

Managing Your Archives

Archives policies for small religious archives services v.3*

Caring for archives is a long-term responsibility. It requires that you establish continual and sustained intellectual and physical control over the historical records in your care. This means ensuring the archives are kept secure against environmental and human threats, yet are also made as accessible to users as possible (even if these are only internal users), both in terms of physical availability and through ready access to relevant archive material through finding aids.

Such provision is never achieved by accident. It requires coherent planning, intelligent use of resources and the application of standards. An effective archives service will have a suite of policies that govern its strategic direction, set its priorities, mark the standards expected and give practical guidance for staff and users.

This may sound daunting, yet it applies as much to a small religious archives service as much as to a major national institution.

Developing formal archives policies offers you many advantages. It

- encourages higher standards in the repository
- demonstrates professionalism to a parent organisation and the outside world
- may help secure external funding
- provides accountability for decisions taken
- improves morale
- feeds into forward planning
- embeds good governance
- feeds into better practice through planning and procedures.

Accreditation

This guidance, produced for the Religious Archives Group, is intended as to complement existing online advice on the Religious Archives Group website on practical aspects of archives work. It is an introduction to good practice in producing policies for smaller religious archives services in particular. It may be that at some stage you will wish to seek external validation for your service. One route is the Archive Service Accreditation scheme, launched by The National Archives and partners in 2013.

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/>

Archive Service Accreditation brings plans, policies and procedures together under three headings covering 1. The organisational health of the archives service, 2. managing and looking after collections and 3. relationships with stakeholders. The guidance issued in association with that scheme helps you to understand what is required of an effective repository and how to attain the requisite standard. It is a scalable standard intended for use across the archives sector. Among the first repositories to receive Accredited Status was Exeter Cathedral Library and Archives.

<http://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/content/news/award-for-library-and-archive.ashx>

Although this document is not a guide to Archive Service Accreditation, and does not cover all the aspects of running an archives service, the structure of the accreditation scheme has been adopted in this guidance. However, they are not in any way prescriptive; you may choose to plan your repository's policies in this way, or completely differently. Another approach is that offered through the West Yorkshire Archive Service's Accreditation Scheme for community heritage archives. This is described at <http://nowthen.org/accreditation>

It offers simple online guidance on collecting, retaining and providing access to archives in the form of sections that can be worked through either in isolation or, if appropriate, as part of the scheme. The sections are: Public services; Collections; Caring for collections; Legislation; Members and volunteers; Audience engagement; and Memory collection.

Guidance

Whether you are seeking external validation or not, there is no substitute for practical guidance on compiling policies to assist you.

The National Archives website also offers case studies of practical implementation of policies and procedures. See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/case-studies.htm>

This guidance is organised following the structure of Archive Service Accreditation as follows:

1. [Organisational health](#)

This section looks at policies to ensure the organisation holding the archives has a clear focus and understanding of its role and an appropriate management and staff structure.

2. [Collections](#)

This section looks at how the archives themselves are cared for within your archives service. Most archive policies relate to this area, and some archive services place their policies together, sometimes as a single document.

3. [Stakeholders](#)

This area governs relations with those who come in to use the archive, those who potentially may do, and all those otherwise engaged with the archives service and have an interest in its work.

** Note on the current version.*

The previous version of this Religious Archives Group guidance relied largely for its content on the presentation of good practice in the form links to examples found on existing websites. The impermanence of web-links, however, makes them unsuitable for use in documents intended to last into the medium- or longer term and with a few exceptions, the content of those examples has been drawn out and is presented in the form of first-hand advice.

1 ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH

This section looks at policies to ensure the organisation holding the archives has a clear focus and understanding of its role and an appropriate management and staff structure. It indicates how the policy or plan might be arranged, what it might cover and how it can link or make reference to other policies and plans.

Mission Statement (Accreditation section 1.1)

Archives service Governance and Management (1.2)

Forward Planning (1.3)

Security Policy (Accreditation section 1.4 Resources: Buildings and storage)

Volunteers Policy (Accreditation section 1.6 Resources: Workforce)

Mission Statement

The archives service should have a mission statement (not necessarily under this name), that defines:

- What the archives service is for.
- How the archives fits into the mission and work of the parent organisation of which it is a part.
- The commitment of the parent organisation to the archives.

