

APPENDIX 3

Tameside Museums and Galleries Service

Documentation Policy

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy will guide the work of Tameside Museums & Galleries in the area of collections documentation.
- 1.2 Documentation underpins every aspect of museum activity. Recording collection information is central to being accountable for the collections, their accessibility, management, research, study and use.
- 1.3 Our policy for the documentation of the collections is to ensure that the information we hold relating to the collections is accurate, accessible, secure and reliable.

2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The aim of this Policy is to ensure that we fulfil our guardianship, stewardship and access responsibilities. Through implementing this policy our aims are to:
 - Improve accountability for the collections
 - Maintain at least minimum standards in documentation procedures
 - Increase access to collections information
 - Maintain and enhance the security of the collections
- 2.2 This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Collections Development Policy, Documentation Plan, Documentation Procedural Manual and Collections Care & Conservation Policy and Plan.

3.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

- 3.1 The museum will maintain a level of collections documentation which will allow it to identify and locate all items for which it is legally responsible including loans. Curatorial staff and appropriately trained volunteers are responsible for creating, managing and enhancing collections records.
- 3.2 The aim of the Policy is to ensure that for every object in the collection:
- 3.3 The museum has documentary proof of legal title.
- 3.4 There is an accurate entry on MODES Complete for each object or group of objects which includes as a minimum; unique number, object name, number of objects (if a group), brief description, current location, acquisition details including owner (if known), recorder and recording date.
- 3.5 A unique accession number is allocated and the object is marked or labelled with this number according to recognised guidelines available from The Collections Trust.
- 3.6 There is an up to date location recorded on the MODES Complete database for each object/group of objects.

- 3.7 Records will be kept detailing the location and movement of all objects in the collection and exit records will be kept for objects leaving the museum premises for loans or other reasons.
- 3.8 Collections records will be securely stored. Copies of duplicate records should be kept at a separate site as a security measure. Data on the museum collections database will be backed up regularly.
- 3.9 In instances of partial or missing records the museum will develop a plan to address and eliminate the backlog.

4.0 STANDARDS

- 4.1 SPECTRUM: the UK Collections Management Standard sets out a series of procedures to ensure good practice in documentation and other aspects of collections management. Accreditation requires that the minimum standards for SPECTRUM primary procedures are met and TMGS is committed to meeting these which are listed below.
- Object Entry
 - Acquisition & Accessioning
 - Location & Movement Control
 - Inventory
 - Cataloguing
 - Object Exit
 - Loans In
 - Loans Out
 - Documentation Planning
- 4.2 In addition TMGS follows the Spectrum standards for Collections Care and Conservation and Emergency Planning for Collections.

5.0 ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

- 5.1 TMGS is committed to providing access to collections information whilst also ensuring that security and preservation of the collections are not compromised.
- 5.2 The museum will ensure that the electronic system used to catalogue the collection is suitable for the job and will still be accessible in the future. The system will be upgraded to the newest version where financial resources allow.
- 5.3 The museum will aim to make information about the collection accessible to the public through on-line catalogues such as the Art UK website.
- 5.4 The museum will aim to keep the 'Men Behind the Medals' website updated with information on new medals accessioned into the collections of the Manchester Regiment.
- 5.5 The museum will provide access to information about the collections through interpretation in exhibitions and displays, education sessions, talks, events and activities as well as through social media and articles in printed media.
- 5.6 Sensitive information such as donation details, location and insurance valuations will not be made available to the public or researchers.

5.7 In accordance with new GDPR regulations the museum has a published privacy notice which is given to donors and lenders of objects to TMGS.

6.0 **SECURITY**

6.1 The museum will save all electronic records on the Council's networked system, which has regular back up procedures in place.

6.2 The museum will ensure that security copies are made of all museum accession registers and these are stored at an off-site location.

6.3 The museum will store museum accession registers and other relevant documentation in a fire-proof safe.

6.4 Only suitably trained museum staff and volunteers will be responsible for carrying out documentation procedures.

7.0 **REVIEW PROCEDURE**

7.1 This policy will be published on the Museum Service's website and will be made available for visitors to the museum to view on request. It will be reviewed from time to time and at least every 5 years.

Governing body: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Date approved by governing body:

Date written: July 2019

Date at which policy is due for review: July 2024