HC 409

Annual report and accounts 2025-26

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Photo caption overleaf:

Our MI5: Official Secrets exhibition

The National Archives Annual report and accounts 2025-26

For the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026

Including the Annual Report of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives 2025-26

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 14 July 2026

HC 409

This is part of a series of departmental publications which, along with the Main Estimates 2026-27 and the document 'Public Expenditure: Statistical Analyses 2026', present the Government's outturn for 2025-26 and planned expenditure for 2026-27.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/official-documents.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us via our website: nationalarchives.gov.uk/contact-us/.

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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 2025 to March 2026 (inclusive) and is divided into three main sections.

The Performance report (see page 008) opens with a foreword from the Chair of our Board and an introduction from our Chief Executive. It includes a summary of our strategic aims and key activities during the reporting year (the Performance overview), followed by our progress over the year against our budgets, business priorities and input and impact indicators, as well our Environmental sustainability report (the performance analysis).

The Accountability report (see page 052) sets out our operating structure and transparency matters. It includes:

- A Corporate governance report that contains information about the governance structure, framework of controls and the processes for identifying and managing risk, as well as a statement of Accounting Officer's responsibilities.
- A Remuneration and staff report setting out disclosures on pay and pensions policies, details of staff numbers and costs, and an open account of the pay and benefits received by executive directors and non-executive Board members.
- A Parliamentary accountability and audit report, allowing readers to understand The National Archives' expenditure against the money provided to it by Parliament along with the Statement of Parliamentary Supply, and 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 (see page 098) outline our income and expenditure for the financial year, the financial position of the department as of 31 March 2026 and additional information designed to enable readers to understand these results.

Annex A (see page 131) contains the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: 23rd Annual Report 2025-26, which describes its role, work actioned in the reporting year and details of the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research.

Annex B (see page 143) contains the Annual Report of the Independent Complaints Reviewer, which sets out information on the service and its standards, an overview of both the learning from complaints and customer feedback, and of complaint activity and examples.

The Appendix (see page 146) contains a list of local Places of Deposit that were awarded New Burdens funding via The National Archives in the year 2025, which was the final year that funding was distributed.

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1.0 Performance report

Objects on display at our Love Letters exhibition; children taking part in our Easter Bunny Storytelling event; our repositories

1.1 Performance overview

A summary of our performance over the reporting year, covering our strategic aims and key activities in pursuit of them.

Foreword from Professor Andrew Wathey CBE, Chair of the Board

2025-26 has been an excellent year for The National Archives. We welcomed more visitors to our site than ever before and reached major milestones in several long-term projects. The achievements outlined in this report bear witness to the gathering pace of our transformation, both in reaching new audiences and in developing our core mission in the digital age.

Our exhibition *MI5: Official Secrets* offered a rare glimpse into the world of espionage by exploring the 115-year history of the Security Service. More than 55,000 people came to see the exhibition in which they were able to view previously unseen material from the archives alongside objects from MI5's private museum.

Other highlights include completing the physical transfer of Parliament's Archive Collections and the launch of Request a Military Service Record. We also received the first transfer of public inquiry records using our new Transfer Digital Records service, which enables records to be published on the same day they were received. Supported by The National Archives Trust, our education offer was bolstered by the launch of an ambitious partnership with North East Museums to expand our in-person offer beyond London and southeast England for the first time.

A major milestone came in March with the publication of our new strategy, which sees The National Archives chart a course towards its

long-term objective of becoming the living digital archive of the state. As we begin implementation of the strategy, I anticipate significant changes to our audiences, operations and impact.

These are just a few examples of The National Archives' many accomplishments over 2025-26.

None of The National Archives' successes during the year would be possible without the efforts of staff, volunteers, partners, and colleagues at The National Archives Trust and the Friends of The National Archives. I pay tribute to their extraordinary efforts. They support the realisation of The National Archives' aims and help sustain the vital work of collecting, preserving and making accessible the public record. On behalf of the Board, I thank all our colleagues for their commitment to fulfilling that purpose.

Andrew Wathey

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE
Chair of the Board
16 June 2026

Introduction from Saul Nassé, Chief Executive

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

I am proud to introduce the 2025-26 Annual report and accounts for The National Archives. When I reflect on a successful year, I'm struck by how we have reached new audiences with innovative approaches.

This has been particularly true of our exhibitions programme, which came roaring back after a period when our gallery had been closed for refurbishment. *Love Letters* was a rollercoaster ride through our collection around the theme of love, simply mounted and cleverly curated. The range of touching and diverse stories brought a new and much younger audience to The National Archives. *MI5: Official Secrets* was the quintessential blockbuster, attracting two and a half times the audience of any previous exhibition at Kew. The deep partnership between The National Archives and MI5 yielded a never-seen-before experience, which we were delighted won the prestigious Museums + Heritage Award for Best Temporary Exhibition.

Audiences were at the heart of the launch of the Request a Military Service Record access service. Over the last few years, we've built a deep understanding of what users are looking for from military records, and the new service meets their needs with an easy-to-navigate online interface, and fast turnaround. We now have a financially sustainable service that will promote public access for years to come.

We've been delighted to welcome new audiences to Kew with the transfer of the Parliamentary Archives collection. Uniting our existing collection with Parliament's Archives has revealed many synergies between them. Examples include the death warrant of Charles I and the manuscript journal of his trial, and the Instrument of the Abdication of Edward VIII and the original Parliamentary copy of the Abdication Act.

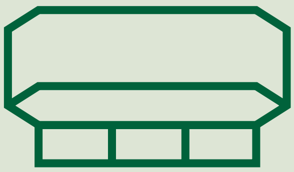
Audiences were our focus as we formulated The National Archives Strategy 2025-30. The process involved The National Archives' Board working with colleagues across the organisation to decide on our strategic priorities for the next four years. I am confident the focus the strategy brings will accelerate our progress towards our 2038 vision of being the living digital archive of the state.

I was pleased to welcome two newcomers to the Executive Team this year: Tobi Adetimilehin as Finance Director and Claire Wightman as Director for People, Inclusion and Change. They are part of a team across The National Archives that determinedly delivered to our audiences across a year of significant achievement. My thanks go to each and every one of our amazing people.

Saul Nassé

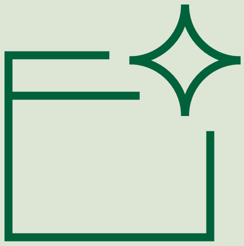
Saul Nassé
Chief Executive and Keeper of Public Records
09 July 2026

The National Archives in numbers



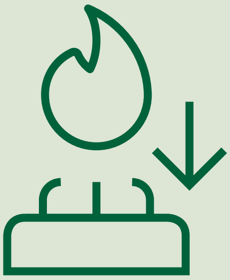
66k+
visitors to our exhibitions

4.1km
of Parliament's Archive Collections transferred to Kew



158k+
amendments applied on legislation.gov.uk

£3.75m[1]
income from grants in the 2025-26 financial year



23%
reduction in natural gas consumption

26k+
schoolchildren taught

1 This includes £202,000 of capital income (receipt of donated assets) which appears in the other comprehensive expenditure section of the statement of comprehensive expenditure in the financial statements.

Who we are

The National Archives is a non-ministerial government department, and the official archive and publisher for the UK Government, and for England and Wales. We are the guardians of more than 1,000 years of iconic national documents.

We are expert advisers in information and records management and are a cultural, academic and heritage institution. We fulfil a leadership role for the archive sector and work to secure the future of physical and digital records.

We are a living, growing repository of evidence, stories and memory, and our collection is accessible to everyone.

Our goals this year were organised under three themes:

- Building the value of our **collection**.
- Sustaining value through **custodianship**.
- Creating value through **connection**.

The following section outlines our achievements alongside the challenges we have faced.

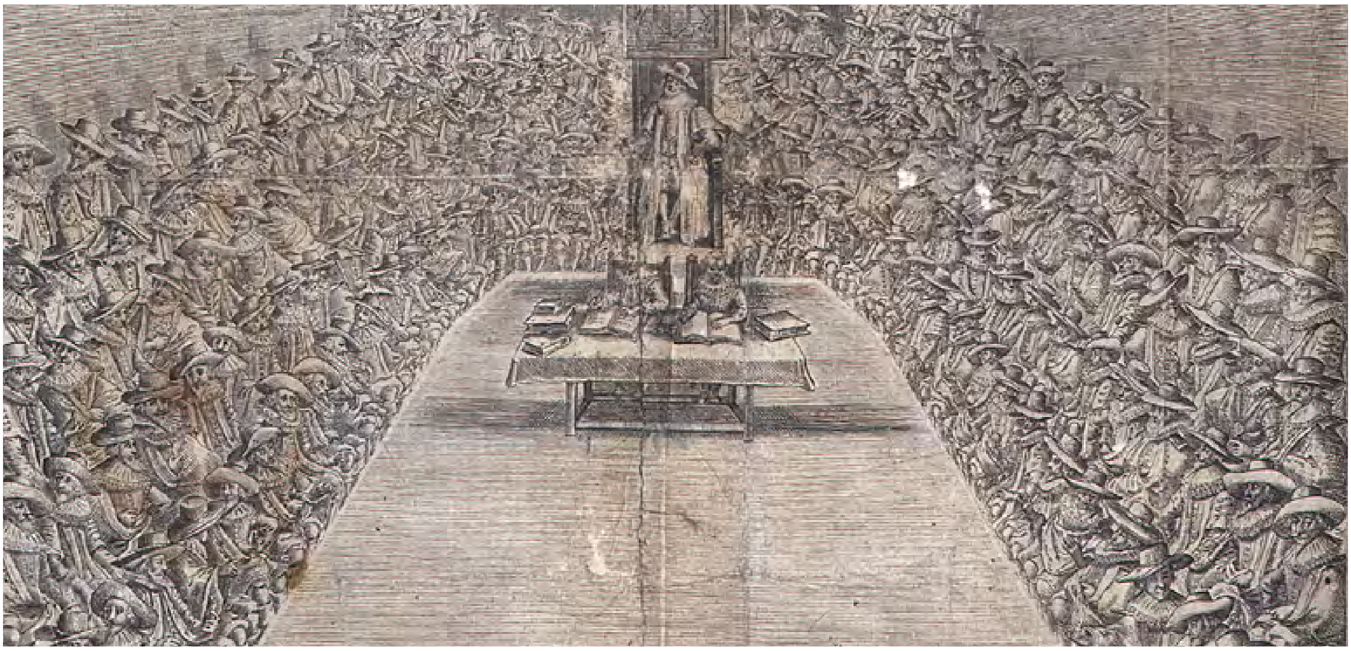
A team member introduces our Love Letters exhibition

Our year 2025-26

Building our collection

- This year we successfully completed the physical transfer of Parliament's Archive Collections, relocating approximately 4.1 linear kilometres of historical documents from the Houses of Parliament to our repositories at Kew and our off site storage facility. This brings the total relocation to approximately 12 linear kilometres.[2] Following the successful relocation of the physical records, we began the complex process of integrating Parliament's digital catalogue into our systems. This included transferring record descriptions to our public-facing catalogue system. We published the first tranche of the collection – the Beaverbrook Library Collection and Papers – on our catalogue in December 2025. By phasing subsequent releases, we are on track to make the entire collection available to the public by summer 2026.
- We continued to secure the historical record of public inquiries. During the reporting period, we engaged with more than 20 inquiries to ensure their records can be transferred to us when they close. We received the first transfer of an inquiry using our Transfer Digital Records (TDR) service at closedown with the Dawn Sturgess Inquiry. TDR is a streamlined, cloud-based, self-service transfer system and these records were published on the same day they were received. We also completed publication of the records of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the largest single digital transfer we have received to date – over half a million records amounting to 1,100GB of data.
- Another notable transfer that began this year is that of the Merlin Database records from the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Work started in September 2025 and will take a year to complete. We are investigating options for providing bulk access to these records for search and computational analysis.

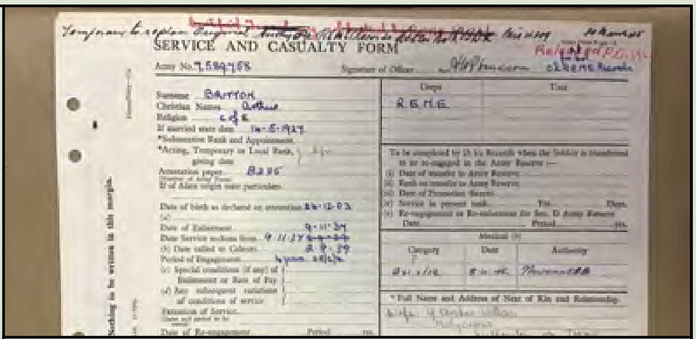
An engraving showing the House of Commons sitting in February 1624, shown in a printed broadside from our collection (EXT 9/45)



2 Last year we reported that the collection was estimated to be 15 linear kilometres. On full receipt of the collection, we have measured it as 12 linear kilometres.

CASE STUDY

Request a Military Service Record



A page from the military service record of Arthur Britton, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, who served in the British Army during the Second World War (WO 420/30072)

A significant development in our Ministry of Defence (MOD) service records project this year has been the launch of our access service, Request a Military Service Record.

In February 2021, MOD began the transfer of historical service personnel records to The National Archives. Containing approximately 9.7 million records, this is our largest physical transfer ever and is due to be complete by April 2027. Custodianship of these records means we must meet the significant demand for public access. By 2024, there had been a 308% increase in the volume of requests received under the *Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2002* compared with 2022. This marked the largest increase in FOI requests among government bodies since monitoring began.

We responded to the challenge by establishing a service transformation team who worked with colleagues across the organisation to execute a major overhaul of the existing access regime. The team handling requests expanded rapidly from three full-time employees in 2021 to 70 at the end of the reporting year, including members from HM Revenue & Customs' Surge and Rapid Response team. This larger team meant that we were able to reduce our backlog of FOI requests and by mid-2025 achieve 98% compliance (see page 025 for more information).

Another pivotal component of the transformation was updating the Public Record Office (Fees) Regulations which had not been changed since 2018. The order was extended to include the MOD records, which required extensive work to ensure that it accurately reflected operational costs.

As a result of these changes, we were able to launch our bespoke digital access service, Request a Military Service Record, on 2 February 2026. Through this service, people can make a request to The National Archives to search for the military service record of someone who served in the British Armed Forces after 1918 and who was born before 1940. The service offers two routes of access. The standard service applies to British Army and Royal Air Force records and provides key documents for a fixed fee of £42.25. Alternatively, customers can request a full record check for £48.87. In this route, the team assesses the entire record and provides a quotation for copies of the releasable pages it contains. Copies are charged at £1.04 per page and require a second payment. This pricing model reflects the true cost of delivering the service and supports the transition towards long-term financial self-sufficiency.

The launch of Request a Military Service Record is an important step forward in continuing to deliver compliant, high-quality access to military service records. By year end, 90% of users responding to a feedback survey said were either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the service.

- Another focus of our digital work has been growing our legal information services. The *Legislation (Procedure, Publication and Repeals) (Wales) Act 2025* came into force on 1 January 2026, creating new statutory requirements for Wales which are distinct and materially different to those in other parts of the UK. The Act sets out the functions of the King's Printer for Wales, who is the King's Printer of Acts of Parliament. To meet these obligations we developed Lawmaker, our innovative cloud-based service for drafting and managing legislation, to handle secondary legislation in English and Welsh. We also updated legislation.gov.uk to properly support the publishing of the new format of Welsh Statutory Instruments.

- In addition, working in partnership with the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive, we extended Lawmaker to Northern Ireland. We have also been adding artificial intelligence (AI) enabled features to Lawmaker, delivering a Keeling Schedule service in beta (see case study on page 019).

- This year we secured a £250,000 grant from the Government Office for Technology Transfer to fund development of a legislative tracking service for business. The project commenced in March 2026 and aims to develop a system that will track legislative divergence between the UK and EU statute books.

- We have also improved our Find Case Law service, focusing this year on widening its coverage and migrating tribunal decisions previously published on gov.uk.

- In March 2026, the Chief Executive in his capacity as Keeper of Public Records issued formal guidance to the Departmental Record Officers under section 3 of the *Public Records Act 1958*. The guidance concerned the safeguarding, selection and transfer arrangements for the departmental records behind the government's response to two humble addresses tabled in the House of Commons in February 2026. These related to the appointment of the UK Ambassador to the USA in 2024 and the role of the UK Special Representative for Trade and Investment from 2001-11.

Custodians of our record

- Alongside significant improvements to our conservation facilities (see case study on page 016), we concluded our two-year window replacement project which was delivered to schedule and budget with minimal disruption to services. The primary objective of the window replacement was to reinstate air tightness to the building. Each elevation has now been assessed using a rigorous independent water testing programme, and we have achieved full compliance across the building. We will continue to monitor the pre-construction sustainability predictions for improved environmental performance and expect the upgrades to provide financial savings of around £50,000 per annum (see Environmental sustainability report on page 039 for more information).

Work on improving our site and research facilities supports UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9.

UNSDG 9.1: Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

CASE STUDY

Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science Projects

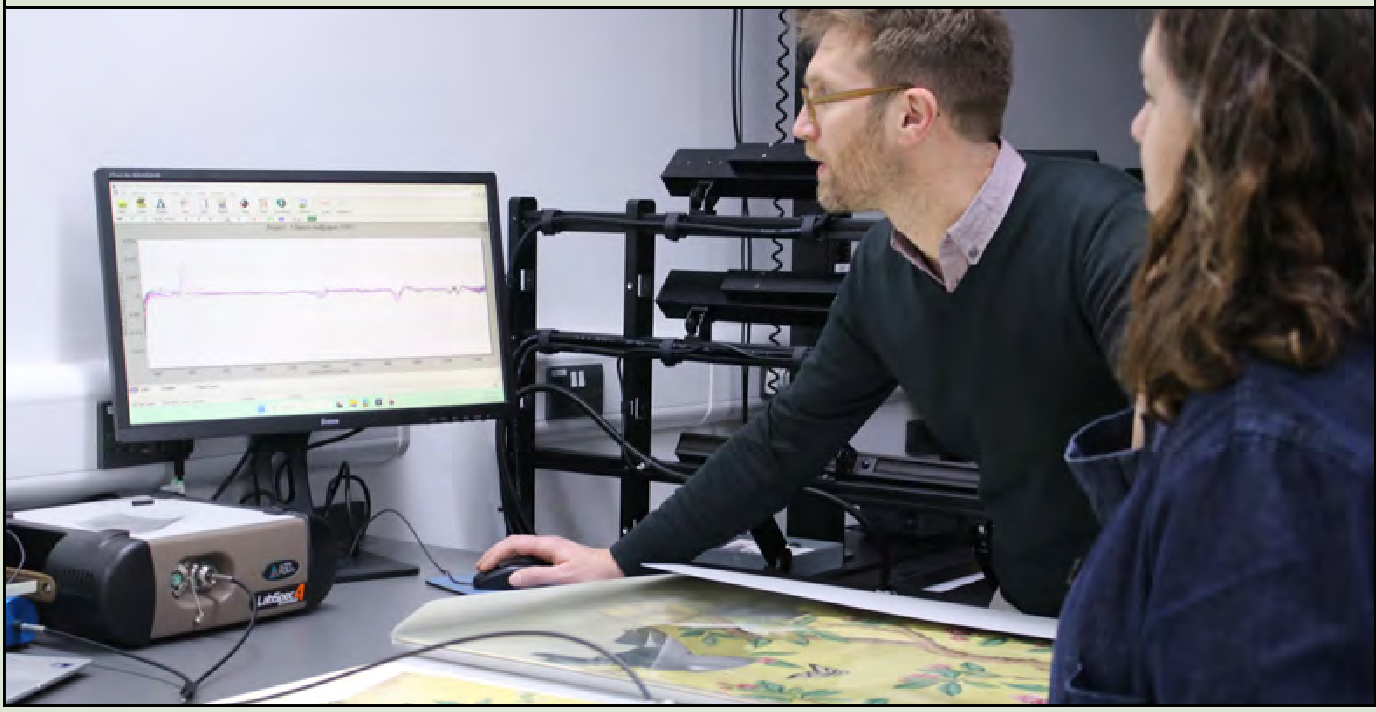
The UK's Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science (RICHeS) is a long-term, £80 million commitment from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to support excellence and collaboration within heritage science conservation research (HSCR). We have been an active advocate for HSCR for many years and helped inform the conception of the RICHeS project. In 2024 we were awarded £1.3 million in grants across two projects.

The first of these projects was to significantly enhance our heritage science laboratory. Our refurbished laboratory is a leading facility dedicated to the scientific study of archival and library materials, with a focus on paper, parchment, photographs and book bindings. It now employs a suite of non-invasive analytical techniques to investigate the chemical, physical and toxicological properties of heritage objects, as well as advanced imaging technologies. Using these facilities, we can reveal how materials were made, used and altered over time. This informs treatment decisions for complex or hazardous items and enhances the legibility and interpretive potential of damaged or obscured content.

The facilities will allow researchers to explore written heritage materials in unprecedented detail. Our research using these new facilities centres on three interconnected aims:

- Deepening material knowledge to illuminate historical practices and lived experiences.
- Advancing conservation strategies through scientific insight.
- Enabling safer, more meaningful access to vulnerable archival materials.

Below and opposite: team members working in our newly refurbished heritage science laboratory



Researchers, organisations and heritage professionals can apply to use our facilities through the AHRC RICHeS Access Fund (information is available on their website).

Alongside research delivery, we have placed strong emphasis on sector engagement and capacity building. During the year we organised a programme of in-region workshops introducing heritage science approaches to the written heritage sector, with activities delivered in Durham, Glasgow, Belfast, Exeter, Manchester and London. These engagements helped to raise awareness of the opportunities offered through RICHeS, encouraged new research partnerships and supported skills development across institutions of different scales.

The second project is to support the new Heritage Science Data Service (HSDS). The HSDS aims to help researchers and professionals working in the heritage sector to store, share and explore data more easily through a centralised online repository. Led by the University of York, The National Archives is one of eight initial data providers for this five-year project.

This year we have been developing our existing knowledge transfer and conservation documentation platform, ResearchSpace, to allow seamless publication to HSDS. We collaborated with The National Gallery to inform further platform development and began work on a public-facing portal that links items in our collection to associated information on their materiality, the analytical equipment that has been used on them and any related heritage science datasets.

