

How to guide: Retention of documents

Records management relates to individual, professional, and organisational responsibilities to manage and retain records effectively and consistently.

Key information you should be aware of:

- In England, all NHS organisations and managers need to enable staff to meet the standards set out in the Records Management Code of Practice 2021: [Records Management Code of Practice 2021 - NHSX](#)
- Practices should ensure good practice is adhered to in relation to records management, as per national guidance.
- The practice Principal Investigator (PI) should adhere to the records management and retention requirements that are outlined in research study protocols. This activity can be delegated via the study delegation log.

Highlights

- The Records Management Code of Practice 2021 provides guidance for those working within, or under contract to, the NHS in England.
- NHSX advises that standards and practice will change over time, so the Records Management Code of Practice document will be reviewed and updated when needed. Practices should ensure the most recent version of this records management guidance is followed by visiting the NHSX website: [Records Management Code of Practice 2021 - NHSX](#)
- The code has a section dedicated to the required retention periods for clinical trials and research. The retention schedule can be found in Appendix II.
- When supporting specific studies, practices should consult the study protocol which will outline the site data retention and management requirements.

See also

- Study conclusion (closedown)

Full guide

Guidance is available to advise of good practice in relation to records management within the NHS in England. Practices should ensure they uphold high standards of record management by following national guidance. The practice PI should follow the records management and retention requirements that are outlined in research study protocols, reviewing these for each individual study. This activity can be delegated via the study delegation log.

Records management and retention

- Published on the NHSX website, the Records Management Code of Practice 2021 is a guide for NHS organisations in England to follow when managing records: [Records Management Code of Practice 2021 - NHSX](#)
- This provides a framework to support consistent and responsible records management. This code considers individual, professional, organisational, and legal responsibilities when managing records.
- Practices should refer to the NHSX website for the most current version of this guidance. The code has a section dedicated to the required retention periods for clinical trial and research records.
- Practices should ensure good practice is followed when managing records, in liaison with study teams. When supporting specific studies, practices should consult the study protocol which will outline study specific data retention and management requirements. Practices should contact the study team to discuss if further information is required.

Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

PI Principal Investigator