

Managing staff exits and hand-overs

Learning Objective

To consider the balance between well-being and support for people working with the spontaneous memorials collection, alongside continuity in collection management and consistency in stakeholder engagement.

Scenario Summary

LOCATION: IN THE ARCHIVE

You manage a spontaneous memorials collection, which formed in the city centre following a terrorist attack at a concert hall. You currently work with a small team on a funded contract, which includes you (as lead archivist), the director of your organisation, a community engagement officer from the local council, and a team of 8 MA student volunteers from a nearby university.

Towards the end of the first year, there are some changes to your team:

1. Your contact in the council leaves the project for another role and will be replaced by a new member of staff with no prior knowledge of the project.
2. Your current team of volunteers are due to graduate and leave university. These students will be replaced by 8 new students.

What steps do you need to take to ensure a smooth hand-over for these new starters and how do you seek to introduce your work and the collection to those encountering the project for the first time?

Key Considerations

- How much work is left (in terms of timeline / manpower needed) to establish minimum accountability for the collection, i.e. completing an inventory, or to achieve further objective(s) as resources permit?
- Your community engagement officer acts as the primary point of contact for the community, as well as other stakeholders. In light of the changes to staff, what information or support does a new starter need to understand and maintain current relationships and lines of communication?
- Is there any overlap between your original volunteers leaving and your new volunteers starting? Is there scope for a formal hand-over? If not, how do you encourage your current volunteer team to reflect, document and hand-over details of their role and responsibilities?
- What information, support or training do you need to have in place before new starters begin working with a traumatic/sensitive collection?

Further training, support, and key readings

Miles, E., Corder, S. and Kavanagh, J. (eds) (2020) [*Contemporary collecting: an ethical toolkit for museum practitioners*](#)

The National Archive [Staff and Audience Wellbeing](#)

PeopleHR: [How to help leavers handle the handover process](#)

Society of American Archivists, [Documenting in Times of Crisis: A Resource Kit](#)

Lucidea: [Stakeholder Management in Archival Projects](#)

