

Generic records retention schedule for Isle of Man local authorities Guidance for use

Overview

Retention scheduling is at the heart of effective records management. It is a set of processes by which you determine how long you need to keep a given record – the 'retention period' - and what happens to it at the end of that period. The decisions you make and actions you identify are drawn together into a key document - the retention schedule - which you can then use to manage your records going forward.

1 What are the benefits of retention scheduling?

Retention scheduling will help you to:

- ensure legislative compliance (with legislation and regulations relating to your own business area, the Public Records Act and Data Protection legislation)
- enhance business effectiveness, by increasing your control over your records, saving valuable staff time and records storage costs

Isle of Man Public Record Office Factsheet 6: 'What is retention scheduling?' and Factsheet 10 'How do I use the Isle of Man Public Record Office's generic retention schedules?' provide further information. It is important that you read these factsheets before using the Generic Retention Schedule. The Isle of Man Public Record Office can also provide a retention schedule template.

2 What are the IOMPRO generic retention schedules?

The Isle of Man Public Record Office generic retention schedule for local authorities provides a starting point for creating retention schedules. It was produced by a working group of Isle of Man Local Authority Clerks and suggests retention periods for record types that are common to a number of Isle of Man local authorities. They are based on business requirements and UK guidance, including advice from the UK's National Archives (<https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>), the Scottish Council on Archives (<http://www.scottisharchives.org.uk/scarrs>) and the Information and Records Management Society. They also aim to take into account legislation common to all public bodies.

It should be emphasised that the Generic Retention Schedule offers general guidance and does not constitute legal advice. The length of time records are required may vary across different areas and no tool will fit all circumstances. Local authorities are responsible for their own records retention decisions, which should take into account their own business and legal requirements.

3 How is the retention schedule arranged?

The schedule is split into 19 sections (each a separate worksheet) containing suggested records series in the following common functional areas:

Corporate management
Finance
Information management
Records of short term value
Risk management and insurance
Health and safety
Human resources
Byelaws and enforcement
Rates
Elections
Housing
Building control
Estates and infrastructure
Refuse and recycling
Planning and property searches
Licensing
Leisure services
Dispute resolution
Payroll

The schedule has the following columns:

Record Series (Column A)	The name of each record series should be placed in this column. Include a row in your retention schedule for each type of records you create or receive (each 'record series'). Examples could include 'Accounts', 'Planning Committee minutes and agendas'.
Retention requirements - legal/regulatory (Column B)	Identify any legislation, policy or regulation that requires you to keep the record series for a certain length of time e.g. '7 years (Isle of Man Government finance regulations)', 'Permanent (Registration of Deeds Act 1961)'
Retention requirements - business needs (Column C)	Identify how long the records are useful to you for business purposes (your operational business needs), other than legal compliance. State the length of time you need to keep the records to meet your business needs in this column, e.g. '5 years'.
Retention period (Column D)	Compare your legal/regulatory requirements and your business needs requirements (identified in columns B and C). The longer of these two requirements will be your final retention period. Insert the final retention period in this column. Try to be as specific as possible and include any triggers that begin the retention period, e.g. 'current financial year + 7 years' or 'date of closure of file + 3 years'
Public Records Act selection (to be completed by the PRO) (Column E)	Please contact the Public Record Office team and we can work with you to decide which records series should be kept permanently as part of the Public Record Office collections. It is important that you discuss and agree selection with us before disposing of any of your records- this is a legal obligation under the Public Records Act. For records included in the generic schedule, many of these decisions have already been included.
Actions (Column F)	Identify any actions to be taken either during the life of the records or at the end of their retention period, e.g. 'Transfer selected records to the Isle of Man Public Record Office' (at a date agreed with the Public Record Office) or 'Destroy records securely at the end of the retention period' (to be used only where records have not been selected for permanent preservation at the Public Record Office).
Notes (Column G)	You can use this column to record any extra information, for example, any access considerations if the record series contains sensitive or confidential information, if the record series only exists for a specific period of time (rather than continuing indefinitely), if the records are in a specific format that might require attention during the retention period (for example audio or audio-visual recordings on vulnerable media with a limited lifespan such as cassette or CD-Rom) or where you have taken retention periods from best practice guidance elsewhere.

4 What about records not covered by the schedule?

Whilst efforts have been made to capture the main functions carried out by Isle of Man local authorities, you may find that some of the records you produce are not listed in the generic retention schedule. It is very important that retention periods are also produced for these records and included in your schedule. It is also important that selection for permanent preservation is carried out before you dispose of any records - this is a legal obligation under the Public Records Act 1999. Please contact Isle of Man Public Record Office when writing or updating a schedule on 693569 or email public.records@gov.im.

5 How to I use the IOMPRO generic retention schedules?

In order to use the Isle of Man Public Record Office generic retention schedule for local authorities you need to:

- transfer the information in the generic schedule into your own organisation's retention schedule
- check that the schedule is appropriate for your records, taking into consideration your organisation's business and legal requirements
- add any additional records series that you create to the schedule and identify your legal and business needs for retention
- consult the Isle of Man Public Record Office to agree selection decisions for any additional record series you have added to the schedule
- set an annual or bi-annual review date and insert this into your schedule
- ask senior management to approve and sign the retention schedule
- ask the Isle of Man Public Record Office to approve and sign the retention schedule
- implement the decisions recorded in the schedule
- keep a log of which records are destroyed or transferred to the Isle of Man Public Record Office
- review your schedule regularly and agree any revisions with the Isle of Man Public Record Office