

STAFFORDSHIRE AND STOKE ON TRENT ARCHIVE SERVICE

CUSTOMER CARE POLICY

The Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service is fully committed to providing a courteous, fair and equal service, which does not discriminate in any way against any existing or potential customer. We are also committed to achieving excellence in the quality of our services and this is one of the strategic objectives in our Service Forward Plan. We recognise that any existing or potential customer has a right to expect a responsive, professional and accessible service and we strive to provide this in the following ways:

Standards of Service

- The standards of service, which our customers can expect to receive, are published in our charter leaflet, *The Archive Service and You*. This can be obtained from any of our service points and is also available on our web site, <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/archives/>
- We regularly monitor our performance against our standards and the results are published annually in hard copy and on our web site. If dips in performance occur, we will always strive to address these by taking appropriate action to improve upon our performance.

Staff Training

- Staff training is important to us in helping our staff to deliver a good service. All members of our staff are trained in customer care issues, as part of their induction training on joining the Archive Service and also in regular follow-up sessions. Members of staff who work in our reading rooms are also regularly trained in the use and application of archives for aspects of research. This helps to widen knowledge and enables our staff to provide a much more informative service for our customers.
- The customer care training, which we use, involves developing in our staff a sensitive awareness and understanding of a number of issues, including those which may affect people with disabilities and people from minority groups. It also involves increasing awareness among all our staff of a range of equal opportunities issues. All training is evaluated against our service objectives and as part of our staff review and development procedures.

- We regularly review performance in customer care in our annual staff performance and review interviews with staff.

Staff identification

- Members of staff, working in our reading rooms, can be readily identified by the badges, which they wear, or by the name plates on the counter.
- Members of staff, working in the reading rooms, do not routinely give their names when answering the telephone, since duty rotas can involve frequent changes of personnel. However any member of staff will readily give their name, as a point of contact, when asked to do so.
- When answering postal or email enquiries, members of staff always sign their name at the bottom of the reply, thus taking full ownership for the response and providing a contact name.

Confidentiality and respect for privacy

- Some of the records, which are held by the Archive Service, may contain personal and highly confidential information. Similarly some of the enquiries which we receive from members of the public may be of a confidential or sensitive nature.
- Archivists, who deal with such records, are bound by their own professional Code of Conduct, which is laid down by the Society of Archivists. For non-archivist members of staff, issues of confidentiality are addressed as part of the induction training when joining the Archive Service.
- We will make every effort to provide a private area if you wish to discuss an enquiry of a confidential nature.

Working to improve services and facilities for customers with disabilities

- The Archive Service is working towards improving its services for customers with disabilities in conjunction with the Access Teams of Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council, the RNIB and the RNID.
- All our premises are accessible for wheelchair users and have disabled access lavatories.

- Hearing loops are in place at all of our premises.
- Information about our services is available in large print and braille format. Our information leaflets and archive catalogues are produced according to the RNIB Clear Print Guidelines.
- Some of the talks, which we offer as part of our talks' programme, may be available with signing. We are also able to bring a portable hearing loop to talks to assist people with a hearing impairment. Details are given on our Information Leaflet No.13, Talks and Visits.
- We will be happy to discuss your particular needs with you in order to determine how we can best provide a service for you.

Information about our services

We have a wide range of information about our services, which is widely available for the public. We provide information in a variety of formats:

- standard information leaflets in hard copy, available at all our access points, by post or from local libraries and museums in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent
- information in braille and large print, available from all our access points
- on our web site at <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/archives/>
- we offer a translation service for any member of the public who wishes to obtain any of our published information in another language

Listening to our customers

- We strongly encourage our users to make their views known about any aspect of our services. This can be done by completing a comments form, available at all our service points or on our web site, or by speaking directly to a member of staff. We use the comments, which we receive, to adapt and improve our services wherever possible.
- We also have a formal complaints procedure, which is published in as Information Leaflet No.14. It is also available on our web site, in large print or in braille.

- Every year we publish details of the complaints, compliments and the constructive criticisms, which we receive and the action, which we have taken in response to them.

Consultation

- Each of our service points at Stafford, Lichfield and Stoke on Trent has a readers' forum which meets annually. The membership of the readers' forums consists of a variety of different types of users of archives and the membership changes regularly to ensure that we have new views. In addition we consult the members of the forum by post on specific issues.
- We participate in the national Survey of Visitors to British Archives, which is held every 18 months under the auspices of the Public Services Quality Group. We publish our results from the survey in one of our Information for Readers leaflets.
- We regularly carry out short focused surveys to seek the views of users about specific issues or changes and we always publish the results of these surveys.
- Our consultation strategy, drawn up in 2002, seeks to extend consultation to wider groups of users and non-users.

Innovation and Improvement

- We use the results of consultation and customer comments to make changes to our services. We hope that the changes, which we make, represent real improvements for our users.
- We also constantly look for ways of introducing innovation and improvements to our services within our available budget. Our staff are encouraged to suggest service improvements by a variety of means, including contributions through our regular Improving Customer Services Team, through staff and team meetings and through the Management Team.

