The National Archives

Collection Development Tools and Guidance

Purpose

These tools and guidance have been developed by The National Archives to help organisations and groups to:

- Review and develop their collections
- Identify gaps and risks;
- Safeguard their collections;
- Consider short and long term needs for preservation and access.

It encourages collection development to ensure that diverse aspects of modern life are represented within archives. This in turn supports active collections of cultural and evidential value: across different localities; different types of organisation and community; different themes, subjects and activity; and different types and formats of information.

Using this toolkit will enable organisations and groups to:

- Understand and assess the need for collections development in their area of interest
- Produce a Collections Development policy
- Follow the process of a collections strategy to deliver the policy
- Identify and make use of the support that is available

It is aimed at both established and new archive collections and services. It may be useful to any organisation keen to develop and safeguard their archives.

Introduction

Collections Development Policies for Archives

Libraries and museums are used to developing their collections to ensure that collecting relates to and fulfils the organisation's mission as effectively as possible. The *collections development policy* is now a crucial tool in the management of collections in these fields. Archives are aware of the importance of their mission to collect, to engage with local and specialist communities to ensure that the records of a diverse range of activity are preserved for the future. Collecting, however this takes place, is the basis for archival preservation and access.

This is an ideal time to consider applying such criteria to archives, as national developments set the scene for a significant shift in archival collecting. The Action Plan which supports *Archives for the 21st Century* states the ambition that: "Institutions have active and effective collection development policies; they collaborate proactively to eliminate gaps in their collections, and document society effectively." [1] The

---

[1] The action plan in support of *Archives for the 21st Century* can be downloaded from
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/policy/aft21c/

framework of collection strategies by The National Archives has emphasised areas of archival work and highlighted the issues of collecting and coverage. [2]

There is a growing audience and appetite for archival and cultural heritage collections. Online methods of delivery are expanding access and user expectations. Today's collections need to be identified, developed and safeguarded for tomorrow's communities.

These developments offer chances to identify new potential for collecting and to address gaps in coverage which leave significant elements of our national and regional life unrecorded. Finally, the shift to digital record-keeping demands an earlier and more active approach to acquisition than ever before.

This document includes these sections:

Section 1: Overall strategy

This section will help you to identify high level needs and tactics for development.

It includes a set of questions on your collections and overall approach.

Section 2: Collection Development Policies

This section will help you to review and develop your collections. It includes areas for development, by geography, sector, theme and format, followed by preparation for development and moving towards a policy.

Section 3: Plans and activities

This section will help you to decide on plans and activities to develop your collections. It includes a set of questions on meeting challenges and options for action.

Section 4: Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

This section includes responses to questions which might arise in the process.

Section 5: Collections Development Policies and Strategies

This includes examples of existing policies and strategies to inform the process.

1 Overall Strategy

1.1 How is a collections development policy different?

1.1.1 Archives have for some years worked routinely within the framework of an established collecting policy, often co-ordinated with other services to avoid potential conflicts and overlaps. A collections development policy does not replace such a collecting policy, which remains a critical collections management tool. Most collecting policies are permissive, not active. They define a collecting remit, rather than identifying priorities and strategies for fulfilling that remit. The key difference for a collections development policy is that it is pro-active and may be time-limited – a strategic five or ten year plan to develop the way an archive service collects.

---

[2] The National Archives, Collection Strategies http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/collection-strategies.htm The framework developed from the National Collections Strategy, originally launched in May 2009.

1.1.2 The collections development policy operates within an existing context and draws out the practical and strategic implications of the overall collecting policy statement. The collections policy explains what will be collected; the collections development policy explains how collecting will be achieved and developed.

1.1.3 Collecting policies should be open to change and development, to reflect the evolving needs of archives and the communities they serve and represent. They are not the main focus of this guidance document.[3] Any new or revised collecting policies must continue to take account of others' policies, and every effort should be made to avoid duplication.[4]

1.2 Assessing and shaping strategy

1.2.1 This section includes information and questions to help you put together an overview of your collections, and find out where development is needed. You can work through the questions, making notes where appropriate. This will support the process for building an overview of where collections development should take place. Responses to these questions will help to focus on the wider issues and situations which create the need for collections development and a strategy to deliver that development.

1.2.2 The first set of questions, **'About the collections' is for all collections, wherever these are held**. This includes established archive services and many different types of organisation or group.
 The second set of questions, '**Partnerships' is for is for all collections, wherever these are held**.
The third set of questions, **'Storage and safe custody' is for archives in many different types of organisation or group.** These questions are not aimed at established archive services, unless there are known changes or risks to your service.

Work through the questions which are relevant to you. At each stage, make notes on your answers to the questions. These notes will form the basis of your strategy and can be used to describe and shape your approach. You can then proceed to Section 2 which looks at Collection Development in more detail.

