Nottinghamshire
County Council

LEARNING AND OUTREACH POLICY

2009

1. Introduction

This policy has been developed by a Nottinghamshire Archives staff working group using the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's (MLA), *Inspiring Learning for All* (ILFA) framework. Strengths and weaknesses have been analysed, highlighting areas for development in the Aims and Objectives of the Policy.

The policy has been approved by the Nottinghamshire County Council Cabinet member for Culture after consultation with the Nottinghamshire Archives User Group and Local Studies/Archives Policy Coordination Group.

2. Definitions

Learning involves both formal and informal activities that facilitate the development of knowledge, understanding and skills; changed attitudes, values and behaviour; and enjoyment, personal fulfilment and progression.

Outreach encompasses a variety of learning activities that seek to promote archives and widen access to users and potential users.

3. Current Learning and Outreach at Nottinghamshire Archives

At present learning and outreach is provided through the following:

- Searchroom services for the study of archives by individuals for leisure, legal and academic pursuits

- Work with teachers, students and pupils to encourage curriculum based use of archives from primary to postgraduate level

- Talks to national, regional and local organisations and the general public

- Visits requested by learning and leisure groups

- Workshops on archive sources and the use of archives

- Open days and events throughout the city and county

- Exhibitions and displays at Nottinghamshire Archives, City and County Libraries and other venues

- Publications and leaflets

- NCC Website

- The East Midlands regional em:source website

- TV, radio and newspaper features

- Work experience placements for school pupils and prospective archivists

- Volunteer projects

However there are limitations on the work we can do, as a result of:

- Resources: budget, staff and equipment

- Time: competing priorities, some of which are statutory

- Location: Nottinghamshire Archives is not geographically central to the county

- Space: limited space and facilities at Nottinghamshire Archives

- Other competing agendas

- Holdings: preservation needs to be balanced with access; many archives do not lend themselves to display or publication; and there are also limitations placed by legislation

4. Profile of existing users

The profile of our search room users may be provided by the Public Service Quality Group Survey of Visitors to British Archives. No information is presently available on our wider general audience eg those who attend talks and exhibitions, purchase publications or access our web pages.

Our user profile in 2007 was as follows:

- Gender:
  Female 51.7% and Male 48.3%

- Age:
  15-19 0.6%; 20-24 5.3%; 25-34 2.4%; 35-44 9.5%; 45-54 10.7%; 55-64 36.1%; 65-74 30.8%; and 75 and over 4.7% (the most significant change between 2004 and 2007 is an increase in users aged 65-74 from 19% to 30.8%)

- Ethnic group:
  White 99.4%

- Disabilities
  Visual 6.3%; Hearing 6.3%; and Physical 5.4%

- Abode:
  Within 2.6 miles 5%; within 4.8 miles 25%; within 7.9 miles 50%; within 21.2 miles 75%; within 161.1 miles 95% and average distance 25.3 miles

- Family history:
  Researching family history 79.8% (down from 84.6%in 2004 and 88.1% in 2006)

- Purpose of visit
  Personal leisure/recreation 68.4% (down from 77.1% in 2006); non-leisure personal or family business 7% (down from 12.2% in 2006); Formal education as student or researcher 16.4% (up from 5.9% in 2006); Work in connection with employment 8.2% (7.1% in 2006)

5. Aims of the Policy

Our aims are to:

5.1 Establish a learning culture throughout Nottinghamshire Archives

5.2 Provide and promote a positive learning environment within Nottinghamshire Archives and through its outreach activities

5.3 Offer a choice in learning and outreach opportunities to suit different learning styles and user needs

5.4 Broaden our user base

5.5 Develop partnerships which enhance the implementation of our aims and objectives

5.6 Ensure that evaluation underpins and informs all our work

6. Objectives

The policy objectives to fulfil these aims are as follows.

6.1 *Establish a learning culture throughout Nottinghamshire Archives:*

6.1.1 Ensure the Learning and Outreach Policy is available and utilised by all staff, service users and potential users

6.1.2 Ensure the principles of ILFA are considered in all planning processes

6.1.3 Provide appropriate learning and development opportunities for staff

6.2 *Provide and promote a positive learning environment within Nottinghamshire Archives and through its outreach activities:*

6.2.1 Continue to identify and remove barriers to learning

6.2.2 Promote Nottinghamshire Archives as a centre for learning

6.2.3 Promote a range of outreach activities

6.3 *Offer a choice in learning and outreach opportunities to suit different learning styles and user needs:*

6.3.1 Be aware of different learning styles and user needs

6.3.2 Provide a range of learning opportunities both within and remote from Nottinghamshire Archives

6.4 *Broaden our user base*:

6.4.1 Identify and profile users and potential users

6.4.2 Consult with potential users to identify barriers to use

6.4.3 Establish learning and outreach activities which target potential users

6.4.4 Seek to acquire deposits of archives from under represented organisations

6.5 *Develop partnerships which enhance the implementation of our aims and objectives:*

6.5.1 Continue existing and establish new partnerships to implement the aims and objectives of the policy

6.5.2 Seek to contribute to and influence the national and regional learning agendas for archives and cultural services and participate in projects as appropriate.

6.6 *Ensure that evaluation underpins and informs all our work:*

6.6.1 Use a range of evaluation techniques making use of the MLA's Generic Learning Outcomes

6.6.2 Make use of evaluation data in all planning processes

6.6.3 Review progress against the ILFA checklists

These objectives will be developed as a detailed Action Plan to feed into the Nottinghamshire Archives Service Business Plan.

7. Evaluation, Review and Monitoring

The effectiveness and currency of the policy will be evaluated and reviewed after 3 years. Performance and individual responsibilities will be monitored as part of our Employee Performance Development and Review procedures.

8. Date
This policy was issued on 14 December 2005 and revised in February 2009