

Subject: Request for information on NRS inspection activities.

FOI reference: 202000078654

Date received: 20 August 2020

Date responded: 17 September 2020

Information requested:

- “1. What inspections activities does the National Records of Scotland perform?
2. How many inspections (of each type if possible) were performed in 2019/20?
3. How many inspectors do you employ, and what was the annual cost of these inspectors in 2019/20?
4. Do you use third parties to perform these inspections? If so, who did you use, and what was the annual spend in 2019/20?
5. What information management system, if any, do you use to manage the inspections, and what was the annual spend on this in 2019/20.

For avoidance of doubt, by ‘inspections’ is meant ‘activities that are carried out to ensure the inspected entity meets **legislative** requirements for their role or function or condition, delivers on their duty of care for individuals or the public and/or adheres to any rules set by government on use of government funds.”

NRS Response:

The answers to the questions are as follows:

1. What inspections activities does the National Records of Scotland perform?
 - a) Scottish Council on Archives:

NRS is responsible for assuring Ministers that government funding provided to the Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) is spent in line with the terms and conditions of their funding award. The SCA is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, set up to provide advocacy for, and build capacity in, the Scottish archives and records management sectors. Each year, before the SCA’s funding is awarded, NRS undertakes a ‘due diligence’ investigation of SCA’s financial position, including an examination of its annual accounts.

During each year SCA draws the funding from NRS in quarterly amounts. Check-points are built into the process in the form of quarterly monitoring meetings between NRS and SCA, at which SCA’s progress on objectives for the year and its financial situation are reviewed.

- b) Public Records (Scotland) Act:

The Public Records (Scotland) Act 2011 requires named public authorities to submit a Records Management Plan (RMP) to be agreed by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (the Keeper).

A plan submitted by an authority for the Keeper's agreement must provide details of the functions of the authority and the types of records it creates. The plan must also show what policies are in place for appropriate retention, disposal, archiving and security of its records.

In addition to the statutory obligation to submit a formal plan, the Keeper also operates a voluntary self-assessment scheme, the Progress Updates Review mechanism (PUR) which enables authorities to benchmark progress in between formal plan assessments.

c) District Examiners:

The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965, Part 5, Section 34, contains provision for District Examiners (appointed by the Registrar General) to examine the unexamined part of a relevant register (births, still births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships) kept or held by a district registrar within the district examiner's district.

The District Examiner searches each unexamined page for anomalies such as factual inaccuracies, spelling errors, errors in policy and so forth. Upon completion of the examination, the District Examiner also draws up a report of any circumstances arising from the examination to which they consider that the attention of the Registrar General should be drawn.

2. How many inspections (of each type if possible) were performed in 2019/20?

a) SCA: Four quarterly monitoring meetings; one 'due diligence'.

b) PRSA: 15 RMPs were assessed and approved in 2019/20; 70 PURs were assessed during 2019/20.

c) District Examiners: We do not compile statistics for inspections. The number of inspections varies annually but each year more than 300 inspections take place.

3. How many inspectors do you employ, and what was the annual cost of these inspectors in 2019/20?

a) SCA: No inspectors are employed specifically for this work. The quarterly monitoring meetings are undertaken by a member of NRS's senior management and the financial scrutiny is provided by a staff member with financial qualifications. These activities are an integral part of the wider responsibilities of these posts, and therefore difficult to cost out separately.

b) PRSA: NRS employs two Public Records assessment officers, one Public Records Team lead and one administrative officer who also contributes to the assessment Programme. The costs of this in 2019/20 was £188k (1x A3, 2x B2, 1 x B3). These staff carry out other activities as well as assessment work.

NRS engage permanent staff on standard Scottish Government terms and conditions, based on pay bands. The actual direct payroll costs to NRS depend on the progression within pay band scales/steps. We have therefore used a rounded figure for each of the requested grades maximum pay scale. This includes employer's National Insurance contributions, noting that employer's pension contributions do vary to reflect personal pension plans. Typical costs for the financial year 2019-20 are: Band A3 - £29k; Band B2 - £48k; and Band B3 - £63k.

c) District Examiners: There are four District Examiners employed at National Records of Scotland who split the 32 registration districts amongst them. The costs of this for the financial year 2019/20 are £144k (4x B2, two full-time and two part-time). As above, NRS engage permanent staff on standard Scottish Government terms and conditions, based on pay bands. The actual direct payroll costs to NRS depend on the progression within pay band scales/steps. We have therefore used a rounded figure for the requested grade's maximum pay scale. This includes employer's National Insurance contributions, noting that employer's pension contributions do vary to reflect personal pension plans.

4. Do you use third parties to perform these inspections? If so, who did you use, and what was the annual spend in 2019/20?

No, the inspections carried out by NRS were not performed by any third parties.

5. What information management system, if any, do you use to manage the inspections, and what was the annual spend on this in 2019/20?

a) SCA: There is no separate information system for this work. Records of the quarterly monitoring meetings and due diligence are filed in the Scottish

Government's electronic document and records management system (eRDM), also known as Objective, which is used for the management of all of NRS's records.

NRS were charged £74,348 specifically for eRDM (Objective) within the overall iTECS 'SCOTS Connect' charges for 2019-20, for a total of 438 users in NRS.

b) PRSA: There is no separate information system for this work. Records created in the fulfilment of statutory and voluntary assessments are filed in the Scottish Government's electronic document and records management system (eRDM), also known as Objective, which is used for the management of all of NRS's records. Costs are given at 5 a) above.

c) District Examiners: District Examiners use a bespoke IT system which allows them to access registration information gathered by local authority registrars. Once each unexamined register entry is checked for anomalies such as factual inaccuracies, spelling errors, errors in policy and so forth the District Examiner uses the system to advise registrars of any corrections necessary. NRS staff developed the IT system used by District Examiners many years ago and the Development Team manage any necessary updates as part of their wider role. We don't keep a record of running costs for individual applications such as the Examiners System.

District Examiners also use eRDM to store the record of examinations and the report they supply to the registrar and service manager for each registration district after each examination. NRS costs for the use of eRDM are given at 5 a) above.