THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Transferring Paper and Physical Records to The National Archives

Statutory responsibilities and practical guidance on preparing physical materials, including paper files, for transfer to The National Archives

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1. What responsibilities and statutory obligations apply to preparing records?

1.1. The responsibilities of transferring bodies and Departmental Records Officers (DROs)

Information on statutory obligations	It is the responsibility of all organisations responsible for public records, as defined by the Public Records Act 1958 (c.51), to transfer records for permanent preservation, under the guidance and supervision of the Keeper of Public Records. These obligations originate in section 3(2) of the Public Records Act 1958 (c. 51). See The National Archives' Legislation and regulations pages for further information.

Under section 3 (Selection and preservation of public records) of the Public Records Act 1958 (c. 51) every person responsible for public records of any description is obliged to follow the guidance of the Keeper of Public Records.

1.2. The responsibilities of The National Archives

Under section 3 (Selection and preservation of public records) of the Public Records Act 1958 (c. 51) the Keeper of The National Archives is responsible for providing guidance and supervision to public record bodies on the safekeeping, selection and transfer of public records.

This includes the provision of preparation guidance in order to:

- ensure that all necessary physical preparation work has been carried out by transferring bodies before a transfer is made to The National Archives and providing advice and guidance on the preparation of records to transferring bodies;
- deal with specialist conservation issues which cannot be reasonably undertaken by transferring bodies.

1.3. Advisory practice for transferring records to The National Archives

Information on advisory practices	The remainder of this guidance covers advisory practices regarding cataloguing records for transfer. Transferring bodies and DROs are advised that following these practices will support the fulfilment of a transferring body's statutory obligations under the Public Records Act 1958.

This guidance is for records management staff, including DROs, who are involved in the transfer of records to The National Archives.

In order to facilitate the transfer of records and support transferring bodies in fulfilling their obligations under the Public Records Act 1958, The National Archives has issued this guidance on appropriate practices for physically preparing records for transfer. This guidance covers common situations that may occur while preparing paper and other physical records.

Not following the practices in this guidance document may affect a transferring body's ability to ensure physical records are prepared correctly for transfer and consequently may lead to a transferring body failing to fulfil its responsibility to select and transfer records.

This guidance will not cover every situation that may occur while preparing records and additional guidance may be required for unusual or specialist issues. Please consult the Transfer Team if you are unsure about any matter relating to preparation.

1.4. Accessing further guidance for DROs and other KIM professionals

The National Archives provides further guidance on record keeping practices through its website and through training sessions.

Further guidance on best practices for record keeping prior to and throughout the selection and transfer process is presented in Annex 2 to this document and on The National Archives website. This includes separate guidance relating to the preparation and transfer of digital records, as well as guidance for records being transferred to a Place of Deposit.

In regard to selection and transfer of records in particular, DROs should:

- consult with The National Archives' Transfer Team as early as possible if there are any concerns about any aspect of the transfer process or believe that specialist conservation or repair work is required;
- report any evidence of mould, asbestos, chemical and hazardous substances, insects, rodents or any other environmental damage to the Transfer Team as early as possible;
- have gained approval for any closure or retention of records and completed all necessary documentation prior to the transfer of records;
- ensure records are kept in a clean, controlled environment, away from any substances and materials which might harm them and all preparation work is done clearly, accurately and carefully, following the practices outlined in The National Archives' guidance.

2. What do you need for physical preparation?

2.1. Sourcing tools and archival supplies

To prepare records for transfer to The National Archives, you will need essential tools and archival supplies. The correct use of these is presented in this section.

Particular materials may need to be sourced either from The National Archives or suppliers, or prepared by the transferring body.

All materials used for the preparation or packing of records (including boxes, map folders or banner bags) must meet The National Archives' standards. A high standard of materials is vital in preserving records.

Please consult with the Transfer Team before using or ordering any materials for the first time to ensure they meet The National Archives' standards.

Sourcing labels and stickers

Transferring bodies must organise the preparation and printing of their own labels and stickers including:

- box reference labels (departmental lettercode, series number and piece and item numbers);
- closure labels ('Closed until' and 'Closed until various dates up to');
- warning stickers for distressing photographs.

Please note boxes must be labelled in line with The National Archives guidance to be transferred.

Label templates, sticker templates and further guidance are available on The National Archives' Cataloguing and preparation of physical records webpage.

Sourcing dummy cards and warning tape for closed extracts

The National Archives can supply the following material to transferring bodies:

- dummy cards for whole pieces and extracts;
- yellow and black warning tape for closed extracts.

To procure these items, please complete the Stationery order form available on The National Archives' Cataloguing and preparation of physical records webpage and email it to the Transfers team at governmenttransfers@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

Other materials and third party suppliers

Any other preparation materials or tools may be obtained from third parties, as long as they meet the criteria for approval by The National Archives. If you have further queries about the criteria for particular materials or tools or are unsure if materials would meet the criteria, please contact the Transfers team at governmenttransfers@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

2.2. Archival boxes

With the exception of a few format types such as large maps and plans, the majority of records which are transferred to The National Archives are transferred and permanently preserved in archival boxes. The archival boxes which are low in acidity and highly durable, are designed to protect the records from water, fire and pest damage.

Archival boxes come in three grades and two types of board. Guidance on choosing the correct size, grade of board and type of board is included below.

Choosing the correct archival box

Size

All boxes should be the correct size to fit the records. They should allow for the records to be packed and easily extracted. A correctly sized box will help ensure your records are protected:

- during the transfer from you to us;
- when the box is on the repository shelf;
- during transit from the repositories to reading rooms.

Records will become damaged if an incorrect box size is used. If a box is too large for the records it will result in the records being bent and distorted. If a box is too small for the records it will result in the records being crushed, folded and frayed around the edges.

You should always check the exact size of the records you wish to transfer before ordering boxes, this includes checking the depth, length and width of the record. In addition, you should allow a finger width on either side of the length and width of the records to allow the documents to be safely removed.

Carefully consider internal measurements when ordering boxes as suppliers often quote external rather than internal dimensions. These can differ by up to 5mm; therefore, if in doubt check with your supplier.

If you require a large quantity of boxes, it may be more cost effective to order flat pack boxes, for you to assemble on site. Note that suppliers can make boxes to order.

Records will become damaged if an incorrect box size is used. If a box is too large for the records it will result in the records being bent and distorted and if a box is too small for the records it will result in the records being crushed, folded and frayed around the edges.

Construction

All archival boxes must consist of a base and a lid. The depth of the lid must be the same as the depth of the base of the box.

The most important criteria of a box transferred to The National Archives is strength. All boxes must withstand a standard industry edge-crush-test (ECT) at a minimum of 5 kN/m.

Board grades and types

There are three grades of board suitable for use at The National Archives. When choosing the grade, it is important to consider:

- what types of material will be stored in the boxes;
- if the records are large or heavy;
- if the records are of high archival value.

The table below will help you determine the grade of board which is required for your transfer:

Board Grade	Board Specification	When to use it
Grade 1 Permanent	☐ 100% chemical pulp ☐ pH 7.5 – 10 ☐ kappa number should not exceed 5, or else less than 1% lignin content ☐ alkaline reserve between 2%-10% ☐ neutral internal sizing (EVA or AKD) ☐ no optical brighteners ☐ no plasticisers ☐ no metal particles, waxes, residual bleach, or other components that could lead to degradation when in immediate contact with the board	Required for boxing materials of high archival or intrinsic value Also recommended, but not required, for boxing standard archival records
Grade 2 Durable	☐ 100% chemical pulp ☐ May be laminated ☐ pH 6.5 – 10	For boxing standard archival records
Grade 3 Photo	☐ 100% chemical pulp ☐ pH 6.5 – 7.5 ☐ kappa number should not exceed 5, or else less than 1% lignin content ☐ may contain fillers as long as pH is as specified ☐ less than 0.0008% reducible sulphur ☐ neutral pH EVA polymer adhesive where laminated ☐ no optical brighteners ☐ no plasticisers ☐ no metal particles, waxes, residual bleach, or other components that could lead to degradation when in immediate contact with the board ☐ pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT)	Recommended for boxing photographs, negatives and other photographic material

There are two types of board suitable for use at The National Archives. Full board is available in Grades 1, 2 and 3, while corrugated (also known as fluted) board is only available in Grades 1 and 3.

Both full board and corrugated board are available to be delivered flat packed from your supplier. Please consult the table below to determine the best type of board for your transfer:

Type of board	Cross section of board	Benefits of use	When to use it
Full board		▪ most durable board type	For most transfers full board is preferred
Corrugated board		▪ rigid in larger sizes ▪ good for stacking	If boxes are to be stacked in storage If records are larger and/or heavier than normal

Boxes for records being stored off-site

Some records are housed in The National Archives' off-site storage facilities in Cheshire. The same boxing and labelling requirements apply to records which will be stored in these facilities.

2.3. Polyester sleeves

A polyester sleeve is a transparent pocket, which is more chemically stable than other plastics. Polyester sleeve are used for the storage of loose, fragile or unstable objects, this includes:

- single damaged page
- single photograph
- sticky note
- newspaper cutting

Polyester sleeves can be purchased ready-sealed on one, two or three sides. Choosing the right sleeve will depend on the condition of the object it will house. For example, will a reader need to remove the object from the sleeve at all and will it be difficult to get it back in again? Could it sustain damage through this action? It is worth considering these possibilities when determining which type of sleeve should be used.

How to use polyester sleeves
☐ Place only one page or photograph in each polyester sleeve. This ensures the item is visible on both sides, and researchers will not need to remove it, as frequently removing an item from a polyester sleeve can cause damage. ☐ Use a polyester sleeve of an appropriate size, neither too small nor too large for its contents. The sleeve should not exceed the size of the file cover. Files which have not previously been folded should not be folded to fit them into the sleeve. ☐ Ensure the document in the polyester sleeve is replaced in its original position in the file it belongs to. ☐ Always try to run the record's tag through both the polyester sleeve and its contents. Exceptions to this are when the punch hole or tag would obscure text or an image. Photographs should, therefore, never be tagged. ☐ Ensure you write the TNA reference of the parent piece on the back in the bottom left-hand side of any item not secured by a tag, in case it comes loose. Write the endorsement lightly, but legibly in HB pencil. ☐ Do not write on the polyester sleeve.

2.4. Acid-free envelopes

Acid-free envelopes are used to store larger, bulkier documents which need to be removed from the record in order to examine them, this includes:

- Booklets
- Folded maps

- Newspaper

In addition, you should use acid-free envelopes to hold objects when a polyester sleeve would be unsuitable. Polyester sleeves can be unsuitable for use with flimsy, fragile or badly damaged papers, or loose, fragile or unstable objects and as they can be quite static and catch on the object. An acid-free envelope may be used in these cases.

You will also need to place photographs or other pages contain a distressing image inside acid-free envelopes.

