

## Minutes of Archive Service Accreditation Committee Annual Meeting - 18<sup>th</sup> May 2023

### Attendees:

Committee members:

Geoff Pick (GP)  
Sarah Aitchison (SA),  
Charlotte Berry (ChB),  
Caroline Brown (CB),  
Teresa Doherty (TD), Mary Ellis (ME)  
Tina Morton (TM),  
Karen Sampson (KS),  
Stephen Scarth (SS),  
Catherine Taylor (CT),  
Joanna Terry (JT)

Observers and speakers:

Annette French (AF) (Accreditation Manager, Arts Council England),  
Isabel Wilson (IW) (Senior Manager, Museums (Development),  
Arts Council England);  
Chris Sheridan (CS) (Head of Professional Standards and Development, ARA)

Programme Team:

Melinda Haunton (MH),  
Jane Shillaker (JS)

<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome and apologies</b>
	Apologies were received from Janice Tullock, Clare Harrington and Janette Strickland.  GP welcomed Charlotte Berry (National Records of Scotland) to her first Committee Meeting.
<b>2</b>	<b>Minutes and matters arising</b>
2.1	The Committee noted the minutes of the Committee meetings held in May and December 2022 and noted that most actions and progress were to be discussed as part of the meeting.  It was noted that there continued to be some flexibility around Review Stage and full applications timetables as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic.

	The Republic of Ireland remained interested in Accreditation but there was little progress to report to date.
<b>3</b>	<b>Statistical return and reflection on 2021-22</b>
3.1	MH noted the key points of the annual return report and the Committee commented that the figures for applications indicated that application schedules were returning to pre-pandemic levels of activity.
3.2	The Committee noted the changes to assessments made by Panels and that there was a continued need to strengthen actions and feedback regarding digital preservation to applicant services.
3.3	<p>MH reported that some services were moving to more dynamic online tools for planning elements of work and that it was necessary to view these on validation visits than as part of the application submission.</p> <p>ME stated that any Strategic Planning documentation should still be publicly available in terms of transparency and accountability</p> <p>CB reported that application schedules in Scotland should be back on track by March 2024 following the COVID 19 pandemic.</p>
3.4	The Committee thanked Natalie Adams, Chris Ash, Fiona Bourne, Camilla Churchill, Victoria Cranna, Jemma Lee, Richard Lewis, Ruth MacLeod, Claire Mayoh, Richard Meunier, Elizabeth Oxborrow-Cowan, Tim Procter, Catherine Ross, Clare Sexton, Mari Takayanagi, Matti Watton for acting as peer reviewers during 2022 -23 and expressed appreciation for their contribution to the assessment programme in England.
<b>4</b>	<b>Policy and precedent arising from 2021-22 Panels</b>
4.1	<p>The Committee discussed expectations around the testing of emergency plans (Panel meeting 3 Nov 2022. Item 3.6) and felt that any assessment should reflect the context of emergency planning. Much was dependent on the context of the archive service but that it was important to regularly update an emergency plan, that staff must be aware of the plan and that regular training was in place.</p> <p>ME reported that she was working with Chris Woods on a major building project that including planning for catastrophic events and that he may be able to provide advice about this.</p> <p>The Committee also discussed how best to deal with situations where buildings posed limitations for services but were not actively putting collections at risk as noted in several cases at the Panel on 8 March 2023.</p>