Together, these activities demonstrate how RICHeS investment supports not only advanced scientific research, but also sustainable data sharing, cross-sector collaboration and long-term public value.

Partnerships like those enabled by our RICHeS projects support UNSDG 17.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

UNSDG 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Hilary Benn MP, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, in our digitisation studio during a visit to see records related to the Northern Ireland Troubles

- Digital preservation is another key component of our mission to conserve our records, and this year we have worked on plans to migrate digital records from our outgoing preservation service to a new cloud-based system. We continue to maintain a separate custodial copy of digital records to mitigate risk.
- We have prioritised strengthening our cyber security posture, adopting a Secure By Design approach in line with government policy. Cyber security is an identified risk, and we have seen an unprecedented level of bot traffic disrupt the search service on our catalogue this year. Bot management and recovery of services have therefore been a focus, and we have improved how we create and maintain secure, unchangeable back-ups.
- We have been ambitious in our approach to AI this year, both in terms of how we are using it and the governance processes we are developing to mitigate risk. We are exploring practical uses of AI to support work with digital records and data, and to enhance research and access to collections. This includes AI-assisted appraisal work with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, early research into how emerging technologies such as Model Context Protocol might help AI tools make better use of structured data in our collections, and wider exploration of how AI could support research and discovery. We have also developed partnerships with the Regulation Directorate at the Department for Business and Trade and the National Data Library team at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, specifically looking at legal data for AI. Good governance is a key enabler of these innovations. We have created an AI steering group which is leading work to develop a purposeful AI governance process that ensures it is used ethically, responsibly, transparently and in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

CASE STUDY

Keeling Schedules

This year we launched our Keeling Schedule service in beta to selected users across central government and the devolved administrations and parliaments. This project demonstrates a practical and safe application of AI within government as part of our high-quality legal information services.

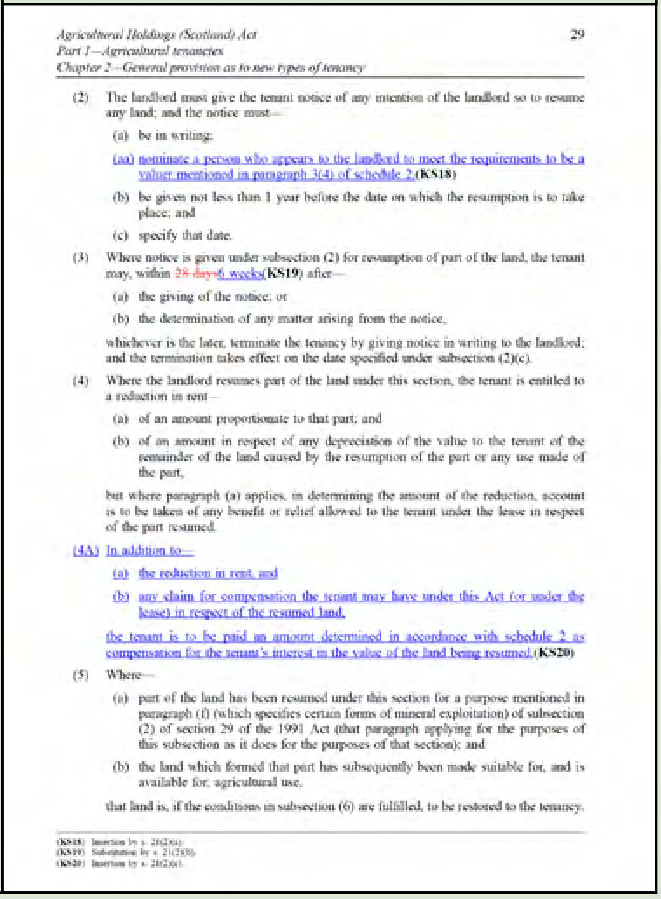
A Keeling Schedule is a version of current legislation, such as an Act, that shows how it is affected by prospective changes contained in draft legislation. Keeling Schedules help readers of the draft legislation, such as MPs and members of the public, understand the changes that are being proposed. This in turn enables better engagement in the democratic process, and there is therefore a high demand for them. However, until now, the process of creating Keeling Schedules has been a laborious one that required a skilled official to manually update a copy of existing legislation. This disincentivised their routine production.

Following previous work to understand the feasibility of using generative AI to assist in this area, this year we launched in beta a version of our Keeling Schedule service to selected users. The service uses a hybrid approach, combining traditional algorithmic processing with generative AI to create a revised version of an existing Act that incorporates amendments proposed in draft legislation as tracked changes.

We were able to deliver this service rapidly because it built on consistent investment in the legislative domain and our technical expertise. Through Lawmaker, we had a secure platform to directly deploy this service to government legal professionals and others, enabling them to easily take advantage of it and allowing us to gather feedback. Outputs from the service are based on high-quality legislative data that we maintain as part of delivering legislation.gov.uk together with the data available in Lawmaker.

The service demonstrates a practical and safe application of AI within government to drive efficiencies and to meet user needs across and outside government. Delivering a relatively small service, for which there was already a defined need, also provided an effective way for us to learn how to develop and deliver production-ready services that depend on AI. We will be able to build on these learnings as we deliver this and other services in future.

A PDF output created using the Keeling Schedule service in Lawmaker showing the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 2003, as amended by the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2025, for demonstration purposes


Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act 29
Part 1—Agricultural tenancies
Chapter 2—General provision as to new types of tenancy

(2) The landlord must give the tenant notice of any intention of the landlord so to resume any land; and the notice must—

(a) be in writing;

(aa) nominate a person who appears to the landlord to meet the requirements to be a valuer mentioned in paragraph 3(4) of schedule 2,(KS18)

(b) be given not less than 1 year before the date on which the resumption is to take place; and

(c) specify that date.

(3) Where notice is given under subsection (2) for resumption of part of the land, the tenant may, within ~~28 days~~6 weeks(KS19) after—

(a) the giving of the notice; or

(b) the determination of any matter arising from the notice,

whichever is the later, terminate the tenancy by giving notice in writing to the landlord; and the termination takes effect on the date specified under subsection (2)(c).

(4) Where the landlord resumes part of the land under this section, the tenant is entitled to a reduction in rent—

(a) of an amount proportionate to that part; and

(b) of an amount in respect of any depreciation of the value to the tenant of the remainder of the land caused by the resumption of the part or any use made of the part,

but where paragraph (a) applies, in determining the amount of the reduction, account is to be taken of any benefit or relief allowed to the tenant under the lease in respect of the part resumed.

(4A) In addition to—

(a) the reduction in rent, and

(b) any claim for compensation the tenant may have under this Act (or under the lease) in respect of the resumed land,

the tenant is to be paid an amount determined in accordance with schedule 2 as compensation for the tenant's interest in the value of the land being resumed.(KS20)

(5) Where—

(a) part of the land has been resumed under this section for a purpose mentioned in paragraph (f) (which specifies certain forms of mineral exploitation) of subsection (2) of section 29 of the 1991 Act (that paragraph applying for the purposes of this subsection as it does for the purposes of that section); and

(b) the land which formed that part has subsequently been made suitable for, and is available for, agricultural use,

that land is, if the conditions in subsection (6) are fulfilled, to be restored to the tenancy.

(KS18) Insertion by s. 21(2)(a).
(KS19) Substitution by s. 21(2)(b).
(KS20) Insertion by s. 21(2)(c).

Attendees at our Love Letters Late

Creating lasting impact through connection

- Providing access to our collection is central to optimising its public value and we endeavour to do so on site, online and beyond. Overall, more than 140,000 visitors came to our site in Kew this year, a 95% increase on last year. For the first time, exhibition visitors, at 66,060, outnumbered reading room visitors, at 37,294. Our exhibition programme this year included *MI5: Official Secrets*, which ran from 5 April to 23 November 2025 and is covered in a case study on page 022. Following this, *Love Letters* opened in January 2026 and attracted 11,200 visitors by year end. It featured correspondence spanning over 500 years and items on display included Jane Austen's will and King Edward VIII's signed Instrument of Abdication.

- Working with the Government Art Collection, *Happy and Glorious* displayed work at The National Archives by eight leading artists commissioned for the Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Using paint, pencil, photography, appliqué and thread, the pieces displayed around the building captured different perspectives on the significance of the event. There was also a rare chance to see two coronation rolls from our collection – the earliest surviving roll made for King Edward II in 1308 and the most recent, His Majesty King Charles III's from 2023. In conjunction, the Friends of The National Archives supported the Young People's summer art project: *Crown and Culture*. Eight participants, aged 16-19, spent five days exploring the exhibited works alongside original records and creating their own artistic response.

- Beyond Kew, we worked with Friends of the Gresford Colliery Memorial, North East Wales Archives, Wrexham Library, Wrexham Archives and the National Library of Wales to create *Gresford: Voices from the Archives*. This was a community-focused display of records from The National Archives for the 91st anniversary of the Gresford Colliery disaster, displayed at Wrexham Library in September 2025. It was visited by more than 400 people and was the first time we have taken records to a community in this way. Feedback showed deep levels of engagement and the event provided a blueprint for this kind of impactful work in future.

Baroness Twycross, Minister for Museums, Heritage and Gambling and artist Mohamed Hassan discussing his artwork at the Happy and Glorious display

CASE STUDY

MI5: Official Secrets exhibition

MI5: Official Secrets was the result of a groundbreaking partnership between The National Archives and the Security Service which made it possible for the public to delve into 115 years of spy history. The exhibition opened the MI5 archive in an unprecedented way, telling the story of ordinary human beings doing extraordinary things to keep our country safe. We were delighted that it won Temporary or Touring Exhibition of the Year (Budget more than £80,000) at the 2026 Museum + Heritage Awards.

The exhibition space took inspiration from the original design of the MI5 registry and gave a sense of being led down corridors, through locked doors and stepping back in time. Items on display included original case files, photographs, papers and real spy artefacts. Immersive elements conjured up scenes such as the interior of infamous Cambridge Five spy Anthony Blunt's flat, and the Operation Double Cross control room where double agents were recruited during the Second World War. Film and audio interviews with current and former MI5 Directors General and anonymised verbatim quotes from current intelligence officers were used to give this silent organisation a voice.

The exhibition received extensive press coverage across the world, including publications in China, Pakistan, Brunei, Malaysia and the United States of America. In the UK, all major media outlets featured the exhibition, and it was given a five-star review by *The Telegraph*.

Recreation of Cambridge Five spy Anthony Blunt's living room

Objects on display at our MI5: Official Secrets exhibition

Across its run – 5 April to 23 November 2025 – the exhibition saw a total of 54,860 visitors, far exceeding previous exhibition totals. A further 13,600 watched the curator tour online. Surveys of visitors indicated that audience satisfaction was high (94%) and visitors were very likely (8.9/10) to recommend the exhibition to others. 76% of visitors were new to The National Archives and the profile of visitors was younger and more diverse than previous exhibitions. People also travelled long distances to view the exhibition. 11% of survey responders were from overseas, with one visitor saying: "I came […] from Germany to see [it] before it closed, and it was absolutely worth it." 99% of survey responders showed interest in visiting us again, with 95% saying they would be interested in future exhibitions.

Events related to the exhibition were equally successful, with 7,173 attendees in total. These included online talks both from our own collections experts and external speakers such as former Director General of MI5, Jonathan Evans. On site, '*An Evening with Mick Herron*', an event where the author discussed his *Slough House* book series, sold out. Tickets for a free screening of episode one, series five of *Slow Horses* – the adaptation of Herron's work – were snapped up within 20 seconds of release. This event was held in collaboration with Apple TV who we also worked with to recreate an office scene from the popular TV show, using original props and costumes from the series in our atrium at Kew.

Visitors get creative at one of our messy play events

- Another pillar of our ambition to connect people with our records is our education service. This year we were re-assessed for, and retained, the Sandford Award, a quality mark for excellence in heritage education that we have held for more than 15 years. We taught 26,540 school students in workshops, of which 18,112 were taught online, 8,192 on site at Kew, 120 off site at local schools and 116 were students from special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) programmes. Supported by The National Archives Trust, we were able to award 27 bursaries of £500 to cover expenses for schools which would otherwise not be able to attend an in-person session. We expanded our reach through broadcast events made possible by the Clore Learning Space, generously supported by the Clore Duffield Foundation. More than 7,000 students have attended a broadcast event this year.
- Further, we launched an ambitious partnership with North East Museums, supported by The National Archives Trust, to offer curriculum-focused workshops to secondary schools in northeast England. This has widened our in-person education offering beyond London and southeast England for the first time.
- Another exciting collaboration this year was with Aardman Academy, the in-house training department of Aardman Animations. We created a pilot workshop for 11–14-year-olds in which participants created stop-motion animations inspired by some of the documents held in our collection.
- We have also been working hard to make access to our collection more inclusive, with our outreach team developing multi-sensory workshops for a range of audiences with additional needs. We have worked with partners including Mencap, Age UK, Alzheimers UK and Skylarks to deliver sessions inspired by the seasons that focused on using all of the senses to engage participants. In addition, we launched a new workshop, Sensing the Archives, for students who are blind or visually impaired. Supported by The National Archives Trust and the Friends of The National Archives, and working with several partners, we used optocartography to turn flat documents from our collection into 3D models.

Work to expand our education offer supports UNSDG 4.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

UNSDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

- Alongside our exhibitions, events and outreach, we continued to improve direct public access to our records, including through better FOI capabilities and digitisation efforts. Our digitisation department has created approximately 2.5 million images this year. Further, our licensing partner Ancestry has to date scanned more than 22 million images from MOD service personnel records. They are now more than 80% of the way through the digitisation of the third and largest collation that they have been contracted to digitise, which consists of approximately 2 million service files. This collation has been split in half for publication purposes, with all open records in this first half expected to be published by November 2026. In addition, we signed a new licensing framework agreement with Findmypast that will enable us to work more efficiently on new digitisation projects. This incorporates the publishing of our content on their new academic platform, *The Social History Archive*. Our academic partners published 11 products this year, including the first solely based on our legal records.

- By mid-2025 we returned to FOI compliance (98% for Q2 of 2025) and remained above the expected 90% timeliness response rate for the rest of 2025.[3] This was achieved through addressing our FOI compliance lessons learned. These focused predominantly on improving the access service for MOD service personnel records and in readying us for the launch of Request a Military Service Record (see case study on page 014). Alongside this, we have made significant progress around transparency through our Reclosure Panel. The panel decides whether certain information found in accessible historical records should, or should not, remain accessible in the current legislative context. Whilst we handled fewer cases in 2025 (530) compared with 2024 (684), more information was released back into the public domain. The dates and minutes of panel meetings are now regularly released and we have updated and published our reclosure policy.

- We published 112 audio-visual testimonies and transcripts from 113 British Holocaust survivors and liberators recorded between 2015 and 2016 by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF). The transfer and launch was coordinated with colleagues across government. The UKHMF testimonies and transcripts licensing arrangements represented a new approach to mediating the re-use of a collection of international significance.

- Our work has also supported cultural diplomacy activities at home and abroad, demonstrating the relevance of the historical records we preserve to today's world. Our collections have made appearances at national and international events, including to support both the German State Visit and the Foreign Secretary's reception and exhibition to mark the centenary of the signing of the Locarno Treaties. Capability building has remained at the centre of our international approach, creating soft power impact and growth opportunities. In May 2025, working with the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, we ran bite-size training sessions for 100 officials from the 26 ministries of the Republic of Djibouti. We emphasised the importance of working with modern born-digital files, shared ways of assessing organisations' maturity and capability in digital archiving, and highlighted our nations' complex shared history.

3 Full statistics and context can be found on the Cabinet Office FOI statistics page.

CASE STUDY

Researching the history of transatlantic slavery

This year was the first year of delivery for our Partnership for Atlantic Slavery Scholarship, Archiving and Global Exchange (PASSAGE) project. This three-year project is funded by a £1 million grant from the Lloyd's Register Foundation to conduct and support research on the history of transatlantic slavery. It combines an international research mobility programme that supports archivists and researchers in West Africa and the Caribbean with archival research at The National Archives into the maritime history of the slave trade, using underused or newly catalogued archival records.

International engagement and collaboration are at the heart of PASSAGE, as we aim to ensure that the communities affected by the legacies of enslavement play a leading role in interpreting the records that document their own histories. The project team visited Ghana in July 2025, and Jamaica and Barbados in January 2026, to talk to archivists, researchers and heritage professionals about the challenges of archival research. Following these discussions, they were invited to submit proposals for research initiatives associated with the history of transatlantic slavery. The resulting international programme was launched in May 2026, distributing £450,000 of funding across 15 projects, thirteen institutions and five countries: Trinidad and Tobago, Cameroon, Ghana, Barbados and Jamaica.

Project partner Kwesi Essel Blankson and project lead Philippa Hellawell at Cape Coast Castle in Ghana

Members of the project team with partners at the University of the West Indies in Mona, Jamaica

The international programme supports a wide and ambitious range of work, from enabling newly established scholars to advance their doctoral research to facilitating large-scale cataloguing and digitisation initiatives within state archives. One participant, Rita Mawuena Benissan, founder of Si Hene, a non-profit foundation in Accra, said "the PASSAGE grant creates a meaningful pathway to expand access to histories that are often fragmented, overlooked, or held outside of local communities". Si Hene's project, funded by PASSAGE, will combine archival research and oral histories to explore the history of Ghana's slaving forts and castles.

PASSAGE is supporting independent scholars as well as institutional research. For Suzanne Francis-Brown, whose project will be investigating Jamaican slave registers in UK archives, the grant "facilitates exploration and excavation of very scanty and scattered records of enslaved individuals, with potential to serve family history as well as academic interests".

Alongside the international programme, cataloguing and research is underway into the extensive and wide-ranging records related to the history of the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans at The National Archives. Most relate to the British state's administration of the trade, and can be found across the Admiralty, Board of Trade, Colonial Office and Treasury departments. PASSAGE researchers are combining these with underused and sparsely catalogued records from the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa, Court of Chancery and the High Court of Admiralty.

Since the project began, we have added 4,800 new descriptions of records to our online catalogue. These records come from the Company of Merchants Trading to Africa from 1750 to 1820 (catalogue reference T 70), and include registers of enslaved people, letters, bills, architectural plans, receipts, legal testimonies and lists of slave-trading vessels. These 'miscellanea' can help resurface individual voices within the administrative record, including those of enslaved people.

The project has uncovered new records related to the history of rebellion and resistance aboard slave ships and the lives of free black people in West Africa and Great Britain. These findings have already been shared through blog posts and academic seminars and will inform future publications, a podcast and a new classroom learning resource.

Engaging the wider archive sector

Engaging the wider archive sector supports UNSDG 17.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

UNSDG 17.17:
Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

- We play an active role in sustaining and optimising the value and impact of archives through research, scholarship and supporting other archival institutions. In 2025-26 we received ministerial approval for the Government's new vision for the archive sector in England. This was the result of extensive consultation with archive professionals, stakeholders and users. It will guide our leadership of the sector to ensure that archives across the country are accessible, inclusive and sustainable at the heart of society.

- Collaboration is a theme across our work as leader of the archive sector in England. We worked with partners across the sector this year, including to help safeguard vulnerable archive collections and delivering the first-ever UK-wide archive sector survey. Another example is working with the Archives and Records Association in response to the *Data (Use and Access) Act 2025* and its implications for the archiving of personal data. The new Generally Recognised Standards were published in March 2026 and provide guidance for organisations who collect personal data with consent for a particular business purpose, and who later wish to transfer that data for archiving in the public interest.

- We provided 59 courses and events for archive professionals this year, building skills in a variety of areas. A key strand of support for the sector has been *Our Digital Century*, our programme to support digital skills and capacity building in the sector. This year we have launched guidance on producing and using digital asset registers in collaboration with the Digital Preservation Coalition and refreshed guidance on digital preservation workflows. We completed the fifth round of the peer mentoring programme, and more than 400 new learners completed our 'Novice to Know-How' digital preservation training.

- We continued to support the sector in decreasing its carbon emissions by running a further seven Carbon Literacy Training for Archives courses. More than 130 sector professionals are now certified Carbon Literate by the Carbon Literacy Project after attending this course.

The Discovering Collections Discovering Communities 2025 conference

Historic England's archive accreditation presentation

- Collaboration was also promoted through conferences. Colleagues presented at the Spontaneous Memorials conference in Manchester in June 2025 and the International Council on Archives conference in Barcelona in October 2025 as part of a larger delegation led by our Chief Executive. Sharing knowledge and experience with our international colleagues will help us to tackle the challenges faced by all archives more effectively.
- 252 archive services responded to the 2025 Accessions to Repositories survey, reporting more than 12,900 collections. 700 collections were added to our catalogue in 2025 by UK archivists using the Manage Your Collections tool. Archive Service Accreditation, the UK-wide sector standard, continues to flourish and we have now reached a landmark 200 accredited archive services. Following a successful pilot with archives from across the UK, the changes proposed following the 10-year review of the programme will be implemented in spring 2026. We thank Geoff Pick OBE for his invaluable term as Chair of the governing Accreditation Committee overseeing this period of change, and welcome Lesley Ferguson as the new Chair.
- We are aware of and monitor the risks to local authority archive services, in particular those that are Places of Deposit (see page 064), posed by reductions in funding, changes in governance and the increasing challenge of digital preservation. Through our archive sector leadership department, we offer guidance and support to local authority archivists, their managers and other local authority staff and elected officials to help them understand their responsibilities and find solutions to the problems that they face.

- Our grants function funds work across the organisation, including to support the archive sector and in our work as an independent research organisation. We won several major grants to support our work this year, including four projects of more than £250,000, from the AHRC, Government Office for Technology Transfer, and the Government of the Republic of Ireland. Our in-year grant income was £3.75 million[4], a 75% increase on 2024-25 and 258% increase on 2023-24. The total value of our grant portfolio was £14.5 million at year end across 29 live projects. Many of our major projects are now in the middle of their delivery periods, including Archives Revealed, the Spaces, Places and Belonging Community Hub, PASSAGE, two AHRC-funded RICHeS projects, and our project to digitise the National Farm Survey. We also awarded 116 grants to the galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) sectors worth £1.93 million, a 110% increase on 2024-25 and 192% increase on 2023-24. These increases have been driven in large part by our Archives Revealed programme, and by support from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and the Wolfson Foundation.
- Our research work continued under the rollout of our Research Vision for 2024-27 and its underpinning roadmap. We published our first-ever Research Report 2024-25 that showcased the broad range of research activities performed by staff and PhD students at The National Archives. We have also been developing a new Research Impact Handbook to be published in 2026-27, consulting across the organisation to form impact priorities and paving the way for a new approach to research impact. In addition, we rolled out a new sub-strategy for research impact, culture and engagement. This included hosting multiple research events, including the Discovering Collections Discovering Communities 2025 conference at the University of Durham, History and Archives in Practice at the University of London, our Research Routes autumn seminar series, our Annual Digital Lecture, and Talking Records, a two-day symposium on environmental history in our collection.

