



SECURITY POLICY

Introduction

Northumberland Archives is committed to ensuring the physical safety and security of all the Archive collections that it preserves.

The Service aims to take all reasonable measures to protect its collections from loss, destruction or damage and its buildings from unauthorised entry. This policy outlines the procedures which are in place at both Woodhorn and the Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office to ensure the security of the collections in their care.

1. PHYSICAL INTRUDER PREVENTION AND DETECTION SYSTEMS

- 1.1 The archive premises at Woodhorn and Berwick-upon-Tweed are both protected by intruder alarm systems which automatically contact the Alarm Company and the Police, if unauthorised access is attempted. A member of staff always attends "calls out" to ensure that the building and the documents are secure. Both systems are serviced at least twice a year.
- 1.2 Entry to the archive storage areas is restricted to Archive staff or to visiting personnel, accompanied by a member of staff.

At Woodhorn, access to the storage area is protected by an electronic pass system to the back of house area and then by keys to individual strongrooms..

At Berwick, access to the Store Unit and the storeroom downstairs in the Walkergate building is limited to Archive key holders only (Berwick Record Office staff) or by contractors accompanied by a member of staff . Access to the areas are key fobbed or alarm controlled.

- 1.3 Both buildings are securely locked and alarmed when not being used by staff. Access to keys for either building is limited to designated keyholders.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL SYSTEMS

- 2.1 Both premises use various environmental controls in their strongroom areas to ensure the long term preservation of the archives in their custody. They both adhere to recommendations found in PD5454::2012 "*Guide for the Storage and Exhibition of Archival Materials*", particularly in relation to temperature and humidity.

At Woodhorn, monitors to the exterior of the strongrooms provide constant temperature and humidity readings. Data from the BMS system is tabulated to provide twice daily reports of readings. Occasionally spot checks of readings at various locations in the strongrooms are taken to supplement this information. The data is analysed and if conditions are not satisfactory, measures are taken to rectify this.

At Berwick, there is no electronically controlled air conditioning system. Instead, the Storage Unit is heated by a thermostatically controlled gas system with fans to circulate the air. Temperature and humidity are checked weekly using a hand held thermohygrograph. The results are analysed and recorded to ensure that the conditions are suitable for the storage of documents. Again measures are taken to rectify unsatisfactory conditions.

3. FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION SYSTEMS

Smoking is not allowed in either of the Northumberland Archives buildings at Woodhorn or Berwick. Fire and emergency exit signs are prominently displayed in both buildings and staff are aware of the emergency evacuation procedures. Staff are also instructed on the location of fire extinguishers and in their use.

3.1 Fire can have a devastating affect on archives and so the following precautions are taken at Woodhorn and Berwick.

At Woodhorn, the strongrooms are protected by an Argonite fire suppression system. The system is serviced regularly by qualified personnel. In addition each strongroom has a 4 hour resistant fire door to protect the area from external fires or to contain any threat.

At Berwick, the Store Unit does not have an automatic fire extinguishing system but has several CO2 fire extinguishers suitable for dealing with small incidents. In addition, the area is fitted with a fire alarm connected to an external company who alert staff of call outs. The system is a series of smoke detectors and sensors. The system is regularly serviced by outside contractors and faulty equipment replaced.

3.2 Each premise is visited once a year by the Fire Service and the Fire Safety Officer to check that the fire precautions in force are acceptable and that earlier recommendations for improvement have been carried out.

4 USERS

There is a recognised conflict between providing access to collections and to preserving them for future use. To ensure a minimum risk to the archives, the following measures are in place :

- 4.1** All members of the public wishing to use the searchrooms at Woodhorn and Berwick **must** register before they can use the service. From 1 June 2017 we have introduced the CARN system to replace the previously used Woodhorn card.
- 4.2** The following procedures are in operation in the searchrooms at both Woodhorn and Berwick to ensure the security of the documents in their care :
- 4.2.1** Visitors are asked to bring a limited number of belongings into the searchroom area of each office. **At Woodhorn** users may only bring a notebook, pencils and laptop into the Study Centre. All other belongings must be placed in the lockers provided. At Berwick, visitors must place all belongings not required in the lockers provided in the Searchroom.
- 4.2.2** All members of the public must sign the Visitors' Book on entering the searchrooms at both **Woodhorn and Berwick**. By doing so, they are agreeing to adhere to the Searchroom Rules (see Appendix 1). They should also tick the book when they leave.
- 4.2.3** Pencils must always be used in the searchrooms to ensure that original documents are not damaged or defaced.
- 4.2.4** In many instances, users will consult surrogate copies (usually on microfilm or microfiche) instead of original documents, particularly for family history resources including parish registers. This prevents wear and tear on the original documents through constant use and ensures their long term preservation.
- 4.2.5** If users wish to consult original documents, they must complete and sign a "Document Request Slip". Users may only consult three documents at any one time and all documents must be returned to the desk after they have been used. No documents may be removed by users from the searchroom. If any member of the public is found to have removed documents, their user card will automatically be cancelled and they will be refused entry to the searchrooms at Woodhorn and Berwick.
- 4.2.6** During normal opening hours the searchroom area of each office will not be left unattended. A member of staff will always be present to ensure that the documents are not defaced or removed from the area and that the room is properly invigilated.