---

[3] For guidance on developing or altering a collecting policy, see The National Archives *Archive Collecting Policy Statements: checklist of suggested contents* (2004). http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/collecting_policies.htm

[4] The National Archives *Standard for Record Repositories* (2004), section 3.1.
http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/standards-framework.htm Repositories who have subscribed to the *Standard* are expected to submit a copy of or online link to any new collecting policy to Archives Sector Development:
asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

1.2.3 Questions: About the collections

These questions are aimed at all collections, wherever these are held.

	Questions	Supporting questions	Notes	Where to get more help
1	What has been collected?	1.a What types of records, information and other material **does** this include? 1.b What is the history of the collection? • How has it evolved? • Who or what does it document?	You may have already accumulated archives or have 'inherited' them from another organisation or group. You may have growing collections being created by your organisation or group. It is useful to assess what types of records, information and other information this includes. It will help inform next steps and future developments.	For more information on assessing what has been collected, please contact asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
2	What is important, valuable or unique about this collection?	2.a Why does it need to be developed? 2.b Are there gaps in collecting in this area of interest? • Who or what is missing? 2.c What needs to be done about these gaps? 2.d What support do you need to develop your collection?	This is part of describing the value of archives: what or who they represent; what makes them special; what they mean to people; what they can tell us. What is missing? Gaps might include: People, activities, periods of time that are not represented in your collections. See the Collection Strategy section on The National Archives' website: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/collection-strategies.htm	For an example of how archival value is defined, please see Surrey History Centre's *Appraisal Policy* (particularly Section 2) http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/sccwebsite/sccwspages.nsf/LookupWebPagesByTITLE_RTF/Surrey+History+Centre+Archive+Appraisal+Policy?opendocument For more information on defining archival, historical and cultural value, please contact asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
3	What else should be collected?	3.a What types of records, information and other material **should** this include?	Collections development for archives looks at building and using collections which reflect and serve their diverse user	See the Collection Strategy section on The National Archives' website:

		3.b Are there any people, aspects of your activity, community or organisation that should be represented in your collections? 3.c What is missing?	communities. This can be addressed by looking at gaps in collecting: • Who or what is missing? • Are there time periods missing? • Are there subjects or themes missing? This is covered in detail at Section 2.	http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/collection-strategies.htm The aims and principles may help you in defining what else should be collected.
4	Who are the main users of the collection?	OR 4.a Who will be the main users of the collection?	This is an ideal point to consider bringing other people on board and gaining advocacy for your collections. Identify your users and potential users. • Who are they? • How will they use the archives? • How will they benefit?	You can find guidance on users and audience development on the *All About Audiences* website http://www.allaboutaudiences.com/resources/knowledgebank/audience-development/general
5	What are other archives in your area of interest or community collecting?	5.a What sectors will you cover? 5.b What themes will you cover? 5.c What locations will you cover? 5.d What formats will you cover? 5.e Is this material already being collected somewhere else? 5.f Do you need to contact anyone else to find out more?	For example, some organisations and groups may find that their collecting interests overlap. They may be in the same line of work or be based near each other. Discussions between the organisations involved are always a good idea. It is useful to discuss ideas and find out what it best for the collections. It may develop links with other groups in your area of interest. It may lead to working together now and in the future.	You can search the *National Register of Archives* to look for organisations that hold archival collections in your area of interest. You can search by organisation name (for example 'Royal Observer Corps', personal name, family name, or place name. The results list where these collections are held: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra For literary manuscripts, you can search the *Location Register of 20th Century English Literary Manuscripts* http://www.reading.ac.uk/library/about-us/projects/lib-location-register.aspx For artists' papers you can search the *Artists' Papers Register* http://www.apr.ac.uk/artists/home.htm For Community Archives, you can search the *Community Archives and Heritage Group directory*:

			http://www.communityarchives.org.uk/category_idtxt_directory.aspx
			Film Archive Forum member archives are listed here:
			http://bufvc.ac.uk/faf/members.htm
			You can even use online search engines to look for particular types of archival collection in locations across the UK.

1.2.4 Questions: Partnerships
These questions are aimed at all collections, wherever these are held.

	Questions	Supporting questions	Notes	Where to get more help
6	Will a partnership be useful to safeguard and provide access to this collection?	6.a Which organisations might be suitable for possible partnerships?	These might be public, academic, or private sector organisations. They might share a common theme or interest with your organisation or group. They might be based in the same region, or a different region. They might be interested working together to preserve and provide access to archives. For example, the National Fairground Archive is held at the University of Sheffield with support from the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain and the Fairground Association of Great Britain. http://www.nfa.dept.shef.ac.uk/index1.html	The Archives for the 21st Century Action plan has some ideas on how to approach partnerships. http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives-for-the-21st-century-in-action.pdf For more information on partnerships in the cultural heritage sector, contact asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

1.2.5 Questions: Storage and safe custody

If you are an established archive service with collections management in place, you will probably have covered these in your work.

