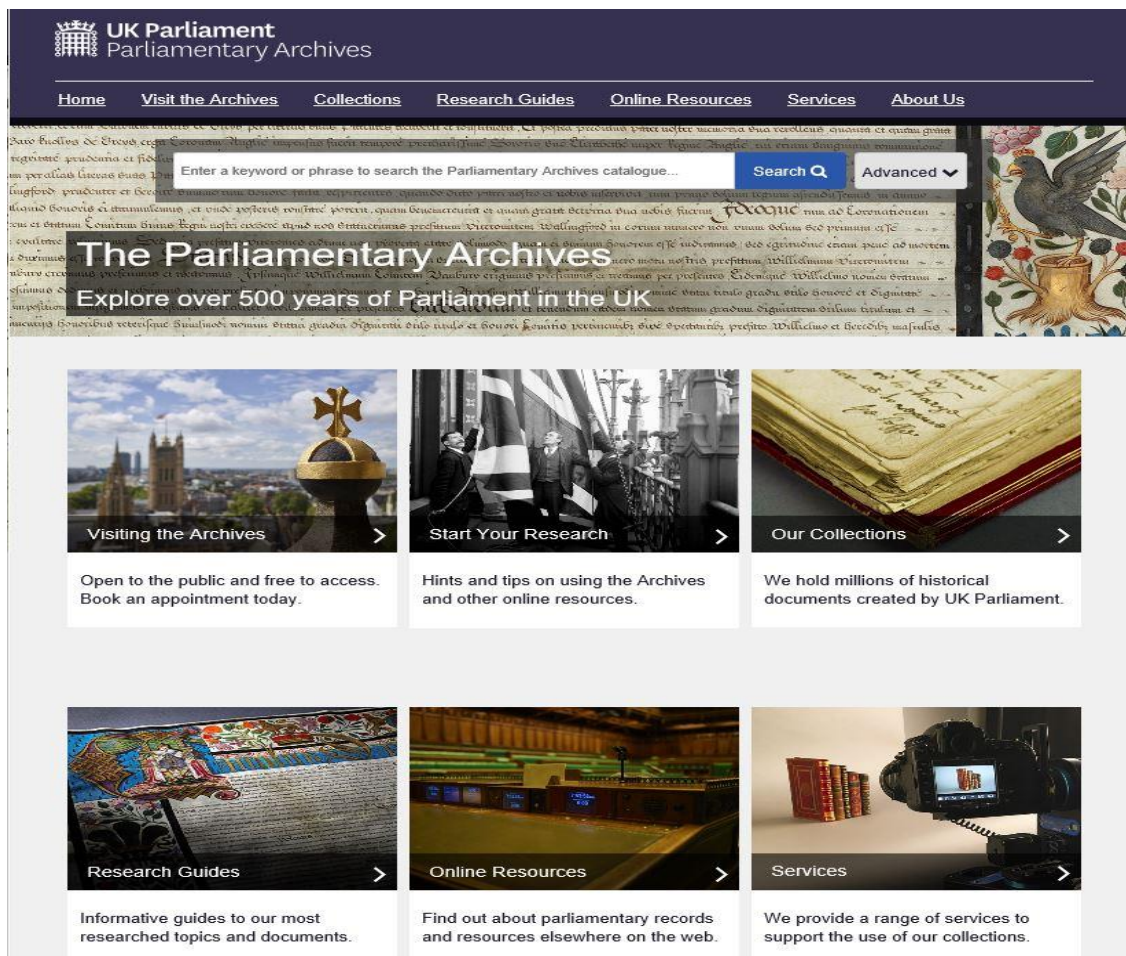


# Collections Information Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The archives of Parliament are a rich and exciting resource for exploring local, national and international history from the fifteenth century to the present day. The collections provide an unparalleled window into Parliament itself, including its functions, administration and architecture.
- 1.2 The Parliamentary Archives enables current and future generations to access unique documentary evidence and research its history by collecting, preserving and making accessible relevant digital and physical records of the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS). By maintaining a record of past actions and decisions the Archives also supports the wider openness and transparency agenda, and act as Parliament's long-term memory.
- 1.3 This policy is part of a suite of policies which direct and inform the acquisition, preservation and management of, and access to collections, including:
  - Parliamentary Information Management Policy
  - Authorised Records Disposal Practice
  - Collections Development Policy
  - Preservation Policy
  - Access Policy

The policy also supports the implementation of Parliament's Information and Data Strategy.

