

Benchmarking exercise using The National Archives 2023 survey of local authority archive services

Data source

The data source for this benchmarking exercise are the results of the [Local Authority Benchmarking Exercise](#) completed by The National Archives in 2023. This replaces the annual Archive Services Statistics Survey run by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The benchmarking exercise was opened to all 126 English and Welsh local authority archives and closed on 28 February 2023. The survey was completed using data from the year 2021/2022. 58% of services participated in the benchmarking exercise.

Selected services

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service is unique in England being the only jointly funded and managed local authority service which comprises a city and a county service. Both the county and city services include local studies collections, as do some archive services such as Derbyshire. Staffordshire also provides a museum service and whilst this is not unique the service does not separate its staff roles out for this service. Some archive services also deliver records management functions, which the joint archive service does not.

In selecting comparator services three neighbouring services from the Midlands have been included (Derbyshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire) who are all funded by one authority and operate one service point. Cheshire Archives and Local Studies is included as it is funded by two local authorities and is a near neighbour. Suffolk Archives is included as it currently operates three service points and has delivered a NLHF funded project to create a new archives centre called The Hold.

Data relates to 2021-2022 in which many archive services were still operating reduced access in line with COVID-19 restrictions.

Selected categories

- Staffing: nos at headquarters, branches if applicable and total.
- Volunteer hours
- Archive holdings
- Born digital holdings
- Percentage of collections without any finding aid
- Digital preservation system
- Enquiries received
- Website visitors
- Social media Facebook likes, Twitter followers

Staff and volunteers

Office	Staff at headquarters (fte)	Staff at branches (fte)	Volunteers	Volunteer hours
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	11.2	5	91	3607
Cheshire	14.9	0	130	2250
Derbyshire	15.7	0	1	208
Suffolk	12.7	6	59	2657
Warwickshire	12.2	0	169	3492
Worcestershire	12	0	6	76

The service headquarters (Staffordshire service) has the least number of staff by full time equivalent. Only Suffolk operates branch offices (two) and has 6 staff compared to 5 at Stoke. The service has the 3rd highest number of volunteers and highest number of volunteer hours.

Collections

Office	Archival holdings cubic metres	Born digital gigabytes	% collections uncatalogued	Digital preservation system
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	1077.1	0.5	0.01%	Preservica
Cheshire	612	105	0%	None
Derbyshire	940.34	114.8	Not answered	None
Suffolk	1339.57	705	38.61%	Preservica
Warwickshire	628	84	0%	Several open source
Worcestershire	1166.7	812.43	28%	None

The service has the third largest analogue collection but the smallest digital archive. It is one of three services to have a digital preservation system, but the small size of the collection reflects the lack resource to implement the system and proactively acquire digital collections. The service performs well in having almost none of its collections lacking a finding aid of some sort.

Access

Office	Enquiries received	Event attendees	Website visitors	FB likes	X/Twitter followers
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent	5124	330	70,579	3010	3001
Cheshire	4744	317	91,335	NA	3654
Derbyshire	NA	2	2,157	NA	868
Suffolk	5007	6667	597,449	2324	3543
Warwickshire	2812	0	12,751	NA	NA
Worcestershire	1722	0	58,566	3591	3694

Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent received the most enquiries compared to other comparator services. Event attendees shows wide variation reflecting differing stages of recovery from Covid-19. Suffolk had attended several external events as part of their NLHF activity programme with the resulting very high number of attendees. Similarly, Suffolk has by far the highest number of website visitors with Staffordshire and Stoke the third highest service. Social media was not recorded by all services. The service was second for Facebook likes and third for Twitter/X followers.