The mission statement should have high level endorsement from within the parent organisation and there should be a commitment to periodic review to establish how the mission is being met, and if it needs to be updated.

Archives service Governance and Management

This may take the form of a single policy, or a number of policies and plans, information sheets and other documents. Taken together it should cover in broad terms:

- The place of the archives service in the parent organisation
- The staffing requirements of the archives service
- The staffing structure
- Areas of responsibility and accountability
- The role of management and/or any advisory body

Guidance

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/managing-and-governing.htm>

Forward Planning

A Strategic or Forward Plan is important to show that thought has been given to the future of the archives service.

See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/forward-planning.htm>

Introduction

Coverage:

- The mission of the archives service {cite or link}, with reference to any relevant internal regulation or measure, and the reason for the policy, with reference to any relevant regulation or measure.
- Where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the plan lies.

The Plan

Coverage:

- The period covered by the plan.
- The aims of the archives service for the period ahead (however that is defined).
- An outline or analysis of any threats and risks to which the archives service may need to respond.
- Any relevant, measurable targets, dates and the post-holders responsible for meeting them.
- Priorities.
- Any likely problem areas.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the plan

Security Policy

This document may well contain confidential information about the layout and procedures of the archives which could constitute a security risk. It should itself be held securely with access limited to a defined number of staff.

Introduction

Coverage:

- The mission of the archives service {link}, with reference to any relevant internal regulation or measure, and the reason for the policy, with reference to any relevant regulation or measure.
- Where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Overall description of the archives service premises

Coverage:

- Structure of the building(s) and room(s) in which the archives are stored, processed, consulted and exhibited.
- Overall security arrangements. Reference risk assessment {link to Collection Care Policy}. Reference key holders.
- Warning systems and procedures for fire, flood {link to Collection Care Policy} and intruders.
- External holdings, including short-term exhibitions and transfer to external conservators.
- Security of any digital archive.

Procedures

Coverage:

- Checks on recruitment of staff.
- Procedures for users {links to Access Policy, Reading Room Rules}.
- Security, supervision of readers and rights of staff to exercise security functions {link to Access Policy}.
- Identification of items likely to be at risk from theft (e.g. iconic documents, autographs, stamps, photographs) and any special precautions for their safeguard.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the policy

Volunteers Policy

See <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/volunteering-policy.pdf>

Introduction

Coverage:

- Statement of any organisational commitment to opportunities for volunteering, with reference to relevant internal regulation or measure, and the reason for the policy.
- Equal opportunities commitment.
- How volunteers can support the mission of the archives service {link}.
- Where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Volunteering within the archives service

Coverage:

- Definition of a volunteer (a person who undertakes activities on behalf of the archives service, under the direction of its staff, but does not have a contract of employment and is unpaid, although may receive expenses).
- Statement of roles/opportunities suitable for volunteer workers; commitment to professional oversight and responsibility.
- Procedures for recruitment and selection.
- Commitments required of archives service: opportunities for volunteer training and development.
- Role of supervisor and support procedures.
- Commitments (e.g. time, regularity) and undertakings required of volunteers (e.g. handling procedures, confidentiality, data protection).

Procedures

Coverage:

- Application method and contact details.
- Health and Safety and any physical requirements (e.g. lifting and carrying)
- Checks on recruitment of staff (e.g. CRB).
- Handling of volunteer information.
- Support procedures (e.g. performance monitoring).
- Insurance.
- Handling problems and complaints.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the policy

2 COLLECTIONS

This section looks at how the archives themselves are cared for within your archives service. Most archive policies relate to this area, and some archives services place their policies together, sometimes as a single document. The guidance below indicates how the policy or plan might be arranged, what it might cover and how it can link or make reference to other policies and plans.

Collections Management (Accreditation section 2.1)

Collections Development (2.2)

Accessions Procedure

Terms of Deposit

Collections Information (2.3)

Collections Care (2.4)

Packaging Procedure

Handling Procedure

Emergency Plan

Collections Management Policy

Introduction

Coverage:

- The mission of the archives service {cite or link to document}, with reference to any relevant internal regulation or measure, and the reason for the Management Policy, with reference to any relevant regulation or measure.
- Where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.
- Forwarding planning, budget and finances of the archives service, responsibility for assigning and reporting thereon.