	Questions	Supporting questions	Notes	Where to get more help
7	Where will the collection be kept in the next 5 years?	7.a Will your organisation keep it? OR 7.b Do you plan to transfer it elsewhere? 7.c If your organisation will keep it, how will you plan for this?	If you plan to deposit elsewhere, get in touch with the organisation to discuss. If your collection will be transferred elsewhere, you will need to decide if ownership would be transferred, or whether this would be a loan.	If you need support with identifying a potential home for your collections, please contact asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk for further guidance.
8	Where is the collection now?	OR 8.a Where will it be created and kept? 8.b Is your organisation large or small? 8.c Are the collections all in one place, or in many places? 8.d Is there a network of collections? 8.e How are the collections structured or grouped?	Consider how the collection will be cared for in the long term. • Do you have secure premises available? • Do you have plans for long term preservation?	Archives need to be stored in secure, clean, dry premises and protected from light, dust and pollution. Storage premises need to be available for the long term. Plans need to be developed to support this.
9	Does action need to be taken to safeguard this material for the future?	9.a Is it safe and secure where it is? 9.b Are there any risks to the collection? 9.c What support is needed to safeguard the collection for the	Risks might include: • Fire • Flood • Damp • Theft • Damage • Poor environmental conditions	Guidance is available on The National Archives' website. Environmental Management http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/environmental-management.pdf Disaster planning http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/disaster-planning-risk-management.pdf

| | | future?

9.d Where will that support come from?

9.e Who else should be involved?

9.f Are there any other people, groups or organisations who you might contact? | • Poor handling
• Inadequate storage and packaging

Support might come from:
• From your parent organisation or community
• From partnership with an external archive
• From partnership with another organisation (not an archive)
• From external funding
• From other sources | Protecting archives and manuscripts against disasters http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/memo6.pdf

The Standard for Record Repositories describes best practice including storage and environment http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/standard2005.pdf

For general advice on caring for archives, please see: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/caring_for_records.htm |

From the notes made by working through these questions, you will be able to produce a draft document highlighting the wider issues, and possible courses of action.

Proceed to section 2: Collection Development Policies

2 Collection Development Policies

2.1 Why have a collections development policy?

2.1.1 A great deal of archive collecting is:

- passive (accepting what is offered);
- routine (accruals from existing depositors and parent bodies);
- or reactive (in response to local changes, business closures, organisational mergers).

All these are valid and important approaches, which have allowed archives to ensure the survival of many significant collections which document the changing nature and identity of communities.

2.1.2 Archive services have also taken forward collecting through active surveying and relationship building with record creators. There are positive strengths in collecting material in this way; as it is directly relates to a collecting policy statement, rather than being acquired passively out of a lack of direction or sense of obligation. Passive acquisition does not support mapping out the future direction of collections development or usually relate to current strategic priorities.

2.1.3 Over the past 25 years professional literature has increasingly considered the role for active collection development – to consider the aims of the organisation as stated in its collecting policy and whether these are being met by current collecting methods. Perhaps the best established of these ideas is the "Minnesota method", developed by the Minnesota Historical Society in relation to business records. The method seeks to compare existing holdings to potential collecting and from there to direct future collecting.[5] Such approaches are known as documentation strategy.

Active documentation strategy has been a controversial idea, and such work is not well established in many archive services. Professor of archives Terry Cook sees this as the logical outcome of a century of development in archival practice:

> [Archivists] "have evolved from being, allegedly impartial custodians of inherited records to becoming intervening agents who set record-keeping standards and, most pointedly, who select for archival preservation only a tiny portion of the entire universe of recorded information. Archivists have become in this way very active builders of their own "houses of memory".[6]

2.1.4 The advent of digital records and likelihood that records of the 1980s onwards are more fragile and in greater need of active preservation to ensure their survival means that collections development for archives

---

[5] Society of American Archivists, Minnesota method definition
http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=2703

[6] *Archivaria* 43 (1997), 46.

is about more than theory. It is about the survival of evidence of aspects of modern life which may not be sustainable or recoverable within the lifespan of current adults. Collecting which is mainly passive does not entirely fulfil the cultural and evidential roles of archives.

