Customer asks for the return of their documents.....	12
Returning customer documents free of charge using secure delivery .....	13
Customer asks for documents to be moved to a new DAP application.....	13
Customer asks for documents to be moved to a new AMS application .....	13
DMS long term store: document storage.....	15
The Intandem long term storage log .....	15
DMS long term storage: First-line Document Management Service.....	16
DMS long term storage: how to store documents .....	16
Long term storage: returning documents to HM Passport Office .....	16
DMS long term storage: moving documents to a new DAP application .....	17
FLDMS managers: email addresses.....	17
DMS long term storage: dealing with documents stored for a year .....	18
DMS long term storage: Second-line Document Management Service .....	19
DMS long term storage: dealing with documents stored for a year .....	19
DMS long term storage: return documents to the issuing authority .....	19

DMS long term storage: destroy documents.....	19
DMS long term storage: dealing with customer requests for documents.....	21
DMS long term storage: request documents are returned to HM Passport Office	21
DMS long term storage: request documents are moved to a new DAP application .....	22
Request documents: if a DMS application pack already exists.....	23
AMS document archives: how we keep records of unclaimed documents .....	25
Responsibility for the retained document spreadsheet .....	25
AMS document archives: how to send documents to the archiving team.....	26
AMS archives: archiving documents returned by Royal Mail .....	26
AMS archives: archiving documents returned by our secure delivery partners ....	26
Archiving documents from UK delivery partners .....	26
Archiving documents from international delivery partners.....	27
AMS archives: archiving documents returned by our Local service providers .....	28
AMS document archives: dealing with customer requests for documents.....	30
AMS document archives: request documents to return to the customer.....	30
AMS document archives: request documents are moved to a new DAP application .....	31
AMS document archives: request documents are moved to a new AMS application .....	32
AMS document archives: regional archiving team contact information.....	32
AMS document archives: how the archiving team deals with documents .....	33
AMS document archives: returning documents to the issuing authority immediately .....	33
AMS document archives: how to manage the archiving area .....	34
AMS document archives: how to deal with a request for documents.....	34
AMS document archives: how to deal with a customer's documents in archives .	34
AMS document archives: how to deal with documents we have archived for 1 year .....	35
AMS document archives: how to maintain the return and destruction log sheet...	35
AMS document archives: how to destroy documents .....	35
Documents in storage: what we must do with documents.....	37
Documents you must deal with immediately.....	37
Documents you must return to the issuing authority after 1 year .....	38
Documents you must destroy after 1 year .....	39

# About: Document storage, retention, and destruction

This guidance tells HM Passport Office staff and suppliers how we store, retain, and destroy documents when we have withdrawn a customer's passport application or receive documents that cannot be associated to a live application.

It tells staff how:

- we store documents when we have withdrawn an application
- when we store documents, return them to an issuing authority, or destroy them
- to request customer's documents from storage, to return to the customer or link to a new application
- to deal with customer questions about documents we have stored

This guidance applies to our 3 storage processes:

- DHU (Document Handling Unit) storage, used for storing documents for applications processed on DAP (Digital Application Processing) and handled by the DHU
- DMS (Document Management Service) long term store, used for storing documents for applications processed on DAP and handled by the DMS
- archives, used for storing documents from applications withdrawn from AMS (Application Management System) or documents which Royal Mail were unable to deliver (non-secure delivery items only) and returned to the Customer Service Management team

## Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors, then email the Guidance team.

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email the Guidance team.

## Publication

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was published:

- version **12.0**
- published for Home Office staff on **12 August 2024**

## Changes from last version of this guidance

This guidance has been updated to merge the storage guidance for AMS archives, DMS long term store, and DHU storage. There are no guidance changes.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Storage and destruction of documents

This section tells HM Passport Office staff and our suppliers when and why we store customer documents. It includes how we store customer documents and how long we keep them if we do not return them to the customer.

When we have unclaimed documents we will:

- return some documents to the issuing authority immediately
- send some documents to a specific internal team immediately
- store (sometimes called 'archive' or 'long term store') certain documents for 1 year when we cannot return them to their owner, and then take an action with them after 1 year
- hold documents longer than 1 year if we archive them during a known crisis event

We keep unclaimed documents, for example, because:

- we lost contact with the customer and withdrew their application (and we keep their documents to protect their identity, as we cannot guarantee the customer is still at the same address)
- the documents have been returned to us, undelivered, by:
  - Royal Mail
  - our UK delivery partners
  - our international delivery partners
  - local service providers
- there are documents we are unable to link to an application (for example orphan documents)

We must store all documents and correspondence sent by customers to support their application, including photocopies of documents, for example if:

- it was an important part of the examination decision process
- you would have returned it to the customer

We must not store letters addressed to HM Passport Office (for example, cover letters or photocopies of documents made by examiners or local services).

You must not change, remove, or alter any information on a document you keep in storage.

You must not store a customer's British passport sent to us as a recovered document (for example, from the Police, immigration or from our secure delivery service). You must send it to the Lost, Stolen and Recovered team, who deal with recovered passports. They will update passport records and destroy the passport.

## How we deal with stored documents

All HM Passport Office staff and suppliers must make sure we securely record and store documents we cannot return to their owner.