Management and staffing structure

Coverage:

- How the work of the archives service is organised and designation of responsibilities {cite or link}.

- Oversight of the archives service and reporting procedure {reference any advisory body}.
- The role of volunteers in the archives service, and roles and decision-making areas restricted to professional staff {possible link to Volunteers Policy}.
- Commitment to Continuing Professional Development and training of staff and volunteers. {possible link to CPD/training Policy}.

Overall description of the accommodation

Coverage:

- Space(s) that are occupied by the archives service. Include office space, user space, exhibitions and lectures rooms, and storage accommodation, including outstations and arrangements with third parties.
- Terms upon which the accommodation is provided for the archives.
- Total space available for storage of archives, the proportion of the space currently filled.
- Current rate of increase in the holdings.

Overall description of the archives (and any other relevant collections)

Coverage:

- The composition in broad terms of the archives, in terms of provenances and acquisition, and coverage in terms of collecting {possible link to Collections Development Policy}.
- Proportion of holdings catalogued, box-listed, and unlisted {possible link to Collections Information Policy}.
- Proportion of holdings needing conservation {possible link to Collections Care Policy}.
- Nature and extent of any non-archival collections.

Policies

Coverage:

- Policies and procedures of the archives service {reference commitment to making policies accessible and to regular evaluation and review}.
- The standards (local, national and international) followed by the archives service
- Any intention to seek Accredited status.
- Procedure in respect of internal or external commercial use of material in the archives.

Relationship to other departments

Coverage: relation of archives department to any associated, allied or similar departments, e.g. Records Management, Library, Special Collections.

Relationship to external stakeholders

Coverage:

- Formal arrangements for liaison or consultation with users (e.g. user group, Friends organisation).
- Arrangements for ad hoc, informal or one-off feedback and complaints {possible link to Complaints Procedure}.

Dates of adoption and evaluation and review of the policy

Collection Development Policy

An Archives Collection Development Policy is a document that should define the archives service's collection and retention of archives including internal transfers of records. It should enable the staff to understand what is to be collected and why, and what should be refused and why.

Introduction

Coverage:

The mission of the archives service {cite or link}, with reference to any relevant internal regulations or measures, and the scope of the Collection Development Policy, with reference to any relevant regulation or measure.

Where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Current collection strengths

Coverage:

What the archives service holds as its core collections. Might include reference to:

- internal records of the organisation (and Records Management/Retention Schedule)
- geographical areas covered
- subject categories covered
- time period covered
- creators covered

Collections of related or allied departments where relevant, e.g. Library

Active collecting

Coverage:

What the service

- is obliged (or ought) to take in (e.g. internal records of the organisation through transfer). Reference records retention schedule where appropriate.
- aims particularly to acquire.

Might reference enhancing existing strengths, broadening existing areas of collection, or collecting in previously neglected area {possible link to Collection Development Plan, if separate}.

Criteria for collection.

Relationship to other collecting institutions.

Terms and conditions

Coverage:

Statement on need for planned collecting and proper agreements not *ad hoc* acquisition.

Terms of acquisition: internal transfer {reference records retention schedule} /exchange/donation/deposit/fixed term loan (with any minimum period)/purchase {link to procedure} {reference any charges to be levied on deposited or loaned collection withdrawn from the repository}.

Preference of type of acquisition (may vary for types of archives).

Reference to agreement form detailing the terms and conditions of donation/deposit {possible link to form/s}.

What formats will be accepted/not accepted/for discussion {possible reference to alternative specialist repositories}.

Requirement for those offering archives to have valid title of ownership and right of transfer.

Acquisitions purchased with the assistance of grant aid.

Accessioning – the information recorded {link to procedure} {reference to appraisal process}.

Transfer of copyright {link to procedure}.

Material (collections) not acquired

Coverage: collections that are not wanted. Grounds may include:

Specified as unwanted through records retention schedule {link}

Content, material not meeting active collecting criteria or judged of insufficient interest or originality.