Appendix 1: The Archive Service and You

Our role

The role of the Archive Service is to locate, collect and preserve archives relating to past and present life in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent and to make them available to the residents and its visitors.

Our services include:

- ◆ Storage, conservation and management of archive collections to national standards
- ◆ Reading rooms to enable people to consult archives for research
- ◆ Copying and research services
- ◆ Published and widely accessible information about the archive collections in our care
- ◆ Talks and exhibitions about archives

As a service we recognise the importance of equality of opportunity and we are committed to the provision and delivery of fair and equal services to all members of the community.

Our commitment to you

You can expect an archive service which:

- ◆ Is courteous, informative and responsive
- ◆ Is accessible
- ◆ Consults its users
- ◆ Strives continuously to improve its services to the public
- ◆ Monitors and publishes the details of its performance against its targets
- ◆ Aims to put things right if they go wrong

- ◆ Provides value for money
- ◆ Is committed to training and developing its staff
- ◆ Co-operates with other organisations to enhance service delivery

Copies of our policies on customer care, preservation, reprographics, Information Technology and access and the Code of Conduct for readers can be obtained from any of the addresses listed at the end of this leaflet.

Your commitment to us

We ask you to:

- ◆ Show courtesy and consideration to our staff and others at all times
- ◆ Observe the ***Code of Conduct and Procedures for Users*** for the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Archive Service
- ◆ Recognise that at the busiest times there may be a delay before we can help you
- ◆ Tell us if things go wrong – a full copy of our complaints procedure can be obtained from any of the addresses listed on the back page of this leaflet
- ◆ Help us to preserve Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent's archival heritage

Our Standards

PERSONAL VISITS

If you visit Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent Archive Service, you can expect:

General Standards

- ◆ A friendly welcome, from clearly identifiable staff
- ◆ Assistance in using the reading rooms
- ◆ Assistance in identifying the records necessary for your enquiry
- ◆ Availability of original documents and microforms within the limits of the Archive Service's security, conservation, and access policies

Production of original documents

- ◆ We aim to produce documents within 20 minutes of your request being made. If undue delays are likely to occur, we will keep you informed.
- ◆ We will aim to produce documents kept in out storage or specialised storage within 2 working days.

POSTAL AND EMAIL ENQUIRIES

If you write to us about the services we provide, or about the contents of collections, you can expect a reply within 5 working days. For more complex archival enquiries an acknowledgement will be sent within 5 working days and a full reply within 20 working days. If we are unable to assist you because we do not hold the records required for your research, we will always try to suggest an alternative line of enquiry for you to follow.

TELEPHONE ENQUIRIES

We aim to answer all telephone calls promptly and courteously. Our staff will always be happy to give you their name and will endeavour to help you to the best of their ability. If we are unable to assist you because we do not hold the relevant records we will always try to refer you to an appropriate organisation.

COPYING SERVICES

Our standard is to notify you of the completion and cost of your copies/microform prints from the receipt of your order within:

- 8 working days at Staffordshire Record Office
- 6 working days at Stoke on Trent City Archives
- 10 working days at Lichfield Record Office

RESEARCH SERVICE

Our standard is to notify you of the completion and cost of your research from the receipt of you order within:

- 15 working days at Staffordshire Record Office
- 15 working days at Stoke on Trent City Archives
- 20 working days at Lichfield Record Office

You can expect a report detailing the results of the research and suggestions for follow up research, where appropriate.

TALKS ABOUT ARCHIVES

We aim to respond positively to requests from local organisations for talks about the archive collections in our care.

ACQUIRING AND PRESERVING ARCHIVE COLLECTIONS

We will actively seek to acquire and preserve archive collections relating to past and present life in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent within the terms of our *Acquisitions Policy* and make them available for people to use

We will respond to all approaches relating to the deposit or donation of archive collections

We will accession all new collections and send a final acknowledgement and receipt from the office of deposit within 12 days of their receipt

We will provide specialist archive storage to prescribed national standards as required, administered and inspected through The National Archives

We will conserve original archives to prescribed national standards and within the terms of our *Preservation and Conservation Policy*

We will catalogue collections to prescribed international cataloguing standards and will make such catalogues available online

Copies of our Terms of Deposit, Acquisitions Policy and Preservation and Conservation Policy are available on request.

Contact details

◆ Head of Archive Services

Thea Randall
Staffordshire Record Office
Eastagate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ
Tel: 01785 278380 Fax: 01785 278414
Email: thea.randall@staffordshire.gov.uk

◆ Staffordshire Record Office

Joanna Terry, Assistant County Archivist
Staffordshire Record Office
Eastagate Street, Stafford ST16 2LZ
Tel: 01785 278396 Fax: 01785 278384
Email: joanna.terry@staffordshire.gov.uk

◆ Lichfield Record Office

Martin Sanders, Area Archivist
Lichfield Record Office
The Friary, Lichfield WS13 6QG
Tel: 01543 510720
Email: martin.sanders@staffordshire.gov.uk

◆ Stoke on Trent City Archives

Chris Latimer, City Archivist
Hanley Library, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 3RS
Tel: 01782 238420 Fax: 01782 238499
Email: chris.latimer@stoke.gov.uk