When we have stored the documents for 1 year and the customer has not claimed them, we will return the documents to the original issuing authority or securely destroy them. You must look at [what to do with archived documents](#) to confirm what to do with a customer's documents.

By dealing with the documents in this way, we:

- reduce potential fraud
- protect documents
- minimise impacts on storing documents
- keep an audit trail of all documents returned to us

## If we no longer have a customer's documents

If a customer asks for documents we no longer have, you must:

1. Send the correct stock letter telling them we have destroyed or returned the documents to the issuing authority.
2. Refer to the complaints guidance if the customer wants to make a complaint.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# Document Handling Units: document storage

This section tells the Document Handling Unit what to do with customer documents attached to a withdrawn Digital Application Processing (DAP) application.

When a customer sends documents to a Document Handling Unit (DHU), they are scanned, validated, and stored by the Scanning, Validation and Storage operator staff.

The documents remain in storage while the application is being processed. If we withdraw the application because we lose contact with the customer, ARD (Application Receive Domain) will automatically issue instructions for each of the documents.

The Application Receive Domain (ARD) inventory log is an electronic system that keeps a record of all documents stored in Document Handling Units and allows users to instruct DHU how to handle documents.

Documents (including photocopies of documents) received as part of the application will:

- be dealt with immediately, if they do not need to remain in storage
- remain in storage in the DHU for 1 year (unless we need to keep them longer due to a crisis event)
- be returned to the issuing authority or destroyed, after 1 year

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# DHU document storage: Scanning, Validation and Storage operators

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how Scanning, Validation and Storage (SVS) operator staff deal with documents in storage.

The supplier operators are responsible for retrieving documents from storage when instructed through the Application Receive Domain (ARD) system.

## SVS operators: dealing with documents stored for a year

When we cannot return customer documents to their owner, we store most documents for 1 year and return others to the issuing authority immediately. The SVS (scanning, validation, and storage) operators will deal with the ARD instructions for the documents held in storage.

The SVS operator will receive an instruction on ARD to retrieve the documents once the DAP (Digital Application Processing) user has processed the **Item retention expired** task.

The SVS operator will follow the ARD instruction for each document which instructs if a document must be:

- destroyed
- returned to the issuing authority
- re-stored for a further year

## SVS operators: return documents to the issuing authority

When the SVS operators return a document to the issuing authority, they will follow the instruction on ARD to send the document to:

- the chosen embassy
- another address provided by the user who processed the **Item retention expired** task

## SVS operators: destroy documents

When the SVS operators get an ARD instruction to destroy a document, they will:

1. Shred the document and place it into confidential waste.
2. Tear it up into a minimum of four pieces and place into confidential waste.

## SVS operators: dealing with a request for documents

When the SVS operators get an ARD instruction (from HM Passport Office) requesting a document is returned to a customer from storage, they will:

1. Get the document from storage.
2. Send the document to the application delivery address show on ARD.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# DHU document storage: Item retention expired task

This section explains how HM Passport Office's staff processing tasks in the DAP (Digital Application Processing) Document Intervention team queue complete the **Item retention expired** task when documents in storage reach the end of their retention period.

Digital Application Processing (DAP) will create an **Item retention expired** task for the users processing the tasks in the DAP Document Intervention queue, based on the type of document and the length of time it has been in storage.

## Item retention expired task

You, the DAP user, will access **Item retention expired** tasks by clicking **Next task** on the Application Receive Domain (ARD) system.

In the task you will see a list of the documents associated with the withdrawn application. You must:

1. Click on each document link to see the document details.
2. Use the [archived document table](#) to decide how to mark the document on ARD, for example select:
  - **Destroyed** – if the document must be confidentially destroyed
  - **Returned to issuing authority** and add the embassy address, for the country the document was issued from
  - **Returned to another address** if you need to return the document to a different address, enter the address as free text
3. Click **Save** to record your selection.
4. Select the correct instruction for each document shown in the task or select **Retain all items** if appropriate.
5. Add a case note explaining your decisions.
6. Click **Submit**.

## Item retention expired task: Retain all items

You can select **Retain all items** if all the documents need to be retained for a further year. This option can be used when a country is in a crisis and returning documents may not be feasible.

You must add a case note to explain the reason for retaining all the documents on the task and click **Submit**.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# DHU document storage: dealing with customer requests for documents

This section explains how HM Passport Office staff deal with requests to return or transfer customer documents from withdrawn applications, processed in a Document Handling Unit (DHU).

A customer may contact HM Passport Office about their supporting documents after we have withdrawn their Digital Application Processing (DAP) application. For example, a customer may ask HM Passport Office to:

- return their supporting documents
- associate the supporting documents to a new DAP application

## Customer asks for the return of their documents

If a customer asks us to return their documents stored in a Document Handling Unit (DHU), after the application has been withdrawn on DAP, you, the HM Passport Office member of staff, must:

1. Check DAP has withdrawn the application (and not transferred it to AMS (Application Management System)).
2. Use the Application Receive Domain (ARD) system to check which document handling service has the documents in storage.
3. Ask the customer to send you their request in writing, the letter must include the address they want the documents returning to (if this is a different from the original address you may need additional evidence) and be signed and dated.

