



VOLUNTEERING AT THE NATIONAL RECORDS OF SCOTLAND

A Handbook for Volunteers Incorporating the Volunteer Agreement



Welcome from Paul Lowe, Chief Executive



Thank you for volunteering with the National Records of Scotland.

You will be involved in a range of activities which will help NRS to improve access to our collections for others.

Our volunteering placements also aim to benefit you by providing you with an opportunity to improve your knowledge and skills and, if you need, gain practical work experience for the future.

I hope that you enjoy your time with us and find the opportunity both interesting and rewarding.

Paul Lowe
Chief Executive

1. WELCOME

Welcome to the National Records of Scotland (NRS). This pack will give you a brief background to the Department and other useful information.

2. ABOUT US

What we do

We hold records spanning the 12th to the 21st centuries, touching on virtually every aspect of Scottish life. We are the repository for the public and legal records of Scotland but we also accept many local and private archives. We hold one of the most varied collections of records in Britain. We advise our colleagues in the Scottish Government as well as other institutions and businesses on the care of their records. NRS is headed by the Registrar General for Scotland and Keeper of the Records and employs approximately 450 staff.

NRS administers the registration of events such as births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships, divorces and adoptions. It is also responsible for the statutes relating to the formalities of marriage and the conduct of civil marriage.

The Department preserves, protects and promotes Scotland's national archives and works in close partnership with public authorities to improve record keeping. We promote access to Scotland's national archives by bringing people and records together, through our website, education services, exhibitions and publications.

We take the Census of Scotland's population every ten years and prepare and publish demographic and other statistics for central and local Government, for medical research, and for the private sector. We make available to customers, public records about individuals, and maintain for the Scottish Government the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR). The Department also has a statutory duty to report each year on various statistical matters. This Annual Report is laid before The Scottish Parliament by the First Minister. It contains an overview of what is happening in Scotland, based on demographic data collated for the previous calendar year. The annual report is supplemented by a set of Reference Tables that include detailed information on births, deaths (including information on cause of death), marriages, divorces, and population estimates for the same period. We also produce a provisional Quarterly Return containing demographic data for the current year. In addition to the range of standard statistics (including Scottish census statistics) available, we produce other statistical output to order.

NRS are partners with the Court of the Lord Lyon, in a joint initiative to create a family history centre – called the ScotlandsPeople Centre. The centre provides 165 search places across four public search rooms in New Register House and neighbouring General Register House. The centre provides access to the electronic genealogical resources provided by the two partners. Information about the Centre can be found at: <http://www.scotlandspeoplehub.gov.uk>. The partners also offer a joint service to key historical sources via the e-commerce website www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk

Although NRS is a separate Government Department, our official position is that of a non-ministerial department of the Scottish Government (SG).

Our offices

Our addresses are:



General Register House
2 Princes Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3YY



New Register House
3 West Register Street
Edinburgh
EH1 3YT



Ladywell House
Ladywell Road
Edinburgh
EH12 7TF



Thomas Thomson House
99 Bankhead Crossway North
Sighthill Industrial Estate
Edinburgh
EH11 4DX



West Register House
17 Charlotte Square
Edinburgh
EH2 4DF

NHSCR
Cairnsmore House
Dumfries
DG1 4EZ

Roles & Functions of NRS

The functions of NRS are to:

- administer the registration of events such as births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships, divorces and adoptions.
- maintain the statutes relating to the formalities of marriage and the conduct of civil marriage.

- take a Census of Scotland's population every ten years and prepare and publish demographic and other statistics for central and local government, for medical research, and for the private sector.
- make available to customers public records about individuals, and maintain for the Scottish Government the National Health Service Central Register (NHSCR).
- select public records worthy of permanent preservation; acquire other historical records of national importance, and make suitable arrangements for the disposal of other material including transfer to another appropriate repository;
- preserve to archival standards all records selected for permanent preservation in the NRS;
- retransmit records of stakeholder bodies under statutory requests;
- increase sustainable public access to the records;
- provide advice to custodians of records out with the NRS and facilitate access to such records;
- take the lead in the development of archival and records management practice in Scotland; and
- deploy the resources available to the NRS in the most effective and efficient manner.
- approve arrangements for the management of public records created or held by named public authorities or by contractors who carry out any functions of those authorities.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NRS AND VOLUNTEERS

The Role

Volunteer placements are made on the suitability of the volunteer (skills and experience) to carry out the particular role. Neither NRS nor the volunteer regard the relationship as a contract of employment and there will be no payment or salary made for the tasks undertaken. The tasks which you will undertake are outlined at **Annex A.**

Expenses

All reasonable and actual expenses incurred by the Volunteer whilst carrying out the tasks will be reimbursed by NRS. This will not include usual travel from home to the office of placement.

Time

How much time you are required for, depends on what you are working on. Regular attendance is important to NRS so that we can ensure that the task runs smoothly. The time and days that you work will be agreed between you and your Supervisor.

Volunteer Supervisor

Your appointed Volunteer Supervisor is << NAME>>, and can be contacted on <<TEL>>, <<EMAIL>>.

Your Volunteer Supervisor will oversee your work and will give you sufficient guidance and provide you with a volunteer role description outlining the specific duties of the role.

Training

NRS may arrange additional training throughout the opportunity as required, for example if you will be handling documents. If you feel you need any training, please discuss this with your Volunteer Supervisor.

