

The National Archives Annual report and accounts 2023-24

For the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

Including the Annual Report of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives 2023-24

Annual Reports presented to Parliament pursuant to section 1(3) of the Public Records Act 1958

Accounts presented to the House of Commons pursuant to section 6(4) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000

Accounts presented to the House of Lords by Command of His Majesty

Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 25 July 2024

This is part of a series of departmental publications which, along with the Main Estimates 2024-25 and the document 'Public Expenditure: Statistical Analyses 2024', present the Government's outturn for 2023-24 and planned expenditure for 2024-25.



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About the Annual report and accounts of The National Archives

This document combines performance and financial data with analysis to help readers better understand our work. It sets out how we spend taxpayers' money to fulfil our remit as the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales. It covers our activities from April 2023 to March 2024 (inclusive) and is divided into three main sections.

The performance report and analysis ([page 7](#)) includes a summary of our strategic aims and our key activities during the reporting year (the performance overview), followed by our progress over the year against our business priorities, input and impact indicators and the Greening Government Commitments 2021-2025 (the performance analysis).

The accountability report ([page 104](#)) includes an introductory statement from the Chair of our Board, and the Directors' report sets out our operating structure and transparency matters, such as inclusion and diversity, and whistleblowing. It also includes:

- a statement of the Accounting Officer's responsibilities
- a governance statement on how The National Archives manages risk

- a remuneration and staff report setting out an open account of the pay and benefits received by the executive directors and Non-executive Board members
- disclosures on pay and pensions policies and details of staff numbers and costs
- a parliamentary accountability and audit report, allowing readers to understand the department's expenditure against the money provided to it by Parliament along with the Statement of Parliamentary Supply
- a copy of the audit certificate and report made to Parliament by The Comptroller and Auditor General, setting out their opinion on the financial statements.

The financial statements ([page 205](#)) outline our income and expenditure for the financial year, the financial position of the department as of 31 March 2024 and additional information designed to enable readers to understand these results.

Annex A ([page 254](#)) contains the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: 21st Annual Report 2023-24, which describes its role, work actioned in the year and details of the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research.

Annex B ([page 275](#)) contains the Annual Report of the Independent Complaints Reviewer, which sets out information on the service and standards, an overview of both the learning from complaints and customer feedback, and of complaint activity and examples.

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1.0 Performance report

1.1 Performance overview

Introduction from the Chief Executive and Keeper

**To the Right Honourable Lisa Nandy MP,
Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport**

The National Archives is a remarkable organisation. Our historic mission dates back almost 200 years, but we continue to adapt, develop and deliver in new and extraordinary ways. As I conclude my final year as Chief Executive and Keeper, these qualities seem to me particularly evident when I look back at all we have achieved across the last twelve months. Truly, it was a challenging, yet also rewarding year.

Much of our success owes to the strength of our partnerships. Throughout the year, we have developed still stronger relationships with colleagues from Parliament and the judiciary. Our work with them has been hugely rewarding as we move further down the path to becoming not just the archive of government but the archive of the state.

In January, we received the first records from the archives of Parliament. This historic collection of 14 kilometres of

records is scheduled to be in the Keeper's custody by the summer of 2025, with public access to be delivered at Kew. Also in January, our web archiving services were expanded to include the Parliamentary web estate. I am proud that this work both helps to safeguard this iconic collection and makes it more widely available – the very heart of our historic mission.

Our Find Case Law service, which receives court judgments and tribunal decisions, has grown significantly across 2023 and 2024, with plans to continue this expansion into future years. Many of these records relate to notable or high-profile cases, such as the management of public records arising in unofficial communications channels and the UK COVID-19 Public Inquiry. An important feature of this service is the capability to produce information quickly and in an accessible manner. Through Find Case Law, we are learning about challenges and techniques that can be used on other born-digital records elsewhere within our living digital archive.

Our government collection also continues to grow. We are past the half-way mark with our transfer of historical military service personnel records – one of the biggest transfer projects in our history – and have now received over 5.5 million files. Each is valuable in its own right, telling a story of service and sacrifice, often complementing other records in our collections. While it is absolutely right that we take in these records, the size of this record series has presented significant challenges, in particular the public demand for access. We are working hard to eliminate the backlog of

requests this has created and, while this project continues to test our capacity, it remains a priority for investment in the months and years ahead.

The year 2023 saw us enter a new phase in our long history, steered by a new four-year business plan. We reaffirmed our commitment to the principles set out in our strategy, *Archives for Everyone*, of working towards becoming the inclusive, entrepreneurial and disruptive archive. While this report focuses on our achievements across the last year, it also shows that our longer-term ambitions for the future are built on the very firm foundations that we have established over recent years.

As this is the final annual report I will oversee, it's right that I offer my thanks and appreciation to those I have worked with over the past decade. I have met countless colleagues across the archives sector and in the information profession and I can attest to their skill, commitment and resourcefulness. Indeed, we are proud to be part of a wider network of archives – a vital and vibrant element of the nation's heritage, memory and, I firmly believe, a key source of hope, inspiration and innovation for its future.

The National Archives is also fortunate to have the support of many dedicated volunteers and engaged users of our services. Together with the Friends of The National Archives, The National Archives Trust and our many supportive colleagues at home and abroad, we are privileged to be part of a wonderful wider family – one that will continue to be important for many years to come.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the staff of The National Archives. Over the last ten years they have demonstrated, repeatedly, huge qualities of determination, enthusiasm, passion, creativity and resilience, especially when faced with the global issues of the last few years. I don't have the space in this short introduction to do them full justice, but they are an absolute credit to this institution and to the Civil Service. I will forever be grateful for everything they have achieved during my tenure. The successes celebrated in this report are, as ever, theirs.

I am incredibly proud of how far we have come and all that we have achieved, often in the face of unprecedented challenges. As I hand over to the next Chief Executive and Keeper, Saul Nassé, I look forward to seeing all that the organisation will achieve in the years ahead.

The National Archives is extraordinary. It has been an honour and a pleasure to lead this institution. I will miss it hugely, but I have every confidence in its future and in the contribution it will continue to make to the life of the nation.



Dr Jeff James CBE
Chief Executive and Keeper
24 July 2024

The National Archives in Numbers

- **over 600,000** original records delivered to on-site users in 2023-24
- **51 terabytes** of content added to UK Government Web Archive during 2023-24
- **86%** of court judgments and tribunal decisions published within 24 hours via Transfer Digital Records
- **58** grants awarded to archives across the sector during 2023-24
- **over 470,000** files transferred from government departments in 2023-24
- **30%** of schools joining our education workshops in 2023-24 new to The National Archives
- **more than 875,000** updates to our catalogue Discovery in 2023-24
- **over 12 million** digital images produced in-house and via our partners in 2023-24
- **9%** reduction in greenhouse gas emissions (tCO₂e) against 2022-23
- **£2 million** of funding secured to digitise the National Farm Survey over four years

Who we are

The National Archives is a non-ministerial department and the official archive and publisher for the UK Government and for England and Wales. We work to bring together and secure the future of the public record, both digital and physical, for future generations. Our collection is accessible to anyone all over the world.

Our historic mission endures: to collect and preserve the record, to use our expertise and knowledge to connect people with their history through our unrivalled collections and to lead, partner and support archives at home and worldwide.

This report covers the first year since we set out our renewed strategy, *Archives for Everyone*. We first laid out our vision in 2019, setting The National Archives on a transformative path towards becoming inclusive, entrepreneurial and disruptive—truly, a national archive for the 21st Century. Since then, much has changed in the world and in the ways we work together. We have withstood many tests during this time and, in doing so, have emerged more resilient and more certain of our value to the nation as a source of memory and evidence. Throughout the challenges of the last few years, we have stayed true to our belief that archives are for everyone because they are about everyone.

Even in times of uncertainty and change, we have continued to embrace our obligation to connect with the biggest and most diverse audience possible, in the most innovative ways we can. When we assessed how far we had come in 2023, it was clear that our commitment to our vision remained undimmed. We continue to transform The National Archives, striving to find creative approaches to the challenges we meet and to make good on our unique promise and potential. As we move forward, we are guided by a renewed purpose, a refreshed strategy and a firm belief in our principles.

Our principles

We will be the inclusive archive

Building trust and tearing down barriers to access, participation and understanding. Harnessing talent from diverse backgrounds.

Bold, active and outward-looking – encountered by people and communities in unexpected places and at vital moments.

The inclusive archive is about who we are, who we serve, how we work and, as custodians of a collection of international significance, our global role.

We will be the entrepreneurial archive

Creating and realising value at home and across the globe. Operating flexibly and fearlessly, adept at finding and exploiting commercial, research and philanthropic funding opportunities – to open out and promote our collection.

The entrepreneurial archive is ever-alert to new possibilities, partnerships and collaborations and adventurous in pursuing them.

We will be the disruptive archive

Constantly adapting, rethinking and reshaping our practice to meet our contemporary and future challenges. Developing new skills and exploiting emerging technology, reaffirming and transforming our historic mission for the digital age, from creation to presentation.

The disruptive archive solves problems. It moves quickly and it moves things forward.

Our goals 2023-27

In 2023, we set out upon the second phase of our journey towards making *Archives for Everyone*. To bring our vision and principles to life, we outlined what we want to achieve over the following four years.

Our goals for 2023-27 unite our activity under three themes: collection, connection and custodianship. These themes focus on sustaining and maximising not only our own value and impact as a national archive, but those of archives more widely. These are the goals against which our progress is measured over the year covered by this report, as well as those against which it will continue to be measured over the coming three years. Read more about our performance against our in-year business priorities in the Performance analysis on [page 104](#).

Building the value of our collection

We will grow the collection, its accessibility and utility.

Over the next four years we will begin a new era in the history of our collection. We will be accessioning near-contemporary digital records at scale, bringing the Parliamentary Archives together with the archive of government and completing one of the biggest transfers in our history – around 10 million records of military service personnel from the Ministry of Defence.

Key outcomes:

- Exponential year-on-year growth of the digital archive, underpinned by a new holistic service and support offer to government and the courts
- Completed transfer of the 15 linear km Parliamentary Archives collection with successful integration of the staff and services supporting it
- Completed transfer of around 10 million service personnel records, with an effective access service offer in place
- A new collection policy informed by inclusive archival practice.

Creating value through connection

We will open up bigger and better opportunities to connect with the collection for everyone, everywhere.

Over the next four years, we will develop further our ability to connect people with our collection in person, online and through education, research and scholarship. In each of these settings we will grow the number of people who encounter and benefit from the experience of archives.

Key outcomes:

- Increased in-person connections, promoting equity of access to our collections at Kew and across the country, with:
 - an overall increase in visitors by more than 50%

- doubling of participants in our learning programmes
- a new regional learning programme, initially reaching up to 10,000 students per year
- a new touring exhibition programme.
- Stronger online connections, making it easier for more people to encounter our content and offering them a more accessible and satisfying experience when they do, putting us on track for a ‘tenfold in ten years’ increase in visitor numbers to our digital services
- Greater global connections through widened access to collections of significant international interest, including those representing shared archival heritage
- Enhanced research connections, supporting more high-impact research especially where our collection has relevance
- Growing connections in schools, with a 10% year-on-year increase on the 3.3 million connections¹ we already make through our taught onsite and online sessions and through our online resources for teachers.

Sustaining value through custodianship

Ever mindful of our historic role, we will invest in the skills, capability and infrastructure needed to support our mission over the long term.

¹ We are currently reviewing whether this baseline is a meaningful measure of our ability to connect people with our collections through education.

Over the next four years we will continue to invest time, thought and resource into the long-term sustainability of our work and that of the sector we lead. This includes a completed business case for a new regional location to complement our Kew headquarters.

Key outcomes:

- A completed business case for and significant progress towards a second, regional location
- Sustainable infrastructure in place to support the growth of our collection as we become the archive of the state
- Upgraded legacy infrastructure to protect and sustain the collection
- Reduced preservation risk for digital public records wherever they are held
- A refreshed version of Archives Unlocked – the UK Government’s vision for archives.

Looking to the future

We embarked upon the first year of our new four-year plan within an environment of uncertainty, with unexpected pressures causing us to make difficult decisions about how we prioritise our resources. Future years will undoubtedly bring new challenges. Yet, we move forward to meet such challenges with greater confidence in our mission and greater clarity about our destination. In July 2024, we mark

the departure after ten years of our CEO and Keeper, Dr Jeff James CBE. The evolution of the organisation during this period is clear, with several major projects now under way. The Parliamentary Archives is in the process of being relocated into our care and we are half way through taking in an unprecedented 10 million records of military service personnel. Innovative tools such as Lawmaker and Find Case Law are expediting the ways that legislation may be created and judicial records can be accessed. Our exhibitions and public events programme goes from strength to strength. The new Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship that we helped launch will open up our profession to people from more diverse backgrounds, with more diverse ideas and skills. As we focus our efforts now on charting a course through new challenges, it is important to recognise the planning and the vision that has enabled us to seize the opportunities these projects have created.

Looking to the future, our sights are set on 2038, which is the bicentenary of the founding of the Public Record Office. By that date, we want to have cemented The National Archives as a living digital archive, an archive of the state, a demonstrably sustainable archive and an archive that is genuinely inclusive, collaborative and available. How we respond to the challenges and opportunities ahead of us will transform The National Archives more profoundly than at any point in the last two centuries. The next few years will be pivotal for both new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, and for the archival profession, which is handling ever-increasing amounts of digital records. We

are readying ourselves, our sector and our colleagues in government to embrace the technological revolution. As a vital source of evidence, stories and memory for the nation, whether in parchment or pixels, our mission is clear. Our records have the power to enrich all who encounter them and it is our duty to not only maintain their value, but increase it, too. Our priority for the coming years must be to sustain and maximise both our own value and impact as a national archive and that of archives more widely.

Our year 2023-24

Becoming the archive of the state

- For many years, our collections grew at a relatively predictable rate. More recently, however, growth has increased in both pace and variability—and the trend looks likely to continue. This increase is due to several factors. Firstly, over the past ten years, government departments have begun transferring their records to us 20 years after creation, rather than after 30 years, as previously. Our interventions during this period revealed that there are more recent paper records of historical value than previously thought. Secondly, two major projects have begun to come to fruition: the relocation into our care of both the Parliamentary Archives and of around 10 million Ministry of Defence service personnel records. Alongside these projects, we continue to require storage for our core work taking in government records, for housing collections from University College London and the Worshipful Company of Mercers, as well as contingency for unexpected events. To put the scale of the challenge into context: it has taken our collection 1,000 years to reach its current expanse of around 250km; over the next ten years, we will take in half as much again. To alleviate the short-term obstacles, we have created a new repository at our site in Kew and procured extra storage offsite. But the longer-term challenges demand much greater capacity and more creative solutions. This year, we have therefore been looking at a variety of options to help us continue to grow.

One avenue we are exploring is a new physical site in the North East of England – a location that aligns with our aims strategically and operationally, as well as our aspirations for developing the archives sector across England. A business case is in draft, to be progressed during the next financial year.

- The year 2023-24 was the first year since the end of the transition period in which government departments began transferring their records to us 20 years after they were created, known as the 20-year rule. This transition was a major change in the way public records are managed and took ten years to implement. Although there were significant challenges – not least during the COVID-19 pandemic – much was accomplished. Record management processes were reviewed and departments now have a better understanding of the records they hold. As a result, there is now greater public access to contemporary public records and greater transparency overall into government decision making. In 2023-24, the number of transfers returned to levels similar to those before the transition period, at around 470,000 pieces or 3,168 linear metres—that’s the length of over 30 football pitches. As the 20-year rule becomes business as usual, we are working with departments to address outstanding transfers, as well as new challenges brought about by born-digital records.
- Our landmark transfer of Ministry of Defence (MoD) service personnel records has moved past the half-way mark, with over 1 million records being delivered into

our care during 2023-24 and a total of over 5.5 million transferred so far. Recently received collections include records relating to the Auxiliary Territorial Service, the Women's Royal Army Corps, Army nurses and Voluntary Aid Detachments, alongside overseas collections that feature UK personnel from East Africa and local personnel serving in the Middle East and South Asia. We are working with our commercial partners to digitise and publish these records online, so that more people are able to explore the stories they hold. Online series will start to become available over the next financial year.

- We have continued to see strong interest in these recently transferred MoD service personnel records through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. During the calendar year 2023, we saw an extraordinary increase in FOI requests, meaning that requests to The National Archives accounted for 30% of all requests to government and the largest overall increase to bodies in government since monitoring began. The number we receive in a single quarter now exceeds previous figures for a whole year and our forecasting anticipates that demand will continue to climb over the next few years. The sheer unprecedented pace of the increase has put significant pressure on our teams and it has proven challenging to undertake the major redeployment and transformation of our resources required, especially while absorbing unforecast pay inflation and one-off payments to staff. Consequently, our rate of timeliness compliance has decreased: for 2023, this was 58%. In March 2023, the Information Commissioner's Office issued a Practice

Recommendation that outlines an expectation that our compliance rate would improve. During 2023-24, we have been working on an action plan to track our recovery, exploring process efficiencies and improving governance and data capture. In addition, since the end of the reporting year, we have submitted a business case to HM Treasury for extra resource to deliver our compliance recovery. Our intersecting obligations under the Public Records Act 1958 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 entrust us with a unique responsibility and, despite the challenges that persist, we remain committed to making these important historical records accessible.

- In January, our partnership to transfer the Parliamentary Archives from the Palace of Westminster to our site at Kew moved into a new phase. We successfully received the first tranche of the collection and access to the Parliamentary web estate is also now available through our web archiving services. Accomplishing these first steps was one of our key strategic priorities for the year and keeps us on track to complete the project on schedule. The full Parliamentary Archives collection is due to come into the custody of the Keeper by the summer of 2025, when public access will resume from our site at Kew.
- We continue to support the government records management community with their obligations under the Public Records Act 1958. In 2023-24, we met with around 60 public record-creating bodies, running training sessions for ministerial offices and Arm's Length

Bodies and working closely with Departmental Record Officers on day-to-day issues. We also published our new Information Management Assessment (IMA) self-assessment toolkit. The IMA programme provides public sector bodies with an independent assessment of how well they are managing their information, their practices, and how effectively they are mitigating any related risks. Developed with industry experts and the information management community, the toolkit and the other resources we offer via our website support colleagues in government to understand their responsibilities according to the Code of Practice on Records Management issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The IMA programme not only aids public sector bodies to evaluate their performance and compliance, it also, alongside our annual Information Management Report, provides valuable data for building a holistic picture of the challenges within digital information management across government. As we move into the era of born-digital records, these insights are vital for informing our services, guidance and training development plans.

- A key part of our offer to government is working with public inquiries and other short-term bodies so that they can meet their responsibilities under the Public Records Act 1958 and the Inquiries Act 2005. From the inception of an inquiry through to final reports, it is our role to provide access to the material that helps investigations into past events and decisions. By its nature, these records are often some of the most high profile in government and we work carefully with inquiries to make

sure they are handled with due diligence and awareness of their potentially sensitive nature. In the past year, we supported six new short-term bodies and 13 ongoing short-term bodies, including the Infected Blood Inquiry, Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry, Grenfell Tower Inquiry and the UK COVID-19 Inquiry.

- As the official archive of the UK Government, it is our duty to make available records created by departments and other public bodies. In December, highlights from recently released records included files from the Prime Minister's Office in 2003, featuring issues crossing the desk of Tony Blair, such as anti-social behaviour and environmental policy. We also released a collection of Cabinet Office files from the 1980s on what became known as the 'Spycatcher' case, regarding a memoir by an ex-MI5 officer. These records attracted three times the media attention of files released in recent years, demonstrating how our collections can activate an interest in politics both past and present.

CASE STUDY: Lawmaker

Lawmaker is a tool for drafting and amending legislation. By automating drafting processes, it produces more standardised and therefore better-quality legislation, generating efficiencies throughout the process and enabling the end result to be more easily preserved and accessed. This innovative service was developed in conjunction with external supplier Leidos and in partnership with the UK Parliament, the Office of

Parliamentary Counsel, the Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Government's Parliamentary Counsel Office, and is now delivered by us on behalf of our partners. Lawmaker is now embedded into business-as-usual processes in the House of Commons, the House of Lords, the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel in the Cabinet Office, the Scottish Parliament and the Parliamentary Counsel's Office in the Scottish Government. In 2023-24, we also rolled out Lawmaker to the Government Legal Department, doubling the number of overall users to more than 1,000. The tool is now in use for all the Bills that come before the UK and Scottish Parliaments, as well as Statutory Instruments, Scottish Statutory Instruments and Northern Ireland Statutory Rules.

In 2023-24, one of our strategic priorities was to deliver enhancements to Lawmaker to support the drafting of legislation following the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 (the REUL Act). This Act made important changes across the statute book, changing the legal hierarchy of what was previously retained EU law in domestic law, revoking 587 legislative instruments of EU origin and conferring powers to restate, replicate, revoke or replace residual 'assimilated' law. The expertise and data we hold as architects of the website legislation.gov.uk proved invaluable for helping colleagues in government identify relevant legislation and Lawmaker made it easier to import texts of the retained EU law to help draft restatement legislation. As the project got underway, we wanted not only to provide a robust drafting tool, but also maintain the level of service we provide to government

departments and the devolved administrations, to help navigate this complex transformation of our laws.

We have also been developing the website legislation.gov.uk to produce revised versions of the affected laws, showing clearly the text of revoked legislation and relevant amendments. This required us to significantly expand our editorial capacity. Prioritising the most accessed or viewed legislation first, we have so far applied 65.2% of changes that came into effect at the end of the ‘transition period’ for leaving the European Union and 67.5% of the effects since then. This is a two-year project and we are on track to complete the work by the end of the next financial year as planned. We have also been undertaking in-depth user research to understand how best to present legislation originating from the EU and will continue developing legislation.gov.uk so that it fully reflects the new single-tier statute book.

Completing the initial roll-out of Lawmaker is a major landmark—but this is just the beginning. Moving forward, we will continue developing the service and expanding its coverage. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Northern Ireland Assembly in 2024, so that we can start the work to support drafting and amending legislation across another of the four nations. In the coming year, we will also be working on a project to explore the potential for using legislation in Artificial Intelligence large language models with funding from Innovate UK (read more in our case study on [page 32](#)). Over the coming years, Lawmaker will be instrumental in driving efficiencies

and maximising the utility and value of essential public information.

Digital transformations

- Our Digital teams have been hard at work over the past year bringing into being the living, growing digital archive. The archive needs to be able to house the ever-expanding digital footprint of government departments, but it also needs to be easy to use, resilient against future challenges and capable of evolving alongside emerging technologies. Part of this work is the somewhat ordinary yet crucial infrastructure work – such as moving to cloud-based services – that keeps our records as safe as possible. All our digital preservation techniques demand extensive planning, as there are risks to assess and mitigations to devise, and we are continually working behind the scenes to improve our public services. Another key component of our digital offering is our catalogue, Discovery, and this year we made more than 875,000 additions and changes – 8% more than the previous year – to ensure its information is as up to date as possible. Due to unexpected resource constraints during the year, however, some parts of our digital infrastructure programme were paused. Development of a new information architecture and a pan-archival catalogue was put on hold so that we could progress other priorities, such as metadata management enhancements to support the digital preservation infrastructure that is becoming increasingly integral to our engagement with government departments.

- Departments are transferring an increasing number of born-digital records into our care, but there is a long way still to go. Government digital records are highly complex to archive, as they come in diverse formats and can include sensitive information. Encouragingly, we are now seeing repeated use of our Transfer Digital Records (TDR) service and we have been developing our user base over the past year, engaging with over 50 transferring bodies. We continue to make improvements to the service, such as adding in new 'customised' metadata, plus features for dealing with records that have access conditions, and we are working to accept transfers directly from systems such as SharePoint. Some work was postponed until 2024-25, though, as capacity was impacted by in-year pressures such as unforecast pay inflation and the one-off payment for Civil Servants. As a companion to TDR, we are also developing 'Access Your Records', a service for government departments to use once their records have been transferred. These services form part of our strategic priority to build the value of our collection and are critical tools for helping government departments manage the transition to the age of digital.
- Our Find Case Law service expands year on year. Across 2023-24, we received over 4,900 court judgments and tribunal decisions through TDR. We published 19% of the judgments within an hour of receipt and 86% the same day. As many of these records relate to notable or high-profile cases – such as a ruling on the management of public records arising in unofficial communications

channels – an important feature of this service is the capability to produce information that can be published quickly and in accessible formats. Find Case Law is teaching us a lot about techniques we can use elsewhere within the living digital archive, enabling us to reshape information into formats such as HTML to improve their accessibility. Currently, we archive and publish the judgments of the higher courts, but from next year we will expand the service to include all currently published judgments, including those of the Lower Tier Tribunals, plus a selection of legally or historically significant Crown Court and County Court judgments. We are proud to be working with the Judiciary and the Ministry of Justice to make this information more easily and quickly accessible.

- Regardless of how someone starts their research journey, most will first find themselves at our website. To help them navigate our collections and connect them with the most relevant content, we have been developing The National Archives' website. ['Explore the Collection'](#) is a new springboard for users that showcases our holdings and inspires people to dig deeper into archives for themselves. We have carefully designed the format to be as accessible as possible across a range of devices and it allows us to publish information in a way that can be easily picked up by online channels such as Wikipedia or Google snippets. Since it launched in June 2023, our most popular page, a ['Record Revealed'](#) of a medieval cold and flu remedy, has been viewed more than 3,000 times. Our website refresh will continue with a new search service that we hope will better support new users

of the archive, while still meeting the needs of those familiar with our current catalogue, Discovery.

- Another important infrastructure project over the past year has been our work developing our web archiving practice with the UK Government Web Archive. We have improved the user interface to make it easier to move around archived content and have been streamlining workflows with a particular focus on improving environmental sustainability. We added 51TB to the web archive over 2023-24, from online content produced by government, as well as in partnership with NHS digital teams, the Office for National Statistics, Government Digital Service and cultural heritage organisations. Working with website managers, we have been trying to ensure that our incremental crawling activity – which captures website data – is as effective as possible, so that the UK Government Web Archive is the definitive place to find an accurate, comprehensive record of the government's online activity.

CASE STUDY: Artificial Intelligence (AI)

It has been a transformational year for the government's capabilities in Artificial Intelligence (AI). This technology is beginning to revolutionise how we process and interact with information and, as custodians of information produced by the UK Government, we are keen to drive forward its responsible use. We are particularly excited about the potential for archives, as AI offers immense opportunities for aiding our ability to organise the vast troves of digital

records created by government. There are early signs that it could significantly speed up the process of appraising whether records are historically significant or contain sensitive information. It is already being used to accelerate techniques for accessing older documents, too, such as handwriting recognition. Embedding AI into our archival practices could have far-reaching effects, across every part of our activity and objectives.

As the official archive of the UK Government, we are leading conversations with colleagues across departments about how AI can be used to improve how records are managed. In 2023, we hosted our second conference on 'AI for GKIM' (government knowledge and information management), organised in collaboration with the Central Digital and Data Office (CDDO), bringing together researchers, policymakers, data scientists, archivists and knowledge and information management professionals to discuss AI adoption and policy. We also convened a workshop on AI and legislation for the four primary legislation drafting offices, known as the Parliamentary Counsel, and supported the development of the government's AI incubator: *i.AI*. These events helped us build relationships with the CDDO, the Government Legal Department, as well as the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, paving the way for partnerships that enable us to take on the opportunities and risks of new technologies together.

AI also holds enormous promise for the archives sector. Large-language models thrive on vast compendia of text and archives hold exactly that. In the past year, we have been making forays into many new areas: with the University of Exeter, investigating how handwriting recognition technology can be used to transcribe digitised images of wills; analysing how our collection is being consumed by chatbots; and exploring how AI can link across separate collections, for the Our Heritage Our Stories research project with the University of Manchester. We have also been securing funding to spur on our activity. Teaming up with lawtech start-ups, academics and AI specialists, we have embarked upon a £2m project to explore using AI for access to justice. We have also deployed £100,000 from the government Knowledge Assets Fund to explore commercial opportunities for our Legal Document Toolkit.

AI looks to become an invaluable tool for archival research, enhancing the value and accessibility of brand new born-digital records and ancient script alike. But new technologies also bring new risks. AI is making the process of generating information extremely easy and, as a result, it is becoming increasingly important to be able to identify authentic content from 'fake'. Verifying the provenance of information for the public will have greater consequences and our expertise in digital archiving is going to prove even more valuable. We are only at the beginning of understanding what AI can achieve, but, as custodians of the nation's records, we have a vital role to

play in grasping the opportunities and the risks of this new technological frontier.

Access and engagement

- It has been a busy year at Kew. Overall, we welcomed 81,500 visitors to our site, showing a healthy 9% increase since the previous year. By early 2024, on site activity had reached levels last seen in 2019. With 37,500 visits to our reading rooms and nearly 474,000 documents being produced for public readers, demand appears to be stabilising. As we have seen on site activity recover, we strive to be reliable and responsive, with more than half of readers taking advantage of our facility to book their seat and order documents in advance. For those who ordered on the day, documents were available on average within 44 minutes. Our front of house team once again helped to steer people through their searches, processing over 22,000 emails, 140 letters and 11,500 Live Chats and we achieved a 90% score from VisitEngland. Visitors are well provided for by local catering firm, Maids of Honour, with whom we are proud to work as part of the government's commitment to supporting Small and Medium Enterprises. As we move forward with our strategy for public connection, which runs to 2030, we are looking at ways to welcome even more people to encounter our collections, whether seasoned researchers or first-time visitors.
- We have also seen engagement with our online events rise steadily for yet another year since we began our

regular online series in 2020. In 2023-24, over 26,000 people joined us, hearing tales from the lives of ‘Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth I’ by historian Tracy Borman, writer Helena Kelly regaled us with ‘The Life and Lies of Charles Dickens’ and records specialist Dr Jessica Nelson unveiled new perspectives on the ‘Magna Carta’ as part of a new series, ‘Secrets of The National Archives’. Our YouTube channel has also enabled us to explore records alongside the experts: our series ‘Spotlight on’, ‘Archives on Film’ and ‘Unboxing the Archive’ allow audiences to deep dive into the documents that have shaped the nation. One of our most popular videos this year took a closer look at MI5 files on a Soviet spy, Klaus Fuchs. Fuchs worked as a physicist on J. Robert Oppenheimer’s ‘Manhattan Project’, and the [video](#) – which explores files from our Security Service collections – has been viewed more than 85,000 times. Our podcast ‘[On the Record](#)’ proved popular, reaching nearly 34,000 downloads during 2023-24—14% more than last year. With the Goalhanger Productions podcast, ‘We Have Ways of Making You Talk’, we also delved into records on ‘Prisoners of War’ and ‘Enemy Aliens’ in World War Two – which were downloaded over 125,000 times. Across all social media channels, we now have more than 382,000 followers.