Delegates take part in Northumberland Archives' travelling escape room at the Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities 2025 conference

4 This includes £202,000 of capital income (receipt of donated assets) which appears in the other comprehensive expenditure section of the statement of comprehensive expenditure in the financial statements.

CASE STUDY

Strategy

This year we completed work to renew our strategy which was published in March 2026. Work began in late 2024, and we were pleased to receive ministerial approval in July 2025. Our vision is that by 2038 – the bicentenary of the founding of the Public Record Office – we will be the living digital archive of the state. The next four years are critical to our realisation of that vision, and in developing our new strategy we wanted to be clear about our choices and priorities.

We began by identifying five areas for investigation: 'Access', 'Artificial intelligence', 'Estate and location', 'Profile and sustainability' and 'Technology'. Each area was overseen by a workstream group co-sponsored by two executive directors to draw on expertise from across the organisation. Run in parallel with our work on the 2025 spending review, this model helped us to take an agile approach to strategy development. We were also able to develop a fresh perspective on opportunities and challenges and examine the links and overlaps between each workstream.

The emerging thinking from these workstreams was tested with colleagues across the organisation and refined through evidence review sessions. Through this process, a clear set of four strategic priorities was distilled:

- **Lead the future of archives:** we will address the challenges of records management capability in government and resilience in the wider archive sector and use our expertise at an international level to help solve common problems.
- **Increase our profile:** we will increase our profile to deliver reach and impact through a more targeted, integrated and creative public programme planned on a longer timescale.
- **Widen availability and reshape place:** we will expand the digital availability of the physical record, while evolving the places from which the collection is encountered and made useful.
- **Renew our technology:** we will upgrade our technology estate so that the quality of our best and most modern systems is matched by renewed infrastructure that fully supports the living digital archive and users' interactions with it.

Accordingly, we have undertaken directorate-level organisation design work with the aim of improving accountability for each strategic priority. Working collaboratively with directors and senior leadership, we developed distinct purposes for each directorate, with a direct link to a strategic priority. The resulting newly titled directorates and directors (see Directors' report on page 053) provide a solid framework through which we can deliver our strategy.

Our new strategy sets a clear, practical and ambitious direction for The National Archives over the next four years. We look forward to reporting on our progress.

1.2 Performance analysis

This section provides detailed analysis of our progress over the year against our budgets, business priorities and input and impact indicators, as well as our Environmental sustainability report.

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 frontline services, and Administration, which covers all other expenditure not included in Programme.

Departments are required to report outturn against Estimate (see Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply statements on page 085). 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 previous years is shown in the table below.

Outturn	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000	2023-24 £000	2022-23 £000	2021-22 £000
RDEL income	(22,194)	(20,945)	(15,224)	(14,346)	(12,678)
RDEL expenditure	74,622	67,920	63,921	60,522	52,918
RDEL total	52,428	46,975	48,697	46,176	40,240
CDEL	7,598	7,417	3,283	5,296	6,383
AME	27	4	(24)	(5)	(142)
Total expenditure	**60,053**	**54,396**	**51,956**	**51,467**	**46,481**

The Common Core tables detailing financial expenditure for the current Comprehensive Spending Review can be found on The National Archives website under the appendices to the Annual report and accounts.

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.

Budget	Outturn £000	Estimate £000	Variance £000
Non-ringfenced RDEL*	44,355	44,977	(622)
Depreciation	8,073	8,201	(128)
RDEL	**52,428**	**53,178**	**(750)**
Capital	7,598	7,944	(346)
Total DEL	**60,026**	**61,122**	**(1,096)**
Total AME (all resource)	27	100	(73)
Net cash requirement	52,310	52,921	(611)

* This includes administration costs of £11,717,000, compared to an Estimate of £12,224,000, a variance of £507,000.

Our total DEL outturn was £60.0 million compared to the HM Treasury net allocation of £61.1 million, a variance of £1.1 million or 1.8% (2024-25: £1.6 million; 2.9%).

Our resource (RDEL) outturn for 2025-26 was £52.4 million compared to a budget of £53.2 million, a variance of £0.8 million or 1.5% (2024-25: £1.3 million; 2.7%). Most of this, £0.5 million (2024-25: £1.1 million), was within administration costs. This underspend included additional income of £0.1 million.

Our capital (CDEL) outturn for 2025-26 was £7.6 million compared to a budget of £7.9 million, a variance of £0.3 million or 3.7% (2024-25: £0.3 million; 4.2%). This was mainly due to delays in equipment purchases running into the next financial year.

The AME outturn relates to depreciation on donated assets.

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 £74.7 million (2024-25: £67.9 million).

Staff costs amounted to £38.9 million (2024-25: 33.2 million). The increase in staff costs reflects an increase in staff numbers and an annual pay award of 3.75% in line with the Cabinet Office pay remit guidance. Spend on agency staff and contingent labour was £864,000 (2024-25: £456,000) this year. The average full-time equivalent (FTE) number of staff employed in

2025-26 was 642 (2024-25: 583). The increase was mainly due to an increase in temporary staff to support work on the backlog in FOI requests relating to the MOD records and to provide support for the MI5 exhibition due to the unprecedented visitor numbers.

Operating expenditure, excluding staff costs, depreciation, provisions and audit charges, amounted to £27.6 million (2024-25: £26.2 million).

Total operating income

Total operating income for the financial year was £22.2 million (2024-25: £20.9 million). The rise was driven by higher levels of grant income, increased income from *The Gazette* and a higher level of recharges to other government departments, including Parliament for the transfer of Parliament's Archive Collections. It was countered by a drop in licensing income, which was high in 2024-25 because of a one-off resale of the 1921 Census.

Total capital expenditure

Total capital expenditure was £7.6 million (2024-25: £7.9 million), of this £2.8 million (2024-25: £2.6 million) funded our continued investment in digital services. This included continued development of:

- Explore The National Archives, the multi-year redevelopment of The National Archives' website and catalogue for the public.
- Access Your Records, a product to allow government organisations access to records, not publicly available, that they have transferred to The National Archives.
- TDR, The National Archives' digital transfer service that helps bodies, subject to the *Public Record Act 1958*, to upload, prepare and transfer their selected digital public records for permanent preservation.

We invested £3.3 million in our estate infrastructure (2024-25: £3.0 million), this included the continued work on a significant windows replacement project (see page 015 and page 043 for more detail).

Financial position

Assets and liabilities are shown in the Statement of Financial Position on page 100.

Total assets as at 31 March 2026 were £215.8 million (2025: £215.8 million). Within this, non-current assets have increased by £397,000 while current assets have reduced by £354,000.

Property, plant and equipment, right-of-use assets and intangibles represented 96.3% of the total asset value (2025: 96.1%). The increase in value is largely due to:

- Improvements to the physical site at Kew, including new windows for the ground and first floor in the Kew 1 building.
- Continued investment in our digital infrastructure including developing software.

The reduction in current assets is largely due to holding a lower cash balance at year end.

Total liabilities as at 31 March 2026 were £13.5 million (2025: 14.4 million). The reduction of £900,000 is largely due to:

- A small reduction in trade payables due to key suppliers submitting invoices a little earlier, allowing for prompt payment at year end.
- A reduction in the lease liability relating to the storage facility at Deepstore.

Performance against our business priorities

This section reports performance against our 2025-26 business priorities which are monitored through the corporate performance framework.

The table below summarises performance during 2025-26 and the delivery status of each business priority at year end.

Business priority	Status at end 2025-26
Complete the transfer of the digital records of public inquiries when available and provide appropriate access.	**Completed:** we completed the transfer of the Infected Blood Inquiry records, with release scheduled for April 2026, and transferred the Dawn Sturgess Inquiry records in March 2026 (see page 013). The TDR service was used for three inquiries.
Complete the relocation of the Parliamentary Archives and reestablish access where appropriate.	**Partially completed:** the relocation of the Parliamentary Archives was completed, as well as partial catalogue migration and public access to records held at Kew (see page 013). However, further work is required to complete cataloguing, system integration and access arrangements for records held at our off site storage facility Deepstore, due summer 2026.
Strengthen resilience against cyber attack.	**Partially completed:** we have strengthened our cyber security posture through improved threat and risk information alongside mitigating measures (see page 018). The cyber threat landscape is increasingly hostile. Further interventions are required to bring overall risk within appetite. That work is a business priority for 2026-27.
Continue to transfer and make available military service personnel records in 2025-26.	**Completed:** we published the updated Fees Regulations and launched the new Request a Military Service Record service (see case study on page 014). We successfully delivered the transfer target, improved compliance performance and reduced the backlog.
Grow our high-quality legal information services.	**Completed:** Lawmaker was embedded as business as usual in the Northern Ireland Assembly, legislative update programmes were delivered to plan, statutory Welsh publishing requirements were met, and coverage of Find Case Law continued to expand (see page 015).
Increase engagement through our exhibitions, education and public programme on site, online and off site, and ensure its financial sustainability.	**Completed:** our major exhibitions exceeded attendance expectations (see case study on page 022), education delivery remained strong across on site and digital channels (see page 024), off site engagement expanded through new partnerships, and grant income significantly exceeded the annual target (see page 030).
Launch a new government vision for the archive sector in England.	**Completed:** the vision was drafted, consulted on and approved by ministers, with expert panel engagement completed and publication and ministerial launch arrangements confirmed within the reporting year (see page 030).

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.

Performance against our input indicators

Input indicator	2025-26 outcome	2024-25 outcome
Original records delivered to on site users	498,657	486,486
Electronic records delivered to online users	342,000,000	306,300,000
Staff diversity (average):		
Women (overall)	50%	51.6%
Women (top management)	54%	50%
Black and Minority Ethnic (overall)	17%	14.9%
Disabled (overall)	9%	8.5%
Staff engagement (as reported by the Civil Service People Survey)	68%	68%
Time taken to deliver original records to on site users	93.8% of on-demand orders were delivered within an hour	90.8% of on-demand orders were delivered within an hour
Time taken to respond to FOI and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests	Our 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 2025 is 83%	The performance rate figure for the calendar year 2024 was 53%[5]
Total departmental spend	£52.4 million	£47.0 million
Staff sickness absence	4.7 days per FTE (average)	6.75 days per FTE (average)
Outstanding effects on legislation.gov.uk	158,539 amendments applied to legislation on legislation.gov.uk	153,004 amendments applied to legislation on legislation.gov.uk
Number of physical records accessioned[6]	1,192,702 pieces, 5,436.14 metres	1,098,969 pieces, 5,980.37 metres

5 The transfer of service personnel records from the MOD that began in February 2021 resulted in a 308% increase in the volume of FOI requests received by The National Archives in 2024, compared to 2022. This impacted the overall percentage of requests responded to ‘in time’ as well as the overall timeliness across all monitored bodies. More information can be found on our website and gov.uk.

6 These figures include over 1 million records accessioned through the MOD service records project. In 2024-25, they accounted for 95% of records and 85% of space used. In 2025-26 this was 96% of records and 77% of space.

Performance against our impact indicators

Impact indicator	2025-26 outcome	2024-25 outcome
Web archiving	Web archive services – sessions: 1,654,498 Web archive services – users: 1,162,609	Web archive services – sessions: 1,428,442 Web archive services – users: 1,003,864
On site users	95%	95%
Online users[7]	72%	83%
legislation.gov.uk users	77%	66%
Records and information management services used across government	Our Information Management Assessment (IMA) programme has evolved into a modular self-assessment tool focused on digital records. Over the 2025-26 period, use of the IMA self-assessment toolkit continued to grow, with 30 assessments being completed by 20 government departments and other public record bodies.	We generated IMA reports for seven departments and engaged with 25 more to develop a new maturity framework for digital records appraisal. We also benchmarked our M365 model with government users and the wider record management community through our collaboration with the Information and Records Management Society. After focusing on content development, we began the agile product development of a new platform to transform these tools into a web-based self-assessment service. It will enable users to submit and manage their assessment data, generate insights, and track progress over time. Automating these processes will allow us to scale the service, making it accessible to all organisations subject to the *Public Records Act 1958*, and provide us with sector-level insights on digital record management practices and challenges.

7 This aggregates satisfaction from the 'What's on'; 'Explore the collection'; 'Blogs'; 'Discovery search'; 'Book a visit'; and 'Digital download' areas of our website.

Environmental sustainability report

Overview

This report was prepared in accordance with the final draft of the Greening Government Commitments (GGC) 2025-30 and the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) guidelines.

The GGC are a set of actions that government departments and their agencies will take to reduce their impacts on the environment. The commitments have been renewed for the 2025-26 reporting period and our 2025-26 data will become the baseline year for the next four years of reporting. This report sets out our progress in each area this year.

TCFD relates to our ability to identify, assess and manage imminent and more remote climate risk based on four thematic areas: Governance, Strategy, Risk management, and Metrics and targets. Our compliance statement is included in this report under Adapting to climate risks.

This year our focus in terms of environmental sustainability has been building a strong foundation to support our long-term environmental goals, as well as improving our data maturity in light of 2025-26 becoming the baseline year for the new GGC 2025–30 cycle.

Key achievements from this year include:

- Introducing a new TCFD and GGC Steering Committee.
- Improving environmental data maturity and our emissions disclosures.
- Delivering upgrades to our facilities that reduce energy consumption and emissions.
- Attaining Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation status.
- Building carbon and climate awareness among staff.

Our environmental sustainability work supports UNSDG 13.

UNSDG 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

Governance

Governance under the GGC framework defines the oversight, ownership and accountability in place to drive and manage the progress in GGC performance. This year, to strengthen our governance of climate-related risks and maintain alignment with government goals, we have established a TCFD and GGC Steering Committee. It is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and operates under the Executive Team, providing regular updates to the Audit and Risk Committee and the Board. The Steering Committee reviews progress and sets out action plans based on our sustainability obligations.

The Board and Executive Team received quantitative GGC performance metrics throughout the year while awaiting the finalised commitments for the 2025-30 period. We have also developed interactive planning tools that allow us to strengthen our readiness for the next phase of commitments. Once the new commitments are published, we will refine our data granularity with different departments and align our monitoring processes with the updated GGC targets and our new baseline figures.

Our main repository building at Kew

For more information on the governance of climate-related risks, please see the TCFD compliance statement on page 044.

Greenhouse gas emissions (tCO_2e)

The tables in this section show various data on our emissions and energy consumption, including per FTE. Additional context is provided beneath them.

As we commence a new GGC cycle, the financial year 2025-26 will serve as our baseline year going forward. A five-year comparison is therefore not applicable at this stage and is not included. In addition, part of the year-on-year metrics may show limited comparability. This is because the reporting period reflects a transition phase in improving our underlying data management processes. Over the course of the cycle, we will continue to enhance data quality by focusing on specific business functions each year, supporting more consistent data reporting over time.

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions are different classifications of greenhouse gas emissions based on where the emissions originate across our operations and value chain:

- Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned or controlled sources.
- Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from purchased energy.
- Scope 3 captures all other indirect emissions occurring upstream and downstream.

Non-financial indicators (tCO_2e)	2025-26	2024-25
Scope 1 – Natural gas	371	487*
Scope 1 – Fugitives emission	111	15**
Total – Scope 1	**482**	**502***
Total – Scope 2 – Electricity	**739**	**895***
Scope 3 – Business travel (domestic travels)	14.4	16.8
Scope 3 – Business travel (domestic flights)***	4.7	4.1
Scope 3 – Business travel (international travels and flights)***	47.7	79.8
Total – Scope 3 – Business travel	**66.8**	**100.7***
Scope 3 – Off site servers and cloud services (location-based method)	89.2[8]	To be reported in future years
Scope 3 – Electricity transportation and distribution	77	79[9]
Total – Reported Scope 3	**233**	**To be reported in future years**
Total – Scope 1, 2 and 3 – Domestic travel and flights & electricity transportation and distribution[10]	**1,317**	**1,497***
Total – Scope 1, 2 and 3 – Domestic travel and flights	**1,240**	**To be reported in future years**
Total – Scope 1, 2 and reported Scope 3	**1,454**	**To be reported in future years**

* Restated following a version control correction, reflecting strengthened data management processes.

** Restated to incorporate newly available data, providing a more complete account of refrigerant emissions.

*** The emission factor has been taken into account with radiative forcing (RF).

Non-financial indicators (tCO_2e /full time employee)	2025-26	2024-25
Total – Scope 1,2	1.90	2.18
Total – Scope 1,2,3 (all business travel)	2.01	2.33

8 Based on proportionate Scope 1 and 2 emissions estimates from our cloud service provider, reflecting localised average grid emissions intensity.
9 The figure has been updated to reflect a methodological correction. Emissions initially reported under indirect energy (including transmission and distribution losses) in GGC Scope 2 have been reclassified to align with the GHG Protocol.
10 The metric reflects the defined overall emission in the 2024-25 Annual report and accounts.

Energy consumption

Energy consumption (MWh)	2025-26	2024-25
Electricity – Grid	4,173	4,324*
Electricity – Renewable	0	0
Electricity – Good quality combined heat and power	122	40*
Natural gas	2,027	2,660*
Total – Energy consumption	6,322	7,024

Energy consumption (MWh /FTE)	2025-26	2024-25
Total – Energy consumption	9.85	12.13

Distance travelled by flights

Flight distance travelled (km)	2025-26	2024-25
Domestic flights	20,480	15,007
Short-haul international flights	109,313	76,730
Long-haul international flights	220,686	250,654

* Restated following a version control correction, reflecting strengthened data management processes.

Flight distance travelled (km/FTE)	2025-26	2024-25
Domestic flights	31.90	26.07
Short-haul international flights	170.27	133.32
Long-haul international flights	343.75	435.51

Financial indicators

Financial indicators (£)	2025-26	2024-25
Expenditure – Energy	1,214,175	1,135,298*
Expenditure – Domestic and international business travel	148,701	145,755*

* Restated following a version control correction, reflecting strengthened data management processes.

This year, we recorded a 23.8% reduction in natural gas consumption and a 3.4% reduction in electricity use. At the start of the financial year, we introduced updated temperature controls on our gas boilers that fit with our operational needs. We have moved away from a fixed temperature to dynamic temperature set points that adjust automatically with demand.

We have delivered measurable energy savings through seasonal adjustments to repository temperature set points. This has allowed us to experience controlled temperature drift while maintaining operational integrity. Following feedback from staff, set points will be recalibrated to approximately 1 to 2°C below our initial plan in order to maintain comfort. This is expected to increase energy demand in 2026-27 but reflects a balanced approach that integrates environmental performance with employee wellbeing and wider sustainability considerations.

The rising cost of utilities presents us with a major challenge. While working to reduce our environmental impact and progress toward net zero, we are also trying to manage the financial pressures associated with rising utility unit costs. This reinforces the importance of building our decarbonisation plan and reducing overall energy demand in operational measures.

Our two-year window replacement project which completed this year (see page 015) will improve thermal bridging and unintentional air leakage, limiting the extent to which external environmental conditions affect indoor spaces (particularly the stable environment required for repository storage). Throughout the retrofit project, which also included insulation enhancement, we closely monitored the environmental conditions to ensure that preservation requirements and occupant comfort were maintained.

Several reported metrics from 2024-25 are restated in the tables throughout the Environmental sustainability report as part of an ongoing enhancement of our data management process. We have indicated where this is the case and have also refined our underlying data structure to provide clearer insights into performance monitoring.

We have expanded our Scope 3 emissions disclosure on off site server and cloud service emissions. Proportionate estimates of Scope 1 and 2 emissions were provided by a third-party cloud service provider. These estimates cover most of our digital services, however, some of our digital services were still transitioning to cloud-based operations and are therefore not covered.

As our data quality and management practices continue to mature, future reporting may incorporate adjustments to earlier figures where improved information becomes available. This includes employee commuting emissions, which are currently based on estimated data. As part of our planned improvements on sustainability data management, we will conduct a staff travel survey to obtain more accurate and representative information for future reporting.

Adapting to climate risks: TCFD compliance statement

We have prepared our disclosure in line with HM Treasury's TCFD guidance, which interprets and adapts the TCFD framework for the UK public sector.

Assessment of climate-related risk

We have built a climate risk register with 22 relevant climate risks, each evaluated with corresponding mitigation measures in the short, medium and long term. Based on our initial assessment, existing controls, mitigation measures and limited direct exposure, climate-related risks are unlikely to pose an imminent danger to the organisation. We have therefore concluded that, at this stage, climate change does not classify as a principal corporate risk. An integrated residual climate risk evaluation will follow as part of the ongoing corporate-wide risk appetite review.

We acknowledge that the climate risk landscape and appetite will evolve. This topic will therefore remain an important focus area monitored through ongoing assessment and management under the directorate risk register. Review of the climate risk register is on the standing agenda of the TCFD and GGC Steering Committee. This is because such risks can affect the resilience of the estate, operational continuity and the preservation of the national collection. We will continue to refine the process for escalating risks and fully embed the topic of climate risk into our corporate risk management framework in the future.

Summary of compliance with TCFD recommendations

For the purposes of this compliance statement, 'comply' denotes full adherence to the TCFD. 'Explain' means that full compliance has not been achieved but a clear and reasoned justification is provided. Further enhancements of the disclosure will be developed over future reporting periods as our climate risk management and sustainability governance continue to mature.

As climate change is not classified as a principal risk, the disclosure in Strategy (a), (b) and (c), and the Metrics and targets disclosures (a) and (c) are not mandatory requirements under HM Treasury guidance. We disclose these pillars voluntarily to enhance transparency and accountability.

