

Access Policy

Hull History Centre is a partnership between Hull City Council and the University of Hull. The City Council's obligations to the partnership are administered and delivered on its behalf by Hull Culture & Leisure Ltd (HCAL) a wholly owned Hull City Council company. The partners aim to provide a seamless service to stakeholders and the following should therefore be read as applying to both partners unless otherwise stated.

The Hull History Centre is recognised by The National Archives as an official place of deposit for public records.

The vision of Hull History Centre is to make history available for all, for research, for learning and for leisure and to inspire interest in the City of Hull, its significant past, present and future.

This policy details the provision of access in all its forms to the holdings of the Hull History Centre and deals with the following areas:

1. Our communities.
2. Legal and other restrictions on access.
3. Physical access to the History Centre.
4. Remote access to the History Centre.
5. Promotion of the service.
6. Education and outreach.

1. Our communities

Hull History Centre exists to provide access to its holdings to all, making no distinction between users; we will not advantage one type of research over another.

We aim to provide equality of access to our services and recognise that some users face difficulties in accessing our services. We report to the Hull History Centre Board the outcomes of reviews of our building and services to ensure that all efforts are made to remove or minimise potential barriers to access. We apply to our service the relevant policies of the City Council and the University.

We will pursue ways of developing new audiences to encourage and increase engagement with our collections.

We will seek the views of our stakeholders about our services regularly, through various means including participation in national benchmark surveys, for example the Archives and Records Association (ARA) Survey of Visitors to British Archives. The results of these surveys will be used to inform the development of the services.

Comments cards are available for visitors to provide feedback on our services. These are reviewed and suggestions may be used to inform service development.

Any complaints received will be addressed by the City Archivist and/or the University Library's Collections Development Manager. Complaints that relate to the service will generally be addressed through the HCAL complaints procedure.

2. Legal and other restrictions on access

Hull History Centre is committed to making available its collections as widely as possible. We operate within a UK legislative framework that includes Data Protection, and Freedom of Information. On occasion, additional restrictions on access will be agreed with a depositor as part of the negotiated terms and conditions of deposit. Copying of material is subject to copyright legislation.

We must balance access with preservation of the collections to ensure their survival for future generations. Therefore, some documents will only be made available as surrogates, for example microfilm, digitisation, or photography. In line with our *Collections Care and Conservation Policy*, it may not be possible to produce others because of their fragility.

Any restrictions on access to documents for any reason will be clearly stated in the finding aids.

3. Physical access to the History Centre

Access to Hull History Centre and onsite use of the collections and surrogates is free of charge. We will ensure that our opening hours are widely publicised, and any changes are only made after consultation with our stakeholders.

We facilitate access to the collections once they have been catalogued and received any necessary conservation or preservation work. The catalogues are made available in paper form onsite and via our online catalogue. We maintain a range of card indexes.

We recognise that many of our users require help and guidance to use the service and collections. We are committed to helping visitors to get the best from their visit. We aim to facilitate this through the provision of information and resources online, a remote enquires service, and appropriate levels of public-facing staff, including a librarian/archivist always being on duty in the Searchroom during opening hours.

Access to the collections must be balanced with the requirements of preserving them for future generations. Archives and rare books can only be consulted in the Searchroom under invigilation. We have established procedures, which are publicly available, to ensure the security and integrity of the material. Some material is only being available for consultation on microfilm. We provide guidance about how to use the Searchroom.

We support users to acquire copies of items in our collections, subject to copyright legislation and preservation concerns. Copies may be requested remotely and in person, and can usually be provided in digital or hardcopy formats. Low resolution working copies are a more affordable alternative to high resolution publication-standard copies. Users may take their own images using a digital camera, phone, or tablet device; fees apply.

Information relating to the use of the service, including details of fees and charges, is published in the Hull History Centre and on our website.

We are part of the Hull Libraries network and provide membership enrolment. Members of Hull Libraries can borrow books from the Hull History Centre and use our IT services. We require users of the Searchroom to have a Hull Libraries card.

4. Remote access to the History Centre services

We recognise that a growing number of our users will never visit the Hull History Centre and engage with our service and our collections remotely. We are committed to making our catalogues available online at <http://catalogue.hullhistorycentre.org.uk>. Online access to our catalogues and information about the service is free of charge.

Users can submit requests to the Hull History Centre's Enquiry Service by post, telephone or email. We can research information within the collections, and supply copies of documents, subject to copyright. There is a charge for this service.

5. Promotion of the service

Hull History Centre is committed to promoting our service and collections to encourage research and learning, and inspire interest in the City of Hull, locally, nationally, and internationally. We engage with local and national print and broadcast media. We provide local history information to media outlets on request and facilitate filming and recording on site while maintaining a balance between the needs of the media and the preservation of the collections. We will provide members of staff to be interviewed where appropriate. There may be a charge for this to cover staff time.

We maintain and develop Hull History Centre's website <http://www.hullhistorycentre.org.uk> as a key element of our online engagement strategy as detailed in our *Social Media Policy*. The website includes information about the service, our collections, details of events and courses,

and our online catalogue. Recognising that an increasing number of users prefer remote access, we are committed to increasing online engagement through a variety of forums including blogs, online exhibitions, and YouTube talks.

6. Education and outreach

Hull History Centre will plan and deliver programmes of learning and events to engage people with the collections, to raise educational attainment and aspiration, and to raise public understanding of archives. This may include:

- a. An educational offer for schools.
- b. Activities and events aimed at children and families.
- c. Displays and exhibitions.
- d. Volunteer opportunities.

This policy will be reviewed every two years.

Last updated: October 2024

To be reviewed: October 2024