



## **'Collecting the Referendum on Scottish independence'**

### **Statement of collecting priorities**

**Maria Castrillo**

**June 2014**

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Regardless of the outcome, the 2014 Referendum on Scottish independence and the debate surrounding it is a major event in Scottish political and cultural life. The documentary evidence of this key event should be collected to ensure that a permanent legacy in a variety of formats and media is preserved and made accessible for the benefit of the Scottish people and for present and future generations of researchers.

NLS has a duty to capture the published output of the Referendum particularly through legal deposit. Furthermore, because of the Library's long-established role as the major centre for collecting political archives in Scotland, including the records of campaigning and pressure groups, it should also seek to ensure the long-term preservation, management and access to records created by bodies, organisations and individuals involved in the constitutional debate<sup>2</sup>.

### 1. General Principles

Given the sensitive nature of the debate and its two possible outcomes, the underlying principle behind 'Collecting the Referendum' is to build a collection that is un-biased, representative and inclusive of the varied and often complex angles surrounding the debate on the constitutional future of Scotland.

The collection will include publications in print and digital format, analogue and born digital archives and records, moving image and sound, websites and social media streams. The selection criteria will be driven by content rather than format; but in cases where appropriate, analysis of format should underpin the selection decision if content is available or can be made available in more than one format (Key Collecting Guideline 2).

NLS will endeavour to collect referendum-related material in any format and media in the Gaelic language<sup>3</sup>.

NLS will seek to co-operate with other heritage organisations, libraries and archives in Scotland and the UK to foster collaboration and to avoid competition, overlap or duplication of effort.

When advising and negotiating with potential donors and depositors, NLS will ensure that the appropriate agreement documents are explained to them and used to document the acquisition process and to comply with legislation requirements, namely Legal and non-print Legal Deposit, Data Protection and Copyright.

In most cases three-dimensional objects will be directed to an appropriate museum or gallery. NLS will only accept such material in very exceptional circumstances, for example if the items are directly related to other material being acquired and removing them from the collection would have a detrimental effect.

### 2. Collecting Priorities

NLS aims to collect published Scottish material comprehensively<sup>4</sup>. It also prioritises the

---

<sup>1</sup> This statement of collecting priorities is in line with NLS's current Integrated Collecting Strategy, 2008, available online <http://www.nls.uk/media/22389/2008-collecting-strategy.pdf> (accessed 12 May 2014).

<sup>2</sup> This is one of the Collections and Interpretation key objectives from the NLS Corporate Plan 2014-2015.

<sup>3</sup> This is in line with NLS Gaelic Language Plan 2012-2017, available online <http://www.nls.uk/media/1093350/2012-2017-nls-gaelic-language-plan.pdf> (accessed 12 May 2014).

acquisition by donation, deposit or purchase of nationally significant manuscripts and archives relating to Scotland, the Scots or to any aspect of Scottish history, life and culture (NLS Key Collecting Guideline 1).

In the context of the 'Collecting the Referendum' project the following priorities have been identified:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) National Campaigning Groups               | publications, records and archives, moving image <sup>5</sup> and audio (in any format and media), websites and social media streams                                       |
| 2) Political Parties and Trade Unions        | publications, records and archives, moving image and audio (in any format and media), websites and social media streams  |
| 3) Think Tanks and Research Institutes       | primarily publications, websites and social media streams; a selective approach must be followed to collect their records and archives at a later stage and if appropriate |
| 4) Government (UK and Scottish) <sup>6</sup> | official publications and websites   |
| 5) Individuals                               | a targeted and selective approach should inform the collecting of material relating to key individuals involved in the debate  |
| 6) Charities, Churches and Third Sector      | publications and websites and possibly social media  |
| 7) Commercial publishers                     | publications   |

As NLS is seeking to build its capacity to collect social media, this collecting strand needs to be addressed in a targeted and focused manner. Whilst we acknowledge that we cannot collect everything and that there are technological hurdles to overcome, NLS will identify and capture social media streams that best represent the different angles of the debate, and develop guidelines and procedures to harvest, preserve and make accessible this output.

Special consideration must be given to the local and grass-roots dimension of many campaign groups and the fact that they largely, although not exclusively, operate in the social media sphere. Because of its ephemeral nature, this output will be at risk after 18th September, so it is important to ensure that a representative sample is collected on time.

### 3. Methods of Acquisition

---

<sup>4</sup> NLS Integrated Collecting Strategy, 2008 available online <http://www.nls.uk/media/22389/2008-collecting-strategy.pdf> (accessed 16 May 2014), pp. 9-10.

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Screen Archive has its own collection policy, available online: <http://www.nls.uk/media/1094670/2013-scottish-screen-archive-collecting-policy.pdf> (accessed 13 May 2014). Curatorial decisions about what moving image needs to be collected must be done in line with this document and in consultation with SSA Curators as appropriate.

<sup>6</sup> Any official records and archives resulting from the referendum and its outcome will be collected by the National Records of Scotland and the National Archives in London as appropriate.

NLS is one of the libraries of legal deposit, which means that it is entitled in terms of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003 to claim a copy of all printed items published in the UK and in the Republic of Ireland by reciprocal legislation.

From 6 April 2013, the Legal Deposit Libraries (Non-Print) Regulations 2013 extended this to include the right to request or harvest UK electronic publications.

Donations of material are preferred to deposits, but a deposit will be considered and negotiated if that is the only route of acquisition available.

Purchase of material will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Donations and deposits of material will be subject to a negotiated agreement between the donor/depositor and NLS and supported by the relevant documentation.

In the case of deposited collections a government indemnity will be sought to cover for their potential loss or damage as a result of theft, destruction or damage while in the care of NLS or during transportation.

Offers of material will be appraised against established collecting criteria before they can be accepted. Material that does not meet the criteria will be offered to an alternative repository with the consent of the donor/depositor.

#### **4. Access**

Notice of new acquisitions along with any restrictions on access or use will be made public at the earliest opportunity.

NLS will provide access to catalogue data and any other finding aids to its users, and to other libraries and archives in Scotland, the UK and beyond.

NLS will enable consultation and access to referendum material by individuals and groups on its premises and subject to any restrictions, and for other educational and exhibition purposes.

Subject to copyright legislation, NLS will provide reproduction of surrogates of original materials for private research by individuals.