

## **ACCESS POLICY**

The Gwent Record Office (GRO) collects, preserves and makes accessible archives relating to the area it serves. The GRO collects and preserves in order to make the Collection accessible now and in the future.

The GRO will provide access to its Collection:

- To individuals visiting the GRO
- To groups visiting the GRO
- Offsite through the use of ICT and other media
- Offsite through partnerships with individuals and organisations

The GRO aims to provide access to people from all sectors of the community in ways which meet and go beyond its statutory obligation to eliminate unlawful discrimination. It aims to make its Collection accessible to people in all areas but in particular to people in the five local authority areas it serves.

To ensure that the Collection is available to future generations, access needs to be provided in a sustainable way. Therefore, the needs of access must be balanced against the needs of preservation as detailed in the GRO Preservation Policy.

### **Individuals and Groups**

The GRO aims to provide access to its whole Collection in the searchroom, on demand, free of charge . However this access will be limited by:

- Statutory requirements such as the Data Protection Act
- The condition of documents
- Availability of resources

Where documents are in a poor condition the conservator may be called in to take remedial action or to assist in making the document accessible.

Efforts will be made to maximise searchroom opening hours. These will be regularly reviewed in line with user demand.

Finding aids will be available in the searchroom. These will be developed to meet archival standards such as ISAD(G) and ISAAR<sup>1</sup>.

To assist individuals in the use of the Collection staff will be available to provide advice and support in the searchroom.

Copies will be provided for a fee within the bounds of the Preservation Policy. Those requesting copies will be asked to sign a declaration that they will comply with copyright legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> International Standard on Archive Description (General) and International Standard Archive Authority Record

Documents will normally be produced within 10 minutes of their being ordered unless there is a query relating to their condition or the sensitivity of the data they contain.

All visitors to the searchroom will be required to register. This will require providing ID, and signing a declaration that they will adhere to the GRO rules and that any information they have access to will be used in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act and any other legislative requirements including copyright.

The GRO will provide services for groups of learners including school children, students, teachers and adult education classes to visit the office. A fee may be charged for this service.

### **Offsite Access**

The GRO aims to be innovative in its approach to providing offsite access to its Collection. It will need to operate within the legal framework of the Data Protection Act, copyright law and other relevant legislation.

The GRO will provide information on its holdings by telephone, post and email. Basic enquiries will be answered immediately and all responses will be answered within 10 working days.

GRO will aim to make digital copies of records and finding aids available on line.

The GRO will aim to maximise the use of partnerships to improve the ways in which this offsite access is provided.

### **Audience Development**

In order to raise awareness of the GRO's Collection and services the office will engage in promotional and outreach activities. Outreach and promotional activities will have the objective of increasing use of the Record Office by the general public and by specific target audiences.

### **Consultation**

To assist in ensuring the GRO is responsive to user demand and reacts to any problems a system for recording user feedback will be in place.

### **Gwent Record Office, Ebbw Vale**

During the years 2009 – 2011 the New Gwent Record Office programme will have an impact on how the service can develop. Users will be informed on any impact this has on access to the Collection.