

Inter Departmental Archives Committee

Government Policy on Archives: Action Plan

Foreword from the Keeper of Public Records

In my capacity as Chair of the United Kingdom Inter-Departmental Archives Committee (IDAC), which I chair on the behalf of the Lord Chancellor, I am pleased to present the Action Plan to accompany the Government Policy on Archives (Cm 4516, December 1999).

The Plan, which has been the subject of extensive consultation, is intended to provide a general framework for the activities of the leading archive bodies, both inside and outside Government, towards achieving the high-level outcomes set out in the main policy document, over the next three years or so. As well as the relevant Government Departments, Resource (the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries), the National Council on Archives (NCA), and the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government (ACALG) will all play a major role in the Plan's implementation. IDAC's secretariat will regularly monitor and publish progress against the agreed action points set out in the Plan.

Shortly after the Plan was approved at official level, Baroness Blackstone, Minister of State for the Arts, announced on 12 July that the functions of the Public Record Office (PRO) and the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) are to be brought together in a single new organisation, called the National Archives, which will come under the Lord Chancellor. This will come into effect on 1 April 2003. In the Action Plan the PRO is designated the lead body for objectives 3 (records and archives management in the public sector) and 5 (the archiving of electronic data), while HMC is the lead body for objective 4 (promoting standards in private archives). As from next April the National Archives will take forward the relevant actions assigned to the two bodies, combining the PRO's expertise in relation to government records with the HMC's extensive knowledge of private archives. The National Archives will not make any distinctions between these objectives, but attach equal importance to the achievement of each of them.

I hope that all custodians and users of archives, as well as those involved in public administration and interested members of the general public, will find the Plan a clear and useful guide to the work of sector over the next three years.

Sarah Tyacke

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30 September 2002

A1.1 Introduction

A1.1.1

The Government Policy on Archives was issued by the Lord Chancellor as a Command Paper on 2 December 1999 [Cm 4516]. The Policy was widely distributed among archive institutions, relevant government departments, and groups representing archive users, and was published in the Journal of the Society of Archivists in April 2000. The leading archive bodies have warmly welcomed it as the first ever statement of government policy in this increasingly important field. The general consensus is that the Policy has struck the right balance between the demands of records management, the preservation of historical archives, and public access to archival material.

A1.1.2

This was the first time that the government departments and expert advisers represented on the Inter-Departmental Archives Committee (IDAC) had worked together on the production of a policy statement. Thus the objectives for the archive domain that it endorsed, in alignment with the government's main policy goals, were necessarily of a rather general character. Also, the Committee's deliberations took place at a time when the Department for Culture, Media and Sport was considering the remit of Resource (The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries). The Committee therefore recommended that an accompanying Action Plan should be developed to further the following six main objectives in the Policy:

Objective 1: To ensure that access to archives, in the most useful and convenient way, is offered to all the nation's citizens and to other users.

Objective 2: To enable the educational sector at all levels to have proper access to the nation's archival resources, so that national educational needs are met.

Objective 3: To ensure that public institutions, at local, regional and national level, select, preserve and manage their current records and their archives, regardless of medium, in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements, guidance and agreed professional standards.

Objective 4: To encourage private organisations and individuals to manage their records effectively, to preserve their historical archives and wherever possible to facilitate public access to them.

Objective 5: To enable the archive sector to prepare for the processing of increasing quantities of electronic data.

Objective 6: To add maximum value to the information resource held by the archive sector.

A1.2 Vision

A1.2.1

The Government's vision is that by 2005 archive services throughout the United Kingdom will be able to give many new audiences access to their unique holdings. To achieve this they will need to exploit the benefits of information and communications technology (ICT) to the full, and develop other ways of delivering their services.

A.1.2.2

Catalogue information about archive collections and digitised images of the most popular records are being added to existing archive resources on the Internet, including the Public Record Office's web site and the Historical Manuscripts Commission's National Register of Archives. This will allow more users, including overseas users, to appreciate the richness of our archival heritage for the first time. Culture Online, a new Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) initiative to provide wider access to the content stored in cultural institutions using digital technology, was announced in September 2000. It promises to play an important part in the achievement of this vision. In Wales, a forum of key public and private cultural sector agencies - Cymru'm Creu (Creative Wales) - will be developing and implementing Culture Cymru Online in close collaboration with Culture Online in England and similar initiatives in other parts of the UK.

A1.2.3

Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own archival legislation, and are therefore independent in matters of archival policy. This Plan, while taking account of developments in Scotland and Northern Ireland, is specifically intended to improve the position of the archive sector in England and Wales. It recognises the devolution of powers that has taken place in Wales, and is sufficiently flexible to take account of the Government's intentions to decentralise some Whitehall functions to the regions of England.

A1.2.4

Within the UK, archival content on the Internet will include a significant amount of material aimed at those social groups, which are under-represented in the current profile of archive users. This should enable everyone to play a full part in the 'information society' and the 'knowledge economy'. More fundamentally, archive services should aim to reflect the country's cultural and social diversity in their outreach work and service planning, thereby reinforcing individual and community identity. They should actively engage with under-represented social groups and learn about their needs and aspirations through regular consultation. At the same time, archive services should review their collecting policies. These policies should reflect the requirements of various communities, aim to be more inclusive in all areas

and avoid the risk of social exclusion. Local archive services in particular have a great deal to offer as local places of learning.

A1.2.5

If archive services are to become a main source of expertise and advice in the management of records created in digital form, archivists and administrators in the public sector will need extensive training in electronic records management. Archivists and records managers will also have a higher profile in the organisation of their parent authorities because their advice will be sought on Data Protection, Freedom of Information (Fol) and other legislation that affects the organisational business of e-records.

A1.2.6

Archives Council Wales, and a flourishing network of Regional Archive Councils throughout England, have all produced archive strategies, which demonstrate the relevance of national policy to developments at local and regional level. In their relations with other regional organisations, governmental and non-governmental, they are championing the interests of archives.

A1.2.7

By continuing a comprehensive programme of modernisation, archive services will dispel any lingering impression of a Cinderella status. Instead they will establish themselves as full participants in new technological change and ways of delivering services. Professional marketing and publicity as well as educational programmes will help increase public awareness of the archive sector.

A1.2.8

Our vision is that, by 2005, the following outcomes will have been achieved, or will be well on the way to being achieved:

- i) Access to the increasing body of digitised archives and other documentary heritage will be available to all who want it.
- ii) Archive services will provide a wider range of onsite and online public services, which respond to users' needs.
- iii) Links between the archives and universities, schools, and other learning sectors will be much stronger and services will be geared to the needs of these audiences.
- iv) All archives in public custody will be safely preserved and made publicly available in a comprehensive network of provision.
- v) The contribution of private, business and specialist archives will be fully recognised.
- vi) Archive and records management services will be able to manage electronic records for present use and future historical use.

vii) Archive services will be working more closely with libraries, museums and the wider cultural sector at local, regional, national and international levels.

A1.3 Funding

A1.3.1

Public authorities should provide a stable funding base for their records management and archive services if this vision is to be realised. Grant awarding bodies should also continue their support for well-focused programmes and projects which are likely to improve opportunities for most people to use archives services. Without this support, the archive sector's progress in engaging with new audiences through imaginative ICT projects in particular is likely to be very much slower than it would be otherwise. This Action Plan should enable the archive sector to identify and exploit new sources of funding.

A1.3.2

Objective 3 of the Action Plan (s.3.4.2) proposes new archival legislation. This plan acknowledges that the Freedom of Information Act has made a vital step forward in providing public authorities with guidance on the records management practices they need in order to comply with the Act. However, public authorities do not have to follow the guidance and are not required to provide archival and records management services. The proposals for new archive legislation would go a stage further in seeking to ensure that local archive and records management services receive the priority they must have in the new legislative environment. The proposed legislation would hopefully put local archive services in a stronger position from which to benefit from the increased financial support, which is already needed under Fol.

A1.3.3

Implementing records management will also help local authorities to improve the delivery of services in this area, and increase efficiency - powerful arguments for them to invest in it.

