

## Document Retention Policy Hartlepool u3a

### 1 Policy

#### **1.1 Scope of Policy**

This policy refers to the work of the Hartlepool and District u3a. The Hartlepool and District u3a is a registered charity and an unincorporated association that operates via members of its Executive Committee, as trustees of the charity.

The policy details how its records will be maintained, updated, stored and deleted, and where applicable in accordance with applicable laws and policies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Hartlepool and District u3a's Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy. In case of any conflict between applicable law and this policy, the terms of applicable law override the terms of this policy.

In the event of a conflict between the requirements of the Hartlepool and District u3a's Privacy Policy and Data Protection Policy then the provisions of those Policies override the provisions of this policy.

#### **1.2 Why this Policy has been written down**

Records of the Hartlepool and District u3a are created in relation to membership applications and associated records, income / expenditure and other financial / contractual obligations, meetings of the Executive Committee, Annual General Meetings and a range of other activities undertaken by the Hartlepool and District u3a generally during the course of its general operation (see Section 2.4).

As the Executive Committee is elected annually and records are currently kept in both electronic and paper form by various members of the Executive Committee and other members of the Hartlepool and District u3a, this policy is written down to ensure consistency in practice, in so far as possible, as to such record keeping and retention. It is recognised that the Data Protection and Privacy Policies also require that personal information of members should not be retained for longer than required under the terms of those Policies.

It is also noted that some records that currently exist may pre-date the date upon which the Hartlepool and District u3a adopted its constitution as a charity and, in as far as this policy references particular categories of document or information, this policy shall apply to analogous records of the predecessor non-charity registered organisation.

## 2 Retention of Records

### 2.1 Membership Records

Membership application forms will be retained for a minimum period of 2 years except where they include an election relating to Gift Aid by a member, in which case they will be retained for a minimum of 6 years.

They will be retained by the Membership Secretary for the time being in either electronic or hard copy format. Member personal data taken from membership application forms will be recorded and retained on Beacon for as long as they are active and for 1 year after their membership lapses.

Personal data on Beacon will be managed by the Membership Secretary and Beacon Administrator who also have designated authority to edit, update and remove member personal data as and when this becomes necessary.

Attendance sheets for meetings will be retained for a minimum period of 2 years. They will be retained by the Membership Secretary for the time being in either electronic or hard copy format.

See Appendix 1 for a summary of key documents and associated retention periods.

### 2.2 Accounting and Tax Records

Accounts and tax records will be retained for a minimum period of 6 years + current year.

Original invoices, contracts with suppliers and similar items will be retained for a minimum minimum period of 6 years + current year.

Insurance claims and related correspondence records will be retained for a minimum period of 7 years.

Records relating to gift aid will be retained for a minimum period of 7 years.

They will be retained by the **Treasurer** for the time being in either electronic or hard copy format.

See Appendix 1 for a summary of key documents and associated retention periods.

### 2.3 Monthly Committee and Annual Member General Meetings

Minutes of Annual General Meetings will be retained indefinitely.

Minutes of Monthly Committee Meetings will be retained for a minimum period of 12 years.

They will be managed by the Chair for the time being in electronic format on the u3a website.

Trustee appointment forms completed and registered with the Charity Commission will be retained **indefinitely**.

They will be retained by the **Vice Chair** for the time being in either electronic or hard copy format

See Appendix 1 for a summary of key documents and associated retention periods.

#### **2.4 Other Documents etc**

Other key documents will be retained by the relevant Committee member for an appropriate period agreed upon by the Committee in electronic or hard copy format.

Details of key documents held by Committee members will be recorded in Appendix 1 of this procedure and updated when the procedure is reviewed every 2 years.

Some general document retention guidelines and best practice is detailed in Appendix 2 of this procedure for information.

#### **3 Destruction of Old Records**

At the end of their minimum retention period all documents will be reviewed by the Committee and approval given prior to their destruction.

Destruction of hard copy documents that are no longer required shall be carried out via cross-cut shredding by or under the supervision of a member of the Executive Committee.

All electronic documents held on PCs, laptops and portable memory devices should be destroyed using an appropriate secure deletion / memory wiping tool.

#### **4 Policy Review**

Policy adopted by the Hartlepool and District u3a at its monthly Committee Meeting on 27/03/2026