2.2 What areas for development might be identified?

There are four main aspects of possible collecting which are frequently identified as under-supported by passive collecting methods:

2.2.1 *Geography*

Where a repository seeks to cover a geographical area, it may be possible to identify patterns of collecting which serve some parts better than others. This is often due to local sensibilities and physical location of the archives service within its community. It can be addressed through awareness raising and dedicated work in priority communities. This can be supported by use of digital surrogates to provide local services to remote areas while retaining a centralised high-quality physical store.

2.2.2 *Sector*

Different types of records may be unevenly represented, and this is a issue for archivists to examine in some detail. Are, for example, sectors like businesses well represented? Are small businesses approached or does collecting rest on major industrial concerns?

Within sectors, are different types of organisation fully represented? Within collections from established Christian denominations, if Methodists are routinely collected, why not Congregationalists? Are many faiths represented or only some? Are aspects such as the cultural and creative arts collected? Are there other types of organisations which are not well documented, and how can these areas be addressed? Are organisational records effectively supported by personal records of those most closely involved in the activity concerned?

2.2.3 *Theme*

Are all themes of significance to the area or the topic collected equally? Are there functions, tasks and activities in the main area of collecting, whether geographical or subject based, which are not reflected in archive holdings? Perhaps the most widely recognised gap in this respect is local Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation in local archive service holdings. There are also questions about whether, for example, medical research material is as consistently collected as patient records; or whether sports are as well represented as youth groups in local archive collections.

2.2.4 *Format*

Not all repositories have facilities to hold certain specialist media, such as film or sound. At the time of writing, few have an established means of taking in digital documents. Where there is no dedicated

alternative repository (for example, a regional film archive which works in partnership with local record offices), this material may be lost. In some cases if this material is collected by repositories without specialist facilities or skills, it may not be properly stored or managed and limited or no access will be provided.

2.2.5 Summary

Tackling gaps in coverage while ensuring effective management and preservation of collected material may benefit from a collaborative or regional approach. The National Archives can support strategic discussion in such cases.

It is best practice not to collect fragile specialist media without acceptable means of ensuring preservation and to work with the appropriate specialist repository where available to ensure proper handling and storage. When considering collecting in a new area, following the questions in section 3 is a good way of ensuring all the critical issues are considered from the outset.

2.3 Preparation for a Collections Development Policy: surveying potential collecting areas

Developing collections to match the aims of the collecting policy means a coherent effort must be made to identify areas of activity which should be covered by the archive collections. Analysis must look at social change over time – to reflect both the activities of the current population (who may well wish to retain their own records, or indeed still be using them actively) and to also address significant activities or groups from the past which need to be reflected in your holdings. The development of surveying is likely to reflect the different areas of collecting identified below.

2.3.1 *Geography:*

This exercise is most easily done in a geographical sense, when plotting the full extent of the communities served is usually a straightforward exercise.

2.3.2 *Sector*

Identifying some sectoral aspects such as core local business activities and longstanding firms is a reasonably straightforward exercise. Other sectors should include organisational, personal and family papers, with sub-sectors such as literary, creative or governmental records. This applies not only to local authority services but to archives seeking to document particular subject areas (examples might be agriculture, political radicalism or women's history). Records covering such subjects were produced by a wide range of corporate bodies and individuals, but it may have proved easier to collect in only some of these sectors. It may also be helpful to think in terms of seeing subjects through public, private and voluntary sectors: ensuring that history can be seen and understood "from below" as well as from above.

2.3.3 *Theme*

Thematic analysis is the most complex and problematic part of this work, as it may appear that collecting could be extended very widely. When identifying possible groups or activities it is then important to combine awareness of likely activities which occur nationally (religious participation; sports clubs; arts and music; town or village institutes) with awareness of what makes the collecting area in question unique. Examples of the unique include high profile individuals; aspects of the landscape; events and festivals and similar unusual features which might be documented and which will be significantly different to others' collecting aspirations. While doing this functional mapping it may be useful to employ the International Standard for Describing Functions (ISDF) to help identify and codify functions.[7]

There may equally be practical issues to address: a well organised and fully documented group will have established procedures already; some groups may be easier to approach than others. Other groups may be suspicious of 'official' collecting or indeed not produce records which are readily collectable. This does not mean that they should be excluded from a scoping exercise, nor perhaps from any records creation work you undertake but it will affect strategy in the immediate future. This is covered in more detail at *Creation of records* below.

2.3.4 *Format*

There is a finite list of potential formats to collect. While specialised formats usually require specialised storage and management, without certain types of record being collected, significant areas of modern life risk being lost to posterity. Examples include various types of digital records (such as databases, websites, digital sound and video or Computer Aided Design material); and three-dimensional records such as models for theatrical sets or engineering designs which may be the most accurate record produced by such activities.

