

APPENDIX 4

Tameside Museums and Galleries Service (TMGS)

Care and Conservation Policy

Dates: June 2019 – June 2024

Tameside Museums and Galleries aim to be:

A dynamic, engaging and responsive Museum Service that celebrates the people and places of Tameside, ensuring a meaningful and enjoyable experience for all.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy will guide Tameside Museums and Galleries Service (TMGS) in the care and conservation of its collections. The separate Collections Care and Conservation Plan will help to deliver the statements made in this policy.
- 1.2 Tameside Museums and Galleries collections are at the centre of everything the service does. The collections number approximately 31,000 and include works of art, social history, military history, natural history and industrial history.
- 1.3 Caring for the collections is of the utmost importance to the service and preserves them for generations to come. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - To preserve collections in the care of TMGS.
 - To maximise the safe use and access to collections, making cost-effective and sustainable use of resources.
 - To support the Forward Plan of TMGS and associated policies/plans.

2.0 PRINCIPLES OF CONSERVATION AND COLLECTIONS CARE

- 2.1 The policy covers all the activities that are designed to preserve the cultural assets of TMGS and Tameside MBC, including preventative measures as well as remedial conservation.
- 2.2 The policy aims to maximise intellectual access to collections by sharing understanding of their physical nature and needs.
- 2.3 The policy aims to promote physical access to and the use of collections, while minimising risks to the objects and to users.
- 2.4 The policy applies to all TMGS collections and objects in its care including loan objects.
- 2.5 The policy relates to all staff and volunteers of TMGS.

3.0 ETHICS AND LEGISLATION

- 3.1 TMGS is obliged to work within the following ethical guidelines and legislation, and will work to best practice, adhering to professional guidelines and standards:
 - Museum Association Code of Ethics
 - PAS 197
 - Control of Asbestos regulations

- COSHH
- Fire safety
- Risk assessments
- Method statements
- Radiation protection
- Working at height

4.0 STANDARDS

- 4.1 The preservation of TMGS cultural assets will be optimised by assessment and reduction of risks to them, with priorities decided in the light of their needs and significance.
- 4.2 Work undertaken by TMGS through the use of external conservators will conform to the standards set down in the Code of Ethics of the Institute of Conservation (ICON).
- 4.3 All treatments will be photographed and documented on MODES (museum object database) and records will be maintained in accordance with Spectrum 5.0 standards, making sure that all conservation information is accessible via the object number and is up-to-date, with the name of the person who performed the work, the organisation to which they belong and the date on which it took place.
- 4.4 TMGS will continue working towards meeting and improving basic benchmarking standards in all of its sites and stores in accordance with the Collections Trust's Benchmarks in Collections Care self-assessment check list.
- 4.5 TMGS will employ qualified and experienced staff to implement the policy.
- 4.6 TMGS will seek to obtain appropriate specialist advice, working with contractors where necessary.
- 4.7 Conservation and collections management actions plans will be reviewed annually as part of the business planning process.

5.0 COLLECTIONS CARE AND PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION

5.1 Buildings maintenance:

- The internal environment of sites run by the service including Portland Basin Museum, Astley Cheetham Art Gallery and storage areas will be monitored as an aid to achieving the conditions that promote the conservation of collections.
- The external buildings are checked regularly for signs of damage and leaks and any repairs reported to Sanctuary Housing at Portland Basin Museum and Robertson, the Council's facilities management provider, at other sites.
- All portable electric equipment is to be tested annually, fire extinguishers are to be tested annually and fire alarm systems are to be tested weekly.

5.2 Environmental and light monitoring:

- Where collections are stored or displayed, continuous monitoring of relative humidity and temperature is achieved through the use of Tiny Tags. These are monitored quarterly by the Technician.

- Temperature and relative humidity levels are kept as consistent as possible, given the limitations of control over heating at some of the sites.
- Lux and UV light levels are monitored by the Technician and are assessed when displaying an object. Natural light is minimised where possible and no vulnerable objects are placed in direct light.

5.3 Cleaning, housekeeping and pest management:

- TMGS takes an active approach to preventative conservation. A monthly programme of pest management monitoring will be maintained by the Curators and daily checks of the displays carried out by Front of House staff.
- Objects that may be infested must be quarantined and, if suitable, frozen for a minimum of one month when they enter TMGS premises.
- General public and staff spaces will be cleaned by the contracted Council cleaning services. Front of House staff, under the guidance of Curators, will be trained to clean the room sets and objects on open display, using cleaning kits put together by the Curators.
- The off-site stores are not cleaned by cleaning staff. These will be periodically cleaned by the Curators and will be kept clean and tidy to reduce the risk of pest infestation.
- No food is consumed in areas where collections are stored.

