Rotherham Archives and Local Studies

Collections Management and Access Policy

2025-2028

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Further information:	To be submitted as part of Rotherham Archive's Accreditation in 2025 This document consolidates the following previously separate policies into a single, comprehensive resource to enhance clarity and eliminate redundancy: Access Policy Cataloguing Policy Collections Care and Conservation Policy Collections Information Policy Collections Management and Development Policy Digital Preservation Policy Digitisation Policy Reprographics Policy

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1. **General overview**

1.1 Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage, which includes Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service (henceforth referred to as 'the Service'), is managed by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage sits within the Creative Programming & Engagement service of the Culture, Sport and Tourism team, which is part of the wider Regeneration and Environment Directorate.

1.2 This policy brings together the previous Access, Cataloguing, Collections Care and Conservation, Collections Information, Collections Management and Development, Digital Preservation, and Digitisation Policies for the Archives and Local Studies collections in the care of Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage.

2. **Purpose and scope**

2.1 The policy covers Archives and Local Studies collections. This includes both traditional and digital records cared for by the Service.

2.2 It does not cover museum objects, which are covered by a separate collections management policy.

2.3 It does not cover current or semi-current records of the Council, which are held by the Records Management section, unless they have been identified as archival records and transferred to the Service.

2.4 Separate policy documents have been amalgamated to cover all aspects of the Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service's approach to collections care and access in one cohesive document.

3. **Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation**

3.1 This policy has been written in accordance with statement of purpose of Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage. The mission of the service is to '*Spark imagination, curiosity, and roots through the celebration of Rotherham's people, stories, spaces and collections'.* This mission is underpinned by five values: generosity, quality, inclusivity, wonder and resilience.

3.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Service's plans relevant to its implementation including the Cataloguing Priorities Plan and the Emergency Plan.

3.3 This policy should be read in conjunction with other Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council policies which relate to the Service, including the Valuing Volunteers Policy which has replaced the service-specific Volunteer Policy.

3.4 It is supported by the Access Statement for Clifton Park Museum, which is the building where the Archives and Local Studies searchroom and one strongroom are located. This is a requirement for VisitEngland as part of the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Standard.

4.   **Ethics, legislation and standards**

4.1   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, Freedom of Information Act, 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 records:

- 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.

4.2   In caring for its collections, Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage adhere to the following legislation and ethical guidelines:

- Museums Association Code of Ethics
- Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland Code of Ethics
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums
- Museums and Galleries Act
- Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974
- CoSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, 2002)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, 2004
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4.3   The Service will also comply with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, which gives creators of literary, dramatic, musical, artistic works, sound recordings, broadcasts, films and typographical arrangement of published editions rights to control the ways in which their material may be used.

4.4   Collections care within the Service is also guided and informed by the following standards:

- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections
- BS EN16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage
- PAS 197:2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management
- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's Information and Cyber Security Standard and Security of Hardcopy and Electronic File Storage;
- ISO 14721: 2012; Space data and information transfer systems (Open Archival Information System – OAIS)
- Code of Practice for legal admissibility and evidential weight of information stored electronically (BIP 0008).

5. **Background and history of Rotherham Archives and Local Studies**

5.1   Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage manages Clifton Park Museum and Boston Castle, as well as five heritage sites across the Borough: Keppel's Column, Catcliffe Glass Cone, Rockingham Waterloo Kiln, Payne Mausoleum and Walker Mausoleum. It also manages Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service and the Rotherham York and Lancaster Regimental Collection on behalf of the sole trustee Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

5.2   Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service was established in 1986 following the abolition of the South Yorkshire County Record Office. Archival records were combined with the existing Local Studies section of Rotherham Libraries.

5.3   Prior to this, archival records and local studies material was collected by Rotherham Libraries since at least the 1930's. The goal was to preserve records of all aspects of life within Rotherham Metropolitan Borough and to make them accessible for use by members of the public.

5.4   At its time of establishment, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies inherited approximately 255 uncatalogued archival collections. Collecting has been guided through policy since 1986, although in recent years it has become more formalised.

5.5   During the early years of the Service, considerable progress was made in cataloguing and producing finding aids. A substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery fund in 2005 enabled the Service to catalogue some of its outstanding larger collections.

5.6   In 2005, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies introduced its first collection management software (Axiell Calm). This database covers archives and local studies material held by the Service. In 2009, this was made available online, and can be accessed here: http://archives.rotherham.gov.uk/calmview/

5.7   In 2011, the museum service merged with Rotherham Archives and Local Studies to form Heritage Services. The Service relocated from the Central Library and Arts Centre to Clifton Park Museum, with 75% of collections moved to an offsite store and 25% moved to the museum. With a renewed focus on the museums, collections and public spaces in our care, in 2019 we became Rotherham Museums, Arts & Heritage.

5.8   From 2012, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service became responsible for the internationally renowned York and Lancaster Regimental archive, which was previously administered by the museum service. Prior to this, Rotherham Council was appointed as the sole Trustee in 2001 with the transfer of status from the Regimental Association. Both the museum and the archive collections continue to be held in Trust.

