

# Access Policy

---

Hull History Centre is a partnership between Hull City Council and the University of Hull. The City Council's obligations to the partnership are administered and delivered on its behalf by Hull Culture & Leisure Ltd a wholly owned Hull City Council company. The partners aim to provide a seamless service to stakeholders and the following should therefore be read as applying to both partners unless otherwise stated.

## 1. Introduction

The Hull History Centre is recognised by The National Archives as an official place of deposit for public records.

*The vision of Hull History Centre is to make history available for all, for research, for learning and for leisure and to inspire interest in the City of Hull, its significant past, present and future.*

This policy, informed by the *Standard for Access to Archives* produced by the Public Sector Quality Group (PSQG) and the *Benchmarks in Collections Care for Museums, Libraries and Archives* produced by the Collections Trust, details the provision of access in all its forms to the holdings of the Hull History Centre and deals with the following areas:

- I. Our communities
- II. Legal and other restrictions on access
- III. Physical access to the History Centre
- IV. Remote access to the History Centre
- V. Promotion of the service
- VI. Education and outreach

## 2. Our communities

The Hull History Centre exists to provide access to its holdings to all, making no distinction between users; we will not advantage one type of research over another.

We aim to provide equality of access to our services and we recognise that some users face particular difficulties in accessing our services. We will report back to the Hull History Centre Board the outcomes on reviews of our building and services to ensure that all efforts are made to remove or minimise potential barriers to access. We will apply to our service the relevant policies of the City Council and the University.

We will ensure that we develop new audiences to increase engagement with our collections.

We will seek the views of our stakeholders about our services regularly, through various means and through participation in national benchmark surveys including CIPFA and PSQG. The results of these surveys will be used to inform the development of the service.

We have an established procedure for users to make a complaint and this would be addressed by the City Archivist and/or the University Archivist within 10 working days. If not resolved to their satisfaction it will follow the complaints policy and procedure of either Hull Culture and Leisure Ltd or the University of Hull as considered appropriate by the Chair and Deputy-Chair of the Hull History Centre Board.

### **3. Legal and other restrictions**

Hull History Centre is committed to making available its collections as widely as possible. However we need to balance access with preservation of the collections to ensure their survival for future generations. Some documents will therefore only be made available as surrogates (eg microfilm or digitised) and it may be necessary not to produce others because of their fragility in line with our *Collections Care and Preservation Policy*.

We operate within a legislative framework which includes Data Protection and Freedom of Information. On some occasions additional restrictions on access will be agreed with a depositor as part of the negotiated terms and conditions of deposit. Copying of material is subject to copyright legislation.

Restrictions on access to documents because of legal requirements or preservation issues will be clearly stated in the finding aids.

### **4. On-site access to the History Centre**

Access to Hull History Centre and use of the collections and surrogates is free of charge. We will ensure that our opening hours are widely publicised and any changes to these will only be made after consultation with our stakeholders.

We will facilitate access to the collections once they have been catalogued and received any conservation or preservation work. The catalogues are available in hard copy in the Searchroom and via our online catalogue. We also maintain a range of traditional indexes.

We recognise that many of our users will require help and guidance on how to use the service and around the collections they wish to use. We are committed to helping visitors

so that they get the best from their visit. We aim to facilitate this through appropriate levels of public-facing staff, including an archivist or librarian being always on duty.

Access to the collections has to be balanced with the requirements of preserving them for future generations. Archives and rare books can only be consulted in the Search Room under invigilation. We have established procedures, which are publicly available, to ensure the security and integrity of the material and provide information on how to use the Search Room.

Some material is only available for consultation on microfilm. This restriction, which is also to balance preservation and access, is noted in the finding aids of the collections.

We will help users to acquire copies of items in our collections, subject to copyright legislation. The physical condition of the item is always of paramount concern and we will not undertake any copying that might risk damaging the item. Where photocopying isn't possible we will suggest alternative options which may include individuals using their phone, camera or tablet device.

Information relating to the use of the service including details of fees and charges are publicised in the Hull History Centre and on our website.

We are part of the Hull Libraries network, and you can become a member here. Members of Hull Libraries can borrow books from the Hull History Centre and use our computers. Visitors to the search room are required to provide proof of name and address either in the form of personal documentation or a library ticket (either Hull Libraries or University of Hull) for which proof of name and address has already been provided.

## **5. Remote access to the History Centre services**

We recognise that a growing number of our users will never visit the Hull History Centre but will engage with our service and our collections remotely. We are committed to making our catalogues available on-line at <http://catalogue.hullhistorycentre.org.uk>. Where appropriate and cost effective we will make archival documents themselves available online. Online access to our catalogues and information about the service will be free of charge.

Hull History Centre operates an Enquiry Service to respond to requests either by post, by telephone or via our website to research information from the collections or to request copies of documents, subject to copyright. There is a charge for this.

## **6. Promotion of the service**

Hull History Centre is committed to promoting our service and our collections to encourage research and learning, and inspires interest in the City of Hull, nationally and internationally. We will engage with local and national print and broadcast media. We aspire to be the primary contact for the media for local history information and will facilitate filming and recording on site while maintaining a balance between the needs of the media and the preservation of the collections. We will provide members of staff to be interviewed where appropriate. There might be a charge for this.

We will continue to develop the Hull History Centre website <http://www.hullhistorycentre.org.uk> as a key element of our online engagement strategy as detailed in our *Social Media Policy*. The website includes information about the service, our collections, details of events and courses and our online catalogue. The Centre also has a blog and an active social media presence.

## **7. Education and outreach**

Hull History Centre will plan and deliver programmes of learning and events to engage people with the collections, to raise educational attainment and aspiration, and also to raise public understanding of archives. To do this we will provide:

- I. An educational offer for schools
- II. Activities and events aimed at children and families
- III. Workshops and courses aimed at adult learners
- IV. Displays and exhibitions
- V. Volunteer opportunities

Schools education at the Hull History Centre is delivered in partnership with Heritage Learning. Information on the offer is available on our website and on Heritage Learning's website <http://www.heritage-learning.com>. Other events, activities and workshops may be delivered in partnership with other providers. For some of these there may be a charge.

Sessions for University of Hull students are delivered at the Hull History Centre to introduce them to the collections for their studies. The Hull History Centre is involved in the development of course modules at the University often built around specific elements of our holdings.

## **8. Collection of data**

The Hull History Centre will seek to collect customer insight data wherever this is practical, reasonable and in compliance with data protection legislation including via our website visitors. We have provided a privacy statement (see <http://hullhistorycentre.org.uk/about-us/about/privacy.aspx>) regarding the information collected by users visiting our website and this link appears on the page footer of every page on the website

This information will only be used to review and enhance the services we deliver. We will also provide clear statements on forms we use to collect data, for example from individual's depositing material with either the City Archives or the University Archives.

We will issue regular news and updates about our collections, services, events and activities to individuals who have expressed an interest in receiving such updates from us or our partners.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Last updated 10 July 2018

To be reviewed July 2020