Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 5
About this Guidance ........................................................................................................................................ 5
The responsibilities of government departments .......................................................................................... 5
The National Archives’ responsibilities ....................................................................................................... 6
Why the physical preparation of records is important .................................................................................. 6
To prolong the life of the records .................................................................................................................. 6
To enable the records to be located and tracked ......................................................................................... 7
To enable researchers to use the records without causing damage ............................................................... 7
To safeguard records not yet available to the public .................................................................................... 7
Handling records with care .......................................................................................................................... 8
Items which need to be removed from records ............................................................................................ 8
Metal ............................................................................................................................................................ 8
Checklist of most common metal objects that should be removed from files: ............................................. 9
Removing staples .......................................................................................................................................... 9
Rubber and plastic ........................................................................................................................................ 9
Checklist of most common rubber and plastic items that should be removed from files: ................................ 9
Sticky notes (Post-it® notes) ....................................................................................................................... 10
Glassine paper ............................................................................................................................................. 11
Polyester enclosures and acid-free envelopes ............................................................................................. 11
Checklist for using polyester enclosures: ..................................................................................................... 12
Checklist for using acid-free envelopes: ........................................................................................................ 12
Damaged and loose pages ........................................................................................................................... 12
Papers stuck with adhesive tape (Sellotape®) ............................................................................................... 13
Glued items .................................................................................................................................................. 14
Newspapers and newspaper cuttings .......................................................................................................... 14
Booklets ..................................................................................................................................................... 14
Maps and plans within the body of a file ......................................................................................................... 14
Photographs and negatives within the body of a file ..................................................................................... 15
Other preparation requirements .................................................................................................................. 16
Writing The National Archives' reference (the TNA reference) on the front cover .... 16
Tips for writing references ............................................................................................................................ 16
Tagging ........................................................................................................................................................ 16
Checklist for tagging: .................................................................................................................................. 17
Thermal paper ............................................................................................................................................. 18
Tips for dealing with thermal paper: ................................................................. 18
Original envelopes within files ........................................................................ 20
Badly damaged and fragile file covers ............................................................... 20
Stickers and labels on file covers ..................................................................... 20
Splitting thick files ......................................................................................... 21
  Checklist for thick and split files: ................................................................... 21
Tying up files ..................................................................................................... 22
Seals within the body of a file .......................................................................... 22
Floppy disks, CDs, microfiche in files ............................................................... 23
Microform outside of files ................................................................................ 23
Unusual collections of papers .......................................................................... 23
  Loose bundles of papers ................................................................................. 23
  Ring-binders .................................................................................................... 23
  Volumes ........................................................................................................... 23
Maps and plans .................................................................................................. 24
  Treatment of individual maps and plans .......................................................... 24
  Folded maps and plans .................................................................................... 24
  Flat maps and plans ........................................................................................ 25
  Rolled maps and plans ..................................................................................... 25
Photographs and similar material ..................................................................... 25
  Individual photographs .................................................................................... 25
  Other photographic material .......................................................................... 25
Video and audio .................................................................................................. 26
Objects, artefacts and seals ............................................................................... 26
Boxing and Box Labelling ............................................................................... 26
  Packing boxes .................................................................................................. 26
    Box size .......................................................................................................... 26
    Fullness when packing ................................................................................ 26
    Packing bound volumes .............................................................................. 27
    Packing uneven records ............................................................................. 27
    Tying boxes ................................................................................................... 27
    Boxes containing dummy cards .................................................................. 27
  Labelling boxes ................................................................................................ 27
    TNA reference labels for boxes .................................................................. 27
    Closure labels for boxes ............................................................................. 28
Boxes for records being stored off-site ................................................................. 29
Box specification ................................................................................................. 29
  Construction ........................................................................................................ 29
  Context of use ...................................................................................................... 30
  Grades of box board .......................................................................................... 30
  Types of box board ............................................................................................ 31
Access Issues ........................................................................................................ 31
Background to access issues relating to physical preparation ............................. 31
Dummy cards ......................................................................................................... 32
  Reasons to use dummy cards ............................................................................. 32
  Filling in dummy cards ....................................................................................... 32
  Use of dummy cards to replace whole pieces ................................................... 34
  Use of dummy cards to replace whole parts of records (extracts) ..................... 35
Redactions .............................................................................................................. 36
  What are redactions? .......................................................................................... 36
  Making redactions .............................................................................................. 36
  Making redactions within bound volumes ......................................................... 38
Stamps used on redacted pages ............................................................................ 39
Preparation of closed records for transfer .......................................................... 39
  Piece and item closure labels and closed item warning tape .......................... 39
  Calculating the relevant dates for CLOSED UNTIL labels ............................ 40
  Boxes for transferring closed records ............................................................... 40
NATO papers and Cabinet Office papers ............................................................ 41
Previously retained and previously missing pieces .......................................... 41
Documentation ..................................................................................................... 41
  The e-Transfer form (AA2) ................................................................................. 41
  Series Level Time Plan (SLTP) .......................................................................... 42
  Transfer Delivery form ....................................................................................... 42
  The National Archives’ cataloguing template ................................................... 43
Suppliers of materials ............................................................................................ 43
  Suppliers of boxes and archival materials ......................................................... 43
Glossary .................................................................................................................. 45
Introduction

About this Guidance

This Guidance is for records management staff from all government departments and agencies transferring records to The National Archives.

This Guidance will not cover every situation that may occur while preparing records. Special guidance may be required for unusual or specialist issues. Consult your Transfer Adviser if you are unsure about any matter relating to preparation.

The National Archives also offers a File preparation e-learning course online.

There is separate guidance relating to the preparation and transfer of digital records and for records being transferred to places of deposit other than The National Archives. For more information on these processes contact your Information Management Consultant for further information.

This Guidance may change over time, to ensure you are using the most up-to-date guidance – visit The National Archives' website and check with your Transfer Adviser.