5.9   A grant from the National Archives in 2012 ensured that the York and Lancaster Regimental archive was catalogued to a high professional standard, with the project concluded in 2014. In 2021, 19,000 images from this collection were published on the Ogilby Muster website in collaboration with the Army Museums Ogilby Trust, following several years of digitisation work. In 2024, the Service was informed that the Ogilby Muster is no longer able to host the website and digitised data will be transferred back to the Service, totally approximately 750 GB.

5.10   There was a rationalisation of the South Yorkshire archive collections held at Sheffield Archives in 2010, leading to a significant volume of records transferred to Rotherham. A change in legislation from 1 January 2015 to the Public Records Act amended the point of transfer for public records from 30 years to 20 years, resulting in a further volume of records transferred to the Service. These factors exacerbated an existing cataloguing backlog.

5.11   In 2019, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies achieved Accredited status. In 2022, the Service passed its Accreditation review. The service must fully reapply in 2025.

5.12   As of 2024, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service holds over 1,300 archival collections and several thousand of local studies items. Approximately 45% of archival collections are fully catalogued to ISAD(G) standards. 5% is catalogued but does not meet ISAD(G) standards. The remaining 50% is box-listed, or only fonds-level description exists.

6. Definitions

6.1   For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions have been adopted:

6.1.1   An archive is a physical or digital collection of records which are identified as having historical value and are selected for permanent preservation.

6.1.2   Records refers to any data or information stored on a medium and used as an extension of human memory or to support accountability.

6.1.3   Collection information refers to the information the Service collects, holds and maintains about its collections.

6.1.4   Appraisal refers to the process of identifying materials offered to the service that have sufficient value to be accessioned. This includes assessing materials for relevance, adherence with policy, and with consideration of resources and capacity.

6.1.5   Sampling refers to selecting, as part of the appraisal process, a portion of a body of records for permanent retention.

6.1.6   Acquisition refers to the process of seeking and receiving records from any source by transfer, donation, or purchase.

6.1.7   Accession refers to the acceptance, by the service, of intellectual and physical custody of records.

6.1.8   Finding aids are tools that help a user find information in a specific record group, collection, or series of archival materials. Examples include box-lists, card catalogues, electronic catalogues, indexes, and registers.

6.1.9   Cataloguing refers to the act of creating a concise description of an archival record or local studies resource, especially one that adheres to a descriptive standard and is publicly accessible as a finding aid.

6.1.10 Weeding refers to the process of identifying and removing unwanted items from a collection.

6.1.11 Disposal refers to the removal of records or materials from the Service which have previously been accessioned.

6.1.12 Donation refers to records gifted to the Service, constituting the transfer of legal ownership. This may or may not be accompanied by copyright ownership.

6.1.13 Deposit refers to records wherein the depositor retains legal ownership, but the Service accepts the responsibility of custody, preservation, and provision of public access to the records. Deposits may be withdrawn temporarily or permanently by the depositor.

6.1.14 Access refers to the availability of archival records and local studies material for consultation, or to the ability for members of the public to locate relevant information through the use of finding aids or other tools. Access can be any set of activities which links primary source materials to the public.

6.1.15 Reprographics refers to the techniques and processes used to copy documents. Examples include photocopying, scanning, photography, and printing.

6.1.16 Digitisation refers to transformation of analogue information into digital form.

6.1.17 Born-digital is used to describe an item originates in a computer or electronic environment.

6.1.18 Digital preservation refers to the utilization of management activities, strategies, best practices and standards, and policies and procedures to guarantee ongoing access to digitised and born-digital information, despite the challenges of technological change, media deterioration, hardware/software obsolescence, data loss, human error, and intentional harm. Digital preservation efforts seek to provide accurate and authentic rendering of content, while ensuring its future functionality and usability over time.

6.1.19 Searchroom refers to the physical space, located within Clifton Park Museum, where users can access and handle archival material.

6.1.20 Strongroom(s) are designated secure spaces with controlled access where archival records are stored, and retrieved by staff on request. Following best practices, strongrooms are temperature and humidity controlled as a preventative conservation effort.

6.1.21 Collections care (also known as preventative conservation) is the passive protection of material where no direct chemical treatment occurs. It aims to avoid, slow or minimise deterioration or loss of collections.

6.1.22 Conservation (also known as remedial or interventive conservation) is the active protection using a physical or chemical treatment to prevent further deterioration and protect cultural or scientific value. It may include restoration where appropriate.

7. **Profile of the collections**

7.1 The following section represents policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone policy document (Collections Management and Development Policy 2022-2026).

7.2 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies currently hold more than 1,300 separate archive collections in a variety of formats. They document the borough's diverse history and culture from the 13th century to the present day.

7.3   Collections include records of people, organisations, public and private institutions, local authorities and businesses in the Rotherham borough. These include:

- Records of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and its predecessors;
- Records of places of worship and religious faiths, excluding Church of England;
- Official records including parish councils and their predecessors, including the poor law unions;
- Records from public bodies including magistrates court, coroner's court, schools and health bodies
- Manorial records
- Records of clubs and societies, local community groups, trade unions, political parties and pressure groups
- Personal and family letters, diaries and photographs.

7.4   Notable collections and items include:

- York and Lancaster Regimental Archive;
- Business archives of Guest & Chrimes, Brass Founders; Beatson Clark, Glass Manufacturers; Parkgate Iron & Steel Co.;
- Feoffees of the Common Lands;
- Dorothy Green papers;
- Family and estate papers of Verelsts of Aston Hall; Walker Family; Bosviles of Ravenfield;
- Parker Rhodes, Solicitors;
- Lady Mabel College and Students Association and
- Rockingham Pottery pattern book.

