



Retention Policy

This document details the policy of Women in the Fire Service (WFS) UK company number 6577352.

If you have any queries about this policy and or procedure, please contact The Company Secretary via the website: <https://wfs.org.uk/>

Policy Statement

WFS will ensure that information is not kept longer than is necessary and will retain the minimum amount of information that it requires to carry out its statutory functions and the provision of services.

Associated Policies

Additional and associated WFS policies can be found at <https://wfs.org.uk/policies/>

Version Control

This document will be reviewed annually by Directors and ratified annually by NEC.

Version number	Last review date	Details of amendments
1	2/12/21	First published/approved by the NEC
2	November 2024	Amends to formatting and review of owners
3	February 2025	Review of owners and general statement added
4	December 2025	Accident book changed to WFS Manager. Version control changed. Policy link added.
5	February 2026	Additional points added to Aims and Objectives Additional responsibilities added Deletion of electronic records added

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1. Scope

1.1. This Document Retention Policy applies to all information held by WFS and its external service providers where they are processing information on WFS behalf.

2. Overview

2.1. Data retention policies give information on what information is held, the reason, where it is stored, and for how long. This policy gives an overview of WFS retention.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1. The key objective of this policy is to provide WFS with a simple framework which will govern decisions on whether a particular document should be retained or disposed of. In the case of documents which are to be retained by WFS, the policy includes guidance on the format in which they should be retained and agreed retention periods.

3.2. Implementation of the policy should ensure transparency when retrieving information, for the purposes of a subject access and reduce the amount of information that may be held unnecessarily.

3.3. The policy clarifies the different roles of employees in relation to document retention and disposal in order that they understand their responsibilities, and who to refer to if they are unsure about any.

3.4. Retention triggers are measured from the relevant event, typically closure of case, end of contract, or end of the tax year, as specified in Appendix 1.

3.5. Where a legal, regulatory, or investigation hold applies, scheduled deletion is suspended for affected records until the hold is lifted, and this is documented.

4. Information

4.1. Information is one of WFS assets; while carrying out its various functions, WFS accumulates information from both individuals and external organisations. WFS also generates a wide range of data, which is recorded in documents and records.

4.2. These documents and records are in several different formats, examples of which include (but are not limited to) data such as names, emails, IP addresses; financial information; payroll for the purpose of processing employee contractual rights; legal documents such as contracts.

4.3. For the purposes of this Policy, the terms 'document' and 'records' include information in both hard copy and electronic form and refers to personal identifiable data within.

4.4. In certain circumstances it will be necessary to retain specific documents in order to fulfil statutory or regulatory requirements and also to meet operational needs. Document retention may also be useful to evidence events or agreements in the case of disputes, and also to preserve information which has historic value.

4.5. Premature destruction of documents could result in inability to defend litigious claims, operational difficulties and failure to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

4.6. Lengthy or indefinite retention of personal information could result in WFS breaching the GDPR.

4.7. It is important for the above reasons that WFS has in place systems for the timely and secure disposal of documents and records that are no longer required for business purposes and in accordance with the GDPR are kept up-to-date and relevant.

5. Retention and Disposal

5.1. Decisions on retention and disposal must follow Appendix 1 and apply the stated retention trigger (e.g., case closure, contract end, termination of employment, end of tax year). Reviews should be recorded and any exceptions justified.

5.2. In circumstances where a retention period of a specific document has expired, a review should always be carried out prior to a decision being made to dispose of it. This review should not be particularly time consuming and should be straightforward. If the decision to dispose of a document is taken, then consideration should be given to the method of disposal to be used.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. Directors will be responsible for determining (in accordance with this policy) whether to retain or dispose of specific documents within the remit of their responsibility.

6.2. Directors may delegate the operational aspect of this function within the organisation.

6.3. Directors should seek advice from the Company Secretary if they are uncertain as to whether minimum retention periods are prescribed by law, or whether the retention of a document is necessary to protect WFS position where a potential claim has been identified, or for operational purposes.

6.4. Directors should ensure that the Schedule in Appendix 1 which is relevant to their responsibility is kept up to date.

6.5. The Company Secretary is accountable for policy governance, annual review, version control, and ensuring processors mirror WFS retention and deletion requirements.

7. Disposal

7.1. Confidential waste should be disposed of using the shredder.

7.2. Disposal of documents other than those containing confidential or personal data may be disposed of by binning, recycling, and deletion (in the case of electronic documents).

7.3. If a record is not listed within the retention schedule, guidance should be sought from Directors and a record of the decision with rationale made.

7.4. Electronic records are deleted or anonymised. Evidence of deletions will be retained.

8. General Statement

8.1. Good housekeeping in line with retention schedules is essential for GDPR compliance. Individuals are responsible for ensuring they comply with this policy and responsibly store and dispose of electronic and hard copies of documents and records.

Appendix 1

Document retention schedule

Guidance on the recommended and statutory minimum retention periods for specific types of documents and records.

Data record	Retention period	Owner
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Financial records

Payroll records	7 years (6 years plus current year)	Treasurer
Supplier contracts	7 years (6 years plus current year)	Treasurer
Policies and procedures	Permanent	Treasurer
Audits	7 Years	Treasurer
Financial statements	Permanent	Treasurer
Invoices	7 years	Treasurer
Expenses documents	7 years	Treasurer
Credit card receipts	7 years	Treasurer

Business and contract documents

WFS policies	Permanent	Company Secretary
Data on former members 6 years after last contact with the individual	6 years	WFS Services Manager
Director's meeting minutes	Permanent	Company Secretary
Tax or employee identification number designation	Permanent	Treasurer
NEC meeting minutes	Permanent	Company Secretary
AGM meeting minutes	Permanent	Company Secretary
Record of Directors	Permanent	(On Companies House)
Contractor Contracts	Duration of contract plus 7 years	Treasurer
Tender documents – Successful	Duration of contract plus 7 years	Treasurer

Tender documents - unsuccessful	12 months	Treasurer
Finance Tender – user requirements, specification, evaluation criteria, invitation criteria	Duration of contract plus 7 years	Treasurer
Contractors' reports	7 years after contract end (permanent if safety-critical)	Treasurer
Operation and monitoring, e.g. complaints	7 years after closure	WFS Services Manager

HR documents

Disciplinary, grievance proceedings records, oral/verbal, written, final warnings, appeals	7 years	HR Director
Applications for jobs, interview notes – unsuccessful	6 months	HR Director
Recruitment/promotion panel	6 months	HR Director
Job history including staff personal records: contract(s), terms and conditions; previous service dates; pay and pension history, pension estimates, resignation/termination letters, leave	Duration of employment plus 7 years	HR Director
Accident books Accident reports and correspondence including RIDDOR reportable incidents	4 years after last entry	WFS Services Manager
Certificates and self-certificates unrelated to workplace injury; statutory sick pay forms	4 years	HR Director
Right to work documentation	Duration of employment plus 7 years	HR Director

All leave: Annual, family friendly, maternity, paternity etc.	4 years	HR Director
Redundancy details, payment calculations, refunds, notifications	Duration of employment plus 7 years	HR Director
Training and development records	Duration of employment plus 7 years	HR Director

Personal category

General: Inbox, deleted emails, recycle bins, downloads, local drives and files	All emails auto-deleted after 3 years; users should regularly delete items that are no longer required. Legal holds override deletion.	All staff: WFS Services Manager, Marketing & Comms Officer & NEC members including Directors and Patrons
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