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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.

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The Vision

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 archives can tell us who we are and how we got here.

Archives Unlocked

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. Launched in 2017, the vision explores, through case studies and think-pieces, what trust, enrichment and openness mean for archives.

Underpinning these ambitions is an annual action plan, which outlines how we are working to make the vision of Archives Unlocked a reality. This third action plan reports on the progress made in 2018-19, and looks at the work we will deliver in 2019-20.

Both the vision and the accompanying action plans are the result of extensive consultation and development work with the archives sector, our partners and beyond.

This action plan presents our progress and plans under three key themes:

1. Digital Capacity
   - Develop the digital capacity of the archives sector
   - Preserve digital records
   - Increase discoverability of the paper and digital archive

2. Resilience
   - Build the sector’s resilience to ensure more archives can meet and sustain the Archive Service Accreditation standard
   - Open the sector to new skills and a more diverse workforce
   - Increase income generation capacities and support innovative service models

3. Impact
   - Demonstrate the impact of archives by developing and expanding audiences
   - Pilot approaches to using data and evidence
   - Influence thinking in the IT, commercial and knowledge sectors

Since the launch of Archives Unlocked in 2017, The National Archives has been developing the knowledge and tools that will help archives deliver on the vision’s three themes of digital capacity, resilience and impact. As always, collaboration with the sector has been crucial for producing meaningful research and guidance. Collaboration and partnerships have also been key for delivering projects such as the Digital Learning Set pilot and fundraising e-learning, which have recently been completed.

This action plan for 2019-20 aims to bring about further positive change, as we focus on building capacity and testing new models for sustaining archive services of all kinds. In particular, there will be an emphasis on diversity, skills and wellbeing.

As we continue to build on the achievements of the last two years, I look forward to working with the sector and our partners to deliver this action plan, and working together to release the potential of archives.

Jeff James
Chief Executive and Keeper, The National Archives

As we reflect on the first two years of progress delivered through Archives Unlocked and look forward to the next year, we also celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Historical Manuscripts Commission. The Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission merged in 2003 to form The National Archives. The values of the Commission, alongside many of its functions, remain integral to our work today. We continue to support and advise archives of all types. We build partnerships and, with our partners across the UK, we work to deliver and develop Archive Service Accreditation, which has now been awarded to more than 150 archives. Just as the Commission originally did, we continue to embrace new opportunities and adapt to the needs of a changing sector.

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Jeff James
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## DELIVERING ARCHIVES UNLOCKED

Working with partners to tackle the barriers to success

### MOVING INTO PHASE TWO: DEVELOPING CAPACITY

The first two years of the Archives Unlocked action plan focused on building the foundations and the infrastructure needed for The National Archives and the wider archives sector to deliver on the three themes: digital capacity, resilience, and impact.

Together with the archives sector and our partners, we have already achieved a number of our goals. We have published a workforce development strategy and have scoped how to build digital capacity through a collaborative survey with Jisc. Our Bridging the Digital Gap trainee programme is also bringing new skills and perspectives into the profession. The new Manage Your Collections tool gives archives control over their catalogue data on Discovery and give them a platform to boost the discoverability of their collections.

Our refreshed cataloguing and new scoping grant scheme are helping to unlock more diverse collections and boosting the confidence of the archives workforce around fundraising. The addition of digital requirements to the national Archive Service Accreditation standard and guidance is helping services address the digital challenge. In addition, research, surveys and events looking at different types of impact of archives are leading to the development of new resources and practical guidance helping archives celebrate the value that they bring to organisations and society.

As we move into the third year of the action plan, we will build on these foundations and put more of our plans and strategies into action to further develop capacity across the archives sector, and foster new ideas and new practice.

