

# Collection Policy

## 1. Introduction

Royal Voluntary Service (formerly WVS and WRVS) was founded in May 1938 as The Women's Voluntary Services for ARP. Throughout its history it has provided care to the most vulnerable in society by continually adapting to prevailing social needs, pioneering and delivering services through its army of volunteers. It has maintained an institutional archive since January 1958 and continues to receive archive and heritage material both from within the organisation, and by means of individual donations of relevant items. The Archive & Heritage Collection (A&HC) is currently part of Royal Voluntary Service

Governance Department, and is managed by the Royal Voluntary Service Archivist.

The term "Royal Voluntary Service" is used in this document to also include WVS and WRVS and any subsidiary companies, trusts and charities both past and present which were part of and/or associated closely with the main organisation eg The WVS Trust, WRVS Office Premises Ltd. The term Archive & Heritage Collection (A&HC) encompasses both the documentary and non-documentary heritage material which forms part of the collections.

## 2. Statement of purpose

The Royal Voluntary Service A&HC seeks to collect, preserve, maintain and make accessible archive and heritage material relating to Royal Voluntary Service and related organisations. The collection forms a continuous and developing narrative, which will be added to in accordance with its collection policy, in order to demonstrate the significance and relevance of Royal Voluntary Service in the past, present and future.

The collection will be used to support the work of Royal Voluntary Service by showing its charitable purpose and social impact in action, and providing an inspirational educational and heritage resource for the widest possible community.



### 3. Collection scope

#### 3.1 Subject area

The Royal Voluntary Service A&HC records all aspects of the history, policies, activities and achievements of Royal Voluntary Service in the UK and also holds the records of related organisations including WVS India, the WRVS Association and the WRVS Benevolent Trust. It also includes material from individuals concerning their Royal Voluntary Service activities as volunteers or staff and related material of individuals significant to the development of the organisation.

Royal Voluntary Service does not collect material which is not related to its work, but it will attempt to direct potential donors of such material to a more appropriate archive or museum.

Further information on the scope of the collection is given in Appendix 1.

#### 3.2 Chronological period

The Royal Voluntary Service A&HC covers the history and development of Royal Voluntary Service from its creation in 1938 to the present day.

#### 3.3 Geographical area

The Royal Voluntary Service A&HC collects material relating to Royal Voluntary Service, WRVS Association and WRVS Benevolent Trust activities in all parts of the United Kingdom, including Cardiff Gate, its registered office, and from all regional and local projects and offices. It also collects material relating to former overseas branches of WRVS in Portugal and the Channel Islands, as well as WRVS Services Welfare in overseas territories and WVS India (1944 - 1958).

#### 3.4 Collection media and types of materials

The collection consists of both archives and artefacts. Items will be accepted in a wide variety of media (with the exceptions listed below). Acceptable media may include: paper, audio visual, electronic and digital formats, works of art including oil paintings, prints and watercolours, textiles including uniforms and decorative items, objects and artefacts including metals, ceramics and wood.

Digital copies of selected items may also be made by Royal Voluntary Service, and obsolete media may be transferred to modern media where appropriate.

Items consisting of, or including the following media will not be accepted for the Royal Voluntary Service A&HC: foodstuffs, biodegradable, toxic or hazardous materials.



### **3.5 Co-operation with similar repositories and collections**

The Royal Voluntary Service A&HC is the official repository for the organisation, and should be regarded as the primary place of deposit for all archival material relating to Royal Voluntary Service. However, material has in the past been deposited by individuals in other repositories and museums, including local record offices, the Imperial War Museum, the RAF Museum, and other military museums, the British Library, and The Second World War Experience Centre. It is recognised that this material now forms part of the formal holdings of other organisations and may remain so, and that there will inevitably be some areas where the scope of collections may overlap with that held by Royal Voluntary Service.

Royal Voluntary Service may seek to acquire copies of this material where appropriate or necessary in co-operation with such archives and museums, and will also offer the opportunity for them to make copies of relevant Royal Voluntary Service Archive material for local access where possible. Duplicate or other material not required by Royal Voluntary Service will also be offered to other suitable repositories in line with Royal Voluntary Service's disposal policy (see section 4.3).

Royal Voluntary Service may also be prepared to accept transfers from other archives or museums of any material which might be considered more appropriate to its collection, subject to space considerations.

### **3.6 Informational, evidential and aesthetic value**

Material will be added to existing holdings in line with any of Royal Voluntary Service's records management and retention policies and where it is judged by a professionally qualified archivist/curator to provide evidential, informational or aesthetic value. Also where it provides examples of the activities of Royal Voluntary Service and its members, volunteers and staff, including under the following headings:

- Legal
- Financial
- Administrative
- Research
- Historical
- Cultural

Material will not be retained in the archive for its financial value alone.



