

DENBIGHSHIRE ARCHIVE SERVICE

COLLECTIONS INFORMATION POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Denbighshire County Council is a local government authority which administers an area consisting of parts of the former counties of Denbighshire, Flintshire and Merioneth and which came into being on 1 April 1996. As a consequence of their former collecting policies, some records relating to the present county are lodged with neighbouring archive services.
- 1.2 According to the scheme for the provision of the Denbighshire Archives Service under the requirements of Section 60 of the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994, Denbighshire County Council agrees to administer Denbighshire Archives and be responsible for the custody of its existing collections. Denbighshire Archives Service (previously known as Denbighshire Record Office) has been in existence since 1972.
- 1.3 Denbighshire Archives Service is appointed by the Lord Chancellor as a repository for locally deposited public records under section 4(1) of the Public Records Act 1958. It is recognised by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales as a repository for parochial records within the area defined by its agreement with the Denbighshire Archive Service.
- 1.4 Denbighshire Archives Service abides by current archives legislation including;
 - Public Records Act 1958
 - Local Government Records Act, 1962
 - Local Government Act (Wales) 1994
 - Data Protection Act, 1998
 - Freedom of Information Act, 2000.
 - Environmental Information Regulations, 2004

2. Mission statement

- 2.1 The principal duty of Denbighshire Archive Service (hereafter DAS) is to preserve the documentary heritage of the County for future generations whilst enabling and promoting access by the public.
- 2.2 In pursuing this end our main objectives are;
 - A. To collect archive collections.
Locating and accruing archives which are of historical significance to Denbighshire.
 - B. To preserve and store archive collections.
Safeguarding unique and irreplaceable collections by providing suitable storage and professional management.
 - C. To catalogue and index collections to make content accessible.
Organising and arranging collections into a way which enables researchers to find what they are looking for with ease.
 - D. To provide and promote access to archive collections.

Supervising and encouraging the use of a free to use public search room whilst providing alternative services to remote researchers

3. Collections information policy aims

- 3.1 The objective of the policy is to outline how we aim to ensure that we meet our overarching service aims, specifically;

C. To catalogue and index collections to make content accessible.

Organising and arranging collections into a way which enables researchers to find what they are looking for with ease.

D. To provide and promote access to archive collections.

Supervising and encouraging the use of a free to use public search room whilst providing alternative services to remote researchers

- 3.2 DAS has responsibility for preserving, managing, interpreting and sharing the historic record of Denbighshire, it must ensure that adequate and appropriate information about the archival collections in its care is collected, recorded and made available. The Archive Service aims to make collections as discoverable and accessible as possible, by transmitting collections information to our stakeholders using a variety of methods, including electronically through an online catalogue and finding aids. This Policy defines the information that DAS will gather and provide about archival collections. It also outlines the history of collections information and cataloguing with the Service, and describes the current cataloguing systems and professional standards used.
- 3.3 This policy supports our mission statement as set out above and should be used in conjunction with the DAS Forward Plan which documents plans for the years ahead and previous key achievements.
- 3.4 DAS will ensure that the information gathered and provided about collections enables it to fulfil its responsibilities under Freedom of Information and Data Protection legislation.
- 3.5 DAS will continue to ensure that all Collections Information procedures and activities are sustainably resourced, and aims to review and streamline all of its Collections Information procedures in order to ensure that they are necessary and as efficient as possible.

4. Scope of information policy

- 4.1 DAS capture information about collections at various points during the 'life' of a collection, from the point of deposit through to cataloguing and subsequently. This Policy covers information gathered:
- a. at point of deposit and accessioning
 - b. during cataloguing (including accruals) and indexing
 - c. through location and movement control
 - d. about demand, usage and disposal
 - e. about physical condition, preservation and conservation activities.