TCFD pillar	Comply or explain	2025-26 actions	Future plans
Governance (a) Board oversight of climate-related risks and opportunities	**Comply:** the overall accountability of TCFD rests with the Chief Executive. Climate-related risks are overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee, supported by our Executive Team and a wider TCFD & GGC Steering Committee (for context, see the Governance statement on page 056).	Discussed climate-related risks and TCFD-aligned disclosure expectations with the Board and the Audit and Risk Committee (see page 058). Invited the National Audit Office to deliver a thought leadership session on climate change.	Update the Audit and Risk Committee terms of reference to make climate change a standing agenda item.
Governance (b) Management's role in assessing and managing climate-related risks and opportunities	**Comply:** senior management is responsible for assessing and managing climate-related risks, reflecting the organisation's focus on operational resilience, estate management and service continuity (for more information on risk management processes, see page 063).	Delivered a series of focus group discussions and workshops to key departments covering building climate literacy and how climate-related risks can influence a range of operational and corporate activities (see page 050). Established a dedicated TCFD and GGC Steering Committee to facilitate overarching operational planning (see page 039).	Clarify and formalise management roles and responsibilities for climate risk.
Strategy (a) Identification of climate-related risks and opportunities over the short, medium and long term	**Comply:** climate-related risks and opportunities have been identified over defined short-medium-and long-term periods, aligned with HM Treasury guidance.	Created a shortlist of climate-related risks, analysing each in terms of its physical, chronic physical and transition impact (see page 044). This work was supported by a qualitative climate risk register and validated by key stakeholders to ensure relevance and completeness.	Enhance prioritisation and decision-usefulness by refining risk definitions, improving consistency and strengthening links to strategic objectives.
Strategy (b) Impact of climate-related risks and opportunities on the organisation's operations, strategy, and financial planning	**Explain:** the impacts of climate-related risks and opportunities on strategy and financial planning have been considered qualitatively; financial impacts have not yet been quantified.	Considered the impact climate risks could have on operations, estates, service delivery and long-term planning (see page 044).	Progress the quantification of potential impacts on capital investment, operating costs and embed climate considerations within financial planning and budgeting.
Strategy (c) Resilience of organisation strategy under different climate scenarios	**Explain:** while potential impacts have been examined, formal financial quantification and climate scenario analysis has not yet been completed.	Created a draft roadmap for future climate scenario analysis which references relevant national climate and flood risk scenarios.	Undertake proportionate climate scenario analysis to assess the resilience of our strategy and inform future planning and decision-making.

TCFD pillar	Comply or explain	2025-26 actions	Future plans
Risk management (a) Processes for identifying and assessing climate-related risks	**Comply:** a dedicated climate risk register, developed in line with HM Treasury's *Orange Book* principles (for more information on risk management processes, see page 063).	Undertook a qualitative climate risk assessment which has informed the identification and assessment of climate-related risks and strengthened risk ownership (see page 044).	Refine prioritisation, consistency and align our assessment more closely with the corporate risk taxonomy.
Risk management (b) Processes for managing climate-related risks	**Explain:** the organisation has begun to consider how climate-related risks might be handled through estates management and operational planning. A defined and consistently applied process for managing climate-related risks has not yet been fully established.	Considered potential resilience and adaptation measures, alongside the identification of climate-related risks (particularly in relation to the estate and operational continuity) (see page 044).	Develop and implement a structured and coordinated climate resilience and adaptation programme, aligned with asset management, operational planning and investment decision-making.
Risk management (c) Integration of climate-related risks into the organisation's overall risk management	**Explain:** climate-related risks are currently assessed alongside existing risk processes, but this process is not yet fully embedded within the corporate risk management framework.	Developed and reviewed climate risks alongside existing risk processes as the organisation updated its corporate risk framework.	Integrate climate-related risks into the refreshed risk management framework, making sure it is alignment with *Orange Book* principles on risk ownership, escalation, appetite and assurance.
Metrics and target (a) Metrics used to assess climate-related risks and opportunities	**Explain:** while emissions data is reported, formal metrics for assessing climate resilience and adaptation have not yet been defined.	Monitored operational sustainability metrics, including energy and building performance indicators.	Develop and introduce metrics to track climate resilience and adaptation across the estate.
Metrics and target (b) Scope 1, Scope 2 and relevant Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions	**Comply:** greenhouse gas emissions are disclosed in line with GGC, covering Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions (business travel).	Collected and reported on emissions data, using established government methodologies (see page 040).	Continue to improve and evaluate data quality and maturity to support robust and reliable reporting.
Metrics and target (c) Targets for managing climate-related risks and opportunities and performance against targets	**Explain:** while long-term emissions targets are disclosed, specific targets relating to climate resilience and adaptation have not yet been established.	Monitored progress against emissions targets.	Define interim targets and milestones for managing climate-related risks and strengthening organisational resilience.

As The National Archives publishes its first TCFD compliance statement, we recognise the need for ongoing improvements, particularly in areas where disclosures do not yet fully comply with TCFD expectations. Progress will be delivered through a phased and proportionate approach. While our capacities, processes and resource planning continue to develop, we will strengthen the quality and integration of TCFD.

In the future, The National Archives plans to:

- Further align climate-related risks to the corporate risk management framework, in line with *Orange Book* principles on risk ownership, escalation and assurance.
- Develop and implement climate-specific metrics relating to climate resilience and adaptation, complementing the pre-existing sustainability and estates performance measures.
- Proceed with proportionate climate scenario analysis, informed by UK climate projections and relevant national flood risk guidance.
- Strengthen alignment between climate risk assessment, estates planning and financial planning.

These actions will support the delivery of more comprehensive and integrative climate-related disclosures, in line with HM Treasury's TCFD-aligned requirements and public-sector good practice.

Waste minimisation and management

Pursuing opportunities to recycle supports UNSDG 12.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

UNSDG 12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

We monitor our operational waste recycling rate and the quantity of construction and projects waste across the organisation. Operational waste recycling rate has changed from 47% to 45% and constructional waste was 37 tonnes.

Our on site composter offered key insights into waste management at Kew. Through data monitoring and regular inspections, we discovered that behavioural changes and daily workflow adjustments would support proper waste segregation and consistent operational practices. In light of this, we offered additional training and guidance to staff to reinforce correct handling of food residue.

We also improved our food waste management during active processing cycles, when food residue could not be added. We provided temporary storage for food waste material until it could be processed in the next loading cycle.

Waste minimisation and sustainable construction were also key to the window replacement project (see page 015 and page 043 for more information). Around 400 intact windows were given a second life and are now being reused to construct commercial flower production greenhouses in Lithuania. The protective packaging and crates used to deliver the new windows were used to safely transport the old units. We were pleased that embedding environmental sustainability into procurement planning in this way has extended the useful life of building materials.

No electronic waste (e-waste) or IT asset disposal activity occurred during the reporting period, in line with our approach to maximise asset value and minimise environmental impact. Disposal activity was deprioritised due to limited capacity and the need to focus on business-critical services. Assets were securely retained and batched for more efficient future disposal. We are developing a more structured, sustainable disposal plan to ensure our recycling activity is as effective and low-impact as possible.

Non-financial indicator (%)	2025-26	2024-25
Operational waste to landfill	0%	0%
Operational waste recycling rate	45%	47%

Non-financial indicator (tonnes)	2025-26	2024-25
Operational waste – Recycled and reused	30	22
Operational waste – Energy from waste incineration	28	20
Operational waste – Food and catering: anaerobic digestion	9	5
Operational waste – Landfill	0	0
Total – Operational waste	**67**	**47**
Construction and project waste – Recycled and reused	20	53
Construction and project waste – Landfill	8	5
Total – Construction and project waste	**28**	**58**

Financial indicator (£)	2025-26	2024-25
Operational waste expenditure – Recycled and reused	3,241	5,292
Operational waste expenditure – Energy from waste incineration	6,312	6,035
Operational waste expenditure – Food and catering: anaerobic digestion	1,315	1,229
Operational waste expenditure – Landfill	0	0
Operational waste expenditure – Other	9,383	To be reported on in future years
Total – Operational waste expenditure	**20,251**	**24,786**

Non-financial indicator (tonnes FTE)	2025-26	2024-25
Total – Operational waste	**0.10**	**0.08**

Finite resource consumption

We actively monitor water usage through our corporate performance dashboard, which gives us a clear view of consumption trends. To reduce consumption in future, we will consider installing or restoring fully functional smart water meters and explore other potential water saving opportunities. Paper purchases were low this year, but this was primarily due to existing stock from previous orders meeting operational needs rather than changes in usage.

Non-financial indicator	2025-26	2024-25
Potable water consumption (m^3)	12,409	To be reported in future years
Sewerage water consumption (m^3)	6,702	To be reported in future years
Total – Water consumption (m^3)	**19,110**	**14,196**
Paper use (reams A4e)	175	1,935

Financial indicator (£)	2025-26	2024-25
Water supply costs	47,826	26,031*

* Restated following a version control correction, reflecting strengthened data management processes.

Procurement

Our procurement policies support UNSDG 12.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

UNSDG 12.7 Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.

In line with public procurement policy, bidders for all openly competed above-threshold contracts are required to address social value as part of their tender submissions and make related contractual commitments. In most circumstances, the social value criteria specified by The National Archives relates to environmental impact. For example, requiring bidders to make clear and measurable commitments to recycling and reducing waste for works contracts.

We are taking a phased approach to achieve the procurement commitment, beginning with building a clearer understanding of our targeted critical and top-tier suppliers and how they manage their environmental impacts. As our understanding grows, we will be able to better work with suppliers on improving transparency, reducing emissions and supporting more sustainable procurement practices across the organisation.

Nature

Our Kew site supports a variety of green spaces and wildlife that contribute to local ecosystems and community wellbeing. With only a limited footprint in terms of natural capital and land use, the impact is correspondingly limited. It will therefore receive proportionately less emphasis within our broader environmental sustainability planning. However, we will continue to maintain oversight of developments and revisit its significance through our ongoing materiality and risk assessment processes. In addition, we will continue to promote and engage with the public on the ecological value of our estate, including creating biodiversity trails that provide new opportunities for staff, visitors and the wider community to learn about the local flora and fauna.

Capacity building

In March 2026, we achieved Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation status. To build on this, we are working to provide access to environmental education across departments, beginning with senior colleagues. As we broaden access over time, our people will be increasingly empowered to make informed, climate-aware decisions in their day-to-day work. We hope to attain Silver status in the future, as we continue to build a climate-aware workforce and commit to improving environmental knowledge across the archive sector.

Saul Nassé
Chief Executive and Keeper of Public Records
09 July 2026

2.0 Accountability report

Our Time Travel Tots: musical storytelling event; the Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities 2025 conference; a painting held in our repositories (COPY 1/170/244)

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. It includes a governance statement which outlines the main features of our risk management and internal control system.

For more information, the Transparency page on our website incorporates a series of documents and policies that govern how we operate and take decisions. It also details the procedures we follow to ensure that our actions are fair, efficient, transparent and accountable to our stakeholders.

Directors' report

About The National Archives

The National Archives is a non-ministerial department sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). Our main statutory duties are set out in the *Public Records Act 1958* and associated legislation. 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, King's Printer for Scotland and King's Printer for Wales. Further details of our remit are summarised from page 012.

Management and structure

Our duties were carried out by the following directorates and functions. During the year under review, we reorganised some directorate portfolios and updated several directors' job titles. The Directors make up the Executive Team. Responsibilities in the table overleaf are as of 31 March 2026.

Directorate/ function	Director	Responsibilities
Chief Executive	**Saul Nassé**, Chief Executive	• Responsible for our future direction and current performance (accountable to ministers for both). • Holding and discharging the following offices (as Keeper of Public Records): · Historical Manuscripts Commissioner · King's Printer of Acts of Parliament (responsible for publishing UK legislation and the official newspapers of record, *The Gazette*, as well as the management of Crown copyright and database rights) ·King's Printer for Scotland ·King's Printer for Wales. • Holding and discharging the following offices: · Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office · Government Printer for Northern Ireland.
Finance and Performance	**Peter Mills**, Interim Finance Director (until 30 November 2025) **Tobi Adetimilehin**, Finance Director (from 1 December 2025)	• Planning and analysing our financial performance, ensuring that resources are strongly aligned to delivery plans and milestones in business planning within the overall financial context. • Ensuring that The National Archives has effective systems and procedures in place to proportionately manage risk. • Overseeing the corporate performance framework and performance reporting for the organisation, bringing together financial performance analysis to support strategic decision making.
Curation and Engagement	**Emmajane Avery**, Chief Curator (from 20 October 2025, previously Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership)	• Developing knowledge of the collections. • Creating on site, online and remote engagement programmes. • Curating compelling experiences and content for the public and wider educational audiences (including collections expertise and academic research, education, outreach, events and exhibitions). • Marketing, media, communications, audience insight and the on site visitor experience (including our activities with volunteers).
Government and Archives Leadership	**Lucy Fletcher**, Deputy Chief Executive (from 20 October 2025, previously Director for Public Records Access and Government Services)	• Delivering on policy reform and statutory obligations. • Developing our strategic relationships with institutions of the state, archive sector and international bodies.
Digital Technology	**John Sheridan**, Chief Digital and Information Officer (from 20 October 2025, previously Digital Director)	• Managing IT operations and digital services. • Fulfilling our ambition to become a digital archive by instinct and design. • Providing strategic direction. • Transforming our digital offer. • Shaping and driving forward our cataloguing and web-based services. • Holding the role of Chief Information Security Officer.
Operations, Research, Commercial and Access	**Gemma Maclagan Ram**, Chief Operating Officer, (from 20 October 2025, previously Research and Commercial Development Director)	• Overseeing research, academic engagement, grants and funding activities, as well as conservation and heritage science. • Managing our commercial teams and developing our commercial products and services. • Delivering value for money and embedding an entrepreneurial culture and ethos. • Overseeing business-critical functions, including on site access services to the public and estates and facilities. • Holding the role of Senior Officer Accountable for Security, leading on physical and personnel security for the organisation.
People, Inclusion and Change	**Andrea Metcalf**, Director of People, Inclusion and Change (until 12 September 2025) **Hannah Lee** and **Lucy Windmill**, Joint Interim Directors of People, Inclusion and Change (from 13 September 2025 to 11 January 2026) **Claire Wightman**, Director of People, Inclusion and Change (from 12 January 2026)	• Provision of high-quality people services to the organisation. • Ensuring we have the structures, skills, and culture in place to deliver the 2025-30 strategy. • Continuing to build a high performing and inclusive culture to support our mission and vision for the archives.

Further details about the Executive Team can be found on page 062. Further information about the organisation and directorate functions can be found on our website.

The National Archives' Board

The National Archives' Board is the key strategic advisory body of the organisation. It consists of the Chief Executive and six executive directors, as well as the Chair of the Board and the four other non-executive Board members, who are:

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE
Chair of the Board

Nigel Baker
Non-executive Board member

Sonia Cargan
Senior non-executive Board member

Lopa Patel MBE
Non-executive Board Member, Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee

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

Further details relating to the operation of The National Archives' Board can be found on page 056 and on our website.

Audit

The financial statements have been audited by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG). The audit fee was £98,000 (see Note 3 to the accounts on page 090). The NAO 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 NAO 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.

The original will of Ann Walker, partner of Anne Lister, which was displayed alongside Lister's will for the first time at our Love Letters exhibition (PROB 10/7038)

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.

Governance statement

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

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.

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.
- Improving how The National Archives delivers on its goals and meets new challenges.
- Encouraging new and innovative ways of thinking across the organisation and enabling the entire workforce to contribute to the organisation's overall aims.
- Providing scrutiny, advice, support and challenge to the organisation, including aiding The National Archives and the Chief Executive in fulfilling his statutory responsibilities and other duties.
- Addressing key financial and other risks, using the Audit and Risk Committee for assistance, ensuring that adequate governance, audit and control systems are in place to meet statutory and administrative requirements.
- Ensuring 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 taking 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.
- Staying informed about any concerns regarding the activities, management and direction of The National Archives and assuring senior officials at DCMS – through the Chair – that appropriate action to address said concerns has been taken.

Board meetings are held quarterly along with additional development sessions and a strategy day. In 2025-26, ordinary meetings took place in June, September and November 2025 and March 2026. Meetings are chaired by the Chair of The National Archives' Board and the Head of Governance acts as the Board Secretary. During part of 2025-26, the role of Head of Governance was vacant and an interim Board Secretary was appointed to support the November and March meetings. The Head of Strategy and Chief Executive's Office also attends meetings. The Board took part in an away day in July 2025 and a strategy session in October 2025.

Supporting and informing the work of the Board are its three sub-committees, the Audit and Risk Committee, the Nominations and Governance Committee and the Finance and Performance Committee. More detail on these sub-committees is provided from page 058.

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 the resulting action plan, and review and approval of the Annual report and accounts. The Board 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 their work, including assurance around risk management, governance and internal control.

The Board reviews and endorses budget and strategic priorities, as well as scrutinising major procurement and policy decisions affecting our future strategic direction.

In 2025-26, the Board spent significant time discussing the new corporate strategy and its implementation plans. It also discussed the outcome of work on the operating model and changes to director portfolios. Other items considered include:

- The development of the government's new strategic vision for the archive sector.
- The state of government record keeping and challenges around digital, including a discussion on approaches to potential legislative change.
- The Ministry of Defence (MOD) service personnel records transfer and service transformation projects, and the 2025-26 Fees Order.
- The transfer of Parliament's Archive Collections, the Northeast Partnership Project and several legal data projects.
- The Cybersecurity Assurance Programme.

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.

Minutes of Board meetings are available on our website.

Board effectiveness

The Board undertakes an annual assessment of its own effectiveness, which informs an action plan to improve effectiveness. The action plan is reviewed bi-annually for progress. During 2025-26 the Board was subject to an external review of its effectiveness. The full report was received by the Board at its April 2026 away day and an action plan based on its recommendations will be agreed during the first half of the 2026-27 financial year.

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

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 and strategic plans.

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

Codes of conduct

As a non-ministerial department, we adopt and adhere to the *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. As well as annually reviewing the Board's effectiveness, we also periodically review corporate governance arrangements more broadly. This ensures that we are aligned with good practice elsewhere across government while considering our unique role and responsibilities and the statutory and non-statutory roles fulfilled by our senior officials. The current structure enables non-executive Board members to challenge the Chief Executive and Executive Team. They are able to clearly position themselves as advisors, shaping the Board agenda and providing positive assurance to senior officials at DCMS (via the Chair of The National Archives' Board) on the management and direction of the organisation.

Board members are also responsible for acting in the best interests of The National Archives and not seeking to personally profit from being on the Board. They adhere to the 12 Principles of Governance for all Public Body Non-Executive Directors, the *Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies*, the Seven Principles of Public Life and other applicable guidance on the role of public sector non-executive directors and boards.

Register of Board interests

Our conflicts of interest policy sets out our approach to handling actual, 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 on our website.

At the beginning of each corporate governance meeting, all members are asked to declare any new and existing interests in relation to the agenda. These are noted in the minutes and where the matter is deemed to constitute a conflict, the member is asked to remove themselves from discussion of the item. In 2025-26, 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 128.

The Board engaged no special advisers in the financial year 2025-26.

The Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of the Board. It supports Accounting Officer and Board members in their responsibilities for issues of risk, internal control and governance, and associated assurance. This includes:

- 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 independent 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.

Membership comprises of the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, a non-executive Board member and an appointed Independent Member, Alison White. Additional non-executive Board members may be co-opted when needed. Regular attendees at each meeting are the Chief Executive, the Finance

Director, Chief Digital and Information Officer, Chief Operating Officer, representatives from our external auditors at the NAO, representatives from our internal auditors, and a member of the governance team.

The Committee usually meets four times a year. During 2025-26 it met in May, October and December 2025 and March 2026. There was an extraordinary meeting held in July 2025 to receive the audit completion report and to recommend the Annual report and accounts 2024-25 to The National Archives' Board.

To structure its work, the Committee maintains a forward programme of assurance topics. This year this has included:

- internal audit
- fraud risk (see page 066)
- security and business continuity
- health and safety (see page 067)
- environmental sustainability (see page 039)
- whistleblowing (see page 068)
- safeguarding (see page 068)
- procurement
- risk management (see page 063)
- cyber security (see page 066)
- annual assurance statements (see page 065).

The Committee also received updates on matters of specific interest, including conflicts of interest (with assurance from the policy and public register), and progress in developing an assurance map, aligned with the *Orange Book* and the three lines of defence model.

Internal audit services were provided by Forvis Mazars during 2025-26. The internal audit programme is 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. Internal audit reports are shared with Committee members on completion, and progress against recommendations is monitored as a standing agenda item. Executive directors may be called to appear before the Committee to account for any issue arising from internal audit reports. The internal audit annual opinion for the year assessed the adequacy and effectiveness of The National Archives' control environment as moderate.

The Committee undertakes an annual self-assessment of its effectiveness and a separate review of internal and external audit services provided by Forvis Mazars and the NAO respectively. The results, considered in December 2025, concluded that the Committee operated effectively during 2025-26 and that internal and external audit arrangements were adequate.

Head of Research Eirini Goudarouli speaks at the Annual Digital Lecture 2025

The Finance and Performance Committee

The Finance and Performance Committee is a sub-committee of the Board and is responsible 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.
- Ensuring The National Archives maximises public value and meets user needs.

Membership comprises the Chair of the Finance and Performance Committee, two additional non-executive Board members (including the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee), the Finance Director, the Chief Operating Officer, the Chief Digital and Information Officer, and the Director of People, Inclusion and Change. Other attendees include the Head of Financial Planning, Performance and Analysis and the Corporate Performance and Risk Manager.

The Committee usually meets four times a year. During 2025-26 it met in May and September 2025, and January and February 2026. Its focus was on scrutinising the following:

- Monthly management accounts, quarterly forecasts and quarterly business priorities.
- The budget for 2026-27 and the corporate dashboard.
- Oversight of the new Request a Military Service Record access service.
- Discussion of a Theory of Change (towards a methodology for valuing intangible assets).
- The savings and efficiencies scenarios to inform our Spending Review submission.
- Oversight of the commercial business development plan.

The Nominations and Governance Committee

The Nominations and Governance Committee is a sub-committee of the Board. It is a forum for discussing leadership development, succession planning and the decision-making body for the pay and bonuses of all our senior civil service staff, except for the Chief Executive. The Committee ensures that pay increases are in line with guidance provided by the Cabinet Office.

The Committee is chaired by the Chair of The National Archives' Board and membership consists of all non-executive Board members and the Chief Executive in an advisory capacity.

The Committee meets a minimum of twice a year. During 2025-26, it met three times, in June, September and December 2025.

