

SPOTLIGHT ON

The ClfA *Standard and guidance for archaeological advice by historic environment services*

Available at <https://archaeologists.net/work/standards>

The overarching ClfA *Standard and guidance for the Stewardship of the historic environment* describes the stewardship responsibilities that **all** members of the Institute owe to the historic environment under the *Code of conduct*. The *Standard and guidance for archaeological advice by historic environment services* expands on that responsibility, providing more detailed guidance for historic environment services acting on behalf of bodies with a regulatory function. It covers *primarily* advice on the undesignated terrestrial and marine historic environment, though the principles apply equally to the designated historic environment. It applies *primarily* to advice provided to or on behalf of a local authority, national park, charitable trust or other not-for-profit public body, but the principles also apply to advice provided by a national organisation or a commercial consultant.

It is complemented by the ClfA *Standard and guidance for commissioning work or providing advice on archaeology and the historic environment*, which fulfils a similar role for advisors working in a consultancy environment. The two documents have been closely aligned very deliberately to acknowledge that all parties are working together to manage change and to achieve the best outcomes for the historic environment.

The *Standard and guidance* emphasises the crucial role of historic environment services in ensuring that archaeological work required through development management processes delivers public benefit. It defines and provides guidance on that role, placing a specific duty on advisors to seek to ensure

that archaeological work has clearly defined research objectives, considers opportunities for engaging with local communities either directly or through the dissemination of results, and is focused on delivering public benefit.

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The aims of archaeological advice on the historic environment are to benefit the public both now and in the future through management, the advancement of understanding, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and the realisation of social, economic or environmental benefits.

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So what does the Standard say?

Archaeological advice on the historic environment must aim to benefit the public both now and in the future, through management and the advancement of understanding. It will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and the realisation of social, environmental or economic benefits.

Advice must be clear, consistent, compliant, reasonable, timely, informed and impartial, and should be proportionate to a reasoned and clearly documented assessment of known or potential significance.

Advice must be provided by suitably qualified, skilled and competent advisors and based on an up-to-date and publicly accessible information base maintained to nationally agreed standards.

Definitions

Advancing understanding is achieved through community engagement, research, the furtherance and dissemination of knowledge, and the creation and maintenance of accessible Historic Environment Records and archaeological archives.

Sustainable development of the historic environment is achieved through managing change to heritage assets and historic landscapes in a way that as far as possible sustains or enhances their significance and that of their setting.

The guidance also highlights the vital role of Historic Environment Records in underpinning archaeological advice. Statutory status of Historic Environment Records is top of ClfA's list of advocacy priorities.

The *Standard and guidance* was written in consultation with the Association of Local Government Archaeologists (and other sector partners) and recognises the key role played by archaeological advisors in managing quality. ClfA is working closely with ALGAO and the national agencies to identify and address compliance issues in relation to its Standards and guidance. As part of that work, we are reviewing how Standards and guidance are presented, used and enforced and how we can provide better support and training in the future to ensure that Standards are met.

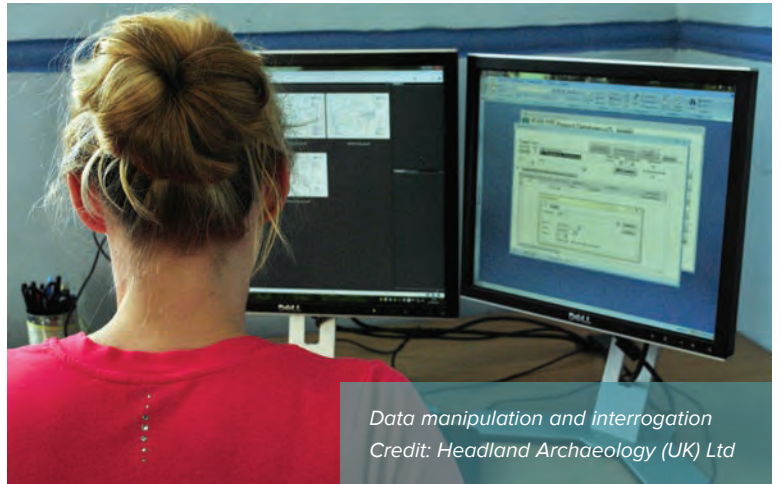
Professional practice is constantly evolving as new techniques are developed and legal, administrative and ideological frameworks change. Feedback on this, and on any of the ClfA Standards and guidance, is welcome at any time. Any substantive changes will be subject to consultation with ClfA members

ClfA Standards and guidance

- define good practice, expanding and explaining general definitions in the *Code of conduct*
- define a required **outcome**: the **standard**
- advise on how the outcome may be reached: the **guidance**
- are formulated **by the sector**, based on current understanding of good practice
- are used when commissioning or designing archaeological work to define measurable **quality standards**
- are not optional: compliance with the Standards is a **professional obligation** for ClfA professionals and Registered Organisations



Excavating workers' housing in Manchester. Credit: Oxford Archaeology



Data manipulation and interrogation
Credit: Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd



The Historic Environment Strategy & Advice Team at Norfolk County Council. Credit: Norfolk County Council