

# National Records of Scotland (NRS) Collections Management Policy

## NRS Purpose

The National Records of Scotland's mission statement is to "Collect, preserve, and produce information about Scotland's people and history, and make it available to inform present and future generations".

## Legislative Background

The NRS is one of the Scottish national collections and is both the Government archive for Scotland and a cultural heritage body. The principal Parliamentary Acts governing NRS's archival work are the Public Records (Scotland) Acts 1937 and 2011; the Public Registers and Records (Scotland) Act 1948; the Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967; the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985; the Local Government, etc. (Scotland) Act, 1994 and the Inquiries Act 2005 and Inquiries (Scotland) Rules 2007. As regards information governance NRS conforms to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

## Responsibilities

The Keeper of the Records of Scotland has overall responsibility for the management of the collections held by NRS. He leads and takes advice from the Business Leadership Group (BLG) who have responsibility for the day-to-day governance and operation of NRS.

In particular, the BLG governs and approves the principal policies relating to the selection, acquisition and archiving of records held by NRS. In practice, oversight of the management and development of the archived collections is devolved to the Deputy Keeper of the Records, a member of the BLG, who exercises this authority through and with the advice of the NRS Records and Archives Board (RAB). Below RAB, there is the Records and Archives Services (RAS) Team Leaders' Meetings.

## Constitution of RAB

RAB meets quarterly and membership is deliberately limited to expedite business. The meetings are formally minuted.

- Chair - Deputy Keeper (ex-officio)
- Head of Government Records
- Head of Court, Legal and Private Records
- Head of Digital Archiving
- Head of Conservation
- Head of Public Services (or authorised representative)
- Other colleagues as required for particular business.

## Remit of RAB

To support and advise the Deputy Keeper in all aspects of the work of collections care, including collecting, collections development, conservation, and collections information.

To support and advise the Deputy Keeper in the formulation of archive- and record-related policy and strategy within NRS, with a view to continuous improvement.

To support and advise the Deputy Keeper in the maintenance and development of NRS's leadership role within the Scottish archive sector.

To support and advise the Deputy Keeper in agreeing corporate objectives, priorities for work areas, adjusting procedures or practices, and preparing business cases for submission to the Keeper.

To support and advise the Deputy Keeper in ensuring that NRS maintains its status as a UK Accredited Archive.

To advise colleagues contemplating the accession of new types of record series, the reappraisal of existing holdings, or the de-accession of existing holdings.

### **Current and future scope of RAB**

RAB's scope embraces the archival and conservation issues that attach to all the records (in whatever form) that belong to, or are held by, the National Records of Scotland.

When RAB was established in 2011, its remit was limited to the holdings of the former NAS. Almost immediately, however, Conservation Branch were recognised as having a *de facto* concern in record holdings across all the NRS estate.

The archive staff in RAS are now developing a similar concern in the archival aspects of all holdings across the estate. Initially this will involve RAS staff in creating Top Level Finding Aids for the NRS catalogue to cover those records created by the Registration and Census business areas. Thereafter RAB will take a long-term view on whether and how these records might be added to the catalogues at file level. The Deputy Keeper will liaise on this with the Heads of the two other areas.

### **NRS Policies and procedures under RAB's Remit**

RAB maintains, reviews and coordinates several key policy and procedural documents covering archival work in NRS. All require the ultimate approval and authority of the BLG but they are drafted and updated by individual branch heads. Most are signed off by the Deputy Keeper. The exceptions are the Digital Preservation Strategy, which is signed off by the Keeper, and the policies concerning preservation and conservation issues, which are signed off by the Head of Conservation as leader of that profession within NRS.

- Digital Preservation Strategy, reviewed at least five-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Digital Archiving. NRS-wide, it is signed by the Keeper of the Records.
- Policy for the Selection of Government Records, reviewed at least three-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Government Records Branch, signed by the Deputy Keeper.
- Policy for Selecting Court and Legal Records, reviewed at least three-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Court, Legal and Private Records Branch, signed by the Deputy Keeper.
- Policy on the Selection of Private Records, reviewed at least three-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Court, Legal and Private Records Branch, signed by the Deputy Keeper.
- Policy and statement of principles on the selection and acquisition of maps, plans, architectural and technical drawings, reviewed at least three-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Maps and Plans section, signed by the Deputy Keeper.

- Collections Care and Conservation Policy, reviewed at least three-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Conservation Services Branch, and signed by them.
- Policy on Fragile Records, reviewed at least three-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Conservation Services Branch, and signed by them.
- Policy on the Transfer of Records of Local Interest to Local Custody, reviewed at least three-yearly, the responsibility of the Head of Court, Legal and Private Records Branch, signed by the Deputy Keeper.
- Cataloguing Policy and procedure manual reviewed at least three-yearly in consultation with the principal cataloguers, the responsibility of the Head of Court, Legal and Private Records Branch and signed by them.
- Collections Information Plan compiled annually by the Head of Court, Legal and Private Records Branch in consultation with the Head of Government Records Branch.

### **Wider NRS Policies and procedures to which RAB has input**

RAB has input to a variety of policies covering wider aspects of NRS activities. This is to ensure consistency with policies for which RAB is responsible and to check whether updates of those policies affect RAB's policies.

- NRS Security Policies. Reviewed annually. Head of Information Security and Assurance.
- NRS Records Management Plan. Reviewed annually. Head of Records Management.
- NRS Records Management Policy. Reviewed annually. Head of Records Management.
- NRS Archiving Arrangements under the Public Records (Scotland) Act, 2011. Reviewed annually. Heads of Records Management and Government Records.
- NRS Record re-closure policy. Reviewed annually. Head of Records Management
- NRS Take-down policy for removing personal data from online. Reviewed annually. Head of Records Management
- NRS Data Protection Policy. Reviewed annually. Data Protection Officer.
- NRS Data Protection Code of Practice – Archive Collections. Reviewed annually. Data Protection Officer.
- NRS Data Protection Code of Practice – Business Information. Reviewed annually. Data Protection Officer.
- NRS Business Continuity Policy. Reviewed annually. Head of Records Management.
- Public Services Access Policy. Reviewed annually. Head of Public Services Division.
- NRS Records Disposal Policy. Reviewed annually. Head of Records Management.

## **RAS Team Leaders' Meetings**

### **Constitution**

Team Leaders meet roughly monthly. The meetings are not formally minuted, but a note is taken of action points and reasons underlying important decisions. Membership is intended to support communication around RAS and to bring the best knowledge on current issues. To allow flexibility and avoid increasing the burden of formal meetings, attendance is not compulsory, unless particular members have to lead or respond to agenda items.

- Chair – Deputy Keeper (ex-officio)
- RAB Members
- RAS staff at B3 or above
- Staff invited from other divisions as appropriate to give updates and help cross-communication

### **Remit**

The group functions as a team meeting for RAS team leaders, where ideas and information can be exchanged and matters of shared interest discussed. It will also facilitate corporate planning and preparations for activities such as stocktaking, away days, etc. This will feed into RAB through the Chair.

This Policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently as required.

Laura Mitchell  
Deputy Keeper of the Records of Scotland  
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