
Issued January 2020

1 Scope

1.1 In order to care for its collections effectively, the Royal Berkshire Archives captures information about them during various service activities. This policy defines what information we capture, when and why:

- At the point of deposit and during the accessioning process
- During cataloguing
- Through location control
- During conservation and preservation activities
- Concerning withdrawal or disposal

1.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the acquisitions, cataloguing and preservation policies.

2 Governing standards

2.1 The Royal Berkshire Archives has adopted the following standards which are relevant to our capture of collections information:

- The National Archives Archive Service Accreditation Standard
- General Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G))

2.2 The Archives will conform to the following legislation relating to the capture and use of information:

- Data Protection Act 1998
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018

2.3 In addition the Archives will seek to implement best practice guidance on collections information from the National Archives, the Archives and Records Association, and other recognised national bodies.

3 Principles

- That information captured is proportionate to that necessary to keep the collection and any rights within it safe
- That collections information supports service activities, including planning and prioritisation of work
- That the default position is that information about archives will be retained permanently
- That information is accurate and that accuracy is checked over time
- That information can be used to scrutinise the service's performance

4 Information captured at the point of deposit and accessioning

4.1 Information will be captured about the provenance of the archives we collect. This will inform potential future questions on subjects such as legal ownership and control. Essential information recorded includes terms of acquisition (whether as a deposit or a gift), identity of the person or organisation transferring the archives, the nature and contents of the records, and agreements about potential disposal.

4.2 Information will be captured about ownership of the archives we collect. The legal transfer of the collection will be recorded through the signing by both parties of a receipt (both paper and electronic copies are accepted). The information on the receipt will be recorded in an official accessions register and relevant correspondence placed on a depositor's file. Transfers of digital material are additionally recorded in the Digital Assets Register.

4.3 Information about accessions can be held in either hard copy or electronic form. If the former, it is kept within our four-hour fire protected area; if the latter, it is stored on a secure server. It is also transferred to the National Register of Archives, via the National Archives' annual survey of accessions to repositories.

5 Information captured at cataloguing and the production of finding aids

5.1 Information will be captured that allows archives to be made searchable and available for research by the public. Catalogue information is created that conforms to General International Standard Archival Description (ISAD(G)), including an identifier reference, title, extent and date, together with any restrictions on access due to condition or content. Information is created in multi-level form which allows for collections or fonds to be identified as such and information to be captured at fonds level. This information is captured electronically within a maintained system.

5.2 All catalogue information will be made publicly available. This is usually via our online catalogue or hard copies within our reading room. Information may also be shared with third parties such as The National Archives' Discovery catalogue. Older catalogue information, which is only available in hard copy, will be added to the electronic system as resources allow.

5.3 Catalogue information is held electronically on a secure server and duplicated for use by the public via a searchable interface. Catalogue information about digital archives is additionally stored within a digital preservation system.

5.4 Catalogue information may also be transferred into other finding aids, such as handlists, source guides and indexes. This information transfer is designed to allow different paths into researching the collections. Finding aid information is not routinely generated for all archives and its creation will be informed by our customer services policy.

6 Information captured during collections care or treatment

6.1 Information will be captured that describes the physical condition of archives, including material, format, damage and risks. This is so the current condition can be recorded as well as the nature of any intervention we make. All treatments will be recorded whether or not they change condition. Information may include a visual record of archives before, during and after treatment.

7 Information captured during storage and movement

7.1 Information will be captured about the location of archives in our strongrooms. This will be done at the accessioning stage and again at cataloguing. Information will allow individual, produceable items to be located to shelf level to ensure confidence about their whereabouts and speed of retrieval. This information will be kept in both electronic and hard copy form so that it is available in the event of loss of IT or utilities; the electronic version will be backed up on a secure server.

7.2 Information will be captured at the point of use of archives by or for customers. This will be to ensure their safety when not in their usual location and to monitor demand. We will note the production of archives and track their position within or without the service. This information is not likely to be retained permanently but will be retained long enough to provide confidence that archives are safe. Information captured may include customer names but will not include other identifying data and any such information will be removed from statistical summaries.

8 Information captured during withdrawal and disposal

8.1 Information will be captured about temporary withdrawal to ensure the security of archives while they are outside the service. This will include personal information about the depositor or third party who is withdrawing archives, as well as location information. This information will be kept in a register of withdrawals and also recorded on the depositor's file. Where archives are being withdrawn for display, information will be captured about the conditions and security of the environment where the archives will be temporarily kept.

8.2 Information will be captured about archives that are no longer part of the collections. This is to record their exit from our care. Permanent withdrawals by depositors will be recorded in the accessions register and on the depositor file and kept securely in our strongrooms. The archives themselves may be captured in digital form if permission is given. If the service decides that archives no longer fall within the acquisitions policy then the decision will be recorded in the accessions register and on the depositor file. More detail about disposals is given in the acquisitions policy.