Records Store Procedures

Contents

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Notes	Date	Author
0	Preliminary notes	2007 09 20	CMG
0.1	Text for intro, deposit & processing sections	2007 09 27	CMG
0.2	Amendments to "Exceptions" & defined format sheet	2007 11 07	CMG
0.3	Filled in lists of DB tables, referenced DB at "Deposit" and "Retrievals", entered details of marking documents at 3.2; DB fields at 3.3; reporting at 3.4	2007 11 14-16	CMG
0.4	Detailed disposals procedure as per practice	2009 11 11	CMG
1.0	Adopted procedures: Filled out Section 4; typos and amendments throughout.	2012 03	CMG
1.1	Re-write: inc. refs to RMP; removed refs. to RMWG; added flow-charts; Included ref. to Shredd-All; Clarified S2 re. deposits to formalize RM's ability to determine what material is appropriate; and renumbered S2.2-2.5	2015 08 14	CMG
1.2	Incorporated comments from RMO and filled out 3.2	2015 08 15	CMG
1.3	Reviewed and checked for accuracy	2017 03 17	RM
1.4	Refreshed. Removed broken links, fixed typos. Amended post titles. Included reference to Child Abuse Inquiry	2020 11 20	SIIO

1 Introduction

This document covers the procedures involved in managing records in the records store from the period of the initial request for their deposit until the time of their final disposition.

It is intended primarily for staff working in the store, and is hoped to establish good practice and ensure consistency of approach.

For guidance on related matters -

- developing retention schedules
- using the records store (re. the deposit of records)
- listing, etc., historic archives
- other records issues

- see the separate guidance and procedures all of which are available on the Council's Records Management Plan on the Council website.

This document covers each of the elements involved in the processing of records at the records store, and these processes are summarised in process flowcharts at the end.

2 Deposit

2.1 introduction

The requirements on the depositor of records are detailed in the “Using the Records Store” guidance note and associated leaflet. These include the proper identification of appropriate material, its sorting and boxing, retentioning, completion of appropriate documentation and its transfer to the store.

This section covers the procedures to be followed by RM staff.

2.2 appropriate material

The records store is only for the storage of records and archives. No other material can be stored at this facility.

Material for the records store must be:

- boxed and sorted
- accompanied by the appropriate documentation
- held within an agreed retention schedule.

Further guidance on all these elements is available in the “using the records store” guidance note for staff.

The Senior Information and Improvement Officer (SIIO) has absolute discretion as to whether material can be accommodated at the store.

2.3 documentation

RM staff will note the consignment number on the “Records consignment control sheet” (in RM/Williamwood Operations) immediately after a verbal or email agreement to accept the records has been made. RM staff will then provide an accession number, box labels, and blank deposit documentation to the depositor.

Also at this time a consignment folder should be opened. This should contain all documentation relative to the deposit of the records and anything pertaining to their subsequent management (e.g. anything on their retention, or on access restrictions, etc.).

This folder should remain at HQ until the records are actually physically transferred: at that point the folder moves to the office at Williamwood.

2.4 initial check

When records are delivered to the store, they must be immediately visually checked over to ensure that:

- the deposit documentation is generally in order
- there is no evidence of damp, mould or parasitic infestation.

For example, if a department have been notified of all the requirements relating to records (as per the “Using the Records Store” guidance or the associated leaflet), but then drop off records which are unlisted, or have not been sorted or are not retentioned, they can NOT be accepted into the store, and the depositing officer MUST rectify the issues PRIOR to deposit.

2.6 initial location

On initial deposit, the officer receiving the records into the store can decide whether the records should go straight onto the shelf or whether they should be placed in a processing area in the store or in the records store office. In any event, no records should be left in a place where they could be a trip hazard or present any other health and safety issue. Factors to consider in deciding where to put records would include current backlog, amount of work required on records, whether any re-boxing is required, and the quality of the deposit documentation and other finding aids.

3 Processing

3.1 Records Processing

All records entering the RM system have to be recorded, marked and entered on the database.

