

## THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM'S POLICY FOR COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

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## THE ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM'S POLICY FOR COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

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**Name of Museum: Royal Air Force Museum**

**Name of governing body: Trustees of the Royal Air Force Museum**

***Delegated authority given to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) by the Board of Trustees for Collections related Policies and Procedures***

**Date on which this policy was approved via SLT delegation: 20 April 2020**

**Date at which this policy is due for review: 2 years after approval**

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### **Introduction**

1. Following the celebration of the RAF Centenary the Museum has committed to improving our story telling and building up our resilience into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Therefore, five strategic priorities will shape our activities for the next ten years:

1. Inspiring engagement, debate and reflection
2. Inspiring our people within a diverse and collaborative culture
3. Embedding an entrepreneurial, agile and sustainable approach
4. Building and sustaining brilliant basics
5. Connecting with our communities and partners

2. The RAF Museum recognises the importance of collections information to support the Museum to achieve its strategic priorities and the fact that it is the bedrock for all access and collection management activities.

PAS 197:2009 defines collections information as '*information an organisation collects, holds and maintains about its collections and/or collected items*'.

This policy describes the Museum's approach to collections information and its work to ensure that it is of high quality, accurate, accessible and secure.

### **Definitions**

3. The following sets out definitions for terms and activities this policy seeks to address:

**Collections Management** - Strategies, policies, processes and procedures relating to a collection's development, information, access and care.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> PAS 197: 2009; © Collections Trust - p. 2.

**Acquisition** – the process by which the Museum acquires legal title to an object which thereby enters the Museum’s collections. This will be carried out in accordance with the Collections Development Policy.

**Object** – a Museum object is a physical or digital asset which has been selected because of its historic, scientific, or other cultural significance together with its associated documentation.

**Collection** – A collection is an assemblage of acquired objects held by the Museum for the public interest.

**Collections Management System (CMS)** – one of the methods of capturing, recording, storing and retrieving the data associated with the objects forming the Museum’s collections. The current software used in the implementation of the CMS is Vernon CMS.

**Catalogue record** – the minimum standard required using the Museum’s CMS as defined in SPECTRUM 5.0. The RAF Museum has a two-tier level of cataloguing, Full Catalogue and Inventory:

**Full catalogue** - Cataloguing is defined in SPECTRUM<sup>2</sup> as: The compilation and maintenance of key information, formally identifying and describing objects. It may include information concerning the provenance of objects and collections management documentation e.g. details of acquisition, conservation, exhibition and loan history, and location history. It need not bring together in one location everything known about an object but should provide cross-references to any other relevant information source known to the organisation.

The Museum uses the status Full Catalogue in order to register those objects or groups of objects which have been fully recorded on the CMS. These records incorporate more detail than Inventory level to support the Museum’s purpose to tell the RAF’s story. This will include as much history about the object or groups of objects as possible - its use and the people it represents. It includes such details as measurement details, condition, history, and more detailed descriptive information including that relating to intellectual property rights, and more in-depth subject indexing.

**Inventory** - Inventory is defined in SPECTRUM<sup>3</sup> as: 'The maintenance of up-to-date information accounting for and locating all objects for which the organisation has a legal responsibility. This may include objects on loan, unaccessioned or previously undocumented items, temporarily deposited objects and support collections.'

The Museum uses the status Inventory to record sufficient information about an item to make it identifiable – including Object Number; Object Name; Title; Brief Description – and traceable through Current Location; Cataloguer; Catalogued Date; Object Status. In addition, from September 2019 new acquisitions will have a valuation recorded at this level for auditing purposes as well as the details concerning any known hazards.

**Accessioned** – Accessioned objects are those that have been formally acquired and accepted into the Permanent Collection. They are documented in accordance with SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on the Museum’s Collections Management System (CMS).

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<sup>2</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2018 Version 5.0 Collections Trust - p. 40.

<sup>3</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2018 Version 5.0 Collections Trust - p. 30.

