Archive Service Accreditation Committee Annual Meeting 2022

11 May 2022, via MS Teams

Committee Attending: Geoff Pick, Sarah Aitchison, Caroline Brown, Teresa Doherty, Mary Ellis, Gillian Mapstone, Tina Morton, Stephen Scarth, Jeannette Strickland, Catherine Taylor, Joanna Terry, Janice Tullock

Invited Observers: Annette French (Accreditation Manager, Arts Council England); Isabel Wilson (Senior Manager, Museums (Development), Arts Council England) for items 1-3; Ben Lee and Joseph Lucas (Shared Intelligence) for item 3.

Programme Team: Melinda Haunton, Jane Shillaker

Agenda

1	**Welcome and apologies**
	GP welcomed all members of the Committee and particularly TD and TM as new members.
	Apologies had been received from Hayden Burns and Karen Sampson.
2	**Piloting updates to Accreditation guidance and questions**
2.1	JS introduced analysis of the piloting of updated guidance, tweaked questions and potential new questions where an implementation decision was required. Numbers of responses were relatively low and were missing responses from HE, business and museum archives. There were however test answers to all questions, and further responses to the reflective feedback on the whole package of updates.
	The overall feedback was generally positive about an incremental approach, embedding EDI throughout, and did not find the current Accreditation structure restricted their responses. Respondents noted that they would welcome further guidance/terminology/clarification, but especially wanted wider support within the sector – training, case studies, mentoring and support.
	Some further opportunities for testing content were identified and would be followed up.

3	**Looking ahead: the Roadmap and programme review**
3.1	*External challenge on inclusion* Shared Intelligence joined the meeting to introduce the external challenge paper they had produced. This raised key challenges and questions that were coming up in discussion with a range of external bodies looking at inclusive practice beyond archives. The report asked major questions about how to implement inclusive practice through a standards-based approach at a time of straitened resourcing and without losing the essential precondition of inclusion which is responding specifically to individual communities and their needs. The Committee discussed multiple aspects of the report and agreed that the topic needed further discussion, perhaps an increased focus on digital inclusion, and to be highlighted within the sector as some issues were much larger than Accreditation. It was agreed to publish the final version of the report.
3.2	*Reflection on next steps needed to work towards 10 year programme review* GP summed up next steps required: • Meetings with partners on the subject of review • At least one session with Committee on shaping the review, and possibly a specific session on inclusion • Potential for a bigger national workshop on the issues raised in the external challenge papers • Ongoing work on resources from partners
	Business meeting
4	**Minutes and matters arising**
4.1	Minutes of Committee
	No corrections were made and the minutes of 18 May 2021 and 24 August 2021 were agreed as a true record of the meetings.
5	**Statistical return and reflection on 2021-22**
5.1	*To note: the annual statistical return* JS briefly introduced changes to the report – particularly reflecting additional content on provisional awards, and actions added at review stage, which have become more significant as the programme has evolved.
5.2	*To note: the record of changes to assessments made by Panels*