If the documents are held in a Document Handling Unit (DHU), when we receive the written request, you must:

4. Check the return address on the letter matches the application and if it does not, request additional evidence (see Delivery addresses for passports and documents).
5. Access ARD using the **Manage documents** option.
6. Search for the customer's document using the customer's details and select the document you wish to return.
7. Select **Return to alternate address** and add the customer's details to the instruction. See ARD: return a document to alternate address for how to complete the request.
8. Enter a case note recording the reason for the return and the request from the customer.

ARD will automatically send an instruction to the DHU, who will arrange for the document to be sent to the address you have entered.

## Returning customer documents free of charge using secure delivery

The Application Receive Domain: handling of customer documents guidance tells you how to return customer's documents free of charge using secure delivery if they are entitled to the service.

## Customer asks for documents to be moved to a new DAP application

A customer may ask us to move their documents from DHU storage to a current DAP application (for example, when an examiner has asked them for extra documents, or the customer has reapplied).

If the documents are in DHU storage, you must:

1. Access ARD using the **Manage documents** option.
2. Search for the customer document using the customer's details and select the document you wish to associate to the new application.
3. Select **Associated applications**.
4. Enter the application number of the new application in the application number field.
5. Enter a case note to record why you are associating the document to the new application.
6. Click **Submit**.

ARD will associate the document to the new application, and DAP will automatically create a **Documents received** task for the examiner.

## Customer asks for documents to be moved to a new AMS application

You, the examiner working on AMS (Application Management System), may identify documents are in DHU storage and need moving to a current AMS application. For example, when you ask the customer for extra documents, or the customer has reapplied.

If the documents are in DHU storage, and you need them transferred to an Application Processing Centre (APC), you, the AMS examiner, must:

1. Complete the ARD document handling instruction form.
2. Email the document handling proforma to the DAP inbox.
3. Case note your actions, then pigeon hole the AMS application until you receive the physical documents.

The DAP support team will arrange for the physical transfer of the documents to the requested APC and remove the documents from the ARD system.

**Related content**

[Contents](#)

# DMS long term store: document storage

This section tells the first-line Document Management Service (FLDMS) what to do with the documents attached to a withdrawn Digital Application Processing (DAP) application.

When a customer sends documents to a Document Management Service (DMS), they are scanned, validated, and stored by the DMS Scanning, Validation and Storage operator staff.

If we withdraw an application because we lose contact with the customer, any documents (including photocopies of documents) received as part of the application will be kept securely by DMS in long term storage by the first-line Document Management Service (FLDMS).

## The Intandem long term storage log

The Intandem long term storage log is an electronic document on the Intandem system (used by the DMS) that keeps a record of all applications held in long term storage.

The FLDMS maintain the long term storage log, located in their Intandem storage system.

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# DMS long term storage: First-line Document Management Service

This section tells HM Passport Office passport examiners and suppliers how the first-line Document Management Service (DMS) staff deals with documents in long term storage.

If a Digital Application Processing (DAP) application is withdrawn because we lose contact with the customer, the first-line Document Management Service (FLDMS) staff will send the documents to long term storage.

## DMS long term storage: how to store documents

To store documents from an application withdrawn by DAP, the FLDMS staff will:

1. Complete all sections on the Intandem long term storage log:
  - the date you stored the documents
  - by whom
  - at which site (on the central log only)
  - the application reference number
  - the type of document(s)
2. Separate those documents you must return to the [issuing authority](#) **immediately**.
3. Store the documents to be kept for 1 year and the proforma (this is already with the application, unless the application only has a British passport submitted. These applications do not require a proforma).
4. Put the documents in storage.

Storage must be secure (for example, in a locked cupboard) and FLDMS must be able to retrieve a document either on request or after it has been in storage for one year.

## Long term storage: returning documents to HM Passport Office

When the FLDMS staff get the TEB email (from HM Passport Office) requesting documents archived in long term storage, they will:

1. Get the documents from long term storage.
2. Update the Intandem long term storage log to confirm:
  - the date of removal from long term storage
  - who took the documents out of long term storage
  - the final status of the documents. They are “returned to HM Passport Office”
3. Send the documents to the person who requested them, including:
  - the document(s)
  - a printed copy of the email

- the long term storage (LTS) appendix to be signed as proof of the handover

FLDMS do not return documents directly to the customer.

## **DMS long term storage: moving documents to a new DAP application**

When the FLDMS staff get an email from a DAP user requesting documents archived in long term storage to be recorded on a new DAP application, they will:

1. Get the documents from long-term storage.
2. Update the Intandem long term storage log to confirm:
  - the date of removal from long term storage
  - who took the documents out of long term storage
  - the final status of the documents (they are “moved to current DAP application”)
3. Record and scan the documents onto the current DAP application (following Document Management Service guidance).
4. Store the documents in the application pack for the current DAP application.

