

Carmarthenshire Archives

Collection Information Policy

2022 – 2026

Mission statement

Our mission is to identify, collect and preserve historical documents relating to the County of Carmarthenshire and make them available to anyone who wishes to use them.

We are also committed to raising awareness about our work and demonstrating the many ways in which archives and records can be used by all members of the community.

Policy aims

This Policy defines the information that Carmarthenshire Archives will gather and provide about its archival collection. It also describes the current cataloguing systems and professional standards used. It supports our Mission Statement as set out above and should be read in conjunction with our Forward Plan, Collection Management Policy, Collection Development Policy, Depositors' Agreements and other relevant policy documents.

Collection information

Carmarthenshire Archives captures information at various stages during the processing of new records from their point of deposit through to accessioning, cataloguing and subsequent development, and as further information legislation affecting archives is introduced and modified.

This Policy covers information gathered:

- at point of deposit and accessioning
- during cataloguing (including accruals) and indexing
- through location and movement control
- about demand, usage and disposal
- about physical condition, preservation and conservation activities

This information is recorded and maintained in a variety of places and formats. These include but are not limited to:

- depositors agreement
- correspondence files for our depositors, which may be used to supplement the information found in accessions and catalogue records
- accessions register
- CALM Collections Management Software
- document request slips
- conservation work request slips
- other finding aids, including hand lists and indices

Carmarthenshire Archives will take steps to record the information required to ensure digital materials are preserved and can be retrieved and used. The acquisition of digital records is managed through an Interim Digital Preservation Policy.

Point of deposit and accessioning

From 2021 formal, written Deposit Agreements were introduced along with a guide explaining the Terms of Deposit for depositors to keep. The Deposit Agreements record the legal status of collections, including ownership and access to the collection. One copy is kept by the depositor; the other is retained permanently by Carmarthenshire Archives as evidence of title.

The Depositors files enable staff to locate easily the correspondence and any notes made concerning a deposit. In addition, an Accessions Database was established in 2020 to run alongside the hardcopy Accessions Register. This also records progress with, and highlights work remaining on any deposit.

There is a separate depositor's form for digital records.

Carmarthenshire Archives contributes to The National Archives' annual Accessions to Repositories Survey, enabling up-to-date information to appear on Discovery. Item level descriptions of Public Records are also available on The National Archives website. Collection level descriptions have previously been placed on the Archives Hub website.

Cataloguing and indexing

Since 2020, all cataloguing has been completed using CALM. Carmarthenshire Archives uses the mandatory elements of the International Council on Archives, General International Standard of Archival Description (ISAD[G]). Before this, cataloguing followed an in-house classification scheme.

Cataloguing is mainly completed by the Archivist.

At present, all indexing is completed using typed cards. The current index is divided into the traditional Personal Names, Parishes and Subject indices (with the Subject Index being backed up by a typed Thesaurus).

Accruals

Additions to existing collections are generally catalogued as separate collections and cross-referenced to related material within another collection. There are examples of collections where later records have been added to an earlier deposit.

In the example of parish records, for which Carmarthenshire Archives receives regular accruals, the sequence is treated as a continuation from the first deposit, and not as a separate collection.

Locations and movement control, including loans

The production of a document is recorded on a Document Requisition Slip, which records when it was produced and the name of the researcher who was consulting it. Document Requisitions Slips are retained for 6 years.

Carmarthenshire Archives has a facility for Depositors to withdraw temporarily their records. The depositor must provide proof of identification and complete a Temporary Withdrawal form confirming: contact details, exact details of items being withdrawn, reason for withdrawal and agreed date of return. Once completed the Temporary Withdrawal form is filed.

Document Requisition Slips are also used to inform those retrieving documents that the item(s) has been temporarily withdrawn.

Disposals and permanent withdrawals

At the point of deposit, Carmarthenshire Archives captures any permission given by the depositor for records to be destroyed or transferred to another archive if the records fall outside our Collection Policy. Carmarthenshire Archives also offers the depositor a return of any records falling outside of our Collections Policy. Record of any disposal is made in the appropriate deposit file.

All permanent withdrawals are recorded in CALM and any hardcopy catalogues available for public consultation are updated. Written confirmation that a document has been withdrawn is placed in the withdrawals file. Depositors are made aware at the point of deposit that Carmarthenshire Archives reserves a right to levy a charge for any work that has taken place on a particular collection, i.e. cataloguing, preservation and conservation.

Physical condition, preservation and conservation

The physical condition of new accessions is initially assessed at the point of deposit and during accessioning. This information is entered into CALM and taken into account when the collection is prioritised for cataloguing.

All conservation work is carried out by a professionally qualified conservator.

Review

This policy was created in October 2022. It will be reviewed in 2026, or sooner if circumstances dictate.