**Unaccessioned** – Long-term deposited objects (also known as un-accessioned objects) represent two thirds of the accumulated objects held by the Museum. The majority are aircraft technical drawings and library objects. They include objects deposited in the long-term care of the Museum which have yet to be assigned a status, catalogued or passed through the Collections Review process. In the past many objects were deposited with little or no corresponding entry documentation or formal acknowledgement of receipt. The bulk of these objects have now been inventoried and allocated temporary T-numbers, often at group or batch level. Due to their uncertain status, provenance and documentation they require the same level of management and care as accessioned (Permanent) objects. Short-term deposited objects are, when newly arrived on premises, recorded through entry forms (as potential new acquisitions). Due to their uncertain status, they require the same level of management and care as accessioned (Permanent) objects.

**Deaccession** – The process including documentation that accompanies the disposal of an object from the Museum's collections.

**Disposal** – The formal decision by the Museum to remove objects from its collection through an agreed method. This will be carried out in accordance with the Museum's Collections Development Policy.

**Value** – this refers to the scientific and wider cultural value of an object to society as well as the financial.

**Permanent collection** - consists of accessioned objects owned and preserved by the Museum in perpetuity for long-term public access, engagement and research.

**Inward loans** - are managed by the Collections team and recorded on Collections Management forms and the CMS for administrative purposes. Due to their status, they require the same level of management and care as accessioned (Permanent) objects.

**Support Collection** - consists of objects held to support public access, engagement and research through additional interpretation and wider context. This includes:

- **Interpretive objects** are managed by the Collections team in conjunction with the Head of Exhibitions and Interpretation and are currently recorded on the CMS for administrative purposes. They are contextual objects of low RAF relevance or duplicate RAF objects that are used to interpret the RAF story within a wider context (e.g. Air Raid Precautions objects in a Battle of Britain showcase) or through more open physical access (e.g. touch objects on open display).
- **Surrogate objects** are managed by the Collections team. Some are recorded on the CMS while others are recorded in departmental files. Surrogates are analogue or digital copies of or substitutes for objects already held in the Museum's Permanent Collection or temporarily deposited for the purpose of copying. They are produced in order to preserve original material and provide more effective means of accessing collections.
- **Handling objects** are managed by the Access and Learning (A&L) teams using departmental forms to document acquisition and a spreadsheet to catalogue and account for the objects. They consist of surrogate (replica) or duplicate original objects used in A&L handling sessions and sometimes worn by members of the

public (e.g. uniforms and flying clothing). While every effort is made to maintain and preserve the material, it is expected that these objects may degrade over time and eventually, in some instances, become irreparable and disposed of.

## **Aims and Objectives**

4. This policy applies to all objects in the Permanent Collection.
5. This policy and all those listed below will also apply to loaned in objects and collections with the exception of the Accessioning policy as well as the Labelling and Marking policy. Loaned in objects and collections will be recorded onto the CMS but not accessioned. They will be labelled in accordance with the lender's stipulations.
6. Every object or group of objects covered by this policy should:
  - a) have documentary evidence of legal title, whether held under the Museum's title or by individuals or organisations that lend material to the Museum
  - b) be labelled or marked with accession numbers that uniquely identify them, and can be correlated with the information recorded on the CMS and in the Accession Register
  - c) have effective links with relevant objects and all other associated records documentation
  - d) have accurate object records recorded on the CMS and Accession Register
  - e) have an accurate and up-to-date record of location and movement transactions
  - f) have an accurate and up-to-date record of inward and outward loan agreements and disposal/dispersal activity
  - g) include as much history about the object, its use and the people it represents as possible. This will include the stories associated with it to ensure it supports the Museum vision
  - h) have details regarding the history of the object (s) while in the Museum's care for example, a record of any conservation treatment or use.
7. Collections will be recorded in accordance with written policies and procedures (see item 12) and documentation standards in the form of Cataloguing Rules and Style Guide. The Cataloguing Rules are based on SPECTRUM standards and can be mapped to ISAD(G) guidelines.
8. The Museum will maintain a Collections Information Plan to support this policy. This plan will be reviewed annually as part of the business planning cycle.
9. The main objective of the Collections Information Plan will be the documentation to at least Inventory level of all objects or groups of objects held in the Museum's custody – both accessioned and unaccessioned collections.
10. The Museum will abide by relevant legislation and sector codes and standards [**see Appendix A**].

