Statistics and Outcomes: Report on UK Applications and Awards for Archive Service Accreditation

(June 2023-May 2024)

This report offers an overview of how Archive Service Accreditation is progressing across the UK since its launch in June 2013, with a particular focus on the period June 2023 to May 2024. It also outlines how applicant archive services have achieved against the standard both at module and at requirement level within the assessment framework.

The report provides the following information:

1) Applications for Archive Service Accreditation
   - Total number of applications
   - Number of 1st applications from non-accredited services
   - Number of 2nd applications from non-accredited services
2) Applications for the Review Stage of Archive Service Accreditation
3) Applications by type of archive service
4) Validation visits undertaken by assessing bodies
5) Archive services awarded Archive Service Accreditation
6) Removal of archive service accreditation
7) Achievement at module level
8) Achievement at requirement level
9) Review Stage: Changes to overall assessments, modules and requirements
10) Review Stage: New Required and Improvement Actions
11) Provisional Status Review

The report is based on the total number of applications reviewed for Archive Service Accreditation by an Archive Service Accreditation Panel. Any applications whose review was deferred by a Panel, are included in Sections 1-3 of the report only (Applications for Archive Service Accreditation and type of applicant archive services), as these applications do not have a confirmed outcome or assessment.

1) **Number of applications for Archive Service Accreditation reviewed by Archive Service Accreditation Panels (seven years)**

Total number of applications

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Total								
England	24	52	30	15	11	17	20	31
Northern Ireland	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	0	0	1	2	0	1	4	3
Wales	4	4	0	0	0	3	5	4
Total	29	58	31	17	11	21	29	38

First time applications from non-accredited archive services

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Total 1st applications								
England	24	52	30	12	5	6	4	8
Northern Ireland	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	0
Wales	4	4	0	0	0	0	2	1
Total	29	58	31	14	5	7	6	9

Second time applications from accredited archive services

Total 2nd applications				2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
England	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	6	11	16	29
Northern Ireland	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	4	3
Wales	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	3	3	3
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	6	14	23	29

Since the launch of Archive Service Accreditation in June 2013, 282 archive services have completed an application for Archive Service Accreditation across the UK. This figure includes archive services who may have made a first unsuccessful application but who were subsequently accredited. Of the applicants, 207 were making an application for an initial award and 75 were accredited archive services making a second application to retain accredited status after the initial six-year award.

The number of new applications has continued to drop since the peak of the initial rollout in 2017/2018 as those archive services identified as priority applicant groups in England and Wales (Places of Deposit) have largely applied for accreditation. It is also worth noting that 2019/ 2020 also saw the first cohort of accredited archive services make their second application for Archive Service Accreditation according to an agreed application schedule. The number of archive services making their second application continues to increase and this reflects the initial rollout of the programme.

During 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 the programme was impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic and associated national restrictions. Following a decision by the Archive Service Accreditation Committee in May 2020, new applications were suspended. In November 2020 the Accreditation Committee agreed that individual home nation assessor bodies should address any new applications, or assess any suspended applications, according to their resources and any restrictions in place. Since then, there has been a gradual resumption of pre-pandemic operations for both applicant services and assessor

bodies. The number of new applicants is slowly increasing reflecting the return to business as usual following the COVID 19 pandemic.

2) Applications for the Review Stage of Archive Service Accreditation

The Review Stage is a 'check in' for archive services three years after the initial award of accreditation. Archive services report to their home nation assessor bodies on any changes since the award of Accreditation, for example changes in resourcing, structure, premises or new or revised policies and plans surrounding collections and access. Review Stage applications are made within an agreed timescale with the assessor body.

Review Stage applications								
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
England	7	9	11	19	22	28	26	20
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	0	2	3	0	1	0	2	1
Wales	0	4	1	4	1	2	0	0
Total	7	15	15	23	24	30	28	21

As noted above there has been some delay in Review Stage applications due to COVID 19 pandemic but despite this the number and pattern of Review Stage applications continue to reflect the trend of initial rollout of the programme.

