

Collections Management Policy

1. Introduction

We're here to enrich the understanding and appreciation of London and all its people – past, present, future.

In doing this, we aspire to be a force for good in London, as London must be for the world.

Our strategic plan 2023-2028 puts the collections at the heart of its mission to become “a shared place in the middle of it all where all our city's stories cross and collide” by envisioning the museum as “a home for learning, exploration and adventure”. It provides the roadmap for all that we do during the next five years which will include the opening of the New Museum in West Smithfield. During this period, 2023-2028, London Museum will be preparing, packing and moving the collection from London Wall to other storage and display locations.

Our strategic objectives for the period 2023-2028 are to:

1. Build our new future
2. Reach more people than ever before
3. Stretch thinking
4. Engage all young Londoners
5. Transform ourselves for a better world

To deliver our current strategic objectives we are committed to increasing access digitally (intellectually and physically once the New Museum has opened) improving the care and storage of the collections, reviewing significance and rationalising, enhancing the information we hold and intellectually developing them. Additionally, we want to grow the use of our collections for research, increase their availability online and make strategic acquisitions to ensure we are collecting for tomorrow.

Our current ambitions are derived from our long term purpose as set out in the two Acts of Parliament that established the Museum. These state that we will: care for, preserve and add objects to our collections; make them accessible via display and for research; promote understanding and appreciation of historic and contemporary London and of its society and culture using this collection and other means.

Our collections underpin all that we do and embody, they are the ‘DNA’ of London and access to them and their associated information is vital for many Museum activities. Primary activities such as exhibitions, learning and research can only be effectively delivered if the collections are well

documented, stored and conserved. The care and management of our collections is a crucial management function that enables many other Museum activities to be delivered effectively and efficiently and in turn helps us to achieve our goals.

2. Key principles

The Museum will establish, develop and maintain an appropriate Collections Management Framework which seeks to:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Museum's obligations towards the collections
- Protect the Museum's collections and ensure responsible stewardship in line with the relevant legislation, professional codes of practice and national standards
- Ensure we are meeting the standards required by Museums Accreditation and Arts Council England's benchmarks for collections care which includes the existence of this policy
- Ensure that we create and maintain accurate information about all collections management activities
- Provide a framework for setting and reviewing collections related objectives in line with the Museum's mission, purpose and strategic objectives.
- Balance the needs of current and future generations and those of access and preservation.
- Be "holistic, integrated and proportional"* in line with sector standards.
- Increase accessibility of the collection and its information through collections management work such as inventory, data quality review, cataloguing and digitisation.

3. Purpose and scope

This policy sets out the standards by which the Museum will manage its collections.

The policy should be read in conjunction with the associated policies and procedures listed in section 8 of this policy document. Together they comprise our overall framework for managing collections at an organisational level.

The policy applies to all acquired and deposited collections and those on loan to the Museum whether short or long term.

4. Definition of terms

Collections management: strategies, policies, processes and procedures relating to a collection's development, information, access and care.

Conservation: interventive techniques applied to an item to achieve chemical

and physical stabilization, or to enhance its condition or some aspect of its significance for study and interpretation.

Collection care: a range of preventative activities intended to protect the collections as whole from deterioration, damage and loss.

Collections Information Upgrade Project: a large-scale project to prepare the collections stored at London Wall to move. This involves audit, information upgrade, barcoding, digitisation and packing of the collections.

Definitions taken or adapted from the PAS 197:2009 Code of practice for cultural collections management BSI.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 *Directorate*

In conjunction with the Board of Governors, the Director and Executive Team are responsible for ensuring that the Museum establishes, documents and maintains an appropriate collections management framework and continually seeks to improve its effectiveness.

5.2 *Collections Plan Board and Collections Plan Operations*

Collections Plan Board and Operations are responsible for the operations of the Collections Management Framework and associated policies and procedures, agreeing changes and overseeing their implementation as well as agreeing and monitoring collections management activity. For some policies, further authorisation may be required by either Executive Team or the Board of Governors.

5.3 *Collections Committee*

Collections Committee are responsible for agreeing this policy and agreeing and monitoring activity related to collections loss, damage, acquisition, disposal and sampling.

5.4 *Heads of IRS, Conservation and Collection Care and Curatorial*

Heads of Collections Departments are responsible for writing and managing this policy and any associated guidelines, procedures and related documentation.

