

Gloucestershire Archives @ The Hub

Collections Information Policy

1. Policy statement and purpose

This policy explains how Gloucestershire Archives describes and processes its collections.

2. Scope

The policy applies to archive collections relating to Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire; local and family history resources relating to Gloucestershire kept at Gloucestershire Archives; and publications bought by Gloucestershire Archives for those Gloucestershire libraries offering local and family history resources.

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.

Public Records are defined by the Public Records Acts of 1958 and 1967. They include records created by coroners, magistrates' courts and health authorities. Under the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, transfers of public records to approved places of deposit will be made once the records are 20 years old.

Accessioning is the formal process of transferring physical, legal and intellectual control of material to an archive service.

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.

Many of our collections were received before the development of modern, standards-based cataloguing. We aim to produce standards-compliant online catalogue records for all holdings but do have backlogs of material requiring cataloguing, and catalogues and indexes requiring conversion into digital format from paper.

5. Accessioning

We maintain an accessions register for purchases, donations, deposits and transfers in our archive management system. Not all information in the accession register is made available for access but summary information is submitted to The National Archives as part of its annual '[Accessions to Repositories](#)' exercise. Temporary and final receipts are produced for every deposit or donation of archives. Associated information, (including copies of receipts, correspondence, information about temporary withdrawals etc) is permanently retained outside our archive management system in a series of donor or depositor files.

6. Collection status information

Information on the status of material, on any restrictions to access and on intellectual property rights is documented at accession and appears in the published catalogue.

7. Cataloguing

We catalogue the material in our care so that we can protect the integrity of our collections and make them discoverable by future generations.

Archival discovery is based on how the collection was created or where it comes from. Professional staff determine the best intellectual arrangement of each collection by following the archival principals of provenance, and original order. They plan and carry out the cataloguing and also allocate tasks to para-professional staff and volunteers in accordance with the complexity of the tasks and the skills and experience of the individual. They oversee adherence to professional standards.

8. Standards

All new cataloguing incorporates the mandatory elements of the General Standard of Archival Description (ISAD(G)). When converting legacy findings aids from paper, all reasonable efforts are made to conform to the mandatory elements of ISAD(G).

In creating controlled access terms, the following standards are used:

- UK Archival Thesaurus.
- International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families (ISAAR, CPF)
- National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names

Gloucestershire Archives' cataloguing manuals describe the processes and procedures involved in cataloguing archives and local and family history resources.

9. Software and systems

We use an archive management system (currently Axiell's CALM) to capture details about the records in our care.

Catalogues are published online. This is through Axiell's CALMView and is available at <https://ww3.goucestershire.gov.uk/CalmView/>.

Business continuity arrangements are in place through our ICT service provider to ensure this significant resource is protected.

10. Backlogs and improving access

Resources for cataloguing are limited. Our first priority is to produce collection level descriptions (and box lists where appropriate) for all new accessions and to list small collections in full detail within 20 working days. Full catalogues for collections give detailed descriptions of the contents, generally down to item level that is a document or a bundle that can be ordered up in the research room.

We also carry out the following activities to improve descriptions of, and access to, our holdings:

- prioritisation activities to ensure resources are targeted appropriately
- proactively identifying and securing external funding to catalogue significant collections
- prioritising core staff time to catalogue other significant collections that do not attract external funding (For example, Gloucestershire County Council's corporate archive)
- recruiting and training volunteers to create item level descriptions for box-lists, to enhance poorly detailed older catalogues or to contribute to externally funded cataloguing projects
- encouraging owners to create their own lists before donating or depositing their records with us, using a standard template we supply and offering training as needed; and importing this data to our online catalogue
- converting old hard-copy box-lists to create usable online catalogue descriptions (accepting that the levels of detail will be quite brief and will lack the structure and contextual information found in a full catalogue)

11. Equalities 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 recognise that our catalogue contains some terms which are offensive, and some whose meaning has changed over time. Such terms exist within some original records and have been retained to inform users of the nature and content of the sources concerned. They do not reflect the views of the Service. When creating new catalogue entries for items which include offensive terms we try to include a modern explanation where possible.

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

12. Roles and responsibilities

Day-to-day collections management activities are carried out by, or under the direction of, qualified archivists.

The Collections Development Manager is responsible for policy revisions, and for ensuring the policy and related procedures are followed.

13. References

Relevant Standards

[International Council on Archives, General International Standard Archival Description \[ISAD \(G\)\], 2nd edition, 1999](#)

[International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families \(ISAAR \(CPF\), 2004\)](#)

[National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names](#)

Other references:

This policy should be read alongside our other policies, especially our collecting, collections development, appraisal, disposal and access policies, to be found at

<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/archives/policies>

Our Terms of Deposit can also be found at

<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/archives/policies>

14. Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

Document Control

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Version History

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