The responsibilities of government departments

Departmental Records Officers (DROs) and records management staff are responsible for ensuring that records are prepared to The National Archives' standards prior to transfer.

Departmental staff should:

- handle records with care during the preparation process, and all preparation and documentation work should be done clearly and accurately

- consult with their Transfer Adviser as early as possible if they are concerned about any aspect of the transfer process or they think that some records may need specialist conservation or repair work

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

- have approval for any closure or retention of records, and must complete all necessary documentation fully and accurately, before the transfer of records can take place
The National Archives’ responsibilities

- Transfer Advisers are responsible for ensuring that all necessary physical preparation work has been carried out by government departments before a transfer is made to The National Archives.

- The Transfer Team is responsible for providing training in the preparation of records to staff in other government departments. This may be in the form of training courses, individual coaching or bespoke guidance. Transfer Advisers also have access to colleagues in the Collection Care Department who are trained conservators and specialists in record preservation. They can advise Transfer Advisers on any unusual or difficult conservation problems.

- Collection Care is also responsible for dealing with specialist conservation issues which cannot be reasonably undertaken by government departments. Such issues should be noted on the e-Transfer (AA2) form so that they are highlighted for Collection Care to examine after the transfer of the records.

The National Archives can supply the following material to government departments:

- box reference labels (departmental lettercode, series number and piece and item numbers)
- closure labels (‘Closed until’ and ‘Closed until various dates up to’)
- dummy cards for whole pieces and extracts
- yellow and black warning tape for closed extracts
- warning stickers for distressing photographs

Contact your Transfer Adviser if you require any of these items.

Why the physical preparation of records is important

To prolong the life of the records

Records transferred to The National Archives have been identified as being of high value and worthy of permanent preservation. The primary aim of careful physical preparation is to ensure that the records remain intact and usable for as long as possible.

Simple preparation measures that can help prolong the life of the records include:
- the securing of loose material so nothing is lost (e.g. by tagging)
- the protection of the record (e.g. by correctly sized covers and boxes)
- the removal of certain potentially harmful materials from the record (e.g. metals and plastics)
- the isolation of certain vulnerable materials (e.g. photographs).

**To enable the records to be located and tracked**
In order to ensure that records do not get lost, there must be a means of easily identifying them so that they can be located and their movements tracked. This is why records transferred to The National Archives are given unique alphanumeric references (TNA references), which are applied to their covers and the boxes containing them.

**To enable researchers to use the records without causing damage**
Records transferred by government departments are intended to be used by the general public. On average the public view more than half a million records each year at The National Archives. Therefore, it is important to prepare records so that the public will find them easy to handle and read, and which minimizes the risk of any accidental damage. For example, records should be split if they are very thick and unwieldy; tags should be long enough to enable files to be opened easily at any point; and all pages and enclosures should be prepared so that the public can view them without causing damage.

**To safeguard records not yet available to the public**
Some information found in records is too sensitive to be seen by the public. Such material is retained by government departments or closed to the public when it is transferred to The National Archives. Various measures are employed in order to ensure that such material is safeguarded from access by the public, while allowing for it to be reunited with the open records when the sensitivity no longer exists. These measures include the use of dummy cards, redaction techniques, warning tape and closure labels.

All materials used for the preparation of records (boxes, folders, labels etc.) must be approved by The National Archives. Consult with your Transfer Adviser before using or ordering any materials for the first time to ensure they meet The National Archives’ standards. A list of potential suppliers of approved materials can be found at the end of this Guidance. The photograph below shows some examples of approved materials.
Handling records with care

Records should be handled with care during the physical preparation process to avoid damage. Keep documents in a clean, controlled environment and ensure that records are kept away from any substances and materials which might harm them.

Keep your hands clean and dry when handling records. This is important because skin naturally secretes oils that attract dust and other particles, and this dirt and oil can stain documents.

There is no need to wear gloves with most types of records. However, photographic prints, negatives and glass plates are more easily damaged by these oils in our skin. Therefore when handling these types of materials, wear cotton or nitrile gloves (you could also wear powder-free latex or vinyl gloves) and hold the materials at the edges in order to reduce fingerprint marks and other surface damage.

Support heavy awkward documents at all times to avoid damage such as rips, tears, folds and creases. This is particularly important when protecting and maintaining the spines of books and volumes. Use reading aids such as book wedges and weights.

Items which need to be removed from records

Metal

Ideally, remove all metal objects (except those of historical value) from records prior to their transfer to The National Archives. This is because metal corrodes and can damage records over time.
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

Once records are transferred to The National Archives they are kept in environmentally controlled conditions; this considerably reduces the risk of corrosion. Therefore, The National Archives does not now require that metal staples are removed unless they prevent papers from being turned and opened easily. However, if time and resources allow, removing metal staples helps with the long term preservation of the document.

Checklist of most common metal objects that should be removed from files:

- paperclips and 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 plastic-ended tags

Removing staples

Use an artist’s palette knife when removing staples, 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

Remove all plastic and rubber objects from files as these materials can deteriorate rapidly, causing damage to paper and other materials that come in contact with them.

Checklist of most common rubber and plastic items that should be removed from files:

- comb bindings
- plastic wallets
- plastic covers
- rubber bands
Polyester enclosures and nylon-ended treasury tags are the only plastic material that should normally be present in a file. This is because both polyester and nylon are more stable than other plastics and degrade at a much slower rate.

Consult your Transfer Adviser if a plastic cover or wallet contains information not written elsewhere as it may be advisable to place it in an acid-free envelope.

Examples of plastic covers and bindings that should be removed

**Sticky notes (Post-it® notes)**

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

Keep sticky notes containing information of value – remove these from the document, place them in polyester enclosures and replace them in their original position in the file.
Glassine paper

Photographs in glassine paper need to be placed in polyester enclosures and the glassine paper should be discarded. Glassine paper was traditionally used to store photographs and negatives; however, it becomes brittle and discours over time which can cause damage to any photographic material it holds. Below is an example of a traditional glassine enclosure – the type which needs to be replaced.