If the customer has sent documents for the new application and we also have documents in long term storage:

- DMS must transfer the long term storage documents, if the new documents and the long term storage documents are in different DMS sites
- DMS must label the transferred documents, for example ‘documents sent from XXX LTS site, to be scanned on new appn ref XXX’
- the receiving DMS site must scan all the items together

## **FLDMS managers: email addresses**

Each FLDMS manager group has a dedicated email address:

- Belfast
- Durham
- Glasgow
- Liverpool
- Newport
- Peterborough (physical documents are now held in Durham)
- Redgrave Court, Bootle (physical documents are now held in Durham)

If you are unsure which DMS site have a customer’s documents in long term storage, you must send the Telephone Enquiry Bureau (TEB) form, by email, to Durham FLDMS managers.

## **DMS long term storage: dealing with documents stored for a year**

The FLDMS staff will review the documents stored (using the long term storage log) to get the documents stored for a year. They (FLDMS) will:

1. Each week take all the archived documents which have been in storage for 1 year or more.
2. Send the document files to the Second-line Document Management Storage (SLDMS).
3. Update the status on the log the archive files are "Returned to HM Passport Office".

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# DMS long term storage: Second-line Document Management Service

This section explains how second-line Document Management Service (SLDMS) staff, deals with documents in long term storage and how they destroy or return the stored documents to the relevant issuing authority.

The second-line Document Management Service (SLDMS) staff will deal with the documents that have been held in long term storage for 1 year.

## DMS long term storage: dealing with documents stored for a year

You (the SLDMS staff) will receive from the first-line Document Management Service (FLDMS) staff the documents stored for a year. You must:

1. Sign the long term storage (LTS) appendix to be signed as proof of the handover and return to the FLDMS.
2. Follow what to do with archived documents to identify if a document must be:
  - o destroyed
  - o returned to the issuing authority
  - o sent back to an examiner to reassess a crisis event
3. Record the action taken on your local [retained document spreadsheet](#).

## DMS long term storage: return documents to the issuing authority

When you (the SLDMS) are to return documents to the issuing authority, you must:

1. Search the internet for the address of the relevant foreign embassy or the financial institution you must return the documents to.
2. Draft a letter to send with the documents and put the letter and documents in an envelope addressed to the embassy or financial institution.
3. Add a passport note or case note (if possible) to the customers application or passport record on the Application Management system (AMS), advising the document has been returned to the issuing authority and the address you sent the documents to.
4. Record the action taken on your [local retained document spreadsheet](#).

## DMS long term storage: destroy documents

To stop the fraudulent use of a document you must destroy it. To destroy a document, you (the SLDMS) must:

- shred the document and place it into confidential waste

- tear it up into a minimum of four pieces and place into confidential waste

You must update your local [retained document spreadsheet](#) to confirm the documents were:

- returned to the issuing authority
- destroyed, the date of destruction, who destroyed them and who witnessed the destruction
- returned to examination for more checks

## **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# DMS long term storage: dealing with customer requests for documents

This section tells HM Passport Office staff, how to get a customer's documents out of Document Management Service long term storage if the customer asks us to return them or we need them for a related application if the customer reapplies.

A customer may contact the HM Passport Office to ask us to:

- return their documents
- record their stored documents on a new application which may be on DAP (Digital Application Processing) or AMS (Application Management System)

If a customer calls the Customer Service Management team (CSMT) you (the CSMT agent) must follow DAP: customer contact record guidance.

## DMS long term storage: request documents are returned to HM Passport Office

You may need to request documents in DMS (Document Management Service) long term storage be returned to HM Passport Office, for example, if:

- the customer has requested the return of the documents
- you are processing a customer's application on AMS

If you are working in a CSLT (Customer Service Liaison Team) in an application processing centre (APC), you may be told about the customer's return request when CSMT send you an archive request form.

If you are an examiner processing an application on AMS, you may find out the customer's documents are in DMS long term storage (for example, if you ask the customer for a document and they tell you they sent it in for an application that was withdrawn).

To get them out of long-term storage, you must:

1. Check which DMS site processed the original application by checking either:
  - the timeline on DAP (if you do not have access to DAP, ask a colleague to help)
  - ARD (Application Receive Domain) which shows the document handling site
2. Send an email requesting the customer's documents to:
  - the FLDMS manager in the original processing office (if the application is still visible on DAP)
  - Durham FLDMS if the document location shows DMS Corby or DMS Hemel Hempstead

- the Durham FLDMS managers if the application is no longer visible on DAP and you cannot establish which DMS held the documents
3. Make sure your email includes:
    - the subject field showing: 'the application is in Long Term Store [insert site location]' - if this is not known, state unknown
    - the original (withdrawn) DAP application number
    - the customer's name
    - the documents you are requesting
    - where to send the documents (which examiner and office)
  4. Add a case note to the AMS application you are processing, recording your actions (if there is a current application).
  5. Destroy any emails by following the email retention policy.

The DMS will send the documents directly to you with a long term storage (LTS) appendix, you must sign this as proof of the handover and return to the DMS.

If DMS tell you they have destroyed the documents or returned them to the relevant authority, you must tell the customer and request any outstanding documents required to support their application.

If the customer wants to make a complaint, you must refer to the [complaints procedure guidance](#).

## DMS long term storage: request documents are moved to a new DAP application

You, the DAP user, may find the customer's documents are in long-term storage, if, for example you:

- have asked the customer for a document, and they tell you they had a previous DAP application withdrawn
- may see a **Not sending documents – do not have them** task if the customer contacted CSMT to tell us this

If you are working in a CSLT in an APC, CSMT will send you an archive request form to tell you this, if the application is still 'awaiting documents' (this is because CSMT cannot create an examiner task, if we have not received any documents from the customer).

