

COLLECTIONS ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Context of the policy

West Glamorgan Archive Service (WGAS) is a joint service for the Councils of the City and County of Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough, reporting to the West Glamorgan Archives Committee.

WGAS is based in Swansea Civic Centre and operates an additional service point at the Neath Mechanics Institute. It provides a professional service to donors, depositors and users of archives in accordance with national standards of access to archives, in particular the Archives Accreditation Standard.

WGAS publishes information about its performance in the form of an annual report available through its web pages on the Swansea Council website. It also provides annual statistical returns to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and annual lists of its accessions to The National Archives.

2. Purpose of the policy

This policy covers the core principles by which WGAS builds and manages its archive collections. These govern the collection, selection and preservation of its holdings and the information it provides about them. This forms part of a suite of Archive Service policies as published on WGAS web pages on the Swansea Council website. Hard copies are also made available in the archive searchrooms.

3. Acquisition of archives

WGAS conforms and is subject to all legislation applying to local authority archive services in England and Wales, including in particular section 60 of the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, and section 224 of the Local Government Act 1972. WGAS aspires to achieve and maintain the Archives Accreditation Standard.

It is appointed by The National Archives as a repository for locally deposited public records under section 4(1) of the Public Records Act 1958 and it is recognised by the Master of the Rolls as an official repository for manorial and tithe records under the Law of Property Act 1922, the Law of Property (Amendment) Act 1924 and the Tithe Act 1936. It has been designated by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales as the repository for parochial records of the Archdeaconry of Gower under an agreement of 2006.

The geographical area served by WGAS is contiguous with the boundaries of the preserved county of West Glamorgan, which are those of the former administrative

county (1974-1996) and in turn these comprise the whole of the local authority areas of the City and County of Swansea and the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot. WGAS receives and collects records relating only to this geographical area, with due regard to the principle that the integrity of archive collections which contain material primarily relating to West Glamorgan, but with some parts of the collection relating to areas outside the county, should normally be preserved.

WGAS will not accept records primarily relating to areas outside this area unless there are special circumstances and the agreement of any other interested archive authority has been sought. Such offers of material will be passed to the most appropriate archive service for consideration. In the case of a dispute between WGAS and another repository over the most appropriate custodian for a particular collection, the advice of The National Archives as a neutral arbiter will be taken.

WGAS does not collect archives from corporate bodies and institutions which already possess a recognised archive repository (such as Swansea University and the University of Wales Trinity St David) without the express permission of that repository.

WGAS collects archives as defined by the National Council on Archives in 1995 '*Archives are those records accumulated by a natural process in the conduct of affairs of any kind, public or private, corporate or individual, which have been preserved because they continue to be significant for administrative or historical purposes*' (*A National Archives Policy for the United Kingdom*, 1995) and as defined by statute, including the Law of Property Act 1922, the Law of Property (Amendment) Act 1924, the Tithe Act 1936, the Public Records Acts 1958 and 1967, the Local Government (Records) Act 1962, the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. It receives archives by way of gift or deposit from individuals and institutions, subject to its terms of deposit, or through transfer from its parent authorities. In exceptional circumstances, it is able to purchase archival items of local importance.

WGAS does not seek to acquire published works relating to the area of West Glamorgan, other than as additions to its searchroom reference library, or where such works form an integral part of an archive collection. Similarly, WGAS does not normally collect newspapers, which are collected by the two library services of its parent authorities.

WGAS does not collect artefacts or archaeological finds, which are most appropriately donated to or deposited with the museums services of its parent authorities.

Photographs, sound recordings, film (and similar formats) and digital resources relating to West Glamorgan are collected where these can be regarded as a primary source for historical research, subject to the provisos in the next paragraph.

4. Appraisal, selection and disposal

WGAS collects records relating to its geographical area in whatever format they may exist, parchment, paper, CD-ROM or other digital medium, film, cassette tape etc. However, it reserves the right to deposit archive material for which it does not possess

the correct storage facilities with a specialist repository on behalf of the depositor, or as part of the conditions of acceptance of a gift.

WGAS acts on the basis that all material offered to it is done so in good faith, i.e. that the donor or depositor has a valid title as owner or custodian of the records offered. Should this prove not to be the case, the records will be returned to their rightful owner.

WGAS reserves the right to refuse any item or items which it does not consider to be worthy of permanent preservation. It also reserves the right to appraise and weed collections to ensure that the retained records are of historical value. This will be done with the knowledge and consent of the donor or depositor. Records not considered worthy of permanent preservation will either be returned to the donor/depositor, transferred to a more appropriate repository or confidentially destroyed, depending on the expressed wishes of the donor/depositor.

WGAS reserves the right to conduct a periodic review of its archive collections and to de-accession material which does not meet its criteria for permanent preservation. No collections will be destroyed without the expressed permission of the donor/depositor or their successors.

5. Preservation

The archive collections are stored in secure strongrooms that meet the requirements of PD 5454: 2012 *Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials* and PAS 198: 2012 *Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections* as regards the standard of the shelving, packaging, environmental control and conditions. This is set out in more detail in the service's Security Policy.

The temperature and relative humidity in the strongrooms are controlled by air conditioning and are constantly recorded and monitored. There is a water ingress alarm system in operation. The strongrooms are kept clean, tidy and free of insect pests and regular checks are made.

Archives are cleaned where necessary and stored for protection in appropriate boxes, enclosures and wrappings. Inappropriate or potentially damaging original storage enclosures and packaging materials are replaced with acid-free materials. Where deemed necessary for their long-term preservation, archives are scheduled for interventive conservation. This is undertaken by accredited conservators as an external service provision and forms part of a managed programme of work.

