



Terms of Reference for a review of the 30 year transfer rule

1. These are the terms of reference for a review of the "30 year transfer rule" – the date by which public records must be transferred to The National Archives by government departments. The review and any resulting plan will be produced by Paul Dacre, Editor in Chief Associated Newspapers and member of the Press Complaints Commission, in agreement with the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice and report in the first half of 2008. Mr Dacre will be supported by a panel of experts, including the eminent historian David Cannadine and Joe Pilling, former Permanent Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office.
2. The review will consider whether there should be any changes to the 30-year rule and the options for implementing any such changes. It will include recommendations on appropriate modernisation of the rule by exploring cost, whether certain categories of information should be prioritised (e.g. matters of particular historical interest) and whether certain categories of information should be excluded from consideration altogether (e.g. those areas identified as sensitive such as defence matters).
3. To inform its recommendations, the review panel will consult with
 - a. previous administrations;
 - b. the academic research community and the media;
 - c. a representative sample of government departments and agencies;
and
 - d. other parties identified by the review team.

The recommendations will seek to strike the appropriate balance between openness, cost-effectiveness and the protection of clearly-defined sensitivities.

4. The plan will be grounded in a detailed analysis of the impact of a change to the 30 year rule and its costs and benefits.