

**Subject:** Request for information on archived file reclosures and loans.

**FOI reference:** 202000074493

**Date received:** 12 August 2020

**Date responded:** 9 September 2020

**Information requested:**

Full details of all requests for archived files to be reclosed / removed from public access from the following public bodies in the last 20 years:

- Scottish Government / Scottish Executive
- UK Government (including the Scottish Office)
- Police Scotland (including the previous regional forces in place prior to 2013)

Including when the request was made, the outcome of the request and a summary of the content of the files requested to be reclosed.

Full details of any loan request for archived files from the same organisations, and how long each loan lasted.

**NRS Response:**

We understand that the first part of the request refers to archived records stored at NRS which had formally been open for public access, but which were subsequently closed to the public - these records are termed 'reclosed records' or 'reclosures'. NRS holds information about reclosures from 2016 onwards, following the introduction of our [Records Reclosure and Takedown Policy](#). Since the Policy was introduced we have not received any reclosure requests from the public bodies enquired about. General information about all reclosures and website takedowns which have occurred since 2016 can be found on our website at the following links:

- [Reclosures and extended closures in 2016](#) (44 KB PDF)
- There were no takedowns from our websites in 2016.
- [Reclosures and extended closures in 2017](#) (56 KB PDF)
- [Takedowns in 2017](#) (34 KB PDF)
- There were no records reclosed or takedowns from our websites in 2018.
- [Reclosures in 2019](#) (151 KB PDF)
- There were no takedowns from our websites in 2019.

We do not record information about reclosure requests dating earlier than 2016 as there was no requirement to do so, and we are therefore unable to provide this information. This is a formal notice under section 17(1) of FOISA that National Records of Scotland does not have the information requested.

The temporary return of archived records at NRS to public authorities (and courts) is a statutory function which operates under the terms of the [Public Records \(Scotland\) Act 1937](#) – these returns are termed ‘retransmissions’. The attached spreadsheet includes details of all temporary retransmissions to the Scottish Government / Scottish Executive and the Scotland Office in the last 20 years, including how long each loan lasted. The spreadsheet doesn’t include detailed catalogue descriptions of the records (titles, descriptions, dates) because our Retransmissions database doesn’t include this information. However, these details can be found by checking the NRS references on our [online catalogue](#).

A quick note on how to use the NRS references when searching our online catalogue. NRS catalogue references are usually made up of three or four alphanumeric elements. The spreadsheet shows these elements split into three columns – “Class”, “series” and “cat-desc”. When using our online catalogue put these together and enter them as a single reference, with numbers divided by the “ / “ character. There are leading zeros in the “cat-desc” column: this is because the column requires data to have 5 characters. Removing the leading zeros makes the reference work correctly.

For example:

Class	series	cat-desc
HH	55	/01290

The NRS catalogue reference for this record is **HH55/1290**.

Similarly:

ED	51	/00008/0550
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The NRS catalogue reference for this record is **ED51/8/550**.

We would be happy to provide further assistance if required.

There have been no temporary retransmissions of records to Scottish Government or Scotland Office since 2018. From September 2018 NRS moved to a system where we either provide access to records on-site at NRS or digital copies are provided, unless there are any specific reasons why records must be temporarily returned which meet the terms of the 1937 Act.

One SG file was temporarily loaned to Police Scotland during this period. This file was transferred to Police Scotland on 6 March 2015 and was returned to NRS on 1 May 2019. The reference number of the file is ED15/384/2.