

M&S **ARCHIVE**

Volunteer Policy 2026



CONTENTS

1. M&S ARCHIVE MISSION STATEMENT.....	3
2. AIM AND SCOPE OF POLICY	3
3. POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW PROCESS.....	3
4. BACKGROUND TO VOLUNTEERING	4
5. LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT AND BEST PRACTICE	4
5.1 DATA PROTECTION AND RECORD-KEEPING.....	4
5.2 BEST PRACTICE.....	4
5.3 CONFIDENTIALITY	5
6. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS	5
6.1 RECRUITMENT CHANNELS.....	5
6.2 RECRUITMENT PROCESS	5
6.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES	6
7. VOLUNTEER PROJECTS.....	6
8. MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS.....	7
8.1 SAFEGUARDING	7
8.2 RECORD-KEEPING.....	7
8.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY	7
8.4 PERFORMANCE AND RAISING ISSUES	8
8.5 EXPENSES.....	8
8.6 RECOGNITION.....	8

1. M&S ARCHIVE MISSION STATEMENT

The M&S Archive enables Marks & Spencer to celebrate and utilise its rich heritage for the good of the business, its customers and the wider community. As a vital business asset, the Archive actively preserves, develops and facilitates access to its unique collection for commercial innovation and inspiration, and delivers a dynamic programme of public engagement, using the collection to support and inspire the community.

2. AIM AND SCOPE OF POLICY

The Volunteer Policy outlines the ways that the M&S Archive will work with volunteers. It lays out clear guidelines for the involvement of volunteers in work undertaken by the Archive and explains the ways their work will be acknowledged and highlighted. The policy will recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and staff, and will ensure the ongoing quality of volunteer opportunities and of their work.

Within the scope of this policy, a volunteer is anyone who, without financial compensation, or expectation of it, performs duties at the direction of and on behalf of the Archive.

3. POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW PROCESS

This policy was first introduced in December 2017, following approval from the Group Secretary and the board of the M&S Archive Community Interest Company, and is reviewed annually.

The annual review process involves evaluating plans and procedures for volunteer work and making recommendations for progression and improvement. Policy review also ensures that all objectives, plans and procedures are appropriate to the scale and nature of the Archive and its activities.

4. BACKGROUND TO VOLUNTEERING

The M&S Archive has worked with volunteers since 2012 when the Archive moved to its current location in Leeds. The contribution of volunteers is welcomed, and volunteers are recruited by the Archive for specific tasks which add value to the Archive's activities.

The M&S Archive recognises that volunteers:

- Can offer support and expertise to enhance the impact of its activities
- Can enable more tasks to be completed
- Can bring new skills and a different perspective
- Can provide important links with communities and be powerful advocates for both the Archive and M&S
- Are not paid employees and will complement, rather than replace, the work of paid staff
- The Archive appreciates that individuals may volunteer for a variety of reasons:
 - To develop new skills and knowledge
 - To improve their CV
 - To develop specific skills in relation to the archives and heritage sector
 - Interest in the history and current activities of M&S
 - For social reasons
 - Desire to contribute to the development of the Archive

5. LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT AND BEST PRACTICE

5.1 DATA PROTECTION AND RECORD-KEEPING

All information relating to volunteers will be used and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and 2003 (which has since been replaced in 2018 with the General Data Protection Regulation).

5.2 BEST PRACTICE

The M&S Archive recruits, trains and manages volunteers according to guidelines from The National Archives, Volunteering England and The Archives and Records Association (UK & Ireland) *Policy on Volunteering in Archives* (2011).

5.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

The nature of volunteering within a corporate archive means that from time to time volunteers may be in situations where they overhear or are exposed to confidential company information.

All new volunteers will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement whereby they undertake not to disclose such information to unauthorised parties.

6. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

6.1 RECRUITMENT CHANNELS

Active recruitment of new volunteers will take place when volunteer roles become vacant, or when there is additional capacity to take on new volunteers.