## 2. Purpose

- 2.1 The creation and continued management of information about Parliament's collections is a core business function of the Parliamentary Archives. It ensures intellectual control, supports inclusive access to the collections for everyone, enhances accountability, and strengthens security. It also ensures collections retain their authenticity and value and remain available for use both in the present and for future generations.
- 2.2 This policy provides the framework for activities which are undertaken to ensure that collections information is acquired, created and improved, made secure, accessible, and continuously managed. These activities ensure the Archives provides and maintains intellectual access to its collections, and that legislative requirements and professional standards are met. They are also essential to making our collections accessible, welcoming and meaningful to everyone.
- 2.3 This policy covers the approach to both physical and digital collections, as both formats are collected by the Parliamentary Archives.
- 2.4 This policy will be reviewed at least every five years and approved by the Director of the Parliamentary Archives. Supporting policies and procedures will also be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

### 3. Legislative / organisational context

- 3.1 Parliament has collected and preserved its own records since 1497, when Richard Hatton, the Clerk of the Parliaments, having prepared the Parliament Roll for transfer to Chancery, retained in the House of Lords the complete series of sixteen enacted Bills, or Original Acts, from which he had made the enrolment.
- 3.2 Since 1946, there has been a dedicated Archives department, based in the House of Lords, but jointly funded by the House of Commons, responsible for the acquisition and preservation of and enabling access to the records of both Houses of Parliament. The Clerk of the Parliaments has overall responsibility for ensuring the preservation of and continued access to the records of Parliament.
- 3.3 Parliamentary records are not Public Records as defined by the Public Records Act 1958, but Parliament seeks to follow best practice as defined by The National Archives in the management of its archives. Parliament's information and collections are subject to the following legislation:
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), as supplemented by the Data Protection Act 2018
  - Freedom of Information Act, 2000
  - Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, as amended

### 4. Systems holding collections information

- 4.1 The following systems are used to create, hold or manage collections information:

Description	Information held
Archive Collection Management system	Accessions data, catalogue data (including draft catalogue entries), locations data, indexing data (e.g. names, places and subjects). Data held is for all collections' formats – physical and digital
Digital preservation system	Descriptive and technical metadata for entire digital collection
External system for open digital collections	Descriptive and technical metadata for the access copies of open digital records
Online Catalogue and website	Publicly available fields from catalogue data, digitised images
Corporate Content Management System	Information about intakes captured before they are accessioned, including location of records, Records Transfer Forms (file lists) and Digital Transfer Authorisation Reports from internal transfers; Control and Disposal information such as appraisal and cataloguing decisions, withdrawal information, collection care condition assessments, deposit agreements/deeds, loan agreements
User services database	Search room productions, linked to visits and user/visitor data

### 5. Acquisitions

- 5.1 The majority of the Parliamentary Archives' acquisitions come from the internal departments, offices and teams of both Houses of Parliament and the Parliamentary Digital Service.

- 5.2 Departmental/internal acquisitions in all formats are managed by application of the Authorised Records Disposal Practice (ARDP), classification scheme and Collections Development Policy, which outline to Parliamentary teams and offices which records should be transferred to the Archives and which should be disposed of.
- 5.3 For physical records, internal transfers are sent to the Information and Records Management Service (IRMS) by the depositing office. For digital records, the IRMS and Digital Archivists work with the Parliamentary Digital Service to manage export of the record and its associated metadata from the relevant digital system.
- 5.4 For physical records, the IRMS process transfers as an intake, check that the records meet the ARDP criteria, check that appropriate closure periods have been applied by the depositor, looking in particular at records which have been marked in line with the Parliamentary Protective Marking Scheme and record the details in the intake register. The IRMS also check the records transfer forms filled out by the depositor, which contain file/document titles, dates, access status and (if appropriate) the closure period and store the forms on the corporate content management system.
- 5.5 Digital records and metadata are temporarily stored on pre-ingest storage, which is managed by Archives staff and many of the activities described above are undertaken as part of the cataloguing and ingest process.
- 5.6 If the records require further appraisal before accessioning, this is arranged with representatives from across the Archives and takes into account the Collections Development Policy's themes as well as internal staff understanding of the evolving working practices of Parliament. Consultation with the transferring department is sometimes also required.
- 5.7 External acquisitions tend to be acquired on an ad-hoc basis and are managed in accordance with the Collections Development Policy. Decisions about what to accept from external sources are made by a cross-office *Acquisitions Working Group*. Formal transfer of ownership is always required, as well as intellectual property rights (if owned by the depositor). All relevant information is collected from the depositor at the point of acquisition and recorded on legal deposit agreements.

## 6. Accessioning and Cataloguing

- 6.1 Accession records are created on the catalogue at the point of acquisition/deposit, to ensure that all the necessary management information about collections is captured. At a minimum, this includes an accession number, information about terms and date of deposit, the creator and depositor, the covering dates of the material, a brief description, information about rights and access restrictions and its storage location.
- 6.2 For all external acquisitions and some internal transfers (dependent on need), the Collection Care team also do a condition assessment, advise on storage and packaging and note any future conservation treatment which may be necessary.
- 6.3 All cataloguing includes the mandatory elements of the International Council on Archives, General International Standard of Archival Description ISAD[G]. Authority

files are designed to meet the standard ISAAR(CPF) and NCA Rules wherever possible. Internal cataloguing guidelines are also followed.