Attendance at Board and Committee meetings

The Chief Executive, executive directors, and non-executive Board members and the Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee attended the following numbers of Board and Committee meetings (for which they were eligible to attend) during the year. The roles of the Executive Team are stated as those after the change that occurred in October 2025 (see page 054 for more information).

Name	Role	Board	Audit and Risk Committee	Nominations and Governance Committee	Finance and Performance Committee
Saul Nassé	**Chief Executive**	7 of 7	5 of 5	3 of 3	4 of 4
Peter Mills (until 30 November 2025)	**Interim Finance Director**	6 of 6	3 of 3	N/A	2 of 2
Tobi Adetimilehin (from 01 December 2025)	**Finance Director**	1 of 1	1 of 1	N/A	1 of 1
Emmajane Avery	**Chief Curator**	5 of 7	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lucy Fletcher	**Deputy Chief Executive**	7 of 7	N/A	N/A	N/A
John Sheridan	**Chief Digital and Information Officer**	6 of 7	4 of 5	N/A	2 of 3
Gemma Maclagan Ram	**Chief Operating Officer**	7 of 7	4 of 5	N/A	4 of 4
Andrea Metcalf (until 12 December 2025)	**Director of People, Inclusion and Change**	3 of 3	N/A	1 of 1	1 of 1
Hannah Lee (13 September 2025 – 11 January 2026)	**Joint Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change**	3 of 3	N/A	2 of 2	2 of 2
Lucy Windmill (13 September 2025 – 11 January 2026)	**Joint Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change**	3 of 3	N/A	2 of 2	2 of 2
Claire Wightman (from 12 January 2026)	**Director of People, Inclusion and Change**	1 of 1	N/A	N/A	1 of 1
Andrew Wathey	**Chair of the Board**	7 of 7	N/A	3 of 3	4 of 4
Sonia Cargan	**Senior Non-executive Board member**	7 of 7	N/A	2 of 3	N/A
Rommel Pereira	**Non-executive Board member**	5 of 7	5 of 5	3 of 3	1 of 4
Alison White	**Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee**	N/A	5 of 5	N/A	N/A
Lopa Patel	**Non-executive Board member**	7 of 7	N/A	2 of 3	4 of 4
Nigel Baker	**Non-executive Board member**	7 of 7	5 of 5	2 of 3	N/A

The Executive Team

The Executive Team is responsible for the day-to-day operations and management of The National Archives. It consists of the Chief Executive and six executive directors. The Executive Team meets 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.

The Head of Strategy and Chief Executive's Office and/or a deputy also attend Executive Team meetings.

The business of the Executive Team is managed in a way that is inclusive, regularly inviting business updates from 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.

Supporting and informing the work of the Executive Team are several strategy and steering committees that offer advice and

Speaker of the House of Commons Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP, hosts an LGBT+ History Month reception at Speaker's House, featuring a display of documents from The National Archives

guidance on specific high-priority issues. This includes sub-committees with delegated responsibilities such as the Estates Strategy Committee and the Greening Government Commitments and Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures Steering Committee, as well as advisory groups such as the AI Steering Group, Departmental Security Committee and Health and Safety Committee.

Staff are encouraged to bring issues to the Executive Team's attention through informal challenge. 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.

Managing our risks

We manage risk proactively at all levels, using risk management to support innovation, delivery and effective decision-making. Risk management is embedded within our governance and performance management arrangements and supports delivery of our statutory duties and strategic priorities. The National Archives complies with the main principles of HM Treasury's *Orange Book*, applying them proportionately to reflect the size, complexity and risk profile of the organisation, with ongoing activity to strengthen maturity where required.

In 2025-26, our risks were categorised as follows:

- operational and policy delivery
- commercial
- financial and value for money
- reputational and credibility (including a distinct category for interaction with ministers and senior government)
- compliance: legal, regulatory and data.

Our risks are assessed based on impact and likelihood, with Board-approved risk appetite statements and maximum residual risk thresholds for each category. Residual risk represents the level of risk remaining after controls and mitigations are applied, and the Board expects risks to be managed within appetite. Where risks exceed appetite, targeted and proportionate mitigating actions are implemented.

The Executive Team identifies and manages a set of corporate risks linked to our strategic priorities and operating environment. Our corporate risks are:

- Formally reviewed at least quarterly by the Executive Team.
- Reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee, with particular focus on risks that are out of appetite.
- Reviewed by the Board quarterly.

Each risk has a named Executive owner, clear mitigating actions and is escalated or de-escalated dynamically to ensure it is managed at the most appropriate level.

Our corporate risks and their controls for 2025-26 are outlined below.

Senior team and wider turnover/single points of failure

Risk: Reliance on a small number of individuals in critical roles reduces organisational resilience and continuity.
Control: Workforce planning, organisation design and succession planning.

Failure to meet the challenges of digital

Risk: There is a risk that The National Archives does not develop the secure, resilient and scalable digital capability required to deliver its statutory role.

Control: Delivery of a prioritised digital investment programme, supported by replacement of legacy systems, strengthened infrastructure and regular senior oversight of progress and risk.

Failure to sufficiently influence and capitalise on the modern digital government agenda

Risk: We may not sufficiently shape or benefit from developments across central government relating to digital, data and emerging technologies.
Control: Active engagement and leadership in cross-government digital, data and technology forums to shape policy, share learning and influence future direction.

Leadership, engagement and culture

Risk: Leadership behaviours and management capability may not provide the direction, prioritisation or support required to sustain an effective and engaged workforce.
Control: Implementation of the People, Inclusion and Culture Strategy, supported by leadership development, staff engagement metrics and targeted action plans responding to survey feedback.

Managing relationship with the Trust

Risk: Ineffective partnership working could reduce our influence and limit opportunities to realise wider strategic benefits.
Control: A revised partnership agreement and agreed funding arrangements to clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations.

Access to MOD service personnel records

Risk: Increased volume and complexity of cases may affect our ability to provide timely Freedom of Information access to MOD service personnel records.
Control: Increased operational capacity and the introduction of digital services to improve case handling, timeliness and demand management.

Parliament's Archive Collections

Risk: There is a risk that delays or issues in the relocation and transition of Parliament's Archive Collections affect service delivery and reputation.
Control: Formal programme governance overseeing the relocation and transition, including completed catalogue migration and phased service transfer.

Cyber attack

Risk: A successful cyber attack could disrupt critical services, compromise sensitive data and damage our reputation.
Control: Enhanced cyber monitoring and assurance, with Board-level oversight and regular testing of controls.

Local authority archives: Places of Deposit

Risk: There is a financial and reputational risk should the viability and sustainability of local archives be further diminished. Responsibility for the management of the records could fall on The National Archives under its legislative and statutory responsibilities. This could create financial and operational challenges in storing, managing, or disposing of records, potentially necessitating legislative intervention.
Control: We are actively communicating statutory responsibilities to local authorities, developing targeted advocacy tools, engaging with local government archivists and providing strategic leadership across the archive sector.

Organisation design

Risk: There is a risk that organisational structure and capacity are not aligned to deliver the future strategy and operating model.
Control: A structured organisation design programme to align resources, capability and accountabilities to strategic priorities.

Team members present some of our records during the German state visit in December 2025

Risks below the corporate level are managed through directorate risk registers and operational and project-level risk registers. Directorate risks are reviewed at least quarterly by directors and their management teams and are escalated where they pose a broader strategic threat or opportunity. Operational and project risks are managed day-to-day through local controls, project governance and assurance processes. Executive directors receive assurance through regular reporting and structured assurance reviews.

To support confidence in the overall control environment, the organisation uses assurance maps, bringing together sources of assurance across the three lines of assurance. These support the Executive Team, Audit and Risk Committee and Accounting Officer in forming an evidence-based view of the effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control. Independent assurance is provided by Internal Audit.

In 2025-26, department-level assurance was provided through an Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) completed by all Heads of Department. The AAS requires Heads of Department to assess compliance and control effectiveness across statutory duties, corporate policies, financial management, projects, evaluation and risk management, using a common confidence scoring framework. Material gaps, weaknesses or risks are explicitly recorded and escalated.

This year, an internal audit of risk management highlighted several opportunities to strengthen our approach. In response, we have reviewed our risk management policy in line with the HM Treasury's *Orange Book* and are revising our risk appetite statements for each risk category. We are also enhancing organisation-wide training and awareness and updating our risk register to reflect best practice. This programme of work will conclude in 2026 and will deliver a more consistent and robust risk management framework that supports effective decision-making across The National Archives.

Functional standards

All central government departments and their arm's-length bodies are required to comply with the government functional standards in a manner proportionate to their scale, business model, and strategic priorities. For 2025-26, The National Archives assessed itself as fully compliant with 9 of the 14 applicable standards. Two standards – Analysis and Communication – have been assessed as not applicable, as the full requirements are not proportionate to an organisation of our size and operating model.

Project delivery was assessed as partially compliant. While progress has been made to strengthen delivery capability, known structural gaps remain within the current delivery model. Addressing these is dependent on wider organisational design changes, which are in train but not yet fully embedded.

In relation to the Security functional standard, The National Archives is compliant with the governance, physical, and response elements. However, the personnel security element is not yet compliant. A structured improvement plan is in its implementation phase, with completion expected during the 2026-27 period.

For the Property standard, there remains a gap in relation to building information modelling requirements. Proportionate arrangements are in place, but this remains an area of partial alignment rather than full compliance.

Information security

Information security and associated risk management has continued to be a priority across the whole of The National Archives in 2025-26. We focused on strengthening the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the information we hold. We successfully recertified corporate systems against the updated ISO 27001:2022 standard, reinforcing our commitment to robust and independently assured security controls. Targeted and independent penetration testing, including a Red Teaming exercise, provided assurance of our cyber resilience. Information Asset Owner processes remain embedded across the organisation to ensure governance of data handling and risk assessment. We also developed our secure external file sharing project to reduce reliance on third-party cloud platforms and improve secure collaboration with external parties. Alongside these measures, we implemented additional cyber security enhancements and controls to protect our systems and services against emerging threats. Additionally, we have improved the provision of cyber security risk information, including the use of artificial intelligence tools to help identify issues and risks.

Risks of fraud and error

Fraud risk is overseen by the Audit and Risk Committee, who take a risk-based approach to potential fraud within the organisation. An annual fraud report is compiled containing a risk assessment, with contributions from Senior Leadership, documenting risks, controls and any areas for improvement. The assessment this year concluded that there was generally a good level of fraud awareness within The National Archives' culture and that no instances of fraud had been committed.

An assessment also showed that the organisation adhered to the UK Government Functional Standard GovS 013: Counter Fraud.

Actions planned for counter-fraud activities within the organisation include a review of key policies and procedures as well as implementing mandatary counter-fraud training for all staff through the Civil Service Learning platform.

UK General Data Protection Regulation

The National Archives was the subject of one complaint from the Information Commissioner during 2025-26, which we received in January 2026. The complaint covered the handling of personal data for the purposes of dealing with an internal case, which has concluded. We provided the Information Commissioner with a detailed account of all the processing involved. The Commissioner is satisfied that The National Archives has demonstrated an understanding of its data protection obligations and has taken appropriate steps to ensure that personal information has been handled in accordance with the requirements of data protection legislation. The Commissioner has therefore closed the case.

Health and safety

Our health and safety, whistleblowing and safeguarding policies support UN Sustainability Development Goal (SDG) 8.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

UNSDG 8.8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

The health and safety of staff and visitors is essential to the success of The National Archives. Our commitment to health and safety is genuine, consistent, and an integral part of the management of the organisation.

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. When incidents do occur, we conduct full investigations, produce action plans to mitigate further incident and monitor their completion.

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 and safe working environment, whether staff are working on site, remotely or a mixture of the two. We achieve this by ensuring our working methods are secure and providing safe work equipment. We monitor and review our safety arrangements and prevention measures, making sure 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.

Safeguarding

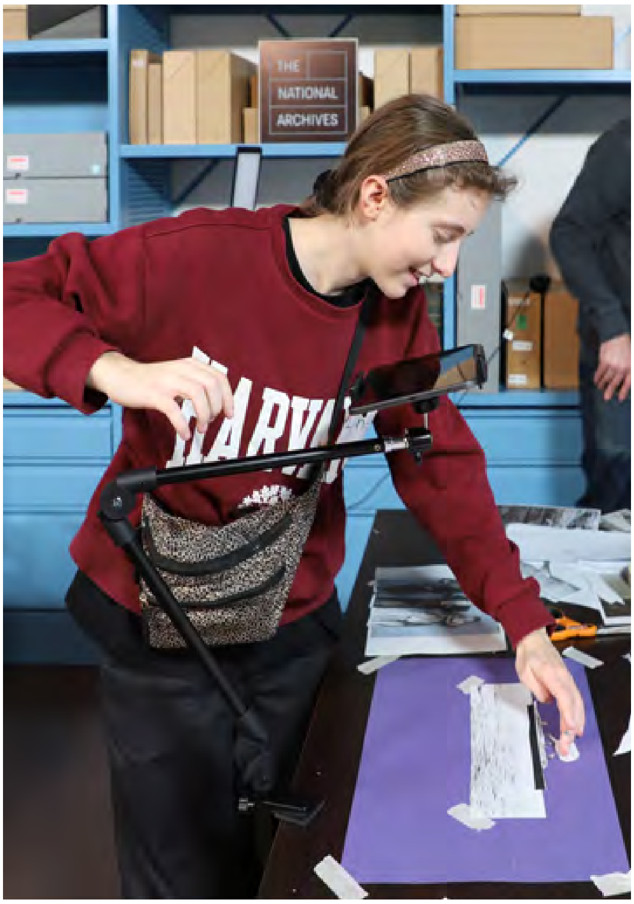
Maintaining a safe and secure environment for our staff and visitors is of paramount importance. Our safeguarding team is made up of three leads as well as additional representatives in different departments (specifically Human Resources, Collections Expertise and Engagement, Events and Exhibitions and Document Services).

The team is responsible for ensuring our safeguarding policy is fully implemented across the organisation. They offer training sessions to new starters on a quarterly basis. In addition, they are working with Human Resources and an external developer to create refresher courses for current staff. The team also ensures that Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks are conducted for all new staff in Education and Outreach. These checks are extended to any staff members who are regularly involved in activities with children or vulnerable adults and are updated every three years.

Every year the Designated Safeguarding Lead provides the Audit and Risk Committee with a status report which details any developments or incidents that have occurred.

Whistleblowing

Whistleblowing is an important safeguard, and all our people have access to our raising a conern policy. There are multiple routes for raising a concern, including talking to a manager, emailing our confidential whistleblowing mailbox, speaking to a nominated officer or speaking directly to the Chair of our Audit and Risk Committee. We build awareness of the policy through regular communications and engagement activities, including annual “speak up” weeks.



Our Aardman Academy stop-motion workshop

The National Archives was the subject of one complaint from the Information Commissioner during 2025-26. This complaint covered the handling of personal data relating to a case and included a whistleblowing complaint. The case has now been closed. Please see information relating to the UK General Data Protection Regulation on page 067 for further detail.

Conclusion

As Accounting Officer, I have considered the evidence provided which formed the basis of the 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 income and expenditure, Statement of Financial Position and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts, the Accounting Officer is required to comply 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 has 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.

Saul Nassé

Saul Nassé
Accounting Officer
09 July 2026

2.2 Remuneration and staff report

This section sets out disclosures on our pay and pensions policies and details of staff numbers and costs, as well as the pay and benefits received by the executive directors and non-executive Board members.

Remuneration report

Senior civil service grades

The remuneration of senior civil servants is set by the Prime Minister following independent advice from the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB). In reaching its recommendations, the SSRB 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 SSRB takes account of the evidence it receives about wider economic considerations and the affordability of its recommendations. Further information about the work of the SSRB can be found on the Office for the Pay Review Bodies web pages on the UK Government website.

Service contracts

Civil service appointments are made in accordance with the *Civil Service Commissioners' Recruitment Code* (The 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.

Further information about the work of the Civil Service Commission can be found on its website.

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.

Saul Nassé was appointed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as Chief Executive from 29 July 2024 for a four-year term until 28 July 2028.

Professor Andrew Wathey CBE was appointed as Chair of The National Archives' Board from 1 April 2022 on a three-year contract, which was extended for a further five-year term until 31 March 2030.

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

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

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.

Alison White was appointed as an independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee from 8 August 2023 on a three-year contract until 7 August 2026.

Nigel Baker and Lopa Patel were appointed as Non-executive Board members from 1 January 2025 on five-year contracts until 31 December 2030.

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

Salary and bonuses (audited)

The policy on remuneration of senior civil servants, and the deliberations of the Nominations and Governance Committee (see page 060), adhere to Cabinet Office policy, which follows the guidance and recommendations of the SSRB.

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. 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 SSRB's 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 2025-26 relate to performance in both 2025-26 and 2024-25, with the comparative bonuses relating to performance in both 2024-25 and 2023-24.

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, executive directors and non-executive Board members of The National Archives, were as follows: [11] [12]

11 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.

12 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	2025-26 Salary and FYE (full-year, full-time equivalent) £000	2025-26 Bonus £000	2025-26 Benefit in kind £000	2025-26 Pension benefits £000	2025-26 Total £000
Saul Nassé **Chief Executive**	145-150	-	-	58	205-210
Peter Mills **Interim Finance Director (from 01 March 2025 until 30 November 2025)**[13]	70-75 (105-110)	-	-	28	100-105 (130-135)
Tobi Adetimilehin **Finance Director (from 01 December 2025)**	30-35 (100-105)	-	-	7	40-45 (105-110)
Emmajane Avery **Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership**	100-105	-	-	27	125-130
Lucy Fletcher **Public Access and Government Services Director**	100-105	-	-	40	140-145
John Sheridan **Digital Director**	100-105	0-5	-	27	135-140
Gemma Maclagan Ram **Research and Commercial Development Director**	110-115	-	-	44	155-160
Andrea Metcalf **Director of People, Inclusion and Change (until 12 September 2025)**	45-50 (100-105)	-	-	18	60-65 (115-120)
Hannah Lee **Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change (role share from 13 September 2025 until 11 January 2026)**	25-30 (80-85)	-	-	14	40-45 (95-100)
Lucy Windmill **Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change (role share from 13 September 2025 until 11 January 2026)**	25-30 (80-85)	-	-	13	40-45 (95-100)
Claire Wightman **Director of People, Inclusion and Change (from 12 January 2026)**	20-25 (100-105)	-	-	8	30-35 (105-110)
Professor Andrew Wathey CBE **Chair of The National Archives Board**	20-25	N/A	-	N/A	20-25
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
Alison White **Independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee (from 08 August 2023)**	0-5	N/A	-	N/A	0-5
Lopa Patel **Non-executive Board member (from 01 January 2025)**	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15
Nigel Baker **Non-executive Board member (from 01 January 2025)**	10-15	N/A	-	N/A	10-15

13 Peter Mills joined The National Archives on 10 February 2025 ahead of taking over as Finance Director. He joined as 0.8 full-time employee (FTE) and as such received only 0.8 of the FYE salary disclosed here.

Director	2024-25 Salary and FYE (full-year, full-time equivalent) £000	2024-25 Bonus £000	2024-25 Benefit in kind £	2024-25 Pension benefits £000	2024-25 Total £000
Saul Nassé **Chief Executive**	110-115 (145-150)	-	-	41	150-155 (185-190)
Peter Mills **Interim Finance Director (from 01 March 2025 until 30 November 2025)**[14]	10-15 (105-110)	-	-	5	15-20 (110-115)
Tobi Adetimilehin **Finance Director (from 01 December 2025)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emmajane Avery **Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership**	95-100	-	-	66	160-165
Lucy Fletcher **Public Access and Government Services Director**	95-100	-	-	38	135-140
John Sheridan **Digital Director**	95-100	0-5	-	57	160-165
Gemma Maclagan Ram **Research and Commercial Development Director**	100-105	-	-	40	140-145
Andrea Metcalf **Director of People, Inclusion and Change (until 12 September 2025)**	95-100	-	-	38	135-140
Hannah Lee **Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change (role share from 13 September 2025 until 11 January 2026)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lucy Windmill **Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change (role share from 13 September 2025 until 11 January 2026)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Claire Wightman **Director of People, Inclusion and Change (from 12 January 2026)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Professor Andrew Wathey CBE **Chair of The National Archives Board**	20-25	N/A	-	N/A	20-25
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
Alison White **Independent member of the Audit and Risk Committee (from 08 August 2023)**	0-5	N/A	-	N/A	0-5
Lopa Patel **Non-executive Board member (from 01 January 2025)**	0-5 (10-15)	N/A	-	N/A	0-5 (10-15)
Nigel Baker **Non-executive Board member (from 01 January 2025)**	0-5 (10-15)	N/A	-	N/A	0-5 (10-15)

14 Peter Mills joined The National Archives on 10 February 2025 ahead of taking over as Finance Director. He joined as 0.8FTE and as such received only 0.8 of the FYE salary disclosed here.

Pay multiples (audited)

2025-26	25th percentile pay ratio	Median pay ratio	75th percentile pay ratio
Band of highest paid director's remuneration (£)	£145,000-£150,000	£145,000-£150,000	£145,000-£150,000
Employee total remuneration (£)	£31,489	£39,567	£52,130
Staff salary and allowances (£)	£31,489	£39,567	£52,130
Ratio	4.68	3.73	2.83

2024-25	25th percentile pay ratio	Median pay ratio	75th percentile pay ratio
Band of highest paid Director's remuneration (£)	£145,000-£150,000	£145,000-£150,000	£145,000-£150,000
Employee total remuneration (£)	£28,529	£38,172	£50,098
Staff salary and allowances (£)	£26,824	£38,172	£50,098
Ratio	5.17	3.86	2.94

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 2025-26 was £145,000-£150,000 (2024-25: £145-£150,000). This was 3.73 times (2024-25: 3.86) the median remuneration of the workforce, which was £39,567 (2024-25: £38,172). The small increase in median renumeration for the workforce is due entirely to the in-year pay award, which is in line with the pay, reward and progression policies at The National Archives. There is no change in the salary band for the highest-paid Executive Director and they did not receive a bonus in either 2025-26 or 2024-25.

