

Access to Collection Items Policy

Part of the Collections Management Framework

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1 Policy Context

The Collections Management Framework sets a context for the policies that assist the Library to manage the collections effectively and efficiently for the benefit of the people of Wales and the World. This policy forms part of the framework and should be interpreted in that context.

2. Strategic Context

- 2.1 2.1 The collections are at the heart of the work and activity of the National Library of Wales. The National Library of Wales was established by a Royal Charter in 1907 and the Charter states that the main purpose of the National Library of Wales is to:

"collect, preserve and give access to recorded information of all kinds and in all its forms, in particular information relating to Wales and the Welsh and other Celtic peoples, in the public interest including those relating to research and learning."

2.2 The collections exist for the benefit of the people of Wales and the World, including future generations. The Library's strategic plan for 2026-2030 - Connecting Wales and the World reinforces this principle when setting out the Library's vision:

" Our purpose is to work together with the people of Wales to preserve, grow and share the nation's memory and culture. Using our collections and expertise we will connect with communities, increase knowledge and develop skills and learning "

- The Strategic Plan also includes four strategic and well-being objectives:
- Preserve and develop the nation's memory
- Sharing Knowledge about Wales and its people
- Connecting Communities
- Education, Skills and Research

Providing access to the collections is not only one of the Library's main purposes under the Charter but also a means for the Library to realize its vision and strategic and well-being objectives.

The Library's Collections Strategy 2030 also provides guidance for work with collections and focuses on three objectives:

- Connected collections
- Inclusive collections
- Sustainable collections

2.5 This document outlines the principles regarding access to items in the collections in the care of the National Library of Wales (NLW). The Library has a wide range of collections in various formats, which include:

- Printed material (books, magazines, newspapers)
- E-resources
- Websites
- Manuscripts
- Archival material (paper and digital)
- Topographical Paintings and Prints
- Portraits
- Photographs
- Maps and charts
- Film
- Video
- Sound recordings

General Principles

- 3.1 Users should expect free and unrestricted access to Library collections in the reading rooms and online. Specific reading room areas are designated for using particular types of items.
- 3.2 The user experience is a core consideration in the planning and development of services that provide access to the collections. Our Customer Care Charter sets out what is expected from the perspective of the Library and the user. See https://www.library.wales/fileadmin/docs_gwefan/ymweld_a_ni/darllen_yn_llgc/myn_cas_customercharter_2019-02.pdf
- 3.3 When deciding on access the Library will consider the impact of its decisions on the ability to meet the needs of future generations as well as the present in accordance with the principle of sustainable development and on the basis of conservation risk assessments

4 Access to Original Items

4.1 On site Access Principles

- 4.1.1 Every effort will be made to provide direct access to collection material, but where high quality surrogate copies are available (i.e. digital versions, microfilms and facsimiles) they will be actively promoted as an alternative to the original items. The main means of access is the Reading Room service and a copy of the Reading Room Terms and Conditions is available here:

https://www.library.wales/fileadmin/docs_gwefan/ymweld_a_ni/darllen_yn_llgc/myn_cas_terms_reading_2019-01.pdf
- 4.1.2 It is possible that requests to view some items may require additional consideration by the Library's staff, as noted in 4.6 below.
- 4.1.3 Although the reading rooms are supervised, users consulting those items which require additional consideration (see part 4.6 below) will be supervised more closely
- 4.1.4 When direct access by users is not possible to collection items, the NLW will strive to provide access through another means, such as placing the item in a glass case, or through an intermediary (such as conservation staff turning pages)
- 4.1.5 The catalogue identifies items that have been restricted for various reasons and the items included in these categories are constantly reviewed. The items that may be affected are based on the criteria in 4.6 and on ongoing conservation assessments.

- 4.1.6 Where staff or users observe poor physical condition or damage to an item which has been requested, this should be reported so that Library staff can take remedial action. This may mean that the item falls under the considerations listed in 4.6

4.2 Access in the storage areas

In very exceptional cases the Library may provide access by allowing access to the storage areas. Such access is carefully managed through the Access to Collections Storage Areas Policy.

