

APPRAISAL POLICY



Introduction

Gwent Archives collects, preserves and makes accessible archival records relating to the area it serves. Considerable resources are spent on the preservation of records and it is essential that these finite resources are directed effectively. Only those records which have enduring value will be selected for permanent preservation.

Selection for preservation is a difficult but central duty of Gwent Archives. If records of limited enduring value are selected it puts future collection of important documents at risk.

Criteria for Preservation

Records are selected for preservation because of:

Primary Value: Those records which provide the most complete and concise documentation of significant organisational functions.

Secondary Value: Either because of the information research value or their intrinsic value largely based upon historical associations.

The emphasis of appraisal will be on justifying decisions to keep, not on justifying decisions to destroy.

Primary Value will largely be assessed through macro-appraisal. Whilst some series will be retained in their entirety other series will be the subject of selective, structured or random sampling. To maximise the opportunities for record linkages, where appropriate, sampling will take into account census years or other significant classes of record.

Secondary Value, especially where a backlog of appraisal exists, will be dealt with largely by micro-appraisal aimed at file level. Only in exceptional circumstances will appraisal be carried out at a level lower than this.

Procedures for Appraisal

Archive appraisal will be carried out by archivists or under the supervision of an archivist.

All material which has not been selected for permanent preservation will be disposed of appropriately. This may involve it being offered back to the depositor or being disposed of as confidential waste.

New accessions will be appraised at source or upon receipt.

Primary Value

The aim of selection based on primary value is to preserve a record of the significant activities of the creating body. In the case of transfer of local authority records this should be a by-product of the records life cycle or records continuum approach.

Emphasis will be on the selection of records which contain summary information. Examples of this are:

School Records: Admission registers will be retained but attendance registers will not. Where there are no admission registers a sample of attendance registers may be taken.

Financial Records: Annual accounts will be preserved but most lower-level financial records will be destroyed. A sample of these accounts may be made if they significantly add to an understanding of the activities of the organisation and its role within the community.

The condition of records and the ease with which significant information can be extracted from them will be taken into account in selection.

Definitions of Secondary Value

Whilst it is not possible to provide a comprehensive list of all criteria which might be applied for assessment of secondary value the list below gives indicative criteria.

Records:

- Containing significant information on notable events and persons
- That relate to major trends and developments in the political, legal, social, economic or cultural history of Gwent
- That relate to significant scientific, technological, ecological or medical developments

Records will not be preserved which are:

- Duplicates
- Ephemera of no intrinsic value
- Material available elsewhere (For example Home Office circulars will be held by The National Archives)
- Publications available elsewhere

This Policy was rewritten in May 2019. It will be presented for approval by the Gwent Archives Joint Committee on 14 June 2019. It will be reviewed in April 2023 or sooner if circumstances dictate.