



Durham County Record Office

Digitisation Policy 2021 to 2024

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Digitisation Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Our digitisation policy exists to ensure that our collections are properly managed and preserved and made available in the most appropriate manner. It should be read alongside our other policies, in particular our Copying Policy, Access Policy, Learning and Outreach Policy and Digital Preservation Policy.

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. 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.
- 3.2 This policy applies to digitisation orders from internal and external customers.

4. Policy Principles

- 4.1 Our digitisation programme aims to:
- assist in preservation of the archives
 - widen access to the archives, especially online
 - enhance our learning offer
 - where possible and appropriate, generate income to help care for the archives

5. Policy requirements

- 5.1 We carry out digitisation:

- on demand, copying specific archives to meet customer orders
 - on demand, copying customers' own material
 - to preserve specific archives, such as church registers
 - to promote specific archives, the archives service, or the Council
 - to make specific archives accessible for our education and outreach activities
 - to upload images to our website as part of a planned programme
- 5.2 Staff and volunteers, fully trained in safe handling of archives and in the use of relevant equipment and software, carry out digitisation.
- 5.3 We create a master copy and retain it following our Digital Preservation Policy.
- 5.4 Surrogate copies are taken from the master file, in a format appropriate to their purpose.
- 5.5 In some instances, with permission from staff and for a fee, visitors can use their own digital camera to photograph documents.

6. Standards

- 6.1 See Appendix 1 for statutory position.
- 6.2 Of particular relevance is the Open Archival Information Systems (OAIS) Reference Model, which defines a high-level functional model for a digital repository. It specifies the terms, concepts, and reference model for a system dedicated to preserving digital assets for a designated community. This standard is widely used in the digital preservation community. We will seek to align our policies with the OAIS model wherever practicable.

7. Roles and responsibilities

- 7.1 DCC Corporate Management Team is responsible for approving the corporate framework for the preservation of archival records as set out in this policy.
- 7.2 DCC Corporate Directors are responsible for developing service guidance for the preservation of archival records.
- 7.3 DCC Heads of Services are responsible for ensuring that appropriate resources are in place to enable compliance with the Digitisation Policy.
- 7.4 Individual Employees are responsible for the records they create and will follow service guidance for the preservation of archival records. DCC owns the information that individual employees create.

- 7.5 The County Archivist is responsible for DCC's Digitisation Policy, and will provide guidance and support to services and elected members in order to support its aims.
- 7.6 The Digitisation Policy will apply to records created by Elected Members as part of their Council work.

8. Communication

- 8.1 The Digitisation Policy will be published on the DCRO website.

9. Audit

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

10. Risk Management

- 10.1 Without a policy and procedures for digitisation, there are a series of risks:
- Damage to historically important records.
 - Restricted access to archives, placing remote users at a disadvantage, creating bad public relations and damage to reputation.
 - Restricted funding opportunities.

11. Review

We will review this policy every three years.

12. Contacts

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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