

Last updated: 7 July 2022

Guidelines for users of the Historical Search Room

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 any 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 careful distancing and ventilation, we have considerably reduced the number of search room seats available and these are strictly by appointment only
- If you wish to request an appointment, this should be accompanied by a list of the 12 (maximum) records you wish to consult. Staff need to check the references to ensure these can all be produced, before we can confirm an appointment.
- Whilst our aim is to be as flexible as possible with booking requests, our user capacity remains reduced, so we cannot guarantee to meet requests for bookings on particular days.
- Our opening hours are 10:00 to 16:30
- 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.
- You may only order a total of 12 records per booking.
- A microfilm reader and virtual volume PCs are available to be pre-booked, please advise if you require these at time of booking.
- Due to space constraints, 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.

Booking a seat.

If you would like to book a seat please contact us by email at lsrhe@scotlandspeople.gov.uk with a list of the 12 (maximum) records you wish to consult.

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. You can be provided a transparent bag for items you wish to take into the search room as you must leave all bags, outdoor garments and umbrellas in the lockers provided. Oversized items cannot be accommodated.
- NRS staff reserve the right to search materials taken by you to or from the search room.
- The following items are strictly forbidden in the search room: Eating, drinking, pens, scissors, knives, video cameras and scanners.
- 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. You may only use a pencil or laptop to take notes. The use of laptops is permitted at owner's risk and NRS accepts no responsibility for loss of information, theft or accidental damage.
- 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 in communal areas but this can be removed when at your desk.
- In the interests of other readers, please observe silence with the exception of consulting with staff members. Mobile phones may only be used for still photography.
- 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.
- Records must be handled with great care, please follow the directions of staff on record consultation and handling.

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

Restrictions on Access

- 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). These must be originals, not scans or print outs.
- Any restrictions that have been placed on access to, or use of, particular records must be strictly observed. Staff will inform you of any such restrictions and advise you concerning applications for access.
- You are not permitted to access private collections for legal purposes without the prior written permission of the owners or depositors.
- It may be necessary periodically to withdraw material from public use for reasons such as stock taking, conservation, display or copying. NRS also reserves the right to withdraw any document in poor or fragile condition.

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.