To get the documents out of long-term storage, transferred and recorded onto the current application, you (the examiner or CSLT staff member) must:

1. Check which DMS site processed the original application by checking:
  - the timeline on DAP if the application was processed in the last 28 days
  - Application Receive Domain (ARD) **Manage documents** option, if the application was processed more than 28 days ago
2. Send an email requesting the customer's documents to:
  - the FLDMS manager in the original processing office (if the application is still visible on DAP)

- Durham FLDMS if the document location shows DMS Corby or DMS Hemel Hempstead
  - the Durham FLDMS managers if the application is no longer visible on DAP and you cannot establish which DMS held the documents
3. Make sure the email includes:
    - the application is in Long Term Store location (in the subject field)
    - the original (withdrawn) DAP application number
    - the customer's name
    - the documents you need from long term store
    - the application reference number you want the documents transferring to
    - whether or not an application pack already exists in a DMS, and if DMS need to physically transfer the documents to another location
  4. Put the application on hold while you wait for the document to be recorded.
  5. Destroy any emails by following the email retention policy.

The DMS will remove the documents from long term storage, and record and scan the documents onto the current DAP application you are processing.

DAP will create a **Documents received** task when this happens, and you can continue to process your application.

## Request documents: if a DMS application pack already exists

Any DMS location can scan a document on to a DAP application, but only one physical application pack can exist in DMS sites (because the DMS with the application pack must follow the instructions on the **Ready to action** report when an application is completed).

More than 1 application pack can exist if one of the packs is in a DHU (Document Handling Unit), and a second pack is created in a DMS.

If you, the DAP examiner, need to request documents in long term storage be recorded onto a new DAP application, you must find out if a physical application pack already exists in one of the DMS locations.

To do this, you must first check the **Documents** tab on DAP for the current application you are dealing with. If there are:

- no documents recorded on the current application, then an application pack does not exist (and a pack can be created in any DMS location)
- documents recorded on the current application, then a document pack exists

If a document pack exists, you must identify the location of the document pack. To do this you must:

1. Select the **Document** tab on the DAP application screen.
2. Select a document.
3. Select **Item details**.

4. View the status of the document, to find out where the customer's documents are held.

If the location of the document pack for the current application is the same as the long term storage location, DMS will be able to:

- retrieve the documents from long term storage
- record and scan them on to the current application
- move them into the application pack for the current application

However, if the document pack for the current application is in a different DMS location to the long term storage location, in addition to the actions above, DMS must also:

- physically transfer the documents that were in long term storage to the DMS site that holds the document pack for the current application

You must include in your email an instruction to transfer the documents if this is necessary.

If a document pack already exists in a DHU (Document Handling Unit) the DMS will be able to create a second pack, so you do not need to instruct the DMS to transfer the documents.

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

Searches and checks

# AMS document archives: how we keep records of unclaimed documents

This section tells HM Passport Office staff about the records we keep for archived documents from applications processed on AMS (Application Management System).

We record all unclaimed documents from applications processed on AMS (Application Management System) on a spreadsheet called the 'retained document spreadsheet'. A team in each office (known in this guidance as the 'archiving team') are responsible for archiving customers' unclaimed documents and maintaining the spreadsheet.

The archiving team must use the retained document spreadsheet to record archived documents:

- held by the archiving team
- returned to their owner
- returned to examiners or issuing authorities
- destroyed after 1 year

## Responsibility for the retained document spreadsheet

The Security Liaison Officer is responsible for the retained document spreadsheet, they must:

- give permission to the office KIM (knowledge and information management) champion for staff to access the retained document spreadsheet
- make sure the retained document spreadsheet is:
  - maintained correctly
  - only accessed by authorised staff
- carry out spot checks on the retained document spreadsheet
- make sure the archive teams fill in the retained document spreadsheet
- make sure the records show a clear audit trail

This is part of the Security Assurance team assurance programme and is subject to assurance visits.

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# AMS document archives: how to send documents to the archiving team

This section tells HM Passport Office staff how to send unclaimed documents to the archiving team so we can store them securely.

If you withdraw an application (that you have been processing on AMS (Application Management System)) because we have lost contact with the customer, you, the examiner, must send the documents and passport application to the team in your office, responsible for archiving customers' unclaimed documents. In this guidance we call these teams the 'archiving team'.

You must:

1. Complete an Archived documents form.
2. Highlight the 'Examiners Comments' box on the form using a highlighter pen and:
  - o add the name of the crisis, if you have archived the application because of a crisis event
3. Put it in the application wallet with the customer's documents.
4. Complete the archive log if your examination team uses one.
5. Put the application wallet in your team's 'Withdrawn' box.

The examination team support clerk must take the team archive log, application and documents to the archiving team daily.

## AMS archives: archiving documents returned by Royal Mail

The Customer Service Management team (CSMT) deal with Royal Mail returns (non-secure delivery only). CSMT will archive customers' documents they cannot return to the customer, using the processes in this guidance.