4.3 Use of proxy copies (physical and digital)

The National Library holds its collections in trust for the nation and is responsible for safeguarding the items in its care as well as providing, promoting and widening access to this material, whether analogue or digital. The Library believes that good proxy copies are a valuable way to increase access to collections, whether for remote online users or for the protection of fragile items or material that is often requested by researchers. However, substitute copies, in whatever form, cannot always replace the original. If available, effective surrogate copies reduce the potential risks to tangible physical items, especially the most fragile and vulnerable items or those in constant use, in accordance with UNESCO's statement that digitization is a means of safeguarding documents from deteriorating as there is less handling of them. For all these reasons, users of the NLW site who order items designated as extremely valuable, fragile or at particular risk of deterioration through atmospheric changes when removed from storage, are encouraged to provide additional details to staff to help them consider the application in accordance with the process described in section 4.6 below. As well as enabling the Library to make an informed decision regarding the request, this information helps to better understand the user requirements and to plan for the future.

4.4 Digitization of Physical Collections

The Library's experience has shown the significant value of using traditional conservation techniques alongside digitization expertise to create digital resources to promote new research and to support the achievement of learning objectives, including business needs (such as boundary evidence), community research and the creation of facsimiles of medieval manuscripts for outreach and learning activities. The first step is to repair and prepare fragile manuscripts for digitization, the second is to create high-quality surrogates, while the whole process is overseen by conservation expertise and the original material is skilfully treated to ensure that it survives as long as possible.

4.5 Digital Collections on the Site

In a number of cases legal and/or contractual restrictions will mean that collections that are digital can be accessed on the Library's sites but not more widely on the Web. Access will be provided on the Library's sites in a way that satisfies those restrictions, and those may vary according to the collection in question.

4.6 Process of Additional Consideration

Whilst the vast majority of collection items are freely available for consultation in the reading rooms or for reprographic orders without restriction, additional consideration is sometimes necessary prior to providing access to particular collection items. The reasons may include, but are not limited to:

- the item is particularly valuable (old, unique, rare) and of high cultural significance, and/or the physical condition is poor and the risk of damage by handling or exposure to environmental change is significant
- specific restrictions on access apply, such as Data Protection legislation or Freedom of Information exemptions
- the item is unusually difficult to retrieve: e.g. because of temporary relocation or barriers to storage areas, or other factors including external loan, exhibition, or being in the process of cataloguing

4.6.1 Requests for items that require additional consideration

Users should complete an 'Access to Items from the Collections: further considerations' form as part of their application for items requiring additional consideration. The information given on this form will be a basis for the decisions made regarding the specific application and will help the Library to understand the needs of its users, to guide the creation of future surrogates and programs of conservation treatment. In relation to reprographic orders, a member of the inquiries team should complete this form on behalf of the users. The most common reason for a request is that the proxy is unavailable or unsuitable for the user's needs: Whilst great care is taken to create high quality proxy copies for research and reprographic purposes, there is not always means to recreate the functional nature or physical experience of the original item in its entirety. Therefore, it is possible that users may need access to original items for their research. When a request relates to a fragile or high-risk item where no proxy-copy is available, the Library will consider creating a proxy-copy.

4.6.2 Assessment Categories

The items which require additional consideration will fall into at least one of the categories below:

Assessment Category	Example Material	Action Required
Category A	Items of particular value (old, unique, rare) and of high cultural significance and/or physical condition is poor and risk of damage through handling is significant	Complete an 'Access to Collection Items: further considerations' form, with signature from authorized member of staff. Circulation may take more than standard time to allow for evaluation of restricted items and/or acclimatization. It may be necessary to allow 24 hours

		between request and delivery to the reading room.
Category B	All other items where good surrogates exist.	No signature required, but staff should recommend the use of surrogates.
Category C	Restrictions for other reasons, such as those listed in 4.6	Contact the relevant member of staff.

4.7 Self Service copying and photography in the Reading Room

4.7.1 Self service copying

Access to self-service photocopiers to allow readers to make copies of post-1910 print collections is available in the Reading Room. For pre-1910 print material, the photocopying service must be used.

4.7.2 Photography in the reading room

Readers are permitted to use their own cameras to make free copies in the reading room under certain circumstances. The use must match the rules set out in the 'Use of Cameras to make Copies in the Reading Rooms' policy. Reading room staff should ensure that items are handled correctly and that suitable support equipment and copy stands are provided. Readers are only permitted to use available light for photography. Additional lighting including flashlights is not permitted. If a reader wishes to photograph an item in a restricted category (see section 4.6), this must be noted on the 'Access to Items from the Collections: further information' form before signing and being submitted.

