
Records retention, destruction and archive

Cambridge University Hospitals has in place a Trust retention and destruction schedule detailing retention periods for Trust-wide documents, and local retention and destruction schedules detailing retention periods for specific documents held within individual departments.

How long are records retained for?

Since 1998 an image of all patients' records who have not attended the hospital for 4 years has been recorded, this image will be retained for 30 years. Once the records have been imaged the paper copy is destroyed.

Exceptions

- Deceased patients' records are destroyed after 8 years unless the patient is a child, and then the records will be retained until the date when the child would have reached the age of 25.
- Records belonging to the mothers of children who have passed away under the age of 25.
- Obstetric patients' records are retained for 25 years and psychiatric patients' records are retained for 20 years, regardless of whether the patient is deceased or not.
- Accident and Emergency cards are destroyed after 8 years.
- Any records subject to a Freedom of Information request will be retained until the request has been processed.
- Any records marked by a consultant as 'Do not destroy'.

How is confidential information destroyed?

Paper records that contain confidential information are shredded or incinerated when they are no longer required.

For more information please see the records preservation, retention and destruction policy.