

Guide: Working with Archive Service Accreditation to help develop and demonstrate compliance with Data Protection Legislation

1. Introduction

This purpose of this guide is to show how working with Archive Service Accreditation can:

- help an archive service or organisation carrying out an archiving function demonstrate how it meets its obligations under Data Protection Legislation
- help support the development of an archive service or organisation carrying out an archiving function so that it can in future demonstrate that it meets its obligations under Data Protection Legislation.

The guide is aimed at organisations carrying out an archiving function, for example local authority archive services, charities, businesses, universities and other HE or educational organisations, museums, galleries and voluntary organisations. The guide uses the term 'archive service' throughout to refer to the archiving function carried out by these many different organisations. This guide does not cover those instances where an archive service generates personal data itself, for example, attendance registers, mailing lists, and that are also subject to Data Protection Legislation. Such business purpose data lies outside the definition of archiving in the public interest.

The guide supports the '[Guide to archiving personal data](#)' where guidance about Data Protection Legislation can be found.

This guide is not legal advice. The award of Archive Service Accreditation is not a means of assessing compliance with Data Protection legislation.

2. Archive Service Accreditation

Archive Service Accreditation is the Standard for archive services across the UK. It examines how well an archive service manages its collections over the long term and how it provides access to those archive collections by looking at the policy, procedural and planning frameworks in place, and those supporting structures that enable an archive service to deliver, such as resourcing of the archive service. The Standard references other nationally recognised standards and the legislation framework in which the archive service exists.

Archive Service Accreditation is applicable to many different types of archive services. It recognises that archive services can be established by statute or may sit within many different types of organisations whether private, public or voluntary - companies, charities, museums, universities, or specialist repositories. It recognises that archive services can operate within different management and governance

structures, have different collecting remits and provide access to their archive collections in ways appropriate to the purpose of their service.

Whilst Archive Service Accreditation does not explicitly assess compliance with Data Protection Legislation, it can demonstrate that an archive service is archiving in the public interest. The documentation it requires from an archive service should demonstrate how the service complies with Data Protection Legislation.

3. Using Archive Service Accreditation to help demonstrate compliance with Data Protection Legislation

Working within the frameworks of Archive Service Accreditation can help an archive service or an organisation that has an archiving function demonstrate that it is meeting the requirements of Data Protection Legislation through:

- its eligibility criteria (demonstrating archiving in the public interest)
- completing the framework of policies and procedures required by Archive Service Accreditation that can help demonstrate transparency and compliance, and the extent of archiving activity within an organisation

4. Archive Service Accreditation Eligibility Criteria and Archiving in the public interest

Archive Service Accreditation can help demonstrate the archiving function of an organisation through elements of its [eligibility criteria](#). These specify key indicators for identifying an archiving function. This may be helpful when archiving takes place without a specific mandate in law, but is nonetheless lawful.

An archive service must meet all of the [six eligibility criteria](#) to be eligible for Archive Service Accreditation. However, an archive that does not meet all six eligibility for Archive Service Accreditation, for example the size of the collections may be too small, or the archive service only holds digitised analogue records, could still be archiving in the public interest, as long as it meets some of the other criteria. Of particular relevance here, is eligibility criteria number 3 'An archive service must offer some access to its collections beyond members of its own institution or organisation'.

5. Archive Service Accreditation: the Standard and Data Protection Legislation

The [Archive Service Accreditation Standard](#) is composed of three modules: Organisational Health, Collections and Stakeholders and their Experiences; and each module is composed of a number of individual requirements.

The following table shows where working with the requirements of Archive Service Accreditation can help demonstrate the integration of Data Protection Legislation

across an archive service through its policy and procedural framework. It indicates those areas where an archive service should think about Data Protection Legislation.

<p><i>Organisational Health</i></p> <p>This module looks at the strategic and organisational context within which the archives collections are managed and are made accessible. It looks at the structure and purpose of the parent body and the relationship of the archive service to this, as well as looking at strategic planning for the archive service. The module also examines whether there are sufficient resources in place to support an effective archive service both currently and in the future.</p> <p>It helps provide the context for the archiving functions undertaken by an organisation and demonstrate a commitment to permanent preservation of collections.</p>	
1.1 Mission Statement:	<p>A mission statement articulates the aim and purpose of the archive service or archiving function and its role in relation to the wider organisation.</p> <p>This can help demonstrate the scope of the archiving function within the organisation.</p>
1.2 Governance and Management Structures	<p>This requirement looks at the legal basis for the archive service in relation to its parent organisation.</p> <p>The archive service will have its own legal status or be part of a larger organisation that does. This requirement looks at how the archive function sits within the wider organisation and delivers its role to serve the needs of the wider organisation and the management arrangements in place to support the delivery of the archive service.</p>
1.3 Forward Planning:	<p>Forward planning can help to demonstrate 'archiving in the public interest' by setting out objectives and actions within a planning framework and organisational context. It can also support transparency of the archiving function.</p>
1.4 Resources: Space and Storage	<p>This requirement looks at how an archive service or organisation provides adequate space for the storage of its archives collections, whether analogue or digital. Ongoing preservation of collections in secure storage is a key role of any archive service.</p>
1.5 Resources: Finance	<p>This requirement can help to demonstrate that the archive service has dedicated funding through its parent organisation to carry out those activities</p>

	relating to the acquisition and preservation of its archive collections in the long term.
1.6 Resources: Workforce:	This requirement requires there to be an archivist at the organisation or for there to be access to professional advice. This is scalable to the purpose and aims of the archive service. This can help demonstrate that professional archiving activity is taking place.

