



ACCREDITED  
ARCHIVE SERVICE

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# Archive Service Accreditation

## Becoming an Assessor

# The goal of Archive Service Accreditation

*“To improve the viability and visibility of UK archives”*

- Archive services are sustainable, effectively managed, collections are safe
- Archive services are well recognised, meet their communities’ needs



# Accreditation Assessment: basic purposes

- To support services and their improvement
- To identify risks and gaps
- To recognise good practice
- To ensure Standard is consistently applied
  
- **NOT** to pick holes and dictate specific solutions
- **NOT** to be a gold standard

# Assessment processes

1. Desk assessment
2. Validation visit (to a %)
3. Panel review and award

# 1 Desk assessment

- For every application, on online system
- Against every (sub)requirement
- **Met-Partially Met-Not Met**, with feedback
- With future actions (**required/improvement**)
- With overview for Panel and key points
- With Panel recommendation: **Accredited- Provisionally Accredited-Not Accredited**

## 2 Validation visit

- **Optional**: desk assessment is key
- With a trained **peer reviewer**
- Chance to review elements which don't come across on paper (space, sensitive documents) and to talk
- Don't try to cover everything: agree **validation areas** at least 10 days ahead
- Timetable in advance but be prepared to be flexible and inquisitive!
- Use to complete desk assessment

# 3 Panel review

- Panels meet 3 times annually
- Composed from the governing Accreditation Committee
- Oversee consistency of assessment outcomes: you will **present your assessment** and changes may be made
- Work with assessors to agree the **actions**
- Make the **award**
- Create a **citation**: assessment front page

# What are we assessing?

- Analytical approach required
- Does the service **evidence** that it meets each requirement?
- Is the requirement **outcome** met?
- Are there areas of risk, of legacy issues, of lack of evidence/planning, blindspots (e.g. non-users)?
- If so, are they improvement areas (→ actions) or do they fundamentally **not meet**?



# Assessor support

- Handbook of precedents, updated after Panels
- Includes a validation visit checklist
- Questions for applicants to ask **themselves** also relevant for assessors
- Guidance on working with peer reviewers
- All the other guidance...

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accreditation](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accreditation)



# Eligibility check

Rarely an issue but...

- Holding archives, of fair size, not only digital
- Offering some **access**
- Holding archives securely
- Identified workforce (incl professional support, and **professional staff** in public sector)

# The Standard: modules

- 1 Organisational Health
- 2 Collections
- 3 Stakeholders and their Experiences

# But first...Scalability

Don't forget: no 'one size fits all' approach

Local authority 1-2

Other public sector 1-2-National

Private and third sector 1-2-3

Affects mission, stakeholders, legal basis and more. Be proportionate in expectations.

