

The Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide (Benefits DDRG)

This is version 8.4 of the policy and was updated on 25th April 2013, you can also see details of the latest amendments on the Knowledge and Information Management site.

Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 Policy Overview	4
1.2 Which benefits does the policy apply to?	5
2. Retention Policy	7
2.1 Document/data classification	7
2.2 Scanned images and original documentation	7
2.3 Data kept on CD/DVDs and other media that can't be printed off.....	8
2.4 Recorded Telephone Conversations	8
2.5 Reclassification of documents/data needed for checks	8
2.6 Retention of scan reports.....	9
2.7 Retention of printed output reports	9
2.8 Main file prints, record prints and copy records	9
2.9 Potentially Violent Persons documents/data.....	9
2.10 Enquiries about the destruction of records.....	10
2.11 Reviews	10
2.12 Put away or dormant documents/data, including system information	10
2.13 Clerically maintained cases	10
2.14 Temporary exceptions and embargoes	11
2.15 Customer Feedback and correspondence	11
2.16 Special Payments	11
2.17 Sub-files.....	11
2.18 Exception cases.....	12
3. Specific Guidance	14
3.1 Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP).....	14
3.1.1 Claim reaches Closed stage	14
3.1.2 Exceptions	14
3.1.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	14
3.2 Carer's Allowance (CA)	15
3.2.1 Reviews	15
3.2.2 Claim reaches dormant stage	15
3.2.3 Exceptions	15
3.2.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	15
3.3 Carer's Credit (CC).....	16
3.3.1 Reviews	16
3.3.2 Application reaches dormant stage.....	16
3.3.3 Exceptions	16

Department for Work and Pensions – Benefits DDRG

3.3.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	16
3.4 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA).....	17
3.4.1 Claim reaches PA stage	17
3.4.2 Exceptions	17
3.4.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	18
3.5 Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	19
3.5.1 Reviews	19
3.5.2 Claim reaches PA stage	19
3.5.3 Exceptions	20
3.5.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	21
3.6 Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)	22
3.6.1 Claim reaches PA stage	22
3.6.2 Exceptions	22
3.6.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	23
3.7 Income Support (IS)	24
3.7.1 Reviews	24
3.7.2 Claim reaches PA stage	24
3.7.3 Exceptions	25
3.7.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	25
3.8 Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefit	26
3.8.1 Case reaches PA stage	26
3.8.2 Exceptions	26
3.8.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	27
3.9 Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)	28
3.9.1 Reviews	28
3.9.2 Claim reaches PA stage	28
3.9.3 Exceptions	29
3.9.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	30
3.10 Maternity Allowance (MA).....	31
3.10.1 Claim reaches PA stage	31
3.10.2 Exceptions	31
3.10.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	31
3.11 NINO Allocation	32
3.12 Pension Credit.....	33
3.12.1 Reviews	33
3.12.2 Application reaches PA stage	33
3.12.3 Exceptions	34
3.12.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	34
3.13 Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	35
3.13.1 Claim reaches Closed stage	35
3.13.2 Exceptions	35
3.13.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	35
3.14 Short Term Benefit Advance and Budgeting Advance	36
3.15 Skills Conditionality forms.....	37
3.16 Social Fund (SF)	38
3.16.1 Application reaches PA stage	38
3.16.2 Exceptions	38
3.16.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	39
3.17 State Pension (SP).....	40
3.17.1 Claim reaches PA stage	40

Department for Work and Pensions – Benefits DDRG

3.17.2 Exceptions	40
3.17.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	41
3.18 Suicide and self-harm documents	42
3.19 Universal Credit (UC)	43
3.19.1 Reviews	43
3.19.2 Claim reaches PA/dormant stage	43
3.19.3 Exceptions	43
3.19.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	44
3.20 Vaccine Damage Payment cases.....	45
3.20.1 Local procedures for document retention.....	45
3.21 Widow's Benefit (WB) and Bereavement Benefit (BB)	46
3.21.1 Claim reaches PA stage	46
3.21.2 Documents/data Received within 14 months of PA	46
3.21.3 Exceptions	46
3.21.4 Local procedures for document retention.....	47
3.22 Winter Fuel Payments (WFP).....	48
3.22.1 Claim reaches PA stage	48
3.22.2 Exceptions	48
3.22.3 Local procedures for document retention.....	49
4. Other Retention Policies.....	50
5. Contact us	51
Appendix 1 – Documents/data destroyed in line with retention policy	52
Appendix 2 – Documents/data destroyed in error.	53
Appendix 3: Abbreviations.....	54
Appendix 4: Glossary	56

1. Introduction

The Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide (Benefits DDRG) provides advice on aspects of document and data retention issues for benefit claims. Compliance with this guide will ensure records are maintained in line with DWP policy, and all statutory and regulatory requirements will be met.

1.1 Policy Overview

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policy was developed to help benefits staff to identify what documents/data should be retained, for how long and any exceptions. In whatever format the information is held, retention periods are determined by the need to keep it.

Benefits legislation covering the maximum review and appeal time limits was the main determining factor for the retention periods and it also takes into account the requirements of the Data Protection Act (DPA). However, it is also necessary to achieve assured, effective and efficient control of documents and data, Documents cannot be retained indefinitely just in case they may be needed.

The maximum time limit for review and appeal is 13 months and 14 days. To meet this review and appeal time limit, the general principle of DWP Benefits DDRG policy has a retention period of 14 months for documents and data.

There are exceptions to this retention period, e.g. where an appeal has been made or there is fraud or overpayment activity (see the section on exception cases for a fuller list of exceptions). When an exception applies, documents and data will not be destroyed until at least 14 months from when all exceptions have been lifted.

When explaining why documents/data have been destroyed it is important to remember that the Benefits DDRG policy was written to meet legislative and DPA requirements. However, when destroying documents/data we are applying DWP Benefits DDRG policy and **not** the Data Protection Act as the DPA does not specify retention periods. It is for each organisation to determine their own retention periods.

The Benefits DDRG contains separate sections which are specific to each benefit. Before looking at the relevant section of the Benefits DDRG, it is important to explain the document/data classifications and retention principles that apply to all benefits.

The Benefits DDRG glossary explains terms common to all benefits and the abbreviations list includes abbreviations used in this policy.

This guidance is **format neutral which means it does not matter how we store data**. This includes:

- Clerical/paper files,
- System data,
- Scanned images,
- PDF's,
- HTML,
- Recorded telephone calls,

- **Portable storage devices**, including CD's, DVD's, portable hard drives, USB keys, laptops/notebooks, Pocket PC, Palm, Blackberry,
- X-rays,
- E-mails,
- Video, or
- **Other storage devices**, including MP3 players and mobile phones.

This list is **NOT** exhaustive. It will evolve with the technology.

The Benefits DDRG applies to all the benefits listed in this guide and staff must apply them correctly.