In both 2025-26 and 2024-25, no employees received remuneration in excess of the highest-paid director. Remuneration ranged from £26,004 to £145-150,000 (2024-25: £25,612 to £145-150,000). The average salary and allowance for all employees was £42,306, a 5.1% increase on the previous year. The average bonus payable for all employees was £328, a 2.9% increase 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 pension age as at 31/03/26 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 31/03/26[15] £000 to nearest £000	Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) at 31/03/25 £000 to nearest £000	Real increase in Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETV) £000 to nearest £000
Saul Nassé **Chief Executive**	5-10	2.5-5	98	39	46
Peter Mills **Interim Finance Director (from 01 March 2025 until 30 November 2025)**	5-10	0-2.5	133	103	26
Tobi Adetimilehin **Finance Director (from 01 December 2025)**	45-50 plus a lump sum of 105-110	0-2.5 plus a lump sum of 0	1,031	1,009	4
Emmajane Avery **Director of Public Engagement and Sector Leadership**	40-45	0-2.5	751	693	14
Lucy Fletcher **Public Access and Government Services Director**	30-35	0-2.5	406	366	21
John Sheridan **Digital Director**	35-40	0-2.5	754	696	15
Gemma Maclagan Ram **Research and Commercial Development Director**	15-20	2.5-5	235	196	25
Andrea Metcalf **Director of People, Inclusion and Change (until 12 September 2025)**	5-10	0-2.5	135	120	12
Hannah Lee **Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change (role share from 13 September 2025 until 11 January 2026)**	10-15	0-2.5	170	153	10
Lucy Windmill **Interim Director of People, Inclusion and Change (role share from 13 September 2025 until 11 January 2026)**	20-25	0-2.5	285	266	9
Claire Wightman **Director of People, Inclusion and Change (from 12 January 2026)**	15-20	0-2.5	220	214	4

15 CETV figures are calculated using the guidance on discount rates for calculating unfunded public service pension contribution rates that was extant at 31 March 2025.

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. Before 1 April 2015, the only scheme was the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS), which is divided into different sections – classic, premium and classic plus provide benefits on a final salary basis, whilst nuvos provides benefits on a career average basis. From 1 April 2015, a new pension scheme for civil servants was introduced – the Civil Servants and Others Pension Scheme (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.

The PCSPS and Alpha are unfunded statutory schemes. Employees and employers make contributions (employee contributions range between 4.6% and 8.05%, depending on salary). The balance of the cost of benefits in payment is met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions in payment are increased annually in line with the Pensions Increase legislation. Instead of the defined benefit arrangements, employees may opt for a defined contribution pension with an employer contribution, the partnership pension account.

In Alpha, pension builds up at a rate of 2.32% of pensionable earnings each year, and the total amount accrued is adjusted annually in line with a rate set by HM Treasury. Members may opt to give up (commute) pension for a lump sum up to the limits set by the *Finance Act 2004*. All members who switched to Alpha from the PCSPS had 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 accrued pensions shown in this report are the pension the member is entitled to receive when they reach normal pension age, or immediately on ceasing to be an active member of the scheme if they are already at or over normal pension age. Normal 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 in this report show pension earned in PCSPS or Alpha – as appropriate. Where a member has benefits in both the PCSPS and Alpha, the figures show the combined value of their benefits in the two schemes (but note that the constituent parts of that pension may be payable from different ages).

When the government introduced new public service pension schemes in 2015, there were transitional arrangements which treated existing members differently based on their age. Older members of the PSCPS remained in that scheme, rather than moving to Alpha. In 2018, the Court of Appeal found that the transitional arrangements in the public service pension schemes unlawfully discriminated against younger members (the "McCloud" judgment). As a result, steps are being taken to remedy those 2015 reforms, making the pension scheme provisions fair to all members. The public service pensions remedy is made up of two parts. The first part closed the PCSPS on 31 March 2022, with all active members becoming members of Alpha from 1 April 2022. The second part removes the age discrimination for the remedy period, between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022, by moving the membership of eligible members during this period back into the PCSPS on 1 October 2023. This is known as "rollback".

For members who are in scope of the public service pension remedy, the calculation of their benefits for the purpose of calculating their CETV and their single total figure of remuneration, as of 31 March 2025 and 31 March 2026, reflects the fact that membership between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022 has been rolled back into the PCSPS. Although members will in due course get an option to decide whether that period should count towards PCSPS or Alpha benefits, the figures show the rolled back position (i.e. PCSPS benefits for that period).

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).

Further details about the civil service pension arrangements can be found on the Civil Service Pensions website.

Cash Equivalent Transfer Values

A 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 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

Developing and shaping the right workforce, skills and culture for the future is a critical enabler for our 2030 strategy. In 2025-26 we made some initial changes to the structure of our directorates, strengthening the links with our strategic priorities (see Directors' report on page 053). Work is currently in progress to review our organisation design, including trade union and staff engagement.

We transitioned to a more comprehensive talent acquisition model, better supporting the end-to-end recruitment process and partnering with external organisations to build future talent pipelines. We reduced the average time to fill positions by 26 days, increased the number of apprentices in our workforce and recruited at pace to enable the expansion of teams delivering critical work to support the transfer of records from the MOD, delivering a 39% increase in recruitment volume to achieve this.

The *Civil Service Pay Remit Guidance 2025 to 2026* allowed departments to make an average pay award of 3.25%. There was also flexibility to use an extra 0.5% to address departmental issues. Following approval from the DCMS and trade unions, we used the 3.25% to ensure that everyone in the organisation is paid at 77% of the market median for their role or above. We used the additional 0.5% to address anomalies, including continuing to meet our commitment to being a London Living Wage employer.

Over the summer of 2025, we launched LinkedIn Learning, giving colleagues access to over 20,000 bitesize online resources to boost their learning and development. To date, 468 colleagues have activated their account and 70% are actively using the platform.

We provided targeted organisational development and business change support to meet emerging business needs and high-priority areas. For example, the newly established MOD access team was stood up quickly and change leadership workshops supported teams impacted by recent leadership changes.

Our people survey engagement score remained consistent with the previous year at 68%, which is slightly higher than the civil service benchmark of 65%. We are delivering a targeted action plan, alongside the programme of organisation design change, to ensure we deliver corresponding improvements to employee experience.

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

Our DEI policy and renewed inclusion plans support UNSDG 5 (gender equality) and 10 (reduced inequalities).

UNSDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

UNSDG 10.2 & 10.3: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

An inclusive culture is vital to ensuring that we perform our statutory duty effectively, collect and preserve the public record, and connect citizens to their history, regardless of backgrounds or perspectives. As a civil service employer, we are also fully committed to equal opportunities under the *Equality Act 2010* and Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities.

All our people have access to our DEI policy and it is everyone's responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment. Our inclusion team is responsible for DEI policy and practice for the organisation. We also have a number of active staff networks within our DEI Forum and Intersectional Support Network to help foster an inclusive culture, embed inclusive practice and act as a conduit for feedback should issues arise. In September 2025, we adopted the Civil Service Network Policy in full.

We remain a Disability Confident Level 2 employer and are committed to ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability. Our DEI policy sets out that the organisation should promote a culture which values and recognises difference, proactively tackles barriers to inclusion and ensures no individual or group is subject to discrimination. We continue to look at ways to increase our knowledge and understanding of disability rights for our workforce.

During 2025-26, we ran a survey to inform the organisation's inclusion plans for 2025-27. There are four areas of focus: leadership and accountability; policies, processes and governance; culture and behaviours; and data and metrics. We are delivering a programme of activity to support this, including campaigns to improve our people data, awareness raising and educational events, and targeted support to meet specific staff and visitor needs.

Workforce breakdown

Workforce	31 March 2026	31 March 2025
Staff numbers (headcount)	668	626
Workforce diversity:		
Ethnic minorities[16]	17.0%	14.9%
Women – director level	5 of 7	4 of 7
Women – overall	50.0%	51.6%
Disabled[17]	9%	8.5%
Temporary appointments[18]	21	21.3
Staff turnover[19]	12.0%	18.0%
Staff sickness absence (days per full-time employee (FTE))	4.7	6.75
Staff engagement (Civil Service People Survey score %)	68	68
Consultancy expenditure (£000)	222	159

16 Percentage of employees declaring an ethnicity.
17 Percentage of employees declaring a disability.
18 Temporary appointments are employees appointed under Exception 1 of the Civil Service Recruitment Principles.
19 This figure includes both voluntary turnover and involuntary turnover, such as the ending of fixed-term contracts.

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	2025-26 Permanently employed staff	2025-26 Other staff[20]	2025-26 Total	2024-25 Total
Government information management	112	30	142	115
Preservation and protection	84	9	93	97
Public access	351	41	392	364
Staff engaged on capital projects	15	-	15	7
Total	562	80	642	583

Senior civil service (SCS) by band as at 31 March 2026

Salary band	2025-26 (number of SCS)	2024-25 (number of SCS)
£80,000 - £90,000	-	1
£90,000 - £100,000	-	5
£100,000 - £110,000	5	1
£110,000 - £120,000	1	-
£120,000 - £130,000	-	-
£130,000 - £140,000	-	-
£140,000 - £150,000	1	1
Total	7	8

20 ‘Other staff’ includes staff on fixed-term contracts.

Staff costs (audited)

Staff costs	2025-26 Permanently employed staff £000	2025-26 Other staff £000	2025-26 Total £000	2024-25 Total £000
Wages and salaries	27,992	864	28,856	25,250
Social security costs[21]	3,742	-	3,742	2,695
Other pension costs	7,567	-	7,567	6,681
Sub total	39,301	864	40,165	34,626
Less staff costs capitalised on IT projects	(1,295)	-	(1,295)	(1,388)
Total net costs	38,006	864	38,870	33,238

Off-payroll engagements

Review of tax arrangements of public sector appointees

Table 1: Temporary off-payroll worker engagements as at 31 March 2025

Number of existing engagements as of 31 March 2025 Of which:	11
Number that have existed for less than one year at time of reporting	8
Number that have existed for between one and two years at time of reporting	2
Number that have existed for between two and three years at time of reporting	1
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

21 2024-25 includes £103,000 Apprenticeship Levy cost (2023-24: £105,000). The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 2017, requiring employers with a pay bill of more than £3 million per year to pay the levy.

Table 2: All temporary off-payroll workers engaged at any point during the year ended 31 March 2025

Number of off-payroll workers engaged during the year ended 31 March 2025 **Of which:**	**16**
Numbers determined as in-scope of IR35	11
Numbers determined as out-of-scope of IR35	5
Number of engagements reassessed for compliance or assurance purposes during the year	0
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 2024 and 31 March 2026

Off-payroll engagements of Board members, and/or senior officials with significant financial responsibility, during the financial year	0
Total number of 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	17

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.[22]

For 2025-26, employers' contributions of £7.5 million were payable in Accruing Superannuation Liability Charges (2024-25: £6.6 million) at a rate of 28.97% of pensionable earnings (2024-25: 28.97%). The Scheme Actuary reviews employer contributions usually every four years following a full scheme valuation. The contribution rates are set to meet the cost of the benefits accruing during 2025-26 to be paid when the member retires and not the benefits paid during this period to existing pensioners.

Employees can opt to open a partnership pension account, a stakeholder pension with an employer contribution. Employers' contributions of £0.09 million (2024-25: £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 earnings.

22 Details of the scheme valuation can be found here.

Employers also match employee contributions up to 3% of pensionable earnings. In addition, employer contributions of £0.003 million (2024-25: £0.003 million), 0.5% 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 £0.01 million (2024-25: £0.008 million). Contributions prepaid at that date were nil (2024-25: 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	2025-26 Compulsory redundancies	2025-26 Other departures	2025-26 Total	2024-25 Compulsory redundancies	2024-25 Other departures	2024-25 Total
< £10	-	-	-	-	-	-
£10 - £25	-	-	-	-	-	-
£25 - £50	-	-	-	-	-	-
£50 - £100	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total number of exit packages	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total costs £000	£-	£-	£-	£-	£57	£57

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 PCSPS. 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 BARs, 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 2025-26 financial year, there were two exits from the civil service as Director and SCS. No Business Appointment applications were received. We did not receive any disclosures relating to BARs and we were not aware of any breaches.

A view of our MI5: Official Secrets exhibition

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 2024-25* (FReM) requires The National Archives to prepare a SoPS and supporting notes.

The SoPS and related notes are subject to audit, as detailed in the Certificate and Report of the C&AG 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 032, 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.

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 Performance report (see page 032) provides a summarised discussion of outturn against estimate and functions as an introduction to the SoPS disclosures.

Summary table 2025-26, all figures presented in £000s

Type of spend	SoPS Note	Outturn			Estimate			Outturn vs Estimate: Savings/ (Excess)	Prior year Outturn total 2024-25
		Voted	Non-voted	Total	Voted	Non-voted	Total		
Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL)									
Resource	1.1	52,428	-	52,428	53,178	-	53,178	750	46,975
Capital	1.2	7,598	-	7,598	7,944	-	7,944	346	7,417
Total		**60,026**	**-**	**60,026**	**61,122**	**-**	**61,122**	**1,096**	**54,392**
Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)									
Resource	1.1	27	-	27	100	-	100	73	4
Total		**27**	**-**	**27**	**100**	**-**	**100**	**73**	**4**
Total Budget									
Resource	1.1	52,455	-	52,455	53,278	-	53,278	823	46,979
Capital	1.2	7,598	-	7,598	7,944	-	7,944	346	7,417
Total Expenditure		**60,053**	**-**	**60,053**	**61,222**	**-**	**61,222**	**1,169**	**54,396**

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 2025-26, all figures presented in £000s

Item	SoPS Note	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, Saving / (Excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total 2024-25
Net cash requirement	3	52,310	52,921	611	48,094

Administration costs 2025-26, all figures presented in £000s

Type of spend	SoPS Note	Outturn	Estimate	Outturn vs Estimate, Saving / (Excess)	Prior Year Outturn Total 2024-25
Administration costs	1.1	13,210	13,746	536	11,584

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

Notes to the SoPS 2025-26

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 2024-25
	Administration			Programme			Total	Total		
	Gross	Income	Net	Gross	Income	Net				
Spending in DEL										
Voted expenditure	13,246	(41)	13,205	61,376	(22,153)	39,223	52,428	53,178	750	46,975
Spending in AME										
Voted expenditure	-	-	-	27	-	27	27	100	73	4
Total Resource	**13,246**	**(41)**	**13,205**	**61,403**	**(22,153)**	**39,250**	**52,455**	**53,278**	**823**	**46,979**

The Outturn was lower than the Estimate by £0.8 million. This is due firstly to an underspend in ring-fenced Net Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit depreciation of £0.1 million and also a saving of £0.1 million in AME due to no requirement for provisions at year end. There was also an additional £0.1 million of income generated throughout the year. The remaining £0.5 million is due to lower costs across the business, including staff costs due to higher than expected recharges to Net Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) for staff working on capital programmes.

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 2024-25
	Gross	Income	Total	Total		
Spending in DEL						
Voted expenditure	7,854	(256)	7,598	7,944	346	7,417
Total Capital	**7,854**	**(256)**	**7,598**	**7,944**	**346**	**7,417**

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 2024-25
Total Resource Outturn	**SoPS1.1**	**52,455**	**46,979**
Depreciation charged to Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure		(27)	(4)
ESA10 Research and Development		82	-
Net Operating Expenditure in Consolidated SoCNE	**SoCNE**	**52,510**	**46,975**

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 2025-26 and 2024-25 relates to depreciation on donated assets, charged directly to Other Comprehensive Net Expenditure. The item relating to ESA10 Research and Development is expenditure treated as CDEL within the SoPS but as operating expenditure within the SoCNE (see Note 3).

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**	**52,455**	**53,278**	**823**
Total Capital Outturn	**SoPS 1.2**	**7,598**	**7,944**	**346**
Adjustments to remove non-cash items:				
Depreciation, amortisation and impairment		(8,099)	(8,201)	(102)
Depreciation on donated assets		(27)	(20)	7
Loss on disposal		(8)	-	8
Right-of-use asset – interest charge		62	-	(62)
Right-of-use asset – remeasurement		(85)	-	85
New provisions and adjustments to previous provisions		-	(80)	(80)
Other non-cash items		(98)	-	98
Adjustments to reflect movements in working balances:				
Decrease in inventories		(16)	-	16
Increase in receivables		259	-	(259)
Increase in contract assets		2	-	(2)
Increase in payables		(355)	-	355
Decrease in contract liabilities		12	-	(12)
Right-of-use asset – lease repayment		610	-	(610)
Net Cash Requirement		**52,310**	**52,921**	**611**

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 (2024-25: nil).

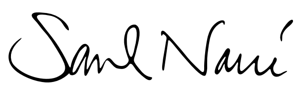
Losses and special payments

There were no material losses and special payments throughout the year that require disclosure (2024-25: £610,000)

The loss in 2024-25 relates to an impairment of intangible assets under development, whereby two components of the Omega project were written off as they will not be developed further and/or brought into use. This impairment will not be reversed in future years.

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 2025-26, there were no remote contingent liabilities to report (2024-25: nil).



Saul Nassé
Accounting Officer
09 July 2026

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 2026 under the Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000.

The financial statements comprise The National Archives':

- Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2026;
- 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 state of The National Archives' affairs as at 31 March 2026 and its 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 2026 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 (2024)*. 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 2024*. 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 is 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 and my auditor's certificate and report thereon. 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 issued 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 issued 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 Report.

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 place 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, in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued under the Government *Resources and Accounts Act 2000*;
- preparing the annual report, which includes the Remuneration and Staff Report, in accordance with HM Treasury directions issued 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[23], 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' and those charged with governance, including obtaining and reviewing supporting documentation relating to The National Archives' policies and procedures on:
  - 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 its compliance with the *Government Resources and Accounts Act 2000, Managing Public Money* and the *Public Records Act 1958*;
- inquired of management, The National Archives' 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 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, bias in management estimates. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), I am required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override.

I obtained an understanding of The National Archives' framework of authority and other legal and regulatory frameworks in which The National Archives operates. I focused 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*

23 Non-compliance is defined as acts of omission or commission intentional or unintentional, committed by the entity, or by those charged with governance, by management or by other individuals working for or under the direction of the entity, which are contrary to the prevailing laws or regulations. Non-compliance does not include personal misconduct unrelated to the business activities of the entity. ISA 700 uses the word "irregularities" to describe non-compliance with laws and regulations. We do not use the word irregularities to describe non-compliance within our certificates and reports as it has another meaning in the context of PN10.

Estimates) Act 2025 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 provisions of 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 audit reports;
- I addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements on 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 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 sufficient appropriate audit evidence 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 I identify during my audit.

Report

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.

Gareth Davies
09 July 2026
Comptroller and Auditor General
National Audit Office
157-197 Buckingham Palace Road
Victoria
London
SW1W 9SP

Costumes from Apple TV series Slow Horses on display in our atrium

3.0 Financial statements

3.1 Primary statements

3.2 Notes to the Departmental Resource Accounts

Our Shop; participants looking at parchment samples through microscopes during the Research Routes 'Does the perfect parchment exist?' workshop; our Reading Room

3.1 Primary statements

Statement of Comprehensive Net Expenditure (SoCNE) for the year ended 31 March 2026

	Note	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Revenue from contracts with customers	3	(15,220)	(16,820)
Other operating income	3	(6,974)	(4,125)
Total operating income		**(22,194)**	**(20,945)**
Staff costs	2	38,870	33,238
Purchase of goods and services	2	27,567	26,227
Depreciation, impairment, provisions and audit charges	2	8,197	8,367
Loss on disposal	4	8	22
Right-of-use asset interest charge	6	62	66
Total operating expenditure		**74,704**	**67,920**
Net operating expenditure		**52,510**	**46,975**
Other comprehensive net expenditure			
Items which will not be reclassified to net operating expenditure:			
– Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of property, plant and equipment	4	(358)	3,041
– Net (gain)/loss on revaluation of intangible assets	5	1,117	(982)
– Receipt of and depreciation of donated assets		(229)	(140)
Comprehensive net expenditure for the year		**53,040**	**48,894**

The Notes referenced in the table form part of the financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 March 2026

	Note	31 March 2026 £000	31 March 2025 £000
Non-current assets:			
Property, plant and equipment	4	161,846	164,543
Intangible assets	5	40,227	36,608
Right-of-use assets	6	5,730	6,255
Prepayments falling due after one year	8	99	168
Total non-current assets		**207,902**	**207,574**
Current assets:			
Inventories		163	179
Trade and other receivables	8	7,096	6,768
Contract assets	8	2	-
Cash and cash equivalents		611	1,279
Total current assets		**7,872**	**8,226**
Total assets		**215,774**	**215,800**
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	9	(7,090)	(7,555)
Contract liabilities	9	(107)	(119)
Obligations under finance leases	6	(580)	(552)
Total current liabilities		**(7,777)**	**(8,226)**
Total assets less current liabilities		**207,997**	**207,574**
Non-current liabilities:			
Contract liabilities	9	(226)	(199)
Obligations under finance leases	6	(5,521)	(6,011)
Total non-current liabilities		**(5,747)**	**(6,210)**
Total assets less liabilities		**202,250**	**201,364**
Taxpayers’ equity and other reserves:			
General fund		52,587	52,651
Revaluation reserve		149,280	148,559
Donated asset reserve		383	154
Total equity		**202,250**	**201,364**

The Notes referenced in the table form part of the financial statements.

Saul Nassé
Accounting Officer
09 July 2026

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 31 March 2026

	Note	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net operating expenditure		(52,510)	(46,975)
Adjustments for non-cash transactions	2	8,267	8,455
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	8	(259)	(1,217)
(Increase)/decrease in contract assets	8	(2)	-
(Increase)/decrease in inventories		16	12
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	9	(800)	(856)
Increase/(decrease) in contract liabilities	9	(12)	(12)
Movements in payables to the consolidated fund not passing through the SoCNE	9	668	350
Net cash outflow from operating activities		**(44,632)**	**(40,243)**
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	4	(4,438)	(4,815)
Purchase of intangible assets	5	(2,824)	(2,585)
Capital donation	4	256	144
Net cash outflow from investing activities		**(7,006)**	**(7,256)**
Cash flows from financing activities			
From the Consolidated Fund (Supply) – current year		51,642	47,744
Repayment of capital element of obligations under finance leases	6	(610)	(529)
Interest element of obligations under finance leases	6	(62)	(66)
Net cash flows from financing activities		**50,970**	**47,149**
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		**(668)**	**(350)**
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the period		**1,279**	**1,629**
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period		**611**	**1,279**

The Notes referenced in the table form part of the financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Taxpayers' Equity for the year ended 31 March 2026

	Note	General Fund £000	Revaluation Reserve £000	Donated Asset Reserve £000	Taxpayers' equity £000
Balance at 1 April 2024		**51,399**	**146,538**	**14**	**197,951**
Net Parliamentary funding		48,094	-	-	48,094
Net expenditure for the year		(46,975)	-	-	(46,975)
Other comprehensive expenditure		140	2,059	-	2,199
Auditor's remuneration	2	95	-	-	95
Transfers between reserves		(102)	(38)	140	-
Balance at 31 March 2025		**52,651**	**148,559**	**154**	**201,364**
Net Parliamentary funding		52,310	-	-	52,310
Net expenditure for the year		(52,510)	-	-	(52,510)
Other comprehensive expenditure		229	759	-	988
Auditor's remuneration	2	98	-	-	98
Transfers between reserves		(191)	(38)	229	-
Balance at 31 March 2026		**52,587**	**149,280**	**383**	**202,250**

The Notes referenced in the table form part of the financial statements.