7.5   The collections are strong in the areas of 20th century municipal government, established religious bodies, and the York and Lancaster Regiment.

7.6   Identified gaps in the collection exist in the following categories:

- Stories about children and young people;
- Local industry;
- Landed families;
- Educational institutions;
- Non-official organisations such as local and voluntary groups;
- Representation of global majority communities;
- Public records relating to NHS bodies within Rotherham.

8.   **Scope and priorities for collections development**

8.1   The following section represents policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone policy document (Collections Management and Development Policy 2022-2026).

8.2   The Service seeks to collect all types of archival records relating to the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham. It aims to be representative of Rotherham's diverse communities.

8.3   The Service seeks to collect material covering all historical periods up to the present day.

8.4 The Service seeks to collect a variety of local studies material relating to the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham, as well as publications giving guidance on the use and interpretation of materials.

8.5 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies collections will be developed to prioritise categories identified in 7.5, with a strong focus on:

- Reflecting stories of children and young people;
- Better representing the diversity of Rotherham's communities now and in the past;
- Making certain that significant evidence is preserved to ensure accountability and transparency;
- Meet statutory responsibilities.

8.6 In the future, Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage intends to consult the Community Story Board- a voluntary group of representatives from across the communities of Rotherham who draw on a wide range of lived experience and culture- with the aim of democratising the Service's decision-making, inviting critical debate and challenge to our leadership. This may impact on collecting priorities and collections development.

8.7 Arrangements for the transfer of non-current records relating to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and Rotherham NHS bodies will be improved.

8.8 The Service will not collect the following categories of records:

- Records relating to County-wide organisations as determined by the Agreement for the Management of the South Yorkshire Joint Archives Service[1];
- Anglican parish records, which are collected by the relevant appointed Diocesan Record Offices and
- Records of the former West Riding County Council.

8.9 The Service can accept archival and local studies material by transfer when items are in common ownership. For example, records of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, or from other archives services such as those within the South Yorkshire Archives Partnership.

8.10 The Service can accept archival and local studies material on deposit when they are items from private bodies. Collections offered on deposit will only be accepted with a Deposit Agreement, outlining the terms of the deposit, which must be signed by the depositor and the Archivist.

8.11 The Service can accept archival and local studies material as a gift.

8.12 The Service will occasionally purchase significant material if there is a strong case for acquisition, on approval by the Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Services Acquisition and Disposal Panel. Financial support can be through donations, by grant from a funding body, or through funding from the Friends of Rotherham Archives.

8.13 A variety of formats and materials may be collected including parchment, paper, photographs, negatives, books, audio-visual, glass, and digital. Objects will not be collected

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[1] See Appendix 1 for list of County-wide organisations listed in agreement

unless they form an intrinsic part of the collection.

8.14   Acquisition will be determined by access and items will only be acquired if the Service holds the necessary equipment to facilitate this or access can be provided by other means.

8.15   Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service may from time to time seek to acquire items jointly with other services, which are also managed by Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Services.

9.   **Collections information**

9.1   The following section represents policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone policy document (Collections Information Policy 2022-2026).

9.2   The focus of this section is on the provision of intellectual access to collections both by users and by staff. It describes how Rotherham Archives and Local Studies will aim to maintain and provide accurate documentation of its collections for the purpose of their improved control and access.

9.3   The following policy points in this section will assist in decision-making and prioritising work relating to:

-    Access to the collections balanced with their long-term preservation;
-    Meet legislative requirements;
-    Guide cataloguing work by staff and volunteers;
-    Support submission of relevant funding bids.

9.4   The following points will outline the framework within which collections information is collected, recorded and kept.

9.5   The Service captures information at various stages during the processing of a collection or item, from its points of entry through to appraisal, accessioning, cataloguing and indexing, location and movement control and withdrawal or disposal if necessary.

9.6   This information is recorded and maintained in a variety of places and formats. These include but are not limited to:

-    Electronic copies of Potential Acquisitions Forms (PAFs)
-    Signed copies of Donation Forms, kept in the Archive Store and/or electronically on Shared Drive
-    Signed copies of Depositor Forms, kept in the Archive Store and/or electronically on Shared Drive
-    Correspondence with donors, filed with Donations Forms in Archive Store and/or electronically on Shared Drive
-    Accession entries, along with depositor details, within the collections management database, Calm
-    Catalogue entries within collections management database, Calm
-    Catalogue entries published online via Calmview
-    Electronic catalogue log, saved on Shared Drive
-    Electronic scoring assessment forms, saved on Shared Drive

- Electronic cataloguing action plan, saved on Shared Drive
- Electronic locations index, saved on Shared Drive
- Electronic retrievals tracker, saved on Shared Drive
- Electronic acquisitions tracker, saved on Shared Drive.

9.7   All collections information, where required, is held securely and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation. Where electronic records are held, access is restricted to Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Service staff members. These records are backed up daily through Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's IT systems.