11. The Museum will ensure this policy is followed for all new acquisitions and work to add any missing information for previously acquired objects.

12. This Collections Information Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- a) Collections Development Policy and Procedures
- b) Entry Policy and Procedure
- c) Exit Policy and Procedure
- d) Loans-In Policy and Procedure
- e) Loans-Out Policy and Procedure
- f) Accessioning Policy and Procedure
- g) Labelling and Marking Policy and Procedures
- h) Movement and Transportation Policy and Procedure
- i) Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Procedure
- j) Use of Collections Policy and Procedure
- k) Digitisation Policy and Procedure.

13. The Collections Information Plan will be supplemented by activity plans drawn up for each collection by the relevant curators in collaboration with the Head of Collections and Head of Collections Services. These plans will be reviewed at agreed intervals to ensure their continued relevance and will be updated accordingly.

### **Collections Management Activities**

14. The following sets out the standards, as per SPECTRUM, which the Museum will follow for each Collections Management Activity with regards to its physical and born digital collections.

#### **15. Object Entry<sup>4</sup>**

##### *Definition*

The management and documentation of the receipt of objects and associated information which are not currently part of the collections. Any object which does not currently have an object number assigned by the receiving organisation must be dealt with within this procedure.

| Minimum requirement  | Why this is important   |
|--|---|
| The Museum can account for all objects left in its care.                       | The Museum does not lose track of objects left deposited for a short time as enquiries. |
| The Museum has clear terms and conditions for accepting objects into its care. | The Museum does not end up being responsible for unwanted objects.                      |

<sup>4</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| The Museum records why objects have been left with it.  | The Museum does not wrongly process a loan as an acquisition.  |
| The Museum schedules the default return of objects to the owner if they are not to be acquired or loaned.               | The Museum can plan for the return of objects. The Museum does not end up looking after objects whose status is unclear.                                       |
| The Museum records who legally owns objects left with it.   | The Museum can deal with the right person if it wants to acquire an object and obtain legal title to it.   |
| The Museum assesses and mitigates any potential risks to people or other objects from incoming objects.                 | The Museum can quarantine items potentially infested with pests that could damage our existing collections.  |
| The Museum records as much significant information about newly arrived objects as it can, to be added to in the future. | The Museum does not lose the opportunity to find out about provenance or likely copyright holders while their owner is in the museum and ready to talk.        |
| Both the Museum and owners know their liability for loss or damage while objects are in its care.                       | Owners are aware of the limits of any claim they may make if anything goes wrong. The Museum does not take on liabilities that might create financial risks.   |
| The Museum provides a receipt for owners and get a signature to show they accept our terms and conditions.              | It is clear to owners the Museum has accepted care of objects they have left. Owners cannot later claim they did not accept the Museum's terms and conditions. |
| The Museum can uniquely identify newly arrived objects.   | The Museum does not mix up objects that look similar.  |

See: Entry Policy and Procedure

## 16. Object Exit<sup>5</sup>

### *Definition*

The management and documentation of objects leaving the organisation's premises

<sup>5</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

| Minimum requirement  | Why this is important   |
|--|---|
| The Museum can account for all objects that have left at the museum for whatever reason.   | The inventory of objects in the Museum's care is up to date and accurate.   |
| All objects leave with appropriate authorisation.  | Objects do not leave without the agreement of those who are responsible for their care.                                   |
| The Museum obtains appropriate signatures to prove that it has transferred objects into someone else's care.                     | The Museum has proof that borrowed objects have been returned to their owners.  |
| The Museum keeps up-to-date location and movement records for objects that belong to it even when they are away from the museum. | The Museum can always account for all its objects.<br>Objects do not become 'lost' when they leave the Museum's premises. |

