Report on UK Applications and Awards for Archive Service Accreditation: Statistics and Outcomes

(June 2014-May 2015)

This report offers an overview of how the rollout out of [Archive Service Accreditation](#) is progressing across the UK since its launch in June 2013 with a particular focus on the rollout period June 2014 to May 2015. It outlines how applicant archive services are achieving against the [standard](#) both at module and at requirement level, as a preliminary indicator of the areas of greatest strength across UK archives, and those areas of ongoing development need.

The report provides the following information:

1) Number of applications for Archive Service Accreditation across the UK
2) Number of archive services who were awarded Archive Service Accreditation across the UK
3) Applications by type of archive service
4) Validation visits undertaken by assessing bodies
5) Achievement at module level
6) Achievement at requirement level
7) Analysis of requirement and improvement actions
8) Emerging trends within the archives sector

This report is based on the total number of applications reviewed for Archive Service Accreditation by an [Archive Service Accreditation Panel](#). It does not include applications whose review was deferred by a Panel, as these applications do not have a confirmed outcome or assessment level.

2014-15 saw a range of applications from three of the home nations, England, Scotland and Wales. The home nation assessor bodies are:

- The National Archives (TNA) for England
- Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) for Northern Ireland
- National Records of Scotland (NRS) and Scottish Council on Archives (SCA) for Scotland
- The Welsh Government represented by CyMAL: Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales, for Wales

The appendix holds further statistical information about Archive Service Accreditation for 2013 to May 2014 for reference where this has not been included in the main body of the report.

1) Number of applications for Archive Service Accreditation

	Total	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Number of Applications (2013 to May 2014)	14	12	0	1	1
Number of Applications (June 2014 to May 2015)	**14**	**10**	**0**	**2**	**2**
Total Number of Applications (2013 to May 2015)	28	22	0	3	3

Since the launch of Archive Service Accreditation in June 2013, twenty-eight archive services have completed an application for Archive Service Accreditation across the UK - twenty-two in England and three archive services each in Scotland and Wales.

The total number of applications across the UK for 2014-2015 was the same as for 2013- 2014 although with a slightly increased number of applicants in both Scotland and Wales matched by a slightly lower number of applicants in England.

The programme partners have agreed that archive services based in the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are eligible for Accreditation. Jersey Heritage applied for Archive Service Accreditation in 2014-2015 and data from this application is included with the data for services based in England.

2) Number of archive services awarded accredited status

The award of Archive Service Accreditation is made by the Archive Service Accreditation Panel. There are three potential outcomes:

- Accredited: The archive service has demonstrated that it meets the standard
- Provisionally Accredited: The archive service is close to meeting the requirements of the standard. Provisional Accreditation is awarded for up to two years so that one or two significant areas of development can be addressed.
- Not Accredited: The archive service requires development in significant areas to meet the standard.

June 2014 to May 2015	Total	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Accredited	12	8	0	2	2
Provisionally Accredited	0	0	0	0	0
Not Accredited	1	1	0	0	0

Twelve archive services were awarded full accreditation by the Archive Service Accreditation Panel and one archive service in England was not accredited. One application for Archive Service Accreditation from England was deferred by the Panel due to a significant change in circumstances during the application period.

For the total number of accredited archive services 2013 to May 2015 see appendix A.

3) **Applications by type of archive service**

Archive Service Accreditation uses formal scalability to identify the types of archive service applying and to outline the expectations for different types and sizes of archive service. We here share the breakdown of types of archive services according to that scalability.

Application by type of archive service

June 2014 to May 2015	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Local authority type 1	0	0	0	0
Local authority type 2	5	0	0	2
Other public sector type 1	0	0	0	0
Other public sector type 2	3	0	2	0
Private and third sector type 1	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector type 2	1	0	0	0
Private and third sector type 3	0	0	0	0

Applications from archive services identified as belonging to the group Local Authority type two 2 (which includes all local authority-based Places of Deposit, even if their overall holdings are relatively small) represents a significant percentage of all applicants (50%).

