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Our ref: NAS3/E3/6.3/1 [3890]

Name  
Address

11 November 2005

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

### **Archives and Records of Scottish Cultural Institutions**

Thank you for your information request dated 20 October 2005 concerning the above.

The National Archives of Scotland does not have any particular statutory or regulatory function in regards the Scottish Cultural Institutions mentioned in your letter, namely the National Galleries of Scotland, National Library of Scotland and the National Museums of Scotland. The Statutory functions of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland are laid out in the Public Records (Scotland) Act, 1937, and I have included a copy of this Act with this letter for your information.

You will see from the Act that the statutory functions of the Keeper of the Records of Scotland (neither the National Archives of Scotland nor the Scottish Records Office, as we were previously known, is named in the legislation) are actually quite narrow, though for historic reasons successive Keepers have taken a fairly broad definition of their role and, for example, collected private archives of national importance. New Scottish Archive legislation is now long overdue and the NAS would welcome any such legislation including more powers to regulate record keeping in government bodies.

At present, however, we provide advice on record keeping issues, if advice is sought from these bodies, as is the case for most non departmental public bodies (NDPBs). Examples of contact that our Government Records Branch have had with the institutions mentioned, include:

- National Galleries of Scotland:
  - The NGS have been transferring records to the NAS at roughly 10 year intervals since the 1930s;
  - June 2002, Laura Mitchell, head of NAS Government Records Branch provided advice on record keeping to the Librarian of the NGS, recommending that they continue to transfer records to NAS.
  
- National Museums of Scotland:

- August 1989, staff from the Scottish Records Office (now NAS) visited and made a report with recommendations concerning the museum's records and archives, at the request of the Head of the Library at NMS;
  - 2001, Laura Mitchell, senior inspecting officer, NAS Government Records Branch, provided advice on records management and the possibility of appointing someone to be records manager/archivist, at the request of the Head of the Library at NMS – this included providing advice on a job advert for a records manager and the scope of the work that that person might be needed to do;
  - 2001, Laura Mitchell, senior inspecting officer, NAS Government Records Branch, at the request of the Head of the Library at NMS, provided her with guidelines on the selection of records for permanent preservation;
  - 2004, Laura Mitchell, head of NAS Government Records Branch provided input into NMS job advert for records manager post, at request of the Head of the Library at NMS;
  - July 2004, Jane Brown, Senior Inspecting Officer, NAS Government Records Branch, led an FOI workshop for senior members of staff at NMS, at the request of the Director of Finance and Resources at NMS.
- National Library of Scotland – the NAS has not had the same sort of dealings with the NLS as it has with NMS and NGS. The Library have their own archive section (the Manuscripts Department), staffed by professionally qualified archivists and our contact with them tends to centre on which of us would be the more appropriate place of deposit for particular collections.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you require more information. If you have any complaints, please write in the first instance to me, as the FOI Officer, at the above address. If this fails to resolve the matter to your complete satisfaction, you have the right to apply to the Scottish Information Commissioner for a decision.

Yours sincerely,

**Morag Fyfe**

Freedom of Information Officer

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