9.8   As much information as possible is recorded about the record(s) at the point of entry to maintain its integrity and to ensure its provenance is fully understood. This includes ownership and legal status, any intellectual property rights, its administrative and custodial history. This information is communicated to the Service via donor correspondence including donation forms. It is recorded in Potential Acquisition Forms (PAFs), and also may be entered at the accessioning and cataloguing stages.

9.9   Where the recommendation is for the Service to acquire the record(s), donors are required to fill out a donation form. One copy of this form is returned to the donor as a receipt, and the other is retained by the Service. Information recorded on this form is as follows:

- Date of donation;
- Name and contact details of the donor;
- Name and contact details of the owner;
- Extent of donation;
- Description of donation, including approximate date(s) of creation;
- Any known access restrictions;
- Any known copyright restrictions;
- Any known administrative and custodial history;
- Authority to transfer or dispose.

9.10   Each new acquisition is given a unique accession number, which is recorded on the donation form. This is added to the accessions database on Calm, then linked to the catalogue database and assigned a catalogue reference number.

9.11   Information about new accessions is supplied to The National Archives under the annual accessions to repositories data collection exercise.

9.12   Once new records have been assigned a reference number, they are added to the locations index. This records its exact location.

9.13   All boxes and items are clearly labelled with the reference number and, in some instances, the title of the collection.

9.14   The capacity management spreadsheet is then amended to calculate remaining accrual space.

9.15   Information about location and movement control is also managed carefully. Rotherham Archives and Local Studies must manage an accurate and up-to-date record of the location of all collections in its care. For this reason, only Archives and Local Studies staff are

authorised to retrieve and return archival and local studies material in stores and strongrooms.

9.16   Archives and Local Studies staff members track retrievals and returns electronically, as well as using document request slips. Information entered into the retrievals tracker includes reference number, the surname and first initial of the customer requesting the record(s), which building the record(s) are normally stored in, the initials of the staff member retrieving the record(s), the date of retrieval, the date of movement between buildings (if relevant), the date of return, and initials of the staff member who made the return. Notes are also included if required, such as in cases where the record(s) are being used in museum exhibitions.

10.   **Acquisitions, withdrawals and disposals**

10.1   Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Service's Acquisition and Disposal Panel[2] oversees the management of the acquisition and disposal of all items offered to and held by Rotherham Archive and Local Studies.

10.2   Before accepting items, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies must be satisfied that the transferer, donor or depositor has the proper authority or title to transfer, donate or deposit them. Neither transferred, donated, nor deposited records are to be left in the care of the service unless acquisition has been formally agreed by all parties in advance.

10.3   Every effort will be made to avoid conflict and duplication with the collecting policies of other archive services and libraries.

10.4   No attempt will be made to secure the acquisition or removal of any archives or local studies items held by another archive service or library, except with the consent of the owner and in consultation with the relevant organisation, as well as on approval of the Acquisition and Disposal Panel.

10.5   Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Service standard terms of donation will apply to all items being offered, unless otherwise stated and agreed in writing with the Archivist. The transferer or donor agrees to these terms of donation by signing the donation form, which includes a full explanation of the terms.

10.6   Records held on deposit can be withdrawn on a temporary or permanent basis in accordance with the terms of the deposit, on prior agreement with the Archivist and on the signing of a withdrawal form.

10.7   The Service collects no more than two copies of any one local studies item.

10.8   The Service accepts the principle there should be a strong presumption against disposal by sale of any items in its ownership.

10.9   Disposal does, however, have a valid role in collections development and the following will apply:

- Permission to dispose of items will be sought from the donor as part of the donation agreement;

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[2] See Appendix 2 for the Terms of Reference for the Panel

- No archival records will be disposed of in contravention of the terms of any current legislation;
- Where it has been identified that legacy material falls outside the scope of this collecting policy, it will be transferred to a more appropriate archive service or library if feasible. Where this is not possible, the material will be offered for return to the original donor or, in the case of a deposit, to the owner. Where this is not possible, it will be confidentially destroyed and this action recorded;
- If Rotherham Archives and Local Studies becomes unable, either temporarily or permanently, to provide proper care for the material, it should be transferred to another appropriate archive service or library

10.10 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies Service may review its collections in line with updated policies and retrospectively recommend transfer, disposal, or destruction.

- If Rotherham Archives and Local Studies becomes unable, either temporarily or permanently, to provide proper care for the material, it should be transferred to another appropriate archive service or library

10.11 The Service keeps a record of all transfers, withdrawals and disposals including the rationale behind the decision. This is recorded in the collections management database (Calm).

11. Cataloguing

11.1 The following section represents policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone procedural document (Cataloguing Policy 2022-2026).

11.2 The focus of this section is on the approach and principles of cataloguing and indexing, which ensure the use of resources are maximised.

11.3 Collections present in the Service's historical backlog are prioritised for cataloguing using the following criteria which, using a scoring system, identified each collection as high, medium or low priority:

- If the collection is owned by the Council;
- How long it has been in the care of the Service;
- If the collection has already been listed in some form;
- Size;
- Existing and potential demand;
- Significance (in line with the Service's Forward Plan and priorities laid out in section 8 of this policy)

11.4 Once a priority has been assigned, collections within the historical backlog are added to the Cataloguing Action Plan. This plan serves as the basis for any cataloguing work undertaken by the Service and also informs funding applications relating to cataloguing.