- Exhibitions offer an effective and engaging way for people to access our collections. In May 2023, we opened our first family-focused exhibition, *Spirit of Invention*. Inspired by the thousands of creative designs that were registered with the Board of Trade from 1839

onwards ([BT 45](#)), we brought together cutting-edge contemporary technology with eccentric inventions from the Victorian era, including a ventilating top hat. The items on display were both aimed at and curated by young people, with pupils from a local primary school helping devise and arrange the exhibits. We were delighted that these weird and wonderful inventions attracted nearly 10,000 people—42% of whom were coming to The National Archives for the very first time. In Spring 2024, Spirit of Invention went on tour to the Discovery Museum in Newcastle, our first exhibition to go on the road. It has been part of our public engagement ambitions to build our capacity for collaboration and we have been working closely with Arts Council England over the past year to become an approved exhibition venue. We are always keen to offer our collections to enrich exhibitions, too, and over 1 million visitors saw the 46 items we lent last year to venues around the UK, Europe and further afield. We hope to build on our connections with colleagues in museums, archives and libraries in the coming years, to forge new collaborations and bring our records to more people across the four nations.

- In February 2024, our latest exhibition opened. *Great Escapes: Remarkable Second World War Captives* offers a glimpse into the lives of Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees during World War Two, featuring stories of captives in Germany, Japan and the UK testifying to the many ways that people can harness courage and ingenuity in desperately hard times. On display

were newly released records from MI9, the intelligence service set up to train people for the experience of being captured, plus items from external collections such as a soldier's boot from the Imperial War Museum that could be modified into a shoe. Sharing our collections beyond the reading rooms has also been made possible by our book accompanying the exhibition, *Captives: Second World War Prisoners of Wars and Internees, 1939-1945*, authored by our records specialists and published by The History Press. The exhibition received wide press coverage and, by the end of March, almost 6,000 people had come to visit the exhibition, with many more exploring the records online.

- Digitisation is a major part of our ongoing efforts to make our collections more accessible. In 2023-24, we captured more than 1.4 million images in house and over 11 million through our commercial partners. A particular focus this year was working with genealogy website Ancestry to begin digitising the records of army service personnel that have recently been transferred to us from the Ministry of Defence. Two series were completed, WO 420 and WO 421, which are now being prepared for publication in the coming financial year. Partners also launched nine new academic primary resource products during 2023-24 on topics ranging from environmental history to public health and political extremism. With the help of these materials, students and scholars can delve into our records, sharpen their research skills and unearth new knowledge.

- Over the past year, we marked several moments of national celebration. The coronation of His Majesty King Charles III in May 2023 signalled a new era in the nation's history, and to celebrate the occasion we offered people the chance to explore coronations through history via our online portal, with highlights from our collections. We will also have a part to play in such momentous state events by preserving the official record of the occasion – the coronation roll – which in due course will be added to the long line of these historic documents we hold, stretching back to Edward II's coronation in 1308 (C 57). We also produced a special episode of our podcast, 'On the Record', and Key Stage 2 workshops in partnership with Westminster Abbey. We were delighted to be able to draw on our records to mark 75 years since two pivotal events in the history of the UK, too: the arrival of migrants from the Caribbean on the *Empire Windrush* and the founding of the National Health Service (NHS). To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the creation of the NHS, we launched an online portal to spotlight health service records both in our collections and around the archives sector. We made key documents about the birth of this historic public service available for people to explore – such as the Beveridge Report – which show how the service was set up. Thanks to support from our Friends, we also ran a project celebrating the NHS through visual images of the service over time, called 'More than a Uniform', in collaboration with the Anstee Bridge organisation. Read more about our work

to commemorate Windrush 75 in our case study on page 42.

- Our education programme saw another lively year of engagement, with over 24,000 school students getting involved in our workshops—up 26% on last year. More than 230 schools signed up for our new online 'Archives Live' sessions, meaning that overall nearly 43,000 students explored our records in 2023-24. A key strand of our strategic aim to create value through connection has been to rebuild opportunities for on site learning and the past year showed that our work has been paying off. In person sessions for 2023-24 were more than double the previous year and 30% of schools were joining us for the first time. We are always trying to expand our audiences and consistently deliver sessions to schools outside London and the South-East (47%), those with above average ethnic minority backgrounds (26%), those with an above average take-up of free school meals (31%) and state schools (82%). For older students, we once again ran our Postgraduate Archival Skills Training workshops, which this year included a new workshop on researching diverse histories. Finally, we also delivered new sessions to PGCE students and people undertaking Continuing Professional Development, to help build confidence when teaching with original documents.
- Thanks to the fundraising efforts of The National Archives Trust, we were delighted to be able to open our new Clore Learning Centre in Summer 2023, which has been generously supported by the Clore Duffield

Foundation. The Centre provides us with a broadcast studio and two production studios, enabling us to reach pupils virtually, wherever they are. We are the first archive in the UK to receive support from Clore for a dedicated centre and are excited to see how the new facilities will enhance our education work. Our new studio allows us to explore iconic documents up close and broadcast them online in all their glory via our new 'Archives Live' series, which kicked off with commemorations for the 75th anniversary of the arrival of the *Empire Windrush* (read more in our case study on [page 42](#)). We are grateful to the Clore Duffield Foundation and The National Archives Trust for contributing towards these state-of-the-art facilities, which will help us nurture new audiences both online and on site.

- We are grateful as ever to the Friends of The National Archives for the support they give to our work. Over the past year, they have funded various projects, including facilitating Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) students to explore our Victorian Board of Trade records ([BT 45](#)) in conjunction with our exhibition, *Spirit of Invention*. The Friends Volunteers also contributed cataloguing work for our recent exhibition, *Great Escapes: Remarkable Second World War Captives*, compiling a card index of internees in Hong Kong and Malaya during the Second World War ([CO 1070](#)). Thanks to the Friends' continued support, we can facilitate projects that strengthen our connections with people

and organisations who may not ordinarily encounter our records.

- Our thanks also go to our indefatigable volunteers, who offer their time to the benefit of everyone who explores our collections. Their efforts during 2023-24 have enhanced research that was brought together in a book on our records called *In Their Own Write: Contesting the New Poor Law, 1834–1900*, co-authored by one of our records specialists. The book won both the 2023 American Historical Association's Morris D. Forkosch Prize and North American Victorian Studies Association's prize, two major international research awards. Volunteers also contributed towards catalogues for the Duchess of Norfolk's Deeds ([C 115](#)), the 1851 Ecclesiastical Census ([HO 129](#)) and Second World War Civil Defence Awards ([T 336](#)). Read more about our cataloguing projects in our [Catalogue Week](#) summary.

CASE STUDY: Windrush 75

On 22 June 2023, we marked 75 years since the arrival of HMT *Empire Windrush* to Britain. The *Windrush* brought passengers from the Caribbean to Tilbury Docks in Essex, most of whom went on to start a new life in the UK following the 1948 Nationality Act, which enshrined in law for the first time the right of people living in British territories overseas to live and work in Britain permanently. Many were seeking work in the NHS or transport service; others had served in the armed forces during the war and wanted to re-enlist. Individuals arriving in Britain often faced

hardships, though. Rationing and shortages were ongoing and migrants could be treated unfairly as they tried to find housing or work. Yet, while discrimination was common, many built strong communities sustained by culture and traditions. Undoubtedly, the Windrush generation has had a lasting impact on Britain and played a vital part in shaping our society. While there were other ships making similar journeys during this period – read more in our [blog](#) – it is the *Windrush* that has become a symbol for this pivotal moment in British history.

We have the privilege of holding the *Windrush's* [passenger list](#) (BT 26), one of the most iconic documents in our collection. The list shows basic information such as names, ages, occupations, onward addresses and last country of residence, allowing us to also assess patterns of migration in the post-war period, particularly from British colonies and Commonwealth countries. We also hold many other records relevant to the story of mid-century migration to Britain. Photographs of ships that carried migrants ([ADM 176/999](#)), documents from the Assistance Board that was created to help migrants find work ([AST 21/8](#)) and correspondence from the Colonial Office ([CO 876/88](#)) all help us build a picture of what life was like both in the Caribbean and later once people had settled in Britain. One of our main aims for the anniversary was to bring to life the documents we hold via new media and through the [interactive maps](#) we developed of people's onward journeys within Britain, so that we can now delve deeper into individual stories of migration.

To mark Windrush 75, we put together new resources and a series of events culminating in two key celebrations: one in person at Tilbury Dock and one online for students to join from their classrooms. At Tilbury Dock, we shared art, dance, food, music and stories with local groups to celebrate the impact of the Windrush generation and their descendants. As part of our new 'Archives Live' series, we welcomed to Kew Baroness Floella Benjamin, who came to Britain from Trinidad with her family in 1960, to explore our records live with us. This was the first live event in our new Clore Learning Centre and it enabled us to reach nearly 15,500 students, showcasing the power of our records to a new generation with Baroness Floella's help. We also worked with the Black, African and Asian Therapy Network to curate a collection of reflections, testimonies and community memories online and theatre company Tamasha developed a new play with input from communities in London and Bristol: 'A story told three times and still unfinished'.

Our thanks go to all the staff and partners who contributed towards marking this important anniversary. The project team worked hard not only running events, but also produced a podcast episode and blogs for the occasion, commissioned a new artwork for our site at Kew by Ngadi Smart and created new schools resources—including the prize-winning video 'Remembering Windrush'.² We hope that all these resources will help illuminate the incredible

2 'Remembering Windrush' won a Bronze Prize at the 2023 Lovie Awards, which recognise excellence in culture, technology and business in the digital sphere.

stories of the Windrush generation for anyone looking to find out more about this historic moment; explore them all via our [Windrush 75 portal](#).

Research

- Our collections are the cornerstone of all our activity. From the day-to-day government administration to decrees that shaped the lives of citizens for centuries to come, the records we hold tell many kinds of stories in many different forms. As we forge ahead with our four-year business plan, our research is focused on improving access to our collections through new technologies, opportunities and understanding. To support this, one of our strategic priorities for 2023-24 was to develop a research vision to guide our activities, ready for launch in summer 2024. This vision defines our work into areas of research interest, to support our ambition over the next few years to build the value of our collection. With colleagues in government, we have been working closely on live issues such as AI, producing new guidance for using the technology to review and select records. In May, we also delivered an ‘Intro to AI for GLAM’ event with the British Library and the Smithsonian. Read more about our work on AI in our case study on [page 32](#).
- It has been a successful year for our grant portfolio, with our overall income from grants growing to over £1,000,000.³ This vital funding signifies a 60% increase from the previous year and has supported research,

3 See [page 228](#) in accounts.

digitisation, public engagement, equipment and capital infrastructure. This year, we have successfully won:

- £380,000 from Innovate UK to enrich our legal data for use with AI (read more about in our case study on [page 32](#)).
- Around £350,000, the first instalment for a project to digitise the [National Farm Survey](#) funded by the Lund Trust. Over four years, we will receive around £2m to enhance access to this uniquely comprehensive view of land use from the 1940s, which is one of our most popular record series.
- £183,000 from the Government of Ireland for another phase of the [Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland](#) project.
- £132,000 from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology for various projects, including a new network of environmental monitoring sensors in our repositories.
- £100,000 from the Government Office for Tech Transfer to develop commercial uses for our Legal Document Toolkit.
- Research enables us to realise the value held within our collections, spurring on the evolution of our techniques, skills and understanding. Over the past year, we have been running research projects including:
 - Vital conservation on the [Great Cowcher Book of the Duchy of Lancaster](#), an illuminated survey of English and Welsh landholding and lordship commissioned

by King Henry IV in 1399. We have digitised the first volume and consolidated flaking paint from the illuminations, developing along the way our expertise in imaging these breathtakingly intricate medieval documents.

- Adaptations of ‘sniffer’ methods of detecting explosives and illicit substances for use with low-level insecticides that historically have been used to preserve documents, via a Collaborative Doctoral Partnership with the Cranfield Institute.
- Colour analysis of the Kellett sledge flag from the 1852 Arctic Expedition in collaboration with the National Museum of the Royal Navy. The flag will eventually go on display at the museum’s locations in Hartlepool, Portsmouth and Belfast.
- ‘Sensory and Materiality’, a workshop that brought together external specialists for the first time to discuss this topic from the fields of conservation, outreach, heritage science, inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) education and exhibition curation. The event explored how the senses can be used to facilitate access to, engagement with and understanding of materiality within archival collections.
- Preparations for creating a digital version of a section of an important record in our collection from the reign of Henry VIII, the Valor Ecclesiasticus ([E 344](#)): an audit of property, people and profits across England, Wales and English-controlled Ireland on the eve of the

Reformation. We are working with Exeter University to make the section on Chertsey Abbey in Surrey more user-friendly, so that people can more easily explore this store of rich regional information.

- Staff research, funded by our internal Strategic Research Fund, on using AI for selecting records for preservation, sensory experiences in the archive and histories of thalidomide (a drug licensed to pregnant women in the UK in the 1950s and 60s and subsequently discovered to cause severe birth defects).
- PhD studentships funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership: 'A Minority at Law: Jews and the Courts in Medieval England, c.1216-1290' with Queen Mary University of London; 'Every record tells a story: understanding and supporting user engagement with potentially sensitive family history records' with King's College London; 'Understanding the Past, Securing the Future: Advanced techniques for the detection of chemical hazards in Archive Repositories through Heritage Science' with Cranfield University; and 'Law & Equity in Flux: The Court of Chancery during the Civil War & Interregnum, 1640-1660' with University College London.
- It was another year of lively discussion and debate at our academic and archives sector events. A major event in the calendar for galleries, libraries, archives, museums and academia is the annual Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities (DCDC) conference, which we co-organise with Jisc and the British Library. The

2023 conference in July was the first hybrid event in the series and brought together international delegates from across these sectors to consider 'Radical reimagining: Interplays of the physical and virtual'. Over 400 delegates attended our flagship event. Our Annual Digital Lecture in December picked up similar themes, this year exploring 'Memory Making in a Digital Age' with guest speakers Identity 2.0, a creative studio working at the intersection of digital rights, technology and identity. We also released an Annual Digital Lecture audio series for the first time. Finally, in March 2024, our History and Archives in Practice conference proved a success, selling out as it went on-the-road for the first time to Cardiff. Co-organised with Cardiff University, the Institute of Historical Research and the Royal Historical Society, this year's theme was 'Collecting history, historical collections and community voices'.

- We have made rapid progress on the Our Heritage, Our Stories research project, led by the University of Glasgow with the University of Manchester and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. The project is part of the 'Towards a National Collection' programme and will facilitate users to combine community-generated digital content with traditional archival collections. We have been leading on the infrastructure development, using cutting-edge approaches to develop scalable linking and discoverability across digital content held in different locations. To help users explore this content, we have been developing a variety of visualisations for the

website, to complement the search features. Our work on the project is due to be completed in September 2024.

- A key output of our inclusion work is our cross-sector partnership with the Black Cultural Archives, the Friends of Huntley Archives at London Metropolitan Archives and the George Padmore Institute to create a Black History Digital Portal. This innovative research project is developing an online portal to bring archival records relating to UK Black History into dialogue with their historical contexts. In 2023-24, a prototype portal was successfully created and the third phase – user testing – will take place in the next financial year. Once completed, the portal will generate opportunities for students, teachers and researchers to make new connections between these archival records and other kinds of contextual material.

Leading the archives sector

- It has been another challenging year for the archives sector, with financial pressures impacting the allocation of resources. 2023-24 was the final year for local authority services to qualify for financial support to transition to the 20-year rule via the New Burdens scheme (read more about the transition on [page 21](#) and funding recipients are listed on [page 284](#)). The transition is not yet complete, but, despite a difficult external landscape, local authority places of deposit successfully accessioned 1,041 linear metres of public records during the year. Colleagues across the sector also added more than 1,000 collections to our catalogue, Discovery, which functions as a useful starting point for online searches. In 2023-24, eight

archives achieved professional accreditation for the first time through the Archive Service Accreditation scheme⁴, including the first ever digital-only archive, the Archaeology Data Service.

- We recently marked ten years as the government's policy lead for archives in England. As such, we have been reflecting upon our leadership role, current challenges and developments, as well as the future vision for the sector. In July, following an independent survey, we published a leadership statement reaffirming our commitment to the archives sector. In this statement, we identified three areas for development: advocacy, partnership working and embedding sector leadership within our organisation. As we move into our second decade as sector lead, we have also renewed our relationship with sector partners, signing a new collaboration agreement with the Archives & Records Association (ARA), as well as renewing our Memorandum of Understanding with Arts Council England. A review is also underway of the Archive Service Accreditation scheme, which celebrated ten years in 2023.
- Our new leadership statement prepares the ground for our refresh of the vision for the archives sector,

4 The Archive Service Accreditation scheme is supported by a partnership across the four nations, including the Archives and Records Association (UK), Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives, The National Archives and the Welsh Government through its Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales division.

Archives Unlocked, which we will begin in 2024.

Originally launched in 2017, Archives Unlocked set out an action plan to unlock the potential in archives by developing digital capacity in the sector, building resilience, and demonstrating the impact of archives by developing and expanding audiences. While these priorities remain current, it is the right time to consider our progress over the past ten years and clarify how we achieve the vision going forward. With input from our partners and sector professionals, we will be working to crystallise a strategic vision that will guide archives into the next decade.

- Another important strand of our sector review has been ensuring that our strategic thinking is informed by up-to-date information. During 2023-24, we have been gathering data from across the sector, in order to align our plans with current challenges and concerns. Our annual Accessions to Repositories Survey reports on manuscript accessions throughout the British Isles, encompassing more than 14,500 collections. In Autumn 2023, we also captured information on public engagement activity across 137 services across England. The results of this survey allow us to identify needs for funding and development, as well as helping to shape our training programmes. In January 2024, we conducted a benchmarking exercise of 140 local authority archives in England and Wales. Finally, we invited all archive-holding organisations in England, such as libraries, museums, businesses and charities, to take part in the first sector-wide annual survey, generating over 400 responses.

All this data enhances our understanding of individual archives and the sector as a whole, thus helping us to envision what our leadership work needs to achieve going forwards.

- In June 2023, we launched our new grant funding offer for the archives sector. We now offer seven grant programmes – covering risk and resilience, access to the record and skills, innovation and engagement – and have reviewed and refreshed our monitoring and evaluation framework. In 2023-24, we awarded 58 grants to the archives sector worth a total of over £650,000, of which around over 73% was allocated to areas outside of London and the South East. Competition for our grant scheme was fierce: we received over 250 applications this year. Archives Revealed, our flagship cataloguing and scoping programme, delivered in partnership with the Wolfson Foundation and the Pilgrim Trust, awarded £430,000 in funding to 27 institutions, so that they can best serve their local communities as sources of information and enrichment.
- We offer a wide range of training and events for archive professionals. Over 2023-24, we ran 15 training courses and 11 events on current issues for the sector, including understanding audiences, bid writing, digitally literate leadership and succession planning. Like other sectors, archives are working to meet the challenges posed by the pace of change in digital technologies and, as sector lead, we want to help forge a pathway through these challenges. In response, in June 2023, we launched our

refreshed strategy for digital capacity building, Our Digital Century, which will run until 2026. As we implement this strategy with colleagues in the archives sector, we have been developing our training materials, adding new modules to the ‘Novice to Know-How’ programme we run with partners in the Digital Preservation Coalition. Our events proved popular once again, with many fully booked:

- Our five online ‘Conservation Knowledge Exchange’ sessions presented the latest research in managing the perception of damage, conservation for imaging, storage and its environmental management, mould and hazardous materials and conservation documentation.
- Our ‘Peer Mentoring Programme’ supported eight mentees to work on a dedicated digital project with support from a digital expert either at The National Archives or elsewhere in the sector.
- More than 1,100 learners undertook our ‘Novice to Know-How’ digital preservation training.
- We ran a series of workshops for archive professionals in preparation for the new Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship scheme (read more in our case study on page 55).
- We also offer advice on archival collections beyond the public record, providing guidance to government, the sector and grant funders on all aspects of archives as cultural property. Over the past year, we have been contributing to the safeguarding of vulnerable archive

collections, working with the Crisis Management Team (CMT) to secure important business archives of national significance facing the risk of dispersal, disposal or becoming inaccessible. We have also delivered our Charity Archives Development Plan for the second year. So far, we have seen successful outputs, including developing a crisis management team for charity archives at risk and hosting a six-month Collaborative Doctoral Partnership placement funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. In our role as lead for the sector, this work ensures that we remain up to speed with current issues.

CASE STUDY: Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship

One of the biggest success stories of our year was the launch in October 2023 of the Level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship. As the first technical training route to becoming a qualified archivist, the scheme is a major step towards making our profession a welcoming place for anyone, whatever their background, and more representative of the communities we serve. Apprentices are able to earn while they learn, spending 80% of the time in on-the-job training at an archive and 20% in formal training with an external provider. This combination of on- and off-the-job experience makes apprentices highly employable. We are proud to have been involved in setting up the scheme, which is a major collaboration with colleagues across the sector, the Archives and Records Association, assessment organisation CILIP Pathways and

training provider Westminster Adult Education Service. The programme has been several years in the making and is a key part of our vision for the archives sector. Our vision of an inclusive archive is also one that works with others to help them be more inclusive, too. The Level 7 apprenticeship is a tangible step towards realising that vision.

Apprentices are employed to learn how to carry out all the day-to-day duties of an archivist. There is no set on-the-job syllabus, because each archive that employs an apprentice will assess what it needs to help it run. This kind of on-the-job experience is invaluable preparation for a career in archives, aids productivity for current and future employers by modelling the specific knowledge and skills needed and, ultimately, broadens the talent pool for the whole profession. Apprentices spend three years in training, then undertake a six-month assessment period. After that, they are qualified to begin working as an archivist. Apprentices are assessed against a standard that has been developed by a group of expert representatives from across the sector.

In 2023, 21 apprentices formed the first cohort – read about their experiences on our website. We look forward to seeing the apprentices flourish in their new profession.

International collaboration

- In June 2023, we launched a refreshed plan for our international activity, *Archives for Everywhere*. Our work with archives in other parts of the world has been going from strength to strength in recent years and

we are delighted to be part of an international archival community that is increasingly working across borders to solve problems. Through our new strategic plan, we outline the importance of our globally significant collection that has the power to bring to the fore underrepresented voices and stories, foster new relationships, inspire new methods of conservation, and generate social and economic value. This new plan lays out how we will make these things happen through three areas of focus: access, practice and value. Launching *Archives for Everywhere* was one of our strategic priorities for the year and demonstrates our commitment to realising our global potential.

- In October 2023, our former CEO and Keeper, Dr Jeff James CBE, came to the end of his tenure as President of the Forum of National Archivists (FAN). After six years at the helm of FAN and ten years on the Executive Board of the International Council on Archives (ICA), an enormous amount has been achieved with colleagues around the globe. The international community has been reinvigorated and annual meetings have been revived, leading to more opportunities to explore issues and collaborations together. From emerging technologies to shared documentary heritage, there are big questions facing archives around the world and we will remain an active part of our community through our continuing membership of ICA expert groups and FAN. As the Presidency of FAN was handed over at the ICA Congress in Abu Dhabi in October, we discussed ideas with colleagues from many countries, including Ukraine,

the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Morocco, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, the Republic of Cameroon, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Singapore, Australia and Iceland. Our approach to public engagement and education proved particularly inspiring to congress audiences and we are keen to open up new avenues in our international work reflecting the full breadth of our activity. More recently, we hosted the first session of a new Virtual Seminar Series organised by FAN and the New Professional Programme, exploring the use and impact of technology in archival practice.

- Our international partnerships have been blossoming in recent years. Work continues on our [Prize Papers](#) project, run with the University of Oldenburg in Germany, funded by the Göttingen Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Lower Saxony. In 2023, we worked with the Spanish Embassy on the online launch of the Spanish Prize Papers and, in early 2024, we made an exciting discovery in a package: a [Faroese sweater](#) from 1807, which was still in pristine condition after 200 years. Read about other intriguing artefacts on the [project webpages](#). Also in February, we signed an Executive Programme agreement with the Ministry of Culture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to develop a collaborative programme that will evolve over the next five years. Initially, we will support the development of digitisation capability in the capital city of Riyadh, as well as working in this region and across the country to evolve research aims, structures and methodologies. We are always keen to

exchange expertise with international colleagues and look forward to seeing this partnership bear fruit.

- We have seen positive progress with the Migrated Archives (FCO 141). In July 2023, we sent a batch of digitised historical files relating to the territory of Swaziland to the High Commission of the Kingdom of Eswatini. Files have also been digitised relating to the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of the Gambia, Nigeria, the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Republic of Botswana. As different countries have different needs and capabilities, we are working closely with colleagues in these countries to determine how we can most usefully share these images. This project is a practical demonstration of our strategic focus on access and, as we keep working on the Migrated Archives over the next few years, collaboration continues to be at the heart of our approach.
- Our collections have made appearances at national and international events over 2023-24. In June last year, we displayed the 1373 Treaty of Perpetual Alliance between England and Portugal (E 30/275) for King Charles III and the President of Portugal to mark the 650th anniversary of this treaty, the oldest one continuously in effect anywhere in the world. In November, the notebook in which Alan Turing calculated the mathematical theory of the Enigma machine (HW 25/37) was featured at the Prime Minister's AI summit at Bletchley Park. Also in November, the Anglo-Korean Treaty (FO 1080/189 and FO 93/26/2) was displayed at 10 Downing Street as

part of a state visit by the President of the Republic of South Korea, Yoon Suk Yeol. Most recently, in March, we brought the series of agreements between the United Kingdom and the French Republic collectively known as the Entente Cordiale ([FO 93/33/201](#)) to the Institut Français in London, to mark the 120th anniversary of their signing. When our records come into contact with people and histories from around the world at these kinds of events, they offer powerful opportunities to develop our mutual understanding.

Our organisation

- Despite many aspects of work returning to a more stable footing since the COVID-19 pandemic, the past year has presented significant challenges for our organisation. We have been operating within an environment of uncertainty and, due to unforecast pressures such as pay inflation and one-off payments to staff during the year, it was necessary to re-prioritise some activities and regulate recruitment more tightly. In particular, services in our digital directorate were disproportionately affected, with ongoing challenges with recruitment compounded by overall constraints on resources. To ensure that we were utilising our resources most efficiently through such challenges, we reviewed our internal processes and rearranged some of our teams. We created a leaner executive team with broader portfolios, meaning that our research teams now sit alongside our commercial activity, to the benefit of both these increasingly symbiotic workstreams. Our work leading the archives sector is

now steered by our Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership. During the year, we also reshaped our People, Inclusion and Change directorate so that it is best placed to further our ambitions to deliver organisational change.

- It has been another year of transition for our staff. As we have seen a return to on site events and in person interactions, we have been supporting some teams move towards a minimum 60% face-to-face working pattern, alongside our fully site-based teams. We have also continued to embed our behaviour framework and, in March 2024, we agreed our new strategic plan for our people, which will help us to identify, develop, attract and retain the capabilities and skills needed to ensure that we can deliver our goals. Our Civil Service staff engagement survey score dropped slightly in 2023 to 67% (from 69% the previous year), so we will work during 2024-25 to identify areas for improvement and review ways to address any concerns raised. Moving forward with our strategic plan in place, we will continue to work on our offer as an employer and champion positive changes for our workforce.
- We are always looking for ways to work more efficiently and improve our processes. In July 2023, we introduced a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Workday, integrating Finance and HR data and replacing several legacy systems. The new system will deliver increased automation, meaning better management reporting, faster decision making and more consistent,

real-time data on our finances and our people. The system is an essential tool in our ongoing efforts to enhance performance management across the organisation, alongside work to reassess our performance metrics and the products and services we offer (read more about our in-year performance on [page 71](#)).

As of January 2024, we have added another layer of scrutiny for our performance via our newly-established Finance and Performance Committee, which reports to our Board (read more about our governance structures on [page 108](#)).

- Our procurement and contract management teams help us to ensure that our commercial partnerships realise best value for money. Over the past year, we have produced tenders for two major procurement projects: *The Gazette* (the official newspaper of record) and a new Total Facilities Management (TFM) contract, which were published in November 2023 and April 2024 respectively. Over the coming year, the team will focus on preparing our systems and processes for new public procurement regulations coming into effect in Autumn 2024.
- We remain ever vigilant to threats to both the physical and digital security of our collections. In response to increased risk in the online sphere during the past year, we have been conducting an ongoing review of our approach to IT security in conjunction with external consultants. To ensure that we continue to meet the relevant requirements for the international standard for information security, ISO27001, we undertook a

surveillance audit by a certification body accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service. To bolster our IT systems, we have also been decommissioning legacy operating system servers and moving catalogue infrastructure off our legacy platform. Our new subscription cloud service, which has an always-on VPN feature, ensures greater protection for remote working. Looking forward to the next financial year, our aim is to work towards attaining GovAssure accreditation, the new cyber security assurance approach for government.

- Another focus for our evolution as an organisation over the past year has been sustainability. We have been assessing our energy management system and technical sustainability management and, thanks to the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology, we received £132,000 in funding to upgrade our environmental monitoring system. Guided by our collection care team, we have also been reviewing how our repositories are managed and have created a thermographic survey of our entire estate, to support our carbon reduction targets. Another major project has been preparing to replace the windows of our oldest repositories, which were built in 1977. Once these are completed in Spring 2025, we expect to see significant improvements in energy efficiency while maintaining optimum conditions for preserving our collections.
- It has also been a year of assessing and reflecting on our diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work. As we continue on the path towards 'Becoming the Inclusive Archive', we

spent 2023-24 assessing where our current strengths and expertise lie and planning how we can best focus existing capabilities. In 2023, we launched a commemorative programme of events tied to milestones through the calendar year, to support staff to learn about aspects of our collections they may not have encountered before. A highlight was our Black History Month event, where we were honoured to welcome James Barnor, Ghana's first photojournalist and influential photographer, discussing his experiences of cultural and political change as well as our own inclusion activity. We also worked alongside the Cabinet Office's Inclusion team, contributing to their consultation to enhance bullying, harassment and discrimination policies and to the government's DEI spending review. As our inclusion work continues, we will be designing an action plan for our DEI activity to align with our strategic vision for our people, to proactively support all who work at The National Archives to realise their own potential and the potential our collections hold to reveal powerful stories, both old and new.

1.2 Performance analysis

The Public Sector Budgeting Framework

The budgeting system is designed to support the government's public spending. Estimates are the mechanism by which Parliament authorises departmental spending and are presented using the public sector budgeting framework. Estimates require Parliament to vote limits for different budget categories of spending. For The National Archives, the categories are:

Net Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL)
Net Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL)
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)

The RDEL budget is further split into Programme, which covers expenditure on front line services, and Administration, which covers all other expenditure not included in Programme.

Departments are required to report outturn against Estimate (see Statement of Parliamentary Supply statements). A breach of any of the budget limits would result in an Excess Vote.

A summary of The National Archives' outturn in all categories compared with 2023-24 is shown in the table below.

