



Collections Care and Conservation Policy National Museums Northern Ireland, 2025

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1.	Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:
1.1	Museum's statement of purpose
1.1.1	The Board of Trustees of the National Museums and Galleries Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to 'National Museums Northern Ireland') is required under Article 4(1) of the <i>Museums & Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998</i> (hereafter referred to as 'the Order'), to 'care for, preserve and add to the objects in its collections'.
1.1.2	The areas of interest to be covered by the organisation are defined in the Order, Article 4(1)(d), as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • art, history and science • the culture and way of life of people; and • the migration and settlement of people Article 4(2) states that 'the Board shall have particular regard to the heritage of Northern Ireland'.
1.1.3	National Museums NI's Vision is: Celebrate who we are: telling the stories of our past, challenging our present, shaping our future
1.1.4	National Museums NI's Mission is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, manage and care for our collections to benefit current and future generations • Make our collections accessible to the widest possible audiences • Play a leading role in the economic and social wellbeing and future of this place • Build an organisation where people feel valued.
1.2	Purpose of Policy
1.2.1	This Policy is part of the National Museums NI Collections Management Policy framework, which consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Development Policy, 2018 • Collections Information and Access Policy, 2024 • Collections Care and Conservation Policy, 2025
1.2.2	The purpose of the Collections Care and Conservation Policy is to ensure that National Museums NI fulfils its responsibilities in relation to the care and conservation of the collections in line with National Museums NI's Corporate Strategy and in proportion to the resources available.
1.2.3	The constituent museum sites within National Museums NI are:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulster Museum • Ulster Folk Museum • Ulster Transport Museum • Ulster American Folk Park • Off-Site Stores
1.2.4	All four sites within National Museums NI are Accredited Museums. The Accreditation Scheme is administered by Arts Council England (ACE) which sets nationally agreed standards for UK Museums.
1.2.6	<p>In line with the Accreditation Scheme this policy details how National Museums NI's will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the condition of the collections • Manage and improve the preservation of the collections through good environmental conditions and building maintenance – a process managed through the Built Heritage Working Group • Maintain best practice in the care and conservation of the collections • Increase access to the collections through the conservation process, scientific investigation, analysis and display.
1.3	Policy Implementation
1.3.1	National Museums NI's policies and procedures are informed by relevant legal and ethical frameworks, alongside appropriate national and international standards, as set out in the Appendix 1.
1.3.2	<p>Managers should ensure that the Collections Management Policy framework and supporting procedures/plans are followed in the areas for which they are responsible.</p> <p>The following strategies, plans and procedures, in particular, are relevant to this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collections Care Incident Response and Recovery Guidelines 2012 • Collections Care and Conservation Plan 2022 • Collections Information and Access Policy 2024 • Documentation Plan (Revised) • Documentation and Loans Procedural Manuals 2025 • Energy Management Policy 2014 • Environmental Sustainability Policy 2022 • Event Hire Policy: Ulster Museum 2012 • Event Hire Policy: Ulster Folk & Transport Museum 2014 • Ethics Policy 2020 • Exhibition Policy 2022 • Human Remains Policy 2022 • Intellectual Rights Policy 2013 • ICT Strategy 2012-2015 ICT Strategy 2016-2020

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Pest Management Policy 2014 • Lending and Borrowing Policy 2023 • Major Incident and Emergency Plan 2024 • Research Policy 2018 • Working Collections Policy 2014
1.3.3	Training, where relevant, will be provided to support the delivery of the Collections Care and Conservation Policy.
1.3.4	National Museums NI staff should strive to meet the responsibilities outlined within this policy.
2	Care of Collections
2.1	Definitions
2.1.1	Caring for the collections is a fundamental duty for all museums. This policy includes a combination of preventive and remedial conservation measures, designed to ensure long-term preservation.
2.1.2	<p>Preventive Conservation covers the measures necessary to slow down or minimise deterioration of museum objects and specimens and structures.</p> <p>Conservation Treatment or remedial conservation involves a treatment to an object or specimen to bring it to a more acceptable condition or state in order to stabilise it or enhance some aspects of its cultural or scientific value.</p>
2.2	Scope
2.2.1	<p>This Policy refers to the care and conservation of collections while:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on display as part of exhibition or loan • in storage as part of our reserve collections • in transit between sites or to other venues
2.2.2	<p>The Policy also refers to collections items that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual accessioned items and collections • Archival and Library collections • Historic exhibit buildings and historic interiors • Collection items in the care of National Museums NI through loan • Support collections such as those on display in exhibit buildings
2.2.3	The Policy does not include collections primarily developed for educational or outreach use, replicas or items primarily used for events or in connection with corporate hire.
2.3	Principles