Polyester enclosures and acid-free envelopes

Place loose, fragile or unstable objects, such as badly damaged pages, photographs, loose booklets, newspapers or large maps into polyester enclosures or acid-free envelopes.

Documents placed in polyester enclosures should be fully visible on both sides so that there is no need to remove the document to view it completely. This is because frequently removing a document from a polyester enclosure can cause damage. Examples of documents suitable for polyester enclosures are: a single torn page, a single photograph, a newspaper cutting or a sticky note (Post-it® note). Consult your Transfer Adviser if you are unsure about whether an item is suitable for a polyester enclosure.
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

Checklist for using polyester enclosures:

✓ place only one page or photograph in each polyester enclosure. This ensures the item is visible on both sides, and researchers will not need to remove it to view it completely
✓ use a polyester enclosure of an appropriate size – one that is neither too small nor too large for its contents
✓ replace the document in the polyester enclosure in its original position in the file it belongs to (its ‘parent piece’)
✓ the file’s tag should normally run through both the polyester enclosure and the document inside it, securing the document in place, unless tagging the document would obscure text. Photographs should not be tagged under any circumstances, endorse (reference on the back) any document not secured by a tag with the TNA reference of the parent piece, in case it comes loose. Write the endorsement lightly but legibly in HB pencil
✓ do not write on the polyester enclosure

Place larger, bulkier documents which need to be removed from the file in order to examine them (such as booklets, folded maps, newspapers, etc.) into acid-free envelopes. Consult your Transfer Adviser if you are unsure whether an item should be placed into an acid-free envelope.

Checklist for using acid-free envelopes:

✓ endorse the document lightly and legibly in HB pencil with the TNA reference of its parent piece
✓ place the document in an acid-free envelope of an appropriate size
✓ mark the envelope in HB pencil on its front with a brief note of the contents (e.g. ‘1 newspaper enclosed’, ‘2 maps enclosed’)
✓ tag the acid-free envelope in the original place of the document within the file, in such a way that the contents can be easily removed for examination and then replaced. The size of the envelope, the way it is tagged, and the envelope’s flap should not make the contents difficult to extract
✓ run the tag only through the envelope and not its contents

Damaged and loose pages

Endorse badly torn pages with their reference and insert them into polyester enclosures in order to prevent further damage. Do not try to repair them with adhesive or ‘archival’ tape. You do not need to take any action if pages have minor tears.

Loose pages can often be tagged in place in their file, without being put into polyester enclosures. Ensure the new tag hole does not damage any text but secures the pages. The tag holes should be about 2cm from the edge of the page, so that the page will not tear loose easily. Do not use self-adhesive tag hole reinforcers.
Put pages with badly torn corners and unusable tag holes into polyester enclosures and replace them in the file. Do not attempt to punch new tag holes or repair pages.

Example of a loose, torn page in a polyester enclosure

An acid-free envelope tagged correctly, with easily removable contents

**Papers stuck with adhesive tape (Sellotape®)**

Endorse and place pages with degrading adhesive tape stuck to them in polyester enclosures and note the issue on the e-Transfer (AA2) form so that it can be examined by Collection Care.

Adhesive tape (commonly known as Sellotape®) can quickly degrade, with the plastic part of the tape becoming discoloured and separating from the adhesive, leaving the sticky adhesive on the document. This in turn can cause damage to other documents within a file. Leave the removal of adhesive tape to Collection Care.
Glued items

Glue can be unstable and often does not hold in the long term. Therefore, where glued items such as newspaper cuttings, photographs, etc. are coming unstuck, put the items and their backing pages into polyester enclosures.

This may not be possible when the glued objects are on the cover, where they are in bound volumes, or where there is a large quantity of glued material. In such cases the issue should be noted on the e-Transfer (AA2) form for the attention of Collection Care.

Newspapers and newspaper cuttings

Endorse newspapers and newspaper cuttings in HB pencil with the TNA reference of the parent piece they belong to, and place into polyester enclosures or acid-free envelopes. Mark the acid-free envelope in HB pencil with a brief note of its contents (e.g. ‘4 newspaper cuttings enclosed’).

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

Booklets

Endorse loose, untagged booklets in HB pencil with the TNA reference of their parent piece and insert into acid-free envelopes. Mark the acid-free envelope in HB pencil with a brief note of its contents (e.g. ‘one booklet enclosed’).

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

Maps and plans within the body of a file

Tag small, flat or folded maps and plans into their original position within the file. The tagging must allow them to be unfolded and viewed by researchers without difficulty or removal of the tag. If a small map is fragile or torn, put it in a polyester enclosure.

Endorse larger folded maps and plans with their TNA reference in HB pencil and place 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 in place in the file. Ensure it is possible to remove the contents without difficulty.

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

Endorse all photographs and place them in polyester enclosures; then tag the enclosures in the place where the photograph originally sat in the file. Only one photograph should be placed into each polyester enclosure so that researchers can see the back as well as the front, without removing the photograph. Do not punch new tag holes in photographs.

Polyester enclosures are the only suitable material for storing photographs. They are used as they enable viewing and handling of the photograph without having to remove it from the enclosure; this limits the damage to the sensitive surface of the photograph. Endorse negatives and photographic slides and place into acid-free envelopes that have passed the ISO18916:2007 Photographic Activity Test (PAT) for enclosure materials. 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 e-Transfer (AA2) form 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. The National Archives supplies these stickers and they are available from your Transfer Adviser.
Other preparation requirements

Writing The National Archives’ reference (the TNA reference) on the front cover

Write The National Archives’ reference (in practice known as the ‘TNA reference’) on a blank space on the cover, ensuring you do not obscure any text. Ideally you should write it near the centre of the cover if there is a blank space available. Do not write the reference on top of labels stuck to the front cover, as these may become loose over time.

If there is no space for the reference to be written clearly on the original file cover, put the file into a 4-flap folder and write the reference on the front cover of the 4-flap folder.