Outturn	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
RDEL Income	(15,224)	(14,346)	(12,678)	(10,981)	(13,484)
RDEL Expenditure	63,921	60,522	52,918	47,479	49,481
RDEL Total	48,697	46,176	40,240	36,498	35,997
CDEL	3,283	5,296	6,383	3,524	2,836
AME	(24)	(5)	(142)	-	(10)
Total Expenditure	51,956	51,467	46,481	40,022	38,823

The Common Core tables detailing financial expenditure for the current Comprehensive Spending Review can be found on The National Archives website under the Appendices⁵.

Financial management commentary

Parliamentary support – Income and expenditure

The National Archives is largely funded through supply voted by Parliament. We are also partially funded by income generated through fees and charges, our commercial activities, and grants. We received additional funding of £1.8 million from HM Treasury this financial year to support our work to apply the legislative effects of the Retained EU Law Revocation and Reform Act 2023.

⁵ nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/plans-policies-performance-and-projects/our-performance

Budget	Outturn £ million	Estimate £ million	Variance £ million
Non-ringfenced RDEL	41.3	41.8	0.5
Depreciation	7.4	7.8	0.4
RDEL	48.7	49.6	0.9
Capital	3.3	3.6	0.3
Total DEL Outturn	52.0	53.2	1.2

Our net DEL out-turn was £52.0 million (2022-23: £51.5 million) compared to the HM Treasury net allocation of £53.2 million: a £1.2 million or 2% variance.

Our resource (RDEL) outturn for 2023-24 was £48.7 million compared to a budget of £49.6 million. The variance of £0.9 million (1.8%) was in part driven by an underspend of £0.4 million in our ring-fenced depreciation budget due to some assets under construction not being complete at year-end and thus not yet depreciable. However, our non-ringfenced RDEL budget, our largest budget which accounts for our day-to-day operational expenditure was within £0.5 million (1%) of our budget. This underspend was driven by some delays in recruitment and lower external storage costs in the final quarter of the year.

Our capital outturn was £3.3 million against a budget of £3.6 million. The underspend of £0.3 million was largely due to an underspend against a large project to upgrade infrastructure on our estate. This was in part due to savings made against budgeted costs and some slippage of costs into the next financial year.

Total operating expenditure

Total Operating Expenditure for delivering our remit as the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales, was £63.9 million (2022-23: £60.5 million).

Staff costs amounted to £32.7 million (2022-23: 29.2 million). The increase in staff costs was largely driven by the staff pay-rise of 4.5% (up to 5% for the lowest paid) and the one-off payment made to civil servants in 2023-24. In addition, spend on agency staff and contingent labour was higher this year due to difficulties in recruiting to key roles. The average full time equivalent number of staff employed in 2023-24 was 569 (2022-23: 591).

Operating Expenditure, excluding staff costs, depreciation, provisions and audit charges, amounted to £23.8 million (2022-23: £24.2 million). This decrease was due to a reduction in contracted services relating to our digital projects and the transfer of MoD service records to enable us to manage increased pay costs.

Total operating income

Total Operating Income for the financial year was £15.2 million (2022-23: £14.3 million). The rise was driven by increased income from sales of *The Gazette*, licensing resales, higher storage income and increased charges for services delivered to other government departments.

Total capital expenditure

Total Capital Expenditure was £3.3 million (2022-23: £5.3 million), of this £1.9 million funded our continued investment in digital services. This included continued development on:

- Transfer Digital Records (TDR), The National Archives' new digital transfer service that helps bodies subject to the Public Record Act upload, prepare and transfer their selected digital public records for permanent preservation.
- Project ETNA, the multi-year redevelopment of The National Archives' website and catalogue.

We also invested £1.2 million in our estate infrastructure. This included replacement of high voltage transformers on our site and starting work on replacing the repository windows in the older section of our building.

Financial position

Assets and liabilities are shown in the Statement of Financial Position on [page 206](#).

The National Archives adopted the new leases accounting standard IFRS 16 from 1 April 2022. This standard requires that all leases which meet the recognition criteria be recognised as an asset on the statement of financial position, with a corresponding lease liability. Under this standard, our lease for storage space is recognised as a right to use asset and at 31 March 2024 was valued at £6.7 million, with a corresponding lease liability.

Total assets as at 31 March 2024 were £213.6 million (2023: £211.1 million). Property, Plant and Equipment, Right of Use Assets and Intangibles represented 96.5% of the asset value (2023: 96.6%). The increase of £2.5 million is largely due to:

- A £1.4 million increase in our intangible assets due to continued investment in our digital infrastructure.
- A £1.0 million increase in the value of our land and buildings due to wider market conditions
- A £1.0 million increase in our Property, Plant and Equipment largely due to the increase in the value of our land and buildings resulting from wider market conditions.

Performance against our business priorities

Building the value of our collection: we will grow the collection, its accessibility and utility.

How we were to achieve this	Status at end 2023-24
We will continue to develop and expand the Transfer Digital Records (TDR) service.	Partially completed – Incomplete features for managing metadata to improve the ability of TDR to handle large transfers. Scheduled for completion early in 2024-25.
We will deliver our part of the Government's programme to review, revoke or reform retained EU law.	Year 1 Completed
We will have completed the first transfer of material from the Parliamentary Archives collection to Kew.	Completed
We will continue to transfer service personnel records in 2023-24 as part of the multi-year Ministry of Defence transfer programme.	Completed

Creating value through connection: we will open up bigger and better opportunities to connect with the collection for everyone, everywhere.

How we were to achieve this	Status at end 2023-24
We will grow a bigger and more diverse audience (including schools) at Kew and across the nation.	Completed
We will continue to deliver upgrades to our website to better facilitate access to our records.	Partially completed – Advanced search features within the new catalogue search not yet matching or surpassing the existing Discovery experience.
We will launch our new International Strategy to look at further opportunities to work together with archives around the world, to advance understanding of our collections.	Completed
We will continue to embed our new approach to research.	Partially completed – The completed research vision and roadmap, our operational plan for 2024-27, was discussed with our Board in June 2024. We will publish that vision and start building new projects and partnerships against its key priorities in 2024-25.

Sustaining value through custodianship: we will invest in the skills, capability and infrastructure needed to support our mission over the long term.

How we were to achieve this	Status at end 2023-24
We will continue to develop our infrastructure capability (including a second, regional location) to safely process, store and present records to the public.	Completed
We will launch and roll out our refreshed leadership offer to the archives sector.	Completed

Performance against our input and impact indicators

Our input and impact indicators demonstrate our overall performance as an organisation and our commitment to quality, as well as illustrating evidence of the effectiveness of the priorities set out in our business plan. They are presented as year-on-year comparisons so that we can track our progress within any given year.

To ensure that we can be held accountable as we move forward in delivering our strategic priorities, underpinned by the UK Government's Transparency agenda, we also publish a number of discretionary (non-financial) indicators on our website, which include staff engagement and diversity.

Performance against our input indicators

Input indicator	2023-24 Outcome	2022-23 Outcome
Original records delivered to on site users	600,191	474,643
Electronic records delivered to online users	339,800,000	350,000,000
Staff diversity (average):		
Women (overall)	51.5%	53.4%
Women (top management)	50.8%	52.7%
Ethnic minorities	18.2%	16.0%
Disabled	8.9%	6.0%

Input indicator	2023-24 Outcome	2022-23 Outcome
Staff engagement (as reported by the Civil Service People Survey)	67%	69%
Time taken to deliver original records to on site users	92.6% of on demand orders delivered within an hour	88.8% of on demand orders were delivered within an hour
Time taken to respond to Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulation requests	Our Freedom of Information (FOI) performance figures are reported on an annual basis as part of the FOI statistics published by Cabinet Office. The performance rate figure for the calendar year 2023 is 58%. ⁶	Our Freedom of Information (FOI) performance figures are reported on an annual basis as part of the FOI statistics published by Cabinet Office. The performance rate figure for the calendar year 2022 is 62%.
Total departmental spend	£48.7 million	£46.2 million
Staff sickness absence	7.4 days per FTE (average)	6.1 days per FTE (average)
Outstanding effects on legislation.gov.uk	107,094 amendments applied to legislation.gov.uk	103,993 amendments applied to legislation.gov.uk

⁶ In February 2021, the Ministry of Defence began the transfer of historic service personnel records to The National Archives. This has resulted in a significant increase in the volume of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received year on year, which has impacted our timeliness compliance. For more information, please see [page 23](#) and the Cabinet Office 'Freedom of Information statistics: annual 2023 bulletin': gov.uk/government/statistics/freedom-of-information-statistics-annual-2023/freedom-of-information-statistics-annual-2023-bulletin.

Input indicator	2023-24 Outcome	2022-23 Outcome
Number of physical records accessioned⁷	469,694 pieces 3,168 metres	305,654 pieces 3,191 metres

⁷ These figures relate to accessions only and do not include special transfer projects such as the Ministry of Defence service personnel records. There is no direct correlation between the number of records accessioned and the space required to hold them because records can vary enormously in size, from around 0.5mm for a single sheet to upwards of 10cm if a record is housed in multiple boxes. In 2022-23, the MoD service personnel records accounted for 80% of total accessions but only 40% of the space used.

Performance against our impact indicators

Impact indicator	Outcome 2023-24	Outcome 2022-23
Web archiving⁸	Web archive services – sessions: 1,367,983	Web archive services – sessions: 897,342 ⁹
	Web archive services – users: 865,008	Web archive services – users: 520,527
Customer satisfaction:		
On site users	94%	96%
Online users	79% ¹⁰	83%
legislation.gov.uk users	66%	71%

⁸ Before 2022-23, this indicator was referred to as ‘Web continuity’.

⁹ Since 2021-22, what we previously referred to as UK Government Web Archive ‘visits’ have been termed ‘sessions’ and what was formerly ‘visitors’ is now termed ‘users’ to be consistent and clear with respect to our analytics data, which now uses Google Analytics. The effect of this is to reduce the headline figure in comparison to server log analysis, which was our previous method. Furthermore, we are now reporting usage metrics for two web archive services: the UK Government Web Archive nationalarchives.gov.uk/webarchive/ and the European Union Exit Web Archive webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/eu-exit/.

¹⁰ As of 2022-23, we began to calculate our online customer satisfaction rating (% of people saying they were either satisfied or extremely satisfied) from responses to our free digital downloads and Discovery catalogue services, in addition to our Book a reading room service. Including more surveys allows for greater understanding of our overall online performance.

Impact indicator	Outcome 2023-24	Outcome 2022-23
Records and information management services used across government	<p data-bbox="730 320 1023 465">Our Information Management Assessment Programme was renewed to provide government bodies with practical tools to evaluate their information management practices, risks and compliance with the S46 Code of Practice. This year, we delivered reports to ten government departments. We continue to develop the programme with the aim to make it available to all public record bodies and to exploit it as a source of data for monitoring trends and challenges, particularly in digital record management in a continuously evolving technological landscape.</p>	<p data-bbox="1174 320 1485 510">A new version of the Information Management Assessment Programme was being piloted. 15 departments took part in elements of this pilot in 2022-23.</p>

Further details of how we measure our performance, our long-term strategic plans and our transparency reporting can be found on our website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/.

Environment and sustainability report

Overview

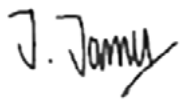
During 2023-24, The National Archives continued to work towards reducing the impact of our operations on the environment, further consolidating the progress we have made against the Greening Government Commitments 2021-25 (GGCs) and expanding the scope of our internal reporting to prepare for future requirements.

Despite the additional challenge introduced by a change in the baseline year to 2017-18, we continue to perform well against the majority of the GGCs. We achieved a 9% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions (tCO₂e) compared with the previous year and a 23% reduction in direct greenhouse gas emissions (tCO₂e). Energy efficiency measures have enabled us to maintain emissions from electricity consumption at 49% below the baseline year, despite many staff resuming greater face-to-face working during the reporting year. We continue to send no operational waste to landfill and introduced initiatives during 2023-24 to remove Consumer Single Use Plastics (CSUP), reduce food waste and promote reusing materials. Where we have identified risks that targets may not be achieved, we are taking steps to implement additional measures.

We continue to look beyond the targets of the 2021-2025 GGCs, ensuring that our activities are aligned to the government's emissions reduction goals of a 65% reduction by 2030 and a 78% reduction by 2035 (both compared to the 1990 baseline) and Net Zero by 2050. We do so in

the context of our core purpose as the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, requiring us to conserve the collection under carefully controlled conditions.

The report that follows presents further detail of our activities during the 2023-24 reporting year, our progress aligning with the GGCs, as well as outlining our plans for the next reporting year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. James". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr Jeff James CBE
Chief Executive and Keeper
24 July 2024

Environment and sustainability report

Introduction

This report was prepared in accordance with HM Treasury's Sustainability Reporting Guidance: 2023-24 and Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure (TCFD)-aligned disclosure application guidance - Phase 1 and Phase 2. The National Archives considers climate to be a principal risk and has therefore complied with the TCFD recommendations for disclosures around:

- Governance – recommended disclosures (a) and (b)
- Metrics and Targets – recommended disclosures (b), where available from existing reporting processes.

This is in line with the central government's TCFD-aligned disclosure implementation timetable for Phase 1. The National Archives plans to provide recommended disclosures for Risk Management and Strategy in future reporting periods, in line with the central government implementation timetable.

Further information on our sustainability work is available on our website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/transparency/energy-environment-and-sustainability/.

Our approach

Governance and reporting

Our key sustainability targets are summarised within our business plans and performance is reviewed at

various intervals throughout the reporting year. We are committed to meeting and, where possible, exceeding the Greening Government Commitments. Our Executive Team, Board and Audit and Risk Committee review our sustainability performance regularly, ensuring that progress is scrutinised and challenged where appropriate. During 2024-25, we will be reviewing the process by which we inform the Board about climate issues, incorporate those issues into strategic decision making and monitor progress, in line with the government's three-year roadmap towards TCFD-aligned reporting.

We actively work with other government departments in sharing best practice in sustainability, as well as benefitting in turn from guidance from various public and private sector bodies. We continue to be a member of the National Museums Directors Council (NMDC) to share best practice within the sector. This group has continued to focus upon carbon reduction journeys and increasing on-site biodiversity, as well as visitor engagement post-pandemic. This work will continue throughout the coming year and beyond.

During 2023-24, we assigned responsibility for sustainability and climate to our Head of Collection Care, who has established a Sustainability Working Group. This will be the vehicle for developing an Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) strategy and cascading it through the organisation. To begin this process, we hosted a workshop with The National Archives of the Netherlands (Nationaal Archief), to explore opportunities for sharing

best practice regarding setting meaningful and challenging targets for material environmental impacts.

Data accuracy

Quarterly reporting and accounting against the GGCs ensures data accuracy and we continue to seek opportunities to improve the scope and quality of our data reporting beyond the minimum requirements set out in the GGCs. There has been some adjustment to the way emissions are categorised in this year's report, to align with latest Sustainability Reporting Guidance issued by HM Treasury. To facilitate comparison, these changes have been applied to historic data where relevant. While they change the way emissions have been categorised, they do not have a material impact on the totality of emissions reported.

We utilise sustainability data accounting dashboards to improve data quality and create additional opportunities to enhance data accuracy:

- The relevant dashboards have been updated with the current emissions and Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) conversions factors.
- Data from the dashboards are populated directly from invoices where possible.
- Verification is carried out to check emissions values are correctly captured and reported.

Our environmental management system is built on sustainability and encourages continuous improvement.

Metrics and targets

As a non-ministerial government department, The National Archives reports against the Greening Government Commitments 2021-25 (GGCs) – a set of targets and outcomes that together help ensure that central government meets its vision for sustainability. These focus on Scope 1 (direct) and Scope 2 (indirect, own-use energy) emissions and business travel emissions (classified as Scope 3), plus targets relating to consumption volumes for waste, water and paper.

During 2023-24, we conducted detailed analysis of our Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions to develop a baseline all scopes emissions inventory, from which we can begin to set medium and long-term decarbonisation targets. During 2024-25, we will also conduct an ESG materiality study to identify our most material environmental and social impacts and support the development of an ESG strategy and action plan. These activities together will lead to greater transparency and increased ambition in the future.

We continue to assess The National Archives' operations in line with the applicable Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting how we contribute to these Goals and to help inform and plan our operations going forward. Our attention continues to focus on those SDGs that align closely to our strategic sustainability goals and where we can have most impact. During 2023-24, we continued to translate our environmental goals and targets into a short infographic to share across the organisation quarterly, to engage staff and visitors and to promote our sustainability

progress with simple messages. From 2024-25, we will also prepare a short graphical summary of our annual sustainability performance to accompany this report.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	Progress 2023-24	Focus for 2024-25
SDG 3. Good Health and Wellbeing	Review our methodology for measuring health and wellbeing to align with hybrid working patterns	Implement new methodology for measuring health and wellbeing to align with hybrid working patterns as part of ESG Action Plan
SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth	Continue to apply the requirements of the Social Value Act and the Modern Slavery Act into all procurement, systems, and processes	Update sustainable procurement processes to reflect anticipated GGCs review
SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities	Continue climate and energy outreach with stakeholders	Expand climate and energy outreach with stakeholders

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)	Progress 2023-24	Focus for 2024-25
SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production	<p>Introduce reporting on consumption of consumer single use plastics</p> <p>Through our shop limit and where possible eliminate the sale of single use plastic</p> <p>Working with our partners limit and where possible eliminate the use of single use plastic</p> <p>Utilise the Green Champions to support implementation of Consumer Single Use Plastics (CSUP) and other initiatives to reduce operational impacts</p>	<p>Update sustainable procurement processes to reflect anticipated GGCs review</p> <p>Develop plan to eliminate the use of CSUP wherever possible</p> <p>Improve education on proper recycling policy across the site in order to support our goal of improved recycling take-up</p>
SDG 13. Climate Action	<p>Continue to increase our understanding of Scope 3 emissions and develop and implement strategies to reduce them</p>	<p>Build on the analysis of our Scope 3 baseline to develop a decarbonisation plan</p>
SDG 15. Life on Land	<p>Develop a Nature Recovery Plan</p> <p>Develop and install educational signage to educate site users of the biodiversity of the Estate</p>	<p>Continue to utilise the Kew site to educate and inform local people on biodiversity</p>

Our performance 2023-24 against the Greening Government Commitments

The Greening Government Commitments 2021-25 set more stretching targets and the baseline year was changed from 2009-2010 to 2017-2018, to more accurately reflect the current government estate and ensure it builds on the progress it has already achieved. The National Archives' decision to set more ambitious internal targets than the Greening Government Commitments for 2015-20 means that our efforts to accelerate emissions reductions before 2017 continue to create additional challenges in achieving the Greening Government Commitments for 2021-25.

Indicator	GGCs target 2021-25	Our target baseline year	2023-24	Change compared to the 2017-18 baseline	Change compared to 2022-23
Overall greenhouse gas emissions (tCO ₂ e)*	-58%	2017-18	1,616	-41%	-9%
Direct greenhouse gas emissions (tCO ₂ e)+	-33%	2017-18	508	-13%	-23%

Indicator	GGCs target 2021-25	Our target baseline year	2023-24	Change compared to the 2017-18 baseline	Change compared to 2022-23
Domestic flights emissions (tCO₂e)	-30%	2017-18	9	88%	122%
Operational waste to landfill (%)	Less than 5% waste to landfill	2017-18	0	0% to landfill	0% to landfill
Operational waste (%)	Reduce overall waste generated by 15%	2017-18	43	-62%	-21%
Recycling (%)	Increase recycling rate to at least 70% overall waste (bracketed figure is % recycled for that year)	2017-18	34%	-33% change (51%)	-40% change (58%)
Paper (A4e)	-50%	2017-18	833	-76%	53%
Water (m³)	Reduce water consumption by at least 8%	2017-18	19,101	4%	15%

- * Includes Direct energy, Indirect energy including transmission and distribution losses and all domestic travel.
- + For The National Archives this includes only natural gas and fugitive refrigerant emissions.

An overall emissions reduction target of 58% against the new 2017-18 baseline was set for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). This covers greenhouse gas emissions associated with building energy use and domestic business travel, which in the 2023-24 reporting year were 1,678 tonnes CO₂e. This represents a 41% decrease against the baseline and a 9% reduction on 2022-23 emissions. While this is a further improvement on our performance in 2022-23, it will be challenging to achieve the required 58% reduction in the remaining period of the GGCs.

The target of the 2021-25 GGCs of a 33% reduction in direct emissions is particularly challenging for The National Archives, as it relates almost entirely to emissions from natural gas, typically used for heating. Up to the new baseline year of 2017-18, we had already reduced our emissions from gas consumption by 61% against the previous 2009-10 baseline, which therefore leaves fewer opportunities for further reductions. Since our core mandate is the protection of the national collection, which requires maintenance of a consistent storage environment regardless of varying weather patterns, this target would be difficult to meet without significant investment in new heating systems. The 23% reduction against our

performance in 2022-23 is likely to be due to the warmer winter and represents only a 13% reduction against the baseline year.

The other target at risk concerns domestic flights: although emissions for the year were only 9 tonnes of CO₂e, this represents a 88% increase against the 2017-18 baseline and a 122% increase compared to 2022-23. There were 66 domestic flights in total during 2023-24, an increase of 106% compared to the previous year. The majority of these flights were to Belfast, a destination difficult to access efficiently by other modes of transport, and were in response to a significant historical anniversary that it fell within The National Archives' remit to support. While this was a one-off event, and therefore not necessarily indicative of future domestic flight emissions, it also illustrates that there may be occasions where the business need for a domestic flight is prioritised.

Our performance 2023-24 per FTE compared to previous year

The National Archives continues to measure progress against its full-time employee equivalent figure, as shown below.

Indicator	2022-23	2022-23 per FTE employee [^]	2023-24	2023-24 per FTE employee [^]
Greenhouse gas emissions – within scope of GGCs+ international travel (tCO₂e)	1,810	3.26	1,675	2.96
Energy used (MWh)	8,789	15.87	7,605	13.43
Waste produced* (tonnes)	54	0.10	43	0.08
Water used (m³)	13,632	24.6	19,101	33.72
Domestic flights (t/CO₂e)	4	0.01	9	0.02
Domestic flights distance travelled (km)	16,702	30.16	33,513	59.17
Short-haul international flights distance travelled (km)**	85,989	155.30	69,554	122.80
Long-haul international flights distance travelled (km)**	96,037	173.45	178,634	315.37

+ Includes direct energy, indirect energy including transmission and distribution losses and official business travel.

* Excludes one-off construction and refurbishment projects waste, to enable meaningful comparison.

^ Average FTE throughout the 2022-23 and 2023-24 reporting years.

** In 2022-23, international flights were reported in miles and short-haul and long-haul flights were calculated as one total figure.

Greenhouse gas emissions

We continue to make strenuous efforts to minimise emissions from our own operations, through a combination of behaviour change and the application of technology. Energy efficiency measures have enabled emissions from electricity consumption to be maintained at 49% below the baseline year with minimal return to pre-pandemic levels, despite many staff resuming a hybrid working pattern including 60% face-to-face working during the reporting year.

We continue to pursue the opportunities identified in the energy audit carried out in 2022-23, which might allow us to reduce operational emissions, in particular natural gas consumption. We are considering options including the isolation of the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) system, office consolidation and the switch to electric boilers or a heat pump heating system, subject to financial constraints.

Greenhouse gas emissions

Indicator (tCO ₂ e)	2023- 24	2022- 23	2021- 22	2020- 21	2019- 20	Baseline 2017-18
Direct Energy – Green House Gas (GHG) Protocol Scope 1	508	659	603	544	611	583
Indirect Energy –GHG Protocol Scope 2	1,000	1,001	992	932	1,349	1,947
Indirect Energy including transport and distribution losses – GGCs Scope 2	1,086	1,098	1,080	1,012	1,464	2,129
Scope 3 – official business travel*	81	47	6	0.2	119	77

* Includes all business travel methods, domestic and international

Building energy consumption

Indicator (MWh)	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	Baseline 2017-18
Electricity – grid	4,828	5,176	4,671	3,998	5,279	5,537
Electricity – renewable	0	0	0	0	0	0
Electricity – good quality combined heat and power	175	108	3	90	132	87
Natural gas	2,777	3,613	3,284	2,941	3,263	3,165
Diesel oil	0	0	6.4	13.8	9.1	0

Financial indicators

Indicator (£)	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	Baseline 2017-18
Energy+	1,612,779	1,263,146	885,795	738,254	885,650	753,022
Official business travel**	143,331	76,729	14,498	1,021	172,403	142,302

+ In the 2022-23 Annual Report and Accounts, the 2021-22 energy spend was erroneously entered as 2022-23. The spend data for 2021-22 and 2022-23 is therefore re-stated here.

** Includes all business travel methods, domestic and international.

Across The National Archives' site, we have introduced a LoraWAN IOT (Long Range Wide Area Internet of

Things) network to assist us in monitoring CO₂, occupancy, temperature and humidity in office areas. These sensors will be integrated into our building management system to increase efficiency of plant equipment operation, whilst maintaining environmental conditions in staff and public areas.

Business travel makes up a relatively small percentage of our overall emissions and we aim to minimise our travel footprint, through the use of digital technology and promoting the use of public transport in preference to private car and train in preference to plane. Emissions have increased slightly by 6% since the 2017-18 baseline reporting year, although domestic travel emissions have fallen by 55%. We continue to seek reductions and during 2024-25 we plan to introduce a new sustainable travel policy.

Indicator	2023- 24	2022- 23	2021- 22	2020- 21	2019- 20	Baseline 2017-18
Electricity emissions – GHG Scope 2 (tCO₂e/MWh excl. T&D losses)	207	193	212	233	256	352
Electricity emissions – GGCs Scope 2 (tCO₂e/MWh incl. T&D losses)	225	212	231	253	277	385

Intensity of emissions per MWh of electricity continues to decrease due to grid decarbonisation, which, combined

with a 13% reduction in electricity use since the baseline year, contributes to a 49% reduction in emissions from electricity.

Waste minimisation and management

Our waste targets according to the GGCs are to send at least 70% of our waste to recycling and less than 5% to landfill, as well as to reduce paper consumption by at least 50% against the 2017-18 baseline.

In 2023-24, 43 tonnes of general, recycling and food waste was produced by The National Archives, in comparison to the 2017-18 baseline figure of 113 tonnes—a reduction of 62%. None of our operational waste is sent to landfill; 24 tonnes were sent to incineration for energy recovery. The proportion of waste being recycled was 34%. The average monthly weight of operational waste was 3.6 tonnes, a decrease from 9.4 tonnes against the 2017-18 baseline year. No waste was reported from projects and exhibitions or from e-waste for this financial year.

Operational waste

Indicator (tonnes)	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	Baseline 2017-18
Total	43	54	68	21	83	116
Recycled and reused	15	31	47	11	52	64
Energy from waste incineration	24	22	19	8	24	46
Food and catering: anaerobic digestion	4	2	1	2	7	6
Composted	0	0	0	0	0	0
Landfill	0	0	0	0	0	0

Construction and refurbishment projects waste

Indicator (tonnes)	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	Baseline 2017-18
Total	0	9	3	30	8	12
Recycled and reused	0	9	3	29	4	6
Landfill	0	0	0	0	4	6

Operational waste expenditure

Indicator (£)*	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	Baseline 2017-18
Total**	24,530	25,856	23,409	14,559	19,860	24,520

Indicator (£)*	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	Baseline 2017-18
Recycled and reused	6,910	10,244	9,842	4,225	3,639	6,066
Energy from waste incineration	5,527	5,337	5,650	2,692	7,558	9,324
Food and catering: anaerobic digestion	957	681	443	247	1,665	1,830
Landfill	0	0	0	0	0	0

* Spend data obtained from our facilities management contract provider. Total includes the cost of storage and containment.

** Includes compactor rental.

We actively encourage waste recycling around the site for both staff and visitors. Visitor engagement has remained a top focus for us this reporting year, as footfall returns to an equilibrium following the easing of restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiatives have included removing Consumer Single Use Plastics (CSUP), reducing food waste and reusing materials. In 2024-25, we will be rolling out new bins within the public spaces with clearer messaging and guidance, to further support and improve recycling across the site.

Reporting on the use of CSUP commenced in 2023-24, so only one year's use data is available in this report and

there is no baseline because this information was not being collected during 2017-18. The number of CSUP items consumed in 2023-24 was 289,300 individual units. Plans will be developed during 2024-25 to work towards their elimination.

Finite resource consumption

Indicator	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	Baseline 2017-18
Water consumption (m³)	19,101	13,632	12,272	15,468	17,462	18,915
Water supply costs (£)	38,447	33,313	34,439	35,740	39,710	36,915
Paper use (A4e)	833	545	815	20	1,697	3,471

Our target remains to reduce overall water consumption by 8% from the current baseline of 2017-18.

Our estate consumed 19,101 m³ of water over the 2023-24 reporting year. This represents a 40% increase compared to the previous reporting year, due to an increase in site occupancy compared to that period, and a 1% increase compared to the 2017-18 baseline.

Printing restrictions and the ongoing digitisation of records is reducing our paper use and this is set to continue into the future. Our paper consumption stands at the equivalent of 833 standard reams of A4 paper, which is a 76% reduction against the current 2017-18 baseline.

Sustainable procurement

The National Archives is committed to buying more sustainable and efficient products and services with the aim of achieving the best long-term, overall value for money for society. We have implemented the UK Government's Social Value Model and apply government tools to embed sustainability considerations into our procurement process. We are awaiting the review of the Sustainable Procurement commitment in the GGCs before updating our procurement strategy, which will also be influenced by the developing sustainability strategy.

Nature recovery and biodiversity action planning

Our site at Kew, especially the pond and surrounding vegetation, is a habitat for bees, small mammals, invertebrates and birds. This means that, despite being a relatively small area of land it has a degree of biodiversity value, especially for its urban location. This positively impacts its attractiveness as a destination, the wellbeing of employees, and its relationships with local stakeholders. It has the potential to influence key biodiversity indicators in the area, such as species richness and ecosystem health.

We have measures in place to promote the health of these ecosystems and continue to take steps to enhance biodiversity impact. For example, we continue to liaise with a local Swan Sanctuary for monitoring the wellbeing of resident wildfowl on our grounds.

Since we do not hold significant natural capital or landholdings as part of our core mission we have

determined that a natural capital approach is not deemed necessary, and therefore have not prepared a Nature Recovery Plan.

Adapting to climate change

In 2021-22, we conducted a high-level Climate Risk Assessment; we have also commissioned a Flood Risk Assessment for our site. During 2024-25, a detailed climate risk assessment will be conducted, which will inform the development of a Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan in line with the requirements of the TCFD and GGCs.

Reducing environmental impacts from ICT and digital

Sustainability drives the direction of travel within our IT operations and our modernisation programme has made significant strides towards fulfilling the Government Greening Commitments. We are currently working towards adoption of the Greening Government ICT and Digital Services Strategy.

Sustainable construction

Site construction at our site in Kew is limited to internal fabric development and life cycle replacement programmes. These works are undertaken with an emphasis on key sustainable milestones. Any waste material associated with these projects is reported as part of the broader site waste management plan. Further development in future years will include an increased focus on the recycling of materials, as well as continuing to ensure through our design teams

that the use of recycled and sustainable materials is at the centre of all developments.

