

Gloucestershire Archives @ The Hub

Buildings and Collections Security Policy

1. Policy statement and purpose

Gloucestershire Archives aims to ensure that the collections in its care are kept securely and preserved permanently.

To this end, we seek to reduce the risk of damage or loss to our collections through accident or deliberate act by taking all measures necessary within our resources. The purpose of this policy is to explain the security framework within which we operate.

2. Scope

This policy applies to the physical security of the collections in our care in relation to

- Site and buildings
- Strong rooms and document storage areas
- Public areas
- Staff and volunteers
- Contractors and visitors
- Transport of collections
- Temporary withdrawals from collections
- Data about collections management including locations

The security of our digital collections is covered separately in our Digital Preservation Policy (see section 14, References).

3. Terminology

Archives are the record of everyday activities of governments, organisations, businesses and individuals. Archives may take many different forms – handwritten, typed, printed, photographic or electronic – and include audio-visual material such as video and sound

recordings. As authentic and reliable records, they are preserved permanently because of their evidential and historical value.

Local and family history resources comprise published information about the history of local areas and their communities, for example, newspapers and locality-based books, pamphlets and journals covering a wide range of topics.

4. Background

Gloucestershire Archives gathers archive collections and local and family history resources to ensure they are kept secure and made accessible.

We are an accredited archive service recognised by The National Archives as the place of deposit for Public Records relating to Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire.

We operate as a Gloucestershire County Council service. By agreement, we also provide an archive service for South Gloucestershire Council and are the appointed Record Office for the Diocese of Gloucester.

Gloucestershire Archives is a lead partner in the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub, a network of local people and organisations created in 2017 with a common interest in our historic county's documented heritage. The network benefits from Hub facilities at Alvin Street, Gloucester and a Hub website, and its members support each other to gather, keep and share their personal and community archives.

5. Security of site and buildings

Our service operates from the Heritage Hub site at Kingsholm, Gloucester.

Site and building security is a service priority. Advice is taken from security and fire prevention specialists before any major alterations or new building works. All staff are trained to be aware of security procedures and to report suspicious behaviour or objects. Risk assessments and monitoring of risks are carried out regularly.

Measures are in place to control access onto the site and to prevent unauthorized intrusion into the buildings. There is a planned inspection and maintenance programme for the site, its buildings and installations such as boilers, air conditioning units, intruder alarms, CCTV, fire detection and fire extinguishing equipment.

6. Security of strongrooms and document storage areas

Our strongrooms are equipped for fire prevention and detection, protection against flooding and prevention against unauthorised intruders. They are designed to ensure that temperature and humidity levels meet national standards for archive storage (see section 14, References).

Only staff (and on occasion volunteers, visitors or authorized contractors accompanied by staff) may access the strongrooms. They are kept locked at all times, except for access.

Documents may be stored temporarily in sorting or cataloguing rooms but are moved into strongrooms as soon as possible.

Procedures and training are in place to prevent accidental misplacement of records or damage to collections occurring through poor storage and mishandling.

7. Security in public areas

We are committed to providing good access for visitors while ensuring the security of our collections. Measures are in place in the public research room to control and supervise access and to prevent theft, malicious or accidental damage and misplacement.

There are additional arrangements to control access to confidential records.

Procedures are reviewed and updated as required.

8. Security in relation to staff and volunteers

Staff are appointed once satisfactory references have been obtained and their employment is confirmed only after they have successfully completed a probationary period. Similarly, some volunteering roles also require references and agreed standards of conduct to be met. All volunteers with access to collections are supervised by staff.

Staff are trained in security and fire procedures and in the safe and careful handling of collections, appropriate to their roles and responsibilities. Failure to comply with procedures will lead to disciplinary action or the end of a volunteering agreement.

9. Security in relation to contractors and visitors

Contractors: The Buildings and Collections Security Officer maintains a register of permits for contractors and supervises their work. No contractor is allowed on site without signing the register.