## AMS archives: archiving documents returned by our secure delivery partners

How we archive documents returned to us by our delivery partners will depend on whether the documents were posted to an address in the UK or overseas.

### Archiving documents from UK delivery partners

When our UK delivery partners return documents to the UK delivery team, the UK delivery team must:

1. Add a case note or passport note to the passport application to confirm the return of the documents.
2. Store the documents securely for 12 weeks.

If there has been no request to return the documents within the 12 weeks, the UK delivery team, must:

1. Check the Application Management System (AMS) to see which Application Processing Centre (APC) examined the application.
2. Complete an Archived documents form.
3. Send the form and documents to the archiving team in the APC who examined the application.
4. Add a case note or passport note confirming your actions.

You, the examiner, must send:

- newly issued British passports to the central Lost, Stolen and Recovered (LSR) team, who will cancel them and make a record
- cancelled British passports that do not contain a valid visa to confidential waste
- cancelled or current British passports (that contain a valid visa) to your local archive team

## Archiving documents from international delivery partners

When our international delivery partners return documents or a British passport because they were unable to deliver them to the customer, the International delivery team, must:

1. Log the documents on the retained document spreadsheet.
2. Contact the customer by phone or email (these details are found on the application on AMS).
3. Send a contact letter by air mail, if the customer has not replied in 2 weeks.

If there is no reply to the contact letter, the International team, must:

1. Check AMS to see which APC examined the application.
2. Complete an Archived documents form and send it to the archiving team in the passport office the application was dealt in.
3. Send any:
  - newly issued British passports to the central LSR team (so they can record them as recovered and cancelled)
  - cancelled British passports to confidential waste
  - cancelled or current British passports that contain a valid visa to your local archive team
4. Record all actions they have taken as a passport note.

## AMS archives: archiving documents returned by our Local service providers

A Local service provider must inform you (the International delivery team member) if they are unable to return a customer's passport or documents because a customer has:

- supplied a UK telephone number (Local services do not use these)
- not responded to the Local service contact attempts

You must:

1. Try to contact the customer by email, using the email address on the application, to say their documents are waiting to be collected.
  - two weeks after the first email, you must phone them (if there is a UK number) and send another email
  - after another 2 weeks, you must send a letter by air mail
2. Confirm with the customer the correct name of the person collecting the documents from Local service.
3. Tell the customer, if the person collecting the passport is different from the customer, the person collecting the passport must have:
  - a signed letter of consent from the customer
  - an overseas contact number
4. Email this information to the Local service, using the current Local service contact details.

After 30 days of a Local Service provider receiving a British passport or any supporting documents, the Local service provider, must:

1. Send the British passport (and any supporting documents) to the International delivery team by Secure Delivery or similar.
2. Email or write to the customer to tell them we have returned their passport or documents to the UK.

When the documents arrive with the International delivery team, you must try to contact the customer again.

You must:

1. Try to contact the customer, to tell them their documents are waiting collection.
2. Confirm with the customer the correct name of the person collecting the documents from Local service.
3. Tell the customer, if the person collecting the passport is different from the customer, the person collecting the passport, must have:
  - a letter of consent from the customer
  - an overseas contact number
4. Email this information to the Local service using the current Local service contact details.

If you are unable to contact the customer, you must send the documents to HM Passport Office Durham to be [archived](#).

**Related content**

[Contents](#)

# AMS document archives: dealing with customer requests for documents

This section tells HM Passport Office staff, how to get a customer's documents out of an archive, if the customer asks us to return them, the customer re-applies or we need them for a related application.

A customer may contact HM Passport Office to ask us to:

- return their documents
- record their archived documents on a new application which may be on DAP (Digital Application Processing) or AMS (Application Management System)

The customer may contact the examiner directly or our Customer Service Management team (CSMT). If you are working on DAP, you may have requested the documents from the customer and see a **Not sending documents** task.

## AMS document archives: request documents to return to the customer

The examiner or CSMT must ask the customer to send a written and signed request for the return of their documents. They can email the letter as an attachment, using the email address they gave us on their application form.

When the name or address on the letter is different from the application, you must request evidence of the change of name or the new address

When you (the examiner or CSMT officer) get the customer's written request, you must find the customer's withdrawn application in application records and check where the documents were archived.

When CSMT get the customer's written request they must email a scanned copy of the letter to the:

- Customer Service Liaison team (CSLT) in the correct application processing centre (APC) and tell them to return the stored documents to the customer
- complete an Archives request form and email it to the CSMT archive team, if the documents are a result of a Royal Mail (non-secure delivery) return

When CSLT or an examiner gets the customer's request, they must complete an Archives request form and [email it to the regional archiving team](#) responsible for unclaimed documents.

The archiving team will get the customer's documents from storage and give them to you. When you receive documents from the archiving team you, must:

1. Return the documents following the Posting Passports and Documents guidance.
2. Return the documents secure delivery when this has been paid for.
3. Include a letter to tell the customer the documents are in the envelope.
4. Add a case note or passport note to the customers' passport record (if possible) to record you have returned the documents to them (listing what documents you have returned to them).

## AMS document archives: request documents are moved to a new DAP application

You may identify documents held in archives are needed if you are processing a customer's new application on DAP. You must not transfer the application to AMS.