Provenance, e.g. archives created by foreign nationals or institutions relating to their own countries; material that would normally be acquired by other archive repositories; records held in another record repository; material where ownership is unclear or disputed.

Format, archives of a specialist nature requiring skills or equipment beyond the resources; art; artefacts.

Uniqueness, e.g. copies or facsimiles, except in exceptional circumstances; printed material.

Access, e.g. archives that would require a long closure period.

Use, i.e. records that are still in current or semi-current use.

Capacity, e.g. collections that would require a disproportionate amount of space or cataloguing for anticipated use.

Condition, archives in poor condition that would require a disproportionate amount of resources to render stable and make accessible {link to Collections Care Policy}.

De-accessioning

Guidance

See <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/Deaccessioning-and-disposal-guide.pdf>

Coverage:

Commitment to the preservation of the integrity of the archives and the circumstances in which material may be removed from the repository. For example,

- material acquired prior to the introduction of the Collections Development Policy which
 - belongs more properly another repository
 - is duplicate, ephemeral or non-archival
 - is in a specialist format which is either no longer accessible at a reasonable cost, or which poses a threat {link to Collections Care Policy}
 - would otherwise not meet the criteria in section 5
- material acquired after the introduction of the Collections Development Policy which on investigation in the appraisal process
 - is duplicate, ephemeral or non-archival
 - is in a specialist format which is no longer accessible at a reasonable cost, or which poses a threat
- material which would be vulnerable should the department become unable to provide proper care for the collections
- material which would be de-accessioned should the owner request the return of items held on loan or deposit

Policy with regard to disposition of non-accessioned/de-accessioned material, including selling material and use of funds raised, principles by which decisions will be made {reference the post-holder or body responsible}.

Note of the parties to call upon in cases of dispute.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the policy

Accessions Procedure

Introduction

Statement as to where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Accessioning process

Statement on steps to be taken

- Preliminary assessment of condition, organisation and content
- Transfer agreement {reference terms of transfer – gift, deposit etc.}
- Entry into Accessions Register.

Information required

Coverage: information required in Accessions Register. May include:

- Accession number and date of entry.
- Date material received and who from, with contact details.
- Title of accession.
- Creator.
- Provenance and brief administrative/biographical history of the creator.
- Contents formats.
- Extent.
- Brief description.
- Related material already held.
- Type of acquisition (donation/transfer/deposit) etc.
- Any known restrictions.
- Notes.
- Location in repository.
- Archivist's signature and date of acknowledgement.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the procedure.

Terms of Deposit

Introduction

Coverage: where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the procedure lies.

Terms and conditions

Coverage:

- Statement on terms of transfer: gift/deposit/loan/transfer/purchase and compatibility with the Terms and Conditions in the Collection Development Policy {link} {reference right to transfer ownership have been established}.
- Assignment of copyright or if not assigned, procedure for allowing copying.
- Responsibility for suitable storage and preservation where necessary {reference conditions where conservation/preservation treatment can be undertaken}.
- Statement on limits of responsibility to 'all reasonable care to preserve records from theft, loss or destruction'.
- Measures permitted to allow access, may include:
 - copying
 - cataloguing
 - numbering/foliation.
- Statement on creating a record of work done on the collection {reference reclaiming expenditure if collection is withdrawn}.
- Right to return or otherwise discard any records not judged to merit permanent preservation {link to Collection Development Policy}.

Mediation

Coverage: arrangements for mediation in cases of uncertainty, disagreement or dispute.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the procedure.

Collection Information Policy

Introduction

Coverage:

- The mission of the archives service {link}, with reference to any relevant external or internal regulations or measures, and the scope of the Collection Information Policy, with reference to any relevant regulation or measure.
- Where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Current holdings

Coverage:

- What records the archives service holds {link to Collections Development Policy}
- Proportions of the holdings listed and to what level. May include reference to:
 - proportion fully catalogued
 - proportion catalogued but requiring updating to bring into line with current standards
 - proportion boxlisted or similar
 - proportion collection level listed
 - proportion accessioned only

Current finding aids to holdings

Coverage:

- General and overall information on the collections currently available and how maintained {link to Access Policy} {reference indexes and guides to holdings} {reference location guide for disaster planning and link to Emergency Plan}.
- Existing finding aids {reference national and international standards, inhouse procedures and standards and link to manual}.
- Collection information provided to external sources and networks (TNA's Discovery, Archives Hub, AIM 25)
- Software(s) used by the department.
- Online access. Reference digitisation and research services (if offered) and terms. {link to Procedure} {link to Collections Information Policy}.
- Accessioning procedure {link to Procedure}.