See: Exit Policy and Procedure

## 17. Acquisition and Accessioning<sup>6</sup>

### *Definition*

Documenting and managing the addition of objects and associated information to the collections of the organisation and their possible accession.

| Minimum requirement  | Why this is important  |
|--|--|
| The Museum only acquires objects in line with its agreed policy and applicable laws, treaties and codes of practice. | The Museum's collecting activity is ethical and serves our museum's mission.<br>Objects are not acquired at the whim of individuals.               |
| The Museum has written evidence that the undisputed owners of acquired objects have transferred title to the museum. | The Museum can prove legal ownership of its collections.<br>The Museum does not acquire heirlooms whose ownership may be disputed within a family. |

<sup>6</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>The Museum makes donors aware of the terms by which their gift or bequest is accepted.</p>                         | <p>Donors understand that objects they have given might not always be on display or might be disposed of in future.<br/>The Museum minimises the risk of reputational damage if donors or their heirs are later unhappy.</p>                       |
| <p>The Museum gives a unique number to each accessioned object and securely labels or marks it with this number.</p>  | <p>The Museum can link each physical object with the information it has about it.</p>  |
| <p>The Museum keeps all relevant information about the acquisition of objects, accessible via its unique numbers.</p> | <p>The Museum has as much documentation as possible about the provenance of its collections. The Museum can refer to the original documents in case of any future problem, such as the heirs of a donor thinking that a gift was only on loan.</p> |
| <p>The Museum has a tamperproof record of all accessioned objects, using its unique numbers.</p>                      | <p>The Museum has a formal record of its accessioned collection. It would be difficult for a thief on the inside to cover their tracks by deleting all record that an object ever existed.</p>   |
| <p>As backup the Museum has an up-to-date security copy of all accession records.</p>                                 | <p>The Museum does not lose this important information in a fire or similar disaster. The Museum has an extra level of security against anyone tampering with the primary accession records.</p>   |

See: Collections Development Policy and Procedures

## 18. **Loans-in (borrowing objects)<sup>7</sup>**

### *Definition*

Managing and documenting the borrowing of objects for which the organisation is responsible for a specific period and for a specified purpose, normally exhibition/display, but including research, conservation, education or photography/publication.

<sup>7</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

| Minimum requirement  | Why this is important  |
|--|--|
| The Museum has a written agreement signed by the Museum and the lender before any loan begins, with clear reference to the care standards it will meet and other terms and conditions. | The Museum has a formal record of what was agreed in case any problems arise during the loan.  |
| The reason for each loan is clearly stated.  | The Museum does not use borrowed objects in a way that goes beyond the purpose agreed with lenders.  |
| All loans are for fixed periods.   | The Museum can review longer-term loans at regular intervals.<br>The Museum does not create a future backlog of objects whose ownership status is unclear.   |
| The Museum has appropriate insurance or indemnity cover for borrowed objects while they are its responsibility (including in transit).   | The Museum is able to borrow high-value objects without unacceptable risk.<br>The Museum does not leave objects without cover while they are being transported.  |
| The Museum has up-to-date information about the location and physical wellbeing of borrowed objects during the loan.   | The Museum can give lenders data on the environmental conditions in which their objects are displayed.<br>Borrowed objects do not get mislaid whilst in the Museum's care, risking damage to reputation. |
| The Museum keeps a written record of all loans.  | The Museum can consult the relevant loan file in case a problem with an object becomes apparent after it has left its care.  |

See: Loans-In Policy and Procedure

#### 19. Loans-out (lending objects)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

*Definition*

Documenting and managing the loan of objects to other organisations or individuals for a specific period and for a specific purpose, normally exhibition/display, but including research, conservation, photography and education.