The correct format for a TNA reference is: departmental code (in upper case), then a space, then series number, then a slash (/), then the piece number, for example:

**HO 405/1784**

Write the reference on the cover in characters about 2cm in height, horizontally, and in a single line.

Letters and numbers should be clearly legible and unambiguous.

Tips for writing references:

- 1s and slashes should be clearly differentiated (the latter should be slightly sloping and longer)
- write numbers plainly – avoid crossed 7s and 0s as they may appear to be crossed out numbers
- be careful with 1s as they can resemble other numbers. For example 1s should not resemble 2s

Write the TNA reference in chinagraph pencil. Chinagraph pencil can be hard to correct if you make a mistake so if you have any doubt about piece numbers, write them in ordinary pencil first and check them with your Transfer Adviser. When they are confirmed write over them with chinagraph pencil. If you do make any mistakes in chinagraph pencil, correct them as clearly and neatly as possible.

**Tagging**

A good standard of tagging is important for the preservation of a file. Pages can easily become separated and lost if they have not been tagged in. 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. Tags which are too tight restrict access to the information within the file, which leads to researchers forcing pages open and accidentally damaging the file and potentially creating loose pages.
Checklist for tagging:

- do not use self-adhesive tag hole reinforcers
- if it is necessary to punch new tag holes, they should normally be about 2cm from the edge of the page. They should not damage text or cause pages to protrude from the file folded pages should be tagged in a way that allows them to be easily unfolded
- documents which cannot be satisfactorily tagged should be put in polyester enclosures or acid-free envelopes
- usually a single treasury tag should be used for each file
- the tag should be tagged through the back cover and through the contents but not through the front cover. If a file is put into a 4-flap folder, the tag should go through the back covers of the file and 4-flap folder, but not through the front covers of either.
- multiple interlinking tags should not be used
- do not loop tags around the spine of the file
- ensure tags are long enough for the file to be opened at any point in its contents, 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

The following are recommended tag lengths for tagging files when files are tagged through the back cover and through the contents but not through the front cover. The contents of the file should be measured at its thickest point. This 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, use the longer of the two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File thickness at thickest point</th>
<th>Recommended length of tag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.1 – 0.9cm</td>
<td>5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 – 1.9cm</td>
<td>7cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 – 2.9cm</td>
<td>10cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 – 3.9cm</td>
<td>12.5cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.0 – 4.9cm</td>
<td>Splitting the file is recommended; where this is not possible use 15cm tags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater than 4.9cm</td>
<td>Split the file</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the contents make the file unwieldy or unstable then it may be advisable to tag through the front cover as well as the back cover and contents to give more stability to the file. In such cases longer tags will be required than when tags only run through the back.
Thermal paper

Copies produced through thermal processes (including some but not all fax papers) 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 paper must be photocopied and the photocopy tagged in front of the original document in the correct place in the file. Do not discard the thermal paper – keep it as it proves the authenticity of the copy.

Tips for dealing with 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 doesn't 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
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

Examples of thermal paper

Example of Electrofax paper with cactus marking
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

**Original envelopes within files**

Some files have original envelopes containing enclosures. In these cases:

- ensure the envelope is securely tagged and will not become loose
- remove the contents from the envelope and tag it in front of the envelope
- if the contents requires it, use polyester enclosures or acid-free envelopes to protect the contents, as you would with other documents

**Badly damaged and fragile file covers**

Place files and reports with badly damaged or fragile covers in new 4-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 4-flap folder.

Write the TNA reference on the front cover of the 4-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.

**Stickers and labels on file covers**

Do not put stickers with barcodes and references on the front covers of files. It is important that stickers do not hide important text on the cover, especially the original title and former reference of the file, which cataloguers, Transfer Advisers and researchers all need to be able to see. It is better for these stickers to be attached to the outside of the back covers.

For closed files, attach a small green CLOSED UNTIL label to the front cover. Ensure this label does not obscure the text.

For files containing distressing photographs, attach warning sticker to the front cover. Again ensure that these stickers do not obscure text.

Ask your Transfer Adviser if you need warning stickers as these are provided The National Archives.
Splitting thick files

Split (divide) a file into parts if it too thick and unwieldy. Splitting the file makes it more manageable and reduces the risk of it being damaged by researchers because it is heavy and difficult to handle.

In most cases it is only necessary to split a file when it is 4-5cm (1.5-2 inches) thick or thicker. If it is between 2.5 and 4cm thick, usually a longer tag is all that is required.

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 enclosures and acid-free envelopes then these will add to the file’s final thickness.

Occasionally, a file under 4-5cm will need to be split, usually because of the condition of the contents. Your Transfer Adviser will advise you if this is necessary.

Files are known as ‘pieces’ and the parts a split file is divided into are known as ‘items’ for the purposes of storage and cataloguing.

Checklist for thick and split files:

- split files which are extremely thick into two or more parts (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 (made by splitting the file) will need to be tagged into new 4-flap folders. Tag only papers taken out of the original file into the new 4-flap folders
- write the relevant TNA item reference on each item. This consists of the TNA reference, followed by a slash and then the item number. For example, a whole file might be ABC 1/23, but if it is split into items, the items will be ABC 1/23/1, ABC
1/23/2, ABC 1/23/3, etc. Do not write ‘Part 1’, ‘Part 2’, ‘End’ or ‘Item’ on the file cover

- splitting a file will affect the item number which needs to be used for any closed extracts removed from the file, the closed extract will always come after the split items (e.g. if a file has been split in two because of thickness, the closed extract will need to become item 3 instead of item 1). If there is a discrepancy with the item number shown on the Freedom of Information (FOI) Schedule, consult with your Transfer Adviser, so that the item number of the schedule can be amended.

Example of a file correctly split and referenced

Tying up files

In most cases tying up files with cotton or linen tape is unnecessary. 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 it is abnormally bulky or uneven.

