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|  | iwm access policy  july 2016 |

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1. **Introduction**

IWM is a global authority on conflict and its impact on people’s lives, from the First World War through to the present day, in Britain, its former empire and Commonwealth.

Our vision is to be a leader in developing and communicating a deeper understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war. One of the ways we do this is through building narrative and interpretation around the extraordinary collection of art, documents, film, photographs, books, sound recordings and objects that we care for.

Access, equality and diversity are integral to our vision. As a public organisation, we are inclusive and uphold the principle that access to our collections, branches and digital resources is open to all.

Our founding mission was to collect material to illustrate the common experience of war and record the individual experiences of the millions who took part in the First World War. Our collections therefore contain the reactions, memories and stories of the whole of society. It is our mission to make our collection and associated collections information – the scale, depth and range of which is unparalleled – accessible to our visitors and users and to work to remove any barriers to physical or intellectual access.

In all that we do, we are guided by our four values which are:

* **Courageous:** we’re confident and have the courage to challenge the established wisdom, championing debate and innovative approaches
* **Authoritative:**  our deep and dynamic knowledge of our rich collections makes us the first port of call on the history of modern conflict, and sets standards of excellence in everything we do
* **Relevant:** we strive to make everything we do relevant to contemporary society, while maintaining a balanced and impartial point of view
* **Empathetic:** we’re sensitive to people’s emotions, respecting different points of view and the deep significance of our collections

1. **Our communities and stakeholders**

In the broadest sense our stakeholders are the public for whom we hold this national collection. The regional spread of our branches, means that we have a direct impact on audiences and local communities in London (specifically the London Boroughs of Lambeth, Southwark and Westminster), the East of England and North West England. The scope of our engagement however is truly global, as our remit includes Britain’s former Empire and Commonwealth, with our collections having relevance and meaning for these audiences.

One of our four values is relevance. We are focused on remaining relevant for future generations by actively engaging young people through our Youth Advisers programme and learning programmes and activities. Learning is at the heart of everything that we do and teachers and our peers in the academic world are valued stakeholders with whom we consult closely.

We work in partnership with peer organisations in the cultural and academic sector. We have developed numerous partners via IWM’s First World War Centenary Partnership, as well as members of the press and media. Researchers, academic students, and members of the public with a personal connection to our collection items are key stakeholders – many of whom actively contribute to building knowledge and understanding around our subject matter.

IWM was founded (in 1917) as a contemporary collection in response to the First World. In terms of a national collection ours is recent history, and for the most part, in living memory. Many of the stories we tell rely deeply on the accounts from the veterans, survivors and eyewitnesses that we work with. In return we have a responsibility to ensure that their experiences are placed in appropriate context for our audiences.

Our collections started with the generosity of those who donated their precious personal possessions. We have a duty of care to our donors and the lenders who support our exhibitions programme.

Without our workforce we would not be able to offer access and customer care of the high standard that we do and staff are our most valued stakeholders. We are supported by a large body of volunteers.

We are a non-departmental public body (NDPB) with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as our sponsoring body. The Government and our sponsor Department, DCMS are key stakeholders. We also work collaboratively with the Ministry of Defence (for example through our contemporary collecting programme). We consult with local authorities so that councillors and planning authorities are kept informed of our future plans and the work that we do. The three branches of the armed forces are represented in our Board of Trustees and are important stakeholders.

We are an approved Place of Deposit with The National Archives and our five branches have full Accreditation status from Arts Council England. We work closely with both organisations.

Approximately 60 per cent of our incoming resource is self-generated. Philanthropic donors, funding bodies, corporate sponsors, Patrons, Friends and Members are close stakeholders who support the work that we do. Our commercial customers are also valued stakeholders as we rely on income from a broad range of commercial activities and fundraising activity.

1. **Legislation and standards**

IWM’s Access Policy and provision is made in accordance with the relevant legislation and standards, including:

* Public Record Act 1958 and subsequent legislation
* Data Protection Act 1998
* International Federation of Film Archive (FIAF) Code of Ethics
* Freedom of Information Act 2000
* Environmental Information Regulations 2000
* Charities Act 2006 and predecessors
* Public Sector Equality Duty & Equality Act 2010
* Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2015
* Museums Association (MA) Code of Ethics for Museums 2015
* Archives and Records Association UK & Ireland Code of Ethics 2016

1. **Current access provision**

We continuously review and assess access issues and provision across our estate. Major exhibition and capital projects are undertaken in consultation with an access consultant or access advisory panel. Significant narrative and interpretation endeavours (such the development of a new gallery, or our contemporary collecting programme) are undertaken with the counsel of academic advisory groups. This provides assurance to our stakeholders that everyone we engage with is treated equally, with respect and dignity and that different perspectives and a diversity of opinions are considered in our programming activity. IWM’s Collections Review Programme has been active since late 2010, strategically shaping our collections through major acquisitions and targeted disposals. Our Collections Development Policy frames and supports the development of our future galleries and public programmes. Current focus is on reviewing our collections relating to Second World War themes as the second phase of Transforming IWM London gets underway. We keenly monitor what our audiences and stakeholders are experiencing and saying through a programme of market research and project/programme evaluation. We aim to be as transparent as possible, for example by publishing the number of collections enquiries we receive and the number of users of our collection access services in our Annual Report and Account.

