

Guidelines for users of Reid Historical Search Room

We are pleased to welcome you to our temporary Historical Search Room in the Reid Room, General Register House.

In order to access the Reid Historical Search Room please follow directional signage through the Archivists' garden to the Garden Entrance, located on the ground floor of General Register House.

To ensure that our search rooms are safe for staff and visitors, we have made a variety of changes to our service provision. We recommend that you read them in advance of contacting us to ensure that the service restrictions are clear to you:

- All customers attending a search room must comply with our NRS safe visit Agreement. (<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/about-us/safe-visit-agreement>)
- Due to the constraints of social distancing and ventilation within our Reid Historical Search Room, we have considerably reduced the number of search room seats available.
- In order to maximise the number of seats available to consult original records, no other facilities are available within the space. The camera stand, microfilm readers, reference books, paper catalogues/indexes and search room PCs will not be available.
- Initially, seat bookings are only available for those customers who require access to our records to complete funded academic research or those who require urgent access to complete PhD, post-graduate or early career research.
- You may only visit the Reid Historical Search room for a maximum period of 4 hours in total per day.
- Whilst our aim is to be as flexible as possible with booking requests, our user capacity is significantly reduced, so we cannot guarantee to meet requests for bookings on particular days.
- Our opening hours are 10:00 to 15:00 to allow for staggered arrivals and departures.
- All records must be requested in advance and no requests can be accepted during your visit, including for those records held in General Register House. Please do not attend on site unless you have had your record request approved. Restrictions in relation to safe work processes for staff mean that we have had to increase document production lead-times.
- Due to the constraints of space and transportation, the following categories of material cannot be produced: oversized material (including maps and plans); fragile items such as objects; items held in specialist storage; items which are unfit for production. If your item cannot be produced for any reason, you will be informed in advance of your visit. Our Conservation Studio is closed, so items which would require treatment of any sort cannot be produced.
- Due to space constraints, and our quarantine process, we cannot normally accommodate 'Keep Outs'. We are keeping this under review.
- Our copying service will not be available. In certain circumstances it may be possible for you to take your own photographs. If you wish to take photographs of a record, please make us aware of this prior to your visit. Our camera stand will not be available and a flash must not be used.

- We are complying with the NHS Test and Protect system and will hold contact details to share with the NHS Tracer for a maximum period of 21 days.

Booking a seat.

If you would like to book a seat from Monday 26th April please contact us by email at lsrhe@nrscotland.gov.uk

Please note that search room access is strictly by appointment only and customers should not attend at on site unless they have received notification of a confirmed booking.

What to bring.

Please only bring what supplies are necessary for your visit, there will be limited locker storage for personal belongings.

Please make sure you bring several sharpened pencils, along with your own pencil sharpener, since there will not be one available for you to use.

Please only use the hand sanitiser provided in the building, this is essential to preserve our records.

There will be no café facility or water machine provided so please bring your own supply for use during any break which should be taken outside of the building.

What to expect during your visit.

We encourage regular hand washing.

Please be mindful that due to ventilation requirements, the search room may be of cooler temperature than expected and you will be required to leave outer garments in the lockers provided.

You must wear a face covering unless exempt.

You will be required to limit your movements around the room as much as possible. While there will be staff supervising the search room, they will not be able to offer a full service of assistance with documents.

While staff are working hard to make sure as many records as possible are accessible, we cannot guarantee to produce any record. We will let you know as soon as possible in advance of your visit, but you may find on arrival that not everything which you have requested is available.

Please follow the directions of staff on record consultation and handling.

Your records will be waiting for you at your allocated desk, along with a supply of document preservation items. There is minimum handling of records and all records will be subject to a period of quarantine for 72 hours after visits.

We rotate the document preservation items so that they are also subject to 72 hour quarantine. If you need additional supplies please ask.

When you have finished your visit, please inform the member of staff so that the documents can be 'returned'.

There will be no access to library books or paper catalogues held in the Historical Search Room. If you need to consult the NRS electronic catalogue, please visit the NRS website www.nrscotland.gov.uk on your own device.

No documents will be issued except on production of a valid reader's ticket. If you hold one, please remember to bring it with you. If you do not hold one, or it has expired, please note that you will be required to obtain one first on your arrival. Please make us aware if you do not have a reader's ticket, prior to your visit. You will need to bring with you two passport-size photographs, printed on photographic paper, and two forms of identification (one showing your address and one displaying a photograph of you).

You may also wish to remind yourself of NRS data protection guidance, available online at <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/visit-us/historical-search-room/data-protection-guidance-for-researchers>. Alternatively, please ask a member of staff for a paper copy.

We expect to refine our processes as we go forward, so please bear with us if things are different from one visit to the next.