How to use acid-free envelopes

- ☐ Always write the TNA reference of the parent piece lightly and legibly in HB pencil on the back of the item.
- ☐ Always label the front of the envelope in HB pencil with the TNA reference and a brief note of the contents. E.g. ‘2 maps enclosed’, ‘1 newspaper enclosed’.
- ☐ Place the item in an acid-free envelope of an appropriate size – one that is neither too small nor too large for its contents.
- ☐ Acid-free envelopes should be tagged where the original item sat in the record.
- ☐ The tag should only run through the envelope and not its contents.
- ☐ Always ensure that the contents can be easily removed for viewing and then replaced, without removing the tag. The size of the envelope, the way it is tagged, and the envelope's flap should not make the contents difficult to extract.

2.5. Four-flap folders

Four-flap folders are used to protect records which are not sufficiently secured by an original file cover or additional protection is required. This includes:

- Records with badly damaged or fragile covers;
- Records which have been split;
- Loose bundles of paper;
- Bound volume of poor condition and/or loose folios;
- Closed/retained extracts.

Four-flap folders are a safe way to fully contain material but are typically only used for small or folded material, while larger material, such as flat maps and plans, should be placed in map folders.

How to use four-flap folders
☐ Always retain the original file cover, and ensure it is tagged into the new four-flap folder. ☐ Use four-flap folders for volume which are in poor condition and/or contains loose pages. ☐ If a file is split due to its size, use a four-flap folder for the items. ☐ Insert closed and retained extracts in a new four-flap folder. ☐ Loose bundles of papers should be placed in order, hole-punched and tagged into a new four-flap folder. ☐ Folded maps and plans which are not part of a file will need to be place in four-flap folders. ☐ Flat maps and plans, which are often large and not part of a file, should be placed into four-flap folders. ☐ Write the TNA reference in chinagraph on the front of the four-flap folder. ☐ If required, for added protection tie the four-flap with cotton/linen tape to secure the four-flap folder.

2.7. Nylon-ended treasury tags

Nylon-ended treasury tags are used to secure all paper pages and other sleeves into file covers.

How to use treasury tags
☐ Tags should only ever go through the back of a file cover or four-flap folder. Never put the tag through the front cover, unless doing so will make an unwieldy file more stable. Never wrap the tag around the spine. ☐ As metal corrodes and damages records over time, any metal ended tags should be replaced with nylon-ended tags. ☐ Tags must be loose enough to enable the file to be fully opened at any point, with both sides lying flat on a surface and absolutely no strain placed on the tag holes. ☐ They should allow each page to be turned easily and viewed without restriction. ☐ Tags which are too tight restrict access to the information within the file. This may lead researchers forcing pages open and accidentally damaging the file, potentially creating loose pages. ☐ If you are unsure about the length then choose a tag that is slightly too long rather than one is too short.

For more information on using treasury tags see section 3.5.

2.8. Cotton/linen tape

Unbleached cotton or linen tape is tied around all boxes to keep them securely closed. A loop is tied in the tape to create a handle, which enables the box to be easily removed from the shelf in the repository. Cotton or linen tape is also used in the following instances to securely hold records:

- File which are abnormally bulky or uneven.
- Volumes with loose pages and/or dummy cards

For more information on using cotton/linen tape to tie records and boxes see sections 3.7 and 3.8.

2.9. Chinagraph and HB pencils

Both HB pencils and chinagraph pencils are used to write the TNA reference on the records.

A HB pencil is primarily used to endorse the contents of a record, typically inside a file. You will need to endorse the following items in HB pencil:

- Photographs
- Acid-free Envelopes
- Booklets
- Maps
- Any loose paper documents, including
    - Damaged pages
    - Newspapers
    - Newspaper Cuttings
    - Redacted Copies
    - Loose pages in volumes

A chinagraph pencil is a waxy pencil which does not easily smudge. You will need to endorse the following items in chinagraph pencil:

- Files covers
- Four-flap folders
- Bags and labels for rolled maps
- Volume covers
- 'Closed until' sticky labels.

2.10. Artist's palette knife

An artist's palette knife is recommend in the removal of staples, as staple removers may damage or tear pages.

If a metal staple prevents papers from being turned and opened easily, you will need to remove it. Other staples do not need to be removed. However, if time and resources allow, you should remove all metal staples to help the long term preservation of the record. The staple should always be removed from behind.

2.11. Single hole punch

A single hole punch is an essential item in the preparation of records. A single hole punch is used to create new tag holes in archival enclosures such as polyester sleeves, acid-free envelopes and four-flap folders. In addition, a single hole punch is required to make new holes in paper records which can be tagged, but currently do not have a tag hole, or do not have a useable one.

If you need to punch new tag holes they should normally be able 2 cm from the top and left edges of the page. You should ensure new holes do not damage text or images etc., or cause pages to protrude from the file.

Folded pages should be tagged in a way that allows for them to be fully and easily unfolded without removal from the file.

2.12. Gloves

Skin naturally secretes oils that attract dust and other particles, and this dirt and oil can stain documents.

Photographic prints, negatives and glass plates are easily damaged by these oils. Therefore when handing these types of materials, wear either nitrile, powder-free latex or vinyl gloves.

There is no need to wear gloves with other types of records. However, you should ensure you keep your hands clean and dry when handling records.

3. What are the basics of file preparation?

3.1. What do you need to remove from a record before transfer?

Metal

As metal corrodes and damages records over time, ideally all metal should be removed from records prior to transfer to The National Archives.

The most common metal objects that must be removed from records include:

- bulldog clips;
- staples which prevent a user from opening pages and viewing information (usually, any staple not fixed in the top left corner);
- pins and sharp objects (which are a health and safety hazard);
- metal-ended tags – replace these with nylon treasury tags.

Removing staples

The National Archives does not ask for metal staples to be removed, unless the staple prevents the paper from being opened and/or poses a risk to the record or reader, since transferred records are stored in environmentally controlled conditions, reducing the risk of corrosion. However, if time and resources allow, removing metal staples does help with the long term preservation of the record.

To remove a staple use an artist's palette knife, as staple removers may damage or tear pages. The staple should always be removed from behind, as seen below.

Correct method for removing staples

Rubber and plastic

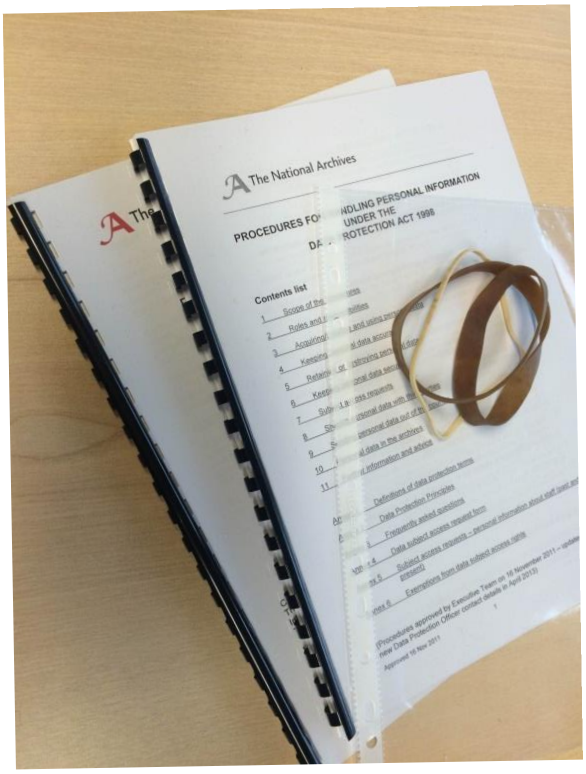
All plastic and rubber objects should be removed from records prior to transfer, as these materials can rapidly deteriorate causing damage to paper and other materials that come in contact with them.

The most common rubber and plastic items that should be removed from records include:

- comb bindings
- plastic wallets
- plastic covers
- rubber bands.

Polyester sleeves and nylon-ended treasury tags are the only plastic material that should normally be present in a record. This is because both polyester and nylon is more stable than other plastics and degrade at a much slower rate.

Although if a plastic cover or wallet contains historic information, which is not written elsewhere, consult with the Transfer Team as it may be advisable to place it in an acid-free envelope.



Examples of plastic covers, plastic bindings and rubber bands

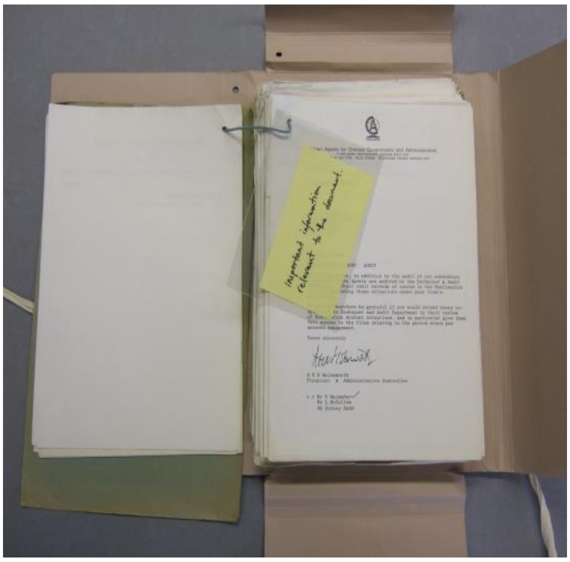
Blank Sticky notes (Post-it® notes)

Any sticky notes which are blank, or have been added during the review and transfer process, and/or contain only unimportant administrative or ‘housekeeping’ information (e.g. ‘Put this on file’, ‘Copy this’) should be discarded.

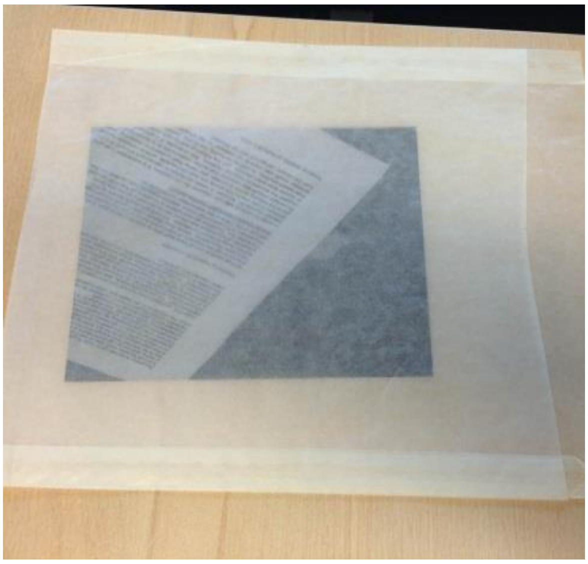
However, sticky notes which contain information of value should be kept within the record. Advice on preparing sticky notes for transfer can be found in section 4.10.

Glassine paper

Glassine paper, traditionally used to store photographs and negatives, should be discarded since it becomes brittle and discolours over time which can cause damage to any photographic material. The photographic material should be inserted into polyester sleeves.



