



Press Release

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The National Archives to move its Family Records Centre staff and services to Kew

The National Archives and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) are today making a joint announcement about the provision of services to family historians. As part of a review of strategy, which has focused on the huge changes in information management over the last 10 years, The National Archives is announcing its intention to move its Family Records Centre (FRC) staff and services to Kew from their current location at Myddelton Street, Islington, by the end of 2008.

The National Archives and ONS have for some time managed the FRC as a joint operation in Myddelton Street, Islington. Users can access historic census returns in The National Archives part of the Centre and establish basic details of births, deaths and marriages in the indexes maintained by ONS prior to ordering copies of relevant certificates.

ONS has an extensive project in hand to digitise registration records and modernise other aspects of service provision, but has not yet made data and documents available online to the same extent as The National Archives. Over the coming months ONS will be reviewing its future requirements for services at FRC in the light of this project and The National Archives' plans to relocate its service to Kew. The review will be carried out in close collaboration with The National Archives to ensure that service delivery by the two organisations continues to be as closely aligned as possible.

James Strachan, Director of Public Services and Marketing for The National Archives, said: "We have already made most of our material housed at the FRC available online. We remain committed to providing high-quality services to family historians, and are therefore planning to develop new online services that reflect customers' needs, and to integrate FRC onsite services at Kew during 2008. We will retain a dedicated family history service, and retain the jobs of our FRC staff in the new service at Kew."

Peter Murphy, Director of Registration Services at ONS, said: "The hard copy indexes of birth, death and marriage registration, which are available at the FRC, remain for now the resource enabling the Registrar General to meet her statutory obligation to make indexes available to the public. Clearly advances in technology now permit other approaches to providing public access and that is what our review will be concentrating on. We will work closely with National Archives colleagues in conducting the review and hope to be able to reveal its main conclusions by the autumn of this year."

For further information please contact:

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Notes for editors:

- The National Archives, www.nationalarchives.gov.uk, based at Kew, west London, is a government department; it is also an executive agency of the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs. Its 550 staff work in Kew or at the Family Records Centre in Islington. The National Archives leads on record management policy with government, and provides access to government records on its two sites and through digital resources available online. The National Archives also oversees information and archive management across the UK, setting standards and providing advice and support to raise the standards of information management. The vision of the National Archives is to:
 - Lead and transform information management
 - Guarantee the survival of today's information for tomorrow
 - Bring history to life for everyone