5.5 *Heads of Department and Line Managers*

Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff (permanent, temporary, contract or voluntary) comply with this policy, the Collections Management Framework and all related procedures.

5.6 Employees

Compliance with this policy, the Collections Management Framework and all associated procedures is a requirement for all employees, contractors and volunteers.

6. Policy

6.1 General framework

The Museum will establish, document and maintain an appropriate collections management framework.

The framework will comprise the following:

- Collections Management Policy (this document)
- Collections Development Policy (and associated processes and procedures)
- Collections Access Policy (and associated processes and procedures)
- Conservation and Collection Care Policy (and associated processes and procedures)

In addition the Museum will maintain the following:

- Core collections management procedures as identified by Spectrum; object entry and exit, acquisition, disposal, location and movement control, collections information, cataloguing, loans in and out, loss, theft, damage and audit.
 - Inventory is covered within the related procedures rather than as a standalone procedure. During this time period it is also covered by the Collections Information Upgrade Project.
- Key conservation and collection care policies and procedures (for full list see the Conservation and Collection Care Policy).
- A specific policy on the acquisition, care and curation of human remains.

6.2 Governance and strategy

The Museum will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Museum's obligations towards the collections.
- Ensure that staff comply with this policy and associated procedures and are aware of the ramifications and risk of not doing so.
- Conduct regular reviews and updates of all collections management policies and procedures.
- Carry out regular internal audits of the Collections Management Framework and related procedures to validate their effectiveness.
- Ensure it routinely identifies training needs associated with collections work and puts in place appropriate training and associated actions.

With the exception of this policy and the Collections Development Policy (which require Board level sign off) all policies, procedures and processes that comprise the Collections Management Framework will be reviewed and authorised by Collections Plan Board or Collections Committee. For some policy changes Executive Team approval may be required, for example if changes necessitate substantial additional resource.

6.3 Conservation and Collection Care

The Museum seeks to:

- Monitor temperature, relative humidity, light levels and air quality in a pest free environment that achieves a satisfactory compromise between the long-term preservation of the objects and accessibility for users and staff.
- Include the consideration of the care of collections in all Museum developments and projects.
- Provide storage and display conditions that meet current collections care standards (as defined by Collections Trust Benchmarking standards, national security standards and government indemnity standards where appropriate) in order to maintain all collections in a state of high protection and security.
- Ensure that all objects are displayed, housed, moved and handled in a manner, which avoids unnecessary physical or chemical changes resulting in unacceptable damage.
- Ensure the risk of accidental and deliberate damage or loss to objects is minimised.
- Ensure that all procedures and conservation treatments are documented following established procedures and the national documentation standard as set out in Spectrum.

6.4 Conservation Treatments

- All conservation work is coordinated via the Conservation and Collection Care department with a general approach of minimum intervention.
- When appropriate, interventive treatments are agreed with the designated curator or specialist.
- For loan in items, or objects that are in the care of the Museum, permission is sought from the owner or their designated representative before any work commences.
- Only those private practitioners or organisations with the appropriate qualifications and experience will be used for work on the museum's collection. In most circumstances, this will require them to be on the ICON Conservation Register.

6.5 Emergency procedures

The Museum takes risk mitigation measures over and above those necessary

for the day-to-day protection of its collections, providing emergency arrangements and facilities in the event of disastrous damage (as from flood, fire etc.). These measures include:

- Provision of a comprehensive Collections Emergency Plan covering all sites as part of the Museum's overall Emergency Procedures.
- Provision of appropriate training in collections emergency protection and response and providing suitable equipment and materials in emergency cupboards at all sites.
- Identification of external bodies whose services may be used in specific emergency situation
- Provision of Business Continuity Team

6.6 Security

- Arrangements for the security of collections are an integral part of the Collections Management policy and procedures. The Museum has a dedicated security team and takes regular advice from the Manager (Security and Protection Advice), Arts Council.
- The Museum has a Security working group that regularly reviews security procedures and practices.
- The Museum maintains key risks for collections security in the relevant risk register as part of its overall management of risk.

6.7 Information and documentation

- The Museum is committed to the use of national and international standards for the documentation of its collections. The Museum's standards and procedures are based on Spectrum: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard, published by the Collections Trust
- The Museum uses the collections management system Mimsy XG as its primary database supplemented by other electronic and written records.
- The Museum manages collections documentation work via the Collections Information Strategy and the Collections Plan.
- The Museum maintains a Collections Information Policy which outlines the standards and benchmarks used to guide the documentation of the collection.

