

Research Guide: Records for time in spent in care

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1. Introduction

National Records of Scotland (NRS) has prepared this research guide to support people who are searching for personal information on time spent in care in Scotland as a child and who may be considering applying to [Scotland's Redress Scheme](#).

NRS holds the Scottish national archives. Its holdings include high level policy and strategic information produced by Government about the direction of the care service across the whole country, but not individual care records. NRS also has custody of historical inspection reports about schools and children's homes, and of historical court records. NRS does not actively seek to collect records of former care organisations, though it does hold a small number of such collections.

2. Restrictions on access

Some records held by NRS are closed to public access because they contain sensitive information. Where records contain personal information, lifespan closure periods have been applied for data protection reasons. Lifespan closures assume a lifetime of 100 years and the closure period applied is then based on the age or assumed age of the individual in the record.

For example, if a record is known to include information about a child whose age is unknown, a closure period of 100 years will apply. If a record known to include information about an adult whose age is at least 16, a closure period of 84 years will apply.

While NRS has custody of these records, decisions on access to information in closed records will be made by the original record creator.

3. Care records

3.1 Care organisations

NRS holds a small number of private care records, which may be of help to some applicants, as there may be admission and discharge registers. These include:

- **Records of the Royal Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Children (RSSPCC) now known as Children 1st** (NRS collection reference GD409):
 - admissions, 1903-1980;

- investigations registers, 1976-1992;
- case papers, 1948-1972;
- lists of children taken into care, 1919-1968;
- case histories, 1963-1980;
- monthly record of children in Shelter, 1960-1980

Website: [Children 1st - Historical Records](#)

Email: cfs@children1st.org.uk

- **Dean and Cauvin Young People's Trust, Edinburgh** (NRS collection reference GD417):

- admissions registers, 1926-1958;
- Matron's report book, 1948-1971;
- applications for admission, 1912-1937;
- register of children in residence, c1960-1981

Website: [Dean & Cauvin Young People's Trust](#)

Email: garyd@deanandcauvin.org.uk

- **Dr Guthrie's Schools, Edinburgh** (boys' and girls' schools) (NRS collection reference GD425):

- admission registers, 1854-1984;
- discharge registers, 1879-1961;
- record books, 1875-1962;
- licensing registers, 1962-1970;
- log books, 1955-1986;
- admission papers, boys, 1861-1936;
- case files, boys, 1940-1981

Azets act as administrator of the Dr Guthrie's Association SCIO

Contact email: SM-Charity@azets.co.uk

Requests for access to information in these records are best made by directly contacting the respective organisations using the contact details above.

3.2 School and care home inspection reports

If you lived in an approved/List D school or a children's home, there may be information in the school inspection reports held by NRS. These have not survived for all establishments and are often not complete for those establishments for which they do exist. They tend to focus on the quality of education provision, school management and other operational matters but will occasionally refer to an individual in the care of the establishment, or a staff member, when this was considered necessary or relevant by the inspector. To request a search of the index

of individuals named in these records you should contact the Scottish Government's Information Assurance and Data Protection Branch: dpa@gov.scot

4. Borstal, Young Offenders Institutions and Prison records

4.1 Prison registers and volumes (HH12 and HH21)

If you were resident in a Borstal or Young Offenders Institution, there may be information about individuals included in the small number of registers and volumes which have survived for these institutions. These records include: Admission Books, Liberation Books, Registers of Punishments, Registers of Sickness; Governor's Journals, Governor's Order Books and Visiting Committee Inspection and Minute Books.