1.2 Which benefits does the policy apply to?

These procedures should be brought to the attention of staff involved with the following benefits:

Section of Guide	Benefits covered by or included in this section
Carer's Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer's Allowance (CA)
Carers Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer's Credit (CC)
Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Living Allowance (DLA) • Attendance Allowance (AA) • Mobility Allowance (MOBA) • Severe Occupational Disablement Allowance
Employment and Support Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incapacity Benefit (IB) • Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)
Income Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income Support (IS)
Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefits and Compensation Payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analogous Industrial Injuries Scheme (AIIS) • Constant Attendance Allowance (CAA). • Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance (ESDA) • Industrial Death Benefit (IDB) • Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) • Pneumoconiosis, Byssinosis, and Miscellaneous Diseases Benefits Scheme • Reduced Earnings Allowance (REA) • Retirement Allowance (RA) • The 1979 Act – Pneumoconiosis etc (Workers Compensation) Act 1979 • The 2008 Diffuse Mesothelioma Scheme • Workmen's Compensation Supplementation
Jobseeker's Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated Service Delivery (ASD (JSA)) • Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA(Cont)) • Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA(IB)) • Training Allowance (TA)
Maternity Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternity Allowance (MA)

Department for Work and Pensions – Benefits DDRG

Pension Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pension Credit
Social Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgeting Loans (BL) • Cold Weather Payments (CWP) • Community Care Grants (CCG) • Crisis Loans (CL) • Funeral Payments (FP) • Sure Start Maternity Grant (SSMG)
State Pension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduated Retirement Benefit (GRB) • State Pension (SP) (previously called Retirement Pension (RP))
Vaccine Damage Payments (VDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccine Damage Payments (VDP)
Widow's/Bereavement Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bereavement Allowance • Bereavement Payment (BPT) • Widow's Payment (WPT) • Widowed Mother's Allowance (WMA) • Widowed Parents Allowance (WPA) • Widow's Pension (WP)
Winter Fuel Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Fuel Payment

2. Retention Policy

2.1 Document/data classification

To help you comply with the DWP Benefits DDRG, simple classifications have been developed.

You must examine **all** documents and data relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following categories:

- **Supporting** documents/data, or
- **Ephemeral** documents/data.

2.1.1 Supporting documents/data

Supporting documents/data are those which support a decision and:

- Contain information on which a decision has been based, e.g. claim and review forms, and/or
- Determine the amount, destination or place of payment, e.g. copies of current wage slips and change of post office or address notifications.

Documents/data required for security and accuracy checks are also classified as supporting.

2.1.2 Ephemeral documents/data

Any documents/data that do not fulfil the criteria for supporting must be classified as **ephemeral**, and can be destroyed after a minimum of 4 weeks, unless the business needs to keep it for longer.

2.2 Scanned images and original documentation

Any document/information that DWP has **agreed** are to be scanned, i.e. scanned images, must follow the current document and data retention policy. They are either 'supporting' or 'ephemeral', and follow the agreed retention period for the benefit. Providing that the scanned image is 'legally admissible', in line with British Standard BSI PD0008:2008 then, the original document can be considered for destruction.

ALL original documentation can be destroyed **4 weeks following scanning, unless identified as a 'valuable'**. This 4 week period can be extended due to business need, and in consultation with the Resources and Capability team.

Document Repository System (DRS) also has two workflow classifications for electronic images:

- Untraceable - this workflow allows missing information for example NINO, to be added to the electronic image so it can be linked to an individual case. Document classification is then changed to supporting/ephemeral as appropriate. If the electronic image is not traced it is deleted after 6 weeks.
- Expunge Immediately - this is for items that have been scanned in error, these images are deleted within 72 hours.

For further information see the DRS guidance.

2.3 Data kept on CD/DVDs and other media that can't be printed off

Data kept on CD/DVDs and other media, which includes X-Rays, must still be classified. Such data **must** be stored in a controlled environment, and so **cannot be sent to Heywood** for storage. Businesses who decide to store such data must ensure that it is stored correctly, to ensure the integrity of the data throughout the period that it is needed for, which can in some cases be many years. In addition, businesses have responsibility to ensure that the data is managed, which includes the need/ability to migrate the data to new formats, as IT changes. The National Archives suggests that this may happen approximately every 5 to 7 years, and so you must plan for this.

You should bear in mind that data held in portable storage devices degrade over time. These will need to be managed effectively to ensure that they remain readable and usable over time.

2.4 Recorded Telephone Conversations

Where the business has introduced recorded telephone conversations, for example as a replacement for signed paper documents, the recorded conversation constitutes evidence of entitlement to the claim or, to the decision of disentitlement. The voice data must be retained on a system and follow procedures which are 'legally admissible', in line with British Standard BSI PD0008:2008.

Voice data which supports a decision and contains information on which a decision has been based and/or determines the amount, destination or place of payment, must be retained as supporting evidence, in accordance with the benefit specific sections of the guide.

If there is a complaint or an appeal lodged the recordings should be retained as per guidance on exception cases.

Where the information given during recorded telephone conversations is used to electronically complete a claim form, which the customer signs and returns; the claim form becomes the supporting evidence. Upon receipt of the signed form, the recording of the telephone conversation becomes ephemeral and can be destroyed in line with other ephemeral documentation/data.

On occasions where telephone conversations are monitored for training purposes only, any recordings do not constitute evidence of entitlement or a decision to disentitlement, and therefore should not be treated as supporting evidence.

2.5 Reclassification of documents/data needed for checks

When a document/data previously classified as ephemeral is needed for a check:

- Reclassify it,
- Note it with the date of the most recent decision (or SF application number), and
- Retain it as a supporting document/data, unless your procedural guidance has specific retention periods.

For guidance on mandatory checks see Business Control System (BCS) guidance

Note – Please check with your procedural guidance for the relevant retention periods. However, if there are no retention periods, then the retention guidance for checks above should be followed.

2.6 Retention of scan reports

The retention period for scan reports may vary. Scans are usually issued with a circular or bulletin giving the retention period and advice line contact numbers. If no retention period is given, contact the appropriate advice line.

2.7 Retention of printed output reports

This guidance also applies to printed output that relates to an individual customer. Continue to follow current procedures for output that relates to more than one customer, e.g. work available reports, direct payment schedules. Benefit staff should refer to their system guidance. Examples include:

- IS Printed Output Guide (POG)
- ESA JSAPS POG
- JSA Payment System POG
- DLA/AA POG
- IIDB POG
- PDCS Single Source of Guidance (Pension Credit POG & State Pension POG now included within SSG)

2.8 Main file prints, record prints and copy records

See the Benefit-specific section for details on how to process Main File Prints, Record prints (full and partial), and Copy records:

- AA Full Record Prints
- DLA Full Record Prints
- ESA Main File Prints (JA70150 DPA)
- IB Copy Records
- IS Full Record Prints
- JSA Main File Prints (JA70150 DPA)
- Pension Credit Copy Records (RRP00022)
- State Pension Copy Records (RRP00022)

2.9 Potentially Violent Persons documents/data

The procedures in this Guide do not affect the way Potentially Violent Persons (PVP) documents/data is managed. Continue to follow current procedures in The Department and You for Retention of PV Documents and Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Note: It is important that records both clerical and system are adequately marked and maintained, to notify staff accessing them of any potential to violent or inappropriate behaviour.

2.10 Enquiries about the destruction of records

Where documents/data have been destroyed in line with the Benefits DDRG see Appendix 1 for recommended lines to take.

Where documents/data have **not** been destroyed in line with the Benefits DDRG and may have been destroyed in error (either partially or fully) see Appendix 2. Data Protection Officers should also refer to the Subject Access Request Guide.

2.11 Reviews

For Benefits DDRG purposes, a **full review** is one which checks and verifies every aspect of a claim/application (excluding mortgage and/or home improvement loans) to make sure the correct level of benefit is in payment.

Full reviews are undertaken in:

- Employment and Support Allowance,
- Income Support,
- Jobseekers Allowance, and
- Pension Credit.

A specific review which checks only one or two aspects of the claim/application (e.g. annual savings check) will not authorise the destruction of documents/data, except for Carer's Allowance.

See Reviews in the benefit-specific sections of this Guide for more information on reviews.