2.3.5 Documentation Strategy

Elements of the methodology for documentation strategy may be of help in this analysis: looking at functions and activities, rather than at records and creators, and then actively seeking to document the identified priority functions and activities. Examples where this approach has been successful include major construction and redevelopment projects around King's Cross.[8] The London Olympics of 2012 is also at the centre of a major documentation strategy initiative.[9] It is worth considering whether to prioritise documentation strategy approach when communities are disappearing – an example would be mining village life, where community change means that the social memory is at risk.

2.3.6 Assessing and Reviewing Significance

---

[7] International Council on Archives, *International Standard for Describing Functions* (2007) http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ISDF%20ENG.pdf

[8] Camden Council website, *Kings Cross Voices* http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/leisure/local-history/kings-cross-voices.en

[9] *The Record: London 2012 and the Cultural Olympiad* http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/2012/

The Reviewing Significance framework, developed by Renaissance East Midlands is effective for reviewing cultural heritage collections of all kinds. It is simple to use and provides effective tools for communicating with management and parent organisations. It allows assessment to be made of significance, risks and need – highlighting priorities for action by cleverly structured spreadsheets. It was developed from the Australian Significance 2.0 by Renaissance East Midlands.

Templates for assessment, significance statement, management and usage and collections review templates, along with the report with full background to the framework are available online.[10]

The methodology has been successfully used for archive collections, including London Screen Archives. The principles are at the heart of their **Collections Care and Management Toolkit which will be published summer 2011.** [11]

2.4 Moving towards a Collections Development Policy

2.4.1 *Collections Comparison*

When you have made a survey or analysis in any or all of the areas above, now is the time to look at your current collections.

How well do they match up to the intended collecting remit? Bear in mind that archives collected will never be a perfect mirror of their communities, and that some degree of mismatch will happen. To identify priorities, which are the greatest, most problematic gaps which can be identified? Making a list of priority and desired collecting areas, involving relevant people, and where possible choosing ways to address these priorities, will allow collections development to be worked into policy and business planning at the right levels.

You may also be aware of specific collections which are not currently available but which would be a target if circumstances changed. It may be helpful to your fundraising, to current and future colleagues to record these as targets. Developing relationships with owners of such collections, through offering preservation advice or even tours of the archive service itself, may encourage participation and opportunities to collect.

2.4.2 If a service is thinking of major changes to current practice, it would be helpful to talk to The National Archives about new and potential areas of collecting. This will alert you to possible gaps, clashes and overlaps in collecting, especially if they relate to sector and theme. These (except where they are heavily concentrated in specific geographical areas) are less fully covered by existing collecting policies and are likely to prove more problematic.

---

[10] Renaissance East Midlands, R*eviewing Significance*

http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_midlands/info_for_sector/collections_buildings/collections_projects

[11] London Screen Archives, *Current projects* http://filmlondon.org.uk/networks/lsa/current_lsa_projects

2.4.3 You may wish to participate in The National Archives-led framework of collection strategies discussions if you are looking beyond geographical collecting areas, to ensure that thematic and sector topics are fully covered at a national level and to be aware of developments in other services.[12]

2.4.4 There is also considerable scope for cross-domain work in capturing a rounded picture: museums may be seeking to document the visual and physical aspects, or specialist libraries the secondary and supporting resources. Co-ordinated effort is positive and can only strengthen archives' own work in these areas.

Section 3: Plans and activities

3.1 Options for Action

Collecting services' situations are likely to vary significantly, so the following provides a set of potential options. Working through the set of questions will help you to consider approaches to any major collecting gaps and issues which affect your collecting.

3.1.1 Short term

Identify quick wins from the list of priorities. Are there areas which could be comparatively readily surveyed – for example through postal questionnaires? Small businesses or organisations for example might welcome an interest in their records and not require prolonged follow-up. Equally, looking to sectors which are undergoing general premises moves, closure or downsizing may well identify groups of records which are at risk of unmanaged disposal, where an approach might be very welcome. Building connections with archive creators and custodians is an important part of the process; though will develop over time and may not necessarily lead to deposit straight away.

3.1.2 Medium term

Identify medium-term strategic options for collecting. Examples might be improved documentation of an industry or a locality where there are known to be records which have survived. A useful starting point is to identify any regular archives users or contacts who could champion such a move. Getting a foothold in a community is often the key to such work and can allow relationships to be built, perhaps through activities like targeted open days or tours. It is vital to resource this effectively, both in terms of community relations and in documentation and access for any newly collected materials. This might tie in with related work on access and outreach.