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years

Last Review Date : 27/03/2026

Next Review Date : 27/03/2028

## Appendix 1 : Key Hartlepool u3a Documents and Proposed Retention Periods

Document Held	Format	Held by	Does anyone else have access	Retention Period
Membership Application Forms	Hard Copy	Membership Secretary	No	Minimum 2 Years / 6 Years where they include election relation to Gift Aid
Beacon Personal Data and Editing	Electronic - Beacon	Membership Secretary / Beacon Administrator	No	Maximum of 1 year after membership ends unless there's a legal, safeguarding, or financial reason to keep them longer
Beacon Backups	Electronic	Beacon Administrator	No	Indefinitely
Beacon Confidentiality Agreements	Hard Copy	Beacon Administrator	No	Indefinitely
ICE Contact Details Group Leaders / members	Electronic Hard Copy	Group Leader	Yes - Electronic Via Beacon	Until member leaves Group or is no longer required
General Meeting Attendance Sheets	Hard Copy	Membership Secretary	No	Minimum 2 Years
Receipts – Invoices, Vouchers and supporting documentation	Hard copy	Treasurer	No	Minimum 6 years plus current
Payments – Invoices, Vouchers, Cheque Requisitions, Purchase orders and supporting documentation	Hard Copy	Treasurer	No	Minimum 6 years plus current
Bank Statements	Electronic / Hard Copy	Treasurer, and via online banking	Electronic - Chair /Treasurer Hard Copies - Treasurer	Minimum 6 years plus current
Cheque book Stubs	Hard Copy	Treasurer	No	Minimum 6 years plus current
Bank Payng in Book Stubs	Hard Copy	Treasurer	No	Minimum 6 years plus current
Audit Certificate	Hard Copy	Treasurer	No	Minimum 6 years plus current
Charity Commission Returns	Electronic	Charity Commission Website	All Trustees	Minimum 6 years plus current
Insurance certificate	Hard copy	Treasurer	All Trustees and Group Leaders	One year until date of expiry
Insurance claims and claims correspondence	Hard copy	Treasurer	All Trustees	Minimum 7 years after settlement except where the claim involves a minor in which case until the claimant reaches the age of majority.
NBS Meeting Room Agreement	Electronic / Hard Copy	Vice Chair	No	Until no longer required

Hartlepool & District u3a Third Age Trust Registration	Hard Copy	Vice Chair	No	Indefinitely
Inaugural Meeting and Steering Group 9 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2011	Hard Copy	Vice Chair	No	Indefinitely - To be retained for the life of the u3a
AGM and Annual Report	Electronic / Hard Copy	Electronic - u3a Website Hard Copy (Some Historic Documents) - Vice Chair	Electronic - Yes via Website Hard Copy - No	Indefinitely - To be retained for the life of the u3a
Committee Minutes	Electronic / Hard Copy	Electronic - u3a Website Hard Copy (Some Historic Documents) - Vice Chair	Electronic - Yes via Website Hard Copy - No	Minimum of 12 Years.
Original Constitution of Hartlepool & District u3a dated 20 <sup>th</sup> Sept., 2011	Hard copy	Vice Chair	No	Indefinitely, or until dissolution of the u3a
Amended constitution dated 3 <sup>rd</sup> June, 2016	Hard Copy	Vice Chair	No	Indefinitely, or until dissolution of the u3a
Current Constitution	Electronic	U3a Website	All Trustees	Until the constitution is amended
Trustee Declaration Forms	Hard Copy	Vice Chair	No	Indefinitely
General Meeting Attendance Numbers and Activity Spreadsheet	Electronic	Vice Chair	No	Indefinitely
Complaints and Associated Documentation	Electronic / Hard Copy	Group Co-Ordinator / Safeguarding Officer	No	Indefinitely - Review every 5 years
Incident Report Forms	Hard Copy	Vice Chair	No	3 years after the date of the incident in case a claim is made, even if a claim seems unlikely
Enhancing Lifelong Learning for Seniors – Improving social inclusivity of Hartlepool & District u3a – a qualitative study	Hard Copy	Vice Chair	No	

## Appendix 2 : Document Retention Guidelines and Best Practices

Record Type	Example Documents	Retention Period	Reason / Legal Basis	Secure Disposal Method
<b>Member Information</b>				
<b>Member Personal Information</b>	Name, contact details, emergency contacts	Up to 1 year after membership ends unless there's a legal safeguarding, or financial reason to keep them longer	UK GDPR requires data to be kept only as long as necessary for the purpose it was collected After membership ends, the charity should delete or anonymise personal data unless needed for legal or safeguarding reasons	Shred / securely delete
<b>Meeting Attendance Records</b>	General Meetings	Current year + 1 year	Useful for operational planning, safeguarding, and verifying participation. Should not be kept indefinitely unless linked to safeguarding or financial records.	Shred / securely delete
<b>Group Trip Attendance Records</b>		Up to 3 Years	May be needed for insurance, safeguarding, or financial audit purposes. After that, anonymise or delete unless linked to incidents or claims.	Shred / securely delete
<b>Special Category Data</b>	Health Information for Trips	Delete immediately after the event unless a safeguarding or legal reason exists	UK GDPR requires stricter handling of sensitive data. Keep only for the duration necessary to ensure safety during the event.	Shred / securely delete
<b>Former Member Data</b>		1 year max after leaving	Allows for follow-up or re-engagement but must be justified. After that, delete or anonymise unless legally required to retain.	Shred / securely delete
<b>Financial Records</b>				
<b>Annual Accounts and Reports</b>		Minimum 6 Years from end of Financial Year.  <b>Best Practice:</b> Keep permanently as part of the charity's historical record.	Required by the Charities Act 2011 and HMRC for tax/audit purposes.  Demonstrates transparency to members and donors	Shred / securely delete
<b>Bank Statements and Cash Books</b>		Minimum 6 Years from end of Financial Year	Evidence of transactions in case of audit, fraud investigation, or donor queries. HMRC requires this for tax compliance	Shred / securely delete
<b>Invoices, Receipts and Payment Records</b>		Minimum 6 Years from end of Financial Year	Supports financial statements, VAT (if applicable), and HMRC inquiries. Protects trustees against allegations of mismanagement	Shred / securely delete