2.12 Put away or dormant documents/data, including system information

All put away (PA'd) or dormant documents/data must be destroyed after 14 months unless they are:

- Marked or identified as exceptions (see exception cases for further information), and/or
- Clerically maintained cases (see the benefit-specific section for further information), and/or
- Relating to the Personal Capability Assessment or Work Capability Assessment (see benefit-specific section for further information)
- Relating to Social Fund and Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefit - (see benefit-specific section for further information)

For more information on PA or dormant cases, see 'Claim reaches PA stage' or 'Claim reaches dormant stage' in the benefit-specific sections of this Guide.

The destruction periods are 'Media Independent', and cover all aspects of document and data retention. See policy overview for further details.

2.13 Clerically maintained cases

Some benefits have special document and data retention arrangements for clerically maintained cases. Where this applies, details are given in the benefit-specific sections of this Guide.

2.14 Temporary exceptions and embargoes

Temporary restrictions are sometimes placed on the destruction of some benefit documents, voice recordings, scanned images, etc. Details and appropriate action are usually issued in bulletins and circulars, which will temporarily supersede the Benefits DDRG.

Note: ALL embargoes MUST be discussed and agreed with Resources and Capability team before implementation.

2.15 Customer Feedback and correspondence

As the initial contact may be followed up at other levels e.g. customer representatives, Ministers etc, documents/data should be retained to refer back to, in order to avoid embarrassment and contradictory information being given. As it may be difficult to predict which contacts may be followed up at other levels, all MPs correspondence, customer feedback and the Departments response should be retained for periods in line with those for supporting documents/data.

2.16 Special Payments

Special Payments come under Financial Redress for Maladministration, details can be found in the Special Payments Guide. These files should be retained intact and filed as supporting evidence and retained for a minimum of 14 months.

2.17 Sub-files

You can find the document retention procedures for fraud files and overpayment files and documents in the Fraud Procedures and Instructions (FPI) manual and Overpayment Recovery Guide (ORG). They are not affected by the procedures in this Guide.

Specialist sections should maintain sub-files (if used) in line with the detailed procedures in this Guide.

Maintenance of sub-files - taking their own organisation and current practices into account, local managers should decide how and when live sub-files should be examined to ensure compliance with the Benefits DDRG. However, they should be examined at least annually, to make sure data is removed if there is no longer a business need to retain it.

The specialist area is responsible for maintaining the sub-file and for either:

- Returning PA'd sub-files to the relevant section for linking with the original claim file, or
- Retaining and destroying the PA'd sub-files at the end of the appropriate retention period.

2.18 Exception cases

There are exceptions to the Benefits document and data retention policies that can apply to one or more benefits. Identify cases which are exceptions and note them as **Not for destruction**.

The most common cases for each benefit, which you should identify as exceptions (✓) and note as **Not for destruction**, are shown in the following table:

Type of exception	DLA	CACC	IB/ SDA	ESA	MA	IISB	JSA	ISS	SF	SP	WPB	Pension	UC	WFP
Fraud	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overpayments	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Appeals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civil	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Proceedings														
Debt Management (Compensation Recovery)	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Recovery from Estates	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Criminal Cases Review Commission	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interest														
Special Payments	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parliamentary Health and Service Ombudsman (PHSO) Cases	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customer Feedback	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Special Rules	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
(DS1500) Cases Subject to a Regional Benefit Review/Risk Assurance Division Performance	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗

Measurement

t

Independent Case



Examiner (ICE) cases

When you identify a case as an exception, you must:

- Mark as **Not for destruction** the claim file and any appropriate sub-files;
- Set any system indicator; and/or
- Note all relevant non-paper data sets and data bases etc.

Responsibility for taking this action is outlined in Exception categories in the benefit-specific sections of this Guide.

The marking on claim file, either document or data should be removed when:

- All action is complete,
- The specialist area no longer has an interest in the case, or
- The file no longer supports a current decision or a decision made in the previous 14-months.

The file should be destroyed 14-months after removing the exception marker.

Note: For HMCTS (Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service) electronic decision outcome notifications. Continue to follow current procedures for retaining paper copies of HMCTS decision outcome notifications. In addition, retain copies of Tribunal Decisions received electronically for three months. Sites without DMACR (Decision Makers & Appeals Case Recorder) will save the outcomes to a set shared folder with access to the content restricted to the Decision Making Team (Authorised users). Sites with DMACR will copy and paste the Tribunal decision into DMACR onto the customer records. For more information on the benefit-specific exceptions, see the benefit-specific sections of this Guide.

3. Specific Guidance

3.1 Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.1.1 Claim reaches Closed stage

For AFIP purposes, claims are closed when:

- Customer/claimant applies for DLA, PIP, or AA;

OR

- Customer/claimant dies.

OR

- Due to the suspension of a claim to AFIP, when a claimant becomes an **In Pensioner** at the Royal Chelsea Hospital.

Destroy closed cases after 24 months. There are some exceptions to this rule: see section below for details.

3.1.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for AFIP. See the exceptions section for details. Note cases which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed retention procedures on the AFIP guidance.

3.1.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Armed Forces Independence Payment documents – see the AFIP guidance retention page.

3.2 Carer's Allowance (CA)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.2.1 Reviews

You should review a claim when a relevant change of circumstances is reported, e.g. by the customer over the telephone, or in writing, or via e-service.

Following a review, retain:

- The most recent claim form
- Any documents/data needed to support the current decision, and
- Any documents/data containing evidence used to reach decisions made within the previous 26 months.

This applies both to clerical and system maintained cases.

Destroy all the remaining documents/data, unless the case is noted or identified as “not for destruction” (see exception section below for further details).

3.2.2 Claim reaches dormant stage

For CA purposes, claims are dormant when:

- there is no entitlement to benefit at the outset, or
- entitlement to benefit ends.

Destroy dormant cases after 26 months. There are some exceptions to this rule, see section below for details.

3.2.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for Carer's Allowance. See the policy section on exception cases for details. Note cases which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed retention procedures on the CA guidance.

3.2.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Carer's Allowance documents – see the CA guidance retention page.

3.3 Carer's Credit (CC)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.3.1 Reviews

You should review a claim when a relevant change of circumstances is reported, e.g. by the customer over the telephone, or in writing, or via e-service.

Following a review, retain:

- The most recent application form,
- Any documents/data needed to support the current decision, and
- Any documents/data containing evidence used to reach decisions made within the previous 14 months.

This applies both to clerical and system maintained cases.

Destroy all the remaining documents/data, unless the case is noted or identified as “not for destruction” (see exception section for further details).

3.3.2 Application reaches dormant stage

For CC purposes, applications are dormant when:

- There is no entitlement to the credit at the outset, or
- entitlement to the credit ends.

Destroy dormant cases after 14 months. There are some exceptions to this rule see exception section below for details.

3.3.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for Carer's Credit. See the policy section on exception cases for details. Note cases which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed retention procedures on the Carer's Credit guidance page.

3.3.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Carer's Credit documents – see the Carer's Credit guidance retention page.

3.4 Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Attendance Allowance (AA)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.4.1 Claim reaches PA stage

For Benefits DDRG purposes, DLA and AA claims are defined as put away (PA) when:

- There is no entitlement to benefit at the outset, or
- Entitlement to benefit ends.

Note: The term PA does **not** apply to documents/data sent to filestore/data repository for filing while benefit payment continues.

You **must** destroy PA'd cases 14 months after PA. There are some exceptions to this rule: see section below for details.

