

Summary

This factsheet intends to provide you with a glossary of records management terms which have been used within the various factsheets comprising the records management toolkit. It also includes some administrative terms relating specifically to the Church of England.

Archives

These are any records which have been designated for permanent retention due to their continuing administrative, informational, legal and historic value as evidence of the work undertaken. Archives are normally a small percentage of an organisation's records.

Appraisal

This is the process of assessing the value of records in accordance with an agreed set of criteria to determine how long they should be retained. Criteria should be based on the records administrative, legal, financial, historical, informational, evidential and research value.

Backups

This is the process of making copies of data which may be used to restore the original if it is lost following a disaster or an accidental deletion or corruption of the data.

Copyright

This is a law which gives rights to a creator of certain works, which includes text, lists and databases, drawings, graphic designs, logos and computer programmes, and allows him/her to control how the works may be used. The principal UK legislation is the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988. For more detail on copyright see the factsheet "Copying and copyright".

Data Protection

This law gives individuals the right to know what information is held about them and provides a framework to ensure that personal information is handled correctly. The current legislation is the Data Protection Act 1998. There are several specific terms associated with the Data Protection Act, which are defined in the factsheet "Data Protection".

Diocesan Record Office (DRO)

This is an agreed place of deposit for parish records and is normally the record office administered by the relevant local authority. It is usually also the place of deposit for diocesan, episcopal and cathedral records as well.

Filing Containers

These are the physical or virtual storage areas for records. Types of containers include document wallets, hanging files, lever arch files and electronic folders. Your Filing Structure (see below) will define the creation, labelling and physical organisation of these containers.

Filing Structure

A framework that defines the organisation of your records, whether in paper or on computer. This should be documented in a clear and usable form, usually as a list of file headings and codes, perhaps with retention advice and a note of who has access to the files. It is best practice for such a framework to reflect the functions and activities which your office undertakes.

Freedom of Information

This law regulates public access to official information held by public bodies. The current legislation is the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This law generally does not apply to the Church of England, except marriage registers dated after 1837, which technically belong to the Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978

This is the principal legislation which regulates the care of parish registers and parochial archives. For more detail on the measure see the factsheet "Agreements with record offices".

Records

Recorded information held in any format, created or received by an organisation in the course of its business and retained as evidence of its activities. Formats can include, for example, paper, electronic files, photos, videos, DVDs, audio-guides and CDs. Throughout their use records can be described as passing through various stages in a lifecycle. Stages include creation, use, maintenance, storage, access and eventual destruction or archiving.

Records Management

This is the efficient and systematic control of records, throughout their lifecycle. The management of records ensures efficiency and economy in their use, storage and disposal and the selection of those of value for permanent preservation.

Record series

A group of identical or related records that are normally created, used and filed as a unit and in turn serve a common function. They allow evaluation as a unit for retention scheduling purposes. A series may consist of one or many records.

Retention Schedule

This is a list of record series created and received across an organisation, with the requirements for how long they should be kept and what action to take at the end of this period. A designated retention period is decided by taking into account legal, administrative, business and historical considerations. It is best practice for the record series to be arranged under the functions and activities which your office undertakes.

Version control

This is the management of a record which goes through multiple revisions. By clearly marking each record with a version number (e.g. v1, v1.1, v2) it enables one version to be distinguished from another.

Factsheets available in the records management toolkit

- What is records management
- Organising your records
- Looking after your paper records
- Looking after your electronic records
- Looking after your emails
- Looking after your multimedia records
- Agreements with record offices
- Access to records
- Data protection
- Copying and copyright
- Glossary

Further advice

For further advice please contact the Church of England Record Centre:

15 Galleywall Road, South Bermondsey, London, SE16 3PB.

020 7898 1030

archives@churchofengland.org

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