

**STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE-ON-TRENT
ARCHIVE SERVICE &
STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES AND HERITAGE**

ACCESS POLICY

1. Mission Statement

- 1.1. Staffordshire Archives and Heritage is made up of the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service and the County Museum Service. It also manages the William Salt Library on behalf of the charitable trust that administers the Library.
- 1.2. The aim of the Service is to locate, collect and preserve irreplaceable archive and museum collections relating to the past and present life and work of people of the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke on Trent and to preserve the archives of the Diocese of Lichfield, thereby contributing to the national network of archive and museum care.
- 1.3. Our Mission is :

To connect people to the memories of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent, by engaging them with the collections we develop and preserve for current and future generations

2. Policy Aims

- 2.1. This policy sets out how access is provided to the Archive and Heritage Service collections. It provides information on restrictions to access, where charges might apply and links to other relevant policies.

3. Statutory and Legal Status

- 3.1. The Joint Archive Service is jointly administered and funded by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council under the terms of a Joint Agreement for Archive Services with effect from 1st April 2011.
- 3.2. The Heritage Service is funded and managed by Staffordshire County Council and delivered by Staffordshire County Museum.

Staffordshire Record Office is:

- Appointed by the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of Public Records under the terms of the Public Records Act 1958, for the deposit of specified classes of Public Records including Quarter Sessions, HM Coroners, hospital records, magistrates' court records.
- Recognised by the Master of the Rolls for the deposit of manorial and tithe records under the Law of Property Act, 1922, and the Tithe Act, 1936.

- Designated by the Bishop of Lichfield for the deposit of Anglican parish records for the archdeaconries of Lichfield, Stoke on Trent and Walsall under the Parochial Register and Records Measure, 1978 (amended 1992).
- Recognised by The National Archives as a repository meeting the Standard for Archive Repositories.

Lichfield Record Office is:

- Appointed by the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of Public Records under the terms of the Public Records Act 1958, for the deposit of specified classes of Public Records including Quarter Sessions, HM Coroners, hospital records, magistrates court records
- Recognised by the Master of the Rolls for the deposit of manorial and tithe records under the Law of Property Act, 1922, and the Tithe Act, 1936
- Designated by the Bishop of Lichfield for the deposit of Anglican parish records from the Deanery of Lichfield and Tamworth under the Parochial Registers and Records Measure, 1978 (amended 1992) and for the deposit of the Diocesan archives
- Recognised by The National Archives as a repository meeting the Standard for Archive Repositories.

Stoke-on-Trent City Archives is:

- Appointed by the Lord Chancellor for the deposit of Public Records under the terms of the Public Records Act 1958, for the deposit of specified classes of Public Records including Quarter Sessions, HM Coroners, hospital records, magistrates court records.
- Recognised by The National Archives as a repository meeting the Standard for Archive Repositories

Staffordshire County Museum is

- Operated and founded under the terms of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and Local Government Act 1972.
- Recognised as a Fully Accredited Museum under Arts Council England's Museum Accreditation scheme.

3.3 The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service has previously been recognised as meeting the Customer Service Excellence for excellence

in public service in its own right. It has a Service Charter setting out standards of service (see Appendix 1).

4. Onsite Access

Access to the Archive and Heritage collections is available to our community and stakeholders. These include:

- People of Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent
- Depositors and donors
- Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council staff and councillors
- Local, family and community history groups
- Potential users from within and outside this geographical area with an enquiry relating to our collections.

Access will be provided free of charge at Staffordshire Record Office, Lichfield Record Office, Stoke on Trent City Archives, William Salt Library and the County Museum in a secure area supervised by staff.

Customers are required to provide proof of identification and obtain a reader's ticket to gain access to original collections in the Archive Service and William Salt Library. Use of original archives is subject to observance of the [Code of Conduct](#) and the Access Restrictions for specific collections.

Museum collections are generally accessible through permanent and temporary displays and exhibitions. Reserve collections can be viewed by appointment, free of charge.

4.1 Our staff

Visitors to our service points can expect:

- A friendly welcome, from clearly identifiable staff.
- Assistance in using our public service points.
- Assistance in identifying the collections necessary for an enquiry.
- Availability of original documents, objects, microforms and online collections within the limits of the Service's security, conservation, and access policies.

Our standards of service are outlined in the [Service Charter](#).

4.2 Security

In order to protect our collections visitors to our service points will be asked to observe security measures. These are described in the Code of Conduct for each record office and include:

- Registering for a reader's ticket.
- Signing in a visitor's register.
- Securing bags in lockers outside the search room.

4.3 Handling and preservation

All staff are required to be proactive in supervising access to original collections. Guidance on using original archive material is given in our leaflet '[In Safe Keeping](#)'. Each service point provides equipment to support safe handling of original items. For heavily used items surrogates are provided as the first means of access to preserve the original item. Access to the original would be at the discretion of staff.

4.4 Use of cameras and copying

Copying documents and using cameras to photograph items is permitted subject to copyright and condition of the item. Use of cameras and copying services are detailed in our leaflets on:

- [Photography and scanning services](#)
- [Copying options](#)

Restrictions on copying are given in the following leaflets:

- [Copyright](#)
- [In Safe Keeping](#)

4.5 Access restrictions

Some collections may have access restrictions on them and this will be clearly identified in our catalogues. Restrictions may occur for the following reasons:

- To comply with legislation such as Data Protection or Freedom of Information.
- If the items are considered too fragile to produce and further damage may occur.
- If a depositor has requested a closure period or other restriction on access.