In both England and Scotland there is a relatively significant number of applications from 'Other public sector type 2'. This group includes national bodies constituted by Act of Parliament and other bodies with a national remit in their constitution or their description of holdings and in this instance represents the National Records of Scotland, university archives and hospital archives. No scale 1 applicants came through from any sector in 2014-15 and this is reflected in 2015-16 training priorities, particularly working with specialist archive groups, to ensure that smaller services have the opportunity to become familiar with Accreditation and to work towards it.

The spread of applications from the types of archive services across the home nations reflects the planned rollout programme across each of the home nations. For example, for The National Archives, as assessor body in England, archive services which are places of deposit are a priority group during the initial rollout but archive services which were ineligible to participate in previous standard schemes are also encouraged to apply for Archive Service Accreditation. The Welsh Government are inviting archive services to apply for accreditation according to an agreed timetable. In Scotland, the Scottish Council on Archives and National Records of Scotland manage limited assessment capacity by accepting a maximum of six applications per annum for the scheme's early years.

4) <u>Number of validation visits undertaken</u>

When assessing an application for Archive Service Accreditation, assessor bodies can also make a visit to the applicant archive service. This is an opportunity for the assessor to validate elements of the application, review any documentation not suitable to be submitted as part of the application, and also to view the site.

June 2014 to May 2015	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Yes	100%	N/A	100%	100%
No	0	N/A	0	0

In Scotland and Wales, where the assessing bodies have committed to visit to 100% of applicant services at each round of Accreditation, this has been achieved. In England, where the policy is to visit a minimum of 25 % of applicant archive services at each round, The National Archives have achieved 100 % visits by the assessment team, due to the relatively small number of applicants during this period and the need to train the assessment and peer review teams.

5) <u>Achievement at module level</u>

Each application receives an overall assessment at each of the three modules within the Accreditation standard, in addition to a detailed assessment against each requirement or sub-requirement. A 'Not Met' in any module would make Accreditation impossible to award.

June 2014 to May 2015	Met	Partially met	Not met
Organisational Health	13	0	0
Collections	11	1	1
Stakeholders and their Experiences	13	0	0

All thirteen applicant archive services met the standard overall for Organisational Health and also overall for Stakeholders and their Experiences. Collections is the relatively weaker area with one of the thirteen archive service assessed as 'partially met' in this module and one applicant assessed as not met.

In the case of the application which was assessed as not met it was judged that there were significant and unmanaged risks to the collections meaning that the archive service did not meet the standard. Accreditation was therefore not awarded.

In the case of the archive service assessed as "partially met" it was felt that the archive service had insufficient control over the conditions in their accommodation and storage areas to bring about the positive changes necessary to meet the standard in full.

6) Achievement at requirement level

Each application also receives a specific assessment against each requirement or sub-requirement of the standard. This allows a more in depth analysis.

a) Requirement: Organisational Health

Organisational Health checks those areas which underpin the long term acquisition, preservation and accessibility of archive collections.

June 2014 to May 2015	Met	Partially met	Not met
1.1 Mission Statement	13	0	0
1.2 Governance	12	1	0
1.3 Forward Planning	12	1	0
1.4 Resources: Premises	9	4	0
1.5 Resources: Finance	13	0	0
1.6 Resources: Workforce	13	0	0

All thirteen applicant archive services were assessed as meeting three out of the six requirements of this module fully. These requirements are **1.1 Mission Statement**, **1.5 Finance** and **1.6 Workforce**. All services had an outline statement of their purpose, had effective input into budget setting and fundraising, and had appropriately qualified staff and support for volunteers.

With regard to requirement **1.4 Resources: Premises**, 70% of applicants met this requirement fully. Where archive services did not satisfy this requirement, this represents a lack of expansion space for storing collections - either analogue or digital - and in some cases a lack of back office space, restricting the possibilities for work on collections by staff and/or volunteers.

For requirement **1.3 Forward Planning,** twelve out of the thirteen archive services were assessed as meeting these requirements fully. One applicant was felt to have plans of limited ambition for the type of service.

2013 to May 2015

	Met	Partially met	Not met
1.1 Mission Statement	27	0	0
1.2 Governance	26	1	0
1.3 Forward Planning	24	3	0
1.4 Resources: Premises	21	6	0
1.5 Resources: Finance	27	0	0
1.6 Resources: Workforce	27	0	0

The cumulative assessments for the period 2013 to May 2015 reflect the trend for June 2014 to May 2015.

b) **Requirement: Collections**

The Collections module examines an archive service's capability to develop, maintain information about and care for its collections.