---

[12] The National Archives, Collection Strategies http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/collection-strategies.htm

3.1.3 Long term sustained work

Where potential or existing depositors are identifiable but records are vulnerable (either because of organisational change or technological change), offering support in managing records and digital preservation will ensure the survival of as complete an archive as possible. The Wellcome Library's Digital Curation Toolbox is a useful example of information aimed at helping depositors to share the preservation process.[13]

Not all of these activities will be appropriate for all situations. Managing relationships with potential depositors has to be a critical part of this work. To descend on a community looking to "take away its records" can lead to a long-term breakdown of relationships, where a partnership approach to documenting local life might have proved successful. Instead community-based projects with a clear remit to improve the representation in collections can be successful. A strong example is the Bristol Black Archives Partnerships which combines community work with a mission to encourage donations of material to archives and museums, preserving the memory of the black community in Bristol.[14] Initiatives to support community groups in caring for their own records and archives in the short and medium term are also highly valuable. West Yorkshire Archives Service is developing the Community Archive Accreditation Scheme and a training programme to share best practice and increase community participation with both the archive service and local heritage and history. [15]

---

[13] Wellcome Library: *Digital Curation toolbox.* FAQs at http://library.wellcome.ac.uk/node289.html See also the Bodleian and John Rylands Libraries' joint *Paradigm* project on curation of digital personal papers: http://www.paradigm.ac.uk/ and its successor, *futureArch* http://www.ouls.ox.ac.uk/beam/projects/futurearch

[14] *Bristol Black Archives Partnership* http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Leisure-Culture/records-and-archives/bristol-black-archives-partnership.en

[15] West Yorkshire Archive Service *Community Archive Accreditation Scheme* draft http://www.nowthen.org/assets/files/mp3/CAA%20Scheme%20(2).pdf

3.2.4 *Resourcing Collections Development (a): funding for projects*

Identify areas which can only be tackled through a major piece of work. This would identify communities which are perhaps marginalised or more challenging to engage with, or where records may not survive or have existed in any quantity. This type of work may need to be project-based, but ongoing relationships need to be considered and sustained if this is to become a long-term strategy.

3.2.5 *Resourcing Collections Development (b): funding for purchases*

Make the argument for funding, not only for project work as outlined above but also of potential purchases. Relatively few archive services now have a defined purchase budget, which reduces their flexibility in cases where material becomes available at short notice. Really sizeable purchases can often be funded with the assistance of grant awarding bodies, but important material under £500 is seen regularly on the market and falls outside most funders' remits.

3.2 Creation of records

3.2.1 This is a much-debated and controversial means of developing collections – apparently going beyond the neutrality of the archivist's role towards becoming document creators. If you have identified significant activities or functions of collecting interest for which there are likely to be few or no records, it may be the only effective way forward. It is compatible with successful activities already undertaken by many services, such as oral history projects, to understand and document aspects of life which are not well captured in organisational and business records and where personal records may not exist.

Where records survive giving only one side of a contested history, an approach such as *Revisiting Archive Collections* allows you to capture differing views in a structured way alongside conventional records and finding aids.[16]

These activities not only enrich collections but form the basis for attracting new audiences and working with harder to reach, sometimes vulnerable or disappearing, communities.

---

[16] Collections Trust *Revisiting Archive Collections* http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/index.cfm?ct=assets.assetDisplay/title/Revisiting%20Archive%20Collections%20Toolkit/assetId/298

3.3 Plans and activities

This section will help you to develop your plans and activities that will support development of your collections.

	3.3.1 Questions: Plans and activities			
	Questions	Supporting questions	Notes	Where to get more help
10	Are there financial limitations which affect the collection?	10.a What needs to be done about these financial limitations? 10.b What can be done to make the most effective of the resources you currently have? 10.c Can you approach your community or organisation for funds? 10.d Can you to apply for external funding?	Almost all archives are limited by finances. Lack of money can have a serious impact on how they are cared for and used. Financial limitations can affect: Physical control - Storage conditions - Security - Access to the collections Intellectual control - People costs - Cataloguing - Management and monitoring - Related documentation	Information on funding opportunities is available on The National Archives website: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/our-services/grant-aid.htm For advice on external funding, please contact: asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
11	Are there technical limitations which affect the collection?	11.a Do technical limitations affect the material you select for the collection? (For example, not collecting records that are in a format that you cannot look after?) 11.b What needs to be done about these technical limitations? 11.c Do any of these limitations place the collections at immediate risk? 11.d Does urgent action need to be taken now?	Technical limitations might include: - Understanding the collection - Understanding storage and handling requirements - Understanding requirements of: - Photographs - Moving image (film and video) - Sound (tape or disc) - Digital records (on removable media such as CD and DVD or on	For guidance on preservation of digital records, please see: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/projects-and-work/digital-preservation-faqs.htm For guidance of photographs, please see: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archivesconservation_photo.pdf For guidance on Film and Sound, please see:

			computers)	Archives and Records Association: http://www.archives.org.uk/resources/E&BPWG_%20F&S%20Guidance.pdf British Library guidance on film preservation: http://www.bl.uk/about/policies/endangeredarch/pdf/08guidelines_film.pdf
		11.e Do you need specialist advice?		
12	Does the collection include restricted or confidential material?	12.a What are the restrictions? 12.b What is confidential? 12.c What needs to be done about the restricted or confidential material? 12.d Do you need to contact the people or organisations involved? 12.e Can you release part of the information? 12.f Do need further information or guidance?	Not all archives are suitable for immediate access. If they contain personal information about living people or information that is confidential for some other reason, you may need to restrict access to them. Guidance is available online on handling personal information covered by the Data Protection Act; see the code of practice at nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/information-management/dp-code-of-practice.pdf Information covered by the Freedom of Information Act: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/legislation/section-46.htm Environmental information covered by the Environmental Information	If in doubt, it is better not to make the restricted or confidential material available until you have had a chance to consider it further and consult others. If you are a public sector organisation, you may find that the archives are covered by the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, both of which provide a right of access for members of the public. If so, you can refuse access only if one of the exemptions in the Act and the Regulations apply. Guidance on these exemptions is available online on the Information Commissioner's website: www.ico.gov.uk. If you need advice on how any of this legislation applies to your archives, please contact asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk for further guidance.

			Regulations:http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/information-management/legislation/environmental-information-regulations.htm If in doubt, it is better not to make the restricted or confidential material available until you have more information on these aspects.	
13	For records being created now, do you need support with records management or collections management?	13.a What support is needed for records management? 13.b What support is needed for collections management?	Records management is the control of creation, use, storage, retrieval, selection and destruction of records through time. Records are evidence of activities and transaction, providing information about what happened, what was decided, and how to do things. All organisations need to keep some records. Collections management uses technical and professional skills to manage heritage collections to deliver best value to owners and the public. It is a combined approach for collections and can include archives, objects, and library material. Collections management works across museums, archives, libraries and all kinds of cultural heritage organisation.	Sources of further guidance are available. The National Archives, *Guide 1:* *What is records management?* (2010) http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/rm-code-guide1.pdf Collections Trust, Collections Management web pages http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk/index.cfm/collection-management/what-is-it/ For specific help, please contact: asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk
14	Where will the collection be kept permanently?	14.a Will your organisation keep it? OR	If you plan to deposit elsewhere, get in touch with the organisation to discuss.	If you need support with identifying a potential home for your collections, please contact

		14.b Do you plan to transfer it elsewhere? 14.c If your organisation will keep it, how will you plan for this?	If your collection will be transferred elsewhere, you will need to decide if ownership would be transferred, or whether this would be a loan.	asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk for further guidance.
15	How will users and researchers access the collection?	15.a Are there premises where the collections will be made available? 15.b Will there be sufficient supervision at these premises to keep the collection safe? 15.c Are there plans to develop this in the future? 15.d Are there plans for online access?	You will need a clean, tidy area to provide access to the collections. You will need to advise users on careful handling and to supervise them whilst they use the archives.	Examples of 'reading room rules' can be found online which may help you. The National Archives welcome leaflet has a simple list of what can and cannot be taken into access areas: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk /documents/tna-welcome-leaflet.pdf If you are thinking of online access, 'Deciding to digitise' is available on the Collections Link website. It has ideas on what to think about before going ahead with digitisation. http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/index.cfm?ct=assets.assetDisplay/title/Deciding%20to%20Digitise/assetId/1
16	What needs to happen?	16.a Are there any other issues affecting the collection? 16.b What else can be done to meet the challenges?	Include any further details of: • what needs to be done now • what needs to be done in the longer term • people and organisations	Refer back to *Options for Action, short medium* and *long term*.

			to contact.	
17	**Overall, what are the risks of not having a strategy?**	**17.a What might happen if action is not taken?**	These risks might include: • Business needs • Legal requirements / compliance • Loss of information assets • Loss of corporate memory • Loss of collective memory • Lack of access • Archives which only tell one side of the story.	See the Collection Strategy section on The National Archives' website: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/collection-strategies.htm This may help you in deciding what will be at risk or missing if no action is taken. If you're archive is at immediate risk, you can contact: asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk for further guidance.

3.4 Developing your Policy and Strategy for action

The table below sets out details of how to develop a detailed statement of the current situation, interested parties and appropriate courses of action. This can form the basis of your Collections Development Policy and your strategy for implementing the policy.

