

# Welcome to The National Archives

All you need to know  
to help you find your  
way around



**museum**

**bookshop**



**cyber  
cafe**



WiFi

The National Archives is a centre of expertise in creating, managing and preserving official information. We work with 250 government and public sector bodies, helping them to manage and use information more effectively.

As the government's national archive for England, Wales and the United Kingdom, we hold over 1,000 years of the nation's records for everyone to discover and use.

The National Archives' collection of over 11 million historical government and public records is one of the largest in the world. From Domesday Book to modern government papers and digital files, our collection includes paper and parchment, electronic records and websites, photographs, posters, maps, drawings and paintings.

### **Getting started**

If this is your first visit, take a minute to read this leaflet. Leave your coat and bag in the lockers on the ground floor, placing your research materials – notes, pencils, digital camera, into one of the clear, plastic bags provided, and head upstairs to the start here desk, on the first floor.

At the Start Here desk staff can help you familiarise yourself with The National Archives and how to begin your research.

## Do I need a reader's ticket?

You do not need a reader's ticket to access many of our resources. Access to many popular genealogy records, such as census, wills, service records and passenger lists, is available online on the first floor. You only need a reader's ticket if you are going to view original documents.

## How do I get a reader's ticket?



If your research requires you to view original documents, you should go to reader registration on the second floor to get a reader's ticket. You will need to take two forms of identification with you – one proof of name with a signature and one proof of address from the last three months.

At any of the available computers within reader registration you should register your personal details and complete a short online document handling information tutorial. Once completed, you can collect your reader's ticket from the registration desk, where a member of staff will also take your photograph.

## Ordering documents

Once you have a reader's ticket you can order up to three original documents at a time. You can order documents from any of the computers in the reading rooms.

To order a document you need to know its catalogue reference. This can be found by searching or browsing our catalogue. The catalogue reference is made up of a series of letters (representing the government department the file has come from) and numbers. For example, WO 95/456.

When you order your document you can also choose where in the Document Reading Room you would like to sit. You will be allocated a seat and a locker which have the same number. The document you have ordered will be delivered to the locker for you to collect, usually within the hour. The estimated delivery time is displayed when you order. You can also check on the progress of your documents at the current order status display terminals found in the reading rooms and in the restaurant on the ground floor.

If the document you have ordered is oversized, a map, or dates from before 1688 it will be delivered to the collection counter in the Map and Large Document Reading Room on the second floor.

### Document ordering times

09:00 – 17:00: Tuesday and Thursday

09:00 – 16:15: Wednesday, Friday and Saturday

### Copying documents

You can make your own copies of documents using the digital document scanners in the Document Reading Room and the Map and Large Document Reading Room. Easy to follow instructions can be found on the machines.

It is possible to print online material from the computers in the reading rooms. You will need to purchase a copying card, or use your reader's ticket, and follow on screen instructions to print.

Alternatively you can use the record copying service which can provide a paper or digital copy of the document. Please see [nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordcopying](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordcopying) for more information.

You may take photographs of documents using your own camera, but please turn off the flash and any sounds.

## What can I take into the reading rooms?

To help us preserve the records for future generations, please observe our guidance for using the reading rooms and handling documents.

No coats, bags or umbrellas  
- please leave in the lockers  
provided on the ground floor



