



**Knowsley Council
Customer Services
Knowsley Archives Service:
The ARK (Archive Resource for Knowsley)**

Archive Policy

May 2023

Revision date: May 2025

1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1 This policy is one of a set of policies which provide a strategic framework for Knowsley Archives Service, based in The ARK (Archive Resource for Knowsley). It offers an overview of the ARK operations and is expanded upon by the Access, Collections Conservation, Collections Management, Digital, Archives Remote Enquiries and Archive Research Service policies.
- 1.2 Knowsley Archives Service, based in The ARK: Archive Resource for Knowsley, is part of Knowsley Library Service which is a section of the Customer Services Department of Knowsley Council.
- 1.3 The Archive Team and Service plans feed into the Knowsley's Corporate Plan 2022-25 and the Knowsley 2030 Strategy, which sets out how the Knowsley Better Together Partnership will create a safe, healthy and thriving community.
- 1.4 The ARK houses a wide range of historical records and documents which reflect the history of the people, places and events of the area which makes up the present-day borough of Knowsley.
- 1.5 The Archive Service's aims, enshrined in its Mission Statement, are:
 - to collect, preserve and organise archive materials relating to the people and places of Knowsley;
 - to make the collections available to researchers and individuals;
 - to encourage individuals and groups to engage with the collections for educational and recreational purposes and to develop a sense of pride and place in Knowsley's communities;
 - to promote the heritage of the borough.

2. Conditions

- 2.1 The ARK holds historical documents in a variety of formats that record the social, economic and political history of the people and communities that make up the modern borough of Knowsley, dating back to the 13th century.

- 2.2 The Archive Service, ARCHON code 1076, is approved by The National Archives on behalf of the Lord Chancellor as a Place of Deposit for public records concerning some hospital and Magistrates' Court Petty Sessions records under s4(1) of the Public Records Act 1958 and records of the Charity Commission under s3(6) of the Public Records Act 1958. It is also authorised to collect and maintain heritage collections, including official records of Knowsley Borough Council and its predecessor authorities, under the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, amended by the Local Government Act 1985.

3. Collections Management

- 3.1 The Archive Service aims to collect relevant materials that relate to the geographical area which makes up the present-day borough of Knowsley, and welcomes offers of deposit from individuals, businesses and organisations.
- 3.2 The types of material that will be collected include:
- local government records of Knowsley MBC and its predecessor authorities;
 - public records allowed under the Public Records Act;
 - records relating to individuals, clubs, societies, organisations and businesses.
- 3.3 The types of material that will not usually be accepted are:
- records that do not relate to the Knowsley area;
 - records that would be better placed in another archive;
 - records which have no historic value;
 - duplicates of items already held;
 - artefacts, unless they form an integral part of a wider, archival collection. Knowsley's Museum Service will collect Knowsley related artefacts in line with its collections policy.
- 3.4 All potential deposits will be assessed for their relevance and condition prior to acceptance and the Archive Service reserves the right to refuse an item if it does not meet its criteria. Advice will be given on alternative repositories if the Archive Service is unable to accept the deposit and depositors will be signposted to the most suitable location. In making sure that collections sit in the most appropriate place, the Archive Service recognises the reciprocal arrangement made with The Archive Group: Liverpool City Region (TAG), which represents repositories including local authority, academic, business and independent archives across the sector in the Merseyside area.
- 3.5 The archive collections are managed in line with approved policies and procedures and within the current standards and best practice

guidance framework developed by The National Archives. Services are developed and delivered with reference to the Archive and Records Association's Code of Conduct, which distils the International Council on Archives Code of Ethics, and the Archive Service recognises the Universal Declaration on Archives, adopted by UNESCO and voiced by the International Council on Archives.

4. Acquisition and De-accessioning

- 4.1 Acquisition and disposal of archive material for permanent preservation by internal transfer from Council departments will be made in accordance with existing KMBC records management policy and retention schedules. In the case of public records, the Archive Service will maintain them as agreed with The National Archives under sections 6, 4(3) and 4(6) of the Public Records Act.
- 4.2 Deposits from members of the public, including groups and organisations, which concern the people, places and activities of the communities that make up the present-day borough of Knowsley will be accepted. On deposit, title of the collections will transfer to Knowsley Archives Service unless otherwise specified. Details of the deposited collections will be documented to capture as much information about the provenance, administrative and ownership history of the items as possible and the depositor will be provided with a copy of the accession documentation if required.
- 4.3 In situations where the item or collection is offered to the Archive on loan, a loan agreement will be put in place, specifying the loan period and any other conditions. At the end of the loan period, the items will be returned to the loaner, be retained under an extended loan agreement by arrangement or be deposited by the loaner, with title transferring to the Archive Service unless otherwise specified.
- 4.4 All items deposited will be fully catalogued and the catalogue record made available to the public for research purposes. The items can then be viewed in the Search Room, subject to their physical condition and any relevant closure periods.
- 4.5 Efforts will be made to keep collections together and to avoid duplication with other archive services.
- 4.6 Items which do not meet the criteria, duplicates or surrogate copies of original items already in the collections will be de-accessioned and either disposed of as appropriate or transferred to a more relevant repository.