This is normally done at the file level. Each file should be:

- Given a unique number. This number is normally made up of three elements: xxx/yy/zz, where xxx is the consignment number, yy the box number, and zz the file number from within that box.
- have a file sticker applied. (see 3.2 below)
- entered as a record on the database (see 3.3 below))

On occasion - perhaps where the deposit documentation is incomplete, or where the material is arranged in large groupings without further internal arrangement, or perhaps because the depositing department has taken the view that the likelihood of retrieval is so low as to make it inappropriate to list to a higher level of detail – documents may be listed at a level above the file. Normally, this will be the box level, and in this case the unique number is only xxx/yy, where xxx is the consignment number and yy the box

3.2 Marking documents

Files should be marked with a sticker in the top left corner - although place elsewhere if this location would cover any significant information on the file.

The sticker will be pre-printed with the consignment number, and the box and file number should be noted in the allocated boxes.

3.3 Database

The RM database consists of the following tables:

- **Consignment**
- **Retention** (for details of these two tables, see "Records Deposit" above)
- **File Management**
- **Loans** (for details of this table, see "Retrievals and Returns" below)

The **File Management** table comprises the following fields:

- **File Ref**., a key field consisting of a unique number, as noted at 3.1 above.
- **File Title**. This field should include a title or description which is useful, accurate and concise. Normally, it would be supplied by the depositing department either on the face of the file itself or with the deposit documentation.
- **Covering Dates**. Date (in format YYYY), or, if the record spans more than one calendar year, YYYY – YYYY.
- **Departmental Ref**. This field should record any departmental number by which the file might again be requested.
- **Consignment Number**. The consignment number in which the file was deposited. This number is originally entered in the "Consignment Table" within the database, and a drop-down appears from there.
- **Records Series**. The name of the records series, as allocated in the "Retention Table" of the database, and a drop-down appears from there

- **Location** within the store, in the format RR/B/S (run/bay/shelf)
- **Date entered.** The date of the *data* entry, not that of the accession of the record.
- **Disposal Date.** Calculated by factoring the last date in "Covering Dates" and the relevant data from the "retention Table".
- **Disposal Outcome.** Either "A" for archive, "R" for review or, usually, "D" for destroy. Again, as per the "Retention table".
- **Security /Access.** This data element should be used to record where particular access or security considerations apply.
- **Notes.** A free text field for any other relevant information not recorded elsewhere
- **Number of Items.** Occasionally, a "file" will consist of several folders, and that should be recorded here.
- **Status.** [This field records when a file has been destroyed. (see "Disposals" below).]

All of the above fields, with the exception of: "Departmental Ref.", "Security/Access", "Notes" and "Status" are mandatory, and must be entered for each and every record.

3.4 Documentation

On the completion of processing the records, if there are issues surrounding the accuracy of the initial deposit information, for example with multiple errors in the box lists, or wrong file series titles have been ascribed, etc., an exceptions report should be completed and sent to the depositing officer.

Once any errors or omissions have been resolved, a report should be run off from the database detailing the records as entered onto the system. This can be formatted as appropriate for the records and as per any requirements of the depositing officer, but, for security purposes, ensure that location details are *not* included in the list.

This "consignment report" can act as a receipt to depositing officers detailing exactly what was deposited and as a finding aid which they can use, if they wish, to browse for files or request records by a variety of references.

Reports based on alternative queries can also be produced on request.

> For example, if:
> - a Department wanted a list of *all* their files in the store; or
> - an officer required a list of all files *of a particular type* but which had not all been deposited at the same time; or
> - a list of all files processed in a particular period was required;
>
> a report tailored to those specifics can be produced.

4 Retrievals and returns

4.1 requests for access

Records remain the property of the depositing department, so only relevant officers can access their files. On occasion, however, other staff - such as internal or external audit - may have a requirement to view files. In these cases the SIIO will determine the appropriate course of action, taking into account the views of the depositing department where appropriate.

4.2 searches

Having determined the appropriateness of the officer requesting access, staff will find the file on the database, note the file location and retrieve it.

