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1. Purpose of Policy

- 1.1 Under the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985, the Board of Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland is responsible for the care, preservation, and development of the collections and for making them available to the public for exhibition, study, and research.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the principles by which National Museums Scotland will ensure effective management of collections information and access to collections to:
 - Improve accountability for the collections
 - Meet or exceed minimum professional standards in collections documentation procedures and collections information
 - Extend access to collections onsite, online as well as lending and borrowing collections
 - Strengthen the security of the collections through accurate collections information
 - Enable staff to manage collections in the Museum's care
 - Improve risk management for the collections.
- 1.3 As required by the Arts Council England Museums Accreditation Scheme, which defines good practice and sets nationally agreed baseline standards for museums in the UK, National Museums Scotland will maintain the primary procedures from Spectrum 5.0: the UK Collections Management Standard (Collections Trust), which represents a common understanding of good practice for collections management in museums and supports the activities involved in managing physical and digital collections and their associated information.
- 1.4 The Museum is committed to providing and maintaining Collections Information Systems (CIS) that enable the recording and retrieval of collections information.
- 1.5 The Museum's approach to the security of information assets and its CIS are set out in the Information Security Policy 2019. This approach conforms to the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

2. Collections Information Principles

- 2.1 The Museum's CIS are the primary tools for creating and managing collections information. The Museum is committed to creating and maintaining good quality information and accurate location information for collection items, which conforms to the Spectrum primary procedures as well as national and international standards, as far as possible. See Appendix A.
- 2.2 This enables accountability for items that the Museum is legally responsible for: permanent collection items, loans to the Museum, items on deposit, un-acquisitioned and previously undocumented items.
- 2.3 All staff responsible for creating and managing collections information should receive the appropriate training and document collections in accordance with

Museum information management procedures. Information will be accurately input in a timely way, retrievable and auditable.

- 2.4 Documentation backlogs will be identified, prioritised and addressed with targeted milestones, reviewed and updated on an annual basis.
- 2.5 Born digital collections will be catalogued in the CIS, in the same way as physical items, and the digital 'master' or item, managed and preserved.
- 2.6 The Museum has an ongoing and prioritised programme to image collection items as resources permit (this includes photographing, 3D modelling, and scanning). These digital assets are catalogued, stored, and accessed in the appropriate system.
- 2.7 The Museum has an ongoing and prioritised programme of collections auditing carried out to verify the locations of collection items as recorded in CIS. Documentation about the collections is made available for inspection by the Museum's auditors upon request.
- 2.8 The Museum will undertake regular reviews of the CIS to ensure they are fit for purpose and that collections information is appropriately safeguarded against potential future obsolescence of the system.

3. Collections Access

- 3.1 The Museum is committed to enabling access to collections items, physically and digitally, in accordance with the Collections Care and Conservation Policy, 2015 (updated 2021), and Digital Media Strategy, 2018 – 2022, Collections Digitisation Plan 2019-2022.
- 3.2 To enable access, appreciation and understanding of the collections, the Museum presents a broad range of exhibitions, displays, and creates touring exhibitions, alongside a range of learning programmes and content on the Museum's website and social media channels.
- 3.3 The Museum provides free online access to collections through 'Search our Collections', on the Museum website. This is updated as new information (text, images, etc.) becomes available and where no rights or data restrictions apply.
- 3.4 The Museum also seeks to extend its reach to online audiences by aggregating information about the collections to other free online platforms as resources permit. Arrangements to use collection information for commercial purposes can be made through National Museums Scotland Enterprises.
- 3.5 Collections not on display may be viewed upon appointment. Appropriate levels of access are monitored and approved by the Director of Collections and Keepers, who have the right to refuse access at their discretion to protect the collections or for other valid reasons.
- 3.6 Museum staff have a duty of care to protect sensitive or confidential collections information, in accordance with legal regulations. All public requests for information will be considered in terms of compliance with the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation 2018, and the Environmental Information (Scotland)

Regulations 2004. Requests will be reviewed for confidential data, such as donor information, environmental information, or site details, on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with applicable legislation and any legal agreements or conditions of gift.

4. Due Diligence

- 4.1 The Museum follows the guidelines issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, which define due diligence as the necessary precaution that museums take to ensure that they acquire, borrow or lend only ethically acceptable material and reject items that may have questionable title, have been looted or illegally exported.
- 4.2 The Museum will not acquire or borrow any collection item unless it is satisfied that the owner/lender has good legal title and they, or any agent acting for them, has full legal authority to enter into an agreement with the Museum.
- 4.3 The Director of National Museums Scotland has overall responsibility, which is delegated to the Director of Collections and Heads of Collection Departments, for ensuring that the appropriate due diligence checks are carried out.

5. Lending and Borrowing for exhibition and display

- 5.1 National Museums Scotland lends and borrows collection items to and from venues across Scotland, the UK and abroad. Lending and borrowing plays an important role in our work to promote access to our collections and to engage a wider audience.
- 5.2 The Board of Trustees is authorised to lend the Museum's collection items and borrow items from other public institutions or private individuals under the terms of the National Heritage (Scotland) Act 1985 and the Museums and Galleries Act 1992.
- 5.3 This section covers the lending and borrowing of single items and large groups of items to one venue or more for the purpose of exhibition and display.

