



Our service aims and objectives

Powys County Archives Office operates in line with the Statement of Policy which was adopted by Powys County Council on 18 June 1991. This statement requires the County Archives to:

1. acquire records relating to Powys' cultural and historical past, and keep and preserve them in accordance with the relevant legislation
2. provide public access to them

Powys County Archives Office aims to make its holdings available to the widest audience possible while taking account of its stakeholders. Access is made possible through a range of services offered by the Archives including on-site access for individuals and small groups in the public searchroom, remote access through correspondence and electronic means with individuals and official agencies, and through outreach activities in partnership with others. This strategy relates in the main, to on-site access.

Legislation, government policies (UK, national and local) and priorities for the service's funding authority have an impact on various points relating to access. The Archives aims to meet all these in its service.

Access is a fundamental function of the Archives, and is outlined in the principles of the PSQG *Standard for Access to Archives 2008*. The Archives undertakes to address issues of equality and social inclusion and physical access to its services. All opportunities will be taken to communicate with users, seek their views and opinions on services through feedback forms and surveys. Where possible the office will respond and make improvements to reflect the interests of its stakeholders. The office manages resources to provide the best services possible while seeking to innovate and consider the effectiveness of its work.

Some restrictions relating to on-site access are a result of the current accommodation of the Archives and its storage areas. In particular, opening hours, reader facilities and document delivery times are affected. However, every effort has been made to improve access, and to maintain and develop the service generally.

This policy will be implemented within the context of the bilingual nature of the county and in line with Powys County Council's commitment to equality and diversity. It will also be implemented in line with the Council's Sustainable Development Strategy.

What you can expect from us

- The website is compliant with guidance for the visually impaired and the information is updated regularly
- All leaflets, forms and website information are available in English and Welsh
- A response to all enquiries, comments and complaints received in writing or by email will be made within 20 working days
- Trained staff will be available to advise on procedures and resources when users visit the searchroom or contact the office
- All staff are identified by name and position and will treat all users courteously
- Up to date information and advice about facilities, sources and services is available on-site, in information leaflets and on the Powys Archives website
- Enquiries can be made by e-mail, social media, telephone and post as well as by personal visit
- Information about newly acquired collections will be published (in our quarterly newsletter and in our Annual Report) and demand will be a factor in evaluating collections for detailed listing
- Information leaflets will be compiled on popular topics of research
- All finding aids will conform to archival standards and where possible be available in automated and hard copy formats
- Where possible we will make records available online

- Procedures will be kept as simple as possible and explained clearly to all new users
- Secure arrangements are provided for personal belongings
- Power points are provided for the use of laptop computers
- Electrical equipment, such as microfilm/fiche readers are maintained and in good working order
- Documents in outstores will be available with a maximum of 5 working days notice

What we expect from you, the user

- Your comments and suggestions on improving the service by filling in a feedback form and participating in our user surveys
- Follow the advice of staff on the careful handling of archival materials to ensure the preservation of these unique resources
- Read and observe the regulations set out in the *Searchroom Rules*
- Show respect and consideration for other users and the staff

Access Restrictions

- Because of limited capacity users are advised to book before visiting the Archives
- Original records can be consulted in the supervised searchroom only
- Whilst every effort will be made to accommodate users there may be insufficient space for all first choice bookings
- Powys Archives closes its public service for an annual stocktake during two weeks in February. Access to records is therefore restricted during this time

Other reasons why users may not be able to see collections include:

- Confidentiality and Data Protection Act
- Permission required by depositor
- Restrictions imposed by donor or depositor
- Physical condition of material

In some cases, specific information from documents closed to full public inspection can be made available. Staff will explain the circumstances and the reasons for the restriction.

The Archives has prepared procedures for complying with the provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1998, the Freedom of Information Act, 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations, 2004

Related documents

Public Services Quality Group: *Standard for Access to Archives 2008*

Historical Manuscripts Commission: *A Standard for Record Repositories*

TNA, Archive Service Accreditation Standard, 2014

The Public Records Office: *Beyond the PRO, Public Records in Places of Deposit*

Powys County Archives Office: *Statement of Policy (1991)*

Powys County Archives Office: *Preservation Policy (Document Usage and Handling)*

Powys County Archives Office: *Fees and Charges (for copying documents)*

Powys County Archives Office: *Search Room Rules*

Powys County Archives Office: *Terms of Deposit*

Powys County Council: *Community Strategy 2005-2020*

Powys County Council: *Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008*

Powys County Council: *Welsh Language Scheme 2006-2008*

Powys County Council: *Equal Opportunities Policy*

Disability Discrimination Act 2005

March 2008

Reviewed 2014

For Review 2017