Where a file is in a consignment which is not yet listed, further information from the depositing officer may be required to facilitate the location of the record.

4.3 documentation

All requests should be recorded on the retrievals spreadsheet, and a 3-part form will be completed for all retrievals.

4.4 returns

Files may be viewed *in situ* or can be collected. A return date - normally 4 weeks - should be agreed at this stage and noted on the 3-part form.

If the file has not been returned when agreed the Senior Business Support Assistant will contact the officer asking for an update on the status of the file.

5 Disposals

5.1 Introduction

No records can come into the store without their first being fixed in a disposition and retention schedule. For the majority of records, this means that after a set period, they will be destroyed.

No further authorisation beyond their initial agreeing to the retention period is required from the department which deposited the records, although it will normally be good practice to confirm disposal prior to destruction.

Some records will be identified as appropriate for transfer to the archival section of the store after their retention period has passed.

This section, however, deals only with the procedure for identifying and disposing of time-expired records management material.

5.2 Defining disposals

Disposing of records should NOT be carried out *ad hoc*, but disposals should be grouped and done on an annual basis (or as frequently as is deemed appropriate). Each disposal process should be numbered with a consecutive “disposal number”, and a file for each process kept at the store relating to all aspects of the process.

5.3 Identifying material for disposal

The query “disposal query” sorts all records in the store by date of disposal, with the earliest first.

A note should be taken off all the boxes in which material which is due to be disposed off appears and a draft disposal list prepared.

Disposal is normally done at box level. To ensure that all the material in a box is due for disposal, this list should then be checked against the main “File Management” list. Any boxes which contain material not yet due for disposal should be removed from the list.

This list should then be further checked against (1) the boxes themselves to ensure that their listing is accurate and that all the enclosed records are indeed ready for disposal and (2) the relevant consignment files, to ensure that no special circumstances apply.

Not that, as at date of review of this procedure note, that no material which may be of interest to the ongoing National Child Abuse Inquiry should be disposed of, even if it has come to the end of its previously agreed retention.

5.4 Method of disposal

Once the disposal list has been checked as at 5.3 above, distinctive stickers should be applied to the shown side of each box.

At this stage, it may be appropriate to inform departments that disposal is imminent. This is NOT a requirement of the process, as depositing officers are informed in all prior-deposit guidance that further authorisation for disposal is not sought after the retention has been agreed.

It may be appropriate, however, to inform departments of the imminent disposal, and, on any rare occasions when they have issues about retention periods, to give them the opportunity to remove the records from the store if they wish to make alternative provision for their continuing storage elsewhere

Immediately prior to the disposal taking place, the records should be moved to a distinctive and clearly demarcated area of the store.