A sticky note placed into a polyester sleeve and tagged into the file in its original position



An example of a traditional glassine enclosure

NATO papers

Departments should remove any NATO papers from their records. This is because they are not public records, even when they are kept in UK government files. NATO retains ownership of its papers, as agreed with its member states. Therefore, all copies of NATO papers should be removed and destroyed.

Cabinet Office papers

Copies of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee documents in the files of other government departments should be removed and destroyed. If they are an integral part of the file, any release needs to be cleared by the Cabinet Office. Cabinet and Cabinet Committee documents are released in Cabinet Office's own records once cleared for sensitivity, and will be available at The National Archives.

In such cases, specially prepared dummy cards are used to replace the papers removed and destroyed. These dummy cards are prepared by the transferring body. Consult the Transfer Team if you are in any doubt.

Scanned versions of minutes and memoranda of the Cabinet are available online in The National Archives' catalogue, Discovery, in series CAB 128 and 129 respectively. It is therefore possible to check whether Cabinet Office have cleared specific Cabinet papers for release by searching for them on Discovery.

3.2. How do you write the TNA reference on the front cover?

Every record that is transferred to The National Archives must be endorsed (meaning written on, in most cases on the back) with a unique TNA reference.

The TNA reference must be written in the format:

- Departmental code (in upper case);
- a space;
- the series number;
- a forward stroke (/);
- the piece number;
- if item numbers are required, another forward stroke and the item number.

For example:

HO 405/1784

JPM 25/1983/1

These example TNA references can be understood as follows:

Dep. code	Space	Series number	Forward stroke	Piece numbe r	(If required) Forward stroke	(If required) Item number
HO		405	/	1784		
JPM		25	/	1983	/	1

The TNA reference should be written in the following way:

Checklist for writing TNA references:
☐ The TNA reference on the front of a file should be written in chinagraph pencil. ▪ Chinagraph can be hard to correct if you make a mistake so, if you have any doubt about piece numbers, write them in HB pencil first and check them with the Transfer Team. When the piece numbers are confirmed write over the pencil with chinagraph. If you do make any mistakes in chinagraph pencil, correct them as clearly and neatly as possible. ☐ The reference should not cover any text or be written across any labels. ☐ The reference should be near the centre of the cover if there is blank space available. If there is no space on the original file cover, write the reference on the front of a new four-flap folder and tag in the original file. ☐ The reference should be about 2cm in height, horizontally, and in a single line. ☐ Letters and numbers should be clearly legible and unambiguous. ▪ 1s should not resemble other numbers or forward strokes. ▪ Write numbers plainly. Avoid crossed 7s and 0s as they may appear to be crossed out numbers.

3.3. How do you write TNA references on split files

When splitting files, write the relevant TNA item reference on each item. This consists of the TNA reference, followed by a forward stroke and then the item number. Do not write 'Part 1', 'Part 2', 'End' or 'Item' on the file cover. For example:

JPM 25/1983/1, JPM 25/1983/2, JPM25/1983/3

3.4. What stickers and labels should be applied to the front cover of files?

The only labels which should be applied to the front cover are:

- A small green CLOSED UNTIL label for closed whole pieces and extracts;
- A Warning! Distressing Content label for files which contain distressing imagery;
- Yellow and black warning tape for closed extracts.

Ensure any labels do not obscure the text and do not put stickers with barcodes and references on the front of file covers, as it is important to ensure the original file cover remains fully visible. If it is necessary to apply barcodes or reference labels, attached them to the outside of the back cover.

Labels should be printed and prepared by transferring bodies according to the guidance in section 2.1.

3.5. How do you tag a file the perfect way?

Tagging is important for the preservation of a file, as pages can easily become separated and lost if they have not been tagged in. However, tags must be loose enough to enable the file to be fully opened at any point, but not so loose that the file becomes unwieldy, but tags which are too tight can restrict access and may result in pages being forced open, causing damage to the file and potentially creating loose pages.

The table below details the recommended tag lengths depending on the thickness of the file. The contents of the file should be measured at its thickest point, which may be at the tag hole, but could be elsewhere if the file has a bulky object in it such as an envelope. If it is not clear which tag length to use, always use the longer of the two.

File thickness at thickest point	Recommended length of tag
0.1 – 0.9cm	5cm
1.0 – 1.9cm	7cm
2.0 – 2.9cm	10cm
3.0 – 3.9cm	12.5cm
Greater than 4.0cm	Split the file

Once you have identified the recommended tag length, pass the tag through the back of the folder and then pass the tag through all of the pages. Once all of the pages have been tagged, you should have an excess length of tag, which will allow all of the pages to be easily turned and accessed by the reader.

Do not pass the tag through the front cover or wrap it around the spine unless the pages in the file seem unsecure, in which case for stability tag the file through the front and back covers using a longer tag.

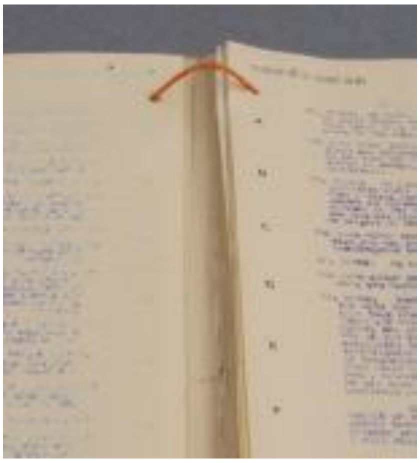
Checklist for tagging

- ☐ Only use nylon-ended treasury tags and replace any metal ended tags.
- ☐ Only use a single treasury tag per file, multiple interlinking tags should be removed.
- ☐ Do not use self-adhesive tag hole reinforcers.
- ☐ Ensure all pages are tagged, with no loose pages. If there are any loose pages, which do not have an existing tag hole, punch a new tag hole approximately 2cm from the top and left sides of the page, as long as the hole does not interfere with any text, images or other information on the page.
- ☐ Loose pages which cannot be satisfactorily tagged should be placed in polyester sleeves or acid-free envelopes, and tagged into the file.
- ☐ The tag should pass through the back cover and the contents, but not through the front cover. If a file is put

Checklist for tagging

into a four-flap folder, the tag should pass through the back covers of the file and four-flap folder, but not through the front covers of either.

- [ ] Do not loop tags around the spine of the file.
- [ ] Ensure tags are long enough for the file to be opened at any point, with both sides lying flat on a surface and absolutely no strain placed on the tag holes. They should allow each page to be turned easily and viewed without restriction.
- [ ] If you are unsure about the length then choose a tag that is slightly too long, rather than one that is too short.



Correct length

Incorrect length

3.6. Handling and splitting thick, heavy and unwieldy files

It is essential to support heavy or awkward records at all times to avoid damage such as rips, tears, folds and creases.

Since thick and oversized files are more likely to become damaged in transit or when accessed, they often need to be split into thinner, more manageable parts. When preparing thick and oversized files, the first question to ask yourself is “how thick is the file?” If it is too thick then it will need to be split. The second question to ask yourself is "do the contents of the file make it unwieldy or unstable?" If it unwieldy or unstable then it will need to be split.

To measure a file, use a ruler and measure it at the thickest part, usually the top left corner where the tag will go.

However, when considering whether a file needs to be split, take into account the final thickness of the file. Bear in mind that if the file needs polyester sleeves and acid-free envelopes then these will add to the file's final thickness.

In most cases it is only necessary to split a file when it is thicker than 4.0cm. Occasionally, a file under 4.0cm will need to be split, usually due to the condition of the contents. However, if the file is between 2.5 and 4.0cm thick, usually a longer tag is all that is required.

For the purposes of storage and cataloguing, files are known as 'pieces' and the parts a split file is divided into are known as 'items'.

How to split thick files

- ☐ Split files which are extremely thick into two or more items as necessary
- ☐ Split files at a sensible point, e.g. between two documents rather than in the middle of a document
- ☐ Items should normally be of a fairly equal thickness
- ☐ The first part (or front of the file) becomes item 1, the second item 2 and so on
- ☐ The first part of a split file will be housed in the original file cover. The other items will need to be tagged into new folders
- ☐ Ensure each item is endorsed on the front cover with the TNA reference according to the guidance in sections 3.2 and 3.3.
- ☐ Splitting a file will affect the item number which needs to be used for any closed extracts. The closed extract will always come after the split items. For example, if a file has been split in two, the closed extract will need to become item 3 instead of item 1.

How to split thick files
■ If there is a discrepancy with the item number shown on the Freedom of Information (FOI) Schedule, consult with the Transfer Team, so that the item number can be amended.      Example of a file correctly split and referenced

3.7. When to tie up file

In most cases tying up files with cotton or linen tape is unnecessary, as the tape will cut into the file cover over time, damaging the file, rather than protecting it. A file should only be tied with cotton tape if the contents of the file are forcing the folder open and cannot be split into multiple files.

3.8. Filling and tying an archival box

Boxes should be overfilled by approximately 1cm so that the files are very slightly compressed when the lid is on. This will prevent documents from moving around inside the box when in transit or on the shelf.

Records which have uneven thickness (e.g. files that are thicker in the corner where they are tagged) should be packed alternatively top to bottom and bottom to top, so the stacking of the files remains even and level throughout.

As the boxes should always be the appropriate size for the record, bubble wrap or corrugated cardboard should not be used as permanent filler. Although, where boxes cannot be filled to the appropriate level or there is a danger of documents moving around in transit, corrugated cardboard or bubble wrap may be used to protect the contents for transit. However, you should note the use of all cardboard fillers or bubble wrap on the Transfer Summary. This is to ensure the material is removed on arrival at The National Archives.

Example of a box filled to the correct levels

How to pack bound volumes

Bound volumes should be packed so that any two volumes are placed with their spines in opposite directions, to ensure that they sit safely within the box and that the lid fits correctly. This prevents the pages from pulling against the spines and damaging them.

Boxes containing dummy cards

When a whole piece is closed, retained, missing, or is 'Number not used', a dummy card must be placed in the appropriate archival box. Adequate space must be left in the box, to ensure that the piece can be reunited at a later date, without the box becoming overfull.

For more information on using dummy cards, see section 6.2.

Tying a box

All boxes should be secured with cotton or linen tape. The tape holds the box closed, and the loop allows the box to be easily removed from the shelf.

The tape should be long enough to be tied around the box lengthways, allowing for a looped handle to be tied at the front and a bow or shoelace knot to be tied at the back. As a rule of thumb, each standard box requires tape four times the length of the box to create the tie.

