

Subject: Request for information on shelving and archival fonds in NRS from 1991 to 2020.

FOI reference: 202000041530

Date received: 29 May 2020

Date responded: 18 June 2020

Information requested:

“How many miles of shelving of archives are in the National Records of Scotland? How many archival fonds and items there are? Do you have information on how the archive resource of the NRS has increased in recent years? How many miles of shelving of archives the NRS had for example in 1991, 2001, 2011 and 2020?”

NRS Response:

Shelving

The table below provides information on the shelving that was available and in use in the archives of National Records of Scotland (NRS) in 2001, 2011 and 2020. We used metric measurements to record this information.

Year	2001	2011	2020
Used km	55.5	63.7	72.99
Available km	79.6	79.6	79.6

Prior to 2001 the relevant information is held in paper files which we are unable to access at the moment as, in line with advice from the UK and the Scottish Government and to delay the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), we have taken the decision to close our buildings and restrict non-critical services.

Information about our archive resource from 2011/12 onwards can be found in our Annual Report and Accounts here: <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/about-us/corporate-governance>. Please note that earlier Annual Reports have not been published, but can usually be consulted in our [public search room](#). However, we are not able to provide access to these reports due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Information held by NRS which is made available to members of the public for inspection and, where practical, copying, even if a payment has to be made for it, is exempt from disclosure under section 25 of FOISA. This is the case even if it is not practical for the requester to visit NRS to inspect or obtain a copy of the information.

We would usually be happy to prepare an estimate for the cost of providing copies, but since the documents have not been digitised and the originals cannot be

accessed, the Historical Search Room (lsrhe@scotlandspeople.gov.uk) will not be able provide either copies or an accurate estimate until normal services resume. General information on our fees and charges is available on our website <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-search-room/copying-services>.

In the meantime we will be publishing regular updates on our websites about the availability of our services.

Number of archival fonds and items

On 10 June 2020, the number of fonds level entries in the NRS catalogue is 6,924.

The number of file or item level entries in the NRS catalogue is 3,482,010.

Please note that NRS commonly uses both the terms File and Item as its lowest cataloguing level, hence the answer to this question covers both File and Item level entries in the catalogue. This answer does not mean that there are 3,482,010 individual documents in the NRS archive collections. A single File as produced to a researcher in the NRS Search Room will likely contain many individual documents. It is not practicable to state how many individual documents exist in NRS archive collections because this would involve a manual counting of all documents within files deposited in NRS archival collection. Under section 12 of FOISA, public authorities are not required to comply with a request for information if the authority estimates that the cost of complying would exceed the upper cost limit, which is currently set at £600 by the Freedom of Information (Fees for Required Disclosure) (Scotland) Regulations 2004.