# 1 Organisational Health

1.1 Mission Statement

1.2 Governance and Management Structures

1.3 Forward Planning

1.4 Resources: buildings

1.5 Resources: finance

1.6 Resources: workforce

# 1 Organisational Fundamentals

1.1 Sense of purpose

1.2 Clarity, visibility, reporting, legality

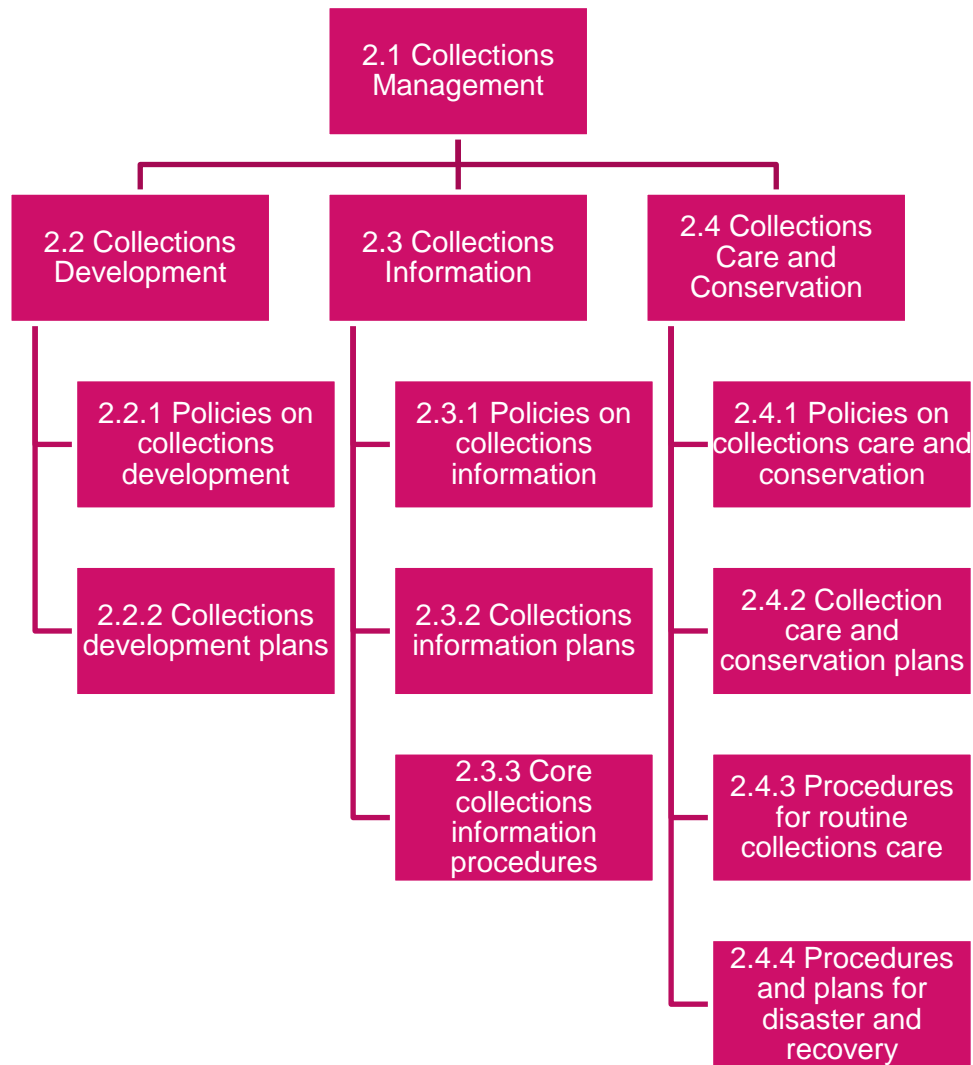
1.3 Moving forward, improving, stretching