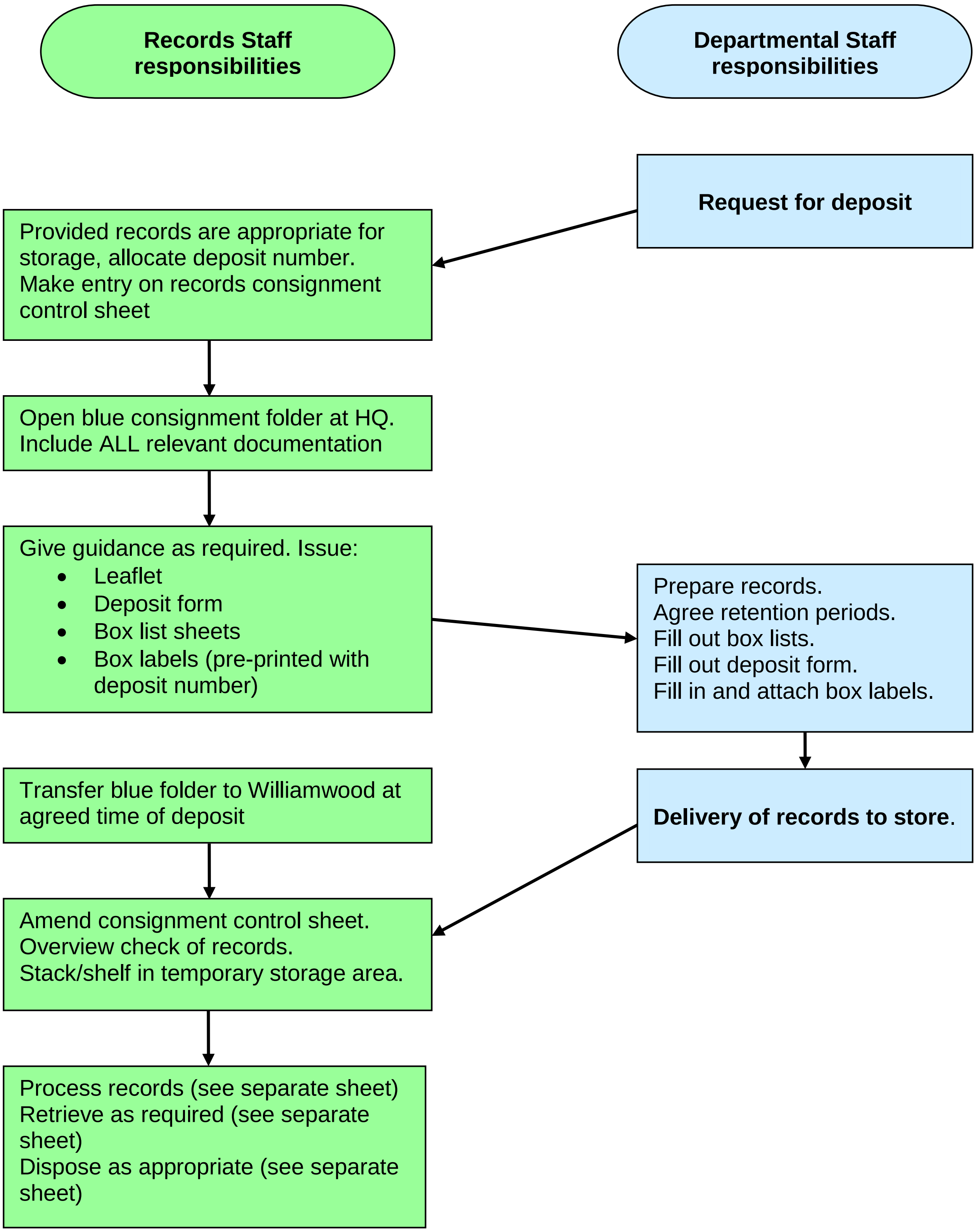
Records should be disposed of by an established company using methods which are both secure and environmentally appropriate. The Council currently has a corporate contract with Shredd-All

5.5 Records of disposals

The shredding company must be able to receipt the process, confirming, at a minimum, the volume of material destroyed and the date that this was done. This receipt should be stored, along with all the other documentation relating to the process, in the “disposal file” noted at 5.2 above.

All records of records are retained permanently on the database. Once a file has been destroyed, it is marked “DISPOSAL REF [x]” on the “File Notes” field and at the start of the “File Title” fields of the File Management Table.

FLOWCHART 1:   deposits



FLOWCHART 2: processing

Arrange boxes in number order in working area

↓

Enter consignment data into RM database

↓

Enter retention data into RM database

↓

Process records in box/file order

↓

Check/amend box labels.

- Confirm retention date
- Add in box location
- Add file labels (normally on the top right of file, but take care not to cover any useful information)

↓

If physical remedial work required, re-bind/cover as appropriate. Tape together items consisting of more than one file.

↓

Enter file data.

