

# **Rotherham Heritage Services**

## **Archives and Local Studies**

### **Access Policy**

**2018 - 2022**

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**Archives and Local Studies**

**Access Policy**

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is part of a suite of policies relating to the management, preservation, documentation and access of the archives and local studies collections to ensure their long-term survival and usability. It should be read in conjunction with the Archives and Local Studies Collections Development and Information Policies, which set out the principles for acquisition and the approach to maintaining accurate documentation of the collections, alongside the Rotherham Heritage Services Access Policy Statement.

1.2 It underpins the delivery of Rotherham Heritage Service's Manifesto and Forward Plan, 2018-2022.

1.3 Rotherham Heritage Service's overall vision is:

'Revealing Rotherham's small wonders and big stories'

And its statement of purpose is to:

'bring people together to build connections, spark imaginations  
and  
create positive and renowned Rotherham stories'

1.4 The vision and statement of purpose is further explored through the Service's Manifesto, which recognises the diversity of Rotherham's heritage and its stories provide significant and meaningful opportunities to enable it to *become one of the most child-friendly museum and heritage services in the UK, to create stronger and more connected communities and to inspire participation and engagement*. The difference will be that this journey will *place children and young people at the heart of what it does*.

1.5 There are six strategic aims at the heart of the Forward Plan, which provide a new focus for the Service and will challenge it to transform the way services are delivered for its audiences through collaborations with partners and stakeholders. These aims are as follows:

- **Strategic Aim 1:** Explore and shape the future direction of the Service with children and young people;
- **Strategic Aim 2:** Implement a strong programme-led approach ensuring children and young people play a key role across Heritage Services;
- **Strategic Aim 3:** Create a framework for engagement, interaction and involvement for children and young people and their families, carers and other adults involved;

- **Strategic Aim 4:** Review, develop and enrich the Service's museum, archive and local studies collections and the stories they contain;
- **Strategic Aim 5:** Raise the profile of Rotherham's heritage attracting more visitors and recognition and
- **Strategic Aim 6:** Develop and strengthen the resilience of the organisation.

1.6 The strategic aims are underpinned by a series of 13 objectives, which are laid out in a supporting Action Plan in the Forward Plan.

1.7 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies play a key role in the delivery of this plan and will aim to increase its relevance and engagement and participation with children and young people and underrepresented communities in Rotherham, whilst continuing to serve the wider archival community.

## **2. Purpose and Scope**

2.1 This policy examines in detail Rotherham Archives and Local Studies planned approach to access (physical and intellectual, onsite, remote and through wider engagement) to the collections under its care, which meet the needs of its users, potential users and stakeholders.

2.2 It is supported by the Access Statement for Clifton Park Museum<sup>1</sup>, which is the building where the Archives and Local Studies searchroom is located. This is a requirement for VisitEngland as part of the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Standard.

2.3 The policy confirms any restrictions on access, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies' commitment to comply with relevant legislation and regulations and outlines the role of fees and charges.

2.4 The policy does not cover museum objects, which are covered by a separate Access Policy Statement. This should be read alongside this.

2.5 It also does not cover the semi-current records of the Council held by the Records Management section, unless they have been identified as archives and transferred to the Service.

## **3. Ethics, Legislation and Standards**

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1

3.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies operates within the legislative framework of the Public Libraries Act, Public Records Acts, Local Government Act, General Data Protection Regulation (hereafter GDPR), Freedom of Information Act (hereafter FOIA), Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations, Representation of the People Act and Environmental Information Regulations, together with the Parochial Registers and Records Measure. All material in the care of the Service will be documented and made available for research in strict accordance with these Acts and Regulations. This includes archives:

- By designation of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, public and presentation records relating exclusively to the areas of Rotherham Metropolitan District to be placed in a local place of deposit under the Public Records Act 1958, s. 4(1) (3) and 3(6);
- By designation of the Master of Rolls through the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts/The National Archives, manorial and tithe documents as indicated by various legislation including the Law of Property Act, 1922 and the Tithe Act, 1936.

3.2 It also adheres to the following:

- Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland Code of Ethics (2018);
- Standard for Record Repositories, The National Archives (2004);
- Customer Access Strategy, Rotherham Council (2018).

#### **4. Access Principles**

4.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies is committed to facilitating access to its collections and resources and to inspire participation and engagement.

4.2 Access to the collections and its resources through the Archives and Local Studies searchroom is provided free of charge.

4.3 Staff aim to deliver high levels of customer care, to facilitate access as efficiently as possible and develop services and access methods as required.