11.5 All cataloguing must conform to current professional standards including:

- Principle and mandatory elements of the General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G));
- International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families [ISAAR(CPF)];
- National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names.

11.6   Accruals to existing collections are amalgamated intellectually within the catalogue.

11.7   It is recognised that uncatalogued collections are a significant barrier to realising the aims and objectives of Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage.

11.8   It is recognised that uncatalogued collections are at increased risk of loss or damage.

11.9   The Service will make every effort to undertake a managed, sustainable and flexible approach to reduce the current cataloguing backlog, and in turn increase the accessibility of collections, within the limits of its resources. This will be achieved by:

- Cataloguing small and medium collections on accession when possible;
- Utilising core resources to catalogue small and medium collections, and box-listing large collections;
- Applying for external funding to enable the cataloguing of large and complex medium sized collections;
- Working in collaboration with key organisations, such as South Yorkshire Archives Partnership to work to develop large scale cataloguing initiatives linked to wider engagement programmes;
- Seeking permission for two annual stocktaking/closure weeks to progress with cataloguing and box-listing;
- Retro-converting paper catalogues and card indexes;
- Collaborating with Library Services to catalogue local studies material, in the absence of a qualified Local Studies Librarian position within the Service.

12.   **Access**

12.1   The following section represents policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone policy document (Access Policy 2022-2026). It also includes policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone procedural document (Reprographics Policy 2022-2026).

12.2   This section focuses on the Service's planned approach to access- physical and intellectual, onsite, remote and through wider engagement- to the collections under its care. This is in consideration of the needs of users, potential users, and stakeholders.

12.3   This section also confirms any restrictions on access, and the Service's commitment to comply with relevant legislation and regulations. It also outlines the role of fees and charges.

12.4   The Service is committed to facilitating access to its collections and resources, and to inspire participation and engagement.

12.5   Access to collections and resources within the Archives and Local Studies Service searchroom is provided free of charge. The searchroom is located within Clifton Park Museum. Opening times are published on the Council website.

12.6   Users of the searchroom can expect the following:

- Trained staff available to advise on suitable sources of information held by the Service, 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 and cushion supports, weights, gloves where required, and polyester sleeves.
- Free internet access and computing facilities.

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

12.8   Material can be ordered in person, over the telephone, or by email. Retrievals are undertaken weekly, taking into account that approximately 75% of material is stored offsite. This advance order requirement is advertised widely in order to meet expectation. When possible, on-demand retrievals may be possible given adequate staff capacity.

12.9   Items which have surrogates are not made available in their original format except in the case of a specialist request.

12.10   A range of reprographics services are available to meet the needs of customers, without placing material at risk of damage, and which are provided in line with the requirements of copyright legislation.

12.11   The Service aims to provide access to material while ensuring the long-term preservation needs of the collections. The condition of an item, and whether 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 including digitisation.

12.12   Copies of archival and local studies material may not be possible if it will damage the item or contravene copyright legislation. Where restrictions may apply, alternative options will be considered. Any final decision will be made by the Archivist, in consultation with senior managers where appropriate.

12.13   Exceptions to copyright can be applied for libraries, archives and museums (under fair use) an copies can be made where the following apply:

- To preserve an item for future generations;
- For non-commercial research and private study;
- Where permission has been given by the copyright owner if the above do not apply.

12.14   Photocopies of records will be made by staff. The use of personal scanners or handheld copiers is not allowed due to risk of damage.

12.15   All copies must be requested through a signed copyright declaration form stating all items to

be copied, including reference numbers. This includes photographs.

12.16   Charges apply for copying and reproducing archival and local studies material.

12.17   Reproduction requests are subject to a preservation assessment, copyright law, and re-use of public sector information regulations. Requests to publish are subject to further approval and on completion of a reproduction rights form. It is the responsibility of the customer to seek permission from the Service or, if copyright is held by an individual or organisation outside of the service, the copyright holder. The Service is unable to provide legal advice relating to copyright law.

12.18   Any breach of copyright which occurs as a result of any later use of the copy rests solely on the customer for whom the copies were made, as stated in the copyright declaration form.

12.19   All published material must credit the Service appropriately.

12.20   Staff will make every effort to provide high quality photocopies but given the nature of the material, the overall aim is to provide researchers with information rather than a perfect replica of the original item. Items cannot be copied repeatedly in order to improve the cosmetic appearance of photocopies if the required information is reasonably legible on the first copy.

12.21   Only one copy of each item is permitted per customer.

12.22   Where further equipment is required to take copies in the archives and local studies searchroom e.g. the use of tripods/lighting; this must be booked in advance to ensure sufficient room is available and will not impact on other researchers.

12.23   Flash photography is not permitted and, where possible, photographic equipment should be set to silent in order to minimise disruption to other customers.

12.24   Customers are able to print from microfilm/fiche, Viewfinder, and Mapper databases using printers provided[3].

12.25   The Service 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 Rotherham Archives and Local Studies services. This includes questions about opening hours, appointments, and the availability of sources. There is no charge for this service;
-    Requests for copies of items held by the Service, including digital copies. There is a charge for this, with cost including the cost of the copies, staff time and postage;
-    Requests for research using archival records and/or local studies resources. There is a charge for this service and must be paid in advance. If desired, customers are able to subsequently purchase additional research time.