**4.1 Audience development**

We engage audiences from across the world with our collections and the powerful stories associated with them through our website at iwm.org.uk, digital channels and across our five branches: IWM London, IWM North, IWM Duxford, Churchill War Rooms and HMS *Belfast*. Our public programme presents a range of different views and perspectives and is informed by an understanding of our different audiences.

* 1. **Collections access**

Remote access to collections not on public display, is made possible through our online collections search function (circa 800,000 items are accessible through this channel) and guided entry-level access is provided through Explore History at IWM London (which welcomes visitors with walk-in collections enquiries).

We operate a collections enquiries service and offer physical access to our archives and/ or specialist staff by appointment through our Research Room at IWM London. This is our primary site for collections access provision. The current opening times and further details of the access arrangements are published on the IWM [website](http://www.iwm.org.uk/research/research-facilities).

Limited access to collections, specifically access to large archive collections or collections which cannot be relocated from storage areas is currently provided at IWM Duxford by arrangement.

**4.3 Commercial licensing**

Archive material (from our film, photograph, sound and documents archives) is also available to commercial and individual researchers via our Image Sales Licensing and IWM Film service. We are committed to trading in information fairly and operate under accreditation from the Information Fair Trader Scheme (IFTS) from The National Archives.

* 1. **Museum Archive**

Our Museum Archive holds IWM’s institutional records. This collection is accessible for the use of all, most notably external researchers and our staff, to support the work they do. Access to the Museum Archive records is available for external researchers via the Research Room at IWM London.

**4.5 Visitor services and customer care**

IWM front of house staff receive training (including disability awareness training) to ensure that all our visitors and guests are provided with courteous and excellent assistance. A significant amount of effort is currently being invested in standardising our customer care across all branches and areas of business at IWM. Equality awareness training is a mandatory requirement for all staff.

We seek ways to build on the inclusive visitor service we offer as standard. For example, in March 2016 we ran a series of events at IWM London as part of Disabled Access Day. We provided a bespoke ‘lights on’ tour of the First World War Galleries before our opening hours for a visitor (and guests) unable to explore low-lit galleries and displays due to retinitis pigmentosa. Historic Duxford at IWM Duxford was awarded an Access Planner and User Engagement Award at the 2013 Jodi Awards for its interpretation which includes audio guides designed for blind and partially sighted visitors, audio description on the Historic Duxford Trail and BSL interpretation films within the exhibition.

**4.6 Broadening access through projects**

Recent examples of recent innovative projects that broadened access in new and dynamic ways are included below:

**4.6.1 IWM’s First World War Centenary Programme**

IWM’s First World War Collection is the richest and most comprehensive collection in the world. Since 2010 we have focussed on making our collection accessible to the widest possible, global audience, through IWM’s First World War Centenary Partnership. Today the Centenary Partnership is a network of over 3,600 cultural and not-for-profit organisations from 59 countries, led by IWM. By joining the Partnership, members have access to resources from our collections and to our expertise via the Partnership intranet. Also through the network, member organisations are able to promote their ideas and have their events listed in a core programme via our external website [www.1914.org](http://www.1914.org). Most recently, Partners are collectively showing *The Battle of the Somme* film to audiences across the world in 2016 – with over 100 Partnership member organisations screening the film in July. *The Battle of the Somme* film has UNESCO Memory of the World status, and is the most significant film in our archive. This example shows how the Partnership enables us to significantly widen access to our collections via an international platform.

Evaluation of the Centenary Partnership so far has shown that perceptions of the Partnership are positive and that its role is valued, not only for coordinating information about the Centenary, but by enabling wider discussion and collaboration within the sector and enhancing the visibility of commemorations.

**4.6.2 Transforming IWM London project**

The overarching ambition of our masterplan for IWM London is to considerably increase space for the public display and interpretation of our collections (through the fundamental redesign of the interior of the museum, by moving staff out of the building and into our administrative headquarters, and by relocating the majority collections stores to IWM Duxford). A key aim of the masterplan is to address the constraints presented by the historic building, by ultimately replacing the main entrance with a design that is step free and allows level access to all visitors to IWM London. Presently visitors with limited mobility are directed to our west entrance, which means that they have a different visitor experience right from the start of their visit.