6.0 DISPLAYS, EXHIBITIONS AND LOANS

- 6.1 TMGS will ensure that lenders' conservation requirements can be met before agreeing to borrow objects.
- 6.2 A risk assessment will be made before TMGS agrees to lend objects.
- 6.3 A condition report will be made before TMGS lends an object.
- 6.4 Objects borrowed and loaned by TMGS will be condition checked on arrival and departure.
- 6.5 When new displays and exhibitions are planned, conservation implications will be considered at an early stage.
- 6.6 Conservation works carried out to objects in the Manchester Regiment collection, which is on long term loan to TMGS, will be reported to the Chair of the Regimental Advisory Committee.
- 6.7 Records will be kept of the loan and exhibitions processes in accordance with Spectrum 5.0 standards and a reference to the loan or exhibition should be added to the object's record on MODES.

7 COLLECTIONS AND INDIVIDUAL OBJECTS

- 7.1 All proposed acquisitions will be assessed before acquisition and if there are cost implications of conservation and long-term care, then the decision will be referred to the Museums Manager.

7.2 The condition of collections items will be recorded during initial documentation and retrospective inventory work and this information will be recorded on MODES.

7.3 TMGS holds a variety of specialist collections, including archaeology, industrial machinery, textiles and natural history collections with differing care and conservation needs. Expert advice for the care and conservation of these collections is sought as required and specialist advice followed.

7.4 Objects requiring specific care and priorities for conservation are outlined in the Care and Conservation Plan, which is reviewed annually. Priorities for conservation are determined by whether the object is deemed to be at risk of further deterioration without conservation treatment and whether the object is required for display.

8 REMEDIAL CONSERVATION TREATMENTS

8.1 Staff and volunteers may be employed in basic object cleaning and always under the supervision of a Curator or the Museum Technician.

8.2 Items requiring conservation will be assessed by the Curatorial team and Museum Technician.

8.3 Where remedial conservation can be completed by the Museum Technician this will be programmed into the work schedule.

8.4 TMGS does not have a conservator as part of its staff. If it is decided that a conservator will be required then funding and priority will be taken into consideration and quotes will be obtained for the work, using conservators registered with the Institute for Conservation (ICON).

8.5 TMGS's Conservation Procedures, outlined in the Documentation Procedures Manual, will be followed when undertaking any conservation work.

8.6 Conservators will be required to supply TMGS with full documentation of work undertaken including detailed treatment proposals, method statements where necessary, treatment reports and digital photographs illustrating the object before, during and after treatment. This information will be retained with the object's history file and recorded on MODES.

8.7 Where necessary, any further conservation treatments, checks and periodic care activities are scheduled in accordance with the needs of the object.

9 EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESPONSE

9.1 The curatorial and management team will contribute to the content of the emergency plan for each site.

9.2 The Curators and Museum Manager must be notified immediately of any incidents involving the collections.

9.3 All response teams should involve at least one Curator.

9.4 The Museums Manager will discuss involving the Greater Manchester Emergency Response Team (GMMG) if required.

10 TRAINING, LEARNING AND DISSEMINATION

- 10.1 As part of their induction, all TMGS staff should be made aware of the issues around handling objects and working within a museum environment. Those who have direct contact with collections, including Front of House staff, will receive basic training in object handling and cleaning.
- 10.2 Curators will provide training in conservation and collections care appropriate to the needs of the staff, trainees and volunteers.
- 10.3 Specialist trained staff and contractors will be used to handle and transport large, heavy and/or fragile objects.

11 STAFF LEVELS AND BUDGETS

- 11.1 The Museums Manager will review the service plans in order to balance the available resources against the needs of the collections.
- 11.2 TMGS will seek external funding for specific conservation projects agreed by the Museums Manager and Curators.
- 11.3 When or if acquiring large or valuable collections TMGS will take into consideration housing, insurance, care and conservation implications.

12.0 REVIEW PROCEDURE

- 12.1 This policy will be published on the Museum Service's website and will be made available for visitors to the museum to view on request. It will be reviewed from time to time and at least every 5 years.

Governing body: Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Date approved by governing body:

Date written: July 2019

Date at which policy is due for review: July 2024