

# Document handling

Guidelines for ensuring the preservation of archival documents

**Help us care for the archives by following these document handling guidelines. Please allow some time to familiarise yourself with these guidelines before starting your research.**

Ensure your hands are clean and dry, and avoid wetting your fingers to turn pages

Please do not use your finger to follow the line when reading, use a slip of paper as a guide instead

Please use pencils in the Reading Room for taking handwritten notes; pens are not permitted as ink can leak and irreversibly damage a document

Handle documents carefully, using the edges to turn pages, and be careful of tears

Please do not fold, crease, or lean on any document

Please consult only one file at a time, and maintain the order of loose documents you are consulting – never remove individual sheets from a file

Please avoid putting strain on the spine of an open volume - do not try to force it to lie flat or leave it lying open face down. Foam wedges and book cushions are provided to support volumes. Book pages can be gently secured using snake weights, which are provided in the Reading Room

Large, curled or folded documents should be handled using the weights provided. Please ask staff for help with handling awkward items

Please do not remove delicate documents or photographs from transparent sleeves, or remove any fastenings such as paper clips, staples and treasury tags from documents. If a fastening causes an obstruction, ask for help from staff

Unsleeved photographs should only be handled wearing nitrile or latex gloves. Please ask staff if you require a pair

If you notice any damaged or missing items, please inform a member of staff

And lastly, please do ask staff if you have any document handling queries or require any assistance; we are always happy to help.