If an item cannot be produced for use staff will explain the reason why not and, where applicable, explain how to gain permission to access an item. If an item is fragile staff will advise on alternative sources and/or seek advice from conservation staff on future access.

5. Remote Access

Staffordshire Archives & Heritage aims to make information and access about collections available online.

5.1. Websites

The Service website is hosted on Staffordshire County Council's website. The content on the site is kept under review and the Service aims to update it promptly with new information. The Service also has content available on the following websites:

- [Staffordshire Past Track](#)
- [The Great War Staffordshire](#)

- [The Minton Archive](#)
- [Staffordshire Name Indexes](#)
- [The Sutherland Collection](#)

5.2. Digital content on partner sites

The Service has digitised some of its name rich collections with its partner Find My Past. Free access is offered at Archive Service sites, Staffordshire Libraries and Stoke on Trent City Libraries.

Oil paintings from the Museum Service's fine art collection are available online on Art UK.

5.3. Online catalogue

[Gateway to the Past](#) is the Archive and Heritage Service online catalogue. It holds information about collections for the Joint Archive Service, County Museum and the William Salt Library. Content is added regularly to the catalogue. Please see our Collections Information Policy for more information.

5.4. Enquiries by post or email

The Service aims to assist users in accessing collections by advising about availability of material. Information on our services and resources held will be given free of charge. For research which requires access to original documents, surrogates, searching of online records, enquirers will be offered our chargeable research service or copying services. Standards for response times to enquiries are outlined in our Service Charter.

5.5. Use of social media

The Service uses social media to promote its collections and new and existing users with the service. Items may include news, events, new collections, projects and interesting items in existing collections. The Service currently uses (but not limited to)

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Blogging sites

For more information please see our [Digital Engagement Strategy](#).

5.6. Learning and Engagement Activities

Staffordshire Archives & Heritage delivers a variety of learning and engagement activities to encourage a wide range of use of its collections. These activities are promoted online, through social media, and mailing lists. They may include:

- Talks and visits

- Exhibitions
- Events and study days
- Externally funded projects working with communities
- Educational visits by schools, colleges and universities
- Reminiscence sessions

In May 2016 Staffordshire Archives and Heritage was awarded a stage 1 pass by Heritage Lottery Fund to develop the [Staffordshire History Centre](#). During the development stage of this project a detailed Activity Plan, Learning Policy and Engagement Strategy will be developed.

6. Review

This policy will be reviewed every five years or sooner if circumstances require it.

September 2016.

Customer Charter

PERSONAL VISITS

If you visit Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service, you can expect:

General Standards

- ◆ A friendly welcome, from clearly identifiable staff
- ◆ Assistance in using the reading rooms
- ◆ Assistance in identifying the records necessary for your enquiry
- ◆ Availability of original documents and microforms within the limits of the Archive Service's security, conservation, and access policies

Production of original documents

- ◆ We aim to produce documents within 20 minutes of your request being made. If undue delays are likely to occur, we will keep you informed.
- ◆ We will aim to produce documents kept in out storage or specialised storage within 2 working days.

POSTAL AND EMAIL ENQUIRIES

If you write to us about the services we provide, or about the contents of collections, you can expect a reply within 5 working days. For more complex archival enquiries an acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days and a full reply within 20 working days. If we are unable to assist you because we do not hold the records required for your research, we will always try to suggest an alternative line of enquiry for you to follow.

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES

We aim to answer all telephone calls promptly and courteously. Our staff will always be happy to give you their name and will endeavour to help you to the best of their ability. If we are unable to assist you because we do not hold the relevant records we will always try to refer you to an appropriate organisation.

COPYING SERVICES

Our standard is to notify you of the completion and cost of your copies/microform prints from the receipt of your order within:

- 8 working days at Staffordshire Record Office
- 5 working days at Stoke on Trent City Archives
- 8 working days at Lichfield Record Office

research service

Our standard is to notify you of the completion and cost of your research from the receipt of you order within:

- 15 working days at Staffordshire Record Office
- 15 working days at Stoke on Trent City Archives
- 20 working days at Lichfield Record Office

You can expect a report detailing the results of the research and suggestions for follow up research, where appropriate.

TALKS ABOUT ARCHIVES

We aim to respond positively to requests from local organisations for talks about the archive collections in our care.

ACQUIRING AND PRESERVING ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS

We will actively seek to acquire and preserve archive collections relating to past and present life in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent within the terms of our *Acquisitions Policy* and make them available for people to use

We will respond to all approaches relating to the deposit or donation of archive collections

We will accession all new collections and send a final acknowledgement and receipt from the office of deposit within 12 days of their receipt

We will provide specialist archive storage to prescribed national standards as required, administered and inspected through The National Archives

We will conserve original archives to prescribed national standards and within the terms of our *Preservation and Conservation Policy*

We will catalogue collections to prescribed international cataloguing standards and will make such catalogues available online

Copies of our Terms of Deposit, Acquisitions Policy and Preservation and Conservation Policy are available on request.

Contact details

◆ Head of Archive and Heritage Service

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◆ Staffordshire Record Office

Andrew George, Principal Archivist
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Eastagate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ
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◆ Lichfield Record Office

Andrew George, Principal Archivist
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◆ Stoke on Trent City Archives

Chris Latimer, City Archivist
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