

# Archives Collections Information Policy

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Mission Statement

At Inspire we want everyone to discover, value, and share the Nottinghamshire story. We will engage and inspire the people of Nottinghamshire and beyond with the county's heritage, by preserving, protecting and stimulating research, learning, creative and entrepreneurial endeavours, and cultural experience through access to its archives and related resources.

### 1.2 Service Objectives

#### 1.2.1 Objectives –Nottinghamshire Archives

- To fulfil a custodial role in the preservation, acquisition and cataloguing of Nottinghamshire's archives and local history collections
- To promote and provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to use Nottinghamshire's archives and local history collections to better understand, and appreciate their heritage
- To develop and to promote best practice in the preservation, enhancement and use of Nottinghamshire's archives and local history collections
- To develop and to support sustainable partnerships and to enable communities and people to engage, explore, conserve and enjoy their own heritage

#### 1.2.2 Objectives – The Records Management Service

- To ensure that Nottinghamshire County Council's paper information and records sources are retained only for as long as is necessary for legal compliance and administrative need.
- To develop and promote best practice and legal compliance in the creation, use, maintenance and disposal of information and records sources.
- To co-ordinate the selection and offering of records and material to Nottinghamshire Archives, thereby contributing to the corporate memory of Nottinghamshire County Council.
- To work with the Information Governance team and to ensure Nottinghamshire Council's compliance with legislation relating to information and record keeping.

## 2 Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to define the information that Nottinghamshire Archives will gather and provide about archival and printed collections. It supports the Mission Statements shown above and should be seen in conjunction with the Collections Management Policy.

The policy outlines the history of collections information and cataloguing within

Nottinghamshire Archives and the current cataloguing systems and professional standards used.

The policy is supported by the Collections Information Plan which sets out the objectives through which the service will achieve the aims of this policy.

The policy and plan are live, working documents which will be reviewed as and when necessary.

### **3 Collections Information**

Nottinghamshire Archives captures information at various stages during the processing of material, from the point of deposit or purchase through to cataloguing and subsequent work. As an archive and local studies service there are different but related procedures in place for archive and printed material

This policy covers information gathered:

- At the point of deposit and during accessioning
- During cataloguing
- Through location and movement control
- Concerning demand, usage and disposal
- Concerning physical condition, preservation and conservation activities

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

- Accessions Register (paper and electronic)
- CALM Collections Management Software
- Correspondence files for depositors, which may be used to augment the information found in accessions and catalogue records
- Document request slips
- Locations guide
- Other finding aids, including handlists and specific indexes
- Marking and labelling of objects

### **4 Point of deposit/Accessioning**

#### **4.1 Archives**

Since the archive service was established all deposits have been given a unique accession number starting with 1.

A deposit or gift agreement is completed for all accessions, unless they are internal transfers or purchases. The agreements are signed by the depositor/donor and a qualified archivist. The original is retained by Nottinghamshire Archives and a copy supplied to the depositor/donor. The agreement is legally binding.

There is a legacy of collections received in the past without formal agreements. Nottinghamshire Archives is committed to reducing this backlog and securing appropriate agreements for such collections.

A receipt is also provided to the depositor/donor providing a summary description of the accession.

If depositors//donors wish to provide lists prior to deposit they are encouraged to do so following a standard spreadsheet format which can then be imported directly into CALM.

All accessions are recorded on CALM. The information recorded includes the following:

- Date of receipt of accession
- Name and contact details of depositor/donor
- Accession number, title and summary description of deposit

- Extent of deposit
- Accession category (Gift, Loan, Purchase, Transfer etc.)
- Any access restrictions
- Any copyright restrictions
- Any administrative and custodial history
- Any material in a fragile condition
- Any passwords or similar for born digital archives
- Whether permission is granted to publish digital copies on the Inspire Picture Archive.

Nottinghamshire Archives participates in The National Archives' annual Accessions to Repositories Survey to enable up-to-date information to appear on the National Register of Archives. Summaries of significant new accessions also regularly appear in the newsletter of the Friends of Nottinghamshire Archives.