5. Digital

- 5.1 The Archive Service recognises that in order to deliver on our core digital offer, concerning preservation, conservation, promotion, education and access, we must develop our infrastructure to enable us to engage in the necessary digital workstreams: select and transfer; ingest; preserve and access.
- 5.2 The Archive Service also recognises the challenges to digital preservation, in the form of the obsolescence of hardware and software and the longevity of storage media which can lead to the degradation of digital records.
- 5.3 The Archive Service will work in collaboration with Knowsley Council's IT Department and in-house E-Services Team to keep up to date with the evolving technology and to ensure that adequate storage is available to preserve the digital records in the most appropriate format, as defined in the Digital Policy.
- 5.4 Robust systems for the safe transfer, management, conservation, preservation of and access to digital records will be put in place, as described in the Digital Policy.

6. Cataloguing

- 6.1 Effective finding aids will be created so that researchers can access the collections, creating a comprehensive online catalogue using the recognised archive management system, Axiell Calm.
- 6.2 Listings and indices will be made available to supplement this and to provide access to collections whose records are in the process of conversion to digital format.
- 6.3 Information about the collections and how to access them will be made available on the ARK webpages, which will include links to the relevant sites and documents. Leaflets and guides will be produced as appropriate.
- 6.4 The finding aids will be created in compliance with ISAD(g) to ensure accuracy, consistency and relevance.

7. Conservation

- 7.1 The Archives Service aims to preserve the documents in the collections for future generations and will carry out the necessary processes to make sure that the collections are conserved.

- 7.2 The expertise of conservation specialists will be utilised to assess the condition of the collections and the ARK will undertake to carry out their recommendations.
- 7.3 ARK staff will complete an annual stock take over an advertised 2-week closure period to check the status, condition and packaging of materials and take action based on the findings.
- 7.4 As collections are accessed, staff will check their condition and prioritise conservation needs, considering digitising items to reduce physical handling which can cause damage to fragile materials.
- 7.5 In order to ensure the best possible care of the collections, the Archive Service reserves the right to restrict public access to items which are very fragile.
- 8. Storage**
- 8.1 The collections are housed in secure, temperature and humidity-controlled conditions, where they are preserved and organised in line with PD5454:2012 (Guide for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Materials).
- 8.2 The materials are then made available to the public for research and consultation in the ARK search room.
- 8.3 Any original archive materials put on public display will be housed in appropriate, secure cases in accordance with the recommendations made in PD5454:2012.
- 9. Access**
- 9.1 The Archive Service is committed to improving and broadening access to the heritage collections and services, both in the ARK and in the community by:
- creating effective finding aids so that researchers can access materials, e.g., creating an online catalogue using Axiell Calm;
 - allowing physical access to the archive collections in the search room
 - providing opportunities for people to engage with heritage collections and services including family history, e.g., the Family History Help Desk; events and activities;
 - developing new audiences for the ARK;
 - raising the profile of the ARK by participating in regional and national networks and projects;
 - making items available online through a selective digitisation programme;
 - working in partnership with other agencies and community groups to deliver focused, interpretative heritage sessions to schools and the wider community;



- offering an enquiry and advice service in line with the ARK's Remote Enquiry and Research Service policies;
 - offering opportunities for people to volunteer with the ARK.
- 9.2 Access to the collections is provided in the ARK search room, situated in Kirkby Library on the 1st floor of the Kirkby Centre, accessible by stair and lift.
- 9.3 Appropriately qualified and experienced staff will be available to supervise and facilitate visits and deal with customer enquiries.
- 9.4 Researchers can access the collections during normal library opening hours and an appointment system is in place to allow planned access to the Archive.
- 9.5 Information about archive services, including operating hours and search room procedures, will be disseminated through a variety of means, including social media platforms, the ARK web pages, leaflets and posters and through community engagement.
- 10. Policy Review**
- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed every 2 years to make sure that it remains relevant and supports the Archive Service.

This policy was approved on 09.10.17 by the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Wellbeing and Customer Services and the Assistant Executive Director (Public Health and Wellbeing) and thereby are adopted by KMBC. Revised May 2020, May 2023.