Community engagement

Engagement with our local community and related stakeholders has continued this year. We have committed to additional Sunday opening and continued to provide events through the year, exemplified by our very successful family event in the summer and our Inventions exhibition which was specifically targeted at a younger audience. We have maintained our grounds and ornamental ponds as a local amenity for our staff, visitors and local residents to enjoy. The grounds are open to the public from dawn until dusk throughout the year.

We also partner with Maids of Honour, a small business local to Richmond who bake at their main campus. This allows us to provide food and refreshments at our public restaurant with minimal food miles, whilst also supporting the local economy.

We have maintained our surface water drainage arrangements to meet our obligations to the flood defences of the local area in support of the Environment Agency. Additionally, we have communicated regularly with our neighbours and local residents regarding planned maintenance and project works and have also supported the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' environmental initiatives, including the Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) and a no idling campaign.

Multiple local groups and organisations have been hosted and aided, including:

- Kew Society, approximately eight times per year, hosting their events and AGM
- Kew Riverside Park Residents AGM once per year
- Q2 Players Local Dramatic Society, two productions per year
- Liaising with Kew Gardens for events where they need extra car parking spaces on our site
- Ensuring our embedded learning spaces can be utilised by the education team as part of our onsite engagement with schools and the local community.

2.0 Accountability report

2.1 Corporate governance report

The Corporate governance report explains the composition and organisation of The National Archives' governance structures and how they support the achievement of our objectives.

Statement from Professor Andrew Wathey CBE, Chair of The National Archives' Board

The year 2023-24 was marked by an acceleration in pace, as The National Archives embarked on a new phase of activity in realising its strategy, *Archives for Everyone*. Major projects are now coming to fruition, including the arrival over the next two years of the Parliamentary Archives and around 10 million Ministry of Defence service personnel records, that signal a further step up in the scale of The National Archives' offer to the public and set the tempo for future developments. This report describes The National Archives' performance in the first year of this new phase of its strategy, and the course it will take towards its longer-term goals.

There were many highlights over the year. In January 2024, the transfer of the Parliamentary Archives' collections to Kew began successfully. New and existing projects evolved

on Artificial Intelligence, the Lawmaker drafting tool and public engagement collaborations, including the major exhibitions *Spirit of Invention* and *Great Escapes*. It has also been a year of building capabilities and planning for further growth. Success securing major funding awards, including £2m over four years from the Lund Trust to digitise the National Farm Survey, demonstrate the extent to which the organisation has matured in recent years. Work has also begun on exploring new storage facilities, including a second physical site, to complement and enhance services at Kew, drive innovation and expand networks within and beyond the archives sector.

During 2023-24, the Board reviewed its expertise via a Board Effectiveness Review. Following this exercise, the Board has been developing its performance oversight, establishing a new Finance and Performance Committee to enable a stronger and more effective process for monitoring progress against a new four-year business plan, and to provide greater assurance that projects and activities are fulfilling organisational priorities. The Board also increased its focus on risk management, especially in areas such as cyber security. I wish to thank my fellow Non-Executive Board Members, the former Chief Executive and Keeper, Dr Jeff James CBE, and the members of the Executive Team for the strategic and generative thinking that they have contributed to the Board's discussions over the past year.

The Board welcomed a new independent member to the Audit and Risk Committee during the reporting year,

Alison White. Two non-executive members, Baroness (Ros) Scott of Needham Market and Mark Richards, will reach the end of their terms in September 2024, both having served on the Board for six years. During that time, they have been an invaluable source of wisdom and support in the Board and for The National Archives' leadership, championing the institution and its values, and helping to further its vision.

It has also been a time of transition for The National Archives' executive, as the Chief Executive and Keeper, Dr Jeff James CBE, stepped down from his role at the end of July 2024. Jeff has made a profound impact during the ten years he led The National Archives and has been a galvanising force in the information management and archival communities at home and abroad. I wish to express the thanks of the Board to Jeff for his dedication in service of the institution and the public record, and also to welcome his successor, Saul Nassé, who joins The National Archives in July after being appointed through a public appointments process earlier in the year. I look forward very much to working together.

Our work would not be possible without the efforts of staff, volunteers, partners, colleagues at The National Archives Trust and the Friends of The National Archives. They support the realisation of The National Archives' aims and help sustain the vital work of preserving the public record. On behalf of the Board, I thank all our colleagues for their commitment over the past year to maintaining that record. I look forward to continuing our work, as The National

Archives embarks upon new endeavours and a new phase in its journey.

Andrew Wathey

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE
Chair of The National Archives' Board
13 July 2024

Directors' report

About The National Archives

The National Archives is a non-ministerial department sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Our main statutory duties are set out in the Public Records Act 1958 and associated legislation and we fulfil the remit of the Public Record Office, the Historical Manuscripts Commission, His Majesty's Stationery Office, King's Printer of Acts of Parliament, Government Printer for Northern Ireland, and King's Printer for Scotland. Further details of our remit are summarised on [page 21](#) of this report.

Management and structure

During the year under review, we reorganised some directorate portfolios. The Research and Collections directorate ceased after 27 July 2023 with the departure of the Director of Research and Collections. The responsibilities of this directorate are now carried out by the Research and Commercial Development Director and the Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership.

Our duties were carried out by the following directorates and functions.

Directorate/ Function	Director	Responsibilities
Chief Executive and Keeper	Dr Jeff James CBE Chief Executive and Keeper	Our future direction and current performance and is accountable to ministers for both. As Keeper of Public Records and Historical Manuscripts Commissioner, he holds the offices of King's Printer of Acts of Parliament (responsible for publishing all UK legislation, and the official newspapers of record, <i>The Gazette</i>); King's Printer for Scotland and Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office; and the office of Government Printer for Northern Ireland.
Chief Operating Officer	Neil Curtis Chief Operating Officer	Ensuring The National Archives has all the resources (human and financial) it needs to deliver its agreed business priorities, via our business-critical functions across the organisation, including finance, corporate and strategic planning, security, IT operations and estates, delivering an effective and efficient foundation from which the organisation can achieve its strategic goals.
Digital	John Sheridan Digital Director	Our digital services, enabling us to fulfil our ambition to become a digital archive by instinct and design. To provide strategic direction, transform our digital offer, and to shape and drive forward our cataloguing and web-based services.
People, Inclusion and Change	Andrea Metcalf Director for People, Inclusion and Change	Our human resources and commitment to further strengthen our culture and approach so that we continually strive to better reflect and represent the society we serve. Our People strategy, building an organisational culture, delivering the new ways of working programme and building a more representative workforce.

Directorate/ Function	Director	Responsibilities
Public Engagement and Sector Leadership (from 28 July 2023, formerly Public Engagement)	Emmajane Avery Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership (from 28 July 2023, formerly Director of Public Engagement)	Our public engagement strategic direction, and developing on site, online, and remote learning and engagement programmes for the public and wider educational audiences. Our active support for the archives sector to secure the best possible long-term future for their collections and services.
Public Records Access and Government Services	Lucy Fletcher Director for Public Records Access and Government Services	Our delivery of access services to the public and offer to government, providing expert advice and guidance to government departments and public bodies; driving strategic compliance with statutory obligations, including the transition to the 20-year rule; enhancing our approach to information rights; and enabling the growth of digital capability for the future preservation of born-digital government records.
Research and Collections (until 27 July 2023 inclusive)	Dr Valerie Johnson Director of Research and Collections (until 27 July 2023 inclusive)	Our research, academic engagement, grants and funding activities as well as our conservation and heritage science. Our active support for the archives sector to secure the best possible long-term future for their collections and services.
Research and Commercial Development (from 28 July 2023, formerly Commercial)	Gemma Maclagan Ram Research and Commercial Development Director (from 28 July 2023, formerly Commercial Director)	Our research, academic engagement, grants and funding activities as well as our conservation and heritage science. Our commercial teams and growing and diversifying our commercial products and services, delivering value for money, and embedding an entrepreneurial culture and ethos.

Together the Directors make up the Executive Team. Further details about the Executive Team can be found on [page 108](#). Further information about the organisation and directorate functions can be found on our website at: nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/transparency/our-staff.

The National Archives' Board

The National Archives' Board is the key strategic advisory body of the organisation. It consists of the Chief Executive and Keeper and six Executive Directors (seven until the retirement of Dr Valerie Johnson on 27 July 2023), as well as the Chair of the Board and the four Non-executive Board members, who are:

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE

Chair of The National Archives' Board

Sonia Cargan

Non-executive Board member

Rommel Pereira

Non-executive Board member, Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee

Mark Richards

Non-executive Board member, Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee

Baroness (Ros) Scott of Needham Market

Non-executive Board member

More information about our Executive Team and Board can be found on our website at nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/executive-team/ and nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/management-board/.

Audit

The financial statements have been audited by the National Audit Office on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. The audit fee was £98,000 (see note 3 to the accounts). The National Audit Office did not provide any non-audit services during the year.

As far as the Accounting Officer is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the National Audit Office is unaware. The Accounting Officer has taken all steps necessary to keep themselves informed of any relevant audit information and to establish that the entity's auditors are notified of that information.

Public sector information

The National Archives has complied with the cost allocation and charging requirements set out by HM Treasury. We are one of the public sector bodies now brought fully within the scope of the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015 and we have taken steps to ensure that we comply with those Regulations, including publishing a statement of our public task.¹¹

11 nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/what-we-do

Governance statement

The Governance statement describes the framework of controls at The National Archives, including the assurances on the operation of the control framework, plus the processes for identifying and managing risk.

The Transparency¹² page on our website incorporates a series of documents and policies that govern how we operate and take decisions, as well the procedures followed to ensure that our actions are fair, efficient, transparent and accountable to our stakeholders.

The National Archives' Board

The National Archives' Board is the main governance body of our organisation. The Board concentrates on strategic issues affecting the organisation, as well as financial scrutiny and the oversight of major policies and performance. Meetings are chaired by the Chair of The National Archives' Board and the Head of Governance acts as the Board Secretary. The Head of Strategy and Chief Executive's Office also attends meetings. Until the end of 2023, formal Board meetings usually took place nine times a year and included one or two strategy days. Since 2024, formal Board meetings have moved to a quarterly cycle, along with an additional development session and strategy day.

Supporting and informing the work of the Board are its three sub-committees, the Audit and Risk Committee, the

¹² nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/transparency/

Nominations and Governance Committee and the newly established Finance and Performance Committee.

The National Archives' Board is responsible for:

- Agreeing and taking forward the strategic aims and objectives of The National Archives, as agreed with Ministers and within the resources framework agreed with HM Treasury.
- Ensuring that it is kept informed of any changes that are likely to impact on the strategic direction of The National Archives or on the attainability of its targets. Advising on the steps needed to deal with such changes and where appropriate bringing such matters to the attention of the responsible Minister directly or via the Executive Team or The National Archives' sponsorship team at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- Providing scrutiny, advice, support and challenge to the organisation, including supporting The National Archives and the Chief Executive and Keeper in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and other duties.
- Demonstrating high standards of corporate governance at all times, including by using the Audit and Risk Committee to help the Board address key financial and other risks; ensuring that adequate governance, audit and control systems are in place to meet statutory and administrative requirements, including that The National Archives operates within its statutory authority and delegated authority given by HM Treasury, in accordance with any other conditions relating to the use of public

funds; and that, in its deliberations, the Board takes into account guidance issued by DCMS.

- Ensuring that it receives and reviews, usually via the Finance and Performance Committee, regular financial information concerning the management of The National Archives; is informed in a timely manner about any concerns about the activities of The National Archives; and provides positive assurance, via the Chair, to DCMS that appropriate action has been taken on such concerns.
- Through the Chair, ensuring that senior officials (the relevant Directors General or the Permanent Secretary) at DCMS are informed of any concerns about the management and direction of The National Archives.

The role of Board members is to:

- Provide scrutiny, advice, challenge and support to the Chief Executive and Keeper, and Executive Directors to support The National Archives' senior leadership team.
- Ensure The National Archives is setting a clear strategic direction across government, in all policy areas in which it is the lead department.
- Strive to improve how The National Archives delivers its strategic aims and objectives and how effectively it meets new strategic challenges as they emerge.
- Provide consistently strong and effective oversight of and support to the Chief Executive and Keeper and the Executive Directors in delivering The National Archives' strategic aims and objectives.

- Promote effective and transparent challenge through open debate on Board matters, wherever necessary, to achieve the best decisions and outcomes.
- Actively encourage new and innovative ways of thinking at Board level, and across the organisation, including on the best use of new technology.
- Ensure that the right strategies and policies are in place to encourage and inspire the entire workforce to contribute to the organisation's overall aims, reflecting the Civil Service's core values.
- Comply at all times with the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies,¹³ and with the rules relating to the use of public funds and conflicts of interest.
- Demonstrate adherence to the 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body Non-executive Directors as appropriate.
- Not misuse information gained in the course of their public service for personal gain or for political profit, nor seek to use the opportunity of public service to promote their private interests or those of connected persons or organisations.
- Comply with The National Archives' rules on handling conflicts of interest and on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and of business appointments.

¹³ [gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies)

- Act in good faith and in the best interests of The National Archives. Uphold the values of the organisation as well as those expressed in the Seven Principles of Public Life.¹⁴
- Ensure they are familiar with any applicable guidance on the role of public sector non-executive directors and Boards that may be issued from time to time by the Cabinet Office, HM Treasury or wider government.
- Ensure the right information and evidence is available to make decisions, measure performance and provide assurance.

Board performance

The Board works collectively and has a rolling agenda. Fixed agenda items include quarterly financial reporting, quarterly business and performance reporting, bi-annual corporate risk register review, annual staff survey results and its resulting action plan, plus review and approval of the Annual Report and Accounts. The Board also receives regular reports from the Executive Team on its activities, as well as updates from the Chairs of the Audit and Risk Committee and the Finance and Performance Committee on the sub-committees' work, including assurance around risk management, governance and internal control. The Board reviews and endorses the budget and strategic priorities, as well as scrutinising major procurement and policy decisions affecting our future direction. Significant items that were considered by the Board during the reporting year included:

¹⁴ [gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life)

- Oversight and scrutiny of short, medium and long-term physical storage options, including the feasibility of a new physical site in the North East of England.
- Strategic development and endorsement of a People, Inclusion and Change strategy, setting out the vision for our people practices and ways of working to support the organisation to deliver its strategic priorities.
- Briefing on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) revolution and impact upon archives and development of ideas on The National Archives' strategic position on the area.
- Oversight of the 4-year Digital Archiving Infrastructure Programme, supporting the organisation to become the living digital archive.
- Oversight of Project ETNA, 'Explore the nation's archives', developing a new website for the online catalogue that better meets user's needs and the Transfer Digital Records service, the platform that helps public record creating bodies transfer their digital records for permanent preservation to The National Archives.
- Oversight and scrutiny of our Digitisation activity, including risks and opportunities and endorsing the future principles for digitisation.
- Oversight of our policy engagement in relation to the Data Protection and Digital Information Bill that was in draft at the end of the reporting year and its potential impact on archives and also on the Retained European Union (EU) Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill and its potential impact

on legislation services, which delivers our responsibility for publishing legislation for the Crown.

- Oversight and scrutiny of our newly developed public facing tagline and brand building campaign, a key deliverable of the Public Engagement strategy and aimed to help reach wider audiences.
- Endorsing management's plan to mitigate against in-year budgetary challenges, largely due to unforeseen staffing pressures.
- Oversight and assurance of our activities that support the delivery of DCMS' four priorities: data, youth, environment and sustainability and levelling up.
- Oversight and scrutiny of options to deliver the build of Clore Learning Centre Phase 2.
- Oversight and scrutiny of the Parliamentary Archives Project.
- Oversight and scrutiny of the Enterprise Resource Planning (Workday) Project.
- Oversight and scrutiny of Freedom of Information (FOI) demand for Ministry of Defence service personnel records, including risks and mitigations and possible wider impacts on the organisation.
- Oversight and scrutiny of a new concessionary contract for *The Gazette* – the official journal and newspaper of record for the UK.

- Annual meeting with the Chair of The National Archives Trust for relationship building and focused discussion on potential areas of support and partnering.

Minutes of Board meetings are available on our website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/management-board/meeting-summaries/

All Board members also meet formally and informally with other senior managers and may be members of specific high-profile project and programme boards, as required. We have an active group of Non-executive Board members, who also engage closely with the business to give strong assurance and governance.

The Board is content that the data with which it is provided is adequate, timely and comprehensive, and there are robust arrangements for reviewing and checking data.

Register of Board interests

Since April 2022, we have adopted a Conflicts of interest policy¹⁵ which sets out our approach to handling potential and perceived conflicts of interest to maintain the integrity and impartiality of our decision-makers. All Board members are required to declare all personal or business interests and these are published in the Register of Interests¹⁶ on the website. At the beginning of each corporate governance meeting, all members are asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest. These are noted in the minutes and where the matter is deemed to constitute a conflict, the

15 nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/transparency/conflicts-of-interest/

16 nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/transparency/register-of-interests/

member is asked to remove themselves from discussion of the item. In 2023-24, there were no declared conflicts of interest that resulted in a Board member recusing themselves from discussion. For further details on related party transactions, see [page 251](#).

The Board engaged no special advisers in the financial year 2023-24.

Board effectiveness

The induction of new Board members includes interviews with key managerial staff about strategic issues and the remit and services of The National Archives as well as providing briefing material on its governance framework.

The Board undertakes an annual assessment of its own effectiveness, which is usually on the basis of a self-evaluation questionnaire that results in an action plan to improve effectiveness. The action plan is reviewed bi-annually for progress. In 2022, the Board agreed to undertake an external Board effectiveness review to bring us into compliance with the [Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of good practice](#) and new Cabinet Office [Arm's length body boards: guidance on reviews and appraisals](#) published in April 2022. Following a procurement exercise, the contract was awarded to Campbell Tickell, who completed their review and reported their findings in May 2023.

Campbell Tickell produced a high-quality report, which noted that the governance of the Board was working well and effective; the Board was skilled, and there were good

processes in place for the escalation of risks. Noting the transition period in the organisation with a new four-year strategy and upcoming changes in Board membership, the report emphasised the importance of pulling together as a team and operating more strategically, giving more time on the agenda to discuss broad questions relating to direction and creating time and space to debate. In respect of the Audit and Risk Committee, the report made positive comments in relation to rigour, scrutiny and challenge. There was also an observation that the agendas were quite heavy and that some rebalancing could be carried out to provide more space for scrutiny of financial matters, which led to the Board establishing a Finance and Performance Committee.

The Board held a workshop session in July 2023 to discuss the themes and recommendations of the external Board effectiveness review in greater detail, which then informed a Board Effectiveness Action Plan. The action plan was agreed at the October meeting and included creating a Finance and Performance Committee to support the Board in its responsibilities for reviewing and monitoring strategic performance objectives as well as financial performance (see [page 66](#)). To balance the number of corporate governance meetings, it was agreed that formal Board meetings would be reduced to quarterly. Progress on the action plan was reported at the June 2024 meeting.

The Board undertook a skills review in November 2023 based on an (internal) self-assessment survey, which was reported at the February 2024 meeting. The findings

reflected a positive, high performing skilled Board who bring a diverse range of knowledge and experience to perform effectively. This trend was reflected across the Executive and Non-executive Board members. The feedback from this, as well as the Audit and Risk Committee annual (internal) self-assessment surveys, did indicate the need for greater digital expertise. With upcoming recruitment of two new Non-executive Board members, the Chair of The National Archives, who is on the recruitment panel, will be mindful of the skills and composition required by the Board and its sub-committees to support the organisation in delivering its ambitions.

Challenge on performance of the Board is provided by the Non-executive Board members and other Board members. In this, the Board is informed by the findings of the board effectiveness review and its resulting action plan.

Non-executive Board members have annual appraisals with the Chair and Chief Executive and Keeper, to monitor their performance and to identify training and development needs. The appraisal of the Chair is undertaken by the Directors General at DCMS. Executive Directors are expected to feed into the process.

Diversity on the Board has improved with appointments made in recent years.

The Executive Team

The Executive Team is the decision-making body of the organisation. It consists of the Chief Executive and Keeper and six Executive Directors. The Head of Strategy

and Chief Executive's Office and/or a deputy also attend Executive Team meetings and the Head of Governance or their nominee provides secretariat support. The Executive Team usually meet fortnightly to:

- fulfil The National Archives' statutory responsibilities and deliver its strategic and business priorities
- drive and manage improvements in business and financial performance
- drive innovation, transparency and efficiencies that support delivery of strategic objectives and give value for money
- identify high-level risks, ensuring their effective mitigation and business continuity
- review and agree corporate policies
- direct and support managers to deliver key investments and major projects
- lead strategic staff management and resourcing.

Supporting and informing the work of the Executive Team is the Estates Strategy Committee. The Estates Strategy Committee was set up in 2022 to provide assurance that the organisation is managing its sites and assets appropriately and effectively, ensuring that all estates development activity aligns to and furthers our strategic plans, brand and cultural change initiatives. The Committee identifies interfaces across projects and manages competing demands and priorities for space. Its main focus

during the reporting year was future document storage requirements, commercial development opportunities, large scale estates development projects and sustainability.

The business of the Executive Team is managed in a way that is inclusive, regularly inviting business updates from the staff members responsible for delivery. The Executive Directors are responsible for cascading summaries of Executive Team business to the rest of the organisation. Minutes of Executive Team meetings are available on our website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/executive-team/meeting-summaries.

Informal challenge encourages staff to bring real issues to the Executive Team's attention. In addition, Directors regularly attend all-staff 'question and answer' sessions called 'Catch up with the Executive Team'. All members of staff are invited to attend and may ask any question about the running of the organisation or current concerns. Questions may be submitted anonymously in order to encourage openness.

The Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of The National Archives' Board and supports the Accounting Officer and Board members in their responsibilities for issues of risk, internal control and governance and associated assurance by:

- reviewing the effectiveness of the assurance framework in meeting the Board's and Accounting Officer's assurance needs

- reviewing the reliability and integrity of these assurances
- providing an opinion on how well The National Archives' Board and the Accounting Officer are supported in decision-taking and in discharging their accountability obligations, particularly in respect of Financial Reporting.

The Committee met four times during 2023-2024: in May 2023, September 2023, December 2023 and March 2024.

Membership comprises the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, an additional Non-executive Board member and an appointed independent member. Additional Non-executive Board members may be co-opted when needed. Other attendees at each meeting are the Chief Executive and Keeper, the Chief Operating Officer, representatives from our external auditors at the National Audit Office, representatives from our Internal Auditors, the Head of Governance and the Corporate Performance Manager who acts as the Committee secretary. Alison White was appointed as the new independent member of the Committee in August 2023, and attended her first Audit and Risk Committee meeting in September 2023.

Internal audit services were managed by Mazars during 2023-24. Proposed areas for internal audit focus are informed by discussions with the Committee, and the Executive Team, together with the internal auditors' understanding of our control environment, the Corporate Risk Register and results of previous work performed. Reports from the internal auditors are copied to Committee members as soon as they are finalised. The Committee

monitors the implementation of recommendations made by internal auditors, taking reports and evidence of progress as a standing agenda item. Any overdue recommendations are reported to the Executive Team in advance of each Committee meeting and Executive Directors may be called to appear before the Committee to account for slippage on implementation dates.

The internal auditors also conduct an annual review to follow up their recommendations, which provides further independent assurance to the Committee. For the reporting year, the internal audit annual opinion was that the governance, risk management and internal control in place throughout The National Archives was moderate in its adequacy and effectiveness.

The Committee maintains a list of risk assurance processes and items to be reported to each meeting in order to structure its agenda. The list encompasses a number of regular updates during the year. This year these included:

- **Progress on the implementation of recommendations from internal audit reviews:** The Committee received assurance that management was taking appropriate action to fully implement internal audit recommendations or had provided business justification if implementation deadlines (which are set by the owner as part of their management response to each recommendation) were not met.
- **Fraud risk assessment:** The Committee took a risk-based approach to potential fraud within the organisation

and was pleased to note the findings from the annual risk assessment, which concluded that there was generally a good level of fraud awareness within The National Archives' culture and adherence to the UK Government Functional Standard GovS 013: Counter Fraud.

- **Security (including information assurance, cyber security risks and data handling) and business continuity:** The Committee received bi-annual updates on key developments in relation to The National Archives' physical security, business continuity, and data handling, and was pleased to note that there had been no significant breaches of security. As a key source of assurance, The National Archives' performance against His Majesty's Government's Minimum-Security Standards was assessed via the annual Departmental Security Health Check return to the Cabinet Office. The Committee was pleased to note the National Archives continued to score above the government average in almost all categories. This reflects a continuing commitment to delivering effective and appropriate security controls that meet government standards, while reflecting the unique circumstances of The National Archives.
- **Health and safety:** The Committee gained assurance that the building remained a safe and accessible working environment for staff, visitors, and contractors. Importantly, the Committee gained regular assurance that appropriate measures and resources were in place to

help support the positive mental health and wellbeing of The National Archives' staff.

- **Environment and sustainability:** Bi-annual progress updates around environmental and sustainability issues provided the Committee with confident assurances that The National Archives is on track to meet Greening Government Commitments, noting however the challenges to do so within the current budget constraints, maintaining appropriate conditions for public records, and maintaining its statutory obligations. The Committee was pleased to note that at year-end, The National Archives was on track to exceed the GGC targets relating to waste reduction, paper reduction and water consumption, and is close to achieving the target relating to overall emissions.
- **Human resources governance:** The Committee oversaw and regularly reviewed current human resource risks within the organisation and took assurance that avenues for confidential reporting within The National Archives were understood and had been tested. The Committee was pleased to note that the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee remained the external and independent whistleblowing escalation point.
- **Safeguarding report:** The Committee successfully oversaw the implementation of a continued programme of safeguarding measures and policies within the organisation, providing strong assurance that The National Archives is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities.

- **Procurement report:** Bi-annual updates gave the Committee oversight of any potential risks and opportunities associated with The National Archives' procurement and commercial activities. In particular, the Committee was kept updated on the impact of the revised Public Procurement Regulations and Cabinet Office Spend Controls on the organisation's procurement exercises.
- **Risk management policy and risk appetite:** The Committee received assurance that risk management policy was effective and that our risk appetite was appropriate.
- **Corporate risks:** The Committee was pleased to note that all corporate risks were being actively managed by the Executive Team. Particular issues identified within the Corporate Risk Register, which continued to be key priorities for the Committee included risks associated with the organisation's inability to recruit and retain key roles (particularly within the digital and financial areas), along with the ongoing risks around Freedom of Information compliance, specifically in relation to the Ministry of Defence service personnel records.
- **Accountability Statements:** This bi-annual update provided the Committee with assurance that business-as-usual risks were being managed effectively throughout the organisation. Following a review of our risk management processes, the Committee noted that bi-annual Accountability Statements were to be replaced from 2024-2025 onwards by a comprehensive Statement

of Internal Control, completed at year-end by heads of departments, then reviewed by Directors before updates provided to the Executive Team and the Committee.

In addition, the Committee received regular updates and progress reports on other issues of particular interest. This year, progress updates included assurance regarding:

- **Freedom of Information (FOI) compliance:** The Committee was presented with an overview of the current risks regarding FOI compliance at The National Archives, with a specific focus on the impact of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) service personnel records transfer project. The committee was advised of progress and an action plan providing a trajectory towards compliance, but noted the potentially significant impact on our operational model.
- **Cyber security:** In March 2024, the Committee was presented with an assessment of The National Archives' current cyber security position, the current contingencies in place and further opportunities to mitigate risks. It also received an assurance as to how the organisation meets the minimum cyber security standard, incorporated in the Government Functional Standard for Security. The Committee noted that there was further work to be done and offered particular advice around the prioritisation of resources to move this work forward more quickly.
- **IT infrastructure:** In September 2023, the Committee received a high-level overview of the robustness of The National Archives' IT infrastructure and legacy systems,

and reviewed the doctrine, strategy and operating models for the organisation's IT provisioning, along with management of legacy systems.

The Committee received the results from its annual (internal) self-assessment survey in December 2023 and a separate survey carried out to review the internal and external audit services by, respectively, Mazars and the National Audit Office (NAO). Overall, it was agreed that the Audit and Risk Committee ran very effectively in 2023-24, with a high level of challenge and scrutiny and excellent oversight of risk management processes. Good practice benchmarking and learning from elsewhere, achieved through the Committee's Thought Leadership sessions and Deep Dive reviews, were particularly appreciated and well received. Feedback indicated potential areas for improvement including more regular checks on the skills and composition of committee members, noting a need for greater digital expertise on the Committee. It was also emphasised that cyber security risks should remain high on the Committee's agenda.

The Finance and Performance Committee

The Finance and Performance Committee has been established as a sub-committee of The National Archives' Board to support it in its responsibilities for:

- Reviewing and monitoring progress and performance in achieving strategic objectives via in year business priorities.

- Reviewing and monitoring regular financial performance information (actuals and forecast) in a timely manner.
- Providing scrutiny, advice and challenge on major projects with a material financial impact.
- Providing scrutiny, advice and challenge to ensure The National Archives maximises public value and meets user needs.

Membership comprises of three Non-executive Board members, including the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, the Chief Operating Officer, the Research and Commercial Development Director and the Director of People, Inclusion and Change. Other attendees include the Head of Finance and the Head of Governance. Secretariat support is provided by the PA to the Chief Operating Officer. The chair is a Non-executive Board member (who is not the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee). The Committee held its first meeting in January 2024 where it reviewed and agreed its terms of reference, reviewed and scrutinised the budget for 2023-24 and received and scrutinised the Quarter 3 Business Priorities report. The Committee will usually meet four times a year.

The Nominations and Governance Committee

The Nominations and Governance Committee is a key forum for discussion of leadership development and succession planning, and the decision-making body for the pay and bonuses of all our senior Civil Service staff, except for the Chief Executive and Keeper.

The Nominations and Governance Committee meets a minimum of twice a year. Pay increases are in line with guidance provided by the Cabinet Office, which hears the outcome of the Review Body on Senior Salaries and sets the pay policy for senior salaries across the Civil Service. The Committee ensures that there are satisfactory systems for identifying and developing staff with high potential. It is chaired by the Chair of The National Archives' Board and membership consists of all Non-executive Board members, the Chief Executive and Keeper in an advisory capacity and the Director of People, Inclusion and Change, who provides secretariat support. The Committee met four times in 2023-24: in June and September 2023 and January and March 2024. The Committee received regular updates on recruitment for a new CEO and Keeper.

The Corporate Governance Code

As a non-ministerial department, we adopt and adhere to Corporate governance in central government departments: Code of good practice to the extent that it is practical, appropriate and compatible with our statutory or other authoritative requirements. We periodically review the Board's effectiveness and corporate governance arrangements to ensure that we are aligned with good practice elsewhere across government—taking into account our unique role and responsibilities, and the statutory and non-statutory roles fulfilled by our senior officials. The current structure enables the Non-executive Board members to challenge the Chief Executive and Keeper and Executive Team, to clearly position it as

an advisory body, to shape the Board agenda and provide positive assurance to senior officials at DCMS, via the Chair of The National Archives' Board, on the management and direction of the organisation.

