

# The National Archives

## Accounting Officer System Statement



© Crown copyright 2022

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit [nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available on our website at [nationalarchives.gov.uk](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk) and on GOV.UK <http://www.gov.uk/official-documents>. Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us via our website.

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

**Contents**

Section one: Scope of the system 3

Section two: Responsibilities within the core department 5

Section three: Local funding arrangements 7

Section four: Third party delivery partnerships 8

Section five: Grants to private and voluntary sector bodies 9

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

**Section one: Scope of the system**

1. I am the Principal Accounting Officer for The National Archives. This System Statement sets out all of the accountability relationships and processes within my department, outlining where accountability sits at all levels of the system.

2. The National Archives is a non-ministerial department, and the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales. Its parent department is the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. It fulfils the remit of the Public Record Office, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Office for Public Sector Information and Her Majesty’s Stationery Office. It works to secure the archival heritage of the nation. Its collection is accessible to everyone all over the world.

3. The National Archives:

- is the custodian of the public record and government’s trusted expert in managing, preserving and using information
- provides access to and makes available more than 1,000 years of the nation’s histories, and connects people and communities with the millions of stories contained in its collection
- leads and supports the archives sector, and help archives to build and develop the skills and capacity needed to sustain the nation’s archival heritage
- works with the academic community and others engaged in scholarly research across a broad range of disciplines, to provide solutions to the major challenges facing archives, and to open up greater access to archival collections
- brings together the skills and specialisms needed to conserve some of the oldest historic documents, as well as leading digital archive practices to manage and preserve government information past, present and future
- plays a leading role in addressing the cross-government challenge of preserving and making accessible the digital record of government.

4. The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport has statutory

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

responsibility under the Public Records Act 1958 for the public records system and is accountable to Parliament.

5. As Accounting Officer, I am personally responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which I have been given charge under HM Treasury’s Estimate, and The National Archives’ resources accounts, as listed in the Accounting Officer appointment letter.

6. This System Statement helps me ensure that I am fulfilling my responsibilities as an Accounting Officer, in accordance with HM Treasury’s guidance as set out in Managing Public Money. It covers my department and describes accountability for all expenditure of public money through my department’s Estimate, all public money raised as income, and the management of any shareholdings, financial investments and other publicly owned assets for which I am responsible.

7. This accountability system is in place at the date of this Statement, and will continue to apply until a revised Statement is published.

**Jeff James**  
**Chief Executive and Keeper, and Accounting Officer**  
**14 July 2022**

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

**Section two: Responsibilities within the core department**

8. As Principal Accounting Officer, I am personally responsible for safeguarding the public funds for which I have charge, for ensuring propriety, regularity, value for money, and feasibility in the handling of those public funds; and for the day-to-day operations and management of The National Archives.

9. In addition, I ensure that The National Archives as a whole is run on the basis of the standards, in terms of governance, decision-making and financial management that are set out in Box 3.1 of Managing Public Money.

10. The operating structure is designed with a focus on The National Archives’ strategic vision, *Archives for Everyone*, which challenges the organisation to become the 21st Century national archive – inclusive, entrepreneurial and disruptive.

11. The National Archives’ Executive Team (comprising the Chief Executive and Executive Directors) is the decision-making body of the organisation and responsible for the day-to-day operational management of the organisation. Supporting the Executive Team are two sub-committees, the Operational Management Team and the Estates Strategy Committee. The Operational Management Team was created in 2021 to oversee operational performance and resource efficiency, improve operational systems and processes, drive strong financial discipline across the organisation and oversee compliance in areas of corporate responsibility. The Estates Strategy Committee was established in 2022 to provide assurance that the organisation is managing its sites and assets appropriately and effectively, including maintaining an Estates Strategy, actively championing changes to the site, and managing office spaces and demand for space.

12. Management information is reported monthly to the Executive Team. The role of the Executive Team includes managing improvements in business and financial performance, driving innovation, transparency and efficiencies that support delivery of strategic objectives and delivering value for money.

13. The National Archives’ Board is the key strategic advisory body of the organisation and comprises the Chief Executive, Executive Directors, the Chair of the Board, and Non-executive Board members. Supporting the Board are two sub-committees, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Nominations and Governance Committee. The Audit and Risk Committee is the main assurance committee for the organisation and

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

supports me and Board members in our responsibilities for issues of risk, internal control and governance. The Nominations and Governance Committee is a key forum for discussion of leadership development, succession planning and senior civil service pay and reward.

14. The Board’s role is advisory and through scrutiny and challenge ensures that the leadership of The National Archives sets the strategic direction, maintains the highest standards of corporate governance, delivers statutory, corporate and business responsibilities, makes key investment, procurement and project decisions, effectively manages risk, monitors financial information, drives improvement in performance and takes responsibility for its decisions and their implementation.

15. Challenge on the performance of the Board is provided by the Non-executive Board members and other Board members.

16. The National Archives’ internal auditors provide a third-party evaluation of the risk management, control and governance arrangements in place. The risk-based approach is agreed with the Executive Team and approved by the Audit and Risk Committee.

17. For further information on the responsibilities of the Board and Committees, please refer to the Governance statement in The National Archives’ annual report and accounts, which can be found on the ‘Our Performance’ section of the website.

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

### Section three: Local funding arrangements

#### 'New Burdens' funding 2015-25

18. Since 1 January 2015, specified public sector organisations (magistrates' courts, prisons, coroners' courts, NHS bodies and some arms-length bodies) must now transfer records selected for permanent preservation to a place of deposit, in line with the 20-year rule. 'New Burdens' funding has been made available from central government to cover the increased activity for local authority places of deposit during the ten-year transition period (£660,000), with a smaller sum available to assist coroners (£50,000). Distributed via The National Archives, this funding is paid annually for each year of transition.

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

**Section four: Third party delivery partnerships**

19. The National Archives uses third party delivery partnerships to support its work as leaders of the archives sector. One of those organisations, the Pilgrim Trust, acts on its behalf to hold monies for the Archives Revealed programme. Financial accountability is assured via review of progress reports from the fund recipients at agreed milestones. At the end of the project, receipt of a final output report is required.

20. Other organisations fund and deliver a range of training, support and sector development work across the archives sector, for example, the Archives and Records Association and the Digital Preservation Coalition. Formal agreements are mandatory for each arrangement and approval is required at Executive Director level. Progress is monitored as appropriate, depending on the length/intricacy of the agreement.

		THE	
		NATIONAL	
		ARCHIVES	

## **Section five: Grants to private and voluntary sector bodies**

21. The National Archives works with and has in place a grants system with other sister organisations to support a range of mutual strategic goals that benefit the archives sector, research and academia. Grants are subject to funding agreements, memorandum of understanding between both organisations, and a clear action plan with regular monitoring and reviews against progress.

22. The National Archives provides grants to a small number of private and voluntary sector bodies to support joint working and collaboration in research. An internal panel approves each grant, counter signed by both parties at appropriate organisational level. Delivery against agreed targets set out in the grant agreement and project plan is monitored by a regionally based team, with all recipients required to report on how they have delivered against the agreed targets. A final evaluation is required upon grant completion.

### **Major contract and outsourced services**

23. The National Archives ensures value for money from its contracts through open competition for any new requirement with a value of £10,000 or more, using Crown Commercial Service frameworks wherever possible. Contract reviews are conducted with our key suppliers, as appropriate. The National Archives procurement and contract management processes are subject to review as part of the internal audit programme.

24. The National Archives has no major contracts in place for the financial year 2021-2022, a major contract being defined as one with a value over £5 million per annum in the Model Services Contract Terms.