3) Applications by type of archive service

Archive Service Accreditation uses scalability to identify the types of archive service applying for accreditation and to outline the expectations for different types and sizes of archive service. We share the breakdown of types of archive services according to that scalability here. These include first time applications and second time applications from accredited archive services

Application by type of archive service

	Total	2013-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
England											
Local Authority Type 1	6	0	0	1	3	0	2	0	1	1	0
Local Authority Type 2	87	11	9	13	21	23	5	5	8	7	14
Other Public Sector Type 1	5	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	1	0	3
Other Public Sector Type 2	45	4	2	7	20	2	6	4	5	7	5
Private and third sector Type 1	4	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector Type 2	7	2	2	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	3
Private and third sector Type 3	18	3	1	1	6	3	2	2	0	1	5
National		1							1	0	

	Total	2013-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Northern Ireland											
Local Authority Type 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	00
Local Authority Type 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Public Sector Type 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Public Sector Type 2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector Type 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector Type 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector Type 3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

	Total	2013-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Scotland											
Local Authority Type 1	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Local Authority Type 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Other Public Sector Type 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Public Sector Type 2	5	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0
Private and third sector Type 1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector Type 2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Private and third sector Type 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

Wales	Total	2013-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Local Authority Type 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Authority Type 2	9	2	2	2	3	0	0	0	1	2	3
Other Public Sector Type 1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Other Public Sector Type 2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1
Private and third sector Type 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector Type 2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector Type 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1		

In 2023/2024 applications were again dominated by accredited archive services making their second application for accreditation – twenty nine out of thirty eight archive services. Almost all these services belonged to the group *Local Authority Type 2* and reflects the initial rollout of accreditation where application cohorts were dominated by *Local Authority Type 2.*

In terms of new or first-time applications for accreditation, during 2023/2024 applications were received from a broad range of archive services, in particular smaller archive services, both public and private, including archive services in museums, small specialist repositories, a small business archive service, university archive services and the first digital only archive service. This reflects a move away from the initial rollout of accreditation where applications were dominated by *Local Authority Type 2 services* as noted above.

4) **Number of validation visits undertaken by home nation assessor bodies**

When assessing an application for Archive Service Accreditation, assessor bodies can also make a visit to the applicant archive service. This is an opportunity for the assessor to validate elements of the application, review any documentation not suitable to be submitted as part of the application, and also to view the site.

The home nation assessor bodies are:

- The National Archives (TNA) for England
- Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) for Northern Ireland
- National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) for Scotland
- The Welsh Government (WG) Culture & Sport division, for Wales

Onsite Validation visits for applications for Archive Service Accreditation from non- accredited archive services.

Validation visits	2013/2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
England (TNA)	93%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	1	19 %	100%	100%
Northern Ireland (PRONI)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	100%	n/a	n/a	N/A	N/A
Scotland (NRS/SCA)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a	N/A	n/a
Wales (Welsh Government)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	n/a	100%	n/a	n/a	100%	!00%

Validation visits for second time accreditations 2022/2023

	2022-2023	2023-2024
England (TNA)	100%	100%
Northern Ireland (PRONI)	N/A	n/a
Scotland (NRS/SCA)	75 %	100%
Wales (Welsh Government)	66 %	100%

These figures include both onsite and virtual validation visits (team meetings) although in reality very few virtual visits took place as assessors returned to onsite visits following the COVID 19 pandemic.

In England, where the policy is to visit a minimum of 25% of applicant archive services at each round, The National Archives achieved 100 % visits by the assessment team to applicant services. Similarly in Wales, the Welsh Government and the Scottish Assessor Bodies achieved 100% visits by the assessment teams.

Validation visits for Review Stage applications for Archive Service Accreditation

Review Stage Validation visits	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021/2022	2022/2023 Onsite visit	2022/2023 Virtual visit	2023/2024 Onsite visit
England	25%	n/a	n/a	23 %	23 %	66%
Northern Ireland	n/a	n/a	n/a	N/A	N/A	N/A
Scotland	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	50%	100%
Wales	0%	n/a	n/a	N/A	N/A	N/A

Validation visits are most often made at Review Stage in cases where not all sites of an archive service were visited during the initial assessment for the award or where there has been significant change to premises. The high percentage of visits in England partly reflects those services that were initially accredited during the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions when no onsite visits were undertaken but enough known about the service to make an award of accreditation.

5) **Number of archive services awarded accredited status**

The Archive Service Accreditation Panel approves the award of Archive Service Accreditation. There are three potential outcomes:

- Accredited: The archive service has demonstrated that it meets the standard
- Provisionally Accredited: The archive service is close to meeting the requirements of the standard. Provisional Accreditation is awarded for up to two years so one or two significant areas of development can be addressed.
- Not Accredited: The archive service requires development in significant areas to meet the standard.