4.4 To observe the aims and objectives outlined within the Council's Customer Access Strategy.

#### **5. Onsite Access**

- 5.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies searchroom is located in Clifton Park Museum. It is open to the public 27 hours a week. The opening times can be found on the Council's Archives and Local Studies webpages<sup>2</sup>.
- 5.2 Access to the building and its facilities is described in the Access Statement for Clifton Park Museum. See Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Users of the searchroom can expect the following;
- Trained staff available to advise on suitable sources of information held by Rotherham Archives and Local Studies or to signpost elsewhere;
  - Staff to be identifiable;
  - A range of finding aids, catalogues and reference material;
  - Advice and guidance on the suitable handling of original materials and appropriate equipment for use including foam supports, weights, gloves and polyester sleeves.
  - Free internet access and computing facilities with free access to the Findmypast website.
- 5.4 Where archives and local studies material is stored onsite, access is generally on demand. Where archives and local studies material is held offsite, material can be ordered in person, over the telephone or by email. Retrievals are undertaken weekly. This is advertised widely in order to meet expectation.
- 5.5 Items which have surrogates are not normally made available in their original format except in the case of a specialist request.
- 5.6 A range of reprographics services is available that meet the need of researchers without placing material at risk of damage and which are provided in line with the requirements of copyright legislation. Further information is available in the Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Reprographic Policy.
- 5.7 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies aim to provide access to material while ensuring the long-term preservation needs of the collections. The condition of an item and the likelihood further handling will cause damage will be taken into account before it is produced. If an item is unable to be produced, consideration will be given to other methods of access e.g. digitisation.

## **6. Remote access**

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200062/libraries/718/archives\\_and\\_local\\_history](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/info/200062/libraries/718/archives_and_local_history)

- 6.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies understands that many of its users are unable to visit in person or would prefer to access information remotely. It has, therefore, developed a research service. This includes:
- Routine enquiries about archives and local studies services. This includes questions about opening hours, making bookings and the availability of certain sources. There is no charge for this service;
  - Requests for photocopies or transcripts, for example, extracts from books, pamphlets, newspapers and journals. There is a charge for this service. The cost includes the cost of the copies, staff time and postage;
  - Requests for research into original documents. There is a charge for this service and an estimate of the research charges is given in advance.

See section 7 for further information about fees and charges.

- 6.2 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies also provide information online about its collections and services both for local and more remote users through the Council's Archives and Local Studies webpages, the Clifton Park and Museum website and various social media platforms.
- 6.3 The online catalogue for Rotherham Archives and Local Studies can be accessed at <http://archives.rotherham.gov.uk/calmview/> and new collections information is added every 3 months.
- 6.4 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies also aim to make as much information as possible available in other web directories and regional/national networks such as The National Archives Discovery catalogue. This includes collections information, contact details and opening hours.
- 6.5 A variety of archive material has also been digitised in conjunction with a third party provider and copies of items are available through Findmypast (<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/>).
- 6.6 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies aims to use various social media platforms in order to provide information about the collections, along with up-to-date information on news and events. This includes the Council's Culture and Leisure Twitter feed and the Clifton Park and Museum Facebook page.

## **7. Fees and Charges**

- 7.1 Any requests for information about Rotherham Archives and Local Studies collections and services will be provided free of charge.



- 7.2 Requests for photocopies or transcripts, for example, extracts from books, pamphlets, newspapers and journals and for more in-depth research will be charged as stated in the schedule of fees and charges for Rotherham Heritage Services.
- 7.3 Charges are also levied for digital copies; personal use of cameras in the searchroom and for reproduction. Where applicable, reproduction requests are subject to a preservation assessment, copyright law and re-use of public sector information regulations.
- 7.4 The schedule of fees and charges are available on request, in the searchroom and on the Council's website<sup>3</sup>.
- 7.5 Advance notice is given of any applicable fees and charges and where charges are payable they must be paid in advance.
- 7.6 Fees and charges are reviewed annually.

## **8. Restrictions on Access**

- 8.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies makes all records (or the information they contain) that it holds routinely available for public consultation and research unless access is:
- Prevented by statutory exemption (see below);
  - Against the wishes of a private depositor;
  - Likely to risk loss of a depositor's property;
  - Likely to cause physical damage to an item.

These restrictions may be waived

- For depositors consulting their own records subject to adequate identification;
- For researchers authorised (in writing) by the depositor;
- For Government security or law enforcement agencies, in line with relevant legislation outlined in section 3.