Attendance at Board meetings and Committees for the Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Non-executive Board members

The Chief Executive and Keeper, Executive Directors, and Non-executive Board members attended the following numbers of Board and Committee meetings (for which they were eligible to attend) during the year:

Name	Role	Board	Audit and Risk Committee	Nominations and Governance Committee	Finance and Performance Committee
Dr Jeff James CBE	Chief Executive and Keeper	10 of 10	4 of 4	4 of 4	N/A
Neil Curtis	Chief Operating Officer	10 of 10	4 of 4	N/A	1 of 1
Emmajane Avery	Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership¹⁷	9 of 10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lucy Fletcher	Director for Public Records Access and Government Services	10 of 10	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹⁷ From 28 July 2023, formerly Director of Public Engagement.

Name	Role	Board	Audit and Risk Committee	Nominations and Governance Committee	Finance and Performance Committee
Dr Valerie Johnson	Director of Research and Collections	3 of 5 ¹⁸	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gemma Maclagan Ram	Director of Research and Commercial Development¹⁹	9 of 10	N/A	N/A	1 of 1
Andrea Metcalf	Director of People, Inclusion and Change	10 of 10	N/A	4 of 4	1 of 1
John Sheridan	Digital Director	9 of 10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Andrew Wathey	Chair of the Board	10 of 10	1 of 1 ²⁰	4 of 4	1 of 1
Sonia Cargan	Non-executive Board member	8 of 10	N/A	4 of 4	N/A
Rommel Pereira	Non-executive Board member	10 of 10	4 of 4	4 of 4	1 of 1
Mark Richards	Non-executive Board member	9 of 10	4 of 4	4 of 4	1 of 1
Baroness (Ros) Scott of Needham Market	Non-executive Board member	8 of 10	N/A	4 of 4	N/A

¹⁸ Until 27 July 2023 inclusive.

¹⁹ From 28 July 2023, formerly Commercial Director.

²⁰ Andrew Wathey provided additional support to the Audit and Risk Committee between February and August 2023.

Name	Role	Board	Audit and Risk Committee	Nominations and Governance Committee	Finance and Performance Committee
Alison White	Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee	N/A	3 of 3 ²¹	N/A	N/A

Functional Standards

All central government departments and their arm's length bodies are required to comply with 14 Functional Standards in a way that meets their business needs and priorities. The National Archives has embedded the relevant standards and put in place a system to monitor compliance and continuous improvement.

Managing our risks

We have a well-established approach to the management of risk at all levels. It encourages risk management as an enabling tool to balance risk and innovation across the organisation. An independent review of The National Archives' risk management processes was carried out between July and October 2023. This included a comprehensive assessment of the organisation's risk management policy and Corporate Risk Register, reviewed against the standards set out in the [UK Government Orange Book: Management of risk – principles and concepts](#). A number of recommendations from the review

²¹ From 8 August 2023.

were endorsed by the Audit and Risk Committee, and subsequently implemented.

In 2023-24, our risks fell under the following categories:

- Operational and policy delivery
- Commercial
- Financial and value for money
- Reputational and credibility
- Compliance: legal, regulatory and data.

The degree of risk is measured by considering likelihood and impact. To describe our appetite for each category of risk, the Executive Team sets maximum 'residual risk' scores based on the risk categories described above and the Board expects that risks at all levels across the organisation will be managed within these scores. Where a risk exceeds its residual risk score, remedial action is taken, where possible and cost-effective, to reduce either likelihood or impact.

The Executive Team has identified a set of corporate risks, linked to our business priorities, and informed by internal developments, external influences and longer-term commitments. These risks, if not managed, would compromise our ability to provide our statutory services or diminish these services to a degree unacceptable to our users. Each corporate risk is owned by a member of the Executive Team, and they are regularly reviewed by the Executive Team and the Audit and Risk Committee with bi-annual updates to the Board.

Our most significant risks in terms of residual risk scores are outlined as follows:

Operating as a national archive delivering our strategic ambitions with general financial and inflationary pressures:

There is a risk that The National Archives faces current and ongoing budgetary pressures, due to the challenging economic landscape and uncertainties regarding the forthcoming Spending Review.

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- We monitored forecasts closely, reduced spend to manage additional pressures, and reprioritised spending plans as required. We began to develop a workforce plan to define the right sizing of teams and skills required to deliver the four-year ambitions articulated in our new business plan.

Failure to meet the challenges of digital: There is a risk that The National Archives fails to address the challenges of being a digital archive, for example: not developing suitably scalable systems, not growing and developing its expertise, not moving quickly enough to respond to or benefit from technological change, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- Mitigations included careful prioritisation of work in the context of a declining headcount in the digital teams and recruitment challenges. We improved digital transfer, preservation and access services to government and the

courts. We also sought to reduce our technology footprint by moving to cloud based products wherever we could. We paused one major long-term project to redevelop the catalogue management software, to ensure that other priorities could be moved forward. We augmented our in-house teams with support from third party suppliers. We also secured grant funding to explore the use of AI in the future.

Staff leadership and culture: There is a risk that leadership and management do not deliver the direction and support required as we adjust to a hybrid way of working to ensure an effective and engaged, diverse and representative workforce.

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- We maintained a continued focus on wellbeing and supporting both managers and non managers. The Head of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion supported people cross-organisationally regarding embedding inclusive practices. Conversations began on strategic workforce planning, to ensure that directors and their heads of department are able to plan more effectively.

Information management (archival and non-archival): There is a risk that areas for intervention and/or caution in the management of archival and non-archival information are not successfully identified.

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- Record management strategy in relation to archival records: We actively engaged with the UK Government Knowledge and Information Management (GKIM) community around developing understanding of the risks and opportunities presented by generative AI and the newly issued *Generative AI Framework for HM Government*. A new regular forum of engagement was set up with Cabinet Office and the Central Digital and Data Office, to ensure joined up leadership in the cross-government digital information management space.
- Record management strategy in relation to non-archival and corporate records: We refreshed training and processes, including clearance arrangements and accountabilities, for issuing FOI responses.

Freedom of Information (FOI) statutory compliance:

There is a risk that, due to an inability to keep pace with the complexity and scale of demand, we are unable to fulfil our statutory obligations to provide access to records through the FOI regime.

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- A strong and transparent working relationship have been maintained with the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and we have worked with the ICO on a formal action plan to recover compliance, in response to the publication of a formal Practice Recommendation. The action plan sets out the context of the challenge and describes the interventions we are making. Since the end of the reporting year, a business case has been

submitted to HM Treasury for extra resource required to deliver compliance recovery.

Parliamentary Archives: In managing this complex strategic partnership, there are risks that transfer is delayed, service expectations are not met or that The National Archives has insufficient resource to either manage the transition or deliver the Parliamentary Archives' services.

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- Workforce planning was underway to define resourcing to cover the delivery of the Parliamentary Archives' services from Kew. A digital workstream has been established to report on timescales, resourcing, migration and integration costs, with escalation to the Parliamentary Archives Steering Group where necessary.

Cyber-attack: There is a risk that The National Archives is the victim of a successful cyber-attack.

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- We have maintained regular communication with staff, heightening awareness of the threat of cyber-attacks, particularly phishing scams. Technical controls on access management to systems were established, including appropriate use of multifactor authentication. We have initiated a programme of work to make improvements to service level security, to enhance monitoring of our systems and to review business continuity plans. We have undertaken contingency planning and reviewed

major incident management plans, including in the event of a successful attack.

Senior leadership changes: The year 2024-25 would bring the appointment of a new Chief Executive and Keeper, as well as two new Non-executive Board members. There is therefore a risk that some corporate memory is lost.

Overview of controls in place during the year:

- A comprehensive induction plan was designed for the new CEO and Non-executive Board members and an extended handover period was planned between the outgoing and new CEOs.

Identifying and managing risk is not a barrier to efficiency, effectiveness or innovation and managing our corporate risks has a minimal effect on our activities unless additional controls need to be introduced. As far as possible, we incorporate risk mitigations into our business-as-usual activities, reinforcing the message that risk management is the responsibility of all staff.

Risks below corporate level are managed, reviewed and updated at least quarterly by Executive Directors and their management teams. A directorate risk register captures what are considered exceptional risks. These will normally:

- be finite
- require new or enhanced risk mitigation or control
- be clearly linked with an organisation or service priority.

- We expect that, over time, most directorate risks will be managed as 'business-as-usual'; exceptionally, directorate risks may be escalated to the corporate risk register. At operational level, risks are managed on a day-to-day basis. The Executive Directors receive assurance on operational risks through six-monthly accountability statements from their direct reports. At year-end, these were replaced by a comprehensive Statement of Internal Control, which will be reviewed by the Executive Team and approved by the Chief Executive and Keeper. Any significant governance or performance issues are monitored by the Chief Operating Officer/Chief Information Security Officer and, if necessary, raised with the Audit and Risk Committee.

Authors of Statements of Internal Control assess the maturity of risk management in their areas of responsibility and provide evidence for their assessment. Authors are also required to provide assurance that their staff comply with key corporate policies, relevant laws and regulations, including the:

- Fraud policy
- Anti-bribery policy
- Conflict of interest policy
- Routes for confidential reporting (whistleblowing)
- Bullying and harassment
- Civil Service Code
- Public Sector Equality Duty
- Managing Public Money
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Public Records Act 1958.

Short- and medium-term additional governance structures are introduced for high-value projects and programmes as appropriate.

We are satisfied that we manage and mitigate risks, and where necessary, that we take action to contain the impact of risk. We are confident that our risk management approach is comprehensive, allowing the Executive Team to identify early, and respond to, any possible threats to the achievement of our objectives.

At a corporate level, our risks for the year 2023-24 aligned with our strategic priorities set out in *Archives for Everyone*, which focuses on our goals of becoming the inclusive, entrepreneurial and disruptive archive.

Health and safety

The Chief Executive and Keeper recognises that ensuring the Health and Safety of staff and visitors is essential to the success of The National Archives and is committed to providing a safe, healthy working and learning environment, in order to support our collective goals of protecting staff at work and ensuring that visitors to our site enjoy their experience.

We monitor, record and investigate accidents and near miss incidents in order to prevent recurrence and work-related ill-health. We continue to meet our legal responsibilities under health and safety legislation, as a minimum, and to assess

risks to anyone who could be affected by our activities. We put in place robust measures to control these risks.

We provide our staff with information, instruction, training, and supervision. We ensure that resources are available to support workplace health and safety. Health and Safety procedures are in place and responsibilities are appropriately assigned to ensure that the aims of our health and safety policy statement are met.

We are committed to delivering an inclusive, safe working environment whether staff are working on site, remotely, or a mixture of the two, ensuring safe working methods and providing safe work equipment. We monitor and review our safety arrangements and prevention measures to ensure they are both effective and encourage a culture of continuous improvement.

We consult on health, safety, and welfare matters with staff, the Health and Safety Committee, and their representatives, including trade unions. We promote a systematic and organised method of improving health and safety within Departments with a robust programme of inspection and audit. Through training and communication, we further promote the exchange of information for staff and managers to adopt safe systems of work within departments.

Whistleblowing policy: 'Raising a concern'

Staff and contractors have access to our Whistleblowing policy, 'Raising a concern'. This provides access to the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee or to the Chief

Executive and Keeper, who support the individual in raising their concerns. They can raise a concern either with a manager within the organisation to begin this process or with one of the nominated officers (the Head of Visitor Experience and the Head of Document Services).

We encourage awareness of the policy by reminding staff and contractors during the year, including the process for raising concerns. Since 2021, we have supported the Civil Service 'Speak Up' campaign and in November 2023, we facilitated 'Speak Up' staff workshop for staff to help remove barriers to raising a concern. No concerns were raised under these policy arrangements during the financial year 2023-24.

Safeguarding

Ensuring the welfare and safety of our staff and visitors is a priority for The National Archives and Safeguarding is considered to be the responsibility of everyone in the organisation. We have a well-developed Safeguarding Policy, which is implemented by a team of three Safeguarding Leads responsible for reporting all incidents to our local authority (Richmond). The team deliver mandatory safeguarding training to all members of staff when they join, with refresher training delivered online every two years to staff. In addition, staff who regularly deliver public engagement activities, including our education, outreach, events, exhibitions and venues teams, plus relevant members of our collections expertise and engagement team, have enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks. We have a strict policy about working with

children and adults at risk and operate a Safeguarding panel of representatives from across the organisation, which meets every six months to discuss any issues. Each year, the Safeguarding lead provides a report to the Audit and Risk Committee on training, developments and any incidents. During 2023-24, we worked with an external specialist to review our training and update our policy and processes for reporting incidents. In the coming financial year, we intend to enhance oversight, by inviting a Non-executive Board member to assume responsibility for overseeing Safeguarding at the Board level. In addition, we intend to seek volunteers to train up as Safeguarding officers, to ensure greater support across the organisation.

Information risk

We have maintained our high standards of Information Security risk management over 2023-24, as attested by maintenance of the ISO 27001 and Cyber Essentials Certification. In 2023, we undertook a surveillance audit by a United Kingdom Accreditation Service-accredited certification body to ensure that we continue to meet the key requirements for the ISO27001.

UK General Data Protection Regulation

There were no personal data-related incidents reported to the Information Commissioner's Office during 2023-24.

Conclusion

As Accounting Officer, I have considered the evidence provided which formed the basis of the Annual Governance Statement along with the independent advice received from the Audit and Risk Committee. I am assured and content with the effectiveness of the framework of governance, risk management and control systems in place outlined above.

Statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities

Under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000, HM Treasury has directed The National Archives to prepare, for each financial year, resource accounts detailing the resources acquired, held, or disposed of during the year and the use of resources by The National Archives during the year.

The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of The National Archives and of its net resource outturn, application of resources, changes in taxpayers' equity and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer complies with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual and, in particular, to:

- observe the Accounts Direction issued by HM Treasury, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis
- make judgments and estimates on a reasonable basis
- state whether applicable accounting standards, as set out in the Government Financial Reporting Manual, have been followed, and disclose and explain any material departures in the accounts

- confirm that the annual report and accounts as a whole are fair, balanced, and understandable, and personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that it is fair, balanced and understandable
- prepare the accounts on the going concern basis.

HM Treasury have appointed me as the Accounting Officer of The National Archives, with responsibility for preparing The National Archives' accounts and for transmitting them to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The responsibilities of an Accounting Officer, including responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which an Accounting Officer is answerable, for keeping proper records and for safeguarding the department's assets, are set out in *Managing Public Money* published by HM Treasury.

As the Accounting Officer, I have taken all the steps that I ought to have taken to make myself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that The National Archives' auditors are aware of that information. So far as I am aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the auditors are unaware.

The annual report and accounts as a whole are fair, balanced and understandable and I take personal responsibility for the annual report and accounts and the judgments required for determining that they are fair, balanced and understandable.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. James". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Dr Jeff James CBE
Accounting Officer
24 July 2024

2.2 Remuneration and staff report

Senior civil service grades

The remuneration of senior civil servants is set by the Prime Minister following independent advice from the Review Body on Senior Salaries. In reaching its recommendations, the Review Body has regard to the following considerations:

- the need to recruit, retain and motivate and, where relevant, promote suitably able and qualified people to exercise their different responsibilities;
- regional/local variations in labour markets and their effects on the recruitment, retention and, where relevant, promotion of staff;
- government policies for improving public services, including the requirement on departments to meet the output targets for the delivery of departmental services;
- the funds available to departments as set out in the government's departmental expenditure limits;
- the government's inflation target.

The Review Body takes account of the evidence it receives about wider economic considerations and the affordability of its recommendations. Further information about the work of the Review Body can be found on the

Office of Manpower Economics web pages on the UK Government website.²²

Service contracts

Civil Service appointments are made in accordance with the Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code. The Code requires appointments to be made on merit, on the basis of fair and open competition, as published in the Recruitment Principles published by the Civil Service Commission. These principles also define where there may be exceptions to this, and the rules governing these.

Unless otherwise stated below, the officials covered by this report hold appointments that are open-ended. Early termination, other than for misconduct, would result in the individual receiving compensation, as set out in the Civil Service Compensation Scheme.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commission can be found at civilservicecommission.org.uk.

Dr Jeff James CBE's appointment as Chief Executive and Keeper was confirmed by the Ministry of Justice from 29 July 2014 until 28 July 2018 and was extended for a further four-year term from 29 July 2018 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), concluding in July 2022. His appointment was extended for a further two years by DCMS to conclude on 28 July 2024.

Rommel Pereira was appointed from 1 May 2021 on a three-year contract as Chair of the Audit and Risk

²² gov.uk/government/organisations/office-of-manpower-economics

Committee, which was extended for a further four-year term until 30 April 2028.

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE was appointed as Chair of The National Archives' Board from 1 April 2022 on a three-year contract.

Baroness (Ros) Scott of Needham Market and Mark Richards were appointed as Non-executive Board members from 21 May 2018 on three-year contracts, which were extended until 30 September 2024.

Sonia Cargan was appointed as a Non-executive Board member from 19 January 2021 on a three-year contract, which was extended for a further four-year term until 18 January 2028.

Service contracts can be terminated under the standard procedures of the Civil Service Management Code.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commissioners can be found at civilservicecommission.org.

The Nominations and Governance Committee

The policy on remuneration of senior civil servants, and the deliberations of the Nominations and Governance Committee, adhere to Cabinet Office policy, which follows the guidance and recommendations of the Review Body on Senior Salaries.

Salary and bonuses (unaudited)

Salary includes gross salary, overtime, reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances, recruitment

and retention allowances, and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation. This report is based on accrued payments made by the department and thus recorded in these accounts. Percentage salary increases, and performance bonuses, are agreed by the Nominations and Governance Committee in accordance with strict guidance and parameters set each year by the Cabinet Office.

Senior staff have written objectives agreed with the Chief Executive and Keeper. Performance against these objectives, and against The National Archives' values, forms the basis of their formal appraisal and subsequent pay and bonus recommendations. This information is used by the Nominations and Governance Committee to determine pay awards, according to the Review Body on Senior Salaries' annual recommendations.

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the department and treated by HM Revenue and Customs as a taxable emolument.

Bonuses are based on performance level attained and are made as part of the appraisal process. The stated figures disclose both in-year bonuses and end-of-year bonuses that relate to the preceding year. As such, reported bonuses in 2023-24 relate to performance in both 2023-24 and 2022-23, with the comparative bonuses relating to performance in both 2022-23 and 2021-22.

The following sections provide details of the remuneration and pension interests of the most senior officials (i.e. Board members) of the department.

Directors' remuneration (audited)

The salary, pension entitlements and the value of any taxable benefits in kind of the Chief Executive and Keeper, Executive Directors and Non-executive Board members of The National Archives, were as follows: ²³ ²⁴

Directors' remuneration (audited)

Director	2023-24 Salary and FYE (full- year, full-time equivalent) £000	2023-24 Bonus £000	2023-24 Benefit in kind £	2023-24 Pension benefits £000	2023-24 Total £000
Dr Jeff James CBE Chief Executive and Keeper	130-135	-	-	0	130-135
Neil Curtis Chief Operating Officer	115-120	-	-	46	160-165
Emmajane Avery Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership	90-95	-	-	51	140-145

23 Salary and full-year equivalent (FYE) are presented to the nearest £1,000. FYE is shown in brackets. Benefits in kind are presented to the nearest £100, pension benefits and total remuneration to the nearest £1,000.

24 The value of pension benefits accrued during the year is calculated as (the real increase in pension multiplied by 20) less (the contributions made by the individual). The real increases exclude increases due to inflation or any increase or decreases due to a transfer of pension rights.

Director	2023-24 Salary and FYE (full- year, full-time equivalent) £000	2023-24 Bonus £000	2023-24 Benefit in kind £	2023-24 Pension benefits £000	2023-24 Total £000
Lucy Fletcher Public Access and Government Services Director	90-95	-	-	37	130-135
Dr Valerie Johnson²⁵ Director of Research and Collections (until 27 July 2023 inclusive)	25-30 (90-95)	0-5	-	35	65-70 (130- 135)
John Sheridan Digital Director	90-95	-	-	54	145-150
Gemma Maclagan Ram Research and Commercial Development Director	90-95	-	-	37	130-135
Andrea Metcalf Director of People, Inclusion and Change	90-95	-	-	36	125-130
Professor Andrew Wathey CBE Chair of The National Archives Board	15-20	N/A	-	N/A	15-20
Sonia Cargan Non-executive Board member	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15

²⁵ Dr Valerie Johnson resigned as a director part way through the year, but remained on payroll in continuous employment as a subject expert.

Director	2023-24 Salary and FYE (full- year, full-time equivalent) £000	2023-24 Bonus £000	2023-24 Benefit in kind £	2023-24 Pension benefits £000	2023-24 Total £000
Rommel Pereira Non-executive Board member	15-20	N/A	-	N/A	15-20
Mark Richards Non-executive Board member	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15
Baroness (Ros) Scott of Needham Market Non-executive Board member	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15
Alison White Independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee (from 8 August 2023)	0-5	N/A	-	N/A	0-5

Directors' remuneration (audited)

Director	2022-23 Salary and FYE (full- year, full-time equivalent) £000	2022-23 Bonus £000	2022-23 Benefit in kind £	2022-23 Pension benefits £000	2022-23 Total £000
Dr Jeff James CBE Chief Executive and Keeper	125-130	10-15	-	48	185-190
Neil Curtis Chief Operating Officer	110-115	-	-	43	150-155
Emmajane Avery Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership	85-90	-	-	9	95-100
Lucy Fletcher Public Access and Government Services Director	85-90	10-15	-	35	130-135
Dr Valerie Johnson Director of Research and Collections (until 27 July 2023 inclusive)	85-90	-	-	35	120-125
John Sheridan Digital Director	85-90	0-5	-	5	90-95
Gemma Maclagan Ram Research and Commercial Development Director	85-90	0-5	-	35	120-125

Director	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23	2022-23
	Salary and	Bonus	Benefit	Pension	Total
	FYE (full-	£000	in kind	benefits	£000
	year, full-time		£	£000	£000
	equivalent)				
	£000				
Andrea Metcalf Director of People, Inclusion and Change	85-90	-	-	35	120-125
Professor Andrew Wathey CBE Chair of The National Archives Board	15-20	N/A	-	N/A	15-20
Sonia Cargan Non-executive Board member	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15
Rommel Pereira Non-executive Board member	15-20	N/A	-	N/A	15-20
Mark Richards Non-executive Board member	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15
Baroness (Ros) Scott of Needham Market Non-executive Board member	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15
Alison White Independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee (from 8 August 2023)	N/A	N/A	-	N/A	N/A

Pay multiples (audited)

2023-24	25th percentile pay ratio	Median pay ratio	75th percentile pay ratio
Band of highest paid Director's remuneration (£)	£130,000-£135,000	£130,000-£135,000	£130,000-£135,000
Employee total remuneration (£)	£27,000	£34,970	£48,108
Staff salary and allowances (£)	£27,000	£34,970	£48,108
Ratio	4.91	3.79	2.75

2022-23	25th percentile pay ratio	Median pay ratio	75th percentile pay ratio
Band of highest paid Director's remuneration (£)	£135,000-£140,000	£135,000-£140,000	£135,000-£140,000
Employee total remuneration (£)	£28,000	£34,943	£46,036
Staff salary and allowances (£)	£28,000	£34,943	£46,036
Ratio	4.91	3.93	2.99

Reporting bodies are required to disclose the relationship between the remuneration of the highest-paid director in their organisation and the lower quartile, median and upper quartile remuneration of the organisation's workforce.

The banded remuneration of the highest-paid Executive Director at The National Archives in the financial year

2023-24 was £130-£135,000 (2022-23: £135-£140,000). This was 3.79 times (2022-23: 3.93) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £34,970 (2022-23: £34,943). The change in salary for the highest-paid Director represents a 4% decrease from the previous year; no bonus was paid, whereas a bonus was paid the previous year. There were no increases in allowances or other performance-related pay.

In both 2023-24 and 2022-23, no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director. Remuneration ranged from £4,912 to £130-135,000 (2022-23: £22,328 to £125-130,000). The average salary and allowance for all employees was £38,040 a 2.7% decrease on the previous year. The average bonus payable for all employees was £295, a 9% decrease on the previous year.

Total remuneration includes salary, non-consolidated performance-related pay and benefits in kind (travel and subsistence). It does not include severance payments, employer pension contributions and the cash equivalent transfer of pensions.

Pension benefits (audited)

Director	Accrued pension at age as at 31/03/24 and related lump sum £000 in bands of £5,000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000 in bands of £2,500	Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) at 31/03/2426 £000 to nearest £000	Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) at 31/03/23 £000 to nearest £000	Real increase in Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) £000 to nearest £000
Dr Jeff James CBE Chief Executive and Keeper	25-30	0	386	347	0
Neil Curtis Chief Operating Officer	20-25	2.5-5	282	218	30
Emmajane Avery Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership	30-35	2.5-5	558	473	38
Lucy Fletcher Public Access and Government Services Director	15-20	0-2.5	262	211	19

26 CETV figures are calculated using the guidance on discount rates for calculating unfunded public service pension contribution rates that was extant at 31 March 2024.

Director	Accrued pension at pension age as at 31/03/24 and related lump sum £000 in bands of £5,000	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at pension age £000 in bands of £2,500	Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) at 31/03/24 £000 to nearest £000	Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) at 31/03/23 £000 to nearest £000	Real increase in Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) £000 to nearest £000
Dr Valerie Johnson Director of Research and Collections (until 27 July 2023 inclusive)	25-30	0-2.5	462	415	8
Gemma Maclagan Ram Research and Commercial Development Director	10-15 plus a lump sum of 0-5	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	156	116	20
Andrea Metcalf Director of People, Inclusion and Change	5-10	0-2.5	78	42	25
John Sheridan Digital Director	30-35	2.5-5	621	527	41

There were no employer contributions to partnership pension accounts in respect of any of the above.

Civil Service pensions

Pension benefits are provided through the Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 April 2015, a new pension

scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme or alpha, which provides benefits on a career average basis with a normal pension age equal to the member's State Pension Age (or 65 if higher). From that date, all newly appointed civil servants and the majority of those already in service joined alpha. Prior to that date, civil servants participated in the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS). The PCSPS has four sections: three providing benefits on a final salary basis (classic, premium or classic plus) with a normal pension age of 60; and one providing benefits on a whole career basis (nuvos) with a normal pension age of 65.

These statutory arrangements are unfunded with the cost of benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos and alpha are increased annually in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Existing members of the PCSPS who were within ten years of their normal pension age on 1 April 2012, remained in the PCSPS after 1 April 2015. Those who were between 10 years and 13 years and 5 months from their normal pension age on 1 April 2012 switched into alpha sometime between 1 June 2015 and 1 February 2022. Because the UK Government plans to remove discrimination, identified by the courts in the way that the 2015 pension reforms were introduced for some members, eligible members with relevant service between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 may be entitled to different pension benefits in relation to that period (and this may affect the Cash Equivalent Transfer Values shown

in this report – see below). All members who switch to alpha have their PCSPS benefits ‘banked’, with those with earlier benefits in one of the final salary sections of the PCSPS having those benefits based on their final salary when they leave alpha. The pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha, the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes. Members joining from October 2002 may opt for either the appropriate defined benefit arrangement or a defined contribution (money purchase) pension with an employer contribution (partnership pension account).

Employee contributions are salary-related and range between 4.6% and 8.05% for members of classic, premium, classic plus, nuvos and alpha. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years’ initial pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate of 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum. Classic plus is essentially a hybrid with benefits for service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic and benefits for service from October 2002 worked out as in premium. In nuvos, a member builds up a pension based on their pensionable earnings during their period of scheme membership. At the end of the scheme year (31 March) the member’s earned pension account is credited with 2.3% of their pensionable earnings in that scheme year and the accrued pension is

updated in line with Pensions Increase legislation. Benefits in alpha build up in a similar way to nuvos, except that the accrual rate is 2.32%. In all cases, members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the Finance Act 2004.

The partnership pension account is an occupational defined contribution pension arrangement, which is part of Legal & General Mastertrust. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 8% and 14.75% (depending on the age of the member). The employee does not have to contribute, but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.5% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of centrally provided risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

The accrued pension quoted is the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over pension age. Pension age is 60 for members of classic, premium and classic plus, 65 for members of nuvos, and the higher of 65 or State Pension Age for members of alpha (the pension figures quoted for officials show pension earned in PCSPS or alpha – as appropriate. Where the official has benefits in both the PCSPS and alpha, the figure quoted is the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes, but note that part of that pension may be payable from different ages).

Further details about the Civil Service pension arrangements can be found at civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV)

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme. The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies.

The figures include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the member has transferred to the Civil Service pension arrangements. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their buying additional pension benefits at their own cost. CETVs are worked out in accordance with The Occupational Pension Schemes (Transfer Values) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 and do not take account of any actual or potential reduction to benefits resulting from Lifetime Allowance Tax which may be due when pension benefits are taken.

Real increase in CETV

This reflects the increase in CETV that is funded by the employer. It does not include the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end of the period.

Staff report

In 2023-24, we saw a slight drop in our Civil Service staff engagement survey score to 67%, from 69% in the previous year. We are actively reviewing how we can address any concerns and areas for improvement raised by the survey and will update our ongoing staff engagement plan accordingly. Due to financial pressures during the year, we put in place recruitment controls, resulting in the re-prioritisation of some activities and projects. We were cognisant of the pressure these recruitment controls placed on the organisation and so provided feedback channels for specific recruitment concerns, as well as accelerating the budget approval process for 2024-25, to give certainty sooner over future resourcing levels.

As part of our efforts to engage with our workforce to better understand their concerns, senior managers met regularly with staff and trade union representatives via forums including Whitley Council, the Health and Safety Committee, the Staff Forum and the forum on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Work continues on our

culture programme, which will provide staff with greater opportunities to get involved in how our organisation runs, helping our interventions to most effectively impact engagement, wellbeing, productivity and morale.

This year, we also continued to embed our behavioural framework within an updated performance management process, continued to champion positive changes to our culture and ways of working through recognition schemes, and have begun to explore an employee value proposition to highlight the positive aspects of our working environment and our offer as an employer.

In July 2023, we introduced a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in order to integrate our Finance and HR data, replacing the use of several different systems reliant on a high level of manual intervention. Implementing the ERP was a significant programme of work and the system will deliver more consistent data, increased automation and better reporting on our people and resources.

Diversity, equity and inclusion

As a public sector organisation, we are committed to equal opportunities for all as part of our duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty: Guidance for public authorities. Our dedication to becoming a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organisation is underpinned in our 2021 plan, *Becoming the Inclusive Archive*, and reiterated in our organisation-wide strategy in 2023, *Archives for Everyone*.

Part of the Public Sector Equality Duty involves fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, including among staff. The policies we have in place guard against discrimination and we work hard to make The National Archives a safe and supportive environment for staff and visitors alike. By the end of 2024-25, we aim to complete a policy overview to ensure that all our policies are people focused, consistent and transparent.