NRS holds records for the following institutions:

- **Barlinnie Prison, Glasgow**
Borstal Visiting Committee Inspection Books (1917-1945);
Borstal Visiting Committee Minute Book, (1937-1945);
Visiting Committee Minute Book (1959-1970).
- **HM Institution Cornton Vale**
Governor's Journal (1945-1951).
- **Dumfries Institution**
Borstal Visiting Committee Inspection Book (1951-1965).
- **Glasgow (Duke Street) Prison**
Borstal Visiting Committee Minute Book (1949).
- **Edinburgh (Calton) Prison**
Borstal Visiting Committee Minute Book (1919-1952).
- **Edinburgh (Saughton) Prison**
Borstal Visiting Committee Minute Books (1919-1952);
Registers of Criminal Prisoners and their Religious Persuasions (Male) (1922-1926) (1965-1970);
Borstal Register (Male) (1926-1958) [with gaps];
Borstal Register (Female) (1931-1957);
Admissions Book (Male) (1993-1995);
Liberation Books (Male) [Young Offenders](1965-1982);
Young Offenders Institution Registers of Punishments (Male) (1965-1979);

Rules and Instructions Male Borstal Institutions' (1939-c1950).

- **Greenock Prison**

Register of Criminal Prisoners and their Religious Persuasions (Female) (1910-1957);

Daily Statement of Prisoners (1947-1961);

Admission Book (1986-1994);

Visiting Committee (Female Borstal) Report Book (1920-1948);

Register of Punishments (1988-1994).

- **Inverness**

Register of Criminal Prisoners and their Religious Persuasions (Male, Female and Young Offenders) (1981-1983).

- **Jessiefield Borstal Institution**

Inspection Book (1913-1926);

Visiting Committee Minute Book. (1913-1937).

- **Noranside Prison**

Daily Record of Sick - (1984-1991);

Register of Fines (1984-1989).

For further details of the prison records NRS holds please consult the following source list below:

[NRS Source List - Prison Service Registers and Volumes \(Borstals and Young Offenders Institutions\)](#) (23 KB XLSX)

To request a search for information in prison records you should contact the Scottish Prison Service at: SPSSubjectAccessRequests@prisons.gov.scot

4.2 Prison and Borstal services general files (HH57)

Information relating to individuals may also be found in general files relating to Prison and Borstal services. These files cover all aspects of prison and borstal administration, other than the case files of individual prisoners and inmates, and include subjects such as Inspection Reports; Visiting Committee Minutes and Reports; Minutes of Revoked Licence Holders Committee; Incident Reports; Escapes; and Ministerial and Official Visits. Like the school inspection reports they will focus on the quality of provisions, management and operational matters in the institutions but will sometimes refer to an individual in the care of the establishment, or a staff member, when this was considered necessary or relevant. General files are held for the following Borstals and Young Offenders Institutions:

- Barlinnie Borstal Institution/Barlinnie Young Offenders Institution
- Castle Huntly Borstal Institution/Castle Huntly Young Offenders Institution
- Cornton Vale Borstal Institution
- Dumfries Borstal Institution/HM Young Offenders Institution Dumfries
- Edinburgh Young Offenders Institution
- Glenochil Prison/Glenochil Detention Centre/Glenochil Young Offenders Institution
- Greenock Prison and Borstal Institution for Girls/Greenock Prison and Young Offenders Institution
- Longriggend Remand Institution/Longriggend Remand Unit
- Polmont Borstal Institution/Polmont Young Offenders Institution
- Noranside Borstal Institution/Noranside Young Offenders Institution

These general files were created by departments whose functions were devolved from the Scottish Home and Health Department – the Home Office, Scottish Office, Prison Commission for Scotland, Prisons Department and Scottish Home Department. In 1991, the Scottish Prison Service (SPS) was made into an agency following a review of its functions and services. Files dating from 1991 onwards continue to be found in HH57.

For further details of the prison and Borstal service files NRS holds please consult the following source list:

[NRS Source List - Prison Service General Files \(Borstals and Young Offenders Institutions\)](#) (44 KB XLSX)

To request a search for information in these records you should first contact the NRS Information Governance Team: who will confirm whether the records of interest are Scottish Government records or Scottish Prison Service records.

5. Court records

If you were aged between 5 and 16, you may have been sent to an approved/List D school or a borstal/young offenders institution by a juvenile court or children's hearing. Juvenile courts – held at sheriff courts – existed up until April 1971, when they were replaced by children's hearings. Records of juvenile courts exist for certain areas and time periods, but many have not survived.

