

Royal College of General Practitioners

Heritage Collections Management Policy

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1 Scope and Purpose

- 1.1** The Royal College of General Practitioners Heritage Collection is the custodian of the records created by the RCGP since its foundation in 1952 to the activities of the present day. The College Archive also holds donated or deposited collections of personal or private records related to the specialty. The collections include both archives and museum objects.
- 1.2** The College recognises the importance of its Heritage Collections and is committed to supporting its management according to professional heritage standards and guidelines.
- 1.3** The College seeks to provide access to the collection both internally and externally.
- 1.4** This document provides an overview of all the heritage policies which support the management of the archive and museum collections, including collections development, information, access, conservation, and preservation.

2 Collections Access

- 2.1** The Royal College of General Practitioners recognises that public access to archives is essential for an informed society. Although there is no legal obligation to open the archives of the RCGP to external users, the College recognises that its institutional records and personal papers, as well as other aspects of the heritage collections, have significant value for understanding social, community and personal history, specifically in the area of general practice.

- 2.2** The RCGP recognises that allowing public access to its institutional records helps maintain institutional transparency and improve public understanding of its unique history and contributions to the healthcare profession. Most College records older than twenty years are available for consultation by external researchers, with other files made available only on successful application to senior college members of staff via the heritage team. All College records held in the heritage collections are available for consultation by College Officers, Fellows and Members, with the exception of material restricted due to data protection issues.
- 2.3** Restrictions on collections will be shown in catalogues to the collections available in the RCGP Library and online. These restrictions will take into consideration Data Protection issues and conditions imposed by external donors of special collections and will follow national guidance in terms of closure periods. All restrictions will be subject to regular reviews.
- 2.4** Material from the heritage collections may be subject to temporary closure for conservation and cataloguing work, and the heritage team will provide information regarding such closures.
- 2.5** The RCGP Heritage Collections will commit to providing a series of exhibitions both online and physical ensuring the ability to highlight different aspects of the collections.
- 2.5.1** Heritage Collections will also be showcased at certain College events and via tours of the building at 30 Euston Square.
- 2.6** Further details regarding physical access to the archives and appeal processes can be found in the *Heritage Collections Access Policy, Loans Policy and Access Procedures*.

3 Collections Information and Development

- 3.1** The College is committed to enhancing its collections and associated information, ensuring this information is securely held and made accessible to its users.
- 3.2** Cataloguing
- 3.2.1** All archive material will be catalogued to ISAD(G) standards
- 3.2.2** Born-digital material is currently catalogued to the same standard and principle carried out for paper records
- 3.2.3** All museum collections will be catalogued to SPECTRUM standards

- 3.3 Collections information is stored on Calm, the Collections Management System (CMS) used by the College.
- 3.4 A full audit of the collections was last carried out around 2011 during the last College move. There are still significant cataloguing and storage issues. A full audit will take place by the end of 2023 to establish the full extent of the backlogs and storage issues.
- 3.5 All records entering the RCGP Archive are accessioned using the Calm database. There is, however, an historical backlog of material where this has not happened.
- 3.6 The College is actively collecting to enhance the heritage collections, with a current emphasis on oral histories, covid collecting and the devolved nations. Areas needing enhancement will be continually under review.
- 3.7 See also *Collections Development Policy*, the *Collections Information Policy* and associated procedures for further details.

4 Preservation and Conservation

- 4.1 The RCGP strives to provide an appropriate climate of temperature, relative humidity and light levels in a pollution and pest-free environment that achieves a satisfactory balance between the long-term preservation of the objects and specimens, and accessibility to staff and external users. The standards PD 5454:2012 and BS 4971:2017 will be the benchmark to all conservation and preservation measures.
- 4.2 Details of the principles of collections care can be found in the *Archive Collections Care and Conservation Policy*.
- 4.3 Plans for response to disasters and emergencies can be found in the *Heritage Disaster and Recovery Plan*.

5 Review of RCGP Policies

- 5.1 This policy and those related to it will be reviewed and assessed after a maximum of five years, or if any of the following occur:
 - 5.1.1 A change in legislation or code of practice
 - 5.1.2 A change in user demand
 - 5.1.3 Loss of or damage to an item
 - 5.1.4 An increase in the level of threat of theft, vandalism or terrorism
 - 5.1.5 An increase in the level of risk of damage from the environment
 - 5.1.6 A change in the level of financial support

5.1.7 A significant addition to the Collection

5.1.8 A change in paid and unpaid employee levels or responsibilities

5.1.9 New research affecting the conservation of items in the collection

VERSION CONTROL			
Author:	Heather Heath	Version:	1
Creation Date:	January 2022	Next review date:	
Signed off by:	Heritage Committee	Sign off Date:	