

Collections Management Policy

1. Aim & purpose

St Helens Archive Service contributes to the strategic objectives of St Helens Borough Council by ensuring the preservation and accessibility of archive material, broadening opportunities of lifelong learning to meet the needs of all potential users.

This policy outlines the approach taken by St Helens Archives Service towards Collection Management and is informed by EN 17820_2023 (Specifications for the management of moveable cultural heritage collections) as well as guidance from The National Archives.

2. Statutory basis

St Helens Archive Service is the repository for the records of St. Helens Council and its predecessor authorities under the Local Government Act, 1972. This requires councils to make proper arrangements for any documents which belong to them, or are in their custody, and applies to records which are still in active use, as well as to those which are now inactive.

St Helens Archive Service is a recognised as a Place of Deposit for specified classes of public records under the Public Records Acts 1958, Section 4 (1).

St Helens Archive Service is an Accredited Archive Service. Archive Service Accreditation is the UK standard, defining good practice and agreed standards to support development and improvement throughout the sector.

3. Scope of Collections

St Helens Archive Service collects material that relates to the geographical area known as the borough of St Helens including those generated by St. Helens Council and its predecessor authorities, public records under the Public Records Act, plus records from societies, charities, organisations, institutions, businesses, industrial and commercial organisations, religious groups, families, individuals, trade unions and political parties.

The archives are in a variety of materials and formats - parchment or vellum, paper, linen, volumes, microfilm and photographic material and audio and digital media - and range in size from tiny documents to rolled parchments or maps

St Helens Archive Service also manages a collection of – books and printed material that relates to the local area and further afield - The St Helens Special Book Collection.

4. Acquisition

St Helens Archive Service collects and preserves archive material of historical significance to the borough of St Helens. As well as records relating to our parent organisation, St Helens Borough

Council, we also accept donations from organisations and individuals to donate or deposit archive collections for safekeeping and for the benefit of current and future users. The St Helens Archive Service 'Collections Development Plan' aims to address weaknesses in our collections and that they continue to reflect the communities we serve.

5. Cataloguing

St Helens Archive Service produces finding aids using the CALM archival management system as well as catalogue lists. Items are catalogued in compliance with ISAD(g) to ensure accuracy, consistency, and relevance.

The CALM catalogue servers are maintained and backed up by St. Helens Council Business IT Department.

6. Conservation and preservation

Protection of the archival heritage of St Helens Borough is of vital importance to St Helens Archive Service. We follow the guidance in BS 4971:2017 Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections, as well as guidance provided through membership with the National Conservation Service.

Archives are stored or repackaged in archive-quality packaging in purpose-built, climate-controlled strongrooms and on Preservica, secure servers or storage media. Access to collections is always by appointment and supervised.

Further information regarding the conservation of the collection can be found within the Conservation Policy.

7. Access

Access to the collections is provided in accordance with our Access Policy and Standards and with respect to the Equality Act 2010, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, the Environmental Information Regulations, and current and relevant Copyright legislation.

As a publicly funded Archive Service, free access to collections is maintained, however there are charges for specifically identified services including copying or specific research fees. A list of Fees and Charges is available in the Search Room and on the St Helens Archive Service website.

8. Emergency Planning

A Disaster Recovery Plan has been created that outlines what will happen in the event of an emergency and how collections will be maintained.

9. Review

Version date	June 2024
Date of review	June 2026