- “Ref. no” is always formatted as: 3-digit cons/box/file
    - Use trailing zeros only at “box” and at “file” when required
- If alternative file subject titles or names, enter both.
- Dates: enter as covering dates in the format yyyy or yyyy-yyyy

↓

If there are errors in metadata or discrepancies with deposit documentation, note details in “File Notes” on “File Management” table

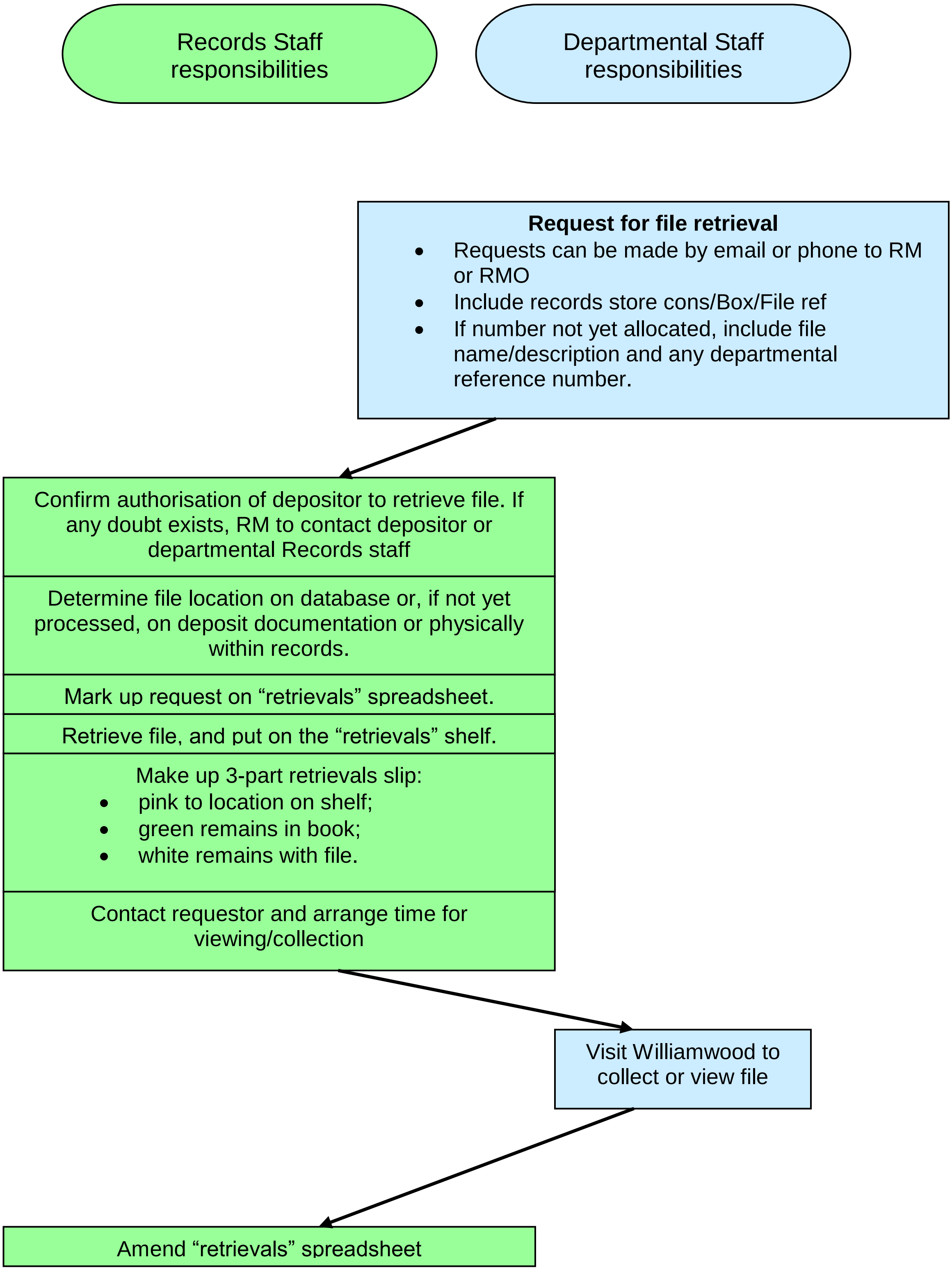
↓

Place completed box at correct location in store

↓

Records Manager to contact depositor re. errors in metadata or deposit documentation and to arrange finding aids if required

FLOWCHART 3: retrievals



FLOWCHART 4: returns