3.4.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for DLA and AA. See the policy section on exception cases for details. Note cases which are exceptions as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed retention procedures on the DLA/AA guidance.

3.4.2.1 Specific exceptions

- a. **Full Record Prints (RDA10211/RAA10211)** - these are classed as **ephemeral** and send to Heywood Stores with a retention period of **4 weeks** Claims that result in an overpayment are classed as **exception cases**, and all supporting documents (including main file prints and screen prints) are retained as per guidance for exception cases.

Note: When sending DLA and AA Full Record Prints (RDA10211/RAA10211) (FRPs) to Heywood Stores: FRPs **must** be in boxes by themselves, FRPs must be registered on FARIO as **MFPs**, not as the benefit to which they relate; FRPs **must** carry a destruction date on FARIO no more than **4 weeks** in the future; any boxes of FRPs which have no destruction date, have a destruction date more than **4 weeks** in the future, or have FRPs mixed with or marked as benefit files will be returned as non-conformant.

3.4.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing DLA/AA documents – see the DLA/AA guidance retention page.

3.5 Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

For ESA, only the 1st and last medical statements (fit note or equivalent) are required to be retained.

3.5.1 Reviews

You should review a claim when a relevant change of circumstances is reported, e.g. by the customer over the telephone, or in writing, or via e-service. You should also follow review procedures to carry out Limited Case Checks and Full Case Checks, which applies to both clerical and system maintained cases.

3.5.1.1 Mortgage review

You should only carry out a review of mortgage and /or home improvement loan documents/data when the Mortgage Interest Direct (MID) anniversary date is reached.

3.5.2 Claim reaches PA stage

For ESA purposes, claims are PA when:

- There is no entitlement to benefit at the outset, or
- The customer dies, or
- Entitlement to benefit or credits ends.

Destroy PA'd cases which are:

- Maintained on system
 - JSAPS data can only be destroyed centrally, in accordance with the system design
- Maintained clerically:
 - 48 months after PA (taxable benefit paid)
 - 24 months after PA (no taxable benefit paid).
- Maintained on system, but with supporting documents 48 months after the last action – as per JSAPS system maintained cases

There are some exceptions to this rule: see section below for details.

3.5.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for ESA. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and mark them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures in the ESA guidance.

3.5.3.1 Specific exceptions

a. Customer Account Management

Where claims are made using the Customer Account Management (CAM) and the telephone conversation is recorded as a replacement for signed documentation, the recorded telephone conversation must not be destroyed until the retention period for all benefits it refers to have elapsed, including Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. In the case of ESA claims, call recordings will be retained for 14 months from the date the claim ends. However, if Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit is also claimed, call recordings will be retained for 14 months from the date the claim ends or for 6 years from the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit claim date, whichever is the longest.

Note: JSAPS claim data remains on the system for at least 4 years after the last update. This is due to HMRC requirements, as ESA is a **taxable benefit**.

Note: Guidance on how to flag ESA CAM cases to retain data longer than the standard 14 months after the end of the claim in CIS can be found in the ESA Guidance.

b. Cleansing of live claim files

When weeding records, account should be taken of the following amended guidance. Retain in the ESA55:

- The last 2 medical referrals containing reports i.e. IB85 unless the reports are held electronically on MSRS, and also
- Any documents containing evidence used to reach decisions made within the previous 14 months.

Note: The IB55 / ESA55 referral files for live claims must be retained for 72 months to ensure that the last two Work Capability Assessments reports on form ESA85 are retained.

c. European Refugee Fund Claims

Clerical Claim forms along with relevant evidence supporting claims made by Gateway Protection Programme refugees must be retained for 5 years following the closure of the claim. The claim form must be annotated with the words "Retain until 5 years following closure of claim – European Refugee Fund (ERF) provision".

d. Main File Prints (JA70150 DPA) - these are classed as **ephemeral** and send to Heywood Stores with a retention period of **4 weeks**. Claims that result in an overpayment are classed as **exception cases**, and all supporting documents (including main file prints and screen prints) are retained as per guidance for exception cases.

However, when the MFP is used for Transfer To Clerical, additional information also needs to be printed and retained:

HB/CTB data: Print the following screens and assign a retention period of 6 years on FARIO: JA760631 - Claim details enquiry - 'Where you live' screen; JA510 - include all screens by pressing F12 until 'last' screen is reached; and JA510737 - navigate to by pressing F1 - NHB forms issued.

Tax data: Print the following screens and assign a retention period of 48 months from the end of the current tax year on FARIO: JA509529 - All screens held in JA509, displayed by tax years, obtain by pressing F12 until the last screen shown.

Note: When sending MFPs to Heywood Stores: MFPs **must** be in boxes by themselves, MFPs **must** be identified as such on FARIO, not as the benefit to which they relate; MFPs **must** carry a destruction date on FARIO no more than **4 weeks** in the future; any boxes of MFPs which have no destruction date, have a destruction date more than **4 weeks** in the future, or have MFPs mixed with or marked as benefit files will be returned as non-conformant.

3.5.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing ESA documents – see the ESA guidance retention page.

3.6 Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.6.1 Claim reaches PA stage

For IB and SDA purposes, you should PA claims when:

- There is no entitlement to benefit or credits at the outset,
- The customer dies, or
- Entitlement to benefit or credits ends.

Note: If entitlement to IB (or SDA) ends but the claimant has been reassessed to ESA, then the reassessment (IB/SDA) case documents should be retained until the ESA claim becomes dormant – see IB Reassessment Guidance para 13.

Destroy PA'd cases which are:

- Maintained on system for 14 months after PA, or
- Maintained clerically for 48 months after PA (taxable benefit paid) or 24 months after PA (no taxable benefit paid).

There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception categories in this section of the Guide for details.

3.6.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance. See the policy section on exception cases for details. Note cases which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures. They should make sure the claim file, any IB55 / ESA55 or SDA14 and any appropriate sub-file(s) are noted with **Not for destruction**, and the **reason for exception**.

3.6.2.1 Specific exceptions

- a. **BI76/77 forms** are also exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for IB and SDA. When BI76/BI77 action is complete, file BI76/77 forms separately from the claim file and retain them until:
 - The customer claims a benefit under the Industrial Injuries Scheme, when the BI76/BI77 should be linked **with BI2**, or

- 14 months after the death of the customer if they do not claim benefit under the Industrial Injuries Scheme.
- b. **IB or SDA reassessment for ESA.** If entitlement to IB (or SDA) ends but the claimant has been reassessed to ESA, then the Reassessment (IB/SDA) case documents should be retained until the ESA claim becomes dormant – see IB Reassessment Guidance para 13.
- c. **Cleansing of live claim files** - when weeding records, account should be taken of the following amended guidance:
- Retain in the IB55 / ESA55 or SDA 14: the last 2 medical referrals containing reports i.e. IB85/SDA16 unless the reports are held electronically on MSRS; and also any documents containing evidence used to reach decisions made within the previous 14 months.
 - The IB55 / ESA55 referral files for live claims must be retained for 120 months to ensure that the last two Personal Capability Assessments on form IB85 are retained.
- d. **Customer Management System** - where claims are made using the Customer Management System (CMS), the original Customer Statement must not be destroyed until the retention period for all benefits the statement refers to have elapsed, including Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit. This is:
- For IB – 14 months from the date the claim is closed.
 - For HB/CTB – 14 months following the claim going dormant or 6 years from the date of claim whichever is the greater.
- Note:** First and last medical certificates must be retained for 14 months after the claim is closed.
- Note:** See guidance on storage and retrieval of CMS documentation.
- e. **Copy records** for deleted accounts should be retained as supporting documents whilst a claim remains live. This applies to all cases regardless of whether or not they are rebuilt on system or continue off-line. The normal retention times for PA claims (as outlined above), extended by any exception cases, will apply.
- Note:** When sending IB Copy records to Heywood Stores they **must** be sent as NAPS.