June 2014 to May 2015	Met	Partially met	Not met
1.1 Collections Management	13	0	0
2.2.1 Collections Development Policy	13	0	0
2.2.2 Collections Development Plan	8	5	0
2.3.1 Collections Information Policy	7	6	0
2.3.2 Collections Information Plan	11	2	0
2.3.3 Collections Information Procedures	13	0	0
2.4.1 Collections Care Policy	12	0	1
2.4.2 Collections Care Plan	10	3	0
2.4.3 Collections Care Procedures	9	3	1
2.4.4 Disaster Recovery Plan and Procedures	12	1	0

In this module, applicant archive services were assessed as strongest in the area of **2.2.1 Collections Development Policy**, reflecting the widespread adoption of collecting policies across the sector, and further work to review the potential for

active collecting. 62% of applicant services met the requirement **2.2.2 Collections Development Plans**. Lack of expansion space which limited proactive collecting was a key issue for the remaining archive services, although all demonstrated awareness of the potential for developing collections.

Collections Information is the area where archive services need to develop most to reach the standard at policy level. This is not surprising, as policy-level documentation on Collections Information has not previously figured in sector standards. Applicants have tended to submit procedural manuals making specific commitments to good practice where a policy has yet to be developed**. 2.3.2 Collections Information Planning** is a stronger area, with most applicants having prioritised cataloguing backlogs. Assessment at Partially met usually reflects a particularly challenging level of backlog. Procedurally, applicants were strong, ensuring that staff and volunteers were well trained and appropriately supported to undertake standards-based description.

In the area of Collections Care, services were generally well aware when there were limitations on the quality of preservation they could offer. An assessment of Partially met in policy or procedures in this section reflects effective on-going management of problematic storage, and the Accreditation Panel has set this down as a precedent. Some services had a lack of prioritisation identified under **2.4.2 Collections Care Planning**, limiting the impact of the interventions they were able to make to improve preservation. **2.4.3 Collections Care Procedures**: where this was assessed as Not met, this reflects evidence of lack of risk identification and management.

2013 to May 2015	Met	Partially met	Not met
1.1 Collections Management	26	1	0
2.2.1 Collections Development Policy	26	1	0
2.2.2 Collections Development Plan	21	6	0
2.3.1 Collections Information Policy	17	10	0
2.3.2 Collections Information Plan	18	9	0
2.3.3 Collections Information Procedures	25	2	0
2.4.1 Collections Care Policy	24	2	1
2.4.2 Collections Care Plan	22	5	0
2.4.3 Collections Care Procedures	17	9	1
2.4.4 Disaster Recovery Plan and Procedures	26	1	O

Since the launch of Archive Service Accreditation in June 2013, applicant archive services have demonstrated strength in overall collections management, at policy level in Collections Development and Collections Care, Collections Information Procedures and Disaster Recovery Plan and Procedures.

In many cases lack of expansion space which inhibits proactive collecting is reflected in the overall assessment for requirement **2.2.2 Collections Development Plans**. Collections Information Policy is a relatively new area for the archive sector and this is reflected here. Significant cataloguing backlogs are again reflected in the nature of assessments in requirement **2.3.2 Collections Information Plan**.

2.4.3 Collections Care Procedures: 63% of applicant archive services were assessed as meeting this requirement. Partially meeting this requirement was usually due to environmental conditions within the repositories, or other long-term managed risks within the storage environment.

c) Requirement: Stakeholders and their Experiences

This module checks an archive service's ability to provide and develop access to its collections, in response to its community's needs.

June 2014 to May 2015	Met	Partially met	Not met
3.1 Access Policy	13	0	0
3.2.1 Understanding Audiences	12	1	0
3.2.2 Analysing Audiences	12	1	0
3.2.3 Planning for Audiences	12	1	0
3.3.1 Information on Access	13	0	0
3.3.2 Procedures for user access	13	0	0
3.3.3 A variety of means of access	13	0	0

All thirteen applicant archive services met four out of the seven requirements or sub-requirements in this module. In general, archive services demonstrate a commitment to access at policy level, awareness of the legal issues around granting access, and good routine procedures and variety of means of accessing collections.