Future planning

Coverage:

- Plans to reduce any backlog. Might include reference to enhancing existing strengths, broadening existing areas, or cataloguing previously neglected areas. Might include reference to user surveys or other feedback.
- Planned levels of listing.
- Priorisation for listing.
- Cataloguing policy with regard to deposited and loaned collections.

Information procedures

Coverage:

- Reference to internal or shared manuals and templates covering collections information processes (e.g. accessioning, cataloguing, indexing)
- Implementation of Data Protection Act and (if relevant) Freedom of Information Act.
- Copyright {link to procedures}

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the policy

Collections Care Policy

Introduction

Statement on the mission of the archives services {link}, with reference to any relevant internal regulation or measure, and the reason(s) for the Collections Care Policy, with reference to any relevant regulation or measure.

Statement as to where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Management of Collections Care

Coverage:

- Statement of principles. Reference identified strategic risks and their management, commitment to training of staff and correct instruction of users {links to Training Programme, Reading Room Rules, Handling Procedure, Packaging Procedure}.
- How the conservation work is organised and designation of responsibilities {link to Organisational Staff Plan} {reference to commitment to professional conservators}.
- Role of volunteers in Collections care. {link to Volunteers Policy}.

Archives storage accommodation

Coverage:

- Individual units of storage accommodation occupied by the archives department with specifications of rooms and space available in them. Include outstations and arrangements with third parties.
- Reference to risk analysis of accommodation. {link to Security Policy}
- Total space available for storage of archives and the proportion currently filled
- Current rate of increase in the holdings.
- Plans for increasing available accommodation, if there is less than five years storage, may include
 - de-accessioning
 - consolidation and repackaging
 - reconfiguration of space
 - acquiring or building further archives accommodation.

Description of Collections care

Coverage:

- Proportions of holdings with primary and appropriate secondary packaging.

- Proportion of holdings needing conservation {Reference types of problems faced (e.g. fragile newspaper cuttings, cellulose nitrate based film, photographic negatives, rolled maps and other outsize items)}.
- Proportion of holdings in different formats (e.g. paper, photographs, CDs).
- Conservation facilities available
- Prioritisation of conservation
 - historical value
 - actual or anticipated use
 - vulnerability
 - risk posed to other material
 - ease of creating surrogate or facsimile copy
 - ownership (i.e. is it deposited or loaned material)
 - cost and possibility of external or special funding

Collections care practice

Coverage:

- National and international standards adopted as best practice.
- Storage and handling of different format material in the archives {reference electronic records if applicable} {link to Handling Procedure}
- Preventive action {link to Packaging Procedure} {reference to cleaning, both items and storage areas.
- Monitoring
 - heat and relative humidity
 - light
 - dirt
 - pests {link to Pest Management Strategy}.

{reference regular auditing of material} {reference regular checking of equipment}.

- Processing new collections {link to Accessions Procedure}.
- Remedial action {reference production of digital surrogates}.
- Restrictions to access to fragile or vulnerable material {link to Access Policy}.
- Disaster planning. Reference testing the plan {link to Emergency Plan}.

Displaying and loaning archives

Coverage:

- Policy with regard to display of material {possible link to procedure}.
- Policy on loaning material to outside organisations, including depositors.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the policy

Archives Packaging Procedure

Introduction

Coverage: where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the procedure lies.

Standards

Coverage: commitment to best practice {link to Collections Care Policy}, use of professional conservators and archival quality packaging {reference use of volunteers} {link to Volunteers Policy}.

