

## Terms of reference for a review of the '30 year rule'

1. The Prime Minister has appointed an independent team to review when Government records are made available to the public. This review will centre on whether, in the light of Freedom of Information and other considerations, there should be any changes (and if so what) to the '30 year rule' – the time span under which most public records are transferred to The National Archives and opened for inspection.
2. The review team will be chaired by Paul Dacre (Editor in Chief of Associated Newspapers and member of the Press Complaints Commission), who will work with Professor David Cannadine (Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Professor of British History at the Institute of Historical Research), and Sir Joseph Pilling (former Permanent Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office).
3. The review team will seek to strike the balance between more openness and how long, in the interests of good governance and national security, state papers need to be kept closed. It will identify options for change and for implementation, bearing in mind such factors as cost, whether as part of any new arrangements some categories of information should be prioritised for release, and any other issues the team believes are relevant to modernising the existing system.
4. To inform its recommendations, the review will gather evidence from and, where appropriate, consult with:
  - previous administrations and political figures;
  - users of the records, including the research community, the media and the public;
  - government departments and agencies;
  - others identified by the panel.
5. The review team will report to the Prime Minister and the Lord Chancellor by the summer of 2008.