

Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service Documentation Policy 2013-2018

Name of Museum: Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service

Name of Governing Body: Hampshire County Council

Date on which this policy was approved:

Date at which policy is due for renewal: 31 March 2018

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Collections documentation and the management of information about collections underpins every aspect of museum activity. Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service is committed to ensuring that all the collections in its care are documented, that this information is gathered, stored and made available and is accurate and reliable.

2 Aims of the Documentation Policy

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure that Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service fulfils its responsibility in relation to the security, management and access to collections information.
- 2.2 Through implementation of this policy our objective is to:
- Improve accountability for the collections
 - Maintain at least minimum professional standards in documentation procedures and collections information, achieving the highest standards wherever possible
 - Improve access to the collections through digitisation
 - Extend access to collections information, particularly through digital media
 - Strengthen the security of the collections.

3 Documentation Policy

- 3.1 Collections will be documented onto a collections management system, currently Modes Complete, to SPECTRUM 4 standards. The system is maintained by Hampshire County Council's IT department and through subscription to the MODES User Association. Detailed operational guidelines concerning documentation procedures are recorded in the Documentation Procedural Manual.

3.2 Object Entry

Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service will record all items entering any of its sites, whether potential acquisitions, loans, enquiries or other deposits. This information will be recorded on a Deposit form.

3.3 Acquisition

The acquisition and disposal of objects from the collections is covered by the current version of the Collections Development Policy.

Each accession will be allocated a unique number and this will be marked onto the item whenever practicable. In the case of bulk archaeological and natural science material a number will be allocated to a whole site. This information is recorded in an accessions register which is maintained by each keeper.

3.4 Cataloguing standards

We will catalogue our collections to either Inventory or Catalogue standard as outlined below -

Inventory level

The inventory level is a basic accession record for an individual object or group of objects. This will allow any object in our care to be individually identified and verified. All accessioned items, loans and any other un-accessioned objects as appropriate are documented at this level.

Catalogue level

The majority of objects will have full catalogue records for individual items. We will continue to add digitised images to the database to improve access.

3.5 Loans

All loans in and loans out of the Arts and Museums Service will be recorded following the appropriate procedures. This information is recorded on a paper form and onto Modes Complete.

3.6 Security of data and backups

Measures are in place to ensure the physical security and long term preservation of all documentation records, whether paper or computerised. There is a microfiche and digitised PDF security copy of the accessions register which is held in a different building and on the server. The collections management system will be backed up daily by Hampshire County Council IT services.

3.7 Controlled access to sensitive data

Collections information will be recorded in compliance with all legal requirements, including the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000). We will review requests for confidential data such as donor information, valuations or site details

on a case by case basis, and in accordance with the applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of gift.

3.8 Access

Objects will always be documented with a view to making the information accessible to the public. There will be an increased emphasis on digitisation ensuring objects are photographed or scanned to a high standard. Images will be stored in accordance with the Digital Preservation Policy 2012-14. We will seek to publish collections online and to use collections information to enhance our exhibitions and community engagement programme. The standards applied to cataloguing and digitisation will ensure that our collections information can be integrated into partnership projects using shared digital platforms.

3.9 Retrospective documentation backlog

Hampshire County Council Arts and Museums Service is committed to reducing its documentation backlogs. We will continue to work to resolve discrepancies between inventory records and existing documentation. The backlog will continue to be addressed in a systematic manner, in accordance with the levels of staffing and resources available at the time. This will be reflected in the current Documentation Plan.