A1.3.4

The Action Plan plays an important part in positioning the archives sector so that it can benefit from additional project funding, particularly from the New Opportunities Fund (NOF), the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and, in the academic sphere, from the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). For the sector to benefit further, it is essential that it works closely with the grant-awarding bodies in developing the right policies and strategies for funding archives. Access to Archives (A2A) is an example of best practice here. European funding sources such as the Information Society Technologies Programme (IST) should not be overlooked; the European Visual Archive (EVA), the European Archive Network (EUAN) and Safeguarding European Photographic Images

for Access (SEPIA) are important examples of projects made possible by EU funding. Within central government, the Public Record Office (PRO) will continue to apply for Invest to Save Budget (ISB) funding from HM Treasury wherever possible. The Capital Modernisation Fund (CMF), administered by DTLR (now ODPM), is also a potential source of funds.

A1.3.5

Building on the foundations laid by the National Council on Archives (NCA) archives lottery advisor, the archives sector should develop a national fundraising strategy, investigating the prospects for sponsorship, partnerships, advertising and marketing. Objective 1, below, forms the basis for such an exercise.

A1.3.6

Public authorities (assisted as appropriate by grant-awarding bodies) need to prioritise expenditure in order to tackle cataloguing backlogs and enable them to publish as much detail about their holdings as possible. Making the information more accessible brings benefits to the public and the staff, and also the authorities. 'Reasonably accessible' information is exempt from the requirements of the FoI Act (s21), so greater accessibility in the form of existing catalogue information will remove the need for formal FoI queries, to the mutual benefit of the authority and the public user.

A1.4 Role of Archive Bodies and Services

The leading archive bodies outside government have accepted responsibilities for those action points, which they are best placed to take forward. These responsibilities have been confirmed after prolonged consultation. Although these bodies have their own concerns and perspectives, all of them subscribe to these general principles, which underpin the Action Plan:

- i) The need to improve the quality and range of public services for online and onsite users.
- ii) The need to promote common standards.
- iii) The need to improve co-operation and to share experience.
- iv) The need to engage with both existing and potential groups of archive users.

A1.5 The Wider Context

A1.5.1

The development of this Action Plan is set in the wider context of the *Modernising Government* agenda. The White Paper of 30 March 1999 made these five commitments:

- i) Forward looking policy making.
- ii) Responsive public services which meet the needs of all citizens.
- iii) Quality public services where mediocrity is not tolerated.
- iv) Information age government: the use of new technology to meet the needs of citizens and business.
- v) An emphasis on the value of public service and the need to modernise the civil service.

The White Paper also included the target that all newly created public records should be stored and retrieved electronically by 2004.

A1.5.2

Under the Local Government Act 1999 local government and some other public authorities in England and Wales must secure continuous improvement in the way they carry out their functions. This process - Best Value - is intended to deliver three of the five *Modernising Government* commitments (forward-looking policy making, responsive public services, and better quality services) at local level. The 'Best Value' regime encourages local authorities to form partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors and other public bodies, because what matters is the quality of the service rather than who provides it. In the quest for continuous improvement, comprehensive performance assessments building on existing inspections, audits, and other forms of assessment, will be introduced for all local councils.

A1.5.3

On 30 March 2000, the Cabinet decided to bring forward the target for the online delivery of all government services from 2008 to 2005. To meet the target, there will need to be new ways of working, more joined up working between government departments, and less reliance on paper trails. In April 2000 the Government published *e-government: a strategic framework for the Information Age*, which laid down these four guiding principles:

- i) Building services around citizens' needs.
- ii) Making government and its services more accessible.
- iii) Social inclusion.
- iv) Making information better.

A1.5.4

On 11 September 2000, the Prime Minister launched *UK Online*, a series of initiatives designed to get business, people and the government itself online. The Government reaffirmed its commitment that by 2005, everyone who wants it will have access to the Internet. Access will be in the home through a personal computer, digital TV or games console, on the move through a mobile telephone or at a nearby public access point. It is intended that over 6000 *UK Online* centres will be available, with broadband Internet access in all public libraries, and all schools connected to the Internet.

A1.5.5

The development of this Action Plan is also influenced by a Cabinet Office study, *Professional policy making for the twenty-first century*, published in September 1999. It found that the essential characteristics of 'modernised' policy making are:

- i) Strategic: looks ahead and contributes to long-term government goals.
- ii) Outcome focused: aims to deliver desired changes.
- iii) Joined up: works across organisational boundaries.
- iv) Inclusive: is fair and takes account of the interests of all.
- v) Flexible and innovative: tackles causes, not symptoms, and is not afraid of experimentation.
- vi) Robust: stands the test of time and works in practice from the start.

A1.5.6

This Action Plan will also use the best available evidence from a wide range of sources and will seek to involve key stakeholders, including end users, at an early stage of implementation. It will also take full account of relevant European developments, including the policy on access to archives adopted by the Council of Europe in July 2000, and wider international comparisons.

Objective 1: To ensure that ready access to archives, in the most useful and convenient way, is offered to all the nation's citizens and other users.

1.1 Raising General Awareness

1.1.1

Archive services already make strenuous efforts to make their collections more accessible onsite and online, often with considerable success. They are trying innovative ways of engaging with new audiences, to promote the relevance of archives and to make access to them much simpler. However, unless citizens are made aware that archive collections are now readily available, then such collections are likely to remain under-exploited. There is, therefore, a need for sustained educational, marketing, and publicity campaigns at local, regional, and national levels. The proposed National Archives Month 2003, co-ordinated by the PRO and the NCA, should help to raise the profile of archive services nationwide. Archive services will need to consider whether they have the right image and branding to succeed in the highly competitive information market of the 21st century.

1.1.2

Citizens should also be given the opportunity to engage with archives, by making them more aware of the past, whether of their family, locality, region or country, and to experience at first hand the importance of archives as the primary source material for the appreciation of that past.

1.1.3

Marketing and outreach activities must be properly resourced if they are to succeed. Also, the sector must expect to plan for an expansion in online and, in some cases, onsite capacity to cope with increased usage.

1.2 Promoting Social Inclusion

1.2.1

Tackling social exclusion is one of the Government's highest priorities. Archive services have an important role in helping to achieve this. Social inclusion policy for archives should aim to raise awareness of what is available and its relevance to individuals, communities and the widest possible cross-section of society. If archive services are to be inclusive, they must find out why some sections of society do not use them, and respond to the needs of their respective communities. They should address the needs of those facing specific barriers. These include:

- People from ethnic minorities
- Disabled people
- Young people
- People who are unwaged
- People in paid employment, who cannot visit facilities open only during working hours - something online access should help to address
- Certain older people (the over 45s otherwise being disproportionately represented among archive users)
- Those who live in isolated rural areas and in urban areas which suffer from deprivation

1.2.2

The DCMS document Centres for Social Change sets out a number of policy objectives and a six-point plan for combating social exclusion. All archive services are strongly encouraged to adopt and implement the methodology below in their business and service development plans:

- i) Identify the people who are socially excluded and their distribution. Engage them and establish their needs.
- ii) Assess and review current practice.
- iii) Develop strategic objectives and prioritise resources.
- iv) Develop the services, and train the staff to provide them.
- v) Implement the services and publicise them.
- vi) Evaluate success, review and improve.

1.2.3

It is important to make use of technical and design standards to support accessibility and social inclusion:

e-Government Interoperability Framework, Office of the e-Envoy, September 2000. (See <http://www.govtalk.gov.uk/interoperability/egif.asp>)

1.2.4

Archive services should try to make provision for those whose first language is not English.

1.2.5

The National Council on Archives and Regional Archive Councils in England have carried out an audit of existing attitudes in archives to social inclusion, entitled 'Taking Part'. *The Centres for Social Change* methodology (see 1.2.2), is being promoted within archives on this basis, in consultation with the Society of Archivists (SoA) and the Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government (ACALG).

1.3 Statutory Rights of Access

1.3.1

The Freedom of Information Act 2000, and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, will establish a general right of access to recorded information held by a wide range of bodies across the public sector. This will be subject to certain conditions and exemptions. For information that is exempt, the Acts will establish a further right of access, where the public interest in disclosure is not outweighed by the public interest in maintaining the exemption. Implementing the new Fol legislation will prove to be a considerable challenge. Achieving a rounded approach to these issues is most likely if Fol is accompanied by fresh national archival legislation which will underpin the access rights.