You must arrange for the documents held in archives to be transferred to Corby DHU (Document Handling Unit). You must:

1. Check MI and identify which archives team holds the documents (this will be the APC where the original AMS application was withdrawn).
2. Complete an Archives request form and [email it to the regional archiving team](#) responsible for the documents, telling the archive team they must send the documents to a DHU.
3. Put the application on hold.

The regional archive team must:

1. Get the customer's documents from storage.
2. Check the documents against the proforma, and record on the proforma the documents you have located and are sending to the DHU.
3. Print the proforma.
4. Put the documents in an envelope with a physical copy of the completed archive request form.
5. Label the envelope with the new DAP application reference number and Corby DHU and pass this to your local post room.
6. Update your local retained document spreadsheet.

The post room will send the envelope to Corby DHU using internal transfer.

The DHU will record, scan, and store the documents following their usual process. DAP will automatically create a **Documents received** task for you, the DAP examiner, when the documents have been recorded by the DHU.

The DHU will also scan the archive request form which will allow you, the DAP examiner, to check the archive team located and forwarded all the documents you requested. You must update ARD (Application Receive Domain) handling instructions before you complete the application, to send this form to confidential waste at the end of processing.

## AMS document archives: request documents are moved to a new AMS application

You may need to request documents from archives if you are processing a customer's new application on AMS.

You must:

1. Check MI and identify which archives team holds the documents (this will be the APC where the original AMS application was withdrawn).
2. Complete an Archives request form and [email it to the regional archiving team](#) responsible for unclaimed documents.
3. Record the documents on the AMS application, when you receive them from the archiving team, by:
  - adding a case note
  - recording the documents in the **Supporting documents** tab

## AMS document archives: regional archiving team contact information

You must use the following email addresses to contact the regional archiving teams:

- Liverpool archiving team
- Durham archiving team
- Peterborough archiving team
- Glasgow archiving team
- Newport archiving team
- Belfast archiving team
- London archiving team

### Related content

[Contents](#)

# AMS document archives: how the archiving team deals with documents

This section tells HM Passport Office staff working in the teams responsible for archiving customers' unclaimed documents (known in this guidance as the archiving teams) how to archive (store) customers' unclaimed documents. It includes how to identify and send documents that you must return to the issuing authority immediately.

To archive a customer's documents, you, the member of staff working in the archiving team, must:

1. Check the Archive form is filled in correctly and the documents received match the documents on the form.
2. Write your initials on the Archive form to confirm the documents are correct and sign the examination teams archive book (if you need to).
3. Put passport application forms, empty envelopes and correspondence not written on the Archive form in confidential waste.
4. Update the retained document spreadsheet to confirm, the:
  - application number
  - customer's forename and surname
  - date the archiving team received the documents
  - documents received
  - documents serial numbers
5. Separate those documents you must return to the [issuing authority immediately](#).
6. Write on the Archive form:
  - the date the archiving team received the documents
  - a review date 1 year in the future
7. Put the documents in a plastic wallet and place the Archive form at the front.
8. Add a case note or passport note on the passport issuing system to the correct application or passport record to confirm you have received the documents.
9. Store the plastic wallet, archive form and customer's documents in the dedicated archive area, ordered by date (using the date the archiving team received the documents).

## AMS document archives: returning documents to the issuing authority immediately

When you receive unclaimed documents into your archiving team, you must check the documents and separate those you must return to the issuing authority. You must:

1. Search on the internet for the address of the correct foreign embassy or financial institution you must return the documents to.

2. Draft a letter to send with the documents and put the letter and documents in an envelope addressed to the embassy or financial institution.
3. Make a note on the retained document spreadsheet to say:
  - you have returned the documents to the issuing authority
  - what documents you have returned
4. Add a passport note or case note to the customer's application or passport record (if possible) explaining:
  - you have returned the document to the issuing authority
  - the type of document you have returned
  - the address you sent the documents to

## AMS document archives: how to manage the archiving area

You, the archiving team member, must update the retained document spreadsheet when a document is:

- destroyed
- returned to their rightful owner
- returned to the issuing authority
- returned to the issuing office
- kept due to an ongoing crisis event

## AMS document archives: how to deal with a request for documents

When the archive team gets an Archive request form, you the archive team member of staff, must add the following information to the retained document spreadsheet:

- the details of the CSMT member, examiner, or Customer Service Liaison team
- team number (or name), or the DHU (Document Handling Unit) you have sent the documents to
- reason for the transfer or return of the document

## AMS document archives: how to deal with a customer's documents in archives

If a customer (or examiner) asks for a customer's archived documents and they are in archives, you must:

1. Print the entry on the retained document spreadsheet and take it and the documents to either the staff member or the support clerk on the team asking for them.
2. Ask the member of staff collecting the documents to sign and date the printed entry and print their name.
3. Send the Archive document form to confidential waste.

