

Gloucestershire Archives @ The Hub

Learning and Outreach Policy

1. Policy statement and purpose

This policy sets out Gloucestershire Archives' commitment to providing accessible learning and outreach opportunities based on our collections.

2. Scope

The policy applies to our learning and outreach activities on-site, off-site and online.

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.

Interpretation refers to all the ways in which information is communicated to visitors or archive users. More specifically, in the context of this policy, it is the communication about the nature, origin and purpose of an archive document or collection. It aims to provoke visitors' curiosity and interest in what may be an unfamiliar topic or theme; relates the document or collection to visitors' own knowledge, experience, background and values; reveals the significance of the document or collection in a way which visitors can understand and appreciate, and helps people to enjoy a satisfying experience. It includes

events, displays, online information including the online catalogue and other finding aids, resource packs, and taught sessions.

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 are 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.

We are 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. Our customers

We define anyone who interacts with our service, be it on-site, off-site, or online, as our customers. Through our learning and outreach activities we aim to provide the broadest possible access to our collections and associated services.

6. Our learning and outreach goals

- 6.1 Support the business objectives of Gloucestershire County Council and South Gloucestershire Council and meet the expectations of our customers within the available resources
- 6.2 Tell people who live and work in Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire and beyond, about our collections and services
- 6.3 Help people to understand the importance of documented heritage
- 6.4 Help people to gather, keep and share their documented heritage
- 6.5 Enable more people to benefit fully from our services, whatever their needs.

- 6.6 Develop our collections to reflect the diverse nature of the communities we serve
- 6.7 Use our collections for learning, enjoyment, inspiration and creativity and to foster wellbeing
- 6.8 Encourage and participate in cultural and learning partnerships that promote a sense of identity and place within local communities

7. Guiding principles

- 7.1 Help people realise how their archives contribute to democracy and accountability, social policy, education, research and an understanding of history and culture.
- 7.2 Help people look after their archives better.
- 7.3 Help people to access and engage with our collections online
- 7.4 Listen to our customers and respond to their needs in ways that help them to help themselves
- 7.5. Consider audience needs and barriers¹ to access when we:
 - evaluate and develop our facilities and services; and
 - generate interpretative content and decide how to deliver that content
- 7.5 Identify, gather, interpret and share collections from Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire's diverse communities
- 7.6 Develop and publish collections-based learning resources
- 7.7 Facilitate independent and volunteer-aided research by users of the public research room
- 7.8 Provide a range of sustainable training and learning opportunities, both stand-alone and progressive, that:
 - help people to understand and use their documented heritage
 - help people to gather, keep and share their documented heritage
 - stimulate an interest in people, places and our shared histories and experiences
 - inform people's attitudes, values, activity and behaviour
 - are suitable for formal and informal learners
 - can be undertaken on an individual or group basis
 - include provision for all ages, including intergenerational learners
 - cater for different learning styles.

¹ Barriers can be physical, sensory, intellectual, cultural, geographical, social, economic and attitudinal

- 7.9 Advise and support community groups undertaking heritage projects and activities
- 7.10 Support not-yet users to benefit from our services and to become regular users
- 7.11 Spark and develop an interest in our services by bringing them to the attention of as wide a range of audiences as possible
- 7.12 Promote Gloucestershire Heritage Hub as a destination for heritage research and promote Gloucestershire library resources as a starting point for heritage research
- 7.13 Use evaluation as a tool to improve standards and demonstrate the impact of what we do
- 7.14 Wherever possible, work with other Hub providers to achieve the above, securing external funding to support related activity.
- 7.15 Wherever possible, work in partnership to increase impact

8. Equality and diversity

Gloucestershire Archives is firmly committed to the principles of equality and diversity in the workforce and in the service we provide to customers.

We treat all customers, and anyone else we come into contact with, equally and with dignity and respect. We do not discriminate on grounds of age, disability status, employment status, ethnic or cultural origin, gender or gender reassignment, marital status, nationality, religious belief or non-belief, responsibility for dependants, sexual orientation, social background, or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justified. We will recognise, respect and value difference and diversity.

We have undertaken an equalities impact assessment of our policies. The resultant Due Regard Statement is available on request.

Equality and diversity is integral to our guiding principles and informs how we work; the Councils' Public Sector Equality Duty is integral to our learning and outreach programming.

We promote and enable access to our collections through:

- 8.1 Online facilities - our [online catalogue](#) contains details of our collections; we also compile guides and other finding aids to help researchers find and interpret specific material, for example our sources for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic history which are signposted from [our website](#).
- 8.2 On-site provision at the Gloucestershire Heritage Hub – sustainable opening hours

agreed in consultation with partners and users, facilities that are accessible to wheelchair users, blue badge parking, a volunteer 'buddy' service to give extra support for researchers with, for example, visual or learning disabilities².

8.3 Learning and outreach activities – for example, community partnership projects to develop collections and widen participation

9. Roles and responsibilities

The Community Heritage Development Manager will draw up an annual plan and oversee delivery and evaluation of events and other activities in accordance with this policy.

10. References

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

Our access statement is available here:

<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/archives/plan-your-visit/opening-hours-and-access/>

Other related guidance includes:

National government policy on archives

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/Archives-Unlocked-Accessibility-Version.pdf

Archives Service Accreditation standard

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/archive-service-accreditation/

² This service is currently suspended during the coronavirus pandemic [Nov 2020]. Please contact us if additional help is required to access our collections or other services.

11. Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Document control

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Approval Body	Gloucestershire Archives Management Team (GAMT); Gloucestershire County Council's Director of Policy, Performance & Governance; South Gloucestershire Archives Liaison Group
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Version history

Version	Version date	Summary of Changes
1.0	October 2013	Approved by GAMT. This replaces the education policy of 2003.
1.1	September 2014	Brief review and minor reformatting
1.2	December 2016	Brief review and minor changes
1.3	January 2018	New template for Heritage Hub; amendments to reflect training for community groups and other minor amendments
1.4	March & October 2020	Brief review, minor amendments made. Link to the access statement. Updated the equality & diversity section.

Date of next revision: 2023