Development policy

City of London

London Metropolitan Archives
Introduction

London Metropolitan Archives aims to provide as wide an access to its holdings as possible in an environment of transparency, learning and fun in which a rich variety of opportunities exist to inspire and enable people of all backgrounds to access and exploit archive and library resources effectively and creatively, on and off site.

Aims

We aim:

- To promote the impact of the City’s Cultural and heritage offer on the life of London and the nation
- To adhere to the highest standards of access, interpretative and educational practice
- To provide equal opportunities for all users of the collections through cultural, physical, sensory, financial and intellectual access
- Actively to encourage and develop a sense of stewardship on the part of users
- To consult with and be responsive to the needs of its users, staff and stakeholders
- To work in partnership to achieve our aims
- To offer unique learning opportunities available through archive collections
- To facilitate formal and informal learning through participation, a wide range of activities, accurate and accessible information and appropriate guidance
- To provide opportunities which are highly responsive to all London’s diverse communities
- To work across LMA to develop a constantly improving enquiry service which strives to meet user needs
- To contribute actively to and implement City of London, regional and national Access and Interpretation policies and practices
- To employ effectively new technologies as learning tools
- To raise awareness of the relevance and significance of the collections both now and in the future
To support colleagues in implementation of interpretation practice

Policy

Statement of objectives

London Metropolitan Archives is fully committed to the provision of learning opportunities for all through Development (Access and Interpretational) activities. The Development policy will provide the means by which all users can have an enriching learning experience.

Management of Development (Access and Interpretation)

We have and will continue to support clear lines of responsibility for Development matters to a senior management level.

Service liaison

Communication between the Development staff and the rest of the archive is seen as essential in achieving learning objectives. Ideas that contribute to the user learning experience are actively sought and welcomed. Staff are encouraged to participate in different learning activities, either to assist or as experts. Learning is a central element of the archive’s function.

External relationships

Networking with potential partners and establishing key contacts is an essential and powerful element of Development. As an archive with distinct local collections we actively pursue working with London’s diverse communities in stimulating, active and inspiring learning activities. We collaborate with and seek advice from a wide range of regional and national organisations.

Fundraising

Development will work across LMA and make appropriate applications for external funding to support current and future work of the service. Development will also liaise with external groups to support viable and appropriate funded projects.
Staff training

We actively support the training of all staff in Development and across LMA and value the wide range of expertise existing amongst our employees. Staff are supported in attending conferences, professional training courses and to access information which keeps them abreast of new developments in formal and informal learning provision. Staff also exchange expertise through in-house training and secondments to different sections of the department.

Learning environments

We recognise the vital role of suitable learning environments and aim to provide access, stimulating displays, well-planned room arrangements, modern equipment and comfort for users and participants in activities on or off the premises.

Resources development

We are committed to developing new ways of communicating the collections to current and potential users. Development staff are active in creating a wide range of materials including study packs, exhibitions and website content which support formal and informal learning and access. These resources are developed in consultation with users.

Users

We identify our users, seeking out and acting upon their opinions and ideas, and responding to their diverse learning needs. Users are central to the shaping of learning experiences. Development staff are committed to involving all users in the shaping of policy and evaluation of activity. Current user groups include family historians, primary and secondary schools, further education colleges, higher education institutions, professional historians, architects, lawyers and social workers. Users are currently invited to contribute through questionnaires, visitor surveys, comment sheets and talking to staff. We will use evaluation processes to maintain and improve all aspects of Development (Access and Interpretation).

Access to documents and conservation

Development staff will facilitate and support access to original material through a range of activities working across LMA teams.
Providing research tools

We are committed to providing all users with the means of researching and analysing documents. High quality research standards are central to the full and proper historical analysis of documents. Working with LMA teams Development will provide users with an online catalogue and access to digitised collections through a range of platforms. Users will be provided with accurate information and guidance in rigorous research methods to enhance their learning experience and enjoyment. We also aim to provide leaflets and guides to make the records more accessible and comprehensible.

Training in handling and conservation skills:

We support training of all staff and users in the correct handling of documents as a central part of conserving the collections for use by others now and in the future. Development staff will work closely with Conservation, Image and Media and external support in using alternative media, enabling greater access to documents for all users.