2.3.1	The Policy aims to strike a balance between the long-term preservation of the collections and the provision of access through the management of risk to the collections and management and training of staff.
2.3.2	Utilising a risk-based approach National Museums NI will undertake assessment of collection care and conservation needs on the basis of a pragmatic risk management model. Evaluation of the likelihood of risk and its impact in terms of loss of value of the item or collection will be used to identify and prioritise collection care measures to reduce damage to an acceptable level within the available resources.
2.3.3	Prioritising Access National Museums NI will support and prioritise physical access to its collections through exhibitions, loans and in store while recognising that the use of collections may result in increased risks. Assessment of risk will take into consideration the nature of the risks and the impact on value of the collection item and will ensure that appropriate measures to mitigate and manage the risk are in place.
2.3.4	Promoting Sustainability National Museums NI will work to reduce the environmental impact of measures taken to stabilise the collections and will embed sustainability into plans and procedures for collections care and conservation.
2.3.5	Achieving Public Value National Museums NI will maximise the public value of collection care and conservation through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting collections use, study and research • adding to the knowledge of collection items through study and research • maintaining and actively promoting good practice
2.4	Preventive Conservation
2.4.1	Within the exhibition environment National Museums NI will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate environmental conditions through monitoring and control of temperature and relative humidity which balances the needs of visitors with care of the collections. In most areas, this aligns to the Joint IIC - ICOM-CC Declaration on Environmental Guidelines 2014. • Provide appropriate lighting while minimising deterioration to vulnerable collections • Effectively monitor and control pest activity, dust, vibration and pollutants • Control damage from handling, wear and tear and environmental factors • Meet appropriate environmental standards for material within the care of NMNI as identified as part of agreements with lending institutions • Maintain adequate fire detection and suppression systems

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide security regimes which deliver protection for collection items consistent with the level of risk and current best practice • Provide appropriate standard operating procedures, resources and training to manage hazards within the collection
2.4.2	<p>Within exhibit buildings National Museums NI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a level of control of environmental conditions commensurate with the original nature of the building and interiors • Deliver a range of housekeeping and monitoring procedures which reduces the incidence of pest damage and enhances the presentation of the buildings • Carry out monitoring of collection damage and loss to effectively manage preventive and remedial conservation measures • Provide appropriate training in pest management, housekeeping procedures, fire prevention and security for visitor guides • Provide appropriate standard operating procedures, resources and training to manage hazards within the collection
2.4.3	<p>Within Collection Storage Areas National Museums NI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review storage areas to prioritise measures to achieve improvements in the buildings and collection environment for all collections • Undertake assessment and review of collection condition to inform priorities for preventive measures and conservation treatment programmes • Improve environmental conditions through monitoring and control of temperature and relative humidity so that the majority of the collections are stored in environmental conditions which meet recognised standards. • Control light levels within storage areas • Monitor and control pest activity, dust and pollutants through measures such as the Integrated Pest Management Programme, housekeeping regimes and use of suitable of storage materials and enclosures • Control damage from handling and wear and tear through appropriate storage furniture, physical protection for collections and appropriate handling techniques • Maintain adequate fire detection systems • Provide security regimes which deliver protection for collection items consistent with the level of risk and current best practice • Provide appropriate standard operating procedures, resources and training to manage hazards within the collection
2.4.4	<p>For Collections in Transit, both within and between sites National Museums NI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate handling equipment and vehicles for transit to minimise risks to collections • Provide appropriate protective enclosures or other physical protection to collections based on an assessment of risk specific to the collection item and proposed movement

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use trained personnel to handle and move collections • Use appropriate security measures for collections in transit • Provide appropriate standard operating procedures, resources and training to manage hazards within the collection
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2.5	Interventive/Remedial Conservation
2.5.1	<p>For conservation treatment carried out in house National Museums NI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake remedial treatment to collections • Respect the integrity of the collection item and, in collaboration with curatorial staff, develop treatments which, where possible, adhere to conservation principles of minimum intervention • Undertake work to high professional standards using appropriately trained and experienced staff • Develop the skills and expertise of staff to improve standards, efficiency and effectiveness in the care and conservation of collections • Adhere to Institute for Conservation (Icon) Code of Conduct and Professional Standards • Provide appropriate standard operating procedures, resources and training to manage hazards within the collection
2.5.2	<p>For conservation work carried out by contractors National Museums NI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ contractors that have appropriate skills and expertise to carry out the work and are, where possible, accredited by either the Institute for Conservation, Institute for Conservator - Restorers in Ireland or another comparable and recognised professional body • Develop a clear brief for the conservation work and agree a detailed and appropriate methodology for any work carried out • Ensure that the contractor has the necessary arrangements in place for the safe keeping of works in their care and is adequately insured
2.6	Emergency Planning
2.6.1	<p>To mitigate against loss or damage to the collections in the event of a major incident NMNI will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively manage major risks and practically plan and prepare for emergency situations • Ensure Business Continuity Plans and Major Incident Management Plans are held for each National Museum Site • Liaise effectively with emergency services and other collection bodies to provide mutual support

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide adequate communication and training for staff to ensure protection of the collections as part of emergency response• Respond to emergency situations involving collections with adequate materials, equipment and personnel• Provide appropriate standard operating procedures, resources and training to manage hazards within the collection in the event of an emergency
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Appendix 1: Legal, Ethical and Standards Framework

The Museum's Collections Management Policy framework is informed by legislation, ethical codes and appropriate sectorial standards.