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

### OUR STEERING BOARD

- **Paul Bristow**
  Director, Strategic Partnerships
  Arts Council England

- **Beth Brunton**
  Fundraising Development Manager
  The National Archives

- **Valerie Johnson** (Chair)
  Director, Research and Collections
  The National Archives

- **William Kilbride**
  Executive Director
  Digital Preservation Coalition

- **Emma Markiewicz**
  Head of Archives Sector Development
  The National Archives

- **Arike Oke**
  Managing Director
  Black Cultural Archives

- **Geoff Pick**
  Director
  London Metropolitan Archives

- **Anna Sexton**
  Forum for Archives and Records Management Education and Research (FARMER)

- **John Sheridan**
  Digital Director
  The National Archives

- **Fiona Talbott**
  Head of Museums, Libraries and Archives National Lottery Heritage Fund

- **Sara Whybrew**
  Programme Director (England)
  Creative & Cultural Skills
DIGITAL CAPACITY

Building capacity to respond to technological change

DELIVERY UPDATE 2018-19

> A digital capacity challenge panel has been established and is supporting the development of a Digital Capacity Building Strategy.
> In partnership with Jisc, we have carried out a survey to establish current digital skills capacity in the archives sector. The results confirm the urgent need for further work in this area, and have provided vital evidence and direction for the new strategy.
> Work on the fundamental principles and scope of the Digital Capacity Building Strategy has been completed.
> We have completed a Digital Learning Set pilot, achieving widespread engagement and receiving positive feedback from across the sector.
> We have funded collaborative networks across the country, enabling projects that are tackling the digital challenge to move forward.
> We have continued to develop and promote our Manage Your Collections tool, which 138 archive services now use. Work has begun to enrol more community archives through hands-on cataloguing workshops.
> We have led the #CultureIsDigital Digitisation Taskforce in undertaking a national survey of cultural heritage institutions. This led to the commissioning of a new online resource hub to help institutions find information and advice on digitisation issues.

PRIORITIES 2019-20

> We have confirmed our commitment to developing effective heritage protections around culturally and historically significant digital archives through two pieces of research designed to inform our future policy and practice.
> The first cohort of Bridging the Digital Gap trainees are completing their training between The National Archives and their host archive services. We have recruited the host organisations for Year Two, and are making incremental improvements to the training based on evaluations from Year One.
> We have published the Digital Capacity Building Strategy and action plan later this year to provide practical and scalable measures for success.
> Scope, develop and deliver an Archive School at The National Archives, teaching practical digital preservation skills for the sector.
> Set up the Digital Archives Learning Exchange (DALE) to encourage the sharing of knowledge and expertise in order to build digital infrastructure and increase skills.
> Work in partnership with organisations like the Digital Preservation Coalition and Jisc to ensure a joined-up approach to capacity building in digital preservation, access and engagement across the archives sector.
> Ensure that our continuing commitment to #CultureIsDigital increases digitisation skills across the wider archives sector.
> Continue to build on the success of the Manage Your Collections tool by growing participation in both number and type of archive services using the tool, thereby improving the discoverability and accessibility of a broader range of collections.
> Continue work to assess the potential for heritage protections around culturally and historically significant digital archives, presenting options for how best to ensure this work is developed further.
> Recruit the host organisations and trainees for the second cohort of Bridging the Digital Gap and begin training. Continue evaluations to deliver continuous improvement and consider potential options for a further funding round.
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RESILIENCE

Helping archives thrive in challenging times

DELIVERY UPDATE 2018-19

> With our partners, we have launched a new Workforce Development Strategy for the archives sector.

> We have continued conversations around workforce diversity and inclusion, including two roundtable events in Manchester and London.

> We have established a trailblazer group to develop a proposal for a new Archivist Apprenticeship standard.

> The group is facilitated by Creative & Cultural Skills, with representatives from ARA, FARMER, CILIP and other stakeholders.

> The Archives Revealed funding programme, with support from The Pilgrim Trust and The Wolfson Foundation, awarded £281,258 in cataloguing grants and £54,000 in scoping grants.

> We have developed Collaborate & Innovate, a new funding programme encouraging collaborative network activity and new approaches to archival work.