12.26   The schedule of fees and charges are available on request in the searchroom and also

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[3] These databases contain approximately 25,000 digitised photographs and postcards; 8 historic Ordnance Survey maps; current Ordnance Survey map and map overlays, which provide information about public rights of way, building control, flood areas, postcode and administrative areas and street lighting.

publicly accessible on the Council website.

12.27   Fees and charges are reviewed annually.

12.28   Advance notice is given of any applicable fees and charges and where charges are payable they must be paid in advance.

12.29   The Service provides information online about its collections and services, for all users, through the Council website and social media platforms.

12.30   The Service's online catalogue can be accessed remotely.

12.31   The Service aims 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.

12.32   Select materials have been digitised in conjunction with a third party provider and copies of items are available through Findmypast (https://www.findmypast.co.uk/).

12.33   The Service makes all records (or the information they contain) 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.

12.34   The above 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.

12.35   Statutory exemptions include:

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.

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.

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[4] 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:

[Access to NHS records transferred to places of deposit under the Public Records Act](#)

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)
    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).

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.

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).

Other privately deposited records (FOIA s. 41)

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[4] *After the Hundred Year Rule*, Colin Gale and Catherine Redfern (Health Archives Group, 2004)

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

12.36   There may be restrictions to access to uncatalogued material.

12.37   The Service has a commitment to opening up the collections in a variety of ways to encourage engagement and active participation. This includes providing access to records for the purposes of:

- Exhibitions;
- Events and activities;
- Workshops and talks;
- School sessions;
- Digitisation and online publication;
- Creative use;
- Programming and community engagement;
- Volunteering and work experience placements.

12.38   Collections within the care of the Service will also be used for advocacy and promotion, both internally and externally.

13.   Care and Conservation

13.1   The following section represents policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone policy document (Care and Conservation Policy 2022-2026).

13.2   This section covers the Service's strategic approach to conservation including the principles of collections care; premises and storage; conservation assessment and treatment; environmental monitoring and control; housekeeping; access; training; security; emergency planning; and environmental awareness. It will be followed in proportion to resources available.

13.3   The Service is committed to caring for and using these collections in a sustainable way striking a balance between their long-term preservation and their accessibility for engagement and research, through the careful management of risk.

13.4   Where required, advice is sought externally, along with any treatments that do not fall within the current staff skill set. Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage does not currently employ or hold positions for conservators.

13.5   Treatments are only undertaken if necessary and sympathetic to the object in question. All treatments are undertaken by professional conservators and are fully documented, and recorded.

13.6   Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage understands that the maintenance of its premises is fundamental to the preservation of its collections. Its building assets are managed through the Council's Corporate Landlord Scheme and both parties will continue to improve the physical condition of its buildings and the storage within them.

13.7   The table below identifies the use of each building, the owner, and who has responsibility.

Building	Used for	Owner	Responsibility for upkeep and improvements
Clifton Park Museum	Museum display and storage Archive and local studies searchroom and storage	Rotherham Council	RMBC Asset Management Services overseen by Museum, Arts and Heritage Service
Outstore	Museum storage Archive and Local Studies storage	Rotherham Council	RMBC Asset Management Services overseen by Museum, Arts and Heritage Service

13.8   All collections are stored securely. All reasonable steps are taken to minimise deterioration and degradation.

13.9   A Service Level Agreement between Asset Management Service and Museums, Arts and Heritage Service is in place regarding the upkeep of all buildings where collections are stored or displayed. Within Museum, Arts and Heritage Services, the Museum, Arts and Heritage Manager is responsible for these agreements.

13.10   Museum, Arts and Heritage Services carries out regular inspections of all buildings (or relevant part of buildings) it uses and notifies the RMBC Asset Management Services about any remedial or maintenance work required.

13.11   As far as feasible, collections are stored in a way that allows access for the purpose of supporting engagement and research.

13.12   All new collections are quarantined when appropriate and their condition is taken into account when presented to the Acquisition and Disposal Panel. Where damage is extensive and is beyond intrinsic value, the Panel may choose not to retain it.

13.13   All storage areas are kept tidy.

13.14   New collections, where feasible (size may be a hindrance) are packaged as soon as possible after receipt. Minimum protection is provided by simple boxing or wrapping, using archival quality materials.

13.15   Retrospective packaging is undertaken as part of projects; during exhibition change-overs; on retrieval for research; or when tackling historical backlogs.

13.16   The retrieval of any items from the collections is recorded.

13.17   External conservators are generally selected from the ICON Conservation Register to ensure professional accreditation. In occasional circumstances a non-accredited

professional or a Conservator not on the register may be selected.

13.18   All conservation treatments are fully documented and stored electronically on the Shared Drive.

13.19   The Service is committed to maintaining and improving environmental conditions in order to preserve the physical condition of its collections. This is done using a combination of automated (telemetric) and manual measurements.

13.20   The museum's Collections and Exhibitions Team is responsible for all day-to-day aspects of preventative conservation. This includes collecting data, monitoring the environment, calibration and taking mitigating actions.

13.21   The Collections and Exhibitions Manager is responsible for agreeing how, when and where preventative conservation will occur within the Museum, Arts and Heritage Service, and for setting limits for temperature/relative humidity/light.

