



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

RM-03-2021

# Records management policy

The Scottish Parliament  
The Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body  
The Scottish Commission for Public Audit

# Foreword



Records management is vital for the proper functioning of any organisation and is essential in ensuring that the Parliament has accurate, reliable and accessible records of its work to support its business and maintain a sufficient archive of its activities.

This records management policy has the full support of the Parliament's senior managers, but it is dependent on the support of all stakeholders to ensure its success.

There are clear personal and business benefits from good records management, including improving access to information we need, ensuring compliance with our legal obligations, keeping the information we need for as long as we need it and ensuring we maintain an archive of the Parliament's activities.

Some of the records we produce record significant events in the history of the Parliament and need to be managed to ensure they remain accessible. We are responsible for ensuring that the records we produce not only meet our short-term business requirements but also our obligations to manage records for long-term access.

**Alan Balharrie**  
**Chief Information Officer and Group Head for Digital Services**  
**July 2021**

# Introduction

The SPCB recognises records management as an essential corporate activity. Most activities we undertake involve creating, managing and sharing information. Good records management is an aid to everyone's role and crucial to the efficiency and effectiveness of our corporate processes. It ensures we have access to our information when we need it and that we take a consistent approach to its creation, use, retention and disposal throughout the organisation, reducing reputational risk and ensuring records of historical significance are maintained. This policy will ensure the necessary levels of organisational support are in place to enable effective record keeping.

The SPCB acknowledges that records management is an essential business activity. SPCB records form the documented history of the Scottish Parliament, the Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body and the Scottish Commission for Public Audit.

All records created by individuals employed directly by the SPCB, or on the basis of a contract for services, are the property of the SPCB, not of the individuals who created or received them.

The SPCB will maintain a records management strategy which ensures that records are secure, accessible, complete and authentic for as long as they are required to be kept.

# Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Scottish Parliamentary Service (SPS) staff have a defined and consistent approach to making and maintaining full and accurate records of transactions and official activities in accordance with good practice and legislative requirements.

The policy sets out practices which SPS staff must follow for the creation, management and disposal of our information. This will mean:

- we will spend less time looking for our information;
- the public will spend less time waiting for information;
- the public will be given the right information;
- we will have direct access to all relevant information on a topic; and
- we will know at a glance what a document is about and know which version is the most recent.

# Scope and definitions

This policy applies to all the information we create, receive and share, regardless of format and storage repository. It applies to all information created by the Scottish

Parliament, the SPCB and the SCPA. All individuals employed directly by the SPCB, or on the basis of a contract for services, are responsible for applying this policy.

For this policy, and all subsequent procedures and guidance, records are defined as “information created, received, and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organisation or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business” (ISO 15489-1:2016).

Records management is defined as the ‘field of management responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use and disposition of records, including processes for capturing and maintaining evidence of and information about business activities and transactions in the form of records’ (ISO 15489-1:2016).

All digital records of the Scottish Parliament, SPCB and SCPA should be captured and managed in the Scottish Parliament’s document and records management system, hardcopy records should be captured and managed in the records storage service.

## Policy objectives

SPS staff are required to maintain appropriate records of their activities and ensure that these records are accessible and managed in accordance with records management procedures and the SPCB records retention schedule. Staff are required to ensure that SPCB records:

- are identified as a business-as-usual process
- are authentic, reliable and protected against unauthorised alteration;
- can be retrieved quickly to aid decision-making and increase management effectiveness;
- remain accessible to those that need to use them for as long as they are required;
- comply with regulatory and other business needs;
- are managed cost effectively, retained only as long as required and disposed of in accordance with the defined process; and
- are held securely in a manner commensurate with their value and retention period.

Each SPCB office will identify records of their activities to ensure that they are accessible and managed in accordance with records management procedures and the SPCB records retention schedule.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years in conjunction with retention schedule reviews. The next review will be no later than May 2024.

Related documentation

RM-01 The SPCB records retention schedule

RM-02 The SPCB records management strategy

RM-04 The SPCB records management procedures and guidance

Records management plan

## Roles and responsibilities

All SPS staff are responsible for keeping appropriate information and complying with records management policies and procedures.

### Individuals

Each individual is responsible for the information they create and receive. Individuals are responsible and accountable for keeping accurate and complete records as appropriate of their decisions and actions to ensure that public accountability expectations are met. Individuals are responsible for identifying and keeping records of their activities.

### Teams/Office

Each team or office is responsible for keeping a complete and accessible record of what they do and for ensuring that document owners identify and keep records in the document and records management system or hardcopy records storage.

### Group and Office Heads

Group and Office Heads are responsible for supporting site owners and for the effective application of the SPCB records retention schedule and the records management policy and procedures in their areas of responsibility. Group and Office Heads are responsible for ensuring their business areas declare records within SPShare to accurately document activities within their business areas.

### Information Manager

The Information Manager is responsible for:

- providing good practice through policies, procedures and guidance which meet our needs;

- ensuring all teams and individuals understand and can carry out their responsibilities;
- ensuring the document and records management system and hardcopy records storage service are both fit-for-purpose
- ensuring records are created, retained and disposed of in accordance with the SPCB records retention schedule.

## Scottish Parliamentary Service senior management

Overall responsibility for records management and the implementation of associated policies, procedures and guidance lies with SPS senior management, making use of advice and assistance from Gordon Hobbs, the Information Manager as appropriate. Alan Balharrie, Head of the Digital Services Group, is the senior responsible owner of records management.

## Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

The records produced or received by the Scottish Parliament, SPCB and SCPA during the course of business activities are owned by the SPCB although managed by individuals.

*This policy does not apply to Members of the Scottish Parliament or their staff.*