



## Collections Development Policy

The Collections Development Policy sets out the framework for developing the British Red Cross Museum & Archives collections for the period from 2017 to 2020

<b>Policy owner</b>	Executive Director of Communications & Engagement
<b>Policy lead</b>	Heritage Manager
<b>Audience</b>	All staff, volunteers and members of the public
<b>Legislation and regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002</li> <li>- <i>Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003</i></li> <li>- 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission</li> </ul>
<b>Formally endorsed by</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Endorsement date</b>	June 2017
<b>Next review</b>	June 2018

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The British Red Cross museum and archives exist to collect, preserve and make accessible the history of the organisation and its place in the context of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to a wide audience.
- 1.2 This policy sets out how we will manage and make accessible the collections openly with transparency and meet the requirements of the Arts Council Museum Accreditation Standard.
- 1.3 The following documents should be read in conjunction with the policy:
  - > Forward Plan
  - > Documentation Policy and Plan
  - > Procedures Manual
  - > Appraisal Guidelines
  - > Collecting and Transfer Guidelines

- > Museum & Archive Accessioning Guidelines
- > Collections care and conservation policy and Plan
- > Museums and Archives access policy

## Definitions

- 1.4 For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will apply:
- > **Accession:** the formal process of documenting an object(s) or archive(s) entering the collection of the British Red Cross Museum & Archives.
  - > **Accreditation:** National standards scheme for museums administered by Arts Council England.
  - > **Deaccession:** the formal, legal process of permanently removing an object from the British Red Cross Museum & Archives
  - > **Disposal:** the permanent removal of an item accessioned into the collection from the ownership of the museum and archives governing body by the process of gift, sale, exchange or destruction.
  - > **Rationalisation:** Collections rationalisation is a procedure whereby a museum improves its understanding of a collection so that the collection can be used more effectively for the benefit of its users

## 2. Policy statement

### Purpose and aims

- 2.1 The British Red Cross museum and archives exist to collect, preserve and make accessible the history of the organisation and its place in the context of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to a wide audience.

### Scope

- 2.2 This policy applies to all historical items held; and potential acquisitions and loans.

### Standards

- 2.3 Standards that need to be met in order to be compliant with the policy:
- > The governing body will ensure that acquisitions and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.
  - > By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The board therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.
  - > Acquisitions outside this policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
  - > The museum recognises its responsibility, when making acquisitions, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of

collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.

- > The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- > The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

### 3. History of the collections

In 1967 the re-planning of headquarters offices in London meant that the archives had to be moved from Dame Beryl Oliver's office at 12 Grosvenor Crescent. In 1969 the archives were transferred to Barnett Hill in Surrey, at that time the National Training Centre, and set up 'an historical exhibition'. In 1985 the first permanent display was installed with assistance from the South East Museums Service. The first professional archivist was appointed in 1987 and the first professional curator was appointed in 1993. The museum and archives moved to its current location in 2004.

### 4. An overview of the current collections

- 4.1 The collection comprises records generated by and artefacts acquired by the organisation from its formation (as the British National Society for Sick and Wounded in War) in 1870 to the present day. A few items relating to the Crimea 1854-1856 and the foundation of the International Red Cross 1859-1864 date from the period before 1870 and serve to set the collection in context.
- 4.2 A large amount of the collection has been, and is still, acquired through donation by individual members of the public, usually with some personal or family connection with the British Red Cross or those who have received assistance from the Movement. Purchases of particularly relevant items have been sanctioned on rare occasions. A very small proportion of the collection (no more than 1%) is held on loan.
- 4.3 There has not been a large museum display since the Museum and Archives moved to its present premises in 2004. However, visitors and researchers are given access to the collections in store by appointment. We also provide internal and external tours of our collections store room by appointment. There is also a changing small display area in the UK office building which visitors and staff have access to.