We remain a Disability Confident Level 2 employer and are committed to ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability. We continue to look at ways to increase our knowledge and understanding of disability rights for our people in the workplace. We are part of the Civil Service Disability Network and are also engaging with Purple Space, a renowned networking and professional development hub and resource group for disabled employees from all sectors and trades.

We continue to prioritise an intersectional approach to engaging and empowering colleagues across the organisation through our staff networks. In 2023-24, our staff networks focused on exploring progressive change, supporting colleagues and peers and inspiring a feeling of belonging. In September 2022, we formed the Intersectional Support Network to support the aim expressed by the Minister for the Cabinet Office, John Glen, at the Institute for Government's Annual Conference in 2024 to create 'collaborative spaces, build a sense

of belonging, helping us to work across-departments.’²⁷ During 2023-24, the Network has continued to be a vital resource for developing holistic inclusive practice, with a view to better informing the organisation’s approaches and strategies.

Last year, we initiated a project to establish greater rigour around the DEI data we collect, so that we can better understand our internal and external audiences and enhance our DEI activities as an organisation. This is now in further planning. Currently, we ask people who attend our events for the public and for academic audiences to tell us about themselves. We also collect data on the socio-economic status of the schools we work with, recording ethnicity demographics and the number of students eligible for free school meals. In March 2024, we ran an internal event featuring Kate Nash OBE from PurpleSpace, which provided us with key insights on celebrating the strengths and contributions of the disabled, neurodivergent, chronically ill and carers community, as well as how we might improve the capability of our leaders and managers around disability topics and gathering better DEI data. Data from the archives sector shows that the number of applications received for grants rose from 2022-23 to 2023-24 and we are working towards using applicant data to further support access to the funding we distribute. In 2024-25, our research vision and roadmap will begin to shape future data collection and provide a clear pathway for staff to develop further as grant-winners.

²⁷ Minister for the Cabinet Office, John Glen’s speech at the Institute for Government’s Annual Conference 2024.

Workforce breakdown

Workforce	31 March 2024	31 March 2023
Staff numbers (headcount)	582	590
Workforce diversity:		
Ethnic minorities ²⁸	18.2%	19.2%
Women – director level	4 of 7	5 of 8
Women – overall	51.5%	54.3%
Disabled ²⁹	8.9%	8.9%
Temporary appointments – average per month ³⁰	17	10
Staff turnover ³¹	15.8%	16.7%
Staff sickness absence ³² (days per FTE)	7.4	6.0
Staff engagement (Civil Service staff engagement survey score %)	67%	69%
Consultancy expenditure (£000)	61	25

28 Percentage of employees declaring an ethnicity.

29 Percentage of employees declaring a disability.

30 Temporary appointments are employees appointed under Exception 1 of the [Civil Service Recruitment Principles](#).

31 This figure includes both voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover, such as the ending of fixed-term contracts.

32 The increase in sickness absence may be linked to a continuing increase in social mixing since the COVID-19 pandemic. As comparison, the average across the Civil Service is 8.1 days for the year 2022-23, according to the [Civil Service sickness absence 2023: report](#).

Average full-time equivalent number of persons employed (audited)

The average number of full-time equivalent persons employed during the year was as follows:

Area of activity	2023-24 Permanently employed staff	2023-24 Other staff ³³	2023-24 Total	2022-23 Total
Government information management	104	11	115	127
Preservation and protection	88	7	95	117
Public access	325	26	351	339
Staff engaged on capital projects	8	-	8	8
Total	525	44	569	591

Senior Civil Service (SCS) by band as at 31 March 2024

Salary band	2023-24 Number of SCS	2022-23 Number of SCS
£70,000 - £80,000	-	-
£80,000 - £90,000	-	6
£90,000 - £100,000	5 ³⁴	-

33 'Other staff' includes staff on fixed-term contracts, as well as agency staff and specialist contractors.

34 Of the six SCS staff in the £80-90,000 band in 2022-23, one ceased being a Director and SCS level member of staff and the other five have moved to the £90-100,000 band through pay progression in 2023-24.

Salary band	2023-24 Number of SCS	2022-23 Number of SCS
£100,000 - £110,000	-	-
£110,000 - £120,000	1	1
£120,000 - £130,000	-	1
£130,000 - £140,000	1	-
Total	7	8

Staff costs (audited)

Staff costs	2023-24	2023-24	2023-24	2022-23
	Permanently employed staff £000	Other staff £000	Total £000	Total £000
Wages and salaries	24,182	720	24,902	21,763
Social security costs ³⁵	2,533	-	2,533	2,443
Other pension costs	6,016	-	6,016	5,611
Sub total	32,731	720	33,451	29,817
Less staff costs capitalised on IT projects	(759)	-	(759)	(637)
Total net costs	31,972	720	32,692	29,180

Off-payroll engagements

Review of tax arrangements of public sector appointees

³⁵ 2023-24 includes £105,000 apprenticeship levy cost (2022-23: £93,000). The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 2017, requiring employers with a pay bill of more than £3 million pounds each year to pay the levy.

Table 1: Temporary off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March 2024

Number of existing engagements as of 31 March 2024	3
Of which:	
Number that have existed for less than one year at time of reporting	3
Number that have existed for between one and two years at time of reporting	0
Number that have existed for between two and three years at time of reporting	0
Number that have existed for between three and four years at time of reporting	0
Number that have existed for four or more years at time of reporting	0

Table 2: All temporary off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2024

Number of off-payroll workers engaged during the year ended 31 March 2024	12
Of which:	
Numbers determined as in-scope of IR35w	7
Numbers determined as out-of-scope of IR35	5
Number of engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	3
Of which: Number of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following the consistency review	0
Number of engagements where the status was disputed under provisions in the off-payroll legislation	0
Of which: Number of engagements that saw a change to IR35 status following the review	0

Table 3: For any off-payroll engagements of Board members, and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility, between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024

Off-payroll Board members and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility engaged between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024	Number
Off-payroll engagements of Board members, and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility, during the financial year	0
Total individuals both on payroll and off-payroll that have been deemed 'board members, and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility', during the financial year	14

Staff pension arrangements

The Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) is an unfunded multi-employer defined benefit scheme in which The National Archives is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. A full actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2020.³⁶

For 2023-24, employers' contributions of £5.9 million were payable in Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (2022-23: £5.5 million) at one of four rates in the range 26.6% to 30.3% (unchanged from 2022-23) of pensionable earnings, based on salary bands. The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates

³⁶ Details of the scheme valuation can be found at civilservicepensionscheme.org.uk/about-us/scheme-valuations/

reflect benefits as they are accrued, not when the costs are actually incurred, and reflect past experience of the scheme.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution.

Employers' contributions of £0.09 million (2022-23: £0.09 million) were paid to the appointed stakeholder pension provider, Legal & General. Employer contributions are age-related and range from 8% to 14.75% of pensionable pay.

Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings. In addition, employer contributions of £0.003 million (2022-23: £0.003 million) of pensionable pay were payable to the PCSPS to cover the cost of the future provision of lump sum benefits on death in service or ill health retirement of these employees.

Contributions due to the partnership pension provider at the balance sheet date were £0.008 million (2022-23: £0.007 million). Contributions prepaid at that date were nil (2022-23: nil).

Reporting of Civil Service and other compensation schemes – exit packages (audited)

Details of the compensation scheme payments, and the number of departures during the year, and the previous year, are shown in the table below. Compensation agreed for departures did not exceed the Cabinet Office's recommended cap of £95,000.

Exit package cost band £'000	2023-24 Compulsory redundancies	2023-24 Other departures	2023-24 Total	2022-23 Compulsory redundancies	2022-23 Other departures	2022-23 Total
< £10	1	-	£9	-	-	-
£10 - £25	-	-	-	-	-	-
£25 - £50	-	-	-	-	2	2
£50 - £100	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total number of exit packages	-	-	-	-	3	3
Total costs £000	£9	£-	£9	£-	£169	£169

Redundancy and other departure costs have been paid in accordance with the provisions of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme; a statutory scheme made under the Superannuation Act 1972. Exit costs are accounted for in full in the year of departure.

Where the department has agreed early retirements, the additional costs are met by the department and not by the Civil Service pension scheme. Ill health retirement costs are met by the pension scheme and are not included in the table.

Business Appointment Rules

The Business Appointment Rules (BARs) apply to civil servants (including Special Advisers) leaving Crown Service. In compliance with Business Appointment Rules,

we are transparent in the advice given to individual applications for senior staff, including special advisers. Advice regarding specific business appointments has been published on GOV. UK here: [Business appointment rules for Crown servants](#). We inform all leavers that they must obtain agreement before accepting a post outside the Civil Service if their official duties in the two years before leaving Crown Service (or earlier if the association has been of a continued or repeated nature) resulted in personal involvement with the prospective employer, or they had access to commercially sensitive information of their competitors. If either of the above applies, we ask staff to contact us for advice. During the 2023-24 financial year, there was one exit from the Civil Service as Director and SCS, but has remained in continuous employment as a member of staff. No Business Appointment applications were received. We did not receive any disclosures relating to BARs and we were not aware of any breaches.

The Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 (Statutory Instrument 328) report

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
20	19.67

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	18
1-50%	2
51%-99%	0
100%	0

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

Pay bill spent on facility time	2023-24
Total cost of facility time	£7,145.92
Total pay bill	£32,691,715
Total	0.02%

Paid trade union activities

Percentage of paid facility time	2023-24
Total	0%

2.3 Parliamentary accountability and audit report

Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SoPS) (audited)

In addition to the primary statements prepared under the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), the Government Financial Reporting Manual 2023-24 (FReM) requires The National Archives to prepare a Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SoPS) and supporting notes.

The SoPS and related notes are subject to audit, as detailed in the Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the House of Commons.

The SoPS is a key accountability statement that shows, in detail, how an entity has spent against their Supply Estimate. Supply is the monetary provision (for resource and capital purposes) and cash (drawn primarily from the Consolidated Fund), that Parliament gives statutory authority for entities to utilise. The Estimate details supply and is voted on by Parliament at the start of the financial year.

Should an entity exceed the limits set by their Supply Estimate, called control limits, their accounts will receive a qualified opinion.

The format of the SoPS mirrors the Supply Estimates, published on GOV.UK, to enable comparability between what Parliament approves and the final outturn.

The SoPS contain a summary table, detailing performance against the control limits that Parliament have voted on, cash spent (budgets are compiled on an accruals basis and so outturn will not exactly reconcile to cash spent) and administration.

The supporting notes detail the following: Outturn by Estimate line, providing a more detailed breakdown (note 1); a reconciliation of outturn to net operating expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE), to tie the SoPS to the financial statements (note 2); and a reconciliation of outturn to net cash requirement (note 3).

The SoPS and Estimates are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to the IFRS. An understanding of the budgeting framework and an explanation of key terms is provided on [page 65](#), in the Performance analysis section of the Performance report. Further information on the Public Spending Framework and the reasons why budgeting rules are different to IFRS can also be found in Chapter 1 of the Consolidated Budgeting Guidance, available on gov.uk.³⁷

The SoPS provides a detailed view of financial performance, in a form that is voted on and recognised by Parliament. The Performance analysis section of the

³⁷ [Consolidated budgeting guidance 2023 to 2024](#).

Performance Report provides a summarised discussion of outturn against estimate and functions as an introduction to the SoPS disclosures.

Summary table 2023-24, all figures presented in £000s

Type of spend	SoPS note	Outturn			Estimate			Outturn vs Estimate: Savings/ (Excess)	Prior year Outturn total 2022-23
		Voted	Non-voted	Total	Voted	Non-voted	Total		
Departmental Expenditure Limit									
Resource	1.1	48,697	-	48,697	49,622	-	49,622	925	46,176
Capital	1.2	3,283	-	3,283	3,565	-	3,565	282	5,296
Total		51,980	-	51,980	53,187	-	53,187	1,207	51,472
Annually Managed Expenditure									
Resource	1.1	(24)	-	(24)	50	-	50	74	(5)
Total		(24)	-	(24)	50	-	50	74	(5)
Total Budget									
Resource	1.1	48,673	-	48,673	49,672	-	49,672	999	46,171
Capital	1.2	3,283	-	3,283	3,565	-	3,565	282	5,296
Total Expenditure		51,956	-	51,956	53,237	-	53,237	1,281	51,467

Figures in the Estimate column cover the voted control limits voted by Parliament. Refer to the Supply Estimates guidance manual, available on GOV.UK, for detail on the control limits voted by Parliament.

Net Cash requirement 2023-24, all figures presented in £000s

Item	SoPS note	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, Saving / (Excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total 2022-23
Net Cash requirement	3	42,171	45,866	3,695	45,362

Administration costs 2023-24, all figures presented in £000s

Type of spend	SoPS note	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, Saving / (Excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total 2022-23
Administration costs	1.1	12,757	13,186	429	12,384

Although not a separate voted limit, any breach of the administration budget will also result in an excess vote.

Notes to the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply 2023-24

SoPS1. Outturn detail by Estimate Line

SoPS1.1 Analysis of Net Resource Outturn by Estimate line, all figures presented in £000s

Spend Type (Resource)	Resource Outturn						Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate: Saving/ (Excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total 2022-23	
	Administration			Programme			Total			
	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net	Total			
Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limits (DEL)										
Voted expenditure	12,784	(27)	12,757	51,137	(15,197)	35,940	48,697	49,622	925	46,176
Spending in Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)										
Voted expenditure	-	-	-	(24)	-	(24)	(24)	50	74	(5)
Total Resource	12,784	(27)	12,757	51,113	(15,197)	35,916	48,673	49,672	999	46,171

The Outturn was lower than the Estimate by £0.9 million. This is due firstly to an underspend in ring-fenced depreciation of £0.5 million, largely driven by some assets under construction not being complete at year end and so not yet depreciable. The remaining £0.4 million is due to delays in recruitment and lower than anticipated storage costs towards year end.

SoPS1.2 Analysis of Capital Outturn, all figures presented in £000s

Spend Type (Capital)	Outturn			Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate: Saving/ (Excess) Total	Prior Year Outturn Total 2022-23
	Gross	Income	Total	Total		
Spending in Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)						
Voted expenditure	3,283	-	3,283	3,565	282	5,296
Total Capital	3,283	-	3,283	3,565	282	5,296

No virements have been made by The National Archives. Virements are the reallocation of provisions in the Estimates that do not require Parliamentary authority (because Parliament does not vote to that level of detail and delegates to HM Treasury). Further information on virements is provided in the Supply Estimates Guidance Manual.

SoPS2. Reconciliation of Outturn to Net Operating Expenditure, all figures presented in £000s

Item	Reference	Outturn total	Prior Year Outturn Total 2022-23
Total Resource Outturn	SoPS1.1	48,673	46,171
Depreciation charged to Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure		(3)	(2)
Net Operating Expenditure in Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	SoCNE	48,670	46,169

As noted in the introduction to the SoPS above, the Outturn and the Estimate are compiled against the budgeting framework, which is similar to the IFRS. Accordingly, the above table reconciles the Total Resource Outturn to Net Operating Expenditure, linking the SoPS to the financial statements.

The reconciling item in both 2023-24 and 2022-23 relates to depreciation on a donated asset, charged directly to Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure.

SoPS3. Reconciliation of Net Resource Outturn to Net Cash Requirement, all figures presented in £000s

Item	SoPS note	Outturn total	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, Saving/ (Excess)
Total Resource Outturn	SoPS 1.1	48,673	49,672	999
Total Capital Outturn	SoPS 1.2	3,283	3,565	282
Adjustments to remove non-cash items:				
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment		(7,376)	(7,797)	(421)
Depreciation on donated asset		(3)	(2)	1
Right of Use Asset - Interest charge		(69)	-	69
Right of Use Asset - Remeasurement		(160)	-	160
New provisions and adjustments to previous provisions		27	(50)	(77)
Other non-cash items		(98)	-	98
Adjustments to reflect movements in working balances:				
Increase in inventories		21	-	(21)
Decrease in receivables		(1,008)	-	1,008
Decrease in contract assets		(131)	-	131
Increase in payables		(1,557)	478	2,035
Decrease in contract liabilities		6	-	(6)
Right of Use Asset – Lease repayment		563	-	(563)
Net Cash Requirement		42,171	45,866	3,695

As noted in the introduction to the SoPS above, the Outturn and the Estimate are compiled against the budgeting framework, not on a cash basis. Therefore, this table

reconciles the Total Resource and Capital Outturn to the Net Cash Requirement.

Parliamentary Accountability Disclosures (audited)

Fees and charges

There were no material fees and charges throughout the year that require disclosure (2022-23: nil).

Losses and special payments

There were no losses or special payments on an individual or cumulative basis that require disclosure because of their size or nature during 2023-24 (2022-23: nil).

Remote contingent liabilities

In addition to contingent liabilities within the meaning of International Accounting Standard (IAS) 37, The National Archives also reports liabilities for which the likelihood of a transfer of economic benefit in settlement is too remote to meet the definition of contingent liability. In the year 2023-24, there were no remote contingent liabilities to report (2022-23: nil).



Dr Jeff James CBE
Accounting Officer
24 July 2024

The Certificate and Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General to the House Of Commons

Opinion on financial statements

I certify that I have audited the financial statements of The National Archives for the year ended 31 March 2024 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000. The financial statements comprise The National Archives’:

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2023;
- Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure, Statement of Cash Flows and Statement of Changes in Taxpayers’ Equity for the year then ended; and
- the related notes including the significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is applicable law and UK adopted international accounting standards.

In my opinion, the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of The National Archives’ affairs as at 31 March 2024 and net operating expenditure for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and HM Treasury directions issued thereunder.

Opinion on regularity

In my opinion, in all material respects:

- the Statement of Outturn Against Parliamentary Supply properly presents the outturn against voted Parliamentary control totals for the year ended 31 March 2024 and shows that those totals have not been exceeded; and
- the income and expenditure recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

Basis for opinions

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs UK), applicable law and Practice Note 10 *Audit of Financial Statements and Regularity of Public Sector Bodies in the United Kingdom* (2022). My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements' section of my certificate.

Those standards require me and my staff to comply with the Financial Reporting Council's *Revised Ethical Standard 2019*. I am independent of The National Archives in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to my audit of the financial statements in the UK. My staff and I have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, I have concluded that The National Archives' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work I have performed, I have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on The National Archives' ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

My responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this certificate.

The going concern basis of accounting for The National Archives is adopted in consideration of the requirements set out in HM Treasury's *Government Financial Reporting Manual*, which requires entities to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements where it anticipated that the services which they provide will continue into the future.

Other Information

The other information comprises information included in the Annual Report, but does not include the financial

statements nor my auditor's certificate and report. The Accounting Officer is responsible for the other information.

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in my certificate, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

My responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If I identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, I am required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, I am required to report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinion on other matters

In my opinion the part of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited has been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

In my opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit have been properly prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000;
- the information given in the Performance and Accountability Reports for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements and is in accordance with the applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which I report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of The National Archives and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, I have not identified material misstatements in the Performance and Accountability Reports.

I have nothing to report in respect of the following matters which I report to you if, in my opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept by The National Archives or returns adequate for my audit have not been received from branches not visited by my staff; or
- I have not received all of the information and explanations I require for my audit; or
- the financial statements and the parts of the Accountability Report subject to audit are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or

- certain disclosures of remuneration specified by HM Treasury's *Government Financial Reporting Manual* have not been made or parts of the Remuneration and Staff Report to be audited is not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- the Governance Statement does not reflect compliance with HM Treasury's guidance.

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Statement of Accounting Officer's Responsibilities, the Accounting Officer is responsible for:

- maintaining proper accounting records;
- providing the C&AG with access to all information of which management is aware that is relevant to the preparation of the financial statements such as records, documentation and other matters;
- providing the C&AG with additional information and explanations needed for his audit;
- providing the C&AG with unrestricted access to persons within The National Archives from whom the auditor determines it necessary to obtain audit evidence;
- ensuring such internal controls are in places as deemed necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements to be free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error;

- preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view and are prepared in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000;
- preparing that annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with HM Treasury directions made under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000; and
- assessing The National Archives' ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the Accounting Officer anticipates that the services provided by The National Archives will not continue to be provided in the future.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

My responsibility is to audit, certify and report on the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a certificate that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate,

they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations including fraud

I design procedures in line with my responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud. The extent to which my procedures are capable of detecting non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud is detailed below.

Identifying and assessing potential risks related to non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of non-compliance with laws and regulations, including fraud, I:

- considered the nature of the sector, control environment and operational performance including the design of The National Archives' accounting policies;
- Inquired of management, The National Archives' head of internal audit and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to The National Archive's' policies and procedures relating to:

- identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations;
- detecting and responding to the risks of fraud; and
- the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including The National Archives' controls relating to The National Archives' compliance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and Managing Public Money;
- the internal controls established to mitigate risks related to fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations including The National Archives' controls relating to The National Archives' compliance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000 and Managing Public Money, and the Public Records Act 1958;
- inquired of management, The National Archives' head of internal audit and those charged with governance whether;
 - they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations;
 - they had knowledge of any actual, suspected, or alleged fraud;
- discussed with the engagement team and the relevant internal IT audit specialists and (as it pertains to their work) external property valuation specialists regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, I considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within The National Archives for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in the following areas: revenue recognition, posting of unusual journals, complex transactions and bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I also obtained an understanding of The National Archives' framework of authority as well as other legal and regulatory frameworks in which The National Archives operates, focusing on those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements or that had a fundamental effect on the operations of The National Archives. The key laws and regulations I considered in this context included Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000, Managing Public Money, Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act 2022 and relevant employment law and tax legislation.

Audit response to identified risk

To respond to the identified risks resulting from the above procedures:

- I reviewed the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations described above as having direct effect on the financial statements;

- I enquired of management, the Audit and Risk Committee concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- I reviewed minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and the Board; and internal reports; and
- I addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls, by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgments on the estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business; and
- I addressed the risk of fraud in revenue recognition, assessing the recognition of licencing and royalty income in line with the accounting framework.

I communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential risks of fraud to all engagement team members including internal specialists and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of my certificate.

Other auditor's responsibilities

I am required to obtain appropriate evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply properly presents the outturn

against voted Parliamentary control totals and that those totals have not been exceeded. The voted Parliamentary control totals are Departmental Expenditure Limits (Resource and Capital), Annually Managed Expenditure (Resource and Capital), Non-Budget (Resource) and Net Cash Requirement.

I am required to obtain evidence sufficient to give reasonable assurance that the expenditure and income recorded in the financial statements have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions recorded in the financial statements conform to the authorities which govern them.

I communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies

Comptroller and Auditor General

24 July 2024

National Audit Office

157-197 Buckingham Palace Road

Victoria

London

SW1W 9SP

3.0 Financial statements

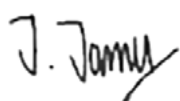
Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Revenue from contracts with customers	4	(13,216)	(12,803)
Other operating income	4	(2,008)	(1,543)
Total operating income		(15,224)	(14,346)
Staff costs	3	32,692	29,180
Purchase of goods and services	3	23,686	24,136
Depreciation, impairment, provisions and audit charges	3	7,447	7,126
Right of Use Asset interest charge	7	69	73
Total operating expenditure		63,894	60,515
Net operating expenditure		48,670	46,169
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items which will not be reclassified to net operating expenditure:			
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	5	6,235	32,411
- Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of intangible assets	6	(134)	(4,178)
- Depreciation of donated assets		3	2
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		54,774	74,404

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2024

	Note	31 March 2024 £000	31 March 2023 £000
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	5	163,485	162,464
Intangible assets	6	35,910	34,505
Right-of-Use Assets	7	6,689	7,109
Prepayments falling due after one year	9	388	266
Total non-current assets		206,472	204,344
Current assets:			
Inventories		191	170
Trade and other receivables	9	5,331	6,461
Contract assets	9	-	131
Cash and cash equivalents		1,629	74
Total current assets		7,151	6,836
Total assets		213,623	211,180
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	10	(8,416)	(5,249)
Contract liabilities	10	(131)	(137)
Obligations under finance leases	7	(525)	(496)
Provisions		-	(27)
Total current liabilities		(9,072)	(5,909)
Total assets less current liabilities		204,551	205,271
Non-current liabilities:			
Contract liabilities	10	(194)	(249)

	Note	31 March 2024 £000	31 March 2023 £000
Obligations under finance leases	7	(6,406)	(6,769)
Provisions		-	-
Total non-current liabilities		(6,600)	(7,018)
Total assets less liabilities		197,951	198,253
Taxpayers' equity and other reserves:			
General fund		51,399	57,762
Revaluation reserve		146,538	140,474
Donated asset reserve		14	17
Total equity		197,951	198,253



Dr Jeff James CBE
Accounting Officer
24 July 2024

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating expenditure		(48,670)	(46,169)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	3	7,516	7,206
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	9	1,008	(665)
(Increase)/decrease in contract assets	9	131	1,696
(Increase)/decrease in inventories		(21)	(3)
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	10	3,112	(1,674)
Increase/(decrease) in contract liabilities	10	(6)	67
Movements in payables to the consolidated fund not passing through the SoCNE	10	(1,555)	(7)
Use of provisions		-	(7)
Net cash outflow from operating activities		(38,485)	(39,556)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	5	(1,283)	(4,092)
Purchase of intangible assets	6	(1,840)	(1,217)
Net cash outflow from investing activities		(3,123)	(5,309)
Cash flows from financing activities			
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) – current year		43,726	45,369
Repayment of capital element of obligations under finance leases	7	(494)	(424)
Interest element of obligations under finance leases	7	(69)	(73)

	Note	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Net cash flows from financing activities		43,163	44,872
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		1,555	7
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		74	67
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		1,629	74

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2024

	Note	General Fund £000	Revaluation Reserve £000	Donated Asset Reserve £000	Taxpayers' equity £000
Balance at 1 April 2022		58,450	168,745	19	227,214
Net Parliamentary funding		45,362	-	-	45,362
Net expenditure for the year		(46,169)	-	-	(46,169)
Other comprehensive expenditure		(2)	(28,233)	-	(28,235)
Auditor's remuneration	3	81	-	-	81
Transfers between reserves		40	(38)	(2)	-
Balance at 31 March 2023		57,762	140,474	17	198,253
Net Parliamentary funding		42,172	-	-	42,172
Net expenditure for the year		(48,670)	-	-	(48,670)
Other comprehensive expenditure		(3)	6,101	-	6,098
Auditor's remuneration	3	98	-	-	98
Transfers between reserves		40	(37)	(3)	-
Balance at 31 March 2024		51,399	146,538	14	197,951

The General Fund records all changes in financial resources for the year, with the exception of those recorded in other reserves. This includes the Parliamentary funding provided and the net expenditure for the year.

The Revaluation Reserve reflects the gain or loss on the revaluation of assets, both tangible and intangible, other than donated assets. Each year, an amount equal to the excess annual depreciation from the revaluation reserve is transferred to the General Fund, which makes sure that by the time the asset is fully depreciated there is no residual balance associated with the asset in the Revaluation Reserve. The Revaluation Reserve relates completely to tangible assets.

The Donated Asset Reserve shows the value of assets donated to The National Archives; value is added when the asset is donated and the assets are depreciated in the same way as other assets. Depreciation is charged to Other Comprehensive Expenditure in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE). On recognition, there is an equal and opposite transfer of income from the donation to other operating revenue in the SoCNE, so that the value of the asset in the Statement of Financial Position remains balanced by the value in the Donated Asset Reserve.

Notes to the Departmental Resource Accounts

1. Statement of accounting policies, key accounting estimates and judgments

1.1 Statement of accounting policies

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Government Financial Reporting Manual 2023-24 (FReM) issued by HM Treasury, as required by the statutory Accounts Directions issued pursuant to section 5(2) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000. The accounting policies contained in the FReM apply International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adapted or interpreted for the public sector context.

The accounting policies adopted by The National Archives are described below. Where the FReM permits a choice of accounting policy, the accounting policy that is judged to be most appropriate to the particular circumstances of The National Archives is applied for the purpose of giving a true and fair view. They have been applied to all items that are material to the accounts.

In addition to the primary statements prepared under IFRS, the FReM also requires the department to prepare an additional primary statement. The Statement of Parliamentary Supply and supporting notes show outturn against Estimate in terms of the net resource requirement and the net cash requirement.

1.2 Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention (the practise of recording the original cost of an asset at its cost on a balance sheet) modified to account for the revaluation of non-current assets, where material, at their value to the business by reference as applicable to their current costs, replacement costs or indices.

Transactions denominated in foreign currency are translated into sterling at the exchange rate ruling at the time of the transaction.

Any assets and liabilities in a foreign currency are translated into sterling at the exchange rate on the date of reporting.

Areas of significant estimates and judgments

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenses. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The financial statements of The National Archives include estimates and assumptions that could influence the financial statements of subsequent financial years.

Estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised and in any future periods affected.

The estimates and judgments that had a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next accounting period are:

- IAS 16 Land and Buildings: Professional valuations are required every five years at a minimum with a professional desktop valuation used in intervening years. In the current year, the land and buildings are stated at fair value using a full professional valuation. Further details are in note 5.
- Heritage assets: Reliable information on cost or valuation is not available for the department's collection of heritage assets and, accordingly, an accounting judgment has been made not to value these in the financial statements. Further details are in note 8.
- IAS 38 Intangible assets: The valuations of licences issued to third parties and internal revenue-generating databases are based on forecasts of probable future revenue generating capacity, which are uncertain. Further details are in note 6.
- IFRS 15 Revenue Recognition: On transition to IFRS 15, judgments were made relating to the determination of performance obligations in each of the major revenue streams, which had the potential to impact the revenue recognition pattern under the contract. No further judgments have been made since transition. Assumptions are required to determine an appropriate measure of progress when determining how control over promised goods or services transfers to the customer. Estimates

are made at year end to recognise revenue where actual sales are unknown. Further details are in note 4.

Going concern

In common with other government departments, The National Archives' liabilities are expected to be met by future grants of supply and the application of future income, both to be approved annually by Parliament. There is no reason to believe that future Parliamentary approval will not be forthcoming, and therefore, in accordance with FReM 4.2.14, it has been concluded as appropriate to adopt the going concern basis of preparation for these accounts.

In forming this view, the directors note that the department:

- i. Applies prudent financial management in order to ensure that its commitments are accommodated within the timing of allocated budget;
and
- ii. Undertakes a robust and detailed annual business planning and budgeting process to establish its operational cost requirements for each financial year.

1.3 Accounting standards issued but not yet effective

IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts is expected to replace IFRS 4 from 1 April 2025 for public sector organisations. The scope of the standard covers insurance contracts issued or held. This reporting standard has been reviewed and is anticipated to have no accounting impact upon The National Archives as no such insurance contracts are held.

Accounting policies for expenditure

1.4 Staff costs

Staff costs include wages and salaries, social security costs and pension costs. All short-term staff costs payable at the year end, which will be paid within one year from the date of reporting, are recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. These include any accrued leave entitlements.