To comply with Data Protection restrictions and the confidentiality of the agreement made between Nottinghamshire Archives and the depositor/donor, full details of the accessions register will not normally be made available to the public.

## **4.2 Printed material**

An electronic record (Excel spread sheet) is maintained for all items purchased or donated. The information recorded includes the following:

- Date of order
- Date of receipt
- Date of cataloguing
- Author, title, publisher, price
- Acquisition note e.g. donation, purchase

## **5 Cataloguing (including Accruals) and Indexing**

### **5.1 Archives**

#### **5.1.1 Cataloguing**

Cataloguing is undertaken using CALM software supported by an in-house Cataloguing Manual. This complies with the following standards:

- The mandatory elements of International Council on Archives, 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 [NCA Rules]

Prior to the adoption of these standards and the use of CALM, cataloguing was undertaken following a variety of individual styles based on the Manual of Archival Description resulting in great variation in the quality and comprehensiveness of the earlier catalogues and indexes.

Nottinghamshire Archives aims to catalogue parish and non-conformist registers on receipt, as well as smaller accessions (occupying less than half a box), through a combination of staff and volunteer support. External funding is sought to support cataloguing work. Other accessions and backlog collections are prioritised based on demand and availability and skill levels of staff and volunteers.

### **5.1.2 Accruals**

Accruals to existing collections are either added to the existing catalogue or catalogued separately but linked to previous deposits from the same source through their finding numbers, hierarchical arrangement in CALM and cross-referencing within the catalogue entries.

## **5.2 Indexing**

Nottinghamshire Archives has a number of historic card indexing systems which are available in the searchroom and reading room. These generally cover particular types of record or individual collections.

Indexing of archive collections on CALM is currently selective, based on need and resources. The development of the online catalogue means that improving this area is now a priority, see also the Collection Information Plan.

## **5.3 Online catalogues and finding aids**

Nottinghamshire Archives maintains an online catalogue. New records are added upon completion of the catalogue.

Nottinghamshire Archives' catalogues are also available on The National Archives' Discovery search engine, though some catalogues are still only accessible in hardcopy format. Work to convert these is ongoing, see also the Collections Information Plan.

## **6 Restrictions and closure periods**

Nottinghamshire Archives' collections include records subject to certain access restrictions or periods during which the records are closed. These may be determined by Data Protection legislation, advice and guidance from The National Archives and the Information Commissioner's Office or imposed by the depositor.

Nottinghamshire Archives reviews existing catalogued collections to ensure that sensitive or personal information is not released. Accession and catalogue entries include information regarding any restrictions on access.

Customers are made aware of any restrictions and their rationale. Archive staff receive regular training in Data Protection and Freedom of Information and follow documented procedures when advising customers.

## **7 Location and Movement Control including loans**

Nottinghamshire Archives aims to maintain up to date information on the locations of all the collections in its care. A location guide provides information on all collection locations within the stores and is kept up to date. A list of missing or mislaid documents is maintained.

Depositors or donors wishing to withdraw their own archive material temporarily must complete and countersign a form prepared and signed by Nottinghamshire Archives staff, as well as provide evidence of identity or authorisation to allow such a withdrawal. If relevant, written advice on the display of records is supplied. Regular reviews of the list of withdrawn material ensure that material is returned as agreed.

## **8 Disposals and Withdrawals**

On deposit, Nottinghamshire Archives captures depositors'/donors' permissions to destroy or transfer to another repository any material that we are unable to keep. Where appropriate, these permissions are reconfirmed prior to disposal. Nottinghamshire Archives records details of any disposals including their rationale.

Nottinghamshire Archives makes use of retention and disposal schedules where appropriate, both for its own disposal decisions and when advising depositors about records recommended for permanent preservation. These schedules include those produced by the County Council, Archives and Records Association, Church of England, and other organisations.

The Records Management Service has developed a retention policy for Nottinghamshire County Council records within its care.

Depositors are made aware on deposit that if a collection on loan is permanently withdrawn, a charge may be made to cover expenditure on storage, cataloguing, preserving and conserving the records.

**Date approved: 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 2022**