- 4.4 The Museum and Archives deal with historical enquiries, loan objects to other accredited museums and provide images and information from the collections to an internal and external audience.
- 4.5 The collections store is fully accessible. Some of the museum collection is on open display in the basement store and other items are made available to view during research visits and tours. The Museum and Archives maintain a strong online presence through the intranet and website:  
[redcross.org.uk/museumandarchives](http://redcross.org.uk/museumandarchives)
- 4.6 Other forms of access to the collection are being explored, including loans, tours of the collection, talks on the history of the British Red Cross, on-line exhibitions, regular contributions to the British Red Cross magazine, promotion of an extensive handling collection, and there are plans in place to provide educational workshops to school groups using the handling collection.
- 4.7 The board in its capacity as the governing body of the museum and archives will be guided by the Museums Association *Code of Ethics for Museums (2008)*, the *Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom (3rd ed., 2002)* and the Archives and Records Association Code of Conduct (2012). We work towards achieving the standards outlined in *The National Archives Standard for Record Repositories (2004)*.
- 4.8 The Museum collection contains artefacts within the following categories:
- > Uniform and Textiles
  - > Awards, Medals and Badges
  - > Works of Art
  - > Commemorative Material
  - > Communications Equipment
  - > Fundraising Equipment
  - > Gifts, Souvenirs and Models
  - > Protective and Relief Equipment
  - > Health, Medical and Social Care
  - > Toys

## 5. Themes and priorities for future collecting

- 5.1 The primary object of our museum and archives is to collect, record, research and make available to the public, material relating to the history of the British Red

Cross as part of the Movement in order that an accurate and comprehensive history of the British Red Cross is maintained.

- 5.2 The museum and archives will collect material relating to the operation of the organisation in 1870 to the present day. It will also obtain material relating to the foundation of the organisation from before 1870 as appropriate.
- 5.3 The geographical area of collecting is dictated by the realm in which we operate, and as such has an international scope.
- 5.4 It is a priority for the museum to review contemporary collecting and acquire material that covers aspects of the work of the organisation not currently represented.
- 5.5 We will take due account of the collecting policies of other museums and archives collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields and will consult with such organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialisms, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.
- 5.6 We recognises our responsibility, in acquiring material to ensure adequate conservation, documentation and proper use of such material and takes into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as inadequate staffing, storage and conservation resources
- 5.7 Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances and only after proper consideration by the board, having regard to the interests of other museums and archives.
- 5.8 There are no known significant gaps in the museum collection except for the contemporary collections. The list below outlines our Red Cross collection priorities for historic objects pre-dating 2000. Note that in most cases we will only acquire one example of a particular object from a former county branch:

- Awards (cups, shields, plaques, trophies); we reserve the right to select only the most significant pieces.
- Textiles (excluding uniforms)
- Art (excluding posters)
- Commemorative material relating to significant events/dates
- Surgical equipment
- Protective equipment (excluding gas masks, helmets and goggles).
- Relief Equipment (excluding food parcels, comforts bags, food stuff and toiletries)
- Social Care Equipment (excluding cosmetics)
- Items made by soldiers and prisoners of war (military or civilian)
- Items relating to crisis response

- 5.9 We can only collect items related to the below categories if they are associated with a person of interest (as defined by the UKO Heritage Team) or if they come with significant contextual information or material (such as a journal or memoir):
- Uniforms
  - Medal and badges

### Limitations on Museum Collecting

- 5.10 We are unable to accept the following:
- Objects without any contextual information
  - Objects in poor physical condition
  - Objects which duplicate items already held in our collection.
  - Objects too large for storage

### Contemporary Collecting

- 5.11 We only have a limited number of contemporary objects for the museum collection post-dating 2000. We are focussing on increasing collecting in this area and reserve the right to override the above policies where this will help increase our collections of contemporary objects related to the British Red Cross.

## 6. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 6.1 The museum recognises that the principles on which priorities for rationalisation and disposal are determined will be through a formal review process that identifies which collections are included and excluded from the review. The outcome of review and any subsequent rationalisation will not reduce the quality or significance of the collection and will result in a more useable, well managed collection.
- 6.2 The procedures used will meet professional standards. The process will be documented, open and transparent. There will be clear communication with key stakeholders about the outcomes and the process.
- 6.3 The museum adheres to responsible, curatorially-motivated disposal as part of a long-term collections policy, in order to increase public benefit derived from museum collections. In correspondence with clause 5, themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal are, for short term action (review by December 2017):
- identification and disposal of uniform items that are unaccessioned, including the inherited 'collection types' of 'spares,' 'loan,' 'survey list'
  - identification of unnumbered textile items to either match with accession number or confirm as unaccessioned and available for disposal.
- 6.4 For medium term action (review by June 2018):
- review disposal of unaccessioned medals and badges.