13.22   Data collected from the monitoring of temperature, Relative Humidity, light/Ultra Violet and pests will be analysed on a quarterly basis by the Collections and Exhibitions Officers. A report (including any issues and recommendations) will be produced and submitted to the Collections and Exhibitions Manager. The Collections and Exhibitions Manager will discuss issues and recommendations with the Museum, Arts and Heritage Manager (and any other relevant members of the Museums, Arts, and Heritage Service) and will agree any actions to be taken to mitigate the issues.

13.23   All data collected as part of environmental and pest monitoring will be kept for at least 10 years. Earlier data will be reviewed and deleted/ disposed or retailed as determined is necessary. Raw data is stored electronically. Reports are stored electronically and a hard copy is also retained.

13.24   Materials used to construct cases will be evaluated and only items which do not emit gaseous pollutants will be used e.g. zero formaldehyde MDF (ZMDF) or acid-free tissue/card. Within the limits of our resources, we will replace all unsuitable packaging with conservation grade acid-free packaging.

13.25   Data collected is assessed and disseminated to relevant staff in order to inform and facilitate decisions about preservation and to ensure that remedial action can be taken promptly in the event of malfunction or breakdown of equipment.

13.26   Equipment is stored and calibrated in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

13.27   Heating controls, humidifiers, and dehumidifiers are in place where required.

13.28   The following limits have been set as a guideline for the Service's museum collections:

Value	Normal range	Maximum range	Rate of change
Temperature	15-20°C	5-30°C	+/-3°C in 24 hours
Relative humidity	40-60%	20-75%	+/-5% in 24 hours

Visible light	under 100lux	under 300lux	n/a
Ultraviolet light	under 50µW/Lumen	under 75µW/Lumen	n/a

BS 4971: 2017 sets out specific limits for archives:

Temperature	13-20ºC
Relative humidity	35-60%

(*With a maximum of 23ºC in the hottest weather*)

13.29   Dust levels will be kept as low as possible and dusting will only be done by trained staff and volunteers following the relevant procedures.

13.30   Service staff and volunteers are trained in handling objects, and any additional staff who are asked to move objects are given best practice advice before doing so. Staff are also trained in manual handling.

13.31   Heavy and cumbersome objects are not moved unless those moving the object have undertaken the relevant manual handling training, and an appropriate risk assessment has been carried out and approved.

13.32   Appropriate equipment is provided for use, including trollies, foam and cushion supports, weights, gloves and polyester sleeves.

13.33   Routine preservation microfilm is undertaken of local newspapers. Where microfilms are available, use of the original papers will not be made unless the microfilm is illegible.

13.34   Access to all collections is restricted to the minimum necessary Museums, Arts and Heritage Services staff.

13.35   Strongrooms are protected from unlawful intrusion and have fire detection systems.

13.36   An electronic key tracking system has been implemented at Clifton Park Museum, which covers access to display cases, galleries and storage areas. The offsite store uses key card systems and code-restricted doors.

13.37   CCTV is utilised in a variety of locations.

13.38   Items removed from storage areas are logged and recorded.

13.39   The Service regularly assesses and reviews all risks to the collections and aims to manage and mitigate these to a level that is acceptable and balanced against the need for access.

13.40   Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Service regularly reviews its Emergency Plan, which includes key relating to collections and buildings, along with key contacts.

13.41   Regular training is undertaken to familiarise staff with these plans.

14. Digital preservation

14.1   The following section represents policy points which were previously part of a stand-alone procedural document (Digital Preservation Policy 2022-2026).

14.2   The focus of this section is to outline an approach which mitigates any economic, reputational or cultural risks associated with digital preservation. It is in part aspirational, which will be addressed during the lifespan of the policy.

14.3   Advances in technology have meant that increasingly records are being created, used and stored in digital formats only. With these advances comes the need to develop sufficient capacity to assure appropriate stewardship of this information and data over the long term.

14.4   It is anticipated that the amount of data created in a digital format will continue to rise exponentially and Rotherham Archives and Local Studies will develop its approach through the support of key partnerships (internal and external) to implement a shared solution to preserve the integrity and accessibility of these collections in the long term.

14.5   Wherever possible, Open Standards (i.e. non-proprietary) formats are used for master and access copies. In addition, Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) and MS office formats (Word, Excel, Access and PowerPoint), being the Council's preferred platform, are used for access copies.

14.6   Rotherham Archives and Local Studies aims to ensure all files remain authentic and accessible.

14.7   Acquisition of digital material will use the same assessment process as physical records.

14.8   The service will aim to capture adequate metadata at the point of acquisition for identification, access and preservation purposes as they form an integral part of the accessioning procedure.

14.9   A number of issues (also see sections 7 and 8) are considered at the point of accessioning including the ingest format, of which there are three main types:

- Proprietary standards – e.g. Microsoft Word which is owned by a company. Its script is not generally made available to others. Data held in such proprietary standards can only be accessed through that software or software that has been licensed to read it. Though proprietary software is perhaps the most commonly used, it is the least desirable format for long term preservation and access;
- Available Standards – e.g. Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) or Microsoft Rich Text Format (RTF). The specification for these is made available to others but they remain proprietary and may be restricted in the future.   Available standards are better for long-term preservation and access than Proprietary, but still have potential drawbacks;
- Open standards – e.g. J-Peg or TIFF images. The specification for these is freely available. Access to data held in these formats does not require specific viewing software. These open formats should be used whenever possible.

