

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Thank you for your Freedom of Information enquiry of 11th November 2016.

You asked for the following information:

- *"Documents and information regarding HM Treasury's records keeping and management policy.*
- *Documents advising ministers on conduct regarding papers: for example that identify to Treasury staff (particularly ministers) what constitutes a government document as opposed to a private document obtain or created in post."*

I can confirm that HM Treasury does hold information within the scope of your request. A copy of HM Treasury's Records Management Policy is enclosed in Annex A. In terms of the records of ministers, policy is determined for the whole of government by the Cabinet Office. This information has already been published and public authorities are not required to reissue information that is publically available (section 21). You will find a copy of the Ministerial Code of conduct here:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/468255/Final_draft_ministerial_code_No_AMENDS_14_Oct.pdf

This is complimented by the Cabinet Office's guide on the filing of ministerial records by departments, which can be found here:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/popapersguidance2009.pdf>

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact us. Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

Annex A: HM Treasury Records Management Policy

Records Management Policy

Record definition

We keep records for three reasons: first, because our information has business value; second, because we're heavily scrutinised and need to be able to explain and justify our actions; third, because what Treasury does makes history and we have a statutory duty to deposit a lot of our records with the National Archives (TNA).

Records are that sub-set of documents that provide the most reliable evidence of the decisions that we reach, the advice that we give and the transactions that we make.

Our records fall into three categories - Policy records describe the majority of our work; Private Office records are the primary evidence of ministers' and permanent secretaries' activities and Corporate records are the substance of our governance, administration and resourcing as a Department.

Our Policy, Private Office and Corporate records provide a comprehensive account of decisions, advice and transactions including not only the final document in each process (say the submission, briefing, contract or minute) but evidence of the significant consultations, drafting, negotiations and other activities that led up to it. All of this is part of the record and is filed consistently so that we can find it later and validate it as evidence.

Record keeping system

All of our records are stored in libraries and folders in Info Store. Information gets created all over the place (in email most often) but all records need, ultimately, to be filed in Info Store.

Documents are sometimes created or stored on the Internet. Internet material that constitutes a corporate record needs to be copied to Info Store.

Documents outside of Info Store are covered only by generic data policies. All the emails of Treasury staff are deleted 10 days after staff leave. This is the generic data policy for email. Personal H drives are deleted on exit too; after 30 days. Only transferring your email messages and documents to Info Store will properly preserve them as the Department's records.

Record keeping responsibilities

All personnel are responsible for reliable record keeping on behalf of HM Treasury; personnel will understand and use Info store; file regularly, selectively, securely and refrain from using excessive personal storage. If personnel are unclear about any of this, they will seek advice from their line manager.

Deputy Directors are responsible for the completeness, security and overall effectiveness of record keeping in their area, including oversight of their team folders. They are the Information Asset Owners for all the data managed by their teams.

Info Store Site Owners are appointed by Deputy Directors to administer their local Info Stores. Site Owners are specially trained and have access to a range of guidance and support in order to manage local access permissions, site features and record keeping functions, including the maintenance of a team folders.

The Permanent Secretary has overall responsibility for ensuring that Department record keeping meets business needs, Government standards and legal requirements.

In line with Cabinet Office guidance, Private Offices keep their own records which are associated with the person and career of an individual minister or Permanent Secretary, rather than any specific policy area.

Record types

There are four broad categories of documents at HM Treasury - Policy, Private Office, Corporate and Ancillary.

Policy documents describe the vast majority of our work and are the critical business material of nearly all our Groups. Policy documents often form part of a record, which means that they need to be managed carefully and preserved for a long time.

Private Office documents are the primary evidence of ministers' and permanent secretaries' activities. Private Office documents are also often part of a record.

Corporate documents are the substance of our governance, administration and resourcing as a Department and cover committees, HR, Finance, IT, procurement, projects and related activities. Corporate documents often form records too.

Ancillary material is everything that isn't core to either our business or our central business support activities. It is of localised and short-term interest only and includes team administration and working and reference information. Ancillary documents don't need to be kept for too long and will never become a part of our long-term record.

