ARCHIVES UNLOCKED
DELIVERING THE VISION 2018-19
Archives will strengthen society through the trust they inspire, the enrichment they offer and their openness to all. We will be the home of world-leading archives, both digital and physical. People will be able to find and navigate collections, and have confidence that reliable archival evidence exists to support their research. Our collections will reflect all of society, so that, whether an individual, community or organisation, archives can tell us who we are and how we got here.

The ambitions at the heart of the vision are

**Trust**
people and institutions trust in the authenticity of archive records, and how they are preserved and presented.

**Enrichment**
archives enhance and enrich our society intellectually, culturally and economically.

**Openness**
archives cultivate an open approach to knowledge and are accessible to all.

### Introduction

The launch of Archives Unlocked, in March 2017, was the start of a conversation about how we achieve our ambition for archives. It is a conversation for two reasons. Firstly, Archives Unlocked is a strategic vision co-created with the archive, digital and cultural heritage sectors and delivered together with many partners. Secondly, at the same time that Archives Unlocked focuses on present need, it also highlights future challenges and opportunities concerning the diversity of collections, the economic potential and the role of archives in our wellbeing.

The action plan underpins the ambitions of Archives Unlocked by setting out how the vision will be realised. It asks: How can archives address the challenges of preserving and making available digital material? How can archives maintain their resilience in times of scarce funding? How do we demonstrate the impact that archives have and the contribution they make to wider society? The Action Plan focuses on three areas - digital capacity, resilience and impact - which shape how we will meet the ambitions set out in Archives Unlocked. The work is split into phases. In these first two years we are ‘building the platform’ - identifying delivery partners and scoping and designing infrastructure to give archives the capacity, knowledge and development tools they need. The later years will build on those foundations to deliver strong programmes of work with our partners.

We have achieved a lot since we launched Archives Unlocked, and I very much look forward to continuing to work with the archive sector and our partners in the years ahead.

**Jeff James**
Chief Executive and Keeper, The National Archives

### About this document

**Archives Unlocked** is the Government’s strategic vision for releasing the potential of archives. Our ambition is that archives inspire trust, enrich society and people’s lives, and are open to all. Archives Unlocked was launched by Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP in his capacity as Minister for Digital and Culture (now Secretary of State for Health and Social Care). The document explores the aforementioned issues through case studies and think-pieces to spark debate on what trust, enrichment and openness look like in the context of archives.

The first action plan document outlined our overarching plan for making that vision a reality. This refreshed action plan reports on our progress in 2017-2018, setting out our targets for the next phase of work. Both Archives Unlocked and the accompanying action plans are the result of extensive consultation and development work with the archives sector, our partners and beyond.

- Developing the digital capacity of the archives sector, to preserve digital records, and increase discoverability of the paper and digital archive.
- Building the sector’s resilience to ensure more archives can meet and sustain the Archivist Service Accreditation standard, open the sector to new skills and a more diverse workforce, increase income generation capacities, and support innovative service models.
- Demonstrating the impact of archives by developing and expanding audiences, piloting approaches to using data and evidence, and influencing thinking in the IT, commercial and knowledge sectors.

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GOVERNANCE

To deliver Archives Unlocked, we have developed a programme structure based around the three priority areas of the action plan: digital, resilience, and impact. A programme of communications and stakeholder management supports the three workstreams and the activity of the Board.

OUR STEERING BOARD

A Steering Board oversees the delivery of Archives Unlocked. Members of the Board are drawn from both within the archives sector and externally, reflecting its ambition to advocate for the value of archives in the heritage, digital and policy-making spheres.

Paul Bristow, Director, Strategic Partnerships, Arts Council England
Rachael Corver, Head of Marketing and Communications, The National Archives
Neil Curtis, Director, Finance and Commercial, The National Archives
Valerie Johnson, (Chair) Director, Research and Collections, The National Archives
William Kilbride, Director, Digital Preservation Coalition
Arike Oke, Collections Development Archivist, Wellcome Collection
Geoff Pick, Director, London Metropolitan Archives
Kathy Settle, Director of Digital, Data and Technology, Department for International Trade
Anna Sexton, Head of Research, The National Archives
John Sheridan, Digital Director, The National Archives
Fiona Talbott, Head of Museums, Libraries and Archives, Heritage Lottery Fund
Sara Whybrew, Programme Director (England), Creative & Cultural Skills

The Board remit is to:
> Advise the programme team on the development of the programme
> Shape the approach to engagement and evaluation
> Make connections through partnerships and collaborations
> Champion Archives Unlocked within and beyond the sector
> Leverage engagement of networks
> Monitor progress of programme and workstreams
> Review and agree annual plans
DIGITAL CAPACITY

Building capacity to respond to technological change

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE 2017-18

Rapid technological change, and the skills needed to preserve and present digital material, are significant current challenges for the archives sector.