## 4 Collection process

### 4.1 Method of acquisition

Royal Voluntary Service A&HC material will be acquired by means of transfers from Royal Voluntary Service Cardiff Gate (the registered office), regional and local offices, projects and services, in accordance with any Royal Voluntary Service records retention policies and archival selection criteria.

Material may also be accepted by gift, deposit or loan from external sources, both corporate and individual.

It is not Royal Voluntary Service policy to purchase material and Royal Voluntary Service does not give opinions as to the market value of archive or heritage material.

### 4.2 Acquisition conditions

Although the Royal Voluntary Service A&HC may accept material by gift or loan, it should be noted that gift is the preferred method of acquisition, in order to secure the permanent retention and preservation of material in its care. However, long term loans may be accepted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the archivist and subject to negotiation.

Potential donors must in all cases provide proof of ownership or entitlement to transfer to Royal Voluntary Service before any transfer of material can take place and sign a standard gift agreement letter.

Material for transfer must consist of acceptable media only (see section 3.4).

Material transferred or donated to the A&HC will be normally made available for access by users in accordance with Royal Voluntary Service access policy, subject to Data Protection and other confidentiality requirements. If donors wish material to remain confidential for a specified period, this must be made explicit, and will be subject to negotiation confirmed as part of the conditions of transfer to Royal Voluntary Service.

### 4.3 Disposals

All items transferred to the A&HC are accepted on the basis that they are relevant to the scope of the collection. If it subsequently becomes apparent that collections include a significant number of duplicate items or non-archival material, these may in some instances be disposed of in line with The National Archives Deaccessioning and Disposal Guidance 2015, which may include transfer to another organisation/institution. Likewise, if it becomes apparent that any item would be more appropriately housed in another collection, or that another organisation has a greater title to the item, such material will also be transferred to that organisation/institution in accordance with the above policy.

It is the general policy of Royal Voluntary Service that items in the collection will not be sold. However, in line with the National Archives Deaccessioning and disposal guidance 2015, duplicate or non-archival items may be sold to support the care of the remaining collections.

Any items transferred to another collection will be done so on the understanding that they should not be sold on and should remain in the public domain where they will be made accessible to all. Reasonable efforts will be made to obtain the agreement of the original depositors of earlier material, and provision for such transfer will form part of any future transfer or deposit agreements.



## 5 Access to the collection

On site access to the A&HC is available to researchers with a legitimate and defined research need. Royal Voluntary Service also provides a free enquiry service and paid for research service. Further details about access to the Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection can be found in our access policy and on the Royal Voluntary Service website [royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/our-history](http://royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/our-history)

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## 6 Policy review

This policy will be reviewed and updated every five years, or more frequently as required in the event of a change of circumstances or policy.

### This policy comes into effect:

1 September 2018



# Appendix 1

## **Notes on Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection scope**

The Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection (A&HC) comprises material relating to all aspects of Royal Voluntary Service policies and activities. It includes documentary material in all formats, including paper, digital and audio visual media. The heritage collection comprises non-documentary items eg objects and works of art.

The objects and artefacts which now comprise the collection have been assembled at various periods on the basis of their association with WRVS. Selection criteria and retention schedules will continue to be developed in more detail, and future transfers of material to the A&HC will be subject to these criteria. The following types of material are included in the collection:

## **1. Archive**

### **Headquarters files pre-1997**

All surviving central HQ files which have been subject to past weeding will be retained permanently in the archive.

### **Headquarters files post 1997**

All documents which shed significant light and are selected as worthy of permanent preservation will be retained. Including:

- Strategy and organisational development documents.
- Documents which shed light on campaigns and fundraising events or projects.
- Financial summaries 2nd Tier and above.
- Selected email and electronic communications.

### **Regional/local office/service and discrete project records**

The A&HC collects surviving files of closed offices as well as from selected current and recent projects and services.

Records collected from recent or current services/local and regional offices will include:

- Regular/irregular internal reports about the service.
- Scrapbooks and photograph albums, digital images (where appropriately curated and labelled).
- Selected retail collateral and images, including: eg menus, flyers and posters, top line sales figures.

Records collected from projects will include:

- Only projects that have been undertaken (not those which were not commissioned).
- The main project document, interim and end of project reports for all projects undertaken.



### ***Narrative reports, county and regional reports and statistical summaries from regions***

All surviving reports will be retained by the A&HC.

#### ***Governance documents***

A full set of minutes, agenda and papers of all Royal Voluntary Service (and associated charities and companies) Committees and Boards, past and present will be retained permanently. Including:

- Trustees
- Trustee sub-committees
- Executive committees
- Chairman's committee
- WRVS Advisory Council
- Standing Committee to the Advisory Council

#### ***Volunteer record cards/ Volunteer Database***

All surviving record cards have been retained and are subject to confidentiality restrictions. (See access policy). A snapshot of the Royal Voluntary Service volunteer database will be captured every ten years.