3.4.1 Stating the case	
This table includes a list of possible sections for your Collections Development Policy and action plan. The examples at section 5 will also be useful to look at when writing your policy and action plan.	
What sections might be included	**What the sections might cover**
Introduction	Why your existing or developing collections are significant and what archival, cultural or historical value they have; why they will benefit from development
Purpose	Aims; objectives; principles; contribution to aims or mission statement of organisation
Current collecting	Categories of collecting; scope and strength of collections; focus of collections; types of material
Collections context	History of collection; audiences; wider context
Methods of collecting	Sources of collections; how collecting happens; how selection happens; donations; purchase
Priorities for collecting	Reviewing current collecting; mapping collections, weaknesses in collections, under-represented groups, archives and records at risk
Development	Future collection; how development will happen; selection; disposition
Access	Onsite access; online access; inclusion; existing audiences; new audiences
Sustainability	Ownership of the collection; safekeeping now and in the future; partnership and collaboration; managing; using and sharing best practice; action plan; review period

3.5 Next steps in the process

The table below sets out possible next steps in the process.

3.5.1 Making it happen	
Consult creators, users and potential users	To develop your strategy, you should discuss with as many people as possible who have a role in creating and using these collections. You should also discuss with any existing archives or cultural heritage organisations

	that already collect this type of material. This will give you as wide a view as possible in shaping your proposal.
Review	Assemble all the information that you have already gathered in shaping your strategy. Review it to check for anything that might be missing.
Share	Once all of the available information has been assembled and reviewed, contact Archives Sector Development at The National Archives. asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk We can review the information provided and provide advice on next steps.
Consider advice	Following the advice, take the appropriate next steps as necessary contacting the relevant organisations where needed. It will also be useful to revisit the information you have already assembled and make any updates or additions that are necessary.
Implement strategy	This stage involves the practical steps to make the strategy happen. When the strategy has been drafted, it can be implemented by addressing the needs, issues and risks set out in your detailed strategy documentation. If appropriate, you may provide regular updates on progress and any issues as they arise. Archives Sector Development asd@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk can provide advice and useful contacts for collaboration and possible sources of funding as required.

4. Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Collections development needs resource to be effective. Inevitably, this poses challenges for services, and partly explains the slow adoption of collection development principles by the archive sector. For effective and relevant collections development, these objections can and must be overcome.

4.1 I haven't got time for this!

Some repositories accession quantities of marginal material – can you cut down on unnecessary acquisitions?

Can you secure dedicated project funding? This type of work can be very significant in improving your service. Grant awarders like the Heritage Lottery Fund are very interested in supporting certain types of community work.

4.2 I haven't got space for this!

Reappraisal and de-accessioning are potentially a valid part of collections development – sharpening existing collections which have been allowed to accrue without sufficient reference to collecting aims. Decisions to reappraise collections must be made in full recognition of archives' mission to preserve unique, irreplaceable material. De-accessioning is a major and often controversial move, not to be taken lightly.

4.3 Isn't this peripheral to core work?

If an archive service is not fully representing its community or its identified goals, it is more vulnerable to challenges to service provision, budget reductions and loss of connection with users and depositors. The growth of the community archives movement provides a strong indication that potential archive users do not feel existing services fulfil all that they look for. Collections development policies can be a useful means of building stronger links with stakeholders.

In a future where digital records will become the norm, liaison with potential depositors will need to happen at a much earlier stage, and to be more intensive. A Collections Development Policy should be the first step towards identifying those you will need to work with to ensure your service remains vibrant and representative.

5. Collections Development Policies and Strategies

5.1 The following are examples of existing policies and strategies which cover areas highlighted in this guidance.

- Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre, *Collection Development Plan, 2008-2012*
  http://www.bexley.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10655

- British Library, *Sound Archive Collection Development Policy*
  http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/bldept/soundarch/soundcdp/development.html

- Gloucestershire Archives, *Collections Development Policy* (2010)
  http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=17210

- London Metropolitan University: the Women's Library, *Collection Development Policy*
  http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/aboutthecollections/collectiondevelopment/home.cfm

- National Library of Wales, *Collection Development Policy*
  http://www.llgc.org.uk/fileadmin/documents/pdf/2009_Collection_Policy.pdf

- National Maritime Museum,
  Collection Development Policy: Collecting Priorities and Action Points
  http://www.nmm.ac.uk/explore/collections/development/development-policy/collecting-priorities-and-action-points are of particular interest within the wider policy framework.

- Nottinghamshire Archives, *Acquisition Strategy* (2006):
  http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/acquisitionsstrategy.pdf

- Renaissance East Midlands, The heart of all we do: a collections development strategy for East Midlands' museums 2009-2019
  http://www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/renaissance/regions/east_midlands/info_for_sector/collections_buildings/~/media/East_Midlands/Files/2009/REM_Eval_short_doc