- 8.2 Statutory exemptions include:

8.2.1 Court records (FOIA (s.32), Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 s.1)

Exempt for 30 years, except in relation to sensitive personal data, which is exempt for 100 years. Requests for access within the exempt period must be made to the appropriate court. Anyone requesting access should make a Data Subject Access Request.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3741/heritage\\_services\\_-\\_fees\\_and\\_charges](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3741/heritage_services_-_fees_and_charges)

### 8.2.2 Coroners' Records (FOIA s.32)

Generally exempt for 30 years. Coroners' records are treated as Court records under FOIA once they have been transferred under the Public Records Act and are covered by an absolute exemption.

Coroners' records between 30 and 75 years old may contain sensitive personal data (e.g. witness statements). For access, a research request needs to be submitted. Permission from the depositing body (or successor body) may need to be contacted for permission prior to any release of information from the archives.

### 8.2.3 National Health Service records (FOIA ss.38, 40, 41, 44, GDPR and Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 413)

Exempt for 100 years for records containing sensitive personal data (except Register of Deaths which are open). If the date of birth is unclear the guidelines from After the One Hundred Year Rule<sup>4</sup> are used:

- medical records of adults closed for 84 years
- medical records of children closed for 93 years
- medical records of infants closed for 100 years.

For further guidance from The National Archives on access to NHS Records transferred to a local place of deposit under the Public Records Act see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/access-tonhs-records-transferred-to-places-of-deposit.pdf>

### 8.2.4 Local authority records (including predecessor urban and rural district councils, civil parishes and townships).

Generally open, except for records relating to legal actions or investigations (exempt s.30 (1)) for 30 years, and where GDPR and other legislation applies in relation to personal data.

Specific categories of local authority records are exempt for longer periods:

- School records (FOIA s.40, GDPR and Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 414)  
Rotherham Council applies the following guidelines for access to school records: Exempt for 30 years – log books, admission registers, punishment books and managers' and governor's minutes.  
Information can be requested as a Subject Access Request.
- Poor Law and Public Assistance Institutions (FOIA s.40 and GDPR)

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<sup>4</sup> *After the Hundred Year Rule*, Colin Gale and Catherine Redfern (Health Archives Group, 2004)

Exempt for 100 years – sensitive medical records and Creed Registers.

- Electoral registers (Representation of the People Act, 2002)  
The current Full electoral register is available to view at Riverside House (by appointment through Customer Services).

Non-current electoral registers are open and available for use in Rotherham Archives and Local Studies searchroom.

Handwritten notes may be made only (no photocopying or equivalent).

8.2.5 Police records (Rotherham District); as guided by South Yorkshire Police. Please note that the depositing body may need to be contacted for permission prior to any release of information from the archives.

#### 8.2.6 Methodist records

Guidelines issued by The Methodist Church Archives and History Committee

Minutes of meetings - exempt for 30 years.

Confidential material – exempt for 75 years (complaints, disciplinary records, assessment files).

#### 8.2.7 Other privately deposited records (FOIA s. 41)

Some privately owned records may be exempt if they were deposited with a confidentiality agreement between Rotherham Archives and Local Studies and the owner.

8.2 There may be restrictions on access to uncatalogued material (FOIA s.22), in that they are intended for publication at a future date as part of Rotherham Archives and Local Studies cataloguing action plan.

## 9. Engagement and Promotion

9.1 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies has a commitment, guided by the Service's Forward Plan to open up the collections in a variety of ways to encourage engagement and active participation. This includes:

- Exhibitions;
- Events and activities;
- Workshops and talks;
- School sessions;
- Digitisation;
- Creative use to encourage wider engagement and active participation;
- Volunteering and work experience placements.

- 9.3 The long term aim of the Service is to develop, use and embrace a platform of co-creation ensuring children and young people are actively involved and heard within the Service. This will, therefore, determine future engagement and audience development plans.
- 9.4 The Archive and Local Studies collections will also be used for advocacy and promotion both internally and externally. Examples will include utilising the Service's websites and Facebook pages; local and national media and for fundraising.

## **10. Review**

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed as required to take into account changes in circumstances and will be reviewed after 4 years in line with the Service's Forward Plan.

## **11. Appendices**

### **11.1 Appendix 1 – Access Statement for Clifton Park Museum**

**Photos are available in the full version**

#### **Access Statement for Clifton Park Museum**

This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with disabilities, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our visitors.

##### **Introduction**

Clifton Park Museum is a Grade II\* listed building set in a Grade II listed Park. The Museum is situated on a main road, approximately half a mile up a hill, with parts of it steep from Rotherham Town Centre. Benches are situated from the bottom of the park up to the Museum. The Museum which is VAQAS accredited tells the story of Rotherham and it's borough and the Walker family as well as being the home to the York & Lancaster Regimental Museum, Archives & Local Studies and the Registration Services venue for celebratory services.