The objectives of the Loans Programme are to:

- Enable greater access to collections, knowledge and expertise
- Extend the reach of the collections within and outside Scotland
- Maximise the benefits of partnership activity
- Maximise opportunities for mutual benefit for the borrower/lender and National Museums Scotland
- Develop the legacy of loans through publications, online presence and outreach projects
- Support shared scholarship

5.4 Criteria for lending for exhibition and display

The outgoing loans programme operates in conjunction with National Museums Scotland's major projects, meaning that capacity may at times be reduced or restricted. National Museums Scotland may charge the borrower for direct costs incurred and reserves the right to make further charges to cover indirect costs.

The following criteria will be used to assess a loan request:

- A minimum of six to nine months' notice for UK loans and twelve months for international loans is preferred
- If the item requested is required for the National Museums Scotland's own purposes such as exhibition in the near future
- The physical condition of the loan item and its suitability for travel
- Resources available to facilitate the loan
- The suitability of the borrowing venue, including the borrower's ability to meet professional standards
- The status and relevance of the item to the exhibition theme and content
- The impact on public displays at National Museums Scotland
- The potential of knowledge generation and lasting legacy
- That there is an appropriate level of public access

5.5 Criteria for borrowing for exhibition and display

The following criteria will be used when requesting a loan:

- A minimum of six to nine months' notice for UK loans and twelve months for international loans is preferred
- Resources should be identified and be available to facilitate the loan
- The suitability of the National Museums Scotland's facilities and display environment, and ability to meet the owner's loan conditions
- A loan should be for the purpose of inclusion in a special exhibition or gallery display
- Items may be placed on loan to National Museums Scotland prior to acquisition
- Loans must not otherwise available from the National Museums Scotland collections
- Loans must be demonstrably beneficial to the National Museums Scotland displays
- That there is an appropriate level of public access
- Long-term loans will be reviewed on a regular basis

6. Lending and borrowing for Research

6.1 National Museums Scotland also lends and borrows collections in support of shared research. This section covers the lending and borrowing of single items and large groups of items to one venue or more for the purpose of research.

6.2 The objectives of the Research Loans Programme are to:

- Enable greater access to collections, knowledge and expertise
- Extend the reach of the collections within and outside Scotland
- Maximise the benefits of partnership activity
- Maximise opportunities for mutual benefit for the borrower/lender and National Museums Scotland
- Develop the legacy of research through publications, online presence and outreach projects
- Support shared scholarship

6.3 Criteria for lending for research purposes

The outgoing research loans programme operates in conjunction with National Museums Scotland's major projects, meaning that capacity may at times be reduced or restricted. National Museums Scotland may charge the borrower for direct costs incurred and reserves the right to make further charges to cover indirect costs.

The following criteria will be used to assess a research loan request:

- The purpose of the loan
- The suitability of the prospective borrower
- The physical condition and degree of rarity of the object
- Any risks to which it is likely to be exposed
- Resources available to facilitate the loan
- Research loans from National Museums Scotland to borrowers will be reviewed on a regular basis.

6.4 Criteria for borrowing for research purposes

The following criteria will be used when requesting a research loan:

- A research loan should be for the purpose of study to meet a specific research project or need
- Resources should be identified and be available to facilitate the loan
- The suitability of the National Museums Scotland's facilities and ability to meet the owner's loan conditions
- Loans must be demonstrably beneficial to the National Museums Scotland research
- Research loans to the Museum will be reviewed on a regular basis

Appendix A

The Museum's Collections Information and Access Policy is informed by national and international legislation, ethical codes, and appropriate sector standards. The following list is not exhaustive, and it is recognised that they may change during the life of the policy.

Legislation

The Scottish National Heritage Act, 1985 and 1998
The Museums and Galleries Act, 1992 (as amended 1993)
The Public Records Acts, 1958, as amended 1967
The Data Protection Act, 2018
The General Data Protection Regulation, 2018
The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002
Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, UNESCO, 1970
CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), 1973 (as amended 1979 and 1983)
The Requirements of HM Customs & Revenue
Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums, published by DCMS in 2005
Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museums, published by MGS in 2011
Copyright Act 1911 and 1956
Copyright and Related Rights Regulations, 2003
Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988
Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act, 2003
Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 (as amended)
Equality Act, 2006
Human Rights Act, 1998
Race Relations Act, 1976
Racial and Religious Hatred Act, 2006
Sex Discrimination Act, 1975
Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
The Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulation, 2004
COSHH: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 2002
The Nagoya Protocol on access and benefit sharing for the use of genetic resources, 2011.

Ethical codes

Code of Ethics for Museums, ICOM, 2006 (including the ICOM 'Red List')
Code of Ethics for Museums, Museums Association, 2015
Combating Illicit Trade: Due Diligence Guidelines for Museums, Libraries and Archives on collecting and borrowing Cultural Material, DCMS, 2005
UK Export Licensing for Cultural Goods – Procedures and guidance for exporters of works of art and other culture goods, DCMS, 1997
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

Sector standards

SPECTRUM

PAS 197:2009: Code of practice for cultural collections management, BSI and Collections Trust

The UK Government Indemnity Scheme Guidelines for National Institutions, 2016.