> We have launched a comprehensive new e-learning offer, incorporating the resources from our popular Fundraising for Archives programme (which was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund).

> We have continued to adapt to changing sector needs and skills gaps, delivering new training sessions on service transformation, workplace resilience, and evidence and outcomes.

> We have worked with charity archives to address their most urgent needs, developing a new records retention toolkit and running a Manage Your Collections event specifically for charity archives.

> With the UK Archive Service Accreditation Partnership, we have launched the refreshed Archive Service Accreditation scheme and standard, including new requirements focusing on digital storage, preservation and access. There are now more than 150 accredited services throughout the UK.

> We have produced refreshed versions of our successful guidance documents on alternative governance and income generation for archives, to be published soon. We also ran training sessions for the sector on alternative governance arrangements.

> We held two successful meetings of the Records at Risk (formerly Collections at Risk) working group, and have begun to develop partnerships to deliver future work in this area.

> We distributed more than £660,000 of New Burdens funding to 49 local authority places of deposit.

PRIORITIES 2019-20

> Launch the Workforce Development action plan to provide tangible programmes supporting a more diverse workforce.

> Continue to work with the Archives Apprenticeship trailblazer group, ARA, FARMER and CILIP, among other stakeholders, to develop the Archivist Apprenticeship standard.

> Seek funding for a new leadership programme to develop future cultural sector leaders from within the existing archives workforce.

> Explore links with Creative & Cultural Skills, and other stakeholders, to ensure archives have a prominent place in creative industries careers.

> Facilitate further conversations with the Records at Risk working group, and investigate possibilities for interventions.

> Support the ongoing development of charity archives, including the publication of the charity records retention toolkit.

> Continue to develop and build on our suite of funding initiatives, and launch the new Collaborate and Innovate funding programme.

> Promote and encourage widened participation in the Archive Service Accreditation scheme.

> With the help of the Archives Unlocked board, work with colleagues in the cultural and local government sectors to explore opportunities for closer collaboration and increased advocacy for archives.

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Ensuring the value of archives is recognised

> We ran a series of successful seminars on different types of impact and their measurement, including economic, wellbeing, and digital.
> We commissioned work to examine and assess the different sources of statistical evidence available across the sector.
> We have begun to develop, in collaboration with What Works Centre for Wellbeing, a toolkit to help archives measure the wellbeing impact of their work and activities.
> With RLUK and Jisc, we published the citation capture research report, and ran a successful event to share the findings and explore future steps.
> We published a report on the 2017 Accessions to Repositories survey, featuring analysis of collecting trends across the country.
> With History UK and the Higher Education Archives Programme (HEAP), we published refreshed guidance on collaboration with Higher Education, and ran a series of regional events to promote it.
> As part of our ongoing monitoring of the scheme, we completed an internal evaluation of 20-Year Rule funding, providing a snapshot of how this funding has been used by archive services.
> We celebrated over 20 years’ work on the Manorial Documents Register (MDR) with a conference in September 2018, and delivered projects to revise and computerise the register in six counties.

PRIORITIES 2019-20
> Continue to build on our successful programme of seminars looking at meaningful impact measures.
> Finish and launch the wellbeing impact toolkit and work with the sector to encourage pilot projects.
> Work with partners to better understand how to standardise, measure and interpret archive metrics and statistical evidence of use and value.
> Develop a community of practice encouraging inclusive practice in the sector. Deliver a programme of training to support this in partnership with ARA and explore ways to reflect this in Archive Service Accreditation expectations.
> With RLUK and Jisc, deliver a workshop to disseminate the recommendations of the Citation Capture report and develop a strategy for future work.
> Continue to evaluate the impact of 20-Year Rule funding on public record networks.
> Broaden and refresh our approach to gathering and disseminating accessions data.
> Celebrate the role of the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC) on its 150th anniversary through a co-ordinated programme of events, and visits to archives services by our Chief Executive and Keeper in his role as Historical Manuscripts Commissioner.
> Continue to manage Manorial Documents Register projects in a further eight counties.