To ensure that archives are handled correctly, the searchroom rules (which form an appendix to the Security Policy) must be followed by all researchers as a prerequisite of using the service. The public searchroom is invigilated by a duty archivist who enforces these rules to ensure that documents are handled with due care. Researchers are given direction as to the correct handling of documents and searchroom production aids, including book cushions, weights and polyester sheeting, are used where appropriate to protect documents during use.

Surrogate copies (photocopies or digital images) may be made and provided for the use of researchers in cases where original documents are in danger of damage or deterioration due to heavy use.

6. Collections information

WGAS is committed to ensuring the information held about the collections it holds is accurate, secure, reliable and accessible.

Summary information about each new accession is recorded in the accession register at the point of receipt. WGAS makes public details of new accessions through its quarterly reports to the West Glamorgan Archives Committee, through its annual report published online on the WGAS website and through its list of annual accessions sent to The National Archives.

Archives that are selected for permanent preservation are catalogued in detail and at multiple levels, in accordance with the International Standard on Archival Description (General) (ISAD(G)). The resulting finding aids are made available to the public as paper catalogues in the searchroom and disseminated more widely in searchable databases online. These include in a standalone form on the WGAS website and collaboratively on the Archives Hub and Archives Portal Europe.

In order further to facilitate access to our collections, additional finding aids may be prepared to assist users researching particular topics. These include map key sheets, name indexes, source lists and guides to record types. They are made available in hard-copy form in the searchroom and, where possible, online on the WGAS website.

Policy dated September 2020, for review by September 2025

Appendix

Conditions of Deposit

West Glamorgan Archive Service (WGAS) is willing to receive records by gift, transfer (in the case of records received from its parent authorities), or by deposit. Where records are gifted to WGAS, title will transfer to WGAS on such terms and conditions as may be agreed between the County Archivist and the donor prior to receipt. The following conditions constitute the standard criteria by which WGAS accepts documents for deposit. In exceptional circumstances they may be altered by agreement between the County Archivist and depositor at the time of deposit. No collections will be accepted on terms that are unnecessarily restrictive or which discriminate against any group or groups of users.

WGAS:

1. will store the records in an environmentally controlled, secure strongroom in Swansea Civic Centre in conditions no less favourable than those considered acceptable for WGAS's own records;
2. will discuss the appraisal and weeding of the collection with the depositor at the time of deposit. WGAS will dispose of any unwanted material in accordance with the wishes of the depositor. This may include returning unwanted items to the depositor, passing them on to another repository or confidential destruction according to the depositor's wishes;
3. will provide the depositor with a receipt at the time the collection is received by WGAS;
4. will, as resources allow, produce a catalogue of all the documents retained, in accordance with current international standards, for the use of members of the public. For purposes of security and identification, the listing process will involve numbering each item (in pencil) with a document reference. A copy of the catalogue will be sent to the depositor. Further copies of the catalogue may be made available in WGAS's other searchrooms and more widely, including on the internet. A copy of the catalogue will if appropriate be sent to the National Register of Archives.
5. will record the names and addresses of depositors of archives in accordance with the principles and provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. WGAS undertakes that the names and addresses of depositors will not be disclosed to any third party without their express permission, having due regard to the right of the depositor to be identified by name as the author/intellectual creator of the collection;
6. will allow members of the public free access to the documents, subject to the constraints of the searchroom regulations (a copy of which can be provided on request), and any special restrictions on access which have been agreed with the depositor, in a specially designated, supervised searchroom. Documents may be produced in the searchroom at Swansea Civic Centre, or at any of the service points maintained by WGAS.
7. will undertake conservation work on the documents, including cleaning, de-acidification and repair, as considered appropriate and practicable by the County Archivist. WGAS will not allow access by members of the public to any documents which are considered too fragile for use;

8. will allow the production of surrogate copies (where this will not result in their damage) subject to the conditions of current copyright law;
9. will seek the permission of the depositor for any publication of a substantial part of a document;
10. will take all reasonable precautions to preserve the documents from damage, loss or theft, while in storage or during periods of access, but cannot accept liability for any damage, loss or theft suffered by the documents during the period of deposit;
11. will not transfer custody of the documents without the permission of the depositor, or in any way dispose of the records without the permission of the depositor.

The depositor:

1. declares that he or she is entitled to deposit the documents, either as legal owner or as agent for the owner;
2. undertakes to notify WGAS of any change of address or other circumstances affecting the legal ownership of the documents;
3. will allow the documents to be marked in pencil with a reference number for identification purposes;
4. will allow WGAS to make the documents available for public research, subject to statutory and otherwise agreed access restrictions;
5. will allow WGAS to make and use facsimiles of the documents for promotional purposes (in the form of publications, leaflets, presentations and exhibitions), or for conservation purposes, the copies to be the property of WGAS;
6. will give permission for preservation and conservation work to be carried out as deemed necessary by the County Archivist. The cost of this work may be claimed from the depositor by WGAS if the collection is permanently withdrawn;
7. will give reasonable notice in writing and specify a definite time period if documents are to be withdrawn on a temporary basis;
8. will give a period of six months' notice if the collection is to be permanently withdrawn from the custody of WGAS. This notice should be presented in writing to the County Archivist;
9. will be prepared to prove their entitlement to withdraw any documents (whether temporarily or permanently) to the satisfaction of WGAS;
10. may also be expected to pay a charge, in the case of the permanent withdrawal of documents, to cover the cost of cataloguing and storage.