#### ***Autograph letters***

The A&HC holds a small collection of autograph letters from eminent people. Correspondents include the Queen Mother, HM Queen and other members of the Royal family, politicians and benefactors.

### ***Audio visual material***

The A&HC holds an extensive and varied collection of audio visual material, which includes the following formats:

- Oral history tapes (copies have also been deposited in the British Library)
- Audio tapes: broadcasts, speeches, conferences, recorded by Royal Voluntary Service for use under licence, or for educational or private use
- Cine film (all formats): training and publicity material
- Videos: training and publicity material; TV programmes recorded by Royal Voluntary Service for use under licence, or for educational or private use
- LPs: speeches and radio broadcasts
- Fairchild projector tapes: training and publicity material
- Non standard format tapes: may be transferred to digital media
- Photographs (prints and negatives): unframed photographs (black and white and colour), negatives
- Slides: 35mm colour slides; black and white filmstrips
- Digital media: copies of material held; new additions on CD or jpeg/tiff files

New accessions to the collection of photographic items will:

- Include copyright information
- Date and location taken
- Nature/title of the event
- The names/titles of all pictured
- Not include more than ten images of any one event



### **WRVS publications and printed material**

The A&HC collects all publications, journals and magazines, Annual Reports, instruction manuals. One copy is retained as a master set, and no more than two additional copies will also be retained, where available, for potential exhibition and display.

### **Posters and publicity material**

The A&HC collects all posters and publicity material, including brochures and handouts. An archive copy will be retained together with no more than two additional copies, where available, for exhibition and display; Copies of items held elsewhere may also be acquired if there is no example in the archive.

### **Personal papers**

Personal papers of Royal Voluntary Service members/volunteers/staff will be collected where they have direct relevance to the organisation and record the work of that individual for the service. Personal papers will not be accepted where there is not a strong direct link to the work of Royal Voluntary Service.

## **2. Heritage Collection**

### **Uniforms**

The collection includes jackets, skirts, coats, hats, ARP helmets, scarves, gloves, bags, overalls, sweat shirts, polo shirts.

A minimum of one example of each unique item will be preserved by the A&HC as a reference collection. A maximum of two duplicates of any one uniform type will also be retained (including appropriate badges) as a loan collection for display or heritage event use.

### **Badges and medals**

The A&HC collects cloth and metal badges; long service awards medals, Honours eg MBEs (but only if related to Royal Voluntary Service service). All unique badges and medals awarded to identifiable individual Royal Voluntary Service Members and Volunteers by Royal Voluntary Service and third parties will be retained. A minimum of one example of each type (not identified as belonging to an individual) will be preserved by the A&HC as a reference collection. A maximum of two duplicate items will also be retained as a loan collection for display, or heritage event use.

### **Textiles**

The A&HC collects embroideries, wall hangings, tapestries and other textile items depicting Royal Voluntary Service activities; items including Royal Voluntary Service logo; commemorative items.

### **Works of art**

The A&HC collects works of art in various media, including: oil paintings and watercolours; prints and drawings; framed photographs.

Content must relate directly to the activities of Royal Voluntary Service and to individuals in their capacity as WRVS members, volunteers or employees. Works of art belonging to individuals which do not relate directly to their Royal Voluntary Service activities will not be accepted.



### **Equipment**

The A&HC collects examples of crockery, cutlery and utensils with WRVS logo. It also collects equipment used including field kitchen and Meals on Wheels equipment. One example of each unique item will be preserved by the A&HC as a research collection. The maximum of two duplicate items will also be retained as a loan collection for display, or heritage event use.

### **Training models and demonstration material**

The A&HC collects models and other items used as part of training activities. Current contents include: field kitchen assembly models and a model clothing store. One example of each unique item will be preserved by the A&HC as a research collection. The maximum of two duplicate items will also be retained as a loan collection for display, or heritage event use.

### **Commemorative objects and memorabilia**

The A&HC collects objects and memorabilia which commemorate aspects of its history. These may be in a variety of formats including ceramics, glass ware, metal and wooden plaques. Items must display an obvious connection with Royal Voluntary Service eg a logo or commemorative inscription, or have associated documentation. One example of each unique item will be preserved by the A&HC as a research collection. The maximum of two duplicate items will also be retained as a loan collection for display, or heritage event use.

## **3. Items not collected**

- Receipt books and cheque book stubs
- Financial material which is less than seven years old (these should be retained locally as described in audit rules)
- Any records which are still 'current'

This list should not be seen as exhaustive or proscriptive and should be used in conjunction with any Royal Voluntary Service records retention schedules. The accession, retention and disposal of all material is at the discretion of the Trustees on the advice of the archivist.