Under requirement 3.2 Access plans and planning, 77% of services met all three sub-requirements in this requirement. Of those who did not, it was felt that the archive service was not sufficiently developed in its activities in the following areas; understanding needs of those in its identified community who were non-users, developing analysis of online audiences and developing further planning for new audiences in accordance with the mission of the archive service.

2013 to May 2015	Met	Partially met	Not met
3.1 Access Policy	24	3	0
3.2.1 Understanding Audiences	26	1	0
3.2.2 Analysing Audiences	26	1	0
3.2.3 Planning for Audiences	26	1	0
3.3.1 Information on Access	27	0	0
3.3.2 Procedures for user access	26	1	0
3.3.3 A variety of means of access	27	0	0

The spread of assessed requirements and sub-requirements can be explained as in the commentary above. In the case of requirement 3.1 Access Policy, for archive services who partially met this requirement this was due to the policy needing formal approval, the need to include access restrictions in the access policy and the absence of an overarching access policy. Applications taking a longer period to apply have noticeably improved in this area.

7) Required and Improvement Actions

Every archive service receives feedback on their application for Archive Service Accreditation reflecting how their archive service performs against each requirement of the standard. Part of this feedback is in the form of required and improvement actions which provide guidance on where the service can meet the standard more. Required Actions must be carried out to continue to meet the standard and retain Archive Service Accreditation in the future. Improvement Actions are to support development of the archive service.

By requirement

June 2014 to May 2015	Improvement Actions	Required Actions
1.1	0	0
1.2	4	0
1.3	0	2
1.4	15	8
1.5	1	0
1.6	4	0
2.1	3	0
2.2.1	4	0
2.2.2	8	1
2.3.1	5	0
2.3.2	2	1
2.3.3	1	0
2.4	7	3

2.4.1	3	0
2.4.2	0	3
2.4.3	2	2
2.4.4	0	4
3.1	4	0
3.2.1	0	0
3.2.2	0	0
3.2.3	2	0
3.3.1	3	0
3.3.2	2	0
3.3.3	2	0

By module

June 2014 to May 2015	Improvement actions	Required Actions
Organisational Health	24	10
Collections	35	14
Stakeholders and their Experiences	13	0

A total of twenty-five required actions and seventy-six improvement actions were identified by assessors during the assessment process June 2014 to May 2015.

a) Required actions:

Common themes

- *Developing new storage space and improving environmental conditions in the storage areas*
- *Testing disaster plan*
- *Improving risk management and collection care procedures*

Organisational Health: In this area, required actions covered a number of different themes:

- an urgent need for storage space for either analogue or digital records (or both)
- improved documentation and procedures for developing forward plans to support future development and sustainability

Collections: Assessors identified the greatest number of required actions in this module. The actions covered the following areas:

- preservation and risk management in stores, including environmental improvements (this is a mandatory required action for services which do not have fully PD5454-compliant storage)
- completion and testing of emergency plans
- collections development activities hindered by lack of storage space

<u>Stakeholders and their Experiences:</u> Assessors identified no required actions in this area. The assessors discussed the difficulty of setting required actions in this module at their annual meeting (July 2014), and identified the lack of set standards and the need for flexibility in light of the different communities each service works with as a key part of the cause. It is also true that applicants are providing access basics securely and legally in all cases, and stakeholders' needs are seen as a priority.

b) Improvement actions:

Common themes

- *Building on digital preservation developments*
- *Developing access offer including outreach and learning*
- *Online information and remote access, including catalogue*
- *Collections information policies*
- *Improved storage and accommodation for archive service*

<u>Organisational Health</u>: Assessors identified a number of improvement actions in this module. Actions were fairly diverse and more specific to individual archive services, covering all requirements of this module with the following themes: engagement with governing body and senior staff; diversifying funding and developing volunteering sustainably; making permanent temporary staff to extend the access offer Again storage, accommodation and digital preservation were recurrent action points here.

<u>Collections</u>: Assessors identified the greatest number of improvement actions for archive services relating to requirements in this module (which has the largest number of requirements). Actions relate to undertaking appraisal to ensure sufficient expansion space, enhanced collections information policies, development of digital preservation, clarification of collecting policies, and enhanced planning, review of procedures, developing an online catalogue, and addressing cataloguing backlogs. The general lack of familiarity with Collections Information Policies was also a factor.