Record retention and deletion

Policy records:

- Documents supporting the policy process will be filed routinely into records libraries in Info Store.
- Business teams will weed out ephemera and duplicates systematically to ensure that the best consolidated record of each policy project, initiative or activity is retained.
- The consolidated record (stored in folders) will be deemed to be complete and no longer current business if there have been no edits and no new filing for 1 year. At this point it will be closed. Closing means that folders are retained in the Group filing area but are locked to additions, changes and deletions.
- Folders will be kept as closed until they are archived. Archiving means that folders are transferred from the Group filing area to the HMT Archive Records Centre where they become the responsibility of the Departmental KIM team. Site Owners will be prompted periodically to archive their closed folders.
- Folders may be archived as either *Open Access* (readable by all HMT) or *Closed Access* (readable on application only) depending on whether they remain SENSITIVE.
- Once transferred to the HMT Archive Records Centre folders will be reviewed by the KIM team no later than 10 years from the date that they were closed.
- Folders with enduring historical value will be sent to the National Archives no later than 20 years after they were first closed. All other folders will be destroyed.

Private Office records:

- Documents describing the core work of ministers and permanent secretaries,

whether departmental, governmental or political, will be filed routinely into records libraries in Info Store.

- Private Office administrators will weed out ephemera and duplicates systematically to ensure that the best consolidated record of each incumbent's term is retained.
- The consolidated record will be deemed to be complete and no longer current business when the incumbent finishes their term. At this point folders will be closed.
- Folders will be kept as closed until they are archived. Archiving means that folders are transferred from the Group filing area to the HMT Archive Records Centre where they become the responsibility of the Departmental KIM team. Site Owners will be prompted periodically to archive their closed folders.
- Folders may be archived as either *Open Access* (readable by all HMT) or *Closed Access* (readable on application only) depending on whether they remain SENSITIVE.
- Once transferred to the HMT Archive Records Centre folders will be reviewed by the KIM team no later than 10 years from the date that they were closed.
- Folders with enduring historical value will be sent to the National Archives no later than 20 years after they were first closed. All other folders will be destroyed.

Corporate records

- Documents supporting our central administration and related activities will be filed routinely into records libraries in Info Store.
- Corporate teams will weed out ephemera and duplicates systematically to ensure that the best consolidated record of each corporate process, service, activity or project is retained.
- The consolidated record will be deemed to be complete and no longer current business if there have been no edits and no new filing for 1 year. At this point folders will be closed.
- Folders will be kept as closed until they are archived. Archiving means that folders are transferred from the Group filing area to the HMT Archive Records Centre where they become the responsibility of the Departmental KIM team. Site Owners will be prompted periodically to archive their closed folders.
- Folders may be archived as either Open Access (readable by all HMT) or Closed Access (readable on application only) depending on whether they remain SENSITIVE.
- Once transferred to the HMT Archive Records Centre folders will be reviewed by the KIM team no later than 10 years from the date that they were closed.
- Folders with enduring historical value will be sent to the National Archives no later than 20 years after they were first closed. All other folders will be destroyed.

Ancillary records

- Documents that are ancillary and will not be filed as Policy, Private Office or Corporate records may be stored in non-records libraries in Info Store, where they need to be shared, or in personal mailboxes or H drives where they don't.
- Ancillary documents are defined as those where business value does not extend beyond 5 years other than for the purposes of personal reference.
- Individual users are responsible for managing this material to support their own or their team's work.
- Ancillary documents in Info Store will be deemed of no further value 5 years after they are created and will be deleted.
- Material in personal mailboxes and H drives will be deemed of no further business use no later than 30 days after a user has left the employment of HM Treasury and

will be deleted.

- By exception a line manager may authorise a longer retention period via the SCR (Staff Change Request) process.

National Archives record selection and transfer

HM Treasury has a statutory duty to select and transfer records of enduring value to the National Archives (TNA). Enduring value means a value beyond the needs of the business.

Records with enduring value have permanent historical or legal significance. Policy and Private Office records and a small number of Corporate ones have enduring value.

Selection and transfer processes are defined by TNA as three gateways and our approach to record keeping will support the orderly progress of data through each.