

Customer Records Retention Schedule

This is **version 1** and is effective from **2nd February 2026**

DWP customer records, are usually, stored in bespoke IT systems, where deletion is managed on the user's behalf.

1. Retention periods are applied to customer records in all formats:
 - In specifically designed IT systems
 - Paper based
2. DWP has two classifications of customer records: Supporting Records or Ephemeral Records. [See Information Management Standard for definitions](#), ephemeral records are kept for 4 weeks, supporting records are kept as defined in sections 4 and 5 below.
3. If the case has the following **live interest**, the customer record must be retained until end of interest, then the normal retention period applies.

Live Interest

- a) Fraud - including active investigations.
 - b) Debt Management - including Overpayments, civil proceedings, Recovery from Estates and Compensation Recovery.
 - c) Appeals - including Mandatory Reconsiderations.
 - d) Customer feedback or complaints being dealt with by Independent Case Examiner (ICE) cases & Parliamentary Health and Service Ombudsman (PHSO) Cases only.
 - e) Criminal Cases Review Commission cases
4. The following customer records have a standard 24 month after live interest retention period.

Standard Retention.

- Attendance Allowance

- Benefit cap
- Bereavement Benefits (including: Widows Benefit/Pension; Widowed Parents Allowance: Widowed Mothers Allowance)
- Carer's Allowance
- Child Maintenance Group
- Disability Living Allowance
- Employment and Support Allowance
- Incapacity Benefit
- Income Support
- Independent case Examiner (ICE) cases
- Industrial Injuries Schemes (not including National Schemes)
- Jobseekers Allowance
- Maternity Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Personal Independence Payments
- Severe Disablement Allowance
- Social Fund
- State Pension
- Universal Credit

5. The following customer records have non-standard retention.

Non-Standard Retention table.

Line of Business	Specific documents (if applicable)	Retention period	Business justification for retention period
Access to Work	Cases with payments in DISC: AtW element(s) awarded and have had a reimbursement payment from payment creation.	84 Months.	Finance payment audit requirements.
	Cases without payments in DISC: Customers that have had an AtW element(s) awarded but no payment – case creation. Cases with a referral to AtW contracted provision case creation.	36 or 84 months.	Access to Work awards are made in three-year periods. Finance payment audit requirements.
	Customers that applied to Access to Work but did not have an element awarded are removed 36 months after the case was created.	36 months.	Access to Work awards are made in three-year periods.
Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)	Clerical records.	7 years after the Date of Death.	Retention advised by Ministry of Defence (MOD) in line with the retention of MOD records of an administrative nature.

Customer Records Retention Schedule V1.0

			DWP are the data processors on behalf of MOD.
Benefit Payments	Departmental benefit payment systems.	6 years after financial year end.	Central Payment System (CPS) / Departmental Payment Systems. To comply with finance legislation.
Claimant Commitments		4 weeks after end of live interest or superseded claim, unless sanction, fraud, appeal, debt, or Performance Management interest.	These are 'supporting' when the claim is live but are 'ephemeral' when superseded, once the claim or DWP interest has ended on current Claimant Commitment.
Complaints	eCase.	24 Months.	To ensure documentation is available for audit requirements.
Customer Information System (CIS)	Multiple.	Not Applicable	For further information please contact – CIS Data Guardian team
Debt Management (including	Benefit lines/CFCD must keep overpayment/Penalty decisions correspondence including notification and acceptance letters.	24 months after debt interest closes.	To ensure documentation is available for audit requirements.

CRU, arrears and enforcements)	Debt Management (Citizen Debt) documents any relevant debt documents needed for audit purposes.		
	Debt Systems and any finance or payments documents. Debt Management – DMS and CRU systems and any finance or payment documents.	7 years for payment related data (ledger).	Financial Audit Requirements.
Employment and Support Allowance	Standard retention other than JSAPs system.	JSAPs stores information for 4 years HMRC (requirement).	To ensure documentation is available for audit requirements. To comply with Regulation 97 of the The Income Tax (Pay As You Earn) Regulations 2003(link is external) .
European Social Fund (England) 2014-2020	All European Social Fund (ESF)data.	All data retained until 31/03/2035.	All data must be retained for a minimum of 10 years from end of financial year after final ESF claim is paid.

European Social Fund (Wales) 2014-2020	All European Social Fund (ESF) data.	2014-20 Programmes – retention dates are set at the level of the operation and are dependent on when the final project expenditure is included in the annual accounts that WEFO submits to the EC. WEFO will write out individually to beneficiaries to confirm these dates once they are available.	You can find more detail on this at section 5.1.4.1 of the WEFO Eligibility Rules and at question 1 of Programme Closure FAQ document (EU Structural Funds 2014 to 2020: project closure FAQs [HTML] GOV.WALES) (Link is external).
Fraud	Fraud documentation.	See Fraud Retention Guidance.	Fraud retention set based on Fraud requirements / legislation.
Incapacity Benefit	Standard retention other than IB55 referral files for live claims.	120 months from date of decision.	This is to ensure that the last two Personal Capability Assessments on form IB85 are retained.
Income Support	Standard retention other than ISCS system All supporting documents.	Data on ISCS is held for 18 months after the claim closure date, last activity, or date of last adjudication on the live system before being moved and placed into the archive system. Once	System retention is 18 months (5 years archived). Clerical and ECMS supporting paper to be held for 24 months following end of DWP Interest/Case closure.

