

Dorset History Centre: Guidelines on retention and disposal of private records/personal papers

This guidance is for private individuals wishing to transfer their archives, including digital material, to Dorset History Centre (DHC) for long-term preservation of and general access to the documents. It assumes that the records under consideration are no longer required for legal or administrative purposes.

Due to storage space and staff time, documents in the schedule marked 'destroy' should be disposed of by the individual(s). Material earmarked for deposit at the History Centre should be box-listed prior to being brought in, so that staff are aware of the potential quantity and types. Please keep the records together to reflect the way they were created, as far as possible, but do not re-package items (e.g. in plastic wallets) or use additional paper clips or staples.

Ownership of the records can be retained by the individual(s) or can be transferred to DHC. Any items which, after appraisal by DHC staff, are deemed unsuitable for permanent preservation will be offered back to the individual or destroyed securely, depending on what was agreed at time of deposit.

For collections that consist solely of printed and published material, we may accept these as part of our local studies collections.

DHC is happy to accept born digital material, but please indicate before deposit, the types of digital material you have. For records not covered by the schedule below, please ask History Centre staff for specific advice.

Please note that we cannot accept any artefacts.

Type of record	Action	Notes
Diaries	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Photographs, including digital images	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Reminiscences	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	May be transferred to Local Studies or Record Office Notes collection
Title deeds	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Wills and probate records	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Certificates of achievement	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	Birth/marriage/death certificates can be destroyed
Research notes	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	May be transferred to Local Studies or Record Office Notes collection

Family trees and other genealogical material	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	May be transferred to Local Studies or Record Office Notes collection
Maps and plans	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Records of other organisations or official bodies	Destroy if not signed originals	Originals are likely to be held here in other collections
Letters/correspondence	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Magazines/journals	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	May be transferred to Local Studies
Newspaper cuttings	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	May be transferred to Local Studies or Record Office Notes collection
Programmes	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Financial records (if more than 7 years old)	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	If numerous, e.g. several years of receipts, it may not be possible to accept them
Photocopies or similar reproductions including digitised copies	Destroy	
Material relating to occupation, such as accounts/professional notes/studies	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	
Drawings/sketch books	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	We may suggest larger artworks should go to a relevant Museum
Recipe/memoranda books	Transfer to DHC for appraisal	

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