1.4 Security of tenure, capacity, confidence to plan (NOT quality of storage)

1.5 Ability to plan financially, say in future

1.6 Professional expertise, staff supported and developed, volunteers supported

# 2 Collections



# 2 Collections Fundamentals

2.1 Collections management is coherent and not in silos

2.2 Collecting happens, across collecting remit, with priorities

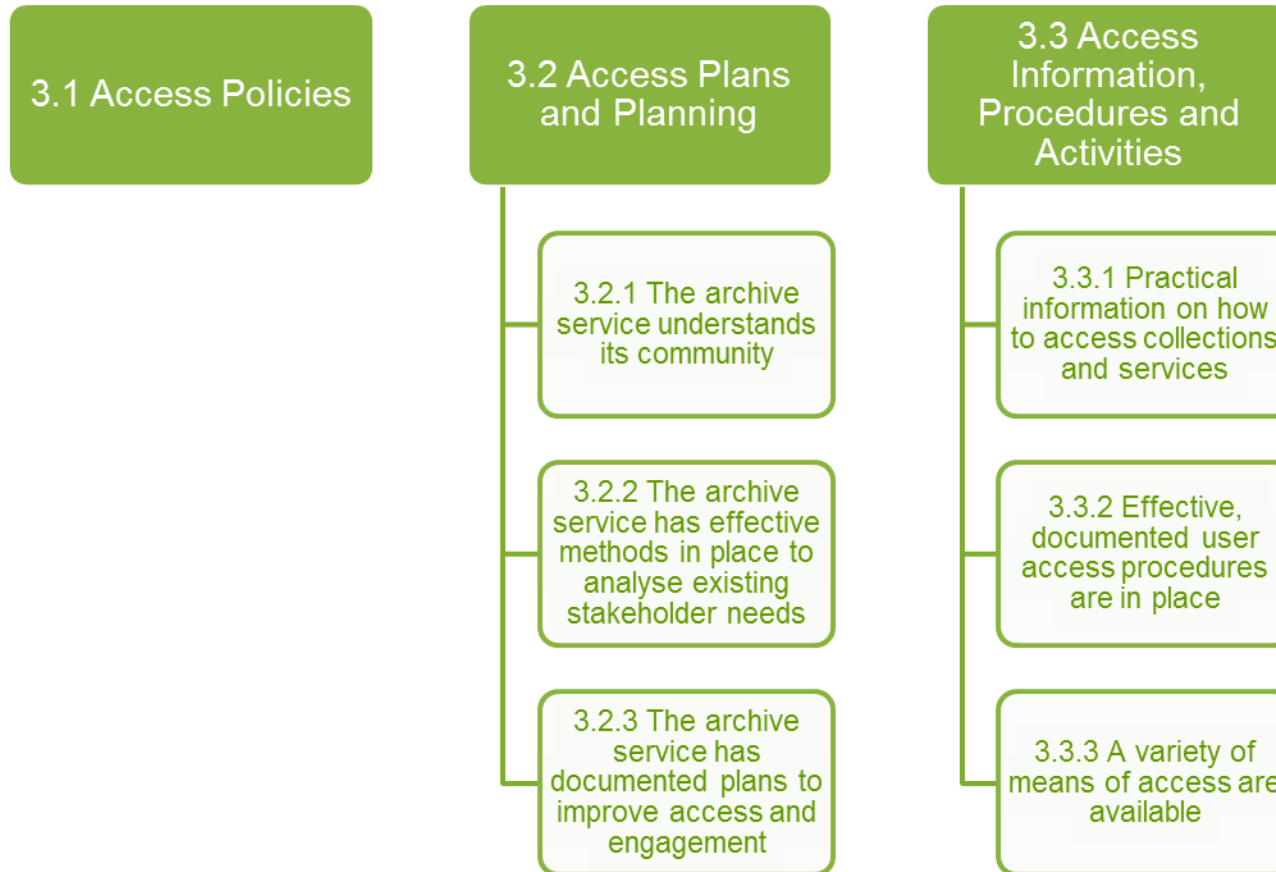
2.3 Information is realistically improving, in planned way, with priorities

2.4 Storage/handling risks are identified, managed, mitigated, prioritised

2.4.4 Disaster plan in place, tested, trained



# 3 Stakeholders and their experiences



# 3 Stakeholder Fundamentals

3.1 Access is proportionate to mission and community, legal and communicated

3.2 Community is understood, analysed and plans in place to improve their access

3.3 People accessing archives are supported and offered a range of ways to engage

Stakeholders are not just users: parent organisation, depositors, funders, community in wider sense

# Writing the assessment report

- Commentary for every (sub-) requirement
- Aim for supportive but honest approach
- **Multiple audiences:** Panel, service, upward reporting to parent organisation
- Pitch it high: to managers
- Use **neutral tone**, backed with evidence
- Avoid critical tone (repeated use of “but...”) or nitpicking
- Pick up positives as well as essential **constructive criticism**

# Setting Key Findings

- Opportunity to highlight strategic points
- Use for **positives** as well as **negatives** on the service
- Allows some **overall reflection** on the service
- Supplements the Panel citation and may be more detailed
- Up to 4 points, try to write at least 3

# Setting Actions: supporting improvement

## Required actions

- Relate to identified **risk(s)**
- If not addressed within Accreditation period, Accreditation will be **withdrawn**
- Must be **significant** issues
- Are likely to be **SMART** (but can be high level)
- Solutions may need higher support (i.e. resource commitment)