1.4 High Standards of Service

1.4.1

Applying for and gaining the Charter Mark award will help archive services to increase their focus on users' needs. The initial development of the Standard for Archival Access Services by the Public Services Quality Group, now part of the NCA, is warmly welcomed. Further development under the auspices of the British Standards Institution (BSI) is the best way forward. As it is developed by BSI, the Standard should state clearly what the appropriate standards are for both online and onsite access. Because the Standard will be used as a yardstick in inspections of archive services by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the Public Record Office and the National Archives of Scotland, archive services are strongly encouraged to adopt the main recommendations of the draft Standard at the earliest opportunity.

1.4.2

In England, the Regional Archive Councils' assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of access provision in their areas will also be highly relevant in helping achieve ever higher standards of service for the online and onsite public.

1.4.3

Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries is developing a strong agenda for standards across the sector. *Preserving the Past for the future: Towards a national framework for collections management* is to be used for identifying and reviewing the methods currently used to assess the care of collections. In support of this, it has also published Benchmarks in Collection Care. The standard *Inspiring Learning: A Framework for Access and Learning in Museums, Archives and Libraries* makes the link between access and learning. Resource's close relations with the archive community in Scotland should encourage the adoption of similar standards there. Resource's relationship with the Northern Ireland administration will be governed by a memorandum of understanding. A draft concordat has been agreed between Resource and the Welsh Assembly Government, based on co-operation and sharing of information. The Assembly Government is now following this up with a consultation paper, setting out options for the development of structures for archives, libraries and museums in Wales.

1.5 Creation of catalogues, lists and finding aids

1.5.1

Rights of access to archives will remain theoretical, and users will be unable to access collections, if material is only partly catalogued or not catalogued at all. S.21 of the Fol Act emphasises that, if information is already reasonably accessible, then there is no reason to treat a request for it as an Fol enquiry. Therefore, reducing the catalogue backlogs should be a priority for the archive sector and a priority for programmes funded by resource-granting agencies and other bodies.

1.6 Improving Access to Collection Descriptions

1.6.1

Effective access to archives for all will only be possible where users can access archival information remotely. Projects to develop this will therefore be given a high priority.

1.6.2

The Access to Archives (A2A) Programme (www.a2a.pro.gov.uk) has begun to provide detailed catalogue descriptions of major collections held in all the regions of England. It is linked to the National Register of Archives (NRA)

(<http://www.hmc.gov.uk/nra/nra2.htm>) maintained by the Historical Manuscripts Commission. The NRA, which aims to contain at least outline descriptions of every substantial archive collection in the UK, is available over the Internet and through the National Grid for Learning. Both A2A and the NRA adhere to the NCA Rules, in order to ensure consistency in the spelling of names, making computer-assisted searches more effective. The widest possible publication, in whatever form, of general and specific descriptions of all historical archives, should be a key priority. This not only helps to make the wider public aware of their existence, but allows readers to determine the context of what they view. Developing a national and regional infrastructure, enabling access to catalogue descriptions, is vital. The study *Full Disclosure* (<http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/bib-man/projects/making/>) looks at converting retrospectively, and nationally, the catalogues of libraries, archives and museums. A2A and NRA are the key building blocks towards putting all archive catalogues and collection-level descriptions online. At the same time the issues of disseminating this information even more widely through emerging networks and long-term resourcing for this will need to be addressed.

1.6.3

Other major developments in the creation of a National Archive Network for the UK include:

- i) The Archives Hub in higher education.
- i) The Scottish Archive Network (SCAN).
- ii) The proposed Archives Network Wales.
- iii) The family records website (www.familyrecords.gov.uk).
- iv) e - CATNI - online catalogues for the public and private archives held in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

1.6.4

These initiatives in the archival world will link up with the People's Network, which is being driven forward by Resource and will include:

- i) ICT learning centres in all libraries.
- ii) 4,000 public libraries linked to the Internet and the National Grid for Learning by 2002.
- iii) More than 30,000 public access terminals.

1.6.4

The People's Network, which will draw together local and national public service information, will have a potential audience of 34 million, many of whom will wish to access archival information. Its success depends upon providing library services in urban and rural areas, nationwide, which are available outside normal office hours and provide both onsite and online services. Resource is looking at how to extend the benefits of the People's Network to archive services.

1.7 Connecting Archives to the Networks

1.7.1 All archive services will need easy access to networking facilities so that information on collections can be readily transferred to these national description projects. This will also allow archive users to seek advice from staff by using online services and e-mail. The following schemes will accelerate the process of connecting archives to the networks:

i) Resource has widened the Modems for Museums scheme to cover archives which currently do not have network access. This has helped to complete the equipping of all archive services to a basic standard. It will also enable them to take advantage of the opportunities offered by modern technology. In England, the scheme is administered through vouchers supplied by the Regional Archive Councils. Similar arrangements for Wales and Northern Ireland are in place. The Scottish Archive Network is providing modems and personal computers to any participating archives that do not already have them. Through its People's Network Development Team, Resource is working to extend network access to museums and archives.

ii) Following the recommendations of *A Netful of Jewels: New Museums in the Learning Age* (National Museum Directors' Conference, 1999), Resource will assess the needs of archives for new learning network development. The findings of the report *Building the Digital Museum* will also be relevant.

iii) Resource will draw the attention of grant-awarding bodies to archives' development needs. Resource's activities will build on the work carried out by the Missing Link Survey of specialist archive services (Society of Archivists/British Library Co-operation and Partnership Programme project 2000-2001), the Archival Mapping Project Phases 1 and 2 relating to local archive services in England (led by the PRO under NCA auspices), and the Welsh Archival Mapping Project overseen by the Archives Council Wales.

1.7.2

More generally, archival resources will be linked to and co-ordinated with complementary sources in libraries, museums and the built heritage. Existing links between organisations in the National Archive Network and the information providers for related sectors will be strengthened. From the user's point of view access to information will become a seamless operation, despite there being so many information sources. To achieve this - and to meet the 2005 target for the electronic delivery of major services to the public - common standards should be adopted and used throughout the archive sector and there should be sufficient funding to ensure adequate interpretation and professional advice.

1.8 Creating Digital Content

1.8.1

The archives sector, together with libraries and museums, can make a very significant contribution to the education and lifelong learning agendas through providing digital content, particularly when it is tailored to a particular set of needs. Good examples are the current initiatives to digitise census, registration, probate and other family history sources, which will be accessible via the *Familyrecords.gov.uk* portal. The Scottish Archive Network has made around three million images of Scottish wills available to users through a new website - www.Scottishdocuments.com. Other archive services are already involved in creating digital content through the NOF digitisation programme. More will be possible with the DCMS's creation of a new body that will be responsible for delivering its Culture Online initiative. Culture Online will use materials from archive and cultural institutions to enrich and support the education curriculum and increase access for lifelong learners and other users. In Wales, more opportunities will arise with the development of Culture Cymru Online.

1.8.2

Digitisation in archives will create a significant body of digital content to control and maintain. This will carry with it implications for the management and preservation of these records, in terms of both infrastructure and staff training (see Objective 5). This Action Plan proposes to start forming a national archiving digitisation strategy, which will tackle these issues.

1.9 Competencies and Capacity Building

1.9.1

Resource is looking at practical ways of ensuring that archive services benefit from programmes similar to those developed for museums and libraries. The NCA, with funding from Resource, is also working on the recruitment and training of archivists. Training programmes will be needed in order to take advantage of the potential of ICT and to encourage archive staff to give ICT applications a high priority in developing services. There is also a specific need to train archive staff in the application of archive standards such as Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and the General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G)) as well as generic ICT applications.

1.10

The outcome should be that all who wish to use archive collections have at their disposal a convenient, affordable and satisfactory means of doing so, both onsite and online.