3.6.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Incapacity Benefit documents – see the Incapacity Benefit guidance retention page.

3.7 Income Support (IS)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.7.1 Reviews

A claim is subject to a full review when you receive a review form, or following a case intervention.

Following a full review, retain:

- The new review form,
- Claim and/or review forms that support the current decision (on entitlement) and any decision made within the previous 14 months,
- All other supporting documents/data relating to the current decision (on entitlement) and any decision made within the previous 14 months, and
- In addition to the above, where there has been a gap of less than 3 months between claims retain the claim form or the review form showing the link to the previous claim/claims.

This applies both to clerical and system maintained cases. You should follow review procedures which applies both to clerical and system maintained cases.

Destroy all the remaining documents/data, including any claim and/or review forms that do not meet the retention criteria above, unless the case is noted or identified as not for destruction (see exception section below for further details).

3.7.1.1 Mortgage review

You should carry out a review of mortgage and /or home improvement loan documents/data when the annual Mortgage Interest Direct (MID) anniversary date is reached or a significant change in circumstances results in a change of lender or the end of the mortgage/home improvement loan.

3.7.2 Claim reaches PA stage

For IS purposes, claims are PA when:

- There is no entitlement to benefit at the outset, or
- Entitlement to benefit ends.

Destroy PA'd cases 14 months after PA. **This applies both to system and clerically maintained cases.** There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception section below for details.

3.7.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for Income Support. See the policy section on exception cases for details. Note cases which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures in the Income Support guidance.

3.7.3.1 Specific exceptions

- a. **Customer Management System** - where claims are made using the Customer Management System (CMS), the original Customer Statement must not be destroyed until the retention period for all benefits the statement refers to have elapsed, including Council Tax and Housing Benefit. This is:
- For IS – 14 months following the claim going dormant.
 - For HB/CTB – 14 months following the claim going dormant or 6 years from the date of claim whichever is the greater.

Note: See guidance on storage and retrieval of CMS documentation.

- b. **European Refugee Fund Claims** - Clerical Claim forms along with relevant evidence supporting claims made by Gateway Protection Programme refugees must be retained for 5 years following the closure of the claim. The claim form must be annotated with the words “Retain until 5 years following closure of claim – European Refugee Fund (ERF) provision”.
- c. **Full Record Prints (FRP)** - these are classed as **ephemeral** and sent to Heywood Stores with a retention period of **4 weeks**. Claims that result in an overpayment are classed as **exception cases**, and all supporting documents (including main file prints and screen prints) are retained as per guidance for exception cases.

Note: When sending FRPs to Heywood Stores: FRPs **must** be in boxes by themselves, FRPs **must** be registered on FARIO as **MFPs**, not as the benefit to which they relate; FRPs **must** carry a destruction date on FARIO no more than **4 weeks** in the future; any boxes of FRPs which have no destruction date, have a destruction date more than **4 weeks** in the future, or have FRPs mixed with or marked as benefit files will be returned as non-conformant.

3.7.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing IB documents – see the Income Support guidance retention page.

3.8 Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefit

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

Medical documents contained in BI8 - The procedures contained within this Guide **do not apply** to any documents/data held on the BI8 file. These documents/data should be retained until the BI2 is destroyed.

A claim for IISB can be made at any time up to 12 months after the date of death. All files, where the customer has died, should therefore be retained separately and destroyed 14 months after:

- The date of death, or
- The date of the last decision whichever is the later.

3.8.1 Case reaches PA stage

For IISB purposes claims are PA when all action on the case is complete. A case is not a PA case where there is an ongoing award of an IIS benefit. A case is only PA where there is no ongoing action or any benefit in payment. Destroy PA files either:

- At age 85, or
- Where the customer has died, destroy files 14 months after:
 - The date of death, or
 - The date of the last decision whichever is the later.

There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception section below.

3.8.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for IISB. See the policy section on exception cases for details. Note cases, which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must make sure that the BI2 and any appropriate sub files are noted with **Not for destruction**, and the **reason for exception**. They must follow agreed retention procedures on the Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefit guidance.

3.8.2.1 Specific exceptions

- a. **B176/B177 files** - when BI76/BI77 action is complete, file BI76/77 forms separately from the claim file and retain them until:
 - The customer claims a benefit under the Industrial Injuries Scheme, when the BI76/BI77 should be linked with BI2, or

- 14 months after the death of the customer if they do not claim benefit under the Industrial Injuries Scheme.
- b. **Embargo** - There is an embargo on the destruction of Miners' IIDB files until the coal miners' litigation against the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC), as inheritor of the liabilities of the former British Coal Corporation, is complete. See the IIDB guidance for details.

3.8.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefit documents – see the Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefit guidance retention page.

3.9 Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.9.1 Reviews

A claim is subject to a full review when you receive a review form, or following a case intervention. This applies both to clerical and system maintained cases.

Following a full review, retain:

- The new review form,
- Claim and/or review forms/data that support the current decision and any decision made within the previous 14 months,
- All other supporting documents/data relating to the current decision and any decision made within the previous 14 months, and
- In addition to the above, where there has been a gap of less than 26 weeks between claims retain the claim form or the review form showing the link to the previous claim/claims.

This applies both to clerical and system maintained cases. JSAPS claim **data** remains on the system for at least 4 years after the last update. **If the case is clerically maintained and benefit has been paid, also retain any records of payment made in the previous 48 months after the last update, i.e. after PA and all exceptions have been cleared, due to HMRC requirements.**

Destroy all the remaining documents, including any claim and/or review forms that do not meet the retention criteria above, unless the case is noted or identified as not for destruction (see exception categories in this section of the Guide for further details). The system data will be destroyed at least 4 years after the last update. This is due to HMRC requirements, as JSA is a taxable benefit.

3.9.1.1 Mortgage review

You should only carry out a mortgage review and/or home improvement loan review when the Mortgage Interest Direct (MID) anniversary date is reached.

3.9.2 Claim reaches PA stage

For JSA purposes, claims are PA when:

- There is no entitlement to benefit or credits at the outset, or

- Entitlement to benefit or credits ends, except where they are serving a period of sanction, still have an underlying entitlement to benefit and they continue to attend the Jobcentre to sign-on. This will keep their claim live.

Destroy PA'd cases:

- Maintained on system - JSAPS data can only be destroyed centrally, in accordance with the system design functionality.
- Maintained clerically: 48 months after PA (taxable benefit paid) or 14 months after PA (no taxable benefit paid).

There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception section below.

3.9.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for JSA. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and mark them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures in the JSA guidance.

3.9.3.1 Specific exceptions

- a. **Customer Management System** - where claims are made using the Customer Management System (CMS), the original Customer Statement must not be destroyed until the retention period for all benefits the statement refers to have elapsed, including Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit as CMS only retains the information for 30 days. This is:
 - For JSA – 14 months following the claim going dormant.
 - For HB/CTB – 14 months following the claim going dormant or 6 years from the date of the claim whichever is the greater

Note: JSAPS claim data remains on the system for at least 4 years after the last update. This is due to HMRC requirements, as JSA is a taxable benefit.

