



Achieving Archive Accreditation at Orkney Archive

Some years ago, when I received the first email about Archive Accreditation I, like many other local authority archivists I'm sure, could see the potential benefits to our service and quickly registered my interest in the scheme.

The benefits were clear to me; being in a geographically remote location means that Orkney Archive operates to a large degree in isolation from other archives, so I recognised that the scheme would provide us with a method of measuring our service provision against a nationally agreed standard, particularly significant as the archive is approved as a Place of Deposit for public records.

I could also see potential benefits in our relationship with our parent organisation, Orkney Islands Council, by raising awareness of our service and its requirements, a very important factor in these times of shrinking council budgets.

After initially registering for the accreditation scheme "real life" took over and it was several years before I had the opportunity to give the scheme much consideration again. Then I received another email, asking me if I still intended to submit our application by June 2017. My first reaction was "did I really say that!" then, after some thought, decided that having a target to work towards was a good thing and would allow me to prioritise my time, and that of other staff into the application process.

I found the online application process to be a good method. The ability to provide access to a number of staff was a definite advantage throughout the process and cut down on the amount of unnecessary duplication of effort. The form was split into four sections covering different aspects of any archive service, with some sections taking longer, due to their subject. My overall impression was that the questions asked throughout the form, though often searching, are not trying to catch anyone out. Some will definitely make us all think a bit more deeply about certain aspects of our services, but I found that to be a positive thing and resulted in positive changes to some parts of our service.

Our application was submitted by the agreed date and we received our inspection visit in early October 2017. There were some robust questions asked, but we don't get many archivists visiting us, so we were more excited than we were nervous and found the day interesting and informative.

Following our award of accreditation in November 2017 we are all proud of the achievement and use the "accredited" logo as much we can. The award has also set us on a path of service improvement which has been agreed by our governing body and, I would say, has raised our profile throughout that

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organisation with the result that requests for infrastructure or other improvements are receiving a higher profile than previously.

Overall, the Archive Accreditation process has been a positive one for Orkney Archive and I recommend it to any other archives considering it.

David Mackie, Senior Archivist, Orkney Library & Archive