	Action	Evaluation	Completion By
1.i	Resource/ NCA/SoA / ACALG/PRONI	<p>Resource, the National Council on Archives and Regional Archive Councils have carried out an audit of existing attitudes in archives to social inclusion. On this basis, in consultation with SoA and ACALG, the Centres for Social Change methodology, outlined above, is being promoted within archives. Further work programmes are being identified and developed. The NCA is encouraging archive services to affiliate to the Network, and will make social inclusion the focus of its 2003 conference.</p> <p>In Northern Ireland, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is committed to making social heritage, including archives, more readily accessible as part of a policy of Targeting Social Need.</p>	Ongoing
1.ii	DCAL	In Northern Ireland, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is pursuing a research initiative, across the sector. This will assess how heritage services, including archives, are being used and the attitude of users (and non-users) towards such services.	December 2002
1.iii	Resource	Resource will establish and lead an Archives Taskforce to revitalise and unlock the potential of the UK's hidden archives. Taking a user perspective, and in full consultation with archive practitioners, users and potential users, the Taskforce will bring out the rich potential of archives and make clear recommendations for future priorities for investment and development.	Summer 2003
1.iv	PRO/NCA	Resource will be developing a unified approach to the gathering of statistical evidence for museums, archives and libraries. Resource will consult with the archives domain and Single Regional Agencies to define the requirements of archive statistics and how best these should be collected.	Foundational research and frameworks for data collection will be established during 2002.
1.vi	NCA(PSQG)	Future NCA (PSQG) surveys of visitors to UK archives will build upon methodologies developed by Resource (under action 1.v) to assess how well archives are doing in meeting users and non-users' needs. They should relate user profiles to national average data drawn from the Census. Taken together with the results of social impact audits, the aim should be to build a comprehensive profile of the user communities	December 2003

		for archives, and of the extent to which archives provide services valued by the whole community. On this basis, NCA (PSQG) will develop performance indicators for archives.	By end of 2002
1.vii	NCA/PRO/HMC	In the light of the report on prioritisation to the Full Disclosure Implementation Group, the NCA will work with the PRO and the HMC to develop a methodology to prioritise cataloguing backlogs within and between repositories. This should help institutions allocate their own resources wisely, and assist the funding agencies in distributing resources in a way which maximises public benefit. The funding agencies are urged to recognise and adopt the agreed prioritisation methodology as a tool in assessing bids of this kind. Public authorities should also be made aware of their obligations under s.21 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This, along with a well-supported and comprehensive Action Plan, should make a powerful case for funding and resolving this issue. (See also 3.ix.)	December 2003
1.viii	Resource	Resource to look at and report on practical ways of ensuring that archive services benefit from programmes similar to those developed for museums and libraries, such as extension of the Designation Scheme and Fund to archives, a review of the Museum's Registration Scheme, and expansion of the People's Network.	Ongoing
1.ix	NCA	NCA to bring the particular needs of non-traditional and contemporary formats such as digital, sound and moving image material to the attention of all archival bodies. This will be of particular consideration when drafting strategies, business plans, funding bids and policies.	Ongoing
1.x	Resource	Resource will develop methodologies for assessing access, building on the survey of physical access carried out in 2001.	End December 2002
1.xi	PRO/Resource/ NCA	PRO, Resource, and NCA will establish a working group to collaborate on the production of a national digitisation strategy in order to address the need for producing digital content, and the skill and infrastructure base to cater for it.	By September 2002
1.xii	NCA	NCA, building on the work of the NCA advisor, will develop a national fund-raising strategy for archives, investigating the prospects for sponsorship, partnerships, advertising and marketing.	By April 2003
1.xiii	PRO	PRO intends to digitise the main popular sources for family history in its custody, including census returns and wills, and to make them available to users online.	By 2005
1.xiv	PRO and partners	As a contribution to social inclusion, a consortium of 30 libraries, museums and archives headed by the PRO have set up the 'Moving Here' project, the purpose of which is to provide free online	By March 2004

		access to digitised materials concerning the immigration experience in the UK from the 1840s to the present day.	
1.xv	PRO	PRO will monitor progress on these and report back to IDAC.	

Objective 2: To enable the educational sector at all levels to have proper access to the nation's archival resources, so that national educational needs are met (DfES/DCMS).

2.1 The contribution of archive services to the educational sector

2.1.1

Archive services can make an important contribution to the learning society. As well as supporting the National Curriculum and formal adult education, archives have enormous potential for meeting the needs of self-directed learners. Information and communications technology will enable archives to provide new opportunities for open and distance learners and to reach new audiences. However, archives must also meet the needs of people who do not have access to new learning media. Archives should therefore aim to develop their onsite capacity for supporting formal and informal learning.

2.1.2

Action is needed to ensure that citizens have the chance to engage with their past through the study of history, and to understand that archives contain the evidence of that history. Young and old alike should be enabled to discover what they can learn about their history through archives, and why they need access to them. History teaching should promote the use of archival content, and archives themselves, for example, in the history national curriculum. The Department for Education and Skills will take the lead.

2.2 The provision of content for Teaching and Learning

2.2.1

Digitised national archives, such as those developed by the PRO's Learning Curve, (<http://www.learningcurve.pro.gov.uk/>) which are available through the National Grid for Learning, can support teaching and learning across a wide range of areas of the National Curriculum for England and the National Curriculum for Wales. In Scotland, the National Archives of Scotland provides material for school pupils through Learning and Teaching Scotland and SCRAN, the Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network (<http://www.scran.ac.uk/>). The Powys Digital History Project (<http://history.powys.org.uk/>) is an excellent example of what can be achieved by a go-ahead local archive service. Resources available on line can support teachers and learners both in the classroom and at home, or in libraries and other UK Online learning centres. HMC's Archives in Focus website (<http://www.hmc.gov.uk/focus/>), for example, provides an

introduction to the use of archives in learning. Currently over 96 per cent of schools are connected to the Internet. The target is for all schools to be connected by the end of 2002. Working with partners in schools, LEAs and the commercial sector, archival resources can be developed to support delivery of the National Curriculum and meet the needs of schools. Making these resources available on the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) and TeacherNet means that local resources become nationally available (e.g. the Learning Curve "snapshots"). The resources of the national archives are no longer accessible only by those schools. Currently around 600,000 pages of resources are indexed on the NGfL and the portal receives 2.5 million "hits" per week. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has a metadata standard for online content aimed at the national curriculum (<http://www.nc.uk.net/metadata/>) which should be borne in mind when creating any online content for schools.

2.2.2.

The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) bids for Community Access to Lifelong Learning; the Public Record Office's Pathway to the Past project; the Gathering the Jewels Project and SCRAN, all of which provide material for lifelong learners. The HE Archives Hub and other Networks, the PRO website and SCRAN all meet the needs of academic and scholarly research.

2.2.3

Resource will be developing an education standard for museums, libraries and archives. To play an important role in delivering quality services which meet that standard, archives will need adequate resources. Archive services should position themselves as key players in building regional education capacity. They should have trained education staff to become organisations which support learning, build knowledge and understanding, and have further expertise whenever needed. Relevant local sources are invaluable in enhancing learning - groups can visit the archives and education officers can take copies of sources out to schools or community centres. These education officers should be based in the repositories rather than in regional archive centres, as a fundamental part of their job would involve a good knowledge of the documents they work with. Education staff should be trained in using access routes and, ideally, have reached MA level in studying the material in their archives.

2.2.4

There needs to be more dialogue between the archives community, education providers and other parties in museums and libraries to promote the use of archives for educational purposes. In England, Resource will consider how best to build and strengthen such networks at the regional level while at national level, NMDC Learning and Access Group, chaired by the PRO, will be dealing with the cross-sectoral issues.

2.2.5

Culture Online (COL) and Culture Cymru Online will provide new investment in arts and cultural material that serve educational purposes. They will encourage institutions which hold material to work more closely together. The unique material held by archives, made more accessible through COL, Culture Cymru Online and other networking initiatives, will help to make the history national curriculum and other learning pursuits more relevant and satisfying.

2.2.6

Resource is establishing Single Regional Agencies in each of the English regions. These Agencies will promote, lead, support and represent museums, archives and libraries to enable them to provide the best service possible to the public. Through their business plans and funding agreements, Resource will be encouraging the Single Regional Agencies to develop learning support units so that museums, archives and libraries can fulfil their full education and learning potential.

The *outcome* will be that close cross-sectoral links between the archival and education sectors are established, developed and used to national benefit.