6.5 For long term action (review by 2020):

- > other areas of the collection where there are duplicates.

## 7. Ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

## 8. Collecting policies of other museums

8.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

8.2 Specific reference is made to the following museums/archives:

- > International Red Cross and Red Crescent Museum
- > International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Archives
- > International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) Archives
- > The Museum of the Order of St John
- > Florence Nightingale Museum
- > The Imperial War Museum

## 9. Archival holdings

9.1 In addition, the British Red Cross museum and archives is the national repository for records relating to the history of the British Red Cross. As such the archive collection contains the following:

- > The Archives collection contains records within the following categories:
- > Wars from 1870-1902
- > Personnel records 1914-1945
- > Records of the Joint Committees 1914-1945
- > Central Registry files 1940-1990s
- > Audio visuals
- > Photographs

- 9.2 The majority of records are acquired through internal transfer or donation. However, where an organisation is unable to dispose of its records (e.g. a charity which is still operational) or where the records are of exceptional significance to the museum and archives, a long term deposit will be considered in line with the *Guiding Principles for Terms of Deposit (1997)* (approved by the Society of Archivists, the National Council on Archives and the Business Archive Council) on a case by case basis.

## 10. Acquisition

- 10.1 We receive material into the collection through:
- > Internal transfer from Red Cross offices across the country where many objects and records of historical interest are currently stored. We encourage all British Red Cross personnel to involve us when they are considering disposing of objects or records.
  - > Donations from members of the public or volunteers.
  - > The British Red Cross records management programme.
- 10.2. Authority to appraise and accept offers of transfers and donations is delegated to the curator or archivist for the majority of material.
- 10.3 In cases where the curator or archivist proposes to accept material via sale, authorisation may be required from direct line management depending on monetary value and allocation of budget.
- 10.4 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).
- 10.5 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

## 11. Human remains

The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

## 12. Biological, and geological material

So far as biological and geological material is concerned, the museum will not acquire by any direct or indirect means any specimen that has been collected, sold or otherwise transferred in contravention of any national or international wildlife protection or natural history conservation law or treaty of the United Kingdom or any other country, except with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

### **13. Archaeological material**

The museum will not acquire any archaeological material.

### **14. Exceptions**

Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- > acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- > acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

### **15. Spoliation**

The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

### **16. The Repatriation and Restitution of objects and human remains**

- 16.1 The museum's governing body, acting on the advice of the museum's professional staff, if any, may take a decision to return human remains (unless covered by the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums' issued by DCMS in 2005), objects or specimens to a country or people of origin. The museum will take such decisions on a case by case basis; within its legal position and taking into account all ethical implications and available guidance. This will mean that the procedures described in 16.1-5 will be followed but the remaining procedures are not appropriate.
- 16.2 The disposal of human remains from museums in England, Northern Ireland and Wales will follow the procedures in the 'Guidance for the care of human remains in museums'.

## 17. Disposal procedures

- 17.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.
- 17.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.
- 17.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.
- 17.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.
- 17.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 17.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 17.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 17.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites.
- 17.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.

- 17.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Arts Council England.
- 17.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.
- 17.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

### **Disposal by exchange**

- 17.13 The nature of disposal by exchange means that the museum will not necessarily be in a position to exchange the material with another Accredited museum. The governing body will therefore ensure that issues relating to accountability and impartiality are carefully considered to avoid undue influence on its decision-making process.
- 17.14 In cases where the governing body wishes for sound curatorial reasons to exchange material directly with Accredited or non-Accredited museums, with other organisations or with individuals, the procedures in paragraphs 16.1-5 will apply.
- 17.15 If the exchange is proposed to be made with a specific Accredited museum, other Accredited museums which collect in the same or related areas will be directly notified of the proposal and their comments will be requested.
- 17.16 If the exchange is proposed with a non-Accredited museum, with another type of organisation or with an individual, the museum will place a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, or make an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites.
- 17.17 Both the notification and announcement must provide information on the number and nature of the specimens or objects involved both in the museum's collection and those intended to be acquired in exchange. A period of at least two months must be allowed for comments to be received. At the end of this period, the governing body must consider the comments before a final decision on the exchange is made.