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 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 to both tangible and intangible 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 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.

3.2 Notes to the Departmental Resource Accounts

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

General accounting policies

1.1 Statement of accounting policies

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the *Government Financial Reporting Manual 2025-26* (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. Where departure from the FReM has been allowed by HM Treasury through a specific Accounts Direction this has been appropriately disclosed. The accounting policies 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 practice 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 judgements
The preparation of financial statements requires management to make judgements, estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets, liabilities, income and expenditure. 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 judgements 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 professional desktop valuation. Further details are in Note 4.
- **Heritage assets:** Reliable information on cost or valuation is not available for the department's collection of heritage assets and, accordingly, an accounting judgement has been made not to value these in the financial statements. Further details are in Note 7.
- **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. An Accounts Direction has been issued by HM Treasury allowing departure from the FReM regarding the valuation approach to these assets. Further details are in Note 5.
- **IFRS 15 Revenue Recognition:** On transition to IFRS 15, judgements 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. Any new revenue streams are assessed against IFRS 15 as and when they commence. 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 3.

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, or that The National Archives will cease to exist in its current form 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 Board note that the department:

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

1.3 New accounting standards adopted

IFRS 17 Insurance Contracts was adopted by public sector organisations for all accounts prepared from 01 April 2025. The new standard replaces IFRS 4 Insurance Contracts.

The scope of the standard covers insurance contracts issued or held. This reporting standard has been reviewed and is determined to have no accounting impact upon The National Archives as no such insurance contracts are held.

1.4 Accounting standards issued but not yet effective

IFRS 18 Presentation and Disclosure in Financial Statements is expected to replace IAS 1. The implementation date for public sector organisations has not yet been decided. The scope of the standard covers general and specific requirements for the presentation of information in the primary statements and notes to the accounts.

IFRS 18 aims to improve financial reporting by:

- Requiring an entity to present two new defined subtotals in the statement of profit or loss.
- Requiring an entity to disclose management-defined performance measures.
- Adding new principles for aggregation and disaggregation of items.

HM Treasury is currently working with the Financial Reporting Advisory Board to agree how the new standard will be interpreted by the FReM and used in the annual accounts and report for public sector bodies.

Accounting policies for expenditure

1.5 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 SoCNE. These include any accrued leave entitlements.

1.6 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 were administered by MyCSP until 1 December 2025 and then by Capita 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 SoCNE when they fall due. There is no further payment obligation once the contributions have been paid.

1.7 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, the cost of that payment is recognised in full in the year the individual accepts the terms of the compensation payment.

1.8 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.

1.9 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.[24] 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

1.10 Contract income

The National Archives recognises revenue from customers 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.

1.11 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 sections of our Kew building to third parties. 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.

1.12 VAT 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

1.13 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 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,

24 A full list of the services on which VAT can be reclaimed under the Contracting Out Direction can be found on gov.uk

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 five-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 IFRS 16 Leases, with the costs, depreciation and other associated disclosures being shown in Note 6. 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 IFRS 16 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 lease.

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. These assets are revalued every year.

The FReM 2025-26 updated the adaptation to IAS 38 Intangible Assets, removing the option to apply the revaluation model to intangible assets. The National Archives has been issued with an Accounts Direction from HM Treasury allowing a derogation from the FReM in order that the revaluation method can be used to value the two classes of indefinite-life intangible assets. This more accurately achieves a true and fair view of the value of the assets given the inherent volatility in the markets underlying the future revenue that the value is derived from. The derogation is granted for three years and will be reviewed in 2027-28.

Further details of the effects of changes in our forecast estimates are shown under Note 5 of the accounts.

1.14 Heritage assets

The National Archives holds an internationally, historically significant collection of physical records and artefacts, as well as a significant and 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 7 of the accounts.

1.15 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.

1.16 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.

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 SoCNE. The carrying amount of 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.

1.17 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.

1.18 Prepayments

Payment in advance of receiving goods and services is made in a limited number of cases:

- Service and maintenance contracts where the service is available and can be called upon from the date of payment.
- Minor services such as training courses, conference bookings and subscriptions.
- Where a value for money assessment demonstrates clear advantage in early payment, for example receiving a price discount.

Where the prepayment is £5,000 or more, the value is held as an asset until such time as the goods/services are received.

2. Operating expenditure

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Staff costs		
Wages and salaries	28,856	25,250
Social Security costs	3,742	2,695
Other pension costs	7,567	6,681
Less capitalised staff costs	(1,295)	(1,388)
Total staff costs	**38,870**	**33,238**
Purchase of goods and services		
Costs of sales	210	692
Employee related costs	988	889
Business rates	3,680	3,623
Property costs	4,748	4,828
IT and telecoms	6,417	5,220
Archival maintenance	1,120	926
Marketing and communications	347	333
Grants paid	2,149	1,617
Contracted services	6,177	6,807
Audit, finance, legal and professional	518	359
ESA10 Research and Development (R&D)	82	-
Other costs	1,131	933
Total goods and services	**27,567**	**26,227**
Non-cash items		
Depreciation and amortisation		
- Civil estate	5,023	4,860
- Other non-current assets	3,051	2,802
Total depreciation	**8,074**	**7,662**
Auditor’s remuneration – audit work	98	95
Right-of-use asset interest charge	62	66
Loss on disposal	8	22
Impairment	25	610
Total other non-cash items	**193**	**793**
Total non-cash items	**8,267**	**8,455**
Total operating expenditure	**74,704**	**67,920**

Further analysis on staff numbers, compensation scheme packages and pension disclosures can be found in the Remuneration and staff report section of the Accountability report (from page 070).

ESA10 R&D relates to expenditure which does not meet the criteria for capitalisation under IFRS, but which fits the ESA10 definition of R&D[25] and as such is treated as Capital Departmental Expenditure Limits (CDEL) expenditure within the Statement of Outturn against Parliamentary Supply (SoPS).

No fees have been paid to auditors for non-audit work in the financial year 2025-26.

3. 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
Licensing royalties 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.	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. 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.
Record Copying (statutory provision) Digital or paper copies of our accessioned records are sold to individual customers.	Revenue is recognised at the point where the copies are provided to the customer. Billing takes place prior to distribution of the copies.
Digitisation 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.	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.
Storage income Commercial partners store records in The National Archives storage facility.	Revenue is recognised in line with usage, with billing arranged quarterly.
Drafting tools Publishing legislation on behalf of other government departments and devolved administrations.	A fee is charged per document published and recognised in line with publication. Billing on a quarterly basis.

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Revenue stream	Timing of performance obligations and significant payment terms
Licensing resales 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.	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. Payment is received either in advance or on delivery.
***Gazette* income** *The Gazette* 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.	Revenue is generated at a fixed percentage of sales and is recognised in line with the sales using reports provided by the partner for the period which is then billed for. Billing takes place on a quarterly basis.
Request a Military Service Record income Request a Military Service Record is a new service launched to allow individual customers to get copies of personnel records transferred to The National Archives from the Ministry of Defence. Income is for searching to ensure we hold the record and then for either digitised or paper copies.	Billing takes place in advance at the point where a customer places the order. Revenue is recognised at two separate stages in the process; where the search is completed and then when the copies are delivered to the customer.
Contract assets Where work has begun on a contract but the performance obligation has not been fully satisfied by year end, and payment for the work is dependent on future performance, the value of the work is held as a contract asset.	
Contract liabilities 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.	

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Revenue from contracts with customers		
Licensing royalties	3,914	3,794
Record copying	654	608
Gazette income	7,845	7,229
Digitisation	163	767
Request a Military Service Record	48	-
Storage income	538	531
Shop income	385	268
Drafting tools	147	142
Licensing resales	604	2,512
Legislation services	106	105
Digital downloads	32	35
Other	784	829
Total revenue from contracts	**15,220**	**16,820**
Other operating income		
Fees charged to other government departments	3,017	2,328
Grant income	3,549	1,436
Apprenticeship Levy notional income	17	5
Lessor income	391	356
Total other operating income	**6,974**	**4,125**
Total income	**22,194**	**20,945**

Licensing resales in 2024-25 included the resale of the 1921 Census to Ancestry for £2.2 million, which was a one-off event.

Grant income has significantly increased due to progress on the Archives Revealed and RICHeS programmes although Archives Revealed is largely for the purpose of grant making and so is offset by increased grant expenditure.

4. Property, plant and equipment

	Land £000	Buildings £000	Plant and machinery £000	Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000	Computers and equipment £000	Assets under construction £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2025	34,260	114,997	17,527	14,756	12,786	468	194,794
Additions	-	2,697	296	926	533	395	4,847
Reclassification	-	-	-	225	218	(443)	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-	(25)	(25)
Disposals	-	-	(347)	(54)	(1,051)	-	(1,452)
Revaluation	-	(5,381)	-	-	-	-	(5,381)
At 31 March 2026	**34,260**	**112,313**	**17,476**	**15,853**	**12,486**	**395**	**192,783**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2025	-	-	10,506	8,148	11,597	-	30,251
Charged in year	-	5,023	944	644	542	-	7,153
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	(340)	(54)	(1,050)	-	(1,444)
Revaluation	-	(5,023)	-	-	-	-	(5,023)
At 31 March 2026	**-**	**-**	**11,110**	**8,738**	**11,089**	**-**	**30,937**
Net book value							
At 31 March 2026	**34,260**	**112,313**	**6,366**	**7,115**	**1,397**	**395**	**161,846**
At 31 March 2025	**34,260**	**114,997**	**7,021**	**6,608**	**1,189**	**468**	**164,543**

	Land £000	Buildings £000	Plant and machinery £000	Furniture, fixtures and fittings £000	Computers and equipment £000	Assets under construction £000	Total £000
Cost or valuation							
At 1 April 2024	34,260	114,684	15,588	13,798	12,402	1,286	192,018
Additions	-	1,788	1,179	909	487	452	4,815
Reclassification	-	347	859	64	-	(1,270)	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	(99)	(15)	(103)	-	(217)
Revaluation	-	(1,822)	-	-	-	-	(1,822)
At 31 March 2025	**34,260**	**114,997**	**17,527**	**14,756**	**12,786**	**468**	**194,794**
Depreciation							
At 1 April 2024	-	-	9,746	7,592	11,195	-	28,533
Charged in year	-	4,863	837	571	505	-	6,776
Reclassification	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Disposals	-	-	(77)	(15)	(103)	-	(195)
Revaluation	-	(4,863)	-	-	-	-	(4,863)
At 31 March 2025	-	-	10,506	8,148	11,597	-	30,251
Net book value							
At 31 March 2025	**34,260**	**114,997**	**7,021**	**6,608**	**1,189**	**468**	**164,543**
At 31 March 2024	**34,260**	**114,684**	**5,842**	**6,206**	**1,207**	**1,286**	**163,485**

Notes

Freehold land and buildings were valued as at 31 March 2026 at £146.6 million by Montagu Evans (the 'valuer'), acting in the capacity of external valuers. This valuer also provided a valuation last year and as such this year performed a desktop valuation, using existing floorplans and breakdown of component areas.

The valuation was produced 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.

The Building Cost Information Service Tender Price Index was used to calculate the value of Kew 1 and Kew 2 buildings, with the useful economic life of Kew 1 being increased by six months to reflect the improvement to the building by replacing the repository windows on the ground floor and floor 1.

The land value has remained constant, reflecting the static prices of land in the Kew area over the year to 31 March 2026.

Revaluation in year is accounted for within other comprehensive net expenditure (see page 099) and accumulated in taxpayers' equity under the revaluation reserve.

5. Intangible assets

	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 2025	916	4,405	544	27,113	5,431	38,409
Additions	105	249	-	-	2,486	2,840
Reclassifications	-	1,019	-	-	(1,019)	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	-	-
Revaluation	-	-	33	1,084	-	1,117
At 31 March 2026	**1,021**	**5,673**	**577**	**28,197**	**6,898**	**42,366**
Amortisation						
At 1 April 2025	903	898	-	-	-	1,801
Charged in year	16	322	-	-	-	338
At 31 March 2026	**919**	**1,220**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**2,139**
Net book value						
At 31 March 2026	**102**	**4,453**	**577**	**28,197**	**6,898**	**40,227**
At 31 March 2025	13	3,507	544	27,113	5,431	36,608

	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 2024	916	3,928	459	28,180	3,933	37,416
Additions	-	-	-	-	2,585	2,585
Reclassification	-	477	-	-	(477)	-
Impairment	-	-	-	-	(610)	(610)
Revaluation	-	-	85	(1,067)	-	(982)
At 31 March 2025	**916**	**4,405**	**544**	**27,113**	**5,431**	**38,409**
Amortisation						
At 1 April 2024	888	618	-	-	-	1,506
Charged in year	15	280	-	-	-	295
At 31 March 2025	**903**	**898**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**1,801**
Net book value						
At 31 March 2025	**13**	**3,507**	**544**	**27,113**	**5,431**	**36,608**
At 31 March 2024	28	3,310	459	28,180	3,933	35,910

Intangible assets in development are internally developed IT systems which are not yet in use and will only be subject to amortisation once they have been brought into use.

There are currently three projects in development:

- Explore The National Archives: a re-development of our website and online catalogue.
- Transfer Digital Records: a series of services which will allow government departments to transfer their digital records to our custody seamlessly.
- Omega: a transformation of the catalogue, replacing legacy systems.

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 099) 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 2026, discounted using the rate of 3.5% set out in HM Treasury's *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 £646,000 and the licences issued would be £33.3 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 2025-26 valuation £000
2025-26 income 10% less than forecast for revenue generating databases	(103)
2025-26 income 10% higher than forecast for revenue generating databases	103
2025-26 income 10% less than forecast for licences issued	(3,256)
2025-26 income 10% higher than forecast for licences issued	3,256

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.

The Accounts Direction from HM Treasury allows for the revaluation model to be used for valuing the indefinite-life intangible assets. Without the Accounts Direction, the assets would have been valued at the carrying value as at 31 March 2025, which is as follows:

- revenue-generating databases £544,000
- licences issued £27.1 million.

6. Leases

The National Archives has one lease recognised as a right-of-use leased asset under IFRS 16, 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 30 September each year. The calculation of the lease liability inflates future lease payments using inflation rates from the PES 2025 09 discount rates paper, except for where another inflation rate is more applicable. For the closing liability, the expected cashflow for 2026-27 has been calculated using the known rate of 4.3%. For cashflows past this, the PES rates of 2% for 2026-27 and 2% for cashflows after this point into perpetuity have been used.

6a) Right-of-use leased assets

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 April	8,010	7,849
Remeasurement	85	161
At 31 March	8,095	8,010
Depreciation		
At 1 April	1,755	1,160
Charged in year	610	595
At 31 March	2,365	1,755
Net Book Value	**5,730**	**6,255**

6b) Lease liability

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Balance at 1 April	6,564	6,931
Remeasurement	85	161
Finance charge	62	66
Lease payments in year	(610)	(594)
Balance as at 31 March	**6,101**	**6,564**

The following table shows the maturity analysis of undiscounted cashflows:

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Within one year	637	614
Later than one year and not later than five years	2,681	2,590
Beyond five years	3,092	3,727
Total	**6,410**	**6,931**

6c) Amounts recognised in the SoCNE

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Interest charge	62	66
Depreciation charge	610	595
Total	**672**	**661**

6d) Amounts recognised in the Statement of Cashflow

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Principal repayment of lease	610	594
Finance charge	62	66
Depreciation charge	610	595
Total	**1,282**	**1,255**

7. Further information on heritage assets

7a) 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 (MOD). 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 that 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.

7b) Preservation and management

Government bodies select digital and physical records for permanent preservation and transfer 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 SoCNE 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 (DCMS) 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.

7c) 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.

8. Trade and other receivables

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Trade receivables	836	1,164
Deposits and advances	50	26
VAT	-	83
Prepayments	1,650	1,573
Accrued income	4,560	3,922
Total trade and other assets	**7,096**	**6,768**
Contract assets	2	-
Total receivables falling due within one year	**7,098**	**6,768**
Amounts falling due after one year:		
Prepayments	99	168
Total receivables	**7,197**	**6,936**

9. Trade and other payables

	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Amounts falling due within one year:		
Other taxation, social security and pension	1,565	1,345
VAT	12	-
Trade payables	940	1,072
Accruals	2,115	2,088
Deferred income	609	658
Deposits	12	12
Short-term staff benefits (holiday pay accrual)	1,226	1,101
Amounts issued from the Consolidated Fund for supply but not spent at year end	611	1,279
Total trade and other liabilities	**7,090**	**7,555**
Contract liabilities	107	119
Lease liabilities	580	552
Total payables falling due within one year	**7,777**	**8,226**
Amounts falling due after one year:		
Contract liabilities	226	199
Lease liabilities	5,521	6,011
Total payables	**13,524**	**14,436**

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

10. Other financial commitments

The National Archives has no capital commitments (2024-25: £nil).

The National Archives has entered into significant non-cancellable contracts (which are not leases or private finance initiative contracts) for a facilities management service, security 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	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Not later than one year	3,374	1,616
Later than one year and not later than five years	11,376	781
Beyond five years	2,861	-
Total	**17,611**	**2,397**

After several years of annual one-year extensions, new multi-year contracts were signed during the year for building security services and total facilities management. The security contract (£4.4 million) is scheduled to run until August 2030 and the total facilities management contract (£12.4 million) until August 2032.

A contract for Microsoft licences (£592,000) has been entered into which will last until August 2027.

11. Future income due under non-cancellable operating leases

The National Archives has entered into contracts to rent sections of the building to third parties. The aggregate minimum lease receipts are as follows:

Future lease income	2025-26 £000	2024-25 £000
Receivable within one year	305	192
Receivable later than one year and not later than five years	1,125	208
Receivable after five years	794	-
Total	**2,224**	**400**

12. 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.

13. Contingent liabilities

There were no material contingent liabilities at the reporting date (2024-25: nil).

14. Related-party transactions

The National Archives is a non-ministerial department of the UK Government. Its sponsor department is the DCMS. The Chief Executive during the reporting year was Saul Nassé, who 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 2026, The National Archives was owed the following: £64 by Cabinet Office (2024-25: nil), £48,000 by Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (2024-25: nil), £156,324 by House of Lords (2024-25: £110,223), £1,242 by Ministry of Justice (2024-25: £3,437), £17,357 by Northern Ireland Office (2024-25: £16,256) and £230,755 by Welsh Government (2024-25: nil). The National Archives owes the following: £7,700 to DCMS (2024-25: nil).

The National Archives had transactions with the following bodies during the year with which Board members have declared an interest. These are not considered to meet the definition of a related party under IAS 24 but are included for transparency.

John Sheridan, Digital Director, is an Executive Committee member of the DLM Forum on behalf of The National Archives, to which The National Archives paid £845 in subscription fees.

Peter Mills, Interim Finance Director from 01 March 2025 to 30 November 2025 was on loan to The National Archives from DCMS. His substantive role at DCMS was Deputy Director – Commercial.

Andrew Wathey, Chair of the National Archives Board, also serves as Independent member of Council and Vice Chair at Royal Holloway, University of London to whom The National Archives paid a grant of £1,600.

Alison White, Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee, also sits on the Defence Audit and Risk Assurance Committee for the MOD as well as being a Non-executive director. A significant programme is currently underway to transfer the MOD service personnel records to the custody of The National Archives.

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

The Remuneration and staff report (see pages 75-91) contains details of payments made to key personnel.

15. Events after the reporting period date

There have been no significant events after 31 March 2026 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.

4.0 Annexes and Appendix

Annex A

Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: 23rd Annual Report 2025-26

Annex B

Annual Report of the Independent Complaints Reviewer 2025-26

Appendix

Local Places of Deposit awarded New Burdens Funding April – December 2025

A team member walking through the repositories at our Kew site; textile print titled 'The Flying Steam Company To China in Twenty-Four Hours Certain' (BT 43/191/7185); children using ultra-violet torches to reveal elements written in invisible ink at our MI5: Official Secrets exhibition

Annex A: Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: 23rd Annual Report 2025-26

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 23rd Annual Report of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives (the Council).

In May 2025, we welcomed seven new members of the Council to their first meeting. They have spent their first year familiarising themselves with the work of the Council and its priorities. They have been fully involved in the Council meetings and Freedom of Information (FOI) panels. Two of the new members have also joined the Council's sub-committee, the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research (the Forum), lending their specific academic experience to its work and helping to develop its priorities for 2026.

In the last year, we also welcomed two new independent members of the Forum, Dr Charlotte Berry and Ms Charlotte Brunskill, who attended their first meeting in October 2025. Both add considerable archive sector knowledge to the Forum. Their contributions will be most valuable.

In the latter half of the reporting year, the Council was pleased to be informed that the Secretary of State had approved four of our existing members, each for a second term of appointment. We are indebted to Dr Nigel Fletcher, Ms Kate Grimley Evans, Sir David Natzler and Mr Jonathan Scherbel-Ball for their work to date and their willingness to continue serving on the Council. I have also reappointed two of our existing members of the Manorial and Tithe Documents Panel (the Panel).

The Council was pleased to welcome Baroness Twycross to our July 2025 Advisory Council meeting. She was able to see the important role that the Council plays and to observe how our advice to ministers comes about. The Council is grateful for her keen interest and support.

The Council has otherwise continued to deliver its functions efficiently throughout the year. It routinely completes FOI panel work within one working day. It provides advice to the Historical Manuscripts Commissioner via the Acceptance in Lieu scheme and works with The National Archives to support the compliance of all government departments with the *Public Records Act 1958* (PRA). The Council has considered specific topics in depth. It has looked carefully at FOI exemptions and sought ways to support the timely transfer of historical records from government departments to The National Archives.