	Action	Evaluation	Completion By
2.i	DfES	Use of archival content, and archives themselves, should be promoted within the History national curriculum. The DfES is ideally placed to take this forward.	
2.ii	Resource/PRONI	Resource is developing a cross-sectoral framework to improve the quality of the learning experiences that museums, archives and libraries offer. (See Inspiring Learning: A Framework for Access and Learning in Museums, Archives and Libraries.) DCALNI is developing, in the context of unlocking creativity, a Learning Strategy that will provide opportunities for PRONI, museums, libraries and others to contribute in a cohesive manner to the development of learning in Northern Ireland.	Piloting 2002-03; Launch 2003; Review 2005 September 2002
2.iii	Resource	Through its Learning Strategy, Resource will put learning at the centre of the museums', archives' and libraries' agenda: the relevant reports on the impact of museums, archives and libraries on learning, access and social inclusion agendas have been published. Resource will identify what needs to be done to make the case for further investment and improve the quality of provision and support that museums, archives and libraries offer.	Ongoing
2.iv	Resource	Resource to encourage and support the establishment of learning support units in English Single Regional Agencies, which will enable museums, archives and libraries to fulfil their full	April 2004

		education and learning potential. Resource will work with the regional agencies and other partners to develop a programme of social impact audits of archive services, to provide meaningful data on the contribution of archive services to the Government's educational and social inclusion policy objectives.	
2.v	Resource/ NCA(PSQG)	Resource will encourage the monitoring of online and onsite usage by educational users, and will support the NCA (PSQG) to develop and disseminate relevant performance indicators for archives.	Ongoing
2.vi	PRO	The PRO will develop mechanisms of consultation with educational users, which will help to gear the content of sites toward their needs. This will be carried out in consultation with the NCA.	
2.vii	PRO	The PRO will make available online material covering all relevant areas of the history national curriculum through the Learning Curve Gallery and develop online sources aimed at lifelong learners through its Pathways to the Past programme.	Ongoing
2.viii	Resource /DCALNI	Resource to monitor progress with English regional learning support units to ensure that archives are fully engaged with and benefit from new opportunities created. DCAL will develop a Learning Strategy to encourage cross-domain co-operation in the heritage sector, including archives, for the delivery of learning needs at all levels.	Resource: ongoing DCAL: ongoing
2.ix	PRO	PRO will monitor progress on these and report back to IDAC	

Objective 3: To ensure that public sector organisations at local, regional and national level, select, preserve and manage their current records and their archives, regardless of medium, in accordance with the relevant legislative requirements, guidance and agreed professional standards [lead body: Public Record Office].

3.1 Records Management

3.1.1

Under the Freedom of Information (Fol) Act 2000 the Lord Chancellor will issue a Records Management Code of Practice for all public authorities in England and Wales on 'the keeping, management and destruction of their records' (under s.46). This code will help public authorities to provide access to information, to comply with the Freedom of Information Act and to follow sound records management practices. The Information Commissioner will be monitoring how public bodies comply with the Act. Where public bodies subject to the Public Records Act are concerned, this will be in consultation with the Keeper of Public Records. The Public Record Office is issuing a number of model action plans aimed at different sectors to help them

implement the Code of Practice. In collaboration with the Society of Archivists, the PRO is also providing training for the broader public sector on the records management implications of FoI.

3.1.2

For central government bodies, under the *Modernising Government White Paper* (March 1999), there is a firm target that 'by 2004 all newly created public records will be electronically stored and retrieved'. The Public Record Office has published a route map for public record bodies indicating the interim milestones that need to be achieved on the way to 2004 ('*e-records: route map and milestones to achieve electronic records management by 2004*'). A body of supporting guidance and toolkits has also been developed. The same principles and best practice apply equally to the broader public sector. The PRO is encouraging local authorities to make use of the published guidance and toolkits and to adapt them for their own purposes.

3.1.3

In England and Wales, the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) issued guidance for local government on 'proper arrangements' for records in local authority custody under the Local Government Act 1972 S.224 in 1999. The Act includes sections on records management and the management of electronic records. This will need to be reviewed in order to ensure compatibility with the FoI Code of Practice.

3.1.4

For public authorities outside central and local government, the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) recently undertook a project on records management in higher education (*Study of the Records Life Cycle* - see <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/projects/srch/reports/reports.htm>). The Department of Health has also issued guidance on management of health records (<http://www.doh.gov.uk/nhsexec/manrec.htm>).

3.2 Selection

3.2.1

All public sector organisations need to be aware just how important it is that they develop clear selection policies and put in place retention and disposal policies for all of their records, whatever form the records take. This will ensure that records worth selecting are preserved, while those of passing value are destroyed at the right time and according to clear criteria. The Public Record Office has published guidance on selection criteria for United Kingdom public record bodies. This is being implemented through a series of more detailed policies at departmental or thematic level.

3.3 Archives Management

3.3.1

A number of international standards already exist (see 3.3.3) covering the description and preservation of archival material. All archive services need to develop plans for meeting those standards to ensure that the entire official archival record is preserved safely, described in a way that can be readily understood and that the public can easily access it.

The following legislation, guidance and standards apply:

3.3.2 Legislation

A full list of relevant legislation is included in Annex C of the *Government Policy on Archives* (Cm 4516). Of particular importance for the management of current records are:

Data Protection Act 1998

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society - yet to be incorporated into UK law.

3.3.3 Standards and Policies

i) Records Management

BS 15489: 2001 Records Management

[*Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Freedom of Information* (working draft, 2002)]

e-Government Policy Framework Electronic Records Management: provides best practice principles for managing electronic records to support electronic service delivery (PRO/Office of e-Envoy, updated July 2001)

e-records: route map and milestones to achieve electronic records management by 2004 (PRO)

ii) Selection

Acquisition and Disposition Policies, (PRO, 2000)

iii) Description and cataloguing

International Council on Archives, *General International Standard Archival Description* [ISAD(G)], 1994 (second edition 2000).

iv) Preservation

BS 5454:2000 Recommendations for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Documents - sets the general standard for the storage of archival material and informs the criteria used by PRO and HMC in record office inspections.

BS 4971 Recommendations for repair and allied processes for the conservation of documents, new edition 2001.

Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS) - Draft ISO Standard.

The *outcome* will be that the entire official archival record is looked after in a comprehensive network of provision.

3.4 Future progress

3.4.1

This is as much as can be achieved under existing legislation. However, the legislation and standards listed above may not be sufficient to deliver the desired outcome because:

- i) The new Data Protection and Freedom of Information legislation has important implications for the Public Records Acts, the major provisions of which are now more than forty years old. In particular, key archival and information concepts, such as 'holding', 'custody' and 'authenticity' need to be redefined if electronic records of historical value are to be permanently preserved and made accessible to future generations.
- ii) Major series of official records, including police forces outside London and the former nationalised industries and utilities, are not covered by legislation.
- iii) There is a need to develop a complete national and regional network for the moving image and sound archives created by public organisations.

3.4.2

The Lord Chancellor recently authorised the PRO to start work with other relevant government departments on a review of the need for new records and archives legislation, including the possibility of covering a wider range of public authorities than the present Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967. The review will examine the scope and coverage of legislation, and in particular, consider whether electronic records and records management are properly provided for. Should the review indicate a need for this work to be done, then a public consultation document will be drafted and circulated before any decisions are taken. Subject to ministerial approval, a bid for legislative time will then be made. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland will be launching a consultation exercise to cover all aspects of archival provision, including the possible need to replace the existing public records legislation (passed in 1923).

3.i	PRO	The PRO is conducting all the necessary monitoring of United Kingdom public record bodies to measure readiness for the 2004 electronic records target.	
3.ii	SoA/ACALG	SoA/ACALG are invited to undertake a review of the disposal schedules for local records issued by the Society of Archivists, in consultation with local data protection officers, where personal information is concerned	
3.iii	ACALG/ODPM	ACALG is to follow up its initial assessment of the impact of the guidance on 'proper arrangements' for records in local authority custody. This will evaluate the growing response from local authorities to the potential implications of Fol, since the publication of the timetable.	Commencing June 2002
3.iv	PRO/ODPM	The PRO, in consultation with ODPM, is to review the DTLR guidance on 'proper arrangements' for records in local authority custody. This is to ensure compatibility with the s.46 Code of Practice on Records Management under Freedom of Information	End December 2002
3.v	PRO/LGA/ODPM	The PRO, ODPM and Local Government Association will work in concert to promote Fol implementation, in respect of records management in local authorities.	Ongoing
3.vi	PRO/ACALG	The PRO, with the appropriate bodies, is conducting an information gathering exercise to identify responsibility for records management in local authorities. PRO will promote records management in local authorities through conferences and seminars.	Commencing July 2002
3.vii	NCA/PRO	In view of the importance of records management as a tool of good business practice, a working group is being set up to consider its promotion in the wider community outside of central and local government. This would require participation from across the range of bodies on IDAC, as well as from some (e.g. DTI) without a representative on IDAC. NCA to coordinate through IDAC.	June 2003
3.viii	PRO/IDAC	PRO to produce a guide on Fol for records managers and archivists, along with the <i>Model Action Plan on Implementation of Records Management under Fol</i> In partnership with Departments and NDPBs, PRONI will develop a Northern Ireland Records Management Standard (NIRMS) that sets out the principles and procedures in relation to records management under FOI, including electronic records management.	PRO: publication by March 2003 DCALNI: April 2002
3.x	PRO	The PRO will monitor progress on these and report back to IDAC.	