2023-2024	Full Accreditation	Provisional Accreditation	Not accredited
England	27	4	0
Northern Ireland	0	0	0
Scotland	3	0	0
Wales	3	1	0
Total	33	5	0

Total 1st accredited archive services	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
England	12	8	14	23	46	24	12	0	4	3	8
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	1	2	2	1	2	0	2	0	1	0	0
Wales	1	2	3	3	4	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	14	12	19	27	52	25	14	5	5	4	9

Total 2nd accredited archive services	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-20216	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
England	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	6	11	16	23
Northern Ireland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	0	4	3
Wales	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	0	3	3	3
Total	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	6	14	23	29

During 2023/2024, thirty-three services were awarded full accreditation by the Archive Service Accreditation Panel and five archive services were awarded provisional accreditation. Of those services awarded full accreditation eight were initial awards.

6) Removal of Archive Service Accreditation

The award of Archive Service Accreditation can be withdrawn from an accredited archive services under exception circumstances. These include:

- Where an archive service no longer meets the eligibility criteria
- Where the archive service no longer meets the standard
- Non-participation in routine reporting for Archive Service Accreditation
- Extraordinary removal of Archive Service Accreditation in by the Committee

Removal of accreditation	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
England	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Scotland	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Wales	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Archive Service Accreditation was not withdrawn from any archive service this year.

7) **Achievement at module level of Archive Service Accreditation**

Each application receives an overall assessment for each of the three modules within the Accreditation standard, in addition to a detailed assessment against each requirement or sub-requirement. A 'Not Met' in any module makes Accreditation impossible to award.

June 2023 to May 2024	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Organisational Health	36	2	0
Collections	34	4	0
Stakeholders and their Experiences	36	2	0

Thirty-six of the applicant archive services met the standard overall for Organisational Health and two applicants partially meet this module overall.

Thirty-four of applicant archive services met the Collections module overall while four archive services were assessed as partially meeting this module. This is the module were applicant archive services performed least well this year.

Thirty-six of the applicant services met the module for Stakeholders and their Experiences overall here with two services assessed as partially meeting the standard here.

The table below illustrates those areas where applicant archive service performed strongly and less strongly against the standard since the launch of Archive Service Accreditation in 2013.

2013 to May 2024	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Organisational Health	246	23	1
Collections	215	31	8
Stakeholders and their Experiences	257	18	1

8) **Achievement at requirement level of Archive Service Accreditation**

Each application also receives a specific assessment against each requirement or sub-requirement of the standard. This allows a more in-depth analysis of how an archive service performs against each element of the standard.

a) **Requirements for Module: Organisational Health**

Organisational Health assesses those areas that underpin the long-term acquisition, preservation and accessibility of archive collections.

	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
1.1 Mission Statement	37	1	0
1.2 Governance	37	1	0
1.3 Forward Planning	31	7	0
1.4 Resources: Premises	27	11	0
1.5 Resources: Finance	37	1	0
1.6 Resources: Workforce	31	3	0

In this module 1.4 Premises continues to be the weakest area. Where archive services did not satisfy this requirement fully this was due to a lack of sufficient, secured space for storing collections, either analogue or digital, and in some cases a lack

of appropriate staff or public space as well. However, archive services have performed less satisfactorily against requirement 1.3 during 2023/2024 than in previous years and in some cases forward planning has been absent since the COVID 19 pandemic. Requirement 1.6 is similarly an area of increasing concern compared to previous years.

b) **Requirements for Module: Collections**

The Collections module examines an archive service's capability to develop, maintain information about and care for its collections.

	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
2.1 Collections Management	38	0	0
2.2.1 Collections Development Policy	31	7	0
2.2.2 Collections Development Plan	32	6	0
2.3.1 Collections Information Policy	35	3	0
2.3.2 Collections Information Plan	24	14	0
2.3.3 Collections Information Procedures	34	4	0
2.4.1 Collections Care Policy	31	7	0
2.4.2 Collections Care Plan	32	6	0
2.4.3 Collections Care Procedures	20	17	1
2.4.4 Disaster Recovery Plan and Procedures	32	6	0

In this module applicants performed least well overall against Collections Care Procedures (2.4.3). Here 45 % of applicant services were assessed a partially meeting this requirement. This particularly highlights those cases where there are poor storage conditions but where archive services are successfully managing risk (2.4.3) and those cases where there was a need to improve risk management around digital preservation but storage for analogue collections was well managed. One service was apparently assessed as not meeting this requirement.

