

## Disability Access Policy

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### Introduction

In line with Gwent Archives [Access Policy](#), we are committed to providing both equality of service and a welcoming, accessible environment for all staff, visitors and service users.

To achieve this Gwent Archives will aim to remove any physical, sensory and intellectual barriers to access. This policy offers a framework of measures to support this commitment.

### The Equality Act 2010

Gwent Archives accepts the service obligations as established by the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act is a piece of legislation designed to ‘protect people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society’.

The Equality Act defines a person as being disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. The Act obliges employers and public goods and service

providers to make 'reasonable adjustment' in order to accommodate the needs of those who identify with this criterion.

## The 'Social Model' of Disability

Gwent Archives upholds the 'Social Model' of disability which adopts the position that people are not disabled by their impairment (the 'Medical Model'), but by the social structures and barriers that prevent or hinder equality of access and/or engagement. These include attitudes to disability, physical barriers and organisational barriers.

## Policy Objectives

- To ensure that Gwent Archives complies with the aforementioned legislation.
- To demonstrate Gwent Archives' commitment to the equality statements and objectives of its governing authorities: Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council.

- To align with the objectives of our governing authorities Strategic Equality Plans:

Torfaen County Borough Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024  
[Strategic-Equality-Plan.pdf \(torfaen.gov.uk\)](#)

Newport City Council Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024  
[Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 \(newport.gov.uk\)](#)

Caerphilly County Borough Council Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024  
[Caerphilly - Caerphilly County Borough](#)

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024  
[Cynllun Cydraddoldeb Sengl \(blaenau-gwent.gov.uk\)](#)

Monmouthshire County Council Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024  
[Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 \(monmouthshire.gov.uk\)](#)

- To positively demonstrate and promote Gwent Archives' commitment to making 'reasonable adjustments' as required by the Equality Act 2010.
- To provide a working equality framework for all staff members and volunteers.
- To actively encourage and inform disabled staff and service users.

## **The Policy**

### **Staff and Volunteers**

A designated member of staff will act as a representative for disability matters and promote awareness of any issues or changes in legislation amongst the team.

All staff members have a responsibility to act in a professional manner to ensure that an accessible service is provided. Gwent Archives staff and volunteers will be encouraged to engage with this policy and raise any issues or ideas they have to improve the service for disabled users.

All members of staff will be offered disability awareness training. New starters will be briefed on disability access provision during their induction.

No direct or indirect disability discrimination by a member of staff towards a service user, other member of staff, volunteer or visitor will be tolerated. This policy also extends to discrimination on grounds of gender, race, colour, nationality, religion, age and sexual orientation.

Any complaints will be dealt with in line with the Gwent Archives [complaints procedure](#).

Gwent Archives will make reasonable adjustments and offer positive support for newly recruited disabled staff members and those who might become disabled whilst in post.

### **Service Users**

Guide dogs will be permitted access to all public areas.

A private, quiet work space can be provided for search room users on request. This facility will be advertised onsite and on our website.

Accessible language and clear print will be used at all times. Recommendations issued by the RNIB will be made available to all staff and volunteers.

Information leaflets, or any other types of written communication, will use accessible text and outline any services and/or provision for disabled users. Large print and audio copies will also be made available.

Gwent Archives will consult with local disability organisations and disabled service users to determine what access improvements can be made. This will be reviewed in line with current and future government legislation.

Any new technology and equipment will be purchased with disabled users in mind. Gwent Archives will obtain appropriate software and adaptive technology to improve and maintain accessibility to our electronic resources.

All equipment, technology and services provided for disabled users will be clearly advertised onsite, on our website and in newsletters and/or information leaflets.

This document, the Gwent Archives' Disability Access Policy, will be published on our website and made available for staff, volunteers, service users and visitors to view onsite.

## **Wider Audience**

Participants in any outreach activities organised by, or in partnership with, Gwent Archives will be routinely asked if they have any specific access requirements. Necessary support will be consistently provided.

Gwent Archives will seek to ensure representation of disability culture in our collections, talks, exhibitions and general service output.

Sign language interpreters will be provided upon request.

Carers and/or helpers accompanying disabled service users will be made welcome at all times. There will be no extra charge for these people (up to two) at ticketed events.

Access issues will be taken into account when considering the use of rooms and venues, both internally and externally, for planned events, talks and exhibitions.

Gwent Archives website will meet the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

To develop and share professional practice, Gwent Archives will commit to recording any future experiences of organising and hosting events for disability groups.

## **Building Management**

Gwent Archives will work with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council to both raise awareness of, and seek a resolution to, any building access issues.

Any new equipment or technology purchase that might benefit access for staff or service users will be advertised.

## **Policy Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed by the designated staff representative every two years and, if required, will be amended to reflect any new professional guidelines or equality legislation.

Any pressing issues or suggestions for implementation will be discussed at staff meetings.

Feedback forms will be available in public areas for comments and suggestions. These forms will be monitored by the designated staff representative.

**This policy was approved by Gwent Archives Joint Committee in December 2021. It will be reviewed in December 2023 or sooner if circumstances dictate.**