<b>Payroll and Staff / Volunteer Records</b>		Minimum 6 Years after employment ends (Sometimes longer for Pensions)	Employment law and HMRC rules on PAYE, NI, and pensions. Needed for potential disputes or references	Shred / securely delete
<b>Charity Commission Annual Returns and Supporting Records</b>		Minimum 6 Years from end of Financial Year		Shred / securely delete
<b>Gift Aid Declarations</b>		Minimum 6 Years after the accounting period the donation was made	HMRC requires this to validate tax reclaims	Shred / securely delete
<b>Contracts and Grant Agreements</b>		Minimum 6 Years after expiry (12 Years if signed under seal)	Limitation Act 1980 allows claims for breach of contract up to 6 years (12 years for sealed contracts). Protects against legal disputes.	Shred / securely delete
<b>Audit Reports and External Examinations</b>		Minimum 6 Years from end of Financial Year	Supports compliance with Charity Commission and provides assurance to members/donors	Shred / securely delete
<b>Insurance Claims and Claims Correspondence</b>		Minimum 6 years after the conclusion of a claim.  <b>Best Practice:</b> 7 Years or longer if claim involves personal injury, safeguarding or potential latent liabilities. <b>Minors:</b> If claim involves a minor until claimant reaches 21 <b>Serious or long-tail liabilities:</b> (e.g. Safeguarding, abuse cases, asbestos etc.) many charities adopt an indefinite or 75-year retention period.	In line with limitation periods for contractual or negligence claims.  Legal basis related to Limitation Act 1980, GDPRs principal of no longer than necessary.  For a Minor to allow for late claims once the person becomes an adult	Shred / securely delete
<b>Committee Reports</b>				
<b>AGM Minutes and Supporting Papers</b>		Permanently	Form part of the official governance record and demonstrate compliance with the governing document and charity law. For continuity and accountability	Not Applicable - Archive
<b>Committee Meetings</b>		Minimum 10 years.  <b>Best Practice:</b> Permanently	Form part of the official governance record and demonstrate compliance with the governing document and charity law. For continuity and accountability	Shred / securely delete

<b>Supporting Papers</b>	Agendas, reports and presentations	Retain for 6–10 years depending on relevance. Key documents that evidence major decisions should be archived permanently	For continuity and accountability	Shred / securely delete
<b>Registers</b>	Trustees, members, conflicts of interest	Permanently or until they are superseded  <b>Best Practice:</b> *Formally Record all resignations * Ensure register of Trustees updated * Return any charity property * Try to support smooth hand over to successors	Required for regulatory compliance. Ongoing Responsibilities / Liabilities for ex. Trustees include : <b>Liabilities for past actions</b> * Involved in Misconduct / Mismanagement * Authorised / failed to prevent something unlawful * Evidence of negligence or breach to trustee duties <b>Financial or Legal Investigations</b> * Co-operate / provide information for inquiries into charities activities <b>Confidentiality and Data Protection</b> * Remain bound by any confidentiality obligations related to sensitive information learned as a trustee	
<b>Incident Reports</b>				
<b>Health &amp; Safety Incident Reports (non-staff)</b>	Accident/near-miss forms for visitors, volunteers, or service users	3 years from incident date	Limitation Act 1980 (personal injury claim time limit)	Shred paper files; permanently delete digital copies
<b>Health &amp; Safety Incident Reports (involving children or vulnerable adults)</b>	Accident reports, injury logs, investigation notes	Until the individual reaches 21 years old (or 3 years after the incident, whichever is longer)	To allow for late claims once the person becomes an adult	Shred / securely delete
<b>Staff Accident or Injury Reports</b>	Accident books, RIDDOR reports, investigation notes	6 years after employment ends	Limitation Act / insurance requirements	Shred / securely delete
<b>Safeguarding Incident Records</b>	Allegations, disclosures, investigation reports, referrals	75 years (or indefinitely if unresolved)	Safeguarding best practice (NSPCC/Charity Commission guidance)	Secure archive; restricted access
<b>Serious Incident Reports to Charity Commission</b>	Notification forms, internal reports, follow-up correspondence	6 years after closure of case	Regulatory compliance evidence	Shred / securely delete
<b>Data Protection Breach Reports</b>	Breach logs, internal assessments, ICO correspondence	6 years	ICO guidance / limitation periods for claims	Shred / securely delete

<b>General Incident Log (Non-personal summary)</b>	Date, type, brief description (no names)	Permanently	Governance and risk monitoring	Review annually; retain summary data only
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