

# Retention Guidelines for Local Authorities

A Guide produced by the Local Government Group

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## Introduction by the Keeper of Public Records

Records management is at the heart of the *Modernising Government* agenda. Electronic records management underpins electronic government services. If public authorities cannot undertake the effective management of their records and information - particularly keeping them organised and accessible for as long as they are needed (but no longer) - it will be hard to sustain electronic services in which the public can have trust.

The effective management of records in all formats depends as much on their efficient disposal as on their long-term preservation. Good records disposal policies are essential to good records management. I am, therefore, extremely pleased to see the publication of these guidelines on the retention of records of local authorities. Government as a whole must be consistent in the way it handles and disposes of its information. These guidelines, which have been drawn up from best practice and with the help of experienced practitioners in the profession, will give local authorities a base line from which they can build their own disposal policies. They will assist local records services and archives in meeting local needs while providing a consistent approach to record keeping across Government.

The guidelines are arranged by function and can thus be adapted to the widely varying structure of local authorities. This is extremely important in the context of freedom of information and data protection compliance; the public will expect equality of openness and availability across the government sector, and stakeholders will expect that their interests are being safeguarded. These guidelines are instrumental in achieving these aims, and I heartily endorse their use.

*Sarah Tyacke*

Keeper of Public Records

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