Checklist for tying up a box
☐ Fold the length of cotton tape in half ☐ Make a looped handle at the closed end ☐ Wrap the tape around the box ☐ Tie a shoelace knot at the open end

3.9. Labelling an archival box

All archival boxes must be clearly labelled to display the content of the box. Every box should contain labels showing the:

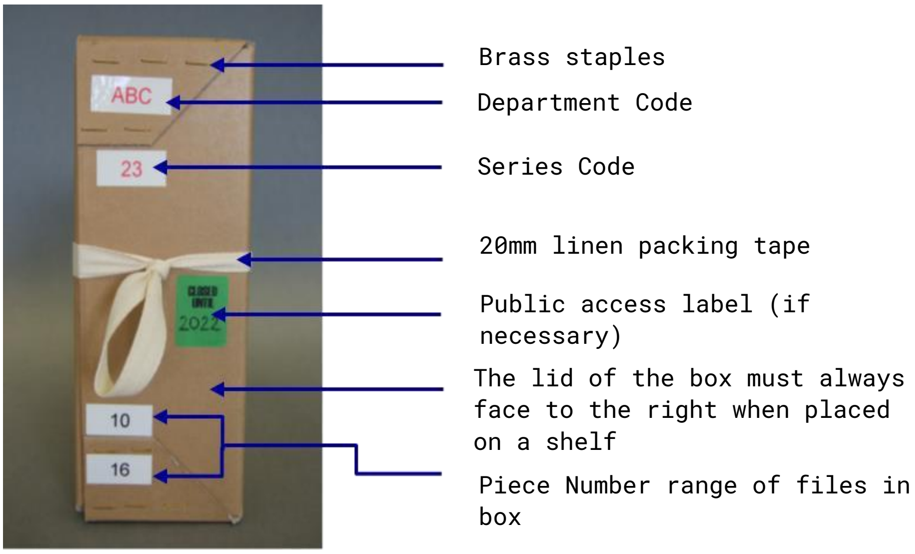
- Department lettercode (white label with red text)
- Series number (white label with red text)
- Piece range (white labels with black text)

In addition, it may be necessary to include item labels, as well as public access labels.

Labels should be printed and prepared by transferring bodies according to the guidance in section 2.2.

How to apply labels to an archive box

- ☐ Attach labels to the smallest side (area) of the box lid when it is placed vertically on a shelf and with the lid opening from left to right.
- ☐ Labels should be stuck on the left hand side without covering old labels, staples or overhanging edges. Department codes should be stuck at the top left hand side with series numbers directly underneath.
- ☐ Piece numbers should be stuck on the bottom left hand side. They should indicate the first piece in the box and the last piece in the box, not every single piece (e.g. 1 and 5, not 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
- ☐ If a box contains only one piece, only one piece number is required (e.g. 10, not 10-10).
- ☐ If a piece has been split into separate items and are divided between two boxes, both piece and item labels must be stuck onto the boxes. However, if all the items are in the same box, a piece number label is all that is required.
- ☐ Ensure that the entire number is printed on a single label (e.g. 200 should be printed onto a single label, and not 2, 0 and 0 stuck together).



Example of a box physically prepared for transfer

3.10. Labelling records with access restrictions

Records with access restrictions may require additional labels for transfer. See section 6.4 for further information.

4. How do you physically prepare specific formats?

4.1. Loose bundles of paper

Loose bundles of paper should be hole-punched and tagged into folders in order to secure them. The hole-punch should be in the top left hand corner 2cm from either edge ensuring that the holes does not obliterate any text or information. The folder should be an appropriate size to hold the papers and other preparation work should be undertaken as normal.

Consult with the Transfer Team if punching holes and tagging might damage the papers, or seems in any way impractical or inadvisable.

4.2. Ring-binders

Ring-binders are usually made of plastic and metal, both of which will degrade and damage the contents of the binders over time. Ring-binders are also usually bulky and wasteful of valuable storage space.

Place the contents of ring-binders in folders and prepared, tagged and referenced in the normal way. If possible tag through the original binder holes using two nylon-ended treasury tags; this is to avoid the need to punch new holes. Discard the ring-binder, but preserve any significant writing on the binder that is not written elsewhere. Ideally this should be preserved and tagged on top of the contents. If it isn't possible to remove the original information from the ring binder, a paper photocopy may be added to the file.

4.3. Volumes and books

Books and volumes require careful preparation, particularly if there are loose pages. The key points to remember when handing volumes and books:

- always support volumes and other books at all times to avoid damaging their spines;
- always ensure the original location of loose pages is clear, by numbering the loose pages, and the volume pages if these are not already number.

Checklist for handling books and volumes with loose pages
☐ Use a HB pencil endorse each loose page with the TNA reference. ☐ If the pages do not have folio numbers, in HB pencil number all the pages in the volume in the top right hand corner in case pages fall out, get mixed up or become lost. ☐ Do not tag the loose pages, but ensure they are replaced in their original place in the volume. ☐ Place any fragile pages in polyester sleeves and the sleeves back where the original was within the volume. ☐ Tie the volume with cotton tape and place in an individual box; if this is not possible, it should be placed in a four-flap folder.

How to prepare volumes:

Using a black chinagraph pencil write the TNA reference on the front cover, however, if the cover is dark use a white chinagraph pencil. In addition, if the cover is uneven or otherwise unsuitable, write the TNA reference in chinagraph pencil on the inside of the volume's front cover or on the page opposite if there is no writing on that page.

Place the endorsed volume in an appropriate sized box. Alternate the orientation of volumes when placing them into boxes. This will ensure that the lid fits evenly and that they do not move during storage and transit.

Should any of your volumes or books contain closed records, see section 6.3.

4.4. Maps and plans

This section deals with maps and plans which do not form part of files, reports or volumes, but which are separate, individual entities. The key points to remember when handing maps and plans are:

- Always transfer maps and plans in the format in which they have previously been stored:

  - folded maps and plans should be transferred folded, not rolled or flattened
  - flat maps and plans should be transferred flat, not folded or rolled
  - rolled maps and plans should be transferred rolled, not folded or flattened
- Do not attempt to repair torn maps. If a map is torn, note the need for repair on the Transfer Summary for the attention of Collection Care.

Folded maps and plans

Using a HB pencil write the TNA reference twice in opposite corners on the back of each map or plan. Select a four-flap folder, large enough to hold the map when re-folded. Using a chinagraph pencil, write the TNA reference of the front of the four-flap folder. Place the endorsed map into the endorsed four-flap folder.

Flat maps and plans

Using a HB pencil write the TNA reference twice in opposite corners on the back of each map or plan. Select a four-flap folder that is large enough to hold the map, keeping it flat without folding it.

Often several maps can be placed in the same folder. The exact number will depend on the map size, thickness and material. The contents should not be thicker than the spine of the map folder. Write the TNA reference in chinagraph pencil on the cover of the folder. If the folder contains several maps, write the range of TNA references on the front of the folder (e.g. ABC 7/20 – ABC 7/30).

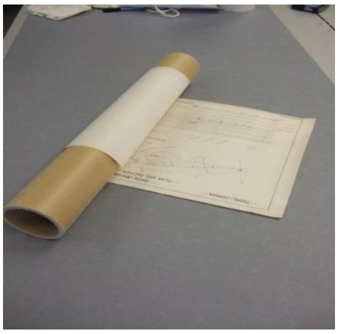
If you are unsure about what size folder you need, please contact the Transfer Team.

Rolled maps and plans

Using a HB pencil write the TNA reference twice in opposite corners on the reverse of a rolled map or plan.

Roll the map onto the outside of an archival tube. Ensure that the tube is longer than the map so the map edges are not damaged and that the tube diameter is wide enough that the map is not rolled too tightly. Secure the map with broad linen tape, tied with an easily released bow.

Using a chinagraph pencil, write the TNA reference on the top and bottom of a cotton or linen bag and label. Insert the tube into the endorsed bag. Tie the label around the opening of the bag, with a simple, easily releasable bow.



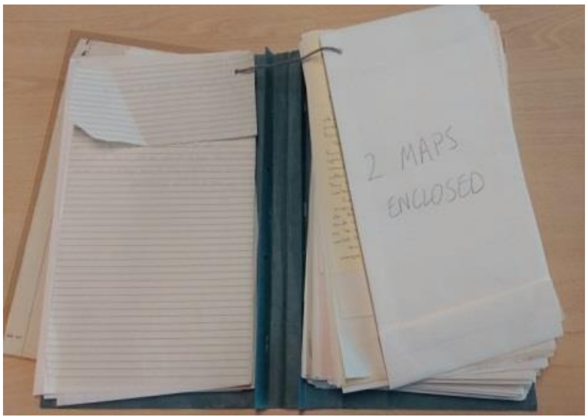
Example of a map rolled onto the outside of an archival tube, secured with linen tape and placed into cotton or linen bag

Maps and plans within the body of a file

Tag small, flat or folded maps and plans into their original position within the file. However, the tag must allow them to be unfolded and viewed by researchers without difficulty or needing to remove the tag. If a small map or plan is fragile or torn, place it in a polyester sleeve.

Endorse larger folded maps and plans with their TNA reference in HB pencil and place it in to an acid-free envelope. Mark the cover of the envelope in HB pencil with a brief note of the contents, e.g. ‘2 maps enclosed’ and then tag the envelope into the file, ensuring it is possible to remove the contents without difficulty.

If it is necessary to use more than one envelope, number the maps and plans on the back. The front of the envelope should reflect the contents, e.g. ‘Contains plans 1-5’, ‘Contains plans 6-8’.



Loose maps correctly prepared within a file

4.5. Photographs

Individual photographs

This section deals with photographs which do not form part of files, reports or volumes, but which are separate, individual entities.

Endorse individual photographs with their TNA reference in HB pencil. Insert the photograph into a polyester sleeves and then place the photograph into an endorsed four-flap folder.

The key points to remember when handing photographs include:

- Only insert one photograph per polyester sleeve
- Handle photographic prints with care, as they are easily damaged by the natural oils in our hands.
- If a file contains a photograph of a distressing nature it is important that you attach a warning sticker to the front of the four-flap folder.

Photographs and negatives within the body of a file

Using a HB pencil endorse photographs with the TNA reference and insert into polyester sleeves. Polyester sleeves are the only suitable material for storing photographs, as it enables viewing of the photograph without having to remove it, limiting the damage to the sensitive surface. Only one photograph should be placed into each polyester sleeve, so that researchers can see the back as well as the front. Tag the polyester sleeve in the place where the photograph originally sat in the file. Do not punch new tag holes in photographs.

Endorse negatives and photographic slides and place them into acid-free envelopes. Interleave individual negatives with silversafe paper. Tag the acid-free envelope into the file where the negatives or slides originally sat.

Do not undertake repair work on photographs or negatives. Instead, note the need for repair on the Transfer Summary for the attention of Collection Care.

If a file contains a photograph of a distressing nature it is important that you attach a warning sticker to the front of the file. Stickers should be printed and prepared by transferring bodies according to the guidance in section 2.1.

Other photographic material

Other types of photographic materials might include:

- Photograph albums

- X-rays
- Glass plates
- Microform such as microfiche or film.

Consult the Transfer Team about these or any other type of image record as these require special attention and preparation advice.