	This was reintroduced as an item now that panel business has normalised. This would remain a standing item for future business meetings of the Committee.
5.3	*To discuss: any trends emerging from assessments in this year and any home nations trends* The Committee confirmed ongoing flexibility with re-timetabling of review and subsequent reapplication where archive services had been extensively disrupted for the past two years. Assessor bodies would have discretion to apply this in dialogue with archive services.
5.4	Minuted thanks to peer reviewers active 2021-22: the Committee thanked Natalie Adams, Lizzy Baker, Claire Collins, Victoria Cranna, Erin Lee, Jemma Lee, Claire Mayoh, Heidi McIntosh, Richard Meunier, Louise Ray, Catherine Ross, Paul Sillitoe, Mari Takayanagi, Tamara Thornhill and Matti Watton for their contributions to the programme, and particularly for supporting Accreditation during a difficult period for so many working in archives. The Committee also expressed thanks to assessors for all their work during this ongoing difficult period. Particular thanks were sent to Sarah Horton who has stepped down as an assessor after being core to the Welsh Government's part in Archive Service Accreditation from the programme's inception.
6	**Policy and precedent arising from 2021-22 Panels**
6.1	To discuss: current approach to access and opening hours. The question remains live with reduced capacity in place in a number of archive services, and active discussion about options for post-pandemic offer in many. This remains an open area of change and where practice is not consistent in pandemic recovery. The Committee agreed that there is an approach to take for assessment: the archive service needs to be understood in terms of what is are being delivered within the confines of their strategic position and resources. However, it was noted that this does not cover the issue of non-users who do not engage with archives because the offer appears to exclude them, and are thus not engaged in the service's planning.
6.2	**Decisions not to award: basis reviewed** Decisions 2021-22 were clear-cut and did not raise any new issues of policy.
7	**Assessor meeting**
7.1	The assessor meeting had been reinstated after the pandemic. This had been a refresher session which had not raised any new strategic issues for consideration by the Committee.

8	**Update from Museum Accreditation**
8.1	AF updated on the changes to the management and operations of the Museum Accreditation scheme in its phased reopening post-pandemic closure from April 2021.
9	**External changes to related standards and activities**
9.1	The Committee noted that CIPFA would no longer collect statistics for local authority archive services in England and Wales. These were the basis for Accreditation statistics and changes might be required over time if replacement data collection changed significantly.
9.2	**Progress on a replacement for PAS197** Work was progressing to bring PAS197 into a European Standard, which had progressed to a draft for comment. The draft maintained the four pillars of collections management as used in Archive Service Accreditation (development, information, care, access) and expanded the definition of collections explicitly to cover digital objects. For the present this was noted with no action required.
10	**Routine updates to programme documentation: to approve**
10.1	The main guidance's annual update was reviewed. The majority of changes were light touch, with some additional guidance on web accessibility provided. The Committee also discussed implementing further content from the roadmap on the basis of the evidence presented in 2.1. Although this was on a limited sample and further feedback would continue to be helpful, it was agreed that of the three potential new questions which were piloted, two could be implemented, with supporting guidance updates. New questions: **Against Requirement 1.6: Workforce** *What policies and procedures do you have in place for supporting a diverse workforce? Please give details of any activity you are undertaking to increase inclusiveness in your recruitment activity, and your staff and volunteer support. If this is detailed in a document, please upload it here, or refer to documents uploaded elsewhere in this application.* **Against Requirement 2.2.2: Collection Development Planning** *How far do the collections held by your archive service reflect the breadth of your collecting remit and the communities the archive is constituted to serve? Please give details of any activity you are undertaking to increase the representation of collections.*

The third tested question (against Requirement 3.3.2 Access Procedures *What procedures do you have in place to support a diverse audience? Please give details of any activity you are undertaking to create an inclusive offer to your archive service's communities.)* was further discussed. This had confused pilot respondents, and responses had duplicated information on disabled provision (an adjacent question) and on the customer care approach or planning (questions under Access and Engagement policy and planning). It was agreed that the experience of service users was a vital part of inclusive practice but that the question did not simply need clarifying in terms of wording – there were more fundamental issues of what inclusive access and engagement look and feel like, as raised in some of the external challenge and other discussions. This needed to be part of bigger conversations around the review.

Otherwise, updates to the guidance and application form were approved for translation and publication. These changes would go live after 1 August 2022, so as not to introduce them in mid-application round.

11	AOB
11.1	SS reported interest from archives in the Republic of Ireland in becoming part of the Accreditation programme. These were very preliminary. This could potentially form part of the full review if relevant bodies were able to resource participation.
12	**Date of next meeting**
12.1	Dates for next meetings of the Accreditation Panel are: 6 July 2022 3 November 2022 GP suggested and it was agreed that it would also be helpful to have a further constructive Committee workshop or more than one, on working towards the review and inclusion work.