Cataloguing Policy

February 2017

Our Mission

The West Yorkshire Archive Service exists to preserve the past, serve the present and protect the future. We do this by collecting and looking after the unique documentary heritage of the region and by helping members of the public use and enjoy these records.

Preserving the past, serving the present, protecting the future

Our Vision

To provide a welcoming and engaging service that will inspire people to use the archives of West Yorkshire, enabling them to celebrate their identity and understand their past, present and future.

Introduction

The West Yorkshire Archive Service [WYAS] is committed to produce catalogues of their collections to conform to all current archival standards. Every attempt is made to ensure our catalogues are clear, consistent and as helpful as possible to both archive users and staff.

Standards

All current WYAS cataloguing conforms to the following standards:

- The General International Standard Archival Description 2nd edition [ISAD_G] published by the International Council on Archives, 2000 available at http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/ISAD(G).pdf
- The National Council on Archives: Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names [NCA Rules] published by The National Council on Archives, 1997 available at http://www.archives.org.uk/images/documents/Publications/namingrules.pdf
- The International Standard Archival Authority for Corporate Bodies, Persons and families 2nd edition [ISAAR (CPF)] published by the International Council on Archives, 2003 available at http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/CBPS_Guidelines_ISAAR_Second-edition_EN.pdf
- Subject indexing terms are taken from the UK Archival Thesaurus [UKAT] available at http://www.ukat.org.uk

Future developments in international standards for archival description will inform any changes made to the Cataloguing Policy of the West Yorkshire Archive Service. These include:

- Records in Contexts – a Conceptual Model for Archival Description, Consultation Draft v0.1 [RiC-CM] published by the Experts Group on Archival Description of the International Council on Archives, 2016 available at http://www.ica.org/en/egad-ric-conceptual-model

Funding

WYAS dedicates staff time and resources to catalogue collections. There are Professional Archivists in all five offices who are allocated varying levels of Collections work depending on their time and post.
WYAS does not expect depositors to fund cataloguing work unless they wish priority cataloguing of their collections.

WYAS will also seek external funding for specific cataloguing projects.

Cataloguing Software

WYAS uses the 'Calm' cataloguing and collection management software provided by Axiell for internal staff use. The online front of the catalogue is also provided by Axiell and is called 'Calmview'.

Staffing

Cataloguing work should usually be undertaken by professional members of staff who have been trained in both archival theory and archival description and who have also received training on WYAS in-house cataloguing procedure.

Some levels of cataloguing work may be undertaken by other staff or volunteers if they are working under the supervision of a qualified professional member of staff and if the cataloguing work requires no appraisal or hierarchical structuring.

All staff who are involved in cataloguing work at any level within WYAS will receive in-house training on how to catalogue to WYAS standards and how to use the cataloguing software, Calm [see Cataloguing Software].

Content of Catalogues

The content of catalogues produced by WYAS will conform to the rules set out by ISAD_G. The following elements are considered mandatory for ISAD_G:

- Reference code [a unique code to identify records]
- Title
- Creator
- Date
- Extent
- Level of Description

ISAD_G rules state that:

- Description should be from the general to the specific
- Information is only provided that is relevant to the level being described
- Descriptions are linked to other levels
- Information is not repeated at separate levels

A cataloguing manual is available to aid staff and all catalogues will be created in line with this manual.

Levels of Cataloguing

Wherever possible WYAS staff will aim to produce full, multilevel, structured catalogues. Due to the extent of collections currently held [and with new collections being received continually] this level of cataloguing is not always achievable in the short term.

Sometimes, especially for larger collections, box listing is a more efficient way of allowing archive users initial access to the content of the collections.

WYAS also hold many old paper catalogues, which due to their age are not in electronic format and do not conform to current standards. WYAS has a strategy to convert these paper lists into searchable electronic lists that can be added to Calm.

This is done using Optical Character Recognition software [OCR software] and where possible these old paper lists are restructured to reflect current standards when they are added into Calm. Once in Calm they are checked by a member of staff before being published to the online catalogue, Calmview.

Availability of Catalogues

WYAS aims to catalogue all collections held to allow the best access possible to collections that are open to the public for research [see Access to Records Policy].

Once a collection has been catalogued and checked to ensure it conforms to the standards stated within this policy, its status in Calm will change from 'draft' which indicates a catalogue is still a work in progress, to 'Catalogued' which indicates that work has been completed on this collection. This will also allow the contents of the catalogue to go through to our online catalogue 'Calmview' where archive users can search for content.

Where appropriate WYAS will seek to share and make available cataloguing metadata in aggregate online catalogues hosted by other organisations to improve the discoverability of collections in our care. Examples of such aggregate sites include 'Discovery' at the National Archives and the Archives Hub hosted by Jisc.

Hard copies of all our catalogues are also available in the relevant office search room. A copy of the catalogue will also be sent to the depositor free of charge if requested.

WYAS conforms to current legislation relating to release of information in certain restricted collections and details of this are covered in our Access to Records Policy.

Review

This policy is issued in February 2017 and will be reviewed and updated as necessary every three years.