| Minimum requirement  | Why this is important   |
|--|---|
| All loan requests are assessed according to the Museum's policy.   | The Museum treats all loan requests in a fair and transparent way.  |
| The reason for each loan is clearly stated.  | Borrowers do not use the Museum's objects in a way that goes beyond the agreed purpose.   |
| All loans are for fixed periods.   | It is clear to borrowers that loans are not 'permanent'. The loan procedure is not used unethically as a backdoor way to dispose of objects.  |
| The Museum has a written agreement signed by the Museum and the borrower before any loan begins, with clear reference to the care standards they agree to meet and other terms and conditions. | The Museum has a formal record of what was agreed in case any problems arise during the loan.   |
| Borrowers have appropriate insurance or indemnity for the Museum's objects while in its care (including in transit).   | The costs of any damage or loss during a loan out are covered. Objects are not left without cover while they are being transported.   |
| The Museum keeps a written record of all loans.  | The Museum can consult the relevant loan file in case a problem arises after the object is returned. Use of the Museum's collections by borrowers' forms part of the recorded history of objects. |

See: Loans-Out Policy and Procedure

20. **Location and Movement Control<sup>9</sup>***Definition*

The documentation and management of information concerning the current and past locations of all objects or groups of objects in the organisation's care to ensure the organisation can locate any object at any time. A location is a specific place where an object or group of objects is stored or displayed.

| Minimum requirement   | Why this is important   |
|---|---|
| The Museum has a system of recording all locations where objects are displayed or stored within its museum.                       | The Museum can pinpoint the specific location of an object quickly and easily.<br>The Museum can note locations that are not suitable for certain kinds of objects. |
| The Museum has the records needed to monitor whether agreed environmental standards are being met.                                | The Museum can take action if the relative humidity in a store is too high.<br>The Museum does not display a watercolour painting in too much light.                |
| The Museum records every movement of an object, including the date moved, and change the location record in line with the policy. | The Museum always knows where every object is.<br>The Museum does not waste time hunting for objects that have been moved but not updated in the location records.  |
| The Museum can access location information by object number and location name.  | The Museum always knows what is in each of the exhibition spaces and stores, and where every object is.   |
| The Museum records who has moved objects (and who authorised those moves if required).  | Named individuals are accountable for moving objects.<br>Objects are not moved without authorisation.   |
| The Museum has as full a history of objects' previous locations as practical.   | The Museum can compile a list of all objects in a location at a particular time, which might later be needed for security or conservation reasons.                  |

<sup>9</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

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|--|--|
| The Museum assesses any risks of moving objects (both to the objects themselves and to people) and, where needed, has a written plan to mitigate them. | The Museum does not cause an accident through lack of planning. The Museum can show it was not negligent should anything go wrong. |
| The Museum has appropriate insurance or indemnity cover in place before transporting objects, particularly in the case of borrowed objects.            | The Museum does not risk financial liability should anything go wrong.   |

See: Movement and Transportation Policy and Procedure

## 21. Inventory<sup>10</sup>

### *Definition*

The maintenance of up-to-date information for and locating all objects for which the organisation has a legal responsibility. This may include objects on loan, unaccessioned or previously undocumented items, temporarily deposited objects and support collections.

| Minimum requirement  | Why this is important   |
|--|---|
| The Museum has met the minimum requirements for all other primary procedures   | The Museum is not creating a new backlog of objects without basic information   |
| From the various records in the Museum's system the Museum can, if required, produce a complete list of every object (or group of objects) within its care | The Museum can account for every object it is responsible for, including its own collections, loans and items temporarily deposited |
| Every object (or group of objects) has a unique number securely associated with it, linking the Museum's records to the physical items they describe       | The Museum can identify the object being looked for among a shelf of similar objects  |
| If a unique number refers to a group of objects, or one object with several parts, the Museum records the number of individual items                       | The Museum can quickly make one inventory record for a draw containing many objects, or for a box containing many objects           |
| Every object (or group of objects) has a recorded name and brief description (or image)  | The Museum broadly knows what each object is (e.g. pot, postcard, drawer of butterflies) even if it has not                         |