Packaging process

Coverage:

- Material found damaged {link to Collections Care Policy}.
- Removal and replacement of inappropriate and potentially damaging packaging.
- Removal and replacement of inappropriate and potentially damaging fastenings, bindings and attachments {reference handling of sellotape}.
- Use of archival packaging
 - archival quality primary and secondary packaging material
 - appropriate size and use of packaging
 - retain integrity of existing units
 - maximum weight
 - store flat
 - clear identification of folders and boxes {possible reference foliation}.
- Materials requiring special care, e.g.
 - photographs and other photographic media
 - pastel drawings
 - newspaper cuttings
 - outsize material (plans, maps, blueprints, posters).

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the procedure.

Archives Handling Procedure

Introduction

Coverage: where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Responsibilities

Coverage: responsibility for care of collections {reference responsibility of staff, volunteers and users to look after material} {links to Collections Care Policy and Reading Room Rules}.

Handling requirements

Coverage:

- Statement on good handling, e.g.
 - cleanliness of hands
 - moving and placing items
 - use of weights and supports
 - rules in consulting material
 - tracing maps etc.
 - packaging and rearranging.
 - handling special material - photographs, outsize items, books, parchment.
- Commitment to staff training in lifting and carrying {possible link to Training Policy}.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the procedure.

Archives Emergency Plan

This document may well contain confidential information about the layout and procedures of the archives which could constitute a security risk. It should itself be held securely with access limited to a defined number of staff.

Introduction

Coverage: where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the plan lies.

Risk assessment

Coverage:

- Potential dangers from flood and actions to mitigate these, e.g.
 - rainstorm
 - burst waterpipes
 - blocked drains or gutters
 - water from fire-fighting.

- Potential dangers from fire and actions to mitigate these, e.g.
 - open fires
 - sources of flame or heat such as kitchens or workshops
 - electrical short-circuits
 - lightning strike
 - stored highly inflammable materials.

- Where appropriate, other potential dangers to the repository and actions to mitigate these, e.g.
 - terrorist attack
 - civil unrest
 - accident.

Procedures

Coverage:

- Monitoring and safeguarding procedures, including 'out-of-hours' service.
- Equipment adopted and method of usage [reference arrangements for checking reliability of equipment].
- Standard working precautions.
 - do not store or leave documents on the floor
 - outside working hours, do not leave documents on tables or beside windows
 - store archives away from external doors, walls and windows

- make security copies of documents of special value and store offsite
- do not allow litter to accumulate inside or outside the building
- be alert to any suspicious packages
- training in use of and monitoring equipment
- training in the Emergency Plan
- predetermined action and communication plans, with responsibilities.
- Emergency planning.
 - record the location of switches, valves, extinguishers
 - store securely but accessibly offsite duplicate sets of finding aids, spare keys and plans of the premises
 - prepare list of contact details of people who need to be contacted for help in an emergency, with copies on and off site, including responsible staff members, caretaker, plumbers, locksmiths, glaziers
 - longer term contact list: insurance company, conservators, and specialist drying restoration service, computer consultancy specialising in the recovery of computers from disaster
 - order of priorities for rescuing documents in the event of an emergency and ensure these documents are clearly identified and their locations recorded.
 - carry out regular drills
 - prepare a disaster kit and ensure staff and volunteers are aware of it and its contents
- Commitment to communication with internal and external stakeholders in the event of an emergency.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the Emergency Plan

3 STAKEHOLDERS

This area governs the archives service's relations with those who use the archive, those who potentially may do, and all those otherwise engaged with the archives service and have an interest in its work. The guidance presented below indicates how the policy or plan might be arranged, what it might cover and how it can link or make reference to other policies and plans.

Archives Access Policy (Accreditation section 3.1)

Signing-in Procedure

Reading Room Rules

Copying Procedure

Archives Access Policy

Introduction

Coverage:

- The mission of the archives service {link}, with reference to any relevant external or internal regulation or measure, and the reason(s) for allowing access, with reference to any relevant regulation or measure.
- Where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the policy lies.

Purpose and commitment of Access Policy

Coverage:

- Statement on identified key users, communities or bodies served by the archives service (internal and external).
- The organisation's commitment to allowing and, if appropriate, enhancing access to the archives, covering both intellectual access and physical access and referring to user-groups {link to Engagement Policy if relevant}
- Statement on handling of external requests and enquiries
- Right of archives service to restrict access.