 37 % of applicant archive service were assessed as partially meeting requirement 2.3.2 Collections Information Planning reflecting large cataloguing backlogs.

c) Requirements for Module: Stakeholders and their Experiences

This module checks an archive service's ability to provide and develop access to its collections, in response to its community's needs.

	Met	Partially Met	Not met
3.1 Access Policy	35	3	0
3.2.1 Understanding and Analysing Audiences	33	5	0
3.2.2 Planning for Access	32	6	0
3.3.1 Information on Access	37	1	0
3.3.2 Procedures for user access	37	1	0
3.3.3 A variety of means of access	37	1	0

Archive services continue to perform most strongly in this module overall and in particularly against requirements 3.3.1 Access Policy, 3.3.2 Procedures for user access and 3.3.3 A variety of means of access of available. Applicant archive services tended to perform slightly less well against requirement s3.3.2 Planning for access and engagement and 3.2.1 Understanding and Analysing Audiences.

9) Review Stage

As part of the Review Stage application, accredited archive services report any changes to their archive services, for example in resourcing, restructuring, forward planning, and any revised policies. This means the original assessment against each requirement can potentially change.

The tables below show where changes were made to the original assessment at the Review Stage.

Changes to overall assessment

2023 to 2024

Met to provisional	Provisional to met	Provisional to not met	Met to not met
0	1	0	0

Twenty archive services submitted a Review stage application satisfactorily and all of these archive services retained their accredited status, including one archive service that moved from provisional to full accreditation.

Module level

2023-2024

	Organisational Health	Collections	Stakeholder and their Experiences
Met to partially met	0	0	1
Partially met to met	3	3	0
Partially met to not met	0	0	0

There were eight changes at module level across Organisational Health and Collections and Stakeholders and their Experiences. Here four archive services moved from partially to fully meeting the Collections Module overall, whereas two services moved from fully meeting to partially meeting the same module. Three archive services moved from fully meeting to partially meeting the Stakeholders and their Experiences module overall.

Requirement level

2023-2024

	Partially Met to Met	Met to Partially Met
1.1	00	0
1.2	1	0
1.3	2	1
1.4	1	3
1.5	1	1
1.6	3	0
2.1	0	0
2.2.1	1	0
2.2.2	4	0
2.3.1	0	0
2.3.2	1	0
2.3.3	0	0
2.4.1	1	0

2.4.2	4	0
2.4.3	3	0
2.4.4	4	0
3.1	0	0
3.2.1	2	0
3.2.2	3	1
3.3.1	1	1
3.3.2	1	1
3.3.3	0	1

Changes in assessment from partially met to met were spread across requirements for all three modules with most changes noted for requirements 2.2.2, 2.4.2, 2.4.4 and, reflecting progress in theses respective areas since the initial award of accreditation.

Changes in assessment from met to partially met were likewise spread across requirements for all three modules with most changes noted for requirement 1.3, 1.4 and 2.2.2.

10) New Improvement and Required Actions at Review Stage 2023 to 2024

In some cases, accredited archive services are given additional improvement and required actions at Review Stage by the assessor. These tend to be much fewer than at the full application stage.

Requirement	Improvement Action	Required Action
1.1	0	0
1.2	0	1
1.3	2	0
1.4	0	2
1.5	0	1
1.6	0	0
2	0	0
2.1	0	0
2.2	0	0
2.2.1	0	0
2.2.2	0	0
2.3	0	0
2.3.1	0	0
2.3.2	1	0
2.3.3	0	0
2.4	0	0
2.4.1	0	0
2.4.2	0	0
2.4.3	0	1
2.4.4	0	0
3.1	0	0
3.2	1	0
3.2.1	0	0
3.2.2	0	0
3.3.1	0	0
3.3.2	0	0

3.3.3	0	0

New required and improvement actions are distributed across the whole standard for the year 2023/2024, although with a slightly greater number for those requirements in the module 'Organisational Health'.

11) Provisional Status Reviews

Archive services may be awarded provisional accreditation for up to two years either following an assessment for a full application for accreditation or at review stage if it is felt that there is a particular area for improvement before full accreditation. Archive services are asked to report against particular actions as part of the review of their provisional status. The outcome may be a move to full accreditation, retain provisional status until review stage or removal of accreditation.

2023 to 2024

	Total	Provisional to Full	Provisional Retained	Accreditation removed
England	2	1	1	0
Northern Ireland	0	0	0	0
Scotland	0	0	0	0
Wales	0	0	0	0
Total	2	1	1	0

During 2023/2024 one archive service that was initially awarded provisional status successfully moved to full accreditation.