Objective 4: To encourage private organisations to adopt, as far as appropriate, the standards which apply to records management, preservation and access in the public sector [lead body: *Historical Manuscripts Commission*].

4.1.

The Government applauds the important role, which voluntary bodies continue to play in this area. The records of business provide rich sources for economic and social history but are particularly vulnerable when firms are wound up in haste; the Business Archives Council has rescued many important collections from neglect and destruction. The British Records Association, through its close links with the legal profession, has found a suitable home for many title deeds and other estate papers, which would otherwise not have survived. Resource will consider the role of the voluntary sector, and the ways in which it might be expanded.

4.2

The Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) will continue to offer non-charged and impartial advice to private and corporate owners on the care, exploitation and (where applicable) the disposal of their archives. The Commission will also be pleased to advise any privately-funded (as well as publicly-funded) repositories wanting an independent assessment of their operations, on whether they meet national best practice guidelines such as the HMC *Standard for record repositories*. The National Register of Archives (Scotland) operated by the National Archives, offers similar advice in Scotland.

4.3 National Standards

4.3.1

HMC works at a regional level with a network of public (and some non-public) repositories, which have a main role in providing access to, and caring for, private archives. HMC, the Regional Archive Councils on which it is represented and the Single Regional Agencies to be created by Resource, will be in an excellent position to encourage private organisations to adopt national standards for their records management and archives administration. This will become of increasing significance in the regions.

4.3.2

The NCA Public Services Quality Group (PSQG) standard on access, currently under development as a British Standard, will join the existing national standards that can readily be extended to private organisations seeking to make their archives publicly available.

4.4

The Government's concern extends beyond the archives of organisations to those of families and private individuals. Understanding these can contribute richly to the history of our nation and its communities. Individual private owners, as well as organisations, will continue to benefit from HMC's impartial advice. The Government is also confident that tax incentives already in place will continue to play an important part in protecting the written heritage. These include exemptions and concessions in connection with:

i) The gift or bequest of private archives to public repositories;

- Where the archives themselves are of pre-eminent heritage value;
- Where they are historically associated with a building that is itself of outstanding historic or architectural interest; or
- Where they are already conditionally exempt from capital taxation;

iii) The acceptance in lieu (of capital tax) of archives of pre-eminent heritage value;

iv) The conditional exemption from capital taxes (subject to certain conditions as to public access) of private archives whether retained in private houses or deposited in public repositories.

The *outcome* will be a better appreciation of the contribution that archives of private origin can make to an understanding of our national, regional and local history and a more holistic approach to their care.

	Action	Evaluation	Completion by
4.i	HMC	Regular monitoring of conditions in the private sector.	Ongoing
4.ii	HMC	Monitoring of threats to and migration of privately owned archives, for example by export or sale; of the transfer of private archives to public repositories; and of the incidence of acceptances of archives in lieu of tax.	Ongoing
4.iii	HMC/SRAs/ Resource	Private archives should be encouraged where possible to adopt the national standards on access. Resource will encourage English Single Regional Agencies to promote the adoption of these standards across each English region	Ongoing
4.iv	HMC/Resource	HMC will monitor progress on these and report back to IDAC, with input from Resource.	

Objective 5: To enable the archive sector to prepare for the processing of increasing quantities of electronic data [lead body: Public Record Office].

5.1 Requirements for processing electronic data

5.1.1

Public authorities must, as a matter of urgent operational need, adapt to the requirement to manage their records effectively in electronic formats. Archivists are well placed to help in that important task. They also need to look to future requirements for archiving, preserving and giving public access to electronic material. Although some electronic archives already exist, material so far preserved is largely structured electronic data, in the form of datasets. Examples here are the National Digital Archive of Datasets (NDAD), managed for the Public Record Office by the University of London Computer Centre and the Data Archive at Essex University.

5.1.2

Despite the continuing importance of skills dealing with paper-based records, the need to be able to handle records in electronic format is both a particular challenge and an opportunity for archives. Their authorities must tackle this problem and will need high quality advice on the subject. Training in electronic records management (ERM) is therefore vital, as unless training is made available, services will be ill-equipped to influence the debate within their authorities regarding the development of ERM. Strong initiatives are now taking place among archives to provide that.

5.1.3

Archives rapidly need to build the capability to handle all types of electronic data. This could come from geographical or design systems, or from websites and office systems. Standards need to be developed and implemented for managing and regularly maintaining electronic data. Some useful standards already exist (see 5.2). Appropriate staff with expert knowledge of managing and preserving electronic records, need to be recruited and developed. An appropriate infrastructure for record handling is also needed (see 5.iii, below).

5.1.4

The PRO's guidance and standards on electronic records management are aimed primarily at central government to support its work in meeting the 2004 target, yet the same principles apply more broadly to public authorities. The PRO is encouraging local archives to make use of this material and to adapt it for their own purposes.

5.1.5

The PRO is supporting public authorities on improving their records management practices in preparation for FoI. It is continuing to provide training and workshops around the country in association with the Society of Archivists. It is also producing a range of model action plans, aimed at different sectors, to support compliance with the Code of Practice on Records Management.

5.2 Standards and policies

These are the key standards and policies that will pave the way for the archival sector to manage electronic data:

e-government: a strategic framework for public services in the Information Age, e-Envoy/CITU, April 2000, and associated framework policies, in particular:

e-Government Policy Framework Electronic Records Management: provides best practice principles for managing electronic records to support electronic service delivery (PRO/Office of e-Envoy, updated July 2001)

Management, appraisal and preservation of electronic records, Vol 1 Principles, Vol 2 Procedures, PRO, 1999 (see also a wider range of electronic records management standards and toolkits in support of the 2004 target on the PRO website <http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/>)

Implementing e-government: guidelines for local government, CITU, April 2000

BS 7799 Code of Practice for Information Security Management

PD0008 A Code of Practice for Legal Admissibility and Evidential Weight of Information Stored Electronically

PD0010 The Principles of Good Practice for Information Management

BS 4783 Storage, transportation and maintenance of magnetic media in data processing and information storage, Parts 1-8, 1988-94

Sustainable electronic records: strategies for maintenance and preservation of electronic records, PRO 2001

Preservation Management of Digital Materials: A Handbook Resource, October 2000

Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS) - Draft ISO Standard

Human Resources: Standards for the Management of Government Records, PRO 1999

Code of Practice on the Management of Records under Freedom of Information, (working draft, 2002)

Model Action Plan for local government, PRO, August 2001

5.3 Training

The following training courses and collaborations will enable staff within the archive sector to meet the challenges presented by the management and preservation of electronic data:

5.3.1

RM3 education and training programme: a consortium of the Universities of Liverpool and Northumbria, which makes general and electronic records management training available throughout central and local government, in accordance with PRO standards.

5.3.2

Post-graduate Archive Masters Courses at University College London, the University of Liverpool, the University of Wales, Aberystwyth; post graduate Masters in Digital Preservation at University of Glasgow; Records Management course at the University of Northumbria, the University of Wales. Diploma courses are also run at the University of Wales, University College, London and by the Society of Archivists.

5.3.3

Continuing Training/Professional Development: Society of Archivists, Records Management Society.

5.3.4

Combined training with librarians (e.g. British Library and AHRB) and other information professionals, e.g. over digitisation.

The *outcome* will be that the archive sector will adapt itself to the information revolution, and meet successfully the challenges that it is producing.