4.6. Newspapers

Whole newspapers

Endorse each page of the newspaper in HB pencil, with the TNA reference. Select an acid-free envelope of an appropriate size – one that will allow the newspaper to be easily removed and replaced without abrading the sides and/or tag, or needing the tag to be removed. Using a HB pencil label the envelope with a brief note of what is enclosed, e.g. '1 newspaper'. Insert the newspaper into the acid-free envelope and tag the envelope in the original place where the newspaper sat in the file, ensuring:

- The contents can be easily removed for examination and then replaced without removing the envelope
- The envelope's flap is not tagged
- The tag only runs through the envelope and not its contents

Newspaper cuttings

It is preferred that newspaper cuttings are placed in polyester sleeves, as this provide robust protection for fragile newspapers, as well as allowing reader to view the cutting without needing to remove or handle it. However, there are a number of factors that would make the use of an acid-free envelope a better choice. Therefore, when preparing newspaper cuttings, ask yourself:

- Will the newspaper cutting need to be folded to fit in a polyester sleeve? If yes, use an acid-free envelope.
- Are the newspapers cuttings distributed throughout the file? If yes, use a polyester sleeve for each cutting
- Do I have a large number of newspaper cuttings from the same location in the file? And if I put all the cuttings in separate polyester sleeves would the file become unwieldly? If yes, use an acid free envelope.

If you decide to use a polyester sleeve for a newspaper cutting, select polyester sleeve of appropriate size for the cutting. Insert the newspaper cutting in the polyester sleeve and tag the polyester sleeve where the cutting originally sat within the record. If possible, pass the tag through both the sleeve and the cutting, ensuring that no text or images are obscured. If this is not possible, ensure the cutting has been endorsed in HB pencil with the TNA reference.

If it is more appropriate to place newspaper cuttings into an acid-free envelope, endorse each cutting in HB pencil with the TNA reference. Select an acid-free envelope of an appropriate size and label the front of the envelope with a brief note what is enclosed, e.g. '21 newspaper cuttings'. Insert the newspaper cuttings in the acid free envelope and tag the envelope in the original place within the file.

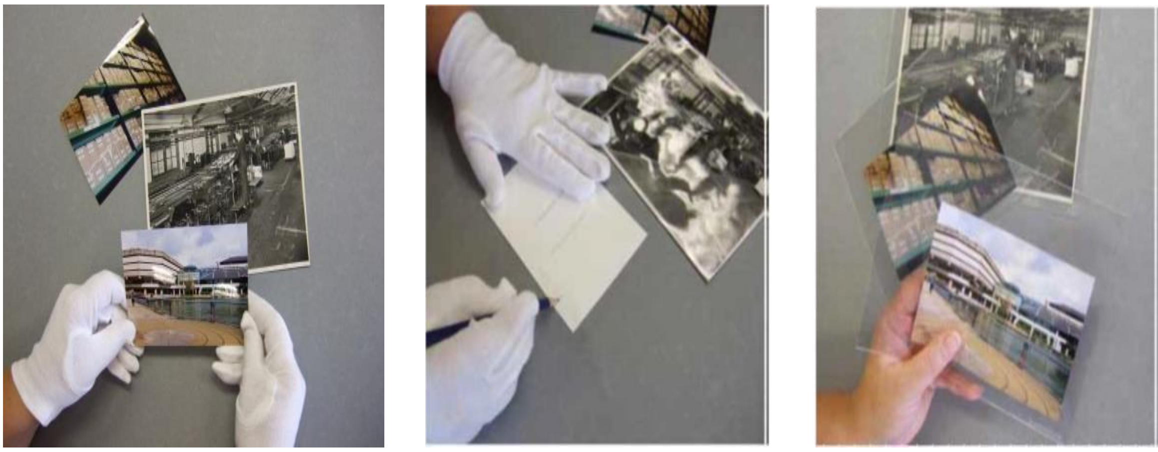
If possible, insert a black and white photocopy of the newspaper or cutting in front of the sleeve or envelope. This minimizes the handling of newspaper materials which are often fragile and likely to deteriorate over time.

4.7. Booklets and pamphlets

Booklets and pamphlets come in many shapes and sizes. Generally these should be placed in acid-free envelopes, to allow the reader to easily remove and open the booklet. However first check if the booklet can be hole-punched without compromising any of the text or images. If this is possible, hole-punch and tag the booklet directly into the file, ensuring it can be fully opened without the need to remove it from the file.

When using acid-free envelopes, you can insert multiple booklets into the same envelope on basis that they are from the same location within the file and it does not become unwieldly. Select an acid-free envelope which is large enough to hold the booklet and label the front of envelope with a brief note of its contents, e.g. '2 booklets'. Using a HB pencil endorse the front of the booklet with the TNA reference. If the booklet is not bound (i.e. no staples) endorse each paper with the TNA reference. Insert the booklet into the acid-free envelope and tag the envelope in the original place within the file, ensuring that the booklet can be easily removed and replaced.

Leave booklets that are already tagged into the file as they are, providing they are secure and can be read without removing the tag.



Correct preparation of photographs

4.8. Thermal paper

Copies produced through thermal processes are often unstable as the text can fade and disappear. There is currently no method of preventing this potential fading as it is due to the chemical makeup of thermal paper. Consequently, specific measures are required for preserving the information found on thermal paper.

Thermal printing paper was most often used to create facsimile (fax) copies. However, not all fax paper is thermal paper and not all thermal paper is fax.

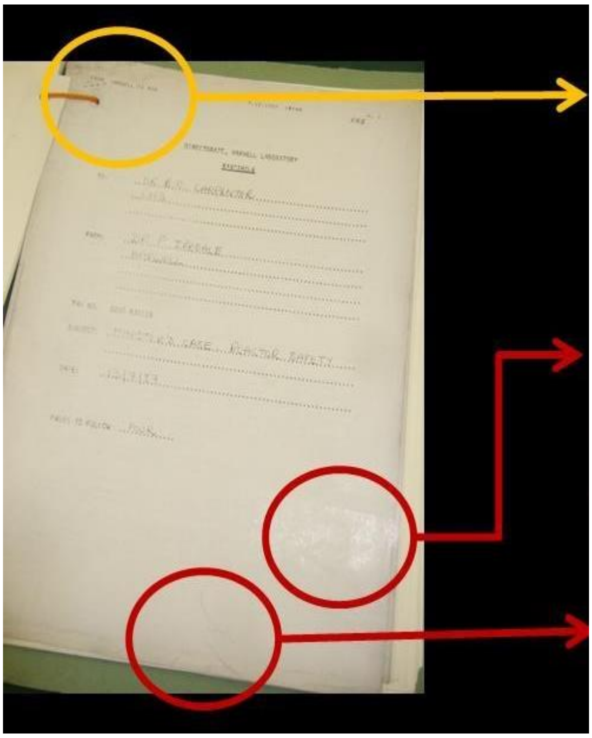
Thermal paper must be photocopied, even if the information is badly faded. This will help preserve the information that does remain and also demonstrate the level of degradation. The photocopy should be tagged in front of the original copy in the file. Do not discard the thermal paper – instead keep it, as it proves the authenticity of the copy.

Identifying thermal paper:

Thermal paper can be identified by its shiny, smooth surface, which often shows grey/silver marks where the paper has been abraded or creased.

Shiny, smooth fax copies with a cactus logo on the back do not need to be photocopied as this indicates an electrostatic process known as Electrofax, which is much more stable and does not fade;

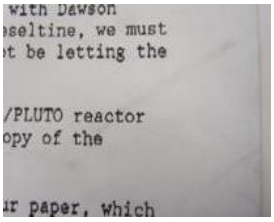
It is sometimes hard to identify thermal paper, so if there is any doubt whether pages are thermal or not, photocopy them as a precautionary measure.



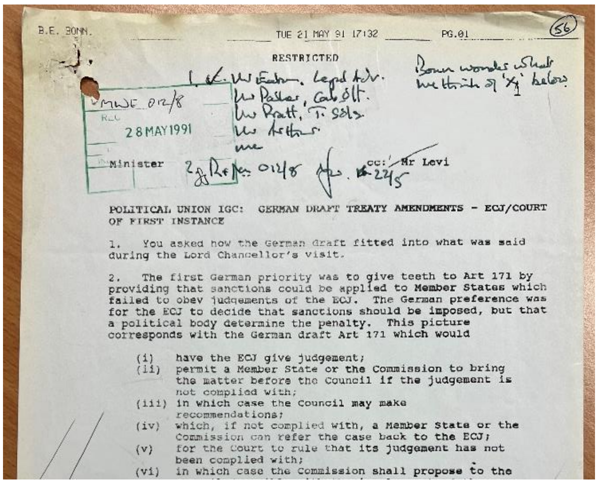
Fax paper indicates this is possibly thermal paper.

The text side is shiny and there are grey/silver scratches on the paper.

The paper should be copied as a precautionary measure.



How to identify thermal paper



B.E. BONN. TUE 21 MAY 91 17:32 PG.01

RESTRICTED

MWE 012/8

REC 28 MAY 1991

Minister

cc: Mr Levi

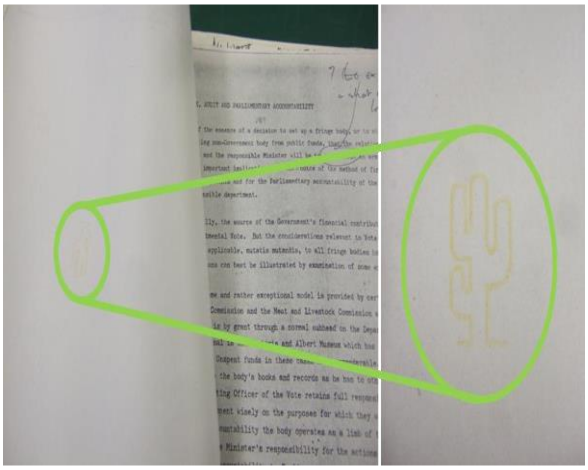
POLITICAL UNION IGC: GERMAN DRAFT TREATY AMENDMENTS - ECJ/COURT OF FIRST INSTANCE

1. You asked how the German draft fitted into what was said during the Lord Chancellor's visit.

2. The first German priority was to give teeth to Art 171 by providing that sanctions could be applied to Member States which failed to obey judgements of the ECJ. The German preference was for the ECJ to decide that sanctions should be imposed, but that a political body determine the penalty. This picture corresponds with the German draft Art 171 which would

(i) have the ECJ give judgement;
(ii) permit a Member State or the Commission to bring the matter before the Council if the judgement is not complied with;
(iii) in which case the Council may make recommendations;
(iv) which, if not complied with, a Member State or the Commission can refer the case back to the ECJ;
(v) for the Court to rule that its judgement has not been complied with;
(vi) in which case the Commission shall propose to the

Example of a thermal paper fax



Example of Electrofax paper with cactus marking

4.9. Original envelopes within files

Some files have original envelopes containing papers. In these cases remove the contents from the envelope and tag it in front of the envelope. Ensure the original envelope is securely tagged in the files. If the contents requires it, use polyester sleeves or acid-free envelopes, as you would with other documents.