## Disposal by destruction

- 17.18 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 17.19 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 17.20 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 17.21 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 17.22 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is possible, e.g. the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

## 18. Responsibilities

- 18.1 The board of trustees is responsible overall for ensuring the requirements of accreditation by the Arts Council are met, and that our collections policy remains fit for purpose.
- 18.2 The Executive Director of Communications and Engagement is the policy owner, on behalf of the board.
- 18.3 The Heritage Manager is the policy lead and is responsible for developing and reviewing the policy in consultation with the Curator and the Archivist; developing an organisational communications plan for the policy; and managing queries about the policy on a day-to-day basis.
- 18.4 The Curator and Archivist are responsible for supporting this policy and approach to collections development within their areas of responsibility.
- 18.5 All of our people are expected to be familiar and comply with the policy during the course of their work, as required.

## 19. Laws and regulations

The Heritage team will comply with the following when acquiring and borrowing historical items:

- 19.1 UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002.

- 19.2 *Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003*. This act makes it a criminal offence to dishonestly import, deal in, or be in possession of any cultural object (object of historical, architectural or archaeological interest), knowing or believing that the object was stolen, illegally excavated, or removed from any monument or wreck contrary to local law.
- 19.3 Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period, issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission. In June 1998 the NMDC established a working group to examine the issues surrounding the spoliation of art during the Holocaust and World War II period and draw up a Statement of Principles and proposed actions for member institutions. We will make appropriate efforts to check the provenance of historical items and carry out due diligence.

## 20. Monitoring and compliance

- 20.1 Compliance with this property will be monitored and reported via the following methods:
- > Collections and documentation audits
  - > Collections assessments
  - > Incorporation of policy into other museum and archives guidelines, plans and policies.

## 21. Training and support

- 21.1 Training and support that is provided to assist people with complying with policy standards:
- > Training sessions on subjects covered by the policy will be provided by the museum curatorial staff to other staff and volunteers.
  - > Opportunities will be provided for staff and volunteers to attend relevant external training events.
  - > Staff and volunteers can consult the Heritage Manager and the Museum Curator for help and support in relation to the policy.

## 22. Review and maintenance

- 22.1 The policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years. It is next due for review in June 2018.
- 22.2 The Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

## 23. Appendices

- 23.1 Where necessary, policies may be supplemented, supported or complemented by other documents. At a minimum the appendices should include:
- 23.2 Appendix 1: related documents
- 23.3 Appendix 2: document provenance

## Appendix 1: related documents

It is important to list any documents – other policies, procedures, guidance documents, templates, forms – which people may need to refer to or to be aware of in relation to this policy.

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Relationship to this policy</b>
Forward Plan	Supports the policy in relation to future collecting priorities and collections rationalisation.
Documentation Policy and Plan	Supports the policy in relation to collections documentation standards.
Procedures Manual	Details all procedures for the documentation of the processes stated in this policy.
Appraisal Guidelines	Supports the policy in relation to collections acquisition, disposal and rationalisation.
Collecting and Transfer Guidelines	Supports the policy in relation to acquisition, transfer and disposal
Museum & Archive Accessioning Guidelines	Supports the policy in relation collections accessioning.
Collections care and conservation Policy and Plan	Supports the policy in relation to collecting and rationalisation
Museums and Archives access policy	Supports the policy in relation to developing accessible collections.

## Appendix 2: document provenance

<b>Date endorsed</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Summarise changes made</b>	<b>Reason for changes</b>	<b>Consulted</b>	<b>Changes endorsed by</b>
24 May 2012	Scheduled review	Written by the former curator (Emily Oldfield) for application to the Arts Council England for Museum Accreditation.	For application to the Arts Council England for Museum Accreditation Return.		Endorsed by the Board  Approved by the Arts Council England
2015	Scheduled review	Reviewed and changes made by the former curator (Emily Oldfield)	For application to the Arts Council England for Museum Accreditation Return.		Endorsed by the Board  Approved by Arts Council England
June 2017	Submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval	Policy from 2015 transferred to BRC policy template for website purposes. Very minor changes made to the policy. Completed by curator (Mehzebin Adam)	To fit the BRC policy template.	Governance and Heritage teams	Board of Trustees; and Arts Council England