	Action	Evaluation	Completion by
5.i	PRO	See action 3.i	
5.ii	PRO/ACALG/ RACs-SRAs	The Office of the e-Envoy has produced a toolkit for assessing the skills implications of e-business in government departments, which will be modified	2004-05

		and applied in the archive sector. The adapted toolkit will be the basis of surveys, to be conducted jointly between the PRO, ACALG, the RACs and, where they have been established, the SRAs, to gauge how quickly the archive sector is rising to meet the challenges of permanently preserving digital records and making them accessible for future generations.	
5.iii	PRO	<p>The PRO will introduce a system, including storage, for the permanent preservation of 'born digital' records created by government departments.</p> <p>The PRO will convene a conference under the auspices of the International Council on Archives at which leading international practitioners will give demonstrations of hardware and software for digital preservation to the UK archival community.</p> <p>In the light of its own experience, the PRO will make 'best practice guidance', including technical specifications, freely available to the wider public sector.</p>	<p>End March 2003</p> <p>April 2003</p> <p>2003 onwards</p>
5.iv	PRO/ACALG/SRAs/DTLR/NCA/Resource	<p>It would be appropriate to consider a regional solution to the storage of electronic records. Further research is needed on this issue in order to address the financial implications, as well as whether these arrangements should have a geographical basis. This issue is highlighted in regional archive strategies devised by the Regional Archive Councils. In response to the concerns raised about this issue in the regional strategies, the NCA is establishing a working party on the management of electronic records outside government. The Single Regional Agencies in England are invited to consider cross-domain strategies to address these needs. It is proposed that meetings should be held in the regions by PRO/DTLR/ACALG for senior public sector managers to promote active discussion of possible models of provision.</p>	<p>Meeting held in March 2002; report expected during 2003.</p>
5.v	PRO	<p>Preliminary work is about to start on a National Archives Bill (see objective 3). This will address the e-records issue.</p>	
5.vi	PRO	<p>The PRO will monitor progress on these and report back to IDAC.</p>	

Objective 6: To add maximum value to the information resource held by the archive sector [lead bodies: Resource and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport].

6.1

The United Kingdom's archives represent a unique information resource, held in trust for current and future generations. Today's custodians of this material must ensure that it is preserved and made publicly available in ways that users want. Through flair and imagination, the archive sector should be able to enrich the lives of all those who use archives, and draw in new audiences to sample our documentary heritage for the first time.

6.2 Information and Communications Technology

6.2.1

The development of common networks could make it easier to access archives. Modern technology could bring this about if it is appropriately funded and applied effectively towards users' needs. Projects for creating innovative and imaginative content can address particular needs and enhance users' experiences. They will also add maximum value to the holdings of archives. Users should be further involved in the early stages of prototyping new ICT projects, and surveys should be taken to assess user expectations. Unified standards for data exchange (XTML); common searching (Z39.30) and data harvesting (Open Archives Initiative) as mentioned in 6.3, would be vital in order to ensure that systems can operate with one another- something that would be required to ensure a seamless service.

6.3 Public Access

6.3.1

Resource is developing *Inspiring Learning: A Framework for Access and Learning in Museums, Libraries and Archives*. Unified standards will be developed and employed to raise the quality of user experiences. These standards will build upon the pioneering work of the PSQG, and will be underpinned by management tools, such as Resource's unified benchmarks in Collections Care. The perceptions and experiences of users will be measured and evaluated through survey and customer care initiatives.

6.3.2

Increased access to, and consequently increased handling of archival material results in faster deterioration of the contents of the archive. Conservation is an integral part of access, as the documents need to be maintained in order for them to continue to be available for public consultation. As public authorities are responsible under FoI (under which, a request for information from an archive might be treated as an FoI query), it is

important to produce an action plan, which is properly funded, to reduce conservation backlogs.

6.4 Stewardship and Preservation

6.4.1

Building on existing best practice guidance, Resource is developing *Preserving the Past for the Future: Towards a national framework for collections management*. Stewardship includes acquisition and disposal; preservation, conservation and collection care; preservation management and collection management; documentation and cataloguing; environmental management of buildings; security of buildings and their contents; use of collections; risk management, and emergency preparedness and research. Benchmarks in Collections Care across the sector are being developed to underpin standards specific to a particular sector.

6.4.2

The National Preservation Office has taken a strong lead in the development of preservation strategies and needs assessments for libraries and archives. These should be used as a platform for further cross-domain work.

6.4.3

The Digital Preservation Coalition proposed by JISC (see <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/dner/preservation/prescoalition.html>) represents an important method of linking up with others to whom digital preservation is of interest - both nationally and internationally. It is also an important way of moving the issue of digital preservation up the agendas of relevant organisations and of ensuring further funding for such projects. All parties to whom the Action Plan is relevant are encouraged to take part.

6.4.4

The Digital Preservation Coalition aims to secure the preservation of digital resources in the UK and to work with others internationally to secure our global digital memory and knowledge base. Members and allies are typically investing significant resources in creating and disseminating digital information, digital archiving and curation, or in developing software and hardware products. Through investment and active participation, the members and allies ensure the strength and direction of the Coalition and achievement of its goals.

6.5 Training

6.5.1

Training and development of staff will play a crucial role in the future success of archive services. The Information Services National Training Organisation

(ISNTO) is responsible for developing a national training strategy for the archives sector. This will be based on training needs identified through skills foresight research undertaken by the National Training Organisation (NTO). The Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation (CHNTO) has already published some useful work. Resource has undertaken a review of ISNTO and CHNTO, and is monitoring developments with the DfES on creating employer-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to replace the NTO network. These will be implemented in 2002, following the piloting of the scheme by a number of 'trailblazer' SSCs, whose experiences will feed into the wider strategy.

6.5.2

Training providers will develop programmes based on the NTO's strategy, and in the light of the findings of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Training in Heritage Skills research study. The NCA study of professional training will also give insights into current training provision. Areas where actions are required are: -

- i) Skills foresight research for the archives sector (ISNTO).
- ii) Commitment by organisations to train all staff, including volunteers, and board members.
- iii) Improving access.
- iv) Leadership and management development.
- v) Customer care training for front of house staff

6.5.3

Training opportunities should be available for staff at various levels and adequately funded to enable the appropriate staff to take advantage of them. As outlined previously (A1.3), this Action Plan is seen as a way of channelling further funds towards the archive sector. Training would be one of the beneficiaries of further funding.

6.5.4

Training needs to be considered in its own right, not as a part of larger projects. Current training needs to be evaluated to ensure that it meets current priorities and needs. Together with its scheme partners, Resource has already extended the Sharing Museums Skills Millennium Awards to cover archive and library services, with the aim of delivering a co-ordinated training programme through a system of paid secondments. The Society of Archivists' Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme has also made an enormous contribution to the development of the profession.

6.6 Regional Co-operation

6.6.1

Archives will play a full part in the work being carried out at a regional level to deliver the desired outcomes of the Action Plan, in partnership with the emerging Single Regional Agencies where these exist. Regional Archive Councils will work with the Single Regional Agencies and the Regional Cultural Consortia, to deliver high quality services that are responsive to users' needs.

6.6.2

The Regional Archive Councils (RAC), under the auspices of the National Council on Archives, have quickly established themselves as an authoritative voice for archives. Each RAC has a broad membership representing the main archival stakeholders from national and local institutions, professional associations, and user groups. They have been taking forward cross-sectoral projects and arranging conferences and training events. All of them have submitted, or are currently submitting, bids to the Heritage Lottery Fund (for information and communications technology cataloguing projects under the Access to Archives (A2A) programme. Funded by Resource, the Regional Archive Councils have drawn up comprehensive regional archive strategies. Each RAC Chair has a seat on the relevant Regional Cultural Consortium, where they are contributing to the development of broader regional cultural strategies. The RACs have been contributing fully to the preparations for the creation of English Single Regional cultural agencies by Resource.

6.6.3

Where practicable, Resource will promote close co-operation among regional agencies to deliver both the regional agenda and national policy through regional priorities and actions. Following on from Future Options for Regional Agencies, Resource will be encouraging single regional agencies in each of the English regions to promote, lead, support and represent museums, archives and libraries, enabling them to provide the best service possible to the public.

6.6.4

The newly created Film Council has already published a regional plan that includes its view of regional film archives. A strategy for moving image and sound archives will be developed by the Film Archive Forum, with the help of a grant from Resource in 2002-03.