Seals within the body of a file

Normally seals within the body of a file should be left as they are and not put into polyester enclosures. The best protection for seals within the body of a file is the paper surrounding it which is more forgiving than a polyester enclosure. Therefore placing seals into polyester enclosures increases the risk of damage to the seal rather than decreases it. Putting them in polyester enclosures increases the risk of damage rather than decreases it.

Ask your Transfer Adviser in cases of large embossed seals, pendant seals or seals outside files.
Floppy disks, CDs, microfiche in files

Inform your Transfer Adviser immediately if a file contains digital or microform materials, such as CDs, floppy disks, magnetic tape, microfiche, microfilm, etc. Ensure you tell them about the type of material, its contents and its likely informational value.

Records contained on digital storage formats that are selected for permanent preservation will need to be transferred to The National Archives via a different process to the one used for paper records. Contact your Information Management Consultant for advice on this process.

Microform outside of files

Microform is a term used to describe microfiche and microfilm materials. Consult your Information Management Consultant or Transfer Adviser if you have any microform.

Unusual collections of papers

Loose bundles of papers

Hole-punch and tag loose bundles of papers into 4-flap folders in order to secure them. Punch the holes in the top left hand corner 2cm from either edge ensuring that the holes don’t 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 your Transfer Adviser if punching holes and tagging might damage the papers, or seems in any way impractical or inadvisable.

Ring-binders

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

Place the contents of ring-binders in 4-flap folders, 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. Consult your Transfer Adviser if you are unsure how to do this.

Volumes

Write The TNA reference in chinagraph pencil directly onto volume covers if possible. If the cover is dark, use white chinagraph pencil. However, if the cover is uneven or otherwise
unsuitable and this is not possible, write the 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 bound volumes in poor condition in 4-flap folders prior to boxing.

If there are loose pages in a volume:

- leave the pages in their original place
- endorse them with their TNA reference in HB pencil
- do not tag them in
- number all the loose pages in the volume in the top right hand corner in HB pencil in case pages fall out, get mixed up or become lost
- place any fragile pages in polyester enclosures
- tie the volume containing the loose pages with cotton tape and place in an individual box; if this is not possible, it should be placed in a 4-flap folder

Remember to support volumes and other books at all times to avoid damaging their spines.

**Maps and plans**

**Treatment of individual 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.

Transfer maps and plans, reports or volumes that do not form part of files in the format in which they have previously been stored:

- folded maps and plans should be transferred folded, not rolled or flattened
- maps and plans which have been stored flat 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. Note the need for repair on the e-Transfer (AA2) form for the attention of Collection Care.

**Folded maps and plans**

Place folded maps and plans in 4-flap folders and write the TNA reference in chinagraph pencil on the cover. Write the reference in HB pencil twice on the back of each map or plan in opposite corners.
Flat maps and plans

Insert flat maps and plans (which are often large) into map folders. Speak to your Transfer Adviser for advice on the size, construction and materials of the folders.

Often several maps can be put in the same folder. The exact number will depend on the map size, thickness and material. The contents shouldn’t 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, the range of references written should be reflect this (e.g. ABC 7/20 – ABC 7/30). Write the reference twice on the back of each map or plan in HB pencil on opposite corners.

Rolled maps and plans

Write The National Archives’ reference (TNA reference) twice in HB pencil in opposite corners on the reverse of a rolled map or plan. Then roll the map onto the outside of an archival tube and secure it there with broad linen tape and tie with an easily released bow. 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. Then insert the tube into a cotton or linen bag and write the reference on the top and bottom of the bag in chinagraph pencil. A label bearing The TNA reference should also be fixed at the opening of the bag.

Photographs and similar material

Individual photographs

Endorse individual photographs that are not included as part of a file in HB pencil with their TNA reference and place them into polyester enclosures and then into 4-flap folders.

Other photographic material

Consult your Transfer Adviser about glass plates, photograph albums, x-rays, etc. as these require special attention and preparation advice.
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

Video and audio

Consult your Information Management Consultant about analogue film and video material as these are archived by the British Film Institute (BFI) Archive, not The National Archives. Similarly, analogue sound recordings are archived by the British Library Sound Archive, not The National Archives. Do not approach the BFI or British Library directly.

Objects, artefacts and seals

Artefacts, large seals and other 3D objects require expert preparation advice on a case-by-case basis so for any of these items please consult your Transfer Adviser.

Boxing and Box Labelling

Packing boxes

Box size
All boxes should meet The National Archives’ standards and be the correct size to fit the records. They should allow for the records to be packed and extracted easily. Always check the exact size of the records you wish to transfer before ordering boxes. Allow a finger width on either side of the length and width of the records to allow the documents to be removed safely.

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

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

Fullness when packing
Boxes should be overfilled by approximately 1cm so that the files are very slightly compressed when the lid is on (as shown in the picture below). This will prevent documents from moving around inside the box when in transit.

Bubble wrap or corrugated cardboard should not be used as permanent fillers in boxes. Boxes should always be the appropriate size. However, corrugated cardboard or bubble wrap can be used in situations where boxes can’t be filled to the appropriate level and there’s a danger of documents moving around in transit. Record the use of all cardboard or bubble wrap on the e-Transfer (AA2) form so the material can be removed on arrival at The National Archives.
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

Example of a box filled to the correct level

Packing bound volumes
Pack volumes so that the spine rests on what will become the bottom of the box when it is placed on a shelf. This prevents the pages from pulling against the spine and damaging it.

Packing uneven records
Pack records that have an uneven thickness (e.g. files that are thicker in the corner where they are tagged) alternatively top to bottom and bottom to top, so the stacking of the files remains even and level throughout.

Tying boxes
Secure all boxes with cotton or linen tape. 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.

To tie up a box: fold the length of cotton tape in half and make a looped handle at the closed end, before wrapping the tape around the box and tying a shoelace knot at the open end. Consult your Transfer Adviser if you are unsure how to do this.