Note: See guidance on storage and retrieval of CMS documentation.

- b. **Labour Market Units (LMU's) retention policy** - all LMUs, and all documents contained therein, should be retained on site for **one month** after closure action is completed and then destroyed. The only exception to this is those LMUs that contain a fraud, appeal or overpayment marker, which should be retained on site for **no longer than 14 months** from the date a claim has ended. The LMU is considered to be housing (ES80AJP) and ALL the documents contained within it.

Note: See Closure and Retention Guidance and JSA LMU Guidance page

- c. **European Refugee Fund Claims** - Clerical Claim forms along with relevant evidence supporting claims made by Gateway Protection Programme refugees must be retained for 5 years following the closure of the claim. The claim form must be annotated with the words "Retain until 5 years following closure of claim – European Refugee Fund (ERF) provision".

Note: SL2's – where there is European Social Fund (ESF) and Match

funded provision – Retain until 31/12/2022. Where there is no ESF and Match funded provision, retain for 18 months.

- d. **Main File Prints (JA70150 DPA)** - these are classed as **ephemeral** and send to Heywood Stores with a retention period of **4 weeks**. Claims that result in an overpayment are classed as **exception cases**, and all supporting documents (including main file prints and screen prints) are retained as per guidance for exception cases.

However, when the MFP is used for Transfer To Clerical, additional information also needs to be printed and retained:

HB/CTB data: Print the following screens and assign a retention period of 6 years on FARIO: JA501589 - Claim details enquiry - 'Where you live' screen; JA510 - include all screens by pressing F12 until 'last' screen is reached; and JA510737 - navigate to by pressing F1 - NHB forms issued.

Tax data: Print the following screens and assign a retention period of 48 months from the end of the current tax year on FARIO: JA509529 - All screens held in JA509, displayed by tax years, obtain by pressing F12 until the last screen shown.

Note: When sending MFPs to Heywood Stores: MFPs **must** be in boxes by themselves, MFPs **must** be identified as such on FARIO, not as the benefit to which they relate; MFPs **must** carry a destruction date on FARIO no more than **4 weeks** in the future; any boxes of MFPs which have no destruction date, have a destruction date more than **4 weeks** in the future, or have MFPs mixed with or marked as benefit files will be returned as non-conformant.

3.9.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing JSA documents – see the JSA guidance retention page.

3.10 Maternity Allowance (MA)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.10.1 Claim reaches PA stage

For MA purposes, claims are PA when:

- There is no entitlement to benefit or credits at the outset, or
- Entitlement to benefit or credits ends.

Destroy PA'd cases 14 months after PA. There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception categories in this section of the Guide for details.

3.10.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for MA. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and note them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures.

3.10.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Maternity Allowance documents – see the Maternity Allowance guidance on end of MAP.

3.11 NINO Allocation

The Secure NINO Allocation Process (SNAP) Guide provides guidance on how to process NINO applications. This is a system process with an **automatic retention purge of 14 months** following the DM (Decision Maker) decision on the application. All system cancelled and refused applications are retained securely for **14 months**, then destroyed. Fraud guidance - Bulletin 13/5/2011 provides guidance on the clerical process for retention of NINO form CA5400 for successful applications. This has a retention period of **3 years** from the date of creation.

3.12 Pension Credit

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.12.1 Reviews

An award is subject to a full review on the expiry of an Assessed Income Period (AIP) or, where no AIP is awarded, as a Periodic Case Review (PCR) every 3 years.

Following a full review, retain:

- The new review form,
- Application and/or review forms that support the current decision and any decision made within the previous 14 months, and
- All other supporting document/data relating to the current decision and any decision made within the previous 14 months.

This applies to both clerical and system maintained cases.

Note: Where no new review form is produced (i.e. following an automated AIP Rapid Review) continue to retain the existing application and/or review forms and all other supporting document/data relating to it.

Destroy all the remaining documents/data, including any application and/or review forms that do not meet the retention criteria above, unless the case is marked or identified as not for destruction (see exception categories in this section of the Guide for further details).

3.12.1.1 Mortgage review

You should only carry out a mortgage review and/or home improvement loan review when the Mortgage Interest Direct (MID) anniversary date is reached. See the Single Source of Guidance (Pension Credit and State Pension) section on Limited case reviews.

3.12.2 Application reaches PA stage

For Pension Credit purposes, cases are put away (PA) when there is no entitlement to Pension Credit at the outset, or entitlement to Pension Credit ends.

Destroy PA'd cases 14 months after PA. **This applies to both system and clerically maintained cases.** There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception section below.

3.12.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for Pension Credit. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and mark them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures.

3.12.3.1 Specific exceptions

In relation to the **Pensions scanning solution**, Pension Credit cases are **retained for 64 months**, before destruction.

- a. **Copy records (RRP00022)** should be retained as supporting documents until 14 months after the customer's death. The normal retention times for PA claims (as outlined above), extended by any exception cases, will apply.

Note: When sending Pension Credit Copy Records to Heywood Stores they **must** be sent as NAPS.

3.12.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Pension Credit documents – see the Single Source of Guidance (Pension Credit and State Pension) retention pages.

3.13 Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.13.1 Claim reaches Closed stage

For PIP purposes, cases are deleted from PIPCS after 24 months following case closure. Claims have reached Case Closure when:

- there is no entitlement to benefit at the outset, or
- entitlement to benefit ends.

The PIP computer system will automatically delete closed cases after 24 months. There are some exceptions to this rule: see section below for details.

Note: The 24 months retention period takes into account PIP Linking Rules.

3.13.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for Personal Independence Payment. See the exceptions section for details. Note cases which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed retention procedures on the PIP guidance.

3.13.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Personal Independence Payment documents – see the PIP guidance retention page.

3.14 Short Term Benefit Advance and Budgeting Advance

Short Term Benefit Advance (STBA), which began April 2013, can be paid for the following benefits;

- Jobseekers Allowance
- Employment & Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- State Pension
- Pension Credit
- Carer's Allowance
- Maternity Allowance
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
- Bereavement Benefit

STBA should be treated as supporting documentation/data, and retained as per retention periods for supporting evidence for each benefit in the DWP Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide. A link to STBA retention procedural guidance will appear here, when available.

Budgeting Advance (BA), which also began April 2013, is only provided by Universal Credit (UC). See also the UC retention guidance.

3.15 Skills Conditionality forms

The Skills Conditionality forms have the same retention period as other JSA and ESA documents. See the relevant Skills Guides for further details regarding skills conditionality in England, Scotland or Wales. See DDRG benefit-specific section for details of JSA retention and ESA retention periods.

3.16 Social Fund (SF)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception categories in this section of the Guide. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

Part of the Social Fund (Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans) ended on 1st April 2013, but Benefits DDRG policies continue to apply to all existing cases and documents.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.16.1 Application reaches PA stage

For SF purposes, applications are put away (PA) when:

- Action on the application is complete, and
- Recovery action, if appropriate, is complete.

Destroy all Social Fund PA'd applications 14 months after the end of the financial year in which the last action was taken. There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception section below.

3.16.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for SF. These are clerically processed applications. See the policy section on exception cases for details. Note cases which you identify as exceptions as, **Not for destruction**.

3.16.2.1 Specific exceptions

a. Clerically processed applications - applications processed clerically are should follow agreed procedures for locally held files on the Social Fund guidance page.

Note: The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures on the Social Fund guidance page. They must make sure the SF wallet and any appropriate sub-file(s) are marked with **Not for destruction**.