➢ This year has focused on scoping and developing a strategy for building digital capacity and forming the partnerships that will help us deliver it.
➢ Our new trainee programme, Bridging the Digital Gap - for 24 trainee digital archive technicians - won HLF funding of over £270,000 over three years. The development phase resulted in a full bespoke training programme to be delivered alongside on-the-job training.
➢ We have helped fund and support projects in digital preservation, and are creating a Digital Action Learning Set to share knowledge and advance learning. We also supported research into digital audience expectations, which will be used as a template for other archives.
➢ To underpin future work on digital skills, we have established a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Jisc, and developed our MoU with Research Libraries UK (RLUK). We also continued to work closely with the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC).
➢ We have worked with other organisations to deliver seminars about digitisation that have helped inform our understanding and provide evidence of sector need.
➢ We launched the Manage Your Collections tool, enabling UK archives - whatever their digital capacity - to publish item-level collections data online via Discovery, our online catalogue.
➢ We carried out the first statistical analysis of UK accessions returns, revealing regional and sector variations in collecting patterns and published the full dataset to data.gov.uk.
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PRIORITIES 2018-19

➢ Establish a digital capacity challenge panel to support the development of practical and scaleable measures to build digital infrastructure and increase skills in the archives sector.
➢ Develop a Digital Capacity Building Strategy in conjunction with the challenge panel.
➢ Conduct scoping work to establish the current digital capacity in the archives sector in partnership with Jisc.
➢ Continue to develop the Manage Your Collections tool to allow archives greater control over their catalogue data on Discovery, in order to improve discoverability and access.
➢ Ensure our commitment to #CultureisDigital increases digitisation skills across the wider archives sector.
➢ Begin work to assess the potential for heritage protections around culturally and historically significant digital archives.
➢ Continue digital capacity building through collaborative networks and encourage the exchange of skills and expertise through initiatives such as the Digital Learning Set.
➢ Recruit and begin training the first cohort of Bridging the Digital Gap trainees, recruit the host organisations for Year Two, and begin evaluation to deliver continuous improvement.
RESILIENCE
Helping archives thrive in challenging times

DELIVERY UPDATE 2017-18

With financial pressures and digital change, it is vital that archives are supported to develop new ways of working.

- Archives Revealed was launched in November 2017, replacing the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme for Archives, with changes to improve transparency, support a greater diversity of cataloguing, and increase impact.
- Archives Revealed secured the continued support of The Pilgrim Trust for £100,000 per year for three years, and £75,000 per year for three years from the Wolfson Foundation.
- We have also developed a new grants scheme for ‘testbed funding’ to support innovation, testing brand-new ideas and sharing the results, whether successful or not.
- We have supported the development of ten regional and two subject-specific networks of archives, with strategic plans that focus on pooling resources to tackle common problems.

In October 2017, we published an evaluation of the networks including case studies and tips for network development.

- We developed a workforce development strategy for the sector as a whole, which covers knowledge and skills; clarity on job roles, entry and progression routes; and access to appropriate qualifications and training. This work was underpinned by a broad sector survey.
- The Archive Service Accreditation scheme continued to thrive and the number of accredited archives in England and Wales passed 100 in 2017. The scheme is being refreshed to include standards around preservation of born-digital material.
- In response to the 20-Year Rule change, we paid out £660,000 to over 60 local archives approved to hold public funding to support innovation; testing brand-new ideas and records. This provided support for a number of project posts sharing the results, whether successful or not.
- We have supported the development of ten regional and two subject-specific networks of archives, with strategic plans that focus on pooling resources to tackle common problems.

PRIORITIES 2018-19

- Launch the Workforce Development Strategy and continue to build partnerships for delivery.
- Explore potential parallel routes to qualifications in archival studies, including degree-level apprenticeships, working with ARA, FARMER and CILIP, among other stakeholders.
- Launch the Innovative and Collaborate! funding initiative to encourage collaborative network activity and innovation across the sector.
- Ensure the legacy of the HLF programme Fundraising for Archives is captured in our e-learning offer.
- Support the ongoing development of charity archives, including work around advocacy.
- Work from our evidence base to identify areas of need, and develop new programmes for sector skills gaps.

- Launch refreshed Archive Service Accreditation Scheme and standard, with the UK Archive Service Accreditation Partnership.
- Publish revised versions of the successful Alternative Governance and Income Generation guidance to reflect changes to the environment in which archives are operating.
- Facilitate further conversations with the Collections at Risk working group.
DELIVERY UPDATE 2017-18

From academic research, to historical drama on television, archives have a remarkable impact on our lives and culture.

» We have commissioned a sector training event, Measuring Impact, Exploiting Data, which helps services measure the impact of their work and demonstrates how they are making a difference.

» We are also working with the Local Government Association to develop a pack for senior managers and elected members. This includes guidance on the statutory framework for archives, and additional guidance on income generation and charging.

» We have developed a series of impact seminars, on the vision themes of Trust, Enrichment and Openness, which will be delivered in 2018-19. These seminars will focus on practical outputs to develop impact measures.

» We have underpinned this work with a communications programme, including a series of regional workshops to help embed the Archives Unlocked vision in the sector.

PRIORITY 2018-19

» Deliver a programme of seminars looking at meaningful impact measures in relation to trust, enrichment and openness.

» Publish the results of the joint The National Archives, RLUK and Jisc research on Citation Capture, including a strategy for the future.

» Assess current methods of capturing statistical evidence of impact.

» Work with existing evidence-gathering bodies to strengthen archives’ ability to measure their impact on wellbeing.

These ambitious plans are supported by communications and engagement designed to advocate for the importance of archives. The strong foundations built in years one and two will support the delivery of the second phase. Years three and four will develop the capacity needed to unlock the potential of archives.

PRIORITIES 2018-19

» Make accessions data available to allow for stronger analysis of collecting trends.

» Publish refreshed Higher Education Collaboration guidance, in partnership with History UK and the Higher Education Archive Programme (HEAP).

» Evaluate the impact of 20-Year Rule funding on the public records network.
ABOUT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The National Archives leads and supports the archives sector in England, and has statutory responsibilities for public records held by archive services in Wales, where we work in collaboration with the Welsh Government. While the vision and action plan are focused on archives in England, we will continue to work with partners in the home nations and internationally, to address the challenges and opportunities of using archives in a digital world, and to support research and innovation.