<u>Stakeholders and their Experiences</u>: Assessors identified the least number of improvement actions in this module. Actions identified here again tended to be more specific to an individual archive service and covered the following themes: review of opening hours, publication of information and policies on line, review of the access policy, development of access to digital records, and development of outreach activities across the community served.

8. Emerging trends within the archives sector

General notes of concern on the state of the sector

During the period June 2014 to May 2015 Archive Service Accreditation Panels noted some common themes emerging from the assessment of multiple services:

- It was noted that a fire service was withdrawing support for automated alarm callouts unless confirmed by a person. This has obvious major risk management implications especially if emergency contacts do not live onsite. Other fire services are understood to have made similar moves in response to budget reductions.

- It was noted that services had on more than one occasion put parent organisation records into avowedly poorer storage than externally-collected material. Although this is routinely justified by arguing the parent organisation has knowingly decided not to pay for better conditions, it implicitly means accepting that such records – which are often the core purpose of the service – are of less value.

- Ongoing concerns were noted about the impact on the profession of early retirements during service restructures and the loss of professional knowledge this entailed.

Appendix

This section contains additional statistical information about Archive Service Accreditation which has been included for reference, relating to applications for Archive Service Accreditation received 2013 to May 2014. It may be useful to draw comparisons between the statistical information held here and that in the main report.

1 Applications by type of archive service

2013 to May 2014	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Local authority type 1	0	0	1	0
Local authority type 2	6	0	0	0
Other public sector type 1	1	0	0	1
Other public sector type 2	1	0	0	0
Private and third sector type 1	0	0	0	0
Private and third sector type 2	1	0	0	0
Private and third sector type 3	3	0	0	0

2) Number of validation visits in response to applications

2013 to May 2014	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Yes	13	0	1	1
No	1	0	0	0

3) Number of archive services awarded accredited status

2013 to May 2014	Total	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Accredited	12	10	0	1	1
Provisionally Accredited	2	2	0	0	0
Not Accredited	0	0	0	0	0

4) Achievement at module level

2013 to May 2014	Met	Partially Met	Not Met
Organisational Health	14	0	0
Collections	11	3	0
Stakeholders and their Experiences	14	0	0

5) Achievement at requirement level

Organisational Health

2013 to May 2014	Met	Partially Met	Not met
1.1 Mission Statement	14	0	0
1.2 Governance	14	0	0
1.3 Forward Planning	12	2	0
1.4 Resources: Building	12	2	0
1.5 Resources: Finance	14	0	0
1.6 Resources: Workforce	14	0	0

Collections

2013 to May 2014	Met	Partially met	Not Met
1.1 Collections Management	13	1	0
2.2.1 Collections Development Policy	13	1	0
2.2.2 Collections Development Plan	13	1	0
2.3.1 Collections Information Policy	10	4	0
2.3.2 Collections Information Plan	7	7	0
2.3.3 Collections Information Procedures	12	2	0
2.4.1 Collections Care Policy	12	2	0
2.4.2 Collections Care Plan	12	2	0
2.4.3 Collections Care Procedures	8	6	0
2.4.4 Disaster Recovery Plan and Procedures	14	0	0

Stakeholders and their experiences

2013 to May 2014	Met	Partially met	Not met
3.1 Access Policy	11	3	0
3.2.1 Understanding Audiences	14	0	0
3.2.2 Analysing Audiences	14	0	0
3.2.3 Planning for Audiences	14	0	0

3.3.1 Information on Access	14	0	0
3.3.2 Procedures for user access	13	1	0
3.3.3 A variety of means of access	14	0	0

6) Required and Improvement actions set

2013 to May 2014	Required actions set	Improvement actions set
1.1	1	1
1.2	1	3
1.3	0	4
1.4	0	11
1.5	0	4
1.6	1	6
2.1	0	4
2.2.1	1	0
2.2.2	0	2
2.3.1	1	2
2.3.2	0	1
2.3.3	0	0
2.4.1	1	3
3.1	0	8
3.2.1	0	0
3.2.2	0	0
3.2.3	0	3
3.3.1	0	1
3.3.2	2	3
3.3.3	0	3