The Museum is located on two floors with lift and stair access to galleries on the first floor. You should allow at least 1.5 hours for your visit. A wheelchair is available on request for loan, free of charge for use inside the Museum. Mobility scooters are available for use in both the Park and Museum from the nearby garden building which is accessed via a level tarmac surface. A £5.00 returnable deposit is required for a one-two hour use. Longer use can be agreed subject to availability.

There are many interactive elements within the galleries which visitors are encouraged to touch and use.

You can also enjoy our Café and Shop, which sells a broad range of souvenirs and gifts. These are both situated on the ground floor with step free access.

Visitor Services staff are available throughout the building should you require any assistance.

##### **Pre-Arrival**

For full details and maps on how to reach us please see the directions section of our website, alternatively you can plan your journey by car or public transport using <http://www.traveline.info>; simply enter your postcode and ours, which is S65 2AA to get directions.

The nearest train station is Rotherham which is approximately three quarters of a mile away. Taxis are available from here along with other taxi numbers. Alternatively the bus station is on the opposite side of the road, a couple of minutes flat walk away.

The nearest bus stop is directly outside the Museum. If travelling from the Bus Station you need to catch the number 14. When you get off the bus you will go up a moderate incline to the main Museum entrance which is step free with automatic doors. If travelling from the Museum back to the Bus Station you need to catch the number 14 on the opposite side of the road, a couple of minutes walk away on a relatively flat path.

The Museum is situated at the top of a hill if coming from the Town Centre or on a moderate hill if coming from the opposite direction. There is a moderate incline if walking from the main road to the Museum entrance, the paths around the Museum are hard surfaced with a layer of very small gravel chippings that do not impede wheelchair mobility.

### **Car Parking and Arrival**

Car parking is available with 64 spaces in total, 5 of which are for Blue Badge parking although visitors displaying a Blue Badge can park in any available space within the main car park. The nearest Blue Badge spaces are 4100 cm (134ft, 5 in) from the main entrance, 1650cm (54 ft, 1 in) from the side (shop) entrance and 8100 cm (265 ft, 7 in) from the Café entrance. The car park surface is flat and tarmac; there are two tarmac footpaths with dropped kerbs, it is not necessary to go on the footpaths when parking in the Blue Badge spaces.

Access from the car park to the Museum via the main entrance, Shop and Café is via a flat tarmac or very small gravel chippings surface. All entrances have level access with automatic doors at the main entrance and Shop, the Café has a manual outward opening door. The main entrance glass doors open inwards and are 107 cm (3ft, 5 in) wide, the glass shop doors slide sideways and are 190 cm (6 ft, 2 in) wide, the wooden café door opens outwards and is 90 cm (2 ft, 9 in) wide.

The car park gets very busy during school holidays and Saturdays throughout the summer; alternative parking is available at the opposite end of the park via the entrance on Doncaster Gate. There are tarmac paths from the car park to the Museum, some areas are up an incline which is slightly steep in places.

### **Main Entrance**

The main entrance is situated on the ground floor at the front of the building; access is step free up a very slight smooth incline with double automatic inward opening doors. The entrance has a sunken mat just inside the doors and a marble floor. Access in this area is level.

Two seats are available in the parlour just off the main entrance.

The entrance is generally bright and airy and is lit with overhead period lighting; the area can feel darker in the winter months.

There is a large print gallery plan on the wall with take away plans to assist as you go around the building. There is also a house model to show how the building looked prior to becoming a Museum. Leaflets relating to the Museum and Park can also be found in this area. Large print information panels giving background information relating to the Museum can be found on the walls.

A member of staff is generally available in this area to assist as necessary.

### **Attraction displays**

Throughout the galleries, there is a range of large print information panels which help tell the story of the Museum. The majority of objects are in upright glass cabinets and each object has a label to give further information. Due to the height of the cases some of the labels are harder to read from lower down.

The Library Gallery has a selection of albums to accompany the items on display.

A wide selection of interactives are available around the museum; these include photo books and computer terminals as well as colouring sheets and puzzles, all of which are at low level. Some of the interactives have sound which is controlled by pressing the button on and off.

The galleries are bright and lit with spotlights on the ceiling as well as each case having its own lighting. There is no background music.

A lift is available to take you to the first floor where further displays can be found. The lift has Braille buttons and sound to identify the floor; it is well lit and has a mirror on one side.

There are two staircases with handrails which take you to the first floor; one in the inner hall (28 steps) and the other in the servants corridor (28 steps).

Chairs and window seats are available around the museum in most rooms.

The majority of the galleries have level wooden floors apart from the parlour, period kitchen and servants corridor which are tiled and the lion's den which is carpeted.