Boxes containing dummy cards
When a whole piece is closed, retained, missing, or is ‘Number not used’, a dummy card must be put in the box where the piece would be if it was a normal open piece. Ensure that adequate space is left in the box for the piece to be placed in the box once it becomes open and available to the public, without the box becoming overfull.

Labelling boxes

TNA reference labels for boxes
You should get all of the box labels you require from The National Archives through your Transfer Adviser. Labels showing departmental lettercodes and series numbers should be white with red text. Labels showing piece/item numbers should be white with black text.

Attach labels to the smallest side (area) of the box lid when placed vertically on a shelf with the lid opening from left to right.
Labels should be stuck on the left hand side without covering old labels or staples. 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 which 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 you print out whole numbers on a single label (e.g. ‘200’ should be printed onto a single label, and not 2, 0 and 0 stuck together).

Closure labels for boxes
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.

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 numerous closed pieces or when the whole transfer consists of closed pieces. This type of transfer needs to be agreed in advance with The National Archives so please consult your Transfer Adviser.

Most boxes do not require closure labels:
- boxes containing only open pieces do not require closure labels
- boxes containing a mixture of open pieces and dummies do not require closure labels
- boxes and bags for transferring closed pieces and items separately from open pieces do not require closure labels

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.
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

If closed pieces are transferred in the same boxes as open records, dummies are not required for the closed pieces.

Example of a box physically prepared for transfer

Boxes for records being stored off-site

Some records are stored in additional National Archives' storage facilities in Cheshire. If it is known that the records you are preparing are going to be stored at the off-site storage facility then different boxing and labelling requirements may apply.

Please consult your Transfer Adviser if you know that the boxes you are preparing are going to be stored at the off-site storage facility.

Box specification

All new types of packing must be approved by The National Archives before they are used.

Construction

- boxes must consist of both a case and a lid. Case and lid must be cut from one piece of board or formed from the same piece of board, e.g. clamshell box. The depth of the lid must be the same as the depth of the case of the box
- the most important criteria of a box sent to The National Archives is strength. All boxes must withstand a standard industry edge-crush-test (ECT) at a minimum of 5 kN/m
**Context of use**
- It is important to know what types of material will be stored in the boxes, if the records are large or heavy, or of high archival value. Different grades and types of box board might be required depending on the context of use.

**Grades of box board**
There are three grades of board suitable for use at The National Archives. This table will help you determine the grade of board required for your transfer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Board Grade</th>
<th>Board Specification</th>
<th>When to use it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **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 |
Types of box board

- all grades of board are available as two types of board. Please consult the table below to determine the best type of board for your transfer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of board</th>
<th>Cross section of board</th>
<th>Benefits of use</th>
<th>When to use it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full board</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ most durable board type</td>
<td>For most transfers full board is preferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ brass wire stitching increases durability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrugated board</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ rigid in larger sizes</td>
<td>If boxes are to be stacked in storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ good for stacking</td>
<td>If records are larger and/or heavier than normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- both full board and corrugated board are available to be delivered flat packed from your supplier. If quantities above 60 standard boxes are required it might be cheaper to order boxes flat packed and assemble them on site
- speak to your Transfer Adviser if you require further assistance with box requirements

Access Issues

Background to access issues relating to physical preparation

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

- the records may be closed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000
- they may be retained by the transferring department under section 3(4) of the Public Records Act 1958
- they may be temporarily retained by the transferring department
- they may be missing at transfer
- they may be ‘Number not used’

Closure under the Freedom of Information Act and retention under section 3(4) must be approved by the Secretary of State before the closure and retention is valid. Approval is not always granted to government departments applying for permission to close or retain. Sometimes applications are rejected. Therefore it is best not to carry out closure and retention work on records (such as completing dummy cards or making redactions) until the Secretary of State has given approval.
Dummy cards

Reasons to use dummy cards
Insert The National Archives' dummy card in place of whole records (pieces) which are removed or absent from boxes, because they are closed, retained, missing or 'Number not used'. Dummy cards also need to be inserted and tagged in place of whole pages or documents (extracts) removed from pieces, because they are closed or retained. Dummy cards are not used for redactions.

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 has been found.

Dummy cards are available through your Transfer Adviser.

Filling in dummy cards
Complete dummy cards clearly and accurately. It is important there are no mistakes or corrections. If you do make a mistake when filling out a dummy card, replace it with a fresh one. Complete dummy cards in pen and ensure that any pencil markings have been completely rubbed out.

The following information should be included on a dummy card:
- TNA reference
- in the case of extracts, some brief text identifying what the extract is (e.g. 'folio 28', 'letter dated 12/11/1984')
- the FOI exemption number(s) (if applicable)
- the date and signature of the individual completing the dummy card opposite the appropriate box, indicating if the record is closed, retained under section 3(4) temporarily retained, missing at transfer or 'Number not used'

There are instructions on filling in such information on the back of the dummy card.

Do not write any information describing the reason for closure or retention on the dummy card.
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

Example of a Dummy card completed for closure
Use of dummy cards to replace whole pieces
When a whole piece is not open and available to the public a dummy card must be put in its place in the box where the piece would be if it were open. Retained pieces are held by the government department, not transferred. Closed pieces are transferred to The National Archives in separate boxes or bags.

Ensure that adequate space is left for the piece to be placed back in the box once it becomes open and available to the public, without the box becoming overfull.
Use of dummy cards to replace whole parts of records (extracts)

When a document (a page or consecutive sequence of pages, or a whole photograph, or some other whole part of a file) is removed from a piece because the document 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 will need to 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 may need to be added after the piece number (if extracts are closed and have an item number). Also, extract details need to be added in the ‘Extract/Item details’ box. The extract details should try to identify the extract in a relatively simple way e.g. ‘Folio 28’, ‘2 photograph albums’.

If a whole document 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 4-flap folder.
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.

