

Collections Management Policy

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Introduction

Gwent Archives' mission is to collect, preserve and make available for research the historical records relating to the old administrative county of Gwent.

We are a regional archives service, working on behalf of the local authorities of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council. Gwent Archives' priority is the management of Gwent's documentary heritage, so that it is preserved for current and future generations. By collecting archival records, Gwent Archives helps provide evidence for the accountability of public institutions, decision-makers and opinion-formers thereby helping safeguard the democratic and legal rights of the citizen.

Policy Aims

The principal aim of this policy is to demonstrate the co-ordinated approach taken by Gwent Archives towards Collection Management. It is supported by a Collections Management Plan which outlines the objectives through which we will achieve the aims of this policy.

Statutory and Legal Status

Gwent Archives was established in 1938 with the appointment of a consulting archivist and became the Monmouthshire Record Office in 1952, serving the 'old' county of that name. In 1974, following local government reorganisation, it became the Gwent County Record Office. Further local government changes in 1996 divided the county of Gwent into five unitary authorities. With a move of premises in 2011 to Ebbw Vale, the new record office took the name of Gwent Archives.

Under the statutory framework for defining the archives and records to be accepted, Gwent Archives is:

- a recognised place of deposit for public records
- the authorised repository for local government records
- approved by the Master of the Rolls for the deposit of Manorial and Tithe records
- an Accredited Archive

Gwent Archives makes records accessible to its stakeholders through onsite visits, online, via a paid research service, via outreach and education, and social media.

Roles and Responsibilities

Qualified archivists, along with the conservator, are responsible for collection management, a process that involves the accessioning, cataloguing, storing and conservation of all archives received. To ensure a coordinated approach to Collections Management, the policies and procedures which underpin Gwent Archives' management of its collections are interrelated. The Archivists work closely with the Research Room Team, the Education and Outreach Archivist and the Records, Information and Data Manager (RIDM) to ensure that planning for collections development, cataloguing, collections care and conservation, and digitisation is fully coordinated.

Collections Management

Our Collections Management Policy draws together the following elements reflected in the Mission Statement:

- Actively collects the archival records of the old administrative county of Gwent, which are managed, catalogued, preserved and made available for public consultation
- Works on behalf of five authorities, who make up our Governing Body, to ensure that Gwent Archives supports current council policies

Standards

The following standards are applicable to Gwent Archives' Collections Management policy:

- EN16893:2018 – Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
- BS4971:2002 - Recommendations for Repair and allied processes for the conservation of documents.

Inter-relationships

Gwent Archives' coordinated approach to collection management is better viewed through the inter-relationships which exist within the service

- Deposits of records: these enter Gwent Archives in various ways: through routine accrual (sometimes through legal necessity) and passive activity. The service has started to analyse its holdings, and has identified areas where the collection needs to be actively developed. Potential deposits are assessed against our Archive Collections Policy to ensure effective use of resources, and that material can be appropriately managed within our existing frameworks.
- New accessions: these are initially assessed for preservation/conservation needs prior to entering the strong rooms. Accessions will then be prioritised for cataloguing and conservation work, to ensure that they are made accessible as soon as possible. In managing the backlog of uncatalogued items, Gwent Archives endeavours to provide opportunities for funding and for training and development opportunities for staff
- Use: demand from users of the service informs priorities for cataloguing. In addition to conservation assessments, user interest also drives conservation priorities. The provision of surrogates (including digitisation) may be considered to enhance access and help ensure the long-term preservation of material in high demand.
- Digital records: the acquisition of digital archival material is moderated through the Digital Preservation Policy. Gwent Archives is part of the Archives and Records Council Wales Digital Preservation Consortium and is working with this group on All-Wales Digital Preservation solutions.
- Disaster planning: Gwent Archives' Emergency Preparedness Plan provides a strategy with procedures for managing the risks to the service's collections onsite.

Related Policies and Plans

The Collections Management Policy should be read in conjunction with the following [policies](#) and plans:

- Appraisal Policy
- Archive Collections Policy
- Collections Development Plan
- Collections Information Policy
- Collections Information Plan
- Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- Collections Care and Conservation Plan
- Digital Preservation Policy
- Emergency Preparedness Plan

Review

This policy was approved by Gwent Archives Joint Committee in March 2022. It will be reviewed in April 2025 or sooner if circumstances dictate.