6.8 Insurance

- For practical and economic reasons and in common with many museums the collection, when in its normal locations on the main Museum sites (or in transit from one Museum site to another), is not insured.
- All loans in are insured by the Museum's commercial insurers or under the Arts Council administered Government Indemnity Scheme. The exceptions to this are historic loans where the lender cannot be traced, as well as the Lord Mayor's State

Coach and the Sainsbury's and PLA archives which are subject to special insurance arrangements. The Museum maintains separate cover for the conservation treatment of borrowed works up to a limit per work (and subject to the approval of the lender).

- All loans out are insured by the lender except in exceptional circumstances or during short-term exits, when the Museum may arrange cover via its commercial insurers.

6.9 Access to and use of collections

- The Museum maintains a Collections Access policy and an Access to Stored Collections policy which outline the approach and requirement of access to and use of the collections.
- During this time (2023-2028) access and use of collections is focused on London Museum Docklands while the collections at London Museum Spaces (London Wall) and London Museum Stores are prepared, packed and moved.

6.10 Compliance with standards and codes of practice

The Museum aims to comply with the following national and international standards/guidelines and codes of ethics:

- Arts Council England Accreditation Standard
- SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Collections Management Standard
- Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums
- ICON Ethical Guidance
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums 2017
- Collections Trust Benchmarks in Collections Care 2.1
- BS EN 17820:2023 Conservation of Cultural Heritage – Specifications for the management of moveable cultural heritage collections
- 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.
- BS EN 15757:2010 Conservation of cultural property specifications for temperature and relative humidity
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA): Code, regulations, standards and guidance
- Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Guidance for the care of Human Remains in Museums 2005
- Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009)
- The National Archives' Framework of Standards
- BS 4971:2017 Conservation and Care of Archive and Library Collections
- ISAD(G) General International Standard Archival Description, Second edition
- ISO 15489-1:2016 Information and Documentation – Records and management
- CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora)
- DCMS Combating Illicit Trade: Due Diligence Guidelines for

Museums, Libraries and Archives on collecting and borrowing Cultural Material, 2005

- Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003
- UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property 1970
- UK Government Indemnity Scheme Guidelines for Non-National Institutions, 2016

7. Guidance on supporting procedures, related policies and the regulatory environment

7.1 Regulatory Environment

The regulatory environment for Collections Management is complex because it covers many areas including health and safety at work, information legislation and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health. Therefore, this policy does not detail the relevant legislation in full, instead the key pieces of legislation are listed below and full details of all pertaining legislation can be found in the relevant policies listed below.

7.2 Legislation

- Museum of London Acts, 1965 and 1968 (amended by the GLA Act 2007)
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
- Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001
- Control of Explosives Regulations 2014
- Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Copyright and Patents Act 1988

7.3 Related Policies

The following policies are related to this one and comprise our overall framework for managing collections:

- Collections Development Policy
 - Policy for the Care of Human Remains in London Museum Collections
 - Due Diligence Policy
- Collections Access Policy (paused during this period while the collections are prepared and moved)
 - Access to Stored Collections Policy
 - Interim Object Movement Policy

- Learning Collections Policy
- Collections Information Policy
 - Supporting Collections Policy
 - Mimsy XG Security Policy
 - Audit Policy
 - Barcoding Policy
 - Designated Barcoded Areas
- Conservation and Collection Care Policy
 - Operation of Collections Policy
 - Integrated pest management Policy
 - Environmental Monitoring and Control Policy
 - Collections Lighting Policy
 - Analysis and Sampling Policy
 - Collections Damage Policy
 - Events in Galleries and Stores Policy
 - Hazards Policy

7.4 *Related Procedures and guidelines*

- Acquisition
- Due Diligence
- Disposal
- Bulk Archaeology Disposal
- Loss
- Theft
- Loans In
- Loans Out
- Object Entry
- Object Exit
- Interim Object Movement Collections Damage
- Audit
- Collections Photography
- Retrospective Rights Clearance
- Hazardous Collections
- Standard Operating Procedure – Controlled Drugs
- Object marking guidelines
- Cataloguing guidelines
- Data Standards