1.5 Pensions

Most past or present employees are covered by the provisions of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and alpha (a pension scheme introduced on 1 April 2015), which are defined benefit schemes open to participating public sector bodies in which the benefit the employee receives during retirement is dependent on factors such as age, length of service and salary. These schemes are administered by MyCSP on behalf of the Cabinet Office. The National Archives pays contributions into these schemes at an agreed rate. As one of many participating organisations, The National Archives is not able to identify its share of any liability for making future pension payments to members and, accordingly, The National Archives accounts for this as if it were a defined contribution scheme and recognises the costs of these contributions when they fall due.

Employees may opt to join a personal stakeholder pension scheme instead, providing the scheme meets the minimum criteria set by government. These are defined contribution schemes where The National Archives pays established

contribution rates into a separate fund. The amount of pension benefit that a member receives in retirement is dependent on the performance of the fund. The National Archives recognises the cost of these contributions in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure when they fall due. There is no further payment obligation once the contributions have been paid.

1.6 Early departure costs

Where The National Archives ends the employment of a staff member and makes a compensation payment within the rules of the Civil Service Compensation Scheme (CSCS), the cost of that payment is recognised in full in the year the individual accepts the terms of the compensation payment.

1.7 Grant expenditure

Grants payable are recognised when the criteria for a constructive obligation are met, payment is probable, values can be measured reliably, and there are no conditions attached to its payment that limit its recognition.

1.8 Value Added Tax (VAT) on purchases

The National Archives reclaims VAT on purchases under section 41 (3) of the VAT Act 1994. Under this provision, HM Treasury issues a Direction commonly known as the 'Contracting Out Direction' which lists the government departments that are eligible to claim refunds of VAT, and the services on which VAT can be reclaimed.³⁸

³⁸ A full list of the services on which VAT can be reclaimed under the Contracting Out Direction can be found at gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/vat-government-and-public-bodies/vatgpb9700.

Where The National Archives makes purchases on which VAT cannot be recovered, it is charged to the relevant expenditure category or included in the capitalised purchase price of non-current assets.

Accounting policies for income

1.9 Contract income

The National Archives recognises revenue in accordance with IFRS 15. The standard sets out that the point of recognition is based on when performance obligations of a contract are satisfied and the benefits are fully received by the customer.

Revenue principally comprises contracted charges for services provided for the sale of copies of documents, sale of publications and other items and services, reproduction fees, income generated by the licensing of digital copies of historical records and storage facility income. Costs associated with the contracted revenue are recognised in the same accounting period.

Further details of The National Archives recognition of contracted income are set out in note 4.

1.10 Other income

Other operating income includes grants and contributions from other organisations (including other government departments) to carry out specific projects, as well as lessor income.

Grant and contribution income is recognised as income over the period necessary to match them with the related

costs for which they are intended to compensate, in accordance with IAS 20. Where funds are received in advance of work starting on the project, these are held as deferred revenue until the related costs are incurred.

Lessor income results from The National Archives renting out a section of the building to a third party. Rental income is recognised as it falls due. Rental income includes a service charge levied on an annual basis to recover central costs borne by The National Archives.

1.11 Value Added Tax (VAT) on sales

Where output tax is chargeable, income is stated net of VAT.

The National Archives does not charge VAT for any work it carries out under statute.

Accounting policies for assets and liabilities

1.12 Property, plant and equipment and intangible assets

Expenditure of £5,000 or more on property, plant and equipment or intangible assets is capitalised where it is expected to bring benefit over future years. On initial recognition, assets are measured at cost and include all costs directly attributable to bringing them into working condition. This includes the costs of external contractors who deliver on information technology projects as well as salaries of internal staff working 100% of their time on particular capital projects. Where bulk purchases are made for individual assets whose unit costs are below the threshold,

but in aggregate exceed £30,000 within a financial year, the assets are capitalised.

All non-current assets are reviewed annually for impairment and are carried at fair value. Property, plant, and equipment is depreciated, and intangible assets amortised, on a straight-line basis over their useful lives to ensure that they are reported at their estimated residual value at the end of their lives.

Property, plant and equipment

The National Archives buildings and grounds at Kew are freehold property. The land and buildings are stated at fair value using professional valuations, by property valuers having appropriate recognised professional qualifications and recent experience in the location and category of the properties being valued, every five years at a minimum. In intervening years, the value is stated at fair value using a professional desktop valuation.

Non-property assets comprise: Plant and Equipment; Furniture Fixtures and Fittings; Computers and Equipment. Assets held at present within these categories mostly have a short lifespan of 10 years or less. Many, particularly within Computers and Equipment have only a 5 year lifespan and are also of low value. These assets are valued at depreciated replacement cost in existing use, which is used as a proxy for fair value.

Mobile Racking, which sits within Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings has a 50 year lifespan. This is a highly specialised bespoke set of assets for which there is no

useful or relevant evidence of recent market transactions, and they are also valued at depreciated replacement cost in existing use as a proxy for fair value.

Expenditure on restoration and conservation work is part of the normal operating costs of The National Archives and is not capitalised; it is recorded as part of programme costs.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the valuation of freehold buildings and other non-current assets by equal instalments over their estimated useful lives. Freehold land and assets in the course of construction are not depreciated.

Asset lives are in the following ranges:

Asset class	Life range
Buildings	up to 40 years
Computers and equipment	up to 10 years
Plant and machinery	up to 25 years
Furniture, fixtures, and fittings	up to 50 years
Transport equipment	up to 10 years

Leases

The National Archives accounts for leases under IFRS16 Leases, with the costs, depreciation and other associated disclosures being shown in Note 7. No recognition of assets and liabilities is done for leases where the underlying asset

is of low value, or for where the lease term is less than 12 months.

The National Archives has one lease recognised under IFRS16 Leases, a storage facility at Deepstore.

Initial recognition

At the commencement of a lease, The National Archives recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability.

The lease liability is measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using either the rate implicit in the lease, or (where this cannot be determined) the HM Treasury discount rate published in the Public Expenditure (PES) Discount Rates paper.

The right-of-use asset is initially recognised at an amount equal to the lease liability, adjusted for: and payments made or amounts accrued before the commencement date, lease incentives received, incremental costs in obtaining the lease, and any disposal costs at the end of the least.

Subsequent measurement

The lease liability is adjusted for interest charges, lease repayments and any remeasurement of the future lease payments based on inflation-linked increases.

Right-of-use assets are depreciated on a straight line basis over the term of the lease. At year end, they are revalued in line with the remeasurement of the liability and depreciation is adjusted for future years based on the updated value of the asset.

Intangible assets

Intangible assets comprise software licences purchased from third parties, amortised over the life of the licence, and the cost of developing internal software assets, amortised on a straight-line basis over the useful economic life of the asset.

In addition, The National Archives recognises licences issued to third parties and internal revenue generating databases (such as our Digital Download and Image Library services) as intangible assets with indefinite lives, reflecting their underlying nature of supporting public records.

Asset lives are in the following ranges:

Asset class	Life range
Software licences	up to 5 years
Internally developed software	up to 15 years
Licences issued to third parties	indefinite
Internally developed revenue-generating databases	indefinite

The assets with a definite lifespan are stated at historical cost less accumulated amortisation and accumulated impairment losses as a proxy for fair value, as no active market exists for them.

The valuation adopted for licences issued to third parties and internal revenue generating databases is based on current forecasts of reasonably foreseeable future revenue

generating capacity, discounted as appropriate. Further details of the effects of changes in our forecast estimates are shown under Note 6 of the accounts.

1.13 Heritage assets

The National Archives holds an internationally, historically significant collection of physical records and artefacts, as well as a growing digital archive, which are collectively classed as non-operational heritage assets. These are held in order to fulfil our statutory function, which includes ensuring that important information is preserved and that it can be accessed and used.

Information regarding our collections is available via our online catalogue, [Discovery](#), which contains descriptions of a broad range of documents and other types of records. In addition, accessioned and published Court Judgments are available from the [Find Case Law](#) service. Web archived material is available through the [UK Government Web Archive](#).

In the opinion of The National Archives' Board, reliable information on cost or valuation is not available for the department's collection of heritage assets. This is due to the diverse nature of the assets held, the lack of information on purchase cost (as the assets are not purchased) and the volume of items held. As well as the aforementioned, any market value placed on these assets would not be a true reflection of the value of the assets to the nation's heritage; the assets, if lost, could not be replaced or reconstructed. These assets are therefore not reported in the Statement of Financial Position.

Certain items within the overall collection are of particular significance, including Domesday Book, one of our most prized national treasures, which has been preserved for over nine centuries and is now cared for at Kew; two contemporary versions of Magna Carta; unique records of official treaties; and a host of irreplaceable social records including the 1921 Census and early-twentieth century historical military service personnel records. Further details of the preservation and management of our heritage assets are provided in note 8 of the accounts.

1.14 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise current balances held at the Government Banking Service. Any amounts held in foreign currency are translated into sterling at the exchange rate on the date of reporting.

1.15 Contract and trade receivables

Contract receivables are amounts invoiced and due from software development, licences, record copying or other services.

Trade receivables are amounts invoiced and due in respect of lessor income, grant income and specific Government Contracts.

Trade receivables do not carry any interest and are stated at their nominal value as reduced by appropriate allowances for irrecoverable amounts. These impairment provisions are recorded in administrative expenses in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure. The

carrying amount of trade receivables is deemed to be an approximation of fair value.

If collection of amounts receivable is expected in one year or less they are classified as current assets. If not, they are presented as non-current assets.

1.16 Contract assets and liabilities

Contract assets relate to our enforceable right to consideration for our completed performance in respect of contracts where that work has not yet been invoiced. It is determined on the basis of work undertaken at the period end, less any provision for unrecoverable amounts.

Payments received in advance of performance under the contract are recognised as contract liabilities. This is then recognised as revenue as the work is performed.

1.17 Provisions

Provisions are recognised in accordance with IAS 37 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets.

The amount recognised as a provision is the best estimate of expenditure required to settle the present obligation at the Statement of Financial Position date. Provisions that are more than a year from the Statement of Financial Position date are discounted at the rates set annually by HM Treasury because The National Archives is a public body funded by the Exchequer and setting its own discount rate could expose taxpayers' funds to risks unnecessarily.

2. Statement of Operating Expenditure by Operating Segment

IFRS 8 Operating Segments requires operating segmental information to be provided based on information that the Chief Executive and Keeper as Chief Operating Decision Maker (CODM) uses to make decisions about the organisation. This information, reviewed by the CODM, is currently presented based on our management structure as per [page 108](#). To aid readers' understanding, the segments below have been presented in line with our public task, which can be summarised as: leading on policy and best practice in knowledge and information management for the public sector; preserving and protecting the record; and providing public access.

In accordance with IFRS 8, below is a schedule of income and expenditure against each identified segment. Overheads are allocated proportionally based on the direct costs of each segment.

	Government information management 2023-24 £000	Preservation and protection 2023-24 £000	Public access 2023-24 £000	Total 2023-24 £000
Income	(4,465)	(980)	(9,779)	(15,224)
Operating expenditure	11,314	16,521	28,683	56,518
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	1,477	2,156	3,743	7,376
Net operating expenditure	8,326	17,697	22,647	48,670

	Government information management 2022-23 £000	Preservation and protection 2022-23 £000	Public access 2022-23 £000	Total 2022-23 £000
Income	(3,927)	(589)	(9,830)	(14,346)
Operating expenditure	12,451	15,435	25,584	53,470
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment	1,640	2,034	3,371	7,045
Net operating expenditure	10,164	16,880	19,125	46,169

3. Operating expenditure

	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Staff costs		
Wages and salaries	24,902	21,763
Social Security costs	2,533	2,443
Other pension costs	6,016	5,611
Less capitalised staff costs	(759)	(637)
Total staff costs	32,692	29,180
Purchase of goods and services		
Costs of Sales	159	301
Employee Related Costs	804	770
Business Rates	3,405	3,522
Property Costs	4,460	4,272
IT and Telecoms	4,512	3,799
Archival Maintenance	663	1,172

	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Marketing and Communications	358	503
Grants Paid	1,120	502
Contracted Services	7,209	8,517
Audit, Finance, Legal and Professional	223	148
Other Costs	773	630
Total goods and services	23,686	24,136
Non-cash items		
Depreciation and amortisation		
- Civil estate	4,506	4,238
- Other non-current assets	2,793	2,807
Total depreciation	7,299	7,045
Auditor's remuneration – audit work	98	81
Right of Use Asset interest charge	69	73
Impairment	77	-
Change to onerous lease provision	(27)	-
Total other non-cash items	217	154
Total non-cash items	7,516	7,199
Total operating expenditure	63,894	60,515

Further analysis on staff numbers, compensation scheme packages and pension disclosures can be found on [page 153](#), within the Accountability Report.

No fees have been paid to auditors for non-audit work in the financial year 2023-24.

4. Income

The following are descriptions of the principal contracted activities, their associated performance obligations and significant payment terms under IFRS 15.

Revenue stream	Timing of performance obligations and significant payment terms
<p>Licensing royalties</p> <p>Commercial partners use accessioned content on their websites or within their online products. Royalties are due to us when their subscribers use this content, or customers purchase their products.</p>	<p>Revenue is recognised in line with usage/sales. A statement is received from the partner detailing usage/sales during the period which is then billed for. Billing arrangements vary from a monthly to quarterly or annual basis.</p> <p>An estimation of usage/sales is made for the last quarter where statements have not been received, based on forecasts and information from partners, and is accrued through the SoCNE.</p>
<p>Record copying (statutory provision)</p> <p>Digital or paper copies of our accessioned records are sold to individual customers.</p>	<p>Revenue is recognised at the point where the copies are provided to the customer. Billing takes place prior to distribution of the copies.</p>
<p>Digitisation</p> <p>A digitisation service for bulk orders from third parties. The records can belong to us or to external parties. Digitised copies are provided on hard drives.</p>	<p>Revenue is recognised at the point where the copies are provided to the third party and is typically billed in advance. Projects on which work has begun, but which has not been delivered at the reporting date, are held as contract assets at the value of the work completed to date.</p>
<p>Storage income</p> <p>Commercial partners store records in The National Archives storage facility.</p>	<p>Revenue is recognised in line with usage, with billing arranged quarterly.</p>

Revenue stream	Timing of performance obligations and significant payment terms
<p>Drafting tools</p> <p>Publishing legislation on behalf of other government departments and devolved administrations.</p>	<p>A fee is charged per document published and recognised in line with publication. Billing on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p>Licensing resales</p> <p>Copies of images digitised either by a licensing partner, or by The National Archives, can be resold to another licensing partner or digitisation customer. When sold to another licensing partner, this will be alongside a license to publish and The National Archives will also benefit from future royalties.</p>	<p>Revenue is recognised at the point where the images are transferred and the licensing partner obtains control of the right to publish, unless it is a sale to a licensing partner where the images are required to be updated over the period that they have access to the material, in which case it is recognised over the period of the licence. Revenue is received either in advance or on delivery.</p>
<p>Gazette Income</p> <p><i>The Gazette</i> is the official newspaper of the government and is printed and distributed by our publishing partner. The income is principally driven from advertisements placed in the paper both statutory and non-statutory.</p>	<p>Revenue is recognised on a sliding scale as set out in the contract with the publisher. The contract period is annual and based on a percentage of the revenue with the percentage increasing as turnover thresholds are reached.</p> <p>The contract is based on a calendar year and the lowest percentage is used to calculate the revenue for January to March as any additional revenue cannot be guaranteed until the turnover threshold in that year has been exceeded.</p>
<p>Contract Assets</p>	
<p>Where work has begun on a contract, but the performance obligation has not been fully satisfied by year end, the value of the work is held as a contract asset.</p>	
<p>Contract Liabilities</p>	
<p>Where work has been billed in advance and delivery has not taken place by year end, the value of the invoices raised are held as a contract liability.</p>	

	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Revenue from contracts with customers		
Licensing royalties	3,368	3,557
Record copying	617	612
<i>Gazette</i> income	5,946	5,520
Digitisation	453	1,035
Storage income	588	469
Shop income	321	347
Drafting tools	117	198
Licensing resales	813	325
Legislation services	105	115
Digital downloads	34	35
Other	854	590
Total revenue from contracts	13,216	12,803
Other operating income		
Fees charged to other government departments	737	574
Grant income	949	649
Apprenticeship levy notional income	14	23
Lessor income	308	297
Total other operating income	2,008	1,543
Total income	15,224	14,346

5. Property, plant and equipment

	Land	Buildings	Plant and machinery	Furniture fixtures and fittings	Computers and equipment	Assets under construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2023	34,150	112,550	14,111	12,582	12,364	3,587	189,344
Additions	-	-	318	56	91	818	1,283
Reclassification	-	514	1,159	1,160	209	(3,042)	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-	(77)	(77)
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(262)	-	(262)
Revaluation	110	1,620	-	-	-	-	1,730
At 31 March 2024	34,260	114,684	15,588	13,798	12,402	1,286	192,018
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2023	-	-	8,915	7,024	10,941	-	26,880
Charged in year	-	4,506	831	568	516	-	6,421
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(262)	-	(262)
Revaluation	-	(4,506)	-	-	-	-	(4,506)
At 31 March 2024	-	-	9,746	7,592	11,195	-	28,533
Net book value							
At 31 March 2024	34,260	114,684	5,842	6,206	1,207	1,286	163,485
At 31 March 2023	34,150	112,550	5,196	5,558	1,423	3,587	162,464

	Land	Buildings	Plant and machinery	Furniture fixtures and fittings	Computers and equipment	Assets under construction	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2022	73,000	110,300	12,869	11,744	14,619	2,155	224,687
Additions	-	49	375	369	349	2,950	4,092
Reclassification	-	-	867	469	(2,595)	(1,518)	(2,777)
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(9)	-	(9)
Revaluation	(38,850)	2,201	-	-	-	-	(36,649)
At 31 March 2023	34,150	112,550	14,111	12,582	12,364	3,587	189,344
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2022	-	-	8,104	6,464	10,552	-	25,120
Charged in year	-	4,238	811	560	576	-	6,185
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	(185)	-	(185)
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(2)	-	(2)
Revaluation	-	(4,238)	-	-	-	-	(4,238)
At 31 March 2023	-	-	8,915	7,024	10,941	-	26,880
Net book value							
At 31 March 2023	34,150	112,550	5,196	5,558	1,423	3,587	162,464
At 31 March 2022	73,000	110,300	4,765	5,280	4,067	2,155	199,567

Notes

Freehold land and buildings were valued on 31 March 2024 at £148.9 million by Montagu Evans (the 'Valuer'), acting in the capacity of external valuers. As this was the first time that the Valuer had been engaged by The National Archives in this capacity, a full onsite valuation including visits to the Kew site was performed rather than a desktop exercise.

The valuation was in accordance with the requirements of the Government Financial Reporting Manual, and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors Valuation – Global Standards, 2020 (Red Book), to include the International Valuation Standards, and the RICS Valuation – Global Standards, 2017: UK National Supplement.

The Valuation was on the basis of Fair Value Market Value, as adapted by the FReM for the public sector context. The Valuer's opinion of Fair Value was primarily derived using the depreciated replacement cost approach because the specialised nature of the assets means that there are no market transactions of this type of asset except as part of the business or entity.

Revaluation in year is accounted for within other comprehensive net expenditure ([page 98](#)) and accumulated in taxpayers' equity under the revaluation reserve.

6. Intangible assets

	Software licences	Internally developed IT Systems	Internally developed revenue- generating databases	Licences issued to third parties	Assets in development	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Cost or valuation						
At 1 April 2023	916	2,777	506	28,267	3,244	35,710
Additions	-	-	-	-	1,840	1,840
Reclassifications	-	1,151	-	-	(1,151)	-
Revaluation	-	-	(47)	(87)	-	(134)
At 31 March 2024	916	3,928	459	28,180	3,933	37,416
Amortisation						
At 1 April 2023	835	370	-	-	-	1,205
Charged in year	53	248	-	-	-	301
At 31 March 2024	888	618	-	-	-	1,506
Net book value						
At 31 March 2024	28	3,310	459	28,180	3,933	35,910
At 31 March 2023	81	2,407	506	28,267	3,244	34,505

	Software licences £000	Internally developed IT Systems £000	Internally developed revenue- generating databases £000	Licences issued to third parties £000	Assets in development £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation						
At 1 April 2022	916	-	623	23,972	2,027	27,538
Additions	-	-	-	-	1,217	1,217
Reclassification	-	2,777	-	-	-	2,777
Revaluation	-	-	(117)	4,295	-	4,178
At 31 March 2023	916	2,777	506	28,267	3,244	35,710
Amortisation						
At 1 April 2022	738	-	-	-	-	738
Charged in year	97	185	-	-	-	282
Reclassification	-	185	-	-	-	185
At 31 March 2023	835	370	-	-	-	1,205
Net book value						
At 31 March 2023	81	2,407	506	28,267	3,244	34,505
At 31 March 2022	178	2,592	623	23,972	2,027	29,392

Assets in development relates to Internally developed IT Systems, to be depreciated once ready for use.

Internally developed revenue-generating databases and Licences issued to third parties are assets based on forecasts of future revenue generating capacity. The revenue-generating databases include the Image Library

and Digital Downloads, which generate revenue through customers purchasing copies of The National Archives' digitised records. Licences issued to third parties are the licences issued to licensing partners for which royalties will be generated on their sales/usage of The National Archives' records.

Revaluation in year is accounted for within other comprehensive net expenditure ([page 205](#)) and accumulated in taxpayers' equity under the revaluation reserve. Any decrease in valuation of an asset in year has not exceeded any amount previously credited to the revaluation surplus.

The intangible asset revaluations of revenue-generating databases and licences issued to third parties are based on forecasts of future revenue generating capacity as at 31 March 2024, discounted using the rate of 3.5% set out in HM Treasury's The Green Book. The forecast cashflows estimated are subject to market conditions as they are dependent on customer use of the products offered – both existing and new. If the cashflows were not discounted, the value of the revenue-generating databases would be £520,000 and the licences issued would be £34.3 million.

Below is a sensitivity analysis of the effects of changes in the forecast assumptions on the amounts disclosed in the accounts.

Market risk – assumptions tested	Increase/(decrease) in 2023-24 valuation £000
2023-24 income 10% less than forecast for revenue generating databases	(93)
2023-24 income 10% higher than forecast for revenue generating databases	93
2023-24 income 10% less than forecast for licences issued	(3,197)
2023-24 income 10% higher than forecast for licences issued	3,197

IAS 36 requires intangible assets with an indefinite useful economic life to be tested for impairment annually and whenever there is an indication that the asset may be impaired, by comparing its carrying amount with its recoverable amount. As a result of undertaking this exercise there is no impairment to the value of the assets.

7. Leases

The National Archives has one lease recognised as a right-of-use leased asset under IFRS16, a storage facility at Deepstore.

The lease liability is measured at the present value of the lease payments not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the HM Treasury rate of 0.95% as in the Public Expenditure System (PES) 2021 10 Discount rates paper.

Future lease payments are subject to an annual increase based on the Retail Price Index (RPI) as at 31 January each year. The calculation of the lease liability inflates future lease payments using inflation rates from the PES 2023 10 Discount rates paper, except for where another inflation rate is more applicable. For the closing liability, the expected cashflow for 2024-25 has been calculated using the known rate of 4.9%. For cashflows past this, the PES rates of 1.8% for 2025-26 and 2.0% for cashflows after this point into perpetuity have been used.

7a) Right of Use Leased Assets

Right of Use Leased Assets	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April	7,689	7,702
Remeasurement	160	(13)
At 31 March	7,849	7,689
Depreciation		
At 1 April	580	-
Charged in year	580	580
At 31 March	1,160	580
Net Book Value	6,689	7,109

7b) Lease liability

Lease liability	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Balance at 1 April	7,265	7,702
Remeasurement	160	(13)
Finance charge	69	73
Lease payments in year	(563)	(497)
Balance as at 31 March	6,931	7,265

The following table shows the maturity analysis of undiscounted cashflows:

Maturity analysis of undiscounted cashflows	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Within one year	591	564
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,477	2,373
Beyond five years	4,287	4,811
Total	7,355	7,748

7c) Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure

Amounts recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Interest charge	69	73
Depreciation charge	580	580
Total	649	653

7d) Amounts recognised in Statement of Cashflow

Amounts recognised in Statement of Cashflow	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Principal repayment of lease	563	497
Finance charge	69	73
Depreciation charge	580	580
Total	1,212	1,150

8. Further information on heritage assets

8a) Accessioning

There is a short time immediately following receipt of newly transferred records before they are formally accessioned into The National Archives' collection and added to our catalogue. For physical records, transfer deliveries are scrutinised for completeness and there is an element of physical and system processing needed before they can be accessioned. This includes ensuring that the physical condition of the records is acceptable, that the information provided for the catalogue reflects the content of the records and that the access conditions for each record (open or closed) are correct.

For digital records, a number of technical checks are carried out to the records themselves and also to the accompanying metadata, as part of the accessioning process. The Transfer Digital Records service automates this process and provides us with a chain of custody for the records. For non-standard digital transfers, such as records

sent on a hard disk, we check and may need to correct the accompanying metadata for accuracy and completeness prior to accessioning the records.

The National Archives is currently undertaking a project to transfer into its care records previously held by the Ministry of Defence. This is a highly complex and atypical transfer that will significantly increase the size of our collection. The accessioning of and provision of access to these records present a number of challenges to our usual ways of working. These records do not undergo formal accessioning in the same way or to the same timescales as other transfers. Nevertheless, these records are carefully monitored and recorded and are subject to controls over documentation, holdings, physical access and storage location are analogous to those in place for routine transfers.

The National Archives also holds a limited amount of un-accessioned material that reached Kew by non-standard routes, often long before current processes were put in place. This un-accessioned material is documented and accounted for and subject to periodic audits and information about the material is held in The National Archives' electronic filing systems. The records themselves are allocated a temporary location on the relevant system and physically held in a repository protected by enhanced access controls, to ensure that they can only be accessed by staff with a legitimate need to do so.

8b) Preservation and management

Government bodies select digital and physical records for permanent preservation and transferring these records to The National Archives. These bodies are subject to the 20-year rule as part of their responsibilities under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958. The Senior Courts transfer their judgments in digital format, usually on the day the decision is handed down.

The National Archives is the guardian of the nation's public records. Its core role includes preserving and protecting, making available and bringing to life the vast collection of historical information it holds. Most of the records are unique and irreplaceable and have been preserved for their historical, social, legal and administrative value. This includes significant collections of digital records.

We adopt a risk-based approach in preserving our digital and physical records. This consists of conducting a preservation risk assessment for whole collections, which is reviewed periodically. The National Archives adopts a combined approach of preventative measures and conservation treatments for records in their digital and physical forms.

Expenditure that is required to preserve or clearly prevent further deterioration of individual collection items is recognised in the Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure when it is incurred.

Our approach to preservation risk

Physical records

The physical records held by The National Archives span the period from the Middle Ages to the present day and are stored on site at Kew and at the Deepstore facility in Cheshire. They comprise a variety of formats: parchment, traditional paper records, seals, maps, costumes, paintings, films, items of court evidence, and more.

The conservation, preservation and care of this unique and irreplaceable collection is a challenging responsibility, given the age and condition of some of the physical materials. We have a dedicated team responsible for the long-term preservation of The National Archives' physical collection for continued access and future use, and we improve the stability of our most vulnerable records through conservation work.

We seek appropriate and secure accommodation for all our holdings, wherever they are stored, processed, transferred, transported or used. This includes providing suitable environmental conditions and appropriate housing. It also includes monitoring via an integrated pest management programme and an environmental monitoring system. We recognise that of all potential risks to the long-term preservation of our records, inappropriate storage is the most significant.

The Secretary of State has delegated their power at section 2(4)(g) of the Public Records Act 1958 to the Chief Executive of The National Archives (in his capacity as

Keeper of Public Records). The Chief Executive therefore has delegated authority to lend documents for display at exhibitions. All loans are conducted in accordance with our exhibitions policy and are subject to criteria agreed with Department for Culture, Media and Sport officials, in line with the loans policies of other major cultural heritage institutions.

Digital records

The National Archives takes a leading role in managing the issues associated with the survival and preservation of today's digital public records. We have produced and have published DiAGRAM, a digital preservation risk model, which we use to measure risks and scenario plan different possible interventions. Our digital preservation techniques and policies follow current good practice, as recognised nationally and globally. Our overall approach involves assessing risks to render-ability (our ability to keep records and produce them in a usable form) and intellectual control (our ability to understand what they are). We act to mitigate these risks.

Our digital preservation systems provide secure, resilient archival storage to ensure the integrity of the original digital objects ('bit preservation'). Our work with DROID and PRONOM provides the international digital preservation community with the ability to identify file formats, a prerequisite for understanding which files are at risk of becoming unfit for presentation. Should a format be identified as posing a risk, action can be taken to migrate records to a more durable format or to otherwise mitigate that risk ('active

preservation’). The National Archives maintains the original manifestation of the record as accessioned. We create digital surrogates for access.

We also routinely harvest digital public records from the web. The UK Government Web Archive collection is a thorough and high-quality capture of published public records. We harvest material from government websites, Public Inquiry websites, and official channels on social media services. A significant proportion of this collection is not held by other archives.

8c) Access

Details of the records we hold can be obtained through our online catalogue, [Discovery](#). All open records are available for viewing by members of the public and can be viewed free of charge on site at Kew or copies can be requested for a fee. Generally, digital copies of some of our open documents are also available for download from our online services – some may be downloaded free and some for a small fee. A brief registration process is required to consult original documents on site; this is not required to view surrogates or online copies of documents.

In a normal year, access to the records is provided in a number of ways, both on site and online. Original documents on site are accessed by readers or staff under controlled conditions, in accordance with nationally recognised and agreed standards.

Readers use the document reading room and the map and large document reading room to consult original

documents. In some cases, valuable or fragile material may only be consulted under supervision either within the conservation studio or in the invigilation room.

There are ongoing projects to catalogue more of our heritage assets, many using volunteers to further improve access to records and we have a dedicated catalogue team responsible for this.

9. Trade and other receivables

	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	1,335	3,081
Deposits and advances	20	22
Prepayments	1,168	946
Accrued income	2,808	2,412
Total trade and other assets	5,331	6,461
Contract assets	-	131
Total receivables falling due within one year	5,331	6,592
Amounts falling due after one year:		
Prepayments	388	266
Total receivables	5,719	6,858

10. Trade and other payables

Trade and other payables	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other Taxation, Social Security and Pension	1,176	1,158
VAT	399	270
Trade payables	2,360	1,409
Accruals	1,759	1,154
Deferred income	120	150
Deposits	12	12
Short-term staff benefits (holiday pay accrual)	961	1,022
Amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at year end	1,629	74
Total trade and other liabilities	8,416	5,249
Contract liabilities	131	137
Lease liabilities	525	496
Total payables falling due within one year	9,072	5,882
Amounts falling due after one year:		
Contract liabilities	194	249
Lease liabilities	6,406	6,769
Total payables	15,672	12,900

See Note 7 for details of amounts due under Lease Liabilities.