Theft

Thefts of official and personal property will not be tolerated. If theft occurs the opportunity will end immediately and you may be subject to prosecution.

Confidentiality, Copyright and Data Protection

As a volunteer you may become aware of confidential information about the National Records of Scotland (formerly National Archives of Scotland and General Register Office for Scotland), its staff, users, stakeholders and suppliers. You must not disclose this information or use it for your own, or another's, benefit without the consent of the party concerned.

NRS will store and maintain Volunteers' personal data with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. Please let NRS: Corporate Development know of any changes in your personal details so that we can keep our records up to date.

All the material that NRS creates is Crown copyright. We ask that all Volunteers assign to the Crown the rights of any material they have created while volunteering for us, so that it can be freely used.

3. YOUR HEALTH & SAFETY AND WELLBEING

We place great importance on ensuring that health and safety standards are maintained in all NRS buildings. Everyone in NRS has responsibility for health and safety – from the top level of management to each individual member of staff.

Please read carefully the leaflet attached at **Annex B** "H&S – Your responsibilities".

Fire

Lists of the NRS fire officers are displayed around the buildings. Normally your line manager will let you know where the fire escape routes are. If you work in a different building from your manager, you should make sure you are familiar with the nearest

escape route. The fire alarm system is tested on a Tuesday in each of our buildings at 11.00am.

First Aid

If you feel unwell please let your Supervisor know as soon as possible. Lists of the trained NRS first aiders are displayed on posters around each building.

Absence due to ill health or unforeseen circumstances

If you are unable to attend because you are unwell, or for any other unforeseen reason, please let your supervisor know and where possible:

- The expected length of the absence;
- Whether there is any piece of work requiring urgent action; and
- Whether there is anything we can do to help.

Smoke Free Policy

A smoke free policy operates throughout the office, in accordance with The Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Prohibition of Smoking in Certain Premises (Scotland) Regulations 2006. There is a smoking shelter located at Ladywell House to the rear of the building, at the North Wall of the car-park. A sand bin to extinguish cigarettes is located next to the shelter. New Register House and General Register House share a smoking shelter, this is found at the bottom of the main stairs, leading to the moat. The smoking shelter in Thomas Thomson House is found at the rear of the building, by the loading bay door. The NRS Smoke Free Policy is attached at **Annex C**.

Eating & drinking Facilities

There are lounge areas with kitchen facilities in General Register House, West Register House and Thomas Thomson House. The ScotlandsPeople Centre Café in New Register House is available to all staff and sells a good range of hot and cold snacks and drinks. The Café offers a 10% volunteer discount. While there are no formal canteen facilities within Ladywell House, there are several small kitchen areas providing microwave ovens, fridges and seating areas.

Public Holidays when we are closed:

- Good Friday;
- Easter Monday;
- May Day Holiday;
- Edinburgh Autumn Holiday;
- Christmas Day;
- Boxing Day; and
- 1st & 2nd January

Insurance

All Volunteers engaged in NRS activities are indemnified under NRS public liability insurance.

4. DIVERSITY

NRS is committed to ensuring that all who work with us or for us are treated equally irrespective of their sex, marital status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, working pattern, employment status, gender identity (transgender), caring responsibility or trade union membership. We aim to be an organisation that is broadly representative of the community we serve, values the contribution of its entire staff and is committed to equal opportunity.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of those who work for us or with us and will positively value the different perspectives and skills of all staff and make full use of these in our work

5. FAIRNESS

We aim to treat all of our volunteers fairly. If you have any problems concerning any aspect of your volunteer opportunity, please speak to your volunteer supervisor at any time.

If this does not result in a mutually acceptable resolution of the issue, further advice should be sought from Fiona Henderson, Volunteer Co-ordinator who can be contacted by e-mail at fiona.henderson@nrscotland.gov.uk or by phone on 0131 314 4224.

6. SECURITY

Only once your Basic Disclosure certificate has been received and your Baseline Personnel Security Standard cleared, will you be provided with a start date, security pass and given access to ICT systems.

6.1 Security Passes

A security pass system operates in all of the NRS buildings. Your pass is used as a ‘swipe’ card, which together with your Personal Identification Number, allows you to gain access to the buildings during normal working hours. You must always wear your security pass so that it can be readily seen when you are in the building. If you forget your pass, please request a temporary one from the receptionist. You should return the temporary pass to reception at the end of the day. If you lose or damage a permanent pass, you must report this immediately to Fiona Henderson 0131 314 4224 (NRS: Corporate Development, Room 1/2/3, Ladywell House, Ladywell Road, Edinburgh).

At the end of your opportunity please return your pass to NRS: Corporate Development.

Please take time to read **Annex D – 10 Key Security Points**.

6.2 ICT Security

If your volunteering opportunity requires you to have access to our IT network and systems. You will be required to adhere to the Scottish Government ICT Code of Conduct. The purpose of this Code is to provide guidance on the use of the system

and, in particular, e-mail and the use of the Internet. It outlines our policy on the personal use of the IT facilities and gives guidelines on what use is **not** acceptable.

An extract of the code can be found at **Annex E**.

7. ENDING THE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

You can end the volunteer opportunity whenever you wish. If you are part of a specific project, please let your Supervisor know as soon as possible.

Similarly we will aim to let you know in advance of the opportunity ending.

8. AGREEMENT

You must sign and adhere to the Agreement contained in this pack and return it to Fiona Henderson, Learning & Resourcing Officer, Room 1/2/3, Ladywell House.