Information about volunteering opportunities will be shared through (some, or all, of) these channels:

- Visiting the Michael Marks building
- The M&S Archive website: (<https://archive.marksandspencer.com>)
- Regional and national volunteering hubs
- Links with the University of Leeds
- Additional routes such as M&S communications for customers and employees, as appropriate, for targeted recruitment of volunteers with specific skills or experience
- In addition, the archive may offer taster sessions for new and potential volunteers.
- Ad-hoc applications from potential volunteers will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

6.2 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The Archive reserves the right to select volunteers based on information provided during the application and informal interview process, and based on current volunteer vacancies.

The availability of vacancies for volunteer roles will be dependent on staff capacity to provide a positive and meaningful volunteer experience. Therefore, the M&S Archive may not always be able to offer a placement or role.

The recruitment process includes:

- Completion of an application form
- Informal interview
- Taking up references (optional)
- Taster session (optional)
- Completion of Volunteer Agreement including Assignment of Copyright and Confidentiality Agreement
- Induction training including health and safety
- Providing appropriate training, supervision and support, with a named member of staff responsible for each volunteer
- Informing volunteers of the Archive's commitment to recognising contributions and achievements

6.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The M&S Archive is committed to equal opportunities and to broadening diversity. In line with *M&S' Equal Opportunities Policy*, the Archive will ensure that the recruitment and treatment of its volunteers are carried out without discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, race, nationality, ethnic origin, age, class, sexual orientation, colour, disability, thus making opportunities as accessible as possible.

Volunteers working with the general public must have an awareness of the above.

7. VOLUNTEER PROJECTS

Volunteer tasks will be clearly defined so that both volunteers and staff are sure of their roles and responsibilities. With the aim of making volunteering as mutually beneficial as possible to both parties, the Archive will seek to match individual skills and interests to particular projects which may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cataloguing, transcription and preservation tasks e.g. cataloguing historical photographs or re-packaging archives
- Preparation of crafts or activities for family events
- Assisting with learning and outreach events at the Archive e.g. welcoming guests to events
- Promoting access by assisting with digitisation of archive photographs

- In addition, where staff capacity allows, one or two-week work experience placements may be available for:
 - school pupils
 - those seeking experience in archives and heritage prior to seeking paid work in the archives profession
- All resources and materials required for volunteer tasks will be provided.

8. MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

8.1 SAFEGUARDING

If necessary for the tasks they will perform, volunteers will be required to sign and abide by the M&S Archive Safeguarding Policy.

While not required for the vast majority of volunteer tasks, consideration will be given as to whether volunteers should be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked. If DBS checks are required for a specific task, volunteers will be informed of this at the outset.

8.2 RECORD-KEEPING

All volunteers sign an attendance sheet. Logs of hours and activity will be kept and these will form the basis of any references requested by a volunteer.

8.3 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Volunteers working at the M&S Archive are subject to the Company's Health & Safety policies and procedures and are covered by the Company's insurance policy.

Health & Safety training and a building induction will be given to new volunteers.

In accordance with security recommendations (*PD 5454:2012 Guidance for the storage and exhibition of archival materials*) volunteers are not provided with keys or allowed unsupervised access to archives or to the archive repository.

8.4 PERFORMANCE AND RAISING ISSUES

If a volunteer has concerns about their work, working relationships or working environment, these should be raised with their supervisor as soon as possible, with the aim of resolving the issue informally. If this is not possible issues should be raised by contacting the Company Archivist.

Likewise, if a member of staff has concerns about a volunteer this will be raised informally and a solution sought. In the event that a volunteer fails to undertake tasks in accordance with the guidelines and training provided for that task, or to modify their work or behaviour following additional training and support, the volunteer's placement may be brought to an end.

8.5 EXPENSES

The archive will reimburse volunteers for reasonable travel expenses if required (limited to a maximum of £10 per volunteer per day, where tickets are provided). Volunteers will complete a claim form to acknowledge receipt on a weekly or monthly basis.

8.6 RECOGNITION

The contribution of volunteers is acknowledged through:

- periodic celebratory events
- a small gift at the end of specific projects
- providing references if required and appropriate, on an individual basis
- reporting volunteers' contribution and achievements in appropriate publications.