

National Meteorological Library & Archive

Forward Plan 2025-2030

Our role and importance

The National Meteorological Library and Archive (NMLA) comprise a repository for unique meteorological and related data together with published and unpublished information relating to the science and history of the weather. It is a recognised Place of Deposit holding materials of national and international importance and as such plays a vital role in preserving these materials for the nation.

Archive Service

The National Meteorological Archive seeks to preserve the national memory of the weather. It fulfils the statutory requirement of the Met Office to preserve and make available Public Records. These records comprise observation data, analyses, charts and meta-data collected and created by the Met Office in the course of its activities. In addition the archive seeks to collect and retain a wide variety of other records and images which complement the Public Records and add to the depth and breadth of the collection.

The National Meteorological Archive is recognised by The National Archives as a repository meeting the Standard for Record Repositories for records created under the authority of the Met Office and its predecessor organisations and subject to the Public Records Act 1958.¹ This collection includes a vast array of charts, a large collection of Ship's Meteorological Logs, extensive collections of climatological returns and daily registers and specific data covering all key meteorological elements including rainfall, wind, sunshine and pressure. The archive also holds a significant collection of rare books and related records on behalf of the Royal Meteorological Society (RMetS) which is managed under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding. In addition there are a large number of private weather records

¹ Meteorological records for England and Wales are held at the National Meteorological Archive in Exeter under the direct responsibility of the NMLA. Records for Scotland are in the process of being transferred under a Memorandum of Understanding to National Records of Scotland (NRS) to be held in appropriate archival conditions. Records for Northern Ireland are held at the Public Records Office Northern Ireland (PRONI). For records held at NRS and at PRONI the National NMLA retains responsibility for making the content of these records accessible and understandable for users but their ongoing preservation, conservation and provision of access is devolved to the archives in which they are held (NRS and PRONI). Note records held in PRONI are subject to the Public Records Act (NI) 1923.

including an outstanding collection of Private Weather Diaries, a significant rare book collection and international records not held by the archives of the nations to which they pertain. The archive thus serves not just as a national source of meteorological knowledge but an international repository of meteorological knowledge.

Library Service

The National Meteorological Library holds one of the country's most comprehensive collections of published meteorological texts and journals as well as being the central repository for both hard copy and increasingly born digital Met Office publications (both published and unpublished). The library also maintains a digital image collection – a mixture of crown images and images provided by the public with a keen interest in the weather.

The library holdings are made directly available to the Met office, the wider scientific community and the general public. The library resource not only supports and promotes the science and history of the Met Office it also provides the public with a learning resource to better understand the science and history of meteorology. The library resource adds value and understanding to those original records held in the archive.

The library and archive together provide one of the country's most comprehensive collections on meteorological not only serving the UK public but a much wider international community.

Access

As a national library and archive service a key aim of the NMLA is to promote awareness of our collections and provide greater access to as wider a user community as possible.

Public access to our information is provided both directly and indirectly through a variety of means including the Met Office website, an online catalogue, a library & archive enquiry service and more recently the Digital Library and Archive. In addition, the NMLA is able to welcome visits by both individuals who wish to consult our records and by interested groups wanting a guided tour of the facilities.

We work closely with the Met Office Communications and Engagement Team and enable access for the media including supplying advice and representatives for television work.

We are constantly seeking new opportunities to enhance access to our holdings and widen participation, usability, reach and engagement by making use of all available dissemination methods. In addition, we are continuing the process of entirely re-cataloguing the archive in order to greatly improve public understanding of the nature and extent of the collections and the wide variety of uses to which the material can be put.

Our ongoing conservation and preservation programme not only follows professional best practice but also ensures the ongoing preservation of our collection. This ultimately also improves access to more materials through both the active conservation of vulnerable items and the preservation scanning of items at risk from over handling.

Strategic Drivers

The Met Office has a vision to 'deliver the most trusted weather and climate intelligence in a radically changing world' and purpose 'helping you make better decisions to stay safe and thrive'. The current Met Office Strategy lists our four priority areas and associated actions:

- Customer Driven
 - Transforming to serve citizens, communities and businesses with trusted services which deliver growth and value.
- Our people and values
 - Our vital core – experts by nature, we live and breathe it, we keep evolving, we're a force for good, we're better together.
- Agility and Innovation
 - Working with Agility to balance innovation, risk and value for money
- Purposeful data and intelligence
 - Increasing value and driving growth by delivering the most accurate, consistent and useable weather and climate data and intelligence.

The NMLA exists within the corporate body of the Met Office and as such our aims and objectives as an operational service flow from the overall strategy and values.

The NMLA is part of Services Strategic Change within the Services Directorate and our remit is governed by the Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG) Customer Supplier Agreement 2021-2027. The (PWSCG) is responsible for overseeing the PWS on behalf of the public, reporting to and advising the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, who in turn reports to the Secretary of State for the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT). The PWSCG acts as the customer on behalf of the public for free at the point of use weather services and on behalf of Public Sector users of PWS outputs. It is responsible for setting the requirement and specifying the outputs, supporting research and development to meet future requirements, meeting international commitments on behalf of UK Government, providing underpinning data for stakeholders and authorising payment for the PWS from DSIT.

We support the corporate priority to be customer driven by maintaining a national collection of scientific and related texts both online and in print and we play a key part in the promotion of scientific output at the Met Office through our website pages, our online

catalogue and our digital library and archive. We are a unique source of historic data for the wider scientific community and climate science area; we provide an enquiries service to the public including schools and students and we work at all times with a view to efficiency and effectiveness in our role. We support and enhance the reputation of the Office on a national and international level through our outstanding levels of customer service as evidenced in regular feedback statistics and through our driver to act as a repository of knowledge for members of the public, members of staff and the scientific community as a whole. As such we contribute to the Met Office value proposition with our trusted services and by supporting the development of our pioneering science.

Key objectives

Our strategy for the future services of the NMLA is very much aligned to the Met Office strategy and we share the wider aim to achieve even closer engagement with our scientific, education and public customers.

Performance Indicators

Detailed performance measures against key short term and longer term library and archive objectives are formally recorded and measured within the staff performance management process. These are reviewed by line management on a regular basis but not less than six monthly intervals. Resulting feedback is passed up and down the reporting chain to ensure that any necessary action is taken to ensure targets are kept on track.

Key activity measures are incorporated within the PWSCG CSA and are reported on a monthly basis.

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3.00	06/2021	06/2022	Updated to reflect new strategy, vision and values
3.1	08/2022	08/2023	Updated to reflect the strategy update
3.1.1	11/2023	11/2024	Reviewed
3.2	08/2025	08/2030	Updated to reflect new Corporate Strategy 2025-2030