

Lambeth Archives access policy

1. Introduction

Lambeth Archives will provide the widest possible access to the material it holds and the subjects they represent.

It will do so irrespective of enquirers' age, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or disability, and of the subject of the enquiry and of the use to which the information might be put.

Lambeth Archives will make additional efforts to make material accessible to those who traditionally make a low use of archives services.

2. Access approaches

2.1. Personal visitors

The service will operate opening hours outside standard office hours; have appropriately qualified, helpful and knowledgeable staff on duty; provide accessible comprehensive finding aids; provide speedy and reliable retrieval of documents ordered from its stores; allow access with minimal necessary identification formalities; provide facilities for disabled users, and provide adequate notice of planned closures.

2.2. Remote enquiries

2.2.1. Correspondence

The service will offer clear guidelines on what enquiries we are able to answer and on what terms – requests for information about its holdings, about how to gain access or to offer straightforward advice on search strategies, or for small amounts of information that can be retrieved quickly will be dealt with free of charge - ; we will offer paid services through which enquirers can obtain copies from specified sources or have research undertaken on their behalf; the service aims to respond to all enquiries within council-wide target response times; its replies will be courteous and complete; its enquiry service will comply to Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.

2.2.2. Phone

A telephone enquiry service will be available at all hours when the service is open; a voicemail will be available at other times; the service aims to make an initial response to voice mail messages within half a day of receipt.

2.2.3. Web publishing

Lambeth Archives will contribute to and maintain currency of information about its services and collection on the council's web site and will continue to sustain and add to the web publishing initiatives it is involved in including www.lambethlandmark.com and www.ideal-homes.org.uk.

2.3 Community engagement

The service will undertake a range of outreach and promotional activities to raise awareness and increase and broaden use of its services, collections and the subjects they represent. The service will do this through a talks, events, publications; displays and exhibitions and work with learners and those in formal education.

3. Supporting activities

The service will maintain finding aids to the collections, including catalogues indexes and leaflets; where possible we will make these available over the web.

Copying by photocopy, photographic copy and by readers using their own photographic equipment is generally available, but ultimately at our discretion; no reason needs to be given to deny access for any copying. All copying must be within copyright law, the service's terms for commercial reproduction and the consideration the service gives to physical condition of the document

The service will produce and distribute publicity material in print and via web pages, which will be findable, retrievable, accurate, timely and relevant.

4. Consultation

The service will consult over policy and quality in execution through Lambeth Local History Forum, participation in PSQG surveys and through user and community feedback and complaints processes.

5. Responsibility

Responsibility for oversight of the procedures that flow from this is with the Archives and Library manager; the daily management of personal visitors is with whichever senior member of staff is assigned desk duty; of remote enquiries and of preservation sits with the archivist, and for cataloguing sits with the archivist and local studies librarian.

6. Status

This policy has been approved by the Head of Libraries, Archives and Arts and will be reviewed in three years.

August 2010