Collections

This module requires archive services to have documented approaches and procedures in place that demonstrate good practice around collections development, including the acquisition and appraisal of collections; the documentation of collections including cataloguing and access to catalogue information; and the long term preservation of archival collections in a usable state, whether analogue or born digital.

A policy and procedural framework can help demonstrate that the acquisition and processing of personal information is considered and reasonable, and is in line with current legislation and best practice guidelines. Documentation can help demonstrate that an archive service knows what collections they hold, where these may contain personal information and how an archive service may be dealing with any legacy issues.

The policies are available for consultation as appropriate, for example through a website or intranet to encourage transparency and accountability around the processing of personal information.

Documented procedures can help demonstrate part of the overall archiving function of an organisation, and show that these procedures are considered and transparent.

2.2.1 Collections Development Policy	<p>A Collections Development Policy demonstrates an archive service's approach to developing their collections from the point of acquisition, through to appraisal and any de-accessioning of collections, including any archive collections that hold personal information. The policy might include the scope of archival collections held by an archive service, its collecting priorities and when records are transferred to the archive service from within its wider organisation.</p> <p>The requirement also requires clear terms of deposit for archive collections re ownership and copyright.</p>
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	<p>It can help demonstrate that collecting is reasonable and that is in line with the aim and purpose of the archive service, and is compatible with any relevant legislation.</p>
2.3.1 Collections Information Policy	<p>Collections information includes information about collections from the point of deposit through to cataloguing whether analogue or digital. It includes such information as appraisal decisions, accession registers, cataloguing, and locations information. It also includes metadata about born digital records created as part of the ongoing preservation process.</p> <p>A policy or suite of policies can demonstrate an archive service's approach to recording collections information, including any archive collections about living individuals and any accessions information that contains information about living individuals.</p>
2.3.2 Collections Information Planning	<p>Planning helps demonstrate how an archive service is planning to tackle any legacy issues, for example improving collections information or reducing a cataloguing backlog.</p>
2.3.3 Collections Information Procedures	<p>This requirement considers the documented procedures in place to record information about collections, including any metadata about born digital records as part of the ongoing preservation process. Procedures may cover the following: collection status, ownership, terms of deposit, access legislation, access restrictions and intellectual property rights, location and movement control, collections audit, appraisal, accessioning, cataloguing, de-accessioning and disposal.</p>
2.4.1 Collections Care Policy	<p>A Collections Care Policy documents the approach to the conservation and preservation of archival collections, ensuring their long-term preservation so collections remain accessible over time. The approach should be informed by best practice guidelines, cover for both analogue and born digital collections and cover arrangements where storage is contracted out to a third party.</p> <p>An archive service may also have a digitisation policy that outlines their approach to the digitisation collections, including any that may hold personal information.</p>

2.4.3 Collections Care Procedures	This requirement needs an archive service to demonstrate adequate procedures in place to ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of its archive collections whether analogue or born digital, with particular reference to risk management.
2.4.4 Disaster Planning	A tested disaster recovery plan is part of the overall planning for the care of the archive collection in order to minimise risks should an emergency arise.

Stakeholders and their Experiences

This module looks at how an archive service provides access to its collections, the procedures in place so that users can access these and how this information is communicated to current and potential users. The policy and procedural framework in this module can help encourage compliance and demonstrate compliance with Data Protection Legislation.

3.1 Access Policies	This requirement looks at how an archive service provides access to its collections, including onsite or through a remote enquiry service. It considers how the service complies with any relevant legislation, including Data Protection Legislation and the protection of personal data in collections, and access restrictions with regard to its collections, including catalogue information.
3.3.1 Appropriate access is provided to collections and archive services, both onsite and off-site and practical information on how to access the service is communicated effectively to all stakeholders	This requirement looks at how an archive service provides both on and off-site access to collections. It looks at how an archive service provides information on accessing archive collections, including those collections that may hold personal data and where data protection legislation may apply, and other services, and covers areas such as a website information, catalogues, onsite and remote enquiry services
3.3.2 Effective documented user access procedures are in place and are well communicated to all stakeholders	<p>This requirement looks at how and where an archive service communicates its procedures for accessing collections, for example registration, seat booking, making an enquiry, making a complaint , responsibilities of users of the archive service and contact details for the archive service.</p> <p>It also looks at how the archive service communicates any restrictions and any procedures for those who may request access to archive</p>

	collections where restrictions apply, including collections that may hold personal information and that are covered by Data Protection Legislation.
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For further information about Archive Service Accreditation, visit our [web site](#):

[Archive Service Accreditation Standard](#)

[Archive Service Accreditation Guidance](#)

[Eligibility Guidance](#)