

## **Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales**

### **Collection Care & Conservation Policy**

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Amgueddfa Cymru holds collections in trust for the people of Wales. Accordingly we make items from the collection accessible to all and facilitate their use by both present and future generations.

1.2 We take a robust approach to collection care and conservation in order to make collections available, so that visitors and users may see and experience them.

#### **2. Objectives**

2.1 The Museum aims to strike a balance between the long-term preservation of the collections and the provision of access to them by adopting a risk management based approach to the care and conservation of the collections.

2.2 We will care for and preserve our collections for future generations by achieving the highest standards of conservation practice through the use of professional, qualified staff and good quality materials.

2.3 This policy demonstrates how we will care for the collections using a combination of preventive and interventive conservation, aimed at ensuring preservation and maximizing access.

#### **3. Definitions of Collections Care, Conservation and Restoration**

3.1 Collections care is the range of activities intended to safeguard a collection. These activities can include organizational policies, security, storage, cleaning, maintenance, handling, scientific investigation, environmental monitoring and control, exhibitions and loans, conservation, provision of surrogates and emergency planning (PAS 197: 2009).

3.2 Conservation is the interventive technique applied to an item to achieve chemical and physical stabilization for the purpose of extending the useful life of the item to ensure its continued availability. This is also known as interventive conservation and remedial conservation (PAS 197: 2009).

3.3 Restoration is all actions directly applied to a single and stable item aimed at facilitating its appreciation, understanding and use. These actions are only carried out when the item has lost part of its significance or function through past alteration or deterioration. They are based on respect for the original material and are reversible wherever possible. Such actions may modify the appearance of the item.

## **4. Principles**

4.1 Everyone who uses the collections or who manages or accesses the spaces in which items are stored or displayed has a role to play in the effective care of the collections.

4.2 We recognize that all activities which involve the use of the collections, such as handling, transportation and display carry a potential risk to the security, longevity and condition of each collection item.

4.3 We will adopt a risk-based approach to identify collections care and conservation priorities and to inform the allocation of resources.

4.4 Security standards recognize our standing as a national museum and will be delivered in accordance with the Government Indemnity Scheme standards for security of the collections.

4.5 Collection care and conservation must be underpinned by knowledge, an understanding of the item and identification of its composition. Critical to this is documentation of its condition and treatment, and a long-term plan for the care of the item.

4.6 All new acquisitions and incoming collections are assessed to ensure that they present no risk to our existing collections through insect pest infestation and are quarantined as necessary.

## **5. Specific Ethical and Legislative Considerations etc.**

5.1 The Museum will care for and conserve its collections in accordance with the Museums Association's *Code of Ethics for Museums*, The Institute of Conservation's *Code of Conduct* (2014), PAS 198:2012 *Specification for Managing Environmental Conditions for Cultural Collections* and the Government Indemnity Scheme Guidelines.

5.2 Any work on, handling or display of hazardous items will be undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation.

## **6 Interventive Conservation**

6.1 Conservation work will be planned and carried out in consultation with the relevant curatorial staff.

6.2 Interventive conservation work will only be undertaken by an appropriately qualified person, or under the supervision of an appropriately qualified person.

6.3 Conservators contracted to work on Museum items will be professionally accredited where available and all references and professional accreditation will be verified where relevant. Such work will be managed by a Museum conservator.

6.4 Any treatment that could prejudice the future research value of an item must be justified and considered by the relevant conservator and curator.

6.5 Reversible treatments will be used wherever possible.

6.6 Accessioned collections will only be treated using proven conservation materials.

## **7 Preventive Conservation**

### *7.1 Provision of suitable building conditions*

7.1.1 The Museum will aim to provide suitable, secure and well-maintained buildings for the stable storage and display of our collections.

### *7.2 Provision of suitable sustainable environmental conditions*

7.2.1 The environment in storage and display areas and display cases will be maintained in accordance with the requirements of the items in each space.

7.2.2 We may measure relative humidity, temperature, visible light, ultra violet radiation and atmospheric pollutants as applicable.

7.2.3 Should a storage or display space fall short of the required standards remedial action will be taken as appropriate and on a prioritized basis to mitigate risks to the preservation of the collection.

7.2.4 All materials used in association or close proximity with the collections must be an appropriate standard to prevent damage or deterioration to them.

7.2.5 We will monitor continuously in order to identify and eradicate any pests.

## **8 Handling and Movement**

8.1 Collection items used for research, study or handling will be assessed as to their suitability for such use and a risk assessment undertaken where required.

8.2 We will ensure that anyone who may handle or move an item does so in accordance with best practice procedures and where required under supervision from a trained member of Museum staff.

8.3 Items may be withdrawn from public use if they are identified as at serious risk of damage, are hazardous, or where their security is deemed to be compromised. Wherever possible, alternative arrangements such as access under supervision will be facilitated. (See *Policy on Access and Use of the Collections*).

8.4 All collection item movements will undergo a risk assessment to ensure that the correct arrangements and resources are present, in order to minimise the risk to the item and to staff.

8.5 Any permanent movement of a collection item should result in its being placed in matching or improved environmental conditions.

## **9 Emergency Planning**

9.1 We will take measures over and above those necessary for the day to day protection of collections, to provide emergency arrangements and facilities in the event of disastrous damage (as from flood, fire etc.). These measures include:

- Developing and maintaining salvage plans, including priority salvage lists.
- Provision of appropriate training in disaster protection and response.
- Providing suitable incident response equipment at all Museum sites.

## **10 Security**

10.1 We will maintain the physical security of all items in our collections in accordance with standards set by the Arts Council for England National Security Advisor.

10.2 Our storage and display conditions will provide all collections with an appropriate level of protection and security.

10.3 We will ensure that no items are transported without being packed and deemed fit for travel and that anyone removing an item from a site has signed authority to do so.

10.4 We will undertake regular reviews of the storage of digital data to ensure they are fit for purpose and that digital collections and collection information is

appropriately safeguarded against potential future obsolescence of the systems (also see *Collection Information Policy*).

## **11 Training**

11.1 The Museum is committed to training and to raising awareness of collection care. By promoting these to the wider community of users including staff, volunteers and researchers, they will communicate the message that safe handling and use of the collections will preserve them for the future and in doing so allow access to them for longer.

11.2 The Museum will encourage all employed conservators to seek Professional Accreditation of Conservator-Restorer accreditation from The Institute of Conservation.

11.3 In instances where conservation work is out-sourced to an external conservator-restorer they will be expected to abide by this Policy.