<sup>10</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | been catalogued in more detail  |
| The Museum knows the current location of every object (or group of objects) and when it was noted there  | The Museum is able to find objects when needed. The Museum can produce an accurate list of the object in a location if needed for an audit or insurance claim |
| The Museum knows who owns each object (or group of objects) in its care, and how they came to be in its care (e.g. acquired, on loan)                          | The Museum can contact the owners of objects due to be returned. The Museum has no 'orphan objects' whose ownership is unclear                                |
| If the Museum has more than one type of collection (e.g. accessioned objects and a handling collection) the Museum knows which collection an object belongs to | The Museum can make appropriate decisions about how to use objects  |
| If the Museum does not currently meet the above requirements, there is an appropriate plan in place to do so within an agreed time period                      | The Museum's governing body can meet the minimum standard of accountability for the objects in its care   |

## 22. Cataloguing<sup>11</sup>

### *Definition*

The compilation and maintenance of key information, formally identifying and describing objects. It may include information concerning the provenance of objects and collections management documentation e.g. details of acquisition, conservation, exhibition and loan history, and location history. It need not bring together in one location everything known about an object but should provide cross-references to any other relevant information source known to the organisation.

| Minimum requirement   | Why this is important  |
|---|--|
| The Museum has a catalogue system in place that records the minimum information needed for the Inventory procedure and, beyond that, supports the cataloguing policy. | The Museum has a basic framework to which more significant information can be added over time in line with the cataloguing policy. |
| Catalogue records are linked to the objects they describe via unique accession numbers that are securely  | The Museum can always link objects to the information in their catalogue records.  |

<sup>11</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

|  |   |
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| associated with the items themselves.  |   |
| Catalogue records cross-refer to relevant information held in the system (whether on paper or digitally) or available elsewhere. | All the relevant information about an object is available for its management and use.<br>The Museum does not spend time researching an object unaware of previous work. |
| The Museum's system can reliably retrieve relevant catalogue information to meet the needs of users.                             | The Museum's users can easily access information about the collections.<br>The Museum does not waste time trawling through search results that are not what is wanted.  |
| The Museum captures relevant information resulting from other procedures in a timely way.  | The catalogue records are up to date.<br>The Museum can re-use exhibition text to improve the online collection database.   |
| The Museum keeps an up-to-date backup of catalogue records.  | The Museum does not risk losing many years' work in the event of a fire or other disaster.  |

See: Cataloguing Rules and Accessioning Policy and Procedure

### 23. Documentation Planning<sup>12</sup>

#### *Definition*

The improvement of the standard of information about objects and collections to meet SPECTRUM Minimum Standards by the documentation of new information for existing objects and collections.

| Minimum requirement   | Why this is important  |
|---|--|
| Review the collections information the Museum already has and agree areas for improvement in the light of collection management priorities. | The Museum does not spend time and resources working on things that do not contribute to the wider priorities of the organisation. |
| The Museum has a written documentation  | The Museum breaks down 'the  |

<sup>12</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| plan setting out specific objectives that can be achieved within a realistic timeframe given the available resources. | backlog' into manageable projects that meet wider objectives.<br>In the UK this is a requirement of Museum Accreditation. |
| The Museum reviews progress towards achieving its planned objectives regularly.                                       | The Museum can celebrate 'quick wins'.<br>The Museum is able to address any problems that might cause the plan to fail.   |

See: Collections Information Policy and Plan

#### 24. **Deaccessioning and Disposal**<sup>13</sup>

##### *Definition*

The management of disposal (the transfer, or destruction of objects) and of deaccession (the formal sanctioning and documenting of the disposal).

| Minimum requirement  | Why this is important  |
|--|--|
| The Museum makes the case for any proposed disposal of an object in writing.   | Those making the decision have all relevant facts and can check the proposal against agreed policy.                                |
| In the written case the Museum cites the documentation that proves ownership of the relevant objects (or gives grounds to assume it does).   | Those responsible for the decision can assess the level of risk of disposing of objects when there is no clear proof of ownership. |
| In the written case the Museum researches and notes any specific risks, costs or other relevant constraints.   | The Museum does not dispose of hazardous objects improperly or even illegally (eg asbestos).                                       |
| The Museum obtains specific approval as per the RAF Museum's approval guidelines before disposing of any accessioned object, and from more than one authorised person disposing of any non-accessioned material. | The Museum can be properly accountable for disposals.<br>Objects are not disposed of at the whim of one individual.                |