	<p>Currently the programme required actions to be delivered within six years or for the service to risk the removal of accreditation. It was agreed that was important to emphasize the need to improve buildings in this situation but without the withdrawal accreditation after six years.</p> <p>The Committee discussed how to handle issues of IT security that were noted in the panel meeting of the 8 March 2023 (items 1.6, 2.7) and noted that cyber security was in most cases outside the control of the archive service. ARA's Security and Access Group have commissioned guidance on this subject and this guidance will be included in the Accreditation Guidance once published.</p> <p>The Committee noted the precedent regarding admissibility of external evidence 6 July 2022 Item 2.5 and that it had been applied again.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed that if there is no risk assessment for commercial offsite storage then there should be a provisional award of accreditation.</p> <p>The Committee noted the need for an agreed approach to issues of capacity to acquire statutory records as noted during the panel on 3 Nov 2022 (Item 1.4) and parent organisation records (Item 2.3).</p>
4.2	<p><b>Decisions not to award accreditation</b></p> <p>With reference to the minutes of the panel 6 July 2022 Item 1.1 it was agreed that the archive service had failed to meet the standard in a number of areas and that this led to the non-award of accreditation.</p> <p>With reference to the minutes of Panel 3 Nov 2022 Item 2.1 the Committee noted that the Pane had agreed to defer the application. Although it was a strong application, the panel felt unable to decide on the award whilst the archive service is currently addressing a matter that would be a significant factor in the award of accreditation.</p>
4.3	<p><b>List of precedents agreed by Committee</b></p> <p>The Committee reviewed and agreed the list of existing precedents.</p>
5	<p><b>Annual assessor meeting feedback</b></p>
5.1	<p>The Committee noted the minutes of the annual assessor meeting 2022.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the request for Committee guidance regarding commercial out stores and that this has already been discussed in item 4.1 above.</p>

	The Committee discussed item 4.2 and noted that information around significant change and progress were needed primarily at Review Stage assessments.
<b>6</b>	<b>Routine updates to programme documentation: to approve</b>
6.1	The Committee agreed light changes in language to the programme Guidance for all elements of Requirement 2.4 to state the archive services should reference current standards and to include expectations regarding risk management in commercial out stores.
<b>7</b>	<b>Review of Accreditation</b>
7.1	<p>There had been little progress regarding the review as no tenders were received for the first issue of ITT. Following a second tender that focused on an extended consultation phase 2023/2024 there two tenders had been received. There would be a clearer timetable regarding the delivery of the review during 2023/2024 following the appointment of the contractor</p> <p>The NRS and Welsh Government were formally thanked for their financial contribution to fund the review.</p>
7.2	<p><b>Inclusive practice workshops report: progressing the roadmap</b></p> <p>Research funding from TNA enabled a project to take forward research into the themes initially explored in the External Challenge Report by an external contractor.</p> <p>GP encouraged all Committee members to read the final report.</p> <p>The Committee members felt that although inclusive practice should cover all aspects of service delivery regarding collections management and access and engagement, it was also important to demonstrate policies around a diverse workforce eg recruitment policies. Guidance around a diverse workforce should be strengthened in the Accreditation guidance with references here to any new published guidance outside of the programme.</p>
7.3	<p><b>Accreditation 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in November 2023</b></p> <p>The Committee responded positively to the idea of holding an event celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first award of Accreditation in November 2023, and members felt there was potential for an in person and online event that celebrated the achievements of the last ten years of Accreditation and that looked forward to the future of the programme.</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>ARA Framework of Competencies and CPD - Chris Sheridan</b>

8.1	<p>CS reported that ARA had started reviewing its competency framework this year and as part of wider consultations invited members of the Committee for comments on the framework both generally and as how the relationship between Accreditation and the competency framework might evolve</p> <p>The committee noted that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many archive professionals become Committee Members and Peer Reviewers for Accreditation already as part of their professional development.</li> <li>• The framework was a useful development tool for both members of ARA</li> <li>• Diversity and Inclusion are not explicit in the framework</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>Update on Accreditation for Public Libraries in England - Annette French</b>
9.1	AF gave a presentation on progress regarding the development of a scheme for accreditation for Public Libraries in England.
<b>10</b>	<b>Update from Museum Accreditation - Isabel Wilson</b>
10.1	IW gave an update about Museum Accreditation
<b>11</b>	<b>AOB</b> None
<b>12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dates for next meeting coming Panel meetings</b></li> <li>• 5 July 2023:</li> <li>• 8 November 2023</li> </ul>