

# Wandsworth Heritage Service

## Access and Security Policy for Archives

---

### 1 Identity of the Archive Service and definition of terms used

This statement of the Heritage Service's Access Policy follows the principles and provisions of the draft Standard for Access to Archives produced by the Public Services Quality Group of the National Council on Archives.

Wandsworth Library and Heritage Service has custody of the archives and local history collection of Wandsworth Council, and is based at Battersea Library, 265 Lavender Hill, London SW11 1JB.

The people who live, work or study in Wandsworth and anyone who uses the online information about the Heritage Service form the community for the service.

The terms of 'user' or 'customer' include any person who uses any kind of service provided by the Library and Heritage Service, or undertakes research and includes potential users as well as established users.

The 'stakeholders' of the Heritage Service include Wandsworth Council, community groups including amenity and historical societies depositors of records (including other record offices), researchers, customers and potential customers, regional bodies, such as the Arts Council England national bodies, and the National Archives.

### 2 Key Principles

The Library and Heritage Service will:

- serve its community as effectively and efficiently as possible
- serve all of its community, devising a range of services appropriate to the community's stated or implied needs
- encourage as much access by customers to primary source material as is compatible with the permanent preservation of unique and irreplaceable material. There will be a presumption of openness
- define the objectives it is seeking to achieve and consult with stakeholders to develop and review that definition. The satisfaction of customers will be amongst the primary objectives
- explicitly plan to achieve those objectives and consult with stakeholders in developing that plan
- have systems to measure its performance against its plans

# Wandsworth Heritage Service

## Access and Security Policy for Archives

---

- have customer feedback mechanisms and complaints procedures, and clear channels of communication to and from other stakeholders
- explicitly respond in its plans to over- and under-performance, and to stakeholder feedback, to maintain an appropriate balance of resources over the full range of objectives
- communicate clearly customer responsibilities and if necessary enforce them
- ensure that its performance in regard to this Access Policy is capable of being audited

### 3 Access provisions

- 3.1 Access to original archives/documents is available by appointment in the searchroom under the supervision of a qualified archivist, or staff supervised by a qualified archivist.

In the searchroom on the first floor of Battersea Library, qualified or appropriately trained staff supervise and assist researchers in the use of original, facsimile and surrogate material.

Finding aids are provided i.e. catalogues, detailed handlists and indexes.

Rules and procedures for the use of the searchroom are displayed with the register for visitors to sign in.

In the searchroom, users can obtain information on the use of archives for research, and view a range of resources relating to the area covered, in facsimile or surrogate form, and on-line. Additionally general advice on family and local history is available in the Reference Library.

- 3.2 The Heritage Service aims to serve all its communities, including those with a disability. The Service also aims to reach out to potential users of the service through special events and press publicity in order to develop our user base, particularly amongst Wandsworth residents. The Service will, where possible, provide speakers to a wide variety of local and family history societies and arrange group visits and open days.
- 3.3 The Heritage Service will not discriminate against any member of the diverse communities from whom users and researchers come. Where possible the Heritage Service will seek to improve use by under-represented groups, including black and ethnic minorities, children and young people, people with disabilities, older people and people from the gay, lesbian and transgender communities. The Heritage Service will also seek to ensure that its collections include sources from these groups where appropriate.

# Wandsworth Heritage Service

## Access and Security Policy for Archives

---

- 3.4 Recognising that not all our users wish or will be able to visit one of our service points in person, the Heritage Service has a website and an enquiry service. We are further developing remote access to our catalogue, which is available online.
- 3.5 The Heritage Service has a feedback mechanism for receiving comments and complaints from users. It responds to all correspondence on its level of service within 10 working days. Every eighteen months, the Archive Service participates in the Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) National Survey of Archive Users to gauge levels of user satisfaction with its service, the results of which are published via the PSQG pages of the Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland) website
- 3.6 The Heritage Service adheres to procedures produced to comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, the Data Protection Act, 1998, the Freedom of Information Act, 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations, 2004 by Wandsworth Council.
- 3.7 The Heritage Service is committed to the publication of information about the service through publications and on its own web site, or through the publications and web sites of other organisations. The Heritage Service is committed to ensure that anyone interested in the service can readily find out about it, and understand their rights of access – both intellectual and physical.
- 3.8 The Heritage Service will ensure that the service is open at appropriate times for community use, including a percentage of hours outside the Monday-Friday 9am-5pm period
- 3.9 Users should be able to find specific records and items of interest in the Heritage Service collections, and the Heritage Service is committed to improving collection level descriptions and catalogues of its holdings, and making these available on the internet
- 3.10 Restrictions on the use of the records, under legislation or under the terms of individual deposits, will be clearly communicated to users.
- 3.11 Where practicable a choice of copying services will be offered to users and any restrictions are clearly communicated by the Heritage Service.
- 3.12 The Heritage Service is committed to reaching the communities it serves through external publications, its web site and a programme of outreach and on-site activities.

# Wandsworth Heritage Service

## Access and Security Policy for Archives

---

- 3.13 The Heritage Service will ensure that users with enquiries that cannot be answered using the resources of the Service will be referred to an appropriate alternative organisation or resource.
- 3.14 The Heritage Service will identify new users and provide them with the means to make full use of the service and its resources.
- 3.15 Users visiting the service in person will be provided with appropriate accommodation for the study of records in an environment that is of a proper standard for the use of those records, or of surrogates and secondary source material.
- 3.16 The Heritage Service will seek to maximise the information available about its services and the records it holds on-line.

## 4 Staff management, participation and responsibilities

- 4.1 The Heritage Service will ensure that the name of the service manager is readily available to all users and researchers, and how that manager may be contacted.
- 4.2 The staff of the Heritage Service will be involved in developing access provisions intended to ensure a user-friendly culture. Staff will be guided by national, regional and local service standards.
- 4.3 Heritage Service staff will always be individually identifiable to users and researchers.
- 4.4 Heritage staff will be fully trained for their jobs, or be directly supervised by appropriately trained staff.
- 4.5 The Heritage Service will seek to ensure that most service delivery problems are resolved at the initial point of contact between staff and user, and that front-line staff have sufficient guidance, authority and resources to meet user and researcher needs.

## 5 User responsibilities

- 5.1 The Heritage Service will ensure that users are aware of their responsibilities and the need to comply with regulations designed to ensure the safe and effective operation of the Heritage service.

## Wandsworth Heritage Service

### **Access and Security Policy for Archives**

---

- 5.2 Users should treat staff courteously and respect conditions regarding use and acknowledgment of information from the Heritage service.
- 5.3 Users should respect others using the Heritage service.

December 2012