<sup>13</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.



|  |   |
|--|---|
| The Museum disposes of objects in line with the ethical codes that apply to our museum.                        | The Museum does not risk reputational damage or lose Accredited status.                   |
| The Museum formally enters approved deaccessions in our accessions register and update other relevant records. | The accessions register is a tamper-proof master list of all the objects the Museum owns. |
| The Museum keeps all documentation relating to disposals.  | There is an audit trail in case of later problems.  |

See: Collections Development Policy and Procedures

## 25. Collections Care and Conservation<sup>14</sup>

### *Definition*

The documentation and management of information about interventive and preventive conservation activities.

| Minimum requirement   | Why this is important   |
|---|---|
| Appropriate authorisation is given for any decision to change an object's standard of care or carry out any conservation treatment.   | No conservation work happens without the knowledge of those responsible for the objects.  |
| The Museum records the details of all collections care measures and conservation treatment (including dates and who performed the work) – and can access these via relevant object numbers. | The Museum has a full conservation history of its objects and can find this information easily when needed.<br>If a problem later arises, the Museum can check other objects that might also be affected. |
| The Museum updates objects' catalogue records with any new information gained as a result of conservation.  | New insights about how objects were made are not just kept in conservation files that might not be generally accessible.  |
| The Museum schedules, where necessary, any further conservation   | The Museum can plan its conservation activity and   |

<sup>14</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| treatment, call-back condition checks or periodic care activities. | ensure that objects are available when needed. |
|--|--|

See: Collections Care and Conservation Policy and Procedure

## 26. Use of Collections<sup>15</sup>

### *Definition*

The management and documentation of all uses of and services based on collections and objects in the organisation. These include exhibition and display, education handling collections and the operation of objects, research and enquiries, reproduction and the commercial use of objects and associated documentary archives. Users include staff (and volunteers) or the public, whether in person, by letter, telephone or any other means of communication.

| Minimum requirement   | Why this is important  |
|---|--|
| The Museum has a system for making, reviewing and authorising requests to use objects and reproductions.                                      | The Museum's objects are not put at risk by being used inappropriately, and there is an audit trail in case of any problems.   |
| The Museum notes each use of an object or reproduction and can access this information via the relevant object number or reproduction number. | The Museum can let key stakeholders know how much our collections are being used.<br>The Museum does not over-expose a light-sensitive object by not recording how long it has been exhibited. |
| The Museum's system prevents objects being booked for more than one use at a time.  | The Museum can coordinate the use of its objects.  |
| The Museum keeps a record of researchers and other people who have used specific objects.   | The Museum can audit items used by a particular  |

<sup>15</sup> Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard; © 2017 Version 5.0 Collections Trust.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | user if any security concerns arise in future.                                    |
| The Museum adds any knowledge gained and content created while using objects or reproductions to its catalogue. | The Museum can re-use exhibition texts to enhance online collections information. |

See: Use of Collections Policy and Procedure

## 27. **Digitisation**

The Museum is also developing its approach for documenting the digitisation of the objects held. The Museum has purchased a digital asset management system (DAMS) to work alongside Vernon CMS.

See: Digitisation Policy and Procedure

## 28. **Labelling and Marking**

Labelling and Marking is part of the SPECTRUM 5.0 procedure for Acquisition and Accessioning. The Museum will ensure each accessioned item, object enclosure or group of items is marked / labelled with a unique identifying number in a way that is as permanent as possible but does not damage the object.

See: Labelling and Marking Policy and Procedure

## **Access to Collections Information**

29. The Museum must provide public access to collections and collections information, while ensuring that security and preservation of the collections are not compromised, within available resources.

29. The Museum will enable access, subject to legal requirements, to collections information for staff, volunteers, researchers and other users. Where restrictions prevent the sharing of information, the Museum will be open and transparent in communicating this.

