

## Retention of Health Records

It is important to refer to the comprehensive guidance given in the links provided for specific records but the following tables summarise guidance for England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland.

### England, Northern Ireland and Wales

England: [Records Management NHS Code of Practice](#)

Wales: [NHS Wales Governance e-manual](#)

Northern Ireland: [Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety \(Northern Ireland\) Good management Good Records](#)

### Recommended summarised minimum lengths of retention of hospital and GP records

<b>Hospital Records</b>	
Children and Young People	Retain until the patient's 25th birthday or 26th if young person was 17 at conclusion of treatment, or 8 years after death.
Mentally disordered persons within the meaning of the Mental Health Act	20 years after the date of last contact between the patient/client/service user and any health/care professional employed by the mental health provider, or 8 years after the death of the patient/client/service user if sooner
Maternity records ( including all obstetric and midwifery records, including those of episodes of maternity care that end in stillbirth or where the child later dies)	25 years after the birth of the last child
All other hospital records ( other than non-specified secondary care records)	8 years after the conclusion of treatment or death
<b>GP Records</b>	
Maternity records	25 years after last live birth
Records relating to persons receiving treatment for a mental disorder within the meaning of the mental health legislation	20 years after the date of the last contact; or 10 years after patient's death if sooner
Records relating to those serving a prison sentence	Not to be destroyed.
Records relating to those serving in HM Armed Forces	Not to be destroyed.
GP records	GP Records, wherever they are held, other than the records listed below retain for 10 years after death or after the patient has permanently left the country unless the patient remains in the European Union. In the case of a child if the illness or death could have potential relevance to adult conditions or have genetic implications for the family of the deceased, the advice of clinicians should be sought as to whether to retain the records for a longer period.

## Scotland

Scotland: [Records Management best practice in relation to the creation, use, storage, management and disposal of NHS records](#)

**Summary of minimum retention periods for personal health records (electronic or paper-based, and concerning all specialties, including GP medical records)**

GP records	Retain for the lifetime of the patient and for 3 years after their death.
Records relating to children and young people (16 years on admission)	Retain until the patient's 25 <sup>th</sup> birthday or 26 <sup>th</sup> if young person was 17 at conclusion of treatment, or 3 years after death.
Adult	6 years after date of last entry or 3 years after death if earlier
Mentally disordered person ( within the meaning of any Mental Health Act)	20 years after date of last contact between the patient/ client/ service user and any health/ care professional employed by the mental health provider, or 3 years after the death of the patient/ client/ service user if sooner and the patient died while in the care of the organisation.
Maternity Records	25 years after the birth of the last child