

# Out of sight, out of mind – getting to grips with documentation

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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



## By the end of this session you will:

- ✓ Have reviewed the documentation requirement for Accreditation
- ✓ Have discussed the benefits and challenges of good documentation practice
- ✓ Have discussed practical approaches to supporting museums to implement good documentation practice using examples from your experience
- ✓ Be aware of supporting documentation resources



# Introductions

- Your name
- Your role
- The documentation problems you are asked about



# Documentation and Accreditation



## Section 2: Collections

“Accredited museums manage collections effectively and make them *and the information they hold about them* available to everyone.”

# What is the requirement for Documentation?

**2.7 Documentation Procedures – the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures** must be in place, and contained in a **Procedural Manual**

**2.3 A Documentation Policy**

**2.5 A Documentation Plan**

## “2.7 Documentation Procedures – the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures must be in place”

If you have the SPECTRUM PPs in place, you have a *basic accountable documentation system*. You know:

- ✓ What you’ve got
- ✓ Where it is
- ✓ Where you got it from



**If the PPs are not in place, you are creating backlogs**

## “2.7 Documentation Procedures – the SPECTRUM

**Primary Procedures** must be in place in the form of a Procedural Manual”

A Procedural Manual is:

- an evolving series of clear instructions to standardise the capture, recording, safekeeping and use of information about museum collections. It describes the documentation system in a museum, and communicates that system to all staff and volunteers.

A Procedural Manual helps to:

- Maintain and share knowledge about the museum’s documentation system

## 2.3 A Documentation Policy

### Documentation Policies:

- Are driven by mission
- Describe key decisions about your documentation system and how it works e.g.
  - The standards you comply with – legal, ethical
  - Your commitment to maintaining and improving the information you hold
  - How you make the information about your collections safe, consistent, accessible



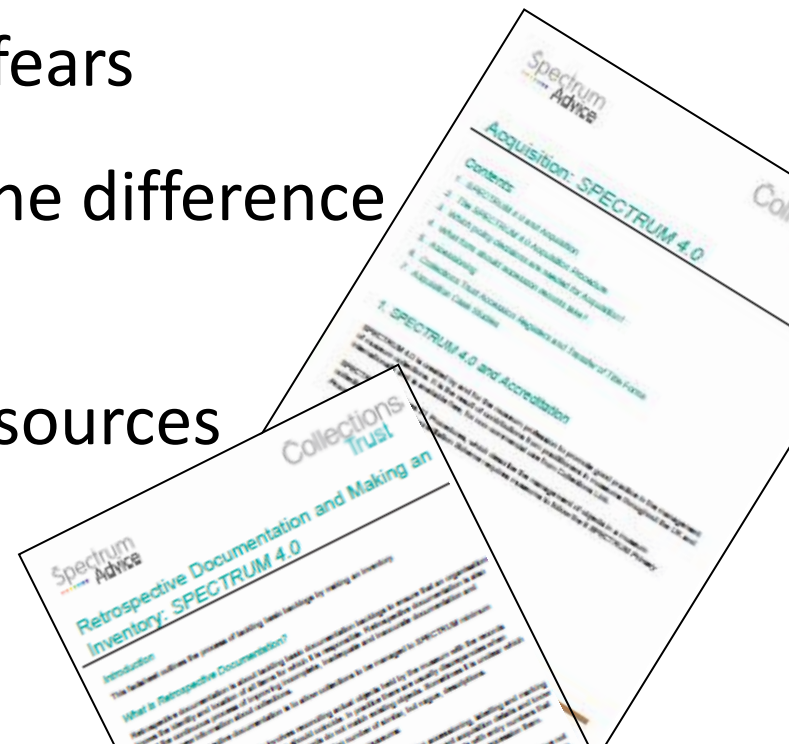
## 2.5 A Documentation Plan

### Documentation Plans:

- If the Primary Procedures are not in place – plan to put them in place FIRST
- THEN plan to put in place your Policies and Procedural Manual
- THEN plan how you want to improve your documentation
- Make plans SMART
- Remember MUST and COULD

# Mentoring and documentation

1. Get people on side - talk about the benefits of good documentation
2. Acknowledge documentation fears
3. Contain the problem – know the difference between MUST and COULD
4. Always point to supporting resources



## Review - in this session:

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# The SPECTRUM Consultation

- The Collections Trust is updating SPECTRUM and wants to hear from you!
- To take part in the consultation, go to the Events tab at

[www.collectionstrust.org.uk](http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk)





Collections  
Trust

## Vicky Dawson

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Documentation & other Accreditation resources

[www.collectionstrust.org.uk](http://www.collectionstrust.org.uk)

[www.southwestmuseums.org.uk](http://www.southwestmuseums.org.uk)

[www.swfed.org.uk/resource/](http://www.swfed.org.uk/resource/)