During the first phase of Transforming London (delivered in July 2014), the project team worked closely with an access advisory group who were consulted on the building design, new visitor experience and facilities, and our Galleries and atrium displays. We welcomed a panel of Youth Advisers at IWM, who worked closely with a wide range of colleagues, learning new skills, but most importantly, sharing their opinions with us. Youth Advisers met regularly with our First World War Galleries curatorial team, giving their feedback on text panels, ideas for our interactive displays and working on the family captions within the Galleries. The legacy of this project is now embedded in our work, as we continue to recruit new members into our Youth Panel to work closely with us.

Our new First World War Galleries at IWM London opened in July 2014, with a considerably larger footprint than the original galleries (+ 34 per cent) and with over 1,300 of our objects on display, many of which were not on public display before. Our curatorial approach was to apply the principle of contemporaneity. We wanted to challenge the common associations of the First World War in public memory – the mud, the war poets, poppies and the futility of the Great War. By embedding archival collections in the Galleries we bring personal voices and stories to the fore; and create a sense that while people did inhabit a very different world, as humans we still have shared emotions. This empathy can lead to a very powerful sense of shared understanding. The exhibition also connects audiences to the collections displayed, as we carefully considered how we could use all our collections in concert rather than as stand-alone objects on display. We offer descriptive tours of the galleries for visually impaired or blind visitors, all audio visual displays are subtitled and the opening film at the start of the visitor journey is BSL interpreted.

The next phase of the project is currently underway as we work to deliver new Second World War Galleries and Holocaust Galleries at IWM London by 2020–21. At the heart of this remains our commitment to an inclusive curatorial approach that brings to life the stories behind our Second World War Collections, in such a way that has meaning and appeal to our diverse audiences; as well as personal relevance for future generations.

**4.6.3 Lives of the First World War and American Air Museum in Britain website**

These two projects heralded a different way of working for IWM – a digital and less mediated platform through which our audiences engage with our collections and content.

Lives of the First World enables people to discover, share and remember the life stories of millions of men and women who served in uniform and worked on the home front. Through this digital platform, we invite users across the world to become citizen historians, making connections between our collections, data held by other museums, libraries and archives around the world, as well as the ability to add their own family collections and other data sources. One of the project’s strength is that it is a crowdsourcing initiative which anyone can contribute to, but at the same time it is evidence based and built in such a way as to ensure that contributors add references to the sources they have discovered. We also have a dedicated area of the website for teachers, to help them to share First World War stories in the classroom. Over 7.6 million Life Stories are available to search and contribute to, ranging from men and women in the armed forces, to conscientious objectors and workers on the home front. Over 1 million facts have been added to the platform, including photographs, anecdotes and official records. Over 3,600 Communities have been created by our members (a Community is a way to bring together the Life Stories of individuals connected to each other, for instance a battalion or unit, family, work, sports teams or names from a war memorial).

The American Air Museum website is an interactive archive of images and information, which is also reliant on the ‘crowd’ to make links and bring history to life. The website records the stories of the men and women of the US Army Air Forces who served their country from the UK in the Second World War. It also records the memories of the British people who befriended them. We digitised and brought together a collection of Second World War photographs from the Roger Freeman Collection (acquired in 2012), together with data we already possessed about American airmen and women, their planes, units and airfields and begun linking them together to build a picture of the American experience in Britain during the Second World War. Users are encouraged to browse, edit and upload their own photographs and memories to help us continue to build this online memorial to their lives. We can gain immensely from user generated knowledge – be it from amateur historians, special interest groups or family members. The input we receive from family members provides the detail and immediacy that would have been lost had we not opened up access as widely as we have with this project.

**4.6.4. Volunteer Programme**

We are supported by a fantastic team of some 1,000 volunteers, who contribute to the delivery of a wide range of activities including engaging with our visitors, supporting our collections team, learning programmes and aircraft, military vehicle and ship conservation, as well as Friends and membership support. IWM North in particular has extensive experience of providing vocational training for a diverse, non-traditional pool of volunteers. In partnership with The Manchester Museum and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, we have delivered two volunteer projects, the award-winning In Touch volunteer and training programme which helped over 180 individuals to develop key transferable skills leading towards increased employability and our current three-year project, if: Volunteering for wellbeing, which supports participants into volunteering at the museum, and within the sector, and away from social and economic isolation.

1. **Access restrictions to collections**

As far as possible we prioritise access to original collections material. There are times when the preservation needs of certain items in our collection, or the content of our collections means that we need to manage or restrict access. We will always balance access to collections against the specific care and preservation needs of those collections.

Restrictions may be imposed, for example, if the information is of a sensitive nature, or if there are data protection considerations with which we need to comply.

Access restrictions are communicated to our users with transparency and honesty at the point of their specific remote or in-person enquiries.