4.10. Sticky notes (Post-it® notes)

Sticky notes are designed to temporarily attach notes to documents. The adhesive on the back is not particularly sticky and over time sticky notes can become detached from the page. Occasionally, important information is found on sticky notes and work is therefore needed to ensure this information is not lost. If the sticky note contains information of relevance to the record, it requires preservation. To preserve the sticky note, use HB pencil to endorse the back of the sticky note with the TNA reference. Insert the sticky note into a polyester closure and tag the polyester sleeve into the file in front of the page you removed the sticky note from.

If a sticky note was used as a placeholder or a page marker, or it is blank or contains "unimportant administrative" type information, such as 'copy this' or 'put on file', the sticky note can be securely discarded.

4.11. Other physical formats

Information on preparing other physical formats such as USB sticks and artefacts can be found in Annex 1.

5. What do you do if you find damage or fragile records?

5.1. Torn pages

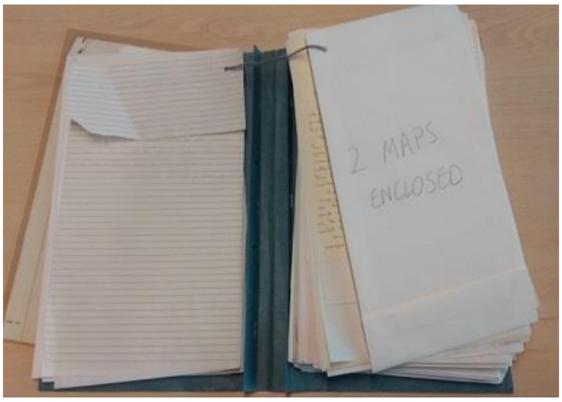
Do not take any action if pages have minor tears.

Endorse badly torn pages, such as those where there is a risk of loss if tearing continues, with their TNA reference in HB pencil and insert them into polyester sleeves in order to prevent further damage. Do not try to repair them with adhesive or 'archival' tape.

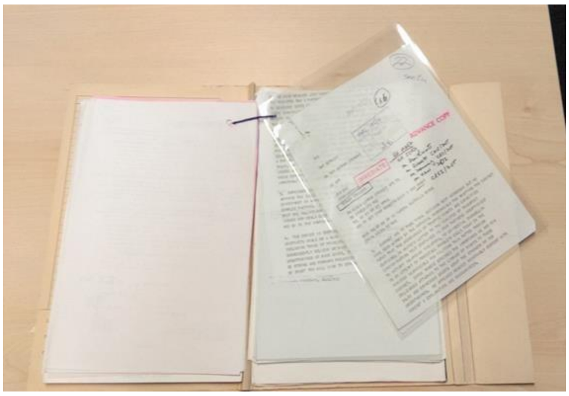
Place pages with badly torn corners and unusable tag holes into polyester sleeves and replace them in the record. Do not attempt to punch new tag holes or repair pages.

5.2. Loose pages

Loose pages can often be tagged in the record, without being placed into polyester sleeves. If the loose page does not have a tag hole, punch a new tag hole and tag the loose page into the file. The hole should be in the top left hand corner 2cm from either edge ensuring that the holes does not obliterate any text or information. Do not use self-adhesive tag hole reinforcers.



Loose maps correctly prepared within a file



Example of a loose, torn page in a polyester sleeve

5.3. Papers stuck with pressure-sensitive tape (adhesive tape or Sellotape®)

Endorse and place pages stuck with degrading pressure-sensitive tape (commonly known as adhesive tape or Sellotape®) into polyester sleeves and note the issue on the Transfer Summary. Do not attempt to remove pressure-sensitive tape.

5.4. Glued items

Where glued items such as newspaper cuttings, photographs, etc. are coming unstuck, put the items and their backing pages into polyester sleeves. Remember to endorse the page with their TNA reference in HB pencil.

Inserting glued items into polyester sleeves may not be possible when the glued item is on the cover, contained within bound volumes or when there is a large quantity of glued material. In such cases, note the issue on the Transfer Summary.

5.5. Damaged or fragile file covers

Place files and reports with badly damaged or fragile covers in new four-flap folders. Never throw the original cover away, as it usually contains valuable information. It is only necessary to tag the file through the back of the four-flap folder.

Write the TNA reference on the front cover of the four-flap folder in chinagraph pencil. You do not need to write the file title, former reference or any other information that appears on the original file cover on the new cover.

5.6. Other damage – mould, asbestos, chemical and hazardous substances, insects, rodents and other environmental damage

Report any evidence of mould, asbestos, chemical and hazardous substances, insects, rodents or any other environmental damage to the Transfer Team as early as possible, as the records may require urgent specialist treatment and this could have serious implications for the transfer process.

6. How should you handle records with access restrictions?

6.1. Reasons for restricting access

As part of the Sensitivity Review, which can be completed in conjunction with Appraisal and Selection, you may have determined that some of your records are sensitive.

There are a number of reasons why records might not be available to the public when they are transferred to The National Archives. This includes:

- records which are closed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- records which are retained by the transferring department under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958
- records which are temporarily retained by the transferring department
- records which are missing at transfer
- piece numbers which are 'Number not used'

Closure under the qualified exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the agreement of the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives. The transfer of material closed under absolute exemptions requires the agreement of The National Archives.

Retention under Section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958 requires the approval of the Secretary of State. Retention applications are first considered by the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives, who advises on whether the applications proceed or not.

Applications to transfer closed records or to retain records may be queried or rejected. Transferring bodies should not carry out closure and retention preparation work such as completing dummy cards or making redactions until the closures or retentions have been finalised and the relevant Schedules have been circulated.

For further information on access to public records, including closure and retention, see the Access to Public Records webpage.

6.2. Dummy cards

When do you use dummy cards?

Dummy cards are inserted into archival boxes in place of whole records (pieces) which have been removed or are absent from boxes because they are:

- closed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- retained by the transferring department under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958
- temporarily retained by the transferring department
- missing at transfer
- piece numbers which are 'Number not used'

Dummy cards also need to be inserted and tagged in place of whole pages which have been removed from pieces because they are closed or retained. Dummy cards are not used for redactions as a redacted version of the page is inserted into the relevant page in the file.

Dummy cards show researchers that something has been removed, and give a general indication of why the record is not present. They also enable the original record to be inserted in the right place when it is no longer sensitive or it has been found.

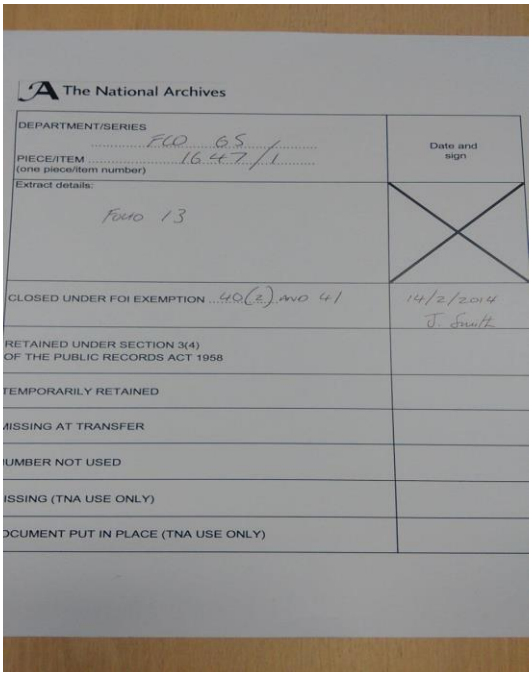
Dummy cards are obtained from The National Archives by completing the Stationery order form as outlined in section 2.1.

How do you complete a dummy card?

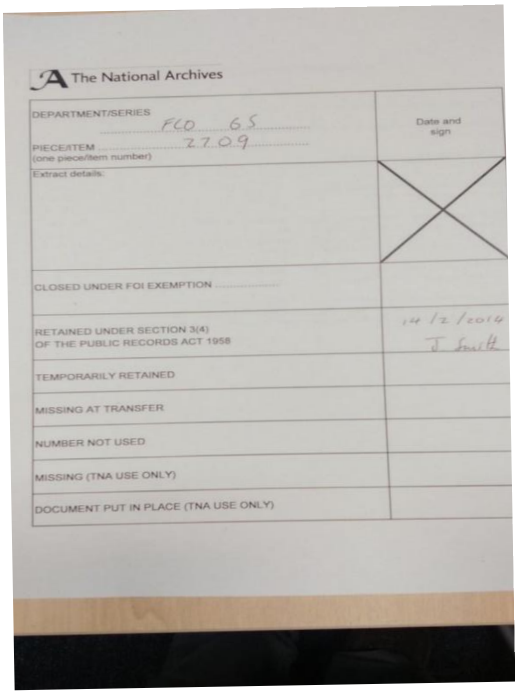
Dummy cards mustbe completed clearly and accurately in pen. Ensure that any pencil markings have been completely rubbed out. It is important there are no mistakes or corrections. If you make a mistake when filling out a dummy card, replace it with a fresh one. Do not write anything sensitive or the information describing the reason for closure or retention on the dummy card. The following information should be included on a dummy card.

Checklist – information to include on a dummy card
☐ The full TNA reference; ☐ The date and the signature of the individual completing the dummy card opposite the appropriate box, indicating if the record is closed, retained under 3(4) temporarily retained, missing at transfer or 'Number not used'; ☐ In the case of extracts, brief text identifying the closed or retained extract (e.g. 'folio 28', 'letter dated 12/11/1984'); ☐ The FOI exemption number(s) (if applicable).

Please refer to the back of the dummy card for further instructions.



Example of a dummy card completed for a closed extract



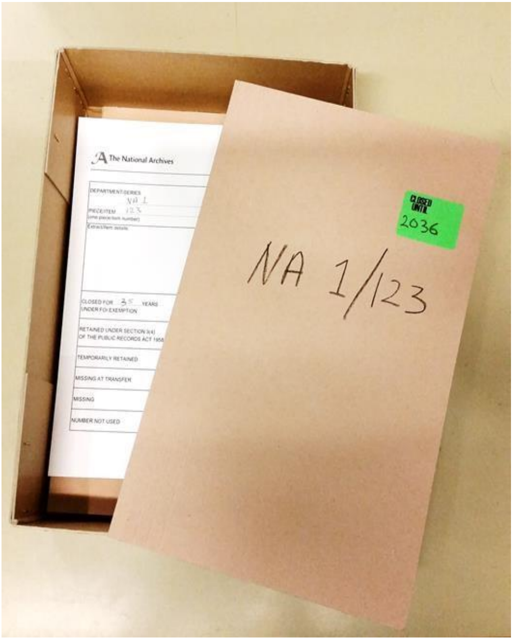
Example of a dummy card completed for a whole piece retention

How do you use a dummy card to replace a whole piece?

When a whole piece is not available to the public, a dummy card must be placed in the appropriate archival box.