- 6.4 Staff are trained in accessioning and cataloguing processes and systems and guidance is regularly reviewed and updated.
- 6.5 Information about collections, including catalogue information and digitised or open born digital material is published on the online catalogue and Archives' website (<https://archives.parliament.uk>). The website is managed and regularly reviewed to ensure it meets the standards required by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, as prescribed by legislation affecting all public sector bodies.

## 7. Restrictions and Closure Periods

- 7.1 Collections acquired by the Parliamentary Archives are open unless they are subject to certain access restrictions or closure periods as determined by Freedom of Information or Data Protection legislation, by advice and guidance from The National Archives and the Information Commissioner's Office or which relate to the context, processes and guidance of the creating organisation. Closures and restrictions imposed by depositors are checked by IRMS or Archives staff at the point of deposit.
- 7.2 Accession and catalogue records include information regarding any restrictions on access and users are made aware of any restrictions and their rationale by the information given in the catalogue.
- 7.3 Staff receive training in Data Protection and Freedom of Information and follow documented procedures when advising users, working closely with Parliament's Information Compliance teams.
- 7.4 Requests to view restricted information are considered in the light of Freedom of Information exemptions and Data Protection legislation.

## 8. Location and Movement Control

- 8.1 All collections held by the Parliamentary Archives should have a location to enable them to be found. For material which has not been catalogued, a location is entered on the Accession record in the Collection Management system. Catalogue records at the appropriate level (usually file) should be linked to a valid location in the Collection Management system's location database. For digital records, data written to the catalogue by the Digital Preservation system as part of the ingest workflow ensures the catalogue record is linked to the digital record(s) managed by the preservation system.
- 8.2 Search room productions are recorded on the user services database and triplicate carbon copy document request slips are used to track and record movements of collections from storage for search room usage or other internal Archives business reasons (e.g. conservation, digitisation, enquiries and in-house exhibitions). One part of the request slip is kept with the item, another remains on the shelf, and a final part is retained in the document order book as a record. Document request slips are kept for one year and then disposed of.

- 8.3 The Archives has acquired a tracking management system and is working with the Parliamentary Digital Service to integrate it with the Collection Management system. Collections and shelf locations are being barcoded in preparation for this. Online ordering functionality is also planned, via the online catalogue and website and this system will replace the user services database as the place productions and usage is recorded.
- 8.4 Collections are not sent off-site for conservation or digitisation, but other reasons for material to leave the Parliamentary Archives' custody and control can include:
- External loan for an exhibition
  - Permanent transfer of deaccessioned material to a new home
- 8.5 The removal of material from the Parliamentary Archives for external loan is managed by the Head of Public Services and Outreach and the Collection Care Manager. Approval is sought first from the Director of the Parliamentary Archives and then finally from the Clerk of the Parliaments. Loan agreements and other documentation (e.g. condition assessments, agreements about display and environmental conditions) are stored on the corporate content management system.

## 9. Disposals and Withdrawals

- 9.1 The Parliamentary Archives seeks to acquire material for permanent preservation, in line with the Authorised Records Disposal Policy (ARDP) and Collections Development Policy. The assumption is that material acquired by the Archives will not be withdrawn or disposed of in future.
- 9.2 However, like many archives, as policies, practices, collecting drivers and storage options evolve, some legacy material may be identified which no longer fits with collection criteria, or which may be better suited to another organisation. Due to previous acquisition practices, the Archives also holds some collections on deposit, which the owners could decide to remove from our care.
- 9.3 If collections are removed, whether through permanent withdrawal by the depositor, by mutually agreed transfer to another archive or by disposal, it is recorded in the Collection Management system's Accessions database. If the collection has been publicly available, its withdrawal is also recorded on our online catalogue and online ordering disabled. Other associated documentation or agreements about the disposal or withdrawal are also stored on the corporate content management system.

## 10. Protecting Collections Information

- 10.1 The Parliamentary Digital Service (PDS) either directly manages, or manages supplier contracts to ensure the storage and back up of all digital systems, including in the case of contractor hosting (the Archives website and online catalogue is hosted by the supplier rather than Parliament). Parliament operates a Cloud First policy, so all systems used by the Archives are hosted on cloud storage, with supplier contracts managed by PDS.
- 10.2 PDS maintain an emergency plan for IT systems and infrastructure, which forms part of the strategy for safeguarding digital content, systems and collections.

## Appendix A – Relevant Standards and Frameworks

The Parliamentary Archives refers to the below list of current standards and frameworks to decide its collections information practices, procedures and guidance. This list will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

- PAS 197:2009 Code of Practice for Cultural Collections Management
- International Council on Archives, General International Standard Archival Description [ISAD (G)], 2nd edition, 1999
- International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR (CPF), 2004)
- National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names
- PREservation Metadata: Implementation Strategies Data Dictionary (PREMIS)
- BS ISO 14721:2012 – Space data and information transfer systems. Open archival information system (OAIS). Reference model
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1