



National Galleries Scotland

Collection Care and Conservation

Principles

NGS has a planned programme for the conservation, maintenance and care of all objects and object-parts or groups of objects in our collections.

We assess the condition of objects and produce a formal condition report, including: on pre-entry, loans in and out, during the acquisition process, on de-accession or when damaged, as required during planned programmes of conservation, and to meet Government Indemnity (GIS) requirements. We make a condition assessment whenever required, including when an object is handled or moved, or whenever it enters or leaves NGS or our partner galleries to maintain a full conservation history of the object.

We monitor and maintain the objects in our care and carry out the necessary steps to prevent damage or deterioration, to ensure they are accessible to the widest possible public, and to preserve them for the future. This includes recommendations for the design and standards of bespoke object supports and fittings and of packing, crating and storage of objects.

Conservation treatments will be informed by scientific analysis of material and other technical assessments, usually the results of condition checks and often prompted by other procedures such as managing a loan request.

Definitions

Conservation and Care: The appropriate, active, on-going and sustainable care of all objects and object-parts for which NGS is responsible, to ensure the preservation and accessibility of those objects. Conservation embraces preventive conservation, remedial conservation and restoration.

Condition checking: Monitoring, documenting and reviewing the condition of objects.

Environmental management: The assessment and control of conditions that have the potential to affect or damage objects.

Treatment: Preventive or remedial actions that contribute to the safe conservation, repair, restoration or preservation of an object.

Legislation and ethics

The conservation and care of objects meets our obligations for duty of care, for audit and accountability, for preservation, and for accessibility. We also take into consideration environmental sustainability.

Relevant statutory requirements and codes of ethics include:

- National Heritage Act 1980 Section 16 (as amended by the Museums and Galleries Act 1992)
- UK H&S Executive: Control of substances hazardous for Health (COSHH) 2002

- Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries, Third Edition 2002
- H&S Guidance for employees and technicians carrying out fumigation operations 2005
- Museums Association Code of Ethics for Museums 2008
- ICOM-CC Terminology to characterize the conservation of tangible cultural heritage 2008
- British Standards Institute: PAS 197, Code of Practice for Collections Management, 2009
- British Standards Institute: BS EN 15757 Conservation of cultural property Specifications for Temperature and RH to limit climate-induced mechanical damage in organic hygroscopic materials, 2010
- Conditions for cultural collections 2012
- ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums 2013
- BS 4971 Conservation and care of archive and library collections 2017
- BS EN 16893 Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections 2018
- BS 1153 Recommendations for processing and storage of silver gelatine type microfilm
- BS EN 15758 Conservation of cultural property Procedures and instruments for measuring temperatures of the air and surfaces of objects
- BS EN ISO 11844-1 Corrosion of Metals and Alloys
- BS ISO 18934 Imaging materials – Multiple media archives – Storage Environment
- BS ISO 31000 Risk Management principles and guidelines
- BS ISO 80000 Quantities and units – Part 7: Light
- MLA: Benchmarks in collections care for museums archives and libraries
- ISO 14001: Environmental Management

Standards

This policy is part of the Collections Management set of policies that form a requirement of PAS197 and Spectrum as part of the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme.

Control measures

We record all conservation and care details. We hold all information centrally and securely on an industry-standard database (MIMSY). Only authorised persons may maintain conservation and care records. Any related object movement is also documented and will be carried out by authorised staff.

NGS is committed to carrying out regular collections audits, which include all objects in our care including loans.

Conservation and care

We have a programme of regular care, maintenance and monitoring of the collections, with documented standards and criteria for the different categories of objects such as oil on canvas, oil on copper, time-based media etc. Conservation work must be authorised, and we record



details of all work carried out, using international standard terminology and including dates and the name/s of those who performed the work.

We also conduct scientific research and develop long-term preventative conservation strategies and methods.

We maintain risk assessments, handling and display criteria for the most critical objects and continue to expand this database of records.

Condition checks and reporting

Only suitably trained persons may make a full, formal condition report, however other checks are also important as part of the object history, for example courier reports and these are recorded also.

We assess the condition of objects and produce a condition report, including prior to transit; on pre-entry; during the acquisition process; an assessment whenever an object is handled or moved; if there is a physical change to the object, or its use or to the surrounding environment; whenever it enters or leaves NGS; and to meet due diligence and GIS requirements. We ensure that the condition of each object is fit to move, and carry out and document a risk assessment where appropriate.

Environmental management

We regularly review and update our knowledge and skills to reflect the latest international research and recommendations. We apply NGS-specified measures to ensure the environmental conditions for storage, display and loan (both for loans in and loans out) maintain optimum ranges of relative humidity, temperature, light and potential pollutants, in order to minimise the risk of damage or deterioration, and to safeguard the authenticity of objects.

We have a strategy and a defined, evidence-based programme for monitoring and maintaining these conditions and work with the estates department and external experts as appropriate. We maintain an accurate, up-to-date, standardised (UK Registrars Group) facilities report for each of the sites in the NGS estate.

We ensure these conditions are met and that these methods and results are documented consistently and are ethical, environmentally sustainable, and consistent.

Environmental management is part of a preventive conservation approach which also includes the implementation of appropriate measures and actions for registration, storage, handling, packing and transportation, security, emergency planning, education of staff, public awareness and legal compliance.

Treatment

Only suitably qualified persons may carry out conservation treatment.

If an external conservator is involved the proposed work will be formally agreed in writing and a contract issued including terms and conditions, authorisation to carry out work agreed, any transport handling insurance, health and safety and access arrangements which may apply.

Where applicable we obtain formal approval from the legal owner of the object, or their designated representative, before carrying out treatment.



When we carry out treatment it is according to knowledge of best conservation practice, an understanding of the science of object materials, and using methods that can be carried out without invalidating analytical techniques or removing potential sources of further information about the object. We consult and involve external specialists as appropriate.

Where conservation treatments known to invalidate analytical techniques or remove potential information, such as over painting to reflect changes in taste, or heat treatment of metals, the object will be fully documented and photographed before and at all stages of treatment.

Related policies

The following are related NGS policies:

- 01 Object Entry
- 02 Acquisition and Accessioning
- 03 Location and Movement Control
- 04 Inventory
- 05 Cataloguing
- 06 Object exit
- 07 Loans in (borrowing objects)
- 08 Loans out (lending objects)
- 09 Documentation Planning
- 10 Condition Checking and Technical Assessment
- 12 Valuation
- 13 Insurance and indemnity
- 14 Emergency Planning for Collections
- 15 Damage and Loss
- 16 De-accessioning and Disposal
- 17 Rights Management
- 18 Reproduction
- 19 Use of Collections
- 20 Collections Review
- 21 Audit

Also the following NGS documents

- NGS Business Continuity Plan
- NGS Carbon Management Programme 2018-2022
- NGS Collection Care Framework
- NGS Collections Development Framework
- NGS Disaster Contingency Plan
- NGS Estates Management Strategy
- NGS Environmental Management Programme 2018-2022
- NGS Partnership Framework
- NGS Public Programme Framework
- NGS Risk Management Policy



NGS Research Policy and Framework

For NGS Rights and Reproduction Policies: SEE NGS Trading Company Policies