Partnership and projects

We build partnerships with external organisations as they make a significant contribution to Development (Access and Interpretation) provision. There is a history of developing and maintaining successful partnerships with London, United Kingdom and internationally based organisations. Development staff will continue to form partnerships with schools, colleges and universities, educational organisations, funding bodies, government departments, advisory groups, users, professional associations, museums, libraries, galleries and archives, providing activities such as tours and work experience opportunities.

Different usage

We value the importance of different types of user activity. All those who use our resources are valued as participants in historical exploration, regardless of the nature of their research. Development will endeavour to meet the diverse requirements of all learners.

Constraints on using collections

Development will protect collections for which there are access constraints. In a small number of cases, access restrictions are applied in conformity with such legislation as Data Protection. Where material is
too fragile to be handled, we will strive to provide an alternative medium by which it can be viewed within the existing Conservation and Image and Media timetables.

**Documents as objects**

The importance of art, craft, conservation science and the diverse materials used in the creation of documents can be as significant as content. Our documents are objects, which tell the physical history of record keeping. They reflect upon the material cultures of the past. The process of making documents is as revealing as the information they contain in words or image and learning opportunities will support this important area of our work.

**Using collections as inspiration for diverse activity**

We want our collections to inspire other areas of activity. The documents held by us can and do provide rich resources for artists, writers, designers, historians, reminiscence projects, community activities, drama activities, literacy, numeracy, family historians and scientists, science historians and communicators. Diversity and imagination fuelled by lateral thinking will broaden the ways in which documents are used, open up unexpected and surprising opportunities and encourage new users to make the most of the archives.

**Supporting document study**

We aim to provide accurate information and friendly and helpful advice to members of the public in response to personal, written and telephone enquiries. We aim to provide additional assistance to enrich the experience of using documents by the provision of leaflets, formal talks, exhibitions and access to knowledgeable staff to ensure that users are given a breadth of learning experience, which adds to their enjoyment and enthusiasm.

**The work of the archive**

We regard the management of document collections as a central part of the users learning experience. An understanding of the storage and conservation of documents is vital in raising awareness of the significance of our work. Exhibitions and tours behind the scenes add an extra dimension to the learning experience.
Digital resources and facsimiles

Access to the collections is of paramount importance. We recognise that not all current and potential users can come to the archive. In order to increase access to documents, off-site exhibitions, web-site developments, and learning resource packs are constantly being developed. A quarterly electronic newsletter is also published which aims to make the work of the archive and its holdings more widely known. Film and sound collections are made available through the Mediatheque. Development is committed to providing opportunities made available through innovation and change.

Feedback

Please complete a comment form or email us at ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk if you wish to give feedback on this policy.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years to make sure it remains timely and relevant.

London Metropolitan Archives mission statement

London Metropolitan Archives is owned, funded and managed by the City of London Corporation on behalf of London and the nation. It is London’s archive service, collecting, preserving, celebrating and sharing the stories of London and Londoners and its many communities through collaboration, innovation and learning. It is responsible for 100 kilometres of the capital’s documentary heritage dating from 1067 to the present day, from parchment rolls to digital files.

Our vision:

Our vision is to ensure as many people as possible now and in the future have access to the archives in our care on site and digitally, safeguarding knowledge, improving understanding, inspiring participation, and supporting good public governance. We aim to provide a world class service aspiring to the highest standards that is open and engaging, innovative, inclusive, secure and sustainable. As one of the leading archive services in the UK we also have a responsibility to provide leadership within the London, national and international archive sectors.
Our commitment:

The City of London provides a unique and diverse range of services to the residents, businesses, workers and visitors in the City of London and beyond. We are committed to being proactive in providing services fairly to all our potential service users. Promoting equal opportunity for all is one of our core values.

Our policy is to treat all service users, and anyone else we come into contact with, equally and with dignity and respect and not to discriminate on grounds of age, disability status, employment status, ethnic or cultural origin, gender, marital status, nationality, religious belief or non-belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, social background, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. We will recognise, respect and value difference and diversity.

In partnership with our employees, our residential communities and stakeholders, we will work hard to meet our obligations under the relevant anti-discrimination legislation, codes of practice and good practice guidelines.

The Collections Acquisition and Management Policy is one of a complete suite of policies for the archive service function delivered by London Metropolitan Archives for which an Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and which is available to view on request.

About this leaflet

This leaflet was revised in March 2016 by London Metropolitan Archives, 40 Northampton Road, London, EC1R OHB

Telephone: 020 7332 3820
Fax: 020 7833 9136
Email: ask.lma@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Website: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/lma

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