



Durham County Record Office

Volunteering Policy

2021 to 2024

Author	Owner	Approval body
Liz Bregazzi, County Archivist	Liz Bregazzi, County Archivist	Head of Transformation

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Durham County Record Office

Volunteering Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Our Volunteering Policy exists to ensure that our collections are properly managed and preserved and made available in the most appropriate manner. Our policy recognises the enormous contribution made by volunteers to the service, and we are committed to offering a range of volunteering opportunities.

2. Context

- 2.1 Durham County Record Office is the statutory local authority archive service for County Durham. We also act under agreement as the archive authority for Darlington Borough Council and as the Durham Diocesan Record Office for Parish Records. DCRO is an Accredited Archive Service, appointed as a place of deposit for public records by The National Archives.

- 2.2 Our mission statement:

Durham County Record Office collects, conserves, secures and makes accessible historical records relating to County Durham and Darlington to enable learning and education, business operations, local accountability, and personal enrichment.

3.0 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all records managed by our service both analogue and digital: Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council corporate records and records accepted by us as archives from other organisations or individuals.

4.0 Policy Principles

- 4.1 Our Volunteering Policy aims to clarify:
- Why volunteers are important to us.
 - How you might benefit from volunteering with us.
 - The relationship between DCRO and volunteers.
 - Our recruitment and selection procedures.
 - Induction, training and support.
 - What we expect of volunteers.
 - Confidentiality, Data Protection and Copyright.
- 4.2 We are committed to promoting equality and diversity - as an employer, in the services we provide, in partnerships, and in the decisions we make. Our aim is to ensure that people are treated fairly and with respect. We have legal responsibilities relating to equality but we see these as the minimum requirement. We also understand the wider benefits of improving everyone's

quality of life and our social responsibility. We have equality policies in place which cover employment and services.

5.0 Policy requirements

5.1 Why volunteers are important to us

Volunteers add value to our work, carrying out tasks that would not otherwise be possible. Volunteers bring enthusiasm, ideas and support, and often contribute specialist skills and knowledge. Volunteering helps us to engage more fully with the communities we serve, and to increase mutual understanding of their requirements and our role and activities.

5.2 How you might benefit from volunteering with us

We aim to make your experience rewarding, relevant and enjoyable. Volunteers meet new people, make new friends and gain confidence. You may use and develop existing, or acquire new, skills and knowledge, and enjoy being part of a team.

5.3 The relationship between DCRO and volunteers

The relationship between a volunteer and Durham County Record Office is one of trust, mutual respect, understanding and benefit. It is a 'gift' relationship, with time given freely and willingly, without expectation of financial reward by the volunteer. Neither we nor the volunteer regard the relationship as a contract of employment. Volunteers can offer as much or as little time as they wish, subject to the opportunities we have available at any one time. Either the Council or the volunteer can end the volunteering at any time and without notice. We will provide you with the resources necessary to your activity; we are unable to pay expenses, but some activities can be carried out at home.

5.4 Recruitment and selection

DCRO recognises the importance of diversity and equality among volunteers and welcomes applications from a wide cross section of backgrounds and experiences. To apply, you should contact us by email, telephone or letter, or via our website when we recruit for specific projects. We select volunteers according to project needs and aim to match volunteers' skills, knowledge, experience, motivation and availability to suitable projects. We usually invite potential volunteers for an informal discussion about their skills, experience, interests and availability and the volunteering activities we can offer.

5.5 Induction, training and support

We will make you welcome, introduce you to staff and co-volunteers, and make you aware of organisational systems, policies, procedures and rules. We will ensure that you are aware of any health and safety risks associated with your role and provide appropriate information, equipment, training and supervision to provide a safe environment and to support the activities you will undertake. We will give you a clear description of your role and provide

support and supervision whether you are working in the Record Office or at home.

5.6 What we expect of volunteers

We expect volunteers to attend induction and training appropriate to the activities they are carrying out. We expect you to carry out activities as agreed with staff, to the best of your ability, and to raise any issues or concerns at the earliest opportunity. You will agree that any equipment or materials we supply you with to support your activities are solely for use on those activities, and you will return them after use. We may ask you to provide accurate details of the volunteer hours and tasks you have completed, and feedback on your activities and learning experience, to help with project evaluation. Volunteers agree to follow the Council's policies relating to Confidentiality, Data Protection, Health and Safety and Equalities & Diversity, as appropriate.

5.7 Confidentiality, Data Protection and Copyright

We will advise volunteers on the need for confidentiality if they have access to sensitive information that is not public knowledge. We may require a signed agreement for particularly sensitive projects.

DCRO will retain the copyright in any work you author as a volunteer. We will ask you to sign a copyright agreement where necessary.

We retain a volunteer database with name, contact details, interests and skills. Personal information will be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. For further details see our Privacy Notice for Volunteers: http://www.durhamrecordoffice.org.uk/media/24853/Privacy-notice---Durham-Record-Office-volunteers/pdf/DCRO_GDPRPrivacyNoticeVolunteers_05-2018.pdf

6.0 Standards

6.1 See Appendix 1 for statutory position.

7.0 Roles and responsibilities

7.1 DCC Corporate Management Team is responsible for approving the corporate framework for the preservation of and access to archival records as set out in this policy.

7.2 DCC Corporate Directors are responsible for developing service guidance for the preservation of and access to archival records.

7.3 DCC Heads of Services are responsible for ensuring that appropriate resources are in place to enable compliance with the Volunteering Policy.

7.4 Individual Employees are responsible for the records they create and will follow service guidance for the preservation of and access to archival records. DCC owns the information that individual employees and volunteers create.

7.5 The County Archivist is responsible for DCRO's Volunteering Policy, and will provide guidance and support to volunteers, services, and elected members in order to support its aims.

8.0 Communication

8.1 The Volunteering Policy will be published on the DCRO website.

9.0 Audit

9.1 DCRO will develop procedures to enable the effective monitoring of the Volunteering Policy.

10.0 Risk Management

10.1 Without a policy and procedures for volunteering, there are a series of risks:

- Damage to historically important records.
- Health, safety and welfare of our volunteers. We will make sure that volunteers are aware of and understand the health and safety risks associated with their role. We will provide volunteers with the appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training required provide a safe environment while volunteering at DCRO.

11.0 Review

We will review this policy every three years.

12.0 Contacts

Liz Bregazzi, County Archivist, Durham County Record Office, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UL. Tel: (03000) 267619. E-mail: liz.bregazzi@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Statutory Position and Standards

Durham County Council has a statutory duty to provide an archives service, to preserve and make accessible archives in whatever format they may be created.

Relevant legislation:

- Public Records Act 1958
- Local Government (Records) Act 1962
- Local Government Act 1972
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Environmental Information Regulations Act 2004
- Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978
- The Law of Property (Amendment) Act 1924
- The Manorial Documents Rules 1926
- The Tithe (Copies of Instruments of Appropriation) Rules 1960

Standards that are relevant to the management of all archives:

- Archive Service Accreditation Standard 2013
- British Standard for archive storage BS 4971:2017
- Information and Records Management Society Retention guidelines for Local Authorities 2003