Complete the dummy card with the TNA reference and then date and sign the appropriate box. Place the completed dummy card into the box and ensure that adequate space is left in the box, so that the piece can be added at a later date, without the box becoming overfull.

Retained pieces are held by the originating department and are not transferred to The National Archives until the retention is no longer required. Closed pieces are transferred to The National Archives along with the main body of the transfer in separate boxes or bags.



Example of a dummy card used to replace a whole piece

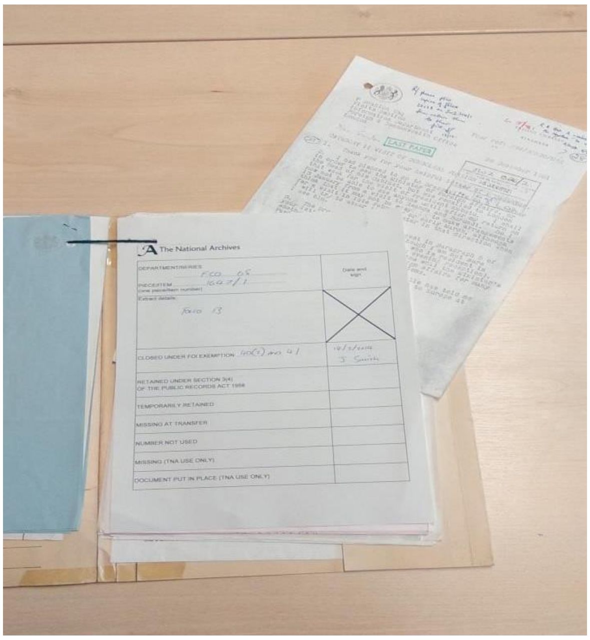
How do you use a dummy card for an extract?

When a document (whether this is a page, multiple pages or a consecutive sequence of pages) is removed from a piece because it is closed or retained, a dummy card should be inserted and tagged in its place.

If various documents are removed from different (non-consecutive) places in a piece, then separate dummy cards must be inserted in each place.

The dummy card should be completed in a similar way to a 'whole piece' dummy card, except that an item number is required. Also, extract details need to be added in the ‘Extract/Item details’ box. The extract details should identify the extract in a relatively simple way e.g. ‘Folio 28’, ‘2 photograph albums’.

If an extract is removed from a volume, a dummy card should be inserted in its place, but not tagged or bound in. The volume should be tied with cotton tape or placed in a four-flap folder.



Example of a dummy card replacing a closed extract

6.3. Redactions

What are redactions?

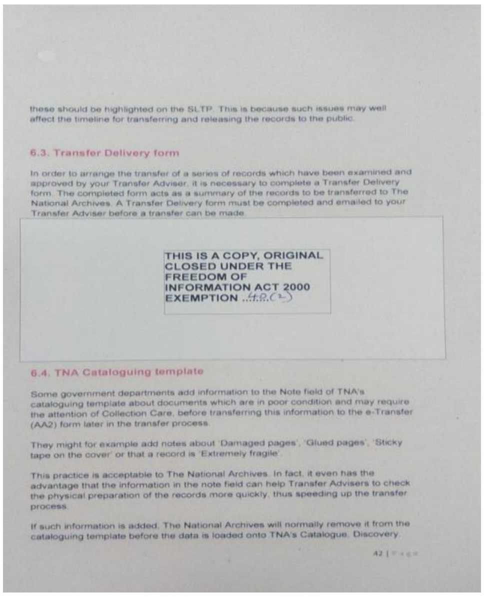
Sometimes pages inside pieces are partially closed or retained (e.g. only a paragraph, a few lines, or a name may be withheld from the public, rather than the whole page). This is called redaction.

How do you redact a page within a file?

Redactions can be applied electronically using specialist software, however to manually redact an original document take the following steps:

Steps for manually redacting a document

- ☐ Remove the original document containing sensitive information from the piece.
- ☐ Insert a temporary placeholder to mark the position of the removed document.
- ☐ Photocopy the original document – this is your first photocopy.
- ☐ Redact the first photocopy, by blanking out the sensitive wording on this photocopy.
- ☐ Re-photocopy the first photocopy you have just blanked out. This is done to safeguard against the possibility of the sensitive information remaining visible, as sometimes blanked-out words can still be read if held against the light – this is your second photocopy.
- ☐ Stamp the redacted replacement (second photocopy) with an appropriate stamp, depending on whether information is closed under an FOI exemption or retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958.
- ☐ Place the redacted copy back in the parent piece at the position marked by the temporary placeholder and remove the placeholder from the piece.
- ☐ Securely shred the first photocopy
- ☐ Place the original document in a separate four-flap folder to carefully safeguard the original documents. They will either remain with the transferring department if retained or will be sent to The National Archives as closed items.



these should be highlighted on the SLTP. This is because such issues may well affect the timeline for transferring and releasing the records to the public.

6.3. Transfer Delivery form

In order to arrange the transfer of a series of records which have been examined and approved by your Transfer Adviser, it is necessary to complete a Transfer Delivery form. The completed form acts as a summary of the records to be transferred to The National Archives. A Transfer Delivery form must be completed and emailed to your Transfer Adviser before a transfer can be made.

THIS IS A COPY, ORIGINAL CLOSED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 EXEMPTION ..40.(2)

6.4. TNA Cataloguing template

Some government departments add information to the Note field of TNA's cataloguing template about documents which are in poor condition and may require the attention of Collection Care, before transferring this information to the e-Transfer (AA2) form later in the transfer process.

They might for example add notes about 'Damaged pages', 'Glued pages', 'Sticky tape on the cover' or that a record is 'Extremely fragile'.

This practice is acceptable to The National Archives. In fact, it even has the advantage that the information in the note field can help Transfer Advisers to check the physical preparation of the records more quickly, thus speeding up the transfer process.

If such information is added, The National Archives will normally remove it from the cataloguing template before the data is loaded onto TNA's Catalogue, Discovery

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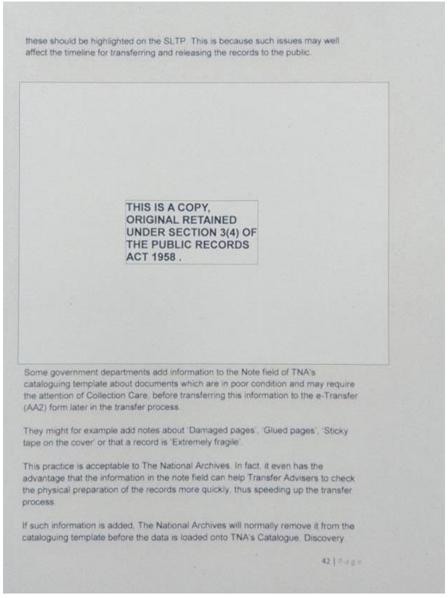
Example of a document with closed information redacted and stamped



these should be highlighted on the SLTP. This is because such issues may well affect the timeline for transferring and releasing the records to the public.

THIS IS A COPY, ORIGINAL RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958 .

Some government departments add information to the Note field of TNA's cataloguing template about documents which are in poor condition and may require the attention of Collection Care, before transferring this information to the e-Transfer (AA2) form later in the transfer process.

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Example of a document retained

For further information on redactions, see:
nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/redaction_toolkit.pdf

How do you redact a page within a bound volume?

Steps for redacting pages within bound volumes:
☐ Carefully remove the original page from the bound volume. Only remove one page at a time. Ideally, use a scalpel to cut the page in a straight line as close to the text as sensibly possible. There needs to be a minimum of 12mm from the centre of the volume to the cut, if this is not possible because the text does not allow for 12mm then speak to the Transfer Team. When using a scalpel ensure that you protect the pages under the one you are removing; ☐ Insert a temporary placeholder to mark the position of the removed document;

Steps for redacting pages within bound volumes:
☐ Photocopy the original document – this is your first photocopy; ☐ Redact the first photocopy, by blanking out the sensitive wording on this photocopy; ☐ Re-photocopy the first photocopy you have just blanked out. This is done to safeguard against the possibility of the sensitive information remaining visible, as sometimes blanked-out words can still be read if held against the light – this is your second photocopy; ☐ Stamp the redacted replacement (second photocopy) with an appropriate stamp, depending on whether information is closed under an FOI exemption or retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958; ☐ If the volume does not contain page/folio numbers, number all the pages in the volume in the top right hand corner in HB pencil. This is to safeguard the original position, in case pages fall out, become mixed up or lost; ☐ Tie the volume with cotton tape and place it in an individual box; if this is not possible, it should be placed in a four-flap folder; ☐ Securely shred the first photocopy; ☐ Endorse the original document in a separate four-flap folder to carefully safeguard the original documents. They will either remain with the transferring department if retained or will be sent to The National Archives as closed items.

What stamps do you need for redacted pages?

All redacted pages must be stamped to indicate that the page is a copy (of the original, unredacted page) and that it has been either closed under a particular exemption of the Freedom of Information Act or retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958.

For redacted pages which are to be closed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the stamp must contain the following information:

THIS IS A COPY. ORIGINAL CLOSED UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 EXEMPTION …. [exemption number/numbers to be inserted]

For redacted pages which are to be retained under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958 the stamp must contain the following information:

THIS IS A COPY. **ORIGINAL RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4)** **OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958**

If a transferring body currently uses different stamps, they must check with the Transfer team to assess whether these are acceptable to use.

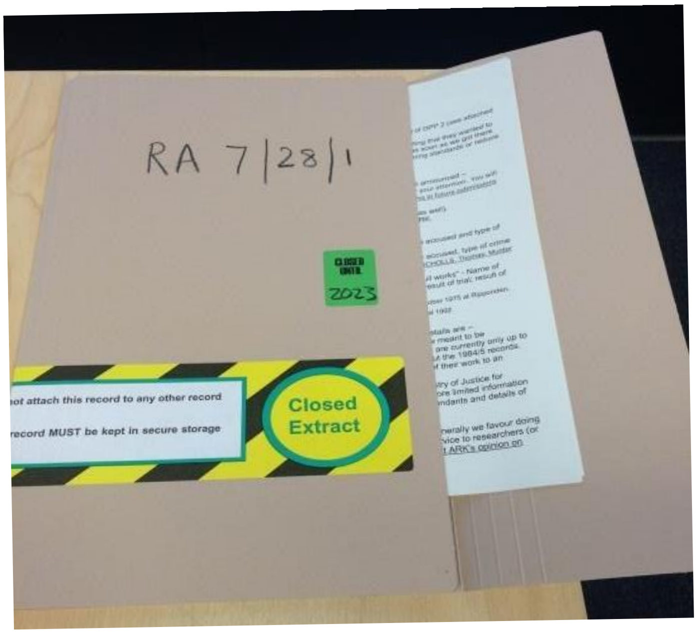
6.4. Preparing closed records for transfer

How do you label whole piece closures and closed extracts?

