



Museum nan Eilean

Collection Documentation Policy

Reviewed: November 2016

Policy adopted: December 2016

Date for review: December 2019

1. Introduction

Documentation underpins every aspect of museum activity. Recording collection information is central to being accountable for the collections, their accessibility, management, research, study and use.

Our policy for the documentation of the collections is to ensure that the information we hold relating to the collections is accurate, secure, reliable and accessible.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that we fulfil our responsibilities in relation to security, management and access to collections by improving accountability for the collections, maintaining professional standards in documentation procedures and collection information, extending access to collection information, strengthening the security of the collections

In order to improve access and accountability, we will enter all new records onto the museum database. Over time and in a phased programme, we will digitise our older paper records, ensuring that copies are kept securely.

2. Ethics and Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with and with consideration for the following guidelines or legislation that guides this area of Museum nan Eilean's work:

- Data Protection Act (1998)
- Freedom of Information Act (2000)
- Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulation (2004)
- Museums Association Code of Ethics (2015)
- Human Remains Policy (*draft, to be completed December 2016*)
- Comhairle Customer Care Standards
- Gaelic Plan /Plana na Gaidhlig

We will review requests for confidential data such as donor information, environmental information, valuations or site details on a case by case basis, and in accordance with the applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of gift.

3. Definitions

We will document our collections to either Inventory or Catalogue level, as described below:

- Inventory level: This includes sufficient key information to meet SPECTRUM standards and to allow any object(s) in our care to be individually identified and verified. All accessioned items and loans inward and outward, and the unaccessioned handling collection are documented at this level.
- Catalogue level: We will identify the collections that merit further, more detailed documentation, thus raising the standard of information to catalogue level. Such documentation will include the known history of a specimen and references to any relevant publication etc.

4. Accountability

4.1 Definition of accountability

We are committed to at least maintaining the minimum level of collections documentation that will allow us to identify and locate all items for which we are legally responsible, including all loans.

4.3 Security against loss of irreplaceable collection information

We have in place measures to ensure the physical security and long-term preservation of all documentation records, whether paper or digitised. We will update all manual and digitised records as appropriate. Nightly backups will be made to secure digital data. Where collection information is wholly

digitised and managed centrally we will make backup copies of all key files, and where considered appropriate, house them securely off-site.

STANDARDS

We are committed to ensuring that all documentation procedures meet SPECTRUM standards (<http://www.mda.org.uk/spectrum.htm>) especially with regard to object entry, acquisition, loans, location and movement, cataloguing and exit.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Documentation Procedure Manual which sets out day-to-day procedures.

ACCESS TO COLLECTIONS INFORMATION

We are committed to working towards improving access to the collections information for all users through improved documentation and ensuring that all enquiries are answered within the timescales set out in Comhairle policy. We will work towards ensuring that all records are kept up to date and checked for accuracy.