Note: All “NIL” awards should be given a standard 6 months retention/destruction date.

b. Community Care Grants (CCG), Sure Start Maternity Grants (SSMG) and Funeral Payments (FP) will have a destruction date of 31 July following the tax year in which they were paid or 6 months from the date of decision, whichever is the greater.

The following examples show how this works in the tax year 6 April 2012 to 5 April 2013:

- Example 1 - Paid June 2012. 6 months from that date is December 2012; 31 July 2013 is 11 months after that date. The destruction date is therefore 31 July 2013 as that is the greater retention period.
- Example 2 - Paid March 2012. 6 months from that date is September 2012. 31 July is only 4 months from the date of payment. The destruction date is therefore September 2012 as 6 months is the greater retention period.

3.16.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Social Fund documents – see the Social Fund guidance retention page.

3.17 State Pension (SP)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.17.1 Claim reaches PA stage

For SP purposes, claims are PA once all action is completed. The actual date of PA is the date that the Decision-maker (DM) decides that the claim has ended.

Destroy PA'd cases:

- 14 months after PA if they are **system** maintained, or
- 14 months after the customer's death if they are **clerically** maintained.

There are some exceptions to this rule: see Exception categories and the Business Needs Exceptions below in this section of the Guide for details.

3.17.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for SP. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and mark them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures.

3.17.2.1 Business Needs Exceptions

In addition to those cases marked or identified as not for destruction, cases identified as Business Needs Exceptions (BNE) are also exceptions to the Benefits DR policy. These are Maxwell Cases and other scheme cessation cases.

File and maintain BNE cases in line with current procedures.

3.17.2.2 Specific exceptions

a. **Copy records (RRP00022)** should be retained as supporting documents until 14 months after the customer's death. The normal retention times for PA claims (as outlined above), extended by any exception cases, will apply.

Note: When sending State Pension Copy Records to Heywood Stores they **must** be sent as NAPS.

3.17.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing State Pension documents – see the Single Source of Guidance (Pension Credit and State Pension) retention pages.

3.18 Suicide and self-harm documents

All documents relating to suicide and self-harm should be retained for 6 years following the date on which the incident occurred or the declaration of intention was made.

See the Health and Safety document retention schedule and customer's suicide and self-harm policy for details

3.19 Universal Credit (UC)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception categories in this section of the Guide. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.19.1 Reviews

You should review a claim when a relevant change of circumstances is reported, e.g. by the customer over the telephone, or in writing, or via e-service. You should follow review procedures (Universal Credit Knowledge Base) which applies both to clerical and system maintained cases.

Destroy all the remaining documents/data, unless the case is noted or identified as “not for destruction” (see exception categories in this section of the Guide for further details).

3.19.2 Claim reaches PA/dormant stage

For UC purposes, claims are PA/dormant when there is no entitlement to benefit at the outset or entitlement to benefit end, which includes (this list is not exhaustive):

- An Incorrect national Insurance number is used
- Claimant moved abroad
- Claimant moves to Northern Ireland
- Dead Letter Office unresolved

Destroy PA cases after 14 months.

Destroy Call Recordings 14 months after PA, where **no** HB element involved. Where HB element claimed, destroy 14 months after PA or 6 years from HB element claim date, whichever is the longest.

Budgetary Advances - this new benefit begins April 2013. These claims are treated as supporting evidence, and must be retained for the normal retention period of Universal Credit. (see above)

There are some exceptions to this rule: see section 3.13.3 for details.

3.19.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for UC. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and note them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed retention procedures on Universal Credit Knowledge Base.

3.19.3.1 Specific exceptions

- a. **FRAIMS** will update CIS with a FRAIMS interest indicator which will then notify UC not to destroy UC records.

3.19.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Universal Credit documents – see the Universal Credit Knowledge Base.

Note: A link will be provided to the Universal Credit Knowledge Base, when available.

3.20 Vaccine Damage Payment cases

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

The retention period for Vaccine Damage Payment (VDP) cases depends on the type of decision reached. Retain cases, which are subject to:

- An award – retain for 14 months after date payment is made,
- An appeal for six years from the date of notification of the original decision, or two years from the date of notification of the tribunal decision whichever is the later,
- A lay or medical rejection, or
- Until after the death of the disabled person, as there is no time limit for an appeal. For cases in this category, where the disabled person is over the age of 80, check details against the Departmental Central Index (DCI) and/or the Customer Information System (CIS) every year and destroy the case if a date of death is confirmed on DCI/CIS.

3.20.1 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Vaccine Damage Payment documents – see the VDP Guide (this guide is held within the VDPU shared drive).

3.21 Widow's Benefit (WB) and Bereavement Benefit (BB)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.21.1 Claim reaches PA stage

For WB/BB purposes, claims are PA once all action has been completed and benefit is in payment. The date of PA is the date when all action is completed. Destroy PA'd cases:

- 14 months after PA if they are **system** maintained, or
- 14 months after the customer's death if they are **clerically** maintained.

There are some exceptions to this rule: see Exception categories and Business Needs Exceptions in this section of the Guide for details.

3.21.2 Documents/data Received within 14 months of PA

When a new decision is needed on a case that has been PA for less than 14 months, file any documents/data supporting the new decision in the existing claim file. If no decision is made but the new document/data is classified as supporting (e.g. change of post office notification) it should be filed in the existing claim file.

If you are retaining a document/data relating to a previous decision to support the subsequent decision, amend the **date of decision** on the document/data.

3.21.3 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for WB/BB. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and note them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed procedures.

3.21.3.1 Business Needs Exceptions

In addition to those cases marked or identified as not for destruction, cases identified as Business Needs Exceptions (BNE) are also exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy. These are widowers' claims received before the introduction of Bereavement Benefit in April 2001 (see Bereavement Bulletin 18/05), and Widower's claims received after 09/04/01 but which specifically relate to the Widows Benefit Scheme.

File and maintain BNE cases in line with current procedures.

3.21.4 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing these documents – see the Bereavement Benefit Guide retention page.

3.22 Winter Fuel Payments (WFP)

The Benefits Document and Data Retention (Benefits DDRG) policies apply to most cases, clerical documents, and any data held that is NOT in paper format, e.g. system data, scanned images, recorded telephone calls etc. Exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy are outlined in exception cases section. See also section 2 for the retention policy on scanned images and telephone recordings.

You must examine all clerical and non-clerical documents relating to a case as you action them, then classify and note them under one of the following two categories: supporting documents or ephemeral documents.

3.22.1 Claim reaches PA stage

For Winter Fuel purposes, claims are put away (PA) when:

- The customer is deceased, or
- The customer advises they no longer wish to receive their winter fuel payment, or
- The customer has claimed a benefit, therefore all subsequent payments will be made by the Feeder Benefit System.

Destroy PA'd applications 14 months after the end of the financial year in which the claim was PA. It is assumed customers will have entitlement to a Feeder Benefit when they are 80 years of age. Applications should be destroyed 14 months after the end of the tax year in which they become 80.

- (e.g. applicants for 2009/10 will have attained age 60 by 5/4/2010. They will therefore be 80 years of age by 5/4/2030. Documents should be destroyed 5/6/31.)

There are some exceptions to this rule: see exception section below

3.22.2 Exceptions

There are some exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy for WFP. See the policy section on exception cases for details. You must identify cases which are exceptions and mark them as **Not for destruction**.

The specialist area dealing with a case identified as an exception must follow agreed retention procedures in the Winter Fuel guidance.

