
Arts Council England and The National Archives Memorandum of Understanding 2016-19

This refreshed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) builds on the framework for cooperation outlined in the 2012-15 MoU between Arts Council England and The National Archives.

This refreshed MoU sets out the role of each organisation and describes how they will work together to achieve their separate and common goals.

1. Background

- 1.1 Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries.
- 1.2 The National Archives leads the archives sector for England and performs the Historical Manuscripts Commission's functions in relation to independent archives. Its support and advice helps archives across the UK to develop and enhance their services, facilities and collections. Over the next four years, its strategic plans include tackling the challenges and opportunities digital technologies present for the creation and preservation of archival collections of all kinds.
- 1.3 The MoU recognises that while both organisations have distinct roles, their strategic visions and aims reflect their areas of shared interest.

2. The National Archives

- 2.1** The National Archives is a non-ministerial government department sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. It is the official archive and publisher for the UK government, and for England and Wales. It is the guardian of some of the most iconic national documents dating back more than 1,000 years.
- 2.2** The National Archives works to bring together and secure the future of the record, both digital and physical, for future generations, nationally and internationally.
- 2.3** *Archives Inspire*, The National Archives' strategic plans for 2015-19, sets out its ambitions to meet the needs of its major audiences – government, the public, academia and the archive sector – and to face the biggest challenge, digital.

3. Arts Council England

- 3.1** Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts, museums and libraries in England. It is a non-departmental public body attached to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.
- 3.2** Arts Council England's mission is 'Great art and culture for everyone'. It works hard to achieve this by championing, developing and investing in arts and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.
- 3.3** Arts Council England has a ten-year strategic framework, running from 2010-20 – 'Great art and culture for everyone'

4. Aim

- 4.1** This refreshed MoU outlines how both organisations will continue to work together.
- 4.2** The aim of the refreshed MoU is to ensure that there is a comprehensive cultural offer for the public, which includes the rich diversity of arts, museums, libraries and archives.

5. Shared objectives

Through collaboration, Arts Council England and The National Archives will:

- 5.1** Act strategically and practically across the full range of cultural and heritage sectors to help communities and people across England to benefit from opportunities to engage with culture.
- 5.2** Develop and enhance the existing connections between the arts, museums, libraries and archives – particularly where opportunities exist to better utilise collections and develop collaborative working.
- 5.3** Continue to recognise archives as part of the wider cultural landscape, often within the context of a museum or library offer.
- 5.4** Share research and intelligence to support a richer cultural offer locally.
- 5.5** Champion and support the development, protection and engagement with the diversity of collections across England for long-term public benefit.
- 5.6** Work together more effectively in other partnerships and networks.
- 5.7** Promote better understanding and support for the cultural ecology, as it exists and develops locally.
- 5.8** Explore shared approaches to sector sustainability, workforce development and resilience.

The delivery of these objectives is outlined in an agreed action plan in a separate annex.

6. Statement of intent

- 6.1** Arts Council England and The National Archives recognise that they have complementary expertise and overlapping interests.
- 6.2** Arts Council England and The National Archives will endeavour to cooperate and work together in so far as their separate interests, legal constraints and corporate aims permit.
- 6.3** They will share knowledge (so far as they are legally permitted to do so), expertise and best practice in relation to matters of mutual interest, and if there is an overlap or mutual interest in a particular area, they will consult as appropriate.
- 6.4** Both parties are committed to the principle of good communication with each other, especially when one organisation's work may have some bearing on the responsibilities or remit of the other organisation.
- 6.5** Both Arts Council England and The National Archives will seek to alert each other as soon as is practically possible to relevant developments within their respective sectors.
- 6.6** The refreshed MoU is to be published on both organisations websites.

7. Frequency of contact

- 7.1** Senior members of staff from Arts Council England and The National Archives will meet on an annual basis, to discuss matters of mutual interest and the operation of this MoU. These meetings will be underpinned by regular liaison between their officials on a quarterly basis, or as and when required.
- 7.2** The organisations will ensure that it is clear who are the appropriate contacts, for particular matters, and that contact details are kept up-to-date.

7.3 At the time of writing, the key contacts are:

- **Dr Valerie Johnson, Director Of Research and Collections, The National Archives**
- **Isobel Hunter, Head of Archives Sector Development, The National Archives**
- **Paul Bristow, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Arts Council England**
- **Scott Furlong, Director, Collections and Cultural Property, Arts Council England**

8. Frequency of review

8.1 This MoU will be reviewed at least every three years and more frequently, if required, by developments in either organisation.

8.2 The MoU is not legally binding. It is a non-contractual agreement between the two organisations.