		archived data is held for 5 years.	
Independent Case Examiner (ICE) Cases	For data recorded on Respond.	24 months after ICE case closure.	Retaining electronic data for 24 months allows sufficient time for a complainant to consider the outcome of ICE examination of their complaint and exercise their right to approach the relevant Parliamentary Ombudsman. <i>For complaints with a live PHSO interest, the retention period is the latter of 24 months or one month after end of interest.</i>
Industrial Injuries Schemes (IIS) (Not including National Schemes)		24 months retention trigger defined by IIS processes.	To ensure all relevant decisions (including Commissioners decisions) have been applied and supporting documentation is available in the event of subsequent claims, change of circumstances and/or disputes.
Information provided to Support Safeguarding Adult Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews	Initial request and any supplementary requests. All information provided including Legal Clearance.	6 years as involves a customer death.	Reflects potential time period of these external reviews.

Customer Records Retention Schedule V1.0

Internal Process Review Documents		6 years from completion of IPR investigation.	To enable responses to requests from FOI's, DWP Select committee and DWP Security of State.
Jobseekers Allowance	Standard retention other than JSAPs System.	JSAPs stores information for 4 years (HMRC requirement).	To ensure documentation is available for audit requirements. To comply with Regulation 97 of the The Income Tax (Pay As You Earn) Regulations 2003(link is external) .
Multi Agency Public Protection Agency (Jobcentre) MAPPA J Forms	MAPPA J forms	Should be retained locally for the period that the restrictions apply. When the restrictions no longer apply the MAPPA forms should be destroyed immediately, in the same way as any other sensitive information.	Required to identify which offenders are MAPPA eligible and the related risk management. See MAPPA guidance for further details.
National Schemes for the 1979 Pneumoconiosis Worker	System records (customer details; system payments). In DRS the application form and	Compensation payment made retention 8 years from the date of the last decision.	To allow DWP to make recovery of National Schemes Compensation Act from civil compensation awards.

Customer Records Retention Schedule V1.0

Compensation Act 1979 and the 2008 Mesothelioma Scheme	supporting documents will be retained.	No award for compensation retention period of 2 years from the date of the last decision.	
NINO Allocation	NINo Allocation, successful NINo applications, the digital NINo application form and associated documents are held on the Apply for a NINo service.	24 months from the date of creation.	24 months is required to prevent Fraud or identity theft, to prevent re-applications and to allow cross reference.
Parliamentary Health and Service Ombudsman (PHSO) Cases	For data recorded on eCase.	24 months.	Retaining electronic data for 24 months allows sufficient time for PHSO to exam and investigate complaints to conclusion.
Pension Credit	Standard retention other than ISCS system.	Data on ISCS is held for 18 months after the claim closure date, last activity, or date of last adjudication on the live system before being moved and placed into the archive system. Once	System retention is 18 months (5 years archived). Clerical and ECMS supporting paper to be held for 24 months following end of DWP Interest/Case closure.

		archived data is held for 5 years.	
Pension Sharing on Divorce Documents		Until State Pension claimed then 24 month retention period applies.	The calculations provide a snapshot of National Insurance which cannot be redone and include details of pension share.
Performance Measurement	DRS/ECMS Supporting Documentation.	24 Months.	To ensure documentation is available for audit requirements.
	Fraud & Error Measurement and Accuracy (FEMA).	36 Months.	To enable the publication of statistical data.
Relationship Validation Unit (RVU) Type B Cases	All supporting documents.	5 years from date of decision.	These are complex cases that likely to be appealed. It would be costly or not possible for the department or claimant to collect this information again.
Right of Access Request (RAR) by Citizens	Responses to Right of Access Request (RAR) by Citizens retained in eCase.	24 months.	Retained in eCase Automatically deleted after 24 months.
SMS (Short Messaging Service) Text messages	All Lines of Business Text Messaging Application (TMA).	90 days.	

Customer Records Retention Schedule V1.0

State Pension Deferred Lump Sum Payments	The completed DL66 & DL67 and any evidence to support subsequent changes to this decision.	72 months (6 years) after the financial year the payment is made.	To ensure documentation is available for audit requirements. HMRC, The National Archives (TNA) and National Audit Office (NAO) requirements.
Suicide and Self-harm Documents	All documents relating to suicide and self-harm.	Retain for 6 years following the date on which the incident occurred, or the declaration of intention was made.	Health and Safety Retention Document. Customer Self Harm.
Support for Mortgage Interest Loan (SMI) Documents	SMI Charge Form / Loan Agreement.	14 months DRS. 2 finance documents 6 years after recovery / write-off of the SMI loan.	Documents should be held until the expiry of the limitation period on loan agreements.
Telephone Call Recording	All Lines of Business Call recordings.	2 years after date of call.	Call recording for Quality and monitoring purposes.
Warm Home Discount	Data from suppliers – stored electronically.	24 months from date of receipt.	Required for data matching in response to customer or Energy Supplier enquiries to check why eligibility was not granted in the previous scheme year. This retention

Customer Records Retention Schedule V1.0

			'carry over' has been agreed with Energy Suppliers.
Winter Fuel Service (WFS)	A system identifying all Winter Fuel Payments, any offline applications should be uploaded into WFS.	24 months after the annual exercise completes (31 March).	To meet NAO requirements.
Work & Health Programme (WHP)	WHP records.	5 years following the closure of the claim/PA.	Information needed so that the Programme can effectively manage the referral and re-referral process.