

Freedom of Information requests

2011

Reference number: 11-003

Dear Sir / Madam,

Under the Freedom of Information Act, could you please tell me whether your organisation has drawn up any new policy / guidance on the storing / displaying / retention etc of artifacts of human remains since 1st January 2008. (Could you also include any instances where changes have been made to existing policies / guidelines.)

If so, please can you provide me with any documents which relate to the new policy / guidance. Please also signify whether any signage for such items on public display has been altered in this time period.

Please could you also state what items (of human remains) the policy relates to. If you have a vast number of such items, I do not require a full inventory, just an indication of the size and variety of your collection.

Finally, please could you indicate whether you have received any complaints during the period from members of the public, or organisations, about such items on display. Where possible, please provide copies of any correspondence.

8 March 2011

Reference number: 11-003

Dear,

Thank you for your request for information. As Head of Knowledge and Information Management for Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales, I will be responding to your request for information.

I refer to your email of 16 February 2011, in which you asked for the following information:

- *Could you please tell me whether your organisation has drawn up any new policy / guidance on the storing / displaying / retention etc. of artefacts of human remains since 1st January 2008. (Could you also include any instances where changes have been made). Provide me with documents which relate to the new policy / guidance.*
- *Signify whether any signage for such items on public display has been altered in this time period.*
- *State what items (of human remains) the policy relates to.*
- *Indicate whether you have received any complaints during the period from members of the public, or organisations, about such items on display.*

In responding to your request for information, I will be referring to each element of your request separately.

- 1) *Could you please tell me whether your organisation has drawn up any new policy / guidance on the storing / displaying / retention etc. of artefacts of human remains since 1st January 2008. (Could you also include any instances where changes have been made). Provide me with documents which relate to the new policy / guidance.*

The last review of the NMW Policy on Human Remains took place during the autumn of 2008 and therefore the Museum's policy has been updated since 1st January 2008. This was approved by the Museum's Trustees in October 2008 and placed on our website shortly afterwards. The Policy is due for renewal in October 2011. The updates made to the Policy in 2008 reflected a correction to the definition of human tissue made by the DCMS and the implementation of the Human Tissue Act in the time since we first published a policy for human remains.

Our only documentation regarding the changes to the Museum's Policy (made in 2008) are those contained within the Policy itself. We have not written any further guidelines from this.

2) *Signify whether any signage for such items on public display has been altered in this time period.*

We have not made any changes to our signage of displayed human remains since January 1st 2008. Indeed the only human remains on display are all older than 100 years since death and we have not made any changes to the displayed remains since that date, apart from replacing the original skeleton of the 'Red Lady' of Paviland with a cast during November 2009, following the recall of the original from loan. For this we generated a new label making it clear that it is now a cast and not the original skeleton that is on display.

3) *State what items (of human remains) the policy relates to.*

The Museum policy relates to all human remains within the collections of the National Museum of Wales. The scope of this collection includes and indeed is mainly comprised of, archaeological human remains that are all older than 100 years since death. The museum holds a very small number of ethnographic remains, all of which are also older than 100 years since death all these remains are stored in a dedicated human remains store, created since January 2008. In addition the Museum holds a small number (less than 20) remains that we have licensed under the Human Tissue Act.

These include:

Hair

Object accession number	Description	Production date
F69.120.2	Doll	Circa 1910
F76.314.1	Doll	Circa 1923
F69.383	Doll	1929
F88.73	Doll	1930's
F72.321.1	Doll	1890 - 1910
F72.321.2	Doll	1890 - 1910
F73.325.12	Hair styling model	1930
F80.121.6	Box containing pieces of hair	Early 20th century
51.453.22	Bracelet	
51.453.23	Bracelet	
51.453.24	Bracelet	
66.310.5	Brooch	
F75.86.94	Head-band	Early 20th century
F75.86.95	Head-band	Early 20th century
54.439.11	Locket	

Tissue

F69.388	caul	1916
F06.4.4	caul	1930's

- 4) *Indicate whether you have received any complaints during the period from members of the public, or organisations, about such items on display.*

There have been no written complaints received about how we display our human remains.

Your request was considered according to the principles set out in the National Assembly's Code of Practice on Public Access to Information (third edition). The Code is published on the Internet at www.information.wales.gov.uk.

If you believe that I have not applied the Code of Practice on Public Access to Information correctly or have not followed the relevant laws, please contact me to request a first-stage review. If, after that, you are still not satisfied you may request a formal review by the Museum. When dealing with any concerns, we will follow the principles of the National Museum of Wales' Code of Practice on Complaints, which is available on the Internet at www.nationalmuseumwales.org/en/45/ or by post to:

Mr. Robin Gwyn
Director of Communications
National Museum Wales
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NP

You also have the right to complain to the Information Commissioner. Normally, however, you should pursue the matter through our internal procedure before you complain to the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Yours sincerely,

Head of Knowledge & Information Management

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Llywydd/President Paul Loveluck CBE JP Is-Llywydd/Vice President Elisabeth Elias MA DL
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Rhif elusen / Charity registration number: 525774
Rhif TAW / VAT registration number: GB 783 4541 10

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