A.	Legislation applying to all Collections Management Polices
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Treasure Act 1996
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Data Protection Act, 1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Data Protection Regulation, 2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Freedom of Information Act, 2000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Requirements of HM Customs & Revenue
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright Act 1911 and 1956
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright and Related Rights Regulations, 2003
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Requirements of HM Customs & Revenue
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copyright and Related Rights Regulations, 2003
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2004
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health at Work (NI) Order 1978
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSHH: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 2002
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex Discrimination Order 1976 (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2008
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment (NI) Order 2003, the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race Relations (NI) Order 1997

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Discrimination Act 1995
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights Act ,1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disposal of Documents Order 1925
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland) Order 1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 75 Northern Ireland Act 1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sections 76 Northern Ireland Act 1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule 9 Northern Ireland Act 1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978
B.	Ethical codes applying to all Collections Management Policies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Ethics for Museums, ICOM, 2006 (including the ICOM ‘Red List’)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combating Illicit Trade: Due Diligence Guidelines for Museums, Libraries and Archives on collecting and borrowing Cultural Material, DCMS, 2005
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Export Licensing for Cultural Goods – Procedures and guidance for exporters of works of art and other culture goods, DCMS, 2021
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Principles issued by the National Museum Directors Conference on spoliation of works of art during the Holocaust and World War II period, 1998
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, 1970
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CITES – ‘Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora’ 1973/79
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Wildlife (NI) Order 1985, Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DCMS Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums. Linked to The Human Tissue Act 2004

C.	Sectorial standards applying to all Collections Management Policies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectrum 5.0: UK Museum Collections Management Standard (2017)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAS197:2009: Code of practice for cultural collections management, BSi and Collections Trust
D.	Collections Information and Access Policy
D.1	Documentation and Cataloguing Standards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spectrum 5.0: UK Museum Collections Management Standard (2017)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISAD(g): General International Standard Archival Description, International Council on Archives, 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules ('AACR', Joint Steering Committee, 2nd ed., 2002 revision): international library documentation standard. In process of super session by Resource Description and Access ('RDA', 2010, revisions through 2013)
D.2	Lending
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans between National and Non-national Museums – New standard and practical guidelines, National Museum Directors' Conference, 2003
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK Registrars Group Courier Guidelines 2nd Edition, 2004
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Facilities Report, UK Registrars' Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display Case supplement, UK Registrars' Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Facilities Report Security Supplement, UK Registrars' Group
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government Indemnity Guidelines for National Institutions (Jan 2016)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Smarter Loans' Principles for lending and borrowing from UK Museums, Museums Association (2012)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Collections, Simple Loans Administration. Museums Association Supported by Esmée Fairburn Foundation. 1st Edition, October 2007
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immunity from Seizure 2007 – legislation to allow museums to apply for immunity from seizure status

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bizot Group Loan Guidelines
E	Collections Care and Conservation Policy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAS 198:2012 Specification for managing environmental conditions for cultural collections
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.0, Alex Dawson (ed.), Museums, Libraries and Archives 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Museum Directors Conference, Guiding principles for reducing museums' carbon footprint 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint IIC - ICOM-CC Declaration on Environmental Guidelines 2014
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS EN 16790:2016 Conservation of cultural heritage. Integrated pest management (IPM) for protection of cultural heritage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS EN 16893:2018 Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS EN 16853:2017 Conservation of cultural heritage. Conservation process. Decision making, planning and implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS EN 15946:2011 Conservation of cultural property. Packing principles for transport
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS EN 16141:2012 Conservation of cultural heritage. Guidelines for management of environmental conditions. Open storage facilities: definitions and characteristics of collection centres dedicated to the preservation and management of cultural heritage
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS EN 15999-1:2014 Conservation of cultural heritage. Guidelines for design of showcases for exhibition and preservation of objects. General requirements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD CEN/TS 16163:2014 Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Guidelines and procedures for choosing appropriate lighting for indoor exhibitions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS EN 16853:2017 Conservation of cultural heritage. Conservation process. Decision making, planning and implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BSI PD 5454:2012 Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BS 4971:2017 Conservation and care of archive and library collections
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAPPT (Risk Awareness Profiling Tool)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Confederation of Conservator Restorers Professional Guidelines

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institute of Conservation (Icon) Code of Conduct 2014
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