Finally, this year we bade farewell to our two longest-serving Council members, Lady Moira Andrews and Ms Liz Copper, who have been on the Council since 2018. I would like to record my gratitude to them for their dedication and support over the last eight years. Their knowledge and understanding of the work of the Council and their considered and insightful contributions in meetings, on panels, and in the Council's working group will be sorely missed. On behalf of all the Council members, I wish them both well and thank them sincerely for their service.

The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Vos
The Master of the Rolls
11 May 2026

Introduction

The Council is an independent advisory body, created under the PRA 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* (FOIA) exemptions and challenges them to provide evidence to justify such requests.

Through its sub-committee, 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 Panel is a further sub-committee of the Forum, composed of subject-matter experts. It advises the Master of the Rolls and the Historical Manuscripts Commissioner on matters relating to Manorial and Tithe documents.

The Council's, the Forum's, and the Panel's respective remits, as well as their terms of reference, are described in more detail on The National Archives' website.

The Council's work in 2025-26

As detailed in our previous report, the Council members committed in 2025-26 to continuing discussions with relevant stakeholders on the application of section 37 of FOIA, which includes exemptions from FOI disclosure or communications with members of the Royal Family and Household. The Council provided advice to the Minister on the matter, as well as to applicable government departments, and will continue to monitor this going forward.

The Council has heard from several departments in attendance at their quarterly meetings and has offered support and scrutiny of records management plans where appropriate. In particular this year, the Council invited the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) to attend its May meeting where they heard from the knowledge and information management team. Following their attendance, the Master of the Rolls wrote as Chair of the Council to the FCDO Permanent Under-Secretary, outlining the Council's concerns for the team and its commitment to supporting them wherever possible. The members were especially concerned at the department's explicit statement that they risked not being able to meet their statutory obligations for records keeping. The Council received a reply to the letter in September though remains concerned about developments at the FCDO and will continue to liaise with the records management team in the coming year.

Another area of concern for the the Council this year has been about what appear to be inconsistencies between how different departments decide between retaining records for security purposes or transferring them closed under relevant FOIA sections to The National Archives. This has been most apparent in relation to potential damage to UK international relations, where section 27 of FOIA allows an exemption to public disclosure. The Council has discussed this with the two departments most concerned, the Cabinet Office and FCDO, with the aim of encouraging them to iron out this apparent inconsistency.

A key topic of interest for the Council this year has been the correct and consistent application of section 40 of FOIA when examining FOI requests and closed transfer requests. The Council has discussed this at length, with support from The National Archives, as well as how absolute exemptions in the FOIA fall under its general purview of providing advice to the Secretary of State on all matters concerning public records, including access. The Council considered its discussions valuable as a general guiding principle to be borne in mind when conducting its work, particularly FOI panels, going forward.

As a public body itself, the Council is subject to the PRA, so this year three members undertook a review of its own records in advance of their transfer to The National Archives.

Meetings

The Council held four formal meetings in May, July and November 2025 and in February 2026. Members held an additional training session online in September 2025 where they discussed digitisation, the application of artificial intelligence and the new digital appraisal, selection and sensitivity review maturity assessment tool from The National Archives. Members also had an update on non-Council processes at The National Archives, and a presentation from the FOI team on encountering difficult or distressing records.

The Council's meetings were attended by members, as well as by Mr Saul Nassé, The National Archives' Chief Executive, and Ms Lucy Fletcher, The National Archives' Deputy Chief Executive. Other representatives from The National Archives who possess expertise relating to the issues considered by the Council also participated as necessary.

The Council's Working Group met four times in 2025-26 to devote more time to discussion on specific issues. Such topics included the Council's Annual Report, 38 and 41 of FOIA, and The National Archives' review of its fees order.

In addition to the Council meetings, members took part in FOI panels. Though not meetings as such, they represent a significant amount of dedication from members who share the demand equally between them. In 2025-26, members completed 35 panels with 20 cases considered per panel.

Engagement with departments

Under the PRA, government departments, arm's-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 2025-26, the Council considered 1,132 applications for retention from public bodies. The Secretary of State accepted the Council's advice on the applications for retention they received.

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 2025-26, Council received a total of 29 updates from across government departments, arm's-length bodies and Places of Deposit.

Freedom of Information panels

FOI panels are made up of three members of the Council, assigned on rotation. During the financial year 2025-26, 34 panels were convened, with 680 cases being considered. Panels substantively challenged 68 of these, or 10% of the total. This compared to 740 cases in 2024-25, where 68 cases were substantively challenged (9%).

The most commonly challenged exemption was section 27(1) (International relations) (32 times) while section 38 (1)(a) (Health & safety) was second-most challenged (21 times). These challenges are consistent with those of 2024-25 where section 38(1)(a) was the most challenged and section 27(1) was the second most challenged. A further breakdown of FOI Panel statistics can be seen in Appendix C (see page 140).

The Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research

The Forum, chaired by the Master of the Rolls with support from the Deputy Chair of the Forum, Professor Leon Livack, meets formally three times per reporting year, usually in June, October and March. In June 2025, Forum members had received the standing item, the annual Sales Monitoring Report which is prepared by The National Archives' archive sector leadership (ASL) team. The Forum greatly values this report and accompanying discussion led by the ASL team, and it was particularly welcomed by the new Forum members. This was also the first meeting of the new Forum members drawn from the Council, Dr Jim Bamberg and Ms Sally McInnes.

The Forum visited the Churchill Archives in Cambridge in October 2025 which provided an opportunity for the members to gain insight into the workings of another archive business model, and to hear about its future development plans. The staff provided a tour of the collections which Forum members greatly appreciated, as well as facilitating the Forum business meeting. At this meeting the Forum discussed its priorities for 2026-27 which were agreed out of committee in December, and the first two were addressed at its March 2026 meeting. The agreed priorities were as follows: archives at the heart of society, inclusive archives, accessible archives, sustainability through The National Archives' action plan, The National Archives' research strategy. The usual standing item, the Sales Monitoring Report, to be discussed in June.

This year, Forum members were delighted to welcome two new independent members, Dr Charlotte Berry and Ms Charlotte Brunskill, who have already taken a keen interest in developing the Forum's priorities and the work for the year ahead.

The Panel, a sub-committee of the Forum, has continued its work to develop a checklist to assist archivists in England and Wales to determine whether documents in their holdings are manorial and/or tithe documents. 2026 marks 100 years of the Manorial Document Rules, which gave legal protection to manorial and tithe documents. To celebrate this anniversary, members of the Panel have been working on a series of articles to be published in the journal of the British Records Association. The anniversary edition of the journal will be edited by Christopher Whittick, a member of the Panel.

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 18, including the Chair. Biographies can be found for the members on our pages on The National Archives' website.

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 four ordinary Council members, as well as three independent members. All members of the Forum, appointed via the Advisory Council by the Master of the Rolls, or by the Secretary of State, are done so in line with the guidance issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

All members are required to keep the 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.

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 2025-26 totalled £106,397.

Freedom of Information requests

As a public body, the Council is subject to the FOIA itself. In 2025-26, the Council received nine FOI requests, all of which were responded to within the statutory timeframe or allowed extensions as required by the FOIA.

The Council also received three requests for internal review, all of which were completed in under 40 working days, the longest taking 36.

Two of these internal reviews formed two complaints to the Information Commissioner.

The Information Commissioner has yet to issue a decision on these complaints.

Environmental sustainability

The Council as a body is reliant on larger bodies to provide 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. Hybrid meetings also have sustainability implications as it facilitates easier attendance from government departments.

Looking ahead

The year 2026-27 looks likely to produce a steadying number, possibly even a slight drop, in the number of FOI panels the Council must undertake as the Ministry of Defence's transfer of service personnel records nears completion and colleagues at The National Archives continue to make progress on casework. We do however expect that the number of 'born-digital' records being transferred to The National Archives will continue to present challenges for departments, as we noted last year.

Members of the Forum will apply themselves to their priorities across their 2026-27 meetings and will engage directly with the sector on their visit to an external archive in the autumn. Across both the Council and the Forum, I look forward to seeing our newer members continue to develop into their roles and seeing how they shape our discussions.

In 2027, we shall again lose a number of Advisory Council members whose second terms will be coming to an end. A priority focus for the Council this year will therefore be succession planning and beginning a new recruitment exercise to ensure we are able to carry out our functions to the same standard of excellence as we do currently.

In January 2026, I announced my retirement from the office of Master of the Rolls which means that my term as Chair of the Advisory Council will come to an end in the autumn of 2026. I would like to note my gratitude to all Council, Forum, and Manorial and Tithe members past and present, as well as to The National Archives, without which the Council could not complete its statutory function. I am confident that the new Master of the Rolls as Chair will have as warm and productive a relationship with members and National Archives colleagues as I have had over the past five years.

The Right Honourable Sir Geoffrey Vos
Master of the Rolls
11 May 2026

Appendix A – The Remit of the Council, the Forum and the Panel

The Council

Background

The Council was established by the 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.

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 on:

- whether records are transferred to The National Archives closed (i.e. not available for public access)
- when a closed record is reviewed after transfer, it should remain closed as these decisions lie with the department whose records they are
- whether a record can be retained by a department. This decision is made by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

Additionally, the Council does **not**:

- advise on departments' retention of records under the Security and Retention Instrument 2011
- 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. 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
- provide an open, independent and authoritative advisory voice to The National Archives, to support its research and academic liaison.

The Panel

Since 2003, when the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission came together to form The National Archives, the Council has also had a remit to advise the Historical Manuscripts Commissioner (as appointed under the terms of the 2003 revision of a Royal Warrant of 1869, which first established the Historical Manuscript Commission) on all matters relating to records and archives outside the public records system. The sub-committee fulfilling this remit is the Forum on Historical Manuscripts and Academic Research.

The Master of the Rolls, Chair of the Forum, has responsibilities for manorial and tithe documents and to advise the Historical Manuscripts Commissioner on matters relevant to these records. The Master of the Rolls is advised in this capacity by the Panel, which sits as a sub-committee of the Forum.

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 (only), 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 an 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
- if released, would damage international relations
- relates 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.

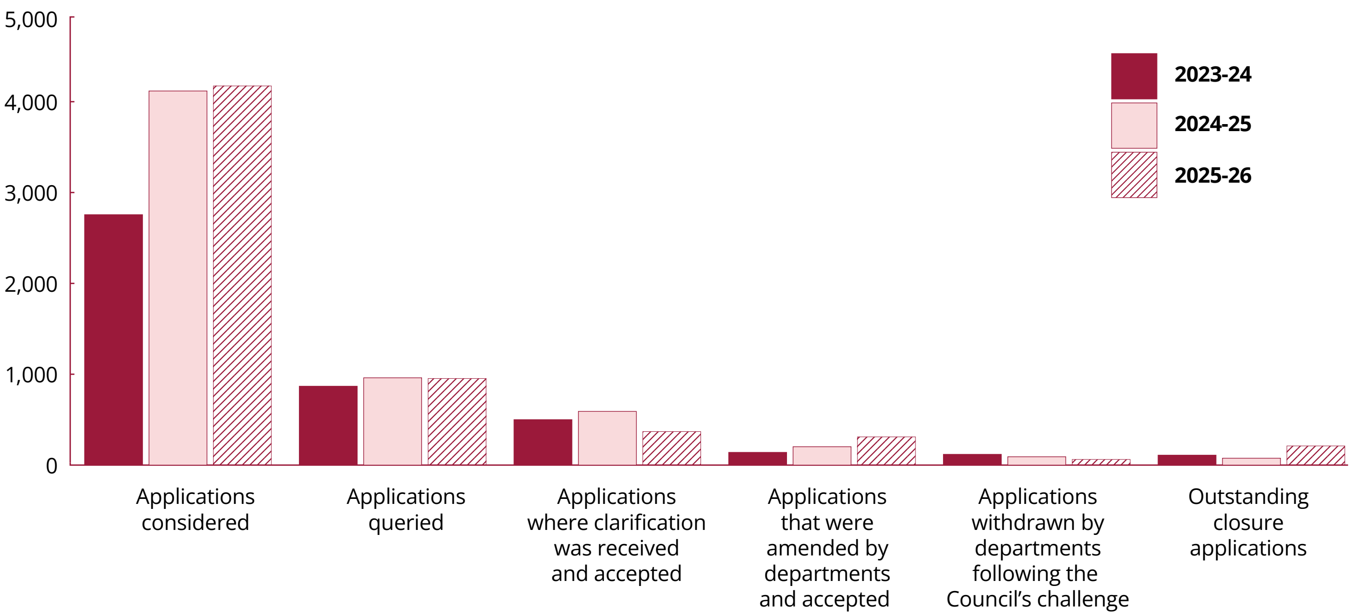
Appendix C – Metrics

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 Council's consideration by way of a Qualified Closure Application. Further information on these is provided in the table below.

Qualified Closure Applications

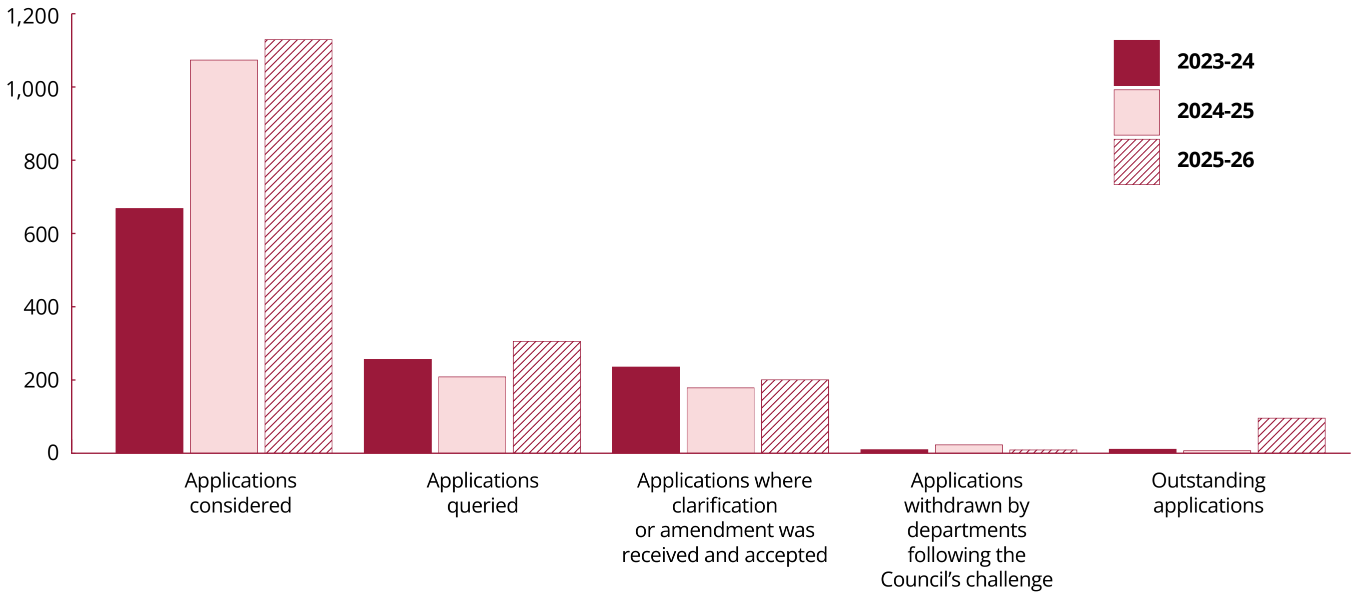
Year	Applications considered	Applications queried	Applications where clarification was received and accepted	Applications that were amended by departments and accepted	Applications withdrawn by departments following the Council's challenge	Outstanding closure applications
2023-24	2,794	880	507	142	120	111
2024-25	4,174	974	599	205	93	77
2025-26	4,230	966	374	315	63	214



When departments apply to retain historical public records (records over 20 years old), this comes to the 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
2023-24	670	257	236	10	11
2024-25	1,076	209	179	23	7
2025-26	1,132	306	201	9	96



Freedom of Information panels

Total number of cases considered: 680 cases across 34 panels.

These were broken down as follows:

- panels 1-3: 60 cases over 3 panels
- panels 4-10: 140 cases over 7 panels
- panels 11-21: 220 cases over 11 panels
- panels 22-29: 160 cases over 8 panels
- panels 30-34: 100 cases over 5 panels.

Total number of substantive challenges to applications of the FOIA: 68 challenges.

These challenges resulted in six cases being opened in full and 13 being opened in part. The most commonly challenged exemption was section 27(1) International relations (32 times) while section 38 (1)(a) (Health & safety) was second-most challenged (21 times). The challenges engaged the sections of the FOIA as follows[26]:

S26: 3
S27 (1): 32
S27 (2): 7
S31 (1): 13
S37 (1)(ac): 1
S37 (1)(b): 1
S38 (1)(a): 21
S38 (1)(b): 7
S40 (2): 4
EIR 12 (5)(e): 1
EIR 12 (5)(f): 1

Discovering Collections, Discovering Communities 2025 conference

26 The numbers listed differ from those noted in the paragraph above as some queries specifically challenged redaction rather than the engagement of an exemption and some queries challenged more than one exemption.

Annex B: Annual Report of the Independent Complaints Reviewer 2025-26

It is with pleasure that we present our eighth contribution to The National Archives' Annual report and accounts since our appointment as Independent Complaints Reviewers (ICR) in 2018.

ch&i associates, led by Alex Oram and Jon Wigmore, continues to provide an independent perspective at the third stage of The National Archives' complaints procedure (for issues that remain unresolved internally). Our role remains to assess whether The National Archives has provided a reasonable service consistent with its established policies and the Ombudsman's UK Central Government Complaints Standards. When we identify any deficiencies that warrant attention, whether constituting maladministration or falling short of it, we recommend proportionate and appropriate remedies.

The year's activity 2025-26

The National Archives maintains an ambitious complaints process designed to ensure that all customer feedback contributes to service improvement. This year, the organisation managed record-breaking visitor numbers while maintaining a robust framework for handling feedback across various channels.

Transactional volume and context

The scale of The National Archives' operations remains significant, providing essential context for the low number of formal escalations:

- **Document productions: 498,657**
  - This is consistent with the high volume of public productions seen in previous years.
- **Written enquiries: 17,244**
  - While this is a decrease from last year's 26,407, it is largely attributed to a refined change in recording and categorising methodologies. We are pleased to note that The National Archives has now agreed on a consistent set of inclusion criteria to ensure data stability moving forward.
- **Contacts via the online chat function: 20,135**
  - This demonstrates the continued importance of the real-time support function.

Feedback trends

The engagement levels through the "Your Views" programme indicate that The National Archives has continued to capture customer sentiment effectively at record levels during our tenure.

Category	2024-25	2025-26	Trend
Formal complaints	63	76	Increase
Suggestions/comments	592	532	Decrease
Concern/criticism	314	532	Increase
Compliments	49	67	Increase
General enquires	250	176	Decrease

The increase in formal complaints appears to have been driven largely by the *MI5: Official Secrets* exhibition, which attracted over 50,000 visitors. While a nearly three-fold increase over their previous best-attended exhibition (22,052) saw event-related complaints rise from 2 to 12 (primarily concerning the queuing systems), we consider this a remarkably low figure given the high footfall.

Additionally, we consider it likely that the sharp rise in "Concerns/criticisms" reflects the work The National Archives has done to better capture feedback from its customers, rather than highlighting any negative new trends. This increase in feedback was also reflected in the formal compliments received, which reached a record high.

Independent review activity

We are pleased to report that for the first time in our tenure, no formal complaints were referred to us for a stage 3 review this year. This reflects the strength of The National Archives' internal resolution process and the quality of their core service.

Despite the absence of formal referrals, we remained active in a consultative capacity on the following topics:

- **Policy development:** We were consulted regarding the organisation's guide to offering refunds, including the clarity of escalation rights.
- **Visitor improvements:** We conducted a hugely rewarding visit to The National Archives to examine improvements made for visitors, particularly relevant given the record visitor numbers this year.
- **Direct contact:** The National Archives' Quality Manager was consistently responsive and helpful in addressing enquires that we received from individuals.

Conclusion

We do not doubt The National Archives' genuine commitment to customer service and the provision of independent review. We again commend the organisation for its efficient first-stage complaint handling and its thorough Chief Executive (stage 2) review. The lack of stage 3 referrals this year, coupled with an increase in complaints at the earlier stages, underscores a robust system that prioritises effective resolution for the individual.

Contact the ICR

Details of the ICR service can be found on The National Archives' website.

ch&i associates ltd
64 Plumstead Road
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NR1 4JU

Telephone number: +44 (0)3301331492
Email: enquiries@chi-assoc.com

The feedback space at our MI5: Official Secrets exhibition

Appendix: Local Places of Deposit awarded New Burdens Funding April – December 2025

Barnsley Archive and Local Studies

Bath Record Office: Archives and Local Studies

Bedfordshire Archives

Royal Berkshire Archives

Birmingham: Archives, Heritage and Photography Service

Bristol Archives

Buckinghamshire Archives

Cambridgeshire Archives

Cumbria Archive and Local Studies Centre

Derbyshire Record Office

Devon Archives and Local Studies Service (South West Heritage Trust)

Doncaster Archives

The Story Durham (formerly Durham County Record Office)

Essex Record Office

Explore York Libraries & Archives

Glamorgan Archives

Gloucestershire Archives

Gwent Archives

Hampshire Archives

Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

Hull History Centre (Hull City Archives)

Kent History and Library Centre

Kresen Kernow (formerly Cornwall Record Office)

Lancashire Archives

Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland

Lincolnshire Archives

The London Archives: City of London

Manchester Archives and Local Studies

Norfolk Record Office

North East Wales Archives, Hawarden (formerly Flintshire Record Office)

North Yorkshire County Record Office

Nottinghamshire Archives

Oxfordshire History Centre

Peterborough Archives

Plymouth Archives, The Box

Powys Archives and Information Management

Sheffield City Archives

Shropshire Archives

Somerset Heritage Centre (South West Heritage Trust)

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service

Suffolk Archives – Ipswich

Surrey History Centre

Tyne and Wear Archives

West Sussex Record Office

West Yorkshire Archive Service

Archives: Wigan & Leigh

Wolverhampton City Archives

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

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