- 4.2 The captured information is recorded and maintained in a variety of places and formats. These include but are not limited to:
- a. Deposit Agreements
 - b. Draft Accessions Register (paper)
 - c. Accession Register held on the CALM accessions module
 - d. Depositors Receipt
 - e. CALM Collections Management Software
 - f. Locations spreadsheet
 - g. Correspondence files (partly paper, partly electronic) for our depositors, which may be used to augment the information found in accessions and catalogue records.
 - h. Finding aids (paper & electronic), including handlists and specific indexes, many of which have been and continue to be made available on the Service's website
 - i. Document request slips
 - j. Cataloguing Backlog spreadsheet
 - k. Conservation Priority spreadsheet
- 4.3 DAS will take steps to record the information required to ensure digital materials are preserved and can be retrieved and used. A separate Digital Preservation and Digitisation Strategy will be developed as part of the Archives and Records Council Wales all-Wales Digital Preservation developments.

5. Accessioning

- 5.1 DAS has maintained an Accession Form and Accession Register establishing and recording the legal status of collections, including ownership and intellectual property rights, since 1972.
- 5.2 Depositors are asked to complete and sign the Depositors Agreement at point of deposit, this ensures that an explanation of the agreement can be given and any legal implications. A signed copy of the Depositor Agreement is retained permanently by the Service, along with all other documentation, as evidence of title.
- 5.3 The Accession Form captures a number of other details, including:
- a. Date of the deposit
 - b. Sequential accession, which began with AN1
 - c. Terms of acquisition
 - d. Contact details of the depositor
 - e. Brief description of items being donated/deposited, including extent and covering dates.
 - f. Custodial/Administrative history.
 - g. Any depositor-imposed restrictions or closure periods

- 5.4 Depositors are encouraged to prepare box/contents lists but are not required to do so. All accessions information is entered into CALM. DAS participates in The National Archives' annual Accessions to Repositories Survey to enable up-to-date information to appear on the National Register of Archives.

6. Cataloguing

- 6.1 All cataloguing since 2015 has been done using CALM software, supported by in house Cataloguing Guidelines. The Service uses the following standards:
- a. The mandatory elements of International Council on Archives, General International Standard of Archival Description [ISAD(G)].
 - b. International Council on Archives, International Standard Archival Authority for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families [ISAAR(CPF)].
 - c. National Council on Archives, Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate Names [NCA Rules].
 - d. Subject authority terms for legacy catalogues are taken from an in-house list but from 2017 DAS will use a simplified bilingual list of these terms which is UKAT compliant.

Prior to the adoption of these standards, the original method of cataloguing was based on an in-house standard template using a set of agreed precedents to ensure cataloguers covered the essential information required.

- 6.2 Accruals to existing collections are catalogued separately but linked to previous deposits from the same source through their finding numbers, hierarchical arrangement in CALM and cross-referencing within the catalogue entries.
- 6.3 Cataloguing Prioritisation is determined by using the logjam methodology to target cataloguing time at selected collections and provide a rationale for decisions. Collections are scored according to their anticipated demand and potential usage, physical condition, size and complexity. The scoring matrices for each collection are analysed and used to determine future staff and volunteer work schedules. The prioritisation list also helps to direct funding applications from external bodies. (See *Collections Information Plan*).
- 6.4 Since 2015 DAS has prioritised the retro-conversion of its paper-based catalogues to CALM using a combination of staff and volunteers to create enhanced digital versions for uploading onto CALM. The Service has also developed a new website, specifically designed to work with the data from CALM alongside our existing indexes until all paper based catalogues have been converted and are on CALM.

7. Access restrictions and withdrawals

- 7.1 Some of the records deposited at DAS have restricted access and may not be available to researchers until this restricted period has elapsed. The restrictions that apply, in the main, relate to the existence of personal information within the records. The restrictions do not prohibit individuals accessing their own data through the Data Protection Act 1998.

- 7.2 Private depositors are advised against temporarily withdrawing their records and encouraged to use surrogates. All withdrawals will be subject to conditions agreed in the Depositors Agreement.
- 7.3 Any temporary withdrawal of material from the archive requires the completion of a signed withdrawal form, this will include a date for its return.

8. Review and revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but at least every 5 years.

9. Next review date

March 2022