4.8 Exhibitions and Loans

4.8.1 Exhibitions

As well as providing access through the reading room and online the Library uses exhibitions on its sites and beyond as a means of expanding access to the collections.

Guidelines regarding taking pictures (photographs) at LLGC Exhibitions:

- It is allowed to take pictures in the galleries for personal, non-commercial use only, However, the Library insists on the right, at times, to prohibit that for reasons related to rights, safety and taste.
- There will always be clear signs to accompany each exhibition to indicate whether it is permissible.
- The use of cameras and mobile phones is allowed.
- The use of flash is not allowed.
- It is not allowed to use a tripod.

- It is the visitor's responsibility to ensure that they do not infringe any copyright laws

4.8.2 Loans

The National Library of Wales lends items from its collections to temporary exhibitions in the UK and abroad, but mainly to galleries and museums in Wales.

Loan applications should normally be made at least 6 months before the exhibition opens. Consideration will be given to all loan applications as long as the borrowing location can meet the requirements outlined in the Loan Agreement Terms. The Library makes every effort to loan, except where the availability, condition or safety of the object prevents us from doing so, see

https://www.library.wales/fileadmin/docs_gwefan/new_structure/visit/things_to_do/exhibitions/item_loan/tac_exh_conditions_of_loan_agreement_2013.pdf

4.9 Learning and Engagement

The Library recognizes the core role that access to the collections plays in promoting learning and engagement. The Library is committed to ensuring the widest access to collections in order to facilitate this work. Access may involve the creation of facsimiles for learning and engagement purposes, and supervised viewing of original items where appropriate.

5. Remote access to Collections

5.1 Definition of access

In a digital context access can be defined at two levels:

View – Access that enables an individual to interpret the content of the item, but without use of it beyond the interface used to present it.

Re-use – The ability to use the information for a different purpose to the original purpose when it was originally produced, stored, collected or shared.

5.2 General Principles

5.2.1 The Library undertakes to provide the widest possible access and digital access is an important means of achieving this aim.

5.2.2 Open and unhindered access is given, free of charge, to all digital reproductions created through the Library's digitization program or projects, unless there is a legal reason or business case for not doing so.

5.2.3 The Library recognizes the existence of rights, including those relating to intellectual property and privacy, that exist in collections that are available remotely and deals with them in an appropriate manner. Intellectual property rights are managed in accordance with the Intellectual Property Policy. Users are also informed of the copyright status of the remotely accessible collections.

5.2.4 The Library gives due consideration to the voice of the user and the use made and/or intended when making decisions about which collections should be available digitally and the method and medium for giving access to them.

5.2.5 When designing, developing and monitoring services that provide remote access, the Library undertakes to prioritize the user experience and basic principles 5.2.1 and 5.2.2, implementing practices and principles such as UX.

5.2.6 Digital access is given to collections to support all types of use. Giving due consideration to practical and legal aspects, the Library encourages and facilitates the reuse of digital collections including creative and innovative use as well as to support engagement, research and scholarship.

5.2.7 An opportunity or attempt to generate income or make commercial use of digital collections, either by the Library or a 3rd party, will be based on a business case that takes into account the impact on use in accordance with the principles above .

5.3 Providing copies of items

The Library provides copies on paper or digitally through reprographic orders and digitization on demand requests. Consideration is given to rights attached to the item and fees are charged based on the cost of providing the service. If the item is not already available digitally from the Library, or where access to the original item is essential for the provision of a copy, section 4.6 of this policy will apply.

5.4 Sharing of Collections

The Library shares digital collections on 3rd party platforms as a means of extending the reach of the collections.

5.4.1 Considerations

The following are considered overriding decisions regarding the investment of resources in order to share the Library's collections on 3rd party platforms:

- Recognition of the Library: How prominent is the Library as the source of information?
- Routes to return to the Library (via links): Is it possible for the user to follow a direct route to the item/collection on the Library's platforms?
- Availability of statistical information as evidence of reach and impact: What information can be obtained about the reach and use of the collection on the 3rd party platform?

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