**Volunteer Policy**

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# **Introduction**

Volunteers perform a valuable and much needed service which helps to advance the three strands of Gwent Archives’ mission – to collect, to preserve and to make accessible archives relating to the area it serves. In return we offer the opportunity for volunteers to learn new skills, meet new people and interact with unique historical archives.

Our volunteers are individuals – working separately or in groups – who carry out work in partnership with us, and the work is by choice and is unpaid. This policy recognises the contribution the volunteers make to our work, in terms of the time and their skills, and makes clear our commitment to supporting them during their time with us. It applies both to volunteers on site at Gwent Archives as well as those working remotely.

Gwent Archives aims to identify worthwhile and satisfying opportunities for volunteers appropriate to their skills and aspirations. The service also aims to support potential volunteers who may need to overcome barriers/experience challenges when volunteering.

Gwent Archives will always operate in line with equal opportunities in relation to both recruitment and support of volunteers and will follow the ‘[Charter for volunteering and workplace relations](https://wcva.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/WCVA-TUC-Document-Web-English-F2.pdf)’ as developed by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

# **Policy Aims**

* To establish a framework for the recruitment, training and support of volunteers
* To provide a welcoming, safe and supportive environment for volunteers

To offer high quality volunteering opportunities and to proactively acknowledge the contributions made by volunteers and their work

* To recognise the roles, rights and responsibilities of the service and the volunteers
* To clarify the role of volunteers and their relationship with staff and the service.
* To provide positive opportunities for volunteers to develop skills and confident in support of Gwent Archives
* To confirm the commitment of Gwent Archives to involving volunteers in its work

# **Volunteer roles**

The principal areas in which volunteers are involved are:

* Enhancing our collections, through the creation of indexes and transcriptions, and the improvement of catalogues to make them more accessible
* Cleaning and repackaging of records to help ensure their long-term protection, preservation and accessibility.

Each area of work receives different levels of support and planning.

# **Recruitment and Induction of Volunteers**

Volunteers will be recruited via a fair process, and opportunities will be advertised widely as they become available. Clear information will be provided about the tasks, required skills, commitment and time and this will be regularly reviewed.

Applications will be made via an application form and an informal discussion prior to volunteer work being offered. This will provide an opportunity for informal assessment on both sides and for a consideration of possible options. Every effort will be made to match volunteers with opportunities, but Gwent Archives may not accept volunteer placements or may withdraw opportunities from existing volunteers where the project is deemed unsuitable for the volunteer.

Volunteers will be given an induction prior to commencing their activities. This will cover:

* Procedures such as fire evacuation and first aid
* Health and safety information
* Information on facilities, such as toilets and refreshment areas
* Who to contact in the event of a problem
* Specific information about their task
* Document handling training

At the end of the induction period a Volunteer Agreement form will be signed by both parties. Volunteer will receive regular quarterly check-ins with a nominated member of staff while volunteering at Gwent Archives.

Gwent Archives recognises the volunteer’s right to withdraw at any time without prejudice. The volunteer will be offered an exit interview upon leaving.

# **Roles and Responsibilities**

All volunteers can expect:

* A named member of staff as a point of contact
* A full, documented, induction with a clear explanation of what they will be doing and why
* Training appropriate to their task
* Regular updates with their staff contact
* A safe working environment in which they are treated with respect, dignity and free from any form of discrimination
* Guidance and support
* For feedback to be listened to, positive or negative, and any comments or complaints dealt with through established corporate procedures
* Staff to try and resolve any difficulties whilst volunteering with us
* Two events each year arranged specifically for volunteers, as well as regular communication on projects, news and information from the service
* Clearly defined tasks
* A reference to support future work applications

Gwent Archives expects that its volunteers will:

* Show courtesy to members of staff and other volunteers
* Help Gwent Archives to fulfil its mission
* Undertake the training provided for the role
* Follow Gwent Archives’ procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its staff, volunteers and users
* Meet time commitments and standards agreed to and to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible
* Provide regular feedback, including at the end of the project or end of volunteering, and raise any concerns with staff
* Agree that any work completed whilst in this role is the copyright of Gwent Archives

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# **Security and Confidential Information**

The work that volunteers will undertake will only involve those records that are open and accessible to the public. Volunteers will not work with closed records or those containing confidential information. However, all volunteers will be briefed on security measures when using the Research Room and on working with confidential information as part of their induction.

**Health and Safety**

Volunteers will be provided with the necessary training to enable them to perform their tasks safely without putting themselves or others at risk. Volunteers must adopt safe working practices with proper attention paid to their Health and Safety and their responsibility to others. Raising awareness of this will form part of the induction.

Risk Assessments will also be undertaken on the work activities and workplace of volunteers engaged. Any residual risks identified will be taken into account in the training of volunteers.

# **Review**

This Policy was approved by Gwent Archives Joint Committee in June 2025. It will be reviewed again in June 2028 or sooner if circumstances dictate.