

**Procedure Name:** 001 Procedure for retention, destruction and archiving of health records

**Procedure initiated by :** NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Health Records Committee

**Date Approved:** 30 July 2009

**Date last Amended:** 01 Feb 2011

**Date of Next Review:** 30 July 2013

**Related Policies and Procedures:**

## 001 PROCEDURE FOR RETENTION, DESTRUCTION AND ARCHIVING OF HEALTH RECORDS

### 1 Opening Statement

The Data Protection Act 1998 places obligations on public authorities to use and record information in line with the eight Data Protection principles outlined in the Act.

The fifth principle of the Act states that ***“Personal Data processed for any purpose(s) shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes”***.

To assist NHS Boards to comply with this principle, the Scottish Government has published guidance on the retention of clinical documents entitled: ‘Scottish Government Records Management: Code of Practice Version 2.0’. NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde adhere to this guidance which was updated in March 2010.

### 2 Retention Periods

Arrangements for retention have been standardised across NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde and ratified through the Board’s Health Records Committee

Current retention periods for health records in NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde are as follows:

Deceased Records	3 years after death
Adult General Records	6 years from last attendance.
Children’s Records (inc A&E cards)	Retained until the child reaches the age of 25 or 3 years after death, whichever is reached soonest.
Maternity Records	25 years from Birth
Mental Health Records	20 years from last attendance or 3 years after death.

### **3 Exceptions**

The following categories of health record must not be destroyed:

- Any record or register which identifies details of health records which have been destroyed
- Any health records pre 1948
- Records of Cancer patients where Radiotherapy/ Chemotherapy treatment is involved
- Certain categories of records such as 'Genetic Records' or patients who have been involved in research, other than clinical trials, will be retained for a minimum of 30 years.
- Mental Health records will be reviewed by the Health Board Archivist to determine retention of records of historic interest.
- Clinical trials/Drug studies retained for a minimum of 15 years.

### **4 Process**

*Process for Culling/ destruction:*

- Records for destruction should be easily identified by:
  - Year sticker
  - List of last attendance.
- Records should be culled from the library on, at least, an annual basis.
- Records must be thoroughly checked to ensure that they are ready for destruction and that they do not fall into one of the categories that require them to be retained longer.
- Records culled must have a date flagged against the storage box which indicates the future destruction date.
- The date of destruction must be recorded in the Master Patient Index against the individual record.
- The Inventory of Records must be updated to reflect the batch of records destroyed in the cull.
- Records which should not be destroyed as per guidance must be clearly identified.
- A&E Records for Children should be filed, if possible, outwith the adult filing system to ensure that they can be readily identified for retention until the patient reaches 25 years.
- Records flagged for destruction must be confidentially destroyed by a

competent supplier who has a contract with the Health Board. NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde will receive confirmation of safe destruction.

#### **4 Definition of Terms & Acronyms**

#### **5 Reference (National/local guidelines, standards and legislation)**

Scottish Government Records Management: Code of Practice V2 March 2010  
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/309966/0097786.pdf>

#### **6 Related Policies and Guidance**

HDL(2006)28 : The Management, Retention and Disposal of Administrative Records  
<http://www.sehd.scot.nhs.uk/mels/HDL200628.pdf>

NHS MEL (2000)17 : Data Protection Act 1998

Procedure 07 : Health Records Filing System