Making redactions
Take the following steps when redacting information from an original document:

- remove the original documents containing sensitive information from the piece and insert temporary place holders to mark their positions
- make a photocopy of the original documents
- place the original documents in a 4-flap folder
- black out or blank out the sensitive wording on the photocopies
- re-photocopy the photocopies you have just blanked out. This is done to safeguard against the possibility of the sensitive information remaining decipherable, as sometimes blanked-out words can still be read if held against the light. These second photocopies are the redacted copies that will be used as replacements in the file
- either shred the first photocopies or place them alongside the original documents in the 4-flap folder
• stamp each redacted replacement 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 copies back in the parent piece at the positions marked by the place holders. Remove the place holders from the piece
• carefully safeguard the original documents. They will either remain with the transferring department or be sent to The National Archives as closed items

Example of a document with closed information redacted and stamped
Making redactions within bound volumes
Steps for redacting pages within bound volumes:

1. 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. If the text runs close to the spine there needs to be a minimum of 12mm from the centre of the volume to the cut. If this isn’t possible because the text doesn’t allow for 12mm then speak to your Transfer Adviser. When using a scalpel ensure that you protect the pages under the one you are removing.

2. Redact the sensitive information using the normal redaction process described on page 35.

3. Endorse the original and redacted copy with a TNA reference in HB pencil and insert the copy into the bound volume in its proper place. Place the original page in a 4-flap folder.

4. Number all pages in the volume in the top right hand corner in HB pencil in case pages fall out, get mixed up or become lost.

5. The volume containing the loose pages should be tied with cotton tape and placed in an individual box; if this is not possible, it should be placed in a 4-flap folder.

Visit our website for further guidance and information on redactions:

nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/redaction_toolkit.pdf
Stamps used on redacted pages

