

## **Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales**

### **Collection Information Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales holds collections in trust for the people of Wales. Our 2015 Vision document, *Inspiring People, Changing Lives*, has reiterated our commitment to making the collections ever-more accessible. Information underpins every aspect of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales' activity. Recording collection information is central to being accountable for the collections, for their effective management and for ensuring their accessibility.

1.2 Good documentation encourages co-operation between museums, ensures information does not remain in any one individual's head, and allows professional standards to be met.

1.3 The Museum's collections include both physical and digital collection items. Information about these collections and associated intellectual property is key to enable their use. Collection information is stored mainly on collections databases or as hard-copy in files.

1.4 This policy is one part of our Collections Management Framework, accordingly it operates alongside other related museum strategies and policies listed in our *Collections Management Policy*.

#### **2. Objectives**

2.1 This policy sets out how the Museum will maintain professional standards in documentation and collections information and attain the very highest standard. It demonstrates how we will strengthen the security of the collections through accurate collections information and how we will improve accountability for collections and collections information.

#### **3. Definition**

3.1 Collections information is all the information that we collect, create, hold and maintain about our collection and/or collected items. This information can include a broad range of knowledge, such as interpretation, stories, research and recorded conversation. (PAS 197: 2009).

#### **4. Principles**

4.1 We will be fully accountable for all objects that enter, or are already within, the Museum, both accessioned and unaccessioned.

4.2 We will create and maintain up-to-date information to the highest possible standards.

4.3 We will ensure that legal ownership and copyright are obtained and recorded for all newly accessioned items, and that due diligence paperwork is created and maintained.

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4.5 Items will be documented so that we know the permanent or temporary locations of all items held by the Museum.

4.6 We will respect and protect the confidentiality of the data in our care.

4.7 We will undertake regular reviews of the collection management databases to ensure they are fit for purpose and that collection information is appropriately safeguarded against potential future obsolescence of the systems.

## **5 Specific Ethical and Legislative Considerations**

5.1 We will comply with all relevant legislation e.g. Freedom of Information (2000), Data Protection Act (1998) and the Environmental Information Regulation (2004) when responding to requests for information.

5.2 All our data will be held securely and the security of the collection management databases will be maintained in line with the Museum's Information Security Strategy.

## **6 Acquisition Records**

6.1 All items entering the Museum will be issued with a receipt and entry number at the time of entry into a Museum site.

6.2 We will capture information concerning legal ownership, copyright holders and will follow our accession procedure before allocating and maintaining a unique number for each accession (see Collection Development Policy).

6.3 We will create and maintain good quality and up-to-date information on our collections management databases which conforms to appropriate national and international standards for collection items.

6.4 Information will be recorded for each object or group of objects sufficient to allow unequivocal physical identification of that group of objects, and provide full accountability and improved accessibility to the collections:

- Object number
- Number of parts or specimens
- Object name or title
- Museum storage location
- Legal ownership history and details
- Copyright information
- Geographical provenance (for scientific, natural history and archaeological items)
- Additional information will be required to uniquely identify an object or group of objects and will be determined in accordance with our *Procedure for Acquisition*.

6.5 Wherever reasonably possible we will create a digital image of each collection item or group of items.

6.6 We will preserve all primary collection-related data even when superseded by new information.

6.7 We will enhance basic records as more information becomes available via research and use of the collection.

## **7 Audit and Accountability**

7.1 We will ensure that the collection management databases are the primary tools for creating and managing collections information and items for which the Museum is legally responsible.

7.2 We will continue to convert our older paper records to a computerized format as time and resources allow.

7.3 We will keep copies of paper records and collection information in secure storage locations.

7.4 We will ensure that all data is traceable through an audit trail as to who created or edited it.

7.5 Entry, location, movement and exit documentation will be maintained for all items that enter, move within or exit the Museum for whatever purpose, regardless of their ownership status.

## **8 Physical Verification**

8.1 Physical verification is the process whereby the Museum establishes, at a given point in time, the physical presence and location of a particular object/specimen in its care. Details of gaps and backlogs of documentation are maintained where relevant. A plan to complete cataloguing gaps is in place and will be progressed as resources permit.

8.2 We will undertake the physical verification of our collections by taking a project-based approach. This will entail the systematic verification of areas of the collection to suit the needs of broader projects, storage relocations, exhibitions, research projects etc.

8.3 Physical verification of our collections will be undertaken during use, e.g. the recording of new movements during loan, exhibition, conservation, photography, research or enquiries.

8.4 The outcome of the verification process will be recorded on our collections management databases and may be accompanied by paper records, e.g. movement forms.

8.5 The systematic auditing of records of collection items will be undertaken by auditors appointed by the Museum's Internal Audit Committee at pre-determined intervals.

## **9 Provision and Use of Collection Information**

9.1 We will comply with all relevant legislation e.g. Freedom of Information (2000), Data Protection Act (1998) and the Environmental Information Regulation (2004) when responding to requests for information, especially confidential data such as donor information, environmental information, valuations or site details on a case by case basis, and in accordance with the applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of gift.