30. Access to collections information is an essential component in providing full public access to objects. This includes enabling the public to view information relevant to the creation and use of an object.

31. Access to collections information may be made through manual or computerised systems, specifically at present the Museum's collection management system (Vernon CMS) and in future through its digital asset management system (DAMS) and Collections Online.

32. Providing access to detailed catalogue information, including images, increases access while reducing unnecessary handling of original objects and will be encouraged. This will be further facilitated through the future implementation of a DAMS.

33. All relevant procedures required by legislation for example Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Copyright will be adhered to.

### **Security of Information**

34. Collections information is recorded on the Museum's CMS. Backup copies are created at identified intervals with weekly and quarterly back-up tapes stored at offsite locations. These are managed by the IT Department. Paper based records are held securely.

35. The Museum will endeavour to make sure all information held in its relevant paper-based records is referenced on the collection management system.

36. Public access to collections information must not compromise security and privacy protection. Donor information, location, valuation and other sensitive data will not be made available to the public. Access to this information will be disabled on the collection management system when viewed by non-members of staff. If computer terminals are made available these will not be connected to the Museum's network.

37. All documentation referenced in sections 15-27 will be archived and retained in accordance with the Museum's Retention Schedule.

### **Resources**

38. Collections Management activities which produce collections information are currently undertaken by the Collections team and volunteers. The Museum will provide adequate resources, in terms of staffing, professional expertise and equipment, in order to meet its responsibilities for maintaining sector standards.

39. This will include seeking partnerships with other organisations and funding bodies.

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## APPENDIX A

### List of legislation applicable:

British Library Act 1972  
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002  
Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, UNESCO, 1954  
Fire Precautions Act 1971  
First Protocol 1954 and Second Protocol 1999  
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, 2003  
Convention on Biological Diversity, CBD, 1992  
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, CITES, 1973  
Convention on the means of Prohibiting and preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, UNESCO, 1970  
Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, 2001  
Copyright Act 1911  
Copyright Act 1956  
Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003  
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988  
Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002  
Data Protection Act 2018  
Equality Act 2010  
Equality Legislation Northern Ireland Act 1998  
Freedom of Information Act 2000  
Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002  
Government of Wales Act 1998  
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974  
Human Rights Act 1998  
Isle of Man Public Records Act 1999  
Law of Property Act 1922 and Law of Property Amendment Act 1924, together with the Manorial Documents Rules 1957 and 1967 and The Tithe Rules 1960 and 1963  
Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003  
Local Government Act 1972  
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999  
Museums and Galleries Act 1992  
National Heritage Act 1980 and subsequent amendments in 1983, 1997 and 2002  
National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985  
National Library of Scotland Act 1926  
National Library of Wales, Royal Charter 1907 and supplemental charters 1911, 1978 and 2006  
Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978 (No.2) as amended by the Church of England (Miscellaneous Provisions) Measure 1992 (No. 1)  
Privacy and Electronic Communication Regulations 2003  
Public Libraries Consolidation (Scotland) Act 1887  
Public Records Act 1958, as amended 1967  
Public Records (Jersey) Law 2002, as amended 2006  
Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended)  
Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006  
Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995  
Sex Discrimination Act 1975  
The British Museum Act 1963  
The Environmental Information Regulations 2004  
The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985  
The Local Government (Records) Act 1962

The Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923  
The Public Records (Scotland) Act 1937 and subsequent supplementary legislation  
Treasure Act 1996  
UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen and Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, UNIDRIOT, 1995

### **List of sector codes and standards**

Archives and Records Association Code of Conduct  
Archive Service Accreditation Standard 2018  
Arts Council England Accreditation Scheme  
Code of practice for archivists and records managers under Section 51(4) of the Data Protection Act 1998  
Code of Practice issued by the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs under section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, 2004  
International Council on Archives ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description, 2000  
Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the management of records issued under section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, 2009  
Museum Association Code of Ethics 2016  
PAS197: code of practice for cultural collections management 2009  
PAS198: specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections 2012  
Standard for Access to Archives 2008