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

In other words the stamps 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]
```

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

If government departments currently use different stamps, The National Archives will need to assess if these are acceptable to use.

Preparation of closed records for transfer

Piece and item closure labels and closed item warning tape

Prepare closed records to the same standard as other records being transferred to The National Archives. In addition, stick CLOSED UNTIL labels to their covers. Complete the labels using chinagraph pencil with the year when the piece will be open and ensure that the labels don’t obscure any text on the cover.

If a piece has been split into items because of thickness, all the items should have CLOSED UNTIL labels on them.

Closed extracts and redactions should be put into separate 4-flap folders. Each of these folders is an 'item', and should have a TNA reference with an item number written on it, matching the FOI schedule. Sometimes (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.
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

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

Calculating the relevant dates for CLOSED UNTIL labels
The closure periods of pieces and items must be approved by the Secretary of State before they are valid. The closure period often ranges between 40 and 100 years, and 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, not the last year when it is closed.

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

Another way of calculating the record opening year is to add the end year of the file and the closure period together and then add 1 (1987 + 50 + 1 = 2038).

Boxes for transferring closed records
Normally, closed pieces and items should be transferred to The National Archives in their own separate boxes or bags, not put into the boxes containing the open records. This is a security measure, so that open and closed material does not get mixed up and closed material shown to the public by mistake. The closed material will not stay in these separate boxes or bags after transfer to The National Archives. It will be taken out and transferred to secure storage. Therefore the boxes for transferring closed material can be old, not of archival standard, and merely need to have details of the contents written on the front, rather than using labels.

In exceptional circumstances, closed pieces may be transferred in the same boxes as open records. These boxes require The National Archives’ reference labels and closure labels.
NATO papers and Cabinet Office 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.

Copies of Cabinet and Cabinet Ministerial and Official 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. Consult your Transfer Adviser 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.

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 to the same standards as any other records, and should be accompanied by an e-Transfer (AA2) form like any other transfer of records. It is important they do not bypass the physical preparation process.

Documentation

The e-Transfer form (AA2)

Records being transferred to The National Archives must be documented by an e-Transfer form (also known as an AA2).

The e-Transfer (AA2) form is available to download at:

nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/cat_aa2.rtf

One e-Transfer (AA2) form is used per series. Once completed, the form should be sent to your Transfer Adviser as an email attachment.

It is extremely important that the e-Transfer (AA2) form is completed fully and accurately because:

- it details exactly what material is being transferred and what is not
• it contains information that appears on The National Archives’ catalogue, Discovery (e.g. whether the series is accruing or not, whether descriptions are open or not)
• it alerts The National Archives’ Accessions Team and Collection Care staff to the state of the records and informs them of whether there are particular physical preparation issues which still need to be resolved or any hazardous substances present

Any records which are closed under the Freedom of Information Act, retained, missing, or ‘Number not used’ need to be documented on the e-Transfer (AA2) form.

Any records containing special or non-standard objects e.g. maps, photographs or newspapers also need to be recorded on the form, so they can be examined.

Any records which are in need of inspection and treatment by Collection Care also need to be recorded, with further information if it is useful. This includes records which are severely damaged, deteriorating materials or difficult conservation issues, beyond the scope of the preparation work expected of a transferring department.

**Series Level Time Plan (SLTP)**

The Series Level Time Plan is the timetable for your department to transfer records to The National Archives. Ensure that you speak to your Transfer Adviser if there is a considerable amount of conservation work needed in a transfer or if the transfer contains unusual formats or materials. This is because the time it takes to complete this work could have an impact on the Series Level Time Plan and this in turn could affect the timeline for transferring and releasing records to the public. Consult your Transfer Adviser if you need more information about the Series Level Time Plan.

**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.

The Transfer Delivery form can be downloaded from The National Archives’ website:


Once your Transfer Adviser is satisfied that the form has been completed properly, a member of the Accessions Team will contact the relevant person named on the form to make arrangements for transfer. After the accessioning process is completed, documents will become available to readers.
Consult your Transfer Adviser if you are unsure about any aspect of the e-Transfer (AA2) and Transfer Delivery forms or the SLTP.

**The National Archives’ cataloguing template**

It is helpful, but not required, for government departments to add information to the ‘Comments field’ of The National Archives’ cataloguing template for documents that are in poor condition and may require the attention of Collection Care. Examples of comments might be 'Damaged pages', 'Glued pages', 'Sticky tape on the cover' or that a record is 'Extremely fragile'.

Although this information will need to be transferred to the e-Transfer (AA2) form later in the transfer process, it is helpful to add it at this stage as this can assist the Transfer Advisers to check the physical preparation of the records more quickly therefore speeding up the transfer process.

If this type of information is added, The National Archives will normally remove it from the cataloguing template before the data is loaded onto The National Archives catalogue, Discovery.

**Suppliers of materials**

All packing materials (boxes, map or banner bags) must be approved by The National Archives. The National Archives must approve all new types of packing materials before they can be used. Consult with your Transfer Adviser to check that the correct materials are being used.

The National Archives does not operate an Approved Suppliers system but we are aware that the suppliers listed below are able to provide some, or all, of the required types of boxes and other archival materials. This list is not exhaustive and there are likely to be other suppliers who would be able to meet The National Archives’ standard specification for materials.

**Suppliers of boxes and archival materials**

Conservation by Design, Timecare Works, 5 Singer Way, Woburn Road Industrial Estate, Kempston, Bedford MK42 7AW
Email: info@cxdltd.com
Website: [http://www.conservation-by-design.co.uk](http://www.conservation-by-design.co.uk)

Conservation Resources Ltd., Unit 15 Blacklands Way, Abingdon-on-Thames, Oxon OX14 1DY
Email: sales@conservation-resources.co.uk.
Website: [http://www.conservation-resources.co.uk](http://www.conservation-resources.co.uk)
Preparing records for transfer to The National Archives

Edward Adcock, Packaging and Display Section, Bodleian Library, 35 Nuffield Way, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1RL
Email: edward.adcock@bodleian.ox.ac.uk
Website: http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/using/pads

G Ryder & Co Ltd., Denbigh Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes MK1 1DG
Email: sales@ryderbox.co.uk
Website: www.ryderbox.co.uk

Jansen-Wijsmuller & Beuns B.V., Postbus 166, 1530 AD Wormer, Netherlands
Email: n/a
Website: http://www.jwb-ceka.nl/contact.php

Klug-Conservation, Furzey Leaze, Beech Grove, Fulbrook OX18 4DD
Email: mas@klug-conservation.co.uk
Website: www.klug-conservation.com

Preservation Equipment Ltd., Vinces Road, Diss, Norfolk IP22 4HQ
Email: info@preservationequipment.com
Website: http://www.preservationequipment.com/Contact-Us

Schempp, Solitudeallee 101, 70806 Kornwestheim, Germany
Email: mail@schempp.de
Website: www.schempp.de

Secol, 15 Howlett Way, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 1HZ
Email: sales@secol.co.uk
Website: www.secol.co.uk

T.G. Nuttall Packaging Ltd., Mellors Road, Trafford Park, Manchester M17 1PB
Email: enquiry@nuttall-packaging.co.uk
Website: http://www.nuttall-packaging.co.uk

 Suppliers for other archival materials

Please confirm the suitability of materials with The National Archives before purchasing.

Evans Textile Ltd., Helmet Street, Manchester M1 2NT
Email: info@evans-textiles.com
Website: http://www.evans-textiles.com
Glossary

**Accessions Team**: Staff at The National Archives responsible for arranging the accessioning of records into The National Archives' collection once the records have been approved for transfer by our Transfer Advisers.

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

**Collection Care**: A department at The National Archives consisting of trained conservators and specialists in the physical preservation and repair of records. They can offer expert advice and help with difficult conservation problems.

**e-Transfer form**: A form fully documenting the transfer of records within a series to The National Archives (formerly and still popularly known as the AA2 form).

**Endorsed**: Usually used to mean written on the back (referring to the writing of the TNA reference on the back of loose documents within files in HB pencil). Endorsed can sometimes be used to just mean written on.

**Extract**: A whole document within a piece which is retained or closed and not available to the public (e.g. a whole page, a number of consecutive pages or a photograph). Note, however, that sometimes both ‘whole’ extracts and redactions are referred to as ‘extracts’.

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Schedule**: A document detailing records whose closure under the Freedom of Information Act has been approved by the Secretary of State.

**Glassine paper**: A glossy, transparent, moisture-proof paper used traditionally to store photographs and photographic negatives. Glassine paper should be replaced by polyester enclosures.

**Information Management Consultant (IMC)**: A member of The National Archives' staff responsible for supervising and liaising with government departments, especially in the areas of records and information management, review and selection of records, and access issues. Each government department, organisation or body should know who their Information Management Consultant is and be in regular contact with them.

**Item**: A part of a piece created during the transfer process – either one part of a file that has been split because of thickness, or closed extracts or redactions removed from the piece.

**Retention Instrument (RI)**: A document detailing records whose retention under the Public Records Act has been approved by the Secretary of State. Retentions approved before December 2015 were via an Instrument signed by the Lord Chancellor (known as LCIs).
Parent piece: The piece which a document or item belongs to (e.g. ‘Endorse the loose document with the corresponding reference of its parent piece’).

Piece: A separate, individual record. For example, a file, a volume, a rolled map.

Polyester enclosure: A 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).

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). Usually a corresponding series is created on The National Archives catalogue, Discovery, to hold the records of the departmental series selected for permanent preservation.

Series Level Time Plan (SLTP): SLTP is the timetable used by government departments to proactively manage the efficient transfer of records to The National Archives. Use of the SLTP gives departments greater control of their transfers while allowing The National Archives a better oversight of the process.

Silversafe: A material that has been developed for photographic conservation; an ideal interleaving paper for the storage of photographic material such as negatives.

The National Archives reference (TNA reference): The alphanumerical reference code applied to pieces and items transferred to The National Archives, consisting 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 Adviser: A member of The National Archives’ staff who is responsible for advising government departments on matters relating to cataloguing, physical preparation and transfer of records, and for checking work in these areas meets The National Archives’ standards.