

Lothian Health Services Archive

Fact Sheet 1: What is LHSA?



Mission Statement

Lothian Health Services Archive holds the historically important local records of NHS hospitals and other health-related organisations. We collect, preserve and catalogue these records and promote access to our holdings for the benefit of all.

Institutional Profile

Annual Budget: derived from Lothian NHS Board for salaries, direct and indirect running costs.

Staffing: 3 archivists (open-ended); 1 conservator (open-ended); 1 archive assistant (open-ended).

Organisational Arrangements: managed by the University of Edinburgh and located within the Centre for Research Collections (Edinburgh University Main Library, George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LJ). LHSA is part of the Library and Collections division of Information Services at the University of Edinburgh.

Core Activities

- Provision of user services (readers and remote enquiries).
- Preservation and conservation.
- Acquisition of archival material in conformity with the LHSA collection policy.
- Cataloguing.
- Outreach (promotion of the Archive and its holdings).

Other Activities

- Repository management (including maintenance of strict environmental conditions necessary for the proper preservation of archival records).
- Advising Lothian NHS Board on archival aspects of records management, Data Protection and Freedom of Information.
- Liaising with National Archives of Scotland and other Scottish NHS archives in order to maintain awareness of the Public Record status of NHS records and to develop clear, applicable guidelines to their preservation, and disposal where appropriate.
- Caring for historically important objects deposited in LHSA, and providing advice on and information about those still on NHS curtilage.
- Promoting LHSA staff training and professional development in order to maximise the level of curatorial care bestowed on the Archive.

Collection Policy

LHSA primarily collects records of long-term legal, administrative, epidemiological and historical value produced by the NHS within the Lothian area, including those of predecessor bodies. In addition, non-NHS institutional records and personal papers relating to the local history of health care and the history of Scottish medicine are collected.

Holdings

Approximately 3,000 linear metres in a variety of media, mostly paper-based, including:

- 53 collections of institutional records (LHBs).
- 45 large gifted and deposited collections (GDs).
- 113 smaller GDs (known collectively as GD1).
- c.130 collections of folder-based clinical case notes occupying c.1,500 linear metres.
- c.1,400 books (LHSA reference library).
- c.5,000 pamphlets (NHS and health related grey literature).
- c.30,000 images (mostly still negatives, prints and x-rays).
- 279 medical instruments.
- 406 artefacts.
- 195 plaques.
- 49 items of silverware.

In addition LHSA has a small quantity of digital assets (e.g. copies of photographs, case notes and x-rays).