4. Update the manual records and the electronic spreadsheet with details of your actions.

## AMS document archives: how to deal with documents we have archived for 1 year

Every month the archiving team must review the unclaimed documents they have stored for 1 year and return them to the issuing authority or destroy them. Each month, you must:

1. Find all the archived documents that are in storage for 1 year or more.
2. Decide if the document must be:
  - destroyed
  - returned to the issuing authority
  - sent back to an examiner to reassess a crisis event
3. Fill in a destruction log for each application number to record the documents you are destroying.
4. Update the retained document spreadsheet to confirm the documents were:
  - returned to the issuing authority
  - destroyed, the date of destruction, who destroyed them and who witnessed the destruction
  - returned to examination for more checks
5. Put the archive document form in confidential waste.

You must return British passports to the central LSR (Lost, Stolen and Recovered) team with a note, asking them to create a Recovered (R) record for the passport.

## AMS document archives: how to maintain the return and destruction log sheet

You must complete the return and destruction log sheet with your actions taken if you have:

- destroyed a document
- returned a document to an issuing authority

The person who witnessed the destruction of the documents and the type of documents destroyed, must print their name and signature on the destruction log sheet.

You must keep the log for the current and previous financial year. This is subject to assurance visits, as part of the Security Team assurance programme.

## AMS document archives: how to destroy documents

To stop the fraudulent use of a document, you must destroy it. To destroy a document, you must either:

- shred the document and place it into confidential waste
- tear it up into a minimum of 4 pieces and place them into confidential waste

### **Related content**

[Contents](#)

# Documents in storage: what we must do with documents

This section tells you, the HM Passport Office staff member, how documents must be handled if they are in storage (for example, after an application has been withdrawn).

If you are a DAP (Digital Application Processing) user processing tasks in the DAP Intervention Queue, you must use this table to decide how to handle documents when the retention period expires.

If you are an SLDMS (second-line Document Management Service), you must use this table to decide how to handle documents held in DMS long term storage.

If you are an AMS (Application Management System) user, you must use this table to decide how you must handle documents when you withdraw an application due to loss of contact with the customer.

All users must send documents using standard post (unless they are an internal transfer).

## Documents you must deal with immediately

These documents must be dealt with immediately, for example, as soon as the customer's application has been withdrawn.

For documents in Digital Handling Unit (DHU) storage, ARD (Application Receive Domain) is not creating the **Item retention expired** task immediately for these types of documents. Since November 2022 ARD has been creating the task once the document has been in storage for 1 year. You must take the action shown below when the task is created.

Type of document	Send them to
Bank cards, bank books, and cheque books issued by a UK bank or building society	The issuing bank immediately
Foreign passport and foreign identity cards	The correct embassy or consulate in the UK For the address, refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's list of <a href="#">foreign embassies in the UK</a>  If you are the SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must include the stock letter

Foreign currency (DMS long term store or AMS archives only)	HM Passport Office's Finance team
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## Documents you must return to the issuing authority after 1 year

Type of document	Send them to
British passport	HM Passport Office's Lost, stolen and recovered team  If you are an SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must send all British passports together in one wallet and not separately, if there is more than one
Home Office documents	See Home Office issued documents
DVLA issued UK driving license	Driver & Vehicle Licensing Authority, Long View Rd, Morriston, Swansea SA6 7JL  If you are the SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must include the stock letter
Change of name deeds, statutory declarations, affidavits	The solicitor named on the document. If the solicitor is unnamed or illegible destroy the documents
Care and Court orders	The court authority on the order
Travel tickets	The issuing authority (if valid) - if expired, destroy it
Student enrolment cards or documents	The university or college listed on card
Foreign birth certificates or family books	The correct embassy or consulate in the UK. For the address, refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's list of <a href="#">foreign embassies in the UK</a>  If you are the SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must include the stock letter
Foreign marriage or civil partnership certificates	The correct embassy or consulate in the UK. For the address, refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's list of <a href="#">foreign embassies in the UK</a>  If you are the SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must include the stock letter
Foreign adoption certificate	The correct embassy or consulate in the UK. For the address, refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's list of <a href="#">foreign embassies in the UK</a>

	If you are the SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must include the stock letter
Foreign driving license	The correct embassy or consulate in the UK. For the address, refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's list of <a href="#">foreign embassies in the UK</a>  If you are the SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must include the stock letter
Foreign Court and Care Orders	The correct embassy or consulate in the UK. For the address, refer to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's list of <a href="#">foreign embassies in the UK</a>  If you are the SLDMS or handling AMS archives, you must include the stock letter

## Documents you must destroy after 1 year

Type of document	Issuing Authority	What to do
UK birth certificates	England and Wales	Destroy
	Scotland	Destroy
	Northern Ireland	Destroy
UK marriage certificates	England and Wales	Destroy
	Scotland	Destroy
	Northern Ireland	Destroy
UK adoption certificate	England and Wales	Destroy
	Scotland	Destroy
	Northern Ireland	Destroy
British consular birth certificate	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office	Destroy
Naturalisation certificate	UK Visas & Immigration	Destroy
Registration certificate	UK Visas & Immigration	Destroy
Change of name deeds, statutory declarations, affidavits		Return to the named solicitor if shown and clear, otherwise destroy
Bank statements		Destroy
Travel tickets		Destroy
Bank cards, bank books, and cheque books issued by a foreign bank or building society		Destroy

Photocopies of any document		Destroy
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**Related content**

[Contents](#)