**5.1 Preservation**

Collections that are particularly fragile, or in high demand, may be made available to users in surrogate form to protect their preservation. For example fragile documents may be made available in the form of microfilm or scanned electronic copies. In these cases, the originals will not be issued unless there is a clear need to do so (for example if the surrogate is unclear). Collections items are not issued externally, unless part of a formal loan. Loans are arranged in accordance with IWM’s Loans Out Procedure.

Increasingly we will be moving to a digital delivery system for surrogate copies of collections content.

**5.2 Other restrictions to IWM records**

IWM records are public records and are subject to Public Record and Freedom of Information legislation. This means that as a general rule, files over 20 years old (counted from the date the file was created) are open to all, however, a few restrictions apply. Occasionally files over 20 years old may be closed for longer periods for the following reasons:

* They are still in operational use and contain later information. This is particularly true of files relating to the acquisition and management of collections items.
* They are covered by an exemption in the Freedom of Information Act.
* The records contain personal information and need to be closed to comply with Data Protection legislation. Examples of the type of information that may be closed includes information about IWM staff, individual donors of collections items or other assets, lenders of items for exhibitions and information about our customers and stakeholders.
* The Advisory Council has approved an application for the records to remain closed.

External researchers may request records that are less than 20 years old under the Freedom of Information Act. There may be instances when they are withheld if they are covered by an exemption in the Act. Further information on Freedom of Information can be found in IWM’s Freedom of Information Policy.

1. **Future access improvement plans**

Our strategic change programme saw in April 2015 the introduction of a new staff structure and new leadership teams (our Executive Leadership Team and Senior Management Team). Our change programme has seen us shift towards greater centralisation and working in collaboration as one family of museums.

While there is good practice across the organisation in providing access for all, and there are localised areas of excellence, with the delivery of our change programme and new leadership team in place, the time is right for a comprehensive refresh of our Strategy for Access, Equality and Diversity, which will set a corporate standard by which work to make a difference consistently across the organisation in the most impactful, audience-driven way.

Future plans in train include:

* Ongoing and prioritised digitisation activity to preserve and make accessible targeted parts of our collection.
* Increasing transition to delivery of access copies of content digitally instead of through paper copies.
* A review of IWM’s website and strategy for redevelopment. This incorporates ancillary services such as Collections Search.
* The development of an online booking function on IWM’s website so that users can book the content they want to access, at a site and time convenient to them.
* The restructure of our Narrative and Interpretation department, which at its heart is guided by the principle of a curatorial service that actively supports our public programme and public access to our collections, content and expertise.
* Linked to this is the mapping of staff knowledge and expertise, so that we have clarity over possible areas where audience interests are not represented.
* The second phase of the IWM Transforming London project is now underway, which will deliver new Second World War and Holocaust Galleries, and new Learning Centre. A new entrance will be created as part of a subsequent phase of works. We will again be working closely with an Access Consultant and are establishing a People’s Forum as a physical and digital space where we can have a two-way dialogue with our audiences. The aim is to have a genuine and meaningful audience consultation model that is long-term, impactful, and cross-departmental. It will involve a diverse audience core group of approximately 20 representatives chosen through strategic partnerships, which will also include Jewish organisations. The digital element of the forum will have a CRM managed portal so we can track our audience data for this programme, but it is a place where anyone can add to our conversations and therefore has national and international reach and is truly inclusive.
* As part of the Collections Storage programme, we will invest £6.9 million in storage of our collections in fit for purpose facilities by 2020. This programme of work centralises 80% of our collections alongside services (conservation and digitisation) and users (curatorial project teams and public researchers) together at IWM Duxford. This will enable our collections to be better utilised, in a more dynamic environment that enables creativity and connection with our audiences. Further, public researchers will benefit from modern processes such as online booking and an additional, complementary access facility (to the Research Room at IWM London) at IWM Duxford.
* A Masterplan for IWM Duxford – The aims of which are similar to that of our long-term IWM London masterplan – an opportunity to improve our visitor experience, develop a logical and coherent visitor journey through the site, make more of historic nature of the site and allow us to build audience numbers. It is premised on the principle that IWM Duxford will be Second World War focused.

1. **Responsibility**

The Executive Director, Collections and Governance has overall responsibility for the management of our collections, including collections access, and all IWM-generated archives and records.

The Assistant Director of Collections Management is responsible for the day to day management, care and access arrangements of our collections and archives.

The Museum Archive, led by the Board Secretary and Corporate Information Officer, is responsible for the day to day management of the IWM’s self-generated records and archives, including access. The Museum Archivist is Departmental Records Officer for the IWM and acts as the main liaison between IWM and the National Archives for IWM records and archives. The Library & Research Room team provides access to collections in the IWM London Research Room and staffs the Explore History centre.

This policy is owned by the Executive Director, Collections and Governance.

It was approved by the Collections Management and Interpretation Governance Group on 21 July 2016.

Date for review: July 2019