## Improvement actions

- Helping services to **improve**
- Highlighting **future** needs
- Offering a **message** about service
- May be used to 'nudge' development

# Fine. Where do I start?

- London Metropolitan Archives
  - [COLLECTIONS] 941334-collections-72110728
  - [About you, your collections and about your service] 941084-application form-71507277
  - [Additional documents uploaded or linked] 1313683-additional documents uploaded or linked-7150727;
  - [ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH] 941304-organisational health-71507277
  - [STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES] 941346-stakeholders and their experiences-7211072
  - 22566123-Appendix 2b-Directorate Structure Chart
  - 40773933-LMA 1. Strategic work plan 2014-15
  - 40773934-LMA 2. Learning and Development Plan 2014-15
  - 40777068-Annual accounts LMA and City Records Services 2011-12 and 2012-13
  - 40777287-2014-01 LMA structure without names
  - 40777295-Director of LMA JD
  - 40777296-Director of LMA PS
  - 40779481-LMA B5. Conservation team work plan 2013-14
  - 40779482-LMA 9. Conservation team work plan 2014-15
  - 40779528-T & R.H 2013 readings strong rooms
  - 47684576-2013-15 - BP Cover Report
  - 47684577-Appendix 1-LMA Summary
  - 47684578-Appendix 2a-Strategic Links
  - 47684579-LMA 4. Building Services and Repository Management team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684580-LMA 5. Collections team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684581-LMA 6. Graphic and Digital Collections team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684582-LMA 6. Graphic and Digital Collections team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684583-LMA 7. City Records team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684584-LMA 8. Imaging and Media team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684585-LMA 10. Development team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684586-LMA 3. Public Services team work plan 2014-15
  - 47684587-Guidelines for Working with Digital Archives
  - 47684588-LMA acquisitions guidelines
  - 47684589-LMA cataloguing conventions
  - 47684590-Guidelines Handling for Staff
  - 47684591-Guidelines Handling for READERS
  - 47684592-Guidelines Packaging and Labelling
  - 47684593-Loading Trolleys Guidelines
  - 47684594-LMA Temporary Depositor Loans Guidelines
  - 47684595-LMA Temporary Loans Guidelines for Depositors
  - 47684596-Criteria for appraising coroners inquest files
  - Archive Service Accreditation validation visit 13 May 2014 - plans as agreed with peer reviewers

Here.  
Don't panic.

# Don't panic. Seriously.

- 5 parts of the application form for all applications

 London Metropolitan Archives

 [COLLECTIONS] 941334-collections-72110728

 [About you, your collections and about your service] 941084-application form-71507277

 [Additional documents uploaded or linked] 1313683-additional documents uploaded or linked-71507277

 [ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH] 941304-organisational health-71507277

 [STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR EXPERIENCES] 941346-stakeholders and their experiences-72110728



- Will guide you through everything else
- And they're in Objective

# Now get onto the assessment system

**ACCREDITED ARCHIVE SERVICE**

## UK Archive Service Accreditation

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Below is a list of applications assigned to you for review. They should be completed within two months of submission.

Home nations assessors may see assessments assigned to the entire team for their nation. In such cases, it is your responsibility to agree who acts as lead assessor for each.

If you have any questions about the assessment process, please contact the accreditation team ([accreditation@nationalarchives.qsi.gov.uk](mailto:accreditation@nationalarchives.qsi.gov.uk)).

Show all  Sub-category: -- All --  Sort: Alphabetically

Applicants to be Reviewed (1)

Submission	Reference Material	Accreditation Assessment Report
<a href="#">Lothian Health Services Archive (LHSA)</a>	<a href="#">See Reference Material</a>	<a href="#">Click to complete</a>

Per page: 10

nationalarchives.fluidreview.com

...and assess





# What happens afterwards?

- After a Panel, applications are moved out of the assessment area
- Applicants receive their formal feedback (minus your front page briefing)
- Certificates are printed and presented
- Provisionally accredited have 6 months-2 years to show actions complete
- Midway review after c3 years
- Unless there is **significant change**: Accreditation is not for life