	Action	Evaluation	Completion By
6.i	NCA/PROResource/ IDAC	ICT projects should be user-led. Conscious efforts should be made to gauge user expectations of the ICT facilities offered by archives. Resource is working with the NCA to	Ongoing

		evaluate electronic networking initiatives from a user perspective. Consultation with all relevant stakeholder groups including HE institutions, should be conducted. PRONI will discharge the same responsibility in relation to its ICT projects.	
6.ii	NCA	NCA is invited to take forward a prioritised Action Plan for dealing with the conservation backlog, to which as many archive bodies as possible should be encouraged to subscribe. Public authorities should be made aware of their obligations to respond to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; this, along with a well-supported and comprehensive Action Plan, should make a powerful case for the funding and consequent resolution of this issue.	2003/04
6.iii	PRO/NCA/Resource/DCMS/DFES/HMC/PRONI	See 6.4.3. All bodies to whom the Action Plan is relevant are encouraged to join the Digital Preservation Coalition. Resource and the SRAs should encourage the RACs to take part.	
6.v	Resource/NCA	Resource and NCA will produce in partnership a report looking critically at training provision for archive professionals throughout their careers, in order to produce solutions to perceived problems in recruitment, training and leadership.	Interim findings/seminar Autumn 2002; full report spring 2003.
6.vi	Resource	Resource is to promote close co-operation among regional agencies to deliver both the regional agenda and national policy through regional priorities and objectives. Resource will develop the cross-sectoral agenda by creating single regional agencies in the English regions. Three regional agencies will be operational in 2002, and all nine will be established by 2004.	By 2004
6.vii	Resource/Film Archive Forum	Resource will be working with the Film Archive Forum to support the development of a national strategy for moving image and sound archives, and to hold a conference to promote such collections.	'Hidden Treasures' Conference, Oct 2002; strategy completed Spring 2003.
6.viii	Resource	Resource will monitor the operation and effectiveness of SRAs to deliver regional and national objectives. More generally, the development of regional structures will be revisited by IDAC in two years.	Ongoing 2004
6.ix	PRO	PRO will monitor progress on these and report back to IDAC.	

Appendix A: Glossary of Acronyms and Terms

ACALG - Association of Chief Archivists in Local Government.

A2A - Access to Archives. A project for the digitisation, and putting online, of the catalogue descriptions of major collections held in all the regions of England.

Archives Network Wales - A project aimed at listing the contents of Welsh archive collections online.

CHNTO - Cultural Heritage National Training Organisation.

CMF - Capital Modernisation Fund.

Culture Online (COL) - An internet portal, akin to UK Online, providing remote access to Britain's culture and heritage. A Department for Culture, Media and Sport initiative.

DCALNI - Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure - Northern Ireland.

DCMS - Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

DfES - Department for Education and Skills.

DTI - Department of Trade and Industry.

DTLR - Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions

EAD - Encoded Archival Description.

ERM - Electronic Records Management.

EUAN - European Archive Network.

EVA - European Visual Archive.

FoI - Freedom of Information (as in the Freedom of Information Act 2000).

Higher Education Hub - Part of the National Archives network, the Higher Education Hub is a single point of access to descriptions of archives held in UK universities and colleges.

HLF - Heritage Lottery Fund.

HMC - Historical Manuscripts Commission.

ICT - Information and Communications Technology.

IDAC - Inter-Departmental Archives Committee.

ISAD (G) - General International Standard of Archival Description.

ISB - Invest to Save Budget.

ISNTO - Information Services National Training Organisation.

ISO - International Organisation for Standardization.

IST - Information Society technologies Programme.

JISC - Joint Information Systems Committee.

Learning and Teaching Scotland - A national public body sponsored by the Scottish Executive Education Department. It provides advice and support in order to enhance the quality of educational experiences.

Mapping Project for England - A project, comprising three phases, which examines a number of key archival issues on a national scale, down to a local level.

Modernising Government - A White Paper, published on 30th March 1999, making five key commitments towards modernising and improving all public services.

NAN - National Archive Network.

NAS - National Archives of Scotland.

NCA - National Council on Archives.

NDAD - National Digital Archive of Datasets.

NDPB - Non-Departmental Public Bodies.

NGfL - National Grid for Learning.

NIRMS - Northern Ireland Records Management Standard.

NOF - New Opportunities Fund.

NRA - National Register of Archives. A register containing at least outline descriptions of every substantial archive collection in the UK.

NTO - National Training Organisation.

ODPM - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Open Government - A commitment to promote informed policy making and debate by extending access to official information, and responding to reasonable requests for information. This is based on the assumption that

information should be released except where disclosure would not be in the public interest.

OAIS - Open Archival information System.

People's Network - A project to link up all libraries in the UK to the internet. Administered by re:source.

PRO - Public Record Office.

PRONI - Public Record Office, Northern Ireland.

PSQG - Public Services Quality Group.

QCA - Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

RACs - Regional Archive Councils.

RCC - Regional Cultural Consortium.

re:source - The Council for Museums, Galleries and Archives. A Non-Departmental Public Body responsible to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Resource Discovery Tools - tools, such as catalogues, search engines, etc., enabling access to information concerning the holdings of archives.

SCAN - Scottish Archive Network.

SCRAN - Scottish Cultural Resources Access Network.

SEPIA - Safeguarding European Photographic Images for Access.

SoA - Society of Archivists.

UK Online - An internet portal, providing access to information about the business and role of government.

ULCC - University of London Computer Centre.

Appendix B: Reference Material

Key Texts

Government Policy on Archives, UK Inter-Departmental Archives Committee, December 1999.

The following eight key documents, which have been produced by leading bodies in the UK archival world, have highlighted issues that this Action Plan is designed to tackle in line with government policy:

An Archives Policy for the United Kingdom, National Council on Archives/Society of Archivists, 1996

Scottish National Archives Policy, Scottish National Archives Policy Working Group, 1998

Archives at the Millennium: the Twenty-Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1991-1999, 1999

British Archives: The Way Forward, National Council on Archives, 2000

Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All: Policy Guidance on Social Inclusion for DCMS funded and local authority museums, galleries and archives in England, May 2000

Developing the 21st Century Archive: An Action Plan for United Kingdom Archives, Resource, 2001

A National Archives and Records Policy for Wales, Archives Council Wales, 2001.

Reference Texts

Resource's Archives Agenda: A Consultation Paper for the UK Archives Community, Resource, April 2001.

Model Action Plan for Developing Records Management Compliant with the Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice Under Section 46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000: Model Action Plan for Central Government, Public Record Office, February 2001.

Using Museums, Archives and Libraries to Develop a Learning Community: A Strategic Plan for Action (Consultation Draft), Resource 2001.

Information and Communications Technology and the Development of Museums, Archives and Libraries: A Strategic Plan for Action (Consultation Draft), Resource 2001.

Future Options for Regional Agencies, Resource, May 2001.

Full Disclosure: Releasing the Value of Library and Archive Collections, National Council on Archives, 1999.

e-Government: e-Government Interoperability Framework, Office of the e-Envoy, September 2000.

Making the Most of Our Libraries, British Library Research and Innovation Centre, 1997.

Preservation Management of Digital Materials Workbook: a pre-publication draft, Resource, October 2000.

Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS) - Draft ISO Standard.

Human Resources: Standards for the Management of Government Records, Public Record Office 1999.

Archives at the Millennium: The Twenty-Eighth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1991-1999, Historical Manuscripts Commission 1999.

An Introduction To Fundraising For Archives, National Council on Archives 1999.

British Archives: The Way Forward, National Council on Archives 2000.

Access to Public Records (Second Edition), Public Record Office 2000.

Taking Part: An Audit of Social Inclusion Work In Archives, National Council on Archives, April 2001.

Your Heritage: Grants £5,000-£50,000, Heritage Lottery Fund, May 2001.

The Bidding Culture and Local Government: Effects on the Development of Public Libraries, Archives and Museums, Information Management Research Institute, 2001.

e-Government Policy Framework Electronic Records Management: provides best practice principles for managing electronic records to support electronic service delivery (PRO/Office of e-Envoy, updated July 2001).

e-records: route map and milestones to achieve electronic records management by 2004 (PRO).

Subject Benchmark Statement: History, Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2000.

Film in England: A Development Strategy for Film and the Moving Image in the English Regions, The Film Council, November 2000.

Professional policy making for the twenty-first century, Cabinet Office, September 1999.