

Terms of Reference

Heritage Collections Advisory Group (HCAG)

Approved on: 7th December 2021

To be reviewed by: 7th December 2023

1. Establishment of the Group

- 1.1 The HCAG is established as an informal network of representative sector organisations and individuals with a common interest in the promotion and safeguarding of specialist collections, knowledge and expertise in libraries, archives, museums, Universities and related knowledge and memory institutions.
- 1.2 The primary activities of the group will be:
 - Advocacy
 - Collaboration
 - Sector development
- 1.3 The group is established on an 'opt-in' basis and is not empowered to make representation on behalf of any of the participants without their express prior consent.

2. Scope and approach

- 2.1 The participants in the group share a common belief in the need for positive, proactive and constructive advocacy of the value and impact of specialist collections, knowledge and research in supporting the educational and social mission and public task of libraries, archives, museums, Universities and related knowledge and memory institutions.
- 2.2 Where possible, the group will seek to engage decision-makers in and facilitate understanding of the value of specialist collections, knowledge or expertise.
- 2.3 We will engage constructively with employers to promote the retention of access to specialist collections, knowledge or expertise.
- 2.4 We have set out our principles to advocate for the value of specialist collections, knowledge and expertise in a Statement of Principles.

3. International focus

- 3.1 The majority of the Group's work will be focused on the UK, but we may from time to time express solidarity with or make representation to stakeholders outside the UK.

4. Model of intervention

- 4.1 Our ambition is to ensure that all Group activities are constructive, respectful and evidence-based.
- 4.2 We will adopt the following broad model of intervention:

Stage 1 – Verification	We seek to verify the details of the situation, referring to public sources and intelligence from members and avoiding reinforcing any misrepresentations online or in the press.
Stage 2 – Engagement	We engage with representatives within the organisation – both members (where we have members) and senior managers, in order to understand their optimal outcome and what form of intervention would be of use. At this stage, we may also contact any other representative organisations involved (generally, one or more Unions).
Stage 3 – Private representation	We will reach out to the senior decision-makers involved and seek to make a positive and constructive representation which promotes the optimal outcome supported by the staff affected.
Stage 4 – Public representation	In the event that we cannot secure constructive engagement with senior decision-makers, we may elect to use one of a number of public channels, including local and national press and political representatives.

5. Termination of the Group

5.1 The group may elect to terminate the group at any time by means of a simple majority vote.

6. Composition of the Group

6.1 The Group will comprise representatives of organisations wishing to participate in the activities of the group as well as individuals with knowledge or expertise in the subject matter.

6.2 It is expected that in the spirit of collaboration, the Chair of the Group will cycle between the members of the group.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

7.1 The Group shares a common commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. We have undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment and will review progress against the outcomes on an ongoing basis.

8. Appointments to the Group

8.1 The Group is open to any representative of organisations that fall within the scope of the group and to individuals based on their knowledge and expertise.

8.2 Any member of the Group may at any time propose additional members for the group, to be included by a simple majority vote.

9. Meetings

- 9.1 The Group will meet at least twice a year, depending on the work programme agreed by the Group.
- 9.2 We may also convene ad-hoc meetings of the group in response to issues or opportunities as they arise. Participating organisations may choose to nominate a delegate to represent them in these discussion.

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