Closed records should be prepared to the same standard as any other records being transferred to The National Archives. A CLOSED UNTIL label needs be applied to their front cover. Ensure the label does not obscure any text and using a chinagraph pencil, write the year when the piece will become open on the label. If a whole piece closure has been split into items due to its thickness, all the items should have CLOSED UNTIL labels stuck on them.

Closed extracts and redactions should be placed into separate four-flap folders. Each of these folders is an 'item', and should have a TNA reference with an item number written on it. The item number should match the information on the FOI Schedule. If a piece contains several closed items (for example when extracts are closed for different periods) there will need to be more than one closed item folder. Again the item references should match the FOI Schedule.

The closed item folders should also have CLOSED UNTIL labels and black and yellow warning tape stuck on them. The black and yellow warning tape should never be applied to whole pieces.



Example of a correctly prepared closed item

How to apply closure labels to boxed records

Normally, closed pieces and items should be transferred to The National Archives in separate boxes or bags from open records. This is a security measure and helps to avoid open and closed records becoming mixed up in transit. Once at The National Archives, the closed records are removed and stored in a separate, more secure location.

Therefore, most boxes do not require closure labels. This includes:

- boxes containing only open pieces;
- boxes containing a mixture of open pieces and dummy cards;
- boxes and bags for transferring closed pieces and items separately from open pieces.

However, occasionally closed pieces may be transferred in the same boxes as open records (rather than in separate boxes or bags). This usually occurs when there are a majority of closed pieces and only a few open or when the whole transfer consists of closed pieces. In both cases, closure labels are required. This type of transfer must be agreed in advance with The National Archives, therefore, please consult the Transfer Team as soon as possible. In the exceptional cases when closed pieces are transferred in the same boxes as open records, green closure labels are required for the boxes as a security measure.

If a box contains only closed pieces and the closed pieces all have the same opening date, a CLOSED UNTIL label needs to be attached to the box and filled in with the opening year in chinagraph pencil.

If a box contains a mixture of closed pieces and open pieces, or closed pieces with different opening dates, a CLOSED UNTIL VARIOUS DATES UP TO label needs to be attached to the box and filled in with the latest opening year in chinagraph pencil.

If closed pieces are transferred in the same boxes as open records, dummy cards are not required for the closed pieces because these have not been removed.

How do you calculate the opening date dates for CLOSED UNTIL labels?

The closure of pieces and items must be agreed before they are valid and can be transferred to The National Archives. The closure period is applied from the end year of the file.

The year which should be written on the CLOSED UNTIL label is the year that the file will become open.

For example if a file is dated 1983-1987 and it is closed for 50 years, it will remain closed until the end of 2037 and will open in 2038. Therefore 2038 should be written on the CLOSED UNTIL label.

The opening year can be calculated using the formula: End year + Closure period +1 = Year of opening. For example: 1987 + 50 + 1 = 2038.

6.5. What do you do with NATO papers and Cabinet Office papers?

See section 3.1 for further information on what to do with NATO papers and Cabinet Office papers.

6.6. How do I prepare previously retained and previously missing pieces?

Any previously retained or previously missing pieces or items which are being transferred to The National Archives should be prepared in the same way as any other record. For information about the process for transferring previously retained or previously missing pieces or items to The National Archives, see: https://cdn.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/sending-previously-retained-records.pdf.

7. Annex 1: Preparing other physical materials for transfer

7.1. Video and audio

Consult the Transfer Team about analogue sound recordings, film and video material as these are not archived by The National Archives.

7.2. Floppy disks, CDs and microfiche in files

If you identify removable storage media (such as USB sticks, CDs, floppy disks, magnetic tape, microfiche and microfilm) that contains selected public records, please contact the Digital Transfer team at The National Archives. The records will need to transfer within the existing digital transfer workflows.

7.3. Seals and other objects

Large seals and other 3D objects require expert preparation advice on a case-by-case basis, so for any of these items please consult the Transfer Team.

Seals within the body of a file

The best protection for seals within the body of a file is the paper surrounding it, which is more forgiving than a polyester sleeve. Therefore, normally seals within the body of a file should be left as they are and not put into polyester sleeves.

Ask the Transfer Team in cases of large embossed seals, pendant seals or seals outside files.

8. Annex 2: Further guidance and training

The National Archives provides further guidance and training on records management practices through supporting the development of the Section 46 Code of Practice on the Management of Records, the Information Management Assessment toolkit and the GKIM Skills Framework.

8.1. The Section 46 Code of Practice on the Management of Records

Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (c. 36) supports the development and publication of a Code of Practice for the management of records issued, which was last revised by The National Archives in 2021. The latest version can be accessed here: FOI Act Section 46 Code of Practice.

The Code of Practice provides a framework to guide authorities throughout the lifecycle of the records they hold. It sets out the principles of robust information management so that authorities understand their responsibilities and are enabled to discharge them.

Conformity with the records management Code of Practice will be monitored via self-assessment by public authorities using tools provided by The National Archives. Our Section 46 Self-assessment tool is being developed as part of our Information Management Assessment toolkit and is available through our pilot programme. If you would like to join the programme, please contact the Government Help Point at GovernmentHelpPoint@nationalarchives.gov.uk.

The guidance in this document relates in particular to the requirements listed below from the Code and covered by the Self-assessment tool.

Paragraph number	Question
2.3	**Keeping, finding and using information**
2.3.6	Authorities should take action to conserve physical records if there are signs of damage according to best practice. Digital information should be subject to the appropriate active digital continuity.
2.3.7	Authorities should make reasonable efforts to recover or preserve physical records and digital information that is found to be damaged or unusable, including their technical and contextual information, keeping a record of any action taken.
2.3.8	Authorities should make reasonable efforts to recover contextual information for 'orphaned information' which they judge to have value, keeping a record of any action taken.
2.6	**Disposition**
2.6.1	Authorities must decide how to dispose of information that no longer has value. Authorities can dispose of information by destroying it, transferring it to another body or by transferring it to an archive.
2.6.2	Authorities must take disposition decisions in line with their policy and the security classification of the information. Disposition decisions must be recorded. Those taking disposition decisions must be properly authorised to do so.
2.8	**Responsibilities where information is shared**
2.8.1	Where the authority works jointly with another authority, body or contractor, a lead or commissioning authority should be agreed which will remain responsible for ensuring that information is managed in accordance with the Code throughout its life.

Paragraph number	Question
2.8.2	The authority and its partner authorities, bodies or contractors should set out their responsibilities in an information sharing agreement.This includes where information in separate authorities' systems is integrated by technical means. The agreement should specify: • the obligation to record decisions, particularly in relation to the transfer or destruction of information; • obligations under copyright, data protection legislation and FOIA; • record management controls and any special requirements for the security and handling of personal information; • the ownership of any copyright.
2.8.3	Authorities should ensure that information sharing arrangements enable them to comply with the requirements of the PRA or the PRA(NI) where at least one authority is subject to the legislation.

8.2. Developing related skills through the Government Knowledge and Information Management (GKIM) Skills Framework

The Government Knowledge and Information Management (GKIM) Skills Framework supports information managers to develop new skills to assist them in identifying and resolving information management issues and ensuring their department is fulfilling its statutory obligations.

More information about the GKIM Skills Framework can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/civil-service-government-knowledge-information-management-profession/about#the-gkim-profession-skills-framework

The information in this guidance relates most closely to:

Skill code	Skill description
OR07	Applying relevant legislation
OR11	Strategy and planning
OR16	Lifecycle
OR21	Categorisation and taxonomy
CE02	Collaboration across government and the sector
IA03	Effective information sharing practices
GC01	Complying with FOI retention rules in relation to archiving records
GC02	Complying with the DPA in relation to archiving records
RM01	Records Management responsibilities
RM02	Retention and disposition
RM04	Physical archives
RM10	Permanent preservation
RM12	Records lifecycle

Monitoring GKIM Skills development

The dynamic online version of the GKIM Skills Framework tool (Comaea) is provided by the Department for Education and will allow you to:

- map your progress in developing skills in real time
- keep a record of your learning and development in the profession
- discuss your development with your manager
- understand what you need to do to reach the next attainment level in a particular skill

Comaea allows managers to produce reports detailing the skill gaps in the six job families across their organisation. You can sign up for the dynamic version of the tool by emailing this address.

9. Glossary

Chinagraph pencil: A waxy pencil originally used to write on china, glass or other hard surfaces. Chinagraph pencil is ideal for writing references on file covers since it is fairly permanent and does not easily smudge.

Collection Care Department: A department at The National Archives consisting of trained conservators and specialists in the physical preservation and repair of records. Through liaison with the Transfer Team, Collection Care can offer expert advice and help with difficult and unusual conservation problems.

Endorsed: Usually used to mean written on the back (referring to the writing of the The National Archives reference in HB pencil on the back of loose papers). However, endorsed can sometimes be used to just mean written on.

Extract: A section of file which is extracted from an open record because it is retained or closed and therefore, not available to the public. For example, this can be a whole page, a redacted page, a number of consecutive pages or a photograph.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Schedule: A document detailing records whose closure under the Freedom of Information Act has been agreed by the relevant authority.

Glassine paper: Glossy, transparent, moisture-proof paper used to traditionally store photographs and photographic negatives. Glassine paper should be replaced by polyester sleeves.

Item: Part of a piece created during the transfer process. This can either be the result of a file which has been split because of its size or the creation of closed extracts.

Parent piece: The piece which an item, photograph or loose doucment belongs to (e.g. 'Endorse the loose document with the corresponding reference of its parent piece'; 'The closed extract has been opened and can be reunited with its parent piece').

Piece: A separate, individual record. This may take a number of forms such as a file, a volume or a rolled map.

Polyester sleeve: Chemically stable transparent plastic pocket used for the storage of photographs, torn pages, etc.

Redaction: A part of a document within a piece which is retained or closed and not available to the public (e.g. a few words or a paragraph on a page).

Retention Instrument (RI): A document signed by the Secretary of State confirming their approval to retain the records detailed on the relevant

Retention Schedule under the Public Records Act. Retentions approved before December 2015 were via an Instrument signed by the Lord Chancellor (known as LCIs).

Retention Schedule: A document detailing records whose retention under the Public Records Act has been approved by the Secretary of State.

Series: A distinct, usually sequential, collection of records, normally created by a branch of a government department to deal with a particular area of work (e.g. a series of reports, a registered file series). The series is created on The National Archives catalogue, Discovery.

Silversafe: Material that has been developed for photographic conservation. Silversafe is ideal for interleaving paper in the storage of photographic material such as negatives.

The National Archives reference (TNA reference): The alphanumerical reference code applied to all pieces and items transferred to The National Archives. It consists of a department lettercode, a series number, a piece number and (if applicable) an item number, written in a prescribed way (e.g. CAB 130/45/1).

Transfer Team: The National Archives' staff who are responsible for advising transferring bodies on matters relating to the transfer of records, including cataloguing and physical preparation.

Uplift: The physical logistical process of delivering records from a transferring body to The National Archives.