General information

Coverage:

- Basic information: location and opening hours, need for prior appointment and supporting documentation including reader identification, any charges, general facilities available (wifi, power sockets for laptops, parking, lockers, toilet), any access problems to the premises, contact information.
- Any different access arrangements for internal users.
- Transport issues (e.g. car-parking, public transport available).
- Information facilities available (archives catalogues, indexes, microfiche readers, reference books, help desk).
- Online access {link to Collections Information Policy} {reference digitisation and research services (if offered)} {possible link to procedure}.
- Access to digital/microfilm/microfiche material held by the Archives department (where relevant) {link to Collections Information Policy}.
- Procedure for remote enquiries (contact, time to be allowed for reply, any prioritisation, any fees for researching information).

Terms and conditions for users

Coverage:

- General terms upon which researchers are allowed to see archives material {link to Reading Room Rules or include them here} {reference registration information required of readers}.
- Process for ordering items on the day/in advance {link to Ordering Procedure}.
- Security, supervision of readers and rights of staff to exercise security functions {link to Security Policy}.
- Treatment of photography/photocopying of material {link to procedure}.
Implementation of copyright rules and reference to procedure to obtain permission to reproduce copyrighted material {link to procedure}.
- Handling closures and restrictions to access.
 - Commitment to identification of material unsuitable for access.
 - Data Protection. Include, if relevant, handling research exemptions and DPA subject access enquiries.
 - Items too fragile for production {link to Collections Care Policy}.
- Access conditions to lightly listed or unlisted material.

Feedback

Coverage:

- Registration information required of researchers and how it is treated {link to Signing-In Procedure}.
- Methods (if any) of acquiring and recording user feedback, and procedures for analysis and acting upon it.

- Contact information on where to send feedback, complaints and queries {link to Complaints Procedure}.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the policy

Signing-in Procedure

Introduction

Coverage: where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the procedure lies.

Handling of information

Coverage: commitment to non-transfer of information, safeguarding and treatment of personal information provided.

Signing-in process

Coverage:

- How to register, information required and I.D. requirements {reference any other requirements (e.g. letter of reference, charge)}
- Procedure for signing in on future visits {reference whether reader's card provided.
- Statement that signing in constitutes acceptance of and agreement to abide by Reading Room Rules {link}, and laws on copyright {link to copying procedure}, data protection, and any other regulations indicated by the archives service.

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the procedure

Reading Room Rules

Coverage:

- Conditions of admission to repository on registration, need for compliance with the regulations and obligation to observe the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988 and Data Protection Act 1998. {link to Signing-In Procedure}
- Rules covering:
 - what can be taken into the Reading Room (generally easier to manage than a list of prohibited items).
 - how to use the Reading Room (ordering original material, using non-original material).
 - how physically to handle original material, information on equipment provided (e.g. book-rests, weights) {link to Handling Procedure}
 - reproduction of items (copyright) and use of photography {link to procedure/s}
 - conduct in the repository

Copying Procedure

Introduction

Coverage: where authority for approval and responsibility for implementation of the procedure lies.

Terms

Coverage:

- Right to refuse copying of fragile items for preservation reasons {link to Collections Care Policy}
- Right to refuse copying of material restricted under data protection legislation
- Copyright. Reference 'fair dealing'. Reference how to request permission to copy and use (for publication, exhibition or commercial purposes) material in copyright. Reference copyright declaration form
- Staff copying service if provided. Reference charges.

Self-service copying

- Self-service photography of records.
 - undertaking to observe rules on copyright {link to Reading Room Rules}
 - devices must operate in 'silent' mode
 - use of the device does not pose a threat to the safety of the records, or infringe privacy of other people
 - cameras, camcorders and digital cameras (including mobile phones and similar) must be in still photography mode
 - no flash photography
 - document handling practices {link}
- Statement on self-service photocopying/scanning of records.
- Users have undertaken to observe rules on copyright {link to Reading Room Rules}

Date of adoption and date of evaluation and review of the procedure.

Compiled by T.E. Powell
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Crown Copyright