11. Other financial commitments

The National Archives has no capital commitments (2022-23: £nil)

The National Archives has entered into significant non-cancellable contracts (which are not leases or PFI contracts) for a facilities management service and IT Services. The payments to which The National Archives is committed, analysed by the period during which the commitment expire, are as follows:

Future financial commitments	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Not later than one year	1,810	1,798
Later than one year and not later than five years	193	176
Beyond five years	-	-
Total	2,003	1,974

The facilities management contract (£1.66 million) has been extended and is due to end in December 2024. No further contract has been entered into beyond that point.

12. Future income due under non-cancellable operating leases

In 2019-20, The National Archives entered into a contract to rent a section of the building to a third party. The aggregate minimum lease receipts are as follows:

Future lease income	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000
Receivable within one year	228	228
Receivable later than one year and not later than five years	133	360
Total	361	588

13. Financial instruments

As the cash requirements of The National Archives are met through the Estimates process, financial instruments play a more limited role in managing risk than would apply to a non-public sector body of a similar size. The majority of financial instruments relate to contracts to buy non-financial items in line with The National Archives' expected purchase and usage requirements and The National Archives is therefore exposed to little credit or liquidity risk.

14. Contingent liabilities

There were no material contingent liabilities at the reporting date (2022-23: nil).

15. Related party transactions

The National Archives is a non-ministerial department of the UK Government. Its parent department is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. The Chief Executive and Keeper, which during the reporting year was Dr Jeff James CBE, reports to the Secretary of State.

The National Archives has had a number of transactions with other government departments and other central government bodies, throughout the year. At 31 March 2024, The National Archives was owed the following: £7,676 by Department for Business and Trade (2022-23: nil), £203,000 by the House of Commons (2022-23: nil), £6,704 by Ministry of Justice (2022-23: nil) and £7,200 by The Scottish Government (2022-23: nil). The National Archives owed £5,784 (2022-23: nil) to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Until 10 October 2023, Dr Jeff James CBE, Chief Executive and Keeper during the reporting year, was the President of the International Council on Archives' (ICA) Forum of National Archivists (FAN) and a member of the ICA Executive Board. Subscription to the ICA was paid to the sum of £18,460 (2022-23: £18,822).

John Sheridan, Digital Director, is a Director of the DLM Forum, for and on behalf of The National Archives. The National Archives paid a membership fee of £892 (2022-23: £854).

There are no further outstanding balances owed to or owed from any of the above related party organisations.

The Remuneration and staff report ([page 153](#)) contains details of payments made to key personnel.

16. Events after the reporting period date

There have been no significant events after 31 March 2024 that require adjustment to, or disclosure in, the financial statements.

These accounts have been authorised for issue by the Accounting Officer on the same date as the Comptroller and Auditor General's Audit Certificate.

Annexes and appendix

Annex A: Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: 21st Annual Report 2023-24

Foreword by Sir Geoffrey Vos, Master of the Rolls

To the Right Honourable Lisa Nandy MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport

I am pleased to present the 21st Annual Report for the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives.

It has been another busy year for the Council with members continuing to perform their statutory role under the Public Records Act 1958, providing advice to the Secretary of State and diligently implementing the public interest test on closure applications brought before them.

At the start of 2023-24, the Council heard an update on the end of the ten-year transition from the 30-year to the 20-year rule from The National Archives. The Council has continued to monitor progress on this, particularly in relation to the transfer of digital records from departments. The Council also received updates on their

own records, progressing toward timely transfer to The National Archives.

Throughout 2023-24, the Council has monitored the increase in requests relating to Ministry of Defence service personnel records. These requests have represented an unprecedented situation for colleagues at The National Archives, and the Council continues to support them in their response to dealing with such vast numbers. Members were pleased to note that the project has reached the halfway point with over 5.5 million records transferred so far. The Council recognises the enormity of the task and has been impressed by the versatility of The National Archives' staff in managing the additional workload.

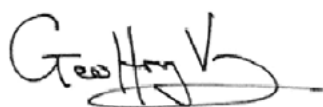
The Council has taken time during the year to reflect on the balance of its work following on from a conversation about the legal basis of its remit. Members considered how to strike a balance between the time they can dedicate to the Council's work and other demands. This is an ongoing conversation as the volume of the Council's work increases, principally due to the increased need for Freedom of Information (FOI) panels and is something members will consider further in the coming year.

Over the past year, the Council has discussed the impact of artificial intelligence on Government records. Members are interested to see how this area develops and the potential impact it could have on records management, including processing speed.

The Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research, a subcommittee of the Council, has continued to provide expert advice under the Acceptance in Lieu scheme as well as monitored activity in the academic archives sector. In October 2023, Forum members visited the John Rylands Research Institute and Library. Members look forward to their planned offsite visit in Autumn 2024 and would like to convey their thanks to the John Rylands staff for an enjoyable and informative day.

At the start of 2024, the Council provided advice to the Secretary of State on the retention and storage of wills. Council members will engage in further discussion with departments on the subject as and when required.

As we look forward to 2024-25, the Council expressed its thanks to outgoing Chief Executive of The National Archives, Dr Jeff James CBE. For the past ten years, he led The National Archives in its mission to ensure that public records are accessible and that its voice is heard in government discussions. We look forward to working with the new Chief Executive and Keeper.



The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Vos
The Master of the Rolls
24 May 2024

Introduction

The Advisory Council on National Records and Archives (the ‘Council’) is an independent advisory body, created under the Public Records Act 1958 and exercising statutory functions under that Act. It advises the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (the ‘Secretary of State’) on issues relating to public records that are over 20 years old (historical public records), including public access to them, at the point of transfer to The National Archives. It also advises the Secretary of State in deciding on requests from Government Departments for historical public records to remain closed under certain Freedom of Information Act 2000 exemptions and challenges them to provide evidence to justify such requests.

Through its sub-committee, the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research (the ‘Forum’), the Council advises the Chief Executive of The National Archives in their capacity as Historical Manuscripts Commissioner on matters relating to independent (non-governmental) archives outside the public records system.

The Council’s and the Forum’s respective remits, as well as their Terms of Reference, are described in more detail on The National Archives’ website nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/advisory-council.

The Advisory Council’s work in 2023-24

At the start of the reporting year, the Council received a response to a letter we sent to our sponsoring Department,

the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in 2022 regarding the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) Sections 23, 24, 65 and 66. The response clarified the Council's role in relation to these sections.

The Council has continued to scrutinise the application of the FOIA through members' participation in Freedom of Information (FOI) Panels. In these Panels, members provide advice on FOI requests in relation to specific historical documents where it is proposed by The National Archives and/or government departments that these documents should remain closed to public view. While the frequency of these Panels has increased, members have worked towards providing feedback as quickly as possible, with the turnaround on all the last quarter's Panels being completed within one working day. Through The National Archives, Panels have also continued to ensure FOI requests under section 66, which require specific departmental approval, are completed in a timely manner. Similarly, by working with The National Archives colleagues, there has been a welcome and significant reduction in the number of outstanding queries with departments on closure and retention schedules.

The Council are continuing to work with other departments across government to develop good working practices and standards. In 2023, we began discussing the application of section 37, which includes exemptions from FOI disclosure for communications with members of the Royal Family and Household, with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Cabinet Office. Since

the end of the reporting year, we have met with FCDO colleagues to discuss this, and the application of FOI exemptions more generally. The Council has also queried the greater length of time accorded for consultations about documents with the Royal Household, compared with similar consultations with government departments. These discussions remain a priority for the Council in 2024-25.

In 2023, the Council were made aware that their own public records were due to be transferred to The National Archives, as required under the Public Records Act. We are pleased to report that this transfer has been largely completed, and our thanks are conveyed to the Advisory Council Secretariat for their work on this.

Meetings

The Council held four formal meetings in May, July and November 2023 and in February 2024. Members held an additional strategy session online in September 2023 where they discussed their process guidance for considering Freedom of Information closures, the balance of the Council's work across its remit under the Public Records Act, and received an update on relevant policy areas.

The Council's meetings were attended by members, as well as by Dr Jeff James CBE, The National Archives' Chief Executive and Keeper of Public Records during the reporting year. Other representatives from The National Archives who possess particular expertise relating to the issues considered by the Council also participated, as necessary.

The Advisory Council's Governance Working Group met three times in 2023-24 to devote more time to discussion on specific issues. Such topics included the newly developed Public Interest Test form and streamlining ways of working with government departments.

In addition to the Council meetings, members took part in Freedom of Information Panels. Though not meetings as such, they represent a significant amount of dedication from members who share the demand equally between them. In 2023-24, members completed 41 panels, which is an increase of seven compared to 2022-23, during which 34 were completed.

Engagement with departments

Under the Public Records Act, government departments, arms-length bodies and places of deposit have a statutory duty to transfer their public records to The National Archives. From time-to-time, this cannot be completed before the statutory deadline and the relevant body must apply to the Council to retain their records. Typically, public bodies apply for between one and five years of retention, and the Council only grants long periods by exception after significant scrutiny. The Council then makes its recommendation to the Secretary of State, who makes a decision on whether to grant the application based on this advice.

During 2023-24, the Council considered 68 new applications for retention from public bodies. The Secretary of State accepted the Council's advice on every application for retention considered.

As part of the Council's work to support departments in transferring records, it will request relevant updates from departments. This can either be through a written update, or an update where the department appears before the Council to discuss their records and processing plans in greater detail. Updates can include information on the support a department has in place, timescales and methods for processing these records, and details on the types of records. Throughout 2023-24, Council received a total of 27 updates from across government departments, arms-length bodies and Places of Deposit.

Freedom of Information Panel metrics

During the financial year 2023-2024, 41 panels were convened, with 820 cases being considered. Panels substantively challenged 117 of these, or 13% of the total. This compared to 624 cases in 2021-2022, where 34 cases were substantively challenged (5%). The increase in numbers of cases considered is part of a wider trend, which was interrupted and slightly reversed by COVID-19, but which overall has seen a year-on-year increase in FOI Panel cases.

The most commonly challenged exemption was Section 38(1)(a) (health and safety) (35 times) while section 27(1) (international relations) was second-most challenged (17 times) along with Section 31(1) (law enforcement) (also challenged 17 times). A further breakdown of FOI Panel statistics can be seen in Appendix C.

The Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research

In 2023, the Forum had an opportunity to consider the 2022-23 Sales Monitoring Report which is prepared annually by The National Archives. Forum members welcomed the report and noted the amount of work The National Archives' Archives Sector Leadership team had put in to the project throughout the year. It is a valuable resource in monitoring the sale of historical records and alerting Archives and Special Collections services to sales of potential interest.

The Forum's visit to the John Rylands Research Institute and Library in Manchester was a particular highlight of 2023. After an informative tour and discussion with the staff, the usual business meeting was held. Members discussed the strategic priorities for the Forum and agreed the following for 2024-25: artificial intelligence, the level 7 Archivist and Records Manager apprenticeship, sustainability in independent archives, building relationships with the Manorial and Tithe Documents Panel, the government's strategic vision for the archives sector ('Archives Unlocked'), and access to archives.

The Forum has also been proactive in asking guest speakers to attend their meetings. This has included sector colleagues from the Bishopsgate Institute, the Worshipful Company of Mercers and the Alfred Gillett Trust. The speakers have covered topics ranging from the Covid-19 Archives Fund, artificial intelligence and its potential in the archives sector, and the new level 7 Archives

apprenticeships. Forum members continue to develop their understanding of pertinent topics such as these and look forward to doing so in the next year. They would also like to convey their gratitude to all those who have spoken at their meetings over the past year. These contributions from the sector are invaluable to the work of the Forum.

In 2023, a recruitment exercise was undertaken for members for the newly established Manorial and Tithe Documents Panel (the Panel) as a sub-committee of the Forum to advise the Master of the Rolls on his responsibilities for manorial and tithe documents and to advise the Historical Manuscripts Commissioner on matters relevant to these records. This body was created, following the agreement of the Master of the Rolls and the Historical Manuscripts Commissioner, to replace the previous Manorial Documents Advisory Panel. The Panel held its first meeting in April 2024, at which it agreed its Terms of Reference. Members will report on their work to the Master of the Rolls via the Forum.

Administration and governance

Membership

The Council is chaired by the Master of the Rolls, Sir Geoffrey Vos, and Mr David Rossington CB is the Deputy Chair. Members generally serve two four-year terms on the Council and are appointed through the Public Appointments process. The total membership of the Council is currently seventeen, including the Chair. Biographies can be found

for the members on our pages on The National Archives' website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/advisory-council/membership/.

The Forum is also chaired by the Master of the Rolls, Sir Geoffrey Vos, and Professor Leon Litvack is the Deputy Chair. The Forum must contain at least three Advisory Council members, as well as three Independent members. Over 2023-24, two new Forum members were appointed: Mr Bill Stocking as an Independent member and Mr Stephen Hawker as an Advisory Council representative. The Forum was pleased to welcome Bill to his first meeting in March and thanks Stephen for volunteering for the role in addition to his Council responsibilities.

All members are required to keep the Advisory Council Secretariat advised of any declarations of interest. If applicable, members that have a declared interest in items on the Council meeting agendas are required to recuse themselves from taking part in the discussion. A list of members' declarations can be found on The National Archives' website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/about/our-role/advisory-council/membership/register-of-interests/.

Remuneration

Remuneration for the Council members, excluding the Master of the Rolls, was approved and introduced on 1 April 2019 and is provided by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Members are remunerated at a rate of £386 per day to a maximum of £9,264 per year. The Council remuneration for 2023-2024 totalled £101,615.

Freedom of Information requests

As a public body, the Council is subject to the FOIA itself. In 2023-24, the Council received six Freedom of Information requests. All requests were responded to within the statutory timeframe as required by the FOIA.

Sustainability

The Council as a body is reliant on larger bodies to provide most of its support services but seeks to increase its sustainability wherever possible. The Council continues to operate with a paperless system for its work and deals with all information digitally. The transition to hybrid meetings also has sustainability implications as fewer overall journeys are required as part of the Council's work, as well as facilitating easier attendance from Government Departments.

Looking ahead

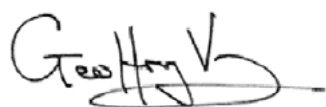
The year 2024-25 looks likely to produce continuation of, if not an increase in, current work levels. We are expecting to encounter a steady rise in the number of 'born-digital' records being transferred to The National Archives which present their own unique set of challenges. We will continue to keep abreast of technological improvements and adaptations that could assist in this area of work.

The Council will undergo a change in membership over the coming year due to existing members' terms coming to an end. We will feel the loss of experienced colleagues,

but look forward to seeing the skills that a new cohort of members can bring to our discussions.

Members of the Forum look forward to a further offsite visit in the Autumn of 2024, allowing for valuable insight into practical archival practice.

Following the appointment of the new Chief Executive and Keeper, Mr Saul Nassé, we look forward to introducing him to the work of the Council and the Forum.



The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Vos
The Master of the Rolls
5 July 2024

Appendix A – The Remit of the Council and the Forum

The Council

Background

The Advisory Council on National Records and Archives was established by the Public Records Act 1958 ('PRA') and is a non-departmental public body. It is chaired by the Master of the Rolls, The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Vos, who was appointed with effect from 11 January 2020.

The role of the Council

The Council is to consider and advise on matters including:

- applications from departments for the retention within those departments of public records beyond the age of 20 years, when those selected for permanent preservation are normally transferred to The National Archives
- the balance of the public interest in relation to applications from departments for the extended closure of historical public records and other “matters relating to the application of the FOIA to information contained in public records that are historical records within the meaning of Part VI of that Act”
- the balance of the public interest in the release or non-disclosure of historical records, an application for the disclosure of which has been made under the FOIA.
- the preservation of public records in places of deposit and facilities for public access to them

Requests under FOIA in accordance with the third bullet point are dealt with through the FOI panel process, which is described in Appendix B below.

In addition, the Council may be required to advise on:

- major objectives, programmes and policy changes for The National Archives
- proposed legislation affecting The National Archives

- the implications for records and public services of any proposed change to the status of The National Archives; and/or
- any subject brought to its attention by the Secretary of State.

As its name suggests, the Council's role is advisory. Accordingly, the Council does not:

- make the final decision as to:
 - whether records are transferred to The National Archives closed (i.e. not available for public access); nor
 - when a closed record is reviewed after transfer, it should remain closed

as these decisions lie with the department whose records they are

- make the final decision on whether a record can be retained by a department. This decision is made by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport
- advise on departments' retention of records under the Security and Retention Instrument 2011; nor
- review departments' decisions on the selection of their records for permanent preservation

as this falls under the remit of the Keeper of Public Records.

The Forum

The Council's responsibility relating to historical manuscripts (private archives) is discharged through the work of its sub-committee, the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research. The Forum advises the Keeper of Public Records in his capacity as Historical Manuscripts Commissioner. The Forum considers and provides advice to the Secretary of State through the Council on matters relating to manuscripts, records and archives, other than public records, and particularly:

- the location, collection, care, custody, preservation, acquisition, sale, and use in all formats of such documents
- the compilation and dissemination of information about them
- any questions affecting such documents as may be referred for its consideration, including issues relating to the statutory duties of the Master of the Rolls in respect of manorial and tithe documents, and the making of recommendations to Arts Council England on the allocation of archives and manuscripts accepted for the nation in lieu of tax; and
- other issues that would formerly have come within the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts.

In addition, on behalf of the Council, the Forum is to:

- act as a vehicle for the development of constructive and collaborative engagement between The National Archives and its academic stakeholders, sharing knowledge and developing trust and understanding; and
- provide an open, independent and authoritative advisory voice to The National Archives, to support its research and academic liaison.

Appendix B – Freedom of Information panels and processes

The Council acts on behalf of the Secretary of State, to consider the balance of the public interest in the release or non-disclosure of information contained in transferred historical records that engage qualified exemptions, when an application has been made to The National Archives under section 66 of FOIA for the disclosure of information held by it. The Council exercises this responsibility through the convening of panels of three members to consider up to 20 requests at a time.

Records retained by departments and those closed at transfer to The National Archives remain subject to the FOIA and individuals can make a request under FOIA (an ‘FOI request’) to have access to them.

When The National Archives receives a FOI request for access to closed information held by it, it follows

the procedure set out in Part VI of FOIA. Under these provisions, before a request can be refused on the grounds of a qualified exemption, the Secretary of State must be consulted. The Council will assess the public interest test, which is necessary before such an exemption can be applied. This test is applied to determine, whether, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in disclosure is outweighed by the public interest in refusing access to the information in the record.

For this purpose, panels of three members of the Council are convened to consider the public interest in the release or non-disclosure of the requested information. (The Council has no advisory role when a request is to be refused citing only absolute exemptions.)

In most cases, the FOI request concerns information closed at transfer on the grounds that it was information:

- that, if released, would endanger the safety or physical or mental health of an individual
- that, if released, would damage international relations; or
- relating to law enforcement.

Cases are carefully scrutinised and debated by panels on the basis of a fresh assessment by the department of the arguments for and against disclosure, taking account of any change in circumstances since the access status of the record was last considered.

If they consider it necessary, panel members will request further detail or clarification from the relevant department or

The National Archives. Even where they are in agreement that the public interest in closure outweighs the public interest in applying the exemption, members of the panel may also raise concerns about departmental practices and draw attention to inconsistencies between departments in their handling of FOI requests.

Appendix C – Metrics

Closure and retention

When departments intend to transfer their public records to The National Archives under condition that some sections and/or the whole record are redacted or withheld from public access, this comes to the Advisory Council's consideration by way of a Qualified Closure Application. Further information on these is provided in the table below.

Qualified Closure Applications

Year	Applications considered	Applications queried	Applications where clarification was received and accepted	Applications that were amended by departments and accepted	Applications withdrawn by departments following the Council's challenge	Outstanding closure applications
2021 – 2022	2,038	403	99	170	53	81
2022 – 2023	3,116	832	421	34	77	300
2023 - 2024	2,794	880	507	142	120	111

When departments apply to retain historical public records (records over twenty years old), this comes to Advisory Council's consideration by way of a Retention Application. Further information on those considered is provided in the table below.

Retention Applications

Year	Applications considered	Applications queried	Applications where clarification or amendment was received and accepted	Applications withdrawn by departments following the Council's challenge	Outstanding applications
2021-2022	734	77	66	3	8
2022 -2023	1,315	150	61	15	74
2023 - 2024	670	257	236	10	11

Freedom of Information Panels

Total number of cases considered: 820 cases across 41 Panels.

These were broken down as follows:

- Panels 1-8: 160 cases over 8 Panels
- Panels 9-23: 300 cases over 15 Panels
- Panels 24-34: 220 cases over 11 Panels
- Panels 35-41: 140 cases over 7 Panels

Total number of substantive challenges to applications of the FOIA: 117.

These were broken down as follows:

- Panels 1-8: 28
- Panels 9-23: 42
- Panels 24-34: 29
- Panels 35-41: 18

These challenges resulted in four cases being opened in full and three being opened in part. The most commonly challenged exemption was Section 38(1)(a) (health and safety) (47 times) while section 27(1) (international relations) was second-most challenged (29 times) along with Section 31(1) (law enforcement) (also challenged 17 times). The challenges engaged the sections of the FOIA as follows:

- S26(1) – 4 times
- S27(1) – 29 times
- S27(2) – 7 times
- S31(1) – 20 times
- S38(1)(a) – 47 times
- S38(1)(b) – 15 times
- S37(1)(ac) – 2 times
- S37(1)(b) – 1 time.

The 117 challenges are challenges to a Public Interest Test (PIT) form in its entirety. The total number of substantive challenges to applications of the FOIA is higher, as some PIT forms had more than one exemption challenged. As such, there were 117 PIT form challenges, which encompassed 125 challenges to exemptions.

Annex B: Annual Report of the Independent Complaints Reviewer 2023-24

It is a pleasure to present our sixth contribution to The National Archives' Annual Report and Accounts since we were appointed Independent Complaints Reviewer (ICR) in 2018.

ch&i associates is run by Alex Oram and Jon Wigmore, both of whom have extensive experience of complaint handling and investigations. We have acted as independent reviewers/investigators for the Charity Commission, the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), the General Medical Council and the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales. We currently act as independent reviewers for the Department for Transport and the Fundraising Regulator, as well as The National Archives. We also investigate complaints of misconduct in political workplaces, and complaints about NHS services.

At the third stage of The National Archives' complaints procedure, we provide an independent perspective on complaints that The National Archives has been unable to resolve itself, at no cost to customers. Our role is:

- To decide whether The National Archives has provided a reasonable service, consistent with its policies and standards. We consider in each case what happened,

alongside what should have happened, with reference to other frameworks (in particular, the Ombudsman's *UK Central Government Complaints Standards*).

- To determine whether there have been any deficiencies in the service provided to the customer (whether constituting, or falling short of, maladministration) that call for attention.
- To recommend proportionate and fitting remedies where service standards have fallen below an acceptable standard.

The year's activity 2023-24

The National Archives sets itself high service delivery standards and has an ambitious complaints process that aims to ensure that all customer feedback, however defined and expressed, improves service delivery and puts things right for people. The National Archives' commitments and principles here are spelled out in its Policy for handling comments and complaints. This emphasises simplicity of access, clarity, timeliness and fairness.

Over the course of the last year the number of complaints received by The National Archives has increased. The 92 complaints received though (compared to 69 last year) is comparable to that seen before the COVID pandemic. In addition, the release of census information in 2021 continued to be a major theme in complaints received in the early part of the year.

The increase in complaints over the last twelve months has not been reflected in the feedback received that, while not a complaint, also highlighted a concern or criticism (318, down by nearly 30% against the previous year). We consider these numbers to be low, particularly when set in the context of The National Archives' relatively high level of transactions: in the last year, these included 600,191 document productions (an increase of over 120,000 against last year), over 22,000 written enquiries and over 20,000 contacts via the online chat function.

The mixed trend continued and has been matched by reductions and increases in what might be considered the more positive types of customer feedback received by The National Archives. Suggestions and Comments totaled 474 (slightly up on the previous year) and 37 compliments were received (almost a 50% reduction). We are sure that The National Archives will be looking to ensure that the levels of positive and/or constructive feedback it collects from customers increases over the coming year by actively encouraging it at all touchpoints.

The upturn in complaints has also seen three people asking us to independently review The National Archives' handling of their complaint at stage three.

We are appreciative of The National Archives' Customer Service and Complaints Team for swiftly helping the handful of people that came to us in the year without stage three complaints. As usual, we have heard from people chasing orders, initiating complaints, trying to cancel subscriptions (to third party services), and requesting Ministry of Defence

service records (in the latter instance, escalation is to the Information Commissioner rather than us). The Team's liaison with us and support of the review process has also been of a high standard. We have no doubt about the genuineness of The National Archives' commitment to customer service, and the independent review provision.

We have over the years commended The National Archives for its speedy first complaint stage and for its exhaustive Chief Operating Officer (second) review stage. This, and the quality of the core service, explains the very few stage three referrals we have received over the years. We regard The National Archives' two-tier complaints process as gold standard.

We undertook three reviews for The National Archives during the year, none of which we upheld.

Case One

A customer ('AB') complained that The National Archives had erroneously released a file that should have been closed until 2103. Despite The National Archives' efforts, AB remained unhappy. AB characterised the release as a notifiable data protection breach, indicative of an underlying lack of rigour and lax systems. AB felt it signified a high risk of further data breaches.

There was some history between AB and The National Archives. The National Archives asked AB from the outset to express their criticisms clearly and constructively. It referred to, but did not engage, its Policy for Handling Unreasonably Persistent Enquiries.

We found that the approach of both sides to the dispute proceeded respectfully.

We commended The National Archives for the thoroughness of its investigation into handling by the cataloguing and accessioning team. The stage one response was dispatched three working days after the complaint was made. The root cause of the error was found to be that the referring Government department had not applied to close the file, one of over 800 transferred in a batch. The National Archives had rectified this soon after the complaint was made.

We were complimentary about The National Archives' second stage review, finding that "the stage 2 investigation report exceeded by some margin the standard we have seen from other organisations' escalated responses, in over 20 years of investigation review, management, and adjudication roles". The senior officer undertaking it was personable and prompt, clearly scoping the complaint and thoroughly timelining and analysing it. Transfer arrangements and inspection procedures were explained and unpicked. An expansive approach to investigation and service improvement was applied.

As at stage one, we remained unclear as to the organisation's assessment of the risks revealed by the complaint. The National Archives told us during the review that it regarded the risk of recurrence as very low. In our experience, the thoroughness of the stage two review in particular was commensurate with a medium risk incident.

We felt that The National Archives should have spelt out its risk assessment in the local complaint stages.

When we asked, The National Archives told us, “of the records accessioned throughout 2021 and 2022 (a total of 154,561) this was the only instance of a record being opened incorrectly”. The high volume of its operations precluded the bespoke handling that AB expected. We accepted this and were content with The National Archives’ handling. We did not uphold the complaint but made some suggestions to The National Archives to improve its service (including liaison with the referring body in an incident investigation if a case offers opportunities for mutual learning and improvement).

Case Two

‘CD’ complained that a document pack was misleadingly labelled. CD had commissioned a copy from The National Archives for several hundred pounds on the basis of the labelling, only to find that it consisted largely of materials available at low or no cost. CD requested, and was repeatedly refused, a refund.

CD felt that The National Archives should have checked and rectified the summary of the contents proactively. We found that CD’s complaint presumed a level of customer service duties on The National Archives’ part akin to a retailer. We accepted The National Archives’ account that it could not operate proactively in every case, and that its advice made the scope of its offer clear enough. The National Archives’ copying service was simply that;

its research services could be commissioned to inform decision-making about what to get copied.

Further, we did not find that the summary was inaccurate; it was minimal, like thousands of other summaries. The summary emanated from the referring department anyway with The National Archives, of necessity, updating and improving the wording in a reactive way. This did not mean that The National Archives had erred in accepting the referring department's original wording about the contents.

We would have welcomed CD – a regular and valued customer – being refunded (as was actively considered at both complaint stages). However, we understood why the service held the line that it could not accept liability for the copying costs of documents that may not in the eyes of customers be adequately catalogued, and/or may be available elsewhere. We were pleased that The National Archives reviewed its advice to users about its copying service. We did not uphold the complaint.

Case three

In the third stage three case, 'EF' complained that online access to the 1921 census was controlled by a commercial company charging (then) £199.99 per year. EF argued that the census was public property that should not be commodified. EF accepted that the company should be paid for digitisation, but not on an ongoing subscription basis by the owners of the asset (the public).

The National Archives pointed out that the 1921 census was also available to view digitally free in Kew and also

at regional hubs in Manchester and Aberystwyth. Online publication had been a significant project for a team of hundreds of conservators, technicians and transcribers, over three years. The National Archives did not have the infrastructure to do this. The commercial partnership and charging model was therefore essential. The National Archives would collect some royalties that would go to support its public services.

We found The National Archives' approach to be fully in line with the Government-approved Archives Unlocked policy. EF's complaint was not directed to customer service and/or administration, but rather the implementation of policy. We did not think an ICR review of administration and customer service could or should support a campaign for subsidised or free remote access to public records. To meet EF's expectations, The National Archives would need to breach its commercial agreement with the company. This was plainly not a recommendation that an ICR could make, even had there been shortfalls in service (in the event, significant shortfalls were not found by the ICR).

Our only reservation about The National Archives' complaint handling was that it was not initially clear enough about the money it would be paid by the company providing census access. This was no secret. The National Archives' Statement of Public Task spelt out the legislative and policy footing of its relationship with the company and other private sector providers. In all other regards, we were happy with The National Archives' customer service.

Contact the ICR

Details of the ICR service can be found at:

nationalarchives.gov.uk/contact-us/complaints-procedure/

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Appendix: Local places of deposit awarded New Burdens Funding 2023-24

Archifau Ynys Mon / Anglesey Archives

Archives: Wigan & Leigh

Barnsley Archive and Local Studies

Bath Record Office

Bedfordshire Archives

Berwick Record Office

Birmingham: Archives, Heritage and Photography Service

Bristol Archives

Cambridgeshire Archives

Conwy Archive Service

Cumbria Archive Centre, Carlisle

Derbyshire Record Office

Devon Archives and Local Studies Service
(South West Heritage Trust)

Dorset History Centre

Durham County Record Office

East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Record Office
(ESBHRO)

Glamorgan Archives

Gloucestershire Archives

Greater Manchester County Record Office
(with Manchester Archives)

Gwent Archives

Hampshire Archives

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

Isle of Wight Record Office

Kent History and Library Centre

Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, Record Office for

London Metropolitan Archives: City of London

North Devon Record Office (South West Heritage Trust)

North East Lincolnshire Archives

North East Wales Archives (NEWA), Ruthin
(formerly Denbighshire Archives)

Northumberland Archives

Oxfordshire History Centre

Plymouth Archives, The Box

Royal Berkshire Archives

Southampton Archives Office

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service:
Staffordshire County Record Office

Surrey History Centre

Teesside Archives

West Glamorgan Archive Service

West Yorkshire Archive Service, Bradford

West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield

Wirral Archives

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

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