

## F.1 HER information services policy

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## F.1 HER information services policy#

In section [B.1](#) of this manual HER managers are recommended to develop policy documents to provide a framework for planning and developing services. Information services are an important area for HERs and benefit from being developed within the framework of a information services policy document. This should cover the following topics:

### Audiences#

HERs often have an established user base for their information services of:

- local government staff offering specialist conservation advice,
- archaeological contractors and other buildings and landscape professionals providing research and advisory services.

Potentially the audience for HER information is a much wider cross-section of society and many local authorities have expectations that HERs will offer public services.

The information service policy might set out the HER's policy both for serving the established user base and for developing its audience, for example increasing the number of users and any plans to target identified groups in the community. The document might also set out the HER's policy with regard to consulting existing users and confirming their needs, defining and consulting potential future users of HER information and identifying barriers to use of the HER.

### Facilities and service standards#

HER managers deliver services directly to visitors and deliver services indirectly to remote users by telephone, letter, email and the Internet. The quality of services provided by different means may differ. HERs are also now expected to meet certain standards of operation, including service standards and are also required to meet the provisions of freedom of information and access to environmental information legislation.

The information services policy should set out details of the services available including:

- In office facilities available for users
- Outreach and remote service standards
- Response times, quality and quantity of services offered.

In addition, the policy document should define the standard that the HER has reached, and what steps need to be taken in order to reach a higher standard of service. These steps should include the development of new services, or necessary changes to services to address barriers to use of HER information.

### Access and charging#

HER operations may be constrained in provision of information by the law and may also be required to cover an element of the costs for provision of information services.

The information services policy document should include a clear statement of the HER's policies relating to access to HER information and associated charges within the context of its local authority's policy in this area. This statement should make reference to the Freedom of Information Acts ([Freedom of Information Act 2000 \(The Stationery Office 2000\)](#), [Freedom of Information \(Scotland\) Act 2002 \(The Stationery Office 2002\)](#)), the [Data Protection Act \(HMSO 1998\)](#), Environmental Regulations ([The Environmental Information Regulations 2004 \(The Stationery Office 2004a\)](#), [The Environmental Information \(Scotland\) Regulations 2004 \(The Stationery Office 2004b\)](#)) (, each of which is covered separately elsewhere in this document (Section [F.5](#)). In respect of copyright the statement might make reference to recommendations relating to copyright charges and the uses of information ([ACAO 1993](#)), or to other authoritative works on intellectual property rights in the heritage sector (for example [Wienand et al, 2000](#)).