



**Comhairle nan Eilean Siar**

## Tasglann nan Eilean Collections Information Policy

<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Tasglann nan Eilean Collections Information Policy</b>
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<b>Date</b>	September 2017
<b>Access</b>	Public

### *Document History*

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comments</b>
V1.0	September 2017	Approved by Comhairle nan Eilean Siar



**Tasglann  
nan Eilean**

Archive



# **Tasglann nan Eilean Collections Information Policy**

## **1. Introduction**

The purpose of Tasglann nan Eilean, as the archive service of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, is to identify, collect and preserve the records of the Comhairle and its predecessor bodies which need to be retained permanently for legal or historical reasons, as well as the archives of organisations, businesses, estates or individuals connected to the Outer Hebrides which have been gifted or deposited, and to make these accessible to the widest extent possible for research, education or enjoyment.

## **2. Policy objectives**

Tasglann nan Eilean recognises that good documentation of its collections, through accessioning, cataloguing and other activities is fundamental to effective collections management and enabling public access.

### **2.1 History of collections documentation**

The archive service began as a three-year EDRF-funded project in 2010. In November 2013, it became part of the heritage service of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Archive material received directly since 2010 has generally been well documented to recognised archival standards.

There is a small quantity of material held for which no accessions or transfer documentation can be traced, making it difficult to establish the terms on which it was initially deposited. This is chiefly material which had previously been held for many years elsewhere in the Comhairle and which was not fully documented at the time of transfer.

A collections database – Axiell CALM - was procured in April 2017. This will make it possible to streamline documentation processes when the customisation of the various modules has been completed.

Prior to this, catalogues were created as hard-copy documents and on an ICA-Atom database, and thus made available online via the Tasglann nan Eilean Siar website, whilst accessions were recorded in an in-house database.

### **2.2 Accessions**

2.2.1 Accessioning is the process of capturing information about acquisitions as they are transferred into the care of the archive service. The purpose is to record important information about the archive's provenance, history and ownership. Tasglann nan Eilean aims to accurately document key information about the material acquired - its nature and contents, the identity of the person or body transferring the archives into its custody, and the terms on which it is to hold the records- in an accessions database as soon as practicable after arrival and certainly within one month of receipt.

2.2.2 Tasglann nan Eilean will make every effort to establish the ownership and legal status of archive material offered at the time of transfer to the archive service.

2.2.3 Tasglann nan Eilean will ensure that all accessions are accompanied by a signed Deposit Agreement Form.

## **2.3 Cataloguing**

2.3.1 Tasglann nan Eilean aims to have at least 75% of its holdings fully catalogued to *General International Standard of Archival Description* (ISAD(G)) standards at any one time.

2.3.2 The archive service aims to provide collection-level descriptions of most of its holdings and to make this information available online and in the reading room, in line with its remit to provide the widest possible access to the archives collections in its care.

2.3.3 A documentation plan identifying priorities for in-depth cataloguing to item level, and the resource available for such tasks, will be drawn up annually as part of the service's business planning process.

2.3.4 Tasglann nan Eilean will use the following standards in addition to ISAD(G) as appropriate:

- National Council on Archives: Rules for the Construction of Personal, Place and Corporate names;
- ISAAR (CPF): International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate bodies, Persons and Families;
- UKAT (UK Archival Thesaurus) for subject indexing

2.3.5 Cataloguing Guidelines which conform to the above standards for use by staff and others involved in cataloguing are available, to ensure that consistency and quality are maintained.

## **2.4 Strategy for dealing with legacy issues and backlog**

2.4.1 Tasglann nan Eilean will attempt to establish the circumstances under which material was deposited with Tasglann nan Eilean and discover its provenance in cases where there is limited transfer documentation or for archive material held which is unaccessioned.

2.4.2 Tasglann nan Eilean will put documentation work plans in place to deal with collections which are not catalogued or only partially catalogued in order to minimise the proportion of uncatalogued archive material held.

2.4.3 Tasglann nan Eilean will pursue grant funding in order to deliver specific cataloguing projects for which the service does not have resource available.

## **2.5 Finding aids and catalogue enhancement**

2.5.1 Tasglann nan Eilean will take account of user demand and feedback in developing additional finding aids to facilitate access to the collections beyond catalogues, such as source or subject guides.

2.5.2 The archive service will, where appropriate, create opportunities for volunteers to work on projects to enhance the catalogues by creating indexes or transcripts.

## **3. Systems for recording information**

3.1 Archive accessions were initially documented in a Microsoft Access database, created in 2010. An archive accessions database was then developed in-house by the Comhairle's IT service in 2016, and the data imported from the Access database as an interim measure prior to the decision to purchase Axiell CALM.

3.2 It is the intention to import the data from the in-house database to the CALM Accessions and Depositors databases by the end of 2017, to enable the accessions, depositors and catalogue databases to be linked, and to make full use of the functionality offered by CALM.

3.3 Signed archive transfer forms and accompanying correspondence and information relating to accessions are held in an accessions filing system in paper format.

3.4 Archive collections are catalogued using Axiell CALM.

3.5 Copies of the archive catalogues are made available on an online database (ICA-Atom) via the Tasglann nan Eilean Siar website, a legacy of the initial project.

3.6 It is a longer-term goal to make the CALM catalogue available directly online.

3.7 Locations are currently recorded on a spreadsheet. It is intended to import the information to the Locations database in CALM by the end of 2017.

## **4. Protecting collections information**

4.1 Information held in online systems (CALM, in-house databases and spreadsheets) are regularly backed up.

4.2 Only authorised members of Tasglann nan Eilean staff have access to Axiell CALM and to the relevant shared drives.

4.3 Paper records such as the accessions files are retained in a locked fire-proof filing cabinet.