5 CLOSURE PERIODS

Northumberland Archives operates closure periods on some classes of records because of the sensitivity of the information that they contain. These closure periods can either be statutory or at the request of a

depositor. If individual documents or classes of records are affected, this will be indicated in the catalogue entry.

6 LOANS/ DOCUMENTS IN TRANSIT

- 6.1** Original documents cannot be removed from the Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn or Berwick without the permission of the owner and the approval of the Head of Collections or the Berwick Archivist. A form must be completed and signed before any document can be removed. If the removal is temporary, an approximate date of return must be entered on the form.
- 6.2** Documents which are to be temporarily transferred from one office to another must be transported in suitable packaging and should not be left unattended during transit.

7 RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW

- 7.1** The overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy rests with the Head of Collections.
- 7.2** This policy will be reviewed within three years, or earlier, if required.

8. POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years, and if appropriate, amended to maintain its relevance

June 2007

Review Date: June 2010

Reviewed June 2017

APPENDIX 1

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED RECORD OFFICE

SEARCH ROOM RULES

These byelaws have been drawn up to ensure the longterm preservation of the documents in the Record Office's custody and for the effective running of the Searchroom for both the public and the staff. On signing the visitor's book, you have agreed to conform to the following regulations which are in operation in this Office :

1. **Access to Documents** : members of the public have access to the documents in the Record Office's custody during its normal public opening hours providing they have been catalogued, are in a reasonable state of repair and are not affected by statutory closure periods or restrictions imposed by their owners. Access to documents outside public hours may be granted at the discretion of the [Berwick](#) Archivist on receipt of a written request.
2. **Use of Documents** : the documents kept in the Record Office are unique and irreplaceable. Please treat them with care and respect - only use pencils to make notes; do not lean on the documents; keep the documents in the correct order and do not refold them against the original fold; ask for a protective cover to do tracings.
3. **Production of Documents** : documents will not be produced unless a document production slip is completed for each item. A maximum of three items can be ordered at one time and no additional items will be issued unless other items are returned to the [Berwick](#) Archivist. The Record Office reserves the right not to produce items which are in a poor state of repair, too fragile to handle or governed by a closure period. Any document which has been microfilmed must be consulted in this medium. Documents will not be produced within 30 minutes of lunchtime or evening closure.
4. **Publication of Documents** : Anyone wishing to reproduce or publish documents held in the Record Office must inform the [Berwick](#) Archivist in writing who will seek permission from the owner. An administrative charge is made for this service.
5. **Transcript Work** : Anyone doing transcript work or indexing for their own use or for the Record Office must complete a Transcript Declaration Form. Please ask staff for further information.
6. **Photocopying Arrangements and Copyright** : photocopy orders will only be accepted on completion of a Copyright Declaration Form and the documents being in a suitable state of repair or of a manageable size for the photocopier. Outsize items can be photographed - ask staff for details. Items affected by closure periods will not be photocopied without written permission from the owner. Photocopy orders cannot be dealt with immediately unless the Express Service is requested and paid for.

7. **Opening Hours and Lunchtime Closure** : the Record Office is open from 9.30 to 1.00 and 2.00 to 5.00 on Wednesdays and Thursdays. At lunchtimes the public must leave the Searchroom.

8. **Use of Equipment** : The use of mobile phones in the Searchroom is strictly forbidden.

9. **Food and Drink** : No food (including sweets) or drink can be consumed in the Searchroom.

10. **Smoking** : smoking is not permitted anywhere in the building because of smoke and fire alarm systems.

11. **Quiet Working** : the public are asked to work quietly and not to disturb those working around them.

Thank you for your co-operation