Other visitors: During the period of the coronavirus pandemic, we request that all visitors use their smart phone to scan the NHS QR code on entry to the Heritage Hub building, or provide their name and phone number which we will add to the Gloucestershire County Council's test and trace database. The relevant member of staff hosting a visit takes responsibility for correctly signing visitors into the building and accompanying and supervising visitors in staff-only areas. Customers and volunteers using the research room, by appointment only, are required to sign up to the Archives and Records Association's (ARA) Archives Card scheme at <https://www.archivescard.com/> to ensure document security on this site and all other sites in the national scheme. Each time an online document request form is submitted, customers also have to agree to following research room rules as part of the appointment process.

10. Security during transport of collections to the Archives

Owners are encouraged wherever possible to transport their collections in person. If the owner is unable to transport their collection, then staff may offer to transport smaller collections directly (for example, on the way from home to work) and a signed receipt will be given to the owner.

If these transport options are impossible, a removal firm experienced in handling archives may be used. Any other arrangements should be agreed in advance with the owners and Collections Management staff. The library van system may be used to transfer stock from libraries.

11. Security during temporary withdrawals of records from the Archives

Withdrawals of records can only be made by their owner or with the written permission of the owner; a record is kept of who requested the withdrawal, the date of withdrawal and the return.

Requests for temporary withdrawals are dealt with by the Collections Management Team. Reasonable notice is required from the owner and a return date agreed. Advice on safe handling and security of the records is provided for the owner. Records that remain withdrawn beyond the agreed time are monitored and followed up.

In exceptional instances, items from collections may be taken off-site by staff with the owner's permission: for example, as part of a temporary display at a public venue such as a museum that can offer acceptable levels of security, or at a Public Enquiry or display where the items remain in the constant care of Archives staff.

Digital copies in place of original archive material are used whenever possible for off-site Archives outreach activities.

12. Security of collections management data

Data relating to the provenance, ownership, quantity and content of collections are recorded at the time of transfer to the Archives. Information about collections is recorded systematically. This includes work undertaken on collections, such as appraisal, disposal, physical arrangement, storage and conservation.

All data is maintained, updated in a timely way, and stored securely in our collections management database. Legacy paper records and other digital records relating to collections management (for example, correspondence with owners of archives) are also stored securely. Recovery arrangements are in place for all data.

13. Roles and responsibilities

Day-to-day site security and buildings maintenance are the responsibility of the Buildings and Collections Security Officer reporting to the Hub Facilities Manager. Systems are checked daily or weekly as needed by the Buildings and Collections Security Officer or his nominated deputy.

Day-to-day collections security is the responsibility of all Archives staff but in particular the Collections Team working under the direction of the Collections Development Manager & Deputy.

Day-to-day data systems security and data recovery is the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council's ICT team.

14. References

This policy should be read alongside other related Archives policies, to be found at www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/archives/policies

Gloucestershire County Council's policies for Information Security and Data Protection can be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/strategies-plans-policies/information-management-and-security-policies/>

Supporting standards:

- PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management
- PAS 198:2012 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections
- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
- Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.0 published by Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2011. Editor Alex Dawson.

15. Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Document Control

Author:	Julie Courtenay, former Collections Leader; Heather Forbes, Head of Archives Service
Owner:	Heather Forbes, Head of Archives Service
Approval Body	Gloucestershire Archives Management Team (GAMT); Gloucestershire County Council's Director of Policy, Performance & Governance; South Gloucestershire Archives Liaison Group
Date Approved	November 2020
Document Number:	V2.3

Version History

Version	Version date	Summary of Changes
1.1	Jan 2010	Policy approved by Libraries Senior Management Team
2.0	July 2014	Policy reviewed and minor revisions approved by GAMT

2.1	Sept 2014	Brief review and minor re-formatting
2.2	Dec 2017	Review following restructuring of service
2.3	Oct 2020	Supporting standards and job titles updated; visitor and contractor security arrangements updated; paginated.

Date of next revision: 2023