3.22.2.1 Business Needs Exceptions

In addition to those cases noted or identified as not for destruction, cases identified as Business Needs Exceptions (BNE) are also exceptions to the Benefits DDRG policy. These are:

- Claims for the winter of 2000/01, scrutinised but rejected as not being **Ashby Look Alike Cases**. The Ashby cases have to be retained for the **6 years before going PA**, in accordance with Policy guidance.

File and maintain BNE cases in line with current procedures.

3.22.3 Local procedures for document retention

For local procedures on processing Winter Fuel Payment documents – see the Winter Fuel guidance.

4. Other Retention Policies

For a list of other retention policies please refer to the KIM Policies page.

5. Contact us

For data retention enquiries contact the KIM policies team.

Appendix 1 – Documents/data destroyed in line with retention policy

“Dear

You wrote to us on (DATE) regarding documentation held by the Department for Work and Pensions, relating to “you / insert name of customer” (AMEND AS APPROPRIATE).

Following a search of our records, I can confirm that the information you requested has been destroyed in accordance with Departmental records management practices.

The retention of customer documentation is directed by the “DWP Benefits Document and Data Retention Policy”, which specifies guidance for the retention of customer claims to benefits including (ADD / DELETE AS APPROPRIATE Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance etc).

The Data Protection Act 1998 dictates that “personal data kept for any purpose should not be kept for longer than necessary”. For DWP, these retention periods have been determined by the maximum review and appeal time limits which, in general, generate a retention principle of 14 months. This, in practice, allows customer documents to be destroyed 14 months after the end of a claim or when a claim has been superseded.

There are exceptions to this, for example where an appeal has been made or there is fraud or overpayment activity. When an exception applies, documents and data will not be destroyed until at least 14 months from when the exception(s) has ended.

For these reasons, the documentation you requested is no longer held by DWP.

A copy of the DWP Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide is available on request from:

DWP Knowledge and Information Management Team
Department for Work and Pensions
Information Management, Devolution and Governance
Room GS36
Quarry House
Quarry Hill
Leeds, LS2 7UA
e-mail: kim.policies@dwp.gsi.gov.uk “

Appendix 2 – Documents/data destroyed in error.

“Dear

You wrote to us on (DATE) regarding documentation held by the Department for Work and Pensions, relating to “you / insert name of customer” (AMEND AS APPROPRIATE).

The retention of customer documentation is directed by the DWP Benefits Document and Data Retention Policy, which specifies guidance for the retention of customer claims to benefits including “Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance etc” (ADD / DELETE AS APPROPRIATE).

We are unable to supply you with the following information (insert list of items) as it has been destroyed in error. We apologise for this.

Optional paragraph

Enclosed is the information which the Department for Work and Pensions holds.

(Insert list of items)

A copy of the DWP Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide is available on request from:

DWP Knowledge and Information Management Team
Department for Work and Pensions
Information Management, Devolution and Governance
Room GS36
Quarry House
Quarry Hill
Leeds, LS2 7UA
e-mail: kim.policies@dwp.gsi.gov.uk “

Appendix 3: Abbreviations

AA	Attendance Allowance
BA	Bereavement Allowance
BB	Bereavement Benefit
Benefits DDRG	Benefits Document and Data Retention Guide
BL	Budgeting Loan
BNE	Business Needs Exception
BPT	Bereavement Payment
CA	Carer's Allowance
CAA	Constant Attendance Allowance
CAM	Customer Account Management
CC	Carer's Credit
CCG	Community Care Grant
CIS	Customer Information System
CL	Crisis Loan
CMS	Customer Management System
CWP	Cold Weather Payment
DCI	Departmental Central Index
DLA	Disability Living Allowance
DMA	Decision Making and Appeals
DP/FoI	Data Protection/Freedom of Information
DPA	Data Protection Act 1998
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
ESA	Employment and Support Allowance
ESF	European Social Fund
ESDA	Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance
FPI	Fraud Procedures and Instructions
GRB	Graduated Retirement Benefit
IB	Incapacity Benefit
ICE	Independent Case Examiner

Department for Work and Pensions – Benefits DDRG

IDB	Industrial Death Benefit
IIDB	Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit
IISB and Compensation Payments	Industrial Injuries Scheme Benefits
IS	Income Support
JSA	Jobseeker's Allowance
JSA(Cont)	Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
JSA(IB)	Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
LMU	Labour Market Unit
MA	Maternity Allowance
MID	Mortgage Interest Direct
ORG	Overpayment Recovery Guide
PA	Put Away
PHSO	PHSO – Parliamentary Health and Service Ombudsman (previously PCA – Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration)
POG	Printed Output Guide
PVP	Potentially Violent Persons
REA	Reduced Earnings Allowance
SDA	Severe Disablement Allowance
SF	Social Fund
SP	State Pension, previously Retirement Pension
SSMG	Sure Start Maternity Grant
VDP	Vaccine Damage Payment
WB	Widows Benefit
WFP	Winter Fuel Payment
WMA	Widowed Mother's Allowance
WP	Widow's Pension
WPA	Widowed Parent's Allowance
WPT	Widow's Payment

Appendix 4: Glossary

Claim file	For the purposes of this Guide a claim file is any holder in which the claim form and any retained documents are filed, i.e. the casepaper, General Benefit Unit (GBU), plastic wallet or file.
Clerically maintained cases	<p>Clerically maintained cases are those, which are not input to, or maintained on, a computer system. This includes cases that are registered and maintained on the Personal Details Computer System (PDCS) for personal details, but all other aspects of the case are dealt with off-line.</p> <p>This does not include cases where payments may be made clerically but are input at a later date.</p>
Customer Feedback	<p>For the purposes of this Guide, Customer Feedback includes; Customer Complaints, 'Thank you' correspondence from either the customer or their representative, and the DWP response.</p> <p>See section 2.14 for the policy details.</p>
Data	<p>For the purposes of this Guide, data is any information the department holds that is NOT paper, and is relevant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customer, and/or • Their claim/application to benefit, pension, allowance or credits.
Decision	An outcome decision, as defined in Decision Making and Appeals (DMA) guidance.
Documents	<p>For the purposes of this Guide, documents are any papers the department holds which are relevant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The customer, and/or • Their claim to benefit, pension, allowance or credits. <p>This may also include system-generated information other than main file prints and full record prints.</p>
Ephemeral documents/data	<p>Documents that are not classified as supporting the claim/application.</p> <p>See section 2.1.2 for the policy details.</p>
Exceptions	For the purpose of this Guide, exceptions are cases which are identified and noted as Not for

	<p>destruction.</p> <p>See section 2.17 for the policy details.</p>
FARIO	<p>File and Retrieval Information Online - a software package which provides on-line web enabled functionality with real-time visibility of all files.</p> <p>For further information please visit the dedicated FARIO Website</p>
Full review	<p>For the purposes of this guide, a full review is one where a check is made to verify every aspect of a customer's claim, to make sure the correct level of benefit is in payment.</p> <p>See section 2.10 for the policy details and the specific guidance for benefit specific details.</p>
Put away (PA)	<p>The definition of the term PA is not the same for all benefits. For PA definitions and the action to take when the PA stage is reached, see the specific guidance.</p> <p>See section 2.11 for policy details.</p>
Supporting documents	<p>Documents which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contain information on which a decision has been based, and/or • Determine the amount, destination and place of payments, and/or • Are required for security or accuracy checks. <p>See section 2.1.1 for policy details.</p>
System	<p>For the purposes of this Guide, there are two types of system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy • Other electronic media