No food, drink, sweets or gum



No sharp objects



Use pencils without erasers



Keep sound levels low when  
using headphones



No pens



Ensure your mobile is  
on silent mode



Ensure your laptop has  
the sound off



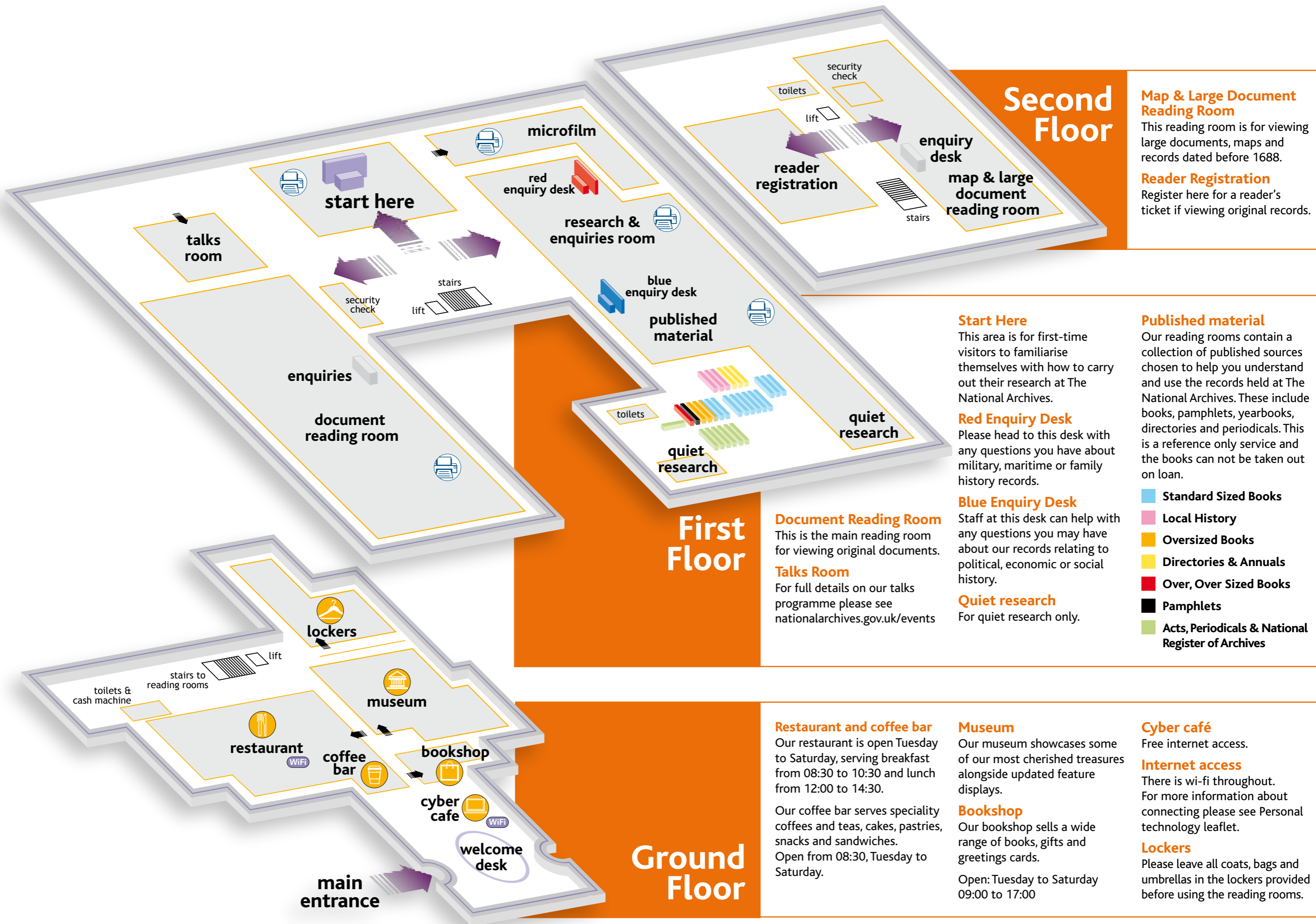
Ensure the sound and flash are  
turned off on your camera



Always handle the  
documents with care



A complete list of rules is available from the welcome desk, the Enquiry Service Manager or online at [nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/rules.pdf](https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/rules.pdf)



## Second Floor

### Map & Large Document Reading Room

This reading room is for viewing large documents, maps and records dated before 1688.

### Reader Registration

Register here for a reader's ticket if viewing original records.

## First Floor

### Start Here

This area is for first-time visitors to familiarise themselves with how to carry out their research at The National Archives.

### Red Enquiry Desk

Please head to this desk with any questions you have about military, maritime or family history records.

### Blue Enquiry Desk

Staff at this desk can help with any questions you may have about our records relating to political, economic or social history.

### Quiet research

For quiet research only.

### Document Reading Room

This is the main reading room for viewing original documents.

### Talks Room

For full details on our talks programme please see [nationalarchives.gov.uk/events](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/events)

### Published material

Our reading rooms contain a collection of published sources chosen to help you understand and use the records held at The National Archives. These include books, pamphlets, yearbooks, directories and periodicals. This is a reference only service and the books can not be taken out on loan.

- Standard Sized Books
- Local History
- Oversized Books
- Directories & Annuals
- Over, Over Sized Books
- Pamphlets
- Acts, Periodicals & National Register of Archives

## Ground Floor

### Restaurant and coffee bar

Our restaurant is open Tuesday to Saturday, serving breakfast from 08:30 to 10:30 and lunch from 12:00 to 14:30.

Our coffee bar serves speciality coffees and teas, cakes, pastries, snacks and sandwiches. Open from 08:30, Tuesday to Saturday.

### Museum

Our museum showcases some of our most cherished treasures alongside updated feature displays.

### Bookshop

Our bookshop sells a wide range of books, gifts and greetings cards.

Open: Tuesday to Saturday 09:00 to 17:00

### Cyber café

Free internet access.

### Internet access

There is wi-fi throughout. For more information about connecting please see Personal technology leaflet.

### Lockers

Please leave all coats, bags and umbrellas in the lockers provided before using the reading rooms.

## Keep in touch

For more information, news and online resources visit our website at [nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk) and sign up to our e-newsletter to receive updates direct to your inbox: [nationalarchives.gov.uk/enewsletter](http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/enewsletter)

Follow us on Twitter:

[twitter.com/uknatarchives](https://twitter.com/uknatarchives)

Become a fan on Facebook:

[facebook.com/TheNationalArchives](https://facebook.com/TheNationalArchives)

Telephone: 020 8876 3444

Email: [nationalarchives.gov.uk/contact/form](mailto:nationalarchives.gov.uk/contact/form)

The National Archives, Kew, Surrey TW9 4DU



### Opening hours

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	09:00 – 19:00
Wednesday	09:00 – 17:00
Thursday	09:00 – 19:00
Friday	09:00 – 17:00
Saturday	09:00 – 17:00