

Response to Request for Information

Reference: 1033623
Date: 21/03/2019

Conservation and collection care

Please could you tell me who manages conservation at Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire archives (whether separately or together as both come under Cambridgeshire County Council) and are they on the collections management team or a similar team who make decisions on the collections?

We have a single Senior Conservator on the staff establishment. It is a permanent full-time role and covers both Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon Archives. The Senior Conservator reports to the Collections Archivist who makes collections-relevant decisions.

Do you have in-house conservators or do you outsource all your conservation requirements to external conservation firms and if so, who and how much do you spend per year on this?

The Senior Conservator is in-house, see response to the question above.

Do you have any contract staff working in-house on external grant funded projects or do you send specific items out for specialist conservation?

No.

If the conservation manager is a conservator do they make the conservation decisions for the collections or are these decisions made by the archivists without consulting with the conservator?

The Senior Conservator makes conservation decisions, with agreement from the Collections Archivist.

If you do have conservators on staff, are any of them accredited conservators and do you support staff training, accreditation and continued professional development (CPD) to keep up conservation skills?

Our current Senior Conservator is not accredited but is a member of the Institute of Conservation (ICON). Yes we support staff training, accreditation and CPD to keep up skills.

Do you have conservation volunteers working regularly at the record office? If so how many and do these volunteers undergo security checks or other checks? Are they managed by the in-house conservator/s or are they left to work on their own on the collections and be in the archive stores on their own?

We do use conservation volunteers. The number varies over time but currently there is one weekly volunteer. All volunteers are interviewed and references are taken. Conservation volunteers are managed by the Senior Conservator and are not left to work on their own with archives in any way.

If you don't have in-house conservation staff do you have volunteers doing the skills of trained conservators?

N/A.

Do you pay for any external conservation support via an annual membership fee such as that with National Conservation Service (NCS) or Harwell and if so how much per year do you spend or have spent on this service/s and any extra payments to them and what level of membership do you have?

No. We pay an annual subscription to Harwell Document Restoration Services (DRS) for emergency disaster recovery but not for routine conservation.

How much is the annual budget for conservation and collection care, this would include items such as conservation materials, conservation packaging, conservation equipment and maintenance and staff training for conservation and collection care.

This year's budget is zero. This is because it is not a normal year. We are currently closed in order to repackage and prepare our archives for the move to the new archives centre in Ely, and the only conservation work being carried out relates to move preparation. So, all conservation materials etc. are instead being purchased from the move preparation budget.

Do you also undertake any income generation for conservation where you offer your in-house conservation services to generate income for Cambridgeshire City Council if so how much do you charge per hour and what has the income been in the last three years?

The charge is £30 an hour plus materials.

2018-2019: £155 income, to date

2017-2018: £282.50

2016-2017: £280.83