

PRESERVATION POLICY

Introduction

The Preservation Policy provides a comprehensive statement of how Glamorgan Archives intends to preserve and continue to make accessible the documents it cares for. It is a broad ranging policy dealing with all aspects of preservation and, as such, affects all areas of the Archives' work.

Preservation is a responsibility of all staff. Ensuring that they have the relevant special skills, knowledge and abilities is central to this policy. To help achieve this, the archives will maintain a commitment to staff development and will require the expertise of a professional conservator.

Conservation

Glamorgan Archives recognises that preventative conservation is the most effective means of conserving its records. Preventative conservation will form the main focus of activity.

Prioritising of conservation requirements is necessary to determine long-term preservation strategies. Decision making will take into account the needs of the user; condition of material and resource implications; importance of material (archival significance) and expected level of use.

Conservation and repair of items will be to the standards specified in BS 4971:2002ⁱ.

Storage

Facilities for archival storage should meet, PD 5454:2012ⁱⁱ. In line with this:

- temperature, relative humidity and light levels will be monitored and controlled,
- all records will be packaged in suitable archival quality materials before being placed in permanent storage
- all documents will be stored in secure areas

Document Usage & Handling

Documents are in greatest danger when they are in use. The use of correct handling techniques by staff and searchers alike is essential to the long-term preservation of documents. It is also essential to have adequate documentation to track the location of documents at all times. To achieve this, the Archives will ensure that:

- All members of staff and volunteers handling documents are trained in document handling techniquesⁱⁱⁱ.
- Searchers receive information and/or instruction in the correct handling of documents. This will include the issue of guidelines on the correct handling of documents to all new searchers; the inclusion of document handling as a standard feature of all introductory courses and instruction by staff supervising the searchrooms.
- Security of searchrooms is maintained at all times
- Documents which, if handled, would deteriorate at an unacceptable rate are declared unfit for production. This information will be fed into the conservation plan.
- A system is in place recording levels of individual document use and information necessary for their security.
- If practicable, where documents are subject to heavy usage, surrogate copies are made. These surrogate copies will be made in such a way as to be readily reproducible.

Copying

Whenever possible, copies of documents will be supplied. Restrictions will be made in cases where there is risk of damage to the original document by the process of copying. Copying guidelines will be available to all members of staff and to the public. Where necessary, decisions on the suitability of documents for copying will be taken in collaboration with the conservator.

Exhibition/Loans

Where possible, surrogate copies of documents will be used. Any documents displayed or loaned for exhibition must be kept in an environment meeting BS 5454:2000 *part 13*. The borrower must enter into an exhibition loan agreement which

will be made in line with the Government Indemnity Scheme under the National Heritage Act 1980.

Advice on display, storage and security will be provided to depositors withdrawing their own documents.

Disaster Preparedness

An emergency plan will be in place. All staff will be aware of this plan and adequately trained in its implementation.

Strategy Formulation and Performance Measurement

It is recognised that to be effective a strategic approach to preservation is essential. A preservation strategy will be in place and will be reviewed on a regular basis. A conservation plan will be formulated as part of the Archives' annual planning activities and a system for addressing short term conservation needs will be in place. Glamorgan Archives will monitor and assess the impact of its activities on the preservation of the Collection. To assist this and to provide a means of measuring performance the Archives has adopted the *Preservation Assessment Survey*^{iv}.

The Preservation Policy will be reviewed as circumstances require or within two years.

ⁱ BS4971: 2002 (Recommendations for the Repair and Allied Process for the Conservation of Documents)

ⁱⁱ BS5454: 2012 (Recommendations for the storage and exhibition of archival materials)

ⁱⁱⁱ Further information is available in the Glamorgan Archives document *Handling Guidelines for Staff*

^{iv} National Preservation Office Preservation Assessment Survey