Information leaflets relating to the Museum and local area can be found in the parlour which is next to the main entrance. Display boards advertising local events are situated in the shop and toilet corridor.

### **Public Toilets**

All public toilets are located on the ground floor with level access from all areas. Access is through the shop down a slight ramp, a handrail is available at the ramp.

There is one unisex accessible toilet which does not require a key to access it. Access to the toilet is through an outward facing single light door with a twist lock. The toilet is 5790 cm (189 ft, 9 in) from the main entrance, 1380 cm (45 ft, 3 in) from the shop entrance and 660 cm (21 ft, 6 in) from the café.

The accessible toilet is 215 cm x 188 cm (7 ft, 5 in x 6 ft, 2 in). The height of the toilet above floor level is 46 cm (1 ft, 5 in); the toilet roll holder is on the left hand side at a height of 123 cm (4 ft, 3 in)

There is a colour contrast between the walls and critical surfaces, the utilities are white. The floor is non slip.

An emergency pull cord is to the left of the toilet, next to the toilet roll holder.

Wall mounted and drop rails are available on either side of the toilet.

The sink has a lever tap with a mirror above it. There are hand towels and an electric hand dryer to the right of the sink.

Coat hooks are on the back of the door.

A baby changing unit and nappy bin is also available within this toilet space.

### **Catering**

The café is situated on the ground floor via level access to the rear of the museum; access is through a wooden outward opening door 90 cm (2 ft, 9 in) wide via the shop or through an outward opening door 90 cm (2 ft, 9 in) wide from the outside. The area is small but can accommodate wheelchairs.

There are 6 tables in total inside the café which are down each side with a walkway in the middle. Additional tables are available outside on the level terrace or in the shop area. The tables are 76 cm (2 ft, 5 in) high and all have a mixture of removable chairs with and without arms. The crockery contrasts in colour with the tables and tablecloths.

The café is counter service for ordering food and purchasing snacks/drinks, prepared food is served to the table. Staff will assist with taking purchased items to the table if this is required. Menus are available on each table and can be taken from the counter to the outside seating area, there are also several free standing blackboards and a specials board on the wall. Food is prepared on site and staff will try to accommodate any special dietary needs.

The area is light with a mixture of natural daylight and ceiling lights.

The same dark wooden flooring is used throughout the café, shop, archives and local studies searchroom and the early Rotherham galleries.

The accessible toilet is down a small corridor from the café.

### **Shop Entrance**

Access to the shop is from the car park side of the building, via level access through double sliding automatic doors. The shop has plenty of space to manoeuvre between the displays. There is a reception desk with a low level counter and a hearing loop system which staff are trained to use.

Tickets for events are sold from the shop and all telephone calls are answered here.

The products are displayed primarily on open shelving at a variety of heights; retrieval of items on the highest shelves may require assistance for wheelchair users.

Additional café seating is available in the shop, the moveable tables are 74 cm (2 ft, 4 in) high and all have a mixture of removable chairs with and without arms.

There is a gallery plan on the wall with take away plans to assist as you go around the building. Leaflets and posters relating to the Museum and Park can also be found in the shop area. The toilets, café, archives & local studies searchroom and the main museum galleries can all be accessed from the shop. All areas have clear signage on the doors as well as directional signage on the walls.

A member of staff is always available in this area to assist as necessary.

### **Additional Information**

All staff participate in regular training including customer care and disability awareness. We have set evacuation procedures and should someone require assistance to evacuate the building, staff are available to provide this. We also have an evacuation chair to assist.

Assistance dogs are welcome and water is available outside the café. As the Museum is situated within a park there are ample areas to walk the dogs.

Text from our leaflets can be made available in large print on request.

Clear signage is used throughout the whole attraction using a clear font with large black letters on a white background.

### **Future Plans**



We are planning to provide more of our labels as handouts over the next year and will provide a magnifier on request to use with these.

We are planning to review our website and move to a new purpose designed site which will be more accessible and informative.

We will review actions from our most recent access group audit and carry out any outstanding recommendations where possible.

### **Contact Information**

Address: Clifton Park Museum, Clifton Lane, Rotherham. S65 2AA  
Grid reference: SK 435 928  
Telephone: 01709 336633  
Minicom: 01709 823536  
Email: [cliftonparkmuseum@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:cliftonparkmuseum@rotherham.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.rotherham.gov.uk/cliftonparkmuseum](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/cliftonparkmuseum)  
Hours of operation: Monday to Friday 10.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.  
Saturday 9.30 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.  
Sunday April – September 1.30 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.  
Closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Years Day and Good Friday