14.10   Acquired digital material will be saved within the Council's ICT infrastructure. The Service will ensure that its needs in this respect are understood and will take advice from the ICT department.

14.11   Depositors will be encouraged to convert digital material to preferred formats prior to deposit but where this is not possible, Rotherham Archives and Local Studies will accept digital material in its native format (i.e. the format in which it was deposited).

14.12   File fixity will be either checked on ingest if provided or will be created.

14.13   All portable media within the collections will be stored in archival quality packaging.

14.14   All files will be scanned for viruses prior to being stored on the Council's network.

14.15   Access to master files is restricted to Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Services staff and kept in a secure building (in the case of portable media) or on a secure server.

14.16   Currently, the Service can only provide access to digital material through PCs in the searchroom, along with access to digitised photographs through the ViewFinder database and to selected digitised school records available through a 3rd party provider website.

14.17   Migration is undertaken as and when required to ensure access is maintained.

14.18   Processing methodologies for born-digital collections are designed to work within the framework of the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) Reference Model (ISO14721:2012).

15.   Environmental Awareness

15.1   Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage is aware of its responsibilities related to the environment and climate change.

15.2   The Service will take account of the expected collection lifetime and the energy demand arising from the conditions needed to achieve this. In undertaking this, the Service will take account of the sensitivity, significance and use of individual collection items.

15.3   The Service will ensure that the collections are kept in the most appropriate conditions, and wherever possible we will reduce the amount of energy used in caring for the collections.

16.   Review

16.1   This policy will be reviewed as required to take into account changes in circumstances of the Service.

17.   Appendices

17.1   Appendix 1 – List of County Collections held at Sheffield Archives:

- South Yorkshire County Council
- South Yorkshire Joint Secretariat
- South Yorkshire Police – post 1974

- South Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service (SYMAS)
- South Yorkshire Fire Service
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTE)
- South Yorkshire County Record Office Miners' Strike material
- South Yorkshire County Council aerial photographs
- Domesday books and Forms 37 (Finance Act 1910)
- Sheffield Regional Hospital Board
- Trent Regional Health Authority
- Yorkshire Water Authority
- South Yorkshire Valuation Court
- South Yorkshire Trading Standards
- West Riding County Council Development Plans

17.2   Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference for Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Services Acquisition and Disposal Panel

Purpose / role of the group:
- Manage acquisition and disposal of items for Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Services, in line with the Service's current Collections Development Policies and overall Commitment and Statement of Purpose.

- The aims and objectives of this group are to:
    - Assess potential acquisitions against current Collections Development Policies and make a decision whether to acquire for Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Services collections.
    - Assess potential disposals against current Collections Development Policies citing clear disposal criteria and relevant professional guidelines and make a decision to remove from Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Service collections, with agreement on method and manner of disposal
    - Present recommendations and seek approval in line with disposal process from Cabinet Member
    - Assess requests for loans in and out of the Service, as appropriate
    - Rationalise historic loans
    - Assess progress against Documentation Backlog Plan and Cataloguing Action Plan

Membership:
- The membership of the group will be as follows:
    - Museums, Arts and Heritage Manager (Chair)
    - Collections and Exhibitions Manager
    - Collections and Exhibitions Officers
    - Archivist
    - Searchroom Supervisor

- Where appropriate (through invite by the Chair), other staff will attend depending on the agenda. This may include:

- Elected Members
- Other Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Services staff
- Representatives from other Council services
- Representatives of other bodies including other museums or heritage organisations

- Membership will be reviewed annually or following staff changes

Accountability:
The decision-making process will be clear and accountable in line with Rotherham Museums, Arts and Heritage Service and Council Policies. No decisions should be taken without a clear audit trail and reference to relevant policies or procedures. All decisions should be legal and ethical, in line with Council and national standards.

Process:
Items for consideration will be supported by relevant research, along with an initial assessment recommendation. Relevant paperwork will be presented to the Panel. Further guidance can be found in the museum documentation procedures manual and archive procedures relating to accessioning and cataloguing.

Assessments will take into account origin and ownership; relevance, importance and long term value; potential use; availability of contextual information; condition; preservation and conversation requirements; accessibility; cost and ethics[5].

Panel will discuss recommendation, determine outcome and record decision. Item will then be processed according to Service's relevant procedures.

Review:
- The group will review the relevance and value of its work and its terms of reference on an annual basis (or earlier required).

- The chosen working method will be:

  - meetings will be held monthly, or more frequently if required to tackle backlogs or influx of items
  - meetings will be held on a formal basis, with agendas and minutes made available.
  - meeting papers will be distributed no later than 5 days before the meeting.
  - draft minutes will be distributed to all members within 2 weeks of the meeting, which will then be approved at following meeting
  - Other representatives attending the meeting will be invited by the Chair or a nominated representative.

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[5] For further information, please see i) Museums Association Ethical Guidelines (Number 1 second ed. 2004); *Acquisition – Guidance on the ethics and practicalities of acquisition* ii) Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland (Approved 9 May 2018); *Code of Ethics*