From April 1971 onwards, court records include applications and appeals relating to children's hearings. These are known as social work court records as they were made under the Social Work (Scotland) Act. Again, these have only survived for certain courts and in certain areas. To search for both of these types of record

(juvenile court and social work court records), we will need to know where you lived before being sent to an institution. Having this information will allow us to identify the records of the most likely court to be searched. If you do not know your childhood home address or the court a hearing was heard in, then just telling us the city/town or council area you lived in will help.

If you were aged 16 or 17 when you were sent to a borstal/young offenders institution, your case is likely to have been heard in a full sheriff court (usually summary procedure), rather than a juvenile court or children's hearing. Records of these cases survive for most courts but vary depending on the area and time period concerned. The records are often not indexed and large in volume, so if you can provide as accurate a date as possible in an initial request, this will enable your request to be processed quicker.

Adult court records can also contain evidence of your time in a care setting. High Court trial papers and sheriff court jury trial records often contain lists of previous convictions and background reports. Lists of previous convictions can include those from juvenile courts showing sentences to approved/D list schools and or borstal/young offenders' institutions. Background reports can include information about all care settings from birth for the subject of the report. They can also contain information on close family members. Therefore, if you or a close family member (sibling or parent when you were under 16) have appeared on indictment at a court as an adult, there may be useful information in trial records. However, only your own personal information can be released to you.

'B Registers' or '2B Registers', which are the registers of summary applications held in sheriff courts, may show when an application was made under the Social Work Act and/or Maintenance Order Act. Entries in the registers can on rare occasions show that an individual was placed at an approved school, in the care of the local council, or the care of another named individual. These records are usually only searched if there are no other records available.

Finally, records of family actions (for divorce, separation, custody, and/or maintenance payment) can include mention of you and any time living outside the family home if you were under 16 at the time of your parents' divorce.

For further details of the court records NRS holds please consult the following source list:

[NRS Source List - Juvenile Court Records and Social Work Court Records](#) (201 KB XLSX)

To request a search for information in court records you should contact the Scottish Courts and Tribunals Service Data Protection Officer: dpo@scotcourts.gov.uk

6. Mental welfare records

NRS holds the records of the Mental Welfare Commission for Scotland (NRS collection reference MC), which include admission registers and patient case files. For information about accessing these records you should contact the NRS Historical Search Room: lsrhe@scotlandsppeople.gov.uk

NRS also holds sheriff court 'mental health' and 'lunacy' records, for cases which appeared in the sheriff courts. Before the 1980s these are few and far between and reflect serious cases/appeals or just the noting of applications in court registers. There were changes in the court/welfare systems in the mid-1980s, and the new Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1984, meant applications for admission to hospital under this Act went through the Sheriff Courts as standard. Therefore, most Sheriff Courts have 'mental health applications' from the mid-1980s to 2002.

The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 established the Mental Health Tribunal for Scotland (MHTS) as the forum for granting, approving and reviewing compulsory measures. The 2003 Act removed the power to make decisions in respect of mentally disordered patients from the existing civil courts and transferred it to the MHTS. MHTS records are due to be transferred to NRS in the future as closed / exempt records. Until these records are transferred to NRS, any requests from individuals for their information in MHTS records should be made to the organisation directly: [MHTS - Contact Us \(mhtscotland.gov.uk\)](http://mhtscotland.gov.uk)

7. What information do I need to request searches of records?

Most of the records NRS holds are not indexed by the names of individuals. Therefore some basic information is needed to enable effective searches to be carried out.

For example, to search for care home or school records it is helpful to know:

- full name of the establishment
- county
- date/year when admitted
- how long you were there
- address or area you were living when you were admitted

To search for court records:

- name or location of court
- date/year placed in care
- your parents' full names
- any information about any known court appearances at the time or later in life

To search for divorce records:

- names of parents
- date/year of divorce
- names of siblings.

8. Further information

You can find out more information about the records NRS holds by visiting our website and by searching the online catalogue here:

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/catalogues-and-indexes>

For further guidance on the records held by NRS and access arrangements please contact the NRS Historical Search Room: lsrhe@scotlandspeople.gov.uk